



## Criminal court statistics quarterly, England and Wales, October to December 2017

*Including statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services  
in courts and tribunals*

### Main points

**Outstanding cases in  
magistrates' courts  
have increased**



Despite a 5% decrease in magistrates' receipts in Q4 2017, they remained higher than disposals for a second consecutive quarter, which resulted in the number of outstanding cases increasing by 4% in Q4 2017.

**Outstanding cases in  
the Crown Court have  
fallen**



Crown Court disposals remained higher than receipts in the quarter, continuing to drive the decrease in outstanding cases to 37,600 in Q4 2017, the lowest number in the quarterly time series.

**The proportions of  
effective, ineffective  
and cracked trials have  
remained the same as  
the previous quarter**



In Q4 2017 just over half (51%) of trials in the Crown Court were effective, 35% were cracked and 15% were ineffective.

**The average number of  
days from first listing to  
completion in the  
Crown Court has  
increased**



For cases completing in the Crown Court, the average number of days from first listing to completion in the Crown Court increased from 172 days in Q3 2017 to 176 days in Q4 2017, the first increase since Q4 2016.

**Total financial  
impositions have  
decreased**



Total financial impositions have decreased by 7% in Q4 2017, mostly driven by an 8% decrease in costs and a 7% decrease in fines.

**Interpreters: The  
success rate of  
completed requests  
remained stable**



The success rate for completed service requests was 98% in Q4 2017, the same as the previous quarter.

The technical guide to Criminal court statistics can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-criminal-court-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-criminal-court-statistics)

For full and detailed commentary please refer to the annual publication:

[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2017)

**We have changed how our quarterly bulletins look, and would welcome any  
feedback to [commentary.champions@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:commentary.champions@justice.gsi.gov.uk)**

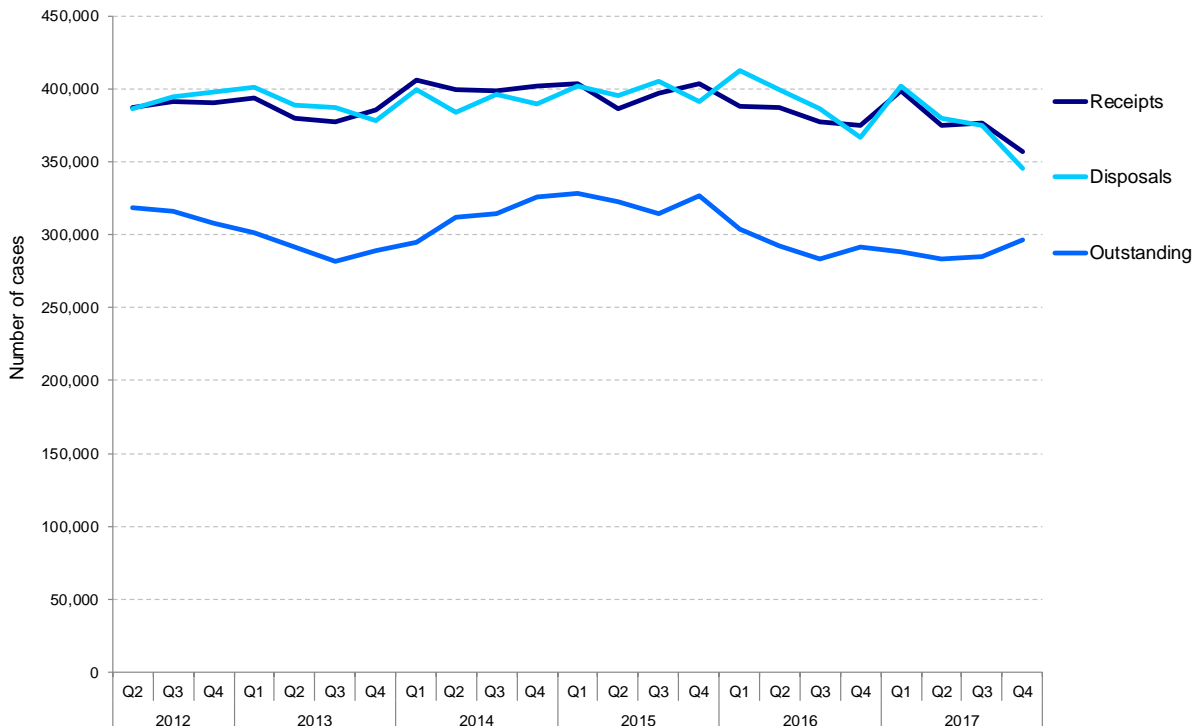
For other feedback related to the content of this publication, please let us know at  
[CJS\\_Statistics@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:CJS_Statistics@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

