



A National Statistics publication for Scotland

CRIME AND JUSTICE

Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2022-23

This bulletin presents National Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland in 2022-23. Statistics on recorded crimes and offences provide a measure of the volume of criminal activity with which the police are faced. This does not reveal the incidence of all crime committed as not all crimes are reported to the police.

It should be noted that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and associated measures to limit social contact, has had an impact on both the type and volume of crime recorded since March 2020. A larger impact was seen during 2020-21, and to a lesser extent 2021-22. The final legal restrictions were lifted in April 2022, suggesting a much more limited impact in 2022-23. More information is presented in the [Coronavirus restrictions crimes chapter](#).

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Key points

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23:

- Crimes recorded by the police in Scotland increased by 1%, from 286,464 to 289,362. The recording of crime remains at one of the lowest levels seen since 1974.
- Crimes recorded under Coronavirus related legislation fell from 3,913 to zero. All other crimes collectively increased by 2%.
- Non-sexual crimes of violence decreased by 1%, from 69,286 to 68,870. Common assault (also down 1%) makes up the clear majority (84%) of all non-sexual crimes of violence recorded in 2022-23.
- Sexual crimes decreased by 3%, from 15,049 to 14,602. These crimes are now at the second highest level seen since 1971, the first year for which comparable groups are available.
- Crimes of dishonesty increased by 11%, from 92,873 to 103,393. The recording of these crimes is at the third lowest level seen since 1971.
- Damage and reckless behaviour crimes decreased by 3%, from 44,284 to 43,123. The recording of these crimes is at the second lowest level seen since 1976.
- Crimes against society decreased by 3% from 61,059 to 59,374. Most of these crimes relate to crimes against public justice (39%) or drug possession (38%).
- Offences recorded by the police in Scotland collectively decreased by 5%, from 180,913 to 172,207. This included a reduction in Antisocial offences (down 11%), Miscellaneous offences (down 1%) and Road traffic offences (down 2%).

Police recorded cyber-crime in Scotland

This bulletin also provides an updated estimate of how many cyber-crimes were recorded in Scotland.

Key Points:

- In 2022-23, an estimated 14,890 cyber-crimes were recorded by the police in Scotland. This is similar to the estimated volume recorded for both 2020-21 and 2021-22 (14,860 and 14,280 respectively), but remains significantly above the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20 (with 7,710 cyber-crimes)
- Cyber-crimes accounted for an estimated 26% of Sexual crimes in 2022-23, 8% of Crimes of dishonesty and 3% of Non-sexual crimes of violence.

Official Statistics on Clear up rates

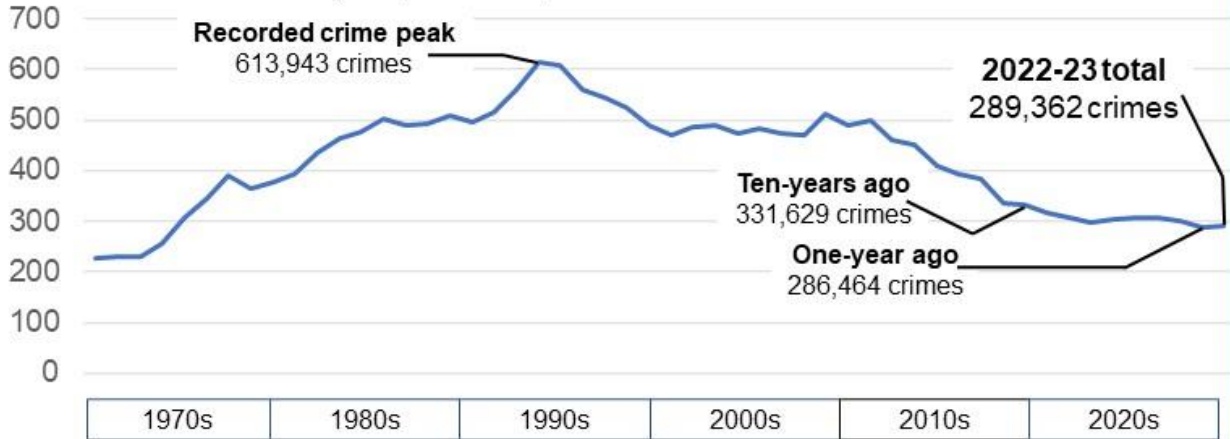
In addition to the National Statistics on police recorded crimes and offences, this bulletin also presents Official Statistics on crimes and offences cleared up by the police in 2022-23. A definition of clear up rates is provided in the [clear up rates chapter](#).

In 2022-23 the clear up rate was 53.3%, down from 54.0% in 2021-22. Crimes against society (93.4%), Non-sexual crimes of violence (67.3%) and Sexual crime (53.4%) continued to have higher clear up rates in 2022-23 than Crimes of dishonesty (31.0%) and Damage and reckless behaviour (28.8%).

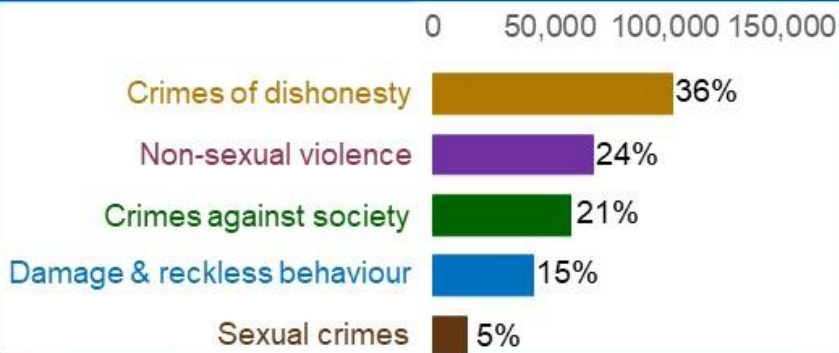
Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2022-23

The number of crimes recorded by the police rose steadily from the 1970s to the early 1990s; since then crime has generally fallen

Number of recorded crimes (000s) in Scotland, 1971 to 2022-23



Over a third of recorded crime is Crimes of dishonesty



An estimated

40%

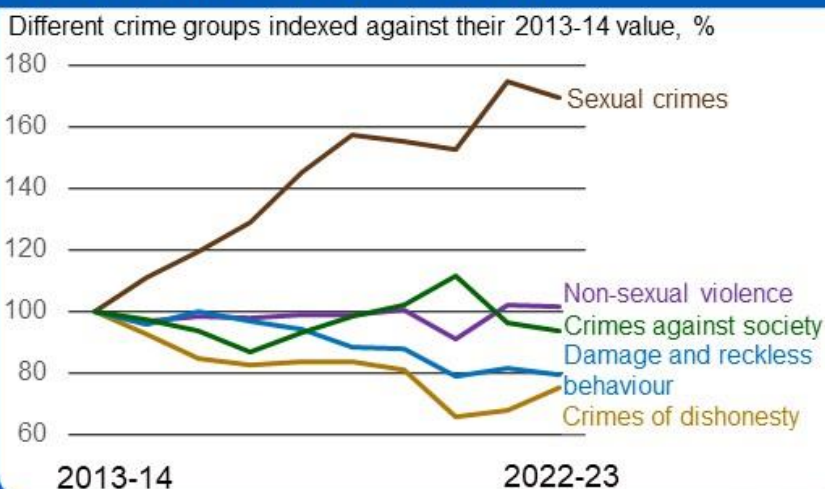
of crime is reported to the police¹

An estimated

5%

of recorded crime is cyber-dependent or cyber-enabled²

Ten-year trends vary by crime group



Recorded Sexual crimes have increased by

70%

in the last ten years

Introduction

This bulletin presents statistics on the number of crimes and offences recorded by Police Scotland. These are derived from data held within the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP), a data repository used and maintained by Police Scotland.

What changes were made to this year's report?

No significant changes have been made to the structure of this year's report. Some new crime and offence codes have been introduced this year to reflect the passing of new legislation (for example the Offensive Weapons Act 2019), however in each case the number of incidents recorded in 2022-23 for those new codes has either been zero or negligible.

Further information on the legislative changes can be found in [Annex 3](#), and in the [User Guide](#).

What is Recorded Crime?

Recorded crime covers crimes which are recorded by the police. Not all crimes are reported to, and therefore recorded by the police. This means that recorded crime statistics does not measure all criminal activity. However, they do provide a measure of the volume of criminal activity with which the police are faced.

What is the difference between crimes and offences?

Contraventions of Scottish criminal law are divided for statistical purposes into crimes and offences. The term "crime" is generally used for the more serious criminal acts. The less serious are termed "offences". The distinction is made only for statistical reporting purposes and has no impact on how the police investigate reports of criminal activity. The "seriousness" of the offence is generally related to the maximum sentence that can be imposed. This distinction has been consistently used in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins since publication began in 1983 and, prior to this, in the Criminal statistics publication dating back to the 1920s.

A further distinction, although not absolute, is that the number of offences recorded by the police generally tends to be affected more by police activity and operational decisions than the numbers of crimes.

There are over 500 types of crimes and offences recorded by police in Scotland. To present these in a meaningful way, they are combined into distinct groups and categories. There are six crime groups and three offence groups. These groups are made up of 50 categories, referred to as the 'Top 50'.

Figure 1: Breakdown of crime and offence groups

Crimes

- Non-sexual crimes of violence
- Sexual crimes
- Crimes of dishonesty
- Damage and reckless behaviour
- Crimes against society
- Coronavirus restriction crimes (*new group since 2019-20*)

Offences

- Antisocial offences
- Miscellaneous offences
- Road traffic offences

What changes were made to the recording of crime in recent years?

There have been several changes in recent years that have had an impact on the recording of crime. These reflect either the enactment of new legislation or procedural changes made by the SCRB ([Annex 3](#)).

Some of the changes that have occurred in the latest five years (2018-19 to 2022-23) include:

- The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, which came into force on 1 April 2019
- The Coronavirus Act 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020 respectively
- A procedural change made to the recording of international crime, from 1 April 2020
- The implementation of the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021, which came into effect from 24 August 2021
- The enactment of various sections of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 in June 2022 and March 2023

Some of the above amendments led to changes in how crimes are recorded but did not change the volume of crime being recorded. For example, before implementation of the Protection of Workers Act, any assault of a retail worker would have been recorded as either a Common or Serious assault. After implementation, such cases are now specifically recorded as either Common or Serious assault of a retail worker. In another example, some incidents that were recorded as Stalking prior to the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 coming into force, may now be recorded as crimes under the Domestic Abuse Act.

Other amendments did result in new and additional crimes being recorded within these statistics, following their implementation (for example the crimes recorded under Coronavirus related legislation).

Information on the recording of crimes affected by the above changes is provided in the relevant chapters of this bulletin. The [User Guide](#) provides more detailed information on these and earlier changes to the recording of crime.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted recorded crime?

The nationwide lockdowns and other measures put in place to limit social contact during the COVID-19 pandemic are very likely to have had a significant impact on the type and volume of crime recorded since March 2020. A larger impact was seen during 2020-21, and to a lesser extent 2021-22. The final legal restrictions were lifted in April 2022, suggesting a much more limited impact in 2022-23. However, some caution is advised before necessarily attributing all of the changes seen since March 2020 to the pandemic. For example, longer term trends in some types of offending, which existed prior to COVID-19, may remain a factor.

All legal Coronavirus restrictions in Scotland were lifted in April 2022, and this year's bulletin reports no crimes being recorded under specific Coronavirus legislation in 2022-23. There were 20,976 such crimes recorded in 2020-21, which reduced significantly to 3,913 in 2021-22. These crimes are included within the total recorded crime figure for Scotland for these years, though are presented separately to the five main crime groups.

How do Recorded Crime statistics compare to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey?

The other main source of crime statistics in Scotland is the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey \(SCJS\)](#), a national survey of adults (aged 16 and over) living in private households, which asks respondents about their experiences and perceptions of crime.

The survey provides a complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime statistics and allows a wider assessment of the overall level of crime victimisation, its characteristics, and likelihood of experiencing crime. The SCJS estimates that 40% of all SCJS crime in 2019-20 came to the attention of the police, a proportion which is stable over time. This confirms that not all crimes are reported to, and therefore recorded by, the police.

Data for 2019-20 is the latest available from the SCJS, due to face-to-face interviewing being paused in March 2020 to support social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the SCJS and police recorded crime show a long-term downward trend in overall comparable crime, with a more stable pattern over the shorter term. Specifically, the survey found that the volume of crime in Scotland, including incidents not reported to the police, fell by 46% since 2008-09 (from an estimated 1,045,000 incidents to 563,000 by 2019-20) and has remained stable compared to 2018-19. Similarly, crimes recorded by the police in 2019-20 decreased by 32% since 2008-09 and remained stable compared to 2018-19.

To fill the evidence gap created by the SCJS suspension, previous respondents to the SCJS were re-contacted by phone for a one-off survey of experiences and perceptions of crime, safety and policing in Scotland during the pandemic – the [Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey \(SVTS\) 2020](#). Further detail on the analytical comparisons between recorded crime, the SVTS and the SCJS is provided in Chapter 5 of the [2020-21 Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin](#).

Future Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins will provide updated comparisons with SCJS findings when these become available. The next publication, for the year ending December 2022, will be published in November 2023.

The [User Guide](#) provides an overview of the main differences users may want to note when making comparisons between Recorded Crime statistics and the SCJS.

What comparisons can be made with other data sources?

When considering crime data across the UK, recorded crime statistics for England & Wales and Northern Ireland are not directly comparable with those in Scotland. The main principles for when a crime should be recorded are similar in all four nations. However, there are various differences between the respective Counting Rules, which specify each nation's approach for counting the number of crimes that should be recorded as part of any single incident. Furthermore, differences in legislation and common law also have an impact on the comparability of recorded crime statistics between Scotland and the other UK nations.

Further detail on the comparability of crime data can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Some 'Data comparisons' are presented within this bulletin. These are clearly marked throughout the text and include information from a range of statistics (e.g. homicide, hospital admissions etc.) which cannot be directly compared to police recorded crime but are useful to understand the wider context.

Where can you find the data from this report?

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook. The workbook includes an 'Introduction' sheet, with information on how to navigate the tables, alongside a 'Notes' sheet, with relevant details to assist users when reading and interpreting results. The Excel workbook mostly covers data for the last ten years.

The data is also available on [statistics.gov.scot : Recorded Crimes and Offences](#) and [statistics.gov.scot : Crime Clear up Rates](#). These include data back to 1996-97.

What is known about the quality of this data?

[Annex 2](#) provides information on the quality of the data used to produce the statistics presented in this bulletin. This includes information on the results of [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland \(HMICS\) Crime Audit 2020](#), which assessed the extent to which police recording practices complied with the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules](#).

What are these statistics used for?

Statistics on recorded crime and offences inform the Scottish Government's [Vision for Justice in Scotland](#). This was published in February 2022 and sets out a transformative vision for the whole justice system in Scotland. The 2022 strategy outlines how the Scottish Government will transform the justice system, through recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

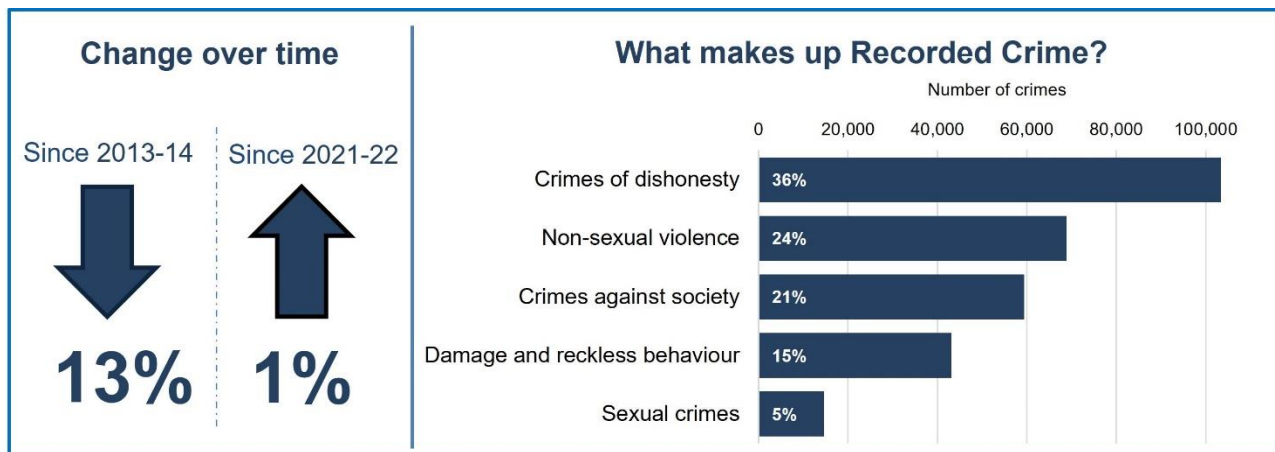
Further information on users and uses of the statistics is provided in the [User Guide](#).

This bulletin is useful for longer term time series analysis and presents a detailed commentary on crime and offences recorded during the 12 month period of 1 April to 31 March. To provide users with more timely data, which can help to identify any shorter-term

changes, the SCRB approved the introduction of a new quarterly release of recorded crime National Statistics. These present findings for the latest rolling 12-month period, of which the year-ending 31 March edition will continue to be this longer term annual bulletin.

The next quarterly release, for the year ending 30 June 2023 (Q1 2023), is scheduled for publication in August 2023. More information on the new quarterly release is available in the [User Guide](#).

Total Recorded Crime



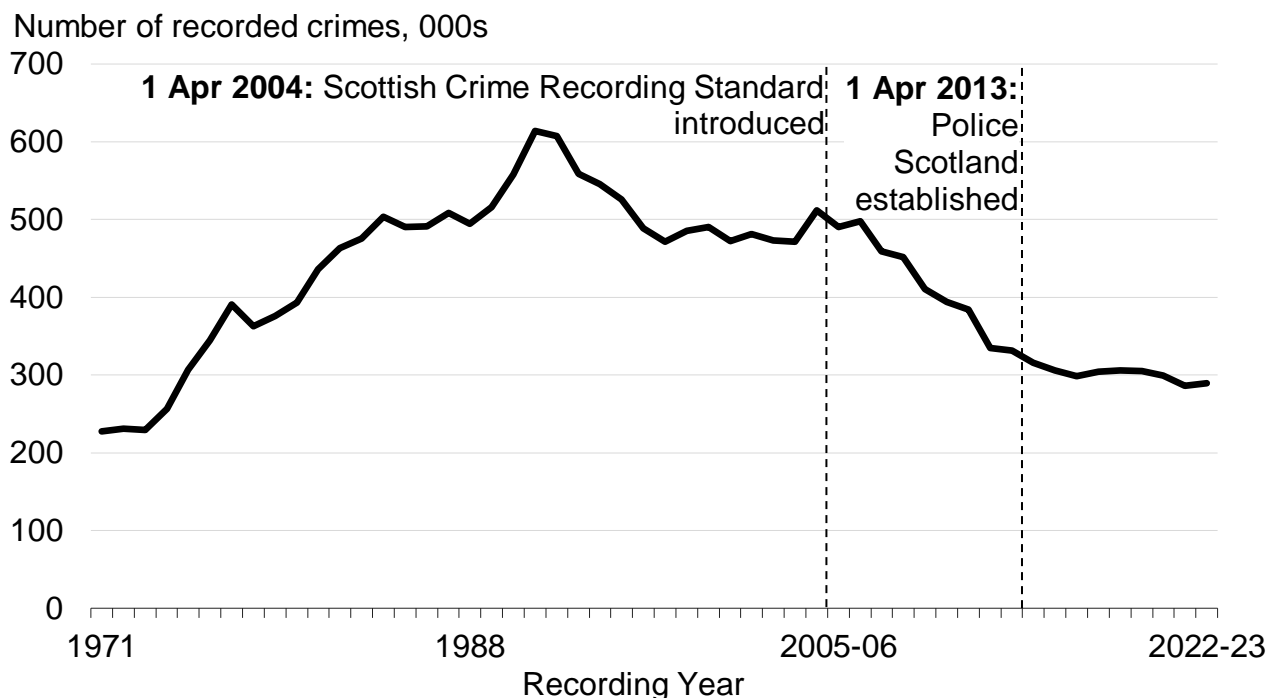
The recording of crime is at one of the lowest levels seen since 1974. The total number of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland in 2022-23 was 289,362. This is 2,898 crimes (or 1%) higher than the level recorded in 2021-22.

