

Safer Communities and Justice Statistics Monthly Data Report : September 2024

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Introduction

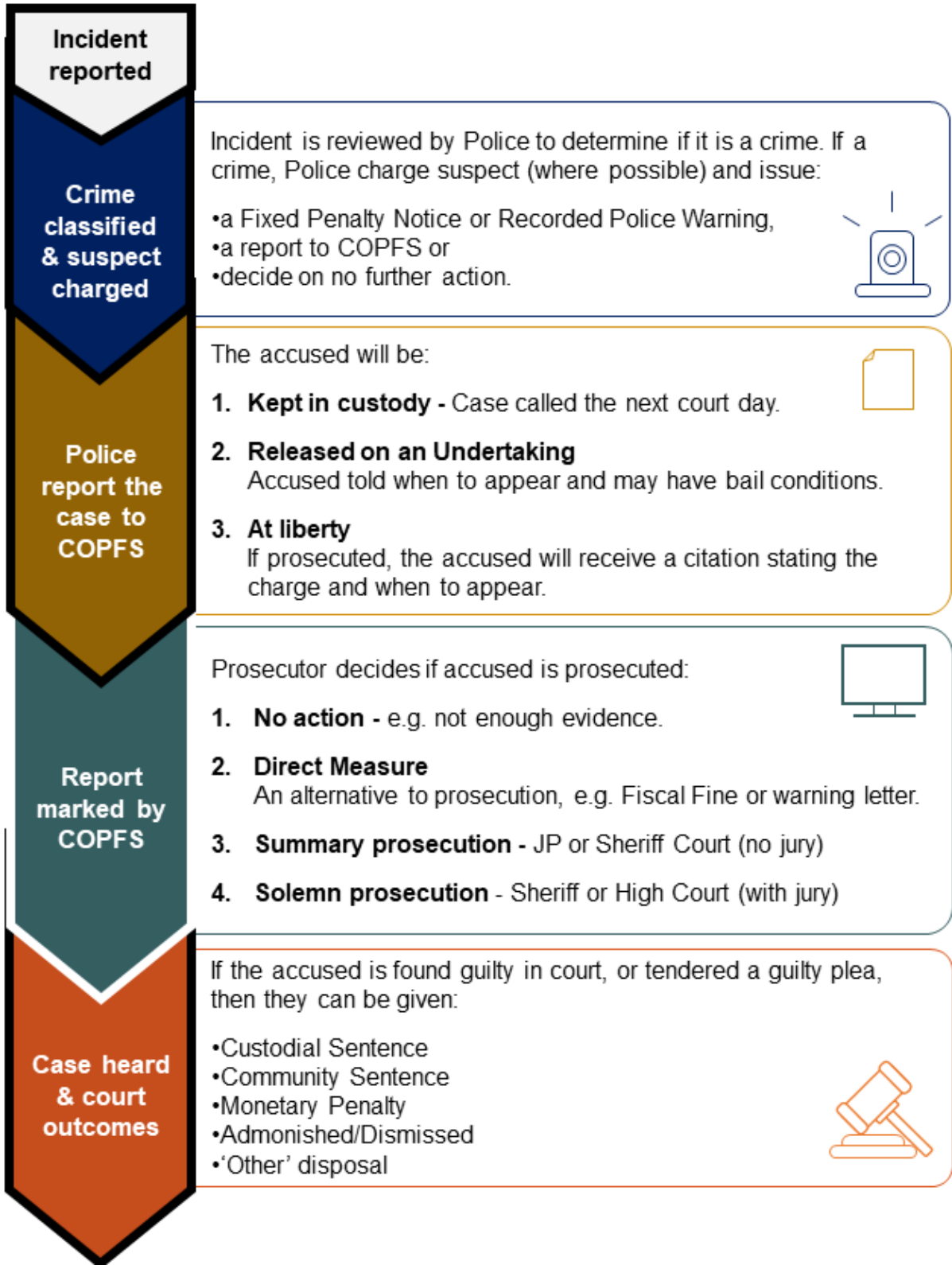
This report provides an overview of a number of important justice and safer communities statistics. Data has been gathered from a number of different sources and may be subject to future revision as more recent data becomes available.

Any newly updated summary statistics are preceded by * New *

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How crime flows through the Justice System

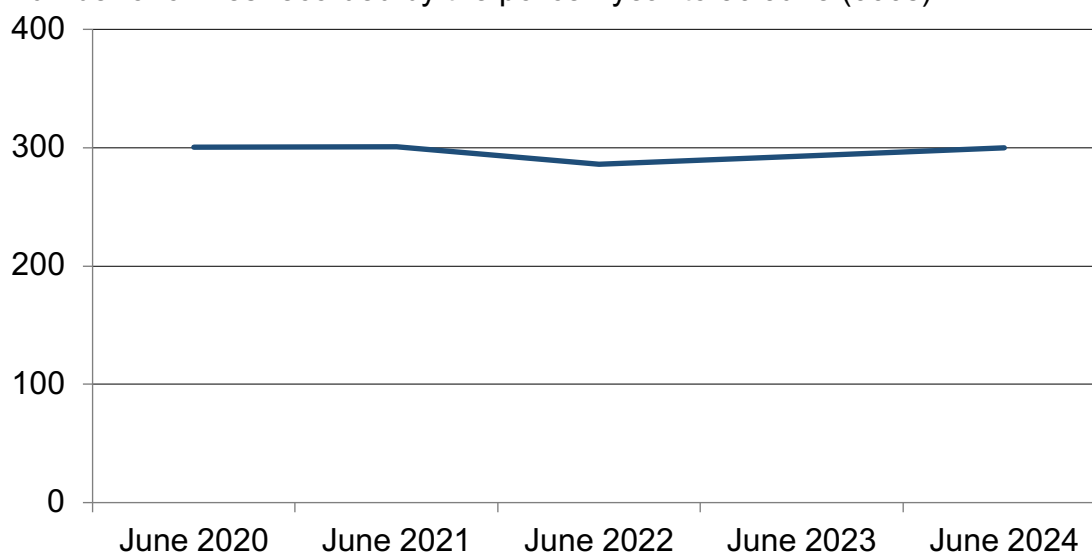


Crime in General

Summary statistics on crime in general

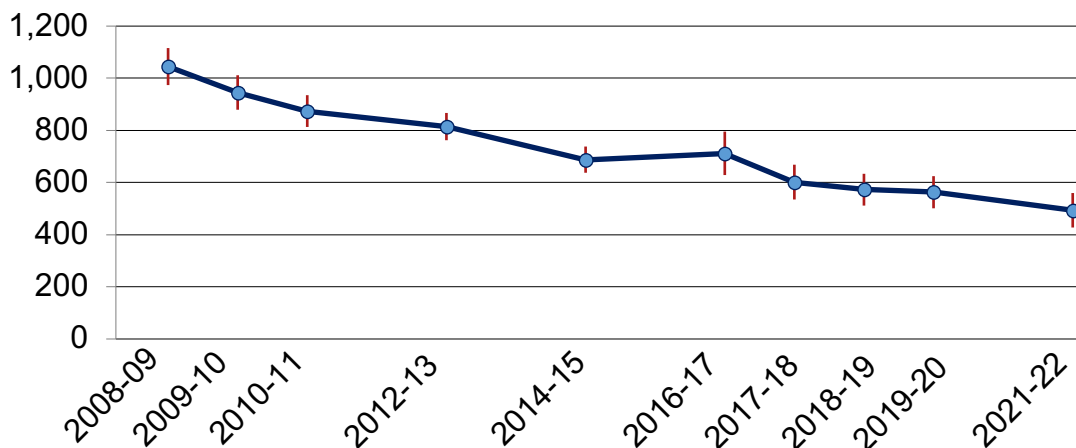
▶ *** New * Police recorded crime is up 3% since year ending June 2023, though remains below the position immediately prior to the pandemic.** The total number of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland in year ending June 2024 was 300,070. This was 7,368 crimes (or 3%) higher than the level recorded in year ending June 2023.

Number of crimes recorded by the police - year to 30 June (000s)



▶ **Crime has fallen by 53% since 2008-09.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that around 1 in 10 adults were victims of crime in 2021-22 (10.0%) compared to 1 in 5 in 2008-09 (20.4%). The estimated number of crimes fell by 53% over the same period, and by 18% since 2017-18. The SCJS detected no change in the overall victimisation rate between 2019-20 and 2021-22.

Estimated total crimes (000s)



▶ *** New * Recorded violent crime increased in the most recent year.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police increased by 2%, from 70,136 in year ending June 2023 to 71,341 in year ending June 2024. Common assault (up 1%) made up the clear majority (83%) of all non-sexual crimes of violence recorded in year ending June 2024. The SCJS showed the volume of violent crime fell by nearly three-fifths (58%) between 2008-09 and 2021-22 and that an estimated 34% of violent crime in 2021-22 was reported to the police.

