Chapter 2 - Repeat Victimisation

Summary

This section focuses on repeat victimisation of adults aged 16 years and over for a range of property crimes including: vandalism, burglary, vehicle-related theft, other household theft, theft from the person, robbery, and other theft of personal property. Data from the latest 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) is used to examine the extent of victims reporting repeat victimisation by individual crime type, divided into those experiencing two victimisations, and those experiencing three or more victimisations. The section describes trends in the proportion of victims and incidents attributable to repeat victimisation (from the 1995 crime peak recorded by the CSEW up to the latest figures). The section also presents characteristics of repeat victims of property crimes using CSEW data collected about the nature of their most recent victimisation.

• The 2012/13 CSEW shows that levels of repeat victimisation varied by offence. Vandalism had the highest repeat victimisation rate, with 25% of victims of this crime reporting they had suffered vandalism more than once in the previous 12 months. Theft from the person and robbery were least likely to have been experienced more than once (7%).

• For all property crime types except theft from the person and robbery, the proportion of victims in the 2012/13 CSEW who were victimised more than once has fallen since CSEW crime peaked in 1995, notably vehicle-related theft which fell by almost half (from 28% to 15%).

• Across all property crime types, the 2012/13 CSEW shows a disproportionately large number of incidents being suffered by a small number of victims experiencing repeat victimisation. This concentration of property crime victimisation is not as pronounced as that seen in 1995.

• Findings highlight the importance of repeat victimisation in influencing crime trends. All property crimes have shown a fall in the volume of incidents compared with the 1995 CSEW. With the exception of theft from the person and robbery, the decline has been more marked for repeat incidents than for one-off incidents. Vehicle-related theft has shown the steepest fall in repeat incidents, with an 85% drop between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys.

• Results suggest that repeat victims are not being victimised to the same extent as they once were. Generally the proportion of incidents accounted for by repeat victims of property crimes in the 2012/13 CSEW has fallen compared with 1995. Again, repeat victims of vehicle-related theft have shown the most pronounced fall in the proportion of incidents they experienced: just under half of all incidents of vehicle-related theft were suffered by repeat victims in 1995,
compared with 30% in the 2012/13 CSEW, a fall of 19 percentage points. The exception was theft from the person and robbery, which showed no change at all.

Introduction

According to the 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), the likelihood of becoming a victim of property crime is markedly lower today than in 1995 when crime reached its peak. However, for those people who do become a victim, the experience can be traumatic, and for the few who become a victim more than once, the impact can be devastating. The importance of intervening and countering repeat victimisation is well recognised, and the CSEW has historically provided a valuable source of information for understanding the extent of, and specific crimes associated with, repeat victimisation.

According to Farrell & Pease (1993), "the most common mistake made by those using crime statistics is to look at incidence on its own, and to take it as the measure of the crime problem". In fact, the number of crimes committed in a given area should not be interpreted as the number of unique victims in that area experiencing crime, and a very different picture emerges when the number of crimes per victim is considered, that is, repeated occurrences of the same crime against the same household or individual.

Repeat victimisation is defined as being a victim of the same offence more than once within the previous 12-month reference period asked about in the survey\(^1\). This is regardless of the number of victimisations suffered and any replacement property. For example, a victim who has had their vehicle vandalised twice or more is considered a repeat victim regardless of whether it is the same or a replacement vehicle that has been damaged. Importantly, repeat victimisation should not be confused with multiple victimisation, not covered in this paper, which is defined as the experience of being a victim of a number of different offences within the 12-month reference period.

Notes for Introduction

\(^1\) CSEW estimates for the number of incidents only include the first five in a ‘series’ of victimisations where events of a similar nature and probably by the same perpetrator(s) have occurred. This ‘capping’ restriction has been applied since the CSEW began. For more information refer to Chapter 2 of the User Guide.

Overview of repeat victimisation

The 2012/13 CSEW indicates that only a small proportion of the population are affected by repeat victimisations; in fact 6% reported having been victimised more than once in the preceding twelve months. Across property crime types, the large majority of respondents had not been a victim in the preceding twelve months, and those who were victimised were, in most cases, victimised once (Appendix Table 2.01) (448 Kb Excel sheet). For example, 95% of households had not been a victim of vandalism, 4% had been a victim once, and 1% had been a victim more than once.

