

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

April 2021

Published 27th May 2021

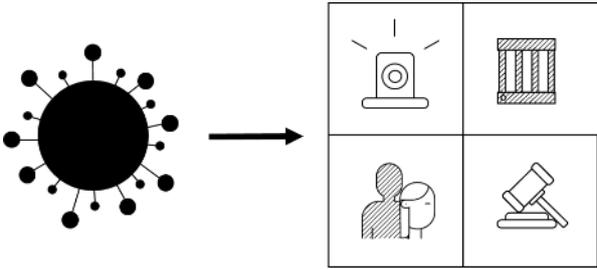


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Summary

This pack provides information on the impact of COVID-19 on the Justice system during April 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

- The number of crimes recorded in April 2021 was 13% higher than in April 2020 and 8% lower than in April 2019.
- Weekly incident numbers have been similar in April 2021, compared to April 2020.
- The number of Domestic Abuse incidents recorded in April 2021 was lower than the level seen in both April 2019 and 2020.
- Coronavirus interventions increased in April 2021 due to a spike across the Easter weekend. Levels have generally been lower than April to June 2020 levels.

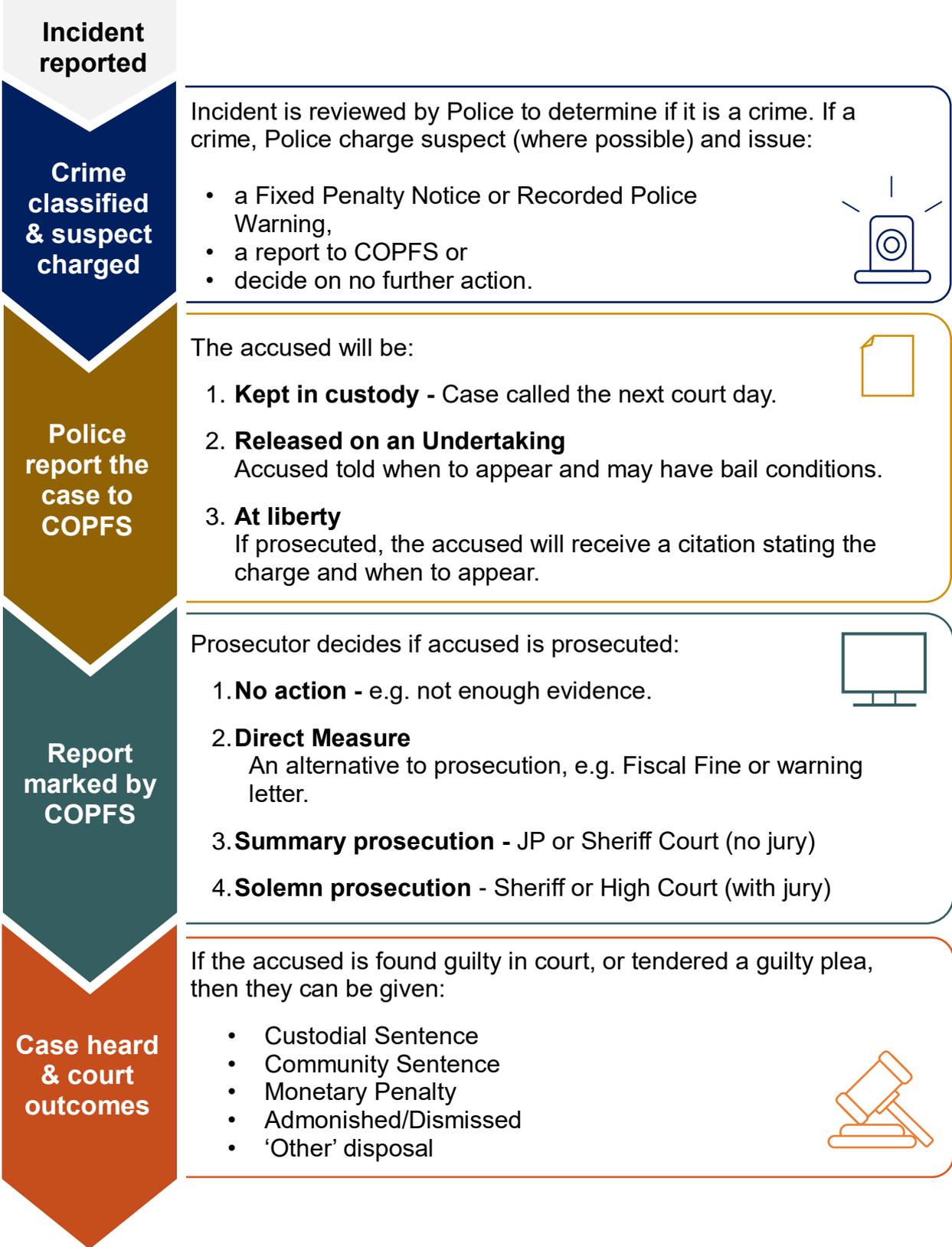
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Courts & Prisons

- Sheriff Court Summary business increased on 19th April following a period of business restrictions due to lockdown in early 2021.
- 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



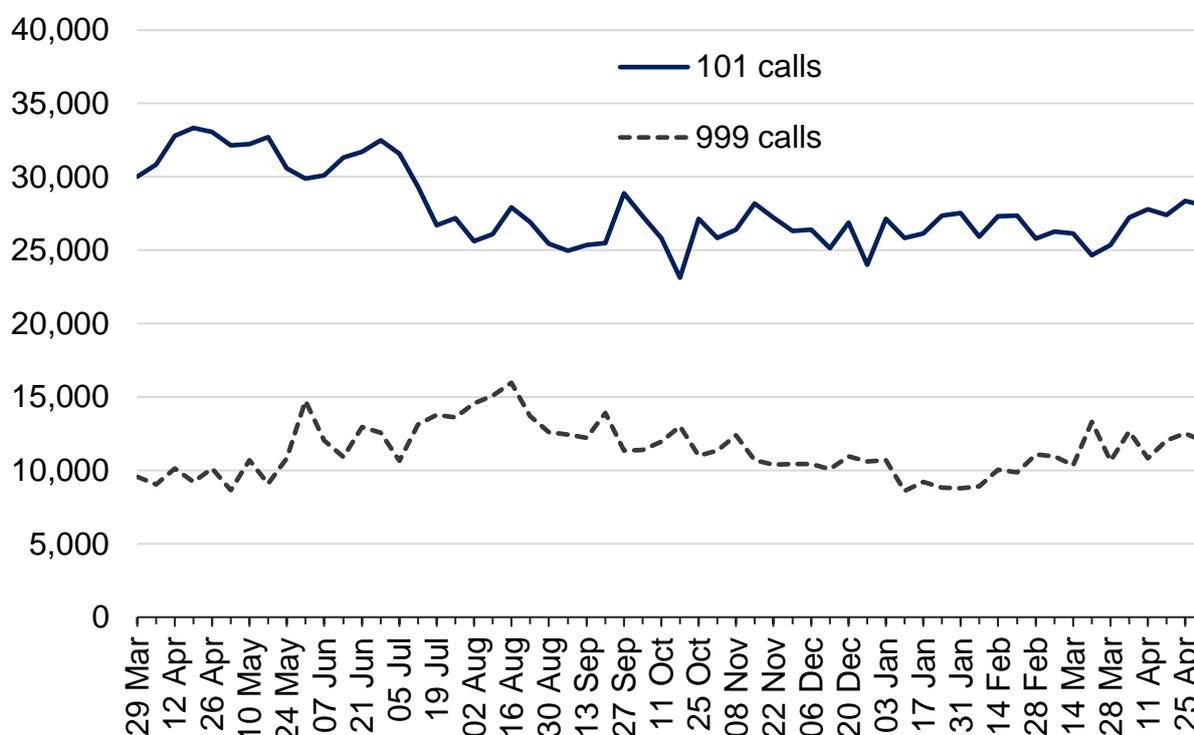
Police Activity (Police Scotland)

101 and 999 call volumes

Total weekly 999 & 101 calls have generally been lower compared to the equivalent weeks from the previous year.

- Both 101 calls and 999 calls have remained relatively stable over the past six months.
- In the week ending 2nd May, 40,010 calls were made to Police Scotland.
- When combined, calls were lower than the previous week.

