

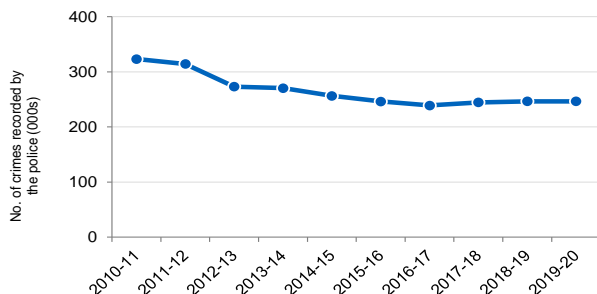


# MONTHLY SAFER COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE BRIEF | May 2021

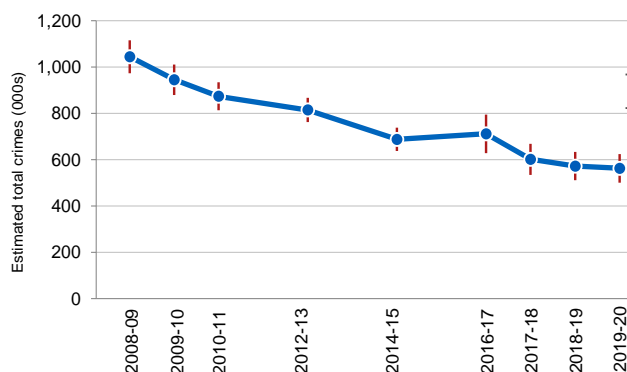
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## ▼ CRIME

- **Police recorded crime at one of the lowest levels since 1974.** Recorded crime is down by 24% since 2010-11 and is at one of the lowest levels seen since 1974. Between 2018-19 & 2019-20, the number of crimes recorded remained almost unchanged.



- **Crime has fallen by 46% since 2008-09.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that around 1 in 8 adults were victims of crime in 2019-20 (11.9%) compared to 1 in 5 in 2008-09 (20.4%). The estimated number of crimes fell by 46% over the same period, and by 21% since 2016-17. The SCJS detected no change in the overall victimisation rate between 2018-19 and 2019-20.



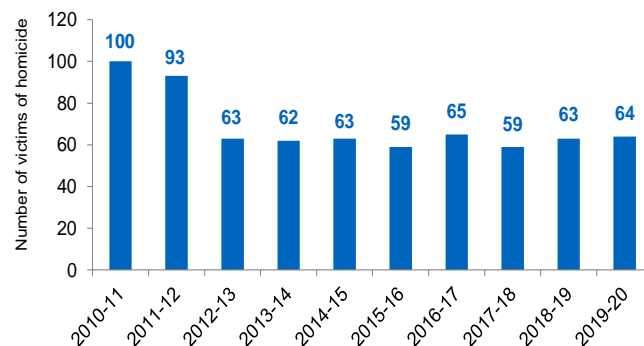
- **Violent crime has fallen over the long term.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police rose by 16%, to 9,316 in 2019-20. These crimes remain at a lower level than all years between 1980 and 2011-12. The number of crimes of handling an offensive weapon (where not used to commit a crime or offence against a person in a public setting) recorded by the police increased by 6% between 2018-19 and 2019-20 to 4,484. The SCJS shows a 39% fall in violent crime between 2008-09 and 2019-20 and that an estimated 48% of violent crime in 2019-20 was reported to the police.

- **Sexual crimes fell in the last year.** Sexual assault, and rape and attempted rape both fell between 2018-19 and 2019-20, while other sexual crimes continued to rise. Multiple factors lie behind the long term increase in recorded sexual crime including a greater willingness of victims to come forward, more historical reporting, more online offending and the impact of new legislation. The SCJS for 2018-20 (2018-19 & 2019-20 combined) estimates that 3.6% of adults experienced at least one serious sexual assault since the age of 16, unchanged from 2008-09.

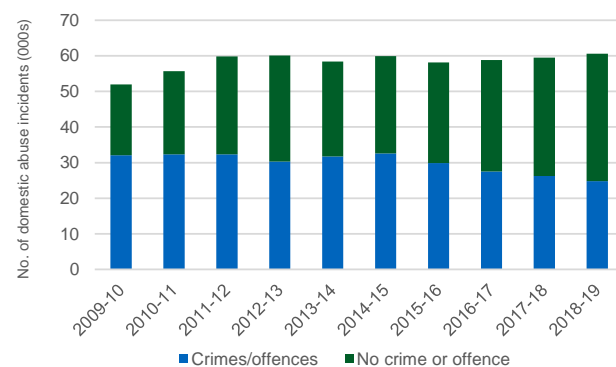
- **Women more likely to experience partner abuse.** The SCJS, for 2018-20, estimates that 3.2% of respondents had experienced partner abuse in the year prior to interview. A higher proportion of women than men experienced this, at 3.7% and 2.6% respectively.

