

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

March 2022

April 2022

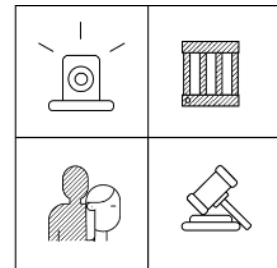
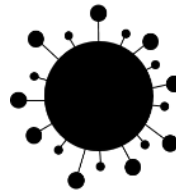


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Summary

This pack provides information on the impact of COVID-19 on the Justice system during March 2022.

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



This March 2022 release is the final edition of a COVID focused report. From May onwards we will produce a more concise but comprehensive monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief. This will combine statistics from the current report with information from the existing Safer Communities and Justice monthly brief to give an up-to-date overview of all the most important statistics across the justice portfolio.

Police activity

- The number of crimes recorded by the Police in March 2022 was lower than in both March 2021 and March 2020.
- The number of Domestic Abuse incidents recorded by the Police in March 2022 was broadly the same as in March 2021 but higher than in March 2020.

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

- Custody reports received by COPFS remain consistently below pre-pandemic levels and undertaking reports remain consistently above pre-pandemic levels.
- Initiations in the civil court remain below 19-20 levels, while disposals nearly matched 19-20 levels in March 2022.
- The proportion of prisoners on remand remains at a historically high level.

Contents

- Summary 1
- How crime flows through the Justice System 3
- Recorded Crime in Scotland 5
 - Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents 9
- Reports received by COPFS 13
- First substantive marking 15
- Summary of COPFS First Substantive Markings 16
- Subjects marked for Direct Measure 17
- Subjects marked for court 18
- Criminal Registered & Scheduled Trials 20
- Criminal Disposals 21
- Sheriff Court Civil Case Volumes 22
 - Initiations and disposals 22
 - Sheriff Court cases by procedure 23
 - Focus on case types 24
- Prison population 26
 - Remand Arrival Offences 27
- Sources and further information 29

101 & 999 call volumes and incidents recorded

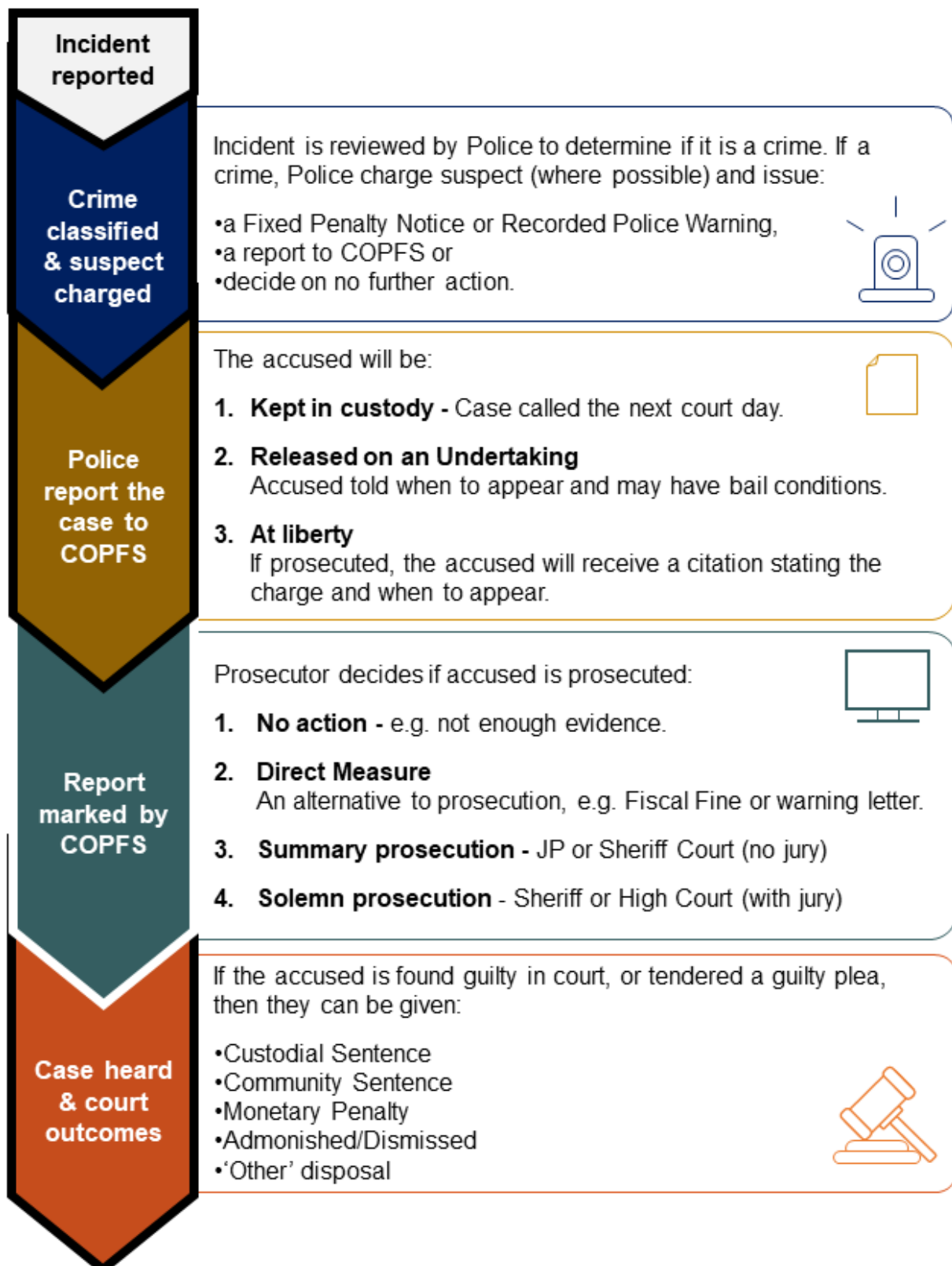
Owing to the stopping of the Operation Talla daily overview in mid-November 2021 we are no longer including these figures here.

A full breakdown of calls and incident volumes is still available from Police Scotland’s [Enforcement and response data page](#).

Coronavirus legislation intervention activity

Following a decline to almost zero interventions, Operation Talla reporting of interventions was stopped in mid-November 2021. The final [COVID-19 Weekly Bulletin](#) from 17 November 2021 showed no interventions in November to that point.

