Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2018

Statistical Bulletin HOSB 10/18

July 2018

Important information

Before April 2013, official statistics about how the police deal with crimes focused narrowly on 'detections' (the number of cases resolved with a charge, caution, etc.). In April 2013, the Home Office introduced the new outcomes framework and changed the presentation of crime outcomes statistics. From April 2014 onwards, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office on the broader set of outcomes. The year to March 2014 bulletin[1], published in July 2014, showed the first provisional statistics from the new outcomes framework. We have since developed the statistics with input from police forces and users.

We continue to ensure that these crime outcomes statistics:

- meet identified user needs, including providing new analysis and greater transparency;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

The statistics in this bulletin are designated as Official Statistics, rather than National Statistics.

In January 2014, the UK Statistics Authority found that police recorded crime statistics did not meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The full assessment report against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website:

www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-268---statistics-on-crime-in-england-and-wales.pdf

In July 2014, the Home Office Chief Statistician and the UK Statistics Authority Head of Assessment agreed to badge the year to March 2014 Crime Outcomes bulletin as Official Statistics, rather than National Statistics. This reflects the move to the new outcomes framework, and also the possibility that outcomes data are affected by similar issues to those that led to the de-designation of police recorded crime statistics.

Full details are available here:

www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-david-blunt-to-ed-humpherson---090714.pdf

www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-ed-humpherson-to-david-blunt---150714.pdf

It is our intention that the statistics will be assessed, with a view to them gaining National Statistics status in due course.

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[1] www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2013-to-2014

Further information

Previous years' "Crime Outcomes in England and Wales" bulletins, are available from:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-statistics

Copies of other Home Office publications (including crime statistics releases prior to April 2012) are available from:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/series/crime-statistics#publications

Copies of crime statistics publications from April 2012 are available from the Office for National Statistics website: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice

This includes the *User Guide to Crime Statistics*, a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications that are key to the production and presentation of the crime statistics.

The dates of forthcoming publications are pre-announced and can be found via the Gov.uk Statistics Release Calendar: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements

For further information about crime outcomes statistics, please email:
CrimeandPoliceStats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or write to:
Crime and Policing Statistics, 6th Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF.

Home Office Responsible Statistician
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Contact via CrimeandPoliceStats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

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Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

This bulletin is based on the full outcomes framework introduced in April 2014. Under this framework, every crime recorded by the police will eventually get a police outcome. This shows how the police deal with all crimes, and those still under investigation.

KEY FINDINGS

How the police dealt with crimes recorded in the year ending March 2018:

- Police forces closed almost half (48%) of offences with no suspect identified, a similar proportion to last year. This proportion varied by crime type. Three quarters (75%) of theft offences were closed with no suspect identified, compared with around 7 per cent of rape offences and 2 per cent of drugs offences.

- The proportion of crimes which resulted in a charge/summons fell by two percentage points, from 11% to 9% (equivalent to an annual reduction of 41,215). This continues a downward trend seen since the introduction of the Outcomes framework in year ending March 2015 when 15% of crimes were resolved with a charge/summons.

- Conversely, the proportion of offences that resulted in evidential difficulties increased from 26 per cent to 29 per cent. This is likely to be partly due to improved crime recording processes by the police which according to the Office for National Statistics is a factor that has contributed to the increase in police recorded crime.

- A further factor is likely to be the changing crime mix with rising numbers of complex crimes such as sexual abuse, and an increasing volume of digital evidence which may require more intensive work to investigate.

How long it took for offences recorded in the year ending March 2018 to get a police outcome:

The length of time it took police forces to assign an outcome to a crime varied. It depended on the offence type and the type of outcome.

- It took police forces an average of 6 days to assign the outcomes they recorded in the year ending March 2018, a decrease of 2 days compared to the year to March 2017.

- As in previous years, there was considerable variation by type of offence. Sexual offences took the longest time to assign an outcome (median of 73 days) and theft and criminal damage/arson the least (median of 2 days).

- The median length of time for investigations to be closed with no suspect identified fell from 2 days to 1 day.

How the police dealt with domestic-abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending March 2018:

- Higher proportions of domestic abuse-related offences received a charge/summons than those that were not domestic abuse-related (15% and 9% respectively).

- Almost 7 out of 10 (69%) of domestic-abuse related offences had an evidential difficulties outcome. This is almost three times higher than the proportion of offences that were not domestic abuse-related (24%).

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

Outcomes recorded in the year ending March 2018 for fraud offences:

The bulletin contains a) data on the number of fraud offences disseminated nationally and by police force area level and b) data on the number of outcomes based on the full outcomes by police force area level.

- There were 638,882 fraud offences recorded in the year end March 2018 which were reviewed by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) for possible investigation and enforcement action.

- There is no direct correlation between offences disseminated and outcomes. Outcomes assigned during 2017/18 could be for offences disseminated prior to year. Investigations can take months or longer to complete.

- Of fraud offences disseminated to the police there was an increase of 3 per cent in the number give an outcome of charge summons in the year to March 2018 compared with the year to March 2017.

1   Introduction

1.1 – OVERVIEW

This bulletin reports on outcomes that police forces have assigned to offences recorded by the police. It covers the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police.

In April 2013, the Home Office introduced the new outcomes framework, replacing 'detections'. This new framework provides greater transparency on how **all** crimes recorded by the police are dealt with. The previous 'detections' gave a partial picture of the work police do to investigate and resolve crime. This resulted in performance targets, which risked driving perverse crime recording decisions. It may also have undermined the victim-focused approach set out in the crime recording standard[2].

As well as this annual publication, the Home Office also publishes quarterly outcomes tables. These are published here www.gov.uk/government/collections/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-statistics.

For more detailed background on the outcomes framework and how it was developed, see Annex A6: Crime Outcomes Data Quality.

1.2 – THE FULL OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

The Home Office introduced the outcomes framework in April 2013. Since then it has developed to cover a broader range of outcome types for police forces to use. Annex table A1.1 shows how the current outcomes framework builds on former outcome and detection types. Detailed descriptions of each outcome type, can be found in the technical annex.

While police forces will eventually give an outcome to every crime, this may take some time. At any given point, police forces will be undertaking crime investigations to which they will not yet have assigned an outcome. Police forces will therefore submit revised data to the Home Office as investigations are completed.

1.3 – OUTCOME GROUPINGS IN THIS BULLETIN

Some of the tables and charts in this bulletin show grouped outcomes to simplify presentation. For transparency, Open Data tables are also published that show the full range of police outcomes. These are accessible from: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables.

Table 1.1 shows the groupings. These take account of user feedback following a consultation in 2014.

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[2] www.gov.uk/government/publications/counting-rules-for-recorded-crime

Table 1.1: Grouping the outcomes framework from April 2014 onwards (outcomes 1-21)

Outcome Group	Outcome type(s)
Charged/Summonsed	1
Taken into consideration	4
Out-of-court (formal)	2, 3, 6
Out-of-court (informal)	7, 8
Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17
Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)	15
Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	14, 16
Investigation complete – no suspect identified	18
Action undertaken by another body/agency (**from April 2015**)	20
Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest (police decision) (**from January 2016**)	21

Note: outcome 19 not shown as this applies to fraud offences recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau only

See technical annex A6.5 for detailed descriptions of each outcome type.

1.4 – SUPPLEMENTARY DATA TABLES

The bulletin chapters below discuss key topics of interest in the outcomes data. Data presented in these chapters as both charts and tables is available online via bulletin tables published on the Home Office website. In addition to the tables found in a main bulletin, a number of supplementary tables area available here which provide additional data on the topics discussed, plus data on areas not covered. Data on transferred and cancelled records, and "old-style" outcomes (see Technical Annex for explanation of the two outcome styles) are also published here. Supplementary data tables for this publication can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

2 Outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the year ending March 2018

2.1 - INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers how the police have dealt with crimes recorded in the year ending March 2018. It should be noted that not all offences recorded have yet to be assigned final outcomes. A complete picture of how crimes have been resolved by the police will become available in updated tables which are published on a quarterly basis. The recording of fraud offences has been centralised via Action Fraud (the UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre) and for this reason outcome for these offences are not included in the data presented in Chapters 2, 3 or 4. Outcomes for fraud offences are covered in Chapter 5.

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

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

These factors are likely to have an impact on the distribution of outcomes over time and across forces.

2.2 – HOW OUTCOMES VARY BY OUTCOME TYPE

Table 2.1 summarises outcomes given to all crimes recorded in the year to March 2018 at the time that data was finalised for analysis (June 2018). It also shows how this compares with outcomes given to crimes recorded in the previous year. For comparability, we present outcomes for the year to March 2017 as they appeared when first published in July 2017[3].

As was the case last year, almost half of offences (48%) were closed with no suspect identified. However, this varied considerably by offence type (see figure 2.1 and table 2.2).

A slightly higher proportion of offences than last year resulted in evidential difficulties (29%). This is nearly three percentage points higher than last year (26%) and most of the increase was due to cases where suspects had been identified, but the victim did not want further action to be taken.

This affected the charge/summons rate, which fell by two percentage points from 11% to 9% (equivalent to a drop of 41,215 charge/summons). There was also a drop in the number and proportion of offences resolved through out of court resolutions. This was seen across the range of out of court outcomes but the largest volume reductions were in the use of adult cautions (down by 0.6% or 17,043) and Community Resolutions (down by 0.4% or 7,940).

Other outcomes were in similar proportions to last year, and around 6% of cases in both years were still outstanding at a similar time of analysis. However, given the increased volume of crime being dealt with by the police, a similar proportion yielded a higher number of cases not yet assigned an

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[3] Published open data tables show the current picture for March 2017 data which have had a further 12 months for an outcome to be applied, see:
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

outcome at year end March 2018 (around 46,000 higher than the previous year). Longer-term trends are examined in section 2.3 below.