Table 2.1 shows single and repeat victims (those victimised more than once) as a proportion of the total number of victims, and highlights that some crimes are more prone to repeat victimisation than
For example, similar to findings in previous survey years, the 2012/13 CSEW shows that victims of vandalism were more likely to have suffered repeat incidents (25% of victimised households) than all other property crimes. Meanwhile, theft from the person and robbery were least likely to have been experienced by victims more than once (7% of victimised individuals).

This variation may in part reflect the differing nature of offences and intent of offenders. For example, a victim of a robbery is more able to take crime prevention steps to reduce the risk of becoming a victim again (for example, being more vigilant or not carrying valuables on display), whereas a victim whose house has been targeted by vandals may be able to do less to reduce their risk of repeat victimisation.

Table 2.1: Number of times victims were victimised by property crime type, 2012/13 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence group</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>More than once</th>
<th>Of which:</th>
<th>Unweighted base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household crimes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11 \ 1,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 \ 711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle-related theft</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4 \ 1,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle theft</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2 \ 540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other household theft</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7 \ 1,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal crimes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft from the person and robbery</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 \ 413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other theft of personal property</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 \ 609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table notes:**
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. See Chapter 5 of the User Guide for more information about the crime types included in this table.
3. Base relates to the victims of specified offences
Broken down into number of times victimised (Figure 2.1), repeat victims of all property crimes were most likely to have been victimised twice (as opposed to more than twice). Across crime types, vandalism was again found to represent not only the largest proportion of victims reporting two victimisations (14% of victimised households), but also the largest proportion of victims reporting three or more victimisations (11% of victimised households). The property crimes least likely to have been suffered by victims three or more times were bicycle theft (2% of victimised households) and theft from the person and robbery (2% of victimised individuals).

**Figure 2.1: Proportion of repeat victims by property crime type, 2012/13 CSEW**

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

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(28 Kb)
As well as providing valuable information on the extent of repeat victimisation, the CSEW also indicates the contribution of repeat victimisation to crime trends. Britton et al. (2012) examined trends in the number of incidents experienced by repeat victims for several crime types and highlighted the importance of repeat victimisation in influencing trends in crime.

Figure 2.2 illustrates how the number of incidents experienced by repeat and single victims varies over time. Between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys, the estimated number of incidents of crime decreased by 55% (equivalent to a fall of around 10.5 million incidents). However, the fall in repeat incidents has been much steeper (a drop of 65%) than in single incidents (a drop of 37%). This suggests that the drop in overall crime levels measured by the survey, and indeed levels of property crime which make up a substantial proportion of the total, is due largely to a fall in repeat victimisation.

**Figure 2.2: Trends in the number of total incidents of crime experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW**

![Graph showing trends in crime incidents](chart.png)

**Notes:**
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

**Download chart**

[XLS](chart.xls)  [XLS format](chart.xls)  (28.5 Kb)
Notes

1. Other household theft covers theft in a dwelling (thefts that occurred in the victim’s dwelling by someone entitled to be there), theft from outside a dwelling (incidents where items are stolen from outside the victim’s home), and burglaries to non-connected buildings (for example, garden sheds).

2. Other theft of personal property covers thefts away from the home where no force is used, there was no direct contact between the offender and victim, and the victim was not holding or carrying the items when they were stolen (thefts of unattended property).

3. Theft from the person covers theft (including attempts) of a handbag, wallet, cash, etc. directly from the victim, but without the use (or threat) of physical force against the victim.

4. Due to small sample sizes, and the similarity of the offences, robbery has been combined with theft from the person for the purposes of analysis.

Vandalism

The 2012/13 CSEW indicates that three-quarters of households experiencing vandalism were victimised once (75%). The remaining 25% was accounted for by repeat victims, who had the highest rate of repeat victimisation across all crimes. Specifically, 14% of victims reported they had been victimised twice, and 11% three or more times (Table 2.2). In terms of population prevalence, 1.3% of all households were repeat victims of vandalism (see Appendix Table 2.01) (448 Kb Excel sheet).

