



Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, October to December 2021

Published 26 October 2023

This publication provides the proven reoffending statistics for the October to December 2021 offender cohort, alongside historical data from 2010 onwards. Although this cohort does not overlap with any Covid-related lockdowns or other operational restrictions, it is still affected by the continued recovery of the courts system, particularly around continued delays in the processing of court cases.

The overall proven reoffending rate was 25.4% for the October to December 2021 offender cohort.



This represents an increase of 2.3 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 and a slight increase (0.1 percentage points) over last quarter.

Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 25.1%.



This is an increase of 2.3 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020 and broadly stable with last quarter.

Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 32.5%.



The juvenile reoffending rate increased by 3.3 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 and increased by 2.1 percentage points over last quarter.

Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 33.1%.



This represents an increase of 3.6 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020 and an increase of 0.7 percentage points over last quarter.

Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 55.3%.



This is an increase of 0.4 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 58.0%, which is an increase of 1.4 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020.

This bulletin, and 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 and a glossary of terms, please refer to the accompanying [guide to proven reoffending](#).

For any feedback related to the content of this publication, please let us know at reoffendingstatistics@justice.gov.uk

Statistician's Comment

“Figures presented in this statistical release show proven reoffending statistics for the October to December 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 25.4% for the October to December 2021 offender cohort, which represents an increase of 2.3 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 and a slight increase (0.1 percentage points) over last quarter. In this quarter, the largest increases in reoffending rates were observed for juvenile offenders – up by 3.3 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020 and by 2.1 percentage points over last quarter.

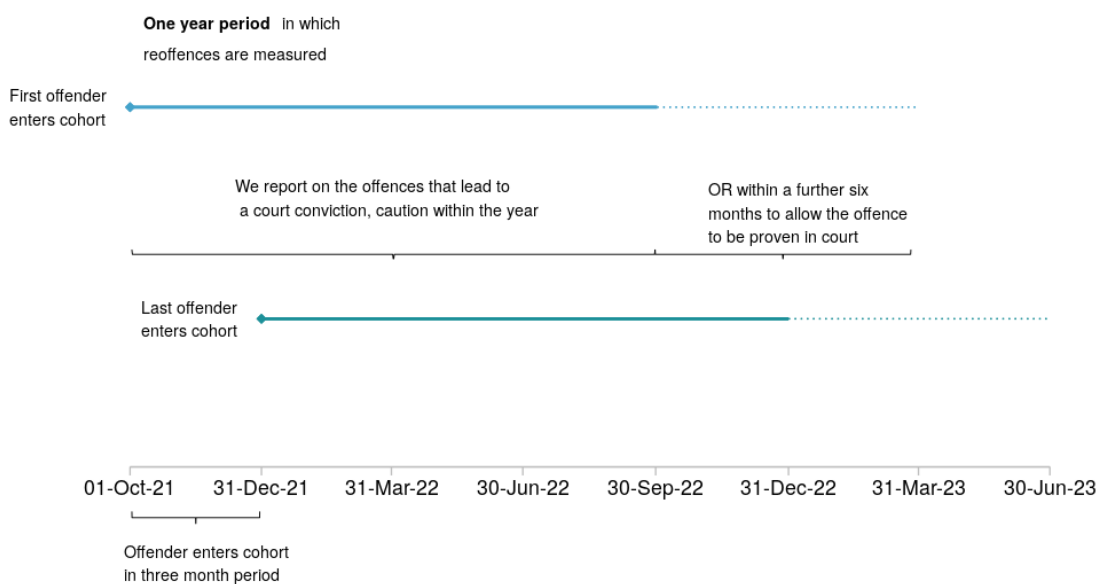
This publication covers the second post-pandemic cohort that does not overlap with any Covid-related lockdowns or other operational restrictions. However, this cohort is still affected by the continued recovery of the courts system and the Criminal Bar Association strike. Particularly, continued delays in the processing of cases mean that increased numbers of reoffence convictions may fall outside of the one year follow up period or six-month waiting period and therefore not be counted in these statistics.”

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 October to December 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.

Figure 1: Timeline of the measurement period of proven reoffending for the October to December 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 were 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’](#).

