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Youth Justice Statistics 2013/14

England and Wales

Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice
Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This publication looks at the English and Welsh Youth Justice System (YJS) in 2013/14 in terms of the number of young people in the system, their offences, outcomes and the trends over time.

Overview

The Youth Justice System (YJS) in England and Wales works to prevent offending and re-offending by young people under the age of 18 years. The system is different to the adult system and is structured to address the needs of young people. The YJS is far smaller than the adult system (see Chapter 11 for more details). The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is the executive non-departmental public body that oversees the YJS in England and Wales.

The overall number of young people in the YJS continued to reduce in 2013/14. Reductions have been seen in the number entering the system for the first time (First Time Entrants), as well as reductions in those receiving sentences in and out of court, including those receiving custodial sentences. The re-offending rate has increased, but there were significant falls in the number of young people in the re-offending cohort, the number of re-offenders and the number of re-offences. Since 2010/11, there have been 51 per cent fewer young people coming into the Youth Justice System and 40 per cent fewer young people (under 18) in custody.

Arrests and out of court disposals¹

Latest available arrests data relate to the 2012/13 financial year. In 2012/13 there were 1.07 million arrests for notifiable offences in England and Wales, of which 126,809 were of people aged 10-17 years. These 10-17 year olds arrested accounted for 11.8 per cent of all the arrests, whereas all 10-17 year olds make up 10.5 per cent of the total population of England and Wales of offending age.²

The number of arrests of young people has fallen by 24 per cent between 2011/12 and 2012/13. This continues the downward trend seen since the peak in arrests in 2006/07.

In 2013/14, 25,625 youth cautions were issued by the Police. Please note, reprimands and final warnings were replaced by youth cautions for offences committed from 8th April 2013. This is a decrease of 17 per cent on the 30,739 given in 2012/13, and a decrease of 73 per cent on the 96,381 given in 2003/04.

¹ A disposal is an umbrella term referring both to sentences given by the court and to out of court decisions made by the police. Disposals can be divided into four separate categories of increasing seriousness starting with out of court disposals then moving into first-tier and community-based penalties through to custodial sentences.

² In England and Wales people of offending age are classed as those aged 10 years or older. The general 10-17 population figures are from the ONS mid year estimates for 2012.

There were also 400 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs)³ given to 16-17 year olds in 2013/14 and in 2013 there were 277 Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) given to young people. In the last year, the number of PNDs issued to young people has decreased substantially due to PNDs no longer being available to young people from 8th April 2013 and the number of ASBOs was at a similar level to the number in 2012.

