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Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly (CJSQ) England and Wales, year ending September 2024

Main points

1.51 million individuals were formally dealt with by the Criminal Justice System (CJS)



The number of individuals formally dealt with by the CJS in England and Wales increased by 4% in the latest year.

Out of court disposals increased slightly (1%)



Over three quarters of OOCs were for community resolutions – volumes have increased by 6% compared to the previous year. The volume of all other OOCs continued to fall.

Prosecutions and convictions increased by 5% and 4% respectively



Prosecutions for indictable offences increased 18% in the latest year and were 11% higher than in the year ending September 2019.

The proportion and volume of defendants remanded in custody increased



There was a slight increase in the proportion of defendants remanded in custody across each stage of court proceedings, and an increase in the overall volume of custodial remand.

The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) for all offences reduced slightly to 20.1 months



Overall ACSL decreased slightly from a series peak seen in the previous year. The decrease in ACSL was mainly driven by an increase in the proportion of custodial sentences for theft offences, which attract shorter sentences.

This publication provides criminal justice statistics for the latest 12-month period, with comparisons made to corresponding periods in previous years where appropriate.

The bulletin is accompanied by overview tables. For technical detail about sources, data quality, and terminology, please refer to the accompanying technical guide to criminal justice statistics.

The publication may include revisions for figures previously published where additional data has become available since those publications.

Introduction

This report presents key statistics on activity in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) for England and Wales. It provides commentary for the 12-month period of September 2023 to September 2024 (referred to as the 'latest year').

The contents of this bulletin will be of interest to government policy makers in the development of policy and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation. Others will be interested in the way different offences are dealt with in the CJS, trends in sentencing outcomes.

Part of the time series in this publication is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic response and the procedural changes required to ensure criminal courts continued to function effectively.

Changes and revisions in this publication

There are no notable changes or revisions made in this edition.