Table 2.2: Proportion and distribution of victimisation for vandalism, 2012/13 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times victimised</th>
<th>Victims (%)</th>
<th>Number of incidents (000s)</th>
<th>Share of total incidents (%)</th>
<th>Unweighted base $^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:

1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. Base relates to the victims of specified offences
Table 2.2 also shows the total number of incidents of vandalism experienced by single and repeat victims, and the percentage share of total incidents for each group. Those experiencing repeat incidents were found to collectively account for just under half of all incidents of vandalism (49%). However, a small proportion of victims experiencing three or more repeat incidents accounted for 30% of all vandalism incidents.

**Vandalism: Trends in repeat victimisation**

Trends back to 1995 ([Appendix Table 2.02](#)) show that the proportion of victims of vandalism who were repeat victims remained at a similar level (fluctuating around 30%) until the 2006/07 survey. Data for subsequent survey years show a fall, with the 2012/13 CSEW representing the lowest level in the past eighteen survey years (25% of victimised households). This has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the proportion of single victims (up from 68% to 75% of victimised households).

In addition to the numbers of repeat victims, it is possible to examine trends in the number of incidents experienced by single and repeat victims. The overall number of incidents of vandalism showed a decrease of 46% estimated between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys. Figure 2.3 indicates that between the 1995 and 2010/11 surveys the number of repeat incidents of vandalism exceeded the number of single incidents but that, the gap between the two has narrowed over time to such a point that in the last two survey years they are at similar levels. Over the long term, there has been a steeper decline in the number of repeat incidents; down 53% from 1995, compared with a 39% fall in single incidents.
Figure 2.3: Trends in the number of incidents of vandalism experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

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(29 Kb)

Between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys repeat incidents have generally comprised a larger share of the total number of incidents than single incidents. For example, 56% of all incidents of vandalism in 1995 were accounted for by repeat incidents, with the remainder accounted for by one-off incidents (44%). The most recent 2012/13 CSEW indicates that the proportion of the total accounted for by repeat incidents has reduced to 49%.

In breaking this distribution of repeat incidents down further (Figure 2.4), victims of three or more incidents accounted for a larger share of the total number than victims of two incidents. There has been a small overall reduction in the shares of both repeat victim categories over this time, but the decline has been more marked for victims of three or more incidents. This is particularly true over recent years following a peak in the 2006/07 survey, whereby victims of three or more incidents
showed a fall of 6% between the 2006/07 and 2012/13 surveys, compared with a fall of 3% for victims of two incidents.

Figure 2.4: Trends in the share of single and repeat incidents of vandalism, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: c) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) d) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

Download chart

These findings show there has been a reduction in the rate of repeat victimisation, as well as a drop in the percentage of incidents of vandalism experienced by repeat victims since the 1995 peak in crime. This shows that falls in the level of vandalism, especially over recent years, are more attributable to a decline in repeat rather than one-off incidents, and particularly victimisations involving higher numbers of incidents. In other words, there are fewer repeat victims, in turn suffering fewer repeat incidents.
Notes

1. Rate of repeat victimisation is an alternative term to refer to the percentage of victims who have been victimised more than once.

Burglary

As measured by the 2012/13 CSEW, the large majority of victims of burglary (86% of victimised households) experienced a single incident during the previous twelve months (Table 2.3). The remaining 14% were repeat victims, comprising an equal proportion of households who had been burgled twice (7%) and those who had been burgled three or more times (7%). Overall, less than half of one per cent (0.3%) of households had been repeat victims (see Appendix Table 2.01) (448 Kb Excel sheet).

Table 2.3: Proportion and distribution of victimisation for burglary, 2012/13 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times victimised</th>
<th>Victims (%)</th>
<th>Number of incidents (000s)</th>
<th>Share of total incidents (%)</th>
<th>Unweighted base$^3$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times$^2$</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. Figures are based on analysis of a small number of victims and should be interpreted with caution
3. Base relates to the victims of specified offences

As a proportion of the total number of incidents, repeat victims experienced around one third of all burglaries. Victims who suffered three or more burglaries accounted for just over one fifth of all burglaries (22%), comprising a higher share of the total than those suffering two burglaries (12%). Similar to vandalism, this indicates that repeat victims of burglary are susceptible to a higher number of victimisations.

