



Home Office



# Crime in England and Wales 2008/09

A summary of the main findings

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This summary presents latest results from the British Crime Survey (BCS) and crimes recorded by the police. 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.

These statistics inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy, for example by highlighting groups that are most at risk of certain crimes.

### IS THERE MORE CRIME THAN LAST YEAR?

The BCS and police recorded crime differ in their coverage of crime. Overall, crime as measured by the BCS shows no change compared with the 2007/08 BCS with no change in most crime types. Crimes recorded by the police show a five per cent decrease compared with 2007/08, with decreases in most crime types.

#### BCS CRIME

- All BCS crime stable (10.7 million crimes in 2008/09)
- Violent crime – stable
  - with injury – stable
- Domestic burglary – stable
- Vehicle-related theft – stable
- ↑ Theft from the person up 25%
- Vandalism – stable
- ↑ Risk of being a victim of crime up from 22% to 23%

#### POLICE RECORDED CRIME

- ↓ All police recorded crime down 5% to 4.7 million crimes
- ↓ Violence against the person down 6%
  - ↓ with injury down 7%
- ↑ Domestic burglary up 1%
- ↓ Offences against vehicles down 10%
- ↓ Theft from the person down 12%
- ↓ Criminal damage down 10%
- ↓ Robbery down 5%
- ↑ Drugs offences up 6%

*This statistical bulletin is a National Statistics output produced to the highest professional standards and free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Home Office Statistics Unit. The governance arrangements in the Home Office for statistics were strengthened on 1 April 2008 to place the statistical teams under the direct line management of a Chief Statistician, who reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters.*

Based on the 2008/09 BCS, violent crime remained stable compared with the previous year (the apparent 4% fall was not statistically significant). For police recorded crime, total violence against the person decreased by 6%.

There was no change in the level of domestic burglary as measured by the BCS. Overall, police recorded burglary also showed little change with a 1% increase in domestic burglaries and a 2% fall in non-domestic burglaries.

The BCS shows that vehicle-related thefts and vandalism are stable compared with 10% falls in police recorded crime for both offences against vehicles and criminal damage.

The BCS shows that robberies are stable compared with a 5% fall in police recorded crime.

The latest figures show some divergence between the two sources in offences of theft from the person (e.g. pickpocketing) and bicycle theft. The BCS shows increases in both theft from the person (25%) and bicycle theft (22%). In contrast, thefts from the person recorded by the police fell by 12% while there was no change in thefts of a pedal cycle.

