

# Victim Personal Statement: Victim Inequality 2015/16

Analysis of data on the offer of Victim Personal Statements from the Crime Survey for England and Wales  
April 2013 to March 2016

January 2017



## Foreword



In November 2015, I published the review – *The Silenced Victim: A Review of Victim Personal Statements*. It looked at how criminal justice agencies and partners involved in the Victim Personal Statement (VPS) process deliver their obligations and what victims say they are experiencing, as set out in the Victims' Code. I found that a systemic failure to make sure victims have the opportunity to make a VPS has left them unfairly silenced within the criminal justice system.

I was shocked by this revelation, so I wanted to investigate whether any particular types of victims are less likely to have the opportunity to make a VPS than others. In January 2016 I published an analysis of data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2014/15. This nationally representative survey asks victims whether they have been offered the opportunity to make a VPS, whether they actually made one, if they wanted their VPS to be read out loud and if they thought their VPS was taken into account by the

criminal justice system. The analysis provided a breakdown of victims who are offered the opportunity to make a VPS, by demographics. It revealed that there is victim inequality and that some victims are being disadvantaged because of where they live, their age, race and long-term health conditions.

This report examines the latest data released from the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2015/16. It examines the current provision of VPSs broken down by demographic data; and a longitudinal approach is used to establish whether this provision is getting better or worse for different groups of victims over the past three years.

The results show that a very small proportion of victims overall are offered a VPS and this has not increased over the last three years. However, there is a significant increase in the proportion of victims who choose to make a VPS once they are made aware of it; it is clear that victims value the opportunity to make a VPS. Disappointingly, some groups of victims continue to be less likely to be offered a VPS than others, I have found significant variations by age, ethnicity, religion, disability, geographical region, crime type and marital status.

I hope that by highlighting these figures a year on, criminal justice agencies will see that there is a long way to go to ensure that all victims have equal access to having their voice heard within the criminal justice system.

I would like to see that the findings in this report help agencies to target their resources to ensure that all victims are offered their entitlement to make a VPS as set out in the Victims' Code, no victim should be a *Silenced Victim!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helena'.

## Summary of key findings

### All victims

Very few victims are offered the opportunity to make a VPS (15% in 2015/16) and this has not improved over the last three years. Significantly more victims are taking up the opportunity to make a VPS than a year ago (61% in 2015/16 compared with 51% in 2014/15) and almost a third (31%) of victims wanted to read out their VPS in court, however this is not significantly different from 2014/15 (38%). There is a downward trend in victims feeling that their VPS has been taken into account, with significantly less victims thinking this in 2015/16 (57%), compared with 2013/14 (69%).

### Age

Older victims (aged 65 – 74) are less likely to be offered a VPS than victims overall (8% in 2015/16), this is significantly lower than 2013/14 (16%).

### Gender

There is no significant difference between the proportion of men and women who are offered the opportunity to make a VPS.

### Disability

In incidents where the victim has a long standing illness or disability, victims are no less likely to be offered a VPS than incidents overall.

### Marital status

In incidents where the victim is married (12% in 2015/16) or widowed (9% in 2015/16), victims are significantly less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS. In incidents where the victim is divorced (20%), victims are more likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16.

### Ethnicity

Incidents in which the victim is Black (13%) are less likely in 2015/16 to be offered a VPS than the previous year (26%), while incidents with White victims (16%) are more likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16 than in 2014/15 (14%). Incidents with Asian victims are less likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16 (12%) than they were in 2013/14 (22%).

### Religion

Incidents in which the victim identifies as Christian are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS (13%) than incidents overall (15%) and they are less likely to be offered a VPS now compared with 2013/14 (16%).

### Area type

Incidents in which the victim lives in a rural area are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS (12%) than incidents overall in 2015/16, and they are less likely to be offered a VPS than they were in 2013/14 (18%).

### Region

In incidents in the East of England (8%), victims are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS and those in the South West (27%) are more likely to be offered one compared with incidents overall in 2015/16 (15%).

