

How effectively do the police record crime?

PEEL spotlight report

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Foreword

For the public to have trust and confidence in policing, they need to know that when they report a crime, the police will record it accurately and without delay.

If the police don't record reports of crime quickly and correctly, it compromises their ability to do their job properly. Accurate crime data allows the police to allocate the right resources so they can respond effectively and provide the right support and services to [victims](#) of crime. It also allows forces to understand the nature and prevalence of crime, so they can develop an [intelligence](#)-led approach to keeping the communities they serve safe.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) assesses how well police forces record the reports of crimes that they receive. We do this through the crime data integrity (CDI) strand of [our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspections](#). From 2016 to 2020, we did this through separate CDI inspections.

When we inspect forces' crime-recording practices, we make sure they adhere to the national standards set by the Home Office. The focus of this work is to make sure:

- victims of crime receive appropriate support;
- the public has accurate information about crime in their area; and
- forces can effectively plan and use their investigative resources to best effect.

This report brings together findings from our 2016–20 CDI and 2021/22 and 2023–25 PEEL inspection programmes.

Overall, we have seen marked improvements in the way forces record crime. I am pleased with the way forces have taken action to implement our recommendations from previous inspections. The percentage of overall crime the police have recorded has risen from 80.5 percent in 2014 to 94.8 percent in 2025.

I was encouraged to see how well forces record sexual offences – in particular rape, which is the most serious of these crimes. Correctly recording these crimes means forces can quickly allocate cases and begin investigations promptly. Importantly, it also provides a better service to victims, who can then access the support they need without undue delay.

Since 2014, there have been changes to the crime-recording rules. These changes have contributed to the improvement in overall crime recording. National initiatives, such as [Operation Soteria](#), have also increased forces' awareness of how important it is to prioritise and accurately record sexual offences. In 2024, we assessed the progress of Operation Soteria. We published our findings in [our 'Progress to introduce a national operating model for rape and other serious sexual offences investigations' report](#). Forces should continue to build on this progress and make further improvements to make sure they effectively record all sexual offences.

Although the standard of crime recording has improved, there is still more to do. There is still too much difference between forces in how well they record crime. Some forces have set and achieve high standards; others haven't made as much progress as we would have liked.

Violent crimes – such as minor assaults, [harassment](#), [stalking](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#) – still aren't being recorded well enough. If forces don't record crimes correctly, they may not allocate investigative resources efficiently. And if they don't prioritise cases in the right way, they may lose important lines of enquiry. Most importantly, victims of these crimes, who are often particularly [vulnerable](#), may be left without the help they desperately need.

As such, we have identified three recommendations that apply to all police forces in England and Wales, which focus on the accuracy, timeliness and scrutiny of forces' crime recording. These recommendations should help forces to monitor their crime recording and make improvements.

We will continue to inspect crime recording as part of our 2025–27 PEEL inspection programme. We have integrated it into our assessment of the way forces prevent, deter and investigate crime, and [safeguard children](#) and vulnerable adults. If we become concerned about a force's crime recording, we will also consider carrying out a full CDI audit.



Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM
HM Inspector of Constabulary
HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Summary

Forces have improved the way they record crime in general, but they need to focus on maintaining standards

The overarching question for our crime data integrity inspections is: To what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?

In 2014, we estimated that forces recorded 80.5 percent of all crime. This included recording 66.9 percent of violent crime and 74.2 percent of sexual offences.

For 2023–25, we estimated that forces recorded 94.8 percent of all crime.

This included recording 93.6 percent of violent crime and 95.9 percent of sexual offences. This represents an improvement of:

- 14.3 percentage points in the recording of all crime;
- 26.7 percentage points in the recording of violent crime; and
- 21.7 percentage points in the recording of sexual offences.

From 2021 to 2025, we carried out individual force CDI audits as part of our [police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspection](#) cycles. We graded each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales for crime recording. In this report, we refer to this as the 2021–25 audit period. We found that:

- 9 forces were outstanding;
- 16 forces were good;
- 11 forces were adequate; and
- 6 forces required improvement.

We initially found that four forces were inadequate. We then re-audited those forces and found that they had all made improvements. We re-graded three of those forces, and the grades from the second audits are included in the list of grades above.

We re-audited the fourth force after the conclusion of our 2023–25 PEEL inspection cycle, so we didn't grade it and it hasn't been counted in the list.

There is still a considerable variation between forces in the way they record crime. In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that individual forces recorded between 86.4 percent and 98.1 percent of all crime.

Forces are recording more crimes, but too many crimes are still left unrecorded

Since 2014, when we estimated that the police recorded 80.5 percent of crime correctly, crime recording has continued to improve. In 2014 we found that over 800,000 crimes weren't recorded that should have been.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the total number of crimes recorded was 5,309,536. We estimate that around 2.3 percent of crime is over-recorded. Taking this into account, and based on a crime recording rate of 94.8%, we estimate that approximately 285,000 crimes weren't recorded that should have been. This decrease in unrecorded crime shows an overall improvement in how forces are recording crime, but that they still have more work to do.

Forces must accurately and promptly record crime, so they can:

- [safeguard victims](#) and give them the service they need;
- carry out effective investigations;
- help to build public confidence in the police; and
- use public money effectively.

When forces over-record crime, it distorts police-recorded crime information

We also found that forces sometimes recorded crimes when there was no need to record them.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that 2.3 percent of crimes were unnecessarily recorded. Some [officers](#) and [staff](#) aren't as familiar with the crime-reporting rules as they should be. We found that crimes were sometimes recorded on a just-in-case basis.

While unrecorded crime is a problem, over-recording crime also matters, as it inflates and distorts police-recorded crime information.

Forces need to improve the way they record violent crime, including conduct crimes

We found that violent crimes are the least well recorded crime type. We estimated that in 2023–25, forces recorded 93.6 percent of violent crime. The crimes that were most often unrecorded were less serious assaults. These accounted for more than half of unrecorded violent crime. Forces also need to improve their recording of conduct crimes such as [harassment](#), [stalking](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#). These are violent crimes, and they disproportionately affect women and girls. These accounted for 37.9 percent of the total unrecorded violent crime.

When a victim reports a conduct crime at the same time as another victim-based crime, and both crimes were committed by the same person, forces should only record one crime. The crime-recording rules state which crime should be recorded. In nearly all cases, forces should record the conduct crime as the principal crime, unless the other crime is very serious, such as rape. In those cases, forces should record the rape as the principal crime.

We found that there is still confusion among forces about how they should record these crimes. When forces become aware of a single conduct crime, they often fail to record it at all. When conduct crimes are reported at the same time as other crimes, forces often record one of the other crimes, rather than the conduct crime.

However, when it comes to very serious crimes, forces' recording practices are much better. In our audit period, we found that when victims reported a rape crime at the same time as reporting a conduct crime, the rape crimes were correctly recorded.

Forces usually record sexual offences correctly, and they have improved the way they record rape

Forces generally make the right decisions about how to record sexual offences. In 2023–25, we estimated that on average, the police recorded 95.9 percent of sexual offences.

In 2014, we found that forces correctly recorded 88.3 percent of rape crimes. In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that forces correctly recorded 93.0 percent of rape crimes.

Forces need to make sure they record unconfirmed reports of rape

The crime-recording rules state that forces should record reported incidents of rape as [N100s](#) in the following circumstances:

- when the victim hasn't confirmed the offence or can't be traced;
- when there is credible evidence to the contrary; or
- when the offence was committed in another police force area or outside the UK.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we considered whether forces were appropriately recording N100s. We found that forces correctly recorded N100s in only 69.4 percent of incidents.

We found that officers and staff didn't always understand that when they don't immediately record the reported incident of rape as a confirmed rape or an attempted rape, they need to record the unconfirmed report as an N100.

If forces don't record crimes, victims are less likely to receive the support and service they need

We have checked certain high-risk crime types to assess whether forces take suitable follow-up actions, even when they don't record crimes. These actions include safeguarding the victim and carrying out a proper investigation.

We found that sometimes, although the force hadn't recorded a crime, it had completed a safeguarding referral. As a result, the victim received the right support. However, in too many cases, the force's failure to record the crime led to missed opportunities to give the victim appropriate safeguarding and support. When forces didn't record a crime, it was also less likely that a proper investigation took place.

