

Chapter 2: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences - Homicide

Coverage: **England and Wales**

Date: **12 February 2015**

Geographical Area: **Local Authority and County**

Theme: **Crime and Justice**

Summary

This chapter presents analyses of homicides recorded by the police in 2013/14. The information comes from the Home Office Homicide Index, which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. The database is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset.

- The Home Office Homicide Index showed there were 526 homicides (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) in 2013/14 in England and Wales. This is at a similar level to 2011/12 (528 offences) but 21 fewer than the 547 recorded in 2012/13 (a decrease of 4%).
- Over recent years, the number of currently recorded homicides has shown a general downward trend and the numbers for 2013/14 (526) and 2011/12 (528) were the lowest since 1989 (521).
- In 2013/14, there were 9.2 offences of homicide per million population. As in previous years, children under one year old had the highest rate of homicide (23.9 offences per million population) compared with other age groups.
- With the exception of those aged under one year, adults generally had higher incidence rates of being a victim of homicide than children. For children aged one or over, homicide rates were higher for one to four year olds (6 per million) than for five to fifteen year olds (2 per million).
- In 2013/14, as in previous years, around two-thirds of homicide victims (65%) were male.
- There were 343 male victims of homicide in 2013/14, down 9% from 377 in the previous year. In contrast, the number of female homicide victims increased 8% from 170 to 183 victims.
- There were differences between males and females in the pattern of relationships between victims and suspects. Women were far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners (46% of female victims compared with 7% of male victims), and men were far more likely than women to be killed by friends/acquaintances (40% of male victims compared with 8% of female victims).
- In 2013/14, there were 46 homicide victims aged under 16 years. Half of these victims were killed by a parent or step-parent (50%, or 23 offences) and 4 (9% of victims) were killed by a stranger.
- The most common method of killing continued to be by knife or other sharp instrument. In 2013/14, there were 202 victims killed in this way, accounting for over 1 in 3 (38%) homicides.

- In 2013/14, 29 homicide victims (6% of the total) were killed by shooting, the same as in 2012/13 and the lowest number since 1980 (19 homicides).

Introduction

The term 'homicide' covers the offences of murder, manslaughter and infanticide. Murder and manslaughter are common law offences that have never been defined by statute, although they have been modified by statute. In this bulletin the manslaughter category includes the offence of corporate manslaughter which was created by the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 which came into force on 6 April 2008. The offence of infanticide was created by the Infanticide Act 1922 and refined by the Infanticide Act 1938 (section 1).

Data presented in this chapter have been extracted from the Home Office Homicide Index which contains detailed record-level information about each homicide recorded by police in England and Wales. It is continually updated with revised information from the police and the courts and, as such, is a richer source of data than the main recorded crime dataset. Data presented here therefore differ slightly from the homicide figures presented in the Crime in England and Wales quarterly releases¹.

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data (including figures from the Homicide Index) have been assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and found not to meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The full assessment report can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website². Further information on the interpretation of recorded crime data is provided in the [User Guide](#).

Homicide Index data are based on the year when the offence was first recorded, not when the offence took place or when the case was heard in court. While in the vast majority of cases the offence will be recorded in the same year as it took place, this is not always the case. The data refer to the position on 5 November 2014, when the Homicide Index database was 'frozen' for the purpose of analysis³. The data will change as subsequent court hearings take place or as other information is received.

Caution is needed when looking at longer-term homicide trend figures, primarily because they are based on the year in which offences are recorded by the police rather than the year in which the incidents took place. For example, the 172 homicides attributed to Dr Harold Shipman as a result of Dame Janet Smith's inquiry took place over a long period of time but were all recorded by the police during 2002/03. Also, where several people are killed by the same suspect, the number of homicides counted is the total number of victims killed rather than the number of incidents. For example, the victims of the Cumbrian shootings committed by Derrick Bird on 2 June 2010 are counted as 12 homicides rather than one incident in the 2010/11 data.

Notes

1. Provisional homicide figures published in the [Crime statistics, period ending March 2014](#) release showed 537 homicides recorded in 2013/14 and 558 for 2012/13. The corresponding figures from the Homicide Index were 526 and 547.
2. [UK Statistics Authority](#).
3. The Homicide Index is continually updated with revised information from the police as investigations continue and as cases are heard by the courts. The version used for analysis does not accept updates after it is 'frozen' to ensure the data do not change during the analysis period. See Section 3.1 of the [User Guide](#) for more information.

Offences recorded as homicide

Figure 2.1 shows the rates of homicides recorded in each year for the last 50 years. Homicides increased from the 1960s up to the early 2000s (the peak in 2002/03 includes 172 homicides committed by Dr Harold Shipman). There has been a general downward trend since 2002/03.

The total number of offences recorded as homicide in 2013/14 was 526. This represents a decrease of 21 offences (4%) from the 547 recorded for 2012/13, returning to a level similar to 2011/12 (528 offences)¹. The 2013/14 and 2011/12 figures were the lowest and second lowest numbers respectively since 1989, when 521 homicides were recorded.

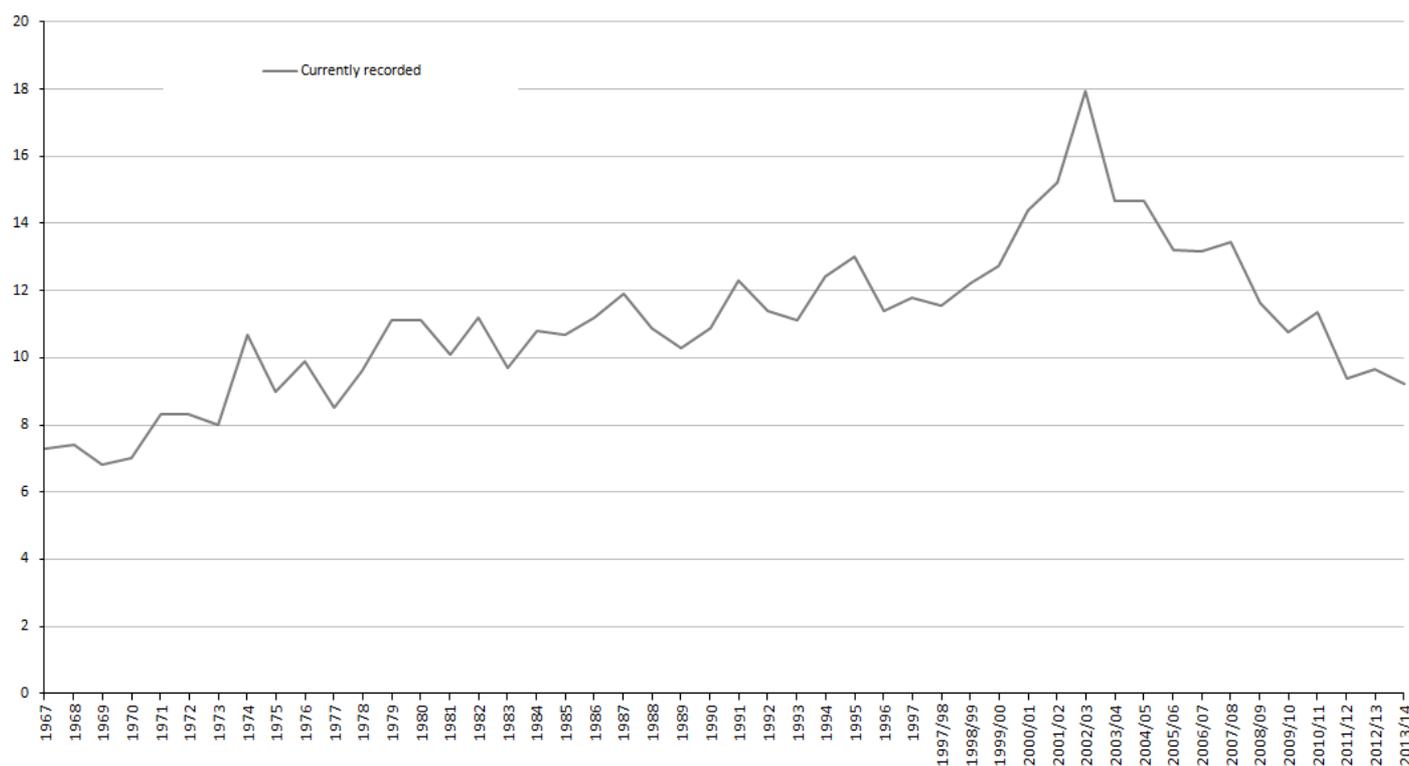
There were 343 male victims of homicide in 2013/14, down 9% from 377 in the previous year and continuing a generally downward trend. In contrast, the number of female homicide victims increased from 170 to 183 victims (an 8% increase), although this is still lower than in previous years.

