



Ministry
of Justice



Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly Update to September 2015

England and Wales

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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Introduction

This report presents the key statistics on activity in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) for England and Wales. It provides information for the latest twelve months (October 2014 to September 2015) with accompanying commentary, analysis and presentation of longer term trends. The information in this publication for the first three quarters of 2015 is provisional.

The data provides users with information about proven offending and its outcomes in England and Wales. The contents of this bulletin will be of interest to government policy makers in the development of policy and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation. Others will be interested in the way different crimes are dealt with in the CJS. Where appropriate, comparisons are made with different sources covering activity in the CJS – in particular, numbers of crimes recorded by the police, often the starting point for crimes dealt with by other CJS agencies¹.

In this publication, criminal offences are divided into four main offence groups:

- Indictable proceedings cover the more serious offences such as violent and sexual offences and robbery. Initial proceedings are heard at magistrates' courts but they then may be passed on to the Crown Court, either for sentencing, or for a full trial with a judge and jury. They are split into two categories:
 - **Indictable only** offences, which can only be tried on indictment in the Crown Court by a judge and jury²; and
 - **Triable-either-way** offences, which are triable either summarily in a magistrates' court or on indictment in the Crown Court;
- Summary proceedings which cover less serious offences are almost always handled entirely in the magistrates' courts when dealt with in court, with the majority completed at the first hearing. They are split into two categories:
 - **Summary non-motoring** proceedings, such as TV license evasion and less serious criminal damage; and
 - **Summary motoring** proceedings, such as speeding and driving whilst disqualified.

The majority of information presented in this publication is reported on the principal offence and principal sentence. Where proceedings involve more than one offence, the principal offence is reported. The basis for the selection of the principal offence is as follows:

- Where a defendant is found guilty of one offence and acquitted of another, the offence selected is the one for which they are found guilty;
- Where a defendant is found guilty of two or more offences, the offence selected is the one for which the heaviest sentence is imposed;

¹ Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales and police recorded crime data are published together in statistical bulletins by the Office for National Statistics.

² All offences committed by a child or young person (someone aged 10-17 years old) can be dealt with by a youth court, subject to the following exceptions which mean that the offence must be dealt with by the Crown Court: homicide; grave crimes where the youth court has determined that, if convicted, a sentence beyond its powers should be available; firearms possession by 16-17 year olds; offences that would attract at least four years custody under the dangerousness provisions; and where it is necessary in the interests of justice to try a youth and adult together.

- Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the one for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

The offence shown for each court proceeding is the one for which the court took its final decision and is not necessarily the same as the offence for which the defendant was initially prosecuted. Unless otherwise stated, the sentence shown is the most severe sentence or order given for the principal offence (i.e. the principal sentence). Secondary sentences given for the principal offence and sentences for non-principal offences are not counted in the tables (unless otherwise stated).

Consultation on changes to Criminal Justice Statistics

Alongside this edition of the Criminal Justice System publication, we have released a separate document which sets out a number of potential changes to the publication for consultation, which aim to improve the way in which information is made available to users.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-criminal-justice-statistics

We would welcome all responses, either on these proposed changes or more generally about how Criminal Justice Statistics can be improved,

Responses are requested by **31st March 2016**. We will take all comments into consideration when producing the annual edition of Criminal Justice Statistics published on 19th May 2016 and will also provide a response to your comments as part of the annual edition, with a link to also be added alongside this edition of Criminal Justice Statistics.

Changes and revisions in this publication

Information on Failure To Appear Warrants

In line with the previous edition of Criminal Justice Statistics, data on failure to appear (FTA) warrants will not be published in this bulletin, due to data availability issues. Prior to this, Table Q3.5 presented statistics on the number of FTA warrants received and executed in each police force area in England and Wales, by category of warrant. In the bulletin covering the 12 months ending March 2015, we were only able to publish this table with reservations as to the data quality, as reflected within the table footnotes. Most significantly, only 9 months of data was present for the Metropolitan Police, the largest police force area. Over the latest two quarters, a still smaller proportion of the required data is available across police forces, and it is believed that what is held would not represent a fair national picture. As such, Table Q3.5 has been withheld from this release.

In the light of these ongoing data availability concerns, we are consulting users on options for replacing our current table on FTA warrants in the consultation document referenced above.

Data Sources

This report draws on data from the following data sources:

- Data on Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) from 2013 onwards are drawn from the PentiP system. Prior to this, data were collected from individual police forces.
- From April 2011 all cautions data are collected from the Police National Computer (PNC). Prior to this, data were collected from individual police forces. Cautions and sentencing data within the offending histories section are also collected from the PNC.
- Statistics on proceedings, convictions and sentencing are either derived from the LIBRA case management system, which holds the magistrates' courts records, or the Crown Court's CREST system which holds the trial and sentencing data. Prior to November 2008 the police reported on magistrate court proceedings.
- Data on cannabis / khat warnings, community resolutions and offences taken into consideration (TICs) are supplied by the Home Office.

A technical document titled "A Guide to Criminal Justice Statistics" is available alongside this bulletin, which provides users with detailed information on the concepts and methods used in compiling this bulletin, including the quality of the data, along with guidance on statistical revisions and forthcoming changes. A copy of the technical document can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-september-2015

Interpretation

This publication presents information for the **latest 12 month period (the twelve months ending September 2015)** alongside the same rolling 12 month periods for the previous ten years. The comparison of 12 rolling month periods has the advantage over reporting on shorter timeframes – for example, covering only the latest quarter – of avoiding misinterpretation of short-term fluctuations caused by seasonality (for example, reduced court volumes every December when many of the courts are closed over the Christmas period), and enables the presentation of longer-term trends across comparable reporting periods.

In this publication:

- the "**latest year**" refers to the **12 months ending September 2015**;
- the "**previous year**" refers to the **12 months ending September 2014**; and
- any other reference period will be referred to explicitly.

Further guidance on the symbols and conventions used in the bulletin is provided in the 'Explanatory notes' section.

Key Findings

The total number of individuals (which includes people and companies) who have been dealt with formally by the CJS in England and Wales, has been declining since 2007, and is now at a record low level (period 1970 to September 2015) with 1.69 million individuals dealt with in the 12 months ending September 2015.

In the latest year, whilst the use of out of court disposals has continued to decrease, there was a 1% increase in the number of defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' courts. This reversed a trend of almost year on year decreases in defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' court over the past decade; the first increase since the 12 months ending September 2009. The increase in defendants proceeded against in the latest year has been driven by rises in both summary non-motoring and summary motoring offences, while the number of defendants proceeded against for indictable offences has fallen.

Similarly, the number of offenders convicted and offenders sentenced both increased by 2%. There was also a one percentage point increase in the conviction ratio to 84% in the latest year.

The increased proportion of offenders sentenced for summary offences has led to a decrease in the overall custody rate from 7.7% in the previous year to 7.3% in the latest year, whilst the custody rate for indictable offences has increased year on year for the past five years. The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) in the latest year was 16.4 months, an increase of 0.9 months on the previous year.

Offending Histories

The number of new entrants to the criminal justice system has continued to fall since its peak in 2007. This decline has been much sharper for juveniles than for adults; however during the 12 months ending September 2015 the decline slowed for both groups of offenders.

