



Home Office

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Statistical News Release

Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to December 2010

The latest National Statistics on crime in England and Wales are released today. They are based on interviews from the British Crime Survey (BCS), and crimes recorded by the police, in the 12 months to December 2010. Each source has different strengths and weaknesses but together they provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone (see Notes to editors).

The figures show that crime has fallen according to both measures. BCS crime has decreased by three per cent compared with the year to December 2009; the number of crimes recorded by the police fell by six per cent in the year to December 2010 compared with the previous year.

BCS interviews in the 12 months to December 2010 showed that the overall risk of being a victim of crime was 21.4 per cent.

Neither the number of BCS personal crimes nor the number of BCS household crime showed a statistically significant change over this period, though there were changes in some specific offence categories.

Levels of BCS violent crime showed no statistically significant change compared with the previous year. There were falls in levels of personal acquisitive crime (down 14%), other theft of personal property (down 12%), and vehicle-related theft (down 9%) based on interviews to December 2010 compared with those in 2009.

The increase in BCS burglaries (up 14%) follows a 12 per cent decrease the year before, with the latest estimate returning to the level estimated from 2008 interviews. In contrast, police recorded crime figures showed a fall of seven per cent in domestic burglaries compared with the previous year, continuing the fall seen in earlier years.

There were falls in all the police recorded crime offence groups except sexual offences, which increased by three per cent and 'other theft' offences which showed a one per cent rise. This is the sixth consecutive quarterly bulletin to show a rise in sexual offences, though there are signs this rise may be slowing. Since 2009 the police have reported improving their recording of sexual offences, and it is known that a high proportion of sexual offences are not reported to the police, so caution should be used when looking at trends in these crimes.

The largest percentage falls in police recorded crime included criminal damage (by 17%) and offences against vehicles (by 12%). There were also falls in domestic burglary (as discussed above) and other burglary (both by 7%). Police recorded violence against the person offences fell by six per cent and robberies by one per cent in the year to December 2010 compared with the previous year.

Provisional statistics recorded by the police showed a seven per cent fall in firearms offences.

The overall proportion of people with high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour in their local area fell by one percentage point (to 14%) compared with the year ending December 2009. Three of the seven individual ASB strands making up the overall measure showed reductions, while four showed no change. BCS interviews in the 12 months to December 2010 also showed that 52 per cent of people agreed that police and local councils were dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter in the area, an increase from 51 per cent last year.

Notes to editors

For the crime types and population groups it covers, the BCS provides a more reliable measure of trends in crime as it has a consistent methodology and is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police, recording practice or police activity. The BCS does not aim to provide an absolute count of crime in England and Wales, but to produce estimates of crimes experienced by adults aged 16 and over resident in households. It does not cover all offences, with homicide, fraud and drug offences being notable exclusions.

Police recorded figures cover groups (e.g. residents of institutions and tourists) and sectors (e.g. commercial crime) excluded from the BCS sample and have a wider coverage of offences. However, police recorded crime does not cover those crimes that are not reported to or discovered by the police and is influenced by any changes in recording practice. Police recorded crime provides a robust measure of homicide (an offence not covered by the BCS) and is a good measure of well-reported crimes.

The BCS results are based on interviews conducted over a rolling 12 month period. In this bulletin, results are from interviews conducted in the year ending December 2010. Recorded crime figures in this bulletin relate to crimes recorded by the police in the year ending December 2010.

The BCS measures on anti-social behaviour, worry about crime and agreement that police and local councils were dealing with the crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter in the area, were previously Home Office targets. These targets have since been dropped, but the questions will remain in the Survey until March 2011 and will continue to be reported in statistical bulletins until July 2011.

'Crime in England and Wales: Quarterly Update to December 2010' is available online via the National Statistics Publication Hub as well as the Science, Research and Statistics section of the Home Office website at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb0611/>

Also available today, via the above link, are:

- National recorded crime data for individual quarters;
- Figures at police force area level, covering a range of recorded crime offence groups and BCS findings on confidence and perceptions; and
- Recorded crime figures on a rolling 12 month basis going back to 2002/03 at police force and local authority area level.