

Chapter 2 - Homicide

Coverage: **England and Wales**

Date: **13 February 2014**

Geographical Area: **Country**

Theme: **Crime and Justice**

Summary

In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data 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](#) website. Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continue to be badged as National Statistics.

While the Homicide Index is covered by the de-designation of all data based on police recorded crime, Home Office and ONS statisticians do not have significant concerns about the accuracy of recording of homicides. However, ONS accepts that there is currently insufficient evidence to provide that assurance. The ONS will work with partners to obtain fuller information on the quality of the Homicide Index and will request a re-assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in due course.

The Home Office Homicide Index shows that there were 551 homicides (murder, manslaughter and infanticide) currently recorded in 2012/13 in England and Wales, 21 more than the 530 recorded in 2011/12 (an increase of 4%). This was driven by an increase among those aged under 16 - from 47 in 2011/12 to 67 in 2012/13. The latest increase should be seen in the context of a generally downward trend since 2002/03.

- Over recent years, the number of currently recorded homicides has shown a generally downward trend and the numbers for 2012/13 (551) and 2011/12 (530) were the lowest since 1989 (521).
- In 2012/13, there were 9.7 offences per million population. As in previous years, children under one year old had the highest victimisation rate (30 offences per million population).
- In 2012/13, as in previous years, more than two-thirds of homicide victims (69%) were male. However among those aged under one victims of homicide were just as likely to be male as female.
- In other age groups 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, and men were far more likely than women to be killed by friends/acquaintances.
- With the exception of those aged under one year, adults generally had higher victimisation rates than children, with adult homicide rates peaking at 14 per million for those aged 30 to 49. For

children aged one or over, homicide rates were higher for one to four year olds (8 per million) than for five to fifteen year olds (3 per million).

- In 2012/13, there were 67 homicide victims aged under 16 years. In line with previous years, the majority of these victims were killed by a parent or step-parent (60%, or 40 offences) and 8 (12% of victims) were killed by a stranger.
- The most common method of killing continued to be by sharp instrument (such as a knife or broken bottle). In 2012/13, there were 194 victims killed in this way, accounting for around 1 in 3 (35%) of all homicides.
- In 2012/13, 29 homicide victims (5% of the total) were killed by shooting, 11 fewer than the 40 recorded in 2011/12 and the lowest number since 1980 (19 homicides).

Introduction

The term 'homicide' covers the offences of murder, manslaughter (including corporate manslaughter) and infanticide. Murder and manslaughter are common law offences that have never been defined by statute, although they have been modified by statute. 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.

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 as at 8 November 2013, when the Homicide Index database was 'frozen' for the purpose of analysis². The data will change as subsequent court hearings take place or as other information is received. Further information is provided in the [User Guide](#).

Notes

1. Provisional homicide figures published in the [Crime statistics, period ending March 2013](#) release showed 552 homicides recorded in 2012/13 and 553 for 2011/12. The corresponding figures from the Homicide Index were 551 and 530.
2. 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 Chapter 3.1 of the [User Guide](#) for more information.

Offences Recorded as Homicide

Figure 2.1 and [Appendix table 2.01 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#) show the numbers of homicides for the last 50 years. Homicides increased steadily from the early 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 2012/13 was 551. This represents an increase of 21 offences (4%) from the 530 recorded for 2011/12.¹ The 2012/13 and 2011/12 figures were the lowest and second lowest numbers respectively since 1989, when 521 were recorded.
- The majority of this increase was among victims aged under 16 - from 47 in 2011/12 to 67 in 2012/13.

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, 559 deaths were **initially recorded as homicides** by the police in 2012/13. This means that by 8 November 2013, 8 were no longer recorded as homicides², giving the total 551 offences **currently recorded as homicides**.

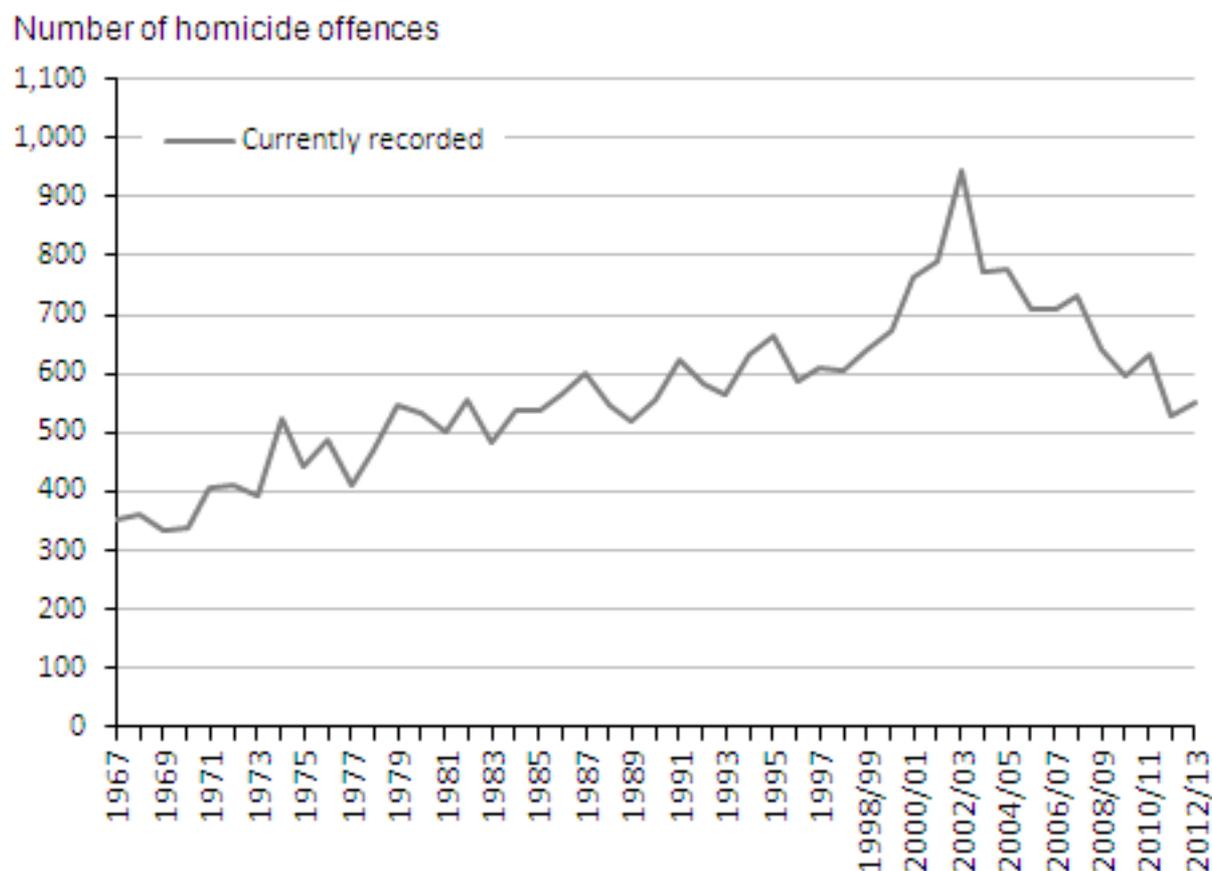
Notes

1. In Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences 2011/12, the number of currently recorded homicides was 540, ten higher than the 530 shown as homicides for 2011/12 in this publication. The 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 not a homicide.

Trends in Homicides

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 on 2 June 2010 are counted as 12 homicides rather than one incident in the 2010/11 data.

