



## Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, July to September 2020

Published 28 July 2022

### Main Points

This publication provides the proven reoffending results for the **July to September 2020** offender cohort. This latest offender cohort period coincides with the latter stages of the first lockdown imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; furthermore, the associated reoffending follow-up and waiting periods for this cohort overlap with the second and third national lockdowns. As a result, volatility continues to be seen in the reoffending figures.

**The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.4% for the July to September 2020 offender cohort.**



This represents a decrease of 1.6 percentage points from the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.4% and 31.8%.

**Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 23.9%.**



This is a decrease of 1.7 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 23.9% and 30.6%.

**Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 32.8%.**



The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 0.2 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 2009.

**Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 30.0%**



This represents a 3.4 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year, the largest year-on-year decrease in the timeseries and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

**Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 58.4%.**



This is a decrease of 1.4 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 60.1%, which is a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year.

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](#).

For any feedback related to the content of this publication, please let us know at [ESD@justice.gov.uk](mailto:ESD@justice.gov.uk)

## Statistician's comment

“Figures presented in this statistical release show proven reoffending statistics for the July to September 2020 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.

Reoffending figures for this latest cohort, as well as more recent offender cohorts, highlight the continued volatility as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These statistics are likely to continue oscillating in the short-term before potentially more stable trends are observed as we move further away from the periods of lockdowns.

This latest offender cohort coincides with the latter stages of the first lockdown imposed due to the pandemic as well as the phased reopening of the courts. As the courts reopened (from late May 2020), the number of criminal cases processed between July and September 2020 increased; this follows the sharp reductions during the period of court closures between April to June 2020. Consequently, the number of offenders in the July to September 2020 cohort increased substantially by 79.8% compared to the previous quarter. However, the latest quarterly cohort still saw the second largest year-on-year reduction in the timeseries (a decline of 20.8%, Figure 1).

Furthermore, the reoffending follow-up and waiting periods for this cohort overlap with the second and third national lockdowns.<sup>1</sup> While there were no court closures during these two lockdown periods, police recorded crime data have shown overall reductions in the reporting and recording of many crime types during periods of lockdown.<sup>2</sup> Similarly to the offender cohort size, therefore, the number of reoffenders also fell over the same period (a decline of 25.7%), again representing the second largest year-on-year reduction in the timeseries.

The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.4% for the July to September 2020 offender cohort, a 1.6 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2019. It follows a sharp increase in the rate for the previous cohort, which followed a more recent downward trend in the rate”.

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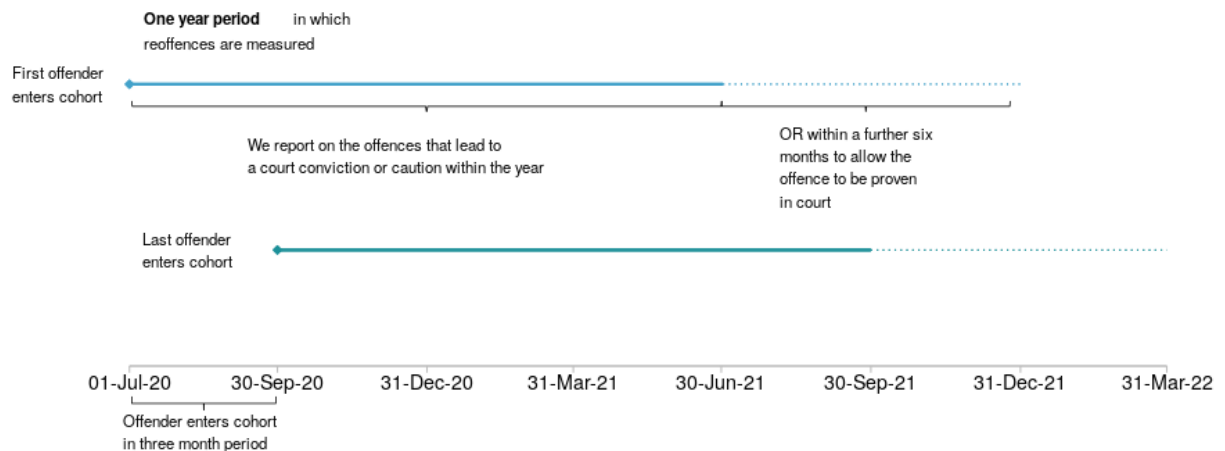
<sup>1</sup> The first national lockdown was implemented on 23 March 2020 and transitioned to phased reopening until August 2020 (including a limited number of jury trials resuming from 18 May 2020). The second national lockdown was implemented on 5 November 2020 and returned to a three-tier restriction system from 2 December 2020. The third national lockdown was implemented on 6 January 2021 and transitioned to phased reopening until June 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Police recorded crime figures (including monthly trends) can be found at:  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>

## 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 caution in a three-month period: July to September 2020. 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 or caution 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 2009 through to the July to September 2020 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. April to June 2020 to July to September 2020). 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

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**The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.4% for the July to September 2020 offender cohort.**

This represents a decrease of 1.6 percentage points from the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.4% and 31.8%.

