

Justice Analytical Services (JAS)
Safer Communities and Justice Statistics Monthly Data
Report

January 2023 edition

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Introduction

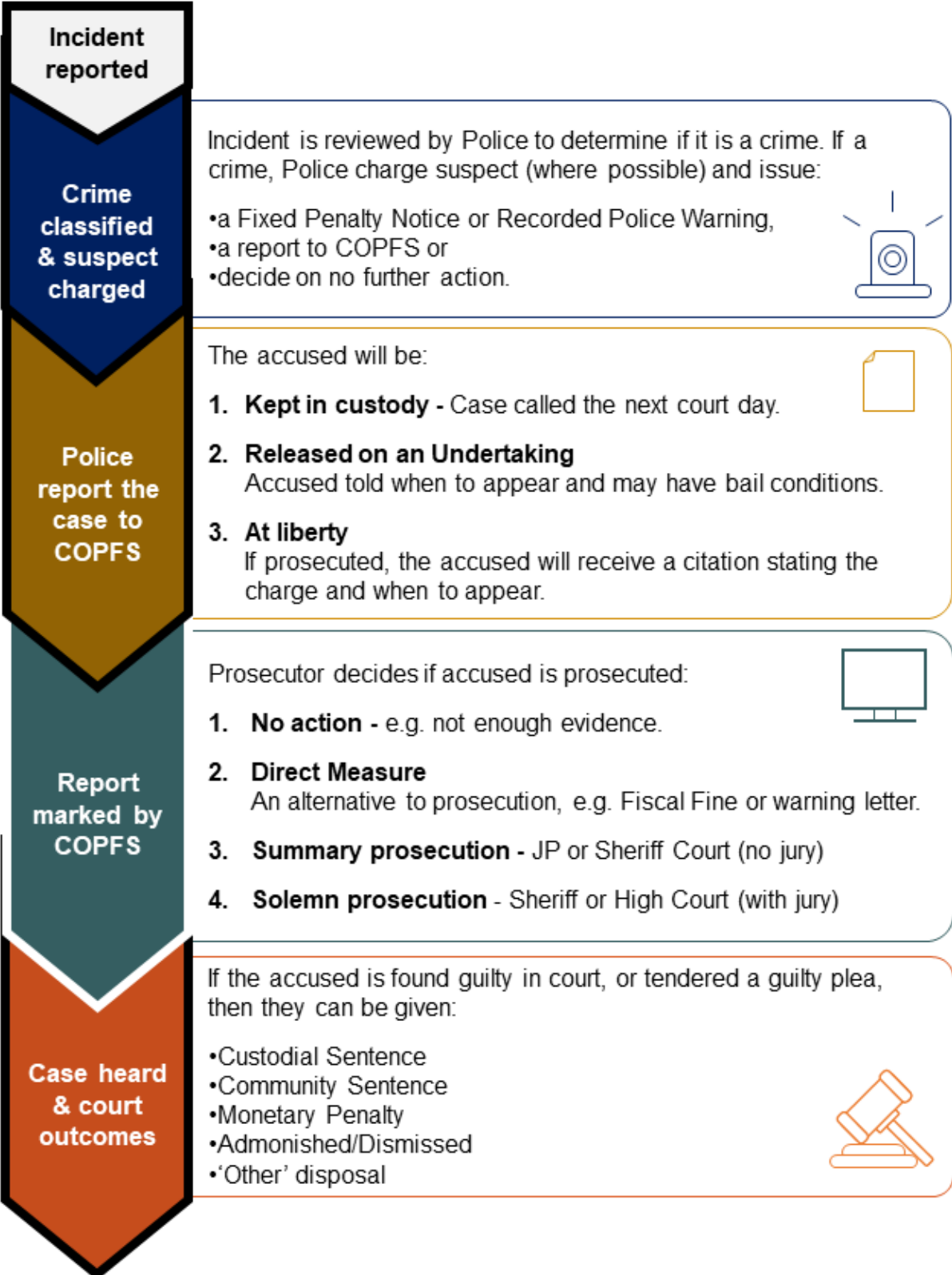
This report provides an overview of a number of important justice and safer communities statistics. Data has been gathered from a number of different sources and may be subject to future revision as more recent data becomes available.

Any newly updated summary statistics are preceded by * New * and are also marked in yellow background.

Contents

- Introduction..... 1
- How crime flows through the Justice System 3
- Summary statistics on crime in general 4
- Summary statistics on policing 7
- Summary statistics on hate crime 8
- Summary statistics on drugs..... 9
- Summary statistics on community safety 10
- Further detail on fire statistics..... 11
- Summary statistics on criminal and civil proceedings..... 12
- Summary statistics on prisons 16
 - Further detail on prison population..... 17
 - Time on Remand to Date 17
 - Remand Arrival Offences 18
- Topic Page 19
 - Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 – Interim Reporting Requirement..... 19
- Sources and further information 20

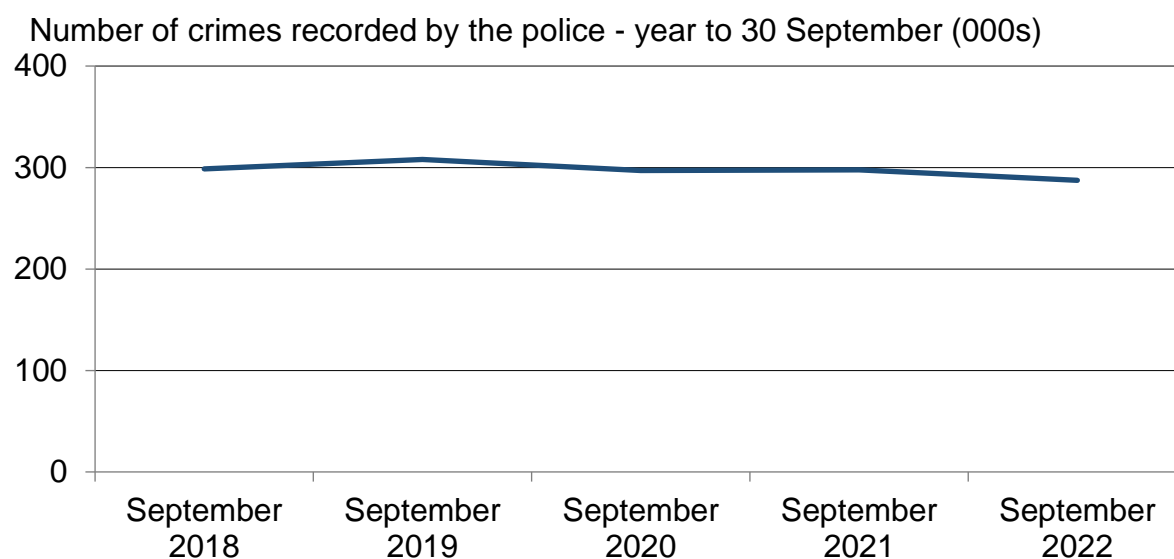
How crime flows through the Justice System