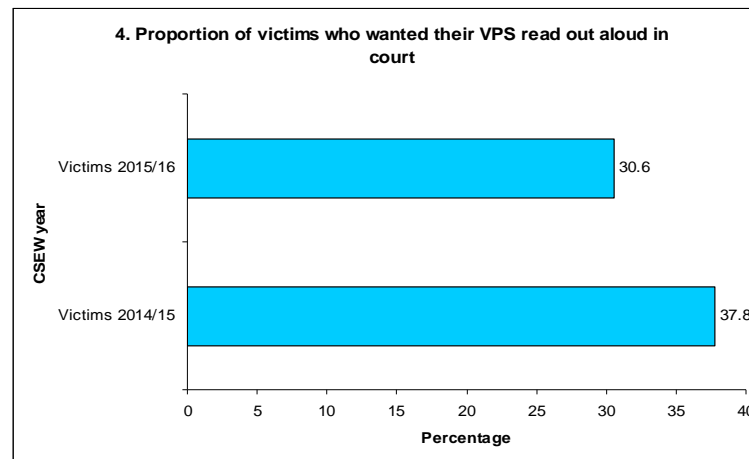
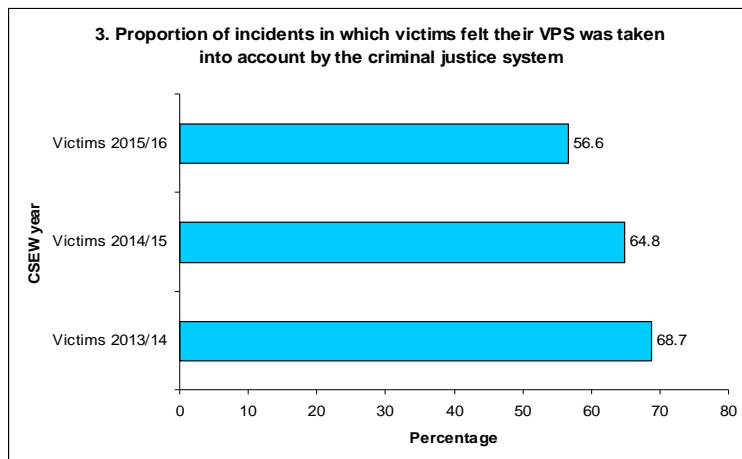
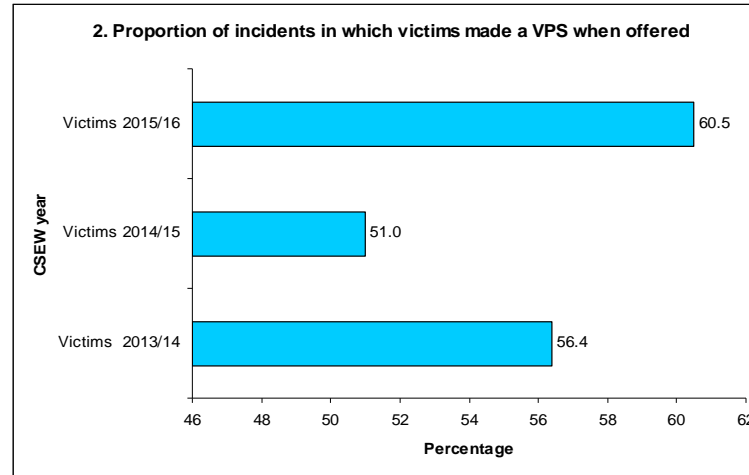
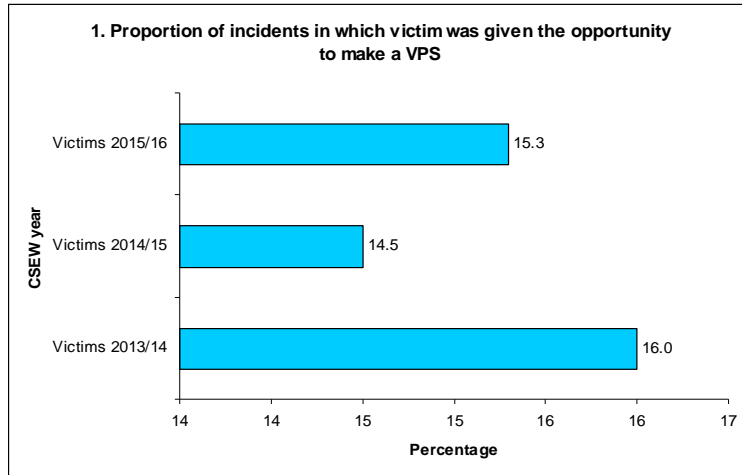
### Offence

Incidents of violence are more likely to result in a victim being offered a VPS (23%) than incidents overall in 2015/16.

Victims in theft related incidents are less likely to be offered a chance to make a VPS than victims overall, (vehicle related theft 9%, bicycle theft 10%, other theft of personal property 10%).

## All victims

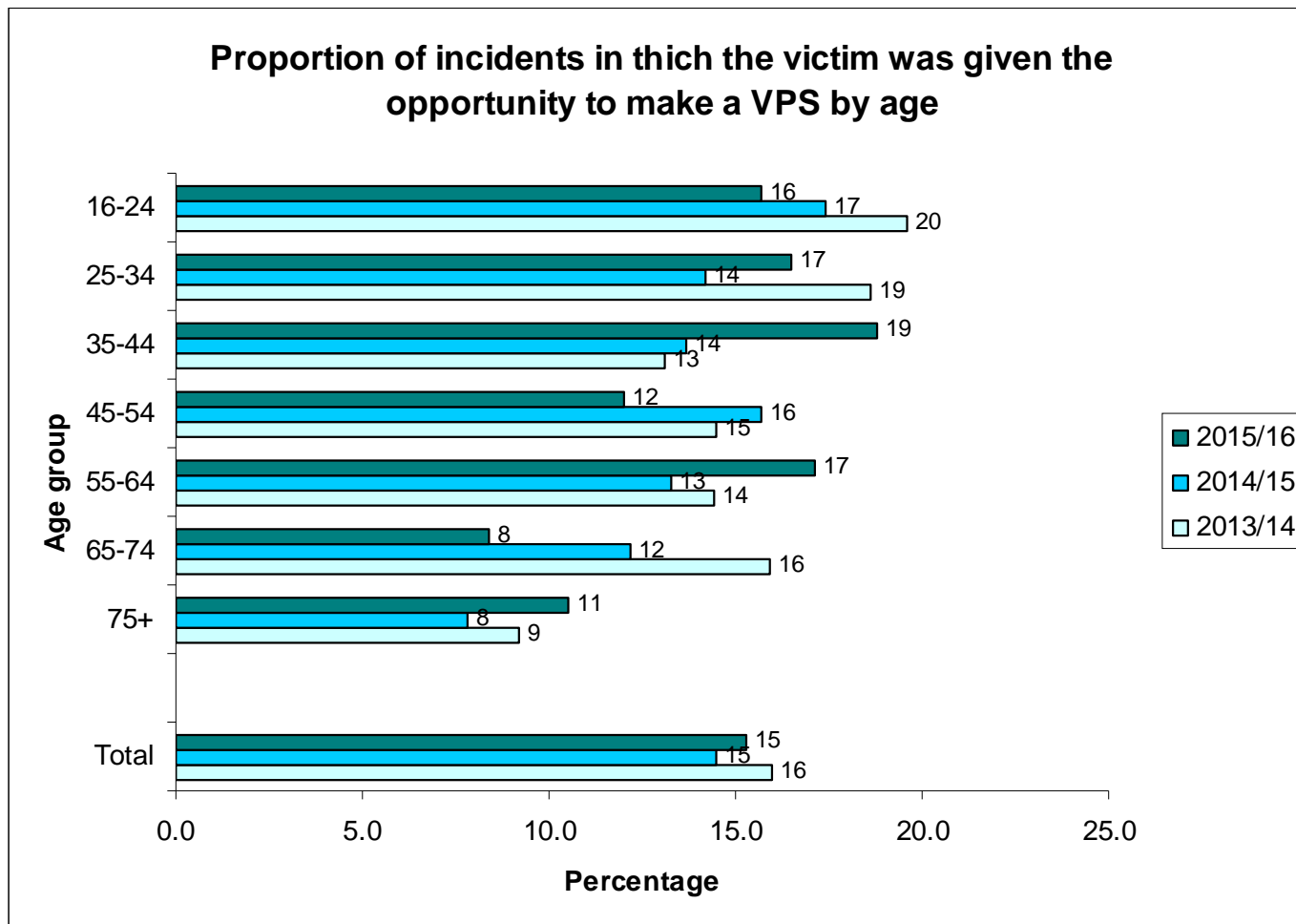
There has been no change in the proportion of incidents in which victims were offered the opportunity to make a VPS in the last three years. However, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of victims that choose to make a VPS in 2015/16 compared to the previous 12 months. Fifty seven per cent of victims felt their VPS was taken into account, which is significantly lower than in 2013/14. Almost a third (31%) of victims wanted to read out their VPS in court, this is not significantly different to 2014/15 (38%).



