Accredited Official Statistics

Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland: 2024-25 – Part 1

Updated Version: **Since September 2025 publication, minor revisions to supervised bail assessments and completions have been made. These updates are now reflected in this publication and the corresponding tables.**

09 September 2025

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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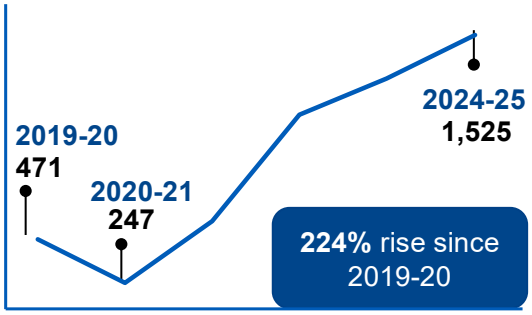
Key Points

- The number of diversion from prosecution cases commenced rose by seven per cent between 2023-24 and 2024-25 from 3,400 to 3,600. This was the highest level in the last ten years.
- There were 40 fiscal work orders imposed in 2024-25. This was a drop from 100 in 2023-24 and the lowest in the last ten years.
- The number of bail supervision cases rose by 17 per cent between 2023-24 and 2024-25 to 1,500. This was the highest in the last ten years.
- There were 1,600 structured deferred sentences imposed in 2024-25. This was 12 per cent more than in 2023-24 and the highest in the last seven years.
- There were 1,200 statutory custody-based throughcare cases commenced in 2024-25, 13 per cent up on 1,100 in 2023-24. This was the highest in the last ten years.
- The number of statutory community-based throughcare cases commenced was 1,000 in 2024-25, a 20 per cent increase on 870 in 2023-24. This was the 2nd highest level in the last ten years.
- The number of voluntary throughcare cases commenced fell by 18 per cent between 2023-24 and 2024-25 from 1,700 to 1,400. This was the 2nd lowest level in the last ten years.
- Between 2023-24 and 2024-25, the number of home leave reports rose by 19 per cent from 1,200 to 1,400. Over the same period, the number of parole/non-parole reports rose by two per cent to 2,600.
- In 2024-25, there were 1,100 home detention curfew assessment reports. This was an increase of 47 per cent on 2023-24.

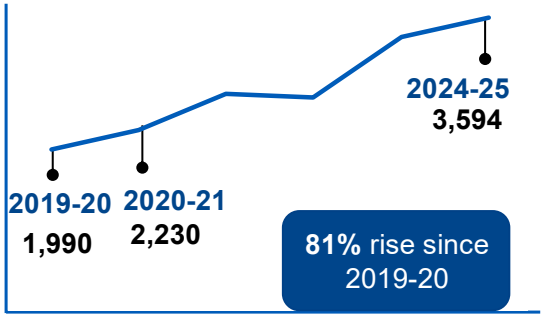
Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland, 2019-20 to 2024-25 – Part 1

Justice Analytical Services

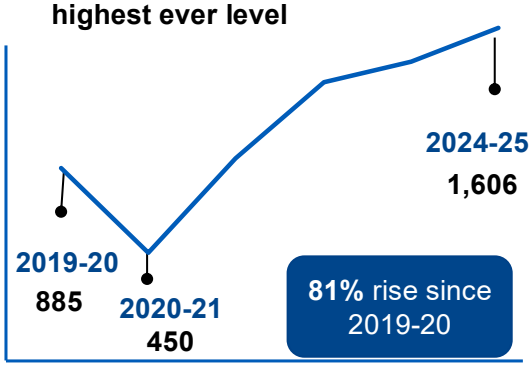
- **Bail supervision cases fell sharply in 2020-21 during Covid but have since risen to their highest ever level**



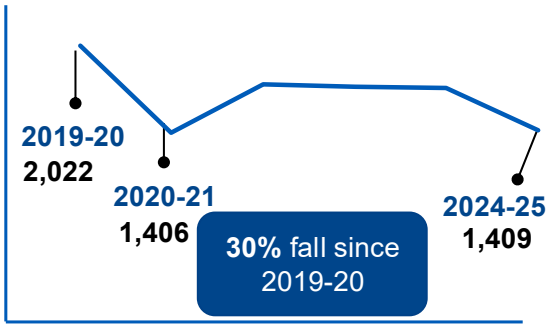
- **Diversion from prosecution cases commenced have been rising, reaching their highest ever level**



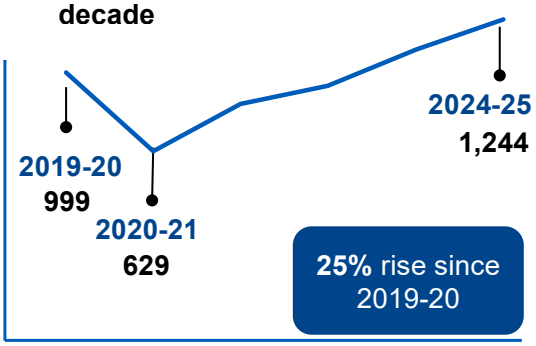
- **Structured deferred sentences fell sharply in 2020-21 during Covid but have since risen to their highest ever level**



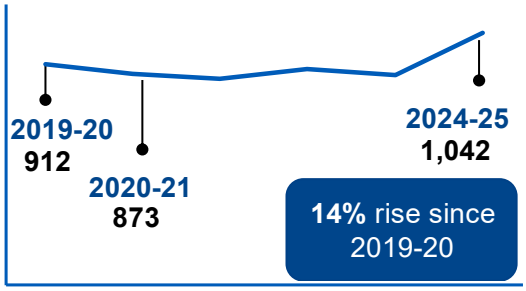
- **Voluntary throughcare cases commenced fell sharply in 2020-21 during Covid and stayed below pre-pandemic levels**



- **Statutory throughcare custody cases commenced fell sharply in 2020-21 during Covid but are now at the highest level in the last decade**



- **Statutory throughcare community cases commenced fell in 2020-21 during Covid but have since to their 2nd highest level in the last decade**



1 Introduction

The annual publication for Justice Social Work statistics is published in two parts. The 2024-25 local authority data and the main national trend data can be found in the additional datasets published alongside this report.

This publication and the accompanying tables referred to throughout, provide statistics on the following areas of justice social work:

- Diversion from prosecution
- Fiscal work orders
- Bail supervision
- Structured deferred sentences
- Statutory/voluntary throughcare
- Pre-release reports
- Home detention curfew assessments

Part 2 of this publication will include information and accompanying tables on these areas of justice social work:

- Community payback orders
- Drug treatment and testing orders
- Justice social work reports

This will be published in the first quarter of 2026. Until then, the current information for part 2 topics is available via the report: Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland: 2023-24 - Part 2.

These statistics are accredited official statistics**.** The Office for Statistics Regulation has independently reviewed and accredited these statistics as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

These statistics were accredited in July 2011, in assessment report 128 on the UK Statistics Authority website.

