

# Statistics on the number of police officers assaulted in 2019/20, England and Wales

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## Key Figures

- In 2019/20 there were over 30,000 assaults on police officers in England and Wales (including British Transport Police but excluding Greater Manchester Police). Of which:
  - 20,269 were crimes of “assault without injury on a constable” recorded across all forces (including the British Transport Police but excluding Greater Manchester Police), an increase of 3.3% compared with 19,615 in the previous year.
  - 10,410 crimes of “assault with injury on a constable”<sup>1</sup> recorded across all forces (including British Transport Police), a small increase of 2.3% compared with 10,177 in the previous year.

## Police recorded crime data

The data source for assaults on police officers is the police recorded crime series, which are published quarterly in “[Crime in England and Wales](#)”, released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This note is updated on an annual basis only, so the crime statistics should be used to access data on a quarterly basis.

Following the implementation of a new IT system in July 2019, Greater Manchester Police have been unable to supply data for the period July 2019 to March 2020. Figures for Greater Manchester are not included in the totals for the years ending March 2019 and 2020.

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

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

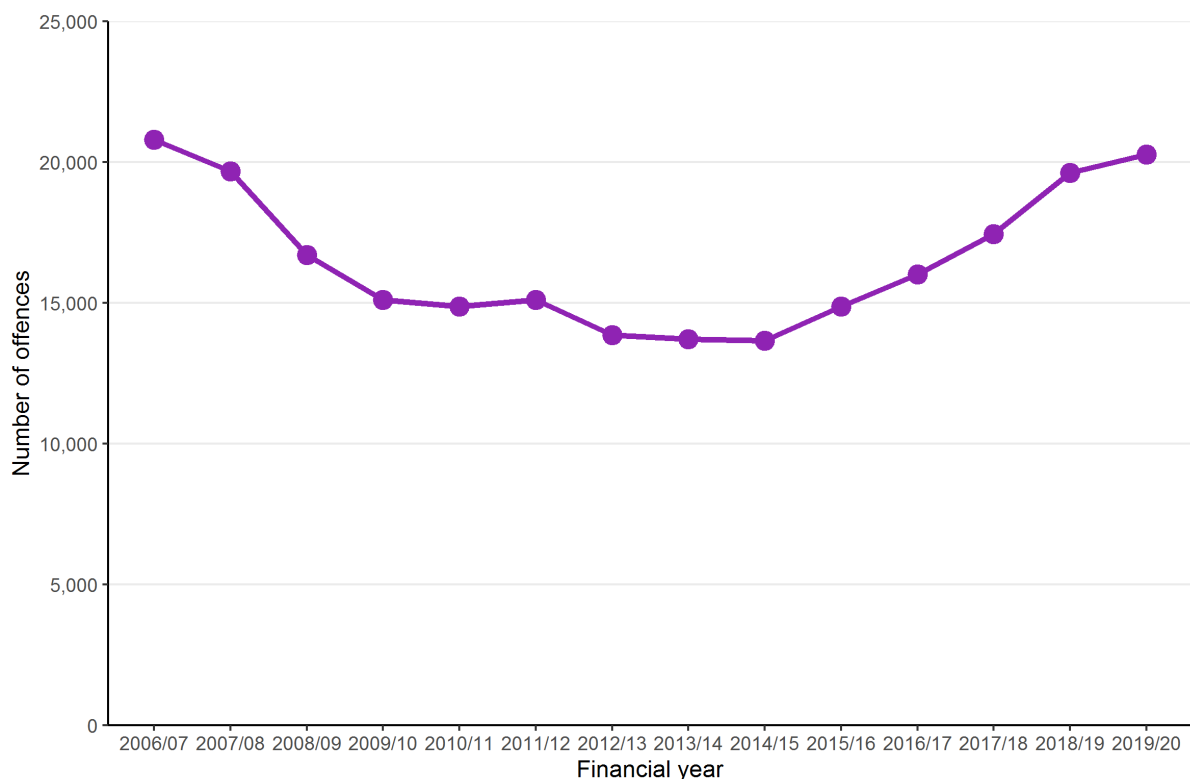
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<sup>1</sup> The crime code of “assault with injury on a constable” was introduced in April 2017. Previously there was no corresponding crime classification for “assault with injury on a constable”, with such assaults recorded under the relevant offence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

