

Consultation on “One Crown” changes to the Crown Court data processing in Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly

Introduction

This consultation reflects the development and implementation of a more consistent and coherent approach to how we use and report Crown Court data in MoJ and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

In May 2025, we notified users of the cancellation of the scheduled Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly (CJSQ) publication, highlighting work that was necessary to assure the quality of source data for the key Crown Court series.

The data quality improvement work on these statistics has been implemented following work to align the MoJ Accredited Official Statistics and HMCTS management information methodologies - benefitting users by providing greater transparency and coherence in court data.

Proposed changes

To address the differences in criminal court datasets, we have worked together on the One Crown project - creating a single, consistent and flexible dataset that meets all user needs enabling greater transparency, clarity and coherence. The latest published CJSQ release includes Crown Court data from the One Crown pipeline for the first time.

In part, the changes seek to align more closely with the way that cases are treated operationally and how court users will see the case in the Common Platform case management system¹. Observed changes apply to data sourced from both legacy (XHIBIT) and reform (Common Platform) administrative systems. The One Crown data is currently available from 2016 onwards only. Static published tools covering the period 2010–2016 will not be revised due to the currently inability to remodel data prior to 2016; although the series 2016 and prior are from a different source, we deem it to be broadly consistent over that period.

Impact

Estimated impacts of key definitional changes made in the One Crown pipeline have been shared with users of the Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly series and are available here:

- [CCSQ Consultation on One Crown](#) (December 2024)
- [Further CCSQ consultation on One Crown](#) (March 2025)

The changes seen in CJSQ series are focused on Crown Court trials and sentencing outcomes. The proposed One Crown definitions are broadly in line with the previous CJSQ

¹ The Common Platform is a digital case management system for the magistrates' and Crown Courts that was rolled out from September 2020. It will eventually replace the existing 'legacy' criminal court systems Libra (magistrates') and XHIBIT (Crown), with a single, streamlined digital system.

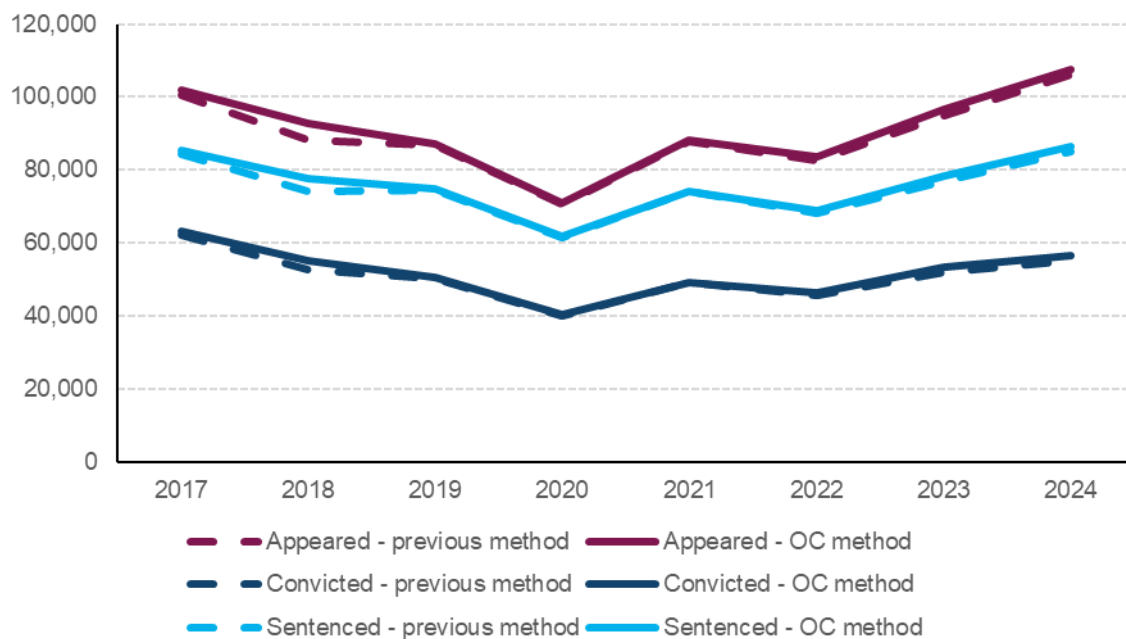
methodology – with small changes made to improve data coverage or revise identified isolated issues. As part of the transition to the One Crown pipeline, a quality assurance review was conducted to ensure trustworthiness, quality and value.

The impact on published figures is minimal, though there have been small changes which have impacted a relatively low number of defendant counts, trends remain largely unchanged. Specific definitional changes and the estimated quantitative impact these have on the published series are detailed below.