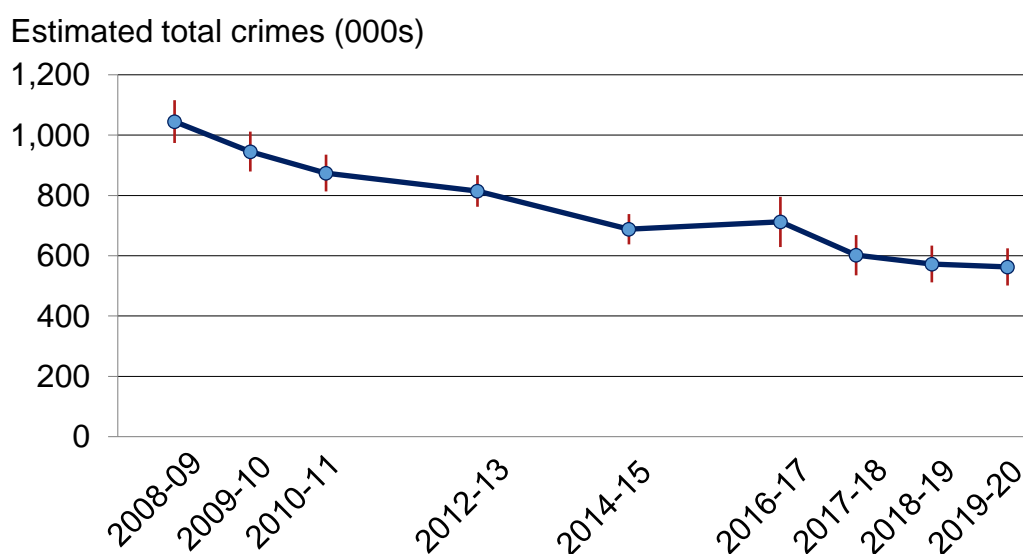
Crime in General

Summary statistics on crime in general

► **Police recorded crime is at the lowest level seen since 1974 and is down 4% since the year ending September 2018.** Between the year ending September 2021 and 2022, the number of crimes recorded decreased by 3%, to 287,374. This fall was driven by a reduction in crimes recorded under Covid-19 related legislation (from 19,861 to 36). All other crimes collectively increased by 3%.



► **Crime has fallen by 46% since 2008-09.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that around 1 in 8 adults were victims of crime in 2019-20 (11.9%) compared to 1 in 5 in 2008-09 (20.4%). The estimated number of crimes fell by 46% over the same period, and by 21% since 2016-17. The SCJS detected no change in the overall victimisation rate between 2018-19 and 2019-20.



▶ **Violent crime increased in the most recent year.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police increased by 8%, to 69,353 in the year ending September 2022. This was driven by a rise in common assault (also up 8%), which makes up the clear majority (84%) of all non-sexual crimes of violence recorded in the year ending September 2022. The SCJS showed a 39% fall in violent crime between 2008-09 and 2019-20 and that an estimated 48% of violent crime in 2019-20 was reported to the police.

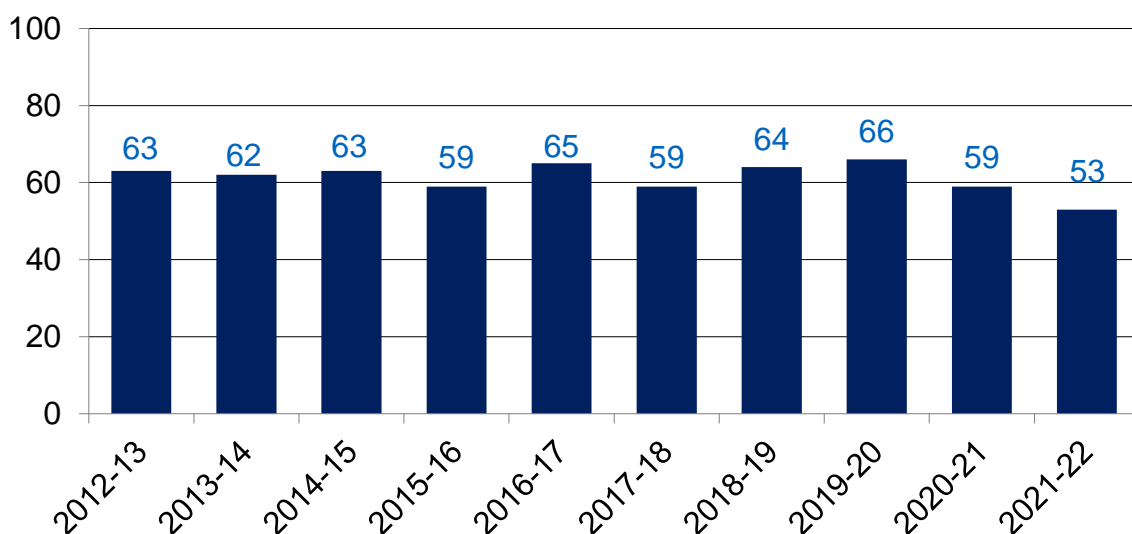
▶ **Recorded sexual crimes increased in the most recent year.** Sexual crimes recorded by the police increased by 6%, to 14,838 in the year ending September 2022 which has led to the highest number of sexual crimes in the last five years. Multiple factors lie behind the long term increase in recorded sexual crime including a greater willingness of victims to come forward, more historical reporting, more online offending and the impact of new legislation. The SCJS for 2018-20 (2018-19 & 2019-20 combined) estimated that 3.6% of adults experienced at least one serious sexual assault since the age of 16, unchanged from 2008-09.

▶ **Women more likely to experience partner abuse.** The SCJS, for 2018-20, estimated that 3.2% of respondents had experienced partner abuse in the year prior to interview. A higher proportion of women than men experienced this, at 3.7% and 2.6% respectively.

▶ **Decrease in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 54.0% in 2021-22, down from 59.3% in 2020-21 and similar to 54.9% in 2019-20. The decrease in 2021-22 reflects a partial return to the volume of different crime types recorded in the year prior to the pandemic (2019-20), albeit clear up rates have still fallen for each of the individual crime groups.

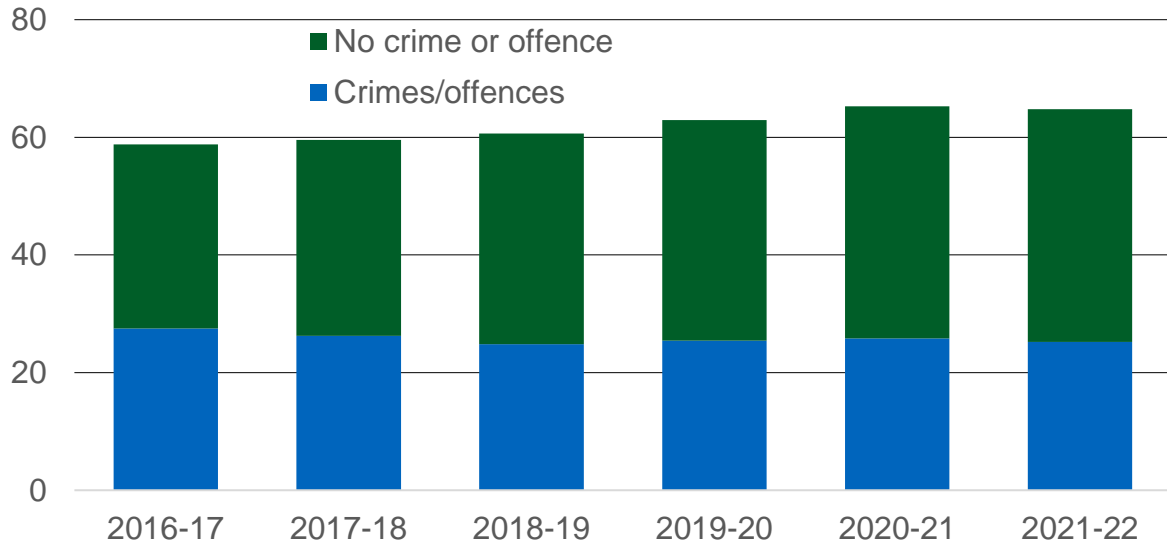
▶ **No. of victims of homicide at record low.** There were 53 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2021-22, a 16% decrease from 2012-13 and the lowest value since comparable records began in 1976.