Over the past ten years, total recorded crime in Scotland has decreased by 13%. This continues a generally decreasing trend in recorded crime over the longer term, from a peak in 1991 when crime reached a record high of 613,943.

[Chart 1](#) shows the total number of recorded crimes since 1971.

Legislative changes and changes to crime recording practices will have had some effect on the longer term time series for recorded crime. [Annex 3](#) provides information on these changes.

Chart 1: Total crimes recorded by the police, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



Note: Data are incomplete for 1975 due to local government reorganisation.

[Chart 2](#) shows the number of recorded crimes for each crime group since 1971 and gives an indication of the scale of crimes recorded in each group.

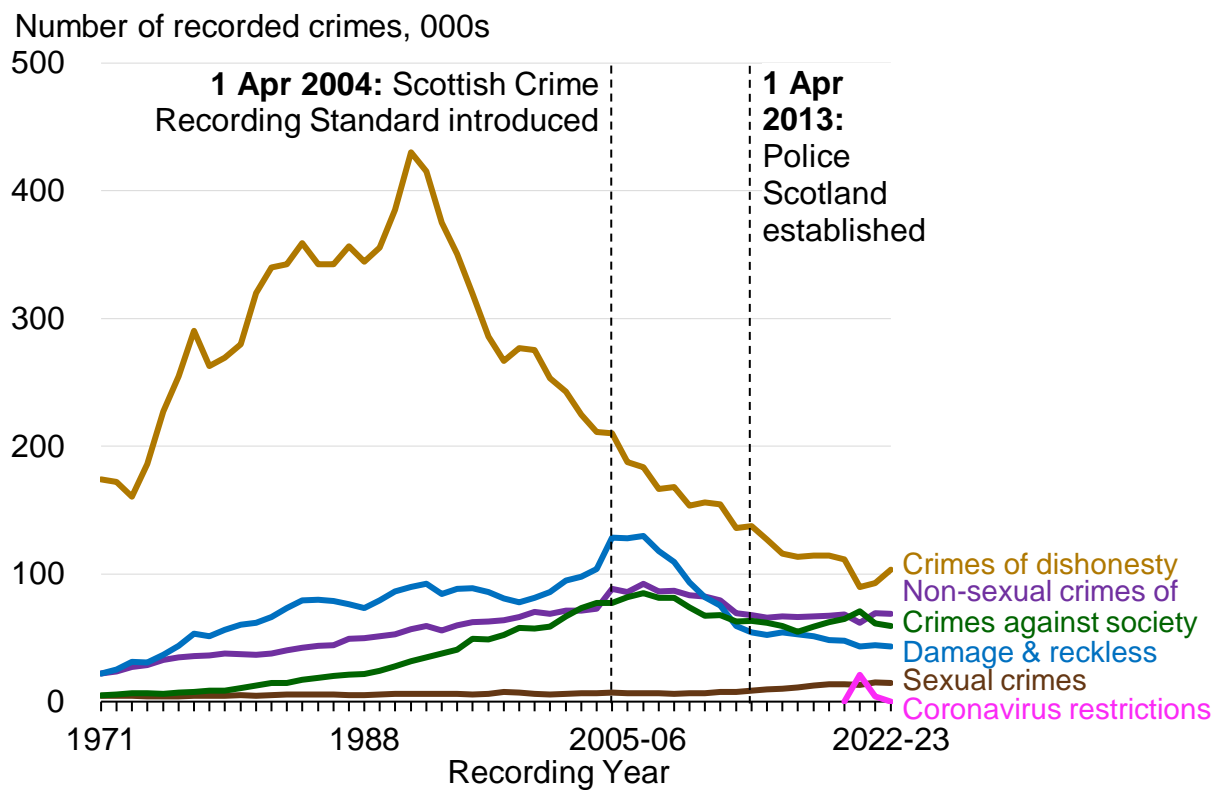
In 2022-23, of all recorded crimes:

- Crimes of dishonesty was the largest group, accounting for 36%
- Non-sexual crimes of violence accounted for 24%
- Crimes against society accounted for 21%
- Damage and reckless behaviour accounted for 15%
- Sexual crimes accounted for 5%

These crime groups are discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

The national rate of total recorded crime was 528 crimes per 10,000 population in 2022-23. This has increased from 523 in 2021-22.

Chart 2: Crimes recorded by the police by crime group, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



Note: Data are incomplete for 1975 due to local government reorganisation.

Total Recorded Crime by Local Authority

Notwithstanding that year-on-year figures can fluctuate across local authorities, the long term trend of decreasing crime is broadly the same across Scotland.

Since 2013-14, most local authorities have seen a reduction in total recorded crime. Seven have seen an increase (Dumfries and Galloway, Dundee City, East Lothian, Na h-Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands, Scottish Borders and Shetland Islands).

Since 2021-22, thirteen local authorities have seen a decrease in total recorded crime, three saw very little (less than half a percentage) change and sixteen have seen an increase.

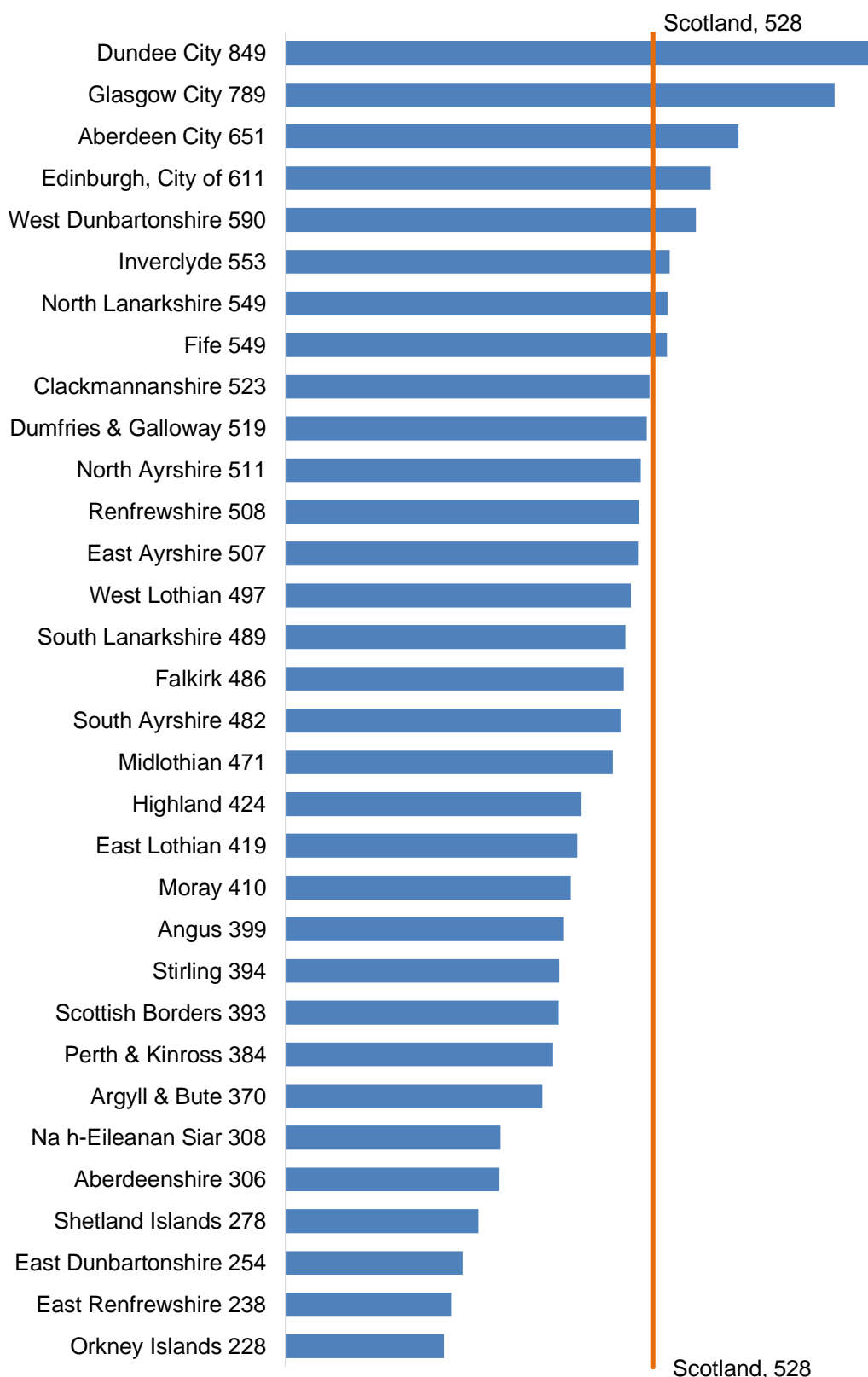
Table 1 in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook provides the number of crimes recorded in each local authority over the past ten years.

[Chart 3](#) shows the number of recorded crimes per 10,000 population in each local authority in 2022-23.

In Scotland as a whole, there were 528 recorded crimes per 10,000 population in 2022-23. Dundee City (849 per 10,000 population), Glasgow City (789 per 10,000 population) and Aberdeen City (651 per 10,000 population) recorded the highest rates.

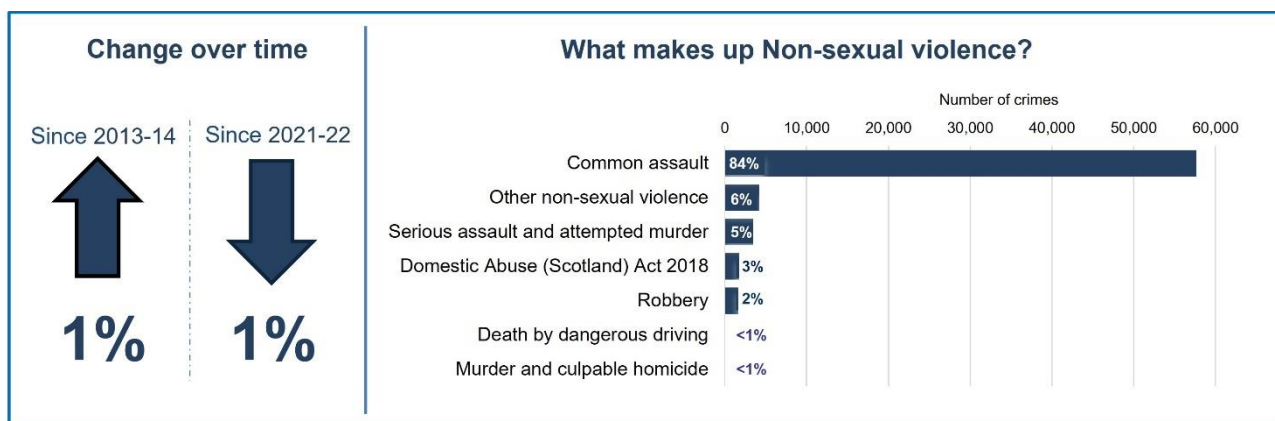
Table 4 in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook provides further details on the number of crimes recorded per 10,000 population in each local authority over the past ten years.

Chart 3: Total number of recorded crimes per 10,000 population¹, 2022-23



1. Due to 2022 mid-year population estimates from the National Records of Scotland being published after the release of the Recorded Crime in Scotland 2022-23 bulletin, the [2021 mid-year population estimates](#) have been used to calculate the 2022 population rates.

Non-sexual Crimes of Violence



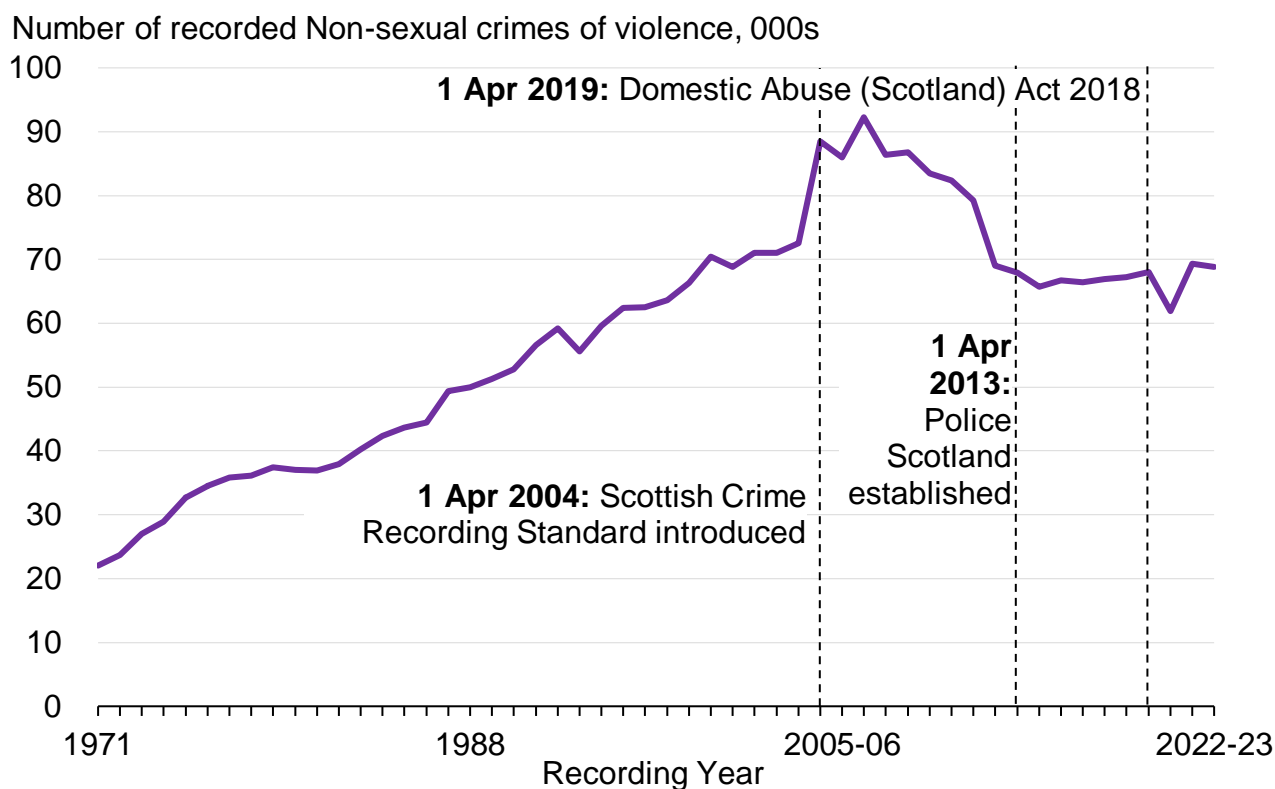
Non-sexual crimes of violence accounted for almost a quarter (or 24%) of all crimes recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police in Scotland decreased by 1%, from 69,286 to 68,870.

The clear majority (84% in 2022-23) of Non-sexual crimes of violence are crimes of Common assault. Due to the size of this crime category within the group, any changes to the trend in Common assault will significantly impact the trend for the group as a whole. As such, the 1% decrease in Non-sexual crimes of violence in this latest year, is primarily due to a 1% decrease in Common assault. A 9% decrease in serious assault and attempted murder also contributed to this reduction, whilst there was a 13% increase in other non-sexual violence.

This is the fourth year of crimes being recorded within the Non-sexual crimes of violence group, under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 – following its enactment on the 1 April 2019. There were 1,769 such crimes recorded in 2022-23, accounting for 3% of Non-sexual crimes of violence.

[Chart 4](#) below shows the number of Non-sexual crimes of violence from 1971 onwards. Levels of violent crime increased for a long period, before entering a downward trend following a peak in 2006-07. There has been a 25% reduction in Non-sexual crimes of violence since 2006-07. Looking at the latest ten years as a whole, the number of Non-sexual crimes of violence has remained broadly stable (increasing by only 1%), from 67,918 in 2013-14 to 68,858 in 2022-23.

Chart 4: Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



Note: Data are incomplete for 1975 due to local government reorganisation.

The national rate of recorded Non-sexual crimes of violence remained unchanged at 126 crimes per 10,000 population between 2021-22 and 2022-23.

In 2022-23, of all Non-sexual crimes of violence:

- Common assault made up the vast majority, accounting for 84%
- Other non-sexual violence accounted for 6%
- Serious assault and attempted murder accounted for 5%
- Crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 accounted for 3%
- Robbery accounted for 2%
- Causing death by dangerous driving and Murder and culpable homicide both contributed very small proportions (both less than 0.1%) to the total

[Chart 5](#) shows the number of Common assault crimes recorded over the latest ten years. This is presented separately from all other categories within Non-sexual crimes of violence due to the larger scale of crimes recorded in this category.

[Chart 6](#) presents all other crime categories within Non-sexual crimes of violence over the latest ten years and gives an indication of the trend and scale of each category.

