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Introduction

The statistical bulletin

This publication presents statistics relating to activity in criminal cases in magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court in England and Wales. It provides provisional figures for the latest quarter (April to June 2016), with accompanying commentary and analysis. The figures themselves give a summary overview of the volume of cases dealt with by these courts over time. The statistics are used to monitor court workloads, to assist in the development of policy, and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

Information on the enforcement of financial impositions can be found in Annex A. The annex provides updated management information on the collection of financial impositions through Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

Criminal Courts; an overview

Magistrates’ courts

Virtually all criminal court cases start in the magistrates’ courts. The less serious offences are handled entirely in magistrates’ courts, with over 90% of all cases being dealt with in this way. The more serious offences are passed on to the Crown Court, either for sentencing after the defendant has been found guilty in the magistrates’ court, or for trial with a judge and jury.

As part of wider measures in the justice system, committal hearings were abolished nationally\(^1\) at the end of May 2013. As a result of the change, triable-either-way cases can now be sent straight to the Crown Court as soon as it is clear the matter is serious enough, rather than having to await a committal hearing.

The Crown Court

The Crown Court deals with cases received from the magistrates’ courts for sentencing, trial or appeal against magistrates’ courts’ decision. Of those proceeded against in the magistrates’ courts, around 6% of defendants go on to the Crown Court for trial.

Triable-either-way cases can be sent to the Crown Court for trial if the magistrates’ courts decide the matter is serious enough or if a defendant elects to be tried by judge and jury.

Indictable only cases can only be tried on indictment in the Crown Court as they cannot be heard summarily at the magistrates’ courts.

Committed for sentence cases are transferred to the Crown Court for sentencing only after a defendant has been convicted in a magistrates’ court. This would occur where a magistrate believes that their sentencing powers are insufficient to apply an appropriate sanction to the defendant.

In its appellate jurisdiction the Crown Court deals mainly with appeals against conviction and/or sentence in respect of criminal offences, including consequential orders, e.g. disqualification from driving, and against the making of certain standalone orders, e.g. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. The Crown Court may dismiss or allow the appeal and vary all or any part of the sentence. Appeals are usually heard by a Circuit Judge sitting with no more than four lay magistrates (normally two).

**Average waiting time at the Crown Court**

‘Average waiting time’ is the time between sending a case to the Crown Court and the start of the substantive hearing.

**Average hearing time at the Crown Court**

The ‘average hearing time’ relates to the average duration of all hearings heard in the Crown Court, including preliminary hearings, main hearings, and hearings where a sentence is given to a defendant.

**Data and court processes**

Information about the systems and data included in this publication can be found in the ‘A guide to criminal court statistics’ which is published alongside this report. It also includes a glossary which provides brief definitions for the terms used in this report.

Changes and revisions in this publication

Changes to timeliness methodology to remove 10 year threshold – published as “experimental statistics”

Following a consultation in early 2015, a proposal was agreed to make changes to the end-to-end case timeliness methodology applied within this publication. The proposed change was to remove the 10 year threshold from the validation scripts applied to published estimates. We confirmed our intention in our most recent bulletin released in June 2016 to implement the changes within this release.

Tables based on both the existing and new methodologies have been produced, along with a separate annex document providing users with a detailed explanation of the change in approach and comparisons between statistics produced under the two methodologies. Within this document, however, commentary on the latest trends in the timeliness section is based on the existing methodology.

The statistics produced using the new methodology are badged as “experimental statistics” and do not display the National Statistics logo, as data are still being evaluated and remain subject to further testing in terms of their reliability and ability to meet customer needs.

Subject to user feedback on these experimental statistics, the intention is to produce both methodologies for this release only, after which we will only present statistics and commentary based solely on the new methodology.

Changes to timeliness tables – inclusion of Single Justice Procedure (SJP) cases

In all the timeliness tables produced within this publication, for both existing and new methodologies, Single Justice Procedure cases have been included within the statistics for the first time. These cases were introduced in June 2015 and apply to adult only summary non imprisonable offences which can only be dealt with by magistrates’ courts.

