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Criminal Justice Statistics quarterly, England and Wales, July 2018 to June 2019

Main points

1.58 million individuals dealt with by the Criminal Justice System in the latest year.



The total number of individuals formally dealt with by the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales is at the lowest since records began and fell 2% in the latest year.

1.37 million defendants were prosecuted in the latest year.



The number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates' courts has continued to decline since June 2016 and fell by 2% in the latest year.

The conviction ratio remained stable at 87%.



Conviction ratios vary by offence groups and are affected by a range of factors. Overall, the ratio has remained unchanged.

The proportion of defendants remanded on bail has continued to fall.



The number of defendants remanded on bail by the police decreased by 10% since year ending June 2018.

The custody rate decreased to 6.5%, the lowest in the decade.



The numbers sentenced to immediate custody (75,800) was the lowest since 2009.

The ACSL increased to 20.3 months for indictable offences and was 17.4 months overall (the highest in the decade).



The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) has steadily increased since June 2009, when it was 16.3 months for indictable offences and 13.5 months overall.

This publication gives criminal justice statistics for the latest 12 month period. These are presented alongside the same rolling 12 month periods where available, giving longer-term trends across comparable periods.

Figures are subject to change prior to the 2019 Criminal Justice Statistics annual bulletin, scheduled to be published on 21 May 2020. For full and detailed commentary, please refer to the annual publication. For technical detail please refer to the accompanying guide to criminal justice statistics.

The release of this quarter's offending histories is delayed, due to upgrades to the Ministry of Justice's data extract of the Police National Computer to improve the range of analysis possible from it. The offending histories chapter will resume in the next Criminal Justice Statistics quarterly, in February 2020.

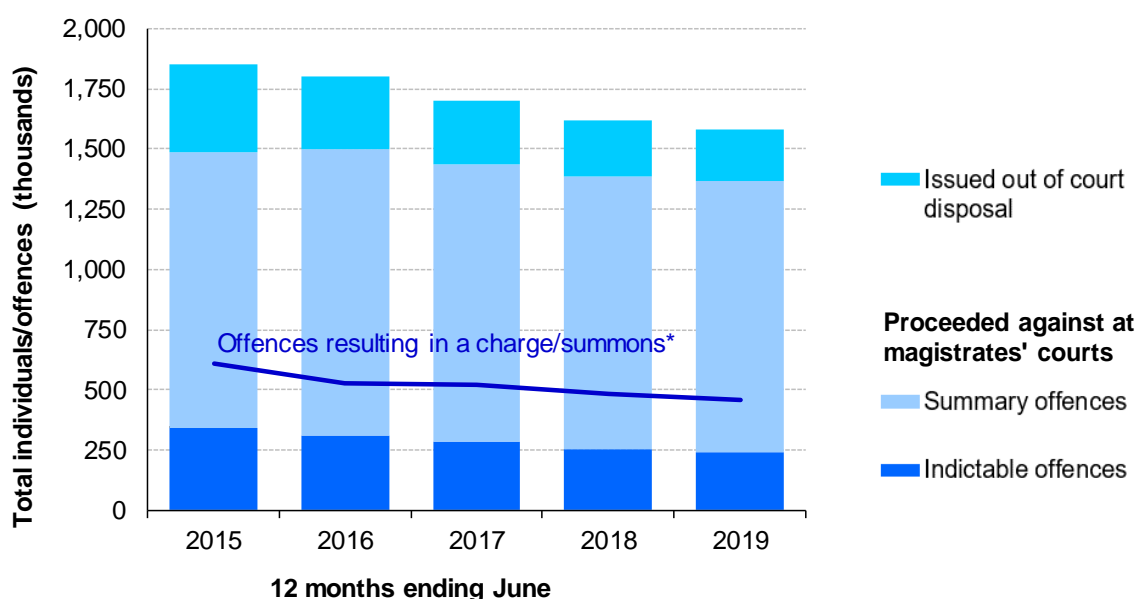
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1. Overview of the Criminal Justice System

1.58 million individuals were dealt with by the CJS in the latest year.

