

STATISTICAL BULLETIN: TERRORISM OFFENCES

Introduction

This bulletin provides information on volumes and sentence outcomes for adult offenders¹ sentenced for offences covered by the Sentencing Council's draft terrorism guideline. The draft guideline covers the following offences:

- Terrorism Act 2000 (TACT2000) – belong/profess to belong to a proscribed organisation (s11), invite support for a proscribed organisation (s12), funding terrorism (s15,16,17,18), failure to disclose information about acts of terrorism (s38B), possession of article for purposes of terrorism (s57), collect/make a record of/be in possession of terrorist information (s58);
- Terrorism Act 2006 (TACT2006) – encouragement of terrorism/dissemination of terrorist publications (s1, 2), preparation of terrorist acts (s5); and
- Explosive Substances Act 1883 (ESA1883) – causing an explosion likely to endanger life or property/attempting to cause an explosion, or making or keeping explosives with intent to endanger life or property (s2, 3).²

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

Additional figures covering sentencing trends since 2006 and the demographics of offenders sentenced for terrorism are available to download as an Excel spreadsheet at the following link:

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

Sentence volumes

- Terrorism is a low volume offence, with around 50 offenders sentenced in 2016 for offences covered by the draft guideline.
- Preparation of terrorist acts is the highest volume offence covered by the guideline, with around 20 offenders sentenced in 2016, and 90 offenders sentenced over the last decade.

¹ Offenders aged 18 or over at the time of conviction.

² The draft guideline applies only to those offences which relate to terrorism. Figures shown here for ESA1883 (s2,3) include all offenders sentenced under this legislation (i.e. including those not related to terrorism), as it is not possible to separate these out.

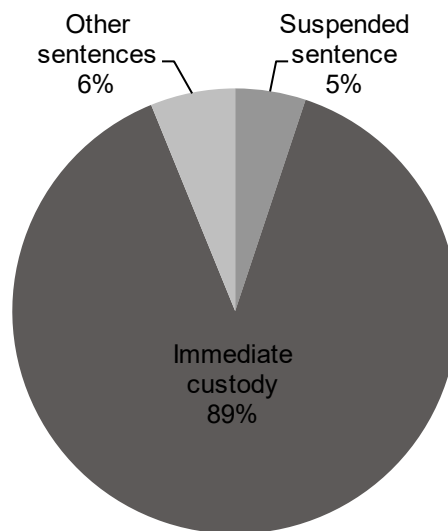
³ The Home Office also publishes a series of Counter-terrorism statistics (covering terrorism arrests and outcomes), available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/counter-terrorism-statistics>

- In 2016, around 20 offenders were sentenced for causing/attempting to cause an explosion likely to endanger life or property (with 40 offenders sentenced since 2011). The remaining offences covered by the guideline are very low volume, with fewer than 10 offenders sentenced each year since 2006.⁴

Sentence outcomes

- Immediate custody is the most frequently imposed sentence outcome for terrorism offences covered by the guideline, comprising 89 per cent of sentence outcomes over the period 2006-2016 (see Figure 1). A further five per cent of offenders received suspended sentence orders, and six per cent were given other sentences (this includes hospital orders and other miscellaneous disposals).

Figure 1: Sentence outcomes received by adult offenders sentenced for terrorism offences covered by the guideline, 2006-2016



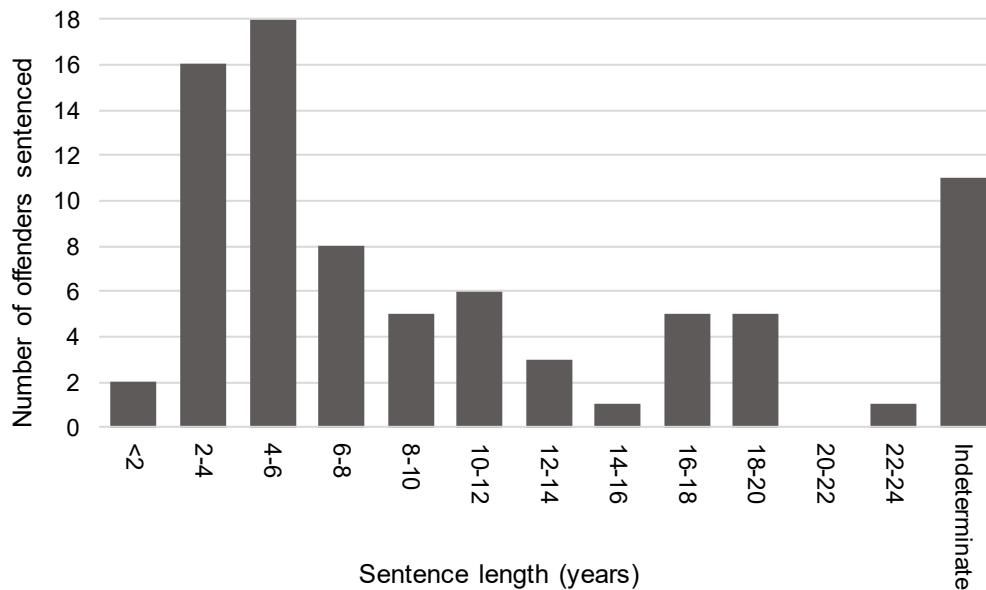
Sentence lengths

- Over the last decade, around eight per cent of offenders sentenced to immediate custody for terrorism offences covered by the guideline were given indeterminate sentences.
- For offenders sentenced for preparation of terrorist acts during 2006-2016, the average (mean) custodial sentence length (ACSL) for those receiving a determinate sentence was 8 years 5 months (after any reduction for guilty plea).⁵ Figure 2 shows the distribution of sentence lengths received for this offence over the last decade.

⁴ For a number of offences covered by the guideline (s11, 12, 15-18, 57, 58 TACT2000; s2, 3 ESA1883) data is only available since 2011. The figures quoted in this bulletin for these offences therefore cover the period 2011-2016.

⁵ The statutory maximum for this offence is life imprisonment.

Figure 2: Sentence lengths received by adult offenders sentenced to immediate custody for preparation of terrorist acts, after any reduction for guilty plea, 2006-2016



Note: Sentence length intervals do not include the lower bound, but do include the upper bound sentence length, for example the category '<2' includes sentence lengths less than and including 2 years, and '2-4' includes sentence lengths over 2 years, and up to and including 4 years.

- For offenders sentenced during the period 2011-2016 for causing/attempting to cause an explosion likely to endanger life or property, the ACSL was 9 years 5 months (after any reduction for guilty plea).⁶
- For all of the other terrorism offences covered by the guideline, the ACSL for the period 2006-2016 ranged between 2 years 4 months and 4 years.⁷

⁶ The statutory maximum for this offence is life imprisonment.

⁷ The statutory maximum for the other terrorism offences covered by the guideline ranges from 5 to 15 years' custody.

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 most severe 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 in the text 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.gov.uk

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Further information on the Sentencing Council and its work can be found at:

<http://sentencingcouncil.org.uk>