



## Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, April to June 2021

Published 27 April 2023

This publication provides the proven reoffending results for the April to June 2021 offender cohort. This latest offender cohort period overlaps with operational restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a period of on-going recovery for the courts. As a result, volatility continues to be seen in the reoffending figures, with overall proven reoffending down from the same quarter last year but up from the previous quarter.

**The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.8% for the April to June 2021 offender cohort.**



This represents a decrease of 4.2 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 but an increase of 0.5 percentage points over the last quarter. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 23.1% and 31.8%.

**Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 24.4%.**



This is a decrease of 4.3 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020 but an increase of 0.5 percentage points over last quarter.

**Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 31.6%.**



The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 1.0 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 but increased by 0.5 percentage points over last quarter.

**Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 31.4%.**



This represents a 6.0 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2020 but an increase of 0.6 percentage points over last quarter.

**Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 54.4%.**



This is a decrease of 3.3 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 57.5%, which is a decrease of 2.8 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020.

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, police force area, probation area, local authority, 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 April to June 2021 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 overall proven reoffending rate was 24.8% for the April to June 2021 offender cohort, which represents a decrease of 4.2 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 but an increase of 0.5 percentage points over last quarter. Across almost all offender breakdowns we see a similar trend, with reoffending rates down from the same quarter last year, but up from the previous quarter. This highlights the volatility we continue to see due to the effects 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 now move further away from the periods of lockdown.

This latest offender cohort coincides with a period of operational restrictions, and phased re-opening, imposed due to the pandemic <sup>1</sup>, as well as a continued period of recovery for the courts. Whilst the number of cases processed between April to June 2021 returned to near pre COVID-19 levels, the number of outstanding cases and the average age of outstanding cases continued to rise <sup>2</sup>.

The number of offenders in the April to June 2021 cohort has increased by 98.1% from the same quarter in 2020 but is down by 0.5% from the previous quarter (January to March 2021). The number of reoffenders has increased by 69.1% and 1.4% respectively. However, this quarter's cohort of offenders is the second smallest in the timeseries, behind only the pandemic-driven historic low of April to June 2020.”

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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.

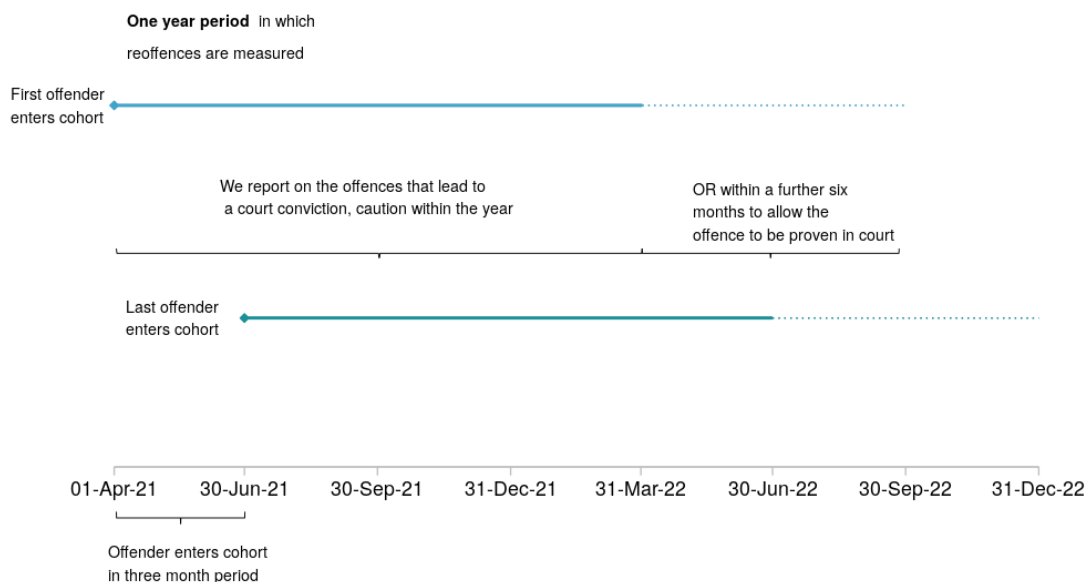
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2021/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2021>

## How is proven reoffending measured?

An offender is included in this publication cohort if they were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, or received a reprimand or warning in the three-month period spanning April to June 2021.

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. This is shown in the diagram below in relation to the latest offender cohort.

### Timeline of the measurement period of proven reoffending for the April to June 2021 cohort (Source: Guide to Proven Reoffending Statistics)



Users should be cautious when making any comparison between cohorts before and after October 2015, due to a change in data source from October 2015 onwards. Additionally, it is important to note that the reoffending rates presented in this publication are not comparable to publications prior to October 2017, as these reported on a 12-month cohort. Users of these statistics should also be aware that comparisons between 3-monthly cohorts are likely to be more volatile as cohort populations are smaller than the previous 12-month ones.

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’](#).

