

***The Scottish Crime and Justice  
Survey 2021/22: Latest findings  
and the impact of the COVID-19  
pandemic***

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**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

## Background

What is the SCJS?

Where are we now?

## Results

Latest findings

Trends over time

Differences in experiences

## Further analysis

Police reporting

Attitudes towards the Police and CJS

## Future SCJS

Plans going forward

Upcoming changes

# Outline



# What is the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)?

- A survey run in Scotland since 2008
- Successor to crime surveys run since 1982

## Who takes part in the survey?



Around 5,600 adults (aged 16 & over)



In private households (incl. rented accommodation)



Across Scotland

## Who does not take part in the survey?



Children



Those living in group residences, institutions or those without a fixed address



Commercial or public sector bodies

## What is covered by the survey?

### ▶ Experiences of being a victim of:

#### Violent crime including:

- Assault
- Robbery



#### Property crime including:

- Vandalism
- Personal theft
- Other household theft



### ▶ Public perceptions of:



Crime



The Police



The Justice System

Respondents also self-complete a questionnaire that covers drug use, partner abuse, sexual victimisation & stalking

## What is not covered by the survey

- Crime without a specific victim (e.g. drug possession, speeding)
- Crimes against businesses (e.g. shoplifting)
- Crime without a victim to interview (e.g. homicide)

# Timeline of recent SCJS releases

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## 2019/20 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

- The last pre-covid survey – which were annual, following financial years
- Interviewing stopped March 2020 due to Covid lockdown
- Published in March 2021

## Scottish Victimization Telephone Survey (SVTS), Sep-Oct 2020

- Shorter telephone interviews to look at changes during lockdown.
- Not comparable with the main survey time-series due to the different methodology.
- Published in February 2021

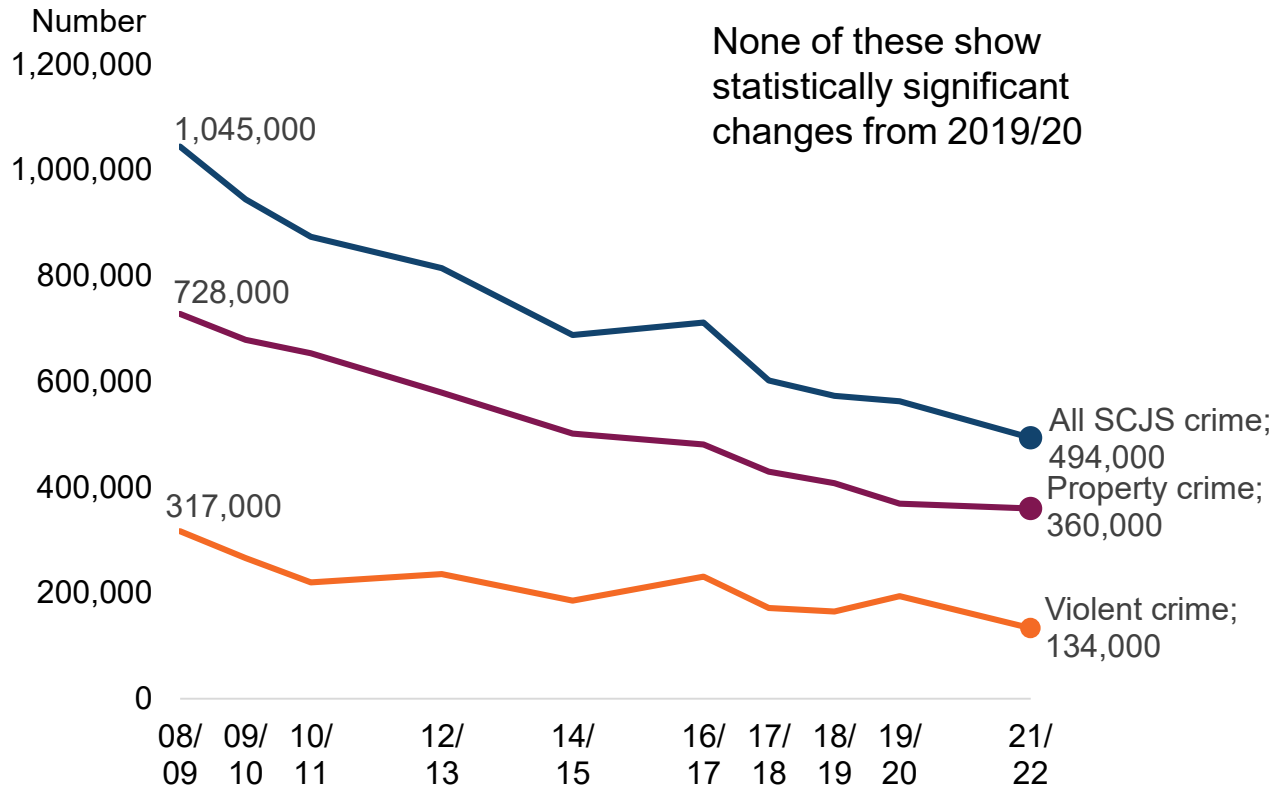
## 2021/22 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

- Fieldwork November 2021 – December 2022 – Published November 2023

## 2023/24 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

- Fieldwork July 2023 – March 2024.

# Overall crime



494,000

crimes were experienced by adults in 2021/22

↓ 53% decrease in crime volume since 2008/09.

10% of adults experienced crime in 2021/22

↓ 10.4 percentage point decrease in adults experiencing since 2008/09

Higher victimisation rates are seen for:

Younger people

15.4% for 16-24

Disabled people

12.9% for disabled people

Deprived areas

13.7% for those in 15% most deprived areas

Urban areas

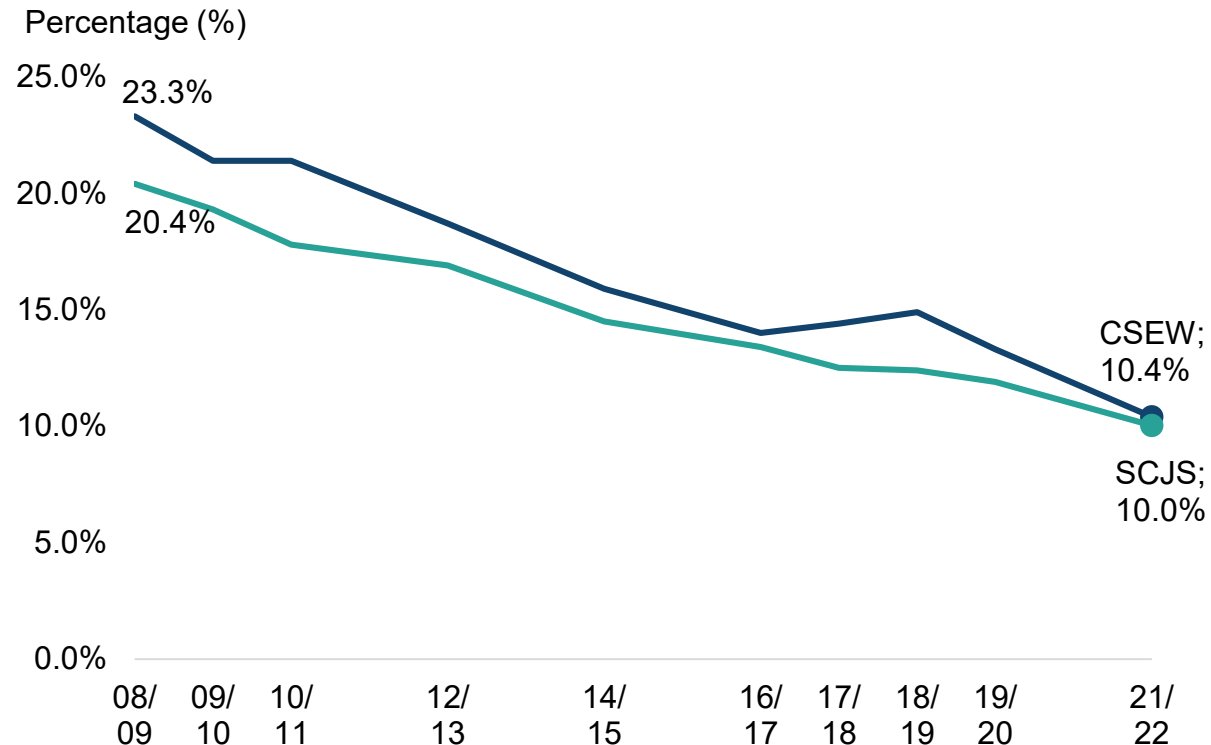
10.8% for those in urban areas

# Comparisons with England and Wales

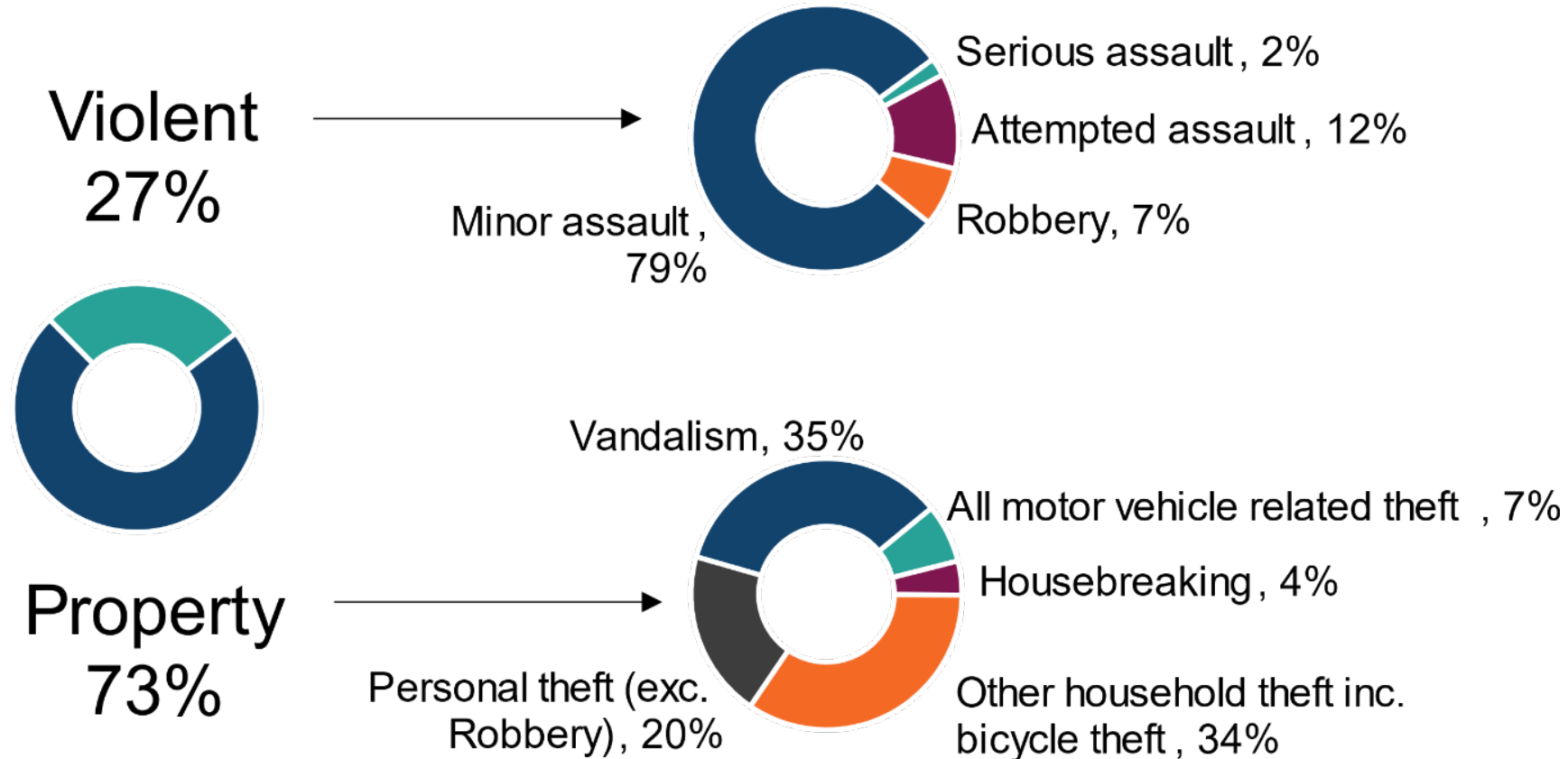
Victimisation rates in Scotland and England & Wales have both fallen over the long term to similar levels in the latest comparable period

This differs from the position in 2019/20 where adults in Scotland were less likely to have experienced crime, with 11.9% being victims compared to 13.3% in England & Wales.

