

Average Time From Arrest To Sentence For Persistent Young Offenders: January - December 2008

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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Executive summary

Background

This Bulletin presents the latest figures on the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders.

These figures are used to monitor the pledge to halve the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales from 142 days in 1996 to 71 days.

Main Points

- The average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders (PYOs) in England and Wales was 57 days in 2008, down 8 days from 2007.
- The overall average time from arrest to sentence for cases sentenced in magistrates' courts was 47 days in 2008 – down 10 days from the previous year. Cases sentenced in the Crown Court took an average of 206 days from arrest to sentence in 2008, down 1 days from 2007.
- 41 of the 42 Criminal Justice areas had achieved the target of 71 days or less for 2008 as a whole. For the fourth quarter of 2007, 39 of the areas had an average of 71 days or less.

Conclusion of the Persistent Young Offenders pledge

On 10 December 2008, the Secretary of State for Justice announced to Parliament that the Persistent Young Offenders pledge would be discontinued with effect from the end of the 2008 calendar year. The full text of his statement can be seen on the UK Parliament website at the following link:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm081210/wmstext/81210m0002.htm#08121029000071>

This monthly bulletin, whose purpose is to monitor the pledge, will therefore cease with effect after this edition covering January - December 2008.

Arrest-to-Charge survey

In previous years, the figures presented in this bulletin have been updated retrospectively to take account of results from the annual 'Arrest to Charge' survey. This exercise generates estimates (at police force area level) of the average time interval between arrest and charge, for the minority of cases where this information is not recorded on the Police National Computer.

This annual survey is normally carried shortly after the completion of a calendar year. However, in the light of the announced discontinuation of the Persistent Young Offenders pledge, we will not be running an 'Arrest to Charge' survey covering 2008, and we will instead be rolling forward the most recent pre-existing survey results for the year 2007.

During 2008, some 89% of cases had full information on the arrest to charge interval recorded on the Police National Computer. The survey results are therefore only applied to the remaining 11%. For this reason, and based on recent years' experience of applying these retrospective updates, we expect the absence of a 2008 survey to have a minimal effect on reported 'pledge' statistics.

Average Interval from Arrest to Sentence

The bulletin

This bulletin contains statistics on the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales.

This bulletin presents figures for January - December 2008. In-year figures for 2008 will be revised as more data is entered onto the Police National Computer – please see the Notes section for further details.

The main body of the bulletin is organised in three parts. This first part contains commentary on the latest figures, the second has detailed tables of results, and the final part comprises of notes on the pledge and methodology used and also includes contact points for enquires.

England and Wales

The average time between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders in 2008 was 57 days, down 8 days from 2007.

The average during October-December 2007 was 57 days, 2 days higher than in the previous quarter. The monthly figure for December 2007 was 58 days, equalling the figure for November.

Further figures can be found in table 1 (page 7). A graph showing monthly progress from January 1997 is shown in figure 1 below

Figure 1: Average time (days) between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders – England and Wales, January 1997 to December 2008



Cases sentenced at Magistrates' Courts

For the year 2008, cases sentenced at magistrates' courts represented 93 per cent of all PYO cases. As table 2 (page 8) shows, the overall average time from arrest to sentence for these cases was 47 days, down 10 days from 2007.

The average for October-December 2008 was 46 days, 1 day higher than in the previous quarter. The monthly figure for December 2008 was 44 days, down 2 days from November.