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

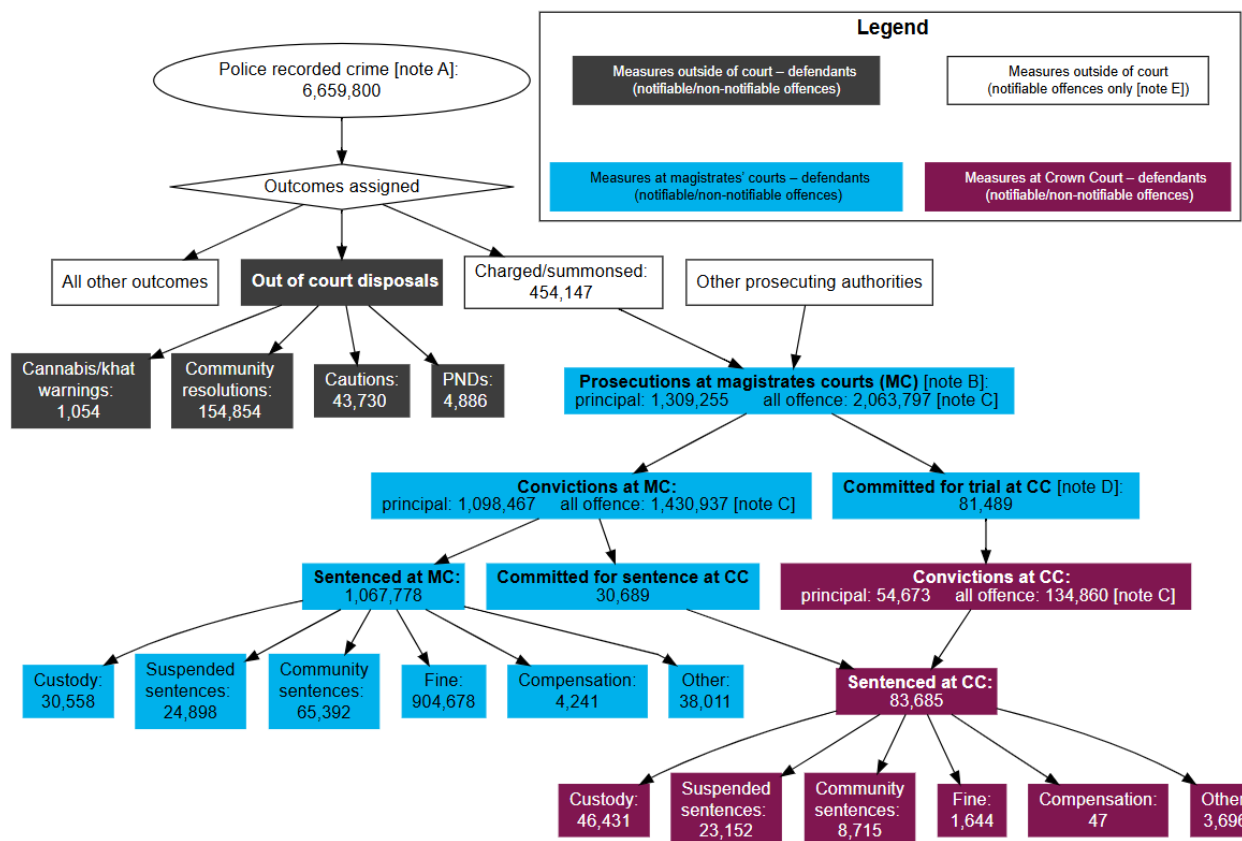
Statistician's comment

Alongside increasing police charge rates, the volume of prosecutions and convictions at criminal courts continued to increase. For the more serious indictable offences prosecutions and convictions reached their highest level since the year to September 2017.

This rise in convictions for more serious offences has increased the number of offenders being sentenced to immediate custody, while the volumes of those remanded in custody continued to rise.

For defendants sentenced to custody, the average custodial sentence length reduced slightly but remains high. The reduction in the latest period is largely due to the change in offence mix of offences sentenced to custody, with more theft offences, which attract lower custodial sentences generally.

Figure 1: Summary of the Criminal Justice System, year ending September 2024, England and Wales¹



Note ref.	Note text
[note A]	Covers all indictable offences, including triable either way, plus a few closely associated summary offences.
[note B]	Includes males, females, persons where sex "Not Stated" and other offenders, i.e., companies, public bodies, etc.
[note C]	Figures relate to a count on an all-offence (principal and non-principal) basis, as opposed to a count of defendants against their principal (most serious) offence.
[note D]	Number of defendants sent for trial at Crown Court.
[note E]	The term 'notifiable' covers offences that are notified to the Home Office, and they are collectively known as 'recorded crime'. Notifiable offences include all indictable and triable-either-way offences (excluding section 6 of the Bail Act 1976), together with certain closely associated summary offences. Police recorded crime statistics cover notifiable offences.

¹ Statistics described in Figure 1 relate to tables Q1.1 and Q2.2 in the Overview Tables accompanying this release. Those presented in coloured boxes indicate where we are responsible for the data described. Details on remaining figures' origin can be found in the Overview Tables.