Figure 2.1: Homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales, 1967 to 2012/13(1,2)



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. Year 1987 includes 15 victims of Michael Ryan.
4. Year 2000/01 includes 58 Chinese nationals who suffocated in a lorry en route into the UK.
5. Year 2002/03 includes 172 victims of Dr Harold Shipman.
6. Year 2003/04 includes 20 cockle pickers who drowned in Morecambe Bay.
7. Year 2005/06 includes 52 victims of the 7 July London bombings.
8. Year 2010/11 includes 12 victims of Derrick Bird.

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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 is statistically significant and indicates a real fall in this offence rather than merely a consequence of random year to year variation.

Case Outcomes

The circumstances surrounding a homicide can 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 2012/13 (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 suspects¹ or with court proceedings pending is expected to decrease as police complete more investigations and as cases pass through the CJS (see 'Suspects' 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 suspect 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 person 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 551 cases currently recorded as homicide in 2012/13, data on the case outcomes of the principal suspects at 8 November 2013 showed ([Appendix table 2.02 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)):

- court proceedings had resulted in homicide convictions in 219 cases (40%);
- court proceedings were pending for 209 cases (38%);
- proceedings had been discontinued or not initiated or all suspects had been acquitted in 18 cases (3%);
- suspects had committed suicide in 17 cases (3%); and
- no suspects had been charged in connection with 88 cases (16%).

These figures are similar to those published last year for 2011/12. Analysis of homicide suspects is included in the sub-section 'Suspects'

Notes

1. See later section on suspects for definition of a suspect.

Victims

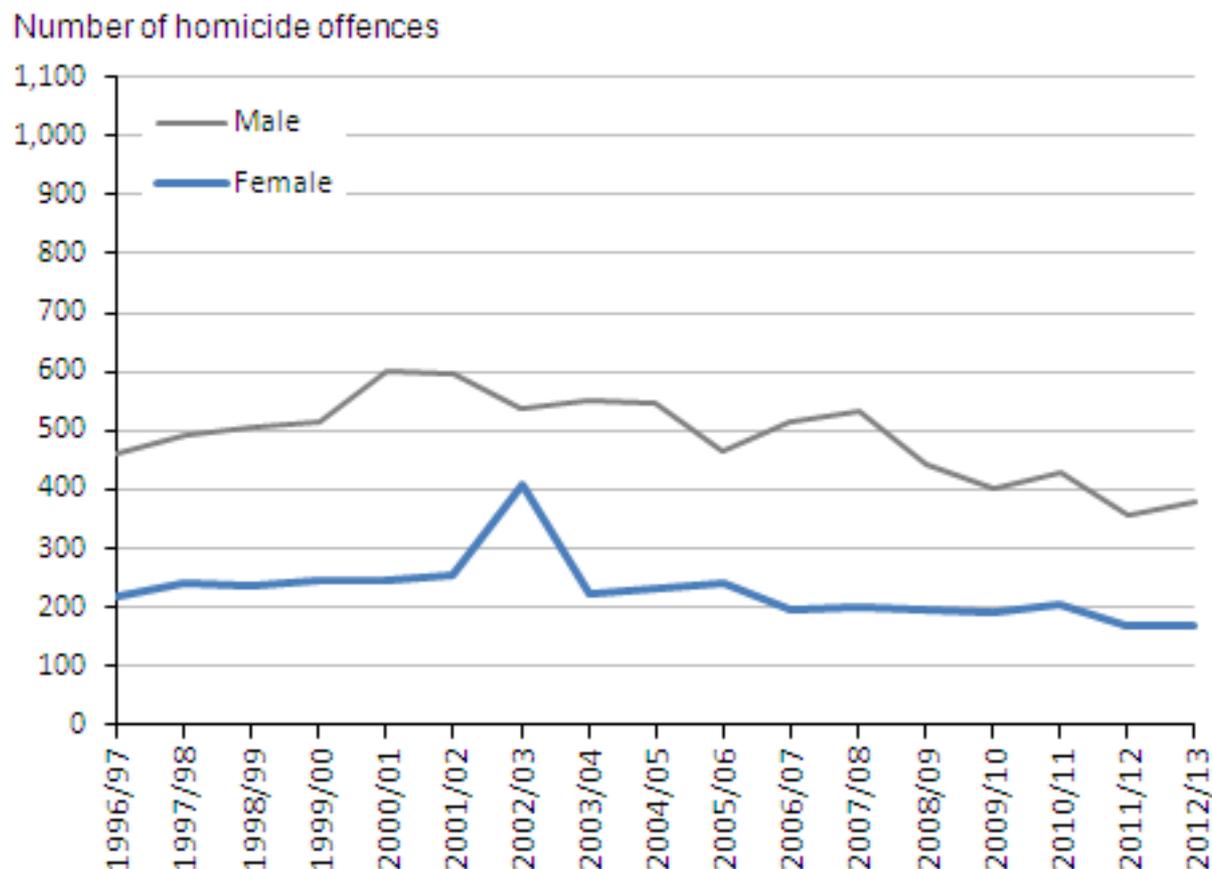
The victimisation rate for homicide remains low, with 9.7 homicides recorded per million population during 2012/13. With the exception of 2011/12 (9.4 offences per million population) and 1983 (also 9.7 offences per million population), this is the lowest homicide rate since the late 1970s (for example, there were 9.6 homicides per million population in 1978). If the 172 homicides committed by Harold Shipman recorded in 2002/03 are excluded from analysis, homicide rates peaked in 2001/02, at 15.2 offences per million population¹ ([Appendix table 2.01 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

The homicide rate has consistently been higher for males than for females (Figure 2.2). In 2012/13 the homicide rate for males (13.6 per million population) was just over twice that for females (6.0 per million population) ([Appendix table 2.03 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

In 2012/13, around two-thirds of homicide victims were male (69%, 380 victims) and one-third were female (31%, 171 victims), similar to that in previous years (68% were male in previous three years). It should be noted that of the 172 victims of Harold Shipman recorded in 2002/03, 130 were women. Among those victims aged under one year old, 50% were male.

There was a small increase in the number of male victims (up 6% from 358) while the number of female victims remained the same (171) compared with 2011/12.

Figure 2.2: Homicide offences currently recorded by the police in England and Wales, by sex of victim, 1996/97 to 2012/13(1,2)



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. Year 2002/03 includes 42 male and 130 female victims of Dr Harold Shipman.

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Notes

1. 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 14.6 offences per million population.

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 such as a broken bottle, with 194 such homicides (35% of total) recorded in 2012/13 compared with 209 (39%) in 2011/12 ([Appendix table 2.04 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Although the volume 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.

