

Journey times in the Scottish Criminal Justice System

An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

April 2023

1. Key Points

This is the first experimental bulletin produced by the Scottish Government that assesses an accused person's criminal justice journey time from offence date to case conclusion or verdict. The bulletin uses two new datasets supplied by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS) covering the time period April 2017 to December 2022.

The insights from this bulletin allow us to make observations about the average length of journey times in general, as well as how these journey times have changed from pre-pandemic levels and over the course of the pandemic and beyond.

In general:

- The effect of the pandemic is very apparent in the data. Across all crime groupings and court types, median journey times of accused persons increased in 2021-22 (post pandemic) when compared to 2019-20 (pre-pandemic).
- Furthermore, with the exception of Justice of the Peace (JP) courts, all other court types saw an additional increase in median journey times over the first 9 months of 2022-23.
- In the first 9 months of 2022-23 covered by this publication, median journey times for accused persons with a COPFS "No action" marking were longer by around 2 months than for accused persons marked for direct measures (e.g. a warning letter or a fiscal fine).
- Median journey times for accused persons in solemn cases are longer than those for accused in summary cases. For example, median journey times in the first 9 months of 2022-23 were around 2 years 10 months in High court and 1 year 5 months in Sheriff solemn courts. This compares to around 11 months in Sheriff summary courts and 10 months in JP courts.
- In both sheriff (solemn and summary) courts and JP courts the offence to verdict median times for accused persons with a non-appearance warrant were higher than for those without non-appearance warrants; in the first 9 months of 2022-23, journey times for accused persons with non-appearance warrants were 8 months longer in Sheriff solemn courts, 6 months longer in Sheriff summary courts and 9 months longer in JP courts.
- The analysis suggests that there are differences in accused persons' journey times depending on the type of crime on registration. The longest journey times were observed for accused persons charged with at least one sexual crime and prosecuted in High court – with a median time of around 4 years in the 9 months of 2022-23 covered by this publication. It is worth noting that a proportion of these

cases are likely to be historic in nature and therefore the age of the offence will impact on the estimated journey time.

- The analysis also shows that the time associated with different parts of an accused person's journey in the justice system varies depending on the type of court their case is allocated.
 - For example, in the first 9 months of 2022-23, offence to registration times were longer than registration to verdict times in solemn courts - median offence to registration time for accused persons in High court were around 20 months and median registration to verdict time were 11 months; offence to registration time in Sheriff solemn court were around 10 months compared to 4 months for registration to verdict.
 - In contrast, for sheriff summary courts registration to verdict times are in general longer than offence to registration times - (median offence to registration journey times were around 2 months compared to a median of about 6 months for registration to verdict).

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3. Introduction

This bulletin presents new information on the time taken from offence to verdict for persons accused of criminal charges. This is the first in a series of experimental official statistics bulletins on this topic and analysis will develop over time in line with user needs. The time taken for the accused to progress through the justice system between offence and verdict times will include:

- the time taken for a victim to report an offence to the police and the associated police investigation time,
- COPFS time in processing the reported crime and subject preparation for court where relevant,
- then finally for the accused whose case progresses to court, the court time in hearing and disposing the case. This stage can involve multiple contributors including: SCTS, COPFS, Police Scotland, defence solicitors, SLAB etc.

The time taken for the accused to progress through the system will be referred to as the 'journey time'. The journey times of two categories of accused are presented here:

- i) those that are reported by the police or another reporting agency to COPFS and are disposed by COPFS either because they have decided that no action should be taken or an alternative to prosecution (e.g. a warning letter or a fiscal fine) is issued and,
- ii) accused that COPFS decide should be prosecuted in court.

4. Background

The information presented in this paper illustrates some of the key trends in journey times for accused persons in the Scottish criminal justice system. For the purposes of this bulletin, a journey through the criminal justice system begins when an offence is committed and ends with the accused's verdict and sentencing, if applicable. Depending on the nature and severity of the charges involved, an accused can leave the criminal justice system via Police Scotland, COPFS or at court.

When an incident is reported to the police, they will begin by considering whether a crime has been committed. If a crime has been committed and a suspect is identified, then police will follow one of three routes: decide that no further action is necessary, issue a fixed penalty notice or recorded police warning (police direct measures) or submit a report to COPFS. In cases where a police direct measure is issued, the time from an individual being cautioned or charged with an offence to being issued with a direct measure is usually short, if not immediate. Due to the rapid disposal of these cases, they are therefore not included in the scope of this bulletin. If a report is submitted to COPFS, the procurator fiscal will decide how to proceed with the case. This can involve taking no action (e.g. where there is not enough evidence), issuing a Fiscal direct measure (e.g. alternative to prosecution, fiscal fine or warning letter) or submitting the case for prosecution in court.

This paper uses two new datasets supplied by COPFS and SCTS covering the time period April 2017 to December 2022 to calculate accused journey times from offence date to conclusion. Both datasets consist of management information derived from live operational databases and as such may be subject to minor changes over time. The data sets have been subject to each organisation's internal quality assurance procedures before being used for this analysis. Using these data sets, the paper presents information on median times (and the 90th percentile time) for accused persons from the date of an offence to the date that the case is closed by COPFS or they are disposed in Court (i.e. the accused is given a verdict).

As with many other areas, the COVID 19 pandemic caused significant disruption and presented significant challenges for the operation of the justice system. Compliance with public health measures during the pandemic influenced operations across the criminal justice system. The Lord Advocate issued revised guidelines on the use of police custody, and the courts had to close for extended periods or operate at reduced capacity. The necessity for non-essential court business to be temporarily suspended and the need for social distancing rules to be considered as courts re-opened will have lengthened case journey times. In addition, the effects of the pandemic on police and COPFS workforces may also have impacted the growth in system backlogs and case journey times. The effects of the COVID pandemic have added significantly to the age profile of business in hand which in turn will affect journey lengths.

5. Methods

A case may have multiple accused with multiple charges. For cases disposed of by COPFS, the journey time is taken to be the time between the oldest offence date and the date when the whole case was closed by COPFS.

Where COPFS decide that there should be no action against an accused, but action is taken against other accused in the same case, the case will remain open until all accused have reached a disposal.

Figures for accused given a direct measure cover those where the initial decision was to offer a direct measure. In some cases, the direct measure may have been refused and may not therefore have been the final disposal for the accused. Again, in a multi accused case, the case will not be closed until all accused have reached a disposal.

The same approach is used to calculate the times for accused disposed in court, the journey time is taken to be the time between the earliest offence date of the accused in a specific case and the latest verdict date (verdict date is only extracted when all charges have received a verdict). Time from offence to court registration is calculated using the date on which the accused was registered in SCTS. The supporting tables provide the median times for each chart with the addition of the 90th percentile times added as an indicator of range.

It should be noted that throughout the document where a court type is referred to this indicates the destination or final court of the accused. Accused may move from one court type to another during their journey.

Where an accused is part of a multi-accused case, the case may be heard in a court type which appears inappropriate for one or more accused. For example, there are cases where an accused has only miscellaneous offence charges and they appear in a solemn court. In such situations, there may be a co-accused with more severe charges being tried in the same case.

To calculate journey times by crime group, all the charges present when an accused was registered with SCTS were mapped to a crime code. These crimes were then classified in groups defined in the new crime classification ([Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2021-2022](#)).

