

## CRIME AND JUSTICE

# HOMICIDE IN SCOTLAND 2018-19

This bulletin presents statistics on crimes of homicide recorded by the police in Scotland in 2018-19. Statistics are presented on the number of homicide cases recorded in Scotland, where a single case of homicide is counted for each crime involving Murder or Culpable homicide (common law), irrespective of the number of victims or accused. This bulletin also presents victim and accused data, the circumstances associated with the homicide, and additional details relating to the method, motive and relationship between the victim and the accused.

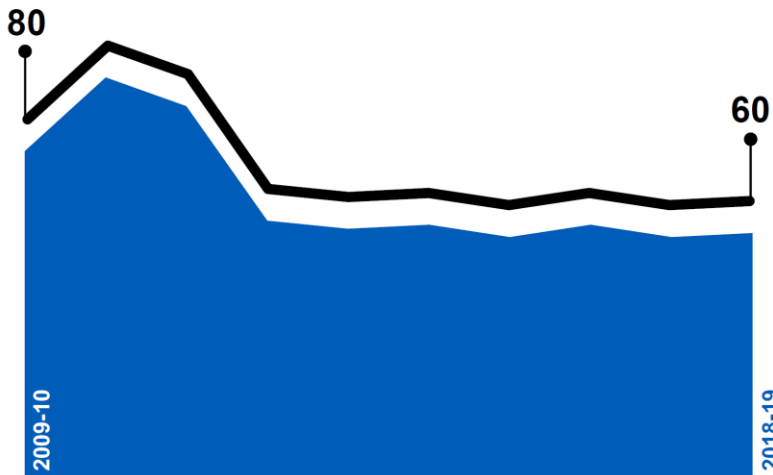
## Key Points

- Between 2017-18 and 2018-19, the number of homicide cases recorded by the police in Scotland increased by 2% (or one case) from 59 to 60 (Table 1). This is the third lowest number of recorded homicide cases for a single twelve month period since 1976, after 59 cases were recorded in each of 2015-16 and 2017-18.
- The number of homicide cases in Scotland has remained relatively stable in recent years, with between 59 and 63 cases recorded each year since 2012-13.
- Over the ten year period from 2009-10 to 2018-19, the number of homicide cases in Scotland fell by 25% (20 cases) from 80 to 60 (Table 1). Glasgow City accounted for over a third (35%) of this decrease. In 2018-19, over one fifth (13) of the 60 national recorded homicide cases occurred within Glasgow City (Table 2).
- In 2018-19, 61 victims of homicide were recorded, 3% (two victims) more than the 59 victims recorded in 2017-18 (Table 1). Of the 61 victims, 75% (46) were male (Table 5).
- In 2018-19, 83 persons were accused of homicide and 88% (73) of them were male (Table 6). Of the 60 cases of homicide recorded for 2018-19, 57 were solved and three are currently unsolved (Table 1).
- For each of the last ten years, the most common method of killing was with a sharp instrument (Table 7). In 2018-19, a sharp instrument was the main method of killing for 44% (27) of homicide victims.

# HOMICIDE IN SCOTLAND 2018-19

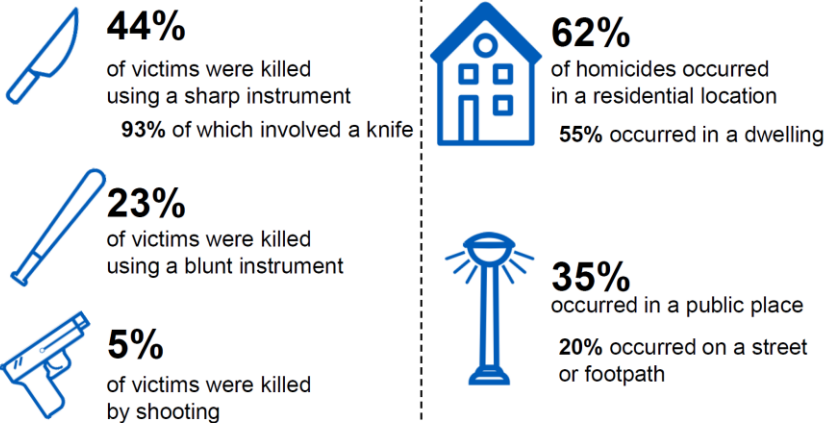


## ▶ THE NUMBER OF HOMICIDE CASES IN SCOTLAND HAS FALLEN BY A QUARTER IN THE PAST 10 YEARS



Between 2012-13 and 2018-19, the number of homicide cases has remained relatively stable with between 59 and 63 cases each year.

### ▶ In 2018-19:



### In the last ten years:

The number of homicide victims fell by

**26%**

The number of those accused of homicide fell by

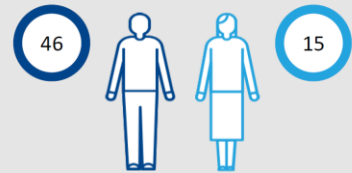
**31%**

The homicide rate as fallen from

**16 ▶ 11**

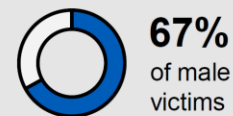
victims per million population

## TOTAL VICTIMS 61



Under 16	3
16 to 20	1
21 to 30	12
31 to 50	29
51 and over	16
<b>Median age of victims</b>	<b>42</b>

Two-thirds of male victims were killed by an **acquaintance**



Most female victims were killed by a **partner/ex-partner**



## TOTAL ACCUSED 83



Under 16	2
16 to 20	11
21 to 30	29
31 to 50	32
51 and over	9
<b>Median age of accused</b>	<b>30</b>

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# Background

This bulletin includes all crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law), with these two crimes collectively referred to as homicide throughout the bulletin. The associated tables to this bulletin can be downloaded from the Scottish Government [website](#).

A [glossary](#) in the annex provides a full list of key variables used throughout this bulletin and what they mean.

The statistics on homicides are used alongside a range of other information to inform the Scottish Government's [Justice In Scotland: Vision and Priorities](#). These statistics are also used by a wide range of stakeholders to monitor trends, for policy research and development, and for research purposes. The *Homicide in Scotland* statistical bulletin forms part of a series of bulletins produced by the Scottish Government on the criminal justice system, which can be found at: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Publications>.

This bulletin excludes cases involving death by dangerous/careless driving, illegal driving resulting in a fatal accident and corporate homicide. The Scottish Government also publishes *Recorded Crime in Scotland*, which includes data on the wider homicide etc. category. The 2018-19 edition of *Recorded Crime in Scotland* can be accessed [here](#).

The data in this bulletin are collected separately from the data included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin. For the crimes of murder and culpable homicide, data are extracted from police recording systems at a different time point and so there may be discrepancies in the information presented here and the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin. In this bulletin homicide cases are included against the year in which the crime that led to the homicide is first recorded by the police. This is not necessarily the year in which the victim dies (and hence is recorded as a homicide), the year in which the accused is brought to trial for the crime, or the year in which the case is finally disposed of by the courts.

A [Data Quality Statement](#) is available, this provides further information on the production of these statistics, the quality assurance undertaken and our approach to revisions.

