

# Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014/15: Sexual Victimisation & Stalking



A National Statistics publication for Scotland

CRIME AND JUSTICE

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# 2014/15 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey: Sexual Victimization and Stalking

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**Scottish Government Social Research**  
**2016**

Main findings from the 2014/15 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey were published on 15 March 2016. This report provides additional findings and evidence on stalking, harassment and sexual victimisation.

## **Acknowledgements**

This report is a National Statistics output produced to the highest professional standards and free from political interference. It has been produced by Dr Kath Murray working with Scottish Government Researchers and Statisticians in the Justice Analytical Services Division.

Thanks go to a number of people involved in the development, implementation and reporting of the SCJS 2014/15. In particular the 11,472 people across Scotland who took time to provide their thoughts and opinions in the survey, as well as the interviewers and support staff who carried out the interviews. Particular thanks go to Leon Page and colleagues at TNS BMRB for their support and advice across all aspects of the survey management, and to the Office of the Chief Statistician and Performance at the Scottish Government, for methodological inputs.

## **Comments and Suggestions**

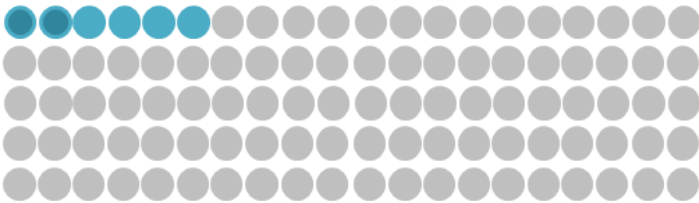
We are committed to continual improvement and would welcome any comments or suggestions on how the SCJS reports could be improved or adapted in the future. Similarly, if you have any enquiries on any aspects of the survey development then we would welcome your opinions or questions. Please contact the SCJS Project Team.

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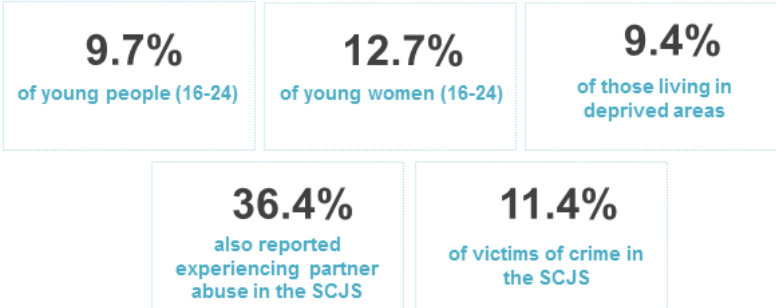
<b>Key Findings .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	7
1.2 Survey Design .....	8
1.3 Survey Coverage.....	9
1.4 Conventions used in figures and tables .....	11
1.5 Key definitions and measures .....	10
1.6 Report structure.....	14
<b>2. SCJS stalking and Harassment.....</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 SCJS stalking and harassment: summary of findings .....	16
2.2 Introduction.....	17
2.3 Defining SCJS Stalking and harassment .....	18
2.4 Overall risk of SCJS stalking and harassment .....	18
2.5 Types of stalking and harassment.....	20
2.6 Varying risk of stalking and harassment.....	21
2.7 Relationship with the offender/s .....	25
2.8 Reporting to the police .....	26
2.9 Cyberstalking and cyberharassment.....	28
<b>3. Serious Sexual Assault .....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1 Summary of findings.....	29
3.2 Introduction.....	29
3.3 Overall risk of serious sexual assault .....	30
3.4 Varying risk of serious sexual assault .....	32
3.5 Incidence of serious sexual assault and repeat victimisation.....	35
3.6 Relationship with the offender/s .....	36
3.7 The physical impact of serious sexual assault .....	37
3.8 Reporting to the police .....	39
<b>4. Less Serious Sexual Offences .....</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Summary of key findings .....	41
4.2 Introduction.....	41
4.3 Overall risk of less serious sexual offences .....	42
4.4 Varying risk of experiencing less serious sexual offences .....	43
4.5 Relationship with the offender .....	45
Annex 1. Data Tables: Sexual Victimization and stalking.....	47
Annex 2. Data strengths and limitations .....	52
References .....	56

# Key findings from the SCJS 2014/15 on Stalking & Harassment in Scotland

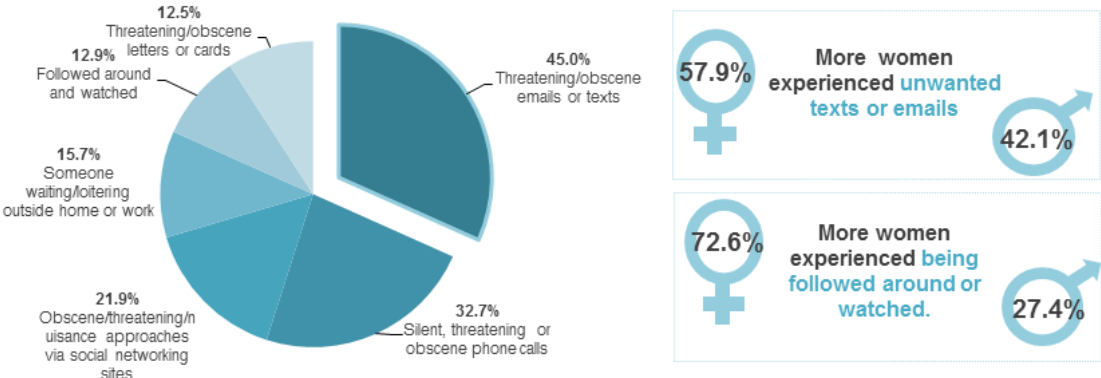
In the last 12 months... **6.4%** of adults experienced at least one type of stalking and harassment. **1.7%** of adults experienced more than one type.



Some people were more likely than others to experience stalking and harassment



The most common type of stalking and harassment was via texts or email.



Most victims knew the offender in some way.



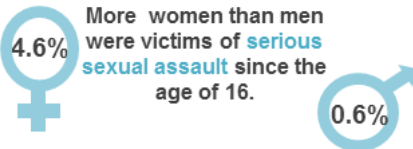
Most stalking and harassment wasn't reported to the police.



# Key findings from the SCJS 2014/15 on Sexual Victimization in Scotland

## Serious Sexual Assault (incl. forced & attempted forced sex or other sexual activity)

Since the age of 16... **2.7%** of adults experienced at least one type of serious sexual assault. **0.9%** of adults experienced more than one type.



Most victims knew the offender well.

**87.4%**  
of victims said that the offender was their partner.

**94.1%**  
of victims said that the offender was male.



Most serious sexual assaults were not reported.

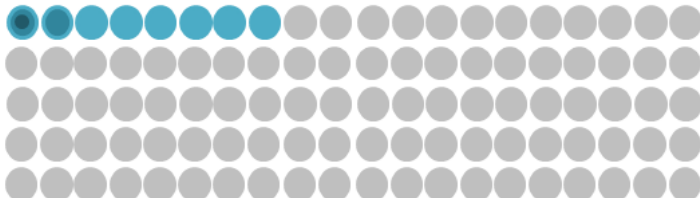
**16.8%**  
said that the most recent (or only) incident of forced intercourse was reported.

**43.4%**  
didn't report forced intercourse because they were frightened that reporting would make matters worse.

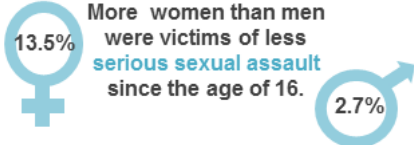
## Less Serious Sexual Assault (incl. indecent exposure, sexual threats & unwanted sexual touching)

Since age of 16, **8.3%** of adults experienced at least one type of less serious sexual assault and **2.3%** of adults experienced more than one type.

In the last 12 months **1.3%** of adults experienced at least one type of serious sexual assault.



While victims tended to be female, offenders tended to be male.



**92.7%**  
of victims said that the offender was male.

The victims relationship to the offender varied depending on the type offence.

**55.1%**  
of victims of sexual threats said that the offender was their partner.

**39.9%**  
of victims of unwanted sexual touching said that the offender was a stranger.

**70.9%**  
of victims of indecent exposure said that the offender was a stranger.

# Key Findings

This report examines experiences of stalking and harassment, serious sexual assault, and less serious sexual offending amongst SCJS respondents. The report examines experiences since the age of 16, and in the last 12 months. The key findings are shown below.

## SCJS stalking and harassment

- Overall, 6.4% of adults experienced **at least one** type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, and 1.7% experienced **more than one** type.
- The most common types of stalking and harassment involved indirect contact. Amongst those who had experienced stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, 45.0% had received unwanted emails and texts, 32.7% received silent, threatening or unwanted phone calls, and 21.9% were subject to obscene or threatening online contact.
- The survey found no statistically significant difference between the proportion of women and men who experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment (at 6.8% and 6.0% respectively).
- Young people, particularly young women, experienced a higher than average level of stalking and harassment: 9.7% of 16 to 24 years olds had experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months. This figure was higher still for 16 to 24 year old women at 12.7%.
- A higher proportion of people living in the 15% most deprived areas experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, compared to those living in the rest of Scotland (9.4% and 5.9% respectively).
- Respondents classified as 'victims' in the main SCJS questionnaire experienced higher levels of stalking and harassment, compared to non-victims (11.4% and 5.5% respectively).
- Just over a third (36.4%) of those who had experienced SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months had also experienced partner abuse in the same period.
- More than half (54.9%) of those who experienced at least one form of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months knew the offender in some way, among whom 15.0% said the offender was their partner. Nearly a third (30.8%) did not know the offender at all.
- Around one fifth of those (18.9%) who experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months said that the police came to know about the most recent incident. More women than men said that the police came to know about the most recent incident (at 23.2% and 13.5% respectively).

## Serious sexual assault

- Overall, 2.7% of respondents had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 (this proportion has not changed over the last six sweeps of the SCJS), and 0.9% had experienced more than one form of serious sexual assault.
- A higher proportion of women than men had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16, at 4.6% and 0.6% respectively.
- More than half of respondents (52.8%) said that they had experienced their first (or only) incident of serious sexual assault between the ages of 16 and 20.
- Serious sexual assault was most commonly carried out by someone known to the victim. Nearly nine out of ten (87.4%) of those who had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 knew the offender in some way, amongst whom over half (54.8%) said that the offender was their partner.
- Men perpetrated the majority of serious sexual assaults: 94.1% of those who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 said the offender was male. This proportion was higher for female victims than male victims, at 98.0% and 63.6% respectively.
- Of those who had experienced forced sexual intercourse since the age of 16, 16.8% said the police were informed about the most recent incident.
- The most common reason for not reporting the most recent incident of serious sexual assault to the police was fear that it would make matters worse (43.4%).

## Less serious sexual offences

- Overall, 8.3% of respondents had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offence since the age of 16, and 2.3% had experienced more than one type.
- Within the last 12 months, 1.3% of respondents had experienced at least one form of less serious sexual offence.
- A higher proportion of women than men had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offence since the age of 16 (13.5% women, compared to 2.7% of men).
- Men carried out the majority of less serious sexual offences: amongst those who had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offending since the age of 16, 92.7% said that the offender was male. This proportion was higher still for female victims, at 98.8%
- The offender-victim relationship varied by the type of less serious sexual offence. Some types of offence were more likely to be perpetrated by strangers, such as indecent exposure (70.9%) and unwanted sexual touching (39.9%), whilst partners were most likely to carry out sexual threats (55.1%).

# 1. The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

## 1.1 Introduction

The [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#) (SCJS) is a large-scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime. The 2014/15 survey is based on around 11,500 face-to-face interviews with adults (aged 16 or over) living in private households in Scotland.

The main aims of the SCJS are to:

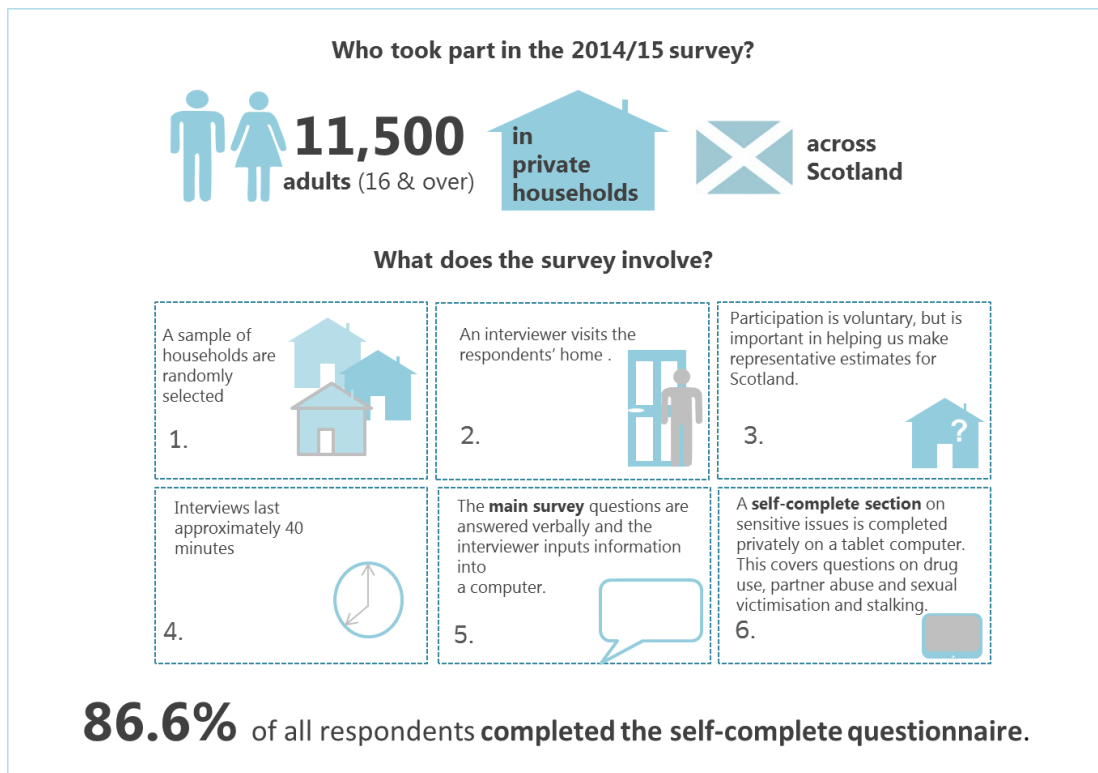
- Enable the Scottish population to tell us about their experiences of, and attitudes to, a range of issues related to crime, policing and the justice system; including crime not reported to the police;
- Provide a valid and reliable measure of adults' experience of crime, including services provided to victims of crime;
- Examine trends, over time, in the number and nature of crimes in Scotland, providing a complementary measure of crime compared with police recorded crime statistics;
- Examine the varying risk and characteristics of crime for different groups of adults in the population.

