

# Cost of Living Crisis and Violent Crime – Analysis and Research

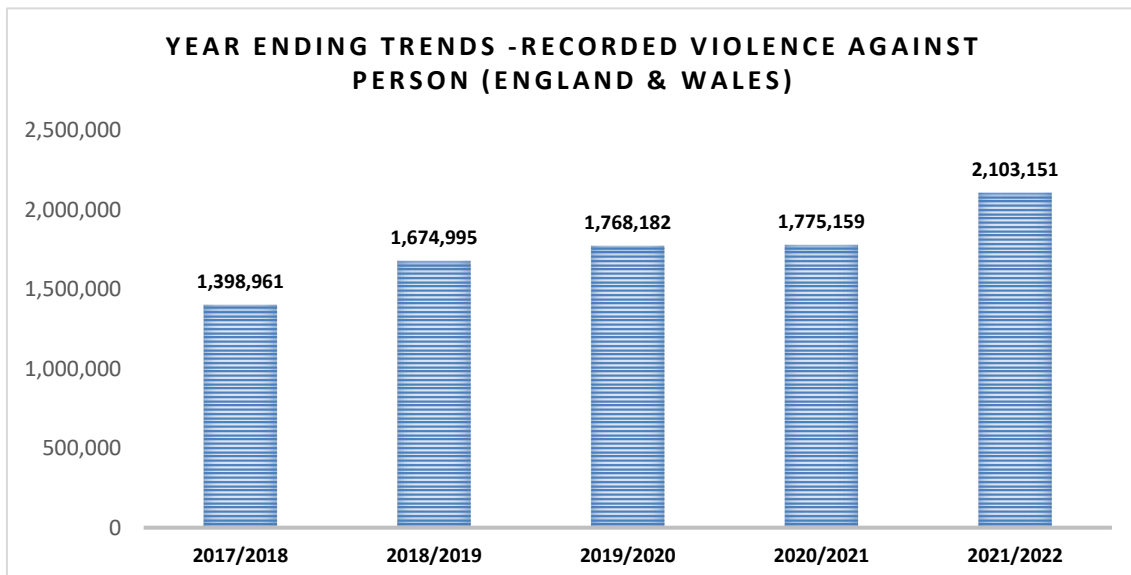
Authors: Harry Forsyth – Risk and Intel Analyst

With the current Cost of Living Crisis affecting the UK - due to the rise in energy costs, rising inflation and the current war in Ukraine; life in the UK is currently difficult for most of its citizens and the issue into the colder months seems to predict worse things to come.

This small report is to investigate and analysis year end Police data to identify the current issues and what is expected going into Winter. The report looks closely at Violent Crime reported into the Police Forces in England & Wales from the year ending of 2021/2022 (31<sup>st</sup> March 2022) and how a forecast into the next few years could see an increase in reported violence.

From several reports, Police chiefs have noted that a 'Tidal Wave' of violent crime will ripple through the UK, during the winter months. From reporter Natasha Anderson of the Daily Mail, **"The chiefs are concerned that 'economic turmoil and financial instability' has the potential to spark a rise in crime, especially 'acquisitive' offences, a leaked national strategy paper has revealed"**. The 'rise' Police chiefs are mentioning are mainly the increase in shoplifting, burglary, online fraud, and other crimes that can exploit vulnerability. With the rise of prices on house of energy bills, food, and fuel - this will lead to first time offender's committing crimes to survive, with the fear of not making it through the harsh winter months. ([Police 'prepare for tidal wave of violent crime and public disorder' as cost of living bites | Daily Mail Online](#)). These crimes can lead into violent tendencies, with the stress and frustration of the public reaching boiling point; with nowhere to turn or go and leading to crime to fuel their needs to survive.

