

NEW CRIME STATS
SHOW LOWEST TOTAL
ON RECORD

Sky News

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<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/crime-stats-show-lowest-total-record-083807911.html#LxWuaLP>

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'Police To Thank For Drop In Crime'

David Cameron says the latest drop in recorded crime is down to the "excellent" work of the country's police.

The estimated number of crimes fell to 8.6 million in England and Wales in the year up to March 2013, the lowest figure since records began in 1981.

It was a 9% decrease compared with last year, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

Overall crime is now running at half the level it peaked at in 1995.

Recorded crime was also down, with police reporting 3.7 million offences in the year ending March 2013, a decrease of 7% compared with the previous year.

But in these times of financial hardship for many, fraud is up by 27%, with over a quarter of a million offences recorded.

Theft from the person - pickpocketing and snatch crime, such as stealing someone's mobile phone - is up by 9%.

The number of rapes recorded by police has risen by 2% in the past year, with the increase thought to be linked to the knock-on effect of the high-profile Jimmy Savile investigation, the ONS said.

The figures - showing drops in many categories, and coming at a time of economic crisis and decreasing number of police officers - were welcomed by the Government.

[David Cameron](#) said the figures were "good news".

"We should congratulate the police. As a government we've asked them to do more with less resources and they performed, I think, magnificently.

"I think also all the work that's gone into crime prevention has made a difference, too.

"This is good news. Britain is getting safer, as well as stronger," the PM said during a visit to Hammersmith police station in west London.

Home Secretary Theresa May praised the police forces but also her own government, which she said had "played its part by slashing red tape and scrapping targets to enable the police to focus on crime fighting".

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said: "It's one of the great triumphs of recent years that we've seen crime come down."

The stats also showed that firearm offences have dropped by 15% in year ending March 2013, continuing to fall since a peak registered in 2005/2006.

Offences that involved a knife or sharp instrument decreased by 15% compared with the previous year.

The number of police officers in England and Wales has dropped for the fourth consecutive year - by 3.4% or 4,516 - taking the total to its lowest level since 2002, the Home Office said.

Sky News Deputy Political Editor Joey Jones said the figures were "extremely encouraging" from the point of view of the Government.

"From David Cameron's point of view, he'll be wanting to press home that sort of political advantage," explained Jones.

"As long as those statistics keep coming along those lines, it clearly makes things that much more comfortable from the Government's point of view."

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