1. CSEW 2013/14 Base: (2,778), CSEW 2014/15 Base: (2,552), CSEW 2015/16 Base (2,603) 2. CSEW 2013/14 Base: (402) CSEW 2014 /15 Base (307), CSEW 2015/16 Base: (345). 3. CSEW 2013/14 Base: (170), CSEW 2014/15 Base: (123), CSEW 2015/16 (154) 4. CSEW 2014/15 Base (137), CSEW 2015/16 Base: (127) (This question was introduced in April 2014).

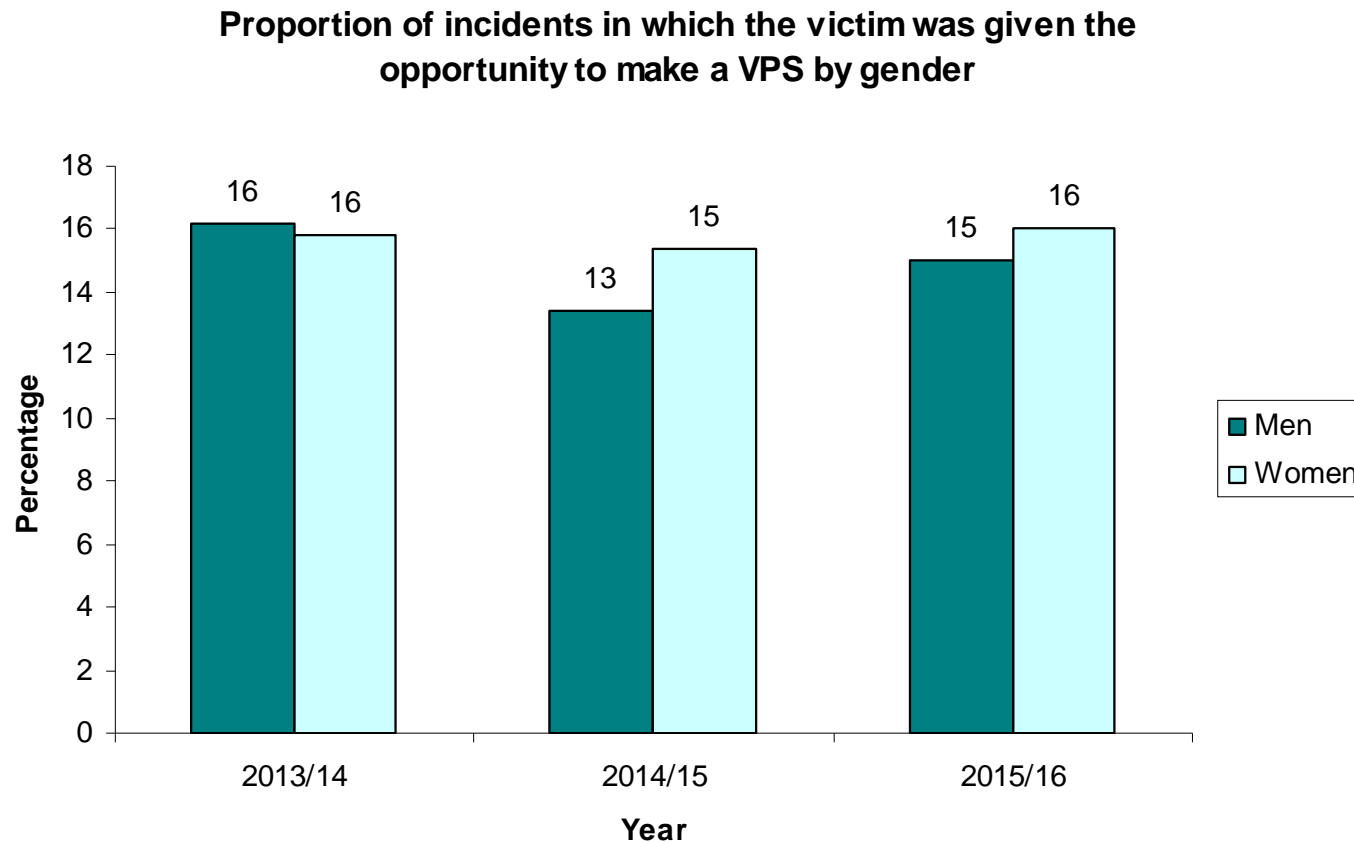
## Age

Incidents with victims aged between 45-54 and 65-74 are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS compared with incidents overall. Incidents with victims aged 65-74 are also less likely to be offered a VPS than they were in 2013/14. In contrast, incidents with victims aged 35-44 are now more likely to be offered a VPS compared with the previous two years.



## Gender

There is no statistically significant difference in the proportion of incidents where a victim was offered the chance to make a VPS according to the victims' gender, and has remained stable over the last three years.

