



Published 31 January 2019

## Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, January 2017 to March 2017

### Main points

This bulletin provides key statistics on Proven Reoffending for adult and juvenile offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, or received a caution in the period **January to March 2017**. The proven reoffending methodology changed in October 2017. For more information about the changes see the [October 2017 publication](#).

**The overall proven reoffending rate was 29.0%**



The overall proven reoffending rate decreased from the same quarter in the previous year by 0.6 percentage points. This is the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries for which data is available under the new measure of proven reoffending. Over time, the rate has fluctuated between 29% and 32%.

**Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 28.2%**



The adult proven reoffending rate has decreased from the same quarter in the previous year by 0.5 percentage points. This is equal to previous lows seen in the available timeseries. The rate has fluctuated between approximately 28% and 31%.

**Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 39.9%**



The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 2.4 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year and increased by around 2-3 percentage points compared to 2005. However, the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by over 80% since 2005.

**Adults released from custody or court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 37.5%**



The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody or court orders has increased by 0.1 percentage point since the same quarter last year but has decreased by 2.4% percentage points since the same quarter in 2011.

**Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 64.1%**



Adults who served custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 64.1%, a decrease of 0.5 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year.

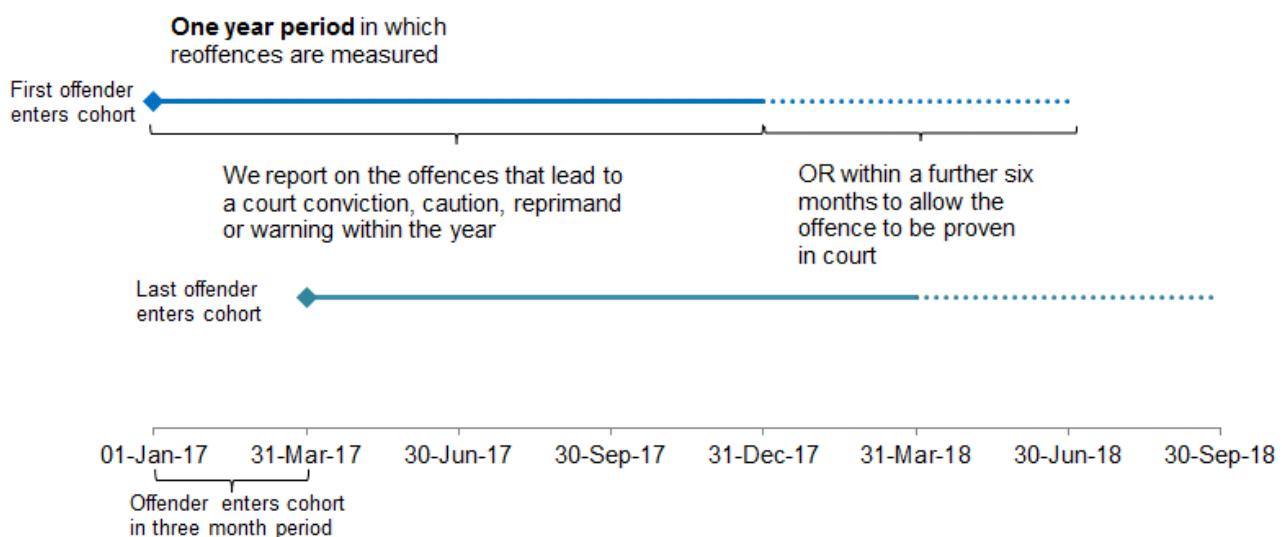
This bulletin, associated tables and data tools present the proportion of offenders who reoffend (proven reoffending rate) and the number of proven reoffences by offender history, demographics, individual prisons, probation area, local authorities and youth offending teams. For technical details please refer to the accompanying [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

For any feedback related to the content of this publication, please let us know at  
[ESD@justice.gov.uk](mailto:ESD@justice.gov.uk)

## How is proven reoffending measured?

An offender enters the cohort if they were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court or received a reprimand or warning in a three-month period: January to March 2017. It is important to note that this is not comparable to publications prior to the October 2017 proven reoffending publication, which reported on a 12-month cohort.

A proven reoffence is defined as any offence committed in a one-year follow-up period that leads to a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one-year follow-up or within a further six-month waiting period to allow the offence to be proven in court as shown in the diagram below.