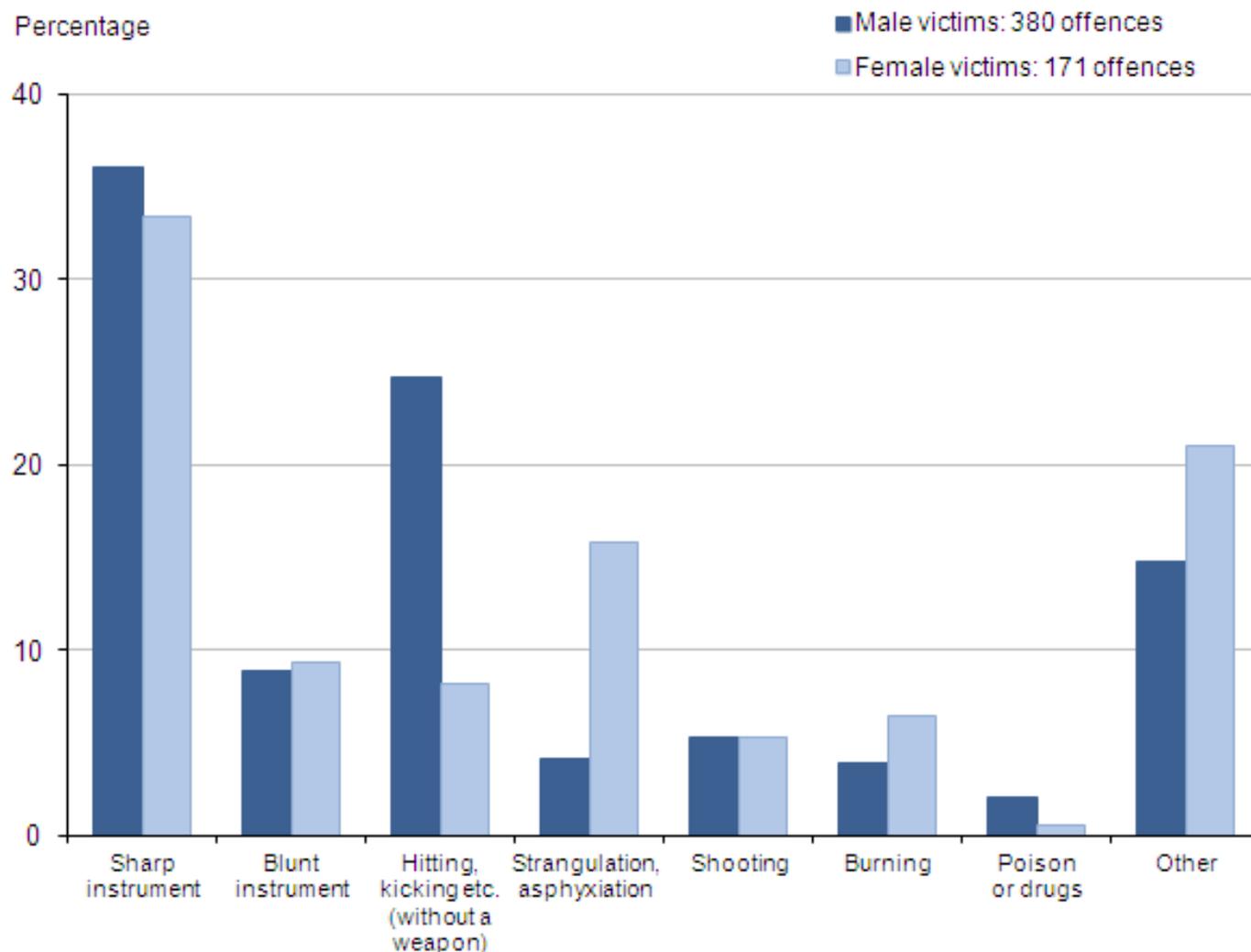
The second most common method of killing in 2012/13 was 'kicking or hitting without a weapon', accounting for 108 homicides (20% of the total), a figure that has been fluctuating slightly over time.

In 2012/13, 29 homicide victims were killed by shooting, a decrease of 11 from the previous year and the lowest number since 1980 (19 homicides).

Similar proportions of male and female victims were killed by a sharp or blunt instrument but there were gender differences in other methods of killing. For example while hitting and kicking without a weapon was the second most common method overall, for female victims, it was strangulation or asphyxiation (27 homicides in 2012/13; 16% 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.

- Around a third of both male and female homicides in the last year were killed with a sharp instrument (36% and 33% respectively).
- A quarter (25%) of male homicide victims over the last year were killed by hitting or kicking without a weapon.
- Around a sixth (16%) of female homicide victims were strangled or asphyxiated.

Figure 2.3: Offences currently recorded as homicide by apparent method of killing and sex of victim, 2012/13(1,2)



Notes:

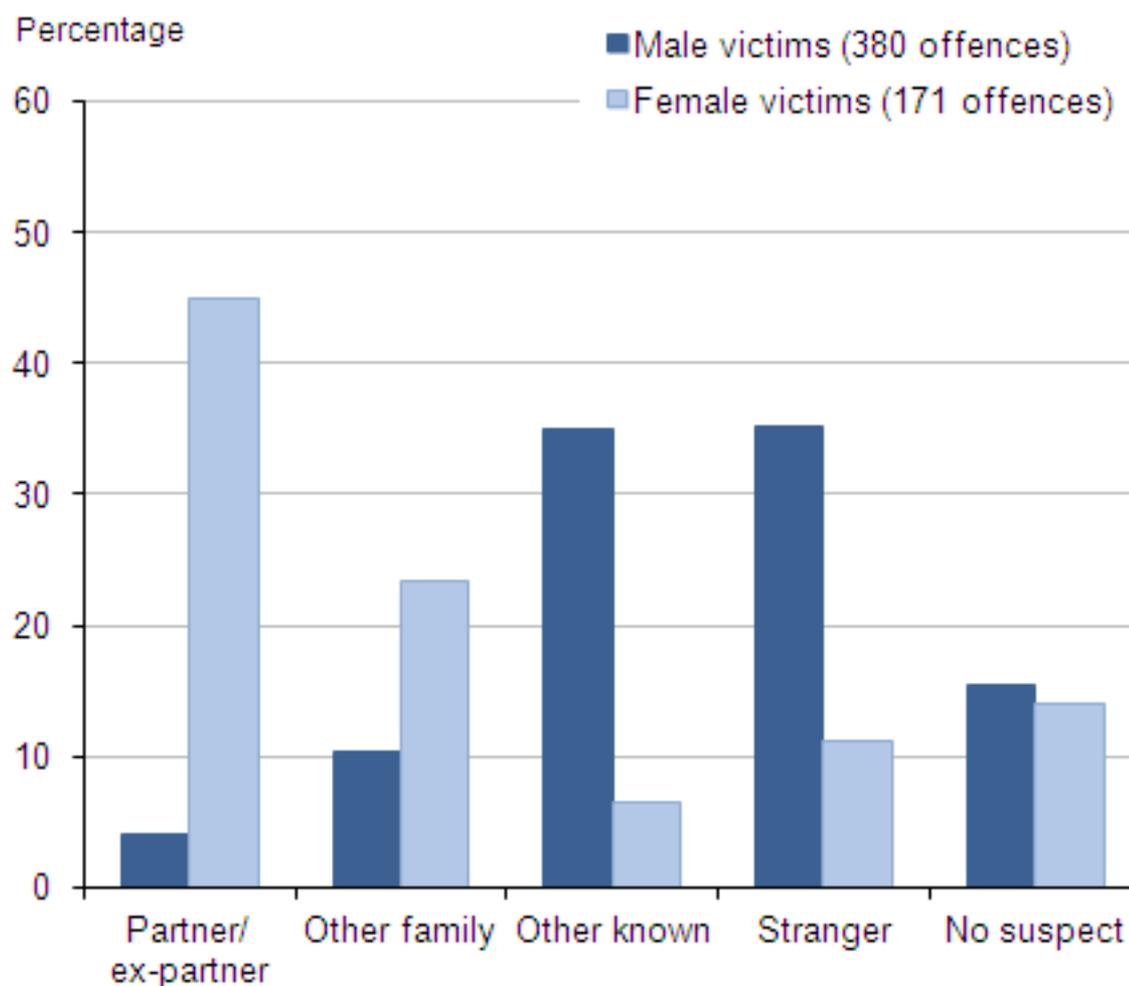
1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. Includes all other apparent methods and where method is unknown.

