

Adult and Youth Reoffending in Northern Ireland (2017/18 Cohort)



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# Summary Findings

- This annual bulletin provides information on the one year proven reoffending rate for offenders who received a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or who were released from custody during 2017/18 within Northern Ireland. Information is presented in relation to the full cohort and also disaggregated in relation to adults (those aged 18 and over) and youths (those aged 17 and under).
- Of the 20,407 people included in the 2017/18 cohort, 3,884 (19.0%) reoffended during the one year observational period. The overall reoffending rate is being used as an indicator for the Programme for Government.
- The 2017/18 cohort was made up of 19,292 adults (94.5%) and 1,115 young people (5.5%). Of the adults within the cohort, 18.4% reoffended. The corresponding figure for young people was 29.4%.
- Of the 3,884 who reoffended, over two-fifths (44.7%) committed their first reoffence within the first three months (adults 44.2%, youths 50.0%).
- In terms of offending history, 61.2% of the 20,407 had committed previous offences, ranging from one to 656 distinct offences (adults 62.6%, youths 35.2%).
- Overall, 12.9% of females and 20.6% of males had reoffended (adult females 12.3% and adult males 20.0%, youth females 24.1% and youth males 30.7%).
- The one year proven reoffending rate for<sup>1</sup>;
  - custody releases was 45.4% (adults 45.0% and 11 of 15 youths).
  - court community disposal (supervision) was 37.3% (adults 34.9%, youths 63.1%).
  - court community disposal (no supervision) was 18.6% (adults 18.3%, youths 47.6%).
  - diversionary disposal was 16.6% (adults 14.4%, youths 24.8%).
- The highest reoffending rates were found amongst those who committed a baseline offence in the 'Burglary' category (42.9%), followed by 'Robbery' (37.7%). This was the same for adults only ('Burglary' 43.4% and 'Robbery' 36.5%). For youths, the highest reoffending rates were found amongst those who committed a baseline offence of 'Criminal Damage' (43.8%), followed by 'Public Order' (38.7%) and 'Drugs' (35.9%).

<sup>1</sup>Base reoffending rates should not be used to measure the comparative success of different disposal types in their own right. The reason for this is that different offender characteristics and histories, coupled with different offence types, will themselves be related to the type of disposal given. Therefore, offender profiles may differ substantially between the different disposal types.

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# 1 Introduction

### **1.1 Adult and Youth Reoffending in Northern Ireland**

In 2013, the Department of Justice's Analytical Services Group embarked on a project to revise the methodology used to calculate recidivism rates within Northern Ireland, bringing it more in line with established methodology in England and Wales. A brief summary of the approach used is detailed in Appendix 2 – Methodology and Counting Rules. For more detailed methodology refer to 'Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology: Methodology and Glossary' Part 1 and Part 2, which can be found at the following link:

Department of Justice Reoffending Statistics (opens in new window)

This report will provide information on the reoffending rates for the 2017/18 adult and youth cohorts. It should be noted that the figures reported throughout have not been adjusted to make allowances for factors known to influence reoffending, such as gender, age and criminal history. Therefore, it is inappropriate to compare these findings with other results from within Northern Ireland or other jurisdictions.





#### About this Chapter

The following section provides information on the reoffending rates of the total cohort along with a separate breakdown for adults and youths. Information is presented by overall reoffending rate, reoffending interval, number of proven reoffences, offending history, gender, age, disposal, baseline offence and specified and serious offences.

#### 2.1 Reoffending Rate

#### 2.1.1 Overall Reoffending Rate

A total of 20,407 offenders were included in the 2017/18 cohort. Overall, 3,884 (19.03%) committed a proven reoffence within the year following release from custody, receiving a non-custodial court disposal or a diversionary disposal. This represents a 1.06 percentage point increase in the actual rate of reoffending from the figure for the 2016/17 cohort (17.97%), and a 0.97 percentage point increase in the actual rate of reoffending reduct rate of reoffending reduct rate of reoffending from 2013/14 (18.06%) which is used as the baseline figure for measuring reoffending in line with the Programme for Government (Figure 1).

Whilst the reoffending rate has increased, it should be noted that the number of individuals included within the 2017/18 cohort of offenders (20,407) decreased by 1,086 from 2016/17 (21,493), and 6,662 from the 2013/14 baseline (27,069) (Appendix 1, Table 1a).

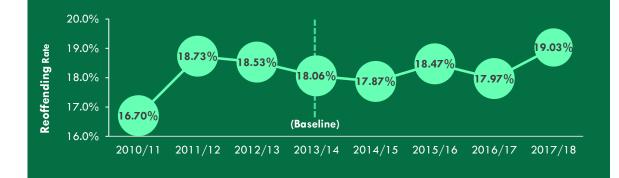
#### Figure 1: Overall Reoffending Rate from 2010/11 to 2017/18

#### Draft Programme for Government & NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan

**Outcome 7:** We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other **Indicator 39:** Reoffending rate

This report provides the latest figure for the overall reoffending rate, which is a population indicator included within the Programme for Government. Comparisons are drawn against the baseline; the overall reoffending rate for the 2013/14 cohort.

**Latest position**: The 2017/18 rate (19.03%) marks a 0.97 percentage point increase from the baseline figure of 18.06% (Appendix 1, Table 1a).



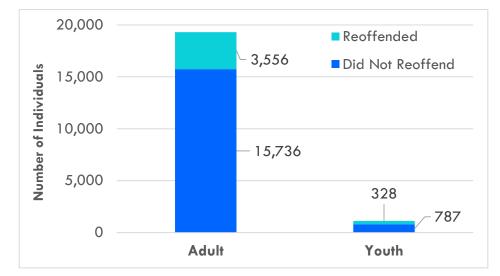


#### 2.1.2 Adult Reoffending Rate

A total of 19,292 adults were included in the 2017/18 cohort, with 3,556 (18.43%) reoffending (Figure 2). This represents a 1.11 percentage point increase from the 2016/17 cohort (17.32%). However, the total number of adults within the 2017/18 cohort (19,292) decreased by 975 compared with the 2016/17 adult cohort (20,267) (Appendix 1, Table 1b).

#### 2.1.3 Youth Reoffending Rate

Youths make up approximately five percent of the entire 2017/18 cohort. In total 328 (29.42%) of the 1,115 youths committed a reoffence within one year of being released from custody, being given a non-custodial disposal at court or a diversionary disposal (Figure 2). The total number of young people within the 2017/18 cohort (1,115) was 111 fewer than the youth cohort in 2016/17 (1,226) (Appendix 1, Table 1c).



#### Figure 2: Adult and Youth Cohorts Released in 2017/18

#### 2.2 Reoffending Interval

Of the total 3,884 adults and youths who reoffended, 734 (18.9%) did so within the first month of being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial court disposal or a diversionary disposal. At 24.7% (81 of the 328 youths who committed a reoffence), the proportion of young people committing an offence within the first month was higher than that for adults (18.4%; 653 of the 3,556 adults who committed a reoffence).

By three months, 1,737 (44.7%) of all adult and youth reoffenders had committed a further offence. The comparative figure for adults only was 44.2% and 50.0% for youths.

Although all disposal groups followed the same general trend, those released from custody were more likely to reoffend within the first month of release. Of those released from custody who reoffended, 56.6% had done so within the first three months of release, rising to 79.5% by the end of the first six months (Figure 3 and Appendix 1, Table 2a, 2b and 2c).



