

## **Demands on the police forces in England and Wales during the Covid-19 pandemic**

### **Introduction**

This release presents the latest data on the demands being placed on the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The latest figures cover the 4-week period to ending 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and are compared with the equivalent 4-week period in 2019.

### **Calls for Service**

Last month we reported that calls for service were returning to similar levels seen in the same period in 2019 with no change in the volume of 999 calls and a much smaller reduction in calls to 101 than seen in previous months. However, the latest figures show a fall of 9% in both calls to 999 and 101 (Table 1). This may be early indication of the impact of some parts of the country moving into tighter local restrictions on socialising. However, the picture will become clearer in next month's release.

**Table 1: Trends in telephone calls for service to police forces in England and Wales, 4 weeks ending 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 compared with the equivalent 4-week period in 2019**

	<b>% change</b>
999 calls	-9%
101 calls	-9%

Calls for service generate incident recording which can be categorised by broad themes (Table 2). The volume of incidents related to reports of missing persons was down 14% (higher than the 8% fall reported last month). Whereas last month we reported continuing increases in other types of incidents, the latest figures show a small reduction in incidents related to mental health (down 1%) – this follows four consecutive monthly increases.

There was a smaller increase of in recorded domestic abuse incidents (up 3% on the same period in 2019; compared with a 7% rise reported last month. As previously reported, however, this trend is not consistent across all forces. Domestic abuse incidents are a measure of concerns that have been brought to the attention of the police. Not all such incidents will result in a crime being identified and recorded. Nor will hidden abuse be captured in these data.

**Table 2: Trends in safeguarding incidents recorded by police forces in England and Wales, 4 weeks ending 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020 compared with the equivalent 4-week period in 2019**

	<b>% change</b>
Domestic abuse related	+3%
Missing person related	-14%
Mental health related	-1%

### **Crime**

In the first few months of the restrictions, we reported marked falls in most crime types compared with the equivalent period in 2019 (Table 3). However, the latest figures show a similar picture to that reported last month with a lower rate of reduction in most crime types and increases in others.

There was the third monthly rise in rape since we have been reporting on these figures (a rise of 2%; following increases of 4% and 2% in the last two monthly reports). There continues to be a reduction in other contact-crimes including assaults (including both Grievous Bodily Harm and Actual Bodily Harm) and robbery committed against individuals. For these types of crime, the partial closure of the night-time economy will be a key driver.

We also continue to see reductions in high volume crimes such as burglary, vehicle-related theft and shoplifting though generally at lower rates than previously reported. The tightening of public health restrictions in many parts of the country may lead to further reduction of opportunities for criminals to commit acquisitive crime.

**Table 3: Trends in crime recorded by police forces in England and Wales, 4 weeks ending 27th September 2020 compared with the equivalent 4-week period in 2019**

	<b>% change</b>
All notifiable crime	-6%
Rape	+2%
Assaults and personal robbery	-10%
Assaults on emergency workers	+27%
Residential burglary	-25%
Theft from and of a vehicle	-19%
Shoplifting	-26%

One exception to the general trend in violent crime is the continuing rise in assaults on emergency workers (up 27% compared with the same 4-week period in 2019). This was a similar rise to that reported last month (29%). As previously reported, these offences are recorded in relatively low volumes and can fluctuate from one period to the next. It is thought the rise may be driven by increases in common assaults on police constables, including suspects spitting on officers while claiming to be infected with Covid-19.

The police in England and Wales recorded a total of 30,202 Covid-19 related incidents in the 4 weeks to the 27<sup>th</sup> September an increase compared with last month's report (19,016). This is the second month in which we have seen a rising trend though the levels of such incidents remain below that seen in the first few months of lockdown. The recent rises may be an indication of an upturn in reports from the members of the public about breaches of the regulation by others as more parts of the country enter tighter restrictions.

#### **Understanding the data**

The data reported here is based on a new ad hoc NPCC collection instituted to inform Operation Talla. The purpose was to provide a mechanism for monitoring and tracking demands on the police during the Covid-19 outbreak to inform operational decisions.

A small number of key indicators have been collated from the 43 territorial forces in England and Wales by the NPCC team. We are aware that not all forces have been able to supply consistent returns across all indicators. The data should be viewed as provisional, having been gathered at speed, and as only indicative of recent trends.

In this release, we have restricted our reporting to those indicators that we have confidence are sufficiently robust to provide a reliable picture.