

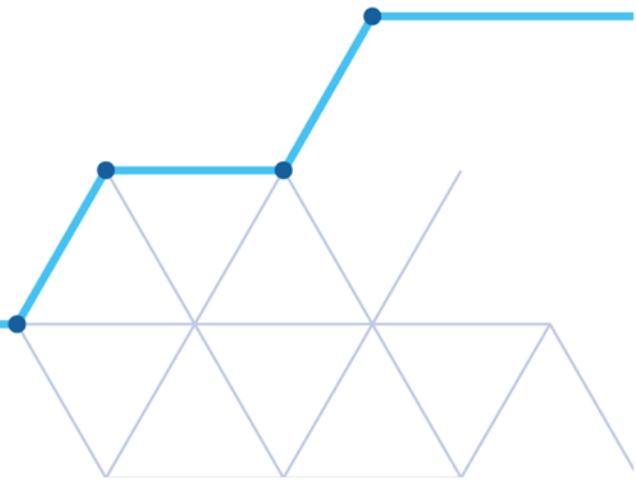


Ministry
of Justice

The Mix of Prior Disposals in Offending Histories: Ad Hoc Statistics

Ministry of Justice Analytical Series
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Protecting and advancing the principles of justice



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1. Background

This ad-hoc statistical report summarises Police National Computer (PNC) data on the mix of selected prior disposals in offending histories for offenders sentenced to custody on their most recent sentencing occasion in 2018. The tables present data for both youth and adults sentenced to 6 months or less in custody and 12 months or less in custody. Shown are details of prior offences across the entirety of offending careers that are recorded in the PNC.

Groups are defined by identifying all possible combinations of a selected set of prior disposals. The selected disposals differ between youth and adults. For adults, all combinations of prior community orders (COs), prior suspended sentence orders (SSOs) and prior custody define the groups. For youth, groups are defined by all combinations of prior youth rehabilitation orders (YROs), prior referral orders (ROs), and prior custody. It should be noted that any YROs or ROs in the histories of adult offenders in 2018 are captured in the CO category for adults. Similarly, custodial sentences received as youth are captured in the custodial category for adults.

Shown for each group is the number of offenders in the group, their proportion share of all offenders analysed and the median number of prior disposals by selected disposal type. Though not used in defining groups, a composite category of 'other' disposals including cautions, fines and discharges is also summarised.

2. Key Findings

- Of adults sentenced to 6 months custody or less, approximately 84% had previously received a CO, 53% had previously received an SSO, and 80% had been previously sentenced to custody.
- Approximately 45% of adults sentenced to 6 months custody or less had received all three types of key disposals -- prior COs, SSOs and Custody -- with a median of 18 prior COs, 3 prior SSOs and 17 prior custodial sentences. This group also had a high number of prior other disposals.
- Of adults sentenced to 12 months custody or less, approximately 81% had previously received a CO, 49% previously received an SSO, and 77% were previously sentenced to custody.
- Approximately 42% of adults sentenced to 12 months custody or less had received prior COs, SSOs and Custody with a median of 18 prior COs, 3 prior SSOs and 17 prior custodial sentences amongst this group.
- Of youth sentenced to 6 months custody or less, approximately 43% had previously received a YRO, 52% had previously received an RO and 62% had previously received a custodial sentence.
- Youth sentenced to 6 months in custody or less were more evenly distributed across groups defined by mix of prior disposals compared to adults receiving up to 6 months custody. For example, 17% of youth had prior custody and other disposals compared to 17% with prior ROs, custody and other disposals.
- Of youth sentenced to 12 months custody or less, approximately 43% had previously received a YRO, 51% had previously received an RO and 59% had previously received a custodial sentence. Approximately 14% of youth sentenced to 12 months custody or less received prior YROs, ROs and custody along with a high number of prior other disposals including cautions, fines, and discharges.

3. Notes

An offender's criminal history counts the number of occasions on which an offender has previously received a conviction, caution or youth caution for any offence which has been recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC), including some offences committed outside of England and Wales.