The findings from the survey are used by policy makers across the public sector in Scotland to help understand the nature of crime, target resources and monitor the impact of initiatives to target crime. The results of this survey provide evidence to inform national outcomes and justice outcomes.

This report presents findings from the self-completion module on **sexual victimisation and stalking**. The report provides data and analysis on the extent of sexual victimisation and stalking in Scotland amongst adults aged sixteen or over.



## 1.2 Survey Design



The design of the 2014/15 SCJS remains broadly similar to the design of the SCJS from 2008/09 to 2012/13:

- **Survey frequency:** Following the completion of the SCJS 2010/11, the SCJS moved to a biennial design. Therefore, no survey ran in 2011/12 or 2013/14<sup>1</sup>.
- **Sample:** the sample is designed to be representative of all private residential households across Scotland (with the exception of some of the smaller islands). A systematic random selection of private residential addresses across Scotland was produced from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF) and allocated in batches to interviewers. Interviewers called at each address and then selected one adult (aged 16 or over) at random from the household members for interview.
- **Questionnaire:** the questionnaire consists of a modular design completed by the interviewer using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and a self-completion section covering sensitive crimes using Computer-Assisted Self Interviewing (CASI). The most recent questionnaire is available on the SCJS [webpage](#). Questions on sexual victimisation and stalking were included in the self-completion section of the questionnaire, which was undertaken at the end of the main SCJS interview.

<sup>1</sup> From April 2016, the SCJS will revert to a continuous survey of around 6,000 adults each year.

- **Interviews and response rate:** 11,472 face-to-face interviews were conducted in respondents' homes by professional interviewers, with a response rate of 63.8%. Interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes, though there was variation in interview length, depending on the respondent's reported experience. Additional to the main questionnaire, all survey respondents were asked to fill out a self-completion section (on a tablet computer) on more confidential and sensitive issues, including drug taking, partner abuse, sexual victimisation and stalking.

In 2014/15, **9,986 respondents** completed the self-completion module, that is **86.6%** of all respondents. The most common reason for refusing to complete the self-complete questionnaire was 'running out of time' (mentioned by almost half of respondents who refused); more details are provided in the [Technical Report](#) (section 6.6.2). An equal proportion of men and women answered the self-completion questionnaire. However, the proportion of those who completed the self-completion section decreased with age. Further information on response rates can be found in the [Technical Report](#) (section 3.4).

- **Fieldwork:** interviews were conducted on a rolling basis between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015, with roughly an equal number of interviews conducted in each month between April 2014 and March 2015. Challenges in fieldwork delivery were experienced in 2014/15 and as a result, the fieldwork period was extended by two months to increase the achieved sample size.
- **Weighting:** the results obtained were weighted to correct for the unequal probability of selection for interview caused by the sample design and for differences in the level of response among groups of individuals. Given that not all respondents chose to answer the self-completion questionnaire, these data are weighted separately to the main questionnaire (using identical weighting procedures). Further details of the weighting used are provided in the [Technical Report](#) (section 4).

### 1.3 Survey Coverage

The SCJS does not aim to provide an absolute estimate for all crime and has some notable exclusions. The SCJS is a survey of adults living in private residential households and, therefore, does not provide information on crimes against adults living in other circumstances (for example those living in institutions or communal residences, such as prisons or hospitals, military bases and student accommodation). Those living in some of the smallest inhabited islands in Scotland are excluded for practical reasons (see Annex 1 of the accompanying [Technical Report](#) for details).

## Some notable survey exclusions



Children &  
Young  
People  
(under 16)



Those living in group  
residences, institutions or  
those without a fixed  
address. (e.g. student halls  
or the homeless population)



Those living in  
some of the  
smallest  
inhabited  
islands in  
Scotland

## 1.4 Key definitions and measures

Respondents are asked about their experiences of sexual victimisation and stalking/harassment **within the last 12 months** and additionally, their experiences of sexual victimisation **since the age of 16**.

For ease of reference, the report categorises sexual victimisation into two groups: **serious sexual assault** and **less serious sexual offences**. These terms do not relate to the seriousness of the impact on the individual.

The following experiences are defined as forms of **stalking and harassment**:

- Being sent unwanted letters or cards on a number of occasions that were either obscene or threatening
- Being sent unwanted emails or text messages on a number of occasions that were either obscene or threatening
- Receiving a number of unwanted approaches via social networking sites that were either obscene or threatening
- Receiving a number of obscene, threatening, nuisance or silent telephone calls
- Having someone waiting outside their home or workplace on more than one occasion
- Being followed around and watched on more than one occasion

The following experiences are defined as **serious sexual assault**:

- Forcing someone to have sexual intercourse.
- Attempting to force someone to have sexual intercourse.
- Forcing someone to take part in other sexual activity.
- Attempting to force someone to take part in other sexual activity.

And the following experiences are defined as **less serious sexual offences**:

- Indecent exposure (i.e. flashing).
- Sexual threats (for example, someone demanding sex when you did not want it, being followed or cornered in a sexually threatening way)
- Being touched sexually when it was not wanted (for example, groping or unwanted kissing).

A full transcript of the [survey questionnaire](#) is available on the SCJS website.

#### **1.4.1 Sexual victimisation, stalking and partner abuse**

There may be some overlap between the incidents of sexual victimisation and stalking detailed in this report, and incidents of partner abuse, which are analysed separately in the [Partner Abuse](#) report. To explain, the self-completion module asks respondents about their experiences of sexual victimisation/stalking and partner abuse separately. Given that sexual/victimisation and partner abuse can involve similar behaviours and experiences, it is possible that some of the incidents detailed in this report are duplicated in the Partner Abuse report. It is also possible that some incidents of sexual victimisation/stalking detailed in this report constituted partner abuse, but were not viewed or reported as such by respondents.

#### **1.4.2 Comparisons with crimes and offences**

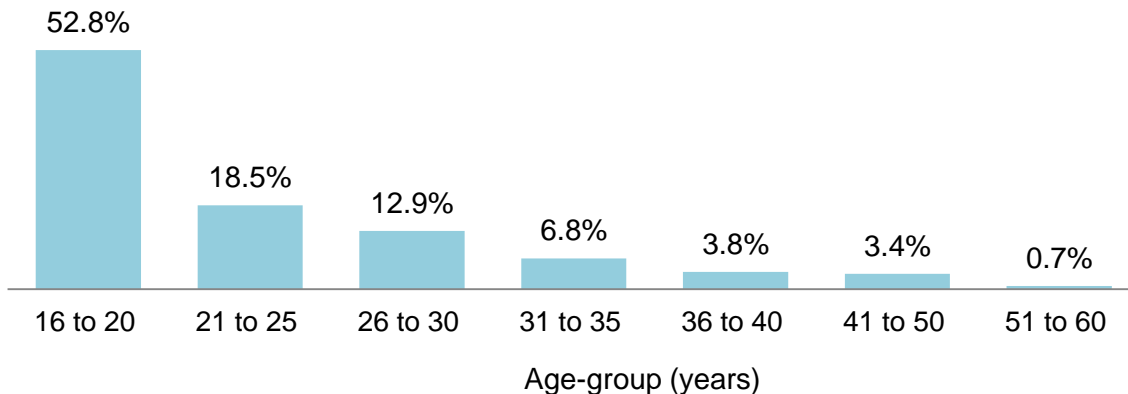
Incidents of stalking, harassment and sexual victimisation recorded in the self-completion module are not directly comparable with police recorded crimes and offences. This is because a limited number of follow-up questions are asked about these incidents (in order to avoid causing possible distress to respondents), which prevents the accurate classification of incidents. For further details on comparable crimes in the SCJS 2014/15, see the [Offence Coding Manual](#).

### **1.5 Conventions used in figures and tables**

Each figure or table has a title, the data source (survey year), a base description (the number of people who answered the question), the unweighted base (the number of respondents in each category), and the SPSS variables. For example:

Title

Figure 3.2 Age at time of first (or only) incident of serious sexual assault, by age-group (%)



Base: All respondents who experienced serious sexual assault since age 16 (332)

Variable names: SA\_ANY\_EV, QDAGE

Variable names

Unweighted base

### 1.5.1 Percentages

Table row or column percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Percentages presented in tables and figures where they refer to the percentage of respondents, households or crimes that have the attribute being discussed may not sum to 100 per cent. Respondents have the option to refuse answering any question they did not wish to answer and the majority of questions have a 'don't know' option. Percentages for these response categories are generally not shown in tables and figures.

A percentage may be quoted in the report text for a single category that is identifiable in the figures/tables only by summing two or more component percentages. In order to avoid rounding errors, the percentage has been recalculated for the single combined category and therefore may differ by one or two percentage points from the sum of the percentages derived from the figures/tables.

Also, percentages quoted in the report may represent variables that allow respondents to choose multiple responses. These percentages will not sum to 100 per cent with the other percentages presented. They represent the percentage of the variable population that select a certain response category.

### 1.5.2 Table abbreviations

' - ' indicates that no respondents gave an answer in the category.

'n/a' indicates that the SCJS question was not applicable or not asked in that particular year.

' \* ' indicates that changes are statistically significant at the 95% level.

### **1.5.3 Decimal Points**

Results from the self-complete section of the survey are generally reported to one decimal place. The self-complete questionnaire collects information on a range of often rare events; therefore, many of the figures reported are small (often under 1%). There is a range of uncertainty around all survey estimates. As outlined below (in sections 1.4.4 and 1.4.5), statistical testing is conducted to assess whether changes and differences between survey results are statistically significant. Only changes and differences which have been tested and assessed as representing statistically significant are highlighted as such in this report.

## **1.6 Survey error and statistical significance**

### **1.6.1 Survey error**

There may be errors in the recall of participants as to when certain incidents took place, resulting in some crimes being wrongly included in, or excluded from, the reference period. A number of steps in the design of the questionnaire are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that this does not happen (for example repeating key date questions in more detail).

The SCJS gathers information from a sample rather than from the whole population and, although the sample is designed carefully, survey results are always estimates, not precise figures. Estimates can differ from the figures that would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed.

It is, however, possible to calculate a range of values around an estimate, known as the confidence interval (also referred to as margin of error) of the estimate. At the 95 per cent confidence level, over many repeats of a survey under the same conditions, one would expect that the confidence interval would contain the true population value 95 times out of 100. This can be thought of as a one in 20 chance that the true population value will fall outside the 95 per cent confidence interval calculated for the survey estimate.

Because of this variation, changes in estimates between survey years or between population subgroups may occur by chance. In other words, the change may simply be due to which adults were randomly selected for interview.

### **1.6.2 Statistical Significance**

We are able to measure whether changes in data across years, or differences between categories, are likely to be the case using standard statistical tests. From these, we can conclude whether differences are likely to be due to chance, or represent a real difference in the underlying population.

Many of the tests for statistical significance in this report, particularly when examining results by different demographic sub-groups, were carried out using the Pearson chi-square test in SPSS<sup>2</sup>, based on individual scaled data. All significant changes highlighted in this report were found to be statistically significant at the  $p \leq 0.05$  level.

The assessments of statistical change over time which are presented in this report use estimated confidence intervals around survey results to examine whether the change is statistically significant. The estimated confidence intervals used in these tests use generic SCJS design factors of 1.2 for 2014-15 results. More detail on the derivation of these confidence intervals and design factors is available in Chapter 11 of the SCJS [Technical Report](#)

Only increases or decreases that are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level are described as changes within this report, and in the tables and figures these are identified by asterisks. Where no statistically significant change has been found between two estimates, this has been described as showing 'no change'. The presentation of uncertainty and change in this report reflect best practice guidance produced by the Government Statistical Service (GSS)[\[4\]](#).

## 1.7 Accessing Survey Data

Information on how to access SCJS data is available on the [Data Access](#) section of our webpage.

## 1.8 Report Structure

This report consists of three substantive chapters.

[Chapter 2](#) examines stalking and harassment and provides data on: the overall risk and varying risk of stalking and harassment, victim-offender relationships and reporting to the police (including reasons for non-reporting). Chapter 2 also provides a short overview of cyber-stalking, which refers to the use of stalking and harassment via electronic communication such as texts and emails.

[Chapter 3](#) examines serious sexual assault and provides data on the overall risk and varying risk of experiencing serious sexual assault, victim-offender relationships, the physical impact of serious sexual assault and reporting to the police.

[Chapter 4](#) examines less serious sexual offences and chapter provides data on the overall and varying risk of experiencing less serious sexual offences, and victim-offender relationships.

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<sup>2</sup> While the analysis for the SCJS main findings report was mainly conducted in [SAS](#) and statistical significance assessed there and using the [SCJS Statistical Testing Tool](#), the analysis for the self-completion reports utilised related functionality in SPSS to assess for statistical significance and report significance consistently at the 95% level.

Where appropriate, additional contextual information from other sources, including academic literature and data from the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, 2014 is provided in text boxes. The report also draws on police recorded crime to provide further context.

The **Annexes** provide summary results and further background information.

[Annex 1](#). Data Tables: Sexual Victimization and stalking provides additional data tables

[Error! Reference source not found.](#) **Error! Reference source not found.** describes the SCJS data strengths and limitations



## 2. SCJS Stalking and Harassment

### 2.1 SCJS stalking and harassment: summary of findings

- Overall, 6.4% of adults experienced **at least one** type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, and 1.7% experienced **more than one** type.
- The most common types of stalking and harassment involved indirect contact. Amongst those who had experienced stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, 45.0% had received unwanted emails and texts, 32.7% received silent, threatening or unwanted phone calls, and 21.9% were subject to obscene or threatening online contact.
- The survey found no statistically significant difference between the proportion of women and men who experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment (at 6.8% and 5.9% respectively)
- Young people, particularly young women, experienced a higher than average level of stalking and harassment. Around one-in-ten (9.7%) 16 to 24 year olds had experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months. This figure increased to 12.7% for 16 to 24 year old women.
- A higher proportion of people living in the 15% most deprived areas experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, compared to those living in the rest of Scotland, at 9.4% and 5.9% respectively.
- Respondents classified as ‘victims’ in the main SCJS questionnaire experienced higher levels of stalking and harassment, compared to non-victims, at 11.4% and 5.5% respectively.
- More than a third (36.4%) of those who had experienced SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months had also experienced partner abuse in the same period.
- More than half (54.9%) of those who experienced at least one form of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months knew the offender in some way, whilst 15% said the offender was their partner. Nearly a third (31%) did not know the offender at all.
- Around one fifth of those (18.9%) who experienced at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months said that the police came to know about the most recent incident. More women than men said that the police came to know about the most recent incident (at 23.2% and 13.5% respectively).

## 2.2 Introduction

The terms 'stalking' and 'harassment' are often used interchangeably (Morris et al., 2002), and taken together, usually refer to intentional repetitive behaviours that cause fear, upset and annoyance to the victim. (Morris et al. 2002).

### **Box 2.1 Stalking and the criminal law in Scotland**

In Scotland, the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 legislates for the offence of stalking. Prior to that Act, stalking was generally prosecuted using common law offences, such as breach of the peace. Under the 2010 Act, an offence occurs when a person engages in a course of conduct on at least two separate occasions, which causes another person to feel fear or alarm, where the accused person intended, or knew or ought to have known, that their conduct would cause fear and alarm.