When the police initially record an offence as a homicide it remains classified as such unless the police or courts decide that a lesser offence, or no offence, took place. In all, 536 deaths were **initially recorded as homicide** by the police in 2013/14. This means that by 5 November 2014, 10 were no longer recorded as homicides², giving the total 526 offences **currently recorded as homicides**.

To put the actual number of homicides in context, incidence rates show the volume of offences as a proportion of the resident population. The incidence rate for homicide remains relatively low, with 9.2 homicides recorded per million population during 2013/14, the lowest homicide rate since the late 1970s (for example, there were 8.5 homicides per million population in 1977). If the 172 homicides committed by Harold Shipman recorded in 2002/03 are excluded from the analysis, homicide rates peaked in 2001/02, at 15.2 offences per million population³ (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: The incidence rate per million population for homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales, 1967 to 2013/14

Rate of homicide offences per million population



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Year 1987 includes 15 victims of Michael Ryan.
3. Year 2000/01 includes 58 Chinese nationals who suffocated in a lorry en route into the UK.
4. Year 2002/03 includes 172 victims of Dr Harold Shipman.
5. Year 2003/04 includes 20 cockle pickers who drowned in Morecambe Bay.
6. Year 2005/06 includes 52 victims of the 7 July London bombings.
7. Year 2010/11 includes 12 victims of Derrick Bird's Cumbrian shootings.
8. Click on image to view an enlarged version.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(36.5 Kb)

Homicides are relatively low-volume events compared to most other types of crime, and year-on-year variations need to be interpreted with some caution. However, an analysis of trends (discussed within 'Statistical interpretation of trends in homicides' of the [2011/12 report](#)) showed the reduction in homicides in recent years was statistically significant and indicates a real fall in this offence rather than merely a consequence of random year to year variation.

Notes

1. In Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences 2012/13, the number of currently recorded homicides was 551, four higher than the 547 shown as homicides for 2012/13 in this publication. Such changes between publications years is common as police investigations continue and as more cases are concluded at court.
2. For example, following further investigation the police determined that the case was a suicide not a homicide.
3. In 2002/03, the rate of homicide was 17.9 homicides per million population. If the 172 Harold Shipman homicides recorded that year are excluded, the rate would have been 14.7 offences per million population.

Case outcomes

The circumstances surrounding a homicide may be complex and it can take time for cases to pass through the criminal justice system (CJS). Due to this, the percentage of homicides recorded in 2013/14 (and, to a lesser extent, those recorded in earlier years) that have concluded at Crown Court is likely to show an increase when the next figures from the Homicide Index are published in twelve months' time. Conversely, the proportion of cases without suspects or with court proceedings pending is expected to decrease as police complete more investigations and as cases pass through the CJS (see 'Suspects' section within this chapter for further details).

Where there are multiple suspects in a homicide case they are categorised in the Homicide Index as either the principal or a secondary suspect. There is only ever one principal suspect per homicide victim. If there is any conviction information available then the suspect with the longest sentence or most severe conviction is determined to be the principal suspect. In the absence of any court outcome, the principal suspect is either the person considered by the police to be the most involved in the homicide or the suspect with the closest relationship to the victim.

As more than one person can be convicted for a single homicide, the number of people convicted will not necessarily be the same as the number of victims recorded. However, if the outcome of only the principal suspect in each case is examined (that is, one suspect per victim), this can provide a more direct comparison to the case outcome of each homicide.

Of the 526 cases currently recorded as homicide in 2013/14, data on the case outcomes of the principal suspects at 5 November 2014 showed ([Appendix Table 2.02 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)):

- court proceedings had resulted in homicide convictions in 239 cases (45%);
- court proceedings were pending for 176 cases (33%);
- proceedings had been discontinued or not initiated or all suspects had been acquitted in 15 cases (3%);
- suspects had committed suicide in 24 cases (5%); and
- no suspects had been charged in connection with 69 cases (13%).

These figures are similar to those published last year for 2012/13. Analysis of homicide suspects is included in the 'Suspects' section.

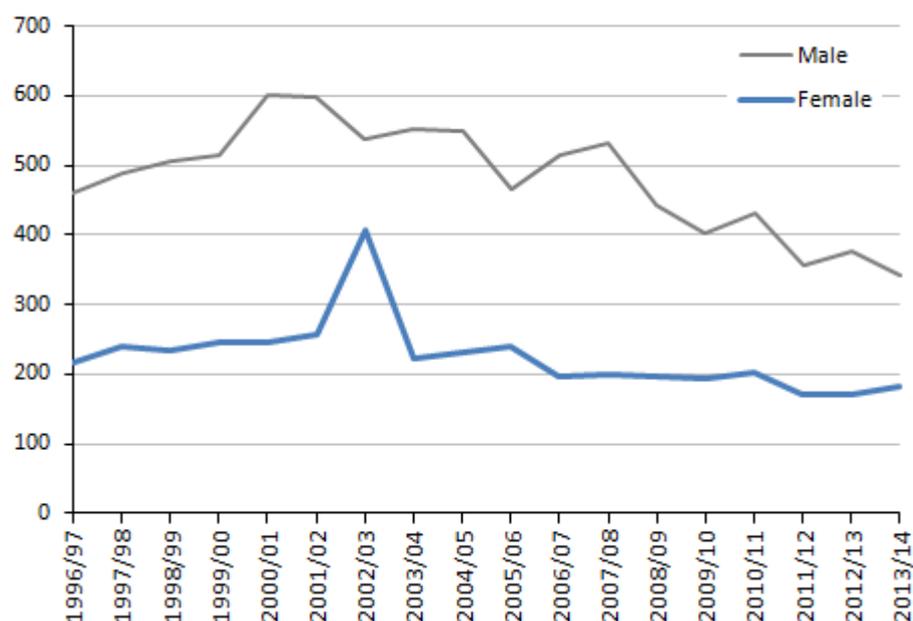
Victims

In 2013/14, around two-thirds of homicide victims were male (65%, 343 victims) and one-third were female (35%, 183 victims). The proportion of victims that were male was slightly lower than that in previous years (68-69% were male in the previous five years). Among those victims aged under one year old, 53% were male.

There was a decrease in the number of male victims in 2013/14 compared with the previous year (down 9% from 377 to 343) while the number of female victims increased 8% from 170 to 183.

