

Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018/19: Summary

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) is a large-scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime.

The 2018/19 SCJS confirms that Scotland has become a safer place over the last decade or so, following large falls in both the overall level of crime and the likelihood of being a victim of crime since 2008/09. The amount of overall crime has decreased by 20% since 2016/17, though has remained stable compared to the last survey in 2017/18. People were also more likely to feel safe in their communities and less likely to be worried about most types of crime in 2018/19 compared to 2008/09.

This summary outlines some key headline results and trends emerging from the survey. The [main report](#) contains a wide-range of evidence about experiences and perceptions of crime, the police and justice system in Scotland, with more detail and context presented in each specific report chapter.



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What does the survey tell us about trends in overall crime?

The survey finds the volume of crime in Scotland, including incidents not reported to the police, has fallen by 45% over the last decade or so – from an estimated 1,045,000 incidents in 2008/09 to 573,000 in 2018/19.

573,000

Crimes were experienced by adults in Scotland in 2018/19

↓ 45%

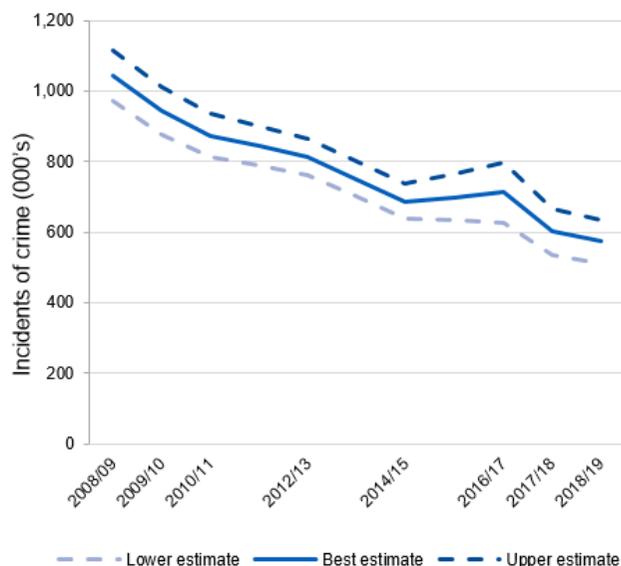
decrease in overall level of crime experienced in Scotland since 2008/09

12.4%

of adults experienced crime in 2018/19

↓ 8 percentage point decrease of adults experiencing crime in Scotland since 2008/09

► How much crime was there?



The SCJS estimates that the **police became aware of 36% of crime** in 2018/19, a similar proportion to previous years. However, when examining categories of crime which are comparable across the SCJS and police recorded crime statistics, both show a long-term and sustained decrease in the level of crime experienced in Scotland.

36%

of crimes were reported to the police



Furthermore, the survey estimates that the number of incidents experienced in 2018/19 was down by 20% compared to 2016/17. This suggests there is no clear evidence yet that the decreasing trend in overall crime, as evidenced by the SCJS over the last decade or so, has ended.

Most adults (87.6%) were not victims of any crime in 2018/19 and victimisation has become less common over the last decade – the proportion of adults experiencing crime decreased from one-in-five (20.4%) to one-in-eight (12.4%) between 2008/09 and the latest year. The SCJS detected no change in the likelihood of being a victim of crime between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

However, despite the large reduction in overall crime in Scotland over the years, victimisation rates continued to vary among the population in 2018/19. For example, **the likelihood of experiencing any crime was higher among those living in the 15% most deprived areas and urban areas of Scotland, and lower for those aged 60 and over.**

► **12.4%** of adults experienced crime. This rate varied across the population.

60+

Those aged 60 and over were less likely than other age groups to experience crime



People living in the most deprived areas were more likely than those living elsewhere in Scotland to experience crime



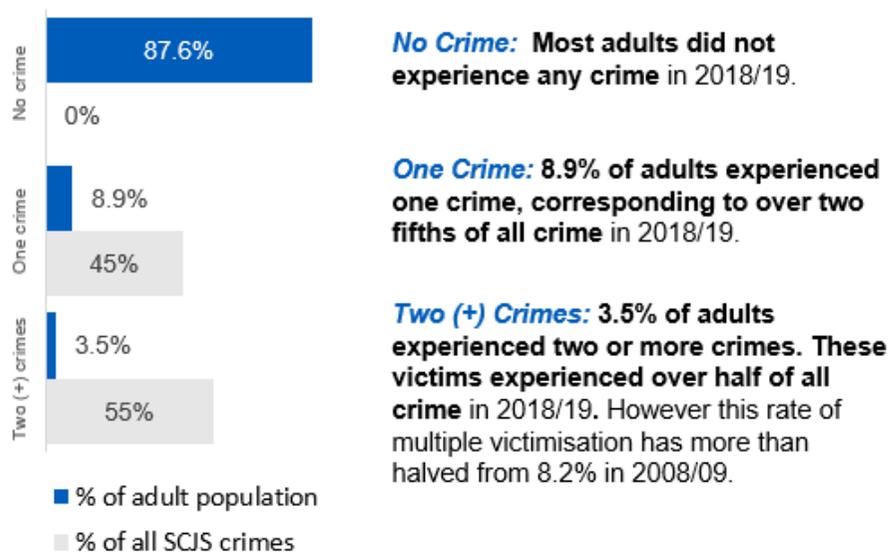
People living in urban areas were more likely than those living in rural areas to experience crime



