Welcome to the first of our quarterly briefings on crime and anti-social behaviour trends and forecasts as part of the new Poliscope subscription service from Crest Advisory and Justice Episteme.

About **Poliscope**

Poliscope is a suite of tools designed to support UK police forces, Police and Crime Commissioners and criminal justice organisations forecast demand and improve performance. Poliscope 'National' is an online accessible tool which shows past, present and future crime trends. More information can be found at poliscope.org.uk

The data informing this briefing is taken from the data.police.uk website and analysed using our Poliscope model. You can try it out for yourself – for free – here: https://jeanalysis.shinyapps.io/NationalModel_Deploy_FreeRC121/ . We recommend reading the data quality notes on the application itself and here: https://data.police.uk/changelog/

National overview

Total crime: The volume of crime dropped during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic when the country was in full lockdown. Crime returned to pre-pandemic levels when restrictions lifted, but then dropped again as tiers of lockdowns were reintroduced.

Volume of crimes recorded per month in England and Wales*
January 2014-March 2021 and forecast to 2024

— Total crime data   --- Forecast from April 2021   --- Forecast from December 2019
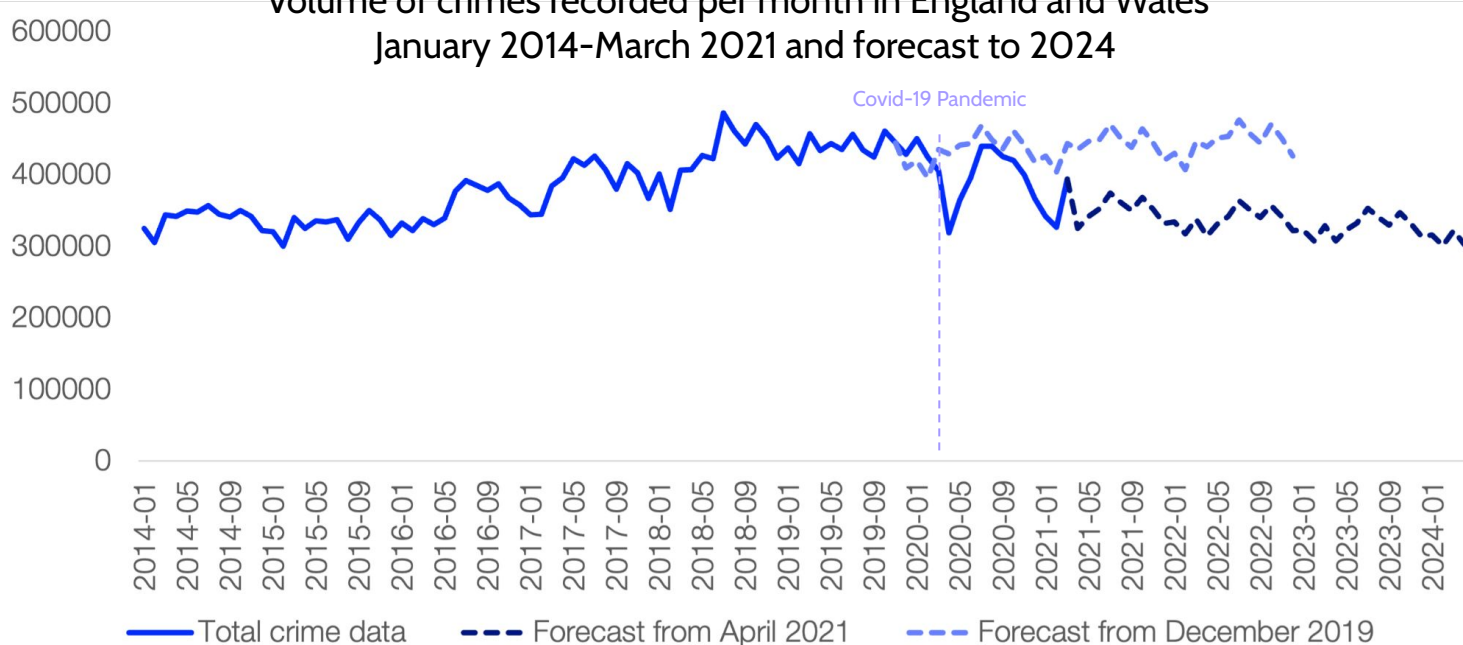
Using data pre- and post- pandemic to conduct statistical forecasting results in two different projections, with the post-pandemic forecast much lower.
This is where contextual information must inform statistical forecasts. We know that much of the decrease was due to lockdowns, and can see that crime did return to pre-pandemic levels post-lockdown one. This suggests that the probable future demand trend lies between the two forecasts. As Poliscope National is refreshed with new data the direction of travel will be clearer.

*Data for England and Wales currently excludes: Greater Manchester Police and British Transport Police.

Some types of crime have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels despite restrictions lifting earlier. For example, shoplifting: non-essential shops reopened on 12 April 2021, but by June 2021 the volume of offences was still 31% lower than in June 2019*.

