



Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, October to December 2019

Published 28 October 2021

The overall proven reoffending rate was 25.2% for the October to December 2019 offender cohort.



This represents a decrease of 2.9 percentage points from the same quarter in 2018, the largest year-on-year decrease and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 24.7%



This is a decrease of 2.8 percentage points since the same quarter in 2018, the largest year-on-year decrease and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 34.3%.



The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 3.0 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. However, for context, the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 88% since the same quarter in 2008.

Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 33.0%



This represents a 2.7 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year, a 7.1 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2011 and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 58.9%.



This is a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 61.6%, which is a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in 2018.

This bulletin, associated tables and data tools present the proportion of offenders who reoffend (proven reoffending rate) and the number of proven reoffences by offender history, demographics, individual prisons, probation area, local authorities and youth offending teams. For technical details please refer to the accompanying [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

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1. Statisticians comment

“Figures presented in this statistical release show proven reoffending statistics for the October to December 2019 offender cohort. Proven reoffences are measured over a one-year follow-up period and a further six-month waiting period to allow for offences to be proven in court.

The reoffending follow-up period for the October to December 2019 offender cohort continues to overlap with the first set of national lockdown restrictions implemented on 23 March 2020,¹ following the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Limits on court activity led to a sharp decrease in the number of cases processed at the criminal courts between March and May 2020. While more recent figures are showing signs of recovery, the impact of the pandemic on the courts is still evident, particularly in the outstanding caseload and court timeliness performance.² Furthermore, police recorded crime figures fell substantially during the first lockdown period.³ The reoffending follow-up period for the October to December 2019 cohort also starts to coincide with the second national lockdown which began on 5 November and ended on 2 December 2020. While there were no court closures over this period, overall crime levels continue to have been affected³.

The overall proven reoffending rate was 25.2% for the October to December 2019 offender cohort; representing a 2.9 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2018. This follows a more marked downward trend in the reoffending rate amongst offender cohorts affected by the impact of the pandemic; it represents the largest year-on-year decrease since the same quarter in 2008 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. More broadly, the average number of reoffences per reoffender (also known as the frequency rate) had gradually been increasing since 2009, indicating that a higher number of reoffences were being committed by a smaller number of individuals. However, continuing with a general reduction in the frequency rate for more recent offender cohorts, the latest figure of 3.67 reoffences per reoffender is the lowest rate since July to September 2014.

The trends in the reoffending and frequency rates are broadly reflected in separate figures for adults and juveniles. Furthermore, the size of the overall cohorts continues to decrease, with both the adult and juvenile cohorts showing general decreases over time. In particular, the juvenile cohort has shown the greatest decrease, with it now making up only 5% of the overall cohort compared to 19% for the same period in 2008. Any marked change in offender cohorts may also affect the rates, both in terms of volatility within the series, and in the offender mix making up the cohorts, which is why caution should be exercised when making comparisons of actual rates over time.

We continue to see an effect of the pandemic on proven reoffending. As the reoffending follow-up period for the October to December 2019 cohort moves through the first national lockdown and starts to coincide with the second one, the more pronounced differences observed are due to a combination of limits in court activity and possible changes in offending behaviour. During this period of flux, it is difficult to assess the direction which reoffending rates will take; future statistical releases though will help establish what the likely effects are as court activity continues to recover.”

¹ With a phased reopening through to summer 2020 (including a limited number of jury trials resuming from 18 May 2020).

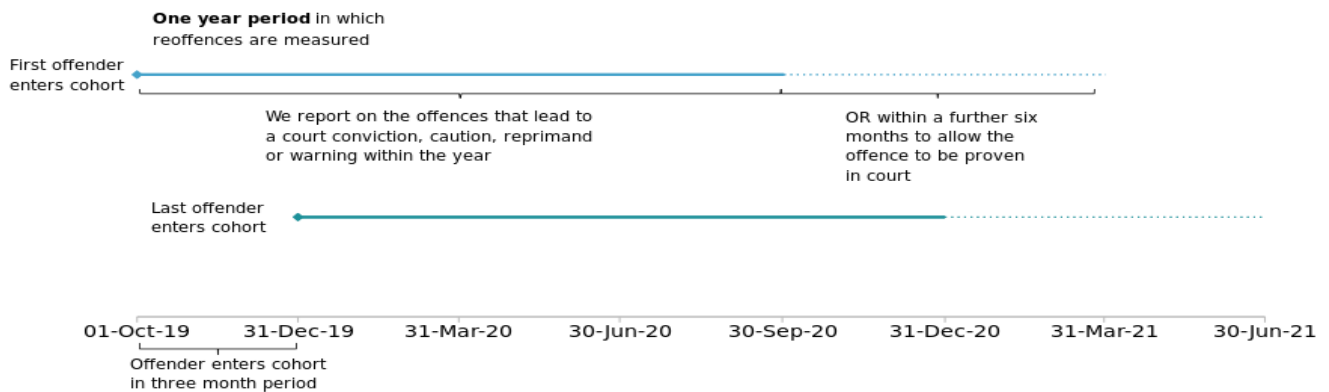
² www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2021.

