



Non-Sexual Violence in Scotland



CRIME AND JUSTICE

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Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to several people for their input. In particular: Celina Davis and Jack Vize at NHS Information Services Division for their help providing data on emergency hospital admissions as a result of an assault and Philip Conaglen and Mette Tranter from NHS Lothian for providing the case study of NHS Lothian Assault Injury Surveillance.

Executive Summary

This report brings together official data from a range of Scottish sources – both Criminal Justice and Health – to better understand the current profile and problem of non-sexual violence in Scotland. Key findings derived from the triangulation of a range of evidence sources include that, currently in Scotland:

- Violent crime is rare but is experienced differently across the Scottish population.
- The likelihood of experiencing violence is higher in deprived communities than it is elsewhere.
- Violence is now patterned less by age and gender than it was a decade ago.
- Violent crime as a whole is not concentrated within a specific age group and in contrast to a decade ago, there is now no difference in the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime between those aged 16 to 24 and those aged 25 to 44 years old. Older age groups, in particular those aged 60 and above, are less likely to experience violence than others.
- As with victims of violent crime, perpetrators are not concentrated within a specific age group and there is evidence to suggest that the average age of perpetrators has increased.
- In contrast to the position a decade ago there is now no difference in the proportion of males or females estimated to have experienced violent crime in 2017-18, although sources show that males are more likely to experience some lower volume types of violence that include severe physical injuries.
- Gender does have an impact on the way violence is experienced, with women more likely than men to have experienced partner abuse (including psychological as well as physical abuse).

The report finds that most non-sexual violent crime in Scotland:

- Is experienced by repeat victims. Fewer than 1 in every 100 adults were victims of repeated incidents of violence, but their experiences accounted for around three-fifths of violent crime in 2017-18.
- Is carried out by males.
- Is not reported to the police.

This report also considers how the profile of non-sexual violence has changed since a decade ago. Findings include:

- All established sources show a notable reduction in non-sexual violence in the general adult population over the past decade, driven by decreases in the years following 2008-09 with broad stability seen more recently.
- Where violent crime is reported to the Police, the relatively narrower measure of police recorded violence (which excludes Common assault) showed a 10% increase in 2018-19.
- A broader measure of police recorded violence (including Common assault, and so closer to the SCJS definition) has shown more broad stability, with increases of less than 1% in both 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- This decrease in violence over the past decade has been driven by a reduction in younger males' involvement in violent crime.
- There has been no change in the proportion of females who experienced violence.
- The likelihood of experiencing violence for people who live in the 15% most deprived neighbourhoods has not shown any reduction since 2008-09, whilst the victimisation rate has fallen for people living in the rest of Scotland.
- Alcohol now plays a less prominent role in violent crime however sources indicate that around half of violent incidents experienced involve a perpetrator under the influence of alcohol.
- Around 1 in 3 violent incidents involved violent perpetrators under the influence of drugs, unchanged from a decade ago.
- Violent incidents where a weapon was used are less common now than they were in the last decade. Crimes of possessing, but not using, an offensive weapon in public are down over the longer term but have increased in the most recent years.
- Violence in public spaces has fallen in recent years. Violent crime which takes place in private spaces has also decreased over the last decade across most types of violent crime.
- In both Scotland and England and Wales, the likelihood of experiencing violent crime is relatively small and has fallen since 2008-09. Direct comparisons of the relative levels of violence are not advised due to methodological and classification differences.

1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The World Health Organisation (WHO)¹ defines a public health approach to reducing violence as one that:

‘Seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence. By definition, public health aims to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. Programmes for primary prevention of violence based on the public health approach are designed to expose a broad segment of a population to prevention measures and to reduce and prevent violence at a population-level.’

The public health methodology provides a scientific model with which to tackle violence, consisting of four steps, which is summarised in Figure 1 on the next page.

The purpose of this report is to address Step 1 of the public health approach to reducing violence - To define the problem through the systematic collection of information about the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of violence. This has been approached by collating the most up to date, robust statistical sources on violence in Scotland. While this report does not consider the consequences of violence, it does present findings on the magnitude, scope and characteristics, thereby helping to answer the question ‘What is the Problem?’.

Where data are available, this report also includes comparisons with the profile of violence in Scotland 10 years ago, in 2008-09, compared to 2017-18 to illustrate the ways in which this has changed.

1.2 What is ‘violent crime’?

In the context of this report, ‘Non-sexual violence’ (henceforth referred to as ‘violent crime’ for brevity) is a general term that encompasses a wide range of offences, from attempted assault and minor assault with or without injury (not all violent

¹ World Health Organisation (2017: n.p.) Violence prevention Alliance: The Public Health Approach. [online] Available at: https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/public_health/en/ [Accessed 21/6/2019].

► **Figure 1: The steps of the public health**



Source: [Violence Prevention Alliance](#)

crimes result in physical contact between perpetrator and victim), as well as Serious assault, Robbery and Homicide². In Scotland most people do not experience violent crime and the majority of violence in 2017-18 was Common assault that resulted in no or negligible injury.

This report does not consider sexual offences (such as Rape, Sexual assault). Further information on other forms of violence such as sexual violence is available in a number of publications available on the Justice Analytical Services website and can be found here: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Research/by-topic/crime-and-justice/publications>

² For an overview of how these terms are used in this report see [Glossary](#).

1.3 How is violent crime measured?

It is challenging to measure the full extent of violence in Scotland – there are various definitions of violence, the data sources measure different types of violence, and each data source has its own strengths and limitations. See [Annex 2](#) for more detail on the data sources used to measure violent crime in this report.

To overcome some of the limitations, here four key sources are used to measure non-sexual violent crime:

Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS):

The SCJS is a face-to-face victimisation survey, where individuals aged 16 and over living in private households in Scotland are asked about their experiences and perceptions of crime over the last 12 months. It is important to note that victims of Partner abuse may not report such experiences through the face-to-face element of the SCJS which produces the main survey prevalence rates – including on violence. As such, questions on experiences of Partner abuse (covering both physical and psychological abuse) and other topics of a more sensitive nature, e.g. drug use, are answered in a self-completion element of the survey.

The survey provides a broad account of national trends in crimes experienced by individuals, which may not have been previously reported to the police. As it is based on a sample of the population, figures reported here are estimates.

A range of offences are captured in this survey, however some crimes, such as Homicide or those against a business or individual not living in a private household in Scotland are not covered.

Police Recorded Crime Data:

Data supplied from across Police Scotland captures a broad range of non-sexual violent crime. Separate data are also provided by Police Scotland on Homicide, detailing specific aspects of criminal behaviour.

These data are particularly useful when examining patterns of low-volume crimes that are hard to access through victimisation surveys, e.g. Homicide, and offences against those not living in private households. However, it can only cover crimes that have been reported to, and recorded by, the police, as such these offences will have met a legal threshold.

Further analysis has been carried out on a sample of police crime records for Robbery, Handling offensive weapons, Attempted murder & Serious assault. This analysis is based on a sample of crime records, and so stated figures are estimates of the number of incidents. See [Annex 2](#) for a full list of the publications used.

Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault Data (hereafter referred to as Hospital Admissions):

NHS Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland provides data on Hospital Admissions for assault. These data provide details of the number of emergency admissions to hospital when an injury has occurred through violence, as identified through the use of specific admissions codes.

These data are unaffected by police recording practices, and can capture incidents that may not have been reported to the police. While considered robust, these data only provide information on those admitted to hospital under emergency admissions codes. Therefore those incidents treated in outpatient settings, or where the individual was not admitted, are not captured.

Scottish Government Criminal Proceedings Data (hereafter referred to as Criminal Proceedings):

This is Scottish Government data that provides details of offences dealt with by courts, sentencing outcomes and characteristics of convicted offenders. It also includes additional information on non-court penalties issued by the Police and Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service. [Bespoke analysis](#) on the changing age and gender profiles of violent offenders using Criminal Proceedings data has also been drawn upon. Overall, Criminal Proceedings data gives information on more minor offences, but is limited to those crimes where legal proceedings occurred.

Each chapter in the report draws upon the key relevant and available data sources to the topic explored. These data sources are clearly identified within each chapter.

In addition to the four key sources above, a case study from NHS Lothian Assault Injury Surveillance programme has been included in [Annex 1](#). These data are not National Statistics and so have not been integrated throughout the report. However, including this case study highlights a potential additional source of data at a local level. Assault Injury Surveillance data offers a harm-based measure of violence (much of which may be unreported to the police) and allows further triangulation of patterns observed in national data sources.

1.4 Structure of the Report

[Section 2](#) of the report presents a brief overview of what has happened to violent crime in Scotland over the last ten years. [Section 3](#) considers what non-sexual violence looks like in Scotland today, by considering the current profile (magnitude, scope and characteristics) of violence in Scotland. This is done by considering a number of key questions about non-sexual violence in Scotland by drawing together the key findings from across the report.

[Section 4](#) of the report looks in detail at victims of violent crime – the characteristics of people who experience violent victimisation and the severity and extent of the violence. [Section 5](#) explores what is known about perpetrators of violent crime in Scotland. [Section 6](#) discusses other characteristics of violence in Scotland, such as when and where it occurs, alcohol, drugs and weapons. [Section 7](#) then examines what is known about unreported violence in Scotland and [Section 8](#) presents conclusions. [Annex 1](#) includes a case study of Lothian Assault Injury Surveillance and [Annex 2](#) contains additional information on Methodology.

2 What has happened to violent crime in Scotland?

2.1 Trends over the past decade

Across all established sources³ there has been a significant reduction in non-sexual violence in the general adult population over the past decade, driven by decreases in the years following 2008-09 with broad stability across most sources in more recent years.

Between 2008-09 and 2017-18:



The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey found a 46% decrease in the estimated number of violent crimes experienced by adults, including those not reported to the police, from 317,000 to 172,000 incidents in 2017-18 (Figure 2)⁴.

Between 2008-09 and 2018-19:



Police Recorded Crime showed a 37% decrease in 'Group 1⁵ - Non-sexual crimes of violence' and a 22% decrease in Common assault (Figure 3).

Between 2008-09 and 2017-18:



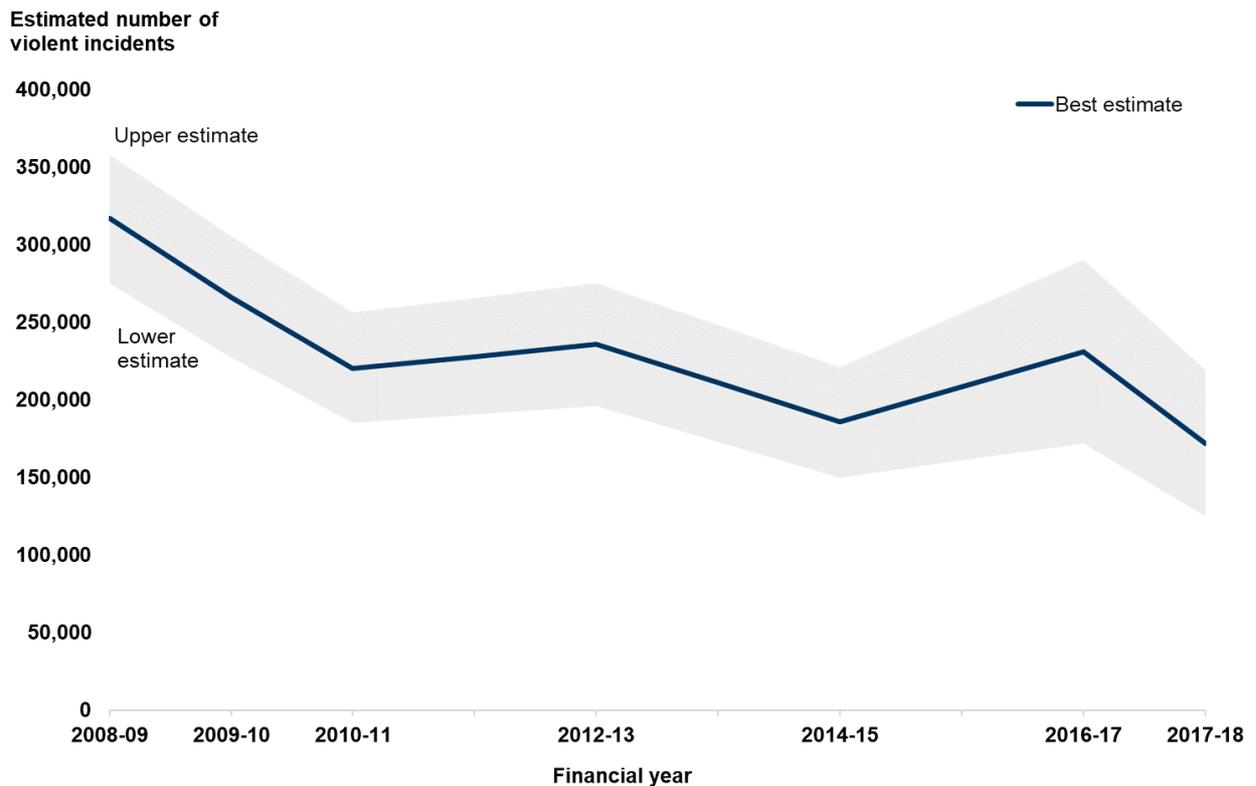
NHS Emergency Hospital Admissions due to Assault decreased by 55% (Figure 4).

³ Sources include: (i) Police Recorded Crime, (ii) SCJS, (iii) Emergency Hospital Admissions due to Assault and (iv) Criminal Proceedings.

⁴ The SCJS gathers information from a sample of the Scottish population and, as with all samples, the results are estimates and subject to a margin of error. To indicate this uncertainty the upper and lower estimates are shown either side of the best estimate. The best estimate is the mean figure drawn from the sample. The lower and upper estimates are for the 95% confidence intervals.

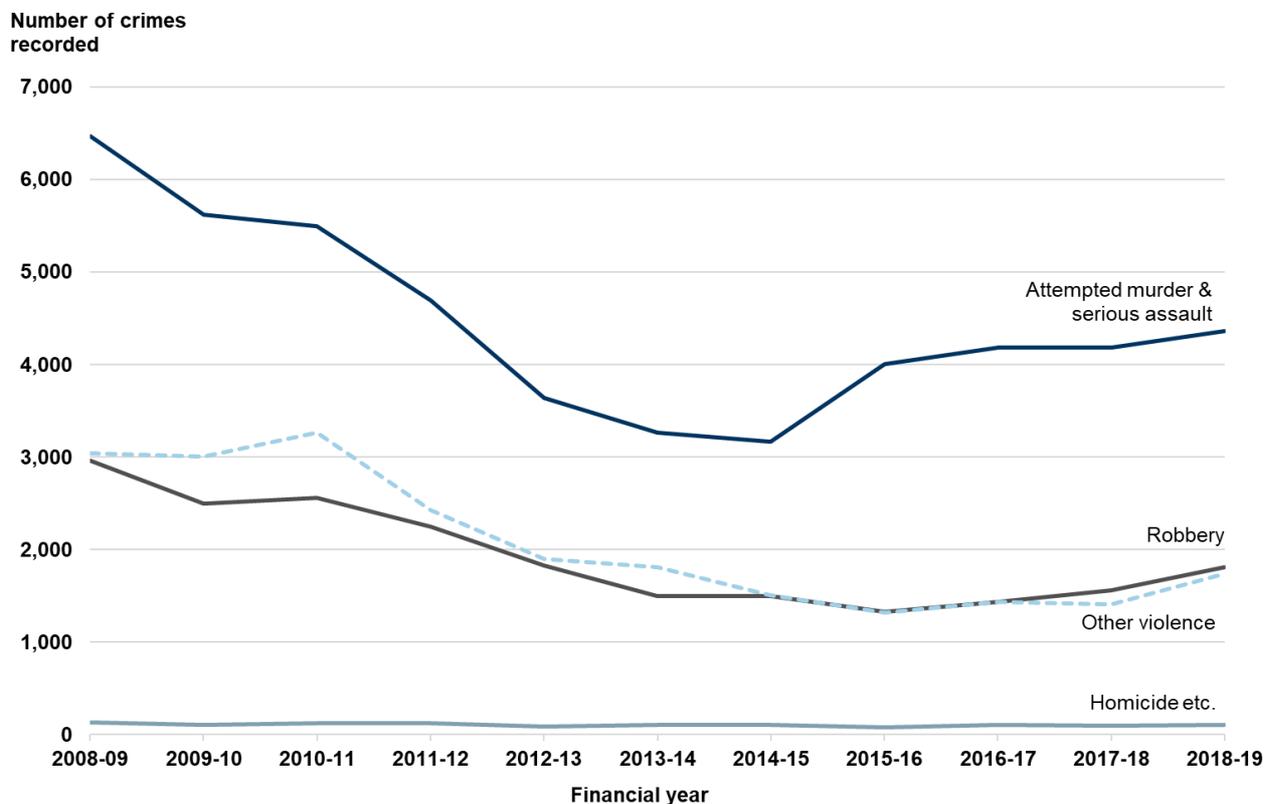
⁵ Group 1 includes Homicide, Attempted murder & Serious assault, Robbery and other non-sexual violence.

► **Figure 2: Estimated number of violent incidents, 2008-09 to 2017-18.**



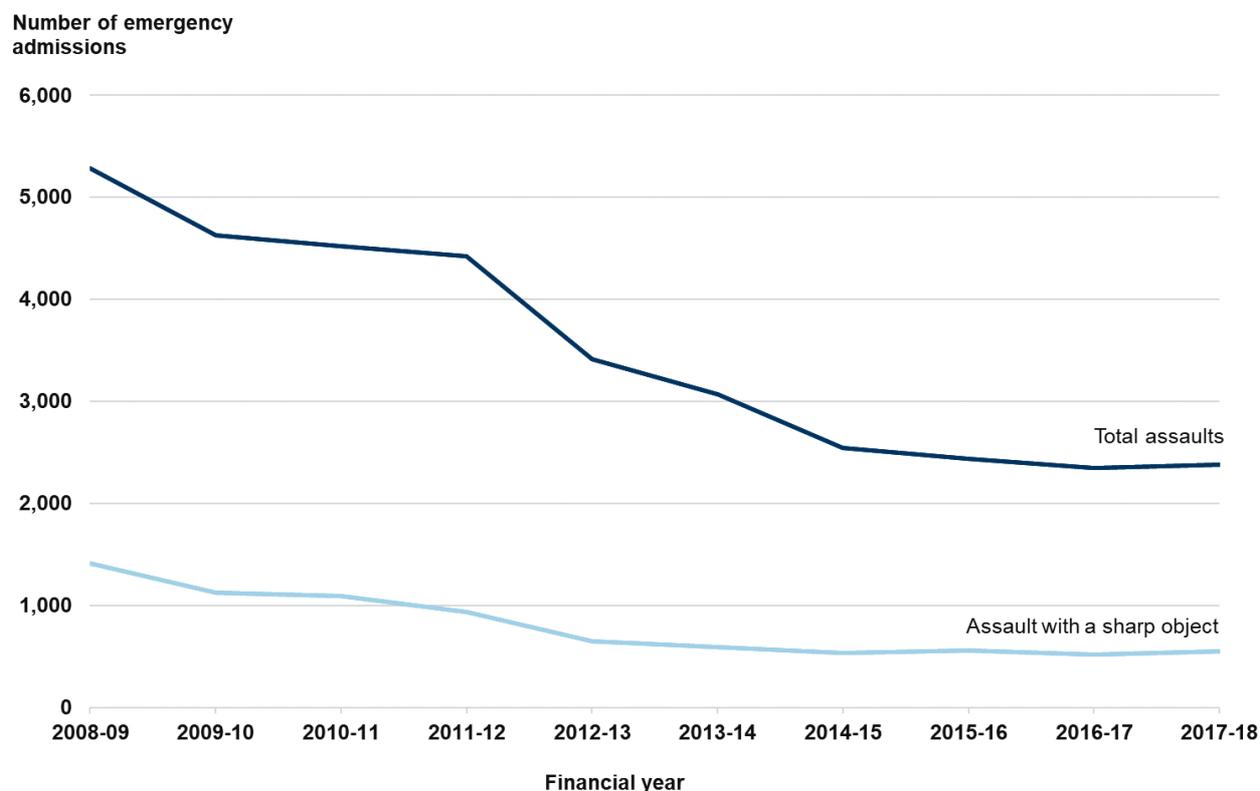
Base: SCJS 2008/09 (16,000); 2009/10 (16,040); 2010/11 (13,010); 2012/13 (12,050); 2014/15 (11,470); 2016/17 (5,570); 2017/18 (5,480) Variable: INCVIOLENT
 Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► **Figure 3: Non-sexual crimes of violence in Scotland, 2008-09 to 2018-19.**



Source: Recorded Crime National Statistics, 2018-19

► **Figure 4: Emergency hospital admissions in Scotland as a result of assault and assault by sharp object, year ending 31 March 2009-2018.**



Source: ISD Scotland: Scottish Morbidity Record (SMR01), Unintentional Injuries Statistics, 2008-09 & 2017-18

2.2 When did the biggest reductions in non-sexual violence take place?

Looking in more detail across the sources, the biggest reductions in non-sexual violence took place at different times, depending on the severity of the violence experienced.

For example, the SCJS - which demonstrates that the majority of violent crime is minor assault (an act similar in nature to what the police record as a Common assault) - estimates that the volume of violent crime experienced by adults decreased by 46% between 2008-09 and 2017-18. However, closer analysis shows that the fall over the last decade has been mostly driven by decreases between 2008-09 and 2010-11, with some fluctuations but broad stability seen since then. Similarly, with Police Recorded Common assault, most of the decline over the past decade occurred during 2008-09 to 2012-13, with figures more stable and increases in some groups since then.

For violence that involves more serious injury to the victim, such as Attempted murder & Serious assault - Police Recorded Crime and Emergency Hospital

Admissions statistics provide a better measure of changes over the past decade. Here the data shows a longer-term reduction up to 2014-15, after which the number of emergency Hospital admissions showed a further, if limited decrease between 2014-15 and 2017-18. Over those same four years the number of Attempted murders & Serious Assaults recorded by the police increased, though remained over a third lower in 2017-18 than in 2008-09.

2.3 Why has violent crime declined in Scotland?

The long term decline in violence in Scotland over the past decade has coincided with the implementation of Scotland's Public Health Approach to violence prevention and the collaborative work of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Medics Against Violence and other key partners including the police, health, education, youth services and the third sector. The Scottish Government and other national agencies have taken a consistent approach to violence and continued to treat violence prevention and reduction as a priority. Activity on violence has largely been centred on Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit, supported by Scottish Government funding since 2006-07. The Unit has acted both as a delivery mechanism for anti-violence programmes as well as a focus for innovation and change. The model is now being implemented in other parts of the UK.

A consideration of the reasons why violent crime has declined in Scotland, in line with trends across the UK, and in other high-income countries, are explored in the recently published [Violence Prevention Framework](#) by the Scottish Public Health Network. They note that potential contributory factors may include:

- the level, nature and success of policing;
- certainty of sanction for those involved in violence;
- unemployment rates, wage levels and consumption levels;
- alcohol consumption, affordability and availability;
- availability and use of illegal substances;
- mental health treatments;
- the position of women in society;
- demographic change impacting on the number of potential offenders;
- wider cultural changes;
- unintended side effects of other policies; and
- interventions aimed specifically at preventing and reducing violence.