Number of victims of homicide



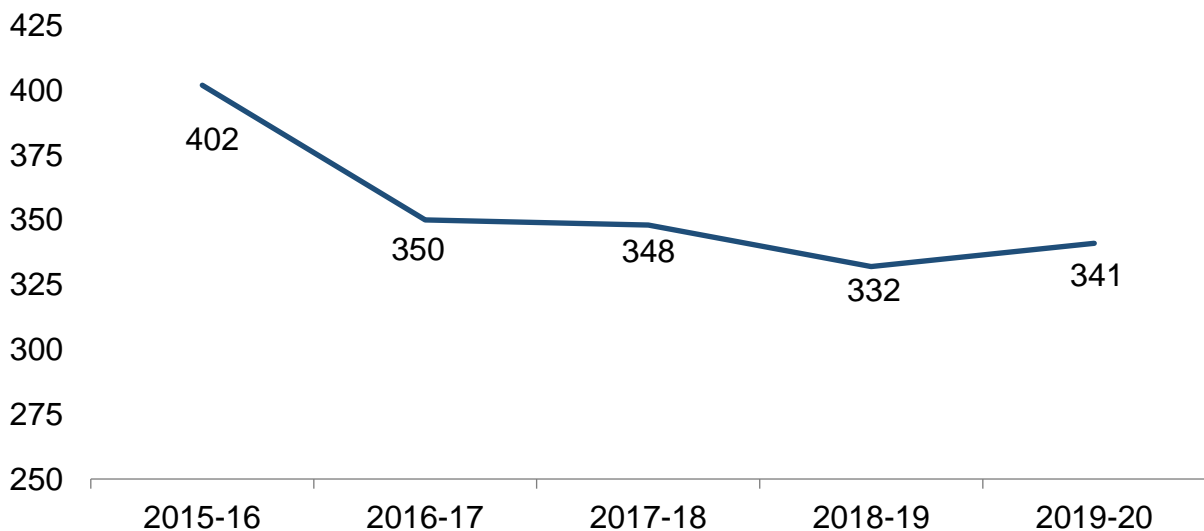
▶ **Slight decrease in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 64,807 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2021-22, a decrease of 1% on 2020-21. In 2021-22, 39% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.

No. of domestic abuse incidents (000s)



▶ **Small increase in firearm offences.** Between 2018-19 and 2019-20 the number of crimes and offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved increased by 3% (from 332 to 341 offences). The 2018-19 and 2019-20 totals are the lowest and second lowest, respectively, since comparable records began in 1980.

Number of recorded crimes and offences where a firearm was alleged to be involved

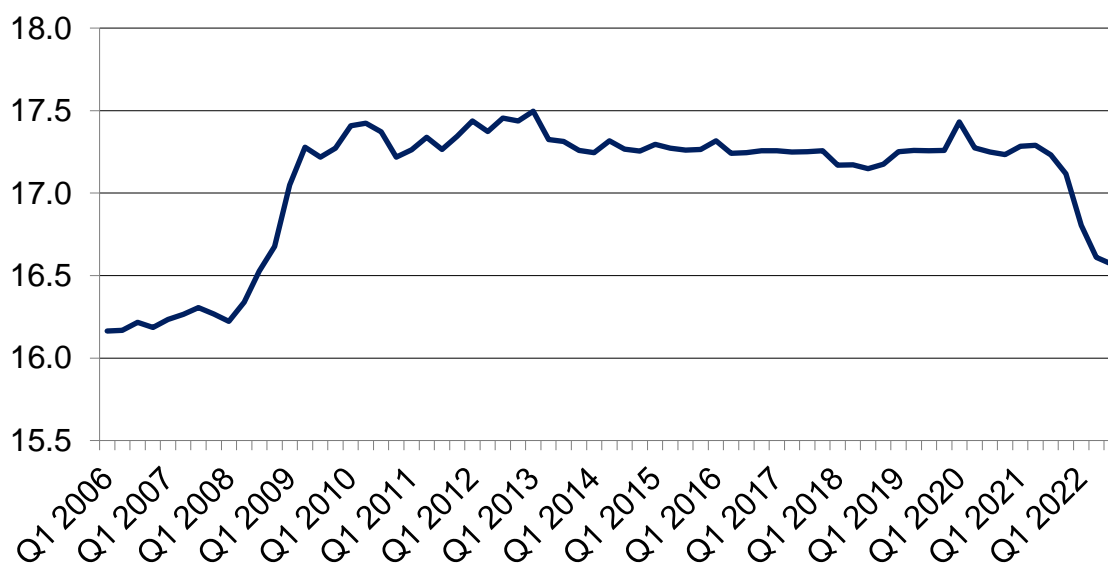


Policing

Summary statistics on policing

▶ **There were 16,570 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 30 September 2022.** This was 336 (+2.1%) more officers compared to the position on 31 March 2007, but 662 (-3.8%) less than on 30 September 2021.

No. of police officers (FTE) (000s)

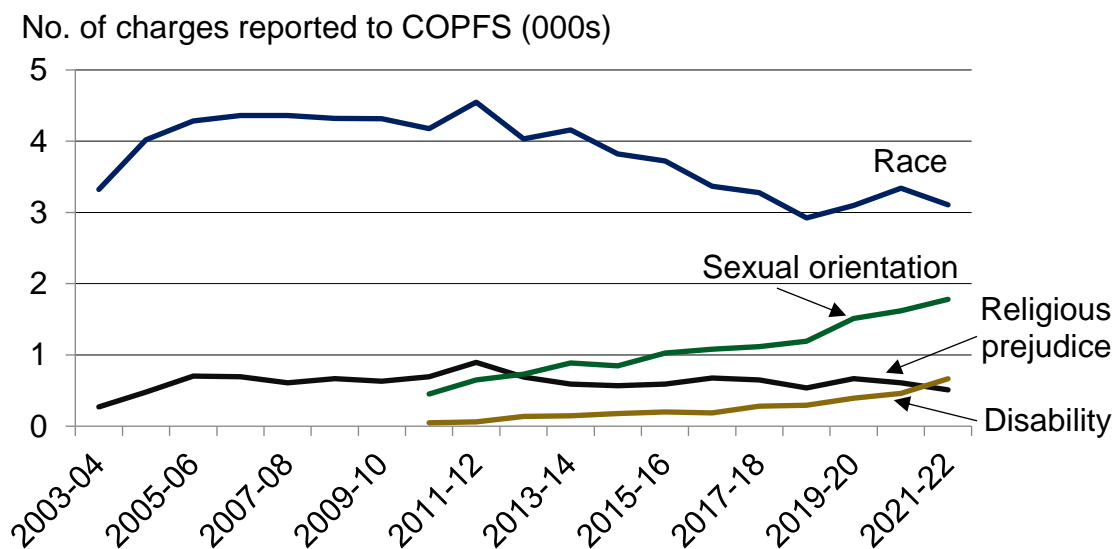


Hate Crime

Summary statistics on hate crime

▶ **Numbers stable for police recorded hate crime.** Between 2014-15 & 2019-20, the number of hate crimes recorded by the police was relatively stable, at around 6,300 to 7,000. In 2019-20, 62% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 20% sexual orientation, 8% religion, 4% disability and 1% transgender identity. The remaining 5% included multiple hate aggravators.