How crime flows through the Justice System

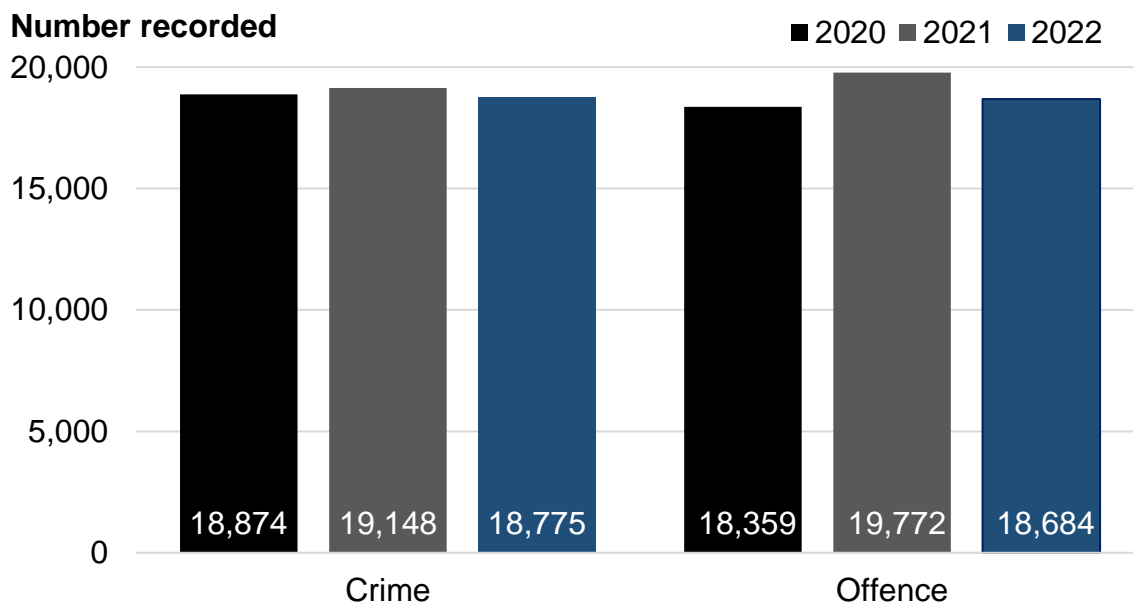


Police Activity (Police Scotland)

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, March 2020, 2021 and 2022

March 2022

The number of crimes recorded in March 2022 was 2% lower than in March 2021 and 1% lower than in March 2020. The number of offences was 6% lower compared to March 2021 but 2% higher than in March 2020.

Non-sexual crimes of violence were 7% (or 57 crimes) higher compared to March 2021, increasing from 795 to 852 crimes, and 21% higher compared to March 2020 (increasing from 702 crimes). Within this, Attempted murder and serious assault increased by 18% compared to March 2021 (from 262 to 310). Other violence increased by 15% compared to March 2021 (from 224 to 258) and also increased by 119% from March 2020 (from 118 to 258). The increase in Other violence between March 2020 and March 2022 was due to a rise in Threats and extortion, with the recently published National Statistics bulletin estimating that more than three-quarters (77%) of Threats and extortion recorded in 2020-21 were cyber-crimes. Crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 increased by 6% compared to March 2021 (from 150 to 159 crimes) and were 45% higher than in March 2020 (increasing from 110 to 159 crimes).

Sexual crimes were 7% (or 92 crimes) lower compared to March 2021, decreasing from 1,278 to 1,186 crimes. This was 7% higher than in March 2020 (increasing from 1,106 crimes). Sexual assault saw the largest percentage increase since March 2021, increasing by 18% (from 373 to 440). This was 15% higher compared to March

2020 (from 383 to 440). Rape and attempted rape decreased by 12% compared to March 2021, from 225 to 198 crimes, but increased by 30% compared to March 2020 (from 152 to 198 crimes).

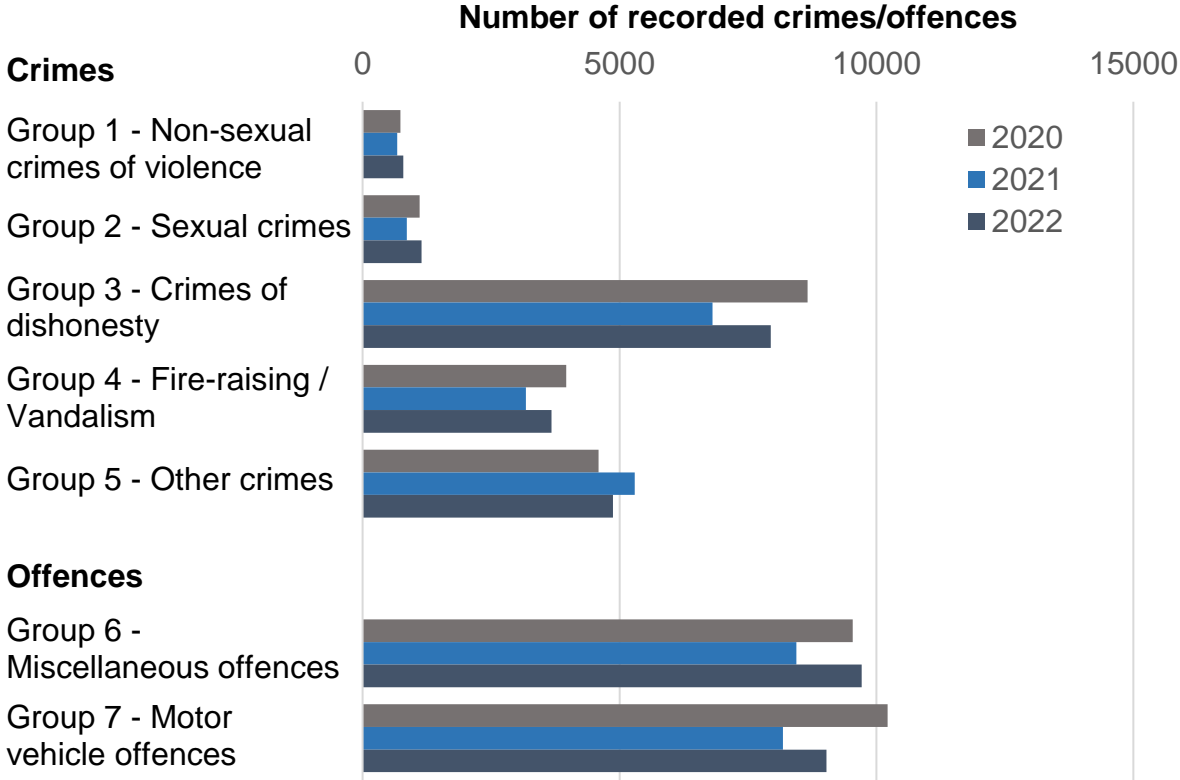
Crimes of dishonesty were 9% (or 714 crimes) higher compared to March 2021, increasing from 7,684 to 8,398 crimes. This was 1% higher than in March 2020 (increasing from 8,356 crimes). Crimes of Fraud have increased throughout the pandemic. Despite a 15% decrease compared to March 2021 (from 1,764 to 1,505 crimes), there was a 49% increase since March 2020 (from 1,010 to 1,505). The [Changes in levels of recorded fraud](#) section in the monthly crime publication provides users with further background on what may be contributing to this change. Shoplifting was the biggest contributor (by volume) to the increase since 2021 having risen by 28% compared to March 2021 (from 1,706 to 2,189 crimes), and was 2% higher when compared to March 2020.

Fire-raising, vandalism etc. was 1% (or 22 crimes) lower compared to March 2021, decreasing from 3,753 to 3,731 crimes, and was 4% lower than March 2020.

Vandalism etc. had one fewer crimes than March 2021 (decreasing from 3,533 to 3,532). This is 5% lower than March 2020 levels.

Other crimes were 18% (or 1,030 crimes) lower than in March 2021, decreasing from 5,638 to 4,608 crimes. This is 4% lower than March 2020 (decreasing from 4,813 to 4,608 crimes). The largest contributor to the decrease since 2021 was Drugs (which fell by 31% compared to March 2021 and 21% compared to March 2020).

The following chart shows a breakdown of the crime and offence groups, comparing March 2020, 2021 and 2022



Note: each category shows rows from top to bottom for March 2020, 2021 and 2022

The biggest decreases from March 2021 to March 2022 were Drugs and Fraud.