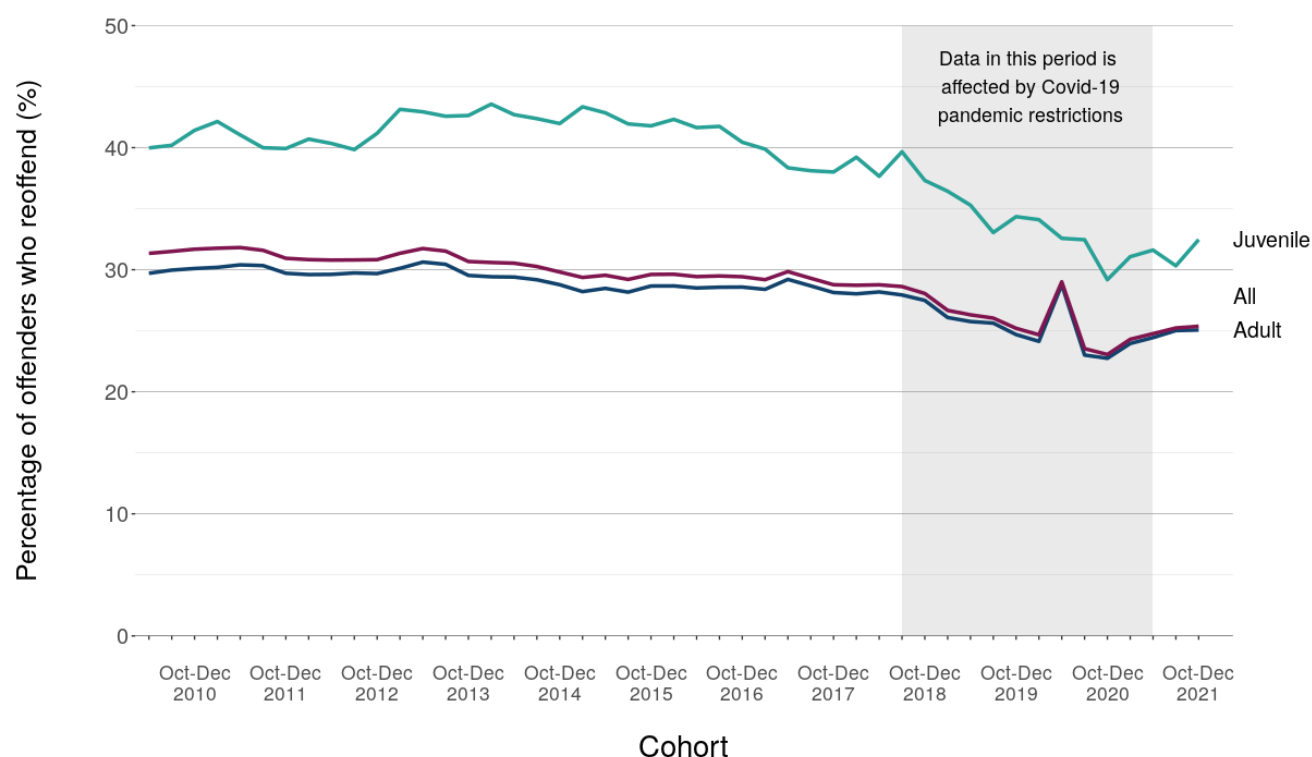
1. Overall – adult and juvenile offenders

The overall proven reoffending rate was 25.4% for the October to December 2021 offender cohort, with around 20,000 of the 79,000 offenders committing a proven reoffence.

Rates of proven reoffending

The overall proven reoffending rate for this quarter was 25.4%, representing an increase of 2.3 percentage points from the same quarter in 2020. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 23.1% and 31.8% (figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of adult and juvenile offenders¹ in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by quarter, April to June 2010 - October to December 2021 (Source: Table A1)



Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 25.1%. This is an increase of 2.3 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year and broadly stable with last quarter. The rate has fluctuated between 22.7% and 30.6% over the timeseries. However, up until the recent quarters affected by the pandemic, the adult reoffending rate has remained broadly flat.

Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 32.5%. The juvenile reoffending rate increased by 3.3 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year and increased by 2.1 percentage

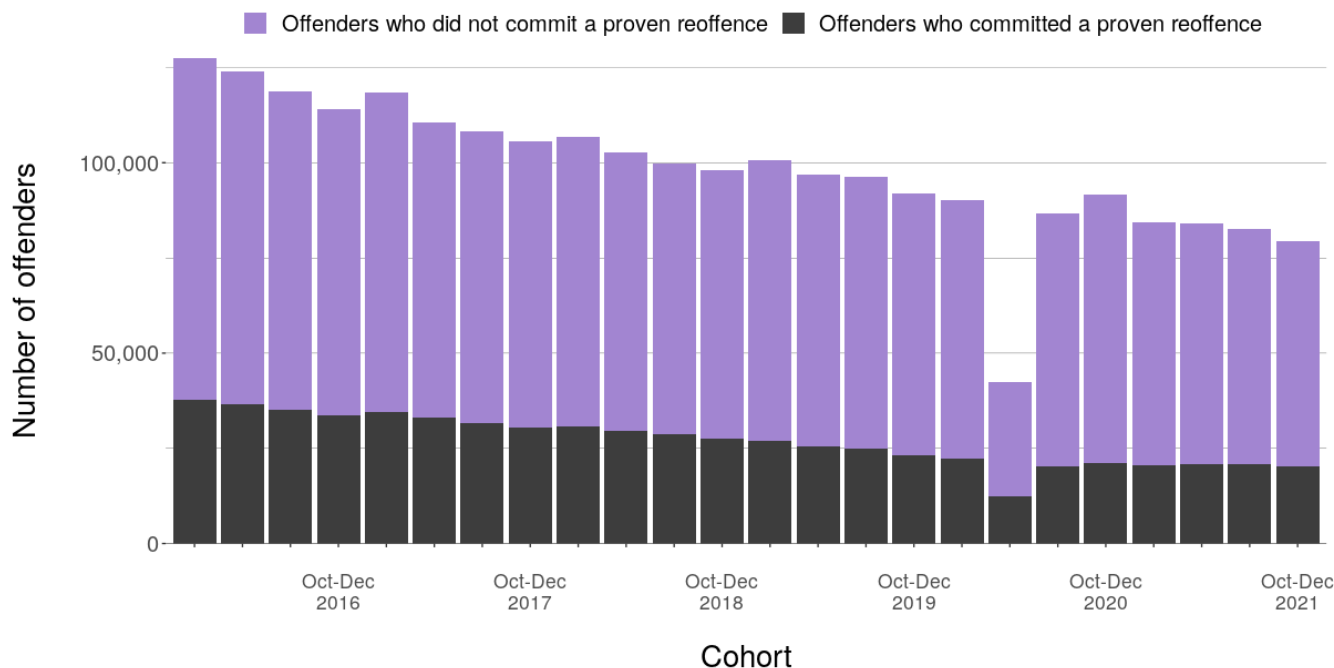
¹ Juveniles are defined as those aged 10 to 17 years old.

points over last quarter. The rate of reoffending has fluctuated between 29.2% and 43.6% over the timeseries but has been in general decline since the January to March 2016 quarter.

