

Accredited Official Statistics



Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2023/24: Main Findings

June 2025

Contents

Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2023/24: Main findings	6
Introduction	6
An Accredited Official Statistics Publication for Scotland	6
Executive summary	7
Around one-in-five adults were a victim of at least one SCJS crime	7
Over two-fifths of crimes in 2023/24 were fraud and computer misuse	7
The victimisation rate and volume of property and violent crime has increased since 2021/22, though remain similar to the pre-pandemic position	9
The increase in violent crime is driven by more occurring in a victim's workplace and those involving perpetrators under the age of 16	10
Around one-in-sixteen adults experienced over half of all SCJS crimes	11
Almost one-in-ten adults were a victim of fraud or computer misuse	11
Around one-in-five SCJS crimes were reported to the police	11
Public confidence in local policing has fallen in recent years	12
Most adults feel that crime has decreased or stayed the same and continue to feel safe in their local area	13
How does the SCJS compare to other sources on crime and victimisation?	14
What other information is included in this report?	14
Background to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey	15
What is the SCJS and what purpose does it serve?	15
What do I need to know when reading this report?	15
Who is included and what does the SCJS cover?	16
How is the survey delivered?	18
How reliable are SCJS results?	19
What findings are included in this report and where can I access additional results?	20
What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SCJS?	21
How can I find out more about the SCJS?	22
Acknowledgements	22
Overview of crime in Scotland	23
Crime groups measured by the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey	23
What was the prevalence of victimisation in Scotland in 2023/24?	24
What was the estimated volume of crime in Scotland in 2023/24?	24
What types of crime were most commonly experienced?	26
How did the likelihood of experiencing crime vary across the population?	29

What can the SCJS tell us about multiple victimisation?	30
What proportion of adults experienced multiple victimisation?	31
What proportion of crime was reported to the police?	33
Violent crime	35
What was the extent and prevalence of violent crime in Scotland in 2023/24? ..	35
What types of violent crime were most commonly experienced?	38
How did experiences of violent crime vary across the population?	40
What can the SCJS tell us about repeat victimisation?	44
Expanding the evidence on repeat violent victimisation	46
What were the characteristics of violent crime?	47
What do we know about perpetrators of violent crime?.....	50
What do we know about the role of alcohol, drugs and weapons in violent crime?	53
What was the impact of violent crime?	55
What proportion of violent crime was reported to the police?	56
What consequences did victims believe offenders should have faced?	57
Property crime	58
What is the extent and prevalence of property crime?	58
What types of property crime were most commonly experienced?	60
How did experiences of property crime vary across the population?	62
What can the SCJS tell us about repeat victimisation?	63
What do we know about the perpetrators of property crime?	65
What was the impact of property crime?	66
How did victims view the incident and what proportion was reported to the police?	66
What consequences did victims believe property crime offenders should have faced?	66
What property crime has a cyber element?	67
Fraud and computer misuse	68
Background to fraud and computer misuse in the SCJS	68
What was the extent and prevalence of fraud and computer misuse in Scotland in 2023/24?	69
What types of fraud were experienced by adults in Scotland?	70
How did experiences of fraud and computer misuse vary across the population?	70
What can the SCJS tell us about repeat victimisation of fraud and computer misuse?	71
What kind of contact did victims of fraud have with the perpetrator?	71

How much money or property did victims of fraud lose?	74
What proportion of fraud was reported to the police or another organisation? ...	75
How does fraud with loss compare to fraud without loss?	75
How does cyber-enabled fraud compare to non cyber-enabled fraud?	75
What can the SCJS tell us about incidents of computer misuse?	76
Comparisons with other statistical sources of crime and victimisation	77
What sources can the SCJS be compared to?.....	77
How does the SCJS compare to Police Recorded Crime?	77
What are the trends in comparable SCJS and police recorded crime?.....	78
Acquisitive crime	80
Violent crime	80
Vandalism	80
Comparing police recorded crime against the volume of SCJS crime estimated to have been reported to the police	81
Strengths and limitations of the SCJS and police recorded crime data	82
How does the SCJS compare with the Crime Survey for England and Wales? ..	83
Public perceptions of policing	85
High level summary	85
What did the public think about the overall performance of the police?	85
How confident were people in the ability of the police?	87
Did the public feel the police conducted their work fairly and were engaged with their community?	89
Police presence and public awareness	92
How satisfied were people with their interactions with the police?	93
Other public attitude surveys on policing	94
Public perceptions of the Scottish criminal justice system.....	96
What did the public think about the criminal justice system in Scotland?	96
Public awareness of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service	98
Did the public report knowing about the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service?	98
Have respondents had contact with COPFS and, if so, how satisfied were they with the way COPFS dealt with them?	98
Public perceptions of prisons and community sentences.....	100
How did the public view the prison system?	100
How did the public view community sentences?	101
Public perceptions of crime and safety.....	102

How did the public think the level of crime in their local area had changed in recent years?	102
How did views on local and national crime trends differ?	103
How safe did the public feel?	105
How common were specific crimes believed to be?	109
How concerned were the public about experiencing crime?	111
How were people affected by their concerns about crime?	113
What steps did people take to reduce their chances of experiencing crime? ...	113
What did people think about their local community and the collective effort to prevent crime in their neighbourhood?	115
How would people respond to witnessing crime?.....	116
Focus on veterans	117
Summary	117
Prevalence of veterans in the latest SCJS findings.....	117
Making comparisons between the veteran and non-veteran population	119
Rate of victimisation amongst veterans.....	120
Feelings of safety and perceptions of crime in their local area	120
National Performance Framework indicators	121
Focus on harassment and discrimination	122
How common were experiences of harassment in Scotland in 2023/24?	122
What can the SCJS tell us about the nature of harassment?	122
Annex A: Data tables.....	125
Overview.....	125
Notes	126
Annex B: Overview of police recorded crime and SCJS	127
Annex C: 2023/24 questionnaire structure.....	129
Annex D: Future changes to the survey questionnaire	130
Introduction	130
Changes for the 2024/25 questionnaire	130
Development of questions on non-fatal strangulation for the 2025/26 questionnaire	130
Other changes for the 2025/26 questionnaire	131
Annex E: Interpreting charts, tables and figures in this report	132
What do I need to know to help me understand the charts and tables in this report?	132
Charts	132
Tables	133

Tell us what you think	135
Comments and suggestions	135
Enquiries	135
Join our mailing list	135
Future publications	135

Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2023/24:

Main findings

Introduction

This publication presents a summary of findings from the latest Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), based on interviews conducted between July 2023 and April 2024. For ease of reference, this period will be referred to as 2023/24 within this report.

These findings are based on a survey of 4,973 adults (aged 16 or over) living in private households in Scotland. The survey asks respondents about their experiences and perceptions of crime and the justice system.

This report is the first to include estimates on the prevalence and volume of fraud and computer misuse crimes experienced in Scotland, as well as information on their characteristics (such as victim demographics).

This release is being published alongside various supporting materials. The [associated data tables](#) page is where the data used in this statistical bulletin can be found, and the [supporting documents](#) page includes the questionnaire and technical report.

An Accredited Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are [accredited official statistics](#). The Office for Statistics Regulation has independently reviewed and accredited these statistics as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).



These statistics were designated as National Statistics in March 2018, more information on this can be found on the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) website.

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

More information about Scottish Government statistics is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Executive summary

The 2023/24 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey shows around one-in-five adults (19.9%) were a victim of at least one crime covered by the headline survey. This includes property and violent crime, as well as for the first time, crimes of fraud and computer misuse. While the prevalence and volume of both property and violent crime combined have increased since 2021/22, they remain at similar levels to the pre-pandemic position in 2019/20 and below that in 2008/09.

The latest figures also show that:

- The first analysis of fraud and computer misuse suggested that one-in-ten people (9.5%) were the victim of a fraud or computer misuse crime. These crimes made up over two-fifths (44%) of all crimes in the latest year
- while most people continue to feel safe in their local communities, most measures of confidence in the police and justice system show a decline in recent years, although many remain positive overall and most are similar to the position in 2008/09

Around one-in-five adults were a victim of at least one SCJS crime

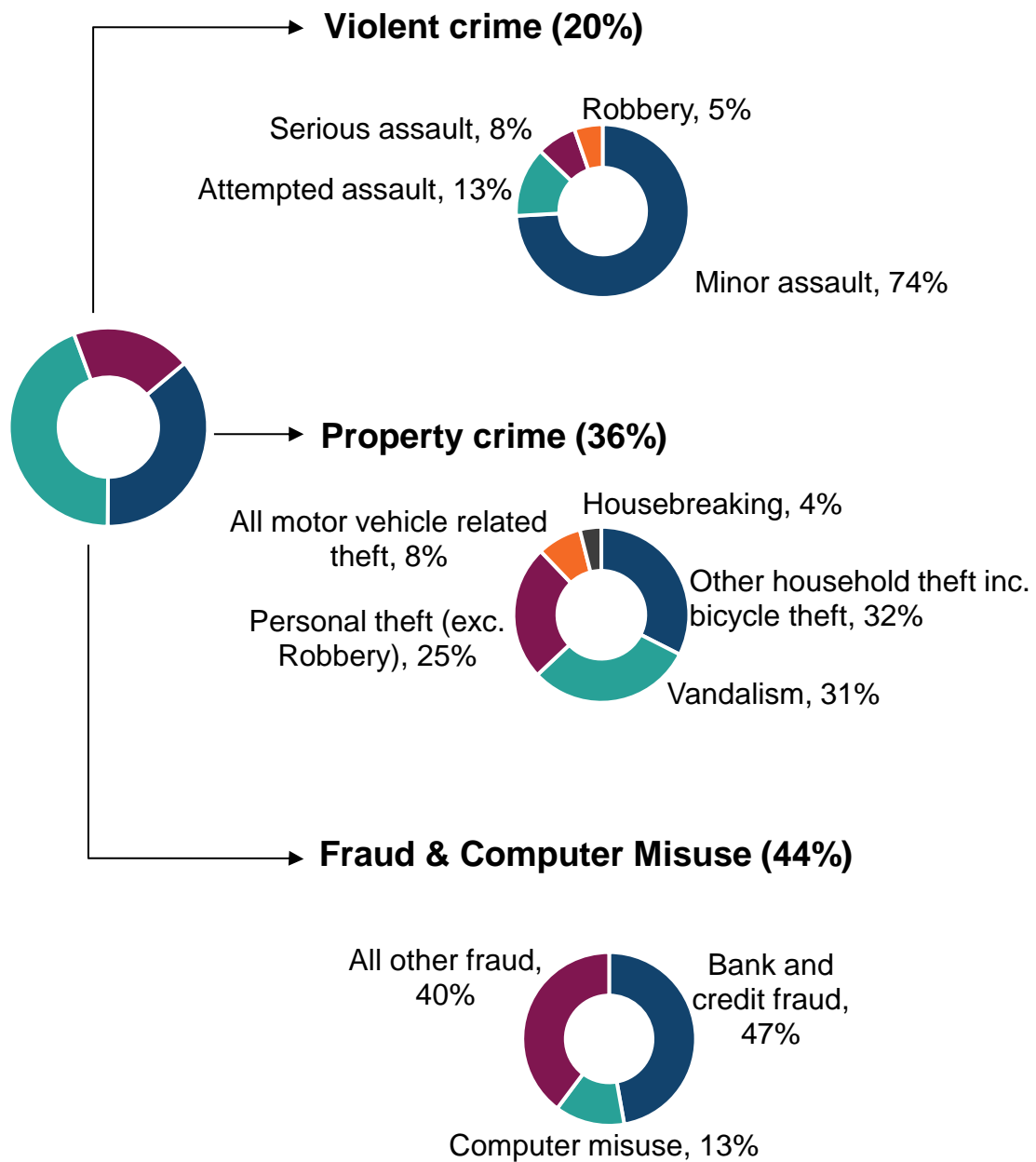
In 2023/24, four-in-five adults (80.1%) were not victims of any crime covered by the survey. The remaining one-in-five adults (19.9%) were estimated to have experienced at least one SCJS crime. For the first time, this measure includes crimes of fraud and computer misuse.

19.9% of adults experienced at least one headline SCJS crime in 2023/24	10.3% of adults experienced at least one property crime	2.9% of adults experienced at least one violent crime	9.5% of adults experienced at least one fraud or computer misuse crime
---	--	--	---

Over two-fifths of crimes in 2023/24 were fraud and computer misuse

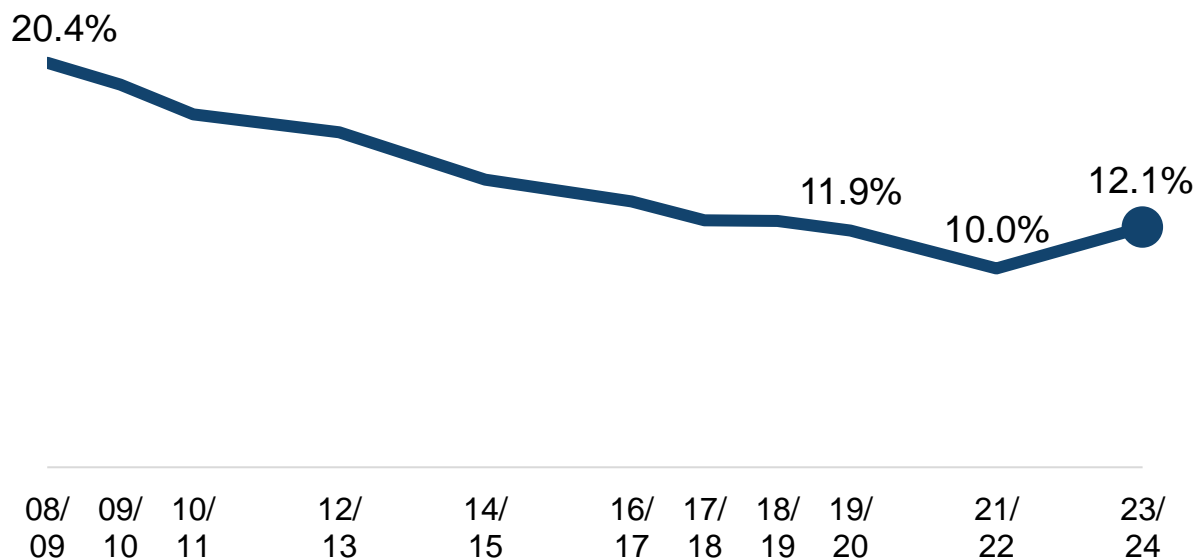
The SCJS estimates that 1,185,000 crimes occurred in Scotland in 2023/24. For the first time, this estimate includes fraud and computer misuse.

Fraud and computer misuse are estimated to account for over two-fifths (44%) of all crimes in the latest year, with almost half of these crimes (47%) being bank and credit card fraud. Property crimes made up over a third (36%) of all crimes, with the largest categories being other household theft (32% of property crime) and vandalism (31%). Violent crimes made up the remaining fifth (20%) of all crimes, with the majority of these being minor assault (74% of violent crimes).



The victimisation rate and volume of property and violent crime has increased since 2021/22, though remain similar to the pre-pandemic position

In 2023/24, 12.1% of adults experienced at least one property or violent crime. This has decreased from 20.4% in 2008/09 but has seen an increase from 10.0% in 2021/22. However, the latest figure is not significantly different from the pre-covid position in 2019/20 (11.9%).



12.1% of adults experienced at least one property or violent crime in 2023/24	Decreased from 20.4% in 2008/09	No change from the pre-covid position in 2019/20	Increased from 10.0% in 2021/22
---	---	--	---

The estimated number of property and violent crime incidents has also increased from 494,000 in 2021/22 to 661,000 in 2023/24 (up 34%). However, the latest position remains 37% lower than 2008/09 and at a similar level to the pre-covid position in 2019/20.

661,000 property and violent crimes were experienced by adults in 2023/24	↓ 37% decrease in the volume of these crimes since 2008/09	No change in the volume of these crimes since 2019/20	↑ 34% increase in the volume of these crimes since 2021/22
---	--	---	--

More information on this topic is provided in the [Overview of crime in Scotland chapter](#).

The estimated volume of violent and property crimes individually have both fallen over the longer term, down 27% and 41% respectively since 2008/09. Estimated violent crime increased by 73% since 2021/22 but remains at a similar level to the pre-pandemic position in 2019/20 while property crime has remained at a similar level to both 2019/20 and 2021/22.

231,000 violent crimes were experienced by adults in 2023/24	↓ 27% decrease since 2008/09 unchanged since 2019/20 ↑ 73% increase since 2021/22	429,000 property crimes were experienced by adults in 2023/24	↓ 41% decrease since 2008/09 unchanged from 2019/20 unchanged since 2021/22
--	--	--	--

More information on these topics are provided in the [Violent crime](#) and [Property crime](#) chapters.

The increase in violent crime is driven by more occurring in a victim's workplace and those involving perpetrators under the age of 16

Violent crime at the victim's workplace has steadily increased over time, from less than one in four (23%) in 2008/09 and around one in three (32%) in 2019/20; to now almost half (48%) in 2023/24. Another 25% took place in a private space, mostly in or outside the respondent's home. Meanwhile, incidents in other public places that weren't the victim's workplace show a long-term fall from 45% in 2008/09 to 27% by 2023/24.

The proportion of violent crime offenders aged under 16 was 31%, which is the highest recorded by the SCJS. This is an increase from 14% in 2008/09 and 8% in 2021/22. It should be noted that this increase is based on a single year, it will be important to monitor future surveys to see if this is a new trend.

The proportion of violent crime involving drugs has risen since 2008/09, from 29% to 45%. Over the same time, the proportion of violent crime involving alcohol has fallen from 63% to 35%. There has been a substantial fall in violent crime that only involved alcohol (i.e. no drugs), from 39% of incidents in 2008/09 to only 4% by 2023/24.

More information on this topic is provided in the [Violent crime chapter](#).

Around one-in-sixteen adults experienced over half of all SCJS crimes

The majority of adults (80.1%) did not experience any crime measured by the SCJS (including fraud and computer misuse) in 2023/24. One-in-seven adults (14.1%) were victims of a single SCJS crime. Multiple victimisation (those experiencing two or more incidents) affected 5.8% of adults (one in sixteen), who collectively experienced 55% of all SCJS crimes.

5.8% of adults experienced more than one SCJS crime in 2023/24	0.9% of adults experienced more than one violent crime	2.5% of adults experienced more than one property crime	1.4% of adults experienced more than one fraud or computer misuse crime
accounting for 55% of all SCJS crimes.	accounting for 61% of all violent crimes.	accounting for 48% of all property crimes.	accounting for 30% of all fraud and computer misuse crimes.

Almost one-in-ten adults were a victim of fraud or computer misuse

Around one-in-ten adults (9.5%) were a victim of at least one crime of fraud or computer misuse in 2023/24. The majority of the estimated 524,000 fraud and computer misuse crimes were fraud (456,000) with the remainder being computer misuse (68,000). Almost half (47%) of all these crimes were bank and credit card fraud with two-fifths (40%) being other types of fraud.

For fraud alone, this first analysis shows that in Scotland:

- females were more likely to be a victim than males (10.1% compared to 6.3% respectively) with no other demographic groups showing a significant difference
- there was contact between the victim and perpetrator in just over a quarter of cases (28%), with the most common means of contact being phone, email or social media (a quarter of frauds in each case)
- in over two-thirds of frauds (69%), the victim incurred the loss of money or property, with the vast majority of cases being money that was lost (97%)

More information on this topic is provided in the [Fraud and computer misuse chapter](#).

Around one-in-five SCJS crimes were reported to the police


Around a fifth of all SCJS crimes (21%), including fraud and computer misuse, were estimated to have been reported to the police. When looking at property and violent crimes combined, 31% were reported to the police. This is unchanged from the position in 2021/22 but down from 2019/20 (40%).

21% of all SCJS crimes were reported to the police in 2023/24	24% of property crimes were reported to the police	44% of violent crimes were reported to the police	10% of fraud and computer misuse crimes were reported to the police
---	--	---	---

Public confidence in local policing has fallen in recent years

Public views on the overall performance of the police in their local area and their effectiveness across a range of measures show mixed results – many remain broadly positive, but they have been falling in recent years.

Less than half of adults in Scotland (45%) believed the police in their local area were doing an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ job in 2023/24. This is a decrease from 61% in 2012/13 and 49% in 2021/22.

 <p>For police in local area:</p>	45% thought they were doing an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ job	↓ Decrease from 49% in 2021/22	Males (44%) and those living in urban areas (45%) were less likely to agree
--	--	--	---

Views on the public’s confidence in police effectiveness across a range of measures including preventing crime, responding to incidents, and supporting victims of crime were generally positive in 2023/24, but have been falling since 2014/15.

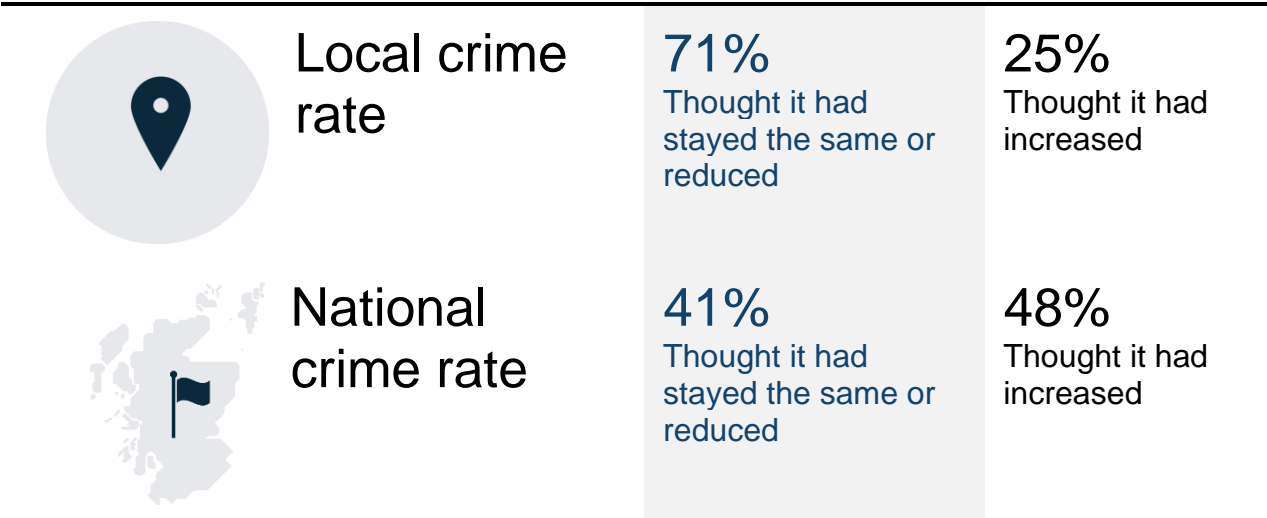
42% of adults were confident in the police’s ability to prevent crime	↓ 4 percentage point decrease since 2021/22	62% of adults were confident in the police’s ability to investigate incidents	↓ 4 percentage point decrease since 2021/22
---	---	---	---

Views on whether the police treat people fairly or focus on issues important to the community are at similar levels to 2009/10 but have generally fallen since 2019/20.

More information on this topic is provided in the [Public perceptions of policing chapter](#).

Most adults feel that crime has decreased or stayed the same and continue to feel safe in their local area

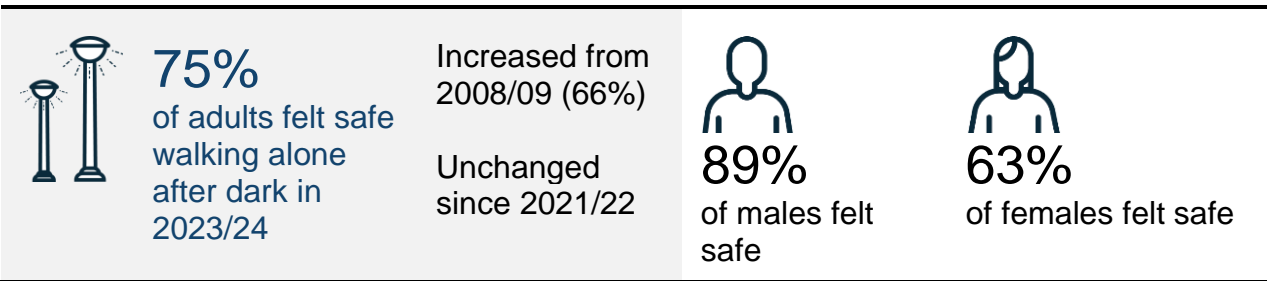
The majority of adults (71%) thought the crime rate in their local area had decreased or stayed the same in the last couple of years; although this has fallen from 76% in 2021/22 back to a similar level to the pre-covid position in 2019/20 and when the survey began in 2008/09.



Around half of adults (48%) believed that crime had increased in Scotland overall in the last two years. This is higher than the quarter of adults (25%) who thought that crime in their local area had increased over the same period. In other words, people were much less likely to say crime had been stable or fallen nationally (41%) than in their local area (71%).

Most adults felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their local area after dark (75%) and when in their home alone at night (95%). Both these measures of feelings of safety have increased from their 2008/09 baseline position, however, males continue to feel safer than females.

More information on this topic is provided in the [Public perceptions of crime and safety chapter](#).



How does the SCJS compare to other sources on crime and victimisation?

In 2023/24, the proportion of adults in Scotland estimated to have experienced crime, including fraud and computer misuse, was higher than in England and Wales (19.9% compared to 16.1%).

Since 2008/09, property and violent crimes recorded by the police in Scotland fell by 47% while the estimate of comparable SCJS crimes fell by 46%.

More information on comparisons with the Crime Survey for England and Wales and Recorded Crime in Scotland is provided in the [Comparison with other statistical sources chapter](#).

What other information is included in this report?

Further chapters of this report detail findings from questions relating to the wider [Scottish criminal justice system](#) and other related areas such as respondents awareness and contact with the [Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service \(COPFS\)](#), and [perceptions of prisons and community sentences](#). Other findings are provided from questions on experiences of [harassment and discrimination](#) and an analysis of the [veteran status of respondents](#).

Background to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

What is the SCJS and what purpose does it serve?

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) is a large scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime and the justice system. The survey is conducted in person, within respondents' homes. Sections addressing sensitive topics are filled out by the respondents themselves, using the interviewer's laptop or tablet.

This report presents the results for the eleventh SCJS, with interviews conducted between July 2023 and April 2024. The 2023/24 survey is based on 4,973 face-to-face interviews with adults (aged 16 or over) living in private households in Scotland.

The main aims of the SCJS are to:

- enable people in Scotland to tell us about their experiences of, and attitudes to, a range of issues related to crime, policing and the justice system; including crime not reported to the police
- provide a valid and reliable measure of adults' experience of crime, including services provided to victims of crime
- examine trends over time in the number and nature of crimes in Scotland, providing a complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime statistics
- examine the varying risk and characteristics of crime for different groups of adults in the population

Findings from crime surveys in Scotland have been used by policy makers across the public sector, academic and third sector to help understand the nature of crime in Scotland, target resources and monitor the impact of initiatives since the 1980s. The results of this survey provide evidence to inform progress against the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF)¹ and a range of other metrics used across the justice system.

What do I need to know when reading this report?




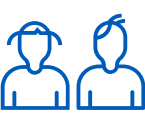


Detailed information about the history, design and methodology of the SCJS is provided in the accompanying [Technical Report](#) to help you understand the strengths and limitations of the survey's results. [Annex E](#) also provides guidance on how to interpret the figures and tables contained in this report. The following sections summarise the SCJS's background, the reliability of survey estimates, how

¹ The framework measures Scotland's progress against the National Outcomes. To do this, it uses 'National Indicators'. The SCJS informs three National Indicators: Crime victimisation, Perceptions of local crime rate and Access to justice.

uncertainty in results is addressed, and an overview of the report's content and supporting outputs.

Who is included and what does the SCJS cover?






The SCJS does not aim to provide an absolute estimate for all crime and has some notable exclusions.

Who takes part in the survey?	 Around 5,000 adults (aged 16 and over)	 In private households (incl. rented accommodation)	 Across Scotland
Who does not take part in the survey?	 Children	 Those living in group residences, institutions or those without a fixed address	 Commercial or public sector bodies

The SCJS is a survey of adults living in private residential households (including private and social rented housing) and therefore does not provide information on crimes against adults living in other circumstances (for example, tourists and those living in institutions or communal residences, such as prisons or hospitals, military bases and student accommodation). The survey also excludes people under the age of 16 and crimes against businesses. Further details on the sampling approach is outlined in the accompanying [Technical Report](#).

The SCJS is primarily a victimisation survey that gathers data on adults' experiences with property and violent crimes and from 2023/24 onwards fraud and computer misuse, including those not reported to the police. However, it doesn't cover all crimes, such as those without a specific victim (e.g., speeding, drug possession, homicide). Experience of sexual offences are excluded from the main estimates and are collected separately through a self-completion section.

For more information on the questionnaire content and structure please refer to the [Technical Report](#).

What is covered by the survey?	What is not covered by the survey
<p>► Experiences of being a victim of:</p> <div> <div> <p>Violent crime including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assault Robbery </div> <div>  </div> </div> <div> <p>Property crime including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vandalism Personal theft Other household theft </div> <div>  </div> <p>Fraud and computer misuse including: (from 2023/24 onwards)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank and credit card fraud Other fraud (i.e. consumer and retail fraud) Computer misuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime without a specific victim (e.g. drug possession, speeding) Crimes against businesses (e.g. shoplifting) Crime without a victim to interview (e.g. homicide)
<p>► Public perceptions of:</p> <div> <div>  <p>Crime</p> </div> <div>  <p>The Police</p> </div> <div>  <p>The Justice System</p> </div> </div>	
<p>Respondents also self-complete a questionnaire that covers partner abuse, sexual victimisation & stalking</p>	

Throughout the report, the term ‘SCJS crime’ (or just ‘crime’) is used to refer to any in-scope incident recorded by the survey, occurring during the interview reference period and in Scotland, in which the respondent or their household as a whole was the victim.

The survey also explores perceptions of the police, the justice system and safety in Scotland.

How is the survey delivered?



1. A sample of households are randomly selected



2. An interviewer visits the respondent's home



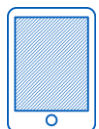
3. Participation is voluntary but is important in helping us make representative estimates for Scotland



4. Interviews last approximately 40 minutes



5. The main survey questions are answered verbally and the interviewer inputs information into a computer



6. An additional section on sensitive issues (such as partner abuse) is completed privately on a tablet computer

The design of the 2023/24 SCJS was broadly similar to the approach used since 2008/09. Therefore, when examining changes over time, this report generally compares the latest findings to those in 2008/09 and the last SCJS in 2021/22. As discussed further below, comparisons are also made with the last pre-covid survey in 2019/20.

Other summary points to note on the methodology are outlined below.

- Survey frequency: Since 2008/09, the SCJS frequency has varied slightly. It returned to an annual schedule in 2016/17. However, no survey was conducted in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic halting fieldwork in March 2020. The 2023/24 SCJS is the latest annual survey, the second following the resumption of fieldwork in November 2021.
- Sample: The sample is designed to be representative of all private residential households across Scotland. A systematic random selection of private residential addresses was produced from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) and allocated in batches to interviewers. Interviewers called at

each address and then selected one adult (aged 16 or over) at random from the household members for interview

- **Questionnaire:** The questionnaire consists of a modular design completed by the interviewer using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). When face-to-face interviewing was either not possible or respondents were not willing to let an interviewer into their home, a telephone or video-interview option was available, conducted with the interviewer using the same CAPI script. A self-completion section covering sensitive crimes was administered using Computer-Assisted Self Interviewing (CASI), or a web or paper survey when the main interview was conducted by telephone or video. [Annex C](#) gives an overview of the questionnaire structure and general topics, and the most recent questionnaire is available in the [supplementary documents](#)
- **Fieldwork:** Interviews were conducted on a rolling basis between July 2023 and April 2024, with roughly an equal number of interviews conducted across most months
- **Interviews:** A total of 4,973 interviews were conducted, from the original 5,000 target, with a response rate of 46.0%. This is comparable to that of 2021/22 (47.3%) which itself saw a large fall following the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 2 of the [2021/22 main findings report](#) detailed earlier work which demonstrated that the fall in response rate and the mixed-mode approach taken for the 2021/22 survey year did not adversely impact the quality of the data collected or the comparability with earlier years.
- **Interview length:** An average interview lasted around 40 minutes, though there was variation in interview length, depending on the respondent's reported experience of crime
- **Time period covered:** Respondents were asked about incidents experienced in the 12 months prior to the month of interview (the reference period). The time period covered by the data on experiences of crime included in this report extends over 21 months (from the start of July 2022 to the end of March 2024) so is not directly comparable with any calendar year
- **Weighting:** The results obtained were weighted to correct for the unequal probability of selection for interview caused by the sample design and for differences in the level of response among groups of individuals

How reliable are SCJS results?

The SCJS gathers information from a sample rather than from the whole population and, although the sample is designed carefully, survey results are always estimates, not precise figures. This means that the results are subject to a margin of error which can have an impact on how changes in the numbers should be interpreted, especially in the short-term. Further information on the process used to calculate estimates is contained within the [Technical Report](#).

To indicate the extent of uncertainty, this report presents key results on the extent and prevalence of crime using both best estimates and lower/upper estimates. The best estimate is the mean figure drawn from the sample. The lower and upper

estimates are for the 95% confidence interval. Aside from these key findings, the majority of the analysis provided in the report focuses on best estimates.

Because of sampling variation, changes in reported estimates between survey years or between population sub-groups may occur by chance. We therefore use standard statistical tests to examine whether differences are likely to be due to chance. Only differences that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level are described as differences or changes within this report.

Where no statistically significant change has been found between two estimates, this has been described as showing 'no change' (or equivalent). The presentation of uncertainty and change in this report reflect best practice guidance produced by the Government Statistical Service (GSS).²

Uncertainty can be particularly high around some crime incidence estimates, often where experiences are less common and incident numbers are derived from the experiences of a relatively small number of victims in the sample. We assessed the uncertainty for crime incidence figures in this report by computing the relative standard error (RSE) around the results and have flagged results which have RSE values greater than 20%.³ We advise using these results with careful consideration.

What findings are included in this report and where can I access additional results?

The report is organised into chapters that cover various topics from the survey, including the extent, prevalence, and nature of crime in Scotland: perceptions of the police and justice system, and consideration of how evidence from the SCJS compares to and complements [police recorded crime statistics](#) in Scotland. The report does not include in-depth, multivariate statistical analysis that would explore the more complex underlying relationships within the data.

Further information on how to interpret figures, tables and data presented in this report is provided in [Annex E](#). Many of these tables and figures include breakdowns by respondent characteristics such as sex, age, victim status (where available), area deprivation⁴ and rurality. Further detail on many of these tables, for example with additional breakdowns, and full time series results, are provided in the data tables presented in [Annex A](#).

All tables referred to throughout the bulletin are available in the '[annex tables](#)' excel workbook. In addition, we have also released a more comprehensive set of SCJS online [data tables](#) alongside this report which present further breakdowns of results,

² [GSS \(2018\) Communicating quality, uncertainty and change: Guidance for producers of official statistics](#)

³ The relative standard error is equal to the standard error of a survey estimate divided by the survey estimate, multiplied by 100. For more information, see the [Technical Report](#).

⁴ Uses the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

from a wide range of survey questions, by geographic, demographic, attitudinal or experiential characteristics of respondents.

The raw survey data files and survey documentation will be available soon after publication of this report from the [UK Data Service](#).

Data from the SCJS's self-completion section (on stalking and harassment, partner abuse, and sexual victimisation) is collected over two survey years and published biennially. The latest findings, from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 surveys, were published in the [2019/20 Main Findings Report](#), with supporting data tables also published. Due to updates to the partner abuse module for the current survey questionnaire, the next set of results will be for the combined 2023/24 and 2024/25 years. Details on these changes were provided in Annex D of the [2021/22 Main Findings Report](#).

SCJS results at the Police Division level are available biennially, combining two survey years to enhance sample size and result precision. Key results from the 2018/19 and 2019/20 surveys were included in the [2019/20 Main Findings Report](#). This includes perceptions of the police and victimisation rates by division. Results can be accessed through the [SCJS interactive data tool](#), which compares divisional data to national averages for specific years or over time. The next set of these results will be for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 combined survey years.

What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SCJS?

In order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, face-to-face interviews for the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) were suspended on 17th March 2020. The [last findings for the SCJS](#) to be unaffected by COVID-19, for the 2019/20 survey year, were published in March 2021.

To fill the evidence gap, the Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey (SVTS) ran in late 2020, collecting crime and safety data. However, no SCJS interviews took place in 2020/21, so no data was published for that year.

SCJS interviews resumed in November 2021. Due to ongoing restrictions at the time these were conducted remotely either by telephone or video, with face-to-face interviews resuming in April 2022. The findings from this sweep of interviews were published in November 2023.

An additional analysis was conducted to examine whether the change in approach to interviewing had impacted the comparability of the 2021/22 findings with earlier, pre-covid, surveys years. The results of this showed that while there were some minor fluctuations in some estimates, the move from interviewing face-to-face in-home to remote interviewing did not have a major impact on the results in relation to measurement error and are unlikely to have introduced discontinuity into the data time series for the SCJS. The full report is available on the [supplementary documents](#) page for the 2021/22 main findings report.

Further information on the impact of COVID-19 on the SCJS and a summary of the comparability analysis is available in Chapter 2 of the [2021/22 main findings report](#).

This report (2023/24) is the first post-pandemic SCJS to be completely unaffected by covid restrictions – the nature of which may have impacted on patterns of crime in Scotland (and therefore the SCJS findings for 2021/22). As such, to aid user interpretation we have also included comparisons with 2019/20, the most recent equivalent year that was not impacted by the pandemic. Given this, some caution should be taken when making inferences based on the comparisons between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

How can I find out more about the SCJS?

The SCJS is utilised by various sectors, including government, public services, academia, and the third sector. Engaging with users helps keep the survey relevant and responsive to their needs.

To learn more about the SCJS or Scottish Government Statistics Group work:

- SCJS user group: This group includes members from government, academia, the justice system, and the third sector, helping ensure the survey remains relevant. If interested in joining, please [contact us](#)
- ScotStat: Register with the [ScotStat mailing list](#) to receive updates and participate in working groups on Scottish Official statistics, including publications and questionnaire development.

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to a number of people involved in the development, implementation and reporting of the 2023/24 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), in particular the 4,973 people across Scotland who took the time to provide their thoughts and opinions in the survey, as well as the interviewers and support staff who carried out the interviews. Thanks also go to colleagues at Ipsos and ScotCen for their support.

Overview of crime in Scotland

Between 2008/09 and 2021/22, the headline crime measure of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) was a product of two distinct groups being combined – property and violent crime.

Following [consultation with users in 2021](#), work commenced to develop and test a new victim form for a third distinct group of crimes - specifically fraud and computer misuse. This new questionnaire was largely based on that used from 2015 onwards by the Crime Survey for England and Wales.⁵ With the new victim form included within the 2023/24 survey questionnaire, findings on the prevalence and characteristics of fraud and computer misuse in Scotland are presented here for the first time.