No difference between men and women in likelihood of experiencing crime

As in previous years, **crime was concentrated among victims of multiple victimisation** – just under one-in-ten adults (8.9%) experienced one crime in 2018/19, while 3.5% of adults were victims of two or more incidents, accounting for over half (55%) of all crime in the year.

► **A small number of victims experienced a high proportion of all crime.**



The overall crime victimisation rate produced by the SCJS also enables a broad comparison with the equivalent rate in England and Wales. As with the previous year, adults in Scotland were less likely to have experienced crime than those in England and Wales during 2018/19, with victimisation rates of 12.4% and 14.9% respectively.

What does the survey tell us about violent and property crime?

As in previous years, violent crime (accounting for 29% of all crime) was less common than property crime (71%) in 2018/19, with the long-term decrease in overall crime underpinned by large falls in both categories.

Violent crime

Violent crime has **almost halved since 2008/09** (down by 48%), whilst the proportion of adults experiencing any violence has fallen from 4.1% in 2008/09 to 2.2% in 2018/19. This suggests that violent victimisation in Scotland has remained relatively uncommon since 2008/09, and has become an even less prevalent experience over the last decade. The fall in the volume of violent crime over the last decade has been mostly driven by decreases between 2008/09 and 2010/11, with broad stability seen in more recent years.

165,000

Violent crimes were experienced by adults in Scotland in 2018/19

↓ 48%

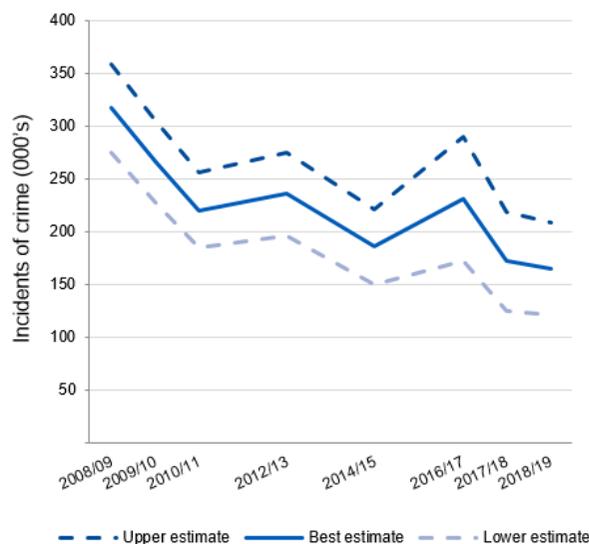
decrease in violent crimes in Scotland since 2008/09, but no change since 2017/18

2.2%

of adults experienced violent crime in 2018/19

↓ 1.9 percentage point decrease in adults experiencing violent crime in Scotland since 2008/09 but no change since 2017/18

► How much violent crime was there?



Consistent with previous years, the **majority of violent incidents were cases of minor assault resulting in no or negligible injury (60%)**, with instances of serious assault (7%) and robbery (3%) remaining relatively uncommon.

29%
VIOLENT CRIME



Of all violent crime, the majority was **minor assault with no /negligible injury (60%)**.

Other violent crime comprises **minor assault with injury (22%)**, **attempted assault (8%)**, **serious assault (7%)** and **robbery (3%)**.

There was **no difference in the proportion of men and women experiencing violence** in 2018/19, but victimisation rates did vary by other characteristics. For example, despite a fall in the violent victimisation rate for 16 to 24 year olds since 2008/09, this group has re-emerged in the 2018/19 survey as the cohort most likely to be victims of violence, in contrast to findings in the last couple of years.

Unlike in previous years, the SCJS detected no difference in the likelihood of experiencing violence in 2018/19 between adults living in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland and those living elsewhere (3.2% and 2.0%, respectively). As a newly emerged finding for 2018/19, this will be an area to review in future surveys to see if this trend continues.