One of the primary aims of this new publication was to determine journey times for victims of sexual crime, therefore the methodology outlined below prioritises charges which relate to sexual crimes. Allocation of accused to a crime group follows the stepwise methodology outlined below:

- 1: if any of the charges against the accused is a sexual crime (Group 2) then that accused is included in the sexual crime group,
- 2: of the remaining (non-Group 2) accused, if any of their charges include a Group 1 crime, then they are classified in the non-sexual crimes of violence group (Group 1),
- 3: of the remaining accused, if any of their charges include a Group 3 crime, then they are classified in the crimes of dishonesty group (Group 3).

The same steps are followed for Damage and reckless behaviour (Group 4), Crimes against society (Group 5), Antisocial offences (Group 6), Miscellaneous offences (Group 7) and Road traffic offences (Group 8).

Note that each accused will be counted once for each case in which they appear and cannot appear in multiple crime groups, i.e. the journey time for an accused with a sexual crimes (group 2) charge at registration and a non-sexual crimes of violence (group 1) charge at registration will be included in the median journey time for sexual crimes and not for non-sexual crimes of violence.

In placing an accused in a single crime group using this methodology, there will always be a small number of occasions where the accused appears in a particular crime group that appears counterintuitive e.g. if an accused is charged with a minor sexual crime and serious assault, they will appear in the sexual crimes group when the serious assault charge may have more impact on their journey time.

Categories where the numbers of accused are small (<2 per month) have been removed from the charts and supplementary tables.

For each of the subsets of times under consideration, median times for 2021-22 (post COVID) are compared to 2019-20 (pre COVID) to help understand the effect that the pandemic has had on journey times. Further, figures for the year 2022-23 to date will be compared to the previous year (2021-22) to determine what change has occurred in the most recent period. A small number (<1%) of 'historic' charges with old offence dates are included in this analysis. Analysis of median times means that less weight is attributed to these long journey times and the addition of the 90th percentile time indicates the distribution of times. It is hoped that additional data fields can be added to this data set to allow specific analysis of 'historic' cases in the future.

6. Accused offered COPFS disposals

When police report a case to COPFS, the Procurator Fiscal decides if the accused should be prosecuted. In that situation, the Procurator Fiscal (PF) will raise proceedings against the accused in court. If the PF decides that court proceedings are not justified then COPFS can mark the accused in one of two ways: i) COPFS can issue a direct measure as an alternative to prosecution, which can be a warning letter, a conditional fixed penalty or diversion from prosecution or ii) the case can be closed with no action by COPFS (if for example there is insufficient evidence to justify prosecution).

Before the COVID pandemic (up to and including 2019-20), 90% of accused reported to COPFS which were not marked for prosecution in court had their cases closed within one year of the offence being committed (Figure 1). This has fallen to 81% in the years during and following the pandemic.

Over the entire period covered by this data set, fewer than 0.5% of accused waited more than 5 years for their case to be closed by COPFS.

Figure 1: Percentages of accused journey times within 1 year, between 1 and 2 years and over 2 years (accused with cases closed by COPFS).

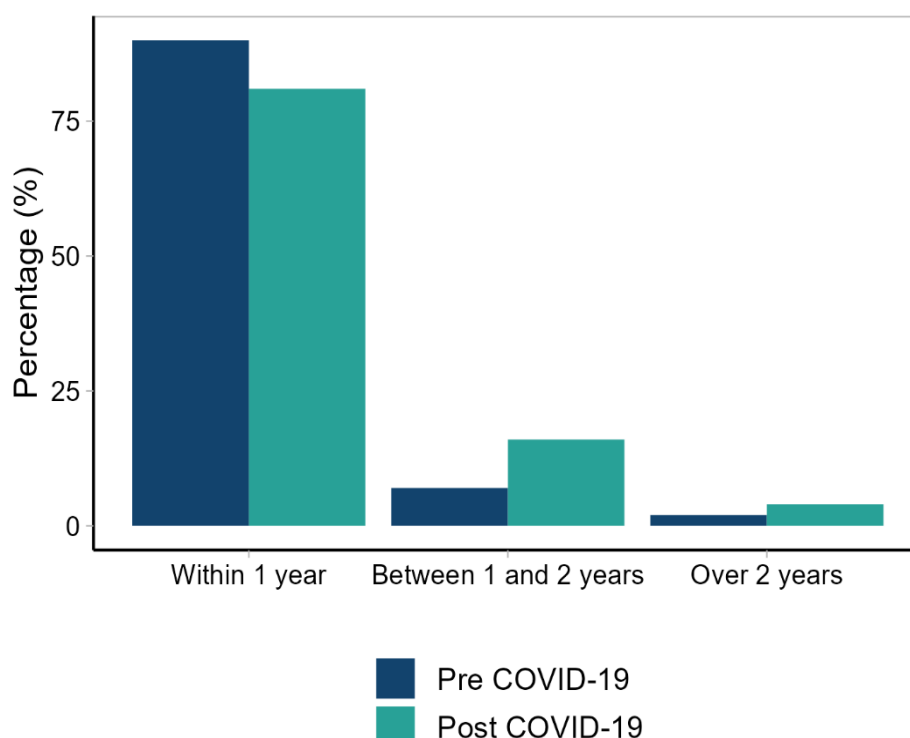
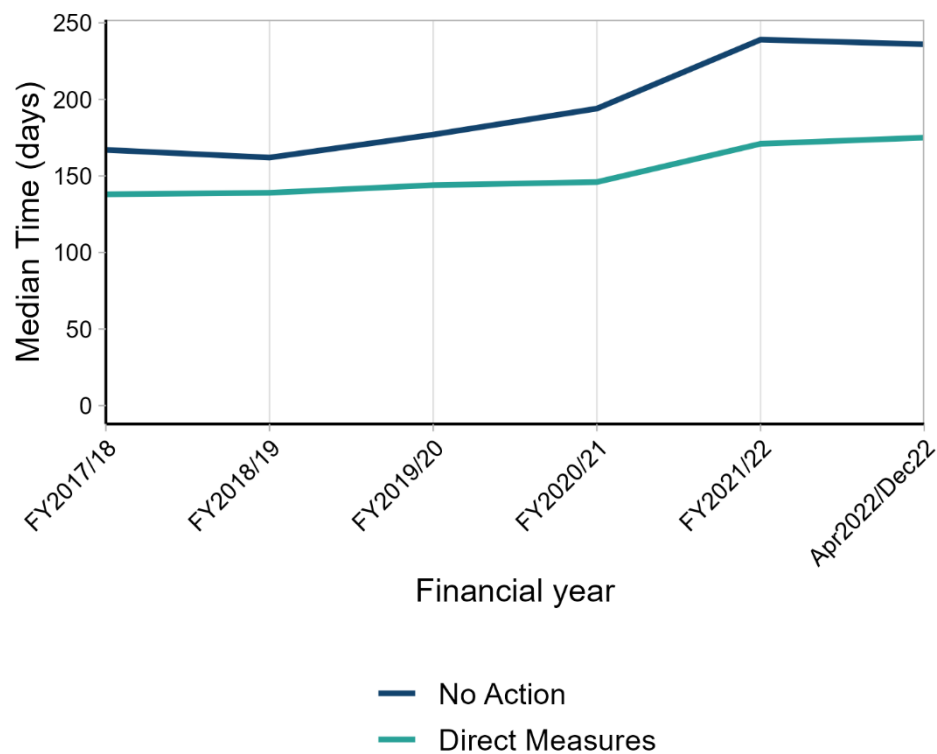


Figure 2 (and supplementary table 1) shows the median times from offence to COPFS direct measure or no action by financial year.

Figure 2: Median time from offence to direct measures & offence to no action by COPFS.



