



Recorded Crime in Scotland: Attempted Murder and Serious Assault, 2008-09 and 2017-18



CRIME AND JUSTICE

Recorded Crime in Scotland: Attempted Murder and Serious Assault, 2008-09 and 2017-18

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a study into the changing nature of **police recorded attempted murder and serious assault** in Scotland (**shortened to serious assault below**). This includes new details on the characteristics of these cases, based on a random sample of police recorded crimes.

Key Findings

Serious assault is any attack where the victim needs hospital inpatient treatment or has any fractures / broken bones, internal injuries, severe concussion, lacerations that require stiches which may lead to impairment or disfigurement, or any other injury which may lead to impairment or disfigurement. Attempted murder is defined as attempting to kill without necessary cause, or acting in a way so reckless as to show the perpetrator was utterly regardless of the consequences.

This study into the characteristics of police recorded serious assault focused on the years of 2008-09 and 2017-18, the time between which saw the number of these crimes in Scotland decrease by 35% or 2,283 crimes (from 6,472 to 4,189).

The vast majority (89%) of the total fall in police recorded serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18 was due to fewer cases in the west of Scotland (centred in and around the city of Glasgow).

All of the fall in serious assault across Scotland came from fewer cases with a male victim, with little change in the number of cases with a female victim. Although the reduction in male victims has driven the total fall in serious assault since 2008-09, they still accounted for 80% of victims in 2017-18. Most male victims are seriously assaulted by acquaintances (55%) or strangers (23%), whereas females are more likely to be seriously assaulted by partners/ex-partners or relatives (52%).

Most (80%) of the fall in serious assault came from fewer cases where the perpetrator used a weapon, with the study finding that a serious assault in 2017-18 was less likely to involve a weapon than in 2008-09 (dropping from 63% to 55%).

In 2017-18, the use of a knife or other bladed/pointed article to commit a serious assault was much more common in the west of Scotland than elsewhere in the country. There was little difference across Scotland in the proportion of serious assault that involved other types of weapon.

Despite the reduction in the volume of serious assaults committed in Scotland over the past ten years, there has been no significant change in the proportion of these crimes that occur in a public setting or a private setting during this time – with most still occurring in a public setting.

The study also found that the average age of both a victim and perpetrator of serious assault in 2017-18 was several years older than their counterparts from 2008-09. This reflected a particularly large fall in the estimated rate of victimisation

for people in their twenties and offending rates for teenagers (aged 13 to 19 years) and people in their twenties.

Finally, the study found that nearly two-thirds (63%) of serious assault committed in 2017-18 included a reference to the consumption of alcohol. This may somewhat underestimate the true position as police officers may not always receive enough information to identify the consumption of alcohol prior to any incident.

Overall this research suggests that fewer cases of males attacking other males in the west of Scotland, often involving relatively younger people (teenagers and those in their twenties) and the use of a weapon, have contributed the most to the reduction in serious assault over the past ten years.

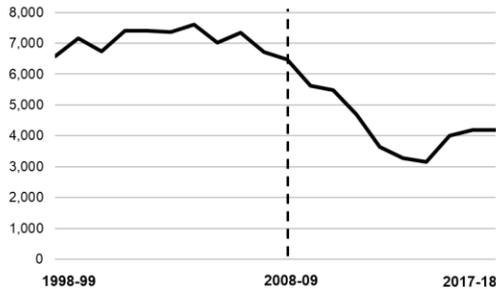
Whilst the police in Scotland now face fewer reports of serious assault today than a decade ago, the characteristics of these crimes are now a little less homogenous than before – with relatively fewer cases concentrated in the west of Scotland, or only involving relatively younger males. It remains the case that the use of knives or other blades is much more prevalent in the west of Scotland than elsewhere, and a majority of all serious assault committed in Scotland involved the consumption of alcohol prior to the incident.

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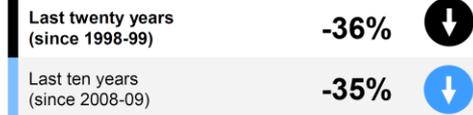


Serious Assault is any attack where the victim needs hospital inpatient treatment or has any fractures / broken bones, internal injuries, severe concussion, lacerations that require stiches which may lead to impairment or disfigurement, or any other injury which may lead to impairment or disfigurement. Attempted Murder is defined as attempting to kill without necessary cause, or acting in a way so reckless as to show the perpetrator was utterly regardless of the consequences. These findings relate to a sample of crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault recorded by the police.

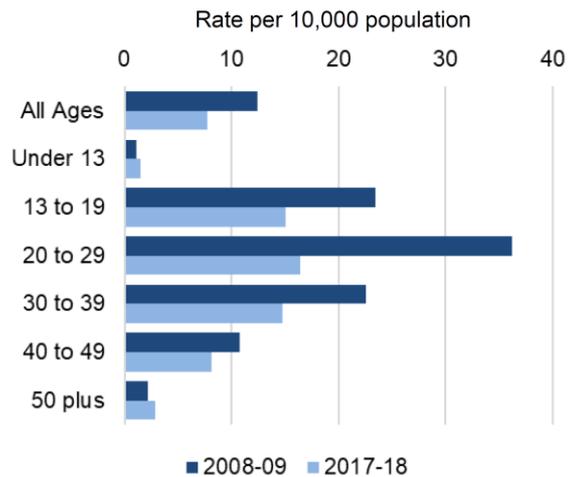
Trends in crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault



Changes over time in police recorded Attempted Murder and Serious Assault



Change in victimisation rate between 2008-09 and 2017-18



Characteristics of crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault

	2008-09	2017-18			
Male victims	87%	80%		In 2017-18, the majority of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault:	
Female victims	13%	20%			
Median age of victims	27	31			
Median age of perpetrators	23	27			
Weapon used	63%	55%			
				Took place in a public space	70%
				Involved male / all male perpetrator(s)	84%
				The perpetrator(s) were known to the victim	66%
				Noted the consumption of alcohol	63%

All of the **reduction** in attempted murder and serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18 is due to fewer crimes of attempted murder and serious assault which involved:

1. A **male victim, under 30 years old, in a public space, with a weapon**



This scenario is estimated to have fallen by **710**, which would account for **31%** of the total fall in recorded serious assault since 2008-09.

2. A **male victim, under 30 years old, in a public space, with no weapon**



This scenario is estimated to have fallen by **530**, which would account for **23%** of the total fall in recorded serious assault since 2008-09.

3. A **male victim, under 30 years old, in a private space, with a weapon**



This scenario is estimated to have fallen by **370**, which would account for **16%** of the total fall in recorded serious assault since 2008-09.

4. A **male victim, aged 30 or above, in a public space, with a weapon**



This scenario is estimated to have fallen by **330**, which would account for **14%** of the total fall in recorded serious assault since 2008-09.

5. A **male victim, aged 30 or above, in a private space, with a weapon**



This scenario is estimated to have fallen by **350**, which would account for **15%** of the total fall in recorded serious assault since 2008-09.

1. Introduction

This report presents information about the characteristics of police recorded attempted murder and serious assault in Scotland. 'Attempted murder and serious assault' is one of four categories Police Scotland use to record non-sexual crimes of violence – the other three being 'Homicide etc.', 'Robbery' and 'Other violence'.

This report provides information about crimes of attempted murder and serious assault which have come to the attention of the police. It does not provide information on the characteristics of all crimes of attempted murder and serious assault committed in society, as not all of these crimes are reported to the police.

The information presented is based on a sample of police records (rather than all records), and provides a broad indication of the characteristics of the 'Attempted murder and serious assault' category, rather than an exact measure.

This report is based on a review of police recorded crimes of attempted murder and serious assault from both 2008-09 and 2017-18. This approach was chosen to help inform users about the extent to which attempted murder and serious assault committed today in Scotland may differ in its character to attempted murder and serious assault committed 10 years ago. Over the longer term the number of crimes of attempted murder and serious assault recorded by the police has fallen substantially, down 35% over the past 10 years (from 6,472 in 2008-09 to 4,189 in 2017-18)¹ ([Chart 1](#)). This decrease is broadly similar to the overall fall in police recorded non-sexual crimes of violence (down 43% between 2008-09 and 2017-18).

