



Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, January to March 2020

Published 27 January 2022

<p>The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.7% for the January to March 2020 offender cohort.</p>		<p>This represents a decrease of 2.0 percentage points from the same quarter in 2019, the lowest rate in the timeseries, and follows a downward trend for offender cohorts affected by the impact of the pandemic. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.7% and 31.8%.</p>
<p>Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 24.1%</p>		<p>This is a decrease of 2.0 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.1% and 30.6%.</p>
<p>Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 34.1%.</p>		<p>The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 2.3 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. However, for context, the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 87% since the same quarter in 2009.</p>
<p>Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 31.8%</p>		<p>This represents a 2.0 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year, an 8.2 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2011 and the lowest rate in the timeseries.</p>
<p>Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 57.5%.</p>		<p>This is a decrease of 2.4 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 59.3%, which is a decrease of 2.8 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019.</p>

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, individual prisons, probation area, local authorities and youth offending teams. For technical details please refer to the accompanying [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#).

Please take some time to read and respond to the decision to discontinue the commentary in section 3 of this bulletin; this is outlined on the back page in the 'Future publications' section.

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

1. Statisticians comment

“Figures presented in this statistical release show proven reoffending statistics for the January to March 2020 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 reoffending follow-up period for the January to March 2020 offender cohort overlaps with the first set of lockdown restrictions, which included limits on court activity leading to sharp decreases in the number of cases processed at the criminal court.¹ Additionally, offenders entering the cohort towards the tail-end (late March 2020) will have coincided with the first lockdown period, which may partly explain why there is a slightly lower volume of overall offenders in the cohort. The reoffending follow-up and waiting periods also begin to overlap with both the second and third national lockdowns.¹ While there were no court closures during these two latter lockdowns, police recorded crime data have shown overall reductions in the reporting and recording of many crime types during periods of lockdown.²

The overall proven reoffending rate was 24.7% for the January to March 2020 offender cohort; representing a 2.0 percentage point decrease from the same quarter in 2019. This follows a trend in more marked decreases in the reoffending rate amongst offender cohorts affected by the impact of the pandemic and is the lowest rate in the timeseries. More broadly, the average number of reoffences per reoffender (also known as the frequency rate) had gradually been increasing since 2009, indicating that a higher number of reoffences were being committed by a smaller number of individuals. However, continuing with a general reduction in the frequency rate for more recent offender cohorts, the latest figure of 3.63 reoffences per reoffender is the lowest rate since January to March 2014.

The trends in the reoffending and frequency rates are broadly reflected in separate figures for adults and juveniles. Furthermore, the size of the overall cohorts continues to decrease, with both the adult and juvenile cohorts showing general decreases over time. In particular, the juvenile cohort has shown the greatest decrease with it now making up only 5% of the overall cohort compared to 18% for the same period in 2009. Any marked change in offender cohorts may also affect the rates, both in terms of volatility within the series, and in the offender mix making up the cohorts, which is why caution should be exercised when making comparisons of actual rates over time.

We continue to see an effect of the pandemic on proven reoffending. For the next proven reoffending publication (April to June 2020 offender cohort), the entire offender cohort period will overlap with the courts closure period, which may result in an even more pronounced impact of the pandemic on reoffending figures. During this period of flux, it is difficult to assess the direction which reoffending rates will take; future statistical releases though will help establish what the likely effects. However, as court activity continues to recover, the expectation is that proven reoffending rates will increase again at some point.”

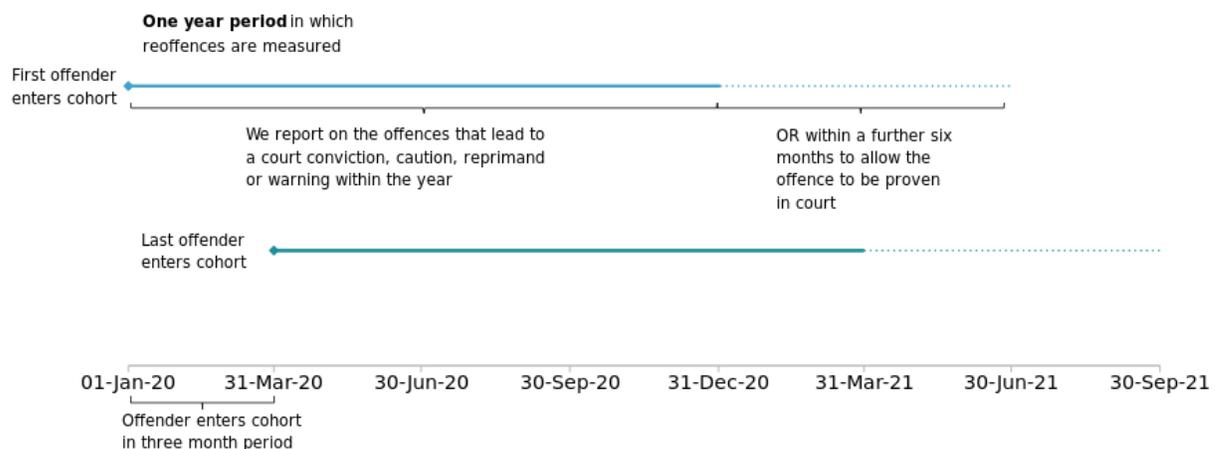
¹ The first national lockdown was implemented on 23 March 2020 and transitioned to phased reopening until August 2020 (including a limited number of jury trials resuming from 18 May 2020). The second national lockdown was implemented on 5 November 2020 and returned to a three-tier restriction system from 2 December 2020. The third national lockdown was implemented on 6 January 2021 and transitioned to phased reopening until June 2021.