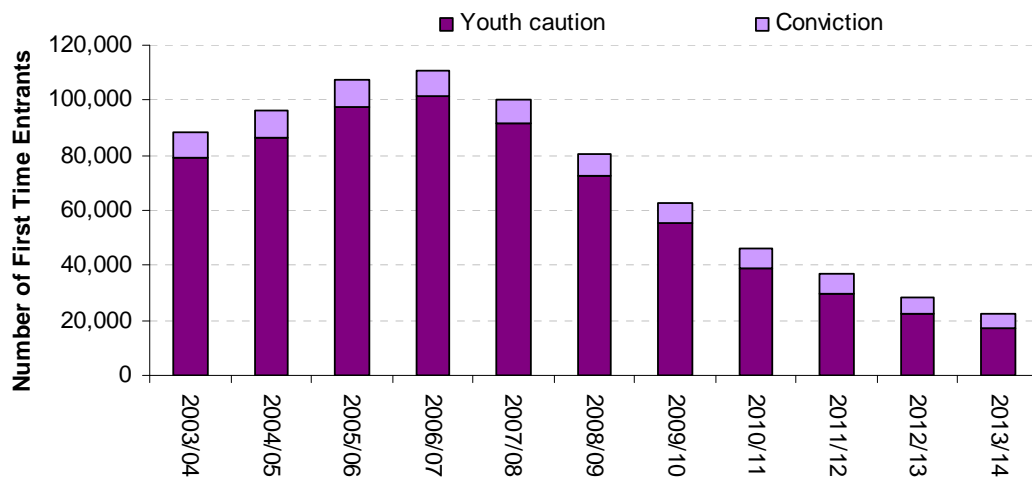
Proven offences by young people

Overall there were 90,769 proven offences committed by young people that resulted in a caution or conviction in 2013/14, down by eight per cent from 2012/13 and down by 68 per cent since 2003/04. The largest percentage falls in proven offences between 2010/11 and 2013/14 have been in the following offences; public order offences fell by 60 per cent, breach of statutory order offences by 55 per cent and motoring offences by 54 per cent. The number of drugs offences fell by 34 per cent and in the number of robbery offences fell by 37 per cent between 2010/11 and 2013/14.

First Time Entrants

In 2013/14, there were 22,393 first time entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System. The number of first time entrants fell by 75 per cent from 2003/04 to 2013/14 and fell by 20 per cent in the last year.

Trends in first time entrants, 2003/04 to 2013/14



In 2013/14, 30 per cent of FTEs to the Youth Justice System were young people aged 10-14. This group showed the biggest reduction (59 per cent) in FTEs between 2010/11 and 2013/14.

⁵ Penalty notices for disorder should be no longer available for persons under 18 from 8th April 2013.

Young people receiving a substantive outcome⁴

There were 41,569 young people who received a substantive outcome⁵ in England and Wales in 2013/14. This number has reduced by 16 per cent from 2012/13 and by 51 per cent since 2010/11.

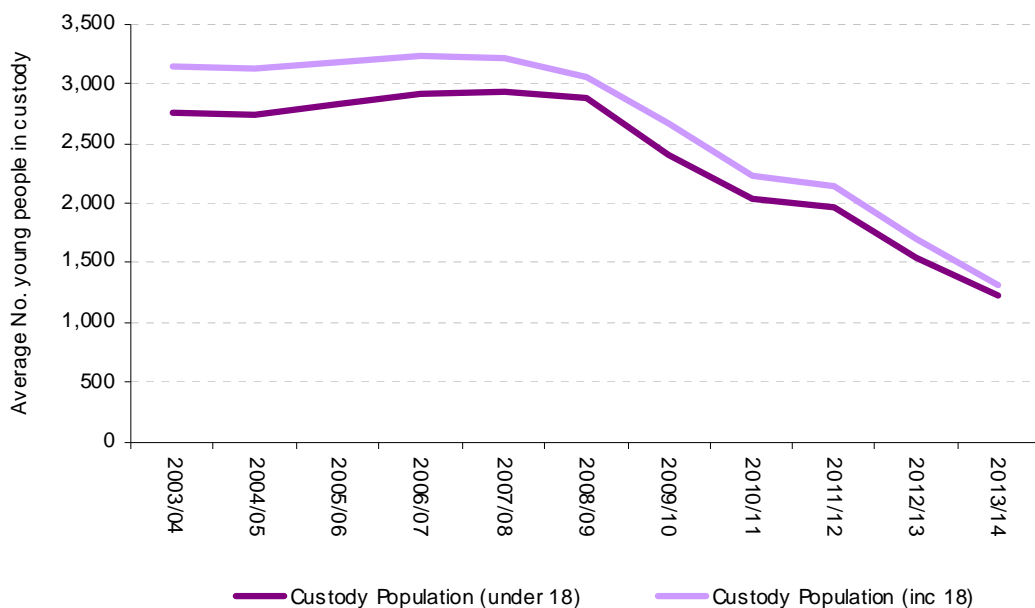
Young people sentenced

In 2013/14 there were 33,902 young people sentenced in England and Wales. This has fallen by 23 per cent in the last year. The number of young people sentenced to immediate custody fell by 21 per cent from 2,815 in 2012/13 to 2,226 in 2013/14. This number has fallen by 65 per cent since 2003/04, when there were 6,288 young people sentenced to immediate custody.