Additional magistrates’ courts timeliness tables – excluding cases committed to the Crown Court

Published timeliness tables at a national level for magistrates’ court cases (tables T2 and T3) include cases committed to the Crown Court. The timeliness transparency file, however, only includes cases fully dealt with in the magistrates’ courts, thereby excluding cases committed to the Crown Court. For completeness, additional national level magistrates’ court tables have been produced (new tables T2b, T3b) to present national timeliness statistics in the same way as the transparency file. These additional tables therefore only include cases fully dealt with at magistrates’ courts and exclude cases committed to the Crown Court; they will become part of the set of timeliness tables produced each quarter.
Key Findings

This report presents statistics relating to activity in criminal cases in the magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court in England and Wales in the second quarter of 2016 (April to June).

- Disposals in magistrates’ courts remain higher than receipts, resulting in the outstanding magistrates’ court caseload dropping to 291,700 at the end of Q2 2016, the lowest level since Q4 2013.

- Outstanding cases in the Crown Court have been gradually decreasing since Q4 2014. Between Q1 2016 and Q2 2016 they declined by 9% to 43,200 cases, the lowest number of outstanding cases since Q2 2013.

- Over the last 12 months, for cases completing in the Crown Court, the average number of days from first listing to completion in the Crown Court decreased overall from 204 days in Q2 2015 to 185 days in Q2 2016.

- Hearing times for not guilty trials in the Crown Court has increased over the last three quarters to a peak of 15.3 hours in Q2 2016. Hearing times for guilty plea trials have increased to 1.7 hours into Q2 2016.
Criminal Courts

At the second quarter of 2016, there were around 240 magistrates’ courts and approximately 80 Crown Court locations across England and Wales.

1. Criminal cases in the magistrates’ courts

Figure 1 below shows the magistrates’ courts caseload for England and Wales.

Figure 1: Magistrates’ courts caseload, Q2 2012 to Q2 2016

Receipts in the magistrates’ courts (figure 1)

The number of receipts fluctuated throughout 2015, but following a decline of 4% between Q4 2015 and Q1 2016 they have remained stable at Q2 2016.

Disposals (figure 1)

Following a peak of 412,400 disposals in Q1 2016, disposals decreased by 3% in Q2 2016 to 400,000, although they continued to be higher than receipts.

Outstanding cases (figure 1)

Outstanding cases dropped to 291,700 cases at the end of Q2 2016, the lowest level since Q4 2013, and a 4% decrease compared to Q1 2016.
2. Criminal cases in the Crown Court

Figure 2 below shows the quarterly Crown Court caseload from Q1 2010 to Q2 2016.

Figure 2: Crown Court caseload, Q1 2010 to Q2 2016

Receipts

Receipts in Q2 2016 were 4% lower than in Q1 2016, and 10% lower than Q2 2015. This latest figure of 28,800 was the lowest of the quarterly time series.

Disposals

Disposals have fallen by 3% between Q1 2016 and Q2 2016 to 32,700, with a decrease of 2% since Q2 2015. Despite this, disposals have continued to be higher than receipts for the last 6 quarters, driving the falling trend in the number of outstanding cases.

Outstanding cases

Outstanding cases in the Crown Court have been gradually decreasing since Q4 2014. Between Q1 2016 and Q2 2016 they declined by 9% to 43,200 cases, the lowest number of outstanding cases since Q2 2013.
**Receipts by case type** (figure 3)

Triable-either-way trial case receipts fell by 9% from Q1 2016. They have driven the overall downward trend in all receipts over the last twelve months, with a decrease of 20% between Q2 2015 and Q2 2016. Indictable only trial case receipts have remained fairly constant from Q1 2016 into Q2 2016, but have fallen by 5% since Q2 2015.

Both committal for sentence and appeals receipts remained stable between Q1 2016 and Q2 2016. Over a longer period, however, the number of committal for sentence receipts has increased by 5% since Q2 2015, while appeals have decreased by 13% over the same time period.

**Figure 3: Crown Court receipts by case type, Q1 2010 to Q1 2016**

![Graph showing receipts by case type from Q1 2010 to Q1 2016](image)

**Disposals by case type** (figure 4)

Overall, triable-either-way disposals have been higher than receipts since Q1 2015, although they decreased by 9% between Q1 2016 and Q2 2016. The number of indictable only disposals has continued to remain stable, at around 8,000 at Q2 2016.