Cases sentenced at the Crown Court

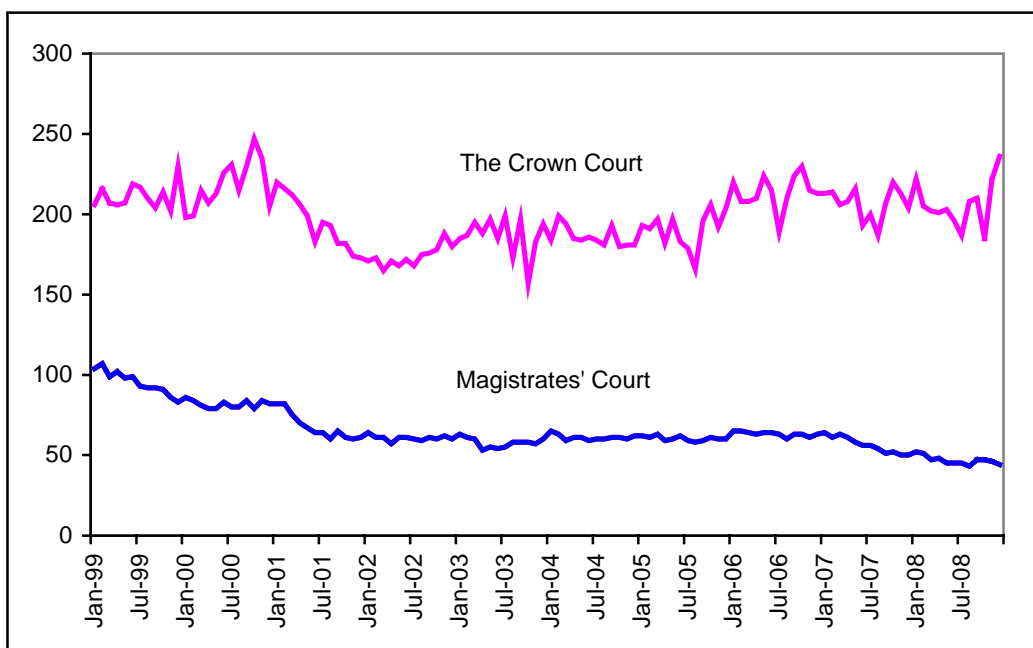
The average time from arrest to sentence for cases sentenced at the Crown Court in 2008 was 206 days, down 1 day from 2007.

The average for October-December 2007 was 212 days, 11 days higher than in the previous quarter. The monthly figure for December 2007 was 236 days, up 14 days from November. Further figures can be found in table 3 (page 9).

Cases sentenced at the Crown Court include both time spent in magistrates' courts before committal to the Crown Court and time spent in Crown Court proceedings after committal. However, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of these periods separately.

The average arrest to sentence times for cases sentenced at the Crown Court and magistrates' courts between January 1999 and December 2008 are shown separately in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Average time (days) from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders by sentencing court – England and Wales, January 1999 to December 2008



Criminal Justice System Areas

Figures by criminal justice area are shown in tables 4 and 5 (pages 10 to 13) - the latter for magistrates' court cases only.

For the year 2008, 41 of the 42 criminal justice areas had an average arrest to sentence time of 71 days or less, compared to 35 areas in 2007. For the October-December quarter of 2007, 39 areas had an average of 71 days or less, equalling the figure for the previous quarter.

The number of areas achieving the 71-day target, on a three-month rolling average basis is shown in figures 3 and 4 below.

Figure 3: Number of Criminal Justice System areas within target by rolling three-month arrest to sentence averages – November 2007 to December 2008