Cohort size

Approximately 79,000 offenders were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, or received a reprimand or warning in the October to December 2021 cohort. Around 20,000 of those committed a proven reoffence within the one-year follow up period (figure 3). In total, reoffenders committed almost 76,000 proven reoffences over the follow-up period.

Figure 3: Number of offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by quarter, January to March 2016 - October to December 2021 (Source: Table A1)



We continue to observe a general decline in the volume of offenders in the cohort and in the volume of subsequent proven reoffenders. The size of the offender cohort has decreased by 56.5% since the same quarter in 2010 and decreased by 13.2% since the same quarter in 2020. Similarly, the number of reoffenders has decreased by 65.2% since the same quarter in 2010 and decreased by 4.5% since 2020.

The decline in the juvenile cohort size is particularly pronounced. The number of juvenile offenders in the cohort has decreased by 87.2% since the same quarter in 2010 and decreased by 26.4% since the same quarter in 2020. This is likely a reflection of continued efforts to divert juveniles away from the criminal justice system where appropriate. The relatively small cohort sizes also means that juvenile reoffending rates may be more prone to volatility and so caution should be taken when making comparisons with these rates.

Within the combined, overall cohort, reoffenders committed an average of 3.76 reoffences each (also known as the frequency rate). More broadly, the overall frequency rate has been in general decline since a peak of 4.06 in 2016. The total number of reoffences has also generally declined over this period but has increased by 2.0% since the same quarter in 2020. Adult reoffenders committed on average 3.74 reoffences each, whilst juvenile reoffenders committed on average 4.26 reoffences each.

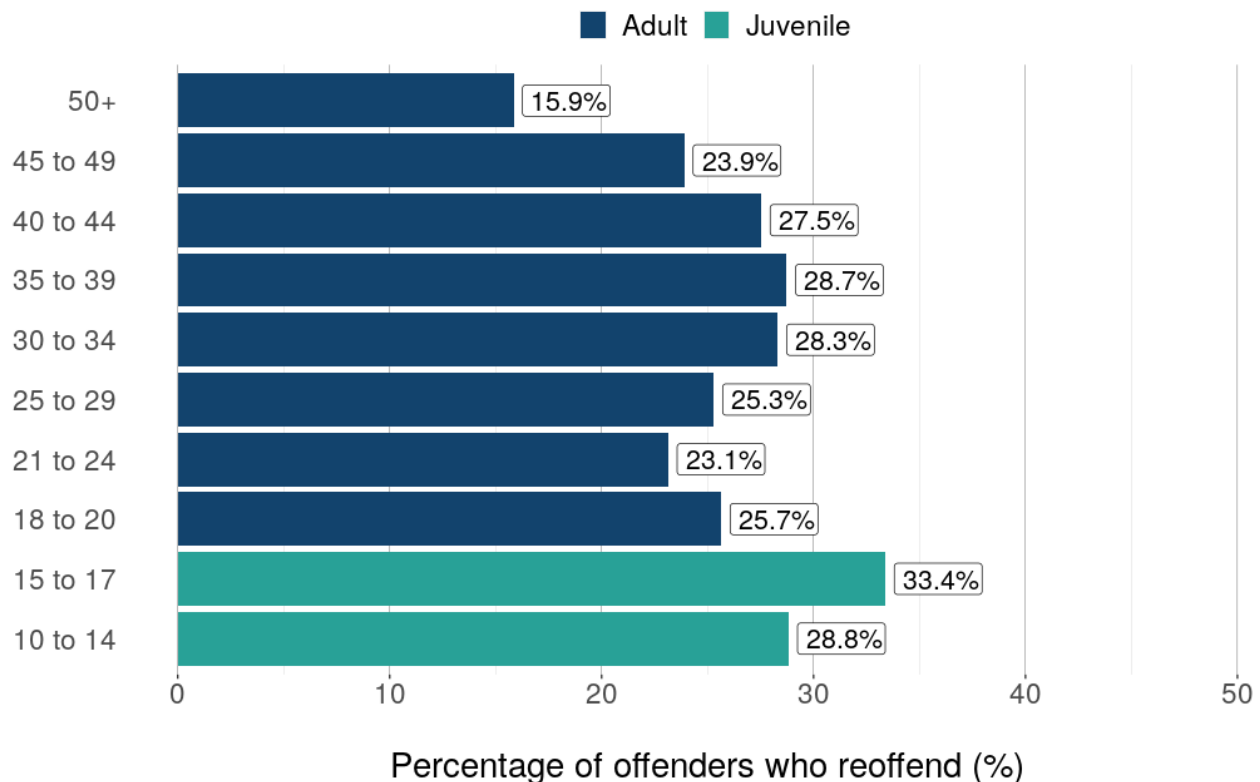
2. Overall – Offender demographics

The age group with the highest reoffending rate was 15 to 17-year-olds (33.4%). Men reoffended at a higher rate (26.1%) than women (21.1%).