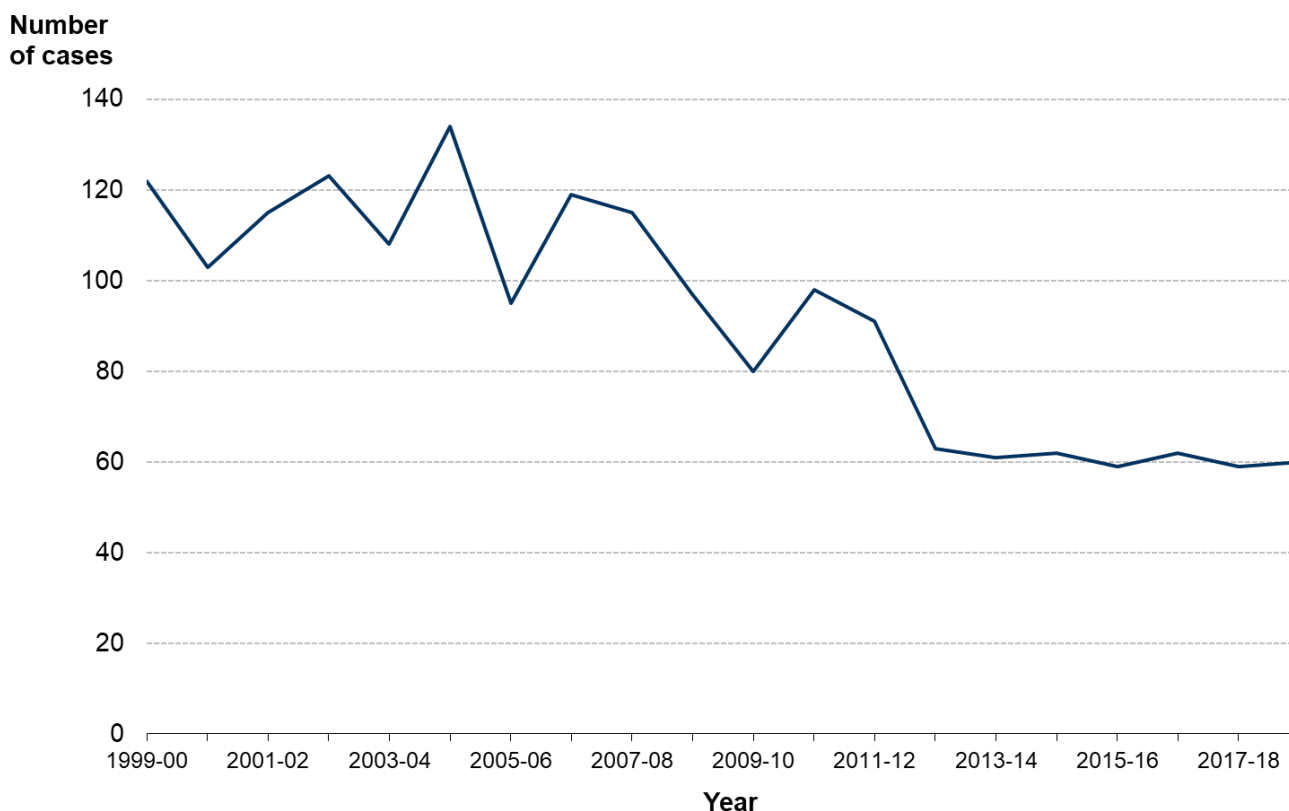
# Commentary

## Homicide cases

Table 1; Charts 1, 2

- The number of homicide cases recorded by the police in Scotland increased by 2% (or one case) between 2017-18 and 2018-19 from 59 to 60. This is the third lowest annual number of homicide cases since 1976, the first year for which comparable data are available. The two years with a lower figure were 2015-16 and 2017-18, both of which had 59 cases recorded.
- Following a generally downward trend between 2004-05 and 2012-13 the number of homicide cases in Scotland has remained relatively stable with between 59 and 63 recorded each year during 2012-13 to 2018-19 ([Chart 1](#)).

**Chart 1: Cases recorded as homicide by the police, Scotland, 1999-00 to 2018-19**



- Homicide cases involving more than one victim are relatively rare, in 2018-19 there was one case with more than one victim (Table 1). Of the 60 homicide cases recorded, 18 involved more than one accused person.

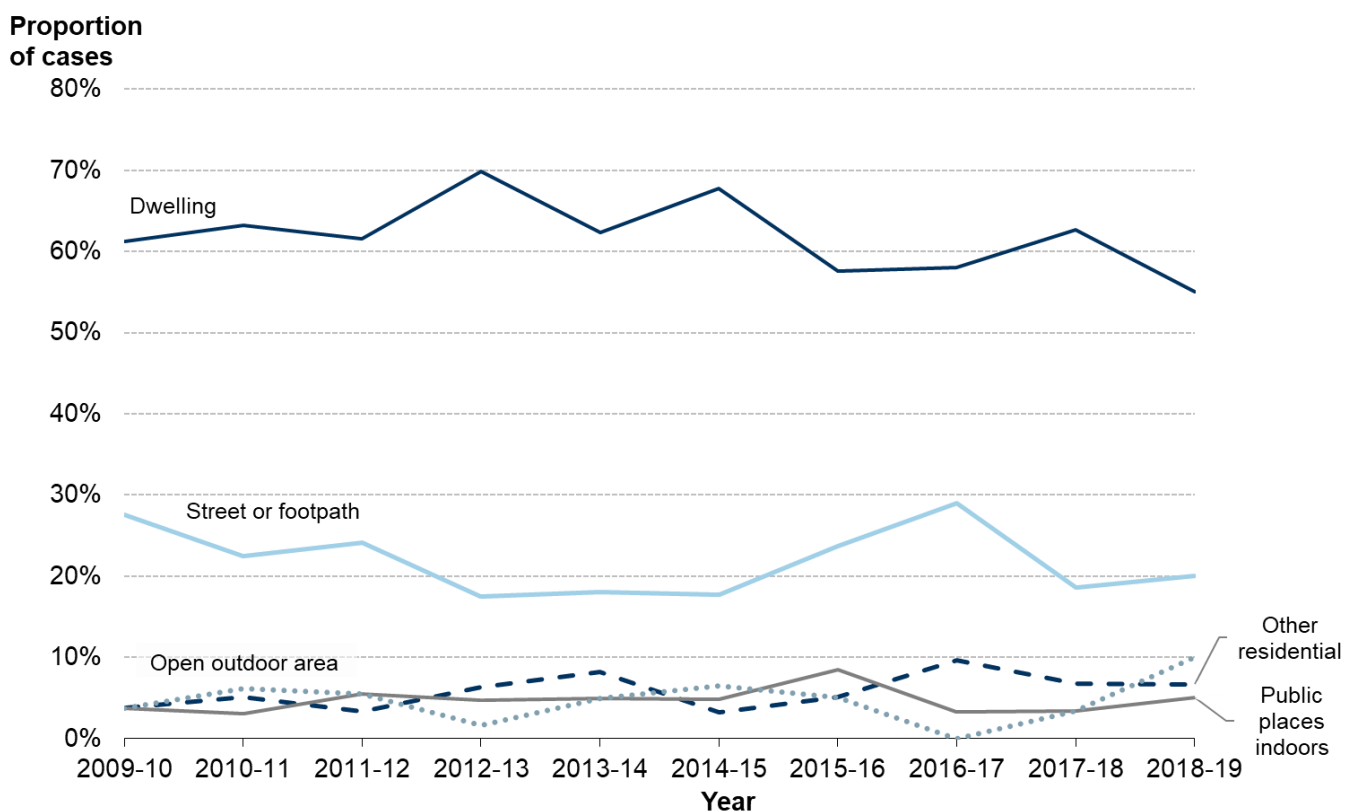
**Table 1: Summary table of homicide cases, victims and accused persons, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19**

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
<b>Total number of cases</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>60</b>
Cases by number of victims:										
1	78	97	90	63	60	62	59	59	59	59
2+	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	3	-	1
<b>Total number of victims</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Median age of victims</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>42</b>
Cases by number of accused:										
1	53	68	66	45	47	49	48	48	45	39
2	20	19	13	11	8	9	9	5	8	10
3+	6	10	10	6	6	4	1	6	5	8
unsolved	1	1	2	1	-	-	1	3	1	3
<b>Total number of accused</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Median age of accused</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>

- In 2018-19, Glasgow City had the highest number of homicide cases (13), representing 22% of the Scottish total (Table 2). Glasgow City has nearly double its share of homicides compared to its population (with 12% of the Scottish population in 2018<sup>1</sup>). It is important to note however that victims may not necessarily reside in the local authority where the homicide took place. Glasgow City has also witnessed a relatively larger fall in homicides of 35% since 2009-10, accounting for over one third (35%) of the overall national decrease.

