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# **Youth Justice Statistics 2011/12**

## **England and Wales**

Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice

Executive Summary

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# Executive Summary

This publication looks at the youth justice system (YJS) in 2011/12 in terms of number of young people in the system, their offences, outcomes and direction of travel over time.

## Overview

The Youth Justice System (YJS) in England and Wales works to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people under the age of 18. The system is different to the adult system and is structured to address the needs of young people. The YJS is far smaller than the adult system (see [Chapter 10](#) for more details). The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is the executive non-departmental public body that oversees the YJS in England and Wales.

The number of young people in the YJS has continued to reduce in 2011/12. Reductions have been seen in the number entering the system for the first time, as well as reductions in those receiving disposals in and out of court, including those receiving custodial sentences. Since 2008/09 there are 54 per cent fewer young people coming into the Youth Justice System, 32 per cent fewer young people (under 18) in custody and 14 per cent fewer re-offences by young people<sup>1</sup>.

## Arrests and out of court disposals<sup>2</sup>

In 2010/11<sup>3</sup> there were 1,360,451 arrests in England and Wales of which 210,660 were of people aged 10-17. Thus, 10-17 year olds accounted for 15.5 per cent of all arrests but were 10.7 per cent of the population of England and Wales of offending age<sup>4</sup>.

There were 40,757 reprimands, final warnings and conditional cautions given to young people in England and Wales in 2011/12. This is a decrease of 18 per cent on the 49,407 given in 2010/11, and a decrease of 57 per cent on the 94,836 given in 2001/02.

There were also 5,571 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) given to 16-17 year olds in 2011/12 and in 2011 there were 375 Anti Social Behaviour

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the average number of re-offences per offender (frequency rate) between 2008/09 and 2010/11

<sup>2</sup> A disposal is an umbrella term referring both to sentences given by the court and pre-court decisions made by the police. Disposals may be divided into four separate categories of increasing seriousness starting with pre-court disposals then moving into first-tier and community-based penalties through to custodial sentences.

<sup>3</sup> The latest period for which data is available.

<sup>4</sup> People of offending age are classed as those 10 or older. ONS mid year estimated for 2011

Orders (ASBOs) given to young people. In the last year the number of PNDs given to young people has gone down by 26 per cent and the number of ASBOs down 30 per cent.

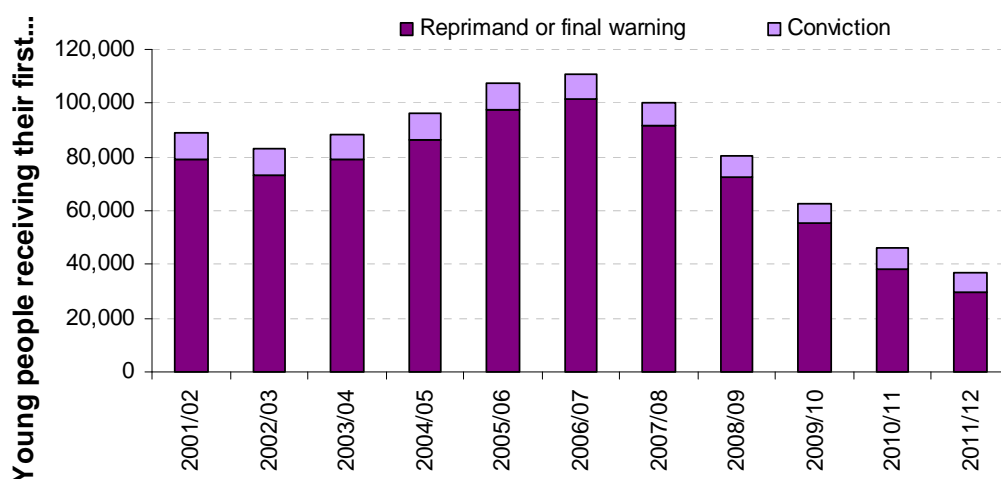
### Proven offences by young people

Overall there were 137,335 proven offences by young people in 2011/12, down 22 per cent from 2010/11 and down 47 per cent since 2001/02. In the last year there has been a notable reduction in offences committed by young people, in particular; criminal damage (down 28%), public order (down 27%), theft and handling (down 23%) and violence against the person offences (down 22%).

### Young people receiving their first reprimand, warning or conviction (first time entrants)

In 2011/12, there were 36,677 first time entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Justice System. The number of first time entrants has fallen by 59 per cent from 2001/02 to 2011/12 and fell 20 per cent in the last year.

*Trends in first time entrants, 2001/02 to 2011/12*



### Young people receiving a substantive outcome<sup>5</sup>

There were 66,430 young people who received a substantive outcome in England and Wales in 2011/12. This number has reduced 22 per cent from 2010/11 and 48 per cent since 2008/09.

### Court disposals given to young people

In 2011/12 there were 59,335 court disposals (sentences) given for all offences to young people aged 10-17 in England and Wales. The total number of disposals given to young people at the courts has fallen 18 per cent in the last year. The number of custodial sentences fell six per cent

<sup>5</sup> A substantive outcome is one where young people have to engage with the Youth Offending Team, this typically excluded reprimands and final warnings.