Table 2.1: Outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the year ending March 2017 and March 2018, by outcome type and group

England and Wales, Recorded crime and outcomes

Outcome number	Outcome type/group	Proportion of offences recorded in period:[2]		Volume of offences recorded in period:[2]	
		Year to March 2017 (as first published in July 2017)[3,4]	Year to March 2018[4,5]	Year to March 2017 (as first published in July 2017)[3,4]	Year to March 2018[4,5]
1	**Charged/Summonsed**	**11.2**	**9.1**	**483,932**	**442,717**
4	**Taken into consideration**[6]	**0.2**	**0.1**	**8,941**	**6,758**
	Out-of-court (formal)	**2.6**	**1.8**	**112,172**	**87,597**
2	Caution - youths[4]	0.3	0.2	13,868	11,139
3	Caution - adults[4]	1.9	1.3	80,651	63,608
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	0.4	0.3	17,653	12,850
	Out-of-court (informal)	**3.2**	**2.6**	**137,214**	**127,587**
7	Cannabis/Khat warning	0.8	0.6	32,738	31,051
8	Community resolution	2.4	2.0	104,476	96,536
	Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	**1.3**	**1.3**	**56,418**	**62,461**
5	Offender died	0.0	0.0	1,076	1,819
9	Not in public interest (CPS)	0.1	0.0	2,629	2,112
10	Not in public interest (Police)	0.7	0.6	28,290	29,917
11	Prosecution prevented – suspect under age	0.1	0.2	6,064	7,623
12	Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill	0.3	0.2	10,987	11,909
13	Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill	0.0	0.0	1,605	1,716
17	Prosecution time limit expired	0.1	0.2	5,767	7,365
15	**Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)**	**9.3**	**8.9**	**401,555**	**434,500**
	Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	**16.7**	**20.0**	**721,406**	**975,333**
14	Evidential difficulties: suspect not identified; victim does not support further action	3.9	4.6	167,515	226,125
16	Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action	12.8	15.4	553,891	749,208
18	**Investigation complete - no suspect identified**	**47.7**	**47.5**	**2,059,076**	**2,316,610**
20	**Action undertaken by another body/agency**	**0.8**	**0.9**	**32,613**	**46,195**
21	**Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest**[7]	**0.9**	**1.4**	**37,960**	**67,025**
	Total offences assigned an outcome (type 1-18, 20, 21)	**93.9**	**93.6**	**4,051,287**	**4,566,783**
	Offences not yet assigned an outcome	**6.1**	**6.4**	**264,213**	**310,217**
	Total offences[1]	**100.0**	**100.0**	**4,315,500**	**4,877,000**

1. Year to March 2017 and year to March 2018 exclude fraud offences. Fraud offences are now recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) rather than police forces. Outcome 19 not shown as this applies only to fraud offences recorded by the NFIB.

2. Proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the year receiving each outcome.

3. Based on data from all 44 forces covering the full year to March 2017. Of these, 3 forces did not submit updated year to March 2017 data to the Home Office for this publication. These forces may therefore appear to have fewer than expected outcomes assigned during that period as their numbers have not been updated since first published. See Table A for details.

4. Proportions as at the time data were provided to the Home Office.

5. Based on data from all 44 forces.

6. Offences asked to be taken into consideration by a court (TICs).

7. Outcome 21 was introduced from January 2016 on a voluntary basis and became mandatory from April 2016.

2.3 – HOW OUTCOMES VARY BY OFFENCE GROUP

How crimes are resolved vary considerably by the type of offence committed and reflect factors such as nature of the offence, differing police force priorities and the varying challenges in gathering evidence. For example, it will be far more difficult to identify a suspect for a criminal damage offence that was not witnessed or caught on CCTV than for a drug possession offence where the police apprehended the offender when the crime came to their attention. Similarly, an offence where substantial forensic evidence exists will be easier to proceed with than one where such evidence does not exist. The willingness of victims or witnesses to engage with the police can also vary by type of offence.

The variation in outcomes across offence groups is highlighted by the differences in the four offences illustrated in Figure 2.1 (a fuller breakdown of can be found in Table 2.2).

Figure 2.1: Outcome proportions by outcome group[1,2,3] and offence group. See Table 2.2 for a more detailed breakdown including all offence and outcome types.

Violence against the person
- 7%
- 15%
- 11%
- 5%
- 7%
- 56%

Robbery
- 9%
- 0%
- 0%
- 9%
- 57%
- 24%

Drug offences
- 13%
- 2%
- 30%
- 44%
- 5%
- 6%

Sexual offences
- 28%
- 14%
- 5%
- 1%
- 7%
- 44%

Legend:
- ■ Not yet assigned an outcome
- ■ Investigation complete – no suspect identified
- ■ Charged/Summonsed
- ■ Out-of court (formal and informal)
- ■ Other
- ■ Evidential difficulties
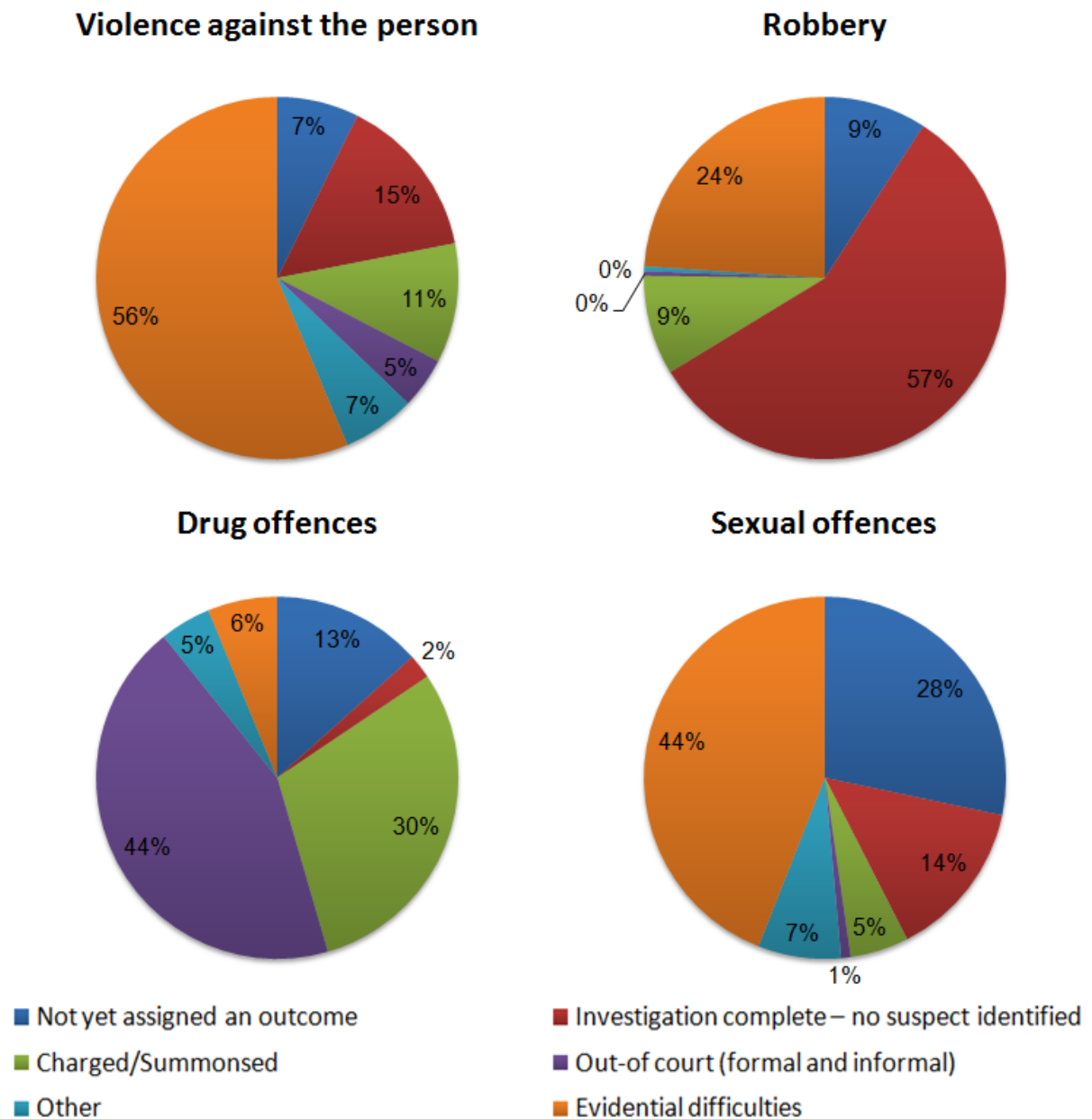
Source: Home Office Data Hub (HODH) and voluntary spreadsheet return

1. Other outcomes include "Taken into consideration", ", "Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest", "Action undertaken by another body/agency" and "Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest"
2. Out-of-court (formal and informal) outcomes include cannabis/khat warnings, community resolutions, cautions for youths and adults and penalty notice for disorder.
3. Evidential difficulties outcomes include

In the four offence groups illustrated, around three quarters of drug offences received either a charge/summons or an out-of-court outcome (44%) or charge/summons (30%). Out-of-court outcomes, such as cautions and Community Resolutions, are typically used for dealing with less serious offences; however, the suspect has to admit guilt for the out-of-court outcome to be applied.

However, within the overall category of drug offences there was a difference between how possession of cannabis and other drugs were resolved[4]. Cannabis possession had a charge rate of 23% with 60%

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4 See https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

of these offences receiving out of court outcomes (of which 38% were cannabis/khat warnings). In contrast, for other drugs the charge rate was higher (43%) and there was much less use of out-of-court outcomes (8%). For drugs possession offences, the overall charge rate and out-of-court outcome rate are both driven by outcomes for possession of cannabis (81,765 offences in 2017/18) which is much more prevalent than other drugs (26,918 offences in 2017/18). It should also be noted that different police forces have differing approaches to using out-of court outcomes. For example, Lancashire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire do not use cannabis/ khat warnings for possession of cannabis offences, deciding to use Community Resolutions instead.

While three-quarters of drug offences resulted in either a charge/summons or an out of court disposal, the other three offences illustrated in Figure 2.1 had much lower rates. For example, robbery had a much higher rate of offences which resulted in no suspect being identified (57%). Given the nature of the offence, victims of robbery may not be able to provide much information about offenders and there may not be good evidence available to identify a suspect if they weren't caught on CCTV and there is no other evidence.

Sexual offences were most likely to have not yet been assigned an outcome (28%) reflecting the greater complexity of investigations for such offences and the extended time required to assign an outcome compared with many other crime types (see chapter 3). This contributed to the low proportion of sexual offences with a charge/summons (5%). Other contributory factors included a higher than average proportion of cases assigned to one of the evidential difficulties categories. For example, in around a third of rape offences (34%) cases were closed because the victim did not support further police action against a suspect. Conversely, given the nature of the crime, sexual offences had much lower level of suspects not identified (14% compared with an average of 47% for all offences).

Violence against the person offences were most likely to result in victims not supporting police action (41%). The unwillingness of victims to support police action contributes to the overall low charge rate for violence offences (11%). Unwillingness of victims to support action was more likely to be a factor in cases involving domestic abuse (see Chapter 4). Violence against the person is a broad offence group covering a wide spectrum of offending from homicide and serious violent crime through to lower volume assault, and stalking. Outcomes varied within this offence group. For example, the charge/summons rate for assault with injury offences was nearly twice as high as that for assault without injury (12% and 7% respectively). Most of this difference was accounted for by victims of assault without injury not supporting police action.

Malicious communications offences accounted for 11% of all recorded violence against the person offences in the year end March 2018 but had one of the lowest charge/summons rates (at 3%). In part this reflected a higher proportion of cases that resulted in no suspect being identified (22%) and in victims not supporting police action (46%).

