

**Justice Analytical Services (JAS)  
Safer Communities and Justice Statistics Monthly Data  
Report**

**May 2023 edition**

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# Introduction

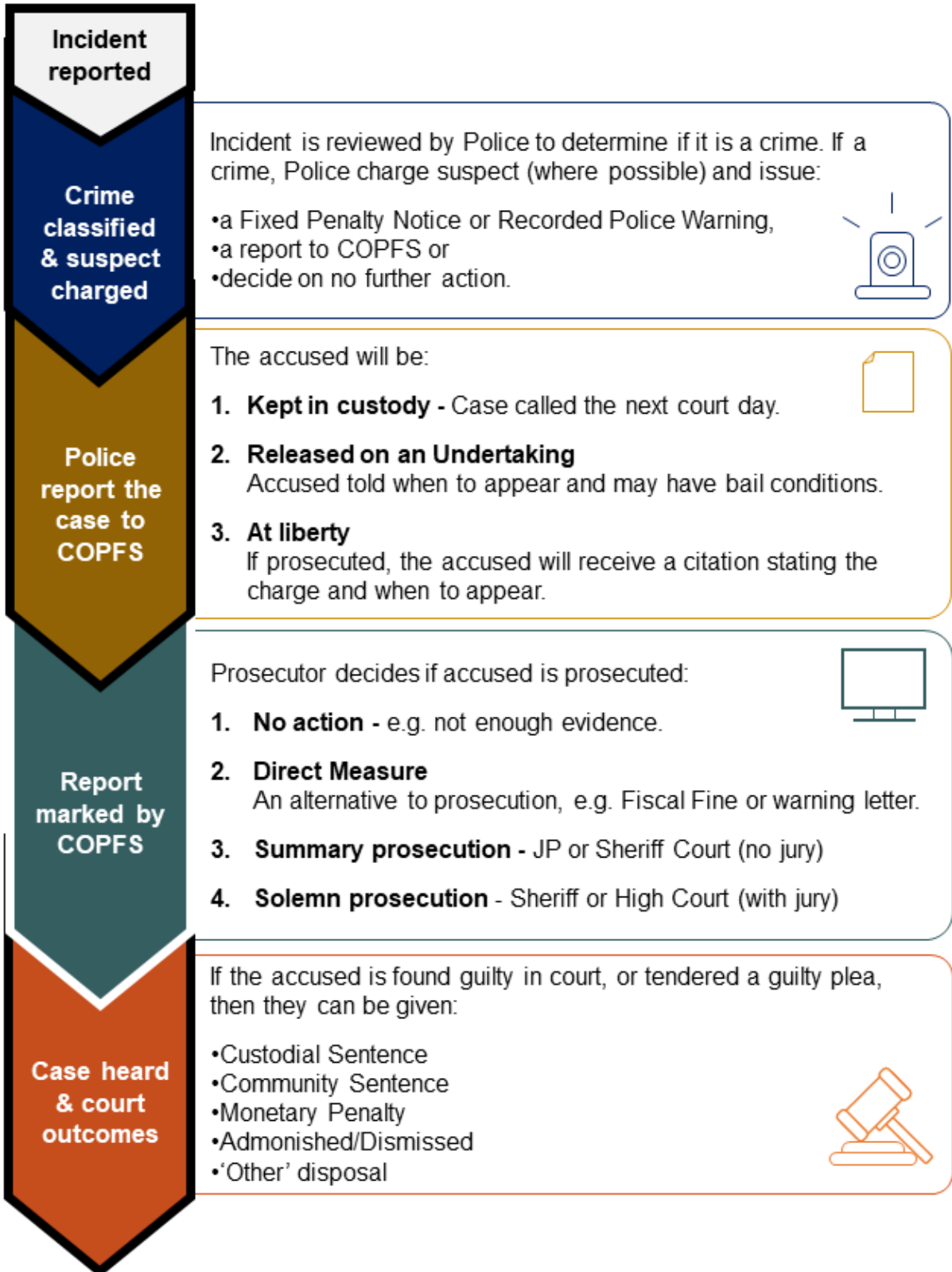
This report provides an overview of a number of important justice and safer communities statistics. Data has been gathered from a number of different sources and may be subject to future revision as more recent data becomes available.

Any newly updated summary statistics are preceded by \* New \* and are also marked in **yellow** background.