Chart 5: Common assault recorded by the police, 2013-14 to 2022-23

Number of recorded Common assaults, 000s

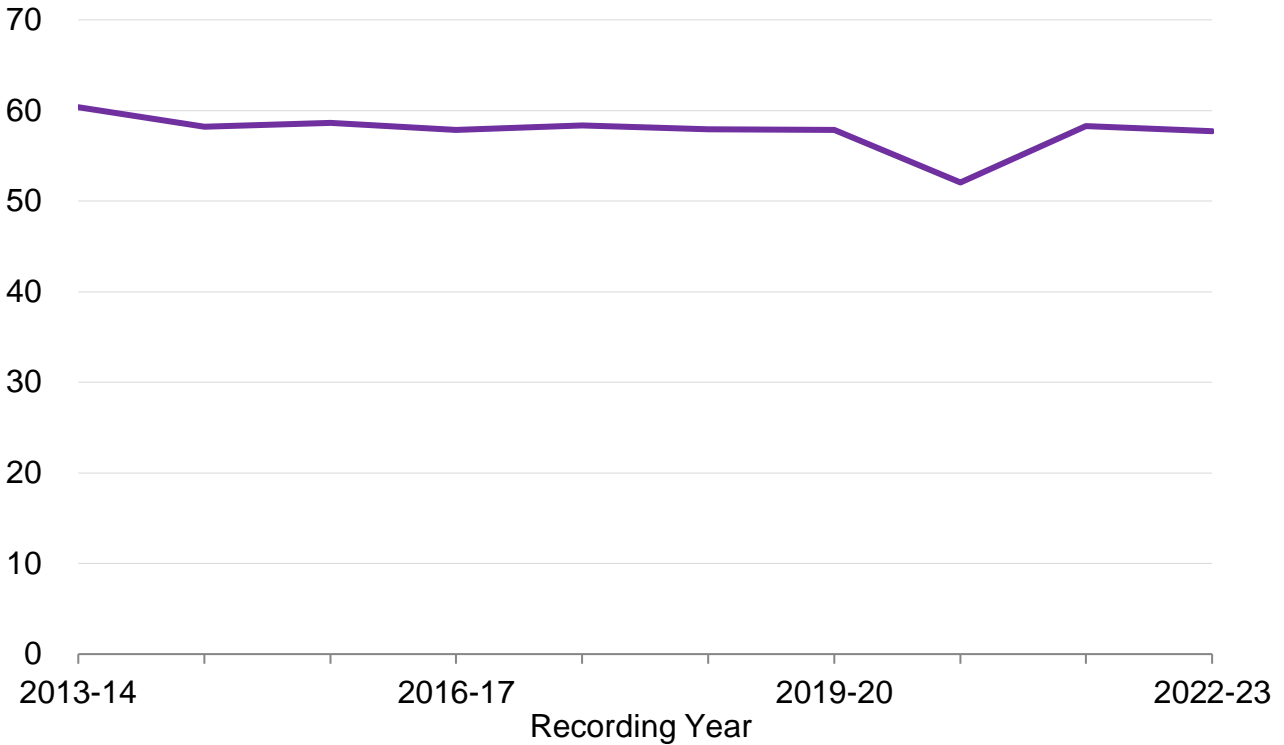
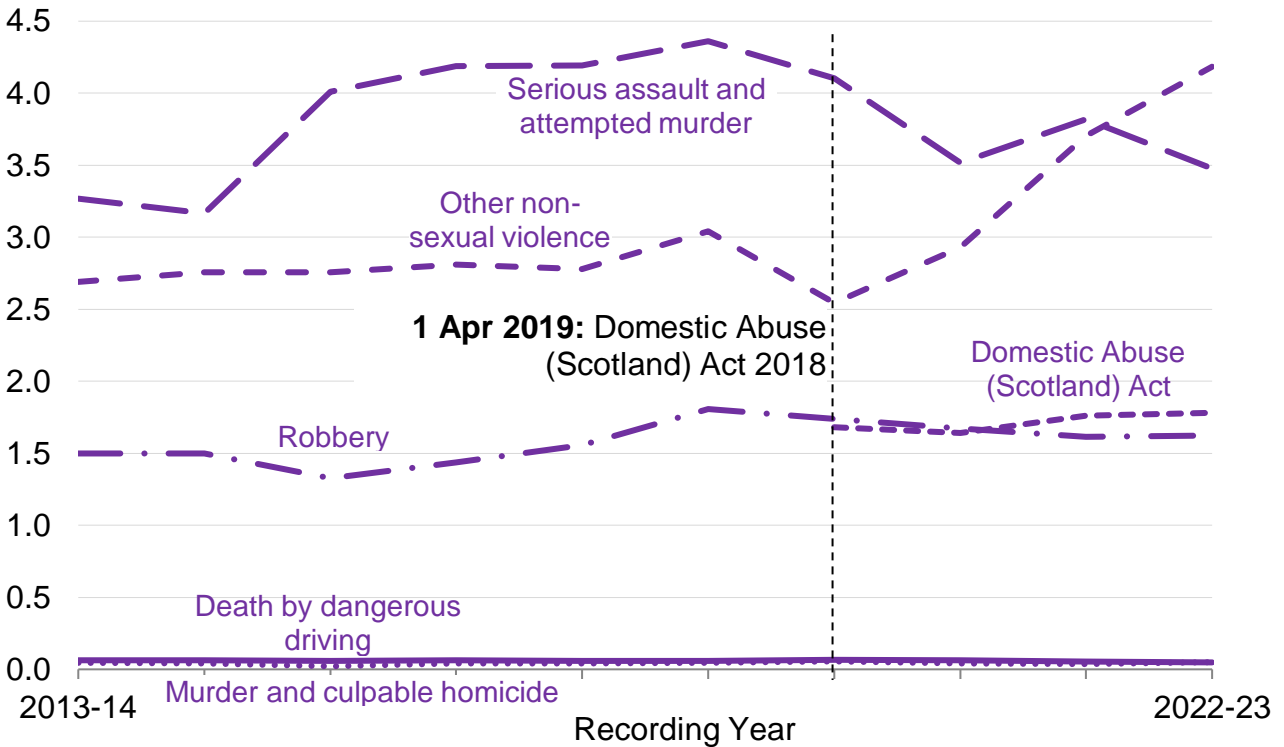


Chart 6: Non-sexual crimes of violence (excluding Common assault) recorded by the police, by category, 2013-14 to 2022-23

Number of recorded Non-sexual crimes of violence, 000s



The following sections discuss in more detail the trends for each crime category within the Non-sexual crimes of violence crime group. These are:

Non-sexual crimes of violence

- Murder and culpable homicide
- Death by dangerous driving
- Serious assault and attempted murder
- Common assault
- Robbery
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018
- Other non-sexual violence

Further details for some categories can be found in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook.

Murder and culpable homicide

Murder and culpable homicide accounted for a very small proportion (less than 1%) of Non-sexual crimes of violence. Crimes recorded in this category decreased by 24% over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23. This includes an 8% decrease between 2021-22 and 2022-23, from 52 to 48 recorded crimes.

Data comparisons: Homicide in Scotland National Statistics

The Scottish Government produce a separate [Homicide in Scotland statistics](#) bulletin. It contains detailed information on the crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law). It presents characteristics of victims and accused, such as age and gender and the circumstances of the homicide. Users interested in Homicide statistics should use the Homicide in Scotland statistics bulletin.

The latest bulletin reports on the year of 2021-22. The data showed a decrease in the number of homicide victims compared to 2020-21, from 59 to 53. This was the lowest number since comparable records began in 1976.

Death by dangerous driving

Causing Death by dangerous driving accounted for a very small proportion (less than 1%) of Non-sexual crimes of violence. Crimes recorded in this category increased by 16% over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23. There has also been a 47% increase in the most recent year, from 34 crimes recorded in 2021-22 to 50 in 2022-23.

Serious assault and attempted murder

Serious assault and attempted murder accounted for 5% of Non-sexual crimes of violence. Crimes recorded in this category decreased by 9% between 2021-22 and 2022-23, from 3,819 to 3,476. Over the ten-year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, this category has seen an increase of 6%, from 3,268 to 3,476.

These crimes fell between 2013-14 and 2014-15, before rising sharply in 2015-16 and then more gradually in the years that followed up to 2019-20. At least part of the increase in 2015-16 was attributed by Police Scotland to the introduction of enhanced guidance for recording Serious assault in January 2015. These crimes then fell over 2019-20 and 2020-

21, before increasing in 2021-22, then decreasing again in 2022-23. The latest figure remains 20% lower than the peak in 2018-19.

For the definition of Serious assault and the distinction between Serious assault and Common assault please see [Annex 1](#).

We previously published the findings of a more detailed [study into Attempted murder & serious assault](#) on our website.

One subset of the Serious assault and attempted murder category is the crime of Serious assault of retail worker, which came into effect on the 24 August 2021. This was introduced by the [Protection of Workers \(Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#). As such, the first statistics for 2021-22 only related to a partial year. There were eight crimes recorded during this time. This has increased to 15 in 2022-23. More information on this new legislation is provided in [Annex 3](#).

Data comparisons: Public Health Scotland Emergency Hospital Admissions as a result of Assault

Another source of statistics on assault is Public Health Scotland's annual publication on hospital admissions due to unintentional injuries. This includes the number of emergency hospital admissions for assault.

The latest published figures are for 2021-22 and are available at: [Unintentional injuries - Hospital admissions year ending 31 March 2022 and deaths year ending 31 December 2021 - Unintentional injuries - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#).

There are several reasons why direct comparisons cannot be made between the two sources. For example, not all who attend hospital with assault injuries will report what has happened to the police, and many recorded assaults will not require inpatient hospital treatment. However, as these sources both generally relate to how Scotland's emergency services respond to the most serious types of assault, it would be anticipated that both should show similar trends over time.

In 2015 enhanced guidance was introduced which helped clarify the differences between the recording of serious assault and common assault. This very likely played a significant role in the 27% increase in police recorded serious assault and attempted murder in 2015-16 (and perhaps to a lesser extent the 4% increase in 2016-17). Looking at the years which followed, the police and hospital-based measures moved in a similar direction, with a 19% fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault between 2016-17 and 2020-21, and a 16% decrease in police recorded serious assault and attempted murder over the same period.

In 2021-22 (the latest year for which statistics are available from both sources), there was some divergence with an increase in recorded serious assault and attempted murder, whilst hospital admissions for assault continued to fall. However recorded serious assault and attempted murder then fell again in 2022-23, and further updates will be required to determine whether the 2021-22 difference was a one-off (perhaps due to some of the factors referenced above or other pandemic-related issues) or the beginning of a longer trend. The first post-pandemic findings of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (due in November 2023) will also provide an additional measure on violent crime victimisation (including those cases not reported to the police), to help inform users about the latest trends in non-sexual violence in Scotland.

Common assault

Common assault is the largest category of Non-sexual crimes of violence, accounting for 84% in 2022-23. Over the ten-year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, the number of crimes recorded in this category has fallen by 4%. There was a 1% decrease between 2021-22 and 2022-23 (from 58,306 to 57,708). This is a similar level to that before the COVID-19 pandemic (in 2019-20).

Of the 57,708 crimes recorded in 2022-23, 7,587 (13%) related to Common assault of emergency workers, a decrease of 3% since 2021-22 and an increase of 11% since 2013-14. Another subset of the Common assault category is the crime of Common assault of retail worker. 1,650 crimes (3% of all Common assault) related to Common assault of retail workers. The crime of Common assault of retail worker came into effect on the 24 August 2021, introduced by the [Protection of Workers \(Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#). As such, the first statistics for 2021-22 only related to a partial year. More information on this new legislation is provided in [Annex 3](#).

Robbery

Robbery accounted for 2% of Non-sexual crimes of violence. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, this category has seen an increase of 8%. Following increases between 2016-17 and 2018-19, there were decreases for the three years between 2019-20 and 2021-22. There was a 1% increase between 2021-22 and 2022-23 (from 1,613 to 1,623).

We previously published the findings of a more detailed [study into Robbery](#). Further information is available on our website.

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

Crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 accounted for 3% of Non-sexual crimes of violence. There were 1,781 crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 in 2022-23, the fourth year this legislation has been in place. This was a 1% increase compared to 2021-22 (from 1,760 to 1,781).

Of those crimes, 95% (or 1,689) involved a female victim and 5% (or 92) had a male victim.

It should be noted that crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 relate to a course of conduct only and therefore do not include all crimes relating to domestic abuse.

[Annex 2](#) provides information on the results of HMICS Crime Audit 2020, which also examined a sample of incidents relating to domestic abuse.

Data comparisons: Official Statistics on Domestic Abuse recorded by the police in Scotland

Statistic presented in this bulletin are the primary source for users interested in the number of crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

However, separate analysis of domestic abuse incidents reported to the police, is presented in the [Domestic abuse: statistics recorded by the police in Scotland](#) Official Statistics bulletin. This is produced by the Scottish Government and contains details of domestic abuse incidents and crimes recorded by Police Scotland, including characteristics of victims and perpetrators, such as their age and gender.

The next Domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland bulletin will contain data for 2022-23 and will be published this financial year.

Other non-sexual violence

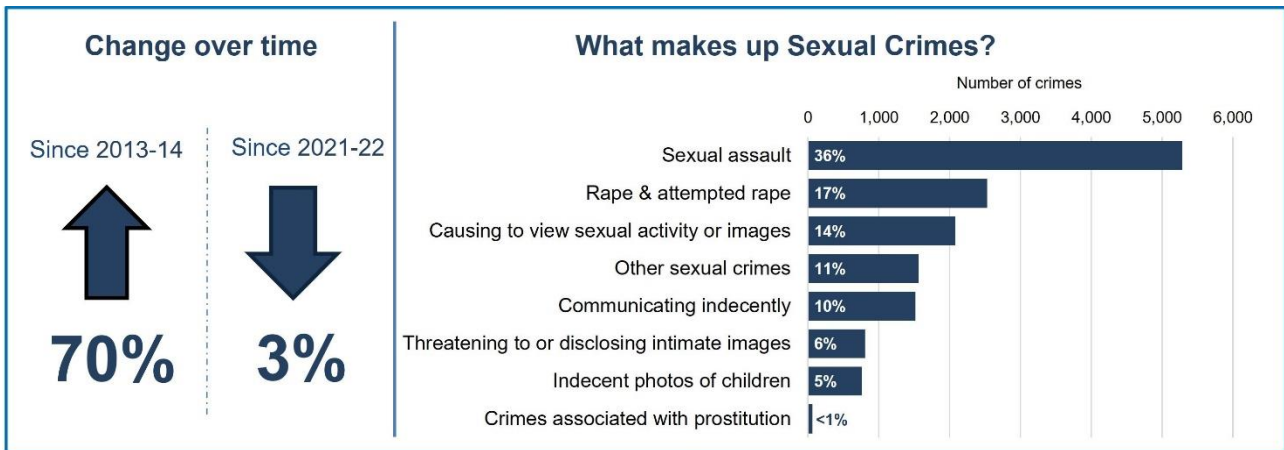
The Other non-sexual violence category includes a wide range of crime types, albeit just five accounted for 95% of the 4,184 crimes recorded in 2022-23. This included Threats & extortion (48% of all Other non-sexual violent crimes), Stalking (20%), Cruelty to & unnatural treatment of children (15%), Abduction (6%) and Drugging (6%). More detail on the crimes included is provided in the [User Guide](#).

Crimes recorded as Other non-sexual violence accounted for 6% of Non-sexual crimes of violence in 2022-23. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this category has seen an increase of 56%, including an increase of 13% from 3,702 in 2021-22 to 4,184 in 2022-23.

These increases are primarily due to increases in crimes of Threats and extortion, which are up 44% in the latest year (from 1,398 in 2021-22 to 2,008 in 2022-23) and are more than five times higher than ten years ago (from 309 in 2013-14). Ninety-one percent of crimes of Threats and extortion were estimated to be cyber-crimes in 2022-23 (further information on this is available in the [Cyber-crime chapter](#)).

The number of drugging crimes has fallen by 42% from 444 in 2021-22 to 257 in 2022-23, however they remain substantially higher than the period from 2013-14 to 2020-21 when no more than 24 drugging crimes were recorded in any year.

Sexual Crimes



Sexual crimes account for 5% of all crimes recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. The number of Sexual crimes recorded by the police in Scotland decreased by 3% from 15,049 in 2021-22 to 14,602 in 2022-23.

[Chart 7](#) below shows the number of Sexual crimes from 1971 onwards. Sexual crimes have been on a long-term upward trend since 1974, with some fluctuations. Prior to small decreases in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2022-23, there have been increases each year since 2008-09.

The national rate of recorded Sexual crimes was 27 crimes per 10,000 population in 2022-23, unchanged from 2021-22.

A number of legislative and procedural changes should be kept in mind when reviewing trends in Sexual crimes over the longer term. These are presented in [Annex 3](#).

In addition to these changes, the issue of historical reporting of sexual crime also continues to play a role in the latest statistics. Further information from Police Scotland suggests that just over a fifth (21%) of Sexual crimes in 2022-23 were recorded at least one year after they occurred. This figure is slightly lower than the 23% reported for 2021-22. Furthermore, as discussed below, the use of specific codes to record sexual crime also highlights where crimes were committed prior to December 2010.

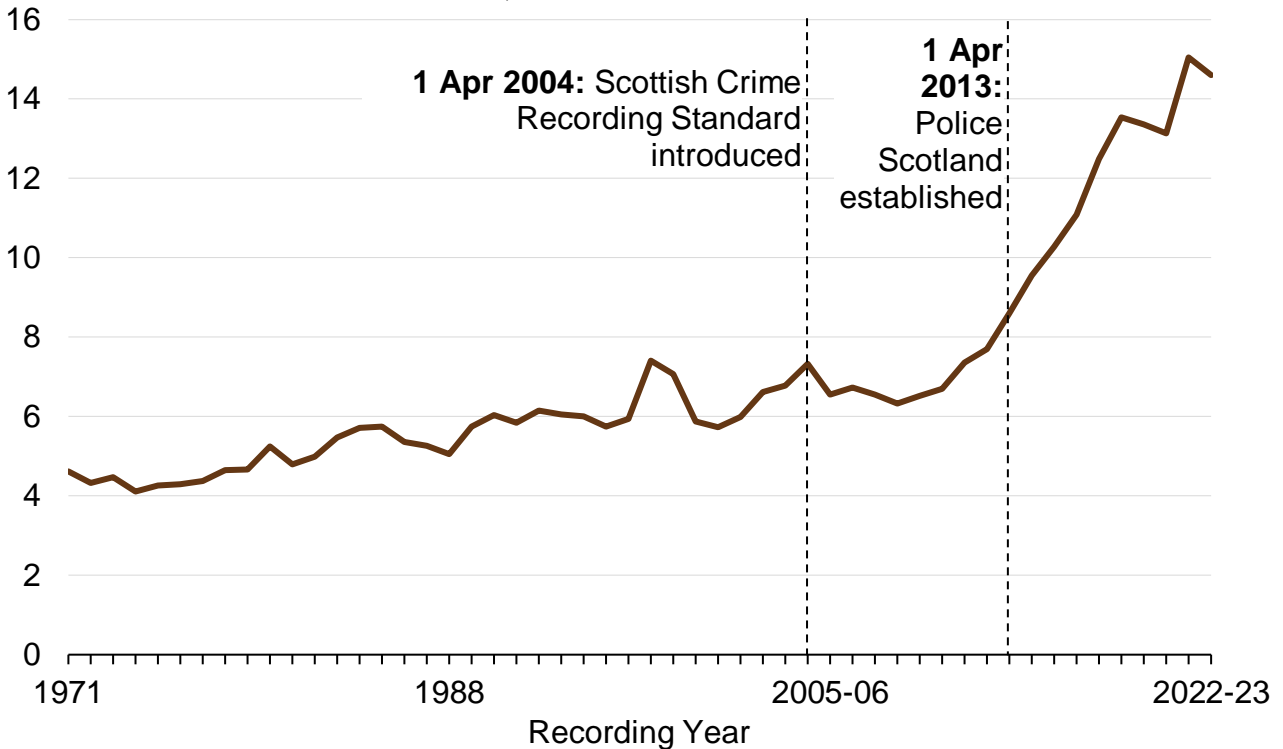
There were 843 crimes of Lewd and libidinous practices in 2022-23. These crimes should all relate to offences which occurred prior to the implementation of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 on 1 December 2010, as the Act replaced Lewd and libidinous practices with specific sexual assault crimes. As a result, we know that these are historical (non-recent) offences. Similarly, there were 293 crimes of Rape and attempted rape and 158 crimes of Sexual assault committed prior to 1 December 2010.

The increase in sexual cyber-crimes has also had an impact on the trend of recorded Sexual crimes over the past ten years. We estimate that the volume of Sexual crimes that were cyber-crimes has increased from 1,100 in 2013-14¹ to 3,830 in 2022-23 (further information on this is available in the [Cyber-crime chapter](#)).