# 1. Criminal cases in the magistrates' courts

## Outstanding cases in magistrates' courts have increased

Despite a 5% decrease in receipts in Q4 2017, they remained higher than disposals for a second consecutive quarter, which resulted in the number of outstanding cases increasing by 4% in Q4 2017.

**Figure 1: Magistrates' courts caseload, Q2 2012 to Q4 2017 (Source: Table M1)**



### Magistrates' court caseload (Figure 1)

In the latest quarter the total number of receipts decreased by 5% from 377,200 in Q3 2017 to 356,800 in Q4 2017, and by 5% from 375,400 in Q4 2016.

Disposals have decreased by 8% in the latest quarter, falling to 345,700 in Q4 2017, and by 6% from 367,300 in Q4 2016.

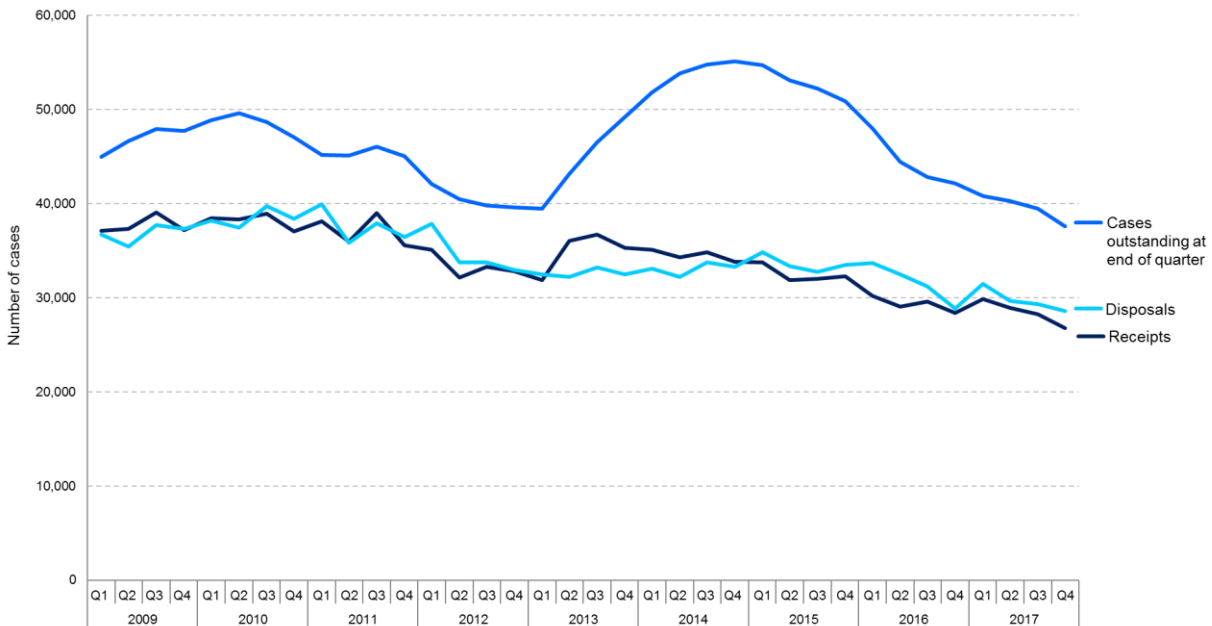
Due to the number of receipts being higher than disposals, the number of outstanding cases increased by 4% in Q4 2017 to 296,300 and by 2% since Q4 2016.

## 2. Criminal cases in the Crown Court

### Outstanding cases in Crown Court have fallen

Disposals remained higher than receipts in this quarter, continuing to drive the decrease in outstanding cases to 37,600 in Q4 2017, the lowest number in the quarterly time series.