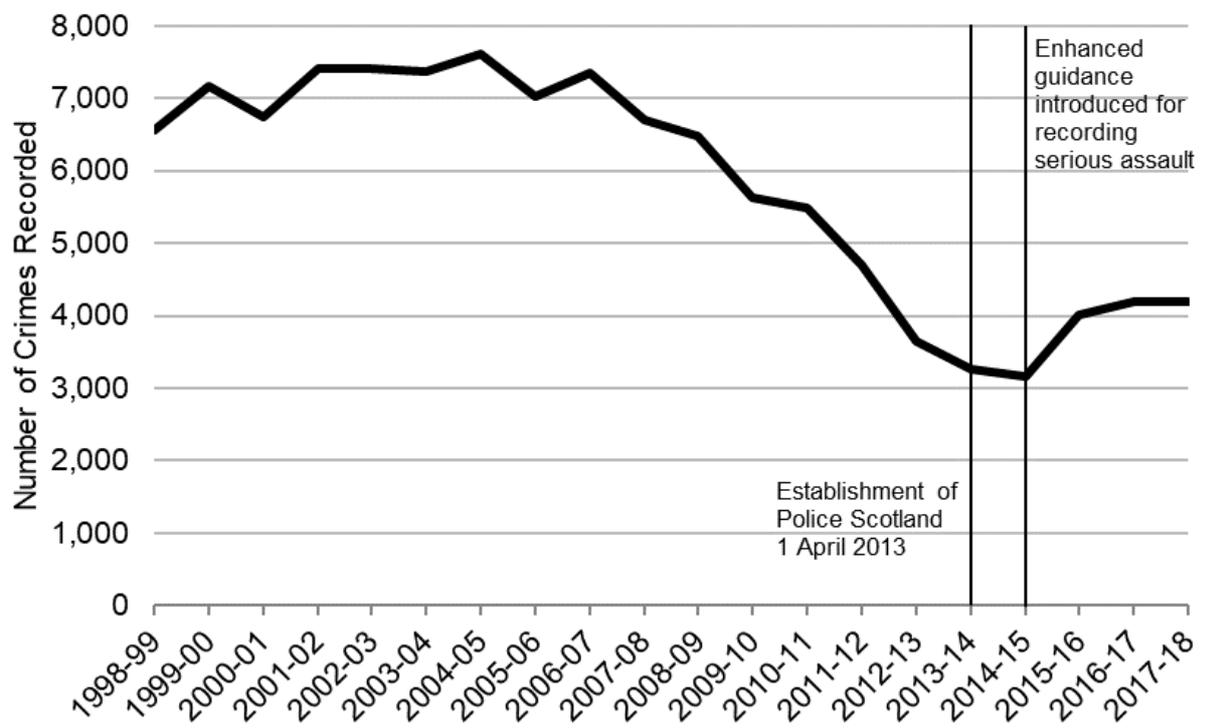
Chart 1 also shows an increase in attempted murder and serious assault in 2015-16. When Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland published a review of incident and crime recording in 2013², they recommended that the definition used for serious assault within the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) be reviewed and clarified, as some police officers sought greater clarity from the existing guidance. In response to this, enhanced guidelines as to the interpretation of serious assault were introduced in January 2015.

When publishing their Management Information report for Quarter 4 2015-16 in June 2016, Police Scotland advised that this action may have resulted in some crimes that would have been seen previously as common assaults now falling into the category of serious assault. This in turn may have led to an increase in overall levels of serious assault in 2015-16 (the first full year following the introduction of enhanced guidelines).

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime>

² <https://www.hmics.scot/publications/review-incident-and-crime-recording>

Chart 1. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault Recorded by the Police, 1998-99 to 2017-18



Source: National Statistics on Police Recorded Crime, Scotland

2. Methods

Scottish Government statisticians and Police Scotland analysts reviewed a random sample of 1,101 attempted murder and serious assault crime records.

These records were sampled from two different years; 550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18. This represented 8% and 13% of all attempted murder and serious assault crimes recorded by the police in 2008-09 and 2017-18 respectively. The inclusion of records from an earlier year was to allow the research to identify whether any significant changes had occurred in the characteristics of attempted murder and serious assault, as it was decreasing over the longer term.

For both years the sample was stratified by Police Scotland division. This was to ensure the prevalence of attempted murder and serious assault across the 13 geographic areas covered by those divisions was reflected within the research.

Information was recorded about the circumstances of each crime and the characteristics of the people involved. No personal or sensitive details were collected.

This research is based on a sample of police records (rather than all records), therefore the percentages (proportions) presented in this report are estimates. The true value may differ slightly from the findings presented below due to sampling error. As such, users should treat the following analysis as a broad indication of the characteristics of attempted murder and serious assault, rather than as an exact measure. Most figures are presented at the national level, as sample sizes are usually too small to provide robust estimates at geographies below this, such as individual police divisions. Some sub-national analysis has been possible where Scotland has been split into those divisions centred around Glasgow (i.e. the west of Scotland) and everywhere else (i.e. the rest of Scotland, including Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee).

There are several methods of calculating an average; in this report the median is used to present the average age of victims and perpetrators (i.e. the age at which half of individuals are older and half are younger). The mean measure of average age can be more influenced by values at the upper end of the distribution (i.e. the older ages) and may not be truly representative of the average age. By taking the middle value of the data, after sorting in ascending order, the median avoids this issue and is consequently considered a better indicator of typical 'average' age.

The geographic location of the victim's home, for each attempted murder and serious assault in the sample, was assigned to a datazone³. These datazones were then compared to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)⁴. The SIMD is a tool for identifying concentrations of deprivation in Scotland. SIMD uses information

³ Datazones are the key geography for the dissemination of small area statistics in Scotland.

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

from a range of indicators including income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing to provide a measure for each of the roughly 7,000 datazones in Scotland. Each datazone is provided a rank ranging from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived) and based on this rank can be grouped together into deciles, with each group consisting of 10% of all datazones in Scotland i.e. the first two deciles contain the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

As the sample was drawn across two years, two different editions of SIMD were used for the comparison, with SIMD12 compared to attempted murder and serious assault crimes from 2008-09 and SIMD16 compared to attempted murder and serious assault crimes from 2017-18.

3. Definition of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault

The Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS)⁵ states that every attack directed to take effect physically on the person of another is assault, whether or not actual injury is inflicted. The injuries sustained determine whether it is deemed serious or non-serious (i.e. common assault).

An assault or attack in which the victim sustains injury resulting in detention in hospital as an inpatient, for the treatment of that injury, or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital would be classified as serious:

- Fractures - fractures mean the breaking or cracking of a bone. Note: Nose is cartilage not bone so a 'broken nose' should not be classified as a serious assault unless it meets one of the other criteria.
- Internal injuries
- Severe concussion
- Lacerations requiring sutures, or equivalent, which may lead to impairment or disfigurement
- Any other injury which may lead to impairment or disfigurement

Attempted murder is defined as attempting to kill without necessary cause. In order to constitute the crime, there must be either an intention to kill, or a wilful act so reckless as to show that the person who committed it was utterly regardless of the consequences.

A crime of serious assault (or attempted murder) should be recorded for each identified victim.

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/SCRB/SCRManual>

4. Findings

As noted earlier, this report presents information on a sample of attempted murder and serious assault crimes recorded by the police. It does not provide information on the characteristics of all crimes of attempted murder and serious assault committed in society, since not all of these crimes are reported to the police.

Findings are presented for the two years sampled by the research; 2008-09 and 2017-18. Characteristics of attempted murder and serious assault crimes are shown as both the proportion of all attempted murder and serious assault recorded by the police (for example the percentage that includes a weapon) and what this suggests the volume of attempted murder and serious assault could be for that characteristic (again as an example, the estimated number of attempted murder and serious assault crimes that include a weapon).

When interpreting the report's findings, it is important that both these measures (proportion of all attempted murder and serious assault and suggested volume of attempted murder and serious assault) are considered in tandem - as the number of attempted murder and serious assault crimes recorded by the police in Scotland fell by more than a third between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 6,472 to 4,189). As such there are some characteristics which were more prevalent in police recorded attempted murder and serious assault during 2017-18 than 2008-09 (i.e. they made up a greater proportion of attempted murder and serious assault crimes than 10 years ago), however they are still estimated to be no more or possibly even less voluminous than in 2008-09, as the total volume of attempted murder and serious assault has fallen significantly.

Where relevant we have drawn readers' attention to where there has been notable change in a particular characteristic of police recorded attempted murder and serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Throughout the rest of this report 'Attempted murder and serious assault' will be referred to as 'serious assault'. This is because serious assault makes up the vast majority of the 'Attempted murder and serious assault' category with attempted murder making up only a small proportion (11% in 2008-09 and 6% in 2017-18) of cases.