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

More information about Scottish Government statistics is available on the Scottish Government website.

2 Background

Local authority justice social work teams provide a range of services, including:

- assessments and reports to assist decisions on sentencing
- court services to assist those attending court
- bail supervision services as an alternative to custodial remand
- supervising people on court orders (e.g. community payback orders) to tackle offending behaviour
- supervising people who need to perform unpaid, useful work for the benefit of the community
- prison-based social work services to those serving custodial sentences
- preparing reports for the Parole Board to assist decisions about release from prison
- throughcare services including parole, supervised release and other prison aftercare orders to ensure public safety
- delivering group work interventions on programmes such as Caledonian and Moving Forward Making Changes

The data presented in this publication comes from justice social work management information systems for each of Scotland's local authorities. Further information on the collection and processing of the data is in Annex A and definitions are in Annex B.

3 Statistical context

The trend data supplied in this publication needs to consider the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid) pandemic. There were significant public health measures, including two national lockdowns, in place during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 recording years. For example, many courts were temporarily closed early in 2020-21. There was also reduced capacity when courts reopened. This means that statistics for most areas of justice social work were impacted in 2020-21 and 2021-22. Caution is advised in comparing data from these two years to other years.

The numbers quoted in the text in this publication are rounded. The tables and charts published alongside this report contain unrounded figures. More information on this is available in section 11.

There has been a number of changes to guidance and data collected for 2024-25:

1. Updated data collection guidance on supervised bail with an additional question on supervised bail cases in progress on 31 March 2025, and a one-off question on bail assessments for policy requirements. Also, the

number of supervised bail cases commenced in 2024-25 was split into age groups.
2. New census ethnicity categories added for Roma and Showperson.
3. New category for unknown added to employment status.
4. New outcome category of 'Monetary penalty' added to structured deferred sentence outcomes.
5. Changes to guidance:
    - New data collection guidance with clearer definitions for some licence types.
    - Additional information requested on recalled prisoners to understand the main reasons for recall.
    - New voluntary throughcare guidance with a detailed definition of required data collections. A new question on the number of referrals for voluntary throughcare, replacing the previous question on the number of individuals who received assistance

The new questions introduced for supervised bail in 2022-23 are now in the third year of collection. The collection of this information has therefore stabilised and is now considered to be accredited official statistics. A new question was introduced in 2024-25 for the number of supervised bail cases open on 31 March 2025. This question is still considered as a statistic under development, as there is the possibility of revisions due to improvement of guidance in the future.

4 Diversion from prosecution

(Tables 1, 2 & 3)

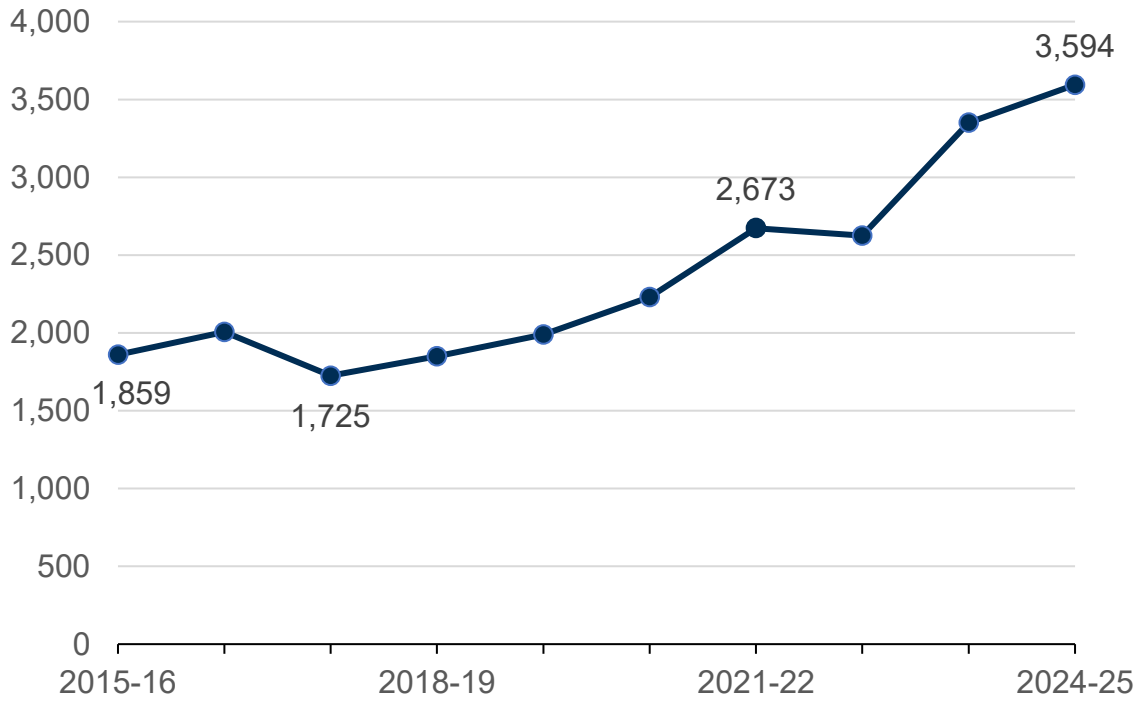
Key statistics for 2024-25:

- The number of diversion from prosecution cases commenced rose by seven per cent between 2023-24 and 2024-25 from 3,400 to 3,600. This is the highest level in the last ten years.
- Sixty-six per cent of cases commenced were for men.
- People aged over 40 accounted for 28 per cent of cases.
- Of those known, just over half were reported as being unemployed.

Diversion from prosecution allows prosecutors to refer cases to local authorities or agencies to address the causes of offending.

The Lord Advocate's prosecution policy for adults is to consider diversion for all individuals with identifiable needs contributing to their alleged offending, best met through support, treatment, or other action. For individuals under 18 not referred to the Children’s Reporter, there is a presumption that an alternative to prosecution is in the public interest. A Procurator Fiscal may waive prosecution at the outset or defer the decision pending successful completion of the diversion.

Chart 1: The number of diversion cases commenced has generally been rising since 2017-18
Number of diversion from prosecution cases commenced, Scotland, 2015-16 to 2024-25



During 2024-25, there were 6,300 referrals made to local authorities and 5,900 assessments. Sixty-three per cent of the assessments (3,700) progressed to cases commenced.

The number of cases successfully completed in 2024-25 was 3,100. This was 28 per cent higher than in 2023-24, when it was 2,400. The number in 2024-25 was the highest level in the last ten years. There were 140 cases commenced which were subject to extended periods of diversion in 2024-25.

Between 2023-24 and 2024-25, the number of cases commenced rose for all age groups except those aged under 18. The highest rise, of 23 per cent, was for those aged between 26 and 30.

Young people were by far the most likely people to get diversion from prosecution, as a proportion of the overall Scottish population. Those aged 16-17 accounted for 23 per cent of people getting diversion from prosecution in 2024-25 but this age group is only three per cent of the Scottish population aged 16 to 70. Similarly, 18-20 years olds accounted for 14 per cent of diversion cases in 2024-25 but only five per cent of the population aged 16 to 70.