³ Police recorded crime figures (including monthly trends) can be found at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2021#main-points>.

How is proven reoffending measured?

An offender enters the cohort if they were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court or received a reprimand or warning in a three-month period: October to December 2019. It is important to note that this is not comparable to publications prior to the October 2017 proven reoffending publication, which reported on a 12-month cohort.

A proven reoffence is defined as any offence committed in a one-year follow-up period that leads to a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one-year follow-up or within a further six-month waiting period to allow the offence to be proven in court as shown in the diagram below in relation to the latest offender cohort.



The timeseries presented in this publication spans the April to June 2008 through to the October to December 2019 offender cohorts.

Latest proven reoffending statistics based on annual average cohorts can be found at: [annual tables](#).

Users should be cautious when making any comparison between cohorts before and after October 2015. This is because there is a change in data source from October 2015 onwards. In addition, users should be cautious when comparing the three-monthly cohorts to one another (e.g. October to December 2019 to July to September 2019). This is due to the smaller three-month cohort size the measure is likely to be more variable than the previous 12-month cohort measure of reoffending. For further details on this, and how proven reoffending is measured, please see the guide to proven reoffending statistics and 'How the measure of proven reoffending has changed and the effect of these changes'.

1. Overall – adult and juvenile offenders

The overall proven reoffending rate was 25.2% for the October to December 2019 offender cohort.

This represents a decrease of 2.9 percentage points from the same quarter in 2018, the largest year-on-year decrease and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

Proven reoffences are measured over a one-year follow-up period and a further six-month waiting period to allow for offences to be proven in court. For the October to December 2019 offender cohort, the reoffending follow-up period continues to overlap with the first set of national lockdown restrictions implemented on 23 March 2020 following the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Limits on court activity led to a sharp decrease in the number of cases processed at the criminal courts.⁴

In addition, this cohort period also coincides with the first and second national lockdown⁵ restrictions put in place more generally which may have had an effect on offending behavior. As a result, we continue to see a more marked effect on proven reoffending.

The overall proven reoffending rate, based on just under 92,000 adult and juvenile offenders (made up of 95% adults and 5% juveniles)⁶ in the October to December 2019 cohort was 25.2%, a 2.9 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2018. This follows a downward trend for offender cohorts affected by the impact of the pandemic and represents the largest year-on-year decrease since 2008 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 25.2% and 31.8%.

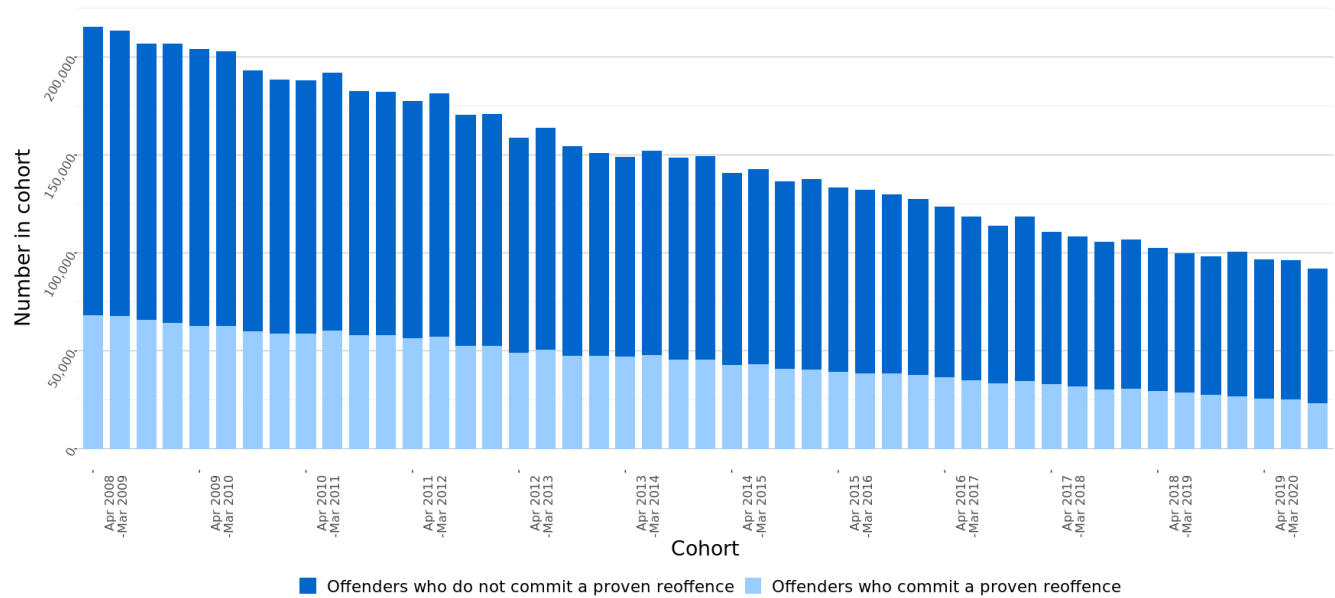
Around 23,000 of offenders in the latest cohort then committed just over 85,000 proven reoffences over a one-year follow-up period, equivalent to an average of 3.67 reoffences each (also known as the frequency rate). More broadly, the frequency rate had been increasing since 2009, indicating that a higher number of reoffences were being committed by a smaller number of individuals. However there has been a general reduction in the frequency rate for more recent offender cohorts, with the latest figure of 3.67 reoffences per reoffender representing the lowest rate since July to September 2014.

