



CRIME AND JUSTICE

Recorded Crime in Scotland: July 2020

This bulletin is the fourth edition of a new monthly release of Official Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland. It provides information on the number of crimes and offences recorded during July 2020, and includes a comparison with the equivalent month of the previous year.

These Official Statistics have been introduced to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Whilst the conditions of lockdown have had an impact on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police, some caution is advised before necessarily attributing all of the changes to this situation. For example, longer term trends in some types of offending recorded by the police, which existed prior to the pandemic, may remain a factor.

Scottish Government statisticians will continue to publish these bulletins each month, covering the period of April to September 2020. After that point, the Scottish Crime Recording Board (which oversees the production of Official Statistics on recorded crime in Scotland) will review whether this process should continue, including user feedback on the value of these statistics.

The annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin](#) remains the primary source of information on crimes and offences recorded by the police, and has been designated as National Statistics by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The next update, covering the 2019-20 reporting year, will be published in September.

Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police provide a measure of the volume of criminal activity with which the police are faced. Crimes recorded by the police do not reveal the incidence of all crimes committed as not all crimes are reported to the police.

Summary

The number of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland was 7% lower in July 2020 than in July 2019, reducing from 21,839 to 20,401. Over the same time period:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 4% higher (increasing from 794 to 827 crimes).
- Sexual crimes were 8% higher (increasing from 1,117 to 1,203 crimes).
- Crimes of dishonesty were 18% lower (reducing from 10,008 to 8,166 crimes).
- Fire-raising, vandalism etc. was 8% lower (reducing from 4,084 to 3,760 crimes).
- Other crimes were 10% higher (increasing from 5,836 to 6,445 crimes).
- Fewer crimes were recorded by the police in 21 (66%) out of 32 local authorities.

The number of offences recorded by the police in Scotland was 5% lower in July 2020 than in July 2019, decreasing from 22,644 to 21,607. Over the same time period:

- Miscellaneous offences were 2% higher (increasing from 11,502 to 11,745).
- Motor vehicle offences were 11% lower (reducing from 11,142 to 9,862).

Overall, the number of crimes recorded by the police between April and July 2020 was 8% lower than the same period in 2019. In April 2020 recorded crime was 18% lower than April 2019. For the most recent month - July 2020 - recorded crime was 7% lower than in July 2019. As outlined above, the annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin](#) remains the primary source of information on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland, including longer-term analysis of changes to each of the crime and offence groups detailed above.

It should be noted that the total figure for recorded crime (presented in this summary and throughout the bulletin) excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation](#) section below for more information.

