



# VS FOCUS ON VIOLENT CRIME

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# Introduction

Violence can be defined as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation”.<sup>1</sup>

Violent crime covers different types of offences, from all incidents of assault with injury and wounding (violence with injury) to incidents without injury, including attempted assault (violence without injury).<sup>2</sup>

Each year, more than 1.3 million people worldwide, including in developed countries, die as a result of violence. This accounts for 2.5% of international deaths.<sup>3</sup> In addition, many individuals are exposed during their lifetime to life-threatening situations or varied types of violence, such as assault with and without injury, wounding, attempted assault and many others.<sup>4,5</sup> Many victims report being exposed to violence from more than one kind of perpetrator.<sup>6</sup>

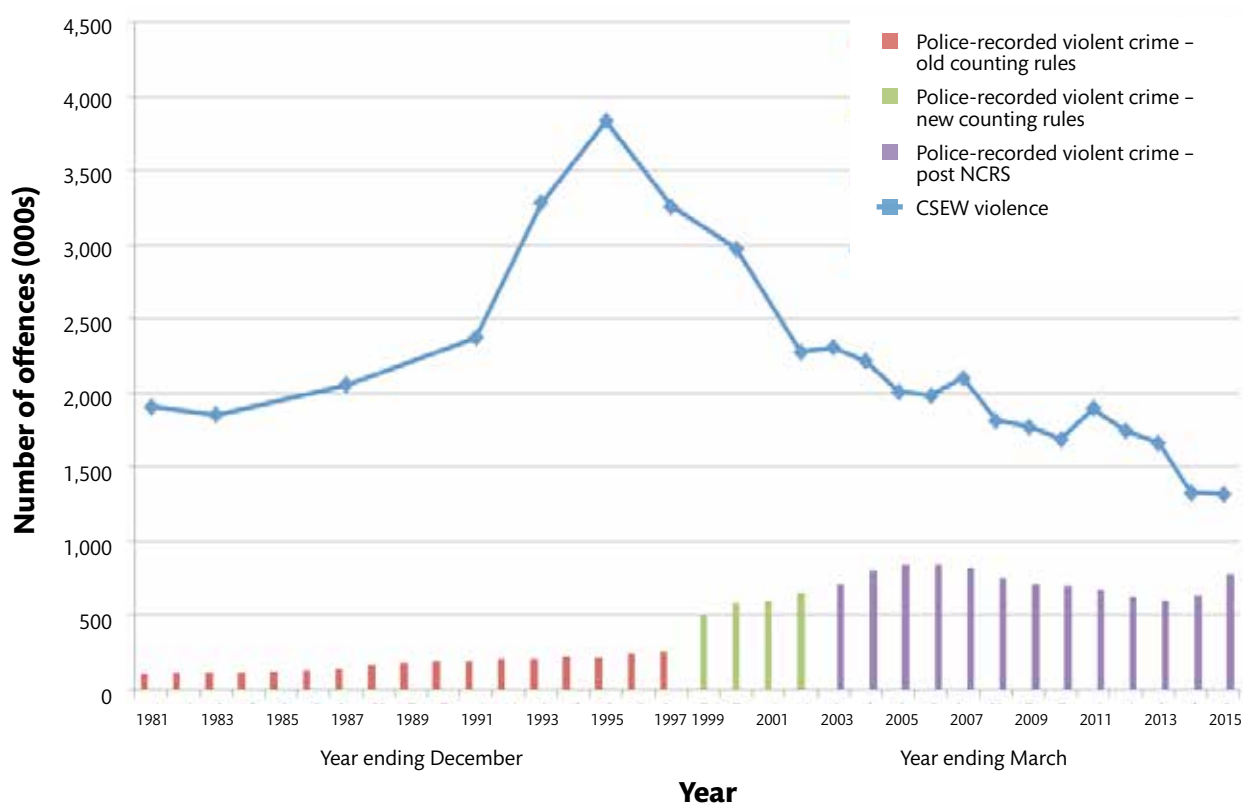
In England and Wales, data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), formerly known as the British Crime Survey, shows an increase in violence throughout the 1980s before reaching a peak in 1995 (Figure 1) and then gradually decreasing. This decline can be observed over the last decade, with violent crime falling by 26% between 2009 and 2015. However, the latest figures show only a marginal drop between 2014 and 2015. Similarly, the number of violent incidents recorded by police gradually decreased between 2005 and 2013 before increasing in 2015. Even though both CSEW data and police-recorded crime show a decrease in violent crime between 2008

and 2013, the trends are dissimilar over this period of time. Police-recorded violent crime decreased by 20% compared to 8% for CSEW violent crime. Furthermore, police-recorded crime shows an increase of 30% in violent crime in the last two years, with the majority of the increase (23%) reported between 2012 and 2015. This is largely explained by the police response to the findings of two recent inspections of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary relating to crime-recording practices.<sup>7</sup>

Being a victim of violent crime may have a profound effect on the individual and also on their family and community. Furthermore, depending on the type and severity of the violence, there can be a variety of physical, emotional and financial consequences. Beyond physical injuries, victims of violence are emotionally affected as well; being a victim of violent crime decreases happiness<sup>9</sup> and general life satisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, 81% of victims of violent incidents report emotional distress and 17% say they are affected very much. Breaking down data by type of injury shows that 86% of victims of wounding are emotionally affected, with 33% of victims being very much affected, compared with 77% of victims of violence without injury. The most common reactions are anger (46%) and annoyance (45%).<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1. Trends in violent crime based on police records and the CSEW, from 1981 to 2015.<sup>8</sup>



In addition, violence can cause severe and long-lasting mental health problems, including fear, anxiety and depression, which, in turn, lead to changes in behaviour and daily routines.<sup>12,13</sup> Other common results of violent crimes include suicidal feelings and post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>14</sup> Some violence (e.g. prolonged exposure to violence or a life-threatening event) may contribute to lifelong ill health and early death. In addition, some of the coping mechanisms that victims may use to deal with the aftermath effect of violent crime can be destructive – for example, smoking, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and unsafe sex. These can lead to the

development of cardiovascular disorders, cancer, HIV/AIDS and other chronic and infectious disorders.<sup>15</sup>

Apart of having direct impact on victims, violence also affects victims' families, friends and communities. It substantially decreases quality of life and imposes a strain on health services. Other costs include the criminal justice and social and welfare services required.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it has a negative impact on the community and its economic fabric by depressing the establishment of new retail and personal-service businesses,<sup>17</sup> decreasing property value,<sup>18</sup> and negatively

influencing local businesses;<sup>19</sup> it also contributes to people moving out to the suburbs.<sup>20</sup> A recent study looking at data from two longitudinal surveys (the British Household Panel Survey and the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing) found that violent crime had significantly negative and substantial effects on mental wellbeing – not only of victims, witnesses and local communities in which the violent crime occurred, but also on residents in the surrounding area who changed their travel route to work, for example.<sup>21</sup>

Surprisingly, despite the high prevalence of violence and its negative consequences on the victim, their family, their community and society, little is known about the risk factors of being a victim of violent crime or what makes a person more vulnerable. There is some evidence showing that, globally, violence and the magnitude of it may vary according to sex, age, income group or region, and that some people are more vulnerable than others – for example, males aged 15–44. There is also a variation between urban and rural populations, different ethnic groups, and wealthy and poor communities, with low-income populations and mixed-ethnicity people being particularly vulnerable.<sup>22</sup>

Earlier studies have found that people with disabilities are at increased risk of violent crime.<sup>23, 24</sup> Previous analysis of CSEW data from the survey of 2010/11 found that 39% of disabled 16–34-year-olds were victims of violent crime compared with 28% of the

non-disabled population in the same age group.<sup>25</sup> It was suggested that this higher risk could have been due to several factors, such as reduced physical and emotional defence, exclusion from education and employment, communication barriers in terms of reporting an incident, requiring personal assistance with daily activities, discrimination, or stigma.<sup>26, 27</sup> Another factor that increased the risk of violence towards disabled people was poor economic status, while increased age in both men and women seemed to be a protective factor.<sup>28</sup>

Additional information about violent crime in England and Wales comes from the National Violence Surveillance Network, which looks at violence with injury that required medical treatment. Data was collected from 151 walk-in centres minor injury units and emergency departments in England and Wales. In total, between 2010 and 2014, there were 247,016 violence-related attendances to emergency departments across England and Wales, which is about 4.4/1,000 residents in England and Wales. The attendees were predominantly male victims – almost three times more than women – between 18 and 30 years old.<sup>29</sup> Variation between regions was found, with the North West and North East showing the highest injury rates due to violence; lower rates were found in East and South East regions.<sup>30</sup>

## Note on the data source

The data used in this briefing is from the CSEW, mainly from the year ending March 2014 to the year ending March 2015.

The CSEW is based on a nationally representative sample of the population resident in households in England and Wales. Participants were asked about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. Since not all crime is reported to the police, the CSEW provides a more reliable picture of the extent of crime experienced by the population in England and Wales. The CSEW is also a better indicator of long-term trends than police-recorded crime because it is unaffected by

changes in levels of reporting to the police or police-recording practices. Nevertheless, the CSEW does not record all offences; as it is based on experience of victimisation, it does not cover offences that are often termed 'victimless', such as drug offences, crimes against public sector bodies or homicides. In addition, incidents of domestic violence and sexual assault are not fully covered by the data presented here due to a low reporting rate arising from the sensitivity of the subject.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> For further information on the CSEW and its methods, see: Office for National Statistics. (2016). *Crime Survey for England and Wales: Technical report 2014/2015 volume 1*. London: Office for National Statistics.