Age

The age group with the highest reoffending rate was 15 to 17-year-olds, at 33.4% (figure 4), which is consistent with historical norms. This was followed by the 10 to 14-year-old offenders, with a reoffending rate of 28.8%. For adults, the proven reoffending rate starts to fall with increasing age after the 35 to 39-year-old group.

Figure 4: Percentage of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, October to December 2021 (Source: Table A3)



Sex

Of the overall offender cohort, 85% were male and 15% were female. The gender split has remained reasonably stable over time.

Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 26.1% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 21.1%. Since 2010, these rates have fluctuated between 23.9% and 33.8% for males and 18.3% to 24.4% for females.

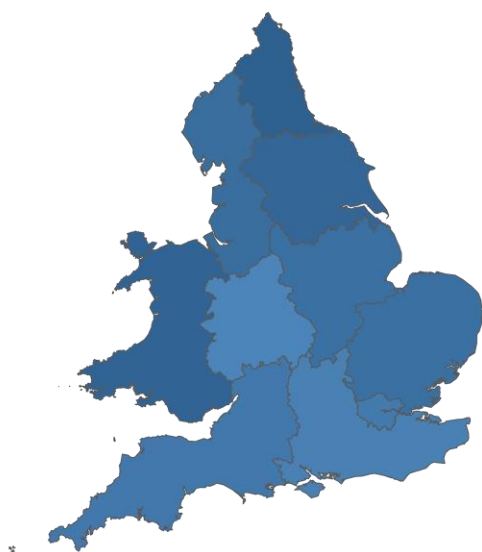
Geography

The geographical region with the greatest decrease in the overall rate of reoffending compared to the same period last year was London, with a 2.0 percentage point decrease (figure 5). The geographical region with the greatest increase was the East of England, with a 2.0 percentage point increase. Note that the geographical regions shown are distinct from the Probation Service areas. The rates shown are also for all offenders, not just those managed by the Probation Service.

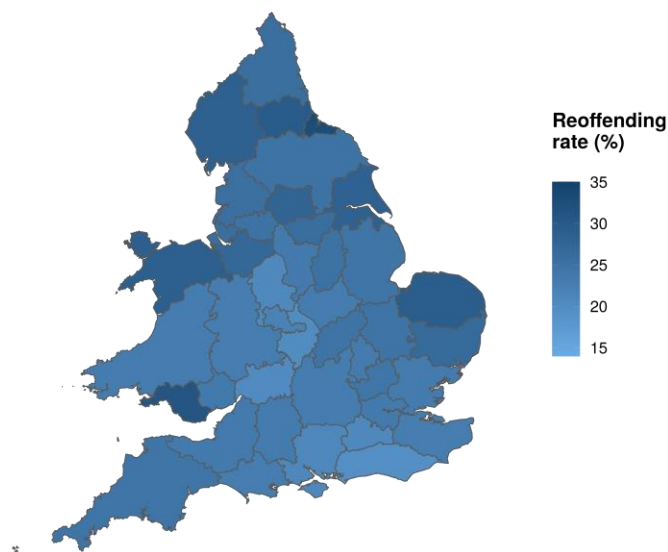
The Police Force Area (PFA) with the greatest decrease in the overall rate of reoffending compared to the same period last year was Gwent, with a 2.0 percentage point decrease. The PFA with the greatest increase was Suffolk, with a 5.3 percentage point increase.

Figure 5: Percentage of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by Region and Police Force Area (PFA), January 2020 to December 2021 (Source: Geographic Data Tool)

Regions



Police Force Areas



Note that reoffending rates by geographical region are rolling yearly averages, rather than quarterly values, to prevent unintended disclosure from small cohort sizes. An offender's geographical location is based on their postcode on the date they received their disposal. Care should be taken when making direct comparison of regions, since the presented rates do not control for offender demographics.

Ethnicity

The highest reoffending rate was observed for White offenders, 26.8%, which is a 2.8 percentage point increase compared to the same quarter last year. This was followed by Black offenders (26.3%, 2.1 percentage point increase), Asian offenders (20.2%, 1.3 percentage point increase), and offenders in the Other category (17.0%, 2.5 percentage point decrease).

3. Reoffending by Disposal Type

Adults released from custody or starting a court order had a proven reoffending rate of 33.1%, representing an increase of 3.6 percentage points since the same quarter last year.

Juvenile offenders given youth cautions or released from custody had differing proven reoffending rates, at 22.8% and 66.7% respectively.

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](#).²

Adult offenders

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders starting a court order³ was 31.5%, an increase of 5.0 percentage points when compared to the same quarter in 2020, and an increase of 1.0 percentage points when compared to the previous quarter⁴.