⁴ For details on trends in criminal court activity, please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>.

⁵ The first national lockdown took place from 23 March 2020 with a phased reopening through to summer 2020 (including a limited number of jury trials resuming from 18 May 2020), whilst the second national lockdown occurred between 5 November 2020 to 2 December 2020.

⁶ A certain proportion of offenders who could not be matched to the Police National Computer (PNC) are excluded from the offender cohort. Therefore, this number does not represent all proven offenders. This means that the number of offenders in this bulletin will be different from the numbers published in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly and Criminal Justice Statistics. Please refer to the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#) for further information

Figure 1: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence and the number of offenders in each cohort, April 2008 to December 2019 (Source: Table A1)



Of this offender cohort, 83% were male and 17% were female, with the gender split remaining reasonably stable over time. Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 26.3% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 19.8%. Since 2008, these rates have fluctuated between 26.3% and 33.9% for males and 19.8% to 24.4% for females.

2. Adult offenders

Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 24.7%.

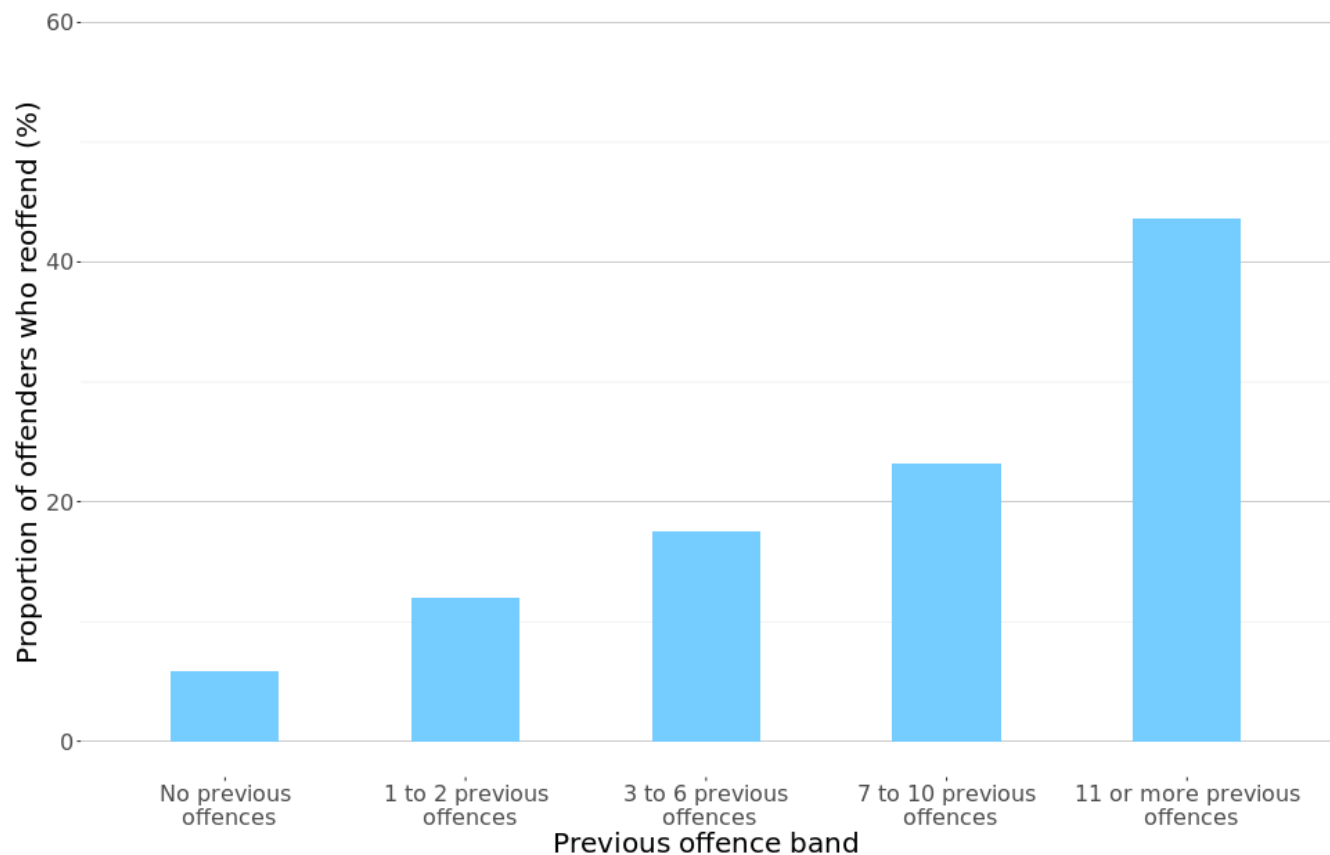
This is a decrease of 2.8 percentage points since the same quarter in 2018, the largest year-on-year decrease and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