# Who is more at risk of becoming a victim of violence?<sup>ii</sup>

In accordance with the definition of violence, two different types of violent crimes were explored: (a) assaults with injury and wounding (violence with injury) and (b) incidents without injury (violence without injury). In addition, the two types of incidents were combined for one category of 'all violent crimes'.<sup>iii</sup>

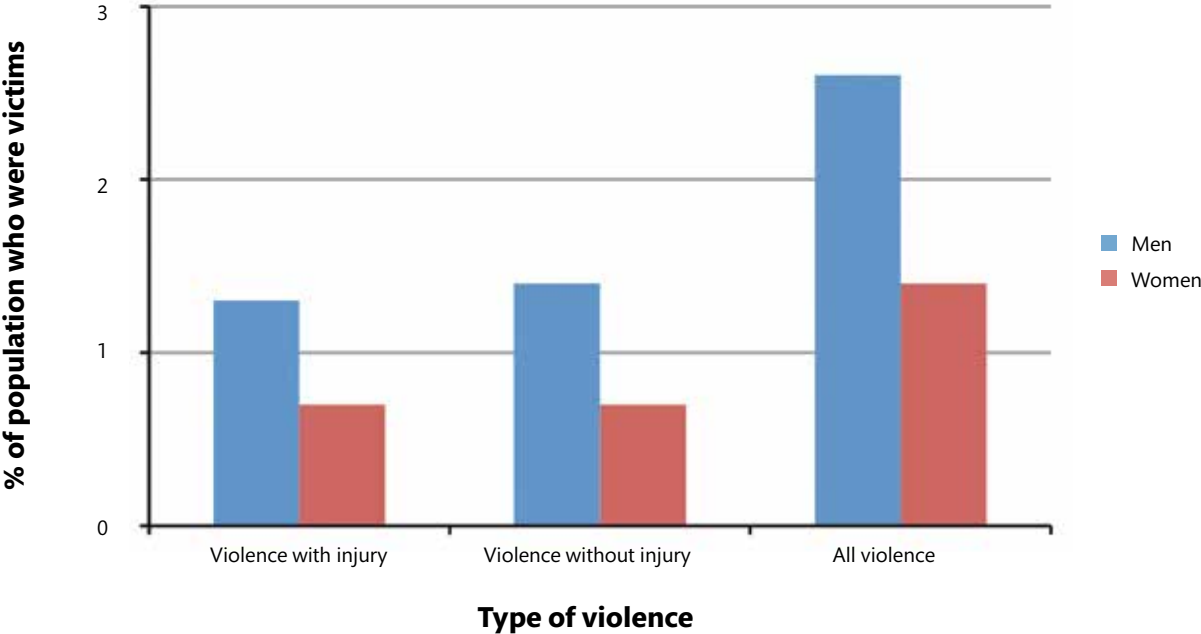
Several personal, household and regional elements were analysed to find out what characteristics are associated with being a victim of crime.<sup>iv</sup>

### Personal characteristics

As can be seen in Figure 2, men had a higher risk than women of being a victim of violent crime.

- 2.6% of the male population were victims of all violence compared with 1.4% of the female population.
- Women were equally likely to be victims of violence with and without injury.
- Men were slightly more likely to be victims of violence without injury than with injury.

Figure 2. Proportion of victims of violent crime by gender



<sup>ii</sup> The percentages presented in this section are based on a sample of 33,550 participants. The data was weighted to reflect (as much as possible) the general population of adults in England and Wales.  
<sup>iii</sup> Violence comprised of wounding (including wounding with sexual motivation), assault (including attempted assault) and robbery (including attempted robbery).  
<sup>iv</sup> Differences between categories within each set of characteristics were analysed using chi-square tests. Only statistically significant results are presented (unless indicated otherwise); this refers to a p-value of less than 0.05.



As can be seen in Figure 3, young adults aged 20–24 were more likely to be victims of violent crimes than any other age group.

- This age group was almost five times more likely to be a victim of all violent crimes than adults aged 55–64, followed by the younger age group of 16–19.
- The difference between people under the age of 24 and the other age groups is larger for violent crime with injury; here, too, adults aged 20–24 were the most likely to become victims than any other age group.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of victims of violent crime by ethnicity.

- People of mixed ethnicity background were more likely to be victims of all violent crimes than any other group.
- Similar results were found for violence with injury; nevertheless, the differences were smaller for violence without injury.
- However, the proportion of repeat victimisation is higher for white than other ethnicity backgrounds; 23.8% of victims with white background were victims more than once, compared to 18.4% of victims with mixed ethnicity background, 5.6% of victims with black ethnicity background and 2.2% of victims with Asian ethnicity background (not shown in the figure).

Figure 3. Proportion of victims of violent crime by age group

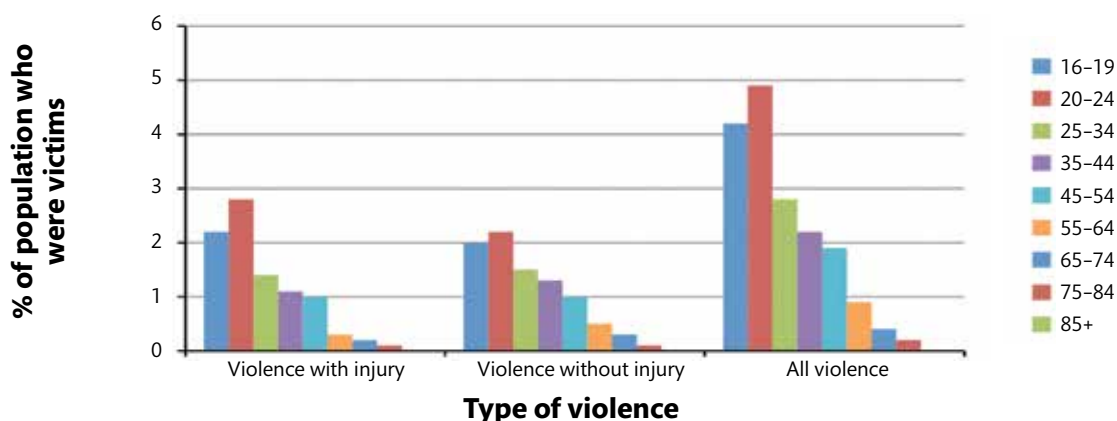
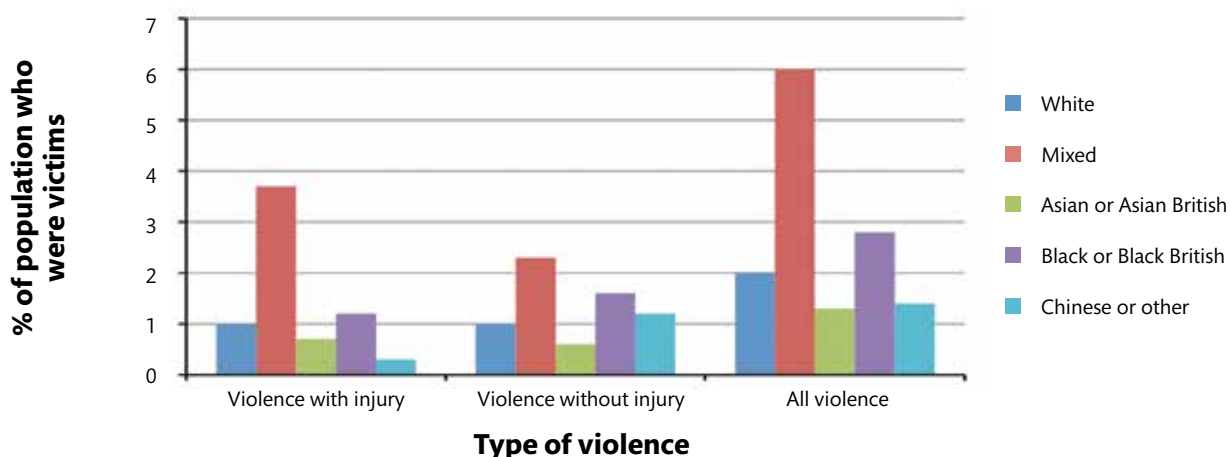


Figure 4. Proportion of victims of violent crime by ethnicity background



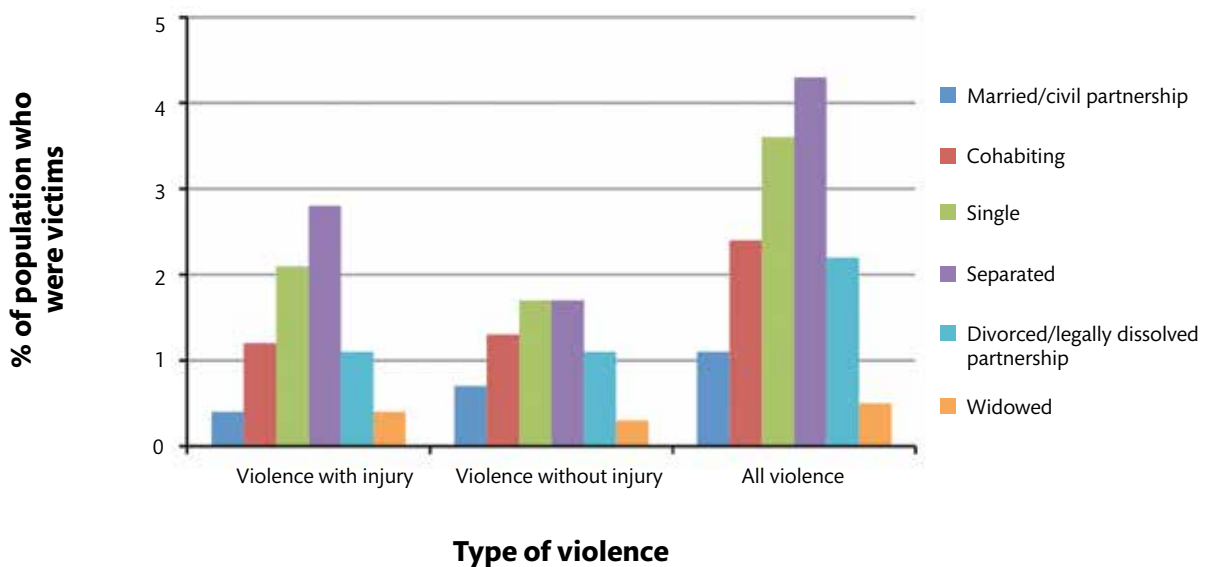
Marital status is also associated with being a victim of violent crime (Figure 5).

