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Taking Stock of Violence in Scotland

Susan A. Batchelor, Sarah Armstrong and
Donna MacLellan

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Writing in the *Scottish Journal of Criminal Justice Studies* in 2007, following the launch of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, co-director Michele Burman highlighted the challenges involved in researching violence:

> *Violence is a deeply emotive topic that excites much political and public attention, in Scotland, as elsewhere. It is a source of media fascination and the subject of fiction. Yet violence is a slippery term, with no standard definition, which can take on several different meanings, dependent on the context in which it takes place. Violence, in whatever its variant forms, is widespread. It is experienced in families, in public situations, at work and in people's treatment of themselves. It is both experienced and used by individuals and by organisations. As a complex phenomenon, its understanding requires the examination of both systemic, situational variables and the dynamics of individual behaviour.*[1]

A wide range of research has been conducted in Scotland during the intervening period, greatly enhancing our understanding of the dimensions and dynamics of violence. Approaches to violence prevention have also developed apace over the same period, with increasing acknowledgement of some of the structural inequalities and inequities that shape meanings and experiences of violence. However, there is still work to be done. Whilst many neighbourhoods in Scotland have experienced an overall decline in crime, particular neighbourhoods and communities remain disproportionately affected.

Purpose and aims

This report seeks to consolidate existing research knowledge about violence in Scotland, broadly defined, drawing on a range of quantitative and qualitative sources. It is not a systematic review; rather it presents a more selective and convenience sampling approach to research that reflects key trends in both research and patterns of the phenomenon under review. The aim is to provide an accessible document that brings together relevant information about the state of violence and violence research, focusing on Scotland, but reflecting wider developments in understanding as a means to inform future research priorities.

The Scottish Government commissioned the report but has not exercised editorial control over the contents. The views expressed are entirely those of the authors.

Our approach

The project realises the opportunity to take stock of many years of research and accumulated expertise on violence in Scotland, re-visiting and reviewing existing projects and publications. This included:

- Reviewing key statistical and non-statistical information sources to map current issues and trends;
- Consultation with known violence researchers (and members of the wider research community) in Scotland in order to identify important and influential projects and publications; and
- A search of literature databases based on identified themes and topics to identify peer-reviewed national and international work.

Review of administrative data and sources

We consulted official sources in order to provide an overview of current patterns and trends and to identify gaps and limitations. This was supported by a review of recent UK and international policy documents, strategies and briefings. Key statistical sources included:

- Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2017-2018
- Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland, 2017-18
- Hate Crime in Scotland, 2017-18
- Homicide in Scotland, 2017-18
- Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland, 2017-18
- Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland, 2014-15 and 2015-16
- Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2016-17
- Recorded Crime in Scotland, Robbery, 2008-09 and 2017-18
- Scotland's People Annual Report, 2017
- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, Partner Abuse, 2014/15
- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, 2017/18
- Scottish Prisoner Survey, 2017
- Unintentional Injuries in Scotland, Hospital Admissions: Year ending 31 March 2018

Research consultation

We consulted key researchers from across the Scottish criminological research community and beyond, issuing a call for contributions via the mailing list of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and social media channels and snowballing from there. As part of this process we spoke directly to 25 researchers and a further 15 sent us materials deemed relevant. There are likely other researchers working on violence in Scotland who were not identified as part of this process, or who did not respond to our requests, so this was not an exhaustive consultation – however we did our best to engage with as wide a range of researchers as possible within the time constraints.

As part of our discussions, researchers were asked to identify research that they had conducted relating to violence in Scotland within the previous 10 years, but also to bring to our attention other important sources of data and/or interesting or insightful examples of scholarship. This included: published and unpublished research, theoretical literature, PhD theses, and 'grey literature' such as organisational reports. Contributors were asked for their views on key strengths of current work in this area, and to identify any important gaps and/or limitations. On the basis of this process we compiled and reviewed a list of relevant

research projects and publications, categorised by subgroup of violence (e.g. youth violence; gender-based violence etc).

Literature search

A search of peer-reviewed literature on violence in Scotland was also conducted. This search was generated in January 2019, using two databases: the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) and Web of Science. We focused on articles published between 2008 and 2018, containing the search terms 'violen* AND Scotland' in the title. This search yielded 80 results which were reviewed for relevance. The majority of the articles identified related to historical violence, youth violence, gender-based violence, and the public health approach to violence prevention. Separate searches were then conducted on thematic topics and subgroups of violence identified in the initial statistical review and research consultation phases.

Report structure

As a result of the process outlined above, seven key thematic priorities were identified and these form the basis of the report which follows. Each co-author was tasked with drafting a number of chapters on identified topics, and each of these was reviewed by a member of the wider SCCJR research community with expertise on that particular topic. The subsequent report provides an overview of and critical reflection on key issues and debates, highlighting those studies identified by researchers as particularly significant for policy and practice development going forwards.

Chapter 2 presents the evidence for the Scottish crime drop, focusing specifically on key official sources on violent crime. The chapter identifies distinct patterns of victimisation for different social groups and highlights the limitations of official sources in measuring everyday experiences of violence and repeat victimisation.

Chapter 3 introduces the policy context relating to violence reduction in Scotland, highlighting the contribution of the public health model alongside feminist approaches to gender-based violence. Contrasting these perspectives with a traditional criminal justice understanding of violence as intentional, physical, interpersonal harm, this chapter emphasises the conceptual and methodological implications of contemporary developments.

Chapters 4 through 10 summarise key findings from research, relating to the following forms and contexts of violence: young people and violence; drugs, alcohol and violence; communities, neighbourhoods and violence; gender-based violence; hate crime; workplace and institutional violence; and violence interventions.

Chapter 11 concludes the report, summarising the key points from individual chapters and reflecting on the implications for future research on violence in Scotland.

A summary of themes arising from our discussions with researchers is included in the Appendix.

Chapter 2: Statistical trends

According to a range of sources, rates of violence in Scotland have fallen significantly over the past decade. Against this backdrop of an overall decline in violent crime, however, some communities experience a disproportionate level of violence, with emerging evidence that violence is perhaps becoming more concentrated on 'high frequency' victims, including victims of hate crime and domestic abuse. This chapter provides an overview of these key trends and patterns, drawing on official statistical sources, as a means of contextualising the thematic chapters that follow.

Long term reductions

Across all three key official sources – police recorded crime, the *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* (SCJS) and data on hospital admissions due to assault and assault with a sharp object – there has been a significant reduction in non-sexual violence over the past decade. Between 2008-09 and 2017-18 the number of non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police in Scotland fell by 43% (see Figure 1).[2] Whilst the latest national statistics show an increase of 1% between 2016-17 to 2017-18 (from 7,164 to 7,215), **violent crime remains at one of the lowest recorded levels since 1974**.

Figure 1. Non-sexual crimes of violence in Scotland, 2008-09 to 2017-18
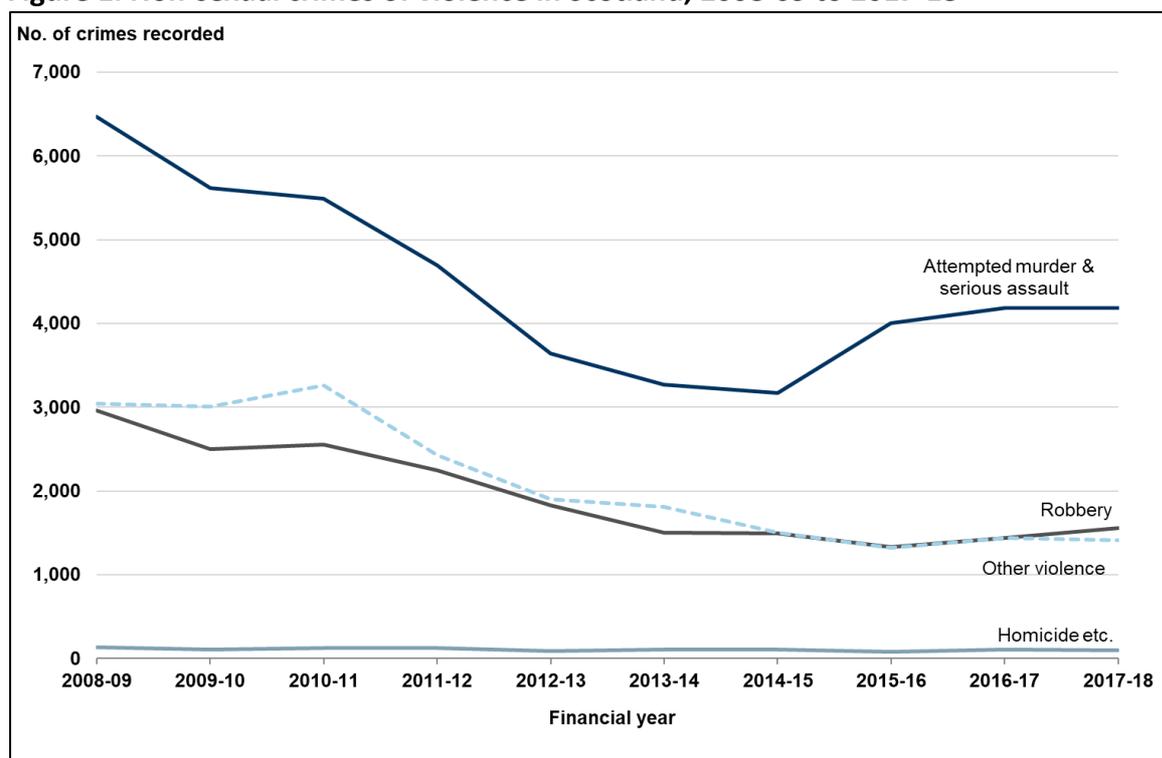
Source: Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2017-18

According to the SCJS, **violent crime is an increasingly rare experience for most people in Scotland**; nearly 98% of adults surveyed in the 2017/18 SCJS sweep reported no violent victimisation.[3] Looking at trends over time, the proportion of adults who did report an experience of violent victimisation fell from 4.1% in 2008/09 to 2.3% in 2017/18. The

number of violent incidents estimated to have taken place since 2008/09 has also fallen, from 317,000 to 172,000 in 2017/18 (Figure 2). This represents an overall drop of 46%, though figures have remained fairly stable since 2010/2011.

Figure 2. Estimated number of violent incidents in Scotland, 2008/09 to 2017/18
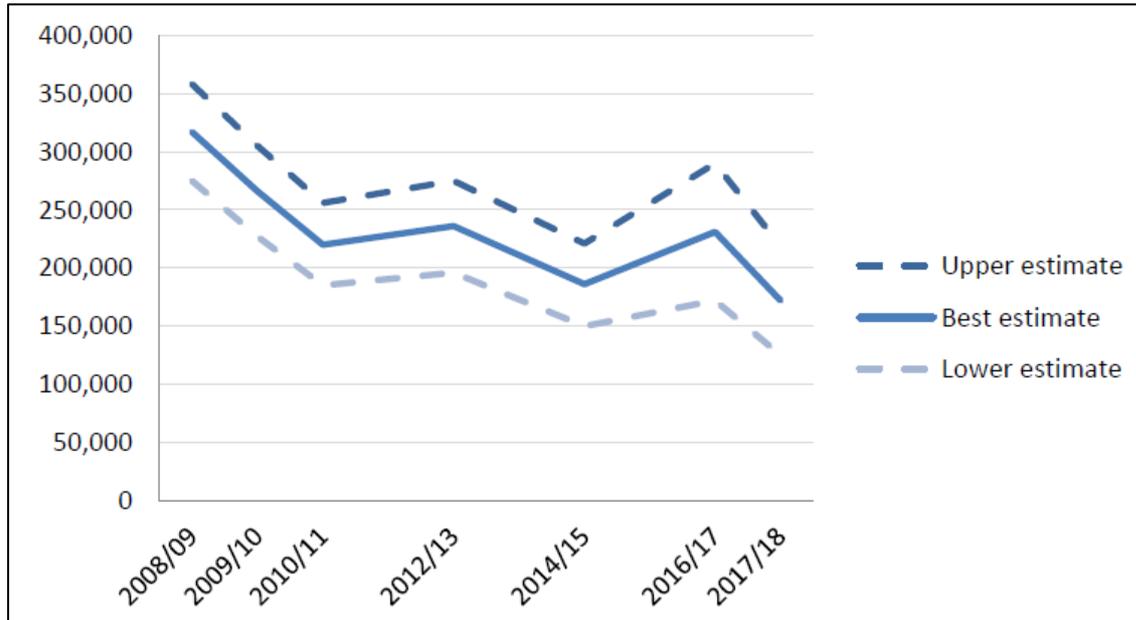
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017/18

In the period 2008/09 to 2017/18 there was also a decrease in emergency admissions to hospital resulting from assault, from 5,286 admissions in 2008/09 to 2,383 in 2017/18 (see Figure 3).[4] Expressed as a percentage, this is a decrease of 55%; expressed as a rate, emergency admissions fell from 101.6 to 43.9 per 100,000. Numbers have stabilized since 2014/15.

Figure 3. Emergency hospital admissions in Scotland as a result of assault, 2008/09 to 2017/18
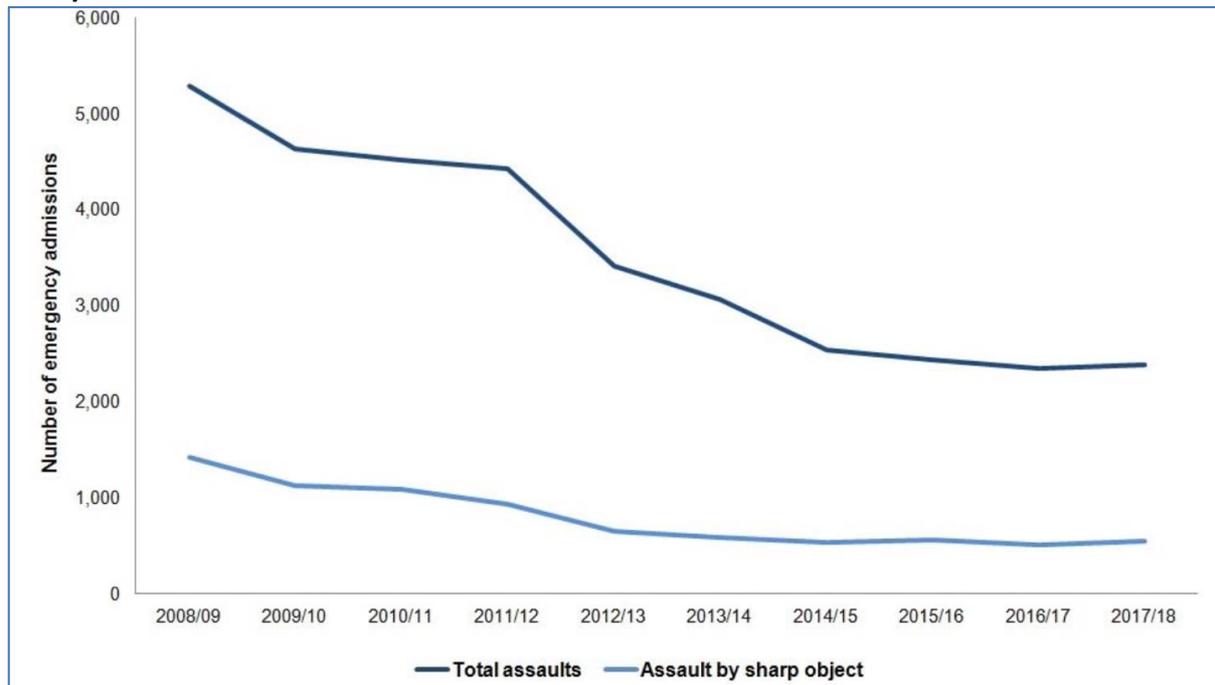
Source: Unintentional Injuries in Scotland Hospital Admissions, 2017/18

Exactly why Scotland has witnessed such reductions in (officially recorded and reported) violent crime remains to be established, but this downward trend mirrors developments elsewhere, across the UK and in other high-income countries, and is therefore likely, at least in part, to be related to wider structural and cultural factors (including demographic changes, fluctuating patterns of socio-economic and other forms of inequality, changing tolerance towards violence, changing patterns of alcohol consumption and regulation, shifting drug markets – and so on). That said, recent analysis of police and survey data by Sara Skott and Susan McVie found that the biggest overall contribution to the reduction in both homicide and other forms of violence in Scotland can be attributed to incidents involving young people using weapons in public places (See Figures 4 and 5).[5] (We would question the attribution of the 'gang rivalry' label here, as this is not possible to determine from homicide data, as far as we are aware. For further discussion of the problem of defining gangs see Batchelor[6] and Fraser and Atkinson.[7]) Incidents involving intimate partner violence perpetuated in a domestic environment also declined, according to the same analysis, but not to the same extent. (These latter findings need to be contextualised through the frames we set out in the following chapter, particularly in relation to how adoption of a feminist methodology has shown how year-to-year-decreases can mask overall trends of increase in some areas of violence.)

Figure 4. Relative change in distribution of homicide types, 2000-2003 to 2012-2015
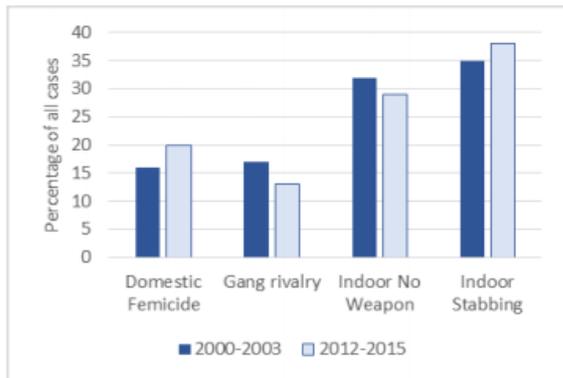
Source: Skott and McVie 2019; Scottish Homicide Database (SHD), 2000-2015

Figure 5. Relative change in distribution of non-fatal violence types, 2008/09 to 2014/15
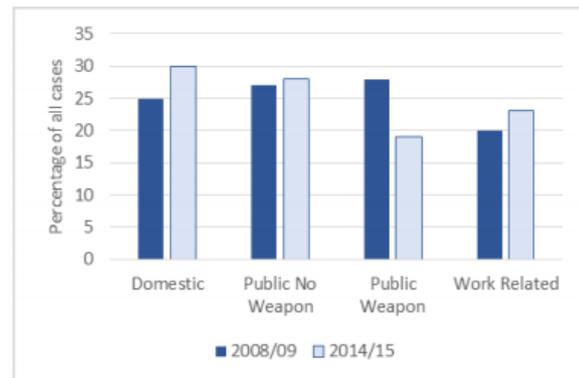
Source: Skott and McVie 2019; SCJS 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2012-13, 2014-15

Research carried out by Justice Analytical Services, based on analysis of a random sample of police recorded crime, 2008-09 and 2017-18, concluded that the fall in attempted murder and serious assault in Scotland was due to fewer cases in the west of Scotland, especially those involving young men and the use of a weapon.[8] 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. The same study found no significant change in the proportion of serious assaults that occurred in a public setting or a private setting between 2008-09 and 2017-18 – with most still occurring in a public setting. A similar analysis of the changing nature of police recorded robbery in Scotland, however, found that reductions in this crime category were due to fewer cases of victims being robbed in public spaces by strangers.[9] The reduction in the number of those cases with a male victim was larger than the reduction in cases with a female victim, though this might be expected given that almost three-quarters (71%) of robbery victims in 2008-09 were male.

Patterns of victimisation

Whilst official data suggest that the level of violence experienced by people in Scotland has generally decreased over the past 10 years, trends over time vary for different groups of people. Relevant findings from the 2017/18 SCJS are: [10]

- **Young people have seen the greatest reductions in their levels of violent victimisation**. Young people aged 16-24 years remain the age group most likely to self-report violent victimisation (5.8% prevalence, compared with 3.1% for the next highest group, 25-44 year olds), but their victimisation rates have fallen greatly (from 12.0% in 2008/09), whilst prevalence rate for other age groups has remained more stable. (NB differences between current rates for 16 to 24 year olds and 25 to 44 year olds not statistically significant, according to SCJS).
- **Men's and women's rates of violent victimisation are now equal**. While men's rate of violent victimisation has fallen by half since 2008/09, the level for women has remained stable over this time, and now women's violent victimisation rates (2.1%) are roughly equal that of men's (2.5%) in 2017/18.