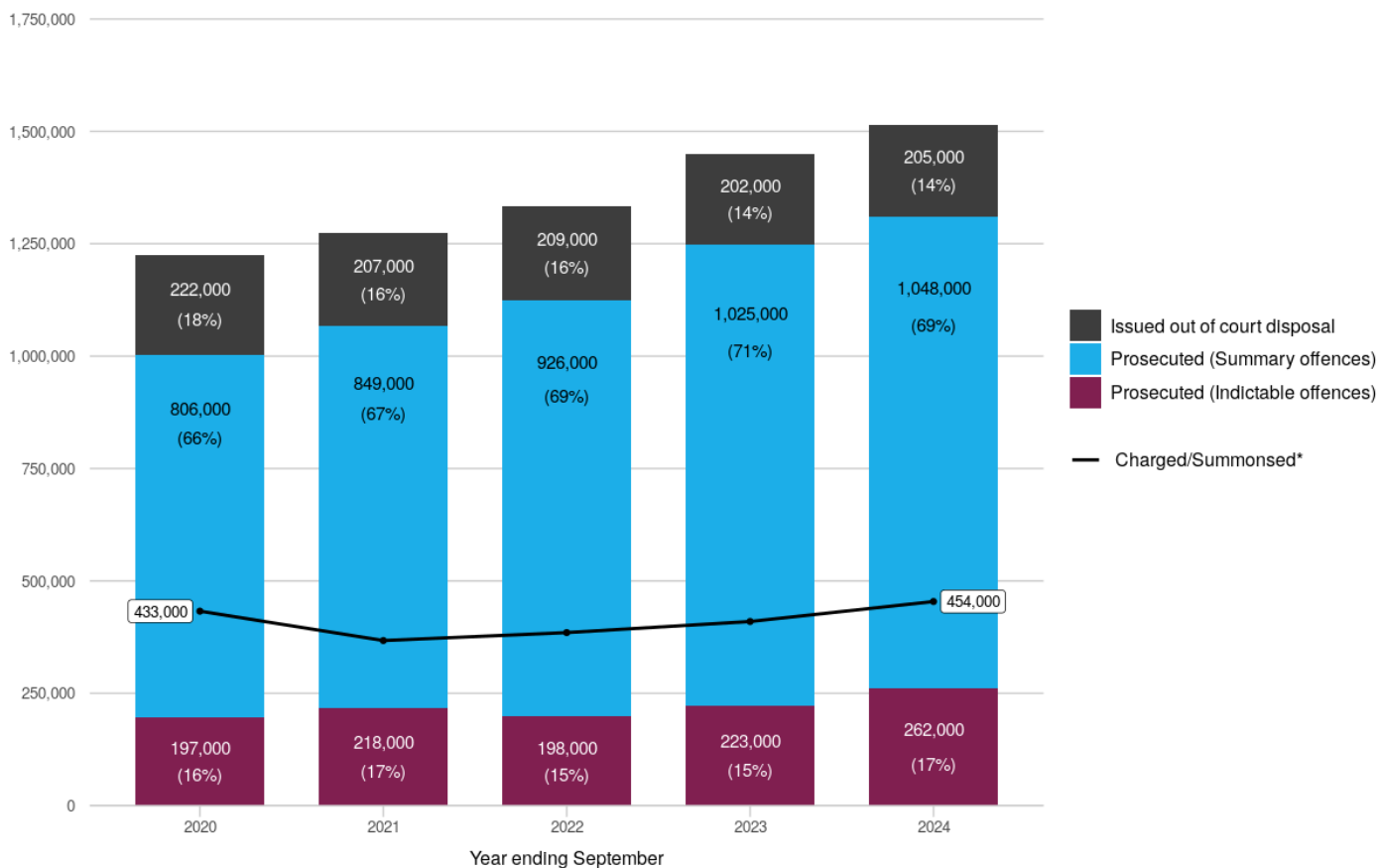
1. Overview of the Criminal Justice System

1.51 million individuals were formally dealt with by the Criminal Justice System (CJS)

The number of individuals² formally dealt with by the CJS³ in England and Wales increased by 4% in the latest year.

Figure 2: Number of individuals formally dealt with by the CJS & offences resulting in a charge/summons

England and Wales, year ending September 2020 to September 2024



Source: Table Q1.1 and Q1.2

*Number of notifiable offences given a charged/summonsed outcome, excludes fraud

Latest estimates from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that crime experienced by individuals and households has generally decreased over the last 10 years⁴.

Police recorded crime (PRC) was 6.66 million in the latest year, a slight decrease from the year ending September 2023. However, levels of police recorded crime have increased from 4.33 million in the year ending September 2015. Changes and improvements in police activity and recording practices are a major driver behind the increase in PRC since March 2014. There was an 11% increase in recorded crimes that resulted in a charge in the latest year, driving some of the increased flows into the courts.

Out of court disposals increased by 1% in the latest year (see the Out of Court Disposals chapter).

The number of defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' courts increased by 5% in the latest year and convictions at all courts increased by 4% (see the Prosecutions and Convictions chapter).

Increases in the numbers sentenced to immediate custody (8%) together with the defendants remanded in custody at the Crown Court (15%) in the latest year have increased workloads on 'downstream' services such as prisons receptions.

² An individual (includes companies) can be counted more than once in a year if dealt with by the CJS on multiple separate occasions.

³ The number of individuals formally dealt with by the CJS is the sum of all defendants prosecuted at magistrates' court plus all individuals issued an out of court disposal (including cautions, Penalty Notice for Disorder, cannabis/khat warning and community resolutions).

⁴ [Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2024](#).

2. Out of Court Disposals

Out of court disposals increased slightly (1%)