Chart: Number of calls



Type of call	Week ending 25 th April 2021	Week ending 2 nd May 2021
101 calls	28,368	28,051
999 calls	12,523	11,959
Total calls	40,891	40,010

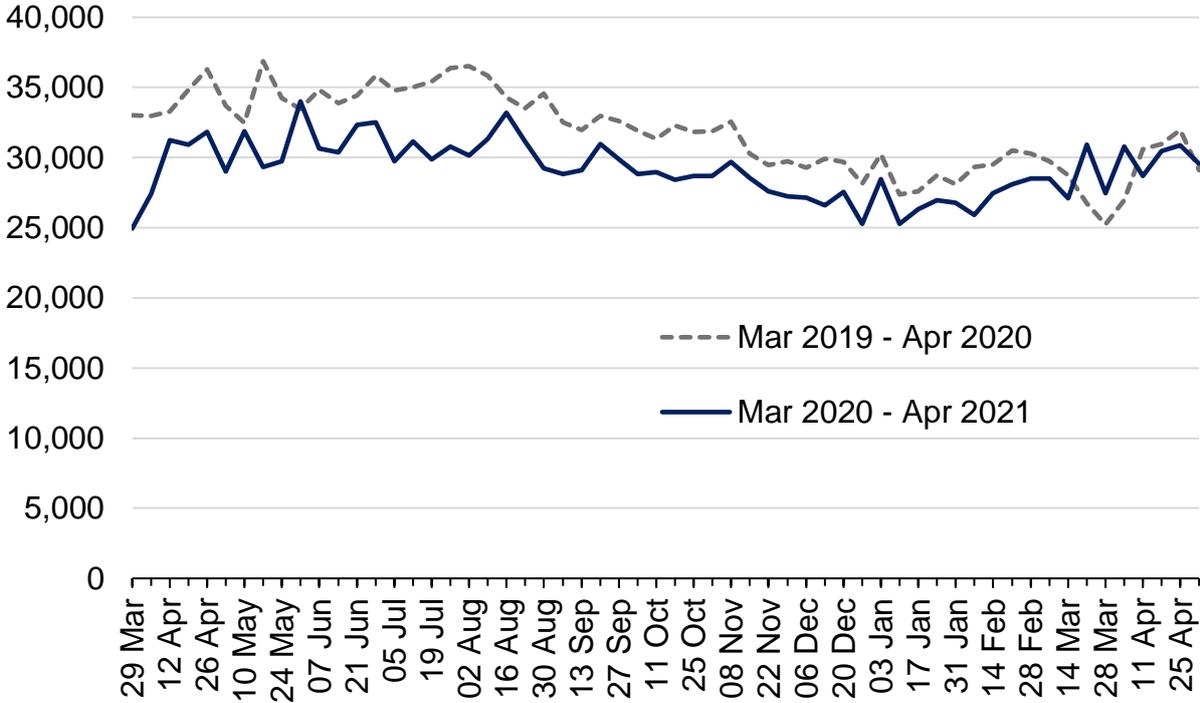
Incidents recorded

Weekly incident numbers have been similar in April 2021, compared to April 2020. It should be noted that coronavirus restrictions were in place in both months.

While there has been fluctuation in March and April 2021, incident levels have generally been lower, compared to the equivalent weeks from the previous year.

Scotland entered Phase 2 of its route map on 28th May 2020. There was an increase in incidents during that week (ending 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.

Chart: Number of incidents



In the week ending 2nd May:

29,542 incidents recorded



Up 2% compared to the equivalent week in 2020 (29,086 incidents)

Further information:

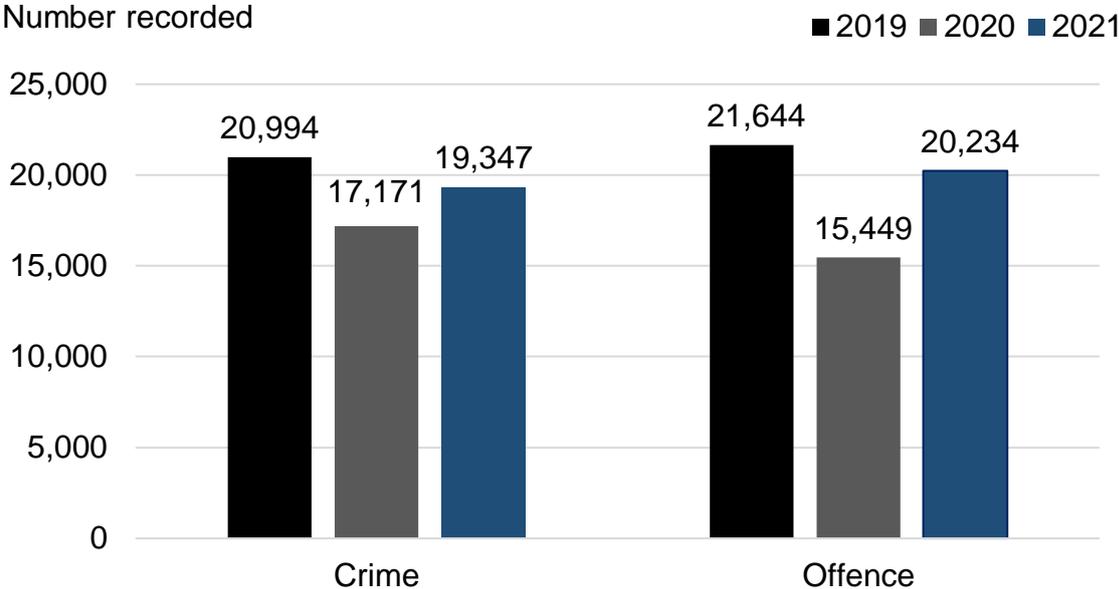
A full breakdown of calls & incident volumes is available from:

<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: Each set of columns shows from left to right, April 2019, 2020 and 2021

April 2021

The number of crimes recorded in April 2021 was above 2020 levels (when the first pandemic lockdown was in place) and lower than 2019 levels (for which there was no pandemic or restrictions on movement).

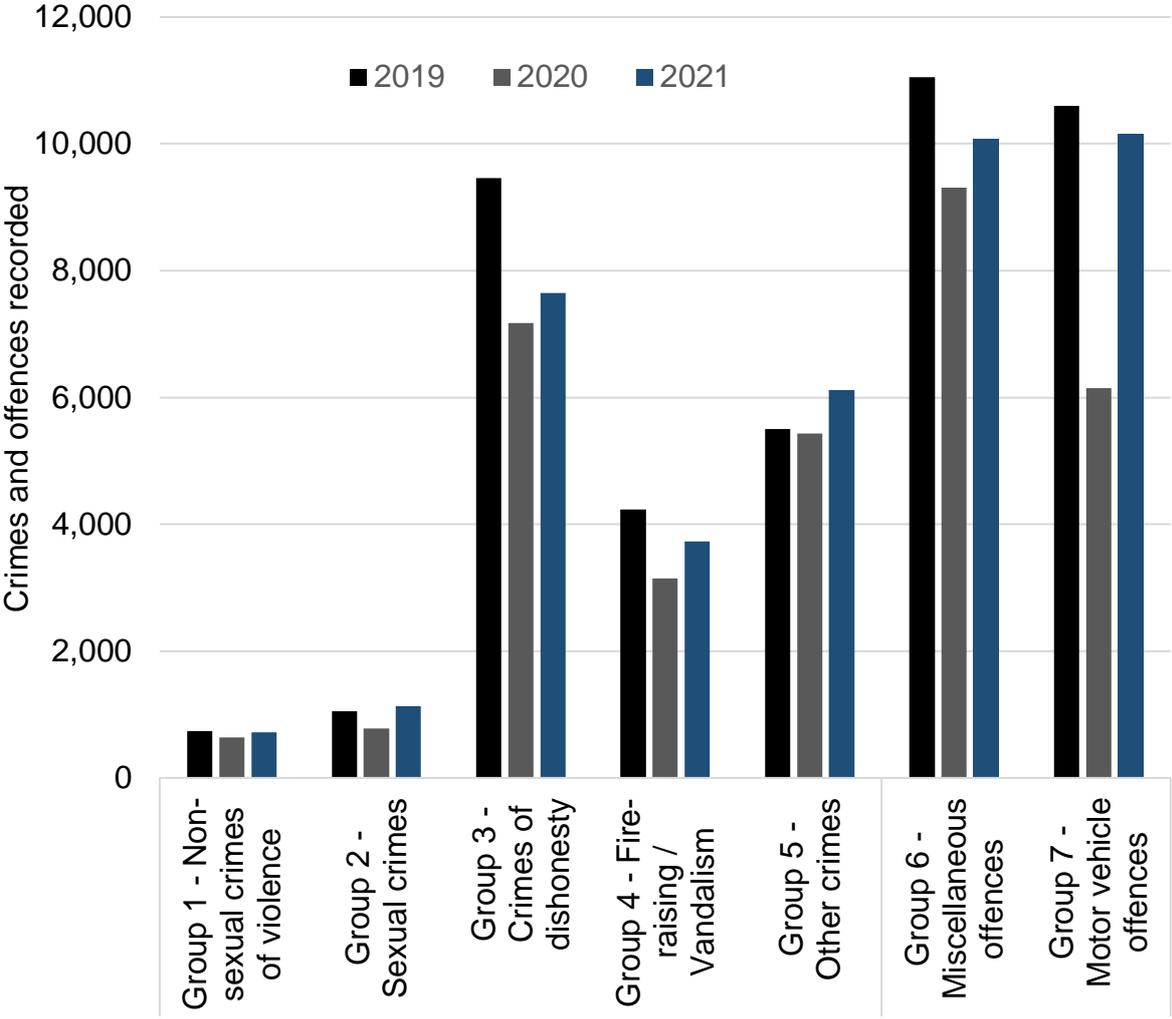
The number of crimes recorded in April 2021 was 13% higher than in April 2020 and 8% lower than in April 2019. The number of offences was 31% higher than in April 2020 and 7% lower than in April 2019.