- **Prevalence rates in rural and areas urban have also narrowed over the past decade.** Since 2008/09, the proportion of those living in urban areas experiencing violence have fallen (from 4.6% to 2.5%), whilst the prevalence rates for those in rural areas have remained stable (from 2.2% to 1.5%).
- **Deprivation doubles the likelihood of experiencing a violent crime.** Adults living in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland were almost twice as likely to have been victims of violence than people living elsewhere in 2017/18 (3.8% versus 2.1%).
- **Victims of repeated incidences of violence account for the majority of violent crime.** In 2017/18, 0.7% of respondents reported repeat experiences (two or more violent crimes) and these repeat victims accounted for three-fifths (59%) of all violent crime reported over the period.

These findings show that there are distinct victimisation patterns and experiences that require differentiation.

As Susan McVie and colleagues note (see Chapter 6), a key factor in the overall crime drop in Scotland has been the substantial decline in one-off victimisations, mainly related to property offending, but also in violent offending. [11] Using latent class analysis of the SCJS sweeps between 1992 and 2014/15, McVie et al. categorised the surveyed population into four groups

- **'Non-victims'** were the largest class, 82.3% across this period, who have 'a very low (almost zero) probability of experiencing any type of crime'.
- **'One-off Property Victims'** were the next largest class, making up 12% of the population overall, comprising those who 'had experienced on average just over one incident of crime in the previous year, most commonly a motor vehicle or household crime'.
- **'Multiple Mixed Victims'** represented 5.4% of the population, and 'they tended to experience an average of around two incidents of crime per year, consisting of a mixture of motor vehicle crime, household crime, and assault and threats.
- **'Frequent Personal Victims'** were the final group, representing just 0.3% of the population overall, experiencing 'an average of 3.5 incidents of crime per year, mostly 'assaults and threats, personal theft and robbery'.

Between 1993 and 2015 there was a significant increase in probability of being in the Non-victim class, with reductions in the One-off Property and Multiple Mixed victim classes but no clear upward or downward trend apparent related to Frequent Personal victims. The analysis therefore showed that **the crime drop was not experienced evenly across the population, and the very small number of people subject to frequent violent experiences may not have seen much if any reduction in victimisation at all**.

These findings can potentially be linked up with data on policing strategy to assess the contribution of criminal justice actors in crime reduction, and it might also suggest important paths for future prevention strategy. It is important, however, not to equate latent classes, based on a probabilistic form of statistical modelling, with human social groups.[12] Latent class analysis is a powerful tool that offers a multi-dimensional picture that helps us to understand the overall crime drop but **there is likely to be heterogeneity in**

terms of the causes, experiences and settings of violence in the lives of the people grouped into this category which can only be adequately explained through the use of qualitative, community-based, methodologies. It would be premature, therefore, to pull together the range of points made above – about the overrepresentation of young people and the most deprived as both perpetrators and victims of violence – to impose a false shared social status or relation to 'frequent personal victims', building intervention strategies on the back of this. The statistical picture offers suggestive directions for further research and policy action, but requires deeper understanding of the contexts of violence as is emphasised in the specific chapters that follow.

Measuring repeat victimisation and routine violence

The official data sources reviewed above offer a fascinating picture of the changed landscape of crime experience in Scotland in which: overall drops in crime are largely attributed to reductions in incidents involving young men and weapons in public places, especially in urban areas and in the West of Scotland. This has increased the proportion of 'frequent personal victims', who are more likely than other groups to be living in areas across Scotland characterised as highly deprived.[13]

While quantitative measures like police recorded crime and survey data provide important insights into patterns and trends of victimisation, there are limits to what such data can tell us about repeat victimisation and routine violence for a number of reasons – some of which are well-rehearsed in the literature on official crime statistics but others which relate to the specific nature of repeat violence victimisation (RVV). It is widely acknowledged, for example, that police data tend to underestimate the extent of crime, as not all incidents are reported or recorded. This is compounded in the case of RVV, since **most people experiencing violent victimisation do not report this to police** (around 60% in the 2017/18 SCJS) and **repeat victims are less inclined to report than other victims**.[14] Analysis of data from the 2008/09 *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* demonstrates a striking overlap between variables predicting non-reporting and violent victimisation risk, suggesting that those who face the highest incidence of violence victimisation are least likely to report such incidences to the police.[15] This finding highlights both the strengths and the limitations of large-scale survey research – as well as pointing to the need to include qualitative approaches 'in order to develop a deeper understanding of the motivation behind non-reporting than can be derived from binary survey responses'.[16] Possible reasons for non-reporting include a combination of shame, fear of reprisals, feelings of self-blame, or because routine forms of violence often become normalised as long-suffering victims-survivors become resigned to a certain amount of abuse, e.g. as an expected consequence of 'difference'.[17]

Additional problems associated with crime surveys are that they are time-based, asking individuals about their experiences during the past 12 months.[18] This means that some victimisations can appear to be one-off, single incidents, when they are in fact part of a series of crimes suffered for years.[19] Less visible forms of violence are more likely to involve multiple, repetitive and serial experiences, and this can be seen especially in relation to gendered forms of violence (see Chapter 7). The SCJS 2017/18 found that 61% of those reporting partner abuse had experienced more than one incident in past 12 months

(excluding those who responded they didn't know or wish to answer). Not only did violence in relationships involve multiple incidents, but those experiencing this form of violence were more likely to have other victimisation experiences outside this relationship: 'Over a quarter (26.2%) of those who were classified as victims in the main SCJS survey had experienced partner abuse since the age of 16, compared to 14.1% of non-victims.'

Despite improvements in data collection methods, such as the use of self-completion modules to facilitate reporting of partner abuse and sexual victimisation, **limitations of official data in assessing the nature and extent of gendered violence** are well established, particularly in terms of the 'snapshot' they provide of domestic abuse, a problem which is characterised by an ongoing and complex pattern of behaviour.[20] For example, recent research by Sylvia Walby et al. has highlighted how the practice of 'capping' incidents of repeat victimisation in survey research (intended to allow for consistent monitoring of crime trends – see Scottish Government Methodological Note[21]) has served to conceal vast amounts of violence against women, which in contrast to violence against men has increased since 2009 in England and Wales. [22] The scale of violence against women is also concealed by the exclusion of sexual offences, such as rape, from the 'violent crimes' category in official statistical publications. Indeed, if we look at the Scottish data for sexual crimes, which account for 5% of all crimes recorded in Scotland in 2017-18, we can see that against the background of an overall violent crime drop, recorded incidents of sexual crimes are at the highest level seen since 1971, the first year for which broadly comparable crime groups are available. Between 2008-09 and 2017-18, the number of sexual crimes recorded by the police in Scotland increased by 97% (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Sexual crimes in Scotland, 2008-09 to 2017-18
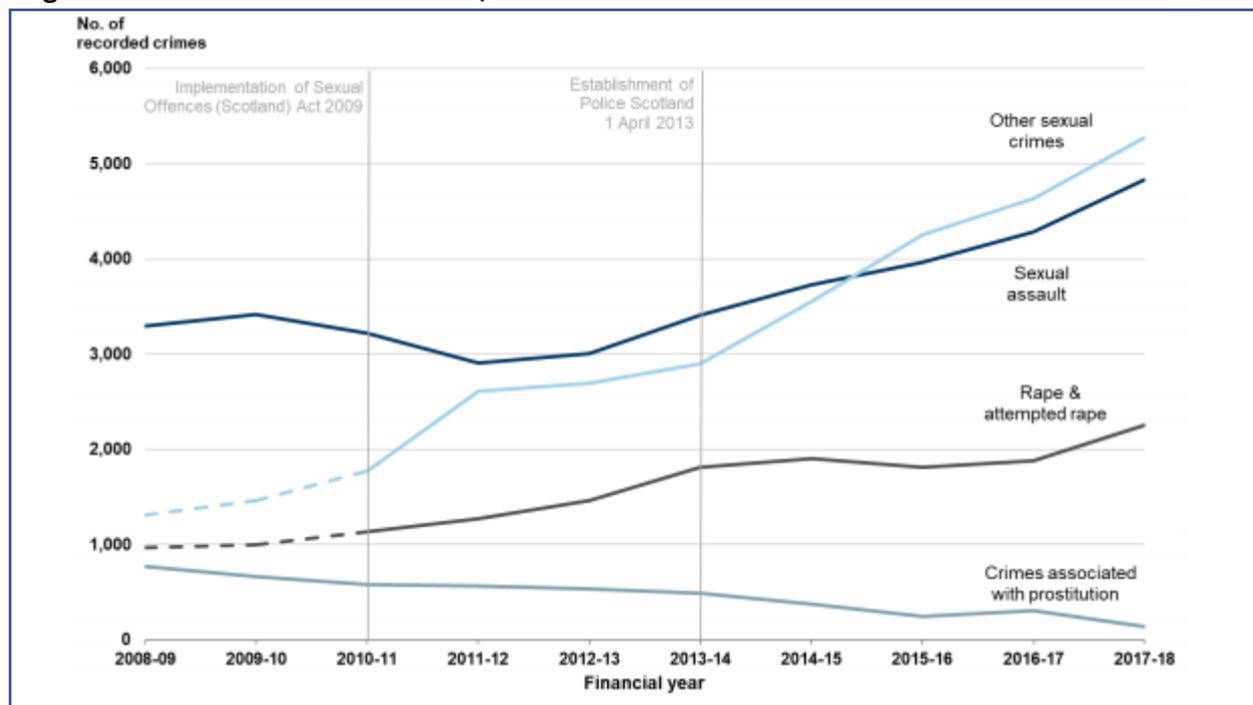
Source: Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2017-18

Key messages

- **Rates of violent crime in Scotland have fallen significantly over the past decade, according to a range of official statistical sources, however important patterns and trends are not always captured within aggregate data.**

- **Whereas men's rates of violent victimisation have decreased, women's rates have remained stable. (See Chapter 7)**

- **Violence appears to be becoming even more concentrated on repeat victims and those living in deprived communities. (See Chapters 6 and 8)**

- **Whilst numerous data on violence are collected and reported, repeat and routine forms of violence are not adequately captured by official statistics, and this can be seen particularly in relation to gender-based violence.**

Chapter 3: Policy context

Rates of interpersonal violence have substantially declined over the past 15-20 years in nearly all European countries as well as in many other places, including the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In Scotland, success in violence reduction is widely attributed to the Scottish Government adopting a public health approach rooted in prevention, with an emphasis on early intervention and partnership working.[23] Scotland is also recognised internationally as leading the way in promoting gender equality as a means to challenge and eradicate violence,[24] adopting a feminist analysis of domestic abuse in 2000[25] and extending this to all forms of violence against women in 2014.[26] This chapter introduces these two approaches, again as a background for the chapters which follow, paying particular attention to respective conceptual and methodological implications.

Defining violence

As alluded to in the opening chapter, violence is a contested concept, notoriously difficult to define because it takes many different forms in different contexts and its meaning is shaped by material and ideological interests.[27, 28] Conventional legal and criminological approaches tend to limit violence to intentional, physical, interpersonal and discrete incidents of harm (i.e. those forms of violence typically enshrined in criminal law), whereas critical criminological definitions incorporate wider harms including psychological and/or economic harms, as well as harms associated with social institutions and structures.[29] Within the current policy landscape in Scotland this latter definition is gaining wider prominence – in relation to public health approaches to violence reduction and feminist informed work on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls – although a conventional criminal legal definition still predominates.

The public health approach

The public health approach to violence prevention adopts the following definition, originally set out by the World Health Organization in their 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health*: **'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, maldevelopment or deprivation'**.[30] This comprehensive definition recognizes the breadth and complexity involved in defining violence, incorporating actions that cause or threaten injury, harm or deprivation beyond the physical. In doing so, it invokes the notion of 'structural violence' – that is **the violence inherent in unjust social, political and economic systems** – as well as more conventional forms of criminal violence and self-directed violence.

Public health approaches work by providing a framework which seeks to understand the range of factors that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence and responding with evidence-based interventions targeted at populations and localities.[31] There is no single agreed public health approach to violence though the key elements of a typical public health model are summarised in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The public health four-step model to violence prevention

1. Understand the scale of the problem through the systematic collection of data on the scale, type and outcomes of violence from multiple sources (police, health, self-report etc.).
2. Identify risk and protective factors by understanding the causes and correlates of violence.
3. Develop and evaluate interventions by using the information gathered in steps 1 and 2.
4. Scale up those programmes and interventions that have been proven to work and measure their impact and cost effectiveness.

Source: Adapted from the Violence Prevention Alliance[32]

Risk and protective factors are captured in an 'ecological model' of violence that considers the **complex interplay between individual, relationship, community, and societal factors**, as illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8: The ecological framework

- Victim of child abuse
- Psychological/personality disorder
- Delinquent behaviour
- Alcohol consumption/drug use

- Poverty
- High unemployment
- High crime levels
- Local illicit drug trade
- Inadequate victim care services

Individual   Relationship   Community   Society

- Poor parenting practices
- Marital discord
- Violent parental conflict
- Low socioeconomic household
- Delinquent peers

- Economic inequality
- Gender inequality
- Cultural norms that support violence
- Weak economic safety nets

Source: Adapted from the Violence Prevention Alliance[33]

In acknowledging the different levels at which risk and protective factors exist, a public health approach suggests that in order to prevent violence, it is necessary to act across multiple levels at the same time. In other words, a sustained reduction in violence is only possible through a shared agenda across sectors and organisations.[34] The complex and multi-faceted nature of such an approach makes establishing an evidence-base difficult but

also challenges conventional understandings of what counts as evidence (see Chapter 10). Not only are controlled evaluation designs and randomised trials near impossible in the context of violent street cultures,[35] for example, but in the few instances where such designs are implemented it is often difficult to attribute any 'promising' results solely to the intervention under evaluation.[36]

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

One public health approach to conceptualising risk factors is the highly influential Adverse Childhood Experiences study, undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Disease Control in the United States.[37] The study explored the impact of certain stressful experiences occurring during childhood and collectively known as 'ACEs'. These experiences include: emotional, physical or sexual abuse; emotional or physical neglect; violence against household members; living with household members who were substance abusers, mentally ill, suicidal or imprisoned; having one or no parents, or experiencing parental separation or divorce; and bullying or exposure to community or collective violence. The original ACEs study led to a plethora of publications identifying relationships between ACEs and a wide range of health behaviours and outcomes, including higher levels of interpersonal violence and self-directed violence in adolescence[38] and adulthood.[39] A nationally representative household survey of almost 4,000 residents in England found that **adults with four or more ACEs were seven times more likely to have been a victim of violence in the past year, and were eight times more likely to have committed a violent act** than those with no ACEs.[40, 41] In a subsequent Welsh study these figures were more pronounced, with those who had experienced four or more ACEs 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence in the past year, and 15 times more likely to have been the perpetrator of a violent incident.[42]

This research has had a substantial impact on the policy discourse across the UK, but also has attracted substantial concern and critique, including from the originator of the concept. On the one hand, **the focus on ACEs has been welcomed as helpful in understanding resilience, in bringing a focus on the impact of trauma throughout the life course and, crucially, the factors that can enable people to thrive** despite adversity and trauma. **Criticisms of the ACEs paradigm relate to the tendency to conflate risk with outcome and the emphasis on adversity within the family at the expense of wider structural inequities and inequalities**.[43, 44, 45, 46] As existing critiques of the risk factor paradigm within criminology and criminal justice have established, risk factors are not necessarily direct causes in and of themselves, but may merely be markers, or correlated with causes.[47] As an epidemiological piece of research, the original ACEs study was designed to identify increased risk in groups, not individuals, and therefore care must be taken when applying the results to an assessment of individuals (e.g. through the use of an 'ACEs checklist'). From a social scientific perspective, the key danger of the ACEs approach is that it reduces the individual into an object who is subjected to experiences, as opposed to a human being who interprets them.[48] ACEs do not consider the meaning of such experiences for the individual.[49] They also fail to account for differences in severity, duration, or adversity between and beyond the key core categories. Other important factors that influence an individual's likelihood of becoming a perpetrator and/or victim of violence include gender inequalities, poverty, disablism and racism, as well as exposure to cultural and social norms

that support violence. These factors – which are not addressed by the ACEs paradigm – also shape the ways in which different groups of victims and/or perpetrators are viewed and treated by others.[50] Finally, little work has attended to how concepts developed in a health setting may be distorted when applied in a separate institutional setting, such as criminal justice, thereby neglecting the potential of such tools aimed at helping to become a form of structural violence (relating to the trauma of state interventions – see Chapter 9). For example, ACEs factors can support criminalising whole groups of the population as easily as they might be used to support structural level interventions (such as to reduce poverty or support families).

Feminist perspectives

The public health model of violence shares some commonalities with feminist analyses of violence, but crucially lacks an explicit theory of power. From a feminist perspective, **violence is 'gendered', stemming from unequal power relations between men and women and cultural norms that reinforce aggressive and violent forms of masculinity**.[51] This understanding is enshrined in Scotland's national strategy to prevent violence against women and girls, *Equally Safe*, which includes a definition of gender-based violence as developed by the former National Group to Address Violence against Women (and based on the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women). It states:

> *Gender based violence is a function of gender inequality, and an abuse of male power and privilege. It takes the form of actions that result in physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering to women and children, or affront to their human dignity, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is men who predominantly carry out such violence, and women who are predominantly the victims of such violence. By referring to violence as 'gender based' this definition highlights the need to understand violence within the context of women's and girl's subordinate status in society. **Such violence cannot be understood … in isolation from the norms, social structure and gender roles within the community, which greatly influence women's vulnerability to violence.**[52]*

This analysis identifies violence as an abuse of power that occurs at individual, group and social structural levels and which involves a continuum of connected behaviours including physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse.[53] Rather than approaching violence as a discrete action, which is exceptional, external and threatening, feminist researchers recognise violence's routine presence in everyday settings – as well as its intimate relationship with power and inequality.[54]

This sensitivity to gender and power, and particularly the interplay between the two, is carried over into feminist research on gender-based violence, which tends to be grounded in women's experiences and attempts to engage women as active participants in the research process.[55] A key imperative of feminist research is to produce knowledge that provides 'understanding of [women's] experience as they understand it, interpretation of their experience in the light of feminist conceptions of gendered relationships, and a critical understanding of the research process'.[56] Methodologically speaking, feminist researchers

have tended to favour face-to-face in-depth interviews with a small sample, observation, and the recording of life-histories as the most appropriate means by which to produce data on women's lives. These qualitative research methods are viewed as more capable of avoiding an exploitative and hierarchical relationship between interviewer and interviewee, enabling the voices of women and other marginalised groups to be heard and their experiences valued.[57]

Figure 9: Enabling the voices of women and other marginalised groups to be heard in research

Drawing on their study of domestic violence service users, carried out as part of the Economic and Social Research Council *Violence Research Programme*,[58] Gill Hague and Audrey Mullender identify the following barriers to participation in research on violence:[59]

- The impacts of poverty, of social class and of cultural imperatives and differences
- The silencing effects of violence
- The impact of abuse on self-esteem
- The stigma of experiencing violence
- Personal difficulties in dealing with painful memories and remembered traumas

In order to avoid the risk of exploiting participants, they offer the following advice for researchers to:

- Consider possible payment for participation
- Provision of childcare, expenses and transport
- Enable 'safe', equal and confidential participation
- Ensure data collection does not result in 're-victimisation' and trauma for participants
- Involve participants in decision making about the best means for them to participate
- Avoid exclusionary language
- Provide an opportunity for participants to comment on findings at an early stage
- Make sure every effort that findings have a positive impact on policy or practice

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Feminist researchers have also sought to develop quantitative methods of research, as part of an attempt to make visible gendered patterns of violence – especially domestic abuse. For example, the pioneering work of Rebecca and Russell Dobash in the late 1970s drew on Scottish police data to provide descriptive statistics on prevalence, finding that 25% of violent crime is wife abuse.[60] More recently, Sylvia Walby and colleagues have sought to mainstream gender into survey measurement of domestic abuse in England and Wales,[61] proposing a new methodological approach which would bring to light the disparities in the frequency and severity of violence perpetrated by men and women through a focus on physical violence aligned with conventional criminal definitions, alongside attention to frequency, severity and the gender of both victim and perpetrator (See Figure 4). Whilst this suggestion has much to recommend it, Walby et al.'s emphasis on physical violence is out of line with the new definition of domestic abuse in Scotland (see Chapter 7), which includes non-violent forms of coercion. By excluding the coercive and controlling contexts in which acts of physical violence often occur, Walby's approach risks obscuring both the most serious forms of abuse and the primary perpetrators, as Andy Myhill warns:

> *Consider the case of a man who, among other degrading acts of abuse, ejaculates over his partner while she asleep and forbids her to wash it off before she sees him again. This man controls most elements of his partner's life, including her clothing*

and sleep. He makes threats to harm her and things close to her, such as her pets. He is sometimes also physically violent. His partner remains with him because she is scared he will kill her if she tries to leave. On one occasion, the man reports to the police that he has been assaulted by his partner. This report may be a malicious counter allegation, of the type made frequently by abusers to try and discredit their victims. Yet equally it would not be surprising if this woman had assaulted this man; many women in such situations do fight back, understandably, and especially if they feel their life is in danger … If a man such as this was chosen to participate in a survey and was asked simply had he ever been assaulted and sustained physical injury, he would answer yes. He would, then, in the absence of any questions on wider context and impact, be counted as a primary victim of domestic violence. [62]

Myhill argues that the current impasse in the use of surveys to effectively measure domestic abuse can be overcome by combining better measurement of acts of physical violence (à la Walby et al.), *alongside* controlling behaviour, sexual coercion, and harassment. The Crime Survey for England and Wales currently measures these behaviours, but in separate sections of the questionnaire, meaning they cannot be tied to a specific perpetrator. This issue has also been highlighted in relation to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey by Sarah MacQueen.[63] MacQueen's analysis provides a highly contextualized picture of the prevalence of abuse in Scotland, drawing on data from the SCJS to highlight differential risk across key groups and the inter-related effects of gender, disadvantage and marginalization. Her analysis demonstrates a greater potential of the SCJS than has been previously acknowledged by academic researchers, highlighting that top-level summary figures indicating apparent similarity in risk of abuse between men and women ought not to be taken in isolation.