## Proportion of adults experiencing crime measured by SCJS and CSEW, 2008/09 to 2021/22



# Crime breakdown



# Violent Crime

**134,000**

violent crimes were experienced by adults in 2021/22

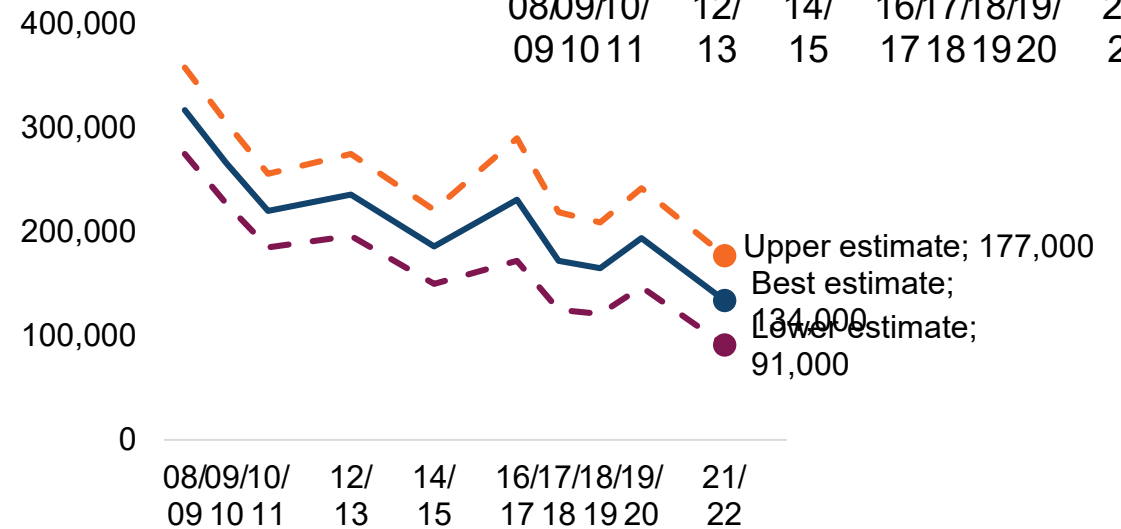
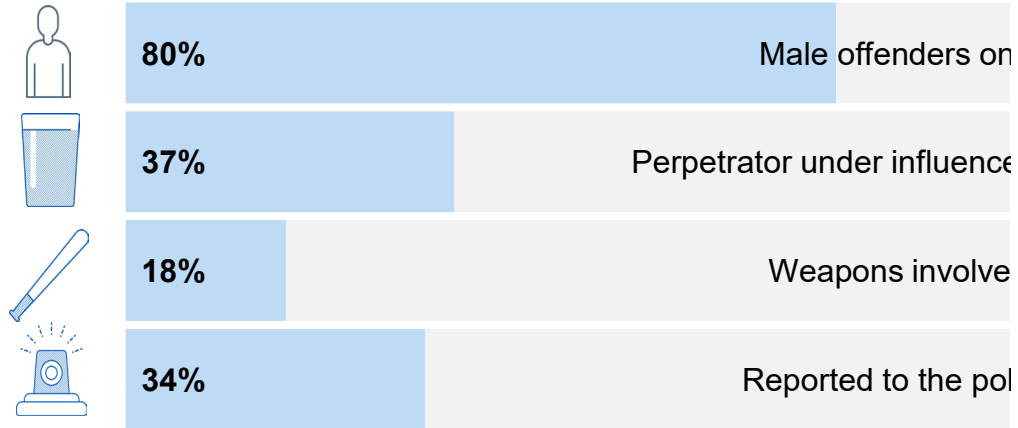
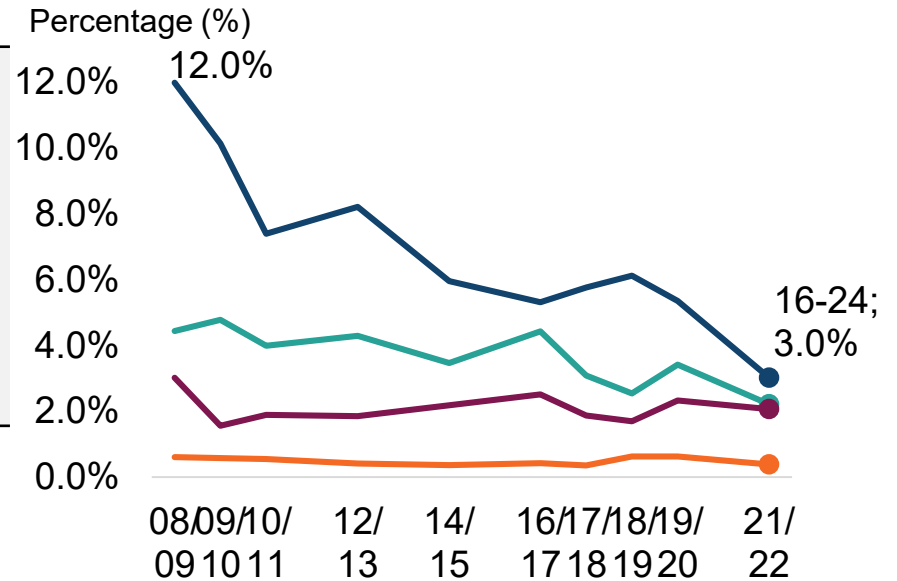
↓ **58%**  
decrease in violent crimes since 2008/09.

**1.7%** of adults experienced violent crime in 2021/22

↓ **2.4**  
percentage point decrease in adults experiencing violent crime since 2008/09