Volumes of shoplifting recorded per month in England and Wales** January 2014-March 2021 and forecast to 2022
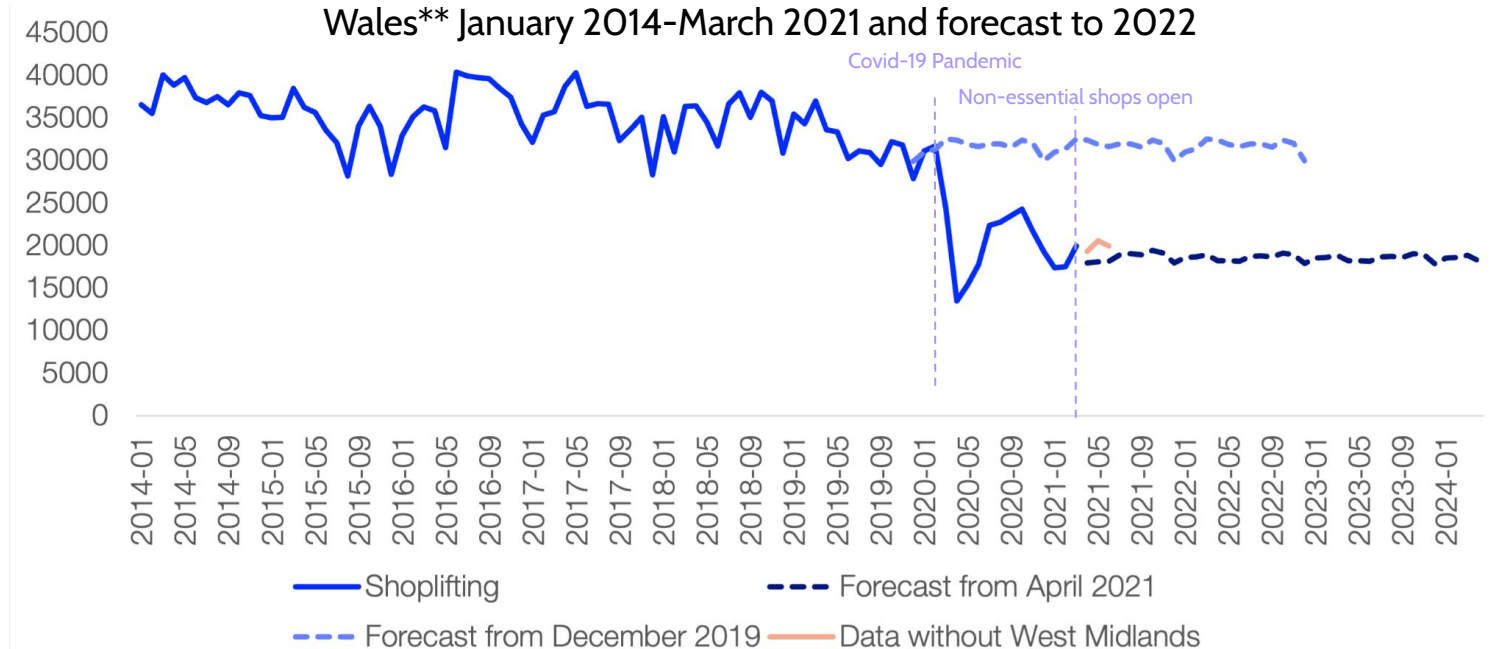
In contrast to crime, reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) increased during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was mainly due to police forces initially classifying Covid-19 related incidents as anti-social behaviour calls.
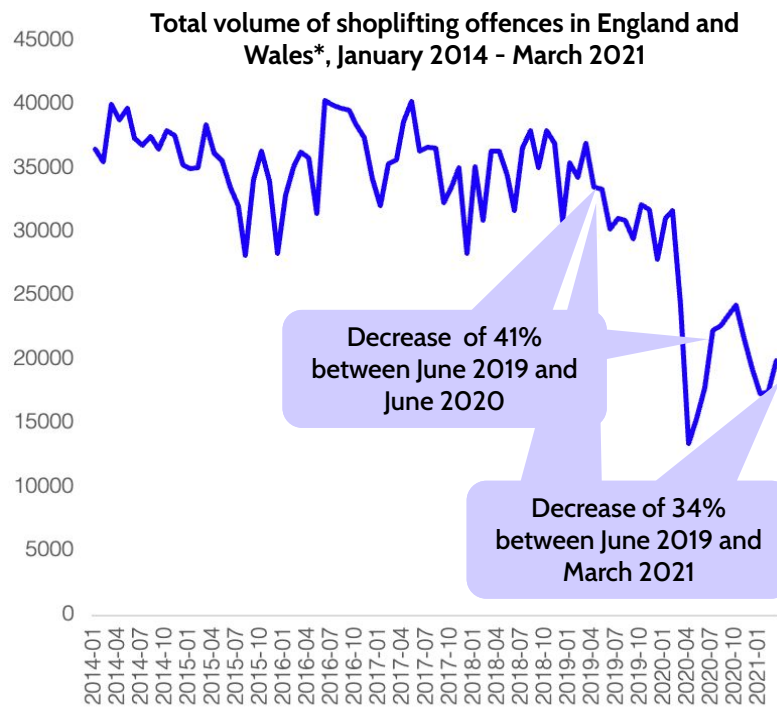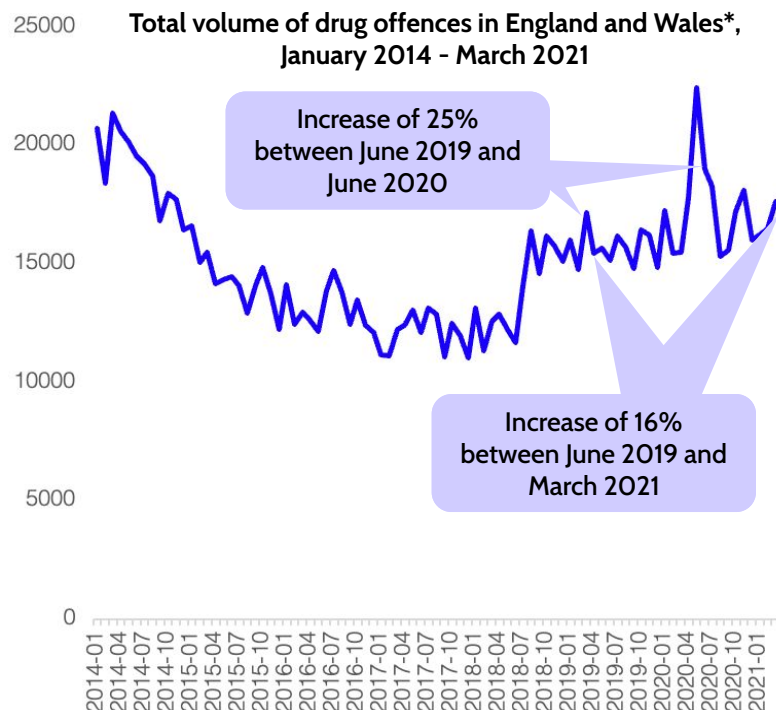
The post-pandemic forecast here suggests that the trajectory of demand has changed since the onset of the pandemic, and that ASB will *increase* over the coming years. However, we know for example that some police forces coded covid-19 related activity as ASB, so this may change significantly as we move out of lockdown and economic activity returns to normal. These forecasts will be re-assessed as we have more access to data after the removal of all Covid-19 related restrictions in England and Wales. This will show whether ASB has in fact decreased to pre-pandemic levels now that restrictions have been eased.