Users should be cautious when making any comparison between cohorts before and after October 2015. This is because there is a change in data source from October 2015 onwards.

In addition, users should be cautious when comparing the 3-monthly cohorts to one another (e.g. January to March 2017 to October to December 2016). This is due to the smaller 3-month cohort size the measure is likely to be more variable than the previous 12-month cohort measure of reoffending.

For further details on this, and how proven reoffending is measured, please see the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#) and '[How the measure of proven reoffending has changed and the effect of these changes](#)'.

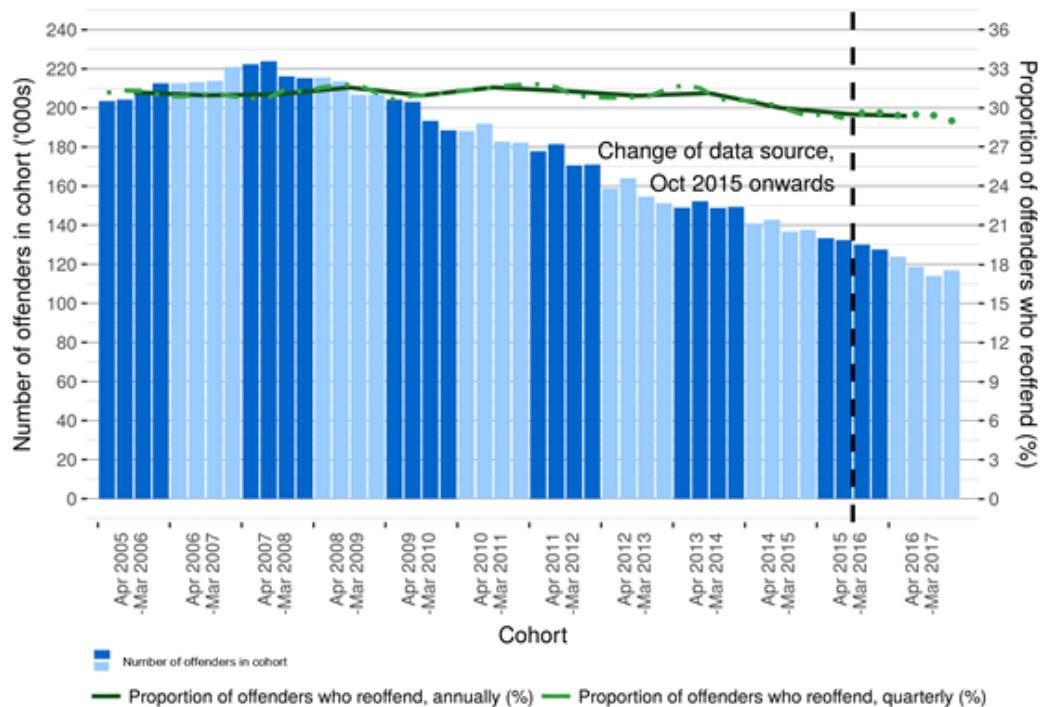
## 1. Overall – adult and juvenile offenders

### 29.0% of offenders in the January to March 2017 cohort reoffended within a year.

In January to March 2017 around 117,000 adult and juvenile offenders were cautioned<sup>1</sup>, received a non-custodial conviction at court or were released from custody. This is an increase since the previous quarter but a drop since the same quarter in 2016. Around 34,000 of these offenders committed a proven reoffence within a year. This gives an overall proven reoffending rate of 29.0%, which is a decrease of 0.6 percentage points from the same quarter in 2016. This is the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries for which data is available under the new measure of proven reoffending.

Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 29% and 32%.

**Figure 1: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence and the number of offenders in each cohort, April 2005 to March 2017 (Source: Table A1)**



Around 137,000 proven reoffences were committed over the one-year follow-up period, with those that reoffended committing, on average, 4.03 reoffences each. The average number of reoffences per reoffender has gradually increased since 2009.

In the January to March 2017 cohort, 83% were male and 17% were female, with the proportion of males in the cohort slightly higher than in 2005. Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 30.2% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 23.2%. The proven reoffending rate for males is the lowest since 2005. Compared to the same quarter the previous year there was a small decrease in the male reoffending rate (0.7 percentage points) and female reoffending rate (0.5 percentage points). Since 2005 these rates have fluctuated between 30% and 34% for males and 21% to 24% for females.