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This latest offender cohort coincides with the latter stages of the first lockdown imposed due to the pandemic as well as the phased reopening of the courts. As the courts reopened (from late May 2020), the number of criminal cases processed between July and September 2020 increased; this follows the sharp reductions during the period of court closures between April to June 2020.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the number of offenders in the July to September 2020 cohort increased substantially by 79.8% compared to the previous quarter.

Furthermore, the associated reoffending follow-up and waiting periods for this latest cohort overlap with the second and third national lockdowns due to the pandemic, which may have had an effect on offending behaviour.

Following sharp year-on-year decreases in the number of offenders and reoffenders associated within the April to June 2020 offender cohort, equivalent differences in volumes for the July to September 2020 cohort continue to show less marked reductions. The size of the offender cohort has decreased by 20.8% since the same quarter in 2019, whilst the number of reoffenders has decreased by 25.7% over the same period.

The overall proven reoffending rate for the July to September 2020 cohort was 24.4%, a 1.6 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2019; this is based on around 19,000 from a total of just over 76,000 offenders (made up of 94% adult and 6% of juveniles) then committing over 66,000 proven reoffences over a one-year follow-up period.

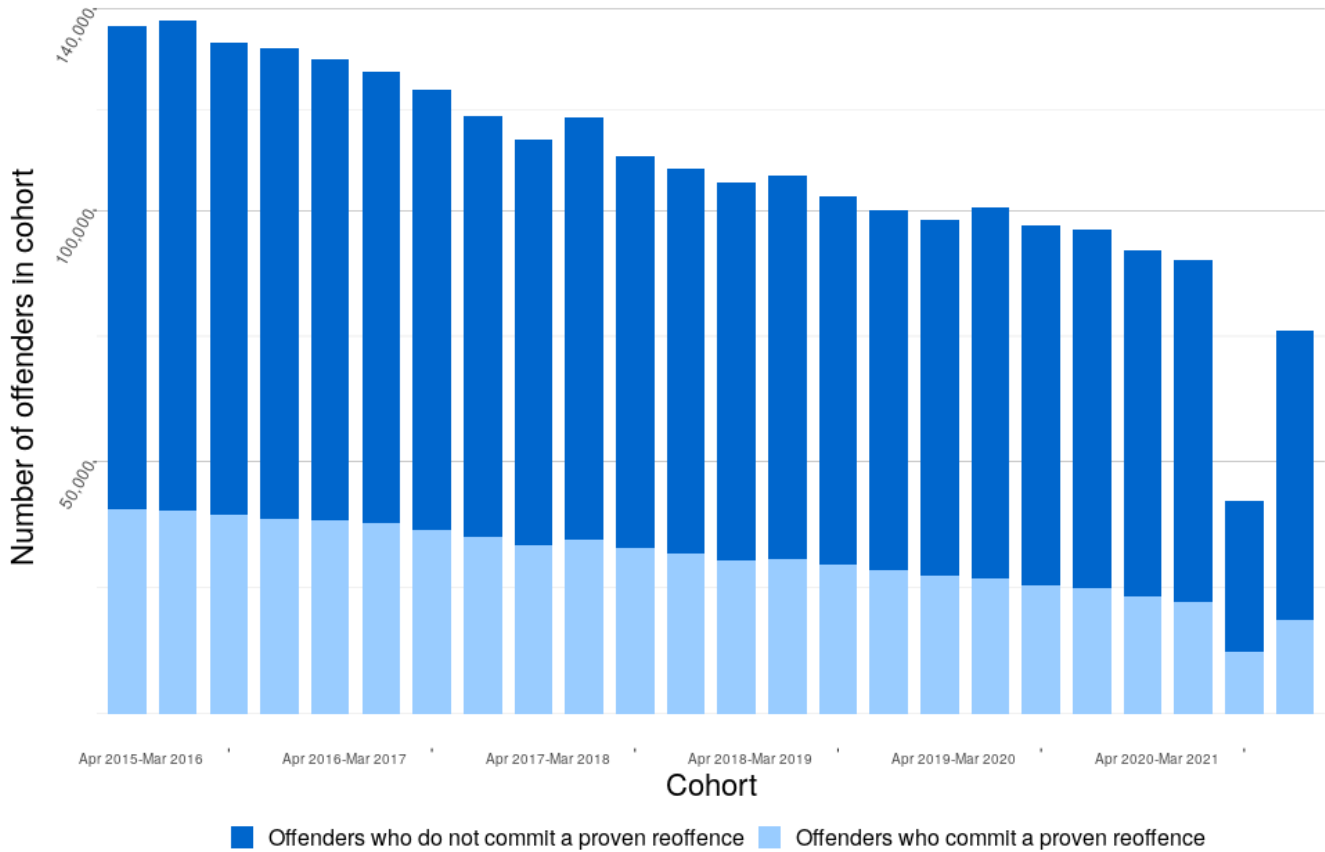
This latest overall reoffending rate represents the lowest in the timeseries. It follows a sharp increase in the rate for the previous cohort, which succeeded a more recent downward trend in the rate; this highlights the continued volatility of the figures for offender cohorts affected, to varying degrees, by the pandemic. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.4% and 31.8%.