Definition	Impact of Change
1. Crown Court acquittals and discontinuances	
We have resolved an identified inconsistency with how a disposal code for discharges was translated into the data. This is now being correctly recorded as an acquittal under the definition of “When a defendant had been found not guilty and has been discharged by the judge”.	<p>In XHIBIT these disposals were recorded as acquittals with a small but growing proportion assigned as discontinuances in the Common Platform processing. The revision has resulted in an increase in acquittal volumes and corresponding decrease in discontinuances from 2022 onwards.</p> <p>Acquittals have increased by 1%, 4% and 11% for years 2022 to 2024 respectively.</p> <p>Impact: Crown Court Data, Crown Court Tool, Outcome by Offence Tool</p>
2. Dropped Plea grouping	
<p>We have introduced a ‘dropped plea’ category to bring CJSQ in line with existing published criminal court performance data and HMCTS management information.</p> <p>In the published CJSQ tools ‘dropped’ pleas are now being counted distinctly, whereas previously they were being grouped with not guilty pleas.</p>	<p>Previously in CJSQ dropped cases were being grouped as ‘Not Guilty Plea’ alongside legitimate Not Guilty pleas. This meant that there was no reliable way to identify whether defendants went to jury trial and received an outcome.</p> <p>By separately counting dropped pleas we can provide better insight into defendant outcomes following a completed jury trial.</p> <p>This change is evident in a reduction of 13% in ‘Not Guilty Pleas’ in 2024, with around 27,400 defendants now captured in the “Dropped plea” category.</p> <p>Impact: Remands Tool, Crown Court Tool</p>
3. Not known pleas	
We have carried out a review and improved the identification of plea types, resulting in a reduction in ‘Not Known’ pleas in Crown Court data.	<p>There has been an improvement to the quality of the data using One Crown methodology and as a result plea not known volumes have reduced by 15% in year ending September 2025 when compared to the previous methodology. We have seen a resulting increase in “Not Guilty pleas”. This is now more in keeping with operational use of data fields.</p> <p>Impact: Crown Court Tool</p>

Overall Data Trends

Figure 1: Headline measure comparisons of Crown Court appearances and outcomes, by methodology, England and Wales, 2017 to 2024

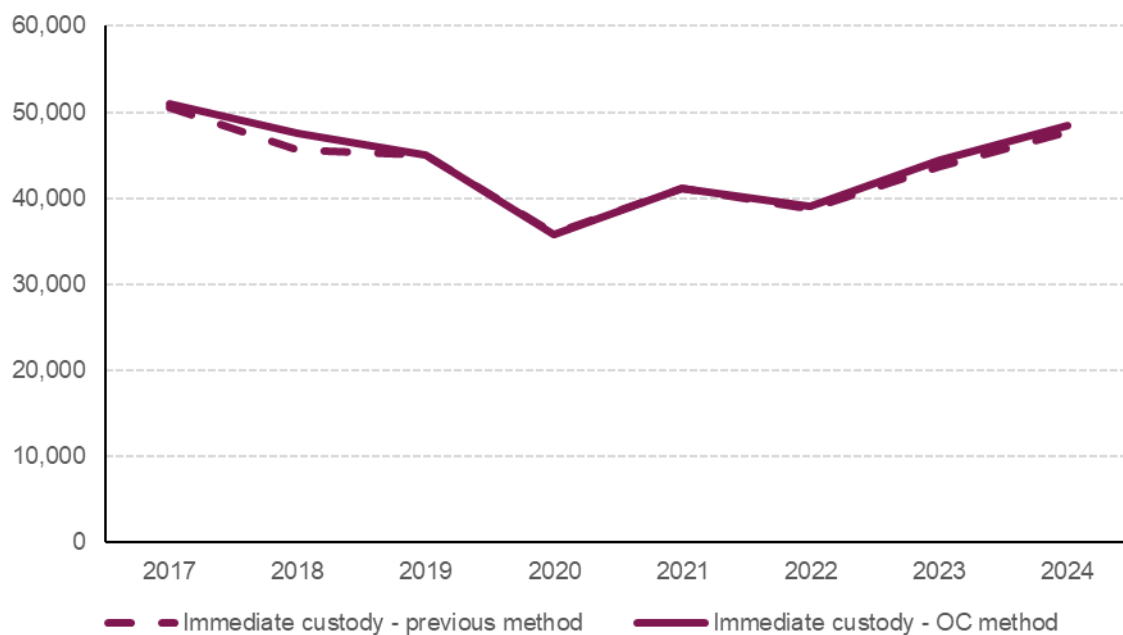


Principal offence data has been compared using 2024 published prosecutions and convictions data and the newly compiled One Crown data. Principal offence data relates to the most serious outcome assigned to an offence that a defendant has been dealt with.

There are no substantial deviations between previously published data and the new One Crown methodology.

- We identified a shortfall in the existing XHIBIT data for 2018 which has been revised to represent a more accurate reflection of the underlying data, this is now reflected as an increase across all data in 2018. This was an isolated issue impacting CJSQ data only and therefore data is now more in line with the trends across the topic area.
- Changes seen from 2022 onwards reflect improvements to the Common Platform data processing and the use of a single set of assured metadata owned by HMCTS. This has led to a small increase across the period in the volume of defendants dealt with and published trends remain unchanged.