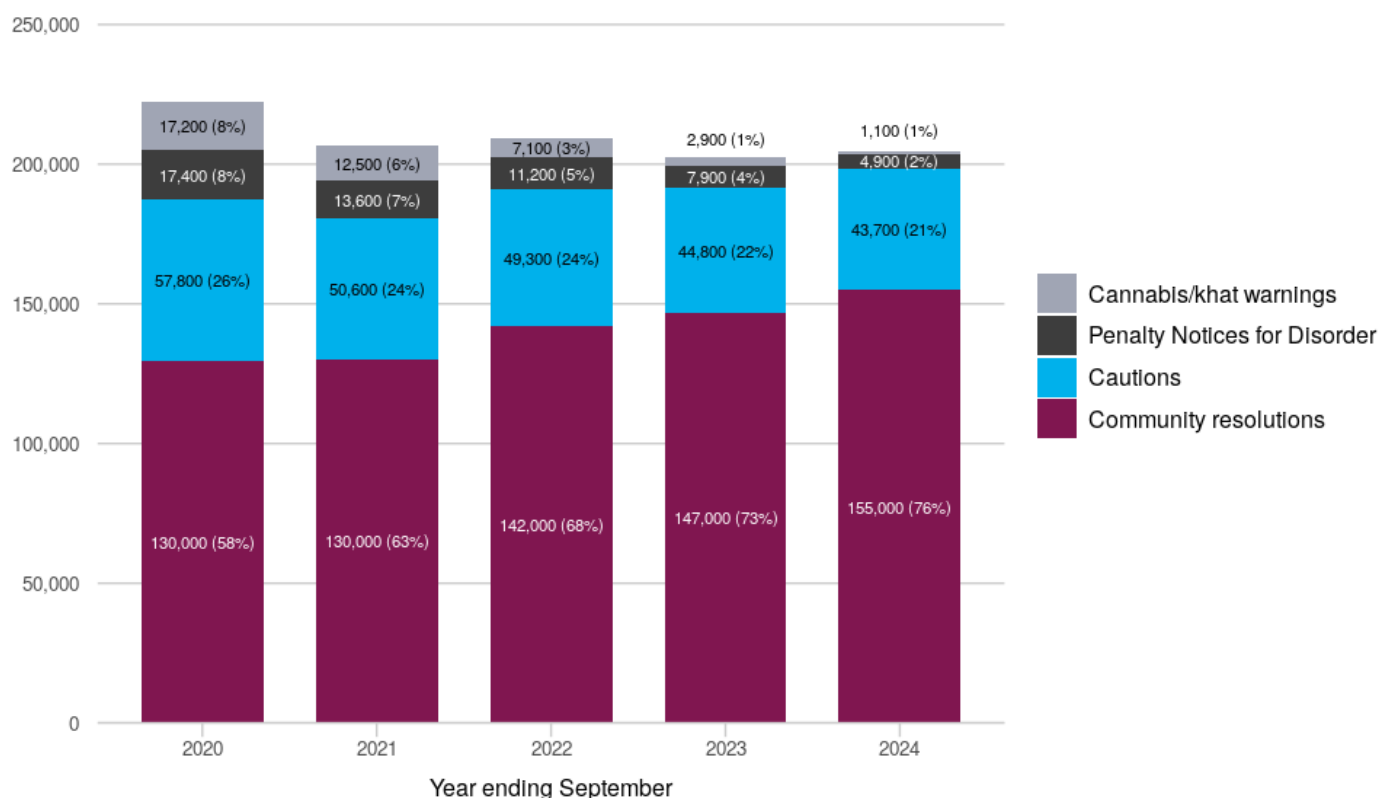
Over three quarters of OOCs were for community resolutions – volumes have increased by 6% compared to the previous year. The volume of all other OOCs continued to fall.

Out of court disposals (OOCs) are sanctions used by the police to address offences without the need to be dealt with at court.

There were around 205,000 OOCs issued in the year ending September 2024, an overall increase of 1% compared to the previous year. This was driven by a 6% increase in community resolutions⁵ (155,000), representing 76% of the total number of OOCs issued in the latest year. Drug offences continued to be the largest contributing offence group accounting around a third of all CRs, with notable increases seen for theft offences (18%) and violence against the person (12%) compared to the previous year.

Figure 3: Number of out of court disposals issued

England and Wales, year ending September 2020 to September 2024



Source: Table Q1.1

There were 4,900 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) issued in the year ending September 2024, this was a 38% decrease compared to the previous year and the lowest volume reported in the series.

Around 43,700 offenders received a simple or conditional caution⁶, a decrease of 2% compared to the previous year and continuing the falls seen over the last decade.

The cautioning rate⁷ decreased slightly to 9% overall and were highest for drug offences (18%) and criminal damage and arson (16%).

⁵ Some police forces have moved to reduce the types of out of court disposals used for adult offenders. In these areas, the only out of court disposals used are community resolutions and conditional cautions. Cannabis/Khat warnings will not be used.