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# How crime flows through the Justice System

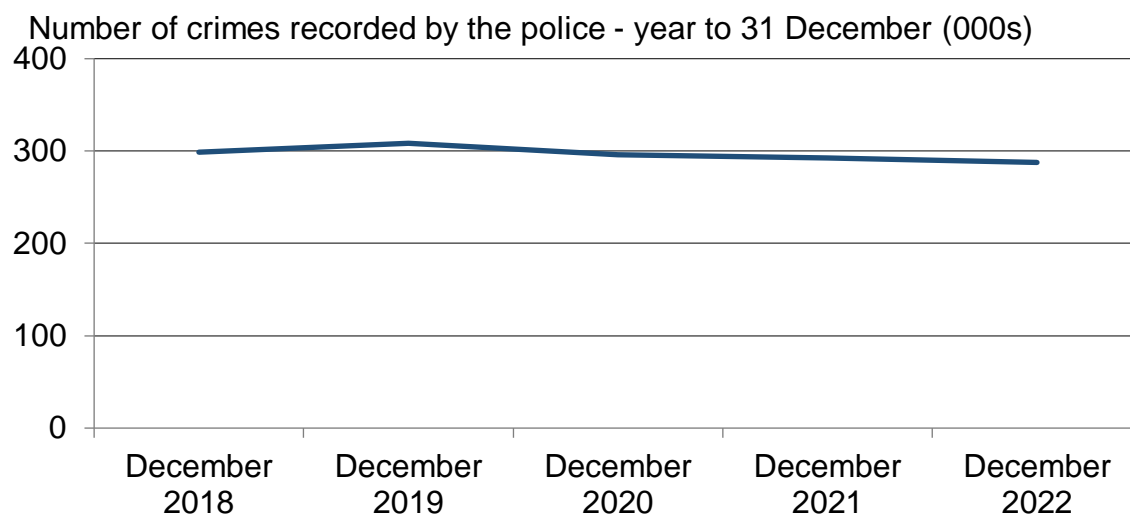


# Crime in General

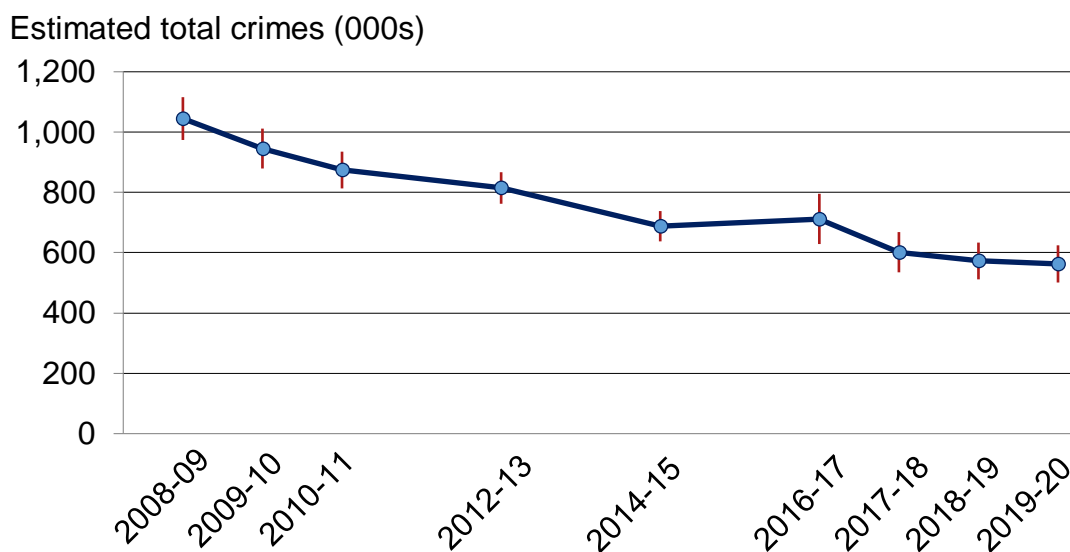
## Summary statistics on crime in general

► **Police recorded crime is at one of the lowest levels seen for a 12 month period since 1974 and is down 4% since the year ending December 2018.**

Between the year ending December 2021 and the year ending December 2022, the number of crimes recorded decreased by 2%, to 287,678. This fall was driven by a reduction in crimes recorded under Covid-19 related legislation (from 15,648 to 14). All other crimes collectively increased by 4%.



► **Crime has fallen by 46% since 2008-09.** Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that around 1 in 8 adults were victims of crime in 2019-20 (11.9%) compared to 1 in 5 in 2008-09 (20.4%). The estimated number of crimes fell by 46% over the same period, and by 21% since 2016-17. The SCJS detected no change in the overall victimisation rate between 2018-19 and 2019-20.



▶ **Violent crime increased in the most recent year.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police increased by 5%, to 69,117 in the year ending December 2022. This was driven by a rise in common assault (also up 5%), which makes up the clear majority (84%) of all non-sexual crimes of violence recorded in the year ending December 2022. The SCJS showed a 39% fall in violent crime between 2008-09 and 2019-20 and that an estimated 48% of violent crime in 2019-20 was reported to the police.