<sup>1</sup> Population estimates are as at mid-year 2018 from the National Records of Scotland (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2018>)

**Chart 2: Location of homicide cases, where known, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19**



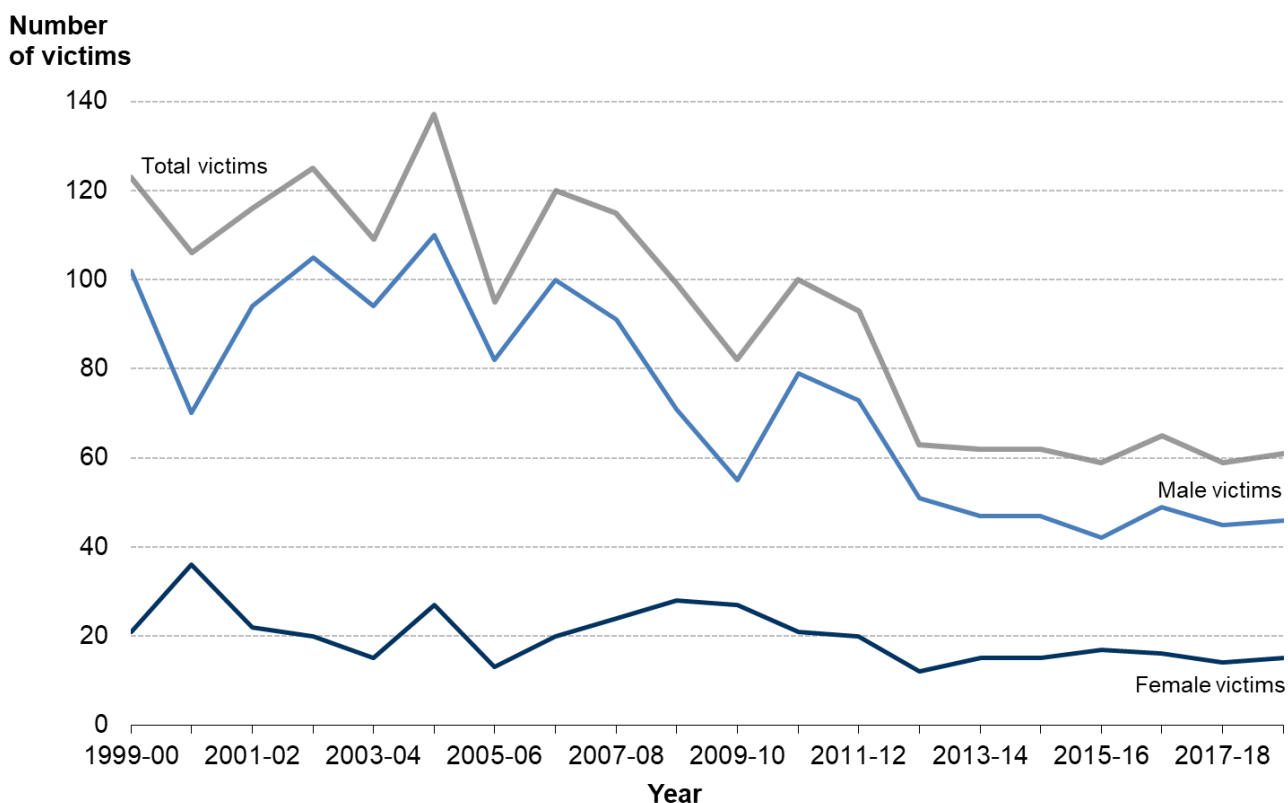
- In 2018-19, 62% of homicides occurred within a residential location (dwelling and other residential), 30% in outdoor public places (street, footpath and open outdoor area) and 5% in indoor public places ([Chart 2](#)).

## Victims of homicide

Table 5; Charts 3, 4

- Between 2017-18 and 2018-19, the number of homicide victims in Scotland increased by 3% (or two victims), from 59 to 61 ([Chart 3](#)).

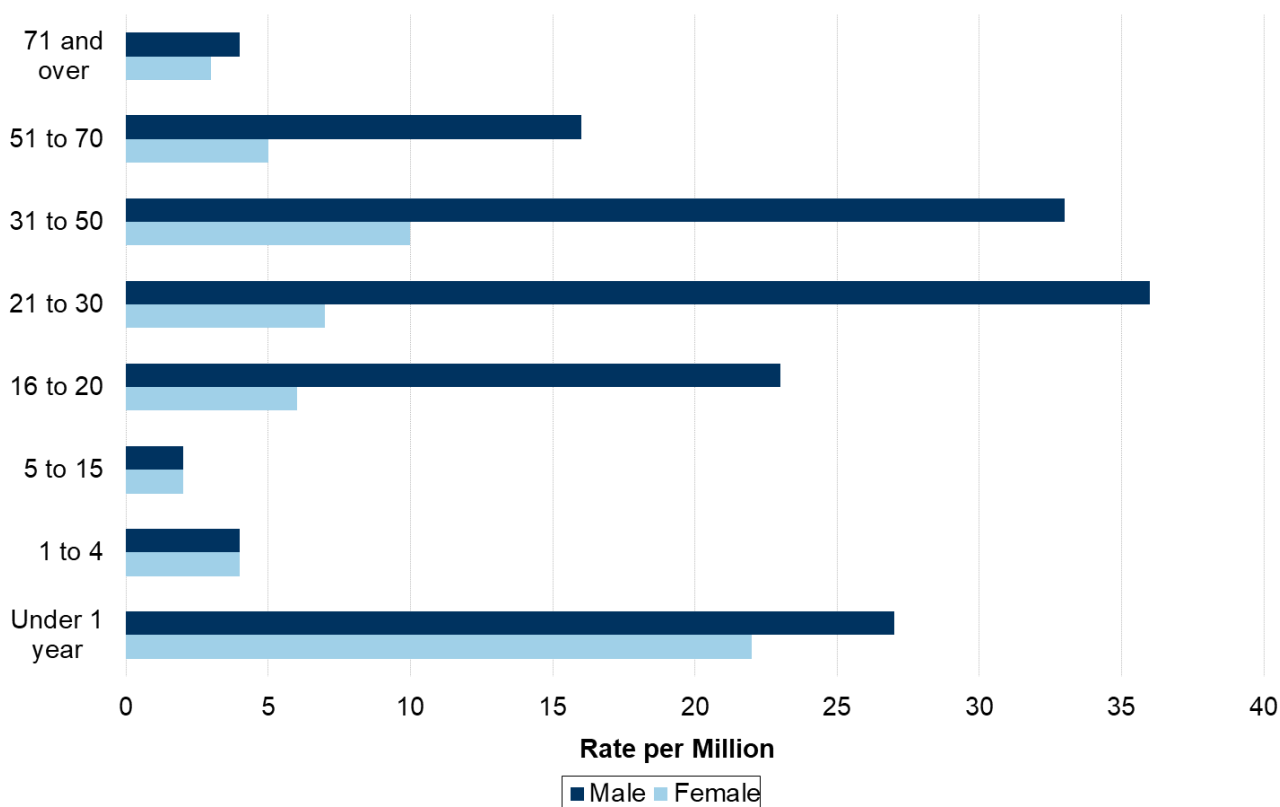
**Chart 3: Total number of victims and victims by gender, Scotland, 1999-00 to 2018-19**



- In 2018-19, there were 46 male victims, representing 75% of all homicide victims. Males are more likely to be victims compared to females, with an overall rate for males of 17 victims per million population, more than three times the rate for females (five victims per million population).
- [Chart 4](#) shows the victimisation rate by age group and gender for homicides since 2009-10 (i.e. for the past 10 years – representing 706 victims). For most age groups, the victimisation rate is higher for males than for females, though rates were almost identical for those aged between one and 15 years old. The victimisation rate for males peaks in the 21 to 30 years old age group.
- The median age of a victim of homicide in 2018-19 was 42 years old, three years higher than in 2017-18 when the median age of a victim was 39 years old. Over the past ten years the median age of a victim has ranged between 33 and 42 years old (Table 1).