**Figure 2: Crown Court caseload, Q1 2009 to Q4 2017 (Source: Table C1)**



### Receipts (Figure 2)

Receipts have fallen by 5% since Q3 2017 and by 6% since Q4 2016. Receipts for triable-either-way cases have seen a reduction of 4% since Q3 2017, while receipts for indictable only cases have decreased by 9% in the same period.

### Disposals (Figure 2)

Disposals have fallen by 3% since Q3 2017 and overall by 1% since Q4 2016. In the latest quarter, triable-either-way disposals fell by 5%, whilst indictable only disposals increased by 1%.

### Outstanding (Figure 2)

Outstanding cases in the Crown Court have decreased since Q4 2014, mainly due to disposals remaining higher than receipts since Q1 2015. Outstanding cases have declined by 11% since Q4 2016; in the latest quarter they decreased by 5% to 37,600 cases, the lowest number in the quarterly time series.

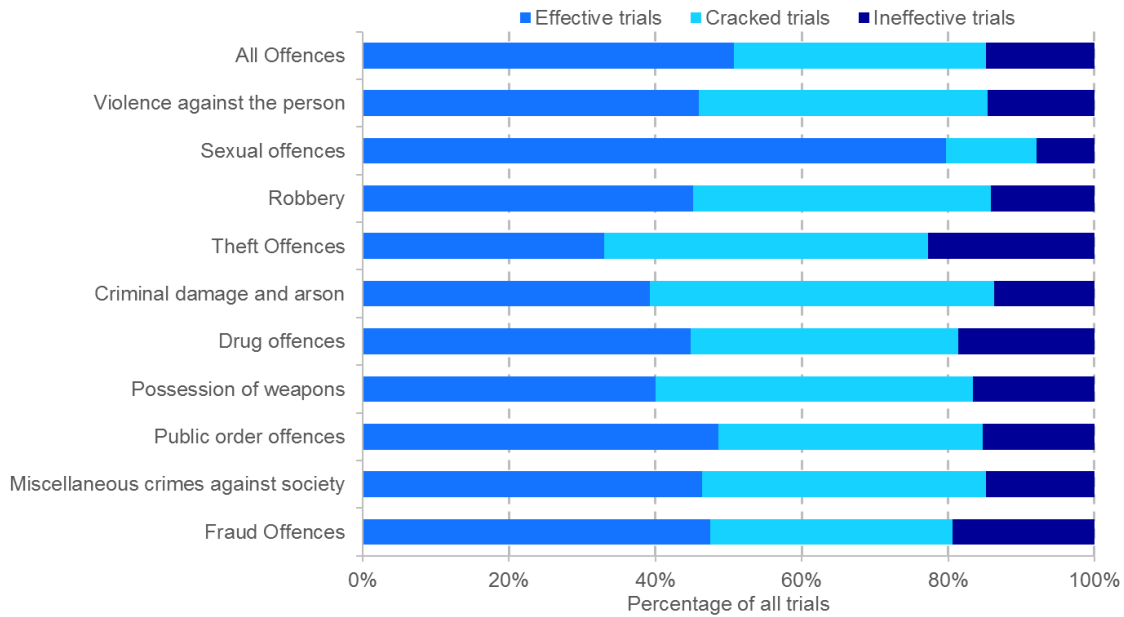
Triable-either-way cases have fallen by 4% in the latest quarter and by 15% since Q4 2016. Indictable only cases followed a similar pattern decreasing by 6% in the latest quarter and by 8% since Q4 2016.

### 3. Effective, cracked and ineffective trials in the Crown Court

The proportions of effective, ineffective and cracked trials have remained the same as the previous quarter.

In Q4 2017 just over half (51%) of trials in the Crown Court were effective, 35% were cracked and 15% were ineffective.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 3: Effectiveness of Crown Court trials by offence group, Q4 2017 (Source: Pivot table 1)**



#### Trial effectiveness by offence group (Figure 3)

In Q4 2017, sexual offences had the highest proportion of effective trials at 80%, followed by public order offences (49%) and fraud offences (47%).

Theft offences had the lowest proportion of effective trials at 33% in Q4 2017, and the highest proportion of ineffective trials at 23%. By contrast the proportion of ineffective trials was lowest for sexual offences at 8%.