Figure 10: Quality criteria for statistics on gendered violence[64]

Gender dimensions
- Sex of the victim
- Sex of the perpetrator
- Relationship between perpetrator and victim
  (intimate partner or other family member; acquaintance; or stranger)
- Whether there is a sexual aspect

Definition of violence
- Anchored in (criminal) law
- Includes both action and harm simultaneously, addressing seriousness
- Addresses repetition by counting all violent events

Unit of measurement is all of:
- event
- victim
- perpetrator

Survey instrument
- Careful wording and framing of questions
- Sampling frame is consistent and comprehensive
- Sample size is appropriate (large)
- Response rate is high and consistent across groups being compared
- Each respondent is reached in the same way

- Confidentiality

Producing indicators from survey data
- Disaggregate by the four gender dimensions
- Disaggregate by different forms of violence
- Include all violent events reported to survey in estimates (no capping)

Violence prevention, from a feminist perspective, involves challenging attitudes, values and structures that sustain inequality, with education identified as a key site for intervention.[65] It also recognises the state as implicated in gendered violence through practices which sustain unequal positions in society. The feminist perspective therefore envisions gender-based violence as transcending individual experiences of violence, exclusively within domestic relationships, but encompasses economic and other structures.

Key messages

- **Approaches to violence prevention in Scotland increasingly advocate a broad definition of violence, which encompasses physical, sexual, verbal and emotional forms of harm, as well as harms associated with institutions and structures.**

- **The public health approach involves identifying risk and protective factors and responding with evidence-based interventions targeted at particular populations.**

- **Feminist approaches pay particular attention to the ways in which structural inequalities contribute to the minimisation of particular forms of violence, and focus on giving voice to marginalised experiences.**

- **Although feminist perspectives are largely confined to analysis of women's victimisation, they increasingly are important for understanding how inequalities shape a range of experiences.**

Chapter 4: Young people and violence

Like violence, 'youth' is a contested concept and there is a lack of consistency in how it is defined or demarcated in both official data and empirical research, leading to difficulties in comparing 'youth violence' data across different sources.[66] The World Health Organisation, for example, adopts a broad definition encompassing violence that takes place between children and young people aged 10 to 29 years of age.[67] Most of the Scottish research cited below focuses on a narrower age range, usually 12 to 18 years (i.e. secondary school age). Official data suggest that the number of children and young people involved in serious violent offending in Scotland has reduced over the past decade, as has the proportion of young people experiencing violent victimization. However, against a background of overall reductions in violent crime, research suggests that experiences of violence remain disproportionately high for young men in deprived communities.

Young people's everyday experiences of violence

A major review of research on youth violence in Scotland published in 2010[68] found that whilst 'legally constituted violence' (i.e. violence of a nature and seriousness that is likely to be reported to and recorded by the police) played a relatively marginal role in the lives of most young people in Scotland, **experiences of low-level violence were common**:

> *'Young people encounter multiple and various forms of violence on a daily basis – verbal and physical conflicts with friends, family, or siblings – that are seen simply as part of the fabric of daily life, distinct from what might be understood to be a matter for the police.'*

Citing a range of previous self-report studies conducted with young people in Scotland in the 1990s,[69, 70, 71] the review pointed to the normalization of a range of 'everyday' violence, ranging from playground bullying and name calling, 'play' fighting between siblings, but also including 'gang' violence and certain forms of gender-based violence. It estimated the prevalence of street fighting amongst secondary school children at between 40-50%, with young men being more likely to participate than young women, and suggested that **fear of violence was highest amongst those young people who lived in disadvantaged areas with a perceived problem of youth gangs**.

Research focus: *The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime* [72, 73]

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (ESYTC) is a longitudinal study of pathways into and out of offending for a cohort of around 4,300 young people in Edinburgh, which commenced in 1998. While the data pertaining to teenagers is now approximately 15 years old, predating some important changes in youthful behaviour particularly around the use of social media and use of public space,[74] as well as changes in policy and practice such as the whole system approach to children and young people who offend,[75, 76] the ESYTC addresses a range of persistent questions about the causes of criminal behaviour in young people and has led directly to reform in youth justice policy and practice in Scotland and internationally.

Data from the ESTYC show that, violence was fairly common amongst the cohort in the early teenage years (late 1990s/early 2000s), although this declined significantly over time:

- The peak age for self-reported violent offending was 13 years, at which stage 49% of the cohort admitted

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to involvement in one or more incidents of assault, robbery or carrying an offensive weapon in the previous year.
- By age 15, only 23% of respondents reported involvement in one or more episodes of violence in the last year.

Young men were significantly more likely than young women to report involvement in violence, and were significantly more likely to be persistent violent offenders:

- At age 13, 62% of young men admitted to involvement in one or more incidents of assault, robbery or carrying an offensive weapon in the last year, compared to 35% of young women
- Compared to only 12% of young women, 33% of young men fell into the most persistent offending category (measured as more than one standard deviation beyond the mean)

A key finding of the ESYTC was that early experience of the highest levels of victimization, rather than early involvement in violence, was a significant predictor of later involvement in violence. Compared with other cohort members, violent offenders were significantly more likely to:

- be victims of crime and adult harassment;
- be engaged in self-harming and para-suicidal behaviour;
- exhibit a range of problematic health risk behaviours (including drug use, regular alcohol consumption, disordered patterns of eating, symptoms of depression and early experience of sexual intercourse);
- have more problematic family backgrounds; and
- come from a socially deprived background.

Importantly, poverty at household and neighbourhood levels was also found to exacerbate violence:

- Those from low socio-economic status households had 1.5 times greater odds of involvement in violence than those from more affluent family backgrounds.
- Those living in the top quartile of deprived neighbourhoods had 1.5 times greater odds of involvement in violence than those from more affluent neighbourhoods.

Young people and criminal violence

Official data on *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland* shows that over 40% of persons convicted for non-sexual crimes of violence in 2017/18 were aged 21 to 30 years; a further 15% were under 21.[77] Looking at convictions related to young people aged under 21, a larger proportion of convictions related to common assault, compared to older people. More than a quarter (28%) of convictions for young women under 21 were under this heading with the corresponding figure for young men being 16%. Findings from the *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* indicate that for 2017/18, in violent incidents where respondents were able to provide information about the offender, 25% of incidents involved perpetrators reported to be aged under 16, 23% aged 16 to 24 years, 33% aged 25 to 39 years and 23% 40 years and over.[78] As noted in Chapter 2, young people aged 16 to 24 years have seen the greatest reduction in levels of violent victimisation since 2008/09, however they still have one of the highest reported prevalence rates of all age groups (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Proportion of adults experiencing violent crime by age, 2008/09 to 2017/18
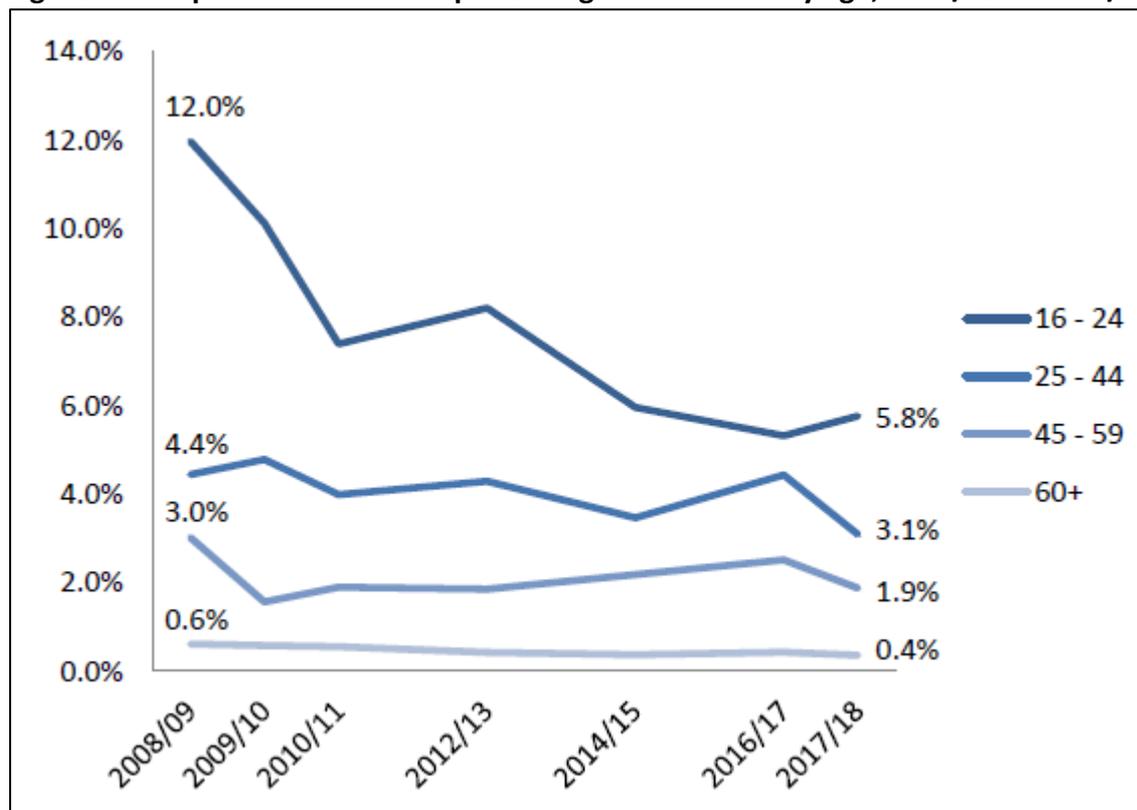
Source: Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2017/18

Marginalisation, masculinities, and youth violence

A key focus of research relating to youth violence in Scotland has been on gangs and knife carrying, particularly (but not solely) amongst young men in Glasgow. This is unsurprising, given Glasgow's former reputation as 'the murder capital of Europe' – arguably a misleading label attributed to the city on the basis of homicide rate per 100,000 population rather than actual number of murders committed.[79] In 2017-18, Glasgow had the highest number of homicide cases in Scotland, almost one fifth (n=11) of the Scottish total (n=59). **The majority of homicides were committed by young men aged 16 to 30 years and typically involved a knife or other sharp instrument.**

In addition to the Scottish Government study of young people involved in gangs and knife carrying published in 2010 (and discussed in Chapter 6),[80] key sources of information about gang involvement in Glasgow include the work of Keith Kintrea, Jon Bannister and Jonny Pickering on young people and territoriality,[81, 82, 83] Ross Deuchar and Chris Holligan on gangs, sectarianism and social capital,[84, 85, 86, 87] Alistair Fraser on gang identity in the post-industrial city, [88, 89] and Robert McLean on the relationship between youth gangs and organized crime groups.[90, 91] All of these studies have drawn on qualitative methods with small samples of young people to highlight how, **against a backdrop of limited licit and illicit opportunities, territorial identities and rivalries offer an important source of respect and recognition for young people (and especially young men) in marginalized communities**.

Rather than revolving around drug selling, racketeering or organized crime, the majority of youth gang activities in Glasgow are reported to revolve around 'recreational violence', described as a form of youth-limited and ritualized collective violence. [92, 93, 94, 95] These 'street battles' act as a remedy for boredom in the present and develop a sense of continuity with the past, reviving long-standing street-based traditions and identities. [96] They also reinforce a sense of confinement, social distance and distrust, [97, 98] and a narrow 'hard man' masculinity that is at odds with the employment opportunities available to them in the local post-industrial service economy. [99, 100] Within this context **young men are often motivated to carry knives by anxiety and insecurity, related to their own fears about being a victim.** [101, 102]

Trauma in the lives of violent young offenders

The links between trauma and violence have been evidenced internationally, [103, 104] and are often attributed to disrupted childhood attachments and an 'existential response to powerlessness and betrayal' that leads to an enhanced impulse towards self-preservation. [105]

Scottish research indicates the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) across the youth offender population, especially amongst violent offenders. Alongside the *Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime* (see 'Research focus', above [106, 107]), two recent studies of the *Interventions for Vulnerable Youth* (IVY) project, a specialist intervention for children and young people (12-18 years) identified as at risk of serious harm to others, revealed high levels of childhood adversity amongst samples of young people involved in violent offending. Nina Vaswani's research, based on a secondary analysis of risk assessment reports for 130 young people referred to IVY, found that 93% of the young people in her sample had experienced at least one such experience (e.g. abuse, neglect or growing up in a household where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse) and 59% of reports recorded four or more. [108] Carole Murphy's research, based on an analysis of 63 case files of young people referred to IVY, found that approximately two thirds of the young people had experienced high levels of caregiver disruption, maltreatment in childhood and exposure to violence in the home. Over two thirds were assessed as having high levels of negative attitudes, anger management problems, risk taking/impulsivity, poor compliance and low empathy/remorse. [109]

The psychosocial roots of youth violence are explicitly addressed by Chris Holligan and Ross Deuchar in their study of male violent offenders, aged 16 to 18 years. [110] Holligan and Deuchar argue that young men's violence stems from their experiences of psychological distress, loss and attachment traumas. Most of the young men in their prison sample originated from socially deprived communities and had early life experiences characterized by parental drug addiction and/or criminality, physical abuse and/or domestic abuse, bereavement and/or parental absence. In line with dominant gender norms that associate masculinity with emotional stoicism and physical toughness, subsequent feelings of depression, anxiety and anger were repressed, managed via drug and/or alcohol use, or else found expression through fighting and pre-emptive aggression.

Similar themes can be found Susan Batchelor's research with young women convicted of violent offences.[111, 112] Batchelor's participants (aged 16 to 24 years) reported comparable histories of family disruption, bereavement and neglect, as well as experiences of childhood physical and sexual abuse. The young women in her prison sample also reported witnessing repeated and serious incidents of domestic abuse, as well as serious physical violence towards and between siblings, as well as within the care system and community more widely. Despite these experiences, they demonstrated great loyalty to their families, alongside unresolved feelings of anger, disappointment and grief – and an overriding sense that the world was 'full of bad people who are out to get you'. Within this context, violence was perceived as a form of self-defence, an attempt to pre-empt [further] bullying or victimization through the display of an aggressive or violent disposition.

Young people's attitudes towards gendered violence

Batchelor's **research also points to the contribution of gendered norms and inequalities** in the development of violent attitudes and behaviour – indicating how individual experiences of trauma interact with wider cultural and structural factors. The family, peer and community contexts of her participants were characterised by male domination (especially physical domination) and pervasive control over girls and women (particularly over their sexuality). These contexts severely limited young women's choices and options and contributed to rigid, stereotypical views about women and women's role.[113] One way in which the young women sought to resist negative gender stereotyping, and thereby avoid feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness, involved appropriating dominant masculine gender performances, including participating in violence and other stereotypically masculine forms of offending.[114]

Internalization of stereotypical gender norms are also evidenced in Scottish studies of young people's understandings of and attitudes towards violence against women. Qualitative research conducted by Nancy Lombard and Melanie McCarry with Scottish schoolchildren found widespread justification of gendered violence by both boys and girls. [115, 116, 117, 118] This was underpinned by a model of gender in which men are seen as more dominant and violence or aggression is considered an accepted characteristic of normative masculinity.[119] Data from the *Young People in Scotland Survey 2014* suggests some differences according to gender, with boys being more likely hold stereotypical views on gender roles and less likely to rate a range of different forms of violence against women as 'very seriously wrong' (compared to girls, aged 11-18 years).[120]

Key messages

- **Against a background of overall reductions in violent crime, research suggests that experiences of violence remain disproportionately high for young men in deprived communities.**

- **Most research on youth violence in Scotland is based on small-scale, qualitative samples – often targeting young men from Glasgow. These studies highlight the impact of area deprivation and deindustrial disinvestment, gender norms and**

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inequalities, and childhood abuse and trauma on young people's understandings and experiences of violence.

- These findings are supported by longitudinal survey data from the *Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime*, which highlight the mediating effects of gender, poverty and vulnerability in relation to youth violence.

Chapter 5: Drugs, alcohol and violence

A wealth of empirical research indicates that both drugs and alcohol are implicated in violence, but the nature of this relationship is complex.[121, 122] The connection between illicit drugs and violence, for example, may be related to: pharmacological effects, the economic imperative to obtain money to finance drug addiction, regulatory activities associated with organised criminal networks, or a combination of all three.[123] Likewise, alcohol may reduce inhibition and increase the likelihood of an argument escalating into an assault, but socially learned expectations about alcohol's potential to elicit aggression can mean that alcohol is intentionally consumed in preparation for violence.[124] These points highlight the significance of social, cultural and situational factors in shaping attitudes and behaviour. Identified empirical work on this topic in Scotland is fairly dated but the available evidence does establish a clear link between alcohol and interpersonal violence, particularly in relation to identified male offenders from socio-economically deprived areas but also between young women within the context of the night-time economy. Research on the relationship between drugs and violence is more sparse, although discussed in emerging literature relating to organised crime groups. Key to note here are the potential impacts of changing drug trends, specifically the increase in cocaine and crack cocaine use,[125] as well as novel psychoactive substances,[126] which are not addressed in the research literature identified. A key trend over time for alcohol use in Scotland has been a shift from on-sales (pubs and clubs) to off-sales (shops); in addition, nightclubs have been in sharp decline.[127]

Drugs, alcohol and violent crime

A recent analysis of the changing nature of police recorded robbery in Scotland, based on a random sample of police recorded crimes, found that in 2017-18, almost a third (31%) of robbery crime records made reference to the consumption of alcohol and around one in five records (21%) made reference to the consumption of drugs.[128] A similar analysis of a random sample of police records relating to attempted murder and serious assault found that nearly two-thirds (63%) of cases included reference to the consumption of alcohol.[129] Of the 81 persons accused in homicide cases in 2017-18, 30 (37%) were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol, drugs or a combination of both at the time of the homicide.[130] This 37% was broken down into 15 (19%) who were under the influence of alcohol, 11 (14%) who were under the influence of both alcohol and drugs and four (5%) who were under the influence of drugs alone. In the ten-year period between 2008-09 and 2017-18, around half (46%) of all accused were reported to have been under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at the time of the homicide. Where the accused was suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, nearly three fifths (60% or 240) occurred during the weekend (i.e. Friday, Saturday and Sunday).