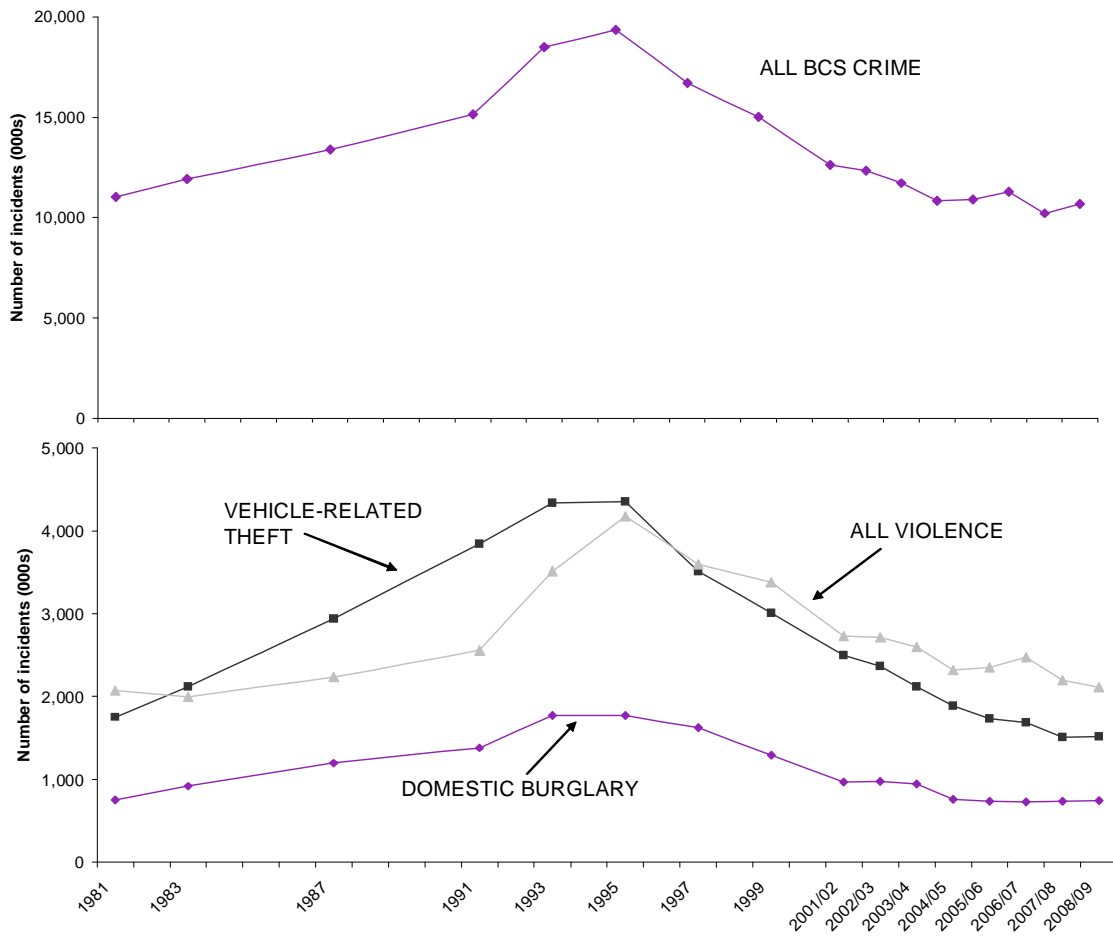
Other sources of data are also available to give a more complete picture of crime. Fraud is a good example of this, as it is substantially under-reported to the police and is not included in the main BCS count of crime. The UK Cards Association records information on plastic card fraud in the UK.

- There were 2.8 million fraudulent transactions on UK-issued cards recorded in the UK in 2008, an increase of four per cent from 2007 (2.7 million).
- The BCS shows that the risk of being a victim of plastic card fraud increased from 4.7% to 6.4% among card users interviewed in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

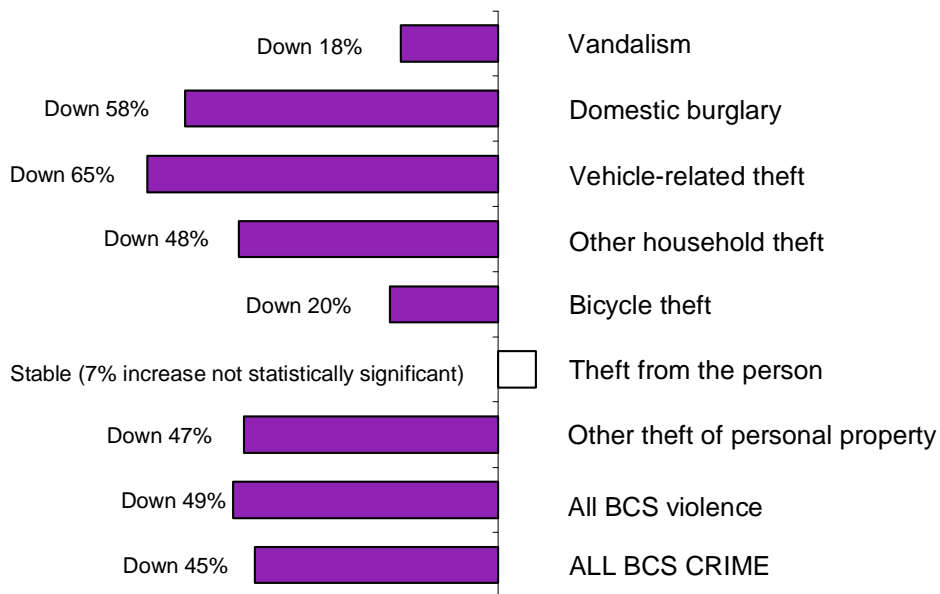
### HOW HAVE LEVELS OF CRIME CHANGED OVER THE LONGER TERM?

