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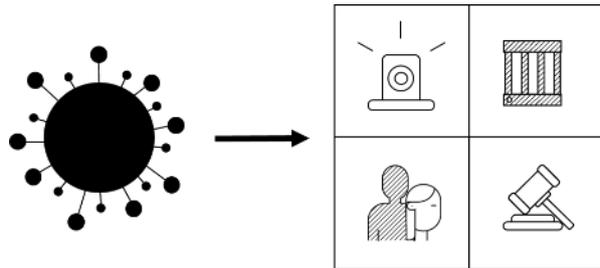
**Justice Analytical Services
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Data Report:
March 2021**

Published 29th April 2021

Summary

This pack provides information on the impact of COVID-19 on the Justice system during March 2021.

Data has been gathered from a number of different sources and may be subject to future revision.



Public compliance

This pack includes information on COVID-19 related interventions undertaken by Police Scotland. In addition to this, information on the public's compliance with measures to help restrict the spread of COVID-19 is collected from surveys of the population. Findings from these surveys can be found in the [Public attitudes to Coronavirus: March Update](#).

Three quarters of respondents agreed that the best thing to do is to follow the government's advice. This has remained high and stable through January and February. However, those stating they had engaged in a non-compliant activity has risen from the start of January (23% to 33%).

Police activity

- Recorded crime was 7% lower over April 2020 to March 2021 compared to the preceding year.
- The number of incidents has been above 2019-20 levels in recent weeks.
- Domestic abuse incidents were 3% higher in April 2020 to March 2021 compared to the preceding year.
- Coronavirus interventions increased by 30% between February and March 2021.

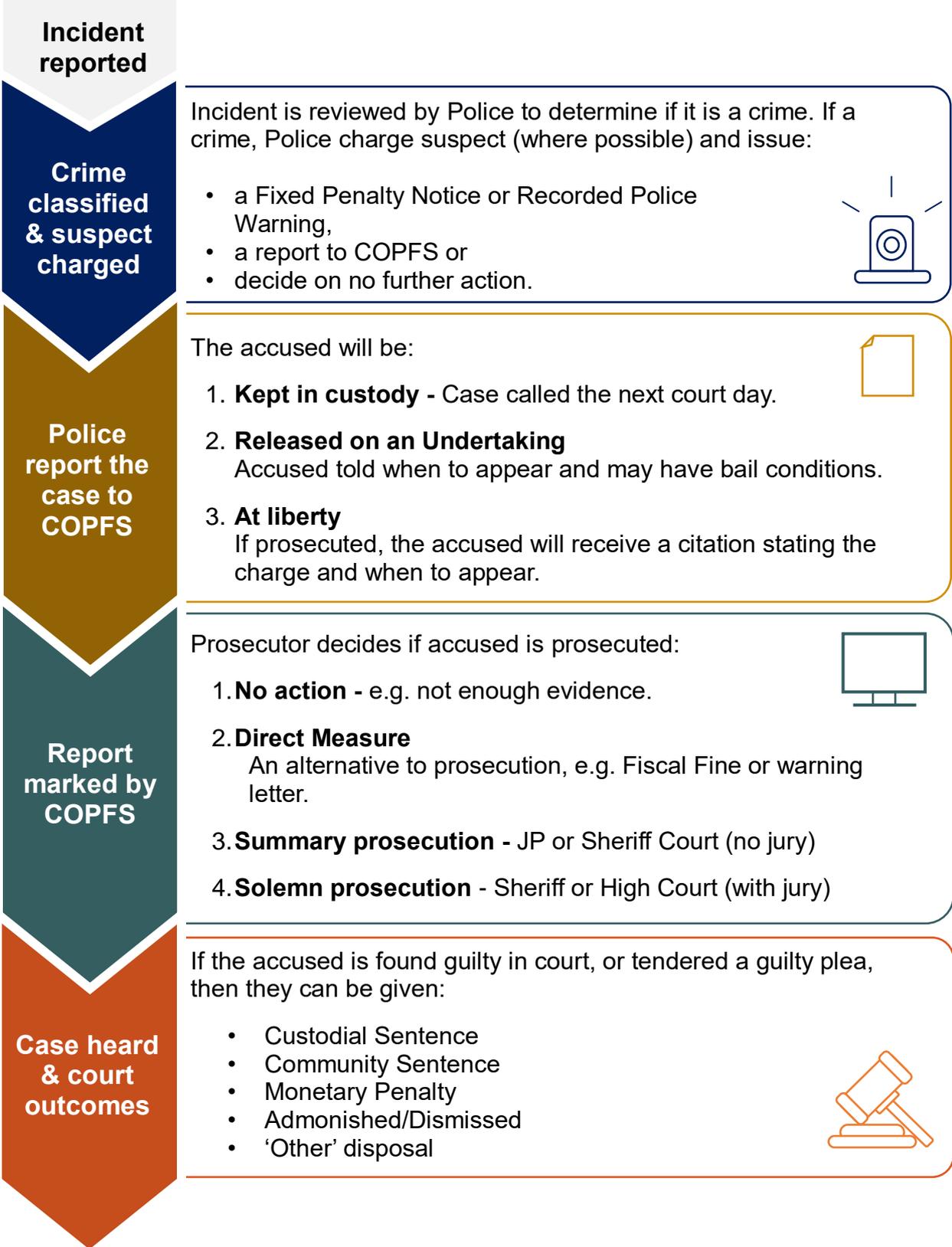
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Courts & Prisons

- To reduce footfall in lockdown, the majority of summary business was adjourned on 12th January.
- Community disposals were returning to 19-20 levels but there remains a backlog of cases (and associated disposals) to conclude.
- Initiations and disposals in the civil court remain below 19-20 levels.
- Prison populations initially decreased as court business abated.
- The number of prisoners on remand subsequently rose to its current, historically high, level.

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How crime flows through the Justice System



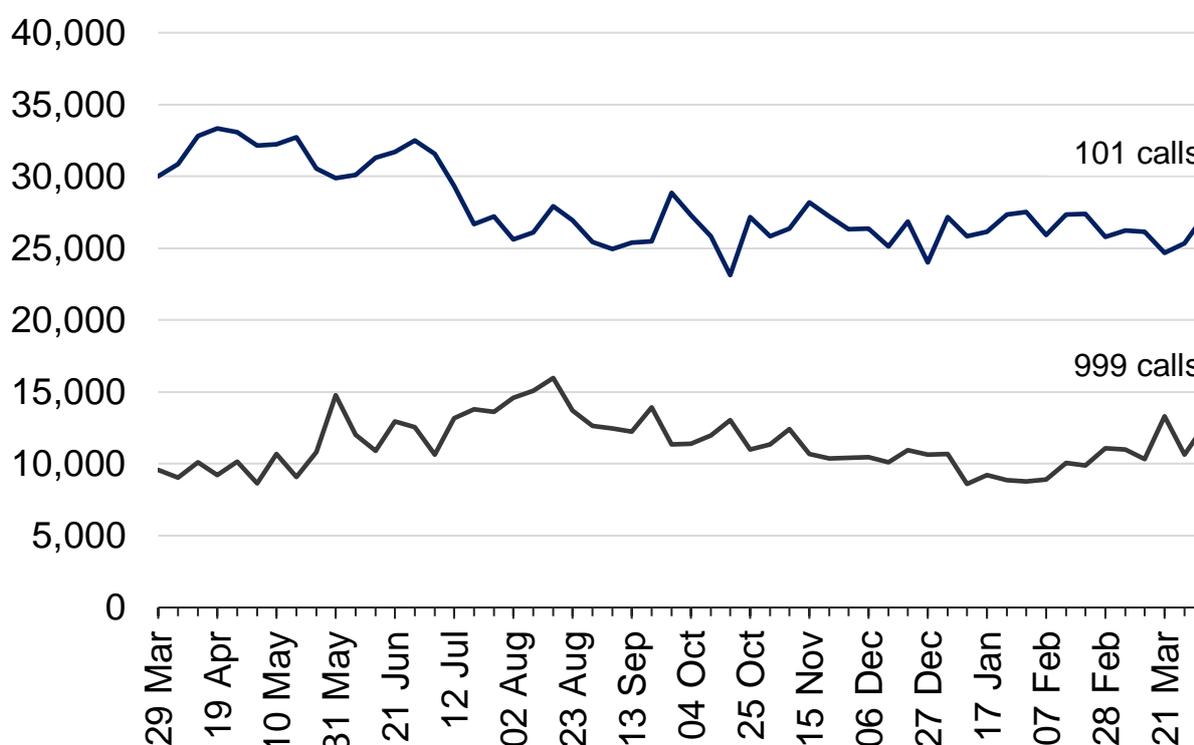
Police Activity (Police Scotland)

101 and 999 call volumes

Total weekly 999 & 101 calls have been above 2019-20 levels in some recent weeks. It should be noted that coronavirus restrictions were introduced in March 2020.

- Both 101 calls and 999 calls have remained relatively stable over the past four months.
- In the week ending 4th April there were 39,898 calls made.
- When combined, calls were higher than the previous week.