Despite the long term reductions in non-sexual violent crime in Scotland, these reductions have not benefitted all groups in Scottish society equally and violent victimisation remains higher for some groups in society than for others. This report considers non-sexual violence in further detail by focusing on key aspects of violent crime, looking at both victims and perpetrators of violent crime in Scotland now and over time. Key findings are presented in [Section 3](#).

3 Non-Sexual Violence in Scotland

3.1 What does non-sexual violence in Scotland look like today?

3.1.1 Victims of non-sexual violence

‘Non-sexual violence’, or ‘violent crime’ is a general term that encompasses a wide range of activity, from attempted assault and minor assault with or without injury, as well as Serious assault and Homicide.

Whilst it is much rarer for violent crime to result in more serious physical injury (that may for example require inpatient medical treatment), the consequences of such actions on the victim and those around them are likely to be far more severe and potentially life changing.

Despite the wide and varied nature of violent crime, most people in Scotland do not experience any form of it. For the relatively small proportion that do (2.3% of the adult population in 2017-18), some form of minor assault is most likely to have occurred.

However, violent crime is experienced disproportionately by those who have already been a victim of violence, and those living in deprived areas. Whilst only 0.7% of adults were victims of more than one violent crime in 2017-18 – their experiences accounted for almost three-fifths of all cases that year. At the same time, when looking at violence overall, victimisation rates are higher in deprived communities, with adults living in deprived areas almost twice as likely to experience violence than those living elsewhere.

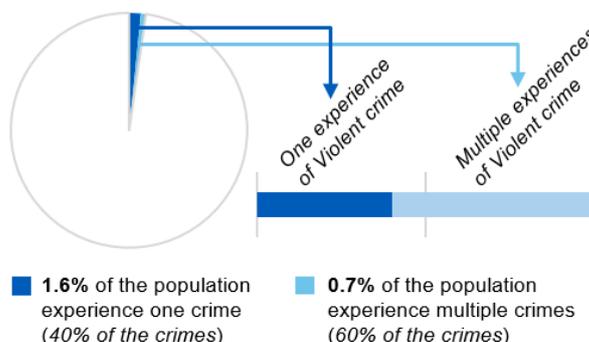
► Violence in Scotland (2017-18)



Most people in Scotland do not experience any violent crime



Violent crime is experienced disproportionately by those who have already been a victim of violence, and those living in deprived areas.



In contrast to the position a decade ago there is now no difference in the proportion of males or females who experienced violence in 2017-18.

However, the picture is more complex when looking at different types of violence. For example, some sources show that males are more likely to experience the lower volume types of violence that include severe physical injuries. Also, figures on the overall prevalence of violence do not capture all experiences of Partner abuse⁶, where evidence shows that females are more likely than males to have experienced this both in the past year and since age 16 (including psychological as well as physical abuse).

A person's age is another factor related to their likelihood of experiencing violence, although violent crime as a whole is not concentrated within a specific age group. In contrast to a decade ago, there is now no difference in the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime between those aged 16 to 24 and those aged 25 to 44 years old. Older groups however, in particular those aged 60 and above, are less likely to experience violence.

Most violent crime in Scotland is not reported to the police. For cases that are recorded by the police, males are much more likely to be the victims of violence that resulted in severe physical injuries (Homicide, Attempted murder & Serious assault) - whilst males and females were equally likely to be victims of violence that led to less severe physical injury or no injury at all (like Common assault). Most police recorded violent crime and cases that proceed to court have male perpetrators.

For the most serious crimes of violence recorded by the police, almost half of victims were aged 25 to 44 years old (including 46% of both Homicide and Attempted murder & Serious assault cases). Therefore, most victims had an age that fell outside this range, demonstrating that violence is not concentrated within a specific age group.

Together, these sources all suggest that the profile of violent crime in Scotland has changed over the past decade, with violence now less patterned in terms of age and gender. However, it remains the case that most violence is experienced by repeat victims and victimisation rates are higher in deprived communities, so for a relatively small number of people within our communities, violence is common place, as a victim and/or as a perpetrator.

⁶ Given the sensitive nature of this crime, data on Partner abuse is collected in an additional self-completion element of the SCJS, for more information on this see [Section 1.3](#) and [Annex 2](#).

3.1.2 Perpetrators of non-sexual violence

Males are more likely than females to commit violent crime, however, the reduction in violence over the past decade has been driven by fewer incidents involving male perpetrators.

As with victims of violent crime, perpetrators are not concentrated within a specific age group and there is evidence to suggest that the average age of perpetrators has increased. In 2017-18, a violent crime was most likely to involve at least one perpetrator aged 25 to 39 years old, although this still only accounted for a third of incidents. Therefore, a majority of incidents involved perpetrators from other age groups. There has been a fall in the percentage of SCJS violent incidents which involved perpetrators aged 16 to 24 from 46% in 2008-09 to 23% in 2017-18.

Where information is available on police recorded violent crime, these are also most likely to involve at least one perpetrator aged 25-39 (including 43% and 42% of Attempted murder & Serious assaults and Robberies respectively). Again a majority of these cases are committed by those aged above and below this group. Over the past ten years, the average age of a perpetrator of police recorded violent crime has seen a small increase, due to reductions in perpetrators aged 16 to 24 years old.

Most sources suggest that, in general, perpetrators of violent crime are known to the victim. One exception is Robbery, which are most often committed by strangers. While the majority of Homicide victims are killed by someone known to them, males are more likely to be killed by an acquaintance whereas females are more likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner.

► Perpetrators of Violent Crime



Males are more likely than females to commit violent crime.

However, the reduction in violence has been driven by fewer incidents with male perpetrators.



Perpetrators of violent crime are not concentrated within a specific age group, though a number of sources show that the average age of perpetrators has increased.



Most perpetrators of violent crime are known to the victim. However, Robbery is most often committed by strangers.

3.2 Who has benefited most from the reduction of violent crime in Scotland?

As outlined in [Section 2](#), there **has been a marked reduction in non-sexual violence in the general adult population over the past decade.**

Those who have benefited the most from this are males and people aged 16 to 24 years old. These groups were both less likely to experience violence in 2017-18 than 2008-09 – with the greatest reduction overall for those that have both of these characteristics (i.e. males aged 16 to 24, where the likelihood of experiencing violence fell from 17.6% in 2008-09 to 6.1% in 2017-18).

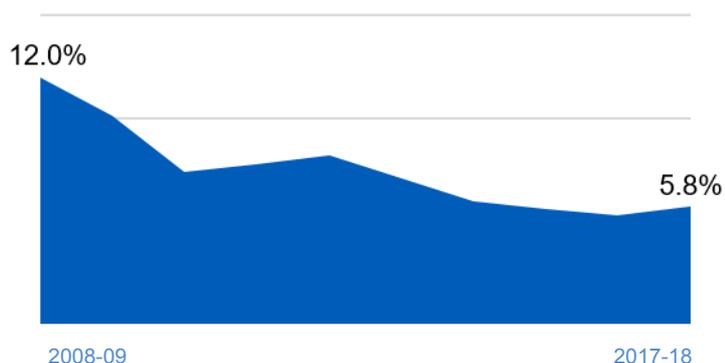
Over the same period no change was detected in the proportion of females or those aged 25 and over who experienced violence.

Another group of individuals who have benefited from the reduction in violent crime are adults who live outwith Scotland's 15% most deprived areas (falling from 3.8% experiencing at least one violent crime in 2008-09 to 2.1% by 2017-18). In contrast, those who live in the 15% most deprived areas have not seen any reduction in violent crime over the past decade.

Where violent crime comes to the attention of the police, and information is available on the characteristics of those involved - a similar picture is apparent. Reductions in Police Recorded violence that includes severe physical injuries have been driven almost exclusively by fewer crimes with a male victim, whilst those aged 16 to 24 years old (and to a lesser extent those aged 25 to 44 years old) have seen the largest fall in police recorded victimisation rates.

For violent offending, Criminal Proceedings data shows that there have also been changes in the ages of perpetrators, with a large reduction in convictions for those aged under 30.

► Victims of Violent Crime



The largest reduction in the experiences of violent crime was for victims aged

16-24.

3.3 What's happening to violence now in Scotland, is it increasing?

There is little evidence to suggest that violent crime as a whole is increasing in Scotland, though earlier reductions appear to have stabilised in recent years.

For example in recent years there has been no change in the proportion of adults who experienced violent crime, whilst the number of emergency Hospital Admissions due to Assault in 2017-18 remained at a near-record low when compared with the previous ten years.

As highlighted above, most violent crime is not reported to the police. Where it is, the relatively narrower measure of police recorded violence (which excludes Common assault) showed a 10% increase in 2018-19. This growth was multifaceted, with a rise in Robbery, Attempted murder & Serious assault, Cruelty to & unnatural treatment of children and cases linked to the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 all contributing.

A broader measure of police recorded violence is one that includes Common assault, bringing it closer to the measure of violence used by the SCJS. As with people's experience of violent crime and hospital admissions, this has also shown broad stability, with increases of less than 1% in both 2017-18 and 2018-19.

One sub-group of recorded violent crime - Attempted murder & Serious assault - has shown an increase since 2014-15. However most of this growth is likely to reflect a change in recording practice following a recommendation by HMICS⁷ to review the guidance used by officers in this area. Police Scotland believe that refreshed guidance issued as a result of this exercise may have led to some crimes

► Is Violent Crime Increasing in Scotland?



⁷ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

that would have been previously categorised as Common assault now being categorised as Serious assault.

This suggestion is re-enforced by the absence of any associated increase in emergency Hospital admissions for assault during the same period – noting that the definition of Police Recorded Serious assault is any injury that is likely to require inpatient hospital treatment. Likewise, as noted above the SCJS has also detected no increase in people's experience of violence during this time.

3.4 Where does most violence occur, and has this changed?

Most violent crime in Scotland occurs in a public setting, with the remainder taking place in private spaces.

The sources used in this report have found no evidence that the proportion of violence occurring in a private space is more prevalent today than it was ten years ago, with most violent crime continuing to occur in a public setting. The SCJS estimates that over three-fifths (62%) of violent crimes took place in a public setting in 2017-18, with the victim's place of work being the most commonly cited specific location.

A similar pattern is seen for some types of violent crime recorded by the police. Over two-thirds of Attempted murder & Serious assault, and three-quarters of Robbery in 2017-18 occurred in a public setting. In contrast, most Homicides occur within a private setting, though this was already the case a decade ago.

The likelihood of being a victim of violent crime for adults living in each Police Division was no different to the national average over the period 2016-18⁸, with the exception of Highlands & Islands where the prevalence rate was lower. The police continue to record higher rates of Homicide, Attempted murder & Serious assault in and around the city of Glasgow (i.e. the west of Scotland), however, this area also experienced the largest decrease in these specific types of recorded violent crime since 2008-09.

The incidence rate of violent crime in Scotland is higher during the weekend – though a majority of violent crime continues to occur during a weekday. This is consistent across all sources included here and has remained unchanged since 2008-09.

► Where Does Violent Crime Happen?

As in previous years, the majority of violent crime occurs in public spaces.

62%

of violent crime happens in public spaces.



38%

of violent crime happens in private spaces.



Glasgow has seen the largest decrease in a range of types of serious violence since 2008-09, though rates of violent crime there remain high.

⁸ 2016-17 and 2017-18 combined to provide Police Division level results, so the national average here also relates to this two year period for the purposes of comparison.

3.5 Are there now more alcohol and/or drug related violent incidents?

Alcohol has played a less prominent role in violent crime in recent years than a decade ago, but nonetheless remains a factor in a substantial proportion of violent incidents.

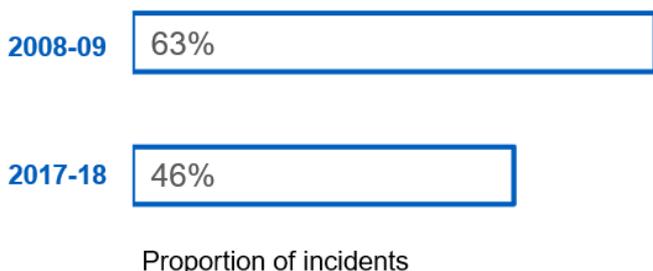
The 2017-18 SCJS found that perpetrators were believed to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs in 62% of violent incidents where the victims were able to say something about the perpetrator.

Perpetrators were believed to be under the influence of alcohol in 46% of violent incidents (down from 63% in 2008-09), while reports of the perpetrator being under the influence of drugs remained unchanged (36% in 2017-18). These figures include incidents where a perpetrator was believed to be under the influence of both alcohol and drugs.

When looking at violent incidents that involved *only* drugs or *only* alcohol, there has been a change in the composition with a smaller proportion of incidents involving only alcohol (from 39% in 2008-09 to 26% in 2017-18) and more involving only drugs (from 5% in 2008-09 to 16% in 2017-18).

Within the analysis of Police Recorded Crime data, references to either perpetrator(s), victim(s) or both being under the influence of alcohol is higher than reference to drug use. This is particularly noticeable in Attempted murder & Serious assault crimes, where most (63%) made some form of reference to alcohol (either with regards to the perpetrators(s), victim(s), or both). Whereas, one in ten (10%) made reference to the consumption of drugs. Over the same period, almost a third (31%) of Police Recorded Crime Robbery records made a reference to the consumption of alcohol, while one in five records (21%) made reference to the consumption of drugs.

► When was Alcohol Involved in Violent Crime?



Overall, SCJS data shows that alcohol has played a less prominent role in violent crime in recent years compared to a decade ago.

3.6 Are there now more violent incidents involving weapons?

Violent incidents where a weapon was used are less common now than they were in the last decade. Crimes of possessing, but not using, an offensive weapon in public are down over the longer term but have increased in the most recent years.

The SCJS found that, where someone saw or heard what was happening, 12% of violent incidents included the presence of a weapon in 2017-18, down from 25% in 2010-2011⁹. The number of Hospital Admissions due to Assault with a sharp object have fallen by over three-fifths (61%) between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Over the past decade, there has been a large reduction in the volume of violent crimes reported to the police that involved the use of a weapon. For example, there was an estimated fewer 1,120 crimes of Attempted murder & Serious assault involving a weapon and 720 Robberies involving a knife in 2017-18 compared with 2008-09.

The most commonly used method as part of a Homicide in Scotland was with a sharp instrument, with around half (51%) of all victims killed in this way since 2008-09. Over the past ten years the number of victims of Homicide fell by over two-fifths (45% or 50 victims) from 111 for the three years ending 2008-09¹⁰ to 61 for the three years ending 2017-18. This reduction has been driven by Homicides that involved the use of a weapon¹¹ (down 31 victims or 44%) compared to when a weapon was not involved (down 19 victims or 47%).

► Violent Crime and Use of Weapons

A weapon was present in **12%** of Attempted murder & Serious Assault.



A knife or other sharp instrument was involved in:



59%
of Homicides

59%
of Attempted murder &
Serious Assault

35%
of Robberies

⁹ This data was first collected on the current basis in 2010-2011.

¹⁰ Three year averages are used when analysing Homicide data in order to mitigate against large fluctuations that can occur year-on-year.

¹¹ Includes where the method of killing was either a shooting or with a sharp or blunt instrument.

Police recorded crimes of possessing, but not using, an offensive weapon in a public setting have shown large reductions since 2008-09 - falling by over half (53%, or 4,764 crimes) from 8,980 in 2008-09 to 4,216 in 2018-19 (**Table 31**), but increasing by around a third (36%, or 1,105 crimes) since 2015-16, when 3,111 crimes were recorded. A subset of this information, crimes of having in a public place an article with a blade or point, fell by a third (34%) since 2008-09. These crimes have also seen a rise in recent years, increasing by around two-fifths (43%) since 2014-15.

3.7 How does non-sexual violence in Scotland compare to England and Wales?

Statistics on crime in both Scotland and in England & Wales are derived from two main sources: Police Recorded Crime and national surveys; the Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW) and the SCJS.

However due to differing definitions and collection methods, it is not advisable to make direct comparisons of volumes and prevalence of most types of violent crime between Scotland and England and Wales using Police Recorded Crime or survey data.

For example, police in Scotland use a different set of rules to count recorded crime than those in England & Wales. For many incidents, multiple crimes will be counted in Scotland but only the most serious one will be counted south of the border.

There are also differences in the methodological approaches taken in crime surveys in Scotland and England & Wales, reflecting the different criminal justice systems in which they operate and the associated coding of crimes in the respective surveys.

However while direct comparisons are challenging, analysis of the 2017-18 CSEW¹² suggests that trends in overall violent crime are similar to those seen in Scotland in the SCJS, with a relatively small proportion of adults experiencing violent crime in England and Wales and the number of incidents falling over the longer term but being more stable in recent years (as shown in [Section 2.1](#)).

As in Scotland, the longer term reduction in violence in England and Wales, as shown by the CSEW is also reflected in their respective Police Recorded Crime statistics. NHS hospital data from England and Wales found that admissions due to assault for the year ending 2018 were 33% lower than ten years previously.

Crimes involving knives or sharp instruments increased over the year ending December 2018 by 6% in England & Wales, to the highest figure since 2011. It is thought that some of this rise may reflect improvements in recording, however the main driver may be a 'real rise' as 31 out of 43 police forces recorded an increase, which is reflected by other data sources. It is also possible that more targeted police action may have led to more offences coming to the attention of the police. The rise in these crimes is supported by hospital data in England and Wales, with a

¹²<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables> (Table A3)

15% increase in admissions for assault by a sharp object during the year to March 2018.

An equivalent measure of knife crime is not available in Scotland, though statistics are produced on recorded crimes of handling offensive weapons or bladed / pointed articles (the latter of which mostly consists of knives). This includes both where the weapon was not used to commit a further crime / offence against a person and where it was used. Long term statistics are available on the former, but were only collected from 2017-18 for the latter. There were 2,709 crimes of handling an article with a blade or point (not used) in 2018-19, up 16% on 2017-18. These crimes have been increasing since 2014-15, across the majority of local authorities, though remain lower nationally than all years between 1999-2000 and 2011-12.

There has been a similar long term decrease in both Hospital Admissions due to assaults involving knives or other sharp objects and in convictions for knife crimes, such as for handling offensive weapons. In more recent years, these measures have remained broadly stable, despite the 43% rise in the number of Police Recorded Crimes of handling an article with a blade or point (not used) since 2014-15. However, it should be noted that statistics for 2018-19 are not yet available for both hospital admissions and criminal convictions, and will need reviewed in due course to determine whether any increase in Police Recorded Crime has started to have an impact in other areas.

4 Victims of Violent Crime



4.1 What do we know about victims of violent crime?

4.1.1 Trends in the ages of victims of violent crime

► Key Findings:

The SCJS shows the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime generally decreased with age. However, the most recent survey found no difference in the likelihood of experiencing violent crime between those aged 16-24 and 25-44 years old.

Police Recorded Crime data suggests those aged 16-24 and 25-44 years old are more likely than other age groups to experience some types of violent crime, including Attempted murder & Serious assault and Robbery.

Taken together, all sources suggest that the long-term reduction in violent crime since 2008-09 has been driven in large part by falls in the number of relatively younger victims. As a result of this fall, the average age of victims has increased for many types of recorded violent crime.

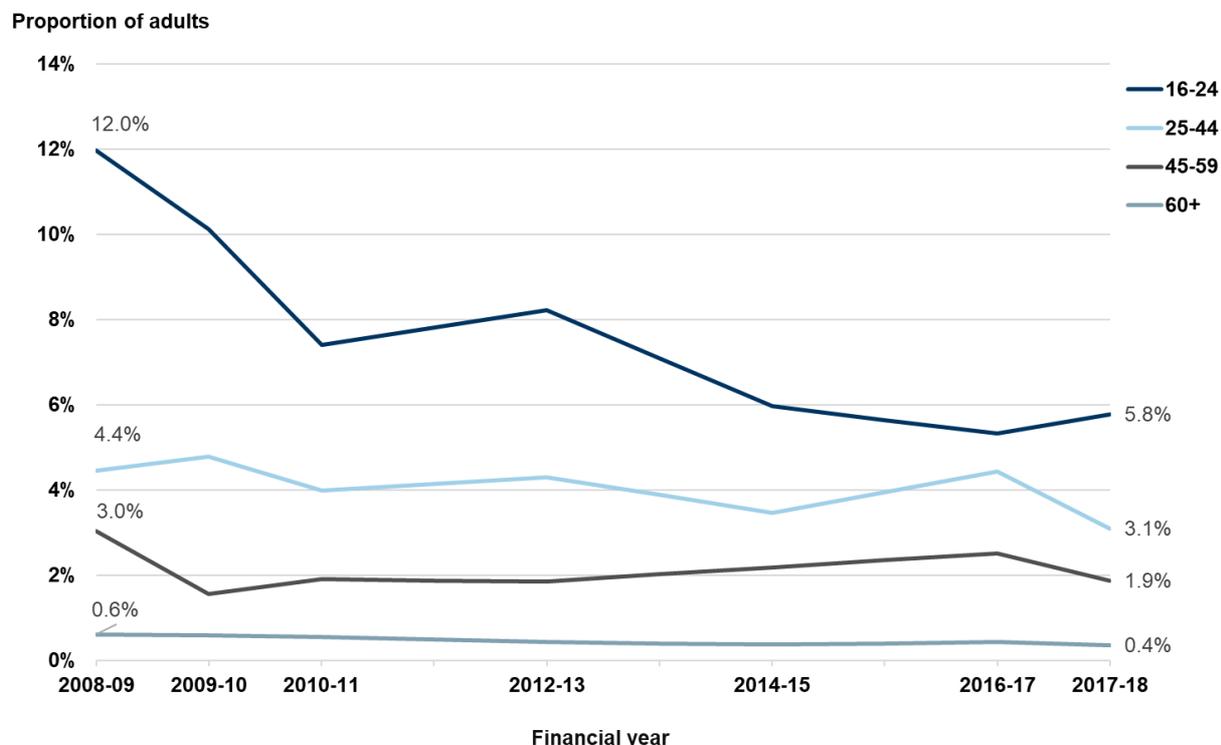
► *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The SCJS found in 2017-18 that the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime generally decreased with age. For example 5.8% of 16-24 year olds experienced at least one violent crime in 2017-18, compared to 1.9% of those aged 45-59 and 0.4% of those aged 60 and over. There was no difference in the likelihood of experiencing violent crime between those aged 16-24 and 25-44 years old.

The prevalence rate for young people aged 16-24 has fallen significantly since 2008-09, when 12.0% of people in this age group experienced at least one violent crime. No changes were seen in any other age group during this time - the

apparent decrease in other prevalence rates is not statistically significant. Figure 5 shows prevalence rates for the different age groups over time.