Where does attempted murder and serious assault occur?

Geographic location

In 2008-09, nearly two-thirds (64%) of serious assaults were committed in the west of Scotland⁶, with the other 36% occurring elsewhere in the country⁷. There was a marked change in this position by 2017-18, whereby one half (50%) of serious assaults were committed in the west of Scotland and the other half (50%) occurred elsewhere (map of Scottish local authorities in [Annex](#)). This shift in the balance of serious assault across Scotland was due to a relatively larger fall in serious assault committed in the west of Scotland, compared to those that happened outwith this area.

Changes in the prevalence of serious assault across Scotland can be further demonstrated using population rates. In 2008-09, the rate of serious assault per 10,000 population in the west of Scotland was significantly higher than elsewhere in the country, with 18.5 serious assaults per 10,000 population in the west compared to 7.9 serious assaults per 10,000 population elsewhere ([Table 1](#)). By 2017-18, the rate in the west of Scotland had halved (fallen by 50%) to 9.2 serious assaults per 10,000 population. The rate for elsewhere in the country also fell between 2008-09 and 2017-18 - but not to the same extent, falling by 15% from 7.9 serious assaults per 10,000 population in 2008-09 to 6.7 serious assaults per 10,000 population in 2017-18.

As outlined above, serious assault in the west of Scotland fell at a much faster rate than for serious assault that occurred outwith this area, albeit rates remain slightly higher in the west of Scotland than elsewhere in the country. This reduction in the volume of serious assault in the west of Scotland accounted for the vast majority (89%) of the total fall in serious assault across Scotland since 2008-09 (with serious assault down 2,023 cases in the west of Scotland between 2008-09 and 2017-18, compared to a reduction of 260 for elsewhere in the country).

Over the ten year period, the rate of serious assault fell in every local authority in the west, with large reductions seen in the local authorities that started with the highest rates (Glasgow City, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire). Glasgow City still remains the local authority with the highest rate, however this has more than halved (down 55%) from 32.5 serious assaults per 10,000 population in 2008-09 to 14.7 serious assaults per 10,000 population in 2017-18.

Elsewhere in the country, reductions were seen in almost every local authority over the ten year period. The exceptions were Dumfries and Galloway (which saw no change) and East Lothian and Midlothian which saw small increases (up 8% and 5% respectively).

⁶ Defined as the police divisions of Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire.

⁷ Defined as the police divisions of Edinburgh, Fife, Forth Valley, Lothians and Scottish Borders, Highland & Islands, North East, Tayside and Dumfries & Galloway.

Table 1. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault Recorded by the Police, by Local Authority, 2008-09 and 2017-18

Area	Number of crimes		Crimes per 10,000 Population		
	2008-09	2017-18	2008-09	2017-18	Percentage change
West of Scotland	4,116	2,093	18.5	9.2	-50%
Argyll and Bute	55	44	6.1	5.1	-17%
East Ayrshire	145	80	11.9	6.6	-45%
East Dunbartonshire	86	50	8.2	4.6	-44%
East Renfrewshire	51	20	5.7	2.1	-63%
Glasgow City	1,872	914	32.5	14.7	-55%
Inverclyde	180	82	22.0	10.4	-53%
North Ayrshire	217	107	15.7	7.9	-50%
North Lanarkshire	452	299	13.6	8.8	-35%
Renfrewshire	367	156	21.3	8.8	-59%
South Ayrshire	130	57	11.5	5.1	-56%
South Lanarkshire	386	210	12.4	6.6	-47%
West Dunbartonshire	175	74	19.2	8.3	-57%
Elsewhere	2,356	2,096	7.9	6.7	-15%
Aberdeen City	254	210	11.9	9.2	-23%
Aberdeenshire	104	93	4.2	3.6	-16%
Angus	64	62	5.6	5.3	-5%
City of Edinburgh	445	385	9.7	7.5	-23%
Clackmannanshire	53	46	10.4	8.9	-14%
Dumfries and Galloway	98	97	6.5	6.5	0%
Dundee City	154	147	10.7	9.9	-7%
East Lothian	43	50	4.4	4.8	8%
Falkirk	133	126	8.7	7.9	-9%
Fife	293	288	8.1	7.8	-5%
Highland	220	151	9.7	6.4	-34%
Midlothian	44	51	5.4	5.7	5%
Moray	75	60	8.1	6.3	-22%
Na h-Eileanan Siar	17	6	6.2	2.2	-64%
Orkney Islands	11	11	5.3	5.0	-6%
Perth and Kinross	85	80	5.9	5.3	-11%
Scottish Borders	55	54	4.9	4.7	-3%
Shetland Islands	7	6	3.1	2.6	-17%
Stirling	64	53	7.2	5.6	-22%
West Lothian	137	120	8.0	6.6	-17%
Scotland	6,472	4,189	12.4	7.7	-38%

Sources: Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2008-09 and 2017-18 (Scottish Government) and Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2008 & 2017 (National Records of Scotland)

Physical location

Almost half of serious assault (47%) occurred in the street or open space in 2017-18 ([Table 5](#)). Just over a third (36%) occurred in a dwelling⁸, with a night time economy, retail or other business setting⁹ accounting for the remaining 17% of serious assault. These proportions have not changed between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Serious assaults in the street or open space are estimated to have fallen by 1,130 between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 3,080 to 1,950). At the same time the volume of serious assaults occurring in a dwelling is estimated to have fallen by 750 (from 2,260 to 1,510). Serious assaults occurring in a night time economy, retail or other business setting are estimated to have fallen by 390 (from 1,110 to 720).

This suggests that around half of the total fall in police recorded serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (down 2,283) has come from a fall in street or open space-based serious assaults. However, serious assaults in dwellings, and night time economy, retail or other business settings have also fallen by similar amounts proportionally.

The location of serious assault was also split into a public or private space. Serious assaults within a person's property (i.e. behind a front-door) have been defined in the research as 'private space' serious assault, with all other settings (including the communal areas of a residential building) defined as 'public space' serious assault.

More than two-thirds of serious assault (70%) occurred in a public space in 2017-18, with the remaining 30% taking place in a private space. This split has not changed significantly since 2008-09.

Serious assault in a public space is estimated to have fallen by 1,420 between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 4,330 to 2,910). At the same time the volume of serious assault estimated to have occurred in a private space fell by 840 from 2,120 to 1,280.

⁸ Either within a private property or the communal area of a residential building

⁹ In (or nearby) a pub, nightclub, hotel, other licensed premises, shop or other private business.

Who are the victims of attempted murder and serious assault?

Most serious assault (80%) had a male victim in 2017-18 ([Table 6](#)). This has fallen from 87% in 2008-09. At the same time the proportion of serious assault with a female victim increased from 13% to 20%, though this represented little change in the estimated volume of cases (up 30 from 820 to 850).

Serious assault with a male victim is estimated to have fallen by 2,310 between 2008-09 and 2017-18, from 5,650 to 3,340. This suggests that all of the total fall in police recorded serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (down 2,283) has come from a fall in serious assault with a male victim.

Victims of serious assault in 2017-18 were older than victims from 2008-09, with the median age of a serious assault victim increasing from 27 years old to 31 years old ([Table 7](#)).

Further analysis can be undertaken using broader categories to group victims by age, with two of these (ages 20 to 29 years old and 50 years and above) showing significant change since 2008-09. The proportion of serious assault with a victim aged between 20 and 29 years old fell from 38% in 2008-09 to 29% in 2017-18. At the same time the proportion of serious assault with a victim aged 50 years and above increased from 6% to 15%. The proportion of victims who are in the other age categories - under 13, teenagers (i.e. 13 to 19 years old), 30 to 39 years old, and 40 to 49 years old have not changed significantly.

The volume of serious assault experienced by age groups from 13 to 49 years old is estimated to have fallen between 2008-09 and 2017-18. This fall was largest for those aged 20 to 29 years old (down by 1,260 from 2,470 to 1,210). The volume of serious assault with a teenage victim is estimated to have fallen by 460 (from 1,060 to 600), the volume with a victim aged between 30 and 39 years old has fallen by 500 (from 1,530 to 1,030) and the volume with a victim aged between 40 and 49 years old has fallen by 290 (from 870 to 580). The volume of serious assault with a victim aged under 13 years old has not changed significantly, whilst the volume of serious assaults with a victim aged 50 and above is estimated to have increased by 210 (from 400 to 610).