Committed for sentence disposals have increased by 10% since Q2 2015, whilst appeals have fluctuated since Q2 2015, with a small increase of 4% from Q1 2016.
Outstanding cases by case type (figure 5)

The trend in triable-either-way outstanding cases drives the trend in the overall number of outstanding cases, with a decrease of 11% in the latest quarter and 24% between Q2 2015 and Q2 2016. This follows the declining trend seen since Q1 2015, which has been driven by disposals for triable-either-way cases being greater than corresponding receipts over this time period.

Indictable only cases have followed a similar pattern but to a lesser magnitude, decreasing by 6% in the latest quarter and by 14% between Q2 2015 and Q2 2016. Committed for sentence outstanding cases had remained fairly steady since Q2 2014 but have since dropped by 5% in the latest quarter. Appeals have also declined in Q2 2016, by 8% compared to Q1 2016.
Figure 5: Crown Court outstanding cases by type, Q1 2010 to Q1 2016

Receipts, disposals and outstanding cases by offence group (figure 6)

In Q2 2016, violence against the person had the highest volume of receipts, followed by miscellaneous crimes against society, sexual offences and drug offences.

For disposals, violence against the person had the highest number in Q2 2016 followed by miscellaneous crimes against society, drug offences and theft offences.

Outstanding cases followed a similar pattern, with violence against the person having the highest amount of cases, followed by sexual offences and miscellaneous crimes against society. Although the number of disposals for sexual offences is higher than receipts in Q2 2016, the high number of outstanding cases may be due to the length of time these cases take to complete in comparison to other offence groups.

At Q2 2016, disposals were higher than receipts for each offence group, resulting in outstanding cases decreasing across each of the groups between Q1 and Q2 2016.
3. Timeliness

Methodology notes

The statistics below are based on the existing end-to-end timeliness methodology in line with previous publications, which excludes cases where the total duration from offence to completion is greater than 10 years. See the Changes and revisions in this publication section of this bulletin for more details on changes to timeliness methodology.

Offence to completion in the magistrates’ courts

For cases in the magistrates’ courts, the (mean) average number of days from offence to completion increased from 155 days in Q2 2015 to 164 days in Q1 2016, but decreased to 162 days in Q2 2016.
Crown Court criminal cases - First listing in the magistrates’ courts to completion in the Crown Court (figure 7)

Over the last 12 months, for cases completing in the Crown Court, the average number of days from first listing to completion in the Crown Court decreased overall from 204 days in Q2 2015 to 185 days in Q2 2016. In the latest quarter, there was a small increase from 183 days in Q1 2016.

The average time from first listing at the magistrates’ court to receipt by the Crown Court has remained at a similar level of 5 days since late 2014.

The average time from receipt by the Crown Court to completion decreased from 199 days in Q2 2015 to 180 days in Q2 2016, driving the overall decrease in the number of days from first listing to completion over the last 12 months. In the latest quarter, however, the average time from receipt by the Crown Court to completion increased by 3 days from 177 days in Q1 2016.

Figure 7: Average number of days (mean) from first listing in the magistrates’ courts to completion in the Crown Court, for Crown Court criminal cases, Q2 2010 to Q2 2016

Average waiting times at the Crown Court (figure 8)

Waiting times for triable-either-way cases have increased since the last quarter from 20.2 weeks in Q1 2016 to 20.5 weeks in Q2 2016, whilst indictable only cases have increased from 21.3 weeks to 21.8 weeks. For non-trial cases, there was a small decrease of 0.4 weeks for committed for sentence cases and also for appeals.
Figure 8: Average waiting time (weeks) at the Crown Court, Q1 2010 to Q2 2016

Average hearing times at the Crown Court (figure 9)

- Hearing times for not guilty trials in the Crown Court has increased over the last three quarters to a peak of 15.3 hours in Q2 2016. Hearing times for guilty plea trials have increased to 1.7 hours into Q2 2016.

Figure 9: Average hearing time (hours) at the Crown Court, Q1 2010 to Q2 2016
Annex A: Enforcement of financial impositions

The following section provides updated management information on the collection of financial impositions through Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). Impositions made in this time period are reported, and payment information will continue to be recorded.

Financial impositions are ordered by the criminal courts for payment by offenders at sentencing and include financial penalties such as fines, prosecutors’ costs, compensation orders and victim surcharge. Financial penalties are the most commonly used sentence and form a significant part of HMCTS’ collection and enforcement business. Accounting centres also enforce penalty notices for disorder and fixed penalty notices registered as fines for enforcement. The financial imposition statistics presented here do not include confiscation orders. Figure 10 shows the financial impositions for each quarter split by imposition type.

