

# The crime rate in britain

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



By the early 20th century many of the old industries on which Britain's industrial supremacy had been based were in decline. In the 1930s depression, they were hit hard: national unemployment in 1933 was 22%, but in parts of northern England, Scotland and Wales it was much higher. Some people did not have a job for twenty years. At the same time, new industries: electricity, radio, cars, household goods sprung up in new areas. There were thus huge contrasts of wealth and poverty between areas and between classes for much of the century. In the search for work, people increasingly moved around the country, making communities less stable and people more unknown to each other. The crime rate in early 20th century Britain was low, lower than for the early 19th century. Even the terrible poverty and unemployment of the 1930s appeared to bring only a small increase in crime. Then from about 1960, crime figures seemed to rocket upwards.

An explanation for this could be linked to a change in reported crime and unreported crime - this is known as the "dark figure" This is the difference between the numbers of crimes committed and the number reported. The "dark figure" exists, but no one knows how big it is, or if it is changing. For example, there was a 100% increase in the number of reported burglaries in the 1970s, yet only an 18% increase in the number of people who said they had been burgled. It would seem that burglary was increasing, but not as fast as the reported crime figures. It seems that the "dark figure" is shrinking as more crimes get reported: the police encourage the reporting of crime; insurance claims make it necessary; more people have telephones. Police reporting and acting on crime reports are also now far more thorough.

Newspaper crime reporting may also exaggerate the actual amount of crime. The newspapers like to report a crime and to sensationalize it.

One effect of this is fear: people are more afraid of crime, even when, in fact, they are at no more risk than in the past. Despite the many changes in crimes over the centuries, crime in Britain and Wales has actually been falling steadily for almost 20 years. There's been a long-term downward trend since the mid-90s, reaching an all-time low in 2014 when crime rates hit their lowest recorded level since 1981. One of the reasons for this may be the advances in policing during the twentieth century, which saw the introduction of police cars, police radios, Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV), The National Police Computer, The Finger Print Register, and of course DNA evidence.

Crime rate fluctuations cannot be attributed to one single factor, but are dependent on a concoction of various issues; shifting social and economic factors, the emerging impact of technology and the highly underestimated fact that many cases often remain unreported all contribute.