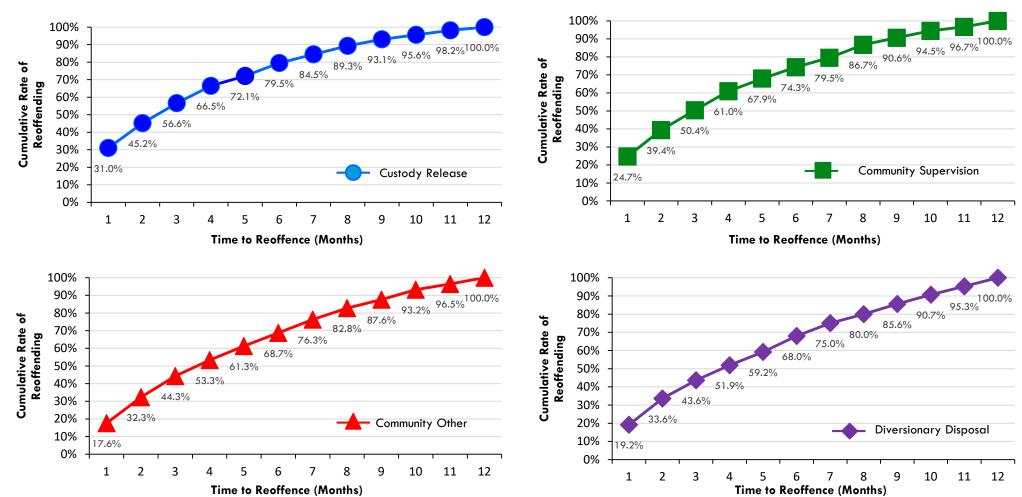


Figure 3: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group (All)\*

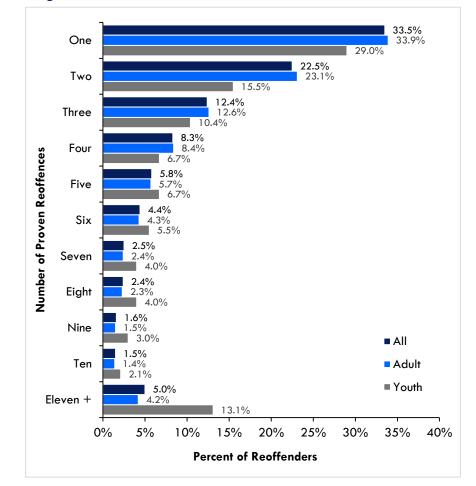
# 2.3 Number of Proven Reoffences

During the observation year, the 3,884 people who reoffended committed a further 13,616 proven offences, with adults committing 11,922 and youths committing 1,694 offences.

Overall this averages to just over three offences per reoffender and less than one offence per offender across the entire 2017/18 cohort. This was also true for adults, whereas youth reoffences equated to an average of five offences per youth who reoffended and less than two offences per offender across the youth cohort.

Just over one-third (33.9%) of adults committed only one further offence within the observation year and 4.2% committed 11 or more reoffences. In contrast, 29.0% of youths committed only one further offence, with 13.1% committing 11 or more.

Overall, the number of reoffences ranged from one to 35 for adults and one to 28 for youths (Figure 4 and Appendix 1, Table 3).



#### **Figure 4: Number of Proven Reoffences**

# 2.4 Offending History

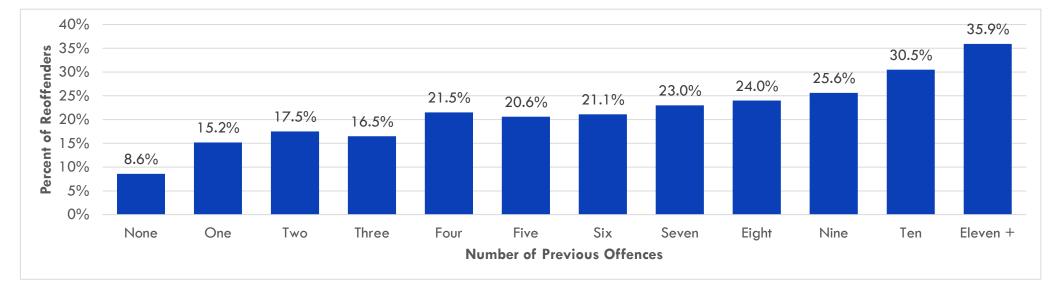
Of the 20,407 offenders included in the 2017/18 cohort, 7,928 had no previous offences. The remaining 12,479 (61.2%) had committed a total of 208,550 previous offences<sup>3</sup> within their lifetime, ranging from one to 656 offences (Appendix 1, Table 4).

Of the 19,292 adults, 7,206 had no previous offences. The remaining 12,086 (62.6%) had committed 205,337

previous offences, ranging from one to 656.

Of the 1,115 youths, 722 had no previous offences. The remaining 393 (35.2%) had committed 3,213 previous offences, ranging from one to 101.

As shown in Figure 5, the reoffending rate overall tends to increase with the number of previous offences.

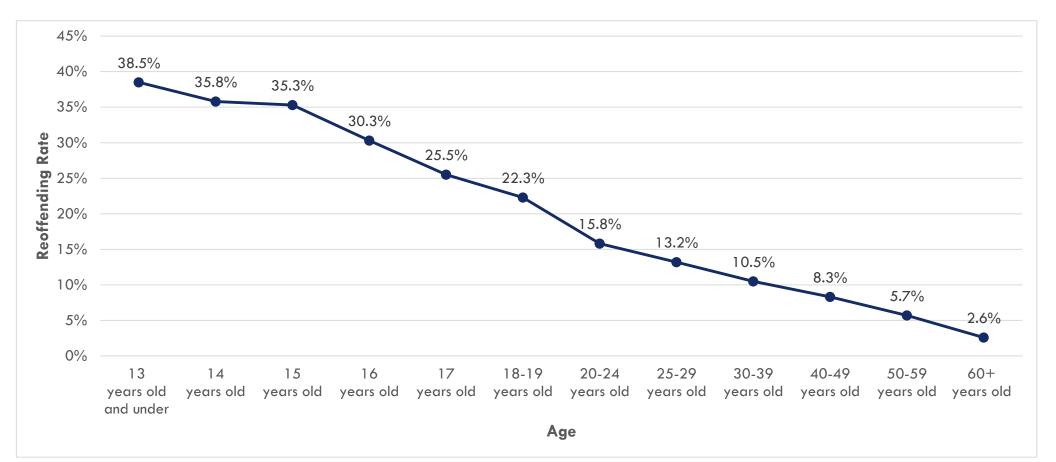


### Figure 5: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences (All)

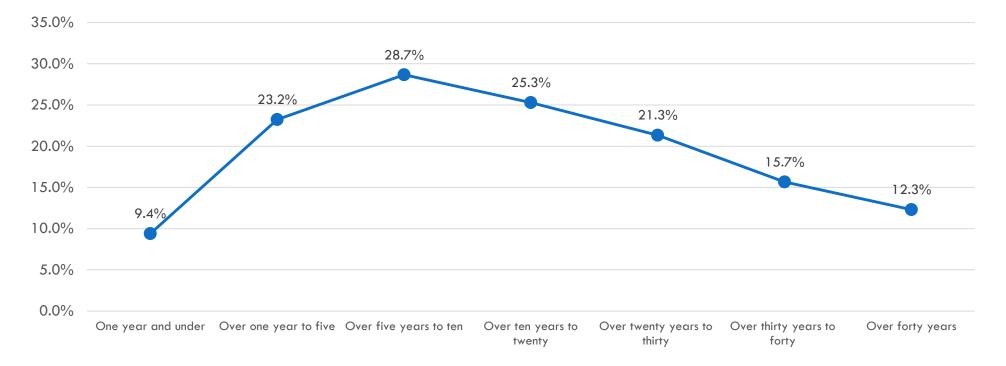
<sup>3</sup>Offences included are those recorded on an offender's criminal record only

For each person in the 2017/18 cohort, their age at first recorded offence was calculated. As Figure 6 shows, the rate of reoffending appears to be generally higher for those who committed their first recorded offence in their early teenage years (Appendix 1, Table 5).

