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This bulletin provides statistics on the outcomes and demographics of adult offenders¹ sentenced for offences covered by the draft guideline on robbery offences. The consultation period for the robbery offences draft guideline will begin on 21 October 2014 and close on 30 January 2015.

Further information on these offences and the draft guideline can be found in the consultation document which can be accessed via the Current Consultations page on the Sentencing Council website, at the following link: <http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/get-involved/consultations-current.htm>

The Court Proceedings Database (CPD), maintained by the Ministry of Justice, is the main source of the data for this bulletin. Data on the CPD are categorised by the relevant legislation under which proceedings are brought. This has been supplemented with information from the Crown Court Sentencing Survey, maintained by the Sentencing Council, for analysis by location of offence.

Introduction

There are three draft robbery guidelines:

1. **Street robbery**
2. **Commercial robbery (including banks, shops, businesses)**
3. **Robbery in a dwelling**

These draft guidelines include offences covered by the Theft Act 1968 (section 8(1)).

The Sentencing Advisory Panel (SAP) and Sentencing Guidelines Council (SGC) chose not to include the offence of assault with intent to rob within their work on the existing guideline. Similarly the draft guideline does not include this offence. In 2013, there were a total of 4,400 offenders sentenced for robbery and only 40 for assault with intent to rob.

Robbery is an indictable only offence and must therefore be tried in the Crown Court.

The figures on which all of the tables and charts provided in this bulletin are based are available for download as Excel spreadsheets at the following link:

<http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/facts/research-and-analysis-publications.htm>

1 General trends across all robbery offence guidelines

This section summarises data across all robbery offences covered by the draft guideline, for which data are available. When reading this section it is important to bear in mind that the sentence outcome for these offences ranges from a community order to a statutory maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Figure 1.1 shows the number of adult offenders sentenced for robbery offences since 2003. The number of offenders sentenced declined between 2003 and 2005, from 4,600 to 4,000, before gradually increasing to 5,500 in 2011. Since 2011 the number has decreased by 20 per cent, to 4,400 in 2013.

¹ Includes adult offenders (aged 18 or over) at the time of conviction.

Figure 1.1: Number of adult offenders sentenced for robbery offences covered by the guideline, 2003-2013

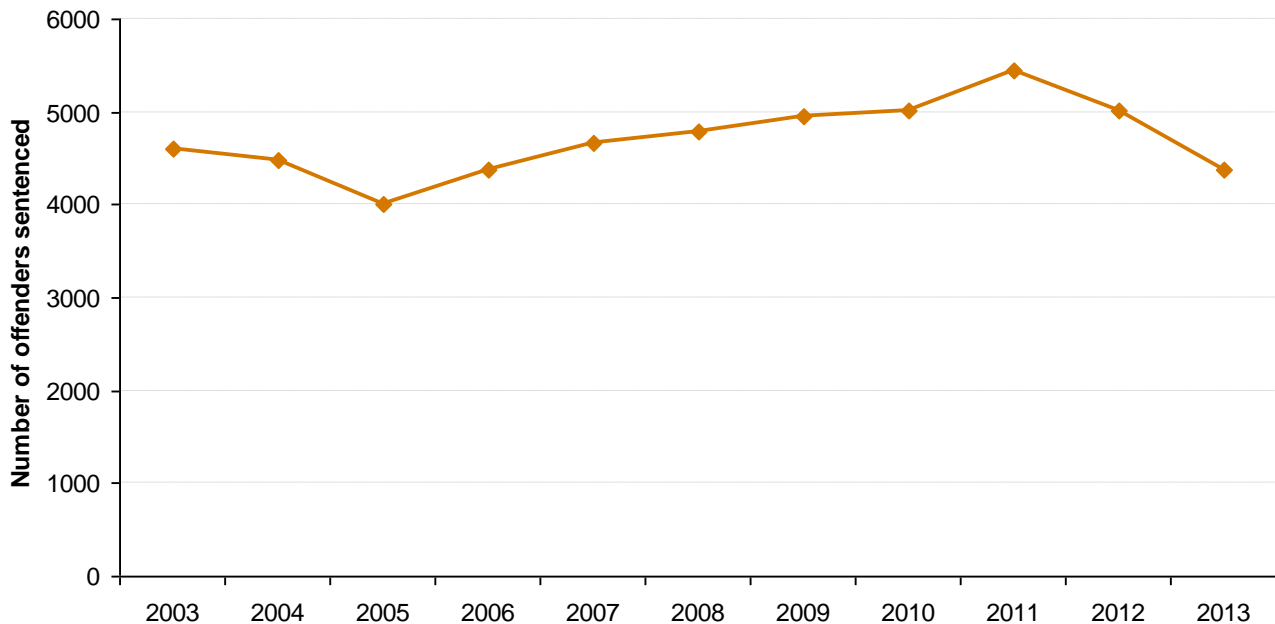
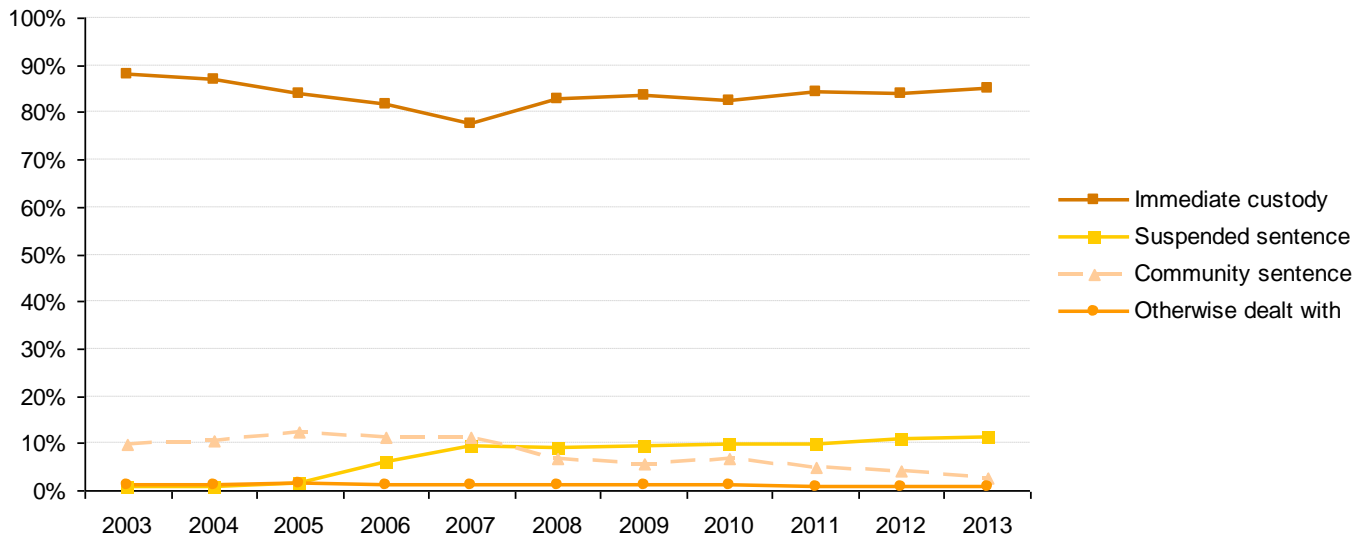
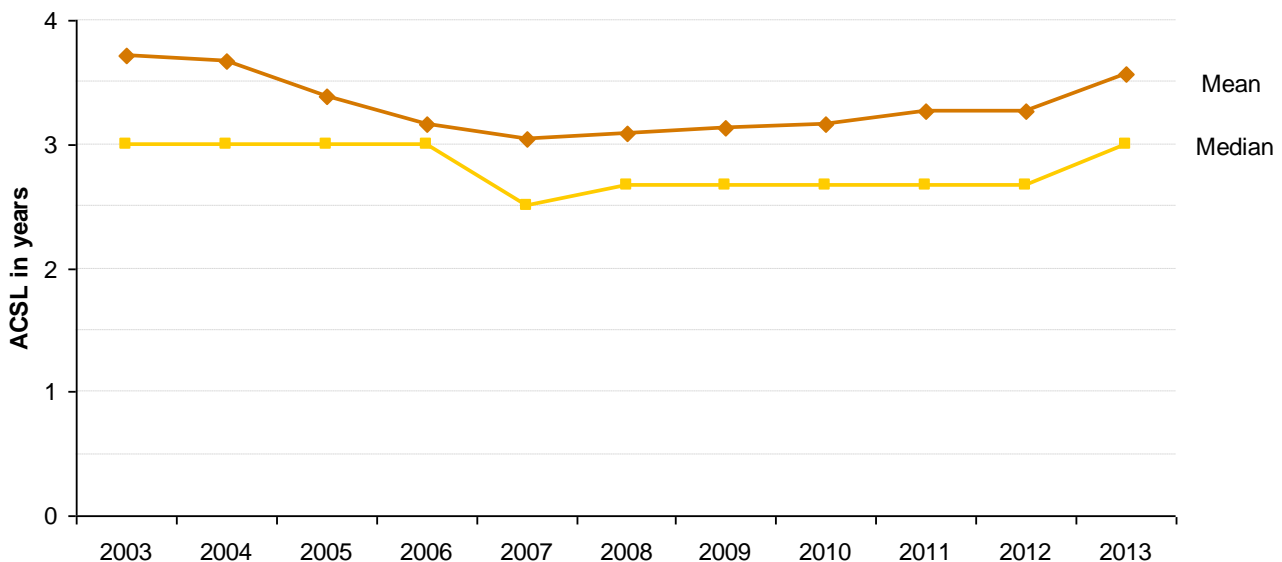