Main findings

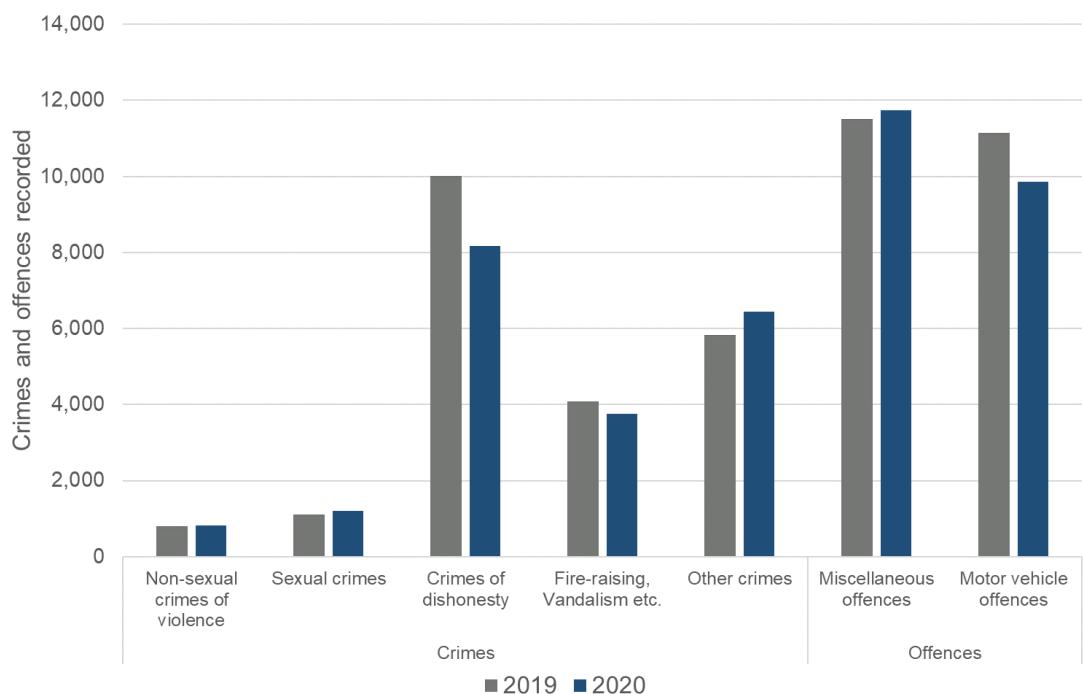
Crimes recorded by the police

In July 2020, the police recorded 20,401 crimes. This is 7% lower (or 1,438 crimes) than the 21,839 crimes recorded in the same month of 2019. There were variations in the year-on-year trends between different crime types. ([Table 1](#), [Chart 1](#)).

Between July 2019 and July 2020:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 4% higher (or 33 crimes), increasing from 794 to 827 crimes. The main contributors to this increase were Other Violence, which rose by 29% (or 38 crimes), and Robbery, up by 17% (or 23 crimes). Over the same period, crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 increased by 6% (or 8 crimes) from 140 to 148 crimes.
- Sexual crimes were 8% higher (or 86 crimes), increasing from 1,117 to 1,203 crimes. The main contributor to this increase was Rape and attempted rape, which increased by 42% (or 76 crimes). Other sexual crimes increased by 9% (or 45 crimes), while Sexual assault decreased, by 7% (or 30 crimes).
- Crimes of dishonesty were 18% lower (or 1,842 crimes), reducing from 10,008 to 8,166 crimes. The main contributors to this reduction were falls in Shoplifting (down 39% or 1,098 crimes) and Other theft (down 19% or 738 crimes). Over the same period, the number of frauds recorded was 55% higher, increasing by 543 to 1,534 crimes. The [Changes in levels of recorded fraud](#) section below provides users with further background on what may be contributing to this change.
- Fire-raising, vandalism etc. was 8% lower (or 324 crimes), reducing from 4,084 to 3,760 crimes. The main contributor to this reduction was Vandalism etc., which fell by 8%, or 323 crimes.
- Other crimes were 10% higher (or 609 crimes), increasing from 5,836 to 6,445 crimes. The main contributors to this increase were Crimes against public justice, which rose by 34% (or 571 crimes) and Handling offensive weapons, which increased by 18% (or 150 crimes). Drugs crimes fell by 3%, or 114 crimes.

Chart 1. Crimes and offences recorded by the police, by crime group, July 2020 compared with July 2019



Offences recorded by the police

In July 2020, the police recorded 21,607 offences. This is 5% lower (or 1,037 offences) than the 22,644 offences recorded in the same month in 2019.

There was a 2% increase in Miscellaneous offences, and a 11% decrease in Motor vehicle offences, as detailed below ([Table 2](#)).

Between July 2019 and July 2020:

- Miscellaneous offences increased by 2% (or 243 offences), from 11,502 to 11,745. This was driven by increases in Other miscellaneous offences, which rose by 25% (or 285 offences), and Breach of the peace etc., up 5% (or 234 offences). These increases were partially offset by reductions in Urinating etc. (down 46%) and Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct (down 20%).
- Motor vehicle offences were 11% lower (or 1,280 offences), reducing from 11,142 to 9,862. The main contributors to this reduction were Speeding, which fell by 22% (or 632 offences), and Unlawful use of a vehicle (down 15% or 524 offences). There were increases in Driving under the influence, up 47% or 255 offences.

Local Authorities

Compared to July 2019, a reduction in recorded crime was seen in 21 (66%) out of 32 local authorities, with the remaining 11 showing an increase ([Table 3](#)). The largest decrease was seen in Falkirk (down 39%) and the largest increase was in Orkney Islands (up 100%). It should be noted that the relatively small number of crimes recorded in some of Scotland's local authorities can fluctuate over time - leading to large percentage changes. This is particularly relevant in this release, where monthly data is being presented rather than the annual information provided in the National Statistics.

The biggest contributors by volume to the overall reduction in crimes recorded by the police were Glasgow City (down 13% or 507 crimes), followed by Edinburgh City (down 13% or 347 crimes) and Falkirk (down 39% or 251 crimes).