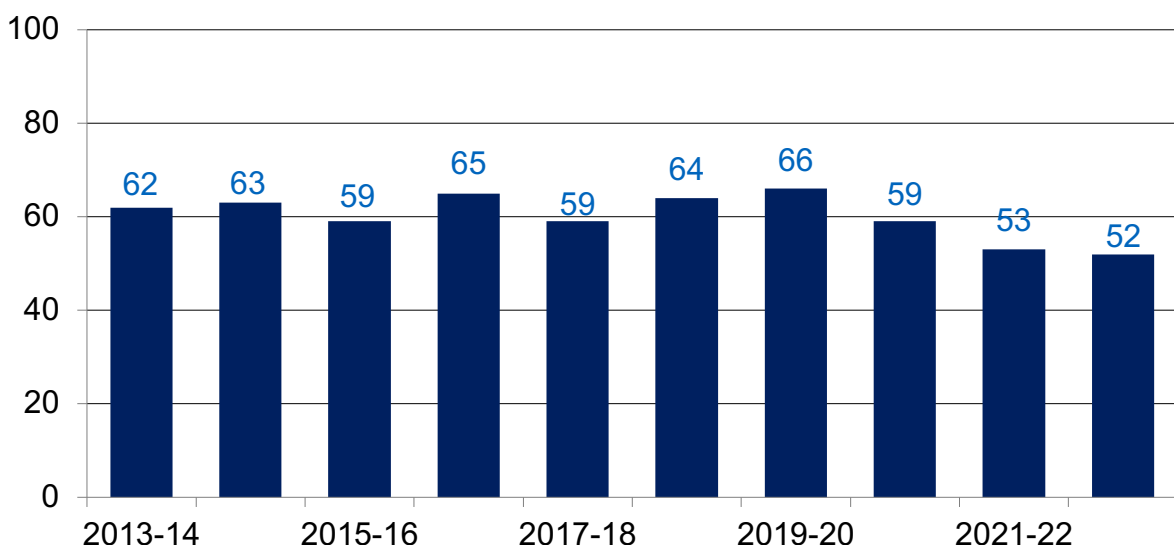
▶ *** New * Recorded sexual crimes decreased in the most recent year.** Sexual crimes decreased by 3%, from 14,834 in year ending June 2023 to 14,417 in year ending June 2024. However, sexual crimes have been increasing in the long term. Multiple factors lie behind the long term increase in recorded 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.

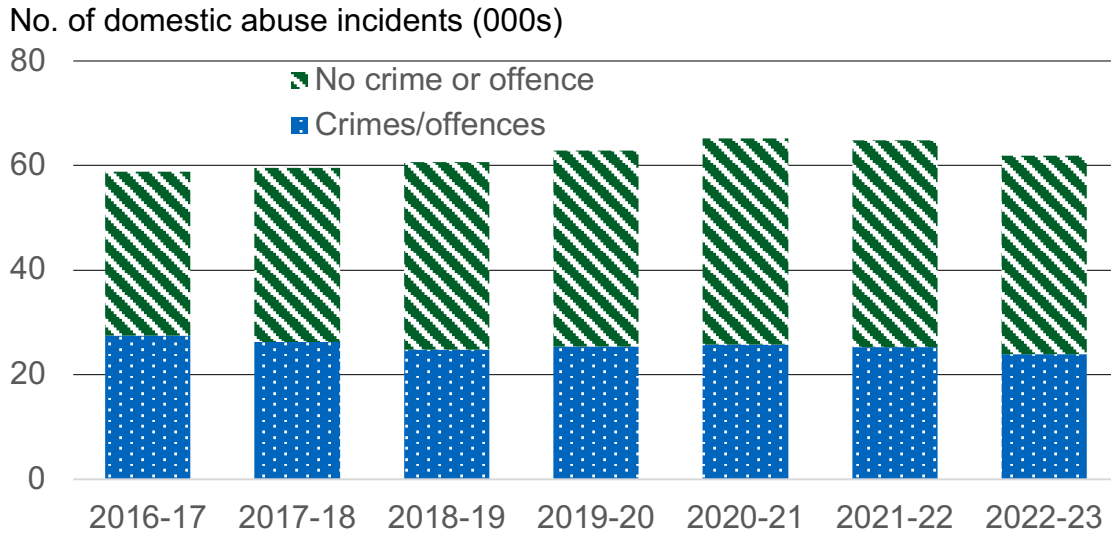
▶ **Increase in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 54.1% in 2023-24, up from 53.3% in 2022-23. Crimes against society (91.4%), non-sexual crimes of violence (68%) and sexual crimes (57.2%) continued to have higher clear up rates in 2023-24 than crimes of dishonesty (33.1%) and damage and reckless behaviour (29.6%).

▶ **Number of victims of homicide at record low.** There were 52 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2022-23, a 16% decrease from 2013-14 and the lowest value since comparable records began in 1976.

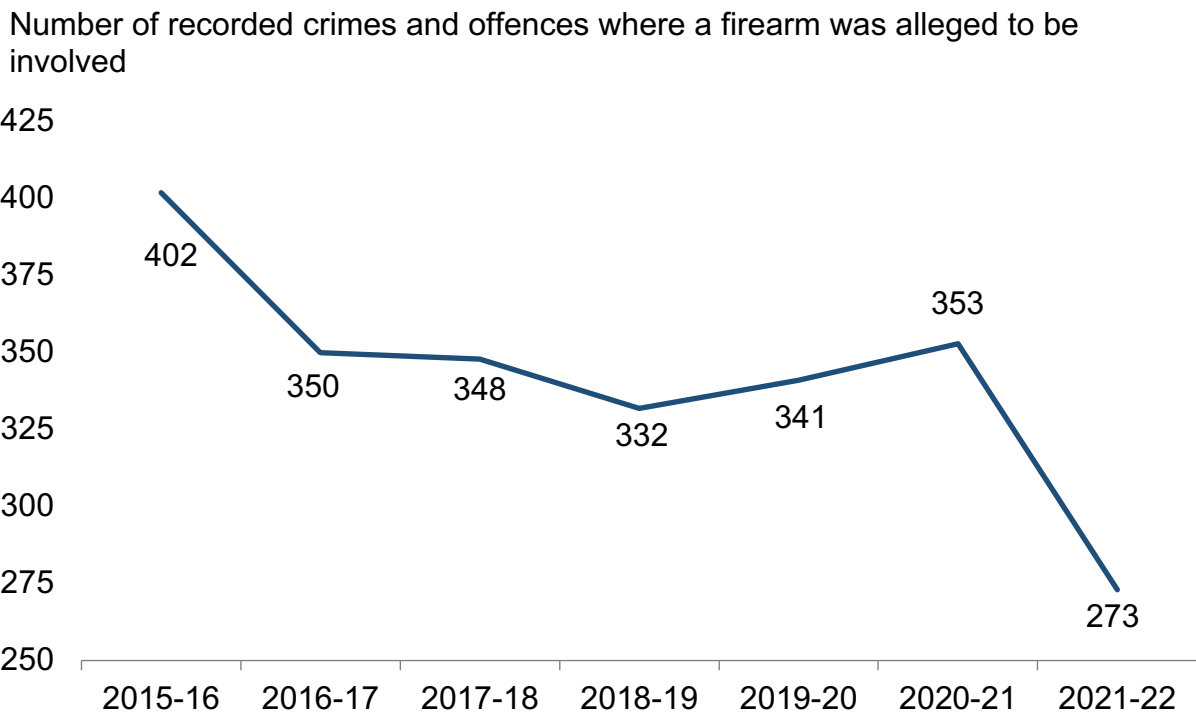
Number of victims of homicide



Decrease in recorded domestic abuse incidents. There were 61,934 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2022-23, a decrease of 4% on 2021-22. In 2022-23, 39% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.



Large decrease in firearm offences. Between 2020-21 and 2021-22, the number of crimes and offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved decreased by 23% (from 353 to 273 offences). The 2021-22 figure is the lowest recorded level since comparable records began in 1980.

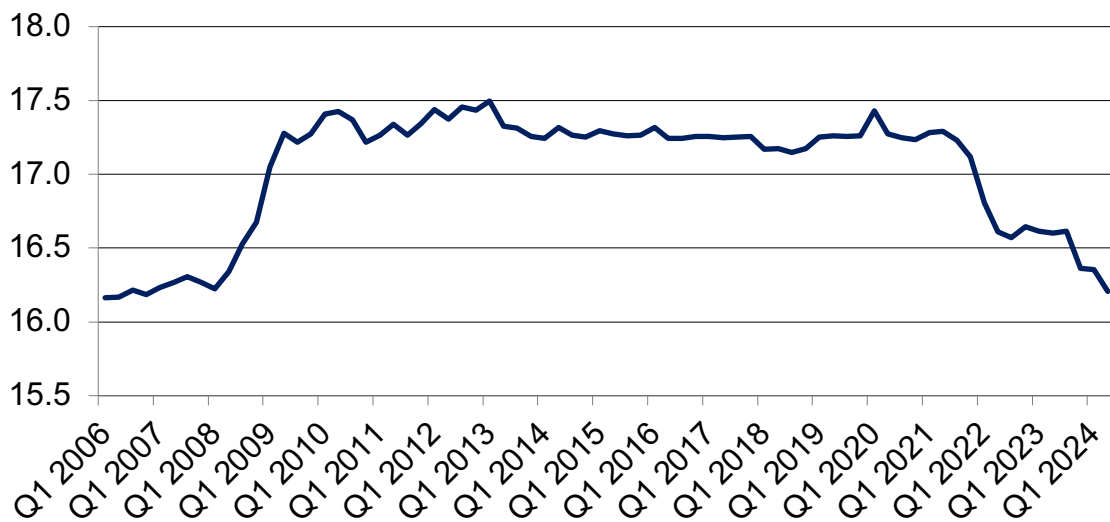


Policing

Summary statistics on policing

▶ There were **16,207 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 30 June 2024**. This was 27 (-0.2%) fewer officers compared to the position on 31 March 2007, and 392 (-2.4%) less than on 30 June 2023.