- **Increase in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 51.5% in 2019-20, up from 51.0% in 2018-19. Clear up rates have been relatively stable over the last decade following a general rise since 1976.

- **No. of victims of homicide at around the same level in the last eight years.** There were 64 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2019-20, a 36% decrease from 2010-11. Since 2012-13, the number of victims of homicide each year ranged between 59 and 65.



- **Increase in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 60,641 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2018-19, an increase of 2% on 2017-18. In 2018-19, 41% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.

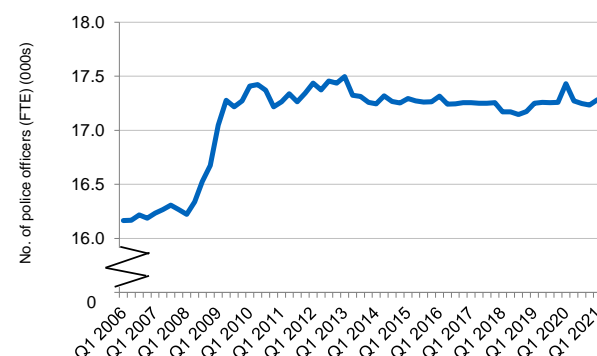


## ▼ SHORTER TERM CRIME TRENDS

- **The number of crimes recorded by the police in April 2021 was higher than April 2020 but lower than April 2019.** Police recorded crime was 13% higher in April 2021 than the same month of 2020 (when the first pandemic lockdown was in place) but was 8% lower than April 2019 (for which there was no pandemic or restriction on movement).

## ▼ POLICING

- **There were 17,283 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 31 March 2021.** This was 1,049 (+6.5%) more officers compared to the position at 31 March 2007.



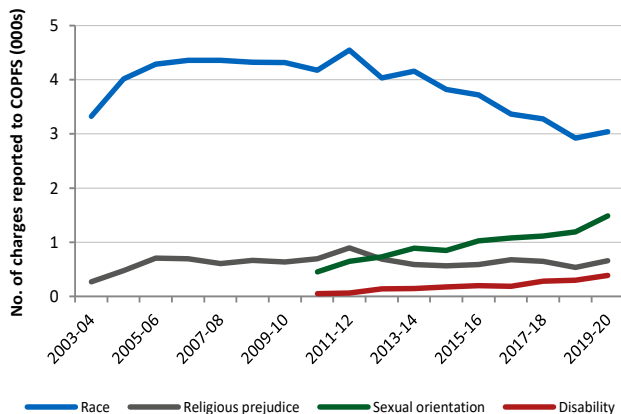


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## ▼ H A T E C R I M E

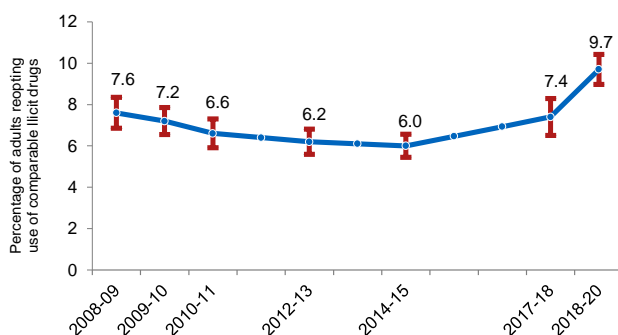
- **Increase in hate crime charges.** There has been an increase in the number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19 for all categories of hate crime (race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity). Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.



- **Numbers stable for police recorded hate crime.** Between 2014-15 & 2019-20, the number of hate crimes recorded by the police was relatively stable, at around 6,300 to 7,000. In 2019-20, 62% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 20% sexual orientation, 8% religion, 4% disability and 1% transgender identity. The remaining 5% included multiple hate aggravators.

## ▼ D R U G S

- **Self-reported illicit drug use amongst adults has increased in recent years.** Where the drug types included in the SCJS are generally consistent over time, self-reported use has risen since 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 7.6% in 2008-09 and 7.4% in 2017-18, to 9.7% in 2018-20). Between 2017-18 and 2018-20, self-reported use of any drug listed in the survey during the 12 months prior to interview, increased from 9.5% to 13.5%. In the 12 months prior to interview, those aged 16-24 were the most likely to have reported using drugs and cannabis was the drug most commonly used by adults.