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Relationship Between Victim and Principal Suspect

Data on relationship of victim to principal suspect for 2012/13 show similar findings to previous years. Female victims were more likely than male victims to have been acquainted with the principal suspect (75% and 49% respectively). Female victims were far more likely than male victims to be killed by a partner or ex-partner (45% and 4% respectively) and less likely to be killed by a stranger (11% compared with 35%) ([Appendix table 2.05 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#); Figure 2.4).¹

Figure 2.4: Relationship of victim to principal suspect by sex of victim, 2012/13(1,2)**Notes:**

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

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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/

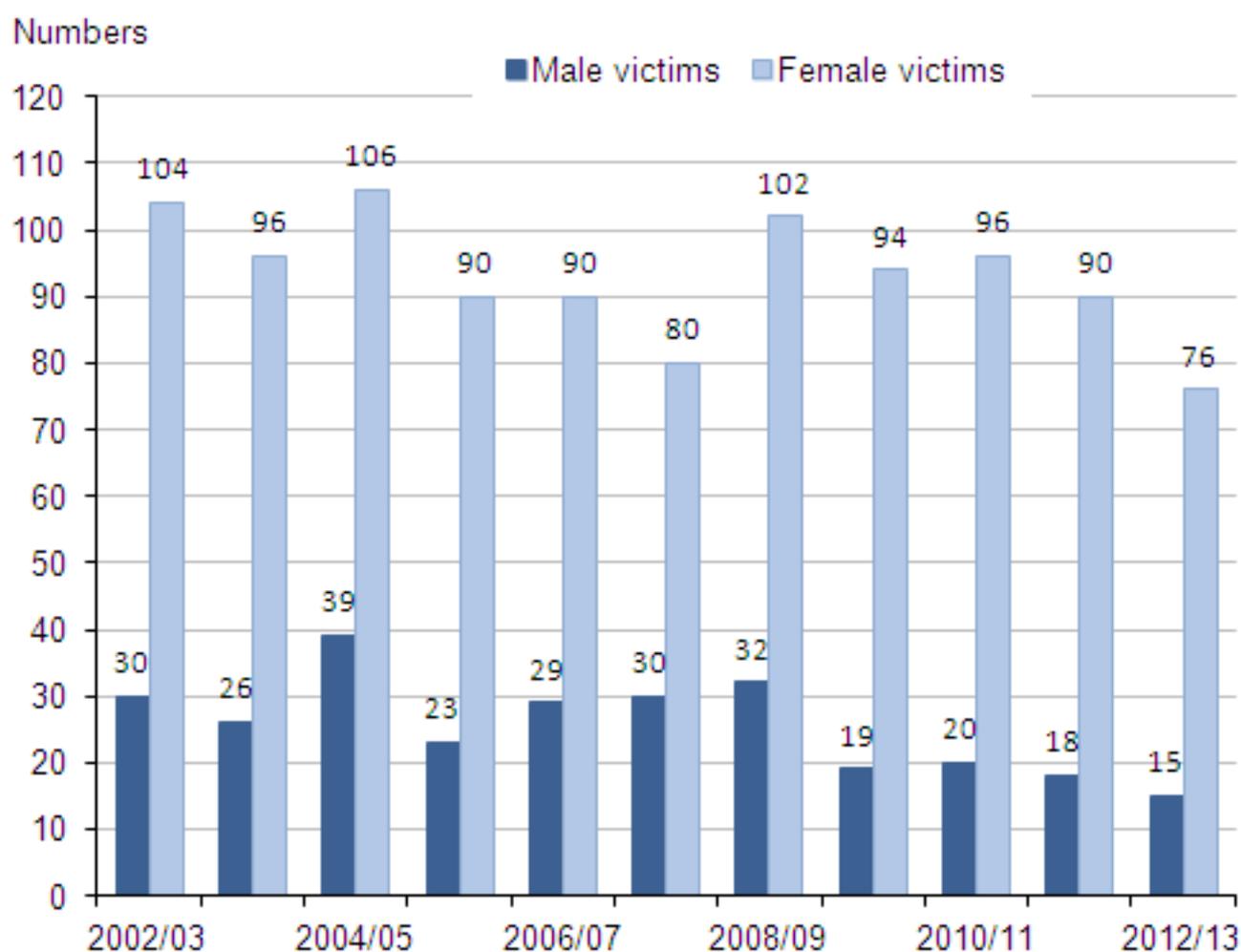
contract killing and other) and where there is insufficient information about the suspect to determine relationship to victim.

Victims Aged 16 Years and Over

There were large differences in the victim-suspect relationship between men and women. In 2012/13, just over half (53%) of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner/ex-partner¹ (76 offences), This is slightly lower than 2011/12 when the proportion of female victims killed by a partner/ex-partner was 61% (90 homicides) and the same as that found in 2010/11 (53%).

In contrast, only 4% of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by their partner/ex-partner in 2012/13 (15 offences) a percentage that is similar to the last three years (5%) ([Appendix table 2.06 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#), Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Number of homicide victims aged 16 and over killed by partner/ex-partner, by sex of victim, 2002/03 to 2012/13(1,2)



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.

2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

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Around two-fifths (38%) of male victims aged 16 or over were killed by a friend/acquaintance in 2012/13 (similar to that found in 2011/12, 42%). In contrast, female adult victims were less likely than men to be killed by a friend/acquaintance, at 8% of homicides in 2012/13 (11 offences).

In 2012/13, just over one-third of male victims (129 males, 38%) and around one in ten female victims (16 females, 11%) 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

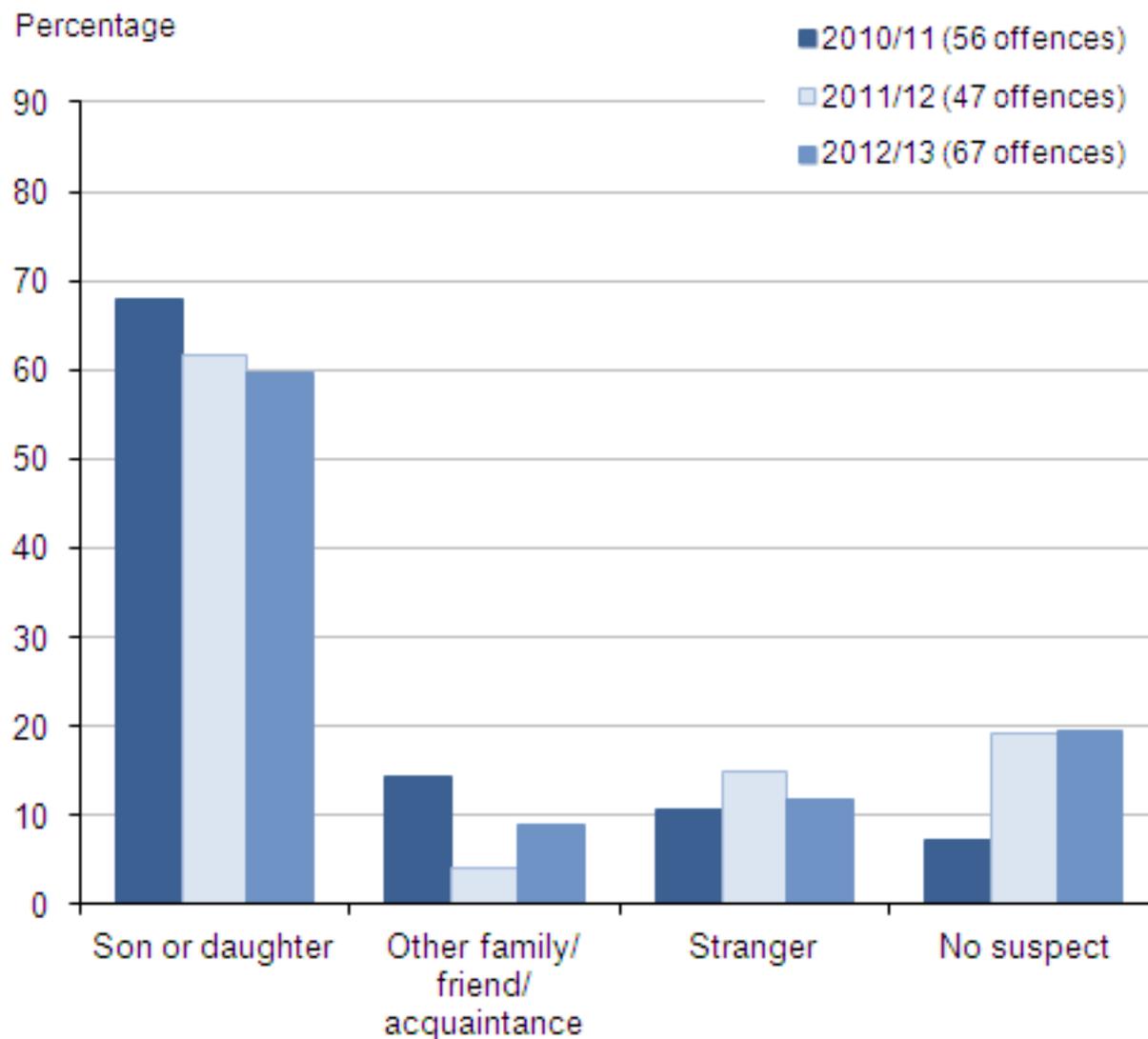
In 2012/13, there were 67 victims under 16 years of age, compared with 47 victims in the previous year. Of the 551 offences currently recorded as homicide in 2012/13, 12% involved victims under the age of 16, a slightly higher proportion than the 9% in 2011/12 ([Appendix table 2.03 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This pattern was slightly different by gender; 10% of all currently recorded male homicide victims were aged under 16, whereas 16% of female homicide victims were aged under 16.