Too often, forces don't record reports of crime at the earliest opportunity

The Home Office expects forces to record crimes on their systems without delay, and to allocate a crime number within 24 hours, apart from in exceptional circumstances.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that on average, forces recorded and classified 78.1 percent of all crimes within 24 hours. We also measured how long it took forces to record rape crimes. Between 2021 and 2025, forces recorded 79.7 percent of rape crimes within 24 hours.

Forces don't record victims' protected characteristics well enough

It is important for the police to understand the [protected characteristics](#) of victims of crime. We found that in nearly all recorded reports of crime, forces recorded victims' age and sex well. They nearly always recorded victims' race, but they rarely recorded victims' sexual orientation or any disability.

Most forces need to improve the way they record domestic abuse crimes

Crimes associated with [domestic abuse](#), including controlling or coercive behaviour, often involve particularly [vulnerable people](#), and they disproportionately affect women and girls.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that 22.8 percent of all crimes related to domestic abuse incidents. They included crimes such as controlling or coercive behaviour, assault, stalking and criminal damage. Of these crimes, 89.9 percent were recorded.

Forces need to improve the way they record crime that involves vulnerable victims

Using a [dip sample](#) approach, we considered how well forces record crimes involving vulnerable adults and [child](#) protection. We found that overall, forces recorded 89.5 percent of these crimes, but there was considerable variation between forces.

Forces haven't sufficiently improved the way they record crime that involves antisocial behaviour

In our 2021–25 audit period, we examined the extent to which [antisocial behaviour](#) included criminal activity, and whether the police were always recognising and recording crime related to antisocial behaviour.

We found that forces recorded only 51.9 percent of the crimes that they had closed as [antisocial behaviour personal](#). Of the unrecorded crimes, half were harassment. We also found that some forces didn't understand when to correctly apply an antisocial behaviour personal closing code.

This level of crime recording is unacceptably low, and it means victims remain at risk of harm.

Forces that get it right have leaders who are committed to high crime-recording standards

We found that forces that get crime recording right have leaders who make sure officers and staff recognise and understand the need to correctly record crime. In these forces, the [force crime registrar](#) attends force governance boards, and they make sure officers and staff understand how they should record crime.

In forces that don't record enough crime, we found that leaders haven't always given officers and staff clear instructions and direction about the importance of recording crime accurately and quickly. In some of these forces, force crime registrars aren't given enough involvement in governance boards, and not all officers and staff understand the importance of accurately recording crime.

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1

Forces need to improve their recording of all violent crime, in particular conduct crimes such as [harassment](#), [stalking](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#) and less serious assaults.

Recommendation 2

Forces should make sure they quickly and correctly record crimes related to [domestic abuse](#).

Recommendation 3

Forces need to make sure all [officers](#) and [staff](#) involved in crime recording are appropriately trained and understand their role in recording crime. They should also make sure there is effective oversight and scrutiny of crime-recording decisions and accuracy.

Introduction

About us

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services to make communities safer. In preparing our reports, we ask the questions that the public would ask and publish the answers in accessible form. We use our expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.

Background

2014: our first crime data integrity inspection

In January 2014, we started our first inspection of crime data integrity (CDI) in all forces in England and Wales. We introduced this inspection programme because of concerns about the impact of crime performance targets on the standard of crime recording.

The purpose of our CDI inspections has always been to answer the question: To what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?

In November 2014, [we published our 'Crime-recording: making the victim count' report](#). In that report, we made 13 recommendations, which covered changes to the way forces:

- record and cancel crimes;
- audit their crime recording; and
- train [police officers](#) and [staff](#).

We also recommended that the [College of Policing](#) establish an accredited course for training [force crime registrars](#).

These recommendations have all been implemented.

After our 2014 inspection, it became clear that we needed to audit and inspect forces' crime recording in far more detail. This was so chief constables, [police and crime commissioners](#) and the Home Office could be confident that individual forces were improving the standard of their crime information.

2016–20: our second crime data integrity inspection

Between April 2016 and February 2020, we carried out an ambitious CDI inspection programme to examine in detail how well each force was recording crime. We examined a much higher number of reported incidents of crime than we did in our 2014 inspection. This allowed us to calculate statistically significant estimates of crime-recording percentages for every force.

We also visited each force and carried out interviews and [reality testing](#) in police stations, as well as holding focus groups with officers and staff. This helped us understand what was working well and what improvements forces needed to make. At the end of each inspection, we gave each force a graded judgment.

The graded judgments in this inspection programme showed that forces needed to further improve their crime-recording processes. Some forces needed to make sure their officers and staff fully understood the crime-recording rules, and that the oversight and supervision of crime-recording decisions were effective. We found that:

- 5 forces were outstanding;
- 16 forces were good;
- 16 forces required improvement; and
- 6 forces were inadequate.

2021: CDI inspections became part of our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy inspection programme

In 2014, [we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspections](#), which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. The questions that make up the PEEL assessments don't remain the same for each cycle of inspections; they adapt to changing priorities and circumstances in policing.

In 2021/22, we added CDI inspections to our PEEL programme. At the same time, we made other changes to the PEEL methodology, including expanding the four-tier system (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate) to five tiers, also including a judgment of adequate.

The crime-recording rules

The Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime in England and Wales are used by specialist crime-recording staff, such as force crime registrars. In June 2023, the Home Office published a shortened version of the rules called the '[Home Office Crime Recording Rules for frontline officers and staff](#)'. These two sets of rules tell police forces how they should record crime. In this report, we refer to these sets of rules collectively as the crime-recording rules.

The crime-recording rules set out the standardised procedures for recording crime. They provide a clear framework and set of criteria for the way police forces should record crime. Forces should consistently apply the crime-recording rules, which centre on [victims'](#) needs. By doing so, they can provide accurate statistics, which the public can trust.

In May 2023, the Home Office made some changes to the way the police record crime. Most notably the way forces should record [harassment](#), [stalking](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#). These are known as conduct crimes, course of conduct crimes or behavioural crimes. In this report, we refer to them as conduct crimes.

The Home Office made this change to the crime-recording rules to help officers identify and focus on the overall conduct crime, rather than sometimes dealing separately with the individual acts of criminality that often make up the ongoing conduct that victims suffer from. This change should also have helped to reduce some of the administrative requirements for the police when they record conduct crimes.

From May 2023 onwards, when a victim reports a conduct crime at the same time as another victim-based crime, and both crimes were committed by the same person, forces should only record one crime. The crime-recording rules state which crime should be recorded. In nearly all cases, forces should record the conduct crime as the principal crime, unless the other crime is very serious, such as rape. In those cases, forces should record the rape as the principal crime.

Methodology

To inform this report, we used evidence from the individual force CDI audits carried out as part of our 2021/22 and 2023–25 PEEL inspection cycles. In this report, this is referred to as our 2021–25 audit period. These CDI audits were included in our [victim service assessments](#) which track a victim's journey from when they report a crime to the police to when a [crime outcome](#) is assigned.

We have also considered evidence from our 2016–20 CDI inspections of all 43 police forces in England and Wales and the findings we published in our 2014 report 'Crime-recording: making the victim count'.

We assessed forces against the crime-recording rules. The most efficient way of assessing crime recording is to take a representative sample of records that should relate to crimes. During our 2021–25 audit period, each force gave us all its records of crime-related incidents for a three-month period before the date of our CDI audit. They also gave us records of [domestic abuse](#) incidents, whether crime-related or not. These came from calls or online reports of crime from the public.

From the records provided by all 43 forces, we then randomly selected a sample of 19,414 records for review. We listened to phone calls to the police, and we examined other records, such as [domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based](#)

[violence forms](#) associated with these reports. We reviewed how well and how quickly forces recorded the crimes that they should have recorded.

For each force, we used the results from our audit to calculate the estimated percentages of recorded crime, and how long the force took to record a crime from the earliest point at which it should have been recorded. We also used the results to calculate estimated percentages of recorded crime for the sub-categories of violent crime and sexual offences.

When a member of the public reports any incident to the police, forces must apply the crime-recording rules and make sure they record any crimes. Officers and staff who receive any report must carefully consider whether crimes have been committed, even when that may at first appear not to be the case. To check forces are doing this, we reviewed a [dip sample](#) of 5,000 records from specific areas of policing to make sure all crimes were recorded. We selected samples from the following categories:

- [vulnerable](#) adult and [child](#) protection cases;
- reported incidents of rape;
- incidents that forces closed as [antisocial behaviour personal](#); and
- rape crimes that forces had cancelled (so we could advise forces on whether these decisions were correct).

