



Ministry
of Justice

A User Guide to Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System, 2021

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National Statistics Publication: Women and the Criminal Justice System (WCJS), 2021

This publication compiles statistics from data sources across the Criminal Justice System (CJS), to provide a combined perspective on the typical experiences of females who come into contact with it. It considers how these experiences have changed over time and how they contrast to the typical experiences of males. This publication is published on a biennial basis and the next publication is scheduled for release in 2024.

The MoJ production team owns the data covering the following areas, disaggregated by *Chapters* in the report:

- *Police activity* – Out of court disposals (PNDs and cautions)
- *Defendants* – prosecutions, convictions, remand decisions and sentencing outcomes
- *Offence analysis* – all analysis conducted
- *Offender characteristics* – breakdowns of the aforementioned, by ethnicity, sex and age.

All other data included in the WCJS publication is collated from a range of data sources, please see the [technical guide](#) to find details of respective data owners.

The Offender characteristics Chapter of the publication includes a data share between Ministry of Justice and Department for Education. This analysis is labelled *Experimental Statistics* and is not a permanent addition to the WCJS publication. If these statistics are beneficial to you, **please get in touch** to ensure we are aware of the range of users and are able to adequately prioritise their inclusion in the future.

The most recent data available during the compilation of this report has been included (usually the 2021 calendar year or 2021/22 financial year), referred to as the 'latest year', though it is important to note that more recent data may have since been published. Please see the accompanying technical guide for links to the latest publications from each data source, where data may have been revised or updated since this release.

Products published as part of the WCJS publication

The statistical bulletin

The bulletin compiles statistics across the CJS to draw out and expand upon key findings; these findings are supplemented by graphs where appropriate. The bulletin contains links to relevant statistics already in the public domain that may not have been extracted within the main text.

Overview tables

Supplementary Excel (in an Open .ods format) tables accompany the chapters, providing additional data where the figures have not previously been published (or not published in that form). Where figures have been published, links are provided as part of the text and tables.

Technical Guide

A technical document titled A Technical Guide to Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System is available alongside this report, which provides users with information on the concepts and terminology used within the report, as well as information about data sources, data quality and references. This includes information on how sex is recorded across data sources.

Infographic

The publication includes an infographic in PDF format, showing visualisations of key messages from the publication.

Dashboard

The WCJS 2021 provides an accompanying dashboard for the first time. This product should be used alongside the bulletin, Overview Tables and Technical Guide in order to enhance understanding of the contained statistics. There may be data presented in the other WCJS products which is absent in the dashboard; data has only been included where data owners were able to provide data in the appropriate format within the timescale. The amount of information on a topic presented in the dashboard reflects the amount it is commented on throughout the bulletin. This is a first prototype and the production team welcome feedback on the dashboard's value and usability. The dashboard is not necessarily a permanent addition to the report and therefore we ask you to get in touch if you find it beneficial and wish for its production to be continued.

The production team is looking to focus more on the dashboard and reduce commentary within the WCJS bulletin in the future in order to maximise the experience of our users and flexibility of analysis. Feedback on this proposal is welcomed. **Please complete the survey [here](#) to contact the team.**

Users should consult relevant data owners with regards to feedback on specific topics within the dashboard. Please see the technical guide for details on data sources.

User Engagement Strategy

In the production of the WCJS 2021 publication, the team invested significant time and effort in building its user engagement capability and setting up user engagement activities. As a result, it developed a good understanding of the use of the statistics and established effective partnerships with a range of key users. This not only supported the development of the WCJS report, but also provided a strong foundation for user engagement activities for future publications. The analytical team employs a range of approaches to tell users about the statistics, to understand use of the statistics and to listen to users, some of which are summarised below.

