Official Statistics

Safer Communities and Justice Statistics Monthly Data Report: December 2025

A summary of justice and safer communities statistics.

December 2025

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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Introduction

This report provides a general overview of a number of important justice and safer communities statistics. Data has been gathered from mainly Scottish Government statistics and may be subject to future revision as more recent data becomes available. The document is reviewed every month to keep it as up to date as possible. Please note that some justice and safer community partners publish their own statistics that are not covered in this compendium. these may provide more current information.

Any newly updated summary statistics for the month are preceded by *** New ***.

These statistics are official statistics. Official statistics are statistics that are produced by crown bodies, those acting on behalf of crown bodies, or those specified in statutory orders, as defined in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

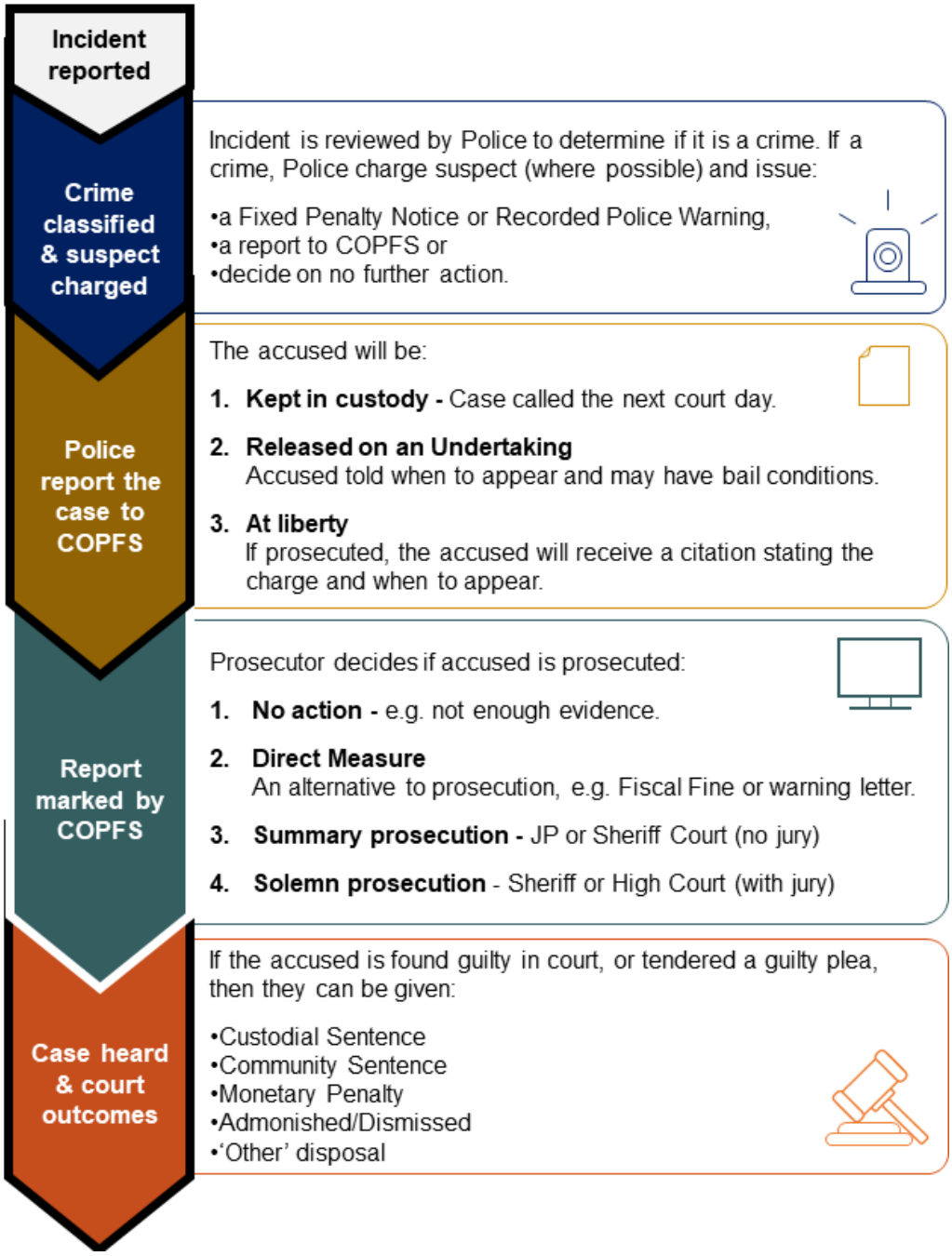
Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

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

Report published on 18 December 2025.
Includes information published up to 9 December 2025.

How crime flows through the Justice System

The diagram below illustrates how crime flows through the justice system. Below the diagram is a text version of this information held within it.



Text from Diagram:

The first arrow is the reporting of an incident.

The second arrow is crime classification and suspect charge. This is where the incident is reviewed by Police to determine if it is a crime. If a crime, Police charge suspect (where possible) and issue:

- Fixed Penalty Notice or Recorded Police Warning,
- a report to Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), or
- decide on no further action.

The third arrow is police report the case to COPFS. The accused will be:

1. Kept in custody - case called the next court day.
2. Released on an Undertaking - accused told when to appear and may have bail conditions.
3. At liberty - if prosecuted, the accused will receive a citation stating the charge and when to appear.

The fourth arrow is report marked by COPFS. The prosecutor decides if accused is prosecuted:

1. No action - e.g. not enough evidence.
2. Direct Measure - an alternative to prosecution, e.g. Fiscal Fine or warning letter.
3. Summary prosecution - JP or Sheriff Court (no jury)
4. Solemn prosecution - Sheriff or High Court (with jury)

The fifth and final arrow is case heard and court outcomes. If the accused is found guilty in court, or tendered a guilty plea, then they can be given:

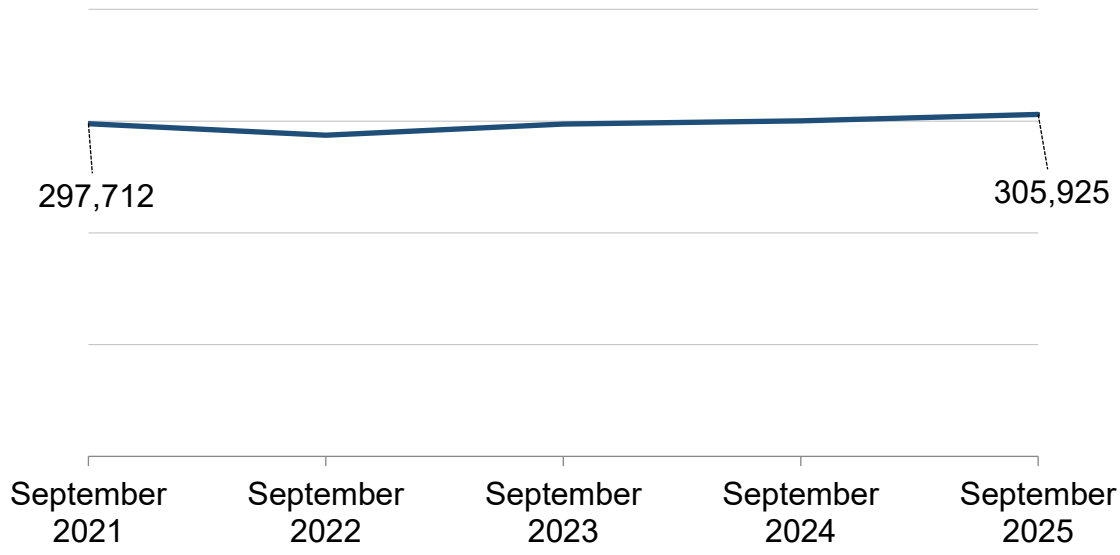
- Custodial Sentence
- Community Sentence
- Monetary Penalty
- Admonished/Dismissed
- ‘Other’ disposal