As in previous years, the majority of victims aged under 16 were acquainted with their principal suspect (69%, 46 offences), and in all but six 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 8 offences in 2012/13 (12%). This compares with 7 offences in 2011/12 (15%) and 6 offences in 2010/11 (11%).

As of 8 November 2013, there were 13 victims aged under 16 (19%) for whom no suspect had been identified, a slightly higher proportion than among adult victims (13%). This number is likely to fall as police investigations continue. ([Appendix table 2.07 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Figure 2.6: Victims under 16 years of age, by relationship of victim to principal suspect, 2010/11 to 2012/13(1,2,3)



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

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Focus on Partner/Ex-Partner Homicides

As previously shown, around half of female victims aged 16 and over, and around 1 in 20 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. As mentioned above, 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'.

An 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.

Due to the relatively low numbers of homicides there can be considerable year-to-year variability, and so this analysis combines data for a three-year period (2010/11 to 2012/13) to provide more robust results. Figures in this section are compared with homicides where the relationship was not 'partner/ex-partner'¹.

Male victims of partner/ex-partner homicides were slightly older on average than other male homicide victims (44 compared with 40 years old). In contrast, female victims of partner/ex-partner homicides were younger than other female homicide victims (41 compared with 51 years old). (Table 2.1 and [Appendix table 2.08 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#))

Male victims of partner/ex-partner homicides were more likely to be White than other ethnic groups but the difference among female victims of partner/ex-partner homicides was less marked.

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

- Sixty per cent of male victims of partner/ex-partner homicide: were killed with a sharp instrument, compared with 38% for other male victims aged over 16.
- Nine per cent 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 46% of partner/ex-partner homicide victims were killed with a sharp instrument, compared with 32% of other female homicide victims aged 16 and over. Conversely, 27% of female victims of partner/ex-partner homicide were killed by strangulation, compared with 16% 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. However, the category of partner/ex partner homicide includes homicides committed by the victim's lover's spouse or emotional rival (see definition above) and this was the case in the majority (14 out of 19) of these instances. Among other adult homicides, 96% of male and 87% of female victims aged 16 or over were killed by a male suspect.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of partner/ex-partner[1] homicides for victims aged 16 and over, combined data for 2010/11 to 2012/13[1,2,3,4]

England and Wales

	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	44	41	41	40	51	42
Ethnicity of victim⁵	Percentages					
White	91	79	81	75	83	76
Black	6	8	7	13	5	11
Asian (Indian sub-continent)	4	8	7	9	7	8
Other	-	3	3	3	2	3
Method of killing						
Sharp instrument	60	46	49	38	32	37
Blunt instrument	8	12	11	10	10	10
Hitting, kicking, etc.	9	3	4	26	10	24
Strangulation, asphyxiation	4	27	23	4	16	6
Other ⁶						
Gender of suspect						
Male	36	100	89	96	87	94
Female	64	0	11	4	13	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. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics
3. 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'.
4. As at 8 November 2013; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.
5. Total includes 21 homicides where the ethnicity of the victim was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.
6. Includes shooting, explosion, burning, drowning, poison or drugs, motor vehicle, other and not known.

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Notes

1. Also excludes those aged under 16 years old.

Circumstances of the Homicides

Just over a half (52%, or 284 offences) of all homicide cases in 2012/13 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 (61%), compared with when the suspect was unknown to the victim (39%). Five per cent of homicides (29 offences) occurred during robberies or burglaries and another 6% (32 offences) were attributed to irrational acts¹. As at 8 November 2013, the apparent circumstances were not known for 18% of homicides (100 offences) recorded in 2012/13 ([Appendix table 2.09 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). This figure is likely to decrease as the police carry out further investigations.

Notes

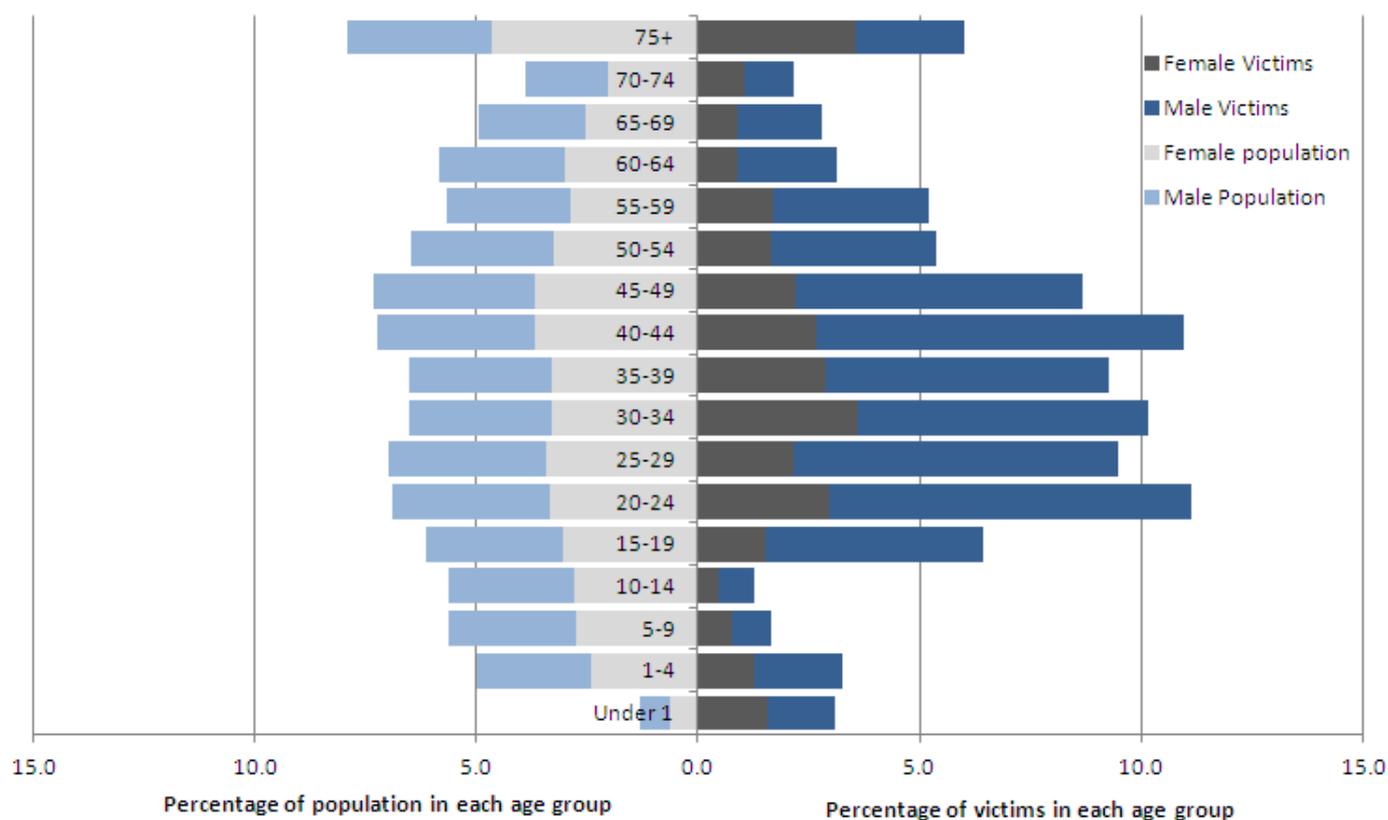
1. These figures do not account for all homicides committed by mentally disturbed people, as offences with an apparent motive (for example, during a quarrel or robbery) are instead included