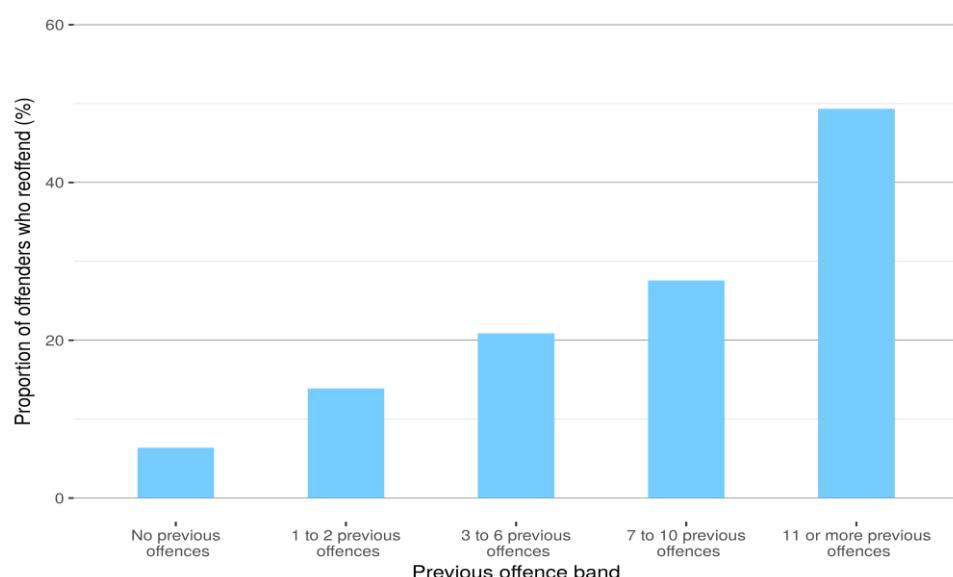
<sup>1</sup> Includes reprimands and warnings for juveniles.

## 2. Adult offenders

**28.2% of adult offenders in the January to March 2017 cohort reoffended within a year.**

Adult offenders accounted for 93% (around 109,000) of the January to March 2017 cohort and juvenile offenders accounted for 7% (around 8,000)<sup>2</sup>. Around 31,000 of all adult offenders were proven to have committed at least one reoffence within a year, giving a proven reoffending rate of 28.2%. This is a decrease of 0.5 percentage points since the same quarter in 2016 and is equal to previous lows in the timeseries.

**Figure 2: Proportion of adult offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences, January to March 2017 (Source: Table A5a)**



The change in data source in October 2015 means users should remain cautious when comparing the latest quarter with results from quarters before October 2015. The adult reoffending rate has remained broadly flat since 2005, fluctuating between 28% and 31%.

Around 124,000 proven reoffences were committed by adults over the one-year follow-up period. Those that reoffended in the January to March 2017 cohort committed on average 4.04 reoffences each. This has broadly been increasing since July to September 2009.

Offenders with a larger number of previous offences have a higher rate of proven reoffending than those with fewer previous offences. In the January to March 2017 cohort, the proven reoffending rates for adults ranged from 6.4% for offenders with no previous offences to 49.3% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences (see figure 2 above).

Adult offenders with 11 or more previous offences made up 39% of all adult offenders in the cohort and was 68% of all adult reoffenders, but committed 80% of all adult proven reoffences.