60+

People aged 60 and over were less likely than other age groups to experience violent crime



No difference between men and women in likelihood of experiencing violent crime



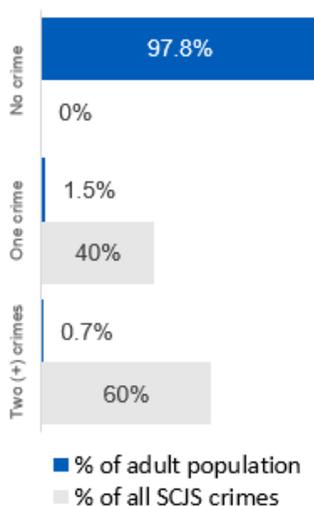
No difference between those living in the most deprived areas and elsewhere in Scotland in likelihood of experiencing violent crime



No difference between urban and rural areas in likelihood of experiencing violent crime

The **concentration of violent crime among repeat victims** (those experiencing two or more violent crimes) was also particularly pronounced. Whilst this affected fewer than one-in-every-hundred adults (0.7%), their experiences accounted for three-fifths (60%) of violent crime in 2018/19.

► **A small number of victims experienced a high proportion of violent crime**



No Crime: Most adults did not experience any violent crime in 2018/19.

One Crime: 1.5% of the population experienced one violent crime, corresponding to two-fifths of all violent crime in 2018/19.

Two (+) Crimes: 0.7% of adults experienced two or more violent crimes. These victims experienced three-fifths of all violent crime in 2018/19. However this rate of repeat victimisation has fallen from 1.6% in 2008/09.

Consistent with previous years, the 2018/19 results show that **most violent crimes involved offenders who were male, under the age of 40 and known (or previously seen) by the victim.** Offenders being under the influence of alcohol or drugs continued to be fairly common factors in violent crime in 2018/19, though the presence of weapons was relatively uncommon and has fallen since 2010/11 (when this data was first collected in its current format).

Property crime

The proportion of adults experiencing property crime has fallen from 18.0% in 2008/09 to 10.9% in 2018/19, with the estimated number of incidents occurring down by 44% over the same period. Both the volume of property crime and victimisation rate have shown stability since the previous survey in 2017/18.

408,000

Property crimes were experienced by adults in Scotland in 2018/19

↓ **44%**

decrease in property crime experienced in Scotland since 2008/09, but no change since 2017/18

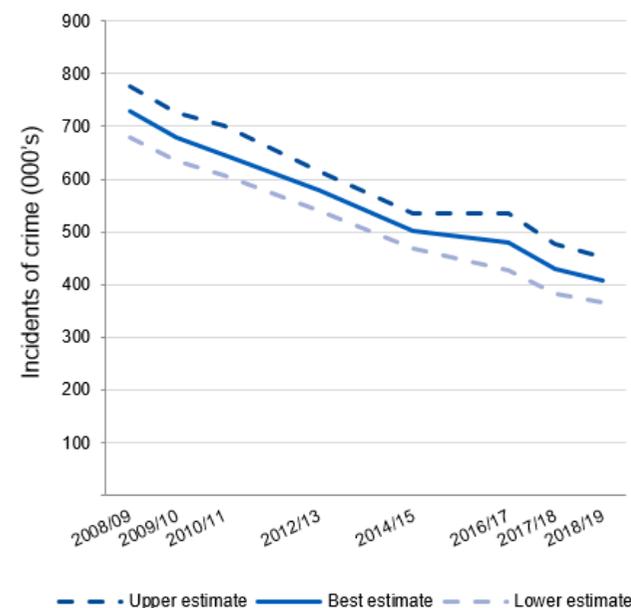
10.9%

of adults experienced property crime in 2018/19

↓ **7.1**

percentage point decrease in adults experiencing property crime in Scotland since 2008/09

► **How much property crime was there?**



Vandalism continued to be the most common form of property crime experienced in Scotland (accounting for 38% of incidents) but has more than halved in volume since 2008/09. Personal theft (24%) and other household theft (including bicycle theft) (23%) were the next largest categories.

71%
PROPERTY CRIME



Of all property crime, **vandalism** (38%), **personal theft** (24%), **other household theft** (23%), **motor vehicle theft** (9%) and **housebreaking** (6%).

Similar to overall crime victimisation rates, experiences of property crime in 2018/19 were **more common among people living in the 15% most deprived areas and urban locations**, whilst people aged 60 and over were least likely to be victims. Females (12.1%) were more likely than males (9.8%) to have been victims of property crime in 2018/19, the first time such a difference by gender has been detected by the survey. Again, as a newly-emerged finding, this will be an area to monitor in the coming years.

► **10.9%** of adults experienced property crime. This rate varied across the population.