5 Fiscal work orders

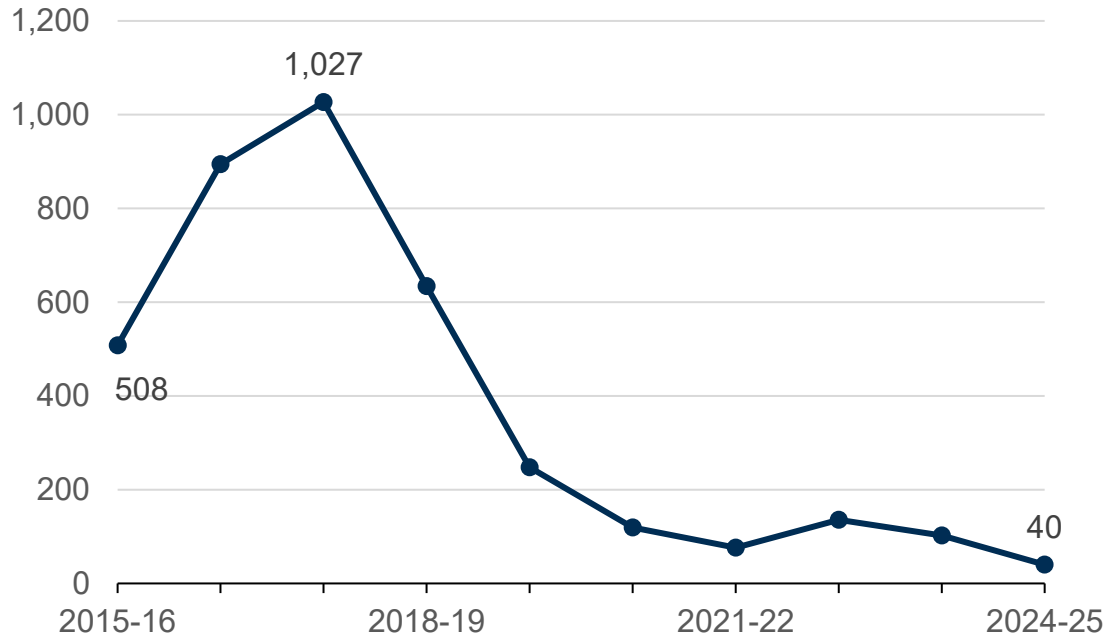
(Tables 1, 4 & 5)

Key statistics for 2024-25:

- Fiscal work orders commenced fell from 100 in 2023-24 to 40 in 2024-25. This was the lowest in ten years.
- Sixty-five per cent of fiscal work orders commenced in 2024-25 were for males.
- Around 38 per cent of orders commenced were for people aged between 31 and 40.
- Of those known, just under half were reported as being unemployed.

Fiscal work orders (FWOs) allow Procurators Fiscal to offer unpaid work orders as an alternative to prosecution. These orders range from 10 to 50 hours and must be completed within six months.

Chart 2: Fiscal work orders have declined since 2017-18.
Number of fiscal work orders commenced, 2015-16 to 2024-25, Scotland



In 2024-25, there were 82 fiscal work order assessments undertaken by local authorities. In 37 of these assessments (45 per cent), the orders were accepted with the remaining 45 (55 per cent) deemed unsuitable by local authorities. 2024-25 is the second year in which the number deemed unsuitable exceeded the number accepted. The number of orders which finished was 50, of which 66 per cent were successfully completed.

People given FWOs have been getting older in the last five years. In the years 2015-16 to 2019-20, 57 per cent of orders commenced were for people aged 25 and under, while 31 per cent were aged 26 to 40. This contrasted with the

position in 2024-25, when 28 per cent were aged 25 and under and 48 per cent were aged 26 to 40.

People have generally been getting longer FWOs in recent years compared with previously. Sixty-five per cent of FWOs imposed in 2024-25 were for 40 hours or more, compared to 29 per cent in 2015-16.

6 Bail supervision

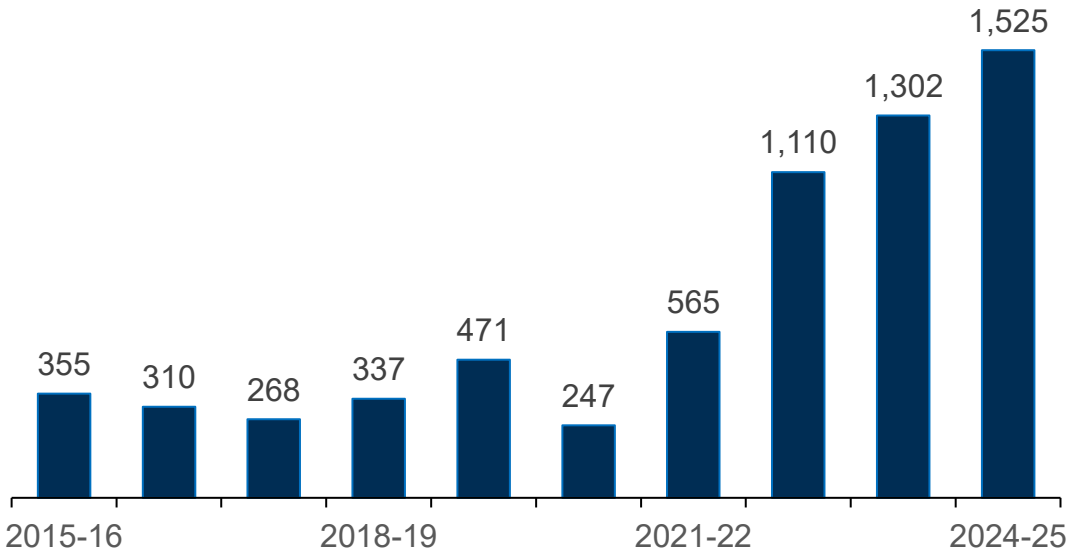
(Tables 1, 6 & 7)

Key statistics for 2024-25:

- A total of 1,500 bail supervision cases commenced in 2024-25, a rise of 17 per cent from 1,300 in 2023-24. This was the highest in the last ten years.
- Eighty-one per cent of supervised bail cases were for males.
- Around 34 per cent of cases commenced were for people aged between 31 and 40.
- There were 5,800 assessment reports for bail suitability submitted to the courts, two per cent down from 5,900 in 2023-24.

Bail supervision, provided by social work or third sector services, helps individuals comply with bail conditions as an alternative to remand in custody. It offers supervision, monitoring, and support for those assessed as needing it. Courts can also impose bail with an electronic monitoring (EM) order, either separately or together with bail supervision.