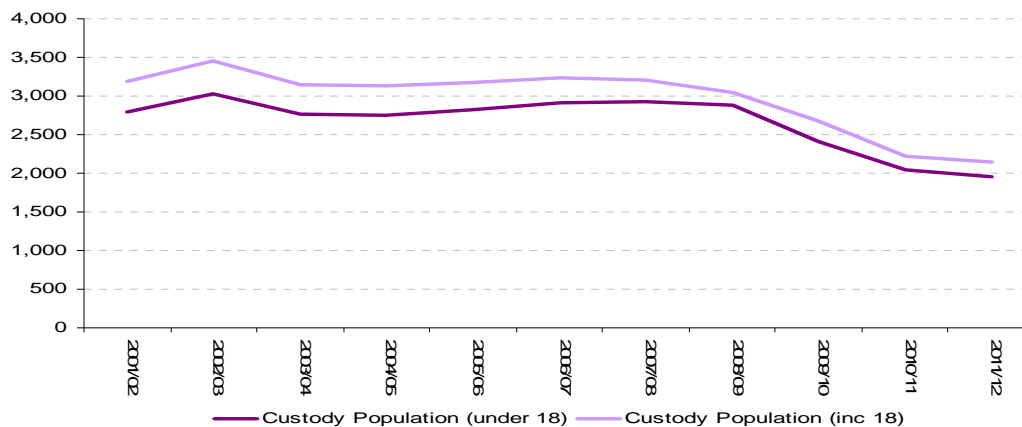
from 4,182 in 2010/11 to 3,925 in 2011/12. This type of disposal has fallen 48 per cent since 2001/02, when 7,485 custodial sentences were given to young people. The custody rate<sup>6</sup> was 6.6 per cent in 2011/12. The custody rate has fluctuated between five and eight per cent for the last decade.

### Young people in custody (under 18)

The average population of young people in custody in 2011/12 (under 18) was 1,963. The average population in custody (under 18) has reduced four per cent in the last year, and by 32 per cent since 2008/09. The average custody population including 18 year olds held in the youth secure estate was 2,141.

Overall the average length of time spent in custody decreased by one day, to 77 days in 2011/12, mainly caused by reductions in the sentenced population. For Detention and Training Orders (DTOs), it decreased by four days (from 111 to 107), for remand it increased by one day (from 41 to 42) and for longer sentences it decreased by 21 days (from 374 to 353).

#### *Trends in young people in custody, 2001/02 to 2011/12*



### Behaviour management in the youth secure estate

There were 8,419 incidents of restrictive physical interventions (RPIs) used in the youth secure estate in 2011/12, up six per cent from 2008/09 and up 17 per cent since 2010/11. Alongside this there were 1,725 incidents of self harm, down 34 per cent on 2008/09 but up 21 per cent on 2010/11. There were 3,372 assaults by young people in custody, down 20 per cent on 2008/09 and down five per cent on 2010/11. There were 3,881 occasions where single separation was used in Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) or Secure Training Centres (STCs), down 51 per cent since 2008/09 and down 13 per cent on 2010/11.

<sup>6</sup> The custody rate is defined as the proportion of custodial sentences out of all sentences given.

## **Serious incidents in the community**

In 2011, there were 20 deaths in the community, where young people under YOT supervision died either through murder, suicide or accidental death<sup>7</sup>. It should be noted that although these people are under supervision of the YOT, the supervision is not 24 hours a day and incidents may happen at home etc. Of the deaths in the community two were murdered in that period. In 2011, YOTs reported that 119 young people under their supervision attempted suicide<sup>8</sup>. This compares to 167 in 2010 and 113 in 2009. In 2011 there were 25 other incidents reported, where the young person was the victim of an offence. This compares to 21 in 2010 and 15 in 2009.

## **Deaths in custody**

There were three deaths of young people in 2011/12 and there have been 16 deaths in the youth secure estate since 2000/01. The death of a young person in custody is a tragic and rare event.

## **Re-offending by young people**

The overall re-offending rate for young people was 35.8 per cent in 2010/11, with an average of 2.87 re-offences per re-offender. This is a rise in the rate from 32.8 per cent in 2008/09 and 33.3 per cent in 2009/10. The higher rate of re-offending is against a backdrop of a smaller cohort, down 37 per cent from 139,732 in 2008/09 to 88,357 in 2010/11.

As the overall rate of re-offending has risen in the last few years the number of young people in the re-offending cohort has gone down, with particular reductions among those with no previous offences and those receiving pre-court disposals. Because of this, those young people coming into the criminal justice system are, on balance, more challenging to work with.

## **Perceptions of youth crime and the Youth Justice System**

Public perceptions from the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales<sup>9</sup> emphasise the perceived importance of rehabilitation, alongside a desire generally for more stringent treatment of offenders by the police and courts.

- Nearly half (48%) of the public surveyed felt that 'rehabilitation through help and support' should be the main aim of the Youth Justice System.
- Around two thirds of people (65%) felt that the police and courts dealt with young offenders too leniently. In 2010/11 there was an increase from the previous year in the proportion who felt that the treatment was 'about

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<sup>7</sup> Accidental deaths include those who died in road traffic accidents.