Volume of ASB recorded per month in England and Wales* January 2014-March 2021 and forecast to 2024
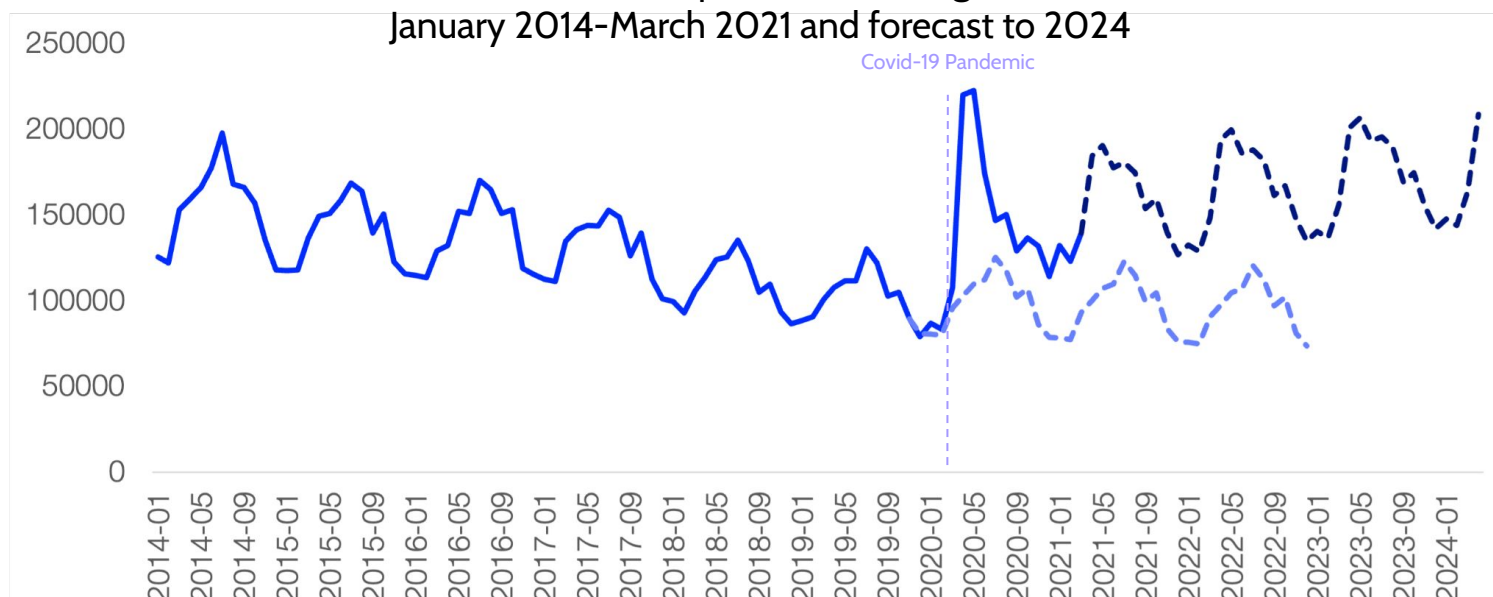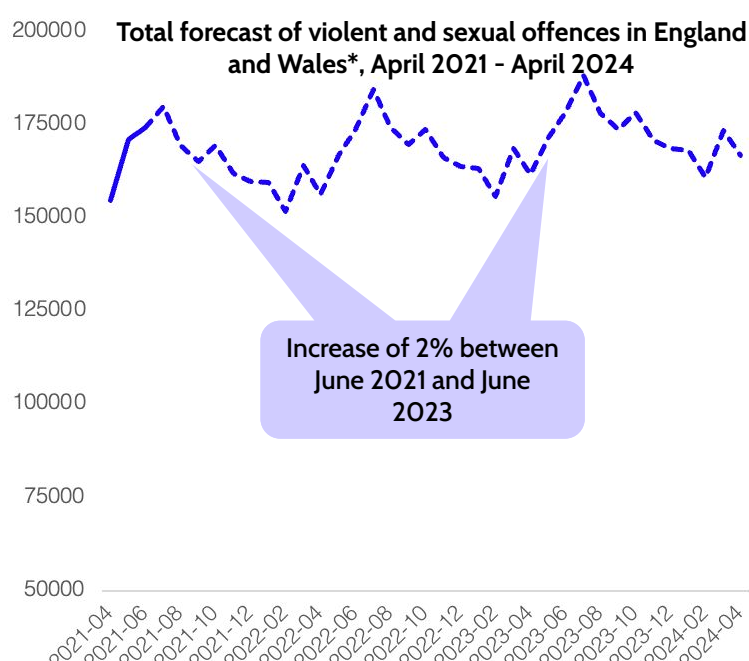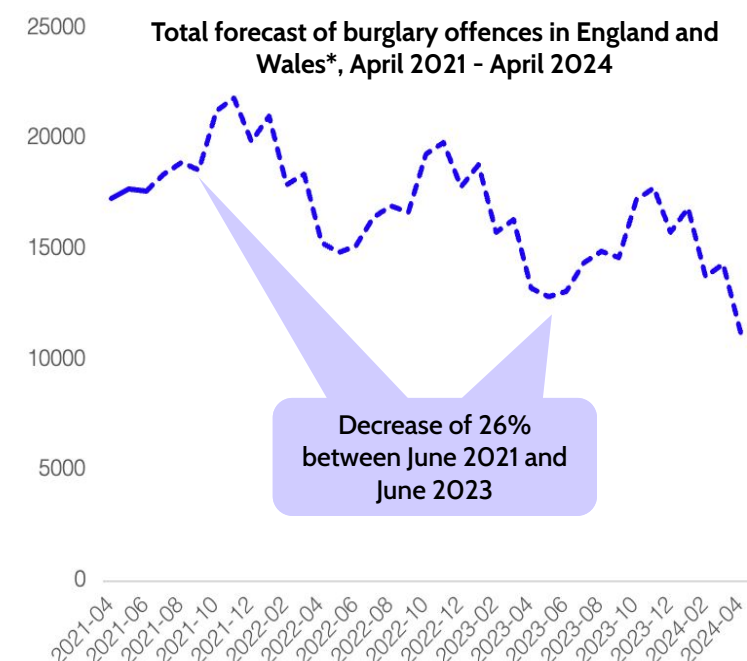

*Excluding the West Midlands. **Data for England and Wales currently excludes: Greater Manchester Police and British Transport Police. West Mercia ASB data is missing since June 2020 but the force has been included prior to this date.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on crime and offending. It reduced opportunities for some types of crime to occur, but increased opportunities for others. The effects are expected to be felt for some time.

Total volume of drug offences in England and Wales*, January 2014 – March 2021

Increase of 25% between June 2019 and June 2020

Increase of 16% between June 2019 and March 2021

Drug offences rose significantly after the onset of the pandemic. They reached their peak in May 2020 – their highest point since March 2014.

Total volume of shoplifting offences in England and Wales*, January 2014 – March 2021

Decrease of 41% between June 2019 and June 2020

Decrease of 34% between June 2019 and March 2021

Shoplifting offences fell significantly during lockdown and other Covid-19 restrictions. Although shoplifting increased in mid-2020, it has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Total forecast of burglary offences in England and Wales*, April 2021 – April 2024

Decrease of 26% between June 2021 and June 2023

There was a substantial fall in burglary during the pandemic – which has impacted the forecast accordingly. Using statistical prediction alone, there could be almost 50,000 fewer cases between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

Total forecast of violent and sexual offences in England and Wales*, April 2021 – April 2024

Increase of 2% between June 2021 and June 2023

The number of violent and sexual offences recorded by police fell slightly after Covid emergency measures were brought in but it is forecast there'll be almost 91,000 more cases between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

*Data for England and Wales currently excludes: Greater Manchester Police and British Transport Police.

Poliscope allows us to view the outcomes recorded for all crimes and for individual types of offence. We can view the information nationally or by police force.
Please note: The way the crime outcomes are recorded in the dataset used here is different from that which is published by the Home Office. However, we have found the results to be very similar - see the more detailed notes on the data used on help page of the Poliscope application.

Proportion (%) of outcomes for all crime in England and Wales, January 2016 – August 2020

