

STATISTICAL BULLETIN: YOUTHS

Introduction

This bulletin provides information on volumes and sentence outcomes for youth offenders¹ sentenced for certain offences² covered by the Sentencing Council's two draft youth guidelines: *Robbery* and *Sexual offences*.

The Court Proceedings Database (CPD), maintained by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), is the data source for this bulletin.³

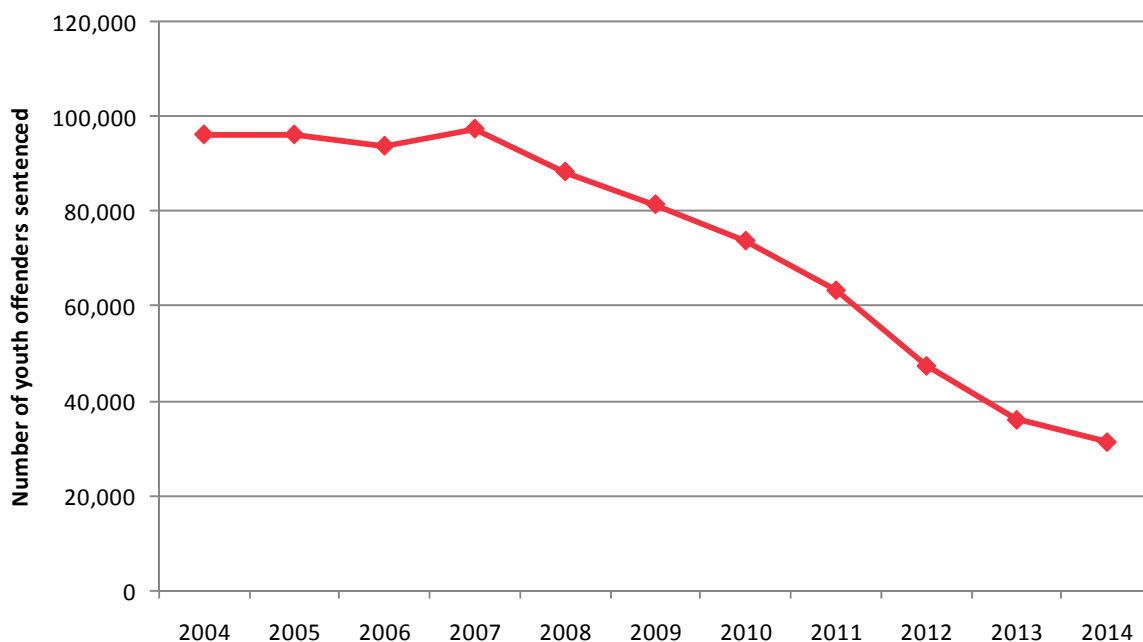
Additional figures are available to download as Excel spreadsheets at the following link:

<http://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/publications/?type=publications&s&cat=statistical-bulletin>

Sentence volumes

- Since 2007 the number of youth offenders sentenced across all offences has been declining, from 97,400 in 2007 to 31,500 in 2014 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of youth offenders sentenced for all offences, 2004-2014



- This overall decline is reflected in the number of youth offenders sentenced for robbery offences, which has been steadily decreasing over the last three years; from 3,700 in 2011 to 1,600 in 2014.

¹ Includes offenders aged under 18 at the time of conviction.

² This bulletin contains data relating to the following offences: robbery - Theft Act 1968, s.8(1); rape, assault by penetration, rape of a child under 13, assault by penetration of a child under 13 (grouped as 'penetrative sexual offences') - Sexual Offences Act 2003, s.1, 2, 5 & 6; sexual assault, and sexual assault of a child under 13 (grouped as 'non-penetrative sexual offences') - Sexual Offences Act 2003, s.3 & 7. Data covering all offences for which youths were sentenced are also shown to provide context.