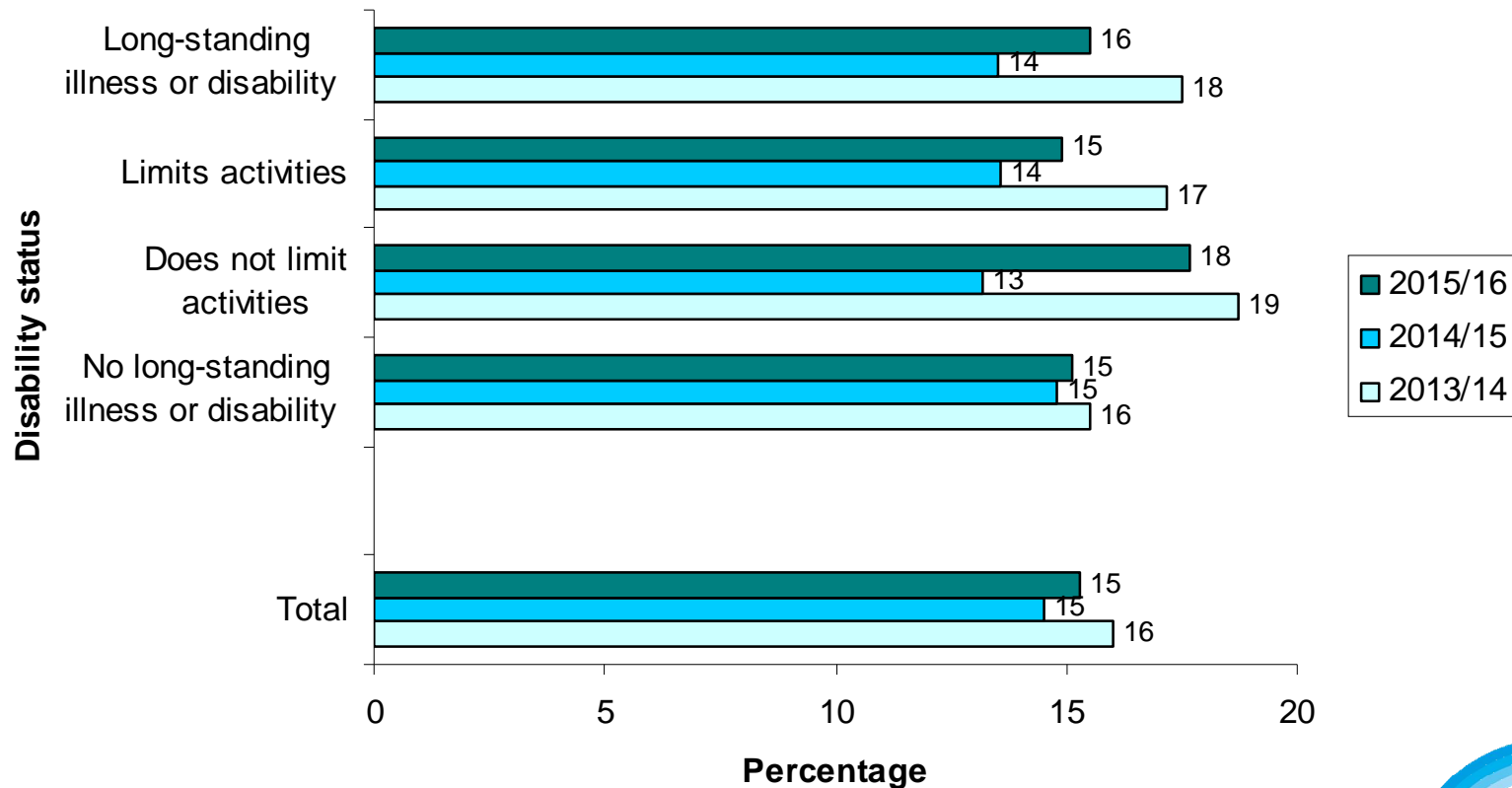


CSEW 2013/14 Base all respondents: (2,778), CSEW 2014/15 Base all respondents: (2,552), CSEW 2015/16 Base all respondents: (2,603)  
N.B: All percentages are rounded. The levels in the bar charts represent un-rounded percentages and so there may appear to be some difference in levels with the same label. E.g. in 2013/14 16.2% of men and 15.8% of women were offered the opportunity to make a VPS.

## Disability

In incidents in which the victim has a long standing illness or disability, victims are no less likely to be offered a VPS than incidents overall.

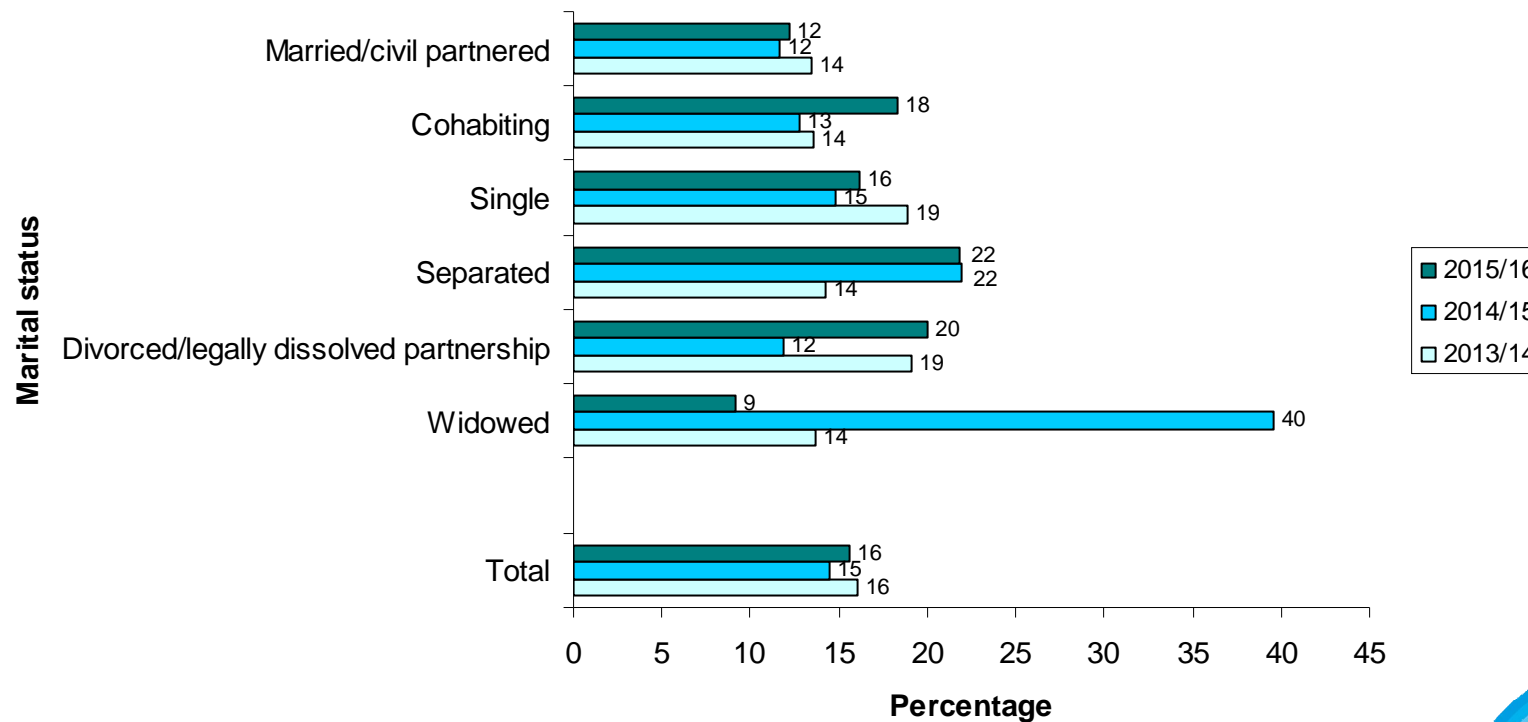
**Proportion of incidents in which the victim was given the opportunity to make a VPS by disability**