The biggest decreases over this period were:

Drugs

↓ 31% (or 865 crimes)

↓ 21% (or 523 crimes) compared to March 2020

Fraud

↓ 15% (or 259 crimes)

↑ 49% (or 495 crimes) compared to March 2020

The biggest increases from March 2021 to March 2022 (by volume) were:

Shoplifting

↑ 28% (or 483 crimes)

↑ 2% (or 42 crimes) compared to March 2020

Other theft

↑ 17% (or 432 crimes)

↑ 5% (or 155 crimes) compared to March 2020

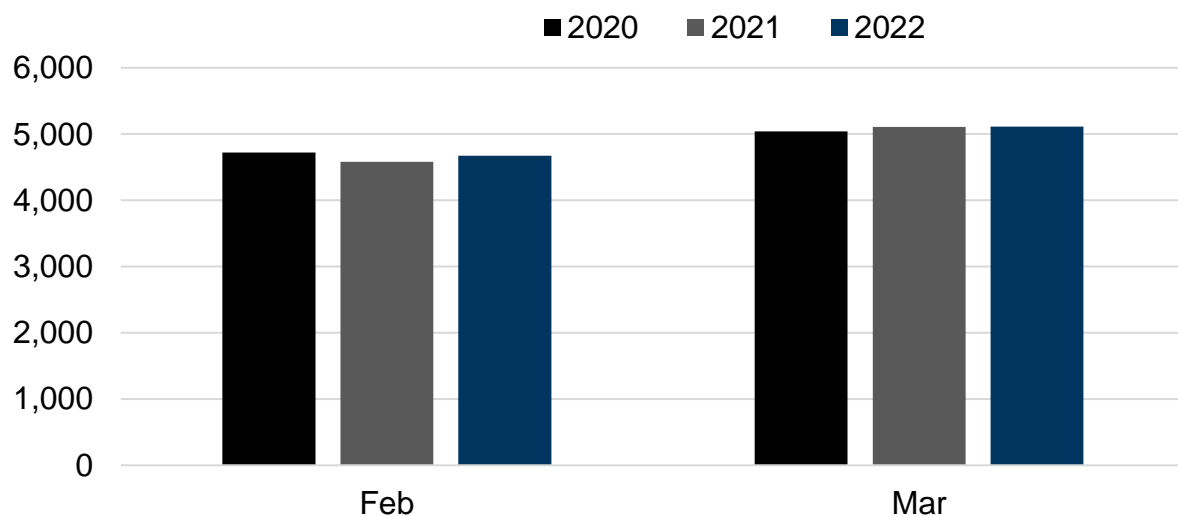
Further Information: The data in this section comes from the monthly Official Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, please see [Recorded Crime in Scotland: March 2022](#).

Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents

The number of Domestic Abuse incidents recorded in March 2022 was broadly the same as in March 2021 but higher than 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 most recent edition covers the 2020-21 reporting year.

Chart: Number of domestic abuse incidents recorded in February and March 2020, 2021 and 2022



In March 2022:

5,111 Domestic incidents recorded	↔	Stable (up <1%) since Mar 2021 (5,109 incidents)	↑	Up 1% since Mar 2020 (5,040 incidents)
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In April 2021 to March 2022:

62,899 Domestic incidents recorded	↓	Down 2% since the same months in Apr 2020 to Mar 2021 (64,140 incidents)	↑	Up 1% since the same months in Apr 2019 to Mar 2020 (62,161 incidents)
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The proportion of April 2021 to March 2022 incidents that included the recording of at least one crime or offence was 42.4%, lower than for the equivalent period the previous year (April 2020 to March 2021), at 43.3%.

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

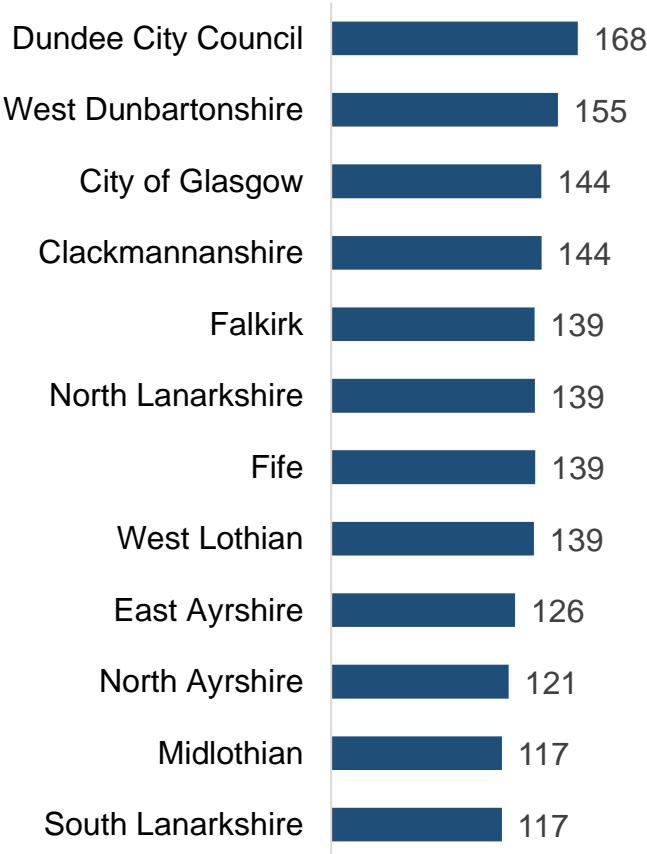
monthly Official Statistics. There were 159 such crimes recorded by the police in March 2022, this is 6% higher than March 2021 (150 crimes) and 45% higher than March 2020 (110 crimes).

Police Recorded Domestic Abuse Incidents per 10,000 population

Across Scotland as a whole, the police recorded 115 domestic abuse incidents per 10,000 population¹ during the period April 2021 to March 2022.

The local authorities with the highest rates were Dundee City (168), West Dunbartonshire (155), City of Glasgow (144) and Clackmannanshire (144).

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



¹ [NRS Population Projections \(2018-based\)](#) are used for these calculations.

The following map shows local authorities with above the national average (in a darker shading) of Domestic Abuse incidents per 10,000 population, in the period April 2021 to March 2022.



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 the Monthly Official Statistics on [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#).

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 has remained below pre-pandemic levels since February 2021.

- Custody report numbers are consistently around 60% of 19-20 average levels (around 1,300 less per month).
- The number of undertaking reports remain consistently around 60% higher than 2019-20 levels (around 700 more per month).