### Figure 6: Reoffending Rate by Age at First Recorded Offence (All)



As well as age at first offence, the time between committing this first offence and entering the 2017/18 cohort (i.e. the baseline date) was calculated as an estimate of the length of time each person has been engaging in criminal behaviours (Appendix 1, Table 6). This represents a very simplistic measure and does not take into consideration the frequency or severity of offending during this period. However, as can be seen in Figure 7, although the rates of reoffending initially appear to increase as the length of time between first offence and the date they enter the 2017/18 cohort increases, after approximately 10 years the reoffending rate appears to consistently decline. This is likely an interaction between ageing and reoffending behaviours. As highlighted in section 2.5, reoffending rates appear to decline as age increases.



#### Figure 7: Reoffending Rate by Time between First Offence and Baseline Date (All)

# 2.5 Gender and Age at Baseline

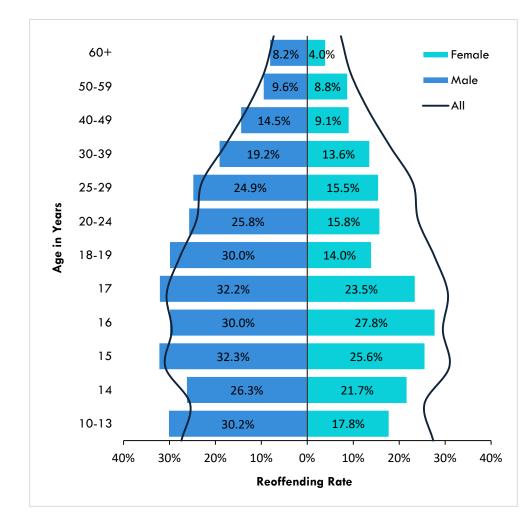
Of the 20,407 offenders in the cohort, 4,139 (20.3%) were female and the remaining 16,268 were male (79.7%). Overall, 535 females (12.9%) and 3,349 males (20.6%) had a proven reoffence within one year (Appendix 1, Table 7).

Of the 19,292 adults in the cohort, 3,923 (20.3%) were female and the remaining 15,369 were male (79.7%). Overall, 483 adult females (12.3%) and 3,073 adult males (20.0%) had a proven reoffence within one year.

Of the 1,115 youths in the cohort, 216 (19.4%) were female and the remaining 899 were male (80.6%). Overall, 52 youth females (24.1%) and 276 youth males (30.7%) had a proven reoffence within one year.

In terms of age, when looking at the entire cohort, the rate of reoffending fluctuates throughout the early teen years, before peaking between the ages of 15-17, and then generally declines thereafter. When looking at males and females separately however, the pattern appears to be different, with males following this overall pattern and females presenting a less consistent trend. This may be a result of the smaller number of female offenders within the cohort (Figure 8 and Appendix 1, Table 7).

#### Figure 8: Reoffending Rate by Age at Baseline and Gender





# 2.6 Disposal

Appendix 1, Table 8 provides a breakdown of reoffending by baseline disposal. Although separate disposals are listed, disposals are grouped into four main categories:

- People released from custody or young offender centre during 2017/18. This group includes those released from serving a prison term only and those released under community supervision (such disposals include Determinate Custodial Sentences; definitions for the different types of custodial sentences can be found on the <u>NI Direct website</u> (opens in a new window);
- 2. People given a non-custodial disposal at court that requires supervision in the community (such as a Probation Order);
- 3. People given a non-custodial disposal at court that does not require supervision in the community (such as a fine or a suspended sentence); and
- 4. People given a diversionary disposal (such as a caution or an informed warning).

At 45.4%, those released from custody have the highest reoffending rate, followed by non-custodial disposal with community supervision (37.3%), non-custodial disposal without supervision (community other) (18.6%) and, finally, diversionary disposals (16.6%).

Adults released from custody had a one year reoffending rate of 45.0%, followed by non-custodial disposal with community supervision (34.9%), non-custodial disposal without supervision (18.3%) and, finally, diversionary disposals (14.4%).

Eleven of the 15 youths released from custody reoffended within one year, as did 63.1% of those who received a noncustodial disposal with community supervision, 47.6% of those who received a non-custodial disposal without supervision and 24.8% of those who received a diversionary disposal.

Please note that base reoffending rates should not be used to measure the comparative success of different disposal types in their own right. The reason for this is that different offender characteristics and histories and different offence types will themselves be related to the type of disposal given. Therefore, offender profiles may differ substantially between the different disposal types.



### 2.7 Baseline Offence

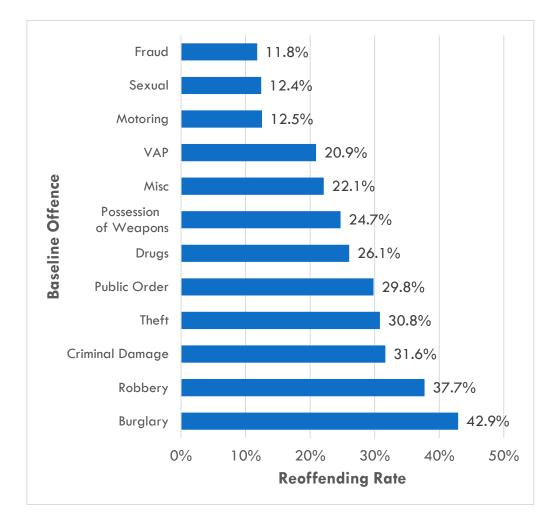
Figure 9 presents the reoffending rate by baseline offence category. Overall, reoffending rates were highest amongst those who committed a baseline offence in the 'Burglary' category followed by 'Robbery' (42.9% and 37.7% respectively).

For adults, the highest reoffending rates were for baseline offence categories of 'Burglary' and 'Robbery' (43.4% and 36.5%). For youths, the highest reoffending rates were found amongst those who had committed a baseline offence in the 'Criminal Damage' category (43.8%), followed by 'Public Order' (38.7%) and 'Drugs' (35.9%).

The lowest overall rates of reoffending for the 2017/18 cohort were committed by those with a baseline 'Fraud' offence (11.8%). This also held true for adults when viewed separately from youths (Appendix 1, Table 9).