Higher victimisation rates for violence are seen for:  
**Younger people**

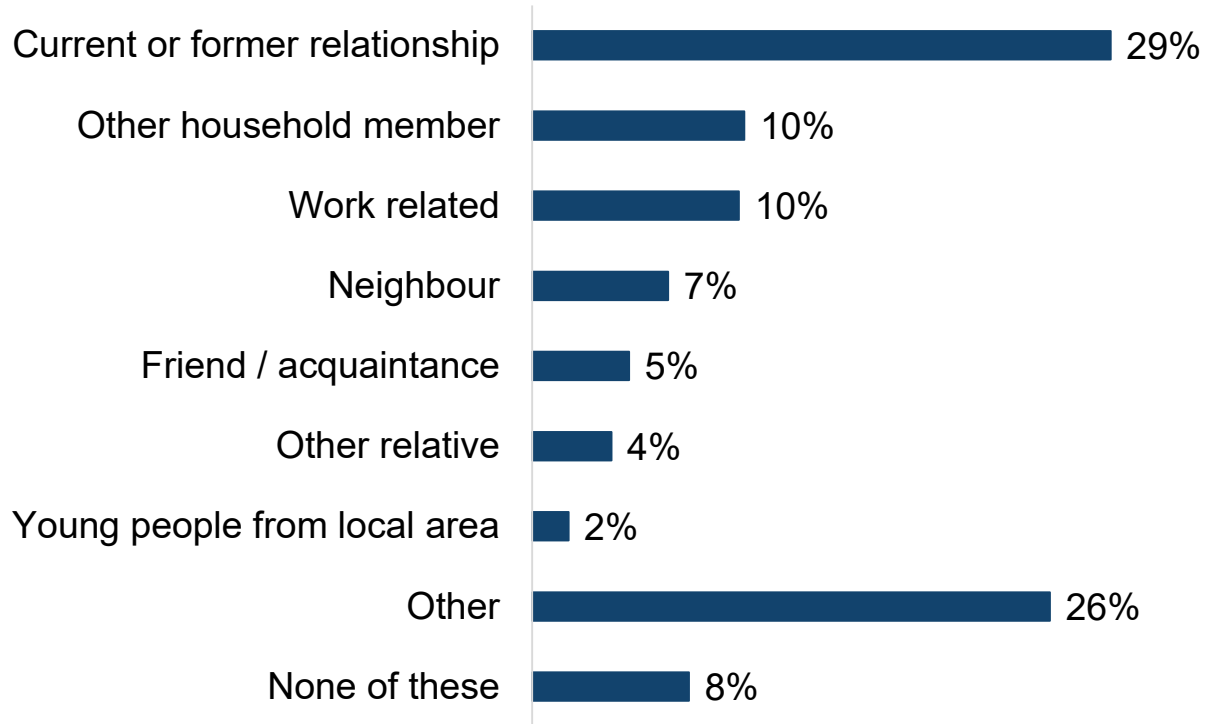
3.0% for 16-24



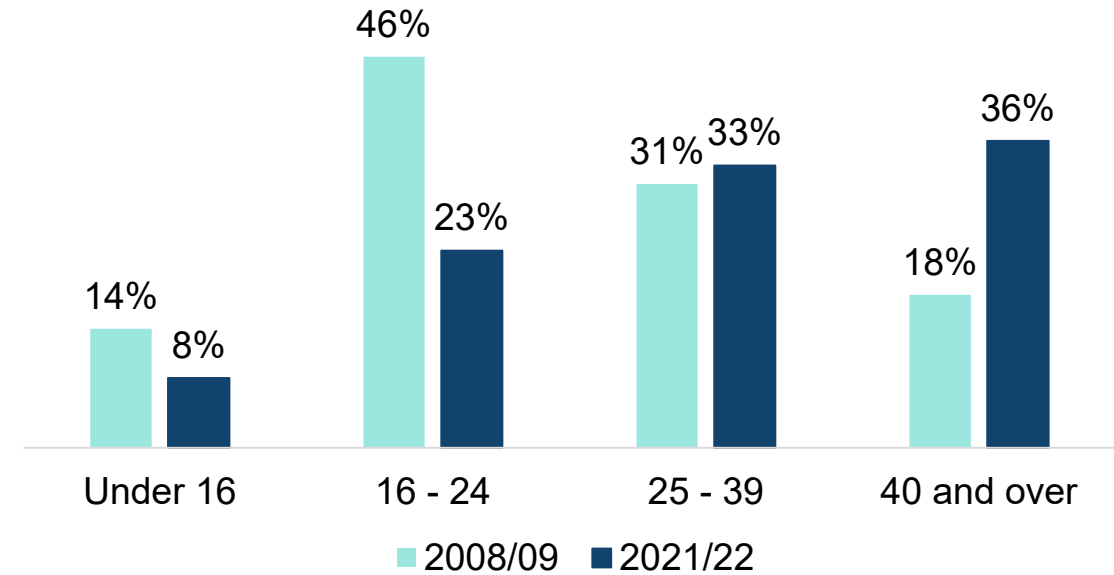


# Violent Crime: perpetrators

## Relationship



## Age



# Property Crime

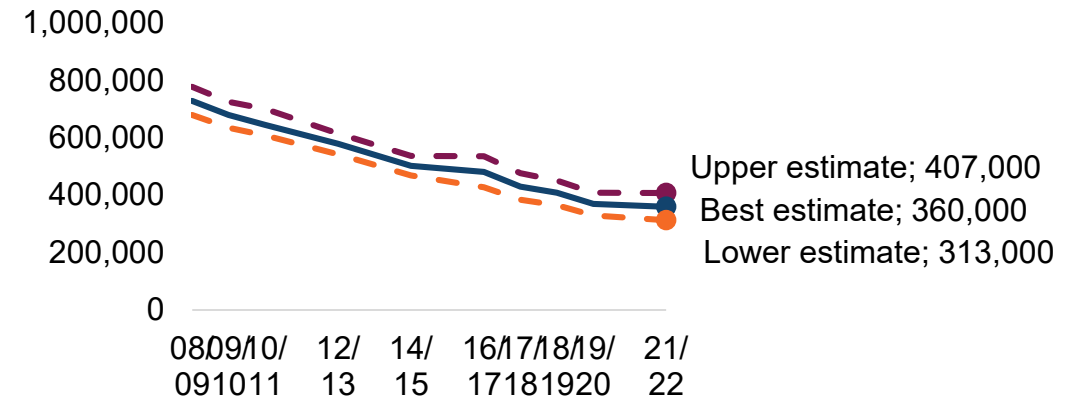
**360,000**

property crimes were experienced by adults in 2021/22

↓ **51%**  
decrease in property crimes since 2008/09.

**8.7%**  
of adults experienced property crime in 2021/22

↓ **9.3**  
percentage point decrease in adults experiencing property crime since 2008/09



Higher victimisation rates for property crime are seen for:

**Younger people**

13.5% for 16-24

**Disabled people**

11.3% for disabled people

**Deprived areas**

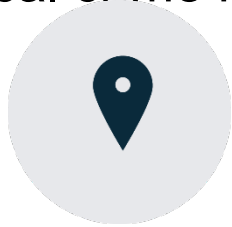
11.3% for those in 15% most deprived areas

**Urban areas**

9.4% for those in urban areas

# Perceptions of crime and safety

## Local crime rate



**76%**

Thought it has stayed the same or reduced  
Increased from 73% in 2019/20 and from 69% in 2008/09

