

Detected Crime – Open Data Notes

Detected crimes are those that have been 'cleared up' by the police. Not every case where the police know, or think they know, who committed a crime can be counted as a detection and some crimes are counted as detected when the victim might view the case as far from solved. For any crime to be counted as detected sufficient evidence must be available to claim a detection and all of the following conditions must be met:

- a notifiable offence has been committed and recorded;
- a suspect has been identified and has been made aware that they will be recorded as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are; and
- one of the methods of detection listed below applies.

The police may use one of several methods to count a crime as detected. They fall into two broad categories; sanction and non-sanction detections.

Once a detection has been claimed, any identifiable victim must be informed that the crime has been detected, or in the case of a child, their parent or guardian.

The detections type labels used in the open data table are given in brackets in the sections below. Please note that all non-sanction detections come under the "Other" detection type.

Sanction Detections

Sanction detections include offences that are cleared up through a formal sanction to the offender. Not all sanction detections will necessarily result in a subsequent conviction. In cases detected by charge or summons, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) may not take forward proceedings or the offender might be found not guilty.

A sanction detection can be claimed when an offender has:

- **Been charged or summonsed (*Charge/Summons*)**

An offence is deemed to be detected if a person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at court).

- **Been cautioned, reprimanded or given a final warning (*Cautions*)**

An offence is deemed to be detected if an offender has been cautioned by the police (including conditional cautions) or given a reprimand or warning under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. A caution may be given by, or on the instructions of, a senior police officer when an offender admits guilt, where there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and where the offender consents to the caution being issued. Guidance on administering cautions was published in 2005 and later revised in 2008. The guidance can be found at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/home-office-circulars/circulars-2008/016-2008/>

- **Had an offence taken into consideration (*TICs previously recorded / TICs not previously recorded*)**

An offence is deemed to be detected if the offender admits the crime and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court and where there is additional verifiable information linking that offender to that crime. TICs previously recorded means that the offence to be

taken into consideration was previously recorded as a crime. Whereas TICs not recorded means that the offence taken into consideration was not previously a recorded crime.

- **Received a Penalty Notice for Disorder (*Penalty Notice for Disorder*)**

An offence is deemed to be detected if the police issue a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND). Such a notice must be issued in accordance with any operational guidance to the police (e.g. Police Operational Guidance on PNDs issued by the Home Office in March 2005). A detection is counted if the penalty notice is not contested, is contested but the CPS proceeds with the case, or, in discontinued cases, the dedicated decision maker reviews the case and stands by the original decision.

With effect from 26 January 2009, it became possible for a PND to be given for an offence of cannabis possession. For central reporting purposes any such PNDs were counted as Cannabis Warnings for the period January to March 2009; from April 2009 a system was put in place to correctly record them as PNDs for the relevant offence.

- **Received a warning for cannabis possession (*Cannabis warning*)**

Prior to January 2007 this detection method was known as a 'formal warning for cannabis possession'. From April 2004 information on police formal warnings for cannabis possession started to be collected centrally (prior to this a pilot scheme was run in parts of London). Those aged 18 and over who are caught in simple possession of cannabis can be eligible for a police Cannabis Warning, which would not involve an arrest. An offence is deemed to be cleared up if a Cannabis Warning has been issued in accordance with guidance from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

Non-sanction detections (*Other*)

Non-sanction detections comprise those where the offence is counted as cleared up but either no further action was taken against the offender or the matter has been resolved by the use of a locally based community resolution or the application of Restorative Justice (RJ) techniques.

- **Non-sanction detections – by no further action**

Prior to April 2007 various reasons were allowed for claiming non-sanction detections where no further action was taken against the offender including where the:

- offender was too ill or mentally disturbed for proceedings to take place;
- complainant or an essential witness was dead;
- victim refused or was unable to give evidence;
- offender was under the age of criminal responsibility;
- police or the CPS decided that it would not be in the public interest to proceed; and
- time limit of six months for commencing prosecution had been exceeded.

From April 2007, there are now only two ways in which non-sanction detections involving no further action may be claimed:

- where the offender dies before proceedings could be initiated or completed;
- where the CPS decides not to prosecute (by virtue of its powers under the Criminal Justice Act 2003).

The use of non-sanction detections involving no further action is now restricted to 'indictable only' offences (those offences which must be tried at Crown Court).

- **Non-sanction detections – by local resolution**

A special arrangement has been in place since 2008/09 to allow eight forces piloting Youth Restorative Disposals (YRDs) to record their disposals under this category. Youth Restorative Disposals (YRDs) allow operational officers to dispose of low-level crime and neighbourhood disorder where it is not considered to be in the public interest to prosecute. The process involves a meeting between the offender and the victim, an apology and may also include additional action to right the wrong caused (e.g. a form of community payback).

From April 2011, forces may voluntarily submit additional data on crimes 'cleared up' by the application of a form of Restorative Justice (RJ). RJ includes formal action, such as the Youth Restorative Disposal, administered by trained practitioners, as well as less formal community- based resolutions where the offender has made an admission and the victim is satisfied that such a resolution may be used. This may amount to an apology or agreement to carry out some activity, such as repairing damage caused. Such 'clear ups' are included as non-sanction detections.

Detection Rates

The detection figures provided in these tables can be considered in conjunction with the recorded crime open data tables to obtain detection rates. Since it is not possible to link individual detections to individual crimes, any detection rate calculated will be the number of offences recorded as detected in a given year as a proportion of the total number of crimes recorded in the same period.

It should be noted that detection rates are not a direct measure of police investigative performance and need to be interpreted with care. For example, some of the offences with the highest detection rates are the offences most influenced, in terms of their recorded numbers, by proactive policing to apprehend offenders (for example, drug offences and many of the offences in the 'other offences' category). This means that overall detection rates can be influenced by the extent to which police prioritise action against different types of offending. There may also be circumstances in which a crime may be considered 'solved' but in which a detection is not claimed – for example, where the police are satisfied that they have identified an offender but the victim is unwilling to cooperate further in an investigation or does not wish for formal action to be taken.

See General Rules section H of [Home Office Counting Rules \(2012\)](#) for information on counting detections.

Offence Codes

To reduce file sizes the open data table contain Home Office offence codes, there is a reference table also provided which gives the description of each of these offence codes and under which crime category they are included in publications.