



CRIME AND JUSTICE

Recorded Crime in Scotland:

November 2020

This Official Statistics bulletin presents information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland during November 2020. It also includes a comparison with the equivalent month of the previous year.

These Official Statistics were introduced from April 2020 to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Whilst the restrictions put in place to limit the spread of the virus will have had an impact on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police, some caution is advised before necessarily attributing all of the changes to this situation. For example, longer term trends in some types of offending, which existed prior to the pandemic, may remain a factor.

We originally planned to ask the Scottish Crime Recording Board (which oversees the production of Official Statistics on recorded crime in Scotland) to review in the autumn whether this monthly process should continue, including user feedback on the value of these statistics. However at this stage, given the prevalence of the virus in Scotland, no changes are planned in the short term. As such, we will continue to publish these Official Statistics on a monthly basis and will consult with users when the above review takes place.

The annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin](#) remains the primary source of information on crimes and offences recorded by the police, and has been designated as National Statistics by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The most recent update, covering the 2019-20 reporting year, was published on 29th September.

Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police provide a measure of the volume of criminal activity with which the police are faced. Crimes recorded by the police do not reveal the incidence of all crimes committed as not all crimes are reported to the police.

Summary

The number of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland was 1% higher in November 2020 than in November 2019, increasing from 20,087 to 20,331.

Over the same time period:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 10% lower (decreasing from 822 to 738 crimes).
- Sexual crimes were 9% lower (decreasing from 1,211 to 1,105 crimes).
- Crimes of dishonesty were 5% lower (reducing from 8,875 to 8,411 crimes).
- Fire-raising, vandalism etc. were 3% lower (reducing from 4,024 to 3,904 crimes).
- Other crimes were 20% higher (increasing from 5,155 to 6,173 crimes).
- More crimes were recorded by the police in 22 (69%) out of 32 local authorities.

The number of offences recorded by the police in Scotland was 2% higher in November 2020 than in November 2019, increasing from 20,135 to 20,443.

Over the same time period:

- Miscellaneous offences were 3% lower (decreasing from 10,361 to 10,047).
- Motor vehicle offences were 6% higher (increasing from 9,774 to 10,396).

Overall, the number of crimes recorded by the police between April and November 2020 was 6% lower than the same period in 2019. In April 2020 recorded crime was 18% lower than April 2019. For the most recent month - November 2020 - recorded crime was 1% higher than in November 2019. As outlined above, the annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin](#) remains the primary source of information on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland, including longer-term analysis of changes to each of the crime and offence groups detailed above.

