



Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, October 2018 to December 2018

Published 29 October 2020

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 **October to December 2018**. The proven reoffending methodology changed in October 2017. For more information about the changes see the [October 2017 publication](#).

<p>The overall proven reoffending rate was 28.1% for the October to December 2018 offender cohort.</p>		<p>This represents a decrease of 0.7 percentage points from the same quarter in 2017 and the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries.</p>
<p>Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 27.5%.</p>		<p>This is a decrease of 0.6 percentage points since the same quarter in 2017 and represents the lowest rate in the twelve-year timeseries.</p>
<p>Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 37.3%.</p>		<p>The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 0.7 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year.</p>
<p>Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 35.7%.</p>		<p>This represents a 1.2 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year and the lowest rate over the twelve-year timeseries.</p>
<p>Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 61.0%.</p>		<p>This is a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 63.6%, which is also a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year.</p>

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 and local authorities. 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

Statistician's comment

“These latest figures show that the overall proven reoffending rate was 28.1% for the October to December 2018 offender cohort; this represents a 0.7 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2017 and the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries. More recently, there has also been a decrease in the average number of reoffences per reoffender (also known as the frequency rate) which stands at 3.97 for the October to December 2018 offender cohort compared to 4.02 for the same quarter in 2017. However, until recently the trend for the frequency rate has been an increasing one over the last twelve years, indicating that a higher number of reoffences are gradually being committed by a smaller number of individuals.

The size of the overall cohorts continues to decrease, with both the adult and juvenile cohorts showing decreases. However, the juvenile cohort has shown the greatest decrease, a fall of 88% since the same quarter in 2007, and now makes up only 6% of the cohort compared to 22% for the same period in 2007. Any marked change in the offender cohorts can also affect the rates, both in terms of the volatility in the series and in the offender mix making up the offender cohorts which is why caution should be exercised when making comparisons of actual rates over time.

As proven reoffences are measured over a one-year follow-up period and a further six-month waiting period to allow the offence to be proven in court, it is worth noting that the waiting period for the **October to December 2018** cohort coincides with the operational restrictions following the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As reduced volumes of cases have been processed at the criminal courts, these restrictions have meant that there has been increases in outstanding cases in Magistrates' and Crown Courts.¹

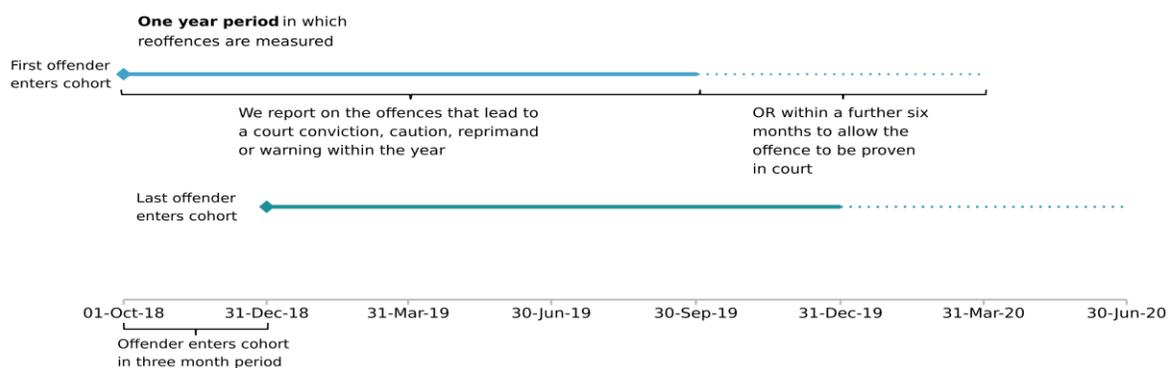
At this stage, it is difficult to determine how proven reoffending rates will be impacted in future releases of this publication as the courts return to business and deal with the current backlog of outstanding cases. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have had a reasonably small effect on the proven reoffending rates for the latest offender cohort but it is too early to tell. This will be assessed further in future releases of proven reoffending statistics though as the one-year follow-up period for reoffending progresses to include the first two quarters of 2020.”

¹ Reported in Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2020>

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: October to December 2018. 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. Offenders who appear multiple times in the cohort are only counted once. Only those reoffences recorded on the Police National Computer are included.