Burglary: Trends in repeat victimisation

Examining long-term trends (Appendix Table 2.02) (448 Kb Excel sheet) shows the proportion of victims reporting that they had experienced burglary more than once within the last year decreased
by five percentage points between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys (from 19% to 14% of victimised households respectively). This was accompanied by a corresponding increase in the proportion of one-time victims (from 81% in 1995 to 86% in the 2012/13 CSEW). The proportion reporting they had been victimised twice has remained at a consistently higher level than the proportion reporting three or more victimisations. However, the gap between the two has been reducing gradually, mainly due to a decrease in the proportion of victims reporting two burglaries (12% of victimised households in 1995 compared with 7% in the 2012/13 CSEW), while the proportion of victims reporting three or more burglaries has remained at a similar level (7% in both time periods).

This would suggest that while overall there are fewer people suffering from repeat victimisation compared with 1995, burglary victimisation has become more focused on a small number of victims. This lends support to the notion that previous victimisation is the best predictor of being victimised again (for example, Tseloni and Pease, 2003); when victimisation does reoccur, it tends to happen within a short time period. For example, Polvi et al. (1990, 1991) found from an analysis of repeat domestic burglaries that half of the second victimisations occurred within seven days of the initial victimisation, while Anderson et al. (1995) found that 40% of all repeat incidents of domestic burglary occurred within one month (Holder, 1997).

In terms of trends, the 2012/13 CSEW shows burglary to be at its lowest estimated level, with a fall of 63% in the number of incidents compared with the 1995 survey. There has been a steeper decline in the number of repeat incidents (down 67%) than in the number of single incidents (down 60%) (Figure 2.5).
Examined as a proportion of the total number of incidents, between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys repeat victims of burglary have consistently comprised under half of the total number of burglaries compared with one-off victims. For example, repeat victims experienced 38% of all burglaries in 1995 (with the remaining 62% suffered by one-time victims) and 33% of all burglaries in the 2012/13 CSEW.

Overall there has been a reduction between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys in the share of the total offences accounted for by victims of two burglaries (from 19% to 12%, respectively), while the share accounted for by victims of three or more burglaries has shown little overall change (20% and 22%, respectively) (Figure 2.6). The years in between however show some considerable fluctuation in the shares (varying between 29% and 41% for repeat victims), making a clear pattern difficult to identify.
Figure 2.6: Trends in the share of single and repeat incidents of burglary, 1995 to 2012/13
CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

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Findings suggest that the overall decline in burglary since 1995 is only partially attributable to a decline in repeat victimisation. There has been a general decrease in the proportion of victims experiencing repeat victimisation, along with a decrease in the share of the total accounted for by repeat burglaries. However, there has been little change in the victimisation rate of victims suffering three or more burglaries, or in their share of the total burglaries. So while there are generally fewer repeat victims of burglary, there are a small proportion of victims whose experience of repeat victimisation has not changed and who, on average, are still experiencing similar levels of repeat burglary.
Vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft

A minority of those households who had been victims of either vehicle-related theft or bicycle theft suffered a repeat incident within the 12-month reference period (Table 2.4). The 2012/13 CSEW indicates, as shown in Table 2.4, that 85% of households who had been victims of vehicle-related theft had experienced a single vehicle-related theft, while 11% had been victimised twice and 4% had been victimised three or more times. The vast majority of victims of bicycle theft also experienced a single victimisation (92%), with the remaining small proportion experiencing repeat bicycle thefts. However, taking into account the small base numbers associated with repeat victims of this crime, interpretation of analysis relating to bicycle theft is restricted to single versus repeat victimisation as a whole, with no further breakdown considered. Overall, 0.5% of households had been repeat victims of vehicle-related theft, and 0.1% of households had been repeat victims of bicycle theft (see Appendix Table 2.01).