Figure 1.2 shows the different sentence outcomes received by adult offenders sentenced for robbery during the period 2003 to 2013. Over the last decade, immediate custody has remained the most frequently used sentence outcome for robbery offences. Between 2003 and 2007 the proportion of offenders who received an immediate custodial sentence decreased to 78 per cent, its lowest level during the last ten years, before increasing again in 2008. Since 2008 the proportion of immediate custody sentences has remained relatively stable, at around 84 per cent.

The use of community sentences, the second most frequent sentence outcome in 2003, has been gradually declining since 2007, and comprised just 3 per cent of all sentence outcomes in 2013. Conversely, the use of suspended sentences increased during the last decade, and since 2007 has remained stable within the range 9 to 11 per cent, which is comparable to the proportion of community sentences in 2003. These changes have come as a result of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which made suspended sentences more readily available from 2005 onwards. Also more recently, the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment Offenders Act 2012 has made further changes to availability by extending powers to suspend sentences of two years custody (an increase from 12 months).

Figure 1.2: Sentence outcomes received by adult offenders sentenced for robbery, 2003-2013

The average sentence length imposed (in years) on adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody for robbery between 2003 and 2013 is shown in Figure 1.3. The sentence length listed is the length imposed after any reduction for a guilty plea, if relevant.

Figure 1.3: Average custodial sentence length (ACSL), in years, received by offenders sentenced to immediate custody for robbery, 2003-2013

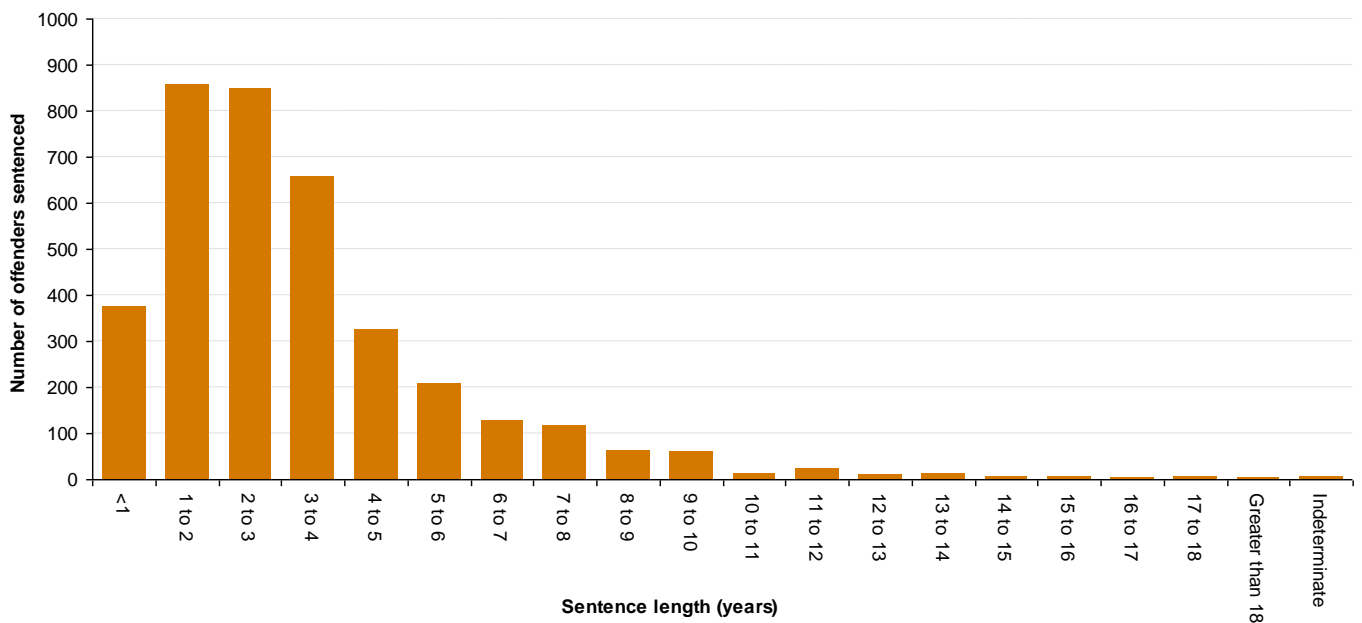
Between 2003 and 2007 the average (mean²) custodial sentence length for robbery decreased from 3 years 9 months to 3 years. Since 2007 the mean has been gradually increasing, and in 2013 the mean custodial sentence length was 3 years 7 months, after any guilty plea reductions. This trend is reflective of the broader changes across the robbery offence group.