The timeseries presented in this publication spans the April to June 2007 through to the October to December 2018 offender cohorts. Accompanying quarterly tables also include figures for the April to June 2018 and July to September 2018 offender cohorts, the statistical releases for which were previously cancelled.² Latest proven reoffending statistics based on annual average cohorts can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872392/proven-reoffending-jan18-mar18-annual.ods.

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. October to December 2018 to July to September 2018). 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'.

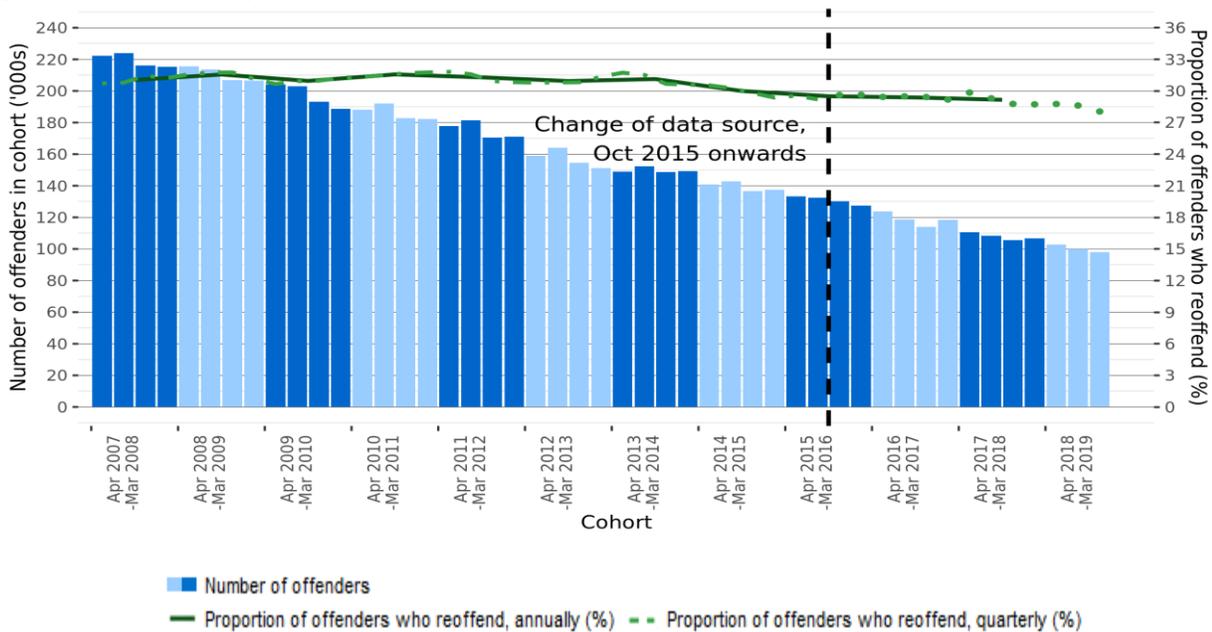
² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/proven-reoffending-statistics-april-to-june-2018>;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/proven-reoffending-statistics-july-to-september-2018>

1. Overall – adult and juvenile offenders

The overall proven reoffending rate was 28.1% for the October to December 2018 offender cohort.

This represents a decrease of 0.7 percentage points from the same quarter in 2017 and the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries.

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 2007 to December 2018 (Source: Table A1)



The overall proven reoffending rate, based on just over 98,000 adult and juvenile offenders (made up of 94% adults and 6% juveniles),³ for the October to December cohort was 28.1%; this represents a 0.7 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2017 and the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries. Almost 28,000 of these offenders committed just over 109,000 proven reoffences over a one-year follow-up period, equivalent to an average of 3.97 reoffences per reoffender (also known as the frequency rate); although this represents the lowest rate since April to June 2016, the frequency rate has generally increased since 2009, indicating that a higher number of reoffences are gradually being committed by a smaller number of individuals.

Of the October to December 2018 offender cohort, 83% were male and 17% were female, with the gender split remaining reasonably stable over time. Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 29.1% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 22.6%.

³ 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.

