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# Youth Justice Statistics Executive summary

Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice

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## Executive Summary

This publication looks at the youth justice system (YJS) in 2010/11 in terms of number of young people in the system, their offences and outcomes and direction of travel over time.

### Overview

The YJS in England and Wales works to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people under the age of eighteen. The youth justice system is different to the adult system and is structured to address the needs of young people. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is the executive non-departmental public body (with board members appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice) that oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales. Alongside this the YJB works to ensure that custody for young people is safe and secure and tries to address the causes of their offending behaviour.

The number of young people in the YJS has continued to reduce in 2010/11. 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 2007/08, there are 55 per cent fewer young people coming into the system, 30 per cent fewer young people in custody and 29 per cent fewer re-offences by young people. While the rate of re-offending has been broadly stable over the last decade, the frequency of re-offending has reduced by 17 per cent since 2000.

### Arrests and out of court disposals

In 2009/10 there were 1,386,030 arrests of which 241,737 were of people aged 10-17. Thus, 10-17 year olds accounted for 17 per cent of all arrests but were 11 per cent of the population of England and Wales of offending age<sup>1</sup>.

There were also 49,407 reprimands and final warnings (collectively called youth cautions) given to young people in England and Wales in 2010/11. This is a decrease of 30 per cent on the 70,734 given in 2009/10, and a decrease of 62 per cent on the 131,660 given at the peak in 2006/07.

There were 7,507 penalty notices for disorder (PNDs) given to 16-17 year olds in 2010/11 and in 2010 there were 536 Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) given to young people. The number of PNDs given to young people has gone down by 30 per cent since 2009/10, and down 64 per cent since the peak in 2006/07.

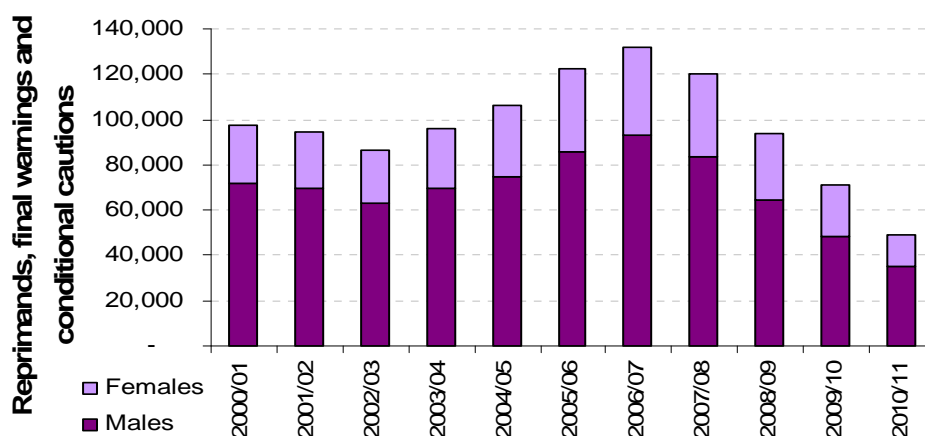
Out of court disposals fell in every offence group except robbery and sexual offences, and by 30 per cent overall. This continues the decline since 2007 which coincided with the replacement in April 2008 of a target to increase offences brought to justice, with one placing more emphasis on bringing

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<sup>1</sup> People of offending age are classed as those 10 or older.

serious crime to justice. The latter target was subsequently removed in December 2010.

*Trends in out of court disposals (reprimands, final warnings and conditional cautions), 2000/01 to 2010/11*



### Court disposals

In 2010/11 there were 72,011 court disposals given to young people aged 10 to 17 in England and Wales. The total number of disposals given to young people at the courts has fallen eight per cent from 78,561 in 2009/10 to 72,011 in 2010/11. The number of custodial disposals fell 10 per cent from 4,657 in 2009/10 to 4,177 in 2010/11. This type of disposal has fallen 44 per cent since 2000/01, when 7,498 custodial disposals were given to young people. The custody rate was 5.8% in 2010/11. The custody rate has fluctuated around six per cent for the last five years.

*Trends in court disposals, 2009/10 to 2010/11*

	2009/10	2010/11	Change from 2009/10 to 2010/11
Number given immediate custody	4,657	4,177	-10%
Number given fines	7,683	6,070	-21%
Number given community sentences	52,772	46,984	-11%
Number given other sentences	13,449	14,780	10%
<b>Number sentenced</b>	<b>78,561</b>	<b>72,011</b>	<b>-8%</b>