Chart 3: Supervised bail has increased rapidly over the last four years. Number of supervised bail cases commenced, 2015-16 to 2024-25, Scotland



In 2022-23, the Scottish Government requested more bail information from local authorities. New data takes time to standardise and is often less consistent than long-term data. The data is now in its third year of collection and from now on it will no longer be considered as statistics in development from 2024-25 onwards, apart from the new question on open supervised cases on the 31 March 2025.

A total of 1,500 bail supervision cases commenced in 2024-25, a rise of 17 per cent on the level of 1,300 in 2023-24 and the highest in the last ten years. Apart from in 2020-21, when many courts were closed for long periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic, numbers have risen every year since 2018-19. In 2024-25, around 450 bail supervision cases (29 per cent) involved an electronic monitoring order. This was over triple the number in 2022-23, when the data was first collected, and when only 11 per cent of cases involved electronic monitoring.

There were 5,800 assessment reports submitted to the courts in 2024-25 to assess suitability for bail supervision and/or electronically monitored bail. Just over two-thirds (70 per cent) were assessed as suitable for supervision. This consisted of 37 per cent suitable for supervision only and 33 per cent for supervision and an electronic monitoring order. A further eight per cent were considered suitable for bail with an electronic monitoring order only, with the remaining 22 per cent assessed as not suitable for bail supervision or electronically monitored bail.

For supervised bail cases successfully completed, these figures may include cases which commenced in a previous year. For example, a supervised case which commenced on 17 February 2024 and which completed successfully on 20 May 2024 would be recorded as a case commenced in year 2023-24 and a case successfully completed in 2024-25. This creates a limitation in reporting as it is not possible to calculate the percentage of cases successfully completed from the data collected. There are similar issues with breaches reported in 2024-25 for cases commenced in 2023-24.

In 2024-25, there were 1,100 bail supervision cases completed successfully, and 140 bail supervision breach reports submitted. For the first time in 2024-25, the number of supervised bail cases open as of 31 March was collected. There were 1,000 cases being progressed on 31 March 2025. This statistic may be likely to be revised as the guidance is improved for next year.

7 Structured deferred sentences

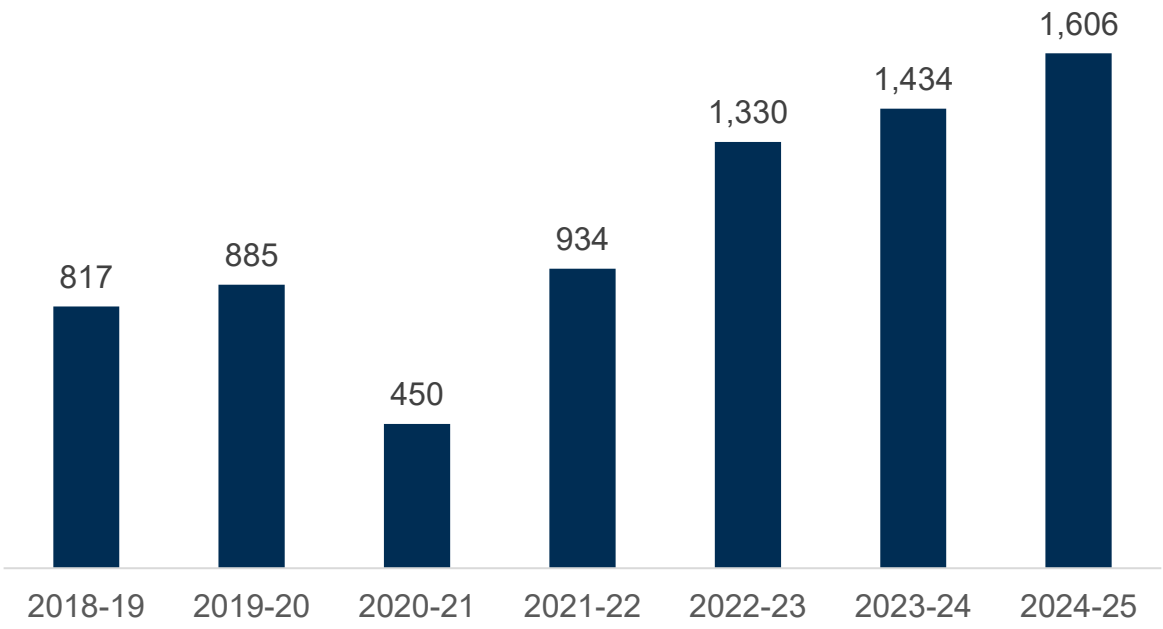
(Tables 1, 8 & 9)

Key statistics for 2024-25:

- Structured deferred sentences commenced at highest level of 1,600 in 2024-25 since first collection in 2018-19.
- In 2024-25, 70 per cent of Structured deferred sentences commenced were for males.
- Those over the age of 40 accounted for the highest proportion (31 per cent).
- Where employment status was known, 60 per cent were unemployed.

Structured deferred sentences (SDS) allow justice social work and relevant partners to provide a short-term intervention post-conviction but before final sentencing by the court.

Chart 4: Structured deferred sentences fell in 2020-21 before rising in each of the next four years to their highest level in 2024-25.
Number of structured deferred sentences imposed, 2018-19 to 2024-25, Scotland



After falling sharply to 450 in the first pandemic year of 2020-21, the number of SDS imposed in Scotland rose in each of the next four years, reaching its highest level of 1,600 in 2024-25 an increase of 12 per cent from 2023-24.

Twenty per cent of SDS had a length of less than three months in 2024-25. A further 41 per cent were for at least three months and less than six months. The remaining 39 per cent were for six months or more.

There were 1,400 SDS which finished during 2024-25. In 39 per cent of these, the person was admonished. A further 15 per cent were issued with a community payback order. Figures on outcomes by local authority area are in the additional justice social work datasets which accompany this publication.

As well as judicial decision making, different outcomes may reflect the fact that SDS are not all used in the same way by different local authorities.