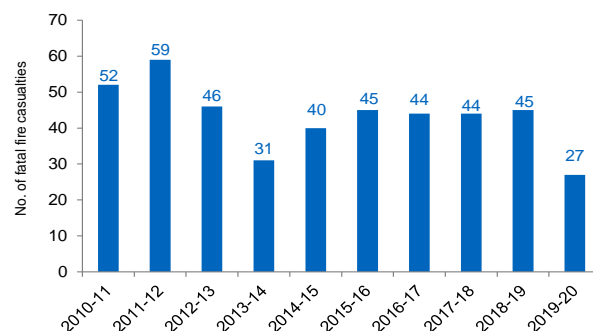


To have a more comparable measure since 2008-09, the figures in this chart exclude poppers, glues, solvents, gas or aerosol and prescription only painkillers not prescribed to the respondent.

## ▼ C O M M U N I T Y S A F E T Y

- **Improved public perception of local crime rate since 2008-09.** The public feel safer in their local communities. The SCJS found that, in 2019-20, 73% of adults thought that the local crime rate had stayed the same or reduced in the past two years. This shows an improvement from 69% in 2008-09 and no change since 2018-19 (73%).

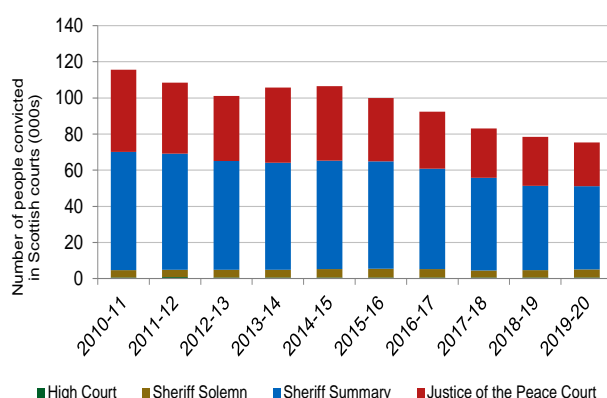
- **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (77%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2019-20, unchanged from 2018-19 (78%) but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.
- **Most adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reports that, in 2019-20, 55% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, unchanged from 2018-19 (56%) but down from 61% in 2012-13.
- **Number of fires fallen 37% in the last decade.** In 2019-20, there were 24,472 fires in Scotland, down 9% on 2018-19 and 37% lower than in 2010-11. There were 27 fire fatalities in 2019-20 - 48% lower than in 2010-11 and the lowest in the last decade.



- **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2010-11.** In 2019-20, there were 2,280 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 541 due to assault with a sharp object. These were both 50% lower than in 2010-11.

## ▼ C R I M I N A L A N D C I V I L P R O C E E D I N G S

- **Lowest number of convictions in last 10 years.** In 2019-20, the number of people convicted in Scottish courts fell by 4% from 2018-19 to 75,251. This is in line with the general downward trend of the last ten years.



- **Fall in convictions in most categories between 2018-19 & 2019-20.** There were notable falls in the number of convictions for unlawful use of a motor vehicle (down 18% or 1,358 fewer convictions), drug crimes (down 11% or 575), and shoplifting (down 9% or 533). However, convictions for violent crimes increased by 11% in 2019-20, with more than half of this increase accounted for by new offences under the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act (206 convictions).
- **Rise in community sentences in 2019-20.** The number of community sentences rose by 7% between 2018-19 and 2019-20, from 15,211 to 16,296. The proportion of all convictions resulting in a community sentence rose to 22%, the highest in the past decade.

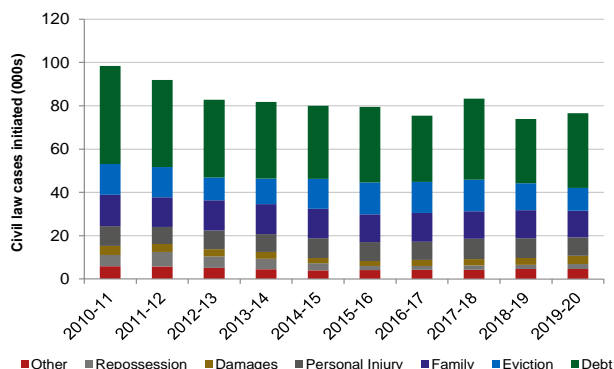


# MONTHLY SAFER COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE BRIEF | May 2021

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▶ **No. of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds down by almost two-thirds in last 10 years.** Statistics published by the [Scottish Children's Reporter Administration](#) (SCRA) show that, in 2019-20, 2,840 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a decrease of 64% since 2010-11.