Chart 7: Sexual crimes recorded by the police, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23

¹ [Recorded crime in Scotland: 'Other sexual crimes', 2013-2014 and 2016-2017](#)

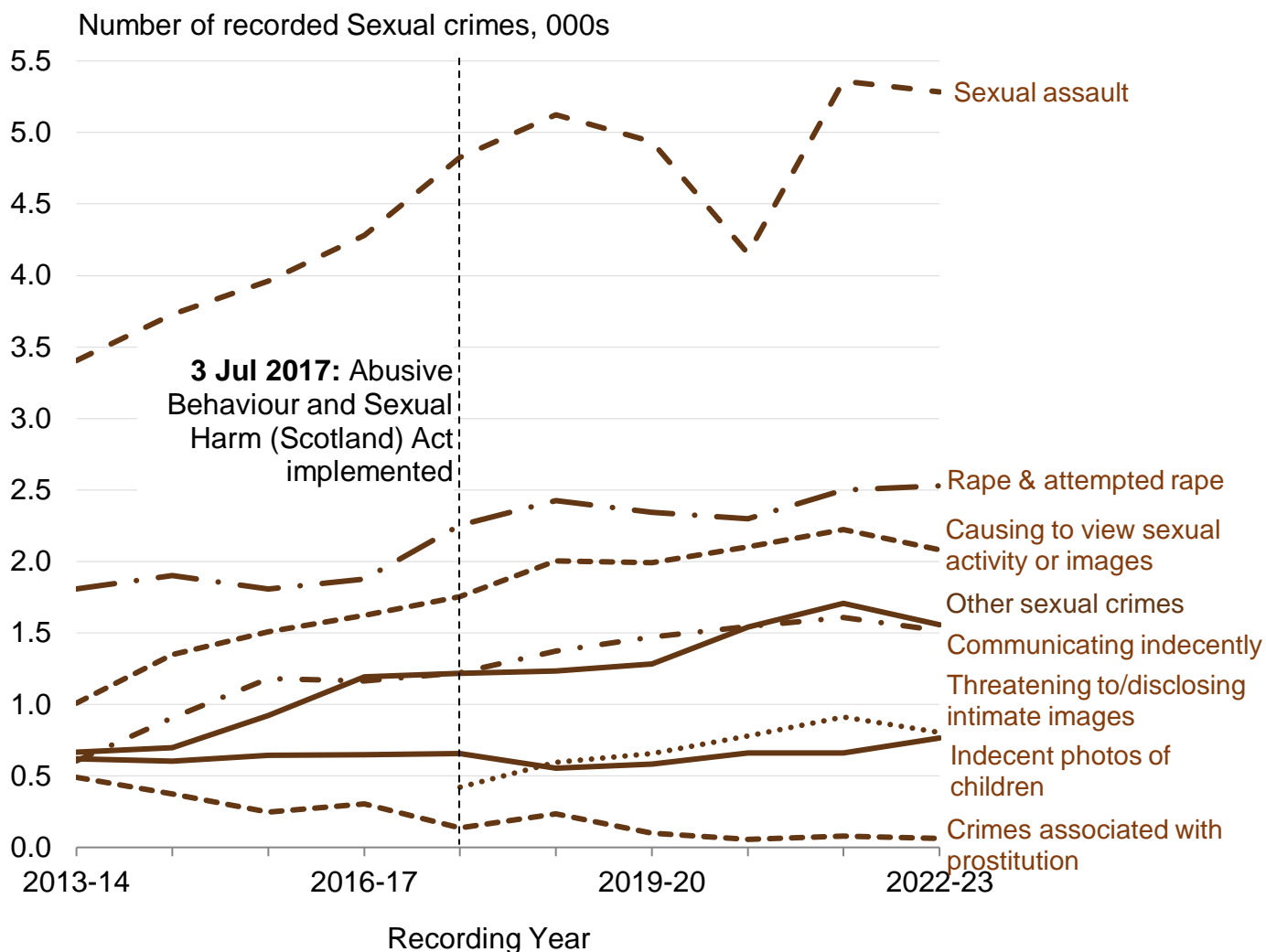
Number of recorded Sexual crimes, 000s



The specific age of the victim cannot generally be determined from the data supplied by Police Scotland. However, many of the sexual crime codes used by the police to record crime are based on specific age groupings in line with the legislation (for example, Sexual assault of older male child (13-15 years)). This will include where the perpetrator targets someone they believed to be a child (for example, through cyber-enabled sexual crime). By adding up all these crime codes, we know that at least 37% of the 14,602 Sexual crimes recorded in 2022-23 by the police related to a victim under the age of 18. This proportion is similar to recent years.

[Chart 8](#) shows the categories within Sexual crimes over the last ten years and gives an indication of the trend and scale of each category.

Chart 8: Sexual crimes recorded by the police, by category, 2013-14 to 2022-23



In 2022-23, of all Sexual crimes:

- Sexual assault accounted for 36%
- Rape & attempted rape accounted for 17%
- Causing to view sexual activity or images accounted for 14%
- Other sexual crimes accounted for 11%
- Communicating indecently accounted for 10%
- Threatening to or disclosing intimate images accounted for 6%
- Indecent photos of children accounted for 5%
- Crimes associated with prostitution accounted for less than 1%

It should be noted for data prior to 2010-11 that the implementation of the [Sexual Offences \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) had an impact on the recording of crimes in this group. Further information on this change is available in [Annex 3](#).

Tables A4 and A5 in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook contains more detailed breakdowns for Sexual crimes.

The following sections discuss trends for each crime category comprised in the Sexual crimes group. These are:

Sexual crimes

- Rape & attempted rape
- Sexual assault
- Causing to view sexual activity or images
- Communicating indecently
- Threatening to or disclosing intimate images
- Indecent photos of children
- Crimes associated with prostitution
- Other sexual crimes

Rape & attempted rape

Rape & attempted rape accounted for 17% of Sexual crimes. After an upward trend from 2013-14 to 2018-19, there were decreases in both 2019-20 and 2020-21. There were then increases in the two most recent years, including a 1% increase from 2,498 in 2021-22 to 2,529 in 2022-23.

In 2022-23, 2,236 (88%) of the 2,529 recorded rapes and attempted rapes were committed after the introduction of the Sexual Offences Scotland Act 2009 on 1st December 2010. Of these 2,236 rapes and attempted rapes, 94% (2,103) had female victims.

Sexual assault

Sexual assault accounted for 36% of Sexual crimes. After an upwards trend from 2013-14 to 2018-19, there were decreases in both 2019-20 and 2020-21 then an increase in 2021-22. There was then a 1% decrease in the most recent year, from 5,359 crimes in 2021-22 to 5,282 in 2022-23.

In 2022-23, 4,281 (81%) of the 5,282 sexual assaults were committed after the introduction of the Sexual Offences Scotland Act 2009 on 1st December 2010. Of these 4,281 sexual assaults, 86% (3,702) had female victims.

Causing to view sexual activity or images

Causing to view sexual activity or images accounted for 14% of Sexual crimes. After an upwards trend from 2013-14 to 2018-19, there has been some fluctuation in more recent years. There was a 6% decrease in the most recent year, from 2,223 crimes in 2021-22 to 2,082 in 2022-23.

Communicating indecently

Communicating indecently accounted for 10% of Sexual crimes. These crimes have seen an upwards trend over the last decade. However, there was a 6% decrease in the most recent year, from 1,608 crimes in 2021-22 to 1,518 in 2022-23.

Threatening to or disclosing intimate images

Threatening to or disclosing intimate images accounted for 6% of Sexual crimes. This category includes crimes being recorded under the [Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#), which was implemented on 3 July 2017. Since then, these crimes have seen an upwards trend. However, there was a 12% decrease in the most recent year, from 912 crimes in 2021-22 to 805 in 2022-23.

Indecent photos of children

Indecent photos of children accounted for 5% of Sexual crimes. These crimes have seen some fluctuation over the last decade. There was a 16% increase in the most recent year from 662 crimes in 2021-22 to 765 in 2022-23.

Crimes associated with prostitution

Crimes associated with prostitution accounted for a very small proportion of Sexual crimes, at less than 1%. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, these crimes have seen a large fall of 87%. There has been a decrease in the most recent year, from 80 crimes recorded in 2021-22 to 62 in 2022-23 (23% decrease).

44% of the crimes recorded in 2022-23 were in the Glasgow City area, with a further 34% recorded in Aberdeen City.

Other sexual crimes

Other sexual crimes accounted for 11% of Sexual crimes.

The Other sexual crimes category includes a wide range of crime types. The largest by volume was Voyeurism², accounting for a third (33%) of all crimes recorded in the Other sexual crimes category in 2022-23 (514 crimes). More detail on the crimes included is provided in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook and in the [User Guide](#).

This category has previously been on an upward trend for some time, with crimes increasing from 666 in 2013-14 to 1,707 in 2021-22 (up 156%). However, there was a 9% decrease in the most recent year, from 1,707 crimes recorded in 2021-22 to 1,559 in 2022-23.

Data comparisons

The sections below include information that should be considered to widen contextual understanding of the data provided on Sexual crimes. Detail is provided on limited comparisons with recorded crime in England & Wales and Northern Ireland. Further detail on the type of information available from the SCJS on sexual crime is also included.

Data comparisons: Recorded Crime in England & Wales and Northern Ireland

While recorded crime in Scotland is not directly comparable with England & Wales or Northern Ireland due to differences in legislation and counting rules, there are some signs

² While most victims of these crimes will be persons aged 16 or over, the provisions of these sections will also cover offences against children aged 13 or over where the perpetrator is under the age of 16.

of increases in police recorded sexual crimes across the UK in recent years³. This reflects a number of factors, including the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage and campaigns on people's willingness to report incidents to the police, as well as a potential increase in the number of victims. Similarly, sexual offences have shown an upwards trend in Northern Ireland⁴, with the most recent quarter (Jan-Mar 2023) showing the highest quarterly figure over the last ten years.

Data comparisons: Self-completion modules in the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)

Detailed information on the victims of sexual crime is not collected in the main Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS). Information on sensitive topics is collected through a number of additional self-completion sections. Some of these sections include information on sexual crime. For example, the self-completion elements of the 2018-19 and 2019-20 surveys included questions on sexual victimisation, stalking and harassment, and partner abuse. The survey found that in 2018-20:

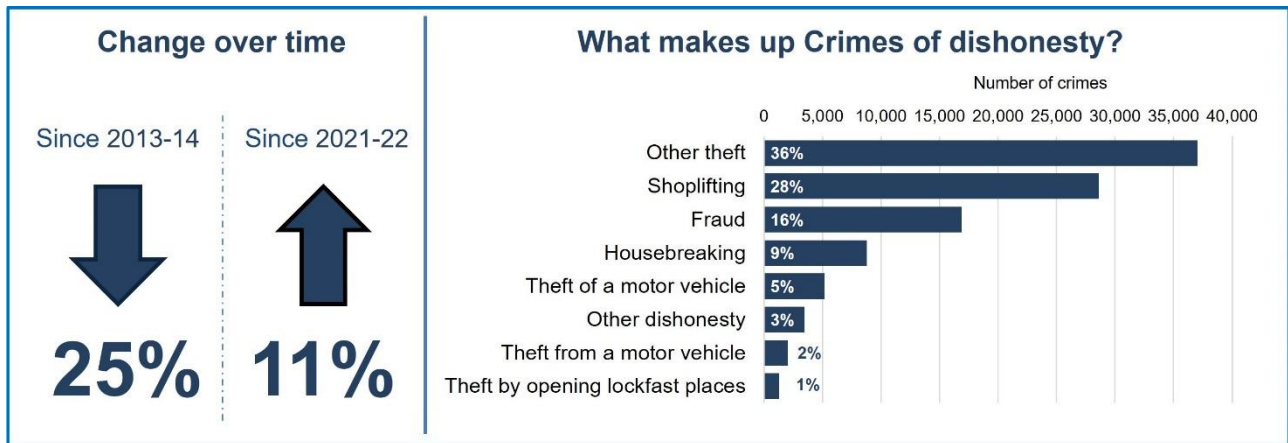
- there have been some increases in the proportion of adults experiencing certain types of sexual victimisation since 2008-09
- almost one-in-eight adults (11.8%) experienced at least one type of stalking and harassment
- 16.5% of adults said they had experienced at least one incident of partner abuse since the age of 16, but these have decreased since 2008-09

The findings are included in the [2019-20 SCJS Main Findings report](#).

³ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Police Recorded Crime Statistics | PSNI](#)

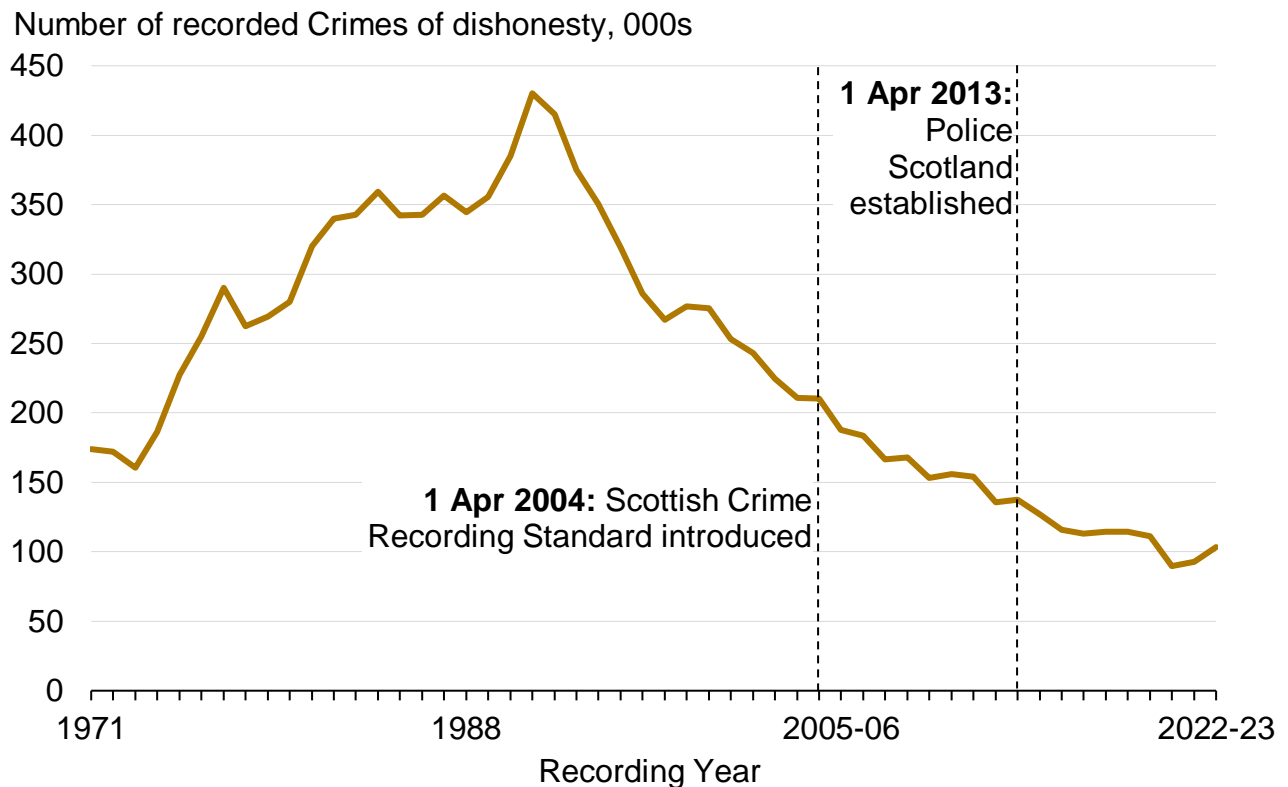
Crimes of Dishonesty



Crimes of dishonesty is the largest crime group, accounting for over a third (36%) of all crime recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of Crimes of dishonesty recorded by the police in Scotland increased by 11%, from 92,873 to 103,393 and it was the only crime group which increased over this period.

[Chart 9](#) below shows the number of Crimes of dishonesty from 1971 onwards. Crimes of dishonesty increased for a long period since 1971 and peaked in 1991. After then, there has been a long-term decreasing trend, with a decrease of 76% between 1991 and 2022-23. Despite the recent increase, the last three years have had the lowest number of crimes of dishonesty since comparable records began in 1971.

Chart 9: Crimes of dishonesty recorded by the police, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



The national rate of recorded Crimes of dishonesty was 189 per 10,000 population in 2022-23, an increase from 169 per 10,000 population in 2021-22.

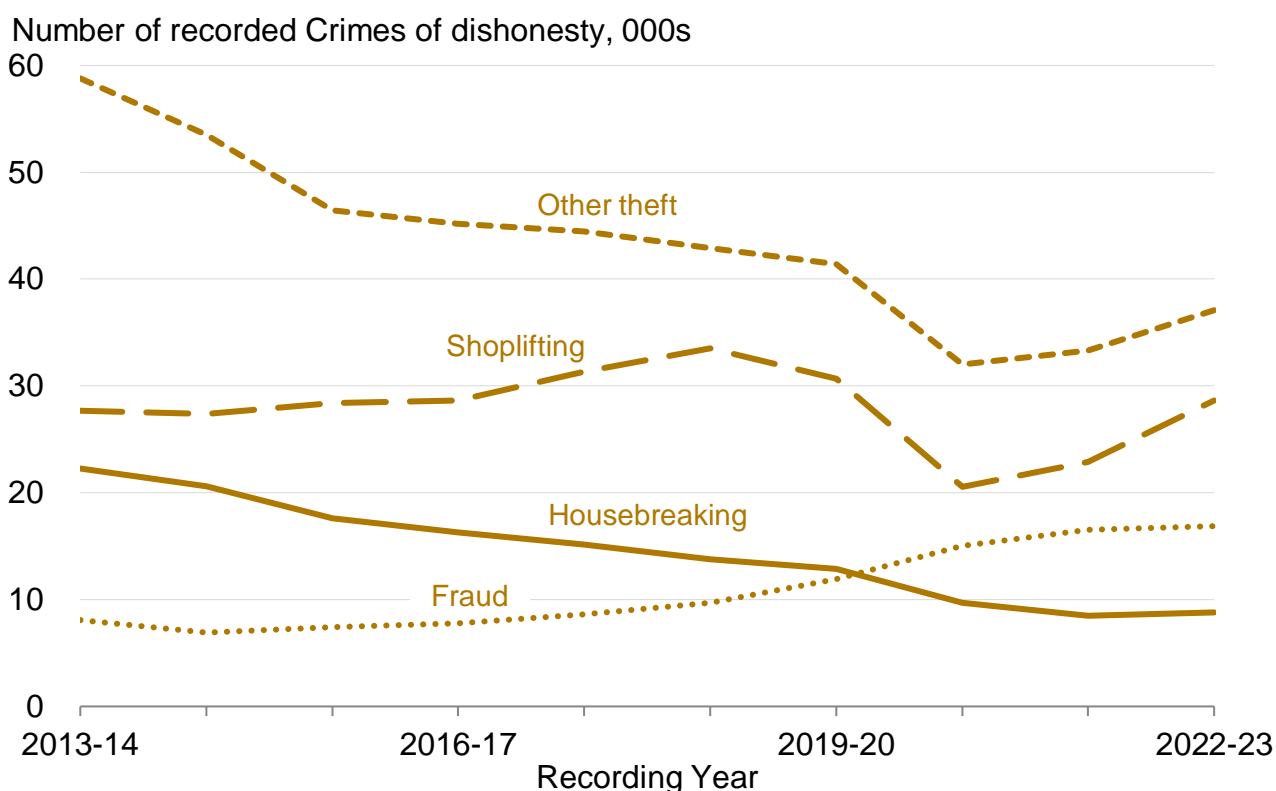
In 2022-23, of all Crimes of dishonesty:

- Other theft accounted for 36%. This has consistently been the biggest category.
- Shoplifting accounted for 28%
- Fraud accounted for 16%
- Housebreaking accounted for 9%
- Theft of and from a motor vehicle together accounted for 7%
- Other dishonesty accounted for 3%
- Theft by opening lockfast places accounted for 1%

All these categories except Fraud and Shoplifting have seen large decreases in the number of crimes recorded over the past ten years. Shoplifting has seen an increase, up 3% since 2013-14, although it reached a peak in 2018-19. Fraud has seen a large increase, up 109% since 2013-14.

[Chart 10](#) shows the four largest categories within Crimes of dishonesty over the last ten years and gives an indication of the trend and scale of each category.

Chart 10: Crimes of dishonesty recorded by the police, showing four largest categories, 2013-14 to 2022-23



The following sections discuss in more detail trends for each crime category comprised in the Crimes of dishonesty crime group. These are:

Crimes of dishonesty

- Housebreaking
- Theft by opening lockfast places
- Theft from a Motor Vehicle
- Theft of motor vehicle
- Shoplifting
- Other theft
- Fraud
- Other dishonesty

Housebreaking

Housebreaking accounted for 9% of Crimes of dishonesty. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this crime group has decreased by 61%, however there was a 4% increase from 8,489 crimes in 2021-22 to 8,796 in 2022-23.

Theft by opening lockfast places

Theft by opening a lockfast place accounted for 1% of Crimes of dishonesty. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, this crime has seen a decrease of 60%. The number of crimes recorded in this category has increased by 8% in the most recent year, from 1,203 in 2021-22 to 1,297 in 2022-23.

Theft from a Motor Vehicle

Theft from a motor vehicle accounted for 2% of Crimes of dishonesty. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this crime has seen a large decrease of 67%, however there was a 6% increase from 1,936 crimes in 2021-22 to 2,061 in 2022-23.

Theft of motor vehicle

Theft of a motor vehicle accounted for 5% of Crimes of dishonesty. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this crime has seen a decrease of 13%. There was a 15% increase in the most recent year, from 4,512 crimes in 2021-22 to 5,182 in 2022-23.