## Marital Status

In incidents where the victim is married or in a civil partnership and those in which the victim is widowed, victims are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS in 2015/16, compared to incidents overall and despite widowed victims being more likely to be offered a VPS in 2014/15 than other victims. Incidents in which the victim is divorced are more likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16 than incidents overall. In incidents where victims are cohabiting or separated, victims are more likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16 than in the previous year.

**Proportion of incidents in which the victim was given the opportunity to make a VPS by marital status**

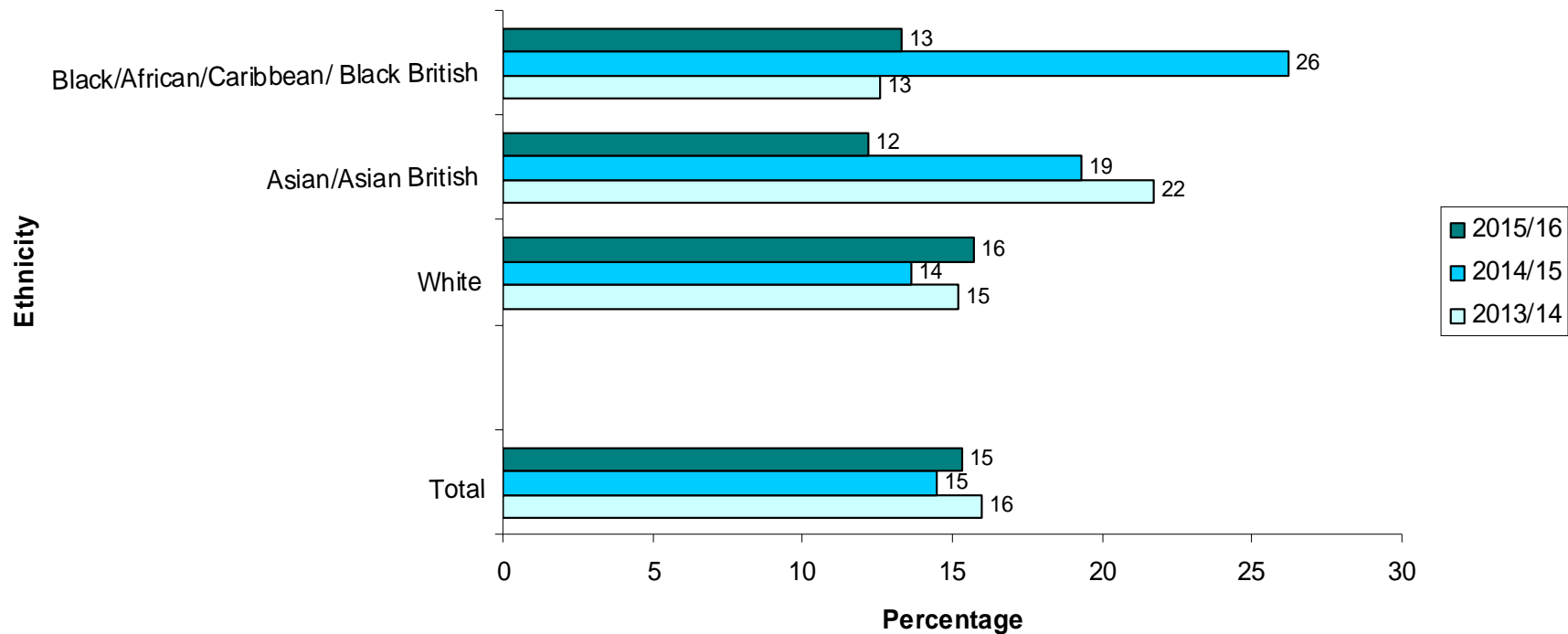




## Ethnicity

Incidents in which the victim is Black are less likely in 2015/16 to be offered a VPS compared to the previous year, while incidents with White victims are more likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16 than in 2014/15. Incidents with Asian victims are less likely to be offered a VPS in 2015/16 than they were in 2013/14.