⁶ Caution figures provided have been drawn from an extract of the Police National Computer (PNC) data held by the MoJ. These are presented on a principal offence basis, reporting information relating to the most serious offence that an offender was cautioned for on a given occasion.

⁷ The cautioning rate represents the percentage of offenders (those either cautioned or convicted, excluding motoring offences) who received a caution.

3. Prosecutions & Convictions

Prosecutions (5%) and convictions (4%) for all offences increased

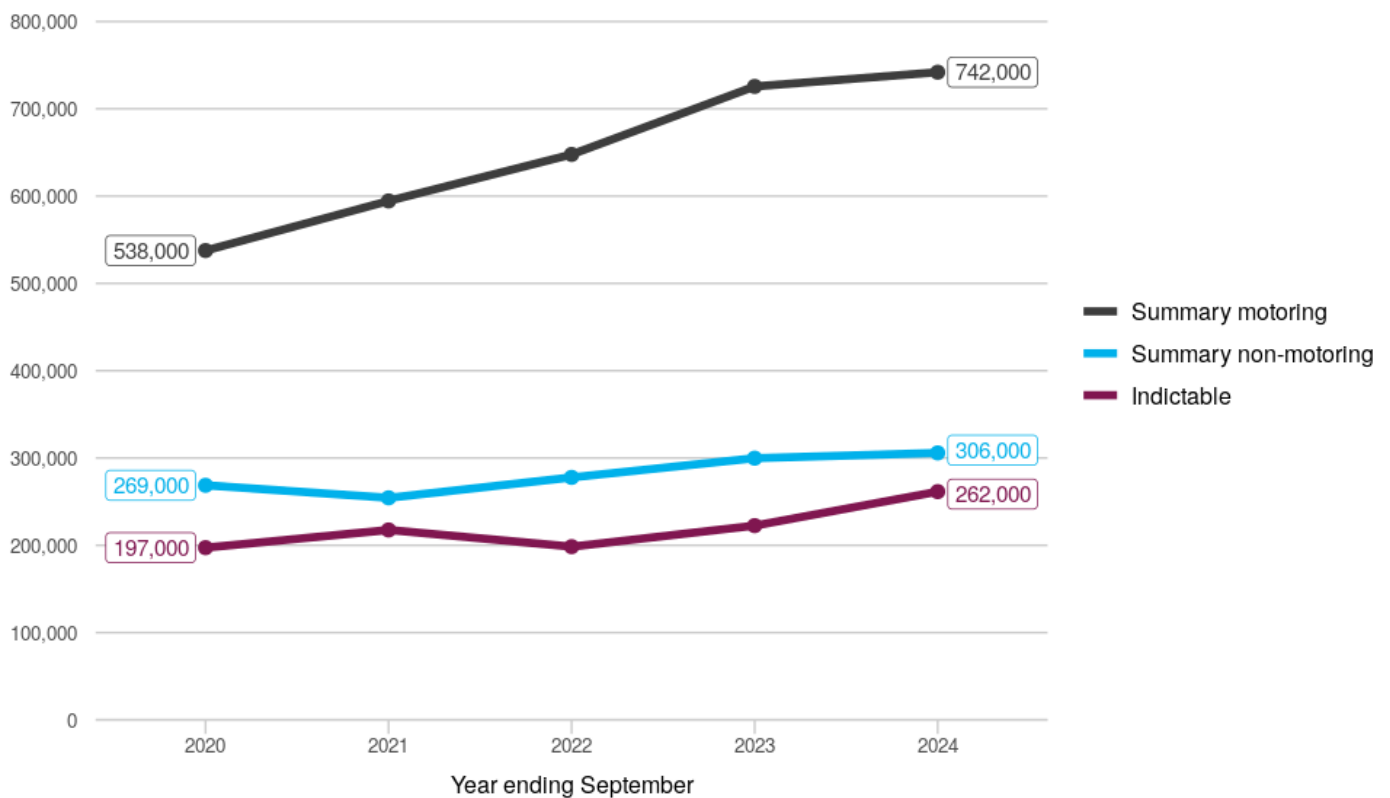
Prosecutions for indictable offences (including triable-either-way) increased 18% in the latest year and were 11% higher than in the year ending September 2019.

In the year ending September 2024, there were 1.31 million defendants proceeded against at the magistrates' courts, an increase of 5% compared to the previous year and the highest number of prosecutions since the year ending September 2019. Summary offences make up 80% of all proceedings and have continued to show small increases. The increase in overall proceedings was driven by an 18% increase in more serious indictable offences (including triable-either-way).