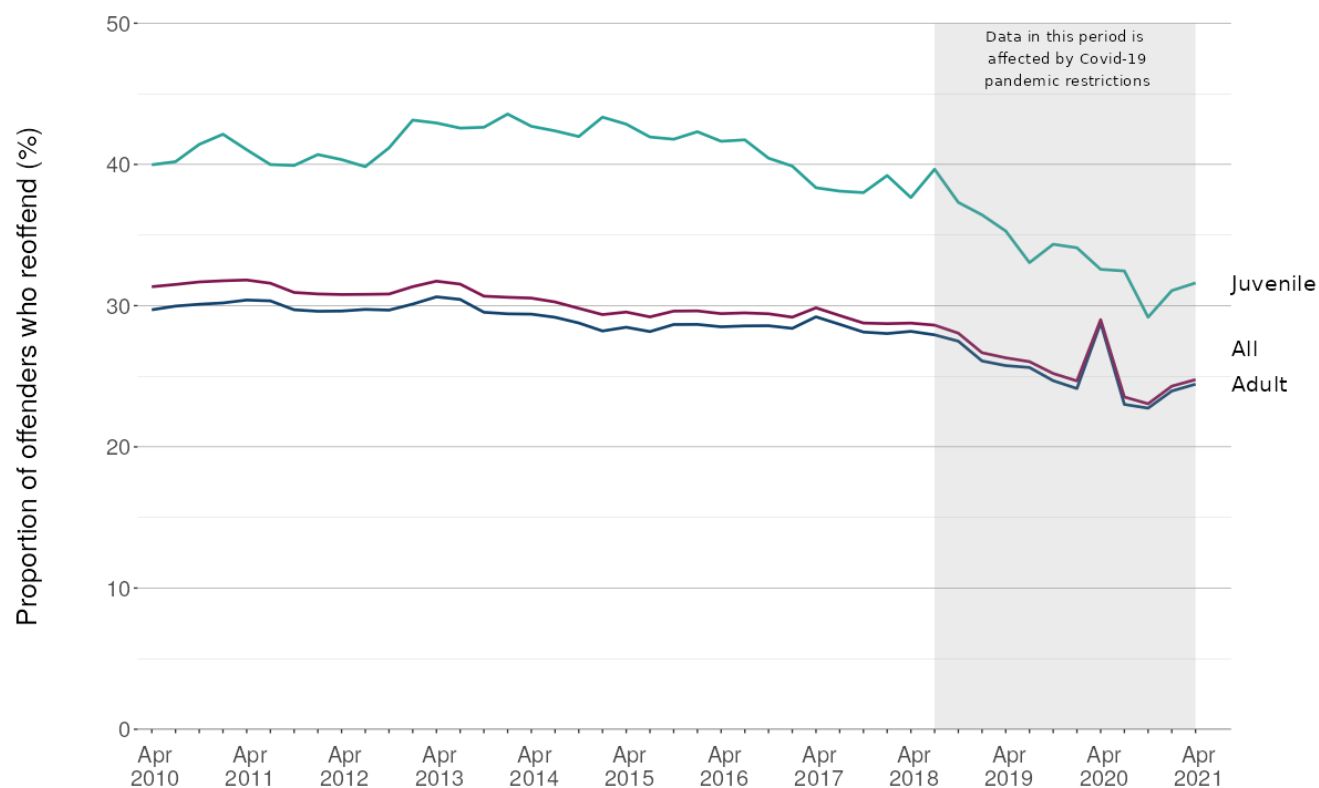
# 1. Overall – adult and juvenile offenders

The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.8% for the April to June 2021 offender cohort, with around 21,000 of the 84,000 offenders in the cohort committing a proven reoffence.

## Rates of proven reoffending

The overall proven reoffending rate for this quarter was 24.8%, representing a decrease of 4.2 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 23.1% and 31.8% (figure 1).

**Figure 1: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders<sup>3</sup> in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, April to June 2021 (Source: Table A1)**



Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 24.4%. This is a 4.3 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in the previous year, but an increase of 0.5 percentage points over last quarter. Except for recent quarters affected by the pandemic, the adult reoffending rate has remained broadly flat over the timeseries. The rate has fluctuated between 22.7% and 30.6% over the timeseries.