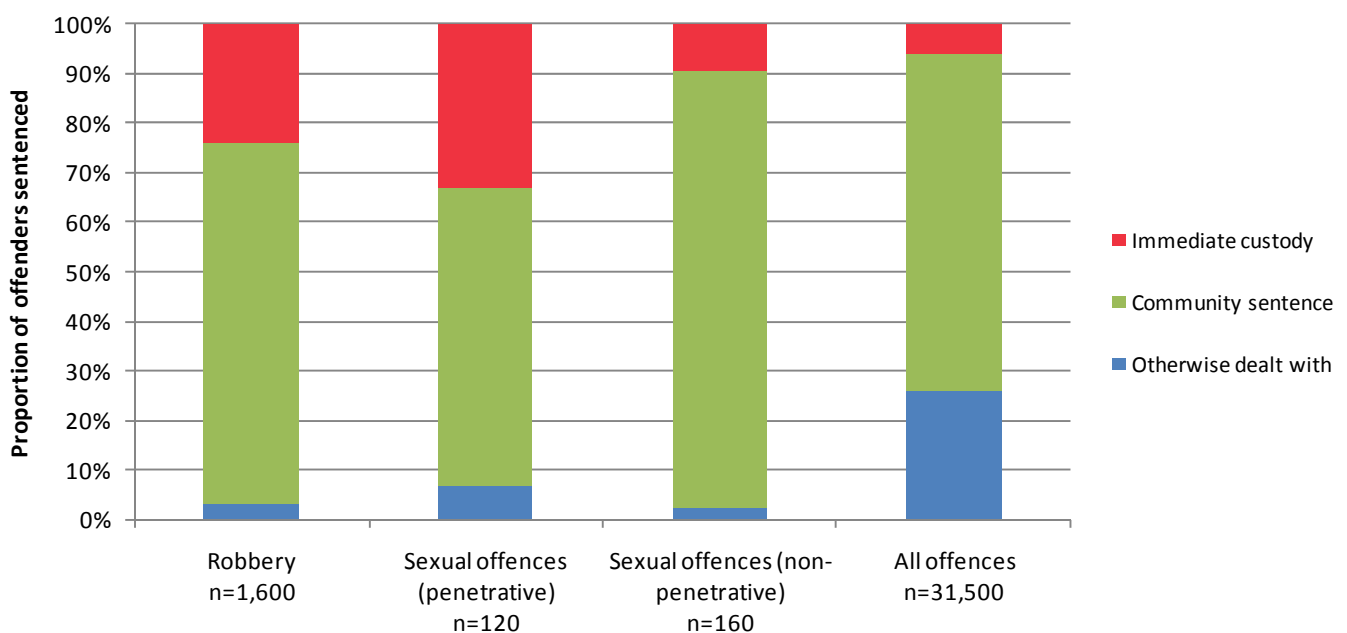
³ Robbery totals shown here differ from MoJ published statistics as these figures exclude offences of assault with intent to rob, which are included in MoJ figures. Figures for sexual offences shown here also differ from those published by MoJ, as they relate only to the specific offences listed above.

- Since 2005, the number of youth offenders sentenced for penetrative sexual offences has remained relatively stable, within the range of 90 to 120 per year. The number of youths sentenced for non-penetrative sexual offences over the same period has consistently been higher; sentences for this type of offence peaked at around 260 in 2010, before decreasing to 160 in 2012, and since then have remained stable.

Sentence outcomes

- Over the last decade, a community sentence has remained the most frequently used sentence outcome across all offences, comprising on average around 66 per cent of sentence outcomes (see Figure 2). The proportion of youth offenders sentenced to immediate custody has remained stable over this period, within the range of six to seven per cent.
- The most common sentence outcomes for youths sentenced for penetrative sexual offences are immediate custody and a community sentence. Since 2005, the proportion of youths sentenced for these offences who received a community sentence has been trending upwards (from 35 per cent in 2005 to 60 per cent in 2014). Conversely, the proportion sentenced to immediate custody has generally been decreasing (from 63 per cent in 2005 to 33 per cent in 2014).
- In 2014 the majority of youth offenders sentenced for robbery offences and non-penetrative sexual offences also received a community sentence (73 per cent and 88 per cent, respectively). In addition, just under a quarter of youths sentenced for robbery offences were sentenced to immediate custody, reflecting the seriousness of this offence.
- By comparison, the majority of adult offenders sentenced for robbery offences in 2014 were sentenced to immediate custody (84 per cent), and just three per cent received a community sentence.⁴