► **Figure 5: Proportion of adults experiencing a violent crime, by age, 2008-09 to 2017-18.**



Base: SCJS 2008/09 (16,000); 2009/10 (16,040); 2010/11 (13,010); 2012/13 (12,050); 2014/15 (11,470); 2016/17 (5,570); 2017/18 (5,480) Variable: PREVVIOLENT, QDAGE.
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► **Police Recorded Crime**

Most Police Recorded Crime statistics do not include information on victim age – however some findings are available from additional studies of this data (based on a review of crime records) and other statistical sources, like the Homicide National Statistics.

The median age of a Homicide victim over the three years ending 2017-18 was 40 years old, compared to 35 years old for the three years ending 2008-09. Between those two periods the number of Homicide victims fell by 46% from 337 during the three years ending 2008-09 to 183 during the three years ending 2017-18. Most of this reduction was due to falls in the number of 16 to 24 year old victims (down from 75 to 26) and 25 to 44 year old victims (down from 150 to 84 victims) (Table 1).

Victims of Attempted murder or Serious assault were also older in 2017-18 than victims in 2008-09 - with their median age increasing from 27 to 31 years old. The volume of these crimes fell by 35% between those years, driven by reductions amongst those aged 16 to 24 years old and 25 to 44 years old (Table 2). For

example the estimated number of crimes with a victim aged 16 to 24 years old fell from 2,220 in 2008-09 to 1,100 by 2017-18, with equivalent figures for those aged 25 to 44 years old of 3,120 and 1,930. In contrast, there was a small increase in the estimated volume of cases for older age groups (45 to 59 years old, and 60 years and above).

Despite these reductions, Attempted murder & Serious assault victimisation rates remain higher for the younger age groups, with an estimated 18.6 and 13.8 victims per 10,000 population respectively for those aged 16 to 24 years old and 25 to 44 years old in 2017-18. Rates were much lower for those aged under 16 or 45 and above (**Table 3**).

Victims of Robbery were older in 2017-18 than victims in 2008-09 – with their median age increasing from 29 to 35 years old. The volume of these crimes fell by 49% between those years, driven by reductions amongst those aged 16 to 24 years old (down an estimated 610 cases), and to a lesser extent those aged 25 to 44 years old (**Table 4**). Those aged 16 to 24 years old and 25 to 44 years old remain at the greatest risk of Robbery (**Table 5**).

► **Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault**

Data on Emergency Hospital Admissions due to Assault reflect the findings of Police Recorded Crime. The total number of admissions fell by 55% between 2008-09 and 2017-18, with the vast majority of this reduction coming from the relatively younger age groups (**Table 6**). Those aged 16-24 years old were down 71% from 1,808 to 522, whilst those aged 25 to 49 years old were down 51% from 2,481 to 1,212.

► **Table 1: Homicide victims by age group, three years ending 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Age Group	3 years ending 2008-09		3 years ending 2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Volume	%	Volume	% Point Change	Volume Change
Under 16	4.8%	16	5.5%	10	↑ by 0.7%	-6
16 to 24	22.5%	75	14.2%	26	↓ by 8.2%	-49
25 to 44	44.9%	150	45.9%	84	↑ by 1.0%	-66
45 to 59	20.7%	69	23.0%	42	↑ by 2.3%	-27
60+	7.2%	24	11.5%	21	↑ by 4.3%	-3
Median age of victim²	35 years old		40 years old			
<i>All recorded Homicide¹</i>	100%	334	100%	183	n/a	-151

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ² Three year moving average age.

Source: Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18

► **Table 2: Attempted murder & Serious assault victims by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Age Group	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Under 16	4.4%	280	4.9%	210	No change	-70
16 to 24	34.4%	2,220	26.3%	1,100	↓ by 8.0%	-1,120
25 to 44	48.2%	3,120	46.1%	1,930	No change	-1,190
45 to 59	10.9%	710	18.0%	750	↑ by 7.1%	40
60+	1.3%	80	3.4%	140	No change	60
Unknown	0.9%	60	1.3%	50	No change	-10
Median age of victim	27 years old		31 years old			
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

► **Table 3: Attempted murder & Serious assault victims per 10,000 population by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Age Groups	2008-09	2017-18
	Victims per 10,000 Population	Victims per 10,000 Population
Under 16	3.1	2.2
16 to 24	36.3	18.6
25 to 44	21.9	13.8
45 to 59	6.6	6.4
60+	0.7	1.1
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	12.4	7.7

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

► **Table 4: Robbery victims by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Age group	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Under 16	7.0%	220	6.1%	100	No change	-120
16 to 24	29.7%	920	19.4%	310	↓ by 10.3%	-610
25 to 44	41.9%	1,300	45.6%	720	No change	-580
45 to 59	13.0%	400	19.2%	300	↑ by 6.2%	-100
60+	8.4%	260	9.6%	150	No change	-110
Median age of victim	29 years old		35 years old			
<i>Total Robbery^{1, 2}</i>	100%	3,100	100%	1,580	n/a	-1,520

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Table 5: Robbery victims per 10,000 population by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Age Group	2008-09	2017-18
	Victims per 10,000 Population	Victims per 10,000 Population
Under 16	2.4	1.1
16 to 24	15.0	5.2
25 to 44	9.2	5.1
45 to 59	3.7	2.6
60+	2.2	1.1
<i>Total Robbery^{1, 2}</i>	6.0	2.9

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Table 6: All recorded Hospital Admissions for assault by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Age Group	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Under 16	4.1%	216	5.9%	140	↑ by 1.8%	-76
16 to 24	34.2%	1,808	21.9%	522	↓ by 12.3%	-1,286
25 to 44	46.9%	2,481	50.9%	1,212	↑ by 4%	-1,269
45 to 59	12.4%	653	17.7%	421	↑ by 5.3%	-232
60+	2.4%	127	3.7%	87	↑ by 1.3%	-40
<i>All hospital admissions due to assault¹</i>	100%	5,285	100%	2,382	n/a	-2,903

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Source: ISD Scotland: Scottish Morbidity Record (SMR01), Unintentional Injuries Statistics, 2008-9 & 2017-18

4.1.2 Gender of victims of violent crime

▶ Key Findings:

The SCJS finds no difference in violent crime victimisation rates between males and females, though females are much more likely to report having experienced Partner abuse through the additional self-completion module of the survey.

Police Recorded Crime data suggests males are much more likely to experience the lower volume types of violence that include severe physical injuries (for example Homicide and Attempted murder & Serious assault), with little difference detected by gender for the higher volume types of violence that include less severe physical injury or no physical injury at all (Common assault).

The SCJS, Police Recorded Crime and Hospital Admissions data all suggest the reduction in violence since 2008-09 has been driven by fewer incidents with a male victim.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

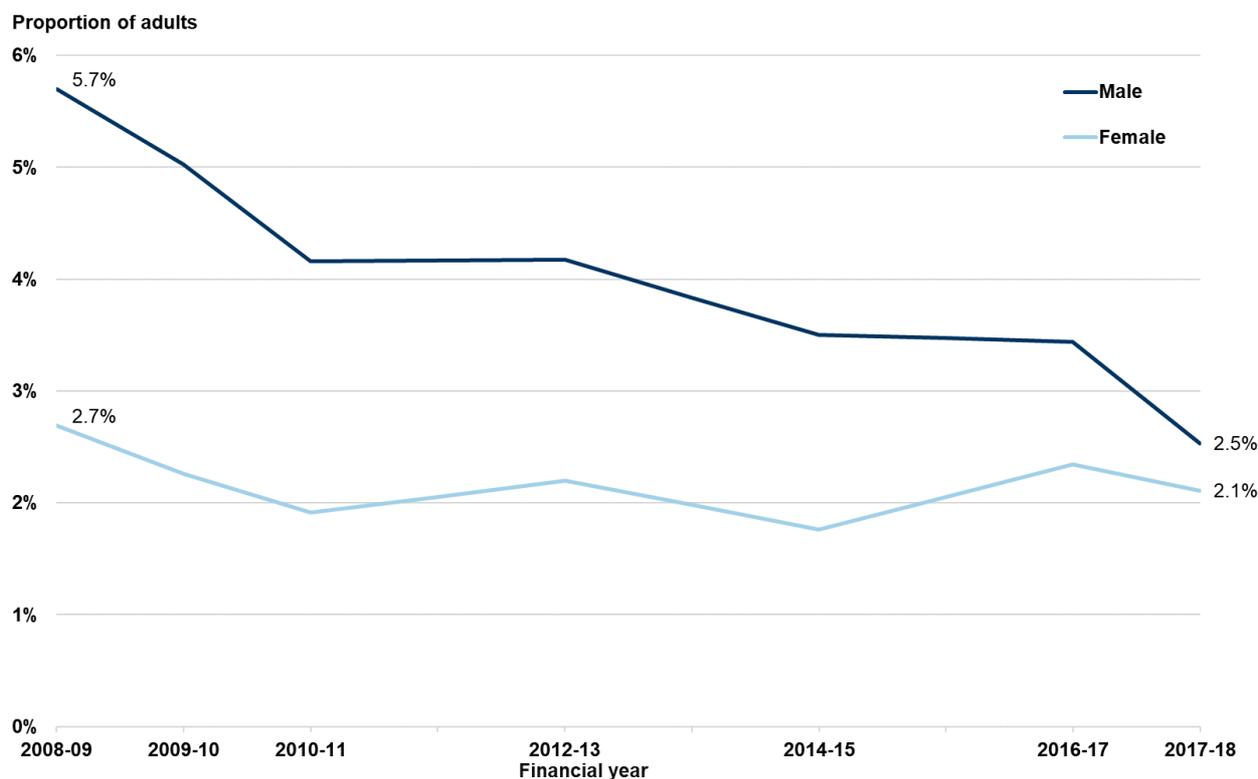
The SCJS found no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime by gender in 2017-18, with 2.5% of males and 2.1% of females experiencing at least one violent crime.

This marks a significant change since 2008-09, when 5.7% of males experienced at least one violent crime, compared to 2.7% of females, see Figure 6. As such the reduction in the prevalence of violence since 2008-09 is due to a fall in male victims, with no change detected for females over this period – the apparent decrease to 2.1% is not statistically significant.

Respondents are asked about experiences of Partner abuse separately to other violent crimes, as part of the self-completion section of the survey. These results suggest that females are more likely to experience Partner abuse, with the 2016-18¹³ SCJS figures estimating that 20.0% have experienced psychological or physical abuse since the age of 16 compared to 10.9% of males. Looking at more recent experiences in particular, the SCJS also found that 3.6% of females experienced Partner abuse in the 12 months prior to interview, compared to 2.3% of males.

¹³ 2016-17 and 2017-18 combined.

► **Figure 6: Proportion of adults experiencing a violent crime, by gender, 2008-09 to 2017-18.**



Base: SCJS 2008/09 (16,000); 2009/10 (16,040); 2010/11 (13,010); 2012/13 (12,050); 2014/15 (11,470); 2016/17 (5,570); 2017/18 (5,480) Variable: PREVVIOLENT, TABQDGEN
 Source: Scottish Crime & Justice Survey, 2008-09 to 2017-18

► **Police Recorded Crime**

Most Police Recorded Crime statistics do not include information on victim gender – however some findings are available from additional studies of this data (based on a review of Police Recorded Crime records) and other statistical sources, like the Homicide National Statistics¹⁴.

Where violent crime is recorded by the police, it will either include the victim sustaining a severe physical injury (such as broken bones or wounds that will scar) or the victim may sustain a less severe physical injury / no physical injury at all (see [Section 4.1.5](#) for more detail on injuries and the impact of violent crime). The former occurs in relatively small volumes, with males much more likely than females to

¹⁴ A new statutory offence of Domestic abuse was introduced on the 1st April 2019, targeting those who engage in coercive or controlling behaviour towards their partners or ex-partners. Scottish Government statisticians will undertake a study into the characteristics of this new offence, and how it was used during its first year of operation - based on a review of crime records. This will be published in the autumn of 2020.

face this type of violence. The latter occurs in much higher volumes with little difference seen between the overall experiences of males and females.

For example, 74% of Homicide victims over the three-years ending 2017-18 were male (**Table 7**), as too were 80% of Attempted murder & Serious assault victims in 2017-18 (**Table 8**). Males also made up a majority (60%) of Robbery victims in 2017-18, though it should be noted most Robbery does not include any physical injury to the victim (**Table 9**). In contrast, a 2014-15 study found that almost identical proportions of Common assault victims were male or female (49% each, with 2% unknown – **Table 10**) – with female victims much more likely than males to be assaulted by a partner / ex-partner (46% versus 14%)¹⁵. This study also found that around half of Common assaults involved no injury to the victim – a proportion that did not change depending on the victim's gender.

Where a comparison can be made over time, it is clear that reductions in the volume of violence that includes severe physical injuries has been driven by fewer crimes with male victims. For example there were an estimated 5,650 male victims of Attempted murder & Serious assault in 2008-09, falling to 3,340 by 2017-18. At the same time the estimated number of female victims remained almost unchanged (820 in 2008-09 and 850 in 2017-18). Crimes of Homicide or Robbery show a similar trend, where reductions in male victims have been larger than for females.

▶ ***Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault***

Whilst it is not possible to make direct comparisons between Hospital admissions and Police recorded crime data (see [Annex 2](#)), these sources do both generally relate to how Scotland's emergency services respond to the most serious types of assault, and so it would be anticipated that both should show similar patterns and trends over time. This appears to be the case with males making up the clear majority of Emergency Hospital Admissions due to Assault in 2017-18 (86%), with most of the reduction in these Hospital Admissions over the past ten years coming from admissions of male victims (i.e. total admissions fell by 2,902 between 2008-09 and 2017-18, whilst those with a male victim fell by 2,566) (**Table 11**).

¹⁵ Recorded Crime 2015-16 National Statistics: Additional Analysis of Common Assault Offences

► **Table 7: All recorded Homicide victims by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Gender	3 years ending 2008-09		3 years ending 2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Volume	%	Volume	% Point Change	Volume Change
Male	78%	262	74%	136	↓ by 4%	-126
Female	22%	72	26%	47	↑ by 4%	-25
<i>All recorded Homicide¹</i>	100%	334	100%	183	n/a	-151

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Source: Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18

► **Table 8: Attempted murder & Serious assault victims by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Gender	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Male	87%	5,650	80%	3,340	↓ by 7%	-2,310
Female	13%	820	20%	850	↑ by 7%	30
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

► **Table 9: Robbery victims by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Victim's Gender	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Male / All male group	71%	2,100	60%	930	↓ by 11%	-1,170
Female / All female group	27%	800	38%	590	↑ by 11%	-210
Mixed Group / Other / Unknown	2%	60	2%	30	No change	-30
<i>Total Robbery^{1,2}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Table 10: Common assault victims by gender, 2014-15.**

Victim's Gender	2014-15	
	%	Est. Volume
Male	49%	28,331
Female	49%	28,798
<i>All recorded Common Assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	58,178

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of 500 crime records from 2014-15

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2014-15

► **Table 11: All recorded Hospital Admissions due to Assault by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Gender	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Male	87%	4,613	86%	2,047	↓ by 1%	-2,566
Female	13%	673	14%	337	↑ by 1%	-336
<i>All hospital admissions due to assault¹</i>	100%	5,286	100%	2,384	n/a	-2,902

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Source: ISD Scotland: Scottish Morbidity Record (SMR01), Unintentional Injuries Statistics, 2008-9 & 2017-18

4.1.3 Levels of repeat victimisation

► Key Findings:

The SCJS estimates that almost three-fifths of all violent crime in 2017-18 was experienced by repeat victims, who experienced an average of 3 incidents each.

The additional self-completion module of the SCJS on Partner abuse shows that in 2016-18¹⁶, around three in five respondents (61%) who reported an incident of Partner abuse in the last 12 months had experienced more than one incident.

Hospital Admissions data shows that in 2017-18, the proportion of people admitted to hospital due to an assault who also had an admission for assault in the last 5 years was 11%.

► *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The SCJS enables us to explore how experiences of violence vary amongst victims and examine the concentration of crime. This includes what proportion of victims have experienced violence more than once in the last year, which is known as 'repeat victimisation'¹⁷.

Table 12 explores the volume of crime experienced by victims in more detail to outline the extent of repeat victimisation. It shows that 1.6% of adults were victims of a single violent incident over the year, with a smaller proportion of the population (0.7%) experiencing repeat victimisation (two or more violent crimes). These repeat victims are estimated to have experienced on average around 3 violent crimes each during 2017-18, whilst together this group of adults are estimated to have experienced almost three-fifths (59%) of all violent crime committed against adults over this period. The table also highlights that an even smaller proportion of the population (0.1%) were high frequency repeat victims who experienced five or more incidents each.

Figure 7 shows trends in single and repeat violent crime victimisation over time. It highlights that the proportion of adults experiencing only one incident of violence, or repeat victimisation (2+ or 5+ incidents) were all lower in 2017-18 than in 2008-09.

The proportion experiencing two or more violent crimes has been below the 2008-09 baseline (1.6%) since 2010-11 with the exception of 2016-17 when the 1.1%

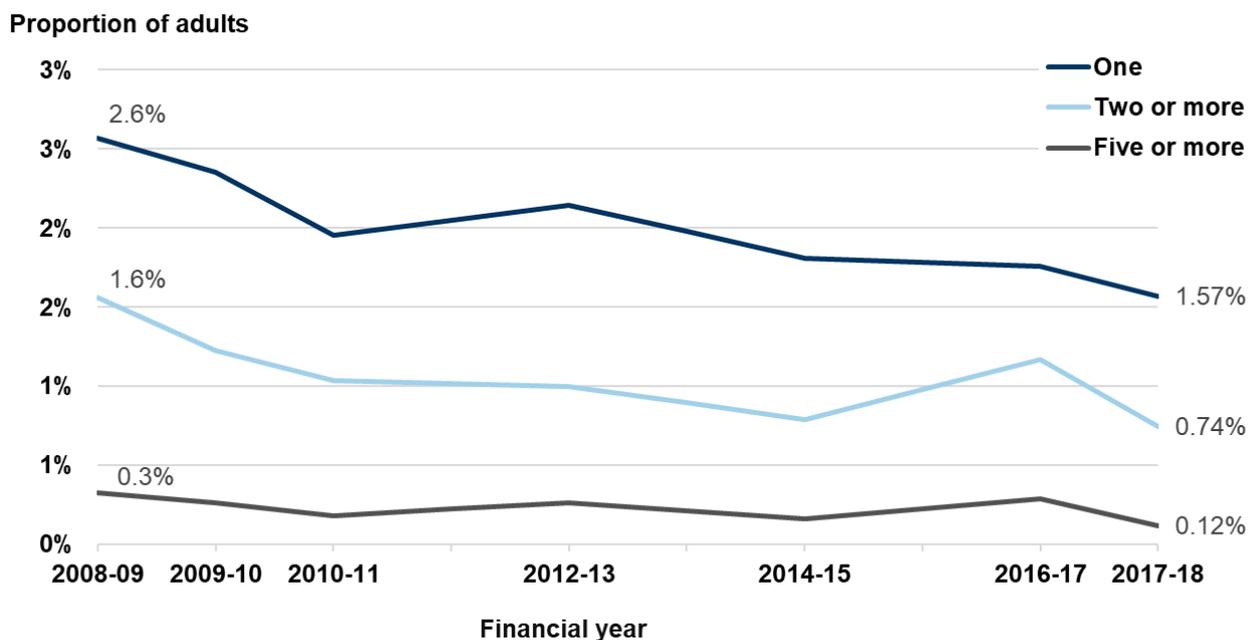
¹⁶ 2016-17 and 2017-18 data combined

¹⁷ For further information, see the SCJS Methodological Note:
<https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0054/00546917.pdf>

estimate was not significantly different to the 2008-09 figure. The return to a significant decrease comparing 2008-09 and the latest figure suggests that the 2016-17 figure may have been an outlier in an otherwise declining trend.

However, although repeat victimisation is consistently very rare, the proportion of adults experiencing five or more violent crimes has shown a less consistent trend and has only been below the 2008-09 baseline figure (0.3%) in 2014-15 (0.2%) and 2017-18 (0.1%). As such it will be important to monitor these findings into the future to see whether the lower victimisation rate seen in 2017-18 is maintained.

► **Figure 7: Proportion of adults experiencing single or repeat violent crimes.**



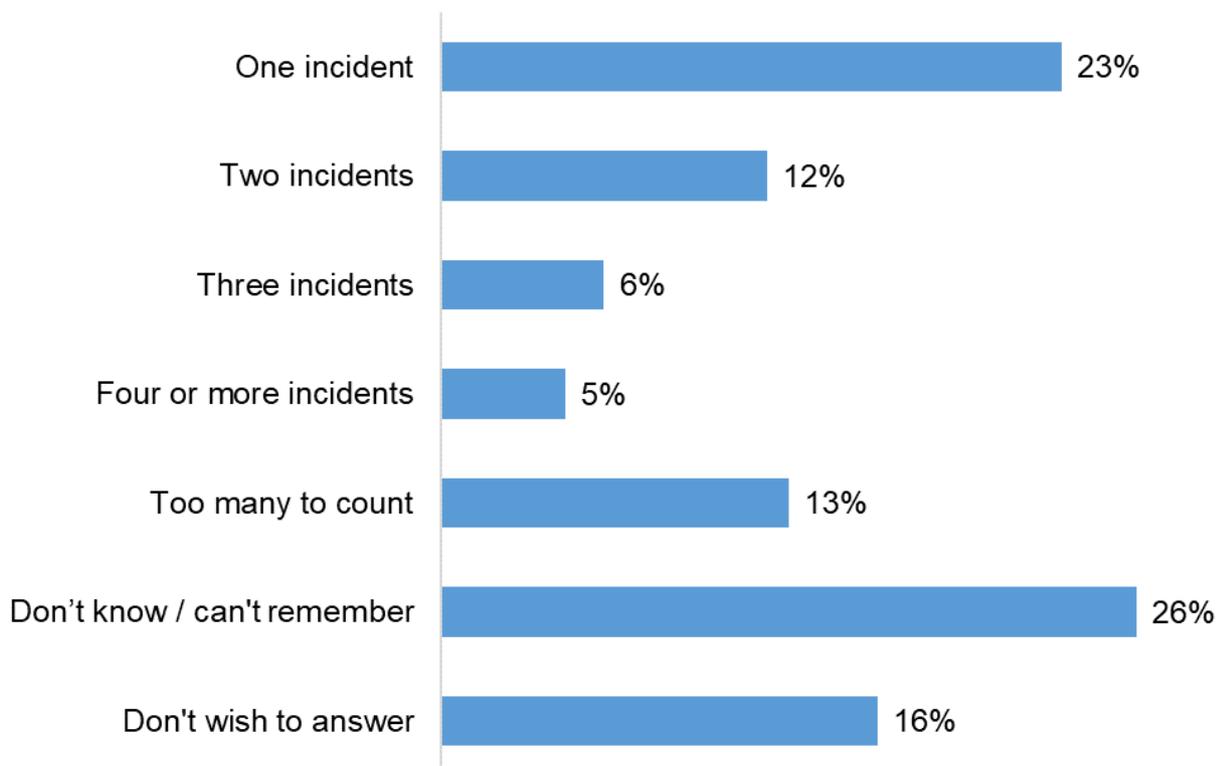
Base: SCJS 2008/09 (16,000); 2009/10 (16,040); 2010/11 (13,010); 2012/13 (12,050); 2014/15 (11,470); 2016/17 (5,570); 2017/18 (5,480). Variable: PREVVIOLENT, INCVIOLENT.
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

The above results come from the face-to-face element of the SCJS. However, further information on repeat victimisation is available from the Partner abuse section of the SCJS self-completion module. In 2016-18, just under two-thirds (63%) of those who reported an incident of Partner abuse in the 12 months prior to interview also reported at least one incident prior to this period.