Long-term trends show that BCS crime rose steadily from 1981 through to the early 1990s, peaking in 1995. Crime then fell, making 1995 a significant turning point. The fall was substantial until 2004/05. Since then, BCS crime has shown little overall change with the exception of a statistically significant reduction of 10 per cent in 2007/08 (the lowest ever level since the first results in 1981). The apparent increase of five per cent in BCS crime this year is not statistically significant. Trends in BCS violence, vehicle-related theft and burglary broadly reflect the trend in all BCS crime.

### Trends in crime, 1981 to 2008/09 BCS



### Percentage change in BCS offences, 1995 to 2008/09



## HOW IS CRIME MEASURED IN ENGLAND AND WALES?

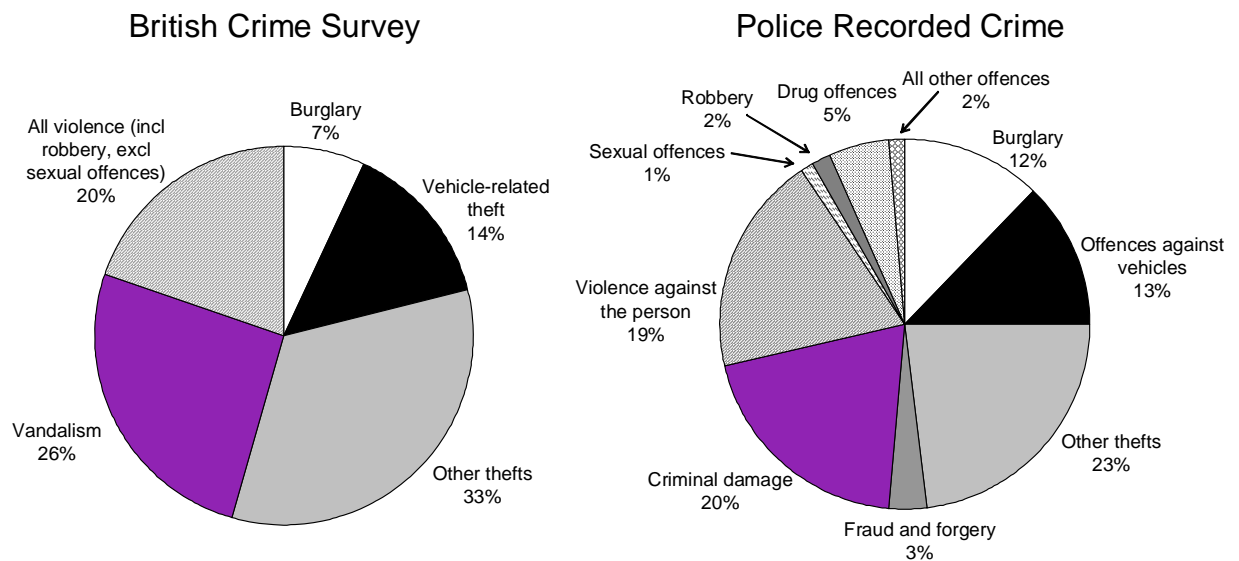
### **BRITISH CRIME SURVEY (BCS)**

- A large survey of a representative sample of people aged 16 and over resident in households in England and Wales
- Asks about people's experiences and perceptions of crime
- Includes questions on people's attitudes towards crime-related topics (e.g. anti-social behaviour, the police, and criminal justice system)
- Provides the most reliable measure of the extent of victimisation and of national trends over time
- Not affected by whether the public report crime or by changes to the way in which the police record crime

### **POLICE RECORDED CRIME**

- Based on figures supplied by the police to the Home Office
- Covers crimes which are reported to and recorded by the police
- A good measure of trends in well-reported crimes and also the less common but more serious crimes
- An important indicator of police workload
- Provides data for small geographic areas

## WHICH CRIMES ARE INCLUDED?



The majority of crimes are property related.