² Police recorded crime figures (including monthly trends) can be found at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2021#overall-estimates-of-crime>

How is proven reoffending measured?

An offender enters the cohort if they were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court or received a reprimand or warning in a three-month period: January to March 2020. It is important to note that this is not comparable to publications prior to the October 2017 proven reoffending publication, which reported on a 12-month cohort.

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 as shown in the diagram below in relation to the latest offender cohort.



The timeseries presented in this publication spans the April to June 2008 through to the January to March 2020 offender cohorts.

Latest proven reoffending statistics based on annual average cohorts can be found at: [annual tables](#).

Users should be cautious when making any comparison between cohorts before and after October 2015. This is because there is a change in data source from October 2015 onwards. In addition, users should be cautious when comparing the 3-monthly cohorts to one another (e.g. October to December 2018 to July to September 2018). This is due to the smaller 3-month cohort size, which means that the measure is likely to be more variable than the previous 12-month cohort measure of reoffending. 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 24.7% for the January to March 2020 offender cohort.

This represents a decrease of 2.0 percentage points from the same quarter in 2019, the lowest rate in the timeseries, and follows a downward trend for offender cohorts affected by the impact of the pandemic. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.7% and 31.8%.

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. For the January to March 2020 offender cohort, the reoffending follow-up period overlaps with the phase of operational restrictions in spring 2020 following the response to the COVID-19 pandemic; furthermore, the actual offender cohort period itself also coincides with the first few days of these restrictions. Limits on criminal court activity over this period meant a reduction in the volumes of cases processed and an increase in outstanding cases in Magistrates' and Crown Courts.³

In addition, the reoffending and waiting periods for this latest cohort also overlap with the first, second and third set of lockdown restrictions put in place more generally which may have had an effect on offending behaviour. As a result, and following on from the figures in more recent statistical releases, we continue to see a more marked effect on proven reoffending.

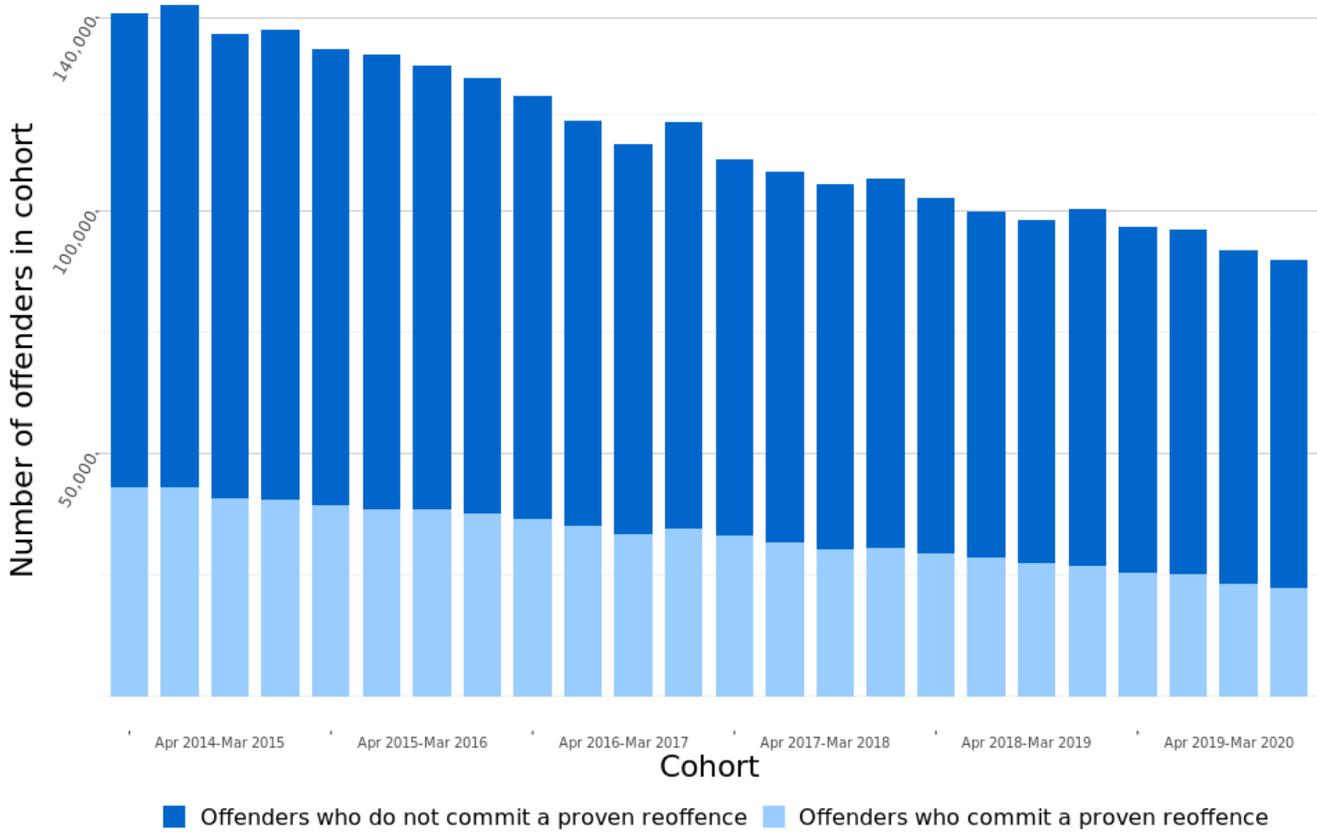
The overall proven reoffending rate, based on just over 90,000 adult and juvenile offenders (made up of 95% adults and 5% juveniles)⁴ in the January to March 2020 cohort was 24.7%, a 2.0 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2019. This follows a downward trend for offender cohorts affected by the impact of the pandemic and is the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.7% and 31.8%.