**20%**

Thought it had increased

## National crime rate



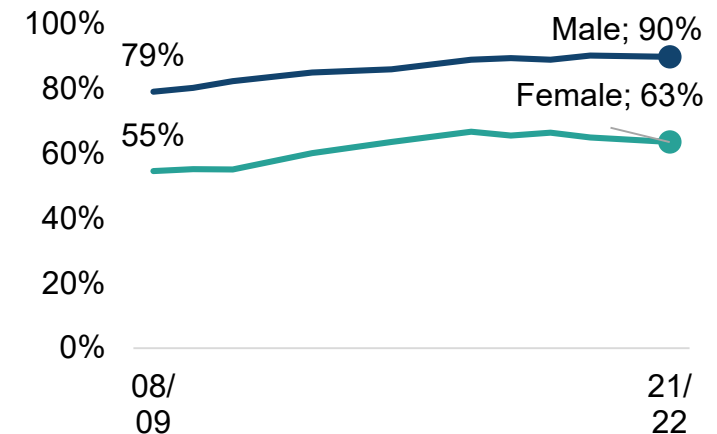
**52%**

Thought it has stayed the same or reduced  
Increased from 2019/20 (45%) and 2008/09 (40%)

**38%**

Thought it had increased  
Lower than 2019/20, but higher than 2014/15 (34%)

Feelings of safety when walking alone in the local area after dark by sex, 2008/09 to 2021/22.



**76%**

of adults felt safe walking alone after dark

Increased from 2008/09 (66%)

Unchanged since 2019/20



**90%**

Of males felt safe



**63%**

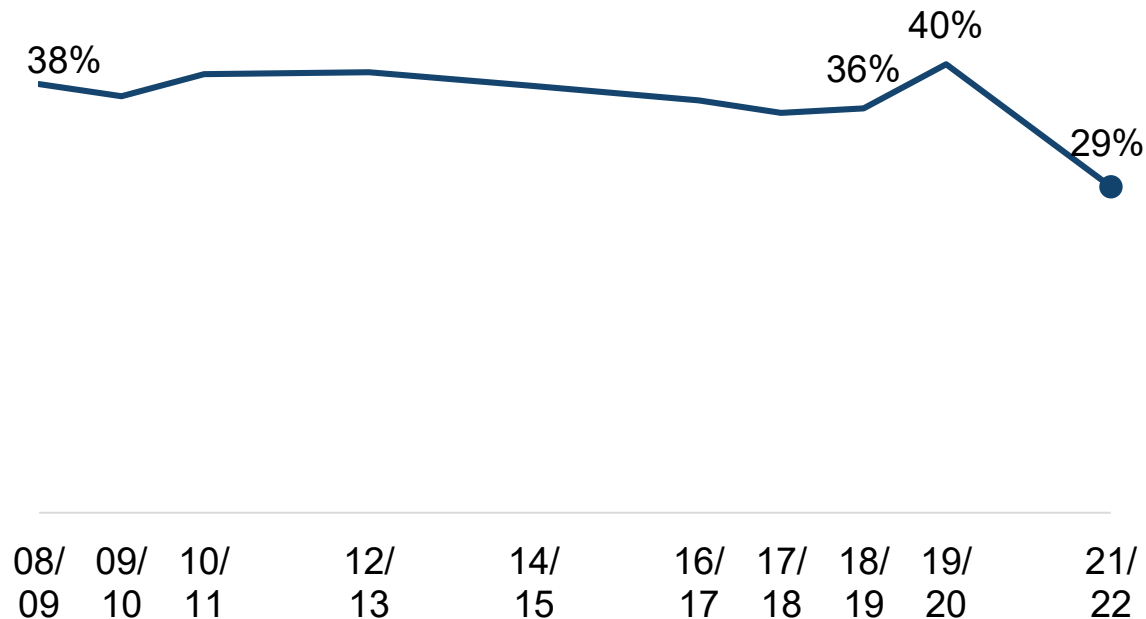
Of females felt safe

# Crime reported to the police

**The proportion of crime reported to the police in 2021/22 is at the lowest level since 2008/09.**

It has fallen to 29%, from 38% in 2008/09 and 40% in 2019/20.

**The proportion of crime reported to the police between 2008/09 and 2021/22**

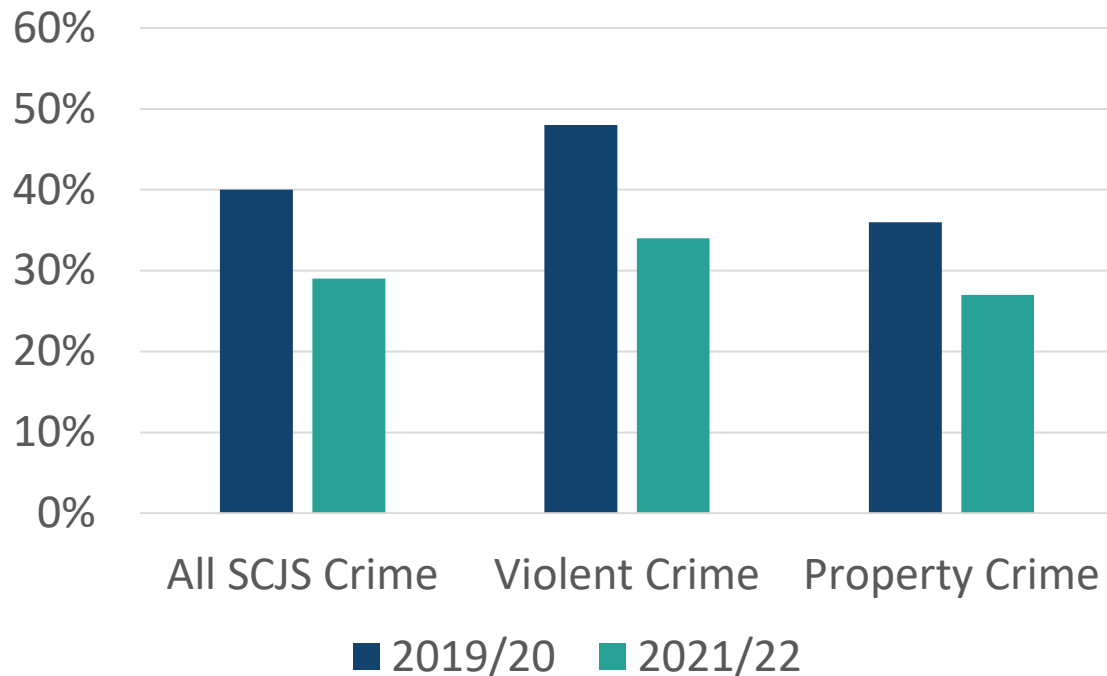


This is a surprising result, and is an unusually large change – there are a few reasons we are cautious about it:

1. It is a one off result – we need to see if it will be a trend in future surveys
2. As crime has fallen, there is a smaller number of victims among survey respondents which could make the results more volatile
3. People may have behaved differently during the pandemic, especially for incidents late 2020/early 2021
4. Perhaps the profile of crimes detected has changed rather than a genuine change in willingness to report crime.
5. We'd expect to see a larger decrease in police recorded crime if such a change occurred

# Crime reported to the police - types of crimes

Crimes reported to the police:



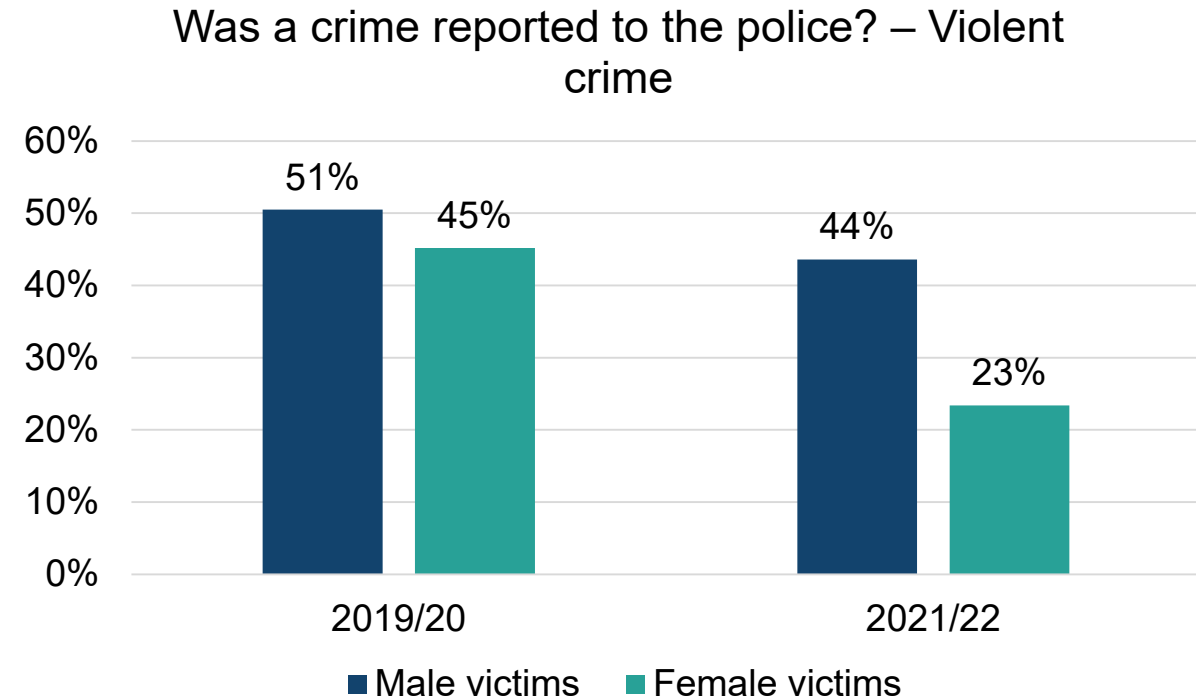
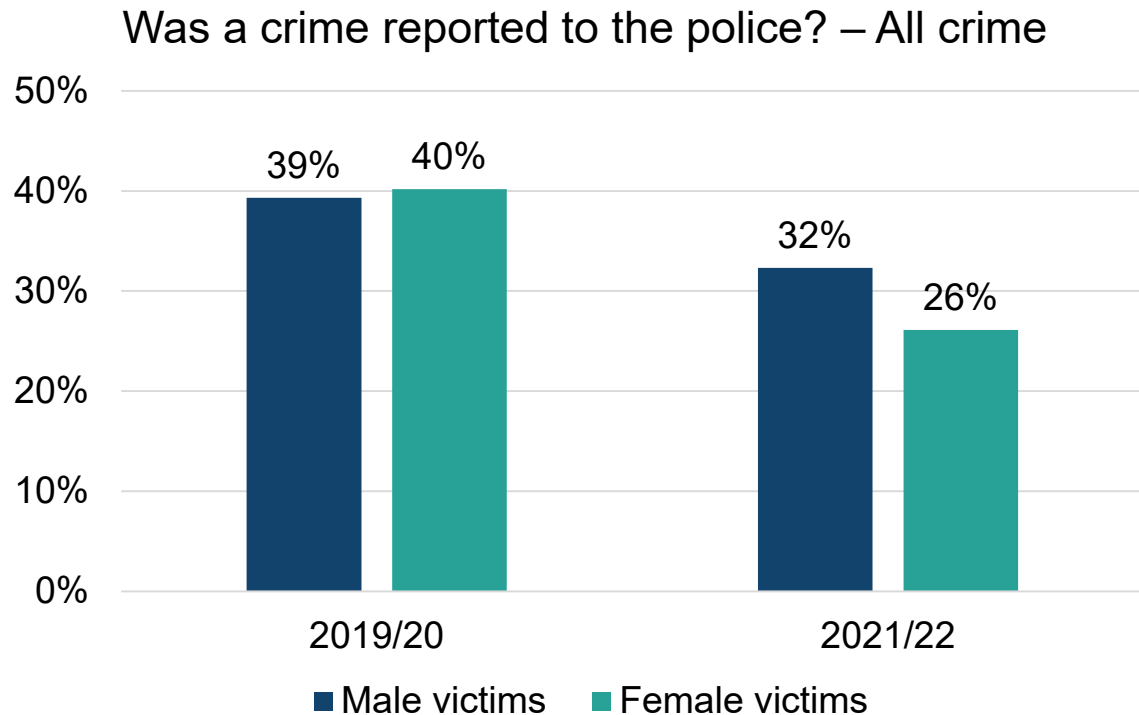
The latest results suggest that the likelihood of reporting a violent crime fell the most.

Reporting of violent crime was down 14 percentage points since 19/20.

The SCJS estimates that just over 80,000 fewer crimes were reported to the police between the 2 most recent surveys.

Despite making up just over a quarter of all SCJS crime, violent crime can account for nearly three-fifths of the gap in reported crimes.