Around 2 in every 5 adults convicted of an indictable offence had a long criminal record compared to just over a quarter in the same period 10 years ago.

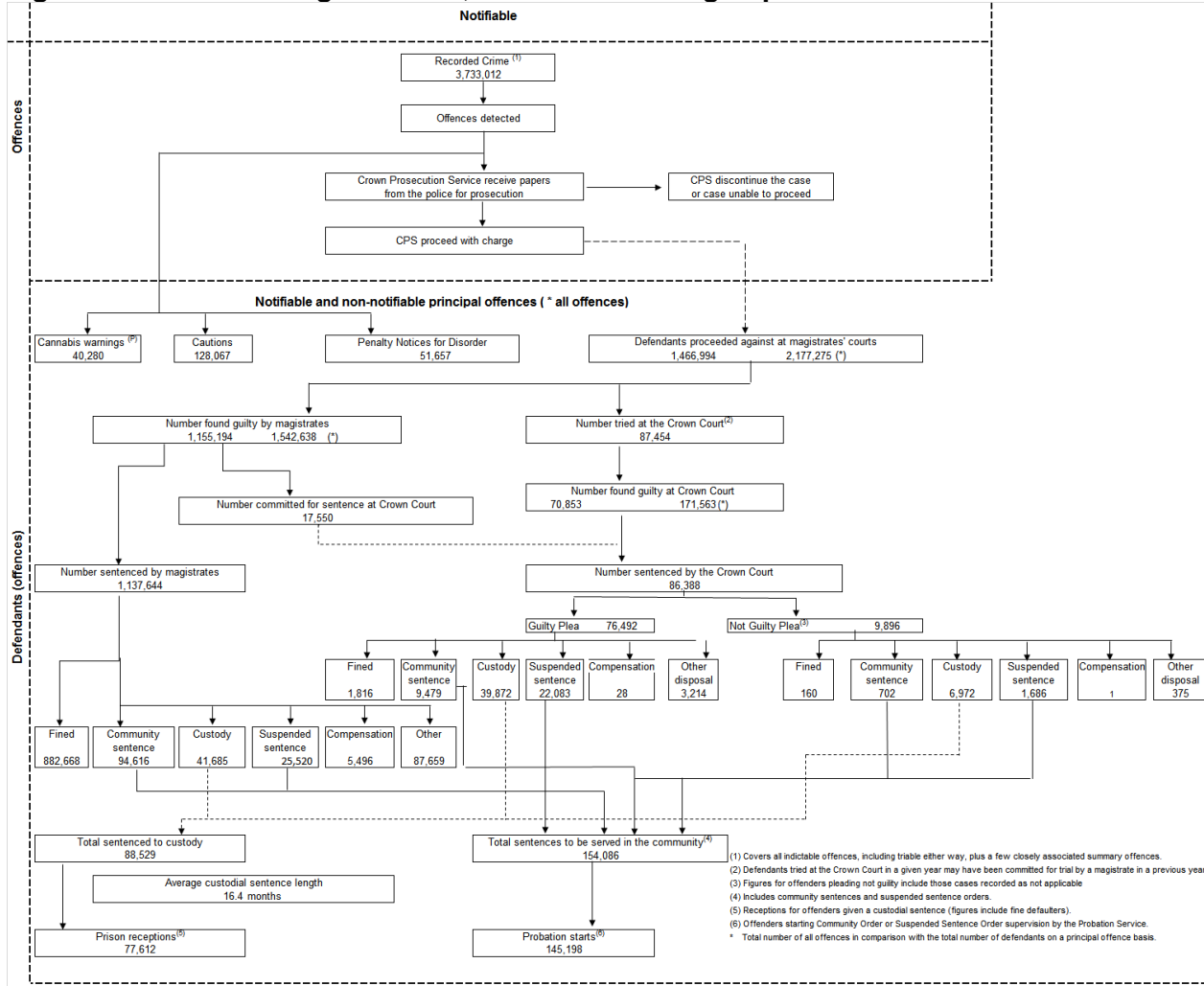
Despite having long criminal records, there has been a 35% increase since Q1 2013 in adults with 15 or more previous convictions or cautions receiving a suspended sentence following a conviction for an indictable offence. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 came into force in April 2013.

Sexual Offences

The number of defendants proceeded against and convicted for sexual offences are the highest in a decade. The increase in the number of defendants proceeded against is likely to be partly due to the Operation Yewtree investigation, connected to the Jimmy Savile inquiry and the resulting media attention. Offenders sentenced for sexual offences had an ACSL of 62.7 months, a rise of 2 months compared with the previous year.

1. Overview of the Criminal Justice System

Figure 1.1: Flows through the CJS, 12 months ending September 2015

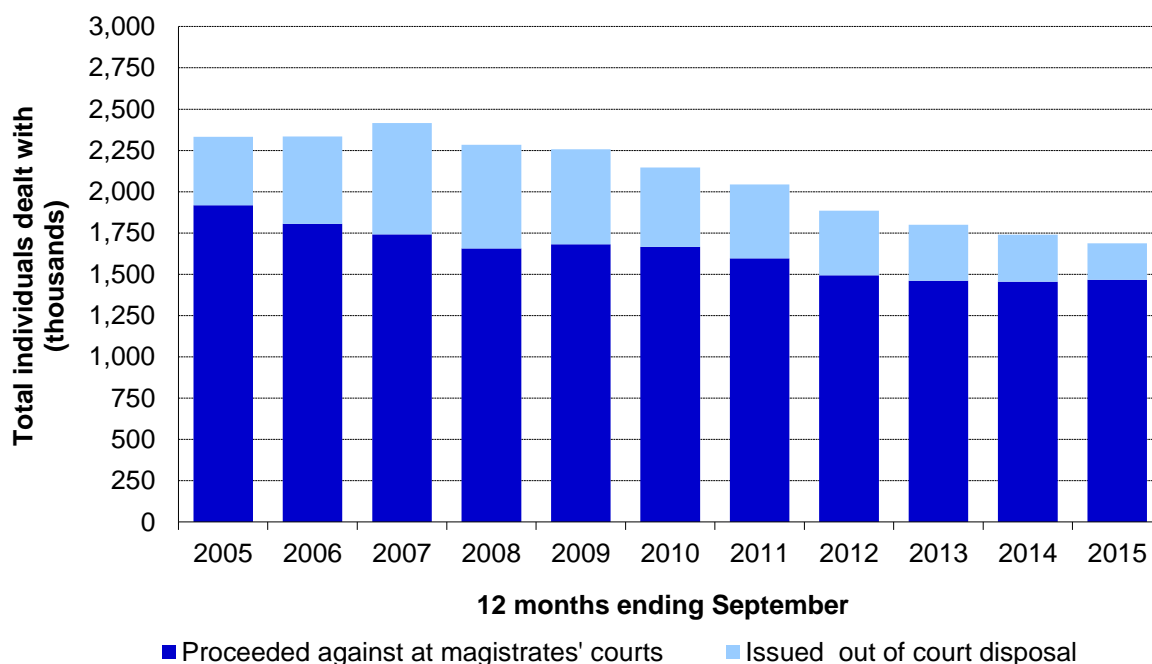


The total number of individuals (which includes people and companies) who have been dealt with formally by the CJS in England and Wales, has been declining over the past 12 years and is now at a record low level (period 1970 to September 2015) with 1.69 million individuals dealt with³ in the 12 months ending September 2015.