Since last year, all crime and offence groups have seen an increase, however the majority were still lower than pre-pandemic levels (April 2019).

Sexual crimes were 45% higher (or 355 crimes) than in April 2020, and 8% higher than in April 2019. Sexual assault saw the largest increase since April 2020, increasing by 69%, however it remained 8% below April 2019 levels. Other sexual crimes increased by 30% compared to April 2020; this was also a 20% increase compared to April 2019. Rape and attempted rape increased by 51% compared to April 2020; this is also a 10% increase compared to April 2019.

Other crimes were 13% higher (or 692 crimes) than in April 2020. This was also an 11% increase since April 2019. The main contributors to these increases were Crimes against public justice (which rose by 13% compared to April 2020 and 32% compared to April 2019) and Drugs (which rose by 16% compared to April 2020 and 4% compared to April 2019).

The following chart shows a breakdown of the crime and offence groups, comparing April 2019, 2020 and 2021



Note: each category shows columns from left to right for April 2019, 2020 and 2021

The biggest drivers of the increase from April 2020 to April 2021 were Fraud, Vandalism etc. and Drugs.

The biggest drivers of the 13% increase from April 2020 to April 2021 (by volume) were:

Fraud

↑ 55% (or 595 crimes)

↑ 113% (or 893 crimes) compared to April 2019

Vandalism etc.

↑ 17% (or 493 crimes)

↓ 14% (or 560 crimes) compared to April 2019

Drugs

↑ 16% (or 431 crimes)

↑ 4% (or 108 crimes) compared to April 2019

The biggest decreases over this period were in:

Housebreaking

↓ 33% (or 318 crimes)

↓ 38% (or 398 crimes) compared to April 2019

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: April 2021](#).

Coronavirus legislation intervention activity

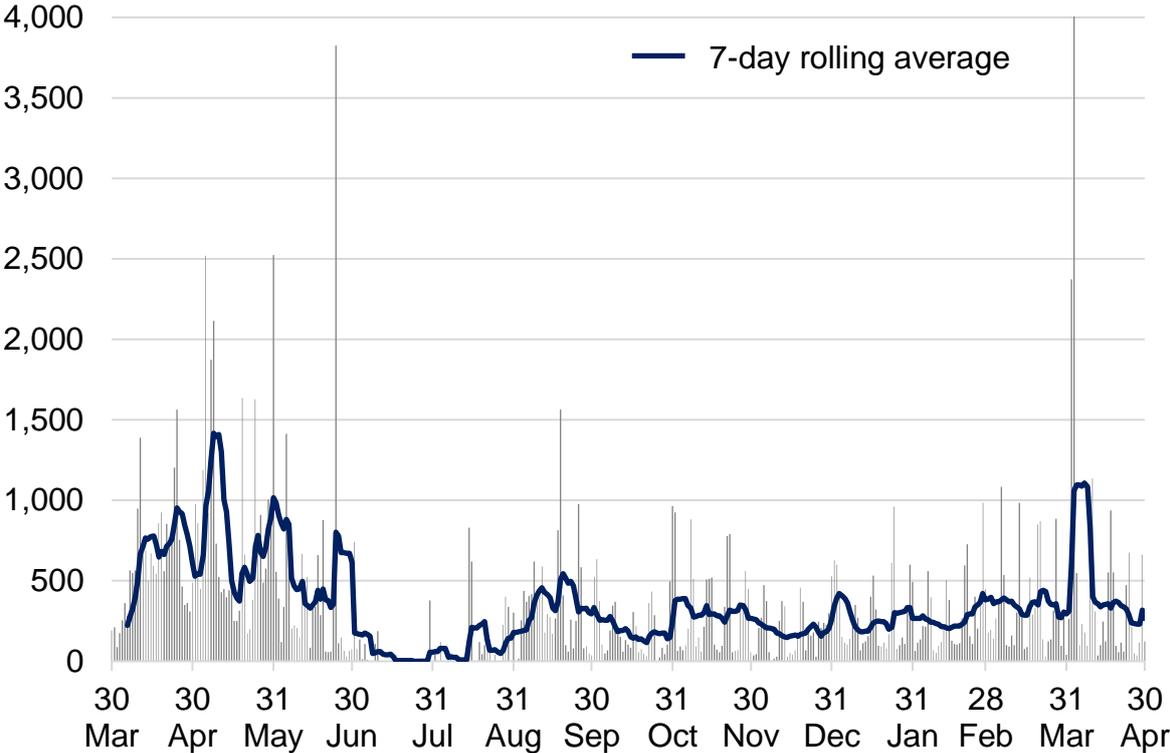
This information is drawn from Police Scotland’s ‘Coronavirus Interventions’ application, which relies on manual input from Police Officers. Due to this manual input, these figures should be viewed as indicative only.

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 April 2021. This was due to a spike across the Easter weekend at the beginning of April, however levels have generally been lower than April to June 2020 levels.

Total use of interventions increased by 48% (or 4,883 interventions) since the previous month.

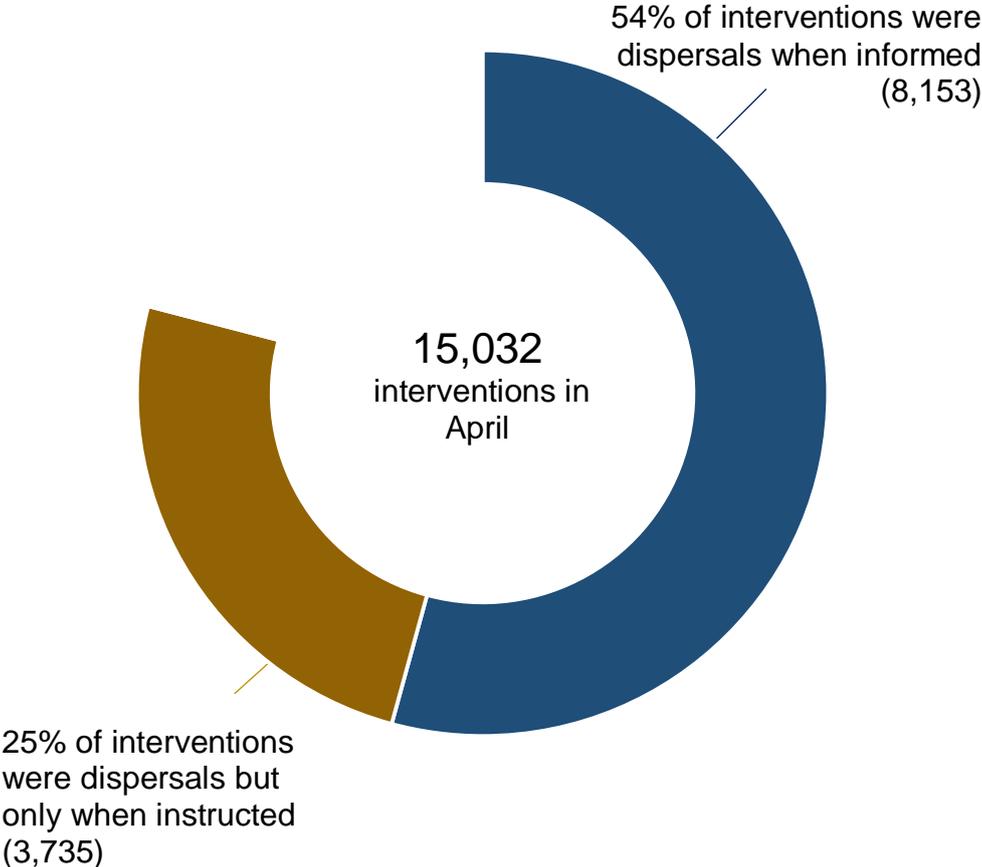
Chart: Number of interventions (including 7-day rolling average)



COVID-19 Intervention Activity in April 2021

In April, 90% of interventions made were dispersals. This is a higher percentage than in the previous month (76% in March).