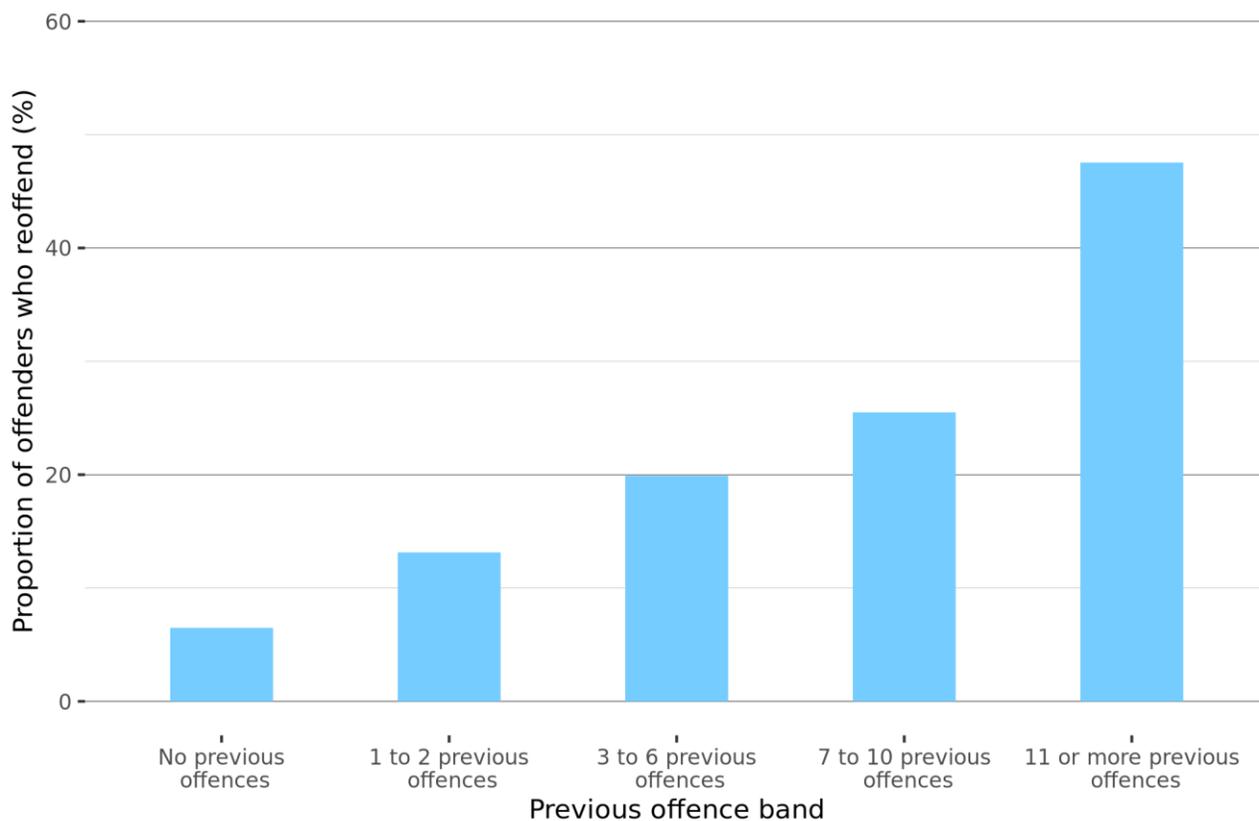
2. Adult offenders

Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 27.5%.

This is a decrease of 0.6 percentage points since the same quarter in 2017 and represents the lowest rate in the twelve-year timeseries.

The adult reoffending rate for the October to December 2018 cohort was 27.5% which is a 0.6 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2017; this is the lowest reoffending rate in the twelve-year timeseries which has fluctuated between 27.5% and 30.6%. Almost 101,000 proven reoffences were committed over the one-year follow-up period by around 25,000 of adults. Those that reoffended committed on average 3.97 reoffences; this represents a 0.05 decrease in reoffences compared to the same quarter in 2017 and the lowest adult frequency rate since April to June 2016.

Figure 2: Proportion of adult offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences, October to December 2018 (Source: Table A5a)



Offenders with a larger number of previous offences have a higher rate of proven reoffending than those with fewer previous offences. Proven reoffending rates for adults ranged from 6.5% for offenders with no previous offences to 47.5% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences for the October to December 2018 cohort (figure 2).