This suggests that the fall in serious assaults with a victim aged 20 to 29 years old, has contributed significantly (by more than half) to the reduction in total recorded serious assaults between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

[Table 2](#) below shows the age of serious assault victims compared to Scotland's population as a whole. The estimated number of victims for each age group reflects the number of times a victim of that age was identified in the sample, grossed up to the total number of serious assaults recorded by the police. This analysis should be seen as providing a broad indication of serious assault victimisation by age, rather than an exact measure - as it is based on a sample of serious assaults rather than all serious assaults recorded by the police. Furthermore it does not account for any

repeat victimisation that may be faced by certain individuals, where they have been a victim of multiple serious assaults during the reporting year.

The table suggests that there were an estimated 12.4 victims of police recorded serious assault per 10,000 population in 2008-09. This figure was highest for people aged 20 to 29 years old, at 36.2 victims per 10,000 population. This was followed by teenagers and those aged between 30 and 39 years old, at 23.4 and 22.6 victims per 10,000 population, respectively. Those aged 40 to 49 years old had a slightly lower than average victimisation rate (10.8 victims per 10,000 population), whilst those aged under 13 years old and 50 years and above had a far lower than average victimisation rate (1.1 and 2.2 victims per 10,000 population respectively).

The estimated number of serious assault victims per 10,000 population had fallen to 7.7 by 2017-18. The rate of serious assault victimisation has decreased for all age groups between 13 and 49 years old. This fall has been particularly large for those aged 20 to 29 years old (down from 36.2 victims per 10,000 population in 2008-09 to 16.4 victims per 10,000 population in 2017-18), whilst the victimisation rate for teenagers fell from 23.4 to 15.1 victims per 10,000 population, and from 22.6 to 14.8 victims per 10,000 population for those aged 30 to 39 years old. Whereas victimisation rates were much higher in 2008-09 for those aged 20 to 29 years old compared to any other group, by 2017-18 the rates were very similar across teenagers, 20 to 29 year olds and 30-39 year olds.

Between 2008-09 and 2017-18, the victimisation rate for those aged 40 to 49 years old fell from 10.8 victims per 10,000 population to 8.1 victims per 10,000 population. The victimisation rate for those aged 50 and above increased from 2.2 victims per 10,000 population to 2.9 victims per 10,000 population albeit remains significantly lower than every other age group except those aged under 13. Serious assault with a victim aged under 13 years is very rare with 1.5 victims per 10,000 population in 2017-18.

Table 2. Age of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault Victims compared to population, 2008-09 and 2017-18

Age Group	2008-09		2017-18	
	Estimated Number of Victims	Victims per 10,000 Population	Estimated Number of Victims	Victims per 10,000 Population
Under 13 years	80	1.1	110	1.5
Aged 13 to 19 years	1,060	23.4	600	15.1
Aged 20 to 29 years	2,470	36.2	1,210	16.4
Aged 30 to 39 years	1,530	22.6	1,030	14.8
Aged 40 to 49 years	870	10.8	580	8.1
Aged 50 and above	400	2.2	610	2.9
All Ages	6,472	12.4	4,189	7.7

Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2008 & 2017 (National Records of Scotland)¹⁰

Victims of serious assault are more likely to live in areas of higher deprivation, with 42% of serious assault victims in 2017-18 living in Scotland's 20% most deprived areas (Table 8). 77% of serious assault victims in 2017-18 lived in urban areas, compared to the 70% of Scotland's population that lives in those areas. Relatively fewer victims of serious assault lived in a rural or small town setting (at least 17% in 2017-18, compared to the 30% of Scotland's population that lives in those areas).

¹⁰ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates>

Who are the perpetrators of attempted murder and serious assault?

A crime of serious assault can be committed by a single perpetrator or multiple perpetrators (i.e. at least two). The proportion of serious assault with multiple perpetrators has fallen from 27% in 2008-09 to 18% in 2017-18 ([Table 9](#)). Over the same time, the proportion with a single perpetrator increased from 65% to 78%, whilst the proportion with an unknown number of perpetrators fell from 7% in 2008-09 to 4% in 2017-18.

Most serious assaults (84%) had a male or all male group of perpetrators in 2017-18 ([Table 10](#)). Only 10% of serious assault in 2017-18 had a female or all female group of perpetrators, whilst the remaining 6% had a mixed gender group or a perpetrator of unknown gender. These proportions have not changed significantly since 2008-09.

Serious assault with a male or all male group of perpetrators is estimated to have fallen by 1,810 between 2008-09 and 2017-18, from 5,330 to 3,520. This fall accounts for around 80% of the total reduction in police recorded serious assault between those two years.

Like the victims of serious assault, perpetrators of serious assault were also older in 2017-18 than perpetrators from 2008-09 - with the median age of a serious assault perpetrator increasing from 23 years old to 27 years old ([Table 11](#)).

In 2017-18, more than a third (37%) of serious assaults involved at least one perpetrator aged between 20 and 29 years old. More than a quarter (27%) involved at least one perpetrator aged 30 to 39 years old (which was higher than the 19% in 2008-09), and 17% involved at least one teenage perpetrator (aged between 13 and 19 years old). 10% involved at least one perpetrator aged 40 to 49 years old, 7% involved at least one perpetrator aged 50 or older, and only 1% involved at least one perpetrator under 13 years old.

Serious assault that involved at least one perpetrator aged 20 to 29 years old is estimated to have fallen by 790, from 2,330 in 2008-09 to 1,540 by 2017-18. A similar fall was estimated in the volume of serious assault involving at least one teenage perpetrator (from 1,440 to 710). There was little estimated change in the volumes of serious assault for the other age groups. It should be noted that a single crime of serious assault will appear more than once in the above estimates if it includes perpetrators from more than one age group (for example a victim is seriously assaulted simultaneously by two perpetrators aged 17 and 21 years old).

This suggests that the fall in serious assault including at least one teenage perpetrator or at least one perpetrator aged 20 to 29 years old, has driven the reduction in total recorded serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

It should be noted that the proportion of serious assaults where the age of the perpetrator was unknown fell significantly over the same period, though this is

unlikely to have had a major impact on the changes outlined above (from 18% in 2008-09 to 9% in 2017-18).

[Table 3](#) below shows the age of serious assault perpetrators compared to Scotland's population as a whole. The estimated number of perpetrators for each age group reflects the number of times a perpetrator of that age was identified in the sample, grossed up to the total number of serious assaults recorded by the police. Those serious assaults that involved more than one perpetrator with a known age are included multiple times in the table. This analysis should be seen as providing a broad indication of offending by age, rather than an exact measure - as it is based on a sample of serious assaults rather than all serious assaults recorded by the police. Furthermore it does not account for any repeat offending that may have been carried out by certain individuals, where they have committed multiple serious assaults in a reporting year nor does it include any perpetrator where no age or estimated age was available from the crime record.

The table suggests that there were an estimated 17.7 perpetrators of police recorded serious assault per 10,000 population in 2008-09. This figure was far higher for teenagers and people aged 20 to 29 years old, at 50.7 and 41.3 victims per 10,000 population respectively. Those aged 30 to 39 years old had a slightly higher than average rate (18.4 perpetrators per 10,000 population), whilst those aged 40 to 49 years old had a lower than average rate (6.7 perpetrators per 10,000 population). The rate for those aged under 13 years and 50 years and above was very low (1.0 and 1.4 perpetrators per 10,000 population respectively).

The estimated number of serious assault perpetrators per 10,000 population had fallen to 9.8 by 2017-18. The rate for teenagers and those aged 20 to 29 years old fell substantially to 23.6 and 23.9 perpetrators per 10,000 population (down from 50.7 and 41.3 perpetrators per 10,000 population). In contrast there was very little estimated change in the rate of offending for all other age groups. Despite this change, offending rates still remain highest for teenagers and those aged 20 to 29 years old.