In this report, headline SCJS crime includes property and violent crime, as previously defined, and also now fraud and computer misuse (see section below). As this is the first year of an expanded headline measure, comparisons over time are not yet possible. However, in addition to the new headline measure, we will continue to provide long-term comparisons of property and violent crimes combined in line with the previous measurement.

Crime groups measured by the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

Violent crime includes the following distinct groups:

- assault (includes serious assault, minor assault with injury, minor assault with no or negligible injury, and attempted assault)
- robbery

Property crime includes the following distinct groups:

- housebreaking
- personal theft (excluding robbery)
- other household theft (including bicycle theft)
- all motor vehicle related theft (including theft and attempted theft of and from a vehicle)
- vandalism (including motor vehicle and property vandalism)

Fraud and computer misuse crimes includes the following distinct groups:

- bank and credit card fraud
- other types of fraud (including consumer, retail and advanced fee fraud)
- computer misuse

⁵ [Nature of fraud and computer misuse in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Further details on each of these groups is provided in the [Technical Report](#).

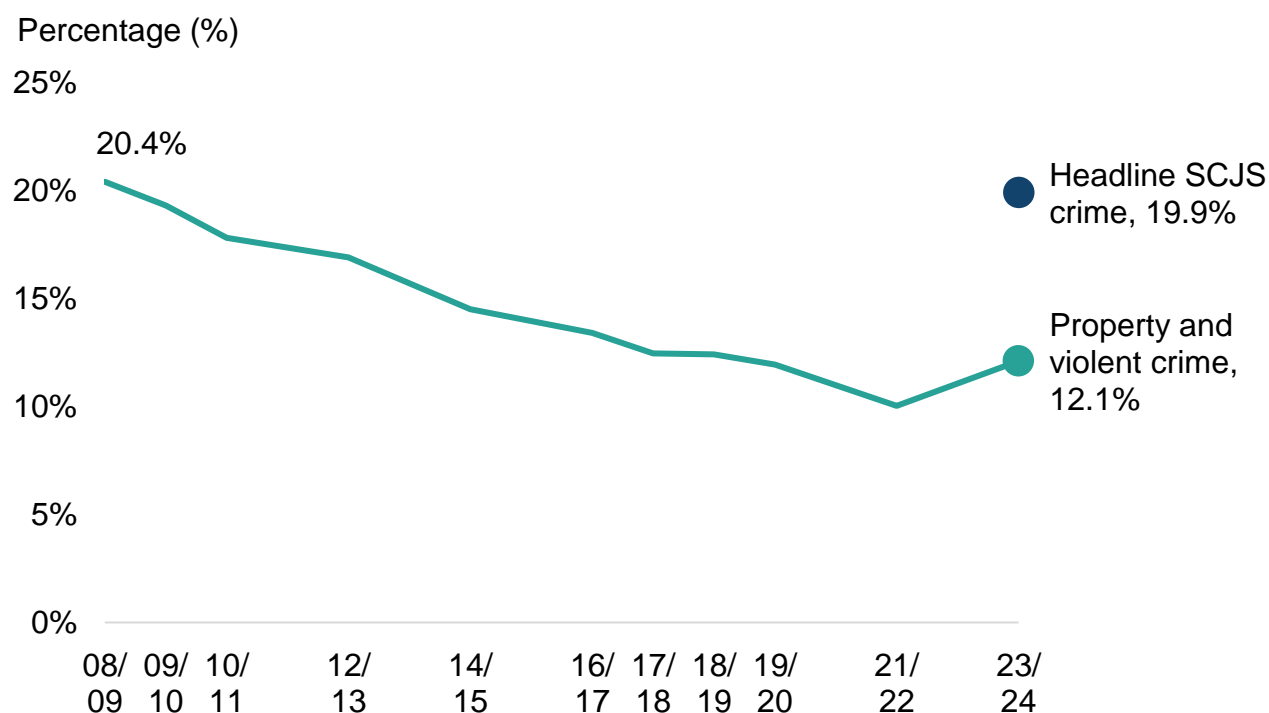
What was the prevalence of victimisation in Scotland in 2023/24?

In 2023/24, around one-in-five of adults (19.9%) were estimated to have experienced at least one headline SCJS crime (including fraud and computer misuse). This percentage is the best estimate, with the actual figure between 18.4% and 21.4%.

For property and violent crimes combined, 12.1% of adults experienced at least one crime in 2023/24. The proportion of adults experiencing these crimes has decreased from 20.4% in 2008/09 but has seen an increase from 10.0% in 2021/22. However, the latest figure is not significantly different from the pre-covid position in 2019/20 (11.9%).

Figure 2.1: The proportion of adults experiencing property and violent crime fell by 8.4% percentage points since 2008/09 but has risen by 2.1% percentage points since 2021/22.

Proportion of adults experiencing any SCJS crime, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: PREVSURVEYCRIME.

What was the estimated volume of crime in Scotland in 2023/24?

In 2023/24, the SCJS estimates that 1,185,000 crimes occurred in Scotland. This estimate comprises property and violent crime as well as, for the first time, fraud and computer misuse. As discussed in the [Background chapter](#), this estimate is rounded to the nearest 1,000 and is subject to a margin of error, with the actual number of incidents likely between 1,068,000 and 1,301,000. As this is the first year

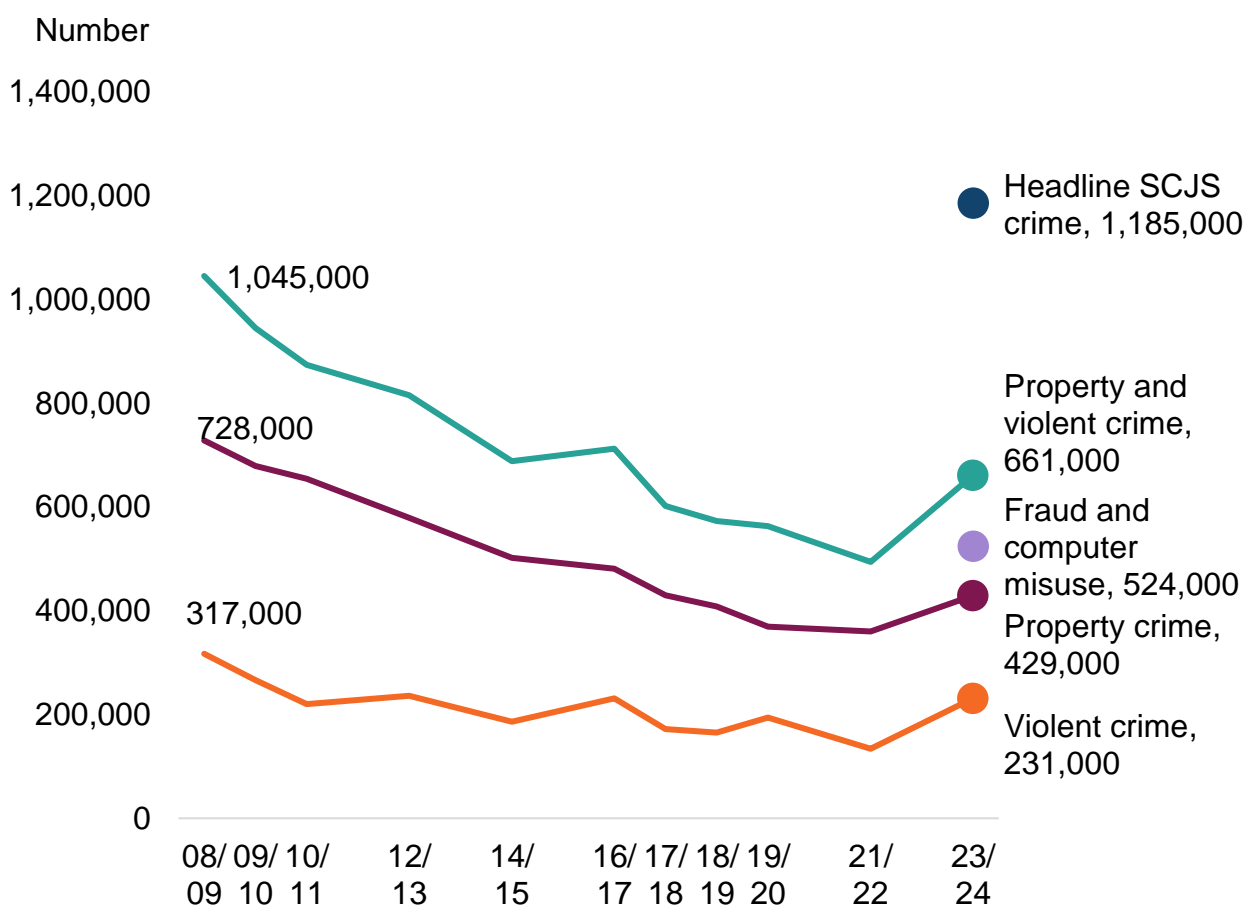
for this new headline measure (including fraud and computer misuse), it is not possible to make comparisons with earlier years.

In terms of property and violent crimes combined, the SCJS estimates that 661,000 crimes occurred in Scotland in 2023/24, with the actual number of incidents likely to be between 566,000 and 755,000. While property and violent crimes continue to be significantly lower than in 2008/09 (down 37%), there has been an increase of 34% since 2021/22. However, the latest figures are not significantly different to the pre-covid position seen in 2019/20.

Table 2.1 provides upper and lower estimates for overall crime, along with best estimates for property and violent crimes, which are detailed in later chapters. Further details on the estimation process are available in the [Technical Report](#).

Figure 2.2: The level of property and violent crimes experienced by adults has fallen by 37% since 2008/09 but has increased by 34% since 2021/22.

Estimated number of incidents of SCJS crime, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: INCSURVEYCRIME.

Table 2.1 looks at results from key comparator years⁶ more closely and shows that the estimated number of incidents of overall property and violent crime experienced by adults:

- decreased by 37% between 2008/09 and 2023/24, from 1,045,000 to 661,000 – an estimated decrease of around 384,000 incidents
- increased by 34% since the last SCJS in 2021/22, up from 494,000 – an estimated increase of around 167,000 incidents
- has shown no change since 2019/20 – the apparent increase from 563,000 is not statistically significant

Table 2.1: The estimated number of property and violent crimes has fallen by over a third since 2008/09 and increased by a third since 2021/22 but remains unchanged from 2019/20.

Estimated number of incidents of SCJS property and violent crime (2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24) with percentage change, where significant, since 2008/09, 2019/20 and 2021/22.

	Estimated number of property and violent crimes				Change since		
	2008/09	2019/20	2021/22	2023/24	08/09	19/20	21/22
Best estimate	1,045,000	563,000	494,000	661,000	Down 37%	No change	Up 34%
Lower estimate	974,000	501,000	428,000	566,000	-	-	-
Upper estimate	1,116,000	625,000	560,000	755,000	-	-	-
Number of respondents	16,000	5,570	5,520	4,970	-	-	-

Variable: INCSURVEYCRIME.

What types of crime were most commonly experienced?

From 2023/24, the SCJS collects data on the adult population's experiences of three main types of crime – property crime, violent crime and fraud and computer misuse. It is estimated that over two-fifths (44%) of all crime measured by the survey in 2023/24 was fraud and computer misuse, with over a third (36%) being property crime and a fifth (20%) being violent crimes.

⁶ [Annex table A2](#) provides best estimates of the number of incidents of crime for each SCJS year since 2008/09.

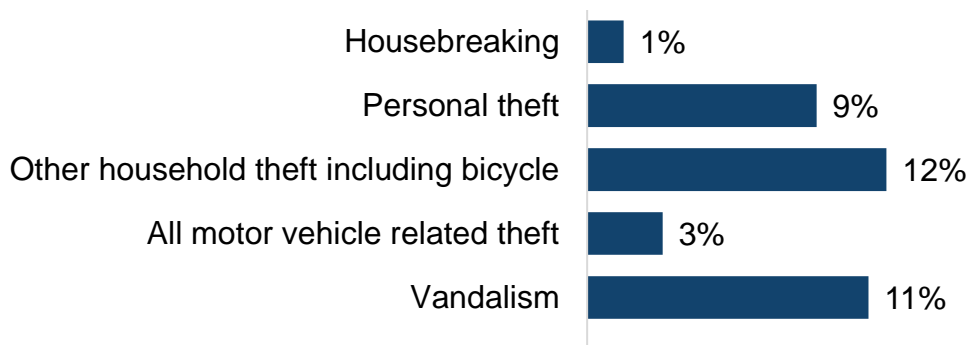
Figure 2.3 below shows the proportion of all crime accounted for by key sub-categories of crime. The largest individual group was bank and credit card fraud, which accounted for a fifth (21%) of all crime measured by the 2023/24 survey. In terms of the main crime groups:

- other household theft (including bicycle theft) and vandalism comprised around a third each (32% and 31% respectively) of all property crimes
- minor assault with no injury made up three-fifths (61%) of all violent crime
- bank and credit card fraud comprised around half (47%) of all fraud and computer misuse crime

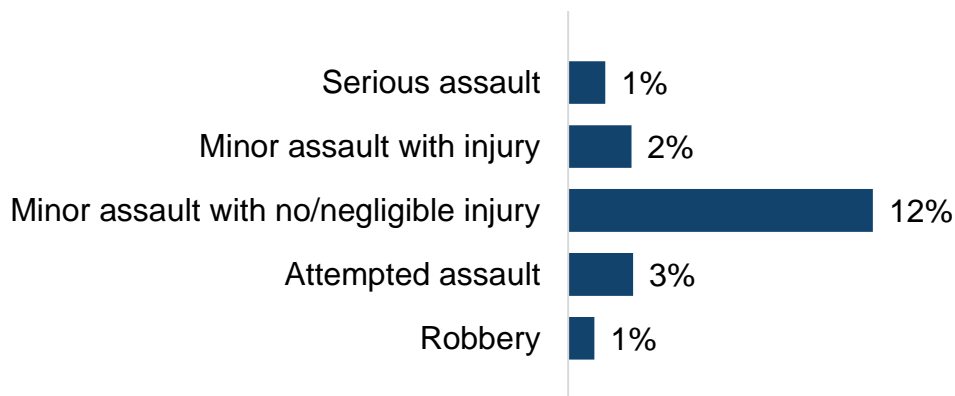
Figure 2.3: Over two-fifths of crime in 2023/24 was fraud and computer misuse related, over a third was property crime and one fifth violent crime.

Categories of crime in 2023/24 as proportions of all headline SCJS crime, split by property crime, violent crime, and fraud and computer misuse.

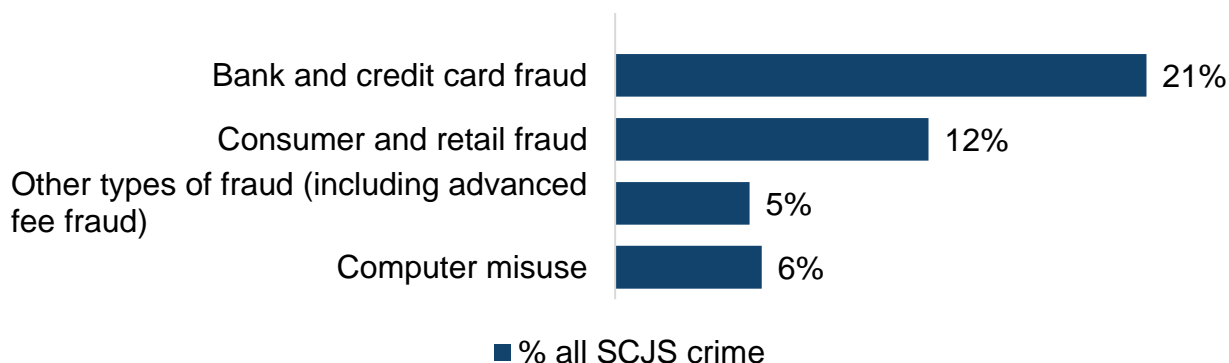
Property crime accounted for 36% of all SCJS crime



Violent crime accounted for 20% of all SCJS crime



Fraud and computer misuse accounted for 44% of all SCJS crime



Variable: Prevalence (PREV) variables.

The SCJS has consistently shown that adults in Scotland are much more likely to have experienced property crime than violent crime in any given year. It is estimated that 10.3% of adults were victims of property crime in 2023/24, whilst 2.9% experienced violent crime. The prevalence of both property crime and violent crime have fallen since 2008/09. In 2023/24, 9.5% of adults experienced a fraud or computer misuse crime, similar to that of property crime but higher than violent crime.

In 2023/24, the average number of crimes experienced was 3.5 for victims of violent crime, 2.4 for victims of fraud and computer misuse, and 1.8 for victims of property crime. This explains why the victimisation rate for property crimes is similar to that of fraud and computer misuse but the volume experienced is lower (429,000 and 524,000 respectively).

More detailed results about the extent, prevalence and nature of violent crime, property crime, and fraud and computer misuse crimes experienced in Scotland in 2023/24, including how experiences varied across the population and trends over time are provided in the respective [‘violent crime’](#), [‘property crime’](#) and [‘fraud and computer misuse’](#) chapters of this report.

How did the likelihood of experiencing crime vary across the population?

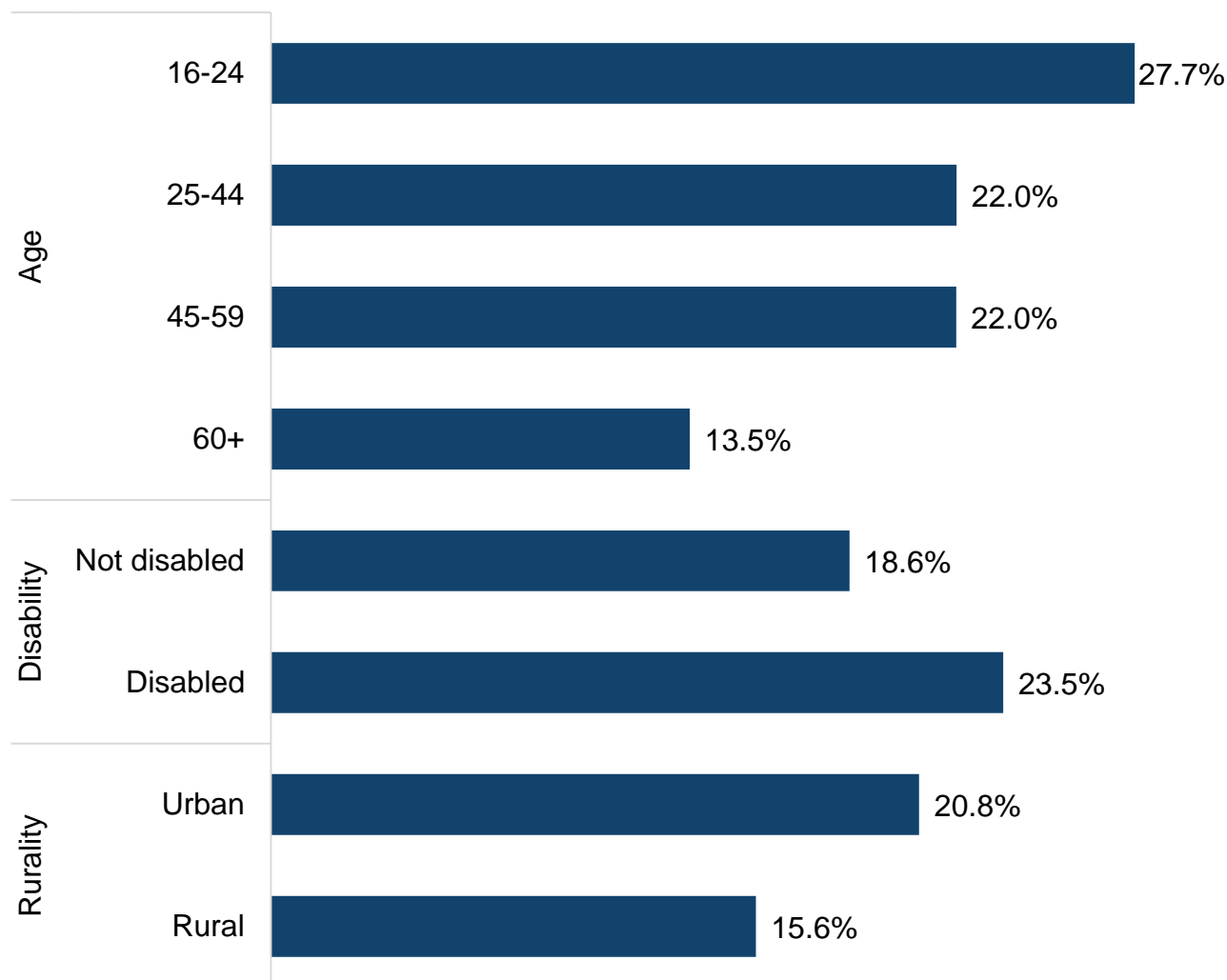
The proportion of adults who were victims of any headline SCJS crime (including fraud and computer misuse) in 2023/24 varied according to demographic and geographic characteristics. For instance, as shown in Figure 2.4, the likelihood of experiencing crime in 2023/24:

- was highest for those aged 16 to 24 and lowest for those aged 60 and over
- was higher in urban areas compared to rural locations
- was higher for disabled adults than those who are not disabled

There was no statistically significant difference in the proportion of males or females (18.8% and 20.9% respectively), or those living in the 15% most deprived areas and the rest of Scotland (20.0% and 19.8% respectively) who were victims of any headline SCJS crime in 2023/24.

Figure 2.4: The likelihood of experiencing crime in 2023/24 was higher for those living in urban locations and for younger adults and those who are disabled.

Proportion of adults experiencing any crime measured by the SCJS in 2023/24, by demographic and area characteristics.



Variables: PREVSURVEYCRIME; QDAGE; SIMD_TOP; URBRUR.

The victimisation rate for property and violent crime combined has decreased since 2008/09 across many key groups in the population – including both males and females; all age groups shown above; those living in the most deprived areas as well as those living elsewhere in Scotland, and adults in both urban and rural locations and those who were and were not disabled.

What can the SCJS tell us about multiple victimisation?

The SCJS also enables us to further explore how experiences varied amongst victims and examine the concentration of crime, including what proportion of victims experienced more than one crime (of any type) during the year. This is known as 'multiple victimisation'. Further information about the approach taken to process

and derive SCJS results, including on multiple victimisation, is provided in the [Technical Report](#).

Multiple victimisation examines the proportion of the population that experienced two or more property crimes, two or more violent crimes or two or more fraud and computer misuse crimes (known as repeat victimisation), or have been victims of any of these crime types (i.e. two or more incidents of any crime).

Repeat victimisation is a sub-set of multiple victimisation, the proportion of adults who have been the victim of the same type of crime more than once (e.g. repeat property crimes). Findings on the extent of repeat victimisation for property, violent and fraud and computer misuse crimes are presented separately in the relevant [‘violent crime’](#), [‘property crime’](#) and [‘fraud and computer misuse’](#) chapters of this report.

What proportion of adults experienced multiple victimisation?

As discussed above, the majority of adults (80.1%) did not experience any crime measured by the SCJS (including fraud and computer misuse) in 2023/24.

In 2023/24, 14.1% of adults were victims of a single SCJS crime (including fraud and computer misuse), accounting for 45% of all crime. Multiple victimisation affected 5.8% of adults, who experienced 55% of all SCJS crime. On average, these victims experienced two and a half crimes each.

In 2023/24, 8.5% of adults were victims of a single property or violent crime, accounting for 40% of all crime. Multiple victimisation for property and violent crimes affected 3.6% of adults, who experienced 60% of all of these crimes. On average, these victims experienced two property or violent crimes each.

Table 2.2: 5.8% of adults experienced two or more crimes during 2023/24, including fraud and computer misuse, accounting for over half of all SCJS crime over the year.

Proportion of all SCJS crime experienced by victims, by number of crimes experienced.

Number of crimes	% of population (all SCJS crime)	% of all SCJS crime	% of population (property and violent crime)	% of property and violent crime
None	80.1%	0%	87.9%	0%
One	14.1%	45%	8.5%	40%
Two	3.1%	20%	1.7%	17%
Three	1.0%	8%	0.7%	9%
Four	0.5%	7%	0.3%	7%
Five or more	1.1%	19%	0.9%	27%
Two or more	5.8%	55%	3.6%	60%

Variables: INCSURVEYCRIME; PREVSURVEYCRIME.

Figure 2.5 explores trends in single and multiple victimisation over time for the previous headline measure of property and violent crime combined. It highlights that between 2008/09 and 2023/24 there were decreases in the proportion of adults experiencing:

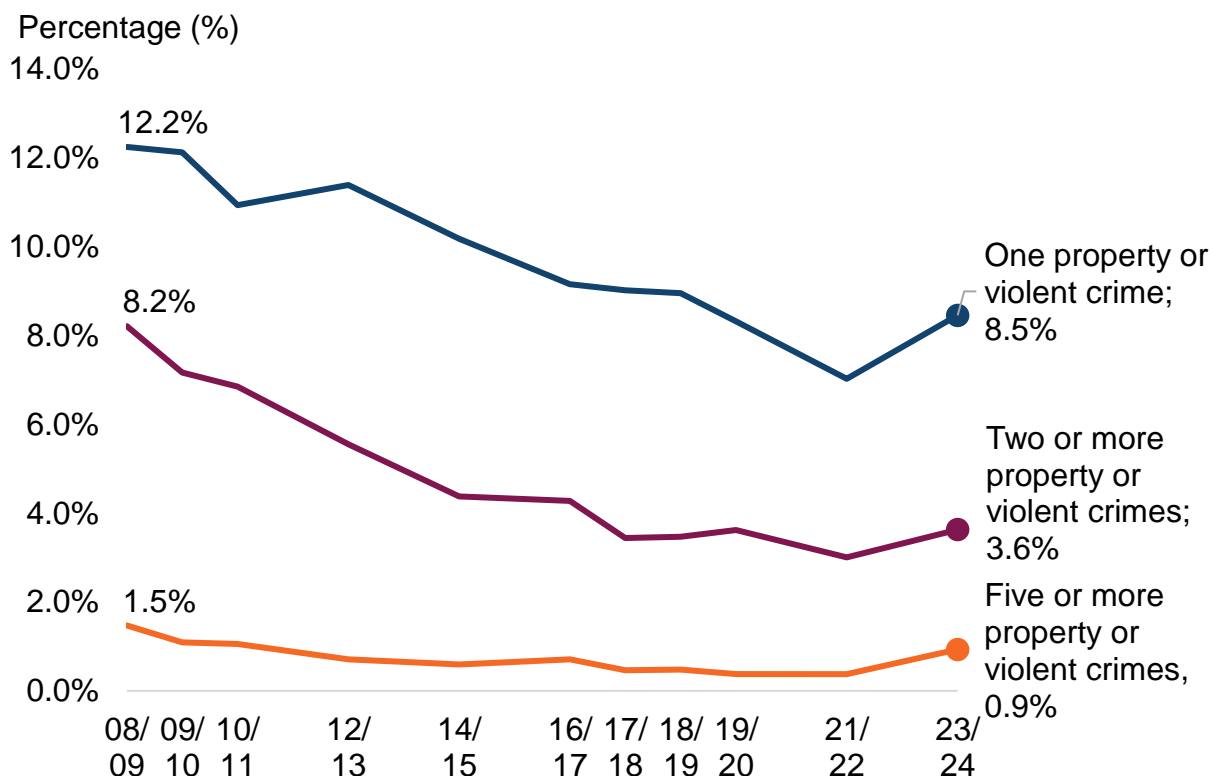
- single incidents of property or violent crime – from 12.2% to 8.5%
- multiple victimisation (two or more incidents of property or violent crime) – from 8.2% to 3.6%
- high frequency multiple victimisation (five or more incidents of property or violent crime) – from 1.5% to 0.9%

The fall in the various levels of property and violent crime victimisation since 2008/09 has occurred alongside a fall in the overall property and violent crime victimisation rate over this period, as discussed [previously](#).

Since the last SCJS in 2021/22, there was a significant increase in the proportion of adults experiencing single victimisation for property and violent crimes (from 7.0% to 8.5%). There was also a significant increase in those experiencing five or more of these incidents (from 0.4% to 0.9%) but no change for those experiencing two or more – as the increase shown in Figure 2.5 is not statistically significant.

Figure 2.5: The proportion of adults experiencing multiple victimisation for property and violent crimes fell from 8.2% to 3.6% between 2008/09 and 2023/24 but remains unchanged in recent years.

Proportion of adults experiencing number of SCJS crimes.



Variables: INCSURVEYCRIME; PREVSURVEYCRIME.

In summary these findings show that, compared to 2008/09, adults in 2023/24 were less likely to be victims of:

- at least one property or violent crime
- one property or violent crime specifically
- more than one property or violent crime

What proportion of crime was reported to the police?

One of the key strengths of the SCJS is that it provides evidence on the extent of crime experienced by the population, including incidents which are not reported to the police. For this reason, the SCJS and [police recorded crime statistics](#) are complementary sources that, together, present a fuller picture of crime in Scotland. The '[Comparisons with other statistical sources of crime and victimisation](#)' chapter of this report explores the differences and similarities between the SCJS and recorded crime (including trends over time) in more detail.

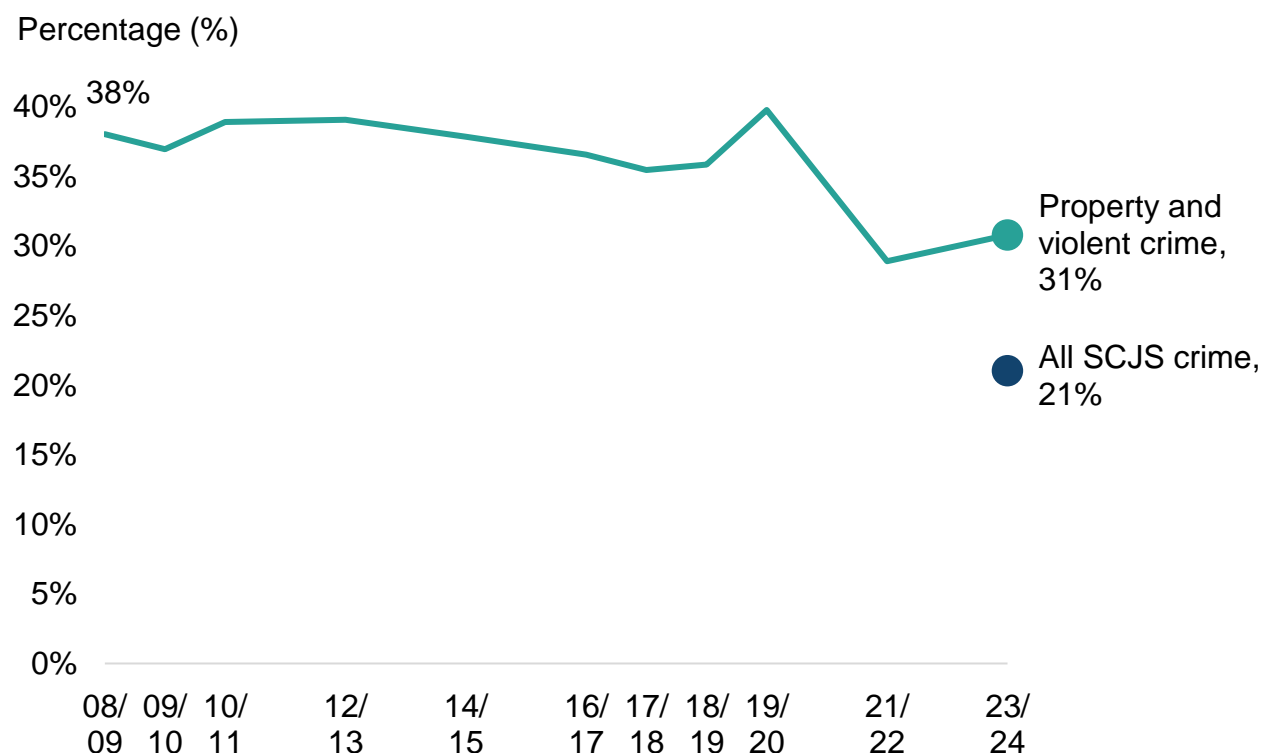
In 2023/24, the SCJS estimates that 21% of all headline crimes (including fraud and computer misuse) came to the attention of the police. When looking at property and violent crimes alone, 31% of crimes were reported to the police, this is unchanged

from the position in 2021/22 but down from 40% in 2019/20. Reporting rates were 24% for property crimes (unchanged since 2021/22 but down from 36% in 2019/20) and 44% for violent crimes (unchanged since 2021/22 and 2019/20). In 2023/24, only one-in-ten (9%) of crimes of fraud and computer misuse were reported to the police.

Further information on the reporting rates and the reasons behind non-reporting are presented in the [‘violent crime’](#), [‘property crime’](#) and [‘fraud and computer misuse’](#) chapters.

Figure 2.6: The proportion of crime reported to the police in 2023/24 remains unchanged since 2021/22.

The proportion of crime reported to the police between 2008/09 and 2023/24.



Variables: QPOL; FCOPSKNOW3.

Violent crime

What was the extent and prevalence of violent crime in Scotland in 2023/24?

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) estimates that 2.9% of adults were victims of violent crime⁷ in 2023/24, within a margin of error between 2.2% and 3.5%.

As a sample survey of the general public, SCJS results on violence are estimates with wide margins of error, not exact counts. Analysis here is focused on the best estimates for each year of the survey. Further details are provided in the [Background chapter](#) and in the [Technical Report](#).

Between 2008/09 and 2021/22, there was a long-term fall in violent crime victimisation, from 4.1% to 1.7% of adults. Between 2021/22 and 2023/24, there was an increase of 1.2 percentage points from 1.7% to 2.9% of adults being a victim of a violent crime. Despite this increase, the chances of being a victim of a violent crime is at a similar level to the pre-covid position in 2019/20. These results are shown in Figure 3.1.

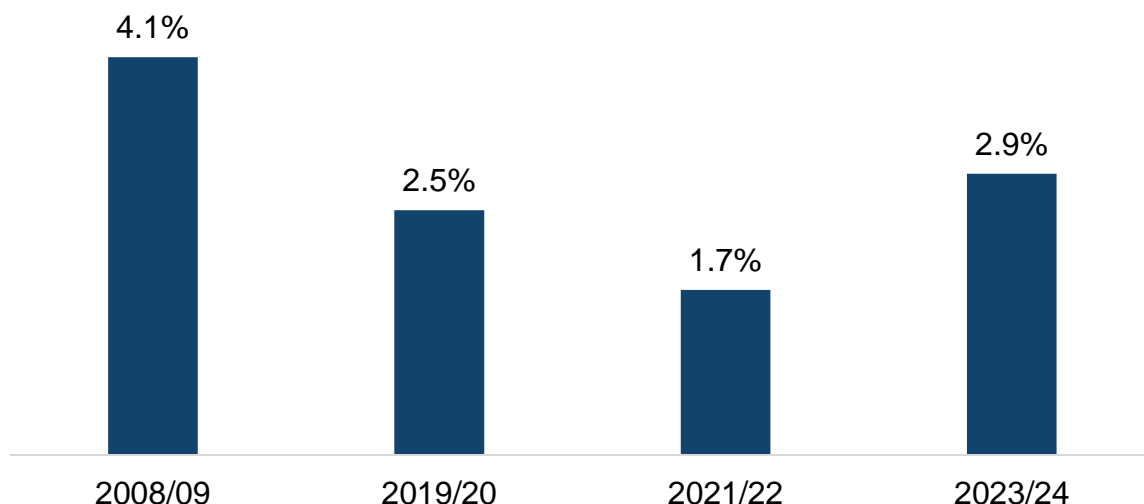
Whilst it cannot be stated with certainty - it is possible that the 2021/22 survey was something of an outlier which may have resulted in lower crime estimates, as some of the reference period covered times when Covid restrictions were in place. For example, earlier analysis from the [Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey](#) suggested that crime fell significantly during the first UK national lockdown.⁸

⁷ Details on the specific crimes within the violence group are outlined in the [‘Overview of crime’ chapter](#).

⁸ [Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey 2020: main findings - gov.scot](#) interviews in September and October 2020, so before the reference period of the 21/22 survey, showed that combined property and violent crime fell by approximately 35% during the first lockdown in 2020 compared to the six months before.

Figure 3.1: The proportion of adults experiencing violent crime in 2023/24 is similar to 2019/20. It has decreased since 2008/09 but increased since 2021/22.

Proportion of adults experiencing violent crime, 2008/09 and 2019/20 to 2023/24.



Variable: PREVVIOLENT.

The number of violent incidents in 2023/24 is estimated at 231,000^{9, 10} – between a lower estimate of 170,000 and an upper estimate of 292,000. This is a 73% increase from 134,000 in 2021/22. However, it is still 27% lower than 2008/09 and does not show a statistically significant change from 2019/20. These results are shown in Figure 3.2 and Table 3.1.¹¹

Violent crime accounted for one in five (20%) of all crime incidents estimated by the SCJS in 2023/24 – with the remainder being property crime, fraud, or computer misuse.

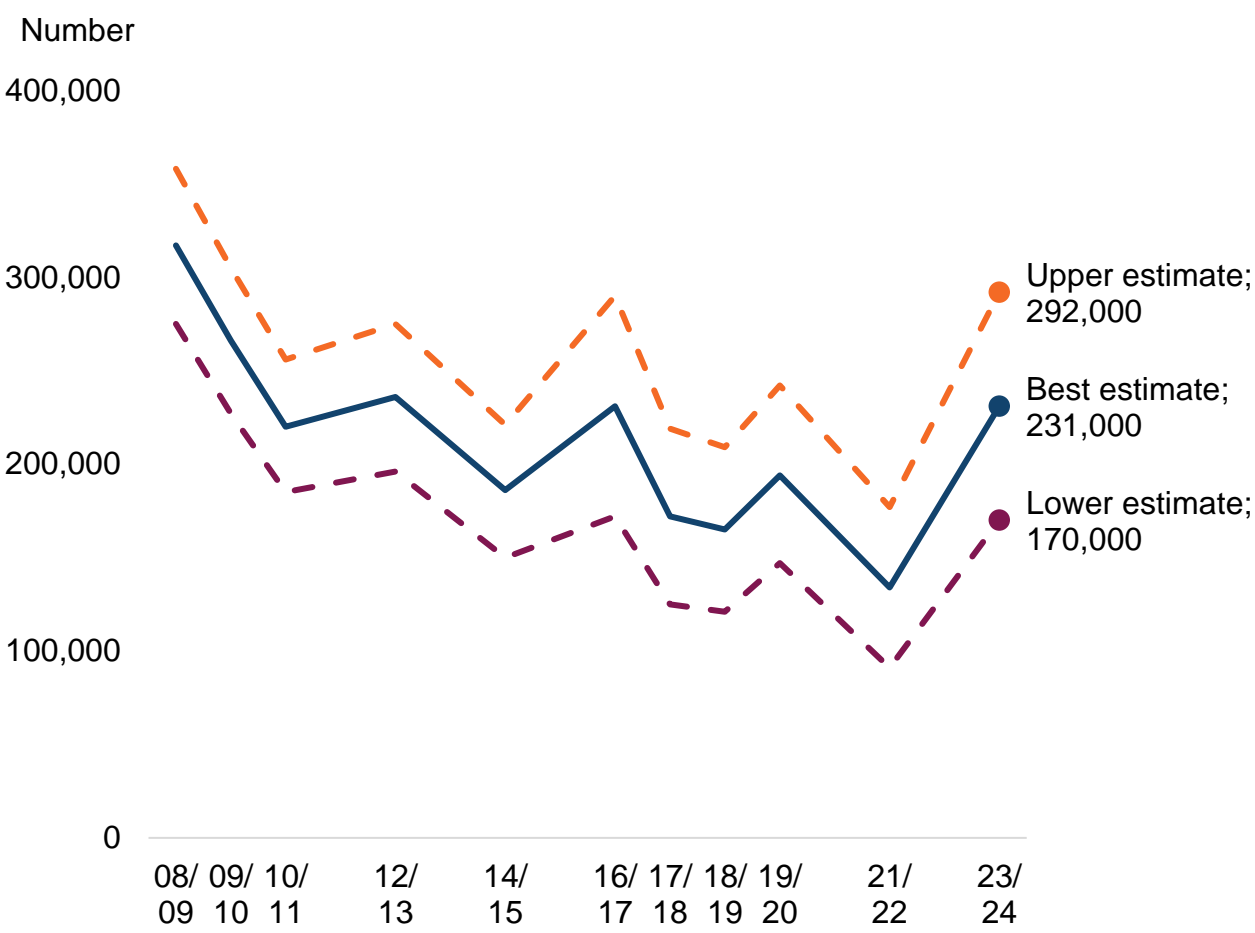
⁹ Crime estimates are rounded to the nearest 1,000 crimes.