Legend: —Charged —Out of Court Disposal —Suspect NFA —No Suspect
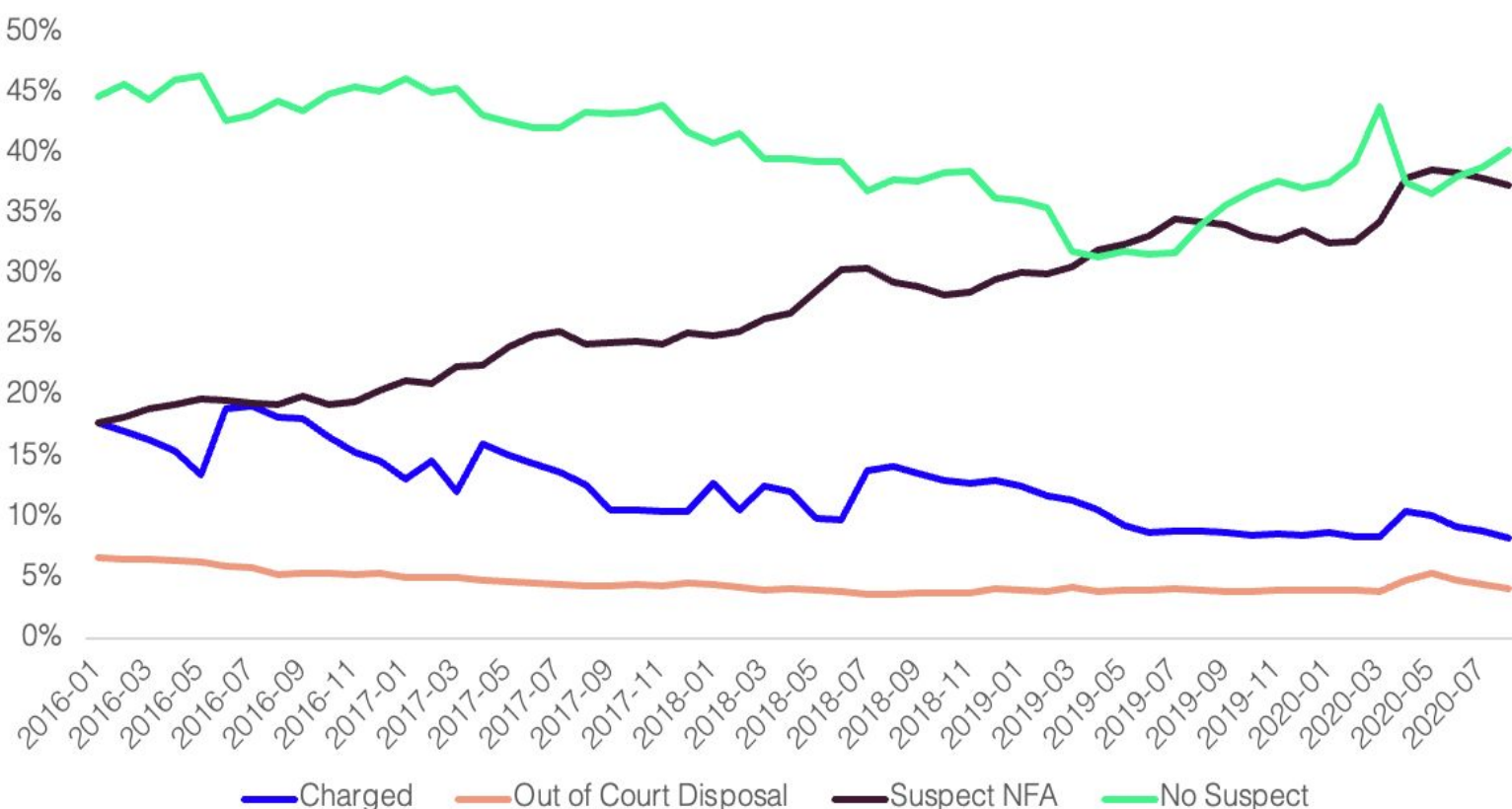
Charged	Out of court disposal
The proportion of cases that result in a suspect being charged has been on the decline since 2016, but there has been little change since 2019.	The proportion of cases leading to an out of court disposal were stable between 2016 and 2020. There was a marginal increase at the start of the pandemic.

| Suspect identified but no further action taken (NFA)	No suspect identified
The proportion of cases resulting in no further action being taken against a suspect has steadily increased since 2016 - with a steeper rise at the start of the pandemic.	The proportion of cases where no suspect has been identified was steadily falling until March 2019. Since then, it has been on the rise - sharply so at the start of the pandemic.

Regional focus: South West

Poliscope allows police forces to compare and investigate differences in demand between neighbouring forces and among forces with similar socio-economic characteristics (as set by HMICFRS, the policing inspectorate).

In this first briefing we focus on the South West region: **Avon & Somerset, Devon & Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire**
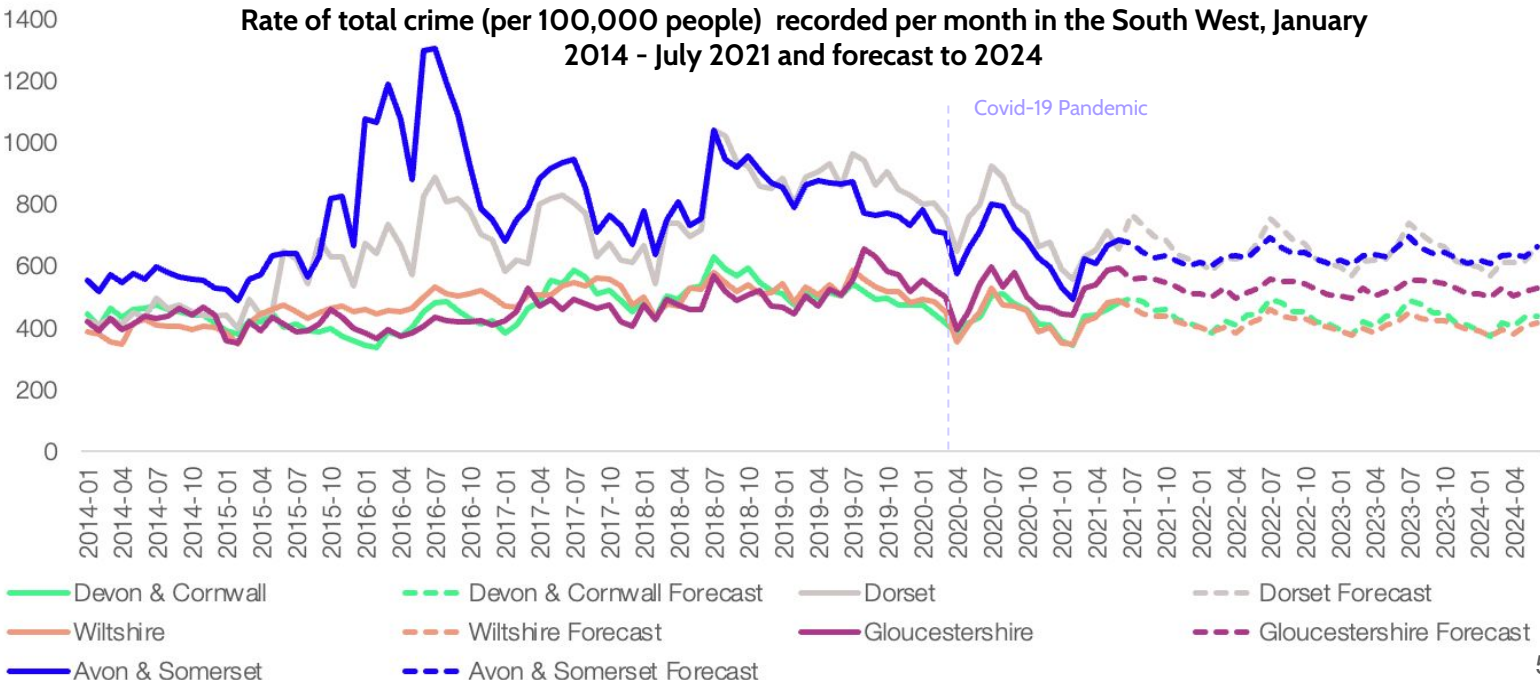