The team conducted user engagement sessions with a wide range of both internal and external users, including policy, analysts, academics, charities and other organisations. This activity sought to identify the use of the WCJS, what data was especially useful and what additions could be made. Feedback was collated and addressed to ascertain where changes and improvements could be made to the publication in order to best suit user needs. Suggestions primarily involved greater intersectionality between sex and other offender characteristics, leading to the production of a dashboard published alongside the WCJS 2021. An initial user session was conducted on the dashboard, with positive feedback, although the team expects further response after the publication of WCJS 2021. Details on requested data that has not been included can be found in the following section of this user guide – the most common reasons being data is unreliable, data is not centrally recorded, data is already in the public domain.

The user engagement sessions served as constructive for both the production team and users, as many were unaware of the scope of the publication prior to this session. It was apparent that many users were not informed on the data sources from which the data included in the report was derived. Whilst informing users has benefited those within the user engagement session, the team has addressed this knowledge gap by more thoroughly citing data sources throughout the bulletin and new dashboard. In cases where data is already published, signposts within the bulletin, dashboard and technical guide have been inserted.

This user guide has been developed in order to enhance the accessibility and transparency of the content within the WCJS. It endeavours to explain the report overall, and its products, functioning alongside the technical guide to provide support to our users. Users should refer to this guide for information on the products of the report, including rationale behind data inclusion and getting in touch with the team. Otherwise, users should refer to the technical guide to find details of data

owners, recording methodology, data quality and validation, and explanations of technical terms throughout the report.

The continual improvement of the WCJS publication demonstrates the benefits of investing resources in user engagement activities and making it a central, ongoing part of producing statistics. By engaging with users in different ways, the team was able to capture a range of feedback, which ensures that the statistics meet the needs of all types of users.

Get in touch

If your team would benefit from getting involved in future engagement activities regarding the next WCJS, please get in touch with the team to express an interest. CJS_Statistics@justice.gov.uk

Data not included in the report

Despite our aim to meet as many needs of our users as possible, some data is not able to be included to the publication. This includes data that is not recorded centrally, not sufficiently reliable, and therefore inaccessible to the production team. Examples of these instances are detailed below:

- Offender characteristics such as religion, faith, nationality and mental health are not reliably recorded across data systems related to the criminal justice system
- Some measure such as charges, recorded by Home Office, do not include records of sex

This may also include data otherwise already published in the public domain. Under these circumstances, duplication of work is avoided in order to minimise time spent on presenting already-accessible information. Examples of related publications are detailed below:

- [Safety in Custody statistics](#)
- [Offender management statistics](#), including:
 - Discipline in Prison Establishments (Adjudications),
 - Restricted Patients,
 - Home Detention Curfew (Releases),
 - Release on Temporary License,
 - Licence Recalls.
- [Death of offenders in the community statistics](#)
- [Community performance statistics](#) (including accommodation and employment statistics)
- [HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report](#), including:
 - Mother and Baby units,
 - Sexual Orientation in the Prison Population,
 - Accredited Programmes,
 - Incentives and
 - Transgender prisoners
- [Electronic monitoring statistics](#)
- [Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system](#),
- [CPS Quarterly Data Summaries – Quarter 1 2022/23](#)¹
- [Nature of Violent Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#).
- [Substance Misuse Treatment Programmes](#)
- [Offender Learning](#)
- [Deaths in or following police contact](#)

The production team welcome feedback on inclusion of data sources, including suggestions for new potential data sources. Please get in touch and we will pass on information to relevant data owners.

¹ In 2019/20, the CPS moved from annual reporting, in the Violence Against Women and Girls annual report, to quarterly data. Data mentioned can be found on the page linked.

National Statistics status

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality, and public value. This bulletin recently underwent a compliance check with the Office for Statistics Regulation and retained its National Statistics status in October 2022². All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for 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.

For feedback or questions related to the content of this publication, please contact us at CJS_Statistics@justice.gov.uk

² <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/mark-pont-to-abigail-self-statistics-on-women-and-the-criminal-justice-system-for-england-and-wales/>