- People who were separated<sup>v</sup> had the highest risk by marital status; they were more than four times as likely to suffer all violence compared to adults who were married or civil partnered.
- Those who were single, cohabiting or divorced also had a higher risk than people who were married or widowed.
- Adults who were separated were more likely to be repeat victims of violence with injury than people with any other marital status; almost half (47%) of the victims of violence with injury who were separated were victims more than once. The figures were significantly lower for adults who were single, married, divorced or cohabiting (24.8%, 23.1%, 14.0% and 11.2% respectively) (not shown in the figure).
- The picture is somewhat different for violence without injury: both separated and single adults were equally likely to be victims.

Figure 6 presents the differences in terms of violent crime between people with various health statuses.

- Adults with limiting disability or long-standing illness had a higher risk of being a victim of all violence than adults with non-limiting disability/illness and those without disability or illness.
- Similar results were found for violence with injury.
- Although no significant differences were obtained for violence without injury, differences between the groups were found when looking at repeated victimisation of violence without injury; while about one third (33.4%) of victims with non-limiting disability/illness and 28% of victims with limiting disability/illness were repeat victims, only 17.7% of victims with no disability/illness were victims of violent crime with injury more than once (not presented in the figure).

Figure 5. Proportion of victims of violent crime by marital status

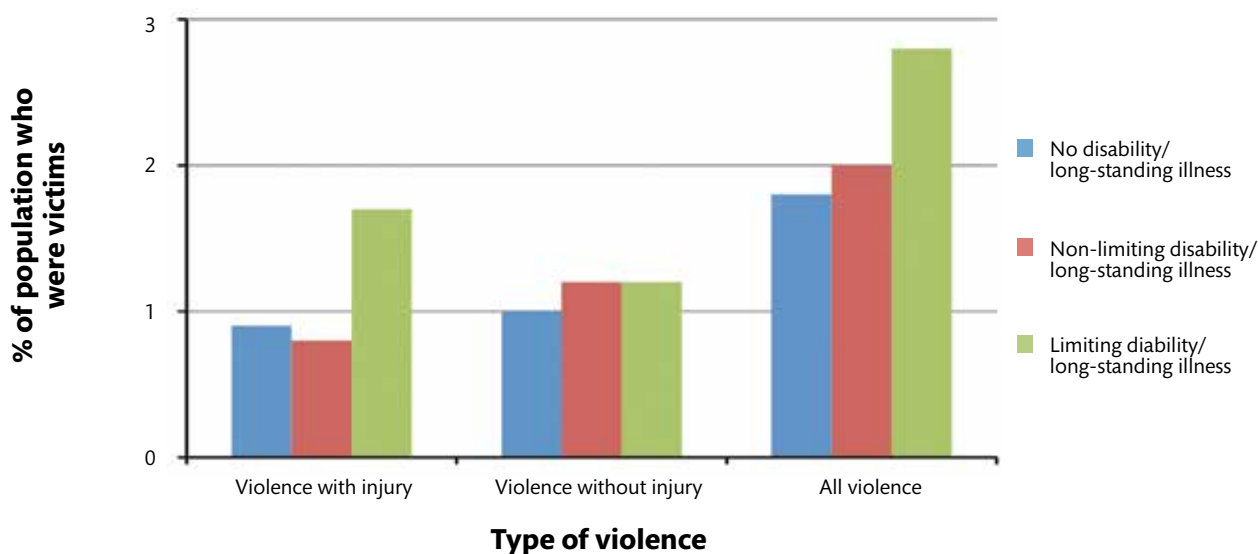


<sup>v</sup> The term 'separated' refers to any person whose spouse or same-sex civil partner is living elsewhere because of estrangement, whether the separation is legal or not. (Office for National Statistics. (2015). *Harmonised concepts and questions for social data sources*. London: Office for National Statistics).

Several other personal characteristics were identified as notable risks:

- People who were unemployed were more likely to be victims of all violence compared to those who were employed (4% of the unemployed population and 2.4% of the employed population).
- Full-time students were nearly two times more likely to be victims of all violence than non-full-time students (3.7% and 1.9% of these populations respectively). However, these differences may be associated with the differences between age groups described above.
- People educated to A Level, or above and below A Level, had a higher risk of being victims of all violence than those with no qualifications (2.4%, 1.7% and 1.1% of these populations respectively). However, conflicting results were found when looking only at those who were victims of violence with injury: 43% of victims with no qualifications were victims more than once, compared to 21.5% of victims with below A-Level education and 18.8% of the victims with A-Level education and above.
- Adults who visited a bar or a pub once a week or more in the last month were more likely to be victims of all violence compared to adults who visited less than once a week or not at all (3.0%, 2.2% and 1.5% of these populations respectively). Nevertheless, when looking at violence without injury, the likelihood of being a victim is very similar for people who visited a pub once a week or more and those who visited less than once a week (1.4% and 1.3% of these populations respectively), which is higher than people who did not visit a pub at all the previous month (0.7% of those who did not visit a pub).
- The differences are much larger when nightclub visits were explored. Adults who visited a nightclub once a week or more in the last month had the highest risk: they were about 6% more likely to be victims of all violence than adults who did not visit a nightclub (7.8% and 1.6% of these populations respectively).

Figure 6. Proportion of victims of violent crime by health status



**Household characteristics**

The second set of variables consists of household-centred characteristics. Figure 7 presents the proportion of victims of violent crime by household income.

- People who live in households with a total income of less than £10,000 had a higher risk of being victims of all violence compared to people living in households with a total income of more than £30,000.
- Similar results were found for violence with injury.

- However, people living in households with different incomes did not differ in terms of the likelihood of being a victim of violence without injury.

The second household characteristic is household structures (Figure 8).

- Lone parents had the highest risk by household structure. They were more likely to be victims of all violence compared to two-parent households with children, and households without children.

Figure 7. Proportion of victims of violent crime by household income

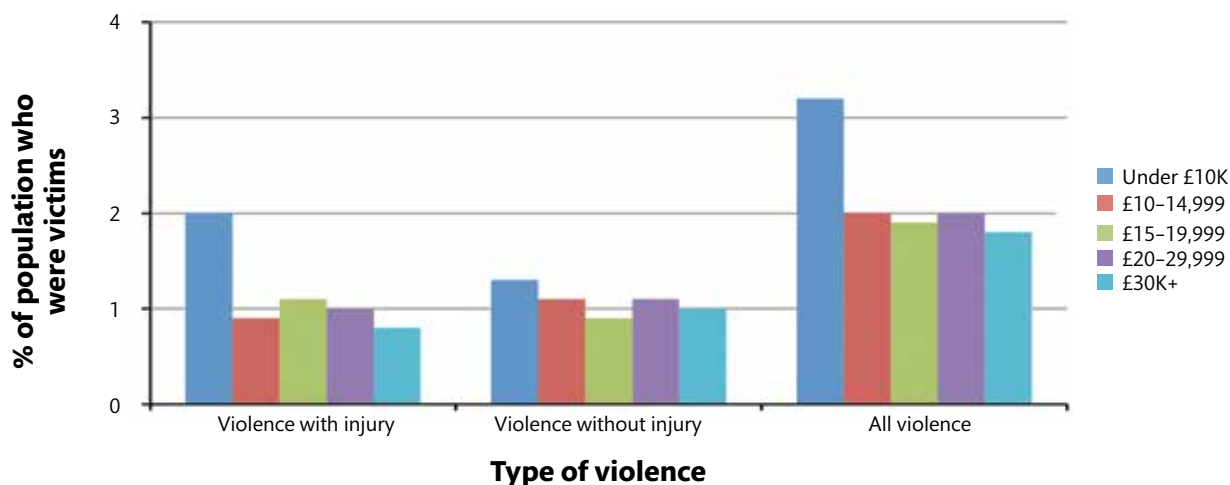
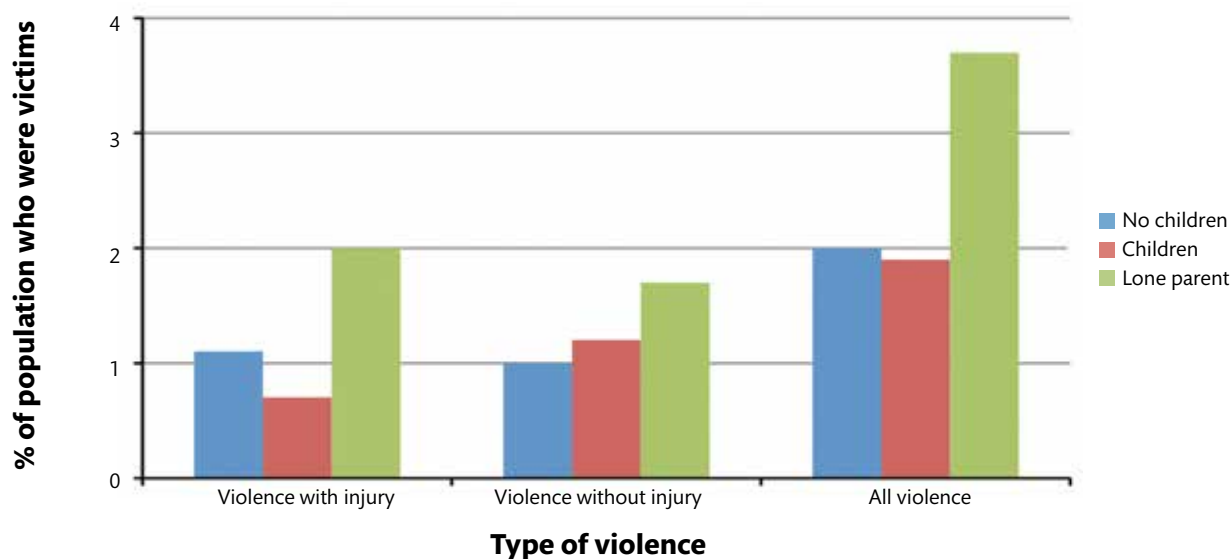