The adult reoffending rate had remained broadly flat since 2008. However, the latest figure for the October to December 2019 cohort was 24.7%, a 2.8 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2018 and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

Over time, the rate has fluctuated between 24.7% and 30.6%. As with the overall proven reoffending rate, the continuing reduction in the rate for more recent cohorts may predominantly be due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined earlier.

For the latest quarterly cohort, around 79,000 proven reoffences were committed over the one-year follow-up period by under 21,000 adults. Those that reoffended committed on average 3.68 reoffences; this represents a 7% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2018 and the lowest frequency rate since July to September 2014.

Figure 2: Proportion of adult offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences, October to December 2019 (Source: Table A5a)



Offenders with a larger number of previous offences have a higher rate of proven reoffending than those with fewer previous offences. In the October to December 2019 cohort, the proven reoffending rates for adults ranged from 5.8% for offenders with no previous offences to 43.6% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences (figure 2).

Adult offenders with 11 or more previous offences made up 39% of all adult offenders in the cohort, represented 70% of all adult reoffenders and committed 79% of all adult proven reoffences.

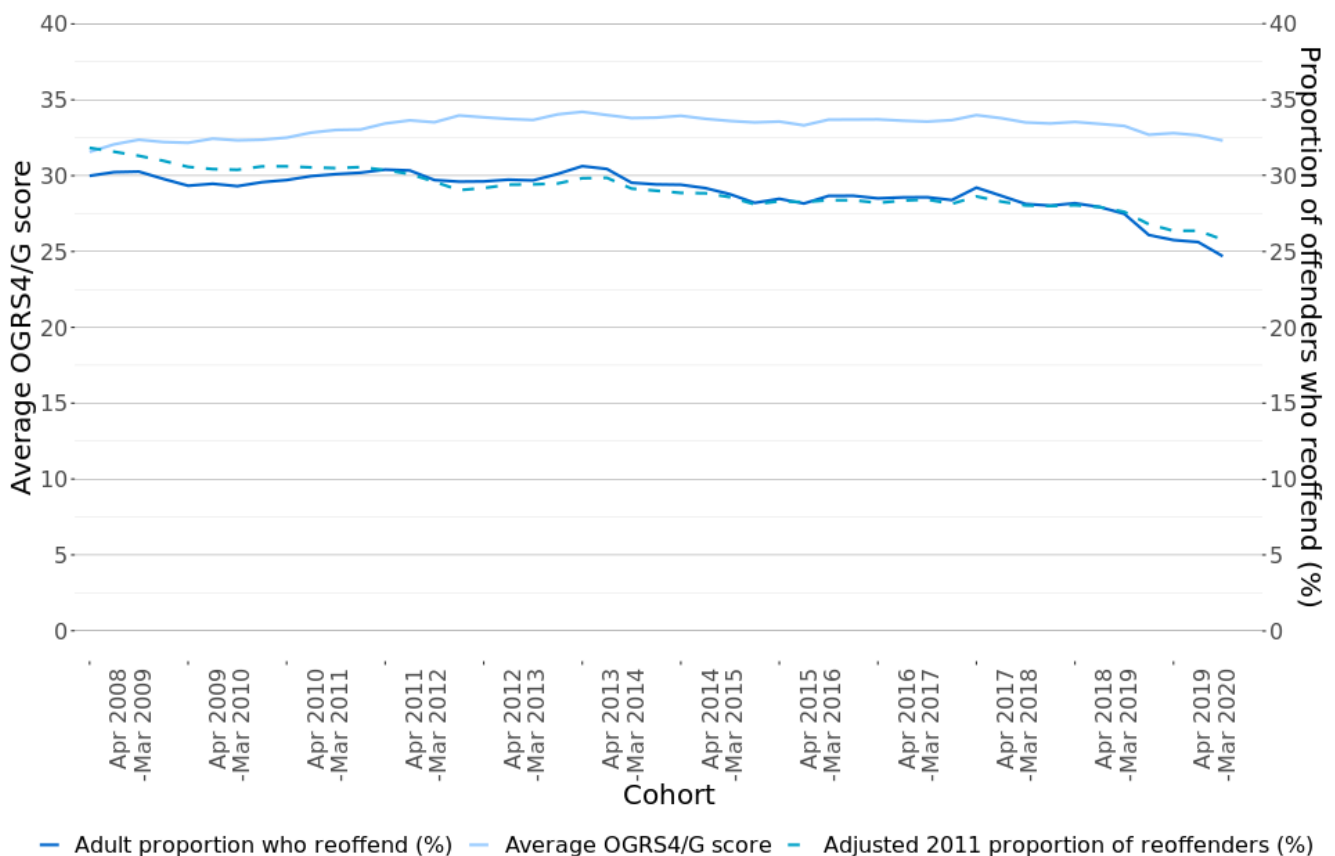
3. Adjusted reoffending rates

When controlling for offender characteristics, 25.8% of adult offenders in the cohort reoffended within a year.