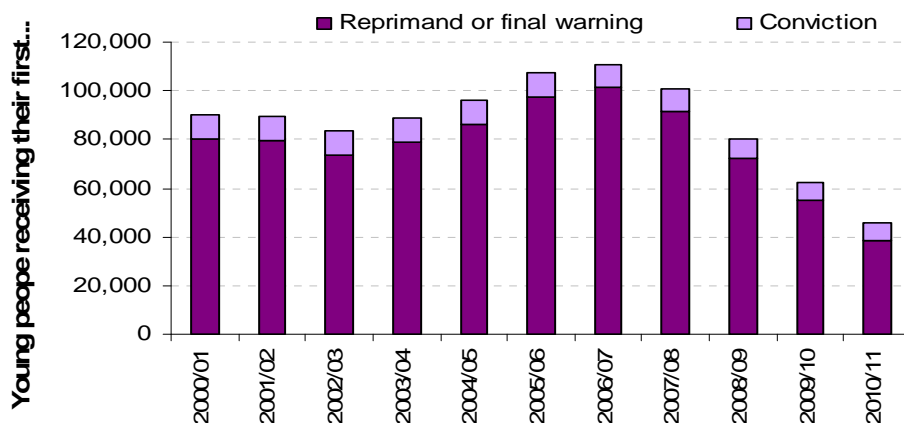
### Proven offences by young people

Overall there were 176,511 proven offences by young people in 2010/11, down 11 per cent from 2009/10. In the last year there has been a notable reduction in offences by young people, in particular; motoring offences (24%), breach of a statutory order (19%) and theft offences (18%). Some offence types saw an increase between 2009/10 and 2010/11; Robbery (up 11%) and burglary (up 2%).

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

In 2010/11, there were 45,519 first time entrants to the youth justice system. The number of first time entrants has fallen by 50 per cent from 2000/01 to 2010/11. These reductions cannot be explained by one factor alone. As mentioned previously the changes in pre-court disposals coincided with changes to a Government target. Increased funding was also made available to Youth Offending Teams for preventative and diversionary work with young people which may also have had an impact.

### *Trends in first time entrants, 2000/01 to 2010/11*



## Young people supervised by Youth Offending Teams

There were 85,300 young people supervised by Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in 2010/11. This number has reduced 20 per cent from 2009/10. However, the group that is left maybe more challenging to work with, as shown in the higher predicted rate of re-offending.

## Young people in custody

The average population of young people in custody in 2010/11 (including 18 year olds held in the youth secure estate) was 2,222. This is a 17 per cent reduction on the 2009/10 figure of 2,670.

Overall the average length of time spent in custody decreased by two days, from 80 days in 2009/10 to 78 days in 2010/11, mainly caused by time spent in custody on remand. For Detention and Training Orders, it increased by two days (from 109 to 111), for remand it decreased by three days (from 44 to 41) and for longer sentences it increased by 25 days (from 349 to 374).

## **Behaviour management in the youth secure estate**

There were 7,191 incidents of restraint used in the youth secure estate in 2010/11, down 9 per cent from 2008/09. Alongside this there were 1,424 incidents of self harm, down 45 per cent from 2008/09, and 3,554 assaults by young people, down 15 per cent since 2008/09. There were 4,462 occasions where single separation was used in Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) or Secure Training Centres (STCs), down 43 per cent since 2008/09.

## **Serious incidents in the community**

Provisional data for 2011 shows there were 20 deaths in the community, where young people under supervision died either through murder, suicide or accidental death<sup>2</sup>. It should be noted that although these people are under supervision by the Youth Offending Teams, the supervision is not 24 hours a day and incidents may happen at home etc. This compares to 23 deaths in the community in 2010 and 2009.

In 2011, YOTs reported that 141 young people under their supervision attempted suicide<sup>3</sup>. This compares to 167 in 2010 and 113 in 2009. In 2010 there were 23 'other' safeguarding incidents reported, where the young person was the victim of an offence. This compares to 21 in 2010 and 15 in 2009.

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

The overall re-offending rate for young people was 33.3 per cent in 2009/10, with an average of 2.79 re-offences per re-offender. While the rate of re-offending has been broadly stable over the last decade, the average number of re-offences per re-offender has reduced by 17 per cent since 2000.

While the overall rate of reoffending has remained broadly stable 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. This is reflected in the higher predicted rate of re-offending and the higher average previous number of offences for each young person. After controlling for these differences, the rate of re-offending had fallen by 1.9 percentage points.

## **Risk factors associated with proven re-offending**

Previous research has shown that young people coming into contact with the youth justice system present with a range of difficulties (e.g. substance misuse) and multiple needs. Such difficulties could be associated with re-offending and therefore are referred to as 'risk factors'.

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<sup>2</sup> Accidental deaths includes those who died in road traffic accidents.

<sup>3</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.

Findings from the Juvenile Cohort Study (JCS)<sup>4</sup> indicated that young offenders presented with a range of risk factors<sup>5</sup> (the median was four). As the severity of YJS disposal increased, so did:

- a) the percentage of young people with each risk factor, for example: a fifth (19%) of 1<sup>st</sup> tier disposals had a risk in terms of 'living arrangements', compared with 36 per cent of those on community sentences and 45 per cent of those on Detention and Training Orders (DTOs); and
- b) the average number of risk factors they displayed i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> tier (median=3); community sentences (median=6); DTOs (median=7).

Risk factors were associated with one-year proven re-offending. For example: as the number of factors increased so did the percentage who re-offended (34% of those who had 0-2 risks compared with 81% of those who had 11-12 risks).