However in the latest year, whilst the use of out of court disposals has continued to decrease, there was a 1% increase in the number of defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' courts. This reversed a trend of almost year on year decreases in defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' court over the past decade; the first increase since the 12 months ending September 2009. The increase in the number of defendants proceeded against in the latest year has been driven by rises in both summary non-motoring and summary motoring offences, while the number of defendants proceeded against for indictable offences has fallen.

³ Excludes individuals dealt with by way of a community resolution.

Figure 1.2: Individuals dealt with formally by the CJS⁴, 12 months ending September 2005 to 12 months ending September 2015



Comparisons with Crime Statistics

Latest figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that, for the offences it covers⁵, there were an estimated 6.6 million incidents of crime against households and resident adults (aged 16 and over) in England and Wales in the latest year. This latest estimate was not significantly different compared with the previous year's. The CSEW covers a broad range of victim based crimes and includes crimes which do not come to the attention of the police.

In contrast to the CSEW, there was a 6% increase in police recorded crime compared with the previous year. The renewed focus on the quality of crime recording is thought to have led to improved compliance with national recording standards, leading to proportionally more crimes reported to the police being recorded by them. This is thought to have particularly affected violence against the person (up 27%). The number of defendants proceeded against for violence against the person, however, showed a 5% decrease. Care should be taken when making comparisons between crime data, which counts the number of crimes, with MoJ data, which counts the number of defendants.

⁴ 'Individuals' includes people and companies. A single individual can be counted more than once in a given year if they are dealt with by the CJS on more than one separate occasion. Excludes individuals dealt with by way of a community resolution.

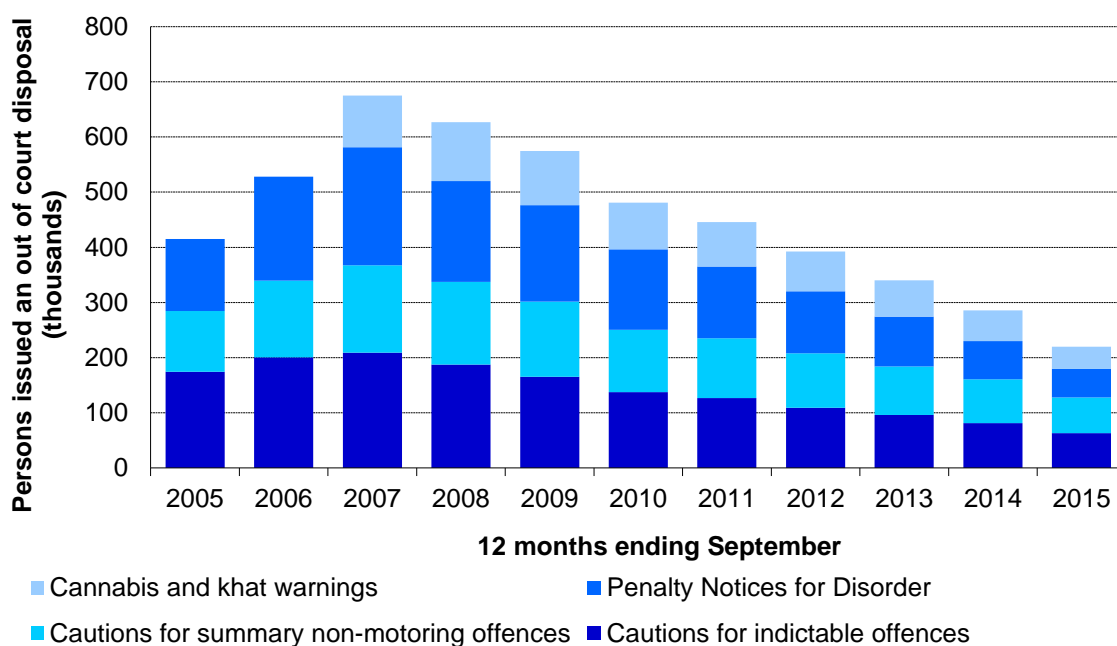
⁵ There are some serious but relatively low volume offences, such as homicide and sexual offences, which are not included in its main estimates. See Crime in England and Wales, year ending September 2015 www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/crime-in-england-and-wales---year-ending-september-2015/index.html for more information.

2. Out of Court Disposals

Out of court disposals⁶ are sanctions that are used by the police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to address offences without recourse to the courts. The out of court disposals available to the police and CPS up to the 12 months ending September 2015 included: cannabis and khat warnings⁷; Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs); simple⁸ and conditional cautions⁹; and community resolutions¹⁰.

The use of out of court disposals (excluding community resolutions) has decreased in the 12 months ending September 2015 by 23%, with 220,000 individuals issued an out of court disposal. This continues the decline in the use of out of court disposals, a decrease of 454,900 (67%) since September 2007. The observed decrease was driven by a number of factors: the replacement in April 2008 of a target to increase offences brought to justice (OBTJ) with one placing more emphasis on bringing serious crimes to justice, which was subsequently removed in May 2010; the introduction of community resolutions; changes in the nature of police activities; and restriction of the use of PNDs to adults only from 8th April 2013.

Figure 2.1: Out of court disposals issued, by disposal, 12 months ending September 2005 to September 2015



⁶ A pilot scheme was implemented from early November in Leicestershire and Staffordshire police forces and from late November in West Yorkshire to reduce the types of out of court disposals available for adult offenders. In the pilot areas, the only out of court disposals available are community resolutions and conditional cautions.

⁷ Khat warnings are available from 24 June 2014.

⁸ Available to adults only until 8th April 2013 at which point youth cautions were introduced, replacing reprimands and warnings for youths.

⁹ From 8th April 2013, youth conditional cautions were made available for all 10-17 year olds in England and Wales. Originally, youth conditional cautions were only available for 16 and 17 year olds in five pilot areas from 26 January 2010.

¹⁰ Community resolutions statistics provided by the Home Office show those community resolutions which (with or without formal Restorative Justice) have been applied in accordance with College of Policing guidance.

Penalty Notices for Disorder

There were 51,700 PNDs issued in the latest year, which represents a 17,800 (26%) decrease from the previous year. The use of PNDs has been decreasing year on year since the peak in the 12 months ending September 2007 when 214,400 were issued. The decrease in the number of PNDs issued followed a number of reforms associated with the decline in OOCs more generally.

Cannabis and Khat Warnings

Khat warnings, a new out of court disposal, could be issued to adults from 24 June 2014. There were 40,300 cannabis and khat warnings issued in the 12 months ending September 2015. The largest decline in the use of out of court disposals in the latest year has been for cannabis and khat warnings, a decrease of 15,200 (27%) compared with the previous year.

Police Cautions and Cautioning Rate

There were 128,100 offenders given simple and conditional cautions in the 12 months ending September 2015. This represents a decrease of 32,700 (20%) compared with the same period a year ago. In the latest 12 months, cautions for indictable offences (including triable either way offences) decreased by 17,900 (22%) to 63,300.

Cautions for theft and drug offences accounted for 45,300 (72%) of all offenders cautioned for indictable offences. The number of offenders administered a caution for sexual offences was the lowest over the past ten years. In the latest year, cautions administered for sexual offences decreased by 100 (9%) compared with the previous year and 900 (45%) compared with the 12 months ending September 2007.