Reoffenders within this latest cohort committed an average of 3.56 reoffences each (also known as the frequency rate), a 5% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2019. As with the reoffending rate though, there had been a general reduction in the frequency rate for more recent offender cohorts followed by an increase for April to June 2020. However, the latest figure represents the lowest frequency rate since October to December 2013. As with the offender and reoffender volumes for this latest cohort, the number of proven reoffences has decreased by 29.4% since the same quarter in 2019.

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<sup>3</sup> For details on trends in criminal court activity, please refer to (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>.)

**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, October 2014 to September 2020 (Source: Table A1)**



In the latest offender cohort, 85% were male and 15% were female, with the gender split remaining reasonably stable over time. Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 25.3% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 19.4%. Since 2009, these rates have fluctuated between 25.3% and 33.8% for males and 19.4% to 24.4% for females.

## 2. Adult offenders

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### Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 23.9%.

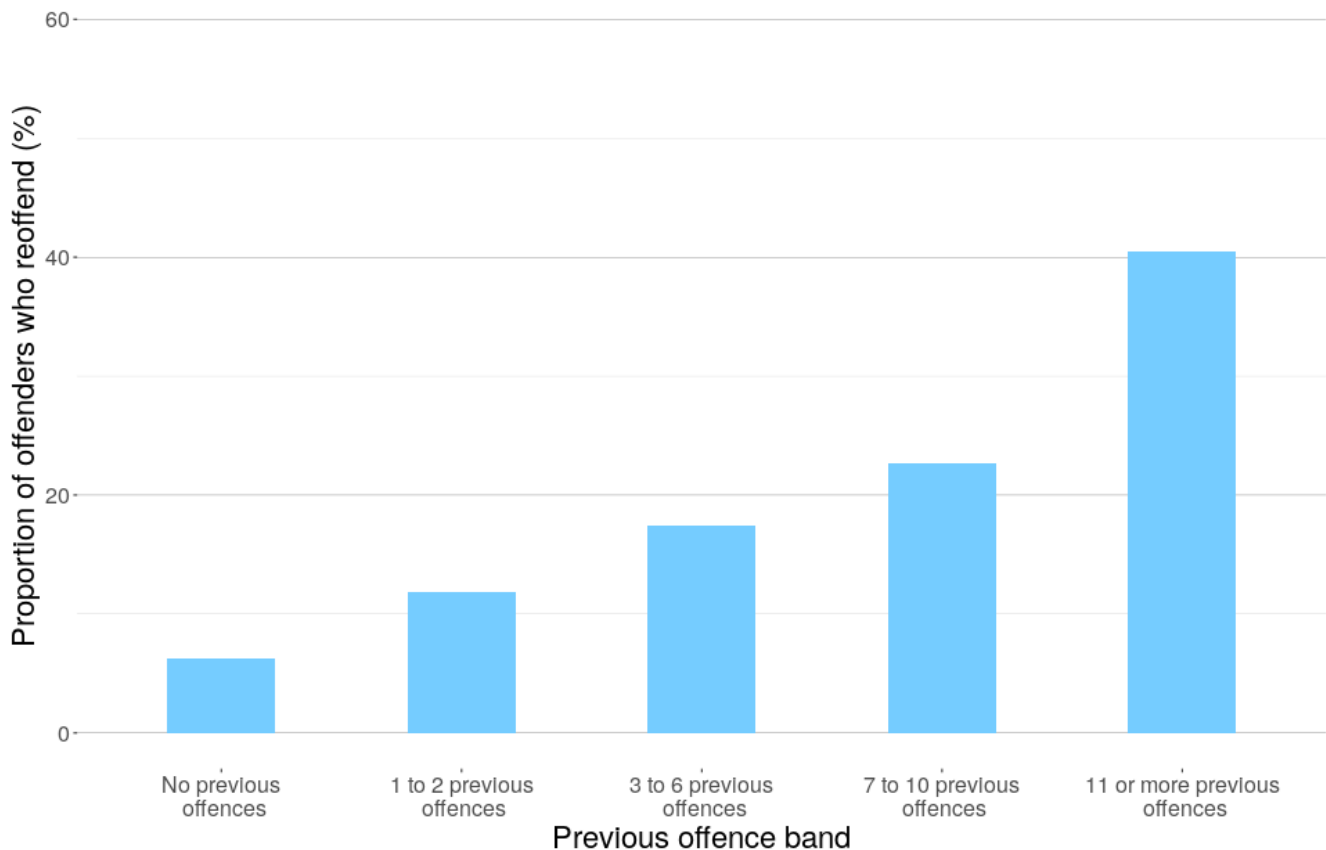
This is a decrease of 1.7 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 23.9% and 30.6%.