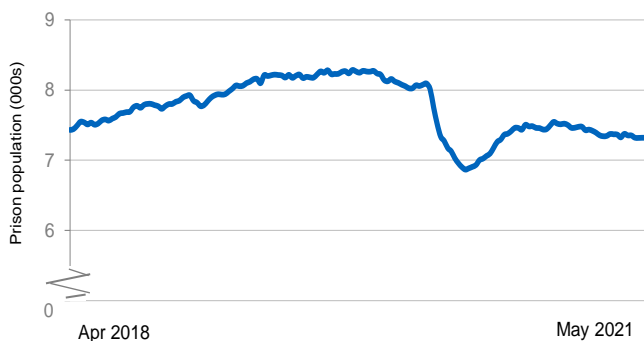
▶ **Long-term downward trend in initiated civil law cases, normalising after the rise in caseload in 2017-18.** There were 74,400 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2019-20 (excluding summary applications). This represents an increase of 3% from 2018-19.



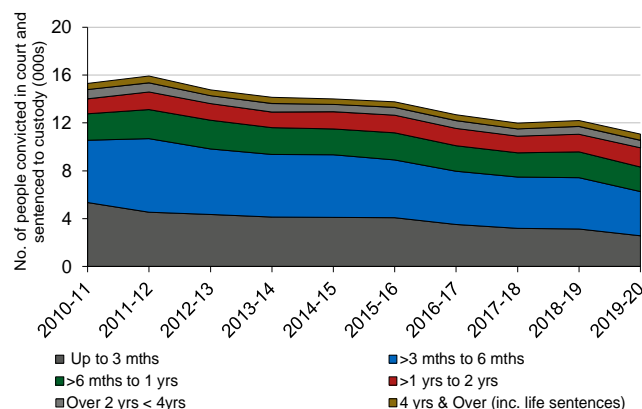
▶ **There was an even split of cases types either increasing or decreasing since 2018-19.** Increases were seen in damages (up 23%), repossessions (up 18%) and debt (up 16%). Decreases were recorded in evictions (down 15%), family and personal injury (both down 6%). Debt actions remain the most common, constituting 46% of principal craves. Family and eviction actions were second and third most common, at 16% and 14% respectively.

## PRISONS & COMMUNITY SENTENCES

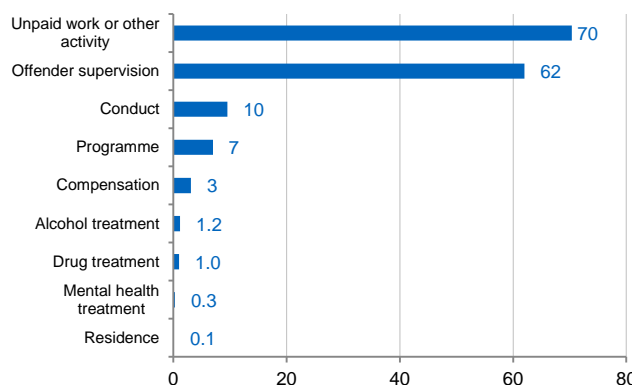
▶ **The prison population has risen from its lowest point at the end of May 2020.** [Daily population figures for Friday](#) published by the Scottish Prison Service, show that the prison population rose from around 7,500 in April 2018 to around 8,300 in November 2019, but fell sharply in the early days of lockdown. This was due to a drop in the number of sentenced admissions following the Covid-19 outbreak and the early release of prisoners. The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020, but grew to over 2,000 by September. Since October 2020, there have been small fluctuations in the remand population, but overall it has remained stable, sitting at 1,900 on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (26% of the overall prison population).



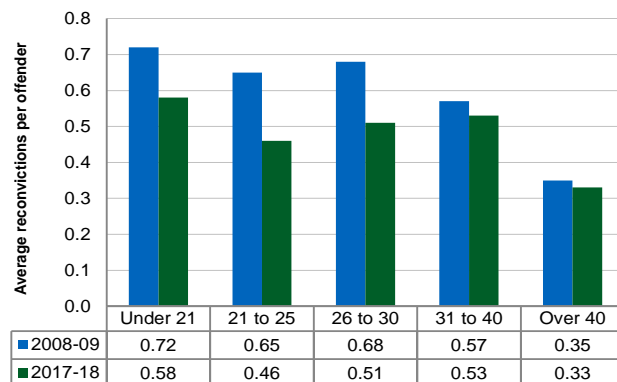
▶ **Average custodial sentence is almost a year.** For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2019-20 was almost a year (356 days) in length. This was 9% longer than in 2018-19 and 29% longer than in 2010-11 (9¼ months). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of up to one year or less fell to 75% in 2019-20, the lowest proportion of the last decade.