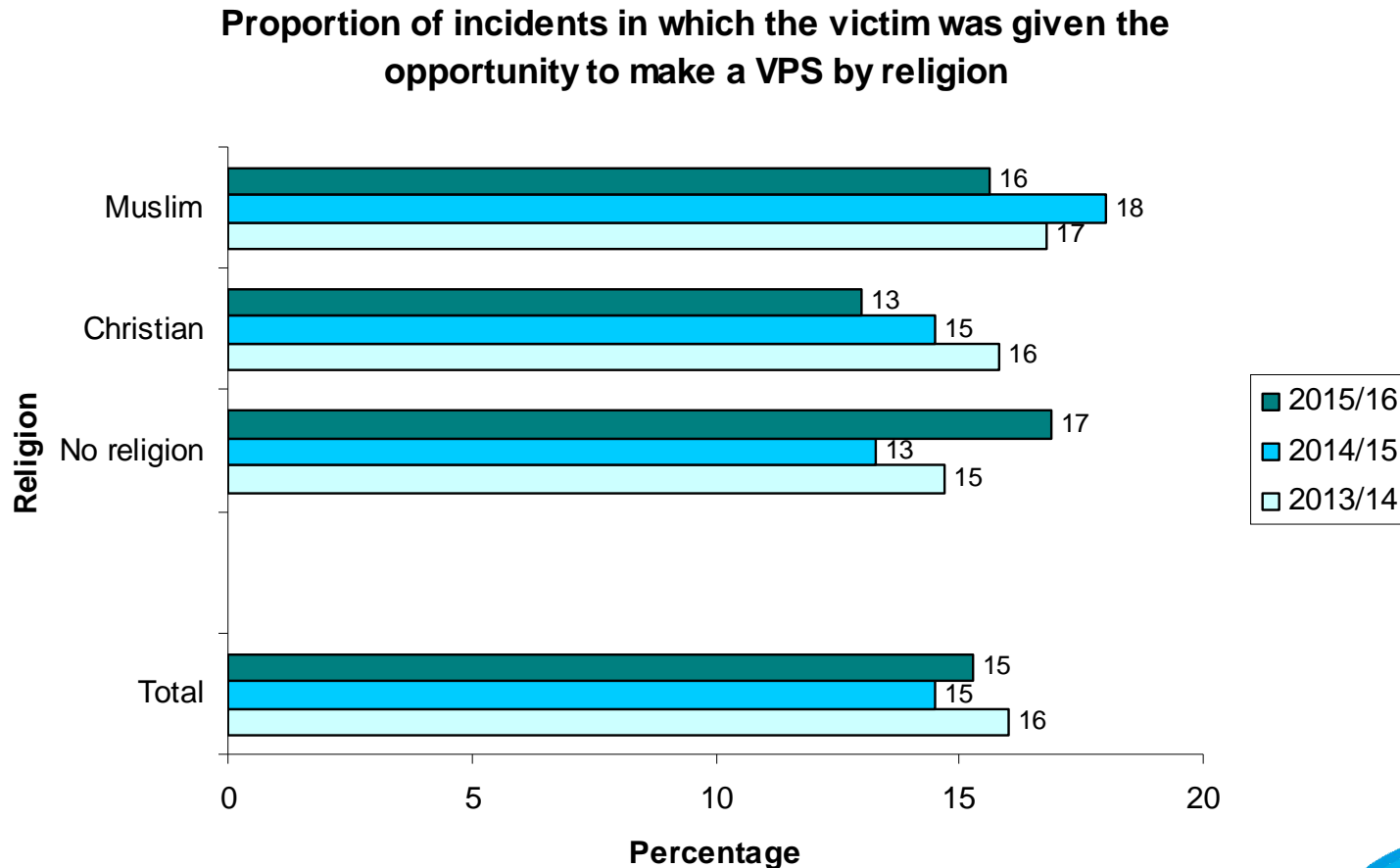
**Proportion of incidents in which the victim was given the opportunity to make a VPS by ethnicity**



CSEW 2013/14 Base all respondents: (2,778), CSEW 2014/15 Base all respondents: (2,552), CSEW 2015/16 Base all respondents (2,603)  
N.B: The number of victims who answered the question who were from Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups and Other ethnic groups was too small to report.

## Religion

In incidents in 2015/16 where the victim identifies as Christian are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS than incidents overall, and they are less likely to be offered a VPS now compared with 2013/14. Incidents in which the victim does not identify themselves with any religion are more likely to be offered a VPS now than in 2014/15.