▶ **Marginal decrease in overall hate crime charges.** There was a decrease in the number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 for race and religion. Sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity aggravated hate crime charges saw an increase. Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.



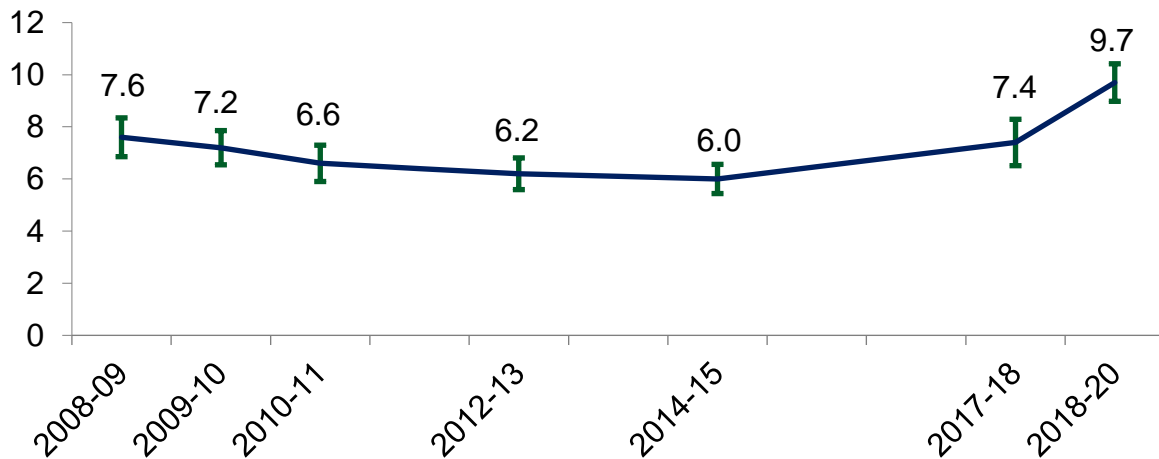
Drugs

Summary statistics on drugs

► **The proportion of adults reporting use of comparable illicit drugs has risen.**

Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that in 2018-20, 9.7% of respondents reported taking one or more of these drugs in the 12 months prior to interview. This has increased from 7.6% in 2008-09 and 7.4% in 2017-18. The drugs listed in the survey questionnaire are the same for both 2017-18 and 2018-20, enabling a direct comparison. There was an increase from 9.5% in 2017-18 to 13.5% in 2018-20 for overall self-reported drug use in the 12 months prior to interview.

Percentage of adults reporting use of comparable illicit drugs



To have a more comparable measure since 2008-09, the figures in this chart exclude poppers, glues, solvents, gas or aerosol and prescription only painkillers not prescribed to the respondent.

Community Safety

Summary statistics on community safety

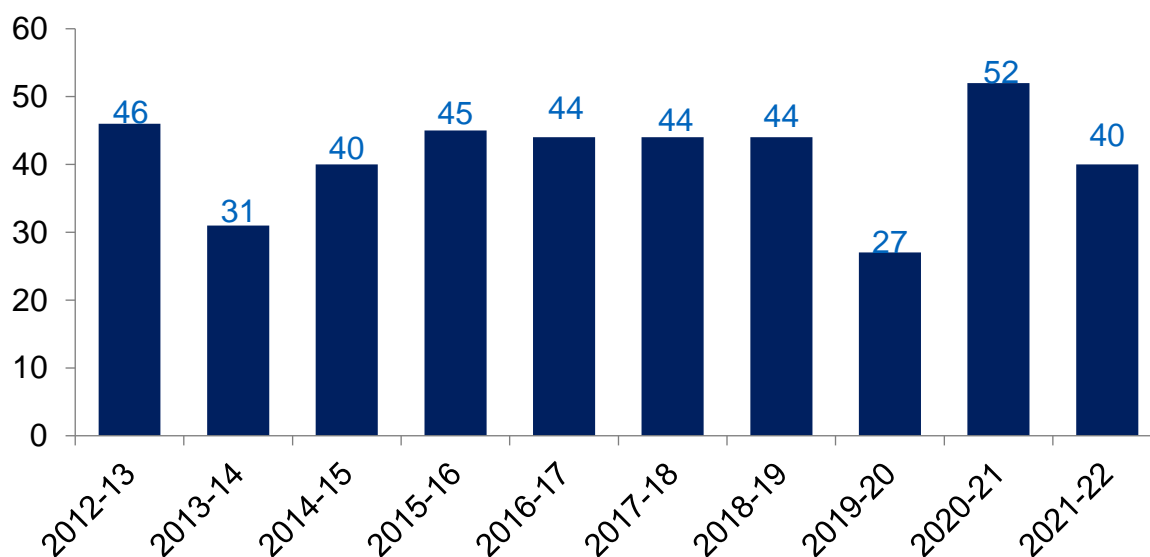
▶ **Improved public perception of local crime rate since 2008-09.** The public feel safer in their local communities. The SCJS found that, in 2019-20, 73% of adults thought that the local crime rate had stayed the same or reduced in the past two years. This shows an improvement from 69% in 2008-09 and no change since 2018-19 (73%).

▶ **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (77%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2019-20, unchanged from 2018-19 (78%) but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.

▶ **Most adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reported that, in 2019-20, 55% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, unchanged from 2018-19 (56%) but down from 61% in 2012-13.

▶ **Number of fires rose 10% in the last year.** In 2021-22, there were 27,771 fires in Scotland, up 10% on 2020-21 and the second highest number in the last decade. There were 40 fire fatalities in 2021-22, the third lowest in the last decade.

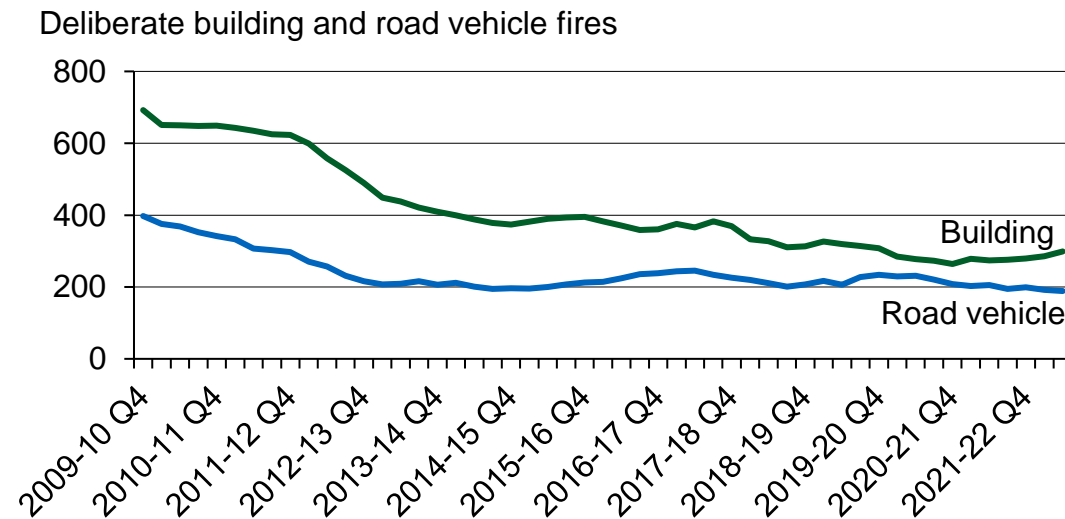
No. of fatal fire casualties



▶ **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2012-13.** In 2021-22, there were 1,819 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 399 due to assault with a sharp object. These were, respectively, 47% and 38% lower than in 2012-13.