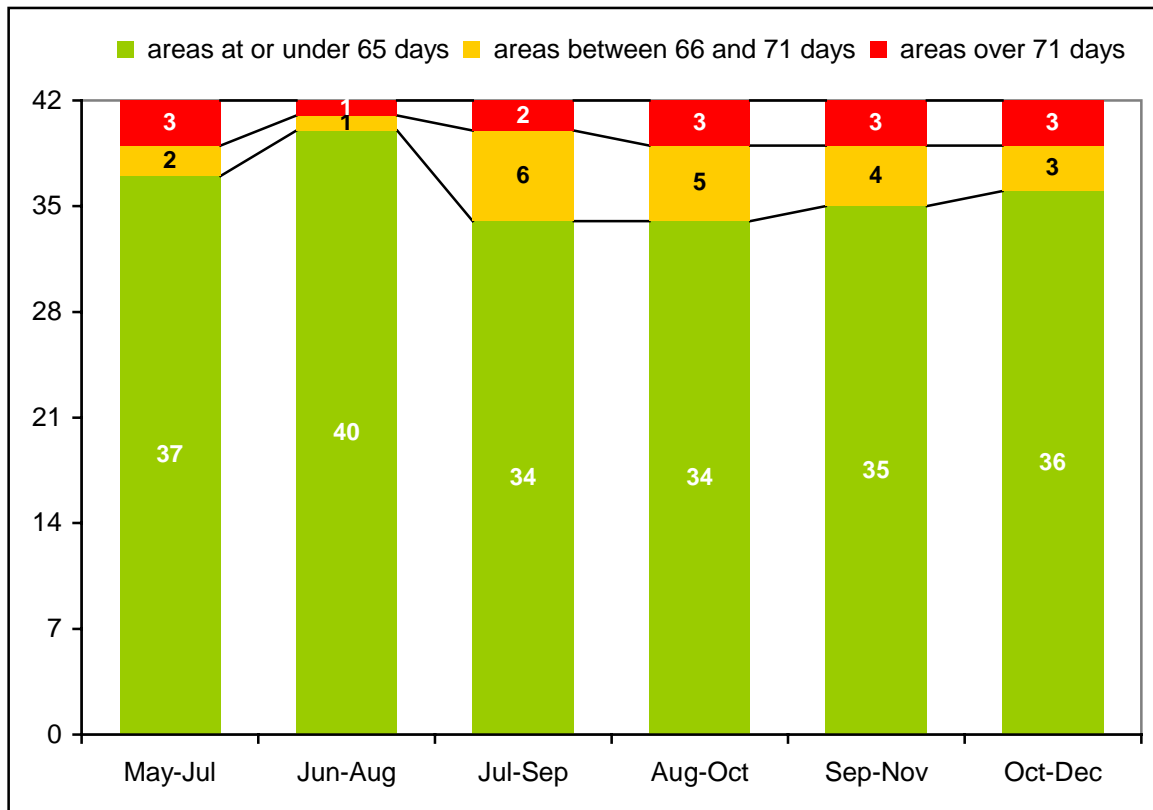


Figure 4: Geographical spread of Criminal Justice System areas within target by rolling three-month arrest to sentence averages – rolling quarter ending December 2008