¹⁰ For 2023/24, an edit was made to a small number of violent crime victim forms which has a negligible impact on the estimated volume of violent crimes for the latest year but no impact on the victimisation rate for violent crimes. See Section 7.3.1 in the [Technical report](#) for more details.

¹¹ [Annex table A2](#) provides best estimates of the number of incidents of violent crime for each year of the SCJS since 2008/09.

Figure 3.2: The estimated volume of violent crime in Scotland has increased since 2021/22, but is similar to 2019/20 and below levels seen in 2008/09.

Estimated number of violent incidents, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: INCVIOLENT.

Table 3.1: The estimated number of violent crimes increased by almost three quarters since 2021/22, but is similar to 2019/20 and has fallen by more than a quarter since 2008/09.

Estimated number of incidents of violent crimes (2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24) with percentage change, where significant, since 2008/09, 2019/20 and 2021/22.

	Estimated number of violent crimes				Change since		
	2008/09	2019/20	2021/22	2023/24	08/09	19/20	21/22
Best estimate	317,000	194,000	134,000	231,000	Down 27%	No change	Up 73%
Lower estimate	275,000	147,000	91,000	170,000	-	-	-
Upper estimate	358,000	242,000	177,000	292,000	-	-	-
Number of respondents	16,000	5,570	5,520	4,970	-	-	-

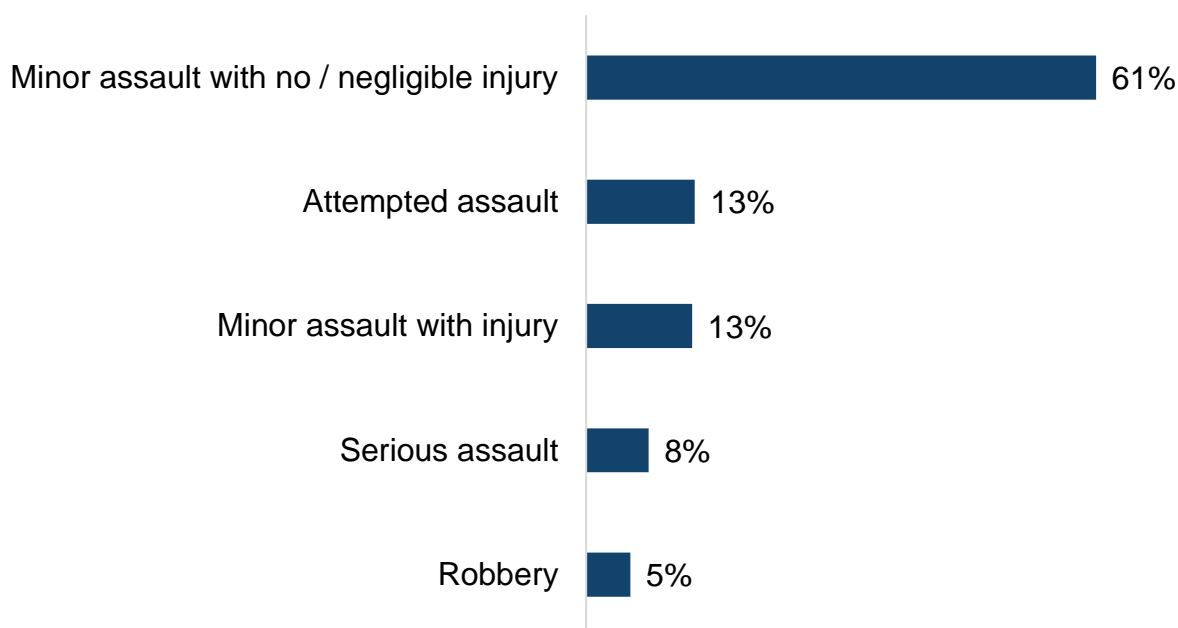
Variable: INCVIOLENT.

What types of violent crime were most commonly experienced?

The vast majority (95%) of violent crime incidents were some form of assault or attempted assault. The most common category of violence is assault with no or negligible injury (three out of five crimes, 61%). Attempted assault and minor assault with injury were 13% each, with serious assault at 8% of all violent crime. The remaining 5% of violent crime is robbery. All of these are shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: The majority of violent incidents in 2023/24 involved minor assault resulting in no or negligible injury.

Categories of crime as proportions of violent crime overall, 2023/24.



Variables: INCMINORASSNOINJURY; INCMINORASSINJURY; INCATTEMPTASSAULT; INCSEARASSAULT; INCROB.

As over 93% of violent crime incidents have been assault since the SCJS began in 2008/09, similar trends are seen for assault and violent crime overall. Assault shows a 26% decrease from 2008/09, no change compared to 2019/20 but a 76% increase since 2021/22.

For crime types which occur in lower volumes (but which may often result in more severe physical injuries), like serious assault, the strength of the SCJS is in examining how prevalent such experiences are in the population (i.e. demonstrating that a relatively small proportion of the population are affected), rather than estimating the number of incidents of these types of crime that occur in a single year or over time. Therefore, the main body of the SCJS report focuses on the prevalence of such crimes. Estimates of the extent of these crimes are provided in the [Annex tables](#) (see Table A2).

Whilst sub-categories of violent crime such as robbery and serious assault are important events for victims, these crimes represent small proportions of violence overall and are experienced by small proportions of the population (and therefore of the SCJS sample), and so this means they have relatively large degrees of error around them.¹²

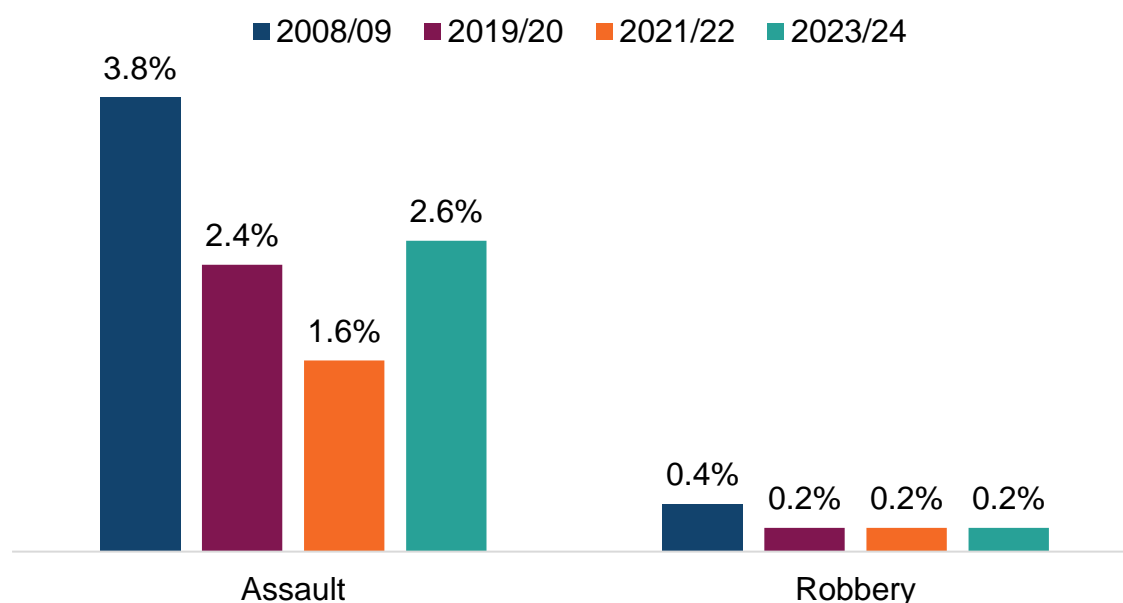
¹² For example, the relative standard error (RSE) around the 2023/24 serious assault estimate is 55%. For more on the relative standard error, please see the [Technical Report](#).

As (minor) assaults with less severe or no physical injuries account for the vast majority of violent crime, later sections looking at the characteristics of violent crime in general will also be mainly driven by these incidents.

In 2023/24, 2.6% of adults were victims of assault, unchanged from the pre-covid position in 2019/20. As with violence overall, this has decreased since 2008/09 but is higher than it was in 2021/22. The proportion of adults experiencing robbery was 0.2%, which is not statistically significant from earlier years, as shown in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: The proportion of adults experiencing assault increased since 2021/22, but is similar to 2019/20 and below what was seen in 2008/09.

Proportion of adults experiencing assault and robbery (2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24).



Variables: PREVASSAULT; PREVROB.

Whilst a small proportion of adults were victims of any sort of assault in 2023/24, experiences of more serious forms of violence were rarer still. This is in line with the [finding](#) that the vast majority of violent crime was accounted for by minor assaults. For instance, while 2.6% of adults experienced any assault, only 0.1% of adults experienced serious assault.

How did experiences of violent crime vary across the population?

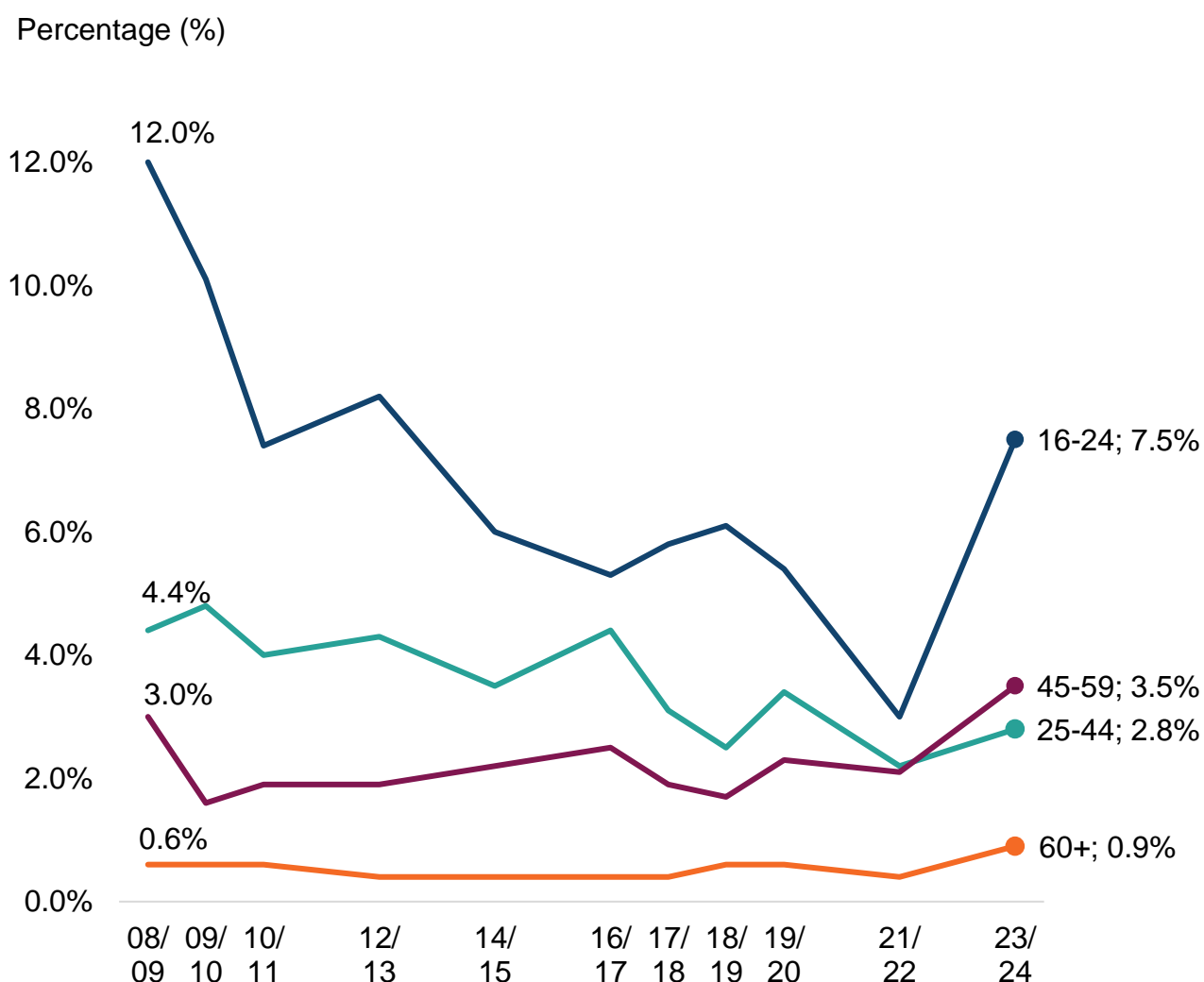
As shown in Figure 3.5, those aged 60 and over had the lowest likelihood of experiencing violence in 2023/24, similar to 2019/20 and 2021/22. Fewer than 1 in 100 (0.9%) of those aged 60 and over experienced a violent crime, compared to about 1 in 14 (7.5%) of those aged 16 to 24. Since 2021/22, the victimisation rate for all age groups is unchanged, the apparent increases shown in Figure 3.5 are not statistically significant.

Adults aged 60 and over were less likely to experience a violent crime than all other age groups (which themselves were not different to each other). There were no other differences between groups that the survey covers. For example, in 2023/24, no difference is seen between males and females, between those living in the 15% most deprived areas and the rest of Scotland, between urban and rural areas, or adults with and without a disability.¹³

This is similar to 2021/22 but different from some earlier years. In 2019/20 there was higher victimisation for: men, people living in urban areas and people living in the 15% most deprived areas.

Figure 3.5: Adults aged between 16 and 24 have shown the largest decrease in victimisation rate since 2008/09.

Proportion of adults experiencing violent crime by age, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: PREVVIOLENT; QDAGE.

¹³ Additional breakdowns are provided in [Annex table A9](#) and the SCJS supporting [data tables](#). For example, age within sex, disability status, and tenure.

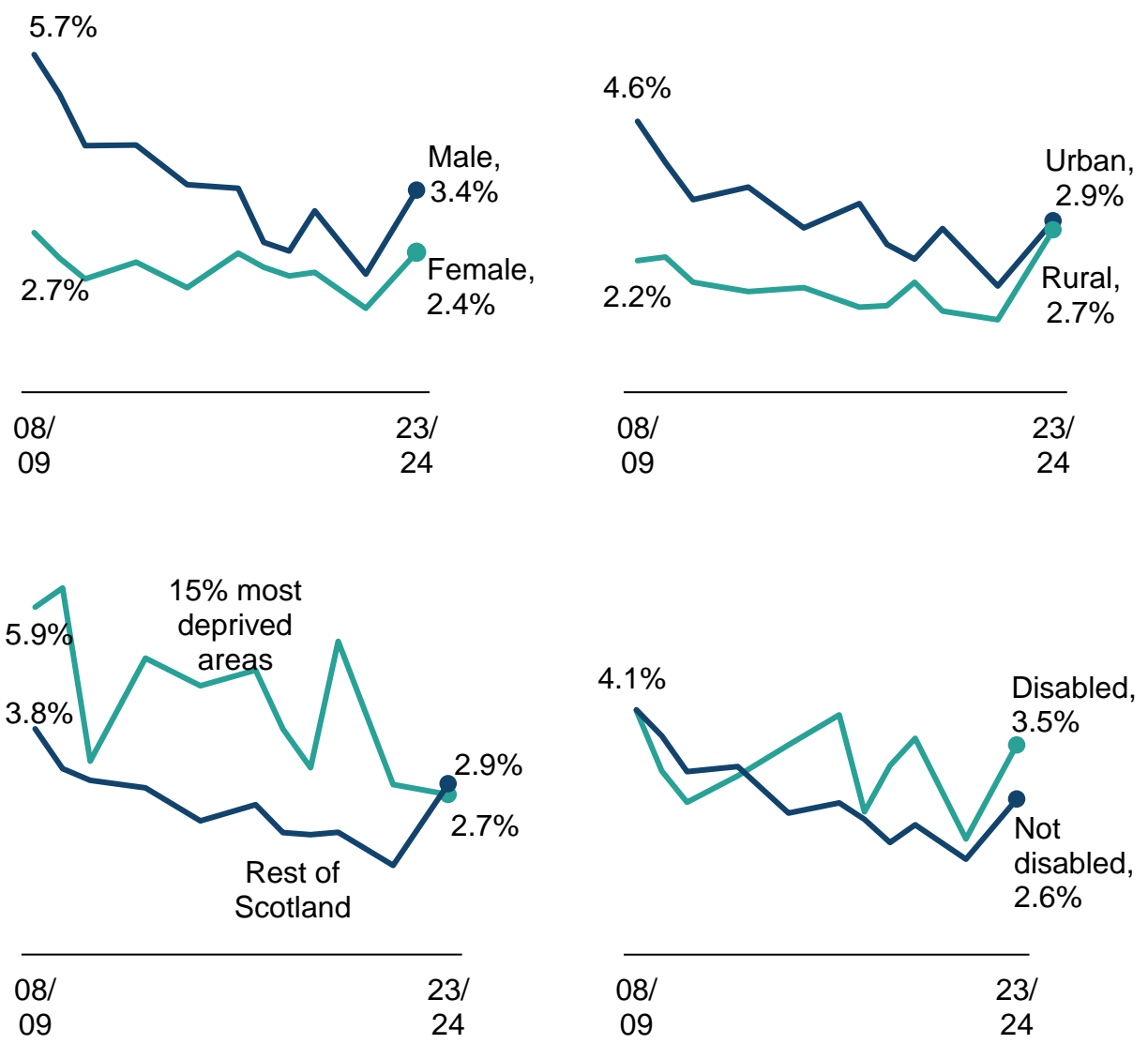
Since 2021/22 many groups have seen an increase in violent crime victimisation. This includes: males, people living out with the 15% most deprived areas, urban areas, and both disabled and non disabled people. However, for almost all of these groups the change is a return to levels similar to 2019/20. The only changes seen since 2019/20 for these breakdowns are a decrease in violent victimisation for those living in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland.

Over the longer term – between 2008/09 and 2023/24, many population groups saw a reduction in the proportion of adults experiencing violent crime, whereas others saw no change. No group saw an increase. Decreases were seen for: males, those aged between 25 and 44, people living in the 15% most deprived areas, as well as the rest of Scotland, people living in urban areas, and people who are not disabled. No change was seen for: women, all other age groups apart from those aged 25 - 44, people living in rural areas, and disabled people.

Further information on how the prevalence of violence has changed over time for these sub-groups is shown in Figure 3.6 below.

Figure 3.6: Since 2008/09, the proportion experiencing violence has significantly decreased for males, both 15% most deprived areas and rest of Scotland, urban areas, and non-disabled people; while other groups haven't seen a change.

Proportion of adults experiencing violent crime by sex, area deprivation, rurality and disability status, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: PREVVIOLENT; TABQDGEN; SIMD_TOP; TABURBRUR; TABQDISAB.

When considering findings by sex, it is important to note that victims of partner abuse may not report such experiences through the face-to-face element of the SCJS which produces the main survey prevalence rates. As such, questions on experiences of partner abuse (covering both physical and psychological abuses as well as sexual assault) are answered in a self-completion element of the survey.

Prior to the pandemic, findings from the self-completion module were always based on two-years' worth of responses to increase the sample size and ensure sufficiently robust findings. Therefore had the pandemic not occurred, data collected on stalking, harassment and partner abuse from the 2020/21 and 2021/22 surveys would have been combined and presented as the 2020/22 cohort in the 2021/22 SCJS report. However no SCJS was conducted in 2020/21 due to COVID-19 and the requirement to restrict social contact (with the survey being based on face-to-face interviews).

The most recently published figures are for the combined 2018/19 and 2019/20 years, presented in the [2019/20 Main Findings Report](#). These figures showed that in the 12 month period prior to interview, experiences of partner abuse were more common for females than males (3.7% and 2.6%, respectively).

We are continuing to review the data collected for 2021/22 to determine if results of some value can be produced, or whether the challenges of the pandemic ultimately mean this isn't possible. The next set of findings from the self-completion module will be published as part of the 2024/25 report (combining the 2023/24 and 2024/25 survey sweeps).

What can the SCJS tell us about repeat victimisation?

The SCJS estimates that most adults did not experience violent crime in 2023/24 (97%), whilst 2.9% of the population were victims of at least one violent crime.

The survey can estimate the proportion of victims who experienced a particular type of crime more than once during a year.¹⁴ This is known as 'repeat victimisation'.¹⁵

Less than 1 in every 100 adults (0.9%) were victims of repeated incidents of violence (i.e. two or more incidents), but their experiences accounted for the majority (61%) of violent crime in 2023/24.

Table 3.2 details repeat victimisation and the concentration of violent crime. It shows that 2.0% of adults were victims of a single violent incident in the year, while 0.9% experienced repeat victimisation (two or more incidents) and 0.3% of adults were high-frequency repeat victims, experiencing five or more incidents. Repeat victims averaged 3.5 violent crimes each.

¹⁴ i.e. two or more experiences of violent crime.

¹⁵ Further information about the approach taken to process and derive SCJS results, including on repeat victimisation, is provided in the [Technical Report](#).

Table 3.2: Around three in five of all violent crime incidents were experienced by repeat victims.

Proportion of all SCJS crime experienced by victims, by number of crimes experienced.

Number of crimes	% of population	% of violent crime
None	97.1%	0%
One	2.0%	39%
Two	0.4%	14%
Three	0.1%	6%
Four	0.1%	9%
Five or more	0.3%	32%
Two or more	0.9%	61%

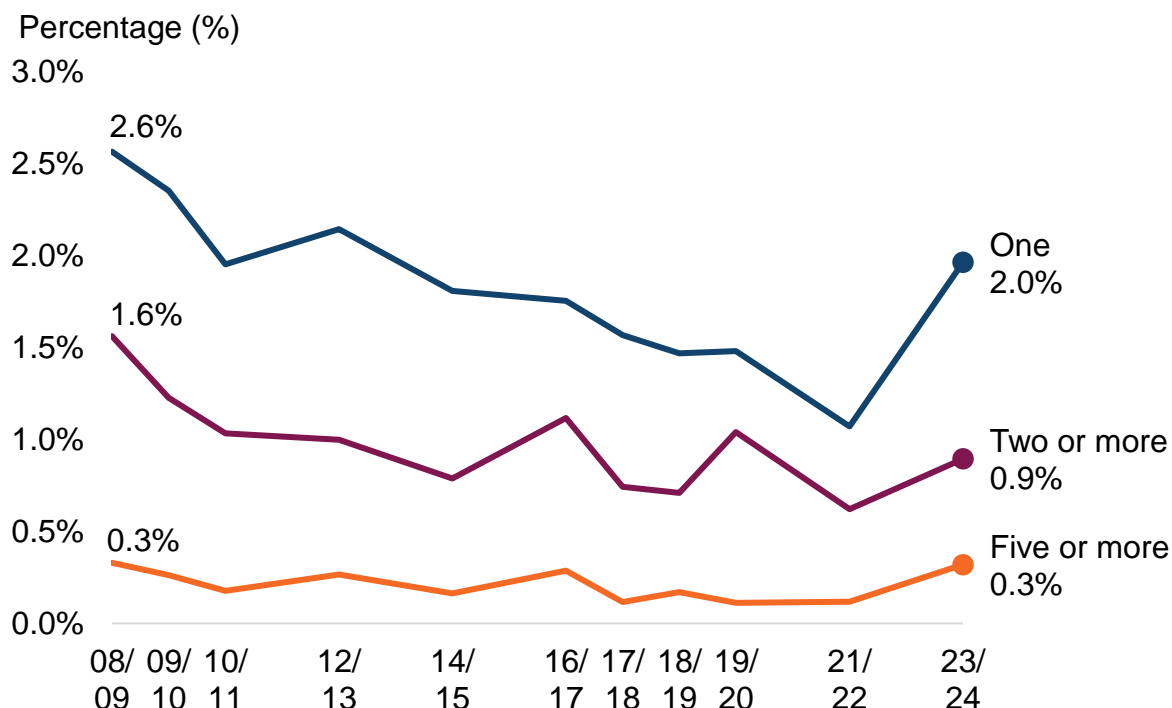
Variables: PREVIOLENT; INCVIOLENT.

Figure 3.7 shows trends in single and repeat violent victimisation over time. It shows:

- the proportion of adults experiencing only one incident of violence, is at a similar level to 2008/09 but has increased since 2021/22, however this remains unchanged from the pre-covid position in 2019/20. Findings comparing single years should be interpreted with caution and be considered within the wider context of broader trends
- the number of repeat victims has decreased since 2008/09 but has not changed significantly in recent years
- the number of high-frequency repeat victims of five or more violent incidents is not significantly different from 2008/09. This is a change from previous survey years – both 2019/20 and 2021/22 surveys showed a reduction from 2008/09

Figure 3.7: The proportion of adults experiencing only one violent incident increased from 2021/22 to 2023/24 but is unchanged from 2019/20 and 2008/09 and so is multiple victimisation.

Proportion of adults experiencing a number of violent crimes, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: PREVVIOLENT; INCVIOLENT. Note: the 'five or more' category is a sub-set of the 'two or more' category.

Expanding the evidence on repeat violent victimisation

A report, [Repeat Violence in Scotland: A Qualitative Approach](#), was published in September 2023, alongside three briefing papers: [alcohol-related and community violence](#); [poverty, violence and the drug economy](#); and [gendered violence and victimisation](#).

The research highlights the detrimental impact of violence on the everyday lives of those who experience it. The research has unpacked patterns of repeat violence and addressed an important knowledge gap, providing a detailed insight into:

- factors that increase vulnerability to repeat victimisation amongst high-risk groups, including people living in deprived areas, people with convictions, and people defined as having complex needs
- the lived experience of repeat violence and related forms of psychological trauma and social harm, including violent offending
- the support needs and experiences of people who experience repeat violence, who tend to be less likely to seek and access police and victim services

The research is being used to inform the implementation of the published [Violence Prevention Framework](#) for Scotland.

What were the characteristics of violent crime?

The most commonly reported location was at the victim's work – estimated at almost half of violent incidents (48%) in 2023/24. This proportion has increased over the long term – from less than one in four (23%) in 2008/09, and around one in three (32%) in 2019/20 but remains at a similar level to 2021/22.

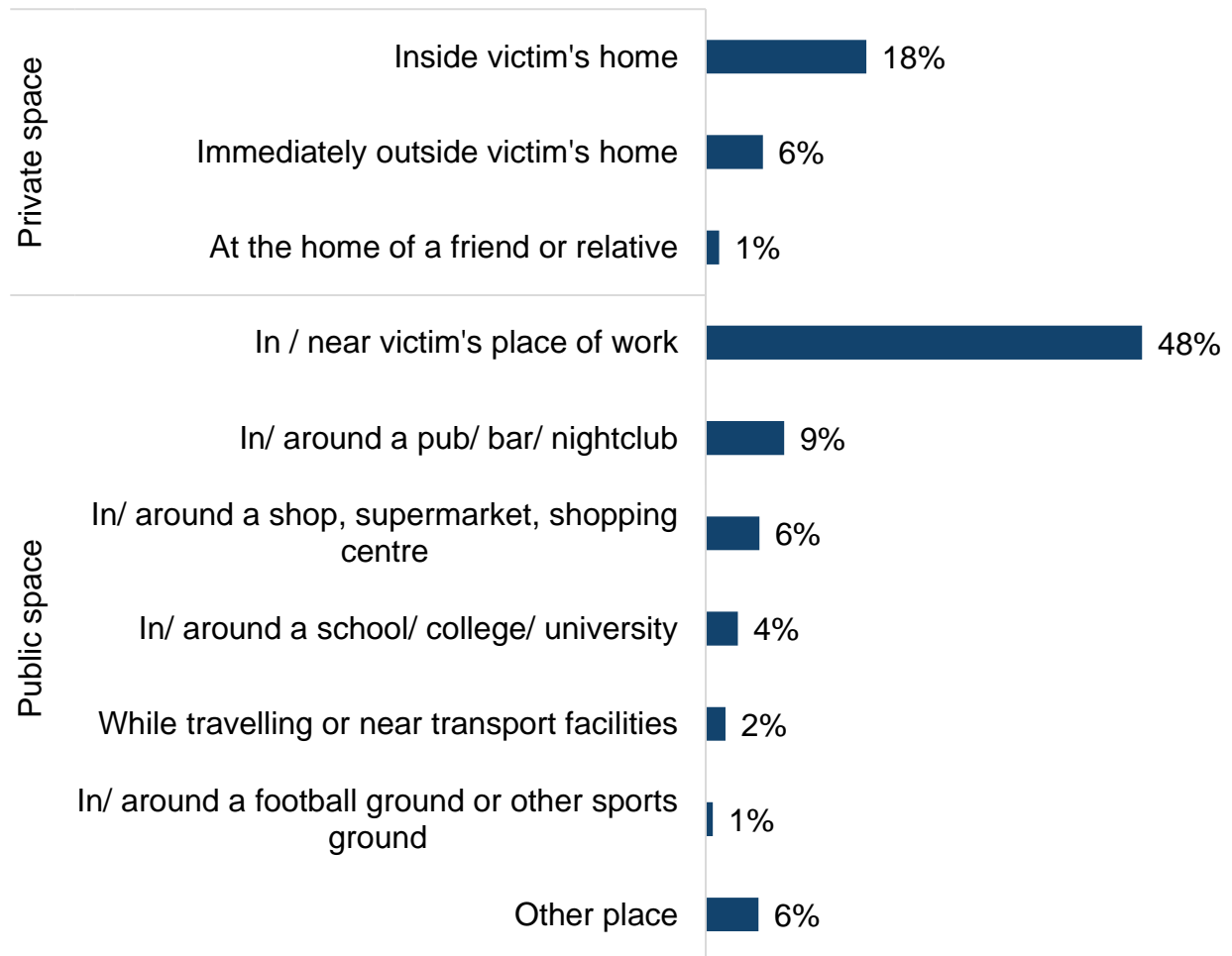
Meanwhile, incidents in other public places¹⁶ that weren't the victim's workplace shows a long term fall from 45% in 2008/09 to 27% in 2023/24. A more detailed breakdown is shown in Figure 3.8, and change over time is shown in Figure 3.9.

Around a fifth (18%) of violent incidents took place in the respondent's own home; which increases to 24% when also including immediately outside the respondent's home, and to 25% when including any private space such as the home of a friend or relative. Other than at the home of a friend or relative, which has fallen since 2019/20, none of the other categories have changed significantly from the last two surveys or since the first survey in 2008/09.

¹⁶ For the purposes of analysis, 'private space' includes the respondent's home, immediately outside their home (includes gardens, driveways, sheds and the street) and the homes of friends and relatives. The definition of outside the victim's home may mean that some of these crimes could be viewed as taking part in a public setting instead – although it is not possible to separate those cases. 'Public space' refers to incidents taking place elsewhere.

Figure 3.8: The majority of violent incidents occurred within a public space with in/near the victim's place of work as the largest category.

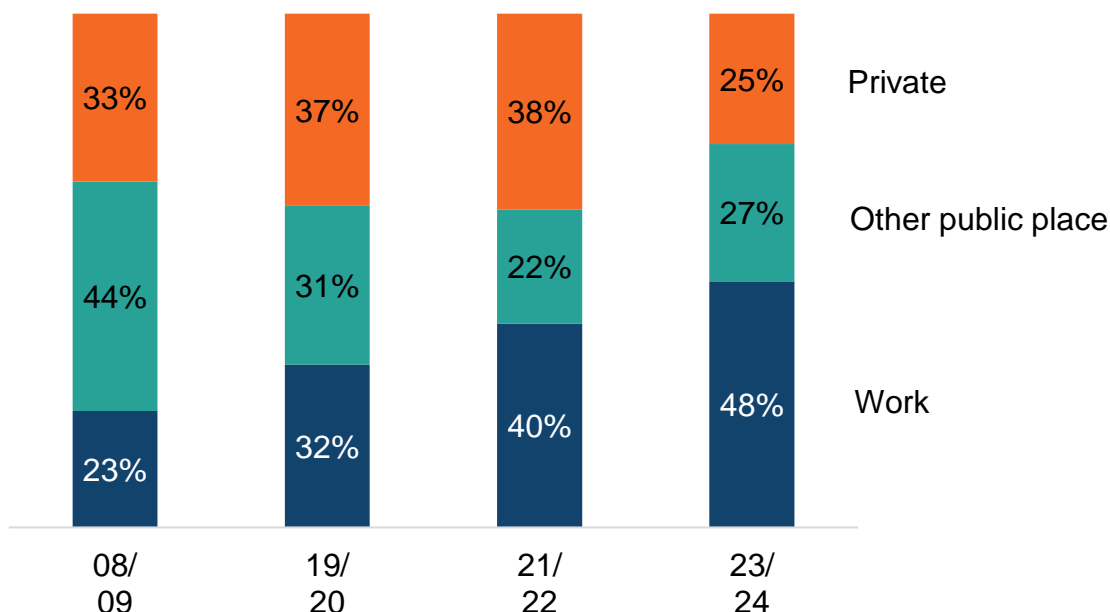
Proportion of violent crime incidents occurring in different locations, 2023/24.



Variables: QWH1; QWH3; QWH5; QWH7.

Figure 3.9: There has been a long term increase in the proportion of violent crime in the workplace and a decrease for other public space, although results can fluctuate each year.

Proportion of violent crime incidents occurring in different locations, 2008/09 and 2019/20 to 2023/24.



Variables: QWH1; QWH5; QWH7.

Almost two-fifths (37%) of violent crime took place at the weekend, with the rest taking place during the week or the respondent didn't know. This has not changed much in recent years, but is lower than 2008/09 (when 55% of incidents took place at the weekend).

The SCJS doesn't ask directly about hate crime, but victims of crime are asked if they believed the incident might have been motivated by factors including the respondent's personal characteristics.¹⁷ The majority (87%) of violent crimes in 2023/24 were thought to have been motivated by none of these. More detail on harassment and discrimination is discussed in the [Focus on harassment and discrimination chapter](#).

Respondents who had experienced violent crime were asked if the incident involved the internet, any type of online activity or an internet enabled device. In 2023/24, 4% of violent crime incidents involved a cyber element. Cyber crime is discussed in more detail in the [Fraud and Computer Misuse chapter](#).

¹⁷ These motivating factors were their ethnic origin/race; religion; sectarianism; gender/gender identity or perception of this; disability/condition they have; sexual orientation; age; and pregnancy/maternity or perception of this.

What do we know about perpetrators of violent crime?

In 97% of violent incidents reported in 2023/24, respondents could provide details about the offender. Key findings include:

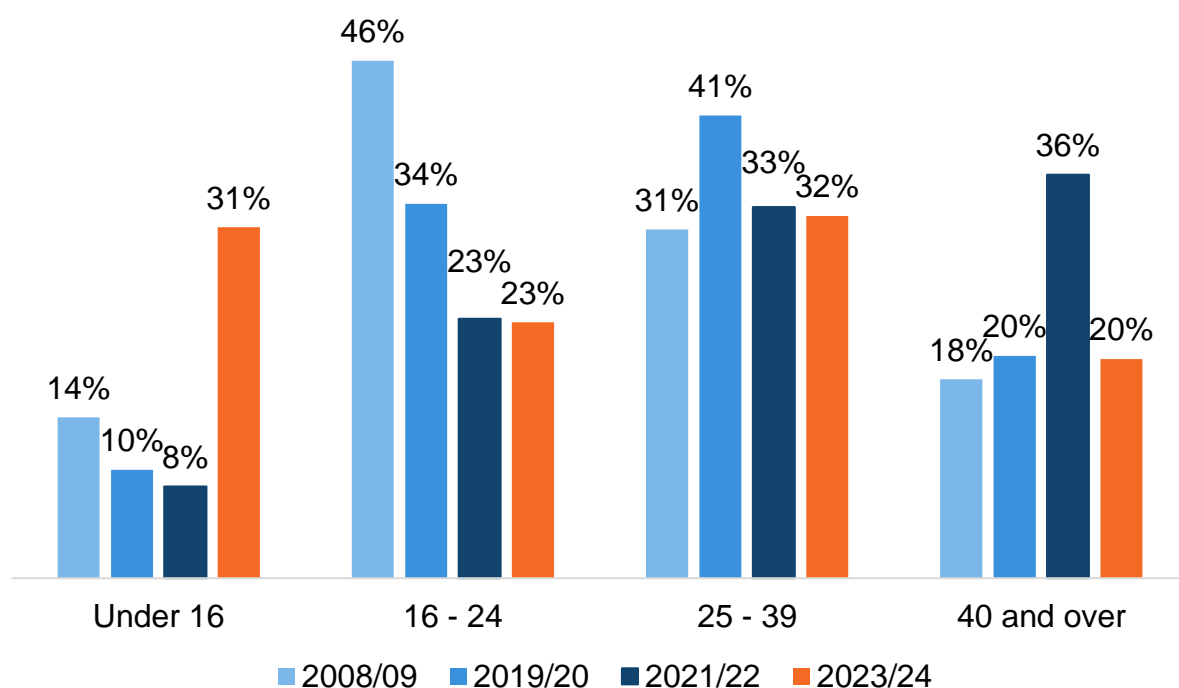
- 80% of violent crime involved at least one male offender, 31% involved at least one female offender, and 11% involved a mixed sex group of perpetrators¹⁸
- perpetrators were mostly younger, with only 20% of incidents involving offenders aged 40 or over. The proportion of offenders who were 40 or over in 2021/22 was 36% - which is unusually high. This has now reduced back to a level similar to both the pre-covid position in 2019/20, and 2008/09
- the proportion of offenders aged under 16 was 31%, which is the highest recorded by the SCJS for this age group. This is an increase from 14% in 2008/09 and 8% in 2021/22. It is unusual to see such a large change in a single survey year. As this is based on a small number of respondents it will be important to see if this is a one off or a trend continued in future surveys
- incidents where the perpetrator was under 16 and took place at the victim's workplace, accounted for 23% of all violent crime in 2023/24. This is a change from previous surveys – 5% for both 2019/20 and 2021/22
- the number of victims interviewed is too small to provide a further breakdown, but it appears these workplace-based violent crimes with perpetrators under 16 are mainly against workers in education or care roles. Being based on a relatively small number, this may fluctuate more each year depending on who happens to be interviewed
- therefore this result should be treated with some caution and compared with other available statistics, for example [Changes over time in the Behaviour in Scottish schools: research report 2023](#) showed that most primary and secondary staff types reported increases in physical aggression and physical violence between 2016 and 2023
- the proportion of offenders aged between 16 and 24 was 23%. This has remained at similar levels in recent years but has fallen over the long term, from 46% in 2008/09

Figure 3.10 illustrates the range of age groups involved in these crimes.