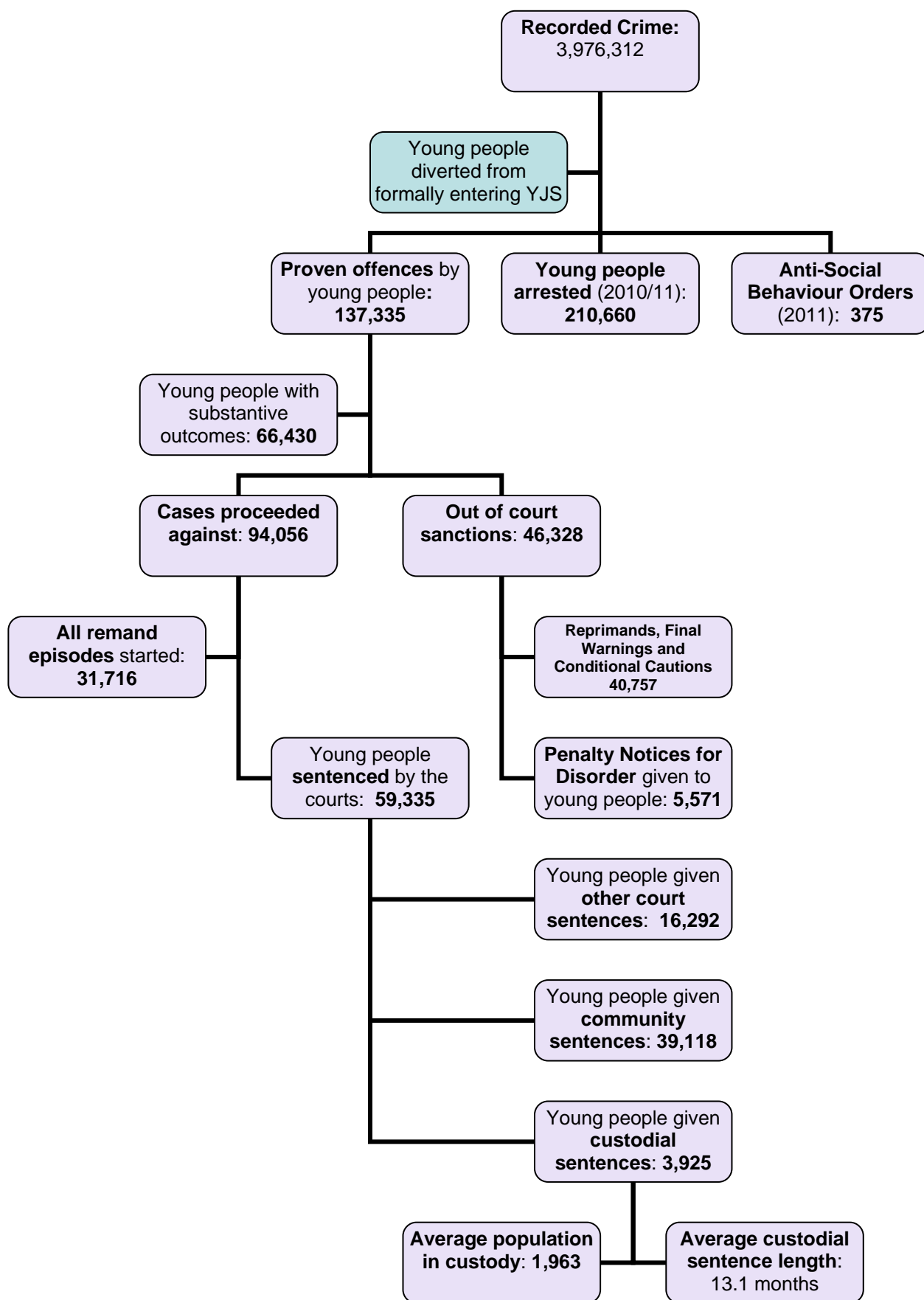
<sup>8</sup> The absence of an agreed definition of what constitutes an 'attempted suicide' or 'near-death' means that decisions about which incidents are reported under this heading are subjective

<sup>9</sup> Previously the British Crime Survey

right' (from 26% to 32%), whilst this year the figure remains fairly stable at 31 per cent.

- Well over half of respondents (57%) were confident that youth crime and anti social behaviour is tackled effectively in their local area.

# Flows through the Youth Justice System, 2011/12



**Notes on flow chart:**

1. Age of offenders are not known when crimes are reported to the police.
2. The number of young people diverted from formally entering the Youth Justice System through schemes such as Triage<sup>10</sup> are not currently known.
3. Average custodial sentence is for indictable offences only.
4. The remand episodes include young people remanded in the community and on bail.
5. The figures given (with the exception of the YOT caseload) are not unique young people. A young person may commit or be given multiple disposals in a year. This is why the YOT caseload is smaller than the offences or disposals attributed to young people.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information please see; [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/occ106](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/occ106)