Unlike more clear-cut types of crime (for example, house-breaking or assault), the classification of stalking is more subjective, insofar as the offence is dependent on whether or not the victim felt afraid.

While the offence of stalking requires that the offender engages in a course of conduct, individual instances of threatening behaviour, or the sending of obscene or threatening messages may be prosecuted using, for example, the offence of 'threatening and abusive behaviour', or offences under the Communications Act 2003

## 2.3 Defining SCJS stalking and harassment

The self-completion module asks respondents if they have experienced one or more of the following types of incidents:

- Being sent unwanted letters or cards on a number of occasions that were either obscene or threatening
- Being sent unwanted emails or text messages on a number of occasions that were either obscene or threatening
- Receiving a number of unwanted approaches via social networking sites that were either obscene or threatening
- Receiving a number of obscene, threatening, nuisance or silent telephone calls
- Having someone waiting outside their home or workplace on more than one occasion
- Being followed around and watched on more than one occasion

This chapter provides information on these six behaviours, each of which can be viewed as a form of stalking and harassment. However, the data do not show whether respondents themselves viewed their experiences as stalking or harassment. To highlight this distinction, the report refers to ‘SCJS stalking and harassment’.

The chapter examines the overall and varying risk of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months; victim-offender relationships; reporting to the police; and cyberstalking, which refers to harassment or stalking via electronic communication (for example, text messages, emails and social network sites).

## 2.4 Overall risk of SCJS stalking and harassment

Overall, 6.4% of respondents had experienced at least one form of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, whilst 1.7% had experienced more than one type. To put these figures in context, results from the SCJS 2014/15 main questionnaire show that there was 2.6% risk of being a victim of violent crime in the same period ([Main Finding report](#) Figure 4.1).

### 2.4.1 Stalking and harassment trends

A change in questionnaire design in 2012/13 to better reflect the changing nature of stalking and harassment means that the scope for direct comparison of stalking and harassment trends over time is, to some extent, limited.

In the three survey sweeps, between 2008/09 and 2010/11, respondents were asked if they had received ‘correspondence’ that was obscene or threatening. In 2012/13 the questionnaire design was changed to ask respondents about three

separate types of correspondence: letters and cards; emails and text messages; and contact via social networking sites.

Bearing in mind this caveat, between 2008/09 and 2014/15 the overall risk of experiencing at least one form of SCJS stalking and harassment did not change (the apparent differences shown below in Table 2.1 are not statistically significant).

Looking just at the last two sweeps of the survey only, the risk of SCJS stalking and harassment (at least one type, and more than one types) did not change between 2012/13 and 2014/15 (again, (the apparent differences shown below in Table 2.1 are not statistically significant).

**Table 2.1** presents the results.

**Table 2.1 Trends in types of SCJS stalking and harassment experienced in the last 12 months (%)**

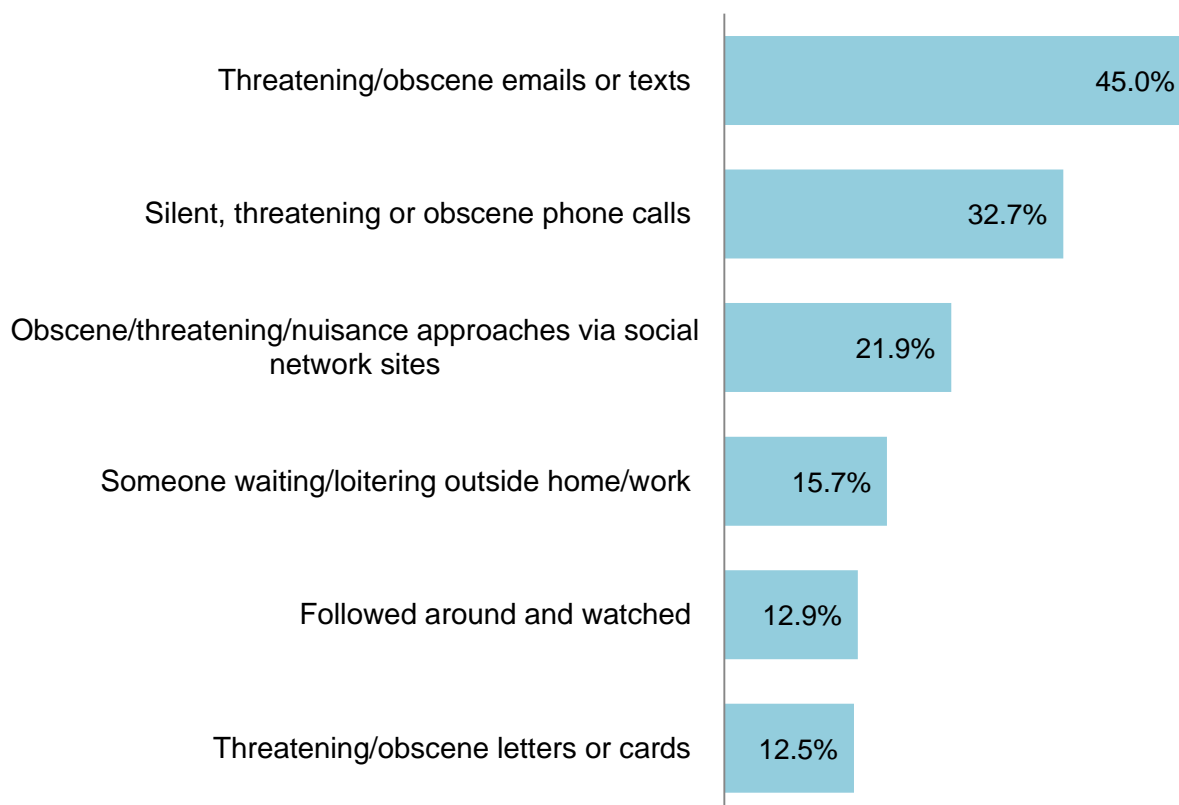
<i>Type of SCJS stalking or harassment (%)</i>	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
<i>Received unwanted correspondence that was obscene or threatening</i>	3.2%	2.7%	2.5%	n/a	n/a
<i>Received unwanted obscene or threatening texts or emails</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	2.9%	2.9%
<i>Received unwanted obscene or threatening contact via social network sites</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.3%	1.4%
<i>Received unwanted obscene or threatening letters or cards</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.7%	0.8%
Received unwanted obscene, threatening, nuisance or silent phone calls	2.3%	2.6%	2.1%	1.9%	2.1%
Person waited or loitered outside your home	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%	1.0%
Followed around and watched more than once	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%	0.7%	0.8%
Victim of at least one form of stalking/harassment	6.1%	5.6%	5.2%	5.7%	6.4%
<i>Base</i>	<i>10,974</i>	<i>13,418</i>	<i>10,999</i>	<i>10,235</i>	<i>9,986</i>

Bases: All respondents (adults aged 16 years and over) SCJS 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2012/13, 2014/15  
Variable names: SHELECT, SHSOCIAL, SHPOST, SHCALLS, SHLOIT, SHFOLL, SH\_ANY

## 2.5 Types of stalking and harassment

**Figure 2.1** below shows the distribution of different types of stalking and harassment amongst those who experienced at least one form of SCJS stalking and harassment. The most common type of SCJS stalking and harassment involved unwanted texts or emails, experienced by 45.0% of victims. These findings are consistent with the results of the 2012/13 survey.

**Figure 2.1 Types of harassment and stalking experienced by victims in the last 12 months (%)**



Base: Adults who reported at least one type of stalking or harassment in the last 12 months (601).

Variables names: SH\_ANY (by) SHELECT, SHCALLS, SHSOCIAL, SHFOLL, SHLOIT, SHPOST

## 2.6 Varying risk of stalking and harassment

The risk of SCJS stalking and harassment varied by age group, victim status (in the main questionnaire) and deprivation. Note that the apparent difference by gender is not statistically significant (see **Section 2.3.1** for further discussion of this result).

**Table 2.2** shows the results.

**Table 2.2 Varying risk of at least one form of stalking/harassment in the last 12 months, by social characteristics (%)**

Social characteristics		% adults	Base
Gender (non-sig.)	Male	6.0%	4,528
	Female	6.8%	5,458
Age-group	16-24	9.7%	836
	25-34	9.2%	1,421
	35-44	8.0%	1,596
	45-54	7.7%	1,794
	55-64	3.1%	1,697
	65 or over	2.2%	2,642
Victim status in the main questionnaire <sup>1</sup>	Victim	11.4%	1,398
	Non-victim	5.5%	8,588
Socio-economic Deprivation	15% most deprived	9.4%	1,412
	Rest of Scotland	5.9%	8,574
All adults		6.4%	9,986

Base: All respondents (adults aged 16 years and over)

Variable names: SH\_ANY (by) QDGEN, AGEBREAKS, VICFLAG3, SIMD\_TOP

<sup>1</sup> A victim is defined as a respondent who reported crimes or offences in the main questionnaire (excluding sexual offences and threats) that are within the scope of the survey, took place in Scotland, and occurred within the reference period.

### 2.6.1 Stalking, harassment and gender

**Table 2.2** shows that the survey found no difference in the risk of SCJS stalking or harassment in the last 12 months for men and women, at 6.0% and 6.8% respectively. This result is also consistent with the 2012/13 SCJS, which found no statistically significant differences in the overall risk of stalking in terms of gender.

Breaking these results down further, however, the risk of SCJS stalking was higher among women in the 16 to 24 age group (12.7%), compared to men in the same age group (6.7%).

In general, these results are inconsistent with international research evidence which suggests that stalking disproportionately falls on women (Sheridan and Grant, 2007; Breiding et al., 2011). The finding is also inconsistent with the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) 2012/13, which reported that 4% of women and 1.9% of men had experienced stalking and harassment in the last year (ONS, 2014; 2). The SCJS results should be interpreted with caution.

A possible explanation for the difference between the SCJS and CSEW relates to **questionnaire design**. Whilst both surveys ask respondents about similar experiences of stalking and harassment, the definition in the CSEW 2012/13 *explicitly* refers to incidents that may have resulted in 'fear, alarm or distress'. By contrast, the definition in the SCJS does not refer to the results of the stalking behaviour

**Box 2.1** shows the respective definitions of stalking and harassment in the CSEW and SCJS.

#### **Box 2.1 Descriptions of stalking and harassment, CSEW and SCJS**

##### **Crime Survey of England and Wales 2012/13**

'People may sometimes be pestered or harassed, either by someone they know or a stranger. This person might do things like phoning or writing, following them, waiting outside their home or work place or putting obscene or threatening information on the internet *that may have caused fear, alarm or distress.*'

##### **Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014/15**

'People may sometimes be pestered or harassed, either by someone they know or a stranger. This person might do things like phoning or writing, following them or waiting outside their home or work place.'

This difference in the way that stalking and harassment is defined may mean that the CSEW data capture a higher proportion of incidents that resulted in fear, alarm or distress than the SCJS. For example, the SCJS may also capture incidents that respondents found irritating or annoying, which could be distributed more evenly in terms of gender.

The results may also be affected by the small sample sizes in Scotland, compared to England and Wales, making it more difficult to detect significant differences between different groups of the population

The respective definitions may also help to explain the overall higher prevalence of SCJS stalking and harassment (6.4%), compared to CSEW stalking and harassment (3%) (ONS, 2014; 7).

### Gender and types of stalking and harassment

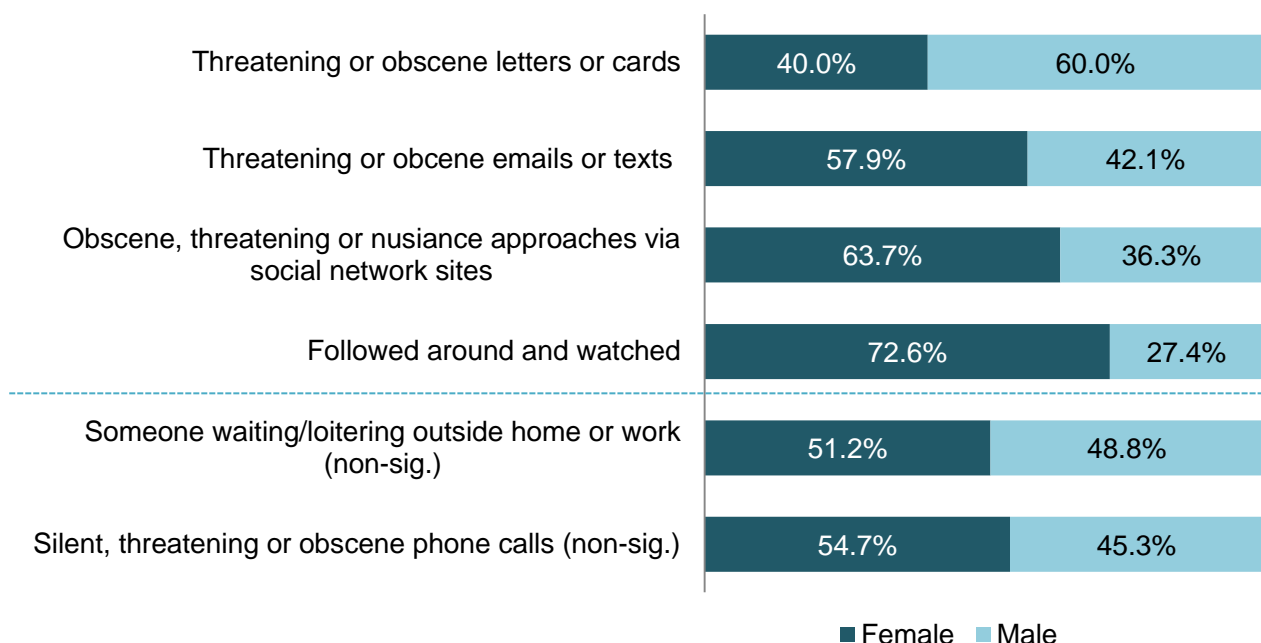
Some gender differences do emerge in relation to different types of SCJS stalking and harassment.

Looking at the six different types of SCJS stalking and harassment, two categories did not vary by gender. These were: receiving silent, threatening or obscene phone calls, and having some waiting or loitering.

The remaining four categories varied by gender. A higher proportion of women than men had experienced three types of stalking and harassment. These were: being followed/watched, unwanted online approaches and threatening/obscene emails and texts.

In one category (followed around and watched), the proportion of men was higher than women, at 72.6% and 27.4% respectively. **Figure 2.2** shows the results.

**Figure 2.2 SCJS Stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, by gender (%)**



Base: Adults in each category: Letters/cards (80), waiting/loitering outside home or work (107), telephone calls (208), emails/text messages (278), social networking (132), followed/watched (86)

Variable names: QDGEN (by) SHPOST, SHLOIT, SHCALLS, SHELECT, SHSOCIAL, SHFOLL



Note that the risk of being followed and watched was higher for women than men, at 72.6% and 27.4% respectively; however, there were no statistically significant differences by gender in relation to someone waiting or loitering (a similar type of behaviour).