The cautioning rate presents the proportion of offenders who were either cautioned or convicted that were given a caution. This gives a measure of the share of all offenders either admitting guilt or being found guilty in a given period who are dealt with by a caution out of court as opposed to being processed through the courts.

The overall cautioning rate in the latest year was 15%, which was a decline from a peak of 32% in the 12 months ending September 2007 and down by three percentage points compared with the previous year.

Community Resolutions

Community resolutions are aimed at low-level crime and first-time offending such as minor incidents of criminal damage or low-value theft. There were 119,300 community resolutions (with or without formal restorative justice) given out in the 12 months ending September 2015. Home Office statistics on community resolutions only include one full year of data, so community resolutions have been excluded from the total number of out of court disposals within this publication.

Further information about community resolutions can be obtained from the Home Office publication at the link below:

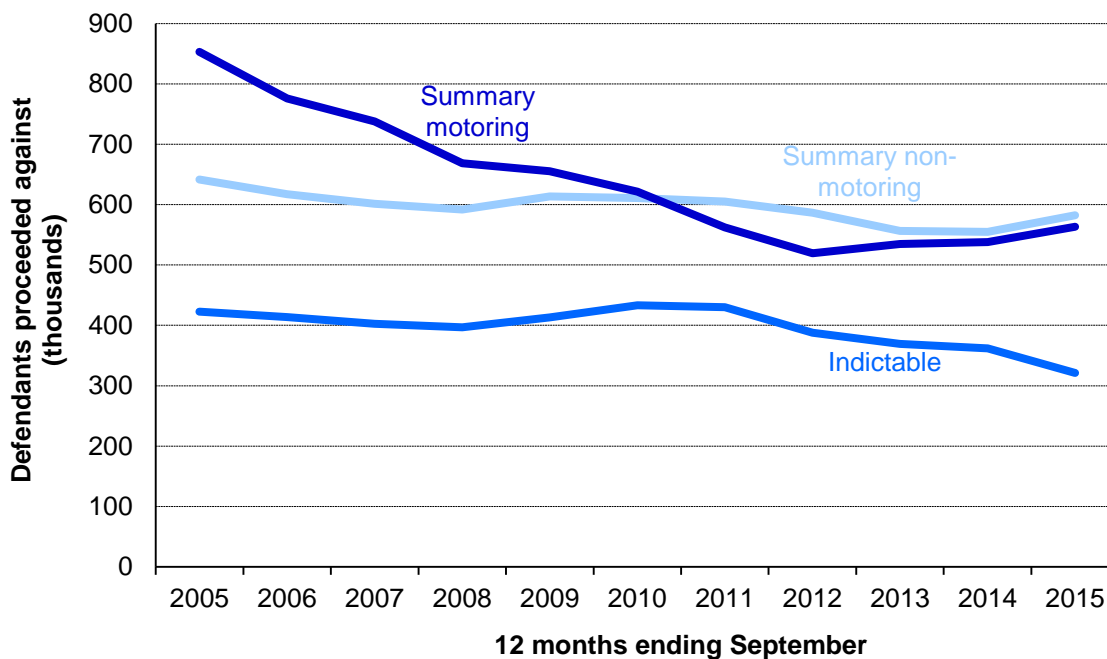
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2014-to-2015

3. Court Proceedings and Convictions

Virtually all criminal court cases start in a magistrates' court and less serious offences can be handled entirely within this court. In the 12 months ending September 2015 there were 1.47 million defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' courts; a 1% increase compared to the previous year. Prior to this, however, the number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts had been declining almost year on year over the past decade. This had been largely driven by a decrease in the number of defendants proceeded against for summary motoring offences.

In the latest year, however, there has been an increase in prosecutions for both summary non-motoring and summary motoring offences. The main driver for the increase in summary motoring cases was speeding offences and the main driver for the increase in summary non-motoring cases was prosecutions for TV licence evasion.

Figure 3.1: Defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts by type of offence, 12 months ending September 2005 to September 2015, in England and Wales



Conviction Ratios and Volumes

Trends in the number of offenders convicted at all courts are driven by two factors; the number of individuals dealt with through the courts (the trend in proceedings) and the proportion of those individuals who are found guilty.

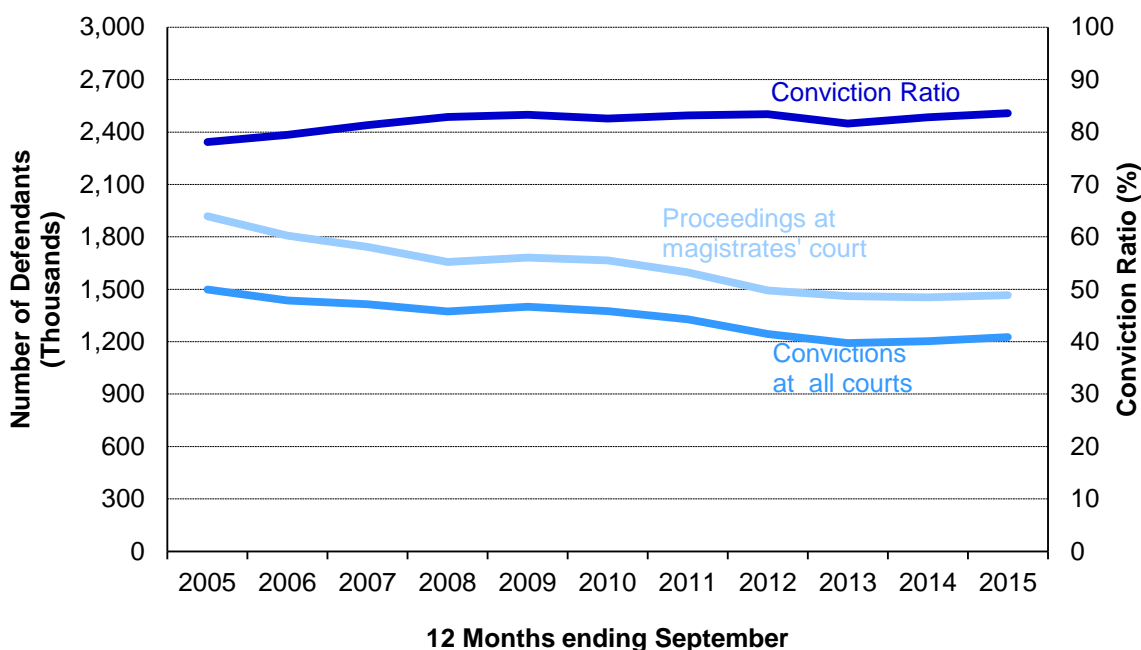
Conviction ratios are calculated as the number of offenders convicted as a proportion of the number of defendants proceeded against. This gives a measure of the relative number of defendants who are found guilty within a given year for a certain offence, when compared with the number who are prosecuted that year for the same offence. It is worth noting that offenders found guilty in a given year might have been proceeded against in a previous year. Furthermore, defendants may be found guilty of a different offence from the one they were originally prosecuted for (this means that the defendants and offenders compared do not necessarily belong to the same group).