Around 22,000 of these offenders in the latest cohort then committed almost 81,000 proven reoffences over a one-year follow-up period, equivalent to an average of 3.63 reoffences each (also known as the frequency rate). More broadly, the frequency rate gradually increased since 2009, indicating that a higher number of reoffences were gradually being committed by a smaller number of individuals. However, there has been a general reduction in the frequency rate for more recent offender cohorts, with the latest figures representing the lowest frequency rate since January to March 2014. In particular though, the volumes of reoffenders and reoffences attributed to this latest cohort both represent the largest year-on-year decreases (reductions of 17.1% and 22.5% respectively since the same period in 2019) and the lowest in the timeseries; this is likely to reflect the impact of and response to the pandemic.

³ For details on trends in criminal court activity, please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics>.

⁴ A certain proportion of offenders who could not be matched to the Police National Computer (PNC) are excluded from the offender cohort. Therefore, this number does not represent all proven offenders. This means that the number of offenders in this bulletin will be different from the numbers published in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly and Criminal Justice Statistics. Please refer to the [guide to proven reoffending statistics](#) for further information.

Figure 1: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence and the number of offenders in each cohort, April 2014 to March 2020 (Source: Table A1)



Of this offender cohort, 84% were male and 16% were female, with the gender split remaining reasonably stable over time. Male offenders reoffended at a higher rate of 25.7% compared to female offenders who reoffended at a rate of 19.4%. Since 2008, these rates have fluctuated between 25.7% and 33.9% for males and 19.4% to 24.4% for females.

2. Adult offenders

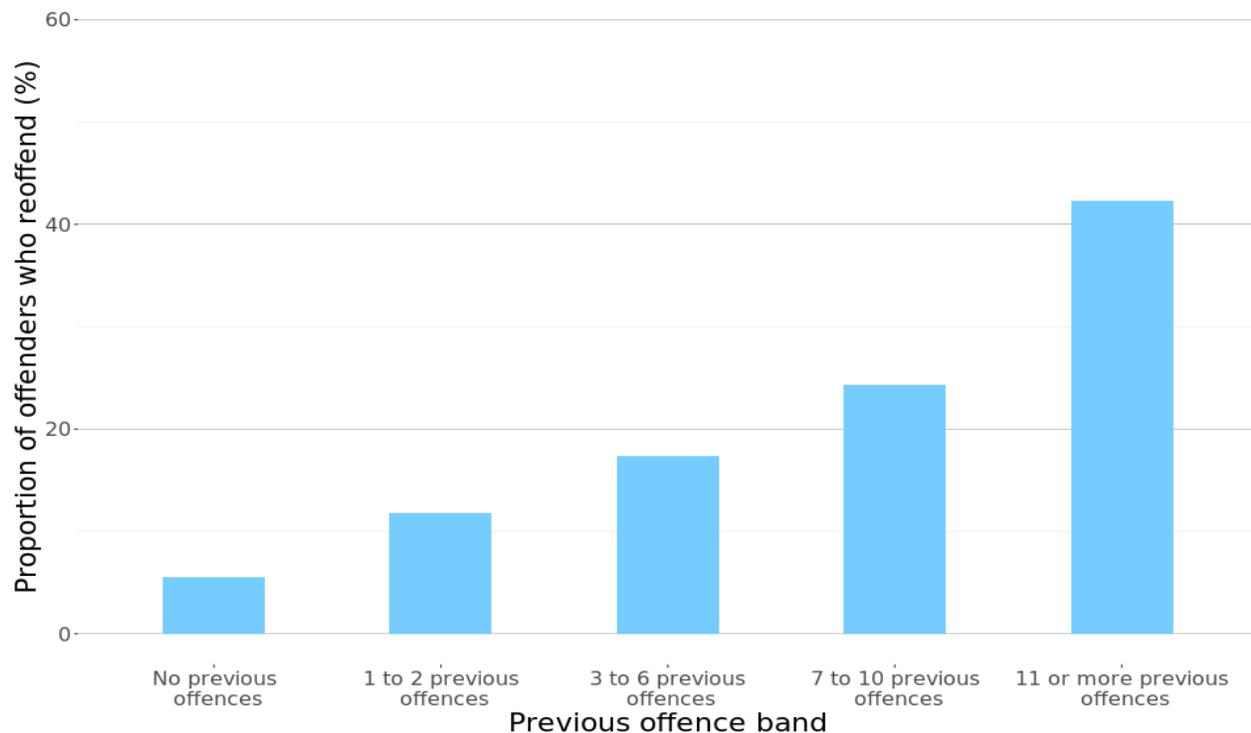
Adult offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 24.1%.

This is a decrease of 2.0 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. Over time, the overall proven reoffending rate has fluctuated between 24.1% and 30.6%.