¹⁸ These add up to more than 100% as incidents may involve multiple perpetrators.

Figure 3.10: There was a large increase in offenders under 16 in 2023/24.

Proportion of violent crime incidents involving offenders of each age group, 2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24.



Variable: QDAGE. Incidents can have more than one perpetrator so may add up to more than 100%.

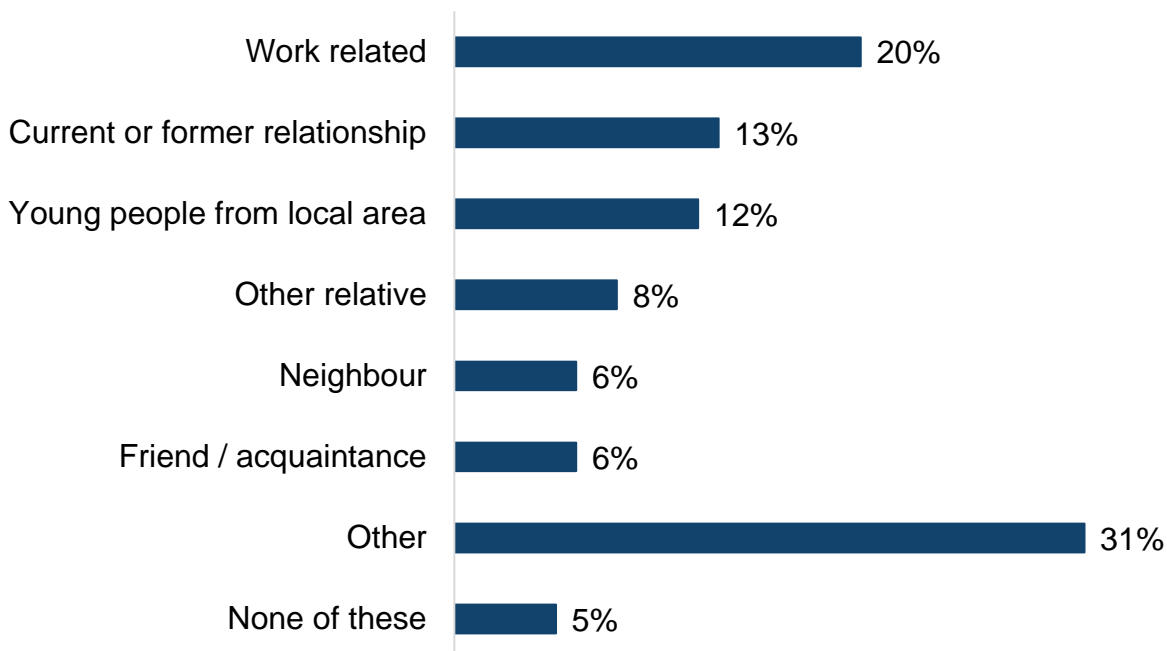
Most violent incidents (59%) in 2023/24 were committed by people who the victims knew or had seen before. Where offenders were known by the victim, just over three-quarters of incidents (76%) were said to have involved people 'known well'. This has increased over the long term from 57% in 2008/09.

Those who said they knew the offender in some way were asked about their relationship to the offender.¹⁹ Figure 3.11 shows the range of relationships between victims and offenders.

¹⁹ An amendment was made to the questionnaire in 2018/19 which meant this question was asked of all respondents who said they knew the offender, whereas previously just those who said they were 'known well' were asked this question.

Figure 3.11: The most common relationship of violent offenders to the victim was either ‘other’ or through work.

Relationship of offender to victim as a proportion of violent incidents where the offender was known in some way, 2023/24.²⁰



Variable: QRE2.

This is based from 74 respondents in 2023/24. The small size means that the figures can fluctuate between years. They have wide confidence intervals which make it more difficult to track changes over time.

Looking at only incidents where the respondent knew or had seen the offender before; there were long term decreases between 2008/09 and 2023/24 in the proportion where the offender was: a current or former partner, from 36% to 13%; or a friend, from 17% to 6%.

When considering these findings, it is important to note that victims of partner abuse may not report such experiences through the face-to-face element of the SCJS. As such, questions on experiences of partner abuse (covering both physical and psychological abuse) are answered in a self-completion element of the survey – with the latest key findings on this topic from 2018/19 and 2019/20 combined presented in the [2019/20 Main Findings Report](#).

²⁰ ‘Current or former partner’ includes any current or former husband, wife, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend. ‘Other relative’ includes any son or daughter (in law) or other relative. ‘Work related’ includes any client or member of the public contacted through work, or a workmate/colleague.

What do we know about the role of alcohol, drugs and weapons in violent crime?

Where the victims were able to say something about the offender in 2023/24, they believed that:

- 45% of offenders were under the influence of drugs
- 35% of offenders were under the influence of alcohol
- 31% were under the influence of both alcohol and drugs
- 38% were not under the influence of alcohol or drugs

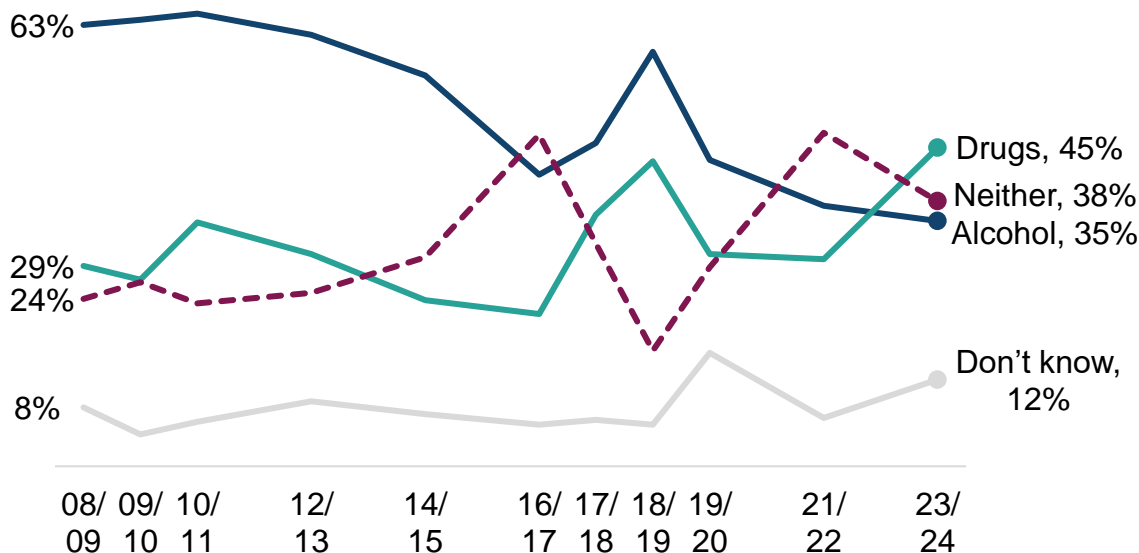
This has changed over the time covered by the survey (2008/09 to 2023/24), as shown in Figure 3.12:

- the proportion of violent crime involving drugs has risen since 2008/09: from 29% to 45%; while the proportion with drugs only has risen from 5% to 15%
- the proportion of violent crime involving alcohol has fallen since 2008/09: from 63% to 35%. This is even more significant for crime with alcohol only: falling from 39% to 4%
- the proportion of violent crime involving neither alcohol or drugs has risen since 2008/09, from 24% to 38%

As shown in Figure 3.12 below, it should be noted that in 12% of violent incidents (where victims were able to say something about the offender) the victim did not know if the offender was under the influence of alcohol or drugs or not.

Figure 3.12²¹: Violent crime where the offender was under the influence of drugs has increased since 2008/09, while for alcohol it has fallen.

Proportion of violent crime with offenders perceived to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: QAL; QDR.

Where a violent incident involved someone seeing or hearing what was going on, over a quarter (29%) in 2023/24 involved a perpetrator with a weapon. This proportion fell from 2010/11 from one in four (25%) to one in eight (12%) in 2017/18. Since then it has increased to its current level which is similar to that in 2008/09.

When combining categories (in a similar way to the [police recorded crime statistics](#)) the SCJS found that bladed/pointed articles²² were used in 10% of violent incidents where someone saw or heard what was happening. Due to small sample sizes, sub-group data can fluctuate.

²¹ These findings are based only on incidents where the respondent could say something about the offender(s). This follows an updated analytical approach first adopted in 2016/17 to focus only on incidents where victims could provide information about the perpetrator(s) and has been applied to the full time-series.

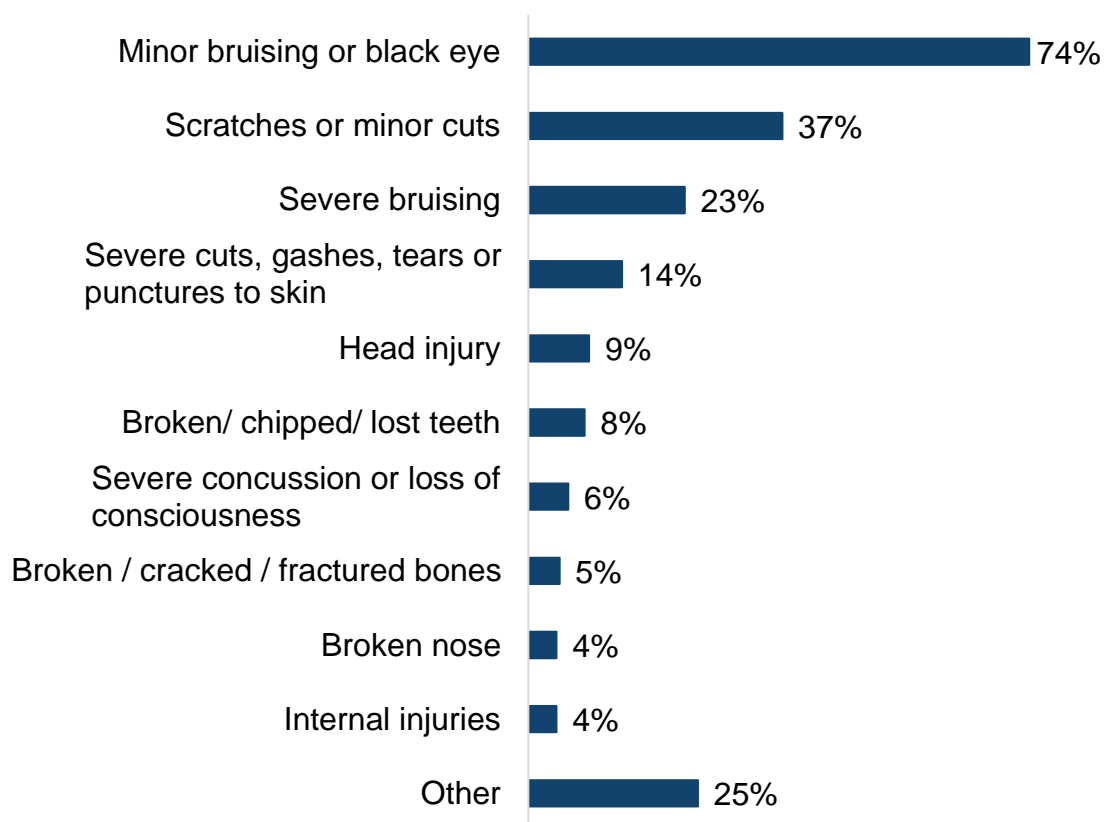
²² Bladed/pointed articles includes knives, screwdrivers and syringes.

What was the impact of violent crime?

Where violent crime resulted in some sort of injury (49% of all violent incidents, 56% of incidents where force was used), the most common injury sustained was minor bruising or a black eye (74%). More serious injuries like broken bones and internal injuries occurred much less frequently, as shown in Figure 3.13.²³ This comes from a small sample size of 55 participants, so confidence intervals are high.

Figure 3.13: The injuries commonly reported by victims are consistent with the finding that the majority of violent incidents are cases of minor assault resulting in no or negligible injury.

Type of injuries sustained as a proportion of violent incidents resulting in injury, 2023/24.



Variable: QINW.

²³ Other injuries are collected as open text responses to capture injuries like bite marks, sore hands and scraped knuckles which cannot be coded under existing categories.

What proportion of violent crime was reported to the police?

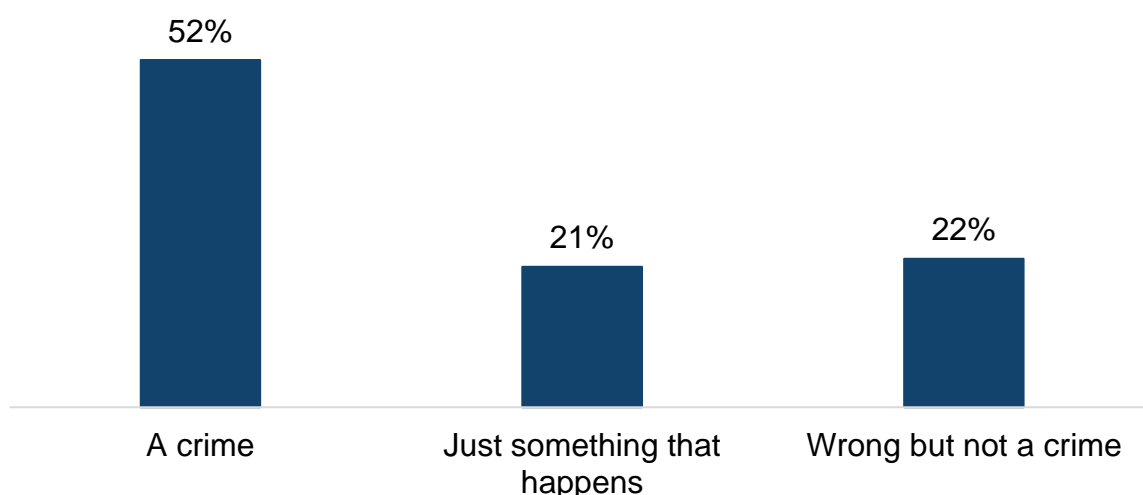
The 2023/24 SCJS estimates that less than half of violent incidents (44%) were brought to the attention of the police. This is unchanged from all previous surveys since 2008/09.

The reporting rate was significantly higher than for [property crime](#) in 2023/24, which was around one in four (24%). This is a change from 2021/22 where no difference was found for reporting rates between these crime groups.

There can be a range of factors which influence whether or not an individual reports a crime to the police, not least how the victim views their own experience. The SCJS found that in just over half of violent incidents in 2023/24 (52%) victims thought their experience should be described as 'a crime', as shown in Figure 3.14 below.

Figure 3.14: In over half of incidents, victims thought their experience was a crime, with over one in five thinking it was just something that happens.

Victim's description of violent crime incidents experienced, 2023/24.



Variable: QCRNO.

When asked directly why they did not report their experience to the police, victims cited a range of reasons. The most common reasons were: ²⁴

- the matter was dealt with personally by the victim (44%)
- it was too trivial/ not worth reporting (23%)
- it was reported to other authorities/organisations (23%)
- Police would not have bothered/ not been interested (21%), Police could have done nothing (20%), or dislike/ fear of police (10%)

²⁴ More than one reason can be given, so these cannot be added together as the total will exceed 100%

What consequences did victims believe offenders should have faced?

Regardless of police reporting, 46% of victims felt the offender should have been prosecuted, a proportion unchanged since 2008/09. Among those not favouring court:

- 30% because the offenders were children / too young – an increase from 9% in 2021/22.
- 30% said it was because there was no loss, damage or harm, and 21% thought the incident was too trivial.
- 27% thought courts are inappropriate for this offence – an increase from 4% in 2021/22. Detailed views on the criminal justice system are covered in the [Public Perceptions of the Scottish criminal justice system chapter](#).

Property crime

What is the extent and prevalence of property crime?

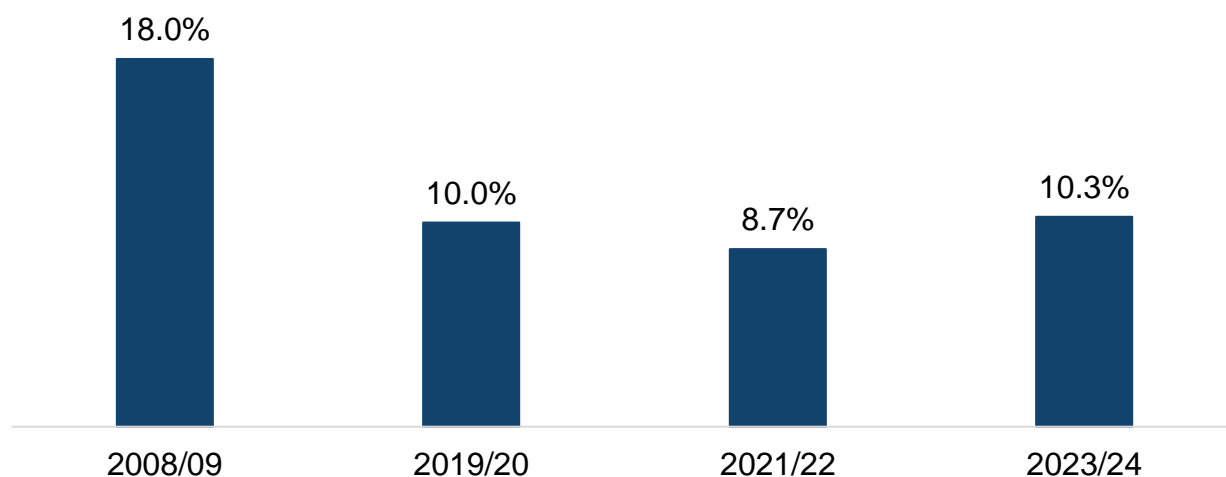
The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) estimates that 10.3% of adults were victims of property crime in 2023/24, within a margin of error between 9.1% and 11.4%.

As a sample survey of the general public, SCJS results on property crime are estimates with wide margins of error, not exact counts. Analysis here is focused on the best estimates for each year of the survey. Further details are provided in the [Background chapter](#) and in the [Technical Report](#).

This proportion has fallen over the longer term, from 18.0% in 2008/09 (Figure 4.1). Between 2021/22 and 2023/24, there was an increase of 1.6 percentage points from 8.7% of adults being a victim of a property crime. Despite this increase, the chances of being a victim of a property crime is at a similar level to the pre-covid position in 2019/20.

Figure 4.1: The proportion of adults experiencing property crime has fallen by 18 percentage points since 2008/09 but increased by 1.6 percentage points since 2021/22.

Proportion of adults experiencing property crime, 2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24.



Variable: PREVPROPERTY.

The number of property crime incidents in 2023/24 is estimated at 429,000 – between a lower estimate of 367,000 and an upper estimate of 492,000. This is a 41% decrease from 728,000 in 2008/09 but is unchanged from 2021/22, the

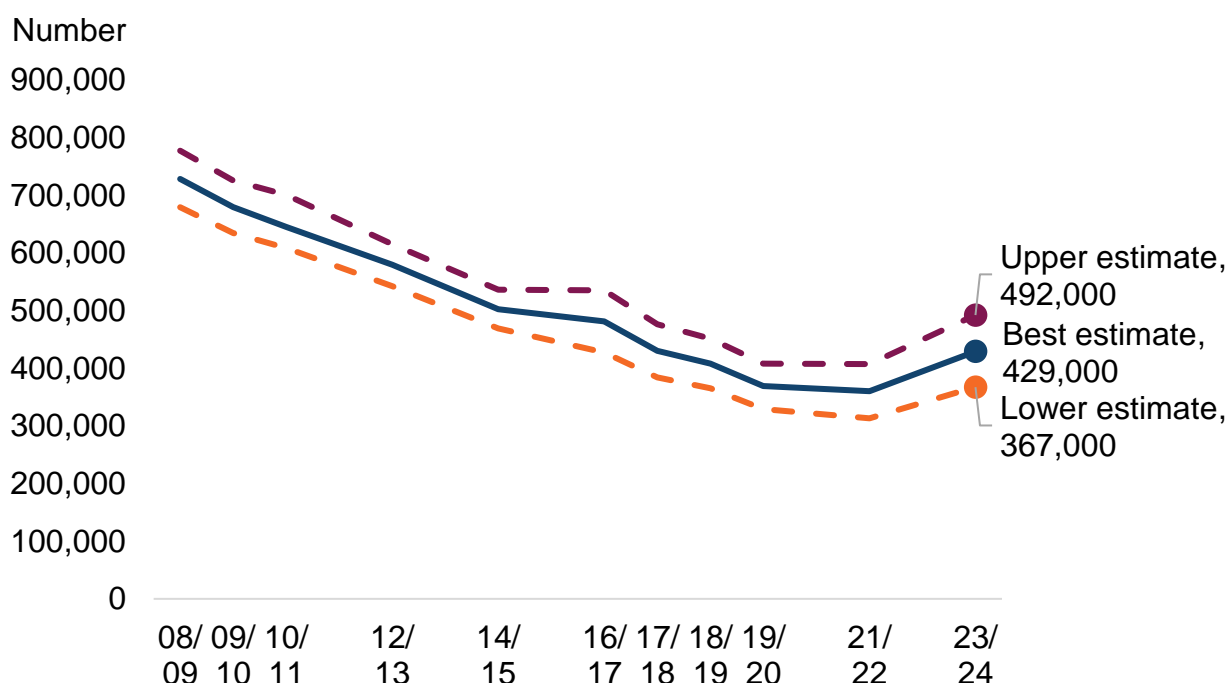
apparent increase shown in Figure 4.1 is not statistically significant, and at a similar level to 2019/20. These results are shown in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.1.^{25 26}

Property crime accounted for over a third (36%) of all crime estimated by the SCJS in 2023/24 – with the remainder being violent crime, fraud, or computer misuse.

As discussed in the [Background chapter](#), this estimate is rounded to the nearest 1,000 and is subject to a margin of error, with the actual number of incidents likely between 367,000 and 492,000.

Figure 4.2: Property crime in Scotland has shown a declining trend since 2008/09, but has remained stable in recent years and unchanged from 2021/22.

Estimated number of property crime incidents, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: INCPROPERTY.

Table 4.1 examines results from key comparator years more closely and shows that the estimated number of incidents of property crime has:

- decreased by 41% since 2008/09, from 728,000 to 429,000 – the decrease of 299,000 is statistically significant
- shown no change since 2019/20 and 2021/22 – the apparent increase from 360,000 in 2021/22 is not statistically significant

²⁵ The increase in confidence interval shown by the greater difference between the lower and upper estimates from 2016/17 onwards is due to reduction in the target survey sample size. Please see the [Background to the SCJS](#) chapter for definitions of best, upper and lower estimates.

²⁶ [Annex table A2](#) provides best estimates of the number of incidents of property crime for each year of the SCJS since 2008/09.

Table 4.1: There has been a reduction in the number of property crimes across several categories since 2008/09 but no change since 2021/22.

Estimated number of incidents of property crimes (2008/09, 2021/22 and 2023/24) with percentage change, where statistically significant, since 2008/09 and 2021/22.

Crime type	2008/09	2021/22	2023/24	Change since 2008/09	Change since 2021/22
All property crime	728,000	360,000	429,000	Down 41%	No change
Housebreaking	25,000	15,000	17,000	No change	No change
Personal theft	110,000	72,000	107,000	No change	No change
Other household theft including bicycle	173,000	124,000	139,000	Down 19%	No change
All motor vehicle related theft	70,000	25,000	35,000	Down 50%	No change
Vandalism	350,000	125,000	131,000	Down 63%	No change
Number of respondents	16,000	5,520	4,970	-	-

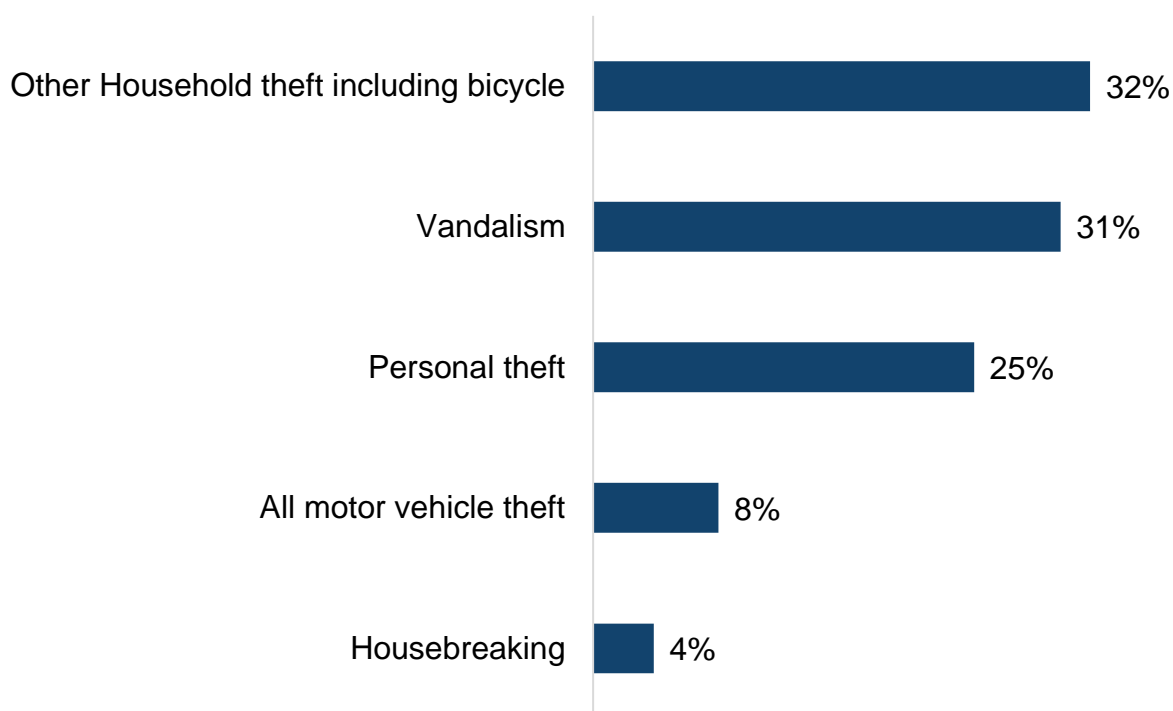
Variables: INCPROPERTY; INCHOUSEBREAK; INCPERSTHEFT; INCOTHERHOUSEHOLDTHEFTCYCLE; INCALLMVTHEFT; INCVAND.

What types of property crime were most commonly experienced?

In 2023/24, unlike in previous years, household theft (including bicycle theft) accounted for the largest proportion of property crime incidents (32%). This was followed by vandalism (31%), personal theft (25%), all motor vehicle theft (8%) and housebreaking (4%).

Figure 4.3: Other household theft and vandalism together comprise almost two-thirds of all property crime.

Categories of crime as proportions of property crime overall in 2023/24.



Variables: INCVAND; INCPERSTHEFT; INCOTHERHOUSETHEFTCYCLE; INCALLMVTHEFT; INCHOUSEBREAK.

Since 2008/09, there have been notable reductions in all types of property crime, including vandalism (down 63%), motor vehicle related theft (down 50%), and housebreaking (33%).

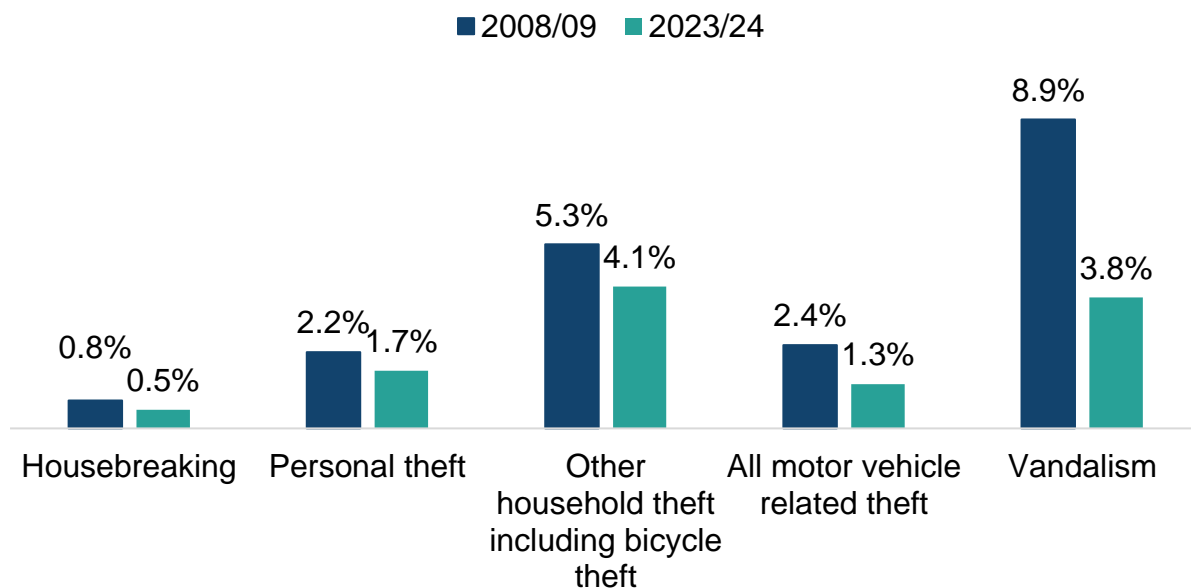
Similar to the estimated number of incidents, the prevalence rates for vandalism, other household theft, motor vehicle related theft, personal theft and housebreaking have all fallen since 2008/09, as shown in Figure 4.4.²⁷ For example, like the incident count, the prevalence rate for vandalism more than halved between 2008/09 and 2023/24 (from 8.9% to 3.8%).

The victimisation rates for all sub-categories of property crime were unchanged between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

²⁷ It is worth noting that prevalence rates for sub-categories of property crime (e.g., vandalism) are considered to be 'household crimes' and are presented as proportions of households victimised. The one exception is personal theft which is a 'personal crime' and therefore relates to the proportion of adults affected.

Figure 4.4: Under 1 in 25 households (3.8%) experienced other household theft in 2023/24, whilst 0.5% were victims of housebreaking.

Proportion of adults/households experiencing types of property crime.



Variables: PREVHOUSEBREAK; PREVPERSTHEFT; PREVOTHERHOUSETHEFTCYCLE; PREVALLMVTHEFT; PREVVAND.

Note: Prevalence rates for vandalism, other household theft, motor vehicle related theft and housebreaking are presented as proportions of households experiencing each crime type, rather than individuals.

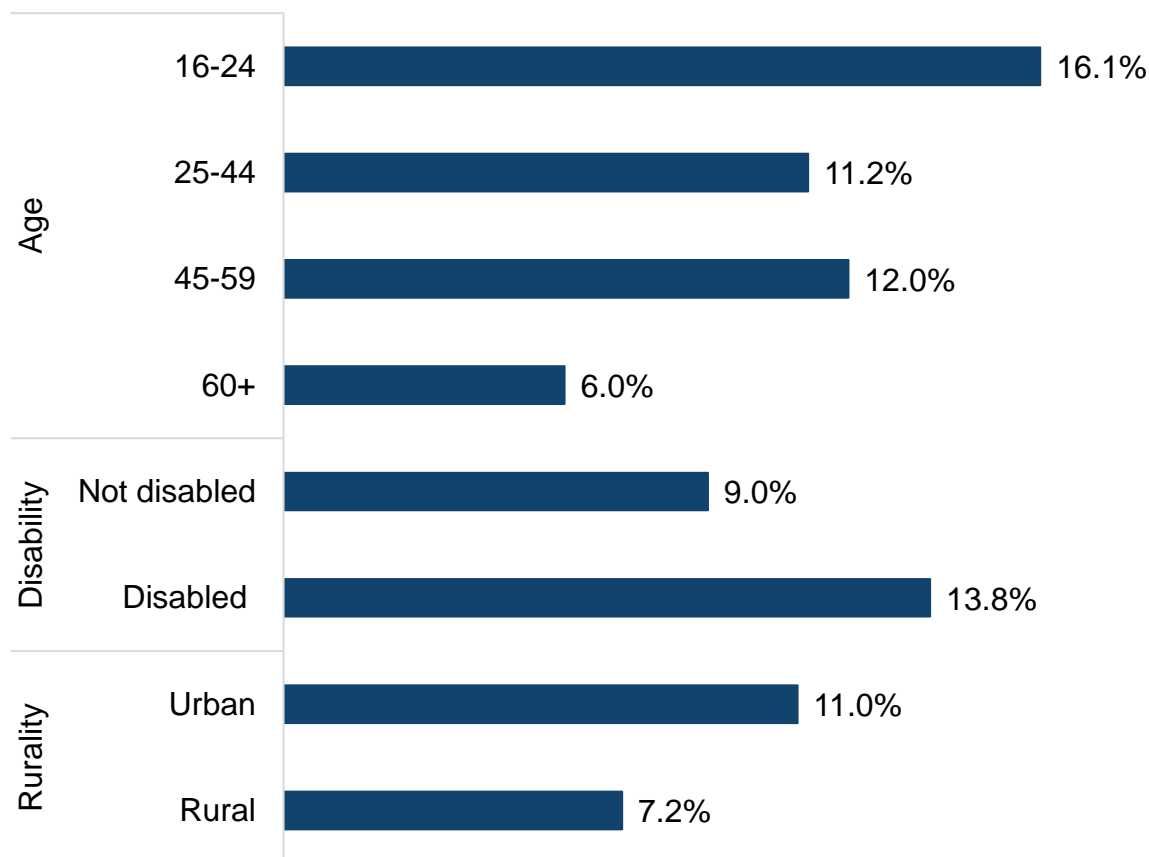
How did experiences of property crime vary across the population?

The SCJS found that victimisation for property crime was:

- lowest for those aged 60 and over
- greater for adults living in urban locations than rural locations
- greater for disabled adults compared to those who are not disabled
- the same for males and females, those living in most deprived areas and the rest of Scotland

Figure 4.5: The likelihood of being a victim of property crime is higher for those living in urban areas.

Proportion of adults experiencing property crime, by demographic and area characteristics.



Variables: PREVPROPERTY; QDGEN; QDAGE; SIMD_TOP; URBRUR.

Property crime victimisation has decreased significantly since 2008/09 across most key groups in the population – including across all the demographic and area characteristics discussed above.

What can the SCJS tell us about repeat victimisation?

As outlined in the '[Overview of crime](#)' chapter, the SCJS estimates that the majority of adults did not experience any property crime in 2023/24 and 10.3% of adults were victims of at least one property crime. However, the survey also enables us to further explore how experiences varied amongst victims and examine the concentration of crime, including what proportion of victims experienced a particular type of crime more than once during the year.²⁸ This is known as '[repeat victimisation](#)'.

Looking at the volume of crime experienced by individual victims in more detail shows that 7.7% of adults were victims of only one property crime, whereas 2.5% of adults experienced two or more property crimes in 2023/24, accounting for almost

²⁸ i.e. two or more experiences of property crime.

half (48%) of all property crime. On average this group is estimated to have experienced 1.8 property crimes each over the year²⁹.

Figure 4.6 displays trends in single and repeat property crime victimisation over time. It shows that between 2008/09 and 2023/24 there were decreases in the proportion of adults experiencing:

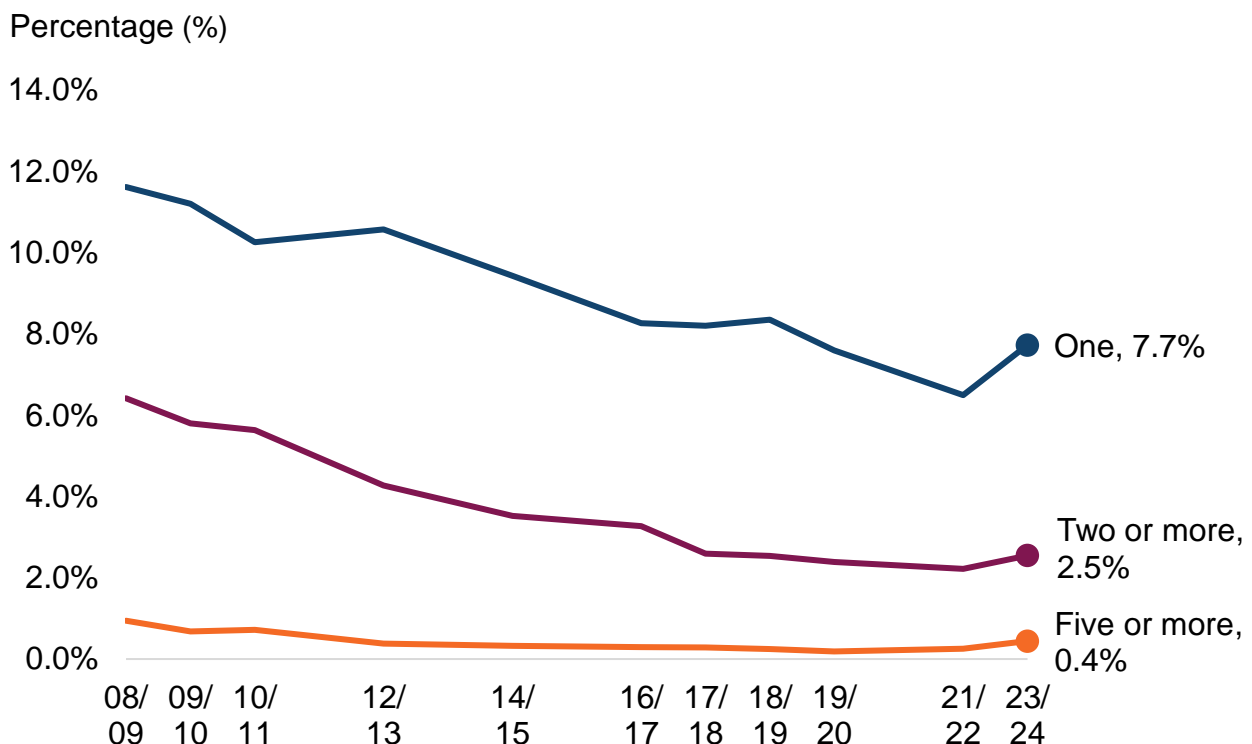
- single incidents of property crime - from 11.6% to 7.7%.
- repeat victimisation (two or more incidents of property crime) – from 6.4% down to 2.5%
- high frequency repeat victimisation (five or more incidents of property crime) – from 0.9% to 0.4%

The fall in the various levels of victimisation since 2008/09 have occurred in line with a decrease in the overall property crime victimisation rate over the same period.

²⁹ Property crime as a category is made up of some crimes that happen against individuals and some against households. When presenting findings for the average number of crimes experienced by repeat victims as individuals, it is possible for the figure to be below two as crimes which happen against households are apportioned across the total number of adults living at an address.