In line with proceedings, the number of offenders found guilty at all courts increased in the latest year (by 2%). The number of convictions decreased between the 12 months ending September 2005 and the 12 months ending September 2013, but has shown a small increase since. The decline in convictions between the 12 months ending September 2005 and September 2008 was not as steep as the decline in the number of defendants proceeded against. Therefore the conviction ratio increased from 78% in the 12 months ending September 2005 to 83% in September 2008. It has remained broadly stable since then, ranging between 82% and 83%, to reach 84% in the latest year.

The complex nature of the CJS means there are a number of factors contributing to this change in the conviction ratio over time. There have been changes in guilty plea rates, the mix of cases handled in and out of court and operational changes and it is difficult to separately identify the impacts of the different factors.

Although the overall conviction ratio has remained relatively unchanged since the 12 months ending September 2008, the conviction ratio for summary motoring offences rose to 88% in the latest year, the highest in a decade.

Figure 3.2: Proceedings at magistrates' courts and convictions at all courts, with conviction ratio, 12 months ending September 2005 to September 2015, England and Wales



Indictable Offences

Over the past five years, there has been a decline in defendants proceeded against for indictable offences (including both indictable only and triable either way offences), driven by decreases in theft offences and miscellaneous crimes against society. Theft offences account for over one third of proceedings for indictable offences. In the latest year, although the total number of shoplifting prosecutions declined, shoplifting accounted for more than half of all proceedings for theft offences. The highest conviction ratios for indictable offences in the 12 months ending September 2015 were for public order offences, drug offences and theft offences.

In the most recent year, prosecutions for sexual offences have increased by 1% to the highest level in the decade, although the increase in prosecutions has slowed. Convictions

for sexual offences have increased by 9% since the previous year and are also at the highest level in a decade. The conviction ratio for sexual offences has increased by 4 percentage points to 55%.

Cases Heard in the Magistrates' Courts and Crown Courts

There are two groups of offence that may be sent by a magistrate to be tried in the Crown Court. Indictable only offences are offences that are considered to be of such gravity that they can only be dealt with at the Crown Court¹¹. Triable-either-way offences can be dealt with at the magistrates' courts or the Crown Court and a decision is made at the magistrates' court on whether the case will be dealt with there or whether it needs to be sent to the Crown Court.

In the 12 months ending September 2015, out of the 1.47 million defendants prosecuted, 80% were tried at the magistrates' court and 6% were sent for trial at the Crown Court. The remaining defendants relate to cases that were discontinued, where the charge was withdrawn or where the defendant failed to appear.

Defendants sent for trial to the Crown Court account for a greater proportion of all proceedings in the latest year compared to a decade ago; at 6% in the latest year compared to 4% in the 12 months ending September 2005.

73% of defendants sent to the Crown Court were accused of either-way offences. This has gradually increased from 65% since September 2005 to now be the highest in a decade.

¹¹ All offences committed by a child or young person (someone aged 10-17 years old) can be dealt with by a youth court, subject to some exceptions which mean that the offence must be dealt with by the Crown Court, or where it is necessary in the interests of justice to try a youth and adult together.

4. Remands

Police remands are decisions made by a police officer, on whether to detain or bail a defendant pending their first appearance in court, or send a notice summoning them to appear in court. In the year ending September 2015, there were 1.53 million defendants directed to appear at magistrates' courts (including those who failed to appear). The proportion of defendants remanded in custody by the police decreased slightly to 10% in the latest year, whereas over the previous four years this was relatively stable and varied between 11% and 12%. The proportion of defendants arrested and bailed by police decreased to 25% in the latest year, from 28% in the previous year, whilst the proportion being summonsed increased from 61% to 65%.

Court remands are the court's decision on whether a defendant charged with a criminal offence should be held in custody, or released on bail during the period up to and including the trial, or while awaiting sentence. In the latest year, bail was granted to 20% of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts, while 4% were remanded in custody and the remaining 76% had their case concluded at the magistrates' courts without being remanded.

Defendants are more likely to be remanded in custody for indictable offences than summary offences – as a result, the proportion of defendants remanded in custody at the Crown Court is higher than at magistrates' courts. In the latest year, the proportion of defendants tried at the Crown Court who were remanded in custody was 37%, unchanged compared to the previous 12 month period. The proportion of defendants remanded on bail was 49%, compared with 47% in the previous year. Of those remanded in custody at the Crown Court, 70% were convicted and sentenced to immediate custody, down from 72% in the previous year.

5. Sentencing

In the 12 months ending September 2015, there were 1.22 million offenders sentenced following a criminal conviction, 2% more than in the previous year. This mirrors the trends in proceedings and convictions, where more defendants were proceeded against and more were found guilty over the same period.

A fine was the most common sentence given to offenders at all courts, accounting for 72% of all sentences. This proportion has been increasing since 2011, because the prevalence of summary offences has been increasing, and fines are the most common sentence for summary offences. Indictable offences were more likely to warrant an immediate custodial sentence or a community sentence.

Figure 5.1: Sentencing outcomes (percentage of all offenders sentenced) at all courts, 12 months ending September 2005 to 12 months ending September 2015