**Chart 4: Age profile of homicide victimisation rate by gender, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19**

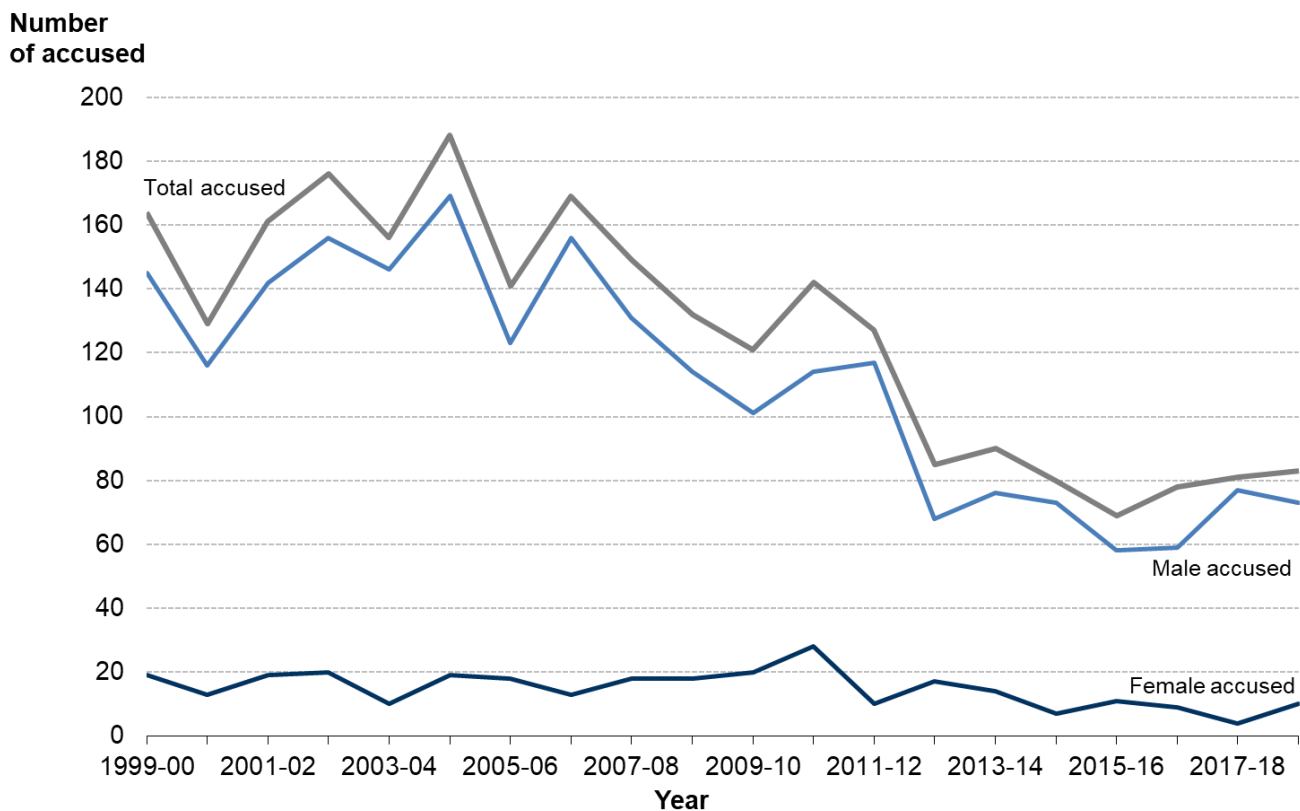


## Persons accused of homicide

Table 6; Charts 5, 6

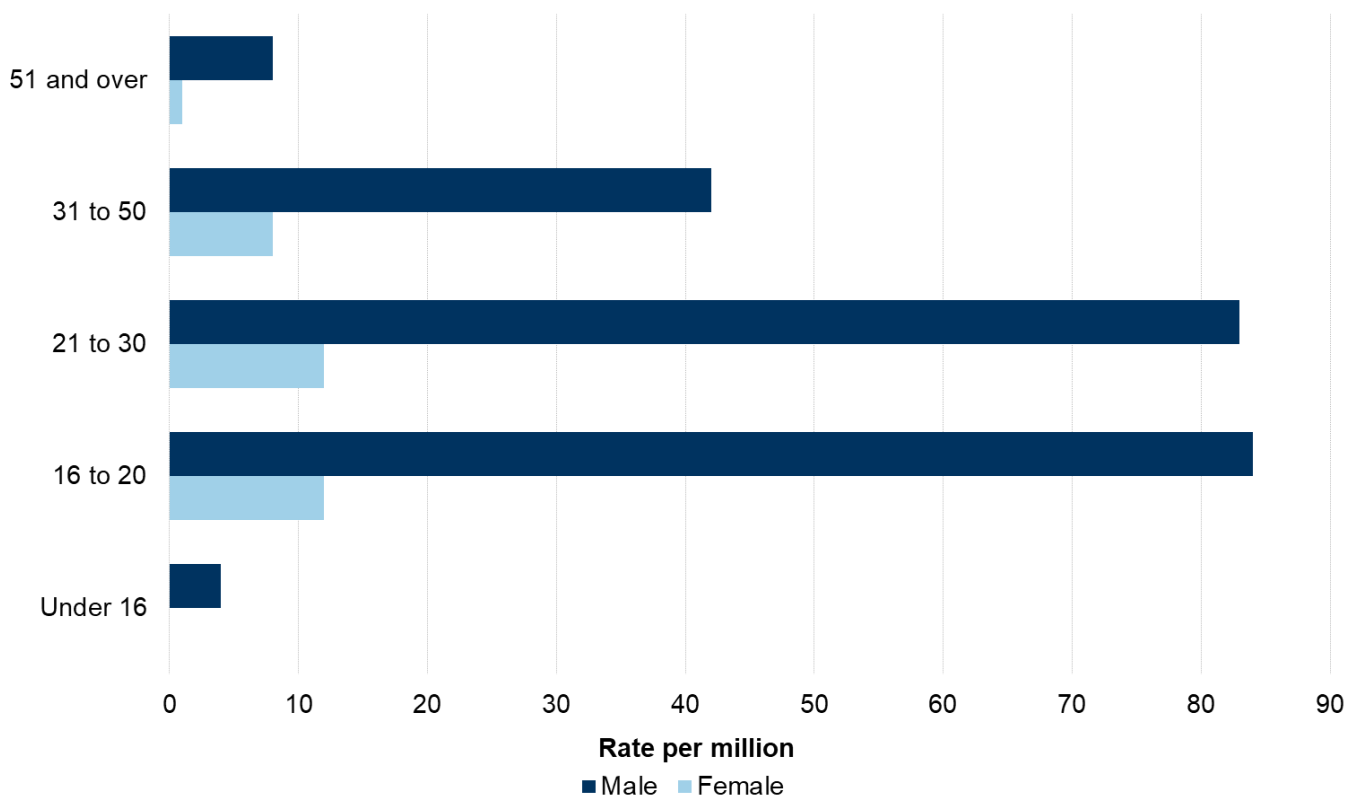
- The number of people accused of homicide has shown an overall downward trend since 2004-05 ([Chart 5](#)). In 2018-19 there were 83 persons accused of homicide, two more than in 2017-18 though remaining lower than all years between 1991-92 and 2013-14.
- The vast majority of persons accused of homicide since 1999-00 have been male, making up 88% of all accused in 2018-19.
- Of the 60 cases of homicide recorded for 2018-19, 57 were solved and three are currently unsolved.