Respondents who reported Partner abuse within the 12 months prior to interview were asked how many incidents of abuse they had experienced within this time period. Excluding those who responded 'don't know / can't remember' or who did not wish to answer, around three in five respondents (61%) had experienced more than one incident. Overall, 23% had experienced one incident, 12% experienced two incidents, 6% experienced three incidents, and 5% experienced four or more

incidents. A further 13% said that there were too many incidents to count. Figure 8 presents the findings.

► **Figure 8: Number of incidents of Partner abuse experienced in the 12 months prior to interview.**



Base: All respondents experiencing at least one type of partner abuse in the 12 months prior to interview (180). Variable: DA_6

Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► **Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault**

Data on Hospital Admissions for Assault provides further information about repeat victimisation in Scotland and demonstrates whether people have had a previous assault in the last 5 years or whether this is their first assault. It is important to note that this does not include previous assaults that resulted in minor injuries that did not require admission to hospital.

Table 13 shows that in 2017-18, the proportion of people admitted to hospital due to an assault who had any admissions for assault in the previous 5 years was 11%. This was higher for males than females (12% and 7% respectively). In 2008-09, the proportion of people admitted to hospital due to an assault who had any admissions for assault in the previous 5 years was higher than 2017-18, at 15%. As in 2017-18, this was higher for males (15%) than females (11%).

► **Table 12: Proportion of violent crime experienced by repeat victims, by number of crimes experienced, 2017-18.**

Number of Violent Crimes Experienced	% of Population	% of Violent Crime ¹
None	97.7%	0%
One	1.6%	41%
Two	0.5%	26%
Three	0.1%	4%
Four	0.1%	9%
Five or more	0.1%	20%
Two or more	0.7%	59%

¹Based on a sample of 5,480 people. Variables used: PREVVIOLENT, INCVIOLENT.

Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► **Table 13: All repeat Hospital Admissions due to Assault in proceeding 5 years by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Gender	5 years ending 2008-09		5 years ending 2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Male	15.1%	697	11.8%	241	↓ by 3.3%	-456
Female	11.0%	74	6.8%	23	↓ by 4.2%	-51
<i>All repeat hospital admissions due to assault¹</i>	14.6%	771	11.1%	264	↓ by 3.5%	-507

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Source: ISD Scotland: Scottish Morbidity Record (SMR01), Unintentional Injuries Statistics, 2008-9 & 2017-18

4.1.4 Where do victims live? Deprivation¹⁸ and violent crime

▶ Key Findings:

The 2017-18 SCJS finds that adults living in Scotland's most deprived areas are more likely to have been victims of violence than those living elsewhere and that while the prevalence of violence has fallen in less deprived areas over recent years, it has not fallen in more deprived areas.

Analysis of Police Recorded Crime data provides similar results, with 31% of victims of Robbery estimated to have lived in the 15% most deprived areas, while 33% of victims of Attempted murder & Serious assault were resident in these areas.

In terms of violence in urban and rural areas, the SCJS found no difference between urban and rural prevalence of violence in 2017-18, whereas in 2008-09 adults living in urban areas were more likely to have been victims of violence than those living in rural areas.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

Overall, the 2017-18 SCJS showed that adults living in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland were almost twice as likely to have been victims of violence than people living elsewhere. The prevalence rate for adults living in the 15% most deprived areas (3.8% in 2017-18) has not shown any change since 2008-09, whereas the rate has reduced for those living in the rest of Scotland (from 3.8% to 2.1%).

While there is no statistically significant difference in the likelihood of having experienced violence between those who live in urban and rural areas, the most recent SCJS found that the likelihood of experiencing violence has decreased for those living in urban areas (from 4.6% to 2.5%), but has shown no change in rural areas.

▶ *Police Recorded Crime*

Victims of the crime of Robbery typically live in areas of higher deprivation, with 31% of victims of Robbery estimated to have lived in Scotland's 15% most deprived areas (**Table 14**). It is also notable that 83% of Robbery victims in 2017-18 are estimated to have lived in an urban area, while 70% of Scotland's population live in those areas. Relatively few victims of Robbery live in a rural or small town setting

¹⁸ See [Annex 2](#)

(around 11% in 2017-18, compared to the 30% of Scotland's population that lives in those areas).

A similar result was seen in an examination of crimes of Attempted murder & Serious assault, with 33% of victims in 2017-18 living in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland, while 77% of victims of Attempted murder & Serious assault are estimated to have lived in an urban area (**Table 15**).

► **Table 14: Robbery recorded by location, SIMD and Urban / Rural classification, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Location	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
15% Most Deprived Areas	29%	870	31%	480	No change	-110
Rest of Scotland	65%	1,930	63%	980	No change	-950
Unknown	5%	160	6%	100	No change	-60
In an Urban Area	85%	2,500	83%	1,290	No change	-1,260
In a Small Town	5%	160	8%	120	No change	-40
In a Rural Area	5%	140	3%	50	No change	-90
Unknown	5%	160	6%	100	No change	-60
<i>Total Robbery^{1,2}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Table 15: Attempted murder & Serious assault recorded by location, SIMD and Urban / Rural classification, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Location	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
15% Most Deprived Areas	38%	2,440	33%	1,400	No change	-1,040
Rest of Scotland	56%	3,640	60%	2,530	No change	-1,110
Unknown	6%	400	6%	270	No change	-130
In an Urban Area	78%	5,060	77%	3,230	No change	-1,830
In a Small Town	8%	530	9%	380	No change	-150
In a Rural Area	7%	480	8%	320	No change	-160
Unknown	6%	400	6%	270	No change	-130
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

4.1.5 Injuries and the impact of violent crime

▶ Key Findings:

SCJS data shows two-thirds of violent crimes resulted in injury, although serious injuries were relatively rare.

Police Recorded Crime data shows that most Robbery and half of all Common assaults resulted in no injury. Where injuries were sustained, the majority were non-serious.

While serious injuries do result from crimes of violence, the majority of injuries sustained through Attempted murder & Serious assault were cuts that would leave a scar or disfigure but that were not caused by a sharp or bladed item, such as a knife.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

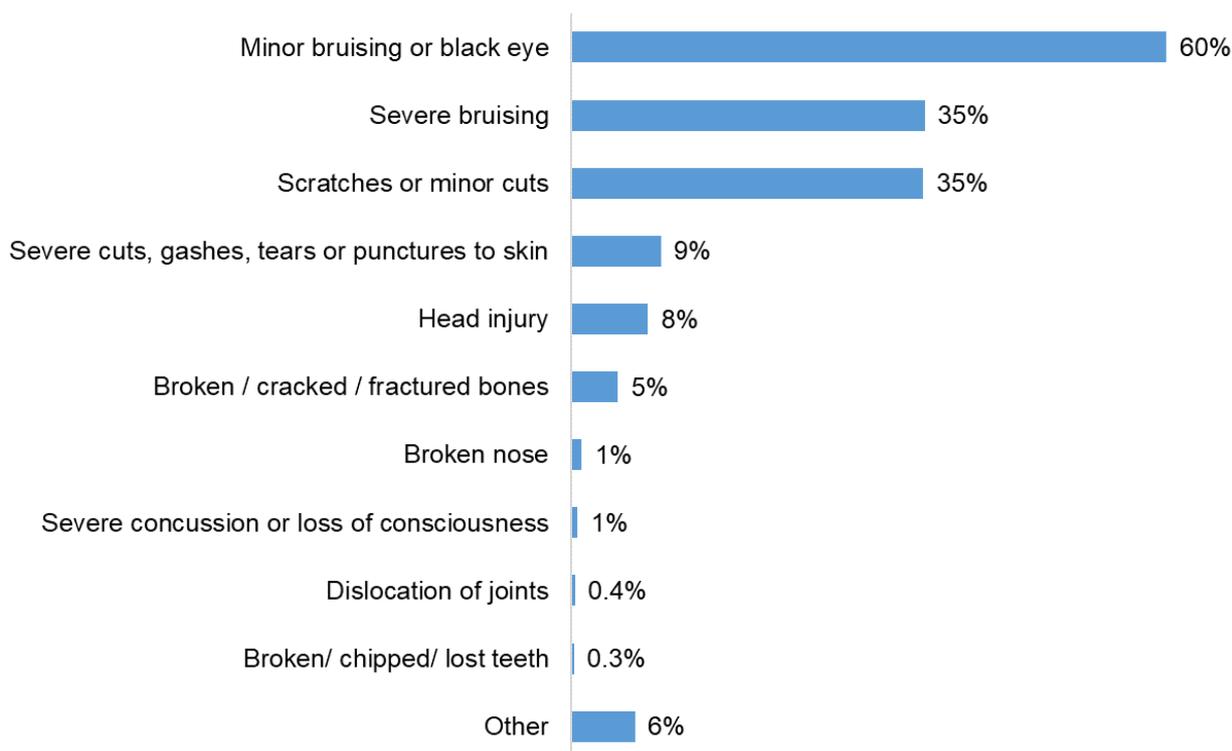
The 2017-18 SCJS found that two-thirds (66%) of violent crime resulted in injury, although serious injuries were rare. The most common incidents resulting in injuries were minor bruising or a black eye (60%), severe bruising (35%) and scratches or minor cuts (35%). More serious injuries such as broken bones occurred less frequently (Figure 9).

The consequences of violent crime for victims extends beyond physical injury and can include emotional impact. The SCJS is the only dataset that captures the emotional impact of violence, and therefore provides more detail regarding the impact of violence in Scotland. The 2017-18 SCJS found that the most commonly reported emotional impacts reported by victims of violent crime were anger (reported in 45% of violent incidents) and annoyance (44%), which was similar to in previous years. Victims in just over a quarter of incidents (27%) said they experienced none of the listed emotional impacts, up from 10% in 2008-09 and 8% in 2016-17.

When looking at the self-completion survey data, most (66%) respondents who reported experiencing at least one incident of Partner abuse in the last 12 months in 2016-18¹⁹ reported at least one psychological effect as a result of the most recent (or only) incident of abuse. Women were more likely than men to report such effects, with 80% of women and 44% of men reporting a psychological impact.

¹⁹ 2016-17 and 2017-18 combined.

► **Figure 9: SCJS data showing type of injuries sustained as a proportion of violent incidents resulting in injury.**



*Base: Violent crime incidents where respondent was injured (70); Variable: QINW
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18*

The most common psychological impact was low self-esteem, which was reported by 46% of respondents.

► **Police Recorded Crime**

Most Robbery (60%) did not result in any injury in 2017-18 (**Table 16**). This trend remains the same from 2008-09 when most Robbery (67%) also did not include a record of physical injury. In the 40% of Robberies that did include injury in 2017-18, 32% of these injuries were at the level of Common assault and 8% were at the level of Serious assault. The majority (80%) of injuries sustained through Robbery were lower-harm injuries²⁰.

Most injuries (42%) resulting from Serious assault or Attempted murder in 2017-18 involved the victim sustaining cuts that would leave a scar or a permanent disfigurement where the injury was not caused by a sharp item (**Table 17**). Injuries that resulted from the use of a sharp item accounted for 24% of injuries sustained from Serious assault or Attempted murder in 2017-18.

²⁰ Definition in [Glossary](#).

Around half of all Common assault cases in 2014-15 (data not available for 2017-18) involved little or no injury to the victim, this includes incidents where there was a failed attempt at physical contact from perpetrator to victim and incidents where the perpetrator spat on the victim (9%)²¹. Most of the incidents (43%) with confirmed contact between victim and perpetrator resulted in no or very little injury, or no mention of injury in the police record.

Around half of all Common assault cases in 2014-15 involved some degree of injury to the victim. The most frequently referred to injuries were scratches, lacerations and/or the drawing of blood (51% of cases), followed by bruising and/or swelling (42%), soreness and/or red marks (26%) and other injury types (15%)²². Of those records that note some kind of injury, almost three-quarters (72%) place at least some of those injuries around the head and neck area of the victim.

► **Table 16: Level of physical injury sustained by the victim from Robbery, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Level of Physical Injury Sustained by Victim	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
No Physical Injuries Reported	67%	1,990	60%	930	No Change	-1,060
Common Assault Level Injury	27%	800	32%	500	No Change	-300
Serious Assault Level Injury	6%	180	8%	120	No Change	-60
Unknown	-	-	*	*	*	*
<i>Total Robbery^{1,2,3}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

Note: Where no records were found a dash (-) has been used to signify this. Where a percentage is based on a low base, of less than five records, an asterisk (*) has been used to signify this.

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18); ³Where multiple injuries were sustained (or there was more than one injured victim), the most serious injury has been used to classify the case in the table.

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

²¹ Additional Analysis of Common Assault 2014-15 is available within [Recorded Crime National Statistics](#))

²² These figures add up to more than 100% as an assault can result in more than one injury.

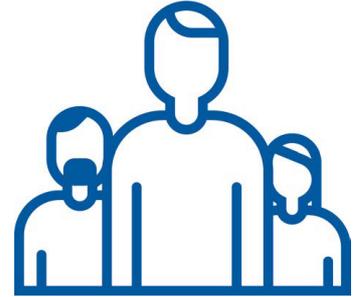
► **Table 17: Type of injury sustained by the victim from Attempted murder & Serious assault, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Type of Physical Injury Sustained by Victim	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Cuts / Permanent Disfigurement (not from sharp-item)	34%	2,210	42%	1,760	↑ by 8%	-450
Broken Bones / Fractures	24%	1,550	30%	1,270	No change	-280
Sharp-Item Related Injuries (stab or slash wounds)	29%	1,890	24%	990	No change	-900
Other¹ (incl. minor / no injury)	13%	810	4%	170	↓ by 9%	-640
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{2,3}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹Other injuries are collected as open text responses to capture injuries like bite marks, sore hands and scraped knuckles which cannot be coded under existing categories; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18); ³Where multiple injuries were sustained (or there was more than one injured victim), the most serious injury has been used to classify the case in the table.

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

5 Perpetrators of violent crime



5.1 What do we know about perpetrators of violent crime?

5.1.1 Trends in the ages of perpetrators of violent crime

▶ Key Findings:

There has been a fall in the percentage of SCJS violent incidents which involved perpetrators aged 16 to 24 from 46% in 2008-09 to 23% in 2017-18. However, findings still suggest that perpetrators of violent crime tend to be from younger age groups (under 40).

Police Recorded Crime data suggests the median age of perpetrators for several types of violence has increased since 2008-09, driven by a fall in those aged 16 to 24 years old.

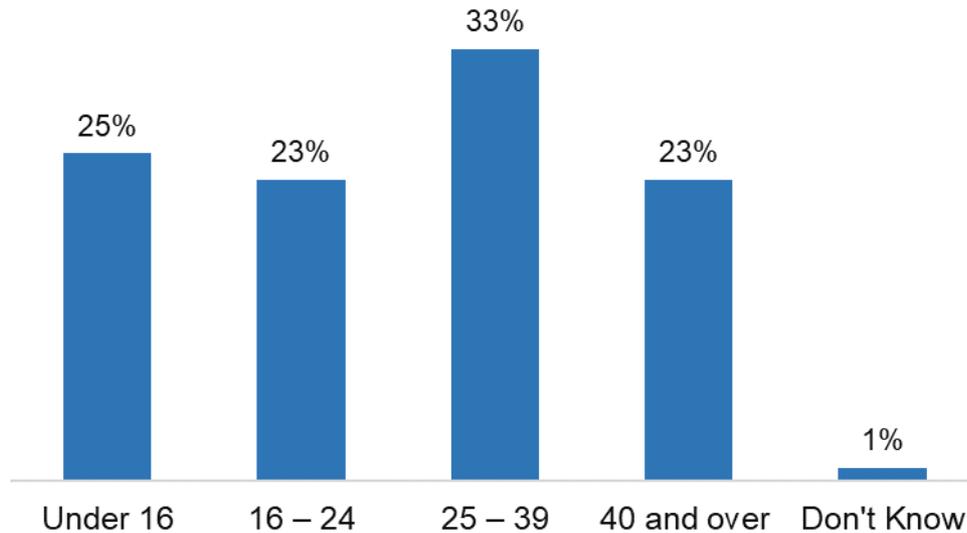
Criminal Proceedings data shows the reductions in convictions for non-sexual crimes of violence and Common assault over the past ten years have been driven by a fall in those aged under 30.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The SCJS found that violent crimes in 2017-18 were perpetrated by individuals from a range of age groups (Figure 10). However, only around one in every four incidents (23%) involved a perpetrator over the age of 40, suggesting perpetrators tended to be from younger cohorts²³.

²³ It is important to note that individual incidents may have involved perpetrators from different age groups. For instance, a proportion of the 23% of cases involving perpetrators aged 16-24 may have also involved perpetrators from other age groups.

► **Figure 10: Percentage of violent crime incidents involving offenders of each age group**



Base: Violent crime incidents where respondent could say something about offender (120); Variable: QAGE

Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► **Police Recorded Crime**

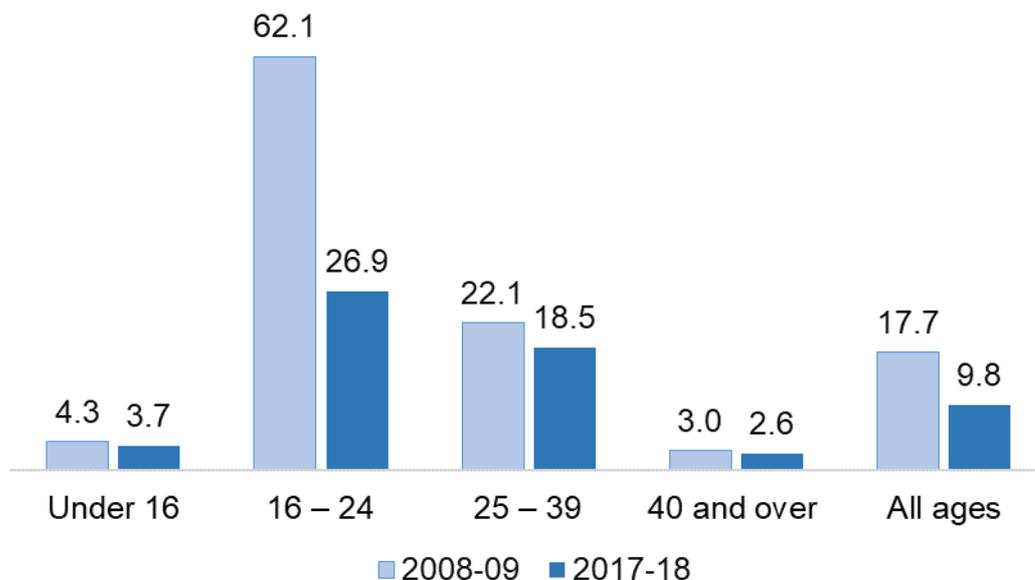
Most Police Recorded Crime statistics do not include information on perpetrator age – however some findings are available from additional studies of this data (based on a review of crime records) and other statistical sources, like the Homicide National Statistics.

The median age of a Homicide perpetrator over the three years ending 2017-18 was 31 years old, compared to 26 years old for the three years ending 2008-09 (**Table 18**). Between those two periods the number of Homicide perpetrators fell by 49%, from 450 during the three years ending 2008-09 to 228 during the three years ending 2017-18. Most of this reduction was due to falls in the number of 16 to 24 year old perpetrators (down from 188 to 61) and to a lesser extent those aged 25 to 39 years old (down from 157 to 102 perpetrators).

Perpetrators of Attempted murder & Serious assault were also older in 2017-18 than perpetrators in 2008-09 - with their median age increasing from 23 to 27 years old. The volume of these crimes fell by 35% between those years, driven by reductions in perpetrators aged 16 to 24 years old (**Table 19**). For example, the estimated number of crimes with at least one perpetrator aged 16 to 24 years old fell from 2,610 in 2008-09 to 1,250 by 2017-18 (or from 40% of all perpetrators to 30%).

Despite these reductions, those aged 16 to 24 were still the most likely to commit Attempted murder & Serious assault, with an estimated 26.9 perpetrators per 10,000 population (compared to 9.8 for all ages) (Figure 11). However this rate has more than halved since 2008-09 (when it was 62.1 perpetrators per 10,000 population), with much less change in rates for the other age groups.

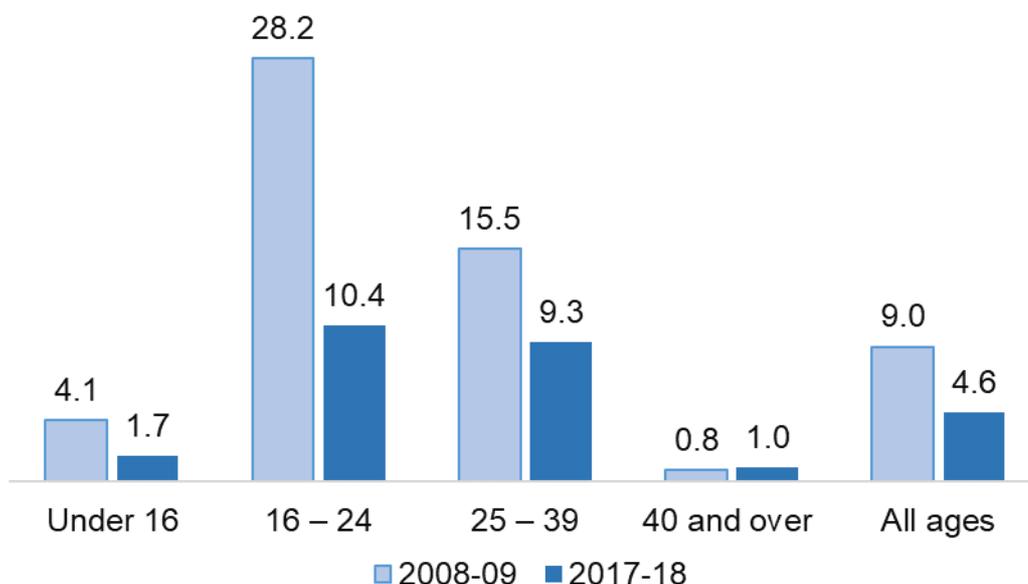
► **Figure 11: Number of perpetrators of Attempted murder & Serious assault per 10,000 population according to age of perpetrator, 2008-09 and 2017-18.**



Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

Perpetrators of Robbery were older in 2017-18 than perpetrators in 2008-09 – with their median age increasing from 23 to 28 years old. The volume of these crimes fell by 47% between those years, driven by reductions in perpetrators aged 16 to 24, and to a lesser extent those aged 25 to 39 years old (**Table 20**). At an estimated 10.4 perpetrators per 10,000 population in 2017-18, those aged 16 to 24 years old still remain the most likely to commit a Robbery (compared to 4.6 for all ages). However their rate is now only slightly higher than those aged 25 to 39 years old, having fallen 63% from an estimated 28.2 perpetrators per 10,000 population in 2008-09 (Figure 12).