Shoplifting

Shoplifting accounted for over a quarter (28%) of Crimes of dishonesty. There was an increasing trend since 2014-15, which was interrupted by a decrease in 2019-20 and a further larger decrease in 2020-21. This was likely to be due to the Covid-19 pandemic related restrictions. There was a small increase in 2021-22 then a further increase of 25%, from 22,913 crimes in 2021-22 to 28,619 in 2022-23. This is only 15% lower than the high in 2018-19. Over the ten-year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, this crime has seen an increase of 3%.

Other theft

Other theft consists of Theft of pedal cycles, Theft from a motor vehicle not elsewhere classified and Theft not elsewhere classified (excl. motor vehicles).

This category is the largest in Crimes of dishonesty, accounting for 36% of these crimes. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, Other theft has seen a decrease of 37%, however there was an 11% increase in the most recent year, from 33,305 crimes in 2021-22 to 37,084 in 2022-23.

Fraud

Crimes of Fraud accounted for 16% of Crimes of dishonesty. Fraud has increased year-on-year since 2014-15, increasing by 109% since 2013-14. There was a 2% increase in the most recent year, from 16,536 crimes in 2021-22 to 16,879 in 2022-23.

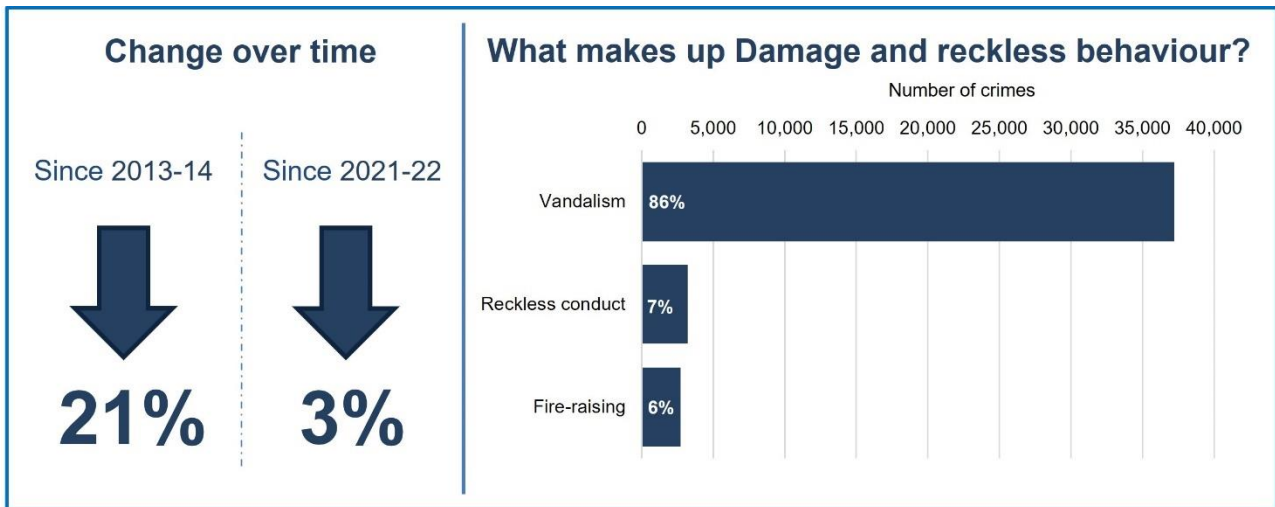
Much of the recent increase in Fraud has related to cyber-crimes which are estimated to account for half of all Frauds (51%) in 2022-23 and saw a significant rise during 2020-21. Further information on this change is available in the [Cyber-crime chapter](#).

Other dishonesty

Other dishonesty includes crimes of Reset, Corruption, Embezzlement, and other crimes of forgery which are not classified elsewhere.

Other dishonesty accounted for 3% of Crimes of dishonesty. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this crime has seen a decrease of 32%, including a 13% decrease in the most recent year, from 3,979 crimes in 2021-22 to 3,475 in 2022-23.

Damage and reckless behaviour



Damage and reckless behaviour accounted for 15% of all crime recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of crimes of Damage and reckless behaviour recorded by the police decreased by 3%, from 44,284 to 43,123. The recording of these crimes is at the second lowest level seen since 1976.

[Chart 11](#) shows the number of crimes of Damage and reckless behaviour from 1971 onwards. These crimes increased for a long period, but a sharp downward trend started after they peaked in 2006-07 (129,734 crimes). This includes a 21% fall over the last ten years since 2013-14.

The national rate of recorded crimes of Damage and reckless behaviour was 79 per 10,000 population in 2022-23, a slight decrease from 81 per 10,000 population in 2021-22, but identical to 2020-21.

In 2022-23, of all crimes of Damage and reckless conduct:

- Vandalism accounted for the clear majority, at 86%
- Reckless conduct accounted for 7%
- Fire-raising accounted for 6%

[Charts 12](#) shows the categories which make up Damage and reckless behaviour, over the past ten years. The chart demonstrates the difference in scale of recorded crimes of Vandalism compared to Reckless conduct and Fire-raising.

Chart 11: Damage and reckless behaviour crimes recorded by the police, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23

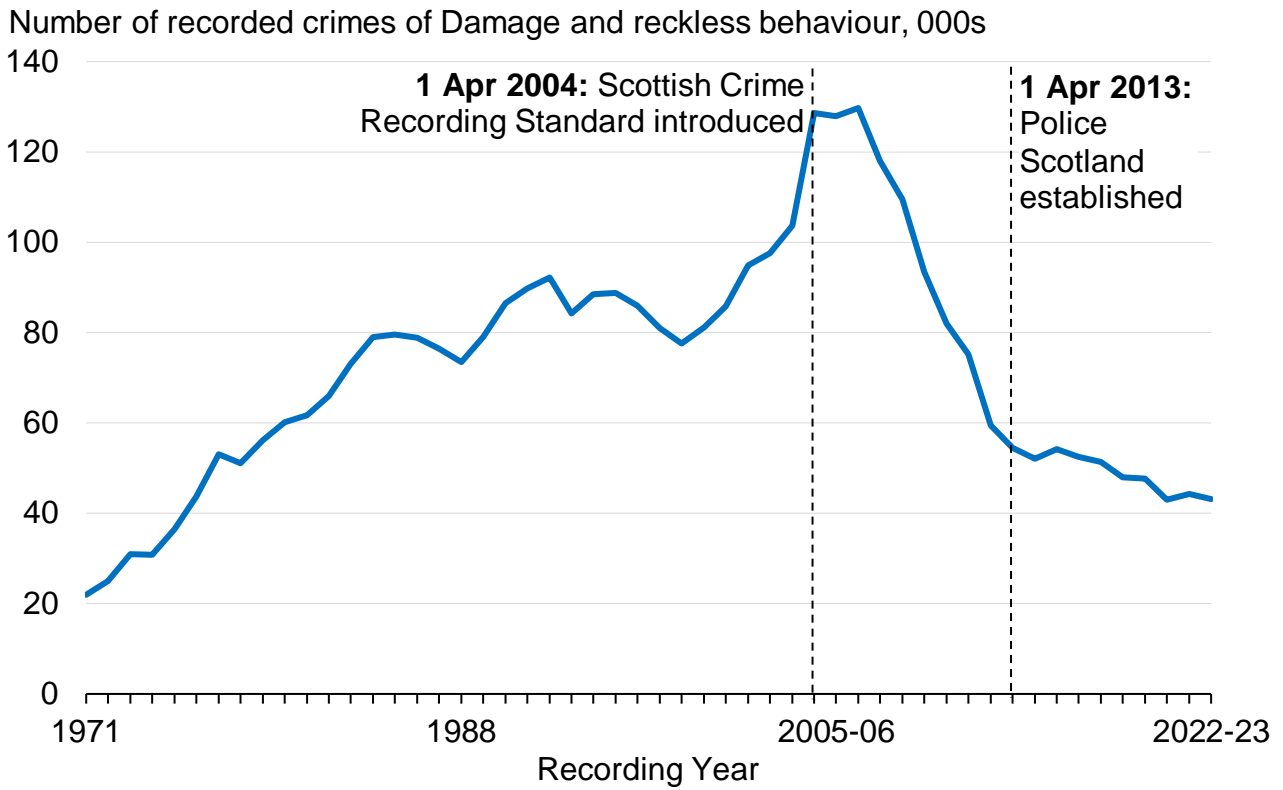
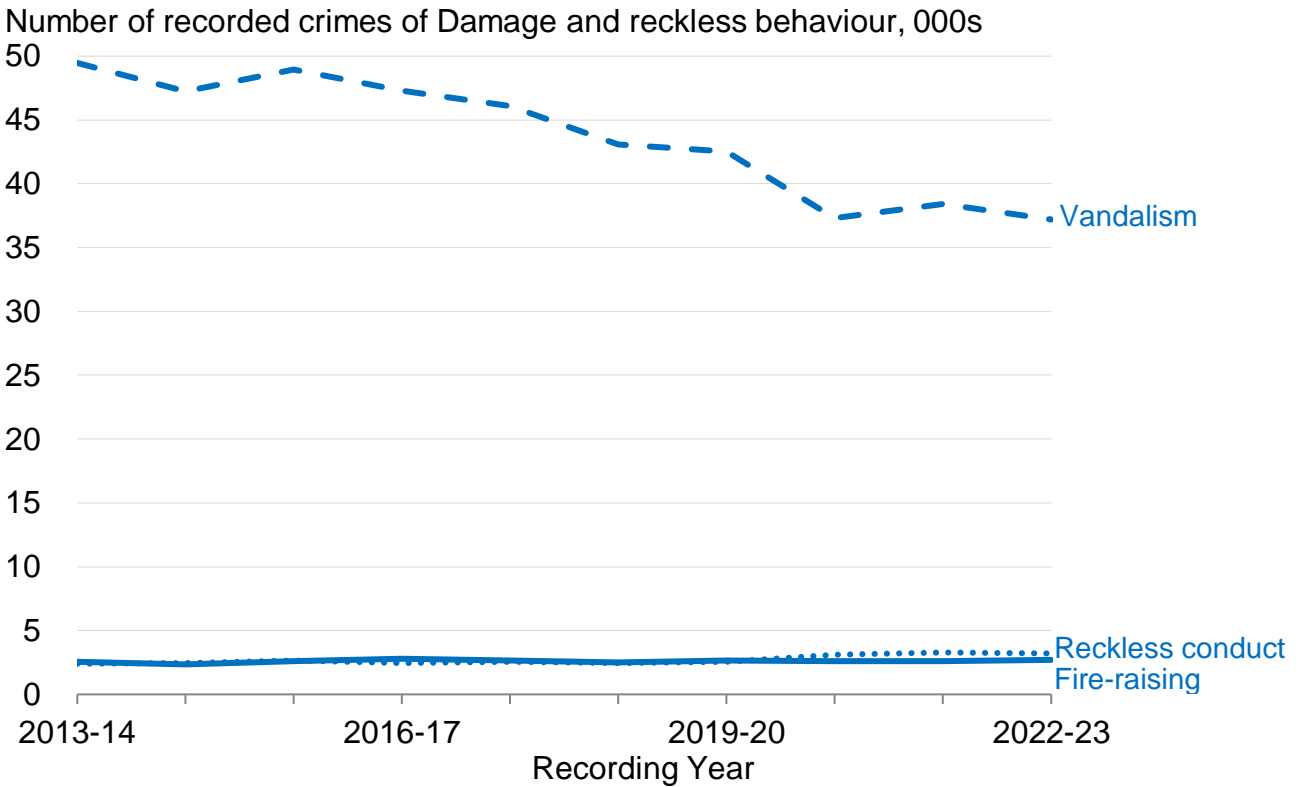


Chart 12: Damage and reckless behaviour recorded by the police, by category, 2013-14 to 2022-23



The following sections discuss in more detail trends for each crime category comprised in the Damage and reckless behaviour crime group. These are:

Damage and reckless behaviour

- Vandalism
- Reckless conduct
- Fire-raising

Vandalism

Vandalism accounted for 86% of Damage and reckless behaviour. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this crime has seen a decrease of 25%. There was a 3% decrease in the most recent year, from 38,404 in 2021-22 to 37,204 in 2022-23.

Reckless conduct

Reckless conduct accounted for 7% of Damage and reckless behaviour. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this category has seen an increase of 33% in the number of crimes recorded. However, there was a 2% decrease in the most recent year, from 3,285 in 2021-22 to 3,206 in 2022-23.

Fire-raising

Fire-raising accounted for 6% of Damage and reckless behaviour. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 this category has seen a 6% increase, remaining relatively stable with between 2,300 and 2,800 crimes each year. There was a 5% increase in the most recent year, from 2,595 crimes in 2021-22 to 2,713 in 2022-23.

Data comparisons: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics

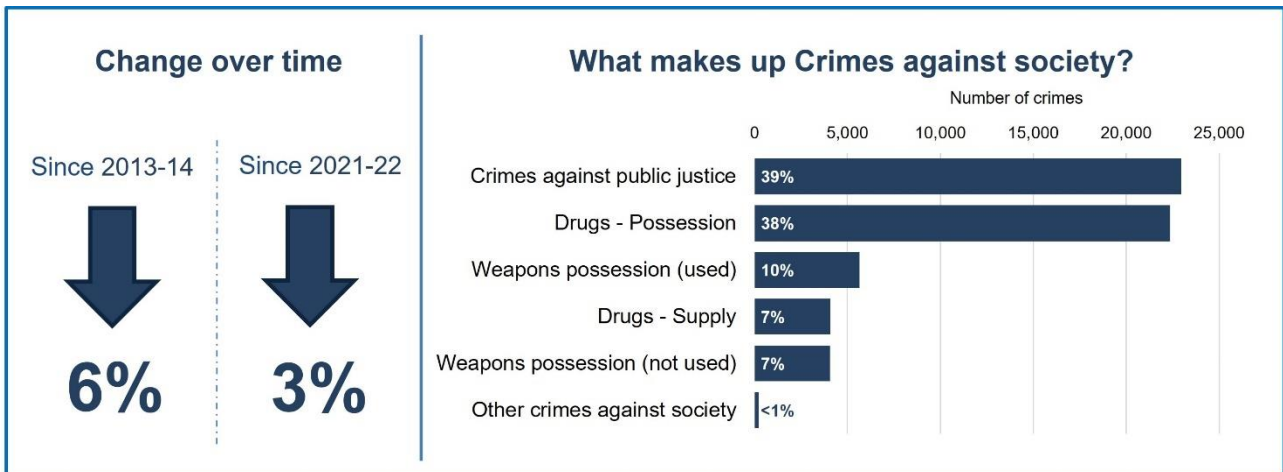
The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) publish annual [Fire and Rescue Incident Official Statistics](#), covering the number of fires attended. The latest figures available are for 2021-22.

It is not possible to make direct comparisons between the two sources, as many fires are caused accidentally rather than as a result of a crime, and the police are not called to all deliberate fires. Furthermore, not all police recorded crimes of fire-raising may result in the attendance of the SFRS. However, as these sources both relate to how Scotland's emergency services respond to fires, it would be anticipated that both should show similar trends over time.

A total of 27,771 fires were attended by the SFRS in 2021-22, up 10% on the previous year. Over half (59%) were started deliberately. Between 2012-13 and 2021-22, there has been a 4% increase in the total number of fires attended and an 8% increase in the number of deliberate fires.

This data is one year older than that for recorded crime presented in this bulletin, therefore direct comparisons are not possible. However, it does suggest that the small overall increase in police recorded crimes of fire-raising over the past ten years has also been broadly reflected in statistics from the SFRS.

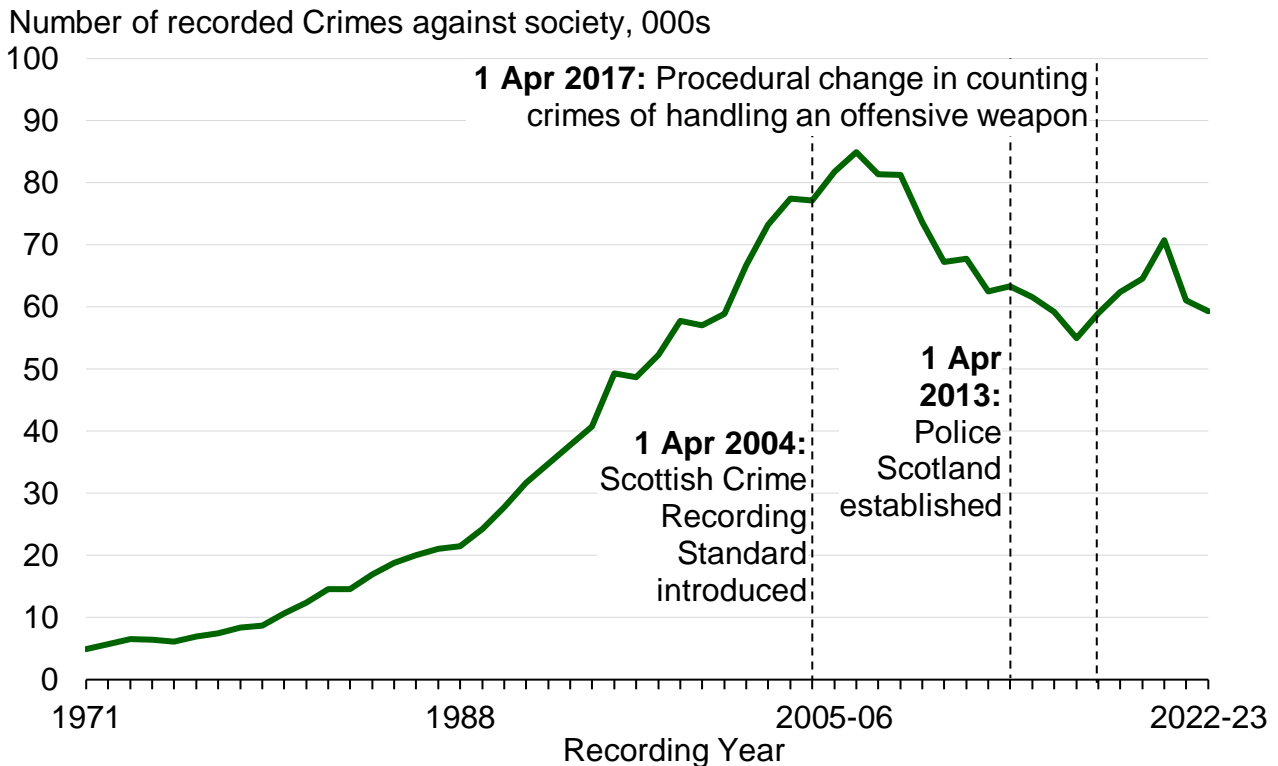
Crimes against society



Crimes against society accounted for 21% of all crimes recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of Crimes against society recorded by the police decreased by 3%, from 61,059 to 59,374. This fall is mostly driven by a decrease in the recording of Drugs – Possession.

[Chart 13](#) below shows the number of Crimes against society from 1971 onwards. After increasing for a long period up to 2006-07, these crimes decreased until 2016-17, before rising and then falling again over 2020-21 to 2022-23. It should be noted that a key part of the overall increase since 2016-17 is due to a procedural change in the recording of crimes of handling an offensive weapon (see later in this section for further information).