Chart: Number of calls



Type of call	Week ending 28 th March 2021	Week ending 4 th April 2021
101 calls	25,358	27,241
999 calls	10,661	12,657
Total calls	36,019	39,898

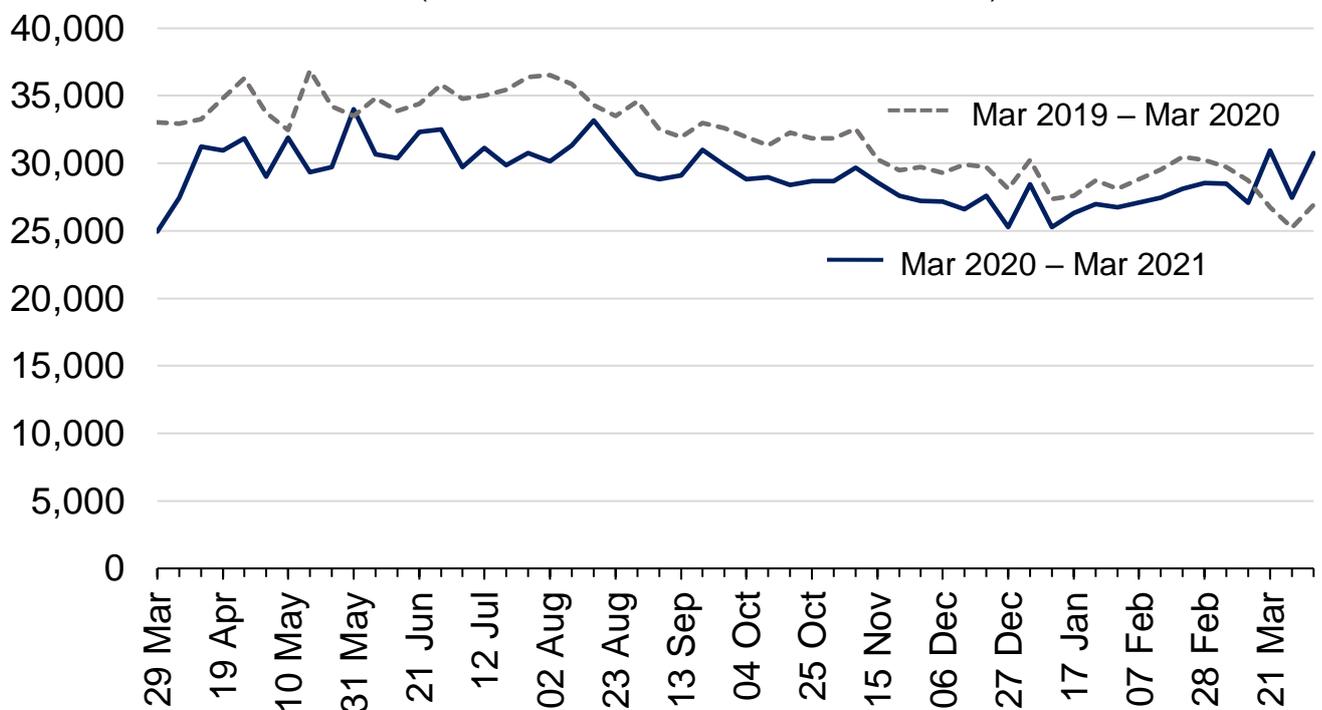
Incidents recorded

Weekly incident numbers have been above 2019-20 levels in recent weeks. It should be noted that coronavirus restrictions were introduced in March 2020.

In March 2021, incident numbers were trending above levels for the preceding year for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic.

Scotland entered Phase 2 of its route map on 28th May 2020. There was an increase in incidents during that week (w/e Sunday 31st May). However, incident numbers remained below 2019-20 levels in the weeks that followed, and declined from November onwards. Scotland entered a new period of lockdown on 5th January 2021. Since then, incidents have remained comparatively low, although there is evidence of an increasing trend since mid-January. This month's data also includes some of the Easter weekend (2nd – 5th April).

Chart: Number of incidents (2019-20 dashed line, 2020-21 solid line)



In the week ending 4th April:

30,775
incidents recorded



Up 14% compared to an equivalent week in 2020 (26,939 incidents)

Further information:

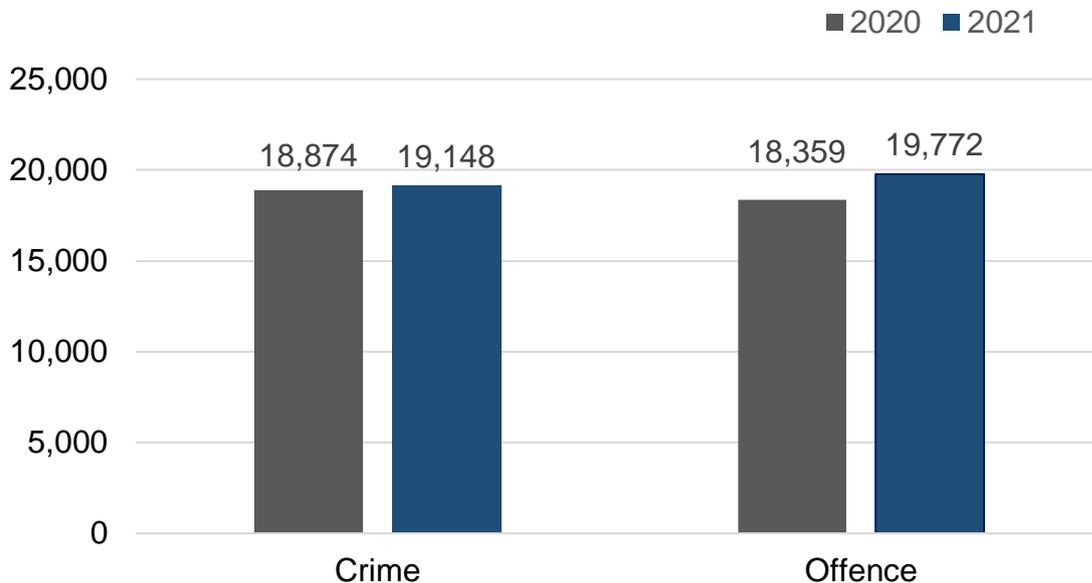
A full breakdown of calls & incident volumes is available from:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/covid-19-police-scotland-response/enforcement-and-response-data/>

Recorded Crime in Scotland

The recorded crime figures presented below exclude crimes recorded under the coronavirus legislation.

Chart: Number of crimes and offences recorded



Note: In each pair of columns, the left is March 2020 and the right is March 2021

March 2021

The number of crimes recorded in March 2021 was above 2020 levels.

The number of crimes recorded in March 2021 was 1% higher than in March 2020, and the number of offences was 8% higher than in March 2020¹.

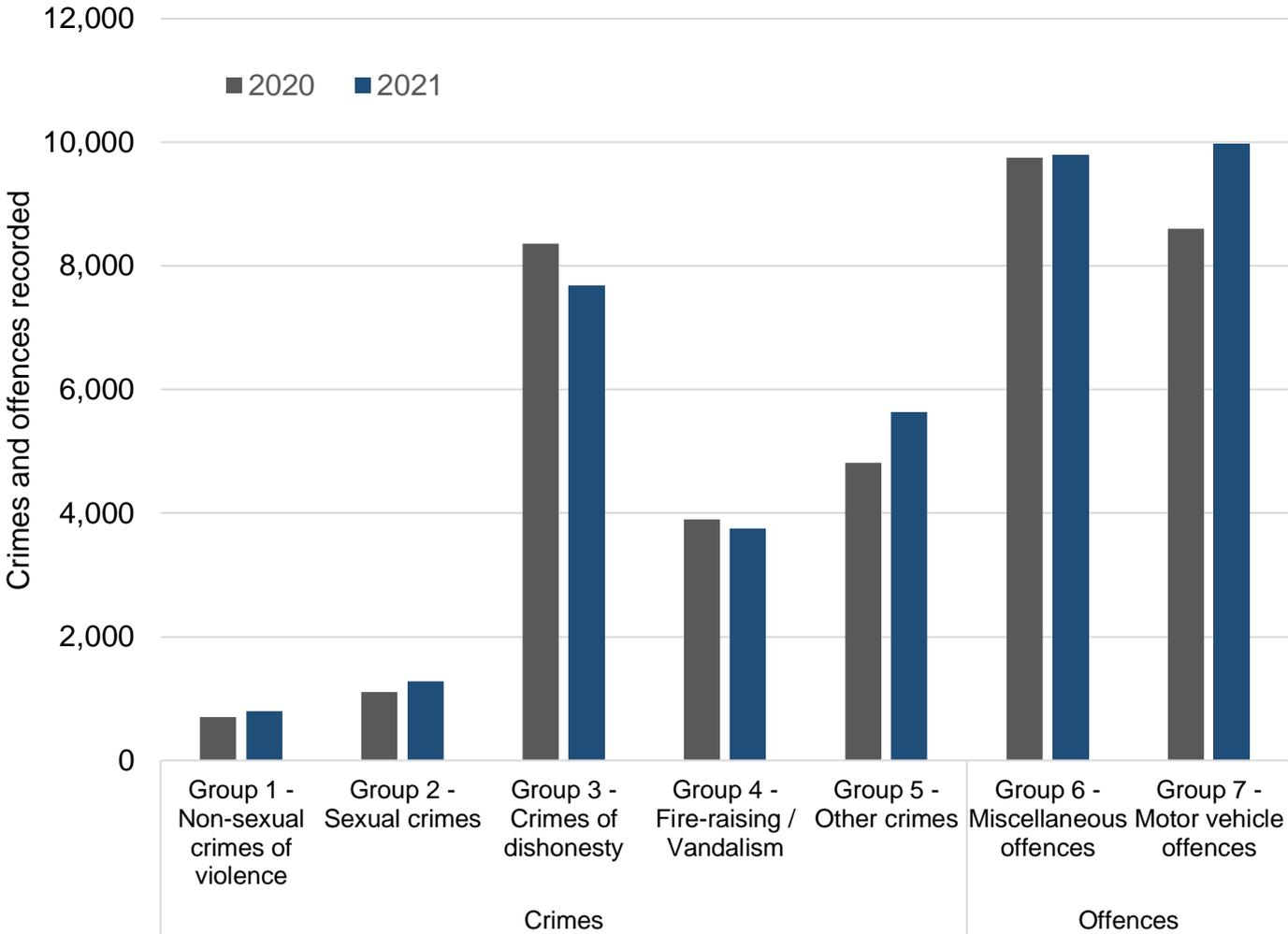
Since last year, most crime and offence groups have seen an increase while two groups are at a lower level.