The median journey times for accused marked “No action” by COPFS increased by 62 days to 239 days (35%) between 2019-20 and 2021-22. In the first 9 months of 2022-23, this time has decreased slightly to 236 days (3 days, 1% decrease).

In 2021-22, the median journey time for cases marked by COPFS for direct measures increased by 27 days (19%) to 171 days when compared to 2019-20. In the first 9 months of 2022-23, this time has increased further albeit by a much lower amount to 175 days (4 days, 2% increase).

7. Accused that proceed to court

7.1. Time from offence to verdict

When the procurator fiscal decides to raise court proceedings against the accused then the accused will be registered in court. This may result in a summary prosecution (in Sheriff or Justice of the Peace (JP) court) or a solemn proceeding (in either Sheriff court or High court).

When an accused is registered in court, several outcomes can occur:

- the accused is convicted, either after pleading guilty or being found guilty after evidence has been heard in Court,
- an acceptable plea short of plea of guilty as libelled is accepted (partial plea),
- the accused is acquitted following a not guilty or a not proven verdict,
- the accused has their plea of not guilty accepted by the prosecutor, or
- the case against an accused is deserted i.e. the Crown decides to not proceed with a prosecution at that time (though they may in some cases decide to prosecute at a future date).

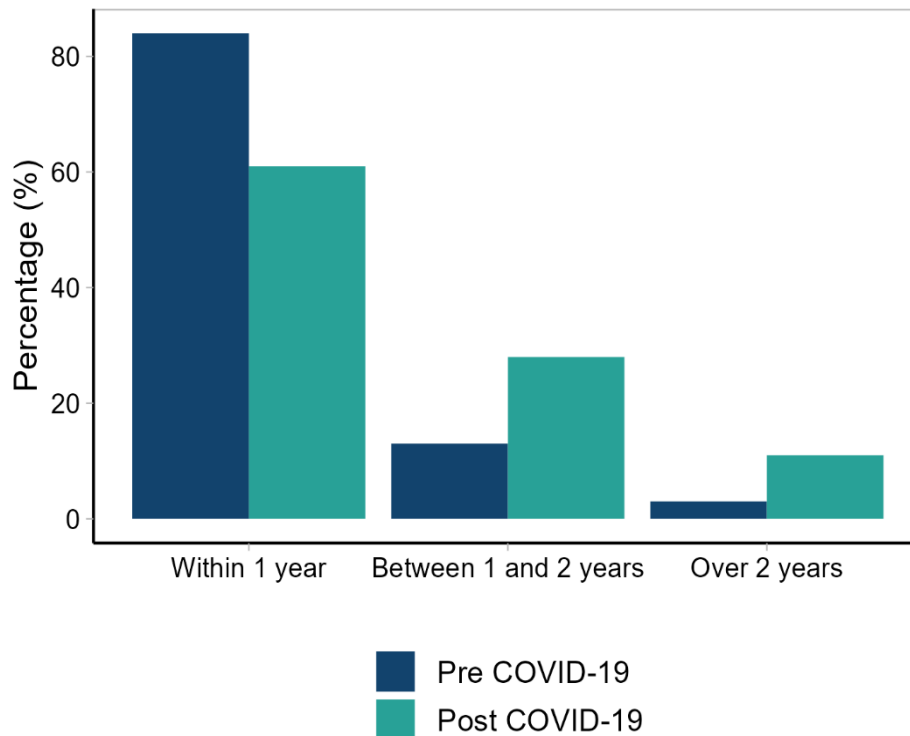
Those convicted of a crime or offence in court can be admonished, given an 'other' disposal, a fine, a community disposal, or a custodial sentence. More information on these criminal proceedings can be found here:

[Criminal Proceedings in Scotland statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/criminal-proceedings-in-scotland-statistics-2019-2020/pages/12.aspx)

The analysis shows that overall, during the pre-COVID period (before 2020-21), 84% of the accused proceeded against in criminal courts had a disposal issued within one year of the offence being committed and 97% within 2 years. However, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic these percentages have decreased to 61% and 89%, respectively (Figure 3).

Over the entire period covered by this data set, fewer than 0.9% of accused waited more than 5 years for a disposal.

Figure 3: Percentages of accused journey times within 1 year, between 1 and 2 years and over 2 years (accused that proceed to court).

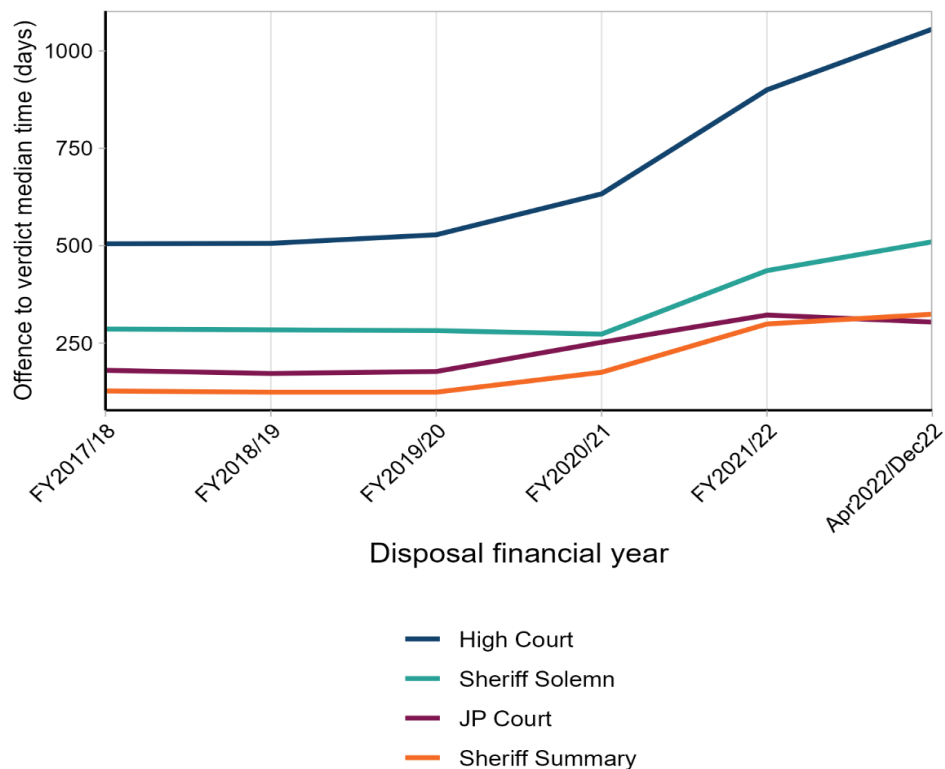


7.2. Time from offence to verdict by type of court

Figure 4 (and supplementary table 2) shows the median journey time by court type for each financial year. Median journey times increased in all court types in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: 71% for High Court (from 528 to 900 days), 55% for Sheriff solemn (from 282 to 436 days), 141% for Sheriff summary (from 124 to 299 days) and 82% for Justice of the Peace (from 177 to 322 days).

With the exception of JP courts, all court types have seen an additional increase in journey times over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis. High court journey times have increased by an additional 156 days to 1,056 days (17%), Sheriff solemn by 74 days to 510 days (17%), Sheriff summary by 25 days to 324 days (8%). Over the same period, journey times in JP court have decreased by 6% or 18 days to 304 days.

Figure 4: Median time from offence to verdict by type of court.