8 Statutory/voluntary throughcare

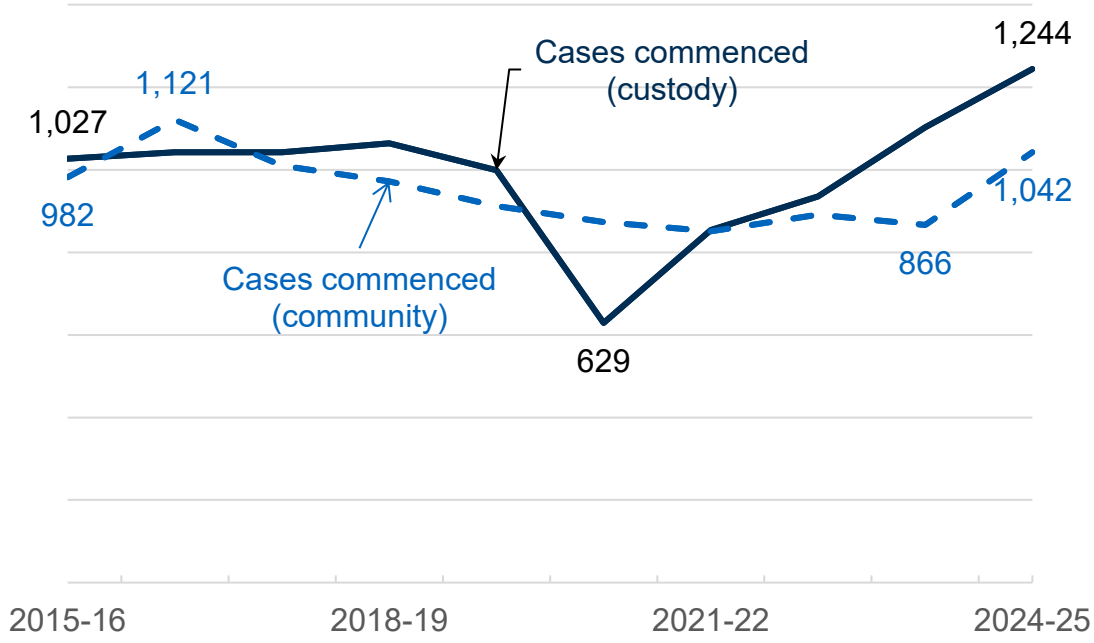
(Tables 1, 10 & 11)

Key statistics for 2024-25:

- There were 1,200 statutory custody-based throughcare cases commenced in 2024-25, the highest in the last ten years.
- There were 1,000 statutory community-based throughcare cases commenced in 2024-25, the 2nd highest in the last ten years.
- Ninety-seven per cent of both statutory custody-based throughcare and community-based throughcare cases commenced were for males in 2024-25.
- There were 1,400 voluntary throughcare cases in 2024-25, the 2nd lowest in the last ten years.
- Seventy-nine per cent of voluntary throughcare cases commenced were for males in 2024-25.

Justice social work must provide throughcare services to those under statutory supervision upon release from prison. This includes individuals serving sentences of four years or more (or six months or more for sexual offences) and those with extended sentences or supervised release orders. Voluntary throughcare services are available to those not under supervision, requested while in custody or up to a year after release, lasting up to 12 months.

Chart 5: Statutory throughcare cases commenced for custody increasing since 2020-21 to be the highest in ten years.
Number of statutory throughcare cases commenced, custody and community-based 2015-16 to 2024-25, Scotland

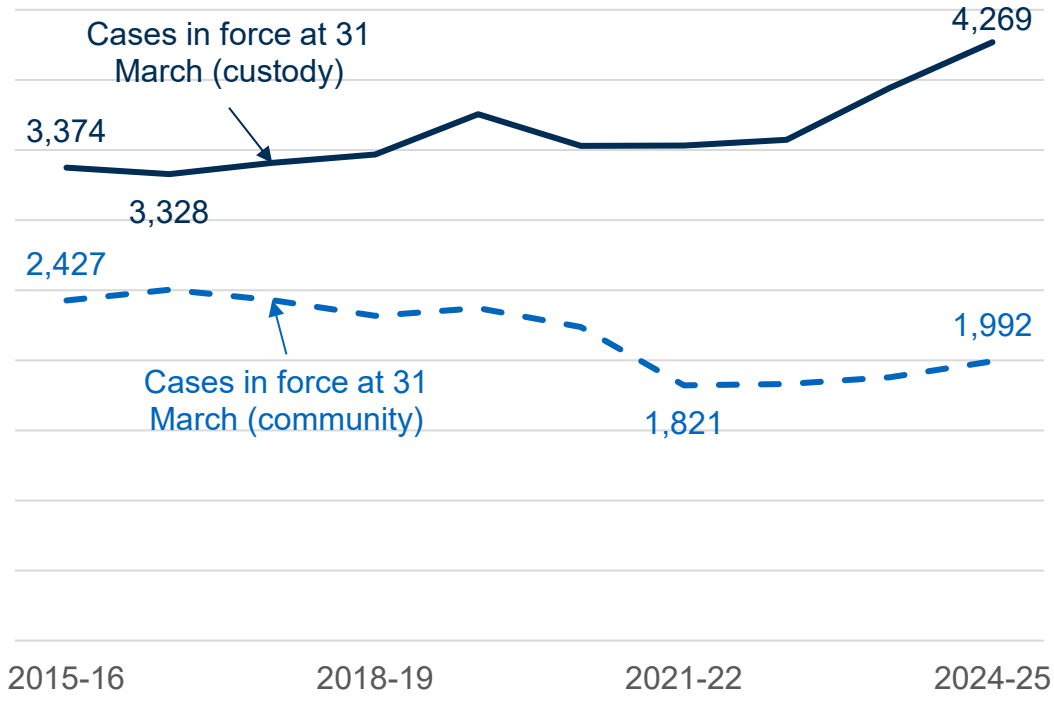


Commencements for statutory throughcare in custody generally fluctuated around 1,000 in the years 2015-16 to 2019-20. Numbers fell at the start of the pandemic in 2020-21 to 630 cases but have risen in each of the following four years, reaching the highest in ten years at 1,200.

Thirty-one per cent of cases in 2024-25 involved determinate sentences of four years or more. Supervised release orders accounted for a further 25 per cent.

The number of commencements for statutory throughcare cases in the community increased by 20 per cent to 1,000 in 2024-25. The largest increases from 2023-24 to 2024-25, were in categories extended sentence and short-term sex offender. Supervised release orders are still the biggest category for 2024-25, contributing 26 per cent.

Chart 6: Statutory throughcare custody cases in force have risen in the last ten years while community cases have fallen slightly.
Number of statutory throughcare cases in force on 31 March, custody and community-based 2015-16 to 2024-25, Scotland



The statutory custody-based throughcare caseload was 4,300 individuals on 31 March 2025. This was eight per cent higher than in 2023-24 and the highest in the last ten years.

The statutory community-based throughcare caseload was 2,000 individuals on 31 March 2025. This was six per cent higher last year but the 4th lowest in the last ten years.

Data was collected on the split of recalled prisoners in 2024-25 for the first time. There were 290 recalled prisoners in 2024-25. Sixty-five per cent were recalled due to non-compliance with licence conditions, with the rest (35 per cent) recalled due to both non-compliance of licence conditions and commission of an offence.

On 31 March 2025, 68 per cent of the caseload was custody-based and 32 per cent was community-based. This differed from the position in March 2015 when 58 per cent was custody and 42 per cent community.

The number of completions of statutory throughcare cases in the community has ranged from 830 to 1,120 over the last ten years. The total of 890 in 2024-25 was the 3rd lowest over this period.

New data for the number of voluntary throughcare referrals was collected for the first in 2024-25. There were around 2,000 referrals reported in that year.

As this is the first year of data collection, there may be revisions to the figures as guidance in improved in the future.

The number of voluntary throughcare cases commenced in 2024-25 was 1,400. This was the 2nd lowest in the last ten years, the lowest was the pandemic year of 2020-21. Twenty-one per cent of the cases commenced in 2024-25 were for females.