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

Figure 1 shows the time series trend for the offence of “assault without injury on a constable”, which is comparable over time. Between 2006/07 and 2012/13 there has been a general downward trend in the number of offences of “assault without injury on a constable” recorded by the police. It then remained stable until 2015/16, when the number of offences increased by 9%, from 13,658 to 14,872 offences (a smaller increase than the 26% over the same period for all victims of “assault without injury”). In the year ending March 2020, 20,269 offences of “assault without injury on a constable” were recorded by the police, a 3% increase compared with the previous year (again a smaller increase than the 9% over the same period for all “assault without injury” cases).

**Figure 1: Number of offences recorded under “assault without injury on a constable”, England and Wales<sup>1</sup>, 2006/07 to 2019/20<sup>2</sup>**



**Notes:**

1. Includes the British Transport Police and excludes Greater Manchester Police
2. These figures are published in table A4 of the [‘Crime in England and Wales’](#) statistical release.

For 2019/20 the Home Office collected data from forces crime recording systems, on a mandatory basis for the third time, on both the “assault without injury on a constable” **and** the “assault with injury on a constable” crime classifications. For 2019/20, 42 police forces in England and Wales provided these data (with Greater Manchester Police the exception), although some stated that the quality was variable and that the data may not be complete. It is known that these data are likely to be an underestimate of the total number of assaults in some forces, as many officers view assaults as part of the job and do not bother to raise a crime record. A further limitation of the data is that it is not always possible for forces to identify whether the police officer was on or off duty at the time of the assault. For these reasons, the figures in Annex A are not directly comparable at police force area level.

In 2019/20 there were 10,410 offences of “assault with injury on a constable” recorded by the police. Caution should be exercised when comparing this figure with the estimates reported for 2015/16 and 2016/17, which were less complete data from a smaller number of forces (15 and 20 forces respectively) and based on a relatively crude estimation method using forces’ health and safety systems.

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

## Annex A: Assaults on police officers, England and Wales, 2019/20

Force name	Police recorded crime - Assault with injury on a constable	Police recorded crime - Assault without injury on a constable	Total assaults on a constable (with and without injury)
Avon & Somerset	306	628	934
Bedfordshire	57	302	359
British Transport Police	196	599	795
Cambridgeshire	68	357	425
Cheshire	222	374	596
Cleveland	113	338	451
Cumbria	67	303	370
Derbyshire	228	245	473
Devon & Cornwall	250	18	268
Dorset	86	30	116
Durham	125	380	505
Dyfed-Powys	65	208	273
Essex	231	950	1,181
Gloucestershire	119	0	119
Greater Manchester	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gwent	99	140	239
Hampshire	383	858	1,241
Hertfordshire	162	551	713
Humberside	199	559	758
Kent	94	1,051	1,145
Lancashire	142	434	576
Leicestershire	67	369	436
Lincolnshire	110	339	449
London, City of	18	45	63
Merseyside	370	379	749
Metropolitan Police	2,575	2,828	5,403
Norfolk	127	532	659
North Wales	153	296	449
North Yorkshire	441	14	455
Northamptonshire	135	386	521
Northumbria	0	122	122
Nottinghamshire	229	325	554
South Wales	281	361	642
South Yorkshire	257	405	662
Staffordshire	150	277	427
Suffolk	91	361	452
Surrey	135	426	561
Sussex	316	835	1,151
Thames Valley	205	896	1,101
Warwickshire	84	162	246
West Mercia	222	433	655
West Midlands	620	426	1,046
West Yorkshire	464	1,721	2,185
Wiltshire	148	6	154
<b>England and Wales</b>	<b>10,410</b>	<b>20,269</b>	<b>30,679</b>