Terminology in this report

Cancelling crime

Situations in which a force reviews a crime it has recorded, then removes the crime record. Forces do this when they believe no crime has occurred, or when they transfer a crime to another force.

Conduct crime

Harassment, stalking, and controlling or coercive behaviour.

Crime-recording rules

In this report, we use this term to refer collectively to the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime in England and Wales and the '[Home Office Crime Recording Rules for frontline officers and staff](#)'.

National

Our reports contain references to, among other things, 'national' definitions, priorities, policies, systems, responsibilities and processes. In some instances, 'national' means applying to England and Wales. In others, it means applying to England, Wales and Scotland, or the whole of the United Kingdom.

Improving and maintaining crime-recording standards

Forces have improved the way they record crime in general, but they need to focus on maintaining standards

The overarching question for our crime data integrity (CDI) inspections is: To what extent can police-recorded crime information be trusted?

We design our CDI audits to allow us to make reliable and statistically significant estimates of:

- the percentage of overall crime forces have recorded; and
- the percentage of violent crime (see [Annex A](#) for classifications) and sexual offences (see [Annex B](#) for classifications) forces have recorded.

In 2014, we estimated that forces recorded 80.5 percent of all crime. This included recording 66.9 percent of violent crime and 74.2 percent of sexual offences.

For 2016–20, we estimated that forces recorded 89.7 percent of all crime. This included recording 86.8 percent of violent crime and 93.6 percent of sexual offences.

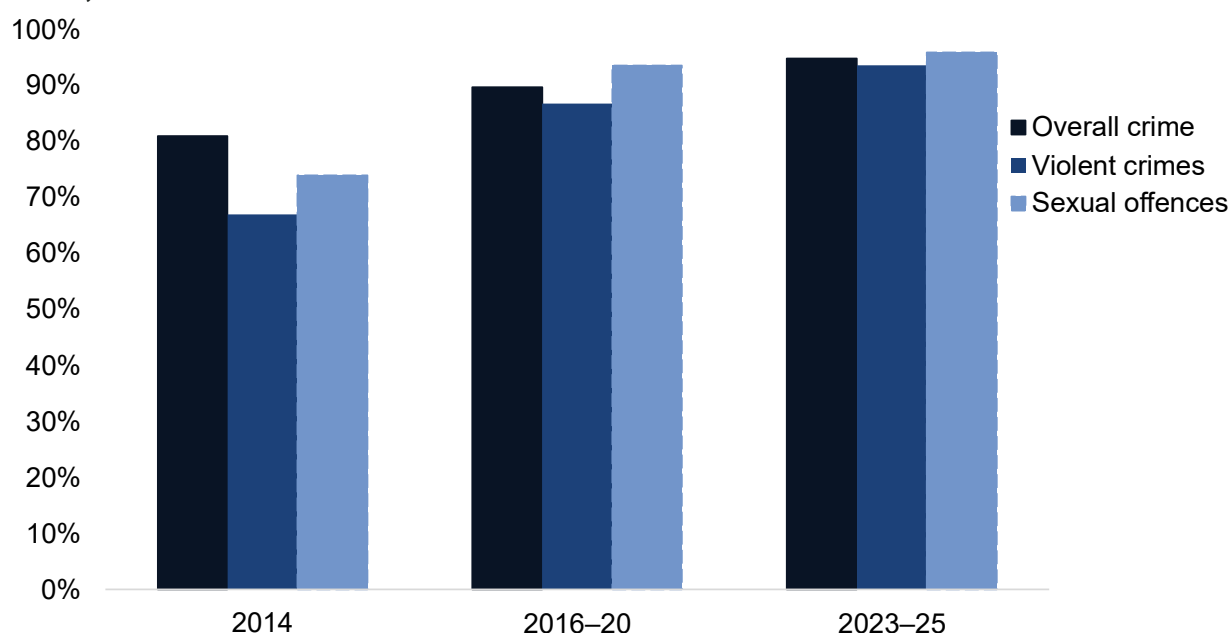
For 2021–22, we estimated that forces recorded 92.9 percent of all crime. This included recording 90.0 percent of violent crime and 96.2 percent of sexual offences. (Because of changes to the crime-recording rules, we haven't included this data in [figure 1](#).)

For 2023–25, we estimated that forces recorded 94.8 percent of all crime. This included recording 93.6 percent of violent crime and 95.9 percent of sexual offences.

From our audit in 2014 to our 2023–25 audit, this is an improvement of:

- 14.3 percentage points in the recording of all crime;
- 26.7 percentage points in the recording of violent crime; and
- 21.7 percentage points in the recording of sexual offences.

Figure 1: Percentages of crimes recorded by all forces in England and Wales: overall crime, violent crimes and sexual offences



Source: HMICFRS crime data integrity audits 2014, 2016–20 and 2023–25

Between 2021 and 2025, as part of our [police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspection programme](#), we graded all 43 forces for crime recording.

We found that:

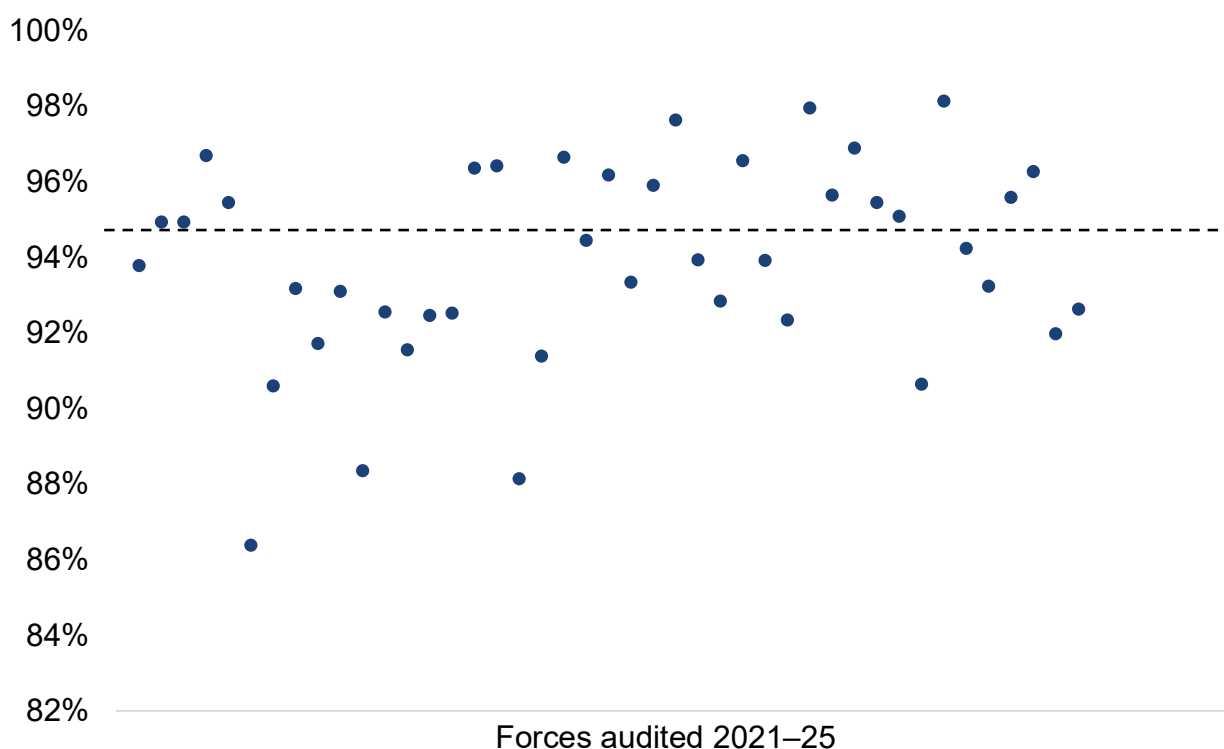
- 9 forces were outstanding;
- 16 forces were good;
- 11 forces were adequate; and
- 6 forces required improvement.

We initially found that four forces were inadequate. We then re-audited those forces and found that they had all made improvements. We re-graded three of those forces, and the grades from the second audits are included in the list of grades above. We re-audited the fourth force after the conclusion of our 2023–25 PEEL inspection cycle, so we didn't grade it and it hasn't been counted in the list.