Chart 13: Crimes against society recorded by the police, 1971 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



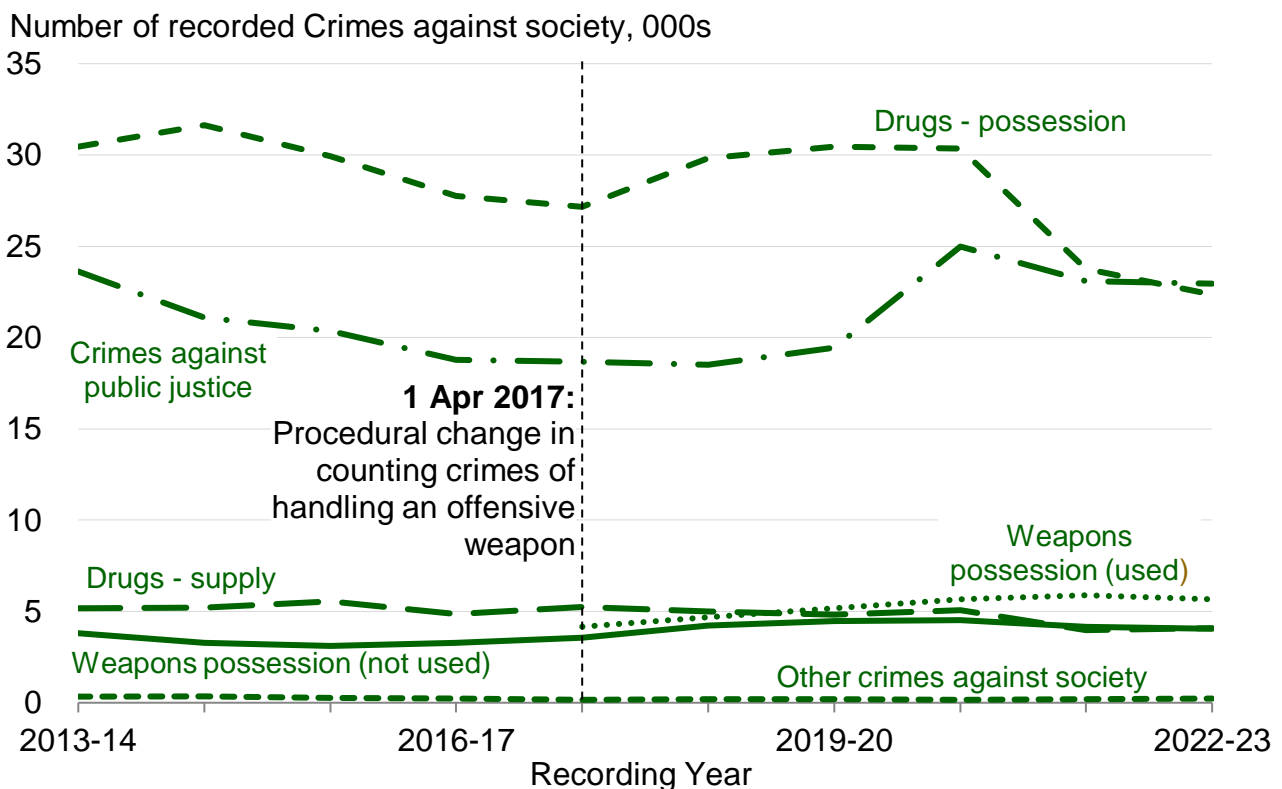
The national rate of recorded Crimes against society was 108 crimes per 10,000 population in 2022-23. This decreased from 111 per 10,000 population in 2021-22.

[Chart 14](#) shows the categories within Crimes against society over the last ten years and gives an indication of the trend and scale of each category.

In 2022-23, of all Crimes against society:

- Crimes against public justice and Drugs - Possession were the largest categories, accounting for 39% and 38%, respectively
- Weapons possession (used) accounted for 10%
- Drugs – Supply and Weapons possession (not used) accounted for 7% each
- Other crimes against society accounted for less than 1%

Chart 14: Crimes against society recorded by the police, by category, 2013-14 to 2022-23



Note: There was a procedural change to the counting of crimes of handling an offensive weapon in 2017-18. As such, the significant rise in the total number of recorded crimes of handling an offensive weapon shown for that year, does not represent a real increase in these crimes.

The following sections discuss in more detail trends for each crime category comprised in the Crimes against society crime group. These are:

Crimes against society

- Crimes against public justice
- Weapons possession (not used)
- Weapons possession (used)
- Drugs – Supply
- Drugs – Possession
- Other crimes against society

Further details on some categories can be found in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook.

Crimes against public justice

Crimes against public justice accounted for 39% of Crimes against society, the largest category in 2022-23. These cover a range of crimes, including Bail offences, Resisting arrest and General attempts to pervert the course of justice.

Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 the number of crimes recorded in this category decreased by 3%. There was a 1% decrease in the most recent year, from 23,099 recorded in 2021-22 to 22,967 in 2022-23. This is the second year there has been a decrease after a large increase between 2019-20 and 2020-21, which was likely due to the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Handling offensive weapons

In 2017-18 the [Scottish Crime Recording Board](#) made a procedural change to how some crimes of handling an offensive weapon were recorded. This has had an impact on the comparability of the recorded crime statistics before and after this point.

Prior to 2017-18, statistics on handling offensive weapons in public places only include incidents where the perpetrator did not commit further crimes with the weapon. If they had, the specific crime of handling an offensive weapon was considered an aggravation of the crime it was used to commit (for example an aggravated assault) and would not have been included in the statistics.

From 1 April 2017, crimes of handling offensive weapons in public places are no longer treated as an aggravation where they are used to commit other crimes or offences against a person. As such, both the crime of handling an offensive weapon in a public place and any crime or offence committed with it are now both included in the statistics. This change was made to improve consistency between the recording of these crimes and the criminal law.

As a result of this change, crimes of handling an offensive weapon have been substantially higher since 2017-18. This does not represent a real increase in recorded crime. This change will continue to have an impact on the comparability of recorded crime statistics for all years prior to 2017-18.

From 2017-18, crimes of handling an offensive weapon in Scotland can then be counted in two different ways:

- the first is to use the pre-existing statistics, where the offensive weapon has not been used to commit another crime or offence against a person in a public place

- the second is to look at crimes where the offensive weapon was used to commit another crime or offence against a person in a public place

In June 2018 the Scottish Government published a report that presented more detailed information on the handling of offensive weapons within public places in Scotland. This included findings on the characteristics of these cases, based on a random sample of 1,500 crimes recorded by the police for the first six months (April to September) of 2013 and 2017. More information can be found by accessing the '[Recorded Crime in Scotland: Handling Offensive Weapons](#)' publication.

On 28th June 2022, Part 1, Section 6 of the Offensive Weapons Act was implemented. This included the introduction of an offence of having a corrosive substance in a public place. Part 4 of the legislation came into effect on 27 March 2023, meaning the possession of certain offensive weapons are now illegal in both a public and private place. Five crimes of Possessing a corrosive substance in public not used in other crime or offences, one crime of Possessing a corrosive substance in public used in other crime or offences and four crimes of Possession of offensive weapons in a private place not used in other crimes or offences were recorded in 2022-23.

Weapons possession – Not used in other crimes or offences

The crime of Weapons possession (not used) accounted for 7% of Crimes against society in 2022-23.

Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 the number of crimes recorded in this category increased by 7% (from 3,795 to 4,064). However, there was a 2% decrease in the most recent year, from 4,160 in 2021-22 to 4,064 in 2022-23.

In 2022-23, 81 crimes of handling an offensive weapon (not used) occurred within a prison, compared to 176 in 2021-22.

In 2022-23, 147 crimes of handling an offensive weapon (not used) occurred within a school. This compares to 126 in 2021-22.

Weapons possession – Used in other crimes or offences

The crime of Weapons possession (used) accounted for 10% of Crimes against society in 2022-23.

There was a 4% decrease in the most recent year, from 5,888 crimes recorded in 2021-22 to 5,663 in 2022-23.

In 2022-23, 66 crimes of handling an offensive weapon (used) occurred within a prison, compared to 80 in 2021-22.

In 2022-23, 96 crimes of handling an offensive weapon (used) occurred within a school, compared to 102 in 2021-22.

Drugs – Supply

Crimes related to the Supply of Drugs accounted for 7% of Crimes against society. Over the ten-year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 the number of crimes recorded in this category decreased by 21%. However, there was a 3% increase in the most recent year, from 3,976 in 2021-22 to 4,087 in 2022-23.

Drugs – Possession

Crimes of Possession of Drugs accounted for 38% of Crimes against society. Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 the number of crimes recorded in this category has decreased by 27%. This includes a 6% decrease in the most recent year, from 23,747 crimes in 2021-22 to 22,356 in 2022-23.

Other crimes against society

Other crimes against society accounted for less than 1% of all Crimes against society. This category includes Treason, Conspiracy, Explosive offences, Wrecking, piracy and hijacking, and Crimes against public order.

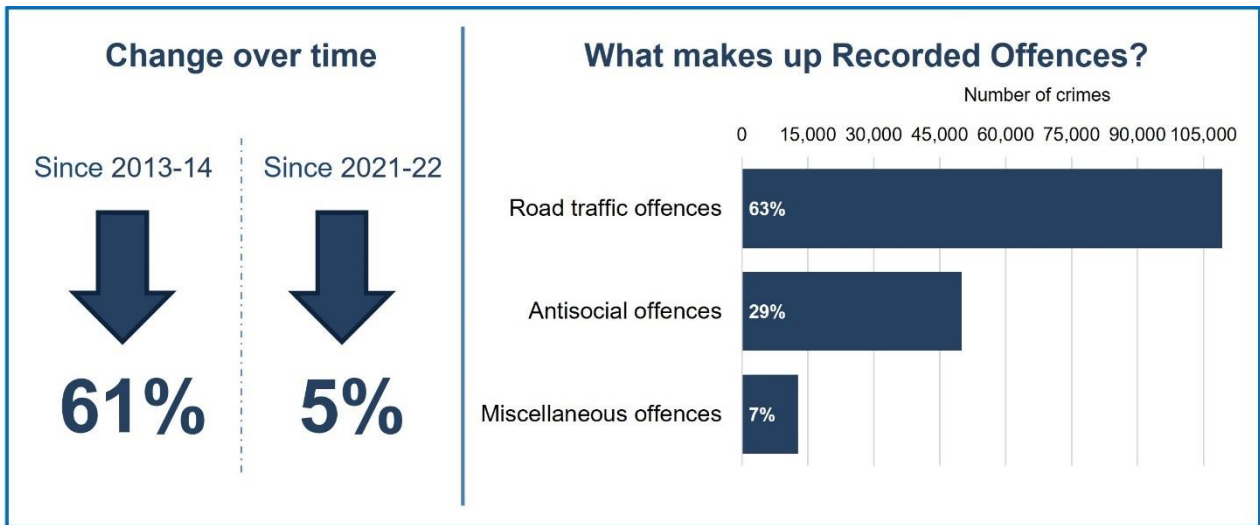
Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23 the number of crimes recorded in this category decreased by 31%. However, there was a 25% increase in the most recent year, from 189 crimes recorded in 2021-22 to 237 in 2022-23.

Coronavirus restrictions crimes

The enactment of the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) and [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) (implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020 respectively) led to new and additional crimes being recorded within these statistics since 2019-20. For example, this includes cases where someone had left the place they were living during lockdown, 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. Further [legislation in respect of local travel restrictions](#) came in to force on 2 November 2020.

The last legal restrictions relating to COVID-19 were lifted in Scotland in April 2022, and there were no crimes recorded during the 2022-23 reporting year. Whilst many incidents were dealt with by the police without the need for enforcement, 3,913 Coronavirus restrictions crimes were recorded in 2021-22, accounting for 1% of all crime recorded in Scotland that year. This compares to 20,976 equivalent crimes recorded in 2020-21.

Total Recorded Offences



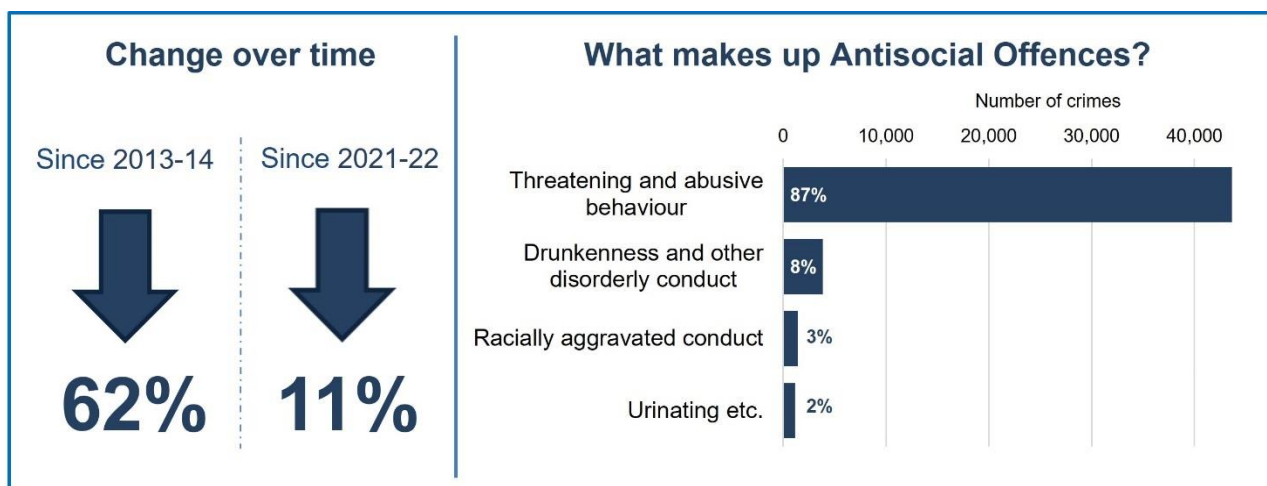
The total number of offences recorded has fallen by over half (61%) since 2013-14, including a 5% decrease from 180,913 in 2021-22 to 172,207 in 2022-23.

In 2022-23, of all recorded offences:

- Road traffic offences accounted for just under two thirds (63%)
- Antisocial offences accounted for just under a third (29%)
- Miscellaneous offences accounted for 7%

It should be noted that the number of offences recorded by the police generally tends to be affected to a greater extent by police activity and operational decisions than the number of crimes.

Antisocial Offences



Antisocial offences accounted for just under a third (29%) of all offences recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2013-14 and 2022-23, the number of Antisocial offences recorded by the police decreased by 62%, this includes an 11% decrease since 2021-22 from 55,975 to 50,094 in 2022-23.

The national rate of recorded Antisocial offences decreased from 102 per 10,000 population in 2021-22 to 91 per 10,000 population in 2022-23.

The Antisocial offences group includes the following categories:

Antisocial Offences

- Threatening and abusive behaviour
- Racially aggravated conduct
- Drunkenness & other disorderly conduct
- Urinating etc.

In 2022-23 of all Antisocial offences:

- Threatening and abusive behaviour accounted for the clear majority, at 87%
- Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct accounted for 8%
- Racially aggravated conduct accounted for 3%
- Urinating etc. accounted for 2%

Threatening and abusive behaviour accounts for the clear majority of antisocial offences and is discussed in more detail below.

For further information on the other Antisocial offences categories please refer to the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook for this bulletin. This includes data on the number of offences recorded in each category (Table 2) and rates per 10,000 population (Table 4). The workbook includes an 'Introduction' sheet, with information on how to navigate the tables, alongside a 'Notes' sheet, with relevant details to assist users when reading and interpreting results.

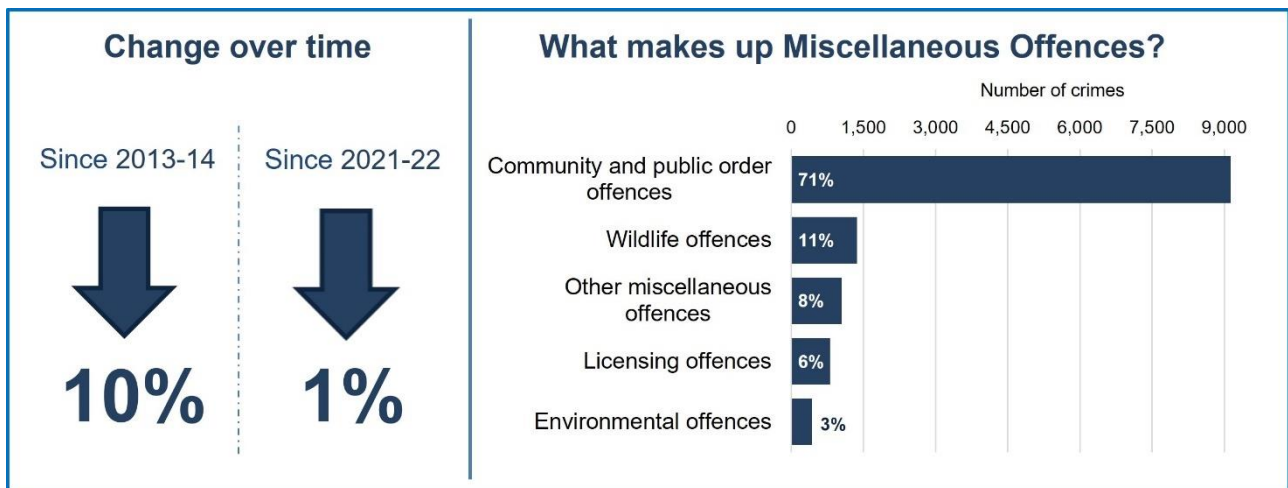
Threatening and abusive behaviour

The Threatening and abusive behaviour category includes offences of Threatening or abusive behaviour (which account for the vast majority of the category, at 90%), Breach of the peace offences (5%) and Threatening and abusive behaviour of a retail worker (5%).

Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, the number of offences recorded in the Threatening and abusive behaviour category has decreased by 38%. This includes a 9% decrease in the most recent year, from 47,756 in 2021-22 to 43,644 in 2022-23.

Threatening and abusive behaviour of a retail worker is a subset of the Threatening and abusive behaviour category, which came into effect on the 24 August 2021. This was introduced by the [Protection of Workers \(Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#). As such, the first statistics for 2021-22 only relate to a partial year. There were 1,130 offences recorded during this time. This increased to 2,106 in 2022-23. More information on this new legislation is provided in [Annex 3](#).

Miscellaneous Offences



Miscellaneous offences accounted for 7% of all offences recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of Miscellaneous offences recorded by the police decreased by 1% from 12,951 to 12,793. There was a decrease of 10% since 2013-14.

The national rate of recorded Miscellaneous offences decreased slightly from 24 per 10,000 population in 2021-22 to 23 per 10,000 population in 2022-23.

The Miscellaneous offences group includes the following categories:

Miscellaneous Offences

- Community and public order offences
- Environmental offences
- Licensing offences
- Wildlife offences
- Other miscellaneous offences

In 2022-23, of all Miscellaneous offences:

- Community and public order offences were the largest category, accounting for 71%
- Wildlife offences accounted for 11%
- Other miscellaneous offences accounted for 8%
- Licensing offences accounted for 6%
- Environmental offences accounted for 3%

In 2022-23, Community and public order offences accounted for the majority of miscellaneous offences, these are discussed in more detail below.

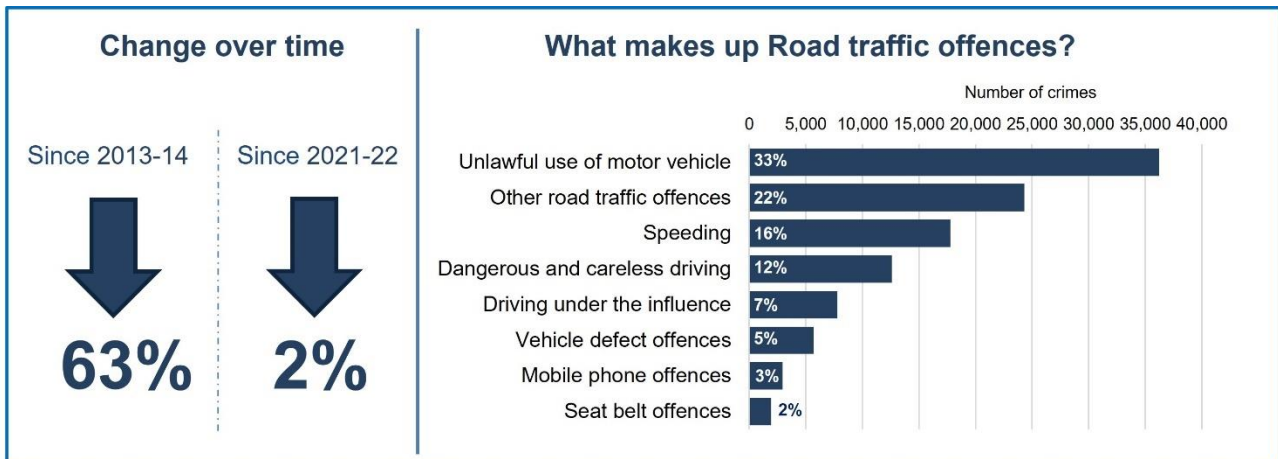
For further information on the other Miscellaneous offences categories please refer to the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook for this bulletin. This includes data on the number of offences recorded in each category (Table 2) and rates per 10,000 population (Table 4). The workbook includes an 'Introduction' sheet, with information on how to navigate the tables, alongside a 'Notes' sheet, with relevant details to assist users when reading and interpreting results.

