

# Incidents of serious violence have risen in England and Wales

April 20 2023

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Serious violence in England and Wales has increased by 12%, almost returning to pre-COVID levels, according to a new report by Cardiff University.

The University's Violence Research Group found an estimated 164,723 people attended A&E in England and Wales for violence-related [injury](#) in 2022, up by 17,867 or 12% from 2021. This increase follows a similar increase in the previous year—the only time this has happened in consecutive years since 2001.

Serious violence among all age groups increased significantly in 2022, compared to 2021—including an increase of 79.6% in those aged 0–10 years, a 24.5% increase in 11- to 17-year-olds, a 3.8% increase among 18- to 30-year-olds, a 14.4% increase in those aged 31–50, and a 17% increase in those over 51 years.

The report on serious violence in England and Wales in 2022 is based on data from 88 Emergency Departments, Minor Injury Units and Walk-in Centers.

Professor Jonathan Shepherd, Cardiff University's Violence Research Group and co-author of the report, said, "Since 2000, and including the period of the COVID-19 epidemic, data collected in hospital emergency departments represent the only reliable and consistent source of information on violence causing injury in England and Wales.

"In the period of the COVID-19 epidemic, violence fell steeply during the public health restrictions, from an estimated 175,764 people treated for violence related injury in 2019 to 119,111 in 2020. In 2021, when these restrictions had largely ended, serious violence increased, by 23%.

"We have seen further increases in violence in 2022, with a total of 41,628 people treated for violence-related injuries in the 88 Emergency Departments, Minor Injury Units and Walk-in Centers we included in our study."

The report found that serious violence—especially affecting males—was

greatest on Saturdays and Sundays. Serious violence also peaked in May and July. The team found that increases in serious violence continue to align with COVID-19 relaxation measures in 2022.

"Between 2021 and 2022, we have seen a 12% increase in violence in England and Wales, increases in violent injury across all age groups and genders, larger increases among children aged 0–10 and smaller increases in adults aged 18–30 relative to other [age groups](#)."

"Overall, the increase is almost to levels in violence observed immediately prior to the COVID-19 epidemic. In 2022, serious violence was only 6.2% lower than pre-COVID levels in 2019," added Professor Shepherd.

The team's findings, along with the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, point to the need to strengthen the prevention of violence outside the home, especially at weekends and in the night-time economy. An important priority is prevent violence in which children are injured outside the home, including those of primary school age and in and around schools.

Professor Shepherd added, "The most important message from the COVID-19 era as far as violence is concerned, is that it can be prevented. Violence is not inevitable."

"Redoubling and targeting prevention efforts will reduce its burdens on citizens, families and across public services, not least on costly, hard pressed hospital emergency departments."

This 22nd [annual report](#) on serious [violence](#) in England and Wales is produced by the Violence Research Group. It includes data from the National Violence Surveillance Network, led by Cardiff University's Professor Vaseekaran Sivarajasingam.

Provided by Cardiff University

Citation: Incidents of serious violence have risen in England and Wales (2023, April 20)  
retrieved 21 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-04-incidents-violence-risen-england-wales.html>

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