Findings from the *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* indicate that for 2017/18, in violent incidents where respondents were able to provide information about the offender, 36% involved an offender who was thought to be under the influence of drugs and 46% involved an offender thought to be under the influence of alcohol.[131] The proportion of offenders thought to be under the influence of alcohol decreased significantly from 2008/09, where the figure was 63%. This suggests that **alcohol may be decreasing in prominence as a factor in violent crime overall – reflecting broader trends in alcohol consumption in Scotland[132] –**

although it clearly remains a factor in a sizeable proportion of incidents. The number of violent incidents reported to the SCJS as having taken place in and around pubs and bars remained relatively stable, from 17% in 2008/09 to 15% in 2017/18.[133]

Research focus: *Alcohol and Violence among Young Male Offenders in Scotland (1979-2009)*[134]

The purpose of this research was to develop understanding of the use of alcohol and violence among male Young Offenders in Scotland. The research was based on four studies carried out between 1979 and 2008:

1. A survey of young offenders' drinking conducted in 1979
2. A survey of young offenders' drinking and drug use conducted in 1996
3. A survey of young offenders' drinking, drug and weapon use conducted in 2007
4. Interviews with young offenders about the above issues conducted in 2008

Whilst dated, the study provides one of the few analyses of the role of alcohol use amongst offenders incarcerated for *violent* crime. For more up-to-date data on the alcohol problems amongst the Scottish Prison Population more generally, see the work of Lesley Graham and colleagues,[135 , 136] alongside the most recent Scottish Prisoner Survey.[137]

Trends in young offenders' drinking

- The proportion of young offenders who stated that they consumed alcohol was higher in 2007 (91%) than in 1996 (74%), but the same as in 1979 (also 91%).
- Among those who did drink the proportion who reported that they get "drunk daily" rose steadily from 7% (1979) to 23% (1996) to 40% (2007). This pattern of 'extreme' drinking by young offenders was confirmed by the interviews conducted in 2008.

Young offenders and violence

- The proportion serving a sentence for any violent offence varied between 42% (1979), 23% (1996) and 73% (2007); those serving sentences for Group 1 Crimes (serious violent offences) varied between 22%, 10% and 53% respectively. A majority of interviewed young offenders, including those not currently in custody for a violent offence, were able to describe violent incidents which they had been involved in while in the community
- A majority, 63%, of the 2007 survey sample admitted to carrying a weapon at some point in time and 61% stated that they had used a weapon. The set of respondents who admitted to carrying weapons was not co-extensive with the set of those who admitted using them.
- A majority, 65%, of the 2007 sample stated that they had been in a gang while in the community. Interviews revealed that gang membership could act as a barrier to the cessation of violent offending.

The relationship between alcohol and violence

- Among those who were drinkers in each survey: The proportion who considered that alcohol had contributed to their previous offending rose from 48% to 58% to 80%. Interviewed young offenders, including those not currently in custody for an alcohol-related offence, were all able to provide details of offences they had committed under the influence of alcohol.
- The proportion who had consumed alcohol prior to their current offence fell from 59% (1979) to only 41% (1996) before increasing to 81% (2007). The proportion that blamed their current offence on drinking rose from 30% to 40% to 57%; those blaming alcohol not in association with other drugs rose from 23% (1996) to 36% (2007). All interviewees linked alcohol to their offending, in some cases to every one of their previous offences.
- In contrast, the proportion that blamed illegal drugs fell from 40% (1996) to 30% (2007); those blaming illegal drugs not in association with alcohol fell from 22% (1996) to 10% (2007). Interviewed young offenders rarely attributed their offending, especially violence, to illegal drugs – the sole exception to this pattern was the drug diazepam.
- Of those who blamed illegal drugs for their current offence, in the 2007 survey the most frequently cited drug was diazepam, which was usually blamed in conjunction with alcohol use. The 2008 interviews confirmed

this pattern and indicated that illegal drug use in this population was more of an extension to their drinking behaviours than an alternative lifestyle choice.
- A small group (around 10%) of the 2007 survey did show characteristics of problem drug use (e.g. recent heroin use, injection, acquisitive drug-related crime), however this group tended to live in remote parts of Scotland and the core of offenders held very negative views towards dishonest 'junkies'.
- Most (81%) of Young Offenders who had used a weapon to injure someone in the 2007 survey stated that they were under the influence of alcohol at the time. Accounts by interviewed Young Offenders implied that alcohol use was a factor in turning weapon owners into weapon carriers and weapon carriers into weapon users.

Alcohol, violence and the night time economy

One of the most prominent researchers in the field of substance use-related violence in Scotland is Alasdair Forsyth. As well as contributing to the 'Alcohol and Violence among Young Male Offenders' report, highlighted in the box above, [138] he has conducted numerous studies into alcohol-related violence in the night-time economy,[139, 140] as well young people's street drinking behaviours[141,142] and the impact of local off-licenses on neighbourhood disorder. [143, 144]

Forsyth's work on violence and the night-time economy draws on participant observation and in-depth interviews in pubs and nightclubs in Glasgow. The pubs study found a relatively low level of disorder within Glasgow venues: 14 aggressive incidents from 100 hours observation, in a sample of eight pubs which included the two with the most recorded crime in the city centre.[145] Despite this lack of observed disorder within premises, very high levels of risky drinking were witnessed, leading the researchers to surmise that the consequences of such behaviour were likely to be felt elsewhere – i.e. the surrounding streets and/or local nightclubs. Indeed, though not systematically recorded as it was beyond the remit of the study, researchers noted 20 aggressive incidents in public space on their way home from conducting observations. Drawing on data obtained from Strathclyde Police, the study indicated that **there were two peak times for city centre disorder: at midnight (when the pubs come out) and at 3am (after the nightclubs shut)**.

The frequency and severity of aggressive incidents observed in the subsequent nightclubs study was much greater than that observed in pubs study: 34 incidents, mainly fights, observed during 100 hours of observation in a sample of eight nightclubs.[146] Given that overall levels of drunkenness did not vary significantly, the researchers concluded that **it was the features of nightclub environments (youth dancing, movement, and sexual conduct) that were responsible for greater levels of violence, rather than alcohol sales**. Although most of the aggressive incidents witnessed by the researchers involved men, a significant proportion of conflicts (37%) involved women.[147] Most of these involved female-to-female aggression in which the violence was as injurious as that observed in fights between males.

A research interest spanning across almost all these projects has been on the links between alcohol-related glass, and its role in increasing the severity of violence. This initially involved an exploration of the impact of banning glassware to serve alcohol at on-trade premises, drawing on data from the nightclub study.[148] This analysis revealed that although replacing glass with other types of vessels did not appear to reduce the incidence of violent events,

disorder in all plastic venues was observed to incur less injury risk. Data from the Young Offenders study pointed to **the role of off-trade glass as a weapon in violent assaults.**[149] In the 2007 survey, a bottle was the weapon which was the second most often reported as being used to injure someone. However, unlike knives, bottles were seldom carried, but used opportunistically while intoxicated. The qualitative interviews with young offenders revealed accounts of violent incidents where a bottle had been used simply because this was what was in their hand at the time, during a drinking session, or because of the ubiquitous nature of bottles at the locations where they drank and fought in the community.

Research focus: *Pathways through Violence: Young Women Incarcerated in Scotland for Violent Offending*[150]

Previously discussed in Chapter 4, Susan Batchelor's research on violent young women was based on in-depth oral history interviews with 21 young women, aged 16 to 24 years, serving custodial sentences for violent offences in 2001. The research identified four pathways to violent offending among the women interviewed:

1 The *abused adult*, who attacks her abuser whilst under the influence of alcohol. The abused adult has no previous convictions and considers her actions to be in self-defence. (Rare in Batchelor's sample due to age range, but more common in the wider female prison population.)

2 The *teenage fighter*, who drinks heavily and experiments with recreational drugs and/or prescription medication, often as a means to avoid problems at home. Her violent offence typically relates to a street fight that is initiated whilst the offender is under the influence of alcohol and where things 'get out of hand', resulting in the victim receiving a severe injury. The (sub) cultural norms and values of this group promote pre-emptive violence and the defence of respect, and victims are generally (but not solely) other young women.

3 The *drug offender*, who engages in property crime and/or prostitution as a means to support her drug habit. Her violent offence typically relates to an assault on a police officer/security guard/householder who has attempted to apprehend her. Often abused as a child, the drug offender relies on substance abuse to dull emotional pain. She is generally intoxicated at the time of the offence and considers her violent actions to be in self-defence.

4 The *hurt and hurting child*, who assaults and robs unknown victims, often threatening them with a weapon. This group of offenders represent perhaps the most 'damaged' young women: they have extensive histories in care, poor family relationships and significant experience of physical and sexual abuse within the family. This small group of young women experience overwhelming feelings of anger and rage and express these feelings by hurting other people.

As these pathways suggest, the vast majority of the young women's offences were related to drugs or alcohol in some way. Four-fifths were committed while the offender was intoxicated (six young women were under the influence of drugs, eight were under the influence of alcohol and three were under the influence of drugs and alcohol) and one-third were committed alongside acquisitive crimes carried out to fund a drug addiction. Of the remaining two offences, one was related to a drug feud and the other to a family feud.

Gangs, drugs and organised crime

As discussed in chapter 4, alcohol-related violence and knife crime has been a cause for concern in Scotland over recent years and prominent focus of academic research. Some of this research has documented how reputations for violence earned in youth gangs may lead to opportunities for employment in the illicit economy,[151] and how gangs form part of the

same street culture that more organised criminal groups emerge from.[152] The recent work of Robert McLean is relevant here. Drawing on interviews with 42 current and ex-street offenders aged between 16 and 35 years, McLean argues a number of different gang types exist in the Scottish context, each which reflect stages in the life cycle of the gang: Young Street Gangs (YSGs), essentially recreational fighting groups; Youth Crime Group (YCGs), engaged in more instrumental crime; and Serious Organized Crime Groups (SOCGs) engaged in illicit enterprise and, in some cases, illegal governance. [153]

Harding et al. utilize this typology to explore the relationship between street gang organisation and robbery, also drawing on McLean's qualitative data with 42 (ex)offenders.[154] Their analysis suggests that, in the early stages of gang activity, young men may engage in opportunistic violent street robbery of peer groups or the public as a form of masculine performance and reputation-building. **As they progress from street gangs to young crime gangs, and their criminal behaviour becomes more instrumental, robbery increasingly focuses on targeting rival drug dealers.** In doing so it becomes a means of gaining economic capital as opposed to symbolic capital, whilst also being motivated by male group bonding and brotherhood. As young men transition into SOCGs, however, emphasis shifts to reducing risks, greater stability and enhanced professionalism. There is a corresponding move from violent street robbery to more subtle forms of fraud and money laundering, alongside more occasional 'flash holdups' to that instil fear and a sense of potential retribution among rival criminally oriented businessmen.

Also drawing on McLean's[155] qualitative dataset, Robinson et al. explore incidences of county lines drug dealing in Glasgow and Merseyside, focusing particularly on the harms associated with child criminal exploitation.[156] 'County Lines' is a term used by police and government agencies to describe the contemporary drug dealing practices of SOCGs, which involve sending representatives to rural areas to establish new and take over existing drug markets**.** Agencies report that vulnerable children and young people are often recruited into this role and subsequently put at risk of violence and exploitation. According to Police Scotland, County Lines are not a new phenomenon in Scotland, but there are still very few lines relative to the numbers in England and Wales. There is evidence of some abuse of vulnerability, however, and an increase in violence associated with the activity that is being closely monitored.[157] The data presented in Robinson et al. does not provide a sense of the scale of the County Lines phenomenon in Scotland, nor of the proportion of interviewees in McLean's study who raised it as an issue, although the authors do suggest the practice is underdeveloped in Glasgow compared to London. The Scottish interview excerpts that are presented originate from only a handful of participants, but together highlight a range of exploitative processes, including marginalised children and young people being used to transport and sell drugs to rural drug markets, and the homes of vulnerable drug users being used as sites to store and retail drugs. According to the authors, this set-up allowed OCG members to remain hidden from law enforcement and rival OCGs. Should their local representatives be arrested, OCGs were able to simply cut ties and relocate. Should they miss a payment, have their goods stolen, or build bad debts, then OCGs could impose themselves and demand payment. **Vulnerable children and adults were variously monitored by their bosses using mobile phone location apps, held hostage in their own homes, forced to temporarily give up their homes to sell drugs there, and coerced into sex or self-harm**. Yet, in spite of the risk of violence and of becoming embroiled in the criminal

justice system, interviewees claimed that working County Lines was easy and highly lucrative, especially considering their lack of academic achievement and limited access to otherwise legitimate work (pointing once again to the contribution of macro-level, socio-economic changes in framing the opportunities, choices and pathways of individual young people).

It is not only those who are cuckooed or exploited to run drugs lines that are at risk of violence from OCGs. Drug dealers and drug users are themselves vulnerable to victimisation and are unlikely to report violence to the police.[158, 159] This is particularly true of those with multiple complex needs such as mental ill health and homelessness. Women drug users and especially sex workers are even more highly vulnerable. These issues are addressed in ongoing doctoral research in Scotland,[160, 161, 162] but we did not identify any recent published data pertaining to the Scottish context. As discussed in Chapter 6, there is also a relationship between organised crime and fear of violence in some communities.

Key points

- **Limited up-to-date research into the relationships between drugs, alcohol and violence in Scotland was identified.**

- **Previous prison-based quantitative studies found that male young offenders in Scotland were heavy drinkers and that they considered their drinking as a contributory factor to violent offending; Observational studies of the night-time economy have illustrated how alcohol-related violence is shaped by the situational contexts in which drinking takes place.**

- **Qualitative research with current and ex-offenders underscores how involvement in substance misuse and violence change throughout the life-course, but both appear to escalate for those young people who progress from youth gangs to street gangs and whose offending becomes more instrumental.**

Chapter 6: Communities, neighbourhoods and violence

Community or neighbourhood studies tend to focus on the relationship between the structural and cultural features of communities and rates of violence, or on specific forms of community crime and disorder (for example, gangs and/or organised crime). International evidence has highlighted the relationship between area deprivation and interpersonal violence, alongside the mediating effects of community social disorganisation. Relevant Scottish research includes analysis of public health data on hospital admissions for assault, quantitative analysis of official crime statistics to explore local variation in the crime drop, as well as qualitative studies of organised crime and its community impact. Taken together, these studies point to (i) potentially widening inequalities between the most and least deprived communities in Scotland, and (ii) the disproportionate impact of violent crime on vulnerable groups within those communities.

Area deprivation, homicide and assault

The relationship between area deprivation and violent crime is evidenced by hospital data on mortality and non-fatal injury due to assault. Based on an analysis of 1,109 deaths in Scotland, 1980-2005, Alastair Leyland and Ruth Dundas explored the relationship between deaths by assault and (i) individual level deprivation and (ii) area deprivation.[163] They found steep social gradients to be evident, with the rate among those in routine occupations (127 per 1,000,000 population) being nearly 12 times that of those in higher managerial and professional occupations (11 per 1,000,000 population). **Men under 65 living in the most deprived areas had a death rate 32 times that of those living in the least deprived areas; for women, this ratio was 35** (13.1 to 77.9 and 4.8 to 256.2 respectively). While it is possible that the results would differ if other individual and area socioeconomic factors were used, these findings suggest that contextual neighbourhood factors may be more important than individual characteristics in explaining homicide victimisation.

Men from areas of social deprivation are also at significantly higher risk of assault-related sharp force injury (SFI) in Scotland. A more recent analysis of national hospital data for SFI assault (2001-2013) conducted by Christine Goodall and colleagues found the major determinants of SFI were extremes of age (20 to 24 years, and 75 years and older), male gender, residence in the West of Scotland, and socioeconomic deprivation.[164] Those from the most deprived areas of Scotland were 3.71 times more likely to sustain a SFI of any cause than those from the most affluent areas. The sociodemographic determinants of alcohol-related facial injuries were investigated by David Conway et al. using data from the Scottish Morbidity Records.[165] The researchers found that between 2001 and 2006 the incidence of alcohol-related facial injuries in Scotland declined, but that the nature and scale of the problem remained considerable, with the majority of injuries disproportionately affecting young men from socioeconomically deprived areas. **There were nearly seven times as many alcohol-related facial injuries in the most compared with the least deprived areas**; men were over five times more likely to have such an injury; and those in the youngest age-group (15–19 years) were around one-tenth more likely.

Neighbourhood variation in the crime drop

Analysis of local variance in the crime drop in Scotland has been led by two researchers, John Bannister and Susan McVie, as part of the ESRC-funded *Applied Quantitative Methods Network (AQMeN), 2013-2017*. Focusing on the Greater Glasgow area, this work identified distinct groupings of high, low, and mixed crime neighbourhoods using geo-coded police data for the period 1998/9 to 2012/13.[166] During this period, recorded *total crime* fell in Greater Glasgow by 40%. However, whereas low crime neighbourhoods experienced a crime drop of 45%, the figure for high crime neighbourhoods was 26%, suggesting the persistence – or perhaps even widening – of existing inequalities. Furthermore, the researchers found the characteristics of high crime neighbourhoods aligned with theoretical explanations of crime centred on economic and social disorganization theories, insofar as they were the most economically deprived and possessed the highest levels of private renting and people aged 16–24, factors associated with increased social disorganisation. Drawing on data covering 2001 to 2011 (inclusive), and **focusing specifically on *violent crime* rates, Bannister et al. found widening inequalities between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods in Glasgow**.[167]

McVie et al's research draws on data from the *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* (SCJS) from 1993 to 2010/11.[168] This analysis identifies four typical groups of respondents: 'non-victims', who had a very low risk of experiencing any kind of crime; 'one-off property victims', who experienced an average of one incident of crime per year, mostly motor vehicle or household crime; 'multiple mixed victims' who experienced approximately two incidents of crime per year, a combination of motor vehicle, household crime, and/or assaults and threats; and 'frequent personal victims'', who experienced three incidents of crime on average per year, mainly assaults but also personal theft. While the non-victim group increased over the study period (from 76% to 82%) and the one-off property victim and multiple mixed victim groups decreased (from 17% to 12% and 6% to 5% respectively), the frequent personal victim group remained stubbornly persistent at around 0.5% of the population. Also, levels of victimisation amongst the groups reduced for all groups except frequent personal victims. Examining these findings alongside data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), **McVie et al. found a significant relationship between area deprivation and violent victimisation at the national level, with frequent personal victims more likely than other groups to be living in areas across Scotland characterised as highly deprived** using both Health and Education measures.[169]

Both analyses highlight the value of analysis of the meso or neighbourhood scale – both in terms of interrogating the drivers of violent crime, but also as a means of developing efficient and effective interventions. Both also bemoan the current lack of available local level data that would support such work. As the proponents of local victimization surveys demonstrated in the 1980s, while the average chance of being a victim of violence may be small, people from the poorest communities suffer disproportionately high levels of risk and fear.[170, 171] Whilst large scale surveys such as the SCJS provide a valuable picture of crime and the national level, they have limited benefit in improving our understanding of crime experience at the local level. According to McVie et al., analysis of the experiences of victimisation within poor or high crime communities is 'severely restricted by the lack of potential explanatory variables contained within the Scottish crime survey datasets -

especially when it [comes] to measures of poverty'.[172] Using the 1993 to 2010/11 data set, it was not possible for the research team to analyse changing characteristics of victims of crime because a number of the indicators pertaining to population characteristics had changed over time – or were not included at all years – which meant that they could not be included in quasi-longitudinal research over such a long period. Another problem was that we were restricted to only two 'economic' variables: (i) income, which had a lot of missing data and which changed over time; and (ii) disposable income, which also changed over time. There were no comparable measures of economic 'status' (such as whether the household was above or below the poverty line), no measures of inequality, and no measures of wider 'capital' (such as social or cultural capital). In addition, McVie and colleagues had difficulty identifying any other measures by which to examine other aspects of inequality (at a household level), such as educational achievement, health conditions or experience of justice systems. Funded under the ESRC *Understanding Inequalities* project (2017 to 2020), McVie and colleagues are currently carrying out new analysis of the most recent sweeps of the survey (from 2008/09 onwards) which include a better set of comparable measures than previously available, but which still do not include some of these wider indicators to enable assessment of multi-dimensional inequality. This should be a priority for action if the SCJS is to be used as a mechanism for understanding the distinct victimisation patterns and experiences highlighted in Chapter 2.