9 Pre-release reports

(Table 1)

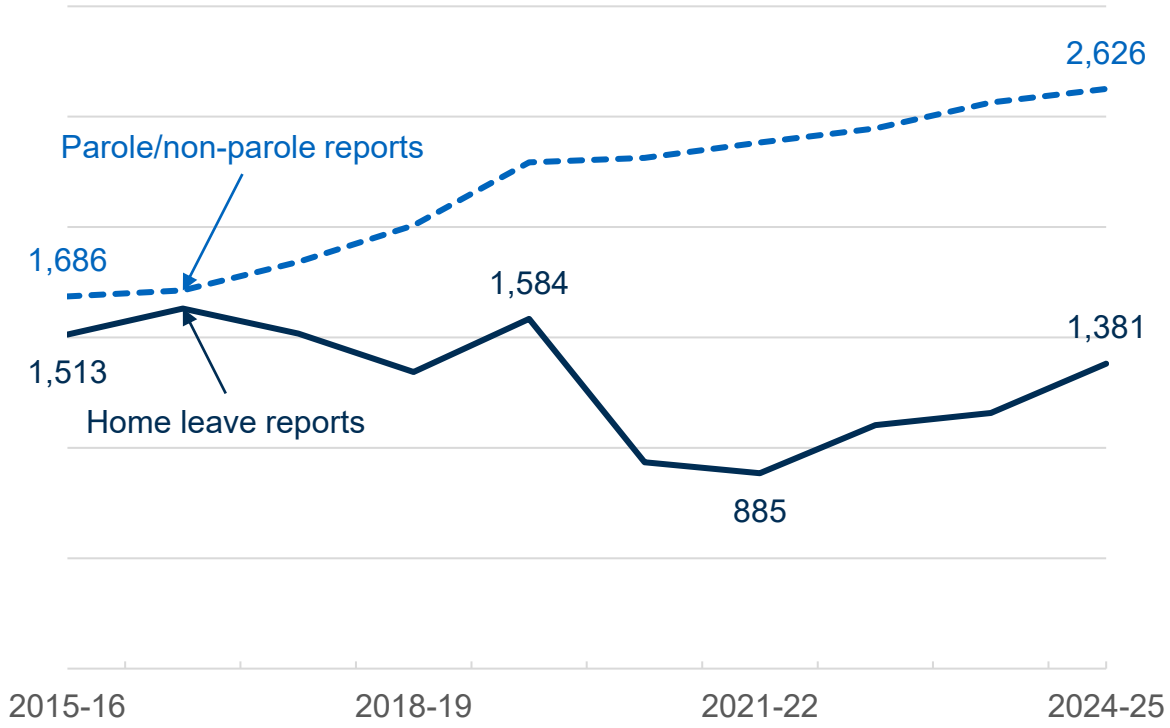
Key statistics for 2024-25:

- There were 1,400 home leave reports produced, the 5th highest in ten years.
- There were 2,600 reports produced for release from prison on parole/non-parole licence, the highest in the last ten years.
- Ninety-one per cent of home leave reports were for males.
- Ninety-eight per cent of parole/non-parole reports were for males.

Part of statutory throughcare involves preparing reports. Pre-release reports is an umbrella term used solely for statistical purposes to cover:

- Home leave reports, which inform temporary release from prison on home leave, and
- Parole/non-parole reports, which inform liberation on licence.

Chart 7: Parole/non-parole reports have steadily increased over the last ten years.
Number of parole/non-parole reports and home leave reports submitted 2015-16 to 2024-25, Scotland



In 2024-25, 1,400 home leave reports were produced. This was 19 per cent higher than in 2023-24. Numbers have generally remained lower than in the pre-pandemic years.

A total of 2,600 reports for release from prison on parole/non-parole licence were recorded in 2024-25. This was a rise of two per cent on 2023-24. Numbers have increased every year since 2015-16.

Overall, pre-release reports in 2015-16 and 2016-17 were nearly 50:50 between home leave and parole/non-parole reports. This ratio has, however, changed substantially since then. The percentage of reports which were parole/non-parole was 66 per cent in 2024-25, with the remaining 34 per cent home leave reports.

10 Home detention curfew assessments

(Table 1)

Key statistics for 2024-25:

- The number of home detention curfew assessment reports completed was 1,100 in 2024-25, an increase of 47 per cent since last year.
- Ninety-one per cent of home detention curfew reports were for males.

- Those between 31 and 40 years old accounted for the highest proportion of home detention curfew reports (41 per cent).

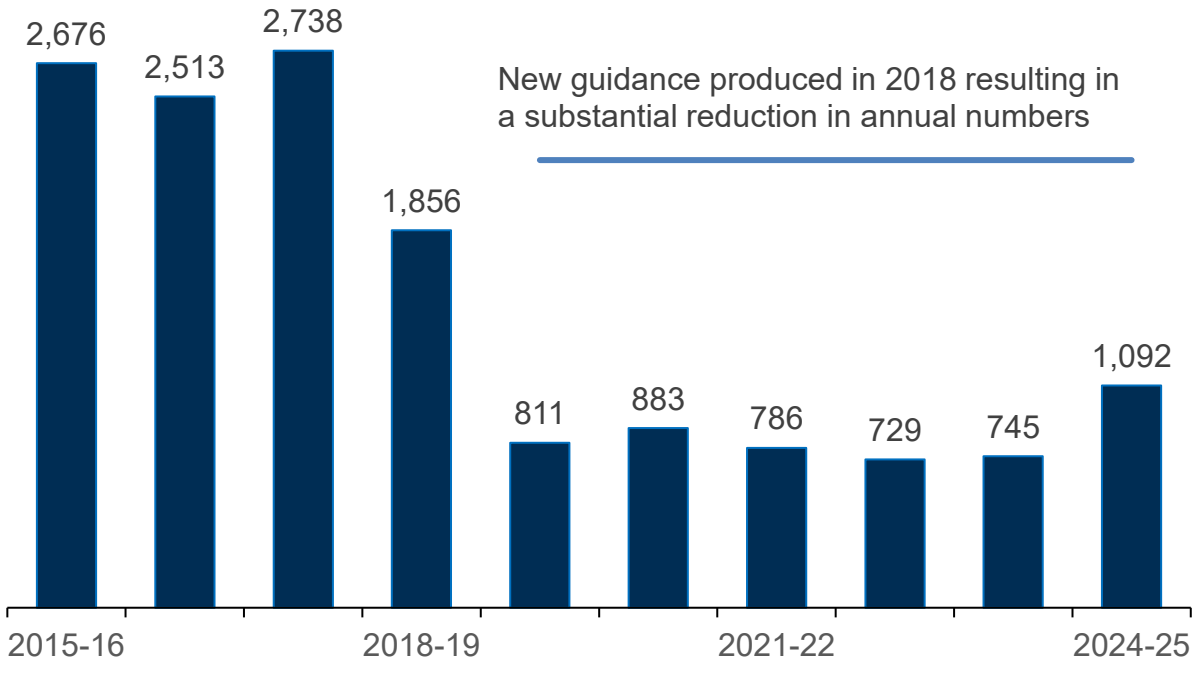
Those serving a custodial sentence can access electronically monitored early release under a home detention curfew (HDC).