**Chart 5: Total number of accused and accused by gender, Scotland, 1999-00 to 2018-19**



- In 2018-19, the total number of individuals accused of homicide equated to 15 per million population.
- In 2018-19, the rates for those accused of homicide were highest for the 21 to 30 years old age group, at 39 per million population.
- [Chart 6](#) shows the rate for accused by age group and gender for homicides since 2009-10 (i.e. for the past 10 years – representing 956 accused). The rates for males accused of homicide per million population were considerably higher across all age groups than for females.
- In 2018-19, the median age of a person accused of homicide was 30 years old, which is five years younger than in 2017-18 when the median age was 35 years old. Over the past ten years the median age of a person accused of homicide ranged between 27 and 35 years old (Table 1).

**Chart 6: Age and gender profile of persons accused of homicide per million population, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19**

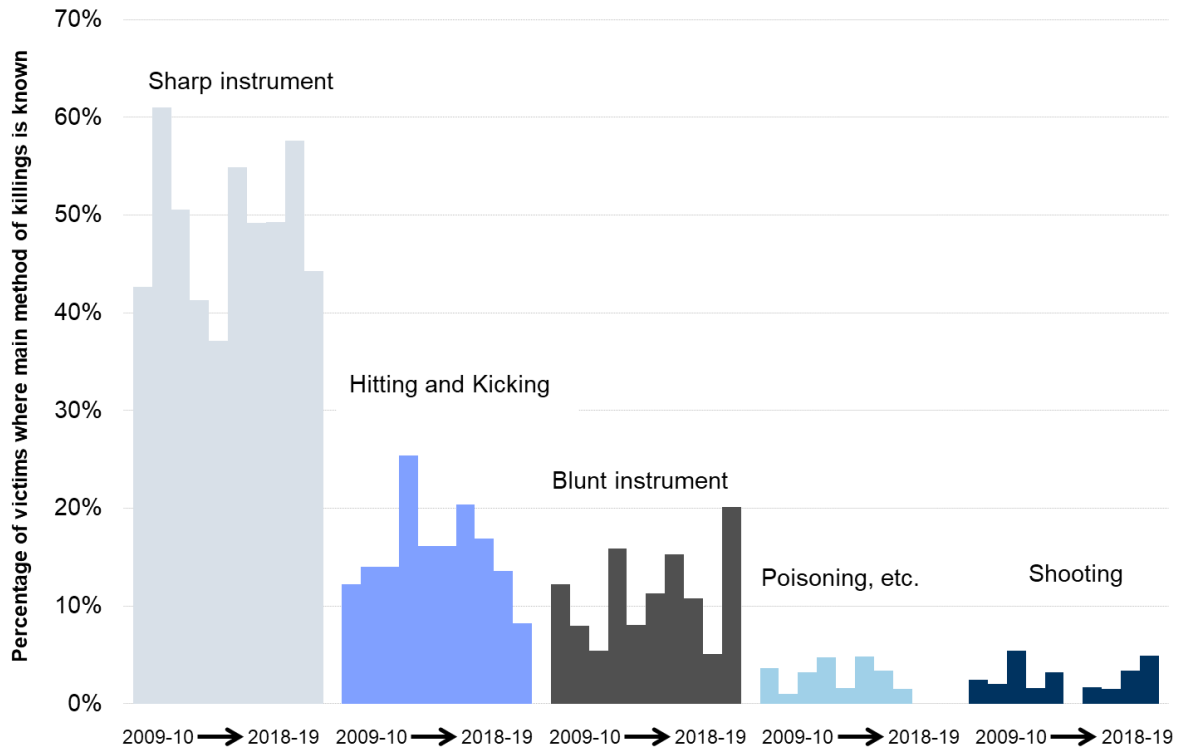


## Method

Table 7; Chart 7

- [Chart 7](#) shows that the most common main method of killing in each of the last ten years was with a sharp instrument. This includes 44% (27) of homicide victims in 2018-19, of which all but two involved a knife. For the other two the type of sharp instrument was unknown. The next most common main method was with a blunt instrument, accounting for 23% (14) of homicide victims in 2018-19.
- Homicide by shooting is relatively rare in Scotland. In 2018-19 there were three victims recorded and since 2009-10 there has only been one other year where more than two victims were recorded (2011-12).