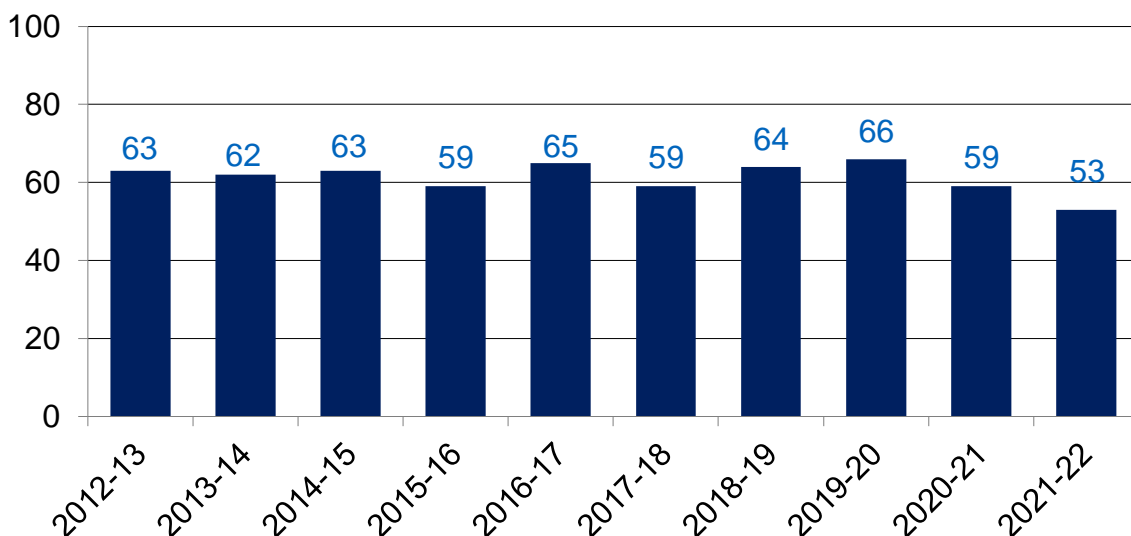
▶ **Recorded sexual crimes increased in the most recent year.** Sexual crimes recorded by the police increased by less than 1% to 14,640 in the year ending December 2022. This has led to the highest number of sexual crimes in the last five years. Multiple factors lie behind the long term increase in recorded sexual crime including a greater willingness of victims to come forward, more historical reporting, more online offending and the impact of new legislation. 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.

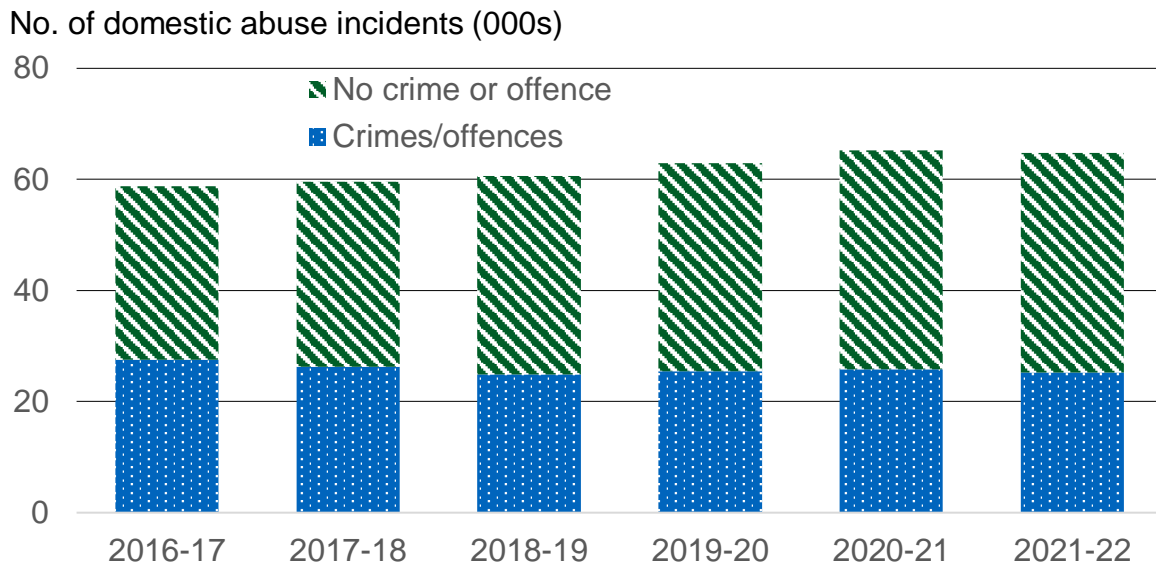
▶ **Decrease in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 54.0% in 2021-22, down from 59.3% in 2020-21 and similar to 54.9% in 2019-20. The decrease in 2021-22 reflects a partial return to the volume of different crime types recorded in the year prior to the pandemic (2019-20), albeit clear up rates have still fallen for each of the individual crime groups.