Furthermore, the proportion of cracked trials was lowest for sexual offences (12%) and highest for criminal damage and arson (47%) and theft offences (44%).

<sup>1</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding.

## 4. Timeliness

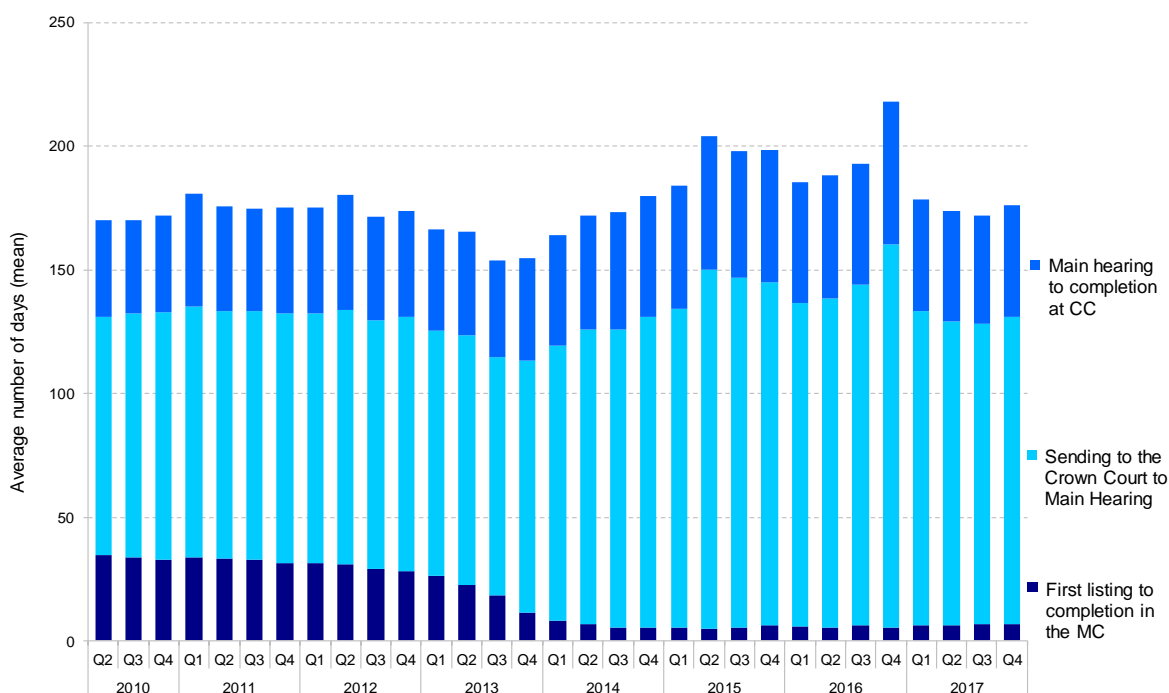
### The average number of days (mean) from first listing in the magistrates' court to completion in the Crown Court has increased

For cases completing in the Crown Court the average number of days from first listing to completion in the Crown Court increased from 172 days in Q3 2017 to 176 days in Q4 2017, the first increase since Q4 2016.

### Average hearing times for not guilty plea trials was 16.0 hours in Q4 2017

Average hearing times for not guilty plea trials in the Crown Court increased from 15.0 hours in Q3 2017 to 16.0 hours in Q4 2017, the highest level in the quarterly time series. Hearing times for guilty plea trials had a small increase from 1.7 hours in Q3 2017 to 1.8 hours in the latest quarter (Table C7).