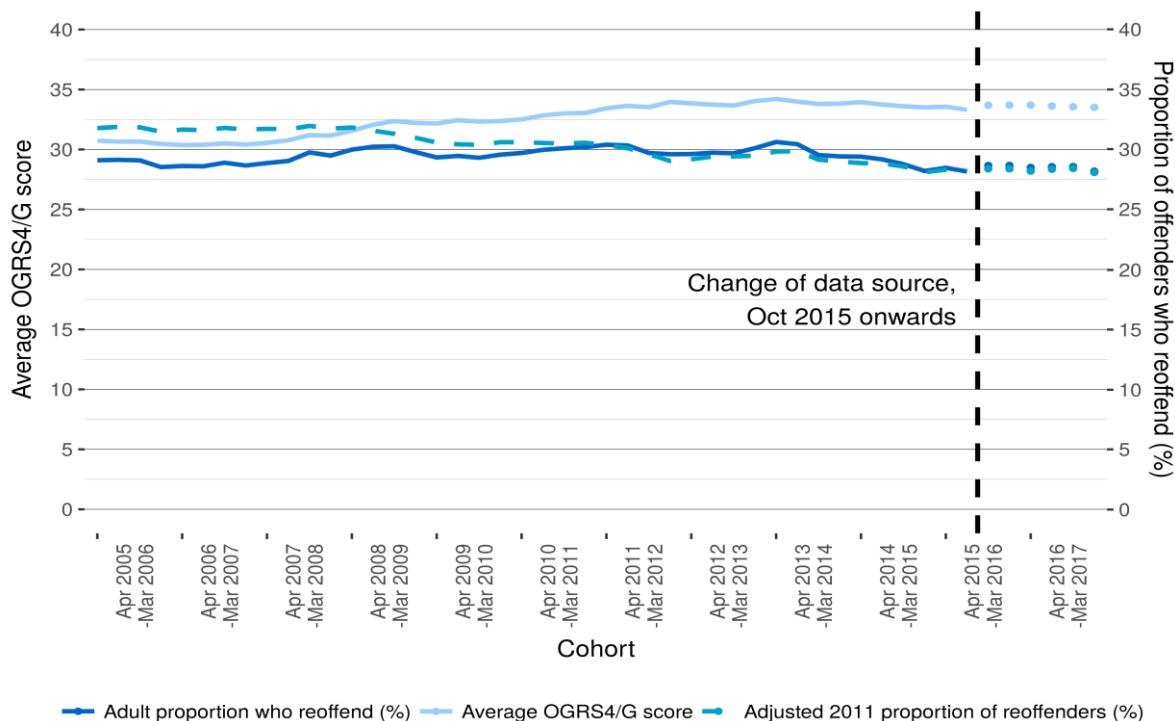
<sup>2</sup> A certain proportion of offenders who could not be matched to the Police National Computer (PNC) are excluded from the offender cohort. Therefore, this number does not represent all proven offenders. This means that the number of offenders in this bulletin will be different from the numbers published in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly and Criminal Justice Statistics. Please refer to the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#) for further information.

### 3. Adjusted reoffending rates

**When controlling for offender characteristics 28.1% of adult offenders in the cohort reoffended within a year. As with the raw rate, this is equal to previous low seen in the available timeseries.**

Adjusted proven reoffending rates for adults are calculated by ‘the proportion of offenders who reoffend’ (proven reoffending rate) for the cohort plus any difference between the average Offender Group Conviction Scale (OGRS4/G) score in that cohort and the 2011 cohorts. OGRS4 is based on a well-established, peer reviewed methodology for assessing and representing reoffending risk<sup>3</sup>. The raw rates have been adjusted to the 2011 calendar year, in line with the Payment by Result statistics.

**Figure 3: The average OGRS scores (2011 adjusted) and the adjusted proven reoffending rate for adults, April 2005 to March 2017 (Source: Table A1)**



Between 2005 and 2011 the average OGRS score increased, but since 2011 it has remained relatively flat. This indicates that between 2005 and 2011 the cohort had an increasing propensity to reoffend, but since 2011 this has since levelled off. As a result, the raw reoffending rate for adults are adjusted upwards between 2005 and 2010 reflecting the cohort having a greater propensity to reoffend.

Following 2011 the raw rates and the adjusted rates have tracked each other more closely. For example, the raw reoffending rate for adults for the January to March 2017 period was 28.2%, but the adjusted rate was 28.1%.

