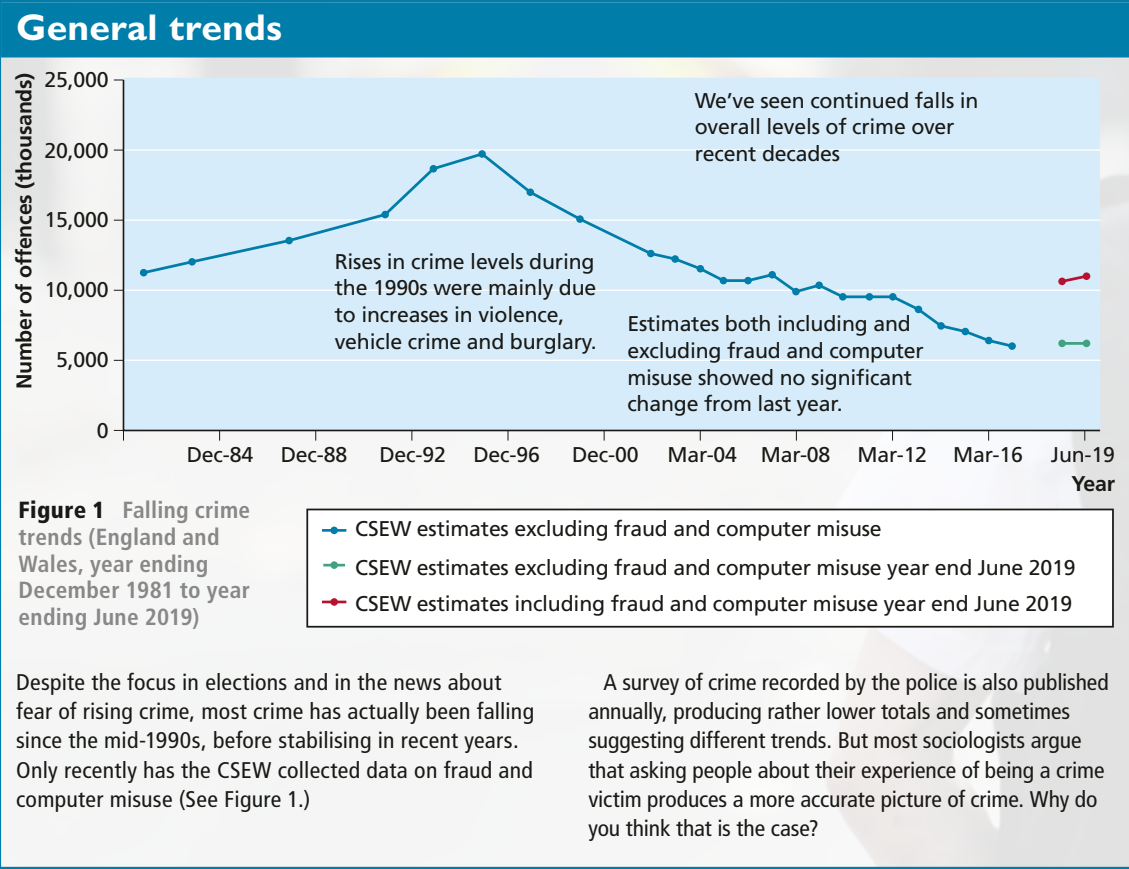


Our national experience of crime

Take a detailed look at trends in crime, as recorded by the CSEW and police

The CSEW

The annual Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW, formerly British Crime Survey) produced in October 2019 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) asks a sample of people aged 16 and over living in households in those countries about their experiences of crime in the last 12 months. These experiences are then used to estimate national levels of crime. Until recently, the survey did not cover crimes against those aged under 16 years, but since January 2009 a sample of children aged 10–15 years have also been interviewed. The core adult sample is designed to be representative of the population of households in England and Wales and people living in those households. Some 35,000 households are now included in the survey. Due to methodological changes to the handling of repeat victimisation in the CSEW, the presentation of data is not continuous.



References

You can find the CSEW online at: www.tinyurl.com/yydkok6h. You can also find a useful comparison, by ONS, of the strengths and weaknesses of victim data and police-recorded data here ('Other sources of data help provide fuller picture of crime'): www.tinyurl.com/rwtpnqk.

Sivarajasingam, V. et al. (2018) 'Violence in England and Wales in 2018: an accident and emergency perspective', Crime and Security Research Institute, Cardiff University.

Crime types

This overall trend in falling crime hides variations seen in individual crime types. The latest CSEW suggests that eight in ten adults in England and Wales did not experience any of the crimes asked about in the survey in the previous 12 months. This figure has remained stable since the introduction of fraud and computer misuse offences into the CSEW. The CSEW estimates that around one in ten children aged 10–15 years were victims of at least one crime in the latest year. It is much more likely these days for an adult in England and Wales to experience fraud, rather than a violent offence (See Figure 2.) However, the likelihood of victimisation also varies by personal and household characteristics. You may want to consider some of the likely key factors here.