**Chart 7: Victims of homicide by main method of killing, 2009-10 to 2018-19**

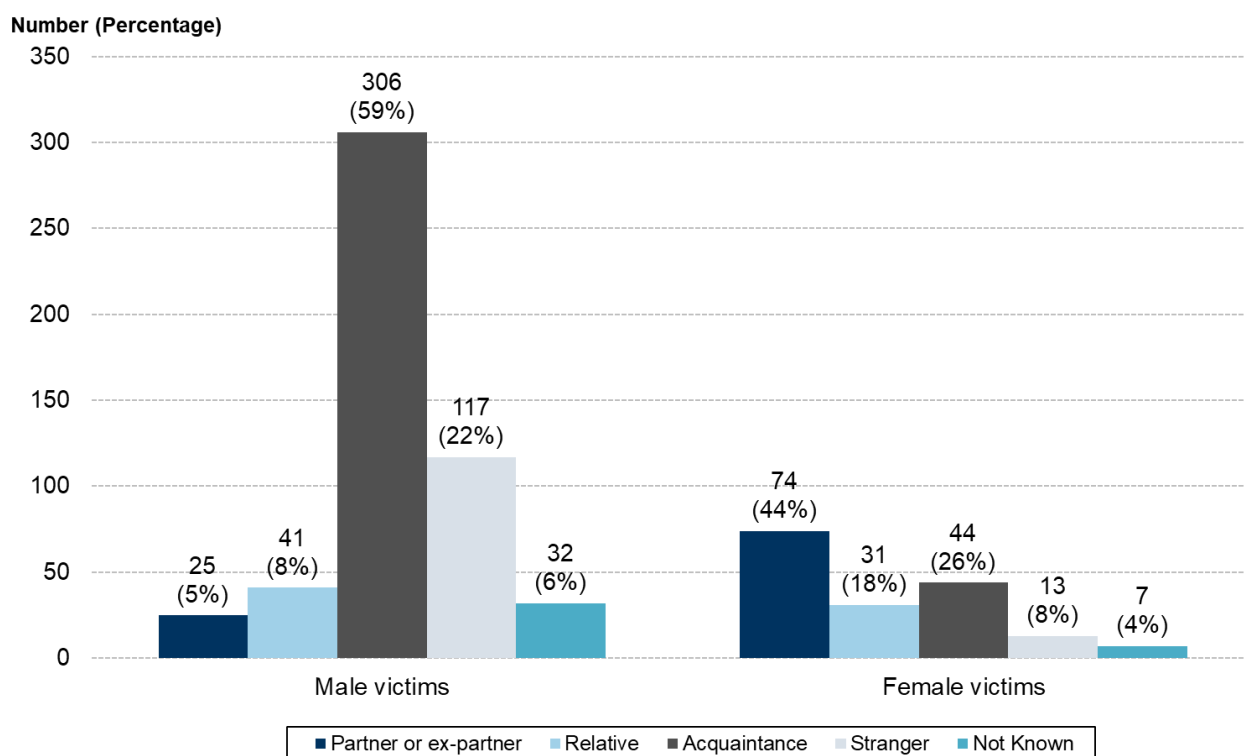


## Relationship of main accused to victim

Tables 8-10; Charts 8-9

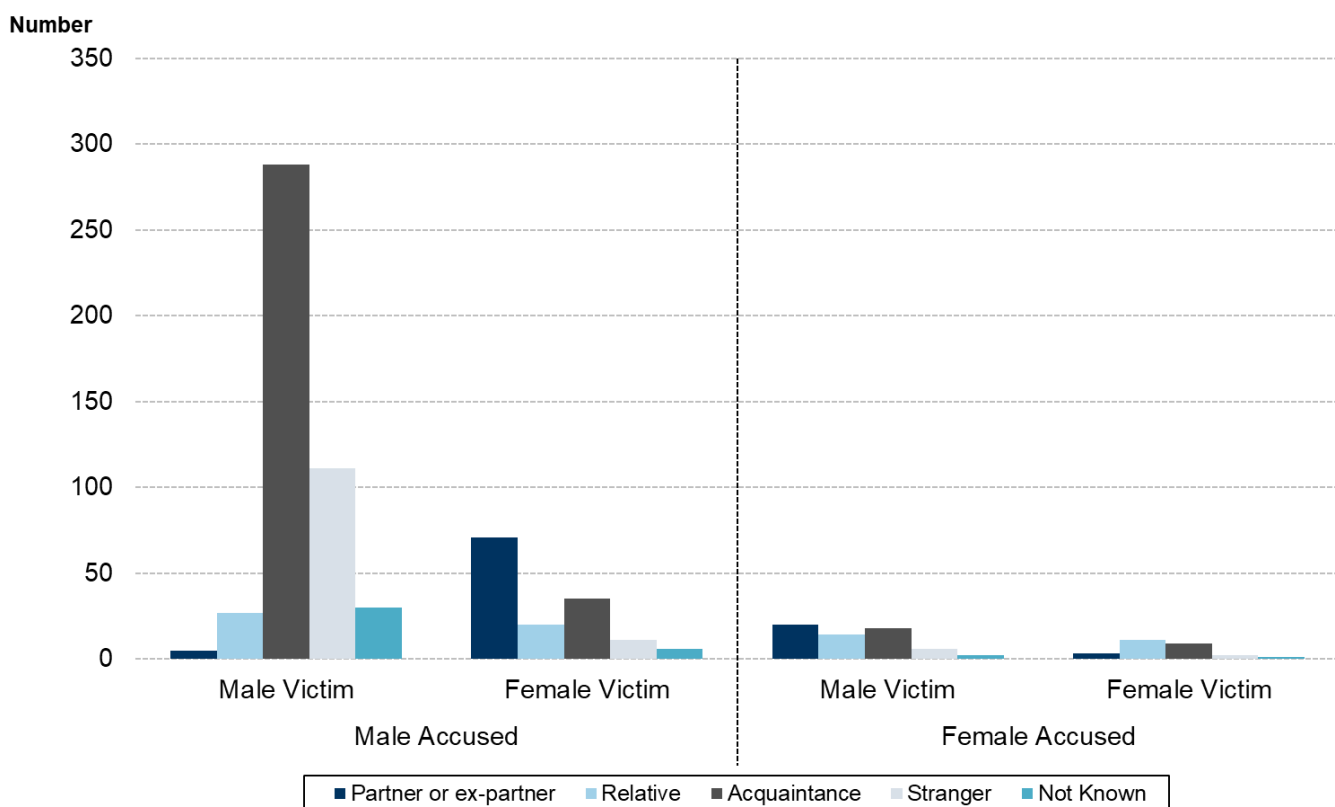
- The victim and main accused were known to each other in a majority of cases, representing 81% of homicide cases solved in 2018-19. The accused was unknown to the victim in nine cases (16%). This latter group includes six cases where the victim was not known to the accused and three cases where the victim was known to the accused. Of those cases where the victim and accused were known to each other, 68% were acquaintances, 21% were partners or ex-partners and 11% were relatives. The relationship to the main accused was unknown in the remaining 3% of cases.
- [Chart 8](#) shows the percentage of homicides for male and female victims by their relationship to the main accused for all victims since 2009-10. Over the past ten years, a majority of male victims were killed by an acquaintance (59%). Over the same period, 44% of female victims were killed by a partner or ex-partner.
- Table 9 shows that between 2009-10 and 2018-19, a total of 34 children under the age of 16 years were victims of homicide (where there was an accused person). Of these, 79% were killed by one of their parents. Since 2009-10 there have been 13 victims aged under one year old and in all but two cases (where there was an accused person) the main accused was a parent.

**Chart 8: Relationship between victim and main accused, by victim gender, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19**



- Table 9 also shows that for all homicides recorded in the last ten years, 61% of male victims aged between 16 and 70 years old were killed by an acquaintance, 23% were killed by a stranger, 5% were killed by a partner or ex-partner and 3% were killed by a relative. Just over half (52%) of female victims aged between 16 and 70 years old were killed by their partner or ex-partner, 27% were killed by an acquaintance, 8% were killed by a son or daughter and 7% were killed by a stranger.
- [Chart 9](#) shows that two-thirds of all homicide cases (67%) recorded between 2009-10 and 2018-19 involved males killing males. Cases where the main accused and main victim were both female accounted for just 4% of the total number.

**Chart 9: Relationship between main accused and victim by gender, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19**



## Main motive

Tables 11 - 14

- The most common reasons recorded for committing homicide in the ten year period between 2009-10 and 2018-19, were fight or quarrel, and rage or fury, with half (48%) of all victims in solved cases killed in such circumstances. For a further 23% of victims during this ten year period the motive was unknown (Table 11).
- In terms of the most recent year (2018-19), fight or quarrel and rage or fury accounted for 19% of all victims in solved cases. A further 48% of cases had an unknown motive. A relatively higher proportion of victims were killed in cases where the motive was a feud or faction rivalry (19%) than over the last ten years as a whole (9%).
- In the period 2009-10 to 2018-19, 83% of all female victims were killed in a dwelling, compared with 55% of males. Table 12 also shows the location, relationship and motives associated with all homicides recorded over the past ten years. The most common set of circumstances associated with a male victim are a rage or fight with an acquaintance in a dwelling (accounting for 19% of male victims). The second most common set of circumstances are a rage or fight with an acquaintance not in a dwelling, accounting for a further 13% of male victims.

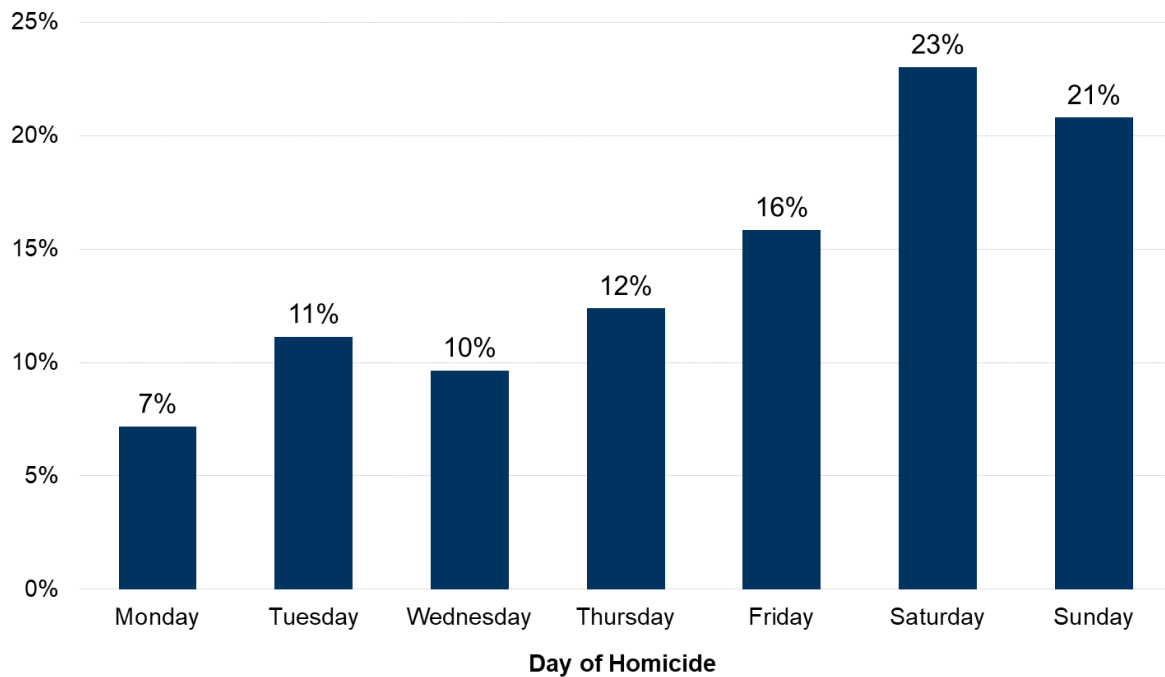
- The most common set of circumstances associated with a female victim are a rage or fight with a partner or ex-partner in a dwelling (accounting for 18% of female victims). The second most common set of circumstances are an unknown motive with partner or ex-partner in a dwelling, accounting for a further 12% of female victims.
- Thirty-three (57%) victims were reported to have been killed in drug-related homicide cases in 2018-19, of which 26 were male (Table 13). The number of drug-related homicide cases has increased over the past two years, though Police Scotland advise that this may be due at least in part to an improvement in recording practice (i.e. better identification of where motives can include a drug-related element). Given this, users are advised to exercise some caution when comparing this variable with earlier years, particularly those prior to 2016-17.
- None of the homicides recorded in 2018-19 were reported to have had a racial motivation. One case had a homophobic motivation. In all homicide cases in the ten years leading up to 2018-19, 2% had a homophobic or racist motivation (Table 14).