**Figure 4: 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 Q4 2017 (Source: Table T4)**



### Crown Court criminal cases - First listing in the magistrates' courts to completion in the Crown Court (Figure 4)

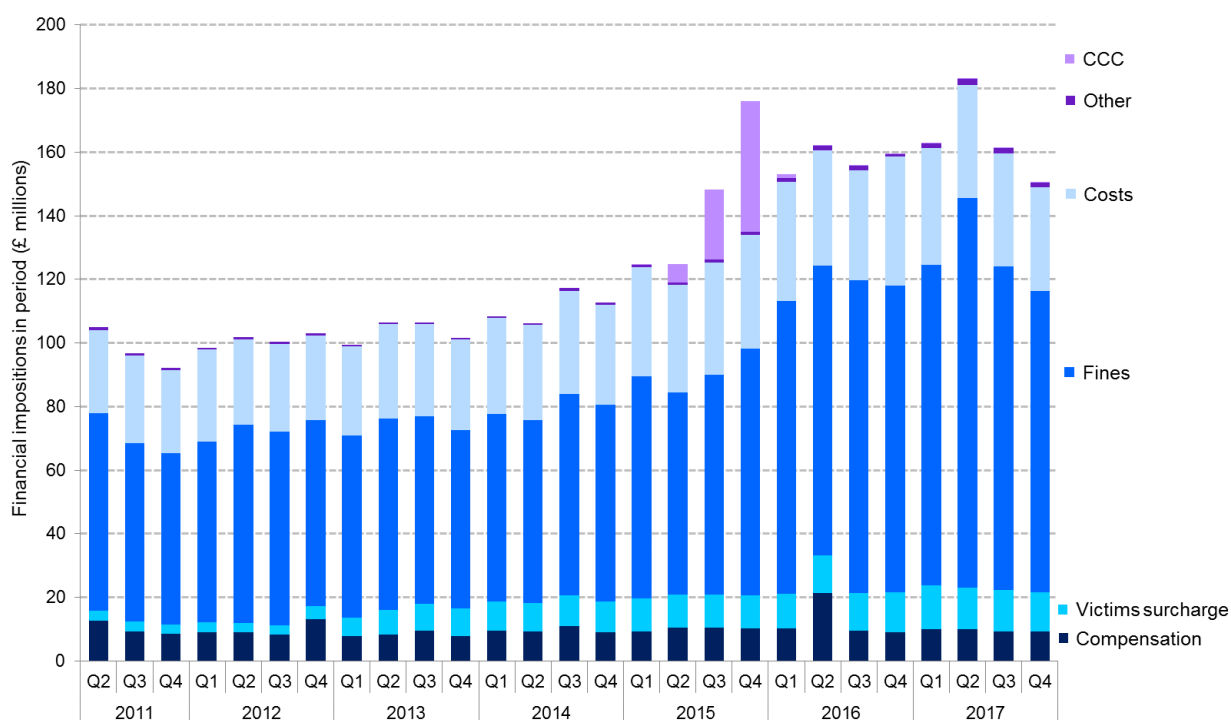
The increase in time from sending to the Crown Court to main hearing has driven the overall increase in first listing to completion in the Crown Court, increasing from 121 days in Q3 2017 to 124 days in Q4 2017. The average time from first listing at the magistrates' court to completion at the magistrates' court remained similar at 7 days in Q4 2017, whilst the time from main hearing to completion in the Crown court remained fairly stable at 45 days in Q4 2017 compared to 44 days in Q3 2017.

## Annex A: Enforcement of financial impositions

### Total financial impositions have decreased in the latest quarter

Total financial impositions have decreased by 7% in Q4 2017, mostly driven by an 8% decrease in costs and a 7% decrease in fines.

**Figure 5: HMCTS management information: Financial impositions by imposition type, England and Wales, Q2 2011 – Q4 2017 (Source: Table A2)**



### Financial impositions and amounts paid by imposition type (Figure 5, table A2)

Between Q3 2017 and Q4 2017 total financial impositions decreased by 7% to £150 million. This decline was mostly driven by decreases in fine impositions (£7m) and costs (£3m). Overall since Q4 2016, total financial impositions decreased by 6% from £159m in Q4 2016.

In Q4 2017, 10% (£15m) of all criminal court financial impositions were paid within the imposition month, a 1 percentage point increase in the collection rate of Q3 2017 (9%). Since Q4 2016 the collection rate of impositions collected within the imposition month has fallen by 1 percentage point from 11% in Q4 2016.

### Outstanding financial impositions (Table A4)

In Q4 2017, the total value of financial impositions outstanding in England and Wales was £971m. The amount of outstanding financial impositions has been increasing since Q1 2014, and showed an increase of £195m (25%) between Q4 2016 and Q4 2017.