Further detail on fire statistics

*** New *** There were 324 deliberate building fires in quarter 2 of 2022-23, up from 273 in the same quarter of 2021-22. Over the same period, the number of deliberate road vehicle fires fell from 211 to 197. There has been a long-term downward trend in deliberate building and deliberate road vehicle fires since this series began.



The figures used in this chart are the average of the quarter in question and the three quarters prior, in order to allow for seasonal variation.

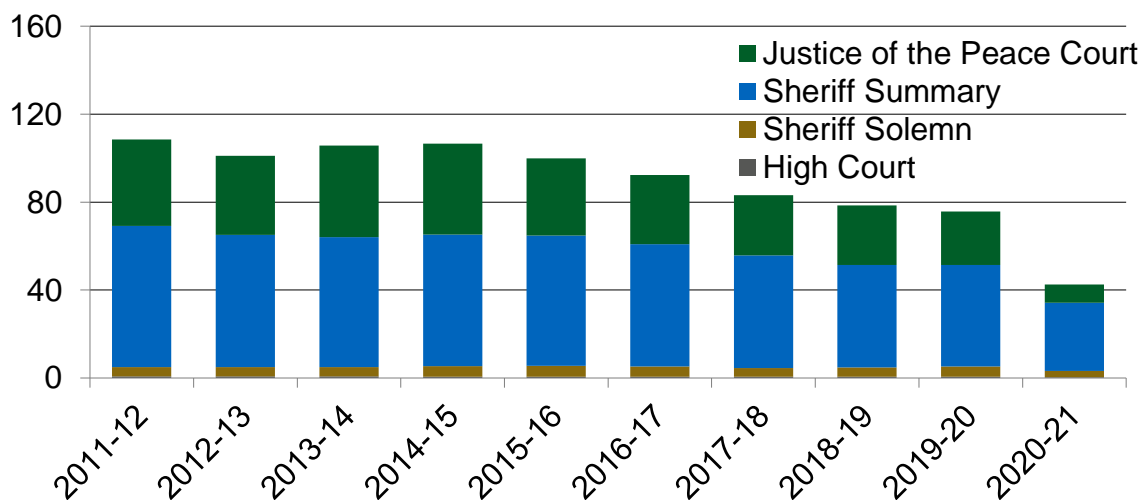
Unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) describe avoidable false alarm signals from a workplace, either from an automatic fire alarm or from a person. There were 8,288 UFAS incidents in quarter 2 of 2022-23, which made up 30% of all incidents attended in that quarter. This was down from 32% of all incidents attended in the equivalent quarter of 2021-22. The Covid-19 pandemic could have influenced the previous year's figures as home working was encouraged and less people were working in offices at that time. Less people in workplace buildings meant there was less likelihood of an unwanted signal being triggered.

Criminal & Civil Proceedings

Summary statistics on criminal and civil proceedings

▶ **COVID-19 impacted the number of proceedings and convictions in 2020-21.** The number of people convicted in Scottish courts fell by 44% from 2019-20 to 42,532.

Number of people convicted in Scottish courts (000s)

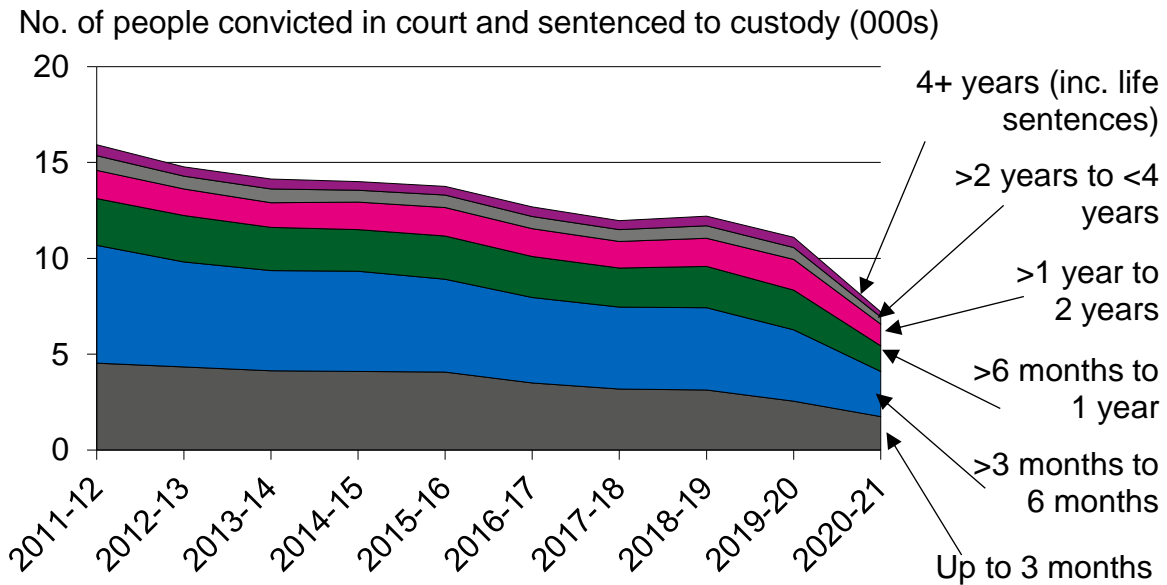


The 2020-21 data mainly reflects the impact of Covid-19 across the justice system, and should not be interpreted as indicative of longer term trends.

▶ **Fall in convictions in almost all categories between 2019-20 & 2020-21.** Convictions fell the most for motor vehicle offences (down 58%) and crimes of dishonesty (down 44%). However, convictions for crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act increased by 81% (383 convictions) in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 (212 convictions). The course of conduct offence was only introduced in April 2019 and so to some extent an increase would be expected after the first year as it takes time for evidence to build up and cases to progress through court.

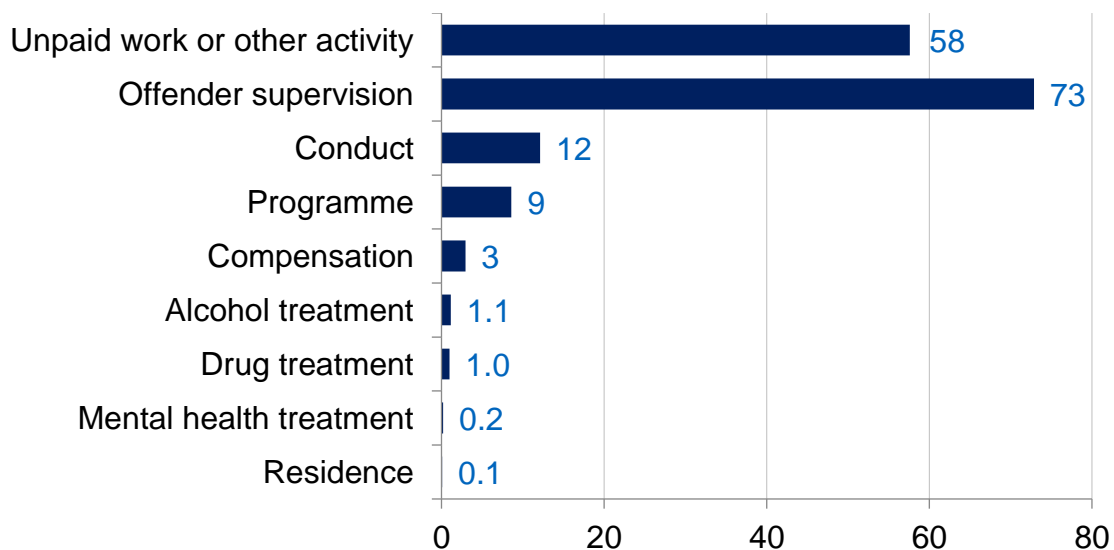
▶ **Fall in numbers of community sentences issued, but rise in proportion in 2020-21.** The number of community sentences in court fell by 42% between 2019-20 and 2020-21, from 16,661 to 9,741, in line with the fall seen in convictions overall due to the impact of COVID-19 on court business. The proportion of all convictions resulting in a community sentence rose to 23%, the highest in the past decade. The proportion split of sentence types this year is likely a function of the differing levels of capacity of the different court types operating during the year rather than indicative of any trend.