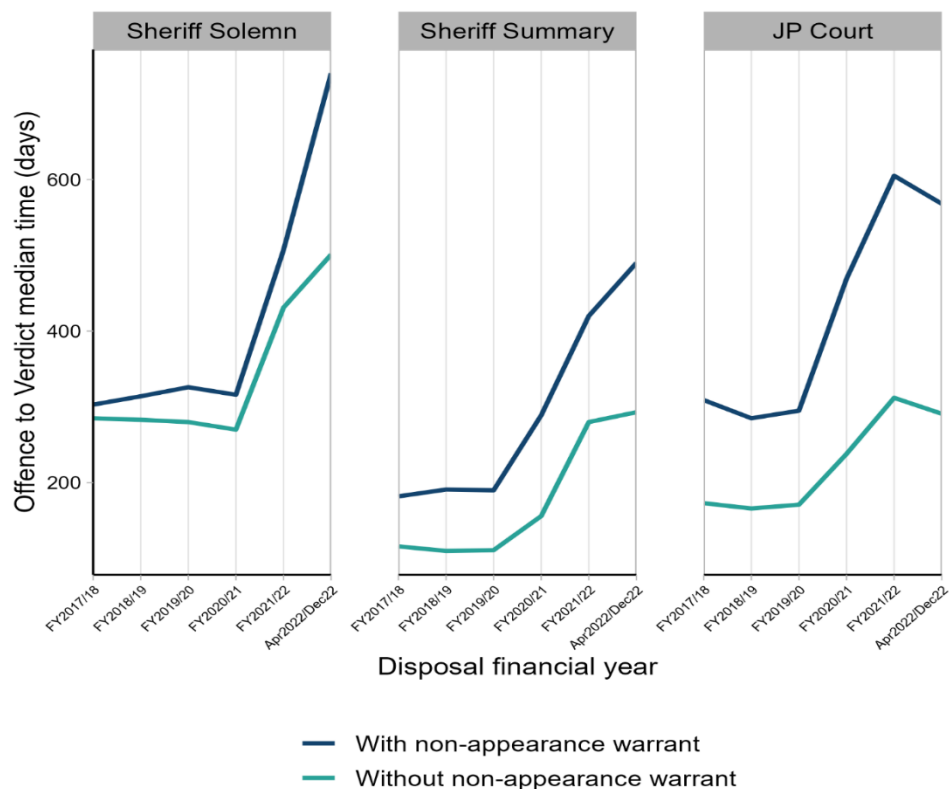


7.3. Time from offence to verdict by warrant status

The median court journey times described above include all accused that have been prosecuted in criminal courts. However, if the accused fails to appear, the court may issue an arrest warrant, which can lead to an increase in the time taken to issue a verdict. Figure 5 (and supplementary table 3) shows median journey times broken down by type of court and warrant status, that is if the accused had ever had a non-appearance warrant on the case. In general, journey times are lower if there is no non-appearance warrant connected with the case.

In Sheriff solemn courts, the difference between accused with and without a non-appearance warrant in 2019-20 was 46 days, increasing to 76 days in 2021-22. For Sheriff summary courts the difference in median time for accused with and without a non-appearance warrant in 2019-20 was 79 days, this increased to 140 days in 2021-22. For JP courts, the difference in journey time for accused with and without a non-appearance warrant was 124 days in 2019-20 increasing to 293 days in 2021-22. The number of accused with non-appearance warrants in the High court were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 5: Median time from offence to verdict by type of court and warrant status.



7.4. Time from offence to verdict by pre-court and in-court time

The available data allow us to split overall journey times into a pre court time (offence to court registration) and an in-court time (court registration to verdict) as shown in figure 6 (and supplementary table 4).

In all court types, median pre-court times increased post pandemic (from 2019-20 to 2021-22): from 333 days in 2019-20 to 493 days in the High court (+48%), from 225 to 252 days (+12%) in Sherriff solemn, from 24 days to 49 days in Sheriff summary (+104%) and from 122 days to 183 days in JP court (+50%).

In 3 court types (High Court and Sheriff Courts), these times have further increased over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis. The High court saw a 129 day increase to 622 days (+26%), Sheriff solemn court saw a 39 day increase to 291 days (+15%) and Sheriff summary court saw a 16 day increase to 65 days (+33%). Pre court times in the JP court increased by 1 day to 184 days in the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis.

Median court registration to verdict time has also increased across all court types post-pandemic. The High Court saw median times increase from 151 days in 2019-20 to 390 days in 2021-22 (+158%), Sheriff solemn courts saw an increase from 52 days in 2019-20

to 110 days in 2021-22 (+112%), Sheriff summary times increased from 71 days to 176 days (+148%) and JP times increased from 34 days to 78 days (+129%).

In both the High court and the JP court, median in-court times have fallen over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis by, 67 days to 323 days in High court (-17%) and by 14 days to 64 days in JP court (-18%). Sheriff solemn courts have seen a further increase in median times over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis (by 15 days to 125 days, a 14% increase). Median in-court times for Sheriff summary court have increased by 4 days to 180 days (+2%).

Figure 6: Median time from offence to registration and registration to verdict by type of court.



7.5. Time from offence to verdict by crime group

The types of crime committed by the accused affect the journey time. Analysis by crime group follows the methodology outlined in the methods section above.

7.5.1. Sexual crimes

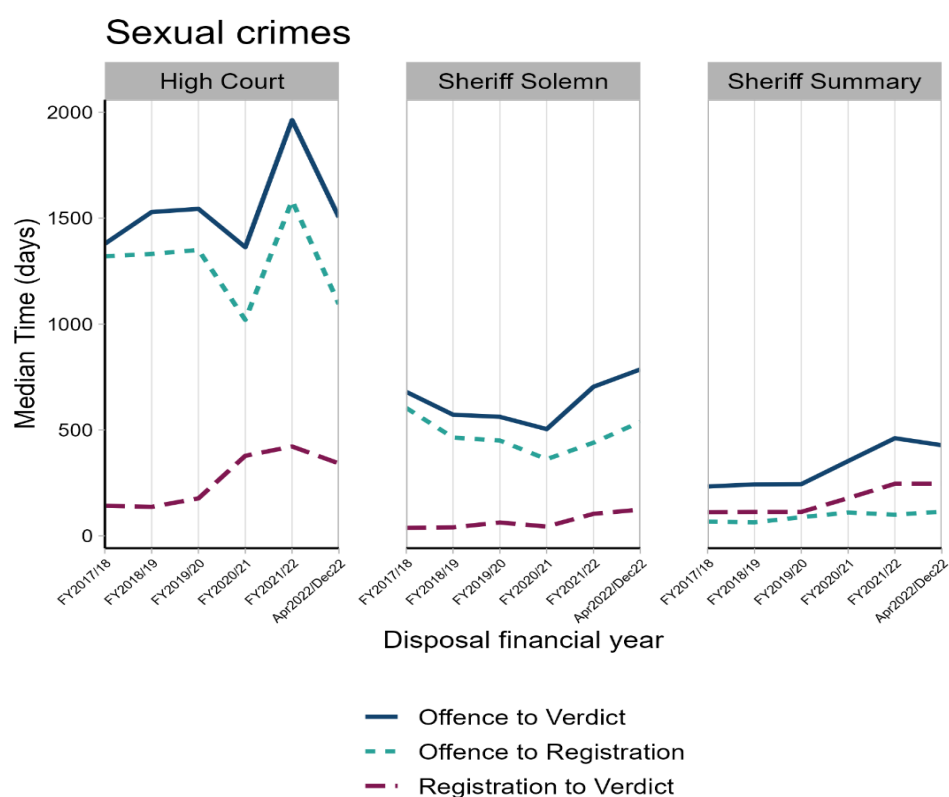
Figure 7 (and supplementary table 5) shows offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by court type for accused included in the sexual crimes group. Median journey times increased in all court types in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 1,544 to 1,963 days in High Court (+27%), from 562 to 704 days in Sheriff solemn court (+25%) and from 244 to 461 days in Sheriff summary court (+89%). However, over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, journey times have

decreased in all court types except sheriff solemn. High court journey times have decreased by 459 days to 1,504 days (-23%) and Sheriff summary by 33 days to 428 days (-7%). Over the same period, journey times in Sheriff solemn have increased by 82 days to 786 days (+12%).