April to July 2020 compared with April to July 2019

Overall, in April to July 2020 the police recorded 78,599 crimes, a reduction of 8% (or 7,040 crimes) compared to the same period in 2019 (85,639 crimes) ([Table 4](#)). The biggest drivers of this reduction by volume were Shoplifting (down 41% or 4,624 crimes), Other theft (down 21% or 3,035) and Vandalism etc. (down 17% or 2,622 crimes). Crimes against public justice saw the biggest increase over this period, growing by 36% (or 2,353 crimes) from 6,513 to 8,866 crimes. Fraud was also higher, increasing by 60% (or 2,107 crimes) from 3,499 to 5,606.

Over the same period, the number of offences recorded by the police was 9% lower (or 8,037 offences), with Miscellaneous offences falling by 2% (or 1,120 offences) and Motor vehicle offences falling by 16% (or 6,917 offences) ([Table 5](#)).

Changes in levels of recorded fraud

Fraud was 55% higher (or 543 crimes) in July 2020 than in July 2019. Further to the note of caution provided in the introduction to these statistics, there are two reasons why some care is advised before attributing all of this change to the specific circumstances of the COVID-related lockdown.

The first is that the [Recorded Crime National Statistics](#) have highlighted an increasing trend in recorded fraud over a number of years (up 40% between 2014-15 and 2018-19), which may be continuing. The second is that a procedural change was made in April 2020 to how some crimes of fraud (and other types of crime which could involve a victim and a perpetrator in different physical locations) are recorded.

Prior to the 1st April 2020, these statistics excluded any crime with a victim in Scotland and a perpetrator who was confirmed by the police to be outside the United Kingdom when the crime took place. Following a recommendation by Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate for Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) to review recording practice in this area¹, the Scottish Crime Recording Board approved a change so that from the 1st April these crimes are now included in the statistics. It should be noted that those cases with only a suspicion or insufficient evidence to confirm that the perpetrator was outside the UK were always included.

This change is likely to have led to additional crimes of fraud being recorded, with a similar impact possible for other types of crime which could be committed using digital technologies. At this early stage we are unable to say to what extent this procedural change has increased levels of recorded fraud, though the 2020-21 National Statistics (to be published in September 2021) will provide users with an estimate of the number of additional crimes that were recorded as a result of this change.

¹ <https://www.hmics.scot/publications/crime-audit-2016>

Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation

It is important to note that these Official Statistics currently exclude crimes recorded under the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) and [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#). These were implemented on 25th March and 27th March respectively and resulted in new crimes being recorded - for example where someone, who had left the place they were living, did not have a reasonable excuse for this when asked by a police officer, and failed to comply with police advice or instruction to return there.

Given the rapid pace of these changes, Police Scotland have used an interim and bespoke data collection to capture information on the number of new crimes recorded under the coronavirus legislation. This is why figures for this legislation are currently presented separately to the overall totals provided for recorded crime in this bulletin. The bespoke data collection suggests that seventeen such crimes were recorded during July 2020. This figure has fallen considerably since April (see Table A below). Users should treat these figures as broadly indicative, and may be subject to further revision in future releases. In due course the annual National Statistics will include this activity within the overall crime total for Scotland.

Table A: Number of crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation, April to July 2020

Month	Number of crimes recorded
April	2,741
May	1,654
June	219
July	17

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Notes for these tables

- The symbol 'n/r' is used to denote where a percentage change figure is not reported. This is done if the denominator is less than ten as any resulting figure may be misleading.
- Please note that tables 1, 2, 4 and 5 can be accessed at local authority level online via the following link: <http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-83960-787-5>

Table 1: Crimes recorded by the police, Scotland, July 2019 and July 2020

Crime group	July		% Change since July 2019
	2019	2020	
Total crimes¹	21,839	20,401	-7%
Non-sexual crimes of violence	794	827	4%
Homicide etc.	17	3	-82%
Attempted murder & serious assault	373	351	-6%
Robbery	134	157	17%
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018	140	148	6%
Other violence	130	168	29%
Sexual crimes	1,117	1,203	8%
Rape & attempted rape	179	255	42%
Sexual assault	430	400	-7%
Crimes associated with prostitution	7	2	n/r
Other sexual crimes	501	546	9%
Crimes of dishonesty	10,008	8,166	-18%
Housebreaking	1,104	807	-27%
Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	161	109	-32%
Theft from a motor vehicle by OLP	235	177	-25%
Theft of a motor vehicle	440	350	-20%
Shoplifting	2,848	1,750	-39%
Other theft	3,813	3,075	-19%
Fraud	991	1,534	55%
Other dishonesty	416	364	-13%
Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	4,084	3,760	-8%
Fire-raising	235	234	0%
Vandalism etc.	3,849	3,526	-8%
Other crimes	5,836	6,445	10%
Crimes against public justice	1,702	2,273	34%
Handling offensive weapons	852	1,002	18%
<i>Not used in other criminal activity</i>	389	421	8%
<i>Used in other criminal activity</i>	463	581	25%
Drugs	3,271	3,157	-3%
Other	11	13	18%