Table 2.2: Outcomes assigned to offences recorded in the year ending March 2018, by outcome group and offence group

Offence group	Charged/ summonsed	Taken into consideration (TICs)[2]	Out-of-court (formal)[3]	Out-of-court (informal)[4]	Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest[5]	Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)	Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)[6]	Investigation complete - no suspect identified	Action undertaken by another body/ agency	Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest[7]	Offences not yet assigned an outcome
Violence against the person	10.7	0.0	2.1	2.4	2.3	15.4	40.9	14.6	2.4	1.8	7.3
Sexual offences	5.2	0.0	0.5	0.4	2.5	15.7	28.3	14.2	2.8	2.1	28.3
of which: Rape	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	15.0	34.3	7.1	1.1	0.3	37.9
Robbery	8.9	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	6.5	17.4	57.2	0.1	0.1	9.1
Theft offences	6.6	0.3	0.8	1.4	0.4	4.2	6.6	75.0	0.1	0.7	3.9
Criminal damage and arson	5.5	0.0	1.5	2.3	0.8	5.2	12.6	67.4	0.2	0.6	3.8
Drug offences	29.9	0.0	15.1	28.6	2.3	5.8	0.4	2.2	0.3	2.0	13.4
Possession of weapons offences	39.6	0.0	6.1	4.8	3.6	14.3	6.8	11.0	0.8	3.0	10.0
Public order offences	10.9	0.0	2.0	2.1	1.8	12.8	30.9	30.5	0.4	2.9	5.7
Misc. crimes against society	17.1	0.1	1.7	2.4	2.3	14.4	19.6	17.9	3.1	7.1	14.4
Total year to March 2018	9.1	0.1	1.8	2.6	1.3	8.9	20.0	47.5	0.9	1.4	6.4

1. Year to March 2018 data exclude fraud offences. Fraud offences are now recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) rather than police forces.

2. Offences asked to be taken into consideration by a court (TICs).

3. Includes caution - adults; caution - youths; Penalty Notices for Disorder.

4. Includes cannabis/khat warnings and community resolutions.

5. Includes not in the public interest (CPS); Not in public interest (Police); Offender Died; Prosecution prevented (suspect under age; suspect too ill; victim/key witness dead/too ill); Prosecution time limit expired.

6. Includes evidential difficulties where the suspect was/was not identified and the victim does not support further action.

7. Outcome 21 (Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest) was introduced from January 2016 on a voluntary basis and became mandatory from April 2016.

8. Proportions show the percentage of crimes recorded in the year receiving each outcome.

2.4 – LONGER TERM TRENDS IN HOW CRIMES RESOLVED

Since the introduction of the crime outcomes framework there has been a downward trend in the proportion of charge/summons applied within the same year that the crime is recorded (falling from 15% to 9%). There has also be a growing proportion of cases recorded where victims do not support police action (from 9% to 20%). These two trends are likely to have been influenced by the changing caseload and crime mix being dealt with by the police. On-going work has improved the recording of crime by police forces which has both increased the volume forces are dealing with and changed the crime mix to include more complex cases, such as sexual offences and domestic abuse, which can be more challenging to resolve. At the same time, while more crimes are now being reported to the police by victims in a growing proportion of cases the victim either doesn't support further action or police are unable to contact them. A more detailed time series of outcomes since the new framework was introduced for the year end March 2015 can be found in Table 2.3 in the online bulletin tables[5].

Key questions – why are charge rates falling? And why are the numbers of charges falling despite increases in police recorded crime?

The charge/summons rate for offences recorded in the year to March 2018 currently stands at 9%, compared with 11% when corresponding data for year end March 2017 was first published. Additionally, the volume of charges is falling, from 483,932 to 442,717 for offences (a 9% fall). This reduction has occurred at the same time as the volume of crimes (excluding fraud) recorded by the police has risen (from 4.3 million to 4.9 million). Along with a growing caseload, there is evidence to suggest that a higher proportion of crimes being recorded are in offence types which are the most challenging to investigate. For example, the number of recorded sexual offences has increased by 24% in the latest year, from 121,450 to 150,732. This means that the caseload has both grown and become more complex.

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[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

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3 – The time gap between offences recorded and outcomes being assigned

This section aims to demonstrate the previously raised point that some crimes are more complex to investigate than others, particularly rape and sexual offences. This can mean it takes more time to assign an outcome to an offence after initial recording.

In order to include outcomes that may have taken a long time to assign, the data presented in this chapter cover outcomes recorded in the year ending March 2018, regardless of when the offence was initially recorded. Time, in days, is presented by median average as this measure is less susceptible to being skewed by a small number of unusually high or low values.

3.1 – TIMELINESS BY OFFENCE AND OUTCOME TYPE

In the year ending March 2018, it took an average of 6 days to assign an outcome to an offence. Furthermore, nearly half (47.3%) of all outcomes were assigned within five days of recording the offence, and close to three quarters (71.3%) within 30 days. A detailed breakdown of time taken to assign outcomes to offences by offence type is in supplementary table S3.1 in the online bulletin tables[6].

More insightful analysis can be made by breaking down overall figures by offence and outcome types, as shown in Figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1: The time taken for outcomes to be assigned for offences broken down by offence groups.

For context, the volume of crimes in each category recorded in 2017/18 is included on the right hand side of the chart.
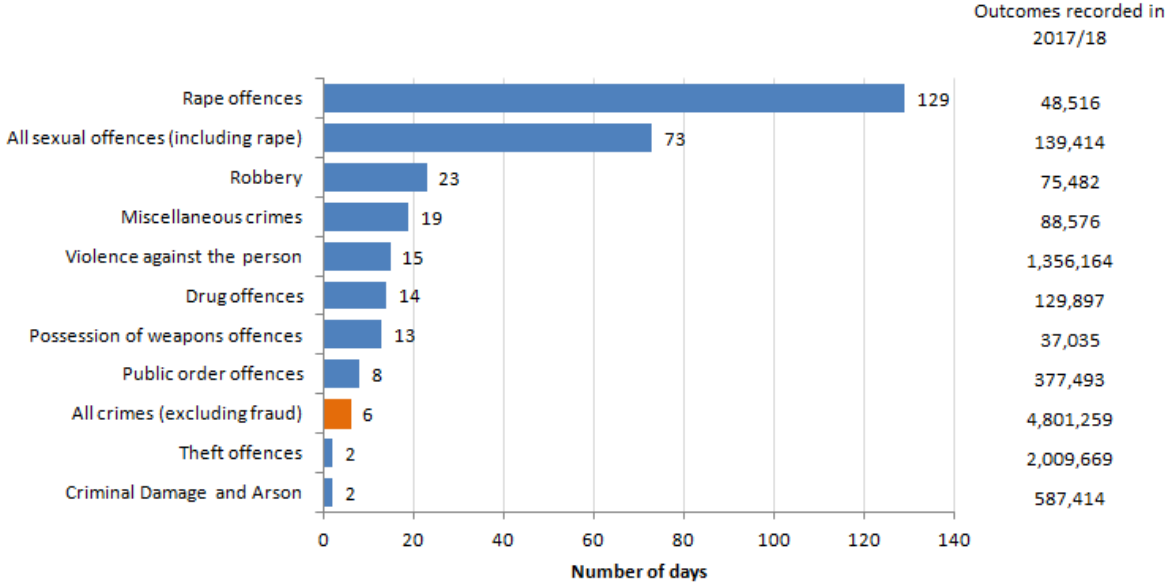
Source: Home Office Data Hub

Sexual offences generally took much longer to have outcomes assigned than other offence types. The median was 73 days, with 41 per cent taking over 100 days. For rape offences, a subset of sexual offences, the median average for an outcome to be assigned was 129 days, with 56 per cent taking over 100 days. The length of time reflects the sensitive nature and complexity of investigating sexual offences.

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6 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

In contrast to sexual offences, theft offences and criminal damage and arson offences took an average of 2 days for outcomes to be assigned. This reflects the nature of these types of offences, whereby police identify offenders immediately, or evidence to locate a suspect is unavailable (e.g. no CCTV).

A detailed breakdown of the amount of time for sexual offences to receive an outcome by the type of outcome applied is presented in Figure 3.2. This shows that charges and summons for sexual offences take the longest amount of time to be assigned, at an average of 150 days.

Figure 3.2 The time taken for sexual offences to receive an outcome, broken down by the type of outcome given to the crime. The average length of time taken for a sexual offence to be given a charge outcome is 150 days, over twice as long as the overall average.
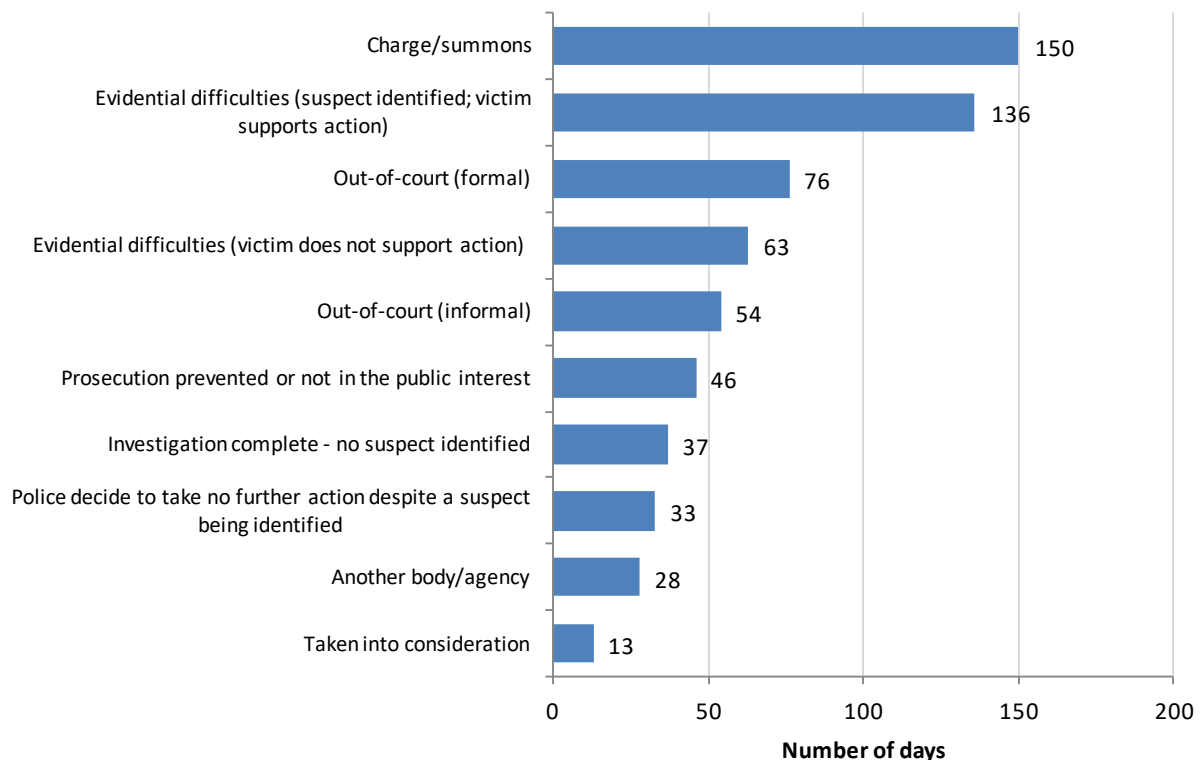
3.2 – CHANGE IN TIME TO ASSIGN OUTCOMES COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS

Table 3.1 shows how the median length of time to assign an outcome to particular offence types has generally decreased in the year ending March 2018 compared to the year ending March 2017. Theft offences were resolved 50% more quickly in the latest year compared to the previous year. This may reflect the fact that some police forces have recently said they will only investigate thefts if the goods are over a certain value (Sources: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-41633205 and https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42492488). Only drug offences have shown an increase in median days for an outcome to be assigned to an offence, from 13 days in the years ending March 2017 to 14 days in the year ending March 2018.

