



CRIME AND JUSTICE

Recorded Crime in Scotland: year ending December 2022

This quarterly National Statistics bulletin presents information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland for the year ending December 2022. It also includes a comparison with the equivalent four previous years.

For additional and more detailed commentary on the recording of crimes and offences, including time series analysis over the longer term (back to 1971), statistics on cyber-crimes and clear-up rates, users should refer to the 2021-22 (or year ending March 2022) [National Statistics bulletin](#).

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. The other main source of crime statistics in Scotland is the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey \(SCJS\)](#), a national survey of adults (aged 16 and over) living in private households, which asks respondents about their experiences and perceptions of crime.

This bulletin presents crime statistics using the new set of crime and offence groups approved by the [Scottish Crime Recording Board](#), following a public consultation of users. More information on the new crime grouping structure is available in the 2021-22 [National Statistics bulletin](#).

Amendments to the recording of Crimes and offences over the past five years

Users should note that some changes have been made to the recording of crimes and offences over the five years up to year ending December 2022. Most often this reflects the enactment of new legislation passed by either the Scottish or UK Parliaments, which can create new criminal offences or amend the existing approach to recording some types of criminal activity. Other changes reflect decisions taken by the Scottish Crime Recording Board. These include:

- The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, which came into effect on 1 April 2019;
- A procedural change made to the recording of international crime, from 1 April 2020;
- The Coronavirus Act 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020, respectively;
- The implementation of the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted goods and services) (Scotland) Act 2021, which came into effect on 24 August 2021.

The implementation of the Protection of Workers Act did not change the volume of crime being recorded. Prior to this, any assault of a retail worker would have been recorded as either a Common or Serious assault. From 24 August 2021 such cases are now recorded as either Common or Serious assault of a retail worker (with the same changes for threatening and abusive behaviour towards retail workers).

The other amendments did result in changes to the number of crimes being recorded within these statistics, following their implementation – most notably the 15,648 crimes recorded under Coronavirus related legislation in year ending December 2021, which reduced to negligible levels in year ending December 2022 (14 crimes).

Where statistics have been impacted by the above changes, this has been highlighted within the bulletin. More detailed information, including for changes prior to the five years presented below, is available in the recorded crime [User Guide](#).

Summary

The police in Scotland recorded 287,678 crimes in the year ending December 2022. This was 2% lower than the 292,316 crimes recorded in the year ending December 2021, and 4% lower than the 298,452 crimes recorded in the year ending December 2018.

It should be noted that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and associated measures to limit social contact, had an impact on both the type and volume of crime recorded since March 2020. Most recently, the 2% fall in recorded crime between the year ending December 2021 and year ending December 2022 was driven by a reduction in crimes recorded under Coronavirus related legislation (from 15,648 to 14). All other crimes collectively increased by 4%.

As highlighted above, the 2021-22 (or year ending March 2022) National Statistics bulletin provides further time series analysis over the longer term (back to 1971). The recording of crime for the year ending December 2022 is at one of the lowest levels seen for a 12-month period since 1974.

In the year ending December 2022:

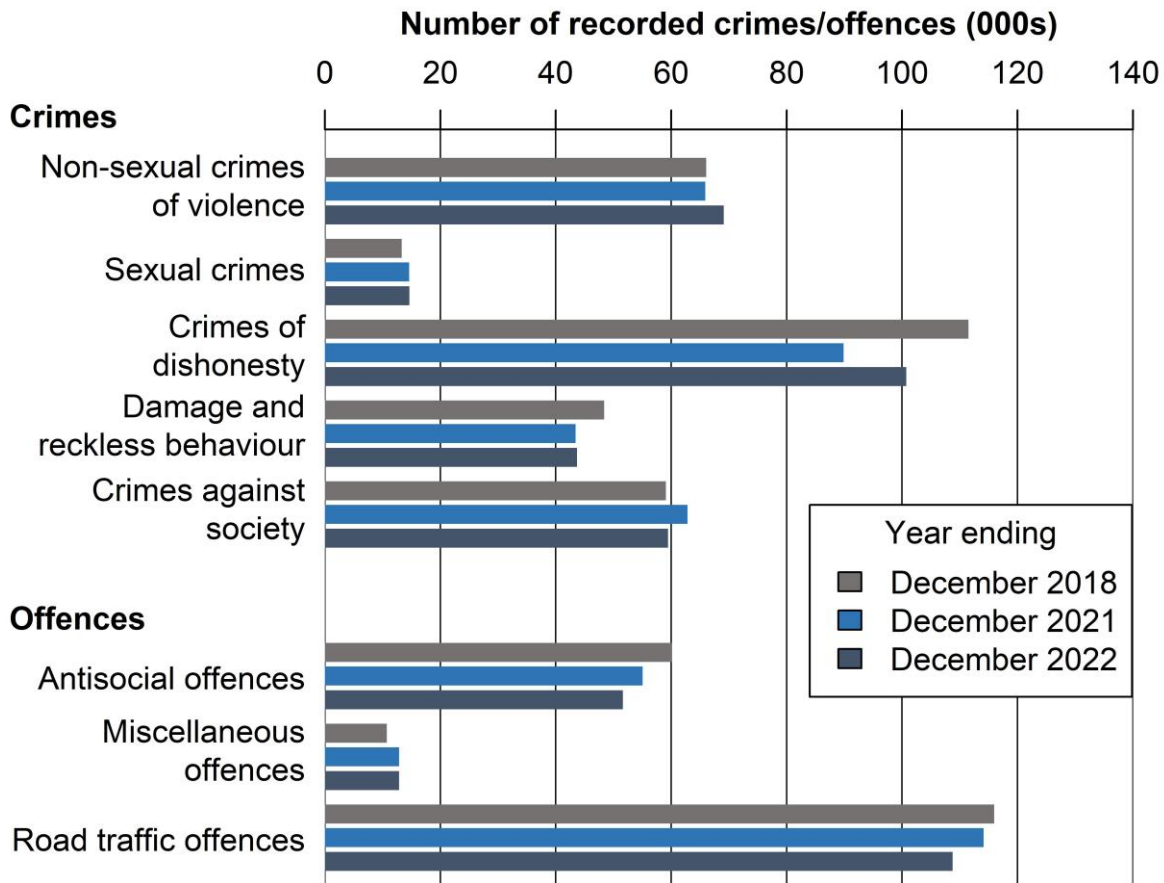
- Non-sexual crimes of violence were 5% higher compared to the year ending December 2021 (increasing from 65,930 to 69,117 crimes), and 5% higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 66,082 to 69,117 crimes).
- Sexual crimes were <1% higher compared to the year ending December 2021 (increasing from 14,598 to 14,640 crimes), and 10% higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 13,335 to 14,640 crimes).
- Crimes of dishonesty were 12% higher compared to the year ending December 2021 (increasing from 89,888 to 100,754 crimes), but 10% lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 111,530 to 100,754 crimes).
- Damage and reckless behaviour was 1% higher compared to the year ending December 2021 (increasing from 43,428 to 43,711 crimes), but 10% lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 48,398 to 43,711 crimes).
- Crimes against society were 5% lower compared to the year ending December 2021 (decreasing from 62,824 to 59,442 crimes), but 1% higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 59,107 to 59,442 crimes).
- Coronavirus restrictions were almost 100% lower compared to the year ending December 2021 (decreasing from 15,648 to 14). As noted above, the legislation used to record these crimes was introduced in March 2020.

The number of offences recorded by the police in Scotland in the year ending December 2022 was 173,269. This is 5% lower than the 182,071 offences recorded in the year ending December 2021, and 7% lower than the 186,858 offences recorded in the year ending December 2018.

- Antisocial offences were 6% lower compared to the year ending December 2021 (decreasing from 55,068 to 51,657 offences), and 14% lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 60,154 to 51,657 offences).
- Miscellaneous offences were <1% lower compared to the year ending December 2021 (decreasing from 12,856 to 12,849 offences), but 20% higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 10,746 to 12,849 offences).
- Road traffic offences were 5% lower compared to the year ending December 2021 (decreasing from 114,147 to 108,763 offences), and 6% lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 115,958 to 108,763 offences).

Main findings

Chart 1. Crimes and offences recorded by the police, by crime group, year ending December 2018 to 2022



Crimes recorded by the police

In the year ending December 2022, the police recorded 287,678 crimes. This was 2% (or 4,638 crimes) lower than the 292,316 crimes recorded in the previous year, and 4% lower than the 298,452 crimes recorded in the year ending December 2018.

Non-sexual crimes of violence

The number of Non-sexual crimes of violence in the year ending December 2022:

- were 5% (or 3,187 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 65,930 to 69,117 crimes), and
- were 5% (or 3,035 crimes) higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 66,082 to 69,117 crimes).