This represents a decrease of 1.8 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2018.

The raw proven reoffending rates have been adjusted against the 2011 calendar year, in line with the Payment by Results (PbR) statistics. These adjusted rates for adults are calculated by 'the proportion of offenders who reoffend' (proven reoffending rate) for the cohort plus any difference between the average Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS4/G) score in that cohort and the 2011 cohorts.⁷

Figure 3: The proportion of offenders who reoffend, the average OGRS scores and the adjusted proven reoffending rate for adults, April 2008 to December 2019 (Source: Table A1)



⁷ OGRS4 is based on a well-established, peer reviewed methodology for assessing and representing reoffending risk. Refer to [A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System \(OASys\)](#) for details.

Between 2006 and 2011 the average OGRS score increased, but since 2011 it has remained relatively flat. This indicates that between 2006 and 2011 the cohort had an increasing propensity to reoffend, but since 2011 this has levelled off. As a result, the raw reoffending rates for adults are adjusted upwards between 2006 and 2011 reflecting the lower propensity to reoffend when compared to later cohorts.

Following 2011 the raw rates and the adjusted rates have tracked each other more closely. For the latest offender cohort though, the gap between the two rates is wider compared to more recent cohorts (the raw reoffending rate stood at 24.7% while the adjusted rate was 25.8%).

4. Juvenile offenders⁸

Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 34.3%.

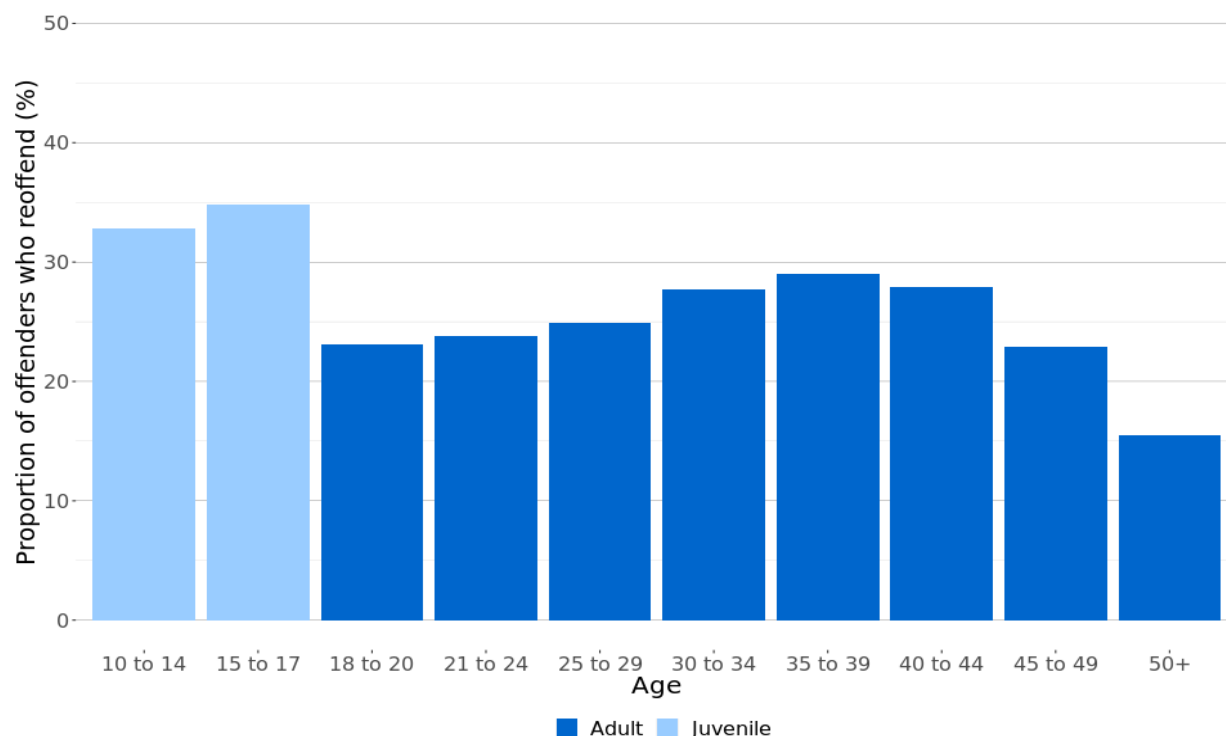
The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 3.0 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. However, for context, the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 88% since the same quarter in 2008.

The juvenile reoffending rate was 34.3%, a 3.0 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in the previous year.