Comparing 2021-22 to 2019-20, offence to registration times for the sexual crimes group increased in High Court by 17% and Sheriff summary court by 14%. There was a small decrease in time in Sheriff solemn court (-2%). Registration to verdict times increased in all the courts: High court by 138%, Sheriff solemn by 65% and Sheriff summary by 118%.

The number of accused in JP court included in this group were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 7: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for sexual crimes group accused.



7.5.2. Non-sexual crimes of violence

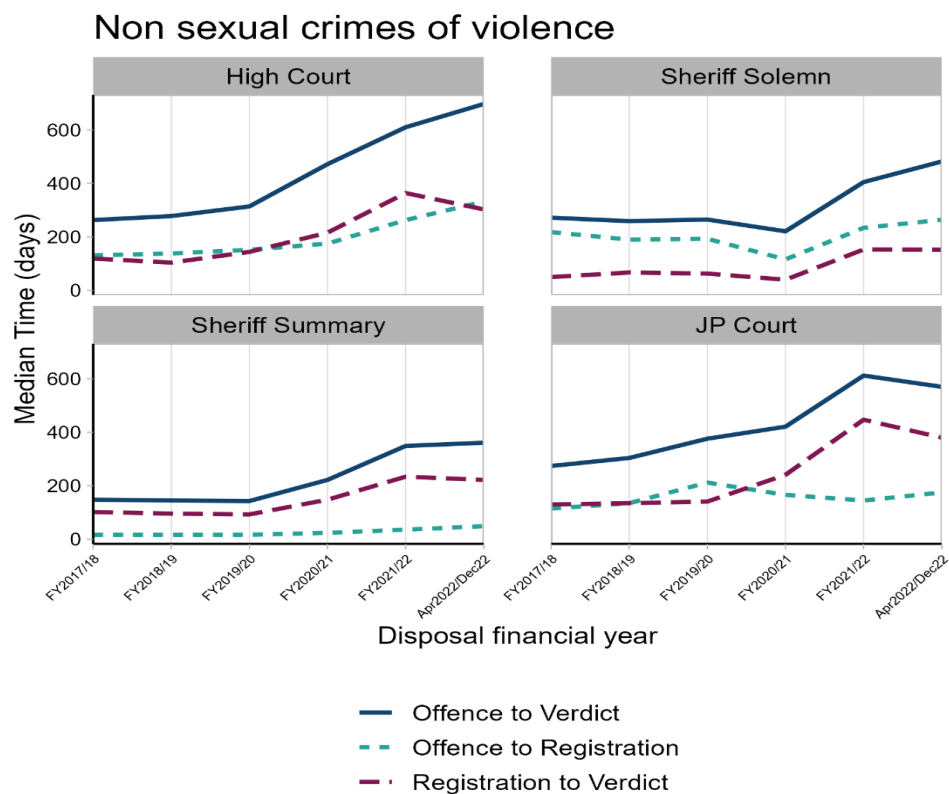
The median times for accused in the non-sexual crimes of violence group are shown in figure 8 (and supplementary table 6). For this group median journey times have also increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 314 to 610 days in High court (+94%), from 265 to 405 days in Sheriff solemn court (+53%), from 143 to 349 days in Sheriff summary court (144%) and from 376 to 612 days in JP court (+63%).

Over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, journey times increased for all courts except for JP court: by 87 days to 697 days (+14%) in High Court, by 77 days to

482 days (+19%) in Sheriff solemn court and by 12 days to 361 days (+3%) in Sheriff summary court. Over the same 9 months of 2022-23, journey times in the JP court decreased by 42 days to 570 days (+7%).

Comparing 2021-22 to 2019-20, offence to registration times increased in High Court by 73%, in Sheriff solemn court by 21% and in Sheriff summary court by 112%; JP court decreased by 32%. Comparing 2021-22 to 2019-20, registration to verdict times increased in all court types: in High court by 153%, in Sheriff solemn court by 143%, in Sheriff summary court by 152% and in JP court by 217%.

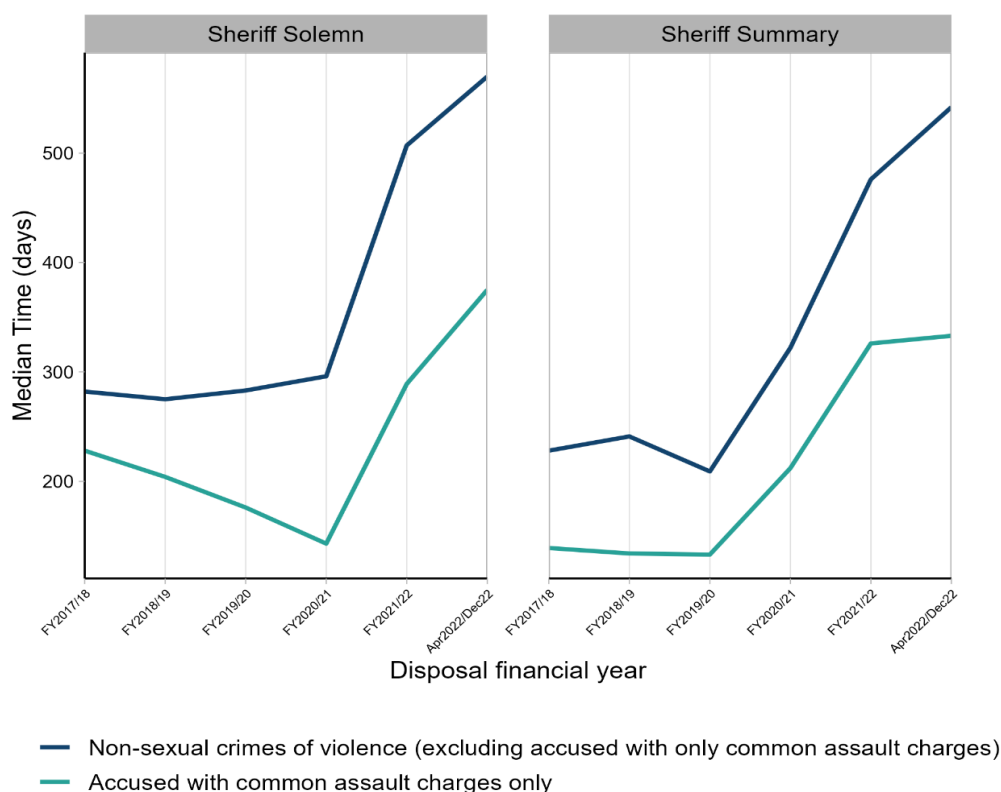
Figure 8: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by court type for non-sexual crimes of violence group accused.



Common Assault is now included in the non-sexual crimes of violence group, having previously been part of the Miscellaneous offences group (see [Annex 5: New crime grouping structure and next steps in the production of crime statistics - Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2021-2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) for more detail). The volume of common assault cases is large, and many may be more straightforward and quicker to progress than other non-sexual crimes of violence cases involving for example murder or serious assault. To help overcome the possibility of many accused with common assault charges artificially lowering the median journey times for Group 1, Group 1 has been split into two sub-groups: 1 - accused with only common assault charges (and no other group 1 charges) and 2 - accused with at least one non-common assault Group 1 charge (accused in this group may also have a common assault charge). Times are presented for both subgroups and shown in figure 9 (and supplementary table 7).