Within this:

- Murder and culpable homicide decreased by 27% compared to the previous year (from 60 to 44 crimes), and decreased by 38% from the year ending December 2018 (from 71 to 44 crimes).
- Death by dangerous driving remained unchanged compared to the previous year (at 37 crimes), but decreased by 20% from the year ending December 2018 (from 46 to 37 crimes).
- Serious assault and attempted murder decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 3,609 to 3,583 crimes), and decreased by 18% from the year ending December 2018 (from 4,362 to 3,583 crimes).
- Common assault increased by 5% compared to the previous year (from 55,220 to 58,192 crimes), and increased by 2% from the year ending December 2018 (from 57,160 to 58,192 crimes).
- Robbery decreased by 9% compared to the previous year (from 1,671 to 1,516 crimes), and decreased by 7% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,624 to 1,516 crimes).
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 crimes increased by 4% compared to the previous year (from 1,723 to 1,800 crimes). Please note that the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into effect on 1 April 2019. As such the year ending December 2019 figures reflect only nine months of activity, with subsequent years covering a full 12 months.
- Other non-sexual violence increased by 9% compared to the previous year (from 3,610 to 3,945 crimes), and increased by 40% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,819 to 3,945 crimes).

Sexual crimes

The number of Sexual crimes in the year ending December 2022:

- were <1% (or 42 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 14,598 to 14,640 crimes), and
- were 10% (or 1,305 crimes) higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 13,335 to 14,640 crimes).

Within this:

- Rape and attempted rape increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 2,481 to 2,530 crimes), and increased by 8% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,351 to 2,530 crimes).
- Sexual assault increased by 4% compared to the previous year (from 5,053 to 5,277 crimes), and increased by 1% from the year ending December 2018 (from 5,243 to 5,277 crimes).
- Causing to view sexual activity or images decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 2,222 to 2,089 crimes), but increased by 11% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,889 to 2,089 crimes).

- Communicating indecently decreased by 7% compared to the previous year (from 1,615 to 1,494 crimes), but increased by 12% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,335 to 1,494 crimes).
- Threatening to or disclosing intimate images decreased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 858 to 857 crimes), but increased by 51% from the year ending December 2018 (from 566 to 857 crimes).
- Indecent photos of children increased by 21% compared to the previous year (from 646 to 783 crimes), and increased by 51% from the year ending December 2018 (from 517 to 783 crimes).
- Crimes associated with prostitution decreased by 24% compared to the previous year (from 80 to 61 crimes), and decreased by 65% from the year ending December 2018 (from 175 to 61 crimes).
- Other sexual crimes decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 1,643 to 1,549 crimes), but increased by 23% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,259 to 1,549 crimes).

Crimes of dishonesty

The number of Crimes of dishonesty in the year ending December 2022:

- were 12% (or 10,866 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 89,888 to 100,754 crimes), but
- were 10% (or 10,776 crimes) lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 111,530 to 100,754 crimes).

Within this:

- Housebreaking increased by 2% compared to the previous year (from 8,371 to 8,537 crimes), but decreased by 38% from the year ending December 2018 (from 13,749 to 8,537 crimes).
- Theft by opening lockfast places increased by 8% compared to the previous year (from 1,180 to 1,279 crimes), but decreased by 26% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,729 to 1,279 crimes).
- Theft from a motor vehicle increased by 9% compared to the previous year (from 1,880 to 2,040 crimes), but decreased by 44% from the year ending December 2018 (from 3,663 to 2,040 crimes).
- Theft of motor vehicle increased by 17% compared to the previous year (from 4,240 to 4,975 crimes), and increased by 3% from the year ending December 2018 (from 4,817 to 4,975 crimes).
- Shoplifting increased by 26% compared to the previous year (from 21,234 to 26,835 crimes), but decreased by 18% from the year ending December 2018 (from 32,722 to 26,835 crimes).
- Other theft increased by 13% compared to the previous year (from 32,288 to 36,488 crimes), but decreased by 13% from the year ending December 2018 (from 41,792 to 36,488 crimes).

- Fraud increased by 3% compared to the previous year (from 16,611 to 17,126 crimes), and increased by 97% from the year ending December 2018 (from 8,702 to 17,126 crimes). Further explanation on the changes in levels of recorded fraud are available in the Recorded Crime in Scotland annual bulletin.
- Other dishonesty decreased by 15% compared to the previous year (from 4,084 to 3,474 crimes), and decreased by 20% from the year ending December 2018 (from 4,356 to 3,474 crimes).