▶ **No. of victims of homicide at record low.** There were 53 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2021-22, a 16% decrease from 2012-13 and the lowest value since comparable records began in 1976.

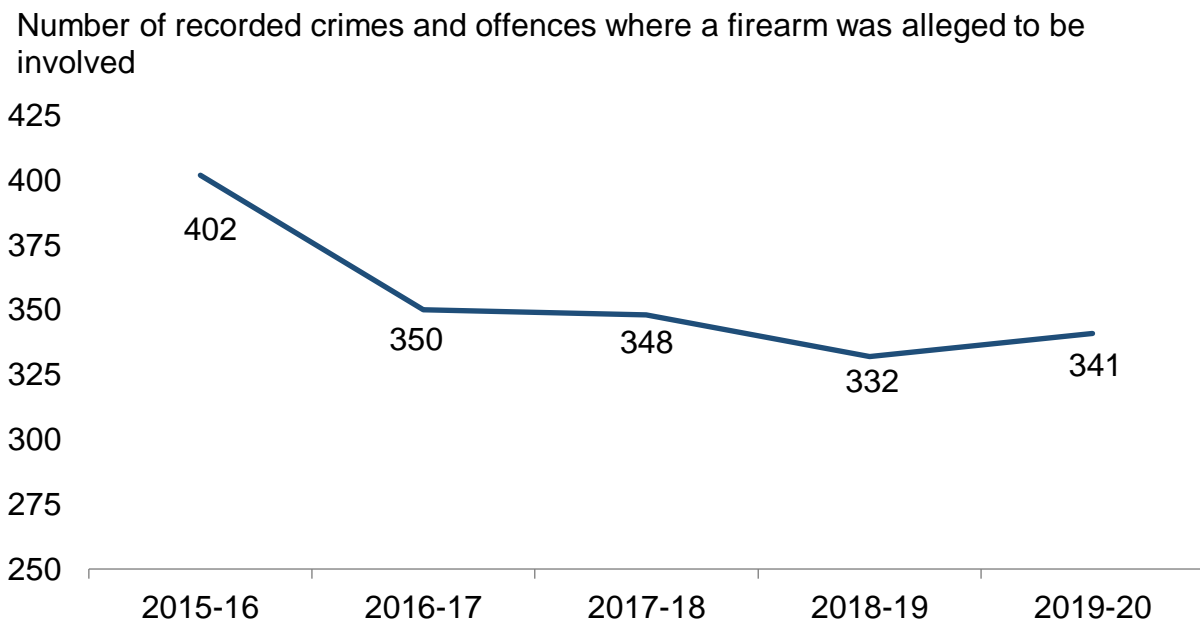
Number of victims of homicide



► **Slight decrease in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 64,807 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2021-22, a decrease of 1% on 2020-21. In 2021-22, 39% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.



► **Small increase in firearm offences.** Between 2018-19 and 2019-20 the number of crimes and offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved increased by 3% (from 332 to 341 offences). The 2018-19 and 2019-20 totals are the lowest and second lowest, respectively, since comparable records began in 1980.

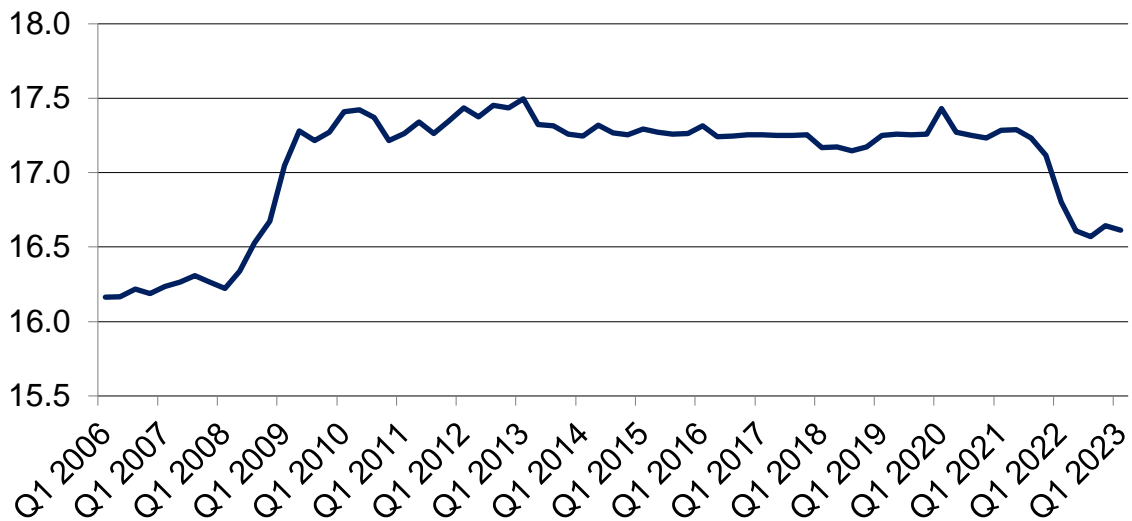


# Policing

## Summary statistics on policing

▶ \* New \* There were 16,615 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 31 March 2023. This was 381 (+2.3%) more officers compared to the position on 31 March 2007, but 190 (-1.1%) less than on 31 March 2022.