In Sheriff solemn courts, journey times for accused with only common assault in 2021-22 were 218 days (-43%) shorter than journey times for other Group 1 accused. Similarly, in Sheriff summary courts, journey times for accused involving only common assault in 2021-22 were 150 days (-32%) shorter than journey times for other Group 1 accused. The number of accused involving only common assault in the High court are too few to allow comparison. Conversely, the number of accused with Group 1 charges other than common assault, in the JP court are also too few to allow comparison.

Figure 9: Offence to verdict median time by type of court for non-sexual crimes of violence excluding common assault only accused and accused with common assault only.



7.5.3. Crimes of dishonesty

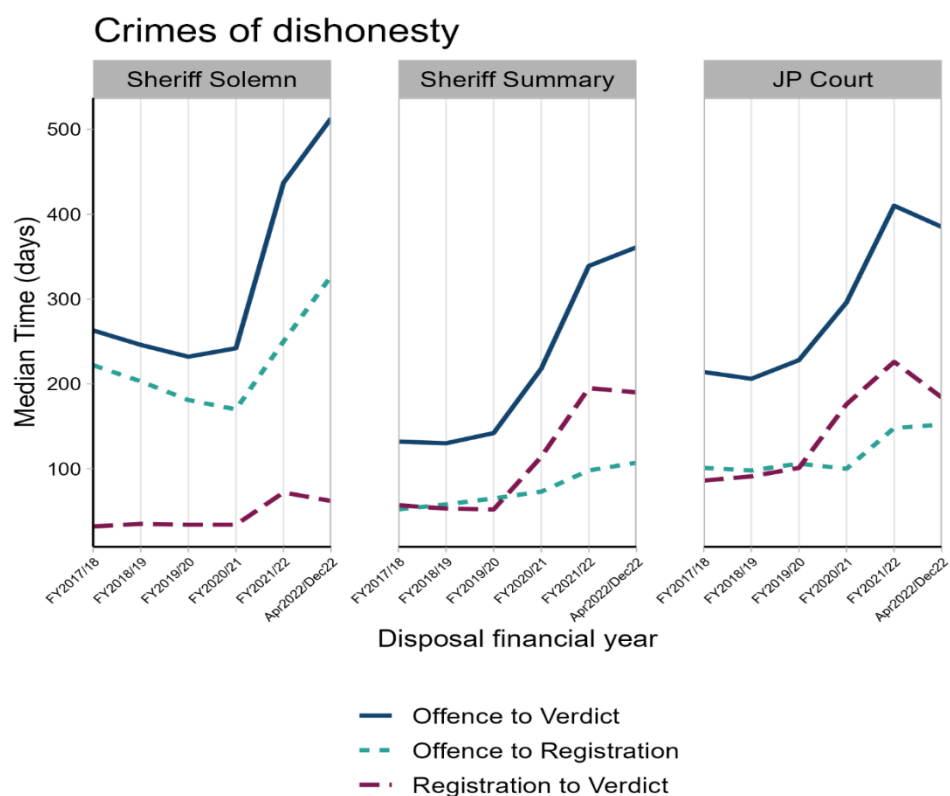
Median offence to verdict journey times for crimes of dishonesty accused are shown in Figure 10 (and supplementary table 8). As with previous crime groups, journey times for cases included in the Crimes of dishonesty group increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 232 to 437 days in Sheriff solemn court (+88%), from 142 to 339 days in Sheriff summary court (+139%) and from 228 to 410 days in JP court (+80%). Over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, journey times increased in all court types apart from JP court. Times in Sheriff solemn court increased by 76 days to 513 days (+17%) and in Sheriff summary court by 22 days to 361 days (+6%). Over the same period, journey times in JP court decreased by 25 days to 385 days (-6%).

Comparing 2021-22 to 2019-20, offence to registration times increased in Sheriff solemn court by 38%, in Sheriff summary court by 51% and in JP court by 40%. Registration to

verdict times also increased over this time period, by 112% in Sheriff solemn court, 275% in Sheriff summary court and 124% in JP court.

The number of accused in High court included in this group were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 10: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for crimes of dishonesty accused.



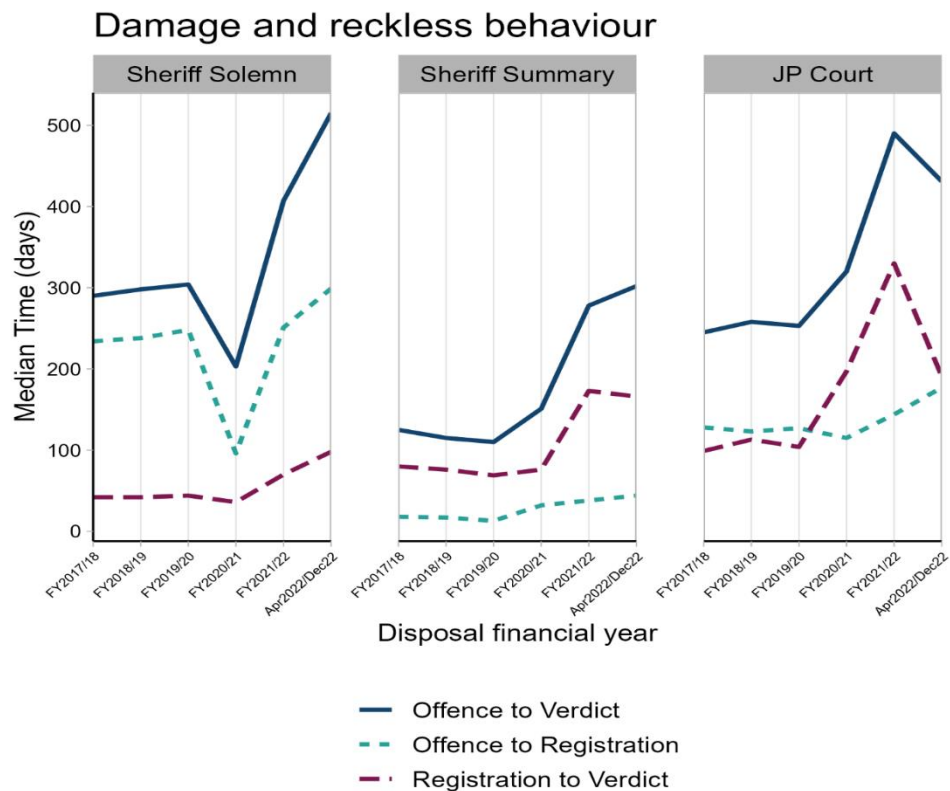
7.5.4. Damage and reckless behaviour

Median journey times for accused included in the damage and reckless behaviour group are shown in figure 11 (and supplementary table 9). For this group median journey times increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 304 to 407 days in Sheriff solemn court (+34%), from 110 to 278 days in Sheriff summary court (+153%) and from 253 to 490 days in JP court (+94%). Over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, journey times increased by 108 days to 515 days in Sheriff solemn court (+27%) and by 24 days to 302 days in Sheriff summary court (+9%). Over the same 9 months, journey times in the JP court decreased by 59 days to 431 days (-12%).

Offence to registration times also increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: by 1% in Sheriff solemn court, 192% in Sheriff summary court and 13% in JP court. Registration to verdict times also increased in all court types: by 59% Sheriff solemn court, by 151% in Sheriff summary court and by 217% in JP court.