This disparity may arise from the respondent's interpretation of the questions, which are likely to tap into similar experiences (loitering, being followed or watched). Overall, the distribution of different types of SCJS stalking and harassment in terms of gender is not clear-cut and might warrant further investigation.

### 2.6.2 Stalking, harassment and other types of victimisation

**Table 2.2** shows that the risk of stalking and harassment in the last 12 months was higher among respondents classified as 'victims' in the main SCJS questionnaire, compared to respondents classified as non-victims, at 11.4% and 5.5% respectively.

More than a third (36.4%) of those who had experienced SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months had also experienced partner abuse in the same period.

### 2.6.3 Stalking, harassment and deprivation

The risk of SCJS stalking and harassment within the past 12 months was associated with socio-economic deprivation. **Table 2.2** shows that 9.4% of those living within the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland reported at least one type of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, compared to 5.9% of those living in the rest of Scotland.

Respondents were also asked how difficult it would be for the household to meet £100 to meet an unexpected expense. Unlike neighbourhood measures of deprivation, this question addresses the issue of immediate access to funds.

Those who said it was impossible or a big problem to find £100 to meet an unexpected expense were more likely to have experienced SCJS stalking and harassment, compared to those who said it would be 'no problem', at 13.6% and 5.3% respectively.

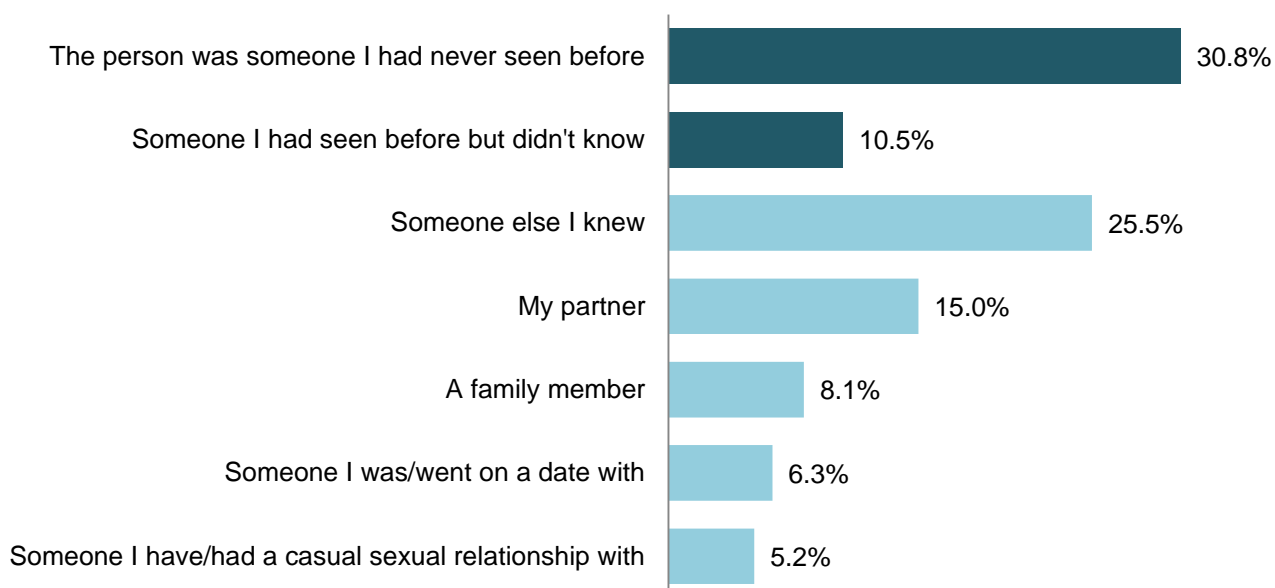
## 2.7 Relationship with the offender/s

The relationship between victims and offenders is not straightforward. More than half (54.9%) of those who experienced at least one form of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months knew the offender in some way, whilst 15.0% said the offender was their partner. However, just under a third (30.8%) described the offender as 'someone I had never seen before'

Of those who had experienced more than one form of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months ( $n = 171$ ), 65.5% said that the same offender was involved.

Below, **Figure 2.3** shows the relationship between the victim and offender in relation to the most recent (or only) incident of SCJS stalking or harassment in the last 12 months.

**Figure 2.3 Victim-offender relationships in the most recent (or only) incident of stalking or harassment in the last 12 months (%)**



Base: Adults who had experienced at least one form of stalking and harassment in the last 12 months (601)

Variable names: SH\_2

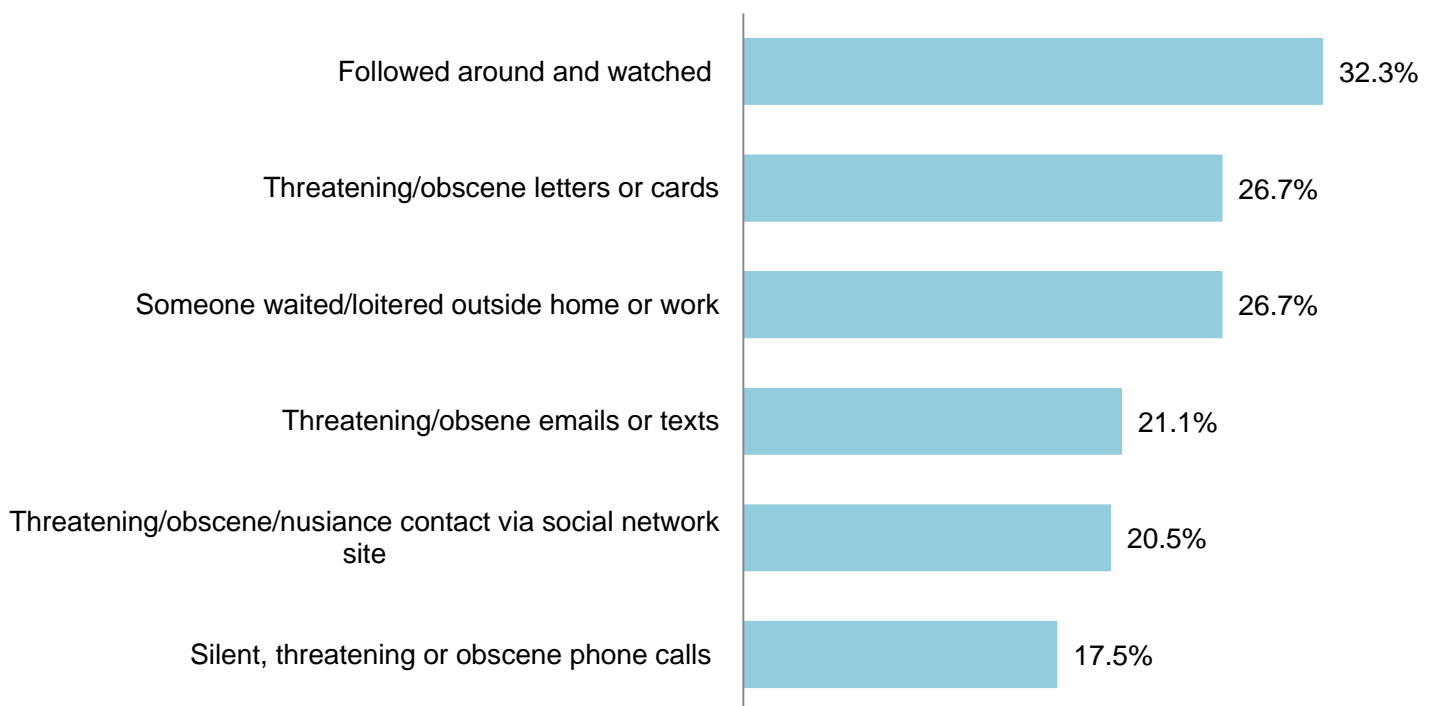
## 2.8 Reporting to the police

Respondents who had experienced at least one incident of SCJS stalking and harassment in the last 12 months were asked if the police were informed about the most recent (or only) incident of to the police. Of these respondents ( $n = 601$ ), 18.9% said that the police came to know about the most recent incident.

The reporting rate for stalking and harassment is comparatively low, when compared to other crimes in the main SCJS questionnaire. The [2014/15 Main Findings report](#) showed that 38% of crimes were reported to the police. Looking at the different crime types in the main survey, estimated reporting rates ranged from 28% for 'other household theft' (including bicycle theft) to 62% for housebreaking. Forty four per cent of violent crime in the main SCJS survey was reported to the police (see Figure 6.1 in the [Main Findings report](#)).

Reporting behaviour varied slightly according to the type of stalking and harassment. Notably, reporting rates were higher than average amongst those who had been followed and watched. **Figure 2.4** shows the results.

**Figure 2.4 Reporting rates for different types of SCJS stalking and harassment (%)**



Base: Adults in each category. Phone calls (208), emails/texts (278), contact via social network site (132), letters/cards (80), waiting/loitering outside home/work (107), followed and watched (86)

Variable names: SH\_6 (by) SHELECT, SHPOST, SHOCIAL, SHCALLS, SHFOLL, SHLOIT

### 2.8.1 Reporting to the police and gender

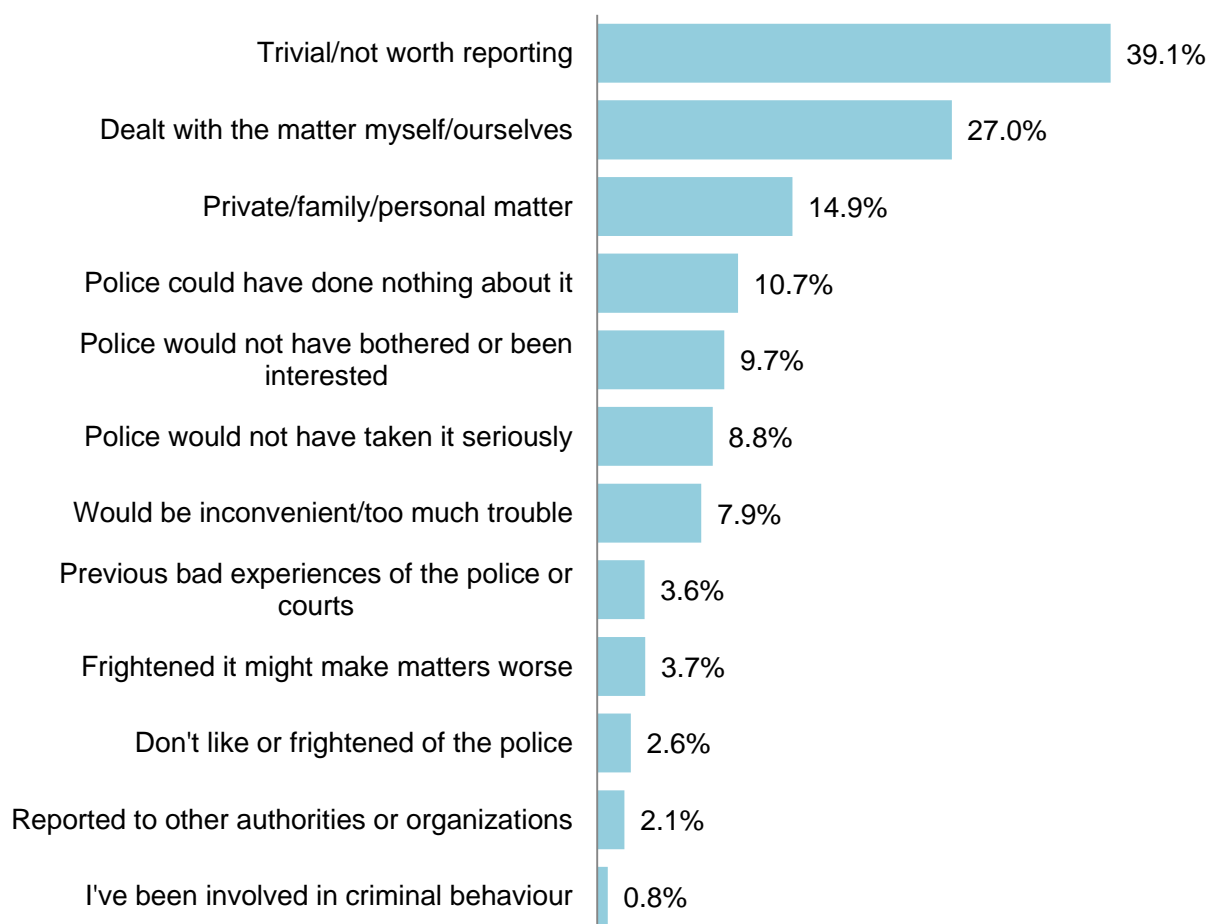
More women than men said that the police came to know about the most recent incident (at 23.2% and 13.5% respectively). This difference may reflect differences between men and women in relation to the degree of fear and distress experienced that is not captured by the survey questions (see **Box 2.1**)

### 2.8.2 Reasons for non-reporting

The most common reason given for not reporting the most recent (or only) incident of SCJS stalking and harassment to the police was that it was considered to be too trivial (39.1%), followed by the victim dealing with the matter themselves (27.0%).

**Figure 2.5** shows the reasons cited for not reporting the most recent incident (or only) incident of stalking and harassment to the police.

**Figure 2.5 Reasons for not reporting the most recent incident (or only) of stalking or harassment to the police (%)**



Base: Adults who had experienced stalking or harassment incident in the last year (476)

Variable names: SH\_6i\_

## 2.9 Cyberstalking and cyberharassment

In the 2012/13 and 2014/15 sweeps, two questions were introduced that ask respondents about their experiences of stalking and harassment via electronic communications, also known as 'cyberstalking' or 'cyberharassment' (see Box 2.2).

### Box 2.2 Definitions of cyberstalking and cyberharassment

**Cyberstalking:** A course of action (more than one incident), perpetuated through electronic means, which causes stress or alarm.

**Cyberharassment:** Intimidation, repeated or otherwise, through electronic means (Maple et al. 2011; 4)

In both sweeps, unwanted texts and emails were the most common form of stalking behaviour reported in the survey: 45.0% in 2014/15 and 51% in 2012/13 (this apparent difference between the two sweeps is not statistically significant).

In 2014/15, 21.9% said that they received unwanted contact via social network sites, which again, is consistent with the 2012/13 SCJS (24%).

The comparative ease with which offenders can contact victims without recourse, either proximal or verbal contact, may help to explain the prevalence and non-gendered nature of cyber-stalking. For example, Sheridan and Grant suggest that the internet may be 'particularly attractive to would-be harassers', given that the 'relative anonymity, the lack of social status cues, and opportunities for disinhibited behaviour' can promote 'greater risk-taking and asocial behaviour' (2007; 628).