Chart: All reports received by COPFS (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed line 19-20 average)

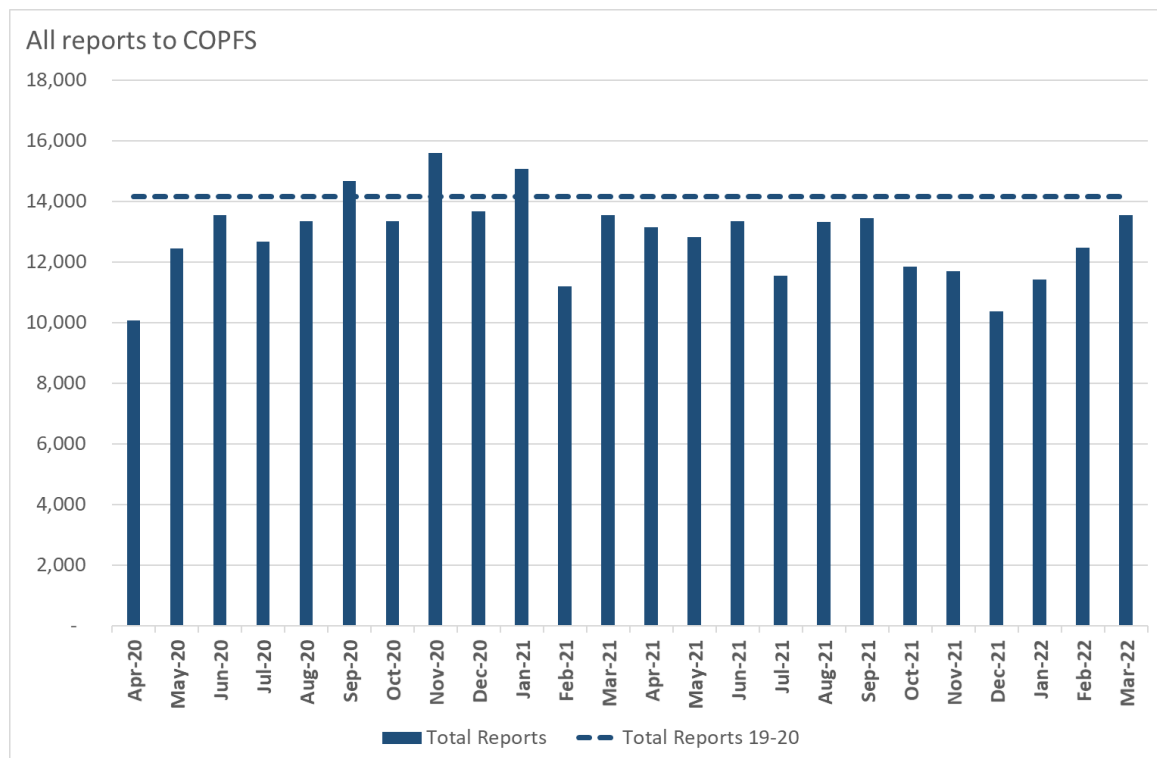


Chart: Custody reports received by COPFS (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed line 19-20 average)

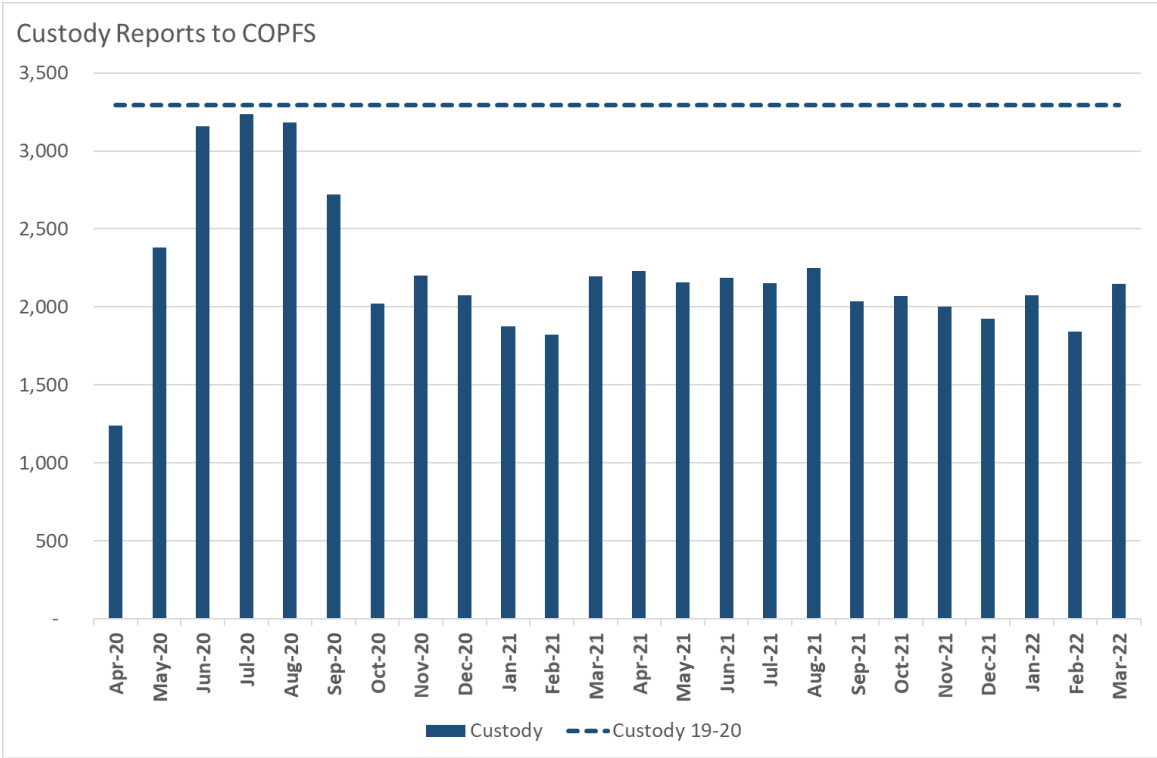
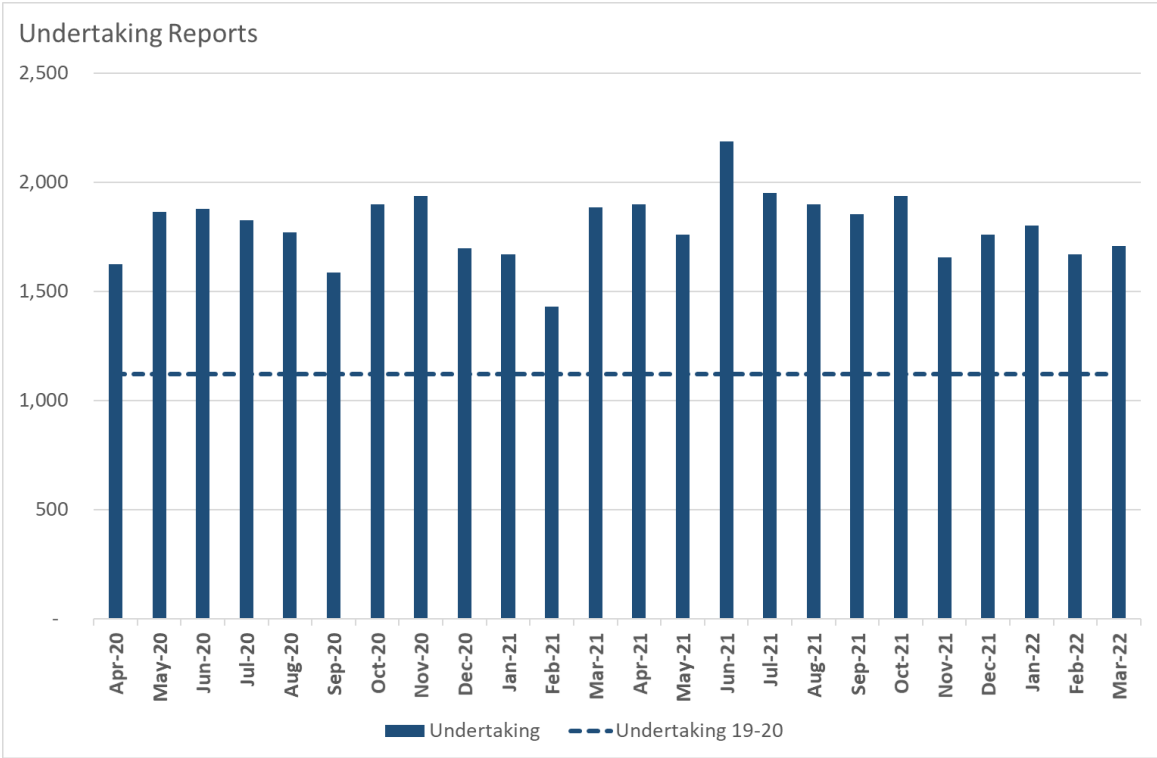