► **Figure 12: Number of perpetrators of Robbery per 10,000 population according to age of perpetrator, 2008-09 and 2017-18.**



Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Criminal Proceedings²⁴**

The reduction in convictions for non-sexual crimes of violence over the past ten years has been driven by a fall in convictions for those aged under 30, most notably those aged between 18 and 25 years old (Figure 13). The median age of males convicted for these crimes increased from 23 years in 2008-09 to 28 years in 2017-18. Over the same period, the median age for females convicted increased from 26 years to 32 years.

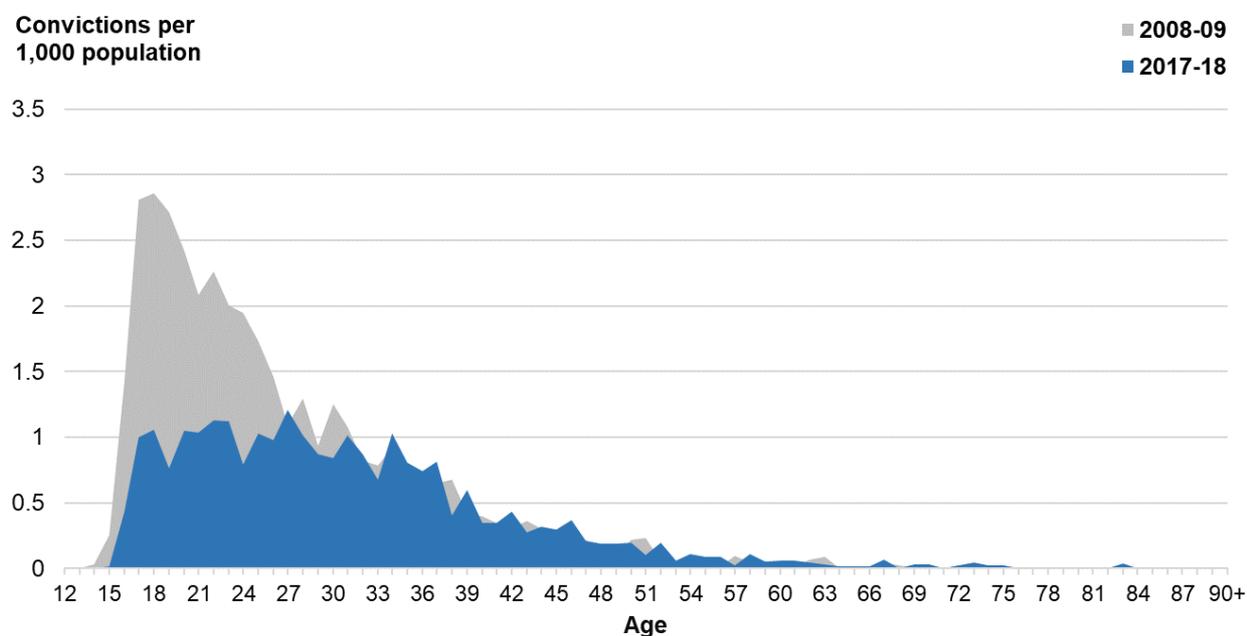
In 2008-09, convictions of Common assault peaked at 18 years of age for males and 17 years of age for females (20.2 convictions per 1,000 population and 6 convictions per 1,000 respectively) and decreased gradually with increasing age. However, by 2017-18, both these peaks had fallen, to 7.6 convictions per 1,000 population for males, and 2 convictions per 1,000 population for females.

In 2017-18, although there was a slight variation in convictions in different year groups, the number of convictions per 1,000 population was the same for 18 year old men as it was for 30 year old men (7.6 per 1,000). For ages over 30, the conviction rate for males followed a very similar pattern to that seen in 2008-09. For females aged up to 30, there were fewer convictions per 1,000 population in 2017-

²⁴ For more information please see: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Research/by-topic/crime-and-justice/publications/agegenderprofiles>

18 than in 2008-09. However, for almost every age older than 30, there were slightly more convictions per 1,000 population in 2017-18 than there were in 2008-09.

► **Figure 13: Non-sexual crimes of violence - convictions per 1,000 population by year of age.**



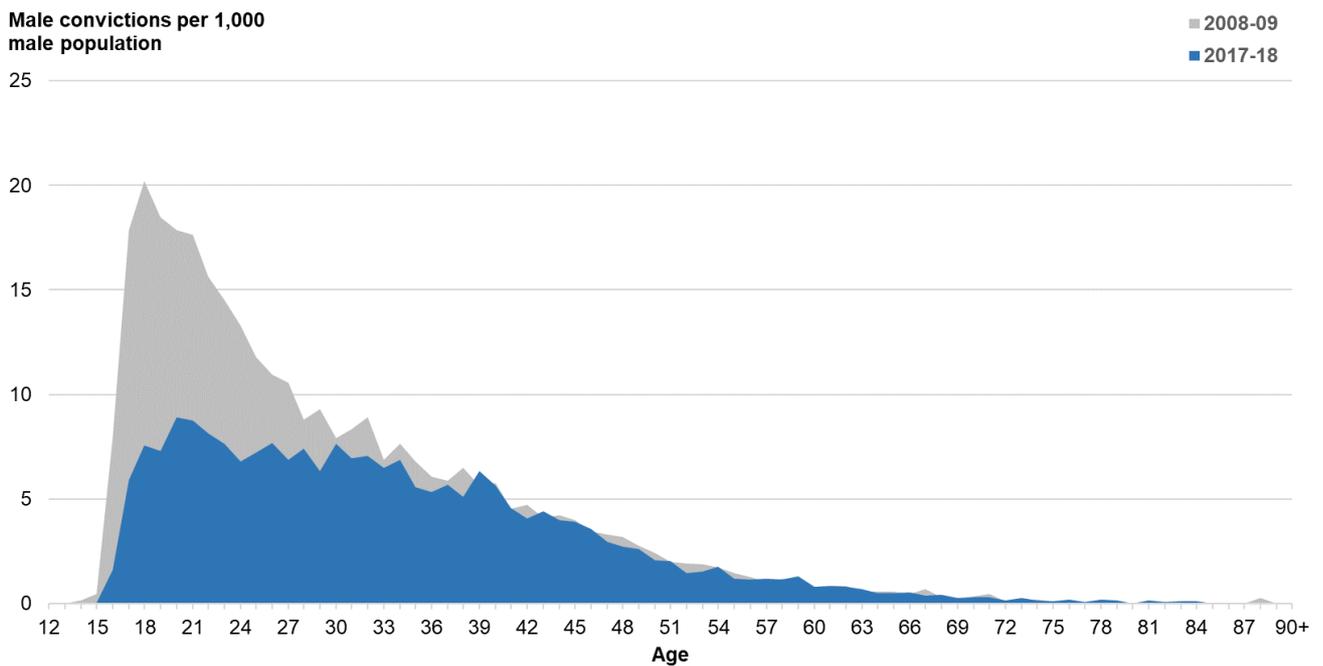
Source: Analysis of Criminal Proceedings Database, 2008-09 & 2017-18

Over the past ten years, the median age for males convicted of Common assault increased from 26 in 2008-09 to 30 in 2017-18. In 2017-18, the number of convictions for Common assault per 1,000 population was broadly the same for 18 year old males as it was for 30 year old males (7.6 per 1,000 population) (Figure 14). Thereafter, the conviction rate for males followed a very similar pattern to that seen in 2008-09.

Similarly, the median age for females convicted for Common assault increased from 26 to 31 years old between 2008-09 and 2017-18. There has been a small change in the number of females convicted of Common assault over the past decade with 0.9 convictions per 1,000 population in 2008-09 and 0.8 convictions per 1,000 population in 2017-18.

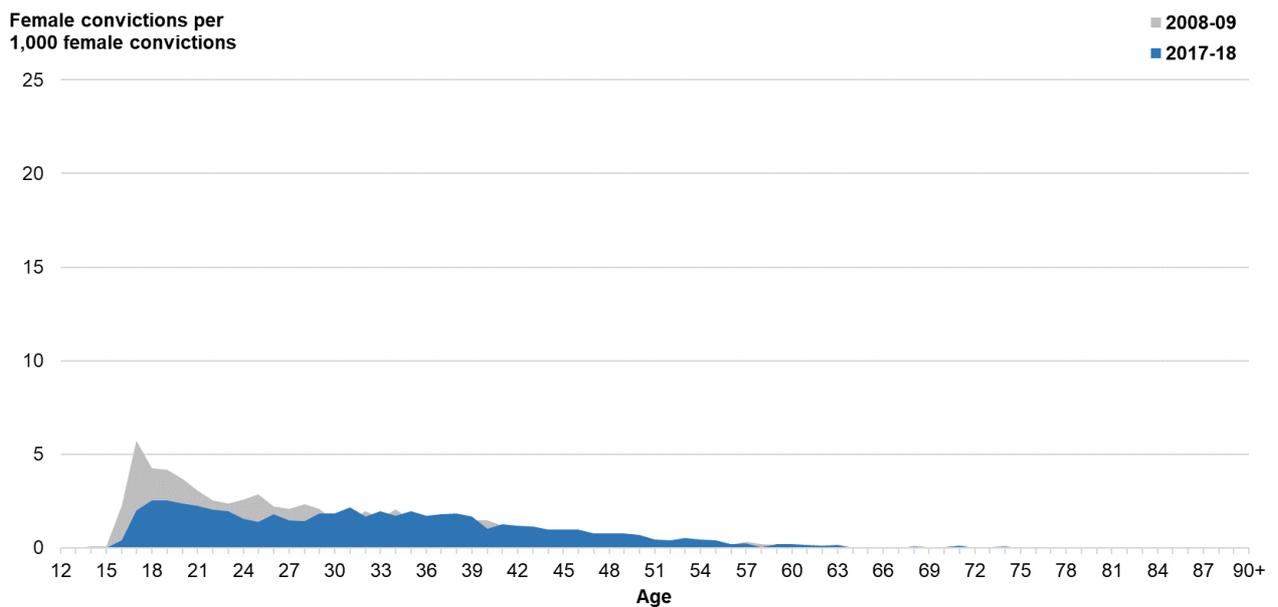
Overall, there has been a very small decrease in female convictions for Common assault in the last decade. However, this overall small decrease comprises a larger decrease in convictions for those females aged under 30 (most notably for 17 year olds) balanced by a small increase in convictions for most years from age 30 (Figure 15). This has resulted in a much wider, more even spread of ages for females convicted of Common assault.

► **Figure 14: Common Assault - convictions per 1,000 population by year of age (male convictions).**



Source: Analysis of Criminal Proceedings Database, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Figure 15: Common Assault - convictions per 1,000 population by year of age (female convictions).**



Source: Analysis of Criminal Proceedings Database, 2008-09 & 2017-18

Note: The axis in Figure 15 matches that in Figure 14 to aid comparison of volumes.

► **Table 18: Homicide accused by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Age Group	3 years ending 2008-09		3 years ending 2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Total Volume	%	Total Volume	% Point Change	Total Volume Change
Under 16	2.7%	12	1.3%	3	↓ by 1.4%	-9
16 to 24	41.8%	188	26.8%	61	↓ by 15.0%	-127
25 to 39	34.9%	157	44.7%	102	↑ by 9.8%	-55
40+	20.7%	93	27.2%	62	↑ by 6.5%	-31
Median age of perpetrator¹	26 years old		31 years old			
<i>All recorded Homicide²</i>	100%	450	100%	228	n/a	-222

¹Three year moving average age; ²Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18

► **Table 19: Attempted murder & Serious assault perpetrators by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Perpetrator's Age Group	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Under 16	5.1%	330	6.7%	280	No change	-50
16 to 24	40.4%	2,610	29.9%	1,250	↓ by 10.5%	-1,360
25 to 39	31.3%	2,020	43.4%	1,820	↑ by 12.1%	-200
40+	12.0%	780	16.5%	690	No change	-90
Unknown	18.4%	1,190	9.4%	610	↓ by 9.0%	-580
Median age of perpetrator	23 years old		27 years old			
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

► **Table 20: Robbery perpetrators by age group, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Perpetrator's Age Group	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	<i>Est. Volume</i>	%	<i>Est. Volume</i>	<i>% Point Change</i>	<i>Est. Volume Change</i>
Under 16	7.5%	220	5.4%	80	No change	-140
16 to 24	36.9%	1,090	22.0%	340	↓ by 14.9%	-750
25 to 39	38.2%	1,130	41.7%	650	No change	-480
40+	6.5%	190	12.3%	190	↑ by 5.8%	0
Unknown	14.8%	440	12.9%	200	No change	-240
Median age of perpetrator	23 years old		28 years old			
<i>Total Robbery^{1, 2}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

5.1.2 Gender of perpetrators of violent crime

▶ Key Findings:

Across all major data sources (SCJS, Police Recorded Crime and Criminal Proceedings), the clear majority of violent crimes in 2017-18 were carried out by a male perpetrator.

The fall in levels of non-sexual violent crime since 2008-09 has been driven by fewer cases involving a male perpetrator.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

In 98% of violent incidents reported in the 2017-18 SCJS, respondents were able to provide some information about who committed the crime²⁵. All findings are proportions of cases where respondents were able to say something about the person or people who carried out the offence, unless otherwise stated.

The SCJS results highlight that the clear majority of violent crimes in 2017-18 (78%) were carried out by male perpetrators only, which is consistent with previous years. Female perpetrators only were involved in 15% of incidents, whilst in 7% of cases both men and women were responsible.

In the self-completion section of the survey, respondents are asked if they have experienced Partner abuse, and if so are also asked the gender of the perpetrator. In 2016-18²⁶, of those who had experienced Partner abuse since the age of 16, 67% said the abuser was male, and 30% said the abuser was female. Less than 1% stated that both male and female partners had perpetuated abuse²⁷. Breaking this down by the gender of respondents, abusive partners were overwhelmingly of the opposite gender - 97% of female respondents were abused by a male partner, and 88% of male respondents were abused by a female partner.

²⁵This figure fell in 2016-17 to 87% from 98% in 2014-15. The return to 98% in 2017-18 is more in line with estimates in previous years.

²⁶ 2016-17 and 2017-18 combined

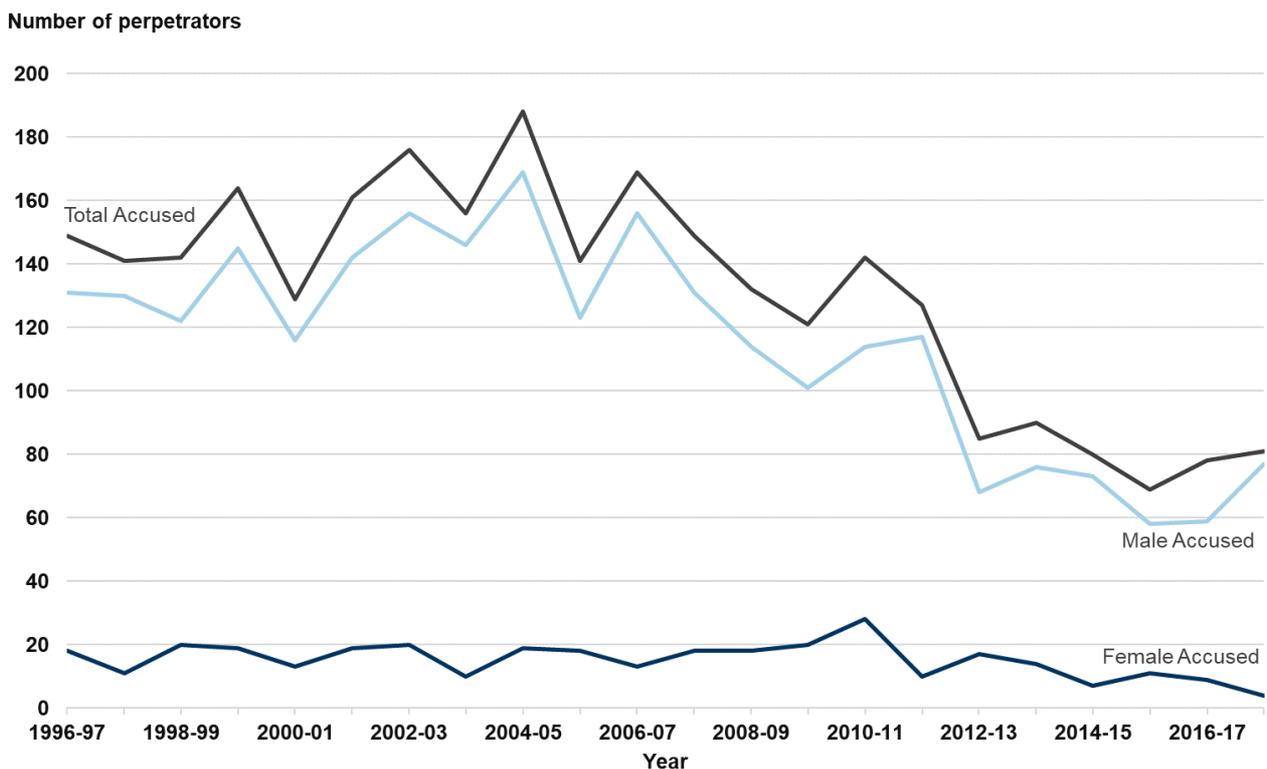
²⁷ The remaining 1.8% refused to answer that question.

► **Police Recorded Crime**

Most Police Recorded Crime statistics do not include information on perpetrator gender – however some findings are available from additional studies of this data (based on a review of crime records) and other statistical sources, like the Homicide National Statistics.

Most perpetrators of Homicide for the three years ending 2017-18 were male (89%). This has remained unchanged since the three years ending 2008-09 (**Table 21**). Looking at these trends over time for Homicide (Figure 16), there has been a noticeable decrease in the overall number of perpetrators, with most of this change accounted for by a fall in male perpetrators.

► **Figure 16: Total number of Homicide perpetrators, and Homicide perpetrators by gender, Scotland, three years ending 1996-97 to three years ending 2017-18.**



Source: *Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18*

The clear majority (84%) of Attempted murder & Serious assaults had a male or all male group of perpetrators in 2017-18 (**Table 22**). This is similar to the figure in 2008-09 (82%). In 2017-18, only 10% had a female or all female group of perpetrators, whilst the remaining 6% had a mixed gender group or a perpetrator of unknown gender. Attempted murder & Serious assault with a male or all male group of perpetrators is estimated to have fallen by 1,810 between 2008-09 and

2017-18, from 5,330 to 3,520. This fall accounts for the clear majority (around 80%) of the total reduction in these crimes since 2008-09.

Around five out of every six Robberies (82%) had a male or all male group of perpetrators in 2017-18 (**Table 23**). This has fallen from 88% in 2008-09. Only 6% of Robberies in 2017-18 had a female or all female group of perpetrators, whilst the remaining 12% had a mixed gender group or a perpetrator of unknown gender. Robbery with a male or all male group of perpetrators is estimated to have fallen by 1,340 between 2008-09 and 2017-18, from 2,610 to 1,270. This fall accounts for almost all of the total reduction in Police Recorded Robbery between those two years.

An earlier study into Common assault²⁸ recorded by the police in 2014-15 found that around three quarters (74%) of perpetrators were male. Around a quarter (24%) of were female while the remaining 2% were mixed gender groups or unknown.

► ***Criminal Proceedings***

A separate analysis was conducted on the profile of people convicted of non-sexual crimes of violence and Common assault, based on data from the Criminal Proceedings database²⁹. This showed that the vast majority of these crimes were carried out by a male perpetrator. Between 2008-09 and 2017-18, males accounted for between 87% and 88% of all convicted.

Further to this, the number of Common Assault convictions per 1,000 population for men has fallen in the past decade, from 4.5 per 1,000 population in 2008-09 to 2.9 per 1,000 population in 2017-18. Over the same period, the number of female convictions for Common Assault remained relatively unchanged (dropping from 0.9 convictions per 1,000 population in 2008-09 to 0.8 in 2017-18).

²⁸ Additional Analysis of Common Assault 2014-15 is available within [Recorded Crime National Statistics](#))

²⁹ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Research/by-topic/crime-and-justice/publications/agegenderprofiles>

► **Table 21: All recorded Homicide perpetrators by gender, three years ending 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Perpetrator's Gender	3 years ending 2008-09		3 years ending 2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Volume	%	Volume	% Point Change	Volume Change
Male	89%	401	89%	204	<1%	-197
Female	11%	49	11%	24	<1%	-25
<i>All recorded Homicide where known¹</i>	100%	450	100%	228	n/a	-222

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Source: Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18

► **Table 22: Attempted murder & Serious assault perpetrators by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Perpetrator's Gender	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Male / All male	82%	5,330	84%	3,520	No Change	-1,810
Female / All female	8%	490	10%	410	No Change	-80
Mixed Group / Other / Unknown	10%	650	6%	260	No Change	-390
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

► **Table 23: Robbery perpetrators by gender, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Perpetrator's Gender	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Male / All male group	88%	2,610	82%	1,270	↓ by 6%	-1,340
Female / All female group	4%	120	6%	100	No Change	-20
Mixed Group / Other / Unknown	8%	230	12%	180	No Change	-50
<i>Total Robbery^{1,2}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

5.2 The relationship between victims and perpetrators of violent crime

▶ Key Findings:

Both the SCJS and Police Recorded Crime data suggest that, in general, perpetrators of violent crime are known to the victim. The exception to this is Robbery, most of which is committed by someone not known to the victim.

While the majority of Homicide victims are killed by someone known to them, males are more likely to be killed by an acquaintance whereas females are more likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner.

Females are more likely to be the victim of Attempted murder & Serious assault, and Common assault committed by a partner or ex-partner.

Over the past ten years, almost all of the reduction in Robbery has been driven by fewer crimes committed by strangers.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The SCJS found that in 2017-18, most violent incidents (74%) were committed by people who the victims knew or had seen before. Where perpetrators were known by the victim, more than two-thirds of incidents (68%) were said to have involved people 'known well'.

▶ *Police Recorded Crime*

Most Police Recorded Crime statistics do not include information on the relationship between the victim and perpetrator – however some findings are available from additional studies of this data (based on a review of crime records) and other statistical sources, like the Homicide National Statistics.

Where a violent crime is recorded by the police, in general, the perpetrator was known to the victim. For example, in 2017-18, 68% of Homicide victims over the three years ending 2017-18 knew the perpetrator, as too did 66% of Attempted murder & Serious assault victims. An earlier 2014-15 study of Common Assault found that around three-fifths (61%) of cases involved a victim who knew the perpetrator. One type of non-sexual violent crime with a different pattern is Robbery, where the majority of cases in 2017-18 (63%) involved a perpetrator not known to the victim.