► **Average custodial sentence is under a year.** For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2020-21 was almost eleven months (329 days) in length. This was 8% shorter than in 2019-20, but 14% longer than in 2011-12 (9.5 months). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of up to one year or less remained unchanged at 75% in 2020-21, the lowest proportion of the last decade.



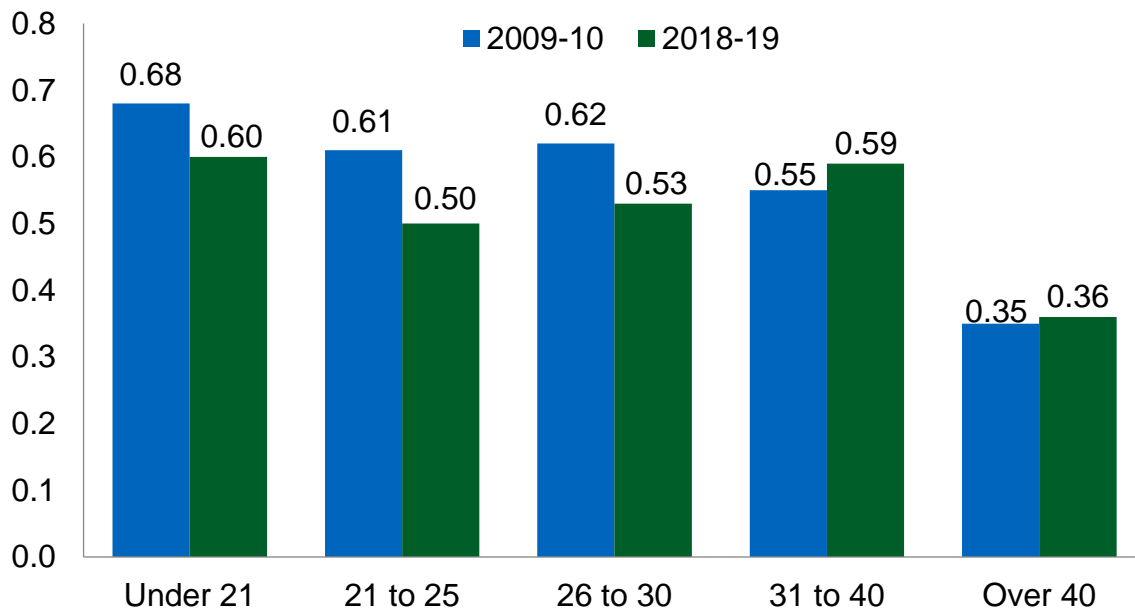
The 2020-21 data mainly reflects the impact of Covid-19 across the justice system, and should not be interpreted as indicative of longer term trends.

► **Community payback orders more likely to have supervision than unpaid work.** There were 8,169 community payback orders imposed in 2020-21, 51% lower than in 2019-20. The suspension of delivery of unpaid work due to Covid-19 during part of the year was a major factor in more orders being issued with offender supervision requirements (73%) than unpaid work or other activity requirements (58%).



▶ **Reconviction rates are at one of their lowest levels in 22 years.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 11% lower than it was a decade ago. The fall in the last decade was driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 12% for under 21s, 18% for 21-25 year olds, and 15% for 26-30 year olds. In contrast, average reconvictions increased for the older age groups over the decade, with increases of 7% for 31-40 year olds and 3% for those aged over 40.

Average reconvictions per offender

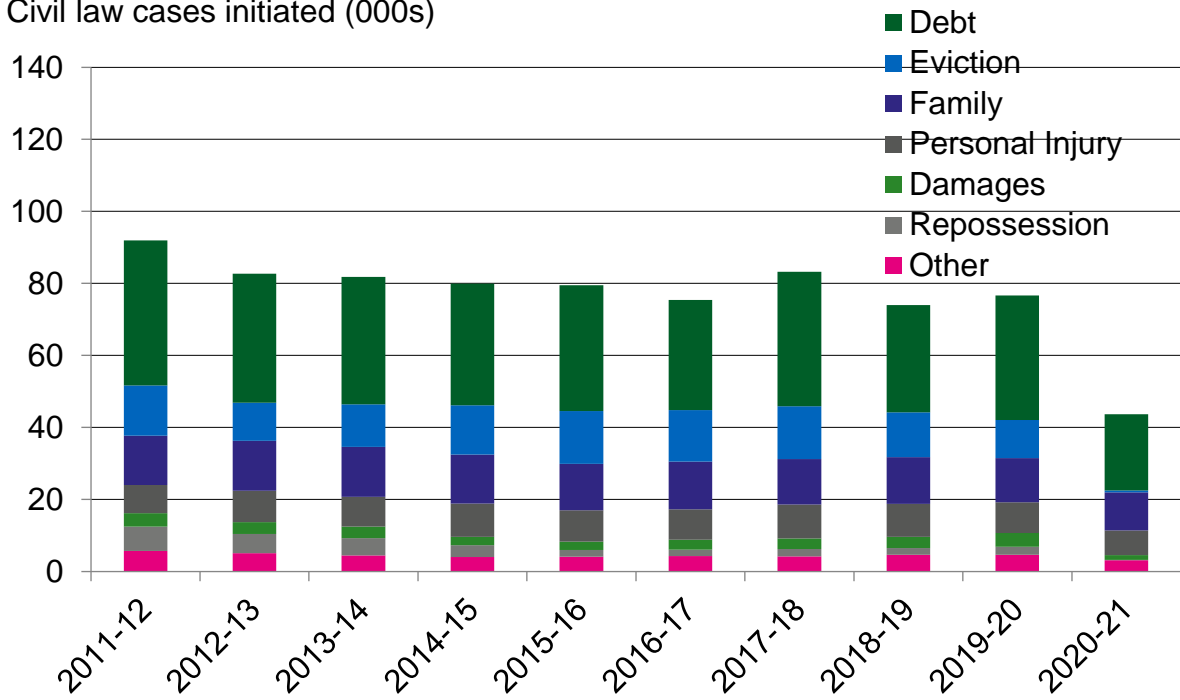


▶ **No. of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds down by over 30 per cent in last 10 years.** [Statistics published by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration \(SCRA\)](#) show that, in 2021-22, 2,398 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a decrease of 31% since 2012-13.

▶ **Long-term downward trend in initiated civil law cases, latest figures lower due to restrictions during the pandemic.** There were 43,632 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2020-21 (excluding summary applications). This represents a decrease of 41% from 2019-20.

▶ **All case types decreased since 2019-20.** The largest decreases were in repossessions (down 96%), evictions (down 95%) and damages (down 65%). Debts were down 39%, while the lowest decreases were seen in personal injury (down 21%) and family (down 14%). Debt actions remain the most common, constituting 49% of principal craves. Family and personal injury actions were second and third most common, at 24% and 16% respectively.