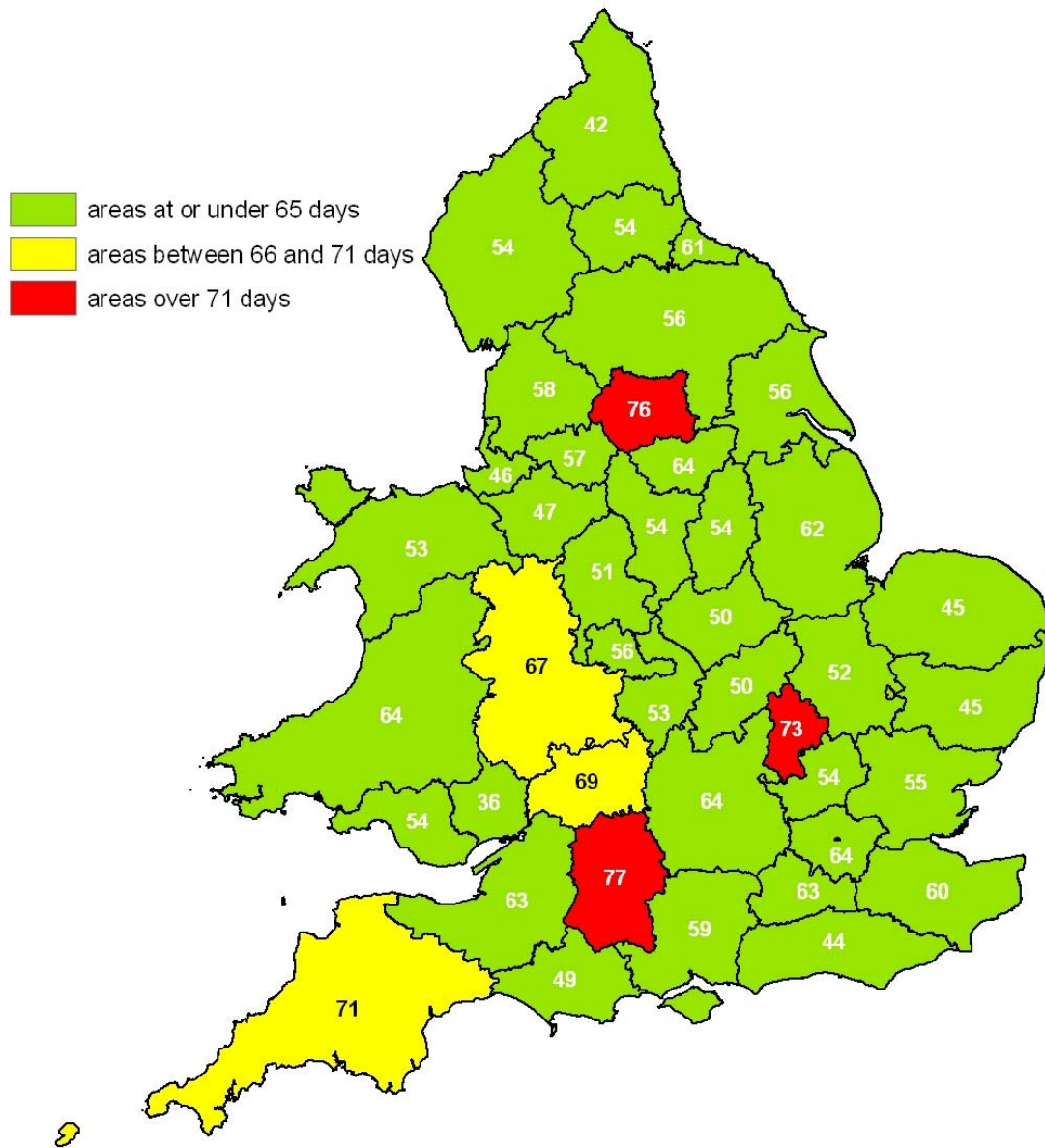


Table 1: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales

Period	Days	Number of cases	
1996	142	-	
1997	141	16,010	
1998	125	18,605	
1999	108	21,151	
2000 ⁽¹⁾	95	23,131	
2001	76	25,393	
2002	68	26,116	
2003 ⁽¹⁾	66	26,086	
2004	69	26,363	
2005	68	27,037	
2006	72	28,252	
2007	65	30,683	
2008	57	28,834	
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2008	January – March (r)	61	7,317 (+5)
	April – June (r)	57	7,517 (+10)
	July – September (r)	55	7,215 (+10)
	October – December	57	6,785
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2008	January (r)	62	2,652 (+1)
	February (r)	63	2,445 (+3)
	March (r)	57	2,220 (+1)
	April (r)	57	2,675 (+1)
	May (r)	57	2,445 (+5)
	June (r)	56	2,397 (+4)
	July (r)	54	2,715 (+4)
	August (r)	53	2,199 (+2)
	September (r)	59	2,301 (+4)
	October (r)	57 (+1)	2,570 (+6)
	November (r)	58	2,169 (+24)
	December (r)	58	2,046 (+51)

Notes:

All period figures denoted by - are not applicable.

All period figures denoted by (r) are based on revised data and replace those provided in the last bulletin in the series.

All period figures denoted by (p) are based on provisional data.

- (1) Full application of the new methodology (to remove double counting of Arrest to Charge survey time) required the re-calculating of time-series figures. This has resulted in the substantive changes on the previously published numbers.

Table 2: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced at Magistrates' Courts in England and Wales

Period	Days	Number of cases	
1999	96	18,851	
2000 ⁽¹⁾	83	21,146	
2001	68	23,752	
2002 ⁽¹⁾	63	24,280	
2003 ⁽¹⁾	58	24,481	
2004	61	24,698	
2005 ⁽¹⁾	61	25,498	
2006	63	26,529	
2007	57	28,904	
2008	47	26,900	
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2008	January – March (r)	50	6,843 (+4)
	April – June (r)	46	7,001 (+10)
	July – September (r)	45	6,744 (+10)
	October – December	46	6,312
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2008	January (r)	52	2,497 (+1)
	February (r)	51	2,265 (+2)
	March (r)	47	2,081 (+1)
	April (r)	48	2,510 (+1)
	May (r)	45	2,264 (+5)
	June (r)	45	2,227 (+4)
	July (r)	45	2,539 (+4)
	August (r)	43	2,066 (+2)
	September (r)	47 (-1)	2,139 (+4)
	October (r)	47	2,393 (+5)
	November (r)	46 (+1)	2,017 (+23)
	December (r)	44 (-1)	1,902 (+48)

Notes:

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All period figures denoted by (p) are based on provisional data.

(1) Full application of the new methodology (to remove double counting of Arrest to Charge survey time) required the re-calculating of time-series figures. This has resulted in the substantive changes on the previously published numbers.

Table 3: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced at the Crown Court in England and Wales

Period	Days	Number of cases
1999	212	2,271
2000	218	1,976
2001	196	1,632
2002 ⁽¹⁾	178	1,829
2003 ⁽¹⁾	188	1,590
2004	186	1,653
2005 ⁽¹⁾	192	1,526
2006	214	1,704
2007	206	1,769
2008	206	1,904
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2008	January – March (r)	210 (+1)
	April – June (r)	200
	July – September (r)	201
	October – December	212
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2008	January (r)	222
	February (r)	205
	March (r)	202
	April (r)	201
	May (r)	203
	June (r)	196
	July (r)	187
	August (r)	208
	September (r)	210
	October (r)	185 (+1)
	November (r)	222
	December	236

Notes:

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All period figures denoted by (p) are based on provisional data.

