



Ministry  
of Justice



Department  
for Education

# Understanding the educational background of young offenders

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Joint experimental statistical report from the Ministry of Justice and  
Department for Education

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## Executive Summary

This is a joint report between the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Department for Education (DfE) that presents initial findings from a major data sharing project between the two departments. The aim of this analysis is to better understand the educational background, including attainment outcomes and characteristics, of young people aged 10 to 17 years who were sentenced in 2014 in England and Wales. The year 2014 has been used as this is the most recent full year of data included in the data share. **The findings do not draw any causal links between Free School Meals, Special Educational Needs, attainment, absences and other characteristics and the propensity to offend.**

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) in academic year 2007/08:*

- Those sentenced to custody had lower attainment at KS2 than those given Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YROs), Referral Orders (ROs) or cautions. 47% of those sentenced to custody for less than 12 months achieved the expected level in Maths at KS2. 56% achieved the expected level in reading and 28% achieved the expected level in writing at KS2.
- The results for those given a custodial sentence of 12 months or longer were slightly better with 52% achieving the expected level at KS2 in Maths, 58% in reading and 33% in writing.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) in academic year 2012/13:*

- Those given custodial sentences had lower attainment at KS4 than those given community sentences or cautions. 1% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A\* - C including English and Maths.
- Of those sentenced to a referral order, 14% achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A\* - C including English and Maths. The figure for those given a caution was 17%.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13:*

- 44% of those given custodial sentences less than 12 months were known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). For those given custodial sentences of 12 months or longer, 44% were known to be eligible for FSM. The equivalent figure for YROs was 40%.
- 45% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody were recorded as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) without a statement and 28% were recorded as having SEN with a statement.
- 46% of those sentenced to YROs were recorded as having SEN without a statement. The equivalent figures for those sentenced to referral orders was 42% and for cautions was 38%.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were recorded as being 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date:*

- 31% of those sentenced to custody for 12 months or longer were looked after at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. The equivalent figure for those sentenced for less than 12 months was 27%.
- Over 90% of those sentenced to custody had a previous record of being persistently absent from school (missing 10% of sessions within a school year).
- 23% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody have been permanently excluded from school prior to their 2014 sentence date. For those sentenced to 12 months or longer in custody, 16% have a previous record of being excluded from school prior to sentencing.

## Introduction

The overall aim of the project is to improve understanding of the characteristics of offenders and their educational background, in particular; educational outcomes (such as attainment and absence levels), pupil characteristics (such as Special Educational Needs (SEN) status) and Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility) and social care characteristics such as looked after children (LAC) status.

By linking personal level administrative data between the Department for Education (DfE) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) it has facilitated analysis of offenders' characteristics and attainment prior to, and in some cases post, their first recordable offence<sup>1</sup>. Results include information on young people who were sentenced for a proven offence in 2014, the most recent comprehensive data available from the data share, and their prior educational attainment and characteristics.

The results presented in this report represent the output from the first analysis of this matched dataset and further publications, which provide more detailed findings or focus on particular themes, are planned. The matched data has been quality assured and cleaned; however, given the complexity of the data and the fact that it is still in the early stages of analysis, all findings in this report should be treated as experimental and provisional.

## How was the data matched?

This report provides initial findings from a match between MoJ's extract from the Police National Computer (PNC) and DfE's National Pupil Database (NPD).

The data were matched using combinations of six demographic variables from the PNC and NPD: forename, middle name, surname, date of birth, gender, postcode and, the derived variable, full name. **Annex B** provides details on the methodology and results of the match.

This report is based on offenders from the PNC that were successfully matched to the NPD. The records of around 1.74 million offenders, aged between 10 and 29 years, from between 2000 and 2015 were shared with DfE. Of those, around 1.22 million were matched and included in the final matched dataset after cleaning. A good match rate of around 70% was achieved. All figures in this publication are based on matched offenders only and, as a result, volumes will be lower than published statistics from individual data sources.

## Data sources

Data from a number of large datasets were brought together in this data share. A brief description of the two main datasets are included below and replicated in **Annex B**:

**National Pupil Database (NPD) – DfE.** A wide range of information about pupils and students which provides invaluable evidence on educational performance. The data includes detailed information about pupils' test and exam results, prior attainment and progression at each key stage for all state schools in England. It also includes information about the characteristics of pupils in the state sector and non-maintained special schools such as their gender, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free

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<sup>1</sup> Recordable offence: Recordable offences are those that the police are required to record on the Police National Computer. They include all offences for which a custodial sentence can be given plus a range of other offences defined as recordable in legislation. They exclude a range of less serious summary offences, for example television licence evasion, driving without insurance, speeding and vehicle tax offences.

School Meals, awarding of bursary funding for 16-19 year olds, information about Special Educational Needs and detailed information about any absences and exclusions.

**Police National Computer (PNC) - MoJ**, covering period 2000 – July 2015

This dataset includes recordable offences committed with separate entries for each offence committed by a person, although only some information (e.g. person characteristics) will be available through the linked data.

## Content of this report

This report sets out comprehensive results from the analysis of the young offenders sentenced in 2014 found in the matched data.

This analysis compares the characteristics of the matched young offender cohort for those given a custodial sentence of 12 months or more, a custodial sentence of less than 12 months, youth rehabilitation orders or equivalent community orders ('YROs'), referral orders ('ROs') and cautions.

The matched cohort includes approximately 500 young people on custodial sentences of 12 months or longer, just under 1,500 on custodial sentences of less than 12 months, around 5,000 sentenced to YROs, around 7-8,000 sentenced to ROs and approximately 15-18,000 given a caution. The cohort sizes vary depending on the analysis.

### **Key points on the analysis – interpreting results:**

In this report, the attainment and pupil characteristics analysis presents results for a single academic year for pupils at the end of the Key Stage. For example, the analysis of KS2 attainment only focuses on those young offenders sentenced in 2014 who were at the end of KS2 in the 2007/08 academic year. The analysis does not provide an average across a number of academic years.

It is also important to note that by only focussing on those sentenced in 2014, the analysis will not capture all young offenders taking KS2 and KS4 exams in a particular academic year. For example, there will be some young offenders taking their KS2 exams in 2007/08 who went on to become young offenders but were sentenced in years other than 2014.

Finally, **care should be taken when interpreting this analysis as it does not imply causality between the educational outcomes/ characteristics and offending.** For example, approx. 50% of those sentenced to custody were known to be eligible for FSM but it is not possible to conclude from these findings that being known to be eligible for FSM means that the young person will go on to offend. There are many young people known to be eligible for Free School Meals who don't go on offend. To illustrate this, the size of the matched young offender cohort is presented against the overall size and results for the general population in the supporting tables.

## Analysis of the Youth Justice cohort

### 1.1. Attainment of Offenders at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 by Youth Justice Disposal

This section analyses the Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) attainment of those offenders receiving a youth justice disposal in 2014 that could be matched to DfE attainment data. It is important to note that **the results presented in this report are for a single academic year**. For the KS2 analysis, results have been presented for young offenders in the matched cohort that were sentenced in 2014 and were at the end of KS2 exams in 2007/08. For KS4, the results are presented for young offenders sentenced in 2014 who were at the end of KS4 in the 2012/13 academic year. Further information on results for other academic years can be found in the supporting Excel tables.