The homicide rate has consistently been higher for males than for females (Figure 2.2). In 2013/14 the homicide rate for males (12.2 per million population) was almost twice that for females (6.3 per million population) ([Appendix Table 2.03 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Figure 2.2: Homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales, by sex of victim, 1996/97 to 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Year 2002/03 includes 42 male and 130 female victims of Dr Harold Shipman.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(28 Kb)

Method of killing

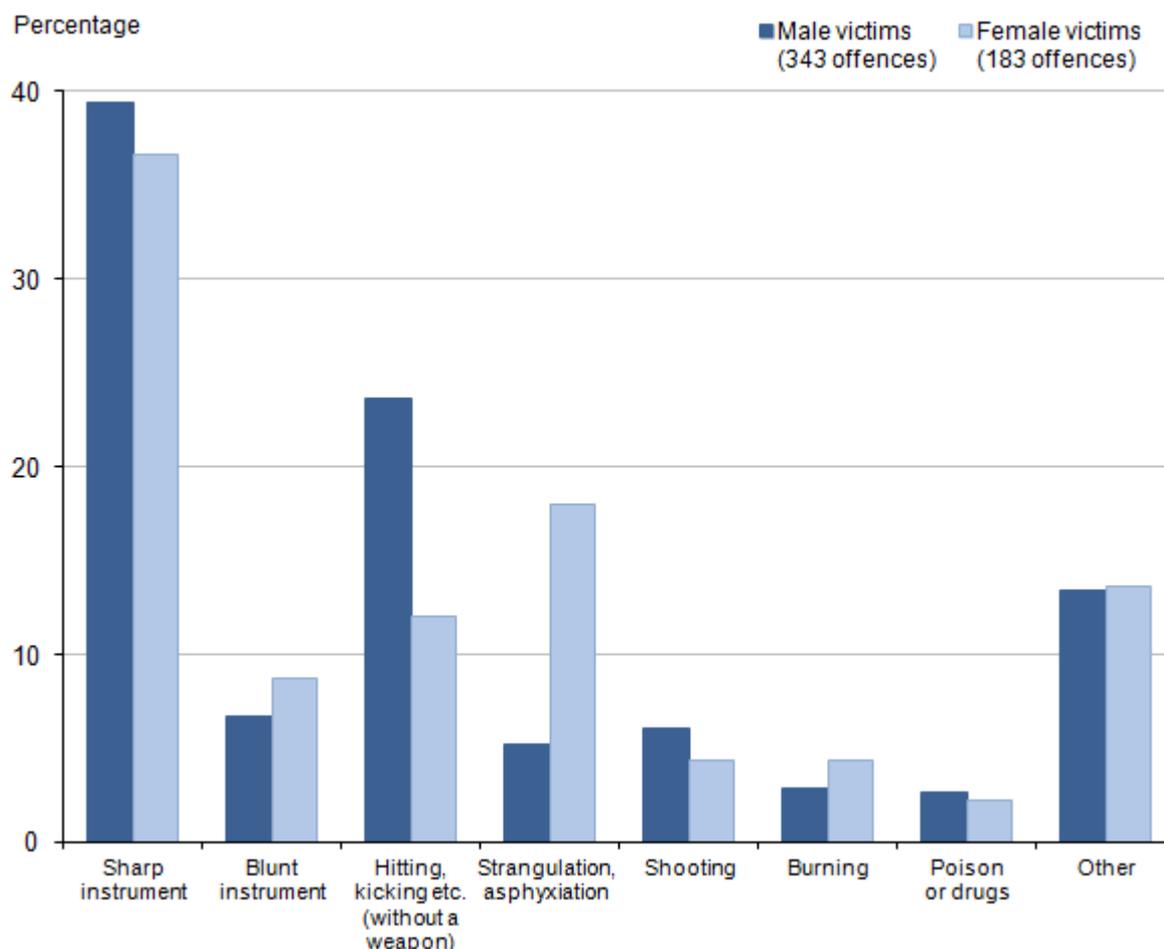
As in previous years, the most common method of killing for both male and female victims was by a knife or other sharp instrument, with 202 such homicides (38% of total) recorded in 2013/14 compared with 194 (35%) in 2012/13 ([Appendix Table 2.04 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Although the absolute number of homicides committed by knives or sharp instruments has fallen slightly over recent years the proportion of homicides committed by this method has only fluctuated slightly from year to year.

The second most common method of killing in 2013/14 was 'kicking or hitting without a weapon', accounting for 103 homicides (20% of the total), a figure that has remained roughly a fifth over the last decade.

In 2013/14, 29 homicide victims were killed by shooting, the same as the previous year and the lowest number since 1980 (19 homicides).

Similar proportions of male and female victims were killed by a sharp instrument or by a blunt instrument but there were gender differences in other methods. For example while hitting and kicking without a weapon was the second most common method for male victims, for female victims, it was strangulation or asphyxiation (33 homicides in 2013/14; 18% of female homicides). Differences in methods of killing by sex of victim are shown in Figure 2.3 and are likely to reflect differences in victim/suspect relationships as discussed in a section below.

Figure 2.3: Offences currently recorded as homicide by apparent method of killing and sex of victim, 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. 'Other' includes all other apparent methods and where the method is unknown.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(28 Kb)

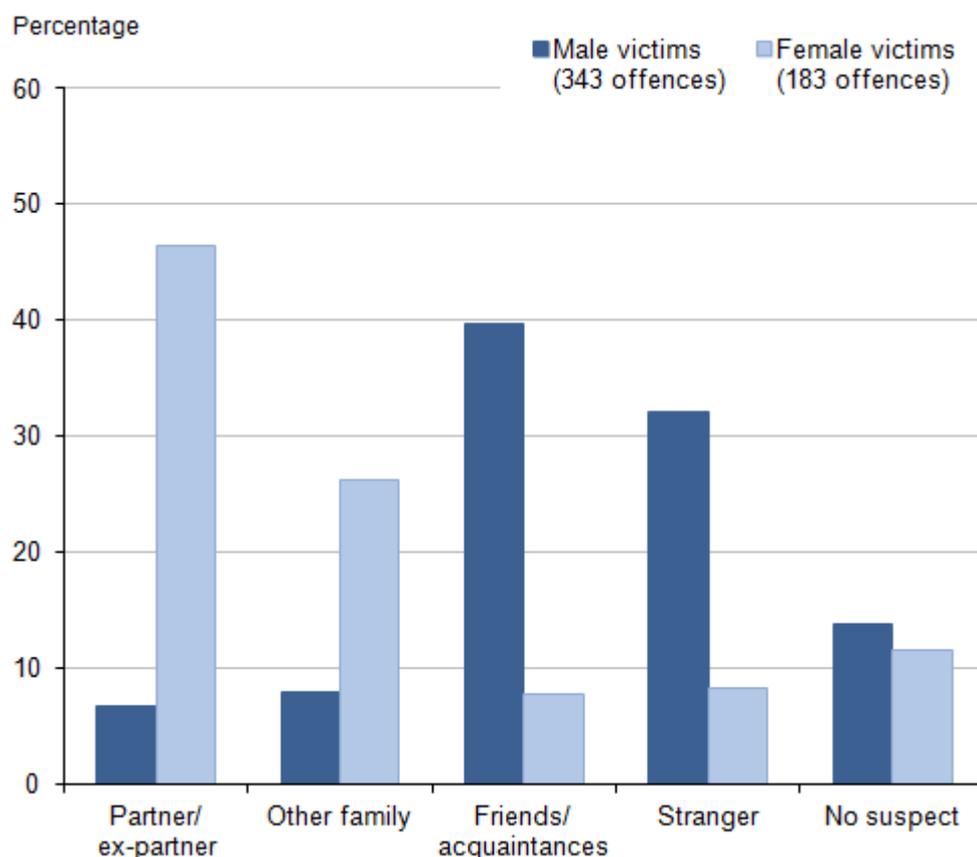
Relationship between victim and principal suspect

Data on relationship of victim to principal suspect for 2013/14 show similar findings to previous years. There were differences between males and females in the pattern of relationships between victims and suspects. Female victims were more likely than male victims to have been acquainted with the principal suspect (80% and 54% respectively).

