

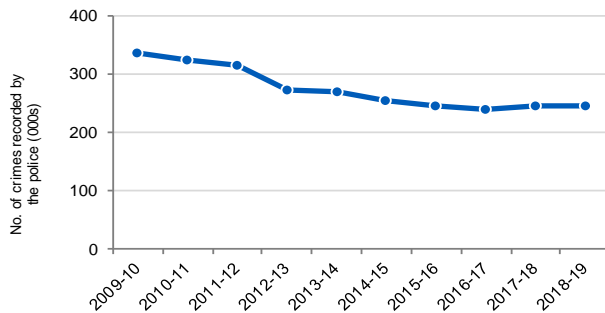


MONTHLY SAFER COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE BRIEF | July 2020

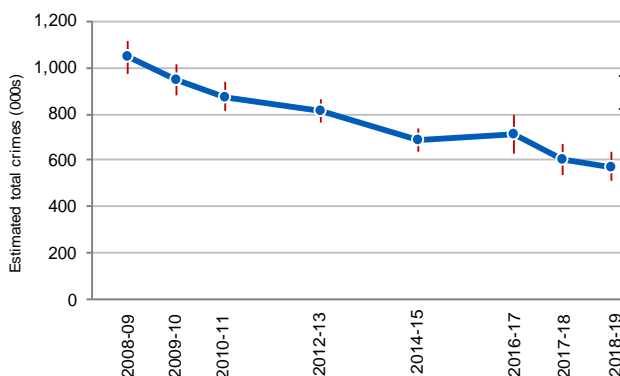
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CRIME

- Police recorded crime at one of the lowest levels since 1974.** Recorded crime is down by 27% since 2009-10 and is at one of the lowest levels seen since 1974. Between 2017-18 & 2018-19, the number of crimes recorded increased by 1%.

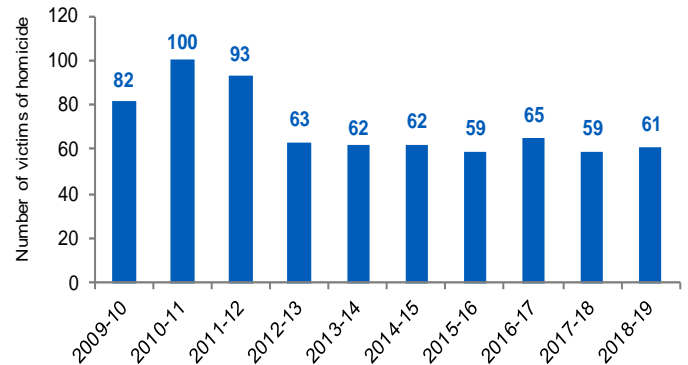


- Crime has fallen by 45% since 2008-09.** Results from the 2018-19 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that 1 in 8 adults were victims of crime in 2018-19 (12.4%) compared to 1 in 5 in 2008-09 (20.4%). The estimated number of crimes fell by 45% over the same period, and by 20% since 2016-17. The SCJS detected no change in the overall victimisation rate between 2017-18 and 2018-19.

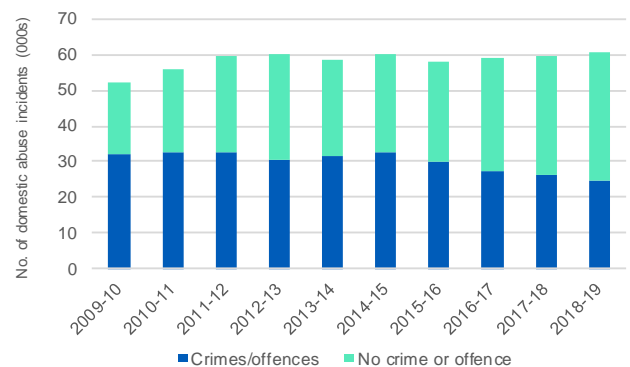


- Violent crime has fallen over the long term.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police rose by 10%, to 8,008 in 2018-19. These crimes remain at a lower level than all years between 1980 and 2011-12. The number of crimes of handling an offensive weapon (where not used to commit a crime or offence against a person in a public setting) recorded by the police increased by 18% between 2017-18 and 2018-19 to 4,216. The SCJS shows a 48% fall in violent crime between 2008-09 and 2018-19 and that an estimated 40% of violent crime in 2018-19 was reported to the police.
- Sexual crimes continue to rise.** Sexual assault, rape and attempted rape, and other sexual crimes, all increased between 2017-18 and 2018-19. Multiple factors lie behind the increase in recorded sexual crime including a greater willingness of victims to come forward, more historical reporting, increased online offending and the impact of new legislation. The SCJS for 2016-17 & 2017-18 combined estimates that 3.6% of adults experienced at least one serious sexual assault since the age of 16, unchanged from 2008-09.
- Total crime recorded by the police in April and May 2020 is lower compared to the same period in 2019.** Overall, the number of crimes recorded by the police during April and May 2020 was 12% lower than the same period in 2019. This included April 2020 being 18% lower than April 2019 and May 2020 being 5% lower than May 2019. A reduction was seen across most crime types during this period.