Main findings

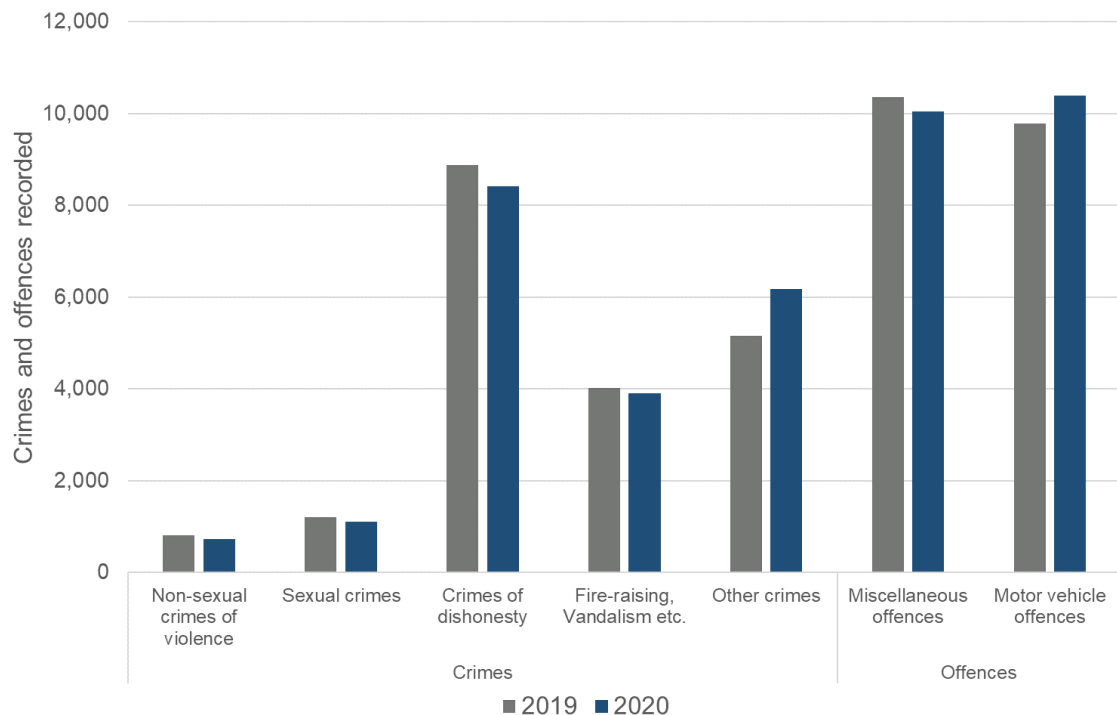
Crimes recorded by the police

In November 2020, the police recorded 20,331 crimes. This is 1% higher (or 244 crimes) than the 20,087 crimes recorded in the same month of 2019. There were variations in the year-on-year trends between different crime types. ([Table 1](#), [Chart 1](#)).

Between November 2019 and November 2020:

- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 10% lower (or 84 crimes), decreasing from 822 to 738 crimes. Most categories in this group experienced a decrease, with the exception of Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (which increased by 4% or 6 crimes). The most marked decrease was in the Attempted murder and serious assault category, which decreased by 64 crimes (20%), from 327 to 263.
- Sexual crimes were 9% lower (a decrease of 106 crimes), decreasing from 1,211 to 1,105 crimes. The main contributor to this decrease by volume was Sexual assault, which decreased by 12% (or 52 crimes), from 437 to 385.
- Crimes of dishonesty were 5% lower (or 464 crimes), reducing from 8,875 to 8,411 crimes. Most categories experienced a decrease with the exception of Fraud (which increased by 78%, from 885 to 1,577 crimes) and Theft of a motor vehicle and Other dishonesty which also saw a small increase. The [Changes in levels of recorded fraud](#) section below provides users with further background on what may be contributing to this change. The overall decrease in Crimes of dishonesty was driven by decreases in Shoplifting (which decreased by 22% from 2,505 to 1,949 crimes), Other theft (which decreased by 11% from 3,336 to 2,974 crimes) and Housebreaking (which decreased by 19% from 1,018 to 824 crimes).
- Fire-raising, vandalism etc. decreased by 3%, from 4,024 to 3,904 crimes. Within this, crimes of Fireraising increased by 6% from 246 to 260 crimes, while Vandalism etc. decreased by 4% from 3,778 crimes to 3,644 crimes.
- Other crimes were 20% higher (or 1,018 crimes), increasing from 5,155 to 6,173 crimes. The main contributors to this increase by volume was Crimes against public justice (which rose by 38% or 598 crimes) and Drugs crimes (which rose by 14% or 403 crimes).

Chart 1. Crimes and offences recorded by the police, by crime group, November 2020 compared with November 2019



Offences recorded by the police

In November 2020, the police recorded 20,443 offences. This is 2% higher (or 308 offences) than the 20,135 offences recorded in the same month in 2019. There was a 3% decrease in Miscellaneous offences, and an 6% increase in Motor vehicle offences, as detailed below ([Table 2](#)).

Between November 2019 and November 2020:

- Miscellaneous offences decreased by 3% (or 314 offences), from 10,361 to 10,047. Most categories experienced a decrease with the exception of Other miscellaneous offences (which increased 21% or 229 offences) and Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct (which increased 12% or 47 offences). The most prominent decreases were in Common assault (which decreased by 6% from 4,653 to 4,356 offences), Urinating etc., which decreased by 79% (from 187 to 39) and Breach of the peace etc. which decreased by 4% (from 4,059 to 3,914)
- Motor vehicle offences were 6% higher (or 622 offences), increasing from 9,774 to 10,396. The main contributor to this increase was Unlawful use of a vehicle, which increased 23% (or 752 offences).

Local Authorities

Compared to November 2019, an increase in recorded crime was seen in 22 (69%) out of 32 local authorities, with 10 showing a decrease ([Table 3](#)). The largest increase was seen in the Orkney Islands (up 45%) and the largest decrease was in the Shetland Islands (down 21%). It should be noted that the relatively small number of crimes recorded in some of Scotland's local authorities can fluctuate over time - leading to large percentage changes. This is particularly relevant in this release, where monthly data is being presented rather than the annual information provided in the National Statistics.

The biggest contributors by volume to the overall increase in crimes recorded by the police were North Ayrshire (up 35% or 161 crimes), West Dunbartonshire (up 40% or 128 crimes) and Midlothian (up 43% or 109 crimes).