Number of police officers (FTE) (000s)



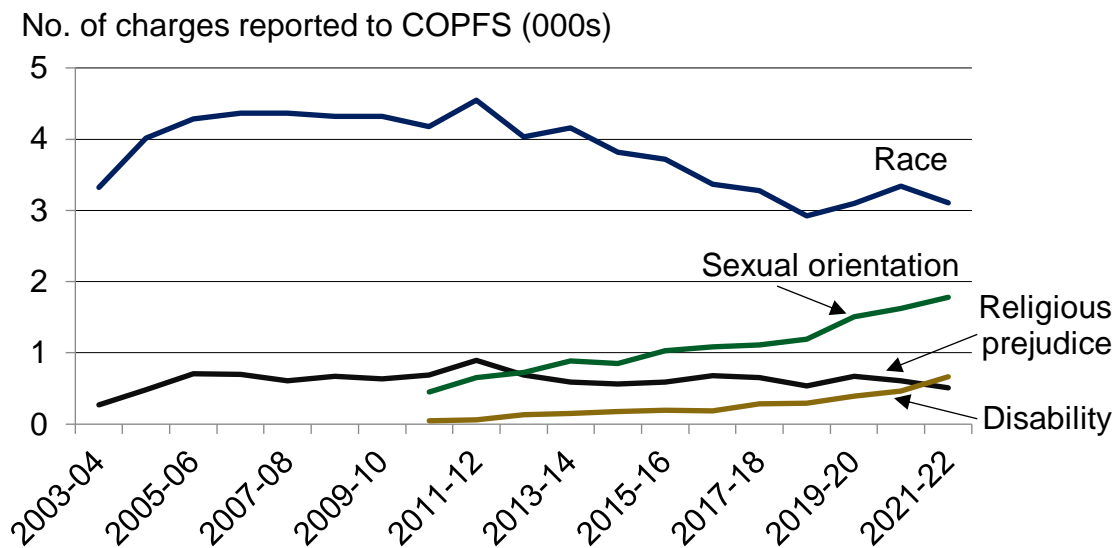


# Hate Crime

## Summary statistics on hate crime

▶ **Numbers stable for police recorded hate crime.** Between 2014-15 & 2021-22, the number of hate crimes recorded by the police was relatively stable, at around 6,300 to 7,000. In 2021-22, 62% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 27% sexual orientation, 8% disability, 7% religion and 3% transgender identity.

▶ **Marginal decrease in overall hate crime charges.** There was a decrease in the number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 for race and religion. Sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity aggravated hate crime charges saw an increase. Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.



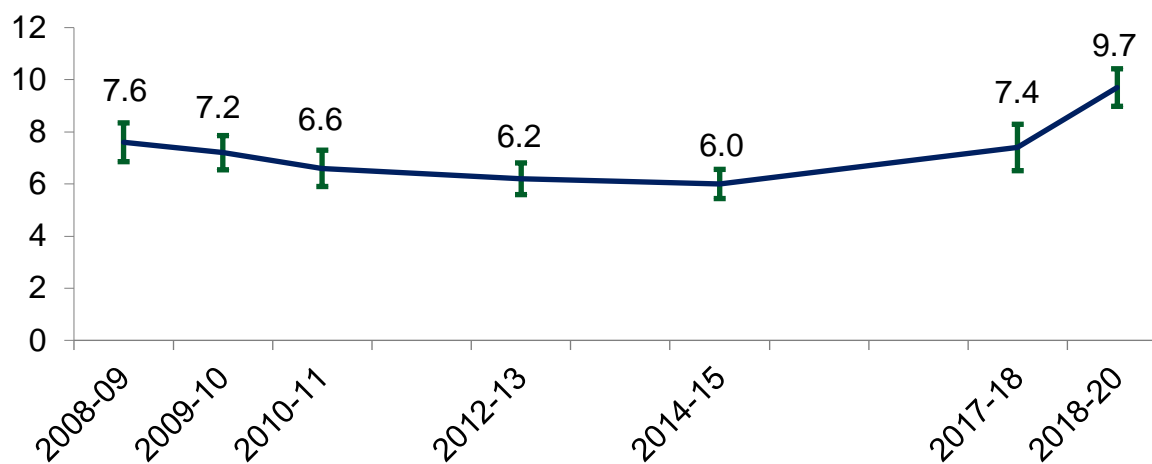
# Drugs

## Summary statistics on drugs

► **The proportion of adults reporting use of comparable illicit drugs has risen.**