Total crime volumes recorded per month in the South West, January 2014 – July 2021 and forecast to 2024
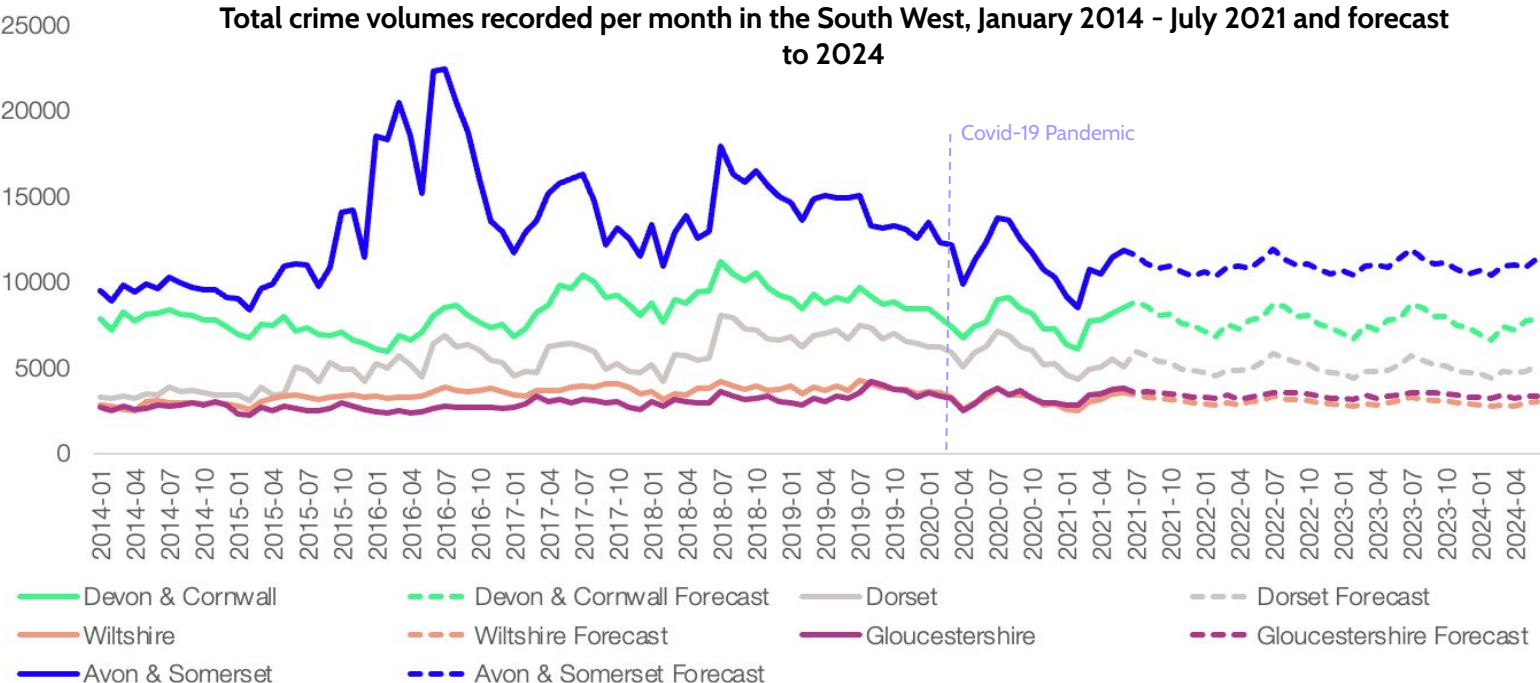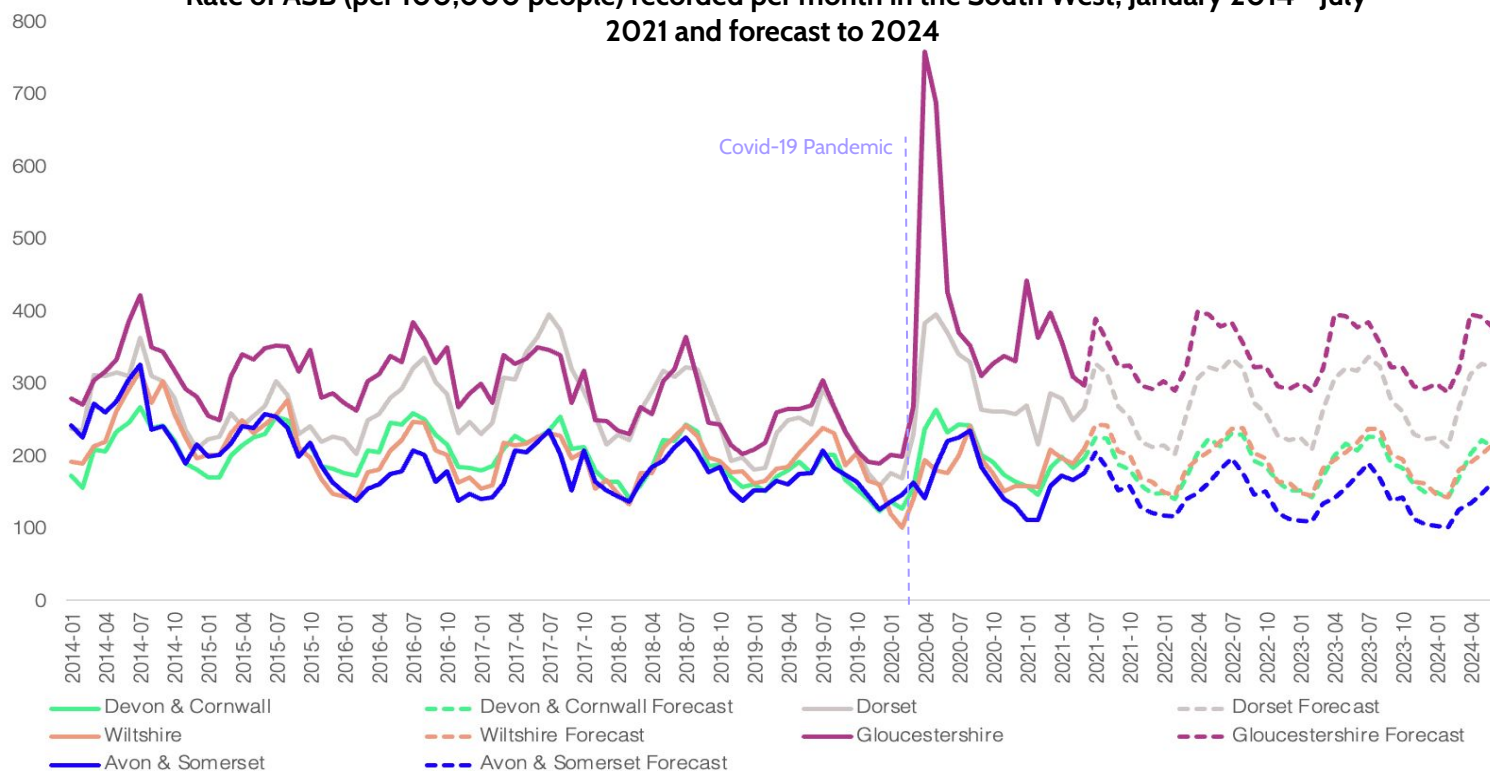
The chart above shows the *number* of crimes recorded per month in the South West, by police force area, whilst the chart below shows the *rate* of crimes per 100,000 of the population. The rate of crime has historically been highest in Avon & Somerset and Dorset, though the rate dropped in all areas during the pandemic.

Rate of total crime (per 100,000 people) recorded per month in the South West, January 2014 – July 2021 and forecast to 2024

The data suggests that higher rates of crime do not necessarily correlate to high rates of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in the South West. Gloucestershire has historically had the highest rate of ASB and Avon & Somerset the lowest (in contrast to the crime rates). The peak in ASB incidents in Gloucestershire, between March and April 2020 is likely due to the recording of Covid-19 incidents which was conducted differently by forces in the early stages of the pandemic.


Rate of ASB (per 100,000 people) recorded per month in the South West, January 2014 – July 2021 and forecast to 2024

Legend: Devon & Cornwall, Devon & Cornwall Forecast, Dorset, Dorset Forecast, Wiltshire, Wiltshire Forecast, Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Forecast, Avon & Somerset, Avon & Somerset Forecast

Whilst the forces in the South West share geography, there is also value in comparing forces with similar socio-demographic characteristics. The chart below, by way of example, shows the rate of ASB incidents in Avon & Somerset compared to Hampshire, an area defined by HMICFRS as having similar characteristics.