In May 2023, the Home Office made some changes to the way the police record violent crime, most notably the way forces should record conduct crimes such as [harassment](#), [stalking](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#). This meant that when we applied our standard calculations, it appeared that forces had improved their recording of violent crime. As a result, we couldn't directly compare the percentages from 2023 onwards with those from previous years. However, overall, we found that the higher percentages were also largely due to ongoing improvements in forces' crime-recording standards.

There is still a considerable variation in forces' performance in this area. In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that individual forces recorded between 86.4 percent and 98.1 percent of all crime.

Figure 2: Variation in crime recording among forces in England and Wales in 2021–25. The line represents the 2023–25 average for forces in England and Wales



Source: HMICFRS crime data integrity audits 2021–25

Forces are recording more crimes, but too many crimes are still left unrecorded

Since 2014, when we estimated that the police recorded 80.5 percent of crime correctly, crime recording has continued to improve. In 2014 we found that over 800,000 crimes weren't recorded that should have been.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the total number of crimes recorded was 5,309,536. We estimate that around 2.3 percent of crime is over-recorded. Taking this into account, and based on a crime recording rate of 94.8%, we estimate that approximately 285,000 crimes weren't recorded that should have been. This decrease in unrecorded crime shows an overall improvement in how forces are recording crime, but that they still have more work to do.

Forces must accurately and promptly record crime, so they can:

- [safeguard victims](#) and give them the service they need;
- carry out effective investigations;
- help to build public confidence in the police; and
- use public money effectively.

When forces over-record crime, it distorts police-recorded crime information

In our CDI audits, we concentrated on making sure crimes haven't been left unrecorded. However, we also found that forces sometimes recorded crimes when there was no need to record them.

For example, when a victim makes one report including multiple offences that have been committed against them by the same person, forces should document these offences within one crime record. Sometimes, forces unnecessarily record a second crime.

On other occasions, members of the public report incidents that don't constitute a crime. Sometimes, forces mistakenly record crimes in these instances. For example, accidental damage may sometimes be incorrectly recorded as a crime of criminal damage.

And occasionally, forces create duplicate crime records by mistake.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we reviewed 19,414 reports and found that 16,257 crimes had been recorded. Of these, 379 shouldn't have been recorded. This indicates that 2.3 percent of crimes were unnecessarily recorded. We found that some forces hadn't recorded any unnecessary crimes, while other forces had over-recorded up to 5 percent of crimes over that period.

Some [officers](#) and [staff](#) aren't as familiar with the crime-recording rules as they should be. We found that crimes were sometimes recorded on a just-in-case basis.

We found that over-recording often happened in forces that were striving to improve their crime-recording standards.

Forces sometimes try to justify over-recording crime as they believe it means they are giving victims a good service, even when there is no crime to record. However, it is important that forces record crimes consistently. Forces shouldn't accidentally inflate their crime numbers by unnecessarily recording crimes.

While unrecorded crime is a problem, over-recording crime also matters, as it inflates and distorts police-recorded crime information.

Forces need to improve the way they record violent crime

We found that violent crimes are the least well recorded crime type. We estimated that in 2023–25, forces recorded 93.6 percent of violent crime. The best-performing force recorded 98 percent of violent crime. However, two forces recorded less than 90 percent of violent crime.

The crimes that were most often unrecorded were less serious assaults. These accounted for more than half of unrecorded violent crime. Forces also need to improve their recording of conduct crimes, which accounted for 37.9 percent of the total unrecorded violent crime.

Forces don't always correctly record conduct crimes

Conduct crimes are harassment, stalking and controlling or coercive behaviour. These are violent crimes, and they disproportionately affect women and girls. Often, they affect some of the most [vulnerable people](#) in society.

Sometimes victims are reluctant to report these crimes to the police. Victims need to be able to trust forces to investigate them quickly and properly. This is why it is vital that when people do report conduct crimes, forces record them accurately. They can then pursue the appropriate lines of enquiry and carry out a thorough investigation.

Often, when victims report conduct crimes, it becomes clear that there are also other crimes to investigate. For example, a victim might report being stalked by their ex-partner. This might include criminal damage to their property, threatening messages or assaults. Before 2023, there was some confusion among forces about the crime-recording rules in situations such as this. Forces weren't always following the rules and often failed to record enough crimes.

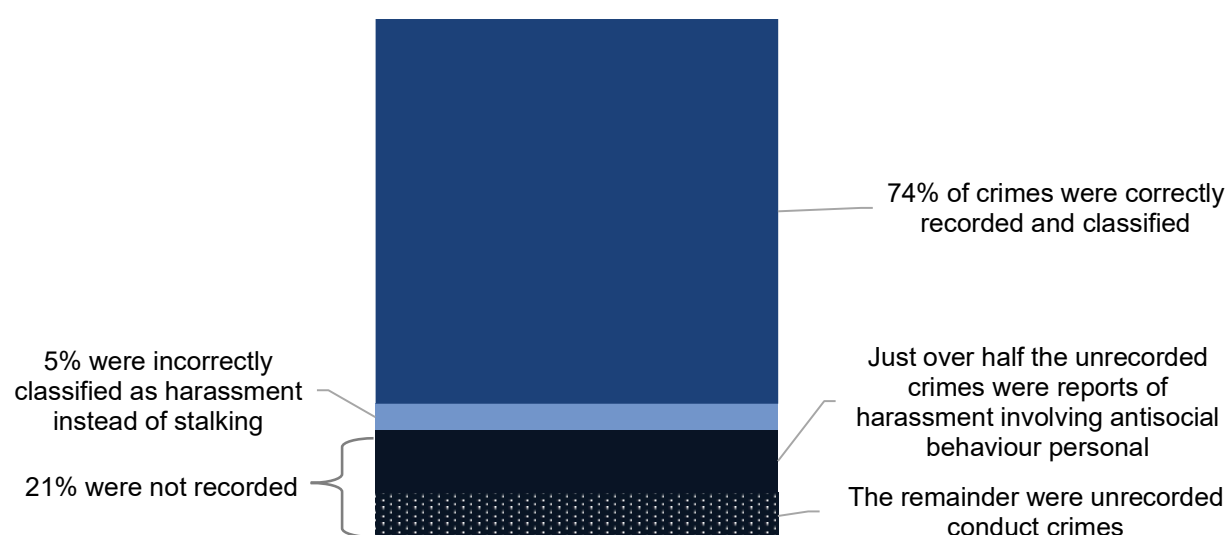
In May 2023, the Home Office changed the crime-recording rules to simplify the way forces should record conduct crimes. When a victim reports a conduct crime at the same time as another victim-based crime, and both crimes were committed by the same person, forces should only record one crime. The crime-recording rules state which crime should be recorded. In nearly all cases, forces should record the conduct crime as the principal crime, unless the other crime is very serious, such as rape. In those cases, forces should record the rape as the principal crime.

The Home Office sent forces detailed guidance about the change, giving examples and explaining how forces should record conduct and other crimes. As ever, the expectation remained that forces should investigate all crimes, even if they only recorded the principal crime.

Since October 2023, we have monitored how well forces have recorded conduct crimes and crimes associated with them. We audited reports of conduct crimes made to 16 forces. We found that there is still confusion among forces about how they should record these crimes. When forces become aware of a single conduct crime, they often fail to record it at all. When conduct crimes are reported at the same time as other crimes, forces often record one of the other crimes, rather than the conduct crime. We saw this pattern in all 16 forces.

In total, we examined 513 incidents in which the victim only reported a conduct crime, without reporting any other crimes at the same time. Of these incidents, 74 percent of crimes were correctly recorded and classified. However, 21 percent of the conduct crimes weren't recorded at all. Of the crimes not recorded, more than half were reports of harassment that involved [antisocial behaviour personal](#). The remaining 5 percent were incorrectly recorded as harassment when they should have been recorded as stalking.

Figure 3: How accurately forces in England and Wales recorded incidents in which the victim only reported a conduct crime



Source: HMICFRS crime data integrity audits 2021–25

Case study: A force didn't record a crime of harassment

A woman was in a dispute about the ownership of an item of property. She had previously been assaulted by the other person, and the police had dealt with this. She told the police she had started to receive abusive and threatening messages, which were frightening her.

The force should have recorded a crime of [harassment](#), but it didn't record a crime at all.

We found that when victims report conduct crimes at the same time as other victim-based crimes, forces showed confusion about which crime they should record.

Among the 16 forces in which we examined reports of conduct crimes since October 2023, we found 329 occasions on which a victim reported a second crime at the same time as reporting the conduct crime.

