

JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2024/25

Sexual violence and harassment

Summary Points

- The rate of sexual offences in Bristol in 2023/24 was 4.0 per 1,000 population, significantly higher than the national average (2.9 per 1,000 population).
- The prevalence of sexual assault is likely to be far greater than the number of recorded offences
- Over a third of people in Bristol feel that sexual harassment is an issue (QoL survey 2024/25).

Findings

Nationally police recorded crime for sexual offences has been increasing year on year since 2012/13 (see figure 1). [Note - Police recorded data needs to be treated with caution, high levels of non-reporting and changes in reporting (which can reflect the impact of high-profile incidents, media coverage or campaigns) mean that it is difficult to identify trends. The overall trend is also difficult to disentangle from the impact of lockdowns. Nationally there was a noticeable drop in recorded offences during the Spring 2020 lockdown before a return to previous levels in the July to September 2020 quarter¹].

In Bristol, the rate of sexual offences has tended to mirror the national profile but at a significantly higher rate, but in the latest period the rate has increased locally but decreased nationally. The 2023/24 rate of 4.0 per 1,000 population is the highest rate recorded in Bristol, significantly higher than the England average (2.9%). Bristol has the third highest rate of all English core cities, an increase from the previous year when Bristol has the second lowest rate. Sheffield is lowest (2.5 per 1,000) and Manchester the highest (4.9 per 1,000).

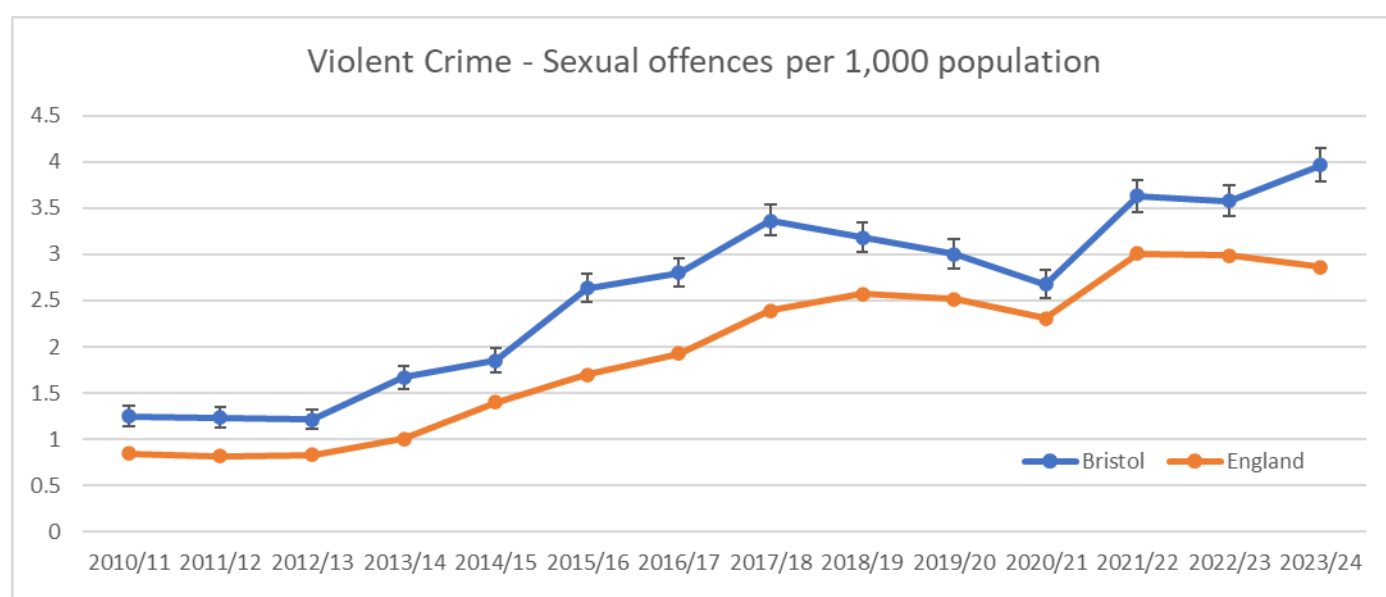


Figure 1: Sexual Offences per 1,000 population. Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework: [Fingertips](https://www.fingertips.com/).

¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/earendingseptember2021#domestic-abuse-and-sexual-offences>

Project Bluestone

Project Bluestone was an initiative launched by Avon and Somerset Police in 2021 and has led to sustained improvements to the way Avon and Somerset police approaches rape and serious sexual offences². Avon and Somerset Police's charge rate for rape cases has more than doubled over three years with charge volumes increasing from 62 in 2021 to 231 in the last year.