April to November 2020 compared with April to November 2019

Overall, in April to November 2020 the police recorded 158,333 crimes, a reduction of 6% (or 9,971 crimes) compared to the same period in 2019 (168,304 crimes) ([Table 4](#)). The biggest drivers of this reduction by volume were Shoplifting (down 33% or 7,042 crimes), Other theft (down 18% or 5,254), and Vandalism etc. (down 11% or 3,541 crimes). Crimes against public justice saw the biggest increase over this period, growing by 34% (or 4,448 crimes) from 12,992 to 17,440 crimes. Fraud was also higher, increasing by 64% (or 4,436 crimes) from 6,974 to 11,410.

Over the same period, the number of offences recorded by the police was 6% lower (or 9,849 offences), with Miscellaneous offences decreasing by 2% (or 1,550 offences) and Motor vehicle offences falling by 10% (or 8,299 offences) ([Table 5](#)).

Changes in levels of recorded fraud

Fraud was 78% higher (or 692 crimes) in November 2020 than in November 2019. Further to the note of caution provided in the introduction to these statistics, there are two reasons why some care is advised before attributing all of this change to the specific circumstances of the COVID-related lockdown.

The first is that the [Recorded Crime National Statistics](#) have highlighted an increasing trend in recorded fraud over a number of years (up 73% between 2014-15 and 2019-20), which may be continuing. The second is that a procedural change was made in April 2020 to how some crimes of fraud (and other types of crime which could involve a victim and a perpetrator in different physical locations) are recorded.

Prior to the 1st April 2020, these statistics excluded any crime with a victim in Scotland and a perpetrator who was confirmed by the police to be outside the United Kingdom when the crime took place. Following a recommendation by Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate for Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) to review recording practice in this area¹, the Scottish Crime Recording Board approved a change so that from the 1st April these crimes are now included in the statistics. It should be noted that those cases with only a suspicion or insufficient evidence to confirm that the perpetrator was outside the UK were always included.

This change is likely to have led to additional crimes of fraud being recorded, with a similar impact possible for other types of crime which could be committed using digital technologies. At this early stage we are unable to say to what extent this procedural change has increased levels of recorded fraud, though the 2020-21 National Statistics (to be published in September 2021) will provide users with an estimate of the number of additional crimes that were recorded as a result of this change.

¹ <https://www.hmics.scot/publications/crime-audit-2016>

Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation

It is important to note that these Official Statistics currently exclude crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation such as the [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) and [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#). These were implemented on 25th March and 27th March respectively and resulted in new crimes being recorded - for example where someone, who had left the place they were living, did not have a reasonable excuse for this when asked by a police officer, and failed to comply with police advice or instruction to return there.

Given the rapid pace of these changes, Police Scotland have used an interim and bespoke data collection to capture information on the number of new crimes recorded under the coronavirus legislation. This is why figures for this legislation are currently presented separately to the overall totals provided for recorded crime in this bulletin. The bespoke data collection suggests that 1,811 such crimes were recorded during November 2020. This month's figure is higher than the previous month but considerably lower than April (see Table A below). Users should treat these figures as broadly indicative, and may be subject to further revision in future releases. In due course the annual National Statistics will include this activity within the overall crime total for Scotland.

Table A: Number of crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation, April to November 2020

Month	Number of crimes recorded
April	2,741
May	1,654
June	219
July	17
August	21
September	189
October	588
November	1,811

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Notes for these tables

- The symbol 'n/r' is used to denote where a percentage change figure is not reported. This is done if the denominator is less than ten as any resulting figure may be misleading.
- Please note that tables 1, 2, 4 and 5 can be accessed at local authority level online via the following link: <http://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-80004-486-9>

Table 1: Crimes recorded by the police, Scotland, November 2019 and November 2020

Crime group	November		% Change since November 2019
	2019	2020	
Total crimes¹	20,087	20,331	1%
Non-sexual crimes of violence	822	738	-10%
Homicide etc.	11	5	-55%
Attempted murder & serious assault	327	263	-20%
Robbery	167	158	-5%
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018	140	146	4%
Other violence	177	166	-6%
Sexual crimes	1,211	1,105	-9%
Rape & attempted rape	235	187	-20%
Sexual assault	437	385	-12%
Crimes associated with prostitution	7	7	n/r
Other sexual crimes	532	526	-1%
Crimes of dishonesty	8,875	8,411	-5%
Housebreaking	1,018	824	-19%
Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	142	103	-27%
Theft from a motor vehicle by OLP	195	167	-14%
Theft of a motor vehicle	378	395	4%
Shoplifting	2,505	1,949	-22%
Other theft	3,336	2,974	-11%
Fraud	885	1,577	78%
Other dishonesty	416	422	1%
Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	4,024	3,904	-3%
Fire-raising	246	260	6%
Vandalism etc.	3,778	3,644	-4%
Other crimes	5,155	6,173	20%
Crimes against public justice	1,561	2,159	38%
Handling offensive weapons	774	793	2%
<i>Not used in other criminal activity</i>	379	350	-8%
<i>Used in other criminal activity</i>	395	443	12%
Drugs	2,800	3,203	14%
Other	20	18	-10%

1. The total figure for recorded crime excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation section](#) for more information.