In 301 of these cases, forces should have recorded the conduct crime. But in just over half of these cases, they incorrectly recorded the other crime instead of the conduct crime. And in a small number of cases, forces didn't record either crime.

There were 13 occasions on which forces recorded a crime of harassment, when they should have recorded a crime of stalking. It is important to identify stalking crimes accurately as they show elevated levels of fixated and obsessive behaviour, often leaving victims at high risk of harm.

However, when it comes to very serious crimes, forces' recording practices are much better. We also found that on 28 occasions, victims had reported a rape at the same time as reporting the conduct crime. In all 28 cases, the rape crimes were correctly recorded.

Case study: A force incorrectly recorded a crime of malicious communications

In 2022, a caller reported that he had recently split from his ex-partner, and that he had started to receive messages that threatened him and his new partner. The force recorded a crime of malicious communications, but it should have recorded a crime of [stalking](#).

In practice, the force should investigate both offences. But by failing to record the stalking crime, it risked overlooking it and focusing solely on malicious communications.

Case study: A force correctly recorded a rape crime

A woman reported that she had been raped by her partner, who had been [stalking](#) her since they broke up. The force recorded a rape crime.

This was the correct recording decision because the rape was the principal crime.

Our audits of those 16 forces' recording practices indicate that the changes to the rules for recording conduct crimes haven't had the intended effect, which was to help officers and staff identify and focus on the overall conduct crime. Too often, forces:

- didn't record a conduct crime at all;
- recorded the wrong conduct crime; or
- recorded the wrong crime when the victim reported more than one crime.

Failing to correctly record the conduct crime increases the risk of forces not understanding the nature and extent of ongoing abuse experienced by victims. This could lead to forces missing investigative opportunities.

We identified this concern in [our super-complaint report 'The police response to stalking'](#). Recommendation 7 of the report addresses changes to police crime-recording systems so that officers and staff can document and search for crimes not recorded as the principal crime.

Recommendation 1

Forces need to improve their recording of all violent crime, in particular conduct crimes such as [harassment](#), [stalking](#) and [controlling or coercive behaviour](#) and less serious assaults.

Forces usually record sexual offences correctly

Forces generally make the right decisions about how to record sexual offences.

In 2023–25, we estimated that on average, the police recorded 95.9 percent of sexual offences. In 2024, two forces recorded 100 percent of sexual offences. But in 2023, another force recorded just 87 percent of sexual offences. This the lowest percentage that we found during our audit period.

We found that when forces failed to record sexual offences, the most common classifications that they missed were:

- sexual assaults; and
- crimes of sexual activity involving [children](#).

Of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, 32 showed improvements since our last inspections in the way they recorded sexual offences. Two forces remained unchanged, and the remaining nine showed a decline of between 1 and 6 percentage points.

Forces have improved the way they record rape

In our first CDI inspection in 2014, we examined 316 reports of rape. Of these, 37 weren't recorded as crimes. This means forces correctly recorded 88.3 percent of the rape crimes.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we examined 2,715 incidents that included a report of rape. We identified 823 of these as reported incidents of rape ([N100s](#)). (For more detail about how forces record N100s, see '[Forces need to make sure they record unconfirmed reports of rape](#)'.) Forces should have recorded the remaining 1,892 incidents as rape crimes. Of those, forces correctly recorded 1,760 rape crimes, but they failed to record 132 crimes. This means forces correctly recorded 93.0 percent of rape crimes. This is an improvement of 4.7 percentage points from what we found in 2014.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we collated more details of incidents in which a force had failed to record a rape crime. This has given us a much better understanding of situations in which forces might not be recording some rape crimes. Out of the 132 crimes forces didn't record, we established that:

- 42 weren't recorded at all;
- 64 were incorrectly recorded as an N100; and
- 26 were incorrectly recorded as a different crime, such as sexual assault or sexual activity with a child.

Case study: A force incorrectly recorded a reported incident of rape (N100) instead of a rape crime

A woman told paramedics, who were treating her, that she had been raped. The police received this information from the paramedics, but the [victim](#) refused to speak to them.

The force recorded a reported incidents of rape ([N100](#)). It should have recorded as a rape crime because a professional third party had given it the information.

Case study: A force should have recorded a rape crime but it incorrectly recorded a different sexual offence

A 14-year-old girl had consensual sexual intercourse with an older boy. On the second occasion she told him to stop, but he refused and carried on against her will.

The force recorded a crime of sexual activity with a child, but it should have recorded a rape crime.

Case study: A force failed to record a second rape crime

A man reported that he had been raped, and the force recorded a rape crime. A week later, he made a further report that he had been raped again. Instead of recording the second crime, the force updated the original report. It should have recorded a second rape crime.

Forces need to make sure they record unconfirmed reports of rape

In 2015, the Home Office introduced a new classification for reported incidents of rape. This classification is known as N100. The crime-recording rules state that forces should record N100s in the following circumstances:

- when the victim hasn't confirmed the offence or can't be traced;
- when there is credible evidence to the contrary; or
- when the offence was committed in another police force area or outside the UK.

Forces must reclassify these incidents if a crime is confirmed. If the rape took place in another force area, it should be transferred to the relevant force.

Since 2016, we have examined N100 records as part of our inspections. We closely examined crime-recording decisions involving reports of rape to assess whether forces have correctly recorded them as crimes or as N100s.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we considered whether forces were appropriately recording N100s. We found a total of 314 incidents in which forces should have recorded N100s, but forces only recorded N100s in 218 cases. This means forces correctly recorded N100s in 69.4 percent of incidents.

We found that officers and staff didn't always understand that when they don't immediately record a reported incident of rape as a confirmed rape or an attempted rape, they need to record the unconfirmed report as an N100.

We also found that forces recorded some reports as rape crimes when they should have recorded them as N100s. This means that the crime data isn't accurate.

Given the very serious nature of rape, forces need to take more care and apply more scrutiny to make sure they accurately and consistently record N100s.

Case study: A force didn't record a reported incident of rape (N100)

Staff at a nightclub reported that a woman had been raped. The police arrived, but the woman had left the nightclub. They couldn't find her or any evidence that a rape had taken place.

This was a report of a rape crime that couldn't be confirmed by the [victim](#). The force should have recorded, but didn't record, a reported incident of rape ([N100](#)).

Case study: A force recorded a rape crime for an unconfirmed report of rape

A man contacted the police to say that his ex-girlfriend had been raped.

The force recorded a rape crime and investigated it. [Officers](#) spoke to the woman, who assured them that the report wasn't true. There was reliable information that it hadn't happened. As a result, the force cancelled the rape crime.

Because the report was unconfirmed, the force should have recorded a reported incident of rape ([N100](#)) rather than a rape crime. If it had done so, its crime data would have been more accurate.

Existing recommendations or areas for improvement

In our spotlight reports, we usually give general recommendations that apply to all police forces in England and Wales. But as this report is based on our PEEL inspection reports, we aren't giving an additional recommendation or [area for improvement](#) on this subject.

However, in relation to making sure officers and staff understand the difference between rape crimes and reported incidents of rape (N100s), and what they should record, forces should make sufficient progress with any existing recommendations or areas for improvement.

How crime recording affects victims

If forces don't record crimes, victims are less likely to receive the support and service they need

In 2014, when we started our crime data integrity inspection programme, there was a view in some police forces that when they didn't record a crime, it didn't affect the good service they gave to [victims](#). To them, not recording a crime was simply an administrative failure.

In our inspections from 2016 onwards, we have checked certain high-risk crime types to assess whether forces take suitable follow-up actions, even when they don't record crimes. These actions include [safeguarding](#) the victim and carrying out a proper investigation. Every time we have audited a force, we have assessed whether victims of rape, as well as other [vulnerable](#) victims such as victims of [domestic abuse](#), received the levels of safeguarding and investigation that they needed.

We found that sometimes, although the force hadn't recorded a crime, it had completed a safeguarding referral. As a result, the victim received the right support. However, in too many cases, the force's failure to record the crime led to missed opportunities to give the victim appropriate safeguarding and support. When forces didn't record a crime, it was also less likely that a proper investigation took place.

However, we found that in the majority of the cases in which forces had incorrectly recorded rape crimes as [N100s](#), they had carried out some investigation activity and some safeguarding of victims.