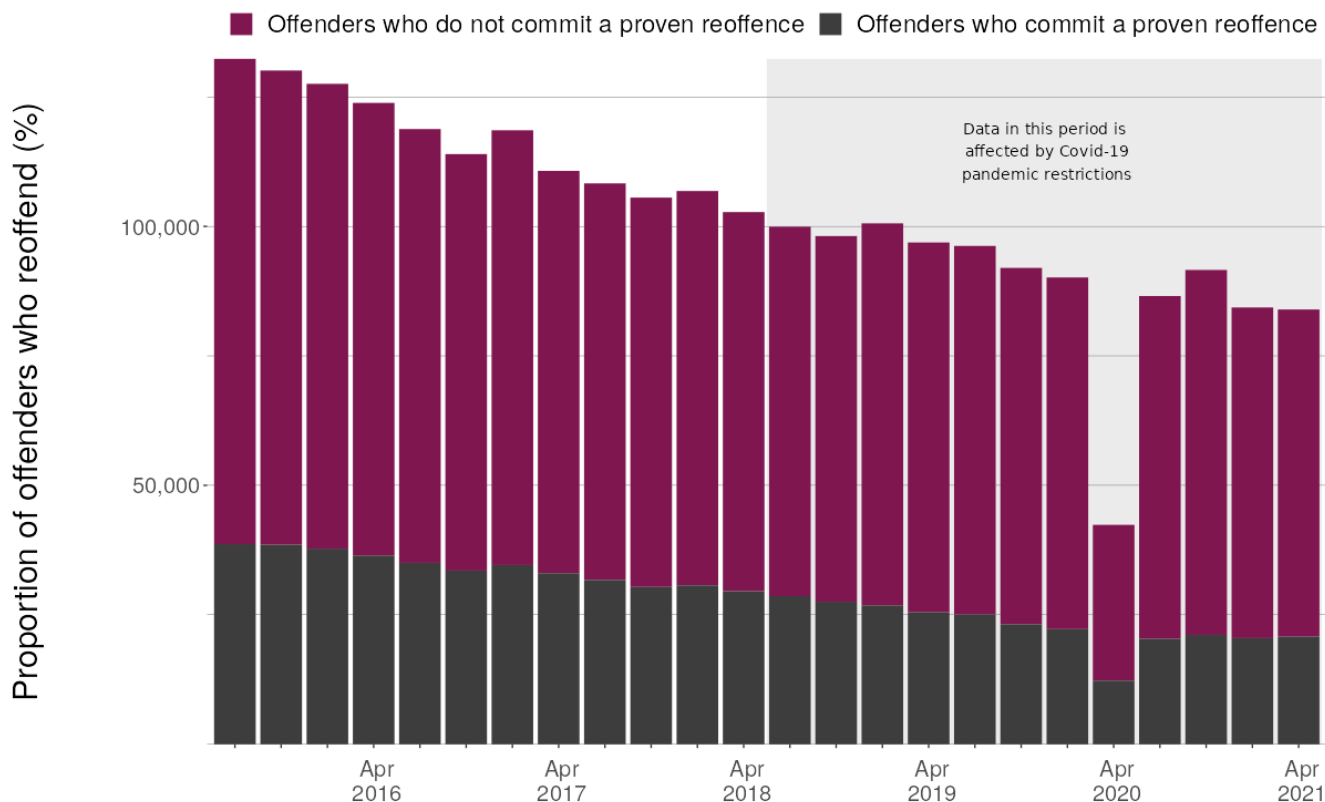
<sup>3</sup> Juveniles are defined as those aged 10 to 17 years old.

Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 31.6%<sup>4</sup>. The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 1.0 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year but increased by 0.5 percentage points over last quarter. The rate of reoffending has fluctuated between 29.2% and 43.6% over the timeseries. However, for context, the number of juvenile offenders in the cohort has fallen by 87% since the same quarter in 2010.

### Cohort size

There were approximately 84,000 offenders in the April to June 2021 cohort, with 21,000 proven reoffenders (figure 2). Reoffenders committed almost 75,000 proven reoffences over a one-year follow-up period.

**Figure 2: Number of offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, April to June 2021 (Source: Table A1)**



We continue to observe marked effects on the volume of offenders in the cohort and the volume of subsequent proven reoffenders. The size of the offender cohort has decreased by 55.4% since the same quarter in 2010 but increased by 98.1% since the same quarter in 2020. Similarly, the number of reoffenders has decreased by 64.8% since the same quarter in 2010 but increased by 69.1% since 2020.

Within the combined, overall cohort, reoffenders committed an average of 3.63 reoffences each (also known as the frequency rate). More broadly, the overall frequency rate has been in general decline

<sup>4</sup> Issue identified in the data matching for the juvenile cohort, meaning the juvenile cohort of those released from custody is slightly smaller than expected. See the final page for details.

since a peak of 4.06 in 2016. The total number of reoffences has also generally declined over this period but the number of proven reoffences has increased by 61.4% since the same quarter in 2020. Adult reoffenders committed on average 3.61 reoffences each, whilst juvenile reoffenders committed on average 3.86 reoffences each.