Table 2.4: Proportion and distribution of victimisation for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft, 2012/13 CSEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victims (%)</th>
<th>Number of incidents (000s)</th>
<th>Share of total incidents (%)</th>
<th>Unweighted base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vehicle-related theft</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times²</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bicycle theft</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice²</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times²</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. Figures are based on analysis of a small number of victims and should be interpreted with caution
3. Base relates to the victims of specified offences
In considering the distribution of incidents, repeat victims accounted for over one quarter of the total number of vehicle-related thefts and under one fifth of the total number of bicycle thefts. Among repeat victims of vehicle-related theft, those experiencing three or more incidents held the smallest share of total incidents, suffering 12% of all vehicle-related thefts.

Vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft: Trends in repeat victimisation

Examining long-term trends in the rate of repeat victimisation show similar patterns with regard to both vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft (Appendix Table 2.02) (448 Kb Excel sheet). In 1995, the proportion of victims reporting they had experienced vehicle-related theft more than once was 28%, almost double that of the proportion in the 2012/13 CSEW (15%), with a corresponding increase in the proportion of single victims from 72% to 85%. Likewise, the proportion of victims reporting they had experienced repeat bicycle thefts decreased from 14% in 1995 to 8% in the 2012/13 CSEW, accompanied by an increase in the proportion of single victimisations from 86% to 92%.

With regard to long-term trends in the volume of crime the 2012/13 CSEW estimates that vehicle-related theft has experienced a 76% reduction in incidents since 1995. Similar to other property crimes, the fall in repeat incidents has been steeper (85%) than the fall in single incidents (66%), and represents the largest decline in repeat incidents across all crime types (Figure 2.7).
Figure 2.7: Trends in the number of incidents of vehicle-related theft experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

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Bicycle theft has decreased to a smaller extent since 1995, with a drop of 30% between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys in the estimated number of incidents. Figure 2.8 shows that a steeper decline is again evident over these two data points in the number of repeat incidents (54% drop) compared to single incidents (22% drop). In fact, single incidents of bicycle theft are shown to have increased by 37% between the 2002/03 and 2012/13 surveys, although there is some notable fluctuation in the intervening years. This may point to victims of bicycle theft taking better precautions to protect subsequent replacement bicycles, or alternatively not replacing them at all.
Figure 2.8: Trends in the number of incidents of bicycle theft experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

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Similar patterns of decline were also found in terms of the distribution of incidents. The percentage of total vehicle-related incidents experienced by repeat victims has dropped from just under half in 1995 (49%) to 28% in the 2009/10 CSEW, following which it has remained fairly consistent up to the 2012/13 CSEW (around 30%). In fact, compared with other property crimes, the proportion of incidents experienced by repeat victims of vehicle-related theft has shown the most marked decrease since 1995 (drop of 19 percentage points). In breaking down further the distribution of repeat incidents of vehicle-related theft (Figure 2.9), between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys victims of three or more incidents generally accounted for the smallest share of the total number of vehicle-related thefts. Such victims showed a smaller drop in their share of the total incidents over this time (8 percentage points) compared with the drop observed for victims of two incidents (11 percentage points).
Repeat victims of bicycle theft also show a fall (albeit smaller) in their share of the total, from 26% in 1995 to 17% in the 2012/13 CSEW. This has resulted in a corresponding rise in the share represented by one-off victims from 74% to 83% (Figure 2.10).

**Figure 2.9: Trends in the share of single and repeat incidents of vehicle-related theft, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW**

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

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Therefore, with regard to both vehicle-related thefts and bicycle thefts, there has been an overall fall in the rate of repeat victimisation in the 2012/13 CSEW compared with the 1995 CSEW. In addition, a steeper decline in the estimated number of repeat rather than single incidents, along with a drop in the share of the total accounted for by repeat victims suggests that the fall in both vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft is partly attributable to a fall in repeat victimisation. With particular regard to vehicle-related theft, this fall would seem largely due to changing patterns in victimisations involving two incidents, meaning that there are still a very small proportion of victims who are experiencing a large number of repeat vehicle-related thefts.
Notes

1. Vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are categorised as household crimes, as respondents are asked whether anyone currently residing in the household has experienced any incidents within the reference period.