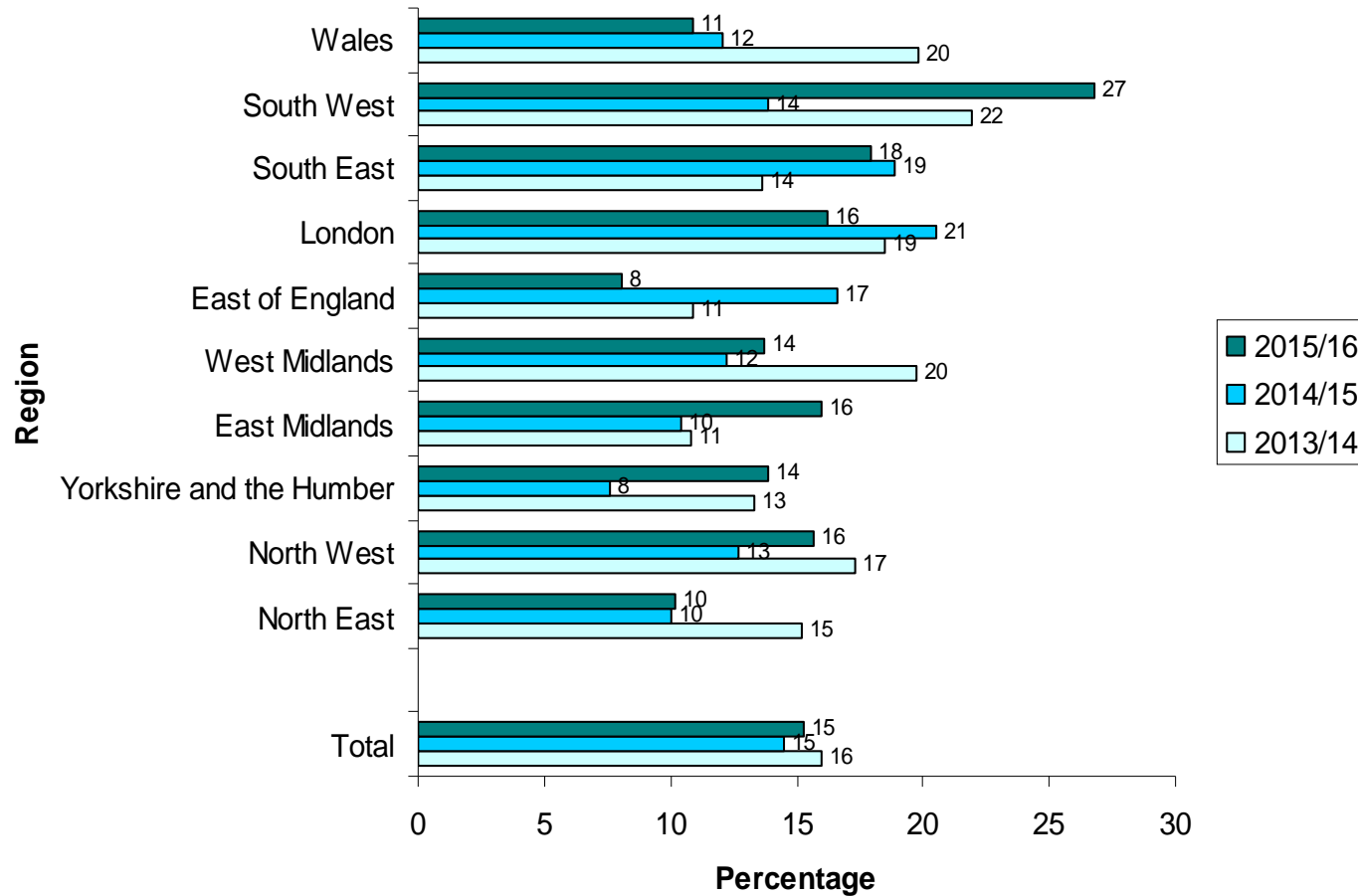


CSEW 2013/14 Base all respondents: (2,778), CSEW 2014/15 Base all respondents: (2,522), CSEW 2015/16 Base all respondents (2,603)  
N.B: The number of victims who answered the question who were from Buddhist and Hindu backgrounds is too small to report.

## Region

In incidents in the East of England, victims are less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS; and those in the South West are more likely to be offered one, compared to incidents overall in 2015/16. In incidents in the East of England victims are also less likely to be offered the chance to make a VPS in 2015/16 compared with 2014/15, while in incidents in the South West and Yorkshire and the Humber victims are more likely to be offered a VPS compared with last year.

**Proportion of incidents in which the victim was offered a VPS by region**



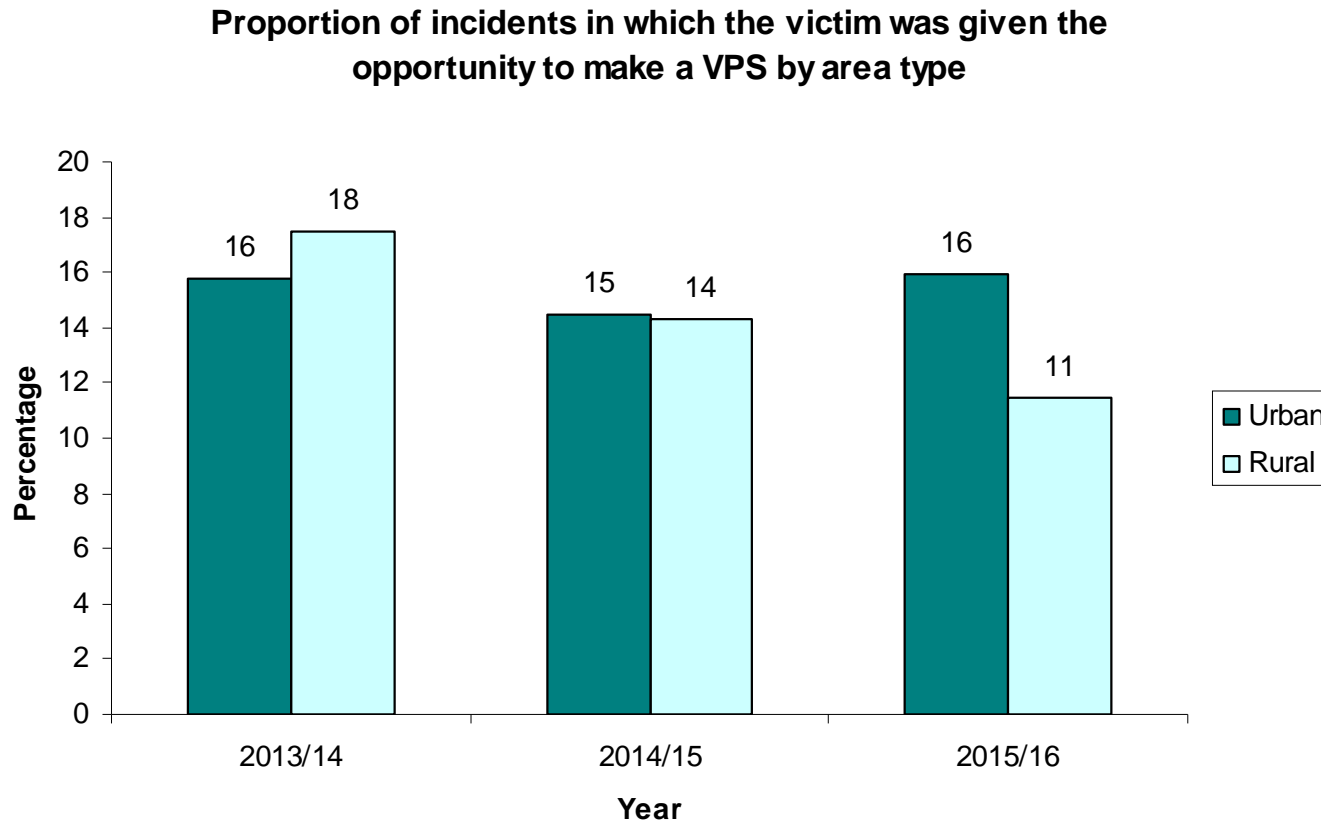
	Change from 2014/15	Change from 2013/14
Wales	-1	-9
South West	+13	+5
South East	-1	+4
London	-6	-3
East	-9	-3
West Mids	+2	-6
East Mids	+6	+5
Y & H	+6	+1
North West	+3	-1
North East	0	-5