- (1) Full application of the new methodology (to remove double counting of Arrest to Charge survey time) required the re-calculating of time-series figures. This has resulted in the substantive changes on the previously published numbers.

Table 4a: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Criminal Justice Area, 2002 to 2008

Area ⁽¹⁾	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Avon and Somerset	76	70	71	69	72	69	69
Bedfordshire	58	51	69	81	70	75	67
Cambridgeshire	66	52	55	59	74	63	58
Cheshire	58	58	63	72	69	50	43
Cleveland	58	61	67	61	68	65	57
Cumbria	64	57	60	58	54	63	52
Derbyshire	85	68	70	71	73	56	50
Devon and Cornwall	55	52	51	56	74	66	57
Dorset	78	70	53	68	74	69	53
Durham	52	57	67	76	69	58	48
Dyfed-Powys	50	40	37	44	49	46	52
Essex	67	72	58	56	60	52	55
Gloucestershire	56	52	57	64	68	65	66
Greater Manchester	71	74	72	78	74	68	54
Gwent	62	64	67	70	85	74	53
Hampshire	73	64	60	66	59	64	62
Hertfordshire	63	59	71	67	84	66	62
Humberside	85	78	67	55	67	65	54
Kent	64	70	71	70	82	71	64
Lancashire	84	60	68	72	65	62	54
Leicestershire	69	65	66	72	102	76	62
Lincolnshire	74	70	77	70	92	56	72
Merseyside	65	81	82	75	65	63	53
Metropolitan	83	77	85	86	85	70	68
Norfolk	72	74	58	59	85	58	47
North Wales	55	53	65	73	67	59	53
North Yorkshire	57	58	66	58	54	59	54
Northamptonshire	80	71	71	93	101	68	55
Northumbria	63	72	70	66	79	72	47
Nottinghamshire	66	61	81	69	52	65	62
South Wales	66	54	55	55	67	75	54
South Yorkshire	70	67	58	59	65	64	63
Staffordshire	51	51	58	69	80	59	53
Suffolk	74	40	35	39	54	50	45
Surrey	64	78	86	52	73	58	63
Sussex	65	56	67	69	64	63	53
Thames Valley	67	66	73	66	92	72	63
Warwickshire	57	61	66	57	55	55	46
West Mercia	63	57	73	85	75	61	56
West Midlands	65	59	72	64	81	60	53
West Yorkshire	64	75	78	55	58	62	67
Wiltshire	48	62	64	59	78	76	63
British Transport Police	90	106	106	110	114	89	58
England and Wales	68	66	69	68	72	65	57

Note:

All Figures denoted by * are based on 40 or fewer cases and should be interpreted with particular care.

All period figures denoted by (r) are based on revised data and replace those provided in the last bulletin in the series.

- (1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been handled in different areas to that which first recorded the cases.

Table 4b: Average number of days from arrest to sentence (three-month rolling averages) for persistent young offenders in England and Wales and by Criminal Justice Area from May 2008 to December 2008

Area ⁽¹⁾	May 08 to Jul 08	Jun 08 to Aug 08	Jul 08 to Sep 08	Aug 08 to Oct 08	Sep 08 to Nov 08	Oct 08 to Dec 08
Avon and Somerset	75	73	69	70	66	63
Bedfordshire	57	51	67	79	87	73
Cambridgeshire	67	58	52	44	50	52
Cheshire	44	38	42	42	49	47
Cleveland	50	55	54	61	58	61
Cumbria	51	51	51	48	55	54
Derbyshire	48	49	49	58	52	54
Devon and Cornwall	45	46	47	54	65	71
Dorset	45	41	48	51	58	49
Durham	42	50	49	54	59	54
Dyfed-Powys	39	49	52	57	71	64
Essex	53	55	59	55	55	55
Gloucestershire	72	65	66	52	56	69
Greater Manchester	51	50	51	53	56	57
Gwent	64	53	52	39	45	36
Hampshire	63	62	63	63	62	59
Hertfordshire	60	57	60	50	54	54
Humberside	48	50	48	51	57	56
Kent	66	61	52	56	60	60
Lancashire	52	52	52	56	58	58
Leicestershire	65	51	50	54	51	50
Lincolnshire	87	67	74	59	70	62
Merseyside	54	49	47	41	44	46
Metropolitan	65	63	66	68	64	64
Norfolk	52	41	41	43	45	45
North Wales	51	44	47	53	54	53
North Yorkshire	44	47	56	60	56	56
Northamptonshire	63	57	53	50	51	50
Northumbria	42	37	42	43	44	42
Nottinghamshire	59	62	60	57	55	54
South Wales	51	51	48	53	49	54
South Yorkshire	52	60	67	67	69	64
Staffordshire	49	52	50	48	48	51
Suffolk	47	43	44	44	45	45
Surrey	48	65	74	78	65	63
Sussex	51	54	59	51	52	44
Thames Valley	61	64	71	67	58	64
Warwickshire	38	42	37	39	44	53
West Mercia	51	53	60	72	78	67
West Midlands	56	52	46	48	56	56
West Yorkshire	64	63	62	66	74	76
Wiltshire	61	63	43	58	59	77
British Transport Police	62	55	50	52	71	63
England and Wales	55	54	55	56	58	57