Results from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) show that in 2018-20, 9.7% of respondents reported taking one or more of these drugs in the 12 months prior to interview. This has increased from 7.6% in 2008-09 and 7.4% in 2017-18. The drugs listed in the survey questionnaire are the same for both 2017-18 and 2018-20, enabling a direct comparison. There was an increase from 9.5% in 2017-18 to 13.5% in 2018-20 for overall self-reported drug use in the 12 months prior to interview.

Percentage of adults reporting use of comparable illicit drugs



To have a more comparable measure since 2008-09, the figures in this chart exclude poppers, glues, solvents, gas or aerosol and prescription only painkillers not prescribed to the respondent.

# Community Safety

## Summary statistics on community safety

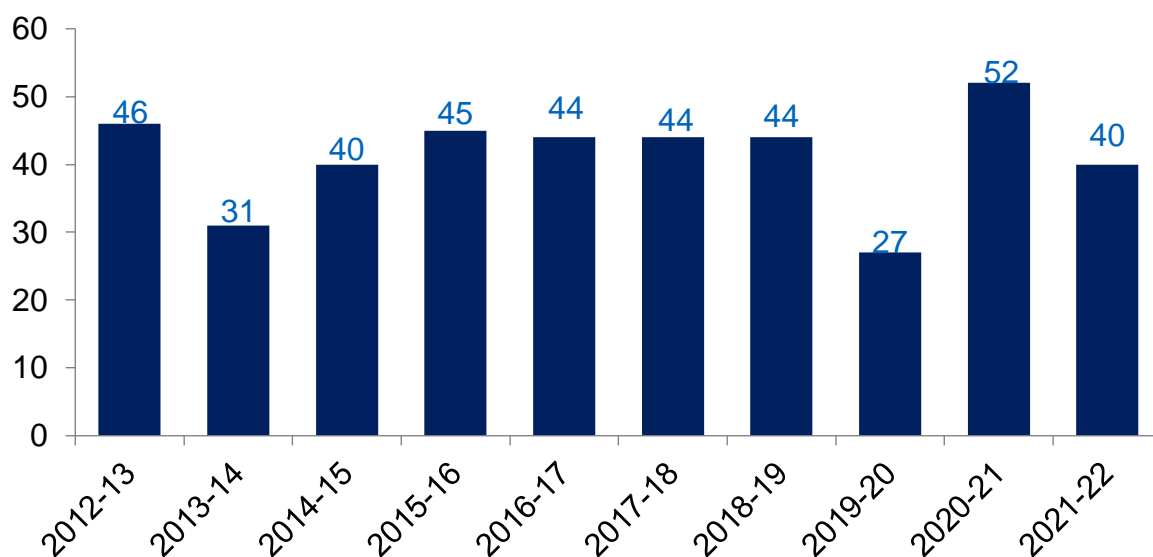
▶ **Improved public perception of local crime rate since 2008-09.** The public feel safer in their local communities. The SCJS found that, in 2019-20, 73% of adults thought that the local crime rate had stayed the same or reduced in the past two years. This shows an improvement from 69% in 2008-09 and no change since 2018-19 (73%).

▶ **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (77%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2019-20, unchanged from 2018-19 (78%) but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.

▶ **Most adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reported that, in 2019-20, 55% of adults said that the police in their local area were doing a good or excellent job, unchanged from 2018-19 (56%) but down from 61% in 2012-13.

▶ **Number of fires rose 10% in the last year.** In 2021-22, there were 27,771 fires in Scotland, up 10% on 2020-21 and the second highest number in the last decade. There were 40 fire fatalities in 2021-22, the third lowest in the last decade.