The total number of individuals¹ formally dealt with by the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales is at the lowest since records began and fell 2% in the latest year.

Figure 1: Individuals dealt with formally by the CJS, offences resulting in a police charge/summons, 12 months ending June 2015 to June 2019 (Source: Tables Q1.1 and Q1.2)



* Number of notifiable offences resulting in a charge/summons, excl fraud
(Source: Home Office, police outcomes)

The number of individuals formally dealt with by the CJS fell by 2% in the latest year. The number of individuals prosecuted at all courts fell by 2% overall, with a 2% increase in summary motoring offences prosecutions offset by decreases in summary non-motoring and indictable offences. Indictable offence prosecutions fell by 5%, in line with the 6% decrease in the number of offences charged by the police².

Police recorded crime rose overall by 6% (to 5.3 million offences excluding fraud³), believed to be associated with improved recording among police forces and victims' greater willingness to report crimes. Around two thirds of total prosecutions are brought to court by prosecuting authorities other than the Police (for example, the DVLA and TVLA).

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (which estimates personal experiences of crime) estimated 6.3 million incidents of crime in the year ending June 2019 (excluding fraud and computer misuse), no change when compared with the previous year⁴.

¹ A single individual (includes people and companies) can be counted more than once in a given year if they are dealt with by the CJS on more than one separate occasion. Includes individuals prosecuted, given a caution, Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) or cannabis/khat warning and community resolutions.

² From Home Office [Crime outcomes in England and Wales](#) and [Outcomes open data tables](#), year ending June 2019.

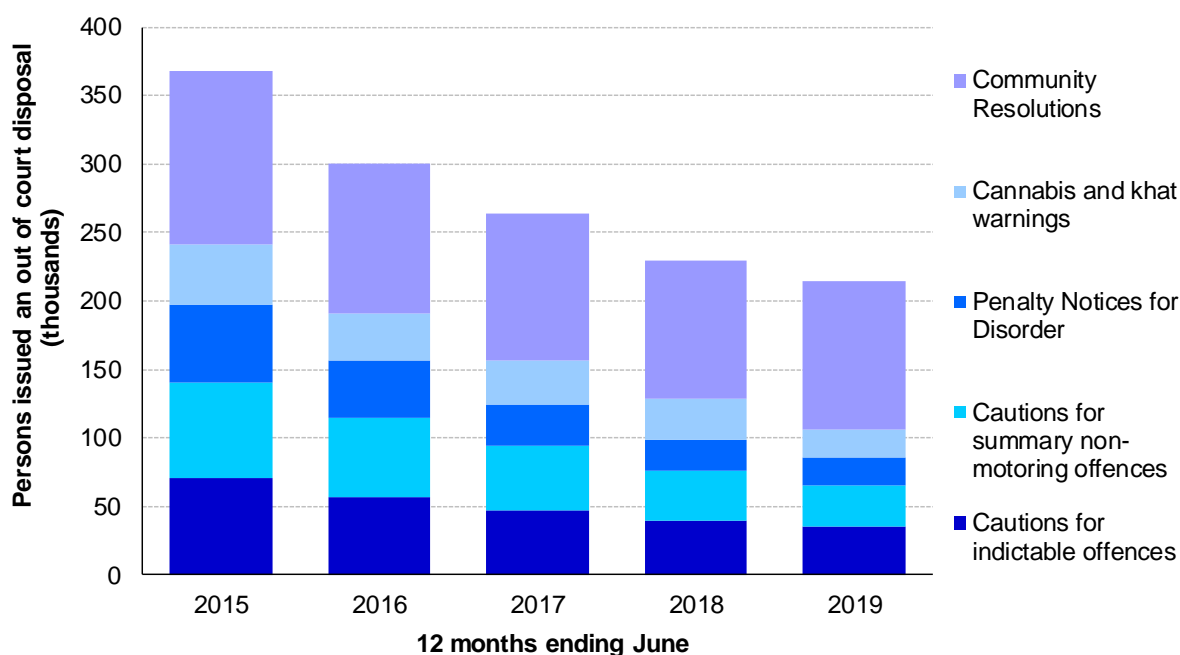
³ Overall police recorded crime by the Home Office, excluding fraud, published in [Police recorded crime open data](#).

⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinenglandandwalesappendixtables>

2. Out of Court Disposals

The number of individuals issued an out of court disposal (OCD) decreased by 15,000 (6%) to 215,000 between June 2018 and June 2019. This decreasing trend can be seen across all OCD types apart from community resolutions⁵, and continues the steady decline in the use of OCDs over the last ten years. The use of community resolutions increased by 8% to 109,000 in the past year in contrast to the downward trend seen since 2016. The overall decrease in the number of OCDs followed a number of policy changes relating to police practice and OCD availability⁶.

Figure 2: Out of court disposals issued, by disposal, 12 months ending June 2015 to 12 months ending June 2019 (Source: Tables Q.1.1, Q2.1 & Q2.2 and historic data)



The number of Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) issued was 20,500, falling 10% from the previous year. The most common offences that resulted in a PND were drunk and disorderly, possession of cannabis, causing harassment, alarm or distress, and theft (under £100). Together these accounted for 91% of all PNDs issued.

The total number of cautions issued was 64,900, falling 14% from the previous year. Drug offences, theft offences and violence against the person accounted for 78% of all cautions for indictable offences. The overall cautioning rate⁷ (among those cautioned or convicted excluding summary motoring offences) fell in the latest year from 10% to 9%. Drug offences had the highest cautioning rate (28%), followed by criminal damage and arson (25%).

The rate of decline in the use of PNDs and cautions has slowed in the past year. However, the number of cannabis/khat warnings issued has declined by 31% compared with an 8% reduction the previous year, and the number of community resolutions for drug offences has increased from 9,700 to 26,300 in the latest year.

⁵ Separately identifiable data on community resolutions were first collected from police forces under the full crime outcomes framework introduced from April 2014. These have been incorporated where comparable years of data are available.

⁶ See the annual version of this publication for further detail.

⁷ The cautioning rate is the proportion of offenders who were either cautioned or convicted (excluding convictions for motoring offences) that were given a caution.

3. Court prosecutions and convictions

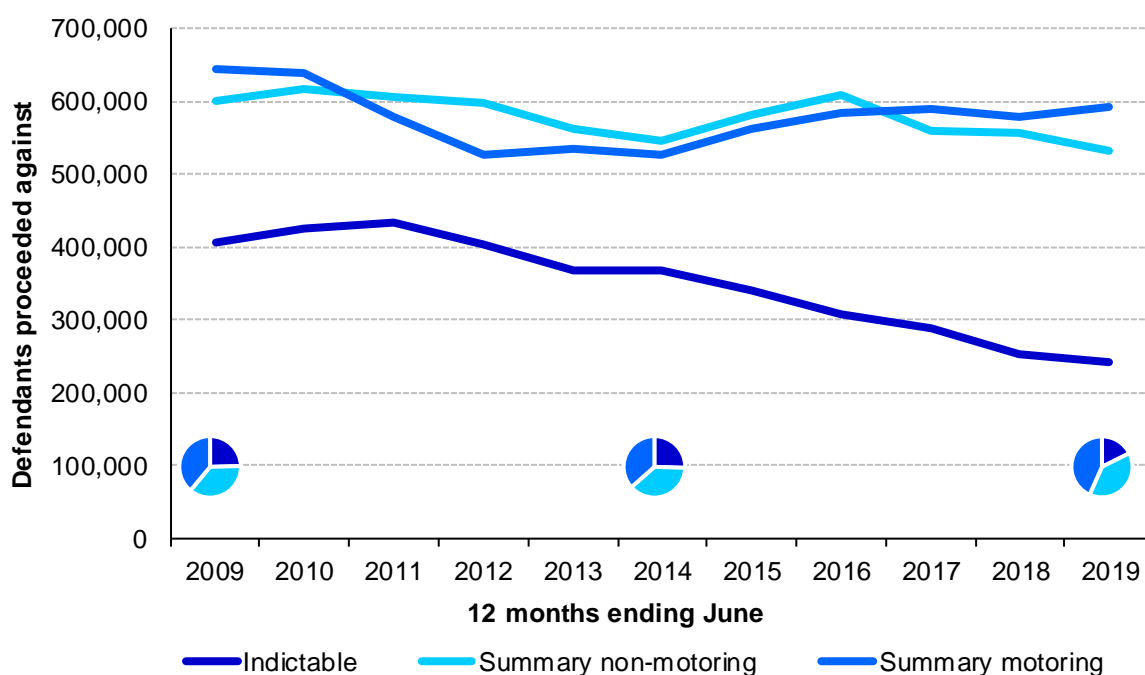
1.37 million defendants were prosecuted in the latest year.