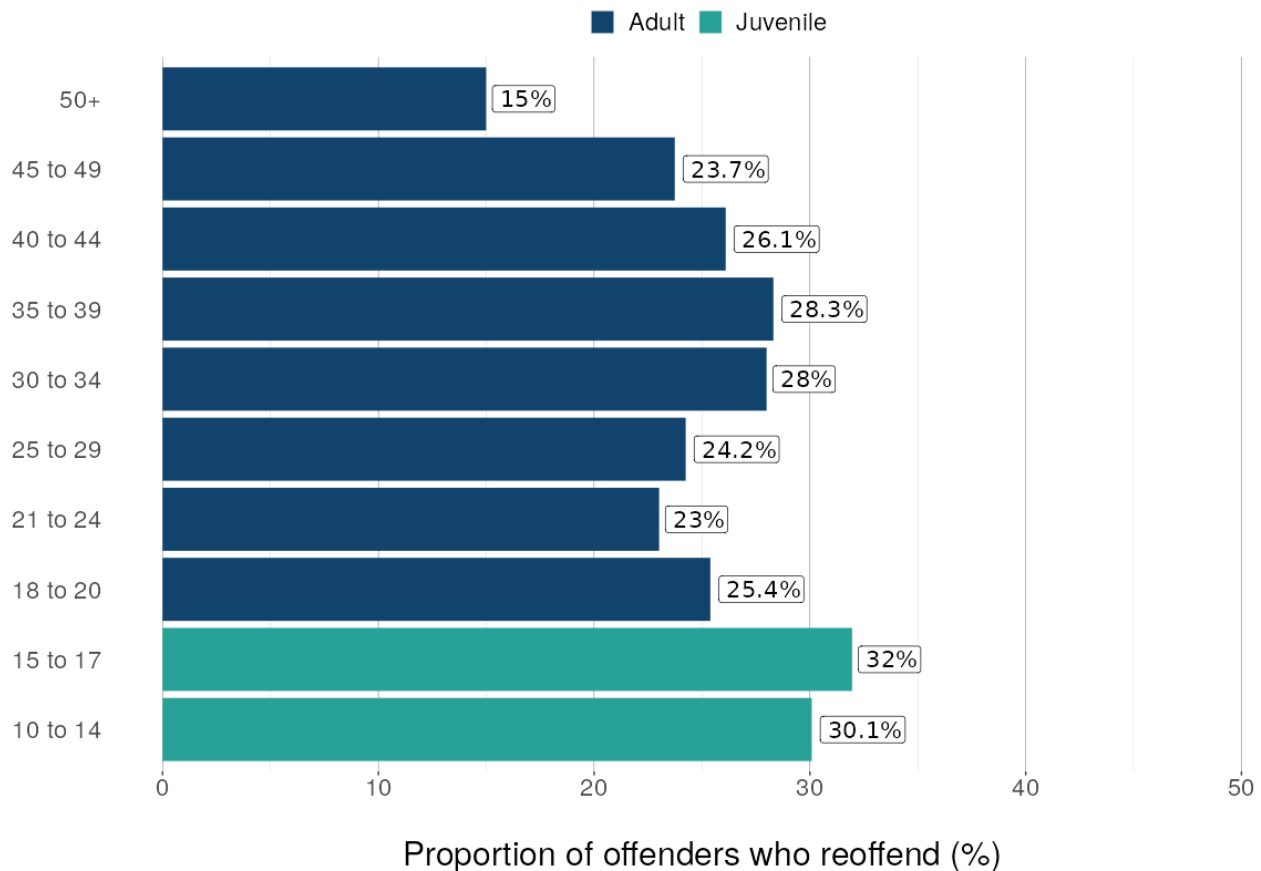
## 2. Overall – Offender demographics

The age group with the highest reoffending rate was 15 to 17-year-olds (32.0%). Men reoffended at a higher rate (25.6%) than women (20.1%)

### Age

The age group with the highest reoffending rate was 15 to 17-year-olds, at 32.0% (figure 3), which is consistent with historical norms. This was closely followed by the 10 to 14-year-old offenders, with a reoffending rate of 30.1%. For adults, the proven reoffending rate starts to fall with increasing age after the 35 to 39-year-old group.

**Figure 3: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, April to June 2021 (Source: Table A3)**



### Sex

Of the overall offender cohort, 84% were male and 16% were female. The gender split has remained reasonably stable over time.

Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 25.6% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 20.1%. Since 2010, these rates have fluctuated between 23.9% and 33.8% for males and 18.3% to 24.4% for females.

### 3. Reoffending by Disposal Type

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**Adults released from custody or starting a court order had a proven reoffending rate of 31.4%**, representing a 6.0 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year.

**Juvenile offenders given youth cautions or released from custody had differing proven reoffending rates**, at 23.7% and 56.4% respectively

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Users should exercise caution when comparing the effectiveness of different sentences because the presented rates do not control for 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](#).<sup>5</sup>

#### Adult offenders

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders starting a court order<sup>6</sup> was 29.5%, a 7.5 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2020, and a 0.8 percentage point increase when compared to the previous quarter<sup>7</sup>.

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 36.8%, a 1.8 percentage point decrease compared to the same quarter in the previous year. The proven reoffending rate varied by custodial sentence lengths (figure 4).

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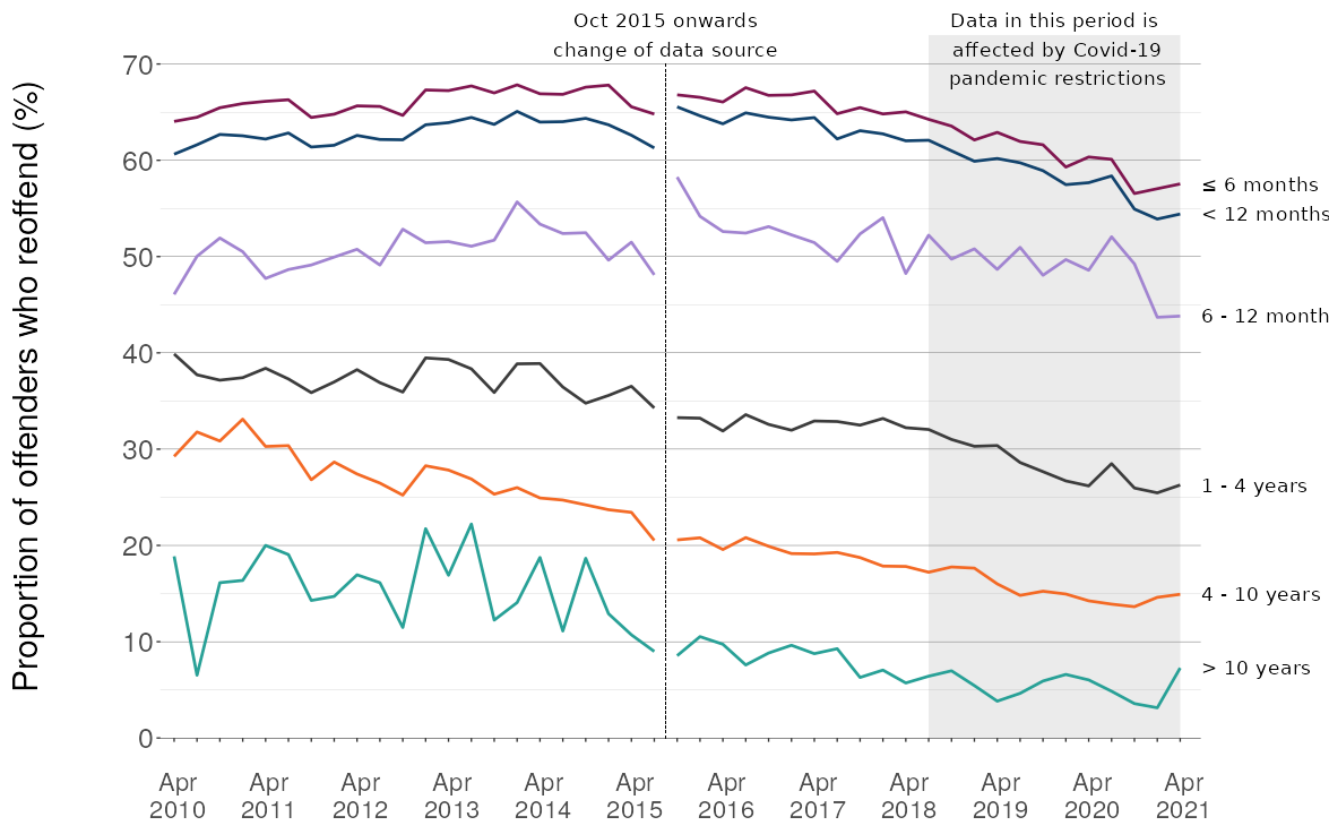
<sup>5</sup> Proven reoffending rates by disposal should not be compared to assess the effectiveness of sentences, as there is no control for known differences in offender characteristics and the type of sentence given. For further information see [Annex D of the October 2016 publication](#) (page 41) and the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