Chart: Undertaking reports received by COPFS (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed line 19-20 average)

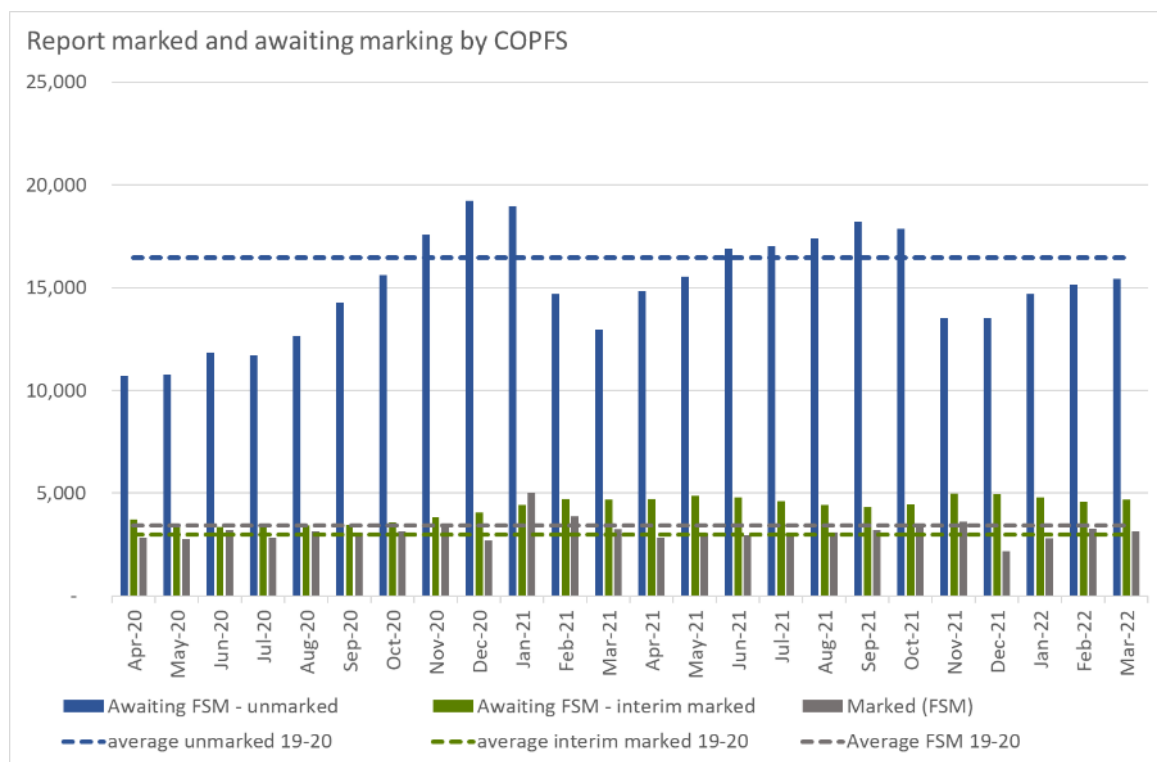


First substantive marking

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 in March 2022 remains below pre-pandemic levels. The number of unmarked reports in March 2022 is below pre-pandemic levels and the number of interim marked reports is above pre-pandemic levels.

Chart: Marking status of COPFS reports (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed lines 19-20 average)



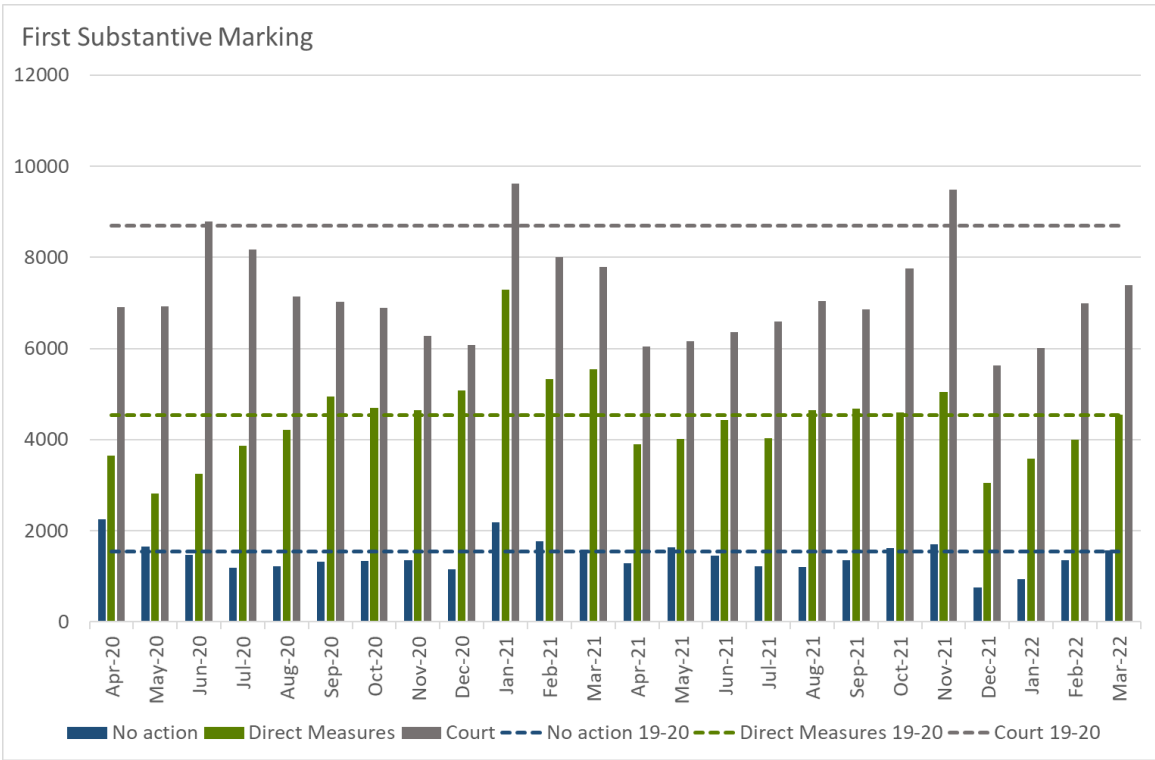
Summary of COPFS First Substantive Markings

There are three types of marking decision available to COPFS:

- No Action
- Direct Measures
- Court proceedings

All marking types have increased this month. No action and direct measures are at 19-20 average levels.