The number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates' courts has continued to decline since June 2016 and fell by 2% in the latest year.

The overall conviction ratio⁸ remained stable at 87%

Conviction ratios vary by offence groups and are affected by a range of factors. Overall, the ratio has remained unchanged.

Figure 3: Defendants prosecuted at magistrates' courts, 12 months ending June 2009 to June 2019, by type of offence (Source: Table Q3.2)



There was a 2% decline in overall prosecutions compared to the year ending June 2018. Compared to the previous year, there have been decreases in prosecutions for all indictable offences except public order offences which remained unchanged, and violence against the person, robbery, drug and possession of weapons offences, which increased by 11%, 2%, 5% and 6% respectively. The increase in prosecutions for violent crimes has been driven by the recent introduction of legislation on assaults on emergency workers. While the number of defendants prosecuted for indictable offences continues to fall compared with a year ago, there is evidence to suggest the recent falls may be flattening, as the volume is similar to the published figures for the year ending March 2019.

Prosecutions for summary motoring offences increased by 2% in the latest year, while summary non-motoring offences continued a gradual downward trend seen since 2016, decreasing by 4%.

There were 1.18 million offenders convicted in the year ending June 2019, a 2% decrease on the previous year. There were decreases in convictions for all indictable offences except violence against the person, drug and possession of weapons offences, which increased by 11%, 3% and 8% respectively, the latter of which continues to show an increasing trend.

⁸ Conviction ratio is calculated as the number of offenders convicted as a proportion of the number prosecuted in a given year.