<sup>3</sup>[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/449357/research-analysis-offender-assessment-system.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/449357/research-analysis-offender-assessment-system.pdf)

## 4. Juvenile offenders<sup>4</sup>

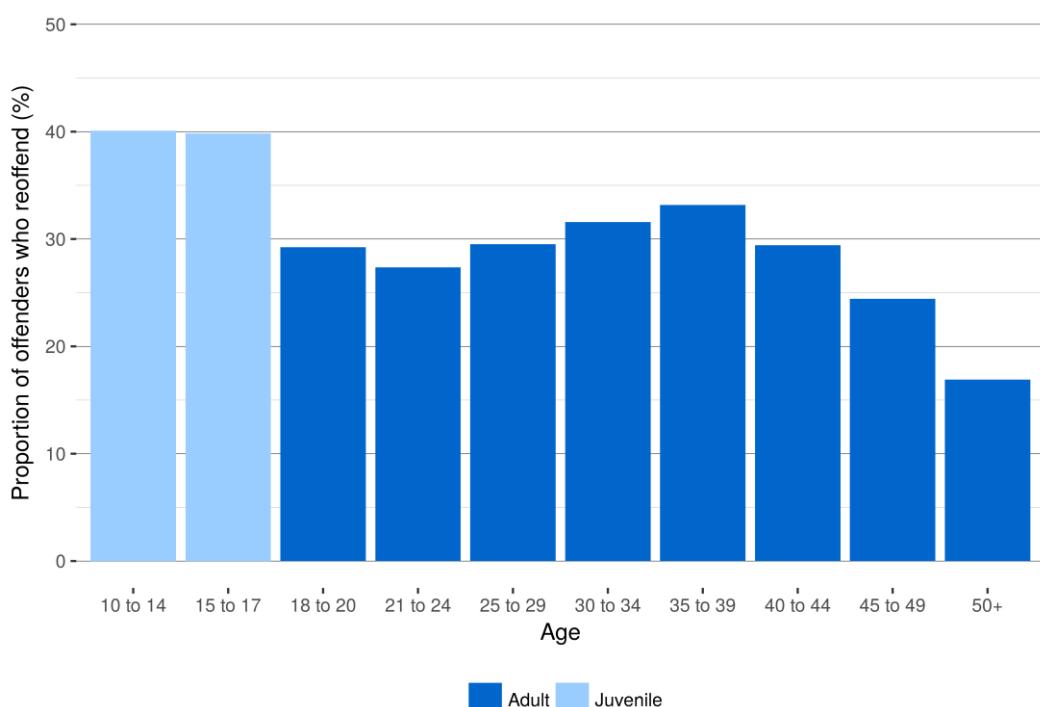
**39.9% of juvenile offenders in the January to March 2017 cohort reoffended within one year.**

Around 8,000 juvenile offenders were cautioned, convicted or released from custody in the January to March 2017 cohort and around 3,000 of them committed a reoffence.

This gives a proven reoffending rate of 39.9%, a decrease of 2.4 percentage points since the same quarter in 2016. The new reoffending measure, however, is likely to be more variable from quarter to quarter due to the smaller size of the cohorts.

Since 2005, the reoffending rate has increased by around 2 percentage points, but the size of the cohort has fallen by over 80% across the same period.

**Figure 4: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, January to March 2017 (Source: Table A3)**



Around 13,000 proven reoffences were committed by juveniles over the one-year follow-up period. Those that reoffended committed on average 3.91 reoffences each. Juvenile offenders with 11 or more previous offences had a higher reoffending rate than those with no previous offences (71.7% compared to 23.2%, respectively).

Last quarter 10 to 14-year-old offenders overtook 15 to 17-year-old offenders as the group with the highest reoffending rate. This quarter 10 to 14-year-old offenders remain the group with the highest reoffending rate of any age group, closely followed by the 15 to 17-year-old offenders, with a reoffending rate of 40.1% and 39.8% respectively (see figure 4 above). However, the number of offenders in the 10 to 14 age group has fallen by almost 90% since 2005. Figure 4 shows that the proven reoffending rate for juveniles is higher than adults and the rate generally falls with increasing age.