## Annex B: The use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals<sup>2</sup>

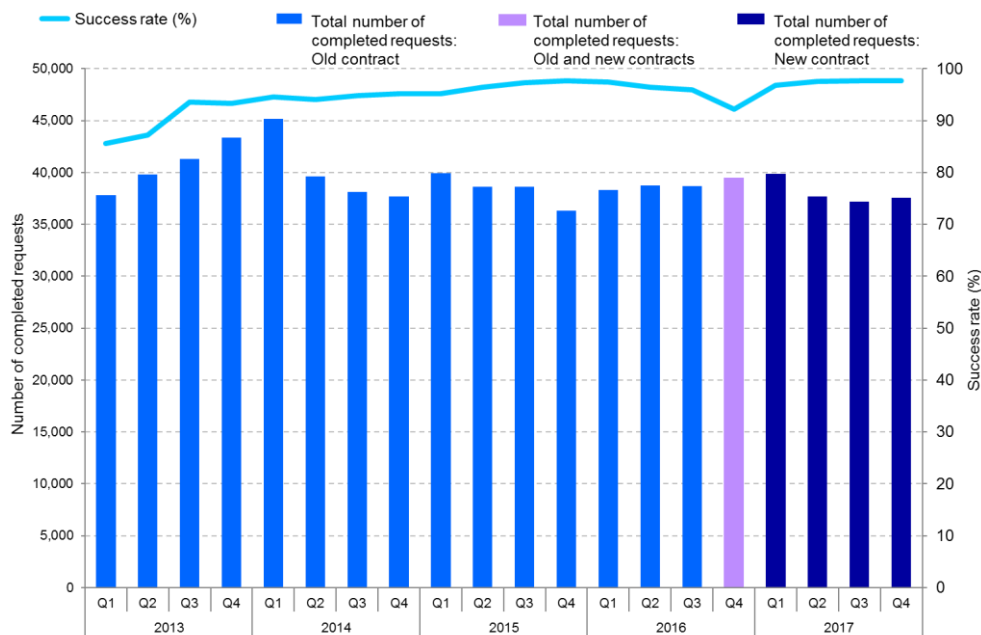
### The total number of completed service requests increased slightly in Q4 2017

A total of 37,500 completed service requests for language interpreter and translation services were made in Q4 2017, a 1% increase compared to Q3 2017.

### The success rate of completed service requests remained the same as Q3 2017

The success rate for completed service requests was 98% in Q4 2017.

**Figure 6: Number of completed language service requests and overall success rate, Q1 2013 to Q4 2017 (Source: Table L1)**



### Completed service requests (Table L1)

The figures comprise data from two separate suppliers, thebigword Group Ltd for face to face interpretation, and Clarion UK Ltd for non-spoken languages (special services). In Q4 2017, criminal courts made the greatest use of face-to-face language interpreter and translation services at 43%, whilst 34% were for tribunal cases, 17% were for civil and family court cases, and 7% of requests were for other cases.

### Success rate (Figure 6)

The success rate for standard language requests has remained at 98% since Q2 2017, whilst the languages without DPSI<sup>3</sup> success rate has also remained broadly stable, at 90% in Q4 2017. Special services has decreased by 2 percentage points to 98%.

<sup>2</sup> The statistics on the use of language interpreter and translation services in courts and tribunals are Official Statistics, except the statistics under the new contracts which are 'Provisional Statistics'.

<sup>3</sup> Languages categorised under 'languages without DPSI' were described in previous publications as 'rare' languages; use of the new description of 'languages permitted exceptional qualification requirements' is considered to more accurately reflect the current position on the availability and use of different qualification requirements for these languages.

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### The total number of complaints for completed service requests increased in Q4 2017

Whilst the number of complaints increased from 420 in Q3 2017 to 462 in Q4 2017, the complaint rate has remained stable, at just over 1% in Q4 2017.