Crime in General

Statistics on crime in general

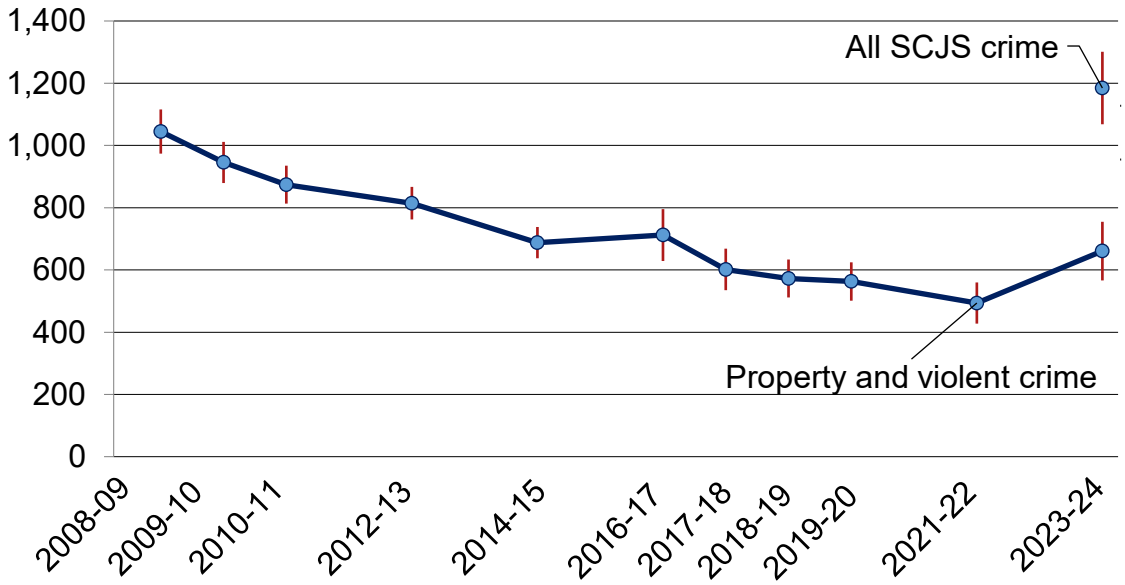
▶ *** New * Police recorded crime increased by 2% between year ending September 2024 and year ending September 2025.** The total number of crimes recorded by the police in Scotland in the year ending September 2025 was 305,925. This was 5,789 crimes (or 2%) higher than the level recorded in the year ending September 2024. The recording of crime is down 50% from its peak in 1991.

Chart 1 : Number of crimes recorded by the police (in thousands) – September 2021 to September 2025



▶**Property and violent crime has fallen by 37% since 2008-09.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that one-in-five (19.9%) adults were estimated to have experienced at least one crime in 2023-24. This included property crime (10.3% of adults), violent crime (2.9%) and for the first time fraud and computer misuse (9.5%). The latest findings show that the overall level of property and violent crime combined and the likelihood of being a victim of these crimes has increased since 2021-22. However, no change is detected with the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20, and both measures are down since 2008-09.

Chart 2: Estimated total crimes (in thousands) – by survey year



▶ *** New * Recorded violent crime increased in the most recent year.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police increased by 3%, from 71,004 in the year ending September 2024 to 73,033 in the year ending September 2025. Common assault (up 3%) made up the clear majority (83%) of all non-sexual crimes of violence recorded in the year ending September 2025. The SCJS showed that in 2023-24 the volume of violent crime increased by 73% since 2021-22. However, this is still 27% lower than 2008-09 and does not show a statistically significant change from 2019-20. It also showed that an estimated 44% of violent crime in 2023-24 was reported to the police.

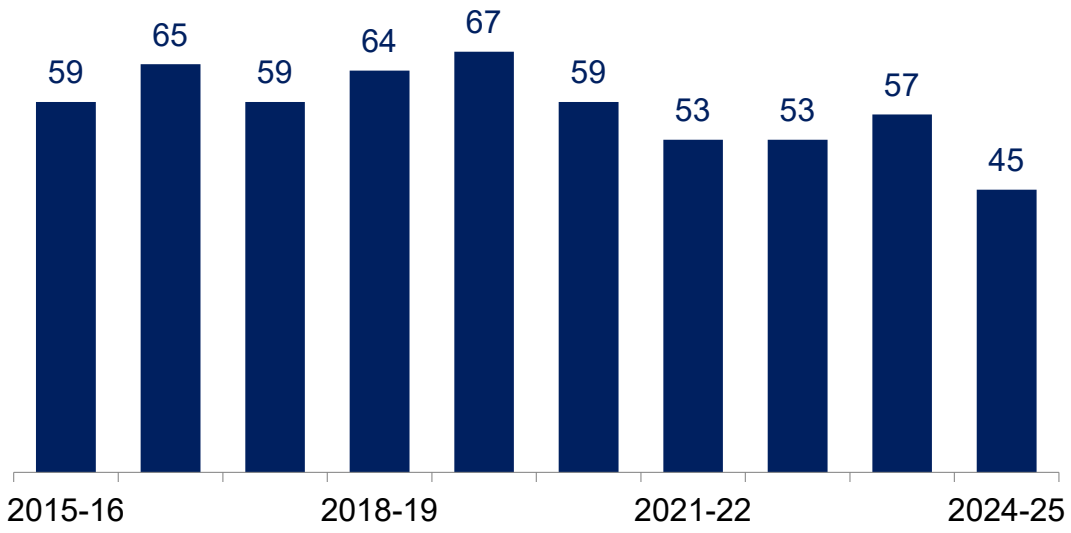
▶ *** New * Recorded sexual crimes increased in the most recent year.** Sexual crimes increased by 7%, from 14,651 in the year ending September 2024 to 15,704 in the year ending September 2025. Sexual crimes have been increasing in the long term. Multiple factors lie behind the long term increase in recorded sexual crime including for example - historical reporting, more online offending and the impact of new legislation. The latest available data from 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 56.0% in 2024-25, up from 54.1% in 2023-24. Crimes against society (93.8%), non-sexual crimes of violence (68.4%) and sexual crimes (56.9%) continued to have higher clear up rates in 2024-25 than crimes of dishonesty (35.1%) and damage and reckless behaviour (31.0%).

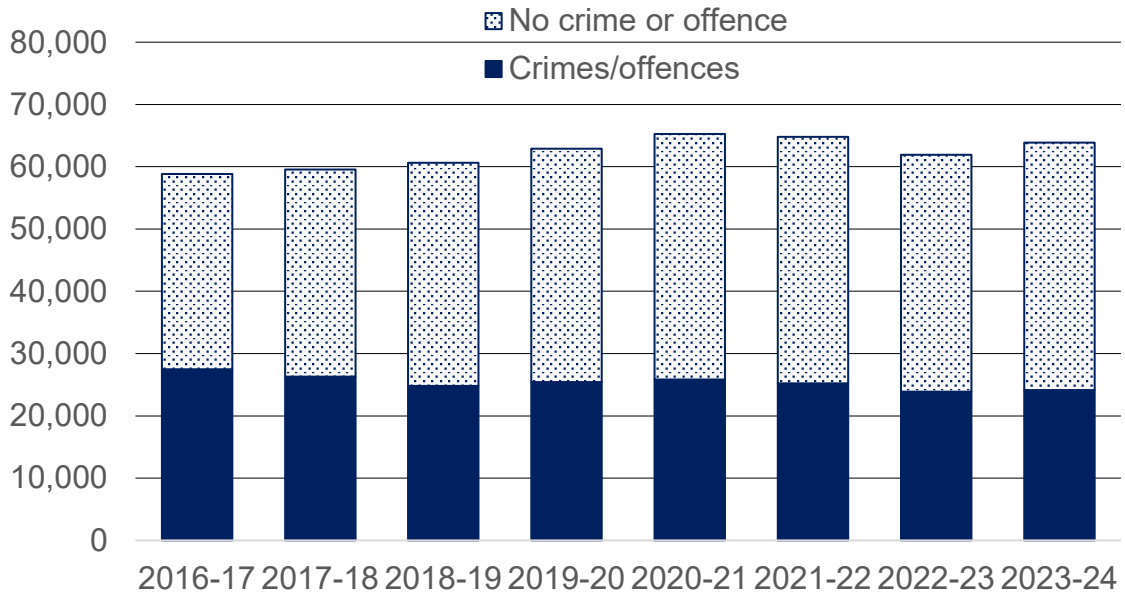
▶ **Number of victims of homicide at the lowest level since 1976.** There were 45 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2024-25, a 21% decrease from 2023-24 and a 24% decrease from 2015-16.