Adult offenders with 11 or more previous offences made up 40% of all adult offenders in the cohort, represented 70% of all adult reoffenders and committed 81% of all adult proven reoffences.

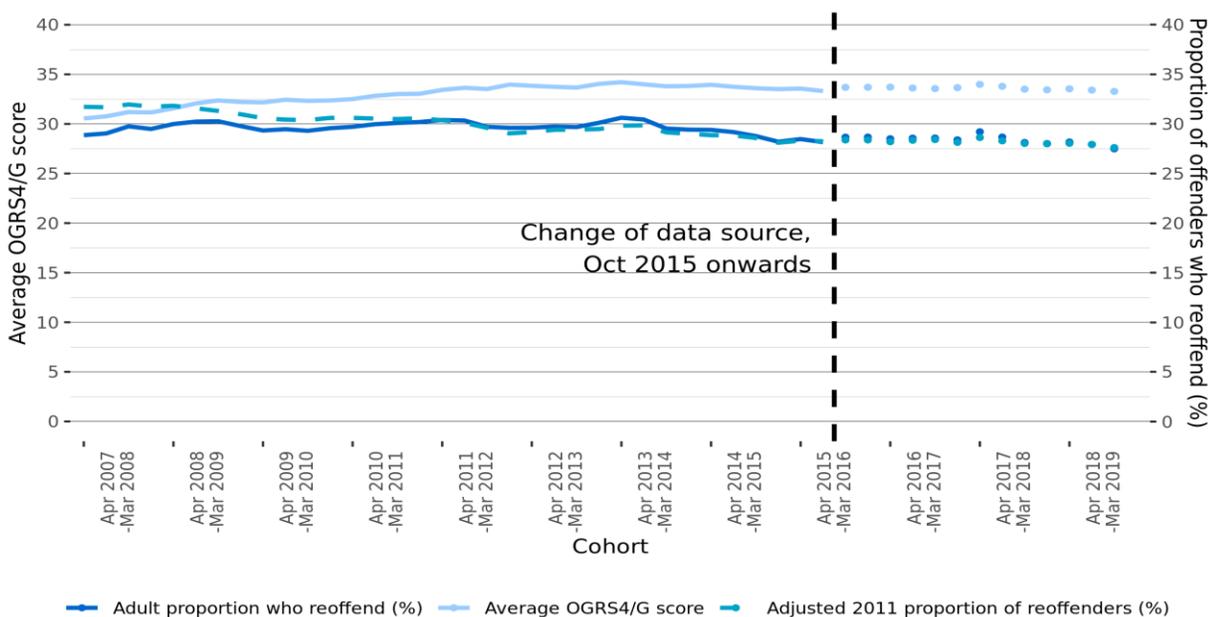
3. Adjusted reoffending rates

When controlling for offender characteristics, 27.6% of adult offenders in the cohort reoffended within a year.

This represents a decrease of 0.4 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2017 and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

The actual reoffending rate provides users with sufficient information on levels and trends. However, as proven reoffending is related to the characteristics of offenders, the actual rate will depend, in part, on the characteristics of offenders coming into the system. The raw proven reoffending rates have been adjusted⁴ against the 2011 calendar year, in line with the Payment by Results (PbR) statistics.⁵

Figure 3: The proportion of offenders who reoffend, the average OGRS scores and the adjusted proven reoffending rate for adults, April 2007 to December 2018 (Source: Table A1)



Between 2007 and 2011, the average OGRS score increased, indicating that the cohort had an increasing propensity to reoffend over this period (figure 3). As a result, the raw reoffending rates for adults were adjusted upwards, reflecting the lower propensity to reoffend when compared to later cohorts. Following 2011, the raw rates and the adjusted rates have tracked each other more closely. The raw reoffending rate for adults for the October to December 2018 period was 27.5% while the adjusted rate was 27.6%.

⁴ These adjusted 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 Reconviction 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. Refer to [A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System \(OASys\)](#) for details

⁵ Refer to [Payment by results statistics](#) for proven reoffending statistics for adult offenders being managed by Community Rehabilitation Companies, under PbR arrangements, and by the National Probation Service.