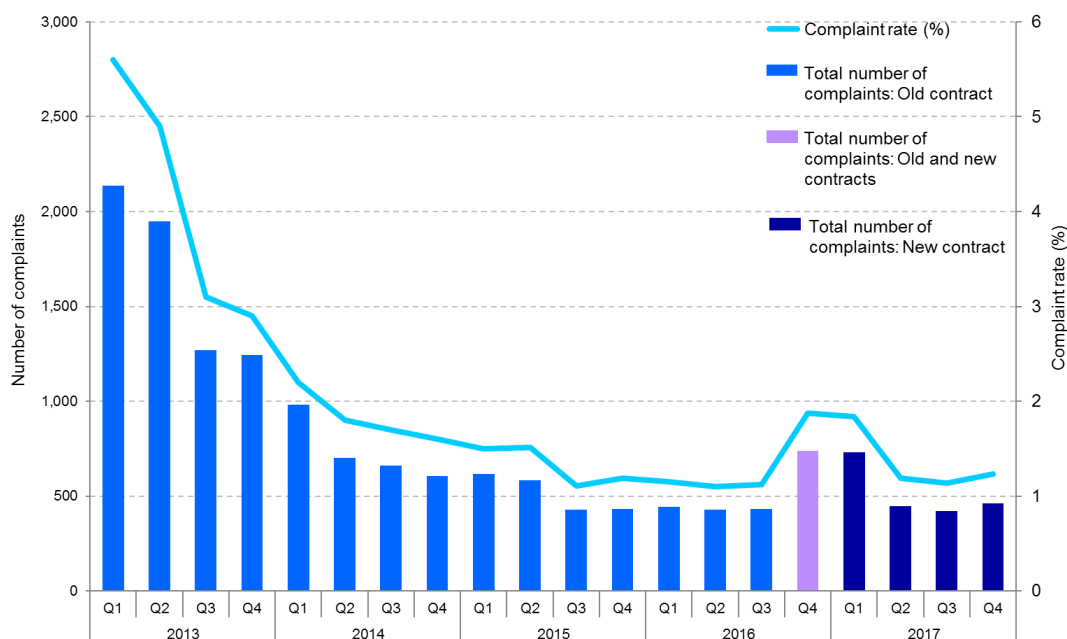
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### The total number of 'off contract' service requests increased in Q4 2017

The number of 'off contract' service requests increased from 316 requests in Q3 2017 to 341 in Q4 2017.

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**Figure 7: Number of complaints and complaint rate, Q1 2013 to Q4 2017 (Source: Table L2)**



### Number of complaints and complaint rate (Figure 7)

The most common cause of complaint was 'interpreter was late' which accounted for 33% (152) of all complaints made in Q4 2017. This was an increase of 10 percentage points compared to the last quarter. In the previous quarter the most frequent complaint had been 'interpreter did not attend', but this decreased by 3 percentage points to 22% (100) in Q4 2017.

The complaint rate for each requestor type remained fairly stable between Q3 2017 and Q4 2017. In Q4 2017 the complaint rate was highest in tribunals and other cases, both at 2%, whilst criminal courts and civil & family courts had complaint rates of less than 1%.

### 'Off contract' requests (Table L3)

'Off contract' requests at tribunals increased from 184 in Q3 2017 to 214 in Q4 2017 whilst criminal courts decreased from 109 to 103. The number of 'off contract' requests made by civil & family courts in Q4 2017 (24) remained similar to Q3 2017 (23).

Tribunals accounted for 63% (214) of all completed 'off contract' service requests, criminal courts accounted for 30% (103), while civil & family courts accounted for 7% (24).



## Annex C: Further information on criminal courts data

The data presented in this publication are provisional. Final data for each calendar year is published in June each year in our Criminal Courts Statistics annual bulletin, following further data cleaning and the incorporation of additional cases not available in our original extracts of administrative data.

### Accompanying files

As well as this bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

- Two technical guides providing background information on ‘Criminal Court Statistics’ and ‘Statistics on the use of languages and interpreters in courts and tribunals’, including data collection and processing, as well as relevant revisions policies and legislation.
- A set of overview tables, covering each section of this bulletin.
- A set of pivot tables containing Crown Court data broken down by offence group.
- 3 CSV files which feature court level breakdowns of published data:
  - Criminal Courts listings transparency.
  - Criminal Courts timeliness.
  - Crown Court receipts, disposals and outstanding cases by offence group.

### National Statistics status<sup>2</sup>

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority’s regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.



It is the Ministry of Justice’s responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

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**URL:** [www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics)

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