Figure 4.6: The prevalence of repeat victimisation for property crimes has fallen since 2008/09.

Proportion of adults experiencing a number of property crimes, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: INCSURVEYCRIME; PREVSURVEYCRIME.

What do we know about the perpetrators of property crime?

Most victims of property crime couldn't provide details about offenders. Only around a third (36%) of incidents included offender descriptions, compared to 97% for violent crimes. Where respondents could provide details, they reported that:

- 84% involved at least one male offender, 17% involved at least one female offender, and 4% involved a mixed sex group of perpetrators³⁰
- most offenders were under 40; only 15% were 40 or older. The largest group was under 16 (33%)
- 41% of offenders were well known to the victim. The majority of them were neighbours (29%)

Given the relatively low proportion of victims who could provide details on offenders, findings should be interpreted with caution and may not reflect all property crimes.

³⁰ In 2023/24 this question was changed to allow respondents to select multiple options when answering this question. Crimes involving a mixed-sex group are now also counted in the individual sex categories, where previously they were always presented separately.

What was the impact of property crime?

Direct financial costs resulting from property crime were typically of relatively low value – but the impact of such costs will vary for each victim. Victims of property crime where something was stolen (54% of property crimes) were asked to provide the approximate value of the items concerned.

Of the 56% of property crimes involving theft, 64% valued items at £100 or less, with around 3% exceeding £1,000.

How did victims view the incident and what proportion was reported to the police?

The results show that 68% of property crime victims saw their reported experience as ‘a crime’, while 17% of respondents viewed it as ‘wrong but not a crime,’ and 15% as ‘just something that happens’. Property crime incidents were more likely to be viewed as criminal by the victim compared to experiences of violent crime in 2023/24 (of which 52% of violent crime incidents were considered ‘a crime’).

However, only a quarter (24%) of property crimes were reported to police in 2023/24. This is unchanged from 2021/22 following a stable period between 2008/09 (36%) and 2019/20 (36%) and a fall in 2021/22 (27%).

The main reasons given by victims for not reporting their experience to the police were that the incident was too trivial (41%) or the perception that the police could do nothing (34%).

What consequences did victims believe property crime offenders should have faced?

Regardless of whether their experience was reported to the police, 42% of property crime victims in 2023/24 thought the offender should have been prosecuted in court. This is not significantly different to the equivalent figure for violent crime in 2023/24 (46%). Of the respondents where they do not think the offender should have been prosecuted, the most common reason given was “incident was too trivial” (40%).

Where victims thought an incident should have resulted in a court prosecution, a prison sentence was considered a suitable outcome in relation to approximately one-in-every-10 cases (10%).

Respondents who did not think property crime offenders should have been prosecuted in court (and those who were not sure) were asked about alternatives to prosecution and whether any other course of action should have taken place. Victims mentioned a range of alternatives, including that offenders should have:

- been given some kind of warning (29% of such incidents)
- apologised for their actions (18% of such incidents)
- been made to pay them compensation (17% of such incidents)

- been given some kind of help to stop them (11% of incidents)

Notably, victims said that ‘nothing should have happened’ in relation to only 2% of these property crime incidents (i.e. where they did not think the offender should have been prosecuted in court). This compares to 17% of violent incidents (where prosecution in court was deemed unnecessary by victims).

What property crime has a cyber element?

Very few property crime incidents involved a cyber element. Respondents who had experienced property crime were asked if the incident involved the internet, any type of online activity or an internet enabled device. In 2023/24, only 1% of property crime incidents involved a cyber element, unchanged since 2019/20 (1%), when this question was asked for the first time.

Fraud and computer misuse

Background to fraud and computer misuse in the SCJS

Where possible, the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey works to keep pace with the changing nature of crime in Scotland. In recent years, one aspect of crime which has been steadily increasing is fraud, with the number of police recorded cases more than doubling in Scotland between 2014-15 and 2023-24 (up 140%).

A user consultation in 2022 gathered feedback expressing a desire for the SCJS to collect more information on cyber-crime incidents – many of which are crimes of fraud.³¹ In 2023/24, a new victim form was included in the SCJS questionnaire, with the aim of gathering information on crimes of fraud and computer misuse. For the first time, this allows us to estimate the volume and prevalence of these crimes in Scotland, as well as present information on their characteristics (such as victim demographics). This new victim form replaces the previous cyber-crime module.

Fraud is a complex and evolving crime category that encompasses a wide range of offences. The fraud data has been subdivided into more specific subtypes, allowing for more detailed analysis. As this is the initial year of collecting this data in this format, it remains in development, and we anticipate refining these categories in future reports based on emerging trends and user feedback.

For the purposes of this report, fraud and computer misuse is broken down into the following categories:

- bank and credit card fraud - for example gaining access to someone's bank account or using someone's bank details to make a payment
- other types of fraud - for example buying or selling goods online, investment fraud or door to door salespeople
- computer misuse - include incidents of hacking, viruses or other types of computer misuse.

As the SCJS is a survey of adults living in private residences, the results presented here do not include crimes against businesses, tax fraud, or benefit fraud for example.

In addition to the specific crime groups mentioned above, it is also possible to discuss the characteristics of fraud in terms of the elements that are common to all subgroups. In this report, further analysis is provided in the following ways:

- whether the crime involved any loss to the victim or not
- whether the crime involved the use of any cyber-technologies or not

The findings presented in this chapter represent an initial, high-level, summary of the information collected through these new questions. Analysts will continue to

³¹ Accredited Official Statistics on [Police recorded crime](#) data shows that of the 16,890 estimated cyber crimes recorded by the police in 2023/24, 9,890 (59%) of these were frauds.

review the data presented here to ensure it best meets the needs of users and provides a fuller understanding of the nature of these types of crimes.

What was the extent and prevalence of fraud and computer misuse in Scotland in 2023/24?

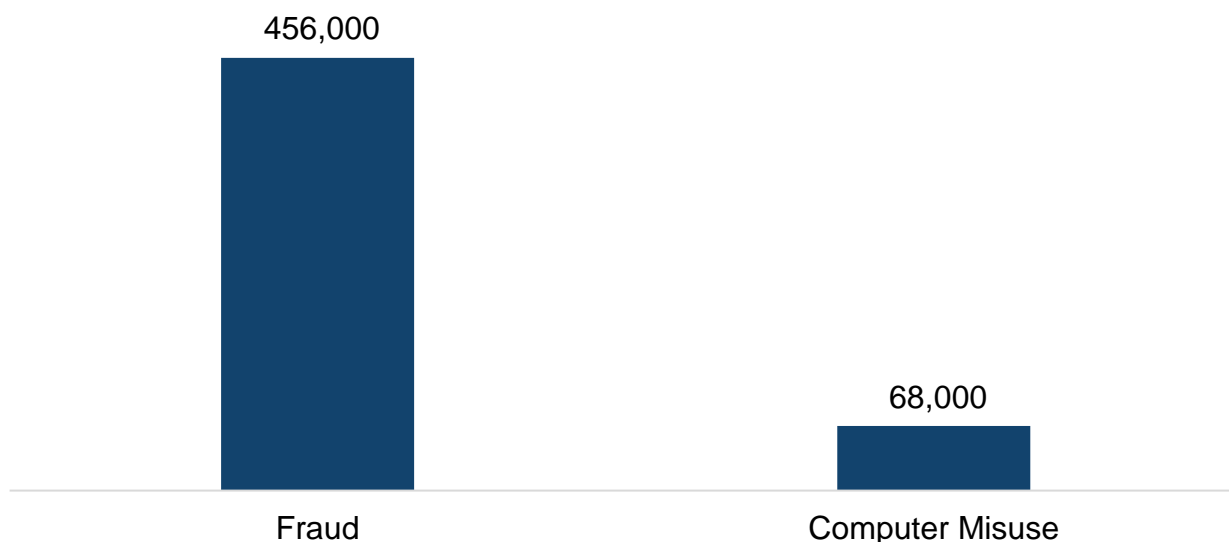
The SCJS estimates that 9.5% of adults in 2023/24 were victims of at least one crime of fraud or computer misuse, within a margin of error³² between 8.3% and 10.7%. The proportion of adults who experienced fraud or computer misuse individually was 8.3% and 1.4% respectively.

As a sample survey of the public, SCJS results on fraud and computer misuse are estimates with wide margins of error, not exact counts. Analysis is focused on the best estimates for each year of the survey. Further details are provided in the [Background chapter](#) and in the [Technical Report](#).

The estimated volume of crimes of fraud and computer misuse was 524,000 between a lower estimate of 456,000 and an upper estimate of 593,000. These crimes account for 44% of all crime measured by the SCJS in 2023/24. As shown in Figure 5.1, most of these crimes were fraud (87% or 456,000 crimes) with the remaining 13% or 68,000 crimes being computer misuse.

Figure 5.1: Of the estimated 524,000 incidents of fraud and computer misuse in 2023/24, the vast majority (87%) of these cases were fraud.

Estimated number of fraud and computer misuse incidents, 2023/24.



Variables: INCALLFRAUD; INCCOMPUTERMISUSE.

³² As a sample survey of the general public, SCJS results on violence are estimates with wide margins of error, not exact counts. Analysis here is focused on the best estimates for each year of the survey. Further details are in the [Technical Report](#).

What types of fraud were experienced by adults in Scotland?

As shown in Table 5.1, almost half of fraud and computer misuse crimes experienced in 2023/24 (47%) were bank and credit card fraud with two-fifths being all other types of fraud (40%). When considering fraud in isolation, bank and credit card fraud comprise 54% of all frauds with all other types of fraud making up the other 46%.

A similar proportion of adults experienced a bank or credit card fraud (4.5%) to any other type of fraud (4.2%).

Table 5.1: Around one in ten adults experienced a fraud or computer misuse crime in 2023/24.

Proportion of adults experiencing fraud and computer misuse crime and estimated volumes by crime category, 2023/24.

Crime category	Prevalence (% of adults)	Estimated volume	% of total fraud and computer misuse
All fraud and computer misuse	9.5%	524,000	100%
All fraud	8.3%	456,000	87%
Bank and credit card fraud	4.5%	247,000	47%
All other types of fraud	4.2%	208,000	40%
All computer misuse overall	1.4%	68,000	13%

Variables: (PREV/INC)ALLSCJSCOMPMISSANDFRAUD, (PREV/INC)ALLFRAUD, (PREV/INC)BANKANDCREDITFRAUD, (PREV/INC)COMPUTERMISUSE

How did experiences of fraud and computer misuse vary across the population?

The SCJS finds that the only difference in victimisation rate for demographic groups was for sex, with females more likely to be a victim (11.3%) than males (7.5%). There were no differences detected for any other demographic group or area characteristic such as age, disability, rurality or level of deprivation. This pattern was true for fraud (10.1% for females and 6.3% for males) but not true for computer misuse alone.

For computer misuse, the only difference seen was that those living in the 15% more deprived areas were less likely to be a victim (0.4%) than those living elsewhere in Scotland (1.6%).

What can the SCJS tell us about repeat victimisation of fraud and computer misuse?

As mentioned above, the SCJS finds that the majority of adults were not a victim of either a fraud or computer misuse crime in 2023/24, at 90.5%.

The survey enables us to see what proportion of victims experienced a particular type of crime more than once during the year.³³ This is known as 'repeat victimisation'.³⁴

Focusing on fraud, the results show that just over 1 in 100 (1.2%) of adults were the victim of repeated incidents (i.e. two or more) and their experiences accounted for 29% of all frauds in 2023/24. Victims of fraud overall experienced 1.2 crimes each and repeat victims on average 2.4 crimes each. High frequency repeat victimisation (i.e. five or more incidents) was experienced by an extremely small proportion of the population, at less than one tenth of a percent (<0.1%). Table 5.2 explores the extent of repeat victimisation in more detail.

Table 5.2: Almost three in ten crimes of fraud were experienced by repeat victims in 2023/24.

Proportion of fraud crime experienced by victims, by number of crimes experienced.

Number of crimes experienced	% of population	% of fraud crime volume
None	91.7%	0%
One	7.1%	71%
Two	0.9%	19%
Three	0.1%	3%
Four	0.1%	4%
Five or more	0.1%	4%
Two or more	1.2%	29%

Variables: INCALLFRAUD.

What kind of contact did victims of fraud have with the perpetrator?

The SCJS found that contact between the victim and the perpetrator only happened in a minority of frauds, just over a quarter of cases (28%) in 2023/24.

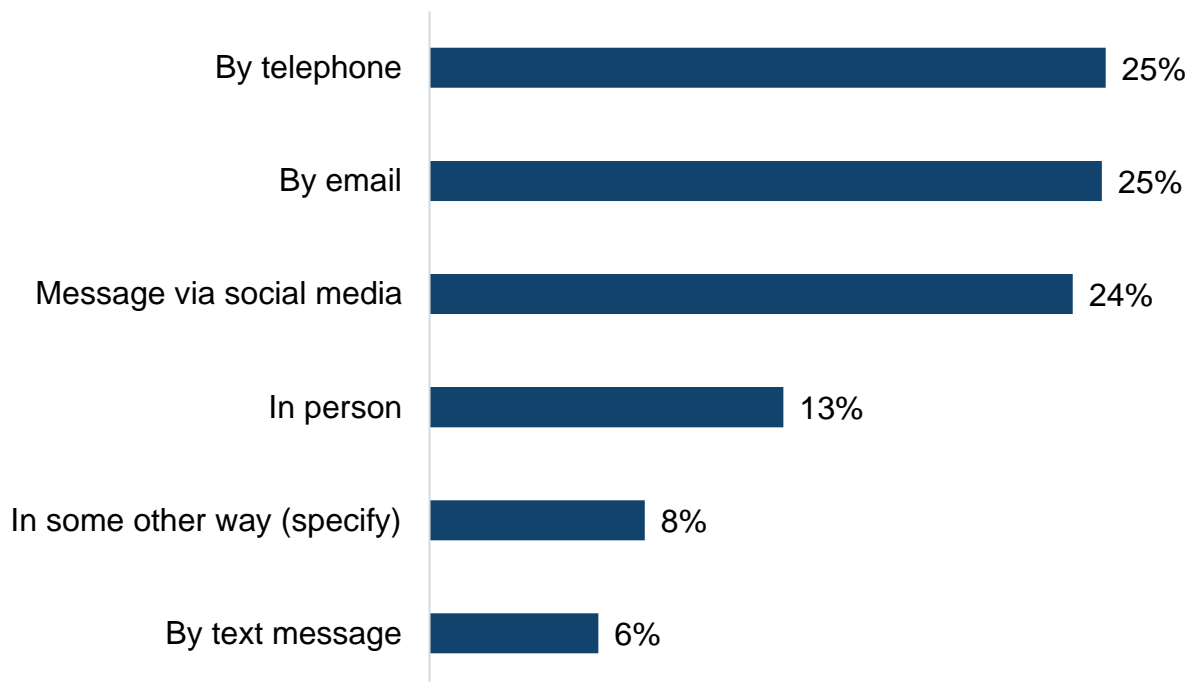
³³ i.e. two or more experiences of violent crime.

³⁴ Further information about the approach taken to process and derive SCJS results, including on repeat victimisation, is provided in the [Technical Report](#).

As shown in Figure 5.2, the most common means of contact was by phone (25%), email (25%) or social media (24%), each representing just under a quarter of such cases. This was followed by in-person at 13% of cases and contact via text message, which was only seen in 6% of cases.

Figure 5.2: In almost three quarters of frauds, the perpetrator made contact with the victim through either telephone, email or social media.

Proportion of methods for contact between victim and perpetrators for incidents of fraud.



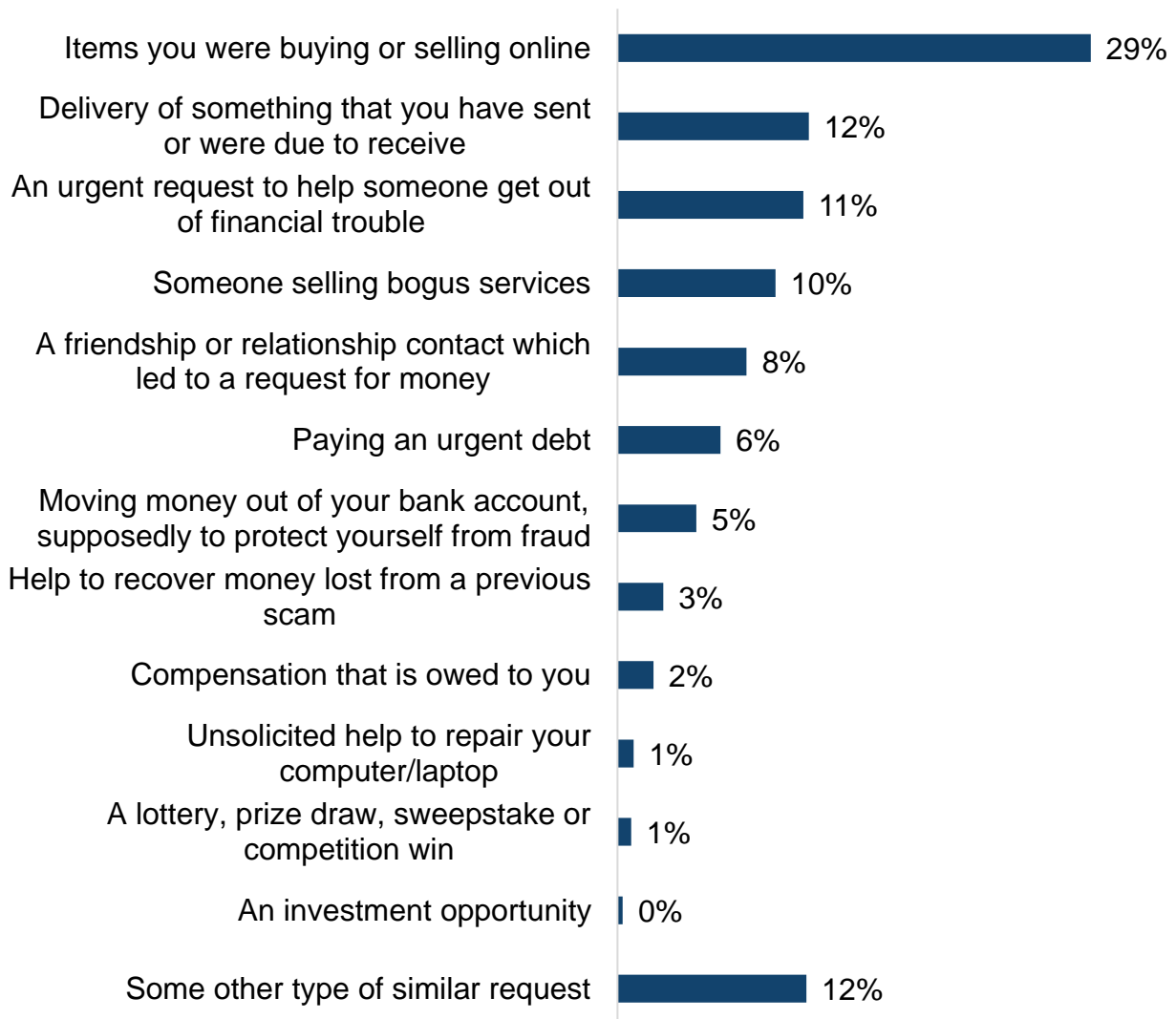
Variables: FHOWCONT2.

In terms of why the victim and perpetrator had contact, as shown in Figure 5.3, the most common reasons were:

- buying or selling online (29%)
- delivery of something that the victim had sent or were due to receive (12%)
- urgent request to help get someone out of financial trouble (11%)
- someone selling bogus services (10%)

Figure 5.3: The most common reason for contact between the victim and perpetrator of fraud was for items being bought or sold online.

Proportion of reasons for contact between victim and perpetrators for incidents of fraud.



Variables: FMFRDTYP2_01 – FMFRDTYP2_17.

In only one-in-ten cases (9%) could the victim say anything about the person who committed the crime. Given the small numbers involved it is not currently possible to provide any detailed information on the characteristics of perpetrators of fraud.

How much money or property did victims of fraud lose?

There are a range of ways in which a victim could have experienced loss. Examples include personal information, money including cash or from bank accounts, or some form of property.

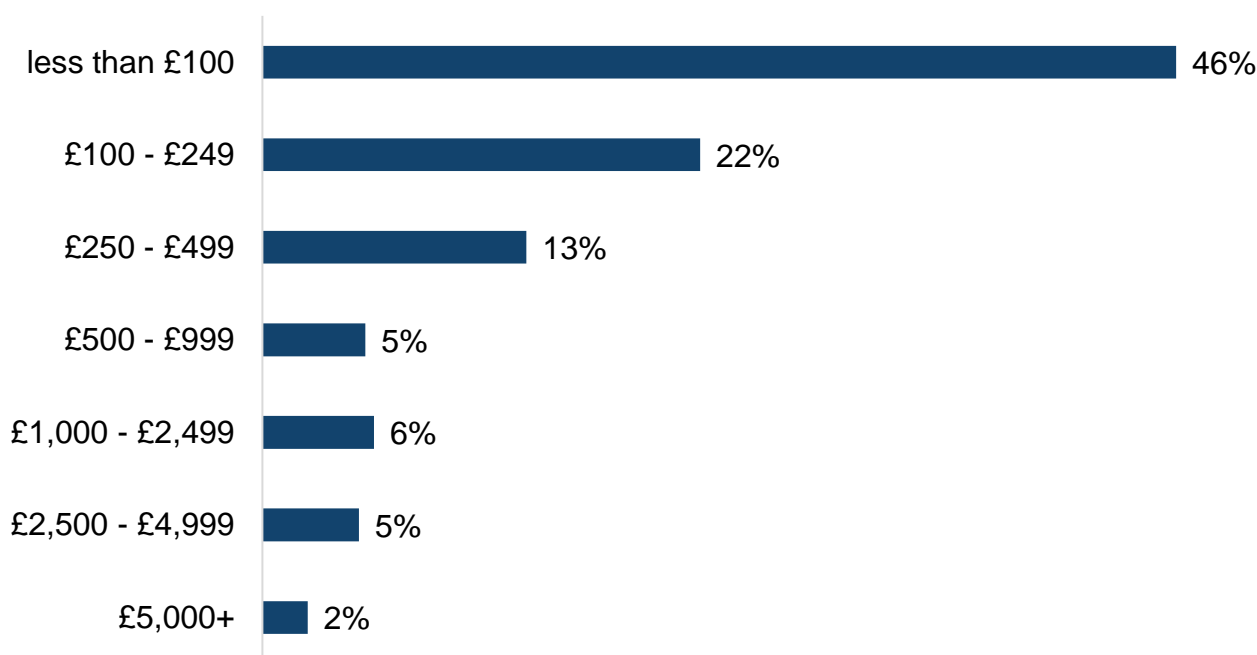
In some instances of fraud anything lost by the victim may be refunded. However, even in cases where the total loss was refunded in full, the SCJS still considers these crimes as having a loss associated with it.

Overall, in over two-thirds (69%) of fraud in 2023/24, the victim incurred the loss of money or property. In most cases (97%), the victim said that it was money that was lost. This was followed by 8% who said they lost personal information and 2% who said they lost property.

As shown in Figure 5.4, where money was lost, in just under half of cases (46%), the victim lost less than £100. A further 41% lost between £100 and £999. While the remaining 13% of victims lost more than £1,000 and 2% lost more than £5,000. The median amount lost in 2023/24 due to crimes of fraud was £100.

Figure 5.4: Where some money was lost in a fraud crime, just under half lost £100 or less, with one-in-eight losing more than £1,000.

Financial impact of fraud crimes where money was lost.



Variable: FQLOSS4_2.

Where victims lost money, the SCJS estimates that in the majority of cases (71%) they were refunded in full, and in a further 7% they were partially refunded. In around a fifth (19%) of cases the victim was not refunded at all and in 4%, the cases had not yet been resolved at the time of interview.

What proportion of fraud was reported to the police or another organisation?

In 2023/24, less than one-in-ten (10%) crimes of fraud were reported to the police. This rate was significantly lower than both property (24%) and violent (44%) crimes in the latest year.

When asked why they did not report the incident to the police, the most commonly given reasons were:

- reported incident to other authority (e.g. the bank/financial institution) (37% of cases)
- thought incident would be reported by other authority (e.g. the bank/financial institution) (20%)
- too trivial/not worth reporting (16%)
- the police could have done nothing (14%)

In 2023/24, it was found to be much more common for an incident of fraud to be reported to a bank than the police. Four-fifths (80%) of all fraud crimes were reported to a bank, building society or credit card company.

How does fraud with loss compare to fraud without loss?

As mentioned earlier, in addition to comparing different types of fraud, it is also possible to discuss the characteristics of fraud in terms of the elements that are common to all subgroups. This allows us to ask questions such as whether there is a difference between fraud which involved a loss to the victim and those that didn't.

In most fraud incidents (67%), the victim experienced some form of loss, such as money or personal information, with the remaining 31% of victims experiencing no loss.

The victimisation rate for frauds that involved loss was higher (5.9%) compared to those without loss (2.7%). This was true for all demographic groups except for those living in the 15% most deprived areas where there was no significant difference.

As with fraud overall, females were more likely to be a victim of a fraud with loss compared to males (7.6% compared to 4.1% respectively). However, males and females were equally likely to experience frauds without loss.

How does cyber-enabled fraud compare to non cyber-enabled fraud?

Around two-fifths (37%) of fraud incidents in 2023/24 were cyber-enabled, with the majority (63%) being not cyber-enabled.

For both cyber-enabled and not cyber-enabled fraud, as with all fraud, females were more likely to be a victim compared to males (6.5% compared to 3.9% and 4.1% compared to 2.4% respectively).

The victimisation rate for frauds that were not cyber-enabled was higher (5.4%) compared to those that were (3.2%). This was true for all demographic groups where a statistically significant difference was found such as:

- males (4.1% compared to 2.4%)
- females (6.5% compared to 3.9%)
- those aged 60 and older (4.9% compared to 2.1%)

What can the SCJS tell us about incidents of computer misuse?

As the number of respondents who disclosed they were a victim of computer misuse was low (less than 100) it is difficult for us to provide a detailed analysis of the nature of these crimes such as victim demographics. What follows is an initial summary of the information collected through these questions. We will continue to review this data in future years to see what additional information can be provided.

Victims of computer misuse only had any form of contact with the person that did it in 3% of cases detected by the SCJS in 2023/24. However, in 14% of incidents the victim was able to say something about the offender that did it.

Three-quarters of victims (75%) believed that what happened to them was a crime, however, only a very small minority of 3% decided to report the matter to the police.

When asked why they did not report it to the police, the most commonly given reasons were:

- too trivial/not worth reporting (36%)
- police could have done nothing (24%)
- dealt with the matter themselves (22%)
- inconvenient/too much trouble (21%)

Comparisons with other statistical sources of crime and victimisation

What sources can the SCJS be compared to?

This chapter presents comparisons of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) to two other main sources of crime victimisation data.

The first is [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#), which provides information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland.

The second is the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) (CSEW), which is similar to the SCJS with both following on from the British Crime Survey (BCS). Although there are some differences between the surveys, for example the coding of crimes varies between the SCJS and the CSEW to reflect the different criminal justice systems in which they operate, the overall results on the proportion of adults experiencing crime have offered a broad comparison point over the years.

How does the SCJS compare to Police Recorded Crime?

This section compares the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) and police recorded crime. It examines the scale of the difference between the volume of property and violent crimes that are recorded by the police and the level of those crimes that are estimated by the SCJS to be experienced by the adult population living in private households in Scotland.

A range of information is provided based on analysis of a sub-set of comparable property and violent crimes.³⁵ This sub-set is made up of three broadly comparable categories from both sources: violent crime, acquisitive crime and vandalism.³⁶ These crimes are coded in the survey in approximately the same way as they would be recorded by the police.

The comparable crime group excludes fraud and computer misuse as only a very small proportion (9.5% in 2023/24, as detailed in the [Fraud and computer misuse chapter](#)) of these incidents are reported to the police. This follows a similar approach to the Crime Survey for England and Wales.³⁷

The first part of this chapter examines trends in these two sources over time, with a focus on each broad category. This is followed by a comparison of police recorded crime with the proportion of SCJS property and violent crimes estimated to have

³⁵ This sub-set should not be used to assess the overall level of crime in Scotland.

³⁶ The [Technical Report](#) provides more information about the crime groups used in this report, including the comparable crime sub-set.

³⁷ [Exploring diverging trends between the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime - Office for National Statistics.](#)

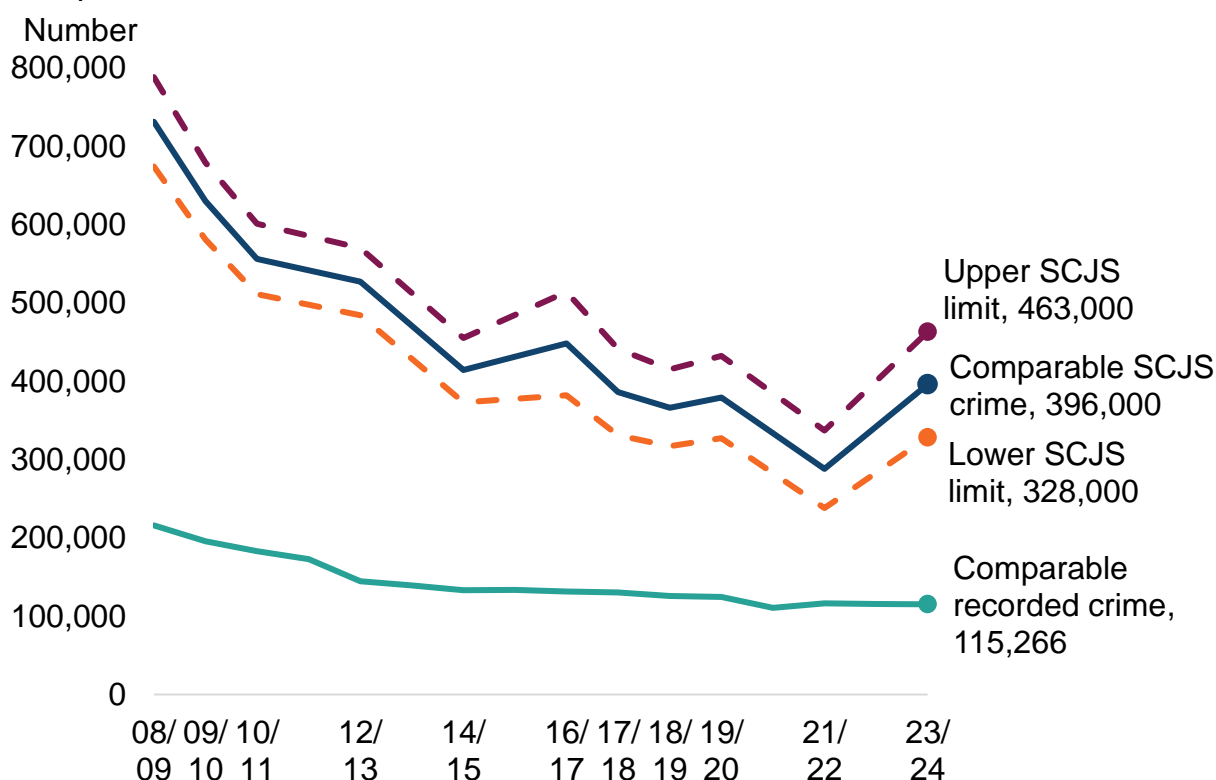
been reported to the police. A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of each source is included at the end of this section.

What are the trends in comparable SCJS and police recorded crime?

Of the 661,000 property and violence crimes estimated by the 2023/24 SCJS, around three-fifths (396,000) can be compared with police recorded crimes. Figure 6.1 demonstrates the scale of the difference between the two series of crime statistics. In 2023/24, the police recorded 115,266 crimes and offences³⁸ in the comparable sub-set, representing approximately three-tenths (29%) of the number of crimes in the SCJS comparable sub-set.

Figure 6.1: Both the SCJS and police recorded crime show a long-term decrease in the number of property and violent crimes, but the SCJS has seen an increase since the previous year.

Comparable recorded crime and SCJS estimates, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



There are a number of reasons for the difference between these two sources, including that SCJS estimates tend to be higher than recorded crime figures because the survey is able to capture crime which does not come to the attention of the police. SCJS respondents were asked if the police came to know about an incident and found that around two-fifths (41%) of all crime in the comparable sub-set came to the attention of the police in 2023/24.

Both the SCJS and police recorded crime provide evidence of large decreases in crime in Scotland over the longer term. As shown in Table 6.1, the SCJS estimates

³⁸ Please see the [Technical Report](#) for more information on offence codes and crime groups.

that the volume of comparable crime fell by 46% between 2008/09 and 2023/24, whilst comparable recorded crime is down by 47% over the same period.

Since 2021/22, comparable recorded crime fell by 1% whilst SCJS comparable crime increased by 38%. However, when comparing with the pre-covid position in 2019/20, comparable recorded crime fell by 7% while comparable SCJS crime shows no change over that period.

Table 6.1: Since 2008/09 comparable SCJS and police recorded crime figures have both fallen by around a half but have shown slightly differing patterns in recent years.

Comparable crime group estimates (2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24).

	Estimated number of comparable crimes				Change since		
	2008/09	2019/20	2021/22	2023/24	08/09	19/20	21/22
Comparable SCJS crime	731,000	379,000	288,000	396,000	Down 46%	No change	Up 38%
Comparable recorded crime	215,901	124,550	116,547	115,266	Down 47%	Down 7%	Down 1%
SCJS acquisitive crime	64,000	46,000	29,000	33,000	Down 48%	No change	No change
Recorded acquisitive crime	27,527	15,919	13,049	12,952	Down 53%	Down 19%	Down 1%
SCJS violent crime	317,000	194,000	134,000	231,000	Down 27%	No change	Up 73%
Recorded violent crime	82,855	63,421	63,018	64,439	Down 22%	Up 2%	Up 2%
SCJS vandalism	350,000	139,000	125,000	131,000	Down 63%	No change	No change
Recorded vandalism	105,519	45,160	40,480	37,875	Down 64%	Down 16%	Down 6%

Sources: SCJS; Police recorded crime

Note: changes in SCJS results specified were statistically significant.

Acquisitive crime

The acquisitive comparable crime group includes bicycle theft, housebreaking and theft of a motor vehicle. In 2023/24 the SCJS estimated that there were 33,000 acquisitive crimes (+/- 11,000, meaning that the true number of acquisitive crimes experienced by the population is estimated to be between 22,000 and 45,000³⁹). The police recorded 12,952 acquisitive crimes in 2023/24.

Both SCJS estimates and recorded acquisitive crime figures decreased between 2008/09 and 2023/24 (by 48% and 53% respectively). Since 2021/22, the SCJS detects no change in the volume of acquisitive crime, and police recorded acquisitive crime decreased by 1%. Where SCJS estimates are based on the experiences of a relatively small number of people, it can often be challenging to detect significant changes between adjacent survey years.⁴⁰

Violent crime

Violent comparable crime includes serious assault, minor assault⁴¹ and robbery. In 2023/24, the SCJS estimates that there were 231,000 violent crimes (+/- 61,000, meaning that the true number of violent crimes experienced by the population is estimated to be between 170,000 and 292,000), while the police recorded 64,439.

Table 6.1 shows that the two sources of comparable violent crime data saw decreases over the longer term. Between 2008/09 and 2023/24, both SCJS estimates and police recorded violent crime figures have shown a decrease (27% and 22% respectively).⁴² Since 2021/22, the SCJS has seen a large year-on-year change, with an increase of 73%, whilst police recorded violence increased by 2%.

Further information on SCJS violent crime is provided in the [Violent crime chapter](#).

Vandalism

The vandalism comparable crime group includes motor vehicle vandalism and property vandalism. In 2023/24, the SCJS estimated that there were 131,000 instances of vandalism (+/- 24,000, meaning that the true number of vandalism crimes experienced by the population is estimated to be between 107,000 and 155,000), while the police recorded 37,875 vandalism crimes in 2023/24.

The trends in comparable crimes of vandalism across both the SCJS and police recorded crime between 2008/09 and 2023/24 are similar – with the SCJS showing

³⁹ Upper and lower estimates are calculated on unrounded figures, then rounded when presented.

⁴⁰ Comparable acquisitive crime is rarer than vandalism and violent crime (estimates of acquisitive crime are based on 52 victim forms in the 2023/24 SCJS sample, compared to 126 violent crime victim forms and 178 vandalism victim forms). Consequently, there is greater uncertainty around the SCJS estimate of acquisitive crime and less power to identify significant changes over time.

⁴¹ The crime of 'minor assault' discussed in this report is referred to as 'common assault' within the [Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics](#).

⁴² Violent crime estimates are based on a relatively small number of respondents (126) who disclosed experiences of violent crimes in 2023/24.

a decrease of 63% and police recorded crime showing a decrease of 64%. Since 2021/22 there has been no change in the SCJS estimate of vandalism, while crimes of vandalism recorded by the police have fallen by 6%.

Comparing police recorded crime against the volume of SCJS crime estimated to have been reported to the police

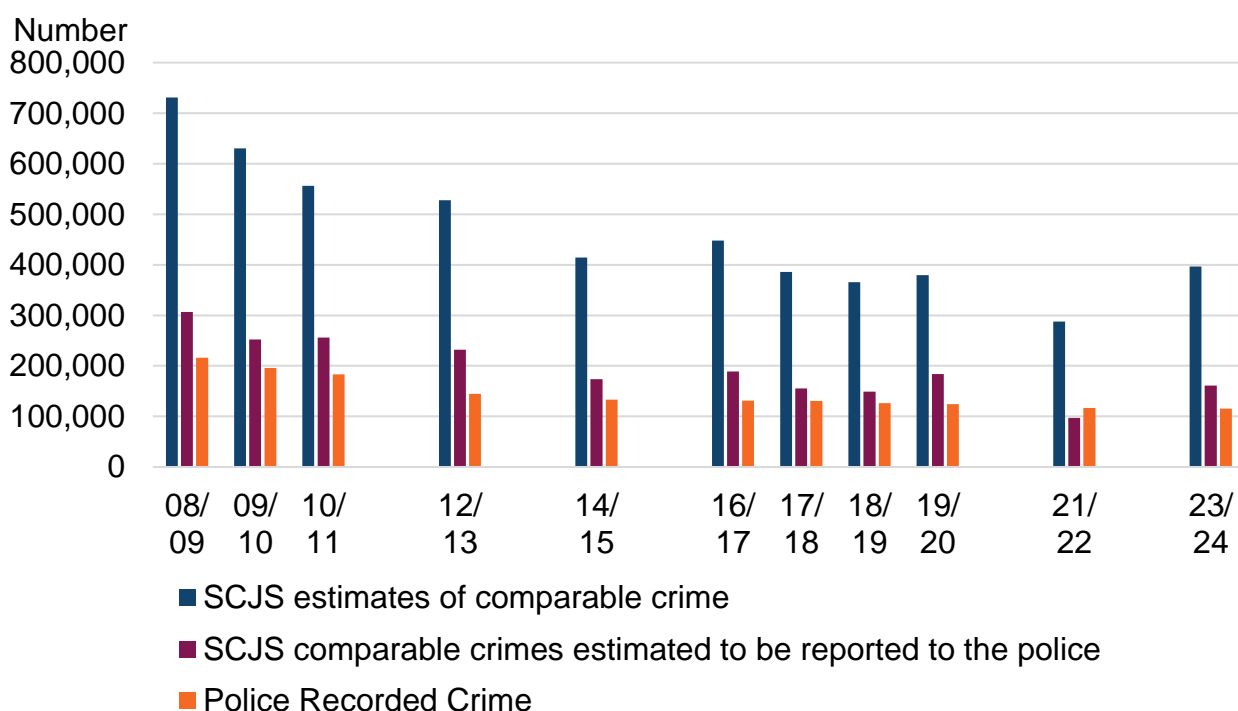
SCJS respondents are asked whether the police ‘came to know about’ the crime, either from them or somebody else. This allows comparisons to be made between comparable crime estimated to have been reported to the police in the SCJS (i.e. a sub-set of comparable crime), and police recorded crime figures.