Figure 8. Proportion of victims of violent crime by household structure



- Similar results were found for violence with injury.
- For violence without injury, the difference is significant but smaller.

Lastly, adults who were living in private or social rented accommodation had a higher risk of being victims of all violence than people living in accommodation that they owned (3.3%, 3.0% and 1.3% of these populations respectively).

### Area characteristics

The last set of variables includes the characteristics of the area in which the respondent lived. People living in London were more likely to be victims of all violence (2.5% of London residents) compared with those living outside London (1.9% of outside-London residents). Similar differences were found for violence with injury. However, people living in London and outside London did not differ in terms of violence with injury. Likewise, people living in urban areas were more likely to be victims of all violence than

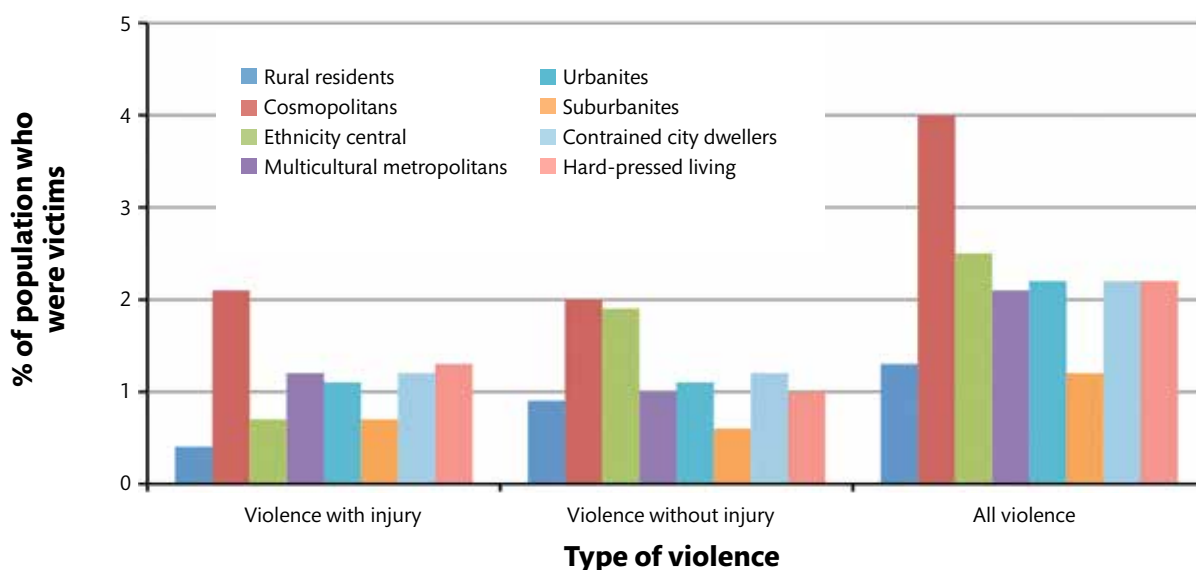
people living in rural areas (2.1% and 1.4% of these populations respectively), with no differences in violence without injury.

The 2011 Area Classification for Output Areas (2011 OAC) was used to explore whether areas' characteristics are associated with the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime (Figure 9).<sup>vi</sup>

- People living in cosmopolitan areas were more likely to be victims of all violence (4% of cosmopolitan residents) than in rural (1.3% of rural residents) or suburban (1.2% of suburbanite residents) areas.
- Similar differences were found for violence with and without injury.

This is not surprising, as the cosmopolitan cluster is associated with other characteristics described above; the population in this cluster is characterised by living in densely populated urban areas with an above-average number of residents from EU accession countries and young adults, and a higher proportion of full-time students.

Figure 9. Proportion of victims of violent crime by 2011 OAC



<sup>vi</sup> The population in the UK was divided into eight supergroups (or clusters) based on characteristics of areas in terms of their demographic structure, household composition, housing, socio-economic characteristics and employment patterns. (Office for National Statistics. (2015). *Pen portraits for the 2011 Area Classification for Output Areas*. London: Office for National Statistics).

# Which risk factors are the strongest?

The above sections describe differences between the categories within each set of characteristics separately. However, since these characteristics may be related to one another (for example, most students are also young adults), we further explored<sup>vii</sup> the relative influence of each characteristic and identified which of them contributed more to the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime.<sup>viii</sup> This provides a clearer picture of the specific groups of people that were more vulnerable to being a victim of violent crime.

Furthermore, where characteristics consist of several categories (for example, 'gender' is composed of 'women' and 'men'), one category serves as the reference category; we can then compare the risk of being a victim of violence to each of the subcategories and the reference category (e.g. if the reference category is women, the risk of men being a victim is compared to the risk of women being a victim).

We separately looked at victims of violence without injury and victims of violence with injury.

## Violent crime with injury

Five characteristics appeared to have a larger contribution to the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime with injury:

- People with **limiting disability/ illness** were more than three (3.4) times likely than people without a limiting disability/illness to be a victim of violent crime with injury.
- Adults who were **separated** were 3.6 times more likely than married adults to be a victim of violence with injury.
- People of **mixed ethnicity background** were 2.8 times more likely to be a victim of violence with injury compared to people of white ethnicity background.
- The likelihood of young adults **aged 20-24** to be a victim of violence with injury was more than doubled (2.5) than the likelihood of adults aged 45-55.
- **Men** were 1.8 times more likely than women to be a victim of violence with injury.

In other words, having a limiting disability/illness, being separated, or being of mixed ethnicity contributes more to the likelihood of being a victim of severe types of violent incidents (including wounding) than, for example, visiting a nightclub once a week or more.

<sup>vii</sup> Using logistic regression analysis.

<sup>viii</sup> Based on the p-value of the Wald chi-square test (Thompson, D. (2009). *Ranking predictors in logistic regression*. Milwaukee, WI: Assurant Health).

### Violent crime without injury

Two risk factors have a larger contribution to the likelihood of being a victim of violence without injury. This is similar to violence with injury:

- Adults with a **limiting disability/illness** were twice as likely as adults without disability to be a victim of violent crime without injury.
- **Men** were twice as likely as women to be a victim of violent crime without injury.

Three other characteristics were found to be associated with being a victim of violent crime without injury (with a slightly lesser influence than the first two). These characteristics are somewhat different than those related to violent crime with injury.

- Young adults **aged 16-19** were nearly three (2.8) times more likely to be a victim of violent crime without injury compared to adults aged 45-55.
- People who **visited a nightclub once a week or more** in the last month were 2.4 times more likely to be a victim of violent crime without injury than people who did not visit a nightclub.
- **People living in private rented accommodation** were 1.6 times more likely than property owners to be a victim of violent crime without injury.

However, once again, having a limiting disability/illness contributes more to the likelihood of being a victim of violence without injury than, for example, being aged 16-19 or visiting a nightclub once a week or more.

# Change in the trend of risk factors over the years

We went on to further examine any changes in the main risk factors over a period of 12 years, from data of the 2003/04 survey up to 2014/15.<sup>ix</sup>

Figure 10 presents the data for health status. Over a period of 10 years (from 2005/06), there was a fall of 48.6% in the proportion of people with no disability/illness who were victims of all violence. Yet, over the same period, the proportion of people with a limiting disability/illness who were victims of all violence actually increased by 3.7%.