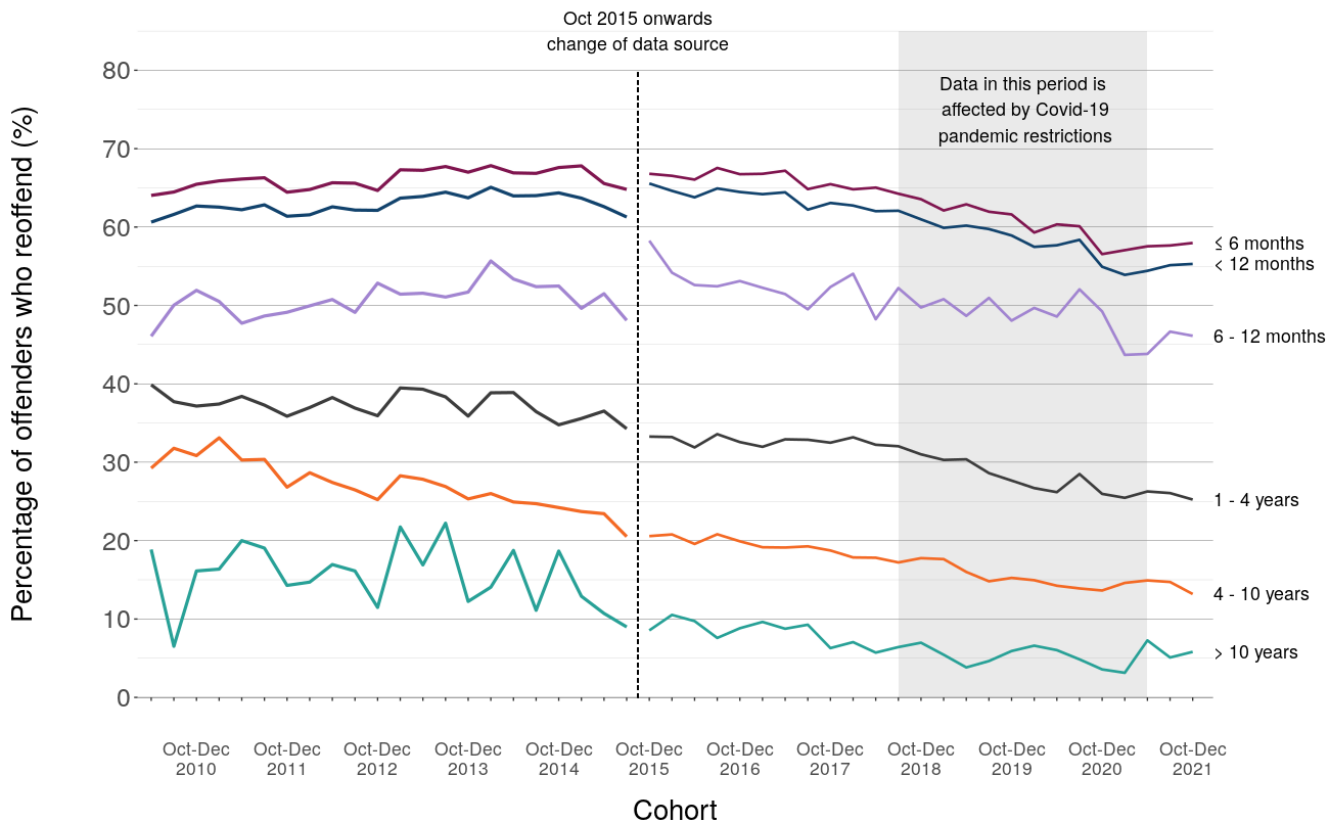
The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 37.1%, a small decrease (0.1 percentage points) compared to the same quarter in the previous year and a decrease of 0.3 percentage points compared to the previous quarter. The proven reoffending rate varied by custodial sentence lengths (figure 6).

² 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](#).

³ Community order or suspended sentence order.

⁴ 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 6: Percentage of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence by custodial sentence length, by quarter, April to June 2010 - October to December 2021 (Source: Table C2a)