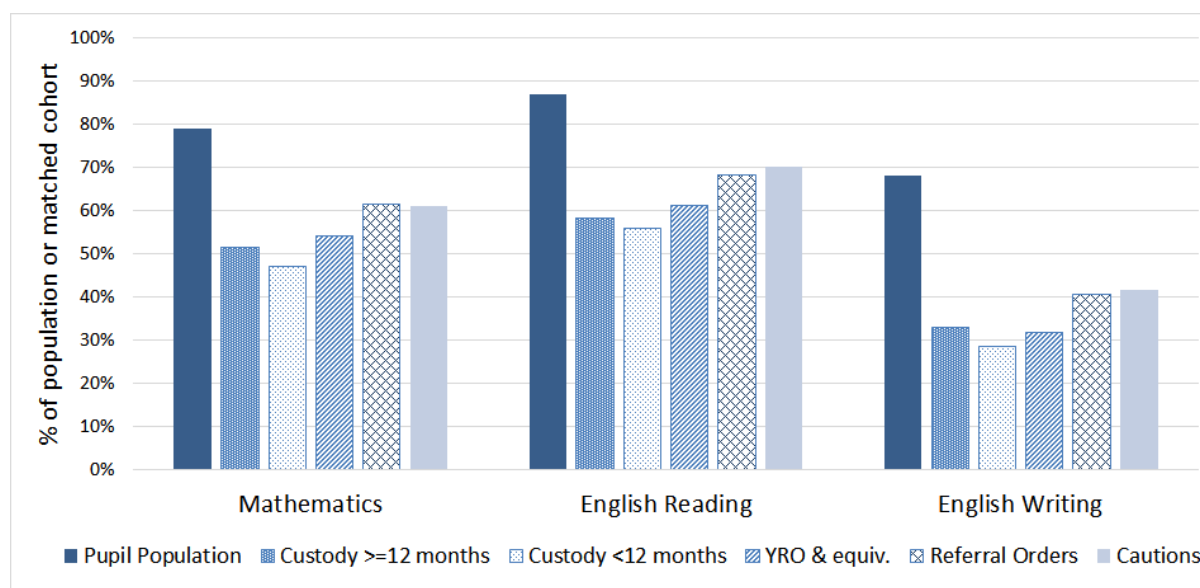
#### 1.1.1 Key Stage 2 Attainment by Youth Justice Disposal

The KS2 attainment exams take place at the end of Year 6 and this analysis looks at results in English Writing, Reading and Mathematics and the proportion of the matched cohort achieving level 4 or above in these subjects. The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for the youth justice disposal types are set out in Chart and Table 1.1.1.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) in academic year 2007/08:*

- They are less likely to have attained the expected level 4 at KS2 than the overall pupil population.
- Those sentenced to custody had lower attainment at KS2 than those given Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YROs), Referral Orders (ROs) or cautions. 47% of those sentenced to custody for less than 12 months achieved the expected level in Maths at KS2. 56% achieved the expected level in reading and 28% in writing at KS2.
- The results for those given a custodial sentence of 12 months or longer were slightly better with 52% achieving the expected level at KS2 in Maths, 58% in reading and 33% in writing.

**Chart 1.1.1 - Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS2 in academic year 2007/08 and achieved Level 4 or above in Maths, Reading and Writing**



Attainment is lower at KS2 for matched young offenders that were at the end of KS2 exams in 2007/08 across all youth justice disposal types and for all subjects when compared to the results for the overall pupil population. **However, it is very important to note that there are substantial numbers of young people in the general pupil population that do not achieve the expected level at KS2 and do not go on to offend.** The results from Chart 1.1.1 are summarised in Table 1.1.1 below including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall pupil population.

*Table 1.1.1: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS2 in academic year 2007/08 and achieved Level 4 or above in Maths, Reading and Writing.*

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that are at the end of KS2 in Academic Year 2007/08	% achieving level 4 or above in Maths	% achieving level 4 or above in Reading	% achieving level 4 or above in Writing
Custody (12 months or longer)	225	52%	58%	33%
Custody (less than 12 months)	488	47%	56%	28%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	1,729	54%	61%	32%
Referral Orders	2,084	61%	68%	41%
Cautions	4,231	61%	70%	42%
Total pupils at end of KS2 in 2007/08	Approx. 600,000	79%	87%	68%

Overall pupil population figures taken from: National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2010 (revised) [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-england-academic-year-2009-to-2010-revised](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-england-academic-year-2009-to-2010-revised)

### 1.1.2 Key Stage 4 Attainment by Youth Justice Disposal

The Key Stage 4 (KS4) attainment exams commonly take place at the end of Year 11 and the exams taken are typically GCSEs but a pupil may also have the option to take equivalent exams such as vocational qualifications. This analysis looks at three KS4 headline attainment measures:

- (i) the proportion achieving any pass in GCSEs (or equivalents),
- (ii) the proportion achieving 5 or more A\* to G grades in GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths, and

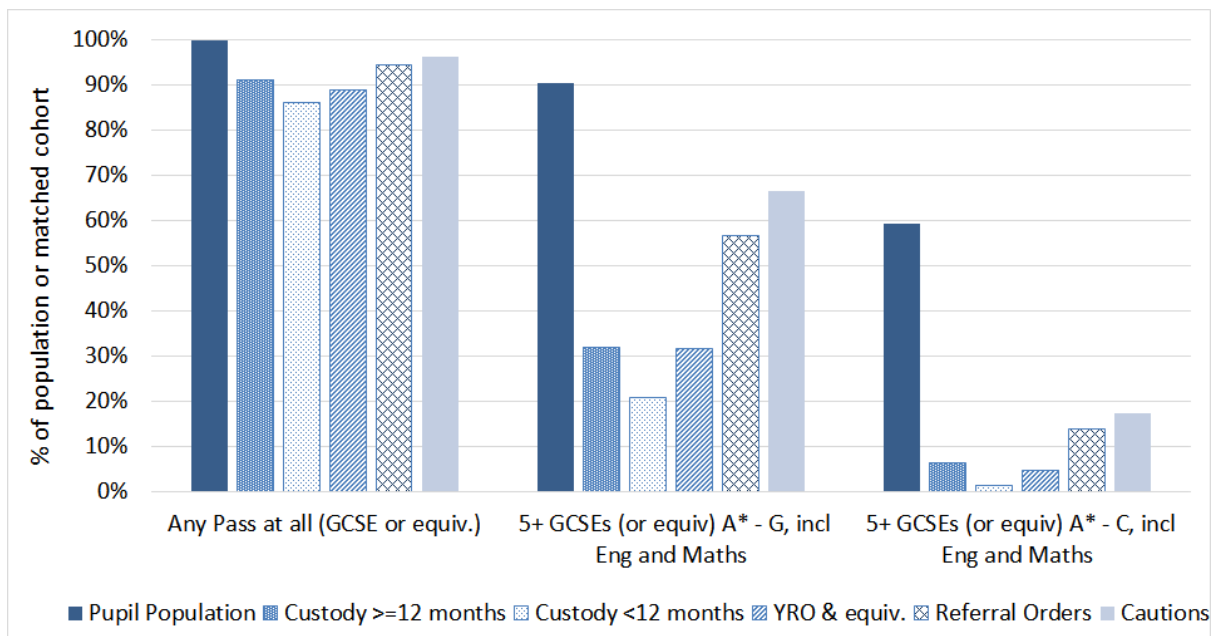
- (iii) the proportion achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades in GCSEs (or equivalents) including English and Maths.