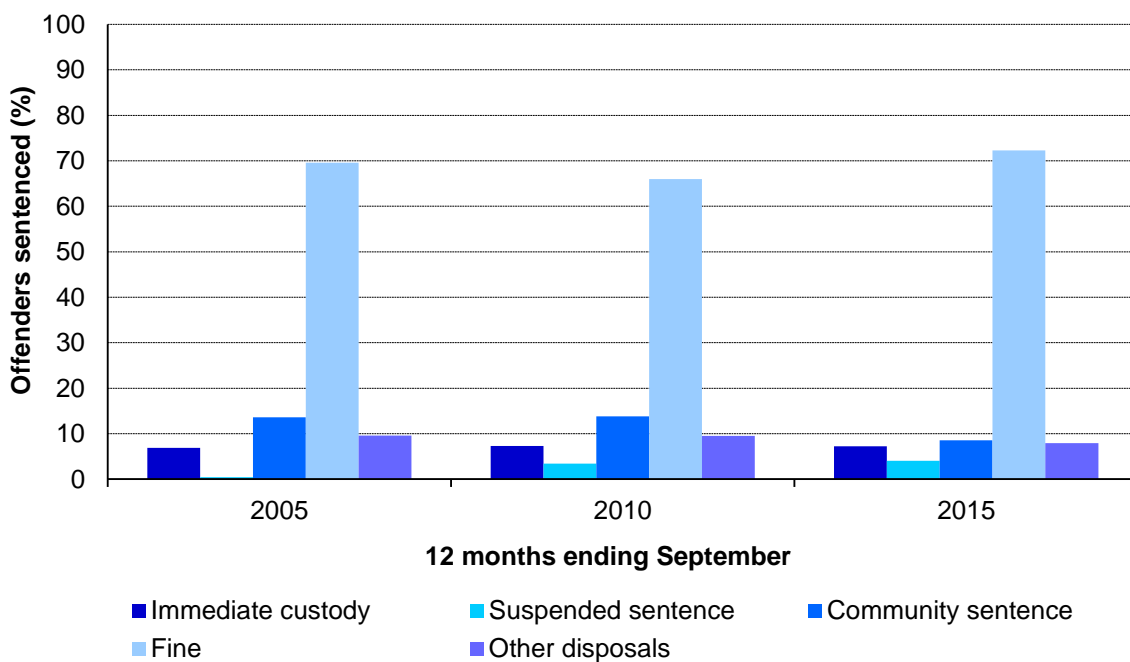
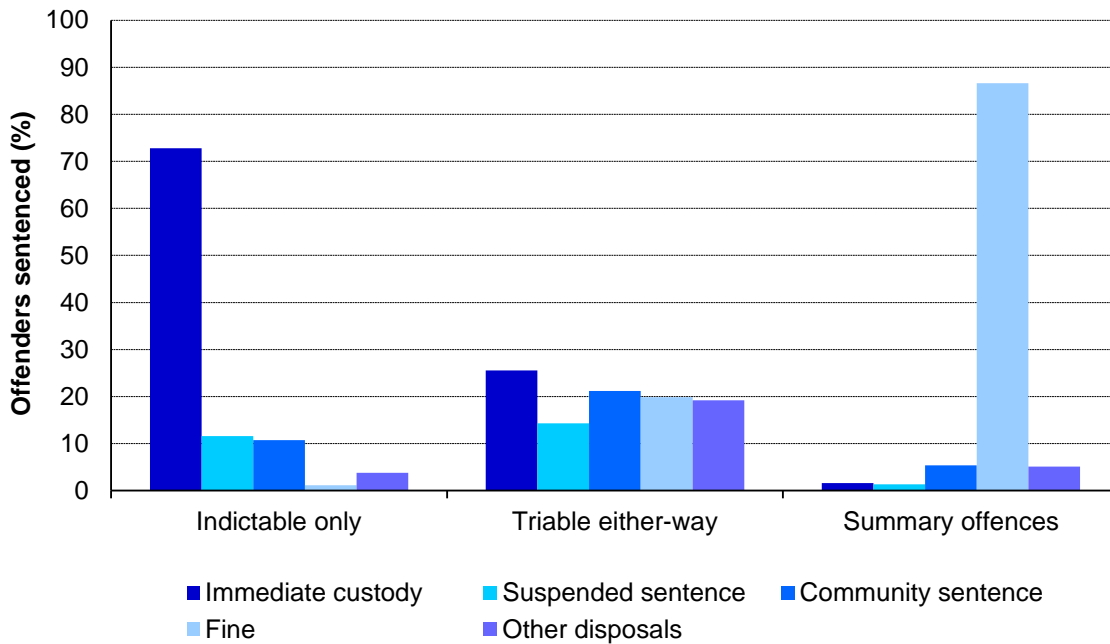


Figure 5.2: Sentencing outcomes for indictable only, triable-either-way and summary offences (motoring and non-motoring) in the 12 months ending September 2015



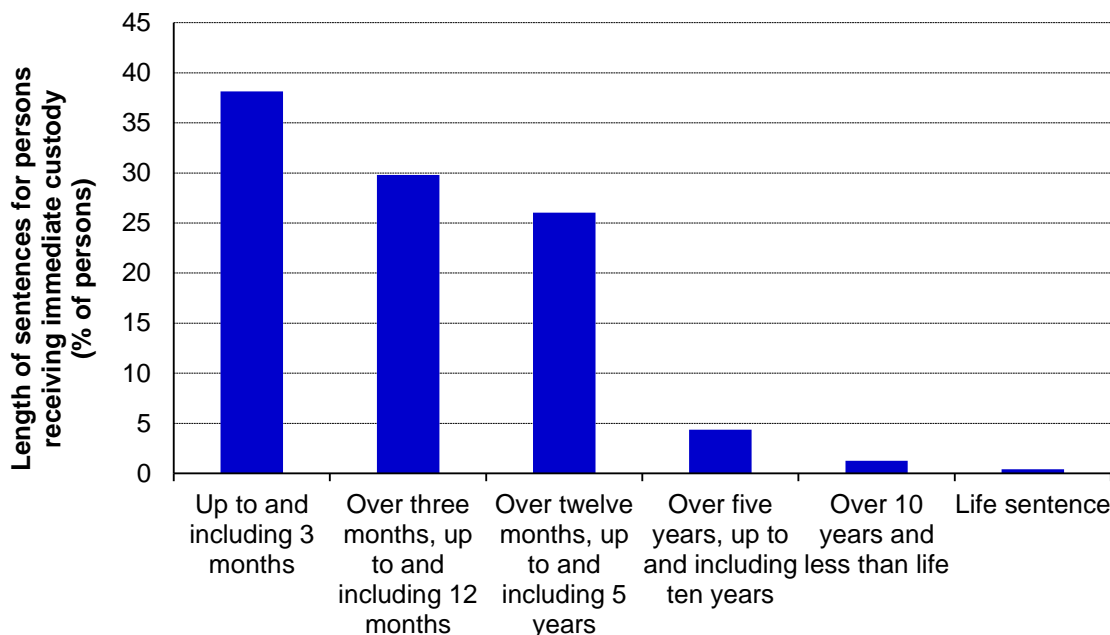
Immediate Custodial Sentences

While the overall custody rate (the proportion of all persons sentenced receiving immediate custody) has decreased from 7.7% to 7.3% in the latest year, the custody rate for indictable offences has increased from 26.9% to 28.3% in the same period.

Over 68% of immediate custodial sentences at all courts are less than or equal to 12 months. This proportion has generally been declining for the past decade, from 74 in the 12 months ending September 2005. Fewer than 2% of persons receive a custodial sentence of over 10 years.

While the number of life sentences has remained broadly stable over the last 5 years, the number of indeterminate sentences for Public Protection (IPPs) has declined steadily since September 2008, as their use had been restricted by the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (CJIA), before being abolished in 2012 by the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment Offenders (LASPO) Act.

Figure 5.3: Length of sentences for persons sentenced to immediate custody, 12 months ending September 2015



The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) for all offenders excluding life and indeterminate sentences has risen steadily from 12.9 months in the 12 months ending September 2005 to 16.4 months in the latest year. Since the 12 months ending September 2014, the ACSL rose from 15.5 months by 0.9 months.

Several factors may have contributed to this increase, including:

- A change in the case-mix of people getting custodial sentences. In the 12 months ending September 2005 indictable offences (which have a higher ACSL compared with summary offences) accounted for 75% of all immediate custodial sentences compared with 83% in the latest year.
- The introduction of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (CJIA) in 2008 restricted the use of Indeterminate sentences for Public Protection (IPPs), which as mentioned are excluded from ASCL. Following this, there has been an increase in long determinate sentences (defined as for 10 years or more).
- The Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment Offenders (LASPO) Act, which was passed on 3rd December 2012, abolished IPPs and Extended Sentence for Public protection (EPP) and replaced them with new Extended Determinate Sentences (EDS), which are included in the ACSL calculation.