Table 3. Age of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault Perpetrators compared to population, 2008-09 and 2017-18

Age Group	2008-09		2017-18	
	Estimated Number of Perpetrators	Perpetrators per 10,000 Population	Estimated Number of Perpetrators	Perpetrators per 10,000 Population
Under 13 years	70	1.0	60	0.8
Aged 13 to 19 years	2,290	50.7	940	23.6
Aged 20 to 29 years	2,820	41.3	1,760	23.9
Aged 30 to 39 years	1,250	18.4	1,160	16.8
Aged 40 to 49 years	540	6.7	460	6.4
Aged 50 and above	260	1.4	280	1.3
Unknown	1,950	n/a	640	n/a
All Ages	9,190	17.7	5,307	9.8

Source: *Mid-year Population Estimates, 2008 & 2017 (National Records of Scotland)*¹¹

¹¹ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates>

Relationship between victims and perpetrators of attempted murder and serious assault

More than two-thirds (70%) of serious assault had both a male victim and a male or all-male group of perpetrators in 2017-18 ([Table 12](#)).

Serious assault that involved all male victims and perpetrators is estimated to have fallen by 1,860 between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 4,790 to 2,930). This accounts for a substantial proportion (around 80%) of the total fall in police recorded serious assault during this time.

Between 2008-09 and 2017-18, the proportion of serious assault with a female victim and a male or all-male group of perpetrators increased from 8% to 14%. However, the volume of these cases did not change significantly.

It was not possible to ascertain the relationship between the victim and perpetrator(s) in a number of cases (either because the perpetrator was not identified or the relationship was not noted). The proportion of serious assaults where the relationship between the victim and perpetrator(s) was unknown has fallen from 21% in 2008-09 to 12% in 2017-18. In nearly half (44%) of those cases with an unknown relationship in 2017-18, the crime record notes at least some unwillingness by the victim to engage with police investigations into the incident. This will have an impact on the proportions noted below as they will to some extent underestimate the true position (and more so for 2008-09 as it has a greater proportion of cases with unknown relationship). As such, year to year changes should be treated with a degree of caution.

At least two-thirds (66%) of serious assaults in 2017-18 were committed by someone known to the victim ([Table 13](#)). This has increased from 52% of serious assault in 2008-09, though as noted above at least part of this could be due to a reduction in cases where the relationship between the victim and perpetrator(s) was unknown.

Looking at relationship in more detail, in 2017-18 half (50%) of serious assaults were committed by an acquaintance of the victim. Around a fifth (21%) were committed by a stranger and 17% were committed by a partner/ex-partner or relative of the victim.

These proportions vary significantly by the victim's gender. Male victims of serious assault are most often attacked by acquaintances or strangers (55% and 23% respectively of serious assault with a male victim) and much less likely to be attacked by a partner/ex-partner or relative (8%). In contrast, female victims (whilst there are far fewer of them than males), are more likely to be attacked by a partner/ex-partner or relative (52% of serious assault with a female victim), compared to an acquaintance (34%). It is rarer for a female to be seriously assaulted by a stranger (12% of cases).

The breakdown of assault by a partner/ex-partner or relative also varies by victim gender. More than two-thirds (69% in 2017-18) of serious assaults committed by a partner/ex-partner or relative of the victim were committed by a partner/ex-partner, which split into 43% for male victims and 84% for female victims.

The largest drop in terms of volume is estimated to have been from the reduction in serious assault where the relationship was unknown, falling by 890 from 1,390 in 2008-09 to 500 in 2017-18. Over the same period, the number of serious assaults committed by a stranger is estimated to have fallen by 770 (from 1,640 to 870) and the number committed by an acquaintance is estimated to have fallen by 600 (from 2,710 to 2,110). The number of serious assaults committed by a partner/ex-partner or relative of the victim has not changed significantly.

Other characteristics of attempted murder and serious assault

A little over half of serious assault (55%) involved the use of a weapon in 2017-18 ([Table 14](#)). This has fallen from 63% of serious assault in 2008-09. As such the corresponding proportion of serious assault which does not involve the use of a weapon has increased from 37% in 2008-09 to 45% in 2017-18.

A quarter of serious assault (25%) involved the use of a knife or other bladed/pointed article in 2017-18, and 30% involved the use of another form of weapon. These proportions by type of weapon have not changed significantly since 2008-09.

Items that may be associated with the consumption of alcohol (for example glasses and bottles) accounted for 10% of all serious assault in 2017-18, whilst industrial or household tools (for example a hammer) and firearms/imitation firearms accounted for 3% and less than 1% of serious assault respectively. None of the crimes sampled from 2008-09 or 2017-18 involved the perpetrator using a corrosive substance.

Serious assault that involved a weapon is estimated to have fallen by 1,820 between 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 4,110 to 2,290). A smaller reduction was seen in serious assault that did not involve a weapon, where the estimated volume fell by 470 (from 2,370 to 1,900). This suggests that the fall in serious assault involving a weapon has had a bigger impact on the total reduction in crimes of serious assault, than those where no weapon was used.

In 2017-18, the most common type of injuries sustained by victims were cuts or permanent disfigurement (not caused by a sharp implement) (42%), followed by broken bones or fractures (30%) ([Table 15](#)). Just under a quarter of reported injuries (24%) were caused by a sharp-item (stab/slash wounds), while a small proportion of serious assault (4%) resulted in minor or no injury to the victim. This can be where a crime of attempted murder didn't involve the victim sustaining a serious injury, or in a handful of cases where the crime would have been better classified as something other than a serious assault. Where more than one physical injury was sustained the most serious injury was used to classify the case.

The largest decrease in estimated volume of serious assault was where the victim sustained sharp-item related injuries (a fall of 900 from 1,890 to 990). The drop in sharp-item related injuries reflects the overall reduction in the estimated number of serious assault where a knife or bladed/pointed article was used. The number of serious assaults where the victim sustained cuts or permanent disfigurement (not from a sharp implement) also fell (from 2,210 in 2008-09 to 1,760 in 2017-18).

The study identified that nearly every serious assault that came to the attention of the police also involved the NHS in some way (e.g. the victim being treated by the Scottish Ambulance Service and/or being taken to a hospital). This figure was 96% in 2017-18 (and 95% in 2008-09). It is very likely that there are some incidents

which the NHS have some involvement in but do not come to the attention of the police.

With regards to the use of weapons, there are some significant differences in the characteristics of serious assault in the west of Scotland¹² compared to elsewhere in the country¹³. A weapon was used in nearly two-thirds (64%) of serious assault in the west of Scotland in 2017-18, compared to 46% of serious assault elsewhere. Just over one third (36%) of serious assault in the west of Scotland did not involve the use of a weapon, compared to more than half (54%) in the rest of the country ([Table 16](#)).

This difference is due to a higher proportion of serious assault in the west of Scotland involving the use of a knife or other bladed/pointed article. In 2017-18, one third (33%) of serious assault in the west of Scotland involved the use of a knife or other bladed/pointed article, compared to 16% of serious assault in the rest of the country. In contrast, there was little difference in the use of other weapon types, with these accounting for 30% of serious assaults committed in both the west of Scotland and elsewhere in the country.

The volume of serious assault in the west of Scotland which involved the use of a knife or other bladed/pointed article is estimated to have fallen by 840 (from 1,540 in 2008-09 and 700 in 2017-18). Similarly, the volume of serious assault in the west of Scotland which involved the use of another type of weapon is estimated to have fallen by 800 (from 1,430 in 2008-09 and 630 in 2017-18). Collectively this accounts for nearly three-quarters (72%) of the total fall in serious assault, across Scotland, between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Just under half (47%) of serious assault in 2017-18 was reported by a witness and one third (34%) was reported by the victim or on behalf of the victim (for example a guardian or someone the victim asked to contact the police) ([Table 17](#)). Reports by another emergency service (most often the Scottish Ambulance Service) accounted for 14% of serious assault, whilst very few cases come to the police's attention during observations whilst on patrol or as a result of investigating another crime, offence or incident (4% of all serious assault in 2017-18).

A number of records made reference to the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs, or noted this as a motivating factor in relation to the crime. This could be in reference to the perpetrator(s), the victim(s) or both. This does not necessarily mean that it was a causal factor in all of these crimes. At the same time alcohol or drugs may have been consumed prior to some of these crimes taking place, or been a motivating factor, but not referenced in the crime record.

¹² Defined as the police divisions of Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde and Argyll and West Dunbartonshire

¹³ Defined as the police divisions of Edinburgh, Fife, Forth Valley, Lothians and Scottish Borders, Highland & Islands, North East, Tayside and Dumfries & Galloway

In 2017-18, nearly two-thirds (63%) of serious assault crime records made reference to the consumption of alcohol. One in ten serious assaults (10%) made reference to drugs.

Nearly all records include information on the time serious assaults occur (time of day and day of week). In 2017-18, three out of every five (59%) serious assaults (where day and time was known) occurred at the weekend (i.e. between 6pm on Friday night and midnight on Sunday).