Despite the historical trends in data appearing visually very different, statistical techniques have identified similarities, apparent in the forecasts. The Poliscope tool allows the user to compare other forces to their most similar force groupings online.


Rate of ASB (per 100,000 people) recorded per month in Avon & Somerset and Hampshire, January 2014 – July 2021 and forecast to 2024

Legend: Avon & Somerset, Avon & Somerset Forecast, Hampshire, Hampshire Forecast
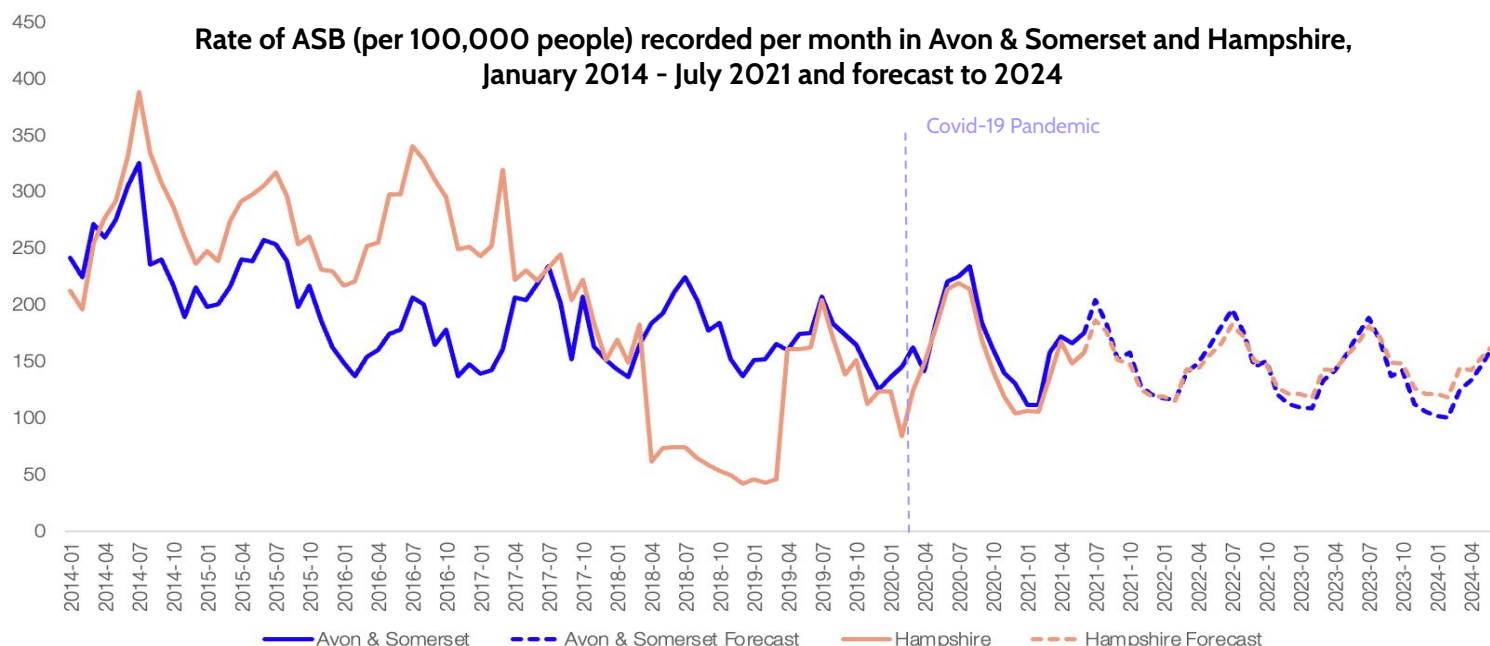
The charts below show the volumes of drug offences, shoplifting, burglary and violent and sexual crimes in the South West. The trends and forecasts in the region are different to those at a national level, as displayed on Slide 3.

— Avon & Somerset   — Devon & Cornwall   — Dorset   — Gloucestershire   — Wiltshire

**Total volume of drug offences in the South West, January 2014 – March 2021**
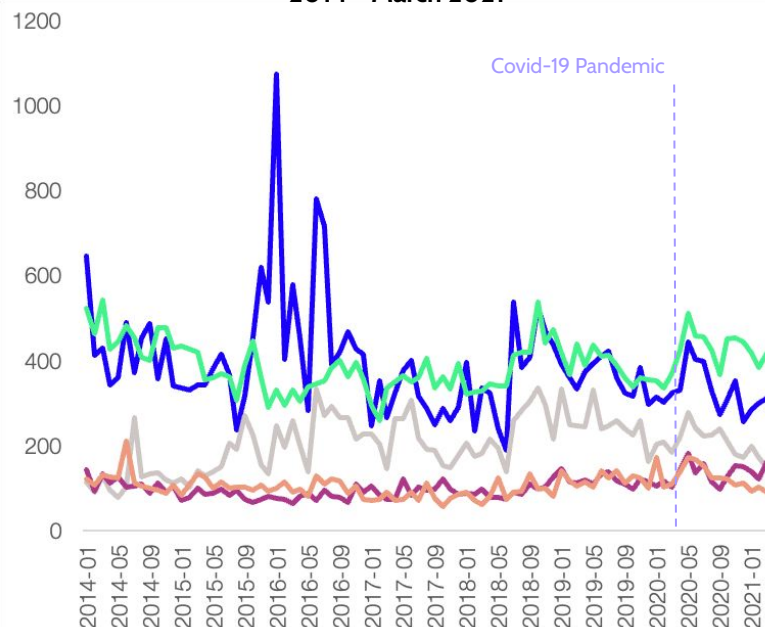
Covid-19 Pandemic

Total volume of shoplifting offences in the South West, January 2014 – March 2021


Covid-19 Pandemic
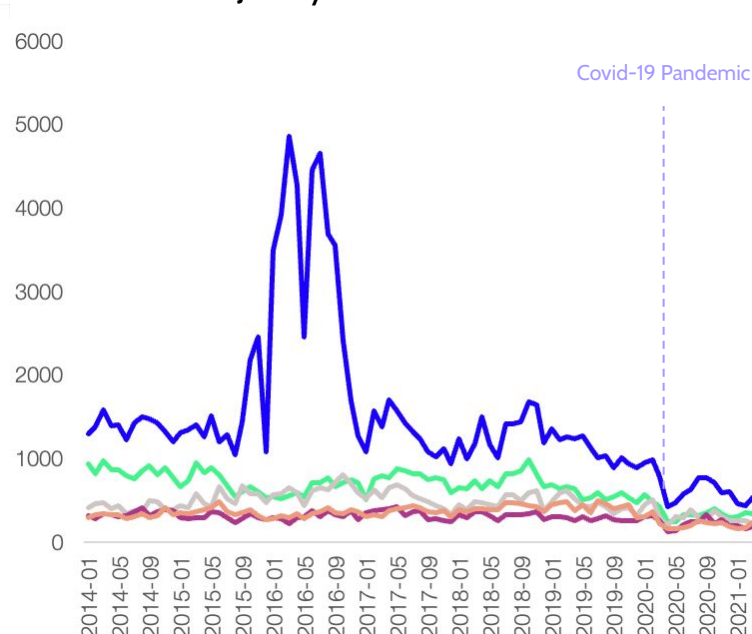
All the forces across the South West recorded an increase in drug offences following the onset of the pandemic. In Gloucestershire, the volume of drug offences in May 2020 was at its highest since 2014.