The community impact of violent crime

A range of Scottish Government-funded studies have explored community experiences of particular forms and contexts and violence, including: gangs and troublesome youth groups,[173] marches and parades,[174] and serious organised crime.[175] Collectively, these studies highlight the indirect effects of violence and disorder on community wellbeing, particularly in relation to fear of violence and its impact on mobility.

All three projects uncovered little evidence of serious violence; very few of the community members interviewed had been directly affected by serious violence, either as victims or perpetrators. Even in the gangs study, which involved interviews and focus groups with young people identified by official agencies as 'gang-involved', direct experiences of serious violence were rare.[176] Much more common, were the more insidious, everyday forms of violence reported in Chapter 4, alongside infrequent territorial violence. Most of this territorial fighting was 'not serious, but involved a great deal of bluster and stand-off – with lots of running back and forwards, shouting, and throwing of missiles – but little actual violence'. *Fear* of gang violence, however, was common and reported as exerting a pernicious impact on young people's mobility, often restricting their movements to just a few streets. This finding is mirrored in the wider literature on youth leisure, which finds that **young people growing up in marginalized communities often report being unable to access activities or facilities in neighbouring areas due to the threat of violence, sometimes leading to social isolation**.[177] These territorial issues also have an impact on parental surveillance and control, with young people and especially young women being kept in at home to keep them safe.[178]

The significance of symbolic boundaries and 'invisible' territorial divides was also highlighted in the marches and parades study, which looked at the community impact of public

processions, including Loyalist and Irish Republican marches and demonstrations by the Scottish Defence League (SDL) using mixed methods. [179] The study uncovered little evidence of obvious, direct impact in terms of immediate disorder that could be attributed to processions, largely on account of the large police presence during these events. However, focus group and interview participants emphasized the 'symbolic violence' of some of these events, for example where processions were routed past particular ethno-religious communities and/or associated notable landmarks. Irish republican interviewees also gave examples where they had been subject to racist taunts, spat at and occasionally subjected to violence by demonstrators who opposed their procession, and researchers observed a range of 'hate speech' (see Chapter 8) including anti-Irish abuse by demonstrators at Irish Republican processions and racist abuse of local communities at SDL events, which were not responded to by police (perhaps to avoid more overt confrontations on the day, because they may not have observed the incident, or had sufficient numbers in attendance to make arrests). This **lack of police intervention left certain sections of the community with the belief that particular forms of hate speech were 'state tolerated', reinforcing feelings of alienation, subjection and fear**.

Research focus: *Community Experiences of Serious Organised Crime in Scotland*[180]

A recent study commissioned by the Scottish Government focused on community experiences of serious organized crime (SOC) across five case study areas characterized by multiple forms of disadvantage, including chronic issues of deprivation, unemployment, and ill health. Drawing on qualitative interviews, focus groups and observations with local community members, voluntary sector representatives and business owners, the study presented a picture in which **actual incidences of serious violence were relatively rare, yet the threat of violence was an implicit and enduring feature of community life**.

- Only a minority of community respondents discussed experiences of direct victimization although the vast majority were aware of the broader effects of SOC in their communities, and were able to articulate the ways in which such activity impacted upon their day-to-day lives and sense of safety.

- Although youths hanging around in public areas were a concern across all fieldsites, respondents reported that street-based gang violence had declined in visibility and severity in recent years.

- The illicit drugs market was identified as the most visible and significant form of SOC, harming community members at both an individual and collective level (fostering addiction and debt, as well as causing territorial stigma and barriers to investment).

- SOC groups were depicted as having detailed knowledge of local vulnerabilities, and accused of exploiting these for personal financial gain (e.g. deliberately targeting individuals that may be susceptible to assisting in their criminal enterprise through coercion). (See discussion County Lines in Chapter 5)

- Generalised feelings of fear, anxiety and insecurity were the impact of SOC most frequently mentioned by community members, alongside associated impacts including substance misuse, reduced or restricted mobility, and a general sense of powerlessness or resignation.

Such findings speak to the concept of 'spirit injury', which considers the combined effects of structural inequality and disadvantage in conjunction with repeated victimisation or the threat of victimisation.[181, 182] As a vast literature established, **fear of crime closely follows lines of disadvantage: those who are marginalized, who lack social acceptance or integration into their neighbourhoods, those who have little control over resources and**

who experience a sense of powerlessness are most likely to fear crime.[183] This suggests that 'the latent structural violence involved in maintaining social inequalities may be as important as the manifest violence measured in crime statistics in understanding fear and its impacts on wellbeing'.[184]

Key messages

- **Quantitative sources highlight local variations in rates of offending and victimisation, with deprived communities suffering disproportionately high levels of violence.**

- **Qualitative sources suggest that deprived communities also suffer disproportionately high levels of fear of crime.**

- **These experiences interact with, and are underpinned by, structural inequalities – with marginalised groups within communities suffering disproportionate victimisation and fear.**

Chapter 7: Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed at an individual because of their actual, or presumed, gender; it is overwhelmingly directed at women and girls.[185] GBV includes, but is not limited to, the following crimes and behaviours:

- Domestic abuse
- Rape and sexual assault
- Child and childhood sexual abuse
- Stalking, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in the public sphere
- Commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography and trafficking
- Dowry-related violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced and child marriages

Due to space constraints, this chapter will focus on domestic and sexual violence, two areas in which there is a range of Scottish data and research in relation to criminal justice responses. This is not to minimise GBV occurring outside of domestic and sexual contexts, which would need to be addressed as part of a comprehensive research and/or prevention strategy (see Chapter 9).

Domestic abuse in Scotland

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 defines domestic abuse as abusive behaviour between partners or ex-partners, according to which 'abusive behaviour' is understood to be that which is 'violent, threatening or intimidating' and would be considered by a 'reasonable person' likely to have the effect of: making a partner or ex-partner dependent on or subordinate to the perpetrator; isolating them from friends, relatives or other sources of support; controlling, regulating or monitoring their day-to-day activities; depriving or restricting their freedom of action; or frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing them.[186] Moving away from conventional legal understandings that focus on one-off acts of physical violence, this new definition is intended to make visible the complex patterns and processes that characterise women's experiences, in line with Evan Stark's concept of coercive control.[187, 188]

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of domestic abuse incidents coming to the attention of the police in Scotland increased by around 50%, rising from 36,000 recorded incidents in 2000-01 to just under 52,000 in 2009-2010.[189] Since 2011-12, the figures have stabilised at around 58,000 to 60,000 incidents per year.[190] In 2017-18, police recorded 59,541 incidents, **the vast majority of which involved female victims and male accused** (around four out of every five incidents) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Gender of victim and accused, where known, 2008-09 to 2017-18
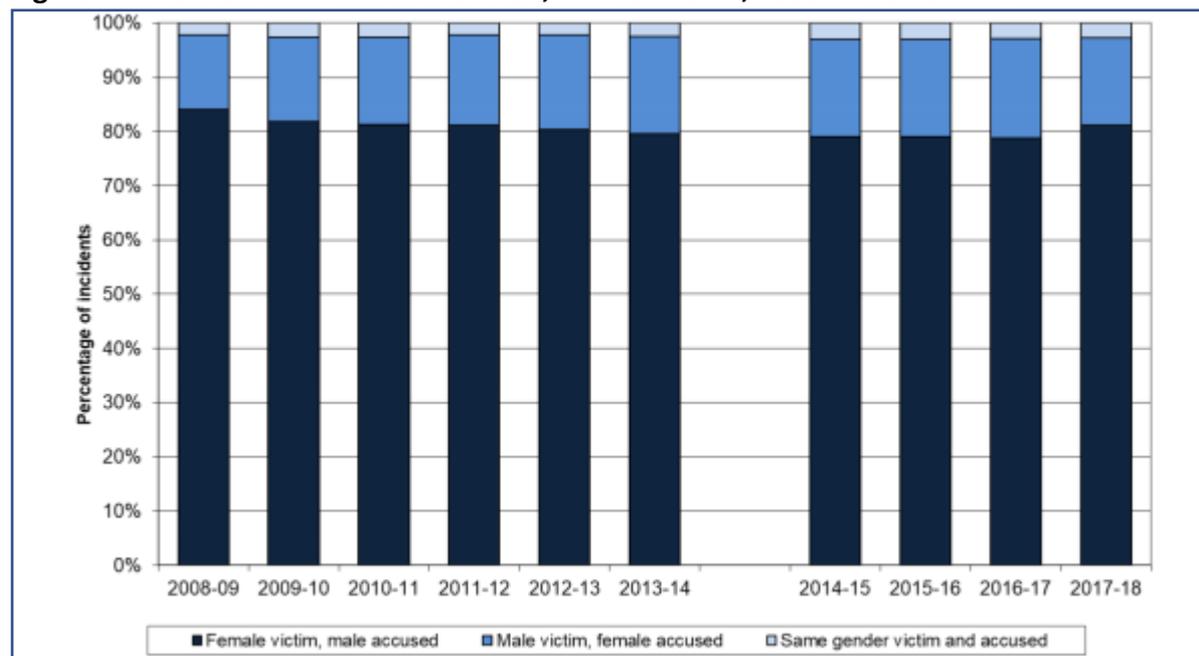
Source: Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland, 2017/18

Of course these figures do not give a full picture of prevalence, with **victims of domestic abuse remaining amongst the least likely to report their victimisation to the police**. Recent sweeps of the *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* (SCJS) reveal only around one in five victims report any police involvement following the most recent incident of partner abuse[191, 192, 193] compared to a figure of around two in five victims of other violent crimes.[194] According to a recent analysis of SCJS data conducted by Sarah MacQueen and Paul Norris, clear disparities exist between key groups of victims in terms of police awareness and attention.[195] Female victims, victims without employment, victims experiencing multiple abuse and victims whose children witness abuse were most likely to come to the attention of the police. Young victims, male victims and victims in employment were the least likely.

Difficulties associated with identifying and measuring domestic abuse relate to the personal nature of this particular form of violence, which (as the new legislation acknowledges) tends to be **experienced as a process rather than a one-off event and on a continuum ranging from everyday acts of verbal and emotional abuse to serious sexual and physical assaults**. The intimate relationship context of domestic abuse means that victims often consider it to be a private, personal or family concern, rather than a matter for criminal justice intervention. Likewise, in crime surveys, victims may be reluctant to define their experiences as 'crime'. The limitations of official crime statistics in capturing systematic and sustained experiences of violence are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The police practice of counting the number of crimes is disputed by some in the domestic violence field, who consider it important to measure the number of victims in order to make visible the repeated nature of domestic violent crime.[196] For example, analysis of Police Scotland's Vulnerable Persons Database (VPD) suggests that more than more than half (54%) of the domestic abuse incidents reported to the police involved both victim and accused who had previously been recorded in an incident of domestic abuse (though not necessarily in the same relationship in all incidents).[197] In a further 11% of incidents there was a mix of results

for the victim and accused (i.e. one or other of the victim or accused had previously been recorded) (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police, by repeat victim/accused analysis (where known), 2017-18
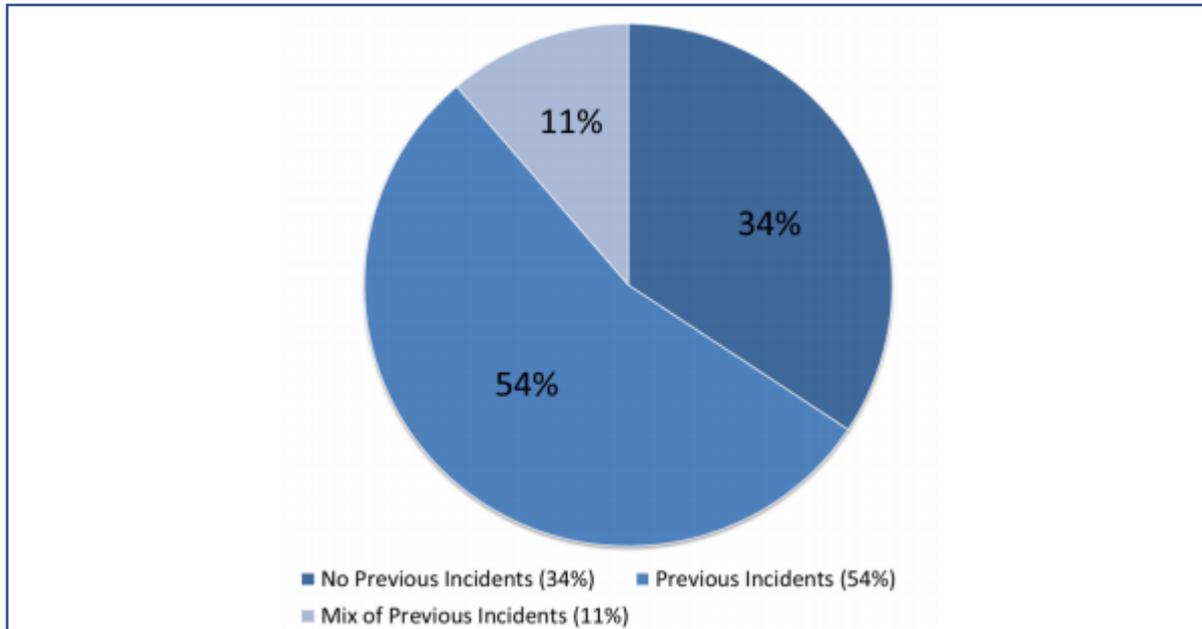
Source: Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland, 2017/18

The challenge of measuring repeat victimization of high-frequency victims of violence is explored in research by Sylvia Walby and colleagues, who analysed the impact of removing the 'cap' on repeat incidents reported in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (see Chapter 3). Doing so not only estimated 60% more violent crime than had previously been reported by the survey, but revealed that this increase was concentrated in violence against women and incidents that involved domestic relations (both of which increased by 70%).[198]

Research Focus: *Dual Reports of Domestic Abuse made to the Police in Scotland*[199]

This pilot study used quantitative Scottish police data, drawn from the VPD over a one-year period, to undertake exploratory analysis of 'dual reports' of domestic abuse. Dual reports occur when both parties in a relationship are reported to the police as perpetrators of domestic abuse at the same time, and these reports may include 'counter-allegations' made by perpetrators of domestic abuse to deflect criminal justice proceedings against them. As such, dual reports present a particular challenge to both conventional understandings of domestic abuse and the police response to these offences. The pilot study examined the nature of dual report incidents, how common they are, and how the police respond to these incidents.

A sample of dual report incidents was selected by identifying all dual report incidents recorded across three police divisions within one legacy police force in 2012/13. The 532 incidents studied represent 266 dual report 'cases' where both a male and female partner were recorded simultaneously as the victim and the perpetrator in two corresponding domestic abuse incidents.

How common are dual reports?

- Across the three police divisions, 5.4% (532) of the 9,913 domestic abuse incidents recorded were dual report incidents that occurred in the context of a heterosexual relationship in 2012/13 (2.7% with a male perpetrator, 2.7% with a female perpetrator).

- In the same year, 55,862 incidents of domestic abuse in the context of heterosexual relationships were recorded across Scotland as a whole, leading the researchers to estimate that the police in Scotland record more than 3,000 dual-report incidents per year.

The profile of dual reports

- With regard to the types of crimes and offences recorded, the dual report sample contained some similarities with domestic abuse recorded across Scotland as a whole over the same one-year period. The four most commonly recorded crimes are the same: threatening and abusive behaviour, common assault, breach of the peace and bail offences. However, in the dual report sample there is a lower proportion of assaults and a higher proportion of threatening and abusive behaviour, breach of the peace and bail offences.
- Compared to domestic abuse incidents recorded across Scotland as a whole, a far higher proportion of incidents in the dual report sample occurred within the context of a current relationship (73% compared to 56%). Further, children were known to be present in almost one in five (18%) of dual report incidents.
- Levels of repeat victimisation were lower in the dual report sample (55%) compared to all incidents across Scotland.

Gender differences

- With regard to gender, given that 80% of domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police in Scotland have a male perpetrator and a female victim, and a much lower proportion (17%) have a female perpetrator and a male victim, this indicates that a higher proportion of domestic abuse incidents recorded with a female perpetrator occur within the context of dual reports than when the perpetrator is male. As an estimate drawing upon national statistics: 3% of incidents with a male perpetrator and female victim occur within context of a dual report; 16% of incidents with female perpetrator and male victim occur within context of a dual report.
- There was little difference in the type of incident recorded by gender although male victims were more likely to have sustained an injury (33% of male victims compared to 28% of female victims). This may be connected to the higher use of weapons where women are recorded as the perpetrator (11% of female perpetrators compared to 2% of male perpetrators).
- A higher proportion of female victims were repeat victims (67%) than male victims (43%). Thus, women were over 50% more likely to have experienced repeat victimisation than male victims and this gap grows as repeat victimisation increases: 26% of female victims had experienced six or more repeat victimisations compared to only 6% of male victims.

Police responses to dual reports

- The vast majority of dual report incidents (97%) resulted in a crime or offence being recorded by the police. This figure is markedly higher than for other domestic abuse incidents; over the same period, 50% of domestic abuse incidents reported to the police in Scotland as a whole resulted in a crime or offence being recorded.
- The proportion of incidents recorded as a crime and subsequently reported to the Procurator Fiscal (PF) in the dual report sample (64%) is also greater than the equivalent proportion for Scotland as a whole

The report concluded that further qualitative research was needed to fully understand the issue and how it is responded to.

Experiences of domestic abuse within minority and marginalised groups

The focus on relationships between partners or ex-partners within contemporary definitions of domestic abuse, and not wider family members, has been criticised by researchers working with minority and marginalised groups in Scotland. In her qualitative study with South Asian women in Scotland, for example, Nughmana Mirza emphasised the role that mothers-in-law can play in supporting and/or perpetrating abuse.[200] The interviewees'

experiences suggest that abuse can take a variety of forms; from more subtle, indirect acts such as being overworked, control of marital relations and constant 'ear-filling'; to those characterised by overt, direct acts such as physical and verbal abuse, and isolation. Immigration status (and all the factors associated with it) was found to intensify, and facilitate, abuse by mothers-in-law, positioning Pakistan-born in a relatively powerless and vulnerable position in terms of financial dependence, education, non-English proficiency and distance of family. These findings are supported by a number of other studies of South Asian women, in Scotland[201] and beyond,[202] which emphasize how domestic abuse[203] (alongside sexual abuse[204]) are underreported in South Asian communities. On the basis of these findings, Mirza argues for **current conceptualisations to be more inclusive of the specificity of South Asian women's experiences of family abuse; namely, expanded to incorporate extended family structures** and relationships.