² The mean is calculated by taking the sum of all values and then dividing by the number of values.

In 2006 the mean and median³ were closely comparable, when the value of each was approximately 3 years. Since 2007 the mean and median have followed a broadly similar pattern in terms of trends. The difference in sentence length between the two has remained within the range of 5 to 7 months, with the mean consistently higher than the median.

Figure 1.4 below presents the full range of sentence lengths imposed for adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody in 2013. Three quarters of offenders received a sentence length of 4 years or less, compared to 4 per cent receiving a sentence length of longer than 9 years.

Figure 1.4: Sentence lengths received by adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody for robbery, 2013



Note: Sentence length intervals do not include the lower bound, but do include the upper bound sentence length, for example the category '<1' includes sentence lengths less than and including one year, and '1 to 2' includes sentence lengths over 1 year, and up to and including 2 years.

Demographics

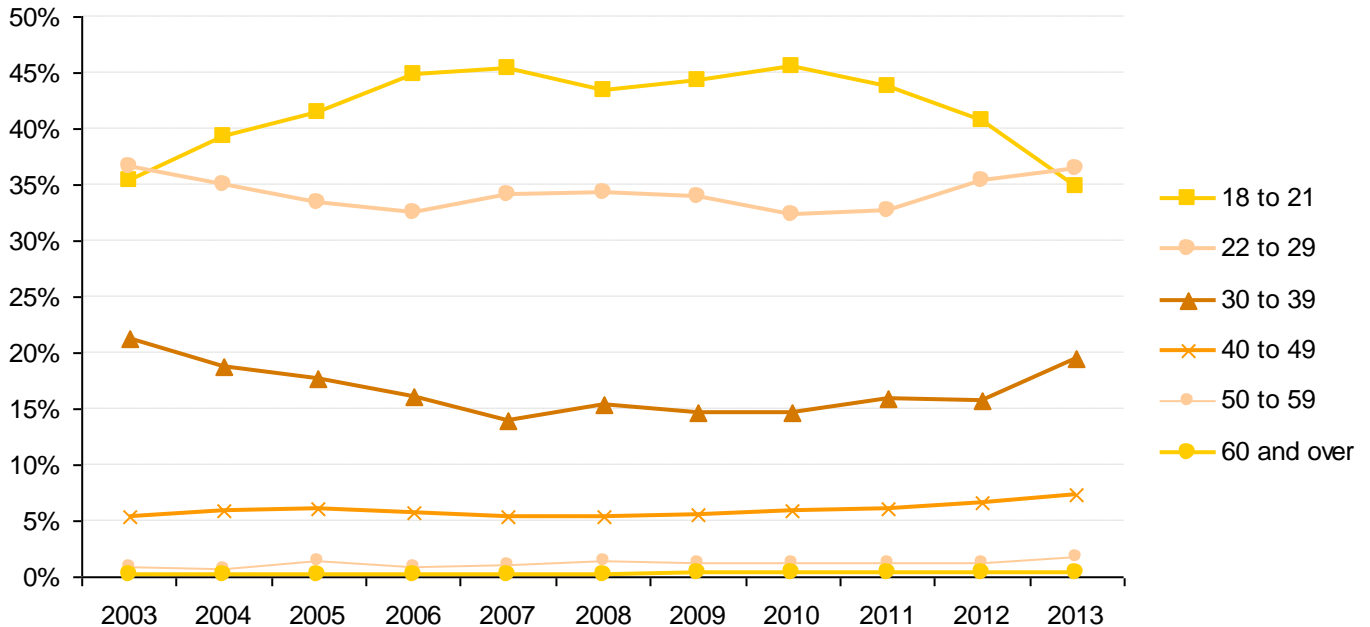
In 2003, 90 per cent of adult offenders sentenced for robbery were male. This proportion increased gradually to 93 per cent by 2009, and since then it has remained stable.

Figure 1.5 shows how the proportion of offenders by age group has changed over time. Over the last decade, the majority of offenders sentenced for robbery have consistently been under 30 years old. During most of this period, the age group 18 to 21 contained the highest proportion of offenders, although since 2010 this proportion has been decreasing. Conversely, the age group 22 to 29 has shown a slight upward trend since 2010, and in 2013 this age group represented the highest proportion of offenders, at 36 per cent.

³ 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.

The proportion of offenders in the age group 30 to 39 declined between 2003 and 2007, but has been gradually increasing in recent years. The proportion of offenders aged 40 and over has remained relatively stable over the last ten years, within the range of 7 to 9 per cent of the total.

