



Ministry
of Justice



Department
for Education

Understanding the educational background of young offenders: Amended summary report

Extended headline figures from a joint experimental statistics report from
the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education

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This summary sets out an extension to key findings from an analysis of young offenders in the youth justice system. The results are from a data sharing project between the Department for Education (DfE) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), conducted in 2015¹. The analysis is of those young offenders sentenced in 2014 matched to DfE data. This amendment reports findings for a more granular breakdown of custodial sentence lengths, with key findings for children and young people sentenced to short custody.

Key findings:

For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) in academic year 2007/08 (Table 1):

- 46% of those sentenced to custody for 6 months or less achieved the expected level in Maths at KS2. 56% achieved the expected level in reading and 29% achieved the expected level in writing at KS2.
- The results for those given a custodial sentence of more than 6 months but up to and including 12 months were marginally different with 55% achieving the expected level at KS2 in Maths, 52% in reading but only 26% in writing.

For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of Key Stage 4 (KS4) in academic year 2012/13 (Table 2):

- 1% of those sentenced to custody for 6 months or less in custody achieved 5 or more GCSEs (or equivalents) graded A* - C including English and Maths. 3% of those sentenced to more than 6 months but up to and including 12 months achieved this standard.

For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were at the end of KS4 in academic year 2012/13 (Tables 3 and 4):

- 42% of those given custodial sentences 6 months or less were known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). For those given custodial sentences more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months, 43% were known to be eligible for FSM.
- 42% of those sentenced to 6 months or less in custody were recorded as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) without a statement and 29% were recorded as having SEN with a statement. 56% of those sentenced to more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months in custody were recorded as having SEN without a statement, while 24% were recorded as having SEN with a statement.

For those young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were recorded as being 16 or 17 years old on their sentence date (Tables 5, 6 and 7):

- 27% of those sentenced to custody for 6 months or less were looked after at 31st March 2014. The equivalent figure for those sentenced to custody more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months was 26%.
- 94% of those sentenced to custody of 6 months or less having ever had a record of being persistently absent from school (missing 10% of sessions within a school year), while 91% of those sentenced to more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months ever had a persistent absence record.
- 23% of those sentenced to 6 months or less in custody have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school prior to their 2014 sentence date. For those sentenced to more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months in custody, 20% have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school prior to sentencing.

¹ For full details, please see Ministry of Justice (2016) Understanding the Education Background of Young Offenders: Full Report available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/understanding-the-educational-background-of-young-offenders-full-report

Caveats:

In this summary, the results of analyses of attainment and pupil characteristics are only 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 be capturing 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.

The recategorization of custodial sentence length presented in this extension to earlier analyses means that volumes and percentages for those in custody are not comparable to those reported in the earlier version of the summary. This is due to several young people being sentenced to custody more than once over the period and appearing in more than one category, as well as those young people sentenced to exactly 12 months shifting categories.

Finally, **care should be taken when interpreting this analysis as it does not imply causality between the educational outcomes or 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.

Supporting Tables:

Please note that for the analysis of attainment at KS2 and KS4, not all of the young offenders that were at the end of KS4 in 2012/13 will have been at the end of KS2 in 2007/08. One of the main drivers for this will be migration of young people between KS2 and KS4.

KS2 attainment

Table 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 (less than or equal to 6 months)	446	46%	56%	29%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	145	55%	52%	26%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	64	45%	61%	36%
Custody (more than 24 months)	64	54%	60%	35%
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%

KS4 attainment

Table 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 (less than or equal to 6 months)	399	1%	21%	86%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	130	3%	25%	89%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	68	7%	32%	93%
Custody (more than 24 months)	84	7%	35%	89%
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%

Offender Characteristics – Free School Meals (FSM)

Table 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 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 (less than or equal to 6 months)	84	42%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	31	43%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	16	48%
Custody (more than 24 months)	24	48%
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 Secondary schools that were known to be eligible for FSM	Approx. 85,000	15%

Offender Characteristics – Special Educational Needs

Table 4: 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 (less than or equal to 6 months)	84	57	42%	29%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	40	17	56%	24%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	15	5	45%	15%
Custody (more than 24 months)	22	11	44%	22%
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 Secondary schools recorded as SEN	Approx. 97,000	Approx. 22,000	17%	4%

Looked After Children

Table 5: 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 31st 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 st March 2014.	% that were looked after as at 31 st March 2014.
Custody (less than or equal to 6 months)	245	27%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	73	26%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	49	36%
Custody (more than 24 months)	58	33%
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	Rate not available

Please note that the figures in the table above are based on matched young offenders sentenced in 2014 that were looked after children on 31st March 2014. The figures take no account of how long the children were in care and do not count the young offenders who were looked after during the year but were not looked after specifically on 31st March 2014.

Persistent Absence

Table 6: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were 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 have ever had a record of persistent absence from school	% that have ever had a record of persistent absence
Custody (less than or equal to 6 months)	836	94%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	259	91%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	122	90%
Custody (more than 24 months)	153	86%
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

Permanent Exclusions

Table 7: Proportion of matched young offender cohort sentenced in 2014 that were 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 have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school	% that have ever had a record of being permanently excluded from school
Custody (less than or equal to 6 months)	203	23%
Custody (more than 6 months and up to and including 12 months)	56	20%
Custody (more than 12 months and up to and including 24 months)	24	18%
Custody (more than 24 months)	26	15%
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