## Use of alcohol and drugs

Tables 15-18; Chart 10

- Of the 83 persons accused in homicide cases in 2018-19, 29 (35%) were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a combination of both at the time of the homicide. These 29 accused break down into 14 (17% of all accused) who were under the influence of both alcohol and drugs, 11 (13%) who were under the influence of alcohol alone and four (5%) who were under the influence of drugs alone (Table 15).
- In 2018-19, the alcohol and drug status of the accused was unknown for 53 persons, 64% of all accused. One accused person (1%) was reported to have been neither under the influence of alcohol nor drugs at the time of the homicide (Table 15).
- In the ten year period between 2009-10 and 2018-19, around half (46%) of all accused were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the homicide. This is slightly higher for males (47%) than females (40%) (Table 16).
- [Chart 10](#) shows that over the last ten years, 23% (93) of homicides, where the accused was suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, occurred on a Saturday. Furthermore, around three fifths of homicides where the accused was under the influence of alcohol (60% or 241) occurred during the weekend (i.e. Friday, Saturday and Sunday).

## Chart 10: Distribution of the accused of homicide under the influence of alcohol<sup>2</sup> by day of the week 2009-10 to 2018-19



### Comparator statistics

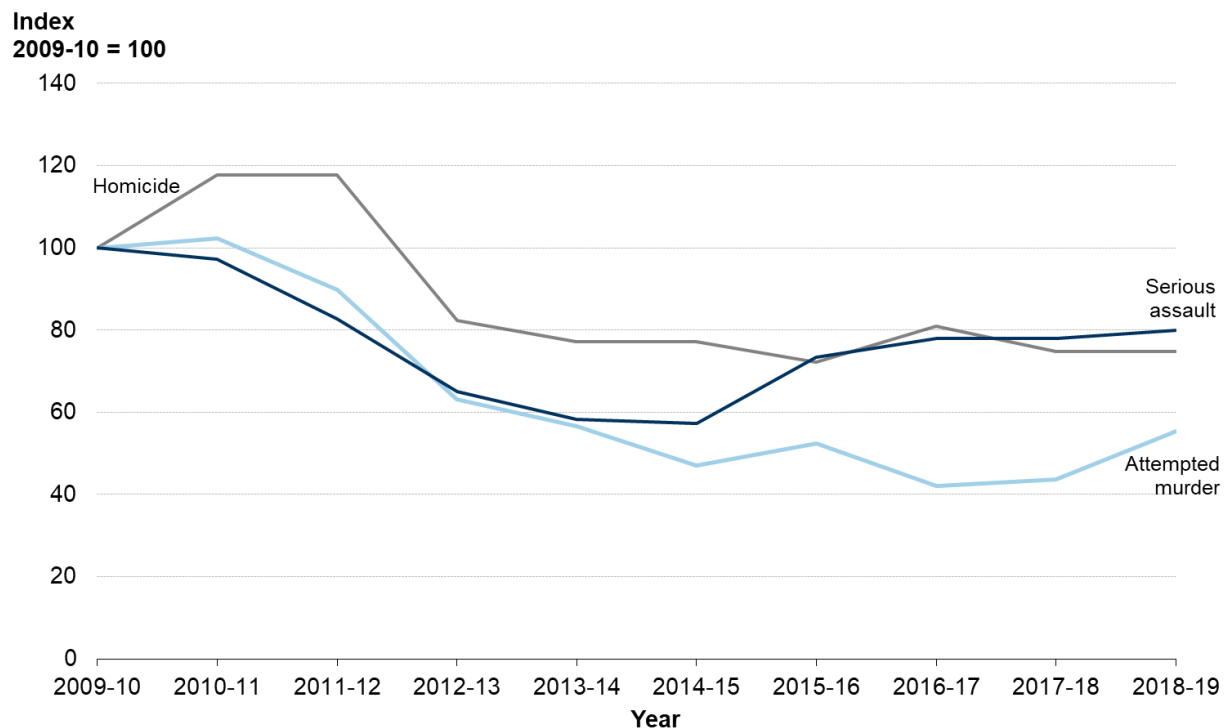
Table 4; Chart 11

- This bulletin has reported a decreasing trend in homicides over the longer term. [Chart 11](#) shows this trend and compares it to the trend in attempted murder and serious assaults. This latter information is taken from the [Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2018-19](#) bulletin. Over the ten year period between 2009-10 and 2018-19, the reduction in levels of homicide has broadly followed a similar fall in levels of attempted murder and serious assault. The number of homicide cases has fallen by 25% over the last ten years, compared with a 45% fall in attempted murder and a 20% fall in serious assault.

<sup>2</sup> Includes both under the influence of alcohol and under the influence of alcohol and drugs.



**Chart 11: Indices in selected crimes of violence, Scotland, 2009-10 to 2018-19  
(Index 2009-10 = 100)**



- Similar to Scotland, England & Wales also produce National Statistics on Homicide, which is extracted from a dedicated database - the Home Office Homicide Index. The latest data published was for the 2017-18 reporting year<sup>3</sup>.
- Direct comparisons between Scotland and England & Wales should be treated with some caution due to uncertainty around different counting and classification conventions.
- Further to this, users should note that in England & Wales, as in Scotland, it is possible for homicides that occurred sometime in the past to be recorded in more recent years. For example whilst the data for 2018-19 are not yet available, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has previously highlighted that earlier figures for 2016-17 included the 96 victims of Hillsborough which occurred in 1989, representing 14% of all victims in 2016-17.
- One area where some general comparisons can be made are the broad trends in changes over time between Scotland and England & Wales, though still allowing for the caveats outlined above.

<sup>3</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/homicideinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2018>

- In Scotland, the number of homicide cases has fallen over the longer term but have remained relatively stable in recent years, with between 59 and 63 cases recorded each year since 2012-13. The 2018-19 figures for England & Wales will be published in 2020. The latest publication for 2017-18 reported that homicide in England & Wales has also fallen over the longer term but has shown increases since 2014-15.

# Annexes

## Data Quality Statement

The statistics presented in this bulletin are based on a snapshot of Police Scotland's live homicide database at an agreed date. Police Scotland maintain a continuously updated list of homicide cases that the Scottish Government uses to populate its own database of homicides in Scotland.

The data provided by Police Scotland go through a series of validation checks, whereby any queries raised through this quality assurance process are fed back to Police Scotland for consideration and discussion. It should be noted that homicides are very high profile crimes, and – in many instances – discussed openly in public. Both Scottish Government statisticians and homicide specialists within Police Scotland consider it unlikely that any major errors exist (as opposed to our practice outlined below for making revisions).

Since it is a 'live' system, amendments to Police Scotland's database can arise after the data has been submitted to the Scottish Government (for example, a serious assault may be reclassified to a culpable homicide sometime after the crime was first recorded by the police).

To allow for these changes, we make retrospective revisions to earlier data for all years since the formation of Police Scotland (i.e. 2013-14 onwards). There were no such revisions required for prior years for these latest statistics. Earlier revisions are detailed in [Homicide in Scotland, 2017-18](#).