Appendix 1, Tables 10a, 10b and 10c provide a breakdown of baseline offence category by first reoffence category. Although no definitive pattern emerged, it is interesting to note that, overall and for adults alone, for those who committed a baseline offence of 'Theft', 'Drugs', 'Public Order' or 'Motoring', the largest proportion of first reoffences were for offences in the same category. For youths, the same trend was noted across these four categories alongside 'Violence Against the Person' and 'Criminal Damage' offences.

#### Figure 9: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence (All)





### 2.8 Specified and Serious Offences

During September 2016 there was an internal Department of Justice exercise which made a small number of changes to offence classifications designated as specified or serious, as per the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008<sup>4</sup>. This had a limited impact on the number of offences designated as 'serious'. However, those offences designated as 'specified' have increased substantially. This should not be interpreted as an increase in such offences, but has resulted from the inclusion of additional offence types in this classification. As such, no comparison with years prior to the 2013/14 cohort can be made.

Overall, 1,946 (9.5%) of the 20,407 people in the 2017/18 cohort had committed a baseline 'specified' offence. Of these, 460 (23.6%) went on to reoffend, 109 committing a further 'specified' offence. When examined separately, 9.2% of the adult cohort (1,766 of the 19,292 adults), had committed a baseline 'specified' offence. Of these, 415 (23.5%) went on to reoffend, 99 committing a further 'specified' offence. For youths, 180 (16.1%) had committed a baseline 'specified' offence. Of these, 45 (25.0%) went on to reoffend, with 10 committing a further 'specified' offence (Appendix 1, Tables 11a and 11b).

Overall, 530 (2.6%) of the 20,407 people in the 2017/18 cohort had committed a 'serious' offence, of which 90 (17.0%) reoffended, 5 committing a further serious offence. In total, 506 (2.6%) of the 19,292 adults had committed such offences, of whom 85 (16.8%) reoffended, with 4 committing a further serious offence. Of youths, 24 (2.2% of the 1,115 youths) had committed such offences. Of the 24, 5 reoffended, with 1 committing a further serious offence (Appendix 1, Tables 11a and 11b).



# Appendix 1 – Tables

Table 1 a: Reoffending Rate (All)

	Number of People in Cohort	Number who Reoffended within One Year	Reoffending Rate (%)
2010/11	33,815	5,646	16.70%
2011/12	31,343	5,869	18.73%
2012/13	29,427	5,452	18.53%
2013/14	27,069	4,890	18.06%
2014/15	23,627	4,221	17.87%
2015/16	21,982	4,059	18.47%
2016/17	21,493	3,862	17.97%
2017/18	20,407	3,884	19.03%

	Number of People in Cohort	Number who Reoffended within One Year	Reoffending Rate (%)
2010/11	30,576	4,875	15.94%
2011/12	28,751	5,116	17.79%
2012/13	27,130	4,760	17.55%
2013/14	25,164	4,353	17.30%
2014/15	22,064	3,718	16.85%
2015/16	20,439	3,601	17.62%
2016/17	20,267	3,510	17.32%
2017/18	19,292	3,556	18.43%

# Table 1b: Reoffending Rate (Adult)

# Table 1c: Reoffending Rate (Youth)

	Number of People in Cohort	Number who Reoffended within One Year	Reoffending Rate (%)
2010/11	3,248	772	23.77%
2011/12	2,592	753	29.05%
2012/13	2,297	692	30.13%
2013/14	1,905	537	28.19%
2014/15	1,563	503	32.18%
2015/16	1,543	458	29.68%
2016/17	1,226	352	28.71%
2017/18	1,115	328	29.42%

# Table 2a: Reoffending Interval (Months) by Disposal Group (All)

Disposal Group*	1 month	2 months	3 months	4 months	5 months	6 months	7 months	8 months	9 months	10 months	11 months	12 months	Total
Custody Release	174	80	64	56	31	42	28	27	21	14	15	10	562
Community Supervision	189	113	84	81	53	49	40	55	30	30	17	25	766
Community Other	474	396	322	243	214	201	203	177	127	153	87	95	2,692
Diversionary Disposal	136	102	71	59	52	62	50	35	40	36	33	33	709
Total	734	561	442	348	294	302	283	246	188	206	136	144	3,884
Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Custody Release	31.0%	14.2%	11.4%	10.0%	5.5%	7.5%	5.0%	4.8%	3.7%	2.5%	2.7%	1.8%	100.0%
Community Supervision	24.7%	14.8%	11.0%	10.6%	6.9%	6.4%	5.2%	7.2%	3.9%	3.9%	2.2%	3.3%	100.0%
Community Other	17.6%	14.7%	12.0%	9.0%	7.9%	7.5%	7.5%	6.6%	4.7%	5.7%	3.2%	3.5%	100.0%
Diversionary Disposal	19.2%	14.4%	10.0%	8.3%	7.3%	8.7%	7.1%	4.9%	5.6%	5.1%	4.7%	4.7%	100.0%
Total	1 <b>8.9</b> %	14.4%	11.4%	9.0%	7.6%	<b>7.8</b> %	7.3%	6.3%	4.8%	5.3%	3.5%	3.7%	100.0%
Cumulative Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Custody Release	31.0%	45.2%	56.6%	66.5%	72.1%	79.5%	84.5%	89.3%	93.1%	95.6%	98.2%	100.0%	
Community Supervision	24.7%	39.4%	50.4%	61.0%	67.9%	74.3%	79.5%	86.7%	90.6%	94.5%	96.7%	100.0%	
Community Other	17.6%	32.3%	44.3%	53.3%	61.3%	68.7%	76.3%	82.8%	87.6%	93.2%	96.5%	100.0%	
Diversionary Disposal	19.2%	33.6%	43.6%	51.9%	59.2%	68.0%	75.0%	80.0%	85.6%	90.7%	95.3%	100.0%	
Total	1 <b>8.9</b> %	33.3%	44.7%	53.7%	61.3%	<b>69.0</b> %	76.3%	82.6%	87.5%	<b>92.8</b> %	<b>96.3</b> %	100.0%	

\*Individual disposals will not sum to overall total. For each of these groupings, only the first instance a person is included in this category is counted.

Disposal Group*	1 month	2 months	3 months	4 months	5 months	6 months	7 months	8 months	9 months	10 months	11 months	12 months	Total
Custody Release	170	77	63	55	31	42	28	26	21	13	15	10	551
Community Supervision	148	94	68	72	51	44	32	49	28	28	15	24	653
Community Other	447	386	316	236	207	200	200	176	126	149	86	93	2,622
Diversionary Disposal	93	67	49	46	32	42	32	21	33	28	25	19	487
Total	653	515	405	323	269	277	261	226	179	194	126	128	3,556
Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Custody Release	30.9%	14.0%	11.4%	10.0%	5.6%	7.6%	5.1%	4.7%	3.8%	2.4%	2.7%	1.8%	100.0%
Community Supervision	22.7%	14.4%	10.4%	11.0%	7.8%	6.7%	4.9%	7.5%	4.3%	4.3%	2.3%	3.7%	100.0%
Community Other	17.0%	14.7%	12.1%	9.0%	7.9%	7.6%	7.6%	6.7%	4.8%	5.7%	3.3%	3.5%	100.0%
Diversionary Disposal	19.1%	13.8%	10.1%	9.4%	6.6%	8.6%	6.6%	4.3%	6.8%	5.7%	5.1%	3.9%	100.0%
Total	18.4%	14.5%	11.4%	9.1%	7.6%	7.8%	7.3%	6.4%	5.0%	5.5%	3.5%	3.6%	100.0%
Cumulative Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Custody Release	30.9%	44.9%	56.3%	66.3%	71.9%	79.5%	84.6%	89.3%	93.1%	95.5%	98.2%	100.0%	
Community Supervision	22.7%	37.1%	47.5%	58.5%	66.3%	73.0%	77.9%	85.5%	89.7%	94.0%	96.3%	100.0%	
Community Other	17.0%	31.8%	43.8%	52.8%	60.7%	68.3%	76.0%	82.7%	87.5%	93.2%	96.5%	100.0%	
Diversionary Disposal	19.1%	32.9%	42.9%	52.4%	58.9%	67.6%	74.1%	78.4%	85.2%	91.0%	96.1%	100.0%	
Total	18.4%	32.8%	<b>44.2</b> %	53.3%	<b>60.9</b> %	<b>68.7</b> %	76.0%	<b>82.4</b> %	<b>87.4</b> %	<b>92.9</b> %	<b>96.4</b> %	100.0%	