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

<sup>7</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.



**Figure 4: Proportion of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence by custodial sentence length, April to June 2021 (Source: Table C2a)**



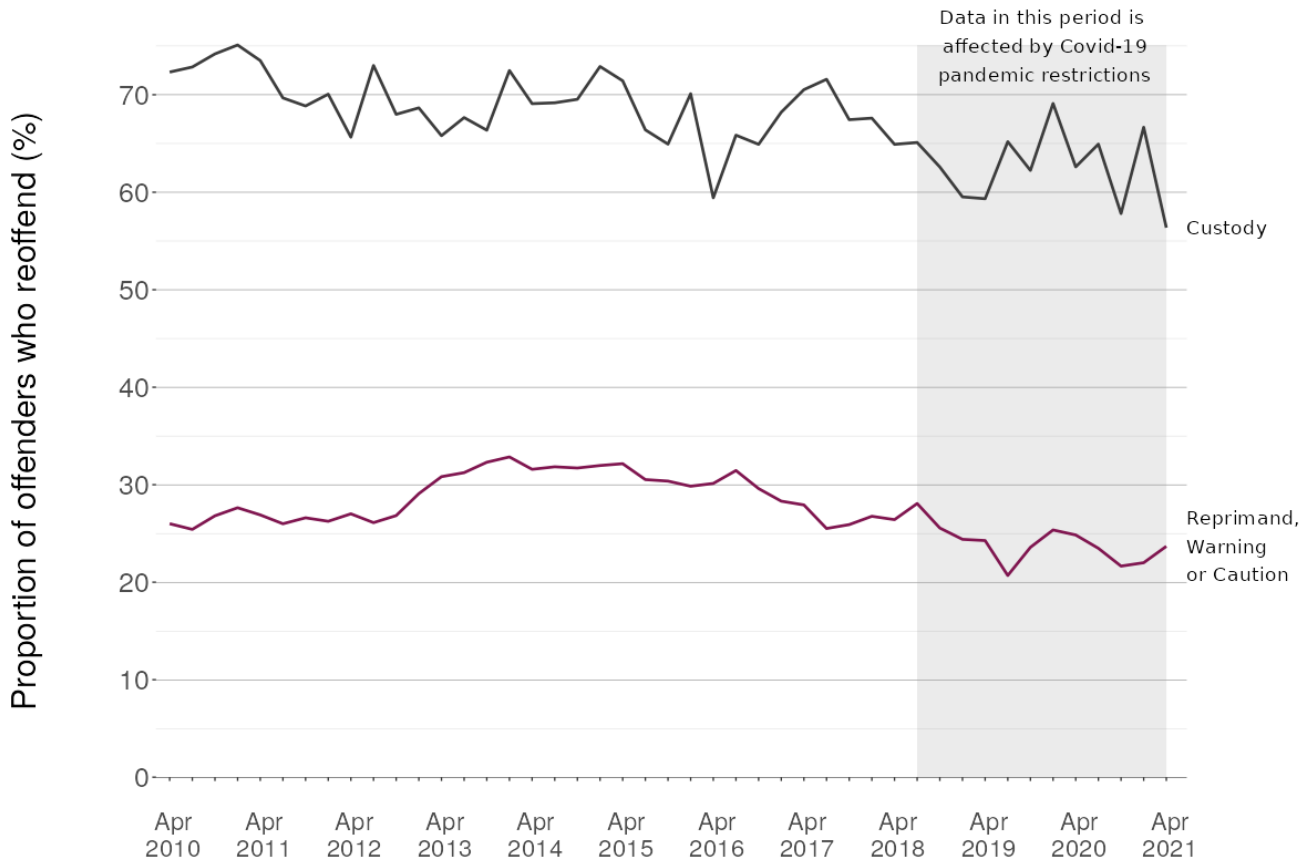
Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 54.4%. This is a decrease of 3.3 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year.

