



## CRIME AND JUSTICE

# Recorded Crime in Scotland:

## October 2020

This Official Statistics bulletin presents information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland during October 2020. It also includes a comparison with the equivalent month of the previous year.

These Official Statistics were introduced from April 2020 to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Whilst the restrictions put in place to limit the spread of the virus will 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, which existed prior to the pandemic, may remain a factor.

We originally planned to ask the Scottish Crime Recording Board (which oversees the production of Official Statistics on recorded crime in Scotland) to review in the autumn whether this monthly process should continue, including user feedback on the value of these statistics. However at this stage, given the increasing levels of the virus in Scotland, no changes are planned in the short term. As such, we will continue to publish these Official Statistics on a monthly basis and will consult with users when the above review takes place.

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 most recent update, covering the 2019-20 reporting year, was published on 29<sup>th</sup> 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 8% lower in October 2020 than in October 2019, reducing from 21,443 to 19,798.**

**Over the same time period:**

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 8% lower (decreasing from 848 to 780 crimes).
- Sexual crimes were 4% lower (decreasing from 1,134 to 1,093 crimes).
- Crimes of dishonesty were 12% lower (reducing from 9,571 to 8,406 crimes).
- Fire-raising, vandalism etc. were 12% lower (reducing from 4,259 to 3,735 crimes).
- Other crimes were 3% higher (increasing from 5,631 to 5,784 crimes).
- Fewer crimes were recorded by the police in 23 (72%) out of 32 local authorities.

**The number of offences recorded by the police in Scotland was 8% lower in October 2020 than in October 2019, decreasing from 20,842 to 19,236.**

**Over the same time period:**

- Miscellaneous offences were 5% lower (decreasing from 10,596 to 10,079).
- Motor vehicle offences were 11% lower (reducing from 10,246 to 9,157).

**Overall, the number of crimes recorded by the police between April and October 2020 was 7% lower than the same period in 2019.** In April 2020 recorded crime was 18% lower than April 2019. For the most recent month - October 2020 - recorded crime was 8% lower than in October 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.