The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for youth justice disposal types are set out in Chart and Table 1.1.2.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) in academic year 2012/13:*

- They are less likely to have attained the headline KS4 performance measures than the overall pupil population
- Those given custodial sentences had lower attainment at KS4 than those given community sentences or cautions. 1% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A\* - C including English and Maths.
- Of those sentenced to a referral order, 14% achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A\* - C including English and Maths. The equivalent figure for those given a caution was 17%.
- Those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody were also the lowest performing type of youth justice disposal on the '5+ GCSEs (or equivalents) A\*-G including English and Maths' and 'Any Pass' measures.

Chart 1.1.2 - Key Stage 4 Attainment for 2014 matched young offender cohort by youth justice disposal type at the end of Key Stage 4 in academic year 2012/13



The 2014 matched young offender cohort generally have a much lower level of attainment at the end of KS4 than the overall pupil population across all three KS4 attainment measures and youth justice disposal types. **However, there are many young people in the overall pupil population that do not achieve the required level across these KS4 headline measures and do not go on to offend.**

Those given a caution or sentenced to referral order have similar levels of attainment at the end of KS4 and generally perform better than those sentenced to YROs or custody. Across all three measures, those receiving custodial sentences less than 12 months have the lowest level of



attainment at the end of KS4. The results from Chart 1.1.2 are summarised in Table 1.1.2 below including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall pupil population.

*Table 1.1.2: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13 and achieved headline measures.*

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that are at the end of KS4 in Academic Year 2012/13	% achieving 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A*-C inc English and Maths	% achieving 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A*-G inc English and Maths	% achieving any pass
Custody (12 months or longer)	215	7%	32%	91%
Custody (less than 12 months)	443	1%	21%	86%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	1,648	5%	32%	89%
Referral Orders	2,039	14%	57%	94%
Cautions	4,184	17%	66%	96%
Total pupils at end of KS4 in 2012/13	Approx. 632,500	59%	91%	99.7%

Overall pupil population figures taken from GCSE and equivalent results: 2014 to 2015 (revised) – table 1a: Time series of GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2014-to-2015)

## 1.2 Eligibility for Free School Meals at the end of Key Stage 4

This section sets out the results for young offenders in the matched cohort who were known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). A young person may be eligible to claim for FSM if they or their family meet certain criteria related to their income and benefits received.

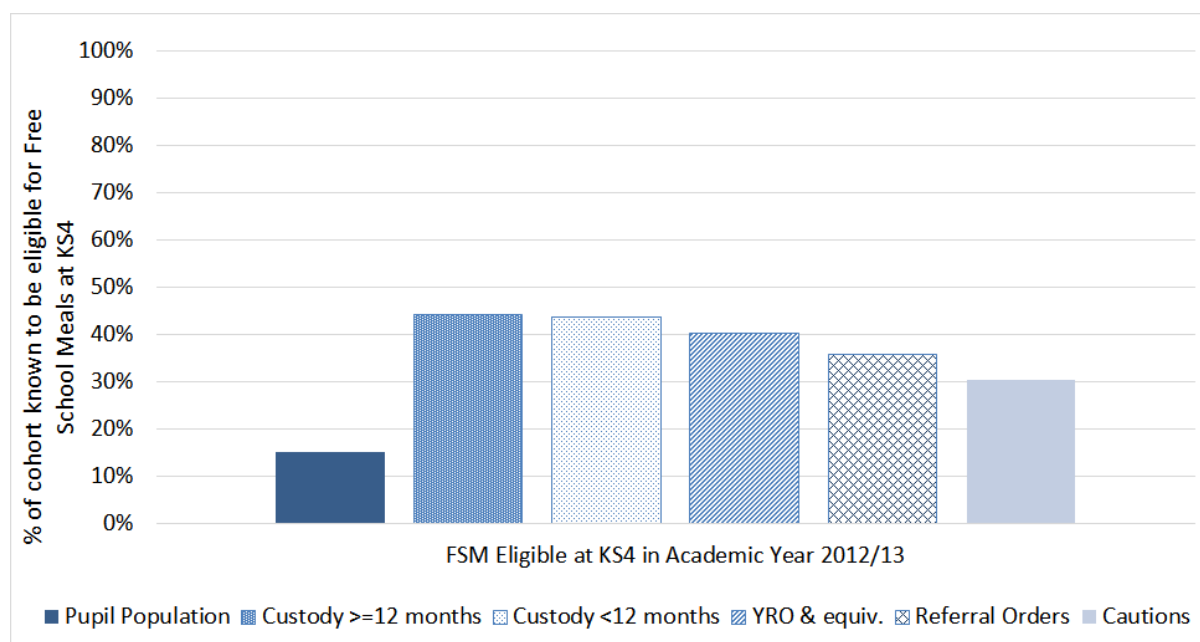
The cohort is based on those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that could be matched to KS2 and KS4 attainment data and the FSM Eligibility indicator from the School Census data. For the analysis of FSM eligibility at the end of KS4, results have been presented for young offenders in the matched cohort that were sentenced in 2014 and were at the end of KS4 exams in 2012/13. Results on FSM eligibility at the end of KS2 can be found in the supporting Excel tables.

The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for all youth justice disposal types are set out in Chart and Table 1.2.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13:*

- A greater proportion were known to be eligible for FSM compared to the 15% eligible for FSM in state-funded schools at the end of KS4 in 2012/13.
- 44% of those given custodial sentences less than 12 months were known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). For those given custodial sentences of 12 months or longer, 44% were known to be eligible for FSM. The equivalent figure for YROs was 40%.
- For ROs and cautions, the proportion known to be eligible for FSM was slightly lower at 36% and 30% respectively.

Chart 1.2. - Proportion of 2014 matched young offender cohort known to be eligible for Free School Meals at the end of KS4, based on academic year 2012/13:



For all youth justice disposal types, the proportion of the matched cohort that are known to be eligible for FSM is much higher than the overall pupil population. **However, it is not possible to conclude from the findings that being known to be eligible for FSM means the young person will go on to offend. There are substantial numbers of young people known to be eligible for FSM that do not go on to offend.** Those receiving cautions and referral orders have a lower proportion known to be eligible for FSM than those sentenced to custody or YROs. The results from Chart 1.2 are summarised in Table 1.2 below including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall pupil population.