# Table 2b: Reoffending Interval (Months) by Disposal Group (Adult)

\*Individual disposals will not sum to overall total. For each of these groupings, only the first instance a person is included in this category is counted.

Disposal Group*	1 month	2 months	3 months	4 months	5 months	6 months	7 months	8 months	9 months	10 months	11 months	12 months	Total
Custody Release	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	11
Community Supervision	41	19	16	9	2	5	8	6	2	2	2	1	113
Community Other	27	10	6	7	7	1	3	1	1	4	1	2	70
Diversionary Disposal	43	35	22	13	20	20	18	14	7	8	8	14	222
Total	81	46	37	25	25	25	22	20	9	12	10	16	328
Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Custody Release	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Supervision	36.3%	16.8%	14.2%	8.0%	1.8%	4.4%	7.1%	5.3%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	0.9%	100.0%
Community Other	38.6%	14.3%	8.6%	10.0%	10.0%	1.4%	4.3%	1.4%	1.4%	5.7%	1.4%	2.9%	100.0%
Diversionary Disposal	19.4%	15.8%	9.9%	5.9%	9.0%	9.0%	8.1%	6.3%	3.2%	3.6%	3.6%	6.3%	100.0%
Total	24.7%	14.0%	11.3%	7.6%	7.6%	7.6%	<b>6.7</b> %	6.1%	<b>2.7</b> %	3.7%	3.0%	<b>4.9</b> %	100.0%
Cumulative Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Custody Release	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Supervision	36.3%	53.1%	67.3%	75.2%	77.0%	81.4%	88.5%	93.8%	95.6%	97.3%	99.1%	100.0%	
Community Other	38.6%	52.9%	61.4%	71.4%	81.4%	82.9%	87.1%	88.6%	90.0%	95.7%	97.1%	100.0%	
Diversionary Disposal	19.4%	35.1%	45.0%	50.9%	59.9%	68.9%	77.0%	83.3%	86.5%	90.1%	93.7%	100.0%	
Total	24.7%	38.7%	50.0%	<b>57.6</b> %	<b>65.2</b> %	<b>72.9</b> %	<b>79.6</b> %	85.7%	88.4%	<b>92.1</b> %	95.1%	100.0%	

# Table 2c: Reoffending Interval (Months) by Disposal Group (Youth)

\*Individual disposals will not sum to overall total. For each of these groupings, only the first instance a person is included in this category is counted.

Number of Proven Reoffences	Number of Offenders (All)	Percent of Offenders (%) (All)	Number of Offenders (Adult)	Percent of Offenders (%) (Adult)	Number of Offenders (Youth)	Percent of Offenders (%) (Youth)
One	1,301	33.5%	1,206	33.9%	95	29.0%
Two	873	22.5%	822	23.1%	51	15.5%
Three	482	12.4%	448	12.6%	34	10.4%
Four	322	8.3%	300	8.4%	22	6.7%
Five	226	5.8%	204	5.7%	22	6.7%
Six	171	4.4%	153	4.3%	18	5.5%
Seven	98	2.5%	85	2.4%	13	4.0%
Eight	95	2.4%	82	2.3%	13	4.0%
Nine	64	1.6%	54	1.5%	10	3.0%
Ten	58	1.5%	51	1.4%	7	2.1%
Eleven +	194	5.0%	151	4.2%	43	13.1%
Total	3,884	100.0%	3,556	100.0%	328	100.0%

### Table 3: Number of Proven Reoffences

Number of Previous Offences	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (All)	Reoffended (Adult)	()ttandard		Reoffended (Youth)	Ottenders	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate* (Youth)
None	678	7,928	8.6%	539	7,206	7.5%	139	722	19.3%
One	292	1,924	15.2%	262	1,829	14.3%	30	95	31.6%
Two	228	1,302	17.5%	198	1,227	16.1%	30	75	40.0%
Three	165	997	16.5%	148	961	15.4%	17	36	-
Four	163	757	21.5%	148	729	20.3%	15	28	-
Five	136	659	20.6%	128	639	20.0%	8	20	-
Six	110	522	21.1%	105	508	20.7%	5	14	-
Seven	106	461	23.0%	100	450	22.2%	6	11	-
Eight	88	366	24.0%	79	352	22.4%	9	14	-
Nine	94	367	25.6%	89	358	24.9%	5	9	-
Ten	89	292	30.5%	86	288	29.9%	3	4	-
Eleven +	1,735	4,832	35.9%	1,674	4,745	35.3%	61	87	70.1%
Total	3,884	20,407	<b>19.0</b> %	3,556	19,292	18.4%	328	1,115	<b>29.4</b> %

Table 4: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences

\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

Age*	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	Reoffending	Reoffended (Adult)	()ttandars	Reoffending	Reoffended (Youth)	Ottenders	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (Youth)
13 years old and under	442	1,148	38.5%	301	773	38.9%	141	375	37.6%
14 years old	300	837	35.8%	233	621	37.5%	67	216	31.0%
15 years old	364	1,031	35.3%	311	823	37.8%	53	208	25.5%
16 years old	357	1,177	30.3%	319	995	32.1%	38	182	20.9%
17 years old	416	1,629	25.5%	387	1,495	25.9%	29	134	21.6%
18-19 years old	645	2,897	22.3%	645	2,897	22.3%	-	-	-
20-24 years old	580	3,674	15.8%	580	3,674	15.8%	-	-	-
25-29 years old	288	2,183	13.2%	288	2,183	13.2%	-	-	-
30-39 years old	291	2,773	10.5%	291	2,773	10.5%	-	-	-
40-49 years old	135	1,622	8.3%	135	1,622	8.3%	-	-	-
50-59 years old	53	931	5.7%	53	931	5.7%	-	-	-
60+ years old	13	505	2.6%	13	505	2.6%	-	-	-
Total	3,884	20,407	19.0%	3,556	19,292	18.4%	328	1,115	<b>29.4</b> %

Table 5: Reoffending Rate by Age at First Recorded Offence

\*This is the offender's age at the time they committed their first offence as recorded on the Criminal Record Viewer