Looking at Homicide over the longer term, again the majority of victims were killed by someone they knew (**Table 24**) including 76% of those killed between 2008-09

and 2017-18. Of all Homicide victims in the last ten years, half (51%) were killed by an acquaintance, 15% by a partner or ex-partner and around one in ten (11%) by a relative. Males were more likely to be killed by an acquaintance (59%) compared with females (27%), whereas females were more likely to be killed by a partner or ex-partner (43%) compared to males (5%).

Females are more likely to be the victim of Attempted murder & Serious assault by a partner or ex-partner than males. In 2017-18, 44% of Attempted murder & Serious assault with a female victim was committed by a partner or ex-partner, compared to 3% of Attempted murder & Serious assault with a male victim.

Similarly, females are more likely to be the victim of a Common assault committed by a partner or ex-partner than males. In 2014-15, 46% of Common assault with a female victim involved a partner or ex-partner as perpetrator, compared to 14% of Common assault with a male victim.

Over the past ten years the number of victims of Homicide fell by over two-fifths (46% or 150 victims) from 327 for the three years ending 2008-09 to 177 for the three years ending 2017-18. This reduction has been driven, in part, by Homicides where the victim knew the perpetrator.

Almost all of the reduction over the past ten years in Robbery has been driven by fewer crimes committed by strangers (**Table 25**). For example there were an estimated 2,240 Robberies where the victim did not know the perpetrator in 2008-09, falling by 1,250 crimes to 990 by 2017-18. At the same time there was no change between 2008-09 and 2017-18 in the estimated volume of Robberies where the victim knew the perpetrator.

Changes in the relationship profile of victims / perpetrators for Attempted murder & Serious assault should be treated with more caution as the proportion of cases with an 'unknown' relationship fell from 21% in 2008-09 to 12% in 2017-18 (**Table 26**). Over the past ten years the number of crimes of Attempted murder & Serious assault where the perpetrator was not known to the victim fell by an estimated 800 cases from 1,710 in 2008-09 to 910 in 2017-18. Whereas, crimes where the victim did know the perpetrator fell by an estimated 610 crimes from 3,380 in 2008-09 to 2,770 in 2017-18.

► **Table 24: Relationship of main Homicide perpetrator to victim for all victims between 2008-09 to 2017-18.**

Relationship	Male victims		Female victims		All victims	
	%	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume
Known to	73%	398	86%	157	76%	555
Acquaintances	59%	321	27%	49	51%	370
Partner / ex-partner	5%	29	43%	78	15%	107
Relatives	9%	58	16%	30	11%	78
Strangers	21%	117	9%	17	18%	134
Unknown	6%	31	4%	8	5%	39
<i>All recorded Homicide victims^{1,2}</i>	100%	546	100%	182	100%	728

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ² For all Homicides where a perpetrator has been identified.

Source: Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18

► **Table 25: Relationship between Robbery victims and perpetrators, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Relationship	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Robbery						
Known to victim	18%	530	34%	530	↑ by 16%	No Change
Not known to victim	76%	2,240	63%	990	↓ by 12%	-1,250
Unknown	7%	200	2%	40	No Change	-160
<i>Total Robbery^{1,2}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ² Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

► **Table 26: Relationship between Attempted murder & Serious assault victims and perpetrators, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Relationship	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
Attempted murder & Serious assault						
Known to victim	52%	3,380	66%	2,770	↑ by 14%	-610
Not known to victim	26%	1,710	22%	910	No Change	-800
Unknown	21%	1,390	12%	500	↓ by 9%	-890
<i>All recorded Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; from 2017-18); ² Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18.

6 Other characteristics of violence in Scotland



6.1.1 Where do violent crimes take place?

► Key Findings:

Overall Police Recorded Crime data and the SCJS suggest that most violent crimes occurred in public space.

The SCJS finds that the respondent's place of work was the most commonly cited location for incidents of violent crime, accounting for almost three in ten (28%) violent crimes in 2017-18.

In 2017-18, Police Recorded Crime data shows that around two-thirds of Homicide occurred in private space. Almost three quarters of Robbery and more than two-thirds of Attempted murder & Serious assaults (70%) occurred in a public space.

There has been no significant change in where crimes of Homicide and Attempted murder & Serious assault took place since 2008-09.

There has been a change in where crimes of Robbery take place, with a higher percentage of Robbery taking place in private in 2017-18 compared to 2008-09.

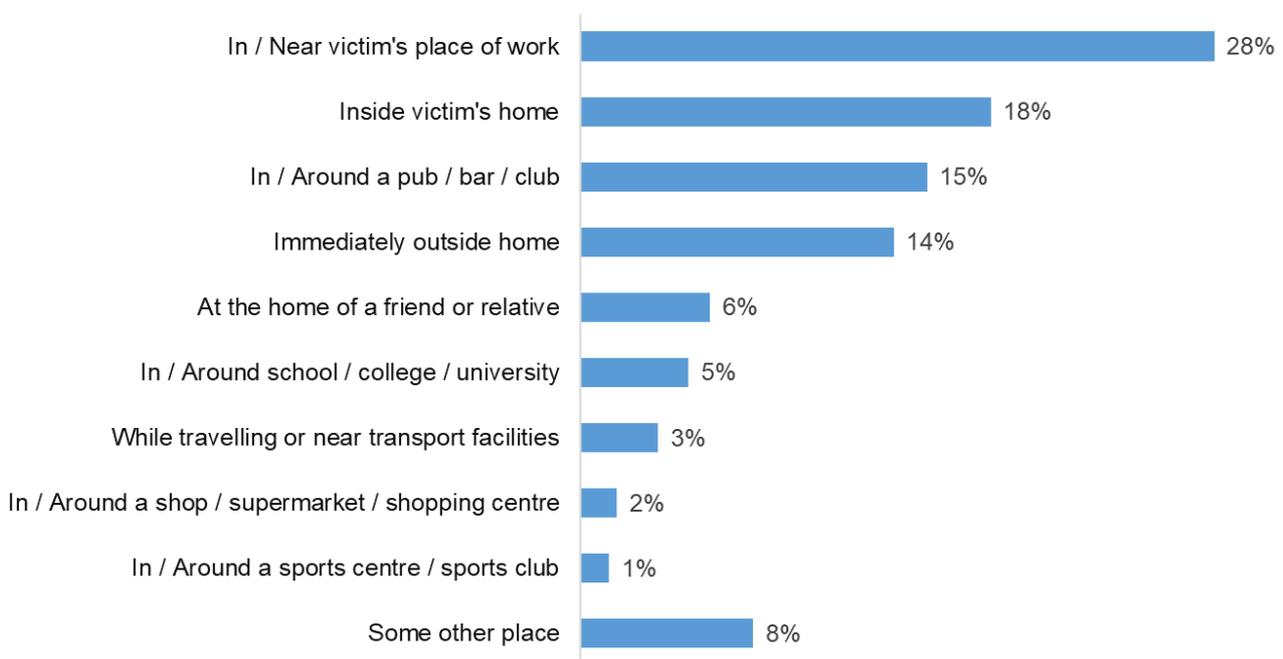
► Violence in public and private spaces

The definitions of 'public' and 'private' space vary across datasets, which means direct comparisons across these datasets are not possible. For instance, Police Recorded Crime data on Robbery categorises communal areas adjacent to private space, such as the corridor outside a flat, as public space. However, the SCJS defines 'private space' as including the respondent's home, immediately outside their home (including gardens, driveways, sheds and the street) and the homes of friends and relatives.

► **Scottish Crime and Justice Survey**

SCJS results show that just over three-fifths (62%) of violent crimes in 2017-18 took place in a public setting³⁰. This proportion is similar to the figures for 2008-09 (67%) and 2016-17 (72%), the apparent differences are not statistically significant. The SCJS also permits analyses of more specific settings (Figure 17) and shows that the respondent's place of work was the most commonly cited location, accounting for almost three in ten (28%) violent crimes in 2017-18. The proportion of violent incidents estimated to have taken place in or around a pub or bar in 2017-18 was 15%, which is similar to results in recent years.

► **Figure 17: SCJS Proportion of violent crime incidents occurring in different locations.**



Base: Violent crime incidents (120); Variable: QWH1 / QWH3 / QWH5 / QWH7
 Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► **Police Recorded Crime**

Police Recorded Crime data shows that most Robbery (73%) occurred in a public space in 2017-18, down from 88% of Robbery in 2008-09 (**Table 27**), while the proportion of Robbery which occurred in a private space increased from 12% to 27%. Robbery in a public space is estimated to have fallen by 56% between 2008-

³⁰ Here 'private space' includes the respondent's home, immediately outside their home (includes gardens, driveways, sheds and the street) and the homes of friends and relatives. The definition of outside the victim's home may mean that some of these crimes could be viewed as taking part in a public setting instead – although it is not possible to separate those cases. 'Public space' refers to incidents taking place elsewhere.

09 and 2017-18 (from 2,610 to 1,140), which is a statistically significant decrease. The volume of Robbery estimated to have occurred in private space significantly increased by 17% (from 360 to 420).

The location of Attempted murder & Serious assault was also split into a public or private space³¹. More than two-thirds of Attempted murder & Serious assault (70%) occurred in a public space in 2017-18, with the remaining 30% taking place in a private space. This has not changed significantly since 2008-09. Attempted murder & Serious assault in a public space is estimated to have fallen by 33% (1,440) between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 4,350 to 2,910). At the same time the volume of Attempted murder & Serious assault estimated to have occurred in a private space fell by 40% (850) from 2,130 to 1,280.

Around half of Attempted murder & Serious assault (47%) occurred in the street or open space in 2017-18. Around a third (36%) occurred in a dwelling (either within a private property or the communal area of a residential building), and a night time economy, retail or other business setting accounted for the remaining 17% of Attempted murder & Serious assault in 2017-18. These proportions have not changed between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Attempted murder & Serious assault in the street or open space is estimated to have fallen by 1,140 between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 3,090 to 1,950). At the same time the volume of Attempted murder & Serious assaults occurring in a dwelling is estimated to have fallen by 760 (from 2,270 to 1,510). Attempted murder & Serious assault occurring in a night time economy, retail or other business setting are estimated to have fallen by 390 (from 1,110 to 720).

In contrast to the above, Homicides were more likely to take place in private space. Most Homicide (63%) occurred in a private space in the three years ending 2017-18 (**Table 28**). This pattern is similar to the three years ending 2008-09 when around three-fifths of Homicides (59%) occurred took place in private space.

³¹ Attempted murder & Serious assault within a person's property (i.e. behind a front-door) have been defined in the report as 'private space' Attempted murder & Serious assault, with all other settings (including the communal areas of a residential building) defined as 'public space' Attempted murder & Serious assault.

► **Table 27: Robbery by location, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Location ¹	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Est. Volume	%	Est. Volume	% Point Change	Est. Volume Change
In a private space	12%	360	27%	420	↑ by 15%	60
In a public space	88%	2,610	73%	1,140	↓ by 15%	-1,470
<i>Total Robbery^{2,3}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹Robberies within a person's property (e.g. behind a front door) have been defined in the research as 'private space'

Robbery, with all other settings (including communal areas of a residential building) defined as 'public space' Robbery;

²Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ³Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18)

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Table 28: All recorded Homicide by location, three years ending 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Homicide Location	3 years ending 2008-09		3 years ending 2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Volume	%	Volume	% Point Change	Volume Change
In a private space	59%	194	63%	112	↑ by 4%	-82
In a public space	41%	135	36%	65	↓ by 4%	-70
Unknown	<1%	2	1%	2	↑ by 1%	No change
<i>All recorded Homicide^{1,2}</i>	100%	331	100%	179	n/a	-152

¹Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding; ²Excludes one case which occurred in a prison in 2017-18.

Source: Homicide National Statistics, 2017-18

6.1.2 Is there any regional variation in violent crime?

► Key Findings:

In 2008-09, the west of Scotland was disproportionately represented in violent crime compared to elsewhere in the country. The difference between the west and elsewhere in Scotland has reduced since then.

Police Recorded Crime data suggests the west of Scotland accounted for around half (52%) of all Attempted murder & Serious assault in 2018-19. This is a reduction from almost two-thirds (64%) in 2008-09.

► *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The 2016-17 and 2017-18 combined SCJS data found that the overall likelihood of being a victim of violent crime for adults living in each Police Division was no different to the national average over that time-frame, with the exception of Highlands and Islands where the prevalence rate was lower.

More Police Division level SCJS results are available via an [interactive tool](#).

► *Police Recorded Crime*

In 2017-18, Glasgow City had the highest number of Homicide cases (11), representing 19% of the Scottish total. When taking into consideration the percentage of the population that live in this area (11% of the Scottish population in 2017-18), Glasgow City had a higher share of Homicide compared to other areas. It is important to note however, that victims may not necessarily reside in the local authority where the Homicide took place. Glasgow City has also witnessed a large fall in Homicides of 54% since 2008-09, accounting for over one third (34%) of the overall national decrease.

In 2008-09, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Attempted murder & Serious assaults were committed in the west of Scotland³², compared to 36% elsewhere in the country. However, by 2018-19, around half (52%) of Attempted murder & Serious assault was committed in the west of Scotland and around half (48%) was committed elsewhere in the country.

In 2008-09, the rate of Attempted murder & Serious assaults per 10,000 population in the west of Scotland was significantly higher than elsewhere in the country, with

³² The west of Scotland is defined as the legacy Strathclyde police force area and Argyll, or the present day police divisions of Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire.

18.5 Attempted murder & Serious assaults per 10,000 population in the west compared to 7.9 Attempted murder & Serious assaults per 10,000 population elsewhere in the country. By 2018-19, the rate in the west of Scotland had almost halved (fallen by 48%) to 9.6 Attempted murder & Serious assaults per 10,000 population. The rate elsewhere in Scotland also fell between 2008-09 and 2018-19 but not to the same extent, falling by 18% from 7.9 Attempted murder & Serious assaults per 10,000 population in 2008-09 to 6.5 Attempted murder & Serious assaults per 10,000 population in 2018-19.

Since 2008-09, the rate of Attempted murder & Serious assault fell in every local authority in the west of Scotland (centered in and around the city of Glasgow), with the largest reductions seen in the local authorities that started with the highest rates (Glasgow City, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire).

Elsewhere in the country, reductions were seen in the majority of local authorities since 2008-09, however these reductions were generally lower than that seen in the west of Scotland.

► ***Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault***

There has been a reduction in Hospital Admissions for Assault by 55% since 2008-09, this represents a fall of 2,904 cases (**Table 29**). Most of this reduction (41%) has come from a fall in Greater Glasgow and Clyde which had 1,966 admissions in 2008-09, compared to 769 in 2017-18 (a decrease of 61%).

► **Table 29: Hospital Admissions due to Assault by NHS Board of Residence, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

NHS Board of Residence	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	Volume ²	%	Volume	% Point Change	Volume Change
Ayrshire & Arran	10.1%	533	6.3%	151	↓ by 3.7%	-382
Borders	1.8%	96	1.5%	35	↓ by 0.3%	-61
Dumfries & Galloway	1.2%	63	1.5%	35	↑ by 0.3%	-28
Fife	4.0%	211	6.6%	157	↑ by 2.6%	-54
Forth Valley	2.3%	124	5.1%	122	↑ by 2.8%	-2
Grampian	9.5%	504	8.7%	207	↓ by 0.8%	-297
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	37.2%	1,966	32.3%	769	↓ by 4.9%	-1,197
Highland	4.3%	227	2.4%	58	↓ by 1.9%	-169
Lanarkshire	12.6%	666	14.1%	337	↑ by 1.5%	-328
Lothian	11.3%	596	14.7%	350	↑ by 3.4%	-246
Tayside	4.9%	260	6.2%	147	↑ by 1.3%	-113
North and Western Isles	0.8%	40	0.3%	6	↓ by 0.5%	-34
<i>All hospital admissions due to assault¹</i>	100%	5,286	100%	2,382	n/a	-2,904

¹ Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding and suppression of values due to potential risk of disclosure.

² Based on volume of admissions. This does not account for changes in the underlying population.

Source: ISD Scotland: Hospital Care, Assault Statistics, 2008-9 & 2017-18

6.1.3 When do violent crimes occur?

▶ Key Findings:

The SCJS and Police Recorded Crime data suggests the incidence of violent crimes per day was higher at weekends. Weekends are disproportionately represented across the SCJS, Homicide and Attempted murder & Serious assault.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The 2017-18 SCJS found that, where respondents provided details about when an incident occurred, around three-fifths of violent crimes (59%) happened on a weekday, and 41% took place at weekends (defined as 6pm on Friday to Sunday midnight). However, taking into account the number of days within each category means that the incidence of violent crime per day was higher at weekends.

The SCJS has data on the time of day that crimes occurred. Violent crimes which happened during the week were most likely to happen during the daytime³³ (58%), however violent crimes which occurred at the weekend were more likely to happen in the evening / night (80%).

▶ *Police Recorded Crime*

For all Homicides between 2008-09 and 2017-18, a fifth (20%) occurred on a Saturday with a further 18% on a Sunday. Homicides therefore disproportionately occur on Saturdays and Sundays, accounting for almost two-fifths of all Homicides (39%) but only 2/7th of the week (29%).

Using the same definition as the SCJS above, research into police recorded Serious assault and Attempted murder showed that in 2017-18 the majority occurred at the weekend (59%) compared with a weekday (41%). This distribution has not significantly changed from 2008-09 when weekends accounted for 56% of such crimes and weekdays accounted for 44%.

In 2017-18, 63% of Robberies occurred on a weekday and 37% occurred at the weekend (using the same definition as above). This means that Robbery is not as likely to have taken place at the weekend using this definition where the weekend represents 32% of the week.

³³ Daytime is defined as 6am to 6pm

6.1.4 The use of weapons in violent crime

▶ **Key Findings:**

The SCJS and Police Recorded Crime data suggest most violence in Scotland does not involve a weapon, though where a violent incident results in a severe physical injury (Homicide, Attempted murder & Serious assault) a weapon is much more likely to have been involved.

Both the SCJS and Police Recorded Crime data suggest that over the past ten years there has been a decrease in the prevalence of weapon-carrying or weapon use to commit violent crime in Scotland. As such there has been a larger reduction in violent crime with a weapon than violent crime without a weapon.

The use of firearms as part of violent crime in Scotland constitutes a very small proportion of Police Recorded Crime.

▶ **Scottish Crime and Justice Survey**

The SCJS found that, where someone saw or heard what was happening, 12% of violent incidents were said to include the presence of a weapon in 2017-18, down from 25% in 2010-2011. A knife was reported as being present in 7% of violent crimes where someone saw or heard what was happening in 2017-18. The SCJS also found that 12% of adults thought that people carrying knives was common in their area in 2017-18, down from 22% in 2009-10.

▶ **Police Recorded Crime**

Police recorded crimes of possessing, but not using, an offensive weapon in a public setting have shown large reductions since 2008-09 - falling by over half (53%, or 4,764 crimes) from 8,980 in 2008-09 to 4,216 in 2018-19 (**Table 31**), but increasing by around a third (36%, or 1,105 crimes) since 2015-16, when 3,111 crimes were recorded. A subset of this information, crimes of having in a public place an article with a blade or point, fell by a third (34%) since 2008-09. These crimes have also seen a rise in recent years, increasing by around two-fifths (43%) since 2014-15.

In general, Police Recorded Crime data does not tell us whether a specific crime involved a weapon. However, some specific studies³⁴ do tell us about the prevalence of weapons during certain types of crime. For example, 66% of Homicides, 55% of Attempted murder & Serious assault and 51% of Robbery involved the use of a weapon in 2017-18. A knife or other sharp instrument was involved in 59% of Homicides, 25% of Attempted murder & Serious assault and 35% of Robberies. The prevalence of weapons was much less frequent for Common assault (according to a 2014-15 study), with around a fifth (21%) involving a weapon and only 3% involving a knife or other bladed article.

Where a comparison can be made over time, it is clear that the reduction in crimes that typically result in more severe physical injuries, but occur in lower volumes, have been driven, in part, by fewer crimes involving the use of a weapon. For example there were an estimated 4,110 Attempted murder & Serious assaults involving a weapon in 2008-09, falling by 44% to 2,290 by 2017-18 (**Table 32**). At the same time the estimated number of these crimes that did not involve a weapon fell by a relatively smaller amount (down 470 crimes). While there was no significant difference in the proportion of Robberies that involved a weapon between 2008-09 and 2017-18, those that involved a knife are estimated to have fallen from 43% to 35% during this time (the equivalent of 720 fewer crimes) (**Table 33**).

The most commonly used method as part of a Homicide in Scotland was with a sharp instrument, with around half (51%) of all victims killed in this way since 2008-09. Over the past ten years the number of victims of Homicide fell by over two-fifths (45% or 151 victims) from 334 for the three years ending 2008-09³⁵ to 183 for the three years ending 2017-18. Most of this reduction came from a fall in homicides that involved the use of a weapon³⁶ (down 93 victims or 44%) with the remainder coming from fewer homicides where a weapon was not involved (down 58 victims or 47%).

In addition to aforementioned crimes of possessing, but not using, an offensive weapon, information is also available from 2017-18 onwards on using a weapon in a public setting to commit another crime against a person. A study into these crimes showed that weapons were most likely to be used, in public settings, to threaten or abuse (44%), commit a Common assault (32%) or a Serious assault

³⁴ [Homicide in Scotland National Statistics: 2017-18](#);
[Recorded Crime in Scotland: Handling Offensive Weapons](#);
[Recorded Crime in Scotland: Attempted Murder & Serious Assault, 2008-09 and 2017-18](#);
[Recorded Crime in Scotland: Robbery, 2008-2009 and 2017-2018](#)

³⁵ Three year averages are used when analysing Homicide data in order to mitigate against large fluctuations that can occur year-on-year.

³⁶ Includes where the method of killing was either a shooting or with a sharp or blunt instrument.

(14%). Where the weapon used was a bladed or pointed article the most common type of crimes committed were again Threatening or abusive behaviour (49%) followed by Serious assault (18%) and Common assault (13%). This suggests that where weapons are used, this often relates to threatening people. However, almost a fifth (16%) of crimes resulted in the victim sustaining a serious injury³⁷ - and this is more likely when the weapon was a knife (22% of crimes).

The use of firearms as part of violent crime in Scotland is rare. In 2017-18, there were two fatal shootings in Scotland (3% of all Homicide victims). Otherwise, firearms were used in 4.1% of Attempted murders (ten offences), 2.2% of Robberies (34 offences) and only 0.2% of Serious assaults (eight offences).

► **Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault**

In addition to Police Recorded Crime, Hospital Admissions data includes annual statistics on emergency admissions to hospital due to an assault with a sharp object (see [Section 4.1.2](#)). Over the past ten years the number of Hospital Admissions due to Assault with a sharp object have fallen by over three-fifths (61%), falling by 862 from 1,415 in 2008-09 to 553 in 2017-18. This is slightly higher than for Hospital admissions for all assaults which fell by over half (55%) over the same period.