Table 1.2: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13 and were recorded as known to be eligible for FSM.

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in Academic Year 2012/13 that were known to be eligible for FSM	% known to be eligible for FSM
Custody (12 months or longer)	53	44%
Custody (less than 12 months)	98	44%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	409	40%
Referral Orders	573	36%
Cautions	1,079	30%
Total pupils at end of KS4 in 2012/13 in state-funded schools that were known to be eligible for FSM	Approx. 85,000	15%

Overall pupil population figures taken from - GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics 2013- Table 2a [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013)

### 1.3. Young Offenders with Special Educational Needs at the end of Key Stage 4

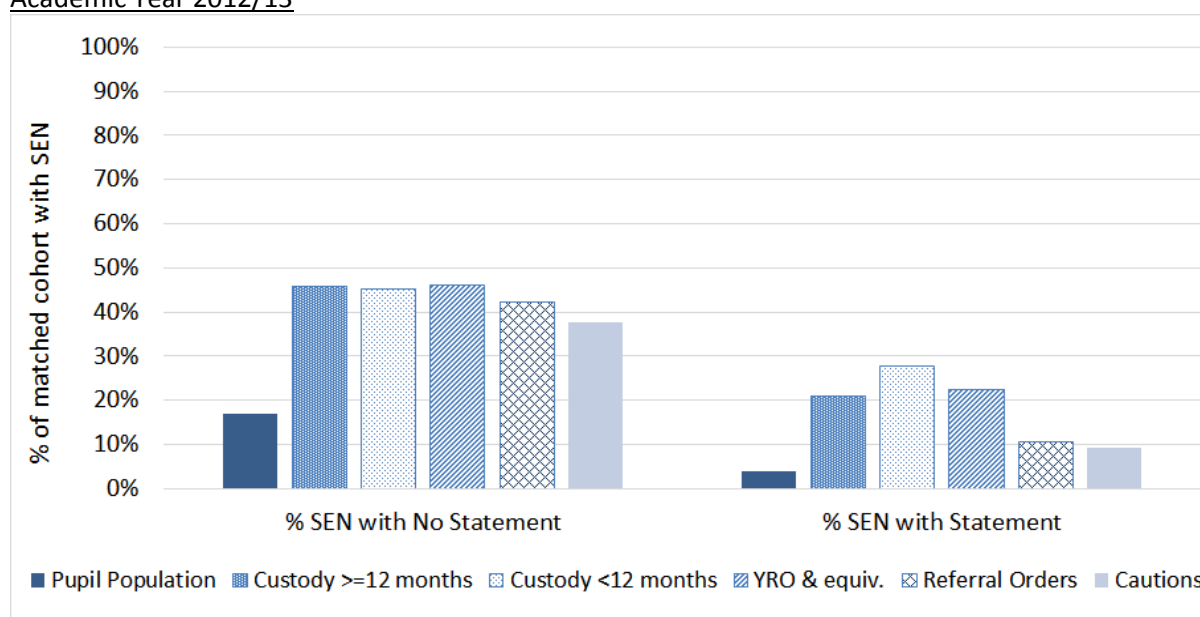
This section sets out the analysis of young offenders with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Young people identified as having special education needs may also have a SEN Statement. Those with Statements (or Education, Health and Care Plans<sup>2</sup>) typically require the most support and help. SEN Statements and Plans are only given to those identified and then assessed with needs that require special educational provision that cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to mainstream providers of education. There may however be children and young people with similar needs who have not been identified or assessed including children who have been out of education for some time.

The cohort is based on those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that could be matched to attainment data for the relevant Key Stage and SEN indicators from the School Census data. For the analysis of SEN at the end of KS4, results have been presented for young offenders in the matched cohort that were sentenced in 2014 and were at the end of KS4 in 2012/13. The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for all disposal types are set out in Chart and Table 1.3.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13:*

- There were a greater proportion with SEN, with and without statements, when compared to the overall pupil population at the end of KS4 in 2012/13.
- 45% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody were recorded as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) without a statement and 28% were recorded as having SEN with a statement.
- 46% of those sentenced to YROs were recorded as having SEN without a statement. The equivalent figures for referral orders was 42% and for cautions was 38%.

**Chart 1.3 - Proportion of 2014 Matched Young Offender Cohort with SEN at the end of KS4 for Academic Year 2012/13**



<sup>2</sup> From 2014 Education Health and Care Plans were introduced and no new Statements of SEN were issued

For all youth justice disposal types, the proportion of the matched cohort that have a special educational need is higher than the overall pupil population. **However, it is not possible to conclude from the findings that having SEN means the young person will go on to offend. Many young people with SEN do not go on to offend.** Those receiving cautions and referral orders have a lower proportion with SEN than those sentenced to custody or YROs. The results from Chart 1.3 are summarised in Table 1.3 below including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall pupil population:

*Table 1.3: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13 and were recorded as having a special educational need.*

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in Academic Year 2012/13 that had a record of having SEN (without a statement)	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in Academic Year 2012/13 that had a record of having SEN (with a statement)	% recorded as having SEN without a statement	% recorded as having SEN with a statement
Custody (12 months or longer)	55	25	46%	21%
Custody (less than 12 months)	101	62	45%	28%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	470	228	46%	22%
Referral Orders	677	172	42%	11%
Cautions	1,338	332	38%	9%
Total pupils at end of KS4 in 2012/13 in state-funded schools recorded as SEN	Approx. 97,000	Approx. 22,000	17%	4%

Overall pupil population figures taken from - GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics 2013- Table 2b. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013)

### 1.3.1 Breakdown of SEN by Primary SEN types

A young person with SEN can have multiple SEN types and their type of SEN can vary from year to year. This analysis looks at the primary SEN type that was recorded in the School Census during the spring term of the academic year for which the young offender was at the end of KS4. Due to very small cohort sizes, this analysis groups together the primary SEN types into the following categories:

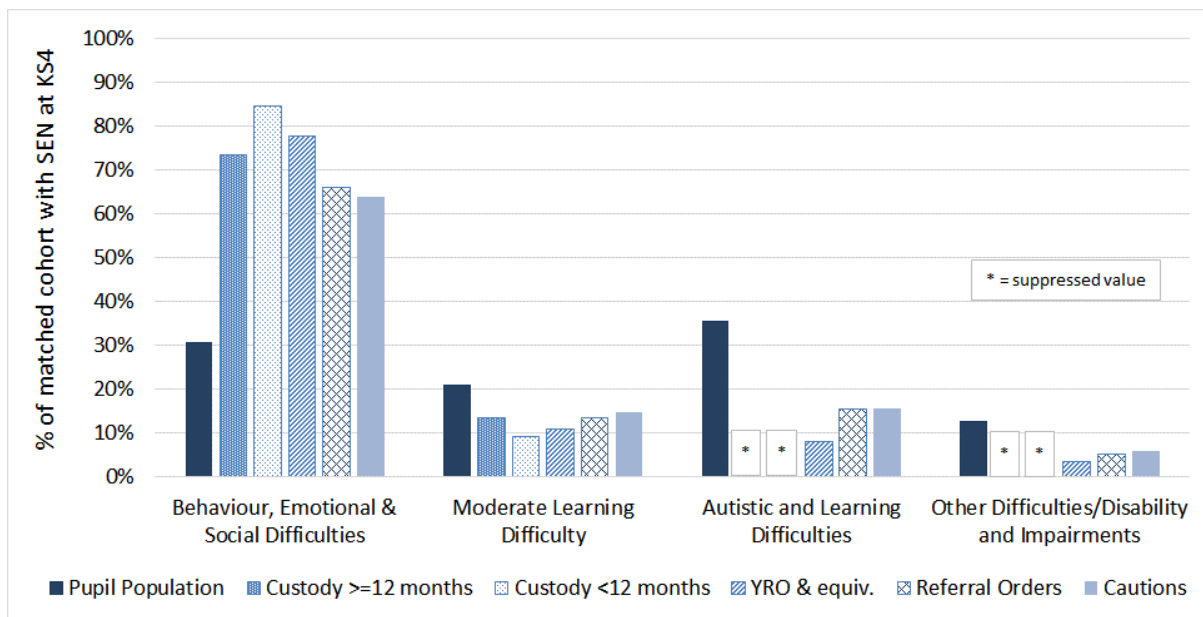
- **Behaviour, Emotional & Social Difficulties (BESD)** – groups together Behaviour, Emotional & Social, and Social, Emotional and Mental Health.
- **Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)** – Moderate Learning Difficulty.
- **Autistic and Learning Difficulties** – groups together Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty, Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Severe Learning Difficulty and Specific Learning Difficulty.
- **Other Difficulties/Disability and Impairments** – groups together Hearing Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Visual Impairment, Physical Disability, and Other Difficulty/Disability.

The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for youth justice disposal types are set out in Chart and Table 1.3.1. **However, it is not possible to conclude from the findings that having a specific primary SEN type recorded means the young person will go on to offend.**

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13 and were recorded as SEN:*

- A greater proportion had a primary SEN type recorded as BESD than seen in the overall state-funded school population at the end of KS4 in 2012/13. The most common primary SEN type grouping in the overall pupil population was Autistic and Learning Difficulties.
- 84% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody had a primary SEN type recorded as BESD. The equivalent figure for those sentenced to 12 months or longer in custody was 73% and for YROs was 78%
- The youth justice disposal type with the lowest proportion recorded as BESD was ROs and cautions at 66% and 64% respectively.
- For those sentenced to custody and YROs, the primary SEN type with the second highest proportion recorded at the end of KS4 was Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD). The lowest proportions were for those recorded as Autistic and Learning Difficulties or Other Difficulties, Disabilities and Impairments.

**Chart 1.3.1 - Proportion of primary SEN type for the 2014 matched young offender cohort with SEN at the end of KS4 in Academic Year 2012/13**



For all youth justice disposal types, ‘Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties’ was by far the most prevalent primary SEN type in the matched cohort for those recorded with SEN. This differs from the overall pupil population (for pupils with SEN in state-funded schools at the end of KS4) where a greater proportion have a primary SEN type recorded as ‘Autistic and Learning Difficulties’.

The results from Chart 1.3.1 are summarised in Table 1.3.1 including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall pupil population. The values for some low volumes are suppressed.

*Table 1.3.1: Breakdown of recorded primary SEN type for those in the matched young offender cohort that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13 and were recorded as having SEN.*

Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in Academic Year 2012/13 that had a primary SEN type record	% with a Primary SEN type of Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties	% with a Primary SEN type of Moderate Learning Difficulties	% with a Primary SEN type of Autistic Learning Difficulties	% with a Primary SEN type of Other Difficulties/Disability and Impairments
Custody (12 months or longer)	60	73%	13%	*	*
Custody (less than 12 months)	129	84%	9%	*	*
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	528	78%	11%	8%	4%
Referral Orders	545	66%	14%	15%	5%
Cautions	997	64%	15%	16%	6%
Total pupils at end of KS4 in 2012/13 in state-funded schools recorded that had a primary SEN type record.	Approx. 55,000	31%	21%	35%	13%

Overall pupil population figures taken from - GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics 2013- Table 1. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2012-to-2013)

## 1.4. Looked After Children

The following section looks at the proportion of the matched young offender cohort that were aged 16 or 17 on their sentence date and were recorded as being looked after children (LAC), as defined by the Children Act 1989, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. This date has been selected as it falls within the sentencing period used for the analysis in this report and provides some consistency with how the DfE measure LAC in their published statistics.

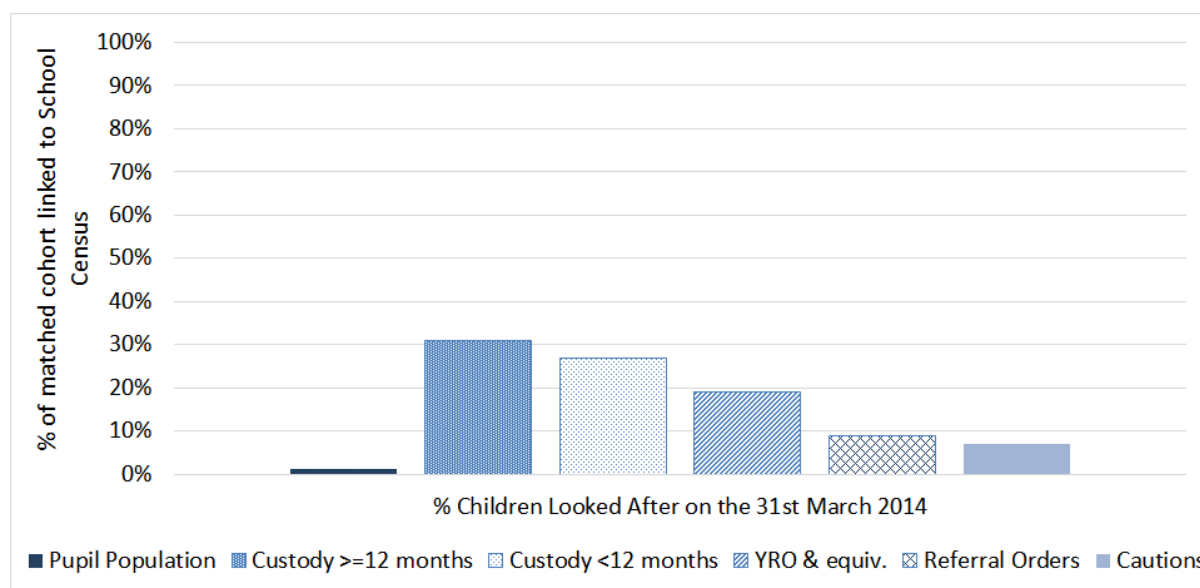
**It is important to note that by using this measure, the analysis takes no account of how long the children were in care and does not count the young offenders who were looked after during 2014 (or previously) but were not looked after specifically on 31st March 2014.**

The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for youth justice disposal types are set out in Chart and Table 1.4.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were recorded as being 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date:*

- A greater proportion were looked after children on 31st March 2014 when compared to the overall population of 16 and 17 year olds (approx. 1%).
- 31% of those sentenced to custody for 12 months or longer were looked after at 31st March 2014. The equivalent figure for those sentenced to custody for less than 12 months was 27%.