In particular, women were far more likely than men to be killed by partners/ex-partners (46% of female victims compared with 7% of male victims), and men were far more likely than women to be killed by friends/acquaintances or strangers (40% and 32% respectively of male victims compared

with 8% of female victims for both categories). ([Appendix Table 2.05 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#); Figure 2.4)¹.

Figure 2.4: Relationship of victim to principal suspect by sex of victim, 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(35.5 Kb)

To account for differences by age in victim relationships to principal suspect, the analysis in the next two sections reports on victims aged 16 and over and victims aged under 16 separately.

Notes

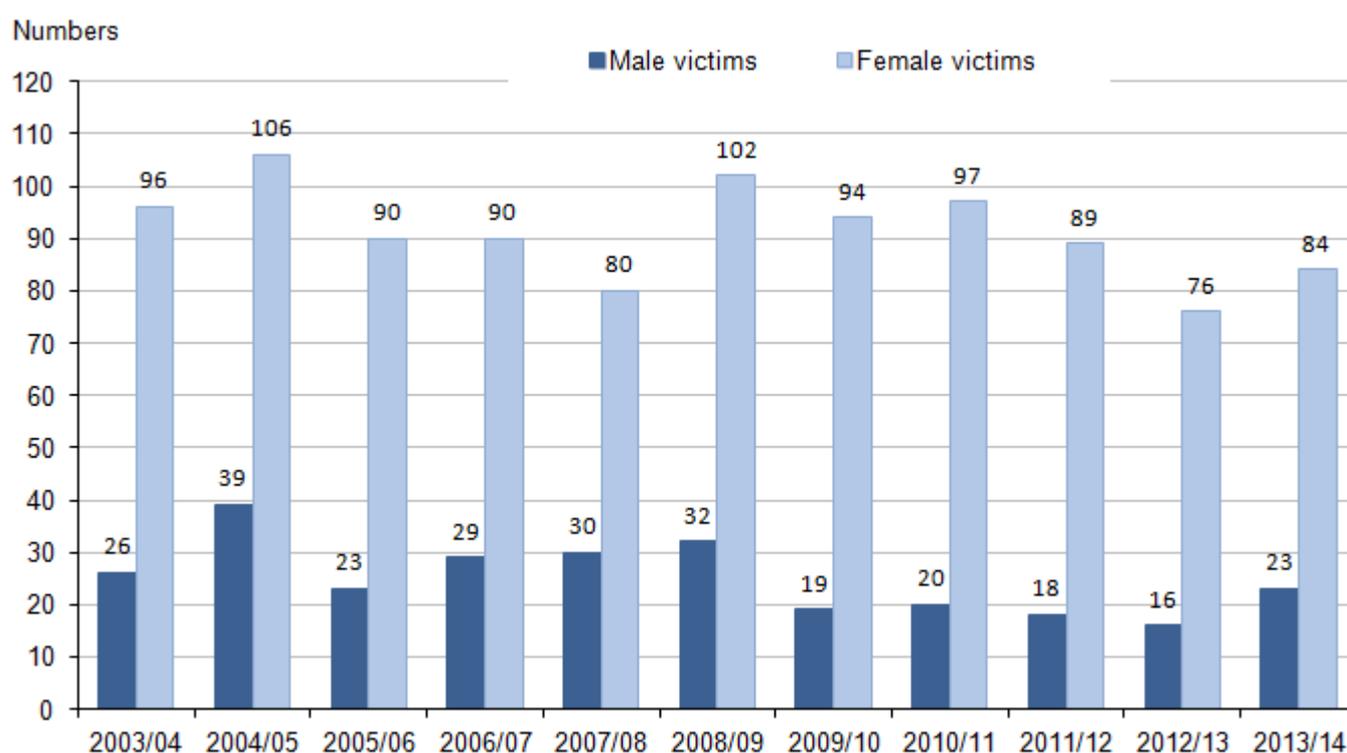
1. The relationship between victim and principal suspect is not always known and, for the purposes of this analysis, such cases have been included in the 'stranger' category. Stranger category includes: business associate, police/prison officer killed in the course of duty, stranger (terrorist/contract killing and other) and where there is insufficient information about the suspect to determine relationship to victim.

Victims aged 16 years and over

There were large differences in the victim-suspect relationship between men and women. In 2013/14, just over half (53%) of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner/ex-partner¹ (84 offences). This is similar to that found in 2012/13 (54%) and broadly similar to previous years.

In contrast, only 7% of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner/ex-partner in 2013/14 (23 offences) a percentage that is similar to previous years ([Appendix Table 2.06 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#), Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Number of homicide victims aged 16 and over killed by partner/ex-partner, by sex of victim, 2003/04 to 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(35.5 Kb)

Around two-fifths (42%) of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by a friend/acquaintance in 2013/14 (similar to that found in 2012/13, 39%). In contrast, female adult victims were less likely than men to be killed by a friend/acquaintance, at 9% of homicides in 2013/14 (14 offences).

In 2013/14, around one-third of male victims (108 males, 34%) and around one in twelve female victims (13 females, 8%) aged 16 and over were killed by strangers.

Notes

1. Partner/ex-partner includes the sub-categories 'spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse/ex-cohabiting partner/ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, adulterous relationship, lover's spouse or emotional rival'.

Victims aged under 16 years

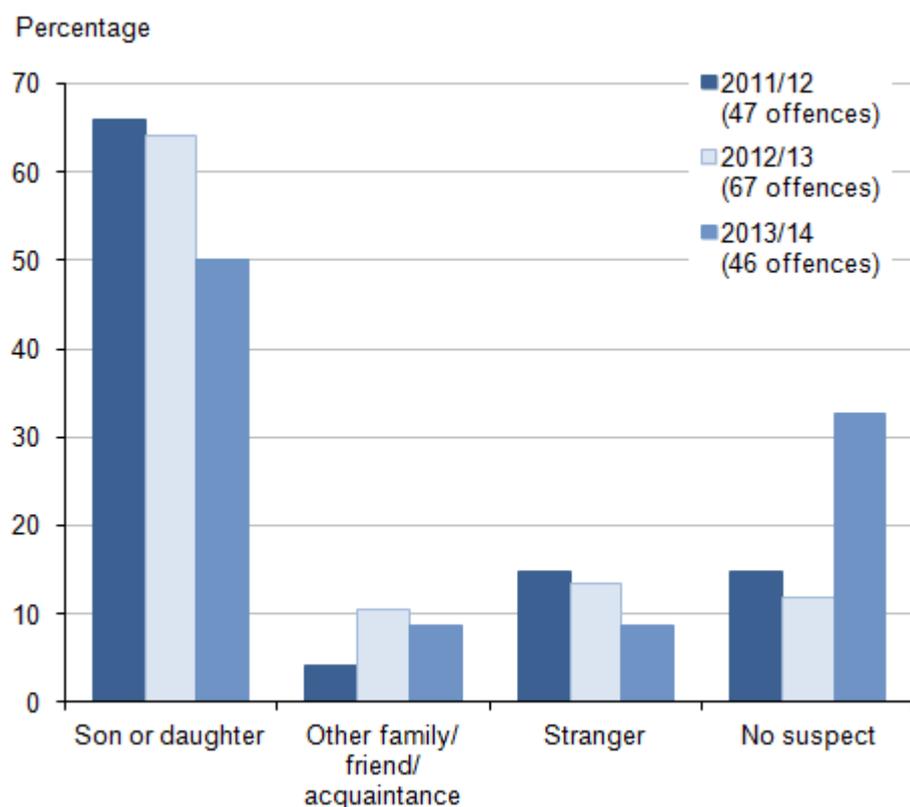
In 2013/14, there were 46 victims under 16 years of age, compared with 67 victims in the previous year. Of the 526 offences currently recorded as homicide in 2013/14, 9% involved victims under the age of 16, a slightly lower proportion than the 12% in 2012/13 and the same as the proportion in 2011/12 ([Appendix Table 2.03 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). There were differences in this pattern between males and females; 6% of all currently recorded male homicide victims were aged under 16, whereas 14% of female homicide victims were aged under 16, similar to that found in previous years.