At the same time, shoplifting offences in the South West dropped significantly. In Avon & Somerset, they remain below historical averages, but in Gloucestershire, they are back to near pre-pandemic levels.

Total forecast of burglary offences in the South West, April 2021 – June 2024
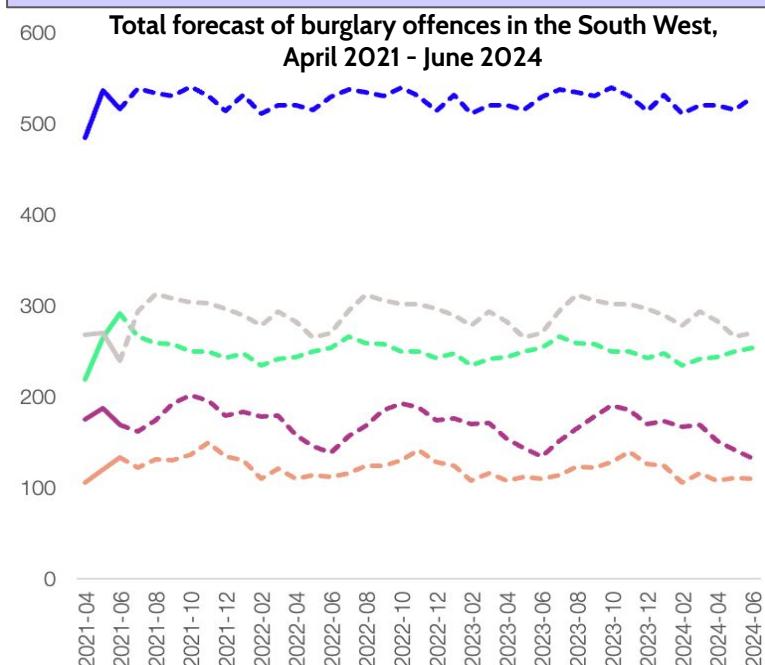
Total forecast of violent and sexual offences in the South West, April 2021 – June 2024
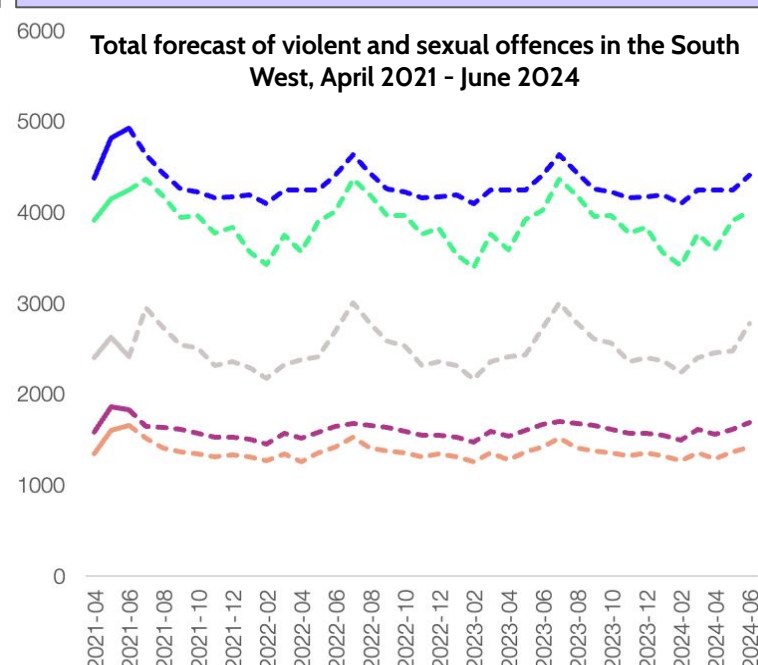
Nationally, burglary is forecast to continue to fall, but the picture is more stable among police force areas in the South West, with the number of break-ins similar to pandemic levels.
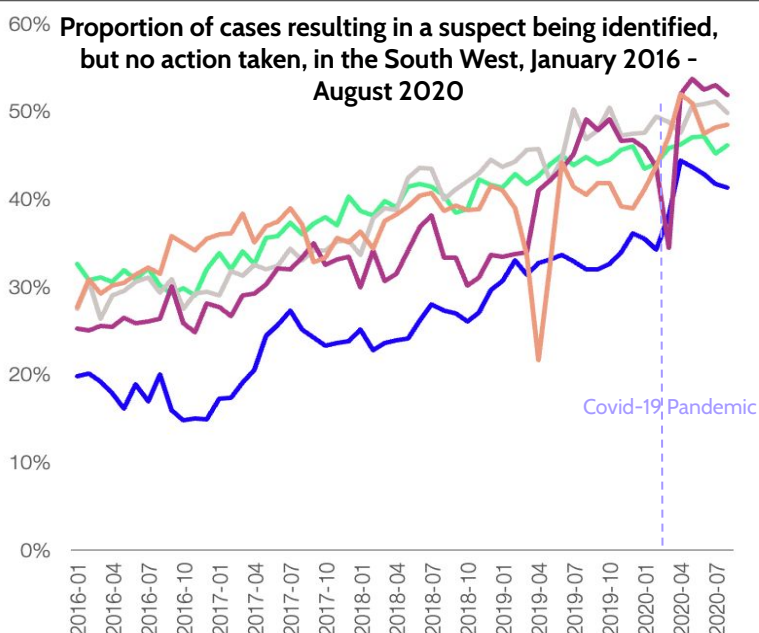
Violent and sexual offences in the South West are forecast to remain largely stable. However, there are more pronounced seasonal variations in Dorset and Devon & Cornwall.

Outcomes of crimes are, proportionately, broadly similar across the South West, albeit with some exceptions. The charts below set out the proportion of crimes resulting in a charge, out of court disposal, no further action and no suspect identified. However, it's also important to there is a fifth category not shown here, where the outcome of the crime is as yet 'unknown'.

— Avon & Somerset   — Devon & Cornwall   — Dorset   — Gloucestershire   — Wiltshire

Proportion of cases resulting in a charge in the South West, January 2016 – August 2020