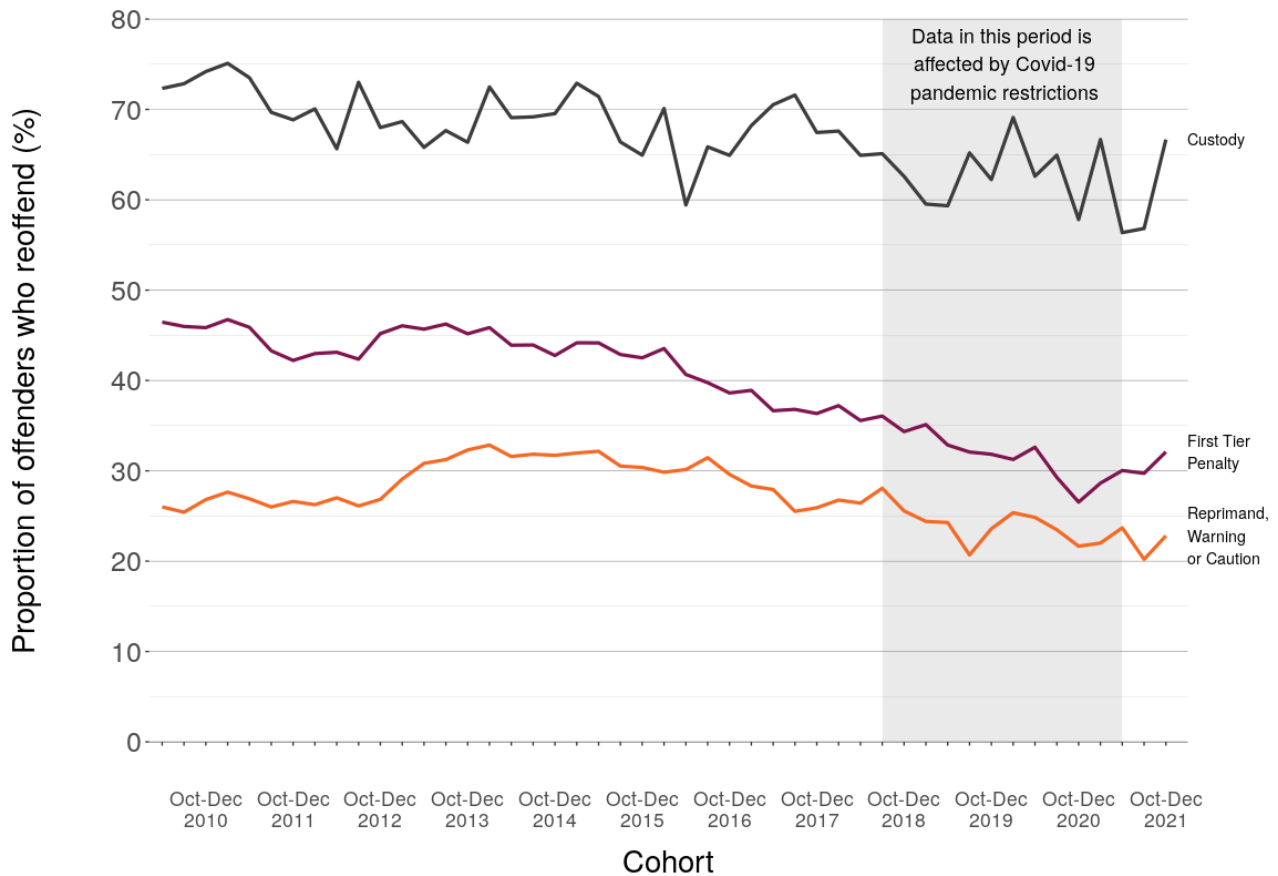


Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 55.3%, whilst those with sentences of 12 months or more reoffended at a substantially lower rate, at 20.9%. This is an increase of 0.4 percentage points and a decrease of 0.5 percentage points respectively from the same quarter in 2020.

Juvenile offenders

Juvenile offenders given reprimands, warnings or youth cautions⁵ had a proven reoffending rate of 22.8%, an increase of 1.2 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020. Those given a first tier penalty had a proven reoffending rate of 32.1%, an increase of 5.6 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020. Those released from custody had a proven reoffending rate of 66.7%, which has increased by 8.9 percentage points since the same quarter in 2020⁶.

Figure 7: Percentage of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, by quarter, April to June 2010 - October to December 2021 (Source: Table C1b)



For the October to December 2021 cohort, 48 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 32 (66.7%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year.

⁵ 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.

⁶ The juvenile proven reoffending data by disposal uses the same methodology as that adopted for adult reoffending by disposal (see section 3 for more details).

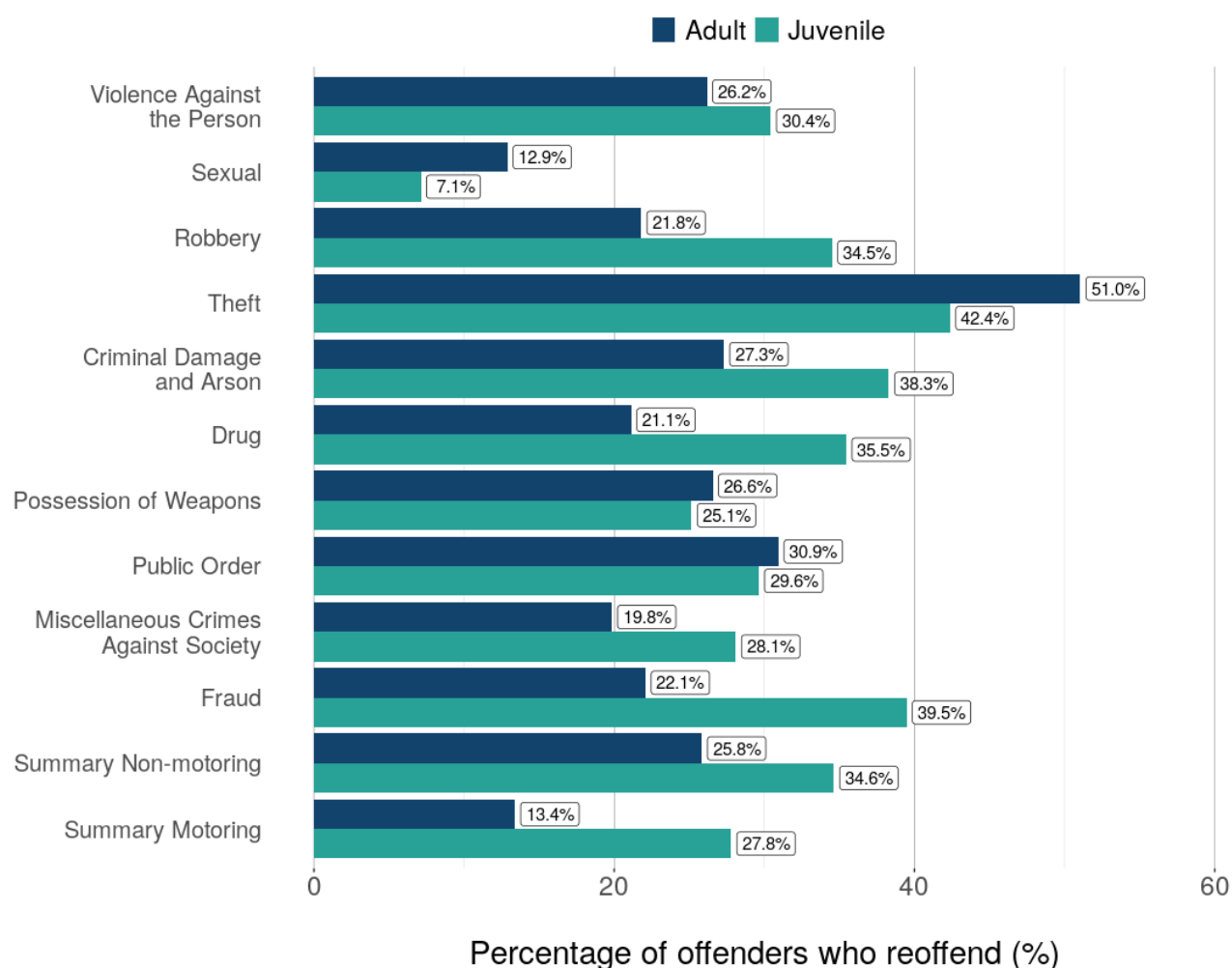
4. Reoffending by Index Offence Type

For the October to December 2021 adult cohort, the index offence⁷ category associated with the highest reoffending rate was theft (51.0%).