Chart: Monthly COVID-19 interventions



Of the remaining 21% of interventions:

- 1,622 were dispersed using reasonable force (this is the highest monthly figure to date: previously, the highest figure was 1,220 in March 2021)
- 1,474 were issued a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
- 48 were arrested

Further Information:

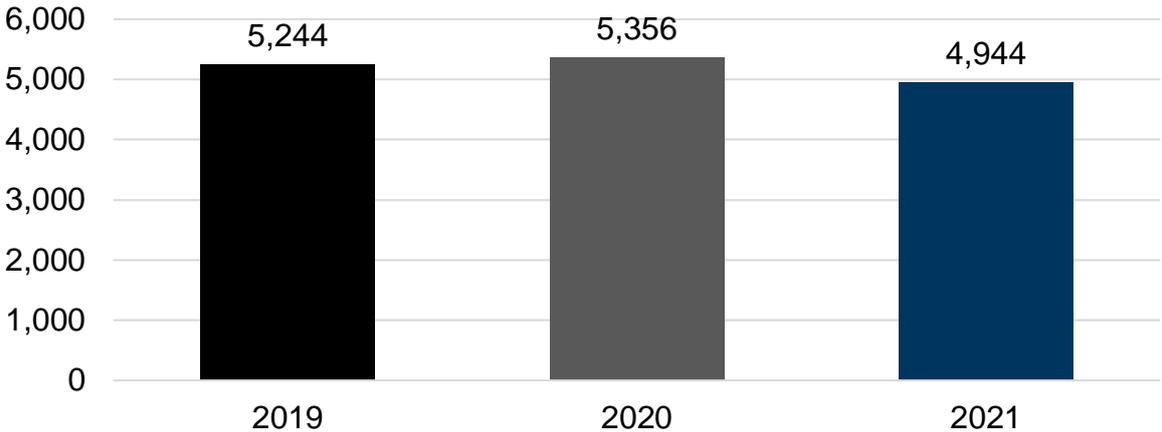
A full breakdown of interventions is available from Police Scotland: <https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/covid-19-police-scotland-response/enforcement-and-response-data/>

Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents

The number of Domestic Abuse incidents recorded in April 2021 was lower than the level seen in both April 2019 and 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, to be published in June 2021, will cover the 2019-20 reporting year.

Chart: Number of domestic abuse incidents recorded in April 2019, 2020 and 2021



In April 2021:

4,944 Domestic incidents recorded

↓ Down 6% since April 2020 (5,356 incidents)

↓ Down 8% since April 2019 (5,244 incidents)

The proportion of April 2021 incidents that included the recording of at least one crime or offence was 43.1%. [Police Scotland's Management Information Report](#) suggests an equivalent figure of 43.9% for 2019-20.

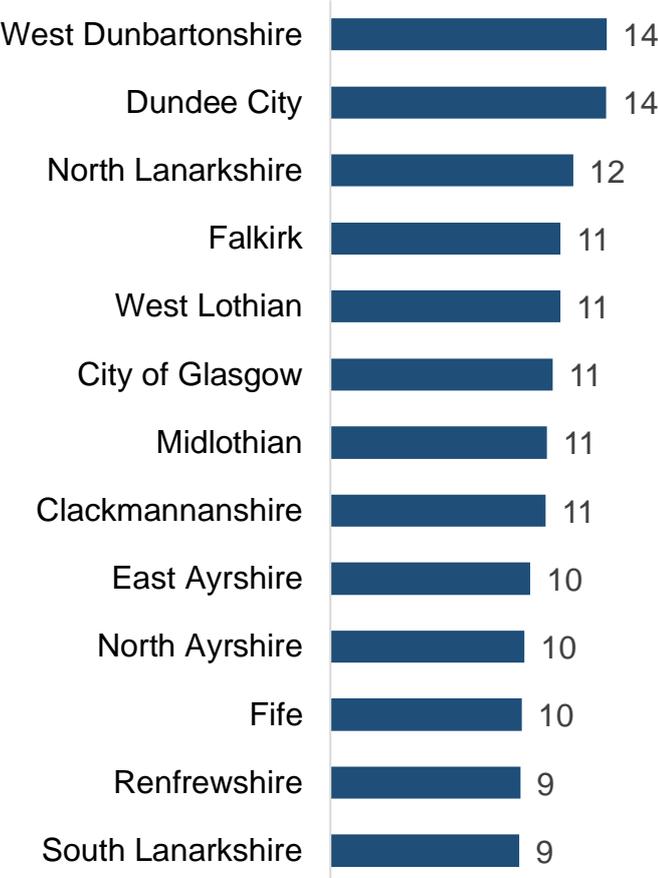
In addition to the above, separate figures on crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 are available from the Recorded Crime in Scotland monthly Official Statistics. There were 137 such crimes recorded by the police in April 2021, this is 26% higher than April 2020 (109 crimes) and 9% higher than April 2019 (126 crimes).

Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents per 10,000 population

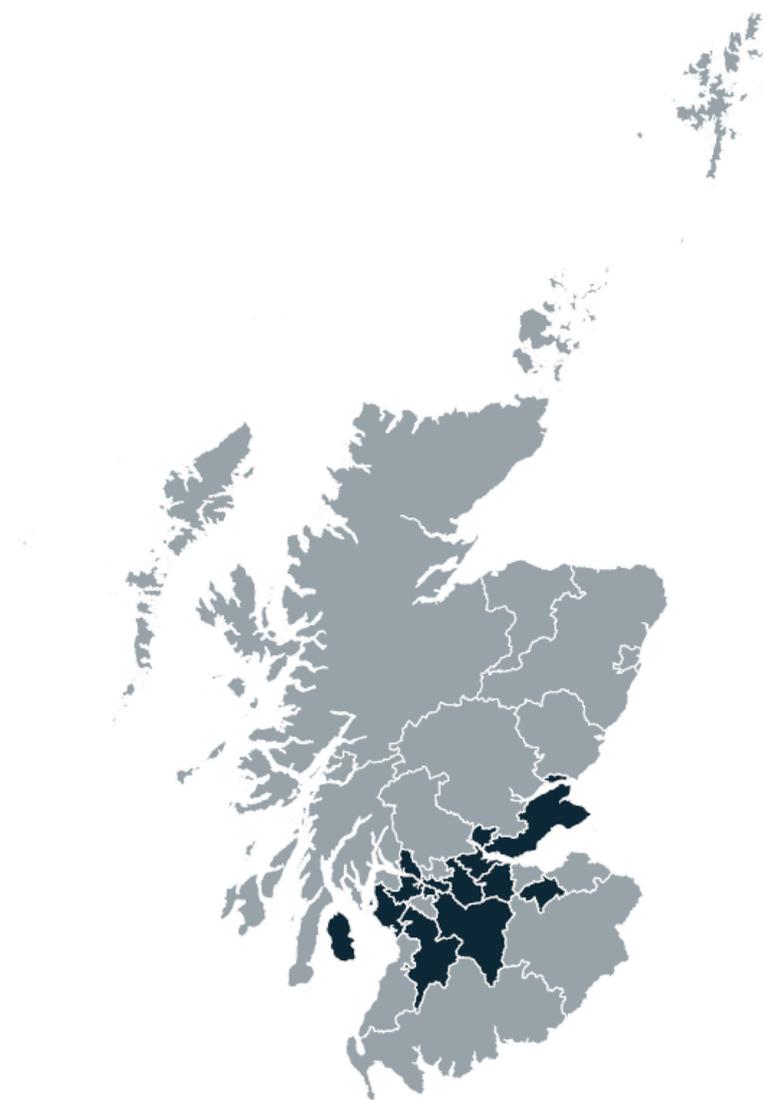
Across Scotland as a whole, the police recorded 9 domestic abuse incidents per 10,000 population during April 2021.

The local authorities with the highest rates were West Dunbartonshire (14), Dundee City (14) and North Lanarkshire (12).