Number of police officers (FTE) (000s)



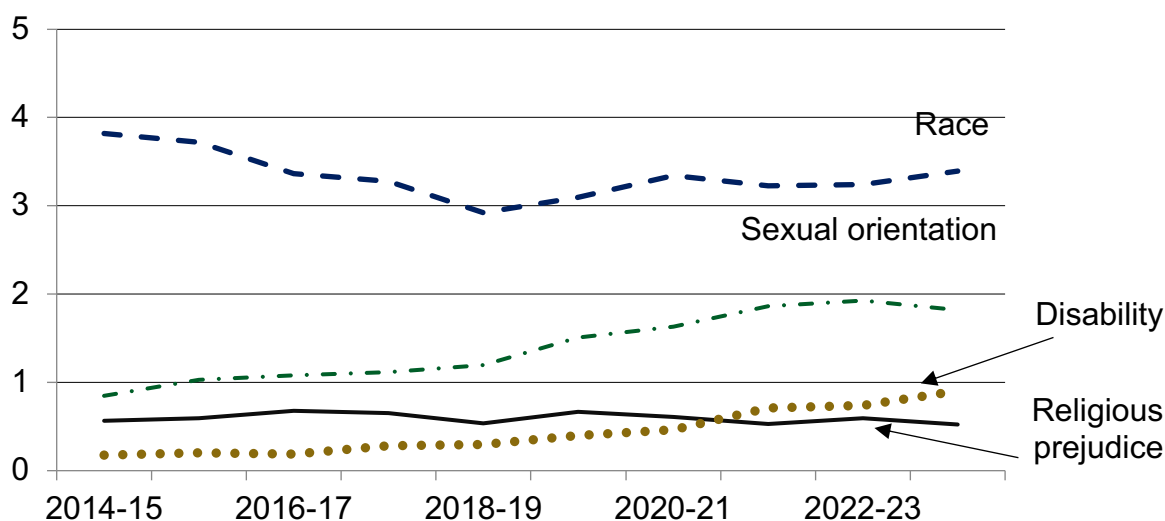
Hate Crime

Summary statistics on hate crime

▶ **Numbers fell for police recorded hate crime.** The police recorded 6,257 hate crimes in 2022-23. This is 10% (or 670) lower than in 2021-22 and the lowest number since 2014-15. No clear trend can be seen in the total number of hate crimes recorded by the police in Scotland over 2014-15 to 2022-23, with four of the years following 2014-15 showing an increase and the other four showing a decrease. In 2022-23, 60% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 26% sexual orientation, 10% religion, 8% disability and 3% transgender identity.

▶ **Small increase in overall hate crime charges.** There was an increase of 1.5% between 2022-23 and 2023-24, in the total number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service containing at least one element of hate crime. There were increases for race, disability and transgender identity. Religion and sexual orientation aggravated hate crime charges saw a decrease. Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.

No. of charges reported to COPFS (000s)



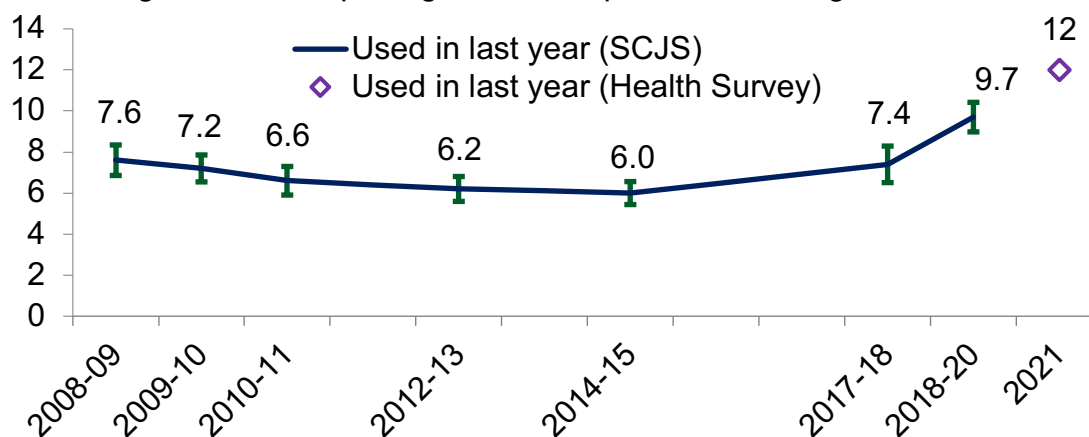
Drugs

Summary statistics on drugs

▶ **The proportion of adults reporting use of comparable illicit drugs rose between 2008-09 and 2018-20.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) showed that in 2018-20, 9.7% of respondents reported taking one or more of these drugs in the 12 months prior to interview. This was an increase 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.

▶ **One in eight people used illicit drugs in 2021.** The most recently published statistics, from the 2021 Scottish Health Survey, showed that 12% of respondents used one or more of these types of drugs in the 12 months before interview. This is a different survey and, although the methodology is similar, the results may be different in a survey focused on health rather than crime. As a result this estimate is not shown as continuous with the SCJS.

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

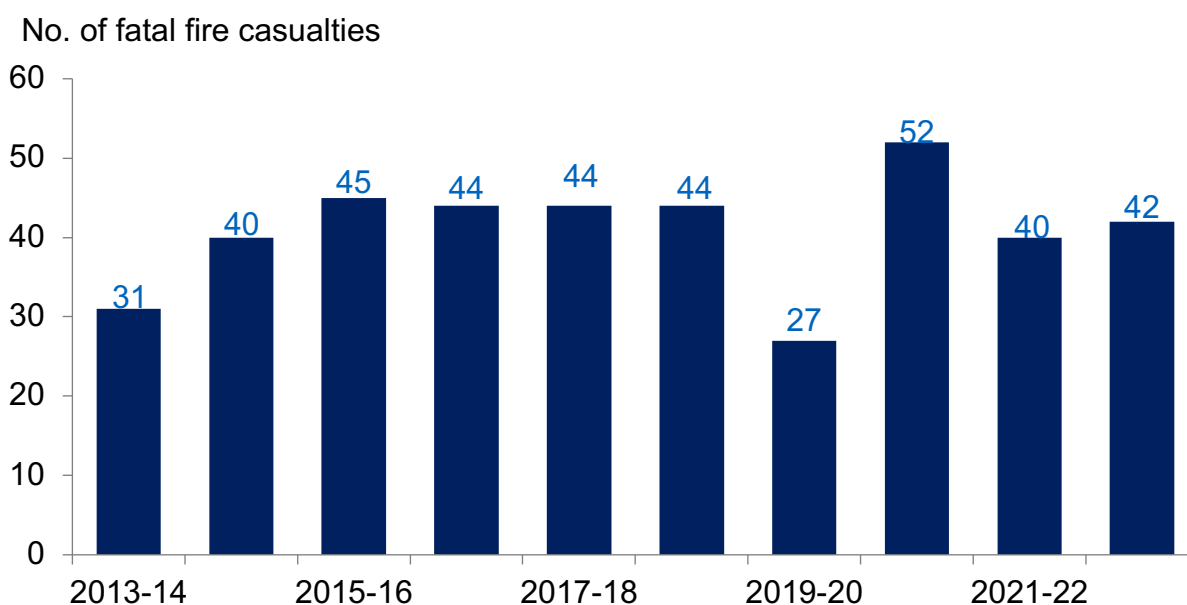
Summary statistics on community safety

▶ **Improved public perception of local crime rate since 2008-09.** The public feel safer in their local communities. The SCJS found that, in 2021-22, 76% 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 73% in 2019-20.

▶ **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (76%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2021-22, unchanged from 2019-20 but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.

▶ **Just under half of adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reported that, in 2021-22, 49% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, down from 2019-20 (55%) and 61% in 2012-13.

▶ **Number of fires fell 3% in the last year.** In 2022-23, there were 26,825 fires in Scotland, down 3% on 2021-22 but 7% higher than in 2020-21. There were 42 fire fatalities in 2022-23, up from 40 in 2021-22 but similar to the number in most years across the last decade.

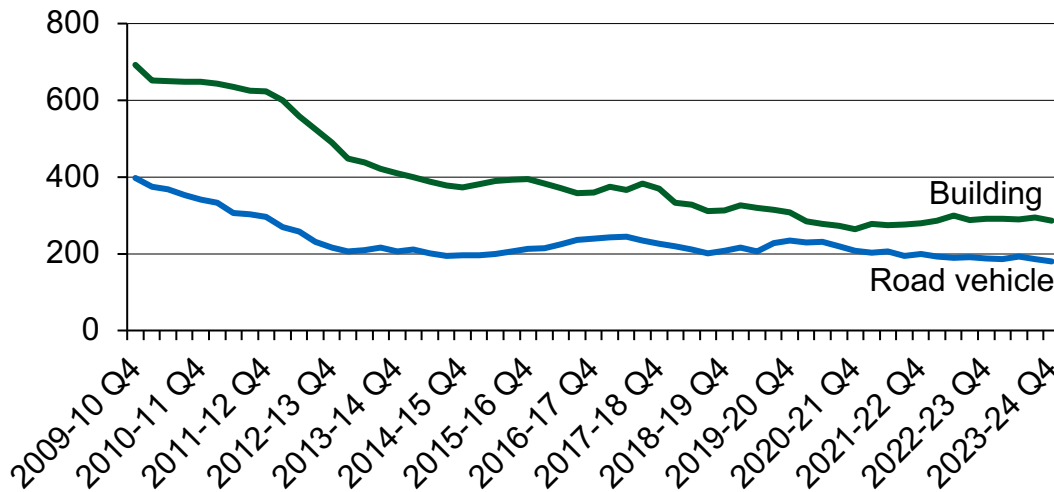


▶ **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2013-14.** In 2022-23, there were 1,600 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 405 due to assault with a sharp object. These were, respectively, 48% and 31% lower than in 2013-14.