Chart 3: Number of victims of homicide, 2015-16 to 2024-25.



▶ **Increase in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 63,867 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2023-24, an increase of 3% on 2022-23. In 2023-24, 38% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.

Chart 4: Number of domestic abuse incidents, 2016-17 to 2023-24

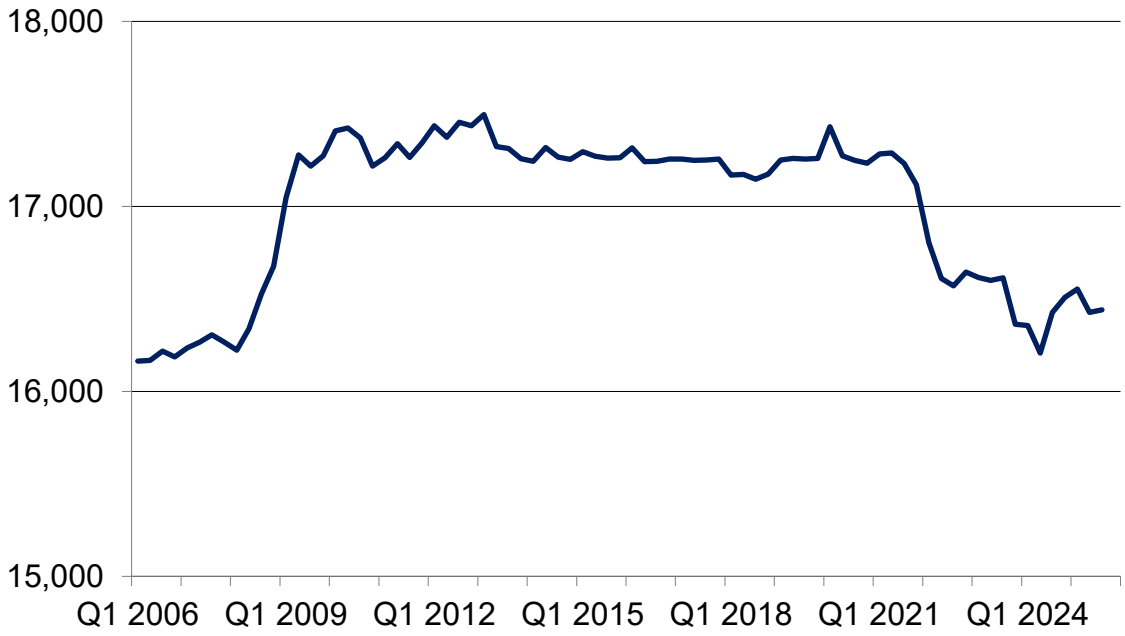


Policing

Statistics on policing

► **There were 16,441 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 30 September 2025.** This was 207 (+1.3%) more officers compared to the position on 31 March 2007, and 14 (+0.1%) more than on 30 September 2024.

Chart 5: Number of police officers (FTE) - Quarter 1 2006 to Quarter 3 2025



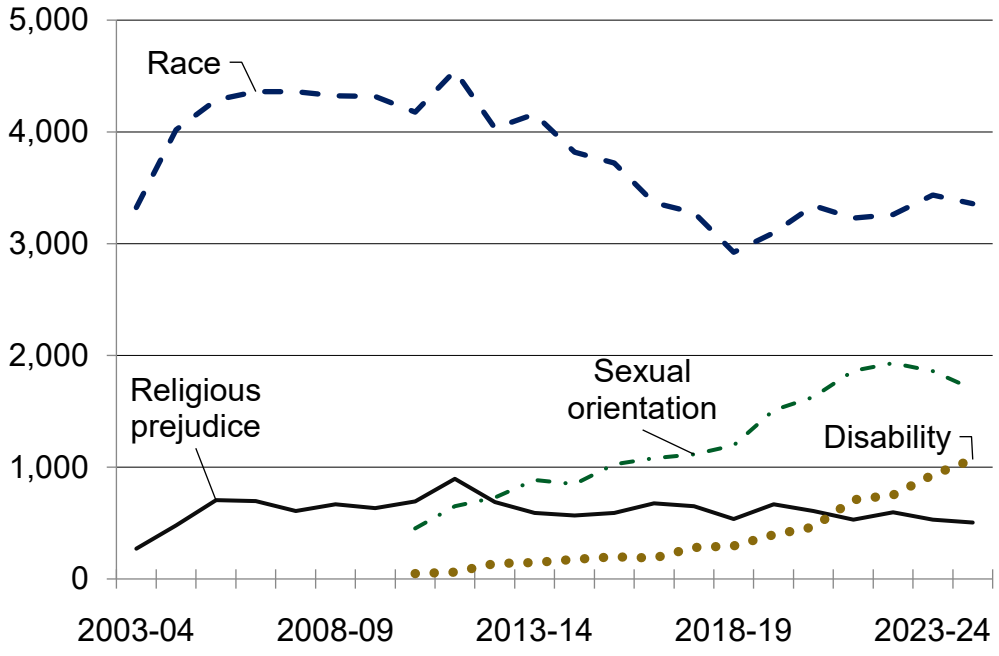
Hate Crime

Statistics on hate crime

► **Numbers fell for police recorded hate crime.** The police recorded 6,227 hate crimes in 2023-24. This is less than 1% (or 30) lower than in 2022-23 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 five showing a decrease. In 2023-24, 63% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 24% sexual orientation, 10% disability, 7% religion and 3% transgender identity.

► **Small decrease in overall hate crime charges.** There was a decrease of 1.2% between 2023-24 and 2024-25, in the total number of charges reported to COPFS containing at least one element of hate crime. The figures for 2024-25 are not directly comparable with earlier years because they include new categories of hate crime and new charges introduced by the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021. There were increases for disability hate crime charges. Race, religion and sexual orientation aggravated charges saw a decrease and transgender identity showed no change. Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator. Following the introduction of two new aggravators in the recent Act, there were 88 charges reported with an aggravation of age and 13 charges reported with an aggravation of variations in sex characteristics.

Chart 6: Number of charges reported to COPFS – 2003-04 to 2024-25



Community Safety

Statistics on community safety

▶ **Public perception of local crime rate at a similar level to 2008-09.** The SCJS found that over two-thirds (71%) of adults in 2023-24 said that the crime rate in their local area had decreased or stayed the same over the last couple of years. This figure has fallen from 76% in 2021-22 and is at a similar level to 2008-09 and the pre-covid position in 2019-20.