▶ **70% of community payback orders issued with unpaid work.** There were 16,710 community payback orders imposed during 2019-20, 1% more than in 2018-19. Seventy per cent of these had an unpaid work or other activity requirement, while 62% had an offender supervision requirement. Community payback orders accounted for around 96% of all social work orders imposed in 2019-20.



▶ **Reconviction rates are at their lowest level for 21 years.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 23% lower than it was a decade ago. The fall in the last decade was mostly driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 19% for under 21s, 29% for 21-25 year olds, and 25% for 26-30 year olds. Average reconvictions also decreased for the older age groups over the decade, but to a lesser degree, with a 7% decrease for 31-40 year olds and 6% for the over 40s.



### ANY QUERIES?

If you require further information on any of the statistics in this brief, please contact [Justice\\_Analysts@gov.scot](mailto:Justice_Analysts@gov.scot) or speak to Alan Fleming (0782 501 1477). Monthly reports with more detail on how COVID-19 has affected the justice system are available [here](#).

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## MONTHLY SAFER COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE BRIEF | May 2021

### Monthly Feature : Engaging in risky online behaviour: Initial findings on prevalence and associated factors at age 12 from the Growing Up in Scotland Survey

Increased accessibility to the internet has resulted in more opportunities for children to engage in risky online behaviours. Engaging in these behaviours could lead to children being exposed to distressing content online, and increases the likelihood of children experiencing more serious forms of victimisation, such as sexual harassment.

The published [report](#) uses 2017-18 data from the nationally representative Growing up in Scotland (GUS) [survey](#) to examine the number of children aged 12 in Scotland who have engaged in risky online behaviour, and the factors associated with engaging in this behaviour.

Overall, 60% of children had not engaged in any of the six measured risky online behaviours (see table below). Of the 40% that had, around a third of children had engaged in one or two of the behaviours, while 7% had participated in three or more. The behaviour most engaged in (33%) was adding someone to friends/contacts list with whom the children had never met face-to-face.

	Have you added someone to your friends/contacts list who you have never met face-to-face?	33%
	Have you done anything online that you know your parents would not want you to do?	9%
	Have you lied to your parents about what you do online?	8%
	Have you met up with someone face-to-face who you first made contact with online?	7%
	Have you sent a photo or video of yourself to someone who you have never met face-to-face?	7%
	Have you sent personal information to someone who you have never met face-to-face?	4%



Base: 3,419 children from Sweep 9 of GUS study.

Association analyses on the 2017-18 data revealed that there are a number of factors associated with engaging in risky online behaviours including individual, familial, peer, school, and online factors:

- **Individual factors:** Boys were more likely to engage in risky online behaviours than girls, as were those with lower levels of wellbeing and life satisfaction, and those with higher levels of hyperactivity/ inattention.
- **Familial factors:** Children who experienced more conflict with their parents and were less close to their parents were also more likely to engage in risky online behaviours. Children who felt their parents knew almost everything about what they did online were less likely to engage in risky behaviours.
- **Peer and school factors:** Children who had experienced face-to-face victimisation and had lower levels of enjoyment at school were more likely to have engaged in the risky online behaviours. Those with higher levels of peer-closeness were less likely to have done so.
- **Online factors:** Those who spent more than seven hours a day on social media on average were more likely to have engaged in risky online behaviours. Those who knew more about protecting themselves online were less likely to have engaged.

#### Conclusions:

Overall, the majority of children aged 12 in Scotland had not engaged in risky online behaviours. For those that had, there were a range of individual, familial, peer, school, and online risk and protective factors that were associated with engaging in these behaviours. However, it should be noted that although statistically significant, the associations found were weak, likely due to the small numbers of children engaging in the measured risky online behaviours. Furthermore, given that data for the GUS 2017-18 survey were collected at the same time, causal conclusions should not be drawn regarding the relationships examined.

For further information on this [report](#) "Engaging in risky online behaviour: Initial findings on prevalence and associated factors at age 12 from the Growing Up in Scotland Survey" (published: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021), please contact Stefania Pagani, Safer Communities Analytical Unit, Justice Analytical Services at [stef.pagani@gov.scot](mailto:stef.pagani@gov.scot).