Prosecutions increased across all offence groups, including a 32% increase for theft offences (up by 15,700) and an 30% increase for criminal damage and arson (up by 700). In addition there was a notable increase in the volume of prosecutions for public order offences in the period, up 15% and showing the highest volumes seen in the last decade – this reflects the impact of the public disorder seen from 30 July 2024.

Figure 4: Number of prosecutions at magistrates' courts, by offence type

England and Wales, year ending September 2020 to September 2024



Source: Table Q3.2

In the year ending September 2024, 1.15 million offenders were convicted, 4% more than in the previous year. The number of convictions increased across all offence types including a 13% in indictable offences, mainly driven by a sharp increase in theft offences (32%).

Despite overall convictions remaining 4% below the level of five years ago, convictions for both violence against the person and sexual offences have increased compared to the year ending September 2019, up 29% and 46% respectively.

Trends in convictions for indictable offences tend to lag prosecutions due to the time taken between completing proceedings in the magistrates' court (counted as prosecutions) and cases completing at Crown Court⁸.

⁸ It is not advised to use this data to calculate conviction rate (the number of convictions as a proportion of total prosecutions). This is due to the Court Proceedings Database counting two separate records at two separate stages (one at magistrates' court, one at Crown Court). An individual may be convicted in a different year from when they were initially prosecuted, or the principal offence may differ between these stages. As a result, this rate is not an accurate measure of the proportion of prosecutions that result in a conviction.

4. Remands⁹

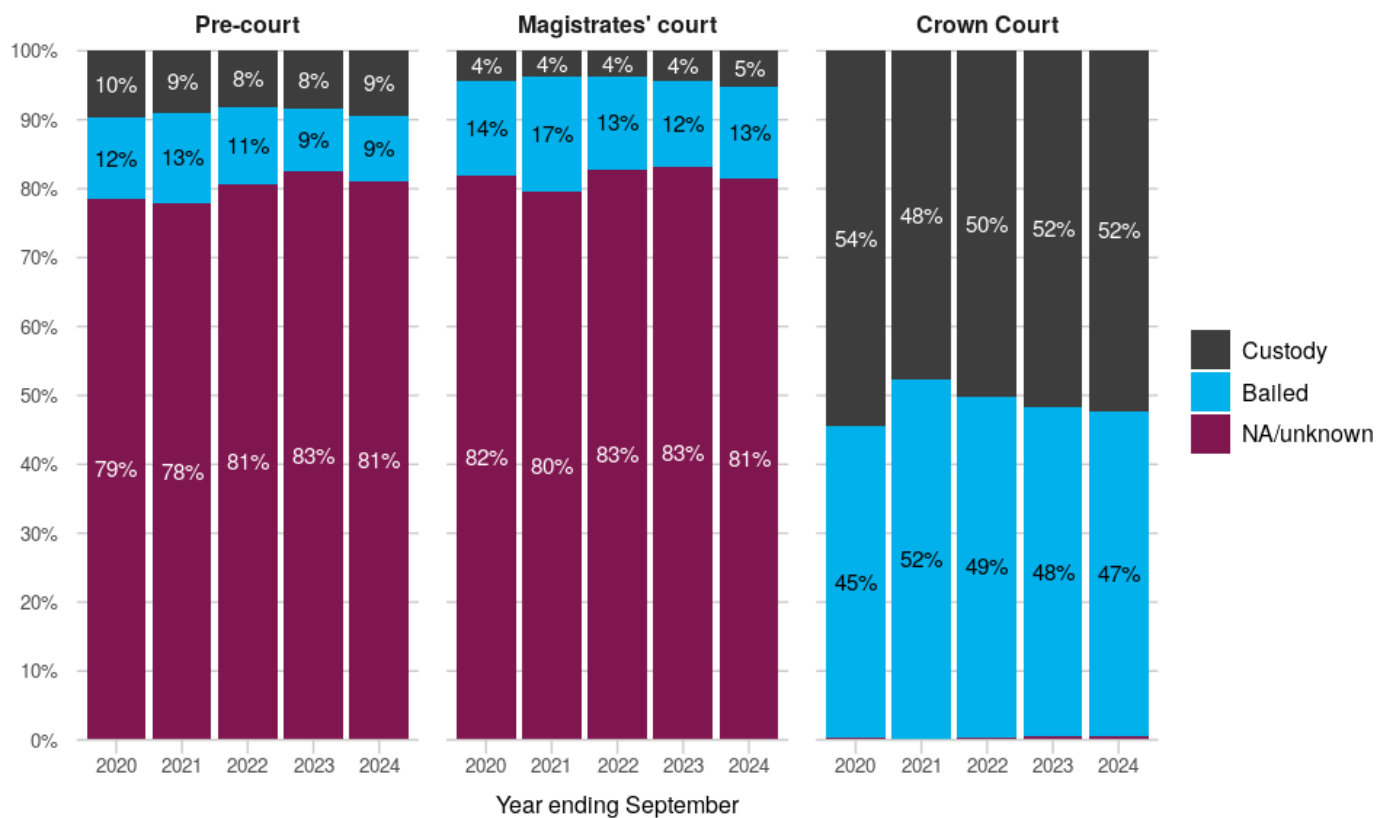
The proportion and volume of defendants remanded in custody increased