As in previous years, the majority of victims aged under 16 were acquainted with the principal suspect (59%, 27 offences), and in all but four of these cases they were killed by a parent or step-parent (Figure 2.6).

Proportionally few homicides of those aged under 16 are committed by strangers. The victim was known to have been killed by a stranger in 4 offences in 2013/14 (9%). This has varied between one and 15 offences in each year over the last decade.

As of 5 November 2014, there were 15 victims aged under 16 (33%) for whom no suspect had been identified, a higher proportion than among adult victims (11%). This number is likely to fall as police investigations continue. For example, Table 2.07 in the [2012/13 release](#) showed that for homicides of victims aged under 16 recorded in 2012/13, there were 13 for whom there was no suspect. This had fallen to eight by the time the Homicide Index was frozen for analysis on 5 November 2014. ([Appendix Table 2.07 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Figure 2.6: Victims under 16 years of age, by relationship of victim to principal suspect, 2011/12 to 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Figures are likely to change as cases progress through the courts and more information becomes available.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(36 Kb)

Focus on partner/ex-partner homicides

As previously shown, around half of female victims aged 16 and over, and around 1 in 14 male victims aged 16 and over, were killed by their partner or ex-partner. This section looks in more detail at the characteristics of the victims and the homicides. Partner/ex-partner includes the sub-categories 'spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse/ex-cohabiting partner/ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, adulterous relationship, lover's spouse or "emotional rival"¹.

Due to the relatively low volume of homicides there can be considerable year-to-year variability, and so this analysis combines data for a three-year period (2011/12 to 2013/14) to provide more robust results. Figures in this section are compared with homicides where the relationship was not 'partner/ex-partner'².

Male victims of partner/ex-partner homicides were slightly older on average than other male homicide victims (46 compared with 39 years old). In contrast, female victims of partner/ex-partner homicides were younger than other female homicide victims (40 compared with 54 years old). (Table 2.1 and [Appendix table 2.08 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#))

Male victims of partner/ex-partner homicides were more likely to be White than other ethnic groups (91%), but the difference among female victims of partner/ex-partner homicides was slightly less marked (73%).

The method of killing showed a different pattern among male victims of partner/ex-partner homicide:

- 60% of male victims of partner/ex-partner homicide were killed with a sharp instrument, compared with 39% for other male victims aged over 16.
- 11% of male victims of partner/ex-partner homicide were killed by hitting or kicking without a weapon, compared with 26% of other male homicide victims aged 16 and over.

The difference was less marked for women where 45% of partner/ex-partner homicide victims were killed with a sharp instrument, compared with 34% of other female homicide victims aged 16 and over. Conversely, 24% of female victims of partner/ex-partner homicide were killed by strangulation, compared with 18% of other female homicide victims aged 16 and over.

All but one of the female partner/ex-partner homicide victims were killed by a male suspect, whereas among men, around a third of partner/ex-partner homicide were killed by a male suspect. The majority of these, 14 out of 21, were committed by the spouse of the victim's lover or "emotional rival". Among other adult homicides, 95% of male and 89% of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by a male suspect (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Characteristics of partner/ex-partner[2] homicides for victims aged 16 and over, combined data for 2011/12 to 2013/14[3]

	Victims partner/ex-partner homicides aged 16 and over			Victims other homicides aged 16 and over		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Average age of victim	46	40	41	39	54	42
Ethnicity of victim⁴	Percentages					
White	91	73	76	75	86	77
Black	4	9	8	13	4	12
Asian (Indian sub-continent)	5	13	11	7	6	7
Other	0	4	3	3	2	2
Method of killing						
Sharp instrument	60	45	48	39	34	38
Blunt instrument	11	11	11	9	9	9
Hitting, kicking, etc.	11	6	7	26	11	23
Strangulation, asphyxiation	5	24	21	4	18	6
Other ⁵	14	14	14	22	28	23
Gender of suspect⁶						
Male	37	99	88	95	89	94
Female	63	0	12	5	11	6

	Victims partner/ex-partner homicides aged 16 and over			Victims other homicides aged 16 and over		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
All homicide victims aged 16 and over	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Partner/ex-partner includes the sub-categories 'spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-spouse/ex-cohabiting partner/ex-boyfriend/girlfriend, adulterous relationship, lover's spouse or emotional rival'.
3. As at 5 November 2014; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.
4. Total includes 4 homicides where the ethnicity of the victim was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.
5. Includes shooting, explosion, burning, drowning, poison or drugs, motor vehicle, other and not known.
6. Includes 1 homicide with no suspect.
7. 0 denotes < 0.5%.

Download table

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(34.5 Kb)

Notes

1. "Emotional rival" is defined as those instances where two persons come to know or meet each other through their association or knowledge of a third person, and where their emotional or sexual interest in this third person brings them into direct conflict with each other.
2. Also excludes those aged under 16 years old.

Circumstances of the homicides

A half (50%, or 263 offences) of all homicide cases in 2013/14 resulted from a quarrel, a revenge attack or a loss of temper. This proportion was higher where the principal suspect was known to the victim (59%), compared with when the suspect was unknown to the victim (34%). 7% of homicides (35 offences) occurred during robberies or burglaries and another 7% (38 offences) were attributed to irrational acts¹. As at 5 November 2014, the apparent circumstances were not known for 16% of homicides (85 offences) recorded in 2013/14 ([Appendix Table 2.09 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This figure is likely to decrease as the police carry out further investigations.