Under 2,000 of approximately 5,000 juvenile offenders in the October to December 2019 cohort, committed a reoffence within a one-year follow-up period (equivalent to around 6,000 proven reoffences). Although this cohort has also likely to have been impacted by the pandemic, it is important to note that the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 88% since the same quarter in 2008 and has fluctuated between 33.0% and 43.6% over the years.

Those that reoffended committed on average 3.54 reoffences each. As with the adult cohort, juvenile offenders with 11 or more previous offences had a higher reoffending rate than those with no previous offences, 71.9% and 18.3% respectively.

Figure 4: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, October to December 2019 (Source: Table A3)



⁸ Juveniles are defined as those aged 10 to 17 years old.

This quarter, 15 to 17-year-old offenders have the highest reoffending rate, closely followed by the 10 to 14-year-old offenders, with reoffending rates of 34.8% and 32.8% respectively (figure 4). The proven reoffending rate for juveniles is higher than adults and the rate starts to fall with increasing age after the 35 to 39-year-old group.

5. Adult reoffending by disposal⁹

Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 33.0%.

This represents a 2.7 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year, a 7.1 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2011 and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

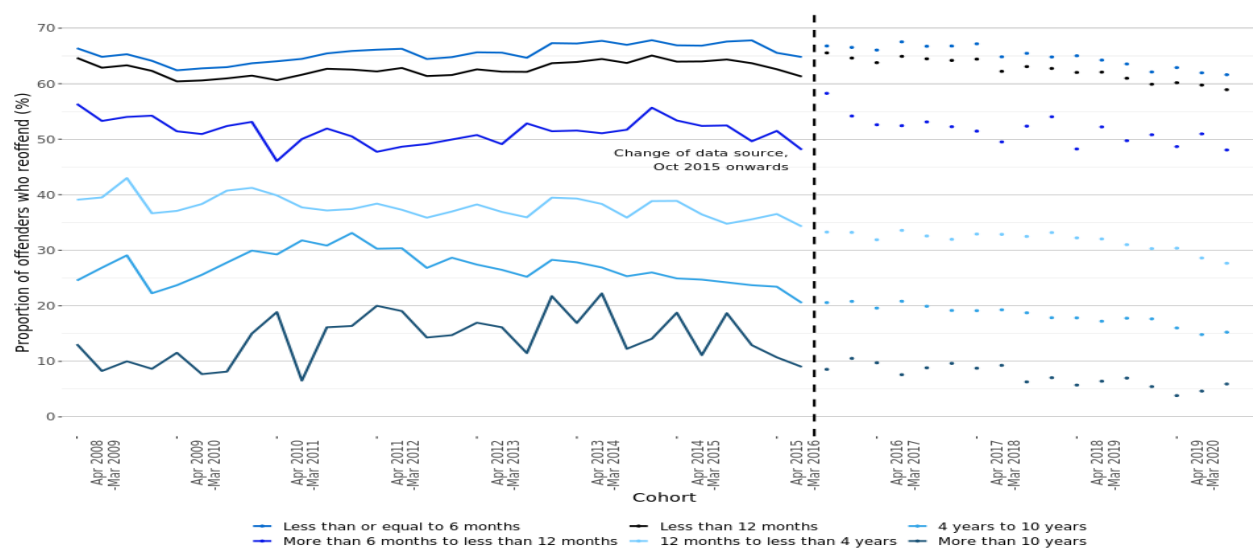
Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 58.9%.

This is a decrease of 2.1 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 61.6%, which is also a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in 2018.

Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 33.0%, a decrease of 2.7 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2018 and a decrease of 7.1 percentage points since the same quarter in 2011.

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders starting a court order¹⁰ specifically was 29.0%, a 2.3 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2018 and a 7.8 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2011. When adjusted for offender mix (i.e. when controlling for offender characteristics), the decrease observed in 2011 is smaller at 2.6 percentage points.

Figure 5: Proportion of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence, by custodial sentence length, April 2008 to December 2019 (Source: Table C2a)



⁹ For proven reoffending statistics, a disposal is defined as a caution, court order, custody, or other disposal resulting from a conviction at court, such as a fine or discharge. A different methodology is used for proven reoffending statistics by disposal type. The first proven offence within each disposal is treated as the start point for measuring proven reoffending. Therefore, some offenders will appear in more than one disposal category.

¹⁰ Community order or suspended sentence order.

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 41.6%, a 3.8 percentage point decrease compared to the same quarter the previous year. However, adults who served sentences of 12 months or more reoffended at a substantially lower rate at 23.6% compared to those who served a sentence of less than 12 months at a rate of 58.9%. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 61.6%, a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year. Users should exercise caution when comparing the effectiveness of different sentences because the presented rates do not control for known differences in offender characteristics receiving those sentences - for further information please consult recent research on the [impact of short custodial sentences, community orders and suspended sentence orders on reoffending](#) as well as the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).¹¹

¹¹ Proven reoffending rates by disposal should not be compared to assess the effectiveness of sentences, as there is no control for known differences in offender characteristics and the type of sentence given. For further information see [Annex D of the October 2016 publication](#) (page 41) and the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