The adult reoffending rate had remained broadly flat since 2008, with small fluctuations over time. However, there have been more marked reductions in the reoffending rate of more recent offender cohorts; as with the overall proven reoffending rate, this is likely to be due to the effects of the pandemic, as outlined earlier. The reoffending rate for the January to March 2020 cohort stood at 24.1%, a 2.0 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest rate in the timeseries. The highest rate in the timeseries was 30.6%, observed for the April to June 2013 cohort.

For the latest quarterly cohort, just under 75,000 proven reoffences were committed over the one-year follow-up period by just under 21,000 adults. Those that reoffended committed on average 3.63 reoffences; this represents a 6% decrease compared to the same quarter in 2019 and the lowest frequency rate since January to March 2014. As with the overall figures, the volumes of adult reoffenders and reoffences attributed to this latest cohort both represent the largest year-on-year decreases (reductions of 16.9% and 22.3% respectively since the same period in 2019) and the lowest in the timeseries; again, this is likely to reflect the impact of and response to the pandemic.

Figure 2: Proportion of adult offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by number of previous offences, January to March 2020 (Source: Table A5a)



Offenders with a larger number of previous offences have a higher rate of proven reoffending than those with fewer previous offences. In the January to March 2020 cohort, the proven reoffending rates for adults ranged from 5.6% for offenders with no previous offences to 42.3% for offenders with 11 or more previous offences (figure 2).

Adult offenders with 11 or more previous offences made up 39% of all adult offenders in the cohort, represented 69% of all adult reoffenders and committed 78% of all adult proven reoffences.

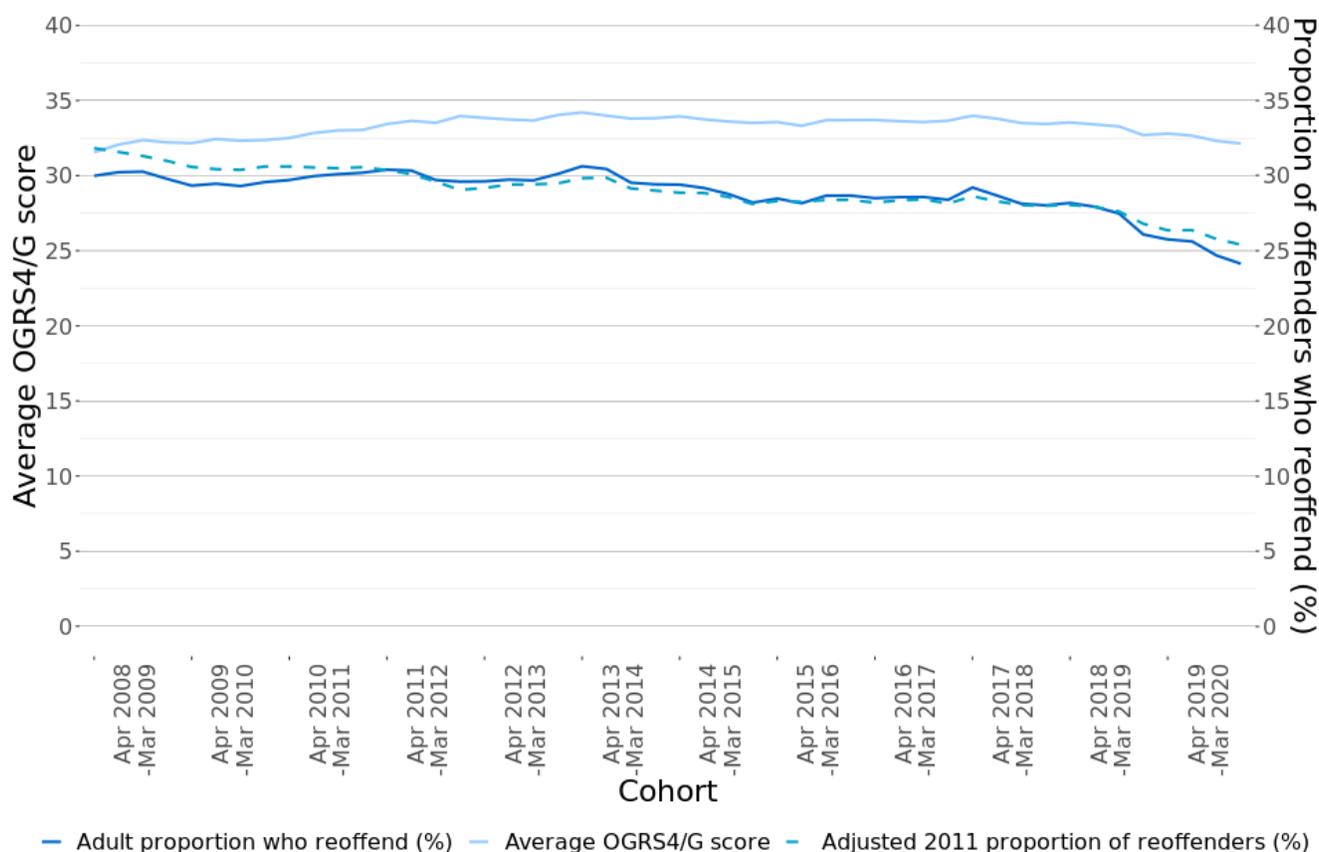
3. Adjusted reoffending rates

When controlling for offender characteristics, 25.4% of adult offenders in the cohort reoffended within a year.