Rate of Sexual Offences by Ward

Figure 2 below shows a significant increase in the rate of recorded sexual offences in many wards across Bristol. Hotwells & Harbourside and Central wards have both experienced significant decreases compared with the previous year. However other wards such as Filwood and Eastville have seen consecutive increases over the past three years.

The [Women's Safety Charter](#) was launched in 2022 by Bristol Nights and aims to build a network of safety advocates across the city, recognising that everyone should feel safe after dark and that harassment has no place in our city.

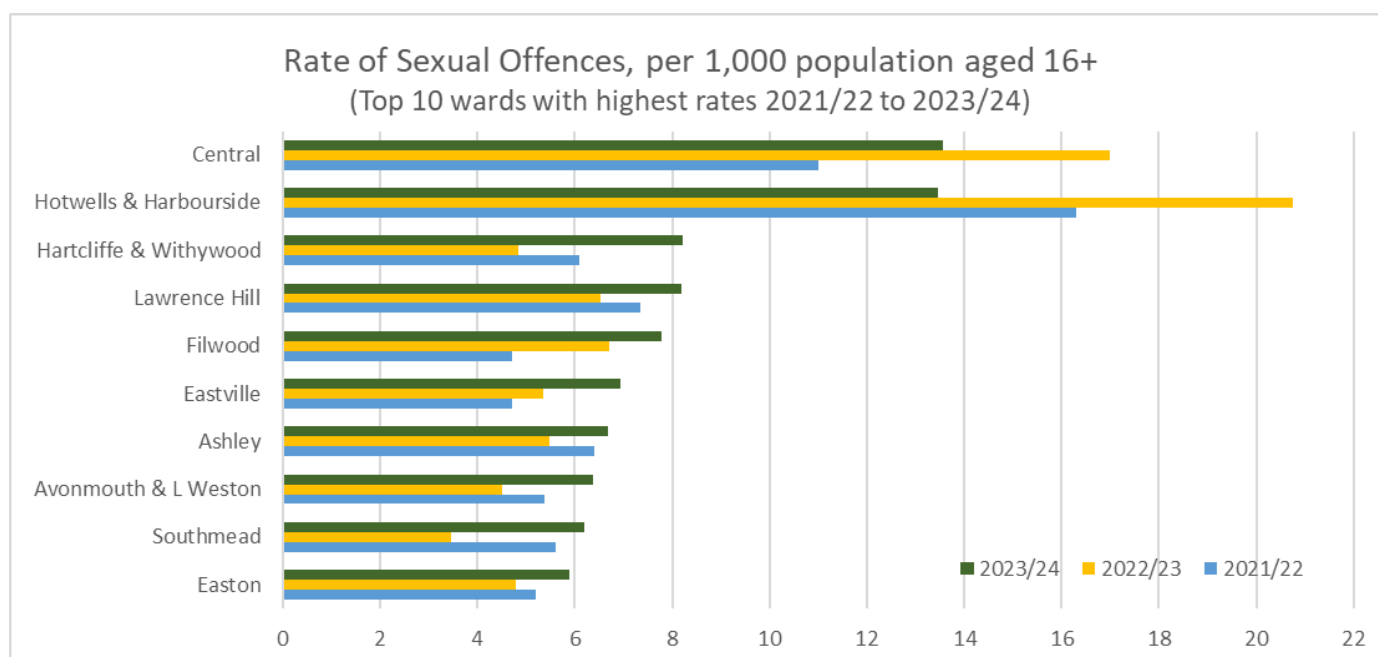


Figure 2: Source: Avon & Somerset Constabulary, ONS Population Estimates

Estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The following findings have been extracted from the ONS bulletin for [Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2024](#): Latest available estimates from the CSEW for the year ending September 2024 showed that 2.2% of people aged 16 years and over had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year.

² [Project Bright Light | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

For analysing data over time, we use the 16 to 59 years age range to give a comparable time series. The CSEW for the year ending March 2024 estimated 2.6% of people aged 16 to 59 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year, compared with 1.5% for the year ending March 2014. The CSEW can also provide important context for police figures, for example latest estimates showed that fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault by penetration reported the crime to the police.

Police recorded sexual offences increased by 5% in the year ending September 2024 (199,445 offences) compared with the previous year (190,620 offences), in part due to improvements in police recording practices over the last decade. Of all sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending September 2024, approximately 35% (69,958) were rape offences. This was a 3% increase from 67,746 offences in the year ending September 2023.