Figures in red show a significant decrease at 5% confidence level. Figures in green show a significant increase at 5% confidence level

CSEW 2013/14 Base all respondents: (2,778), CSEW 2014/15 Base all respondents: (2,522), CSEW 2015/16 Base all respondents (2,603)

## Area type

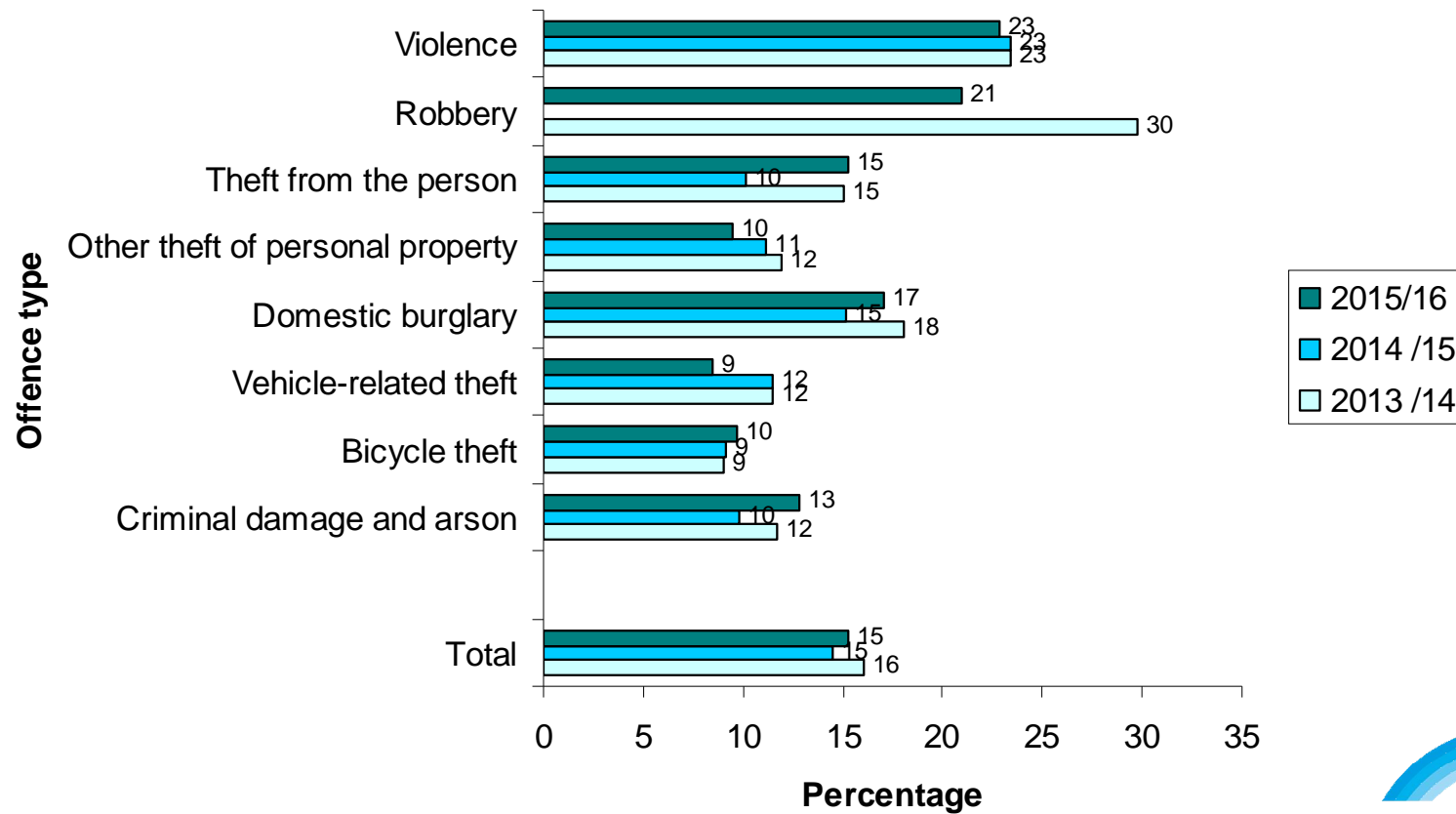
Incidents in 2015/16, where victims live in rural areas are significantly less likely to be offered the opportunity to make a VPS compared to incidents where victims live in urban areas. Rural victims are also significantly less likely to be offered the chance to make a VPS than they were in 2013/14.



## Offence

In 2015/16, incidents of violence are more likely to result in a victim being offered a VPS than incidents overall. However, victims in theft related incidents are less likely to be offered a chance to make a VPS than victims overall.

**Proportion of incidents in which the victim was given the opportunity to make a VPS by offence**



CSEW 2013/14 Base all respondents: (2,778), CSEW 2014/15 Base all respondents: (2,522), CSEW 2015/16 Base all respondents (2,603)  
N.B: The number of victims in 2014/15 who answered the question relating to Robbery is too small to report.

## Methodology

**Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW):** The CSEW, formerly known as the British Crime Survey (BCS), is a face-to-face survey asking people who are resident in households in England and Wales about their experiences of a range of crimes in the past year. The random sample survey interviews both adults and children, though the VPS questions are not included in the survey of children. The survey is conducted on a continuous basis with around 35,000 adults and 3,000 children aged 10 to 15 years old interviewed each year.

**Statistical Significance Testing:** All differences and changes reported are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level unless otherwise stated. This means the probability of any given difference happening by chance is low (at most one in 20). However findings should be treated with caution owing to the small number of CSEW respondents that were asked questions on Victim Personal Statements.

CSEW Question	2013/14 Unweighted Base	2014/15 Unweighted Base	2015/16 Unweighted Base
Victims of crime have an opportunity to make a formal statement to the police about how the crime affected them financially, physically or emotionally or in any other way. This is called a Victim Personal Statement. Did the police give you this opportunity?	2,778	2,522	2,603
Did you make a Victim Personal Statement?	402	307	345
Did you say you wanted your Victim Personal Statement read aloud in court?	Not asked	137	127
Do you feel that what you said in your Victim Personal Statement was taken into account by the Criminal Justice System?	170	123	154