## 3. Serious Sexual Assault

### 3.1 Summary of findings

- Overall, 2.7% of respondents had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 (this proportion has not changed over the last six sweeps of the SCJS), and 0.9% had experienced more than one form of serious sexual assault.
- A higher proportion of women than men had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16, at 4.6% and 0.6% respectively.
- More than half of respondents (52.8%) said that they had experienced their first (or only) incident of serious sexual assault between the ages of 16 and 20.
- Serious sexual assault was most commonly carried out by someone known to the victim. Almost nine-in-ten (87.4%) of those who had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 knew the offender in some way, whilst over half (54.8%) said that the offender was their partner.
- Men perpetrated the majority of serious sexual assaults: 94.0% of those who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 said the offender was male. This proportion was higher for female victims than male victims, at 98.0% and 63.6% respectively.
- Of those who had experienced forced sexual intercourse since the age of 16, 16.8% said the police were informed about the most recent incident.
- The most common reason for not reporting the most recent of serious sexual assault to the police was fear that it would make matters worse (43.4%).

### 3.2 Introduction

The SCJS survey asks respondents if they have experienced one or more of the following types of serious sexual assault:

- Forced to have sexual intercourse
- Attempted forced sexual intercourse
- Forced to take part in another sexual activity (for example, oral sex)
- Attempted forced to take part in another sexual activity

Respondents are asked about their experiences over two time-periods: within the last 12 months and since the age of 16.

This chapter mostly focuses on respondents who reported at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 ( $n = 332$ ), as the lower base number of

respondents who experienced serious sexual assault in the last 12 months ( $n = 23$ ) prevents more detailed analysis.

This chapter examines the overall and varying risk of serious sexual assault; the incidence of serious sexual assault; victim-offender relationships; the gender of the offender; the physical impact on victims; and reporting to the police.

### 3.3 Overall risk of serious sexual assault

In the 2014/15 survey, 2.7% of respondents had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16, and 0.9% had experienced more than one form.

#### 3.3.1 Trends in serious sexual assault

The risk of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 did not change between 2008/9 and 2014/15, or between the last two sweeps of the survey. The small differences shown in **Table 3.1** are not statistically significant.

**Table 3.1 Overall risk of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 (%)**

<i>Type of serious sexual assault</i>	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
Forced sex	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.6%	1.6%
Attempted forced sex	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%
Other forced sexual acts	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	1.1%	0.7%
Attempted other forced sexual acts	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%
At least one form of sexual assault	3.2%	2.7%	2.8%	2.5%	2.7%
<i>Base</i>	10,974	13,418	10,999	10,235	9,986

Base: All respondents (adults aged 16 years and over)

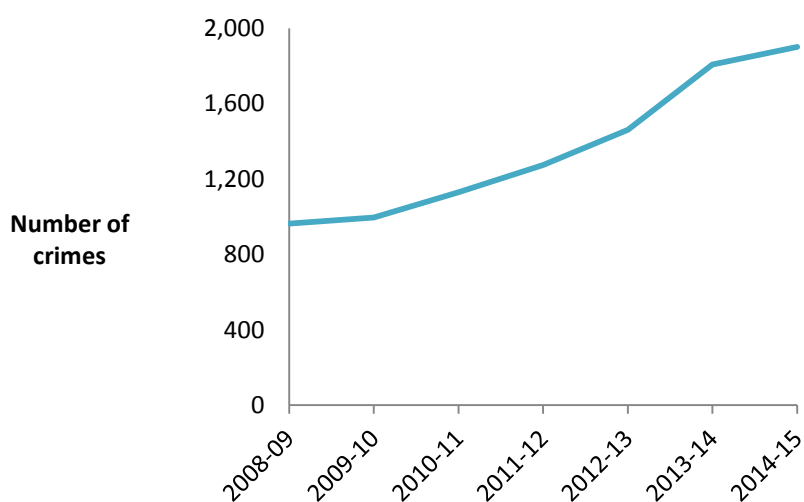
Variable names: SAFS, SAAFS, SAOS, SAAOS, SA\_ANY\_EV, AIIMSSA

Sexual victimisation, as reported in the SCJS, is not directly comparable with police recorded crime. This is because limited follow-up questions are asked about these incidents (in order to avoid possible distress to the respondent), which prevents the accurate legal classification of incidents.

Despite these limitations, patterns of police recorded serious sexual assault are generally less consistent than patterns of serious sexual assault as reported in the SCJS.

This difference between the two sources of data is most likely due to changes in reporting behaviour, and a greater willingness to report sexual assault. For example, **Figure 3.1** shows that police recorded incidents of rape and attempted rape increased by 97% between 2008/09 and 2014/15, from 963 to 1,901 incidents.

**Figure 3.1. Police recorded rape, attempted rape and sexual assault, 2008/9 to 2014/15**



Source: Scottish Government (2015) Recorded Crime in Scotland



### 3.4 Varying risk of serious sexual assault

The risk of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 varied by gender, age and victimisation (as reported in the main questionnaire), and socio-economic deprivation.

**Table 3.2** presents the results.

**Table 3.2 Varying risk of serious sexual assault since age of serious sexual assault since age of 16, by social characteristics (%)**

<i>Social characteristics</i>		<i>% adults</i>	<i>Base</i>
Gender	Male	0.6%	4,528
	Female	4.6%	5,458
Age-group	16-24	1.9%	836
	25-34	3.2%	1,421
	35-44	3.6%	1,596
	45-54	4.2%	1,794
	55-64	2.2%	1,697
	65 and over	1.3%	2,642
Victim status in the main questionnaire <sup>1</sup>	Victim	5.3%	1,398
	Non-victim	2.2%	8,588
Socio-economic Deprivation*	15% most deprived	3.8%	1,412
	Rest of Scotland	2.5%	8,574
All adults		2.7%	9,986

Base: All respondents

Variable names: SA\_ANY\_EV (by) QDGEN, QDAGE, VICFLAG3

<sup>1</sup> A victim is defined as a respondent who reported crimes or offences in the main questionnaire (excluding sexual offences and threats) that are within the scope of the survey, took place in Scotland, and occurred within the reference period.

### 3.4.1 Gender and serious sexual assault

Looking at those who experienced at least one type of serious sexual assault since the age of 16, 88.6% were female, and 11.4% were male.

Serious sexual offending, as reported in the SCJS, was almost exclusively carried out by men. Of those who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 (both women and men), 94.1% said the offender(s) was male. This proportion was higher amongst female victims (98.0%), compared to male victims (63.6%).

**Box 3.1** below explores public attitudes towards violence against women, as measured by the Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2014.

#### 1 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014<sup>3</sup>

##### [Attitudes to violence against women in Scotland report](#) (Reid et al., 2015)

The 2014 Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA) provides evidence on public attitudes towards to sexual violence, domestic abuse (physical, verbal, mental and emotional), sexual harassment and commercial sexual exploitation.

The SSA findings on sexual violence show that the majority of people thought that rape by a stranger (95%) and within a marriage (93%) were 'seriously wrong'. Fewer people felt that a husband raping his wife was 'very seriously wrong' (74%) than believed that a man raping a stranger was 'very seriously wrong' (88%). People were also less likely to say that the husband raping his wife caused the victim 'a great deal' of harm, compared to the harm caused when the rape was perpetrated by a stranger.

There were some demographic differences in attitudes towards sexual violence. Women, younger people, those who had experienced some form of gender-based violence and those who did not hold stereotypical views on gender roles were all more likely to think that the husband raping his wife was 'very seriously wrong'.

When respondents were asked about a scenario where the woman had first taken the man into her bedroom and started kissing him, fewer people felt that the man's behaviour was seriously wrong. The proportion viewing the rape by a stranger as 'very seriously wrong' fell from 88% to 58%, and in the case of the husband's behaviour, from 74% to 44%.

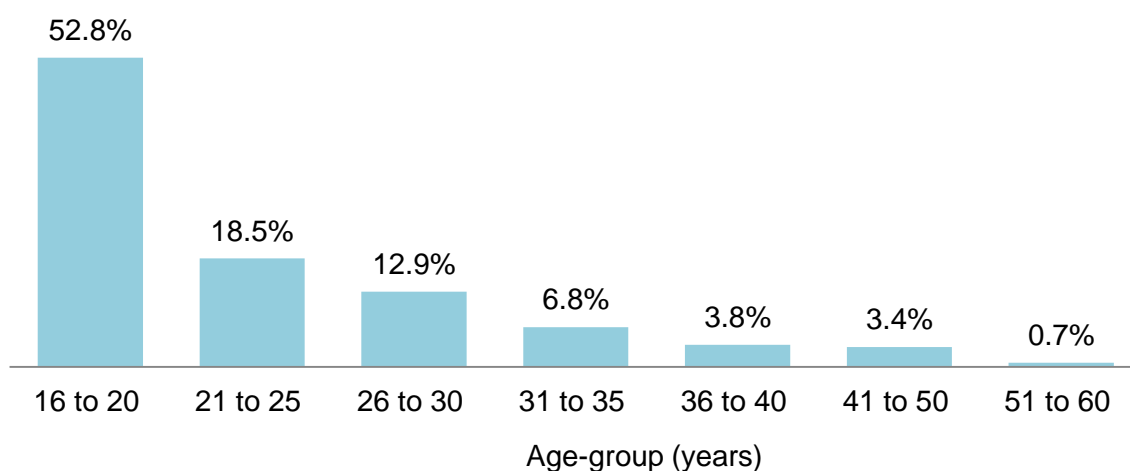
There was evidence to suggest people believe that in certain situations woman are partly to blame if they are raped. Only 58% said that a woman who wore revealing clothing on a night out was 'not at all to blame' for being raped, and 60% said the same of a woman who was very drunk. Around a quarter (23%) agreed that 'women often lie about being raped' and nearly 2 in 5 (37%) agreed that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex'.

<sup>3</sup> The SSA is carried out by ScotCen Social Research, an independent research organisation based in Edinburgh. The 2014 survey involved 1,501 interviews with a representative probability sample of the Scottish population.

### 3.4.2 Age and serious sexual assault

Respondents were asked at what age the first (or only) incident of serious sexual assault took place. **Figure 3.2** shows that the majority of first (or only) reported incidents (52.8%) took place between the ages of 16 to 20.

**Figure 3.2 Age at time of first (or only) incident of serious sexual assault, by age-group (%)**



Base: All respondents who experienced serious sexual assault since age 16 (332)

Variable names: SA\_ANY\_EV, QDAGE

### 3.4.3 Deprivation and serious sexual assault

The risk of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 varied by neighbourhood deprivation: 3.8% of those living in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland reported abuse since age of 16, compared to 2.5% of those living in the rest of Scotland.

#### Available income

The risk of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 was also associated with available income. Respondents were asked how easy it would be for the household to find £100 to meet an unexpected expense. Unlike neighbourhood measures of deprivation, this question addresses the issue of immediate access to funds.

The risk of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 was higher amongst those who stated that it would be 'a big problem' or 'impossible' to find £100 to meet an unexpected expense, compared to those who stated it would be 'no problem', at 7.4% and 2.0% respectively.

### 3.5 Incidence of serious sexual assault and repeat victimisation

Victims of serious sexual assault were likely to report more than one incident. For example, 57.8% of those respondents who had experienced forced, and 67.6% attempted forced sexual intercourse, since the age of 16 said that they had experienced more than one incident. Within these groups, 18.3% of those who had experienced forced sex and 19.8% of those who had experienced attempted forced sex said that there were too many incidents to count.

**Table 3.3** shows the incidence of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 in the four types of serious sexual assault.

**Table 3.3 Incidence of serious sexual assault since the age of 16 (%)**  
SCJS 2014/15

Number of incidents	Forced sex	Attempted forced intercourse	Other forced sexual acts	Other forced attempted sexual acts
One	37.9%	23.1%	18.1%	22.6%
<i>More than one</i>	<i>57.8%</i>	<i>67.6%</i>	<i>81.9%</i>	<i>77.4%</i>
Two	10.0%	10.4%	9.6%	9.5%
Three	10.3%	13.8%	5.2%	9.7%
Four	7.0%	8.8%	4.4%	1.2%
Five	2.0%	2.9%	-	4.9%
Six to ten	3.0%	3.5%	25.0%	23.2%
Eleven and over	7.2%	8.4%	37.7%	29.0%
Too many to count	18.3%	19.8%	-	-
<i>Base</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>155</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>96</i>

'Don't know/can't remember' and 'don't wish to answer' responses are not shown.

Base: Adults who had experienced each form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16

Variable names: FS\_2EVER AFS\_2EVER OS\_2EVER AOS\_2EVER

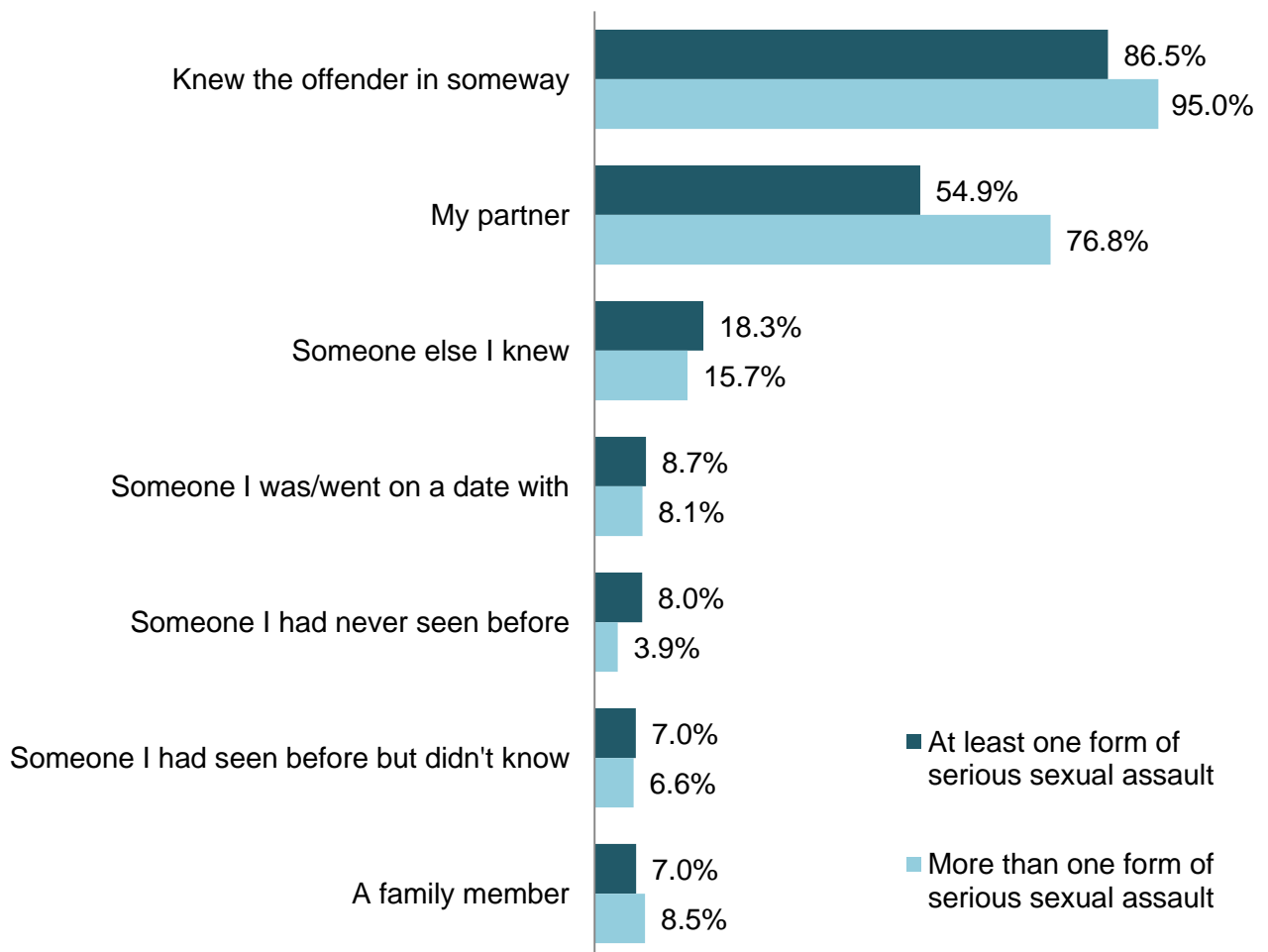
### 3.6 Relationship with the offender/s

The majority of serious sexual assaults were carried out by someone known to the victim. Nearly nine out of ten (87.4%) of those who had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since age sixteen knew the offender in some way, with over half (54.8%) saying that the offender was their partner. These findings are consistent with 2013/14 Police Scotland data, which show that a third of reported rapes took place in a domestic setting ([Police Scotland, 19/6/2014](#)).