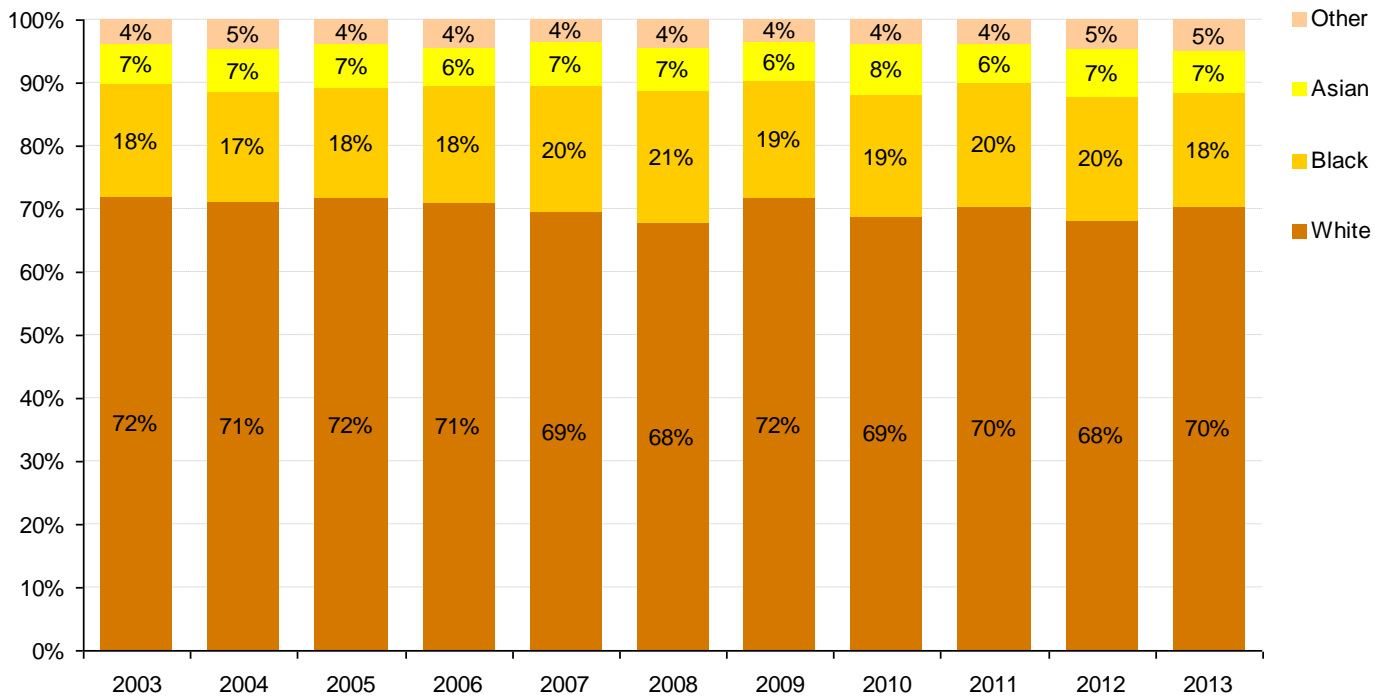
Figure 1.5: Proportion of adult offenders sentenced for robbery, by age group, 2013



The majority (70 per cent) of adult offenders sentenced for robbery in 2013 were perceived to be of White origin by the police officer dealing with their case. Over the last ten years, the proportions across all ethnicities have remained relatively stable. The proportions amongst those for whom data on perceived ethnicity was provided may not reflect the demographics of the full population of those sentenced.

In 2003 the proportion of robbery cases where the perceived ethnicity was unknown or not recorded was 41 per cent. By 2013 this proportion had decreased to 10 per cent. Figure 1.6 shows the ethnicity of offenders over the last decade, for robbery cases where the perceived ethnicity was recorded.

Figure 1.6: Proportion of adult offenders sentenced for robbery, by perceived ethnicity where recorded, 2013



Note: This chart excludes robbery cases where the perceived ethnicity was unknown or not recorded.

Location of offence

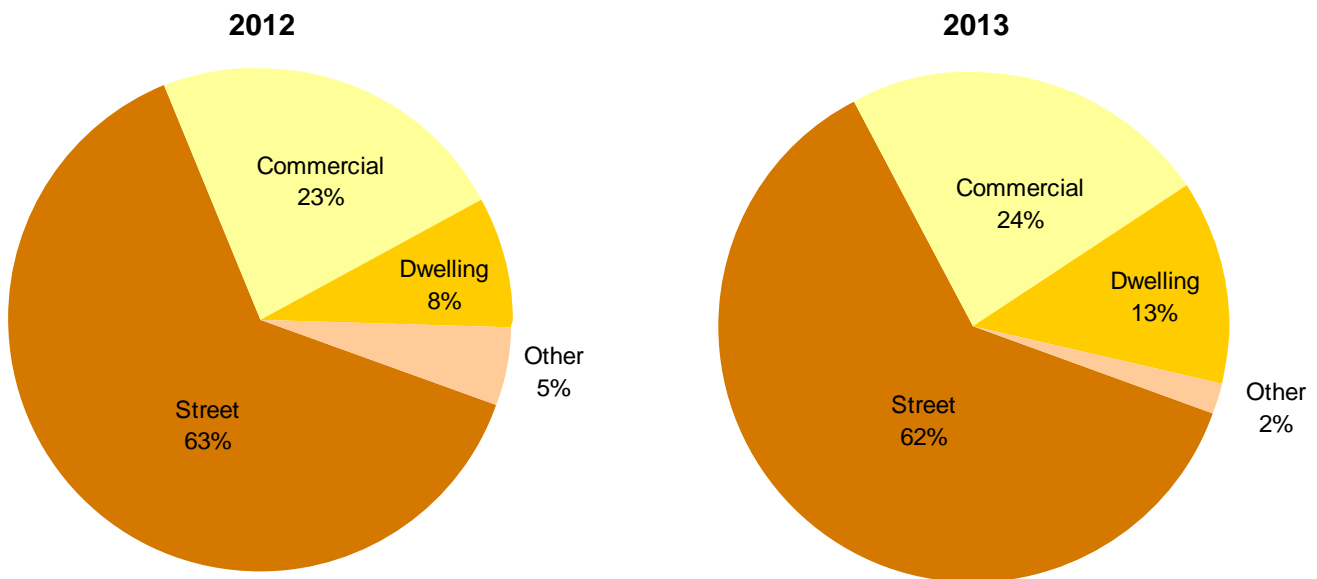
The Crown Court Sentencing Survey⁴ (CCSS) enables analysis to be carried out on the location of robbery offences, where judges have recorded it on the survey form. From this point onwards in the bulletin, the source of data is the CCSS.

Figure 1.7 shows the proportion of robbery offences committed in 2012 and 2013 by location, as recorded in the CCSS. Proportions have been calculated using those robbery cases where a location was provided on the CCSS form⁵. In 2013, 62 per cent of all robbery offences were recorded as street robbery; a slight decrease from 2012. The proportion of robbery offences which occurred in a dwelling increased from 8 per cent in 2012 to 13 per cent in 2013, although this change may be due to an improvement in the quality of data collected on the survey⁶.

⁴ <http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/facts/sentencing-survey.htm>

⁵ In 2013, for 16 per cent of robbery cases recorded on the CCSS the offence location was not known or not stated, compared to a quarter of robbery cases with an unknown or unrecorded location in 2012.

⁶ Unlike street and commercial, the option to indicate the robbery was in a dwelling is not explicitly available on the survey form.

