

Serious violence falls by a third in England

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Levels of serious violence in England and Wales fell by almost a third in 2020, reflecting COVID-19 lockdowns and other restrictions.

Analysis by Cardiff University's Violence Research Group shows 56,653 fewer people were treated in [hospital](#) for violence-related injuries in

2020 compared to 2019.

"From a violence perspective, 2020 was the safest year on record," said Professor Jonathan Shepherd, co-author of [Violence in England and Wales in 2020](#), published today.

Data gathered from 133 NHS hospital emergency units showed that 119,111 people attended for treatment of violence-related injuries in 2020, down from 175,764 in 2019.

Emergency hospital treatment for [violent injury](#) among males and females declined by 33% and 29% respectively in 2020—the biggest falls since Cardiff University's first report on violence from this NHS perspective 20 years ago.

Declines were found in all age groups and were greatest (66%) among children aged under 11.

"The full picture on domestic violence is still not clear," said Professor Shepherd, who pioneered the use of [injury](#) data to measure [violent crime](#).

"Police in England and Wales [recorded](#) 842,813 [domestic violence](#)-related offenses in the year to September 2020 but many such offenses are not reported. From an A&E perspective, in Cardiff, which may not be typical, levels of violence in the home did not change relative to 2019."

"Men aged 18-30 continue to be at greatest risk of violent injury. In 2020, males were twice as likely as females to receive emergency hospital treatment."

Violent injury serious enough to result in emergency hospital treatment

in 2020 closely correlated with the imposition, tightening, easing and lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

"Lockdowns, especially the March 23rd 2020 lockdown, were associated with steep falls in violence. Closure of pubs, clubs and other social venues prior to this was also associated with significant falls. Each easing of restrictions thereafter was followed by violence increases; each tightening of restrictions in the autumn was associated with decreases."

"Violence peaked in August 2020, reaching pre-pandemic levels," said Professor Shepherd.

According to this reliable measure of serious harm, apart from the years 2014 to 2017 when violence flatlined and knife crime increased, there have been year on year falls in violence in England and Wales since 2001. From 2010 to 2019, for instance, numbers of injured people treated in emergency departments fell by 137,269 from 313,033, a decrease of 43.8%. Over the two decades, numbers in 2001 equated to 461,759, falling to 119,111 in 2020, a decrease of 74%.

This 20th annual report on serious violence in England and Wales includes data from the National Violence Surveillance Network (NVSN), led by Cardiff University's Professor Vaseekaran Sivarajasingam, of 133 certified NHS hospital Emergency Departments, Minor Injury Units and Walk-in Centers.

Reflecting on [violence](#) in the last two decades, Professor Shepherd said advances in inter-agency collaboration, [data sharing](#) and analysis, targeted policing and real-time CCTV surveillance, were key to prevention. "These factors are all vulnerable when the economy is stretched; they need constant attention" he said. "Through all these means, vibrant, safer towns and cities can be achieved."

More information: Violence in England and Wales in 2020:
[static1.squarespace.com/static ... niversity+Report.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a1d1e1e5a1d1e1e5a1d1e1e/t/600000000000000000000000/162000000000000000000000/University+Report.pdf)

Provided by Cardiff University

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