# Crime reported to the police - types of crimes cont.



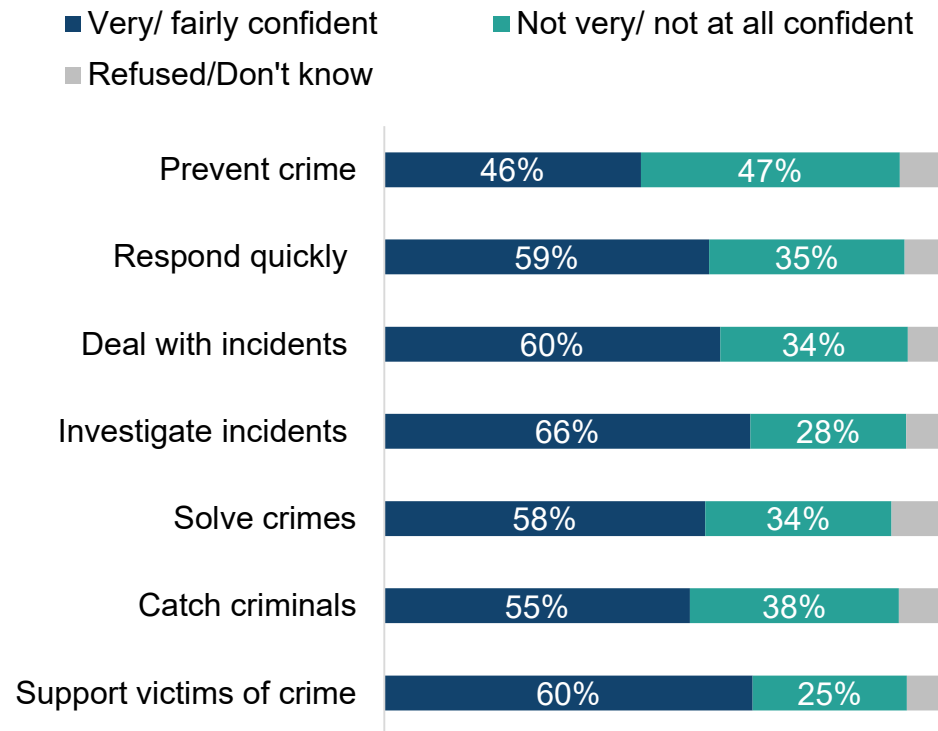
Victims are asked why they did not report a crime to the police. These estimates are prone to fluctuation, but in 2021/22 the most commonly given reasons for violent crime were:

- The victim dealt with the matter themselves
- The incident was a private matter
- Police would not have bothered
- Previous bad experience of police or courts

# Police

**The majority of adults were confident in the police across six of the seven effectiveness measures.**

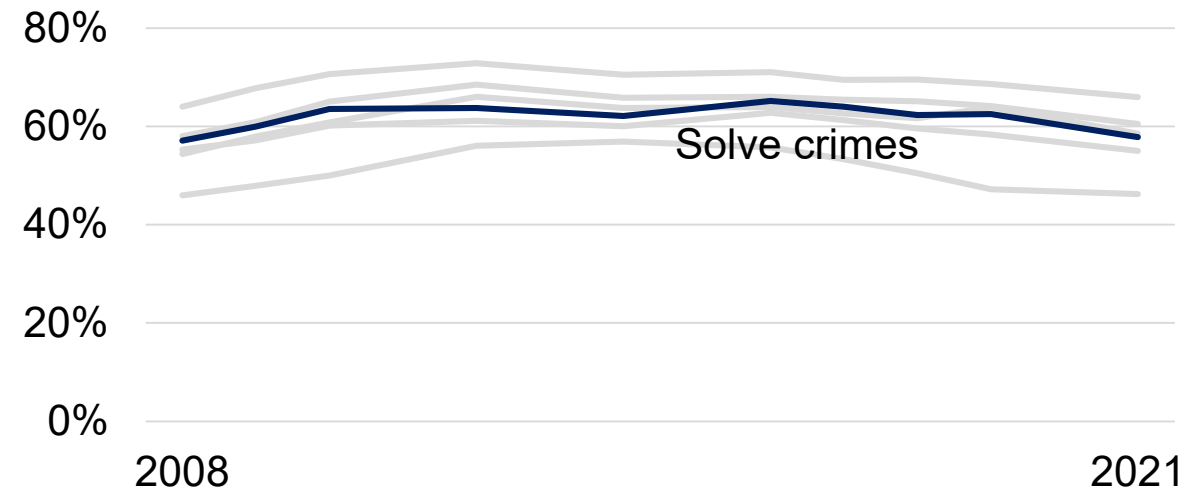
Proportion of adults who were confident in the ability of the local police to carry out various aspects of police work.



Confidence in the police:

- increased in the years between 2008/09 and 2012/13
- decreased since 2014/15 with three showing a return to the 2008/09 baseline

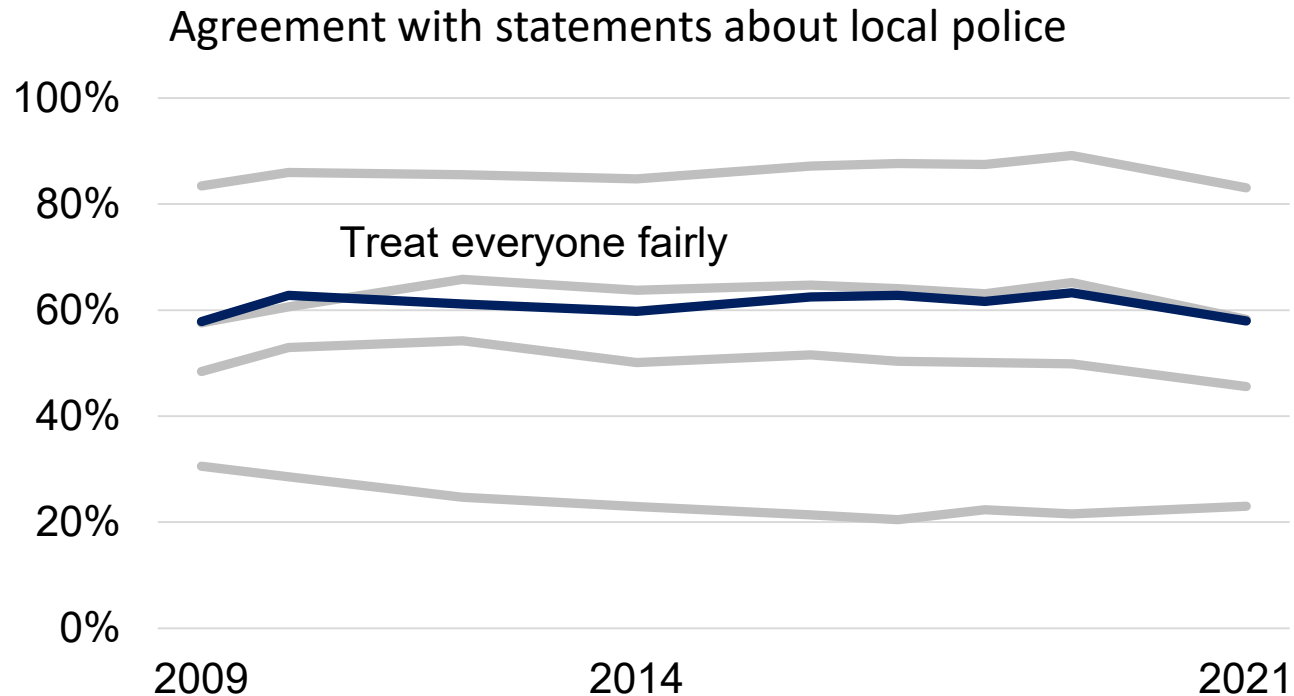
Five out of six found confidence in the ability of the police to be lower in 2021/22 than in 2019/20