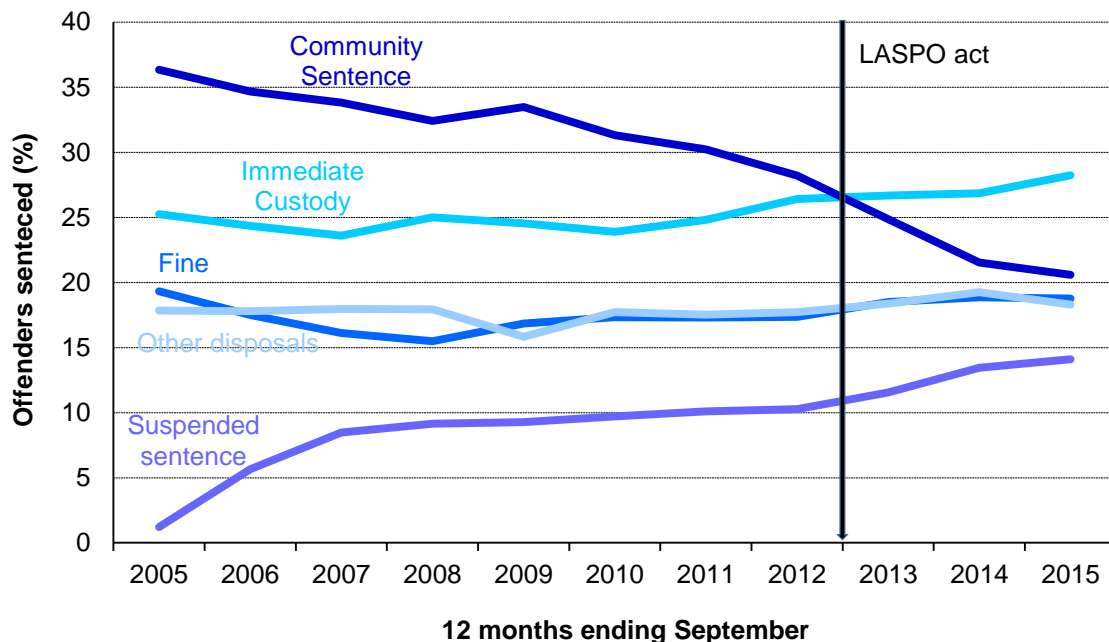
Further legislative changes have made sentence lengths longer for certain offences – for example, the powers to sentence offenders convicted of a third domestic burglary offence to a mandatory minimum sentence of three years custody, as introduced by the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997 for offences committed after 30th November 1999, have been used increasingly in the last decade.

Indictable Offences (indictable only and triable either way)

The most common sentence in each of the past 3 years for indictable offences has been immediate custody, accounting for 28% of the total sentenced for indictable offences in the latest year. Prior to the 12 months ending September 2013, the most common was a community sentence. The proportion of offenders sentenced to community sentences has decreased steadily since 2005. By contrast, the use of suspended sentence orders (SSOs)

increased over the same period. The latter change is as a result of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which made SSOs more readily available. More recently, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act in 2012 made further changes to the availability of SSOs, resulting in a 12% increase in SSOs for indictable offences between the 12 months ending September 2012 and the 12 months ending September 2015¹².

Figure 5.4: Trends in sentencing outcomes for indictable offences in all courts, in the 12 months ending September 2005 to 12 months ending September 2015



The custody rate for indictable offences in the latest year was 28.3%, the highest in the decade and a continuation of the yearly increases seen since 2010. The largest increases were seen in the robbery and criminal damage and arson offence groups, with 10 and 13 percentage point increases respectively in the last five years. The custody rate for possession of weapons has also been increasing; by 10 percentage points over the past decade.

The ACSL for indictable offences has risen consistently since the twelve months ending September 2007; and from 18.1 months in the previous year to 19.3 months in the twelve months ending September 2015.

Sexual Offences

There has been a small increase in the custody rate for sexual offences, from 59.1% in the previous year to 60.8% in the latest year. The ACSL for sexual offences has increased steadily from 41.9 months in the year ending September 2005, to 62.7 months in the latest year.

Summary Offences

While the number of offenders sentenced for indictable offences declined in the latest year, the number sentenced for summary motoring and summary non-motoring offences increased. This is mainly due to an increase in speed limit offences and TV licence evasion. The most common sentence for summary offences was a fine, accounting for 87% of those sentenced in the latest year.

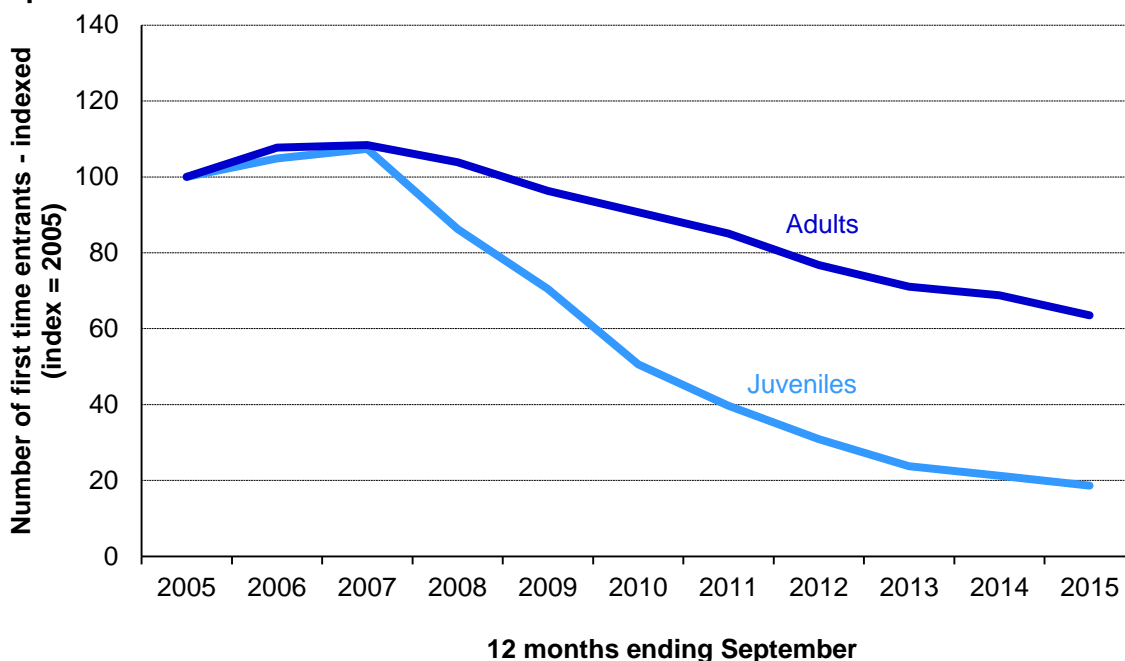
¹² The most recent 6 months of data in the Court Proceedings Database contains fewer Suspended Sentence Orders (SSOs) than are found in the underlying court data systems. We are working with data suppliers to ensure that the remaining SSOs are incorporated into our finalised 2015 data ahead of our annual publication in May, but they will not be included in the provisional data used for this publication.

6. Offending Histories

First Time Entrants (FTE)

The number of First Time Entrants (FTEs)¹³ to the criminal justice system has continued to fall since its peak in 2007. This decline has been much sharper for juveniles than for adults; however during the 12 months ending September 2015 the decline slowed for juveniles.

Figure 6.1 Change in number of juvenile and adult first time entrants to the criminal justice system, 12 months ending September 2005 (index=100) to 12 months ending September 2015



Criminal Histories

An offender's criminal history counts the number of occasions on which an offender has previously received a conviction, caution or youth caution for any offence and has been recorded on the PNC, including some offences committed outside of England and Wales¹⁴. This count differs from FTEs because all offenders prosecuted by an English or Welsh police force, irrespective of country of residence, are included.