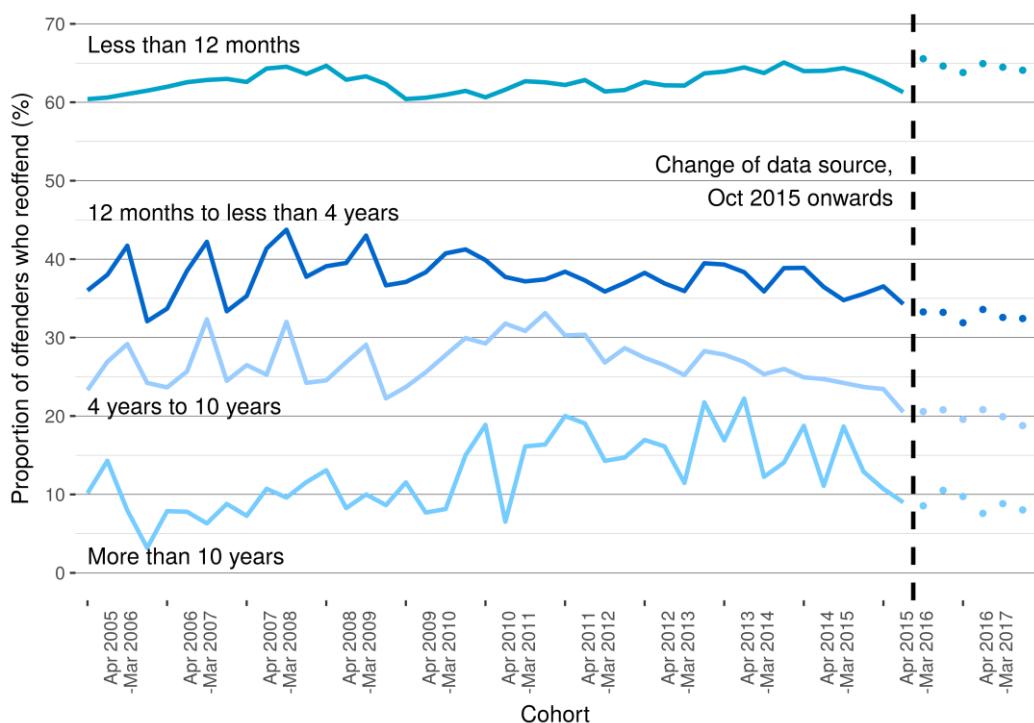
<sup>4</sup> Juveniles are defined as those aged 10 to 17 years old.

## 5. Adult disposal<sup>5</sup>

**Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 37.5%.**

A different methodology is used for proven reoffending statistics by disposal type. The first proven offence within each disposal is taken as the start point for measuring proven reoffending. Therefore, some offenders will appear in more than one disposal category. For Proven Reoffending Statistics a disposal is defined as a caution, court order, custody, or other disposal resulting from a conviction at court, such as a fine or discharge.

**Figure 5: Proportion of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence, by custodial sentence length, April 2005 to March 2017 (Source: Table C2a)**



For adult offenders starting a court order (Community sentence or Suspended Sentence Order) the proven reoffending rate was 33.3%. The rate for this group has declined since 2005 by around 4-5 percentage points. When adjusted for offender mix the decrease is smaller.

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 47.9%, a decrease of 0.8 percentage points compared to the same quarter the previous year. The proven reoffending rate for adults released from sentences of less than 12 months was 64.1%, a decrease of 0.5 percentage points from the same quarter in 2016. The impact of changing data source in October 2015 is particularly noticeable among offenders serving short sentences and might be connected to the introduction of statutory supervision for this group.

<sup>5</sup> Proven reoffending rates by disposal should not be compared to assess the effectiveness of sentences, as there is no control for known differences in offender characteristics and the type of sentence given. For further information see [Annex D of the October 2016 publication](#) (page 41) and the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

The rate for those released from short sentences (less than 12 months) has been consistently higher compared to those released from longer sentences (see figure 5 above). Adults who served sentences of 12 months or more reoffended at a rate of 28.5% (compared to 64.1% for those released from less than 12 month sentences).