# Main findings

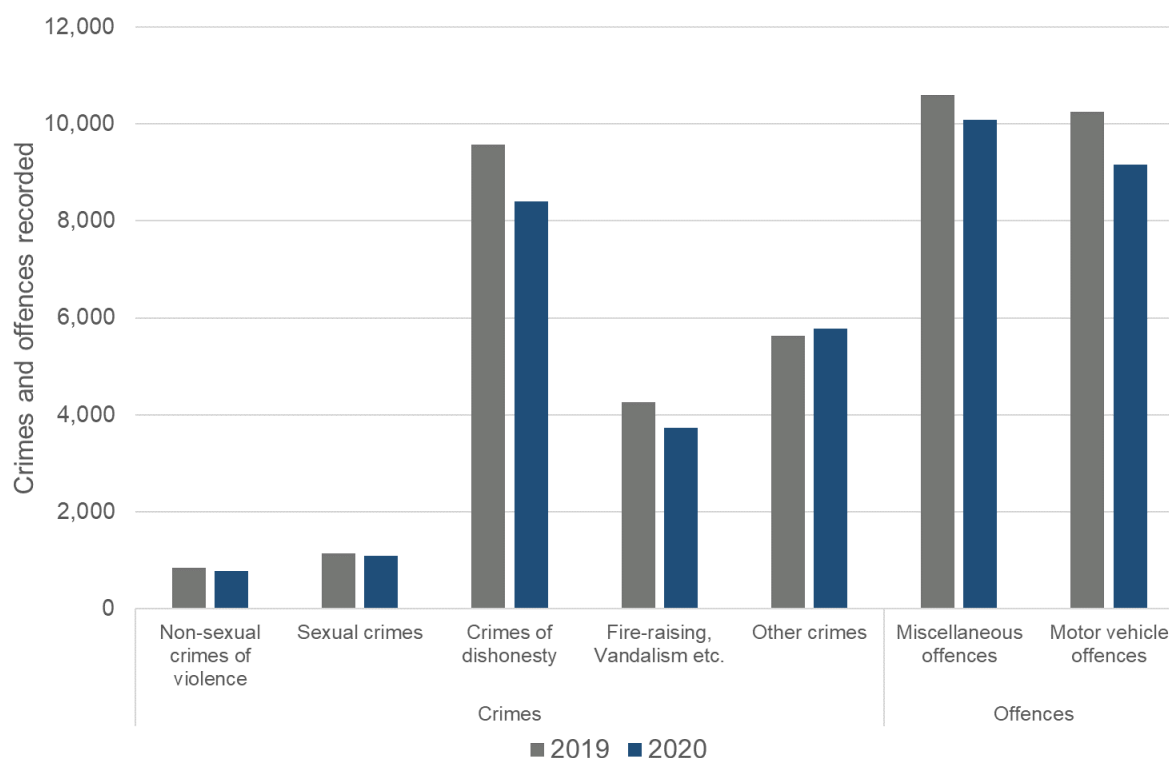
## Crimes recorded by the police

In October 2020, the police recorded 19,798 crimes. This is 8% lower (or 1,645 crimes) than the 21,443 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 October 2019 and October 2020:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 8% lower (or 68 crimes), decreasing from 848 to 780 crimes. Most categories in this group experienced a decrease, with the exception of Homicide etc. which increased by 1 crime, and Other violence (which increased by 10% or 16 crimes). The most marked decrease was in the Attempted murder and serious assault category, which decreased by 60 crimes (17%), from 350 to 290. Crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act decreased by 12% (from 165 to 146 crimes).
- Sexual crimes were 4% lower (a decrease of 41 crimes), decreasing from 1,134 to 1,093 crimes. The main contributor to this decrease by volume was Sexual assault, which decreased by 23% (or 99 crimes), from 435 to 336. Other sexual crimes increased by 11%, or 53 crimes.
- Crimes of dishonesty were 12% lower (or 1,165 crimes), reducing from 9,571 to 8,406 crimes. All categories experienced a decrease with the exception of Fraud (which increased by 62%, from 927 to 1,506 crimes). The [Changes in levels of recorded fraud](#) section below provides users with further background on what may be contributing to this change. The overall decrease in Crimes of dishonesty was driven by decreases in Shoplifting (which decreased by 28% from 2,644 to 1,912 crimes), Other theft (which decreased by 17% from 3,681 to 3,066 crimes) and Housebreaking (which decreased by 18% from 1,089 to 891 crimes).
- Fire-raising, vandalism etc. decreased by 12%, from 4,259 to 3,735 crimes. Within this, crimes of Fireraising increased by 11% from 238 to 265 crimes, while Vandalism etc. decreased by 14% from 4,021 crimes to 3,470 crimes.
- Other crimes were 3% higher (or 153 crimes), increasing from 5,631 to 5,784 crimes. The main contributor to this increase by volume was Crimes against public justice, which rose by 25% (or 410 crimes). Drugs crimes fell by 11%, or 329 crimes.

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



### Offences recorded by the police

In October 2020, the police recorded 19,236 offences. This is 8% lower (or 1,606 offences) than the 20,842 offences recorded in the same month in 2019. There was a 5% decrease in Miscellaneous offences, and an 11% decrease in Motor vehicle offences, as detailed below ([Table 2](#)).

Between October 2019 and October 2020:

- Miscellaneous offences decreased by 5% (or 517 offences), from 10,596 to 10,079. Most categories experienced a decrease with the exception of Other miscellaneous offences, which experienced an increase of 16% from 1,148 to 1,329. The most prominent decreases were in Common assault (which decreased by 7% from 4,770 to 4,416 offences), Breach of the peace etc. which decreased by 5% (from 4,149 to 3,937) and Urinating etc., which decreased by 71% (from 163 to 47).
- Motor vehicle offences were 11% lower (or 1,089 offences), reducing from 10,246 to 9,157. The main contributors to this reduction were Speeding, which fell by 23% (or 547 offences) and Unlawful use of a vehicle (which fell by 8% or 260 offences). Driving under the influence increased by 31% (160 offences), from 509 to 669.

## Local Authorities

Compared to October 2019, a reduction in recorded crime was seen in 23 (72%) out of 32 local authorities, with 8 showing an increase and one staying the same ([Table 3](#)). The largest decrease was seen in Shetland Islands (down 26%) and the largest increase was in Na h-Eileanan Siar (up 26%). 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 18% or 719 crimes), Edinburgh City (down 14% or 347 crimes) and North Lanarkshire (down 8% or 129 crimes).