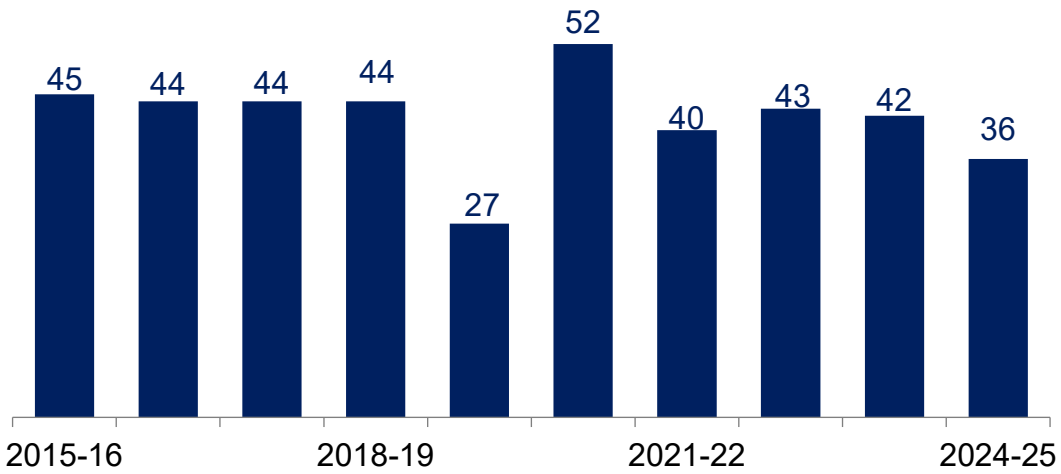
▶ **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that three-quarters (75%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2023-24. This is an increase from 66% in 2008-09 but has been stable since 2016-17.

▶ **Less than half of adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reported that, in 2023-24, 45% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, down from 49% in 2021-22 and 61% in 2012-13.

▶ **Fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2015-16.** In 2024-25, there were 1,554 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 376 due to assault with a sharp object. These were, respectively, 36% and 33% lower than in 2015-16.

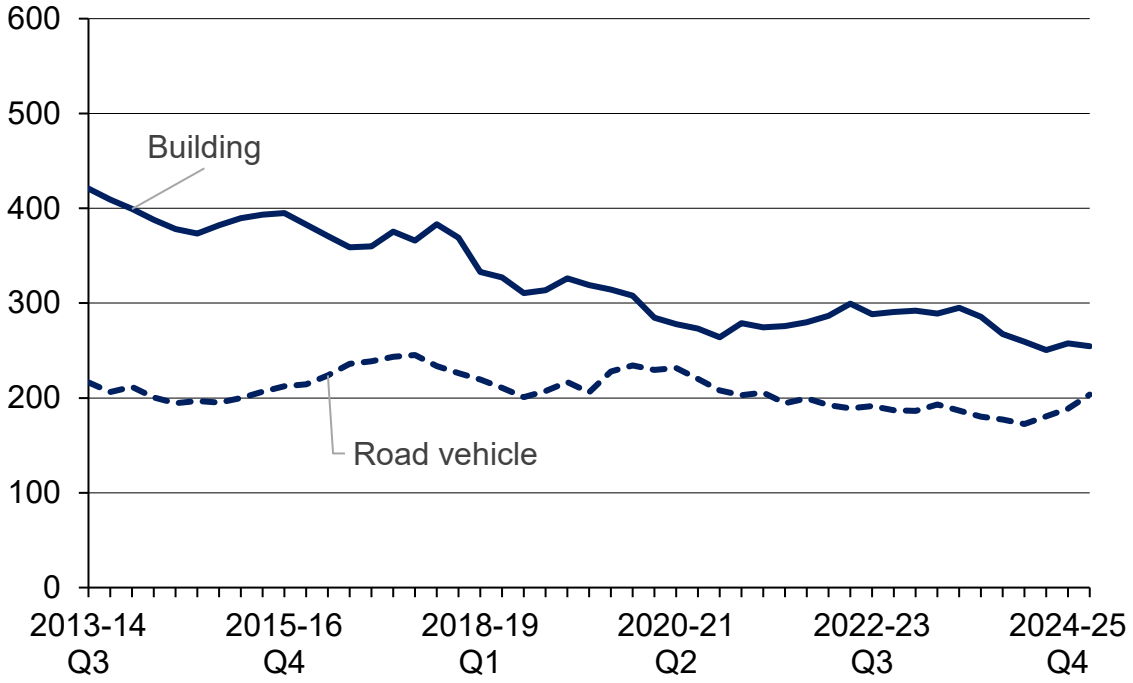
▶ **Number of fires fell 5% in the last year.** In 2024-25, there were 22,925 fires in Scotland, down 5% on 2023-24 and the lowest in the last ten years. There were 36 fire fatalities in 2024-25, down from 42 in 2023-24 and the second lowest in the last decade.

Chart 7: Number of fatal fire casualties – 2015-16 to 2024-25



► **The number of deliberate building fires has fallen over the last year while the number of deliberate road vehicle fires increased over the same period.** There were 290 deliberate building fires in 2025-26 Q1, down from 302 in 2024-25 Q1. There were 229 deliberate road vehicle fires in 2025-26 Q1, up from 170 in 2024-25 Q1.

Chart 8: Deliberate building and road vehicle fires, 2013-14 Q3 to 2025-26 Q1



Note: 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.

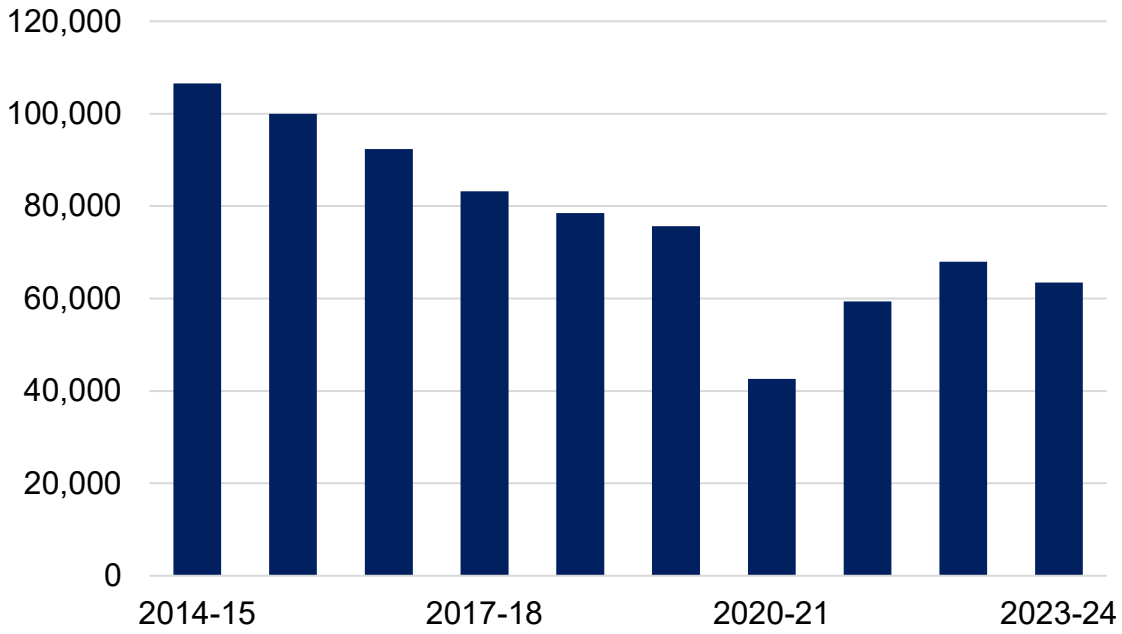
► **Unwanted fire alarm signals made up 12% of incidents in the first quarter of 2025-26.** Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) describe avoidable false alarm signals from a workplace, either from an automatic fire alarm or from a person. There were 2,737 UFAS incidents in 2025-26 Q1, which makes up 11.7% of all incidents attended in Q1. This is down from the previous year when UFAS made up 16.0% of all incidents attended in 2024-25 Q1. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) introduced a new policy in July 2023 which outlined a change in how automatic fire alarm call outs are managed and led to a decrease in the number of UFAS incidents attended.