The tables relate to cautioning or sentencing occasions recorded on the PNC. Offences recorded on the PNC are all offences which could attract a custodial sentence which are all indictable offences, all triable either way offences and some summary non-motoring offences.

Where an offender has been cautioned or sentenced on more than one occasion the offender's offending history on each occasion has been included. Where an offender has been cautioned or sentenced on the same occasion for several offences, each offence has been counted in the histories.

When selecting cases sentenced to custody over which to present summary information about the histories, the "principal offence" on the most recent sentencing occasion was selected. Where more than one offence is considered in a court case or cautioning occasion, the offence that would/did attract the most severe sentencing outcome is deemed to be the "principal offence". If two offences in the same case attract the same sentence the offence with the higher statutory maximum sentence is deemed the "principal offence".

Separate analyses were conducted for adults and youth. An adult offender is any person aged 18 or older on the date of the cautioning or sentencing occasion. A youth offender is any person aged 10 to 17 on the date of the cautioning or sentencing occasion.

For all other concepts used in this summary not otherwise defined, e.g., 'community order', 'suspended sentence order', etc., please consult the glossary at the end of the *Guide to Criminal Justice Statistics* available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2018>

As the PNC is a large administrative database containing information about police cautions and court convictions held by individual offenders in England and Wales, volumes from this data source may not match data published elsewhere due to definitional differences used between publications and administrative recording systems.

Median Counts of Prior Disposals. Shown in the tables are the median number of prior disposals for selected prior disposal types. A 'median' is a number representing the mid-point in a series of ordered data and is unaffected by outlying values in the series. It differs in this respect from a 'mean' and is therefore preferred as a measure of the typical or usual situation when outlying values may be particularly influential. Where the mid-point in the series lies between two numbers, the half-mark is shown (e.g. 12.5 when the mid-point in the series would lie between the numbers 12 and 13 as shown in

Table 2 Mix of Prior Disposals for Adults Sentenced to 12 Months Custody or Less, 2018
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Appendix: Tables

Table 1 Mix of Prior Disposals for Adults Sentenced to 6 Months Custody or Less, 2018

			Any Prior Community Orders (COs)	Any Prior Suspended Sentence Orders (SSOs)	Any Prior Custody	Total Number in Cohort
Summary			17,938	11,348	17,234	21,422
			84%	53%	80%	100%
	Number	Percentage	Median Number of Prior CO	Median Number of Prior SSO	Median Number of Prior Custody	Median Number of Prior Other* Disposals
Only 'Other' Prior Disposals	748	3%				5
Prior COs	1,086	5%	4			13
Prior SSOs	154	1%		2		9
Prior Custody	1,357	6%			3	8
Prior CO & Prior SSO	1,234	6%	6	2		19
Prior CO & Prior Custody	5,917	28%	10		9	36
Prior SSO & Prior Custody	259	1%		2	6	20
Prior CO, SSO & Custody	9,701	45%	18	3	17	60
No Prior Disposals	966	5%				
Total	21,422	100%				

* 'Other' disposals include cautions, fines, absolute discharges, conditional discharges, compensation and being dealt with otherwise.

Table 2 Mix of Prior Disposals for Adults Sentenced to 12 Months Custody or Less, 2018

			Any Prior Community Orders (COs)	Any Prior Suspended Sentence Orders (SSOs)	Any Prior Custody	Total Number in Cohort
Summary			22,615	13,771	21,497	27,997
			81%	49%	77%	100%
	Number	Percentage	Median Number of Prior CO	Median Number of Prior SSO	Median Number of Prior Custody	Median Number of Prior Other*
Only 'Other' Prior Disposals	1,212	4%				4
Prior COs	1,688	6%	4			12.5
Prior SSOs	193	1%		2		9
Prior Custody	1,827	7%			3	8
Prior CO & Prior SSO	1,577	6%	6	2		18
Prior CO & Prior Custody	7,669	27%	10		9	35
Prior SSO & Prior Custody	320	1%		2	6	20
Prior CO, SSO & Custody	11,681	42%	18	3	17	59
No Prior Disposals	1,830	7%				
Total	27,997	100%				

* 'Other' disposals include cautions, fines, absolute discharges, conditional discharges, compensation and being dealt with otherwise.