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- (1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been handled in different areas to that which first recorded the cases.

Table 5a: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced in Magistrates' courts in England and Wales: by Criminal Justice Area, 2002 to 2008

Area ⁽¹⁾	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Avon and Somerset	68	57	65	62	66	63	61
Bedfordshire	54	47	59	67	58	64	53
Cambridgeshire	53	42	44	49	66	54	46
Cheshire	49	53	58	68	64	43	36
Cleveland	51	53	61	55	61	59	47
Cumbria	55	51	54	53	50	57	48
Derbyshire	78	60	61	63	62	47	42
Devon and Cornwall	50	45	45	49	66	63	47
Dorset	70	64	52	67	69	64	41
Durham	47	51	59	71	61	52	39
Dyfed-Powys	49	38	35	42	44	45	41
Essex	57	64	51	49	51	45	46
Gloucestershire	52	48	52	55	62	62	50
Greater Manchester	59	61	61	69	62	56	44
Gwent	54	60	62	66	80	65	40
Hampshire	68	60	54	61	52	57	53
Hertfordshire	55	52	62	62	79	56	52
Humberside	79	68	60	49	58	56	46
Kent	58	64	63	64	74	63	59
Lancashire	72	53	63	63	56	56	45
Leicestershire	58	55	56	67	99	71	51
Lincolnshire	69	66	71	67	86	54	58
Merseyside	60	73	78	68	57	53	45
Metropolitan	73	65	73	74	69	57	52
Norfolk	63	63	52	56	81	50	36
North Wales	53	51	62	72	61	55	46
North Yorkshire	53	54	61	50	51	52	46
Northamptonshire	69	65	68	87	98	60	51
Northumbria	59	68	66	63	72	68	40
Nottinghamshire	60	54	74	61	46	56	55
South Wales	62	50	50	50	62	66	45
South Yorkshire	63	58	50	53	58	57	51
Staffordshire	47	46	51	58	74	56	44
Suffolk	63	35	30	35	50	41	37
Surrey	57	70	77	46	64	49	49
Sussex	60	50	62	66	59	54	42
Thames Valley	58	56	63	60	80	58	46
Warwickshire	51	57	56	50	49	52	36
West Mercia	57	50	67	79	67	52	49
West Midlands	58	51	61	55	65	47	39
West Yorkshire	57	67	70	48	53	55	53
Wiltshire	43	60	60	54	75	67	56
British Transport Police	73	86	85	98	88	74	46
England and Wales	61	58	61	60	63	56	47

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- (1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been handled in different areas to that which first recorded the cases.

Table 5b: Average number of days from arrest to sentence (three-month rolling averages) for persistent young offenders sentenced in Magistrates' courts in England and Wales and by Criminal Justice Area from May 2008 to December 2008