- Vandalism accounts for 26% of all BCS crime (two-thirds of which is vehicle vandalism); criminal damage accounts for one in five (20%) of crimes recorded by the police.
- Vehicle-related theft accounts for 14% of all BCS crime. Offences against vehicles account for 13% of recorded crime.
- Burglary accounts for 7% of all BCS crime and 12% of recorded crime.

Violent crime represents around a fifth (20%) of BCS crime. Violence against the person also accounts around a fifth (19%) of police recorded crime.

### How do crimes included in the BCS and police recorded crime differ?

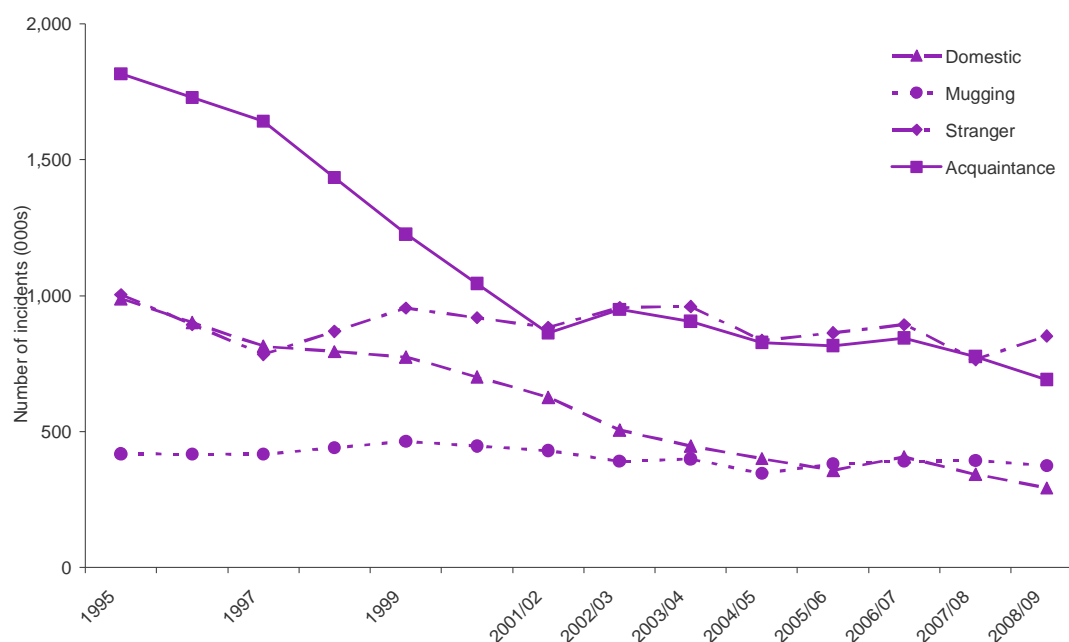
- Differences in the profile of offences between the two sources are influenced by the different coverage of the BCS and police recorded crime; for example, recorded crime includes crime experienced by under 16s and commercial premises, and the BCS does not. However, since January 2009 children aged 10 to 15 have been included in the survey. First results are due in spring 2010.
- Some crimes are more likely to be reported and recorded than others, overall less than half of BCS crime is reported to the police.

## FOCUS ON VIOLENT CRIME

Around half of violent crime involves no injury (47% of BCS violence and 53% of police recorded violence against the person).

The BCS shows that since 1995 there have been large falls in domestic and acquaintance violence while stranger violence has fluctuated from year to year. The number of muggings has remained stable.