Young people in custody (under 18)

The average population of young people in custody in 2013/14 (under 18) was 1,216. The average population in custody (under 18) has reduced by 21 per cent in the last year, and by 56 per cent since 2003/04. The average custody population in 2013/14 including 18 year olds held in the youth secure estate was 1,318. This represents a 23 per cent reduction on the average of 1,708 in 2012/13.

Trends in young people in custody, 2003/04 to 2013/14



Overall the average length of time spent in custody increased from 85 days in 2012/13 to 90 days in 2013/14. For Detention and Training Orders (DTOs), it decreased from 115 to 109, for remand it increased from 45 to 51 and for longer sentences it increased from 302 to 409.

⁴ A substantive outcome is an out of court or court disposal.

⁵ As recorded by Youth Offending Teams.

Behaviour management in the youth secure estate

There were 5,714 incidents of restrictive physical interventions (RPIs) used in the youth secure estate in 2013/14, down by 21 per cent from 2010/11 and a down by 12 per cent since 2012/13. The number of RPIs per 100 young people increased from 20.5 in 2010/11 and from 23.8 in 2012/13 to 28.4 in 2013/14.

Alongside this, there were 1,318 incidents of self harm, a decrease of seven per cent on 2010/11 and a decrease of eight per cent on 2012/13. The number of self harm incidents per 100 young people increased from 4.1 in 2010/11 and 5.2 in 2012/13 to 6.6 in 2013/14.

There were 2,932 assaults by young people in custody, down by 18 per cent on 2010/11, but an increase of seven per cent when compared with 2012/13. The number of assaults per 100 young people increased from 10.1 in both 2010/11 and 2012/13 to 14.6 in 2013/14.

There were 2,392 occasions where single separation was used in Secure Children's Homes or Secure Training Centres, down by 46 per cent since 2010/11 and down 12 per cent on 2012/13. The number of single separation incidents per 100 young people decreased from 64.5 in 2010/11 and 42.7 in 2012/13 to 38.9 in 2013/14.

Deaths in custody and number of serious incidents

There have been 16 deaths of young people in custody since 2000; the most recent of these being three deaths in youth custody during 2011/12.

Complete data on the number of serious incidents in the community is not available for 2012/13 or 2013/14, because of a change in the way that information is recorded.

Re-offending by young people

The overall (binary) re-offending rate for young people was 36.1 per cent in 2012/13, with an average of 1.08 re-offences per offender in the cohort (frequency rate) and 2.99 re-offences per re-offender.

The number of young people in the re-offending cohort has gone down every year since 2007/08, with particular reductions among those with no previous offences and those receiving out of court disposals. As such, the cohort is comprised of young people whose characteristics mean that they are more likely to re-offend. This is reflected in the higher average number of previous offences for each young person, which was 1.74 in 2007/08 and 2.57 in 2012/13.

Criminal history of young people

The proportion of young people sentenced for indictable offences and who were previously known to the Youth Justice System has decreased over time. In 2003/04, 88 per cent of the young people sentenced for an indictable offence, had one or more previous convictions or cautions. By 2013/14 this proportion had fallen to 82 per cent.

In 2013/14, four per cent of young people sentenced for an indictable offence had 15 or more previous offences. This figure has risen from the two per cent in 2003/04 but decreased from five per cent in 2012/13.