Overall, there has been a 25% reduction in the time for outcomes to be assigned, from 8 days in the year ending March 2017 to 6 days in the year ending March 2018. This continues a downward trend in time taken for outcomes to be assigned, from a peak of 11 days in the year ending March 2016. In part, this may reflect growing familiarity with the new framework as the new approach to resolving outcomes has bed-in.

Table 3.1: The difference in the average (median) length of time taken to assign an outcome between the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2018, by offence type

England and Wales, Recorded crime and outcomes

Median number of days for an outcome to be assigned

	Y.e. March 2016	Y.e. March 2017	Y.e. March 2018	Difference between y.e March 2017 and y.e March 2018
Violence against the person	17	17	15	-2
Sexual offences	80	79	73	-6
of which: Rape	138	144	129	-15
Robbery	34	31	23	-8
Theft offences	7	4	2	-2
Criminal Damage and Arson	4	3	2	-1
Drug offences	10	13	14	1
Possession of weapons offences	9	13	13	0
Public order offences	16	13	8	-5
Miscellaneous crimes	20	20	19	-1
All crimes (excluding fraud)	11	8	6	-2

Source: Home Office Data Hub, outcomes recorded in the years ending March 2016, March 2017 and March 2018

Table 3.2 shows how the average length of time to assign particular outcomes has changed since the previous year. The time taken to charge someone increased from 17 days in the year ending March 2017 to 18 days in the year ending March 2018. The time taken for investigations to be closed with no suspect identified decreased from 2 days in the year ending March 2017 to just 1 day in the year ending March 2018.

Table 3.2: The difference in the average (median) length of time taken to assign an outcome between the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2018, by outcome group

England and Wales, Recorded crime and outcomes

Median number of days for an outcome to be assigned

	Y.e March 2016	Y.e. March 2017	Y.e. March 2018	Difference between y.e March 2017 and y.e March 2018
Charge/summons	14	17	18	1
Taken into consideration	65	61	67	6
Out-of-court (formal)	10	12	16	4
Out-of-court (informal)	14	16	17	1
Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	27	26	26	0
Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)	36	39	40	1
Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	16	14	12	-2
Investigation complete - no suspect identified	4	2	1	-1
Action undertaken by another body/agency	19	17	21	4
Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interes	17	17	13	-4
All crimes (excluding fraud)	**11**	**8**	**6**	**-2**

Source: Home Office Data Hub, outcomes recorded in the year ending March 2016,March 2017 and outcomes recorded in the year ending March 2018

Key question – why is the overall time taken for outcomes to be assigned to crimes decreasing?

With the volume of police recorded crime up in the latest year, and policing numbers remaining largely unchanged, it might be expected that the time for outcomes to be assigned to crimes to would increase rather than decrease. There are likely to be a range of factors behind this decrease including the changing crime mix and use of local policies to prioritise investigative resource. The largest volume increases in recorded crime have been in a number of categories least likely to have good evidence to follow-up or deemed a lower priority for investigation, such as theft and low level violence.

4   How domestic abuse-related offences were dealt with by the police

4.1 INTRODUCTION

There is not currently a specific offence of domestic abuse and such crimes will be recorded under a specific criminal offence, such as actual bodily harm. In April 2015, the Home Office began collecting information from the police via the Home Office Data Hub (see technical annex for description) on whether recorded offences were related to domestic abuse from police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport police. Crimes are "flagged" by the police as being domestic abuse-related if the offence meets the government definition of domestic violence and abuse[7].

This chapter covers how the police have dealt with domestic abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending March 2018. The analyses presented are based on data from 29 police forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police[8])that supplied adequate data[9]. These police forces recorded 69 per cent of all domestic abuse-related offences in England and Wales in 2017/18. Further detailed data can be found in supplementary online tables[10].

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publish an annual cross-governmental bulletin on domestic abuse which includes further analysis on domestic abuse-related outcomes. The latest publication can be found at here and will be updated in November 2018.

4.2 HOW DOMESTIC ABUSE OFFENCES WERE DEALT WITH BY THE POLICE BY OUTCOMES TYPE

The rates shown in Figure 4.1 cover domestic abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending March 2018. In total, 93 per cent of these offences had been assigned an outcome at the time the data were extracted from the Home Office Data Hub[11]. Police forces had not yet assigned an outcome to the remaining seven per cent of offences. Domestic abuse-related offence outcomes are compared below with offences that were not domestic abuse-related; some of the differences found will reflect the differing crime types within each category.

- A higher proportion (15%) of domestic abuse-related offences were dealt with by a charge or summons than offences that were not domestic abuse-related (9%).

- Almost 7 out of 10 (69%) domestic abuse-related offences had an evidential difficulties outcome. This is almost three times the proportion of offences that were not domestic abuse-related that had an evidential difficulties outcome (25%).

- Evidential difficulties for domestic abuse-related offences consisted of 47 per cent of offences where the victim did not support further action and 22 per cent where the victim supported further action.

- Just two per cent of domestic abuse-related offences were assigned the outcome 'investigation complete - no suspect identified' compared with over half (52%) of offences that were not domestic abuse-related. This is to be expected given that, by definition, in a domestic abuse-related offence the offender must be a partner, ex-partner or a family member of the victim.

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[7] Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.
[8] Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, Norfolk, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, South Wales, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Yorkshire and Wiltshire.
[9] The analysis in this chapter is based on a different subset of forces than previous chapters.
[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018
[11] Mid-June 2018 This proportion is higher than the proportion for all offences, although much of this may be due to different snapshot dates and the inclusion of fewer forces.

Figure 4.1; Proportions of outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related offences and offences not domestic abuse-related recorded in the year ending March 2018

Legend: ■ Offences not flagged as domestic abuse ■ Domestic abuse flagged offences

Outcome	Offences not flagged as domestic abuse	Domestic abuse flagged offences
Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	16	48
Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)	8	22
Charged/Summonsed	8	15
Offences not yet assigned an outcome	6	6
Out-of-court (formal and informal)	5	4
Investigation complete - no suspect identified	54	2
Other	4	4

Source: Police Recorded Crime, Home Office Data Hub
1. Based on 29 police forces that supplied adequate data
2. The numbers behind this chart are in the supplementary online data tables, which can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

4.3 – TRENDS IN HOW DOMESTIC ABUSE-RELATED OFFENCES WERE DEALT WITH BY THE POLICE

In order to get an indication of genuine changes over time it is more meaningful to compare figures for the year ending March 2018 with figures for the previous year as at the time they were first published in July 2017. As there were only data for 26 comparable forces for both years these comparisons are carried out on these forces[12] only.

As shown in Figure 4.2, a similar proportion of crimes had been assigned an outcome in both years. However, the proportion of domestic abuse-related offences assigned a charge/summons decreased (from 18% to 15%). Conversely, the proportion of offences that resulted in evidential difficulties (victim does not support action) increased, from 42 per cent to 47 per cent in the following year. This is a similar trend to all offences (see Chapter 2).

Differences in outcome proportions will be influenced by a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- Improvements in crime recording by the police which have led to increases in crime volumes for some crime types, in particular for violence and sexual offences. It is likely that many of the additional offences now being recorded are those that are less likely to be resolved by a charge, summons or other out of court resolution than offences that would have previously been recorded.

- An increased willingness of victims to report crimes to the police, particularly for domestic abuse related offences. It is likely that some of the increase in evidential difficulties outcomes is due to crimes that victims may not have reported to the police in previous years.

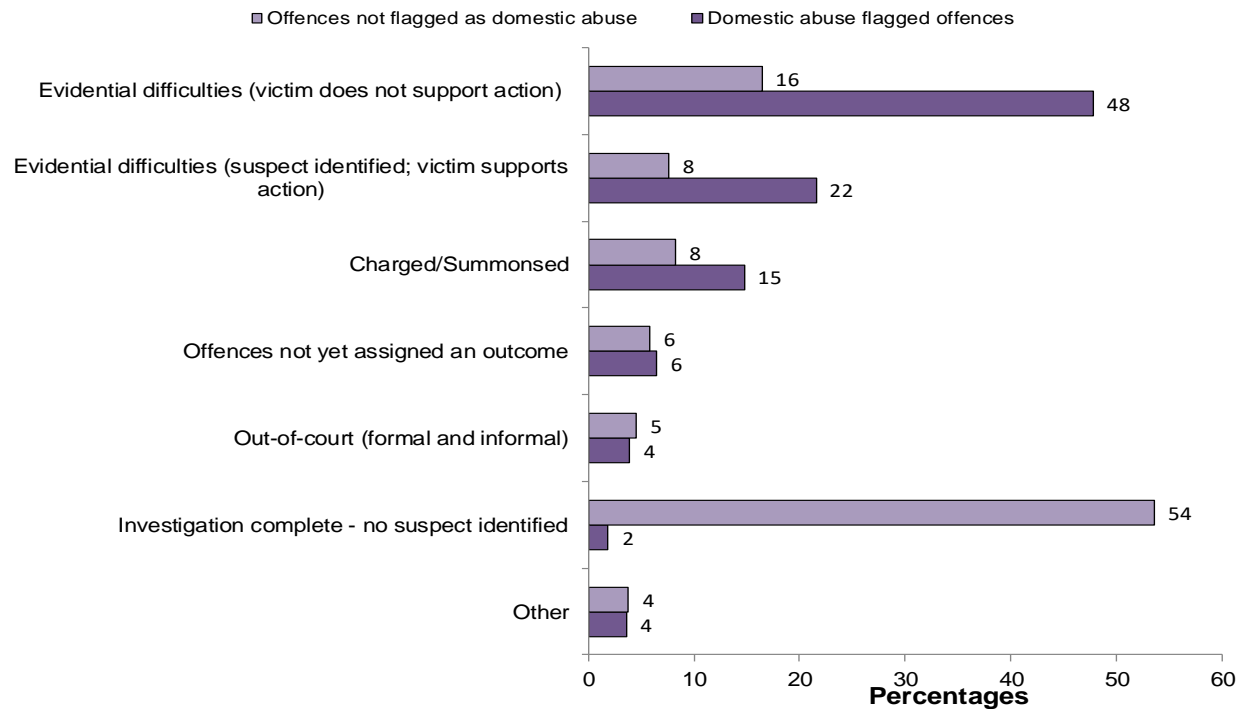**Figure 4.2: Outcomes assigned to domestic abuse-related offences recorded in the year ending**

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[12] Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, British Transport Police, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Devon and Cornwall, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, South Wales, Staffordshire, Surrey, Thames Valley, West Yorkshire and Wiltshire.