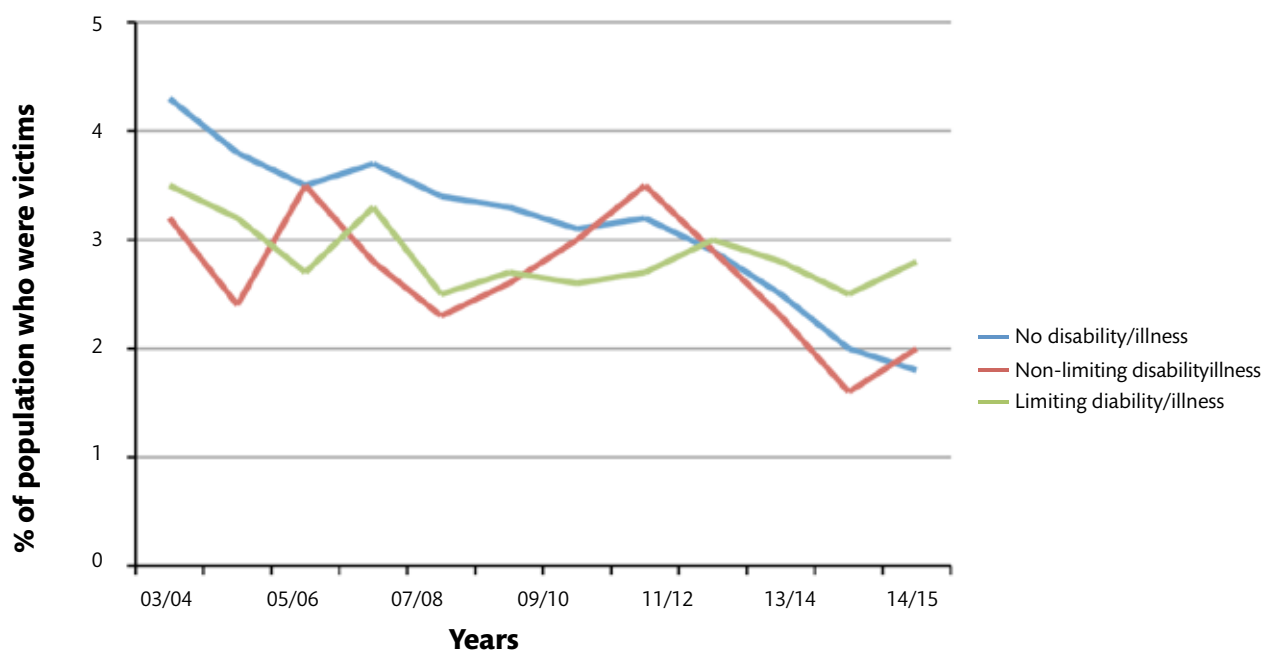
Furthermore, during the course of 2011/12, the proportion of people with a limiting disability/illness who suffered all violence was larger than the corresponding proportion of the non-disabled/healthy population,

and that has continued to be the case to the present day. The most recent figures show that the proportion of people with a limiting disability/illness who suffer all violence continues to increase, while the corresponding proportion for those without continues to decrease.

As can be seen in Figure 11, there was a sharp decrease in the proportion of victims of all violent crimes among people aged 16–19 from 2006/07 to 2014/15 (65.8% fall). While the decrease for those aged 20–24 was also large (50%), it is this age group that is now most at risk of being a victim of all violence.

Figure 12 shows the proportion of victims of all violence by marital status from 2003/04 to 2014/15. Until 2014/15, the

Figure 10. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by health status from 2003/04 to 2014/15



<sup>ix</sup> For a few variables, the earliest data available is from 2006/07.



Figure 11. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by age group from 2006/07 to 2014/15

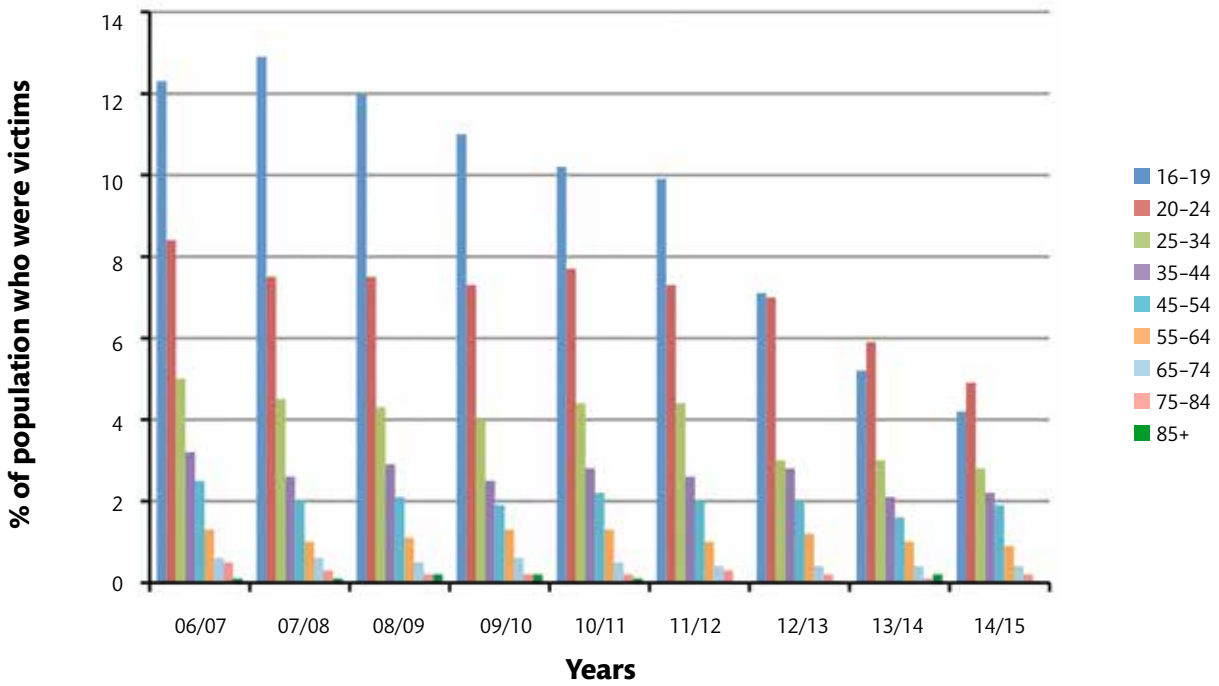
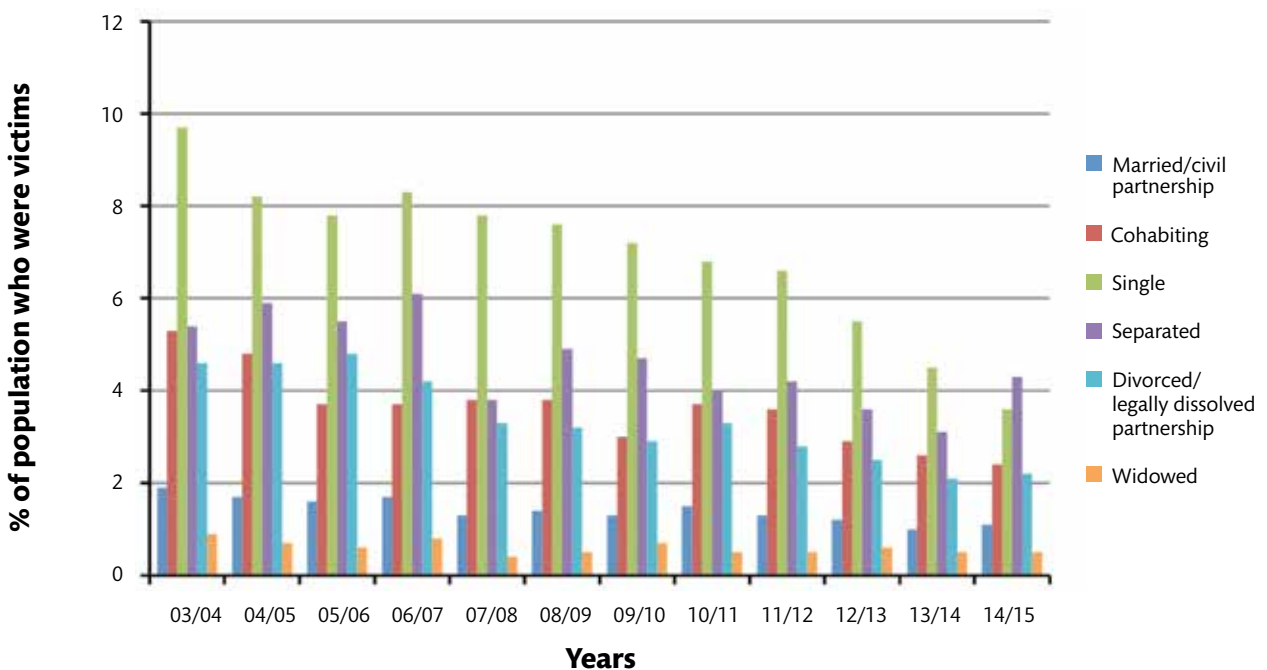


Figure 12. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by marital status from 2003/04 to 2014/15



group with the largest proportion of victims was single adults. Now it is those who identify as separated who are most at risk. Furthermore, while there was a sizeable fall in the proportion of victims of violence who were single or married (62.9% and 42% respectively), there was only a 20% decrease in adults who were separated. Figures for people who were separated actually increased during 2014/15 and returned to the 2011/12 levels. A very similar trend for single, married and separated marital statuses was also found for violence with injury from 2006/07 to 2014/15 (decreasing by 42.8%, 60.4% and 20% respectively).