The number of accused in High court included in this group were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 11: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for damage and reckless behaviour accused.

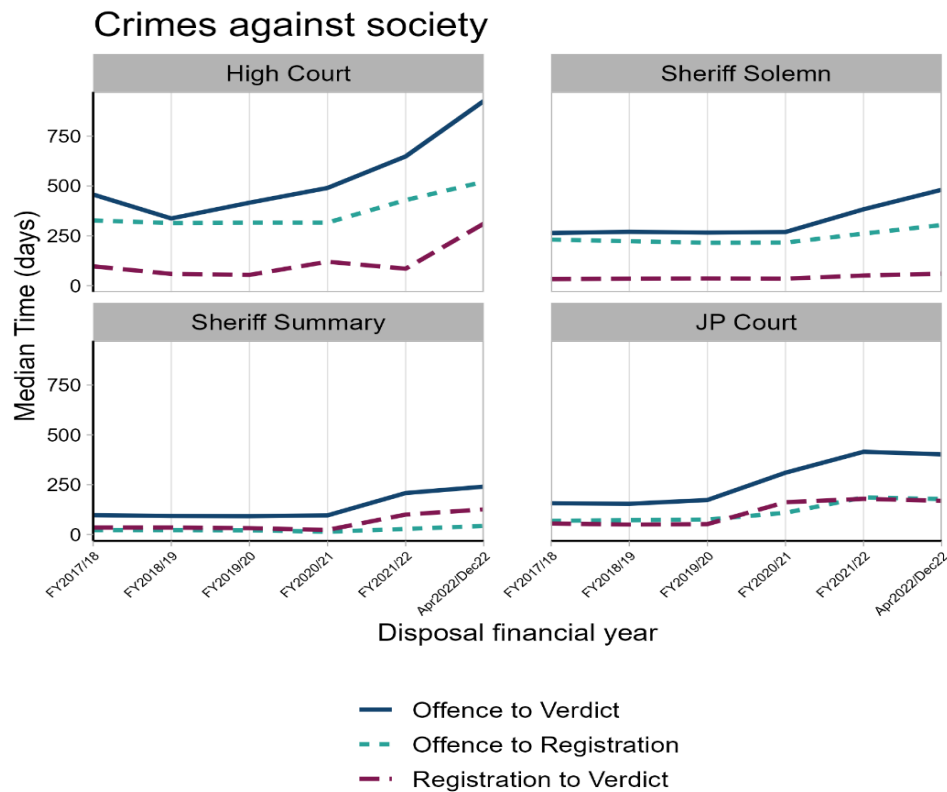


7.5.5. Crimes against society

Figure 12 (and supplementary table 10) shows the median journey times for accused in the crimes against society group. Median journey times increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 416 to 648 days in High Court (+56%), from 266 to 383 days in Sheriff solemn court (+44%), from 92 to 208 days in Sheriff summary court (+126%) and from 173 to 415 days in the JP court (+140%). Over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, journey times have increased for all court types except JP court. High court journey times increased by 278 days to 926 days (+43%), Sheriff solemn times increased by 98 days to 481 days (+26%) and Sheriff summary times increased by 32 days to 240 days (+15%). Over the same period, journey times in JP court decreased by 13 days to 402 days (-3%).

Offence to registration times also increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: by 36% in High Court, by 21% in Sheriff solemn court, by 33% in Sheriff summary court and by 148% in JP court. Registration to verdict times also increased in all court types: by 57% in High Court, by 42% in Sheriff solemn court, by 213% in Sheriff summary court and by 244% in JP Court.

Figure 12: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for crimes against society accused.



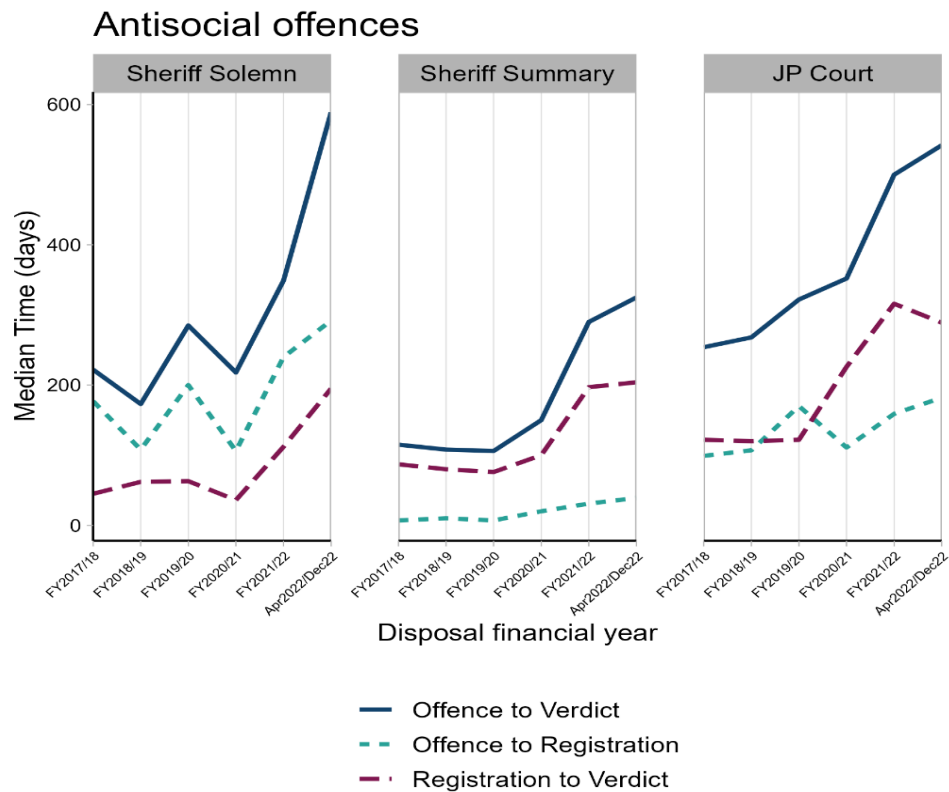
7.5.6. Antisocial offences

Journey times for accused included in the antisocial offences group are shown in figure 13 (and supplementary table 11). For this group median journey times increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 285 to 349 days in Sheriff solemn court (+22%), from 106 to 290 days in Sheriff summary court (+174%) and from 322 to 500 days in the JP court (+55%). Over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, Sheriff solemn journey times increased by 240 days to 589 days (+69%), Sheriff summary times increased by 35 days to 325 days (+12%) and JP court times increased by 42 days to 542 days (+8%).

Offence to registration times in Sheriff courts increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: by 20% in Sheriff solemn court and by 343% in Sheriff summary court. Offence to registration times decreased by 7% in JP court. Registration to verdict times increased in all court types: by 78% in Sheriff solemn court, and by 159% in Sheriff summary and JP courts.

The number of accused in High court included in this group were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 13: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for antisocial offences accused.