March 2017 (as first published) and the year ending March 2018, by outcome group

■ Y.e March 2017 (as first published July 2017) ■ Y.e March 2018
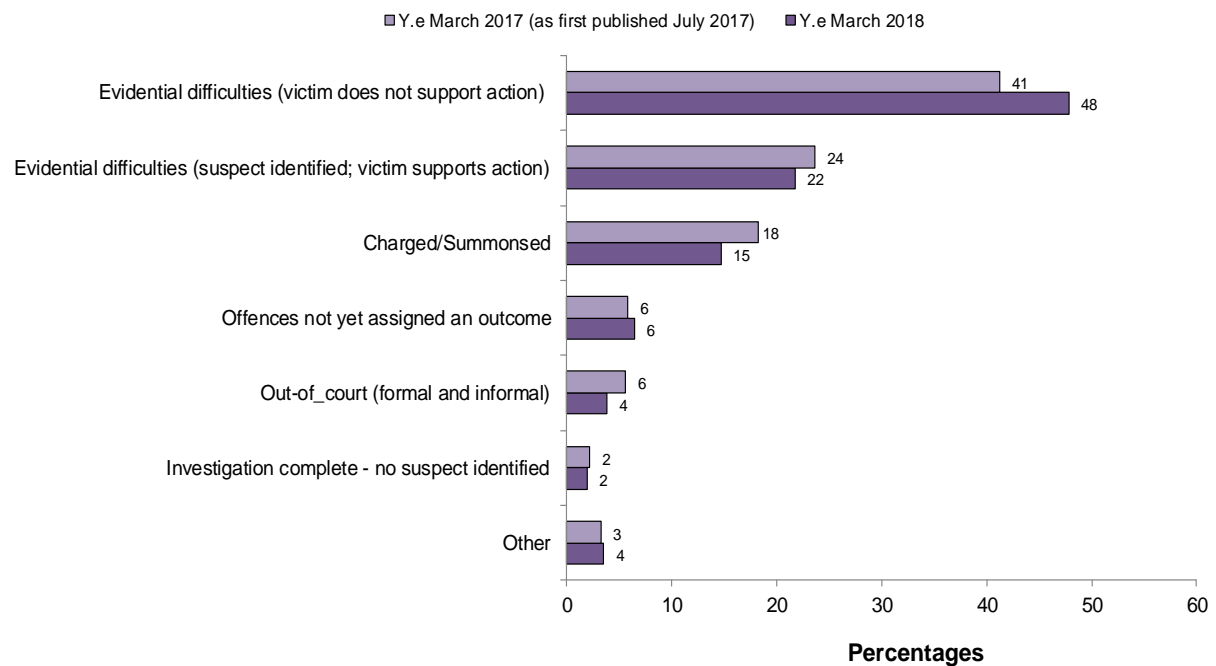
Source: Police Recorded Crime, Home Office Data Hub
1. Based on 26 police forces that supplied adequate data
2. The numbers behind this chart are in the supplementary online data tables, which can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

Key questions - why haven't we got the whole picture? And why are there a large percentage of cases with evidential difficulties?

The number of forces that supplied adequate data to the Home Office Data Hub was 29 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport Police. This is less than the number of forces (34) for the equivalent time period last year. Similarly there are 26 forces who supplied adequate data in both 2016/17 and 2017/18 consecutively. Changes to individual police force recording systems and demand on police resources are thought to be the reasons for this.

Domestic abuse outcomes data typically have a high rate of cases with evidential difficulties and figures show the proportion of this is increasing. Of the forces supplying adequate data, 42% of domestic abuse flagged offences had an outcome of evidential difficulties where the victim did not support action in 2016/17 compared with 47% in 2017/18. Improvements in police recorded crime and increased willingness of victims to report crime that they wouldn't have in previous years are likely to be the drivers of this.

5 Outcomes assigned to fraud offences in the year ending March 2018

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In April 2011, Action Fraud (the UK's national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) began gradually taking over the recording of fraud offences from individual police forces in England and Wales. This transition completed in March 2013. The implementation of Action Fraud as a single national fraud reporting centre has led to an increase in the number of fraud offences recorded, as it provides an easier way for individuals and businesses to report such offences (via an online reporting tool and a dedicated call centre), and centralises expertise in these cases. The transfer to Action Fraud was rolled out at different times in different forces. The year ending March 2014 was therefore the first full year where all fraud offences previously reported to the police were recorded centrally.

Action Fraud reports are reviewed by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), based at the City of London Police, who are responsible for allocating offences to forces for them to investigate. The police recorded crime series published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), also incorporates offences reported to the NFIB by two fraud prevention industry bodies: Cifas and Financial Fraud Action UK (FFA UK). Data on fraud offences broken down by industry body are shown in Table 3.1.

The NFIB outcomes recording process is shown in the flow chart in Figure 3.1. Reports from Cifas, FFA UK and Action Fraud are automatically assessed by the NFIB's systems, using a scoring matrix to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to allocate the case to the police for investigation. The NFIB's system constantly reviews all crime reports against all other data held in the database and looks for links between offences which share a piece of information, such as a telephone number, email address or website URL. The reports are scored based on a viability criteria, and the NFIB's system automatically produces crime networks with a viability ranking. The team reviews these networks and determines if there is a realistic chance of identifying the offender through personal information, such as a telephone number, postal address or bank account. The team conducts research to help identify suspect(s), such as requesting information from a bank or making a telecommunications subscriber check.

Where it is judged that there are sufficient grounds for investigation and enforcement is viable, the NFIB allocates these cases to the most appropriate police force or other law enforcement agency. Cases closed at one point may be re-opened if new information comes to light. For example, an offence could have occurred in 2016/17 but not scored highly enough on NFIB's matrix to make it viable for enforcement at the time. Then another offence could have occurred in 2017/18 which links to the 2016/17 offence with a shared offender name, and provides more information such as a bank account. Then both offences could have received a viability score above the threshold, resulting in both offences being disseminated to the relevant force for investigation.

NFIB allocations to forces are referred to as "dissemination packages", and each package can contain multiple offences. The police force investigates the offences and allocates an appropriate outcome to each individual offence. Rather than return these outcomes to the Home Office with other recorded crimes, each police force submits the outcomes to the NFIB on a monthly basis, who in-turn pass aggregate reports to the Home Office.

For crime reports where sufficient grounds for investigation do not exist, the reports remain on the NFIB's database. As new crime reports are submitted, more data may be linked to existing crime reports which may increase their viability for investigation.

In addition to investigating offences disseminated from NFIB, a police force can also receive fraud-related 'calls for service' direct from members of the public. This is when victims of fraud require an active police response, and dial either 999 or 101 to contact the police directly. Police forces will deal with fraud directly if certain criteria are met, such as if at the time of the call for service, the offender is in the act of committing, or has recently committed, the offence. As with disseminated offences, the outcomes of calls for service for fraud offences are submitted by the relevant force to the NFIB.

It should be noted that, unlike other outcomes data presented in this bulletin, it is not possible to link individual outcomes to offences as the data streams at present are based on aggregate totals. It is important to note that the number of outcomes will not necessarily correspond to the number of disseminations in a given year since investigations can take months, or longer, to complete. A large number of offences disseminated to the police in the year to March 2018 are still under investigation.

In addition, some outcomes data will relate to offences recorded in previous years. Caution should be used when comparing the number of outcomes to disseminated offences and in comparing fraud outcomes with other offence types.

Figure 5.1: How fraud outcomes are recorded

Fraud offence is reported to Action Fraud, Cifas or FFA by individual or business

Offence recorded by NFIB and included in the total offence count for that period

NFIB assess case using scoring matrix and determine whether there are sufficient grounds to allocate it to a police force for investigation

No

Yes

Offence is allocated Outcome 19 (National Fraud Investigation Bureau filed)

The offence and any related crime network is manually reviewed by NFIB, who conducts research. This may identify the likely suspect(s) and decision is made about which police force should receive the dissemination

Offence is allocated to relevant police force for investigation

Fraud offence reported as 'call for service' where direct police action is required, made by phoning police directly via 999 or 101

Police force investigates and allocates an outcome for each offence in the dissemination package

Outcomes (1-18, 20-21) sent back to NFIB, who record on their own system and send the data to Home Office every month

The Home Office have invested in a new IT analytics engine for the Action Fraud/NFIB capability, which is expected to improve the reporting and reviewing process. It is due to go live in 2018. The victim reporting process will be greatly improved through the implementation of a streamlined, more intuitive online portal for crime reporting and individuals will be able to 'track my crime' for the first time.

In 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected approaches to fraud, particularly focussed on referrals made to forces by Action Fraud, within their PEEL effectiveness inspections. In their report 'PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017', they stated: "Inspection findings showed forces are providing a mixed response to this type of crime; some are more advanced than others in dealing with referrals, in conducting effective investigations and in providing reassurance and support to victims". HMICFRS plan to carry out a thematic inspection of fraud in the future which will review police handling of fraud offences in more detail.

5.2 FRAUD DISSEMINATIONS AND OUTCOMES IN THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 2018 – HEADLINE FINDINGS

The findings from the fraud disseminations and outcomes data for the year ending March 2018 are presented below. Comparisons with the data for the year ending March 2017 are also shown (the latter presented as published last year to allow comparisons to be made). It is anticipated that future publications will include updated data for all available years, as well as presenting the data for the previous year, as originally published. This will be in line with the presentation of crime outcomes for other crime types.

Outcomes recorded by NFIB only cover those offences that have been dealt with by forces either as a result of a direct call for service or as part of a dissemination package sent by NFIB to them for investigation. Outcomes are not recorded when the offence is passed to another law enforcement agency, such as Trading Standards.

Table 5.1 shows the number of dissemination packages sent to police forces and the number of offences within those packages. By way of context, these are presented alongside the total number of fraud offences recorded in the years ending March 2017 and March 2018.

Each dissemination package can be made up of any number of offences, from one to hundreds. This depends on the size of the suspected fraud network, as many similar crimes may be linked together if investigators believe one suspect or set of suspects is responsible. An offence can be included in more than one dissemination, if it links to multiple crime networks. However, each offence only receives one final outcome.

Table 5.1 – Number of fraud offences and disseminations, year ending March 2017 and year ending March 2018

			England and Wales
	Year ending March 2017	Year ending March 2018	Percentage change
Total number of fraud offences:	652,362	638,882	-2%
Number recorded by Action Fraud	261,943	277,561	6%
Number recorded by Cifas and FFA	390,419	361,321	-7%
Total number of fraud offences within disseminations[2,3]	64,501	49,861	-23%
Number of disseminations[2,4]	16,781	11,094	-34%

1. Caution should be taken when comparing data for fraud offences and disseminations. Data presented are for offences and disseminations recorded within the year. Offences which are disseminated will not necessarily be disseminated in the year the offences was recorded.