What types of attempted murder and serious assault fell the most between 2008-09 and 2017-18?

Some of the measures discussed above can be combined - to present a picture of how likely it is that a police recorded serious assault will comprise of a certain scenario. This approach has been used to describe the different types of serious assault faced by the police in Scotland, both in 2008-09 and 2017-18. From this, an estimate can then be made of which types of serious assault have contributed the most to the total fall in these crimes over the past ten years.

Four variables (or characteristics) have been combined to produce sixteen different scenarios for a serious assault. These are (i) the victim's gender, (ii) the victim's age, (iii) where the serious assault took place and (iv) whether the perpetrator used a weapon ([Table 18](#)).

This analysis suggests that there are five different scenarios for serious assault that collectively account for all of the total fall in serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18. These five scenarios all involve serious assault with a male victim, and four involve the use of a weapon.

[Table 4](#) below provides further information on the five scenarios.

The first scenario was the most common type of serious assault in both 2008-09 and 2017-18, where the serious assault had a male victim under 30 years old, took place in a public space and involved the use of a weapon. This scenario accounted for 18% of serious assault in 2017-18. These types of serious assault are estimated to have fallen by 710 (from 1,450 to 740), which would account for nearly a third (31%) of the total fall in recorded serious assault between the two years sampled. Further analysis shows that nearly all of this fall (98%) is due to a drop in these types of serious assault in the west of Scotland.

The second scenario was the second most common type of serious assault in 2008-09 but the fourth most common by 2017-18. This was where the serious assault had a male victim under 30 years old, took place in a public space and did not involve the use of a weapon. This accounted for 12% of serious assault in 2017-18, with the volume of these cases estimated to have dropped by 530 since 2008-09 (from 1,040 to 510). This would account for nearly a quarter (23%) of the total fall in recorded serious assault between the two years sampled. Just over half (56%) of this fall is due to a drop in the west of Scotland.

This suggests that scenarios one and two combined (i.e. serious assaults with a male victim under 30 years old which took place in a public space) collectively account for more than half (54%) of the total fall in recorded serious assault.

The third scenario involved serious assault with a male victim under 30, taking place in a private space, and involving the use of a weapon. This accounted for 5% of serious assault in 2017-18, with the volume of these cases estimated to have dropped by 370 since 2008-09 (from 600 to 230). This is estimated to account for a

further 16% of the total fall in recorded serious assault between the two years sampled. Nearly all of this fall (94%) is due to a drop in the west of Scotland.

The fourth scenario involved serious assault with a male victim aged 30 or above, taking place in a public space, and involving the use of a weapon. This accounted for 15% of serious assault in 2017-18, with the volume of these cases estimated to have dropped by 330 since 2008-09 (from 950 to 620). This would account for 14% of the total fall in recorded serious assault between the two years sampled. More than two-thirds of this fall (69%) is due to a drop in the west of Scotland.

The fifth scenario involved serious assault with a male victim aged 30 or above, taking place in a private space, and involving the use of a weapon. This accounted for 8% of serious assault in 2017-18, with the volume of these cases estimated to have dropped by 350 since 2008-09 (from 690 to 340). This would account for 15% of the total fall in recorded serious assault between the two years sampled. Around three-quarters of this fall (76%) is due to a drop in the west of Scotland.

Taken as a whole, the remaining eleven scenarios for serious assault had very little impact on the total reduction in these crimes between 2008-09 and 2017-18. This includes all scenarios with a female victim and all but one of the scenarios which did not involve the use of the weapon.

There was also limited change in the estimated volume of serious assault recorded by the police for each of the remaining eleven scenarios between 2008-09 and 2017-18.

Looking further at the sixteen scenarios outlined above, those which involve serious assault with a male victim under 30 years old collectively accounted for 50% of all serious assault in 2008-09 and 37% in 2017-18. The volume of these cases is estimated to have dropped by 1,650 since 2008-09 (from 3,220 to 1,570). This would account for nearly three-quarters (72%) of the total fall in recorded serious assault between the two years sampled.

Table 4. Estimated Change in Volume of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18, by Scenario

<u>Scenario:</u> Serious assault characteristics:	Estimated change in volume between 2008-09 and 2017-18	Change as % of Total Fall
1. A male victim under 30 years old in a public space by someone who used a weapon	-710	31%
2. A male victim under 30 years old in a public space by someone who did not use a weapon	-530	23%
...a male victim under 30 years old in a public space (1 and 2 Combined)	-1,240	54%
3. A male victim under 30 years old in a private space by someone who used a weapon	-370	16%
4. A male victim aged 30 or above in a public space by someone who used a weapon	-330	14%
5. A male victim aged 30 or above in a private space by someone who used a weapon	-350	15%
Scenarios 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 combined	-2,290	100%
Change in serious assault between 2008-09 & 2017-18 (<i>Recorded Crime National Statistics</i>)	-2,283	

5. Conclusion

This study into the characteristics of police recorded serious assault focused on the years of 2008-09 and 2017-18, the time between which saw the number of serious assaults in Scotland decrease by 35% or 2,283 crimes (from 6,472 to 4,189).

The vast majority (89%) of the total fall in police recorded serious assault between 2008-09 and 2017-18 was due to fewer cases in the west of Scotland (centred in and around the city of Glasgow).

All of the fall in serious assault across Scotland came from fewer cases with a male victim, with little change in the number of cases with a female victim. Although the reduction in male victims has driven the total fall in serious assault since 2008-09, they still accounted for 80% of victims in 2017-18.

Most (80%) of the fall in serious assault came from fewer cases where the perpetrator used a weapon, with the study finding that a serious assault in 2017-18 was less likely to involve a weapon than in 2008-09 (dropping from 63% to 55%).

Despite the reduction in the volume of serious assaults committed in Scotland over the past ten years, there has been no significant change in the proportion of these crimes that occur in a public setting or a private setting during this time – with most still occurring in a public setting.

The average age of both a victim and perpetrator of serious assault in 2017-18 was several years older than their counterparts from 2008-09. This reflected a particularly large fall in the estimated rate of victimisation for people in their twenties and offending rates for teenagers (aged 13 to 19 years) and people in their twenties.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of serious assault committed in 2017-18 included a reference to the consumption of alcohol. This may somewhat underestimate the true position as police officers may not always receive enough information to identify the consumption of alcohol prior to any incident.

Overall this research suggests that fewer cases of males attacking other males in the west of Scotland, often involving relatively younger people (teenagers and those in their twenties) and the use of a weapon – have contributed the most to the reduction in serious assault over the past ten years.

Whilst the police in Scotland now face fewer reports of serious assault today than a decade ago, the characteristics of these crimes are now a little less homogenous than before – with relatively fewer cases concentrated in the west of Scotland, or only involving relatively younger males. It remains the case that the use of knives or other blades is much more prevalent in the west of Scotland than elsewhere, and a majority of all serious assault committed in Scotland involved the consumption of alcohol prior to the incident.

Tables

Please note:

- Where no records were found a dash (-) has been used to signify this.
- Where a percentage is based on a low base, of less than five records, an asterisk (*) has been used to signify this.

Table 5. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Location

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
In a Dwelling ³	35%	2,260	192
In the Street or Open Space	48%	3,080	262
In a Retail or Other Business setting	17%	1,110	94
In a Private Space ⁴	33%	2,120	180
In a Public Space	67%	4,330	368
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
In a Dwelling	36%	1,510	199
In the Street or Open Space	47%	1,950	257
In a Retail or Other Business setting	17%	720	95
In a Private Space	30%	1,280	168
In a Public Space	70%	2,910	383
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
In a Dwelling	No Change	-750	
In the Street or Open Space	No Change	-1,130	
In a Retail or Other Business setting	No Change	-390	
In a Private Space	No Change	-840	
In a Public Space	No Change	-1,420	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10
3. A 'Dwelling' location includes both Attempted Murder and Serious Assault within a private property (i.e. behind a front-door) and the communal areas of residential buildings (for example a stairwell in a block of flats)
4. A 'Private Space' location only includes Attempted Murder and Serious Assault within a private property (i.e. behind a front-door)

Table 6. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Gender of Victim

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Male	87%	5,650	480
Female	13%	820	70
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Male	80%	3,340	439
Female	20%	850	112
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Male	-8	-2,310	
Female	8	30	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