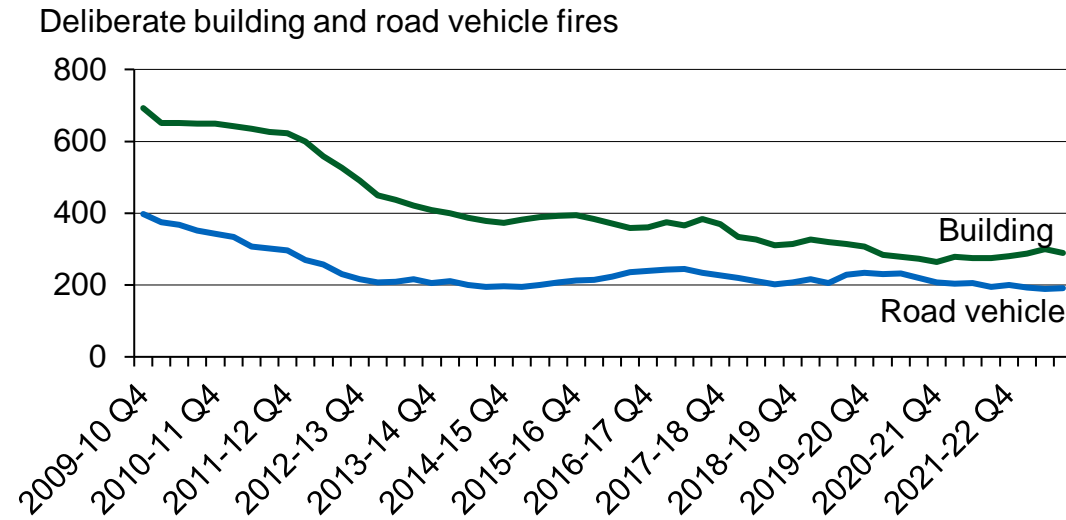
No. of fatal fire casualties



▶ **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2012-13.** In 2021-22, there were 1,819 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 399 due to assault with a sharp object. These were, respectively, 47% and 38% lower than in 2012-13.

## Further detail on fire statistics

There were 235 deliberate building fires in quarter 3 of 2022-23, down from 279 in the same quarter of 2021-22. Over the same period, the number of deliberate road vehicle fires rose from 177 to 187. There has been a long-term downward trend in deliberate building and deliberate road vehicle fires since this series began.



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 (UFAS) describe avoidable false alarm signals from a workplace, either from an automatic fire alarm or from a person. There were 8,854 UFAS incidents in quarter 3 of 2022-23, which made up 35% of all incidents attended in that quarter. This was similar to the previous year where UFAS made up 34% of all incidents attended in that quarter.

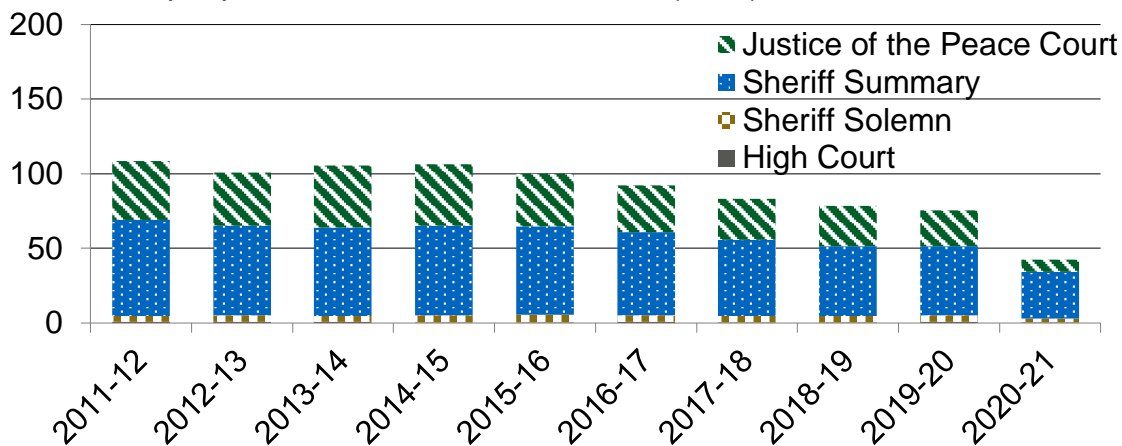
# Criminal & Civil Proceedings

## Summary statistics on criminal and civil proceedings

### ► COVID-19 impacted the number of proceedings and convictions in 2020-21.

The number of people convicted in Scottish courts fell by 44% from 2019-20 to 42,532.

Number of people convicted in Scottish courts (000s)



The 2020-21 data mainly reflects the impact of Covid-19 across the justice system, and should not be interpreted as indicative of longer term trends.