2. Figures for disseminations in the year ending March 2017 are as published in 'Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2017: data tables second edition'.

3. Some offences can be included in more than one dissemination, or can be disseminated to a force in multiple months. This number reflects the total number of unique offences, and offences which are part of two or more dissemination packages are only counted once.

4. In the year to March 2018, there were an additional 9 dissemination packages sent to the 'National Lead Force' (part of City of London Police). At the time of publication, data were not available for numbers of fraud offences within these disseminations, therefore these data have been excluded from the table.

It is important to note that the number of outcomes will not necessarily correspond to the number of disseminations in a given year since investigation can take months, or longer, to complete. A large number of offences disseminated to the police in the year ending March 2018 are still under investigation.

5.3 OUTCOMES RECORDED AGAINST FRAUD OFFENCES BY OUTCOME TYPE

Table 5.2 shows the number of outcomes recorded by the police against fraud offences in the year ending March 2018, by outcome type. These are presented alongside the total number of fraud offences disseminated to the police and the total number of recorded fraud offences for the latest and previous years.

Table 5.2 - Fraud outcomes recorded in the year ending March 2017 and the year ending March 2018, by outcome type

Outcome number	Outcome type/group	Year ending March 2017[2] Number of outcomes[3]	Year ending March 2018 Number of outcomes[3]	Percentage change
1	**Charged/Summonsed**	6,402	6,572	3%
4	**Taken Into Consideration[1]**	206	238	16%
	Out-of-court (formal)	944	824	-13%
2	Caution - youths	55	29	-47%
3	Caution - adults	878	790	-10%
6	Penalty Notices for Disorder	11	5	-55%
	Out-of-court (informal)	594	679	14%
7	Cannibis/Khat warning[4]	n/a	n/a	n/a
8	Community resolution	594	679	14%
	Prosecution prevented or not in the public interest	740	870	18%
5	Offender died	22	67	205%
9	Not in public interest (CPS)	128	200	56%
10	Not in public interest (Police)	524	484	-8%
11	Prosecution prevented - suspect under age	6	3	-50%
12	Prosecution prevented - suspect too ill	10	20	100%
13	Prosecution prevented - victim/key witness dead/too ill	41	75	83%
17	Prosecution time limit expired	9	21	133%
15	**Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)**	10,191	12,009	18%
	Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)	4,511	5,789	28%
14	Evidential difficulties: suspect not identified; victim does not support further action	1,562	1,932	24%
16	Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action	2,949	3,857	31%
18	**Investigation complete - no suspect identified**	18,318	20,152	10%
20	**Action undertaken by another body/agency**	1,127	1,480	31%
21	**Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest**	1,854	3,697	99%
	Total number of fraud outcomes	44,887	52,310	17%
	Total fraud offences disseminated to police[5]	64,501	49,861	-23%
	Total recorded fraud offences	652,362	638,882	-2%

1. Offences asked to be taken in to consideration by a court (TICs).

2. Figures as published in 'Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2017: data tables second edition'.

3. Offences recorded by Action Fraud, Cifas and FFA UK with outcomes recorded by NFIB in the year ending March 2017 or the year ending March 2018.

4. Outcome 7 does not apply to fraud offences.

5. In the year to March 2018, there were an additional 9 dissemination packages sent to the 'National Lead Force' (part of City of London Police). At the time of publication, data were not available for numbers of fraud offences within these disseminations, therefore these data have been excluded from the table.

6. The Home Office does not currently collect data on outcome 19 from the NFIB.

Table 3.2 shows that, compared with other crime types, a relatively low number of recorded fraud offences result in an outcome. This is largely due to the fact that a relatively small proportion of those recorded are disseminated to police forces for investigation. In addition, some fraud cases can take months, or longer, to investigate due to the complex nature of some of the cases.

Between the year ending March 2017 and March 2018, there was a 2% fall in total fraud offences recorded. Over the same period, the total number of fraud offences within disseminations also fell, by 23%. In contrast, over the same period, the total number of outcomes recorded against fraud offences increased, by 17%.

The NFIB advise that a number of factors have influenced the fall in fraud disseminations. There was a reduction of reviewing capacity within the NFIB over the last year. Additionally, the NFIB have taken a more conservative approach to assessing viability for further investigation, and placed an increased concentration on organised crime. Organised crime may have a larger impact on victims, though result in fewer recorded outcomes.

While there was a decrease in the number of disseminations in the last year, there was a rise of around 7,500 in cases that had been assigned an outcome (17%) compared with the previous year. This increase was largely driven by three outcome types: 'Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action)' which increased by 1,818 offences (18%), 'Investigation complete – no

suspect identified' which rose by 1,834 offences (10%), and 'Further investigation to support formal action not in the public interest' which increased by 1,843 offences (99%). These increases may be partly due to the fact that reporting of fraud outcomes to the Home Office became mandatory in April 2017 and led to further improvements in recording practices by forces.

The total number of recorded fraud offences has decreased compared with the year ending March 2017. The fall was driven by a 10% fall in offences recorded by Cifas, though this was offset by a 6% increase in fraud offences recorded by Action Fraud. There was no change in the level of fraud offences recorded by FFA UK.

The increase in offences recorded by Action Fraud was largely driven by increases in "advance fee payment fraud" and "other advance fee frauds". Further information on fraud offences data for the year to March 2018 can be found in 'Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018', published by the ONS.

5.4 DISSEMINATIONS AND OUTCOMES BY POLICE FORCE AREA

Table 3.3 shows fraud outcome and dissemination data for the years ending March 2017 and March 2018 by police force area. The data are also available in the accompanying 'Fraud outcomes in England and Wales open data, year ending March 2018', broken down by both police force area and outcome type.

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that the number of outcomes will not necessarily correspond to the number of disseminations in a given year since investigations can take months or longer to complete. Therefore, comparing the number of offences to disseminated offences should be done with caution, as the not all offences recorded in the year will be disseminated in the same year.

The offences were disseminated to forces in 2017/18 but the actual offence may have occurred in a previous year. The offence will only be disseminated to forces when there is enough information to make it viable for investigation or enforcement action.

Table 5.3 - Fraud outcomes recorded and disseminated offences in the year ending March 2018

Police Force	Number of disseminated offences[1]			Number of outcomes[2]		
	Year ending March 2017[3]	Year ending March 2018	Percentage change	Year ending March 2017[3]	Year ending March 2018	Percentage change
Avon and Somerset	946	446	-53%	537	1,023	91%
Bedfordshire	625	465	-26%	179	463	159%
Cambridgeshire	580	510	-12%	486	966	99%
Cheshire	537	609	13%	187	403	116%
Cleveland	214	221	3%	292	262	-10%
Cumbria	160	74	-54%	338	387	14%
Derbyshire	476	447	-6%	562	765	36%
Devon and Cornwall[4]	1,014	502	-50%		871	
Dorset	324	222	-31%	827	705	-15%
Durham	178	144	-19%	223	488	119%
Essex	1,705	1,531	-10%	279	1,676	501%
Gloucestershire	269	165	-39%	518	339	-35%
Greater Manchester	6,023	3,510	-42%	1,988	1,493	-25%
Hampshire	996	673	-32%	368	1,462	297%
Hertfordshire	1,059	706	-33%	1,087	1,538	41%
Humberside	513	300	-42%	914	572	-37%
Kent	1,284	1,956	52%	2,664	2,829	6%
Lancashire	1,273	759	-40%	288	475	65%
Leicestershire	782	760	-3%	438	289	-34%
Lincolnshire	360	205	-43%	349	772	121%
London, City of[5]	2,640	552	-79%	919	782	-15%
Merseyside	1,746	942	-46%	736	1,611	119%
Metropolitan	24,081	22,081	-8%	13,561	12,970	-4%
Norfolk	450	232	-48%	170	467	175%
North Yorkshire	735	216	-71%	1,093	33	-97%
Northamptonshire	534	788	48%	1,116	678	-39%
Northumbria	190	306	61%	29	927	3097%
Nottinghamshire	601	418	-30%	1,317	1,925	46%
South Yorkshire	911	428	-53%	577	672	16%
Staffordshire	1,351	1,348	0%	1,142	1,198	5%
Suffolk	506	287	-43%	10	395	3850%
Surrey	785	910	16%	1,195	1,887	58%
Sussex	916	828	-10%	1,324	1,827	38%
Thames Valley	1,845	1,083	-41%	599	867	45%
Warwickshire	261	243	-7%	240	403	68%
West Mercia	391	477	22%	638	676	6%
West Midlands	3,892	2,974	-24%	3,690	2,462	-33%
West Yorkshire	1,767	917	-48%	458	1,302	184%
Wiltshire	461	219	-52%	896	809	-10%
Dyfed-Powys	181	47	-74%	249	115	-54%
Gwent	200	70	-65%	504	404	-20%
North Wales	264	239	-9%	517	788	52%
South Wales	521	412	-21%	1,151	1,178	2%
Total 43 forces[6]	**64,474**	**49,858**	**-23%**	**44,655**	**52,154**	**17%**
British Transport Police	27	3	-89%	232	156	-33%
Total[6]	**64,501**	**49,861**	**-23%**	**44,887**	**52,310**	**17%**

1. Number of offences within dissemination packages. The number of outcomes will not necessarily correspond to the number of disseminations in a given year since investigations can take months or longer to complete. A large number of offences disseminated to police in 2017/18 are still under investigation.

2. Outcomes recorded by NFIB in the year ending March 2017. There are known data quality issues, and the Home Office and NFIB are working with forces to improve data.

3. Figures as published in 'Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2017: data tables second edition'.

4. As above, data for the year to March 2017 are as originally published. At the time the 2016/17 figures were originally published, data for Devon and Cornwall were not available. It is now known that Devon and Cornwall recorded 474 outcomes against fraud offences during this period.

5. City of London includes City of London Police, National Lead Force and Insurance Fraud Enforcement Department. In the year to March 2018, there were 9 dissemination packages sent to the 'National Lead Force' (part of City of London Police). At the time of publication, data were not available for numbers of fraud offences within these disseminations, therefore these data have been excluded from the table.

6. The overall total does not equal the total for all forces. Some offences can be included in more than one dissemination, or can be disseminated to a force in mutliple months. This number reflects the total number of unique offences, and offences which are part of two or more dissemination packages are only counted once. Each offence, no matter how many times it is disseminated, is assigned only one final outcome.

5.5 FUTURE WORK ON FRAUD OUTCOMES

The dataset provided by the NFIB continues to be subject to development and quality assurance and so these statistics should still be treated as experimental.

The Home Office continues to work with the NFIB to improve data quality for fraud offences, disseminations and outcomes. In future publications, the Home Office intends to publish fraud outcomes data for outcomes recorded against offences recorded in the year. This would be in line with the presentation of outcomes data against other crime types within this publication, allowing more meaningful comparisons with other crime types.