The picture regarding ethnicity background is somewhat complex. On the one hand, when comparing white with non-white populations, victimisation through all violence for both groups decreased from 2003/04 to 2014/15 (50% and 58%

respectively) (see Figure 13). The decrease for non-white ethnicity background can be mostly accounted to the large fall in violence without injury for non-white ethnicity background during this period.

On the other hand, when different ethnicity backgrounds were compared, people with mixed ethnicity backgrounds were consistently the group with the highest proportion of victimisation of all violence, particularly since 2010/11 (Figure 14).

There was a similar decrease in the proportion of victims of all violence for both men and women from 2003/04 to 2014/15 (51.8% and 51.7% respectively) (see Figure 15). However, while the proportion of men who were victims of violent crime with injury dropped by more than half (53.6%), the decline was smaller for violence without injury (39.1%).

Figure 13. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by white or non-white ethnicity background from 2003/04 to 2014/15



Figure 14. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by ethnicity background from 2006/07 to 2014/15

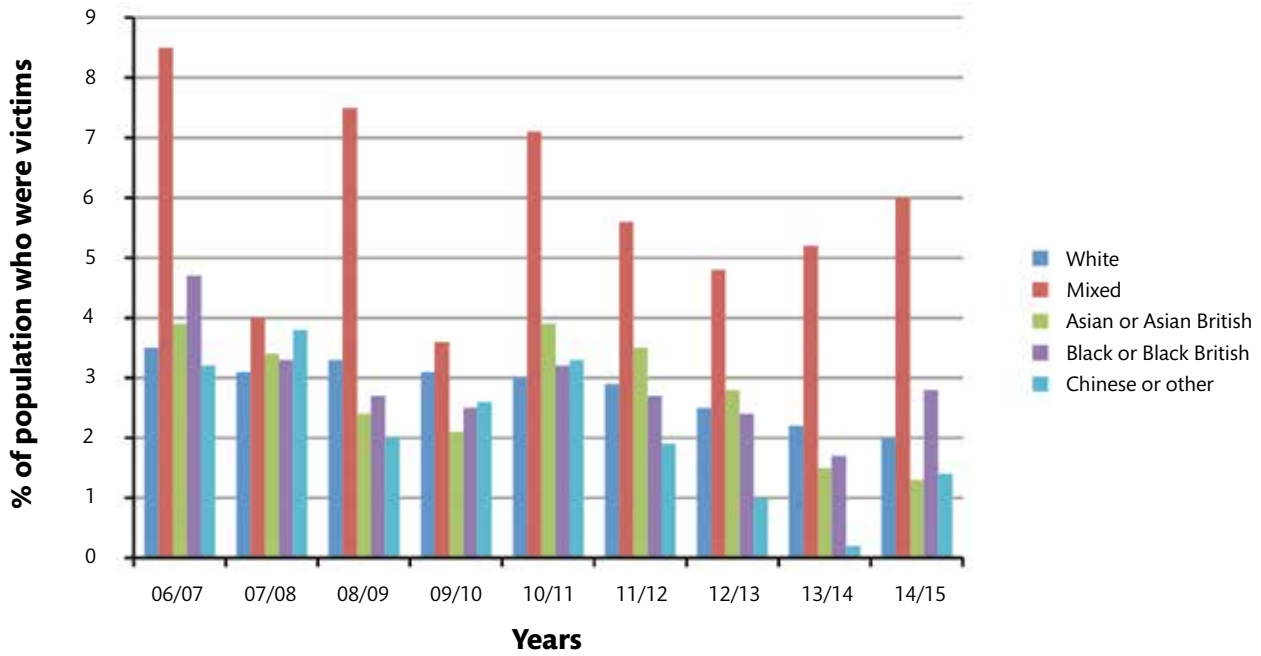
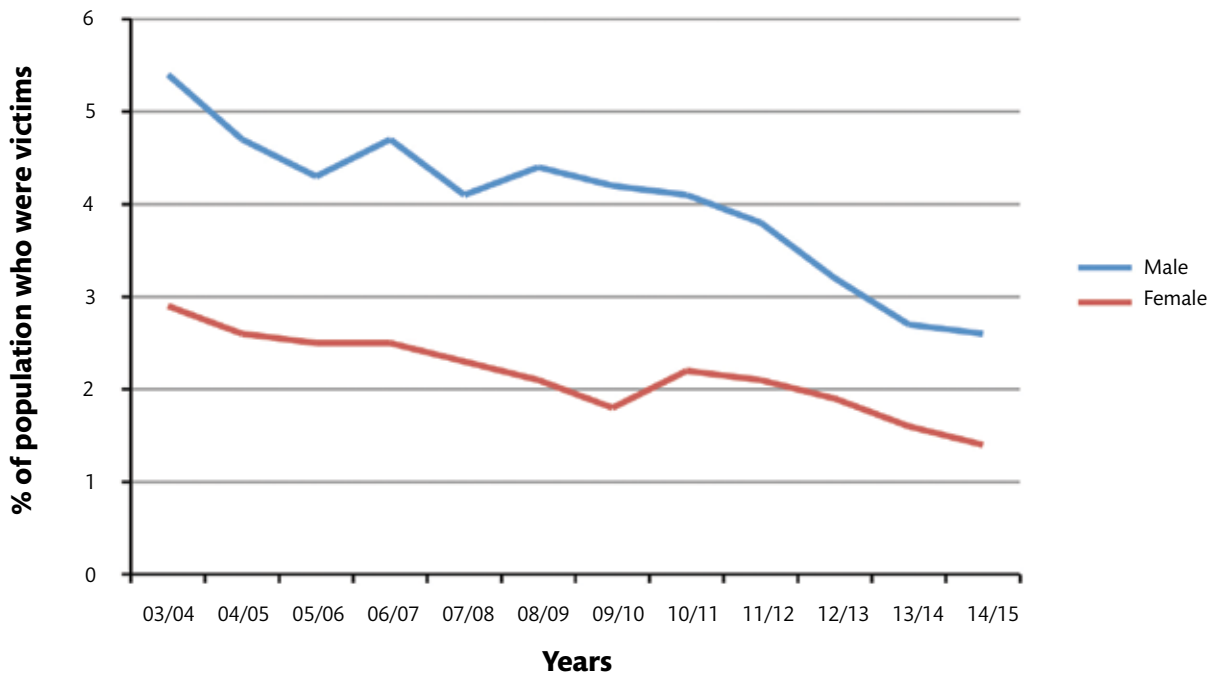


Figure 15. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by gender from 2003/04 to 2014/15



**FOCUS ON VIOLENCE**

The gap in proportion of victims of all violent crimes between adults who visited a pub or a bar in the last month and those who did not is closing (Figure 16). Though the proportion of victims who visited a nightclub once or

more in the last month fell by 50% between 2006/07 and 2014/15, this group remains at higher risk than the group that visited less than once a week or not at all (Figure 17).

Figure 16. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by frequency of bar/pub visits in the last month from 2006/07 to 2014/15

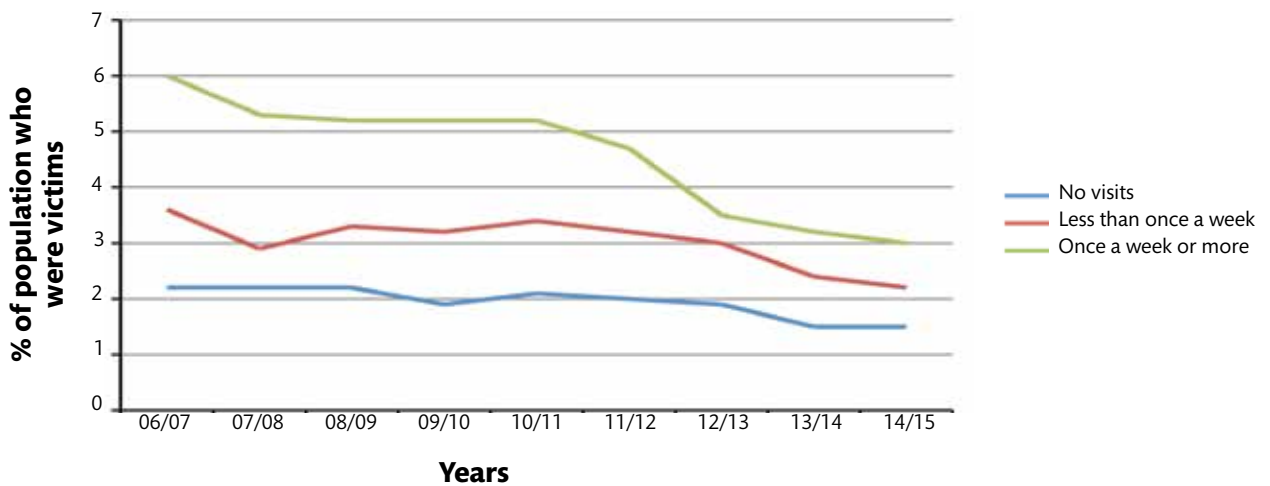
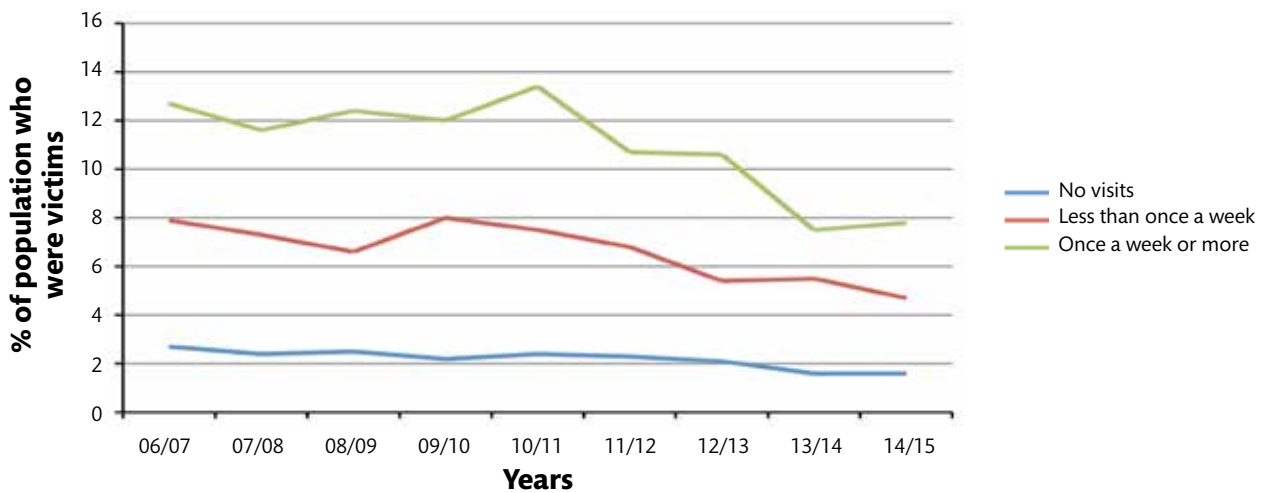