The following chart shows local authorities with rates above the national average



The following map shows Domestic Abuse incidents per 10,000 population, April 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: April 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: All reports received by COPFS (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed line 19-20 average)

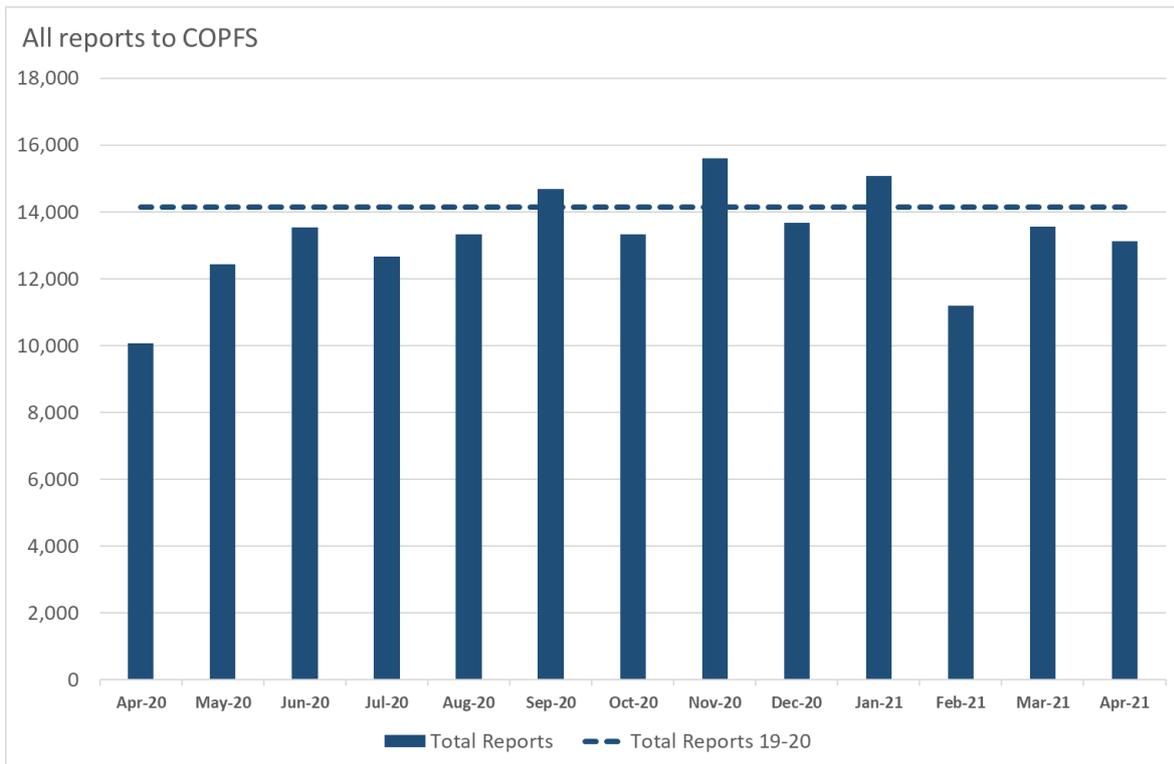


Chart: Custody reports received by COPFS (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed line 19-20 average)

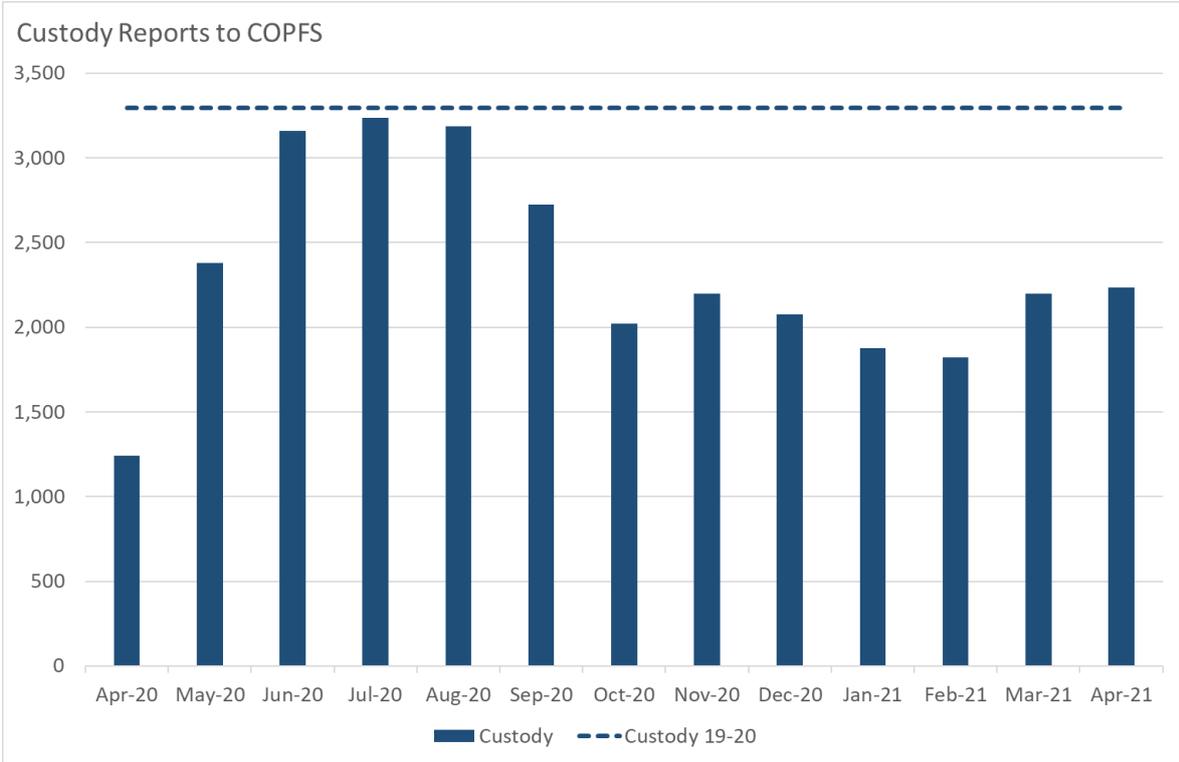
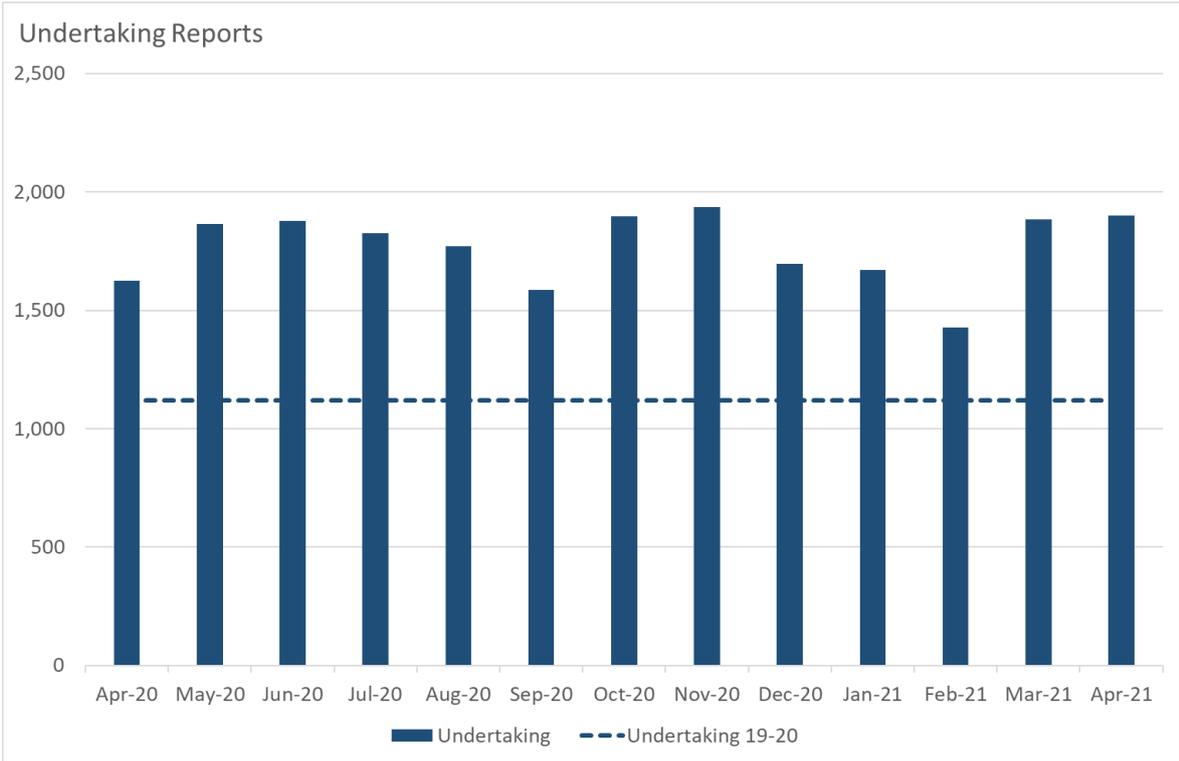


Chart: Undertaking reports received by COPFS (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed line 19-20 average)