Women were more likely than men to experience property crime

60+

People aged 60 and over were less likely than other age groups to experience property crime



People living in the most deprived areas were more likely than those living elsewhere in Scotland to experience property crime

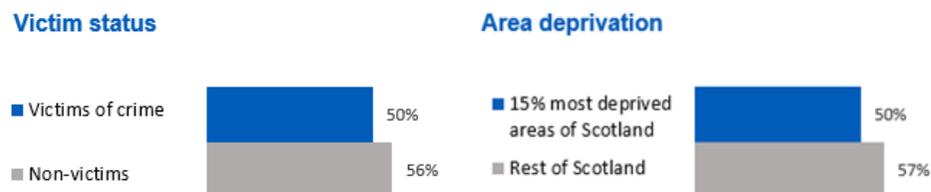


People living in urban areas were more likely than those living in rural areas to experience property crime

What does the survey tell us about perceptions of the police and justice system?

Perceptions of the police

The majority of adults (56%) said the police in their local area do an excellent or good job. This figure has been stable in the last few years, but has fallen from 61% in 2012/13. Victims of crime and those living in the 15% most deprived areas were less likely to feel this way about the police than comparator groups.



The survey also looks at attitudes towards and experiences of more specific elements of policing, covering a variety of issues. For example, the 2018/19 results show that **adults were generally confident in the ability of the local police** to take forward different aspects of police activity covered in the survey.

The proportion of adults aware of the police regularly patrolling their area has fallen from 56% in 2012/13 to 38% in 2018/19. However, questions on perceptions of community engagement and fairness find that people generally hold favourable views on the approach of the police in their local area.

Perceptions of the justice system

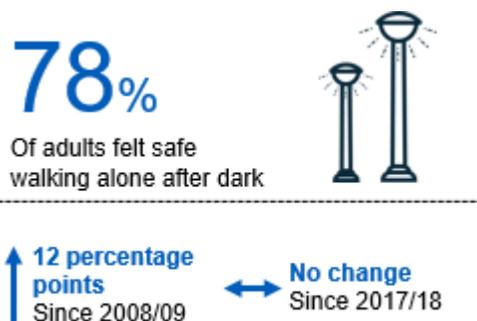
Consistent with previous years, **the majority of adults knew little about the criminal justice system but were fairly confident about its operation.** For example, three-quarters (76%) of adults were confident that it allows those accused of crimes to get a fair trial regardless of who they are, with the same proportion confident that it makes sure everyone has access to the justice system if they need it. However, adults were less confident on other measures, for example, 37% were confident that it gives sentences which fit the crime, with 58% saying they were not confident.

What does the survey tell us about perceptions of crime and safety?

Just under three-quarters of respondents thought that the local crime rate had stayed the same or reduced in the two years prior to interview (73%), up from 69% in 2008/09 and unchanged from last year.



People were more likely to feel safe in their communities than they were a decade ago – the proportions reporting feeling safe when walking alone in their local area or on their own at home during the night were higher in 2018/19 than in 2008/09.



Despite general improvements in perceptions of crime and feelings of safety since 2008/09, differences remain in the population. For example, **women, people in deprived areas and victims of crime were less likely to feel safe, more likely to be worried about specific types of crime, and more likely to think they would experience crime in the coming year.**

What is new in the 2018/19 SCJS?

This year's SCJS also includes analysis of new questions on cyber fraud and computer misuse, providing information on people's experiences of these types of crime. Whilst findings should be interpreted with a degree of caution due to the limited nature of the questions and how respondents may have engaged with them, the initial results suggest that **cyber fraud and computer misuse were issues encountered by a sizeable minority of the population** in 2018/19, and that most people did not bring such experiences to the attention of the police.

Methodology and limitations

The SCJS is primarily a victimisation survey which captures information on adults' experiences of violent crime and property crime, including those not reported to the police. However, it does not capture data on all crimes – for example, crimes with no direct or specific victim to interview (e.g. speeding, drug possession and homicide). Experiences of sexual offences are not included in the main estimates and are instead collected in the self-completion section and reported separately.

The 2018/19 results are based on answers given by 5,537 face-to-face interviews that were conducted across Scotland. The sample was designed to be nationally representative of all private residential households.

Survey results are always estimates, not precise figures. This means that the results are subject to a margin of error and some changes in reported estimates between survey years, or between population sub-groups, may occur by chance. All results published here are best estimates (the mean figure drawn from the sample) and any changes commented on are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Get in touch

Please get in touch with the SCJS team if you have any questions, comments, or suggestion – we welcome feedback at any time.

- ▶ Email: scjs@gov.scot

Useful resources

For more information, please visit the SCJS webpages:

www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-crime-and-justice-survey

- ▶ **Main report** – a more detailed explanation of the key findings from the survey
- ▶ **Data tables** – figures, including breakdowns by a range of demographic and area characteristics
- ▶ **Technical report** – understand the methodology that underpins the survey analysis
- ▶ **Questionnaire** – read the questions that respondents were asked