This represents a decrease of 1.4 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2019.

The raw proven reoffending rates have been adjusted against the 2011 calendar year, in line with the Payment by Results (PbR) statistics.⁵ These adjusted rates for adults are calculated by ‘the proportion of offenders who reoffend’ (proven reoffending rate) for the cohort plus any difference between the average Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS4/G) score in that cohort and the 2011 cohorts.⁶

Figure 3: The proportion of offenders who reoffend, the average OGRS scores and the adjusted proven reoffending rate for adults, April 2008 to March 2020 (Source: Table A1)



⁵ Refer to [Payment by results statistics](#) for proven reoffending statistics for adult offenders being managed by Community Rehabilitation Companies, under PbR arrangements, and by the National Probation Service.

⁶ OGRS4 is based on a well-established, peer reviewed methodology for assessing and representing reoffending risk. Refer to [A compendium of research and analysis on the Offender Assessment System \(OASys\)](#) for details.

Between 2006 and 2011 the average OGRS score increased, but since 2011 it has remained relatively flat. This indicates that between 2006 and 2011 the cohort had an increasing propensity to reoffend, but since 2011 this has levelled off. As a result, the raw reoffending rates for adults are adjusted upwards between 2006 and 2011 reflecting the lower propensity to reoffend when compared to later cohorts.

Following 2011 the raw rates and the adjusted rates had tracked each other more closely. However, the gap has widened again for more recent cohorts which is likely to reflect the effects of the pandemic; for example, the raw reoffending rate for adults for the January to March 2020 period was 24.1% while the adjusted rate was 25.4%.

4. Juvenile offenders⁷

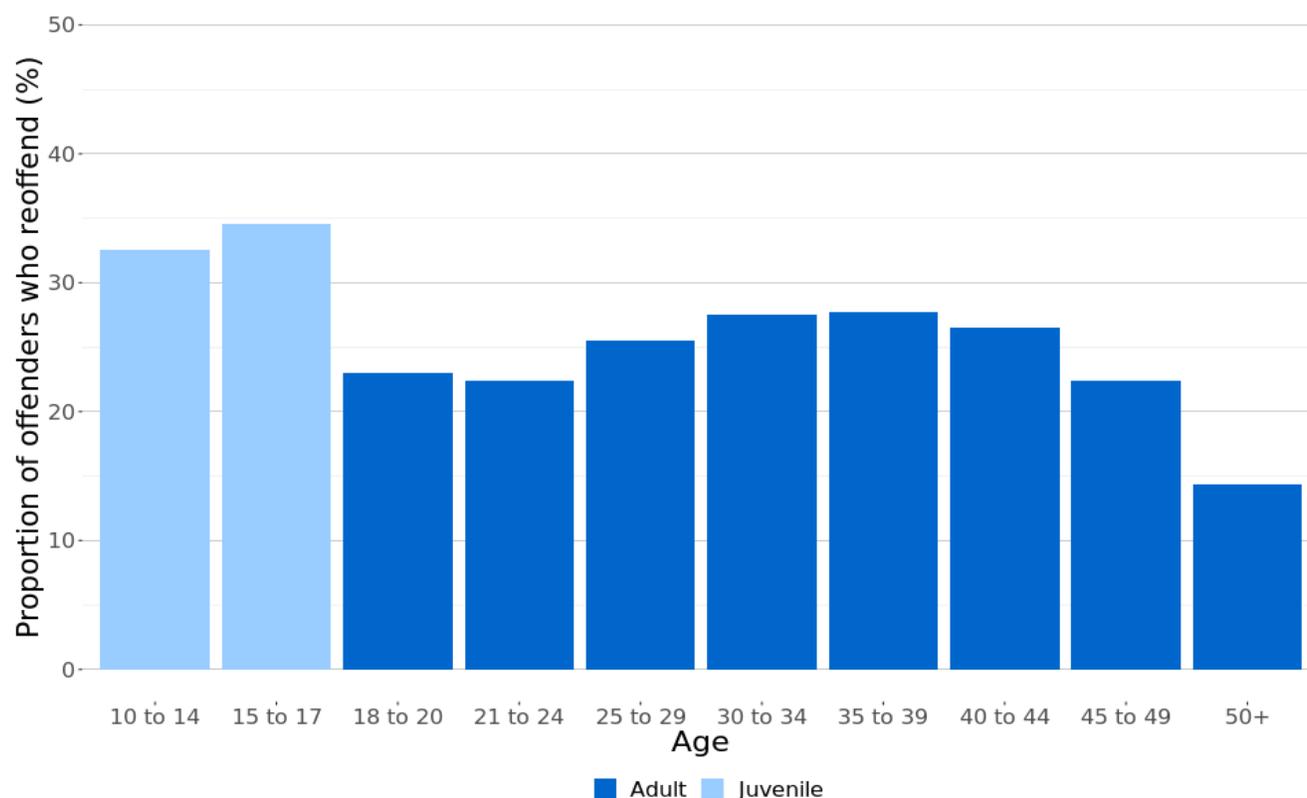
Juvenile offenders had a proven reoffending rate of 34.1%.

The juvenile reoffending rate decreased by 2.3 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. However, for context, the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 87% since the same quarter in 2009.