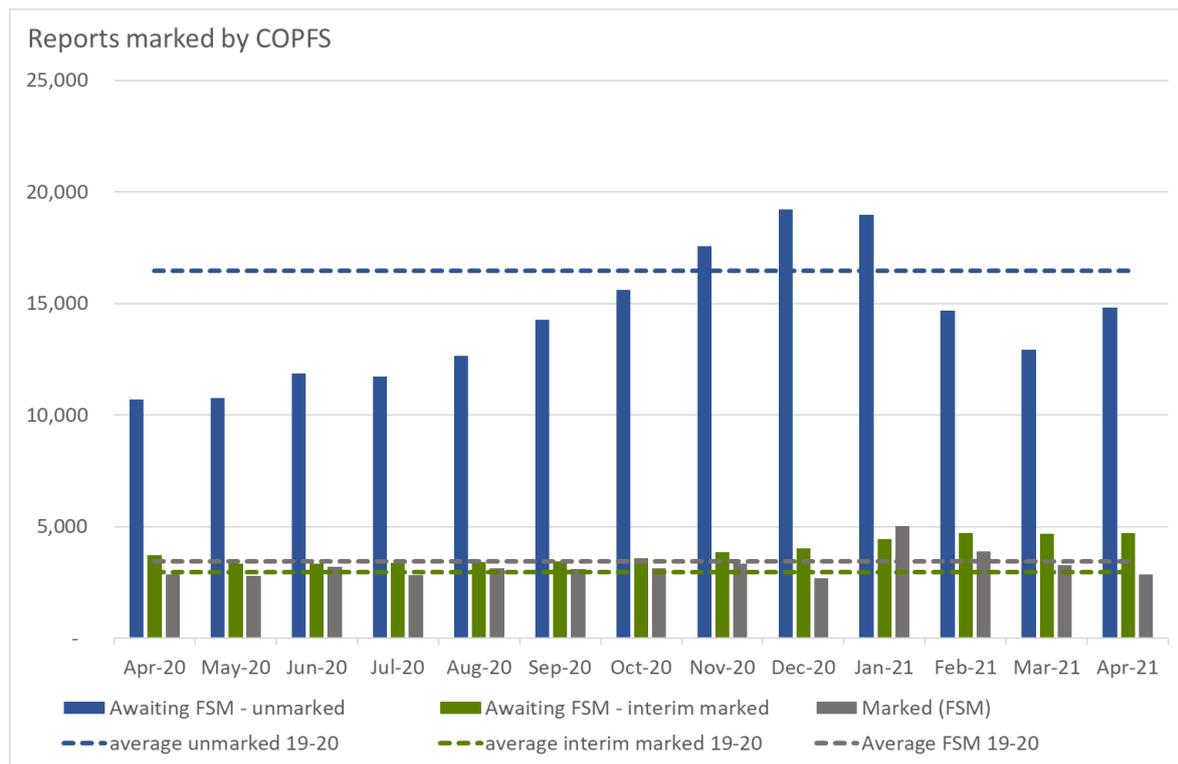


First substantive marking

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 January 2021 but has since decreased to below pre-pandemic levels. After increasing throughout 2020, the number of reports awaiting marking decreased again in early 2021 and is now below 19-20 average levels. The number of reports with an interim marking has been above 19-20 average levels throughout 2020 and into 2021.

Chart: Marking status of COPFS reports (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed lines 19-20 average)



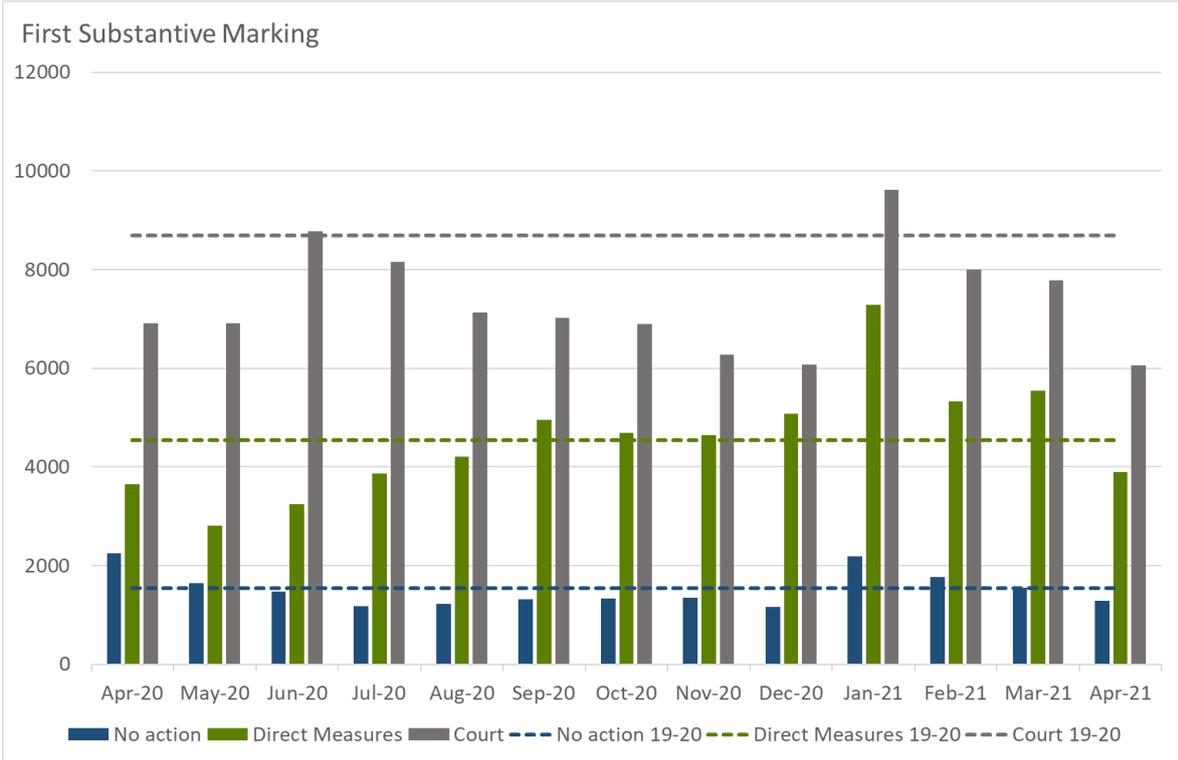
Summary of COPFS First Substantive Markings

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. Markings for No Action and Direct Measures remain around 19-20 average levels and markings for court are significantly below 19-20 average levels.

Chart: First Substantive Marking (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed lines 19-20 average)



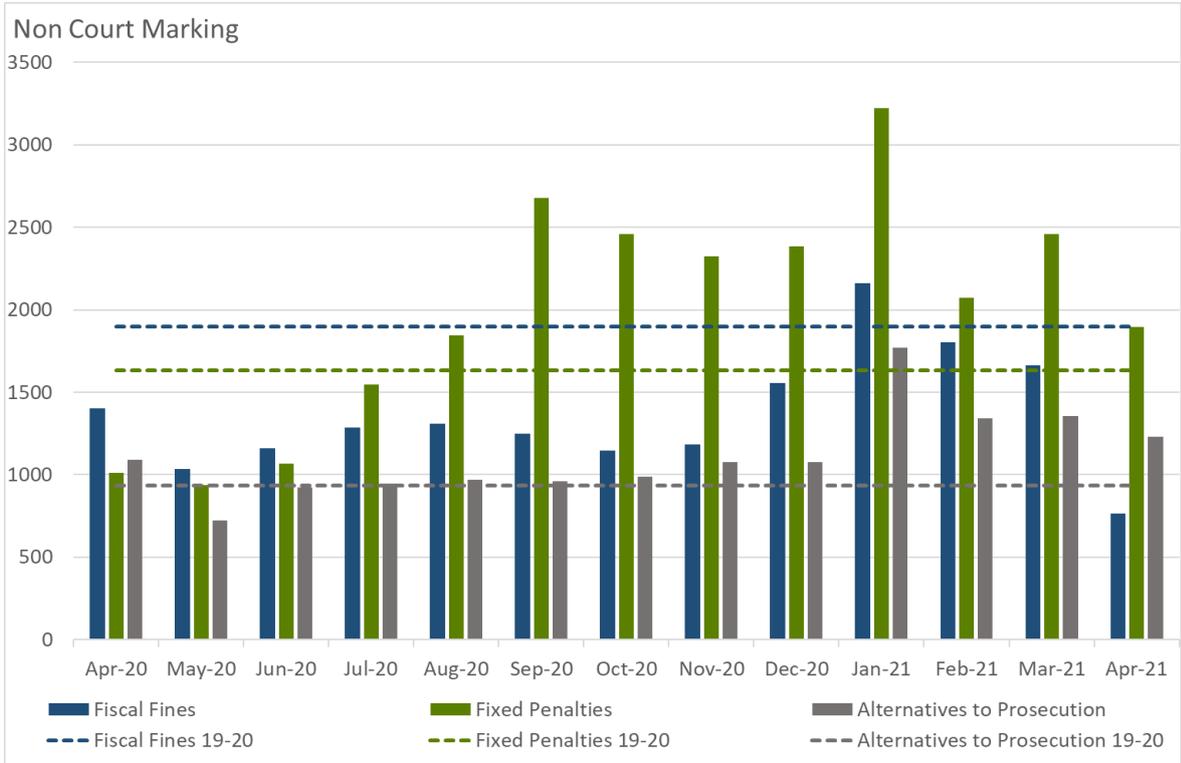
Subjects not marked for court

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 returned to below 19-20 average levels in subsequent months.