► **Table 30: Number of crimes of handling an offensive weapon, 2008-09 & 2018-19.**

Crimes of Handling an Offensive Weapon	2008-09	2018-19	% Change
Handling an offensive weapon (Weapon not used in other criminal activity)¹	8,980	4,216	↓ by 53%
Possession of an offensive weapon	4,892	1,483	↓ by 70%
Having in a public place an article with a blade or point	4,080	2,709	↓ by 34%
Handling an offensive weapon (Weapon used in other criminal activity)²	-	4,680	-
Possession of an offensive weapon	-	2,771	-
Having in a public place an article with a blade or point	-	1,909	-
<i>Total¹</i>	-	8,896	-

¹ Includes crimes of 'Restriction of an offensive weapon' (8 in 2008-09 and 24 in 2018-19)

² Crimes of Handling an offensive weapon when used in other criminal activity were only recorded from the 1st April 2017 onwards.

Source: Recorded Crime National Statistics, 2018-19

³⁷ Includes fatalities, broken bones and stabbing or permanent disfigurement.

► **Table 31: Percentage of Attempted murder & Serious assault committed with an offensive weapon, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Use of Weapons in Violent Crimes	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	<i>Est. Volume</i>	%	<i>Est. Volume</i>	<i>% Point Change</i>	<i>Est. Volume Change</i>
All Weapons	63%	4,110	55%	2,290	↓by 9%	-1,820
Knife or Other Bladed / Pointed Article	31%	1,980	25%	1,030	No change	-950
<i>Total Attempted murder & Serious assault^{1,2}</i>	100%	6,472	100%	4,189	n/a	-2,283

¹Based on a sample of crime records (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18); ²Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

► **Table 32: Percentage of Robberies committed with an offensive weapon, 2008-09 & 2017-18.**

Use of Weapons in Violent Crimes	2008-09		2017-18		2008-09 to 2017-18 change	
	%	<i>Est. Volume</i>	%	<i>Est. Volume</i>	<i>% Point Change</i>	<i>Est. Volume Change</i>
All Weapons	57%	1,700	51%	800	No change	-900
Knife or Other Bladed / Pointed Article	43%	1,270	35%	550	↓by 8%	-720
<i>Total Robbery^{2,3}</i>	100%	2,963	100%	1,556	n/a	-1,407

¹Based on a sample of crime records (501 from 2008-09 and 450 from 2017-18); ²Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Analysis of Police Recorded Crime records, 2008-09 & 2017-18

6.1.5 Alcohol and drugs and violent crime

► Key Findings:

Overall, SCJS data shows that alcohol has played a less prominent role in violent crime in recent years compared to a decade ago – although perpetrators were believed to be under the influence of alcohol in almost half of violent crime incidents, where victims were able to say something about the perpetrator.

Just over one in three violent crimes involved perpetrators reported by victims to be under the influence of drugs. This has remained unchanged compared to 2008-09.

Within the analysis of Police Recorded Crime data, references to either perpetrator(s), victim(s) or both being under the influence of alcohol is higher than reference to drug use. This is particularly noticeable in Attempted murder & Serious assault crimes, where most made some form of reference to alcohol.

► *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The 2017-18 SCJS found that perpetrators were believed to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs in 62% of violent incidents where the victims were able to say something about the perpetrator.

Perpetrators were believed to be under the influence of alcohol in 46% of violent incidents where victims were able to say something about the perpetrator in 2017-18³⁸³⁹. This figure has fallen from 63% in 2008-09 but is not significantly different from the estimate in 2014-15 (56%) or 2016-17 (42%). See Figure 18 below.

For wider context on the role of alcohol in violent crime, victims reported having consumed alcohol immediately before the incident in 25% of cases of all violent crime in 2017-18. Relatedly, victims reported that just over one-in-three of violent crimes (36%) involved perpetrators who were thought to be under the influence of

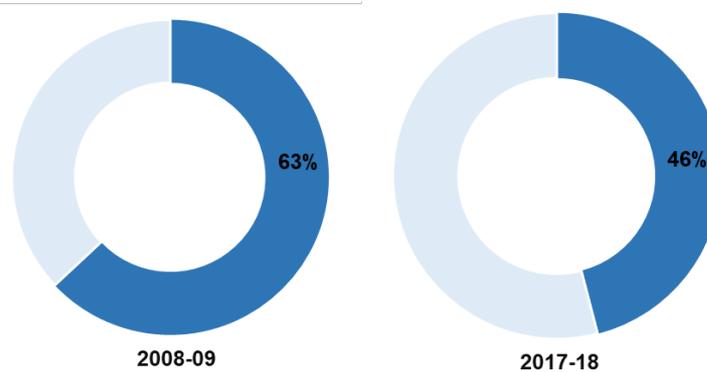
³⁸ In 98% of violent incidents reported in the 2017-18 SCJS, respondents were able to provide some information about who committed the crime.

³⁹ This figure includes incidents where a perpetrator was believed to be under the influence of both alcohol and drugs,

drugs in 2017-18³⁹, up from 22% in 2016-17 but unchanged⁴⁰ from the 2008-09 figure (29%).

When looking at violent incidents that involved *only* drugs or *only* alcohol, there has been a change in the composition with a smaller proportion of incidents involving only alcohol (from 39% in 2008-09 to 26% in 2017-18) and more involving only drugs (from 5% in 2008-09 to 16% in 2017-18).

► **Figure 18: Proportion of violent crime perpetrators under the influence of alcohol (where respondent could say something about offender)**



Base: Violent crime incidents where respondent could say something about offender (2008/09: 570; 2017/18: 120); Variable: QAL
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

► Police Recorded Crime

Of the 81 perpetrators in Homicide cases in 2017-18, 30 (37%) were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a combination of both at the time of the Homicide. This 37% was broken down into 15 (19%) who were under the influence of alcohol, 11 (14%) who were under the influence of both alcohol and drugs and four (5%) who were under the influence of drugs alone. However, it is important to note that in 2017-18 the alcohol and drug status of the perpetrator was unknown for 49 persons, 60% of all perpetrators. Two perpetrators (2%) were reported to have been neither under the influence of alcohol nor drugs at the time of the Homicide.

In 2017-18, 63% of Attempted murder & Serious assault crime records made some form of reference to the consumption of alcohol (either with regards to the perpetrator(s), victim(s) or both). One in ten records (10%) made any reference to the consumption of drugs.

⁴⁰ The apparent change in proportion is not statistically significant.

Over the same period, almost a third (31%) of Robbery crime records made a reference to the consumption of alcohol. Around one in five records (21%) made reference to the consumption of drugs.

While, a number of Attempted murder & Serious assault and Robbery records made reference to the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs this could be in reference to the perpetrator(s), the victim(s) or both. This does not necessarily mean that it was a casual factor in all of these crimes, on the other hand there may also have been cases where alcohol or drugs may have been consumed prior to the crime taking place but no reference was made to this in the crime record.

7 What do we know about unreported violence?

▶ Key Findings:

The SCJS provides estimates for measuring the proportion of crime reported to the police in Scotland.

The 2017-18 SCJS estimates that the majority (61%) of violent incidents in 2017-18 were not reported to the police, similar to the reporting rate in previous years.

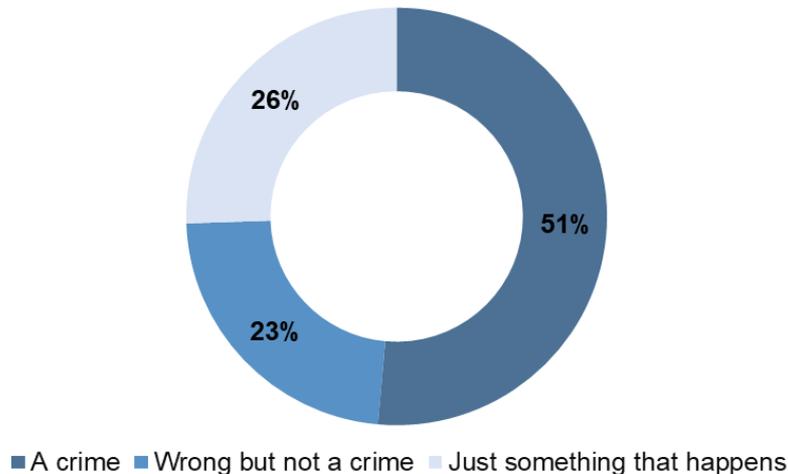
Police Recorded Crime data provides figures on crime which has been reported to the police, however it is unable to provide an estimate of the level of unreported crime. As outlined in [Section 1.3](#), the SCJS asks adults about their experiences of crime regardless of whether or not it was reported, and therefore provides the best estimate of overall levels of violence experienced in Scotland as well as the amount (and proportion) of crime which has not been brought to the attention of the police.

▶ *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey*

The SCJS asks respondents who report experience of violent crime if the police came to know about the matter. The 2017-18 SCJS estimates that just under two-fifths of violent incidents (39%) were brought to the attention of the police. The reporting rate in 2017-18 was not significantly different from the rate in any SCJS sweep since 2008-09 (for example, 43% in both 2008-09 and 2016-17).

There can be a range of factors which influence whether or not an individual reports a crime to the police, not least how the victim views their own experience. For instance, the SCJS finds that in around half of violent incidents in 2017-18 (51%) victims thought their experience should be described as 'a crime' as shown in Figure 19 below. Just over three-fifths (62%) of incidents which victims considered to be a crime were brought to the attention of the police in 2017-18.

► **Figure 19: Victim's description of violent crime incidents experienced.**



Base: Violent crime incidents (120); Variable: QCRNO
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017-18

When asked directly why they did not report their experience, regardless of whether they viewed their experience as a crime or not, victims cited a range of reasons. The most common explanations provided by victims were that:

- they reported the matter to other authorities (35% of unreported violent crime);
- they dealt with the matter themselves (19%);
- the issue was considered a private, personal or family matter (13%);
- the experience was too trivial or not worth reporting (11%).
- 'other' reasons were cited in 24% of cases.

Comparing these figures to previous results, there appears to be some changes over time, however some of this variability may be caused by small sample sizes. In previous years, the police not being interested or being unable to do anything were also amongst the most common reasons for not reporting violent incidents to the police.

When looking only at cases of violent crime where the police did not know about the matter, the sample size is reduced considerably⁴¹. Therefore, it is difficult to produce meaningful analysis from these results and further analysis from any single year of survey data is limited.

⁴¹ In 2017-18, there were 67 cases of unreported violent crime.

In future, combining the SCJS surveys since 2008-09 into one dataset will create a bigger sample size and allow for more detailed analysis of unreported violence, in terms of the characteristics of those experiencing unreported crime; the types of crimes most likely to not be reported to the police; and potential differences in the characteristics and impact of reported and unreported violent crime.

8 Conclusions

This report collates the most up to date, robust statistical sources on non-sexual violence in Scotland. It presents findings on the magnitude, scope and characteristics of non-sexual violence in Scotland, helping to answer the question ‘what is the problem?’ posed in Step 1 of the public health approach to reducing violence.

It finds that, currently in Scotland, most violence is carried out by males, occurs in a public space and is not reported to the police. Violence is also now less patterned in terms of age and gender than a decade ago. For example, there is no difference between those aged 16 to 24 years old and those aged 25 to 44 years old in their chances of being a victim of violent crime, and also no difference in the proportion of males or females who experience non-sexual violence. However, gender has an impact on the way violence is experienced and women are much more likely than men to have experienced Partner abuse.

A new statutory offence of Domestic abuse was introduced on the 1st April 2019, targeting those who engage in coercive or controlling behaviour towards their partners or ex-partners. Scottish Government statisticians will undertake a study into the characteristics of this new offence, and how it was used during its first year of operation - based on a review of crime records. This is expected to be published in the autumn of 2020.

Over the past decade there has been a notable reduction in non-sexual violence in the general adult population, driven by decreases in the years following 2008-09 with broad stability seen more recently. This is largely attributable to a reduction in younger males’ involvement in violent crime (as victims and perpetrators) - with no equivalent change in the proportion of females who experienced violence. There has also been a decrease in the proportion of violent incidents where a weapon is used, compared to a decade ago.

While most people in Scotland do not experience any form of violent crime, the likelihood of experiencing violence is higher in deprived communities. Moreover, the likelihood of experiencing violence for people who live in the 15% most deprived neighbourhoods has not shown any reduction since 2008-09, whilst the victimisation rate has fallen for people living in the rest of Scotland.

Existing evidence also shows that violent crime is disproportionately suffered by repeat victims. There are limitations to what existing statistical data and research can reveal about repeat violent victimisation in Scotland, and so alternative approaches are needed to develop the evidence base and inform policy responses.

The Scottish Government published a [rapid evidence review on repeat violent victimisation](#) in April 2019, and are currently commissioning an exploratory study to better understand repeat violent victimisation in Scotland. This study, which will commence in Autumn 2019, will principally include people who; live in areas of high deprivation where there are also high levels of violent crime; who experience multiple exclusion and who have current convictions and those who have desisted from crime. The research is intended to inform effective, appropriate and proportionate policy responses, as well as service responses to support victims, tailored to the needs of those who experience the highest levels of violent victimisation in Scottish society.

Further work is planned and underway to further enhance our understanding of violent crime, including and complementing this report, in September 2019, the [Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research also published a report 'Taking Stock of Violence in Scotland'](#) which consolidates existing research knowledge about violence in Scotland, bringing together relevant information about the state of violence and violence research in Scotland, to inform future research priorities.

9 Annex

9.1 Annex 1 – Case Study – NHS Lothian Assault Injury Surveillance

► Background

Over a number of years, NHS Lothian has established and refined a local approach to Emergency Department Assault Injury Surveillance. This was based on the ‘Cardiff Model’, developed by J. Shepherd and colleagues in Wales (see Sivarajasingham *et al*, 2016)⁴². The programme uses routinely collected clinical data to identify occasions where an individual’s attendance at an emergency department is identifiable as resulting from interpersonal violence⁴³. These data are extracted from locally-held electronic patient records, cleaned and anonymised. Brief reports of the anonymised data are regularly shared with community safety partners to inform local decision making. Comparisons between these and police reported data have demonstrated that more than half of cases presenting to emergency departments related to incidents not reported to the police⁴⁴. The following brief overview of some available data demonstrates how Assault Injury Surveillance can help inform the intelligence picture to support violence prevention.

► Findings

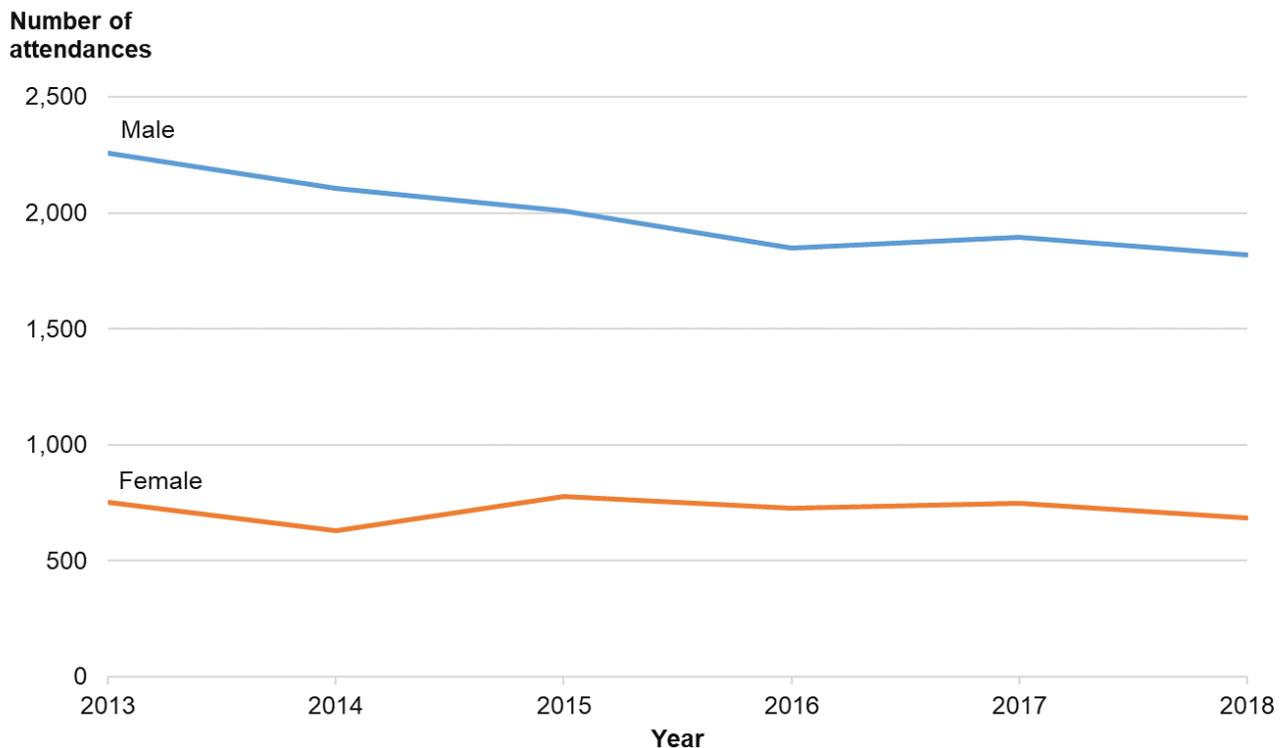
In 2018 a total of 2,506 people attended NHS Lothian Emergency Departments with a violence-related injury. This represents a 17% reduction since surveillance began in 2013 when there were 3,009 attendances. In keeping with national findings, this demonstrates a downward trend over this period (Figure 20).

⁴² Sivarajasingam V, Page N, Wells J, et al. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2016;70:616–621.

⁴³ Unlike the main report, the data presented here do not exclude individuals who are injured as the result of a sexual offence, although such individuals may often attend specialist centres which would not be captured here.

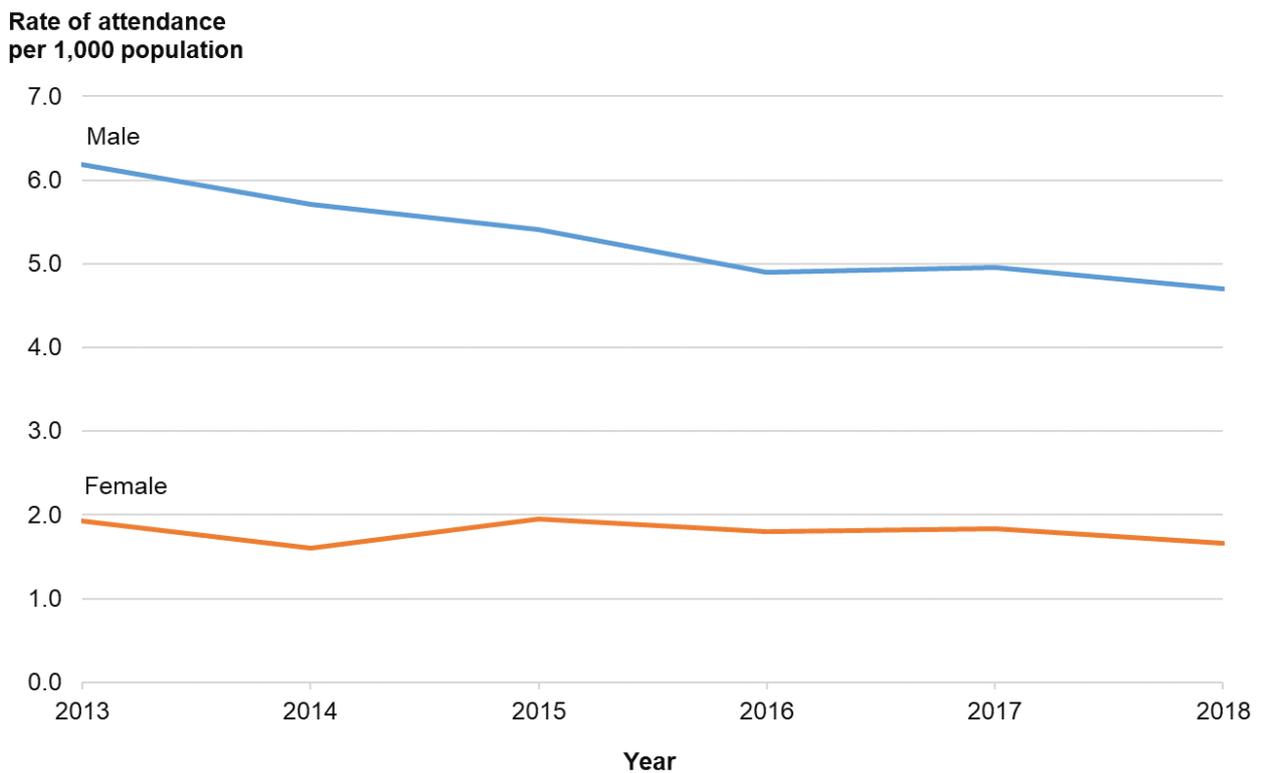
⁴⁴ NHS Lothian Assault Injury Surveillance Programme (2014, unpublished data)

► **Figure 20: Number of attendances at NHS Lothian Emergency Departments with a violence-related injury, by year and sex**



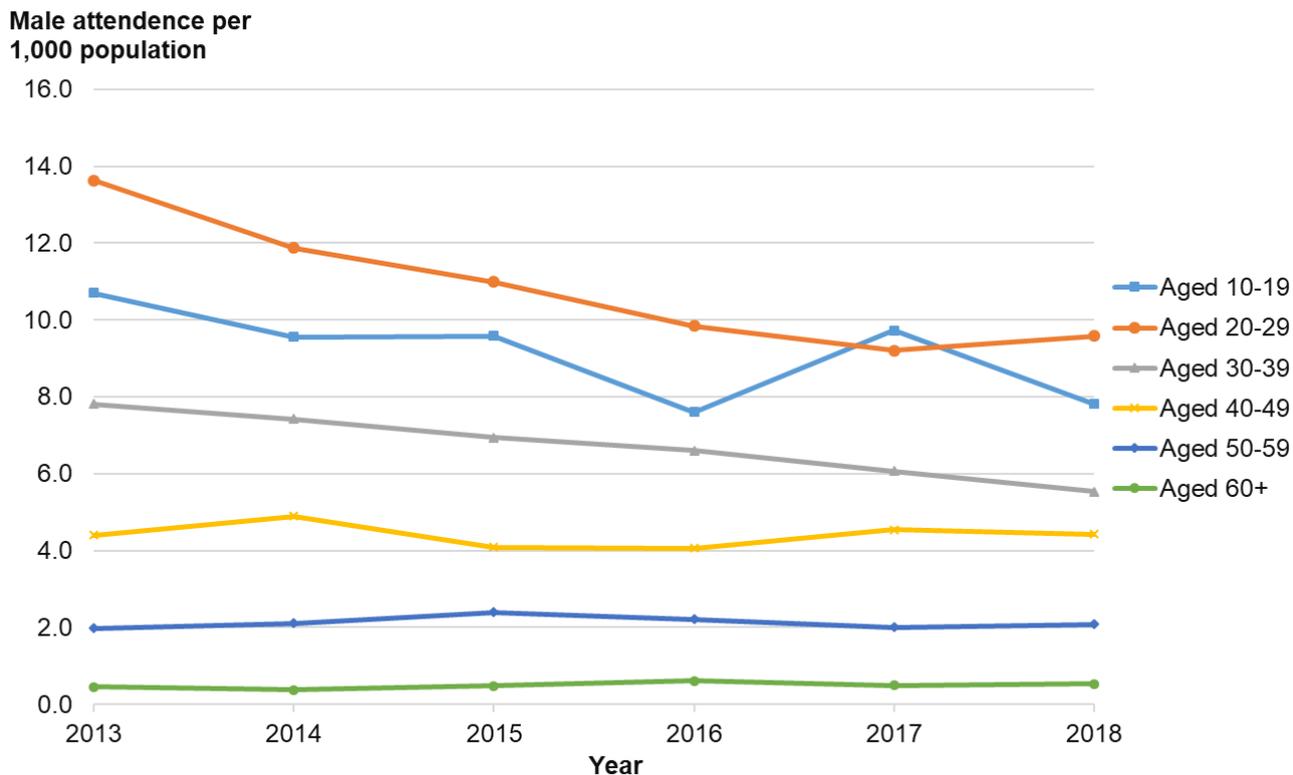
In 2018, males were more than two and a half times as likely as females to attend an emergency department as a result of violence (males = 4.7 per 1,000 population; females = 1.7 per 1,000 population – Figure 21). Rates of attendance in males have shown a strong downward trend with a reduction of 24% between 2013 and 2018. In females the changes in rates of attendance have been less consistent although, overall, there is a modest downward trend. These findings are broadly in keeping with national trends for non-sexual violence among males and females. It is interesting to note the persistence of a gap between rates of attendance for males and females at Lothian emergency departments. This pattern is consistent with trends seen in national emergency hospital admissions for assault; where reductions over time have been driven largely by males; but where males persist in constituting the majority of admissions (see [Section 4.1.2](#)).