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

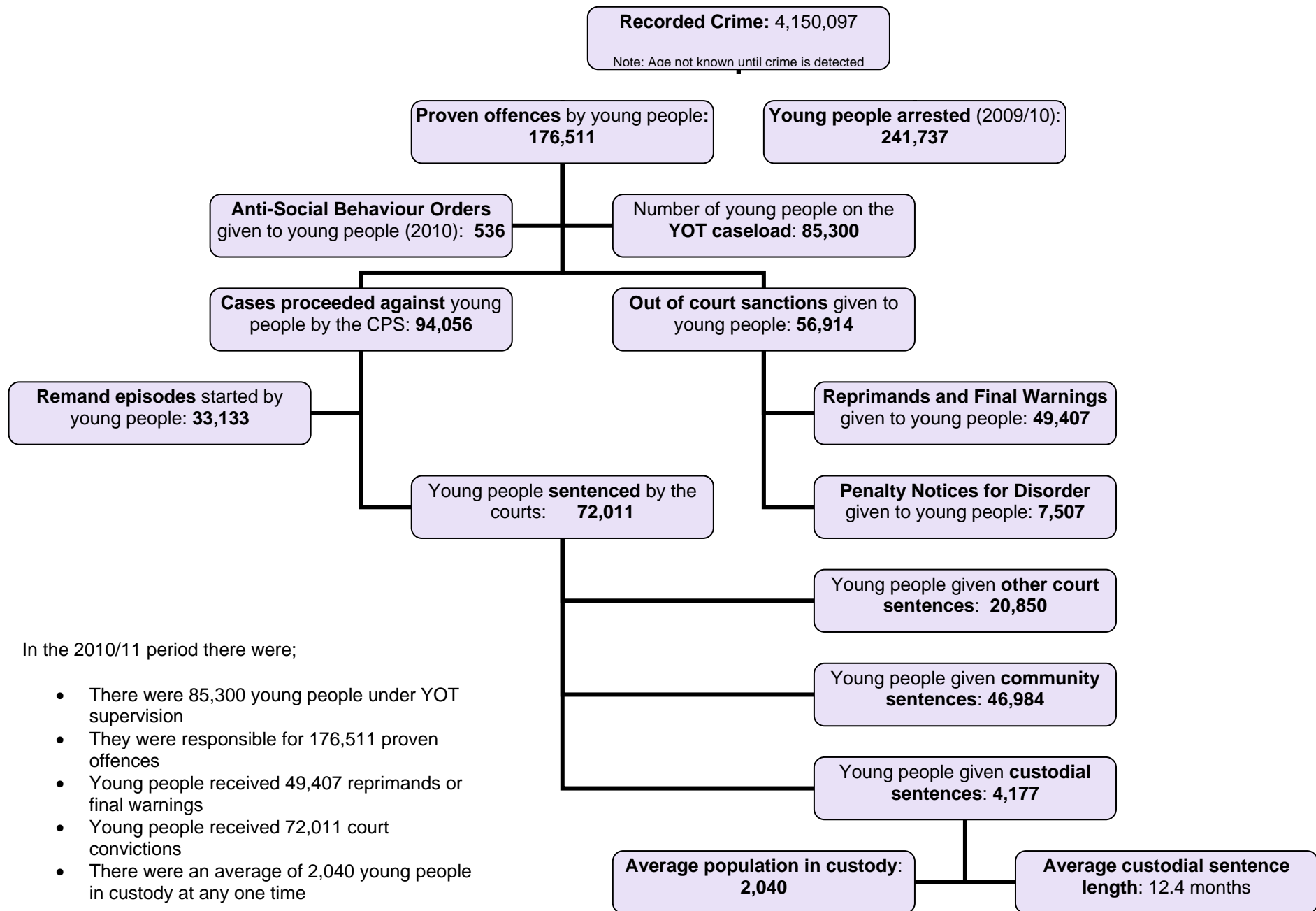
Public perceptions from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey (BCS) emphasise the perceived importance of rehabilitation, alongside a desire generally for more stringent treatment of offenders by the police and courts.

Findings include that nearly half (45%) of respondents believed rehabilitation should be the main aim of the Youth Justice System (by far the most popular response), and over half of respondents were confident in the way youth crime and ASB was tackled in their local area (59%). That said, two-thirds (64%) thought that young offenders were dealt with too leniently by the police and courts (although there was an increase from the previous year in the proportion that felt treatment was 'about right' - from 26 per cent to 32 per cent.

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<sup>4</sup> Based on a group of young people in 30 Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) between 1 February 2008 and 31 January 2009. The sample (5,453) used for this analysis was broadly representative of young people coming into contact with YOTs in terms of age group, sex, ethnicity and disposal category.

<sup>5</sup> As assessed using the Asset youth risk assessment tool, which is used by YOTs.



In the 2010/11 period there were;

- There were 85,300 young people under YOT supervision
- They were responsible for 176,511 proven offences
- Young people received 49,407 reprimands or final warnings
- Young people received 72,011 court convictions
- There were an average of 2,040 young people in custody at any one time