Sexual Harassment

Self-reported data from the Bristol Quality of Life survey 2024/25³ indicates that 36.7% people feel that “sexual harassment is an issue in Bristol”, an increase on the previous year (33.2%). By sub-locality, the highest % of residents who feel sexual harassment is an issue live in the Inner City (45.3%) and the lowest live in North and West (Outer) (31.6%). By ward breakdown residents say that sexual harassment is more of an issue in Hengrove & Whitchurch Park (48.9%), Ashley (47.9%) and Easton (47.1%) and less of an issue in Brislington West (27.4%), Redland (26.4%) and Stockwood (21.7%) – the ward with the lowest level of concern (see figure 3 overleaf).

Equalities data: Sexual harassment in Bristol was felt to be a significantly higher issue for some equalities groups when compared to the Bristol average of 36.7%, including Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) people (56.5%) and young people aged 16 to 24 (54.2%) . 39.3% of females felt that sexual harassment was an issue compared to 33.4% of males.

³ [The quality of life in Bristol - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/jsna)

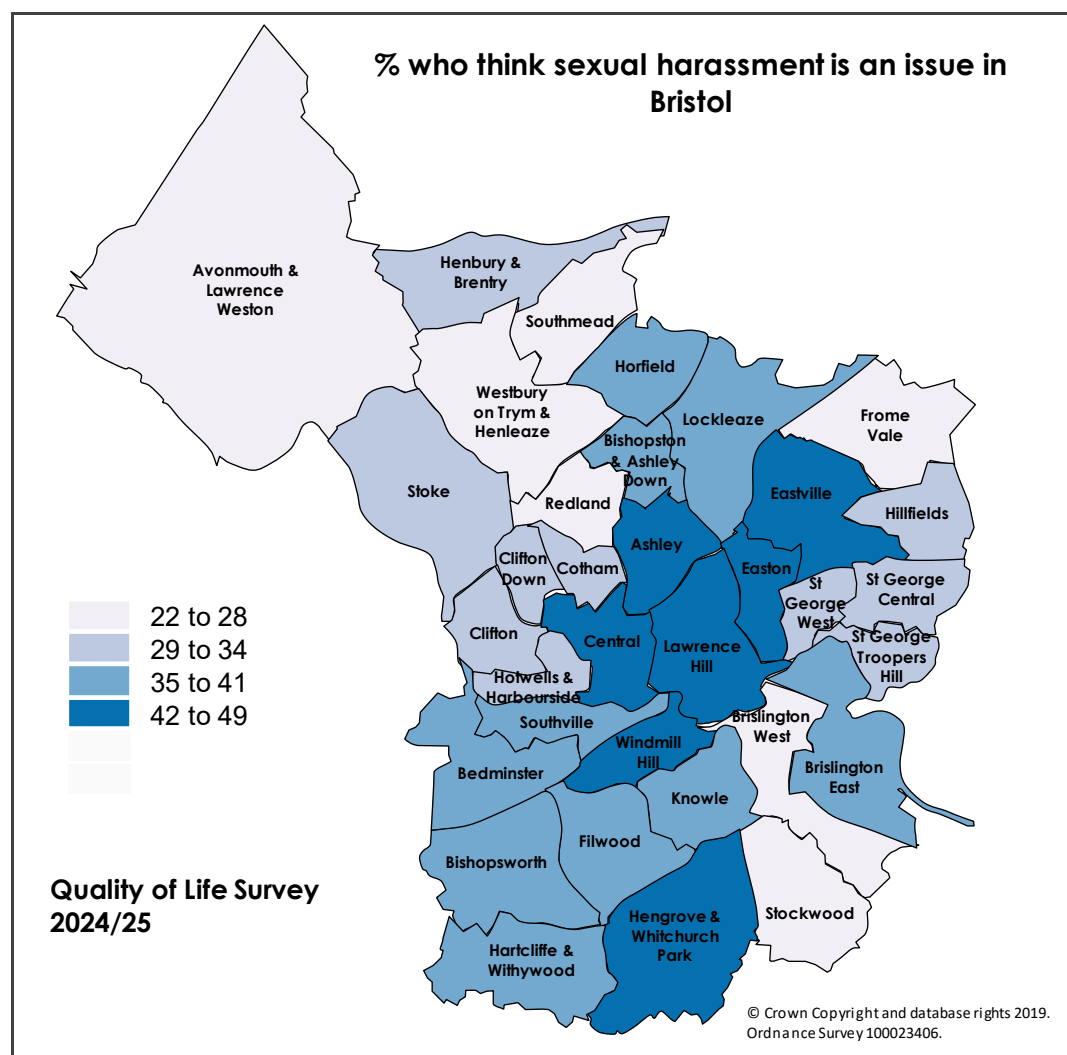


Fig 3: Source: Bristol Quality of Life survey 2024/25

Further data / links:

- Public Health Outcomes Framework: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/phof>
- [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

Date updated: March 2025**Next update due:** March 2026