4. Juvenile offenders⁶

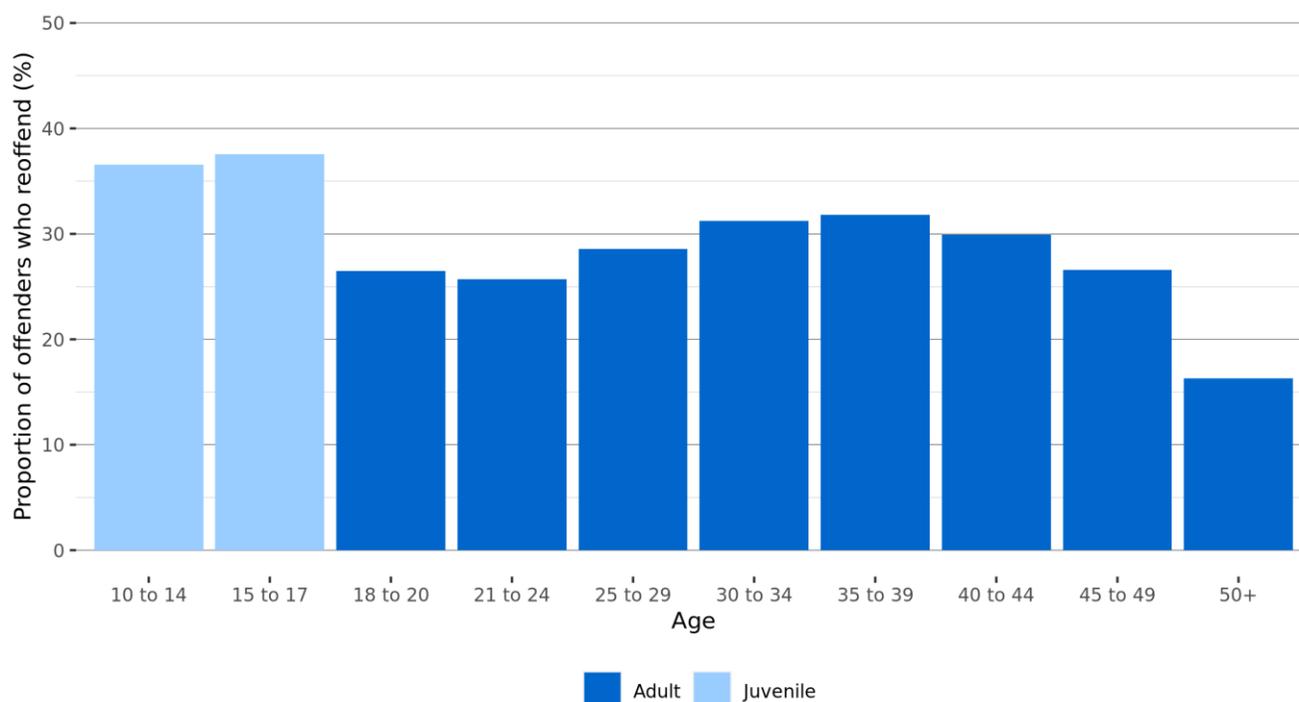
Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 37.3%.

The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 0.7 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year.

The juvenile reoffending rate was 37.3%, a 0.7 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in the previous year. Of the approximately 6,000 juvenile offenders in the October to December 2018 cohort, just over 2,000 of them committed a reoffence within a one-year follow-up period (equivalent to around 8,000 proven reoffences). However, the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 88% since the same quarter in 2007 and has fluctuated between 36.3% and 43.6% over the years, creating a more volatile series.

Those that reoffended committed on average 3.92 reoffences each. As with the adult cohort, juvenile offenders with 11 or more previous offences had a higher reoffending rate than those with no previous offences, 71.0% and 20.7% respectively.

Figure 4: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, October to December 2018 (Source: Table A3)



This quarter, 15 to 17-year-old offenders have the highest reoffending rate, closely followed by the 10 to 14-year-old offenders, with reoffending rates of 37.5% and 36.6% respectively (figure 4). The proven reoffending rate for juveniles is higher than adults and the rate starts to fall with increasing age after the 35 to 39-year-old group.

⁶ Juveniles are defined as those aged 10 to 17 years old.

5. Adult reoffending by disposal⁷

Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 35.7%.

This represents a 1.2 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year and the lowest rate over the twelve-year timeseries.

Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 61.0%.

This is a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 63.6%, which is also a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year.