Adults who served sentences of 12 months or more reoffended at a substantially lower rate, at 22.1%. This is a decrease of 0.2 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year.

## Juvenile offenders

Juvenile offenders given reprimands, warnings or youth cautions had a proven reoffending rate of 23.7%, a decrease of 1.2 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020. Those released from custody had a proven reoffending rate of 56.4%, which has decreased by 6.2 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020<sup>8</sup>.

**Figure 5: Proportion of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, April to June 2021 (Source: Table C1b)**



For the April to June 2021 cohort, 55 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 31 (56.4%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year. Due to a data matching issue within juveniles released from Secure Children’s Homes and Secure Training Centres, the juvenile cohort for offenders released from custody is smaller than expected. There is also likely to be more variation from one quarter to another due to the small size of the cohort.

Note: 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.

<sup>8</sup> The juvenile proven reoffending data by disposal uses the same methodology as that adopted for adult reoffending by disposal (see ‘adult offenders’ footnote 7 for more details).

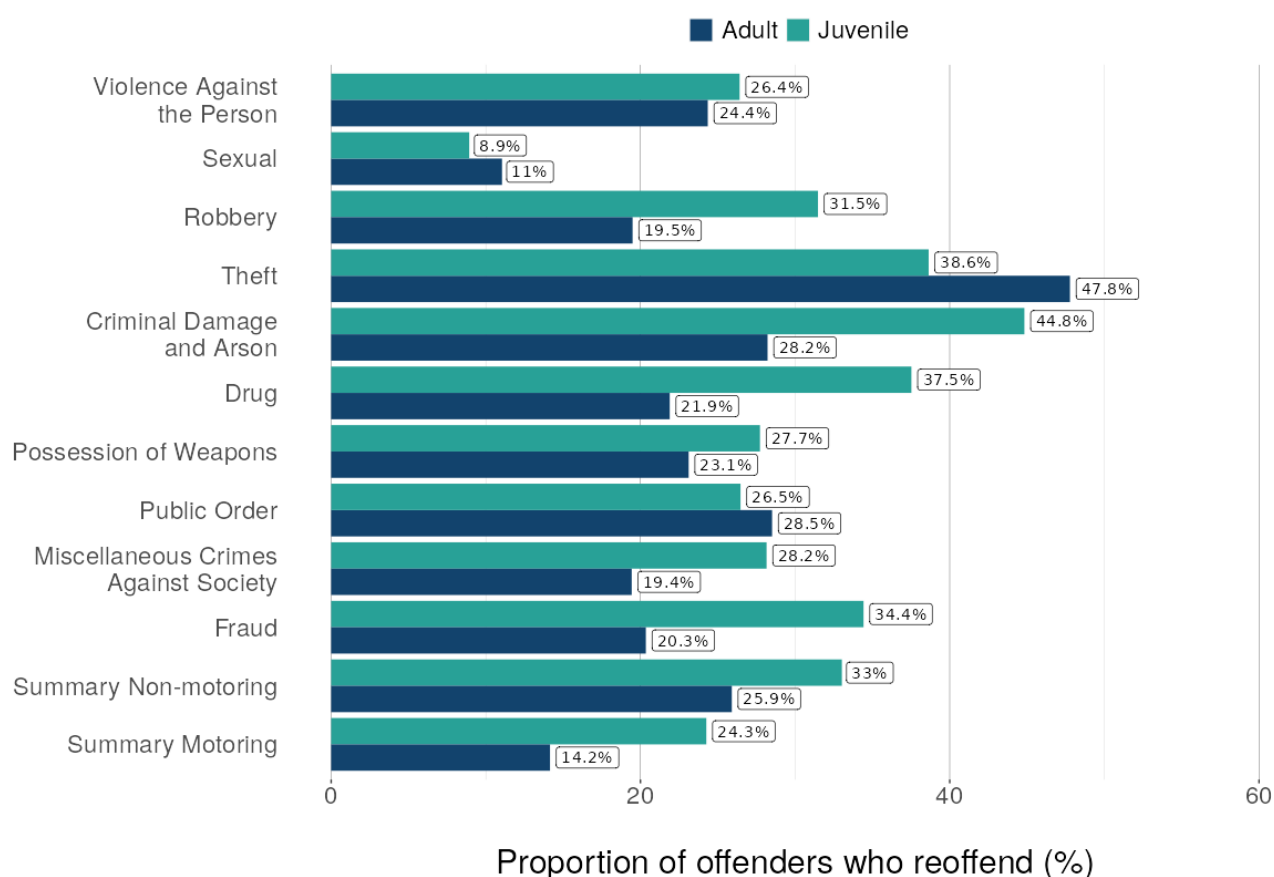
## 4. Reoffending by Index Offence Type

For the April to June 2021 adult cohort, the index offence<sup>9</sup> category associated with the highest reoffending rate was theft (47.8%).

This is decrease of 2.8 percentage points, from 50.5%, in the same quarter in 2020.

For adult offenders, the highest reoffending rate of 47.8% was for those with an index offence of theft. For juvenile offenders, the highest reoffending rate of 44.8% was for those with an index offence of criminal damage and arson (figure 6).