Disabled women's experiences of intimate partner violence and gender-based violence are explored by Phillippa Wiseman, at the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory, and Jo Ferrie, in collaboration with Engender Scotland, in their mixed methods research.[205] The study, *Our Bodies, Our Rights,* focused on disabled women's reproductive rights in Scotland through an online qualitative survey (with 95 responses from disabled women) and focus group discussions (three groups, involving 12 women with learning disabilities). Overall the project found that disabled women's experiences of sex education and reproductive health care were poor, with many participants reporting being excluded and/or removed from sexual health and relationships education lessons in school and having little choice or control over contraception. What emerged most significantly, however, was the scale of GBV and intimate partner violence reported – even though this was not the research's central focus. All of the 12 women with learning disabilities reported experiences of intimate partner violence, including physical violence, rape, forced prostitution and gang rape. This was in addition to experience of parental abuse and violent victimisation as children and adults, sexual violence as children, and violence experienced in care settings, long-stay hospitals and residential facilities by staff and residents. This highlights the **complex nature of disabled women's abuse experience, as well as pointing to the intersecting features of the violence perpetrated against them**. The links between disability and domestic abuse have been under-examined nationally and internationally, resulting in the marginalisation of disabled women in research, policy and practice.[206] Women with learning disabilities in *Our Bodies, Our Rights* said that, because violence was so much a part of their lives for as long as they could remember, they considered violence to be unremarkable, 'natural' and normal and so didn't tend to see it as something to be reported. Where women did report, they were not believed and were never put in contact with supportive services or organisations such as Rape Crisis or Women's Aid. Only one participant in the study accessed Rape Crisis Scotland's services and said she found them inaccessible.

Criminal justice responses to rape and sexual assault

The number of rapes and attempted rapes reported to the police in Scotland increased by 99% between 2010-11 and 2017-18, including a 20% increase from 1,878 in 2016-17 to 2,255 in 2017-18.[207] Though this rise is generally taken as a sign that victims feel more confident in coming forward, there has not been a corresponding improvement in

prosecutions and convictions. Whilst the number of convictions of rape and attempted rape in 2017-18 was more than two and a half times higher than in 2008-09 (107 in 2017-18 compared to 42 in 2008-09) and the average sentence length for rape and attempted rate is at its highest level for the past decade (2,567 days in 2017-18 compared to 2,543 days in 2008-09),[208] recent figures suggest a mere 5% of complaints – one in 20 – actually result in a conviction.[209] Like many countries, Scotland has a problem with attrition – the process by which the number of cases initially reported to police do not proceed through the criminal justice system. One difficulty with prosecution and conviction that is unique to Scotland is the evidential requirement of corroboration, which requires two different and independent sources of evidence to prove a crime.[210] This is a particular problem for rape cases since they frequently occur in private. Under corroboration rules, victim statements alone, no matter how strong and credible, are not legally sufficient; there needs to be additional evidence to proceed. Figure 14 shows the acquittal rates for rape and attempted rape in comparison with other crime types:

Figure 14. Crime types with the highest acquittal rates, 2017-18
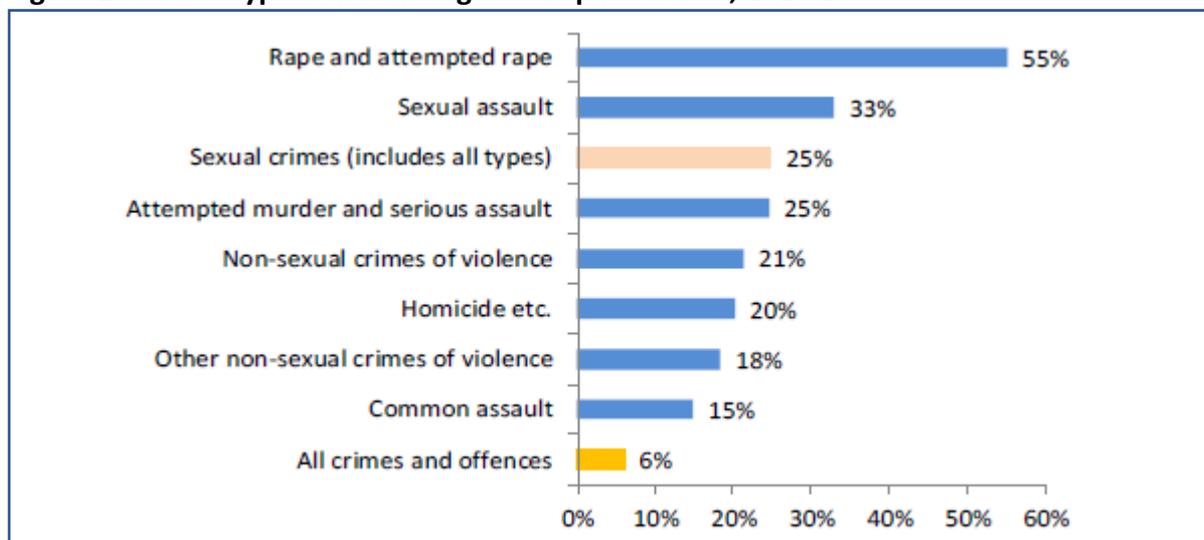
Source: Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2017/18

There are serious and long-standing concerns about the experiences of victim-survivors of rape and serious sexual assault within the criminal justice process in Scotland. These concerns include 'secondary victimisation' throughout the criminal justice process and a lack of coordinated service provision to victims. Research on victim-survivors views' of their experiences of the criminal justice process has been conducted by Michele Burman and colleagues in a series of empirical projects that include a series of evaluation projects on the introduction of successive attempts at 'rape shield' legislation, and the relevance and admissibility of sexual history and character evidence in sexual offence trials,[211, 212] as well as research on victim-survivors views' of their experiences of the criminal justice process.[213, 214]

Burman's work on rape shield legislation reveals some of the **limitations of legal reform** in the area of gender-based violence, drawing research conducted in Scottish criminal courts (including analysis of the taped proceedings of a sample of sexual offence cases heard in the Scottish High Court, in-court observations, and interviews with trial judges, prosecution and

defence counsel, and complainers).[215] Whereas the introduction of rape shield legislation was designed to restrict the use of questioning and evidence about the complainer's sexual history and character, the research found that - somewhat paradoxically - use of the legislation increased the likelihood questioning on sexual history and character rather than limiting it (such that 7 out of 10 complainers in the most serious sexual offence trials were questioned on their sexual history and sexual character). Distress on the part of the complainer was common, with victims describing their experiences as traumatic.

Concerns about criminal justice responses to victim-survivors of rape and sexual assault have led to the development of advocacy support services intended to assist victims in their interactions with criminal justice, health and other agencies. Drawing on empirical material from a qualitative evaluation of the pilot phase of a rape advocacy service introduced in Scotland to assist male and female rape victims at the initial stage of making a report to the police,[216] Oona Brooks and Michele Burman show how convictions alone do not redress the harms caused by rape and sexual assault – process matters, too.[217] In doing so, they raise important questions about the outcomes sought by victims of rape:

> *While prosecution and conviction may represent a positive criminal justice outcome and go some way to redressing the harms associated with rape, these findings highlight the importance of victims' experience of the criminal justice process and the agencies they encounter on this journey. Hence, the consistent finding that while the criminal justice process is important, belief, recognition, support, validation, voice and control remain key to recovery from rape and other forms of sexual violence.*

In essence, Brooks and Burman's research points to the **importance of procedural justice** and fairness of process: 'This broader sense of justice particularly difficult to achieve within conventional criminal justice responses to sexual violence given the process of marginalization described by victims in their peripheral role as witness or sources of evidence'. (The Scottish Government has recently commissioned research synthesising conceptualisation and measurement of justice experiences. This work is employing frameworks of procedural justice and person-centred services, and is due to be completed late summer 2019.)

Key messages

- **Recent research on domestic abuse in Scotland has been largely quantitative, focusing on reporting issues – in relation to police recording practices and survey measures which have traditionally been unable to capture the ongoing and gendered nature of abuse.**

- **Other characteristics such as race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability intersect and impact on how domestic abuse is experienced and responded to. These intersections remain under-researched, with the exception of some notable small-scale, qualitative pieces of work.**

- **Some of the most significant studies pertaining to GBV in Scotland focus on responses to rape and sexual assault. Drawing on a range of methods that include secondary analysis of court reports, observations and interviews, these studies highlight the limits of criminal justice reforms in delivering justice for victims.**

Chapter 8: Hate crime

There is no single accepted definition of the term 'hate crime'. This not only reflects the dynamic, historically and culturally contingent nature of 'crime', which is shaped by broader social structures and ideologies, but also limitations of the word 'hate'.[218, 219] In short, **hate crime need not be (and often is not) motivated by hate, but rather by prejudice or bias toward the (perceived) group affiliation of the victim**.[220] In the absence of a universally accepted definition, it is Barbara Perry's conceptualisation of hate crime that is most often cited in the academic literature:[221]

> *Hate crime involves acts of violence and intimidation, usually directed toward already stigmatised and marginalised groups. As such, **it is a mechanism of power and oppression, intended to reaffirm the precarious hierarchies that characterise a given social order**. It attempts to re-create simultaneously the threatened (real or imagined) hegemony of the perpetrator's group and the 'appropriate' subordinate identity of the victim's group. It is a means of marking both the Self and the Other in such a way as to re-establish their 'proper' relative positions, as given and reproduced by broader ideologies and patterns of social and political inequality.[222]*

The importance of Perry's definition lies in its emphasis on: (i) the significance of structural hierarchies, and (ii) the group (as opposed to individual) identity of the victim. Specifically, she identifies traditionally marginalised minority groups as the victims of hate crime. Hate crime occurs when, representatives of a subordinate group (identified as 'Other') attempt to step beyond their 'proper' position. Hate crimes are thus 'acts of violence and intimidation directed not only towards the victim but also towards the collective wider community to whom he or she belongs … [They] are designed to convey a message to this community that they are somehow "different" and "don't belong"'.[223]

While there are a range of metrics collected in Scottish Government surveys and elsewhere, **there is currently very little research on hate crime in Scotland, either in relation to victims or perpetrators.**

Official data on prevalence

In Scotland, hate crime falls within current legislation that enables existing offences, such as assault or breach of the peace, to be aggravated by prejudice in respect of one or more of the protected characteristics of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender identity. An offence is recorded as a 'hate crime' where it is 'perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group'.[224] The police also record hate incidents which are: 'any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, as being motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group, but which does not constitute a criminal offence'. Details of hate crime reported to the Procurator Fiscal in Scotland are reported annually in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) report, *Hate Crime in Scotland*. The 2017-18 report includes the following headline findings:[225]

- **Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime**, with 3,249 charges reported in 2017-18, but this is the lowest annual total since 2003-04.
- **Sexual orientation aggravated crime is the second most common type of hate crime**, with the number of charges reported increasing by 3% in 2017-18 to 1,112. With the exception of 2014-15, there have been year-on-year increases in charges reported since the legislation introducing this aggravation came into force in 2010.
- **The number of disability aggravated charges reported increased by 51% in 2017-18** to 284. With the exception of 2016-17, there have been year-on-year increases in charges reported since the legislation introducing this aggravation came into force in 2010.
- In 2017-18, 49 charges were reported with an aggravation of prejudice relating to transgender identity, seven more than in 2016-17. **This is the highest number of transgender charges reported since the legislation came into force**, although the numbers remain small.
- There were 642 religiously aggravated charges reported in 2017-18, 50% of which involved Roman Catholicism as the target of abuse.[226]

Trends in hate crime charges reported are illustrated in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Trends in hate crime charges reported, 2003-04 to 2017-18
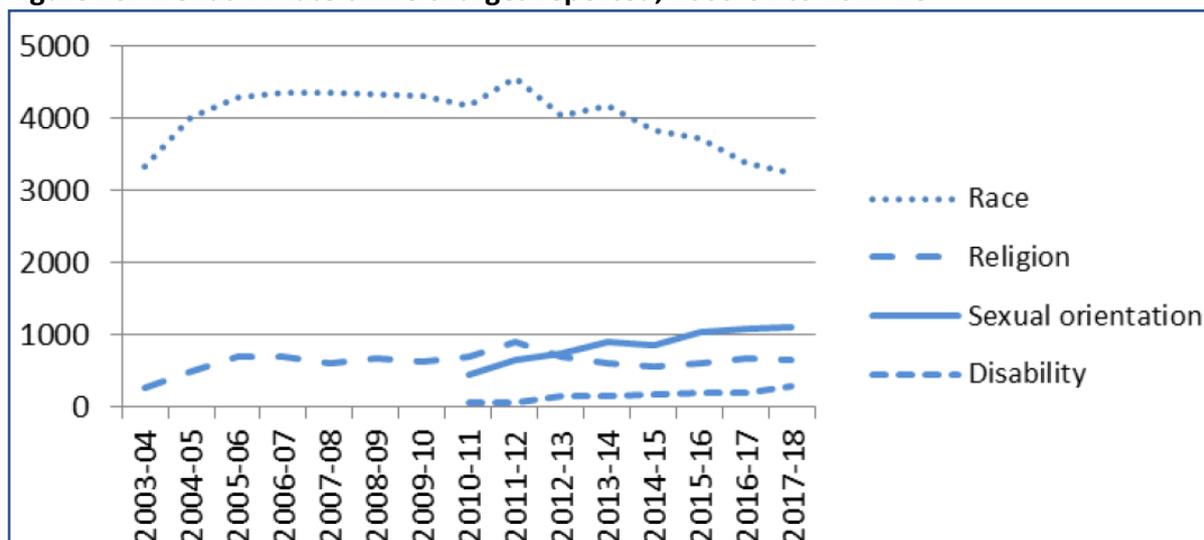
Source: Hate Crime in Scotland, 2017/18

Data on experiences of discrimination and harassment are also available from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) annual report, *Scotland's People*.[227] In 2017, just over one in 20 adults reported that they had experienced either discrimination (7%) or harassment (6%) in Scotland at some point over the last three years. Some groups were more likely than others to report having experienced discrimination or harassment than others, specifically respondents who identified as 'Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual' (20% discrimination, 21% harassment) and those from minority ethnic groups (19% discrimination, 11% harassment). The most common reason cited as a motivating factor was the respondent's ethnicity. Around a third (31%) of respondents who had been discriminated against believed the reason behind this was their ethnic origin. Aside from 'other' reasons (20%), the next most common motivating factors were said to be the respondent's age (15%), gender (12%) or disability (10%). The

report also highlights a marked difference in perceived prevalence at the neighbourhood level, with 24% of those living in the most deprived areas (lowest two 10-percentiles) stating that harassment from groups or individuals was very common in their neighbourhood compared to only 3% of those living the least deprived areas (highest two 10-percentiles).

Official data on hate crime are subject to many of the same limitations as statistics on GBV (see Chapters 3 and 7), because they too have **high rates of under-reporting and repeat victimisation[228]** and can encompass a range of interrelated behaviours, including verbal abuse, intimidation and harassment, physical violence and criminal damage to property.[229] Hate crimes, like GBV, are a cause and consequence of social inequality and therefore more precise measurement of contextual factors and wider impacts are required to illuminate the power relations inherent in abusive acts. This includes more precise data on the characteristics of both the perpetrator and the victim, but also attention to the effects of direct and indirect victimisation. Wider research suggests these crimes can have considerable impact on victims, their friends and acquaintances, and on other members of the community who may come to hear about events through mutual associates or the media.

Community reported incidences and experiences

A review of the evidence on hate crime and violent prejudice in Scotland was conducted by Maureen McBride in 2016.[230] As part of this review, a survey of stakeholder organisations was conducted to gather perspectives on the topic, as well as information on current data collection practices (and gaps). In addition to highlighting the underreporting of hate crime in official data, the report emphasised **problems associated with the aggregation of (and different definitions of) protected group characteristics**. Aggregation of protected group categories was also considered to obscure underlying patterns and trends. 'For example,' the report observed, 'while reported crimes related to race/ethnicity have declined … there have been reported increases among particular ethnic/national groups.'

Stakeholder organisations reported widespread and varied experiences of hate crime amongst their service users, at incidences much higher than those reported in official statistics, but also emphasised that **hate crimes perpetrated on the basis of multiple characteristics were typical**. Current approaches to reporting and recording hate crime were said to mask these intersectional features. As one organisation noted, 'Race and religion can often be interconnected and it is difficult to pick out whether a hate crime towards someone is because of their religion or their perceived race.'

The contemporary focus on 'hate crimes' was also said to obscure the ordinariness of much of the prejudice that minority groups face, and to prioritise the needs of some groups over others. Stakeholder organisations reported that **'everyday' incidents often become normalised, as long-suffering victims become resigned to a certain amount of abuse as an expected consequence of 'difference'**. 'Low level' verbal abuse and incivility can still have a significant impact, however, with indirect effects including fear, isolation, and a lack of engagement with services – thus contributing to lower standards of health and wellbeing. People with learning disabilities were emphasised by various stakeholders in the study as a group whose experiences of prejudice and violent victimisation are often marginalised,

alongside people in prison and/or other institutional settings. This hierarchy of victims, according to which some categories and groups of victims are prioritised over others, is also emphasised in Kevin Kane's report for Victim Support Scotland.[231] Drawing on the wider academic literature on hate crime, [232, 233, 234] Kane suggests that '**some of the most vulnerable victims of hate crime are excluded from existing policy and legislative frameworks**.' Overlooked groups include: the homeless,[235, 236] refugees and asylum seekers,[237] gypsies and travellers,[238] the elderly, and those with mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency. Whilst these groups of victims are not identified using the protected characteristics from equality legislation, they can conceivably be classed as 'stigmatised and marginalised groups', against whom there is evidence of longstanding violence and intimidation (see also Chapter 10).

Research focus: *The Impact of Hate Crime on the Health and Wellbeing of People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland*[239]

Despite disability being a protected characteristic, covered by current hate crime legislation, little is known about the prevalence or impact of violent prejudice on disabled people in Scotland. Whilst official sources are unable to distinguish between the experiences between different impairment groups, wider research has that people with learning disabilities are at a significantly greater risk of all forms of violence.[240, 241, 242] The current study, conducted by Phillippa Wiseman and Nick Watson with the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory, involved focus groups and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 22 adults with learning disabilities from across Scotland to explore their views on and experiences of disability hate crime.

Key findings

- All of the participants had experienced violence across the life course, including: childhood violence (child abuse, domestic abuse, and peer violence – especially in mainstream schools); institutional violence (perpetrated by support workers and staff members in residential facilities, Adult Treatment Units and long-stay hospitals); and gender-based violence (intimate partner and sexual violence).

- Participants also reported violent incidents and experiences of hate crimes, linked to them having a learning disability, including: name calling, bullying, targeted harassment and physical violence, stalking, home invasion, theft, and financial crime/exploitation.

- While some participants identified violence specifically as hate crime, others talked about violence in more everyday general terms. For most participants, experience of violence was ongoing and weekly, if not every day.

- These experiences of violence led participants to be too afraid to leave the house, to go on public transport (especially buses where hate incidents/crimes were most frequently encountered) and to take part in their everyday community activities. Some participants described not being able to go and get their food shopping, being too afraid to go out alone, not being able to go to Church, and not leaving the house for weeks.

- Participants reported high levels of anxiety, depression, intense fear and worry, self-harm and repeated suicide attempts as a result of violence. Some participants had to move area in order to get it to stop.

- Police responses were articulated as poor and inaccessible and most participants did not know how to report violence, especially if it was a family member, partner or support worker perpetrating violence.

Key messages

- **Hate crime in Scotland should be a focus for future research, as it has received relatively little attention to date.**

- **The limited research which does exist highlights the pervasive effects of repeat and routinised incidents, which compound existing inequalities and exclusion.**

- **Future research needs to attend to the experiences of multiply marginalized groups, including those with learning disabilities.**

Chapter 9: Workplace and institutional violence

The final substantive topic considered in this report relates to sites and forms of organisational violence, specifically:

- workplace violence: the violence experienced by those in the context of carrying out their jobs; and
- institutional violence: the violence that takes place within institutions, which may be perpetrated by state actors or others.