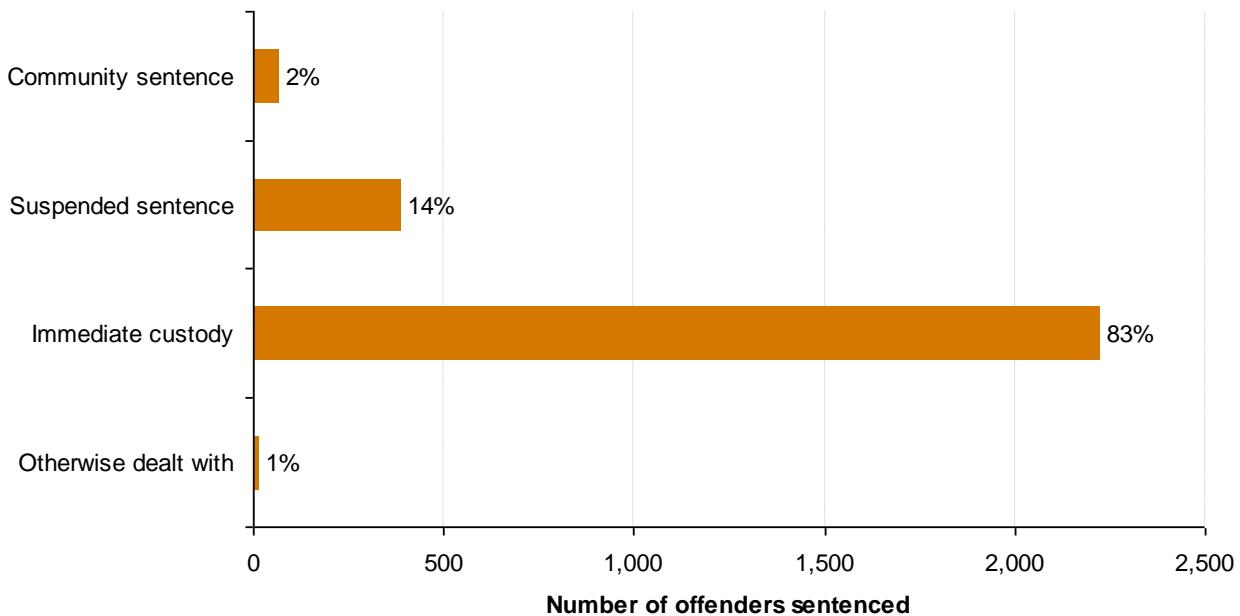
Figure 1.7: Location of robbery offences⁷, 2012 and 2013

2 Street robbery

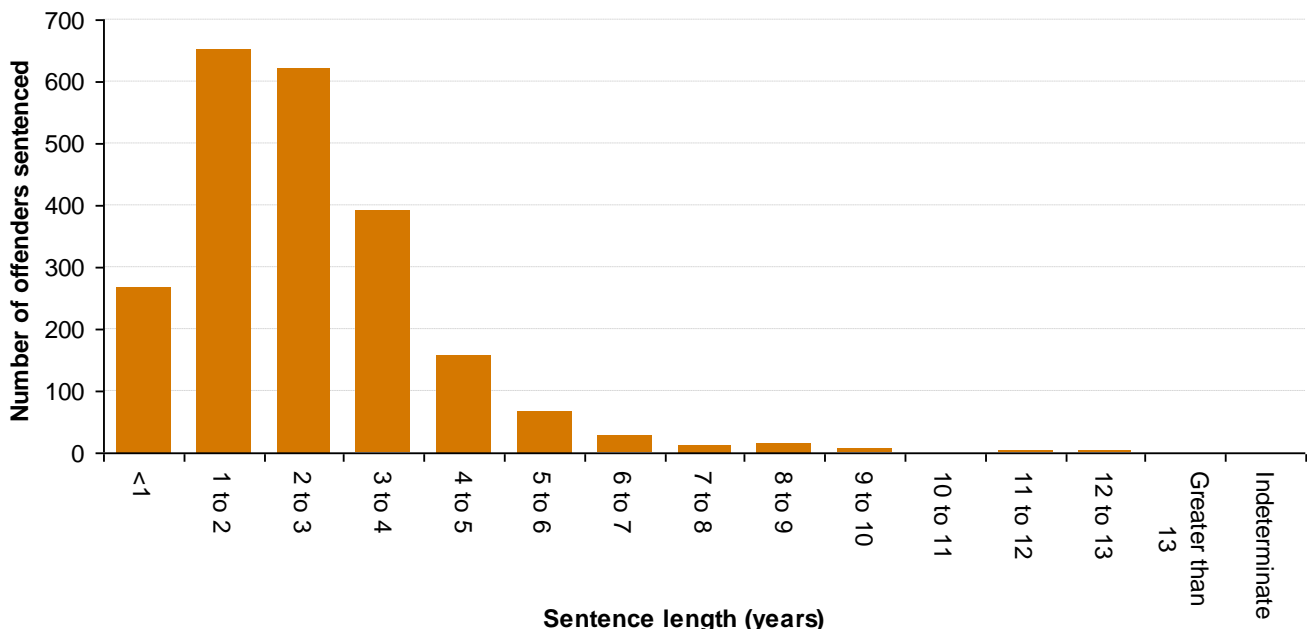
In 2013, approximately 2,700 adult offenders⁸ were sentenced for street robbery offences, a slight decrease compared to the number recorded in 2012. The majority of offenders received a custodial sentence, with 83 per cent sentenced to immediate custody, compared to 82 per cent in 2012. Figure 2.1 shows the sentence outcome received by adult offenders in 2013 for street robbery offences, ordered from top to bottom by least severe to most severe in terms of sentence severity, followed by 'Otherwise dealt with'.

⁷ Cases where the location was not stated or was unknown have been excluded from these charts.

⁸ This figure has been estimated using the proportion of street robbery cases in the CCSS and the total number of robbery cases obtained from the Court Proceedings Database (CPD).

Figure 2.1: Sentence outcomes received by adult offenders sentenced for street robbery, 2013

The average custodial sentence length for street robbery in 2013 was 2 years 9 months, after any guilty plea reductions. Sentence lengths imposed on adult offenders ranged from under one year to 13 years. Figure 2.2 presents the full range of sentence lengths imposed for offenders sentenced to immediate custody in 2013.

Figure 2.2: Sentence lengths received by adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody for street robbery, 2013