### **April to October 2020 compared with April to October 2019**

Overall, in April to October 2020 the police recorded 138,002 crimes, a reduction of 7% (or 10,215 crimes) compared to the same period in 2019 (148,217 crimes) ([Table 4](#)). The biggest drivers of this reduction by volume were Shoplifting (down 34% or 6,486 crimes), Other theft (down 19% or 4,892), and Vandalism etc. (down 13% or 3,407 crimes). Crimes against public justice saw the biggest increase over this period, growing by 34% (or 3,850 crimes) from 11,431 to 15,281 crimes. Fraud was also higher, increasing by 61% (or 3,744 crimes) from 6,089 to 9,833.

Over the same period, the number of offences recorded by the police was 7% lower (or 10,157 offences), with Miscellaneous offences decreasing by 2% (or 1,236 offences) and Motor vehicle offences falling by 12% (or 8,921 offences) ([Table 5](#)).

## Changes in levels of recorded fraud

Fraud was 62% higher (or 579 crimes) in October 2020 than in October 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 73% between 2014-15 and 2019-20), 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 area<sup>1</sup>, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> <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 coronavirus legislation such as 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 588 such crimes were recorded during October 2020. This month's figure is higher than the previous month but considerably lower than 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 October 2020**

Month	Number of crimes recorded
April	2,741
May	1,654
June	219
July	17
August	21
September	189
October	588

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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/978-1-80004-328-2>



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

Crime group	October		% Change since October 2019
	2019	2020	
<b>Total crimes<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21,443</b>	<b>19,798</b>	<b>-8%</b>
<b>Non-sexual crimes of violence</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>-8%</b>
Homicide etc.	10	11	10%
Attempted murder & serious assault	350	290	-17%
Robbery	161	155	-4%
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018	165	146	-12%
Other violence	162	178	10%
<b>Sexual crimes</b>	<b>1,134</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>-4%</b>
Rape & attempted rape	202	215	6%
Sexual assault	435	336	-23%
Crimes associated with prostitution	11	3	-73%
Other sexual crimes	486	539	11%
<b>Crimes of dishonesty</b>	<b>9,571</b>	<b>8,406</b>	<b>-12%</b>
Housebreaking	1,089	891	-18%
Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	137	107	-22%
Theft from a motor vehicle by OLP	251	174	-31%
Theft of a motor vehicle	434	389	-10%
Shoplifting	2,644	1,912	-28%
Other theft	3,681	3,066	-17%
Fraud	927	1,506	62%
Other dishonesty	408	361	-12%
<b>Fire-raising, vandalism etc.</b>	<b>4,259</b>	<b>3,735</b>	<b>-12%</b>
Fire-raising	238	265	11%
Vandalism etc.	4,021	3,470	-14%
<b>Other crimes</b>	<b>5,631</b>	<b>5,784</b>	<b>3%</b>
Crimes against public justice	1,667	2,077	25%
Handling offensive weapons	831	899	8%
<i>Not used in other criminal activity</i>	368	413	12%
<i>Used in other criminal activity</i>	463	486	5%
Drugs	3,116	2,787	-11%
Other	17	21	24%

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, October 2019 and October 2020**

Crime group	October		% Change since October 2019
	2019	2020	
<b>Total offences</b>	<b>20,842</b>	<b>19,236</b>	<b>-8%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous offences</b>	<b>10,596</b>	<b>10,079</b>	<b>-5%</b>
Common assault	4,770	4,416	-7%
Breach of the peace etc.	4,149	3,937	-5%
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	366	350	-4%
Urinating etc.	163	47	-71%
Other miscellaneous offences	1,148	1,329	16%
<b>Motor vehicle offences</b>	<b>10,246</b>	<b>9,157</b>	<b>-11%</b>
Dangerous and careless driving	956	974	2%
Driving under the influence	509	669	31%
Speeding	2,371	1,824	-23%
Unlawful use of vehicle	3,381	3,121	-8%
Vehicle defect offences	612	546	-11%
Seat belt offences	188	95	-49%
Mobile phone offences	187	118	-37%
Other motor vehicle offences	2,042	1,810	-11%