Crimes of dishonesty were 8% lower (or 672 crimes). This decrease was driven by falls in Shoplifting (down 21%, or 441 crimes) and Housebreaking (down 41%, or 467 crimes).

Fire-raising, vandalism etc. were 4% lower (or 144 crimes). This decrease was driven by a fall in Vandalism etc. (down 5%, or 178 crimes).

¹ It should be noted that this month's report is the first time that both the current month and the comparison month from the previous year have included periods of coronavirus restrictions.

The following chart shows a breakdown of the crime and offence groups, comparing March 2020 to 2021



Note: In each pair of columns, the left is March 2020 and the right is March 2021

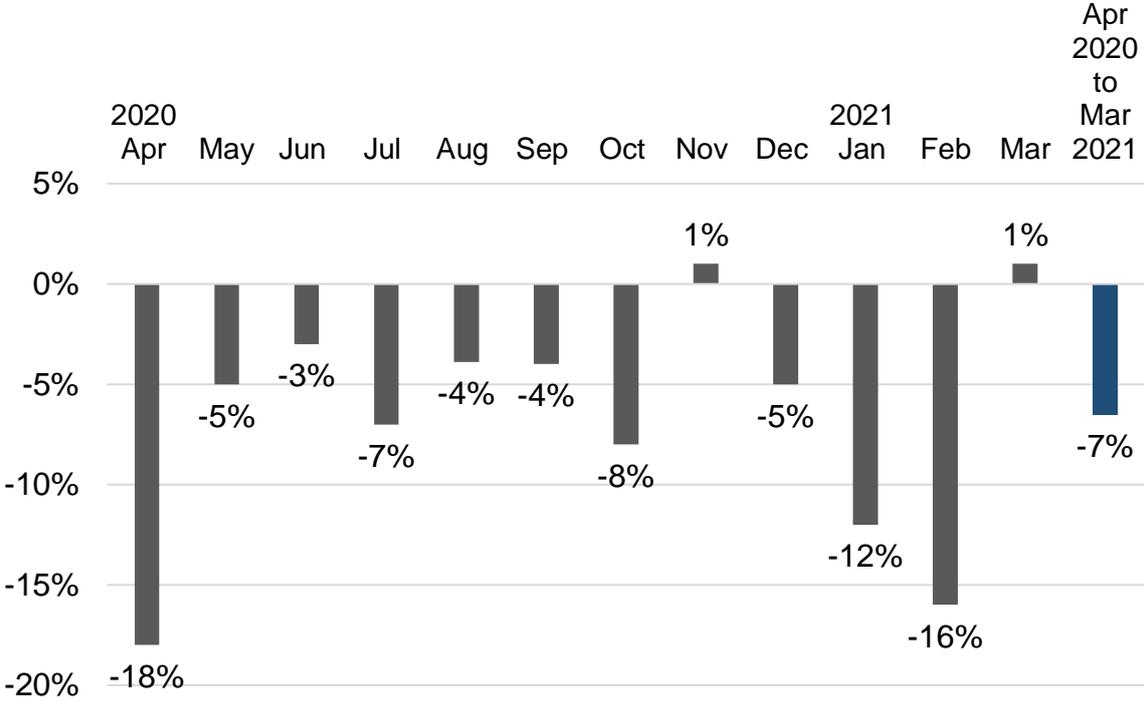
April 2020 to March 2021

For the second time since April 2020, crime was above levels for the equivalent month of the previous year.

When looking across April 2020 to March 2021*, 228,502 crimes were recorded. This was 7% lower than April 2019 to March 2020 (244,433 crimes recorded).

When comparing to previous months, crime since the start of the pandemic has generally remained below that of the preceding year, with the exception of November 2020 and the most recent month, March 2021.

Chart: Percentage change in recorded crime compared to preceding year



*The recorded crime figures presented here exclude crimes recorded under the new coronavirus legislation.

The biggest drivers of the reduction across April to March were Shoplifting, Other theft and Vandalism etc.

The biggest drivers of the 7% reduction over April to March (by volume) were:

Shoplifting

↓ 33% (or 10,076 crimes)

Other theft

↓ 19% (or 7,654 crimes)

Vandalism etc.

↓ 12% (or 5,416 crimes)

The biggest increases over this period were in:

Fraud

↑ 63% (or 6,861 crimes)

Crimes against public justice

↑ 31% (or 5,945 crimes)

The [Changes in levels of recorded fraud section](#) in the latest bulletin provides further background on what may be contributing to the above increase.

Further Information:

The data in this section comes from the monthly Official Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information, please see [Recorded Crime in Scotland: March 2021](#).

Coronavirus legislation intervention activity

This information is drawn from Police Scotland’s ‘Coronavirus Interventions’ application, which relies on manual input from Police Officers. Due to this manual input, these figures should be viewed as indicative only.

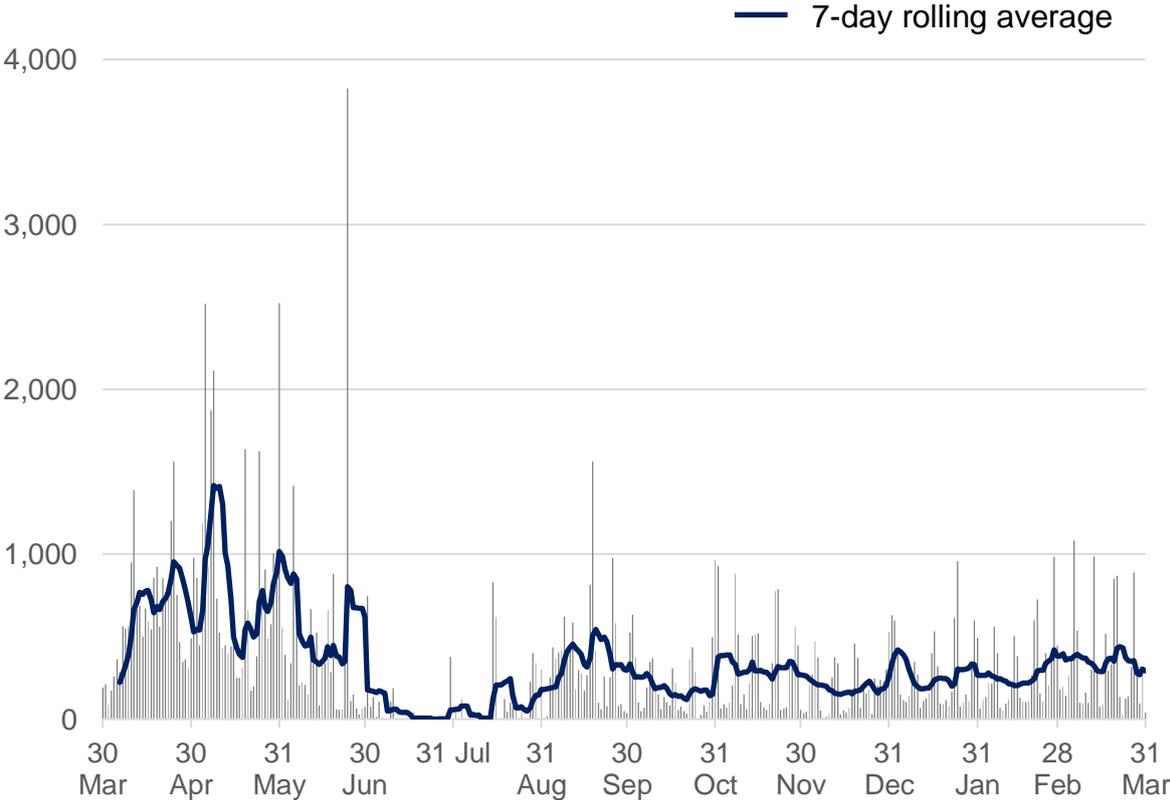
This system currently provides the broadest picture of the differing levels of co-operation experienced by Police across Scotland.

The use of interventions increased in March 2021, however trends remain lower than April to June 2020 levels

Total use of interventions has increased by 30% (or 2,327 interventions) since the previous month.

A large spike in interventions was seen on 25th June, following a large scale disturbance in Kelvingrove Park.