Amongst those who had reported more than one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16, 95.2% said that they knew the offender in some way, whilst more than three quarters (76.8%) said the offender was their partner.

**Figure 3.3** shows victim-offender relationships for those who reported at least one, and more than one form of serious sexual assault experienced since the age of 16.

**Figure 3.3 Victim-offender/s relationships: at least one, and more than one form of serious sexual assault experienced since the age 16 (%)**



Results show responses for four types of serious sexual assault. Respondents may have answered in more than one category. 'Knew the offender in some way' includes responses shown in the figure.

Base: Adults who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age 16 (323)

Variable names: FS\_3B4, FS\_3, AFS\_3B4, AFS\_3, OS\_3B4, OS\_3, AOS\_3B4, AOS\_3

### 3.6.1 Serious sexual assault and strangers

Of those who had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16, 8.0% had never seen the offender before. Again, these findings are consistent with 2013/14 Police Scotland data, which show that five per cent of reported rapes were committed by someone unknown to the victim ([Police Scotland, 19/6/2014](#)).

These findings contrast with the other types of sexual victimisation discussed in the report. For example, indecent exposure and unwanted touching (since the age of 16) was more likely to be perpetrated by someone that victim had not seen before, at 70.9% and 39.90% respectively (see **Section 4.4**). Also nearly a third of those who had experienced stalking and harassment in the last 12 months, said that they had not seen the offender before (see **Section 2.4**).

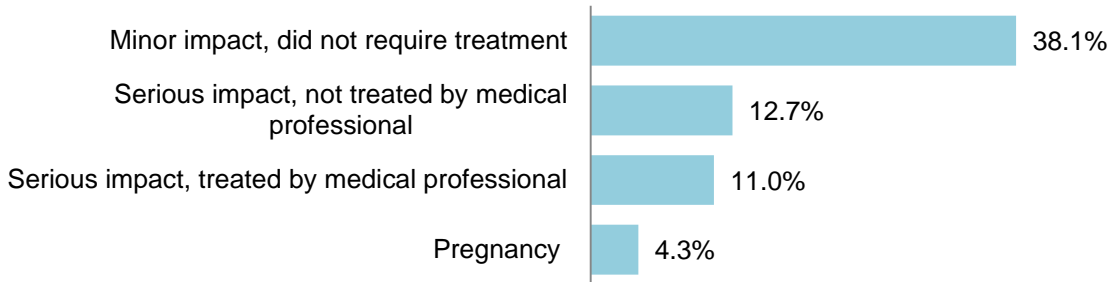
## 3.7 The physical impact of serious sexual assault

Respondents who had reported at least one incident of serious sexual assault, since the age of 16, were asked about the physical impact of the latest (or only) incident. **Figure 3.4** shows the physical impact of serious sexual assault, broken down by category of assault.

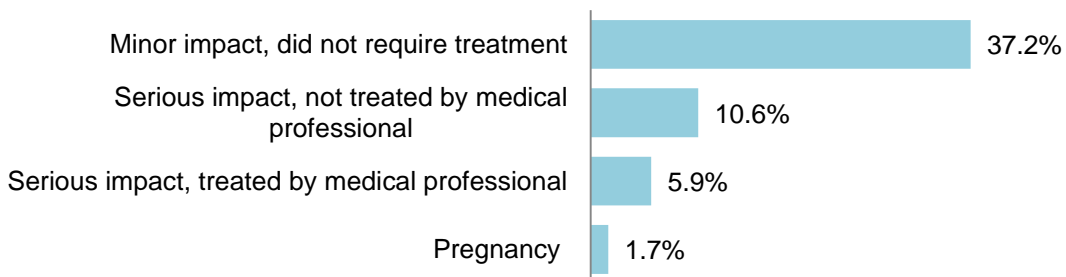
Of those who had experienced forced sexual intercourse, nearly two-thirds (61.8%) said that the last (or only) incident had resulted in some form of physical injury, either minor or serious, while 4.3% said that the last (or only) incident had resulted in pregnancy.

**Figure 3.4 Physical impact of serious sexual assault (%)**

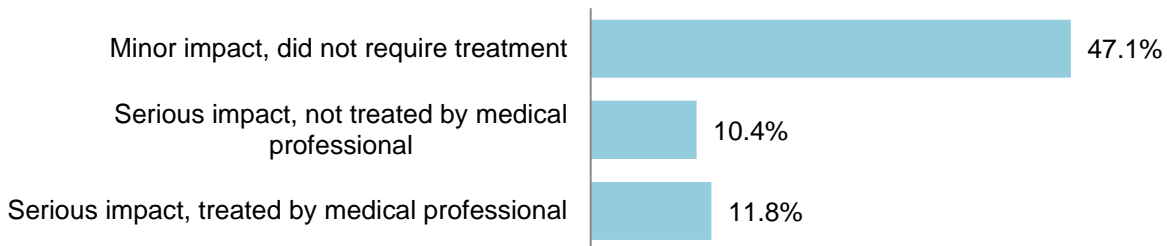
**Forced sexual intercourse**



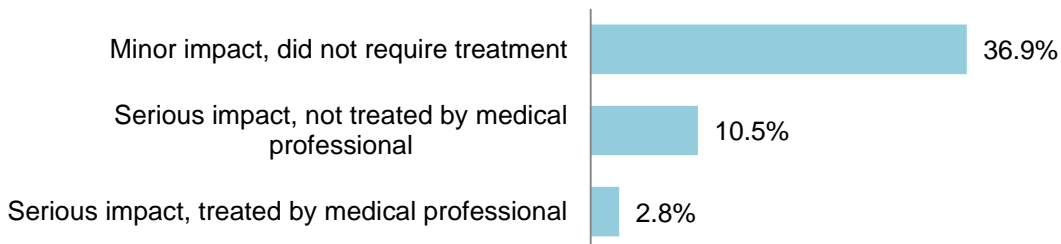
**Attempted forced sexual intercourse**



**Other forced sexual activities**



**Other attempted forced sexual activities**



Base: Adults who had ever experienced attempted forced sexual intercourse (185), attempted forced sexual intercourse (146), other forced sexual activities (70) attempted other forced sexual activities (77).

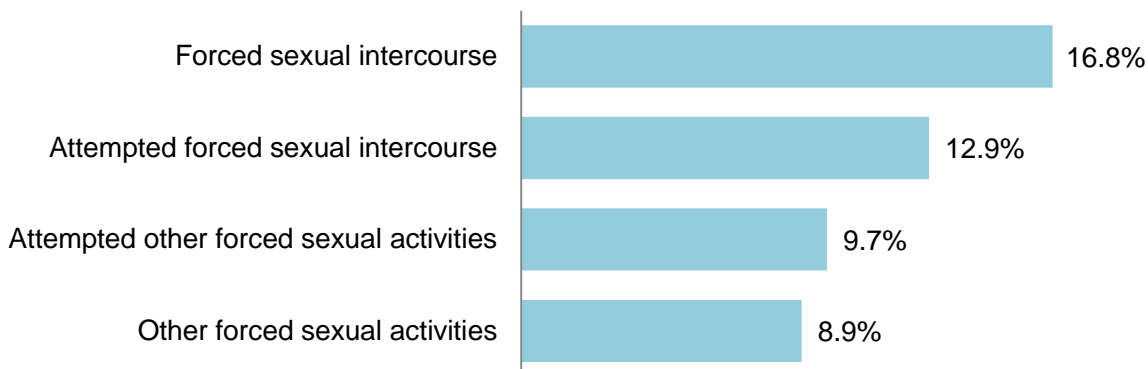
Variables: FS\_5ii\_01, FS\_5ii\_02, FS\_5ii\_03, AFS\_5ii\_04, AFS\_5ii\_01, AFS\_5ii\_02, AFS\_5ii\_03, AFS\_5ii\_04, OS\_5ii\_01, OS\_5ii\_02, OS\_5ii\_03, AOS\_5ii\_01, AOS\_5ii\_02, AOS\_5ii\_03, AOS\_5ii\_04

### 3.8 Reporting to the police

Respondents who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 were asked if the police were informed about the most recent (or only) incident.

**Figure 3.4** shows reporting rates for the four types of serious sexual assault (see **section 2.8** for reporting rates for other types of SCJS crime). Note that the apparent variation in reporting rates between categories shown in **Figure 3.4** is not statistically significant.

**Figure 3.4 Proportion who said the police were informed about the last (or only) incident of serious sexual assault since age 16 (%)**



Base: All who experienced each type of assault, since age 16: Forced sexual intercourse (189), attempted forced sexual intercourse (150), other forced sexual activities (71), attempted other forced sexual activities (80)

Variable names: FS\_7, AFS\_7, OS\_7, AOS\_7

#### 3.8.1 Reasons for non-reporting

**Figure 3.5** below shows the reasons why the police did not come to know about the most recent (or only) incident of forced and attempted forced sexual intercourse since the age 16 respectively (these are the two largest categories of serious sexual assault).

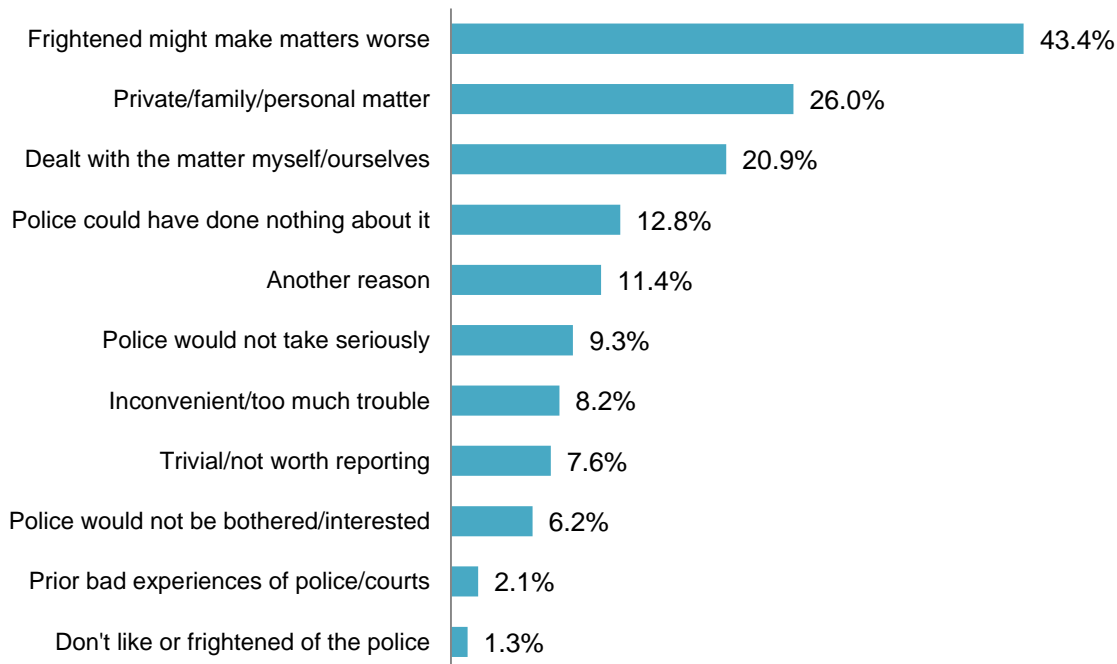
For both types of assault (forced and attempted forced intercourse) the most common reason for not informing the police was fear, at 43.4% and 32.6% respectively. Around a quarter said that they had not reported the most recent (or only) incident because it was a private or personal matter, at 26.0% and 26.4% respectively.

Note that these findings contrast with respondents reasons for not reporting stalking and harassment to the police. For example, **Figure 2.5** shows that only 3.7% of those who had not reported the most recent incident of stalking or harassment to the police said that the reason was fear that it might make things worse.

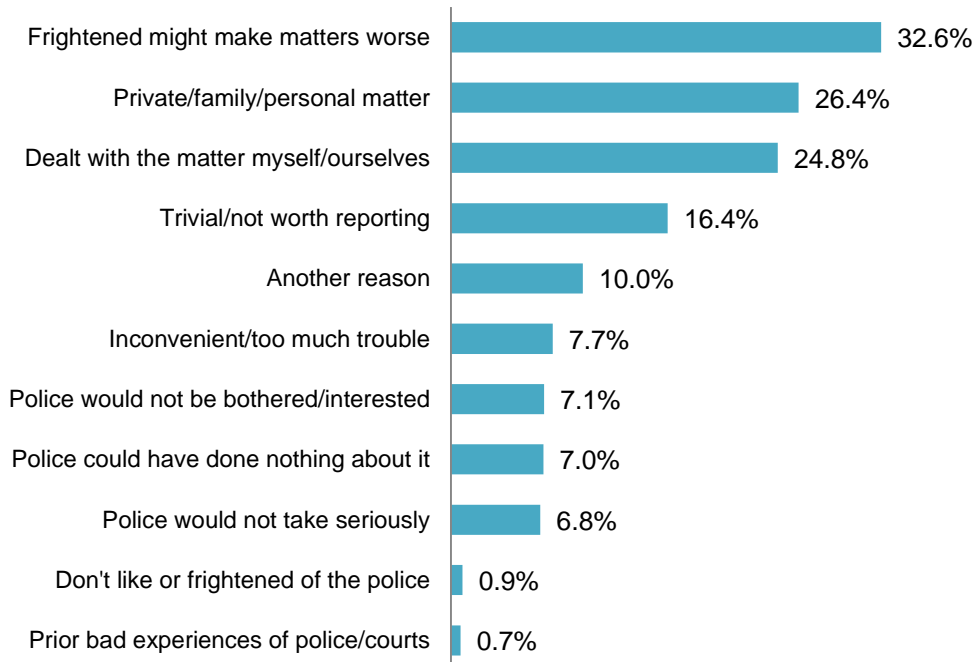


**Figure 3.5. Reasons the police did not come to know about most recent (or only) incident of serious sexual assault (all types) since the age 16 (%)**

**Forced sexual intercourse**



**Attempted forced sexual intercourse**



Base: Adults who experienced forced sexual assault (154) and attempted forced sexual intercourse (125) since the age of 16, where the police did not come to know about the most recent/only incident.