Criminal Proceedings

Statistics on criminal proceedings

▶ *** New * Number of prosecutions and convictions in 2023-24 both fell 7%, but solemn proceedings, which are more complex and take longer to conclude in court, increased.** The number of people convicted in Scottish courts in 2023-24 was 63,486, 7% lower than the 67,966 seen in 2022-23.

Chart 9: Number of people convicted in Scottish courts – 2014-15 to 2023-24



Note: Data from 2020-21 onwards were affected by the Covid pandemic and should not be considered indicative of long term trends.

▶ *** New * Rise in convictions for serious crimes between 2022-23 and 2023-24.** Convictions for non-sexual crimes of violences rose by 4% and sexual crimes rose by 12%. These include 19% increases in convictions under both the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act (up to 897, a new high) and rape and attempted rape (221, a new all-time high going back to 1989-90).

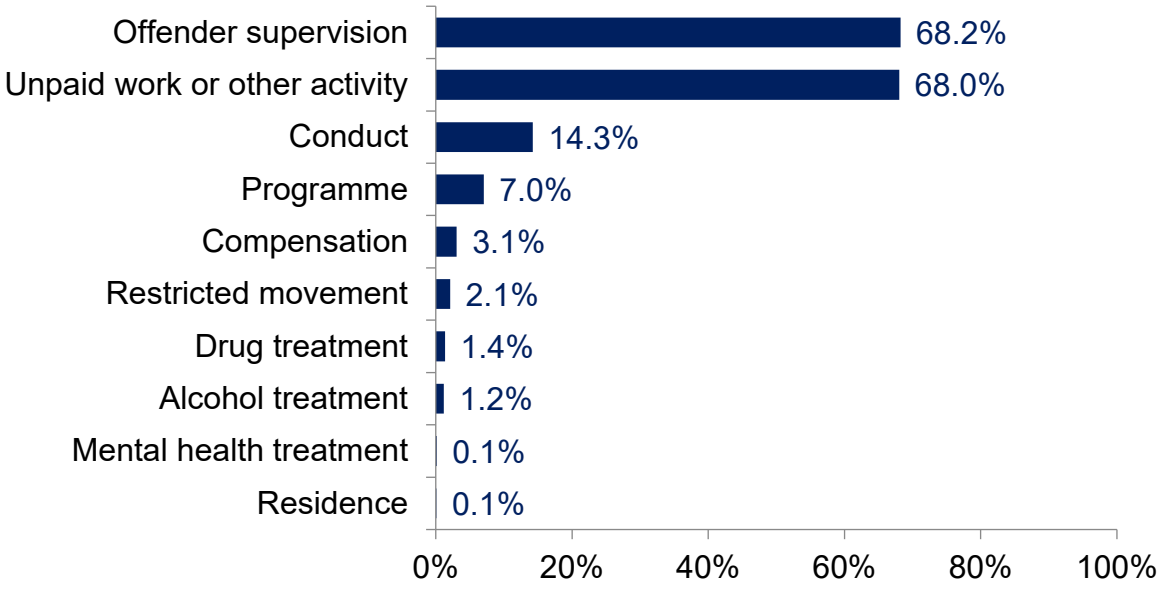
▶ *** New * Rise in proportions of custodial and community sentences in 2023-24.** Reflecting the increase in the proportion of more serious offences convicted in 2023-24, the proportion of custodial sentences was 16% (three percentage points higher than in 2022-23). The proportion of community sentences also increased, by one percentage point to 25%, the highest in the 10-year span.

▶ *** New * Average custodial sentence increased again to new all-time high.** The average custodial sentence length, excluding life and indeterminate

sentences, was 393 days in 2023-24. This was 2% higher than in 2022-23 (386 days) and the highest on record (since 1989-90). New analysis in the 2023-24 bulletin shows this rise is driven by an increasing proportion of more serious offences, which attract longer sentences, and sentence inflation, where longer sentences were given for the same main charge.

▶ **Community payback orders slightly more likely to have supervision than unpaid work.** There were 15,100 community payback orders imposed in 2023-24. This was 3% higher than in 2022-23 but still 10% lower than in 2019-20. In 2023-24, 68.0 per cent were issued with an unpaid work requirement, while slightly more (68.2 per cent) were issued with a supervision requirement.

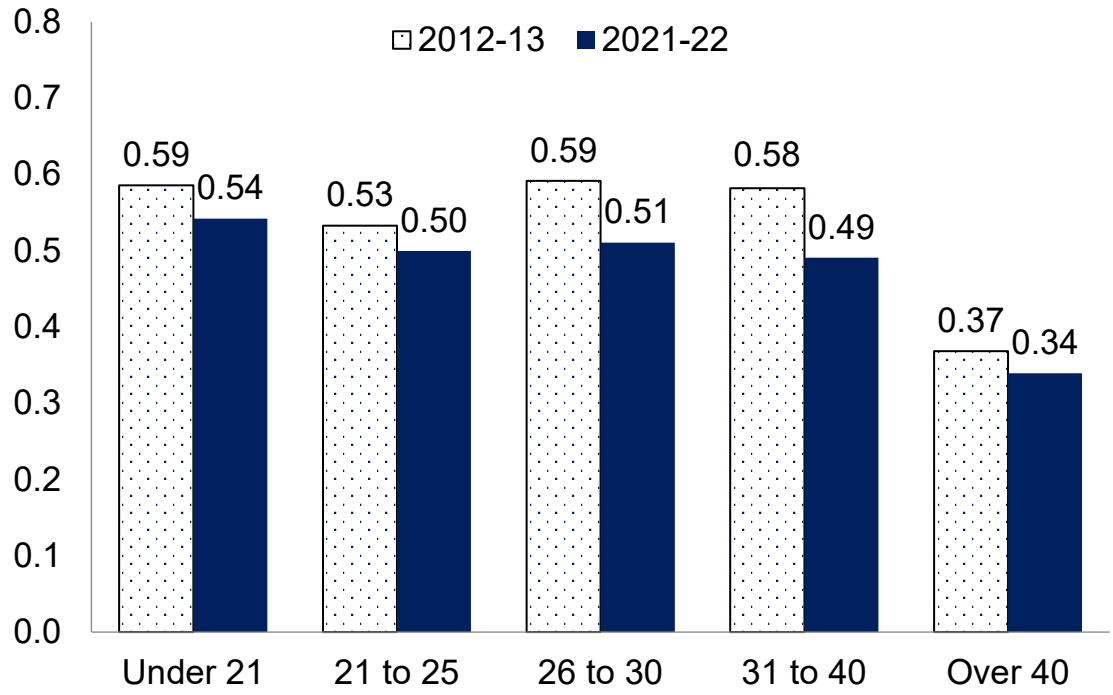
Chart 10: Community payback orders imposed – percentage of orders with different requirements, 2023-24



▶ **Reconviction rates are still yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, but have increased over the last few years.** The overall reconviction rate for the 2021-22 cohort was 27.1%, almost the same as the rate for the 2020-21 cohort (27.0%). Data is still likely to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but to a lesser extent than the previous year.

▶ **The average number of reconvictions per offender has decreased over time.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 14% lower in 2021-22 compared to 2012-13. The largest decrease in average number of reconvictions was for those aged between 31 and 40, a decrease of 16% since 2012-13.