Table 2: Offences recorded by the police, Scotland, November 2019 and November 2020

Crime group	November		% Change since November 2019
	2019	2020	
Total offences	20,135	20,443	2%
Miscellaneous offences	10,361	10,047	-3%
Common assault	4,653	4,356	-6%
Breach of the peace etc.	4,059	3,914	-4%
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	383	430	12%
Urinating etc.	187	39	-79%
Other miscellaneous offences	1,079	1,308	21%
Motor vehicle offences	9,774	10,396	6%
Dangerous and careless driving	989	942	-5%
Driving under the influence	622	719	16%
Speeding	2,102	2,075	-1%
Unlawful use of vehicle	3,223	3,975	23%
Vehicle defect offences	512	583	14%
Seat belt offences	165	131	-21%
Mobile phone offences	165	115	-30%
Other motor vehicle offences	1,996	1,856	-7%

Table 3: Crimes recorded by the police by local authority, Scotland, November 2019 and November 2020

	November		Change since November 2019
	2019	2020	
Aberdeen City	871	943	8%
Aberdeenshire	556	559	1%
Angus	269	270	0%
Argyll & Bute	216	190	-12%
Clackmannanshire	216	244	13%
Dumfries & Galloway	462	554	20%
Dundee City	825	906	10%
East Ayrshire	546	457	-16%
East Dunbartonshire	222	268	21%
East Lothian	322	363	13%
East Renfrewshire	169	186	10%
Edinburgh City	2,460	2,269	-8%
Falkirk	618	587	-5%
Fife	1,128	1,210	7%
Glasgow City	3,594	3,192	-11%
Highland	555	556	0%
Inverclyde	312	394	26%
Midlothian	255	364	43%
Moray	236	217	-8%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	36	48	33%
North Ayrshire	462	623	35%
North Lanarkshire	1,651	1,464	-11%
Orkney Islands	20	29	45%
Perth & Kinross	364	430	18%
Renfrewshire	645	680	5%
Scottish Borders	249	312	25%
Shetland Islands	43	34	-21%
South Ayrshire	371	451	22%
South Lanarkshire	1,206	1,140	-5%
Stirling	276	256	-7%
West Dunbartonshire	320	448	40%
West Lothian	612	687	12%
Scotland¹	20,087	20,331	1%

1. The total figure for recorded crime excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation section](#) for more information.

Table 4: Crimes recorded by the police, Scotland, April to November 2019 and April to November 2020

Crime group	April to November 2019	April to November 2020	% Change since 2019
Total crimes¹	168,304	158,333	-6%
Non-sexual crimes of violence	6,468	5,979	-8%
Homicide etc.	88	66	-25%
Attempted murder & serious assault	2,925	2,421	-17%
Robbery	1,156	1,175	2%
Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018	1,166	1,039	-11%
Other violence	1,133	1,278	13%
Sexual crimes	9,191	8,584	-7%
Rape & attempted rape	1,674	1,534	-8%
Sexual assault	3,462	2,711	-22%
Crimes associated with prostitution	65	29	-55%
Other sexual crimes	3,990	4,310	8%
Crimes of dishonesty	75,215	65,037	-14%
Housebreaking	8,505	7,044	-17%
Theft by opening a lockfast place (OLP)	1,174	826	-30%
Theft from a motor vehicle by OLP	1,865	1,508	-19%
Theft of a motor vehicle	3,313	3,026	-9%
Shoplifting	21,338	14,296	-33%
Other theft	28,843	23,589	-18%
Fraud	6,974	11,410	64%
Other dishonesty	3,203	3,338	4%
Fire-raising, vandalism etc.	32,719	29,155	-11%
Fire-raising	1,875	1,852	-1%
Vandalism etc.	30,844	27,303	-11%
Other crimes	44,711	49,578	11%
Crimes against public justice	12,992	17,440	34%
Handling offensive weapons	6,697	7,219	8%
<i>Not used in other criminal activity</i>	3,095	3,313	7%
<i>Used in other criminal activity</i>	3,602	3,906	8%
Drugs	24,876	24,804	0%
Other	146	115	-21%

1. The total figure for recorded crime excludes the new crimes being recorded under the recently enacted coronavirus legislation. Please see the [Crimes recorded under coronavirus legislation section](#) for more information.