Notes

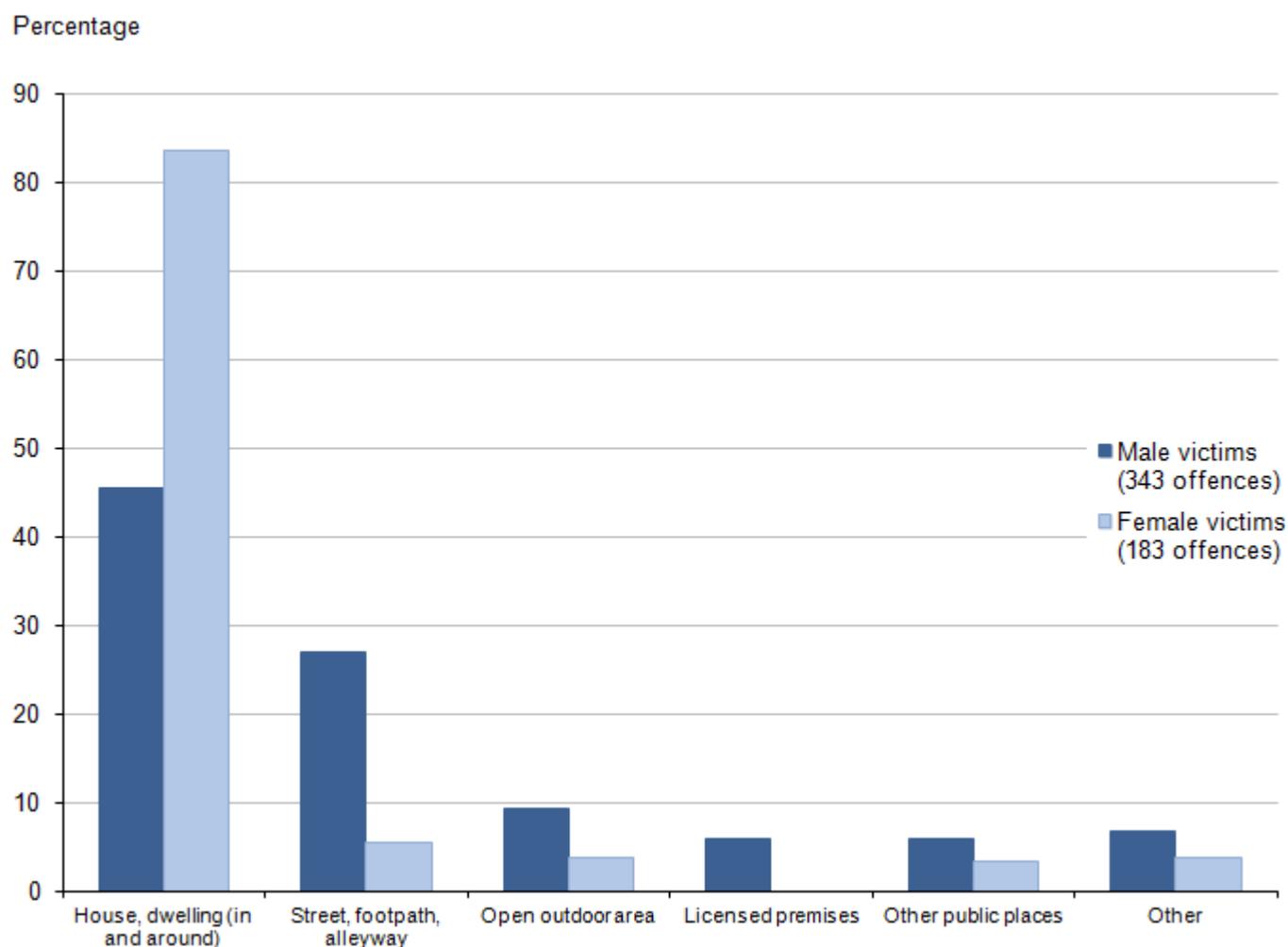
1. These figures for irrational acts do not account for all homicides committed by mentally disturbed people, as offences with an apparent motive (for example, during a quarrel or robbery) are instead included under the respective circumstance. Higher overall totals for homicides committed by mentally disturbed people are quoted elsewhere (NCI, [2014](#)).

Location of the homicides

Information on the location of homicides has been collected since April 2007, and is shown here for the first time. Over a half (59%, or 309 offences) of all homicide cases in 2013/14 occurred in a house or dwelling. This proportion was slightly higher in the most recent four years. Around a fifth (19% of homicides (102 offences)) occurred in a street, footpath or alleyway and 7% took place in an open outdoor area¹.

The pattern was different for males and females, reflecting victim-suspect relationships. The majority of female homicides (84%, 153 offences) took place in a house or dwelling compared with 45% of male homicides (156 offences). Over a quarter of male homicides took place in a street, path or alleyway (92 offences) compared with only 5% of female homicides (10 offences). ([Appendix Table 2.10 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) and Figure 2.7)

Figure 2.7: Offences currently recorded as homicide by location of homicide and sex of victim, 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. 'Other' includes all other locations including unknown.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(34 Kb)

Notes

1. 'Open outdoor area' here includes the category from the Homicide Index and car parks.

Homicide risk for different age groups

Analysis and commentary in this section focuses on data combined from the last three years (2011/12 to 2013/14) to allow a greater breakdown of age groupings, including by sex (Figure 2.8; [Appendix Table 2.11 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Previous analysis of Homicide Index figures has consistently shown that children under the age of one have the highest rate of homicide per million population ([Appendix Table 2.03 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)) and the analysis here shows that they were disproportionately represented, accounting for 3% of homicide victims but only 1% of the population ([Appendix Table 2.11 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

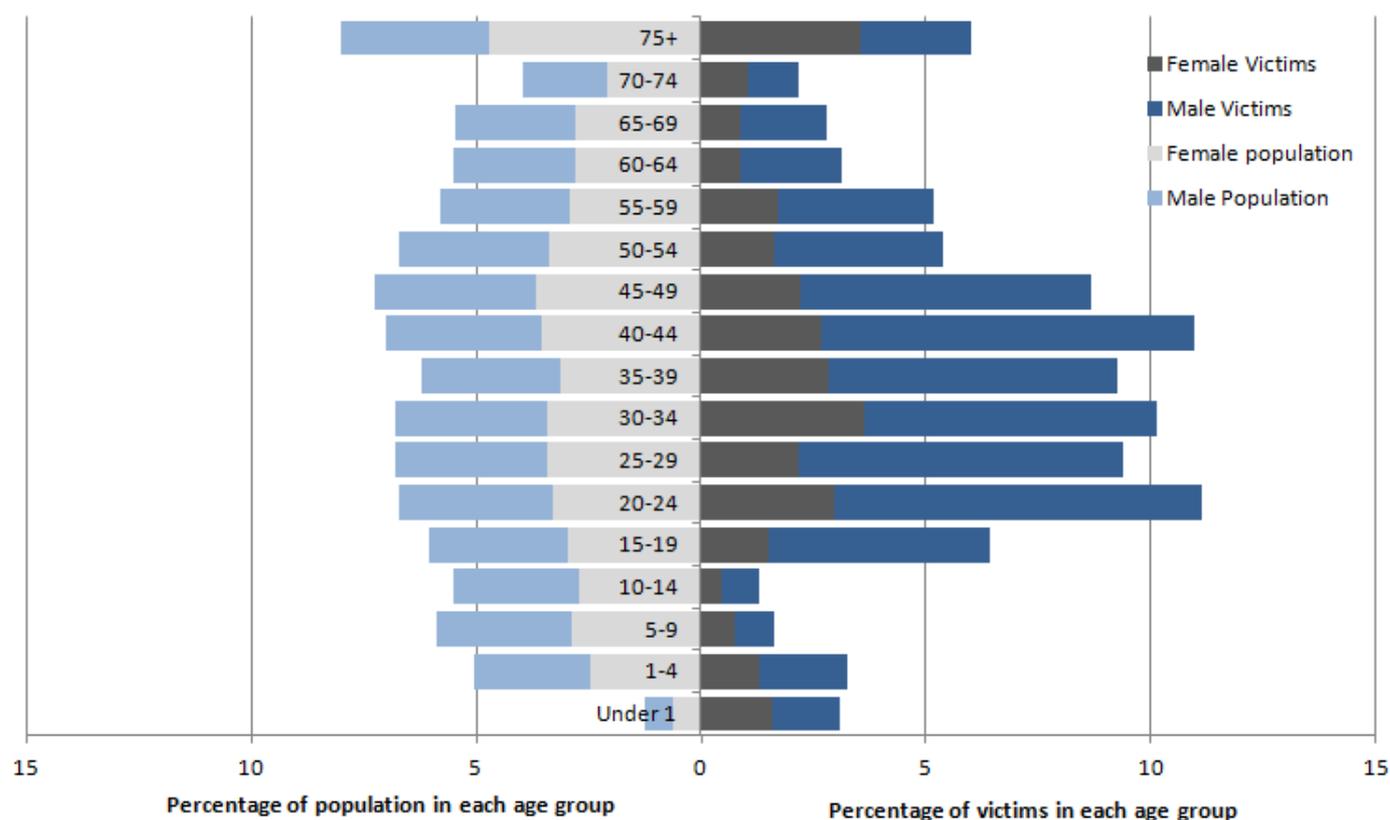
Victims aged between 20 and 49 years old also formed a disproportionately large number of victims compared with the population profile, particularly so for those in the 20 to 24 years age group. While 7% of the population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 11% of homicide victims (184 victims).