Case study: A force didn't record a crime, or carry out safeguarding or investigation activity

A caller, who was in an emotional state, rang the police to report that she was the [victim](#) of [domestic abuse](#). She said there had been an altercation and her husband had left the house. The police went to the address, and the caller described the relationship as abusive. It was clear that she was the victim of [controlling or coercive behaviour](#).

A few hours later, after her husband had returned home, the victim contacted the police again and withdrew her report.

The force took no further action and it didn't record a crime. It didn't try to find out why the victim had changed her mind or whether it was possible that her husband had made her retract her report.

The force should have put [safeguarding](#) measures in place, and recorded and investigated the crime.

Too often, forces don't record reports of crime at the earliest opportunity

The crime-recording rules state: "A crime must be recorded as soon as possible after the person receiving the report is satisfied that it is more likely than not that a crime has been committed."

The Home Office expects forces to record crime on their systems without delay, and to allocate a crime number within 24 hours. The rules allow for crime recording to take up to seven days. But this is only in exceptional circumstances, such as when a force can't immediately locate the victim to confirm a crime has occurred.

It is important that forces promptly record crime so that crime data is accurate. Also, forces need to carry out investigations without delay so they don't lose vital lines of enquiry. Most importantly, forces need to make sure victims can access the support they need as quickly as possible.

We expect forces to record at least 95 percent of crimes within 24 hours. This means entering a crime record on a force crime-recording system, assigning a crime number and giving a crime classification.

In our 2021–25 audit period, we found that on average, forces recorded and classified 78.1 percent of crimes within 24 hours.

On average, forces aren't recording crimes quickly enough. For example, in our 2021–25 audit period, we found that:

- 5 forces recorded and classified over 95 percent of crimes within 24 hours;
- 12 forces recorded and classified 90 to 95 percent of crimes within 24 hours;
- 5 forces recorded and classified under 40 percent of crimes within 24 hours; and
- 1 of these forces recorded and classified 2.6 percent of crimes within 24 hours, and it took over a week for it to record most crimes.

We also measured how long it took forces to record rape crimes. Between 2021 and 2025, forces recorded 79.7 percent of rape crimes within 24 hours.

In our audits, we found that forces often retrospectively checked records to make sure they had correctly identified and classified crimes. This process usually improved the accuracy of crime recording. However, these checks sometimes took place days after the crime was first reported.

Forces should minimise delays in recording crime, whether those delays take place for operational or administrative reasons. Victims expect the police to record crimes without unreasonable delay. It is important that this happens, for investigative reasons and to help victims access the support they need.

Existing recommendations or areas for improvement

In our spotlight reports, we usually give general recommendations that apply to all police forces in England and Wales. But as this report is based on our PEEL inspection reports, we aren't giving an additional recommendation or [area for improvement](#) on this subject.

However, in relation to recording crime without delay, forces should make sufficient progress with any existing recommendations or areas for improvement.

Forces don't record victims' protected characteristics well enough

Under the [Equality Act 2010](#), it is against the law to discriminate against people because of [protected characteristics](#). The nine protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

It is important for the police to understand the protected characteristics of victims of crime. For instance, if a victim is attacked because of their sexual orientation or race, forces must record this information so they can investigate thoroughly and put in place the right interventions and safeguards for the victim. Forces must also fulfil their obligations under the [public sector equality duty](#), and they should understand the scale, patterns and risk associated with crime types.

We have previously made recommendations about the importance of recording protected characteristics. We did this in the following reports:

- [‘Race and Policing: A review of the police service’s leadership and governance arrangements for race-related matters’](#);
- [‘Interim report: Inspection into how effectively the police engage with women and girls’](#); and
- [‘Police response to violence against women and girls: Final inspection report’](#).

In our audits, we examined whether forces recorded five of the nine protected characteristics for victims of crime: age, disability, race, sex and sexual orientation. We chose these five characteristics because they were the most relevant to our audits.

We found that in nearly all recorded reports of crime, forces recorded victims' age and sex well. They nearly always recorded victims' race, but they rarely recorded victims' sexual orientation or any disability.

We found that there were two reasons for this. First, not all IT systems that forces use to record crimes have the functionality for recording all protected characteristics. Second, [officers](#) and [staff](#) aren't always sure what information they should collect and record. Victims don't always want to give this type of personal information, and [force control room](#) operators are sometimes reluctant to ask questions that they may feel are intrusive and unnecessary, especially during an emergency call.

In 2023, the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) and the [College of Policing](#) developed a national protected characteristics data standard for operational policing. The data standard aims to give forces consistent values for recording protected characteristics.

At the time of publishing this report, the standard was under review, following the April 2025 UK Supreme Court ruling on the scope of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to sex and gender. The review includes:

- examining the way forces must collect and record data on protected characteristics;
- giving forces information to help them implement the updated standards across their IT systems;
- developing contextual guidance for officers and staff on the circumstances in which they should ask people, including victims of crime, about their protected characteristics.

Most forces need to improve the way they record domestic abuse crimes

In our audits, we analysed how well forces recorded violent crimes and sexual offences. Within these categories, we also examined whether domestic abuse was a factor in the reported incidents. Crimes associated with domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, often involve particularly vulnerable people, and they disproportionately affect women and girls.

Case study: A force failed to record a domestic abuse crime

A woman reported to the police that she was frightened of her partner. She told them she was trying to separate from him and he had destroyed some of her property. She said he constantly texted her and controlled what she did. She also said he had hurt her in the past and that the abuse was escalating.

The force should have recorded a crime of [controlling or coercive behaviour](#), but it didn't record a crime at all.

In our audits, we found that 22.8 percent of all crimes related to domestic abuse incidents. These crimes weren't all domestic abuse crimes, but they related to reports that involved domestic abuse. They included crimes such as controlling or coercive behaviour, assault, [stalking](#) and criminal damage. Of these crimes, 89.9 percent were recorded.

Of the crimes that forces hadn't recorded, about four fifths were violent crimes.

This suggests that if forces focus on correctly recording crimes that relate to reports of domestic abuse, their recording of violent crime would automatically improve.

It is important that forces correctly record all crimes. But when victims of domestic abuse report crimes to the police, it is vital that forces quickly and correctly record and classify those crimes. If not, forces could miss important opportunities to understand the extent of the domestic abuse and to safeguard the victim.

Recommendation 2

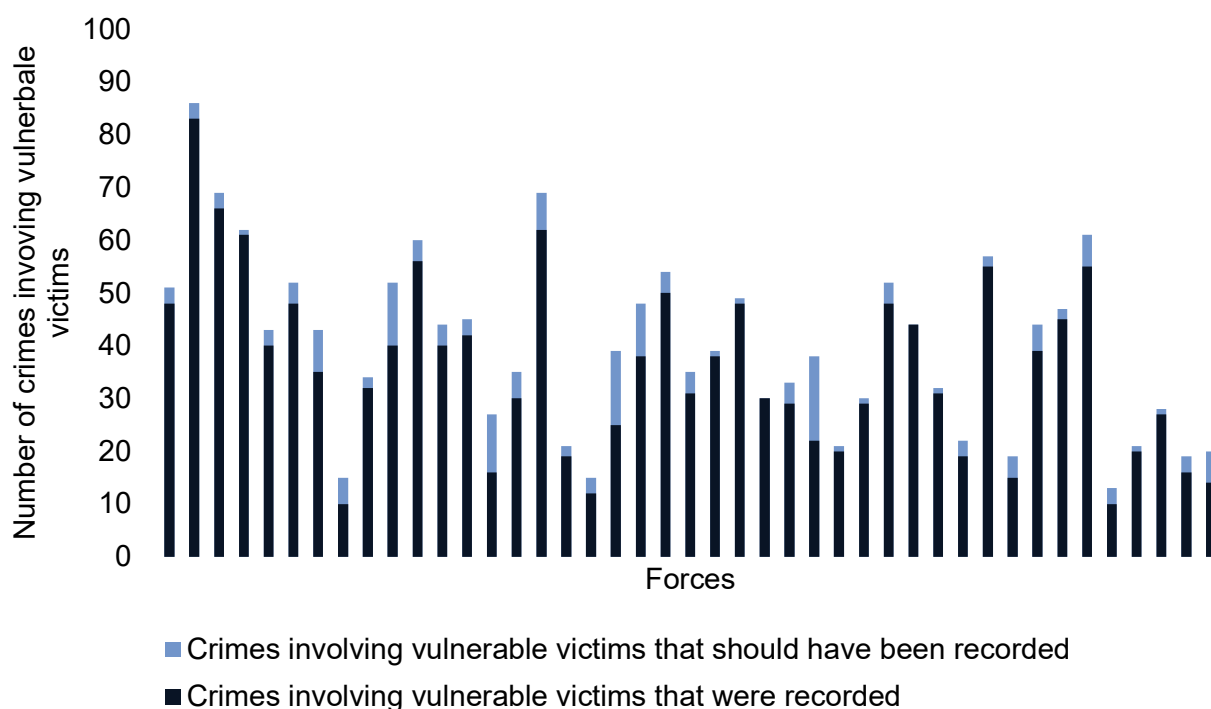
Forces should make sure they quickly and correctly record crimes related to [domestic abuse](#).