Further detail on fire statistics

There were 196 deliberate building fires in quarter 4 of 2023-24, down from 234 in the same quarter of 2022-23. Over the same period, the number of deliberate road vehicle fires fell from 179 to 153. There has been a long-term downward trend in deliberate building and deliberate road vehicle fires since this series began.

Deliberate building and road vehicle fires



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.

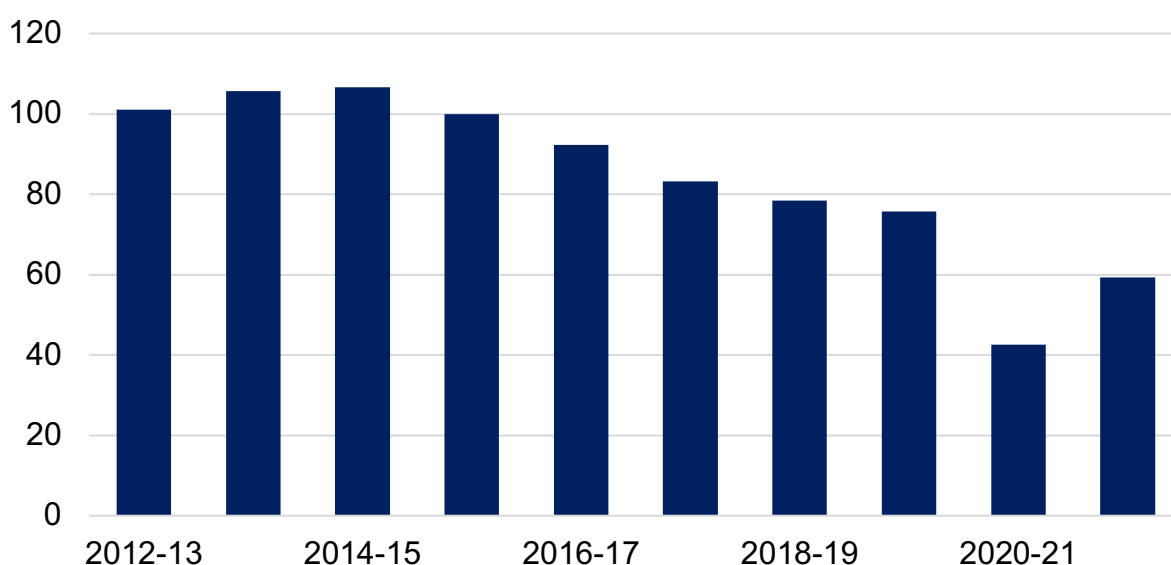
Unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) describe avoidable false alarm signals from a workplace, either from an automatic fire alarm or from a person. There were 2,905 UFAS incidents in quarter 4 of 2023-24, which made up 18% of all incidents attended in that quarter. This is down from the previous year where UFAS made up 35% of all incidents attended in that quarter. This decrease is attributed to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's new policy regarding UFAS incidents, which outlines a change in how automatic fire alarm call outs are managed.

Criminal & Civil Proceedings

Summary statistics on criminal and civil proceedings

▶ **COVID-19 continued to impact prosecutions and convictions in 2021-22.** The number of people convicted in Scottish courts rose by 39% from 2020-21 to 59,295, but remain below a typical pre-pandemic year.

Number of people convicted in Scottish courts (000s)

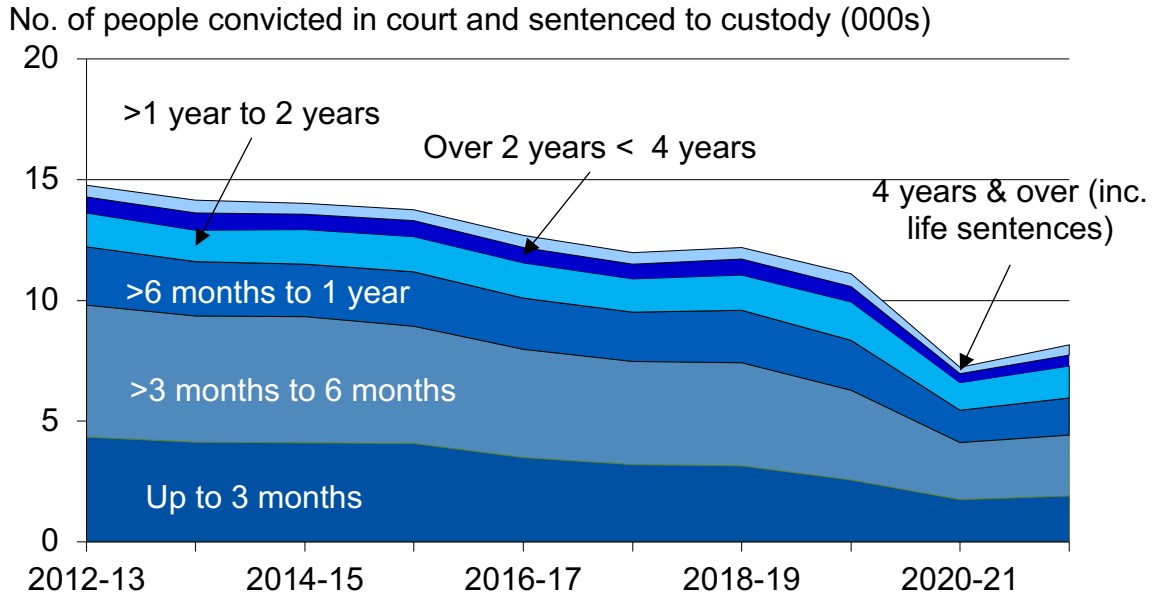


Data from 2020-21 and 2021-22 are affected by the pandemic and should not be considered indicative of long term trends.

▶ **Rise in convictions across all groups between 2020-21 and 2021-22.** Convictions for Sexual crimes rose by 52% and are the only group to exceed their pre-pandemic (2019-20) level. Road traffic offences rose the most proportionally (up 76%) and Crimes of dishonesty the least (up 7%). Convictions for crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act increased by 81% (689 convictions) in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 (381 convictions).

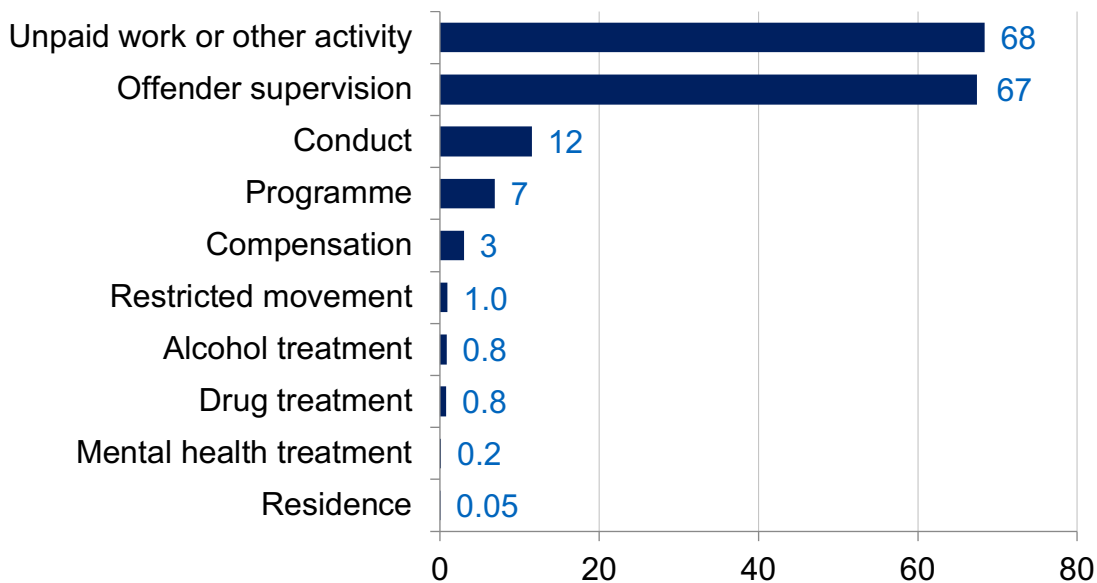
▶ **Rise in numbers of community sentences issued and new high in proportion of sentences in 2021-22.** The number of community sentences in court rose by 45% between 2020-21 and 2021-22, from 9,783 to 14,160, in line with the overall rise in convictions. The proportion of all convictions resulting in a community sentence rose to 24%, the highest in the past decade.

