Brits losing confidence over crime in major UK cities

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Britons wrongly believe violent crime in London is rising, despite official statistics indicating that crime rates in the capital are falling.

New statistics collated by YouGov in September 2025 indicate that over half of Brits believe that crime in London is increasing, while Metropolitan Police data shows that it is falling.

The conflict in public perception versus recorded crime statistics comes as the UK faces a crossroads in its adoption of smart video camera technology that can play a role in crime prevention. All 43 police forces in the UK use body worn cameras, but not all use smart cameras - although many major cities do so.

Line Bang Riecke Hjardemaal, Sales Director for UK and Western Europe, from video technology company Milestone Systems said: “Modern technology has given us the tools to create safer cities by using video surveillance to predict and prevent crime. Whether it’s police forces themselves using cameras to monitor behaviours and intervene early, or cities using them to track footfall and vehicle use and adapt plans accordingly, the opportunity to use smart technology to reduce crime is vast.

“The British public’s perception is that crime is rising, which could be fuelled by a rise in very visible crimes like phone snatching. So, even though crime rates overall are down, the public feeling is one of unsafety. Phone snatching is one area where smart video systems can play a really important role. By using AI technology to monitor live feeds, systems can automatically flag suspicious behaviours like mopeds driven close to curbs or gangs congregating near train or tube stops, alerting police to allow for early intervention and better crime prevention.”

Phone theft is a rising occurrence in Britain, with cases reaching a 20-year high in 2024 and London accounting for a significant proportion of the total. Two fifths of all European phone thefts occur in the UK, with 42 per cent of those taking place in London.

In the face of this epidemic of phone theft, the majority of the British public (55 per cent) is in support of CCTV systems being in place in every public space in the country.

This type of crime is highly visible and often goes unsolved by police, contributing to a public view that crime is rising to high levels. Line Bang Riecke Hjardemaal added: “The UK is a very safe place, and people should feel safe and secure to be in major cities without fear of becoming a crime victim. Implementing smart camera systems is an effective, affordable and straightforward way to help prevent crimes against the person, using existing CCTV infrastructure to help make British cities even safer.”

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