Chart 1.4 - Proportion of 2014 matched young offender cohort who were aged 16 and 17 on their sentence date and were recorded as Looked After Children on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014



For all youth justice disposal types, the proportion of the matched cohort aged 16 and 17 that were LAC on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 was much higher than seen in the overall population (calculated using overall population of 16 and 17 year olds from 2014 ONS data – approx. 1.3 million). **However, it is not possible to conclude from these findings that being LAC means the young person will go on to offend. There were nearly 15,000 looked after children aged 16 and 17 at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 with many of them never having offended.** The results from Chart 1.4 are summarised in Table 1.4 below including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall population.

Table 1.4: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 and were 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date and were looked after as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 and aged 16 or 17 on their sentence date and were looked after as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014.	% that were looked after as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014.
Custody (12 months or longer)	140	31%
Custody (less than 12 months)	265	27%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	685	19%
Referral Orders	412	9%
Cautions	639	7%
Total pupils aged 16 or over that were LAC as at 31st March 2014	Approx. 14,450	1% (overall population of 16 and 17 year olds from 2014 ONS data)

Overall pupil population figures taken from: 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2014 to 2015'

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015)

2014 ONS Population Data: [Link](#)

## 1.5 Persistent Absence and Permanent Exclusions

This section looks at the proportion of the 2014 matched young offender cohort that have a history of being persistently absent from school or have a previous record of being permanently excluded from school. A young offender has been classified as being persistently absent from school when



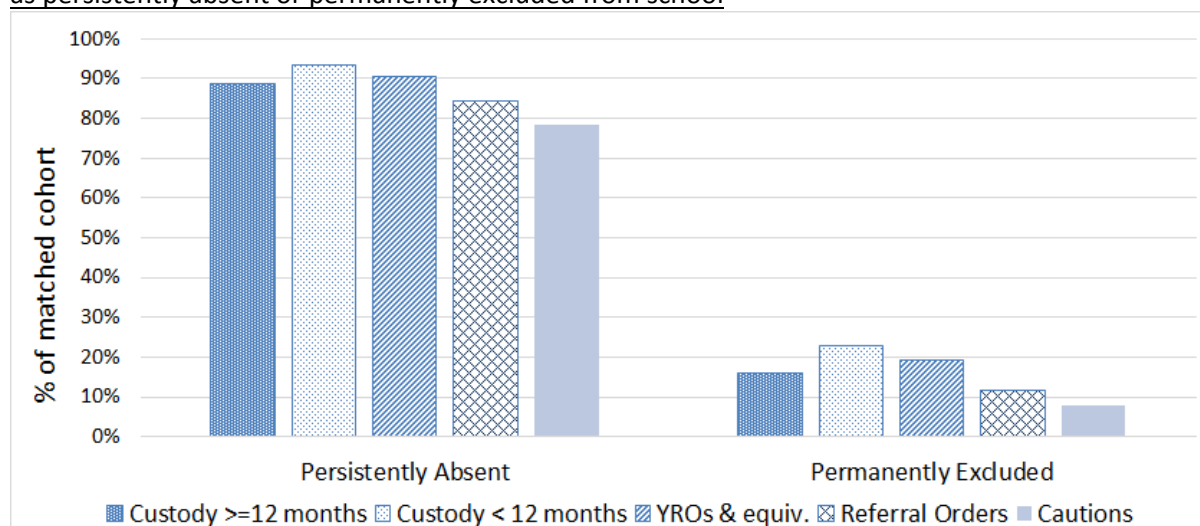
they have taken absences (both unauthorised and authorised) during the school year that account for more than 10% of the total number of school sessions available.

The cohort is based on those young offenders where a match was possible with the school census, and the absence and exclusions datasets. The key findings from this analysis are presented below and the results for all youth justice disposal types are shown in Chart 1.5 and Tables 1.5.1 and 1.5.2.

*For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were recorded as being 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date:*

- Around 90% of those sentenced to custody had a previous record of being persistently absent from school. The figure for YROs was also around 90% and for ROs and cautions, between 80% and 90% had a previous record of being persistently absent from school.
- 23% of those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody have been permanently excluded from school prior to their 2014 sentence date. For those sentenced to 12 months or longer in custody, 16% have a previous record of being excluded from school prior to sentencing.

**Chart 1.5 - Proportion of 2014 matched young offender cohort who have previously been recorded as persistently absent or permanently excluded from school**



For all youth justice disposal types, the majority of the matched cohort aged 16 and 17 have previously had a record of being persistently absent from school (ranging from 78% for cautions up to 94% for those sentenced to less than 12 months in custody). **It is important to note though, that there are many young people in the overall pupil population that are persistently absent from school that do not go on to offend. For example, in the autumn 2015 term alone, as many as 670,000 of pupils enrolled in state-funded primary and secondary schools were persistently absent from school (around 10% of all pupils – see link below table 1.5.1 for reference).**

The proportion of permanent exclusions for those in the matched young offender cohort aged 16 and 17 ranges from 8% for cautions to 23% for custodial sentences less than 12 months. There is no direct comparison available for the overall pupil population but published statistics show that there have been around 5-6,000 permanent exclusions per year in state-funded primary and secondary schools between 2010 and 2015. **Therefore, there will be many young people permanently excluded from school that do not go on to offend.** The results from Chart 1.5.1 are summarised in



Tables 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 including the underlying volumes in the matched cohort and the overall pupil population.

*Table 1.5.1: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 aged 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date that have ever had a record of being persistently absent from school.*

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 and aged 16 or 17 on their sentence date that <b>have ever had a record of persistent absence from school</b>	% that have ever had a record of persistent absence
Custody (12 months or longer)	401	89%
Custody (less than 12 months)	921	94%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	3,206	90%
Referral Orders	3,757	84%
Cautions	7,152	78%
Number of pupil enrolments who were persistent absentees in the Autumn 2015 term in all state funded Primary and Secondary schools	Approx. 670,000	No direct comparison available

*Table 1.5.2 Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 aged 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date that have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school.*

Youth Justice Disposal Type	Number of matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 and aged 16 or 17 on their sentence date that <b>have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school</b>	% that have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school
Custody (12 months or longer)	72	16%
Custody (less than 12 months)	224	23%
Youth Rehabilitation Orders	679	19%
Referral Orders	526	12%
Cautions	730	8%
Number of permanent exclusions in 2014/15 for all ages in Primary and Secondary schools	5,800	No direct comparison available

Overall pupil population figures taken from: 'Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2014 to 2015' [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2014-to-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2014-to-2015) and 'Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn term 2015' [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term-2015)

## Annex A – glossary of acronyms and key terms

DfE – Department for Education

FSM – Free School Meals - the variable used is FSM eligibility. There are some children that are known to be eligible but do not actually take-up the Free School Meals on offer.