Chart: First Substantive Marking (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed lines 19-20 average)



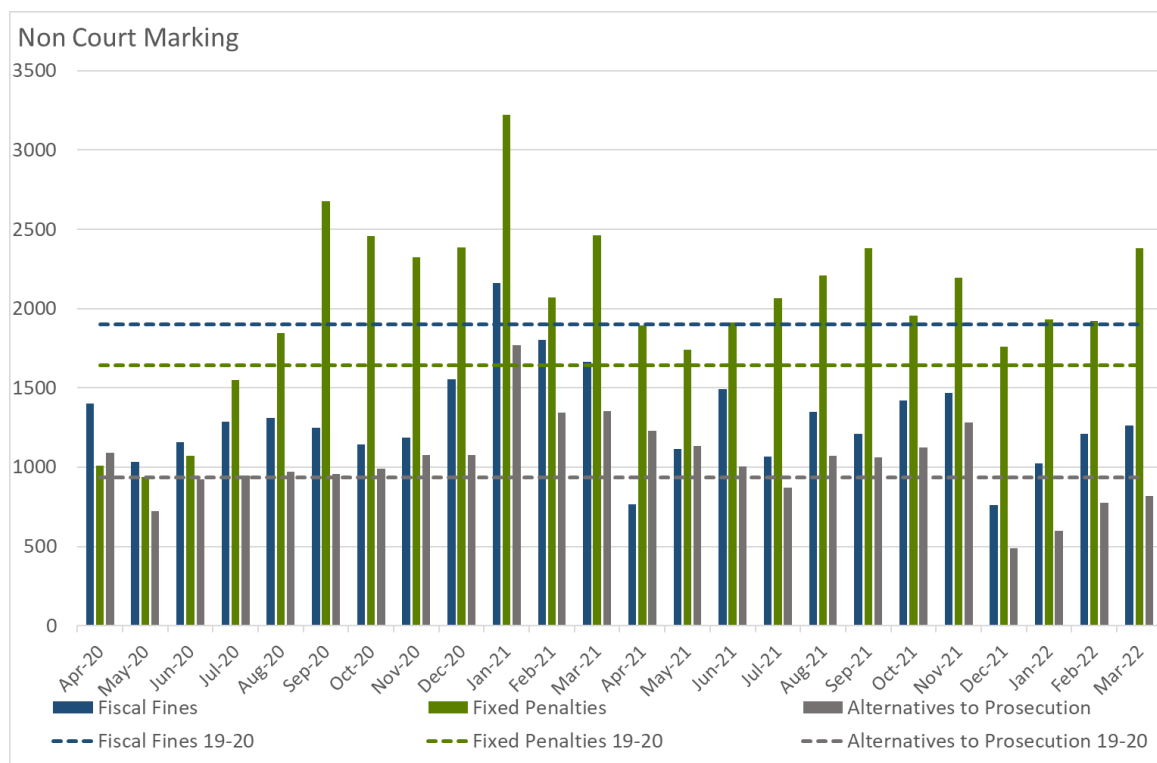
Subjects marked for Direct Measure

Direct measure or 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 number of subjects receiving a Fiscal Fine increased to above 19-20 average levels (dotted lines). Following a substantial decline in December 2021, numbers have been increasing but remain below the 19-20 average.

The number of subjects given Fiscal fixed penalties increased from May 2020, and they have remained above 19-20 average levels since August 2020.

Chart: Subjects marked for direct measures (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed lines 19-20 average)

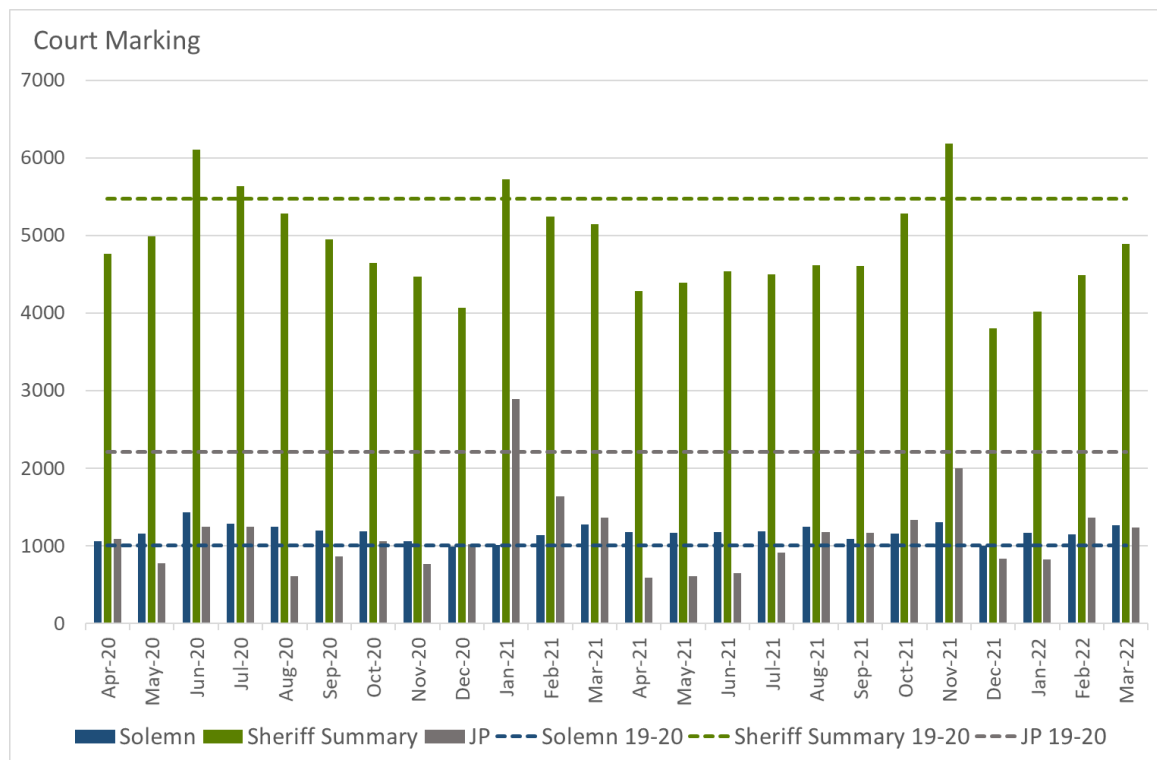


Subjects marked for court

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.

- Markings for Solemn court (High Court or Sheriff & Jury) have been consistently at or above 19-20 average levels since April 2020.
- Markings for Sheriff Summary court have, on the whole, remained below pre-pandemic levels since April 2020.
- Markings for JP court remain below the 19-20 average.

Chart: Subjects marked for court (bars – monthly count April 2020 to March 2022, dashed lines 19-20 average)



Fatal Accident Inquiries (as of 1 April 2022)

FAIs with scheduled court dates: 33

FAIs with First Notice lodged, awaiting court dates: 1

Source:

Data in this section comes from COPFS Internal Management Information System.

Scottish Courts & Tribunal Service (SCTS)

Criminal Registered & Scheduled Trials

Since the initial lockdown in March 2020, there have been 162,227 criminal registrations in the courts. Six-hundred and fifty-one of these registrations have been COVID-19 related (0.4%).

In March 2022, registrations in all court types were below 19-20 averages.

Cases Registered	19-20 monthly average	March 2022	Change from 19-20 monthly average	Outstanding trials March 2020	Outstanding trials March 2022
Indictments					
High Court	85	80	-5 (-6%)	390	560
Sheriff Court	454	447	-7 (-2%)	497	2,274
Complaints					
Sheriff Court	5,458	4,970	-488 (-9%)	13,971	30,520
JP Court	2,799	2,512	-287 (-10%)	3,497	7,569

At the end of March 2022 there were 40,923 trials outstanding. This compares to 18,355 at the end of 2019-20. In addition, SCTS have forecast that there are another 1,537 cases in the system (all solemn cases), which are likely to come to trial but have not yet had a trial date set (see [SCTS published monthly criminal statistics](#) for more detail).