CSEW other theft

As with other property crimes, 2012/13 CSEW figures demonstrate (Table 2.5) that victims of CSEW theft offences\(^1\) were most likely to report one-off victimisations; this was true for victims of other household theft\(^2\) (83% of victimised households), theft from the person\(^3\) and robbery (93% of victimised individuals), and other theft of personal property\(^4\) (90% of victimised individuals). The remaining proportions comprised repeat victims, representing overall 0.7% of households who had been repeat victims of other household theft, 0.1% of individuals who had been repeat victims of theft from the person and robbery, and 0.2% of individuals who had been repeat victims of other theft of personal property (see Appendix Table 2.01) (448 Kb Excel sheet). With regard to other household theft, the majority of repeat victims had been victimised twice (11%), compared to a smaller proportion who were victims three or more times (7%). Concerning other theft of personal property and theft from the person and robbery, the small base numbers associated with repeat victims of these crimes mean that interpretation of their analysis is restricted to single versus repeat victimisation as a whole, with no further breakdown considered.
Table 2.5: Proportion and distribution of victimisation for other theft offences, 2012/13 CSEW

England and Wales

| Number of times victimised | Victims (%) | Number of incidents (000s) | Share of total incidents (%) | Unweighted base
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other household theft</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theft from the person and robbery</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other theft of personal property</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more times</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. Figures are based on analysis of a small number of victims and should be interpreted with caution
3. Base relates to the victims of specified offences

In terms of the distribution of incidents, over one third (36%) of the total number of other household thefts were experienced by victims who were victimised more than once. Among these repeat victims, those suffering three or more incidents (20%) accounted for a larger share of other household thefts than those suffering two incidents (16%). With regard to theft from the person and
robbery, 17% of all incidents of this crime were suffered by repeat victims. Concerning other theft of personal property, around one-fifth of total incidents were experienced by repeat victims.

**CSEW other theft: Trends in repeat victimisation**

Looking at trends back to 1995 ([Appendix Table 2.02](#) [448 Kb Excel sheet](#)) there has been an overall reduction of 6 percentage points in the proportion of victims experiencing repeat incidents of other household thefts (23% in 1995 compared with 17% in the 2012/13 CSEW), with a small decrease over this time among both repeat victims experiencing two victimisations and those experiencing three or more victimisations (around 3 percentage points each). With regard to theft from the person and robbery, the proportion of victims experiencing repeat incidents varied somewhat between 1995 and 2005/06, followed by a general fall from 12% in 2005/06 to 7% in the 2012/13 CSEW. Concerning other theft of personal property, 14% of victims of this crime suffered repeat victimisations in 1995, compared with 10% as measured by the 2012/13 survey.

Turning to trends in the number of incidents, the level of crime involving other household theft as estimated by the 2012/13 CSEW was not as high as it was in 1995, having fallen by 42%. The number of repeat incidents, which dropped by 54%, showed a steeper fall than the number of single incidents, which fell by 32% (Figure 2.11).

**Figure 2.11: Trends in the number of incidents of other household theft experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW**

![Figure 2.11: Trends in the number of incidents of other household theft experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW](#)

**Notes:**
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

Download chart

Presented as a share of the total number of incidents, trends indicated that repeat victims suffered a little under half of all other household thefts reported in 1995 (46%), compared with 36% of the total in the 2012/13 CSEW. Figure 2.12 shows that between 1995 and 2001/02, victims of three or more incidents of other household theft have consistently accounted for a higher share of the total number of incidents than victims of two incidents. Similar to vandalism and burglary, this suggests the greater susceptibility of repeat victims of other household thefts to a higher number of victimisations. There has been a fall in the shares of both repeat victim categories since 1995, although the decline has been more marked for victims of three or more incidents; a drop of 7 percentage points compared with a drop of 2 percentage points for victims of two incidents. The result is that the gap between the two has narrowed towards a more even share of the total.

Figure 2.12: Trends in the share of single and repeat victims of other household theft, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

Download chart

In considering these findings, while there has only been a relatively small fall in the rate of repeat victimisation in other household thefts, there has been a more pronounced decrease not only in the estimated number of repeat incidents compared with single incidents, but also in their share of the total number of incidents. This is particularly evident with regard to victims of three or more incidents. Therefore the fall in this crime type over the years is largely due to a decrease in repeat victimisation, with slightly fewer repeat victims of this crime suffering fewer repeat victimisations.