Area ⁽¹⁾	May 08 to Jul 08	Jun 08 to Aug 08	Jul 08 to Sep 08	Aug 08 to Oct 08	Sep 08 to Nov 08	Oct 08 to Dec 08
Avon and Somerset	69	66	61	61	59	53
Bedfordshire	43	41	48	57	61	58
Cambridgeshire	57	50	40	33	33	40
Cheshire	38	33	36	35	38	34
Cleveland	42	47	49	52	50	45
Cumbria	48	48	48	42	45	43
Derbyshire	38	41	44	48	44	44
Devon and Cornwall	42	43	45	49	49	50
Dorset	33	33	35	40	44	42
Durham	33	39	45	44	49	42
Dyfed-Powys	39	42	45	46	42	36
Essex	44	49	51	48	46	45
Gloucestershire	50	43	45	45	49	54
Greater Manchester	44	44	44	42	44	43
Gwent	51	43	43	33	36	27
Hampshire	51	52	51	53	54	50
Hertfordshire	54	51	57	49	52	46
Humberside	41	41	41	47	51	50
Kent	57	52	46	52	56	55
Lancashire	43	41	42	47	48	49
Leicestershire	56	43	39	38	39	39
Lincolnshire	57	55	68	59	70	61
Merseyside	45	44	42	39	39	41
Metropolitan	48	47	49	51	50	48
Norfolk	32	33	36	38	37	36
North Wales	45	38	42	47	46	47
North Yorkshire	40	39	43	44	43	42
Northamptonshire	61	57	51	46	48	48
Northumbria	35	34	37	38	37	37
Nottinghamshire	52	54	51	48	48	47
South Wales	42	40	39	43	42	45
South Yorkshire	45	46	49	52	51	47
Staffordshire	49	51	48	42	38	38
Suffolk	35	32	34	40	38	34
Surrey	40	46	54	53	52	52
Sussex	41	41	43	38	40	33
Thames Valley	44	40	43	43	44	44
Warwickshire	34	37	32	37	42	44
West Mercia	49	49	47	50	56	56
West Midlands	39	36	37	37	39	40
West Yorkshire	45	45	47	55	63	64
Wiltshire	61	63	43	53	54	70
British Transport Police	47	47	41	44	51	48
England and Wales	45	44	45	46	47	46

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- (1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been handled in different areas to that which first recorded the cases.

Notes to the pledge

The pledge

1. The original Government pledge was to halve the time it takes to deal with persistent young offenders from arrest to sentence in England and Wales from 142 days in 1996 to 71 days by 2002. The timely process of these offenders at the target level remains an ongoing commitment.
2. Overall responsibility for the pledge is shared jointly by all Criminal Justice System departments and agencies. However, the agency with the lead responsibility for overseeing delivery nationally is the Office for Criminal Justice Reform.
3. From 2005, the pledge has been applied to all Criminal Justice System areas, who are required to achieve the compliance target on a consistent basis. The Local Criminal Justice Boards are responsible for delivery in the local areas.
4. Since 1997, this National Statistics bulletin published by the Ministry of Justice has presented national and local performance against the target.

Notes to the data and methodology

Data sources

5. The raw data used to identify persistent young offenders, and to calculate the average time interval from arrest to sentence across relevant cases are:
 - the Police National Computer, which is the police's central management information database. The source provides a full collection of cases, and all the variables needed to determine the offenders classification and to contribute to the calculation of performance against the target; and
 - the annual Arrest to Charge survey, which is an annual sample survey designed to enable the calculation of robust representative estimates of subsidiary time from the initial to the process stage.

Please see the definitional and calculation rules for details on data usage.

Paths through the system

6. Offenders can take two paths through the Criminal Justice System:
 - one where they are arrested and subsequently processed by the police, then listed to appear in court for however many hearings are necessary until the session where the sentence is passed on them; and

- another where they are reported and information is laid against them by the police, then they are summoned to appear in court for however many hearings until the final session where the sentence is passed on them.

Definitional rules

7. The data used to identify whether a defendant found guilty of an offence is a persistent young offender comes from the Police National Computer. Under the counting rules such an offender is:
 - a young person who is aged 10 to 17 at the point of process, and 18 or under at the start of the calendar year in which they are sentenced guilty of an offence;
 - who has been sentenced guilty of offences by any criminal court in the United Kingdom on three or more separate occasions in the past for one or more recordable offences on each of the occasions; and
 - within 3 years of the last of these sentencing occasion is subsequently arrested and then found guilty of at least one more recordable offence.

Under this definition, it is possible for young adults aged 18 and 19 years at sentence, but not those aged 20 years or over, to fall in the category.