### Trends in BCS violent crime by type of violence, 1995 to 2008/09



Provisional data show the police recorded 648 incidents of homicide in 2008/09, the lowest recorded level in the last 20 years. The number of attempted murders also decreased from 621 in 2007/08 to 575 in 2008/09.

Weapons were used in about one in five (21%) of BCS violent crimes (this figure has been stable over the past decade); knives were used in 7%, glasses or bottles in 5%, hitting implements in 4% and firearms in 1% of incidents. Between 2007/08 and 2008/09 BCS interviews, the use of knives and glasses or bottles has remained stable while the use of hitting implements has decreased.

The number of police recorded offences involving firearms fell by 17% between 2007/08 and 2008/09. Firearm offences resulting in injury also fell (down by 46% in 2008/09) due to a large reduction in the use of imitation weapons (down 41%) and a corresponding fall in slight injuries. There was a small rise in the use of shotguns and handguns (both up 2%).

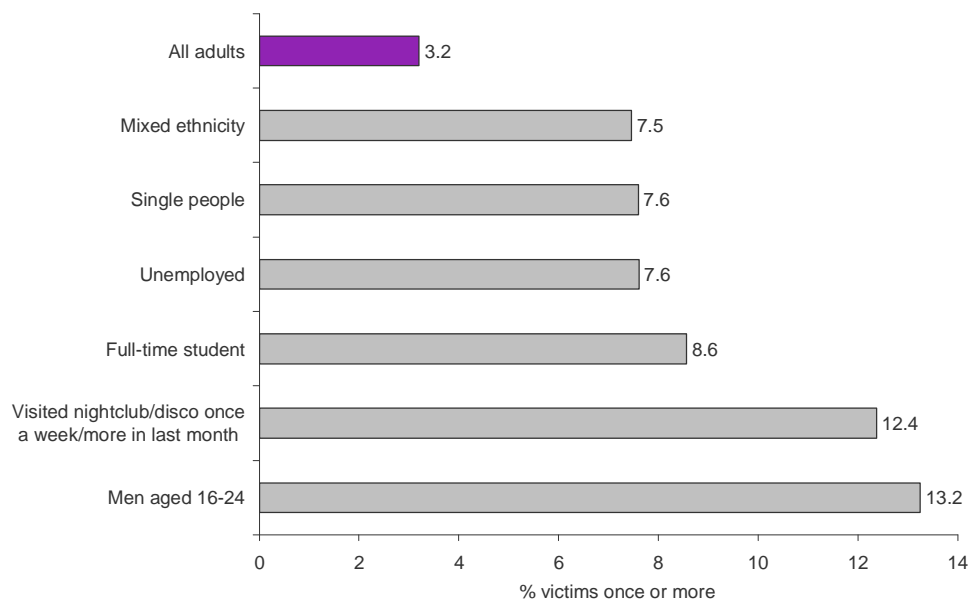
There was a fall in the number of homicide offences involving a knife or other sharp instrument (down from 270 to 252) between 2007/08 and 2008/09 but a rise in the number of attempted murders involving a knife (up from 245 to 271 offences). Robbery offences involving knives decreased slightly (from 17,058 to 16,701) in the same period.

## WHO IS AT RISK OF CRIME?

The risk of becoming a victim of crime has risen from 22% to 23% in the last year, having fallen from 40% in 1995. Risk of victimisation varies by personal and household characteristics and by crime type.

Overall, 3% of adults had experienced a violent crime in the last year. Men were twice as likely as women to have been victims of violence, with young men aged 16 to 24 having the highest risk (13%). Differences in risk tend to reflect age profiles and lifestyle.

### Risk of being a victim of violent crime, 2008/09 BCS



Overall, 2.5% of households had experienced a burglary in the last year.