**Figure 6: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence, April to June 2021 (Source: Table A4a/b)**



For adult offenders, the second highest reoffending rate was for those with a public order index offence (28.5%). The lowest rate of reoffending (11%) was observed among those with a sexual offence as their index offence. The public order index offence category saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2020, with a 13.5 percentage point

<sup>9</sup> An index offence refers to the offence that leads to an offender being included in the offender cohort.

difference. Those with an index offence of criminal damage and arson saw the largest increase of 5.1 percentage points over the same period.

For juvenile offenders, the second highest reoffending rate was for those with an index offence of theft at 38.6%. Offenders who had committed a sexual index offence had the lowest rate of reoffending (8.9%). Those who committed an index offence of summary motoring saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2020, a 13.9 percentage point difference. Possession of Weapons index offences represented the largest percentage point increase over the same period (a 4.9 percentage point difference).

Due to a slight database inconsistency, the “other” offence category has the highest rate of reoffending in the adult index offence table (Table A4a). To avoid misrepresentation, and since this category is a mix of offence types, this category has been removed from analysis and charts.

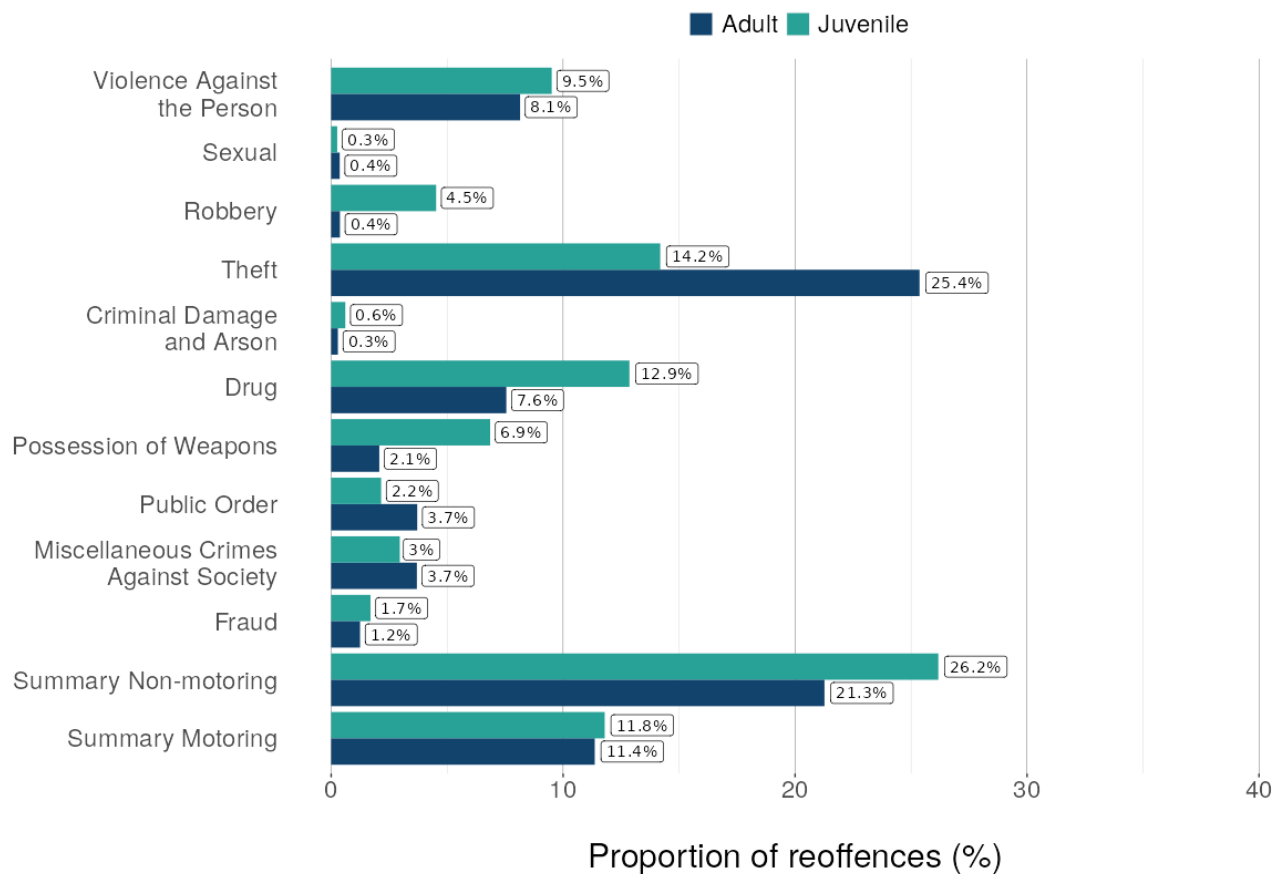
## 5. Reoffending by Proven Reoffence Type

For the April to June 2021 adult cohort, 25.4% of proven reoffences were theft, making up the highest proportion of reoffences.

This represents a decrease of 2.8 percentage points compared to the same period in 2020.

For the adult offender cohort, the highest proportion of proven reoffences (25.4%) were for theft (figure 7). For the juvenile offender cohort, summary non-motoring offences make up the largest proportion of reoffences (26.2%).

**Figure 7: Proportion of proven reoffences for adult and juvenile offenders committed in the one-year follow-up period in England and Wales, by reoffence type, April to June 2021 (Source: Table B3)**



For the adult offender cohort, the second highest proportion of proven reoffences were for summary non-motoring offences (21.3%). Despite the general decrease in the number of proven reoffences committed by adult offenders in recent cohorts, the share of each reoffence category has remained broadly stable over time.