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The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders in the July to September 2020 cohort was 23.9%, a 1.7 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. The rate for adults follows a similar trend to the overall rate for more recent cohorts affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. a more recent downward trend in the rate followed by a sharp increase in the rate for the April to June 2020 cohort). Over time, the adult rate has fluctuated between 23.9% and 30.6%.

For the latest quarterly cohort, just over 17,000 out of a total of around 72,000 adults committed over 61,000 proven reoffences over the one-year follow-up period. Those that reoffended committed on average 3.57 reoffences; this represents a 4.6% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest frequency rate since October to December 2013.

**Figure 2: Proportion of adult offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences, July to September 2020 (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 July to September 2020 cohort, the proven reoffending rates for adults ranged from 6.3% for offenders with no previous offences to 40.5% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences (figure 2).

Adult offenders with 11 or more previous offences made up 40% of all adult offenders in the cohort, represented 68% of all adult reoffenders and committed 77% of all adult proven reoffences.

### 3. Juvenile offenders<sup>4</sup>

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#### Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 32.8%.

The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 0.2 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 2009.

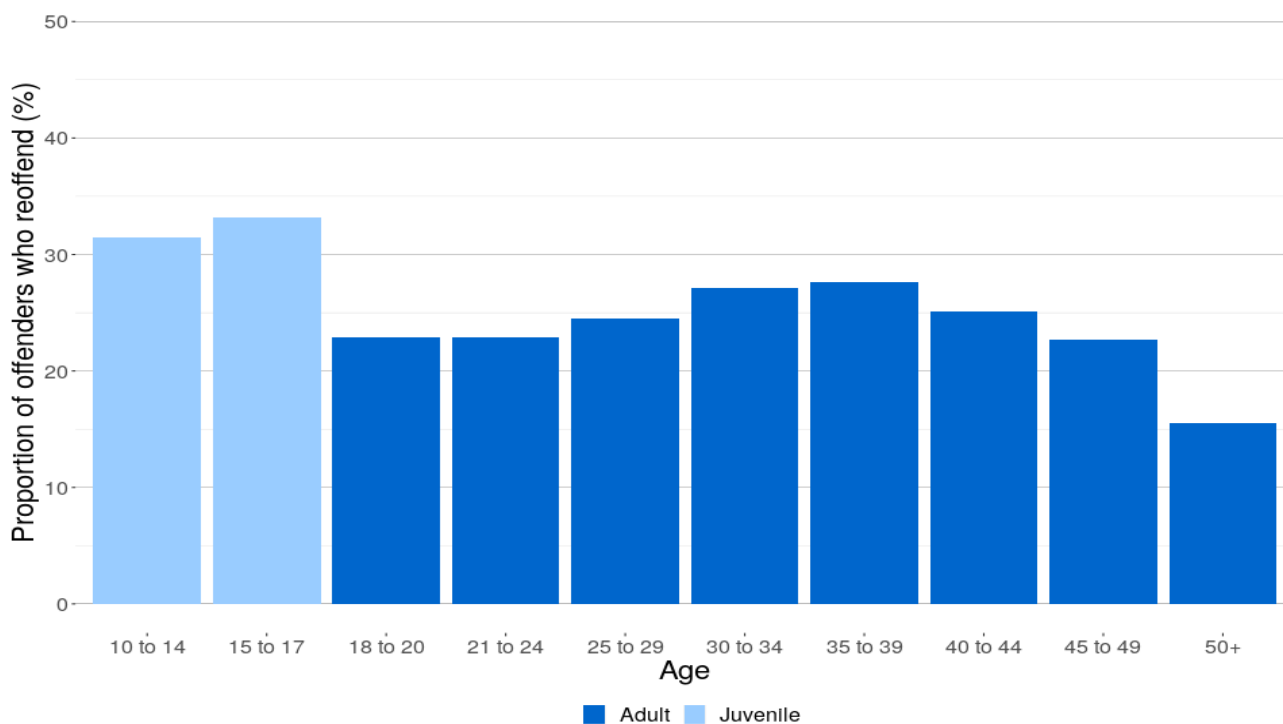
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The juvenile reoffending rate was 32.8%, a 0.2 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in the previous year.

Over 1,000 of approximately 4,000 juvenile offenders in the July to September 2020 cohort, committed a reoffence within a one-year follow-up period (equivalent to around 5,000 proven reoffences). Despite this cohort 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 2009. Over the years, the rate has fluctuated between 32.6% and 43.6%.

Those that reoffended committed on average 3.44 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 at 67.2% and 17.2% respectively.

**Figure 3: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, July to September 2020 (Source: Table A3)**



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<sup>4</sup> 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 33.1% and 31.5% respectively (figure 3). 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.

## 4. Adult reoffending by disposal<sup>5</sup>

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### **Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 30.0%.**

This represents a 3.4 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year, the largest year-on-year decrease in the timeseries and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

### **Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 58.4%.**

This is a decrease of 1.4 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 60.1%, which is a decrease of 1.9 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019.

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Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 30.0%, a decrease of 3.4 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2019, the largest year-on-year decrease and the lowest rate in the timeseries. This follows the previous quarter which saw the largest year-on-year increase in the timeseries.