- No. of victims of homicide at around the same level in the last seven years.** There were 61 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2018-19, a 26% decrease from 2009-10. Since 2012-13, the number of victims of homicide each year ranged between 59 and 65.



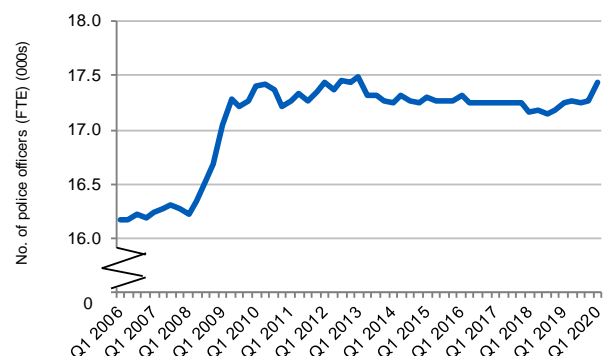
- Increase in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 60,641 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2018-19, an increase of 2% on 2017-18. In 2018-19, 41% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.



- Women more likely than men to experience partner abuse.** The SCJS for 2016-17 & 2017-18 combined estimates that 3.0% of respondents had experienced partner abuse in the 12 months prior to interview. A higher proportion of women than men experienced partner abuse, at 3.6% and 2.3% respectively.
- Increase in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 51.0% in 2018-19, up from 49.5% in 2017-18. Clear up rates have been relatively stable over the last decade following a generally upward trend since 1976.

POLICING

- There were 17,431 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland at 31 March 2020.** This was 1,197 (+7.4%) more officers compared to the position at 31 March 2007.



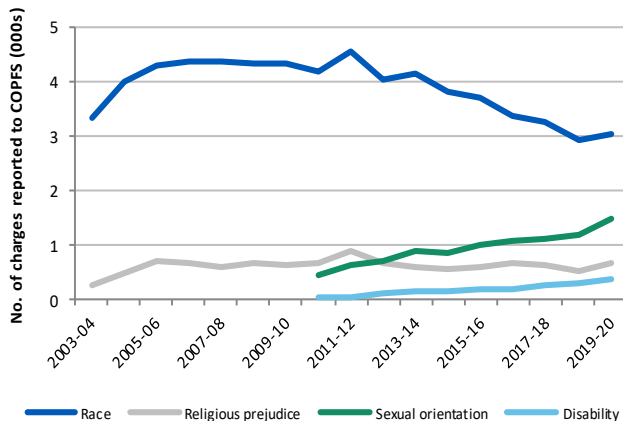


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▼ HATE CRIME

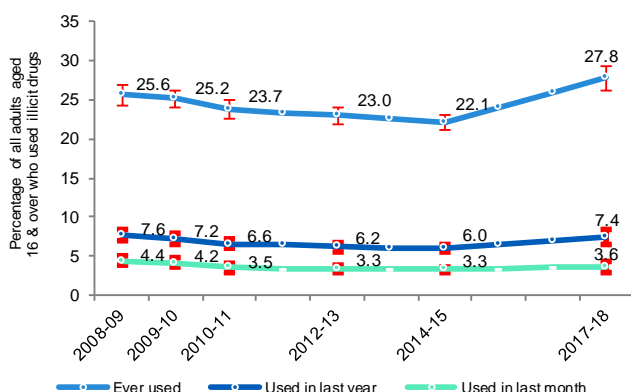
- **Increase in hate crime charges.** There has been an increase in the number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19 for all categories of hate crime (race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity). Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.



- **Numbers stable for police recorded hate crime.** Between 2014-15 & 2017-18, the number of hate crimes recorded by the police has been relatively stable, at around 6,600 to 7,000. In 2017-18, 67% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 16% sexual orientation, 7% religion, 4% disability and 1% transgender identity. The remaining 5% had multiple hate aggravators.