under the respective circumstance. Higher overall totals for homicides committed by mentally disturbed people are quoted elsewhere (Appleby, [2006](#), [2010](#)).

Homicide Rates for Different Age Groups

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. There were 22 homicide victims under the age of one in 2012/13 (a rate of 30 per million population), seven more than the 15 recorded in 2011/12 (21 per million population, [Appendix table 2.03 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). Analysis and commentary focus on data combined from the last three years (2010/11 to 2012/13) to allow a greater breakdown of age groupings, including by sex (Figure 2.7; [Appendix table 2.10 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

Figure 2.7: Age and gender profile of currently recorded homicide victims compared with population, combined years 2010/11 to 2012/13(1,2)



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

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Victims aged between 20 and 44 years old 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 (188 victims). The relatively high incidence rate among 20 to 24 year olds was largely due to the higher incidence rate among 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 (140 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 to the population profile (45% of female homicide victims were aged between 20 and 44 years old, whereas 34% of the female population was covered by these age groups).

For female victims, a disproportionately small number of victims were in the age groups 5 to 9 years and 10 to 14 years. For example, while 5% of the female population were aged 10 to 14 years old, this age group accounted for 1% of homicide victims (8 victims).

Analysis of Ethnicity in Homicide Data

Additional analysis has been conducted on the ethnicity, sex, age and method of killing of victims. Due to the relatively low numbers of homicides, there can be considerable year-to-year variability and so this analysis combines data for a three-year period (2010/11 to 2012/13) to provide more stable results. Caution should nevertheless be taken in drawing conclusions from these figures because the numbers remain small for some ethnic minority groups. The Ministry of Justice 'Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System' publication¹ also reports on homicide and ethnicity, as part of more detailed discussion on the representation of Black and Minority Ethnic groups as suspects, offenders and victims within the criminal justice system.

There are likely to be important socio-economic factors in homicides that cannot be examined using Homicide Index data. There is evidence from other studies that suggests that ethnicity is just one of many factors in homicides and violent incidents in general. [Leyland and Dundas](#) (2009), for example, investigated Scottish homicides between 1980 and 2005, and concluded that "contextual influences of the neighbourhood of residence might be more important than individual characteristics in determining the victims of assault". When analysing overall CSEW violence, the 2009/10 survey ([Flatley et al.](#), 2010) showed that ethnic groups other than White do not have a higher risk of being a victim of CSEW violence. While the CSEW looks at violence overall (and does not cover homicide), and the Leyland and Dundas study is for Scotland, this does provide some evidence that other socio-factors may also be important.

Of the 1,715 homicides recorded by police in the three-year period ending March 2013:

- Over three-quarters (77%) of victims were White (1,317 offences), compared with 86% of the population of England and Wales from 2011 Census² results,
- Around one in ten (11%) were Black (186), compared with 3% of the population,
- One in twelve (8%) were Asian (140), the same as the population, and

- Three in one hundred (3%) were of other minority ethnic groups (47), the same as the population of England and Wales.

The ethnicity of 1% of victims was not recorded (25 offences) (Table 2.2).

Black victims are therefore over-represented and White under-represented but it should be noted that these results have not been age-standardised, and it was shown earlier ([Appendix table 2.03 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)) that there is a relationship between age and being a victim of homicide and there is a relationship between age and ethnicity.

Estimated homicide rates by ethnicity shown in Table 2.2 have been produced using the 2011 Census estimates which classify ethnicity by self-identification of ethnic group, which is not directly comparable with the visual identification of homicide victims carried out by the police³. These estimates indicate that Black and Asian people have higher homicide rates when compared with White people. For example, Black males, at a homicide rate of 55 offences per million population, are over four times more likely to be a victim of homicide than White males (12 offences per million population). The differential is less pronounced for female victims; yet Black females were around twice as likely to be a victim of homicide than White female victims (13 million offences per population compared with 6 million offences per population).

Table 2.2: Currently recorded homicide victims[1,2,3] by ethnic appearance and sex, numbers and rates per million population, combined data for 2010/11 to 2012/13

	England and Wales				
	White	Black	Asian	Other	All ethnic groups
Number of victims					
Male	879	147	99	31	1,170
Female	437	39	41	16	544
All victims	1,317	186	140	47	1,715
Rates per million population					
Male	12	55	16	11	14
Female	6	13	7	6	6
All victims	9	33	11	9	10

Table notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics

3. Excludes 25 cases where the victim ethnicity was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.

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There are differences in age profile and method of killing by ethnicity. The following analysis excludes offences for which the victim's ethnicity is not known or not recorded.

Ethnic minority victims tended to be younger than White victims, with those in the Black ethnic minority group the youngest. The average age of Black victims was 28 years, compared with 40 for White, 33 for Asian and 31 for 'Other'. The lower average age of Black victims is due to proportionately more homicides in the 16 to 29 age ranges than for other ethnic groups (data not shown).

Homicide by sharp instrument was the most common method of killing across all ethnic groups, although Black victims were more likely to have been killed this way than other groups (Black: 51%, White: 35%, Asian: 40%, 'Other': 43%). Black victims were more likely than White victims to be stabbed or shot and less likely to be a victim of homicide by hitting, kicking etc. (Table 2.3).

Black homicide victims were proportionally more likely to have been shot (25% of Black victims) than other ethnic groups (White: 6%, Asian: 4%, 'Other': 2%).