LAC – Looked After Children – a child looked after by their local authority. See the Children Act 1989 for a more detailed definition.

Matched young offender cohort – all offenders aged 10 to 17 years in 2014 in the matched Police National Computer – National Pupil Database dataset.

MoJ – Ministry of Justice

NPD – National Pupil Database

Persistent absence - unauthorised and authorised absences during the school year that account for more than 10% of the total number of school sessions available

PNC – Police National Computer

SEN – Special Educational Needs

## Annex B – Data match: Methodology and Results

### 1. Data matching methodology

The methodology used to match the data sources together was similar to that used in other MoJ data linking projects, such as the data share between MoJ and the Department of Work and Pension (DWP) and Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) see

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/experimental-statistics-from-the-2013-moj-dwp-hmrc-data-share](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/experimental-statistics-from-the-2013-moj-dwp-hmrc-data-share). The following six variables – and one derived variable (full name) - were the only common variables available in the National Pupil Database and the Police National Computer datasets and therefore used for matching:

- 1) Forename
- 2) Middle name
- 3) Surname
- 4) Date of birth
- 5) Postcode
- 6) Gender
- 7) Full Name – all the name together

Matching rules were agreed between MoJ and DfE and included combinations of at least four exact matches of the common variables. The following 20 matching rules were employed hierarchically, with Match Rule 1 taking precedence and, if no match was found, each subsequent rule being considered in turn:

*Table B1: Matching Rules*

Match Rule	Forename	Middle	Surname	Date of Birth	Post Code	Gender	Full Name
1	F	F	F	F	F	F	X
2	F	F	F	F	F	X	X
3	X	X	X	F	F	F	F
4	F	N	F	F	F	F	X
5	F	N	F	F	F	X	X
6	F	F	F	F	P	F	X
7	X	X	X	F	P	F	F
8	F	X	F	F	F	F	X
9	F	X	F	F	F	X	X
10	F	F	F	P	F	F	X
11	F	N	F	F	P	F	X
12	F	N	F	P	F	F	X
13	F	F	F	F	F	F	X
14	F	N	F	F	F	X	X
15	F	F	F	F	X	F	X
16	F	N	F	F	X	F	X
17	F	F	F	F	F	F	X
18	F	N	F	F	F	F	X
19	P	F	F	F	F	F	X
20	P	F	F	F	F	X	X

Notes:

F = Exact match

X = Not included in match

N = Set to Null

P = Partial Match

The majority of the data was matched on Rules 1 and 15, which together accounted for around 80% of records matched. Most of the remaining matches were from Rules 4, 6, 8 and 16.

In addition to full matching, partial matching was used to improve match rates when matching on forename, middle name and surname was not successful. As exact matching is very strict (either a word matches or it does not), partial matching improved match rates by including matches where the first two characters from forename, middle name or surname matched. Partial matching was also employed for Date of Birth (i.e. when date and month of birth were inverted) and postcode (i.e. by matching on the postcode sector, e.g. “SE14 5”, rather than the full postcode).

Alias information – alternative names and dates of birth recorded for the same offender - from the PNC was also included in the data share. Previous data shares have indicated that this information plays a key role in data matching projects. As such, multiple names and postcodes were provided for some offenders. However, as described in Section 3 on Matching Results, only one-to-one matches were included in the final matched dataset.

## 2. Match rate

This report is based on offenders from the PNC that were successfully matched to the NPD. The records of around 1.74 million offenders, aged between 10 and 29 years, between 2000 and 2015 were shared with DfE. Of those, around 1.22 million were matched and included in the final matched dataset, after cleaning. A good match rate of around 70% was achieved (see Section 8 on Caveats for reasons why offenders’ characteristics may not have matched to information from the NPD). All figures in this publication are based on matched offenders only.

## 3. Matching results

Multiple records for the same offender were included in the data matching exercise between the PNC and the NPD. This meant that there were five potential scenarios for each unique offender:

- 1) One PNC record matched to one NPD record
- 2) One PNC record matched to many NPD records
- 3) One NPD record to many PNC records
- 4) Many PNC records to many NPD records
- 5) No match between PNC and NPD

After matching, there was a match of one PNC record to one NPD record (scenario 1) for around 98% of offenders. Only these records, where there was a one to one match, were included in the final matched dataset.

## 4. Datasets used

The datasets used from MoJ and DfE in this analysis are given in Table B2:

*Table B2: Datasets used*

Dataset used	Information extracted	Time Period in data
Police National Computer	Age Offence Committed Sentence Date	Sentenced in calendar year 2014

	Disposal Type (custody, community order etc.) Sentence Length	
School Census	Gender Ethnicity (self-declared) Free School Meal eligibility SEN provision Primary SEN Type	2002 – 2014/15 FSM and SEN as at KS2 and KS4
Key Stage 2	English Reading attainment level English Writing attainment level Mathematics attainment level	1997/98 – 2014/15
Key Stage 4	Any Passes at all (GCSE or equivalent) Attained Level 1 (5 or more GCSE or equivalent A* - G including English and Maths) Attained Level 2 (5 or more GCSE or equivalent A* - C including English and Maths)	2001/02 – 2014/15
School Absences	Flag for those were Persistently Absent	2006 - 2015
School Exclusions	Flag for those were Permanently Excluded	2006 - 2014
Looked After Children	Flag for those who were Looked After Children Flag for those who were LAC at 31 March 2014	2005/06 – 2014/15

## 5. The 10-17 year old young offender cohort

The analysis in this publication focuses only on the young people who were aged 10-17 years old when they were sentenced to a disposal in the calendar year 2014.

If the same person had more than one disposal of the same type in 2014 then only the earliest sentence is selected (e.g. if they had three referral orders, only the earliest referral order is counted and the young person would appear in the referral order cohort once).

If the young person had multiple sentences over several disposal types in 2014, e.g. if they had 3 cautions, 1 YRO and 2 Short Custodial sentences, then that young person would appear in the each of the three cohorts (cautions, Youth Rehabilitation Order and short custody) once.