Proportion of cases resulting in an out of court sanction in the South West, January 2016 – August 2020
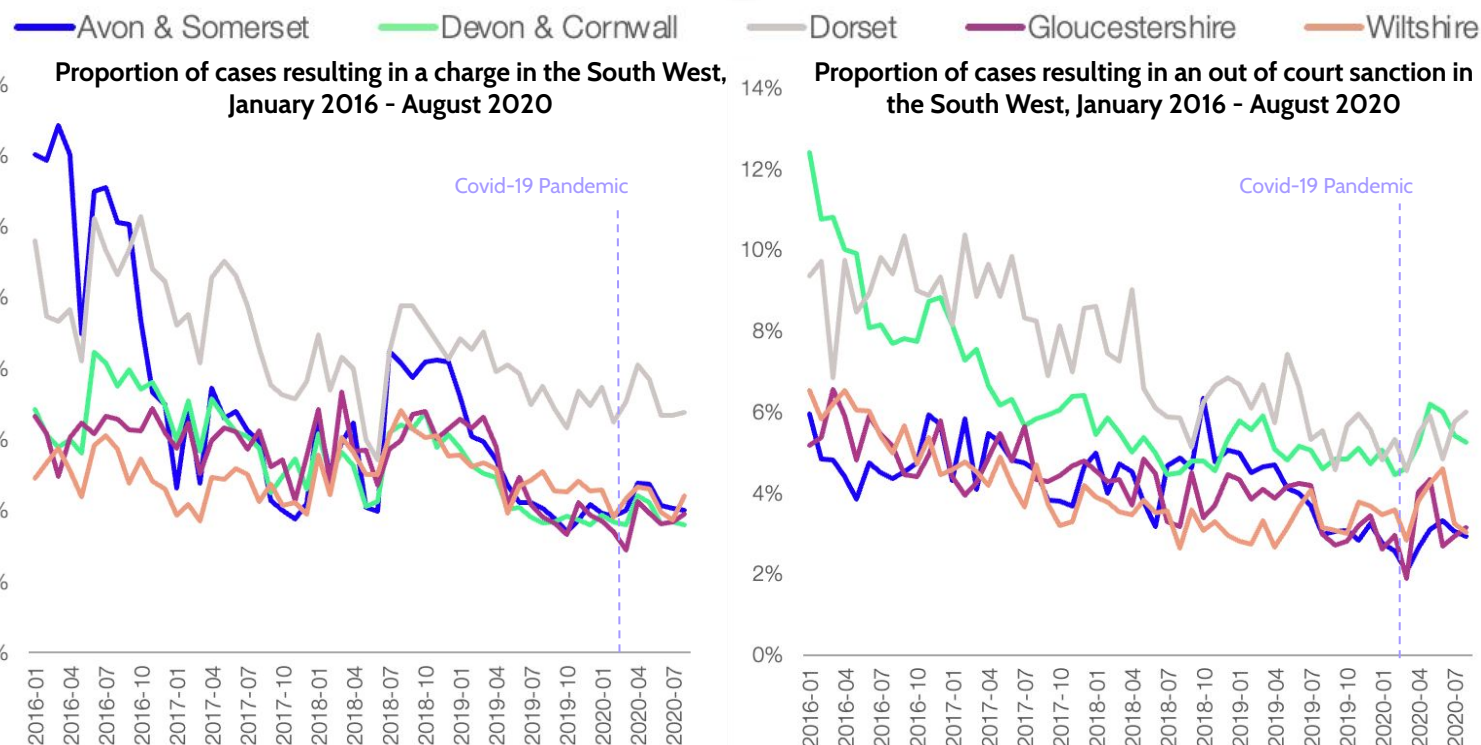
The charge rate for forces in the South West has been on a downward trend since 2019. In 2019/20, the charge rate for Dorset was greater than all other South West forces – reaching a monthly average of 18% in comparison to 10-11% in the other forces.

Out of court sanctions have been declining as a proportion of all outcomes since 2016, although there are recent signs of stabilising use in some areas. Dorset and Devon & Cornwall utilise these sanctions at a greater rate than all other South West forces.

Proportion of cases resulting in a suspect being identified, but no action taken, in the South West, January 2016 – August 2020

Proportion of cases resulting in no suspect being identified in the South West, January 2016 – August 2020

The proportion of outcomes resulting in a suspect being identified, but no further action being taken, has been increasing in the South West since 2016. The sharp dips in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire are likely linked to data recording issues.
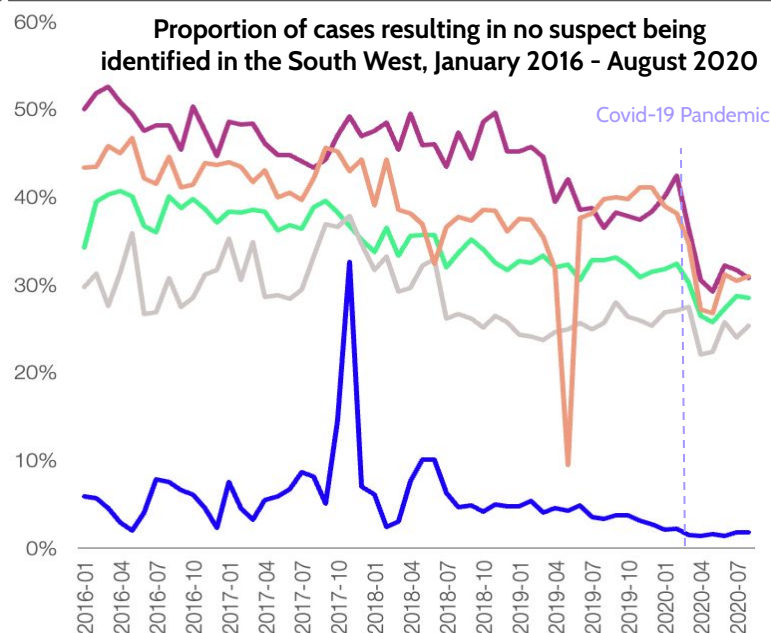
The proportion of cases resulting in no suspect being identified has been very slowly decreasing in the South West since 2016. The pandemic initiated a steep and sudden reduction in the proportion of cases with this outcome.

The next quarterly briefing will be provided in January to those subscribing to the Poliscope via our underline website.
We are keen to tweak the briefing in response to feedback from our subscribers so please get in touch at hello@poliscope.org.uk if you have an idea of something you'd like to see included next time.

The data informing this briefing is taken from the data.police.uk website and analysed using our national Poliscope model. You can try it out for yourself – for free – here:
https://jeanalysis.shinyapps.io/NationalModel_Deploy_FreeRC121/
We also strongly recommended reading the data quality and methodology notes on the application.
Please bear in mind in particular when using the information in this briefing, and in the application itself:

- The forecasts displayed are an average of a number of statistical forecasting techniques, applied to a period of historical data in order to extract trends and seasonal patterns in the historical data, the quality of which is subject to individual police data reporting systems and processes.

- These forecasts are our best estimates, using statistical information alone, within an interval of uncertainty (not shown in this briefing but present in the application), of what might happen to crime as we come out of the pandemic.

- However, they should be read and revisited in the context of changing social and economic environments. Poliscope will periodically provide updates to these forecasts as new data become available.

- We have tested our method by conducting forecasts using historical data and comparing them against more recent trends to gain an understanding of accuracy. You can test this out yourself by looking at the accuracy metrics in the application.

The Poliscope methodology can also be applied to local, more granular data sets. Our range of services is outlined below, but can be tailored to client needs.

	Poliscope National *Free Version*	Poliscope National *Subscription Version*	Poliscope Local *Case volume forecasting*	Poliscope Local *Workload modelling*
Forecasting	Volumetric crime and ASB forecasts	Volumetric crime and ASB forecasts	Volumetric non-crime incident and crime forecasts	Volumetric and workload incident and crime forecasts
Performance	Proportionate crime outcomes data for 4 key outcome groups	Proportionate crime outcomes data for 4 key outcome groups	-	Detailed incident and outcomes performance data
Comparisons	-	Comparison with most similar force groupings available	-	Comparison with other forces using poliscope possible
Scenario modelling	-	-	-	Modelling of demand and response scenarios
Data source	Published crime and ASB data (data.police.uk)	Published crime and ASB data (data.police.uk)	Local police data	Local police data
Data updates	Annually	Quarterly	Annually or quarterly	Quarterly
Outputs	Online tool	Online tool + download to excel	Online or local tool + download to excel	Online or local tool + download to excel + report
Support	-	Provision of quarterly forecast digest document	On call phone and email support	On call phone and email support, in-house rollout
Cost	Free	£695/annum	*On request*	*On request*

Please get in touch at hello@poliscope.org.uk if you require further information about any of our services or have any questions about the information in this briefing.