## 6. Juvenile disposal<sup>6</sup>

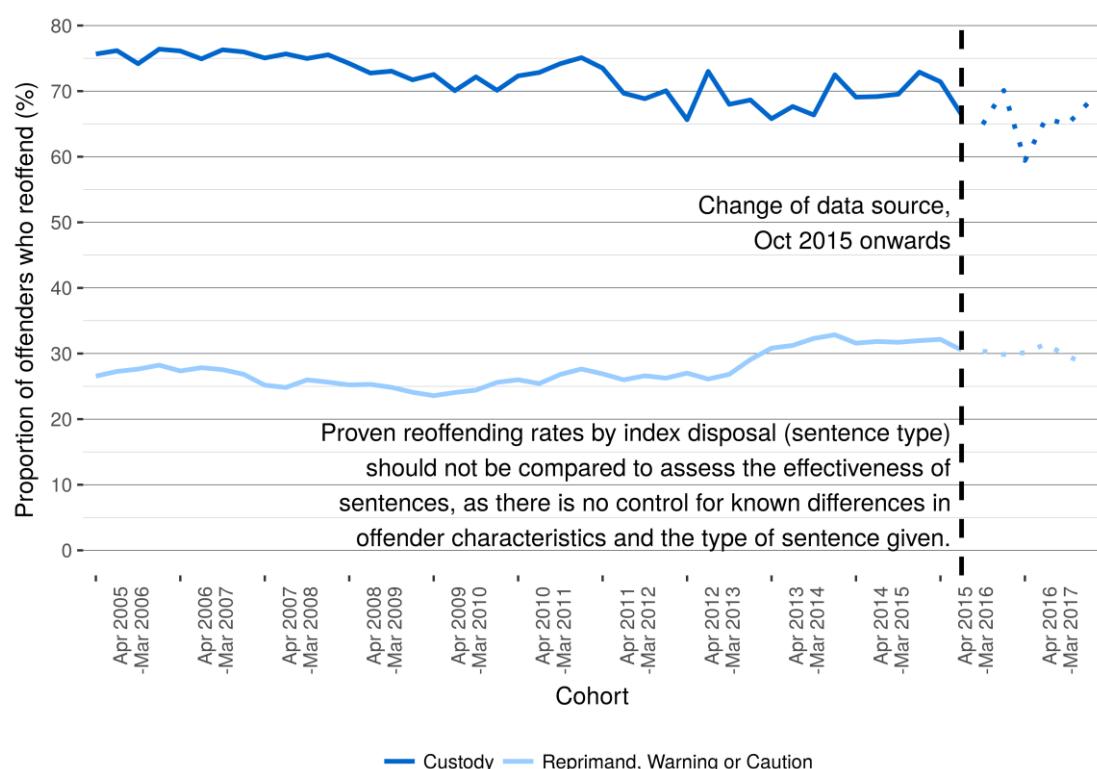
**Juvenile offenders given youth cautions had a proven reoffending rate of 28.3%.**

The reoffending rate for juvenile offenders given youth cautions has remained broadly flat since 2013, but has increased by around 1-2 percentage points compared to 2005.

Reprimands and warnings for youths were abolished under the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 with effect from 8 April 2013 and replaced with youth cautions.

Youth cautions are a formal out-of-court disposal that can be used as an alternative to prosecution for juvenile offenders in certain circumstances. A youth caution may be given for any offence where the young offender admits an offence and there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, but it is not in the public interest to prosecute.

**Figure 6: Proportion of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, April 2005 to March 2017 (Source: Table C1b)**



Between January and March 2017, 173 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 118 (68.2%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year. This represents a fall of approximately 6-8 percentage points since 2005 and 1.9 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2016 (for juvenile offenders released from custody). There is, however, likely to be more variation with the new reoffending measure, from one quarter to another due to the reduced size of the cohort.