Figure 2: Defendants sentenced to immediate custody at the Crown Court by methodology, England and Wales, 2017 – 2024



Defendant sentencing outcomes saw little variation between One Crown and previously published data, with observed differences broadly in line with headline changes outlined above. Observed changes in the volume of defendants sentenced to immediate custody include:

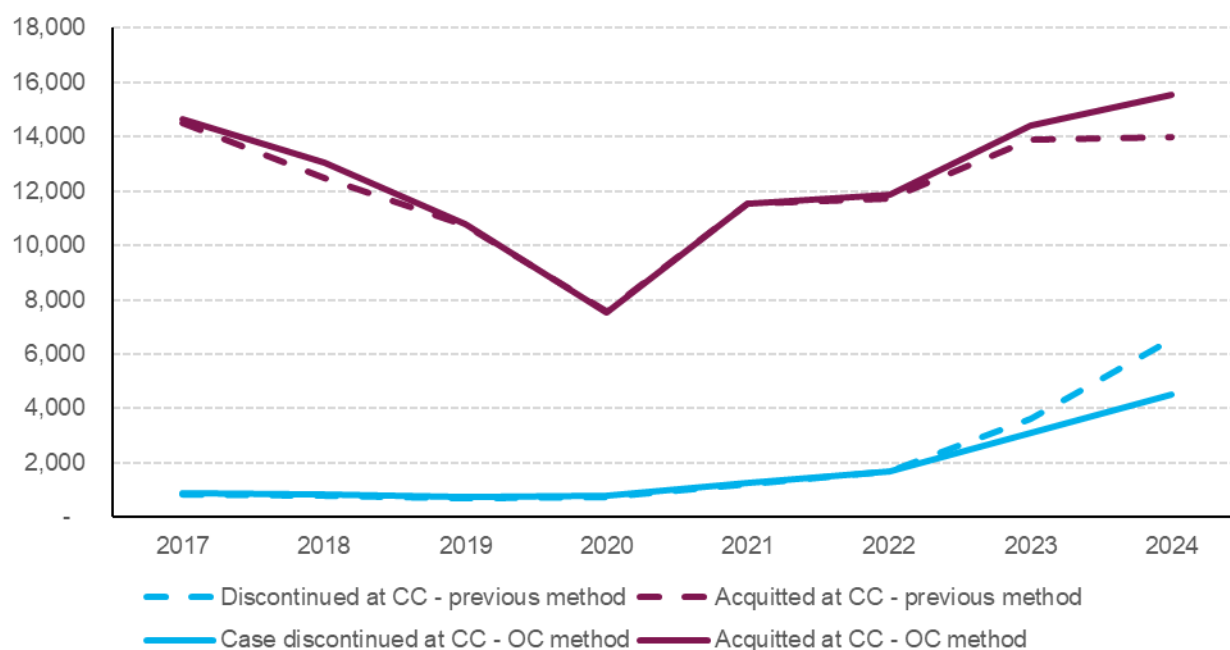
- The most noticeable observed change is a 4% increase in defendants sentenced to immediate custody in 2018, this reflects the broader increase in defendant volumes in 2018.
- Increases of around 2% can be seen from 2022 onwards are due to changes in the underlying Common Platform metadata which defines disposals and is now consistent across criminal court statistics publications and underlying management information.

Acquittals and discontinuances

Following the identification and correction of inconsistencies in our disposal definitions in Common Platform we have observed an increase in Crown Court acquittals and a respective decrease in discontinuances in the One Crown data.

- This change is the result of an improvement to the published definitions of the acquittal disposal category. Previously CJSQ incorrectly defined one disposal category as a discontinuance in the Common Platform data feed and as a result had overestimated observed increases in the volume of discontinued defendant outcomes in recent years.

Figure 4: Defendants receiving acquittals and discontinuances at the Crown Court by methodology, England and Wales, 2017 to 2024.



Unknowns

Following the adoption of the new pipeline there is a small observed increase in unknown values reported across selected reported data fields including plea status.

Despite the volume increase, these values account for less than 2% of defendants in the Crown Court. We believe this is a result of improved defendant counts from the new data pipeline which have identified small areas of potential data quality concern. Work is ongoing with HMCTS to identify trends in unknown volumes and seek to further improve data coverage on key published series iteratively.

Future Changes

All published CJSQ measures release today concerning Crown Court outcomes have been developed using the One Crown pipeline for the first time.

However, it has not been possible to include defendant Crown Court remand status breakdowns in the latest release. Further assurance of the remands data is required to ensure that series are accurate, robust and consistent with the previous published methodology. The Crown Court remand tool will be updated in the next release of CJSQ which is provisionally planned for April 2026.

The One Crown project has improved data quality and coherence across both MoJ and HMCTS, with a single data source of trustworthy data across criminal court outputs helping to ensure that users receive a consistent set of statistics. We will continue to regularly review the presentation and breakdown of Crown Court data between releases alongside our routine consideration of the content of this publication.

We will notify and update users concerning any further amendments made in future statistical releases.