As National Statistics, this information on homicide in Scotland is subject to continuous review by analysts to ensure it remains of high value for users. When producing the 2017-18 statistics, we identified that there is a tendency for the first publication of figures for a particular year to be revised upwards in subsequent bulletins - due to developments with specific cases. As outlined above, an example of this could be where a victim of serious assault dies of their injuries sometime after the incident, which could subsequently lead to the case being reclassified to a culpable homicide. Decisions at the prosecution stage can also have an impact, leading to some crimes being reclassified to homicides.

Given this, we made a small amendment to the data collection process for these statistics in 2017-18. As with earlier bulletins, we continue to present statistics based on a snapshot of Police Scotland's live homicide database as at the end of the reporting year. However in addition to this, we now carry out a further check during the month before publication – whereby any crimes recorded during the latest reporting year but not reclassified to a homicide until after the reporting year, can now be included in the first publication of that year's statistics – and not as a subsequent revision. There was one such case in 2018-19.

This change further improves the quality of these statistics as it reduces the need for subsequent revisions to the data, though clearly they can still occur should crimes be reclassified to a homicide after the additional check has been carried out.

In addition to the above consideration of our revisions policy, we also discussed with Police Scotland the reported increase in homicide cases with a drug-related motive. Police Scotland advise that this may be due at least in part to an ongoing improvement in recording practice (i.e. better identification of where motives can include a drug-related element). Given this, users are advised to exercise some caution when comparing this variable with earlier years, particularly those prior to 2016-17.

## Police Scotland Management Information

In addition to the National Statistics, Police Scotland publish management information on the number of homicides reported by the police. This is presented within their Quarterly Management Information Reports, which are available from Police Scotland's website:

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/our-performance/>

These reports are produced to demonstrate Police Scotland's commitment to transparency (alongside other regular reporting activity to the Scottish Police Authority). The information within these reports is presented on a cumulative quarterly basis, with the first quarter of a reporting year containing three months of data (from April to June), the second containing six months of data (from April to September) etc. The reports are typically published within two months of the period to which they refer.

The Quarterly Management Information Reports make clear to users that the data they contain on recorded homicides is based on the administrative data available to Police Scotland at that time and not the National Statistics. The annual National Statistics published by the Scottish Government on police recorded crime are based on management information which has undergone further quality assurance work, including additional dialogue with Police Scotland, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

## Stakeholder Consultation

From April-June 2015, Justice Analytical Services conducted a consultation of stakeholders and users of the suite of publications based on returns from Police Scotland, which includes the Homicide in Scotland statistical bulletin series.

A report on the results of the consultation can be found at the link below:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/StakeCon/RCUC2015>.

Separate to the presentation of the statistics on Homicide in Scotland, the Scottish Crime Recording Board is running a consultation on how the National Statistics on [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) are presented. This includes inviting user views on some potential changes in approach to the grouping structure used in these statistics. The consultation closes on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Further information on this consultation can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-official-statistics-present-information-recorded-crime-related-topics/>

We always welcome feedback on the content of our statistical bulletins and users are welcome to submit their comments to: [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot).

If you would like to be kept informed about developments in crime statistics, we suggest registering with ScotStat: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/scotstat>.

## Homicide National Statistics

### Other Notes

Justice Analytical Services publishes a work plan each year detailing the programme of work planned over the current financial year period. The work of the division covers both an agreed forward programme of analytical priorities, and routine analytical work particularly related to the compilation of National and Official Statistics, ongoing project management and knowledge transfer activity.

Analytical planning to develop a programme for the financial year 2019-20 followed a structured process of engagement with policy colleagues which was designed to closely align our analysis with current policy priorities and to the delivery of outcomes. The work plan is available via the following link:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Research/by-topic/crime-and-justice>

Clearly, only a limited selection of tables can be included in any statistical bulletin. Further analysis of homicides in Scotland can be supplied on request. In certain cases a fee is charged. For details of what can be provided, please contact Mark Bell on 0131 244 5459 or email [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot).

## **Glossary**

### **Accused**

- (i) a person who has been arrested in respect of an offence initially classified as homicide and charged with homicide; or
- (ii) a person who is suspected by the police of having committed the offence but is known to have died or committed suicide prior to arrest/being charged.

### **Accused (Co-accused)**

For those cases with multiple accused which are currently recorded as homicide, the co-accused are included in the statistics in this bulletin regardless of whether or not they were ultimately charged with homicide.

### **Accused (Main accused)**

Where more than one person is accused of committing a homicide, the main accused is taken as the person who received the severest penalty. If more than one possible main accused is identified, then the first person recorded on the statistical returns that is submitted annually by Police Scotland is selected.

### **Alcohol status**

On 1 April 2013, Police Scotland changed their operational practices when reporting on the alcohol status of the accused and victim. Individuals are no longer referred to as being 'drunk' and are referred to as 'being under the influence of alcohol'.

### **Current and initial classification of homicide**

Some cases initially classified as homicide will, on the basis of criminal proceedings, no longer be classified as such at a later date.

### **Date**

A homicide case is included against the year in which the crime that led to the homicide is first recorded by the police. This is not necessarily the year in which the victim dies, the year in which the accused is brought to trial for the crime, or the year in which the case is finally disposed of by the courts.

### **Homicide case**

A single case of homicide is counted for each crime involving murder or culpable homicide (common law) irrespective of the number of victims or accused.

### **Main method**

Only one method of killing has been selected for each victim. The main method is taken to be the most serious of those methods recorded. Methods of killing have been ranked in the following order of priority: shooting, sharp instrument, blunt instrument, hitting and kicking, strangulation or asphyxiation, drowning, fire, poisoning and other or unknown.

**Main method (poisoning)**

The main method of “poisoning” includes the use of drugs, gas and carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Main method (sharp instrument)**

The term “sharp instrument” includes knives, broken bottles, swords, sharpened screwdrivers and any other pointed or edged weapons.

**Main motive**

The motive behind committing a homicide is as determined by the police.

**Main motive (drug-related)**

A “drug-related” homicide is defined as a homicide motivated by a need to obtain drugs or money for drugs, a homicide of a consumer or supplier of drugs, a homicide committed in order to steal proceeds of the drugs trade or a homicide as a consequence of rivalry between users and/or dealers within the drugs trade.

**Relationship**

When considering the relationship of the main accused person to the victim, the term “partner or ex-partner” includes: spouse, separated or divorced spouse, cohabitee, lover, boy/girlfriend and ex-boy/girlfriend.

**Solved cases**

The distinction between “solved” and “unsolved” homicide cases is where an accused individual is attached to it (solved) and where an accused individual has not been identified (unsolved).

**Victim (main victim)**

If a person is accused of killing more than one victim, the main victim is the person for whom the accused received the severest penalty for killing. Where more than one possible main victim can be identified, then the first person recorded on the statistical return is selected as the main victim.



## Statistics Designation

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Assessment Report, which was published in June 2011, can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-119---statistics-on-homicide--domestic-abuse--firearm-offences-and-firearm-certificates-recorded-by-the-police-in-scotland.pdf>

Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the estimated costs of responding to statistical surveys and data collection are to be published.

The estimated cost of compliance for supplying and validating the data for this bulletin is: £2,400.

Details of the calculation methodology are available on the Scottish Government Crime and Justice website at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/costcalculation>.

## **A National Statistics publication for Scotland**

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

## **Correspondence and enquiries**

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Email: [Statistics.Enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:Statistics.Enquiries@gov.scot)

## **How to access background or source data**

The data collected for this statistical bulletin

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available on the Scottish Government website
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

## **Complaints and suggestions**

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, GR, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, email [statistics.enquiries@gov.scot](mailto:statistics.enquiries@gov.scot).

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at [www.gov.scot/scotstat](http://www.gov.scot/scotstat)  
Details of forthcoming publications can be found at [www.gov.scot/statistics](http://www.gov.scot/statistics)

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