▼ DRUGS

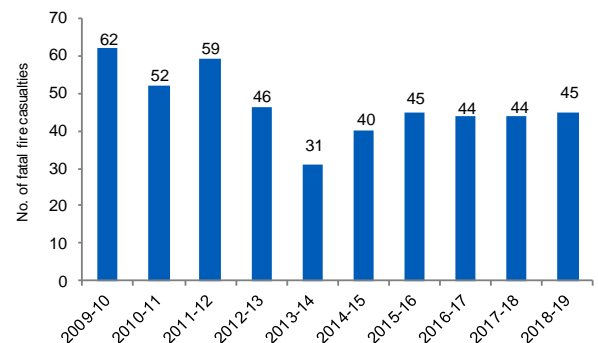
- **Illicit drug use in adults increases in latest year.** Looking at comparable measures, where the types of drugs included in the SCJS are generally consistent over time, the proportion of adults reporting use of illicit drugs in the 12 months prior to interview has increased from 6.0% in 2014-15 to 7.4% in 2017-18, but is unchanged since 2008-09. Those aged 16-24 were the most likely to have reported using drugs in the last year. Cannabis was the drug most commonly used by adults both in the last year and in their lifetime.



▼ COMMUNITY SAFETY

- **Improved public perception of local crime rate since 2008-09.** The public feel safer in their local communities. The SCJS found that, in 2018-19, 73% of adults thought that the local crime rate had stayed the same or reduced in the past two years. This shows an improvement from 69% in 2008-09 and no change since 2017-18 (73%).

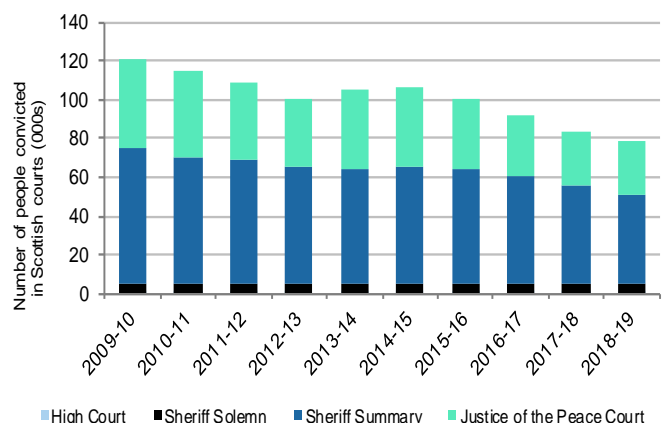
- **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (78%) of adults said they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2018-19, unchanged from 2017-18 (77%) but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.
- **Most adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reports that, in 2018-19, 56% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, unchanged from 2017-18 (57%) but down from 61% in 2012-13.
- **Number of fires fallen 31% in the last decade.** In 2018-19, there were 26,726 fires in Scotland, up 2% on 2017-18 but 31% lower than in 2009-10. There were 45 fire fatalities in 2018-19 – higher than the all-time low of 31 in 2013-14, though still 27% lower than in 2009-10.



- **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2009-10.** In 2018-19, there were 2,585 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 665 due to assault with a sharp object. These were, respectively, 44% and 41% lower than in 2009-10.

▼ CRIMINAL AND CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

- **Lowest number of convictions in last 10 years.** In 2018-19, the number of people convicted in Scottish courts decreased by 7% to 78,503. This is in line with the general downward trend of the last ten years.



- **Fall in convictions in most categories between 2017-18 & 2018-19.** The decline in convictions in 2018-19 was driven by falls in breach of the peace (13%), common assault (12%) and crimes against public justice (11%). Convictions for sexual crimes increased by 9% in 2018-19 from 1,112 to 1,215 people, the only category of convictions to increase.
- **Rise in custodial sentences in 2018-19.** The number of custodial sentences increased by 2% between 2017-18 and 2018-19, from 11,980 to 12,220. The proportion of all sentences resulting in custody rose to 16%, the highest since 2009-10. This contrasts with the fall in the proportion of community sentences, from 21% in 2017-18 to 19% in 2018-19.