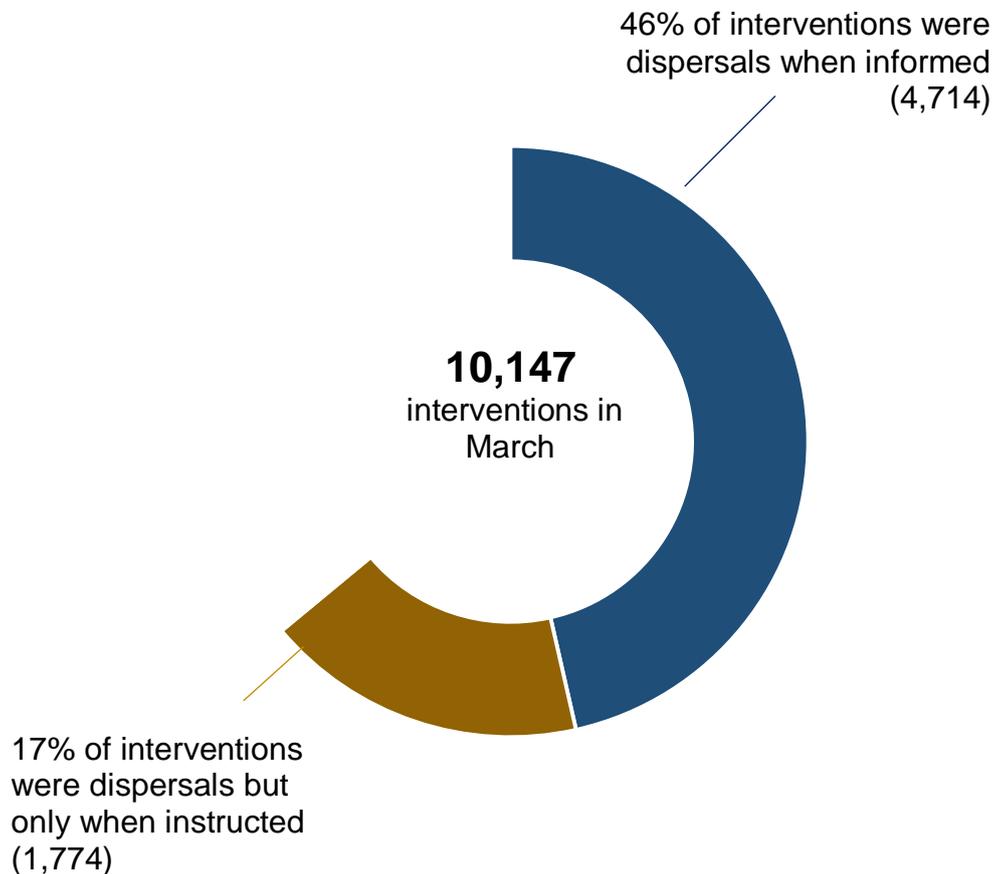
Chart: Number of interventions



COVID-19 Intervention Activity in March 2021

In March, 76% of interventions made were dispersals. This is a higher percentage than in the previous month (63% in February).

Chart: Monthly COVID-19 interventions



Of the remaining 24% of interventions:

- 1,220 were dispersed using reasonable force (this is the highest monthly figure to date: previously, the highest figure was 181 in April 2020)
- 2,331 were issued a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
- 108 were arrested

Further Information:

A full breakdown of interventions is available from Police Scotland:
<https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/covid-19-police-scotland-response/enforcement-and-response-data/>

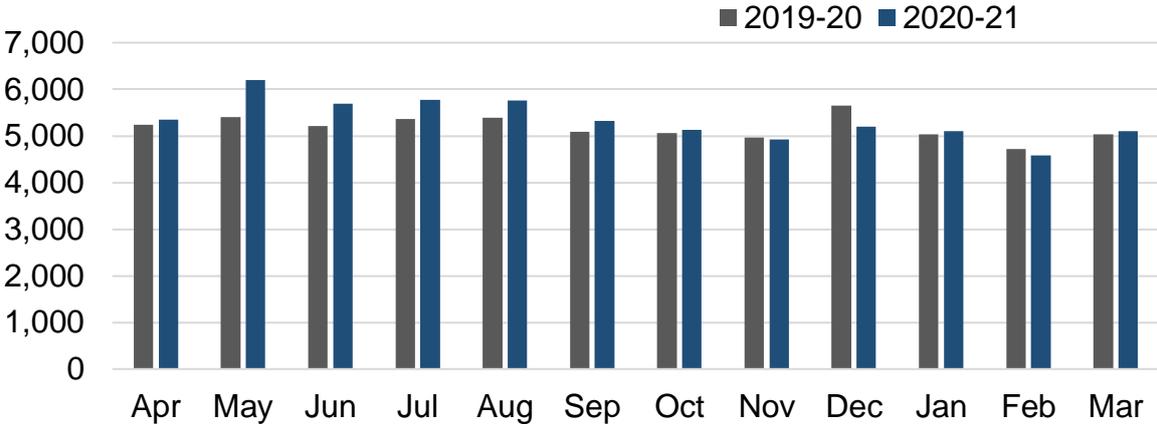
Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents

The number of Domestic Abuse incidents recorded in March 2021 was slightly higher than the level seen in March 2020.

These updates (including the proportion with a crime or offence) will be reflected in future editions of the Official Statistics on [Domestic Abuse in Scotland](#). The next edition will cover the 2019-20 reporting year.

Looking cumulatively across April 2020 to March 2021, incidents were 3% higher than the equivalent period of the previous year.

Chart: Number of domestic abuse incidents



Note: In each pair of columns, the left is the month of 2019-20 and the right is the month of 2020-21

In March 2021:

5,109 Domestic incidents recorded  Up 1% since last year (5,040 incidents)

In April 2020 to March 2021:

64,140 Domestic incidents recorded  Up 3% since equivalent period last year (62,161 incidents)

The proportion of April 2020 to March 2021 incidents that include the recording of at least one crime or offence was 40%. [Police Scotland’s Management Information Report](#) suggests an equivalent figure of 43.9% for 2019-20.

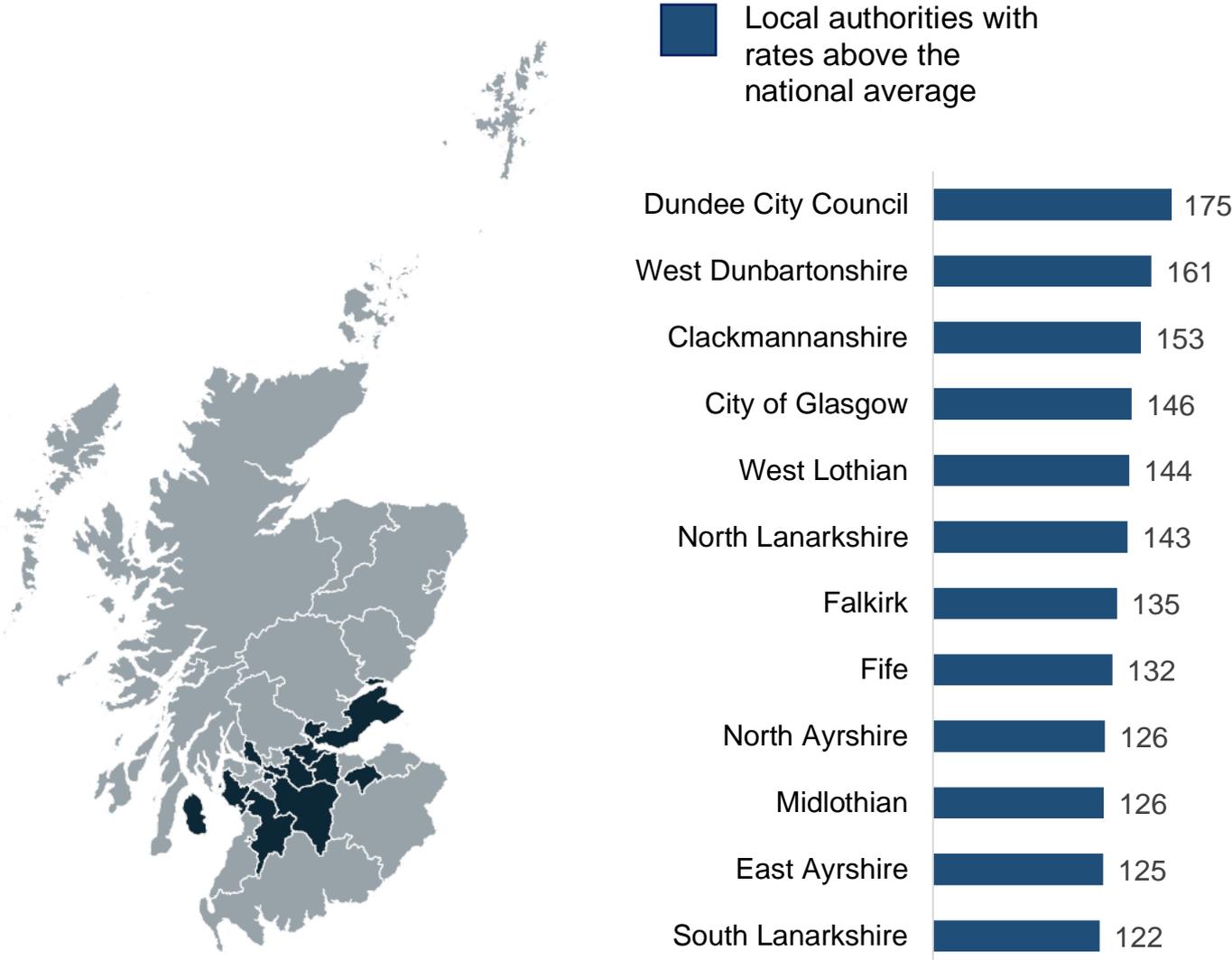
In addition to the above, separate figures on crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 are available from the Recorded Crime in Scotland monthly Official Statistics. There were 1,569 such crimes recorded by the police in April 2020 to March 2021, compared to 1,690 during the equivalent period the preceding year (down 7%).

Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents per 10,000 population

Across Scotland as a whole, the police recorded 117 domestic abuse incidents per 10,000 population during April 2020 to March 2021.

The local authorities with the highest rates were Dundee City (175), West Dunbartonshire (161), and Clackmannanshire (153).

Map of domestic Abuse incidents per 10,000 population, April 2020 to March 2021



Further Information:

The crime data in this section comes from the monthly Official Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information, please see [Recorded Crime in Scotland: March 2021](#)

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)

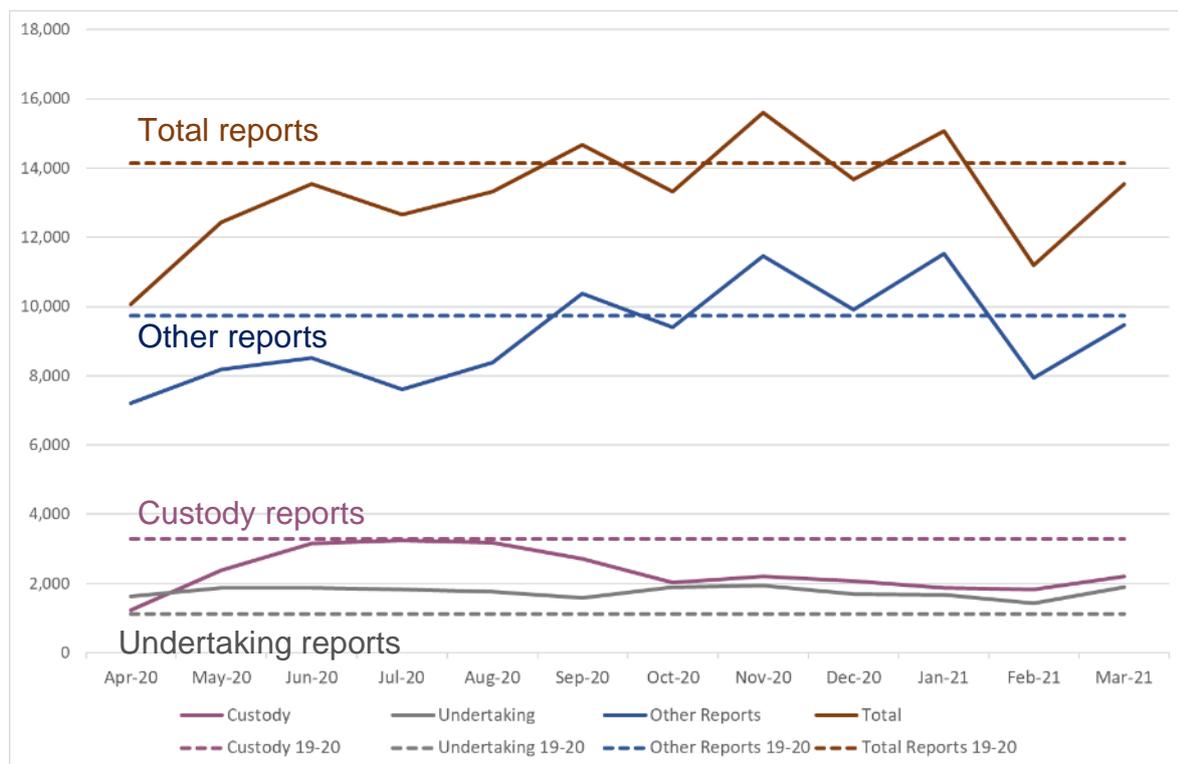
Reports received by COPFS

After a crime is classified and a suspect charged, police send a report to the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

Total reports received by COPFS recovered to pre-pandemic levels in March 2021.

- The total number of reports received by COPFS decreased substantially at the beginning of lockdown. Numbers increased to pre-pandemic levels before a substantial decrease in February 2021. Reports in March recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- Undertaking report numbers remain higher than 2019-20 levels.
- Custody report numbers had returned to 2019-20 levels but decreased from August and are now around half of 19-20 average levels.

Chart: Reports received

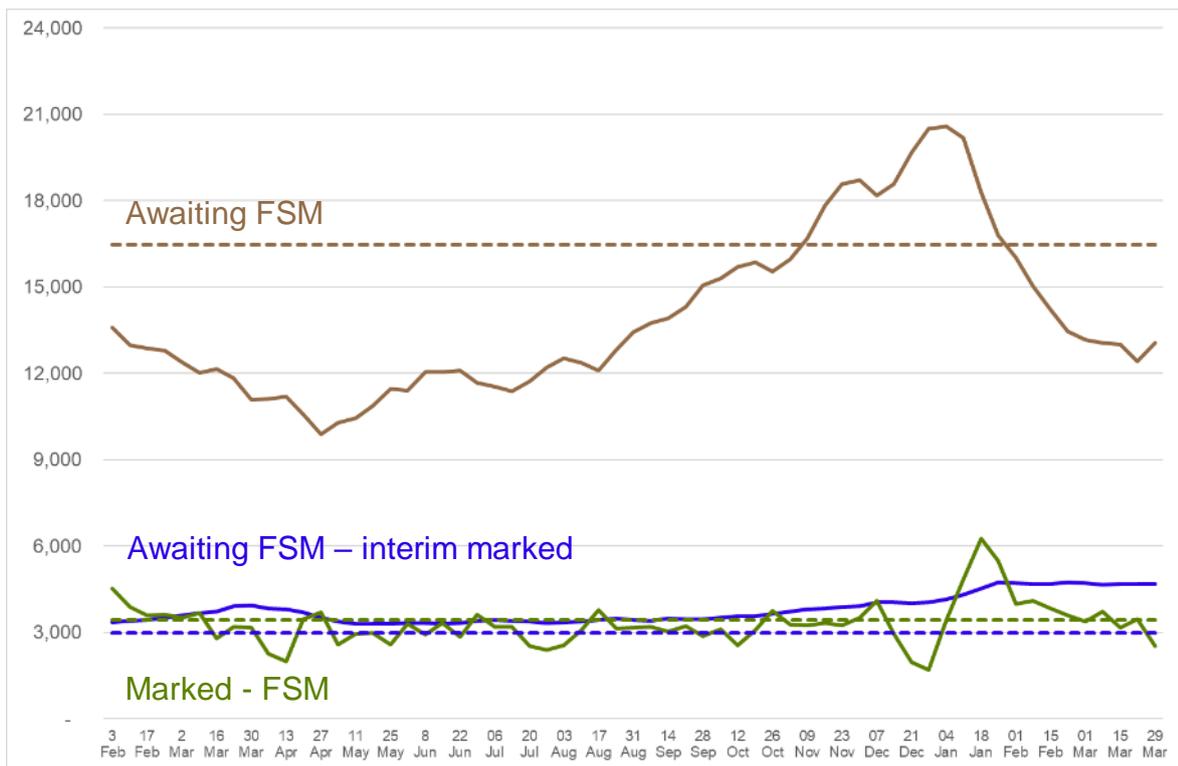


First substantive marking

When COPFS receive a report that someone has committed a crime the prosecutor must decide whether and what action to take. This is recorded on the case as a “marking”. If a decision cannot be taken immediately, an interim marking may be recorded. When a substantive decision is reached a First Substantive Marking (FSM) is recorded, to indicate how the prosecutor has decided to proceed.

The number of accused given a FSM by COPFS increased substantially in the early part of January 2021 but returned to 19-20 average levels by the end of February and continued to decline throughout March 21. The number of reports awaiting marking is now significantly below 19-20 average levels. The number of reports with an interim marking remains above 19-20 average levels.