Figure 17. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by frequency of nightclub visits in the last month from 2006/07 to 2014/15



As shown in Figure 18, despite a decrease in the proportion of lone parents who were victims of all violent crimes (54.3%), the decrease for households without children and two-parent households with children was larger (59.6% and 63.6% respectively). From these results, we can ascertain that adults living in lone-parent households are still at higher risk of being a victim of all violence.

The trend regarding household income can be seen in Figure 19. From 2006/07 to 2014/15 there was an 11.1% decrease in the victimisation of people living in households with a total income of less than £10,000. However, over the same period, there was a 40% decrease in the victimisation of people living in a household with a total income of more than £30,000.

Figure 18. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by household structure from 2003/04 to 2014/15

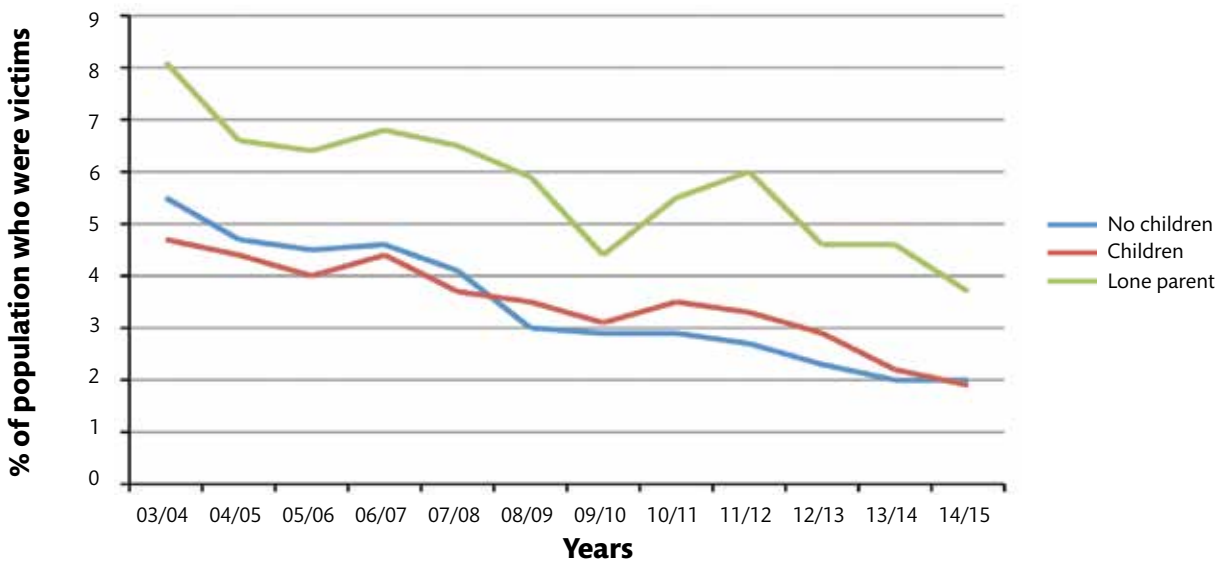
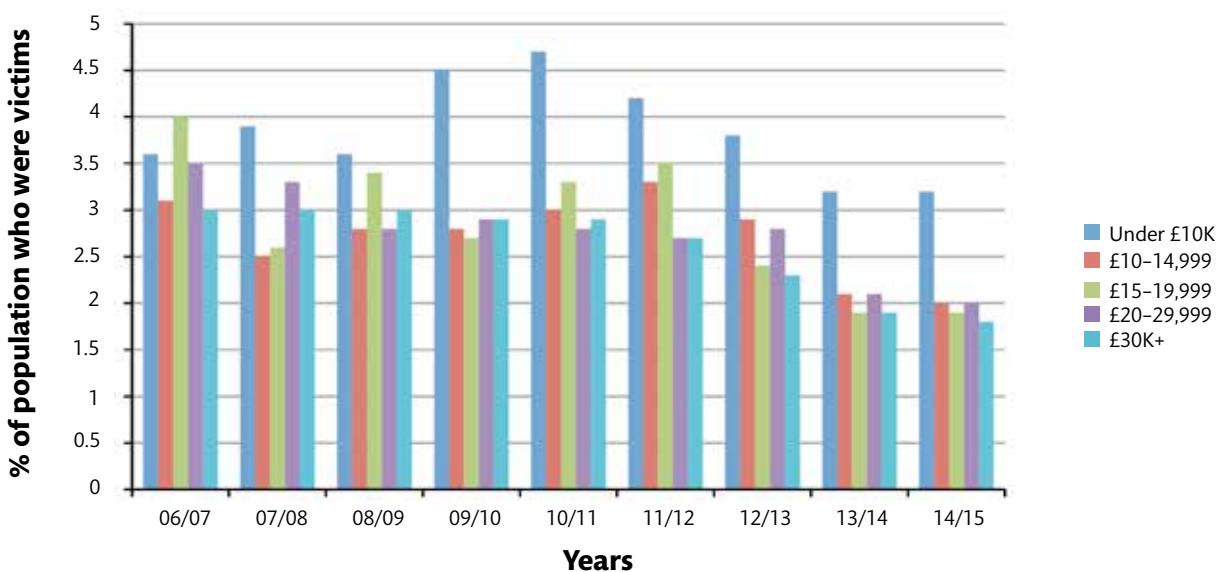


Figure 19. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by household income from 2006/07 to 2014/15



**FOCUS ON VIOLENCE**

As presented in Figures 20 and 21, even though there was a decrease in the proportion of victims of violent crime with and without injury among private and social renters, both groups are still at higher risk than property owners.

Furthermore, there was a sharp fall in the proportion of victims of violent crime without injury for private rented accommodation. However, this changed last year and it will be interesting to follow whether this represents a new trend.

Figure 20. Proportion of victims of violent crime with injury by household tenure from 2006/07 to 2014/15