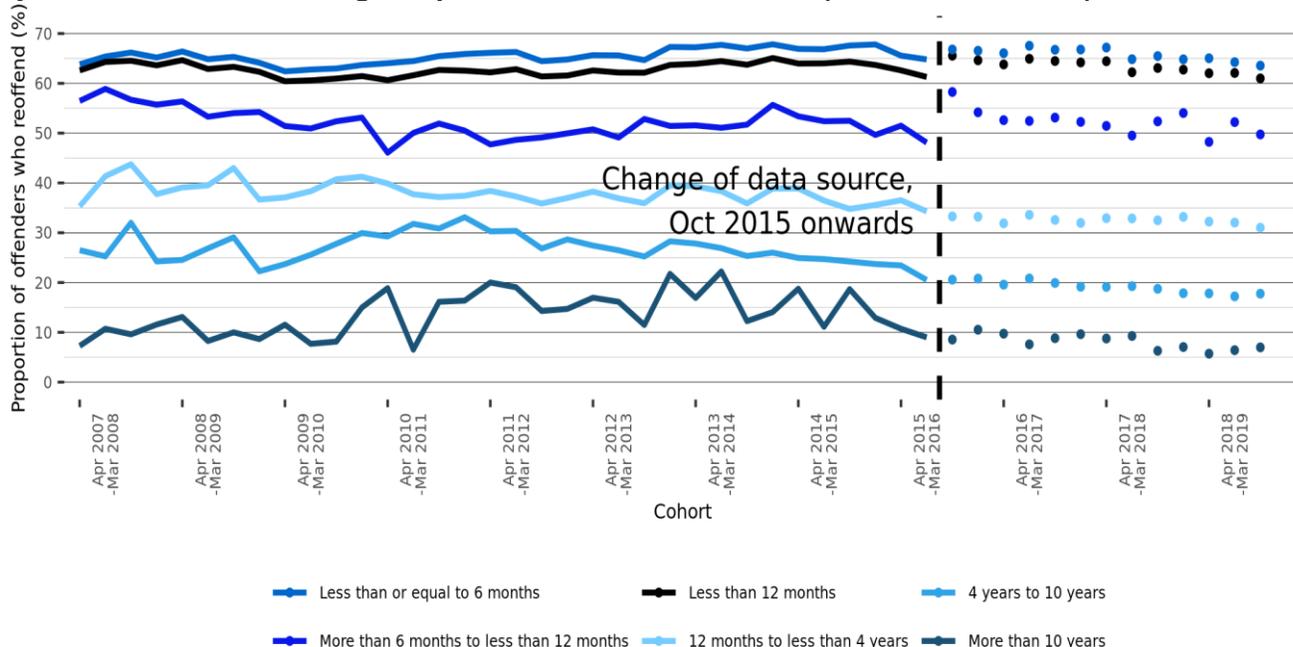
Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 35.7%, a decrease of 1.2 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2017 and a decrease of 4.4 percentage points since the same quarter in 2011, i.e. the year for which the PbR baseline was originally constructed.

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders starting a court order⁸ specifically was 31.2%, a 0.8% decrease since the same period in 2017 and a 5.5 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2011. When adjusted for offender mix (i.e. when controlling for offender characteristics), the decrease observed since 2011 is smaller at 1.2 percentage points.

⁷ 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. A different methodology is used for proven reoffending statistics by disposal type. The first proven offence within each disposal is treated as the start point for measuring proven reoffending. Therefore, some offenders will appear in more than one disposal category.

⁸ Community order or suspended sentence order.

Figure 5: Proportion of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence, by custodial sentence length, April 2007 to December 2018 (Source: Table C2a)



The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 45.4%, a 2.1 percentage point decrease compared to the same quarter the previous year. However, adults who served sentences of 12 months or more reoffended at a substantially lower rate at 26.9% compared to those who served a sentence of less than 12 months at a rate of 61.0% (figure 5). Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 63.6%, a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year. Users should exercise caution when comparing the effectiveness of different sentences because the presented rates do not control for known differences in offender characteristics receiving those sentences - for further information please consult recent research on the [impact of short custodial sentences, community orders and suspended sentence orders on reoffending](#) as well as the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).⁹