The relatively high incidence rate among 20 to 24 year olds was largely due to the higher incidence rate amongst males in this age group. While 7% of the male population were aged 20 to 24, this age group accounted for 12% of male homicide victims (133 victims).

The distribution among females is more even than for males, but there was still a disproportionately high number of female victims aged between 20 and 44 years old compared with the population profile (40% of female homicide victims were aged between 20 and 44 years old, whereas 33% of the female population was covered by these age groups).

A disproportionately small number of victims were in the age groups 5 to 9 years and 10 to 14 years. For example, while 6% of the population were aged 10 to 14 years old, this age group accounted for 1% of homicide victims (14 victims).

Figure 2.8: Age and gender profile of currently recorded homicide victims compared with population, combined years 2011/12 to 2013/14



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(39 Kb)

In previous reports, additional analysis was conducted on the ethnicity, sex, age and method of killing of victims and their inter-relationships. There were differences in the sex and age profile and method of killing by ethnicity and the results are discussed in the [2012/13 report](#).

Suspects

Definition of homicide suspect

For the purposes of the Homicide Index, a suspect in a homicide case is defined as:

- (i) A person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide¹ and charged with homicide; or

(ii) A person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest/being charged.

More than one suspect may be charged and tried per homicide victim and in some cases no suspect is ever brought to trial (Table 2.2). Due to this, the number of suspects is not the same as the number of offences. It should also be noted that the number of cases with no suspect will reduce as the police continue their investigations.

Table 2.2: Number of suspects for currently recorded homicide victims, 2011/12 to 2013/14

England and Wales

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	Number			Percentage		
No suspects charged	44	76	70	6	11	10
One	378	344	353	55	48	49
Two	108	134	110	16	19	15
Three or more	163	165	186	24	23	26
All initially recorded homicides	693	719	719	100	100	100

Table notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office

Download table

 [XLS format](#)
(31.5 Kb)

In total, there were 649 suspects ([Appendix Table 2.13 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)) as at 5 November 2014 relating to 536 homicides initially recorded in 2013/14. Of these:

- court proceedings had concluded for 355 suspects (55% of all suspects).
- court proceedings were pending for 268 suspects (41%).
- twenty-three suspects had committed suicide or died (4%), and the remaining 3 suspects had no proceedings taken on advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions ([Appendix Table 2.13 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

For those suspects where proceedings had concluded, 90% were male (338 suspects) and 10% were female (38 suspects) (data not shown).

Among male suspects:

- over half (57%) of those indicted for a homicide offence and with a court outcome were convicted of murder,
- three in ten (32%) were convicted of manslaughter,
- fewer than one in ten (7%) were acquitted or their proceedings were discontinued
- and one in twenty (4%) had another outcome².

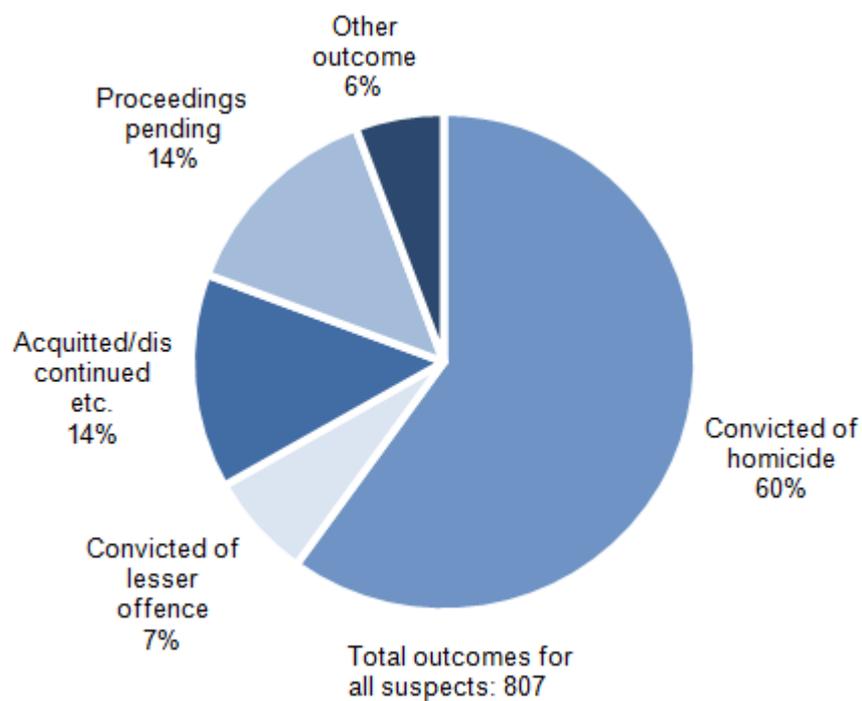
For females indicted for homicide with a court outcome,

- under half (44%) were convicted of murder,
- around one fifth (21%) of manslaughter,
- one in ten (10%) of infanticide,
- one in ten (10%) were acquitted or had their proceedings discontinued and
- one in seven (14%) had another outcome.

In the time period 2011/12 to 2013/14, 81% of suspects indicted for homicide (murder, manslaughter or infanticide) with a court outcome were found guilty of homicide and 13% were acquitted ([Appendix Table 2.14 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Similar criminal justice statistics produced by the [MoJ](#) show that the conviction ratio (the number of convictions within a given period divided by the number of prosecutions in the same period) for homicide offences in 2013 was 81%. This is a relatively high conviction ratio and, for example, compares with 69% for violence against the person offences, and 76% for burglary offences.

The case outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in 2013/14 (Figure 2.10) are likely to change as cases progress through the CJS and more information becomes available. As such, cases from previous years are more likely to have concluded at court. This is illustrated in Figures 2.9 and 2.10 which show the court outcomes for all suspects of homicides recorded in 2009/10 and 2013/14 respectively. While 41% of the suspects in homicides recorded in 2013/14 were awaiting court proceedings, proceedings were pending for only 14% of the cases recorded in 2009/10. Conversely, 47% of the suspects of homicides recorded in 2013/14 had been to court and been convicted of homicide compared with 60% of those recorded in 2009/10.