Chart 11: Average reconvictions per offender by age, 2012-13 and 2021-22 cohorts



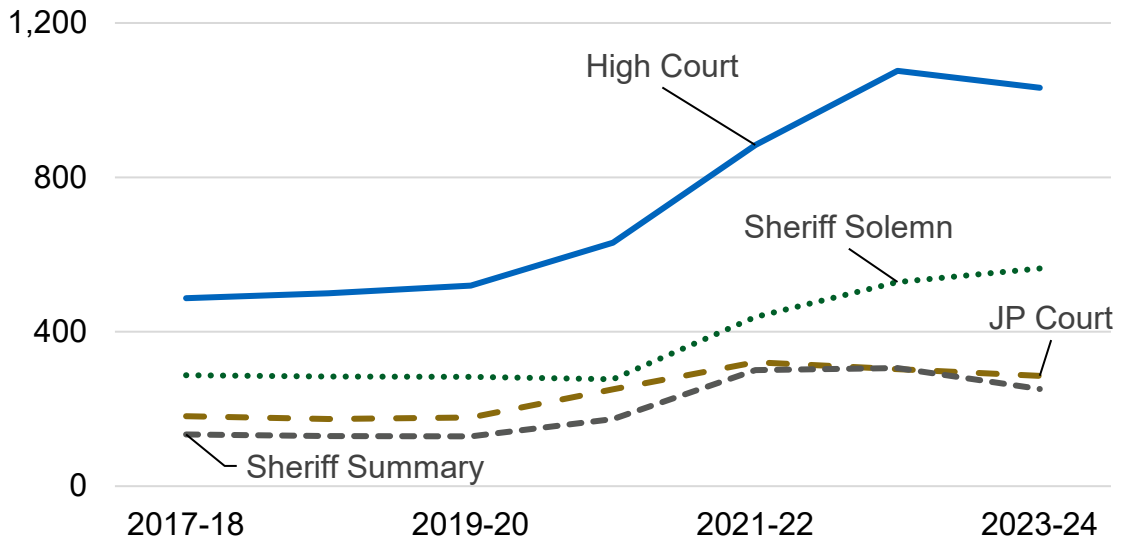
► **Number of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds fell by nine per cent in the last year.** Statistics published by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) show that, in 2024-25, 2,447 children were referred to the reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a fall of 9% from 2023-24 and is 11% lower than in 2015-16.

Justice Journey Times

Statistics on criminal justice journey times (offence date to verdict)

▶ **Median journey times decreased in 2023-24.** Median journey times decreased in high court and summary court in 2023-24 when compared to 2022-23. There were decreases of 4% in high court (from 1,076 to 1,032 days) and 18% in sheriff summary court (from 306 to 252 days). Sheriff solemn journey times increased by 7% (from 529 to 564 days).

Chart 12: Median time (in days) from offence to verdict by type of court, 2017-18 to 2023-24



▶ **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.** In solemn courts, the main drivers of journey time are the times from when the case is reported to COPFS to when it is registered in courts and the time from court registration to verdict. In general, for solemn courts the COPFS report to court registration times are higher than court registration to verdict times. In 2023-24 compared to 2022-23, median COPFS report to court registration time increased by 14% in high court and 11% in sheriff solemn court. Median court registration to verdict time remained stable in high court (11 months) and decreased by 9% to 117 days in sheriff solemn court, compared to 2022-23. In sheriff summary courts, the main driver of journey time is the time from court registration to verdict. In 2023-24, the median court registration to verdict time was around 4 months and the median COPFS report to court registration time was 24 days.

Chart 13: Median time (in days) - COPFS report to courts registration and court registration to verdict for high court, 2017-18 to 2023-24

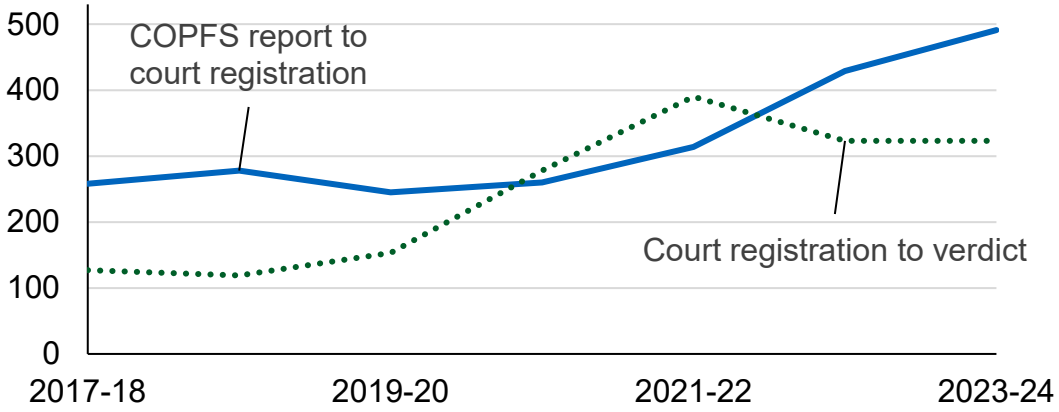
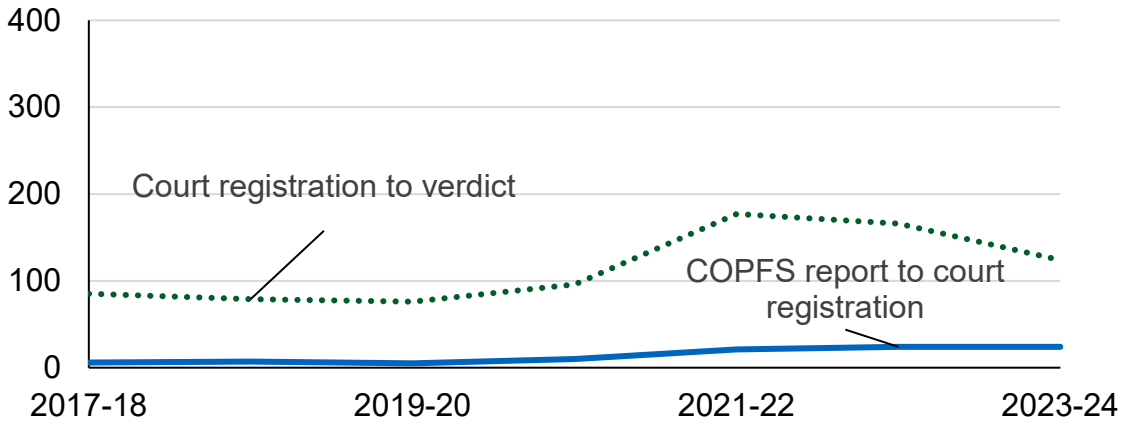


Chart 14: Median time (in days) - COPFS report to courts registration and court registration to verdict for sheriff summary courts, 2017-18 to 2023-24



► **There were differences in accused persons' journey times depending on the type of crime on registration.** The longest journey times were observed for accused people charged with at least one sexual crime and verdict issued in high court.

► **Historic offences increase overall journey times.** Journey times can be split by whether an offence was historic or not. The median journey time for accused in the historic sexual crimes group in high court in 2023-24 was around 11 years, down from around 13 years and 4 months in 2022-23 (-18%). In sheriff solemn court, median journey times for this group increased from around 7 years and 5 months in 2022-23 to around 8 years and 2 months in 2023-24 (10%). Median journey times for accused in the non-historic sexual crimes group remained largely stable in high court, at just over 3 years in 2023-24. It 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 journey times in the sexual crimes group are for rape and attempted rape. In 2023-24, the median journey time for non-historic cases of rape and attempted rape remained stable at around 3 years. For historic offences, median journey time decreased by 9% in 2023-24 to around 10 years and 8 months.