Time in Years*	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (All)	Reoffended (Adult)	Ottenders		Reoffended (Youth)	Number of Offenders (Youth)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (Youth)
One year and under	685	7,285	9.4%	540	6,610	8.2%	145	675	21.5%
Over one year to five	835	3,594	23.2%	677	3,195	21.2%	158	399	39.6%
Over five years to ten	1,045	3,646	28.7%	1,020	3,605	28.3%	25	41	-
Over ten years to twenty	845	3,340	25.3%	845	3,340	25.3%	-	-	-
Over twenty years to thirty	317	1,486	21.3%	317	1,486	21.3%	-	-	-
Over thirty years to forty	126	804	15.7%	126	804	15.7%	-	-	-
Over forty years	31	252	12.3%	31	252	12.3%	-	-	-
Total	3,884	20,407	19.0%	3,556	19,292	18.4%	328	1,115	<b>29.4</b> %

Table 6: Reoffending Rate by Time Between First Recorded Offence and Baseline Date

\*This is the time in years between the offender's first offence as recorded on the Criminal Record Viewer and the baseline date

Age*	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (All)	Reoffended (Male)	Number of Offenders (Male)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (Male)	Reoffended (Female)	Number of Offenders (Female)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate** (Female)
10-13 years old	34	124	27.4%	29	96	30.2%	5	28	-
14 years old	35	137	25.5%	30	114	26.3%	5	23	-
15 years old	63	204	30.9%	52	161	32.3%	11	43	-
16 years old	80	271	29.5%	65	217	30.0%	15	54	27.8%
17 years old	116	379	30.6%	100	311	32.2%	16	68	23.5%
18-19 years old	340	1,227	27.7%	316	1,055	30.0%	24	172	14.0%
20-24 years old	820	3,403	24.1%	730	2,833	25.8%	90	570	15.8%
25-29 years old	798	3,463	23.0%	693	2,784	24.9%	105	679	15.5%
30-39 years old	927	5,139	18.0%	781	4,065	19.2%	146	1,074	13.6%
40-49 years old	419	3,173	13.2%	349	2,403	14.5%	70	770	9.1%
50-59 years old	183	1,940	9.4%	143	1,484	9.6%	40	456	8.8%
60+ years old	69	947	7.3%	61	745	8.2%	8	202	4.0%
Total	3,884	20,407	19.0%	3,349	16,268	20.6%	535	4,139	12.9%

# Table 7: Reoffending Rate by Age and Gender

\*Age at baseline date

\*\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

# Table 8: Reoffending Rate by Disposal

Disposal Group	Disposal*	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	Reoffending	Reoffended (Adult)	Number of Offenders (Adult)		Reoffended (Youth)	Number of Offenders (Youth)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate <sup>**</sup> (Youth)
Custody Release	Life Licenses	0	10	-	0	10	-	0	0	-
Custody Release	Indeterminate Custodial Sentence	0	4	-	0	4	-	0	0	-
Custody Release	Extended Custodial Sentence	7	24	-	7	24	-	0	0	-
Custody Release	Determinate Custodial Sentence	110	370	29.7%	110	370	29.7%	0	0	-
Custody Release	Custody Probation Order	0	15	-	0	15	-	0	0	-
Custody Release	Imprisonment	396	745	53.2%	395	744	53.1%	1	1	-
Custody Release	Young Offender Centre	51	72	70.8%	49	69	71.0%	2	3	-
Custody Release	Juvenile Justice Centre Order	8	11	-	0	0	-	8	11	-
Custody Release	Total	562	1,239	45.4%	551	1,224	45.0%	11	15	-
Community Supervision	Attendance Centre	12	16	-	1	1	-	11	15	-
Community Supervision	Enhanced Combination Order	34	83	41.0%	34	83	41.0%	0	0	-
Community Supervision	Combination Order	101	285	35.4%	99	283	35.0%	2	2	-
Community Supervision	Probation Order	351	873	40.2%	341	855	39.9%	10	18	-
Community Supervision	Community Service Order	220	715	30.8%	214	707	30.3%	6	8	-
Community Supervision	Youth Conference Order	98	164	59.8%	5	14	-	93	150	62.0%
Community Supervision	Community Responsibility Order	7	8	-	0	0	-	7	8	-
Community Supervision	Total	766	2,052	37.3%	653	1,873	34.9%	113	179	63.1%
Community Other	Suspended Imprisonment	858	2,807	30.6%	842	2,782	30.3%	16	25	-
Community Other	Monetary Penalty	1,914	11,583	16.5%	1,894	11,525	16.4%	20	58	34.5%
Community Other	Bound Over	18	63	28.6%	18	63	28.6%	0	0	-
Community Other	Conditional Discharge	206	602	34.2%	169	543	31.1%	37	59	62.7%
Community Other	Absolute Discharge	8	33	-	6	31	-	2	2	-
Community Other	Other Disposal	20	126	15.9%	14	107	13.1%	6	19	-
Community Other	Total	2,692	14,461	18.6%	2,622	14,314	18.3%	70	147	<b>47.6</b> %
Diversionary Disposal	Caution	539	3,522	15.3%	466	3,266	14.3%	73	256	28.5%
Diversionary Disposal	Youth Conference Plan (PPS)	136	502	27.1%	19	64	29.7%	117	438	26.7%
Diversionary Disposal	Informed Warning	72	324	22.2%	8	70	11.4%	64	254	25.2%
Diversionary Disposal	Total	709	4,281	16.6%	487	3,386	14.4%	222	895	<b>24.8</b> %
Overall Total		3,884	20,407	19.0%	3,556	19,292	18.4%	328	1,115	<b>29.4</b> %

\*Individuals disposals will not sum to disposal groups or the overall total as an individual may experience multiple disposals. For each grouping, only the first instance a person is included in this category is counted

\*\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

Baseline Offence Category	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	U	Reoffended (Adult)	Number of Offenders (Adult)		Reoffended (Youth)	Number of Offenders (Youth)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate* (Youth)
VAP	608	2,907	20.9%	538	2,619	20.5%	70	288	24.3%
Sexual	18	145	12.4%	17	136	12.5%	1	9	-
Robbery	20	53	37.7%	19	52	36.5%	1	1	-
Theft	384	1,246	30.8%	346	1,126	30.7%	38	120	31.7%
Burglary	70	163	42.9%	62	143	43.4%	8	20	-
Criminal Damage	282	891	31.6%	211	729	28.9%	71	162	43.8%
Drugs	562	2,157	26.1%	525	2,054	25.6%	37	103	35.9%
Possession of Weapons	67	271	24.7%	63	249	25.3%	4	22	-
Public Order	342	1,147	29.8%	301	1,041	28.9%	41	106	38.7%
Motoring	1,279	10,196	12.5%	1,252	10,030	12.5%	27	166	16.3%
Fraud	23	195	11.8%	22	187	11.8%	1	8	-
Misc	229	1,036	22.1%	200	926	21.6%	29	110	26.4%
Total	3,884	20,407	19.0%	3,556	19,292	18.4%	328	1,115	<b>29.4</b> %