Criminal Disposals

In March 2022 there were 7,204 disposals (excluding secondary disposals and the 'other' disposal category) from Scotland's courts. This is 99% of the 19-20 monthly average of 7,276 and higher than February 2022 (5,676 disposals).

Between April 2020 and March 2022 there were 58,621 (34%) fewer disposals from courts than would have been expected based on 19-20 average figures. Over this time period, there have been 32% fewer custodial sentences and 36% fewer community disposals imposed by the courts than might have been expected.

To:	Monthly average	March	Change	Estimated*	Actual	
31 March 2022	2019-20	2022	%	April 2020 – March 2022	April 2020 – March 2022	Change %
Imprisonment	1,010	774	-23%	24,240	16,440	-32%
Community Disposal (CPO & DTTO)	1,383	1,403	1%	33,192	21,268	-36%
Restriction of Liberty Order	296	364	23%	7,104	6,161	-13%
Fine etc.	3,105	3,152	2%	74,520	46,595	-37%
Admonished/ Discharged	1,482	1,511	2%	35,568	25,539	-28%

* 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.

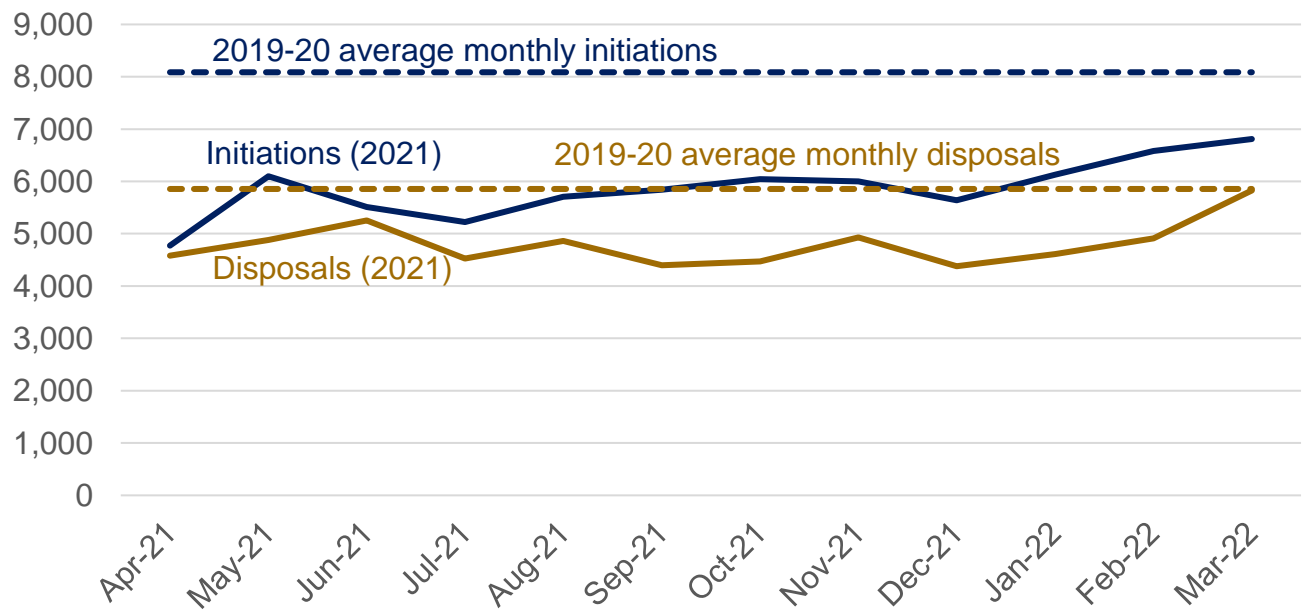
Further Information: Latest [SCTS published official statistics](#)

Sheriff Court Civil Case Volumes

Initiations and disposals

Initiations in the Sheriff Civil Courts remain lower than the 2019-20 typical levels, while disposals nearly matched 2019-20 levels for the first time since the pandemic (see dotted lines). Numbers for both initiations and disposals increased in March, for the third month in a row. Both initiations and disposals are at their highest in the last 12 months.

Chart: Initiations and disposals



Sheriff Court cases by procedure

Initiated case numbers for ordinary cause and simple procedure are returning to 2019-20 monthly average levels, with month to month variation. Ordinary cause numbers increased in March and are much closer to the 2019-20 average monthly levels. There was no change in summary cause cases in March from the previous month, but are still much lower than 2019-20 average levels. Simple procedure cases decreased in March, for the second month in a row. Small claims have largely been replaced by simple procedure.

Disposed cases for ordinary cause and simple procedure were both higher than the 2019-20 levels. Summary cause disposals decreased for the first time in four months.





Summary cause figures are heavily influenced by the emergency legislation which protected tenants during the pandemic, brought into force in April 2020 as part of [Coronavirus \(Scotland\) Act 2020](#). This was a temporary public health protection measure, aimed at ensuring people could stay safe in their homes for as long as possible. The provisions of the Act expired on 30 March 2022.

Procedures	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	2019/20 monthly average
Initiated						
Ordinary cause	1,908	1,580	1,455	1,803	1,892	1,928
Summary cause	361	262	298	361	361	1,132
Small claim	0	0	0	2	0	2
Simple procedure	1,715	1,811	2,648	2,418	2,246	2,696
Total initiated	3,984	3,653	4,401	4,584	4,499	5,758
Disposed						
Ordinary cause	1,412	1,280	1,208	1,391	1,669	1,445
Summary cause	561	407	468	589	479	1,096
Small claim	2	2	0	3	2	5
Simple procedure	2,022	1,766	1,984	2,040	2,492	2,306
Total disposed	3,997	3,455	3,660	4,023	4,642	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.

Focus on case types

- The case types presented below show gradual return to 2019-20 levels of initiations, with some month to month variation. Both Family and Children's Referrals were higher than the 2019-20 average levels in March.
- Family, Children's Referrals and Debts disposals were all higher than 2019-20 average monthly levels. Personal Injury was lower.

Case Type	Initiated Cases (Mar 2022)		Disposed Cases (Mar 2022)	
	Mar 2022	Change from 19-20	Mar 2022	Change from 19-20
 Family	1,040	103% of 19-20 average month (1,014 cases)	1,060	119% of 19-20 average month (892 cases)
 Children's Referrals	739	123% of 19-20 average month (602 cases)	294	113% of 19-20 average month (260 cases)
 Debt	2,595	90% of 19-20 average month (2,883 cases)	2,728	115% of 19-20 average month (2,368 cases)
 Personal Injury	331	82% of 19-20 average month (402 cases)	177	58% of 19-20 average month (306 cases)

Further Information:

Latest published [Civil Justice Statistics](#)

Prisons

Prison population

While the overall prison population is lower than pre-pandemic levels, the number of people held on remand remains at a historic high. The changing levels across groups that are required by law to be housed separately – like those on remand – pose increasing difficulties in the management of the prison population.

In March 2022 (up until the morning of Friday 1 April 2022):

- the population decreased by 40 to 7,488
- 2,190 were on remand: 1,896 (25%) untried and 294 (4%) awaiting sentence
- 66% of arrivals were untried (570 of 858), and 17% awaiting sentence (144)

The remand population grew through October and November and, after dropping somewhat in December, it continued to grow through January. The remand population exceeded its previous high point on 1 February when it was 2,292 and has fallen slightly since.

The specific needs of remand prisoners means this changing population profile poses additional challenges to staff and estate.