We have already noted that understanding, reporting and research about violence tends to focus on 'street' forms, that is what is public and visible, and thus easily brought to the attention of police. While there is growing awareness and understanding of violence that takes place in the private sphere, especially in the context of family and personal relationships, an area often neglected is the semi-public/semi-private space of organisations and institutions. Research is less well developed here – within the academic literature generally and within Scotland specifically. This is despite the incorporation of structural forms of violence within both public health and feminist approaches. This chapter provides an overview of key issues and indicators in this area.

Workplace violence

Workplace violence is conventionally understood as: violence amongst and between employees; violence experienced by employees as they come into contact with others in the course of their work; and workplaces as a site of domestic forms of violence (when a person comes to a partner's workplace to harass, stalk, monitor/control or attack them). [243, 244] Critical criminological perspectives, however, employ a broader definition which includes organisational forms of violence, including safety crimes and corporate homicide (where organisations inflict harm due to corporate negligence, or wilful violations of health and safety regulations, knowingly placing their employees and/or their clients in violent or dangerous situations).[245, 246]

Most available data and research relate to the second type of workplace violence mentioned, specifically violence experienced at work, and within this we found the most data related to public sector workers, especially emergency workers. UNISON has conducted annual surveys of public employees since 2006 and their latest results show a trend of increased levels of violence against local government, health workers and others from 2013 to 2018, though there has been an apparent decline in the most recent year (2017 to 2018) (see Figure 16).[247]

Figure 16: Assaults on staff by public sector employers in most recent year under report
Survey year

Area	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Local Govt	14,879	15,671	13,206	17,605	22,006	20,208
Health	13,142	15,057	18,636	17,116	19,170	18,225
Other	6,187	6,296	6,437	6,445	1,245	2,135
Total	**34,208**	**37,024**	**38,279**	**41,166**	**42,421**	**40,568**

Source: Violence at Work: A survey of UNISON employers in Scotland 2018

Attacks on emergency workers have been criminalised in Scotland via the Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005 and subsequent amendments. Data on prosecutions and convictions under this Act for attacks on blue light services and health workers is shown in Figures 17 and 18. These show a peak in such offences between 2011-13, plateauing after that but with noticeable upticks specifically for those in health services, or attacked in hospitals. Prison staff also are subject to increasing numbers of assaults (Figure 19).

Figure 17: Proceedings in Scottish Courts for offences under the EWA, 2007-08 to 2016-17
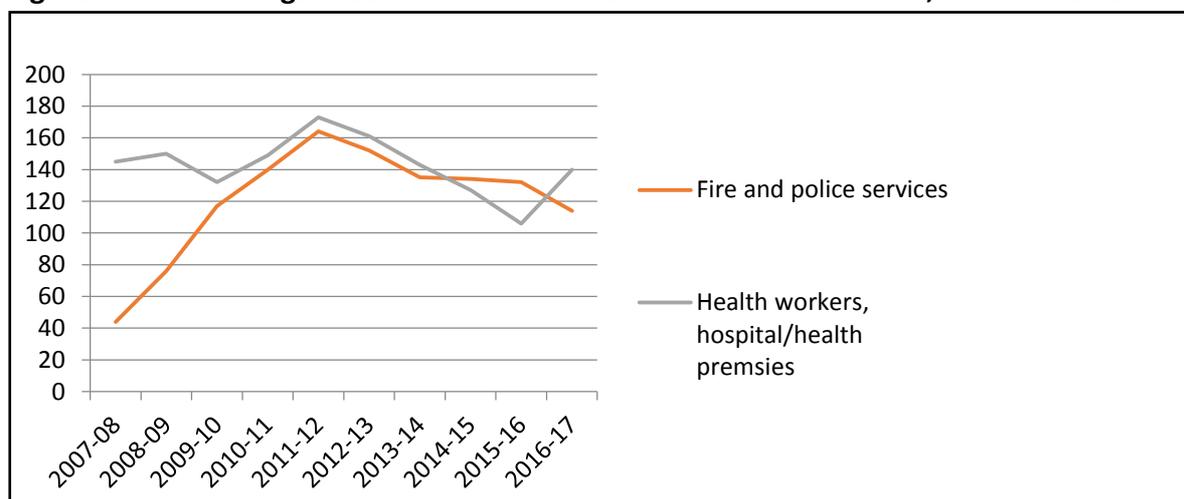
Source: Violence at Work: A survey of UNISON employers in Scotland 2018

Figure 18: Convictions in Scottish Courts for offences under the EWA, 2007-08 to 2016-17
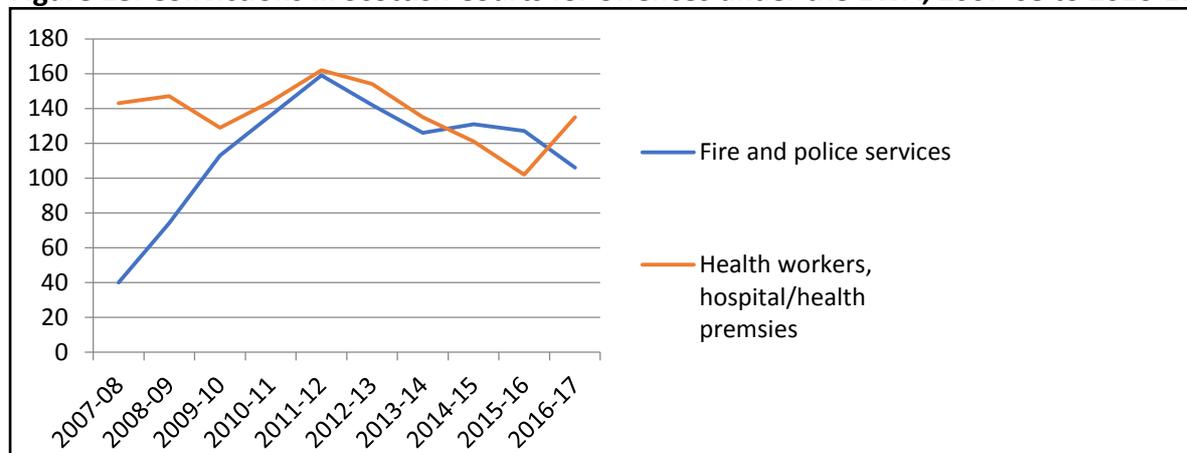
Source: Violence at Work: A survey of UNISON employers in Scotland 2018

Figure 19: Assaults by Prisoners of Staff, Scottish Prisons, 2013-2018

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Minor	162*	161	202	193	284**
Serious	2	9	4	5	14
3 year rolling average (serious assault)			5	6	8

Sources: SPS Annual Reports, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18
* This figure comes from the 2014-15 annual report, which notes that the 2013-14 annual report excluded assault numbers from private prisons in error.
** The 2017-18 report includes two figures for this category: 284 on p. 12 in the main text and 283 on p. 93 in an appended table; we are using the number from the table.

Research commissioned by UNISON in 2006 explored care workers' experience of violence in the workplace.[248] Carers reported physical aggression only occasionally; sexual harassment was more common, while verbal abuse was a frequent occurrence for most. Aggression from service users and their families was said to be associated with failure to understand carers' roles and responsibilities, as often these individuals had developed unreasonably high expectations of the service and became frustrated and confrontational when their expectations were not met. **The conflation of service and servitude that can erupt into abuse in the context of care work is compounded by gender inequalities and hierarchical work relationships** that are not dissimilar to those in the hospitality and service industries.[249] Research on non-profit care settings in Canada and Scotland 'reveals some tolerance for violence among management and workers, operating as a gendered dynamic in which paid care work requires the same kinds of elasticity and self-sacrifice expected of mothers and other unpaid females, as well as the same disregard for conditions of work and workplace safety'.[250]

Beyond the public sector, workplace violence is even less visible, partly because it is not often acknowledged as violence at all. This means there is limited monitoring or research. In their guidance to managing occupational violence and aggression in the workplace, NHS Health Scotland cite research carried out as part of a Scottish Government marketing campaign relating to public attitudes towards workers who deal with the public. This research found that **the public regard some public-facing workers as legitimate targets of abuse, believing that it 'goes with the job'**. An illustration of the results is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 20: Attitudes towards workers who deal with the public
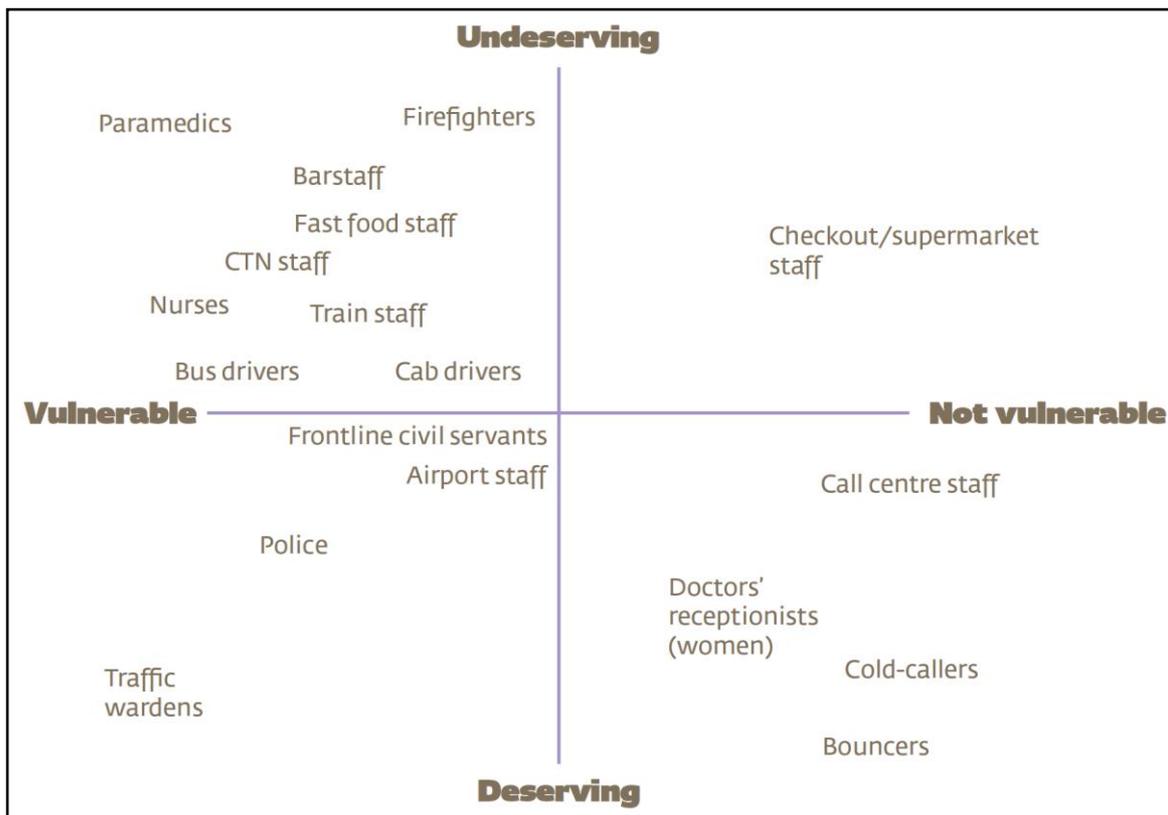
Source: Managing Occupational Violence and Aggression in the Workplace

Such analyses expose connections between wider structural economic conditions – where precarious forms of work, service and caring jobs, and low paid work for women are increasingly characteristic.

Taken together, workplaces are important sites of violence with effects for society and economy. Aside from the personal consequences resulting from violence, workplace violence can affect stress levels, effectiveness and wellbeing across an organisation and foment other work-related issues including burnout, poor recruitment, substance issues and more. Taking these sites into account and addressing them requires and may further develop more holistic, public health, as opposed to criminalised, approaches. It may also provide **an enlarged understanding of gendered violence, as a phenomenon which transcends the boundary of a personal relationship**. An example that draws out the overlapping forms of workplace, gender, ethnic/religious and other forms of violence are situations of domestic modern slavery and human trafficking. In this area, women (and men) may be coerced or forced into employment situations in private homes and businesses where they can be sexually and physically abused.

Institutional violence

The violence that takes place in institutions, discussed here mainly in terms of prison, is neglected in most official forms of crime recording, including crime and victimisation

surveys and police reports. However, there are two arguments that this form of violence should be a greater focus of attention:

- **those in institutional settings may be at heightened risk of violent victimisation** for a range of reasons, and
- **institutional settings are much less visible than public sites of violence, with especially limited means for those within them to report violence**.

What is known about this form of violence reinforces these arguments for increasing attention. For example, in 2017-18, there were over 1,200 recorded assaults and 1,697 cases of fights in Scottish prisons that led to disciplinary action.[251] These are the crimes that officially came to the attention of authorities and, similar to all official measures of crime and disorder, likely reflects an underreporting of actual assaults. The Scottish Prison Service's Annual Report 2017-18 notes in its reporting on KPIs that there have been increases in all categories of violence within the prison system over the past year including: serious prisoner on staff assaults (14 incidents in 2017-18, compared to 5 in 2016-17), minor prisoner on staff assaults (284 versus 193), and serious prisoner on prisoner assaults (94 versus 74) (see also Figure 19, above, for assaults on staff). There are no KPIs or data reporting figures on staff on prisoner violence. Assault data broken down by gender appears in prison annual reporting of breaches of discipline as shown in Figure 21.

Figure 21: Assaults in Scottish Prisons 2013-2018, by prisoner gender

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Men	830	831	*	969	1105
Women	75	112	*	84	102
Total	**905**	**943**		**1053**	**1207**

Sources: SPS Annual Reports, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18.
*Aggregated numbers of assaults are not included in the 2015-16 Annual Report.

Bullying, self-harm and death in prisons also are part of the picture of institutional violence. SCCJR researchers have recently reviewed evidence of self-harm and death finding, among other things, that Scotland has a comparatively high prison suicide rate compared to other high income countries and is about ten times the suicide rate of the overall Scottish population.[252] Suicide is on the rise in Scottish prisons while it is declining in the overall population.[253] Following a decreasing trend in the early 2000s, after rising rates in the 1990s (a trend also seen in the general Scottish population), prison suicides rose from a rate of 97 per 100,000 in the 2011-2014 period to 125 per 100,000 during 2015-2018.[254] There were two homicides in prison in 2014, prior to which 2006 was the last date of a recorded homicide in prison.

Figures for self-harm in prison have been available through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and these show rising rates of self-harm in prison. During a period when prison population was declining, self-harm incidents rose from 305 in 2013-14 and 315 in 2014-15, to 429 in 2015-16 and 428 in 2016-17.[255] A recent FOI request showed a sharp rise to 762 in the most recent year, 2017-18, at a time when the prison population was falling.[256] Changes in reporting practices should always be considered in interpreting changes in rates, as these have affected apparent increases in records of sexual violence as efforts seek to support better reporting as one example, and should be taken account of here. Findings that are

consistent with wider literature include: women have much higher self-harm levels than men and that self-harm incidents were highest in some of the newest prisons (HMP Grampian and Addiewell).

The only recent data we could find on bullying in prison comes from the Scottish Prisoner Survey that is administered every two years. It should be noted that there is an overall low and varied response rate by prison to this survey. In the most recent (2017) sweep, 16% of prisoners responding reported they had been bullied, which represented an increase compared to the 12% reporting bullying experiences in the 2015 survey.[257] Of those reporting being bullied, more than 70% did not report this to staff. A forthcoming analysis of wellbeing in prison, also using the prisoner survey, found that wellbeing scores declined between 2013 and 2017.[258]

Collectively, this data suggests **violence in Scottish prisons is on the rise, including levels of bullying, assault, suicide and self-harm** of prisoners.

Of course institutional experiences of violence are not limited to those carried out directly by state or other institutional actors (such as employees) but include also **the maintenance of environments where inmates/residents are exposed to conditions which create despair, violence between institutionalised residents, and emotional hardship**, for example as documented in the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry. It has been regularly observed that populations in prison have higher levels of a range of issues including relating to mental health, substance use, experiences of abuse and victimisation, histories of care and other markers of so-called vulnerabilities.[259] This makes clear that (i) people who are imprisoned for causing harm to others, also themselves predominantly have experienced harm and (ii) prisons concentrate people with multiple and overlapping frailties and possibly dispositions towards violence. This can play into heightened levels of violence observed in prison compared to outside communities, but does not explain increases, as has been observed over the past few years.

These observations about prison populations also fail to take account of institutions themselves, which can in particular situations, or due to inherent dynamics, be an agent or trigger of violence,[260] sometimes called **institutional trauma** or sanctuary trauma. Researchers have employed the concept of **'slow violence'** to 'help us recognise the cumulative harmful and often catastrophic emotional and physical effects of everyday practices' in places like prison including being locked in cells, spoken to in hostile ways, witnessing other people's distress and so on.[261]

Concepts of institutional trauma and slow violence underline how **entangled, pervasive and overlapping experiences within institutional settings combine to produce experiences of victimisation**. This is made particularly clear in recent research on trauma and people with criminal justice histories.[262] Sarah Anderson, for example, found that experiences of and within criminal justice, perpetrated harm in themselves and also compounded early and later traumatic life experiences. Caitlin Gormley focused on experiences of people with learning disabilities employing the idea of 'pervasive victimisation'; she showed how the accumulation of neglect and emotional abuse in childhood to physical abuse by carers and others were early and chronic experiences of violence. Later experiences of serious criminal

victimisation as well as mundane but repeated instances of bullying and cruelty experienced in contact with criminal justice actors became part of a normalised existence of everyday violence for these disabled people.[263]

Similar effects and forms of violence have also been reported in settings such as probation[264] and institutions for children, where recent child abuse inquiries have provided powerful examples of the harms suffered that were invisible, covered up and denied for decades.[265] Those who have experienced institutionalisation via imprisonment have higher levels of mortality from all causes than those who have never been institutionalised, and this is true even when controlling for deprivation and substance misuse.[266] Institutions, in other words, appear to have independently negative effects for health and are a less visible and neglected setting for the measurement of violence.

Key points

- **Workplace and institutional contexts are rarely included within criminological and policy considerations of violence but fit within public health and feminist perspectives of crime and justice.**
- **Workplace violence is a neglected site of gender-based violence, and shows linkages between economic inequality and gender inequality as predictors of victimisation.**
- **Institutions such as prisons and children's homes can be sites and facilitators of violence and trauma.**
- **Institutional forms of violence are pervasive, and in the case of Scottish prisons are on the rise, including levels of bullying, assault, suicide and self-harm of prisoners.**

Chapter 10: Interventions

Due to space constraints, the current chapter focuses on the (limited) peer-reviewed evidence about the effectiveness of violence interventions with Scottish populations. It is worth noting that, whilst the crime drop in Scotland has been hailed as evidence of the efficacy of the public health approach,[267] not much evaluative work has taken place to substantiate this.[268] In addition, overall reductions in violent crime make attributing specific reductions to specific initiatives complex.   A recent overview of the range of violence-specific prevention and reduction projects taking place in Scotland is provided by Julie Arnot.[269]   A review of literature on effective interventions and practices to deal with perpetrators of violence against women is provided by Oona Brooks and colleagues.[270]

Violence risk assessment

A review of research and practice in risk assessment and risk management of young people engaging in offending behaviours was conducted by the SCCJR in 2007.[271] The review concluded that the development of tools for assessing the risk of violence among children and young people was at an early stage. It identified two instruments designed specifically to assess violence risk in children and young people: the Early Assessment Risk List for Boys/Girls (EARL-20B/EARL-21G) and the SAVRY (Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth). **Evidence of the predictive accuracy of such tools was found to be limited; independent, peer-reviewed studies of predictive validity were scarce and those that did exist were not conducted with Scottish populations**. A further problem relates to the definitions of violent behaviour employed in such studies, insofar as the types of behaviours used as outcome measures varied (e.g. self-reported violence, institutionally recorded violence, criminal charges, criminal convictions) and often included (less serious) acts that would not necessarily be categorised under the heading 'non-sexual crimes of violence'.