In the year ending September 2024, there was a slight increase in the proportion of defendants remanded in custody across each stage of court proceedings, and an increase in the overall volume of custodial remand.

In the year ending September 2024, 1.31 million defendants were directed to appear at magistrates' courts by prosecuting authorities. The proportion of defendants held in custody increased slightly from 8% in the year ending September 2023 to 9% in the latest year.

At magistrates' courts, the volume of those remanded in custody increased by 26% to around 68,000 compared to the previous year (54,000) - this remains broadly stable at around 5% of all defendants dealt with at the magistrates' courts. Of the defendants remanded in custody at magistrates' courts in the latest year, 13% received an immediate or suspended custodial sentence and a further 71% were sent for trial or sentencing at Crown Court.

Figure 5: Defendants' remand status prior to appearing at court, at magistrates' court and at Crown Court
England and Wales, year ending September 2020 to September 2024



Source: Tables Q4.1, Q4.2 & Q4.3

At the Crown Court the volume of defendants remanded in custody increased by 15% to around 55,000 compared to the previous year (48,000) and is the highest volume seen across the last decade. As a proportion of defendants dealt with this remained unchanged at 52%. Defendants dealt with for indictable offences are more often remanded in custody for reasons such as the severity of offence, risk of further offending and likelihood of failing to appear in court.

Of those remanded in custody at the Crown Court, 78% were issued an immediate or suspended custodial sentence – compared to 54% of those bailed.

⁹ Defendants are reported against their most serious remand status recorded at a court hearing (excluding their status recorded post-sentencing hearing as this reflects the outcome of the sentence rather than a remand decision). A defendant's remand status may change several times throughout their court journey, however only the most serious status during that period is reported and this does not reflect the number of remand decisions made.

5. Sentencing

The average custodial sentence length (ACSL)¹⁰ fell back slightly to 20.1 months

The decrease in ACSL was due to an increase in the proportion of custodial sentences accounted for by theft offences, which attract shorter sentences.