More broadly, the proven reoffending rate for adult offenders across all sentence types decreased compared to the same quarter in 2019, with the exception of those cautioned. Following the sharp year-on-year reductions in the number of offenders, reoffenders and reoffences seen across most disposal types in April to June 2020, equivalent volumes for the July to September 2020 cohort are showing less acute year-on-year decreases. The variable changes in the data trends for more recent cohorts reflect the continuing volatility in the system driven by the impact of the pandemic.

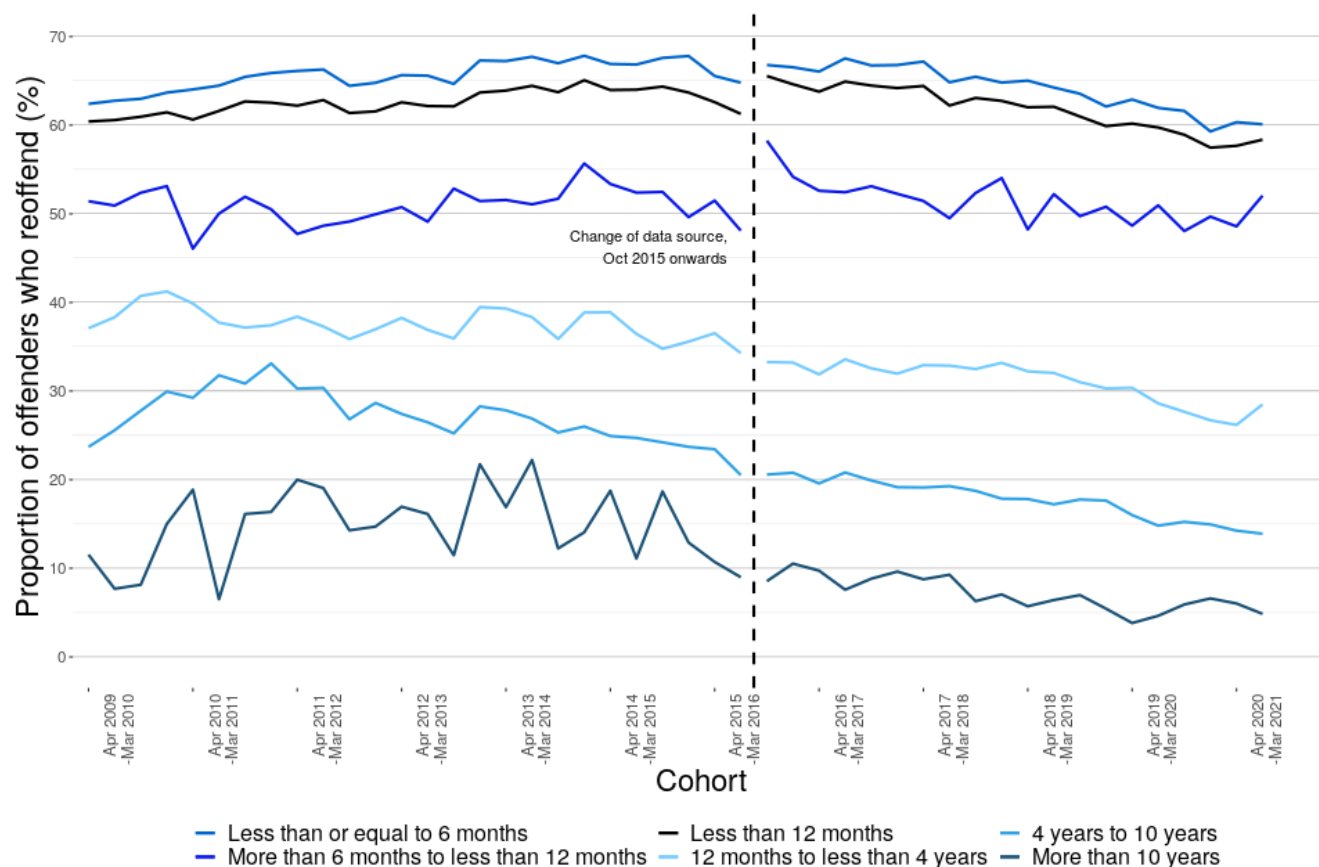
Specifically, the proven reoffending rate for adult offenders starting a court order<sup>6</sup> was 26.0%, a 3.6 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2019. This also represents the largest year-on-year decrease and the lowest rate in the timeseries. This follows the previous quarter which saw the largest year-on-year increase of 7.7 percentage points. Furthermore, although the volumes of offenders, reoffenders and reoffences has decreased by 13.8%, 24.2% and 30.3% respectively since the same quarter in the previous year, equivalent figures have risen sharply since the previous quarter (increases of 174%, 92.8% and 77.7% respectively); this dramatic change in trend is likely due to the impact of court closures followed by the subsequent reopening of the courts over the recent cohort period.

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Community order or suspended sentence order.