The predictive validity of the Psychopathy Checklist-Screening Version (PCL-SV), Historical/ Clinical/Risk Management scale (HCR-20), and the Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG) instruments within the Scottish context was evaluated by Hilda Ho and colleagues, drawing on a sample of 96 adult patients discharged from the Orchard Clinic, a medium secure unit sited at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. Follow-up information regarding post discharge violence and clinical factors was collected for two years by the research team. Four (4.2%) patients from the sample committed five serious violent offences, while 38 (40.6%) patients committed more than 100 minor violent offences. All three risk assessment tools were found to have moderate predictive accuracy for violent outcomes, but VRAG scores appeared to be the best predictor of overall violence.

Alcohol and violence-related brief interventions

Brief interventions are short, one-on-one counselling sessions with a trained interventionist (e.g. nurse, psychologist, or social worker), designed to address unhealthy or risky behaviours, usually in a health care setting. A review of international research literature pertaining to violence brief interventions (VBIs) was conducted by Fergus Neville and

colleagues.[272] Key themes of successful interventions included: brief motivational interviewing as an effective method of engaging with at-risk participants and encouraging change, the utility of social norms approaches for correcting peer norm misperceptions, the usefulness of working with victims of violence in medical settings, the importance of addressing the role of alcohol after violent injury, the advantages of a computer-therapist hybrid model of delivery, and the need for adequate follow-up evaluation as part of a randomised control trial. This information was used to design a VBI for young men undergoing treatment for a violent injury in Scotland which is currently under evaluation.

The only Scottish research included in Neville et al.'s review was the work of Christine Goodall and colleagues. The first study evaluated a nurse-delivered alcohol brief intervention (ABI) for hazardous drinkers with alcohol-related facial injuries.[273] This prospective randomised controlled trial was conducted in three oral and maxillofacial outpatient clinics in the West of Scotland between 2003 and 2005. Participants either received a nurse-led ABI, or a brochure regarding alcohol guidelines (as the control). Twelve months post intervention, participants in the intervention condition displayed significantly fewer drinking days and heavy drinking days than participants in the control condition. The authors reported that the participants with the highest Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) scores at recruitment demonstrated the most degree of change which the authors noted was an unusual finding for an ABI. They suggested that this finding was due to the role of alcohol in participants' injuries, such that the injuries themselves may have acted as an intervention to motivate change in drinking behaviour.

In a subsequent study, Goodall et al. assessed the effectiveness of ABI alongside SS-COVAID (Single Session Control of Violence for Angry Impulsive Drinkers), a new intervention designed to reduce alcohol-related aggression.[274] Hazardous drinkers who were victims of interpersonal violence were randomly assigned to receive either SS-COVAID or an ABI. After twelve months **both groups displayed a significant decrease in negative drinking outcomes, but neither group demonstrated a reduction in self-reported aggression**. One reason proffered as to why this may be the case was that the facial trauma patients tend to see themselves to be victims rather than aggressors.

Violence prevention programmes based in educational settings

A number of school-based violence prevention programmes exist in Scotland, many of which have been independently evaluated, but only one of which reported in peer-reviewed publications: Damien Williams and Fergus Neville's qualitative evaluation of the *Mentors in Violence Prevention* (MVP) pilot project.[275] MVP originated in the United States and was developed to address gender-based violence (GBV). A strong emphasis is placed on building healthy, respectful relationships both in school and the wider community. Neville and Willams' evaluation comprised a series of interviews and focus groups with school staff, and pupils in three participating Scottish high schools. **The peer-learning model was generally well received and found to effect positive attitudinal and behavioural change.** Teaching staff reported instances where mentors had been observed intervening in conflicts and noticed changes in mentees' attitudes to conflict resolution and use of violence. According to mentors, who were aged between 15 and 18 years, involvement increased their awareness of GBV and changed their attitudes towards intervening, should they witness

GBV. Some of the mentees, who were aged between 11 and 14 years, felt that their behaviour had changed, especially in relation to the spread of rumours and gossip, and male mentees reported that they thought they treated girls and young women with more respect. Female mentees, however, did not agree with this assessment – stating that male mentees were 'still horrible' to girls.

Additional violence prevention programmes which have been positively evaluated in Scottish School settings include: Roots of Empathy,[276, 277] the Zero Tolerance RESPECT pilot project,[278] and Rape Crisis Scotland National Sexual Violence Prevention programme.[279]

Criminal justice-led violence prevention

The impact of police-monitored curfews and electronic monitoring on gang members in Scotland was explored by Ross Deuchar in a qualitative study of 20 young men from socially deprived areas in the West of Scotland.[280] Deuchar's research did not comprise a formal evaluation any specific service, and focused on the impact on 'social strains, support and capital' rather than on gang-related or violent behaviour. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with young men and their families, the research found that both sanctions had limited success in reducing antisocial behaviour, often generating anger, frustration, resentment, relationship difficulties, increased domestic violence and substance dependency, alongside alienated social bonds that eventually drove some young men to breach. **Positive outcomes were most likely to occur when curfews and/or electronic monitoring were used in conjunction with intensive supervision and monitoring services which included access to social services for support with addiction, anger management and special educational provision.**

Deuchar also explored the impact efficacy of the police-led Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) as part of a wider project looking at the policing of gang violence in Glasgow and Cincinnati.[281] Glasgow CIRV was established in June 2008 by a partnership of agencies in the city, led by Strathclyde Police, through the auspices of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). Based on a model originally developed in Cincinnati, CIRV employed intelligence gathering, sheriff court self-referral sessions, multi-agency individualized client support, and police enforcement in an attempt to reduce physical violence and weapon carrying among gang-related youths. Deuchar's qualitative study suggested that 'the initiative complemented and supported offenders' journeys towards desistance by providing them with positive institutional influences, supportive human relationships and an opportunity to take on generative activities'.[282] A post hoc quantitative evaluation of CIRV, conducted by Damien Williams et al., compared rates of criminal offending for the 167 young men who engaged with the initiative with data for a matched group from a non-intervention area of the city. Their analysis found violent offending reduced across all groups over the time of the study. **The reduction in the rate of physical violence was not significantly different between the intervention group and the comparison group; however, the rate of weapons carrying reduced more in the intervention group than the comparison group** (84% vs 40% respectively in the 2-year follow-up cohort).

In spite of this measure of success in crime reduction amongst the target group, a failure to secure financial sustainability for the initiative eventually led to its demise in 2011.

According to a retrospective analysis by the former project Deputy Manager, William Graham, in his PhD thesis on policy transfer in violence reduction, longer-term sustainability would likely have been enhanced by academic input at an earlier stage in order to build in a proper and accountable system of evaluation:

> *Glasgow CIRV did publish some evaluation results in their quarterly reports, however, it would have been beneficial to have a more structured evaluation model in place at the outset of the project to provide valid and reliable data for independent analysis and scrutiny. This failing appeared to hinder Glasgow CIRV in producing relevant data as reliable evidence of progress at a later stage, especially when attempting to secure funding in order to ensure longer-term sustainability.[283]*

Key points

- **Long term crime trends in violence reduction make the evaluation of specific interventions difficult. As a result, independent, peer-reviewed studies of (i) the predictive validity of violence assessment tools and (ii) violence prevention programmes in the Scottish context are scarce.**
- **Evaluations of public health violence prevention projects in Scotland have reported mixed results: alcohol brief interventions have proved effective in decreasing negative drinking outcomes but not self-reported aggression; Glasgow CIRV found improvements in reductions of weapons carrying but not levels of physical violence.**

Chapter 11: Conclusion

This concluding chapter summarises a number of high level methodological and substantive points synthesising points that arise across the preceding chapters. It should be considered in conjunction with themes raised in the Appendix (Researcher Consultation).

Methodological cross-themes

Most substantive research on violence in Scotland tends to fall into one of the following three categories: **quantitative analyses of violence patterns and trends that draws on official statistics and survey data**; mixed-methods **studies of specific contexts of violence**, for example pubs and clubs or particular communities; and **small scale qualitative research amongst specific groups** of perpetrators and/or victims. In reviewing the research and speaking with leading researchers, a number of methodological insights have emerged.

1. **Larger scale, life course research offers an important resource for understanding specific issues like violence.** An important exception to the 'standard' approaches to violence research is the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, which is an extremely valuable source of data for understanding violence in Scotland. There is now a substantial literature on risk factors for violent offending and victimisation, but it is still unclear which are merely 'markers' and which may be causally related. **Longitudinal studies such as the ESYTC can help establish the sequencing of variables and help tease out cause from effect**. It also offers a form of study that contextualises violence within larger patterns of lives to avoid one limitation of the standard approaches which is to over determine or over prioritise violence as a problem in individual lives or communities.

2. **Advances in quantitative methods can help reveal complexities that may be hidden within aggregate violence trends.** We gave examples of this in the use of latent class analysis and moving averages. Ongoing quantitative analysis of recorded crime and survey data has yielded important insights into some of the patterns of offending and victimisation that underpin headline trends. These relate to the spatial patterning of violence and the link between violence and social deprivation. **Quantitative analysis suggests distinct patterns of violent victimisation, and is starting to be able to more effectively address the distinctive features of repeat and routine forms of violence, such as domestic abuse and hate crime**.

3. **This report also highlights the value of using more sophisticated methods and a need for more mixed method and multi-scalar work to analyse and disaggregate available crime data**. For example, while the SCJS is an important source of data on violence and victimisation, and now includes a better set of comparable measures than previously available, it lacks some of the wider indicators required to enable assessment of multi-dimensional inequality. The SCJS is also limited to households and adults and it does not capture crimes against other victims, including young people and those living outside 'normal' households – e.g. homeless people, people living in institutions.

4. **Both public health and feminist approaches offer promise as tools to improve understanding and prevention of violence, but also carry risks when poorly implemented.** These perspectives emphasise that violence perpetration, victimisation and prevention are shaped by the interplay of individual, interpersonal, community and socio-structural factors. If we are to achieve a holistic understanding of violence in Scotland we need a research strategy capable of examining these intersecting contexts – **moving beyond the prioritisation of individual-level factors** to examine how, for example, shifting labour market conditions work through community and normative structures, shaping gender roles and relationship dynamics, alongside individual attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and stressors.

5. **The way in which violence is (or isn't) defined has a major impact on the final results.** Different studies adopt different criteria, for example sometimes relying on respondents' own definitions or, alternatively, specifying a series of behaviourally specific acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse (e.g. hitting, slapping or kicking) and setting parameters as to the time period, frequency etc. This means that prevalence figures on violence are not comparable.

6. **The challenge of capturing routine and repeat victimisation.** Research indicates that the people most chronically affected by violence often deny or minimise their experiences due to a combination of shame, fear of reprisals, feelings of self-blame, or because routine forms of violence are often normalised. This poses a particular challenge for quantitative approaches, which tend to underreport violent victimisation and especially routine and repeat victimisation. In general, prevalence estimates are higher for more focused, localised studies than national surveys designed primarily for other purposes.

7. **Evaluation methodologies are of limited value in assessing violence prevention and intervention strategies.** The complex and multi-faceted nature of violence makes it difficult to establish an evidence-base in terms of effective interventions. Not only are controlled evaluation designs and randomised trials near impossible in the context of violent street cultures, for example, in the few instances where such designs are implemented it is often difficult to attribute any 'promising' results solely to the intervention under evaluation.

8. **There is a need to consider the ethical challenges and implications of research itself, particularly in studies of violence**. Challenges that are particular to violence research relate to potentially threatening and traumatic nature of the subject matter and the perceived 'vulnerability' of the research participants. Many of groups with disproportionately higher experiences of violence also are considered to be 'over researched' creating the risk of research becoming part of a dynamic of institutional violence.

Marginalisation and intersectionality cross-themes

1. **Qualitative research has highlighted the significance of poverty, gender and childhood victimisation in shaping involvement in violent offending** – alongside use of alcohol and weapon availability. A key focus for research on violence in Scotland in recent years has been youth violence and knife carrying, with a number of qualitative studies engaging with young men (and, to a lesser extent, young women) from deprived communities and/or in custodial settings. Across subjects, research is needed to fill gaps in mapping the relationships of deprivation, young people's experiences, victimisation and offending.

2. An overarching theme of research reported here is that serious violence is a relatively rare occurrence, but **particular communities and social groups experience regular, low-level violence and/or fear of violence which has a significant impact on their social participation and sense of wellbeing**.

3. Scotland has long-established research strengths in the field of gender-based violence, particularly around criminal justice responses to domestic abuse and sexual violence. Feminist research in this area highlights **the limits of conventional criminal justice approaches to defining and responding to GBV**, as well as pointing to the enduring influence of gender norms which minimise or support violence. Feminist research also has the potential to shape wider understanding of crime and victimisation beyond GBV.

4. **Hate crime** was identified as a key priority for future research. Especially lacking is research looking at the experiences of (and responses to) people with learning disabilities and other **multiply marginalised groups**. Given that identities intersect and experiences of violence often overlap, such research must attend to the (institutional, community) contexts which put people at risk, rather than focusing on one form of harm. The literature on hate crime also points to the need for population-based data. Whilst small-scale qualitative studies are essential for understanding the meanings and dynamics of violence, they do not tell us how many people overall are affected, nor how violence affects different groups.

5. The **intersections** between gender and race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability also remain under-researched in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

6. We know more about victims of hate crime and domestic abuse than we do about **perpetrators**.

7. The significance of the **community context** of violence is highlighted by a number of the research studies presented here, with a range of evidence identifying a link between area deprivation and violence perpetration and victimisation. Yet very little research on either perpetrators or victims has examined this community context in any depth. This will require a combination of quantitative *and* qualitative approaches, perhaps including local crime surveys and community-based,

ethnographic and/or participatory methods. There is also an argument for such research to attend to low crime neighbourhoods and/or include the experiences of 'ordinary' and/or 'resilient' community members.

Under-researched areas

1. **Up-to-date research is needed on the relationship between shifting patterns of alcohol consumption and violent offending**, including the impact of recent changes to alcohol licencing.

2. **Surprisingly little research has been conducted into the relationship between drugs**, **violence and organised crime**.

3. **We need more studies that look at institutional and workplace violence, and locate it within violence research generally**. The discussion of workplace and institutional violence shows strong overlaps and associations with other forms of violence including gender-based violence.

Appendix: Summary of themes from researcher consultation

This project involved interviews with over three dozen leading researchers whose work in some way touches on problems of violence (see Acknowledgements). These researchers were diverse and work in fields ranging across criminology, sociology, disability studies, gender research, medical research, urban studies, and more. We asked them to reflect on the latest developments in their areas and to comment on the most important conceptual, methodological and substantive contributions of their field over the past ten years.

The following themes identified by researchers offer a useful sense of the main changes over the past decade that are informing how violence is understood and studied.

What is violence? Most discussed competing definitions of violence (e.g. public health, criminal legal, etc.), with an emphasis on the limits of especially criminal legal approaches (both theories and methods) which understand (or 'count') violence as a 'one-off' physical incident targeting an individual.

The contribution of feminist perspectives on gender-based violence: Scotland is regarded as a world leader in terms of GBV research (and policy/practice). A number of researchers commented on the positive contribution of feminist-informed research in: expanding the definition of violence to incorporate broader forms of harm; demonstrating that violence generally occurs in a repeated and patterned ways; and emphasising that these patterns are often linked to entrenched social relations. The relationship between masculinity, marginalisation and violence is explored in a range of Scottish studies.

Pervasive victimisation: Most of the researchers we spoke to emphasised the 'pervasive', 'embedded', 'engrained' character of much interpersonal violence. Indeed, many of the (predominantly qualitative) researchers who raised this point did not initially set out to study violence, but rather said that violence emerged as a prominent feature of the lives of their (often marginalised) participants. Sometimes this violence was identified as such by participants, other times it was 'normalised' and/or 'taken-for-granted'. This common experience of violence was seen to pose methodological challenges, particularly in terms of reporting 'incidences' of violence, linking back to the initial point about definitional issues (and potential limitations of quantitative measures). Examples related to violence experienced by disabled people, ethnic and religious minorities, contexts of domestic/intimate partnerships, and families more generally.

Overlapping circumstances and populations of victimisation and offending: Researchers consistently highlighted the frequent overlap between victims and offenders. Depending on disciplinary background and training, some discussed this in relation to 'adverse childhood experiences'; others placed greater emphasis on mediating structural and/or institutional contexts. This led to discussions around the significance of trauma for people in the criminal justice system – and its links with interpersonal, institutional, structural and symbolic forms of violence.

Violence and inequality: Researchers reflected that violence often emerges within a context of multiple disadvantage, recognising the ways in which intersecting social divisions structure the impact and experience of violence. This requires a research approach that goes beyond decontextualized measurement of incidents. This is necessary in order to situate violence in a deeper, more multi-dimensional picture capable of articulating the different meanings of violence for diverse groups and in particular contexts. The emphasis on disadvantage is important here because it acknowledges the social context of these experiences (and its association with other harms of inequality related to health, education, housing), and the need to avoid the individualizing (and potentially pathologising) consequences of the concept of 'needs' (and 'risks/needs').

Epistemic, symbolic and structural violence: A history of institutional denial, especially around sexual abuse and hate crime, was mentioned by a number of researchers – although recent shifts were noted (e.g. in relation to HEI context). Related to this, researchers noted that some populations exert epistemic privilege pertaining to violence. (Epistemic privilege refers to the ability of those having superior relative standing and power based on factors such as gender, social class, educational attainment, race/ethnicity, dominant religion, including the subtle markers of these, to impose their own worldview and life experience as normal/superior. This shapes ideas about who can be a victim, how a problem is defined and so on. Epistemic privilege means the views and experiences of marginalised groups have been generally neglected and/or dismissed. Examples of such groups particularly highlighted related to disabled people and those with a history of institutional care, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems, homelessness, chronic poverty, and victimisation.

Workplace violence and violence within institutions: Although a number of researchers highlighted the significance of state violence (e.g. in relation to the treatment of people with learning difficulties in prison, or the removal of children from disabled mothers), workplace violence was a topic that failed to come up in conversation and when asked researchers had very little knowledge of this issue or of relevant Scottish data or research.

(Over)emphasis on youth 'territorial' violence: Alongside gender-based violence, there would appear to be a wealth of research literature pertaining to young people, territorial gangs and violence in Scotland. This was generally highlighted as strength, in terms of sufficient evidence existing in this area. However, a number of researchers felt there was a need to focus on violence throughout the life course – and on violence that takes place outwith the public sphere. There also was some challenge around the language of 'youth gangs' and its slippage with lay and tabloid use of this term.

The Scottish crime drop and deprivation: Researchers noted that violence has decreased overall, but in uneven ways so that it appears to be becoming more concentrated (which is not the same as saying it is increasing) in specific (particularly deprived) communities. This links to the point made above about the mutually reinforcing nature of violence and related forms of disadvantage – and the need to understand this co-occurrence as a stand-alone factor (i.e. the effects of each disadvantage cannot just be added together). The question of whether violence is moving from the public to the private sphere was raised by a number of researchers.

Alcohol, drugs and violence: Alcohol and drugs came up surprisingly infrequently in our discussions with criminological researchers, and so we actively sought contributions from the substance misuse community. The research here is less likely to centre crime/violence and its prevention and more likely to focus on issues of health outcomes and recovery.

Organised crime groups and violence: There is a perceived relationship between OCGs, drugs and violence but very limited research evidence. There is also some debate about how to define what constitutes an OCG, and this complicates the ability to explore the relationship to violence.

The relationship between criminal justice and public health: A number of researchers emphasised the importance of adopting a public health approach to addressing violence, although there remains a lack of specificity and consensus on what this means; some critical views were expressed about the ACEs and other risk-orientated paradigms.

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