- Declines in confidence in the police are also seen in other sources – SPA survey and Crime Survey for England and Wales
- Similar trends with confidence in the justice system overall in SCJS
- The Scottish Household Survey shows falls in satisfaction for other public services (e.g. health, schools, transport)

Further Analysis

# Police



Between 2019/20 and 2021/22 a smaller proportion of people agreed that the police:

- Would treat you with respect
- Can be relied on when you need them
- Treat everyone fairly
- Listen to the concerns of local people

## Justice System

SCJS also asks about confidence in the criminal justice system.

We see long term improvements in confidence across many measures, but some aspects have plateaued or began to decline

### Why have we seen a decline?

Not possible to confirm through SCJS alone

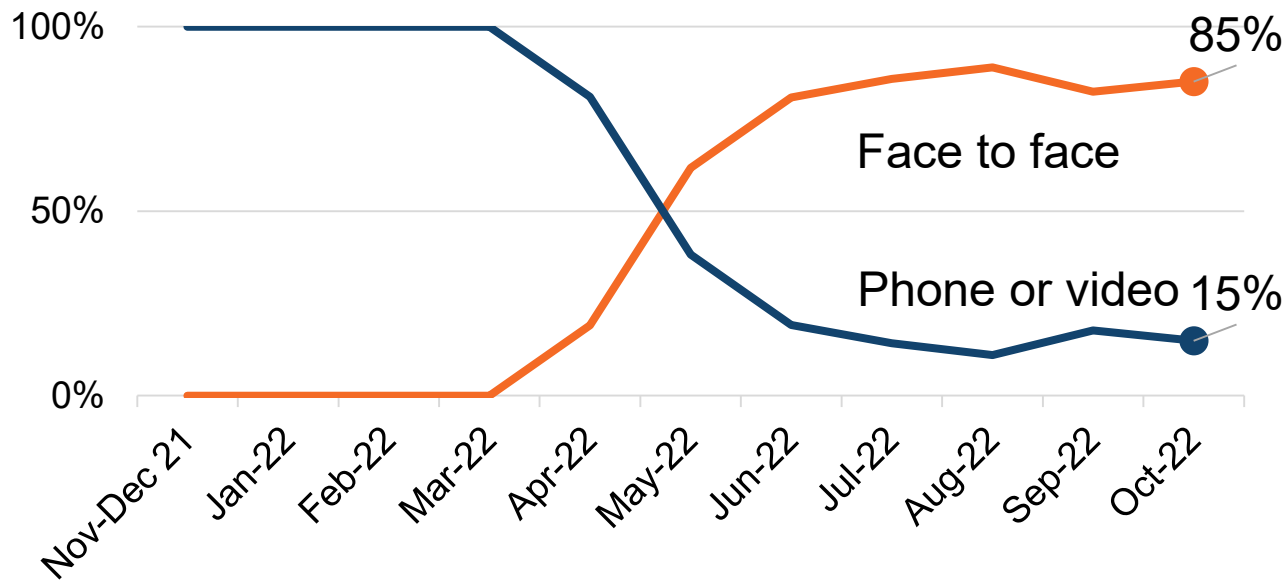
A range of factors might influence



# Impact of covid on interviewing

Two approaches used: face to face interviewing and “knock to nudge” approach

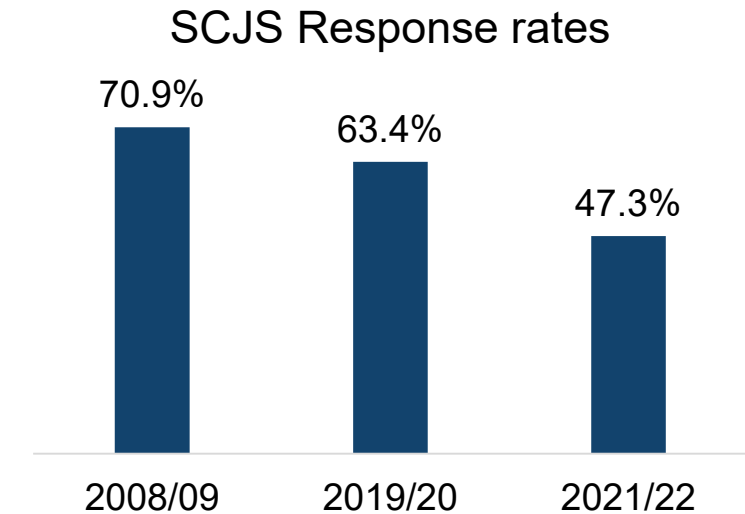
- Interviewer arrives at an address and arranges a telephone or video interview
- Face to face allowed from March 2022



Response rates were lower than 2019/20

There was already a long term decline, but much bigger drop in 2021/22

This has happened with other surveys



# Changes for the future

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**The 2023/24 survey was launched in July and the first results are expected by early 2025**

1. Changes to questions on **partner abuse** and **VAWG** to bring them in line with new legislation and to better capture instances of coercive control.
  - The first findings are expected in 2026 at the earliest following two years of data collection
  - In 2023, cognitive testing was conducted, and a new survey module on Partner Abuse was piloted
  - Significant effort was dedicated to formulating new and updated questions on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
2. Inclusion of a new module to allow the estimation of volume of **Fraud and computer misuse**.
  - The first findings are expected to be published alongside the 2023/24 report.

**The 2024/25 survey is due to commence in April 2024.**

More transparent analysis – aim to publicly provide source code for analysis of future surveys on github: <https://github.com/ScotGovAnalysis>

***Thank you for your attention!***

***Full SCJS results are available on the Scottish Government Website***

***Search 'scjs 2021' or visit <https://bit.ly/scjs-2021>***

***Please get in touch with any further questions***

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