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 not marked for court (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed lines 19-20 average)



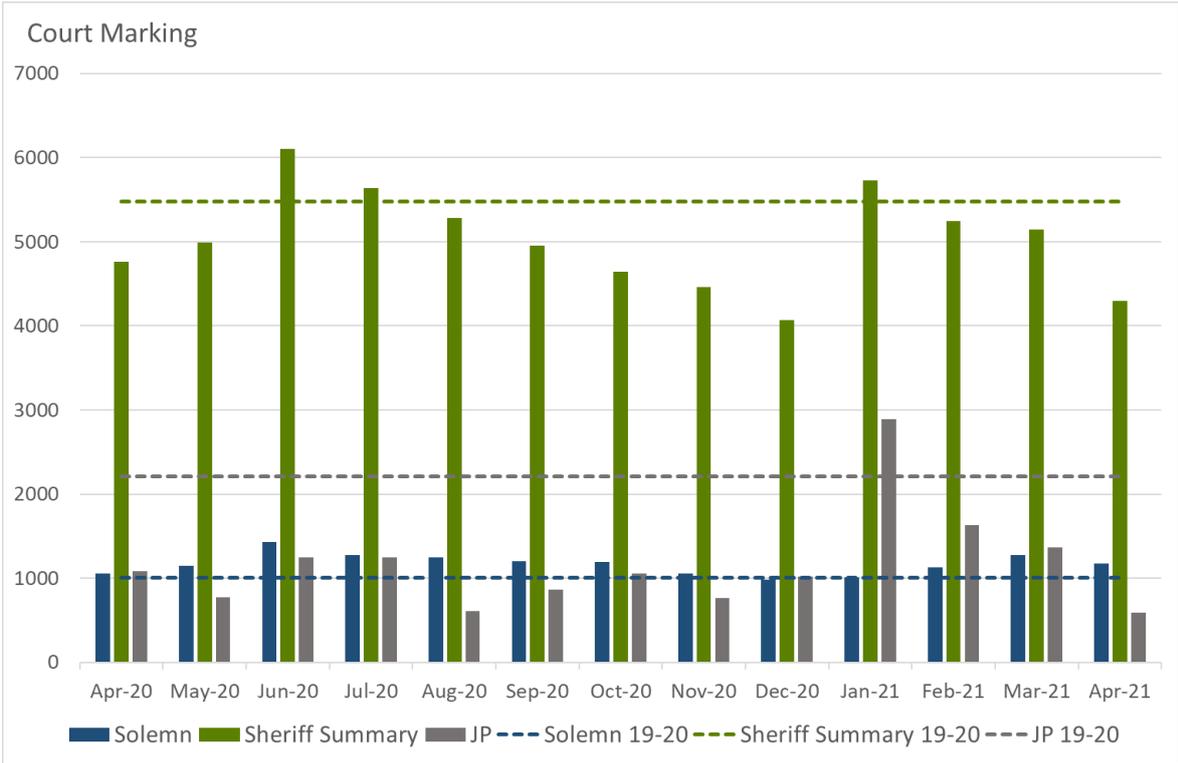
Subjects marked for court

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 subsequent months.

Chart: Subjects marked for court (bars – monthly count March 2020 to April 2021, dashed lines 19-20 average)



Fatal Accident Inquiries (as of 04 May 2021)

FAIs with scheduled court dates 34
 FAIs with First Notice lodged, awaiting court dates: 1

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

Scottish Courts & Tribunal Service (SCTS)

SCTS update

Sheriff Court Summary business increased on 19th April following a period of business restrictions due to lockdown in early 2021.

Criminal Registered & Scheduled Trials

Since the initial lockdown in March 2020, there have been 84,165 criminal registrations in the courts. 451 of these registrations have been COVID-19 related (0.5%).

In April 2021, all types of court registration remained lower than 2019-20 averages, although sheriff court registrations appear to be returning to pre-pandemic levels:

- Indictments registered in the High Court were 35% lower than the 19-20 average.
- Indictments registered in the Sheriff court (solemn cases) were 3% lower than the 19-20 average.
- Complaints (summary cases) registered in the Sheriff Court were 8% lower than the 19-20 average.
- Complaints registered in the JP court were 29% lower than the 19-20 average.

Cases Registered	19-20 monthly average	April 2021	Change from 19-20 monthly average	Outstanding trials March 2020	Outstanding trials April 2021
Indictments					
High Court	85	55	-30 (-35%)	390	292
Sheriff Court	454	441	-13 (-3%)	497	1,398
Complaints					
Sheriff Court	5,478	5,017	-461 (-8%)	13,971	31,799
JP Court	2,799	1,992	-807 (-29%)	3,497	5,999

At the end of April 2021 there were 39,488 trials outstanding. This compares to 18,355 at the end of 2019-20. In addition, SCTS have forecast that there are another 8,322 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 April 2021 there were 3,903 disposals (excluding secondary disposals and the 'other' disposal category) from Scotland's courts. This is 54% of the 19-20 monthly average of 7,278 and 7% lower than March 2021.

Between April 2020 and April 2021 there were 42,163 (45%) fewer disposals than would have been expected based on 19-20 average figures. Over this time period, there have been 36% fewer custodial sentences and 48% fewer community disposals imposed by the courts than might have been expected.

To:	Monthly average 2019-20	April 2021	Change %	Estimated* April 2020 – April 2021	Actual April 2020 – April 2021	Change %
30 April 2021						
Imprisonment	1,011	707	-30%	13,142	8,357	-36%
Community Disposal (CPO & DTTO)	1,384	821	-41%	17,989	9,367	-48%
Restriction of Liberty Order	296	261	-12%	3,852	3,035	-21%
Fine etc.	3,106	1,238	-60%	40,374	19,256	-52%
Admonished/ Discharged	1,481	876	-41%	19,256	12,435	-35%

* based on 19-20 monthly average disposals

Disposals from court at any point in time are related both to the volume of business coming into courts and the length of time it takes that business to proceed through the court system. Therefore, changes in crime levels or the ability of courts to function in the usual way may have associated impacts on disposals.

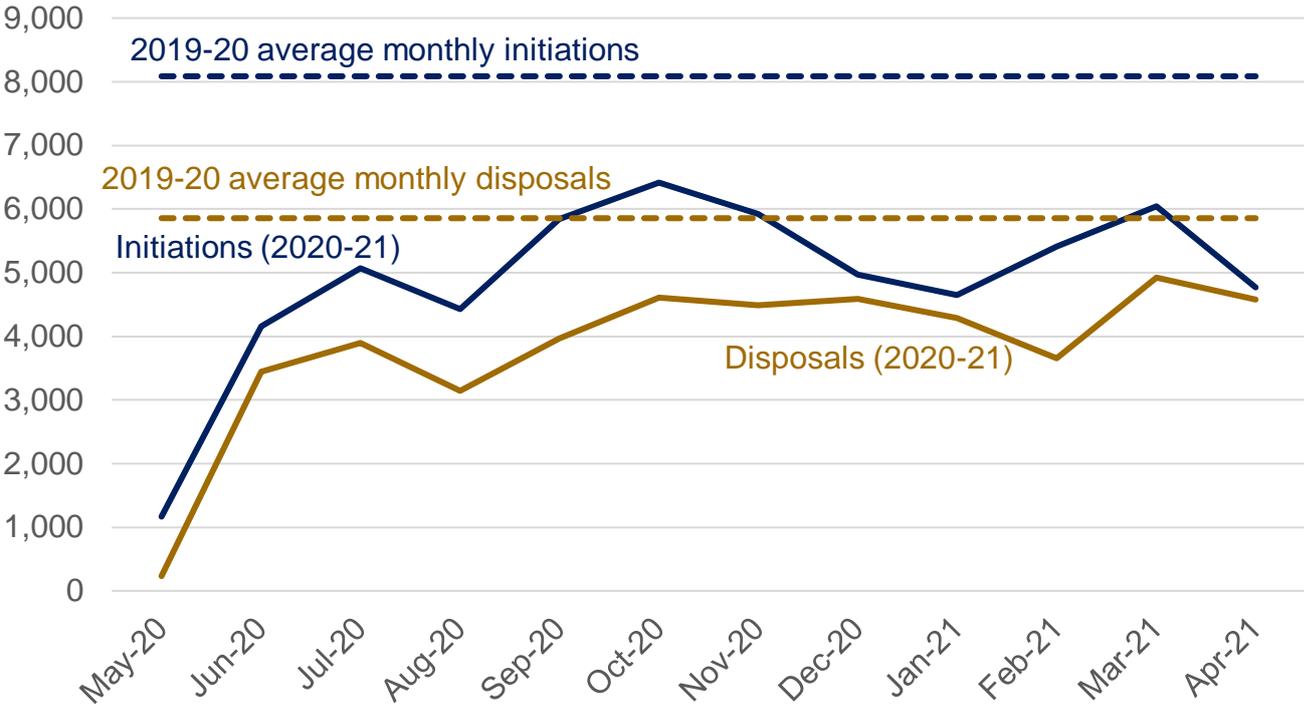
Further Information: Latest SCTS published official statistics can be found here: <https://scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>

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 decrease in both initiations and disposals in April.