Civil law cases initiated (000s)



Prisons

Summary statistics on prisons

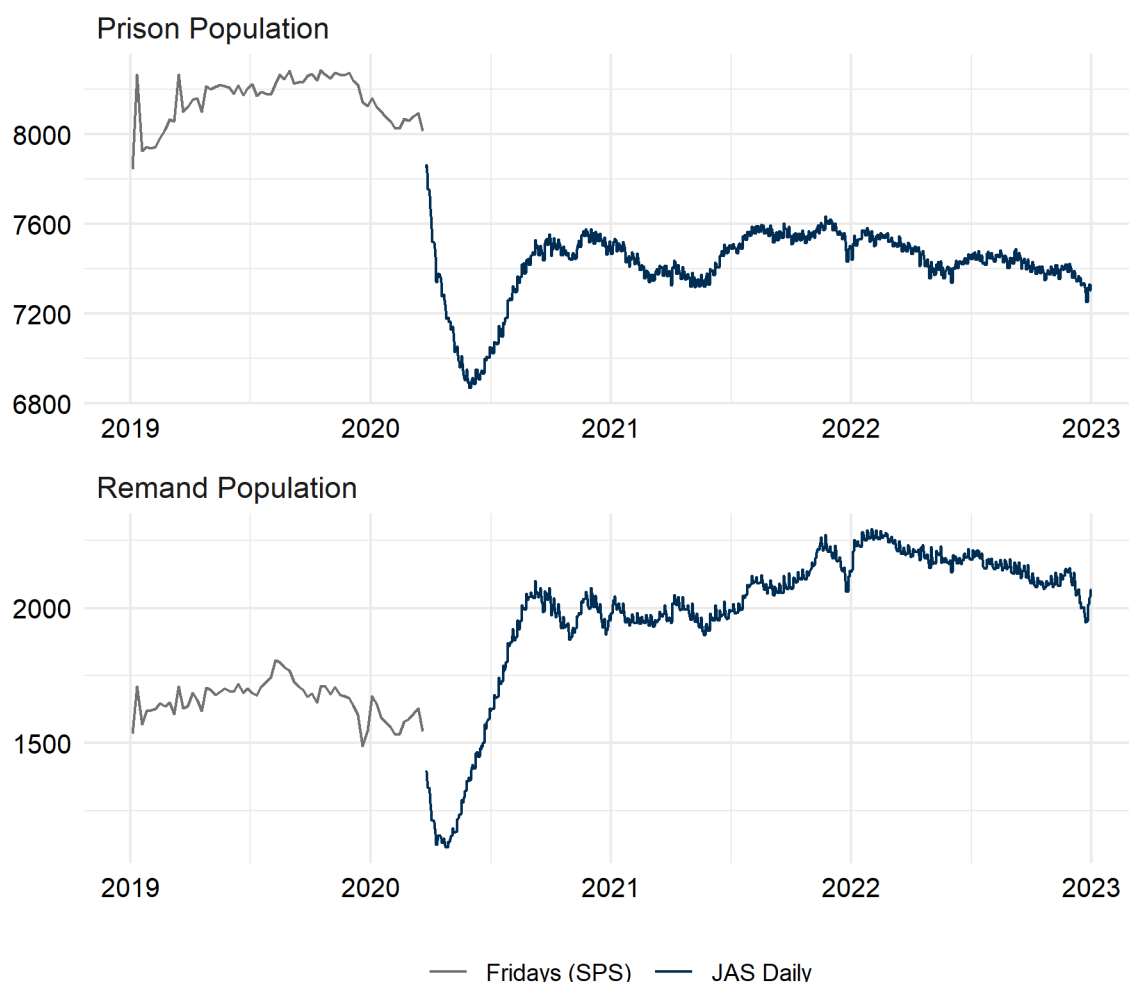
*** New ***

▶ **The prison population has risen from its lowest point at the end of May 2020.** [Friday population figures 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 the lockdown in 2020. This was due to a drop in the number of sentenced admissions following the Covid-19 outbreak and the early release of prisoners.

▶ The population has since stabilised between 7,300 and 7,600 and was 7,303 on 1st January 2023.

▶ The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 24th April 2020, but grew to over 2,000 by September 2020. The remand population has grown significantly since, and exceeded previous records on 1st February 2022 to a new peak of 2,292. It has since fallen slightly to 2,069 (28% of the total prison population) on 1st January 2023.

Chart: Prison populations (total and remand), January 2019 through December 2022



Further detail on prison population

*** New ***

In December 2022 (up until the morning of Sunday 1st January 2023):

- the population decreased by 99 to 7,303
- 2,069 were on remand: 1,789 (24%) untried & 280 (4%) awaiting sentence
- 68% of arrivals were untried (551 of 807), and 15% awaiting sentence (121)

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 growing difficulties in the management of the prison population.

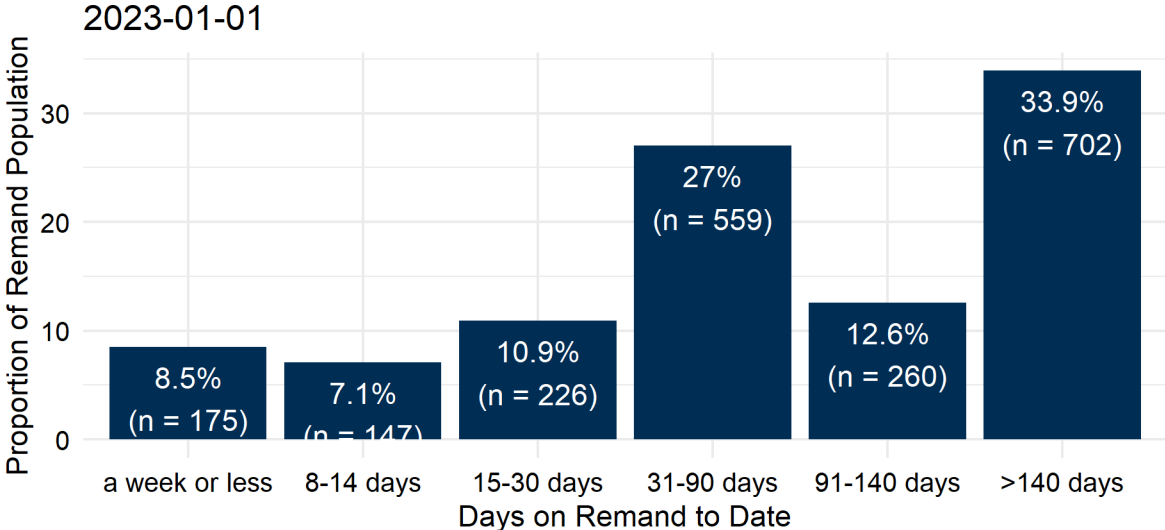
The remand population grew during March through November 2021, exceeding its previous recorded peak. In line with previous years, overall numbers and remand populations fell during December 2021, hitting a low of 7,433 (2,061 remand) over Christmas before rebounding. Since February 2022, the prison population overall has fallen somewhat. The remand population peaked on 1st February 2022 at 2,292 (30%) – the highest daily number on record.

Time on Remand to Date

*** New ***

Among the 2,069 people on remand as of the morning of Sunday 1st January 2023 , the median continuous time spent with this status to date was 80 days.