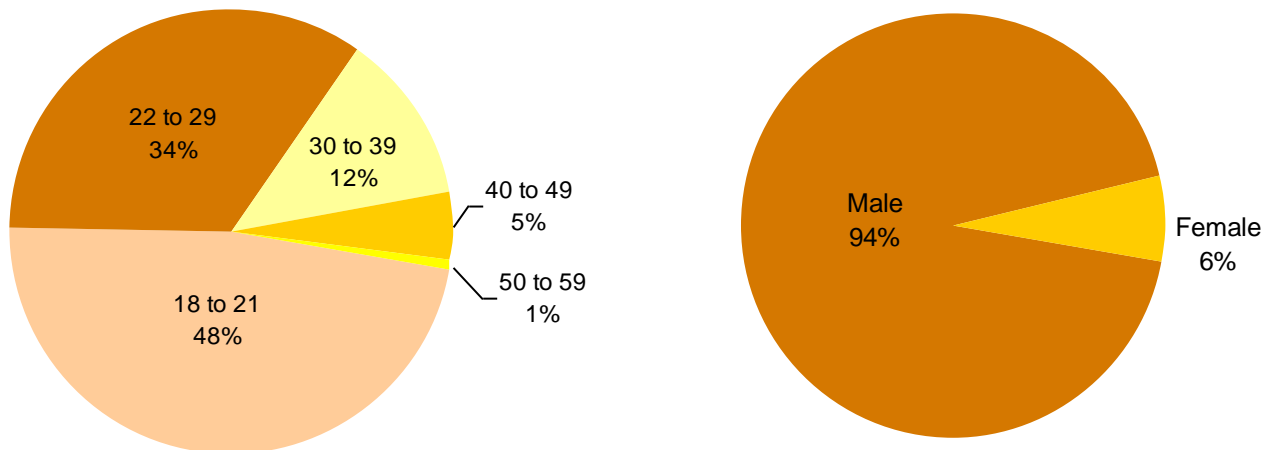
Note: Sentence length intervals do not include the lower bound, but do include the upper bound sentence length, for example the category '<1' includes sentence lengths less than and including one year, and '1 to 2' includes sentence lengths over 1 year, and up to and including 2 years.

Approximately 69 per cent of offenders received a sentence length of 3 years or less, compared to 3 per cent receiving a sentence longer than 6 years.

Demographics

Almost half of all adult offenders sentenced for street robbery in 2013 were between the ages of 18 and 21, and approximately a third were in the age group 22 to 29. 94 per cent of adult offenders sentenced in 2013 were male, slightly higher than the proportion of males across all robbery offences (90 per cent). Further information on the age and gender of offenders sentenced for street robbery can be found in Figure 2.3.

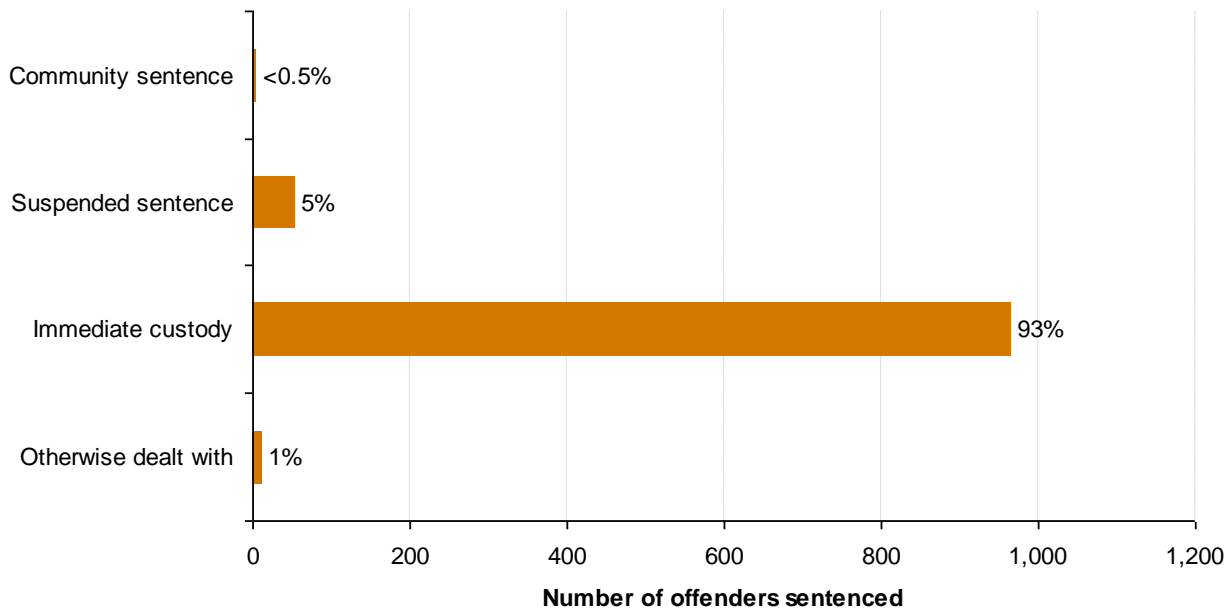
Figure 2.3: Age and gender demographics of adults sentenced for street robbery, 2013



3 Commercial Robbery

In 2013, approximately 1,000 adult offenders⁹ were sentenced for commercial robbery; a decrease of 12 per cent compared to the number recorded in 2012. As with street robbery the majority of offenders received a custodial sentence, with 93 per cent of offenders sentenced to immediate custody, and 5 per cent given a suspended sentence. In 2012 a slightly lower proportion of suspended sentences (2 per cent) were imposed on offenders, along with 96 per cent of offenders sentenced to immediate custody. Further information on sentence outcomes received by offenders can be seen in Figure 3.1, where sentence outcomes are ordered from top to bottom by least severe to most severe in terms of sentence severity, followed by 'Otherwise dealt with'.

⁹ This figure has been estimated using the proportion of commercial robbery cases in the CCSS and the total number of robbery cases obtained from the CPD.

Figure 3.1: Sentence outcomes received by adult offenders sentenced for commercial robbery, 2013

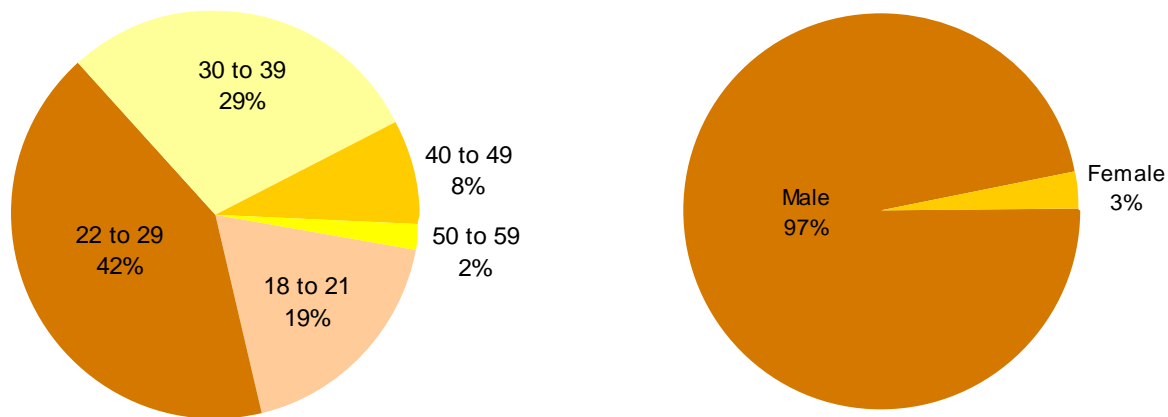
The average custodial sentence length for commercial robbery in 2013 was 4 years 7 months, after any guilty plea reductions. Just over three quarters of offenders received a sentence length of 6 years or less, compared to 4 per cent receiving a sentence length of over 11 years. In addition, one per cent of offenders received an indeterminate sentence. Figure 3.2 presents the full range of sentence lengths imposed for offenders sentenced to immediate custody in 2013.