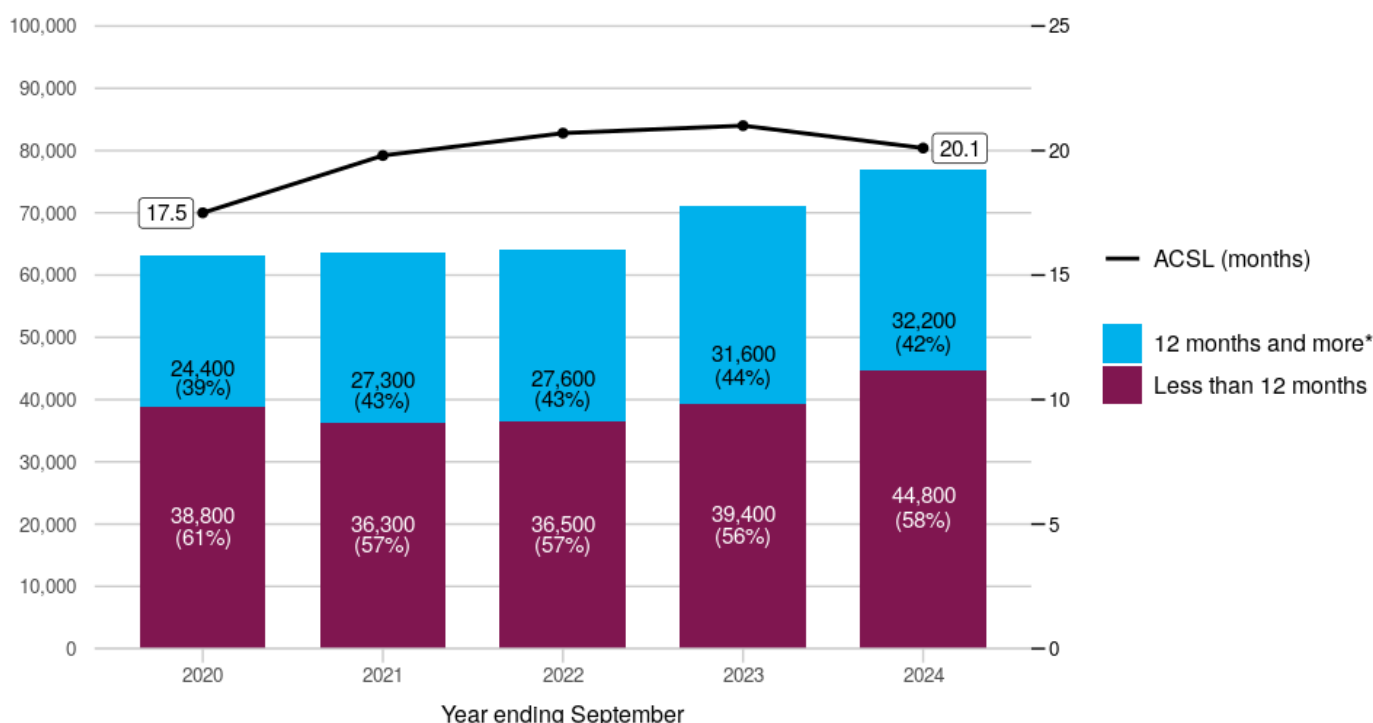
There were 1.15 million offenders sentenced in the year ending September 2024, a 4% increase from the previous year. 79% of offenders were sentenced to a fine.

The number of offenders sentenced to immediate custody increased by 8% compared to the previous year, from 71,000 to 77,000 in the year to September 2024, with notable increases seen for theft (27%) and public order offences (20%).

The custody rate¹¹ remained relatively stable at around 7% for all offences – this was 33% for indictable offences which remains relatively high for these series over the last decade. The highest custody rate continued to be for sexual offences (56%) and robbery (55%) – true across the last decade.

Figure 6: Number of offenders sentenced to immediate custody at criminal courts, by sentence length. Average Custodial Sentence Length (ACSL) plotted on the secondary axis.

England and Wales, year ending September 2020 to September 2024



Source: Table Q5.4

*Includes life and indeterminate sentences

The overall volumes sentenced to immediate custody increased, but this was largely due to a 14% in the volume of sentences of less than 12 months – which accounted for 58% of all custodial sentences in the last year.

The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) in the year to September 2024 was 20.1 months, this has fallen back slightly from a series peak seen in the last year (21.0 months in September 2023) but remains high across the last decade. Similarly, the ACSL for indictable offences fell back slightly, reaching 22.2 months in the last period. However, the average of indictable only offences (the most serious) increased and reach a series peak of 69.2 months.

¹⁰ Average custodial sentence length excludes life and indeterminate sentences. Custodial sentences with amount of 60 years and over are assumed to be errors and are excluded from the calculation.

¹¹ Custody rate reflects the percentage of offenders that received an immediate custodial sentence. It is calculated by dividing the number of offenders issued an immediate custodial sentence, by the total number of offenders sentenced.

Further information

Accompanying files

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

- A technical guide providing further information on how the data is collected and processed, as well as information on the revisions policy and legislation relevant to sentencing trends and background on CJS.
- A user guide listing all products alongside this release; this allows easy navigation of all files accompanying this release.
- A set of overview tables covering each section of this bulletin.
- Outcomes by Offence data tool allowing breakdowns by offence and offender demographics, plus underlying data in CSV format.
- A machine-readable offence group classification document outlining offence groupings.

Accredited official statistics status

National Statistics are [accredited official statistics](#) that meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in May 2020¹². They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled as accredited official statistics. It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for accredited official statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. Accredited official 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 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 and on the specific issues identified in the introduction.

Contact

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/media-enquiries>

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to: CJS_Statistics@justice.gov.uk

Next update: 15th May 2025

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics>

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Alternative formats are available on request from CJS_Statistics@justice.gov.uk

¹² [Office for Statistics Regulation: Proven re-offending and criminal justice system statistics](#)