Variable names: FS\_7i AFS\_7i

## 4. Less Serious Sexual Offences

### 4.1 Summary of key findings

- Overall, 8.3% of respondents had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offence since the age of 16, and 2.3% had experienced more than one type.
- Within the last 12 months, 1.3% of respondents had experienced at least one form of less serious sexual offence.
- A higher proportion of women than men had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offence since the age of 16 (13.5% women, compared to 2.7% of men).
- Men carried out the majority of less serious sexual offences: amongst those who had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offending since the age of 16, 92.7% said that the offender was male. This proportion was higher still for female victims, at 98.8%
- The offender-victim relationship varied by the type of less serious sexual offence. Some types were more likely to be perpetrated by strangers, such as indecent exposure (70.9%) and unwanted sexual touching (39.9%), whilst partners were most likely to carry out sexual threats (55.1%).

### 4.2 Introduction

The self-completion section asks respondents about their experiences of three types of less serious sexual offences:

- Indecent exposure
- Sexual threats
- Touching sexually when it was not wanted

Respondents were asked about their experiences in relation to two reference periods: within the last 12 months; and since the age sixteen. Like chapter 3, this chapter mostly focuses on those who reported at least one type of less serious sexual offence since the age of 16 ( $n = 883$ ). The chapter also includes some analysis of less serious offending in the last 12 months ( $n = 106$ ).

The chapter examines the overall and varying risk of experiencing less serious sexual offences and victim-offender relationships.

### 4.3 Overall risk of less serious sexual offences

In 2014/15, the risk of experiencing at least one form of less sexual assault since age of 16 was 8.3%, whilst the risk of experiencing more than one form of less serious sexual assault was 2.3%.

#### 4.3.1 Trends in less serious sexual offences

Between 2008/09 and 2014/15, the overall risk of risk of experiencing at least one, or more than one type of less serious sexual offence did not change.

Breaking this down by different types of less serious sexual offences, the risk of unwanted sexual touching and sexual threats did not change, however there was a decrease in the risk of indecent exposure, from 5.0% to 4.3%.

Looking just at the last two survey sweeps (2012/13, 2014/15), the overall risk of risk of experiencing at least one type, or more than one type of less serious sexual offence did not change.

Again, looking at the different types of less serious sexual offences, the risk of indecent exposure and sexual threats did not change. However, there was an increase in the risk of unwanted sexual touching, from 4% to 4.8%.

**Table 4.1 Risk of experiencing less serious sexual offences since the age of 16**

Type of less serious sexual offence	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15
Unwanted sexual touching	4.8%	4.1%	4.6%	4.3%	4.8%
Indecent exposure	5.0%	5.1%	4.2%	4.0%	4.3%
Sexual threats	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%	2.1%
Victim of <i>at least one</i> form of sexual assault	9.4%	8.8%	8.3%	7.6%	8.3%
<i>Base</i>	10,974	13,418	10,999	10,235	9,986

Source: SCJS 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2012/13

Base: All respondents 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2012/13, 2014/15

Variable names: SVINEX, SVST, SVTS, SV\_ANY\_EV

## 4.4 Varying risk of experiencing less serious sexual offences

The risk of experiencing less serious sexual offences varied by gender, age and victim status<sup>4</sup> (as defined in the main questionnaire) and socio-economic deprivation. **Table 4.2** presents these results.

**Table 4.2 Risk of at least one form of less serious sexual assault since the age 16 (%)**

Social characteristics		% adults	Base
Gender	Male	2.7%	4,528
	Female	13.5%	5,458
Age-group	16-24	10.0%	836
	25-34	8.6%	1,421
	35-44	8.1%	1,596
	45-54	10.6%	1,794
	55-64	8.5%	1,697
	65 and over	5.1%	2,642
Victim status in the main questionnaire <sup>1</sup>	Victim	10.5%	1,398
	Non-victim	7.9%	8,588
Socio-economic Deprivation	15% most deprived	8.7%	1,412
	Rest of Scotland	6.5%	8,574
All adults		8.3%	9,986

Base: All respondents (adults aged 16 years and over)

Variable names: SV\_ANY\_EV, (by) QDGEN, QDAGE, VICFLAG3, SIMD\_TOP

<sup>1</sup> A victim is defined as a respondent who reported crimes or offences in the main questionnaire (excluding sexual offences and threats) that are within the scope of the survey, took place in Scotland, and occurred within the reference period.

<sup>4</sup> A victim is defined as a respondent who reported crimes or offences in the main questionnaire (excluding sexual offences and threats) that are within the scope of the survey, took place in Scotland, and occurred within the reference period.

#### 4.4.1 Gender and less serious sexual offending

The risk of having experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offence was higher for women than men. Since the age of 16, 13.5% of women had experienced at least one type of less serious sexual offence, compared to 2.7% of men.

Among those who reported at least one type of less serious sexual offending since the age of 16, more than 9 in 10 (92.7%) said that the offender was male. A higher proportion of women than men said the offender was male, at 98.8% and 60.0% respectively.

#### 4.4.2 Age and less serious sexual offending

It is difficult to gauge the relationship between the risk of less serious sexual offending and age in **Table 4.2**, principally because the question refers to all experiences since the age of 16, which may accumulate over time.

Looking at the relationship between the age and risk of sexual offending in the last 12 months, **Table 4.3** shows that the risk of less serious sexual offending was highest amongst the 16 to 24 years age group (4.2%).

**Table 4.3 Less serious sexual assault in the last 12 months, by age-group (%)**

Age-group	% adults	Base
16-24	4.2%	836
25-34	1.5%	1,421
35-44	1.2%	1,596
45-54	0.8%	1,794
55-64	0.5%	1,697
65 and over	*	2,642
All adults	1.3%	9,986

Base: All respondents (adults aged 16 years and over)

Variable names: SV\_ANY\_12M, QDAGE

#### 4.4.3 Deprivation and less serious sexual offending

The risk of less serious sexual assault since the age of 16 varied in terms of neighbourhood deprivation: 8.7% of those living in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland had experienced abuse since the age of 16, compared to 6.5% of those living in the rest of Scotland.

#### Available income

The risk of less serious sexual assault since the age of 16 was also associated with available income. Respondents were asked how easy it would be for the household to find £100 to meet an unexpected expense. Unlike neighbourhood measures of deprivation, this question addresses the issue of immediate access to funds.

The risk of less serious sexual assault since the age of 16 was higher amongst those who stated that it would be 'a big problem' or 'impossible' to find £100 to meet an unexpected expense, compared to those who stated it would be 'no problem', at 12.1% and 7.9% respectively.

### 4.5 Relationship with the offender

The relationship between victims and offenders varied according to the type of sexual offence (also see **sections 2.8** and **3.6**).

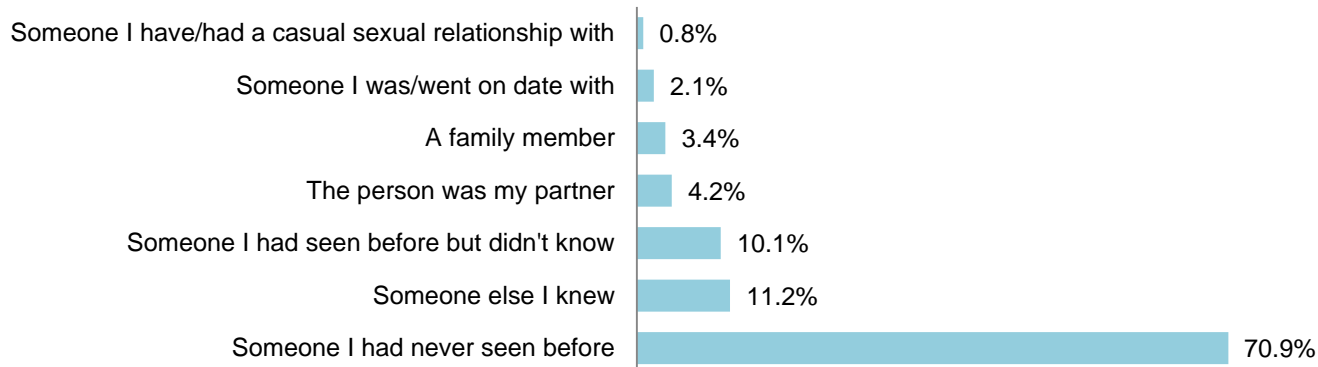
Of those who had experienced indecent exposure since the age of 16, 70.9% said that the offender was a stranger. Strangers were also most likely to perpetuate unwanted sexual touching (39.9%), followed by 'someone else' the victim knew (30.7%). Indecent exposure and unwanted sexual touching were less likely to involve partners, at 4.2% and 18.5% respectively.

By contrast, sexual threats were more likely to involve partners. Of those who had experienced sexual threats since the age of 16, 55.1% said the offender was their partner. Note that this finding is consistent with the proportion of serious sexual assaults (since the age of 16) carried out by partners (54.9%) (see **Figure 3.3**).

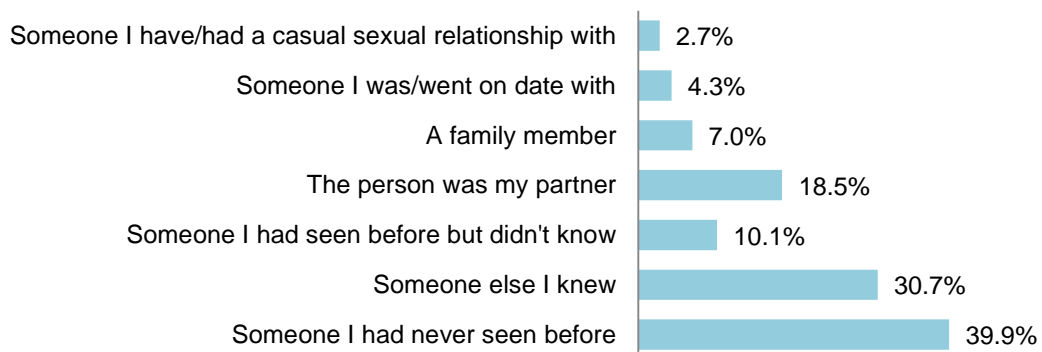
**Figure 4.1** presents the results.

**Figure 4.1 Victim-offender relationships for indecent exposure, unwanted sexual touching and sexual threats since the age 16 (%)**

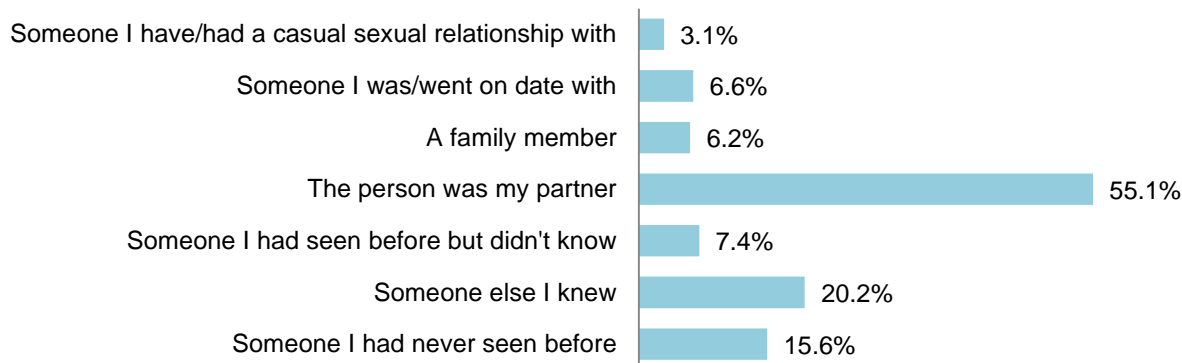
**Indecent exposure**



**Unwanted sexual touching**



**Sexual threats**



Base: Adults who had experienced each form of less serious sexual assault since the age 16. Indecent exposure (449), unwanted sexual touching (496), sexual threats (242).

Variable names: INEX\_5, INEX\_3, ST\_5, ST\_3, TS\_5, TS\_3,

## Annex 1. Data Tables: Sexual Victimization and stalking

**Table A1.1 Percentage of adults who experienced any stalking/harassment or sexual victimisation, by demographic variables**

Social characteristics	Any stalking & harassment in last 12 months	Any less serious sexual assault since age 16	Any serious sexual assault since age 16	Base
<b>Age</b>				
16-24	9.7	10.0	1.9	840
25-34	9.2	8.6	3.2	1,420
35-44	8.0	8.1	3.6	1,600
45-54	7.7	10.6	4.2	1,790
55-64	3.1	8.5	2.2	1,700
65 and over	2.2	5.1	1.3	2,640
<b>Male (Total)</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>4,530</b>
16-24	6.7	6.0	0.8	400
25-34	7.7	3.2	1.0	630
35-44	7.8	2.4	1.2	720
45-54	7.8	2.4	0.5	820
55-64	2.8	1.9	0.1	780
65 and over	3.2	1.2	0.3	1,180
<b>Female (Total)</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>5,460</b>
16-24	12.7	14.2	2.9	440
25-34	10.6	13.8	5.4	790
35-44	8.2	13.5	5.9	870
45-54	7.7	18.5	7.7	980
55-64	3.5	14.9	4.2	910
65 and over	1.5	8.1	2.0	1,460
<b>Victim status</b>				
Victim	11.4	10.5	5.3	1,400
Non-victim	5.5	7.9	2.2	8,590
<b>Deprivation</b>				
15% most deprived	9.4	6.5	3.8	1,410
Rest of Scotland	5.9	8.7	2.5	8,570
<b>All</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>9,990</b>

Base: All respondents (adults aged 16 years and over),

Variable names: SH\_ANY, SV\_ANY\_EV, SA\_ANY\_EV (by) Age breaks, VICFLAG3 QDGEN, SIMD\_TOP



**Table A1.2 Estimated number of adults (000s) who experienced: stalking/harassment in the last 12 months; serious sexual assault, and less serious sexual assault since age 16, by gender**