Figure 3.2: Sentence lengths received by adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody for commercial robbery, 2013

Demographics

In 2013, 97 per cent of adult offenders sentenced for commercial robbery were male, a higher proportion than those sentenced across all robbery offences (93 per cent) and street robbery offences (94 per cent). The majority of offenders (42 per cent) were in the age bracket 22 to 29, followed by 29 per cent of offenders aged between 30 and 39. This differs from street robbery, where the youngest age group, 18 to 21, represents the majority of offenders. Figure 3.3 shows further information on age and gender demographics.

Figure 3.3: Age and gender demographics of adults sentenced for commercial robbery, 2013

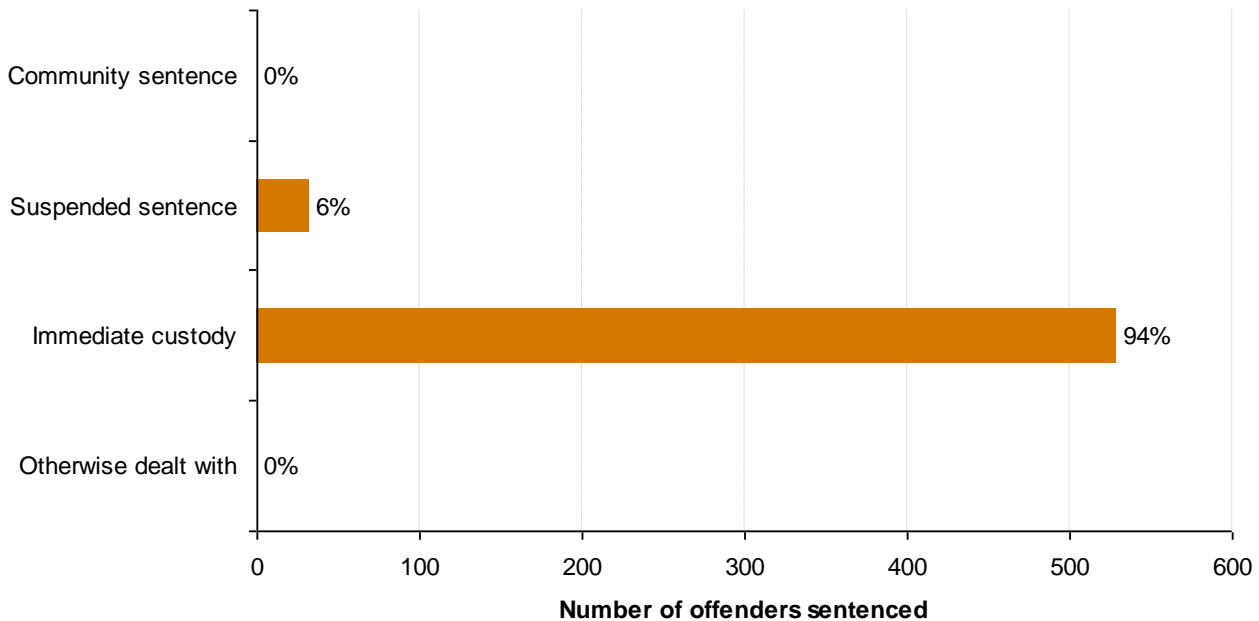


4 Robbery in a Dwelling

Approximately 560 adult offenders¹⁰ were sentenced for committing the principal offence of robbery in a dwelling in 2013, an increase of 35 per cent compared to the number recorded in 2012. All of the offenders in 2013 received custodial sentences, with 94 per cent sentenced to immediate custody, the same proportion as in 2012, and the remainder suspended sentences. Figure 4.1 shows further information on sentence outcomes received by offenders in 2013, ordered from top to bottom by least severe to most severe in terms of sentence severity, followed by 'Otherwise dealt with'.

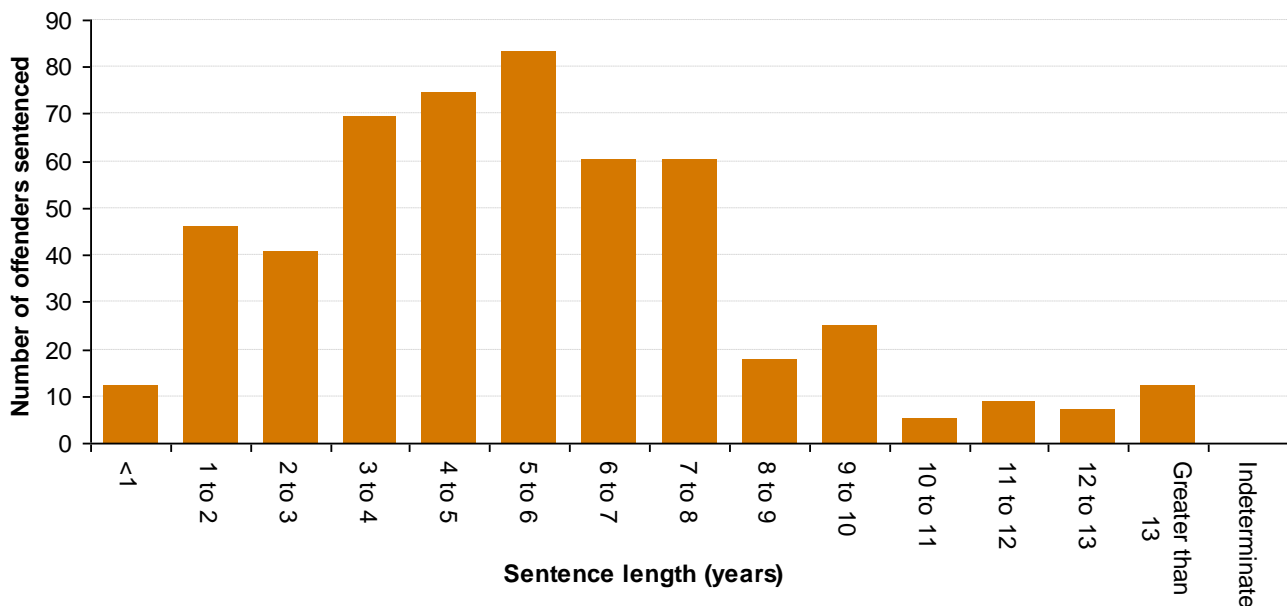
¹⁰ This figure has been estimated using the proportion of robbery cases which occurred in a dwelling in the CCSS and the total number of robbery cases obtained from the CPD.