Table 3 Mix of Prior Disposals for Youth Sentenced to 6 Months Custody or Less, 2018

	Any Prior Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YROs)	Any Prior Referral Orders (ROs)	Any Prior Custody	Total Number in Cohort
Summary	130	158	187	301
	43%	52%	62%	100%

	Number	Percentage	Median Number of Prior YRO	Median Number of Prior RO	Median Number of Prior Custody	Median Number of Prior Other Disposals
Only Prior 'Other' Disposals	11	4%				2
Prior YROs	13	4%	6			22
Prior ROs	30	10%		2		4.5
Prior Custody	50	17%			4	5
Prior YROs & Prior ROs	31	10%	4	2		23
Prior YROs & Prior Custody	40	13%	5.5		4.5	30
Prior ROs & Prior Custody	51	17%		2	4	9
Prior YROs, ROs & Custody	46	15%	4	2.5	6	32
No Prior Disposals	29	10%				
Total	301	100%				

* 'Other' disposals include cautions, fines, absolute discharges, conditional discharges, compensation and being dealt with otherwise.

Table 4 Mix of Prior Disposals for Youth Sentenced to 12 Months Custody or Less, 2018

		Any Prior Youth Rehabilitation Orders (YROs)	Any Prior Referral Orders (ROs)	Any Prior Custody	Total Number in Cohort
Summary		208	247	286	485
		43%	51%	59%	100%

	Number	Percentage	Median Number of Prior YRO	Median Number of Prior RO	Median Number of Prior Custody	Median Number of Prior Other* Disposals
Only Prior 'Other' Disposals	20	4%				2
Only Prior YROs	23	5%	6			20
Only Prior ROs	49	10%		2		5
Only Prior Custody	77	16%			4	5
Prior YROs & Prior ROs	52	11%	5	2		25
Prior YROs & Prior Custody	63	13%	6		4	31
Prior ROs & Prior Custody	76	16%		2	4	10
Prior YROs, ROs & Custody	70	14%	4.5	3	5.5	34
No Prior Disposals	55	11%				
Total	485	100%				

* 'Other' disposals include cautions, fines, absolute discharges, conditional discharges, compensation and being dealt with otherwise.

Statement of Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

The Code of Practice for Statistics is built around 3 main concepts, or pillars:

- Trustworthiness – is about having confidence in the people and organisations that publish statistics
- Quality – is about using data and methods that produce statistics
- Value – is about publishing statistics that support society's needs

The following explains how MoJ have applied the pillars of the Code in a proportionate way.

Trustworthiness

The figures presented in this ad hoc statistical publication were created following interest from MoJ ministers and inform the evidence base underpinning departmental thinking around the potential for sentencing reform. They are being published now in order to give equal access to all those with an interest in them.

MoJ analysts work to a professional competency framework and Civil Service core values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality. The analysis in this release has been scrutinised and received sign-off by the expert lead analyst.

We protect the security of our data in order to maintain the privacy of the citizen, fulfil relevant legal obligations and uphold our obligation that no statistics will be produced that are likely to identify an individual, while at the same time taking account of our obligation to obtain maximum value from the data we hold for statistical purposes. All analysts are given security training and the majority of data accessed by analysts is obfuscated and access is business case controlled based to the minimum data required.

Quality

The data which underpins this information is taken directly and solely from departmental systems, which are relied upon by MoJ for effective offender management. Quality assurance has taken place in line with the standards usually applied to MoJ ad hoc releases, with an internal check that the results shown are robust, and a true representation of the needs of offenders who receive custody and community disposals.

Value

Releasing this information serves the increased public interest in the needs of offenders being managed in the justice system. The figures also help reduce the administrative burden of answering Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information requests and other forms of ad hoc enquiry.

Contact Information

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from:

statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system

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