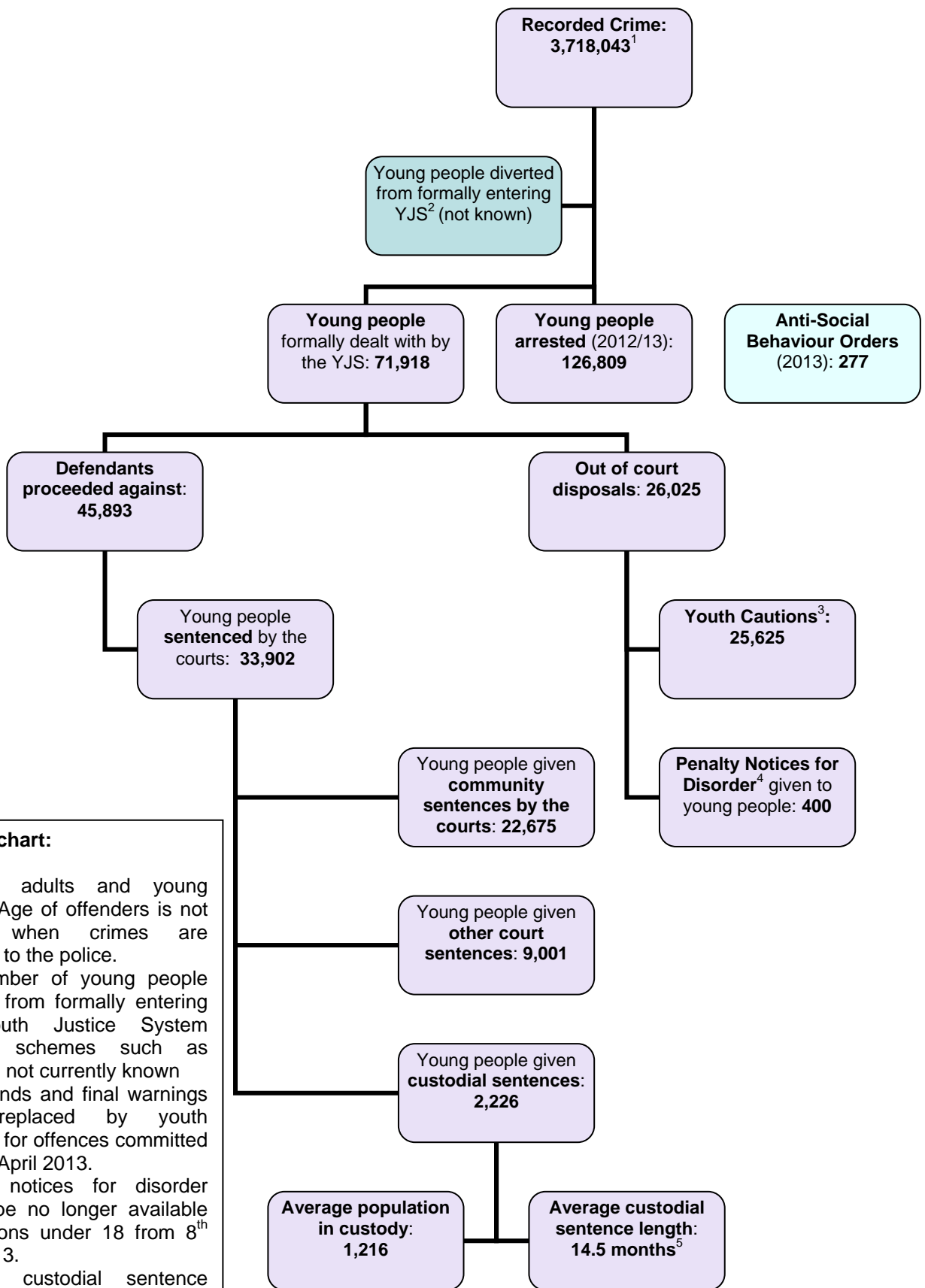
Average time from offence to completion

The criminal court timeliness measure is an estimated average of the time criminal cases spend in the Criminal Justice System, across both Magistrates' and Crown tiers of criminal court.

In 2013/14, for all completed criminal cases⁶, the average number of days from the time that the offence took place until the case was completed (and a final decision was made) was 111 days. This is an increase on the 108 days in the previous year and continues an upward trend.