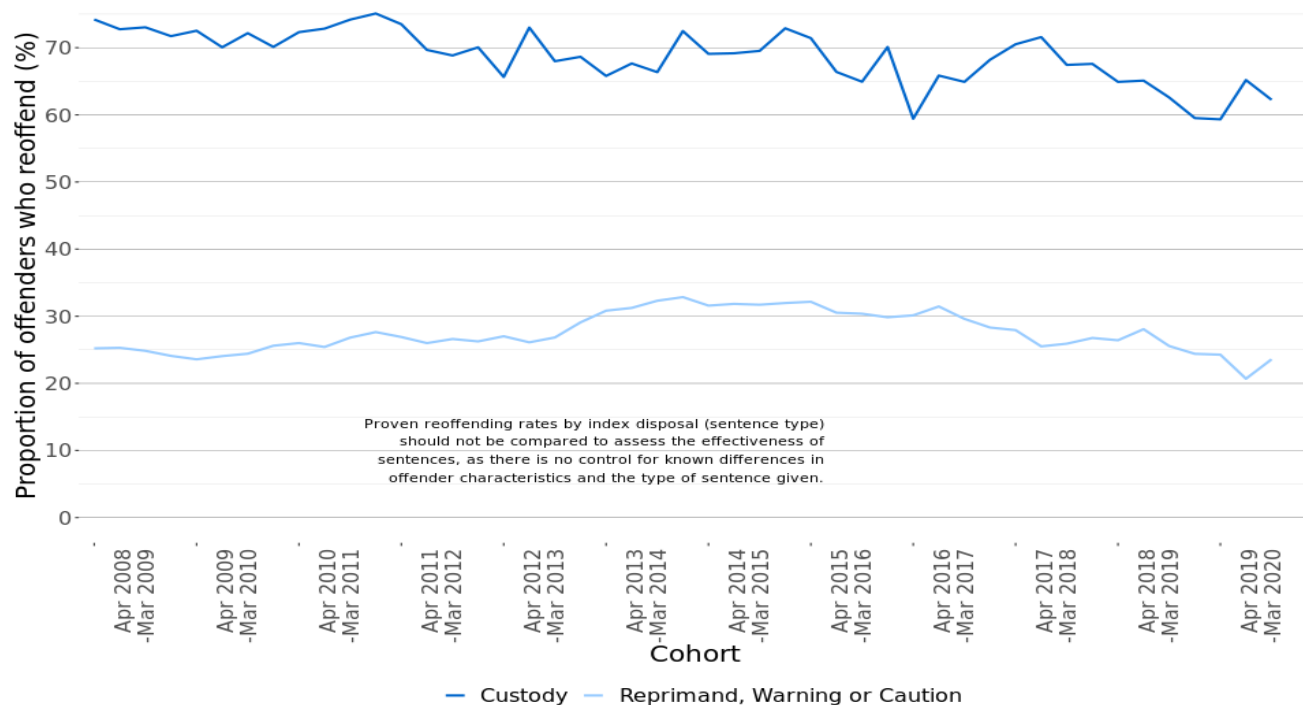
6. Juvenile reoffending by disposal¹²

Juvenile offenders given youth cautions had a proven reoffending rate of 23.6%.

The reoffending rate for juvenile offenders given youth cautions has decreased by 2.0 percentage points since the same quarter last year.

Reprimands and warnings for youths were abolished under the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 with effect from 8 April 2013 and replaced with youth cautions. Youth cautions are a formal out-of-court disposal that can be used as an alternative to prosecution for juvenile offenders in certain circumstances. A youth caution may be given for any offence where the young offender admits an offence and there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, but it is not in the public interest to prosecute.

Figure 6: Proportion of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, April 2008 to December 2019 (Source: Table C1b)



Between October to December 2019, 143 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 89 (62.2%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year. The rate has decreased by 0.4 percentage points since the same quarter in 2018. There is, however, likely to be more variation with the current reoffending measure, from one quarter to another due to the reduced size of the cohort.