▶ Average custodial sentence exceeds one year. For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2021-22 was over twelve months (376 days) in length. This was 14% longer than in 2020-21, and 32% longer than in 2012-13 (284 days). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of less than one year fell by two percentage points to 73% in 2021-22, the lowest proportion of the last decade.



The 2020-21 and 2021-22 data reflect the impact of Covid-19 across the justice system, and should not be interpreted as indicative of longer term trends.

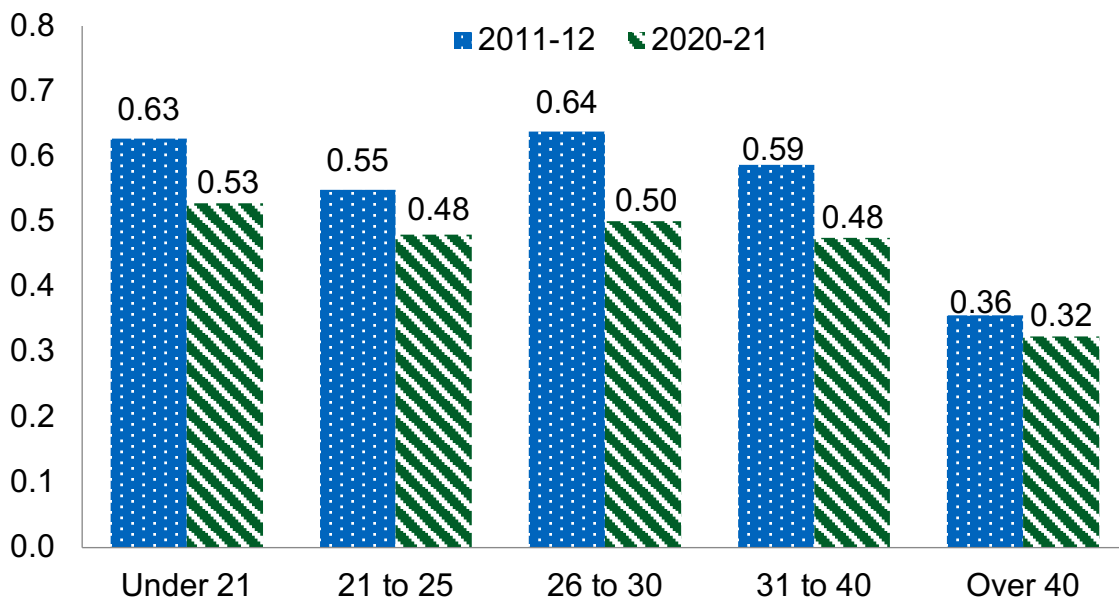
▶ Community payback orders slightly more likely to have unpaid work than supervision. There were 14,700 community payback orders imposed in 2022-23. This was 20% higher than in 2021-22 but still 13% lower than in 2019-20. For the first time since 2019-20, more orders were issued with unpaid work or other activity requirements (68%) than offender supervision requirements (67%). This reflected decreased Covid-19 restrictions during 2022-23, meaning it was less difficult for unpaid work to be carried out.



▶ **Reconviction rates are still yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, but have increased from the 2019-20 cohort.** The overall reconviction rate increased by 2.6 percentage points over the last year from 24.3% in 2019-20 to 26.9% in 2020-21. Data for the 2020-21 was still affected by COVID-19, but the follow up period, up to March 2022 depending on when an offender entered the cohort, saw less COVID-19 restrictions than the previous publication.

▶ **The average number of reconvictions per offender has decreased over time.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 20% lower in 2020-21 compared to 2011-12. The fall in the longer term was driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 16% for under 21s, 13% for 21-25 year olds, 22% for 26-30 year olds, and 19% for 31-40 year olds. In contrast, average reconvictions returned to levels similar to a decade ago for those over 40.

Average reconvictions per offender

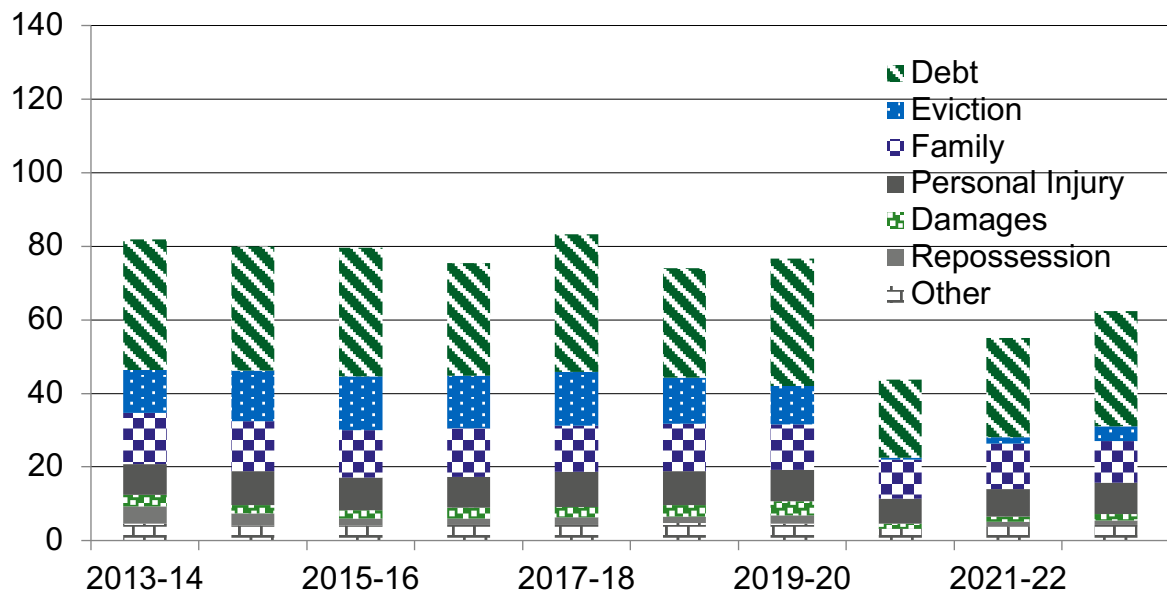


▶ **No. of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds rose by six per cent in the last year.** [Statistics published by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration \(SCRA\)](#) show that, in 2023-24, 2,733 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a rise of 6% on 2022-23 and is similar to the level of 2,761 in 2015-16.

▶ **The most recent ten years show a general downward trend in initiated cases, latest figures show gradual recovery from the pandemic.** There were 60,943 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2022-23 (excluding summary applications). This represents an increase of 13% from 2021-22.

▶ **Most case types increased between 2021-22 and 2022-23, except family which fell by 7%.** The highest increases were seen in evictions (up 128%) and damages (up 28%). The increase in evictions follows a large Covid-related fall in 2020-21 to a record low. The increase in eviction initiations in 2022-23 is moving towards the levels observed pre-pandemic but is still 63% lower than 2019-20. Damages too are still substantially lower than pre-pandemic levels (56% down on 2019-20). Personal injury (up 12%) and repossession (up by 14%) recorded the lowest increases between 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Civil law cases initiated (000s)



Justice Journey Times

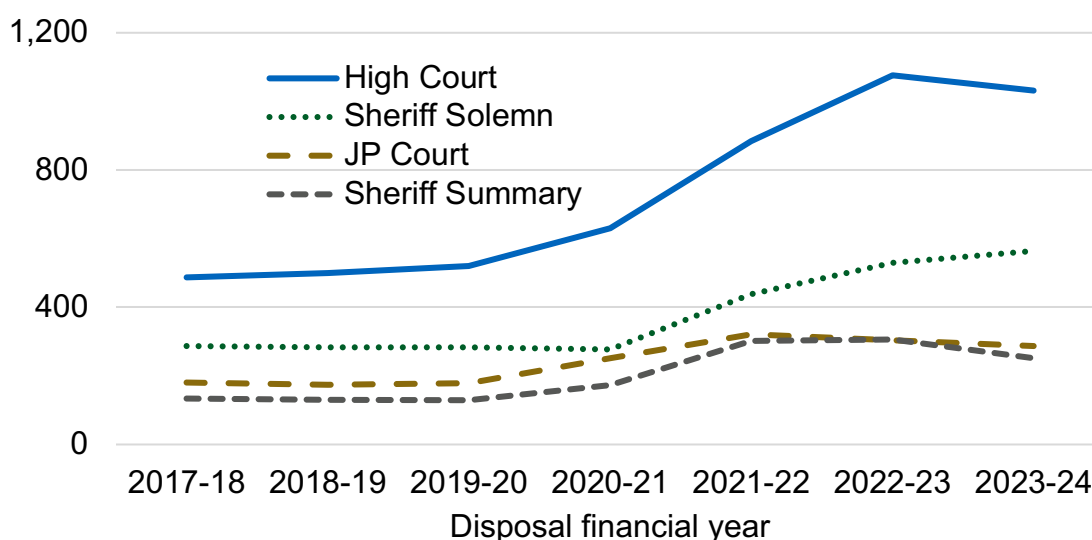
Summary statistics on journey times in the Scottish criminal justice system

▶ **Journey times in the Scottish Criminal Justice system.** The percentage of accused reported to COPFS which were not marked for prosecution in court and had their cases closed within one year of the offence being committed, has been falling since 2019-20 but increased slightly over the last year from 78% in 2022-23 to 80% in 2023-24. For accused prosecuted in criminal courts, up to and including 2019-20, 83-84% of accused had a disposal issued within one year of the offence being committed. This fell to 57% in financial year 2022-23 but increased to 61% in 2023-24.