Turning to theft from the person and robbery, with regard to long-term trends in the volume of crime there has been a general fall in the number of incidents by 25% between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys; specifically a 26% drop in the number of single incidents and a 23% drop in the number of repeat incidents (Figure 2.13). Notably, repeat incidents showed a sharp rise between the 1995 and 2001/02 surveys (70%), followed by an overall fall of 55% by the 2012/13 survey.

Figure 2.13: Trends in the number of incidents of theft from the person and robbery experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW
Examining trends in the distribution of these incidents (Figure 2.14), single incidents have comprised the majority share of the total number of incidents, with an almost identical proportion identified in 1995 compared with the 2012/13 CSEW (83%). In other words, under one fifth of total incidents of this crime were suffered by repeat victims (17%). There has been some considerable fluctuation in these shares in the intervening years however, making it difficult to draw any firm conclusions about victimisation patterns concerning this crime.

**Figure 2.14: Trends in the share of single and repeat victims of theft from the person and robbery, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW**
Turning to the final theft offence covered in this section, other theft of personal property, the number of incidents is estimated to have fallen by half between the 1995 and 2012/13 surveys (53%). As seen with other property crime types, there is a steeper decline in the number of repeat incidents (68% drop) than single ones (46% drop) (Figure 2.15).

**Figure 2.15: Trends in the number of incidents of other theft of personal property experienced by single and repeat victimisation, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW**

As a share of the total number of other thefts of personal property, repeat victims accounted for 31% of all incidents in 1995, compared with 21% in the 2012/13 CSEW (Figure 2.16).
Figure 2.16: Trends in the share of single and repeat victims of other theft of personal property, 1995 to 2012/13 CSEW

Notes:
1. Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics
2. The data on this chart refer to different time periods: a) 1995 to 1999 refers to the calendar year (January to December) b) 2001/02 to 2012/13 refers to the financial year (April to March)

Download chart
XLS  XLS format
(28 Kb)

Findings would suggest that the extent of repeat victimisation from crimes involving other theft of personal property is decreasing, both in the rate of repeat victimisation, the estimated number of repeat incidents, and the proportion of incidents experienced by repeat victims.

Notes
1. This section groups other household theft, theft from the person and robbery, and other theft of personal property under the same heading.

2. Other household theft covers theft in a dwelling (thefts that occurred in the victim’s dwelling by someone entitled to be there), theft from outside a dwelling (incidents where items are stolen
from outside the victim’s home), and burglaries to non-connected buildings (for example, garden sheds).

3. Theft from the person covers theft (including attempts) of a handbag, wallet, cash, etc. directly from the victim, but without the use (or threat) of physical force against the victim.

4. Other theft of personal property covers thefts away from the home where no force is used, there was no direct contact between the offender and victim, and the victim was not holding or carrying the items when they were stolen (thefts of unattended property).

The skewed distribution of repeat victimisation

The 2012/13 CSEW has been very useful in highlighting that the likelihood of becoming a victim of repeat victimisation is very small for the large majority of property crimes, not only among the population as a whole but also among victims themselves.

Previous research has shown however that this small proportion of repeat victims account for a significant proportion of all crime. Ellingworth et al. (1995) reported that data from the 1982-1992 British Crime Surveys (BCS) (the previous name for the CSEW) found 6% of the sample experienced 63% of all property crimes, while 3% of the sample experienced 77% of all violent crimes. Their analysis also estimated that between 24% and 38% of crime “is suffered by people who experience five or more such offences…over a year” (Ellingworth et al., 1995, p. 362). As highlighted by Gottfredson (1984), this means that the distribution of victimisation is highly skewed in that the mean victimisation rate is ‘inflated’ by a small number of repeat victims (Sparks, 1982). This is largely supported by findings from the 2012/13 CSEW as summarised below, although not to the extent seen in 1995:

- **Vandalism:** the 25% of repeat vandalism victims identified in the 2012/13 survey accounted for 49% of the total number of incidents of vandalism, while the 30% of repeat vandalism victims identified in 1995 accounted for 56% of total incidents of this crime.
- **Burglary:** The 14% of repeat victims of burglary identified by the 2012/13 survey suffered 33% of all burglaries. This compares to the 19% of repeat victims of burglary identified by the 1995 survey who suffered 38% of the total number of burglaries.
- **Vehicle-related theft:** 30% of all vehicle-related thefts were suffered by the 15% of repeat victims identified by the 2012/13 survey, while half of all vehicle-related thefts (49%) were suffered by the 28% of repeat victims of this crime identified in 1995.
- **Bicycle theft:** 17% of all bicycle thefts were experienced by the 8% of repeat victims of this crime identified by the 2012/13 survey. This compares to 26% of all bicycle thefts which were experienced by the 14% of repeat victims of this crime as identified in the 1995 survey.
- **Other household theft:** The 17% of repeat victims of other household theft identified by the 2012/13 survey experienced 36% of the total number of incidents, while the 23% of repeat victims of other household theft identified by the 1995 survey experienced 46% of the total number of incidents of this crime.
- **Theft from the person and robbery:** The 7% of repeat victims of this crime identified in the 2012/13 survey suffered 17% of all such incidents. The 8% of repeat victims of theft from the person and robbery identified in 1995 also suffered 17% of all incidents of this crime.
• **Other theft of personal property**: One-fifth (21%) of total incidents of other theft of personal property were experienced by the 10% of repeat victims of this crime as identified by the 2012/13 survey. This compares with 31% of the total number of such incidents which were experienced by the 14% of repeat victims of this crime as identified in 1995.

### Characteristics of repeat victims of property crime

According to the 2012/13 CSEW, the likelihood of experiencing any of the property crimes covered in this chapter was not evenly spread across the population and varied across different personal, household and area characteristics. The majority of the characteristics found to be associated with repeat victims were similar to those identified for single victims. For example, repeat victims of vandalism were, among other things, more likely to have a household income of between £40,000 to £50,000 and to reside in areas with a high perceived level of physical disorder; repeat victims of burglary were more likely to be social renters, to live in terraced housing, and to have no home security in place; repeat victims of other theft of personal property were more likely to be aged 16 to 24 years and to be full-time students. A full breakdown for each crime type by personal, household and area characteristics is shown in Appendix Tables 2.03 to 2.09 (448 Kb Excel sheet). Many of the characteristics will be closely associated (for example, marital status and age), so caution is needed in the interpretation of the effect of these different characteristics when viewed in isolation.

### Additional notes

While the CSEW is a valuable tool for helping us to determine the prevalence of repeat victimisation for specific crimes, along with associated trends and characteristics, there are a number of points which need to be considered in using the survey to interpret the full extent of repeat victimisation:

• Due to the fact that the CSEW is a time-based survey (it covers a twelve-month recall period), it is very possible that an apparently one-off event may actually represent something more. According to Farrell and Pease (1993), this ‘single’ incident may be a repeat of a crime which happened either side of the time coverage. As a result, it is very possible that repeat victimisation is misrepresented in crime surveys, specifically that it is largely underreported, while single incidents of crime may be over-counted.
• The ‘eligibility’ of targets for repeat victimisation must be considered. For example, a car, bicycle, building or other piece of property which has been badly damaged in a crime may be removed, written off or repaired for a substantial period of time, meaning it is no longer available for a repeat victimisation to take place, in turn reducing the maximum repeat victimisation which could occur. Again this could present an over-counting of single incidents and an under-counting of repeat victimisations (Farrell and Pease, 1993).
• Respondents may be unwilling to report repeat crimes, may not be able to recall them, or may misreport them by responding in a way they believe is socially acceptable (response bias). Any of these could in turn lead to misrepresentation of repeat victimisation.
• The number of incidents that a respondent can report to the survey is capped at five, thereby underreporting victimisations which extend beyond this. In addition, some questions are only asked in relation to the last victimisation suffered, and circumstances may not be the same for all repeats.
Multiple victimisation needs to be given some consideration in interpreting repeat victimisation, as the same person could have been victimised repeatedly, but not necessarily from the same crime. Using British Crime Survey data, Ellingworth et al. (1997) found that victims who had been previously burgled or assaulted had a greatly increased risk, compared with non-victims, of becoming a victim of property crime.

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.

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