1. The total figure for recorded crime excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation](#) section for more information

Table 2: Offences recorded by the police, Scotland, July 2019 and July 2020

Offence group	July		% Change since July 2019
	2019	2020	
Total offences	22,644	21,607	-5%
Miscellaneous offences	11,502	11,745	2%
Common assault	4,896	4,868	-1%
Breach of the peace etc.	4,553	4,787	5%
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	684	546	-20%
Urinating etc.	238	128	-46%
Other miscellaneous offences	1,131	1,416	25%
Motor vehicle offences	11,142	9,862	-11%
Dangerous and careless driving	1,077	1,090	1%
Driving under the influence	548	803	47%
Speeding	2,819	2,187	-22%
Unlawful use of vehicle	3,538	3,014	-15%
Vehicle defect offences	592	663	12%
Seat belt offences	372	228	-39%
Mobile phone offences	248	214	-14%
Other motor vehicle offences	1,948	1,663	-15%

Table 3: Crimes recorded by the police by local authority, Scotland, July 2019 and July 2020

Local Authority	July 2019	July 2020	% Change since July 2019
Aberdeen City	1,002	1,141	14%
Aberdeenshire	631	590	-6%
Angus	310	295	-5%
Argyll & Bute	248	241	-3%
Clackmannanshire	213	157	-26%
Dumfries & Galloway	628	526	-16%
Dundee City	890	848	-5%
East Ayrshire	435	452	4%
East Dunbartonshire	265	261	-2%
East Lothian	370	272	-26%
East Renfrewshire	192	160	-17%
Edinburgh City	2,718	2,371	-13%
Falkirk	636	385	-39%
Fife	1,193	1,210	1%
Glasgow City	3,818	3,311	-13%
Highland	715	755	6%
Inverclyde	265	289	9%
Midlothian	372	326	-12%
Moray	180	268	49%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	34	44	29%
North Ayrshire	544	536	-1%
North Lanarkshire	1,558	1,487	-5%
Orkney Islands	23	46	100%
Perth & Kinross	389	415	7%
Renfrewshire	706	673	-5%
Scottish Borders	307	341	11%
Shetland Islands	40	34	-15%
South Ayrshire	433	383	-12%
South Lanarkshire	1,220	1,189	-3%
Stirling	325	229	-30%
West Dunbartonshire	451	436	-3%
West Lothian	728	730	0%
Scotland¹	21,839	20,401	-7%

1. The total figure for recorded crime excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation](#) section for more information.

Table 4: Crimes recorded by the police, Scotland, April to July 2019 and April to July 2020

Crime group	April to July 2019	April to July 2020	% Change since 2019
Total crimes¹	85,639	78,599	-8%
Non-sexual crimes of violence	3,172	2,929	-8%
Homicide etc.	51	29	-43%
Attempted murder & serious assault	1,536	1,181	-23%
Robbery	522	592	13%
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018	565	518	-8%
Other violence	498	609	22%
Sexual crimes	4,575	4,110	-10%
Rape & attempted rape	797	736	-8%
Sexual assault	1,739	1,223	-30%
Crimes associated with prostitution	23	12	-48%
Other sexual crimes	2,016	2,139	6%
Crimes of dishonesty	38,630	31,963	-17%
Housebreaking	4,303	3,590	-17%
Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	602	388	-36%
Theft from a motor vehicle by OLP	983	839	-15%
Theft of a motor vehicle	1,683	1,511	-10%
Shoplifting	11,259	6,635	-41%
Other theft	14,611	11,576	-21%
Fraud	3,499	5,606	60%
Other dishonesty	1,690	1,818	8%
Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	16,470	13,756	-16%
Fire-raising	992	900	-9%
Vandalism etc.	15,478	12,856	-17%
Other crimes	22,792	25,841	13%
Crimes against public justice	6,513	8,866	36%
Handling offensive weapons	3,452	3,695	7%
<i>Not used in other criminal activity</i>	1,590	1,742	10%
<i>Used in other criminal activity</i>	1,862	1,953	5%
Drugs	12,755	13,226	4%
Other	72	54	-25%

1. The total figure for recorded crime excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation](#) section for more information.