Community and public order offences

The Community and public order offences category includes a wide range of offences. The main ones are General post office/telecommunications offences (which account for the clear majority of the category, at 85%), Computer Misuse Act 1990 – unauthorised access only (5%), and False or hoax calls to emergency services (5%).

Over the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, the number of offences recorded in the Community and public order offences category has increased by 3%. However, there was a 1% decrease in the most recent year, from 9,224 in 2021-22 to 9,137 in 2022-23.

Road traffic offences



Road traffic offences accounted for 63% of all offences recorded in Scotland in 2022-23. Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the number of Road traffic offences recorded by the police decreased by 2% from 111,987 to 109,320. Over the longer term, there was a decrease of 63% since 2013-14.

The national rate of recorded Road traffic offences decreased from 204 per 10,000 population in 2021-22 to 199 per 10,000 population in 2022-23.

The Road traffic offences group includes the following categories:

Road Traffic Offences

- Dangerous & careless driving
- Driving under the influence
- Speeding
- Unlawful use of motor vehicle
- Vehicle defect offences
- Seat belt offences
- Mobile phone offences
- Other road traffic offences

In 2022-23, of all Road traffic offences:

- Unlawful use of motor vehicle accounted for a third (33%)
- Other road traffic offences accounted for just over a fifth (22%)
- Speeding accounted for 16%
- Dangerous & careless driving accounted for 12%
- Driving under the influence accounted for 7%
- Vehicle defect offences accounted for 5%

- Mobile phone offences accounted for 3%
- Seat belt offences accounted for 2%

The following section discusses the three largest categories (Unlawful use of motor vehicle, Other road traffic offences and Speeding) in more detail.

For further information on the other Road traffic offences categories please refer to the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook for this bulletin. This includes data on the number of offences recorded in each category (Table 2) and rates per 10,000 population (Table 4). The workbook includes an 'Introduction' sheet, with information on how to navigate the tables, alongside a 'Notes' sheet, with relevant details to assist users when reading and interpreting results.

Unlawful use of motor vehicle

The Unlawful use of motor vehicle category includes offences such as Driving while disqualified, Driving without a licence, Driving without insurance, and Driving without a test certificate. Further detail can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Unlawful use of motor vehicle is the largest category in this group, accounting for 33% of all Road traffic offences. This category decreased by 37% between 2013-14 and 2022-23, including a 3% decrease from 37,238 in 2021-22 to 36,243 in 2022-23.

Other road traffic offences

Other road traffic offences accounted for just over a fifth (22%) of all Road traffic offences. This category includes a range of offences, such as Accident offences (accounting for 66% of the category), Driver's neglect of traffic directions (not pedestrian crossing) (16%), Motor vehicle other offences (7%) and Failing to provide info to identify driver of motor vehicle (5%).

This category increased by 9%, from 22,355 in 2021-22 to 24,302 in 2022-23, however there was an overall decrease of 42% since 2013-14.

Speeding

Speeding accounted for 16% of all Road traffic offences. This category decreased by 21%, from 22,472 in 2021-22 to 17,767 in 2022-23. There was a decrease of 78% since 2013-14.

These figures do not include any offences recorded as a result of the Scottish Safety Camera Programme. These are excluded as no police resources are used in the recording of an offence by this programme and the National Statistics on Recorded Crime focus solely on crimes and offences faced by the police and not by other organisations.

Police recorded cyber-crime in Scotland

This chapter presents an estimate of how many cyber-crimes were recorded in Scotland during 2022-23.

The information provided below relates to cyber-crimes which have come to the attention of the police. It does not provide information on the characteristics of all cyber-crime committed in society, as not all of these crimes are reported to the police.

Background

Defining cyber-crime is complex, with no agreed upon definition of the term. The main debate centres around the extent to which cyber technology needs to be involved for the crime to be termed 'cyber-crime'. For the purposes of recorded crime (as defined in the Scottish Crime Recording Standard), a broad definition of cyber-crime is adopted that includes crimes in which cyber technology is in any way involved. This ranges from crimes where a digital system, infrastructure or Information and Communication Technology (ICT) device is the target as well as the principal or sole method of attack, known as 'cyber-dependent' crimes (such as the spreading of computer viruses), to 'traditional' crimes where the internet has been used as a means to commit the crime, known as 'cyber-enabled' crimes (such as online fraud or sexual crime). Throughout this chapter, both 'cyber-dependent' and 'cyber-enabled' crimes are referred to collectively as 'cyber-crimes'.

The estimates provided in this chapter are based on a review of crime records, whereby a random sample of cases was drawn across Scotland for those types of crime that could in theory involve a cyber-element. The review considered which proportion, by crime type, actually were cyber-crimes in 2022-23.

As this analysis is based on a sample of police records (rather than all police records), it should be seen as providing a broad estimate of the volume and type of cyber-crime recorded in Scotland, rather than an exact count. Following previous reviews of crime records, we have assumed that all crimes under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (within the Damage and reckless behaviour crime group) were cyber-crimes.

Estimated volume of cyber-crimes

In 2022-23, an estimated 14,890 cyber-crimes were recorded by the police in Scotland. This is similar to the estimated volume recorded for both 2020-21 and 2021-22 (14,860 and 14,280 respectively), but remains significantly above the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20 (with 7,710 cyber-crimes). Part of the increase seen in reported cyber-crimes may be due to the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and government instructions to limit social contact. However the lifting of restrictions has not been accompanied by a reduction in the estimated volume of police recorded cyber-crime in 2022-23.

A procedural change to the recording of international crime made in April 2020 has also likely led to some additional cases, but relatively few when compared to the overall increase. This is discussed further in the [2020-21 Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin](#).

We estimate that at least 5% of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland in 2022-23 were cyber-crimes. This includes an estimated 26% of Sexual crimes, 8% of Crimes of dishonesty, 3% of Non-sexual crimes of violence and less than 1% of Damage and reckless behaviour.

It is important to note that whilst the sample of crime records reviewed for this analysis was designed to capture the main types of crime that could involve a cyber-element, this may not have included every relevant type of crime. As such, these figures should be

taken as estimates. Going forward statisticians will continue to keep the types of crime reviewed for this chapter under consideration, to ensure any additional types (beyond those discussed below) that may involve a cyber-element are included.

Table A12 in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook provides estimates of the number of cyber-crimes split by crime type from 2019-20 to 2022-23.

Cyber-crimes within Non-sexual crimes of violence

This analysis looked specifically at crimes of (i) Threats and extortion (ii) those recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and (iii) Stalking.

In 2022-23, an estimated 1,830 crimes of Threats and extortion were cyber-crimes, an increase of 45% from the estimated 1,260 recorded in 2021-22 and a five-fold increase from the estimated 290 recorded in 2019-20. In the latest year, 91% of recorded Threats and extortion were cyber-crimes. Most of these cases relate to 'sextortion', most commonly where the perpetrator threatens to reveal evidence of the victim's online sexual activity unless they receive some form of monetary payment.

As part of the analysis we looked at the confirmed and suspected location of the perpetrators of cyber-crimes. This analysis was based on the information recorded at the point which the cases were reviewed. Amongst the cases we sampled, for Threats and extortion the location of perpetrators was confirmed or suspected to be outside Scotland in almost two-thirds of cyber-crimes (64%) and unknown for a further 1 in 3 cyber-crimes (34%).

Table A14 in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook provides estimates of the location of perpetrators of cyber-crimes in 2022-23.

Crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and Stalking are course of conduct type offences. Within this research, any crime that occurred wholly online, or included a mix of in-person and online activity as part of the course of conduct, has been classified as a cyber-crime. In 2022-23, an estimated 290 crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and 270 crimes of Stalking were cyber-crimes. This represented an estimated 16% of crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and a third (33%) of crimes of Stalking.

Cyber-crime within Sexual crimes

This analysis looked specifically at those types of sexual crimes that could have a cyber-element. For example, crimes of Communicating indecently, Cause to view sexual activity or images, Indecent photos of children, Disclosing or threatening to disclose intimate images and Voyeurism.

In 2022-23, an estimated 3,830 Sexual crimes (26%) recorded by the police were cyber-crimes, compared to 4,210 in 2021-22. The estimated volume of Sexual crimes that were cyber-crimes has gradually increased over the longer term from 1,100 in 2013-14⁵. Part of the increase after 2017-18 will likely relate to new crimes of Disclosing or threatening to disclose intimate images being recorded under the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016, which was implemented on 3 July 2017. However, the clear majority of this increase will be due to other factors.

The analysis also suggests an estimated 2,060 Sexual crimes recorded in 2022-23 were both cyber-crimes and had a victim under the age of 18.

⁵ [Recorded crime in Scotland: 'Other sexual crimes', 2013-2014 and 2016-2017](#)

We found that, for around two-thirds (64%) of the records examined perpetrators of Sexual crimes which were cyber-crimes were either confirmed or suspected to be located in Scotland. The location of perpetrators was unknown in a further fifth (22%) of records.

Cyber-crime within Crimes of dishonesty

This analysis predominately covers the crimes of Fraud, as well as Proceeds of crime.

Fraud includes a wide range of criminal activity such as bank card fraud, failure to pay for goods and services (either online or in person such as taxi fares and meals at restaurants), fraudulent sales, bogus workmen, phishing, banking scams etc.

In 2022-23, around half (51%) or 8,520 recorded frauds were estimated to have been cyber-crimes. This is similar to the estimated 8,010 cyber frauds recorded in 2021-22, but has more than doubled from the estimated 3,450 recorded in 2019-20.

Table A13 in the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook provides estimates of volumes and proportions of Cyber Fraud from 2018-19 to 2022-23.

We found that for just over a third (37%) of the records we examined, the location of perpetrators of Fraud cyber-crimes was unknown. A further third (32%) of records had perpetrators who were either suspected or confirmed to be located outside of Scotland and a third (31%) were suspected or confirmed to be located in Scotland.

In 2022-23 an estimated 120 cases of Proceeds of crime were cyber-crimes (representing around 7 out of 10, or 70%, of all recorded cases).

Cyber-crime within Damage and reckless behaviour

As a result of analysis undertaken in previous years and the nature of the crime recorded, we have assumed that all 30 crimes recorded under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (causing damage) were cyber-crimes.

Official Statistics on clear up rates

This section presents statistics on recorded crime clear up rates in Scotland during 2022-23. Whereas the rest of this bulletin presents recorded crime statistics that have been produced as National Statistics, these clear up rate statistics remain published as Official Statistics.

A crime or offence is regarded as cleared up where there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings notwithstanding that a report is not submitted to the procurator fiscal because either:

- (i) by standing agreement with the procurator fiscal, the police warn the accused due to the minor nature of the offence, or
- (ii) reporting is inappropriate due to the non-age of the accused, death of the accused or other similar circumstances.

Clear up rates are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{number of crimes cleared up in year y}}{\text{total number of crimes recorded in year y}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Clear up rates presented are rounded to one decimal place.

Because crimes or offences may be cleared up in a different year than they were recorded, rates in excess of 100% can arise.

Clear up rates for both the Coronavirus restrictions crimes group and Road traffic offences group are not included in this bulletin, as by their nature both typically involve criminality in which the offender is 'caught in the act'. Further to this, it has not been possible to obtain clear up rate information for the Coronavirus restrictions group, due to the separate and bespoke data collection used by Police Scotland. Further detail on clear up rates by groups and categories is available from the '[Supporting documents](#)' Excel workbook (Table 3).

More information on clear up rates is available in the [User Guide](#).

Total recorded crime

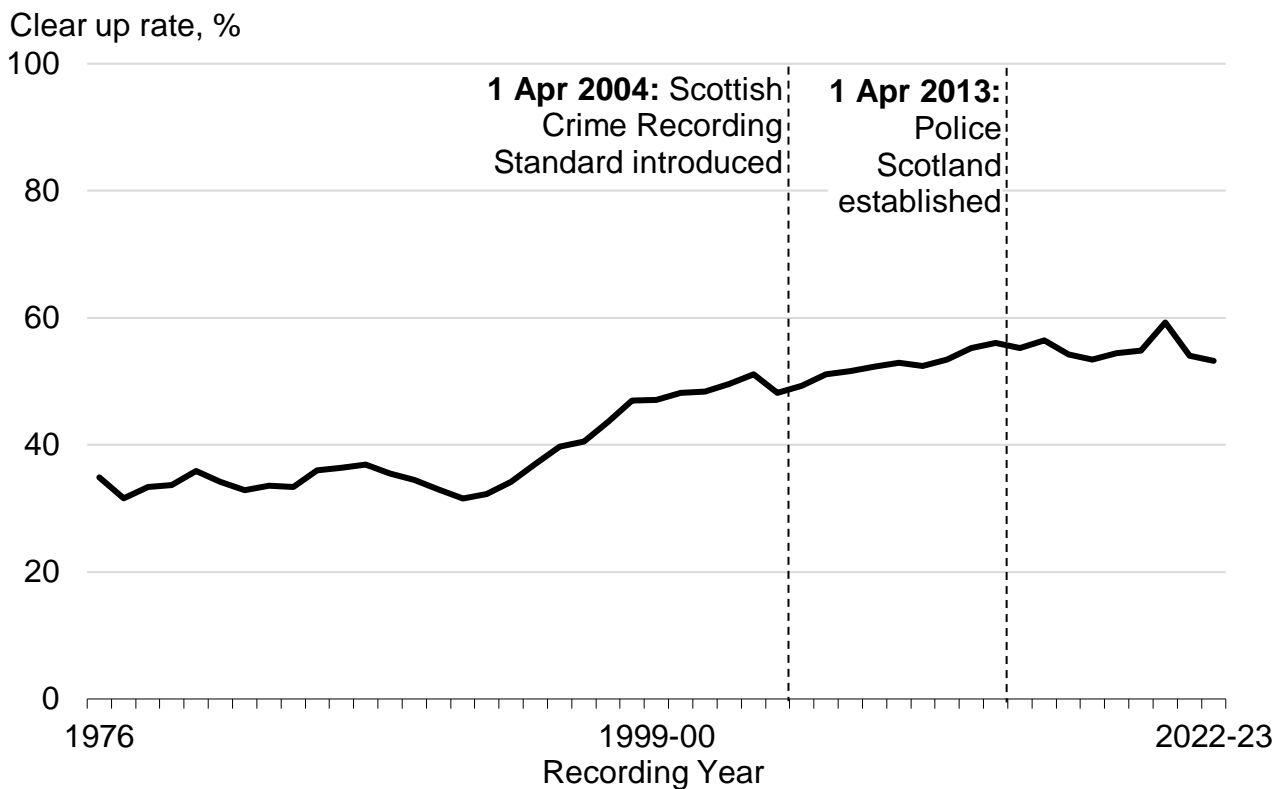
In 2022-23 the clear up rate was 53.3%, down from 54.0% in 2021-22 and 59.3% in 2020-21.

The larger decrease between 2020-21 and 2021-22 likely reflected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the types of crime recorded, with the volume of those crimes that have relatively lower clear up rates falling more sharply in 2020-21 than those with relatively higher clear up rates. The fall back to 54.0% in 2021-22 reflected a partial return to the volume of different crime types recorded prior to the pandemic (2019-20), albeit clear up rates still fell for each of the individual crime groups.

Clear up rates then remained more stable in 2022-23, reducing slightly from 54.0% to 53.3%. Crimes against society (93.4%), Non-sexual crimes of violence (67.3%) and Sexual crime (53.4%) continued to have higher clear up rates in 2022-23 than Crimes of dishonesty (31.0%) and Damage and reckless behaviour (28.8%).

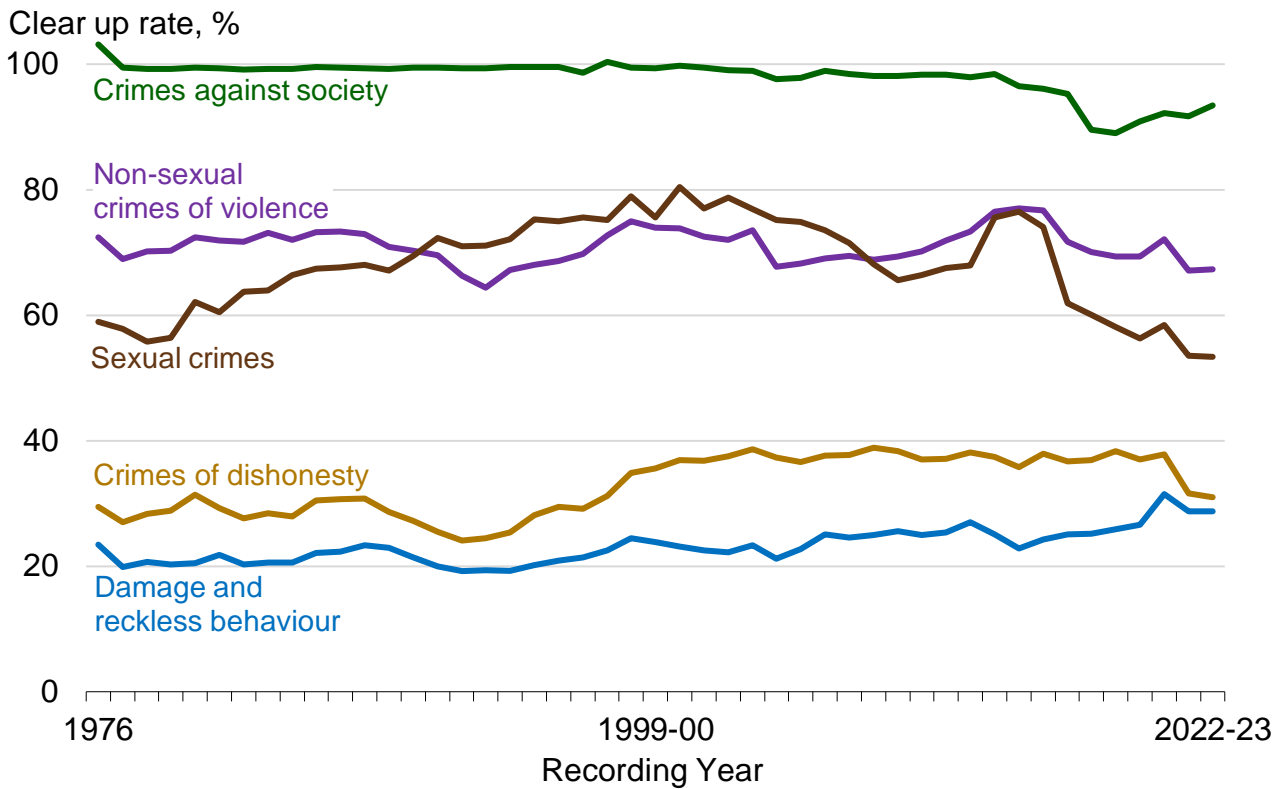
Prior to 2020-21, clear up rates had been relatively stable over the last decade following a generally upward trend since 1976, the first year for which comparable clear up rates are available, as shown by [Chart 15](#) below. [Chart 16](#) shows the clear up rates by crime group from 1976 onwards.