Although it is not possible to determine on an individual basis whether a crime that the police ‘came to know about’ was captured in police recorded crime data, this type of analysis can give an indication of the level of crime that goes unrecorded, as well as the broad relationship between police recorded crime figures and SCJS estimates.

Figures from the 2023/24 SCJS indicate that of the 396,000 property and violent crimes in the overall sub-set, around 161,000 (41%) were estimated to have been reported to the police. Figure 6.2 displays the difference by volume between SCJS comparable crimes estimated to be reported to the police (as a sub-set of all SCJS crime) and police recorded crime for all years since 2008/09.

Figure 6.2: In 2023/24, the SCJS estimates that 72% of comparable crime reported to the police was recorded by the police.

Recorded crime, SCJS crime and SCJS crime reported to the police, in the sub-set of comparable crimes, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Sources: SCJS, Police recorded crime

In 2023/24, the police recorded 115,266 crimes in the comparable category. It is therefore estimated that 72% of comparable SCJS crime estimated to be reported to the police was recorded by the police in 2023/24. This figure is similar to all survey years from 2008/09 with the exception of 2021/22, which ranged from 70% to 86%. In 2021/22, the number of comparable crimes recorded by the police was higher than the proportion of comparable SCJS crimes which were estimated to have been reported to the police. In Chapter 6 of the [2021/22 main findings report](#) we suggested some caution around this figure, in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengths and limitations of the SCJS and police recorded crime data

There are a number of differences between the SCJS and police recorded crime data that are important to bear in mind when making comparisons between the two sources.

[Police recorded crime](#) captures a broad range of crimes that are recorded by the police. It provides a good measure of crimes that are reported to and recorded by the police and is particularly useful for lower volume crimes that are challenging for sample surveys of the population to capture. Police recorded crime is used to develop and evaluate measures put in place to reduce crime, and to assess the performance of policing and criminal justice organisations. However, this data is sensitive to changes in recording practices and police activity, and does not include information about crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by, the police.

In March 2021, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) published the results from their 2020 [audit of incidents and crimes recorded by Police Scotland](#), with the report stating that 'the results show that compliance is generally good, however there is still room for improvement'.

Crime surveys allow a wider assessment of the overall level of crime and likelihood of experiencing crime. They also provide a range of additional information, for example on the characteristics of crime, the relative likelihood of experiencing crime across the population and on repeat victimisation. However, surveys are often not as good at picking up some rarer crimes, crimes where there is no specific victim (for example, speeding), or where the victim is not covered by the survey sample (for example, crimes against businesses and children).

As well as these differences, the SCJS and police recorded crime also cover different timescales. The [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) statistics cover crimes recorded by police over a 12 month period whereas the 2023/24 SCJS includes crimes experienced by SCJS respondents over a 21 month 'reference period'.⁴³ The recorded crime dataset used for comparison is [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#)

⁴³ Respondents were asked about incidents experienced in the 12 months prior to the month of interview (the 'reference period'). The time period covered by the SCJS in 2023/24 extends over 21 months (from start of July 2023 to the end of March 2024) so is not directly comparable with any calendar year. However, results in the 2014 [analytical paper](#) showed consistent results using different methods to make comparisons over time.

[2023/24](#), which covers crimes recorded between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, making it the dataset which best aligns with the latest fieldwork period.

How does the SCJS compare with the Crime Survey for England and Wales?

Victimisation surveys are conducted globally to gather data on crime experiences, but comparing results can be challenges due to methodological differences. That said, the SCJS is similar to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) (CSEW). Although there are some differences between the surveys, for example the coding of crimes varies between the SCJS and the CSEW to reflect the different criminal justice systems in which they operate, the overall results on the proportion of adults experiencing crime have offered a broad comparison point over the years.

Following updates to the methodology used in the CSEW to produce elements for the volume of crime experienced by the adult population, we assess that the results on overall victimisation rate remain broadly comparable between the two surveys. A short [methodological paper](#) is available which confirms the approach currently taken to produce crime estimates in the SCJS and its relative strengths and limitations.

Further information on the similarities and differences between the SCJS and CSEW are provided in the SCJS 2021/22 [Technical Report](#).

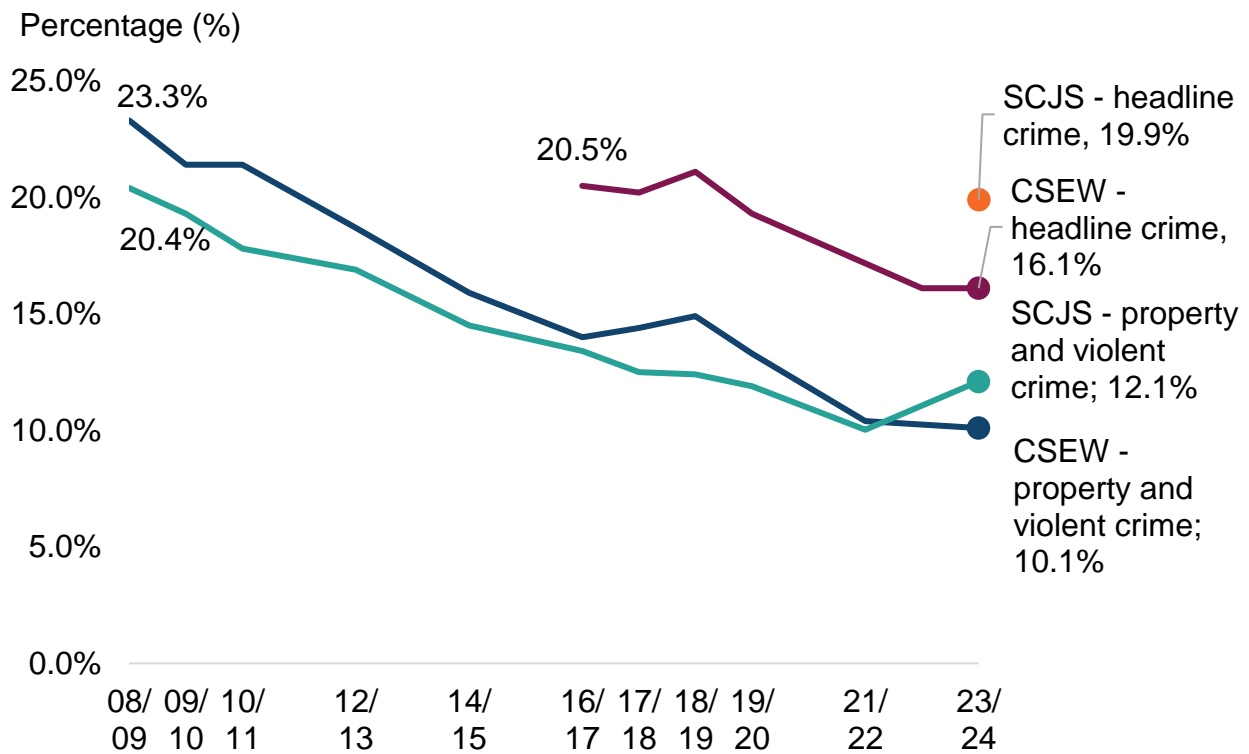
In 2023/24, the latest comparable survey period, overall crime victimisation rates in Scotland (including fraud and computer misuse) were higher to those in England and Wales (19.9% and 16.1%).

When looking at property and violent crimes alone, the rate in Scotland was also higher than in England and Wales (12.1% compared to 10.1%). This is a change to the position in 2021/22, when both areas had a similar victimisation rate and 2019/20, when Scotland had a lower rate (11.9% compared to 13.3%).

As shown in Figure 6.3, property and violent crime victimisation in both areas have fallen significantly over the longer term, with Scotland often below England and Wales. This is the first time that the surveys have suggested Scotland has a higher rate, as a result of the CSEW not finding a similar increase to that found by the SCJS in 2023/24. However, it is important to note that these findings are based on a single year and future surveys will be required to determine if this represents a new trend.

Figure 6.3: Victimisation rates in Scotland and England & Wales have both fallen over the long term to similar levels in the latest comparable period.

Proportion of adults experiencing crime measured by SCJS and CSEW, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: PREVSURVEYCRIME.

[CSEW prevalence](#) – Base: year ending March 2024 (30,847)

Public perceptions of policing

High level summary

Public views on the overall performance of the police in their local area and their effectiveness across a range of measures show mixed results – many remain broadly positive but they have been falling in recent years. Views on whether the police treat people fairly or focus on issues important to the community are at similar levels to 2009/10 but have generally fallen since 2019/20.

What did the public think about the overall performance of the police?

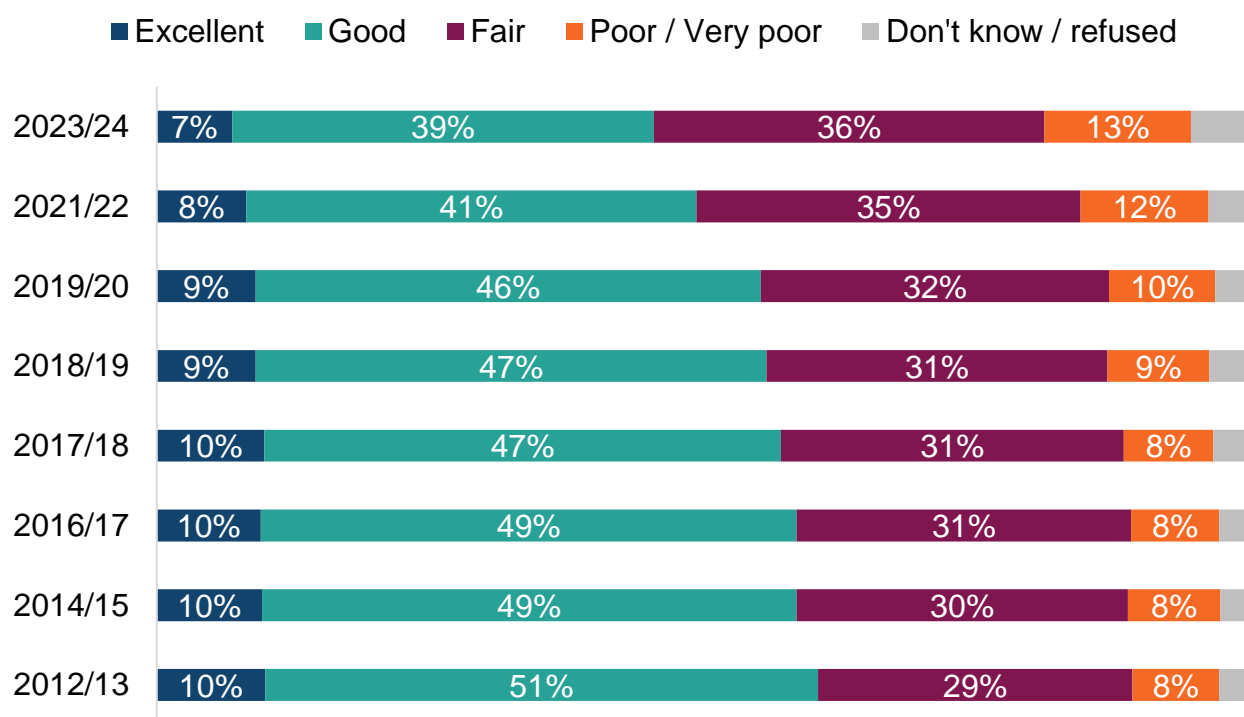
Fewer than half of adults in Scotland (45%) believed the police in their local area were doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job in 2023/24. This is a decrease from 61% in 2012/13⁴⁴ and from 49% in 2021/22.

Over one third (36%) thought the police were doing a 'fair' job in 2023/24, whilst over one in ten (13%) said the police were doing a 'poor or very poor' job. Of these two categories, 'poor' and 'very poor' and 'excellent or good' are both significantly different from 2021/22. The proportion of people saying the police were doing a poor or very poor job increased slowly over time: from 8% in 2012/3 to 14% in 2023/24.

⁴⁴ This question (QRATPOL) was first included in the 2012/13 SCJS.

Figure 7.1: Fewer than half of adults in Scotland believed the police in their local area were doing an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ job in 2023/24.

Views on the overall performance of the police in the local area.



Variable: QRATPOL.

Unlike in previous years, there were no differences detected for any other demographic group or area characteristic such as sex, age, disability, rurality or level of deprivation.

Since 2012/13, confidence in the police has decreased across all demographic groups covered by the survey. The largest decline was observed among those aged 60 and over, from 64% in 2012/13 to 43% in 2023/24. Other groups experienced declines ranging from approximately 10 to 17 percentage points over the same period.

Further details of these changes in confidence levels over time can found in [Annex Table A13](#).

How confident were people in the ability of the police?

This section examines public confidence in the police's effectiveness across seven key areas, referred to as 'effectiveness measures':

- preventing crime
- responding to calls and information
- dealing with incidents as they occur
- investigating incidents
- solving crimes
- catching criminals
- supporting victims of crime

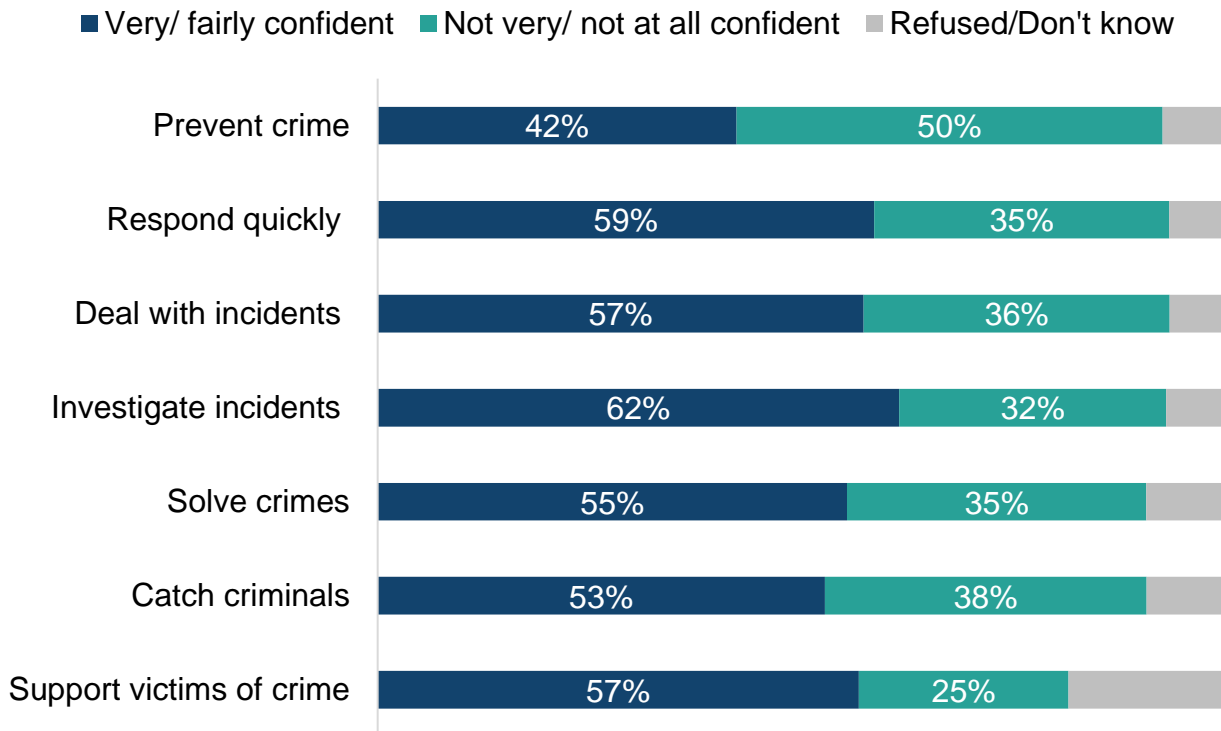
The measure of confidence in the police's ability to support victims of crime was introduced in 2021/22, so data is only available from that year onward. As a result, trends over the longer term can only be shown for the six other measures introduced in 2008/09.

As shown in Figure 7.2, a majority of adults in Scotland were confident in the ability of the police across six of the seven effectiveness measures in 2023/24. Fewer than half of adults (42%) were very or fairly confident in the police's ability to prevent crime.

Four out of seven effectiveness measures have fallen significantly since 2021/22 (prevent crime, dealing with incidents, investigating incidents and supporting victims) while three have remained unchanged (responding quickly, solving crime and catching criminals).

Figure 7.2: The majority of adults were confident in the police across six of the seven effectiveness measures.

Proportion of adults who were confident in the ability of the local police to carry out various aspects of police work.



QPOLCONF_01 – QPOLCONF_07.

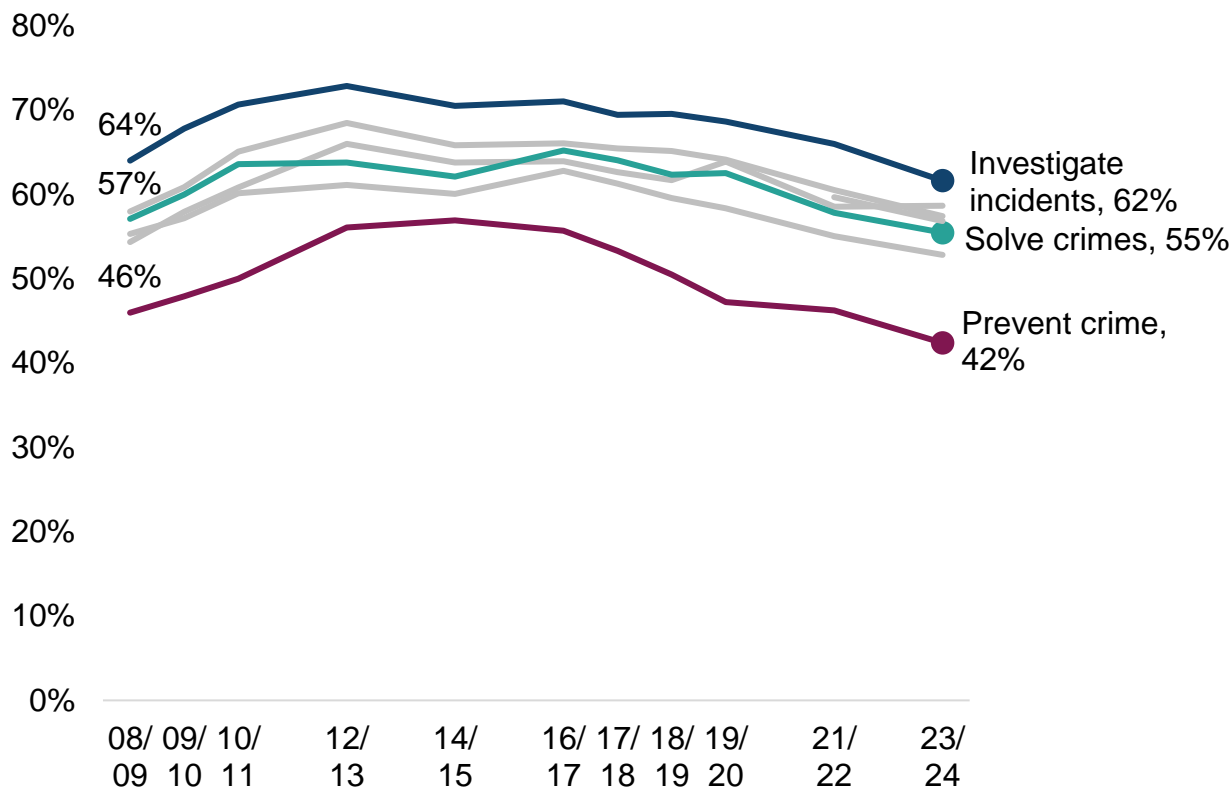
As shown in Figure 7.3, when looking over the longer term, views of confidence in the ability of the police generally:

- increased between 2008/09 and 2012/13
- decreased between 2014/15 and 2023/24, with all measures decreasing since the pre-covid position in 2019/20
- two measures (dealing with incidents as they occur and solving crime) have now returned to 2008/09 levels and three are lower than 2008/09 (prevent crime, investigate incidents after they occur, catch criminals). Only one measure is higher: respond quickly to appropriate calls and information from the public.

The ability to prevent crime consistently received the lowest confidence rating, peaking at 57% in 2014/15 before dropping to 42% in 2023/24, the lowest since the survey began.

Figure 7.3: Confidence in the ability of the police has decreased in recent years.

Proportion of adults who were very/fairly confident in the ability of the police to perform certain functions, with selected categories highlighted, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: QPOLCONF_01 – QPOLCONF_07.

Did the public feel the police conducted their work fairly and were engaged with their community?

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with eight statements about the police.⁴⁵ These are grouped into three categories: 'fairness' (how fair the police are when carrying out their duties), 'community engagement' (how engaged the police are with the local community) and 'accountability' (are the police held to account for the services they provide).

Most of these measures were introduced in 2009/10, with three included for the first time in 2021/22 (therefore comparisons can only be made with this year), these are:

- are the police friendly and approachable, included in community engagement
- are the police involved in activities in the local community, included in community engagement

⁴⁵ The results presented below relate only to adults who are not in the police themselves, and who are not married to or living with a serving police officer.

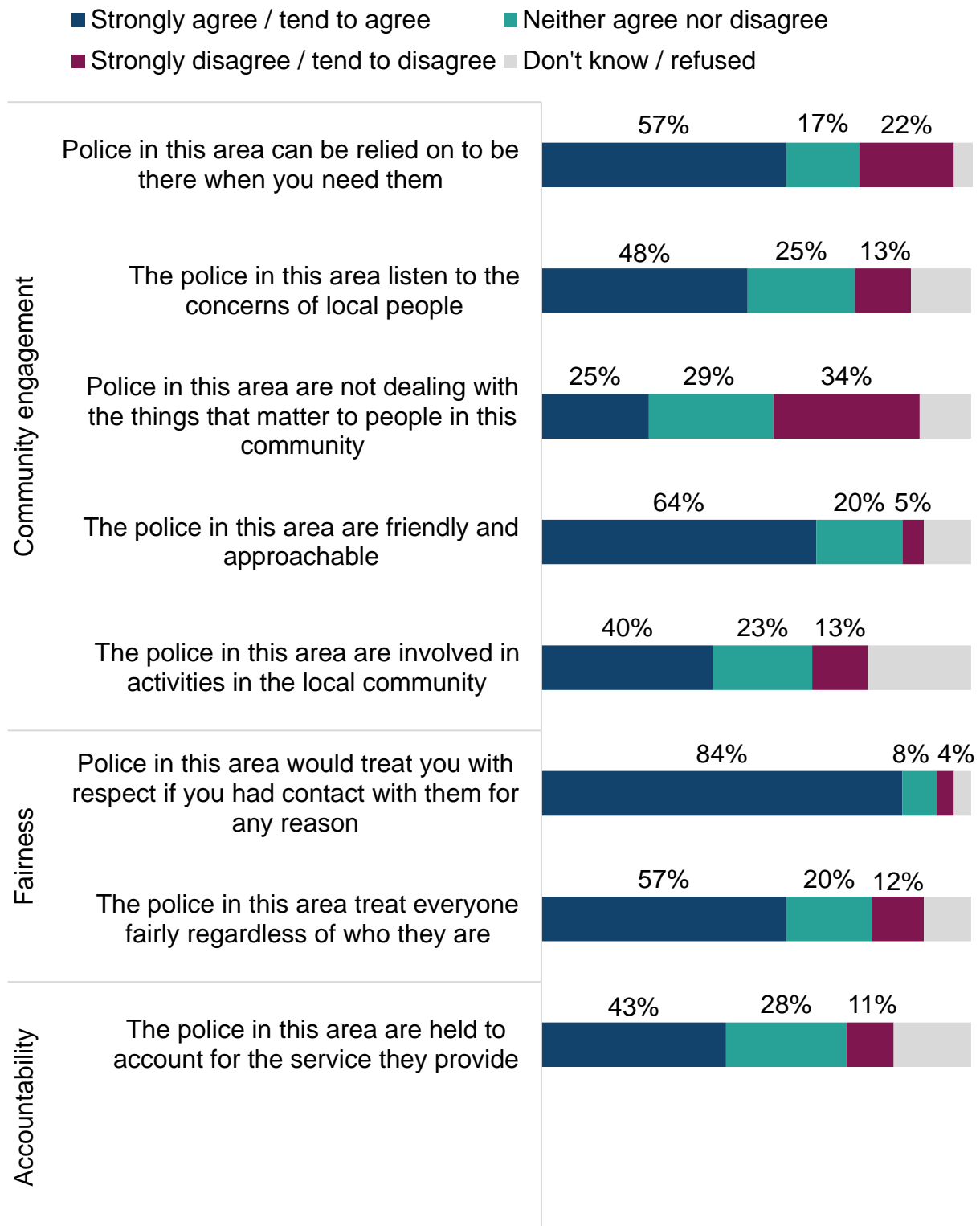
- are the police held to account for the service they provide, included in a new accountability group

Of the measures which were introduced in 2009/10, most have remained relatively stable and show no change compared to either 2009/10 or 2021/22, except 'police in this area are not dealing with the things that matter to people in this community' which has decreased by 6 percentage points (i.e. has improved) since 2009/10 but is unchanged since 2021/22. Since the pre-covid position in 2019/20, four of these measures have moved to a more negative position (treat with respect, can be relied on, not dealing with things that matter to the local community and treat everyone fairly) while one remains unchanged (listens to concerns of local people).

In terms of the three questions added in 2021/22, two have increased in 2023/24 (are police friendly and approachable and are police involved in activities in the local community) while one (are police held to account for the service they provide) has shown no change over this period.

Figure 7.4: Respondents generally had positive or not strong views around how local police conducted their work.

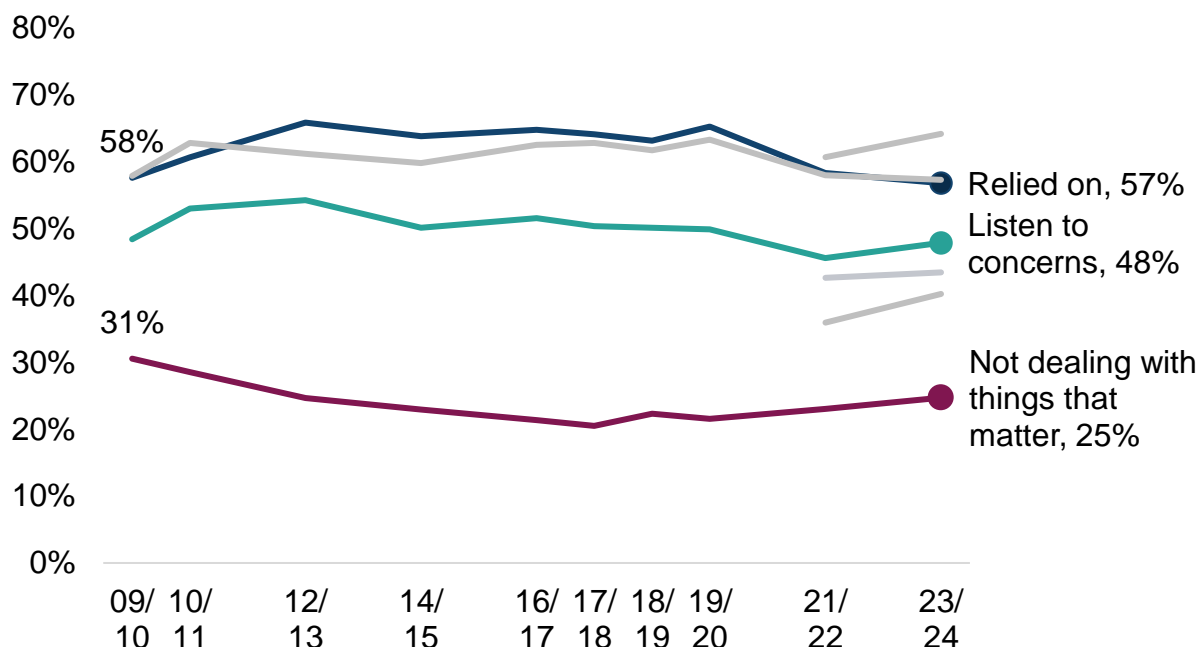
Attitudes towards the police.



Variables: POLOPREL – POLOPACC.

Figure 7.5: Views on how police conduct themselves in the local community has been stable over the longer term but has shown some reductions in recent years.

Proportion of adults who were very/fairly confident in the ability of the police, with selected categories highlighted, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: QPOLCONF_01 – QPOLCONF_07.

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey collects information on the demographics of respondents. More detail on how views of policing vary by age, sex, deprivation and rurality are available in [Annex Table A15](#).

Police presence and public awareness

The SCJS asks respondents about the visibility of police in their local area, specifically whether police patrol their area regularly, either by foot, bicycle or car and whether they consider this to be sufficient or not. In 2023/24, Around two in five adults (42%) thought police presence in their local area, was “about right”, while half (50%) felt it was insufficient. The proportion thinking it was “about right” was higher than in 2009/10 (38%), similar to most recent surveys, but lower than 47% in 2021/22. Perceptions of police presence varies:

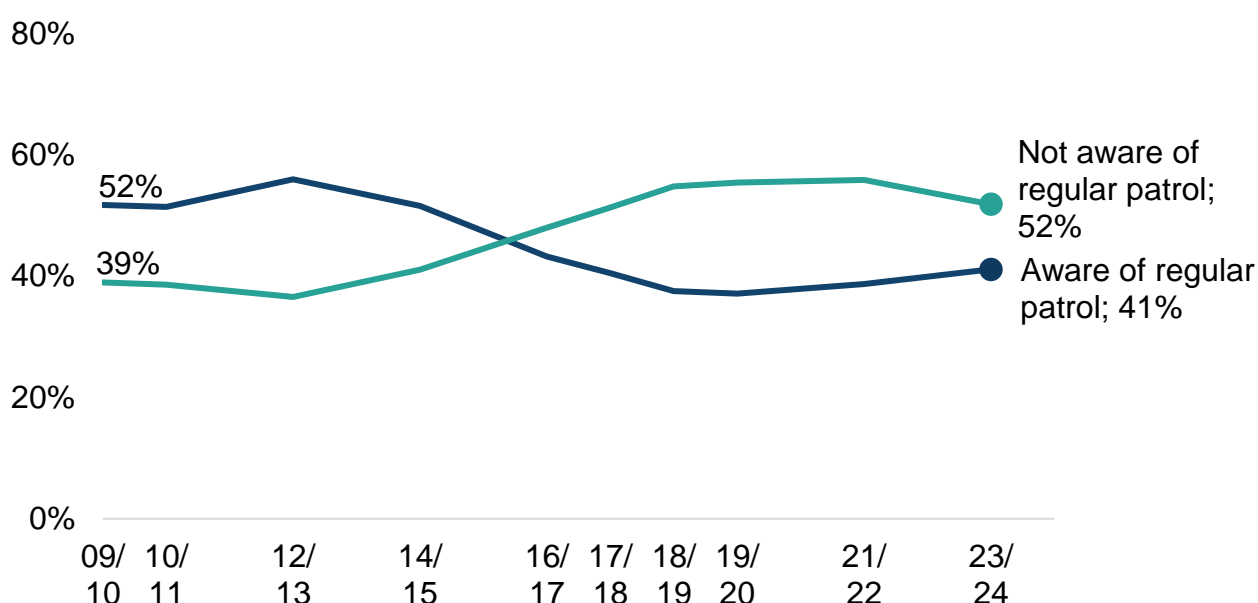
- rural residents (50%) were more likely than urban residents (41%) to say the presence was “about right”, older respondents (33% for 60+) were less likely to agree than younger respondents (56% for 16-24), and disabled respondents (33%) were less likely to agree than non-disabled respondents (45%)
- the most common reason for believing police presence was insufficient was not seeing officers on foot (70%) or rarely seeing police at all (49%)

- those satisfied with police presence most often cited low crime levels (58%) or seeing police patrolling in cars (39%)

Around two-fifths (41%) of adults were aware of police patrols in 2023/24. This declined from 52% in 2009/10, but shows a small increase from 37% in 2019/20. Residents in the 15% most deprived areas were more likely to be aware of police patrols (55%) compared to the rest of Scotland (39%).

Figure 7.6: The proportion of adults who were aware of regular patrols has fallen from a peak in 2012/13 but is unchanged since 2021/22.

Proportion of adults who said they were aware of regular police patrol in their area, 2009/10 to 2023/24.



Variable: POLPATR.

How satisfied were people with their interactions with the police?

Most people who interacted with the police reported positive experiences, and most of these measures show little change since first asked in 2012/13. Some are lower than 2018/19, but that year had more positive estimates than other years so may be an outlier.

Of people who had an interaction with the police for any reason:

- 62% were satisfied with the way the police handled the matter - unchanged from recent surveys and 2012/13, but lower than 70% in 2018/19.
- 94% of respondents found the police polite
- 83% thought they were treated fairly by the police, unchanged from all previous surveys. 16% thought they were treated unfairly, which is

unchanged from recent surveys and 2012/13, but higher than 11% in 2018/19

- most respondents (71%) said their interaction with police did not change their view of the police at all; and 12% had a less favourable view, unchanged from previous surveys. 16% had a more favourable view, which is below 20% in 2021/22 but similar to what was seen in 2012/13 and 2019/20

For victims of violent or property crime where police came to know about it, just over half (53%) of respondents were satisfied. This is not statistically different from people who interacted with the police for any reason. Satisfaction is unchanged from the first survey in 2008/09 and recent surveys in 2019/20 and 2021/22 but lower than 2018/19, when two in three (66%) were satisfied.

For other questions asked of these victims, most showed a positive view and no change from previous surveys since 2008/09, including:

- 81% agreed that police gave them an opportunity to explain what happened
- 48% agreed that the police gave them an opportunity to express views about how the case should be handled
- 77% agreed that the police dealt with the respondent fairly
- 58% agreed that overall the police dealt with the case fairly

Over half (52%) received information or assistance from the police about the investigation (and the case). Unlike other measures here, this shows a large increase from 2008/09 when less than one in three (31%) agreed.

Other public attitude surveys on policing

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) also conducts regular polling of Scottish adults (aged 16 and over) on policing in Scotland and other related interests. The latest report, for the sixth wave of polling, was published in January 2025. Reports on previous polling can be found [here](#). In this survey, respondents are asked how much trust they have in the police in a range of areas on a scale of 0 'do not trust at all' to 10 'trust completely'. The latest survey found that:

- trust in local policing had an average rating of 5.71 with trust in Police Scotland overall at 5.55, and both of these measures down from the previous wave (August 2024) at 5.91 and 5.66 respectively
- confidence in local policing had an average rating of 5.71 with confidence in Police Scotland at 5.64 (also down from 5.84 and 5.75 since the previous wave
- 43% of respondents believed police in their local area were doing a good job policing in general, down from 46% in August 2024

Similar to the SCJS, they also provide breakdowns by demographic groups such as gender, age, deprivation and rurality.

Police Scotland's [Your Police Survey](#) and [User Experience Survey](#) indicate general satisfaction with police responses, aligning with SCJS findings.

Public perceptions of the Scottish criminal justice system

What did the public think about the criminal justice system in Scotland?

Three quarters (75%) of adults said they know nothing or not very much about the criminal justice system, consistent with previous years. Only 3% reported knowing a lot.

Despite low self-reported knowledge, most respondents expressed confidence in the system's performance for most measures. However, all questions show either similar or decreasing confidence since 2021/22, and more than half of the measures show decreasing confidence since 2019/20. For example:

- 73% were confident the system provides fair trials, decreasing from 77% in 2019/20
- 69% believed everyone can access the criminal justice system if needed, decreasing from 75% in 2019/20
- 57% were confident that the criminal justice system was effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice, decreasing from 61% in 2019/20
- 51% felt that the criminal justice system provides victims of crime with the services and support they need, remaining at a similar level to 2019/20

However, two measures had lower levels of confidence:

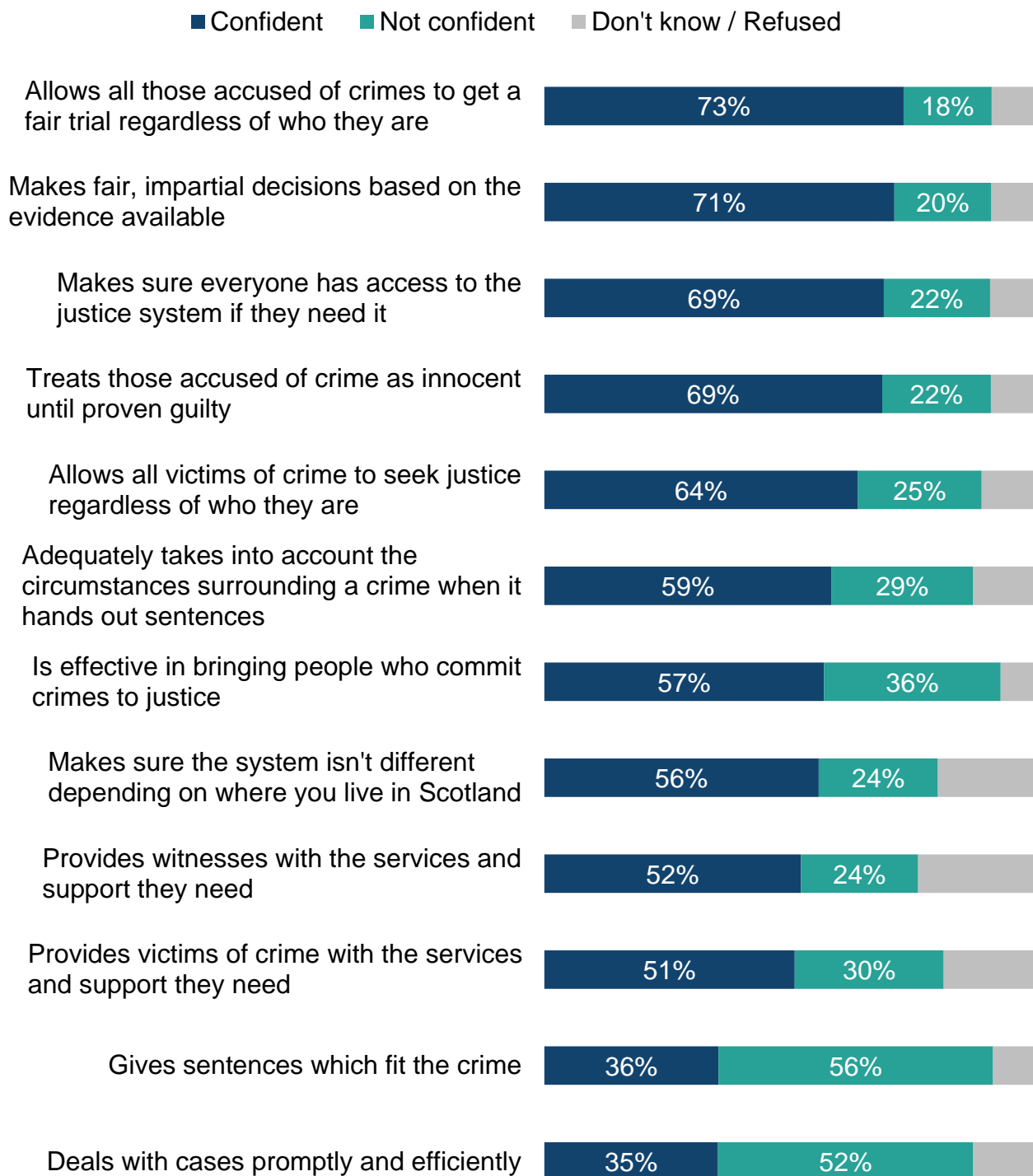
- 36% were confident that the criminal justice system gives sentences which fit the crime. This is unchanged from 2019/20, although it is lower than the 2021/22 estimate (41%)
- 35% were confident that it deals with cases promptly and efficiently, decreasing from 2021/22

A significant proportion of respondents answered "don't know" to some questions, highlighting ongoing gaps in public understanding.