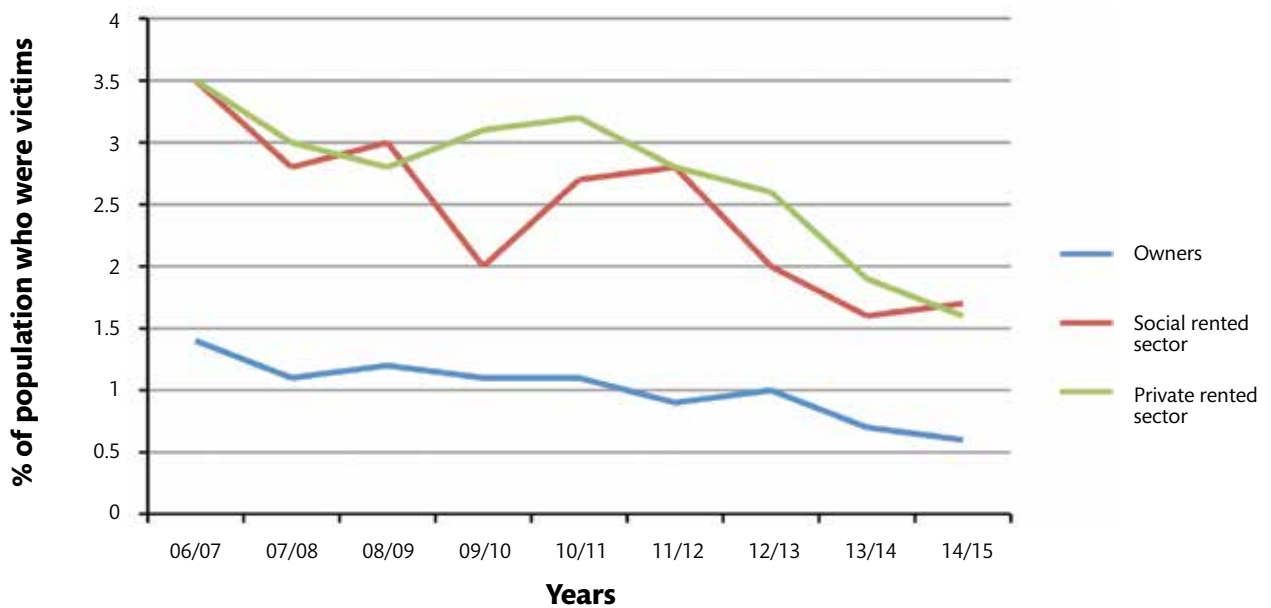
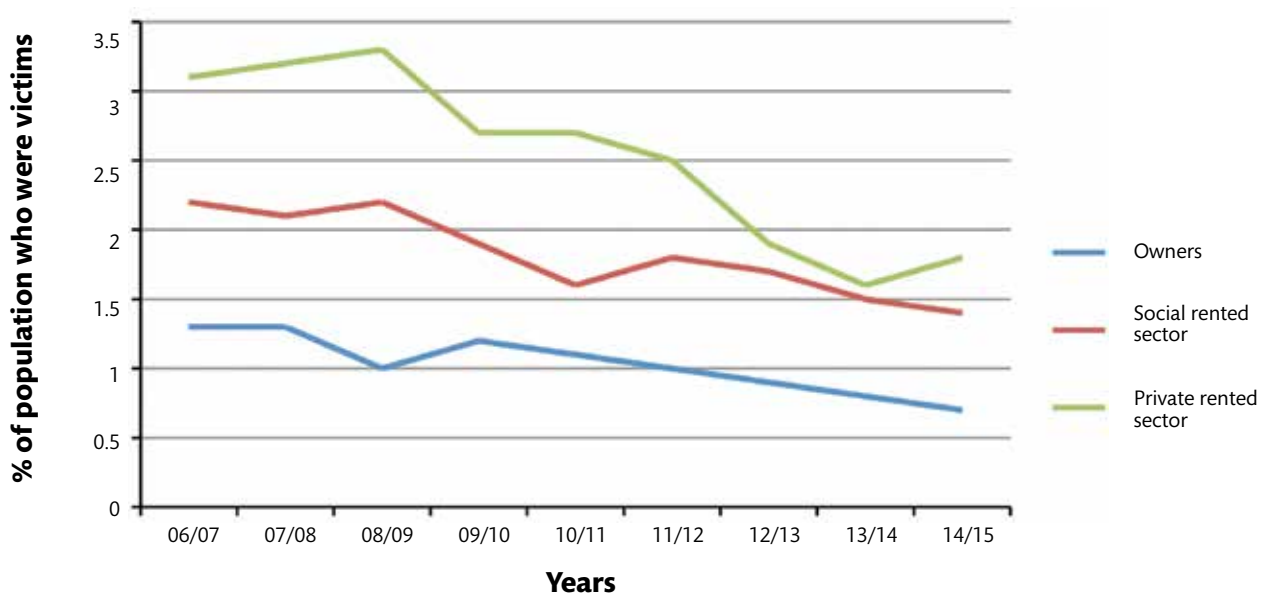


Figure 21. Proportion of victims of violent crime without injury by household tenure from 2006/07 to 2014/15



When looking at the differences between people living in London and elsewhere, the differences over the years are not major (Figure 22).

Nevertheless, when focusing only on violent crime without injury, people living in London are consistently at higher risk than those living outside London (Figure 23).

Figure 22. Proportion of victims of all violent crimes by living in London or elsewhere from 2006/07 to 2014/15

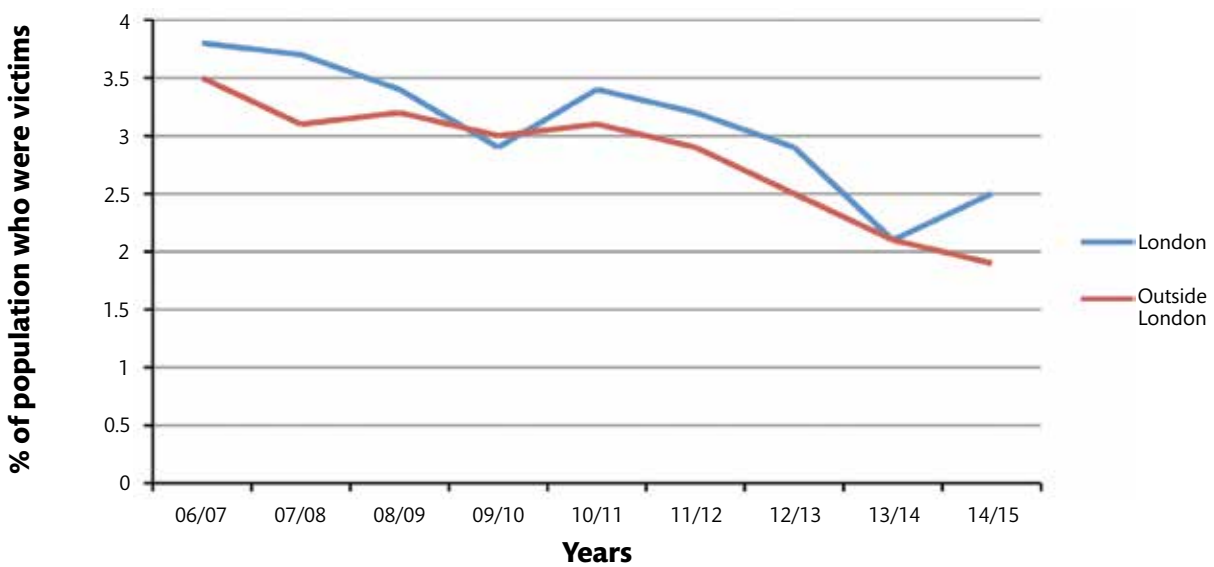
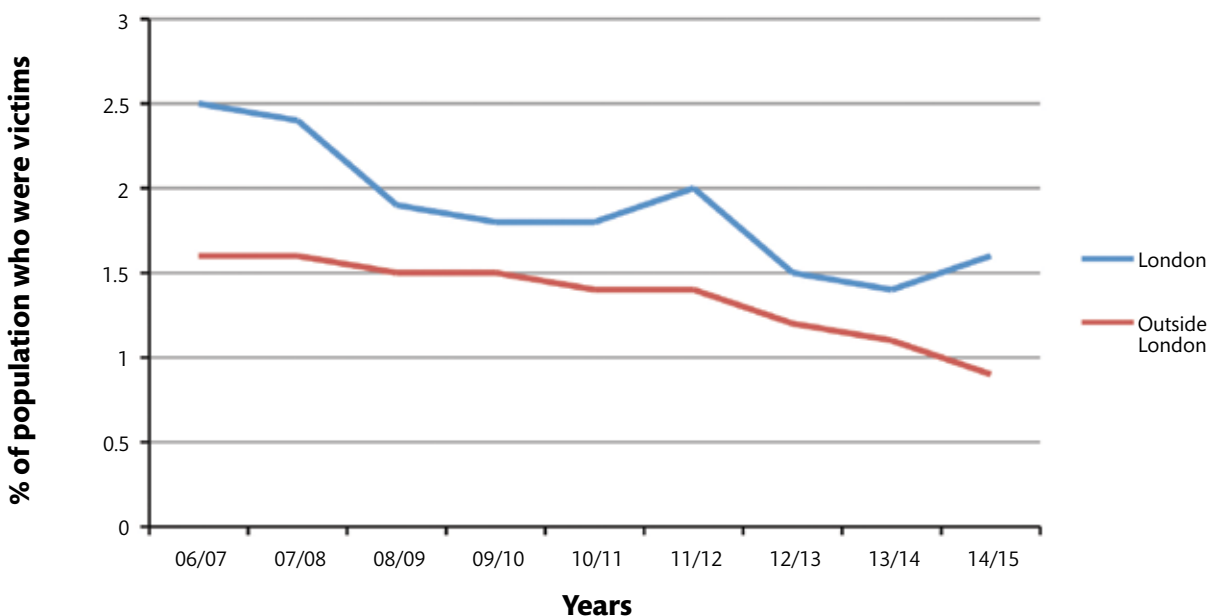


Figure 23. Proportion of victims of violent crime without injury by living in London or elsewhere from 2006/07 to 2014/15



## Conclusions

- Having a **limiting disability/illness** and being a **man** increases the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime with **and** without injury.
- Besides these two, there are other **distinctive characteristics** that most strongly contribute to the likelihood of being a victim of violence. These are:
  - Being separated, being from a mixed ethnicity background, or being aged 20–24, increase the likelihood of being a victim of violent crime with injury.
  - Being aged 16–19, visiting a nightclub once a week or more, or living in private rented accommodation increase the likelihood of being a victim of violence without injury.
- The general decrease in the number of violent crimes over the last decade has not been reflected for several groups, which continue to be at **higher risk**.
- The proportion of people with a **limiting disability/illness** who suffer violence increased over a period of 10 years.
- The proportion of victims who identify as **separated** increased during 2014/15 and returned to 2011/2012 levels.





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