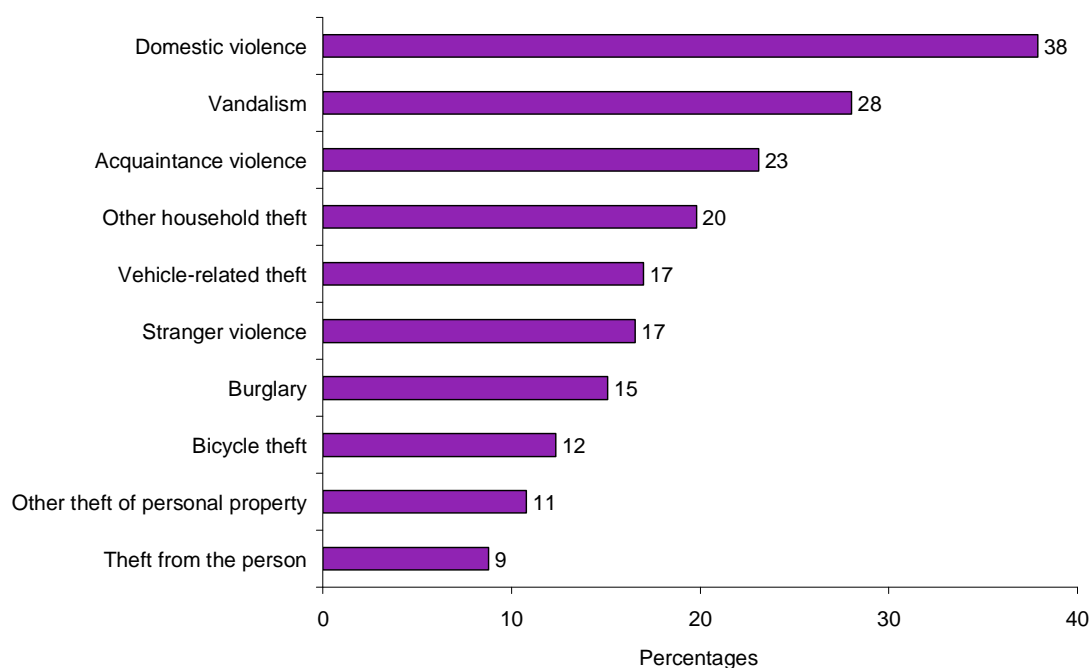
For both burglary and vehicle-related thefts, households who do not have security measures in place were at higher risk of victimisation. For example:

- Households with less than 'basic' home security measures were considerably more likely to have been victims of burglary (3.4%) than households with 'basic' or 'enhanced' home security measures (1.4% and 0.7% respectively).
- In just over half of burglaries (54%), properties had window locks compared with nine in ten (87%) households who had not been burgled in the previous 12 months.

## REPEAT VICTIMISATION

Levels of repeat victimisation (being a victim of the same crime type more than once) vary by offence type. Victims of domestic violence and vandalism are most likely to experience repeat victimisation.

### Proportion of victims who were victimised more than once in the last year, 2008/09 BCS



## VARIATION BY AREA

Crime tends to be geographically concentrated. The national picture may not therefore reflect people's experiences in their own local area. This is particularly the case for robberies and knife-related offences.

- Fifty-nine per cent of robberies in England and Wales were recorded by just three forces, the Metropolitan Police, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, that represent 24 per cent of the population.

The type of area that people live in can also be a factor.

- Households in rural areas have a lower risk of being a victim of BCS household crime than households in urban areas (13% compared with 19%); this was true for vandalism, vehicle-related theft and burglary.
- The risk of being a victim of these household crimes was lower for households in the least deprived areas compared with the most deprived areas in England (16% compared with 22% for BCS household crime).