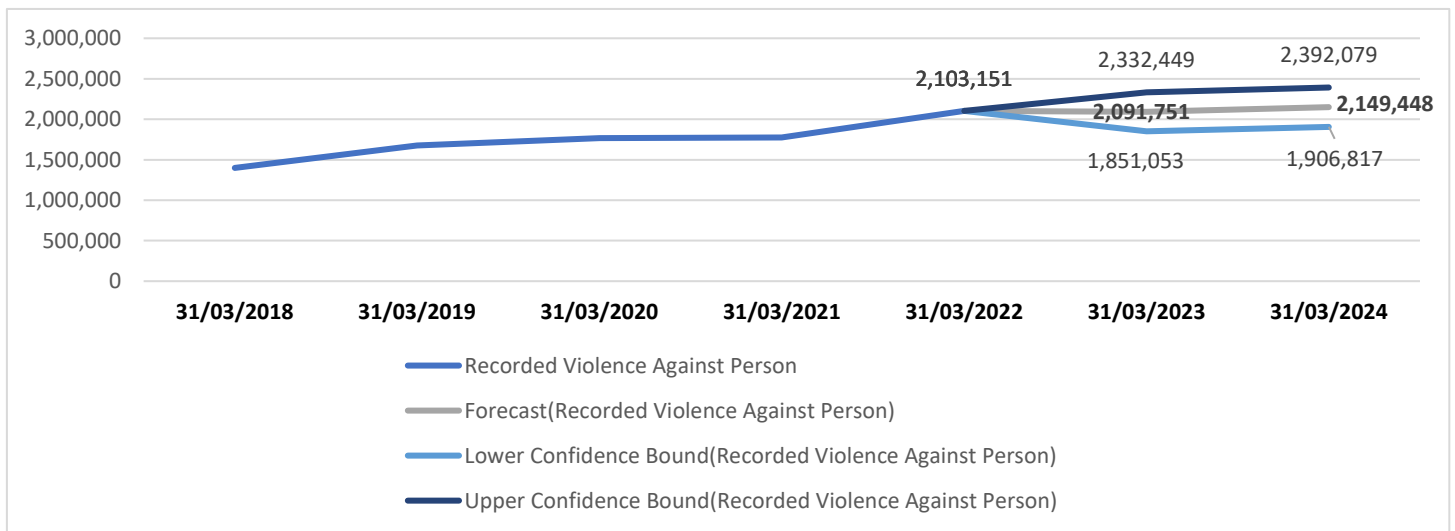
From Government and Police data, Crime in the UK has risen by 16% from the year ending of 2021/2022. Looking closer at Violent Against Person Crimes reported into Police Forces in England and Wales, there has been a general increase in violent crimes being reported. From the Y/E 2020/2021 (31/03/2021) to 2021/2022, a rise in violent crime was reported at 18%. This growth is the biggest jump in data seen since the Y/E 2017/20218 and 2018/2019 – which saw an uprise in results at 20%. Since 2018/2019 – statistics stabilised but slowly increased over time. Crime of violence saw an increase between 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Restrictions being placed, which saw the public becoming frustrated and fed-up with being locked in and legislations penalising activities with others. The Cost-of-Living Crisis currently could see potential figures for violence increase further into the future, due to the inflation on prices and the risk of recession occurring on the horizon.



<https://www.statista.com/>

Below – GV Analytical view of the upcoming forecast for Year Ending results for Violent Crimes, being reported into Police Forces in England and Wales.

Looking at Forecasting into the next two-year ending dates (2022/2023 and 2023/2024) results can branch into three different scenarios, depending on the worse and best case for future data collation. Looking at Upper Confidence Bound, there potentially could be more continuous increases of 11% into the Year End results of 2022/2023; with further rises of 3% from 2023 into 2024. This rise in crime data could collate well with the potential 'tidal wave' of crimes that could occur going into the winter months, which is leading into Police Chiefs Councils creating plans to deal with the unpredictable risk and chance of civil unrest – due to soaring, eye watering living costs. If we look at middle of the road, there could be a small dip in results of 1% (2,103,151 Y/E 2022 to 2,091,751 Y/E of 2023), but may see statistics rising again into 2024, increasing to 3%. Finally, if results lower into 2023, there is a chance (however unlikely) that Violent Crimes reported into Police Forces could potentially drop by 12%. However, results will rise again like other scenarios seen in the forecast, with 2024 year-end figures rising by 3%.



From the results above, there is a strong probability that the Violence Against Person crimes reported into Police Forces across England and Wales will increase, due to the difficult months ahead. Before the new Prime Minister Liz Truss bought in a price-freeze on the energy crisis (Cap is frozen at £2500), the average household bill for gas and electricity in England would have rose to an eye-watering £3,549 from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. Even with the freeze being put on by Parliament and energy grants being paid into households from 1<sup>st</sup> October, this can be seen as a good scenario for the UK public, and a short-term aid to this crisis. However, some may see this as a bandage over the wound – with the continuous issue of rising inflation, food and fuel prices going into the new year of 2023. The Household Support Scheme introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 will reportedly freeze energy bills for two years, with people in England, Scotland and Wales paying an average **34p per kWh of electricity**. It was being reported that from Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, the average annual prices for energy usage could have reached approx. £4,200, leading vulnerable citizens into fuel poverty. Even with this cap placed to help households with their energy bills, issues with the price of food and fuel could still see unrest in society, leading to members of public becoming desperate and committing acts of crime to help feed themselves and their families going into winter. Civil unrest could be a concern also going into the colder months with lower incoming families having to decide on whether to eat or turn on their heating.

More analytical research will need to be conducted once October 1<sup>st</sup> has passed with the frozen cap on rising energy prices (Average Price from 1<sup>st</sup> October - £2500), this can then help identify where the correlation and forecast of violent behaviour is leading to into 2023; but also investigate how inflation, cost of food and fuel has changed in this time frame.