Figure 2.9: Current outcomes [2] for suspects of homicides recorded in 2009/10



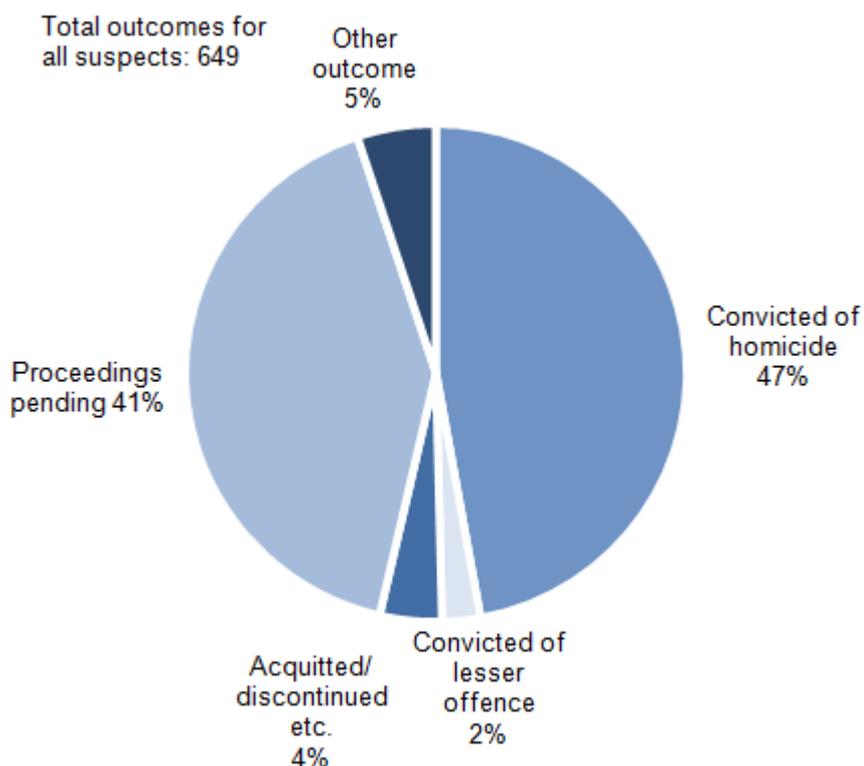
Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. (As of 5 November 2014)
3. 'Other outcome' includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)

(36 Kb)

Figure 2.10: Current outcomes[2] for suspects of homicides recorded in 2013/14**Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. As of 5 November 2014
3. 'Other outcome' includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.

Download chart

[XLS](#) [XLS format](#)
(36 Kb)

Notes

1. The homicide may no longer be recorded as such if all the suspects were acquitted.
2. 'Other outcome' includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.

Previous homicide convictions

The Homicide Index shows that in 2013/14 there were 5 convictions for homicide offences for suspects who had a previous conviction for homicide. As more cases are concluded at Crown Court, this figure may change. For homicide offences recorded in 2012/13, there were 3 people

convicted of homicide who had a previous conviction for homicide ([Appendix Table 2.16 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

For homicide offences recorded between 2003/04 and 2013/14, in total, 47 people who were convicted of a homicide offence had a previous conviction for homicide. Of these 47 offences, the second conviction was for murder in 39 cases ([Appendix Table 2.17 \(1.42 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

International homicide comparisons

A number of international organisations, including Eurostat, have attempted to collate international homicide statistics. There are issues surrounding the comparability of international homicide data including:

- different definitions of homicide between countries, although definitions vary less than for some other types of crimes;
- differing points in criminal justice systems at which homicides are recorded, for instance, when the offence is discovered or following further investigation or court outcome;
- the figures are for completed homicides (i.e. excluding attempted murder) but, in some countries, the police register any death that cannot immediately be attributed to other causes as homicide.

Caution should therefore be taken in comparing homicide rates across countries.

Eurostat's most recently published figures compare homicide rates averaged over the years 2010 to 2012¹. The rates for the member countries of the European Union and some other European countries are shown in Table 2.6, per million population. The Eurostat published rate for England and Wales is 10.9, which is below that for Scotland (16.5) and Northern Ireland (13.2) and in the mid-rank of the EU countries shown.

Table 2.3: Homicide rate per million population for selected European countries (ranked in order high to low), averaged data for 2010 to 2012

Country ²	Rate	Country ²	Rate
Kosovo	89.7	Hungary	13.0
Lithuania	68.5	Malta	12.8
Estonia	56.9	Ireland	11.9
Latvia	46.7	Portugal	11.4
Liechtenstein	36.5	Norway	11.2
Turkey	32.1	Poland	10.9
Montenegro	27.9	UK: England & Wales³	10.9
Finland	19.6	Denmark	10.7
Bulgaria	18.9	Italy	9.6
Romania	18.5	Luxembourg	9.5
Belgium	17.3	France	9.4
UK: Scotland	16.5	Czech Republic	8.9
Serbia	16.5	Netherlands	8.6
Slovakia	16.0	Sweden	8.4
Greece	15.8	Austria	8.3
FYR of Macedonia	15.5	Spain	8.2
Bosnia & Herzegovina	14.2	Germany	7.9
Croatia	14.0	Slovenia	6.5
Cyprus	13.2	Iceland	6.3
UK: Northern Ireland	13.2	Switzerland	6.0

Table notes:

1. Source: Eurostat
2. Excludes Albania as rate not available.
3. Eurostat calculated this figure using the recorded crime returns, not the Homicide Index. If the Homicide Index was used, the figure would be slightly lower.

Download table

XLS [XLS format](#)
(35 Kb)

The figures above are based on a 3 year average for 2010 to 2012. The Scottish Government publish annual homicide figures², and the most recently published report shows that there were 61 victims of homicide (11 homicides per million population) in Scotland in 2013/14, a fall from 63 victims (12 per million) in the previous year. This was the lowest in the ten year period covered by the Scottish statistical bulletin.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland publish monthly figures on homicides, and the release for the [year ending March 2014](#) shows that there were 21 homicide offences recorded by the police in Northern Ireland (11 homicides per million population).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) publish a global study on homicide which gives a comprehensive overview of intentional homicide across the world. The most recent of these was published in [2014](#), and showed that the global average homicide rate stands at 62 per million population, but Southern Africa and Central America have rates over four times higher than that (above 240 victims per million population). Meanwhile, with rates some five times lower than the global average, Eastern Asia, Southern Europe and Western Europe are the sub-regions with the lowest homicide levels.

Notes

1. Eurostat's [‘Crime Statistics’](#)
2. [Homicide in Scotland](#).

References

Eurostat, 2014 [‘Crime Statistics’](#)

Ministry of Justice, 2014, [‘Criminal Justice Statistics 2013’](#)

Office for National Statistics, 2013, [‘Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2011/12’](#)

Office for National Statistics, 2014a, [‘Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2012/13’](#)

Office for National Statistics, 2014b, [‘Crime Statistics, period ending March 2014’](#)

Police Service of Northern Ireland, 2014, [Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland](#)

The National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness, 2014, [‘ANNUAL REPORT: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales’](#)

The Scottish Government, 2014, [‘Homicide in Scotland’](#)

UK Statistics Authority, 2014, [‘Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: Statistics on Crime in England and Wales’](#)

UNODC, 2014, [Global Homicide Book](#)

Background notes

1. If you have any queries regarding crime statistics for England and Wales please email crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk.
2. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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 broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Copyright

© Crown copyright 2015

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document is also available on our website at www.ons.gov.uk.