Table 5: Offences recorded by the police, Scotland, April to November 2019 and April to November 2020

Crime group	April to November 2019	April to November 2020	% Change since 2019
Total offences	171,442	161,593	-6%
Miscellaneous offences	88,910	87,360	-2%
Common assault	39,299	35,927	-9%
Breach of the peace etc.	34,965	35,320	1%
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct	4,160	4,476	8%
Urinating etc.	1,600	680	-58%
Other miscellaneous offences	8,886	10,957	23%
Motor vehicle offences	82,532	74,233	-10%
Dangerous and careless driving	7,764	7,777	0%
Driving under the influence	4,233	5,783	37%
Speeding	20,568	14,589	-29%
Unlawful use of vehicle	25,668	26,062	2%
Vehicle defect offences	4,710	4,377	-7%
Seat belt offences	2,137	1,299	-39%
Mobile phone offences	1,756	1,218	-31%
Other motor vehicle offences	15,696	13,128	-16%

Annexes

Annex 1: Background

As outlined on page one, these monthly Official Statistics have been introduced to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Their role is to provide more recent information on this topic - in a product that has been produced by Scottish Government statisticians, in line with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

Scottish Government statisticians will continue to publish these bulletins each month. In due course, the Scottish Crime Recording Board (which oversees the production of Official Statistics on recorded crime in Scotland) will review whether this process should continue, including user feedback on the value of these statistics.

The annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) bulletin remains the primary source of information on crimes and offences recorded by the police, and has been designated as National Statistics by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The most recent update, covering the 2019-20 reporting year, was published on 29th September. Users should refer to the National Statistics for more detailed information on the production of the recorded crime statistics - including governance arrangements, a description of their quality, background methodologies and changes to recording practice.

Annex 2: Data Sources

Since 2013-14, the National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland have been produced using data extracted from a single Police Scotland IT system called the Scottish Operational and Management Information System (ScOMIS). This data is then provided to the Scottish Government for the production of the National Statistics.

In 2019, Police Scotland developed a new data repository called the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP). The intention is that this will, in due course, become the official source of information for the recorded crime National Statistics, replacing ScOMIS.

A preliminary review, looking at how changing from ScOMIS to SEBP impacts on the production of the Recorded Crime National Statistics, suggests that there is good alignment between both of these administrative systems.

Before the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) approves this transition, a final confirmatory check of the full 2019-20 reporting year has been carried out. This involved a comparison of trends in recorded crimes, offences and clear up rates for all local authorities and Scotland as a whole between 2018-

19 and 2019-20. A technical report detailing the results of this analysis and highlighting any implications for data interpretation will be published in due course.

In order to produce the new monthly Official Statistics included in this bulletin in the necessary shorter time frames, the information supplied by Police Scotland has been extracted from SEBP. As such, the figures provided in this publication use a different source from the most recent National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland – and are therefore not directly comparable (notwithstanding the preliminary finding noted above that there is good alignment between the two systems).

In addition, amendments to crime and offence records will always arise after data has been submitted by Police Scotland to the Scottish Government. Some crime or offence records may, on further investigation by the police, be redesignated to not constitute a crime or offence (a process known as ‘no-criming’). In other cases the original crime or offence may be re-classified, which could shift the record between different crime or offence groups (for example if a common assault was found on further investigation to be a serious assault it would switch from Group 6 Miscellaneous Offences to Group 1 Non-sexual Crimes of Violence).

The data for this bulletin was extracted in December 2020. The information for November 2019 is unlikely to change as more than a year has passed since the crimes were originally recorded and the vast majority of amendments are likely to have taken place. In contrast, there has been a much shorter time for amendments to have been made to the information for November 2020 and so this information is likely to change to a greater extent as more time passes. Some caution should therefore be taken in interpreting the changes between 2019 and 2020, as outlined in these monthly bulletins, which should be seen as providing a broad indication of changes over the period in volumes and types of specific crimes and offences.

The annual National Statistics for 2019-20 and 2020-21 (when published) will provide the most robust source of information on crimes recorded by the police, and how these have changed over time.

For further background information (e.g. classification of Crimes and Offences and comparisons with England & Wales and Northern Ireland) please see Annex 1 in the latest National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-2019-2020/>

Annex 3: Feedback

We are always keen to hear users' views on our products and as this is a new series of monthly recorded crime publications we would welcome feedback. If you have any comments or suggestions please contact us at:

Justice_Analysts@gov.scot.

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot.
- some limited additional information may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact statistics.enquiries@gov.scot for further information.
- detailed information cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

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