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

	October		Change since October 2019
	2019	2020	
Aberdeen City	1,039	970	-7%
Aberdeenshire	588	584	-1%
Angus	246	257	4%
Argyll & Bute	204	179	-12%
Clackmannanshire	193	185	-4%
Dumfries & Galloway	490	488	0%
Dundee City	887	881	-1%
East Ayrshire	511	479	-6%
East Dunbartonshire	246	248	1%
East Lothian	379	336	-11%
East Renfrewshire	192	192	0%
Edinburgh City	2,545	2,198	-14%
Falkirk	591	495	-16%
Fife	1,229	1,366	11%
Glasgow City	3,998	3,279	-18%
Highland	556	590	6%
Inverclyde	336	266	-21%
Midlothian	341	358	5%
Moray	195	213	9%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	35	44	26%
North Ayrshire	570	492	-14%
North Lanarkshire	1,583	1,454	-8%
Orkney Islands	30	26	-13%
Perth & Kinross	420	414	-1%
Renfrewshire	712	627	-12%
Scottish Borders	280	284	1%
Shetland Islands	57	42	-26%
South Ayrshire	435	380	-13%
South Lanarkshire	1,180	1,142	-3%
Stirling	302	299	-1%
West Dunbartonshire	425	413	-3%
West Lothian	648	617	-5%
<b>Scotland<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>21,443</b>	<b>19,798</b>	<b>-8%</b>

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 October 2019 and April to October 2020**

<b>Crime group</b>	<b>April to October 2019</b>	<b>April to October 2020</b>	<b>% Change since 2019</b>
<b>Total crimes<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>148,217</b>	<b>138,002</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Non-sexual crimes of violence</b>	<b>5,646</b>	<b>5,241</b>	<b>-7%</b>
Homicide etc.	77	61	-21%
Attempted murder & serious assault	2,598	2,158	-17%
Robbery	989	1,017	3%
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018	1,026	893	-13%
Other violence	956	1,112	16%
<b>Sexual crimes</b>	<b>7,980</b>	<b>7,479</b>	<b>-6%</b>
Rape & attempted rape	1,439	1,347	-6%
Sexual assault	3,025	2,326	-23%
Crimes associated with prostitution	58	22	-62%
Other sexual crimes	3,458	3,784	9%
<b>Crimes of dishonesty</b>	<b>66,340</b>	<b>56,626</b>	<b>-15%</b>
Housebreaking	7,487	6,220	-17%
Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	1,032	723	-30%
Theft from a motor vehicle by OLP	1,670	1,341	-20%
Theft of a motor vehicle	2,935	2,631	-10%
Shoplifting	18,833	12,347	-34%
Other theft	25,507	20,615	-19%
Fraud	6,089	9,833	61%
Other dishonesty	2,787	2,916	5%
<b>Fire-raising, vandalism etc.</b>	<b>28,695</b>	<b>25,251</b>	<b>-12%</b>
Fire-raising	1,629	1,592	-2%
Vandalism etc.	27,066	23,659	-13%
<b>Other crimes</b>	<b>39,556</b>	<b>43,405</b>	<b>10%</b>
Crimes against public justice	11,431	15,281	34%
Handling offensive weapons	5,923	6,426	8%
<i>Not used in other criminal activity</i>	2,716	2,963	9%
<i>Used in other criminal activity</i>	3,207	3,463	8%
Drugs	22,076	21,601	-2%
Other	126	97	-23%

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 October 2019 and April to October 2020**

<b>Crime group</b>	<b>April to October 2019</b>	<b>April to October 2020</b>	<b>% Change since 2019</b>
<b>Total offences</b>	<b>151,307</b>	<b>141,150</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous offences</b>	<b>78,549</b>	<b>77,313</b>	<b>-2%</b>
Common assault	34,646	31,571	-9%
Breach of the peace etc.	30,906	31,406	2%
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	3,777	4,046	7%
Urinating etc.	1,413	641	-55%
Other miscellaneous offences	7,807	9,649	24%
<b>Motor vehicle offences</b>	<b>72,758</b>	<b>63,837</b>	<b>-12%</b>
Dangerous and careless driving	6,775	6,835	1%
Driving under the influence	3,611	5,064	40%
Speeding	18,466	12,514	-32%
Unlawful use of vehicle	22,445	22,087	-2%
Vehicle defect offences	4,198	3,794	-10%
Seat belt offences	1,972	1,168	-41%
Mobile phone offences	1,591	1,103	-31%
Other motor vehicle offences	13,700	11,272	-18%

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Background

As outlined on page one, these 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. In due course, 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 most recent update, covering the 2019-20 reporting year, was published on 29th 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.

## 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 has been carried out. This involved 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 due course.

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 November 2020. The information for October 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 October 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.

The annual National Statistics for 2019-20 and 2020-21 (when published) 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-2019-2020/>

### **Annex 3: Feedback**

We are always keen to hear users' views on our products and as this is 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](mailto: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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e-mail: [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot)

### **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through [statistics.gov.scot](https://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](mailto: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**

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, GR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot).

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ISBN 978-1-80004-328-2

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