Prisons

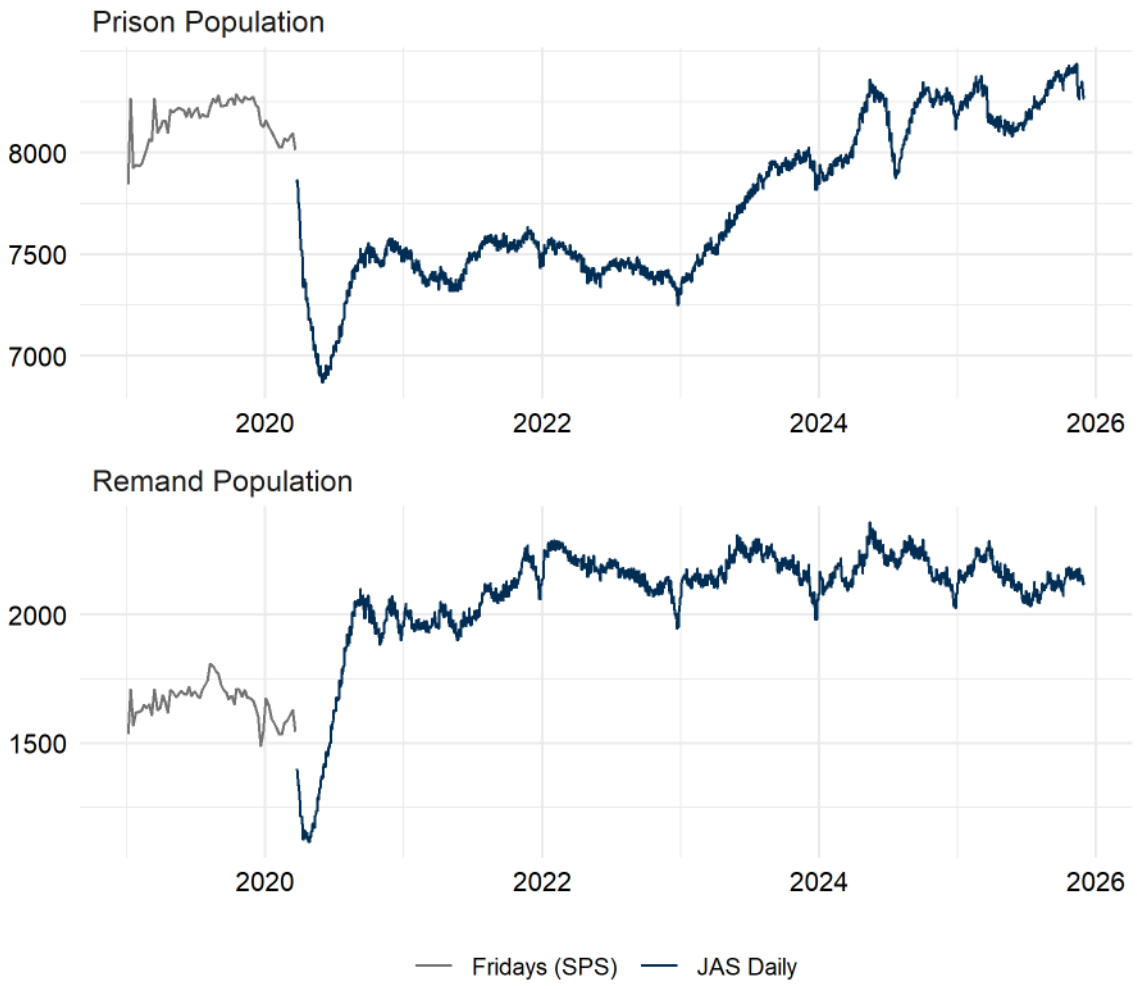
Statistics on prisons

*** New * The prison population has exceeded previous record levels.**

In November 2025 (up until the morning of Monday 1st December 2025):

- the population decreased by 126 to 8,267.
- 2,130 were on remand: 1,729 (21%) untried & 401 (5%) awaiting sentence. 6,137 (74%) were serving a sentence.
- 57% of arrivals were untried (454 of 800), 24% awaiting sentence (194) and 19% sentenced (152).

Chart 15: Prison populations (total and remand), 2019 to 1st December 2025



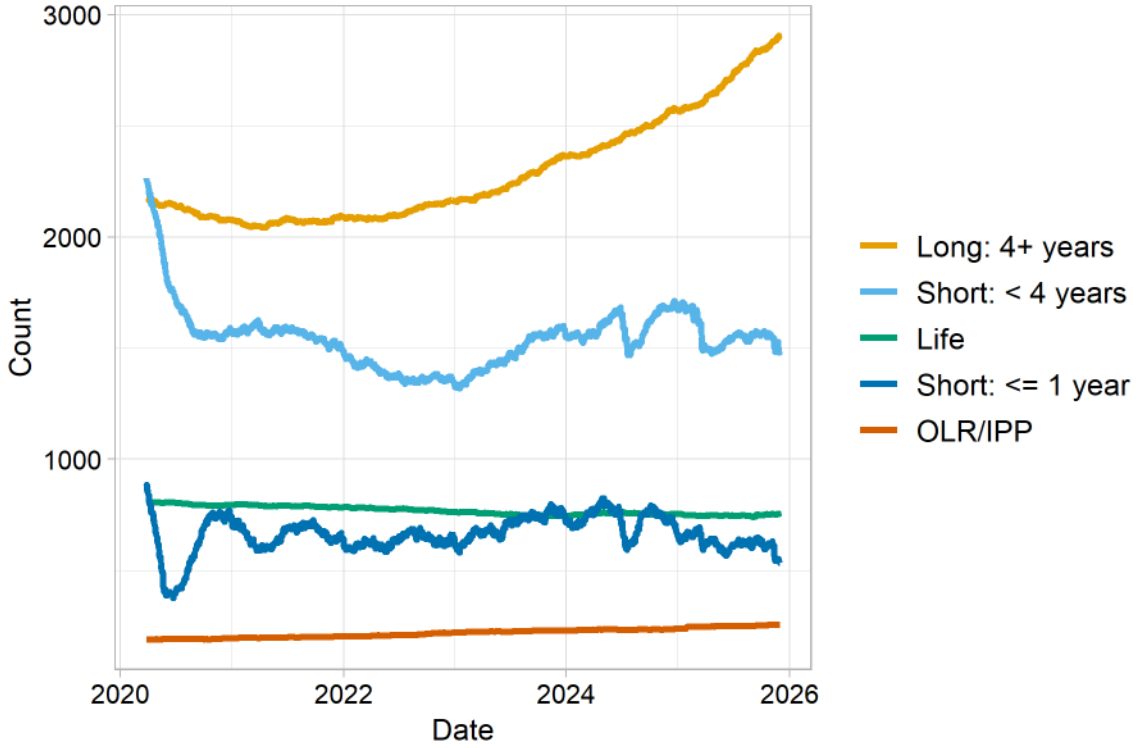
The prison population is high, reaching a new highest recorded level of 8,441 on the morning of 11th November 2025.

Measures taken to manage prison population levels include the emergency early release (EER) of eligible short sentenced prisoners (those serving an overall sentence of less than 4 years) in summer 2024, and new legislation to amend the release point of short sentenced prisoners in late 2024. The revised release point (from 50% to 40%) commenced in February 2025. A further emergency early release (EER) commenced in November 2025.

Overall sentence lengths

*** New *** Changes occurring in the sentenced prison population vary by sentence length banding, as shown in the chart below.

Chart 16: Prison populations by overall sentence bands, 26th March 2020 to 1st December 2025



The populations serving short sentences (less than 4 years overall) fell substantially and rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas populations serving long (4+ years) and indeterminate (order for lifelong restriction (OLR) and life) sentences remained at similar levels to pre-pandemic.

The population serving overall sentences of less than or equal to one year has fluctuated since the pandemic but increased overall across 2023 and early 2024. It reduced sharply during EER in summer 2024 but recovered quickly thereafter. However in late 2024 this group declined and has been at a further reduced level since commencement of the revised release point for short

sentenced prisoners (40%) in 2025 so far. Following commencement of EER in November 2025, there has been a further reduction in this population.

The population serving overall sentences of between 1 and 4 years had been declining since the pandemic. However it increased across 2023 and early 2024. During EER in summer 2024 it decreased sharply but recovered quickly thereafter, stabilising at a similar level to pre-EER until the commencement of the revised release point for short sentenced prisoners (40%) in early 2025. There had been a small increase in this population, followed by a period of relative stability in summer and autumn 2025. Following commencement of EER in November 2025, there has been a reduction in this population.