Damage and reckless behaviour

The number of Damage and reckless behaviour crimes in the year ending December 2022:

- were 1% (or 283 crimes) higher compared to the previous year (increasing from 43,428 to 43,711 crimes), but
- were 10% (or 4,687 crimes) lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 48,398 to 43,711 crimes).

Within this:

- Fire-raising increased by 3% compared to the previous year (from 2,594 to 2,659 crimes), and increased by 12% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,367 to 2,659 crimes).
- Vandalism increased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 37,435 to 37,866 crimes), but decreased by 13% from the year ending December 2018 (from 43,639 to 37,866 crimes).
- Reckless conduct decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 3,399 to 3,186 crimes), but increased by 33% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,392 to 3,186 crimes).

Crimes against society

The number of Crimes against society in the year ending December 2022:

- were 5% (or 3,382 crimes) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 62,824 to 59,442 crimes), but
- were 1% (or 335 crimes) higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 59,107 to 59,442 crimes).

Within this:

- Crimes against public justice increased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 23,170 to 23,196 crimes), and increased by 30% from the year ending December 2018 (from 17,844 to 23,196 crimes).
- Weapons possession (not used) decreased by 3% compared to the previous year (from 4,138 to 4,016 crimes), but increased by 2% from the year ending December 2018 (from 3,951 to 4,016 crimes).

- Weapons possession (used) decreased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 5,650 to 5,586 crimes), but increased by 23% from the year ending December 2018 (from 4,554 to 5,586 crimes).
- Drugs - Supply decreased by 8% compared to the previous year (from 4,304 to 3,960 crimes), and decreased by 17% from the year ending December 2018 (from 4,753 to 3,960 crimes).
- Drugs - Possession decreased by 12% compared to the previous year (from 25,401 to 22,448 crimes), and decreased by 19% from the year ending December 2018 (from 27,828 to 22,448 crimes).
- Other crimes against society increased by 47% compared to the previous year (from 161 to 236 crimes), and increased by 33% from the year ending December 2018 (from 177 to 236 crimes).

Coronavirus restrictions

The number of Coronavirus restrictions crimes in the year ending December 2022:

- were 100% (or 15,634 crimes) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 15,648 to 14 crimes).

The [Coronavirus Act 2020](#) and [Health Protection \(Coronavirus\) \(Restrictions\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#) were implemented on 25 March and 27 March 2020, respectively. As such the year ending December 2020 figures reflect only a little over nine months of activity.

Offences recorded by the police

In the year ending December 2022, the police recorded 173,269 offences. This was 5% (or 8,802 offences) lower than the 182,071 offences recorded in the previous year, and 7% lower than the 186,858 offences recorded in the year ending December 2018.

Antisocial offences

The number of Antisocial offences in the year ending December 2022:

- were 6% (or 3,411 offences) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 55,068 to 51,657 offences), and
- were 14% (or 8,497 offences) lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 60,154 to 51,657 offences).

Within this:

- Threatening and abusive behaviour decreased by 6% compared to the previous year (from 47,179 to 44,537 offences), and decreased by 9% from the year ending December 2018 (from 48,883 to 44,537 offences).
- Racially aggravated conduct decreased by 10% compared to the previous year (from 1,692 to 1,524 offences), and decreased by 15% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,801 to 1,524 offences).

- Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct decreased by 13% compared to the previous year (from 4,976 to 4,315 offences), and decreased by 37% from the year ending December 2018 (from 6,865 to 4,315 offences).
- Urinating etc. increased by 5% compared to the previous year (from 1,221 to 1,281 offences), but decreased by 51% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,605 to 1,281 offences).

Miscellaneous offences

The number of Miscellaneous offences in the year ending December 2022:

- were <1% (or seven offences) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 12,856 to 12,849 offences), but
- were 20% (or 2,103 offences) higher compared to the year ending December 2018 (increasing from 10,746 to 12,849 offences).

Within this:

- Community and public order offences decreased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 9,180 to 9,177 offences), but increased by 27% from the year ending December 2018 (from 7,209 to 9,177 offences).
- Environmental offences decreased by 15% compared to the previous year (from 507 to 433 offences), and decreased by 23% from the year ending December 2018 (from 565 to 433 offences).
- Licensing offences decreased by 3% compared to the previous year (from 829 to 808 offences), and decreased by 33% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,212 to 808 offences).
- Wildlife offences decreased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 1,445 to 1,440 offences), but increased by 24% from the year ending December 2018 (from 1,163 to 1,440 offences).
- Other miscellaneous offences increased by 11% compared to the previous year (from 895 to 991 offences), and increased by 66% from the year ending December 2018 (from 597 to 991 offences).

