



Ministry
of Justice

Statistical Notice

Information on remand decisions at magistrates' courts.

Thursday 21 February 2013

Background

Following the introduction of the Libra case management system in magistrates' courts in England and Wales, which occurred incrementally throughout 2008, it has become evident that the magistrates' courts remands data have been subject to recording issues, potentially affecting published figures since 2009.

As a result, tables Q3.2 and Q3a have been withheld from the remands chapter of the latest Criminal Statistics bulletin released on Thursday 21 February 2013.

There was a known issue in the way that central statistical systems interfaced with Libra to ascertain the remand status of a defendant appearing at the magistrates' courts. Initially it was thought that the main impact was on those remanded in custody by magistrates. Work was undertaken to match those remand decision to the prisons reception information to ensure robust estimates were produced.

Work has been ongoing with Her Majesties Court Service (HMCTS) to develop and introduce a solution. A solution has been introduced taken effect from mid May 2012. Initial analysis has shown that the issue was not limited to the custody decision, but also the bail decision particularly with regards to those individuals with only one court hearing. Work is now underway to assess the impact prior to May 2012 and revised data covering 2009 to 2012 will be released at a later date.

It should be noted that Crown Court data are not affected by the same issues.

Defendants proceeded against

The tables withdrawn from the main publication have been presented here.

Table Q3.2 shows defendants bailed or summonsed by magistrates to appear at magistrates' courts, by type of offence and remand decision, 12 months ending September 2005 to 12 months ending September 2012.

Table Q3a shows defendants proceeded against by court type, type of remand and outcome of proceedings, 12 months ending September 2012.

Estimates for the number of defendants remanded at the magistrates' courts have been included in both of these tables. Further details covering the methodology of the estimates applied can be found in "A guide to Criminal Justice Statistics" at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/statistics/criminal-justice-stats/criminal-justice-statistics-guide-nov-2012.pdf>

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