This is an increase of 7.5 percentage points, from 43.6%, in the same quarter in 2020.

For adult offenders, the highest reoffending rate of 51.0% was for those with an index offence of theft. For juvenile offenders, the highest reoffending rate of 42.4% was for those with an index offence of theft (figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence, October to December 2021 (Source: Table A4a/b)



For adult offenders, the second highest reoffending rate was for those with a public order index offence (30.9%). The lowest rate of reoffending (12.9%) was observed among those with a sexual offence as their index offence. The public order index offence category saw the largest percentage

⁷ An index offence refers to the offence that leads to an offender being included in the offender cohort.

point decrease in reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2020, with a 2.8 percentage point difference. Those with an index offence of theft saw the largest increase of 7.5 percentage points over the same period.

For juvenile offenders, the second highest reoffending rate was for those with an index offence of fraud at 39.5%. Offenders who had committed a sexual index offence had the lowest rate of reoffending (7.1%). Those who committed a public order index offence saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate since the same quarter in 2020, a 7.7 percentage point difference. Theft index offences represented the largest percentage point increase over the same period (a 7.8 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 the analysis and charts.

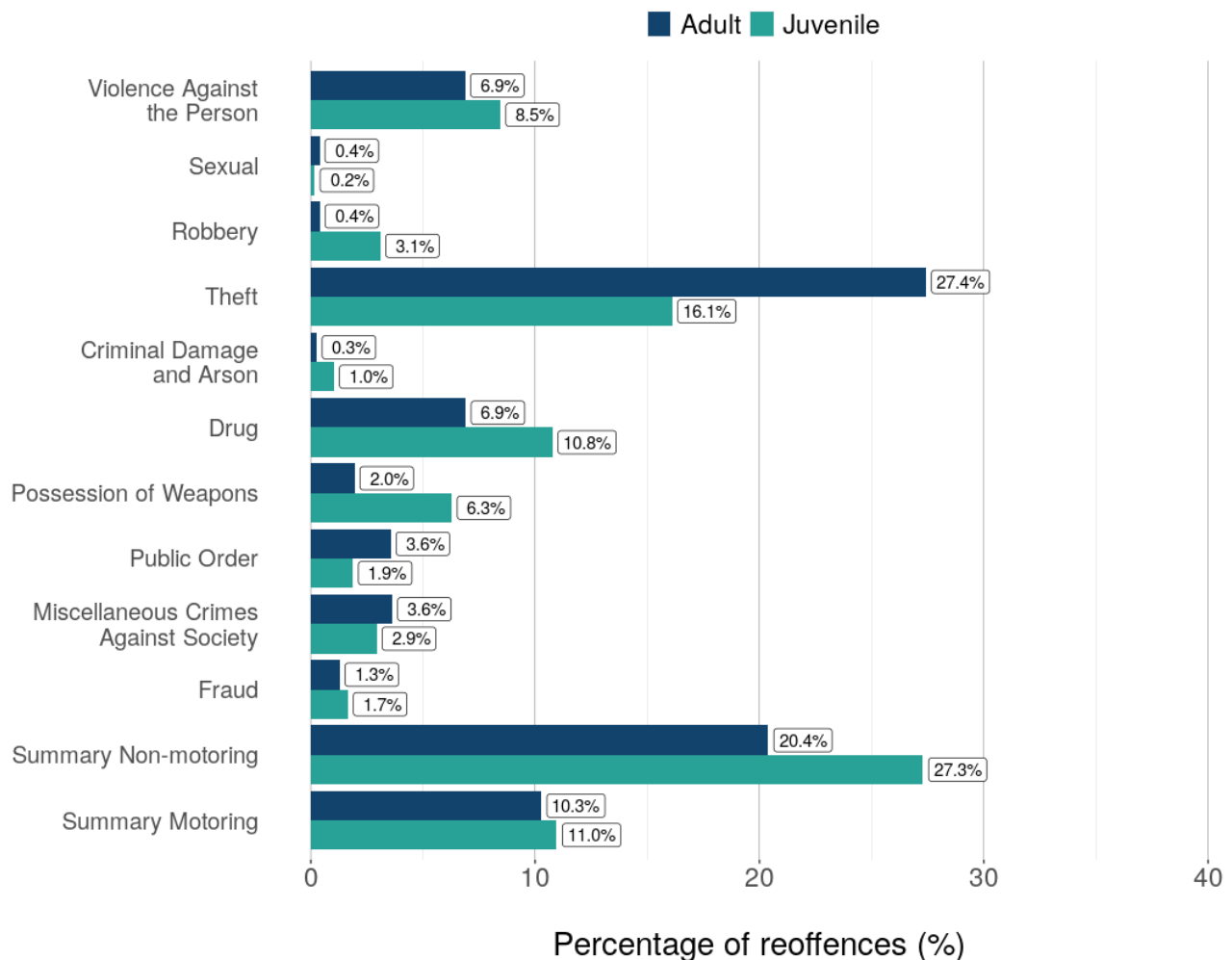
5. Reoffending by Proven Reoffence Type

For the October to December 2021 adult cohort, 27.4% of proven reoffences were theft, making up the highest proportion of reoffences.