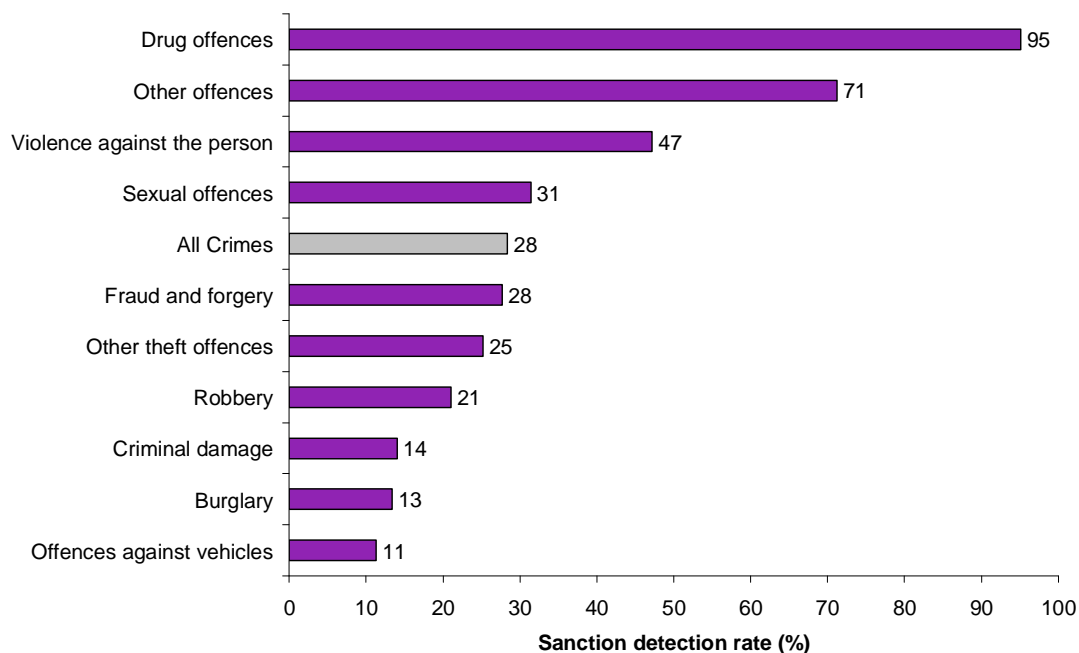
## HOW MUCH CRIME DO THE POLICE DETECT?

Detected crimes are those that have been 'cleared up' by the police. Reporting of detections focuses on sanction detections where an offender is given a formal sanction.

- There were just over 1.3 million crimes detected using sanction detections in 2008/09.
- The proportion of recorded crimes cleared up by a sanction detection in 2008/09 was similar to last year (28%).
- The number of sanction detections fell by 3% over the period, while the overall number of recorded crime offences fell by 5%.

The sanction detection rate for drug offences is the highest, reflecting the fact that these offences normally come to light when the police apprehend an offender. In contrast, for the crimes with lower detection rates there will often be fewer possible lines of inquiry.