Under 2,000 of approximately 5,000 juvenile offenders in the January to March 2020 cohort, committed a reoffence within a one-year follow-up period (equivalent to around 6,000 proven reoffences). This represents a juvenile reoffending rate of 34.1%, a 2.3 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2019. Despite this cohort likely to have also been impacted by the pandemic, it is important to note that the number of offenders in the cohort has fallen by 87% since the same quarter in 2009 and has fluctuated between 33.0% and 43.6% over the years.

Those that reoffended committed on average 3.60 reoffences each. As with the adult cohort, juvenile offenders with 11 or more previous offences had a higher reoffending rate than those with no previous offences, 71.0% and 17.2% respectively.

Figure 4: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by age, January to March 2020 (Source: Table A3)



⁷ Juveniles are defined as those aged 10 to 17 years old.

This quarter, 15 to 17-year-old offenders have the highest reoffending rate, closely followed by the 10 to 14-year-old offenders, with reoffending rates of 34.5% and 32.5% respectively (figure 4). The proven reoffending rate for juveniles is higher than adults and the rate starts to fall with increasing age after the 35 to 39-year-old group.

5. Adult reoffending by disposal⁸

Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 31.8%.

This represents a 2.0 percentage point decrease since the same quarter last year, an 8.2 percentage point decrease since the same quarter in 2011 and the lowest rate in the timeseries.

Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months had a proven reoffending rate of 57.5%.

This is a decrease of 2.4 percentage points from the same quarter in the previous year. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 59.3%, which is a decrease of 2.8 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019.

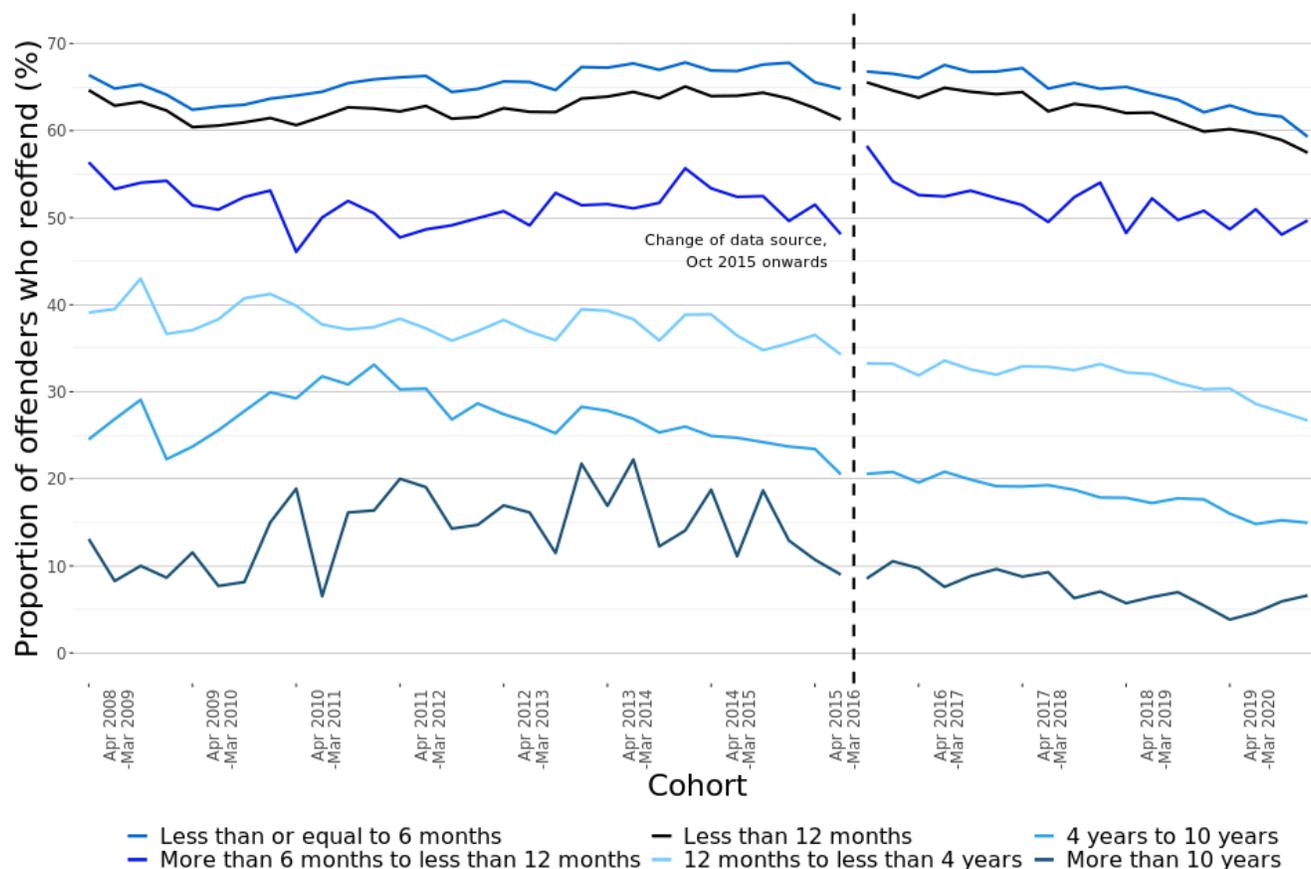
Adults released from custody or starting court orders had a proven reoffending rate of 31.8%, a decrease of 2.0 percentage points compared to the same quarter in 2019 and a decrease of 8.2 percentage points since the same quarter in 2011.