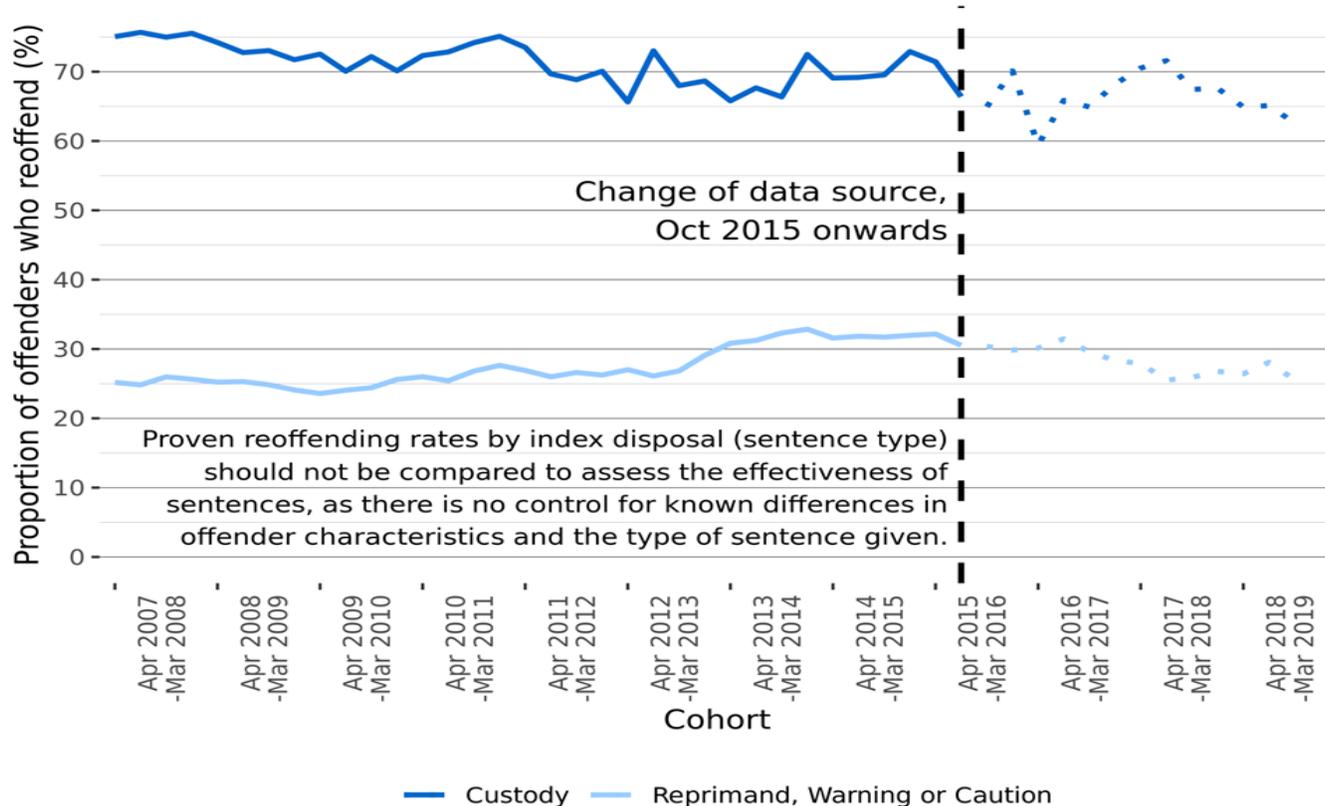
⁹ Proven reoffending rates by disposal should not be compared to assess the effectiveness of sentences, as there is no control for known differences in offender characteristics and the type of sentence given. For further information see [Annex D of the October 2016 publication](#) (page 41) and the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

6. Juvenile reoffending by disposal¹⁰

Juvenile offenders given youth cautions¹¹ had a proven reoffending rate of 25.6%.

The reoffending rate for juvenile offenders given youth cautions decreased by 0.3 percentage points since the same quarter in 2017.

Figure 6: Proportion of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, April 2007 to December 2018 (Source: Table C1b)



Between October to December 2018, 139 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 87 (62.6%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year (figure 6). The rate has decreased by 4.9 percentage points since the same quarter in 2017. 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.

¹⁰ The juvenile proven reoffending data by disposal uses the same methodology as that adopted for adult reoffending by disposal (see section 5 for more details).