Table 2.3: Apparent method of killing of currently recorded homicide victims by ethnic appearance of victim, combined data for 2010/11 to 2012/13[1,2]

England and Wales

Apparent method of killing	Total homicides	Ethnic appearance of victim			
		White	Black	Asian	Other
Number of offences					
Sharp instrument	639	463	94	56	20
Blunt instrument	162	125	6	18	10
Hitting, kicking, etc.	317	272	14	20	5
Strangulation, asphyxiation	163	134	7	11	6
Shooting	129	75	47	6	1
Other	305	248	18	29	5
Total³	1,715	1,317	186	140	47
Percentage ⁴ within ethnic appearance category					
Sharp instrument	37	35	51	40	43
Blunt instrument	9	9	3	13	21
Hitting, kicking, etc.	18	21	8	14	11
Strangulation, asphyxiation	10	10	4	8	13
Shooting	8	6	25	4	2
Other	18	19	10	21	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics
3. Total includes 25 homicides where the ethnicity of the victim was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.
4. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

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In many homicide cases, victims are killed by someone from the same ethnic group. Of those cases with a current suspect, just over three-quarters (77%) of Black victims and around one half (54%) of Asian victims were killed by someone from the same ethnic group. For White victims, the figure was 90% (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Ethnic appearance of currently recorded homicide victims by ethnic appearance of principal suspect[1,2,3,] combined data for 2010/11 to 2012/13

England and Wales

Ethnic appearance of victim	Ethnic appearance of principal suspect (%) ⁵					Number of cases with current suspect
	Total ⁴	White	Black	Asian	Other	
White	100	90	6	2	1	1,121
Black	100	13	77	5	4	142
Asian	100	28	14	54	3	117
Other	100	28	16	12	40	43

Table notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics
3. Excludes cases where no suspects are charged or all suspects are acquitted (see Table 2.02).
4. Total percentages include the 35 cases between 2010/11 and 2012/13 where the ethnicity of the victim and/or the principal suspect was 'not known' or 'not recorded'.
5. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

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Notes

1. Latest release is available from the [MoJ website](#).
2. 2011 Census results are published on the [ONS website](#).
3. ONS population statistics by ethnic group are based upon self-defined ethnicity whereas homicide victims' ethnicity is visually identified by the police. ONS figures are based on the ethnic group classification used in the 2011 Census for England and Wales and include mixed group categories which are not an option on the homicide data return. This may affect the homicide rates presented here.

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 2.5). It should also be noted that the number of cases with no suspect may reduce as the police continue their investigations.

Table 2.5: Number of suspects for currently recorded homicide victims, 2010/11 to 2012/13^[1,2]

England and Wales

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
	Number			Percentage		
No suspects charged	78	48	91	12	9	16
One	461	398	361	71	73	65
Two	60	54	64	9	10	11
Three or more	51	45	43	8	8	8
All initially recorded homicides	650	545	559	100	100	100

Table notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics

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Due to this, the number of suspects is not the same as the number of offences. In total, there were 606 suspects ([Appendix table 2.12 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)) as at 8 November 2013 relating to 559 homicides initially recorded in 2012/13. Of these:

- Court proceedings had concluded for 305 suspects (50% of all suspects).
- Court proceedings were pending for 285 suspects (47%).
- Fourteen suspects had committed suicide or died (2%), and the remaining 2 suspects had no proceedings taken on advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions ([Appendix table 2.12 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

For those suspects where proceedings had concluded, 90% were male (288 suspects) and 10% were female (31 suspects) (data not shown).

Among male suspects:

- Over half (54%) indicted for a homicide offence were convicted of murder,
- Three in ten (30%) were convicted of manslaughter,
- Around one in eight (12%) were acquitted or their proceedings were discontinued and

- One in twenty (5%) had another outcome².

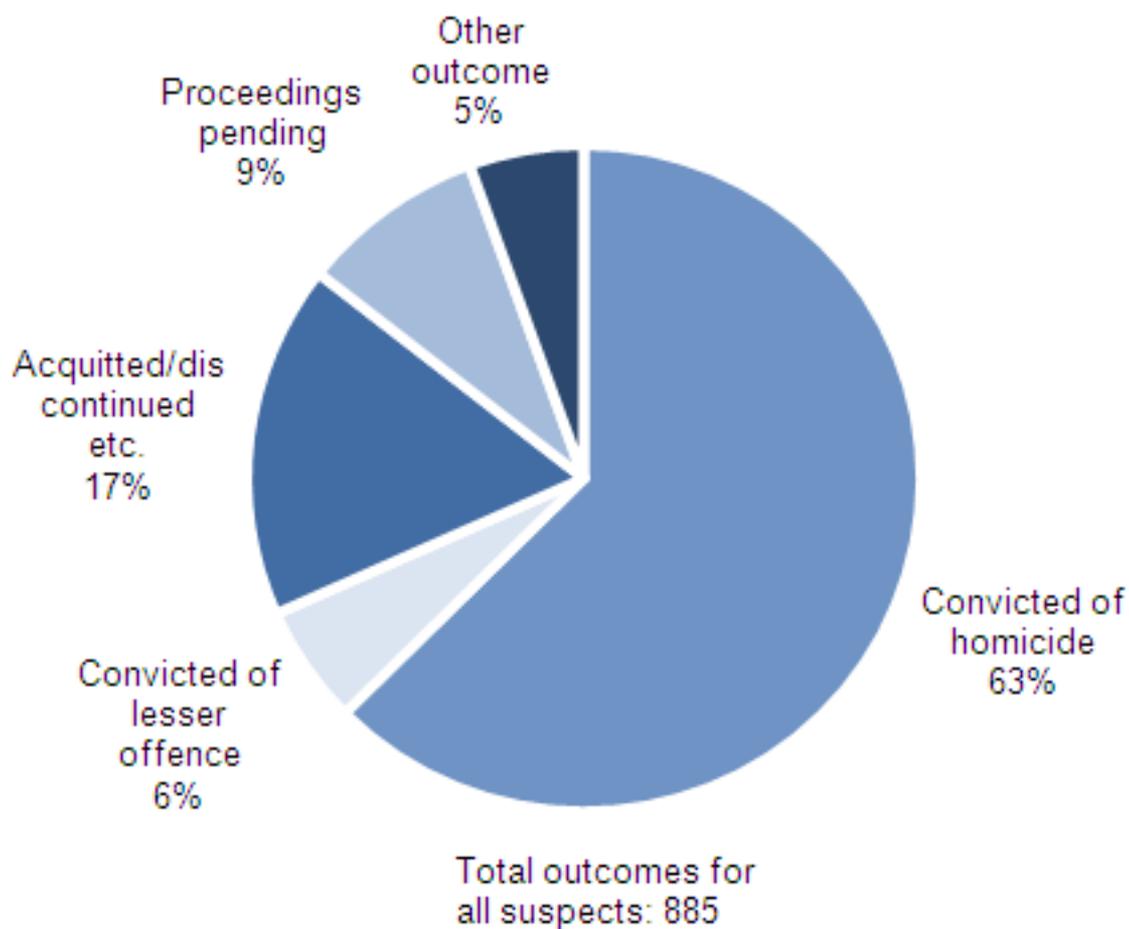
For females indicted for homicide:

- Over half (55%) were convicted of murder,
- Around one fifth (21%) of manslaughter,
- One in seven (14%) were acquitted or had their proceedings discontinued and
- Just over one in ten (11%) had another outcome.

In the time period 2009/10 to 2011/12, 79% of suspects indicted for homicide (murder, manslaughter or infanticide) were found guilty of homicide and 16% were acquitted ([Appendix table 2.13 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)). 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 2012 was 84%. This compares with 73% for violence against the person offences, and 77% for burglary offences.

The case outcomes for suspects of homicides recorded in 2012/13 (Figure 2.9) are likely to change as cases progress through the criminal justice system and more information becomes available. As such, cases from previous years are more likely to have concluded at court. This is illustrated in Figures 2.8 and 2.9 which show the court outcomes for all suspects of homicides recorded in 2008/09 and 2012/13. While 48% of the suspects in homicides recorded in 2012/13 are awaiting court proceedings, proceedings are pending for only 9% of the cases recorded in 2008/09. Conversely, 42% of the suspects of homicides recorded in 2012/13 have been to court and been convicted of homicide compared with 63% of those recorded in 2008/09.