For the juvenile offender cohort, theft offences make up the second largest proportion of reoffences (14.2%), followed by drug offences (12.9%). There has been some variation time over in the share of each reoffence category, with violence against the person having an increasingly larger proportion of

total juvenile reoffences within more recent cohorts; currently standing at 9.5% of total proven reoffences.

For adult and juvenile offender cohorts combined, 32.1% of all reoffences took place within three months after release from custody or after receiving a non-custodial conviction at court, a reprimand, or a warning. This percentage increases to 58.1% within sixth months and steadily increases at an average rate of 7% per month beyond that point.

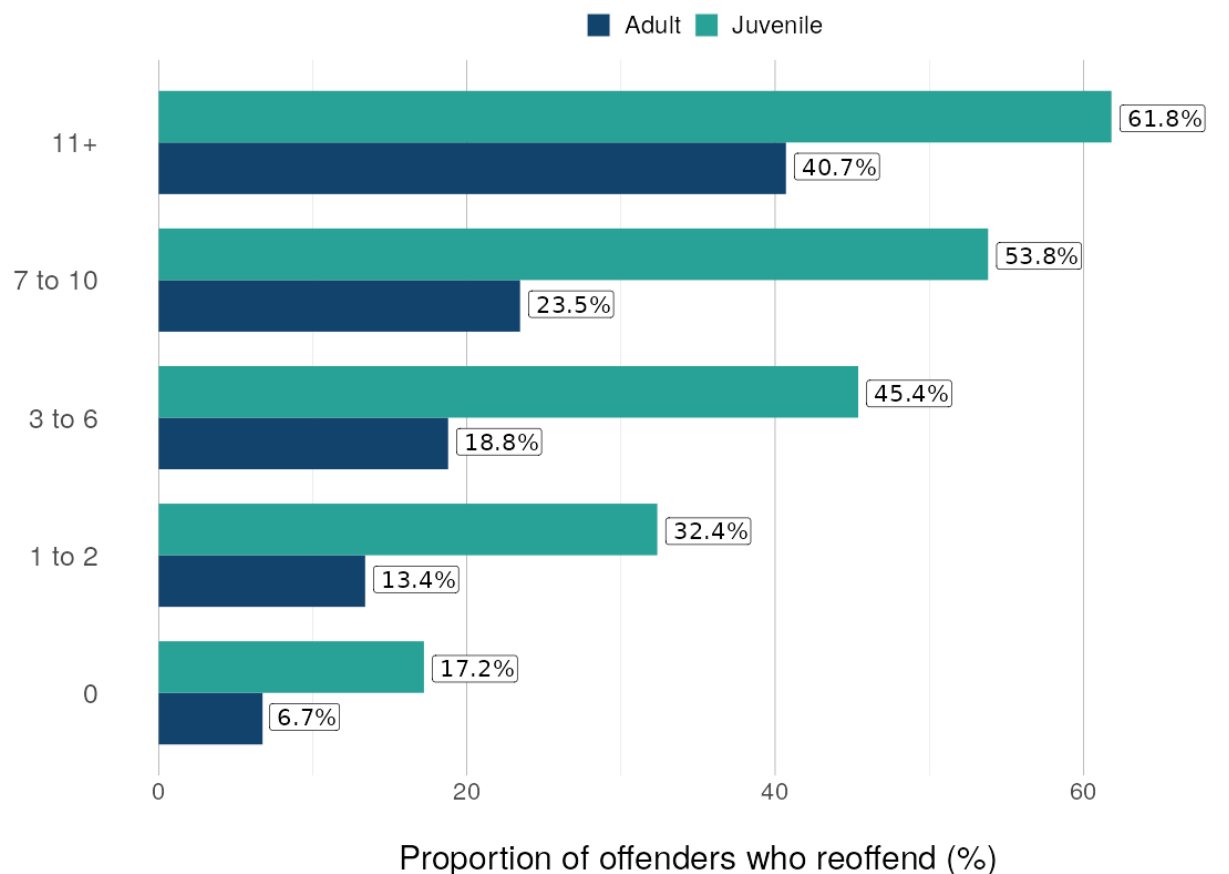
As in section 3, the “other” offence category has been removed from analysis and charts.

## 6. Reoffending by Number of Previous Offences

Offenders with 11 or more previous offences had the highest rate of reoffending (40.7% for adults and 61.8% for juveniles).

For both adult and juvenile offenders, the rate of proven reoffending increases with the number of previous offences committed, as shown in figure 8.

**Figure 8: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences April to June 2021 (Source: Table A5a)**



In the April to June 2021 cohort, the proven reoffending rate for adults ranged from 6.7% for offenders with no previous offences to 40.7% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences. Those with 11 or more previous offences made up 39% of all adult offenders in the cohort, represented 66% of all adult reoffenders and committed 76% of all adult proven reoffences.

The proven reoffending rate for juveniles ranged from 17.2% for offenders with no previous offences to 61.8% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences.

## 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.
- [Data tools](#) providing proven reoffending data for England and Wales, split by various categories (covering July 2010 - June 2021).
- 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.

### Note on data quality

Following additional quality assurance, an issue with the data matching for juveniles released from Secure Children's Homes and Secure Training Centres was noticed. Work is on-going with the data supplier to resolve, with the aim of updating in July's publication. In the meantime, the juvenile cohort released from custody is slightly smaller than expected and these figures should therefore be treated with caution.

### 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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**Next update: 27 July 2023**

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