▶ **Median journey times (from offence date to case closed), for cases closed by COPFS, increased post pandemic and were longer for accused marked as “No Action”.** In general, median journey times for accused persons with a COPFS “No action” marking were longer than for accused persons marked for direct measures (e.g. a warning letter or a fiscal fine). This difference has decreased in financial year 2023-24 where the median journey time was 189 days for cases marked no action and 161 days for cases marked for direct measures.

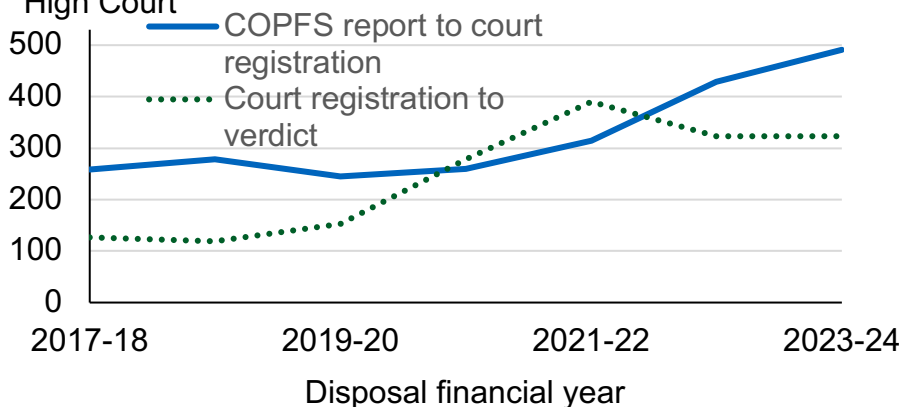
▶ **Median journey times for accused prosecuted by courts (from offence date to verdict) increased post pandemic.** Median journey times decreased in all court types in 2023-24 when compared to 2022-23 with the exception of Sheriff solemn. There were falls of 4% for High Court (from 1,076 to 1,032 days), 18% for Sheriff summary (from 306 to 252 days) and 6% for Justice of the Peace (from 303 to 286 days). Sheriff solemn journey times increased by 7% (from 529 to 564 days).

Median time (in days) from offence to verdict by type of court

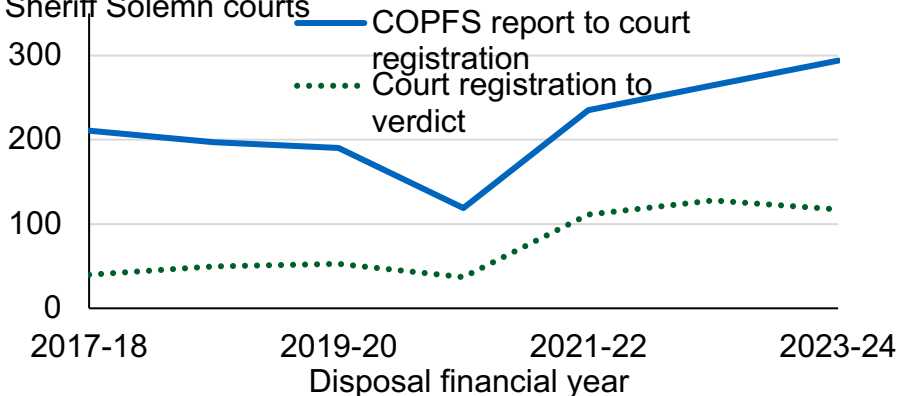


▶ **The time associated with different parts of an accused person’s journey in the justice system varies depending on the type of court their case is allocated.** The data available allow for overall journey times to be split into: date of offence to the date an offence is first known to police (offence to police known), date an offence is first known to police to the date an offence is recorded at COPFS (police known to COPFS record), the date an offence is recorded at COPFS to the date a case is registered in court (COPFS report to court registration) and the date a case is registered in court to the date a verdict is reached (court registration to verdict). The median offence to police known for accused with verdicts issued in High Court was 3 days in 2023-24 and 0 for accused with verdicts in other courts. The median police known to COPFS report time ranged from 3 days for accused with verdicts issued in Sheriff solemn court to 60 days in 2023-24 for accused with verdicts issued in JP court. The median time from COPFS report to court registration is, in general higher, for accused with verdicts issued in solemn courts than for the accused disposed in summary courts. For accused disposed in solemn courts these times have further increased in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. For High Court there was a 14% increase to 491 days and for Sheriff solemn court there was an 11% increase to 294 days. COPFS report to court registration times for accused disposed in Sheriff summary court remained stable (median time 24 days) in 2023-24 and JP courts median times decreased by 23% to 80 days. In-court times (court registration to verdict) saw a decrease in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23 in all court types except the High Court where times remained stable: High Court remained at 323 days, Sheriff solemn court decreased by 9% to 117 days, Sheriff summary court decreased by 25% to 124 days and JP court decreased by 7% to 65 days.

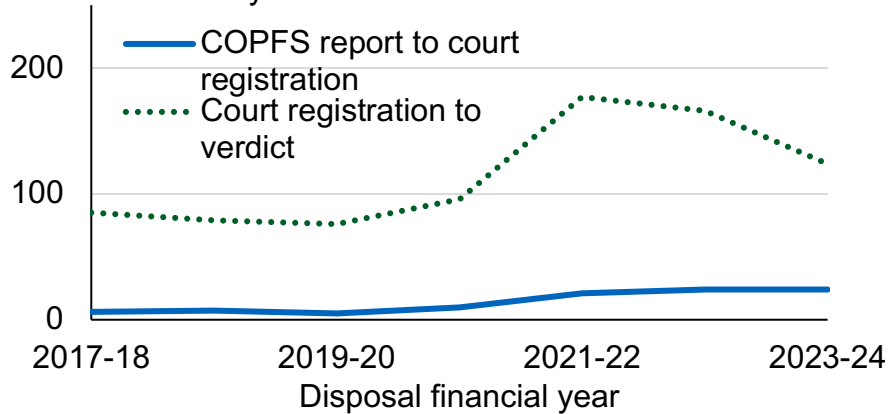
Median time (in days) - COPFS report to courts registration and court registration to verdict for High Court



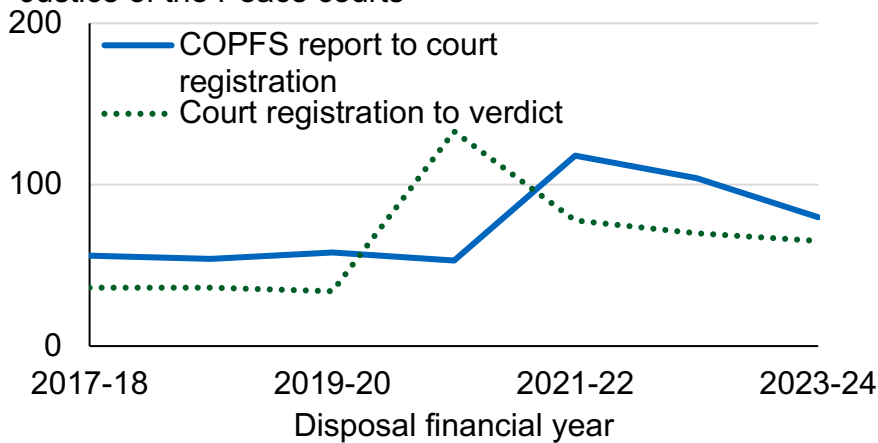
Median time (in days) - COPFS report to courts registration and court registration to verdict for Sheriff Solemn courts



Median time (in days) - COPFS report to courts registration and court registration to verdict for Sheriff Summary courts

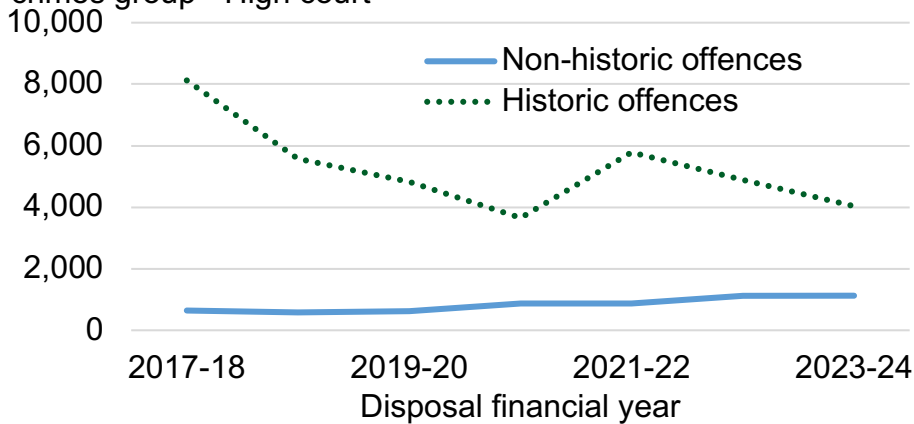


Median time (in days) - COPFS report to courts registration and court registration to verdict for Justice of the Peace courts