Table 9: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence Category

\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

# Table 10a: Baseline Offence Category by First Reoffence Category (All)

Baseline Offence Category	VAP	Sexual	Robbery	Theft	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Possession of Weapons	Public Order	Motoring	Fraud	Misc	Total
VAP	82	1	2	32	4	59	79	21	124	110	2	92	608
Sexual	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	6	0	3	18
Robbery	2	0	0	4	0	1	6	1	1	3	0	2	20
Theft	17	1	1	109	13	18	58	10	38	59	9	51	384
Burglary	2	0	1	10	7	4	11	3	8	12	1	11	70
Criminal Damage	43	0	1	25	6	30	39	9	57	28	3	41	282
Drugs	28	0	1	31	2	29	212	19	42	140	3	55	562
Possession of Weapons	4	0	0	6	0	14	11	1	14	11	0	6	67
Public Order	44	0	1	20	5	18	37	6	121	44	0	46	342
Motoring	50	0	0	31	7	38	120	22	85	807	5	114	1,279
Fraud	1	0	0	6	0	0	4	1	0	10	1	0	23
Misc	22	1	0	23	6	12	28	7	44	48	1	37	229
Total	296	4	7	297	50	224	605	100	540	1,278	25	458	3,884
Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
VAP	13.5%	0.2%	0.3%	5.3%	0.7%	9.7%	13.0%	3.5%	20.4%	18.1%	0.3%	15.1%	100.0%
Sexual	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robbery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theft	4.4%	0.3%	0.3%	28.4%	3.4%	4.7%	15.1%	2.6%	9.9%	15.4%	2.3%	13.3%	100.0%
Burglary	2.9%	0.0%	1.4%	14.3%	10.0%	5.7%	15.7%	4.3%	11.4%	17.1%	1.4%	15.7%	100.0%
Criminal Damage	15.2%	0.0%	0.4%	8.9%	2.1%	10.6%	13.8%	3.2%	20.2%	9.9%	1.1%	14.5%	100.0%
Drugs	5.0%	0.0%	0.2%	5.5%	0.4%	5.2%	37.7%	3.4%	7.5%	24.9%	0.5%	9.8%	100.0%
Possession of Weapons	6.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.0%	0.0%	20.9%	16.4%	1.5%	20.9%	16.4%	0.0%	9.0%	100.0%
Public Order	12.9%	0.0%	0.3%	5.8%	1.5%	5.3%	10.8%	1.8%	35.4%	12.9%	0.0%	13.5%	100.0%
Motoring	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.5%	3.0%	9.4%	1.7%	6.6%	63.1%	0.4%	8.9%	100.0%
Fraud	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Misc	9.6%	0.4%	0.0%	10.0%	2.6%	5.2%	12.2%	3.1%	19.2%	21.0%	0.4%	16.2%	100.0%
Total	7.6%	0.1%	0.2%	7.6%	1.3%	5.8%	15.6%	2.6%	13. <b>9</b> %	<b>32.9</b> %	0.6%	11.8%	100.0%

\*Violence Against the Person

\*\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

\*\*\*Highlighted figures indicate those baseline offences for which the largest proportion of first reoffences were for offences in the same category

# Table 10b: Baseline Offence Category by First Reoffence Category (Adult)

Baseline Offence Category	VAP	Sexual	Robbery	Theft	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Possession of Weapons	Public Order	Motoring	Fraud	Misc	Total
VAP	66	0	2	28	3	49	68	18	113	106	2	83	538
Sexual	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	5	0	3	17
Robbery	2	0	0	4	0	1	5	1	1	3	0	2	19
Theft	15	1	1	97	10	14	55	8	36	57	8	44	346
Burglary	2	0	1	8	6	4	11	3	7	10	1	9	62
Criminal Damage	30	0	1	14	5	17	33	7	48	24	3	29	211
Drugs	25	0	1	30	2	23	199	17	39	137	3	49	525
Possession of Weapons	4	0	0	5	0	13	10	1	14	11	0	5	63
Public Order	36	0	1	17	5	15	33	4	106	44	0	40	301
Motoring	49	0	0	31	7	37	115	20	81	796	5	111	1,252
Fraud	1	0	0	6	0	0	4	1	0	9	1	0	22
Misc	20	1	0	20	6	8	26	5	35	45	1	33	200
Total	251	3	7	260	44	182	559	85	486	1,247	24	408	3,556
Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
VAP	12.3%	0.0%	0.4%	5.2%	0.6%	9.1%	12.6%	3.3%	21.0%	19.7%	0.4%	15.4%	100.0%
Sexual	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robbery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theft	4.3%	0.3%	0.3%	28.0%	2.9%	4.0%	15.9%	2.3%	10.4%	16.5%	2.3%	12.7%	100.0%
Burglary	3.2%	0.0%	1.6%	12.9%	9.7%	6.5%	17.7%	4.8%	11.3%	16.1%	1.6%	14.5%	100.0%
Criminal Damage	14.2%	0.0%	0.5%	6.6%	2.4%	8.1%	15.6%	3.3%	22.7%	11.4%	1.4%	13.7%	100.0%
Drugs	4.8%	0.0%	0.2%	5.7%	0.4%	4.4%	37.9%	3.2%	7.4%	26.1%	0.6%	9.3%	100.0%
Possession of Weapons	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.9%	0.0%	20.6%	15.9%	1.6%	22.2%	17.5%	0.0%	7.9%	100.0%
Public Order	12.0%	0.0%	0.3%	5.6%	1.7%	5.0%	11.0%	1.3%	35.2%	14.6%	0.0%	13.3%	100.0%
Motoring	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.6%	3.0%	9.2%	1.6%	6.5%	63.6%	0.4%	8.9%	100.0%
Fraud	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Misc	10.0%	0.5%	0.0%	10.0%	3.0%	4.0%	13.0%	2.5%	17.5%	22.5%	0.5%	16.5%	100.0%
Total	7.1%	0.1%	0.2%	7.3%	1.2%	5.1%	15.7%	2.4%	13.7%	35.1%	0.7%	11.5%	100.0%

\*Violence Against the Person

\*\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

\*\*\*Highlighted figures indicate those baseline offences for which the largest proportion of first reoffences were for offences in the same category

### Table 10c: Baseline Offence Category by First Reoffence Category (Youth)

Baseline Offence Category	VAP	Sexual	Robbery	Theft	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Possession of Weapons	Public Order	Motoring	Fraud	Misc	Total
VAP	16	1	0	4	1	10	11	3	11	4	0	9	70
Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Robbery	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Theft	2	0	0	12	3	4	3	2	2	2	1	7	38
Burglary	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	8
Criminal Damage	13	0	0	11	1	13	6	2	9	4	0	12	71
Drugs	3	0	0	1	0	6	13	2	3	3	0	6	37
Possession of Weapons	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
Public Order	8	0	0	3	0	3	4	2	15	0	0	6	41
Motoring	1	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	4	11	0	3	27
Fraud	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Misc	2	0	0	3	0	4	2	2	9	3	0	4	29
Total	45	1	0	37	6	42	46	15	54	31	1	50	328
Percent (%)	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
VAP	22.9%	1.4%	0.0%	5.7%	1.4%	14.3%	15.7%	4.3%	15.7%	5.7%	0.0%	12.9%	100.0%
Sexual	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robbery		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theft	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burglary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Criminal Damage	18.3%	0.0%	0.0%	15.5%	1.4%	18.3%	8.5%	2.8%	12.7%	5.6%	0.0%	16.9%	100.0%
Drugs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Possession of Weapons	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Order	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motoring	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fraud	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Misc		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	13.7%	0.3%	0.0%	11.3%	1.5%	12.8%	14.0%	4.6%	16.5%	9.5%	0.3%	15.2%	100.0%

\*Violence Against the Person

\*\*Percentage cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50

\*\*\*Highlighted figures indicate those baseline offences for which the largest proportion of first reoffences were for offences in the same category

Table 11a: Reoffending Rate by Specified	and Serious Offences
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Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 List	Reoffended (All)	Number of Offenders (All)	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate (All)	Reoffended	Offenders	Reoffending	Reoffended (Youth)	Number of Offenders (Youth)	Reoffending
Specified Offences	460	1,946	23.6%	415	1,766	23.5%	45	180	25.0%
Serious Offences	90	530	17.0%	85	506	16.8%	5	24	-

\*Percentages cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50.