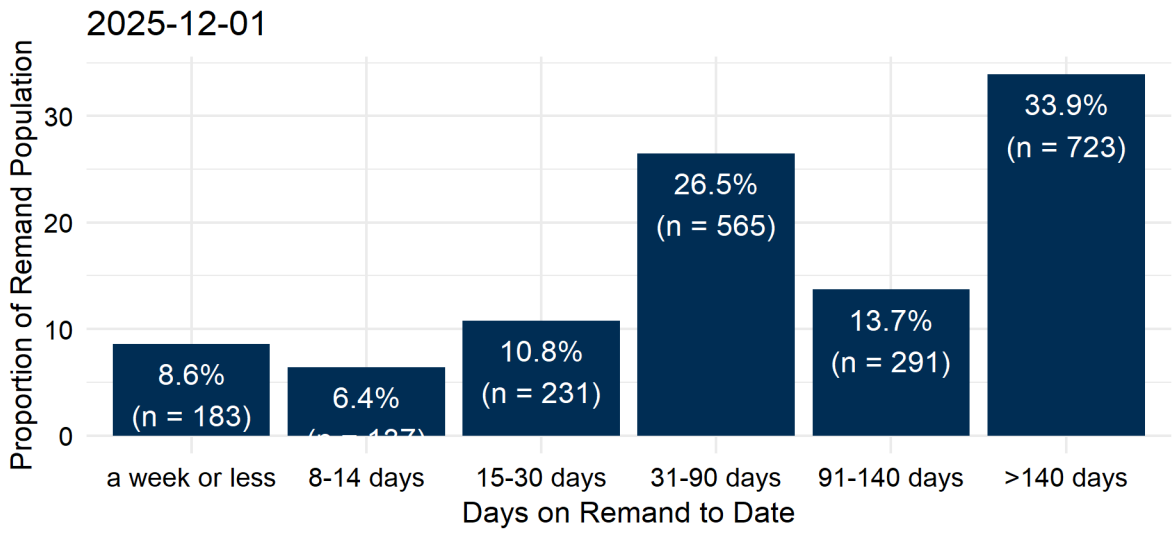
The population serving long sentences (4+ years) has been increasing since early 2022 (+39% from 2,090 on 1st January 2022 to 2,896 on 1st December 2025). The population serving indeterminate sentences has been stable overall over the same period, although small changes have occurred within this group – the number serving life sentences has declined, while the number serving OLR sentences has increased.

While recent changes in prison population levels have been largely driven by changes in the sentenced population, the remand population remains high. The remand population reached its lowest point of 1,114 on 24th April 2020, but grew rapidly thereafter to record high levels. It has continued to fluctuate at a high level to date. On 14th May 2024 the remand population reached a peak of 2,360. People on remand are required by law to be housed separately from sentenced prisoners.

Time on Remand to Date

*** New *** Among the 2,130 people on remand as of the morning of Monday 1st December 2025 , the median continuous time spent with this status to date was 82 days.

Chart 17: Banded continuous time on remand to date, percentage of remand population

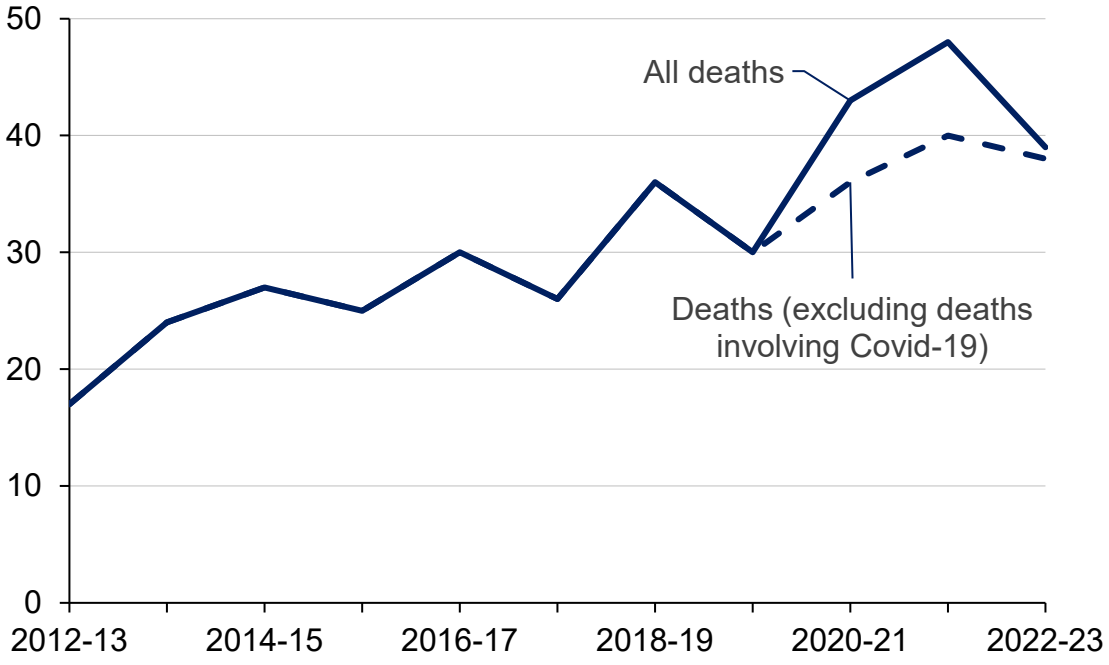


Note: The remand population includes individuals whose trial has commenced but not concluded, as well as those awaiting commencement of a trial. As a result, the figures referenced above reflect only that an individual has held the same status for an extended period, but do not reflect the relationship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

Deaths in Prison Custody

There were 345 deaths in prison custody between the financial years 2012-13 and 2022-23. The annual number of deaths occurring in prison custody fluctuated between 2012-13 and 2022-23, but there has been a general upward trend. Of these deaths: 105 were due to probable suicide, 71 were due to diseases of the circulatory system, and 50 were as a result of drug misuse. There was a total of 16 deaths that involved COVID-19.

Chart 18: Number of deaths in prison custody recorded in each financial year, 2012-13 to 2022-23



Using standardised mortality ratios (SMRs) has demonstrated that the risk of death in the male prison population has been significantly lower than in the male general population of Scotland in each year between 2012-13 and 2022-23. In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the risk was closer to that of the general population but remained significantly lower.

Links to recently published information

This includes links to the publications that have been marked as *** New *** and any other statistical or research publications produced by Scottish Government Justice Analysis and Strategy between 19 November and 9 December 2025:

- Recorded Crime in Scotland: year ending September 2025
- Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services Criminal Disposals Dashboard : updated to include 2025-26 quarter 1
- Criminal Proceedings in Scotland: 2023-2024

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 Accredited Official Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland.
- Homicide in Scotland Statistics. Annual Accredited Official 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 Accredited Official Statistics on criminal proceedings concluded in Scottish courts and on a range of measures available as alternatives to prosecution.
- Biannual Civil Justice Statistics publication. This contains management information on civil business at Scottish courts as recorded by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS).
- Scottish Prison Population statistics and projections. Accredited Official statistics on Scottish prison populations, exploring population levels and composition and change over time.
- Deaths in Prison Custody 2012-13 to 2022-23. An Official Statistics in Development publication, exploring deaths in prison custody and composition and change over time.
- SCTS Statistics. Includes data on criminal and civil court activity as well as fines and financial penalty collection rates 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. Quarterly updates on journey times are available in the journey times interactive dashboard: https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-criminal-justice-system-journey-times-dashboard/

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 2023-24 – this is an Accredited Official Statistics publication.
- Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland. Annual Accredited Official Statistics on justice social work activity in Scotland.

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.

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

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