Table 5: Offences recorded by the police, Scotland, April to July 2019 and April to July 2020

Crime group	April to July 2019	April to July 2020	% Change since 2019
Total offences	88,054	80,017	-9%
Miscellaneous offences	45,510	44,390	-2%
Common assault	19,859	17,381	-12%
Breach of the peace etc.	17,939	18,315	2%
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	2,384	2,658	11%
Urinating etc.	856	374	-56%
Other miscellaneous offences	4,472	5,662	27%
Motor vehicle offences	42,544	35,627	-16%
Dangerous and careless driving	3,911	3,772	-4%
Driving under the influence	2,076	2,969	43%
Speeding	11,081	6,928	-37%
Unlawful use of vehicle	12,989	12,821	-1%
Vehicle defect offences	2,485	2,060	-17%
Seat belt offences	1,275	664	-48%
Mobile phone offences	989	647	-35%
Other motor vehicle offences	7,738	5,766	-25%

Annexes

Annex 1: Background

As outlined on page one, these new monthly Official Statistics have been introduced to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Their role is to provide more recent information on this topic - in a product that has been produced by Scottish Government statisticians, in line with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

Scottish Government statisticians will continue to publish these bulletins each month, covering the period from April to September 2020. After that point, the Scottish Crime Recording Board (which oversees the production of Official Statistics on recorded crime in Scotland) will review whether this process should continue, including user feedback on the value of these statistics.

The annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) bulletin remains the primary source of information on crimes and offences recorded by the police, and has been designated as National Statistics by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The next update, covering the 2019-20 reporting year, will be published in September. Users should refer to the National Statistics for more detailed information on the production of the recorded crime statistics - including governance arrangements, a description of their quality, background methodologies and changes to recording practice.

The next bulletin, covering the month of August 2020, will be published on 17th September.

Annex 2: Data Sources

Since 2013-14, the National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland have been produced using data extracted from a single Police Scotland IT system called the Scottish Operational and Management Information System (ScOMIS). This data is then provided to the Scottish Government for the production of the National Statistics.

In 2019, Police Scotland developed a new data repository called the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP). The intention is that this will, in due course, become the official source of information for the recorded crime National Statistics, replacing ScOMIS.

A preliminary review, looking at how changing from ScOMIS to SEBP impacts on the production of the Recorded Crime National Statistics, suggests that there is good alignment between both of these administrative systems.

Before the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) approves this transition, a final confirmatory check of the full 2019-20 reporting year will take place prior to publication of the Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2019-20 National Statistics.

This will involve a comparison of trends in recorded crimes, offences and clear up rates for all local authorities and Scotland as a whole between 2018-19 and 2019-20. A technical report detailing the results of this analysis and highlighting any implications for data interpretation will be published in September 2020.

In order to produce the new monthly Official Statistics included in this bulletin in the necessary shorter time frames, the information supplied by Police Scotland has been extracted from SEBP. As such, the figures provided in this publication use a different source from the most recent National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland – and are therefore not directly comparable (notwithstanding the preliminary finding noted above that there is good alignment between the two systems).

In addition, amendments to crime and offence records will always arise after data has been submitted by Police Scotland to the Scottish Government. Some crime or offence records may, on further investigation by the police, be redesignated to not constitute a crime or offence (a process known as ‘no-criming’). In other cases the original crime or offence may be re-classified, which could shift the record between different crime or offence groups (for example if a common assault was found on further investigation to be a serious assault it would switch from Group 6 Miscellaneous Offences to Group 1 Non-sexual Crimes of Violence).

The data for this bulletin was extracted in August 2020. The information for July 2019 is unlikely to change as more than a year has passed since the crimes were originally recorded and the vast majority of amendments are likely to have taken place. In contrast, there has been a much shorter time for amendments to have been made to the information for July 2020 and so this information is likely to change to a greater extent as more time passes. Some caution should therefore be taken in interpreting the changes between 2019 and 2020, as outlined in these monthly bulletins, which should be seen as providing a broad indication of changes over the period in volumes and types of specific crimes and offences.

When published, the annual National Statistics for 2019-20 and 2020-21 will provide the most robust source of information on crimes recorded by the police, and how these have changed over time.

For further background information (e.g. classification of Crimes and Offences and comparisons with England & Wales and Northern Ireland) please see Annex 1 in the latest National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2018-19/pages/23/>

Annex 3: Feedback

We are always keen to hear users' views on our products and as this is the first in a new series of monthly recorded crime publications we would welcome feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions please contact us at: Justice_Analysts@gov.scot.

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot.
- some limited additional information may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact statistics.enquiries@gov.scot for further information.
- detailed information cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

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