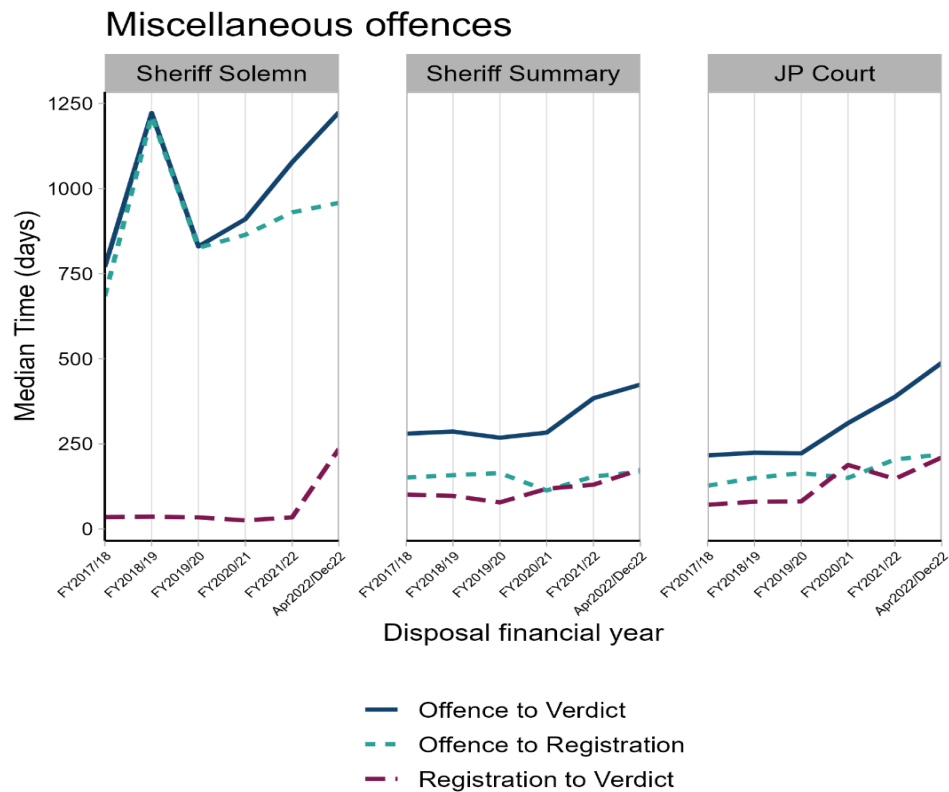
7.5.7. Miscellaneous offences

Journey times for accused in the miscellaneous offences group are shown in figure 14 (and supplementary table 12). Median journey times increased post pandemic in all court types: from 830 to 1,077 days in Sheriff solemn court (+30%), from 268 days to 384 days in Sheriff summary court (+43%) and from 222 days to 388 days in the JP court (+75%). In all court types, these times have further increased in the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis: by 147 days to 1,224 days in Sheriff solemn court (+14%), by 40 days to 424 days in Sheriff summary court (+10%) and by 100 days to 488 days in the JP court (+26%).

Comparing 2021-22 to 2019-20, offence to registration times increased in Sheriff solemn court by 13% and by 24% JP court. Offence to registration times decreased by 6% in Sheriff summary court. Registration to verdict times increased by 67% in Sheriff summary court and by 82% in JP Court but remained the same in Sheriff solemn court. However, median registration to verdict times in Sheriff solemn courts have increased by 591% in the first 9 months of 2022-23.

The number of accused in High court included in this group were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 14: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for miscellaneous offences group accused.



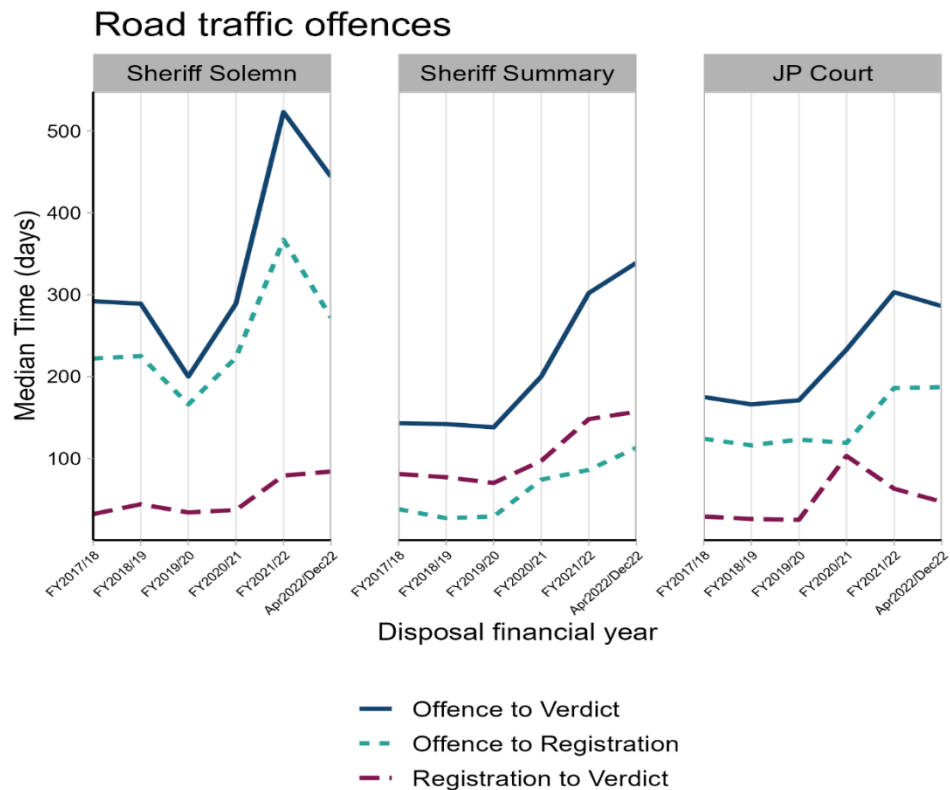
7.5.8. Road traffic offences

Journey times for road traffic offences are shown in figure 15 (and supplementary table 13). For this group median journey times increased in 2021-22 when compared to 2019-20: from 200 to 523 days in Sheriff solemn court (+162%), from 138 to 302 days in Sheriff summary court for (+119%) and from 171 to 303 days in JP court (+77%). Over the 9 months of 2022-23 covered in the analysis, journey times for this group decreased for all the courts except for Sheriff summary. Sheriff solemn decreased by 15% (-79 days) and JP court by 6% (-17 days). However, Sheriff summary journey times increased by 12% (+37 days).

Comparing 2021-22 to 2019-20, offence to registration times increased in all court types: by 121% in Sheriff solemn court, by 197% in Sheriff summary court and by 51% in JP court. Registration to verdict times also increased in all court types: by 132% in Sheriff solemn court, by 111% in Sheriff summary court and by 152% in JP Court.

The number of accused in High court included in this group were too few to allow comparison.

Figure 15: Offence to verdict, offence to registration and registration to verdict median times by type of court for road traffic offences group accused.



8. Conclusions

This bulletin represents the first in a series of experimental official statistics publications looking at accused journey times in the criminal justice system. The insights from this bulletin have allowed us to make observations about the average length of journey times in general, as well as how these journey times have changed from pre-pandemic levels and over the course of the pandemic and beyond.

Overall, the effect of the pandemic is very apparent in the data. Across all crime groupings and court types, median journey times of accused persons increased in 2021-22 (post pandemic) when compared to 2019-20 (pre-pandemic).

9. Further Work

User feedback is essential to ensure that this series of bulletins develops in such a way that it can help extend the evidence base in this area. The figures presented can only provide the starting point for discussions about what an ideal median journey time should be and what the system challenges might be in achieving that time.

Work is underway with stakeholders to understand what extra information could be added to this data set that will help to explain some of the findings further. Analysts are currently working on the addition of a 'report to COPFS' date which will add more context to the overall journey time and help to determine what effect 'historic' offences have on journey time. Future bulletins will also consider different methods of grouping crimes and/or provide more granularity of crime type.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80525-748-6 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, April 2023

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS1274922 (04/23)

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