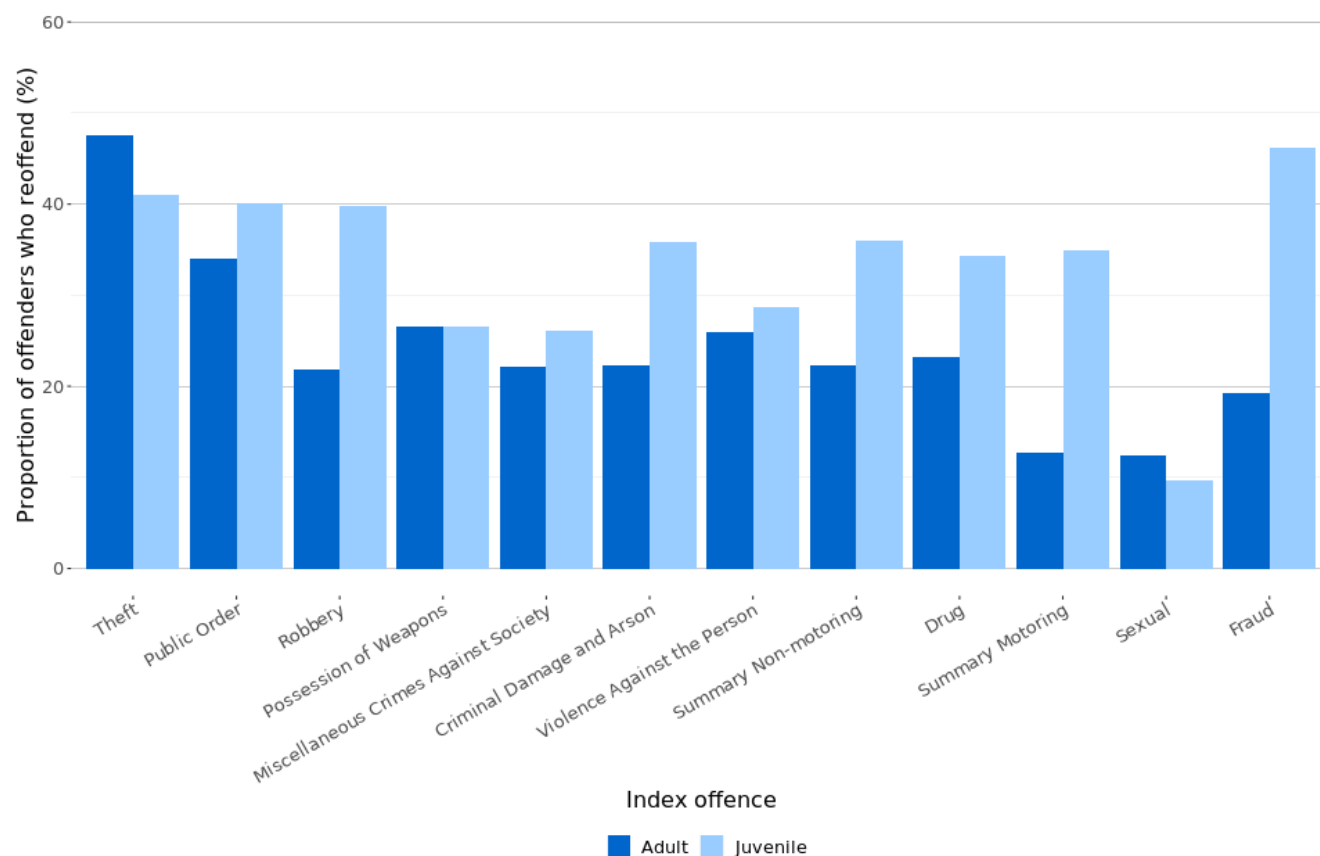
¹² The juvenile proven reoffending data by disposal uses the same methodology as that adopted for adult reoffending by disposal (see section 5 for more details).

7. Index offences¹³

For the October to December 2019 adult cohort, the index offence category associated with the highest reoffending rate was theft at 47.5%.

The second highest reoffending rate of 34.1% amongst adult offenders was those with an index offence of public order (figure 7).

Figure 7: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence (except the 'other' offence category), October to December 2019 (Source: Table A4a/b)



The proportion of reoffences committed depending on index offence has remained broadly stable over time. The lowest rate of reoffending in the adult cohort was observed amongst those with a sexual offence as their index offence, with a rate of 12.3%. Excluding the 'other' offence category, the robbery index offence category saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2008, a 19.3 percentage point difference. Those with an index offence of fraud saw an increase over this period, a 5.4 percentage point difference.

¹³ An index offence refers to the offence that leads to an offender being included in the offender cohort.

In the juvenile cohort, those with an index offence of fraud had the highest proven reoffending rate at 46.2%, followed by those with an index offence of theft at 41.1%. Those with the lowest rate, excluding the 'other' offence category, were offenders who had committed a sexual index offence. Their reoffending rate was 9.7%. Those who committed miscellaneous crimes against society index offences saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2008 (a 26.3 percentage point difference) whilst fraud index offences represented the biggest percentage point increase over the same period (a 16.6 percentage point difference).

Further information

Accompanying files

As well as this bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

- A set of [overview tables](#), covering each section of this bulletin.
- One [data tool](#) providing proven reoffending data for England and Wales, by region, county as well as local authority (covering January 2009 - December 2019).
- A [technical guide](#) to proven reoffending statistics providing information on how proven reoffending is measured and the data sources used.
- A data quality statement which outlines our policies for producing quality statistical outputs and the information provided to maintain our users' understanding and trust.

National Statistics status

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Future publications

Our statisticians regularly review the content of publications. Development of new and improved statistical outputs is usually dependent on reallocating existing resources. As part of our continual review and prioritisation, we welcome user feedback on existing outputs including content, breadth, frequency and methodology. Please send any comments you have on this publication including suggestions for further developments or reductions in content.

Contact

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Other enquiries and feedback on these statistics should be directed to the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice:

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