**Figure 4: Proportion of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence, by custodial sentence length, April 2009 to September 2020 (Source: Table C2a)**



The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 39.3%, a 3.1 percentage point decrease compared to the same quarter in 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 58.4%. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 60.1%, 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.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 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 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](#) and [Annex D of the October 2016 publication](#) (page 41).

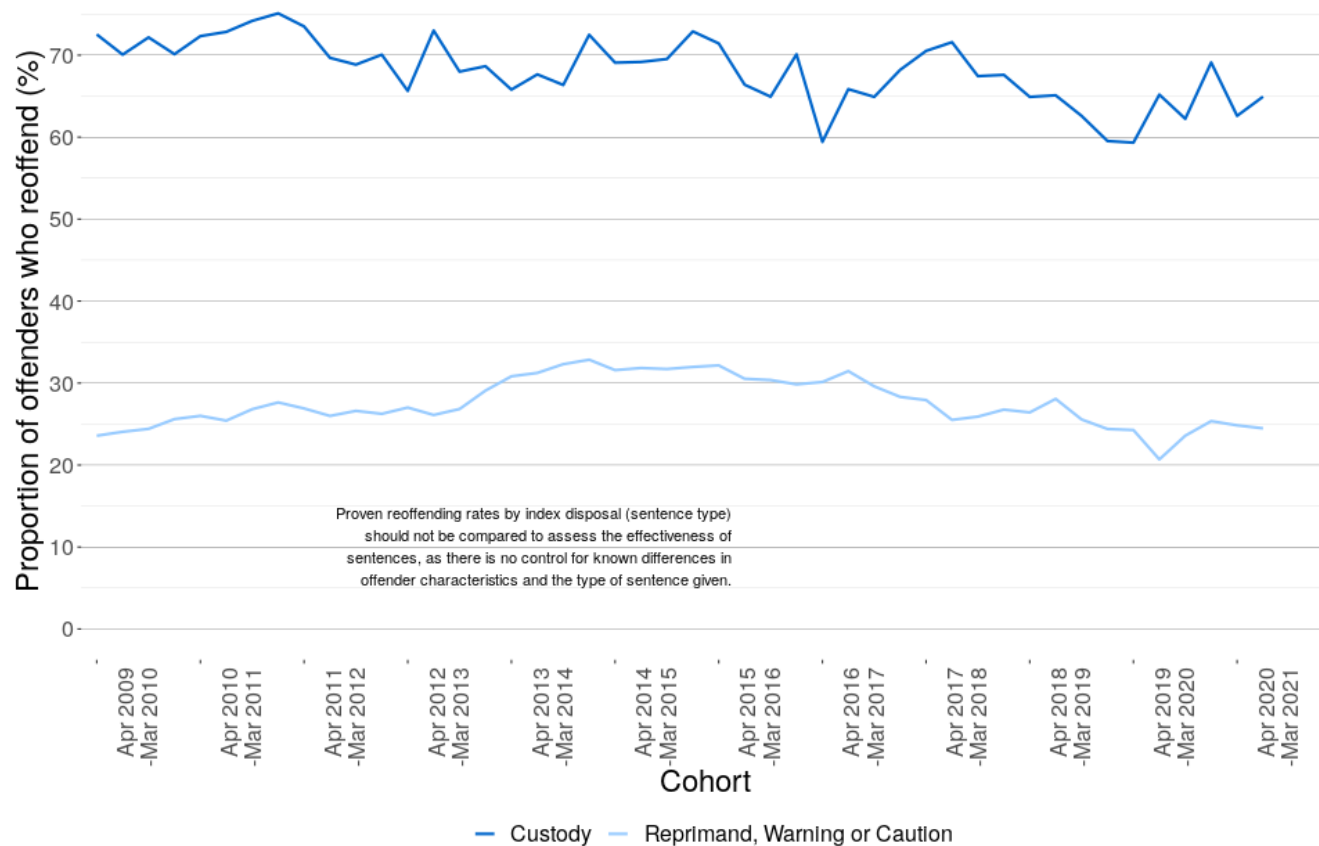
## 5. Juvenile reoffending by disposal<sup>8</sup>

Juvenile offenders given youth cautions had a proven reoffending rate of 24.5%.

The reoffending rate for juvenile offenders given youth cautions has increased by 3.8 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 5: Proportion of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, April 2009 to September 2020 (Source: Table C1b)**



<sup>8</sup> The juvenile proven reoffending data by disposal uses the same methodology as that adopted for adult reoffending by disposal (see section 4 for more details).