Technical Annex

A1. OVERVIEW

Before April 2013, the official statistics focused on "detections" (the number of cases resolved with a charge, caution, etc.) to reflect how the police deal with crimes. Since April 2014, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office on the broader set of outcomes. The first provisional statistics from the new outcomes framework were published in the Year to March 2014 bulletin. We have since developed the statistics with input from police forces and users.

A2. THE CRIME OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Detections were revised to become the outcomes framework from April 2013. The purpose of the revision was:

- To **strengthen police discretion** by recognising the full range of possible disposals, including community resolutions, rather than incentivising police officers to pursue a particular outcome because it is perceived as 'better' than others. This will empower officers to exercise their professional judgement to ensure that offenders are dealt with by the most appropriate disposal available, in the knowledge that no one outcome is favoured over others – the emphasis should shift from hitting targets to appropriateness.

- By strengthening police discretion, the framework should in turn help to **promote a more victim-oriented approach**, focused on providing a better service to victims of crime by removing perverse incentives for forces to record and pro-actively pursue certain crimes on the basis of locally-set detection targets, and encouraging police officers to consider the needs of victims, and the potential for engaging them in the process.

- To **further increase transparency** in policing, and trust in national statistics, by providing the public with a richer picture of crime, and how it is dealt with in their area. This broader set of information can be used as a tool by which the public can hold the police to account, and as a basis for constructive engagement between communities, the police, and police and crime commissioners. By giving every crime an outcome, we will help the public understand – and therefore support or challenge – police activity.

New outcomes introduced from April 2016

It is possible for a suspect to be charged or cautioned but for the charge or caution to be for a different offence to the one recorded.

The recording standards reflect the law and in reaching charging decisions the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) set out a range of standards and guidance that both they and the police must follow. These standards frequently dictate that an alternate offence be charged to that recorded. For example, an assault may be recorded as a crime of Actual Bodily Harm (because that is the offence in law committed) but the CPS will direct that the offence charged is Common Assault.

Therefore, in April 2016 three new outcomes were introduced on a voluntary basis until they become mandatory in April 2017. These outcomes reflect where the charge/summons (outcome 1A), youth caution (outcome 2A) or adult caution (outcome 3A) relates to an alternative offence to that recorded.

For full details on the transition from the regime of detections (in existence until April 2013) to the outcomes framework, please see "Crimes Outcomes in England & Wales, 2013/14":

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2013-to-2014

Table A1.1: Detection types prior to April 2013 and the outcomes frameworks in place thereafter

Detections regime – prior to April 2013 (outcomes 1-6)	Outcomes framework – April 2013 to March 2014 (outcomes 1-9)	Outcomes framework – April 2014 onwards (outcomes 1-19)
1. Charge/Summons	1. Charge/Summons	1. Charge/Summons
2. Caution	2. Caution – youths	2. Caution – youths
	3. Caution – adults	3. Caution – adults
3. Taken into consideration – previously recorded 4. Taken into consideration – not previously recorded	4. Taken into consideration (TIC)	4. Taken into consideration (TIC)
5. Penalty Notice for Disorder	6. Penalty Notice for Disorder	6. Penalty Notice for Disorder
6. Other	5. The offender has died (indictable only/sexual offences)	5. The offender has died (all offences)
	7. Cannabis Warning	7. Cannabis/Khat Warning
	8. Community Resolution	8. Community Resolution
	9. Prosecution not in public interest (CPS) (indictable only offences)	9. Prosecution not in the public interest (CPS) (all offences)
Data not collected by the Home Office		10. Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest (police decision)
		11. Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility
		12. Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute
		13. Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence
		14. Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect not identified – the crime is confirmed but the victim declines or is unable to support further police action to identify the offender
		15. Evidential difficulties named suspect identified – the crime is confirmed and the victim supports police action but evidential difficulties prevent further action
		16. Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified – the victim does not support (or withdraws support from) police action
		17. Prosecution time limit expired – suspect identified but the time limit for prosecution has expired
		18. Investigation complete – no suspect identified. Crime investigated as far as reasonably possible – case closed pending further investigative opportunities becoming available
		19. National Fraud Intelligence Bureau filed (NFIB only). A crime of fraud has been recorded but has not been allocated for investigation because the assessment process at the NFIB has determined there are insufficient lines of enquiry to warrant such dissemination
		20. Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action to be taken **(from April 2015)**
		21. Further investigation, resulting from the crime report, which could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest – police decision **(from January 2016)**

A2. 1 FRAUD OUTCOMES

Since April 2013, Action Fraud (the national fraud and cyber crime reporting centre) have been responsible for recording fraud offences, rather than individual police forces. ONS publish police recorded crime statistics both including and excluding fraud. As well as offences recorded by Action Fraud, the ONS also publish data on the number of frauds recorded by FFA UK and CIFAS. Similarly, outcomes of fraud offences are not collected in the same way as other crimes. The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) review Action Fraud reports, along with FFA UK and Cifas reports. The NFIB allocate fraud offences with viable information to the relevant police forces in dissemination packages. The police forces investigate the offences, and allocate an outcome to each individual offence. Each police force submits the outcomes to NFIB on a monthly basis. Fraud outcomes are therefore not included in the main body of this bulletin. We have presented experimental data on fraud offences separately in Chapter X. Outcomes data in the rest of this bulletin do not include outcomes of fraud offences.

Future work on fraud outcomes

The data set provided by the NFIB continues to be subject to development and quality assurance and so these statistics should still be treated as experimental. However, the NFIB are introducing a new management information system which is due to go live in 2018. This should mean that the fraud outcomes data will be more readily accessible and more accurate as the system should allow individual outcomes to be linked to the fraud offences they relate to. The Home Office intends to work closely with NFIB to ensure that the data is as robust as possible and that it meets user needs.

Future publications could potentially include outcomes assigned to offences disseminated to police in a given year. This could also include data on the length of time between fraud offences being disseminated to the police and when an outcome is assigned to that offence. This will depend on forces providing good quality data to NFIB, and the data being available to the Home Office. These new pieces of analysis would bring fraud in line with the other crime types and the analysis presented in previous chapters.

A2.3 DOMESTIC ABUSE OUTCOMES

Since April 2015, police forces must provide the Home Office with the number of offences they record that are domestic-abuse related. For forces providing record-level data via the Home Office Data Hub (HODH) it is possible to link domestic abuse related crimes to their outcomes. Chapter XXX covers these data.

A3. OUTCOMES DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

A3.1 FORCE OUTCOMES FOR OFFENCES RECORDED IN QUARTER (NEW STYLE)

This method looks at outcomes for offences recorded in the same period in which the offence was recorded, rather than just a measure of total outcomes recorded in a period. It allows crimes to be traced from when they were recorded to when they were given the outcome. As every crime will eventually receive an outcome, this measure can be used to show how an increasing number of crimes recorded in a certain period are resolved over time. This is particularly effective for tracking sexual offences over time, as many of these do not receive their outcome in the same year in which they are recorded.

A3.4 FORCE OUTCOMES RECORDED IN QUARTER (OLD STYLE)

These outcome volumes relate to outcomes recorded in that year regardless of when the associated crime was recorded. Rates can be calculated as the number of outcomes recorded in the year as a proportion of crimes recorded in the same year. This is how rates were presented before it was possible to link crimes with their outcomes. It is still useful to look at outcomes in this way as an additional measure of police activity in relation to crime.

Comparing the number of outcomes with the number of recorded offences in this way should be done with caution, because proportion of the outcomes relate to offences recorded in previous years. Some crime types could show a rate of over 100 per cent against a particular outcome, which is sometimes the case for relatively low volume crimes.

Rates presented for outcomes recorded in the year are therefore illustrative rather than 'true' rates and can be influenced by changes in crime volumes. The analysis presented in chapter 2 offers a more meaningful representation of how a given set of crimes are resolved and become increasingly useful when repeated over time.

A4. TIMELINESS

Timeliness is a measure of the time taken between an offence being recorded and its outcome being assigned. This measure can be used as a proxy for the efficiency of police investigations, but should not be considered a firm measure.

While the analysis in chapter 3 gives an indication of the length of time to assign an outcome, it is affected by any delay between a force achieving an outcome and recording it on their system. In particular, for some of the outcomes that take 1-5 days to assign, the outcome may have been 'actioned' on the same day as the offence was recorded but implemented on the system at a later date. For example, cannabis warnings will almost always be issued at the time the offence comes to the attention of the police. However, the administration of assigning the outcome on the crime recording system may happen some days later.

A5. TRANSFERRED OR CANCELLED RECORDS

A5.1 OVERVIEW

Transferred or cancelled records (formerly referred to as 'no-crimes') occur when a police force records an offence and later decide that the crime did not take place, was recorded in error or should be transferred to another police force. Since April 2015, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office split by the five reasons why the police may transfer or cancel records. It is important to note that cases where an incident was not recorded as a crime in the first place are not included.

Data on transferred and cancelled records can be found in the supplementary bulletin tables S1.1 to S1.3 available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

A5.2 DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Since April 2015, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office split by the five reasons why the police may transfer or cancel records.

1   Transferred: Crime committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded – passed to the appropriate force.

2   Cancelled: Additional verifiable information that determines that no notifiable crime occurred becomes available.

3   Cancelled: Duplicate record or part of a crime already recorded.

4   Cancelled: Crime recorded in error.

5   Cancelled: Self-defence claimed (for specific recorded assaults).

Transferred or cancelled records are always recorded in the same financial year as the offence was originally recorded. For example, if an offence was recorded in January and then subsequently transferred or cancelled in the next financial year (e.g. May), the transferred or cancelled record will be recorded for the previous financial year. This ensures that the total count of offences in any given year is correct.

A5.3 COMPARING TRANSFERRED OR CANCELLED RECORDS

It is important to exercise caution when comparing transferred or cancelled records data across police forces and between years. A full comparison is only possible for the most recent years, after March 2016. Comparing years before March 2016 can only be done by looking at the total of the five categories. Prior to April 2015, all 43 police forces in England and Wales (including British Transport Police) supplied the total number of transferred and cancelled records to the Home Office as one combined category ("no-crimes"), with no further explanation of why the crime was classed as such.

A high or low number of transferred or cancelled records should not necessarily be interpreted positively or negatively, because different forces may use transferred or cancelled records in different ways and volumes may be affected by specific locations of forces (in particular for transferred records). Since April 2015, the Home Office Counting Rules have required the police to record a crime at the earliest opportunity, and at most within 24 hours after the reporting officer decides that a crime should be recorded (previously this was within 72 hours). This is likely to result in increased numbers of transferred and cancelled records. However, whilst one force may record all crimes immediately and then later transfer or cancel a more significant proportion of these, others may wait slightly longer to judge whether an offence constitutes a crime or not, and thus are likely to record fewer transferred or cancelled records overall. Transfers in particular are susceptible to local practices. As a result, a firm conclusion should not be drawn when comparing transferred or cancelled record data across forces, as any differences seen may just reflect differences in recording practices. More details of this can be found in the HMIC reports.