Table 7. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Age of Victim

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Under 13 years old	1%	80	7
Aged 13 to 19 years old	16%	1,060	90
Aged 20 to 29 years old	38%	2,470	210
Aged 30 to 39 years old	24%	1,530	130
Aged 40 to 49 years old	13%	870	74
Aged 50 and above	6%	400	34
Median Age of Victim: 27 years old			
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Under 13 years old	3%	110	15
Aged 13 to 19 years old	14%	600	79
Aged 20 to 29 years old	29%	1,210	159
Aged 30 to 39 years old	25%	1,030	135
Aged 40 to 49 years old	14%	580	76
Aged 50 and above	15%	610	80
Median Age of Victim: 31 years old			
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Under 13 years old	No Change	30	
Aged 13 to 19 years old	No Change	-460	
Aged 20 to 29 years old	-9	-1,260	
Aged 30 to 39 years old	No Change	-500	
Aged 40 to 49 years old	No Change	-290	
Aged 50 and above	8	210	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages will not sum to 100% as the age of the victim was unavailable for a small proportion of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault (1% in both 2008-09 and 2017-18)
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

Table 8. Location of Victim Residence for Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by SIMD³ and Urban/Rural classification

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
In Scotland's Most Deprived Areas	44%	2,870	244
Everywhere else	49%	3,200	272
Unknown	6%	400	34
In an Urban Area	78%	5,060	430
In a Small Town	8%	530	45
In a Rural Area	7%	480	41
Unknown	6%	400	34
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
In Scotland's Most Deprived Areas	42%	1,780	234
Everywhere else	51%	2,150	283
Unknown	6%	260	34
In an Urban Area	77%	3,230	425
In a Small Town	9%	380	50
In a Rural Area	8%	320	42
Unknown	6%	260	34
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
In Scotland's Most Deprived Areas	No Change	-1,090	
Everywhere else	No Change	-1,050	
Unknown	No Change	-140	
In an Urban Area	No Change	-1,830	
In a Small Town	No Change	-150	
In a Rural Area	No Change	-160	
Unknown	No Change	-140	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

3. Two different editions of SIMD were used for the comparison, with SIMD12 compared to Attempted Murder and Serious Assault from 2008-09 and SIMD16 compared to Attempted Murder and Serious Assault from 2017-18

Table 9. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Number of Perpetrators

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Individual perpetrator	65%	4,240	360
Multiple perpetrators	27%	1,770	150
Unknown	7%	470	40
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Individual perpetrator	78%	3,270	430
Multiple perpetrators	18%	770	101
Unknown	4%	150	20
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Individual perpetrator	13	-970	
Multiple perpetrators	-9	-1,000	
Unknown	-4	-320	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

Table 10. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Gender of Perpetrator

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Male / All Male	82%	5,330	453
Female / All Female	8%	490	42
Mixed Group / Other / Unknown	10%	650	55
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Male / All Male	84%	3,520	463
Female / All Female	10%	410	54
Mixed Group / Other / Unknown	6%	260	34
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Male / All Male	No change	-1,810	
Female / All Female	No change	-80	
Mixed Group / Other / Unknown	No change	-390	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

Table 11. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Age of Perpetrator³

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Under 13 years old	1%	60	5
Aged 13 to 19 years old	22%	1,440	122
Aged 20 to 29 years old	36%	2,330	198
Aged 30 to 39 years old	19%	1,210	103
Aged 40 to 49 years old	7%	480	41
Aged 50 and above	4%	260	22
Age of perpetrator(s) unknown	18%	1,190	101
Median Age of Perpetrator: 23 years old			
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Under 13 years old	1%	60	8
Aged 13 to 19 years old	17%	710	93
Aged 20 to 29 years old	37%	1,540	203
Aged 30 to 39 years old	27%	1,130	149
Aged 40 to 49 years old	10%	400	53
Aged 50 and above	7%	270	36
Age of perpetrator(s) unknown	9%	610	52
Median Age of Perpetrator: 27 years old			
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Under 13 years old	No change	0	
Aged 13 to 19 years old	No change	-730	
Aged 20 to 29 years old	No change	-790	
Aged 30 to 39 years old	8	-80	
Aged 40 to 49 years old	No change	-80	
Aged 50 and above	No change	10	
Age of perpetrator(s) unknown	-9	-580	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages will not sum to 100% as a proportion of crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault (18% in 2017-18) have more than one perpetrator, and therefore will appear more than once in the table if they are of different age groups

2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

3. Where an age-range was available (for example 16 to 20 years old), the mid-point of that range was recorded as a best estimate

Table 12. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Gender of Victims and Perpetrators³

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
All Male Victims and Perpetrators	74%	4,790	407
All Female Victims and Perpetrators	3%	200	17
Female Victim / Male Perpetrator(s)	8%	540	46
Male Victim / Female Perpetrator(s)	5%	290	25
Mixed gender Victims and Perpetrators	3%	180	15
Victim or Perpetrator gender unknown	7%	470	40
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
All Male Victims and Perpetrators	70%	2,930	385
All Female Victims and Perpetrators	5%	200	26
Female Victim / Male Perpetrator(s)	14%	590	78
Male Victim / Female Perpetrator(s)	5%	210	28
Mixed gender Victims and Perpetrators	3%	110	14
Victim or Perpetrator gender unknown	4%	150	20
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
All Male Victims and Perpetrators	No change	-1,860	
All Female Victims and Perpetrators	No change	0	
Female Victim / Male Perpetrator(s)	6	50	
Male Victim / Female Perpetrator(s)	No change	-80	
Mixed gender Victims and Perpetrators	No change	-70	
Victim or Perpetrator gender unknown	-4	-320	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

3. 'Mixed gender Victims and Perpetrators' is where an Attempted Murder and Serious Assault has multiple perpetrators of different genders

Table 13. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Relationship of Victim to Perpetrator³

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Acquaintances / 'Know of' each other	42%	2,710	230
Strangers	25%	1,640	139
Partners / Ex-Partners / Relatives	11%	740	63
Unknown	21%	1,390	118
Known to Victim	52%	3,380	287
Not known to Victim	26%	1,710	145
Unknown	21%	1,390	118
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Acquaintances / 'Know of' each other	50%	2,110	278
Strangers	21%	870	114
Partners / Ex-Partners / Relatives	17%	710	93
Unknown	12%	500	66
Known to Victim	66%	2,770	365
Not known to Victim	22%	910	120
Unknown	12%	500	66
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Acquaintances / 'Know of' each other	9	-600	
Strangers	No change	-770	
Partners / Ex-Partners / Relatives	No change	-30	
Unknown	-9	-890	
Known to Victim	14	-610	
Not known to Victim	No change	-800	
Unknown	-9	-890	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10
3. Where an Attempted Murder and Serious Assault has multiple perpetrators, including some known to and not known to the victim, this has been classified in the table as 'Known to Victim'

Table 14. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Use of Weapon

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Knife or other Bladed/Pointed Article	31%	1,980	168
Other Weapon Type	33%	2,130	181
No Weapon used	37%	2,370	201
Weapon used	63%	4,110	349
No Weapon used	37%	2,370	201
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Knife or other Bladed/Pointed Article	25%	1,030	136
Other Weapon Type	30%	1,250	165
No Weapon used	45%	1,900	250
Weapon used	55%	2,290	301
No Weapon used	45%	1,900	250
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Knife or other Bladed/Pointed Article	No change	-950	
Other Weapon Type	No change	-880	
No Weapon used	9	-470	
Weapon used	-9	-1,820	
No Weapon used	9	-470	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

Table 15. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Physical Injury sustained by Victim³

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
Cuts/permanent disfigurement (not from sharp implement)	34%	2,210	188
Broken bones / fractures etc.	24%	1,550	132
Sharp-item related injuries (stab/slash)	29%	1,890	161
Other (including minor/no injury)	13%	810	69
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
Cuts/permanent disfigurement (not from sharp implement)	42%	1,760	232
Broken bones / fractures etc.	30%	1,270	167
Sharp-item related injuries (stab/slash)	24%	990	130
Other (including minor/no injury)	4%	170	22
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
Cuts/permanent disfigurement (not from sharp implement)	8	-450	
Broken bones / fractures etc.	No change	-280	
Sharp-item related injuries (stab/slash)	No change	-900	
Other (including minor/no injury)	-9	-640	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10
3. Where a victim sustained multiple physical injuries, the most serious injury has been used to classify the case in the table

Table 16. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Use of Weapon and Geographic Location