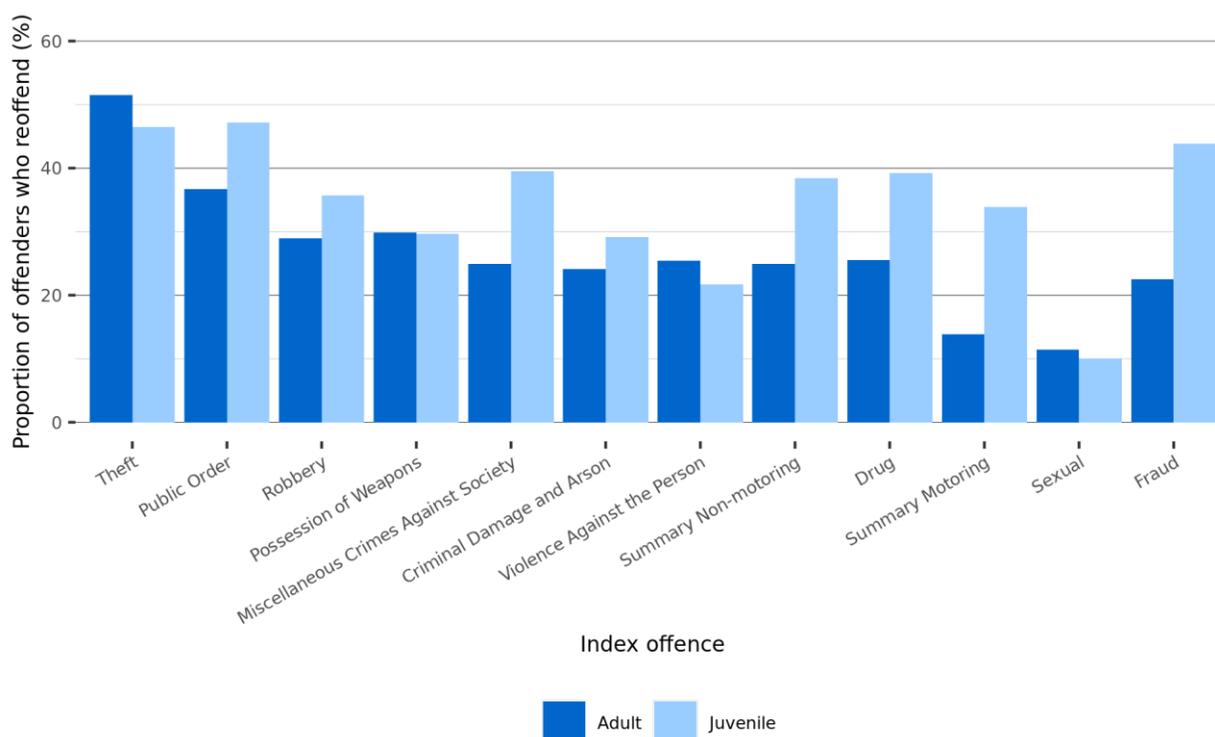
¹¹ Reprimands and warnings for youths were abolished under the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 with effect from 8 April 2013 and replaced with youth cautions. Youth cautions are a formal out-of-court disposal that can be used as an alternative to prosecution for juvenile offenders 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.

7. Index offences¹²

For the October to December 2018 adult cohort, the index offence category associated with the highest reoffending rate was theft at 51.5%.

This represents a 0.5 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2017. The second highest reoffending rate of 36.7% amongst adult offenders was those with an index offence of public order.

Figure 7: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence (except the 'other' offence category), October to December 2018 (Source: Table A4a/b)



The proportion of reoffences committed depending on index offence has remained broadly stable over time. The lowest rate of reoffending in the adult cohort was observed amongst those with a sexual offence as their index offence, with a rate of 11.5%. In the juvenile cohort, those with an index offence of public order had the highest proven reoffending rate at 47.2%, followed by those with an index offence of theft at 46.4%.

¹² An index offence refers to the offence that leads to an offender being included in the offender cohort.

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.
- Geography data tools providing proven reoffending data for England and Wales, by region, county as well as local authority.
- A data quality statement which outlines our policies for producing quality statistical outputs and the information provided to maintain our users' understanding and trust.

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.

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.

Contact

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Next update: 28 January 2021

URL: www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics

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