Figure 4.1: Sentence outcomes received by adult offenders sentenced for robbery in a dwelling, 2013



The average custodial sentence length (ACSL) in 2013 for robbery offences which occurred in a dwelling was 5 years 9 months, after any guilty plea reductions; a slight increase on the ACSL of 5 years 3 months in 2012. In 2013, just under three quarters of offenders received a sentence length of 7 years or less, compared to 5 per cent receiving a sentence length of over 11 years. Figure 4.2 presents the full range of sentence lengths imposed for offenders sentenced to immediate custody in 2013.

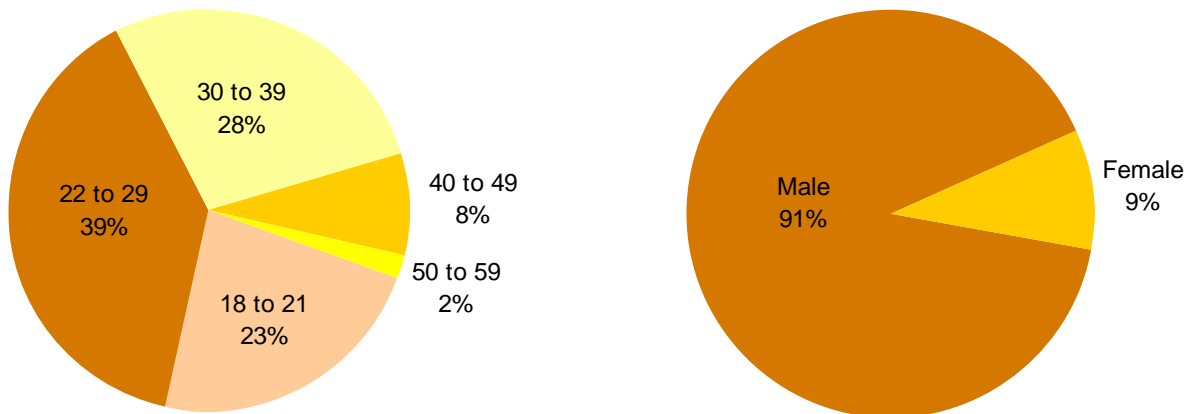
Figure 4.2: Sentence lengths received by adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody for robbery in a dwelling, 2013



Demographics

In 2013, 9 per cent of adult offenders who were sentenced for robbery in a dwelling were female, which is a higher proportion than street robbery (6 per cent), commercial robbery (3 per cent) and robbery offences overall (7 per cent). Similar to commercial robbery, the highest number of offenders sentenced fell within the age category 22 to 29 (39 per cent), followed by the age group 30 to 39 (28 per cent). Figure 4.3 shows further information on age and gender demographics.

Figure 4.3: Age and gender demographics of adults sentenced for robbery in a dwelling, 2013



Further information

Notes on the data

Volumes of sentences

The data presented in this bulletin only include cases where the robbery offence was the principal offence committed. Where an offender commits multiple offences on a single occasion, the offence which received the most severe sentence is taken to be the principal offence. 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. This way of presenting the data is consistent with the Ministry of Justice publication, Criminal Justice Statistics.

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. This contrasts with the sentencing ranges presented at step 2 of the draft guideline, which are the recommended sentence lengths before taking into account certain factors, such as whether a reduction is appropriate for a guilty plea. Therefore, the sentence outcomes shown in the data are not directly comparable to the ranges provided in the new guideline.

Offender Gender and Ethnicity

Where the ethnicity of sentenced adults is described, the ethnicity as perceived by the police officer dealing with the case is used. Perceived ethnicity is the most comprehensive data source available on ethnicity; therefore it is used in preference to any other source of ethnicity data. However, for some offences, there are a high proportion of cases where the perceived ethnicity was not known or not recorded. Therefore the ethnicity data should be read with some caution. The proportions reflected amongst those for whom data was provided may not reflect the demographics of the full population sentenced.

General Conventions

The following conventions have been applied to the data:

- 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.
- Percentages derived from the data have been provided in the narrative and displayed on charts to the nearest whole percentage, except when the nearest whole percentage is zero. In some instances, this may mean that percentages shown, for example in pie charts, do not add up to 100 per cent.
- Where the nearest whole per cent is zero, the convention '<0.5' has been used.
- Where totals have been provided, these have been calculated using unrounded data and then rounded.

Data Sources and Quality

The primary source of data for this bulletin is the Court Proceedings Database. This is supplied to the Sentencing Council by the Ministry of Justice who obtain it from a variety of administrative data systems compiled by courts and police forces.

Every effort is made by the Ministry of Justice and the Sentencing Council to ensure that the figures presented in this publication are accurate and complete. Although care is taken in collating and analysing the returns used to compile these figures, the data are of necessity subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system. Consequently, although numbers in the accompanying tables available online and charts 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. The figures in the text have been rounded to the nearest 100, or 10, as described in the section on general conventions.

Further details of the processes by which the Ministry of Justice validate the records in the Court Proceedings Database 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>

The Sentencing Council's Crown Court Sentencing Survey (CCSS) has been used for the information on location of offence. This information is collected directly from the sentencer at the time of sentencing. In 2013 the overall national response rate for the CCSS was 60 per cent. The figures shown in the text and tables have therefore been estimated using the proportion of robbery cases in the CCSS for each location, and the total number of robbery cases obtained from the Court Proceedings Database (CPD). The latest findings from the Crown Court Sentencing Survey can be found at:

http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/docs/CCSS_Annual_2013.pdf

Background information

The Ministry of Justice publishes a quarterly statistical publication, Criminal Justice Statistics, which includes a section focusing on sentencing data at national level. This section breaks down the data by offence group and by demographic factors such as age, gender and ethnicity. The full publication can be accessed via the Ministry of Justice website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly>

Detailed sentencing data from the Ministry of Justice's Court Proceedings Database can be accessed via the Open Justice website at:

<http://open.justice.gov.uk/sentencing/>

This website allows the data to be viewed by offence category, local police force area and sentencing court. The offence categories used on this website are consistent with those used by the Ministry of Justice in their Criminal Justice Statistics publication, which is at a higher aggregate level than that used in this bulletin.

Further information on general sentencing practice in England and Wales can be found on the Council's website at:

<http://sentencingcouncil.judiciary.gov.uk/index.htm>

Alternatively, you may wish to visit the sentencing area on the Direct.gov website, which can be accessed at:

<http://sentencing.cjonline.gov.uk/>

Uses Made of the Data

Data provided in the Council's range of analysis and research bulletins are used to inform public debate of the Council's work. In particular, this bulletin aims to provide the public with the key data that the Council has used to help formulate the draft guideline on robbery offences.

Contact Points for Further Information

We would be very pleased to hear your views on our analysis and research bulletins. If you have any feedback or comments, please send them to:

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<http://sentencingcouncil.org.uk>