Chart 15: Clear up rate for total recorded crime, 1976¹ to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



1. Comparable clear up rates for the present crime groups are not available prior to 1976.

Chart 16: Clear up rates for crimes recorded by the police by crime group, 1976 to 1994, 1995-96 to 2022-23



1. Comparable clear up rates for the present crime groups are not available prior to 1976.

Non-sexual crimes of violence

The clear up rate for Non-sexual crimes of violence increased from 67.1% in 2021-22 to 67.3% in 2022-23.

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the category with the largest decrease was Murder and culpable homicide, from 113.5% to 91.7%. Serious assault and attempted murder had the largest increase, from 77.4% to 79.9%.

Sexual crimes

The clear up rate for Sexual crimes was relatively unchanged from 53.5% in 2021-22 to 53.4% in 2022-23. This is the lowest rate since 1976, the first year for which comparable clear up rates are available.

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the category with the largest decrease was Other sexual crimes, from 47% to 44.1%. Crimes associated with prostitution had the largest increase, from 66.3% to 80.6%.

Crimes of dishonesty

The clear up rate for Crimes of dishonesty decreased from 31.6% in 2021-22 to 31% in 2022-23.

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, clear up rates decreased for most categories. The category with the largest decrease was Other dishonesty, with the clear up rate falling from 58.7% to 54.3%. The only category with an increase was Theft by opening lockfast places, increasing from 16.2% to 23.5%.

Damage and reckless behaviour

The clear up rate for Damage and reckless behaviour remained unchanged at 28.8% in both 2021-22 and 2022-23. Damage and reckless behaviour consistently has the lowest clear up rate of the five crime groups. However, despite the decrease in 2021-22 which has remained unchanged in 2022-23, there have been increases since 2014-15. The rate for 2021-22 and 2022-23 is the second highest over the past ten years.

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, the only decrease occurred in the clear up rate for the Reckless conduct category, from 48.8% to 45.4%.

Crimes against society

The clear up rate for Crimes against society increased from 91.6% in 2021-22 in to 93.4% in 2022-23. Clear up rates for Crimes against society have always been the highest of all groups, as many of the contributing categories (though not all) relate to criminality for which someone is generally 'caught in the act' (for example Drugs – Possession). An example of where this is not the case would be the Weapons Possession (used) category, where earlier research⁶ suggested the clear majority of crimes were recorded following a victim or witness report to the police.

There were consistent decreases in clear up rates for Crime against society between 2013-14 and 2018-19, followed by small increases over 2019-20 and 2020-21, before a decrease in 2021-22 then increasing again in the latest year.

Between 2021-22 and 2022-23, most categories have seen a decrease. Two categories showed an increase in clear up rate with the largest one occurring for Other crimes against society, from 75.1% to 82.3%, with the only other category showing an increase being Drugs – Possession, from 94.6% to 100.8%.

Annex 1: Data source and context

Data source

National Statistics on police recorded crime are based on data which Police Scotland extract from their data repository, called the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP) and submit to the Scottish Government. Prior to 2020-21, the data was collected from a different Police Scotland IT system, called the Scottish Operational and Management Information System (ScOMIS).

Scottish Government statisticians, with support from Police Scotland, conducted a comparative analysis between ScOMIS and SEBP. This analysis considered the impact of

⁶ [Supporting documents - Recorded crime in Scotland: handling offensive weapons](#)

changing the source of recorded crime statistics from ScOMIS to SEBP and found that there is strong alignment between both administrative systems, with just minor discrepancies. The outcomes of this work are discussed in more detail in the [User Guide](#).

Prior to 2013-14 and the establishment of Police Scotland, the Scottish Government collected recorded crime data from the eight legacy forces, who in turn extracted the data from their own systems. Despite the change in method of collection, the data presented on total recorded crime remains comparable both before and after 1 April 2013. The Scottish Government produced a [Technical Report on the Comparability of Recorded Crime Data](#) in 2014 which detailed the quality assurance work which was carried out to reach this conclusion.

On 1 April 2004, the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) was introduced to help maintain a victim orientated approach to crime recording. It was anticipated that this might increase the number of minor crimes recorded such as vandalism and minor thefts. It can be seen from [Chart 1](#) that this did cause a slight increase in 2004-05 as expected, but that the downwards trend returned following this change to recording practice.

The detailed classification of crimes and offences used by the Scottish Government to collect criminal statistics contains over 500 codes. Further information on how the crime codes are grouped can be found in the [User Guide](#). As discussed in the Introduction, a new crime and offence grouping structure has been used since the 2021-22 bulletin. More detailed information on these changes please see [Annex 5 of the 2021-22 Recorded Crime publication](#).

The statistical return from which most of the figures in this bulletin are taken is a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences, for each local authority, which the police have recorded and cleared up.

Amendments to crime and offence records will always arise after data has been submitted by Police Scotland to the Scottish Government.

As with our analysis in previous bulletins, the comparison presented below confirms that the extent of further amendment to police crime and offence records following the original submission of data continues to be minimal at the Scotland level. This gives users confidence that the published statistics for 2013-14 to 2021-22 recorded crimes and offences are reliable. On a proportional basis, the biggest impact is on the Crimes of dishonesty group, where a net 1,590 fewer crimes have been recorded following no-criming and reclassification between groups. This has reduced the number of Crimes of Dishonesty by 1.7% from 92,873 to 91,283.

Table A13: Revisions of crimes recorded by the police, Scotland, 2021-22

<u>2021-22 Reporting Year</u>	Number & Percentage			
Crime or Offence Group	Submitted in April 2022	Submitted in April 2023	Difference	% Difference
Total Crime and Offences	463,464	462,708	-756	-0.2%
Total Crime	282,551	280,210	-2,341	-0.8%
Non-sexual crimes of violence	69,286	69,022	-264	-0.4%
Sexual crimes	15,049	15,170	121	0.8%
Crimes of dishonesty	92,873	91,283	-1,590	-1.7%

Damage and reckless behaviour	44,284	44,339	55	0.1%
Crimes against society	61,059	60,396	-663	-1.1%
Total Offences	180,913	182,498	1,585	0.9%
Antisocial offences	55,975	56,164	189	0.3%
Miscellaneous offences	12,951	12,793	-158	-1.2%
Road traffic offences	111,987	113,541	1,554	1.4%

Despite the fact that only a very small proportion of records are amended following their original submission to the Scottish Government, it is important for National Statistics purposes that time series comparisons between 2013-14 to 2021-22 are on a like-for-like basis. As such the 2013-14 to 2021-22 data used in this bulletin remains that which was submitted immediately following each of these years, to ensure this is consistent with the timetable being followed for the submission of data for 2022-23 (i.e. the same amount of time has elapsed for amendments to records for each reporting year based on ScOMIS/SEBP).

Information on the data source used in the Recorded Crime bulletin series and supporting metadata can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Information is also collected from the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police, but these figures have not been included in the main body of this bulletin.

The following crimes and offences were recorded by these two organisations:

Table A14: Crimes and offences recorded and cleared up (as a percentage of those recorded) by the British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police, Scotland, 2022-23

	Number & Percentage			
	Crimes	Crime clear up rate	Offences	Offence clear up rate
Total recorded by British Transport Police	1,887	41.2%	3,008	28.5%
Total recorded by Ministry of Defence Police	27	29.6%	x	x

In addition to the National Statistics presented in this bulletin, Police Scotland publish management information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police. This is presented within their [Quarterly Management Information Reports](#), which are available on Police Scotland's website.

For more information on these statistics please see the [User Guide](#).

Context for recording crimes and offences

This section provides information on the context for recording crimes and offences.

In one criminal incident, several crimes or offences may occur – e.g. a house may be broken into and vandalised, and the occupants assaulted. In this example, crimes of housebreaking (which would include the vandalism) and assaults would be recorded. In multiple offence incidents, more than one offence may be counted rather than one for the incident as a whole; that is, the counting system is offence based rather than incident based.

An offence may have more than one victim – for example in robberies – and be committed by more than one offender – e.g. some assaults and housebreakings (note that for Murder, Attempted murder and Culpable homicide, the number of crimes recorded is equal to the number of victims). Thus the statistics in this bulletin are not directly comparable with statistics on action taken against offenders, as one offence may lead to several persons being charged. Equally, an offender may be charged with several offences.

Attempts to commit an offence are included in the statistics, in general in the same group as the substantive offence.

Information on the definitions used in this bulletin are provided in the [User Guide](#).

Annex 2: Data quality and validation

Governance of data quality

The Police Service of Scotland (referred to throughout this report as Police Scotland) is responsible for operational policing in Scotland and is held to account by the Scottish Police Authority. The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 changed the policing landscape in Scotland, replacing the previous eight police forces, the Scottish Police Services Authority and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency from 1 April 2013.

The recording of crime by the police and the subsequent publication of information through this statistical bulletin is undertaken by those who are professionally independent of wider decision-making and performance processes within their organisations. Within Police Scotland, the Crime Registrars ensure that crimes in Scotland are recorded ethically. They sit within the corporate services business area so that they are removed from direct operational activity and investigation. In turn, the production of the National Statistics on recorded crime is managed in an impartial and objective way, in the public interest, by Scottish Government statisticians.

A [Scottish Crime Recording Board](#) supports the production of accurate and objective statistics on crime in Scotland. It takes into account the needs of both users and providers in the production of crime statistics and ensures that this process is undertaken in a manner consistent with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). The Board is chaired by the Justice Analytical Services division of the Scottish Government and a wide range of organisations are represented including Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

In general, this statistical bulletin covers the ten year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, the entirety of which is subject to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) introduced in 2004-05. The SCRS has helped maintain a consistent approach to recording crime and is maintained and developed by the Scottish Crime Recording Board. The [SCRS manual](#) can be accessed from the Board's webpage.

The [User Guide](#) documents the steps undertaken to quality assure data that is captured and published as management information by Police Scotland, and analysed and produced as National Statistics by the Scottish Government. This includes a summary of the quality checks made at each stage of the data journey, from capture to publication.

Data validation: HMICS Crime Audit 2020

In 2020, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) conducted an audit which assessed the extent to which police recording practices complied with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules.

This audit found no systemic data quality issues around the recording of crimes and offences, with the resulting report stating that 'Police Scotland's compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules is generally good at over 90%'.

91.4% of incidents were closed correctly⁷ and 90.8% of crime was counted and classified correctly.

The 2020 audit also examined 3,150 incidents relating to domestic abuse, 1,001 of which resulted in a crime record. HMICS found that the compliance was good overall, as:

- 94.6% of domestic abuse incidents were closed correctly, which is a higher compliance rate than the other categories examined.
- 92.6% of domestic abuse crime records were counted and classified correctly.
- 95.2% of domestic abuse crimes were recorded within 72 hours of the incident being reported to the police, with ten of the thirteen divisions achieving over 95% compliance.

A more detailed discussion of the results of the audit and its relation to recorded crime is also provided in the [User Guide](#).

The full findings and analysis from this audit can be found in the [HMICS Crime Audit 2020 publication](#).

⁷ Correct closure means either that (a) the incident was closed as non-crime related and contained sufficient information to dispel any inference of criminality; or (b) the incident indicated a crime had occurred and a crime record was traced.

Annex 3: Legislation and procedural changes

This annex provides information on legislative changes and procedural changes to crime recording which will have had some effect on the recorded crime time series. It also provides information on future considerations that may have an impact on crime recording.

It should be noted that changes made to the rules governing the coding and counting of crimes and offences within the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) must be approved by the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) ([Annex 2](#) provides background information on the role of the Board).

Changes in 2010-11:

Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009

The implementation of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 on 1 December 2010 resulted in a number of changes to the recording of sexual crimes, including a redistribution of Sexual crimes among the categories and a widened definition of rape. A number of crimes which may have been recorded as Breach of the peace prior to the implementation of the Act would also not have shown up as sexual crimes before December 2010. Comparisons with data prior to 2010-11 for these categories should therefore be treated with caution.

Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children

In 2010-11, incidents of Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children were transferred from Miscellaneous offences to Sexual crimes and back-revised to 2009-10. Whilst these crimes represent a small proportion of sexual crimes (4% of all Sexual crimes in 2021-22), it has resulted in a small discontinuity in the time series for any analysis that spans 2009-10.

Change in 2016-17:

Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016

The implementation of the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016 on 3 July 2017 resulted in new crimes of Disclosing or threatening to disclose an intimate image being recorded. This has contributed to the increase in Other sexual crimes. Whilst some of these cases may have been recorded as a different crime or offence had they occurred prior to the Act, it is likely the majority of them would not have been classified as a Sexual crime. The enactment of this legislation also extended the criminal law to criminalise certain conduct that previously may not have been illegal. There were 912 crimes of Disclosing or threatening to disclose an intimate image in 2021-22.

Changes in 2017-18:

Communications Act (2003) Sexual

In 2017-18, Communications Act 2003 (Sexual) offences were transferred from Miscellaneous offences group to Sexual crimes group.

This change involved reclassifying some activity from an offence group to a crime group, and so resulted in a small increase in total recorded crime, with 315 recorded in 2021-22. Statistics for 2016-17 were back-revised within the 2017-18 bulletin, to ensure time series continuity was not affected. There will be some discontinuity for earlier years as

Communications Act 2003 offences with a sexual element were not separately identifiable within the statistics until 2016-17.

Changes to the recording of handling offensive weapons in 2017-18

Changes in recorded crime from 2017-18 should be treated with some caution due to the addition of newly recorded crimes of handling an offensive weapon. Further information on this procedural change and its impact on the statistics is available in the [chapter on Crimes against society](#). This change will have an impact on the comparability of recorded crime statistics for all years prior to 2017-18. However the impact will be smaller for earlier years (for example comparisons with 2012-13) when set against the long term changes in total crime recorded by the police and other legislative and procedural changes made to the recording of crime during this period.

Classification of Etizolam as a Class C drug

Etizolam has been classified as a Class C drug by the May 2017 amendment to the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#), along with several other designer benzodiazepine drugs.

Changes in 2019-20:

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into force on 1 April 2019. The Act created a new offence of abusive behaviour as a course of conduct⁸ towards a partner or ex-partner. Prior to the 1 April 2019, any criminal act which formed part of a domestic abuse incident (such as a Common assault, Stalking, or Threatening or abusive behaviour) was included within the statistics under the relevant crime or offence. Where there is evidence of a course of conduct, new crime codes of Domestic abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (against a male or female victim) have been created. In general, existing common law and statutory offences will continue to be recorded where appropriate, in addition to the new crimes. There are some limited exceptions (in particular Threatening and abusive behaviour and Stalking), which should no longer be recorded when occurring as part of a course of conduct for Domestic Abuse, with the crime of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 taking precedence.

Coronavirus restrictions legislation

The enactment of legislation such as the Coronavirus Act 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020 respectively) led to new and additional crimes being recorded within these statistics. For example, where someone, who had left the place they were living during lockdown, 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. Further legislation in respect of local travel restrictions came in to force on 2 November 2020. All legal covid restrictions were removed in April 2022.

Change in 2020-21:

⁸ A course of conduct involves behaviour on at least two occasions.

Recording of international crime

A procedural change was made from 1 April 2020 to how crimes which could involve a victim and a perpetrator in different physical locations (e.g. cyber-crimes) are recorded. Prior to the 1 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 UK when the crime took place. Following a recommendation by HMICS to review recording practice in this area⁹, the SCRB approved a change so that from the 1 April 2020 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 led to the recording of additional crimes for those types of crime which could be committed using digital technologies.

Changes in 2021-22:

Breach of adult at risk banning order

From 1 April 2021, Adult Protection Act Offences (39/019) will no longer be counted as crimes. The reason for this is that the charge does not relate to a criminal offence and was created to allow the circumstances to be reported to the Procurator Fiscal. Having reviewed the earlier data recorded under this code, it was decided not to back date this change within the statistics, as the numbers are negligible in the context of the Crimes against society group.

Protection of Workers Act

The Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021 came into effect from 24 August 2021. The Act makes it an offence for a person to assault, threaten or abuse another person who is a retail worker and who is engaged, at the time of the offence, in retail work. Committing this offence while a retail worker is enforcing a statutory age restriction also constitutes an aggravation.

Changes in 2022-23:

Proceeds of Crime

As of 1 April 2022, crimes previously recorded as Other criminal conduct, money laundering related offences and Drugs, money laundering related offences will now be recorded as Proceeds of Crime. The Scottish Crime Recording Board reviewed the use of these three crime codes and agreed that they should be merged as they all largely relate to the same piece of legislation ([Proceeds of Crime Act 2002](#)).

Offensive Weapons Act 2019

On 28th June 2022, Section 6 of the Offensive Weapons Act was implemented. This included the introduction of an offence of having a corrosive substance in a public place.

Sections 44 and 46 of the legislation came into effect on 27 March 2023, meaning the possession of certain offensive weapons is now illegal in both a public and private. This includes Section 46 prohibiting the possession of listed offensive weapons in private places and Section 44 prohibiting the possession of certain dangerous knives in private places.

⁹ [HMICS | Crime Audit: 2016](#)

Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022

As of 10 October 2022, Section 21 and Section 44 of the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022 came into effect. Section 21 makes it an offence to knowingly buy or attempt to buy a firework or pyrotechnic article for a person under the age of 18, or give or otherwise make available a firework or other pyrotechnic article to a person under the age of 18. Section 44 makes it possible for an offence to be aggravated by the use of a firework or pyrotechnic article if the victim (or intended victim) of the offence is an emergency worker.

Future considerations

Following the [2019 consultation](#) and [2021 consultation](#), the Scottish Crime Recording Board has agreed that common assault should be split into with and without injury and that new crime codes will also be introduced to help identify police officer/staff victims of all types of assault. To ensure that the new information on common assault is recorded consistently and to prevent duplication of work, the Scottish Crime Recording Board also agreed that implementation of this change will wait until Police Scotland's new crime management system has been rolled out to all divisions.

Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022

It is anticipated that Section 35 (Prohibition of pyrotechnic articles in public places) and Section 36 (Prohibition of pyrotechnic articles at designated venues or events) will go live later in 2023/24.

Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021

New offences for breaches of Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders have still to come into force under Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021.

Annex 4: User engagement

Scotland's recorded crime National Statistics presented in this bulletin are used by a large number of stakeholders within central government, the police and other public bodies for a variety of purposes. We continuously engage with users to gather their views on how best to ensure that these statistics remain of high value and relevant, through their capacity to support understanding of the important issues relating to crime in Scotland (alongside other complementary sources of official statistics and research).

We always welcome feedback on the content and the uses made of our statistical bulletins and users are invited to submit their comments and any suggestions to: justiceanalysts@gov.scot.

The [standard survey for statistical products](#) is now live. The survey provides users a way to share feedback on our publications.

If you would like to be kept informed about developments in crime statistics, we suggest registering with our [ScotStat](#). Please note that the Scottish Government moved to a new system on the 1 March 2022. While the underlying system has changed, the ScotStat branding will be retained and the new system will serve the same function. Existing ScotStat users should re-register with the new system to continue to receive updates. Further information and a signup form is available at the following link: [ScotStat Register: Guidance](#).

As part of this, we ran a [consultation in 2021](#) on behalf of the [Scottish Crime Recording Board](#) (SCRB). This focused on the production and dissemination of Scotland's recorded crime statistics, and on the possible development of new statistical products covering other types of policing activity. The consultation built on earlier engagement with users in 2019¹⁰ and invited views on an alternative way to group and present recorded crime statistics. The full [Summary of Responses to the 2021 consultation](#) can be accessed online.

Following consideration of the responses received, along with other feedback from the associated consultation events and previous consultation, the SCRB approved a number of changes to the recorded crime statistics which were implemented for the first time in the 2021-22 bulletin. [Annex 5 of the 2021-22 Recorded Crime publication](#) provides details on these changes.

Further information on previous user consultations and uses of the statistics can be found in the [User Guide](#).

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Please consider answering our short [feedback survey](#) on how you found this publication.

¹⁰ A [report summarising the responses](#) received through this earlier engagement was published in June 2021, following some delay due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the resultant increase in demand for associated analysis.

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs
- are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards
- are explained well

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this publication:

are available in through Statistics.gov.scot

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot for further information.

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