Characteristics of the Attempted Murder and Serious Assault	2008-09			2017-18			Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18	
	Percentage of Serious Assault ¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault ²	Number Sampled	Percentage of Serious Assault ¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault ²	Number Sampled	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume ²
West of Scotland								
Knife or other Bladed/Pointed Article	38%	1,540	131	33%	700	91	No change	-840
Other Weapon Type	35%	1,430	121	30%	630	83	No change	-800
No Weapon used	28%	1,140	97	36%	760	100	No change	-380
Weapon used	72%	2,970	252	64%	1,330	174	No change	-1,640
No Weapon used	28%	1,140	97	36%	760	100	No change	-380
Rest of Scotland								
Knife or other Bladed/Pointed Article	18%	430	37	16%	340	45	No change	-90
Other Weapon Type	30%	700	60	30%	620	82	No change	-80
No Weapon used	52%	1,220	104	54%	1,140	150	No change	-80
Weapon used	48%	1,140	97	46%	960	127	No change	-180
No Weapon used	52%	1,220	104	54%	1,140	150	No change	-80
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550	100%	4,189	551	<i>n/a</i>	-2,283

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

Table 17. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Method of Reporting to Police

Sample Year	Percentage of Serious Assault¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault²	Number Sampled
2008-09			
By Victim or on behalf of Victim	28%	1,810	154
By a Witness	42%	2,730	232
Other emergency service	17%	1,080	92
Police Patrol / Other Investigation	4%	250	21
Other / Unknown	9%	600	51
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550
2017-18			
By Victim or on behalf of Victim	34%	1,410	185
By a Witness	47%	1,950	257
Other emergency service	14%	590	77
Police Patrol / Other Investigation	4%	160	21
Other / Unknown	2%	80	11
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	4,189	551
Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18			
	Percentage Points	Estimated Volume	
By Victim or on behalf of Victim	No change	-400	
By a Witness	No change	-780	
Other emergency service	No change	-490	
Police Patrol / Other Investigation	No change	-90	
Other / Unknown	-7	-520	
All Recorded Serious Assault	n/a	-2,283	

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10

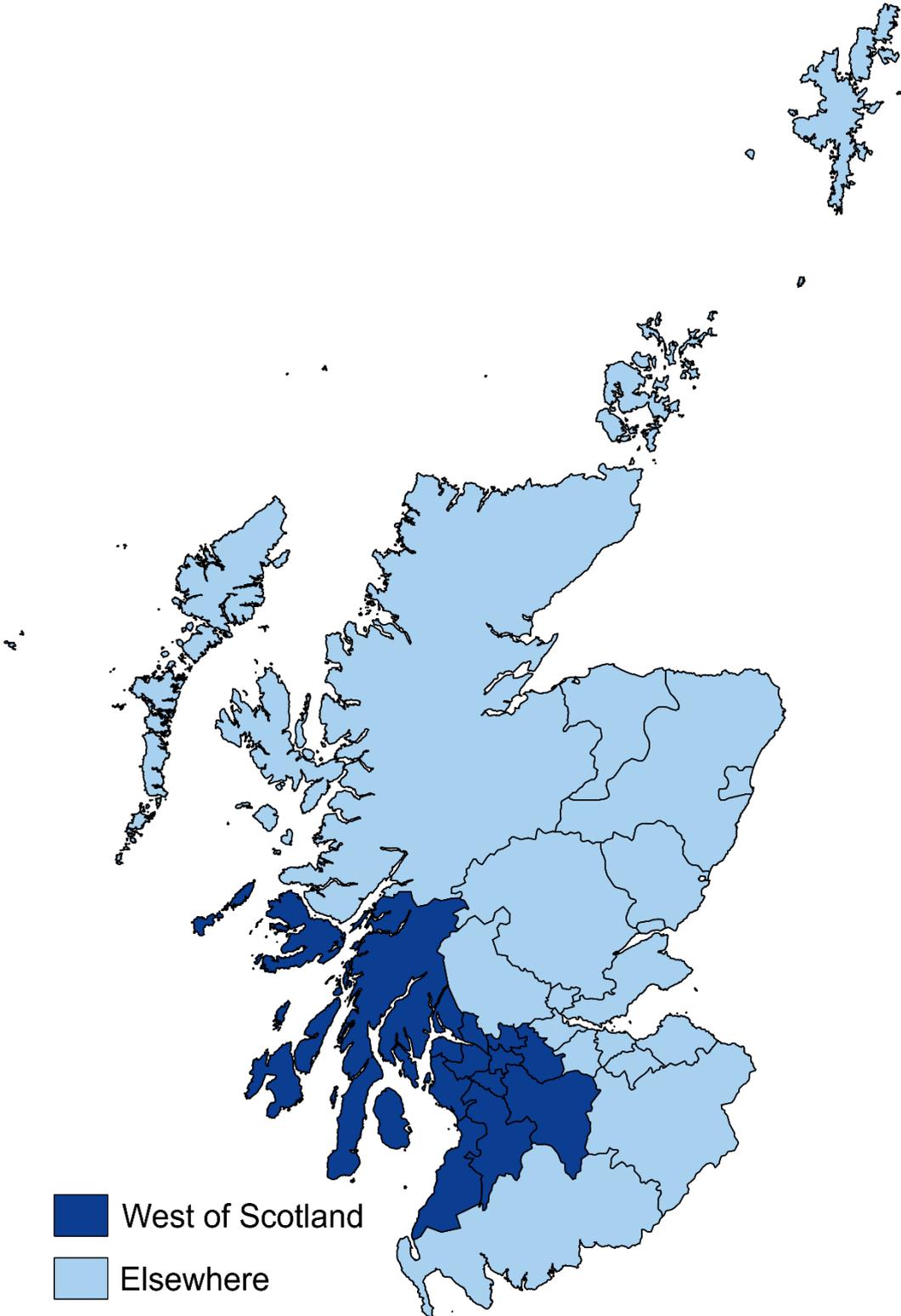
Table 18. Crimes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault by Gender of Victim, Age of Victim, Location³, and Use of Weapon

Characteristics of the Attempted Murder and Serious Assault	2008-09			2017-18			Change between 2008-09 and 2017-18	
	Percentage of Serious Assault ¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault ²	Number Sampled	Percentage of Serious Assault ¹	Estimated Volume of Serious Assault ²	Number Sampled	Percentage points	Estimated Volume ²
Male victim / Under 30 / Public space / No weapon used	16%	1,040	88	12%	510	67	No change	-530
Male victim / Under 30 / Public space / Weapon used	22%	1,450	123	18%	740	97	No change	-710
Male victim / Under 30 / Private space / No weapon used	2%	130	11	2%	90	12	No change	-40
Male victim / Under 30 / Private space / Weapon used	9%	600	51	5%	230	30	No change	-370
Male victim / 30 or above / Public space / No weapon used	10%	640	54	15%	620	82	No change	-20
Male victim / 30 or above / Public space / Weapon used	15%	950	81	15%	620	82	No change	-330
Male victim / 30 or above / Private space / No weapon used	2%	110	9	3%	140	19	No change	30
Male victim / 30 or above / Private space / Weapon used	11%	690	59	8%	340	45	No change	-350
Female victim / Under 30 / Public space / No weapon used	1%	70	6	2%	100	13	No change	30
Female victim / Under 30 / Public space / Weapon used	*	*	3	2%	80	10	*	*
Female victim / Under 30 / Private space / No weapon used	2%	140	12	3%	120	16	No change	-20
Female victim / Under 30 / Private space / Weapon used	2%	140	12	1%	60	8	No change	-80
Female victim / 30 or above / Public space / No weapon used	*	*	4	3%	130	17	*	*
Female victim / 30 or above / Public space / Weapon used	1%	60	5	2%	70	9	No change	10
Female victim / 30 or above / Private space / No weapon used	2%	150	13	4%	160	21	No change	10
Female victim / 30 or above / Private space / Weapon used	2%	140	12	3%	120	16	No change	-20
Unknown victim age, or unknown location	1%	80	7	1%	50	7	No change	-30
All Recorded Serious Assault	100%	6,472	550	100%	4,189	551	<i>n/a</i>	-2,283

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding
2. All estimated volumes of Attempted Murder and Serious Assault are rounded to the nearest 10
3. A 'Private Space' location only includes Attempted Murder and Serious Assault within a private property (i.e. behind a front-door)

Annex

Map of Scottish Local Authorities



How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot for further information.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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