The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders starting a court order⁹ specifically was 28.1%, a 2.0 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2019 and an 8.3 percentage point decrease when compared to the same quarter in 2011. When adjusted for offender mix (i.e. when controlling for offender characteristics), the decrease observed in the corresponding financial quarter in 2011 is smaller at 3.7 percentage points.

⁸ 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.

⁹ Community order or suspended sentence order.

Figure 5: Proportion of adult offenders released from custody who commit a proven reoffence, by custodial sentence length, April 2008 to March 2020 (Source: Table C2a)



The proven reoffending rate for adult offenders released from custody was 40.3%, a 3.3 percentage point decrease compared to the same quarter the previous year. However, adults who served sentences of 12 months or more reoffended at a substantially lower rate at 22.8% compared to those who served a sentence of less than 12 months at a rate of 57.5%. Those released from sentences of less than or equal to 6 months had a proven reoffending rate of 59.3%, a decrease of 2.8 percentage points since the same quarter in the previous year. Users should exercise caution when comparing the effectiveness of different sentences because the presented rates do not control for known 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](#).¹⁰

¹⁰ 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](#).

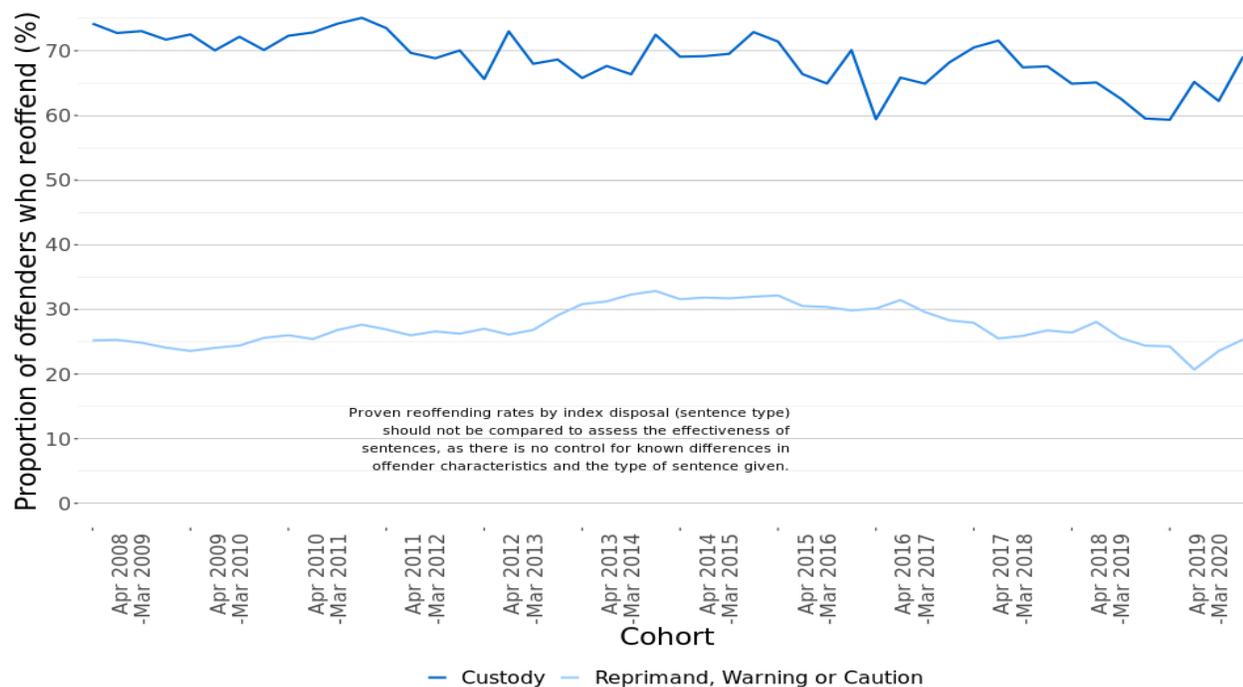
6. Juvenile reoffending by disposal¹¹

Juvenile offenders given youth cautions had a proven reoffending rate of 25.4%.

The reoffending rate for juvenile offenders given youth cautions has increased by 1.0 percentage points since the same quarter last year.

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.

Figure 6: Proportion of juvenile offenders released from custody or given a reprimand, warning or caution who commit a proven reoffence, April 2008 to March 2020 (Source: Table C1b)



Between January to March 2020, 123 juvenile offenders were released from custody and 85 (69.1%) were proven to have committed a reoffence within a year. The reoffending rate had increased by 9.6 percentage points since the same quarter in 2019. There is, however, likely to be more variation from one quarter to another due to the reduced size of the juvenile offender cohort.

