

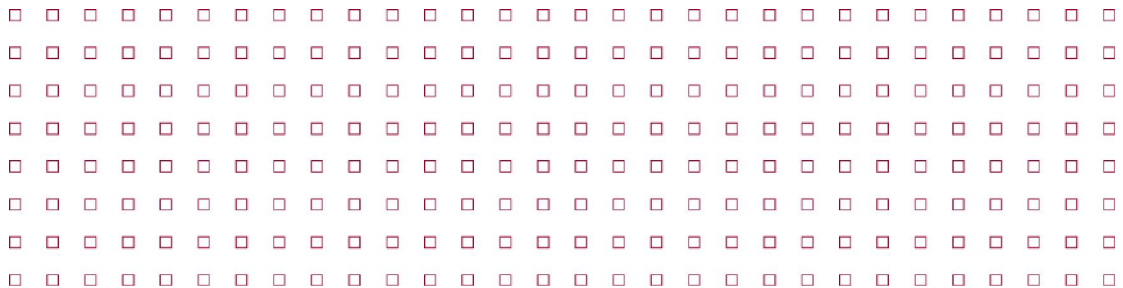


Ministry of **JUSTICE**

Statistical Notice

Developments in Criminal Statistics 2009 and Sentencing Statistics 2009

Published October 2010



Statistical Notice – changes to National Statistics publications

Introduction

This note advises users of the changes and improvements being made to the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) National Statistics publications:

- Criminal Statistics 2009, and
- Sentencing Statistics 2009

due for release on the 21 October 2010.

Improvements to the publications

A number of developments have been made to these publications in response to recommendations made in the UK Statistics Authority report 'Statistics on the Criminal Justice System'¹. In addition a number of issues have been resolved following a review of the compilation process of Criminal Statistics during 2009. These include the treatment of 'breach offences', presentation of ethnicity data, and the alignment of offence groups between the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office.

Breach of civil orders

Breaching the terms of some court orders, eg Anti Social Behaviour Disorders, is a criminal offence. These offences were not previously reported in the National Statistics but have been included for 2009. This increases the reported number of defendants proceeded against by approximately 10,000, less than one per cent of the total number proceeded against.

Presentation of statistics by ethnic group

Figures on offences committed and defendants dealt with by the police or in court will include breakdowns by the ethnic groups, white, black, Asian and other. These will provide high-level statistics by ethnic group but cannot be used to draw conclusions about equality in the criminal justice system. The principal source of equality information will continue to be the MOJ publication 'Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System'.

Standardisation of offence groups

The offences bigamy, 'concealment of birth' and 'vehicle fraud' were previously classified in the National Statistics within different offence groups than those used by the Home Office. For 2009 they will be reclassified to be consistent with Home Office groupings as follows:

- bigamy, will be included in the offence group 'other indictable offences', moving from 'sexual offences', changing the classification of an offence² committed by approximately 20 defendants each year;
- 'concealment of birth', will be included in the offence group 'other indictable offences', moving from 'violence against the person'; changing the classification of an offence committed by approximately five defendants each year, and

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

² Based on the principal offence committed by a defendant -where proceedings against a defendant involve more than one offence the principal offence is the most serious.

- 'vehicle fraud', will be included in the offence group 'fraud and forgery', moving from 'motoring', changing the classification of an offence committed by approximately 1,000 defendants each year.

Court level sentencing data

As part of the Ministry of Justice structural reform plan there was a commitment to provide sentencing data for every court published in an open and standardised format. These will be released alongside sentencing statistics and criminal statistics.

Revisions

There have been changes to cautions data for 2008, following revisions received from one police force.

Changes in methodology

Average fine data presented in Sentencing Statistics were previously based on the mean average. The mean is sensitive to extreme values so that a large fine given to a company or public body causes a substantial increase which may make this measure misleading. For Sentencing Statistics 2009 average fine figures will be based on the median. The median is less sensitive to extreme scores and is generally considered a better 'measure of the middle' in data distributed as fines are.

Contact details and further information

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

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