Chart: Total prison population

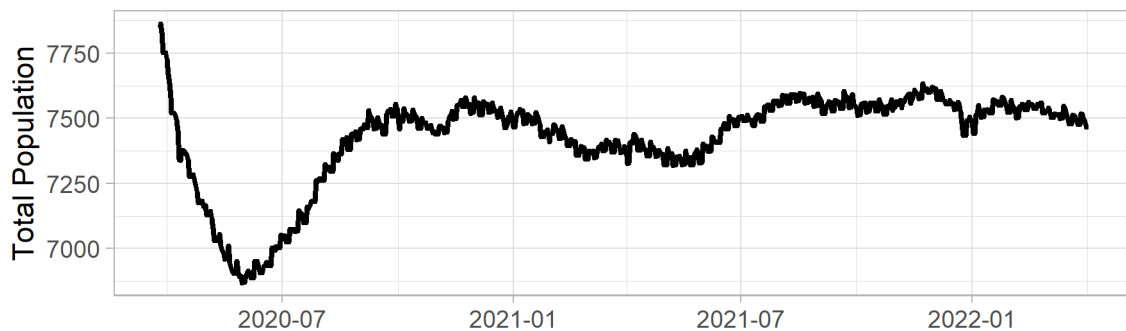
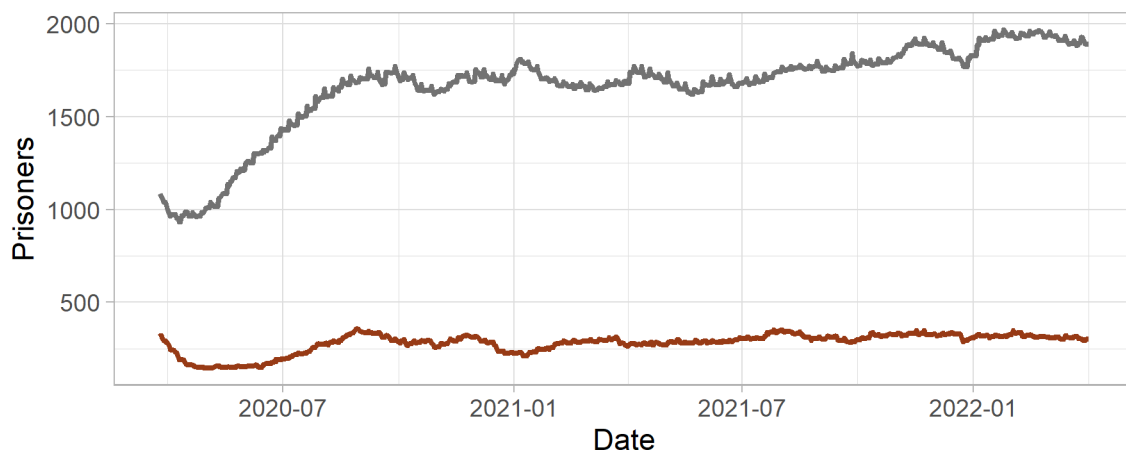


Chart: Remand population

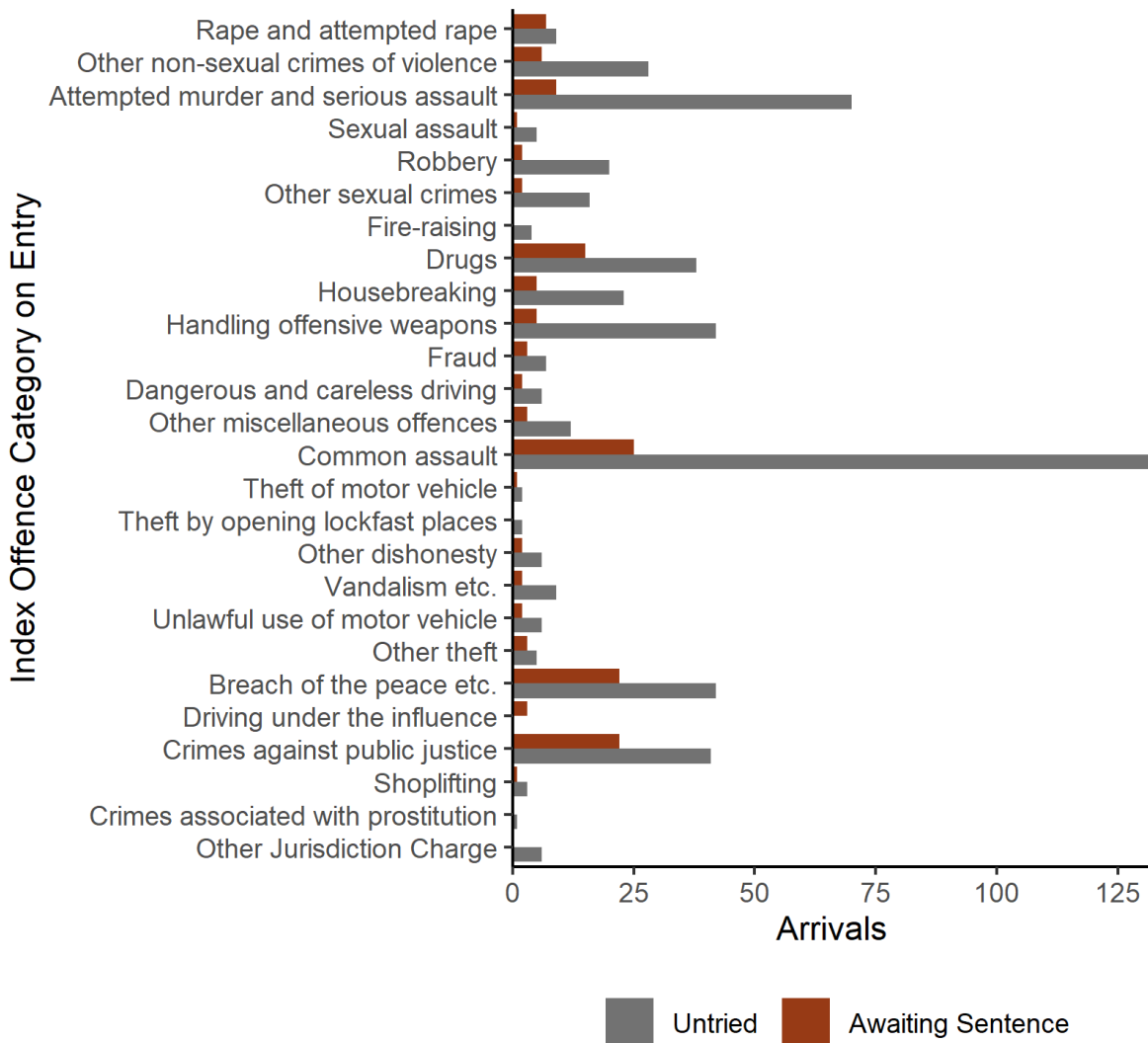


Status — Untried — Awaiting Sentence

Remand Arrival Offences

There were 678 un-sentenced arrivals to prison with known offence types in March, awaiting trial or sentence for the following alleged offences.

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



Note: Double-counting may occur where an individual arrives, is absent from prison for one or more nights in the month, and then returns before the end of the period. Where an individual has multiple alleged offence types in a single stint, the offence towards the top of the list in the chart is used as the index offence.

Further Information:

Latest published [Annual Prison Population Statistics](#)

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: 2019-20](#) 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.

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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