Chart: Number of reports



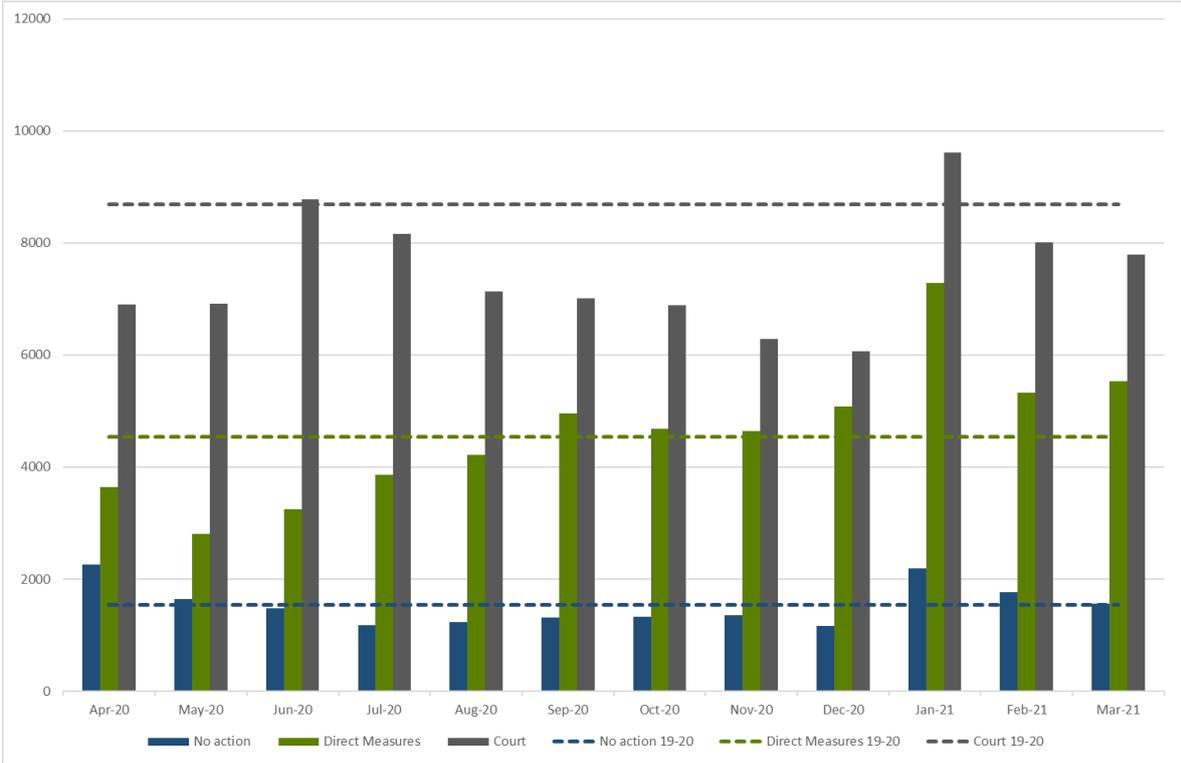
Summary of COPFS First Substantive Markings

There are 3 types of marking decision available to COPFS:

- No Action
- Direct Measures
- Court proceedings

Following an increase in all marking types in January 2021, numbers of markings have decreased in February & March. Markings for No Action and Direct Measures remain at or above 19-20 average levels and markings for court are below 19-20 average levels.

Chart: Subjects marked



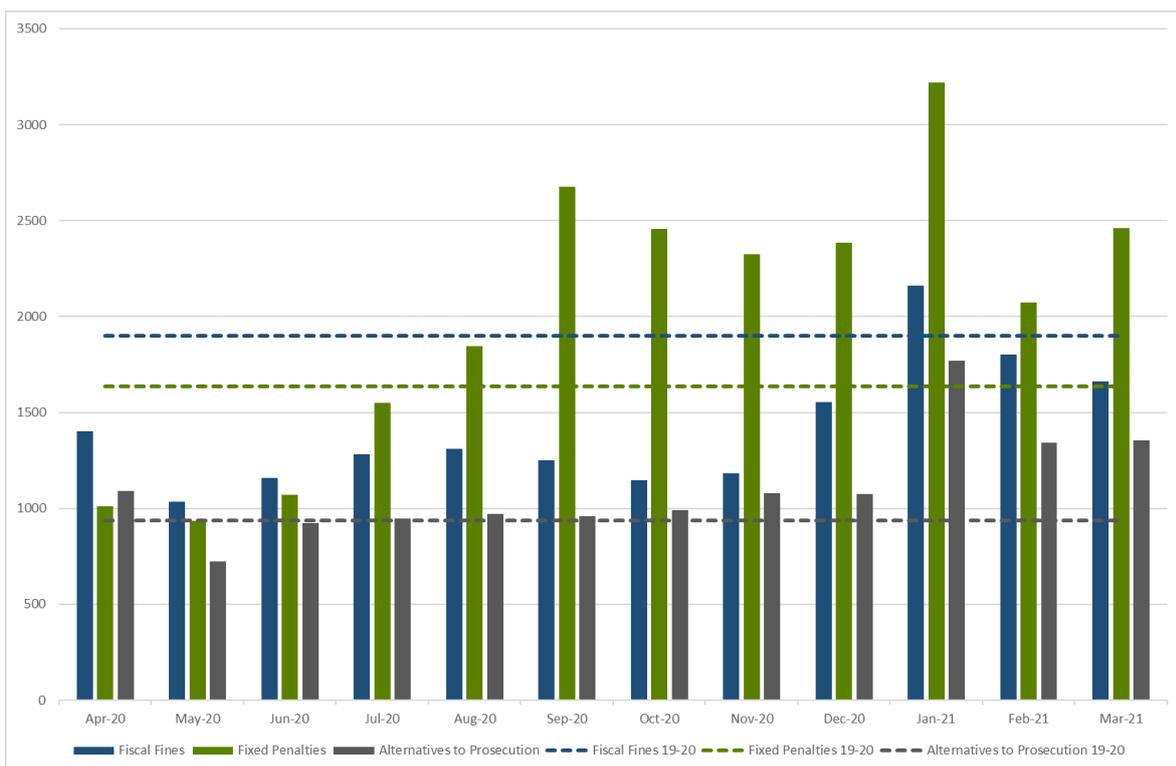
Subjects not marked for court

Alternatives to court include diversion, fiscal fines, fixed penalties, community and work orders. Fiscal fine limits were increased as part of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020.

In January 2021, for the first time in 2020-21, the numbers of subjects receiving a Fiscal Fine increased to above 19-20 average levels (dotted lines). This fell back to below the 19-20 average in February & March.

The number of subjects given Fiscal fixed penalties increased from May 2020, and remained above 19-20 average levels throughout the end of 2020. Numbers increased to almost double 19-20 average levels in January 2021 before decreasing again but remaining above pre-pandemic levels.

Chart: Subjects marked



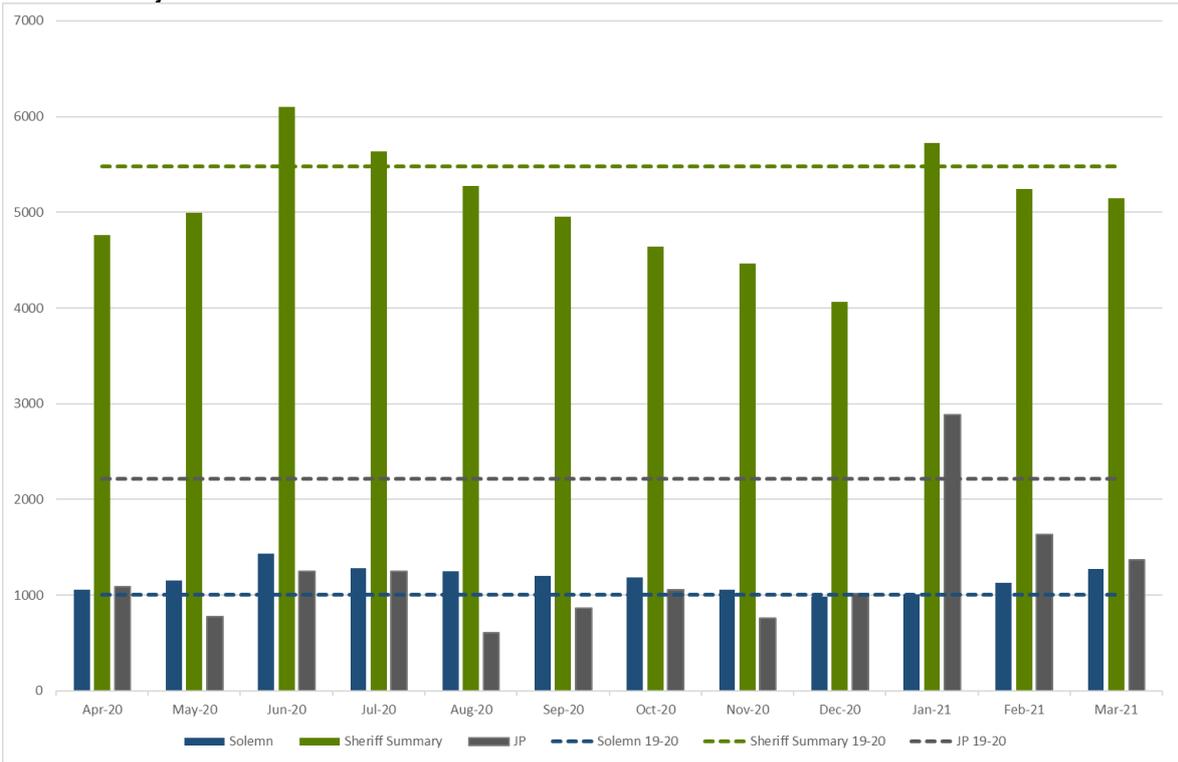
Subjects marked for court

The type of court proceedings appropriate for a case depends on the nature of the crimes or offences involved. The most serious crimes are marked for solemn proceedings, whilst less serious crimes and offences will be marked for Sheriff Summary or JP courts.

The number of people marked for proceedings in:

- Solemn court (High Court or Sheriff & Jury) has been at or above 19-20 average levels since April 2020.
- Sheriff Summary court fell below 19-20 average levels in August and continued to decrease until levels returned to at or near the 19-20 average in early 2021.
- After a significant increase in January 2021, markings for JP court have returned to below 19-20 average levels in February and March 2021.