*Table B3: Disposal Types*

Disposal Type	Description	Included?
Short Custody	All custodial sentences with sentence lengths under 12 months.	Yes
Long Custody	All custodial sentences with sentence length 12 months or longer.	Yes
Referral Order	Referral Orders are a type of community order where the young person is referred to a YOT panel and agrees a contract of interventions lasting between 3 -12 months.	Yes
Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) or equivalent.	Youth Rehabilitation Orders are a type of community order. This category includes YRO with or without Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS) It excludes reparation orders.	Yes

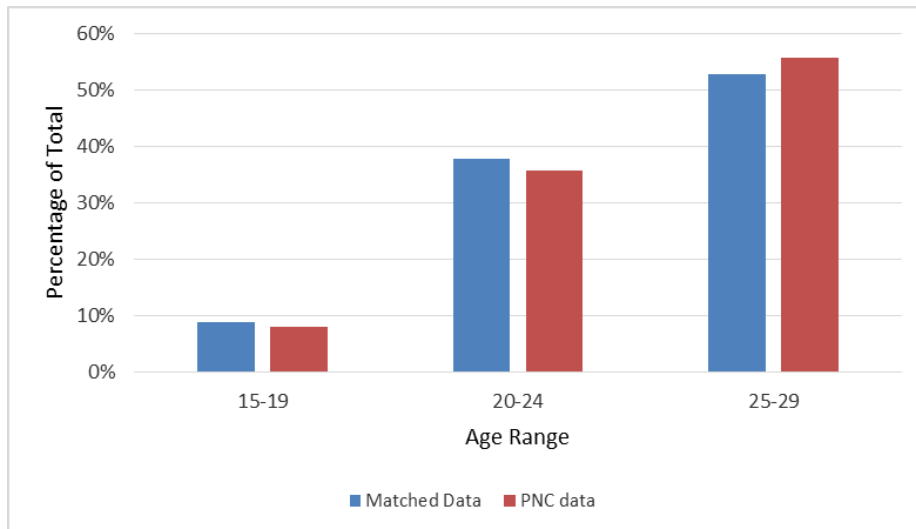
Caution	Cautions are out of court disposals.	Yes
Absolute and Conditional Discharges		No
Fully Suspended Sentences		No
Fines		No
Other		No

## 6. Representativeness of the matched dataset

The 1.22 million records in the final matched dataset were compared against the 1.74 million PNC records originally shared with DfE for data matching. Overall, the matched dataset had similar characteristics to the original PNC dataset in terms of gender and age, with some noted differences for ethnicity.

- The matched dataset was 72% male and 28% female which was broadly in line with the original PNC dataset (74% male and 26% female).
- The age breakdown of the matched dataset was similar to the original PNC dataset, although the matched data slightly under-represents older offenders and slightly over-represents younger offenders. This is due to better matching rates for younger offenders (see Section 9 on 'Match Rates by Age').

*Chart B1: Age breakdown of matched dataset compared to PNC records originally shared*



- Comparisons were also made between the matched data and the published self-identified ethnicity of those sentenced for all offences in 2014. The comparisons in Table B4 show only a slightly higher proportion of offenders from a “White” background (85% of the matched data, compared to 83% in sentencing data) and a slightly lower proportion from a “Black” background (6% of the matched data, compared to 7% in sentencing data). This may be due to the variables used to match the data as Western names are more likely to be consistently recorded across datasets.

*Table B4: Ethnicity breakdown of matched data to compared to published PNC data*

	PNC Ethnicity	
	Match data	Percentage of persons sentenced for all offences at all courts , 2014*
White	85%	83%
Black	6%	7%
Asian	5%	6%
Mixed	4%	3%
Chinese or Other	0%	1%
Any Other Ethnic Group	1%	0%

\* Figures from Table 5.14 in MoJ publication 'Race in the Criminal Justice System' - [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/race-and-the-criminal-justice-system-2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/race-and-the-criminal-justice-system-2014)  
Records where ethnicity was unknown or not given were excluded from Table B4.

## 7. Characteristics of young offender cohort

Background information on the matched young offender cohort such as age, gender, and ethnicity breakdowns were also analysed. This is to see how closely aligned the matched cohort used in this publication were to these characteristics from other publications on the entire young offender cohort and overall pupil population. Please see the supporting Excel tables for full breakdowns.

## 8. Caveats when using matched data

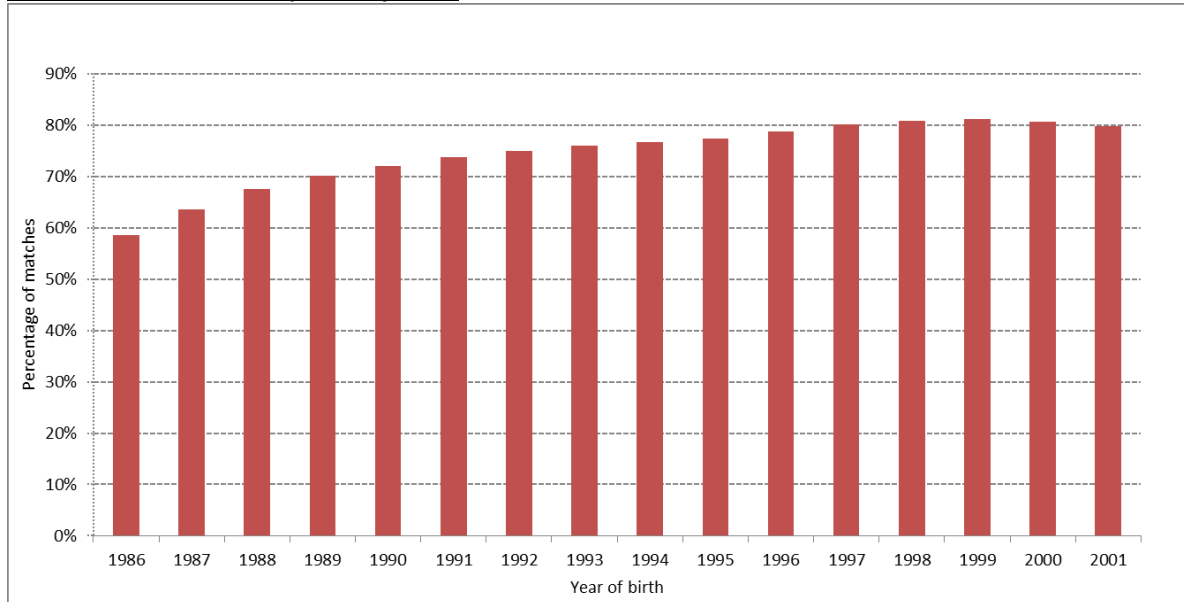
There are a number of caveats which should be considered when using the matched data:

- The matched data has been produced using administrative data sources whose main purposes are not solely statistical. Therefore, as with any large scale recording system, the data are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. Quality assurance procedures, including removal of duplicated offenders entries and checks for completeness and representativeness, have been applied to the matched data.
- The comparisons on representativeness provide some assurances that the matched data is broadly reflective of the offender cohort aged 29 years and under, but it should be made clear that this is not the full offender population.
- The analysis in this report is based only on the final matched dataset. Around 30% of offenders aged 29 years and under were not uniquely matched to the NPD. Reasons for this include:
  - they offended in England or Wales and were educated in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or outside of the United Kingdom
  - different names were recorded (potentially due to the offender changing their name or reporting a different name) on the NPD and the PNC
  - they have a common set of characteristics (i.e. the same name, date of birth and/or postcode) that make it difficult to determine a unique match across the datasets

## 9. Match rates by age

The overall match rate was around 70%, but a greater proportion of younger offenders were matched as they will have had a greater likelihood of being included in the National Pupil Database where matched data is available from 2002/03.

*Chart B2: Match rates by Year of Birth*





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### **Feedback**

This is an experimental statistical release based on initial analysis of the MoJ-DfE data share.

Feedback and ideas for further analysis would be welcomed through

[statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

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