Forces need to improve the way they record crime that involves vulnerable victims

Using a [dip sample](#) approach, we considered how well forces recorded crimes involving vulnerable adults and [child](#) protection. We asked each of the 43 forces in England and Wales to provide 25 sample records of each of these crime types (making a total of 50 records per force). We also asked the forces to provide 20 sample instances on which they had received emails or referrals from partner agencies, such as social services and child protection services. These cases may have involved more than one crime, one crime or no crime at all.

We found that, overall, forces recorded 89.5 percent of these crimes, but there was considerable variation between forces. Two forces recorded all the crimes identified in this way. The remaining 41 forces didn't record between 1 and 16 crimes from their samples.

Figure 4: Number of crimes involving vulnerable victims that forces in England and Wales recorded, compared to the number that they should have recorded



Source: HMICFRS crime data integrity audits 2021–25

Existing recommendations or areas for improvement

In our spotlight reports, we usually give general recommendations that apply to all police forces in England and Wales. But as this report is based on our PEEL inspection reports, we aren't giving an additional recommendation or area for improvement on this subject.

However, in relation to making sure officers and staff understand how to quickly and correctly identify and record all crimes involving vulnerable adults and child protection, forces should make sufficient progress with any existing recommendations or areas for improvement.

Forces haven't sufficiently improved the way they record crime that involves antisocial behaviour

[Antisocial behaviour](#) is a problem for many communities throughout England and Wales. It can range from people making a noise in public, which is annoying, to extreme examples in which individuals are abused to the extent that their lives are a misery. Sometimes antisocial behaviour involves a crime or more than one crime; in other instances, it doesn't involve a crime.

Some well-publicised cases have highlighted failures by the police to recognise and act on reports of antisocial behaviour. In these instances, crimes weren't recorded or investigated, and forces didn't address the victimisation of vulnerable people. In some of these cases, the lack of action has resulted in tragic deaths. For example, Fiona Pilkington complained to the police 33 times about [harassment](#). In 2007, the lack of police action contributed to the deaths of both Fiona and her daughter Francecca Hardwick.

We define [antisocial behaviour personal](#) as "incidents that are deliberately targeted at or aim to affect an individual or a particular group".

In our 2021–25 audit period, we examined the extent to which antisocial behaviour included criminal activity, and whether the police were always recognising and recording crime related to antisocial behaviour. We assessed whether the police were correctly recording reports of antisocial behaviour personal. We also assessed whether forces were recording crimes when they closed incidents as antisocial behaviour personal. Closing an incident means giving it a code that describes what it actually was.

We examined a total of 2,242 incidents from all 43 forces that had been closed as antisocial behaviour personal. We found that 777 crimes should have been recorded, but only 403 crimes had been recorded. This means that in those incidents, forces recorded only 51.9 percent of the crimes. Of the unrecorded crimes, half were harassment. In many of those harassment cases, victims suffered persistent and ongoing abuse, usually from neighbours or other people living in their community.

In 2021, five months after we started our audits, we were so concerned about the high number of crimes related to antisocial behaviour personal incidents that weren't being recorded, we wrote to all forces to tell them about our findings. Since then, some forces have made some improvements. But it is disappointing that during our 2023–25 inspection cycle, we still found that many forces failed to record even half the crimes they closed as antisocial behaviour personal incidents.

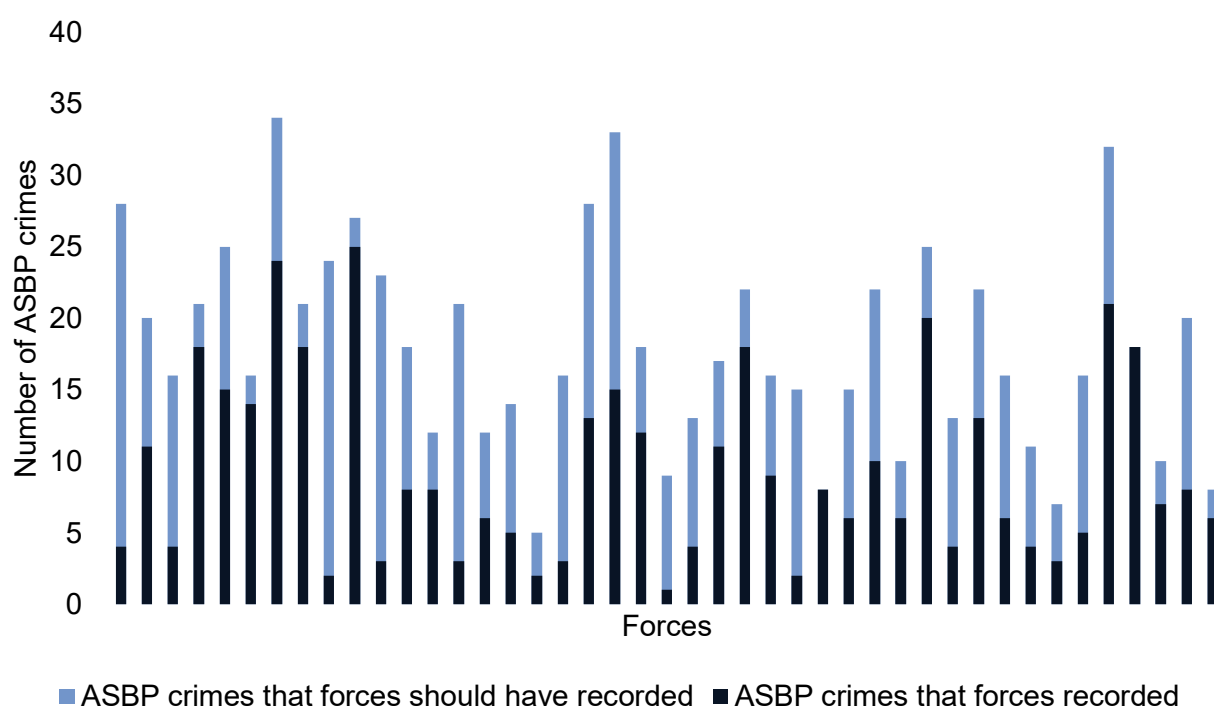
In our audits, we also found that some forces didn't understand when to correctly apply an antisocial behaviour personal closing code. They often used an antisocial behaviour personal code to close incidents that weren't incidents of antisocial behaviour.

Some examples of forces incorrectly closing incidents with an antisocial behaviour personal code include:

- A member of the public accidentally dialled 999 while their mobile phone was in their pocket, and all that could be heard was someone going about their normal business.
- A member of the public reported their neighbour for drink driving.
- A member of the public called the police about a broken-down car in a lay-by.

These incidents should all have been closed with different codes.

Figure 5: Number of antisocial behaviour personal (ASBP) crimes that forces in England and Wales recorded, and the number that they should have recorded



Source: HMICFRS crime data integrity audits 2021–25

Case studies: Forces didn't record crimes in antisocial behaviour personal incidents

In the following examples, forces closed the incidents as [antisocial behaviour personal](#). They should have recorded, but didn't record, crimes of [harassment](#):

- An adult [victim](#) with learning disabilities was being targeted by young people. They threw eggs at his house and routinely banged on his windows as they walked past. He told the force he was afraid to leave his house.

- A teenager with a neurological disorder hadn't left his house in 18 months. This was due to fear of meeting boys who routinely shouted at him from the street and threw fireworks at his house. The teenager's mother told the force the whole family was terrified.
- A mother called the police about youths throwing eggs at her house. She told the force it was probably related to her son being bullied at school. She said her son was afraid to leave the house and had threatened to kill himself.