Figure 10: HMCTS management information: Financial impositions by imposition type, England and Wales, Q2 2011 - Q2 2016

Note: The Criminal Court Charge (CCC) ceased to exist on 24 December 2015 but impositions still appear due to when the data are entered onto the system.
Financial impositions and amounts paid (Table A1)

Financial penalties can be imposed by the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court; although they are all collected and enforced by the HMCTS National Compliance and Enforcement Service.

The total value of financial penalties paid in Q2 2016, regardless of the age of the imposition, was £118 million, the highest figure since Q1 2009, when the time series began. This was a 37% increase when compared with the same quarter in 2015 and an 8% increase since Q1 2016.

Financial impositions and amounts paid by imposition type (Table A2, figure 10)

Total financial impositions have increased by 30% between Q2 2015 and Q2 2016, driven by an increase to fines in earlier quarters and an increase in compensation impositions, of £11 million, in the latest quarter. This is predominantly due to a single high value figure imposed to one account. There have also been a number of other high value impositions for cases included within compensation, such as Health and Safety Executive cases.

In Q2 2016, 21% (£33.6 million) of all financial impositions imposed by the criminal courts were paid within the imposition month. This proportion is the highest since Q2 2011, when this time series began, and is driven by an increase in compensation payments within the imposition month.

Financial impositions (£ million) for victim surcharge (Table A2, figure 11)

Victim surcharge is an additional surcharge which is added to the fines that are imposed. The receipts obtained from the collection of these monies by HMCTS are passed to the Justice Policy Group of the MoJ to fund victims' services. The amount imposed has been increasing since its scope and amounts payable were extended in October 2012.

Following a period of stability between Q1 2015 and Q4 2015, impositions have increased at the start of 2016 and are 13% higher at Q2 2016 than at Q4 2015. While the amount imposed has increased, the proportion of impositions collected within the imposition month has decreased from 11% in Q2 2015 to 10% in Q2 2016.
Financial imposition accounts opened and closed (Table A3)

An account is opened when a financial penalty is ordered in court and is closed when the imposition against the account has been paid or the imposition ceases. Where a defendant has more than one financial penalty and/or account, these can be consolidated into one account.

There were 324,000 accounts opened in Q2 2016, remaining stable since Q1 2016, but decreasing by 2% when compared to the same period in the previous year. Of the accounts opened in Q1 2016, 9% (30,100) were closed within the imposition month.

Outstanding financial impositions (Table A4)

The amount outstanding is irrespective of the age of the imposition or the payment terms, and excludes all impositions already paid as well as both legal and administrative cancellations. Payment terms may include arrangements for offenders to pay amounts owed over a period of time.

In Q2 2016, the total value of financial impositions outstanding in England and Wales was £706 million. The amount of outstanding financial impositions has been increasing since Q1 2014, and show an increase of 29% between Q1 2014 and Q1 2016. The increase since Q2 2015 is partially due to owed criminal court charge payments.
Annex B: End to End Timeliness new methodology

Published as a separate document alongside this bulletin.

Annex C: List of Accompanying Tables and CSV

Accompanying this publication are the following tables:

Table M1  Receipts, disposals and outstanding criminal cases in the magistrates' courts in England and Wales, annually 2012 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2012 – Q2 2016
Table M2  Effectiveness of magistrates' courts' trials in England and Wales, annually 2003 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table M3  Key reasons for ineffective magistrates' courts' trials in England and Wales, annually 2006 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table M4  Key reasons for cracked magistrates' courts' trials in England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C1  Receipts, disposals and outstanding cases in the Crown Court in England and Wales, annually 2000 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C1a Receipts by offence group in the Crown Court in England and Wales, annual 2014 – 2015, quarterly Q1 2014 – Q2 2016
Table C1b Disposals by offence group in the Crown Court in England and Wales, annual 2014 – 2015, quarterly Q1 2014 – Q2 2016
Table C1c Outstanding cases by offence group in the Crown Court in England and Wales, annual 2014 – 2015, quarterly Q1 2014 – Q2 2016
Table C2  Effectiveness of Crown Court trials in England and Wales, annually 2007 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C3  Key reasons for ineffective Crown Court trials in England and Wales, annually 2007 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C4  Key reasons for cracked Crown Court trials in England and Wales, annually 2007 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C5  Defendants dealt with in trial cases in the Crown Court by plea in England and Wales, annually 2001 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C6  Defendants dealt with in trial cases by stage at which guilty plea was entered and accepted in the Crown Court, by receipt type, England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016
Table C7  Defendants dealt with in trial cases where a guilty plea was entered before a trial, during trial or at a cracked trial, and accepted in the Crown Court, by receipt type, England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016