For a full breakdown of trends over time, see [Annex Table A16](#).

Figure 8.1: The majority of adults were either very or fairly confident about the delivery of the criminal justice system across a range of considerations.

Confidence in the operation of the criminal justice system.



Variables: QDCONF_01 – QDCONF_15.

The level of confidence that everyone has access to the justice system if they need it was adopted as a National Indicator in the Scottish Government's refreshed [National Performance Framework](#) in 2018.

Public awareness of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

[The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service \(COPFS\)](#) is the independent public prosecution service for Scotland and one of the organisations which form the Scottish Criminal Justice System.

This section is based on questions asked of one-third of the overall SCJS sample.⁴⁶ Most of these results are not broken down for population sub-groups within this report but full results for demographic and area characteristics are provided in the 2023/24 SCJS online [data tables](#).

Did the public report knowing about the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service?

The 2023/24 SCJS estimates that over two-thirds (70%) of adults in Scotland had heard of COPFS, with younger adults less likely to have heard of COPFS than older adults (41% of 16-24 year olds compared to 81% of adults aged 60 and over).

Of those who were aware of COPFS, most (72%) reported knowing not very much or nothing at all about its work, while over a quarter (28%) reported knowing a fair amount or a lot.

The roles and responsibilities of COPFS are to investigate, prosecute and disrupt crime; establish the cause of sudden, unexplained or suspicious deaths; and investigate allegations of criminal conducts against police officers.⁴⁷

Adults who said they were aware of COPFS were asked to indicate what roles they believed are carried out by COPFS, choosing multiple answers from a list of four options (where two were correct and two incorrect). Almost three-quarters (73%) identified the correct role of COPFS in investigating and prosecuting crime and almost half (48%) identified the correct role in investigating sudden and unexpected deaths. However, almost half said they thought COPFS decided on sentences for those found guilty of crime (48%) and 39% thought COPFS represented the victims of crime in court, neither of which are responsibilities of COPFS.

Have respondents had contact with COPFS and, if so, how satisfied were they with the way COPFS dealt with them?

Around a quarter (28%) of adults that had heard of COPFS said they have had any contact with COPFS at some point, including for professional reasons.

The most common ways in which adults had contact with COPFS included:

⁴⁶ In 2023/24, 1,699 respondents answered the COPFS module of the survey. For more information on the questionnaire content and structure, please see the [Technical Report](#).

⁴⁷ Detailed description of COPFS's values and objectives available on the [COPFS website](#).

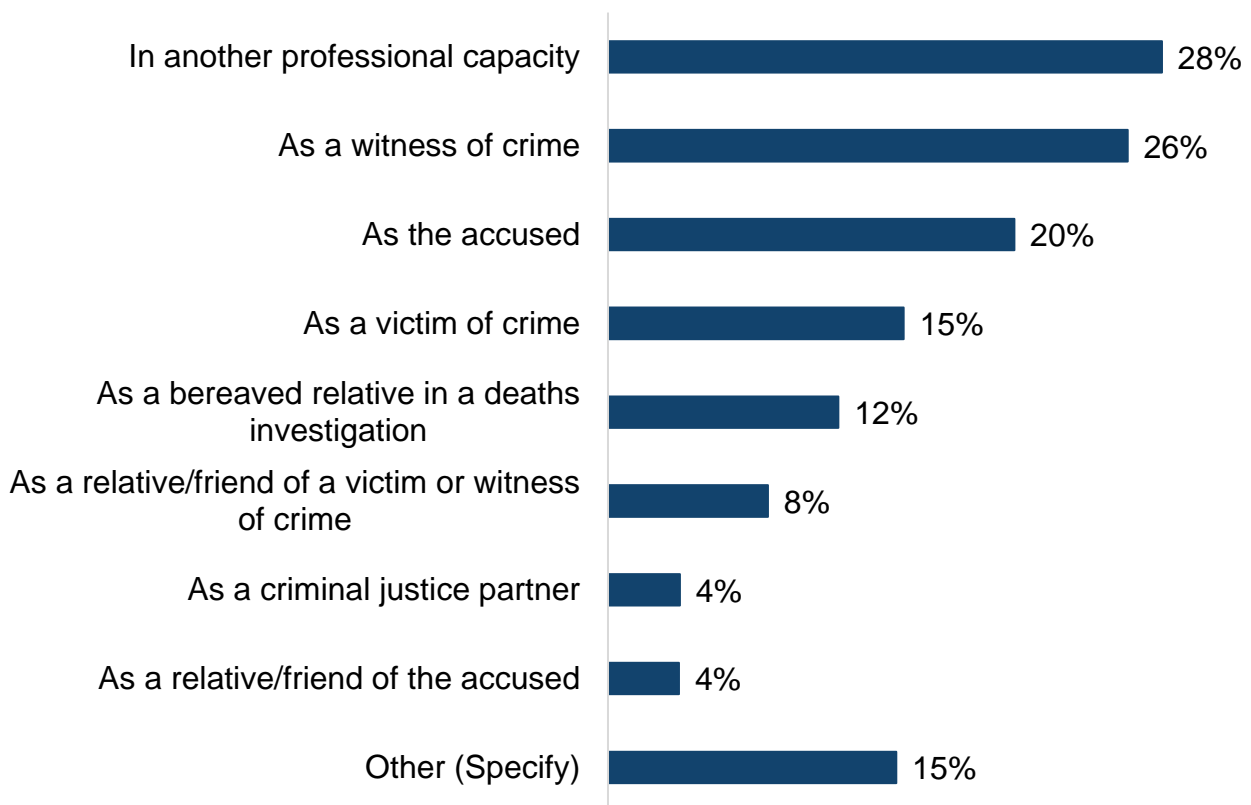
- in another professional capacity (28%)⁴⁸
- as a witness of crime (26%)
- as the accused (20%)
- as the victim of a crime (15%)

Other ways in which contact was made are shown in Figure 9.1.

For those who have had contact with COPFS, two thirds (66%) of respondents said they were satisfied with the way COPFS dealt with them the last time they had contact, 22% were dissatisfied and 12% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Figure 9.1. Around half of adults who had contact with COPFS did so as either a witness or in another professional capacity.

Ways in which respondents had contact with COPFS.



Variable: QCOP5.

⁴⁸ 'Another professional capacity' refers to someone who was involved in a professional capacity but not as a criminal justice partner for example Police Scotland and Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service.

Public perceptions of prisons and community sentences

How did the public view the prison system?

The SCJS explores attitudes towards prisons and community sentences, assessing public perceptions of sentencing and rehabilitation.

In 2023/24, the majority of adults agreed that:

- only serious offenders should go to prison (55%)
- homeless prisoners should be helped to find a place to live after they leave prison (91%)
- prisons should help prisoners change their behaviour rather than punish them (92%), provide support in order to prevent people committing more crime (93%) and work with other organisations to help prisoners fit back into the community (92%)

All of these measures remain unchanged since 2021/22 while two have increased slightly since 2017/18 (prisons should work with organisations to help prisoners fit back into the community and help homeless people find a place to live after leaving prison).

Table 10.1: The vast majority of adults agreed that prisons should help or support prisoners to change their behaviour, reduce re-offending, fit back into the community and find a place to live if they are homeless.

Attitudes towards the role of prisons.

Proportion of adults	Strongly/ slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly/ slightly disagree	Don't know/ refused
Only those who have committed the most serious crimes should be put in prison	55%	12%	32%	2%
Prisons should help prisoners change their behaviour rather than just punish them	92%	4%	4%	1%
Prisons should provide support in order to prevent people committing more crime	93%	3%	3%	1%
Prisons should work with other organisations in the community to help prisoners fit back into the community	92%	4%	3%	1%
Homeless prisoners should be helped to find a place to live after they leave prison	91%	5%	3%	1%

Variables: QPRIS3_01 – QPRIS3_05.

How did the public view community sentences?

The current questions on whether respondents agreed or disagreed with a series of statements relating to the purpose and operation of community sentences were developed in 2017/18. In 2023/24, most adults supported community sentences, specifically:

- 90% believed offenders should receive support (e.g., addiction, mental health, literacy) to prevent reoffending.
- 83% saw community service as a better response to minor crimes than short prison sentences.
- 71% felt those who fail to comply with sentences would be held accountable.
- 23% believed community sentences pose a risk to the public.

Only 9% of adults were aware of unpaid work placements in their area, but 67% of those who were aware felt their community benefited. This is similar to previous years.

Public perceptions of crime and safety

How did the public think the level of crime in their local area had changed in recent years?

Over two-thirds (71%) of adults in 2023/24 said that the crime rate in their local area had decreased or stayed the same over the last couple of years. This figure has fallen from 76% in 2021/22 and is at a similar level to 2008/09 and the pre-covid position in 2019/20, as shown in Figure 11.1.

Overall, the majority (64% of adults) believed that the crime rate in their local area had 'stayed the same', higher than the 60% in 2008/09 but lower than 68% in 2021/22. A quarter of adults (25%) thought the amount of crime in their local area had increased in the last two years, higher than in 2021/22 (20%), but at a similar level to the pre-covid position in 2019/20 (23%).

The proportion of adults saying the local crime rate had decreased or stayed the same varies across demographic groups – for instance:

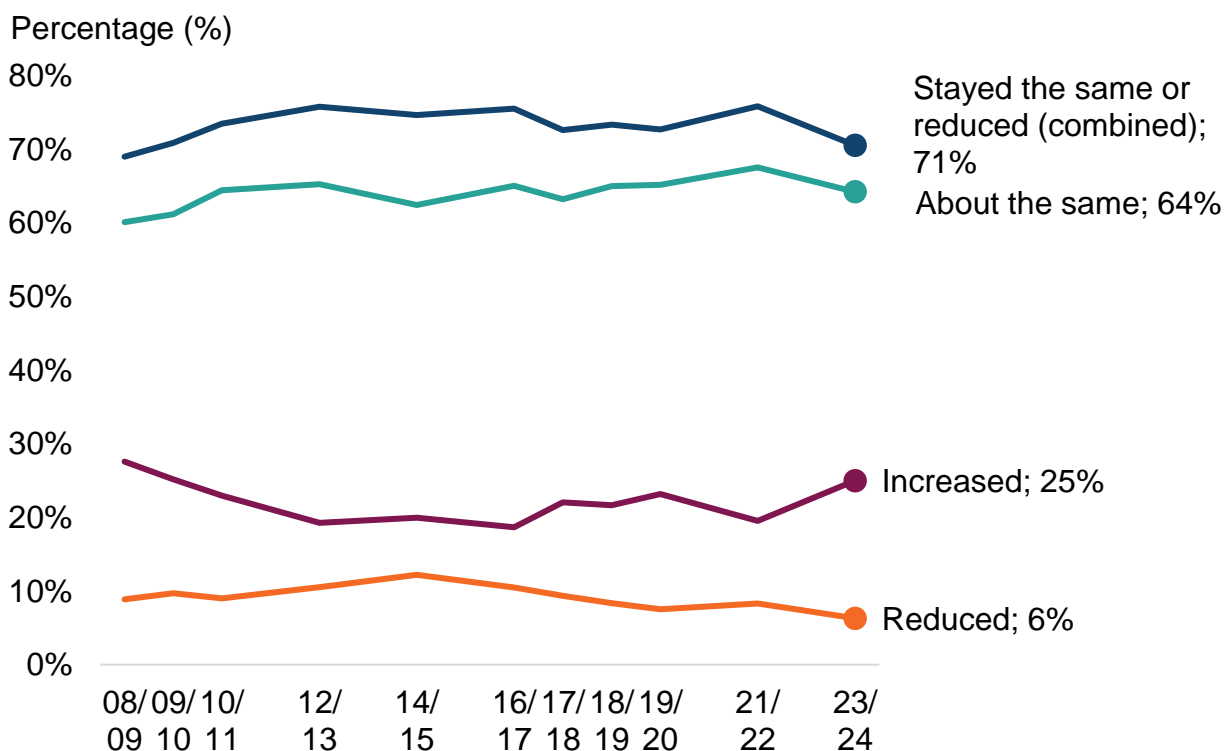
- fewer females than males (67% compared to 74%)
- fewer adults with disabilities than without disabilities (64% compared to 73%)
- fewer adults living in the 15% most deprived areas than those living in the rest of Scotland (62% compared to 72%)
- fewer victims of property or violent crimes than those who were not victims of these crimes (58% compared to 72%)⁴⁹

Further breakdowns for demographic groups are provided in [Annex Table A17](#). It shows that while there were improvements between 2008/09 and 2021/22 for most groups, since 2021/22 all groups have either fallen or remained at a similar level, such that now all groups are at a similar level to 2008/09.

⁴⁹ The measure of feelings of safety for victims versus non-victims presented here includes only victims of property or violent crime and excludes fraud and computer misuse.

Figure 11.1: The proportion of adults who thought the crime rate in their local area had stayed the same or reduced over the last two years has fallen since 2021/22 to a similar level to 2019/20.

Proportion of adults holding views on changes in the local crime rate in the last two years, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: QS2AREA.

Whilst the SCJS is the preferred source for national results on perceptions of the local crime rate, this question is currently part of the Scottish Surveys Core Questions (SSCQ), which sees a selection of measures collected in the same way across the three large household surveys in Scotland - the Scottish Health Survey (SHeS), the Scottish Household Survey (SHS), and the SCJS. Results from the three surveys on the core questions are pooled together each year to offer a larger sample size, enabling more precise and granular breakdowns of results for equality groups and at local level. More on the SSCQ, including the latest results available on the local crime rate indicator from the three surveys combined, can be found on [the SSCQ website](#).

How did views on local and national crime trends differ?

Around half of adults (48%) believed that crime had increased in Scotland overall in the last two years. This is higher than the quarter of adults (25%) who thought that crime in their local area had increased over the same period.⁵⁰ In other words,

⁵⁰ Only those who have lived at their current address at least two years are asked for their views on the local crime rate. Analysis of the national crime rate data for only those resident at their address for at least two years indicates a fairly small impact on the comparison between local and

respondents were much less likely to say crime had been stable or fallen nationally (41%) than in their local area (71%).

Table 11.1: The proportion of adults who thought the national crime rate had stayed the same or reduced over the last two years has fallen to a similar level to 2008/09.

Public perceptions on how the national crime rate has changed in the two years prior to interview.

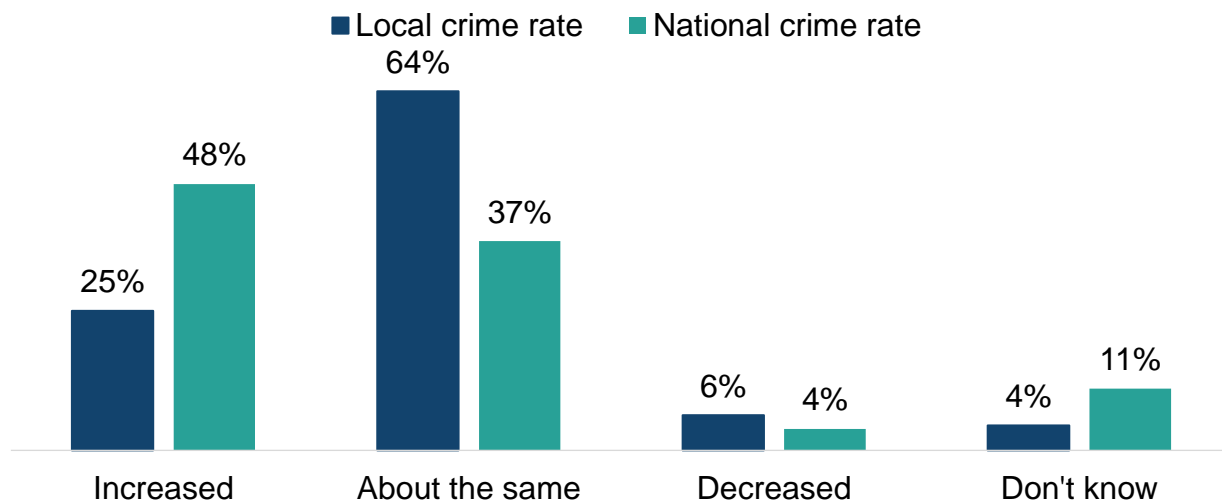
Percentage of adults holding view on change in national crime rate	2023/24	Change since 2008/09	Change since 2019/20	Change since 2021/22
A lot more / a little more	48%	Down from 52%	No change	Up from 38%
About the same	37%	No change	No change	Down from 43%
A lot less / a little less	4%	No change	Down from 6%	Down from 8%
Don't know / refused	11%	Up from 8%	No change	No change
Combined: Less or same	41%	No change	Down from 45%	Down from 52%
Number of respondents	4,970	16,040	5,570	5,520

Variable: QS2AREAS.

national crime perceptions, compared to using the full sample for such figures, therefore the full sample is used.

Figure 11.2: A higher proportion of adults thought the crime rate had increased nationally compared to the crime rate in their local area.

Perceptions of changes in the crime rate locally and nationally in the two years prior to interview.



Variables: QS2AREA; QS2AREAS.

Further breakdowns and trends within groups over time are provided in [Annex Table A18](#).

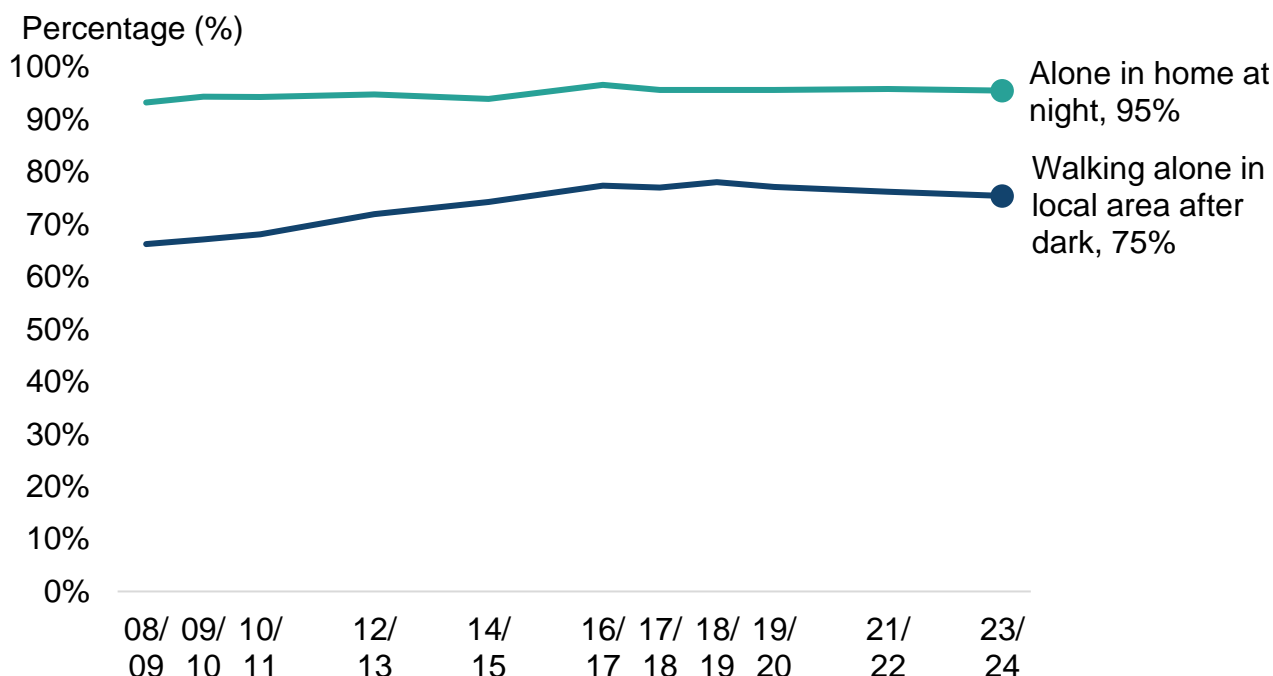
How safe did the public feel?

The majority of adults in Scotland said they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their local area after dark (75%) and when in their home alone at night (95%). Both these measures of feelings of safety have increased from their 2008/09 baseline position, as shown in Figure 11.3 below.

Both the proportion feeling safe walking alone in their local area after dark and the proportion feeling safe in their home at night increased from 2008/09 to 2016/17, but has been stable over the latest years since then.

Figure 11.3: The proportion of adults who felt safe in the local area or at home alone has increased since 2008/09 but has been more stable lately.

Proportion of adults feeling very/fairly safe in local area and at home alone, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variables: QSFDARK; QSFNIGH.

Latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales found a similar proportion of adults (79%) felt safe walking alone at night in the year ending March 2024.⁵¹

As shown in Figure 8.4, while the majority of adults across a range of population subgroups reported feeling safe when walking alone in their local area after dark and despite increases across most groups since 2008/09, there continues to be variations by factors such as sex, age, area deprivation and rurality in 2023/24. In summary:

- females and those living in the most deprived areas of Scotland were less likely to feel safe than males and those living in the rest of Scotland, respectively
- those who are disabled were also less likely to feel safe than those who are not disabled, as were victims of property or violent crimes compared to non-victims⁵² and those living in an urban area compared to a rural area

⁵¹ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/crimeandjustice/crimeandjusticeinenglandandwales): The CSEW typically excludes don't know and refusal responses from analysis, whereas the SCJS does not. However, it is worth noting that less than 1% of respondents said don't know or refused in the 2021/22 SCJS, so the impact on the comparison highlighted would be minimal.

⁵² The measure of feelings of safety for victims versus non-victims presented here includes only victims of property or violent crime and excludes fraud and computer misuse.

- those aged 60 or over were less likely to feel safe than any other age group (69%)

Full results for both questions with breakdowns for key groups, including over time, are provided in [Annex Tables A19 and A20](#).

Figure 11.4: There have been long term improvements in feelings of safety across a wide range of demographic and area characteristics.

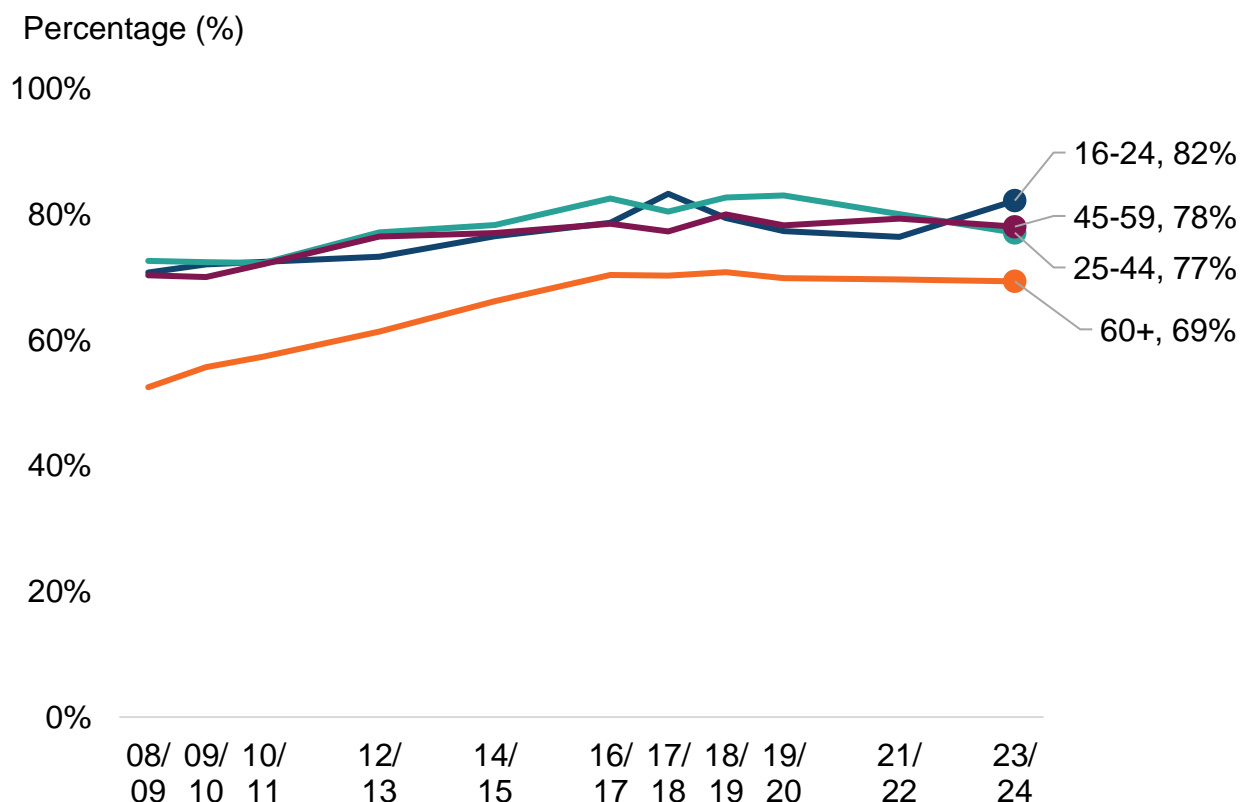
Feelings of safety when walking alone in the local area after dark by demographic and area characteristics, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: QSFDARK.

Figure 11.5: Adults aged 60 and older continue to feel less safe walking alone after dark compared to all other age groups, despite long term improvements in feelings of safety.

Feelings of safety when walking alone in the local area after dark, by age, 2008/09 to 2023/24.



Variable: QSFDARK.

Looking at how safe respondents feel when home alone at night, overall the overwhelming majority (95%) of respondents say that they feel safe. However, again, some differences exist amongst the various demographic or geographic categories. For example:

- 91% of victims of property or violent crimes reported feeling safe in their home alone (compared to 96% of those who were not victims of these crimes)
- 93% of females (compared to 98% of males)
- The following sub-groups were also less likely to feel safe when home alone at night: those living in the most deprived areas compared to the rest of Scotland; and disabled people compared to non-disabled people

Over the shorter-term, the SCJS detected no change in either measure of perceived safety between 2021/22 and 2023/24 amongst the population groups discussed above, with the exception of those aged 25 to 44, which reduced from 96% to 93% (at home alone at night).

How common were specific crimes believed to be?

As well as being asked about the local and national crime rates, respondents were asked how common they thought a range of crimes and behaviours were in their area. Table 8.2 shows the issues asked about and the results for 2023/24.

Overall, most adults did not consider each issue to be a common occurrence in 2023/24, with some seen as more prevalent than others, for example:

- Around half of adults (48%) noted street drinking / drunken behaviour or under age drinking as being very or fairly common. This question was introduced within the latest survey so there is no available comparison with earlier years
- This was followed by drug dealing and drug abuse (46%) and then people behaving in an anti-social manner (34%)
- Fewer people viewed various types of non-sexual violence as common, such as: violence between individuals or gangs (13%), people being physically assaulted (12%), people being mugged / robbed (6%), and people being physically attacked because of their skin colour, etc. (5%).

Table 11.2 also indicates that adults were generally less likely to report problems as common in 2023/24 than when views were first collected on each matter, with perceptions showing stability since the previous SCJS in 2021/22.⁵³ The most notable outlier in this long term trend is the perceived prevalence of sexual assault, which has shown an increase since the 2008/09 SCJS from 3% to 5%.

With the exception of people carrying knives, which increased from 10% to 13%, all issues have shown no change since 2021/22 and all measures are at a similar level to the pre-covid position in 2019/20.

⁵³ [Annex table A21](#) outlines the full time series of results.

Table 11.2: The perceived prevalence of various crime types is generally lower than in 2008/09, but has remained stable in recent years.

Percentage who thought issue was very or fairly common in their local area with percentage change, where significant, since 2008/09, 2019/20 and 2021/22.

Type of issue	2023/24	Change since		
		2008/09	2019/20	2021/22
Drug dealing and drug abuse	46%	No change	No change	No change
People behaving in an anti-social manner in public	34%	Down from 46%	No change	No change
Violence between groups of individuals or gangs	13%	Down from 26%	No change	No change
People being physically assaulted or attacked in the street or other public places	12%	Down from 19%	No change	No change
People having things stolen from their car or other vehicles	11%	Down from 20%	No change	No change
People having their car or other vehicles stolen	10%	Down from 15%	No change	No change
People being mugged or robbed	6%	Down from 10%	No change	No change
People being physically attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion	5%	Down from 7%	No change	No change
People being sexually assaulted	5%	Up from 3%	No change	No change
	2023/24	2009/10	2019/20	2021/22
People carrying knives	13%	Down from 22%	No change	Up from 10%
	2023/24	2012/13	2019/20	2021/22
Deliberate damage to cars or other vehicles	17%	Down from 25%	No change	No change
Deliberate damage to people's homes by vandals	9%	Down from 14%	No change	No change
	2023/24	2016/17	2019/20	2021/22
People buying or selling smuggled or fake goods	12%	No change	No change	No change

Variable: QACO.

Note: comparisons are made to the year in which questions were first asked.

How concerned were the public about experiencing crime?

In line with findings in previous years, in 2023/24 the crimes which the public were most likely to say they were very or fairly worried about (from those asked about) were fraud-related issues.⁵⁴ More specifically, around half (49%) of adults said they were worried about someone using their credit or bank details to obtain money, goods or services, whilst two-fifths (40%) were worried about their identity being stolen. By comparison, 15% of adults were worried about being physically assaulted or attacked in the street or other public place, whilst 12% were concerned about being sexually assaulted.

In addition to the above issues, three further questions were included into the latest questionnaire. In 2023/24, the results of these questions were that:

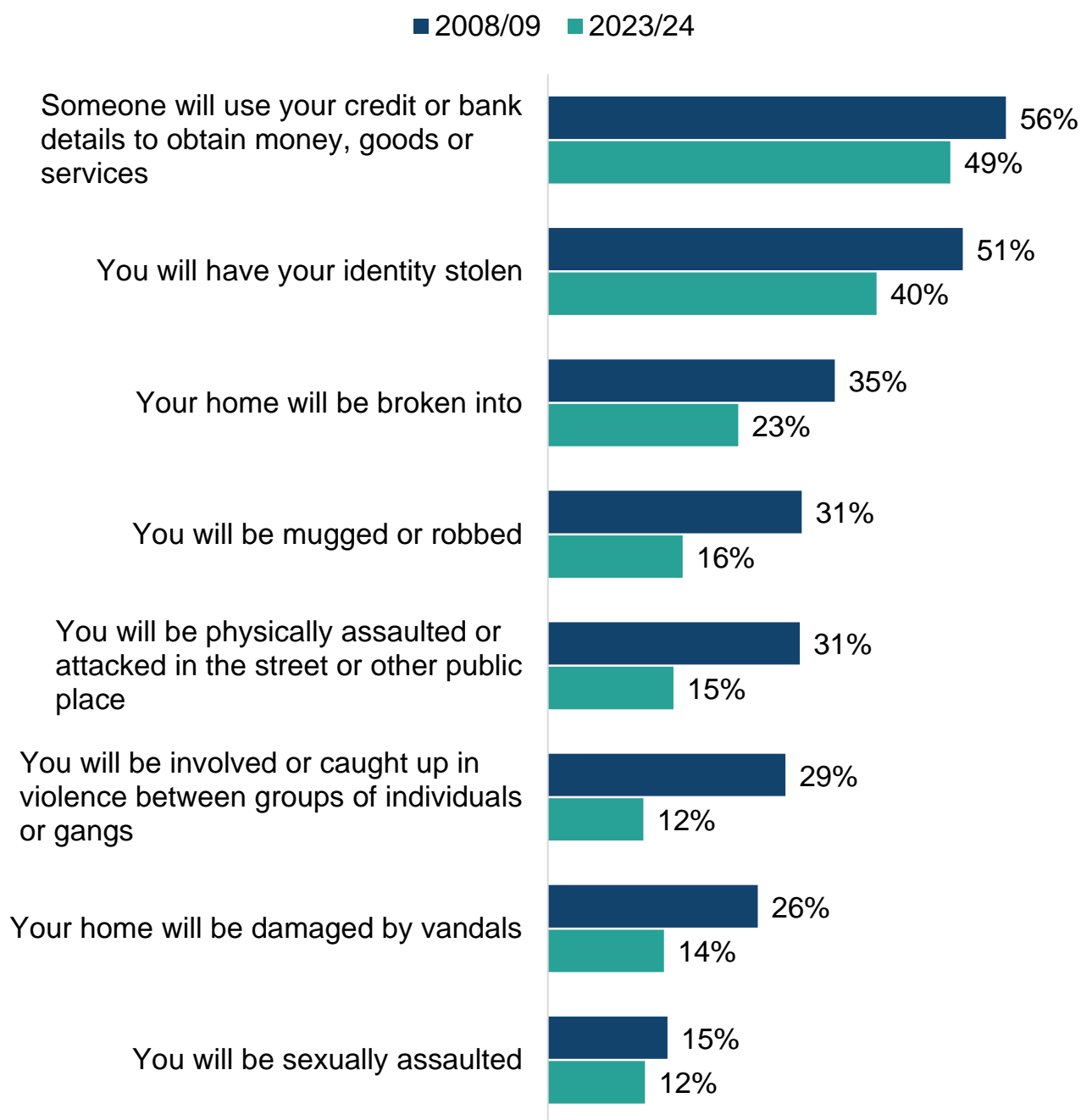
- 21% of adults said they were worried about being followed by someone in a manner which caused fear, alarm or distress
- 20% of adults were worried about being threatened or verbally abused
- 7% of adults were worried about being physically attacked because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion

Figure 11.6 (and [Annex Table 23](#)) presents the results on worry about different crimes over time, for those questions which have been in the survey since 2008/09. It highlights that the proportion of adults who were very or fairly worried about experiencing each specific issue was lower in 2023/24 than the 2008/09 baseline. Looking more recently, all measures have shown no change since the last SCJS in 2021/22.

⁵⁴ Findings in relation experiences of fraud are also discussed in the [‘Fraud and computer misuse’](#) section of the report.

Figure 11.6: The proportion of adults who were very or fairly worried about experiencing specific issues fell for all categories since 2008/09.

Proportion of adults worried about experiencing each issue, 2008/09 and 2023/24.



Variables: QWORR_04 – QWORR_11.

In addition to the results shown in Figure 11.6 in relation to all adults, the survey also explores worry about vehicle-related crime amongst adults in households with access to a vehicle. The 2023/24 SCJS found that:

- 27% of adults (in vehicle-owning households) were worried about their car or other vehicle being damaged by vandals

- 21% were worried about things being stolen from their car or other vehicle
- 20% were worried about their car or other vehicle being stolen

A small change to questionnaire routing and the response options⁵⁵ for the questions relating to worry about vehicle crime in 2016/17 means that this year now forms the baseline for these questions, with worry about vehicle vandalism decreasing from 31% but worries about theft remaining unchanged. Prior to this questionnaire update, the three indicators had shown decreasing levels of worry between 2008/09 and 2014/15, as [Annex Table 24](#) shows.

[Annex Table 25](#) presents results on expectations around experiencing different crimes over time.

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey collects information on the demographics of respondents. More detail on how crime and safety vary by age, sex, deprivation and rurality are available in the [Annex Tables](#).

How were people affected by their concerns about crime?

Of those who reported being worried about experiencing some sort of crime, more than half (57%) reported that it did not prevent them from doing things they otherwise wanted to do ('at all'). In the latest survey, one in three (34%) said they were prevented from doing things 'a little', whilst 7% said it affected them 'quite a lot'. Only 2% said that it affected them doing things 'a great deal'.

Some groups were more likely than others to be affected. For example, females (50%), those in urban locations (54%), victims of property or violent crimes (57%), people living in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland (47%), and disabled people (47%) were all less likely than comparator groups to say that their concerns had not prevented them from doing things they wanted to.

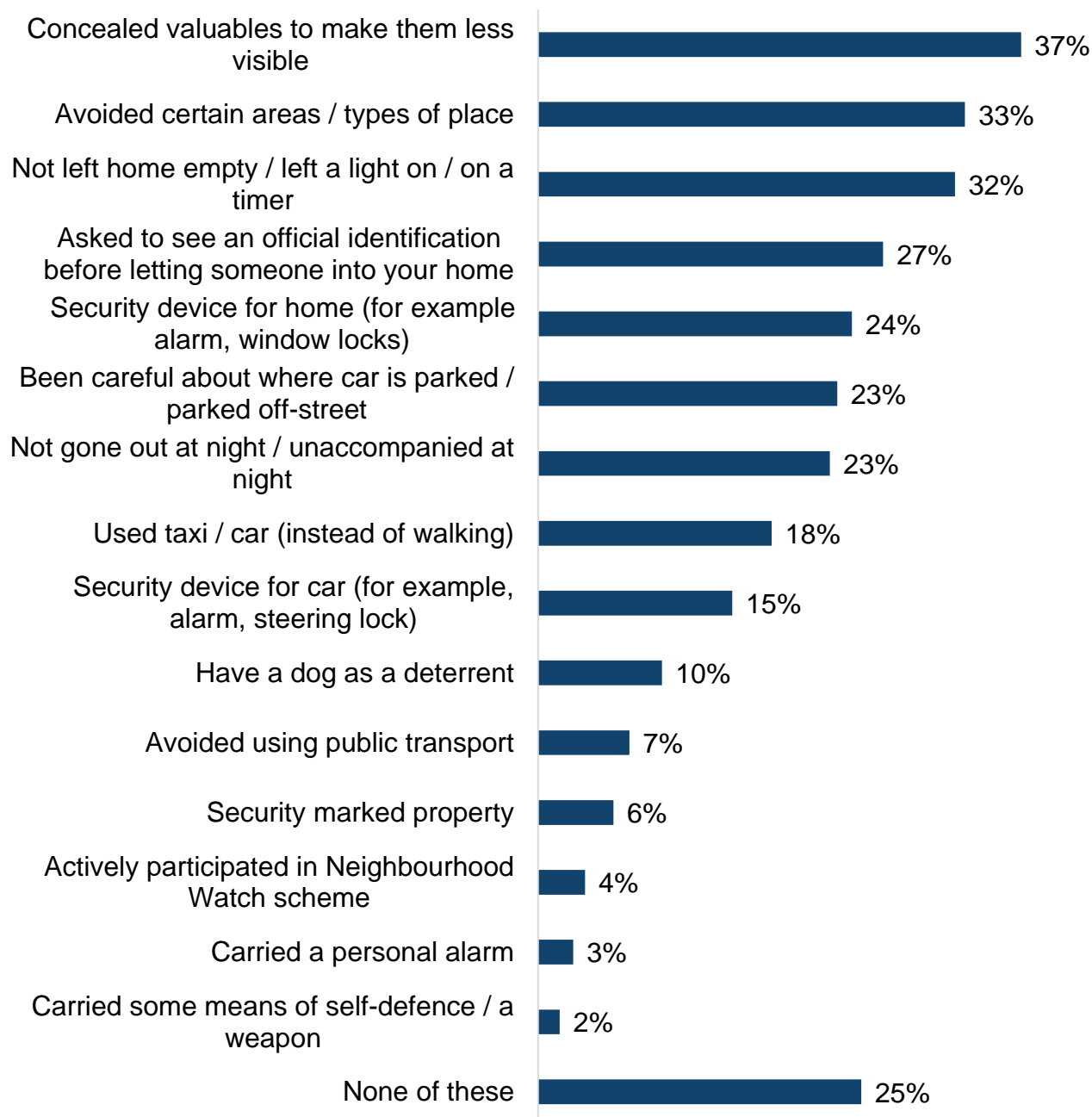
What steps did people take to reduce their chances of experiencing crime?

