

Who is vulnerable to bicycle theft?

Specification links

AQA

GCSE 3.2.1. Urban Issues and Challenges *Urban change in cities in the UK leads to a variety of social, economic, and environmental opportunities and challenges.*

Edexcel

GCSE 4.5 Globalisation and economic change create challenges for the chosen UK city that require long-term solutions. *How economic change is increasing inequality in the city and the differences in quality of life.*

OCR

GCSE 1.2.3. There are different causes and consequences of development within the UK. *The causes of uneven development within the UK, including geographical location, economic change, infrastructure, and government policy.*

Eduqas

GCSE 2.2.2 What are some of the contemporary challenges facing UK towns and cities?

Overview of bike theft in England and Wales

The latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) data released on bike theft in England and Wales [is from 2017](#). This release was based on the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Generally speaking, bike theft accounts for around 5% of all crimes covered in the CSEW. In recent survey years around 2 in 100 households have been victims of bike theft in the past 12 months.

Which groups in society are most likely to be bike theft victims?

There are very specific age groups and types of person who fall victim to bike theft. Below is a visual *Guess Who* activity designed to highlight exactly who is most likely to have their bike stolen.

Using the images below as a prompt, can you guess who is more likely to be a victim of bike theft? Circle or tick the correct box¹.

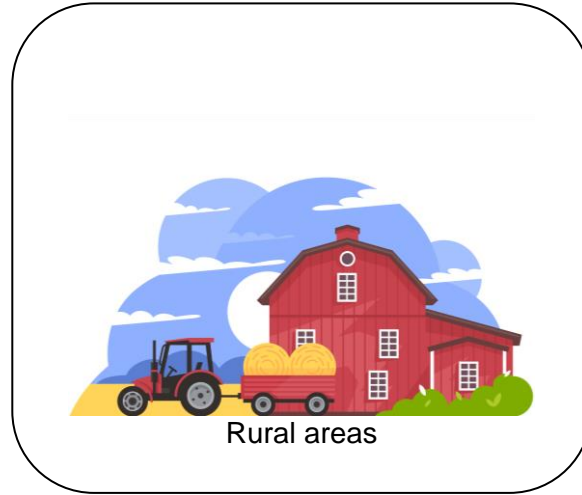
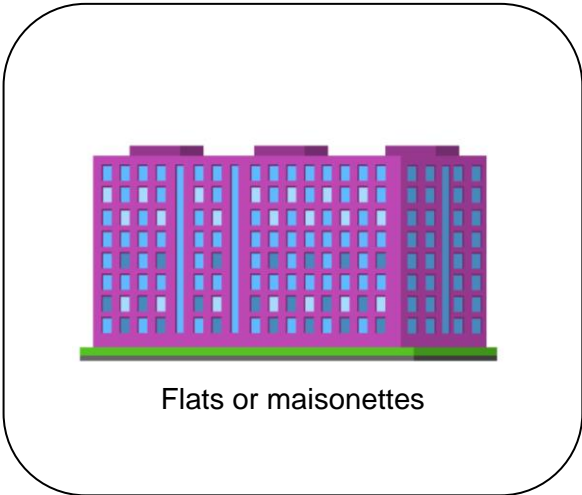
¹When civility was measured by the CSEW the measure encompasses: vandalism, graffiti, deliberate damage to property, rubbish, litter, and homes in a poor condition.



Full time student



Other occupations





Bike thieves

Bikes are stolen for different reasons. Some cycles are stolen for transportation purposes, to get the offender from A to B. Other cycles might be stolen to trade in for cash or drugs. Specific (generally more expensive) bikes might be stolen to order. Alternatively, a bike may be stolen to facilitate another crime, such as robbery of a mobile phone to increase the speed with which the offender can escape.

Most bike thefts do not result in someone being arrested. The detection rate for bike thefts in England and Wales tends to be around 5%. Low police detection rates may partly be due to the fact that for many bike thefts there is little relationship between the offender and the victim, and thus identification of suspects is often difficult.

There is some evidence that bike theft is a “gateway” or “entry” crime i.e., the first offence of a career criminal who then might go on to commit more serious forms of criminality.

Bike theft is also largely a crime of stealth, or one that goes unnoticed or unchallenged. This is most clearly illustrated [in this video of bike theft in New York](#).

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Further reading

- Which groups in society are most likely to be victims of bicycle theft? [Overview of bicycle theft - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)
- Victims of Crime published 4 March 2020 <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-the-law/crime-and-reoffending/victims-of-crime/latest>
- An interview with a former London bike thief <https://www.stolenride.co.uk/former-bike-thief-london-interview/>
- Bike theft affects the young and the poor <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2019/feb/22/bike-theft-affects-the-young-and-poor-most-why-is-it-not-taken-seriously>
- Cyclists reveal the true cost of crime <https://inews.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/money/bike-thefts-rife-cyclists-reveal-true-cost-crime-885103>