4. Remands

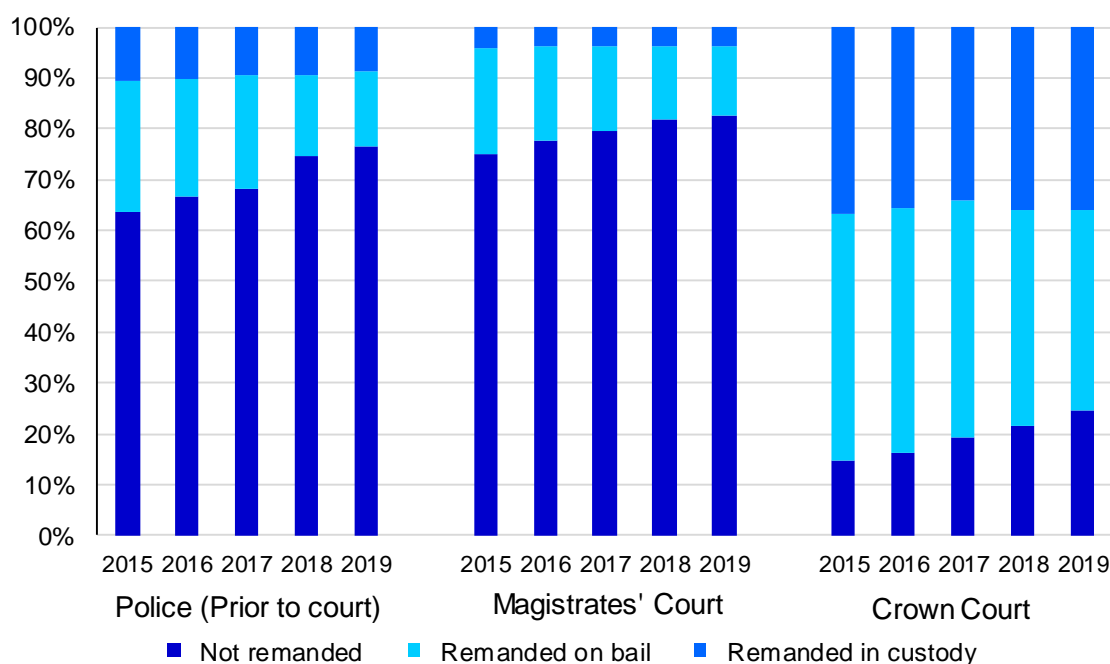
The proportion of defendants remanded on bail has continued to fall.

In the latest year, there was a decrease in the number of defendants remanded on bail by police⁹ and at court. The number of defendants remanded on bail by the police has decreased by 10% since June 2018.

In the year ending June 2019, 1.43 million defendants were directed to appear at magistrates' courts (including those who failed to appear). Compared to the previous year, the proportion of defendants not remanded prior to appearing at magistrates' court increased from 75% to 77%, the proportion arrested and bailed by police decreased from 16% to 15%, and the proportion remanded in custody by the police remained broadly stable at 9%.

The proportion of defendants prosecuted at magistrates' courts and granted bail remained stable at 14%. The proportion of defendants remanded in custody remained stable at 4%, while 83% had their case concluded at magistrates' courts without being remanded, up from 82% in the previous year. At Crown Court, when compared to the previous year, the proportion of defendants not remanded increased from 21% to 25% and the proportion of those remanded in custody remained stable at 36%. The proportion of defendants who were remanded on bail decreased from 42% to 39% in the latest year.

Figure 4: Defendants' remand status with Police (prior to court), at magistrates' courts and Crown Court, June 2015 to June 2019 (Source: Table Q4.1, Q4.2 and Q4.3)



Defendants are more often remanded in custody for indictable offences than summary offences, so the proportion of defendants remanded in custody at Crown Court is higher than at magistrates' courts. In the latest year, of the defendants remanded in custody at magistrates' courts, 14% were sentenced to immediate custody, and a further 62% were sent for trial or sentencing at Crown Court. Of those remanded in custody at Crown Court, 73% were sentenced to immediate custody. Of all defendants who were not remanded at Crown Court, 52% received an immediate custody sentence.

⁹ This may be associated with new legislation under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, which came into force on 3rd April 2017 and introduced a bail limit of 28 days.

5. Sentencing

The custody rate¹⁰ decreased to 6.5%, the lowest in a decade.

The numbers sentenced to immediate custody (75,800) was the lowest since 2009.

The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) increased to 20.3 months for indictable offences and was 17.4 months overall (the highest in a decade).