Numbers of incidents (000s)	Best estimate (000s)	Higher estimate (000s)	Lower estimate (000s)	Confidence Interval
Experienced any form of SCJS stalking and harassment in last 12 months				
<b>All</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Male</i>	126	147	105	21
<i>Female</i>	157	183	131	26
Experienced any form of SCJS less serious sexual assault since age 16				
<b>All</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>31</b>
<i>Male</i>	58	72	44	14
<i>Female</i>	310	338	281	28
Experienced any form of less serious sexual assault in last 12 months				
<b>All</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Male</i>	12	18	6	6
<i>Female</i>	47	68	26	21
Experienced any form of SCJS serious sexual assault since age 16				
<b>All</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Male</i>	14	18	9	4
<i>Female</i>	105	118	93	13
Experienced any form of SCJS serious sexual assault in the last 12 months				
<b>All</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Male</i>	2	4	1	2
<i>Female</i>	6	9	3	3

Base: All respondents (9,990 )

Variable names: SH\_ANY, SV\_ANY\_EV, SA\_ANY\_EV

The best estimates shown in Table A1.2 are derived by multiplying the prevalence rate by the population aged 16 years and over, and rounded to the nearest thousand. Population totals are based on the National Records of Scotland's (NRS) [Mid-2013 Population Estimates Scotland.](#)'

**Table A1.3 Percentage of adults who experienced different types of stalking and harassment in the last 12 months by demographic variables (%)**

Social Characteristics	Any stalking or harassment	Unwanted texts or emails	Unwanted letters or cards	Unwanted phone calls	Social network contact	Watched/ followed	Waited/ loitered	Base
<b>Age</b>								
16-24	9.7	4.9	1.1	2.0	3.2	1.3	0.8	840
25-34	9.2	3.9	0.9	2.4	2.9	1.2	1.9	1,420
35-44	8.0	4.0	1.1	3.0	1.4	0.9	1.2	1,600
45-54	7.7	3.5	0.9	2.5	1.3	1.1	1.7	1,790
55-64	3.1	1.0	0.6	1.4	0.2	0.6	0.4	1,700
65 and over	2.2	0.8	0.4	1.4	0.1	0.2	0.2	2,640
<b>Male (Total)</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>4,530</b>
16-24	6.7	3.0	1.1	2.0	1.9	0.9	0.5	400
25-34	7.7	2.7	0.9	1.7	2.1	0.3	2.5	630
35-44	7.8	3.4	1.5	3.2	1.1	0.6	1.3	720
45-54	7.8	4.0	1.2	2.1	1.1	0.4	1.2	820
55-64	2.8	1.0	0.5	1.0	0.2	0.5	0.4	780
65 and over	3.2	1.3	0.8	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.2	1,180
<b>Female (Total)</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>5,460</b>
16-24	12.7	6.8	1.1	1.9	4.5	1.7	1.2	440
25-34	10.6	5.1	0.8	3.2	3.7	2.1	1.3	790
35-44	8.2	4.6	0.8	2.9	1.6	1.2	1.1	870
45-54	7.7	3.1	0.5	2.9	1.5	1.8	2.1	980
55-64	3.5	1.1	0.8	1.8	0.1	0.7	0.4	910
65 and over	1.5	0.5	0.1	1.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	1,460
<b>Victim status</b>								
Victim	11.4	6.0	1.6	3.1	2.4	1.3	2.4	1,400
Non-victim	5.5	2.3	0.7	1.9	1.2	0.7	0.8	8,590
<b>Deprivation</b>								
15% most deprived	9.4	4.4	1.2	3.7	2.1	1.1	2.0	1,410
Rest of Scotland	5.9	2.6	0.7	1.8	1.3	0.8	0.8	8,570
<b>All</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>9,990</b>

Base: All respondents. Variable names: SH\_ANY, SHELECT, SHPOST, SHCALLS, SHSOCIAL, SHFOLL SHLOIT (by) Age breaks, VICFLAG3 QDGEN, SIMD\_TOP

**Table A1.4 Percentage of adults who experienced serious sexual assault since the age 16, by socio-demographic characteristics**

Social characteristics	Any more serious sexual assaults	Forced intercourse	Attempted forced intercourse	Other forced sexual acts	Attempted other forced sexual acts	Base
<b>Age</b>						
16-24	1.9	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.8	840
25-34	3.2	1.9	1.3	1.0	0.8	1,420
35-44	3.6	2.0	1.3	1.2	1.4	1,600
45-54	4.2	2.6	2.3	0.9	1.0	1,790
55-64	2.2	1.6	1.1	0.5	0.6	1,700
65 and over	1.3	0.6	0.6	0	0	2,640
<b>Male (Total)</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>4,530</b>
16-24	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3	400
25-34	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.8	630
35-44	1.2	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.7	720
45-54	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	820
55-64	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	780
65 and over	0.3	0.1	0.2	-	0.1	1,180
<b>Female (Total)</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>5,460</b>
16-24	2.9	1.5	1.0	0.5	1.3	440
25-34	5.4	3.5	2.3	1.4	0.8	790
35-44	5.9	3.4	2.3	2.0	2.1	870
45-54	7.7	4.8	4.2	1.5	1.7	980
55-64	4.2	3.1	2.2	1.0	1.3	910
65 and over	2.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.4*	1,460
<b>Victim status</b>						
Victim <sup>1</sup>	5.3	2.7	2.5	1.5	1.9	1,400
Non-victim	2.2	1.4	1.0	0.5	0.6	8,590
<b>Deprivation</b>						
15% most deprived	3.8	2.1	2.1	0.7	1.1	1,410
Rest of Scotland	2.5	1.5	1.1	0.7	0.7	8,570
<b>All</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>9,990</b>

Base: All respondents.

Variables: SV\_ANY\_EV, SAFS, SAAFS, SAOS, SAAOS by Age breaks, VICFLAG3 QDGEN, SIMD\_TOP

<sup>1</sup> A victim is defined as a respondent who reported crimes or offences in the main questionnaire (excluding sexual offences and threats) that are within the scope of the survey, took place in Scotland, and occurred within the reference period.

**Table A1.5 Percentage of adults who experienced different types of less serious sexual assault since the age 16, by socio-demographic characteristics**

Social characteristics	Any less serious sexual assault	Indecent exposure	Unwanted sexual touching	Sexual threats	Base
<b>Age</b>					
16-24	10.0	4.4	6.6	1.4	840
25-34	8.6	3.8	6.2	2.1	1,420
35-44	8.1	3.5	5.4	2.6	1,600
45-54	10.6	5.6	5.7	3.3	1,790
55-64	8.5	5.1	3.9	1.8	1,700
65 and over	5.1	3.4	2.1	1.1	2,640
<b>Male (Total)</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4,530</b>
16-24	6.0	4.0	2.6	0.3	400
25-34	3.2	1.7	1.6	0.6	630
35-44	2.4	1.2	1.4	0.6	720
45-54	2.4	1.0	1.5	0.8	820
55-64	1.9	0.8	1.1	0.3	780
65 and over	1.2	0.4	0.9	0.2	1,180
<b>Female (Total)</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5,460</b>
16-24	14.2	4.7	10.7	2.6	440
25-34	13.8	5.8	10.7	3.5	790
35-44	13.5	5.7	9.3	4.5	870
45-54	18.5	10.0	9.7	5.7	980
55-64	14.9	9.2	6.6	3.3	910
65 and over	8.1	5.7	3.0	1.8	1,460
<b>Victim status</b>					
Victim	10.5	5.3	6.1	3.4	1,400
Non-victim	7.9	4.1	4.6	1.8	8,590
<b>Deprivation</b>					
15% most deprived	6.5	2.9	4.0	2.6	1,410
Rest of Scotland	8.7	4.5	5.0	2.0	8,570
<b>All</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>9,990</b>

Base: All respondents. Variables: SV\_ANY\_EV, SVINEX, SVTS, SVST (by) Age breaks, VICFLAG3 QDGEN, SIMD\_TOP

## Annex 2. Data strengths and limitations

### Summary: data strengths and limitations

SCJS Strengths	SCJS Limitations
Captures information about crimes that are not reported to the police (including sensitive issues such as domestic abuse or drug abuse).	Does not cover all crimes (e.g. homicide or 'victimless' crimes such as speeding).
Provides information on multiple and repeat victimisation (up to 5 incidents in a series).	Does not cover the entire population (e.g. children, homeless people or people living in communal accommodation).
Good measure of trends since 2008/09.	Unable to produce robust data at lower level geographies.
Analyses risk for different demographic groups and victim-offender relationships.	Difficult to measure trends between survey sweeps in rarer forms of crime (such as more serious offences).
Provides attitudinal data (e.g. fear of crime or attitudes towards the justice system).	Estimates are subject to a degree of error.

One of main strengths of crime and victimisation surveys such as the SCJS is that they provide a complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime statistics. Police recorded crime is a measure of crime that police come into contact with. However, it is well established that people may be unwilling to report crimes for a range of reasons, including a perceived lack of benefit, fear of reprisal, vulnerability, an inability to identify assailants or unwillingness to bring the victims conduct to the attention of the police. People are also less likely to report some types of crime than others (for example, people are less likely to report sexual than property crimes). Police practices can also influence recorded crime, for example, officers may not record all crimes reported by the public.

These factors are unlikely to affect SCJS data. For example, people's attitudes toward the police are unlikely to affect SCJS data, nor are the data affected by police recording practices. SCJS data also provide a measure of prevalence, that is, the risk of experiencing different types of crime in a given time period. By contrast, police recorded crime can only measure incidence or the number of

crimes. In addition, the SCJS collects demographic information, providing richer insights into *who* is experiencing crime. Furthermore, follow-up questions about incidents allow the SCJS to capture respondent's attitudes to the criminal justice system, including reasons for not reporting crimes to the police.

### **Sampling and crime type limitations**

The main limitations of the SCJS result from sampling, and the types of crimes surveyed. In terms of sampling, the survey is of adults aged 16 and over, living in private residential households only. As such, the survey excludes persons under the age of sixteen, the homeless, and populations living in residences such as care homes, halls of residences, hospitals, prisons or other communal accommodation.

### **Survey Error**

As discussed in the report introduction, the SCJS gathers information from a sample rather than from the whole population and survey results are always estimates, not precise figures. This means that they are subject to a level of uncertainty. To estimate the extent of this uncertainty, 95% confidence intervals for the statistics are calculated to define bands within which the 'true' value of survey estimates are likely to lie (i.e. that value which would be obtained if a census of the entire population was undertaken). These confidence intervals are particularly important when making comparisons of SCJS estimates over short timescales.

### **Non-quantifiable errors: recall and accuracy**

SCJS estimates are also subject to a margin of non-quantifiable error. For example: there may be errors in the recall of participants as to when certain incidents took place; respondents may have claimed to have reported a crime to police when they had not, feeling that this was the socially acceptable response; some incidents could also be inaccurately recorded by interviewers, or miscoded by the wider survey team. Although a number of steps in the design and implementation of the survey are taken to reduce such errors, they can never be fully eliminated.

There may be errors in the recall of participants as to when certain incidents took place, or the number of incidents that took place. This is particularly relevant to collecting data on more sensitive topics, which may be cumulative and ongoing. For example, it may be difficult for respondents to recall the exact number of incidents. Also, respondents may not want to either remember or report some experiences.

For further details on the respective advantages and limitations of SCJS data see the introduction to the [2014/15 Main Findings Report](#) and the [Technical Report](#).

### **Survey design changes**

The collection of survey data on crime and victimisation in Scotland has undergone several major changes in methodology. Changing crime survey methodology in Scotland has implications for making comparisons across survey designs. As previous surveys had smaller sample sizes, estimates from earlier surveys are subject to a higher degree of uncertainty, and this report therefore focuses on the period from 2008-09 onwards.

### **Self-report data advantages**

One of main strengths of crime and victimisation surveys is that they provide a complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime statistics. The limitations of police recorded crime are well established. For example, people may be unwilling to report crimes for a range of reasons, including a perceived lack of benefit, fear of reprisal, vulnerability, an inability to identify assailants, or an unwillingness to bring the victims conduct to the attention of the police. Some types of crime are also less likely to be reported than others. For example, sexual crimes are less likely to be reported to the police than property crimes. Police recorded crime may also be influenced by police practices, for example, officers may not record all crimes that are reported to the police.

The SCJS self-complete section is unlikely to be influenced by attitudes towards the police and are unaffected by police recording procedures. It is designed to allow respondents to answer questions on more sensitive and personal topics privately. Self-report data can capture crimes and experiences of a sensitive nature that respondents may be unwilling to report to the police, or to disclose in a face-to-face survey situation. For example, evidence from the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows that respondents are more likely to report sensitive issues in the self-completion module than in face-to-face interviews (2014; 3). Section 7.7 of the [Technical Report](#) discusses the self-complete section of the questionnaire in more detail.

Unlike police recorded crime (which measures incidence or the number of crimes), the SCJS can also provide a measure of prevalence, that is, the risk of experiencing different types of crime within a certain time period. The survey also provides information on respondent's reasons for not reporting experiences/crimes to the police, and on their attitudes towards the criminal justice system more broadly.

### **Self-report data limitations**

A number of factors may affect the self-report data (as well as other types of survey data). These include the wording of questions and the presence or skills of the interviewer. The presence of other people in the house may also influence results. Although the self-completion module allows respondents to answer in relative privacy, respondents may be unwilling to disclose personal or distressing details.

Another important limitation to consider is where self-completion interviews on sensitive topics are administered by the interviewer, at the request of

respondents, who, for example, do not wish to use the laptop/tablet to complete the interview themselves. In 2014/15 87% of respondents completed the self-completion section: 71% entered their answers directly in to the tablet PC themselves and 16% asked the interviewer to administer the questionnaire for them. Of those where the interviewer administered the self-completion, in five per cent of cases, the respondent completed the section themselves after the first few questions being administered by the interviewer. Steps are taken by the SCJS trained interviewers to ensure that the number of self-complete interviews that are interviewer-administered are minimised and this is monitored closely by the SCJS team and our survey contractors.

Under-reporting and under-representation is also a concern of this survey. For example, it is likely that there will be an under-representation of some groups, e.g. those who take drugs. In part, this will be due to the fact that some people who use drugs may live in accommodation not covered by a survey of private households (such as the SCJS) including, for example, hostels, prisons and student halls of residence. The survey is likely to under-represent those with the most problematic or chaotic drug use, some of whom may live in accommodation previously described and some of whom may live in private households covered by the survey, yet they may be rarely be at home or be unable to take part in an interview due to the chaotic nature of their lives.

Despite using Computer Assisted Self-completion Interviewing (CASI) for this module, it is likely there will be some underreporting of illicit drug use, partner abuse and sexual victimisation and stalking among survey respondents. For example, each of these are sensitive topics, and illicit drug use is an illegal activity and as such some individuals may have felt uncomfortable reporting that they have taken illicit drugs, despite reassurances about confidentiality and anonymity.

Questions cover past use over varying periods (ever, in the last year and in the last month) and it is possible that some respondents may simply forget experiences, particularly if they last took it a long time ago.



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The data collected for this social research publication:

are available via the [UK Data Service](#).

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ISBN 978-1-78652-264-1 (web only)

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