An Open Data table on transferred or cancelled records by police force is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

A6. CRIME OUTCOMES DATA QUALITY

A6.1 INTRODUCTION

The UK Statistics Authority published its assessment of ONS crime statistics in January 2014. It found that statistics based on police recorded crime data, assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, did not meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The UKSA published a list of requirements for these statistics to regain the National Statistics accreditation.

Some of the requirements of this assessment were to provide more detail on how data sources were used to produce these statistics, along with more information on the quality of the statistics. Additionally, there was also a requirement to provide information on the process used by police forces to submit and revise data, and the validation processes used by the Home Office. In order to ensure that this publication meets the high standards required by the UK Statistics Authority, details are provided below.

A6.2 DATA QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Home Office receives monthly data from police forces on crime, crime outcomes and records that were initially recorded as crimes and subsequently transferred to another police force or cancelled. These data are quality assured and analysed by Home Office statisticians and any anomalies or errors identified through this process result in a report being returned to the relevant force for validation or correction.

Prior to the publication of crime outcomes a verification exercise is carried out with all forces. The data held by the Home Office are returned to individual forces asking for confirmation that the data accords with that held on their own systems and to highlight any perceived inconsistencies in their data. Again, forces resubmit data if required.

The Ministry of Justice has been working with the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service and the National Police Chiefs' Council to deliver a project to make the use of out-of-court disposals for adult offenders more effective. In November 2014, as part of this project, three police forces (Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire) commenced a 12 month pilot operation of a simplified model of such outcomes (West Yorkshire Police adopted a phased roll out starting in November 2014 and fully operational in January 2015). All three forces, with the agreement of Ministers, voluntarily stopped issuing adult simple cautions (part of outcome 3) and cannabis / khat warnings (outcome 7) and limited their use of penalty notices for disorder (outcome 6), instead using the adult conditional caution (part of outcome 3) and the community resolution (outcome 8). The rules and guidance that apply to conditional cautions and community resolutions have been amended for those three forces to reflect this new approach. These three pilot forces have continued to operate in accordance with the pilot conditions since the pilot ended in November 2015. Some other forces have subsequently also limited their use of some out of court disposals. This may lead to apparent falls in some of these outcome types (e.g. cannabis/khat warnings) which may be accompanied by increases in outcomes 3 and 8 which will have been used in their place.

A6.3 CRIME OUTCOMES DATA SOURCES:

- Aggregated Crimsec4 return: an aggregated return supplied on monthly basis from small number of police forces

- Home Office Data Hub (HODH): The HODH allows police forces to provide record-level detail on offences, vastly increasing the opportunities for the analysis of police recorded crime data.

- Voluntary returns: the Home Office requested that all forces providing Crimsec4, voluntarily provide additional outcomes data on a quarterly basis

Crimsec4

Police recorded crime data are supplied to the Home Office by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. Each year a small number of forces supply crime and outcomes data to the Home Office in an aggregated return (Crimsec4 form) on a monthly basis. In this return, data on outcomes and transferred or cancelled records (formerly referred to as 'no-crimes') are collected alongside recorded crime data for each crime within the notifiable offence list. Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely-related summary offences dealt with by magistrates, such as assault without injury.

The monthly data are cumulative, such that each month's return will contain the data for the financial year to date. When a police force wants to make revisions to this data, they usually do this in the latest monthly return, rather than re-sending a return for the period affected. The exception to this rule is when the revisions affect a previous financial year. In these cases the police force will re-send an end of year return for that year.

Outcomes are recorded on the Crimsec4 form in the month that the outcome is applied, and not the month in which the original offence occurred. For example, if an offence occurred in January and a suspect was subsequently charged in June, the outcome would be recorded in June. This means that the data recorded on a Crimesec4 do not correspond to the data on offences in that month, or even the same year. However since the year ending March 2016 the Home Office has additionally requested that forces capture outcomes that relate to the period the crime was recorded. Most forces are now providing outcomes data via the Home Office Data Hub (see below) which can also capture outcomes relating to the period in which the crime was recorded. These data are presented in Chapter 2.

The latest outcomes introduced, outcome 20 (since April 2015) and outcome 21 (since January 2016), and the five sub-categories for transferred and cancelled records are not included on CrimSec4 forms and are instead collected via an additional manual collection on a quarterly basis.

The Home Office Data Hub

The Home Office Data Hub (HODH) allows police forces to provide record-level detail on offences, vastly increasing the opportunities for the analysis of police recorded crime data. At the time of publication, there were 42 forces providing their monthly crime, outcomes and transferred or cancelled records data solely via the HODH, with the majority of the remaining forces in the 'parallel running' phase, where they are sending data both via the Crimsec4 form and via the HODH, with a view to switching exclusively to the HODH soon. The Home Office are continuing to work with these forces to help them with this transition, and are committed to achieving a fully operational HODH.

The voluntary returns

As not all forces are currently able to provide data via the HODH, the Home Office requested that all other forces provide additional outcomes data on a quarterly basis to capture outcomes data from all police forces.

The data presented in Chapter 2 covers all 44 police forces (including the British Transport Police) and is based on HODH for 42 forces and manual returns from the remaining forces . Data for year ending March is usually taken from the HODH in early June, and the remaining forces voluntarily provided their data for year on different dates between early-April and mid-June. The proportion of crimes recorded in March that had been assigned an outcome at the time of submitting data to the Home Office is likely to be smaller for a force that sent their data return in early April than for a force that provided this in May or June, because there had been less time for these offences to be investigated and the outcomes to be assigned. These dates will therefore have an impact on the overall proportion of crimes still under investigation and comparability between forces.

Chapter 2 also presents updated data for the previous financial year. Therefore, these updated figures reflect the fact that crimes have had an additional year in which to be assigned an outcome.

A6.4 DATA VALIDATION PROCESSES

The Home Office carry out a series of routine checks and feed the results of these back to police forces on monthly basis. These checks include:

- Looking for any offences where there have been a large number of transferred or cancelled records since the previous month;
- Looking for any large or unusual changes in offences, outcomes or transferred or cancelled records from the previous month;
- Looking for cases where forces have provided data against an offence classification that no longer exists (e.g. the former fraud classifications);
- Comparing offence types and outcome types against the long-term trend, to spot any outliers in the monthly data;
- Looking at where cautions (outcomes 2 and 3) have been assigned to rape offences and these are then queried with Force Crime Registrars;
- Checking that outcome 17 has not been applied to any offence which does not have a time limit.
- Checking that outcome 7 has not been applied to any non-cannabis or khat offences.

Any outliers or anomalies are usually small. Police forces are then asked to investigate these anomalies and either provide an explanation or resubmit figures where an error has occurred. Where resubmission is required, the force will usually just correct the errors in the latest monthly submission, rather than re-send all of the months in question. In the case of forces providing data via the HODH, the force will send modified versions of the affected records. These then supersede the original versions.

A6.5 FURTHER INFORMATION ON CRIME OUTCOMES

Care needs to be taken when making comparisons of crime outcomes between police forces. In some cases making any such comparisons may be misleading, given that different police forces use outcomes in different ways and will have a different mix of crimes to deal with. For example, some police forces may implement more community resolutions than others, depending on their approach, the nature of the crimes they deal with and the views of their communities. For example, a force that deals with a disproportionately high number of drug offences may apply a different mix of outcomes compared with a force that deals with a higher proportion of violent offences.

General Rules Section H of the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) contains information on recording outcomes. For Home Office purposes, all recorded crimes are assigned one of the following outcome types:

Outcome 1: Charge / Summons: A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at Court).

Outcome 1A [introduced in April 2016, voluntary]: Charge / Summons – alternative offence: A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime, but following the application of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) charging standards and the provisions of the HOCR, the charge/summons relates to an alternative offence to that recorded (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at court).

Outcome 2: Caution – youths: A youth offender has been cautioned by the police.

Outcome 2A [introduced in April 2016, voluntary]: Youth Caution – alternative offence: A youth offender has been cautioned by the police, but following the application of the CPS charging standards and the provisions of the HOCR, the caution relates to an alternative offence to that recorded.

Outcome 3: Caution – adults: An adult offender has been cautioned by the police.

Outcome 3A [introduced in April 2016, voluntary]: Adult Caution – alternative offence: An adult offender has been cautioned by the police, but following the application of the CPS charging standards and the provisions of the HOCR, the caution relates to an alternative offence to that recorded.

Outcome 4: Taken into Consideration (TIC): The offender admits the crime by way of a formal police interview and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court. There must be an interview where the

suspect has made a clear and reliable admission of the offence and which is corroborated with additional verifiable auditable information connecting the suspect to the crime.

Outcome 5: Offender died: The offender has died before proceeding could be initiated.

Outcome 6: Penalty Notices for Disorder: A Penalty Notice for Disorder (or other relevant notifiable offence) has been lawfully issued under Section 1 – 11 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

Outcome 7: Cannabis/Khat Warning: A warning for cannabis or khat possession has been issued in accordance with College of Policing guidance. Note: Khat warnings were introduced from 24 June 2014 and numbers are likely to be small.

Outcome 8: Community Resolution: A Community Resolution (with or without formal Restorative Justice) has been applied in accordance with College of Policing guidance.

Outcome 9: Not in public interest (CPS): Prosecution not in the public interest (CPS decision). The CPS by virtue of their powers under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 decides not to prosecute or authorise any other formal action.

Outcome 10: Not in public interest (Police) **(from April 2014)**: Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest (Police decision).

Outcome 11: Prosecution prevented – suspect under age **(from April 2014)**: Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility.

Outcome 12: Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill **(from April 2014)**: Prosecution prevented – Named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute.

Outcome 13: Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill **(from April 2014)**: Named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence

Outcome 14: Evidential difficulties: suspect not identified; victim does not support further action **(from April 2014)**: Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect not identified. The crime is confirmed but the victim declines or is unable to support further police action to identify the offender.

Outcome 15: Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action) **(from April 2014)**: Evidential difficulties named suspect identified – the crime is confirmed and the victim supports police action but evidential difficulties prevent further action. This includes cases where the suspect has been identified, the victim supports action, the suspect has been circulated as wanted but cannot be traced and the crime is finalised pending further action.

Outcome 16: Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action **(from April 2014)**: Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified. The victim does not support (or has withdrawn support from) police action.

Outcome 17: Prosecution time limit expired **(from April 2014)**: Suspect identified but prosecution time limit has expired (from April 2014).

Outcome 18: Investigation complete –no suspect identified **(from April 2014)**: The crime has been investigated as far as reasonably possible – case closed pending further investigative opportunities becoming available.

Outcome 19: National Fraud Intelligence Bureau filed (NFIB only) **(from April 2014)**: A crime of fraud has been recorded but has not been allocated for investigation because the assessment process at the NFIB has determined there are insufficient lines of enquiry to warrant such dissemination.

Outcome 20: Action undertaken by another body/agency **(from April 2015)**: Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency other than the police, subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action being taken.

Outcome 21: Not in the public interest – suspect identified **(from January 2016)** Further investigation resulting from the crime report that could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest – police decision.

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