Figure 2.8: Current outcomes(1,2,3) for suspects of homicides recorded in 2008/09



Notes:

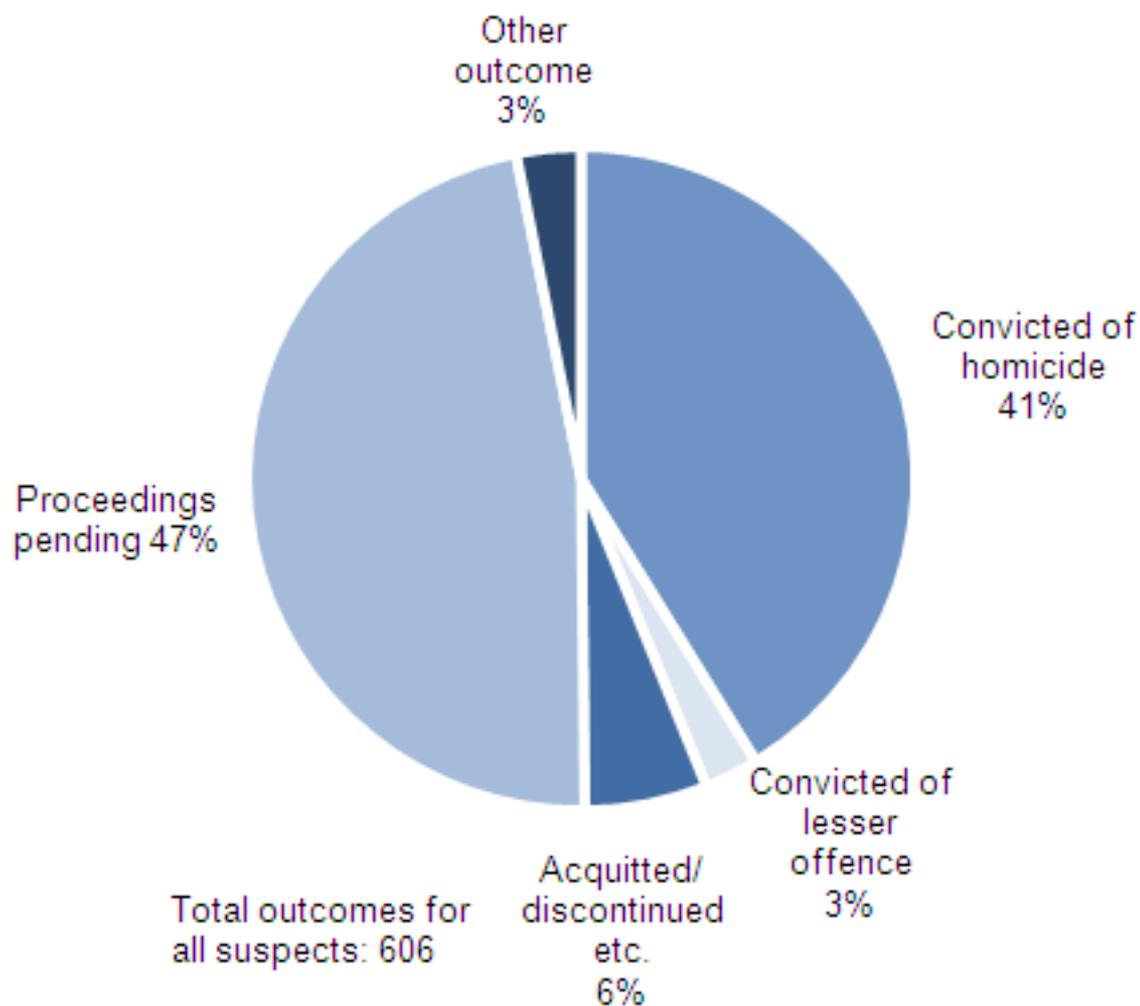
1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. As of 8 November 2013.
4. 'Other outcome' includes suspect unfit to plead, proceedings concluded with other outcome, suspect committed suicide or died and the cases where no court proceedings were taken.

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Figure 2.9: Current outcomes(1,2,3) for suspects of homicides recorded in 2012/13



Notes:

1. Source: Homicide Index, Home Office.
2. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.
3. As of 8 November 2013.
4. '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.

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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 2012/13 there were 3 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 2011/12, there were 2 people convicted of homicide who had a previous conviction for homicide ([Appendix table 2.15 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

For homicide offences recorded between 2002/03 and 2012/13, 43 people who were convicted of a homicide offence had a previous conviction for homicide. Of these 43 offences, the second conviction was for murder in 35 cases ([Appendix table 2.16 \(1.38 Mb Excel sheet\)](#)).

International Homicide Comparisons

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

- There are different definitions of homicide between countries, although definitions vary less than for some other types of crimes;
- There are 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 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 2008 to 2010¹. 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 11.7, which is below that for Scotland (17.4) and Northern Ireland (14.2) and in the mid-rank of the EU countries shown.

Table 2.6: Homicide rate per million population for European Union countries (ranked in order high to low), averaged data for 2008 to 2010[1]

Country ²	Rate	Country ²	Rate
Lithuania	77.0	Luxembourg	13.5
Estonia	55.7	Cyprus	13.3
Albania	43.8	Denmark	13.3
Turkey	36.4	Ireland	13.0
Kosovo	30.1	Poland	12.1
Liechtenstein	28.1	Portugal	11.9
Montenegro	24.3	UK:	11.7
		England &	
		Wales³	
Finland	21.4	France	11.4
Bulgaria	20.6	Malta	11.3
Romania	19.7	Czech Republic	10.5
Serbia	19.5	Italy	10.3
Belgium	17.7	Sweden	9.4
FYR of Macedonia	17.6	Netherlands	9.1
Bosnia & Herzegovina	17.6	Spain	8.9
UK: Scotland	17.4	Germany	8.6
Slovakia	16.4	Switzerland	6.7
Croatia	15.3	Norway	6.4
UK: Northern Ireland	14.2	Austria	5.8
Hungary	13.9	Slovenia	5.6
Greece	13.6	Iceland	3.1

Table notes:

1. Source: Eurostat
2. Excludes Latvia 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

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Although the rate of murder and non-negligent manslaughter in the USA has fallen substantially in recent years, it is still well above those experienced in Western Europe, at 48.0 per million population².

The Scottish Government publish annual homicide figures³, and the most recently published report shows that there were 62 victims of homicide (12 homicides per million population) in Scotland in 2012/13, a fall from 93 victims (18 per million) in the previous year. This was the lowest in the ten year period covered by the Scottish statistical bulletin and continuing a downward trend.

Notes

1. Eurostat's [‘Trends in Crime and Criminal Justice’](#)
2. As reported in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's [‘Crime in the United States, 2012’](#).
3. [Homicide in Scotland](#).

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Appleby, L, Shaw, J, and Kapur, N N, 2006, [‘Avoidable Deaths: Five year report of the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness’](#), Report for the National Patient Safety Agency, Department of Health

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Background notes

1. A list of the organisations given [pre-publication access](#) to the contents of this bulletin can be found on the ONS website.
2. In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, statistics based on police recorded crime data 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](#) website.

While data relating to the Homicide Index used in this release is covered by the de-designation of all data based on police recorded crime, Home Office and ONS statisticians do not have significant concerns about the accuracy of recording of homicides. However, ONS accepts that there is currently insufficient evidence to provide that assurance. The ONS will work with partners to obtain fuller information on the quality of the Homicide Index and will request a re-assessment by the UK Statistics Authority in due course.

Data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) continues to be badged as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

For more information on statistics designated as National Statistics, see background note 3.

3. 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.

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