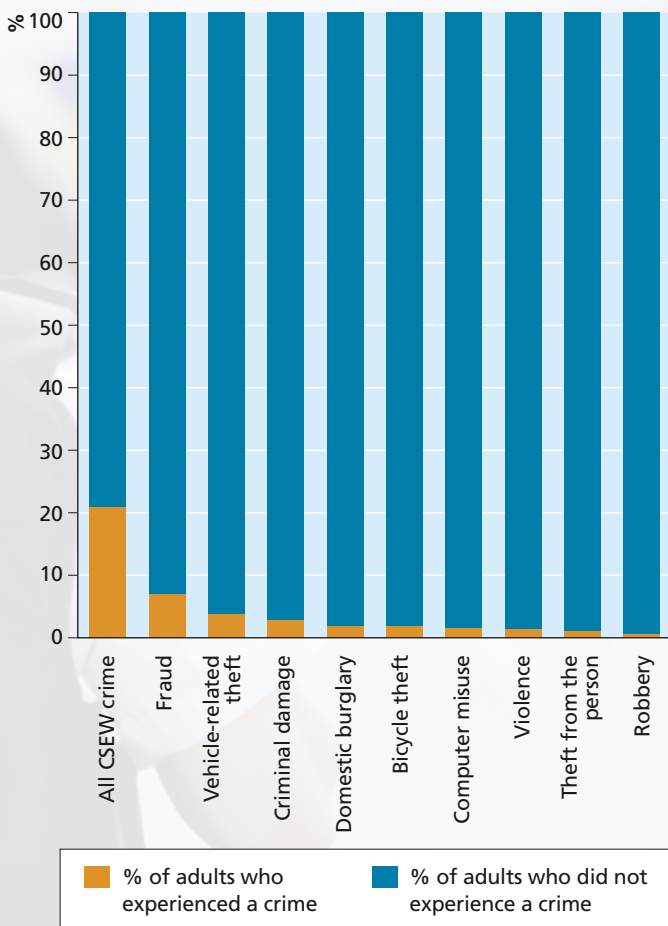
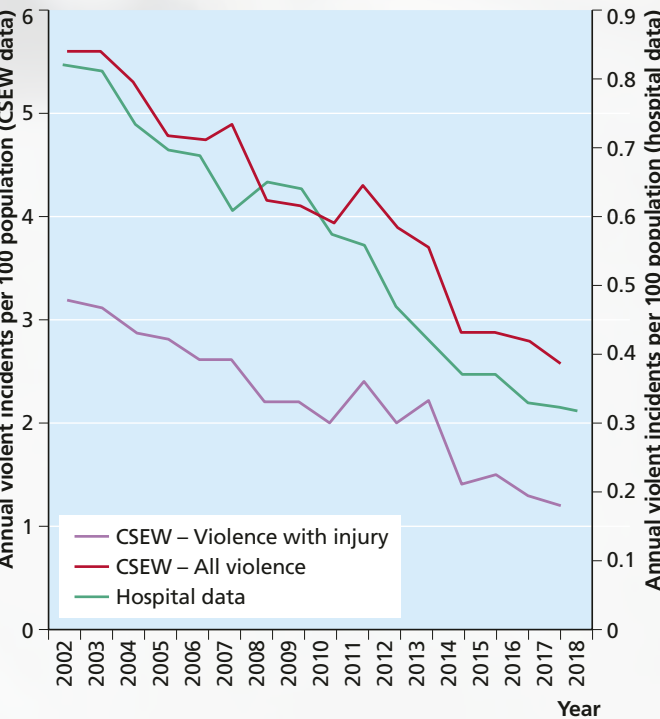


Figure 2 The likelihood of being a victim of crime varies by crime type (England and Wales, year ending June 2019)

Violent crime

The ONS argues that figures on police-recorded crime give rather more insight into the lower-volume but higher-harm violence that the CSEW survey either does not cover or does not capture especially well. These police-recorded data show: a 5% decrease in the number of homicides, following a period of increases over the last 4 years; a 4% increase in the number of police-recorded offences involving firearms; and a 7% increase in the number of police-recorded offences involving knives or sharp instruments.

So, can we trust the CSEW data on lower-level personal violence? The data collected by the CSEW on reported violence by victims shows a pretty steady downward trend. That pattern seems to be confirmed by research on hospital data of victims of violence collected by academics at the Crime and Security Research institute at Cardiff University. (See Figure 3.) Whichever way one looks at it, and although fear of crime is always an issue, lower-level violent crime seems persistently to be falling too.



Source: Sivarajasingam et al. (2018)

Figure 3 Trends in violence in England and Wales