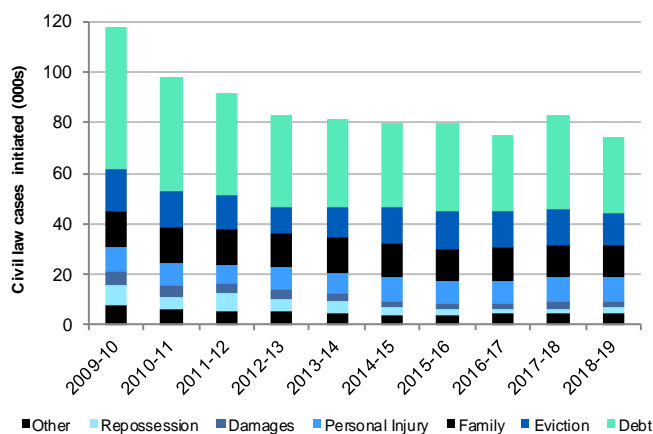


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- ▶ **No. of children referred to SCRA down by almost 80% in last 10 years.** Statistics published by the [Scottish Children's Reporter Administration](#) (SCRA) show that, in 2018-19, 2,824 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a decrease of 76% since 2008-09.

- ▶ **Long-term downward trend in initiated civil law cases, normalising after the rise in case load in 2017-18.** There were 72,100 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2018-19 (excluding summary applications). This represents a decrease of 11% from 2017-18, which continues the long-term downward trend in court business levels over the last ten years.



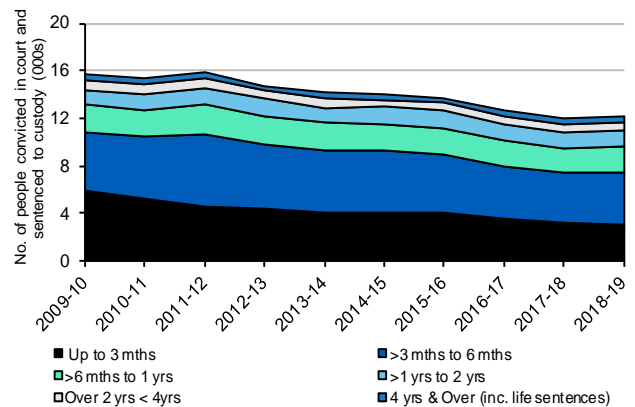
- ▶ **In the context of decreasing levels of business, most case types have decreased in parallel since 2017-18.** The largest decreases were recorded for debt (down 20%), eviction (down 15%) and repossession (down 9%). However, damages cases have increased by 8% and family cases rose by 3%. Debt actions remain the most common, constituting 41% of principal craves. Family and eviction actions were second and third most common, at 18% and 17% respectively.

PRISONS & COMMUNITY SENTENCES

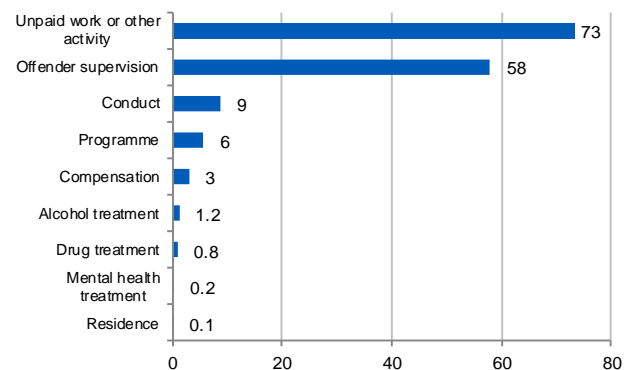
- ▶ **The prison population is growing again from its lowest point at the end of May.** [Daily population figures for Friday](#) published by the Scottish Prison Service, show that the prison population rose from around 7,500 in April 2018 to around 8,300 in November 2019, but fell sharply in the early days of lockdown. This was due to a drop in the number of sentenced admissions following the Coronavirus outbreak and the early release of prisoners. The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 27th April, but has since grown significantly to 1,718 on 17th July, when remands made up 24% of the prison population.



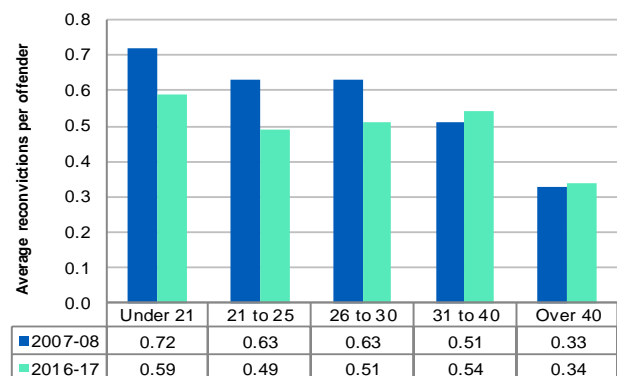
- ▶ **Average custodial sentence is over 10½ months long.** For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2018-19 was over 10½ months (326 days) in length. This was 3% longer than in 2017-18 and 16% longer than in 2009-10 (9¼ months). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of up to three months fell to 26% in 2018-19, the lowest proportion of the last decade. It has fallen each year since 2015-16.