In incidents that forces close as antisocial behaviour personal, the level of crime recording is unacceptably low. This means victims remain at risk of harm. Forces must do more to quickly identify antisocial behaviour personal incidents, and they must accurately record crimes, especially harassment. Forces need to act decisively so victims receive the service they need from the police.

Existing recommendations or areas for improvement

In our spotlight reports, we usually give general recommendations that apply to all police forces in England and Wales. But as this report is based on our PEEL inspection reports, we aren't giving an additional recommendation or area for improvement on this subject.

In [our 'The policing response to antisocial behaviour: PEEL spotlight report'](#), recommendation 2 states that forces need to "identify and record antisocial behaviour and associated crime when they are first reported". Forces should promptly act on this recommendation.

Factors in effective crime recording

Forces that get it right have leaders who are committed to high crime-recording standards

Since we began our crime data integrity inspections in 2014, we have found that forces that get crime recording right have leaders who make sure [officers](#) and [staff](#) understand the need to correctly record crime.

In these forces, the [force crime registrar](#) attends force governance boards, and they make sure officers and staff understand how they should record crime. Trained officers and staff also carry out internal audits, which means forces can identify gaps in crime recording and take steps to improve it.

We found that most force crime registrars now have [formal accreditation from the College of Policing](#). The [College of Policing](#) also provides training for officers and staff who record crimes or supervise crime-recording processes.

Case study: West Yorkshire Police has improved and sustained its crime-recording standards

In 2014, we had concerns about how well West Yorkshire Police was recording crime. The force had no clear management of crime-recording processes, and it didn't fully understand how well it was recording crime. We found evidence of local performance targets affecting the force's decisions to record crimes.

[Chief officers](#) recognised that they needed to improve. The deputy chief constable carried out a complete review of the force's crime-recording processes and put in place measures to make improvements, such as a well-staffed [force crime registrar](#)'s department. This team carried out wide-ranging and robust audits of the force's crime-recording standards. Importantly, the force made it clear it had high expectations for all [officers](#) and [staff](#) to record crimes correctly.

When we re-inspected the force in 2018 and again in 2023, we graded it outstanding for recording data about crime on both occasions.

West Yorkshire Police's officers and staff understand the importance of correctly recording crime. The force has shown that improvements in crime recording can be sustained and embedded. Strong leadership, good governance and effective training for frontline officers and staff have led to outstanding crime-recording standards.

In forces that don't record enough crime, we found that leaders haven't always given officers and staff clear instructions and direction about the importance of recording crime accurately and quickly.

In some of these forces, force crime registrars aren't given enough involvement in governance boards, and not all officers and staff understand the importance of accurately recording crime.

As a result, these forces can't give [victims](#) confidence that the force is recording and managing their crimes effectively. And crime [intelligence](#) isn't accurate enough for these forces to use it in a way that keeps communities safer.

Recommendation 3

Forces need to make sure all [officers](#) and [staff](#) involved in crime recording are appropriately trained and understand their role in recording crime. They should also make sure there is effective oversight and scrutiny of crime-recording decisions and accuracy.

Conclusion

Since 2014, in our inspections and audits of crime data integrity, we have assessed the accuracy of crime recording by police forces in England and Wales. In 2014, we measured how well the police as a whole recorded crime. From 2016 to 2020, we developed our audit methodology to measure how well each force recorded crime. Then from 2021 to 2025, we carried out individual force audits as part of [our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspection programme](#).

In [our 2014 report 'Crime-recording: making the victim count'](#), we made 13 recommendations for improvements to crime recording. We are pleased to report that since then there has been a steady improvement in the way forces record crime.

We have also carried out audits in which we [dip sampled](#) cases in areas such as:

- [vulnerable adult](#) and [child](#) protection cases;
- reported incidents of rape ([N100s](#)); and
- incidents that forces closed as [antisocial behaviour personal](#).

These are all areas in which [victims](#) need to be able to access the right support. In some of these cases, forces may not always easily understand that crimes have been committed.

We didn't find improvements in all these areas. In particular, the standard of crime recording when members of the public report antisocial behaviour personal incidents has shown disappointingly little progress. In these instances, most forces failed to record even half the crimes they should have recorded.

Forces should understand the ways in which victims and other members of the public might report crime. When they receive reports of what seem to be non-crime incidents, they should routinely check whether they actually contain reports of crime. Forces should also make sure [officers](#) and [staff](#) understand antisocial behaviour personal and the impact it can have on victims.

Forces must accurately and promptly record crime, so they can:

- [safeguard](#) victims and give them the service they need;
- carry out effective investigations;
- help to build public confidence in the police; and
- use public money effectively.

Accurate crime data also allows [police and crime commissioners](#) to hold forces to account.

Some forces have made substantial progress and have maintained good standards of crime recording; others are making slower progress. A small number only made progress when we carried out re-audits because we weren't satisfied with the standards we had found in previous inspections.

There is still too much difference between those forces that record crime well and those with lower standards of crime recording. Forces, and all who use police-recorded crime information, should expect that every force in England and Wales records crime accurately and to the same standard.

Forces must make sure they maintain improvements they make in crime-recording standards. They should also use their own resources effectively and efficiently to monitor and improve standards, rather than waiting for our next audit to find out how well they are recording crime.

Next steps

As part of [our 2025–27 police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy \(PEEL\) inspection programme](#), we will continue to monitor how well forces record crime. We will focus our audits on incidents in which [victims](#) are particularly [vulnerable](#), such as those involving [domestic abuse](#). We will also focus on areas in which we aren't confident that forces are recording crime well enough, such as incidents involving [antisocial behaviour personal](#). Our results will be integrated into our PEEL questions on preventing and deterring crime, investigating crime, and [safeguarding adults and children](#).

If we become concerned about a force's crime-recording performance, we may carry out a full crime data integrity audit so we can better understand how that force is recording crime.

Annexes

Annex A: violent crime classifications in the crime-recording rules

In this annex, we list the violent crime classifications that forces record, and their Home Office classification codes.

Homicide

- 1 Murder
- 4/1 Manslaughter
- 4/10 Corporate manslaughter
- 4/2 Infanticide.

Death or serious injury – unlawful driving

- 4/4 Causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving
- 4/6 Causing death by careless driving under the influence of drink or drugs
- 4/8 Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving
- 4/9 Causing death or serious injury by driving: unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured drivers
- 37/1 Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking.

Violence with injury

- 2 Attempted murder
- 4/3 Intentional destruction of a viable unborn child
- 4/7 Cause or allow death or serious physical harm to a [child](#) or [vulnerable person](#)
- 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm
- 5E Endangering life
- 8N Assault with injury
- 8P Racially or religiously aggravated assault with injury
- 8S Assault with injury on a constable
- 8T Assault with injury on an emergency worker (other than a constable).

Violence without injury

- 3A Conspiracy to murder
- 3B Threats to kill
- 11A Cruelty to children/young persons
- 13 Child abduction
- 14 Procuring illegal abortion
- 36 Kidnapping and false imprisonment
- 104 Assault without injury on a constable
- 105A Assault without injury
- 105B Racially or religiously aggravated assault without injury
- 106 [Modern slavery](#).

Stalking and harassment

- 8L [Harassment](#)
- 8M Racially or religiously aggravated harassment
- 8Q [Stalking](#)
- 8R Malicious communications
- 8U [Controlling or coercive behaviour](#).

Annex B: sexual crime classifications in the crime-recording rules

In this annex, we list the sexual crime classifications that forces record, and their Home Office classification codes.

Rape

- 19C Rape of a female aged 16 and over
- 19D Rape of a female [child](#) under 16
- 19E Rape of a female child under 13
- 19F Rape of a male aged 16 and over
- 19G Rape of a male child under 16
- 19H Rape of a male child under 13
- 19J Rape of a female – multiple undefined offenders
- 19K Rape of a male – multiple undefined offender.

Other sexual offences

- 17A Sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over
- 17B Sexual assault on a male child under 13
- 20A Sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over
- 20B Sexual assault on a female child under 13
- 21 Sexual activity involving a child under 13
- 22A Causing sexual activity without consent
- 22B Sexual activity involving a child under 16
- 23 Incest or familial sexual offences
- 70 Sexual activity etc with a person with a mental disorder
- 71 Abuse of children through [sexual exploitation](#)
- 73 Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature
- 88A Sexual [grooming](#)
- 88C Other miscellaneous sexual offence
- 88D Unnatural sexual offences
- 88E Exposure and voyeurism.

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