► **Figure 21: Rate of attendance at NHS Lothian Emergency Departments with a violence-related injury per 1,000 population, by year and sex**

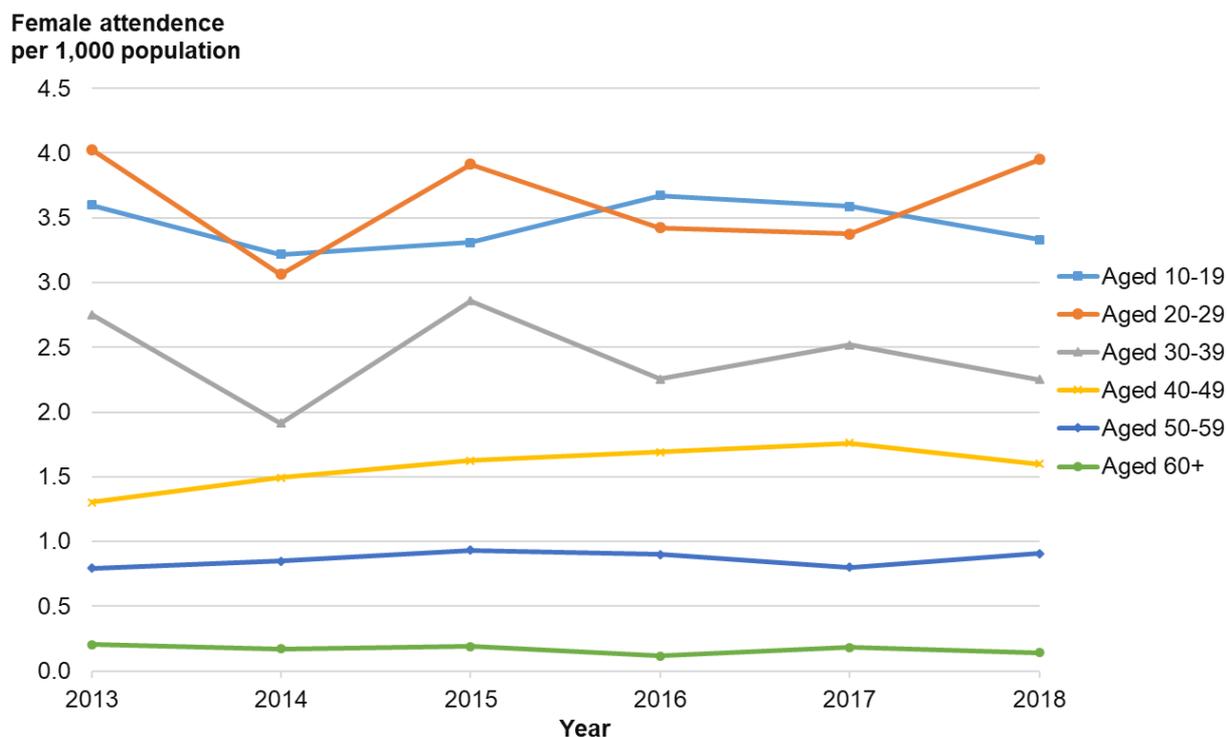


The majority of the decline in attendance appears to be driven by reductions in attendance by males aged: 10–19, 20–29 and 30–39 years (Figure 22). Within these three age categories there were 453 fewer attendances in 2018 when compared with 2013; a reduction of 24%. This is broadly consistent with analysis of the victims of certain more serious crimes (attempted murder and serious assault) in Police Recorded Crime records (see [Table 2](#)). The largest change in female attendance was seen in women aged 20–29 years with 64 fewer attendances; a reduction of 23% (Figure 23). Please note, due to small numbers we have excluded patients aged 0–9 years from this case study.

► **Figure 22: Rate of attendance at NHS Lothian Emergency Departments with a violence-related injury per 1,000 population by age group – males.**

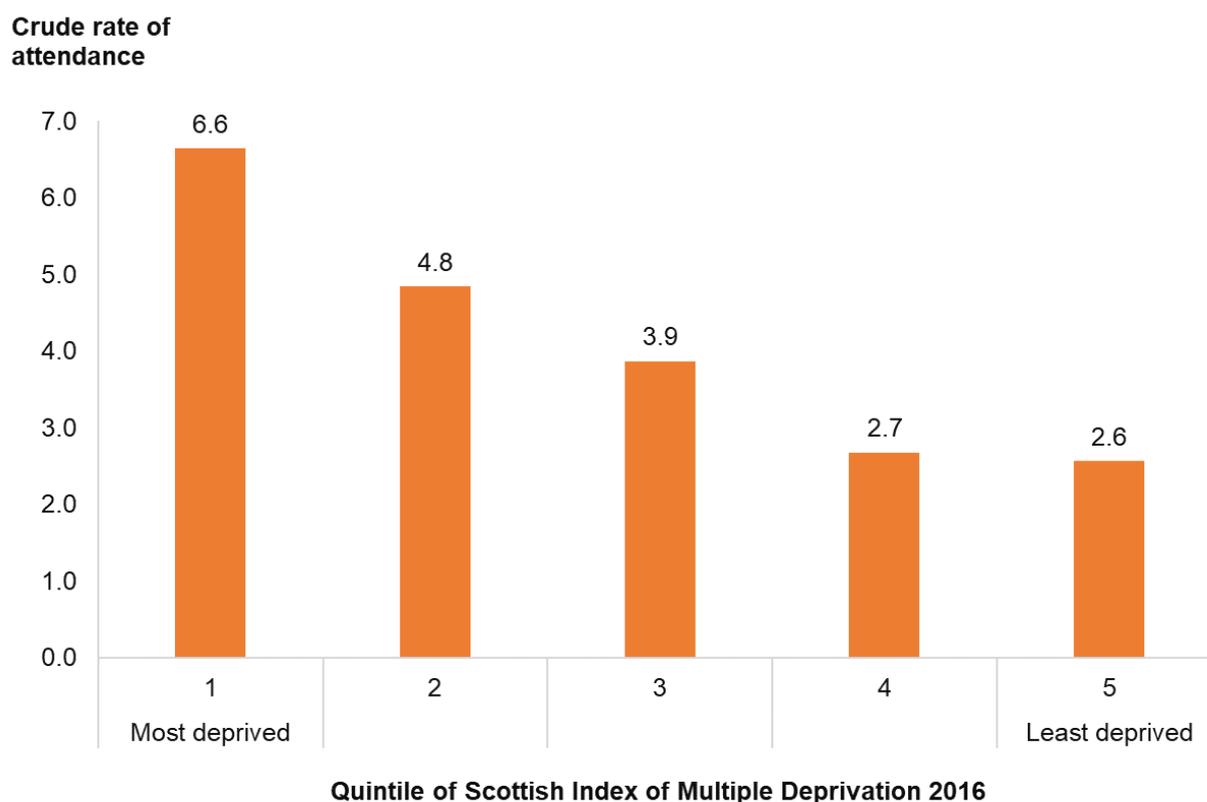


► **Figure 23: Rate of attendance at NHS Lothian Emergency Departments with a violence-related injury per 1,000 population by age group – females.**



In Figure 24, attendance rates in 2017 are estimated for each quintile (20% group) of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 2016). This shows an association between an area measure of multiple deprivation and the estimated rate of experiencing a violence-related injury. In keeping with the findings of the SCJS and Police Recorded Crime data (see [Section 4.1.4](#)), a disproportionate burden of violence is seen to fall on those from more deprived areas. These Lothian data also demonstrate a clear gradient across all deprivation quintiles reinforcing the need for population-wide approaches to violence prevention which are proportionate to need.

► **Figure 24: Crude rate of attendance at NHS Lothian Emergency Departments in 2017 with a violence-related injury per 1,000 population by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2016) quintile**

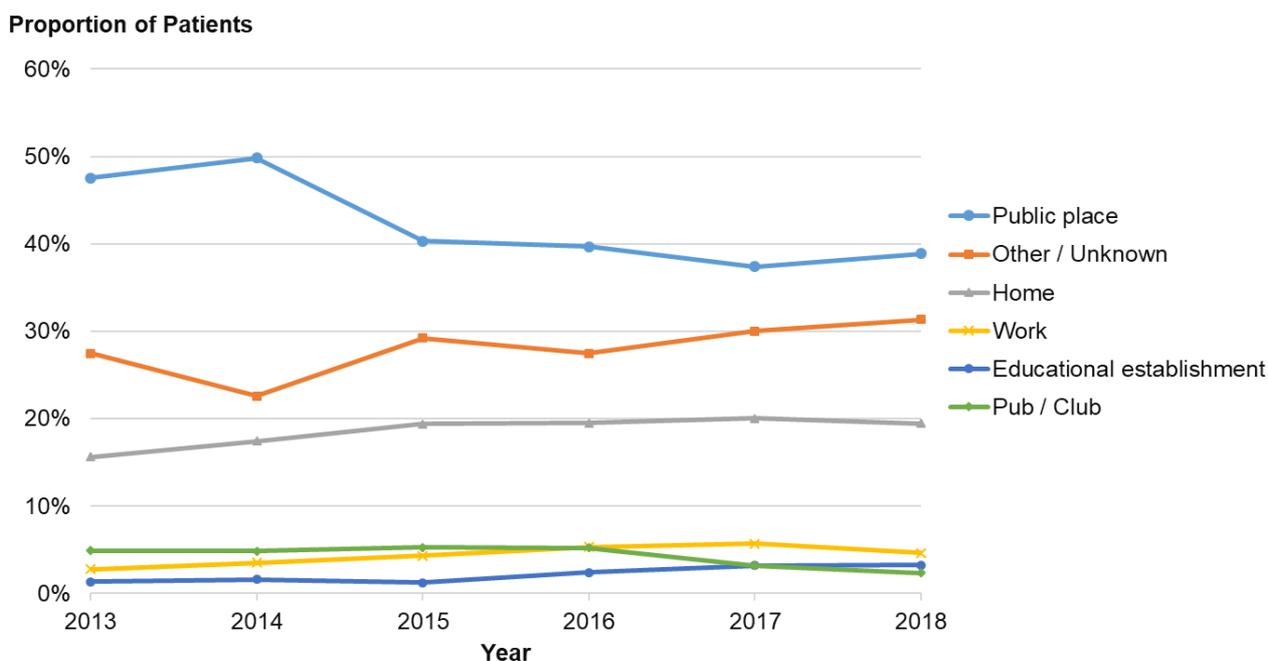


In 2018, the item the person was attacked with was recorded as ‘other’ or ‘unknown’ in 44% of cases. In the remaining cases where the item which injured the patient was specified, the injury was due to: body part, 82.7%; blunt object, 5.5%; bottle, 5.0%; knife, 4.8%; and glass, 2.1%. Due to large and varying proportions of patients where the item was recorded as ‘other’ and ‘unknown’ over time, it is not currently possible to comment on trends.

In keeping with the above issues around unknown data, around a third of patients did not have a location of injury recorded and this proportion has increased slightly in recent years (see Figure 25). Hence caution is advised when interpreting any

apparent trends in these data but they may give some sense of where violence-related injuries are happening. For example in 2018, a large proportion of injuries occurred in a ‘public place’ (39%), followed by ‘other / unknown’ (31%) and home (19%). Again, these more common locations are consistent with national findings ([Section 3.4](#)).

► **Figure 25: Proportion of patients attending NHS Lothian Emergency Departments with a violence-related injury by year and location of injury.**



NOTES: Data for patients aged 0–9 years have been excluded from this case study due to small numbers. A more detailed analysis of the wider NHS Lothian Assault Injury Surveillance data set is planned and will be published in due course

Acknowledgements: with thanks to NHS Lothian Emergency Department staff for gathering data, Mette Tranter for running the Surveillance programme and Caitlin Fox and Robyn Pascoe for analytical support.

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June 2018

9.2 Annex 2 – Methodological Discussion

9.2.1 Additional Notes on Data Sources

▶ **Scottish Crime and Justice Survey:**

The [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#) collects a range of detailed information about the characteristics of victims and the circumstances in which crimes occur.

The survey is a National Statistics product. It is conducted annually and asks a random sample of adults living in private households in Scotland about their experiences and perceptions of crime.

Further methodological information about the survey can be found [here](#).

▶ **Police Recorded Crime:**

This data includes the following publications:

- [Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics: 2018-19](#)
- [Homicide in Scotland National Statistics: 2017-18](#)
- [Recorded Crime in Scotland: Robbery, 2008-2009 and 2017-2018](#)
- [Recorded Crime in Scotland: Attempted Murder & Serious Assault, 2008-09 and 2017-18](#)
- [Recorded Crime in Scotland: Handling Offensive Weapons](#)
- Additional Analysis of Common Assault 2014-15 (within [Recorded Crime National Statistics](#))

▶ **Criminal Proceedings:**

This data includes offences dealt with by courts, sentencing outcomes and characteristics of convicted offenders.

- [Criminal Proceedings in Scotland National Statistics: 2017-18](#)

▶ **Hospital Admissions:**

Scottish Morbidity Record (SMR01), Unintentional Injuries Statistics. SMR01 is the General / Acute and Inpatient Day Case dataset which collects episode level data on hospital inpatient and day case discharges from acute specialities from hospitals in Scotland. This data provides information on emergency admissions to hospital when an injury has occurred through violence. Includes analysis from 2008-09 to 2017-18.

General:

Throughout this report, all numbers are reported to the level of precision used in the original source.

Information on gender is presented within this report with binary information split by male/female, reflecting the information provided by the relevant agencies.

9.3 Challenges in measuring violent crime

9.3.1 Which is the better source?

It is challenging to measure the full extent of violence using just one source. By combining sources a fuller picture of violent crime in Scotland can be obtained.

Each source has its own strengths and limitations, see [Section 9.3.5](#). For example, while a broader range of crimes can be found in Police Recorded Crime and Criminal Proceedings datasets, the SCJS estimates that only 39% of violent crimes were reported to the police in 2017-18 (which is consistent with earlier years). Given the under-reporting of violent crime and that police recording practices can often be subject to change, other sources such as victimisation surveys (the SCJS) and Hospital Admissions data can be used to further improve our understanding.

The SCJS and Hospital Admissions data are however themselves subject to limitations. The SCJS for example can only provide information on those over 16 years old in private households, while Hospital Admissions data are reliant on a person to be admitted and for their injuries to be identified and coded as being due to violence (those receiving care from a GP or in an outpatient setting and those attending emergency departments but not admitted will not be recorded).

9.3.2 Non-standardised definitions

For each source there is a detailed process used to define the crime. There are however slight variations in how crime terms are used and defined by each source.

In particular, it is important to note that:

- The SCJS includes actual and attempted minor assault (which is similar in nature to the what the police would record as a 'Common assault'), as well as Serious assault and Robbery.
- Police Recorded Crime data does not include Common assault in the category of non-sexual violence (which can also be referred to as Group 1). However when considering trends in non-sexual violence more broadly within this report, Common assault is included in our understanding of violent crime.

- Hospital Admissions data can only capture violent crime when an injury serious enough to need an emergency admission to hospital has occurred, thereby omitting violence that involved less serious or no injury.

For details on how terms are used in this document, see the [Glossary](#).

9.3.3 Defining and analysing deprivation

In order to assess deprivation, the geographic location of each crime in the samples was assigned to a datazone. These datazones were then compared to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)⁴⁵. This comparison was only possible for data from the SCJS, Robbery and Attempted murder & Serious assault. Data from Homicide were not able to be linked to the SIMD in this way.

The SIMD is a tool for identifying concentrations of deprivation in Scotland. SIMD uses information from a range of indicators including income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing to provide a measure for each of the roughly 7,000 datazones in Scotland. Each datazone is provided a rank ranging from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived) and also defined as being either Urban, Rural or a Small town.

As the sample for both the Robbery and Attempted murder & Serious assault analyses were drawn across two years, two different editions of SIMD were used for the comparison, for example, the SIMD12 was used to compare crimes from 2008-09 and SIMD16 compared to crimes from 2017-18.

9.3.4 Time periods examined

The precise time periods for each source differ, meaning that they are not directly comparable with one another, although broadly each source refers to a similar time period per annum.

The 2017-18 SCJS figures included in this report cover interviews conducted between April 2017 to May 2018. As the survey asks respondents about incidents experienced in the 12-months prior to the month of the interview crimes included in the survey could have occurred anytime between April 2016 to May 2018. Because of this data from the SCJS is not directly comparable to data from other sources collected over a specific year.

The self-completion Partner abuse data from the SCJS and the Police Division level figures are from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 sweeps of the survey. The data are merged over two years to provide a larger sample size, with findings therefore covering 2016-17 to 2017-18 (referred to throughout as 2016-18). The majority of the Police Recorded Crime data referred to here, relates to crimes recorded by the police in the financial years of 2008-09 and 2017-18 (i.e. from April to March of that

⁴⁵ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

year). Some of these crimes may have taken place prior to the year in which they were recorded but did not come to the attention of the police until a later date.

The Homicide National Statistics data are derived from the total number of Homicide cases, victims, or perpetrators for the three year periods ending in 2008-09 and 2017-18. This method is used to mitigate against large fluctuations that can occur in Homicide data due to the relatively low numbers involved, and allowing trends to be understood and analysed. Any individual Homicide case is included against the year in which the crime that led to the homicide is first recorded by the police, which is not necessarily the year in which the victim dies.

The Hospital Admissions data relates to emergency admissions to hospital (as a result of an assault) during the financial years of 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Criminal Proceedings data refers to court proceedings, as recorded on the Criminal History System (CHS), that were concluded during the financial years of 2008-9 and 2017-18. Data is only received once the sentence details are given. A pending case on the CHS should be updated in a timely manner but there are occasions when slight delays happen, these usually affect High Court disposals as they are the more complex and length trials.

9.3.5 Strengths and limitations of data sources

Strengths	Limitations
Scottish Crime and Justice Survey	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large, nationally representative survey that is good for looking at long-term trends across households in Scotland.• Includes crimes not reported to the police, and uses methods (e.g. a self-completion section for Partner abuse) that may allow for more detail on crimes to be gathered.• Consistent methodology over time, that is independent from changes to police recording practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to sampling errors, such as the respondent not recalling or disclosing past events.• Only covers households, thus crimes against businesses or non-household residents (such as tourists, or those living in grouped housing) are not included.• Does not include information on crimes experienced by those under 16, nor low volume crimes (e.g. Homicide) where a victim may not be available to interview.
Police Recorded Crime	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good measure of crimes that are well-recorded and reported to the police, e.g. theft where a police reference is needed for processing insurance claims.• Covers a broader range of crimes and population than the SCJS.• Useful for lower-volume crimes, that are challenging for sample methods to capture.• Can have a short lag time between occurrence of crime and reporting and so is good for examining emerging trends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to changes in recording practices, as well as changes in police activity, which can influence trends shown.• Does not include crimes not reported to, or recorded by, the police, or less serious offences.

Continues overleaf

Strengths

Limitations

Emergency Hospital Admissions for Assault Data

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes data on individuals that may be hard to access through other methods (e.g. who are not residences of households or who do not report the crime to the police).• Unaffected by police enforcement activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only includes those admitted under an appropriate emergency Hospital admissions code, e.g. excludes those not admitted or treated in outpatient settings.• Relies on information recorded by the hospital, and is dependent on a clinician's judgement about the cause of admission, which may be difficult to obtain. |
|---|---|

Scottish Government Criminal Proceedings Data

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides data on more minor offences, such as non-court penalties | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only includes crimes that resulted in legal proceedings. |
|---|--|
-

10 Glossary

Attempted murder	An attempt to bring about the end of a person's life.
Common assault	The act of assault which occasions minor injury or no injury. In the SCJS, this is termed 'minor assault'.
Harm	Defined according to the severity of physical injury sustained, with 'lower-harm' and 'higher-harm' referring only to the extent of physical injury recorded or assumed. More broadly, 'harm' is a subjective term that varies according to personal experience and can encompass emotional, social, economic, and psychological injury, however this is outside the scope of this enquiry.
Homicide	Unlawful killing.
Partner abuse	<p>In Scotland, Partner abuse refers to abusive behaviour to a partner or ex-partner and can incorporate emotional, physical, sexual abuse as well as coercive and controlling behaviour. (Domestic Abuse in Scotland includes partners only, whereas in England and Wales this also includes family members).</p> <p>This report uses data from the SCJS Partner Abuse report, and for this reason, the terminology Partner Abuse is used rather than Domestic Abuse.</p>
Perpetrator	A person accused or convicted of committing a violent crime. In self-report surveys and Police recorded crime the perpetrator may not be convicted or legally accused, nonetheless they are defined as 'perpetrator' for standardisation across the report.
Serious assault	The act of assault which occasions severe injury.
Victim	A person physically harmed or injured, or who has felt under threat of physical injury.
Violent crime/ Violence	Violent crime includes a variety of non-sexual offences that involve injury or the threat of injury. Not all violent crimes results in physical contact between perpetrator and victim; for a crime to be considered as violent it suffices for the threat of physical injury to be present, such as an attempted assault.



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This document is also available from our website at www.gov.scot.
ISBN: 978-1-83960-188-0

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Produced for
the Scottish Government
by APS Group Scotland
PPDAS588890 (09/19)
Published by
the Scottish Government,
September 2019



Social Research series
ISSN 2045-6964
ISBN 978-1-83960-188-0

Web and Print Publication
www.gov.scot/socialresearch

PPDAS588890 (09/19)