Road traffic offences

The number of Road traffic offences in the year ending December 2022:

- were 5% (or 5,384 offences) lower compared to the previous year (decreasing from 114,147 to 108,763 offences), and
- were 6% (or 7,195 offences) lower compared to the year ending December 2018 (decreasing from 115,958 to 108,763 offences).

Within this:

- Dangerous and careless driving increased by <1% compared to the previous year (from 12,569 to 12,621 offences), and increased by 15% from the year ending December 2018 (from 10,931 to 12,621 offences).

- Driving under the influence increased by 1% compared to the previous year (from 7,706 to 7,764 offences), and increased by 33% from the year ending December 2018 (from 5,828 to 7,764 offences).
- Speeding decreased by 23% compared to the previous year (from 23,067 to 17,875 offences), and decreased by 32% from the year ending December 2018 (from 26,454 to 17,875 offences).
- Unlawful use of vehicle decreased by 8% compared to the previous year (from 39,761 to 36,639 offences), and decreased by 2% from the year ending December 2018 (from 37,257 to 36,639 offences).
- Vehicle defect offences decreased by 15% compared to the previous year (from 6,384 to 5,427 offences), and decreased by 21% from the year ending December 2018 (from 6,877 to 5,427 offences).
- Seat belt offences increased by 8% compared to the previous year (from 1,674 to 1,809 offences), but decreased by 33% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,695 to 1,809 offences).
- Mobile phone offences increased by 82% compared to the previous year (from 1,446 to 2,637 offences), but decreased by 1% from the year ending December 2018 (from 2,677 to 2,637 offences).
- Other road traffic offences increased by 11% compared to the previous year (from 21,540 to 23,991 offences), and increased by 3% from the year ending December 2018 (from 23,239 to 23,991 offences).

Local Authorities

Between the year ending December 2018 and the year ending December 2022, of the 32 Local Authorities, 13 saw an increase in recorded crime, three saw very little (less than half a percentage) change, and 16 saw a decrease in recorded crime.

Between the year ending December 2021 and the year ending December 2022, of the 32 Local Authorities, nine Local Authorities saw an increase in recorded crime, two saw very little (less than half a percentage) change, and 21 saw a decrease in recorded crime.

Annexes

Annex 1: Background

These quarterly National Statistics cover a rolling 12-months of activity, up to the end of the latest quarter. They were introduced to inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland, on a more frequent basis than the existing annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics](#).

The latest annual [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) bulletin, covering the 2021-22 reporting year, was published on 28 June 2022. Users should refer to the annual National Statistics for more detailed contextual information regarding the statistics in this report, and the production of the recorded crime statistics more generally - including governance arrangements, a description of their quality, background methodologies and changes to recording practice.

Annex 2: Data Sources

Since 2020-21 the National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland have been produced using data extracted from a single Police Scotland IT system called the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP), which was created in 2019.

A technical review on the impact of changing from the previous IT system to SEBP, found strong alignment between both administrative systems for recorded crime in 2020-21. Further information on this is available in Annex 3 of the [Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2020-21 bulletin](#).

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. As such it is important for National Statistics purposes that data is extracted at a similar point in time each year, to allow comparisons of any trends to be on a like-for-like basis.

The figures provided in this bulletin for the year ending December 2022 were extracted in January 2023. Data for the two previous years ending December 2020 and December 2021 was then extracted retrospectively to reflect the position as it would have been at December in each of those two years. This ensured a like-for-like comparison could be carried out, as discussed above. Due to earlier IT constraints, this retrospective extraction wasn't possible for the years ending December 2018 and December 2019. However the impact this will have on any comparisons with those two earlier years, will be minor.

Annex 3: Comparisons with England & Wales and Northern Ireland

For further background information (e.g. classification of Crimes and Offences and comparisons with England & Wales and Northern Ireland) please see the [Recorded Crime in Scotland User Guide](#).

Annex 4: Feedback

We are always interested to hear users' views on our products, how our statistics are used and how they can be improved. As this is a new series of quarterly recorded crime publications we would particularly welcome feedback.

Please consider answering our short [feedback survey](#) on how you found this publication.

Or you can contact us with any queries, comments or suggestions at: Justice_Analysts@gov.scot.

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact: Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442, e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

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.

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 Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot.

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