In the 12 months ending September 2015 the number of offenders with no previous convictions and cautions sentenced for indictable offences increased by 3.6%. The increase has been seen across all types of offences except robbery and theft offences.

In the latest period, around 96,000 adult offenders convicted of an indictable offence had 15 or more previous convictions or cautions (long criminal records - on average 33.6 previous sanctions). 39% of adults convicted of an indictable offence had a long criminal record

¹³ A first time entrant (FTE) to the criminal justice system is an offender residing in England and Wales at the time of the offence, who has been recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC) by an English or Welsh police force as having received their first conviction, caution or youth caution. Offences resulting in a Penalty Notice for Disorder are not counted as first offences.

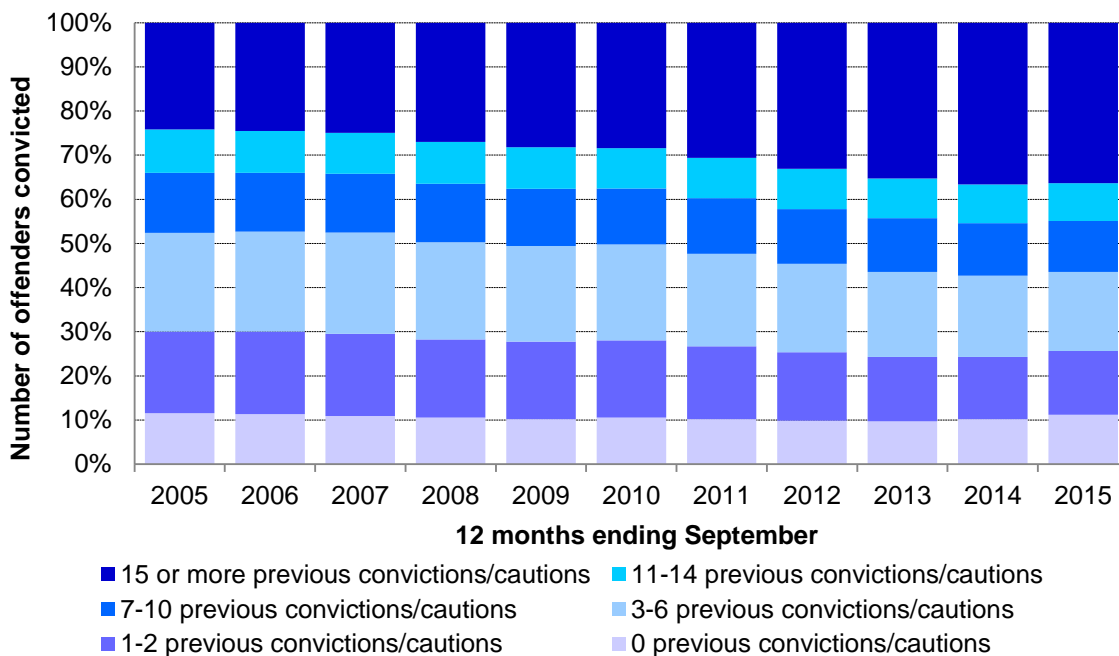
¹⁴ Where there were multiple offences on the same occasion, only the primary offence as recorded on the PNC would be counted.

compared to 29% in the same period 10 years ago. However, during recent years there has been a decline in offenders with longer criminal records. Further investigations have shown that there has been a fall since 2009 in the number of offenders progressing from their 15th to their 16th conviction or caution. Similarly during the 12 months ending September 2015 there was a decline in the number of offenders with 16 or more previous convictions or cautions.

Three fifths of those convicted of an indictable offence with 15 or more previous convictions and cautions were convicted for offences related to theft – by comparison, only 22% of those with no previous convictions or cautions were convicted for theft offences.

For those convicted of a sexual offence in the 12 months ending September 2015, just under half also had a first offence from the same offence category and for just 5% of offenders all of their previous convictions and cautions were for sexual offences.

Figure 6.2 Percentage of offenders convicted of indictable offences, by number of previous convictions or cautions, 12 months ending September 2005 to 12 months ending September 2015



As might be expected, given that sentencing decisions will typically take into account previous offending history, the proportion of offenders receiving immediate custody for an indictable offence is higher for those groups of offenders with longer criminal histories.

In the latest period, 40% of adults with 15 or more previous convictions or cautions received an immediate custodial sentence compared to 12% for adults with no previous history of offending. The equivalent figures for juveniles were 41% and 2% respectively.

The most common disposal given in the latest period for offenders committing an indictable offence with no previous criminal history was a caution, with this accounting for 71% of juveniles in this group and 56% of adults.

Despite having long criminal records there has been a 35% increase since Q1 2013 in adults with 15 or more previous convictions or cautions receiving a suspended sentence following a conviction for an indictable offence. This coincided with changes made under LASPO, which allowed judges to give suspended custodial sentence of up to 2 years.

Revisions Policy

In accordance with Principle 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the Ministry of Justice is required to publish transparent guidance on its policy for revisions. A copy of this statement can be found at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/statistics/mojstats/statistics-revisions-policy.pdf>

The Ministry of Justice aims to avoid the need for revisions to publications unless they are absolutely necessary and put systems and processes in place to minimise the number of revisions.

Within the Ministry of Justice's statistical publications there can be three main reasons for statistics to be revised:

- Changes in how either source administrative systems collect information or a change in statistical methodology to improve accuracy and measurement.
- Receipt of subsequent information which alters our understanding of previous periods (for example – late recording on one of the administrative IT systems used operationally).
- Errors in our statistical systems and processes.

Our policy in handling revisions is to be transparent with users about:

- The need for revisions.
- How and when to expect revisions as part of our standard processes.
- The processes by which other revisions will be communicated and published.

To meet these commitments, all of our statistical publications will:

- Ensure that the need for major revisions for any series are pre-announced on the Ministry of Justice website.
- Include a detailed revisions policy within every release.
- Detail how users will be informed of the need for revisions.
- Give detailed and full explanations as to why the revisions were necessary.

In addition, the annual report from the Head of Profession to the National Statistician will:

- Provide information on how many revisions were required to our publications and the reasons for these.
- Publish a time-series of revisions due to errors in our statistical processes and procedures so we can monitor the quality of our outputs.

Explanatory Notes

The statistics in the bulletin relate to cases in the Crown Court and magistrates' courts in England and Wales during 12 months ending September 2015. This bulletin subsumes a number of previous bulletins including Criminal Statistics: England & Wales, Quarterly Sentencing Statistics, and Young people aged 10-17 receiving their first reprimand, warning or conviction.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = Nil

* = Not applicable

.. = Not available

(R) = Revised data

(P) = Provisional data

Guidance on tables

This bulletin is supported by two Excel spreadsheet workbooks and two pivot tables. These workbooks can be accessed at:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-september-2015

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General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from: www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system

Feedback

Please send us your comments in response to the Consultation document published alongside this bulletin by **31st March 2016**, for consideration before the next annual edition, published in May 2016.

If you have any additional feedback about the changes referred to in the Changes and Revisions section or the report more generally, please send comments through to the production team through the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice:

Email: CJS_Statistics@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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