Chart: Subjects marked



Fatal Accident Inquiries (as of 01 April 2021)

FAIs with scheduled court dates 32
 FAIs with First Notice lodged, awaiting court dates: 2

Source:
 Data in this section has come from COPFS Internal Management Information System.

Scottish Courts & Tribunal Service (SCTS)

SCTS update

As a result of the increasing spread of the new variant of COVID-19 across Scotland, the Lord President has announced that during the lockdown period the criminal courts will focus on the most serious trials and the majority of summary trials in the Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court will be adjourned. This will reduce the overall number of criminal trials taking place during lockdown by up to 75% and be implemented from January 12th.

Criminal Registered & Scheduled Trials

Since lockdown, there have been 76,660 criminal registrations in the courts. 406 of these registrations have been COVID-19 related (0.5%).

In March 2021, most types of court registration were lower than (but returning to) 2019-20 averages:

- Indictments registered in the High Court were 6% higher than the 19-20 average.
- Indictments registered in the Sheriff court (solemn cases) were 10% lower than the 19-20 average.
- Complaints (summary cases) registered in the Sheriff Court were 9% lower than the 19-20 average.
- Complaints registered in the JP court were 26% lower than the 19-20 average.

Cases Registered	19-20 monthly average	March 2021	Change from 19-20 monthly average	Outstanding (scheduled) trials	
				March 2020	March 2021
Indictments					
High Court	85	90	+5 (+6%)	390	267
Sheriff Court	454	410	-44 (-10%)	497	1,329
Complaints					
Sheriff Court	5,478	5,000	-478 (-9%)	13,971	30,645
JP Court	2,799	2,060	-739 (-26%)	3,497	5,560

At the end of March 2021 there were 37,801 trials outstanding. This compares to 18,355 at the end of 2019-20. In addition, SCTS have forecast that there are another 8,295 cases in the system which are likely to come to trial but have not yet had a trial date set (see SCTS published monthly criminal statistics for a more detail - <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>).

Criminal Disposals

In March 2021 there were 4,171 disposals (excluding secondary disposals and the 'other' disposal category) from Scotland's courts. This is 57% of the 19-20 monthly average of 7,278 and 23% higher than February 2021.

Between April 2020 and March 2021 there were 38,775 (44%) fewer disposals compared to the previous year.

If courts had not been subject to lockdown and crime levels had remained the same we could have expected the number of April 2020 to March 2021 court disposals to be similar to April 2019 to March 2020 levels.

From April to March of 2021, there have been 37% fewer custodial sentences and 49% fewer community disposals imposed by the courts than might have been expected under normal circumstances.

To:	Monthly average 2019-20	March 2021	Change %	April – March 2019-20	April – March 2020-21	Change %
31 March 2021						
Imprisonment	1,011	794	-21%	12,125	7,650	-37%
Community Disposal (CPO & DTTO)	1,384	810	-41%	16,600	8,546	-49%
Restriction of Liberty Order	296	330	+11%	3,555	2,774	-22%
Fine etc.	3,106	1,277	-59%	37,263	18,018	-52%
Admonished/ Discharged	1,481	960	-35%	17,779	11,559	-35%

Overall, the number of crimes recorded by the police between April 2020 and March 2021 was 7% lower than the same period in 2019-20. It will take time for these cases to move through the courts system and it is unlikely that many of these cases are included in the disposal figures above. Any changes in crime levels may have associated impacts on volumes of court business and disposals.

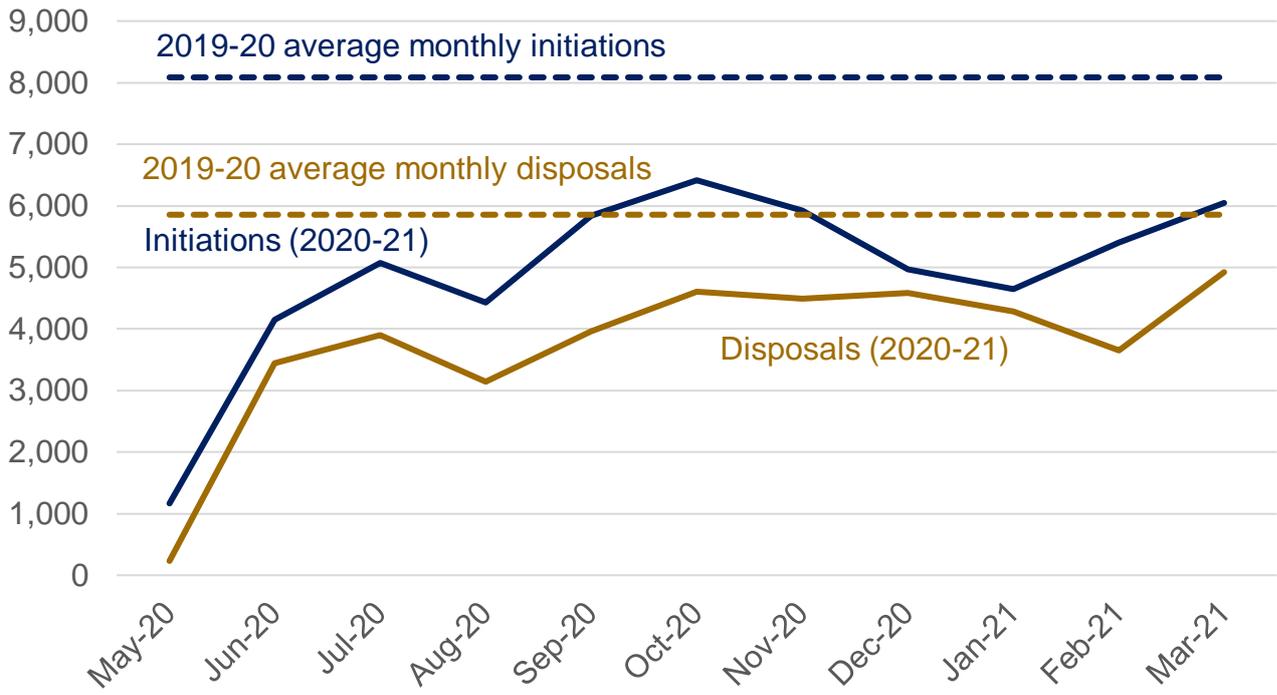
Further Information: Latest SCTS published official statistics can be found here: <https://scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>

Sheriff Court Civil Case Volumes

Case initiations and disposals

Initiations and Disposals (of all types) in the Sheriff Civil Courts remain low, but are recovering to 2019-20 typical levels (dotted lines) as the courts continue to emerge from lockdown. There was a rise in both initiations and disposals in March.

Chart: Initiations and disposals



Sheriff Court initiated and disposed cases by procedure

Initiated case numbers for ordinary cause and simple procedure are returning to 2019-20 monthly average levels. Ordinary cause numbers have exceeded 2019-20 average monthly levels for the first time since October 2020, while simple procedure is fluctuating. Summary cause is much lower than 2019-20 levels, while small claims have largely been replaced by simple procedure.

Likewise, disposed cases for ordinary cause and simple procedure are returning to 2019-20 levels. In line with the rise in total disposals in March, ordinary cause and simple procedure cases increased in parallel. Summary cause are much lower than average, but have also increased in March in line with overall disposals.

In addition to lower volumes across all procedures, summary cause figures were heavily influenced by the emergency legislation which protects tenants during the pandemic, brought into force in April 2020 as part of [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#). The provisions of the Act, although temporary in nature, have now been extended until 31 March 2021.

Procedures	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	2019/20 monthly average
Initiated						
Ordinary cause	1,885	1,512	1,304	1,577	2,161	1,928
Summary cause	154	186	173	209	228	1,132
Small claim	2	4	0	0	1	2
Simple procedure	2,282	1,668	1,819	2,181	1,823	2,695
Total initiated	4,323	3,370	3,296	3,967	4,213	5,758
Disposed						
Ordinary cause	1,424	1,367	1,003	1,047	1,428	1,445
Summary cause	366	562	411	284	644	1,096
Small claim	2	4	1	2	4	5
Simple procedure	2,170	2,140	2,364	1,754	2,148	2,306
Total disposed	3,962	4,073	3,779	3,087	4,224	4,852

1. Figures exclude summary applications.
2. Figures for initiations and disposals do not necessarily refer to the same cases.
3. Excludes Sheriff Personal Injury Court.

Case types

In March 2021, total initiated and disposed cases were below 2019-20 levels.

- Initiated case types presented are gradually returning to 2019-20 levels, with month to month variation. Only Debt cases are still lower than the pre-festive season initiations in 2020, but the other case types have recovered.
- There was a sharp overall rise in disposals from the previous month, with all case types presented showing an increase. Debt disposals were higher than the 2019-20 monthly average figures.

Initiated Cases (Mar 21)			Disposed Cases (Mar 21)	
March 2021	Change from 19-20	Case Type	March 2021	Change from 19-20
1,297	123% of 19-20 average month (1,055 cases)	 Family	858	94% of 19-20 average month (910 cases)
438	73% of 19-20 average month (602 cases)	 Children's Referrals	139	53% of 19-20 average month (260 cases)
2,200	76% of 19-20 average month (2,883 cases)	 Debt	2,425	102% of 19-20 average month (2,368 cases)
321	80% of 19-20 average month (402 cases)	 Personal Injury	236	77% of 19-20 average month (306 cases)

Further Information:

Latest published Civil Justice Statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/civil-justice-statistics-scotland-2019-20/>

Prisons

Prison population

While the total prison population has fallen slightly with reduced court business, the number of people held on remand remains at a historic high level.