Table C8  Average waiting times in the Crown Court in England and Wales, annually 2000 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016

Table C9  Average waiting times (weeks) in the Crown Court for defendants dealt with in trial cases, by plea and remand type, England and Wales, annually 2007 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016

Table C10  Average hearing and waiting times for trial cases in the Crown Court by plea in England and Wales, annually 2000 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016

Table C11  Average hearing times (hours) in the Crown Court for cases disposed of, by case type and plea, England and Wales, annually 2007 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016

Table C12  Appeals (against decisions of magistrates' courts) dealt with in the Crown Court, by appeal type and result, England and Wales, annually 2007 - 2015, quarterly Q1 2010 – Q2 2016

Table T1  Average number of days from offence to completion, percentage of proceedings completed at first listing and average number of hearings for criminal cases at the magistrates' courts by initial plea, England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016

Table T2  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases at the magistrates' courts in England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016

Table T3  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all summary cases at the magistrates' courts in England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016

Table T4  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for Crown Court criminal cases in England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016

Table T5  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for criminal cases in England and Wales, annually 2010 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016

Table T6a  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases by offence group, in England and Wales, Q1 2015 and Q2 2016

Table T6b  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases by offence group, in England and Wales, annually 2011 - 2015


Table A3  HMCTS management information: Number of financial imposition accounts opened and closed, annually 2011 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2011 – Q2 2016
Table A4  HMCTS management information: Total amount of financial impositions outstanding, annually 2011 - 2015, quarterly Q2 2011 – Q2 2016
Annex T2a  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases at the magistrates’ courts including those committed to the Crown Court, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T2b  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases at the magistrates’ courts excluding those committed to the Crown Court, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T3a  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all summary cases at the magistrates’ courts including those committed to the Crown Court, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T3b  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all summary cases at the magistrates’ courts excluding those committed to the Crown Court, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T4  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for Crown Court criminal cases in England and Wales, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T5  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for criminal cases, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T6a  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases by offence group, quarterly Q2 2010 – Q2 2016
Annex T6b  Average number of days taken from offence to completion for all criminal cases by offence group, annually 2011 - 2015

There are also a number of csv files that support this publication, these include:

- National and court level workload activity and case progression data
- National and court level timeliness data
Annex D: Explanatory notes

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The statistics in this bulletin relate to cases in the magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court in England and Wales. Calendar year statistics are also provided.

Breakdowns of many of the summary figures presented in this bulletin, such as split by court or by HMCTS area, are available in the Comma Separated Value (CSV) files that accompany this publication.

Revisions

The statistics in the latest quarter are provisional, and are therefore liable to revision to take account of any late amendments to the administrative databases from which these statistics are sourced. The standard process for revising the published statistics to account for these late amendments is as follows:

- An initial revision to the statistics for the latest quarter may be made when the next edition of this bulletin is published. Further revisions may be made when the figures are reconciled at the end of the year. If revisions are needed in the subsequent year this will be clearly annotated in the tables.

For more information please see the Guide to criminal court statistics.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- .. = Not applicable
- -  = Not available
0    = Nil
(r)  = Revised data
(p)  = Provisional data
Previous editions

Previous editions of Court Statistics Quarterly can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/court-statistics-quarterly#court-statistics-quarterly-reports

Future publication

The next publication of Criminal court statistics quarterly is scheduled to be published on 15 December 2016, covering the period July to September 2016.

Contacts

Press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed to the Ministry of Justice or Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS) press offices:

**Ministry of Justice News Desk**
Tel: 020 3334 3536
Email: newsdesk@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice:

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General enquiries about the statistics work of the Ministry of Justice can be emailed to statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from www.statistics.gov.uk

Feedback

The structure and content of this report is continually being reviewed to reflect user requirements. If you have any feedback about these changes, or the report more generally, please contact the production team through the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice:

Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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