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) conducts individual risk assessments for all eligible individuals seeking HDC release. This determines if they can be managed in the community under curfew and licence conditions. If they pass the risk assessment, SPS requests a community assessment report (CAR) from local authority justice social work to evaluate the suitability of the proposed release address. SPS considers the CAR information when deciding on HDC release.

From 2015-16 to 2017-18, there were at least 2,500 reports a year. This declined in 2018-19 to 1,900 and has fallen further since then, averaging 790 in the next five years. The total of 1,100 in 2024-25 was the highest in the last six years, an increase of 47 per cent since 2023-24.

The decline since 2017-18 is the result of a change in the approach to the HDC assessment framework. In 2018, new guidance for SPS's individualised risk assessment for HDC led to a significant decrease in individuals assessed as suitable for HDC release. Consequently, fewer CARs were requested from justice social work departments.

Chart 8: Annual home detention curfew assessment reports in 2024-25 the highest in the last six years of comparable data
Number of home detention curfew assessment reports completed 2015-16 to 2024-25, Scotland



11 Tables

The detail on the findings in this publication are drawn from the tables which are published alongside the publication.

The following symbols are used throughout these tables:
low - a percentage which is not actually zero but is:
- Less than 0.05% if percentages are given to one decimal place.
- Less than 0.5% if percentages are given to the nearest whole percentage.

x - data which was not collected in the year(s) in question.
z - data for a category which did not exist in the year(s) in question.

Percentage figures given in tables and charts may not always sum to the exact totals due to rounding.

The data in the tables comes from administrative IT systems and may have some small inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording. The figures have been checked as far as practicable. Figures are approximate and not necessarily accurate to the last whole number. They are also updated and quality assured on an ongoing basis in the administrative systems. This publication's information supersedes previous ones, so always refer to the most recent publication and tables, as figures may differ slightly. Footnotes provide details of substantive revisions to improve data quality.

Numbers in the tables are exact but, in the text, they are rounded for presentational purposes. The numbers in the text are generally rounded as follows:

- 1,000 to less than 100,000 – rounded to the nearest 100
- 100 to less than 1,000 – rounded to the nearest 10
- Less than 100 – unrounded

Also in the text, percentages are calculated based on the unrounded numbers and are then rounded to the nearest whole number.

Additional justice social work datasets can be found on the Scottish Government's open data platform, under the “Crime and Justice” theme. It is hoped to expand the amount of justice social work data on this platform in 2026.

Annex A Data and Methodology

The annual aggregate justice social work return for local authority justice social work services was introduced in 1999-2000. It initially covered justice social work reports, community service orders, and probation orders. Over time, the content and format have evolved to reflect new developments, increased demand for information, and clarification of data definitions. Additional items and their introduction years include:

- throughcare (statutory post release supervision) (2001-02)
- diversion from prosecution (2001-02), (2022-23)
- bail information and supervision (2003-04),(2022-23 to 2023-24)
- voluntary throughcare (2004-05), (2023-24)
- court-based services (2004-05)
- fiscal work orders (2015-16)
- structured deferred sentences (2018-19).

Figures in this publication are sourced from live justice social work systems. The latest statistics cover the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Earlier years' figures may have slight revisions, detailed later in this Annex.

Data from local authorities' recording systems, used for case management and internal monitoring, includes personal characteristics like gender and ethnicity. These characteristics are usually self-identified. Administrative data will always be subject to some degree of error that arises in any large-scale recording system. The data in this publication has, however, been quality assured as far as practicable. This is done through a series of validation processes before publication. As a result, the data is considered of good quality.

The aggregate return includes validation checks to notify local authorities of inconsistencies within the data. If there are large changes from the previous year, the local authority is asked to confirm the figures. Once all data returns are returned, further analysis is conducted to detect major changes over recent periods.

Occasionally, it is discovered after publication that some figures require revision. The revision mechanism depends on factors such as:

- The importance of the statistic
- The size of the change
- The consequences of the change.

Revisions are considered individually. If needed, reports and tables are updated on the website. Otherwise, corrections are made in the next

publication and noted in footnotes. Future publications do not highlight these revisions but there will be details within the note(s) to the relevant table(s).

Some changes have been made since the previous publication in 2023-24, which would have affected some local authority figures and Scotland level figures. These affect the following (only 2023-24 unless stated otherwise):

- Diversion from prosecution
- Bail supervision
- Structured deferred sentences
- Statutory throughcare
- Voluntary throughcare (2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24)
- Pre-release reports.

Please note, tables are annotated with the relevant notes.

An additional one-off question was posed regarding individuals assessed as not suitable for bail in 2024-25. Specifically, the question was: "How many had inappropriate accommodation as a contributing factor to the assessment recommendation of not suitable for bail?" Seventeen local authorities were able to provide this information, while other authorities do inquire about accommodation but were unable to record and/or extract this information from their management systems. These 17 local authorities accounted for 17 per cent of those assessments deemed not suitable for bail for the whole of Scotland, i.e. less than one-fifth. Of the 244 assessments where it was possible to provide this information, only 30 per cent (73) had inappropriate accommodation as a contributing factor to the recommendation of not suitable for bail.

Unlike the report and the tables referred to in the report, the live (mainly local authority level) tables on the Scottish Government justice social work statistics website, are usually updated as soon as an error becomes apparent.

Ratios in this publication are calculated per 10,000 people aged 16 to 70 in Scotland, using mid-year population estimates from the National Records of Scotland website. Estimates from 30 June 2024 were used for the 2024-25 data. Revised figures from Scotland's Census 2022 have been applied for years 2011 to 2021.

As well as the additional justice social work datasets at local authority level on the Scottish Government website, there are also further datasets on the Scottish Government's open data platform.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland have different judicial systems. This makes comparing information on justice social work statistics unfeasible. Statistical information on their judicial systems can be found at:

- England and Wales: Statistics at Ministry of Justice
- Northern Ireland: Department of Justice

There are a range of other statistics on the Scottish judicial system:

- Scottish Government Crime and Justice Statistics
- Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service – Official Statistics
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service - Publications
- Scottish Prison Service - Information
- Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services Criminal Disposals Dashboard

Annex B Definitions

The following section provides a brief description of the main types of justice social work activity encompassed within this report.

Diversion from prosecution:

Diversion from prosecution is an alternative to prosecution used by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) upon receiving a police report or a report from a specialist reporting agency. COPFS refers the accused to local authority justice social work or a partner agency for support, treatment or other actions to address the underlying causes of the alleged offending with the aim of preventing further offences. Diversion is considered when:

- there is enough evidence to prosecute;
- the accused has an identifiable need contributing to the offending; and
- it is assessed that diversion is the most appropriate outcome in the public interest

Cases commenced which were subject to extended periods of diversion are those cases which were extended beyond an initial three-month period. Such cases are those where COPFS have either agreed to extend beyond three months or have received and agreed to a request from a local authority to extend.