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. However, in line with overall decrease in initiated cases in April, they have decreased in parallel. Summary cause is much lower than 2019-20 levels, and it also decreased from the previous month. Small claims have largely been replaced by simple procedure.

Likewise, disposed cases for ordinary cause and simple procedure are returning to 2019-20 levels. Similar to overall disposals in April, disposals for both case types were lower than they were in March. Summary cause disposals are returning to 2019-20 monthly average levels, and have increased in the last two months.

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 expired on 30 March 2021.

Procedures	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	2019/20 monthly average
Initiated						
Ordinary cause	1,512	1,304	1,577	2,161	1,676	1,928
Summary cause	186	173	209	228	181	1,132
Small claim	4	0	0	1	0	2
Simple procedure	1,668	1,819	2,181	1,823	1,369	2,695
Total initiated	3,370	3,296	3,967	4,213	3,226	5,758
Disposed						
Ordinary cause	1,367	1,003	1,047	1,428	1,254	1,445
Summary cause	562	411	284	644	724	1,096
Small claim	4	1	2	4	0	5
Simple procedure	2,140	2,364	1,754	2,148	2,000	2,306
Total disposed	4,073	3,779	3,087	4,224	3,978	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 April 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. All initiated case types were lower than they were in the previous month.
- There was an overall decrease in disposals from the previous month, with all case types, but children’s referrals showing a decrease.

Initiated Cases (Apr 21)			Disposed Cases (Apr 21)	
April 2021	Change from 19-20	Case Type	April 2021	Change from 19-20
991	94% of 19-20 average month (1,055 cases)	 Family	804	88% of 19-20 average month (910 cases)
358	60% of 19-20 average month (602 cases)	 Children’s Referrals	150	58% of 19-20 average month (260 cases)
1,678	58% of 19-20 average month (2,883 cases)	 Debt	2,184	92% of 19-20 average month (2,368 cases)
225	56% of 19-20 average month (402 cases)	 Personal Injury	172	56% 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 April 2021 (up until the morning of 1st May):

- the population fell by 64 to 7,321
- 1,958 were on remand: 1,686 (23%) untried & 272 (4%) awaiting sentence
- 67% of arrivals were untried (630 of 939), and 17% awaiting sentence (157)

Chart: Total prison population

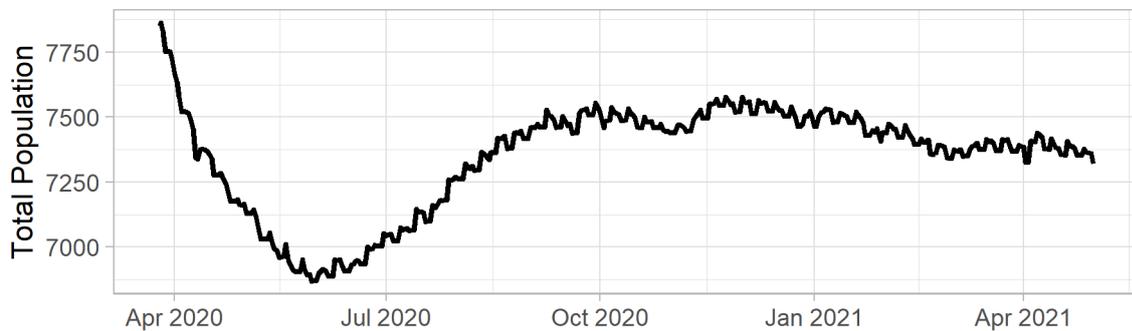
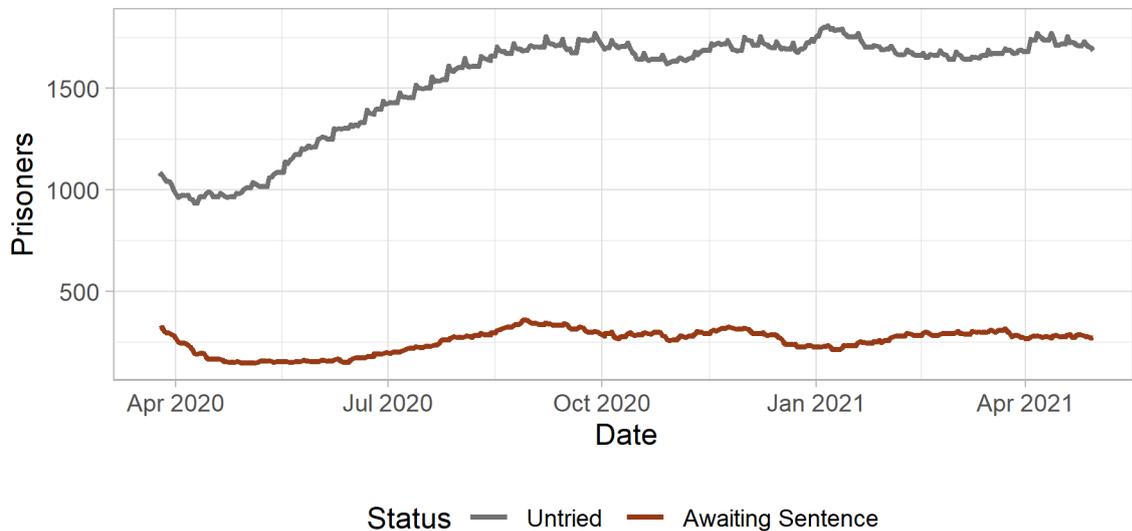


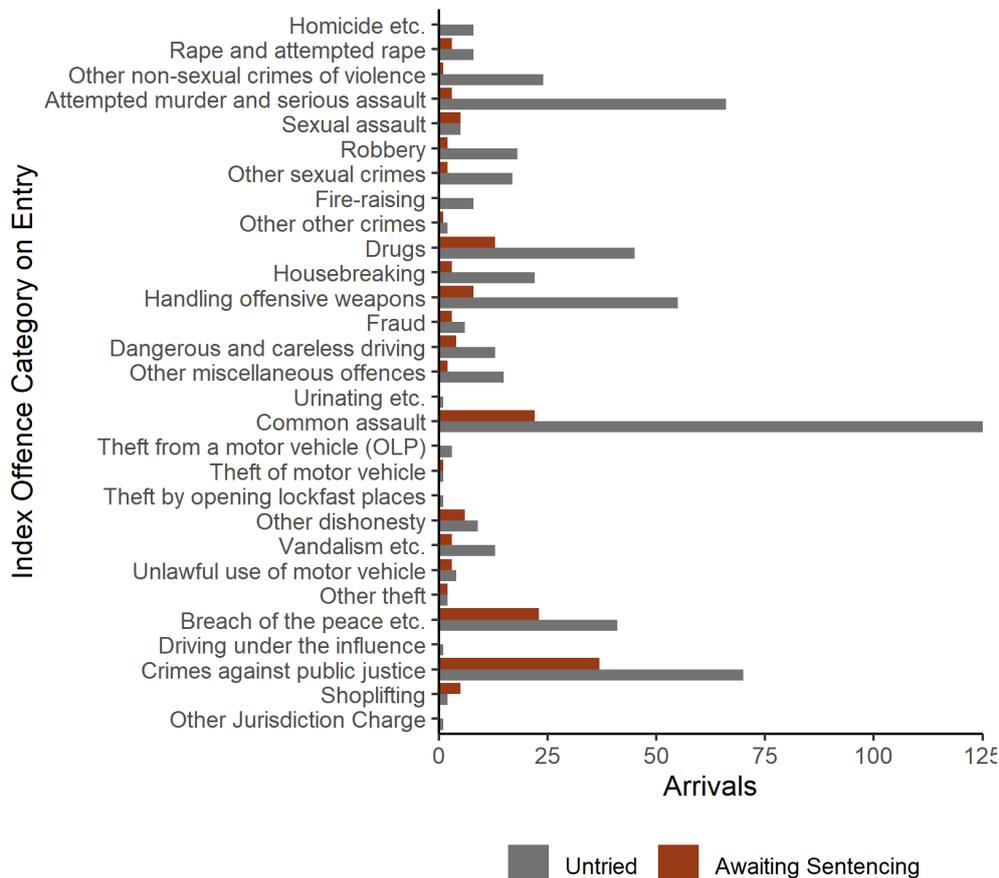
Chart: Remand population



Remand Arrival Offences

There were 738 un-sentenced arrivals to prison with known offence types in April, 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](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-prison-population-statistics-legal-status-2019-20/). 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-legal-status-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

For enquiries about this publication please contact:
Justice Analytical Services,
e-mail: Justice_Analysts@gov.scot

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotstat-register-guidance/>
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The Scottish Government
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