Calculation rules

8. The full data used to calculate the overall interval between the initial stage (arrest or reporting / information laid) and the sentence stage for the cases of persistent young offenders comes from the Police National Computer in the main.
9. However, some additional data from the annual Arrest to Charge survey is used in the calculations for an ever-decreasing number of cases. For this minority of cases, survey results are used as proxy for time from the initial to process (charge or summons) stage, where that time is not recorded on the main data source. This time is then added to the usually larger interval from process to sentence stage derived from the aforementioned source.
10. The overall interval is commonly known as the average time from arrest to sentence, owing to the fact the vast majority of cases pass through that path. It can essentially be a national, sentencing court type jurisdiction or local area average of the intervals of all relevant cases in a given period.

Additional notes

National Statistics

11. This is a National Statistics publication produced by the Ministry of Justice. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

The bulletin

12. The Ministry of Justice has produced the figures in this bulletin with assistance from the data source owner in the National Policing Improvement Agency.
13. The figures presented in this bulletin are obtained from separate monitoring exercises run on successive monthly data extractions from the Police National Computer from 1997.
14. In accordance with the counting rules, the bulletin covers all cases sentenced in magistrates' courts and the Crown Court in England and Wales that are recorded on the Police National Computer.

The definition

15. A persistent young offender was first defined in the inter-departmental circular 'Tackling delays in the Youth Justice System' issued on 15 October 1997:

"A persistent young offender is a young person aged 10-17 who has been sentenced by any criminal court in the UK on three or more separate occasions for one or more recordable offence, and within three years of the last sentencing occasion is subsequently arrested or has an information laid against them for a further recordable offence."

16. Individuals can fall within this definition at the date of sentence. This happens where offenders are brought into the group by virtue of one or more offences committed after but dealt with before the fourth sentencing occasion. Essentially, this rearranges the usual order of counting occasions, so that offences which would not be expected to fall on the final occasion do so; with the longest lasting case then contributing to the arrest to sentence averages.

The calculations

17. In the instance where an offender is sentenced for more than one offence on the fourth sentencing occasion, only the longest running of these cases will contribute to the arrest to sentence averages.

The extraction

18. All cases in the consecutive counting of sentencing occasions are extracted from the source. However, some of them are then excluded from the monitoring exercise because the offences were:

- committed outside the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man;
- handled by a police force outside England and Wales, other than cases handled by the British Transport Police;
- proceeded with in courts outside England and Wales;
- resulted in no convictions being brought against the offender, for example where individuals were acquitted or cases against them discounted; and
- breaches of previous sentence order, for example probation orders.

However, from 1 January 2005 breaches of anti-social behaviour orders have been included in the exercise.

The amended methodology

19. From May 2006, all arrest to sentence figures have been calculated using an amended methodology. This new approach has been applied to remove the double counting of Arrest to Charge time for offences processed at arrest, or else that where overall time is recorded on the Police National Computer.

20. The new methodology has been retrospectively applied to backdated periods, so that all time-series are consistent within this bulletin and others released since the change. However, changes to statistics published prior to May 2006 may be partly or wholly due to this amendment and are not comparable.

The provisional statistics

21. From April 2007, more up to date statistics have been made available in this bulletin. The introduction of 2 months in arrears statistics has augmented the headline 3 month in arrears figures.

22. These provisional statistics were introduced after a longitudinal study of data collections from the Police National Computer, which revealed that from January 2005 around 95% of records are consistently inputted 2 months in arrears in England and Wales.

23. The collection of more data earlier has meant that 2 months in arrears statistics have become closer to the published National Statistics for England and Wales and for cases heard in magistrates' courts. These provisional statistics are adjusted in the order reflect observed historical and seasonal fluctuations.

The survey

24. The Arrest to Charge survey collects arrest or information laid dates in March for a representative sample of cases for the previous calendar year.
25. Respondents in each of the police constabularies and the British Transport Police complete the survey forms sent by the Ministry of Justice. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary champions the survey, and helps to ensure its prompt completion.
26. In the instance where survey forms contain offenders with more than one offence sentenced on a single occasion, only the longest running of these cases will contribute to the survey results.
27. The previous year's survey estimates are used to calculate in-year arrest to sentence figures until the current survey results are available.

Symbols and conventions

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

- Not applicable
- 0 Nil
- .. Not available
- (r) Revised data
- (p) Provisional data

Contact points for further information

Current and previous editions of this publication are available for download at:

www.justice.gov.uk/publications/averagetimearresttosentencepyo.htm

This bulletin, together with other information about delay in persistent young offender cases can also be found on the Youth Justice Board's reducing delays internet site at:

www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/MonitoringPerformance/ReducingDelays

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