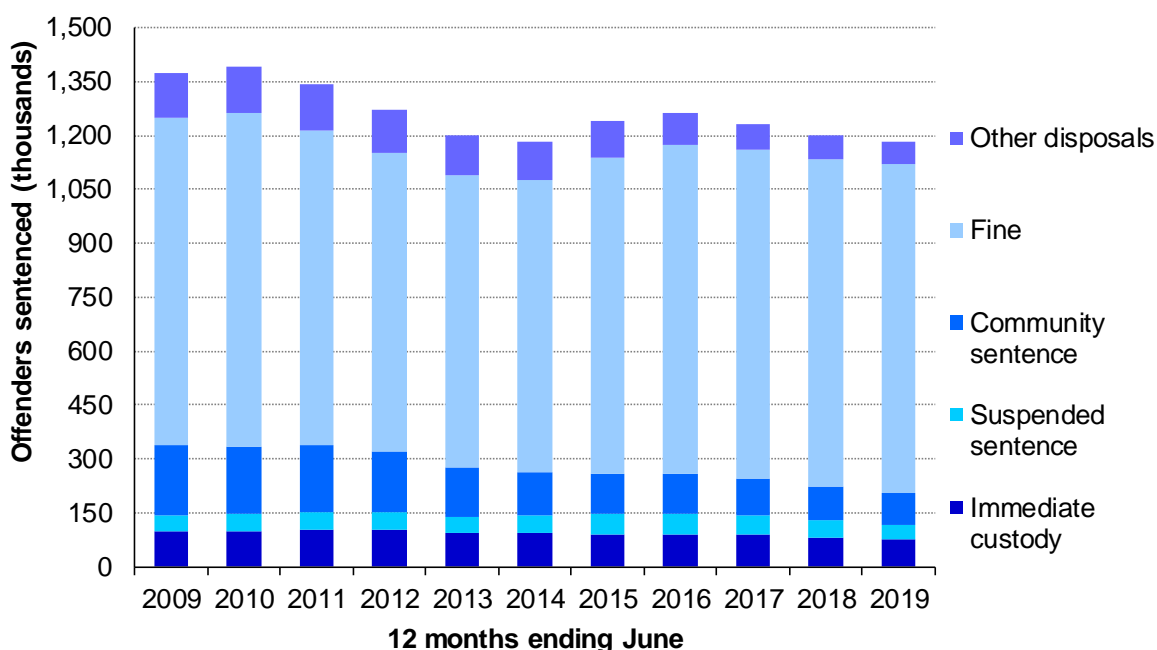
Average custodial sentence length (ACSL) has steadily increased since June 2009, when it was 16.3 months for indictable offences and 13.5 months overall.

In the latest year there were 1.18 million offenders sentenced. Sentencing trends for offence groups closely followed convictions.

Fines accounted for 78% of all sentences, an increase of 12 percentage points since 2009. This trend is in part due to the increasing proportion of sentences for summary offences (83%, a 7 percentage point increase since 2009).

The number of offenders sentenced to immediate custody has followed a downward trend since 2016 and decreased 8% to 75,800 in the latest year. There was a reduction across all custodial sentences lengths, except life sentences which saw a 20% increase to 459. The number of sentences of a month or less fell by 19% to 10,100. Of all persons sentenced to immediate custody, over half (56%) were sentenced to 6 months and less. The number of suspended sentences decreased by 19% to 39,200, and community sentences decreased by 1% to 90,600.

Figure 5.1: Sentencing outcomes at all courts, year ending June 2009 to year ending June 2019 (Source: Table Q5.1)



The number of offenders sentenced for possession of weapons offences (14,100) was the highest since year ending June 2009 and custody rate was the highest in a decade at 37%. However, the ACSL was the shortest in a decade at 12.2 months.

¹⁰ Custody rates are calculated as the number of persons sentenced to immediate custody as a proportion of all sentenced.

Further information

The data presented in this publication are provisional. Final data for each calendar year is published in May each year in our Criminal Justice 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:

- A technical guide providing further information on how the data is collected and processed, as well as information on the revisions policy and legislation relevant to sentencing trends and background on the functioning of the criminal justice system.
- A set of overview tables, covering each section of this 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 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.

Future publications

Our statisticians regularly review the content of publications. Development of new and improved statistical outputs is usually dependent on reallocating existing resources. As part of our continual review and prioritisation, we welcome user feedback on existing outputs including content, breadth, frequency and methodology. Please send any comments you have on this publication including suggestions for further developments or reductions in content.

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