Figure 2: Sentence outcomes received by youth offenders sentenced, 2014⁵



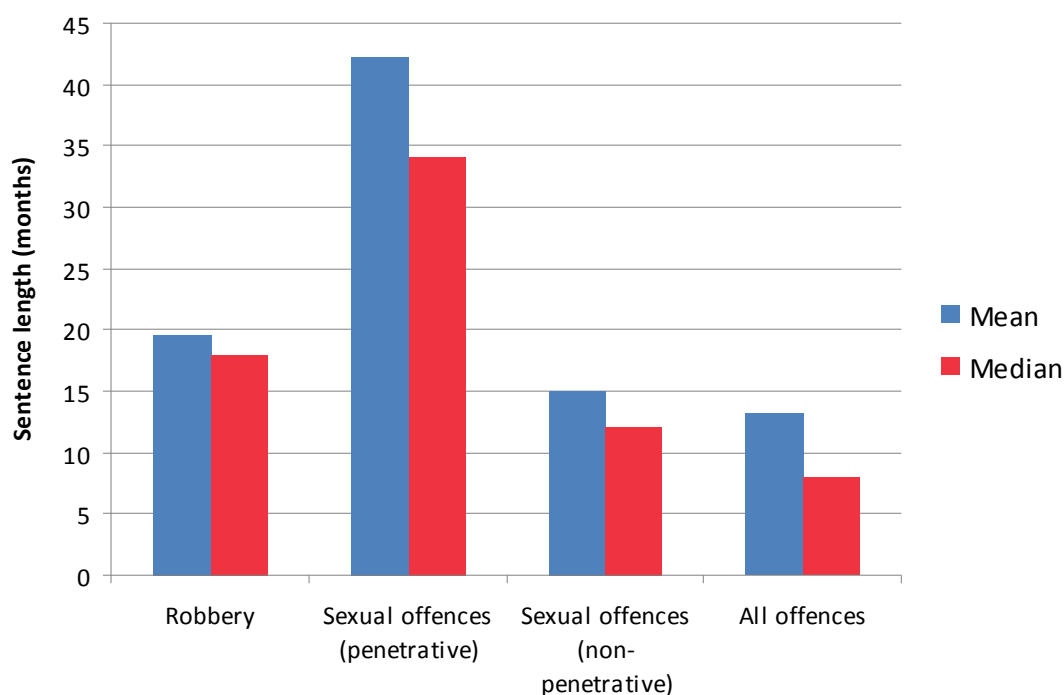
⁴ <http://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/publications/item/robbery-statistical-bulletin/>

⁵ The category 'Otherwise dealt with' includes discharges; fines; compensation; and other miscellaneous disposals.

Sentence lengths

- Since 2007 the average (mean)⁶ custodial sentence length imposed on youth offenders sentenced to immediate custody across all offences has generally been trending upwards, from 10 months in 2007 to 13 months in 2014 (after any guilty plea reductions). In 2011 the median⁷ custodial sentence length increased from 6 months to 8 months, and since then has remained stable (see Figure 3).
- The mean custodial sentence length imposed on youths sentenced for robbery offences has also gradually been increasing since 2007, from 15 months in 2007 to 20 months in 2014. The median custodial sentence length remained stable at 12 months during the period 2004 to 2013, before increasing to 18 months in 2014.⁸
- The mean custodial sentence length for youths sentenced for penetrative sexual offences in 2014 was 42 months, and the median was 34 months. The mean and median sentence lengths for non-penetrative sexual offences were lower (15 months and 12 months respectively). These figures should, however, be treated with caution, due to the low number of youth offenders sentenced to custody for non-penetrative sexual offences.⁹

Figure 3: Average sentence lengths received by youth offenders sentenced to immediate custody, 2014



⁶ The mean is calculated by taking the sum of all values and then dividing by the number of values.

⁷ The median is the value which lies in the middle of a set of numbers when those numbers are placed in ascending or descending order.

⁸ Detention and training orders (DTOs) are a type of custodial sentence for youths. DTOs are only available for the following periods: 4 months; 6 months; 8 months; 10 months; 12 months; 18 months; or 24 months. As a consequence, an increase (or decrease) in the sentence length for one or two cases can result in what appears to be a large increase (or decrease) in the median - for example, in 2014 the median appears to jump from 12 to 18 months, when in fact the next available DTO sentence length after 12 months is 18 months.

⁹ In 2014, less than 20 youth offenders were sentenced to immediate custody for non-penetrative sexual offences.

Further information

Volumes of sentences

The data presented in this bulletin only include cases where the offence detailed was the principal offence committed. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences this is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe. Although the offender will receive a sentence for each of the offences that they are convicted of, it is only the sentence for the principal offence that is presented in this bulletin.

Sentence outcomes

The outcomes presented are the final sentence outcomes, after taking into account all factors of the case, including whether a guilty plea was made.

General conventions

Actual numbers of sentences have been rounded to the nearest 100, when more than 1,000 offenders were sentenced, and to the nearest 10 when less than 1,000 offenders were sentenced.

Data sources and quality

The source of data for this bulletin is the Court Proceedings Database (CPD), which is maintained by MoJ. Every effort is made by MoJ and the Sentencing Council to ensure that the figures presented in this publication are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used. Subsequently, although numbers in the accompanying tables available online are shown to the last digit in order to provide a comprehensive record of the information collected, they are not necessarily accurate to the last digit shown.

Further details of the processes by which MoJ validate the records in the CPD can be found within the guide to their Criminal Justice Statistics publication which can be downloaded via the link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics>

Contact points for further information

We would be very pleased to hear your views on our statistical bulletins. If you have any feedback or comments, please send them to: research@sentencingcouncil.gsi.gov.uk

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Further information on the Sentencing Council and its work can be found at: <http://sentencingcouncil.org.uk>