⁶ In Magistrates and at Crown Courts

Flows through the Youth Justice System, 2013/14



Notes on flow chart:

1. Includes adults and young people. Age of offenders is not known when crimes are reported to the police.
2. The number of young people diverted from formally entering the Youth Justice System through schemes such as Triage is not currently known
3. Reprimands and final warnings were replaced by youth cautions for offences committed from 8th April 2013.
4. Penalty notices for disorder should be no longer available for persons under 18 from 8th April 2013.
5. Average custodial sentence length is for indictable offences only.

Understanding the flows through the Youth Justice System

In 2013/14 there were 3.7 million crimes **reported to the police** in England and Wales. At the time of reporting these crimes, the age of the person responsible is not always known.

The police in England and Wales made around 1.07 million arrests in 2012/13 (data for 2013/14 is not yet available⁷), and of these 126,809, 11.8 per cent, were of young people aged 10-17 and for notifiable offences. Not all young people who come into contact with the police formally enter the Youth Justice System; some will be diverted through schemes such as Triage or a restorative justice programme⁸. The number of young people who are diverted from the system at this stage is unknown. In some cases no further action will be taken against a young person, the case will be dropped or they are found to be not-guilty at court, which is why arrest figures are higher than those of disposals.

The true number of offences committed by young people that come to the attention of the police or other criminal justice agencies will be higher than is shown by these statistics, due to the reasons set out above.

In 2013/14 there were 71,918 young people formally dealt with by the Youth Justice System (proceeded against or given an out of court disposal). Please note, that the same young person may be responsible for more than one offence in a given period (e.g. a young person may be cautioned for an offence in April and then receive a referral order for a different offence in September).

There are a number of ways offences are dealt with either outside or inside the courts;

Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBOs)

ASBOs are a civil disposal given to young people for low level anti social behaviour. The ASBO is not a formal criminal disposal, but to breach the conditions of an ASBO can result in a criminal outcome, including a custodial sentence. There were 277 ASBOs issued to young people in 2013 (latest information available is for calendar year 2013).

⁷ Due to be published in April 2015. Information for 2012/13 is available at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-2012-to-2013

⁸ For more information please see the User Guide to Home Office Crime Statistics: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/116226/user-guide-crime-statistics.pdf

Out of court disposals

1. Youth cautions – In 2013/14, 25,625 youth cautions were issued by the Police. Please note, reprimands and final warnings were replaced by youth cautions for offences committed from 8th April 2013.
2. Penalty notices for disorder (PND) – Financial penalties for low level offences for 16-17 year olds. In 2013/14 there were 400 PNDs given to young people. Please note, penalty notices for disorder should be no longer available for persons under 18 from 8th April 2013.

Court proceedings and young people sentenced

In 2013/14 there were 45,893 defendants (aged 10-17) proceeded against in the courts. Of these 33,902 were sentenced for their offences. Those who were not sentenced may have been found not guilty or had the case against them dropped. Of those that were sentenced:

3. 9,001 young people were sentenced to first tier⁹ (sentences, including fines and discharges);
4. A further 22,675 young people were sentenced to community sentences, including youth rehabilitation orders. See Glossary for more information;
5. A small number of young people were sentenced to immediate custody (2,226) accounting for 6.6 per cent of all young people with sentences. The average custodial sentence given for indictable only offences was 14.5 months. The most common type of custodial sentence given was a Detention and Training Order (DTO), where half the time is typically served in custody and the remainder in the community on licence and under YOT supervision.

Information on waiting times

In 2013/14, the average time from offence to completion for youth arrest¹⁰ for young people was 89 days.

The average time from offence to completion consists of the following processes:

- Offence to arrest - average of 12 days;
- Arrest to charge - average of 19 days;
- Charge to first listing - average of 17 days;
- First listing to completion - average of 41 days.

⁹ This is an umbrella term used for the following orders made at court: bind overs, discharges, fines and deferred sentences. For more information please see the Glossary.

¹⁰ Where a Magistrate's youth panel sat and the date of arrest is known.