This represents an increase of 2.6 percentage points compared to the same period in 2020.

For the adult offender cohort, the highest proportion of proven reoffences (27.4%) were for theft (figure 9). For the juvenile offender cohort, summary non-motoring offences made up the largest proportion of reoffences (27.3%).

Figure 9: Percentage of proven reoffences for adult and juvenile offenders committed in the one-year follow-up period in England and Wales, by reoffence type, October to December 2021 (Source: Table B3)



For the adult offender cohort, the second highest proportion of proven reoffences were for summary non-motoring offences (20.4%). 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 (16.1%), followed by summary motoring offences (11.0%). There has been some variation over time 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 8.5% of total proven reoffences.

For adult and juvenile offender cohorts combined, 30.8% 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 57.2% within six months and steadily increases at an average rate of 7.1% per month beyond that point.

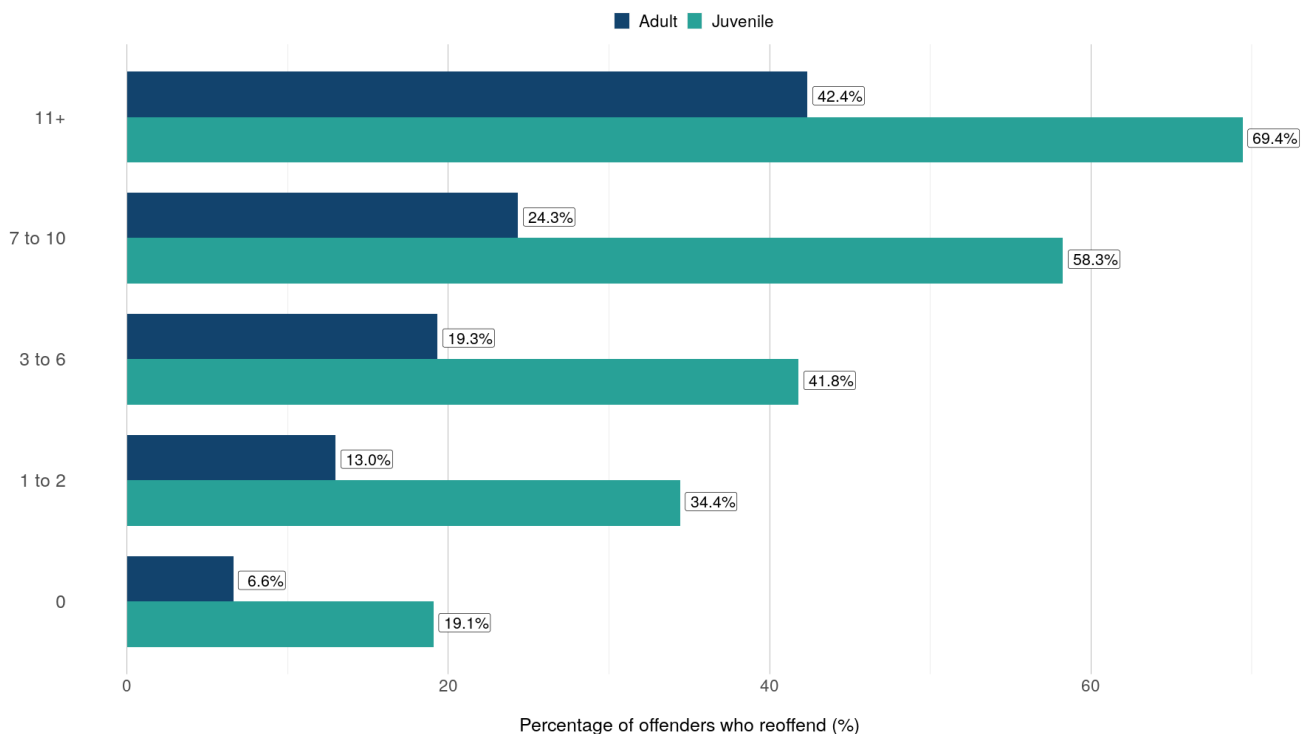
As in section 4, the “other” offence category has been removed from analysis and charts.

6. Reoffending by Number of Previous Offences

Offenders with 11 or more previous offences⁸ had the highest rate of reoffending (42.4% for adults and 69.4% 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 10.

Figure 10: Percentage of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences, October to December 2021 (Source: Table A5a/b)



In the October to December 2021 cohort, the proven reoffending rate for adults ranged from 6.6% for offenders with no previous offences to 42.4% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences. Those with 11 or more previous offences made up 39.4% of all adult offenders in the cohort, represented 66.6% of all adult reoffenders and committed 76.9% of all adult proven reoffences. The proven reoffending rate for juveniles ranged from 19.1% for offenders with no previous offences to 69.4% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences.

⁸ Previous offences are those committed prior to an offender's index offence.

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 January 2011 - December 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.

National Statistics status

National Statistics are [accredited official statistics](#) that meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to [contact us](#) directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

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 OSR 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 Data and Analysis directorate of the Ministry of Justice:

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