In March 2021 (up until the morning of 1st April):

- the population increased by 44 to 7,385
- 1,951 were on remand: 1,680 (23%) untried & 271 (4%) awaiting sentence
- 65% of arrivals in March were untried (646 of 991), and 19% awaiting sentence (187)

Chart: Total prison population

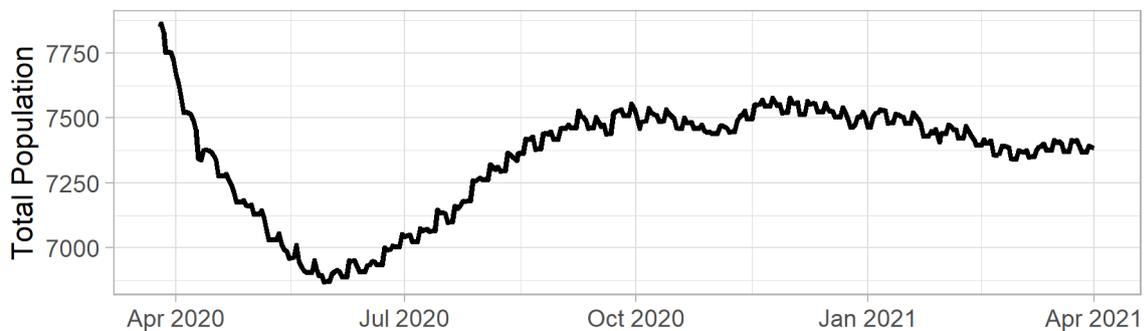
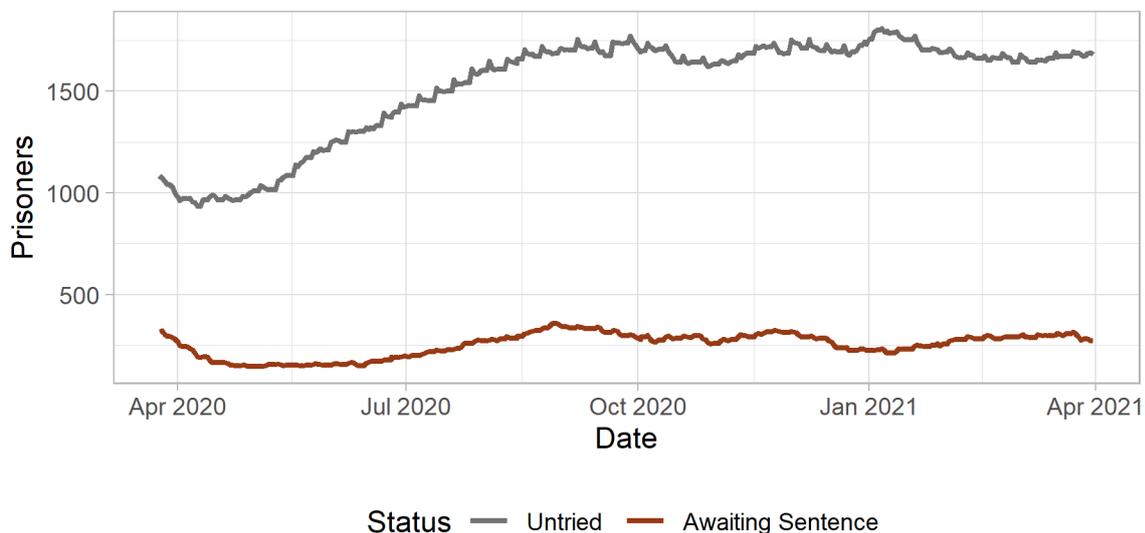


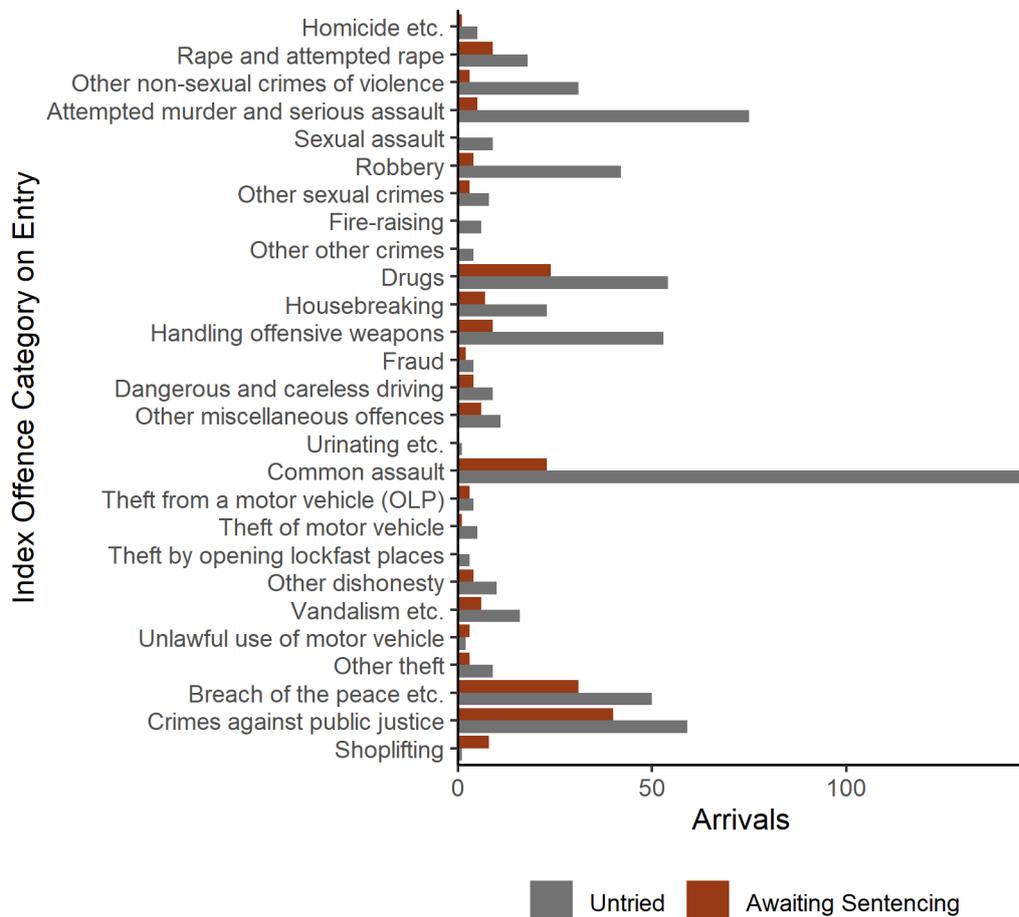
Chart: Remand population



Remand Arrival Offences

There were 857 un-sentenced arrivals to prison with known offence types in March, awaiting trial or sentencing for the following alleged offences

Chart: Index offence category on entry of un-sentenced arrivals



Note: Double-counting may occur where an individual is absent from prison for a night in the week and then returns. Where an individual has multiple alleged offence types, the offence towards the top of the list in the chart is used as the index offence.

Revision: The way index offences are identified for remand prisoners changed from December 2020. Offences are now prioritised on the basis of average sentence length from [Criminal Proceedings 2018-19](#). This has increased the proportion where Common Assault, Drugs or Handling Offensive Weapons is the index offence. It has reduced the number of remanded individuals for whom Crimes Against Public Justice and Vandalism are the index offences

Further Information:

Latest published annual prison population statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-prison-population-statistics-2019-20/>

Sources and Further Information

Sources and further information

The information presented in this pack are compiled from a range of sources – including Official Statistics, management information published by partner bodies, and more recent analysis of administrative data. These are combined to provide users with a summary of the latest impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Scotland.

It should be noted that where information has come from non-Official Statistics sources, it will be provisional in nature and may be subject to future revision. It's inclusion at this stage is to provide users with more timely and detailed information on how the pandemic has affected different parts of Scotland's Justice system. As such this should be seen as providing a broadly indicative summary – rather than a precise measure of activity.

In due course and as standard practice, many of these measures will be reflected in the associated annual Official Statistics. Links to these related products are provided below, along with management information published by partner organisations.

Police activity:

- Monthly [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) Bulletin. This contains Official Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland.
- [Domestic Abuse Statistics: 2018-19](#). Official statistics on domestic abuse in Scotland.
- Quarterly [Police Scotland Management Information](#) reports. These contain the number of domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police in Scotland and the proportion of these incidents that resulted in the recording of a crime or offence.
- Police Scotland [Enforcement and Response Data](#). Includes data on enforcement activity and demands on policing. As this is drawn from management information it is subject to change.

Courts and prisons data:

- Annual [Civil Justice Statistics Bulletin](#). This contains Official Statistics on civil justice and court reform as recorded by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS).
- [Scottish Prison Population Statistics, 2019-20](#). Experimental statistics on Scottish prison populations, exploring population levels and composition and change over time.
- [SCTS Official Statistics](#). Includes quarterly data on fines, financial penalty collection rates, and criminal court activity in Scotland.

Correspondence and enquiries

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