Bail supervision and electronic monitoring for bail

Local authority justice social work assesses suitability for bail supervision and electronic monitoring in appropriate cases. Bail supervision, provided by social work or third sector services, supports people to comply with bail conditions. Updated national bail supervision guidance was published in May 2022.

Introduced under the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019, electronic monitoring orders can be issued by courts as part of a bail order. These can be standalone or alongside bail supervision and may include conditions like curfews or staying away from a specific location.

Bail supervision cases successfully completed are where the person has met all the terms of their bail supervision. This includes cases where review(s) took place that did not lead to breach reports.

Fiscal Work Orders

Fiscal work orders allow COPFS to offer unpaid work as an alternative to prosecution, where:

- there is enough evidence to prosecute a summary offence;
- when it is assessed as the most appropriate outcome in the public interest
- Justice social work has met with the person and assessed that they are suitable

These orders were introduced nationally on 1 April 2015. They can be for a minimum of ten and a maximum of 50 hours and should be completed within six months.

Structured deferred sentences

Structured deferred sentences (SDS) provide courts with a flexible intervention which can be used post-conviction but before final sentencing. SDS is delivered by justice social work and key partners and aims to address underlying causes of offending. The court retains discretion to pass sentence in any manner that would have been appropriate at the time of conviction, but with the benefit of information from the period of deferral. The Scottish Government published National guidance on structured deferred sentences in Scotland in February 2021.

Statutory Throughcare

Throughcare is the support provided to prisoners and their families from sentencing, during imprisonment and after release. Those serving over four years are released on licence under statutory supervision. Those sentenced to less than 4 years can be made subject to a short-term sex offender licence under Section 15 of the Management of Offenders, etc. (Scotland) Act 2005, or those with extended sentences or supervised release orders, can also be subject to statutory supervision upon release. The aim is to protect the public, prepare individuals for release, and support their reintegration and rehabilitation into the community.

Voluntary Throughcare

Voluntary throughcare is available to those who are not subject to statutory throughcare, but who request support from local authorities while in custody or within 12 months of release.

Home Leave Reports

Home leave is a key part of progression, allowing temporary release from custody to visit an approved place, such as a family member's or friend's home. This period can last up to seven nights every four weeks, typically for long sentence prisoners who have successfully completed day releases and shorter home leave periods and are preparing for release.

For statutory supervision post-release, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) requests a home leave report from local authority justice social work.
The final decision on home leave rests with SPS and is facilitated by the Risk Management Team (RMT). During home leave, the individual should be seen by their community-based social worker.

Parole/non parole reports

Parole/non-parole reports are prepared for prisoners nearing release by a local authority justice social worker. They visit the prisoner's family home and the prisoner to gather necessary information. The report should cover:

- the social and family context the prisoner will return to.
- how supportive this environment is likely to be.
- the level and nature of supervision and support for the prisoner and their family upon release.
- details of any resources or programmes to aid social inclusion and reduce the risk of reoffending and harm.

Parole/non-parole reports by the community-based justice social worker supplements an assessment report by a prison-based justice social worker. Since late 2022, the Throughcare Assessment for Release on Licence (TARL) report has been introduced, combining both reports. In 2023-24 and 2024-25, local authorities were asked to report how many of their parole/non-parole reports were TARLs. In 2024-25, around 70 per cent of the parole/non-parole reports were TARLs.

Home Detention Curfew

Home Detention Curfew (HDC), under Section 3AA of the Prisoners and Criminal Proceedings (Scotland) Act 1993, as amended by the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019., allows eligible individuals to serve a part of their sentence in the community, up to 180 days. They are electronically monitored and managed via licence conditions, including a nightly curfew, for the duration of their release on HDC.

HDC is mainly used for those serving short-term sentences (less than four years). For long-term sentences (four years or more), the Parole Board for Scotland must recommend release on parole before the Scottish Prison

Service (SPS) can consider release on HDC. Licence conditions for release of these individuals must mirror those set by the Parole Board.

All eligible individuals considered for release on HDC are risk assessed by SPS, on behalf of Scottish Ministers. This assessment includes a community assessment report (CAR) by local authority justice social work.

Local authority justice social work provides SPS decision-makers with relevant information to support the HDC decision-making process. SPS then decides on HDC release, based on the collective evidence.

Annex C Consultation

A data user review of justice social work statistics was conducted in 2023 and published on the Scottish Government website. This is the last time that these six recommendations will be reported on as they have been progressed as far as possible.

1. Aim: Improve the timing of published data – from 2024 onwards, the report will be split in two. This will allow some of the data to be in the public domain three to four months earlier. Outcome: This has been completed.
2. Aim: Commentary to be changed to reflect some of the requests e.g., key points at the beginning of topics and more graphs/infographics to break up text. Outcome: This has been completed.
3. Aim: Tables to be streamlined to allow filtering to make it easier to select different years and geographical breakdowns. Outcome: This has been completed.
4. Aim: There were a number of requests asking for more data linkage. This would first require a review and likely changes to existing information governance arrangements, to ensure any future work in this area is compliant with data protection regulations. Outcome: Ongoing work to improve governance in data linking requests. Any request for data linkage would go through the Scottish Government Statistical Public Benefit and Privacy Panel.
5. Aim: Possible changes to the data collection method, possibly extending the use of the ProcXed.NET data platform to make data transfer between local authorities and Scottish Government more efficient. Outcome: Not currently resourced.
6. Aim: Investigate and review the requests for additional data that relate to justice social work statistics. Outcome: There were 11 requests on possible changes to the data collection. These were investigated and this is a summary of the results:

Ten of these requests have been closed:

- Justice social work reports conversion data – this is already published.
- Local authority data – due to resource burden, it was decided against increasing the frequency of collection, but disposal information is available from other sources more frequently since this review was commissioned (see Annex A).
- Bail statistics – extra data is now requested.
- Unpaid work hours – there is now a separate publication on this topic.
- Where services are shared – shared services are split into separate local authorities in the data.
- Throughcare – there is now improved guidance and additional questions
- Demographics – data was requested in 2024-25 for bail supervision numbers by age group data.
- Social work family grouping – this is outside the scope of this publication.
- Drug treatment and testing orders (DTTO) – a previous working group decided to remove the collection of data on DTTO assessments when reviewing the information to be collected on a unit basis.
- Low and high tariff structured deferred sentences (SDS) - SDS is a flexible intervention and the guidance does not define low and high tariff.

The other request is awaiting change to support investigation:

- Diversion from prosecution - awaiting new national guidance to be published in 2025.

Tell us what you think

We are always interested to hear from our users about how our statistics are used, and how they can be improved.

Enquiries

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