Chart: Banded continuous time on remand



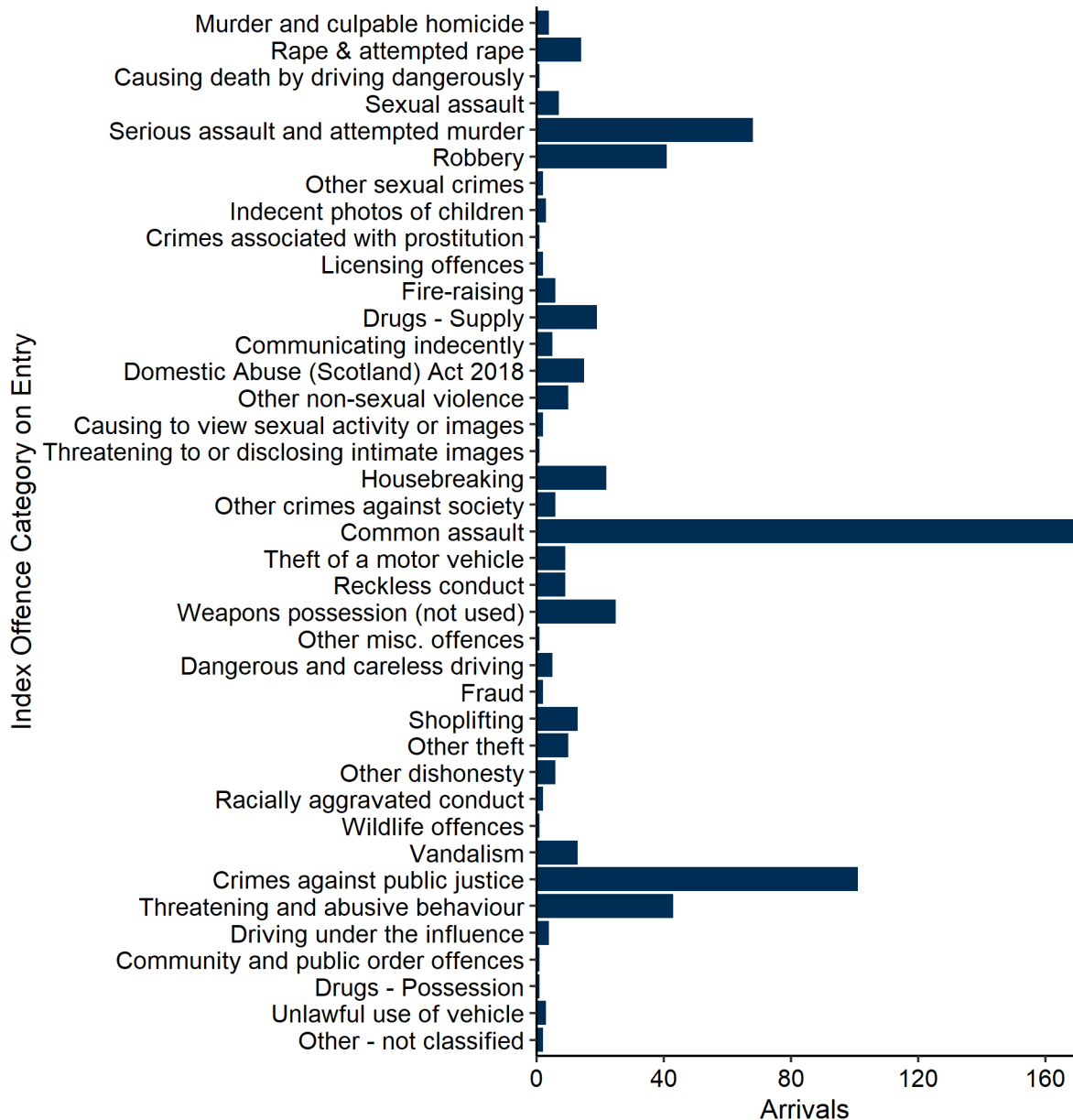
Note: The remand population includes individuals whose trial has commenced but not concluded, as well as those awaiting commencement of a trial. As a result, the figures referenced above reflect only that an individual has held the same status for an extended period, but do not reflect the relationship between these times on remand and the ongoing court procedure(s) to which they relate.

Remand Arrival Offences

*** New ***

There were 649 remand arrivals to prison with known offence types in December, awaiting trial or sentence for the following alleged offences.

Chart: Index offence category on entry of arrivals to remand



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.

The crime categories presented here have been revised in line with those presented in [Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2021-22](#).

Topic Page

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 – Interim Reporting Requirement

In January [we published information](#) on the progress and outcome of domestic abuse cases in court and the experiences of victims and witnesses, since the introduction of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (the ‘Act’).

A central aim of the Act is to enable the prosecution of various types of abuse, including emotional and psychological abuse, which takes place over a period of time, under a new domestic abuse offence. Early indications show an increase in the use of the legislation over the two years for which statistical data is available:

- an increase in the number of people convicted of the new offence (from 212 in 2019-20 to 383 in 2020-21)
- an increase in the use of the new statutory sentencing aggravation intended to reflect the harm caused to children by domestic abuse since the Act came into force, from 39 in 2019-20 to 90 in 2020-21.

The research with victims and witnesses found that the new law better reflects how adult victims experience domestic abuse: participants reported a range of psychological, physical and, for some, sexual harm over time. However, there was limited awareness of what constitutes criminal behaviour under the Act.

Going to court was experienced as difficult and distressing for many of the victims and witnesses, including children and young people, who participated in the research.

Overall, the evidence on victim and witness experiences of the criminal justice system, suggests the continued existence and/or the exacerbation (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) of known issues relating to the experiences of vulnerable witnesses at court; rather than new issues specific to or resulting from the Act. These included long delays; lack of communication, involvement or understanding of procedures; and the importance of kind and respectful treatment and availability of specialist support.

A number of areas for improvement were identified in the research which included improved knowledge, communication and information sharing; increased use of remote and/or earlier pre-recorded evidence; quicker and more efficient processes; and expanding support and ensuring safety for victims at all stages of the justice process.

It is important to note that the research findings are drawn from three small-scale research studies (69 research participants in total) and cannot therefore be generalised to all domestic abuse victims and witnesses. Small samples are fairly typical of research studies on domestic abuse due to their highly sensitive nature. Moreover, the impact of the pandemic makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, the findings are consistent with other recent research on experiences of victims in the justice system.

Sources and Further Information

Sources and further information

The information presented in this report is primarily drawn from a range of Official Statistics sources. In the case of fire and prisons statistics, more recent analysis of administrative data has been used, whilst recorded hate crime information comes from a Social Research publication.

Police activity:

- Quarterly [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#) bulletin. This contains National Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland.
- [Homicide in Scotland Statistics](#). Annual National Statistics on crimes of homicide recorded by the police in Scotland.
- [Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland Statistics](#). Annual Official Statistics on police recorded domestic abuse in Scotland.
- [Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics Scotland](#). Quarterly Official Statistics on the number of full-time equivalent police officers in Scotland.
- [Characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland: study](#). Social Research study into the nature of police recorded hate aggravated crimes in Scotland.

Courts and prisons data:

- [Criminal Proceedings Statistics in Scotland](#). Annual National Statistics on criminal proceedings concluded in Scottish courts and on a range of measures available as alternatives to prosecution.
- 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](#). Official 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.

Other:

- The [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#) (SCJS) is a large-scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime and the justice system in Scotland. The most recent release was for 2019-20.
- [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland](#). Annual National Statistics on justice social work activity in Scotland.

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