Almost three-quarters of adults (75%) reported adopting at least one preventative action to reduce their risk of becoming a victim of crime in 2023/24. As in previous years, the most commonly adopted precaution was concealing valuables to make them less visible (reported by 37%).

⁵⁵ The 'not applicable' response option to the worry questions, previously included as a possible response, was removed with effect from 2016/17, with the questions now only asked of respondents from households with access to a vehicle. As such, results up to 2014/15 and from 2016/17 onwards are not directly comparable. See [Annex table A21](#) for more information.

Figure 11.7: Nearly three-quarters of people have taken some preventative action to reduce their risk of being the victim of crime in 2023/24.

Actions taken to reduce the risk of experiencing crime in the last year.



Variable: QDONE.

Most actions have either increased or remained stable since first collected in 2012/13 and all, except asking to see official identification before letting someone into your home, have remained at a similar level since 2021/22. The largest increases over the long term include:

- concealing valuables to make them less visible (from 27% in 2012/13 to 37% in 2023/24)
- avoiding certain areas (from 23% in 2012/13 to 33% in 2023/24)

- security device for home, for example alarm, window locks (16% in 2012/13 to 24% in 2023/24)
- not gone out at night / unaccompanied at night (from 15% in 2012/13 to 23% in 2023/24)

What did people think about their local community and the collective effort to prevent crime in their neighbourhood?

As shown in Table 11.3 below, most adults gave a positive account of people in their area and their efforts to prevent crime. For example, the vast majority of respondents indicated they had people nearby they could rely on to keep an eye on their home and that people would call the police if someone was acting suspiciously.

Table 11.3: The majority of adults feel positively about the people in their local area and their efforts to prevent crime.

Adults' views on people and support in local area.

Percentage of adults	Agree (strongly / slightly)	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree (strongly / slightly)	Don't know / refused
If my home was empty, I could count on one of my neighbours or other people in this area to keep an eye on it	89%	3%	6%	1%
The people who live in my local area can be relied upon to call the police if someone is acting suspiciously	81%	8%	8%	4%
I have neighbours or other people in my local area I feel I could turn to for advice or support	84%	6%	8%	1%
People in this local area pull together to prevent crime	59%	23%	12%	6%
People in my local area cannot be trusted	14%	13%	70%	3%

Variables LCPEOP_01 – LCPEOP_05.

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey collects information on the demographics of respondents. More detail on how views local crime and safety vary by age, sex, deprivation and rurality are available in [Annex Tables A19 to A25](#).

A further SCJS question asked respondents whether they thought broken glass in a park or playground would be removed fairly quickly. In 2023/24, 47% thought this would be the case with 32% disagreeing, and the remainder (21%) giving no clear view or saying don't know. The proportion agreeing in 2023/24 was in line with the baseline position from 2012/13 and the 2021/22 result.

How would people respond to witnessing crime?

The vast majority of people said they would phone the police and help to identify the perpetrator if they saw someone being robbed.

To explore potential individual level responses to witnessing crime and subsequent actions, survey respondents were asked how they would act in a scenario where they saw a man pushed to the ground and his wallet stolen.

Over nine-in-ten adults said they would be likely to call the police (91%) and willing to identify the person who had done it (89%) were they to witness such an event. A slightly smaller proportion, but still the vast majority, of people would be willing to give evidence against the accused in court (84%). The proportion of adults who said they would be willing to identify the person who had done it has decreased slightly since 2017/18 (94%). However, the rest of the findings were all unchanged compared to 2017/18, and have shown no change since 2021/22.

Focus on veterans

Since 2021/22 the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey has included questions to gather information on prevalence of veterans, as well as their experiences and views of crime and justice. All respondents were asked “have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces?”, and the options presented to respondents were:⁵⁶

1. No
2. Yes, previously served in regular Armed Forces
3. Yes, previously served in reserve Armed Forces

As with other questions in the survey, respondents could choose to answer ‘don’t know’ or refuse to answer.⁵⁷

Summary

SCJS findings suggest that just under one-in-twenty-five (3.8%) respondents have previously served in either the regular or reserve UK Armed Forces. Veteran status was found to vary significantly across the population, in particular males are more likely to have served than females (7.0% compared to 0.9%), and older adults (60+) are more likely than younger adults (16-24) (6.4% compared to 2.0%).

The victimisation rate was not found to be statistically different between veterans and non-veterans. Likewise, opinions on the change in local crime rate and access to justice did not show a difference between veterans and non-veterans.

Prevalence of veterans in the latest SCJS findings

When looking at veteran status of any kind, 3.8% of all respondents were veterans. The vast majority of respondents never served in the UK Armed Forces (96.1%). Just under one-in-thirty (2.9%) have previously served in the regular Armed Forces and around one-in-one-hundred (1.1%) have served in the reserve Armed Forces. Full results of this question are shown in Table 9.1 below, while Table 9.2 shows that these results are consistent with the previous survey in 2021/22.^{58,59}

⁵⁶ Note that any respondent who is currently serving in the regular or reserve armed forces would answer ‘No’ to this question.

⁵⁷ It is possible for a respondent to answer that they have previously served in both the regular and reserve Armed Forces. Therefore, the percentages presented will not necessarily add up to 100%.

⁵⁸ As mentioned above, due to the fact that respondents are able to answer that they have served in both the regular and reserve Armed Forces, combined veteran status will not necessarily be a simple sum of both categories.

⁵⁹ Due to small sample sizes of veterans, much of the analysis presented here combines regular and reserve armed forces into one single category.

Table 9.1: The vast majority of SCJS respondents have not previously served in the UK Armed Forces, but veteran status varies across the population.

Percentage of people who previously served in the UK Armed Forces, 2023/24.

	No	Yes: regular Armed Forces	Yes: reserve Armed Forces	Yes: either	Number of respondents
All respondents	96.1	2.9	1.1	3.8	4,970
Female	99.1	0.4	0.4	0.9	2,710
Male	92.9	5.5	1.9	7.0	2,250
16-24	98.0	0.5	1.6	2.0	260
25-44	98.2	1.7	0.1	1.8	1,300
45-59	96.2	2.6	1.4	3.8	1,110
60+	93.6	5.1	1.7	6.4	2,260
Rural	95.3	3.7	1.2	4.7	1,150
Urban	96.3	2.7	1.1	3.6	3,820
Disabled	95.0	3.5	1.7	4.9	1,510
Non-disabled	96.5	2.6	1.0	3.4	3,460
15% most deprived	95.2	4.1	1.0	4.7	680
Rest of Scotland	96.3	2.7	1.2	3.7	4,300

Variable: QDVET.

Table 9.2: The proportion of the population who are veterans has been consistent across the two surveys where this has been asked.

Percentage of people who previously served in the UK Armed Forces, 2021/22 to 2023/24.

	2023/24	2021/22	Change
All respondents	3.8	3.8	No change
Female	0.9	0.7	No change
Male	7.0	7.1	No change
16-24	2.0	0.1	No change
25-44	1.8	1.6	No change
45-59	3.8	4.2	No change
60+	6.4	7.0	No change
Rural	4.7	5.3	No change
Urban	3.6	3.5	No change
Disabled	4.9	4.7	No change
Non-disabled	3.4	3.5	No change
15% most deprived	4.7	3.1	No change
Remainder	3.7	3.9	No change

Variable: QDVET.

As shown in Table 9.1, veteran status varied across the population. For example, veteran status was more commonly seen in males compared to females (7.0% compared to 0.9% respectively).

A higher proportion of older respondents were veterans: 6.4% for 60+ compared to 2.0% for 16-24

The population subgroup with the highest proportion of veterans of any was males aged 60 and over, with around one-in-eight (12.4%) people in this group previously serving in the Armed Forces.

There was no statistically significant difference in veteran status found on the basis of deprivation, disability, or by urban/rural location.

Making comparisons between the veteran and non-veteran population

The information gathered from the recently introduced veteran status question can be used to further analyse other questions from the SCJS and investigate whether the experiences and opinions of veterans differs from the rest of the population.

However, as demonstrated above, the prevalence of veterans varies significantly across different population groups. The biggest differences seen are in sex and

age, where males are more likely to be veterans than females, as are older people compared to younger people.

Due to this, any attempt to compare veterans to non-veterans is likely to be influenced by these other demographic differences mentioned. While it might be useful to frame the analysis like this in the most simple terms, it is unlikely to show any effect of veteran status in isolation.

To partially overcome this issue, the analysis presented in the following sections will also provide a comparison of two groups that share some demographic similarities - namely males over the age of 25 who are veterans and males over the aged of 25 who are not veterans. This allows other demographic differences to be controlled for and may provide a better estimation of the effect of veteran status to be presented.

Rate of victimisation amongst veterans

Overall, 19.9% of respondents were the victim of any type of crime within the scope of the survey in 2021/22.

The three broad categories of crime picked up by the survey are violent crime, property crime, and fraud and computer misuse; with the estimated prevalence in 2023/24 being 2.9%, 10.3%, and 9.5% respectively.

When analysing the victimisation rates for all veteran respondents, it was found that there was no difference in the rates between veterans and non-veterans for overall crime, as well as for violent crime, property crime, and fraud & computer misuse individually.

Even when using the approach outlined above to restrict the analysis to more comparable subsections of the population (i.e. male respondents aged 25 and over), there was still no difference found in the victimisation rates between veterans and non-veterans.

Therefore, findings from this sweep of the SCJS indicate that the likelihood of being a victim of crime does not vary by veteran status.

Feelings of safety and perceptions of crime in their local area

Chapter 9.5 in the [2021/22 main findings report](#) provides an analysis of veteran responses to questions of feelings of safety and perceptions of crime in their local area. These findings showed that veterans felt more safe than the rest of the population and were less likely to perceive specific crime as common in their area. However, most of these differences were not true when restricting the analysis to only veterans and non-veterans who were male and over the age of 25. On examining the responses to these questions for 2023/24, the results show no difference to those for 2021/22.

National Performance Framework indicators

Alongside the overall prevalence of victimisation, the SCJS is used by Scotland's [National Performance Framework](#) for two other indicators: perceptions of local crime rate; and access to justice.

A majority of individuals believe the crime rate has either remained stable or decreased, with just over three-quarters (70.5%) of people answering this way. Veteran status was found to have no effect on how people perceived changes in the crime rate in their local area, and this remained true when comparing only veterans and non-veterans who were males aged 25 or over.

The access to justice indicator asks respondents how confident they are that the Scottish criminal justice system makes sure everyone has access to the justice system if they need it. Around three in ten (69.3%) people answer that they are very or fairly confident for this question. As with the other indicators, no difference was detected between veterans and non-veterans here, and again this remained true when comparing only veterans and non-veterans who were male and over the age of 25.

Focus on harassment and discrimination

This section reports on adults' experiences of harassment and discrimination, by examining whether they had any incidents in which they were insulted, pestered or intimidated in any way (in person or by some other means⁶⁰) by someone outwith their household in the year prior to interview.

These findings are based on questions asked to one-third of the overall sample.⁶¹ As agreed with SCJS users, third-sample results are generally not broken down within the report for population sub-groups. However, some breakdowns are presented here for illustration. All results for demographic and area characteristics are provided in the 2023/24 SCJS online [data tables](#).

Additional information on other experiences of stalking and harassment are captured in the self-completion element of the SCJS with the below summary focusing on key findings on this topic from the main (face-to-face) survey. Due to Covid disruption and contract changes the most recently published findings are for the combined years 2018/19 and 2019/20, presented in the [2019/20 Main Findings Report](#). Due to updates to the partner abuse questionnaire for the current survey questionnaire, the next set of results will be for the combined 2023/24 and 2024/25 years. Details on these changes were published in Annex D of the [2021/22 Main Findings Report](#).

How common were experiences of harassment in Scotland in 2023/24?

In 2023/24, 14% of adults said that they had been insulted, pestered or intimidated in the previous year, in line with the proportion of respondents who experienced such incidents in 2008/09 and 2021/22.

Across three of the population sub-groups focused on in this report, sex and SIMD and urban/rural classification, there were no differences in the proportion that said they had been insulted, pestered or intimidated in the previous year. However the proportion was higher amongst those aged between 16 and 24 when compared with those aged 60 and over (20% compared to 7% respectively).

What can the SCJS tell us about the nature of harassment?

Of those who said they had experienced harassment in the year prior to interview the vast majority (96%) were insulted, pestered or intimidated 'in person', whilst 12% said this happened 'in writing via text, email, messenger or posts on social media'. This suggests that 'offline' experiences of harassment remain much more common than 'online'.

⁶⁰ Some other means includes writing and electronic communications.

⁶¹ In 2023/24, 1,622 respondents answered the harassment and discrimination module of the survey. For more information on the questionnaire content and structure, please see the [Technical Report](#).

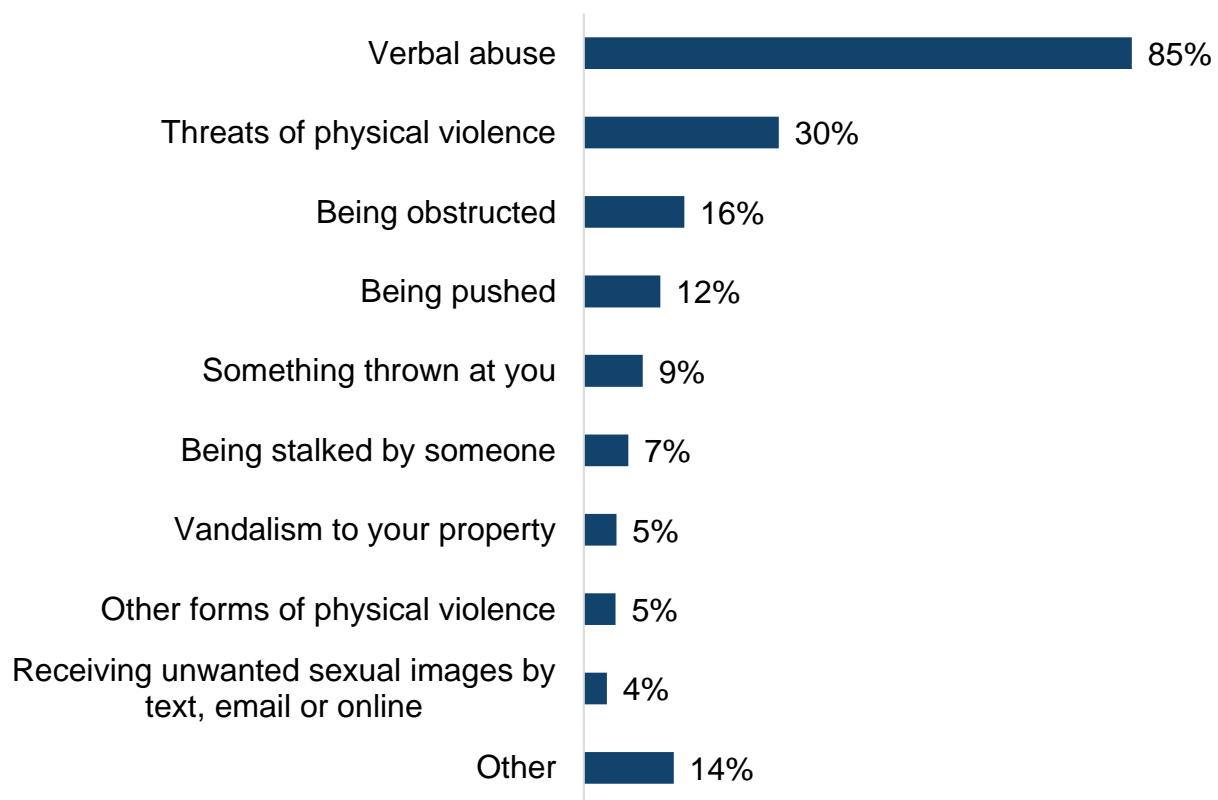
Most people who had experienced harassment said it had happened on more than one occasion in the previous year (67%), with 26% reporting only one incident. A further tenth (11%) of people said they experienced harassing behaviour too many times to remember.

Verbal abuse was the most common type of harassment in 2023/24, experienced by 85% of the victims. Other types of harassment, particularly those involving physical contact, were much less commonly experienced, as shown in Figure 13.1. In 2023/24, 4% of people received unwanted sexual images by text, email or online.

More in-depth analysis about the extent and nature of violent incidents in 2023/24 is provided in the '[Focus on violent crime](#)' chapter.

Figure 13.1: The majority of victims of harassment experienced verbal abuse with over a third experiencing threats of physical violence.

Proportion of harassment victims experiencing different kinds of behaviour in previous 12 months.



Variable: QHWHAT2.

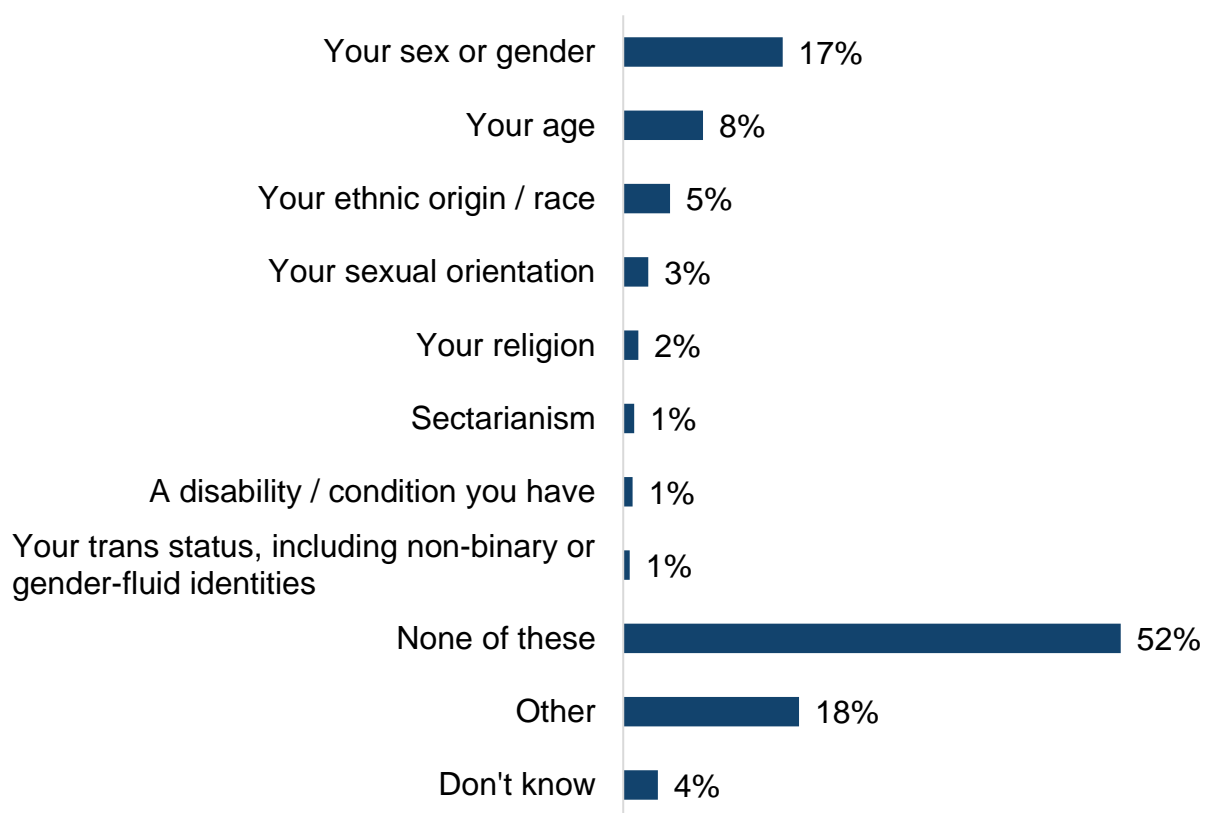
To explore whether incidents may have been related to discrimination, respondents who experienced harassment in the previous 12 months were asked whether they thought any particular - perceived or actual - characteristic they hold may have motivated the offender in any encounters. A range of possible reasons in relation to the most recent (or only) experience are outlined in Figure 9.6 below.

Around half (52%) did not think any of their characteristics were an influencing factor in their most recent (or only) experience of harassment. Nearly one in five (17%) thought that their sex or gender was a possible motivating factor, while 8% believed their age and 5% believed their ethnic origin or race was a possible influence.

Since the last SCJS in 2021/22, there has been no change across all possible motivating factors.

Figure 13.2: The majority of victims did not think any of their characteristics were an influencing factor in their most recent harassment experience.

What victims thought their most recent (or only) experience of harassment in last year was or may have been motivated by.



Variable: QHDISCRIM1.

Annex A: Data tables

Overview

All tables referenced in the main text are available on the [associated data tables webpage](#). These tables provide data for some of the key measures of the survey, including trend data for past crime surveys in Scotland. Information on how to read and interpret these tables is presented below.

Tables displaying different groupings of crime (e.g. Table A1) have the following structure:⁶²

All SCJS crime includes all crimes measured by the survey except threats and sexual offences.

Property crime comprises the following groups:

- vandalism
- all motor vehicle theft related incidents
- housebreaking
- other household thefts (including bicycle theft)
- personal theft (excluding robbery)

Violent crime comprises the following groups:

- assault
- robbery

Fraud and computer misuse comprises the following groups:

- bank and credit card fraud
- other types of fraud (including consumer and retail fraud and advanced fee fraud)
- computer misuse

Further sub-groups are also shown - for example vandalism is further broken down into motor vehicle vandalism and property vandalism.

For analysts using the SPSS data files (which will be available from the UK Data Archive), variable names which correspond to the crime groups displayed in the data tables are provided in Annex 10 of the [Technical Report](#).

Comparable crime is a sub-set of all SCJS crime that can be compared with [police recorded crime statistics](#). This comparable sub-set comprises vandalism, acquisitive crime and violent crime but excludes fraud and computer misuse. Three-fifths (60%) of property and violent crimes were classed as comparable with police

⁶² See the [Technical Report](#) for more information on the groupings of crime.

recorded crime statistics, as discussed in the [Comparisons with other statistical sources](#) chapter. Further details about police recorded crime statistics are included in Chapter 12 of the [Technical Report](#).

Notes

1. Upper and lower estimates are based on 95% confidence intervals.
2. In [Annex tables A4 and A5](#) rates are quoted per 10,000 adults for the following crime groups: personal theft, theft from the person, other theft, violent crime and all fraud and computer misuse. The following crimes are quoted per 10,000 households: vandalism, motor vehicle theft, housebreaking, household theft and bicycle theft. All SCJS crime, property crime and comparable crime are presented using a combined rate of adults and households.
3. Columns showing percentage change or percentage point change for SCJS results over time only present statistically significant changes. Where an apparent increase or decrease over time is not statistically significant, this is described using the shorthand [ns] for 'not significant'.
4. For presentation purposes, some figures are shown as rounded. Estimated crime volumes are rounded to the nearest 1,000 and crime rates per 10,000 adults/households are rounded to the nearest 10. Percentage point changes and changes in estimated volumes are calculated on the unrounded figures.
5. The shorthand notation '[x]' is used where data is unavailable – this is largely because the relevant question had not yet been added to the SCJS.
6. The tables detail the overall base size number of respondents. Base sizes for demographic and geographic breakdowns are available in the SCJS online [data tables](#), base size figures are also rounded to the nearest 10.

Annex B: Overview of police recorded crime and SCJS

	Recorded Crime	Scottish Crime and Justice Survey
Where do the data come from?	Administrative police records	Face-to-face interviews with residents from a nationally representative sample of the household population
Basis for inclusion	Crimes recorded by the police in Scotland, governed by the Scottish Crime Recording Standard	Trained coders determine whether experiences of victimisation in the last 12 months constitute a crime and assign an offence code
Frequency	Collected and published on a quarterly basis, by rolling 12 month periods	Survey conducted annually for each financial year with reference period extending around 25 months. Results previously published biennially, now annually.
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers the full range of crimes and offences • Provides data at a local level • A good measure of rarer, more serious crimes that are well reported • Measure of long-term trends • Good measure of crime that the police are faced with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good measure of trends since 2008/09 • Captures further information about crimes that are and are not reported to the police (including sensitive issues such as domestic abuse or sexual victimisation) • Analyses crime for different demographic groups and victim-offender relationships • Provides information on multiple and repeat victimisation (up to 5 incidents in a series) • Provides attitudinal data (e.g. fear of crime or attitudes towards the criminal justice system)

Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partially reliant on the public reporting crime • Reporting rates may vary by the type of crime (e.g. serious crime is more likely to be reported or housebreaking if a crime number is required for insurance purposes) • Trends can be affected by legislation; public reporting practices; police recording practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not cover all crimes (e.g. homicide or crimes without specific victims, such as speeding) • Does not cover the entire population (e.g. children, homeless people or people living in communal accommodation) • Less able to produce robust data at lower level geographies • Difficult to measure trends between survey years, especially in rarer forms of crime (such as more serious offences) • Estimates are subject to a degree of error (confidence intervals)
What other data are collected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional statistical bulletins published, including on homicides, firearm offences, drug seizures, hate crime and domestic abuse incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public perceptions about crime • Worry about crime and the perceived likelihood of being a victim • Confidence in the police and the criminal justice system • Prevalence estimates on 'sensitive' topics (partner abuse, sexual victimisation and stalking) - reported on biennially

Annex C: 2023/24 questionnaire structure

Main questionnaire (Section 1-2)	4,973 respondents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of crime (Section 1) • Victim form screener (Section 2)
Victim forms (Section 3) Standard victim form	764 respondents – 1,089 completed forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident dates • Incident details • Experiences of criminal justice system and related issues
Fraud and computer misuse victim form	748 respondents – 956 completed forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident dates • Incident details • Contact with police / bank / other orgs
Full sample modules (Section 4)	4,973 respondents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice System • Police
Third of sample modules (Section 5) Each participant is only asked questions from one module.	<p>Module A</p> <p>1,699 respondents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community • Perception of crime • Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) <hr/> <p>Module B</p> <p>1,652 respondents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentencing (including community sentencing and prisons) • Police visibility <hr/> <p>Module C</p> <p>1,622 respondents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice system overall • Harassment
Demographics (Section 6)	4,973 respondents
Self-completion questionnaire (Section 7–10)	4,305 respondents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal relationship screener (Section 7) • Stalking / harassment (Section 8) • Partner abuse (Section 9) • Sexual victimisation (Section 10)

Annex D: Future changes to the survey questionnaire

Introduction

A key goal of the SCJS is that it continues to meet the needs of users by, where possible, reflecting the changing nature of crime in Scotland. As such, each year there can be anything from minor wording changes to specific questions, to the development and inclusion of new topics to the questionnaire. During the 2023/24 survey year, substantial progress was made in several key areas of development, such as improvements to the self-completion modules and the inclusion of the new fraud and computer misuse victim form, these changes were detailed in Annex D of the [2021/22 Main Findings Report](#).

Changes for the 2024/25 questionnaire

For the 2024/25 questionnaire, only one addition was made. Specifically, the inclusion of new questions (QAS) to the perceptions of crime section which asks respondents about whether aspects of anti-social behaviour are common in their local area, including:

- Noisy neighbours or loud parties (QAS_1)
- Rubbish or litter lying around (QAS_2)
- Neighbour disputes (QAS_3)
- Animal nuisances (e.g., noise or dog fouling) (QAS_4)
- People causing disturbances with motorized vehicles (e.g., cars, mopeds, scooters) (QAS_5)

The first findings from these new questions will be included in the 2024/25 main findings report, expected for publication in 2026 at the latest.

Development of questions on non-fatal strangulation for the 2025/26 questionnaire

In response to growing public concern, increased media interest, and calls from victim support groups and other stakeholders, a new set of survey questions was developed to better capture experiences of non-fatal strangulation. There was a clear demand for more accurate data in this area to inform policy and support services. This work also reflects a broader commitment to ensuring the survey remains responsive to emerging evidence needs and relevant to the public discourse.

A set of survey questions has been developed in collaboration with external organisations, victim's groups and experts in survey design. Due to the sensitive nature of these questions additional quality assurance steps were taken during the questionnaire development process. Both internal and external were asked to share

their expertise and provide feedback. Once the questions had been refined they were cognitively tested to assess the acceptability and understanding of the new questions. Cognitive interviews were conducted with 10 participants. The questions were then amended in line with the feedback received during the cognitive interviews and included in the 2025/26 survey. These questions aim to measure:

- The proportion of adults who have experienced strangulation during sexual activity
- Whether the experience involved coercion
- Whether it occurred in the past 12 months
- Any resulting impacts, including physical or mental/emotional problems

Findings from the self-completion module are typically published every two years. The initial results from these questions are expected to be published in the 2026/27 main findings report (combining the 2025/26 and 2026/27 survey years). However, analysts will review the first year of results to examine the feasibility of releasing findings earlier.

Other changes for the 2025/26 questionnaire

As part of planned updates for the 2025/26 survey, several changes and additions are being introduced to improve how we capture public experiences and perceptions around emerging issues.

A new question has been added to the existing bank of QACO questions which asks respondents how common certain issues are in their local area. The new question focuses specifically on the misuse of fireworks during times of seasonable celebration:

- "People misusing fireworks or other pyrotechnics, such as flares or smoke bombs, in an antisocial manner in public, during times of seasonal celebration (such as Bonfire Night or Halloween)."

This addition is intended to explore public perceptions of disruptive or disorderly behaviour involving fireworks, rather than incorrect, unsafe, or inconsiderate use. Cognitive testing was conducted to evaluate how respondents interpret the term "misuse" and understand the intent of the question.

Finally, a new question has been added to the QWORR set which asks respondents about whether they are worried about different types of crimes happening to them. This additional question (QWORR_18) asks whether

- You will be spiked - that is, someone will put alcohol or drugs into your drink, cigarette or vape, or inject you with drugs without your knowledge or permission.

This question aims to assess levels of concern around spiking behaviour and how widespread this fear may be among the population. The first findings from the new questions on spiking and misuse of fireworks will be included in the 2025/26 main findings report.

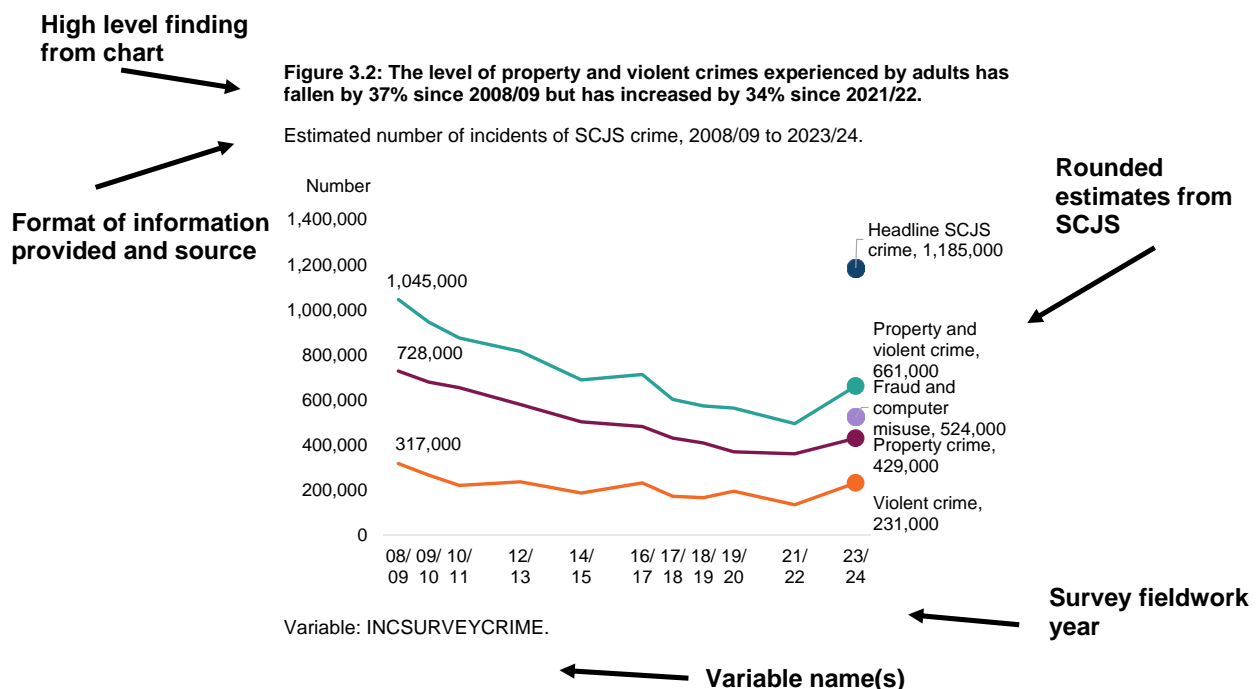
Annex E: Interpreting charts, tables and figures in this report

What do I need to know to help me understand the charts and tables in this report?

The information provided alongside figures and tables includes a title, the data source (survey year etc.), a base definition and, if relevant, the variable name(s). Unless otherwise stated the results are from 2023/24. Examples of a chart and a table are shown below.

Where changes are referenced, either between groups or over time, this is only when a result is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This is due to the fact that the findings are based on a sample of respondents and therefore some level of uncertainty is associated with each measure. When testing for significance, a design effect of 1.44 is applied to the confidence intervals or each estimate, this is to account for the fact that the sample design of the SCJS is not completely random, and is stratified at police division level.

Charts



Charts and graphs presented in the report are a useful way to visualise trends over time or summarise and highlight differences between groups. Each chart features a title which provides the main key message from the information, or highlights a notable or significant finding. The subheading explains how the data is presented and what time period is covered, if no time period is stated then the data will refer to the most recent survey year. Figures presented in charts are based on weighted data unless otherwise stated, some may show the number of respondents which is the unweighted base.

Where change over time is displayed, the horizontal axis shows the period in which the SCJS fieldwork took place. Labels on the horizontal axis are only included in years in which there was SCJS fieldwork conducted, i.e. there was no survey covering 2011/12, 2013/14, 2015/16 or 2020/21. The time periods typically refer to a 12 month period covering the financial year, however as mentioned elsewhere in the report, the fieldwork for 2023/24 ran from July 2023 to April 2024. These labels have been formatted as '23/24' etc. to increase the size and readability for all users.

Tables

All SCJS percentages and rates presented in the figures and tables are based on weighted data (see Chapter 9 of the accompanying [Technical Report](#) for details on survey weighting). However, figures and tables show the unweighted base which represents the number of respondents/households in the specified group or the numbers of crimes that the analysis is based on.⁶³ In tables and figures these are rounded to the nearest multiple of 10 (unrounded numbers are provided in [data tables](#) released alongside this report).

Title and high level finding

Table 3.1: The estimated number of SCJS property and violent crimes has fallen by over a third since 2008/09 but increased by a third since 2021/22.

Estimated number of incidents of SCJS property and violent crime (2008/09, 2019/20 to 2023/24) with percentage change, where significant, since 2008/09, 2019/20 and 2021/22.

Format of information provided and source

	Estimated number of property and violent crimes				Change since		
	2008/09	2019/20	2021/22	2023/24	2008/09	2019/20	2021/22
Best estimate	1,045,000	563,000	494,000	661,000	Down 38%	No change	Up 34%
Lower estimate	974,000	501,000	428,000	566,000	-	-	-
Upper estimate	1,116,000	625,000	560,000	755,000	-	-	-
Number of respondents	16,000	5,570	5,520	4,970	-	-	-

Test of statistical significance

Variable: INCSURVEYCRIME.

Variable name(s)

Most results presented in this report are rounded to whole numbers, but are available to multiple decimal places in the [data tables](#) released alongside this report. The prevalence estimate results presented in this report are provided to one decimal place which can sometimes be helpful where results are low. However, it should be noted that these results are estimates with associated ranges of uncertainty around them, which are taken account of in the statistical testing used in this report (and available more generally by using the [users statistical testing tool](#) published online alongside the [associated data tables](#)).

Note: table row or column percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

⁶³ i.e. this is generally how many people were asked the question for the results being discussed.

Percentages presented in tables and figures, where they refer to the percentage of respondents, households or crimes that have the attribute being discussed, may not sum to 100%. Respondents have the option to refuse answering any question they did not wish to answer and the majority of questions have a 'don't know' option. Percentages for these response categories are generally not shown in tables and figures. In a small number of instances, to aid interpretation of the results, analysis is also presented based on data with 'don't know' and 'refused' responses removed.

A percentage may be quoted in the report text for a single category that is identifiable in the figures/tables only by summing two or more component percentages. In order to avoid rounding errors, the percentage has been recalculated for the single combined category and therefore may differ slightly (i.e. by one or two percentage points) from the sum of the percentages derived from the figures/tables shown.

Also, percentages quoted in the report may represent variables that allow respondents to choose multiple responses. It is not possible to sum these categories when a respondent can choose multiple options. These percentages will not sum to 100% with the other percentages presented. They represent the percentage of the variable population that selected a certain response category.

The footer of each table features the variable name that was used. This name is as it appears in the SPSS datasets that are available on the [UK Data Service](#).

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Comments and suggestions

We are committed to continual improvement and would welcome any comments or suggestions on how the SCJS Main Findings Report could be improved or adapted in future.

If you have enquiries on aspects of the survey development then we welcome your opinions and questions. Please contact the SCJS Project Team via scjs@gov.scot.

Enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Mark Bell
Justice Analytical Services
E-mail: scjs@gov.scot
Telephone: 0131 244 3012

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician
E-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

More information about Scottish Government statistics is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Join our mailing list

If you would like to receive notification about statistical publications, or find out about consultations on our statistics please join the [ScotStat mailing list](#).

Future publications

Details of future publications can be found on our [forthcoming publications](#) page.