- ▶ **73% of community payback orders issued with unpaid work.** There were 16,418 community payback orders imposed during 2018-19, 8% lower than in 2017-18. Seventy-three per cent of these had an unpaid work or other activity requirement, while 58% had an offender supervision requirement. Community payback orders accounted for around 93% of all social work orders imposed in 2018-19.



- ▶ **Reconviction rates remain at their lowest level for 20 years.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 16% lower than it was a decade ago, although there was no change between 2015-16 and 2016-17. The fall in the last decade was mostly driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 18% for under 21s, 22% for 21-25 year olds, and 19% for 26-30 year olds. In contrast, average reconvictions were 6% higher for 31-40 year olds and 3% higher for the over 40s.



ANY QUERIES?

If you require further information on any of the statistics in this brief, please contact Justice_Analysts@gov.scot or speak to Alan Fleming (0782 501 1477).

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Monthly Feature: Scottish Prison Population Statistics 2019-20

Scottish Prison Populations

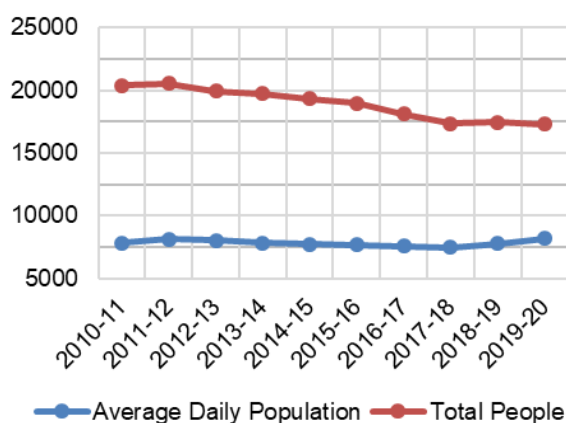


Official Statistics and Management Information (MI)



Prison Populations

► Annual Official Statistics to 2019-20

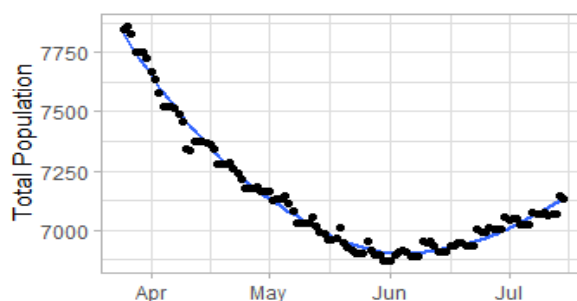


The average prison population increased 9.8% from 2017-18 to around 8,200 in 2019-20. The number of people spending any time in prison fell over the same period, indicating that the growth in the prison population is caused by people being imprisoned for longer.

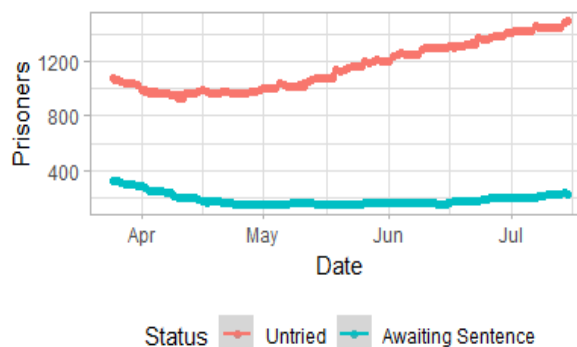
Between March and June 2020, the prison population fell dramatically. However from mid-April, the untried population began to grow.

Almost ¼ of prisoners are currently on remand.

► Population changes since March 2020 (MI)



► Remand populations since March 2020 (MI)



MI Extract 15 July 2020

► In 2019-20...



4%

of the average prison population were **young people**

This represents a steep decrease from 11% in 2010-11



33%

of prisoners arrived from the 10% most **deprived areas** of Scotland

This level is more or less consistent over the past decade



95%

of people imprisoned identified as White

Yet since 2010-11 those identifying as African, Black or Caribbean have significantly higher imprisonment rate



12%

of prisoners were aged **50 or over**

This has nearly doubled from 6.5% in 2010-11