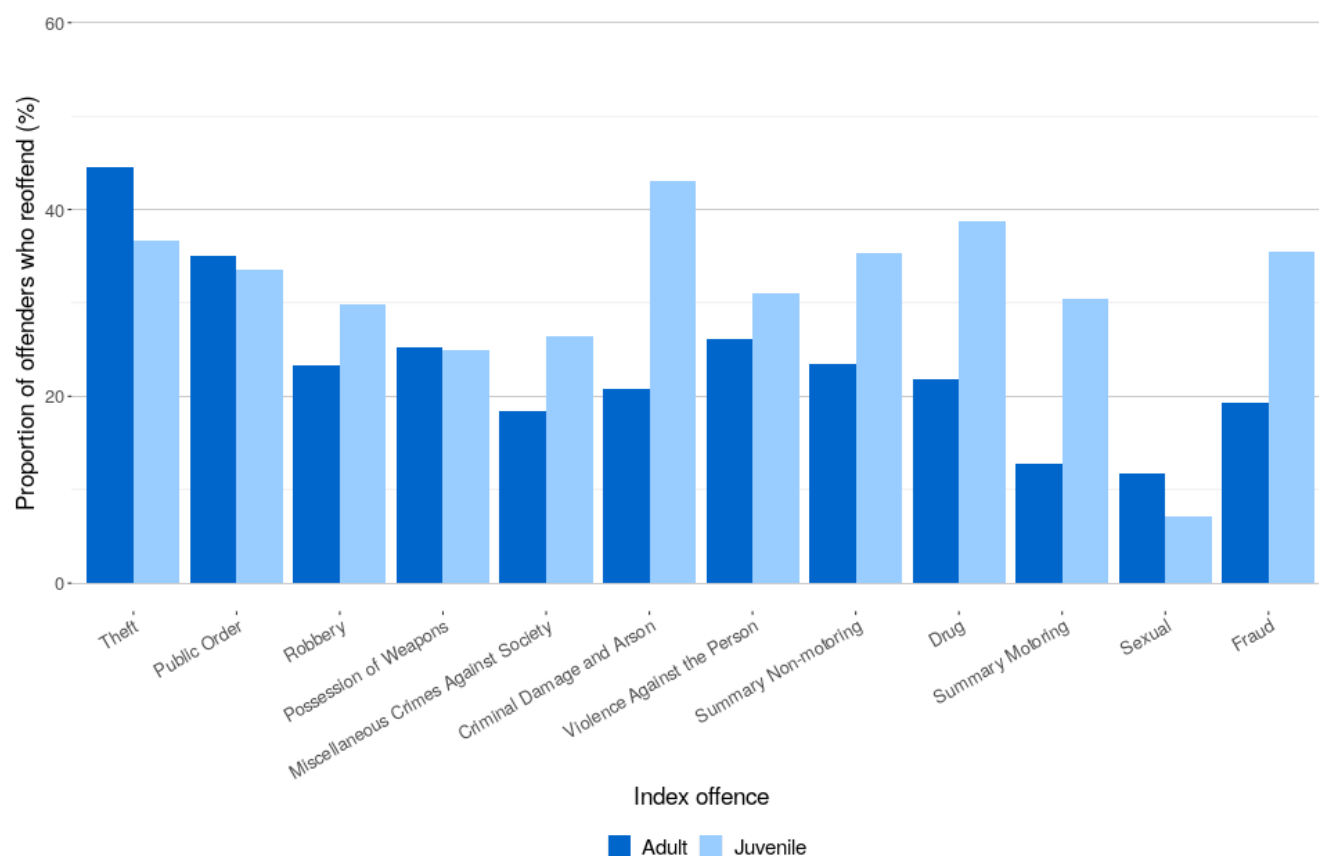
Between July to September 2020, 77 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 50 (64.9%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year. The rate has decreased by 0.3 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019. In addition to the effects of the pandemic for this latest cohort, there is, however, likely to be more variation with the new reoffending measure, from one quarter to another due to the reduced size of the cohort.

## 6. Index offences<sup>9</sup>

For the July to September 2020 adult cohort, the index offence category associated with the highest reoffending rate continues to be theft at 44.6%.

The second highest reoffending rate of 35.0% amongst adult offenders was those with an index offence of public order (figure 6).

**Figure 6: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence (except the 'other' offence category), July to September 2020 (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 11.7%. Excluding the 'other' offence category, the robbery index offence category saw the largest decrease in the reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2009, with a 17.9 percentage point difference. Those with an index offence of fraud saw the largest increase over this period, with a 5.3 percentage point difference.

<sup>9</sup> 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 criminal damage and arson had the highest proven reoffending rate at 43.1%, followed by those with an index offence of drug at 38.7%. Those with the lowest rate, excluding the 'other' offence category, were offenders who had committed a sexual index offence (7.1%). Those who committed miscellaneous crimes against society index offences saw the largest decrease in the reoffending rate since the same financial quarter in 2009 (a 23.1 percentage point difference) whilst fraud index offences represented the biggest increase over the same period (a 10.7 percentage point difference).