Table 11b: Proportion of Offenders with a Baseline Specified and Serious Offence whose First Reoffence was also Specified and Serious

Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 List	Reoffended (All)	Offenders		Reoffended (Adult)	Offenders	Reoffending	Reoffende d (Youth)	Offenders	Reoffending
Specified Offences	109	460	23.7%	99	415	23.9%	10	45	-
Serious Offences	5	90	5.6%	4	85	4.7%	1	5	-

\*Percentages cannot be shown where denominator is less than 50.

# Appendix 2 – Methodology and Counting Rules

The following section provides a brief summary of the methodology and counting rules used in the production of the Northern Ireland reoffending rates. For more detailed methodologies and glossaries providing definitions of key terms please refer to the two published methodology papers<sup>6</sup>.

#### Who is included in the cohort?

The cohort is made up of all adults and youths who have been given a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or who have been released from  $custody^7$  during the financial year 2017/18. An adult is defined as someone aged 18 or over at the time of community disposal or release from custody and a youth is defined as anyone aged 17 or under at this point. Information in the following bulletin is presented for the full cohort (adults and youths combined) and separately for adults and youths.

#### What are the baseline date, offence and disposal?

The baseline date is the date of entry into the cohort. This is the date that a non-custodial sentence is given at court, a diversionary disposal imposed or an individual is released from custody. This date forms the starting point for the observation period. The baseline offence is the principal offence associated with this baseline date. Following consultation, it has been agreed that an offender will be counted once within each relevant disposal category, including the initial baseline disposal associated with their entry into the cohort and also disposal categories associated within any subsequent proven reoffences.

#### What are the observation and follow up periods?

The observation period is the window of time over which a person is observed following receipt of a diversionary disposal or non-custodial disposal at court or release from custody. A balance needs to be struck between the need for timely information and the need to make the reoffending rate as informative and meaningful as possible. For one year reoffending, the observation period is one year and the follow up period is six months.

<sup>6</sup> Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology 2014 (opens in new window) & Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology 2015 (opens in new window)

<sup>7</sup>Includes only those released from custody following the completion of a sentence and excludes fine defaulters, those bailed or released following a period on remand, subject to extradition or transfer to another secure hospital facility.

#### What counts as a reoffence?

Under one year proven reoffending methodology an offence is counted as a reoffence if it:

- occurs within the one year observation period.
- has been committed within Northern Ireland.
- is prosecuted via the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and not a third party (e.g. the Department of Communities can bring some cases of benefit fraud).
- is not a breach offence (e.g. breach of a probation order).
- has been 'proven', meaning that a court conviction or diversionary disposal has been imposed within the observation year or by the end of the 6 month follow up period.

#### **Data Source**

In Northern Ireland the main data source used to measure reoffending rates is supplied to the Department of Justice's Analytical Services Group from the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism (DSM1). The information used is primarily created from an extract of records held on the Criminal Records Viewer (CRV). The CRV is held on Causeway and utilises data which originated from PSNI, along with data from Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. Causeway is an interconnected information system, launched as a joint undertaking by the Criminal Justice Organisations (CJOs) in Northern Ireland. Information is also provided from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) case management system (PRISM) and the Youth Justice Agency regarding releases from custody. Information on these offenders is matched to information taken from CRV.

#### **Data Quality and Validation**

While every care has been taken in collating the data, they are subject to the limitations inherent in any large-scale recording system and to variation in recording practice over time. While the relevant CJOs have a vested interest in maintaining the accuracy of the data within their management information systems, a number of accuracy, quality assurance/validation procedures have been conducted upon the dataset used to compile this data series, to ensure the data extracted are accurate, complete and fit for the statistical purposes for which they are to be used. Both automated and manual checks are carried out, at individual case level and, data corrected, where possible. Much of this validation is completed for the production of datasets in relation to the annual Prosecutions, Convictions and out of Court Disposals Publications<sup>8</sup>. Please refer to these publications for information on the validation process.

Specific to this publication is the validation process completed on prison release data, to ensure that key fields are complete and logical and that all those who have been sentenced and released from custody can be identified. Validation exercises conducted have included comparing convictions data from Causeway with records from other agencies, including the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency, with amendments made where appropriate. For example, for the 2015/16 dataset, 1,515 cases were checked to ensure all sentenced prisoners were identified, with amendments made in 233 cases, relating to updates to the sentence release status of the offenders and updates to essential date fields. These changes are required due to the point in time in which the data has been extracted from the NIPS case management system (PRISM) and recording practices within NIPS that are not consistent with information required to produce the reoffending analysis.

Following guidance provided by the Office for National Statistics on the Quality Assessment of Administrative Data, information pertaining to data quality and validation is continually being assessed.

#### **Interpreting Trends**

The ability to compare and discuss trends in reoffending is important to its usefulness as a performance target within government. However, differences in the offending related characteristics of those included in each cohort make comparing reoffending rates problematic, across both time and jurisdictions. In previous bulletins, reoffending figures were provided alongside adjusted reoffending rates for adults and the overall cohort, to help provide an estimate of change in reoffending. Following consultation with key users, the decision has been taken to exclude this from future publications to avoid confusion in the interpretation of findings. We will continue to explore statistical techniques that could be employed to control for differences within the cohorts, meanwhile, care should be taken to understand the wider context within which offending and reoffending has occurred.

In addition, reoffending rates should not be used routinely to measure the comparative success of the different disposal types. As no adjustments have been made to control for offender characteristics or factors relating to variations in sentencing, such comparisons would be misleading.

Since 2015, there has been a consistent decline in the number of cases prosecuted and also in corresponding guilty findings. This has resulted in a further reduction in the size of the reoffending cohort.

A further distorting factor for 2017/18 may be the significant reduction in disposals at the Crown Court. The introduction of new rules in May 2015 in relation to legal aid remuneration resulted in a number of solicitors and counsel withdrawing their representation from a range of court cases. This affected defendants' access to legal aid representation and had an impact on disposals and delay within the Crown Court process during the period.

#### **Analysis and Presentation of Statistics**

The data used in this report are validated, maintained and analysed using IBM SPSS, which is a statistical package commonly used within social science.

For ease of use, figures in charts are given as whole numbers, whereas percentages throughout the text and tables are reported to one decimal place. When reporting on the change in reoffending rates, figures are presented to two decimal places due to the small numbers involved.

Whilst tables of information have been included in Appendix 1, the tables are also published alongside this bulletin in Microsoft Excel and open data format for ease of use.

The data upon which the publication is based are used to inform policy decisions within the Department of Justice (DoJ), as well as to inform requests from other Government organisations, answers to NI Assembly questions and queries from the general public.