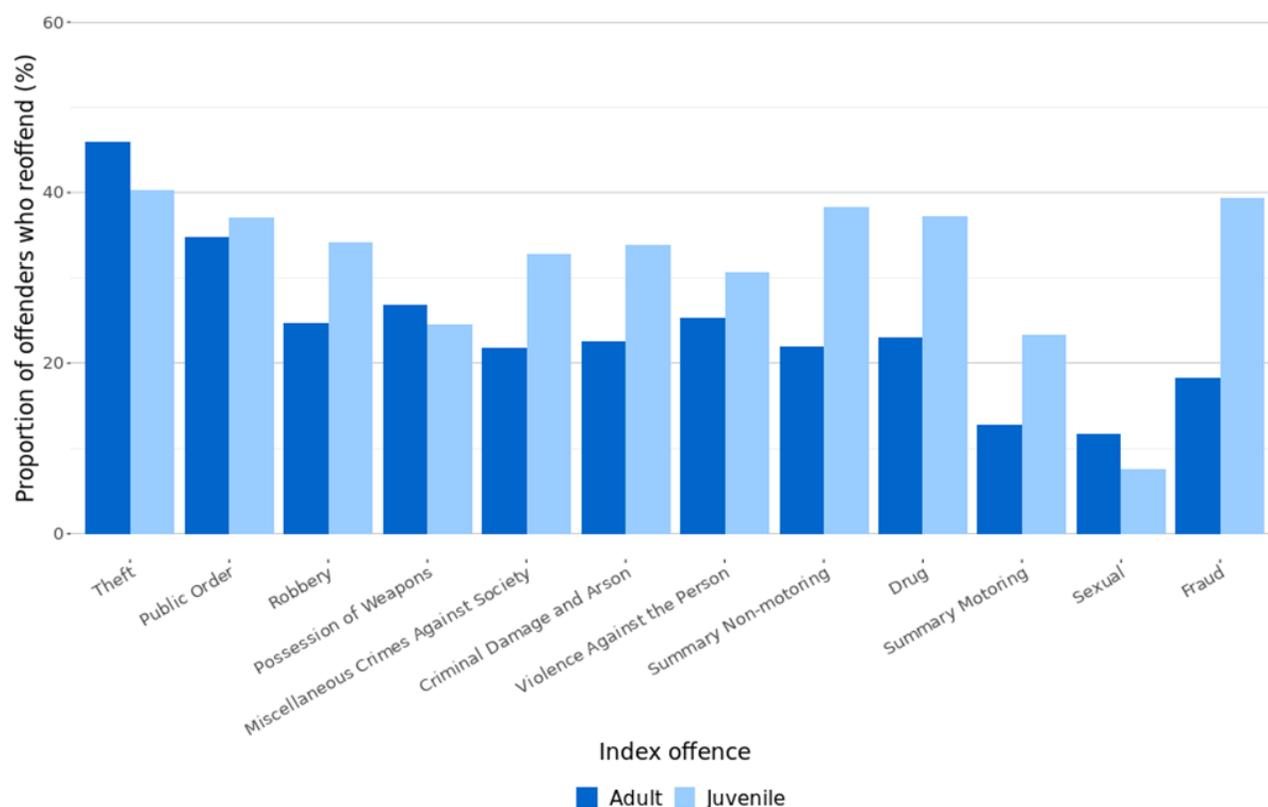
¹¹ The juvenile proven reoffending data by disposal uses the same methodology as that adopted for adult reoffending by disposal (see section 5 for more details).

7. Index offences¹²

For the January to March 2020 adult cohort, the index offence category associated with the highest reoffending rate was theft at 46.0%.

The second highest reoffending rate of 34.7% amongst adult offenders was those with an index offence of public order (figure 7).

Figure 7: Proportion of adult and juvenile offenders in England and Wales who commit a proven reoffence, by index offence (except the 'other' offence category), January to March 2020 (Source: Table A4a/b)



The proportion of reoffences committed depending on index offence has remained broadly stable over time. The lowest rate of reoffending in the adult cohort was observed amongst those with a sexual offence as their index offence, with a rate of 11.8%. Excluding the 'other' offence category, there were decreases in reoffending rates across all index offence categories compared to the same quarter in 2019; theft saw the largest percentage point decrease (3.9 percentage points) during this time, whilst summary motoring offences had the lowest (0.1 percentage point reduction).

¹² An index offence refers to the offence that leads to an offender being included in the offender cohort.

Since the same quarter in 2009, the miscellaneous crimes against society index offence category saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate (a 12.6 percentage point difference). Those with an index offence of violence against the person saw an increase over this period (a 3.7 percentage point difference).

In the juvenile cohort, those with an index offence of theft had the highest proven reoffending rate at 40.3%, followed by those with an index offence of fraud at 39.4%. Those with the lowest rate, excluding the 'other' offence category, were offenders who had committed a sexual index offence. Their reoffending rate was 7.6%. Excluding the 'other' offence category, there were decreases in reoffending rates across most index offence categories compared to the same quarter in 2019 except for violence against the person and criminal damage and arson which saw increases in their rates (1.5 and 4.4 percentage point increases respectively).

Compared to the same quarter in 2009, those who committed miscellaneous crimes against society index offences saw the largest percentage point decrease in reoffending rate (a 16.2 percentage point difference) whilst theft index offences represented the biggest percentage point increase over the same period (a 6.6 percentage point difference).

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](#) which include proven reoffending data by demographics, offender history, probation area and geography (covering April 2008 - March 2020).
- 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 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 have therefore decided to remove the current section 3 in the bulletin on adjusted reoffending rates from the April 2022 edition onwards. The adjusted reoffending rates will continue to be presented in the accompanying tables, as well as an explanation of the rates more generally in the technical guide. Should you have any concerns/comments on this, or any other feedback related to these statistics, please contact us at statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk.

Contact

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Email: newsdesk@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Other enquiries and feedback on these statistics should be directed to the Data and Evidence as a Service division of the Ministry of Justice:

Liz Whiting, Head of Reducing Reoffending and Probation Statistics

Ministry of Justice, 7th Floor, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

Email: ESD@justice.gov.uk

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