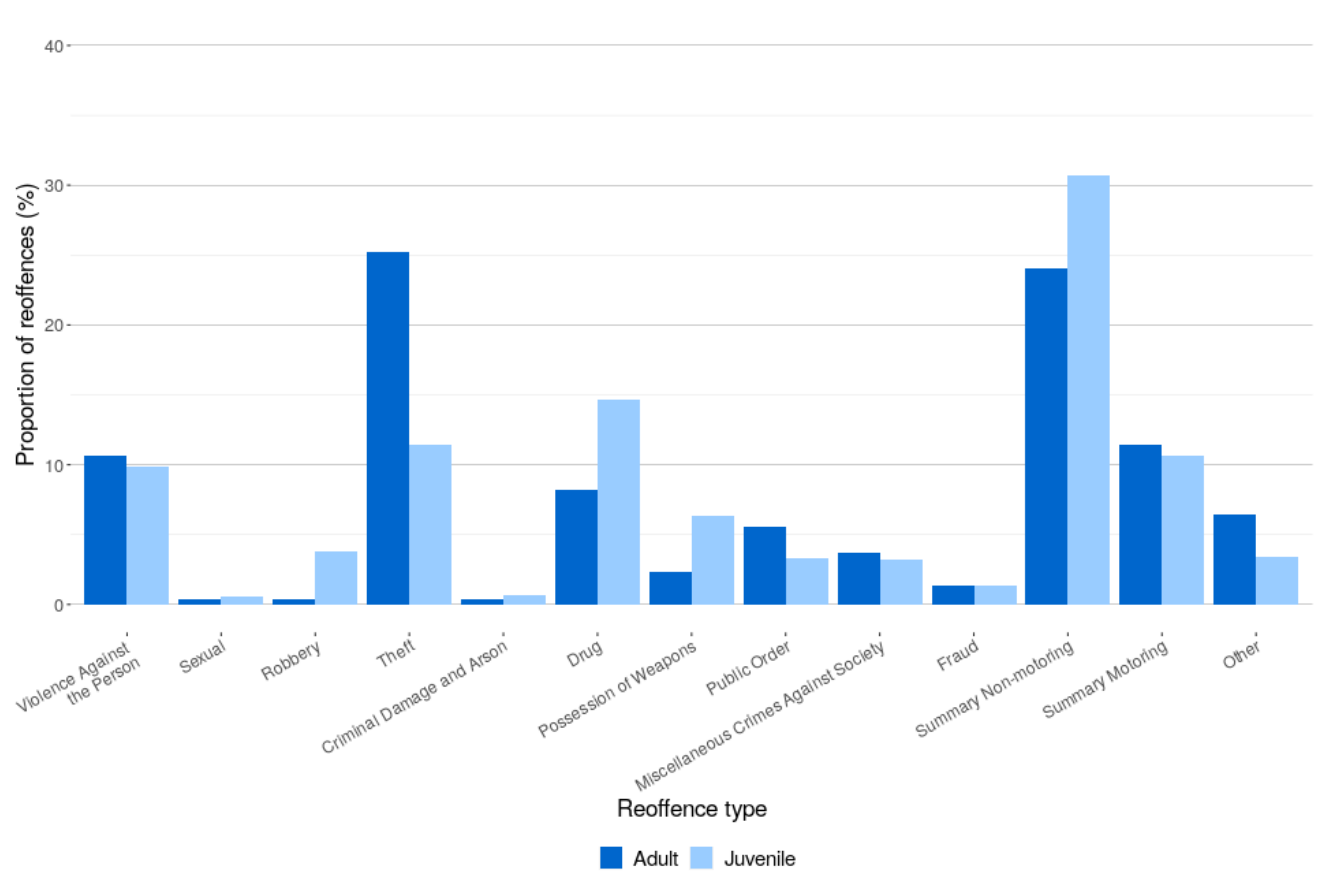
## 7. Proven reoffences

For the July to September 2020 adult cohort, 25.2% of proven reoffences committed were theft, making up the highest proportion of reoffences. This represents a decrease of 7.1 percentage points compared to the same period in 2019.

The second highest proportion of proven reoffences committed were summary non-motoring offences (24.0% of reoffences) followed by summary motoring (11.5% of reoffences) (figure 7). Despite the annual decreases in the number of proven reoffences committed by adult offenders, the share of each reoffence category has remained broadly stable over time.

For the juvenile offender cohort, summary non-motoring offences make up the largest proportion of reoffences (30.7%), followed by drug offences (14.7%) and theft offences (11.4%). In terms of the split by reoffence category, there has been some variation over time with violence against the person taking up an increasingly larger proportion of total juvenile reoffences for more recent cohorts; this currently stands at 9.8% of total proven reoffences.

**Figure 7: Proportion of proven reoffences for adult and juveniles committed in the one-year follow-up period, by reoffence type, July to September 2020 (Source: Table B3)**





For both adult and juvenile offenders, 33.6% of all reoffences were committed within three months after release from custody or after receiving a non-custodial conviction at court or caution. This percentage increases to 58.0% of all reoffences within six months and then steadily increases beyond that point at an average rate of 7.0% per month of reoffence.

## 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 October 2009 - September 2020).
- 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 prioritization, 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

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Email: [newsdesk@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

Other enquiries and feedback on these statistics should be directed to the Data and Evidence as a Service division of the Ministry of Justice: Liz Whiting, Head of Reducing Reoffending and Probation Statistics Ministry of Justice, 7th Floor, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

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**Next update: 27 October 2022**

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