### Sanction detection rates for police recorded crime, 2008/09



## HOW CONFIDENT ARE PEOPLE IN THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?

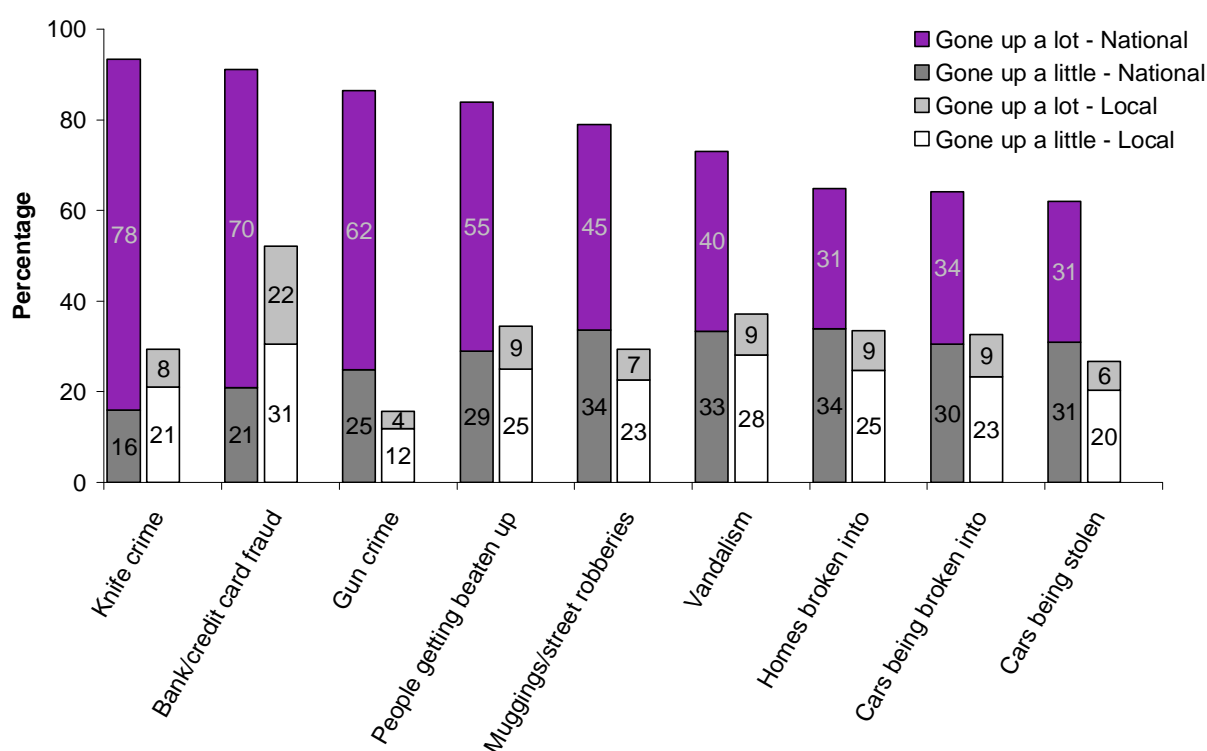
- Around half of adults (49%) agreed that the police and local councils were dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in the local area, increasing from 45% in 2007/08.
- There are high levels of confidence in the police treating people fairly (65%) and with respect (84%), but less confidence that they are effective in dealing with crime and related issues, for example, 46% of people thought their local police could be relied on to deal with minor crimes.
- Six out of ten adults thought the CJS as a whole is fair (an increase from 56% to 59% since 2007/08). Around four out of ten adults thought that CJS is effective (similar to 2007/08).

## DO PEOPLE THINK CRIME IS GOING UP OR DOWN?

Around half of people (51%) think they live in a lower than average crime area, a further 39% think crime in their area is about average and 11% think they live in a higher than average crime area.

Overall, people tend to have less negative perceptions about crime in their local area than nationally. The proportion of people that perceive an increase in crime nationally (75%) is higher than those that perceive an increase in crime locally (36%), and this is evident across crime types.

## Perceptions of changes in crime levels by individual crime type, 2008/09 BCS



This difference is particularly marked for knife crime (93% of people perceiving an increase nationally compared with 29% locally) and gun crime (86% nationally compared with 16% locally), both of which are crimes where people are less likely to have personal experience.

Perceptions of crime rates vary by people's characteristics; for example, in general those who read 'popular' newspapers are more likely to think crime has risen nationally than readers of 'broadsheet' newspapers.

## DO PEOPLE THINK ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IS A PROBLEM?

The BCS asks people if they think that different types of anti-social behaviour are a problem in their local area. Seven individual strands of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are combined to form a measure of high level of perceived ASB. The 2008/09 BCS shows that this has remained stable at 17 per cent compared with the 2007/08 BCS.

Levels of two of the seven strands have changed since 2007/08 BCS. The number of people perceiving problems with abandoned or burnt-out cars has fallen from 7% in 2007/08 to 6% in 2008/09. In contrast, the proportion perceiving people using or dealing drugs to be a problem has risen from 26% to 28% over the same period.

### Proportion of people perceiving anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their area, BCS