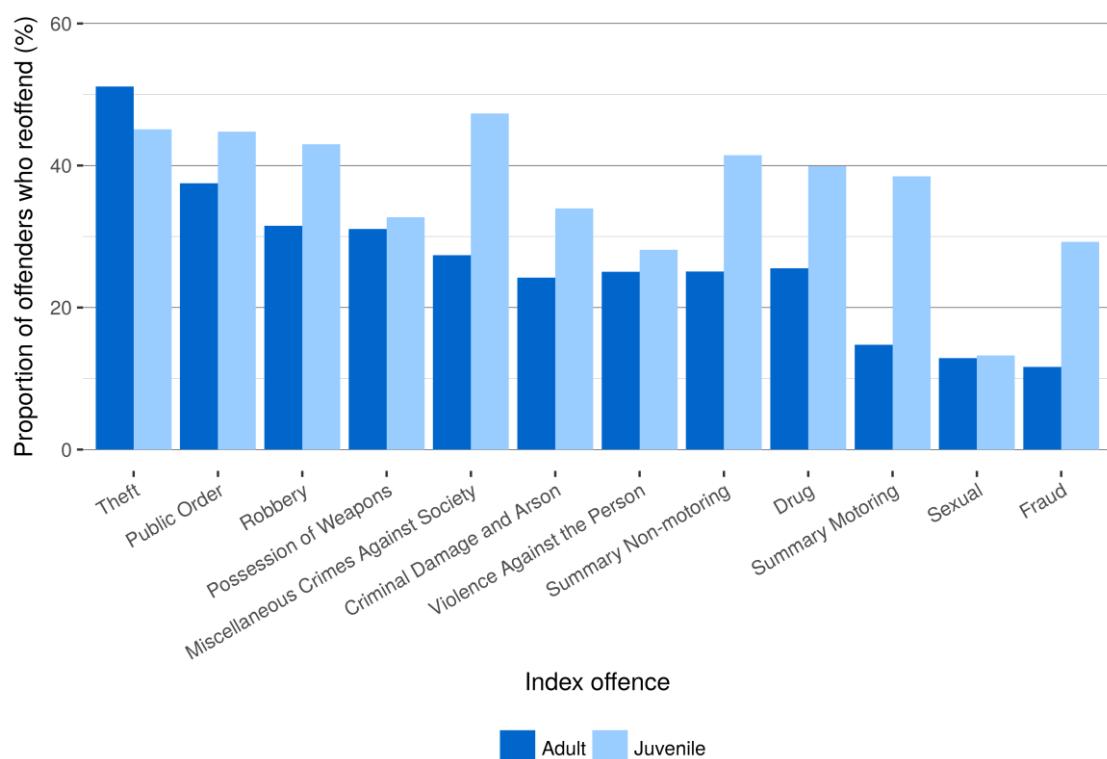
<sup>6</sup> Proven reoffending data for juvenile disposals uses the same methodology as adult disposals (see section 5 for more details).

## 7. Index offences

In the January to March 2017 cohort, adult offenders with an index offence of ‘Theft’ had the highest reoffending rate at 51.1%.

The offence that leads to an offender being included in the offender cohort is called the index offence. In the January to March 2017 adult cohort, offenders with an index offence of ‘Theft’ had the highest proven reoffending rate of 51.1%. The second highest reoffending rate for adult offenders was those with an index offence of ‘Public Order’ (37.5%).

**Figure 7: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence (except ‘Other’), January to March 2017**  
(Source: Table A4a/b)



With the exception of index offences recorded as ‘Other’, those with the lowest rate of reoffending in the adult cohort had an index offence of ‘Fraud’ (11.6%). The ‘Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society’ and ‘Fraud’ index offence categories saw the largest decreases since 2005. Those with an index offence of ‘Violence against the person’ and ‘Theft’ saw the biggest increases since 2005.

In the juvenile cohort, those with an index offence of ‘Miscellaneous crimes against society’ had the highest proven reoffending rate at 47.3%, followed by those with an index offence of ‘Theft’ at 45.1%. Those with the lowest rate had a ‘Sexual’ index offence (with the exception of the ‘Other’ index offence category) and reoffended at a rate of 13.3%. ‘Public order’ index offences saw the largest percentage point decreases since 2005, and the ‘Theft’ index offence saw the biggest percentage point increase since 2005.

## **Further information**

### **Accompanying files**

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

- A [technical guide](#) to proven reoffending statistics providing information on how proven reoffending is measured, and the data sources used.
- A set of [overview tables](#), covering each section of this bulletin.
- A set of [data tools](#) provide proven reoffending data by demographics, offender history, individual prisons (available from April 2005 - September 2015) and probation area and geography. These are formed by taking a weighted average of the four preceding 3-month offender cohorts.
- Tables showing reoffending rates for indeterminate sentenced offenders are being republished due to a labelling issue with the tables published in October 2018. This does not impact the commentary in the October bulletin.

### **National Statistics status**

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.

### **Contact**

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

Tel: 020 3334 3536  
Email: [newsdesk@justice.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@justice.gov.uk)

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

Nick Mavron, Head of Prison, Probation, Reoffending and PbR Statistics  
Ministry of Justice, 7th Floor, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ  
Email: [ESD@justice.gov.uk](mailto:ESD@justice.gov.uk)

**Next update: April 2019**

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

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