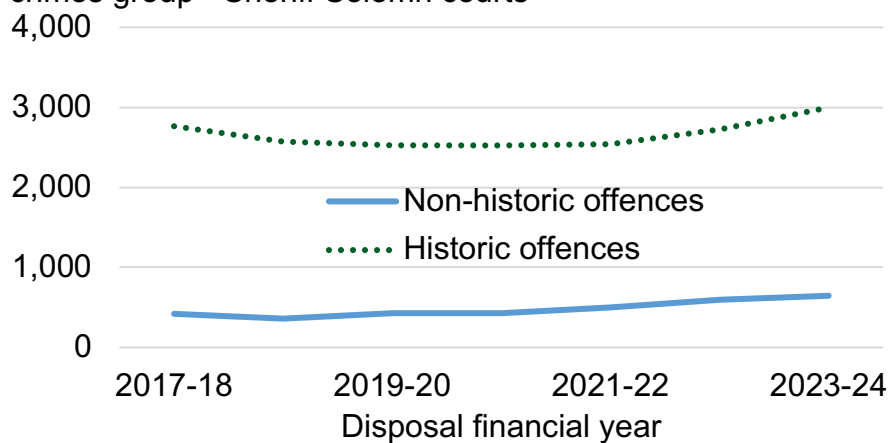


There were differences in accused persons' journey times depending on the type of crime on registration. The longest journey times were observed for accused persons charged with at least one sexual crime and verdict issued in High court. These times can now be split into historic and non-historic sexual offences. The median offence to verdict time for accused in the historic sexual crimes group in High Court in 2023-24 was around 11 years. This has reduced from around 13 years and 4 months in 2022-23 (-18%). In Sheriff solemn court, the median journey times for this group were around half this value, increasing from around 7 years and 5 months in 2022-23 to around 8 years and 2 months in 2023-24 (10%). The median offence to verdict times for accused in the non-historic sexual crimes group remained largely stable in High Court, at just over 3 years in 2023-24. This has increased by 9% in Sheriff solemn court from around 1 year 7 months in 2022-23 to around 1 year 9 months in 2023-24. The longest median offence to verdict times for crimes classified as sexual crimes are for rape and attempted rape. As mentioned earlier, the median offence to verdict time for all sexual crimes cases is influenced by the proportion of historic cases reaching a verdict and the time in which those cases reach a verdict. The median offence to verdict times for accused with historic rape and attempted rape offences are much higher than the times for non-historic offences. In 2023-24, for non-historic offences, the median offence to verdict time remained stable at around 3 years. For accused with historic offences, median journey time decreased by 9% in 2023-24 to around 10 years and 8 months.

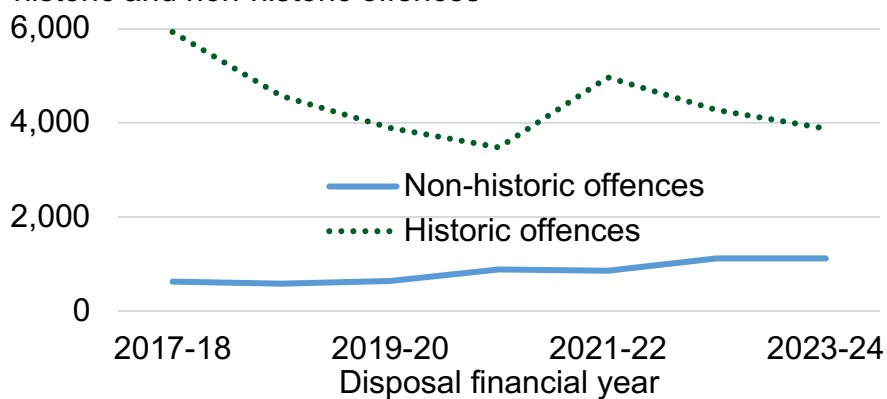
Effect of historic offences on the median journey times from offence to verdict of accused in sexual crimes group - High court



Effect of historic offences on the median journey times from offence to verdict of accused in sexual crimes group - Sheriff Solemn courts



Median offence to verdict times for accused charged with rape or attempted rape split by historic and non-historic offences



Prisons

Summary statistics on prisons

*** New ***

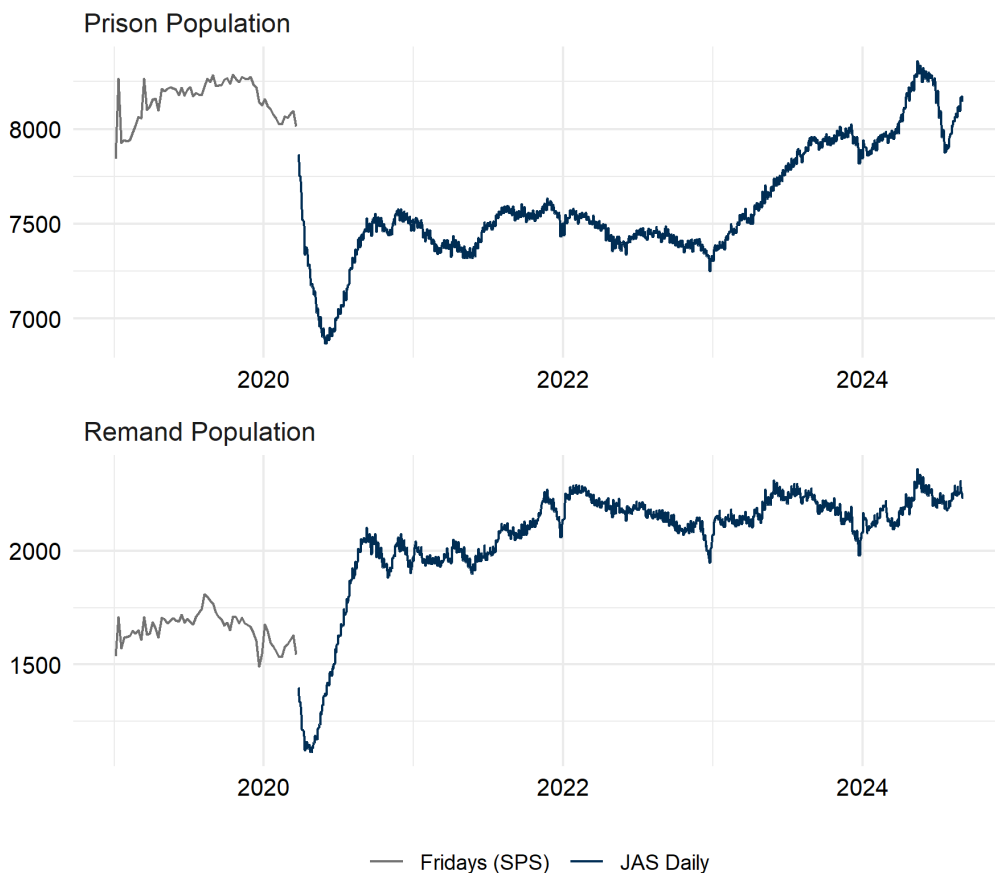
▶ **The prison population has risen during 2023 and 2024**

In August 2024 (up until the morning of Sunday 1st September 2024):

- the population increased by 188 to 8,151
- 2,236 were on remand: 1,783 (22%) untried & 453 (6%) awaiting sentence. 5,915 (73%) were serving a sentence.
- 58% of arrivals were untried (614 of 1,061), 25% awaiting sentence (263) and 17% sentenced (184)

The overall prison population has exceeded 2019-20 (pre-pandemic) levels. There has been a sustained population increase from 2023, and the number of people held on remand remains at a considerably higher level than pre-pandemic. The reduction in recent months is partly accounted for by the early release of 477 short-term prisoners under Release Of Prisoners (Scotland) Regulations 2023.

Chart: Prison populations (total and remand), January 2019 to 1st September 2024



[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 fall in arrivals to custody and the early release of prisoners.

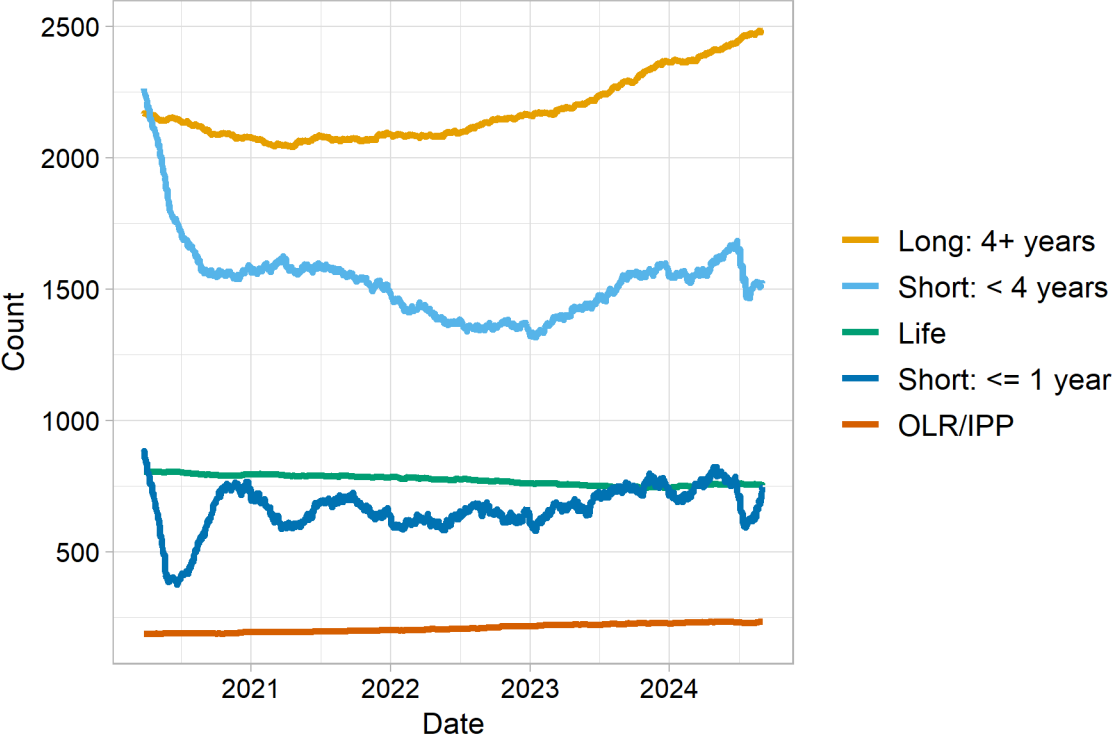
Following a rapid growth in the remand population to September 2020, the prison population stabilised between 7,300 and 7,600 across 2020-22. However, growth across 2023 has led to a higher prison population. The prison population has consistently exceeded 8,000 since the end of March 2024, and reached 8,361 on the 14th May 2024.

Prison population growth was initially driven by a rise in both remand and sentenced arrivals to custody. However, while sentenced and convicted awaiting sentence arrivals continue to trend upwards, untried arrivals to remand have increased over the past few months. See the [Scottish Prison Population Projections](#) for more detail on these changing patterns.

The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 24th April 2020, but grew to over 2,000 by September 2020. Following a period of relative stability, the remand population grew further in the first half of 2023. On 14th May 2024 it peaked at 2,360. People on remand are required by law to be housed separately from sentenced prisoners.

Change in the sentenced prison population varies by sentence length, as shown in the chart below.

Chart: Prison populations by Overall Sentence, 26th Mar 2020 to 1st September 2024



The populations serving short term overall sentences (less than 4 years) fell substantially and rapidly during 2020, whereas populations serving long term and indeterminate sentences remained at similar levels to pre-pandemic.

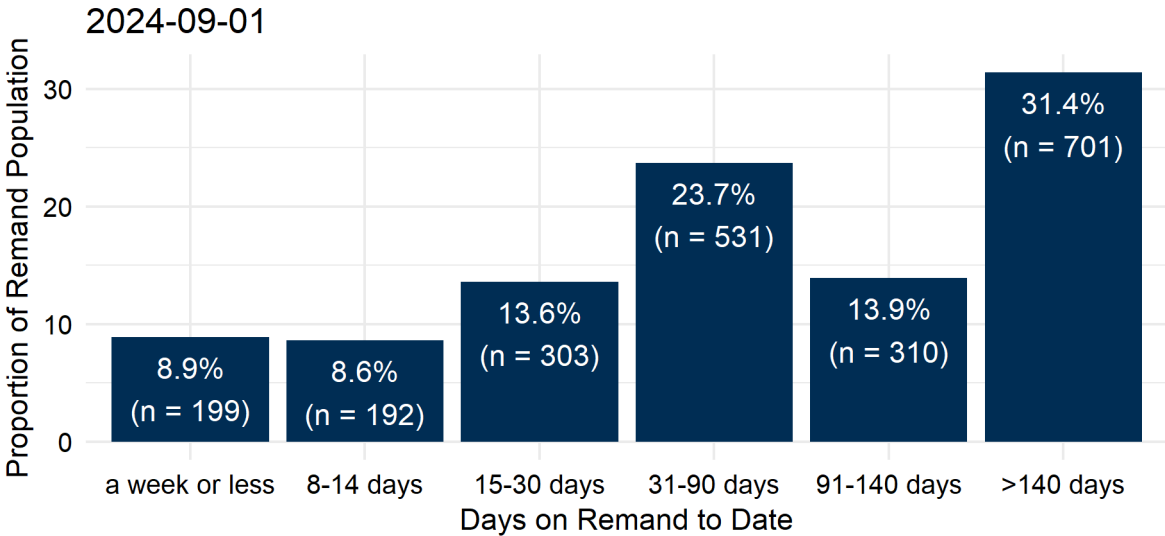
The population serving life sentences has seen a small and gradual decline since 2020, which continued in 2023. The population serving overall sentences of less than or equal to one year and of one to four years increased during 2023. Short-sentenced individuals were those targeted with emergency release, and those are the populations that have seen the greatest fall and rebound in recent months.

Time on Remand to Date

*** New ***

Among the 2,236 people on remand as of the morning of Sunday 1st September 2024 , the median continuous time spent with this status to date was 79 days.

Chart: Banded continuous time on remand to date, % of remand population



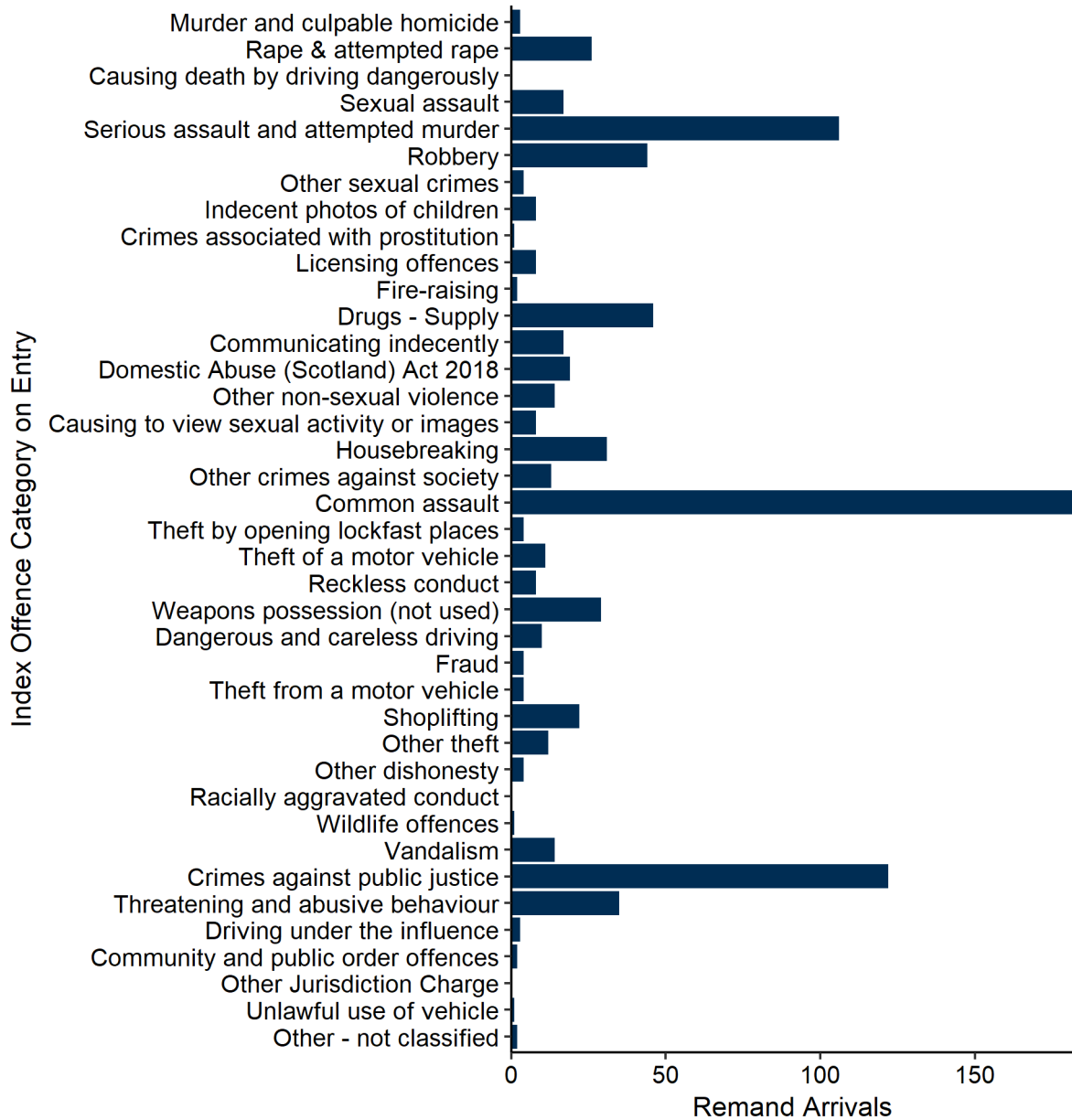
Note: The remand population includes individuals whose trial has commenced but not concluded, as well as those awaiting commencement of a trial. As a result, the figures referenced above reflect only that an individual has held the same status for an extended period, but do not reflect the relationship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

Remand Arrival Offences

*** New ***

There were 837 remand arrivals to prison with known offence types in August, awaiting trial or sentence for the following alleged index 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.

Sources and Further Information

Sources and further information

The data in this report is drawn from a range of Official Statistics sources. For 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 and Projections](#). 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.
- [Journey Times in the Scottish Criminal Justice System](#). Assesses an accused person's criminal justice journey time from offence date to case conclusion or verdict. The [interactive dashboard](#) provides quarterly updates to the experimental statistical bulletin on the length of journey times in the criminal justice system.

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 2021-22.
- Drugs data from the [Scottish Health Survey](#) 2021 is also shown.
- [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland](#). Annual National Statistics on justice social work activity in Scotland.

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