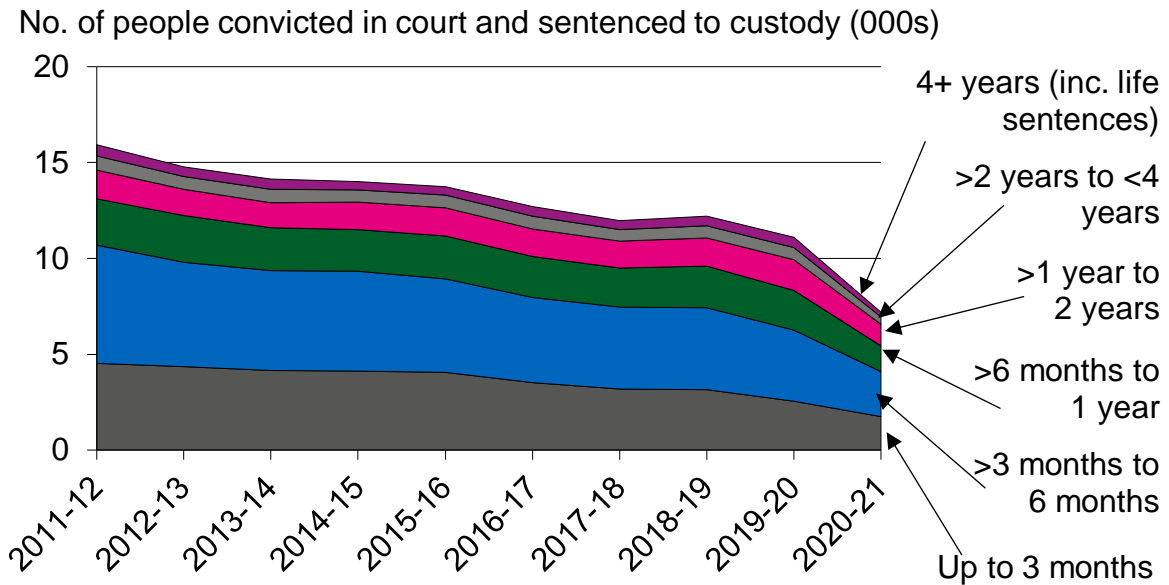
### ► Fall in convictions in almost all categories between 2019-20 & 2020-21.

Convictions fell the most for motor vehicle offences (down 58%) and crimes of dishonesty (down 44%). However, convictions for crimes under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act increased by 81% (383 convictions) in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 (212 convictions). The course of conduct offence was only introduced in April 2019 and so to some extent an increase would be expected after the first year as it takes time for evidence to build up and cases to progress through court.

### ► Fall in numbers of community sentences issued, but rise in proportion in 2020-21.

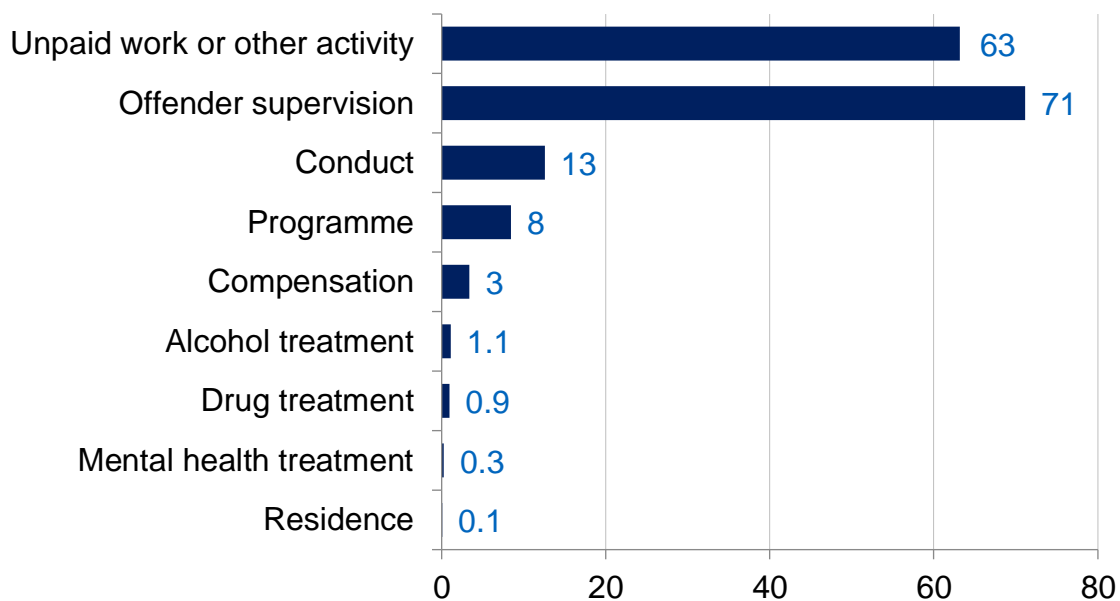
The number of community sentences in court fell by 42% between 2019-20 and 2020-21, from 16,661 to 9,741, in line with the fall seen in convictions overall due to the impact of COVID-19 on court business. The proportion of all convictions resulting in a community sentence rose to 23%, the highest in the past decade. The proportion split of sentence types this year is likely a function of the differing levels of capacity of the different court types operating during the year rather than indicative of any trend.

▶ **Average custodial sentence is under a year.** For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2020-21 was almost eleven months (329 days) in length. This was 8% shorter than in 2019-20, but 14% longer than in 2011-12 (9.5 months). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of up to one year or less remained unchanged at 75% in 2020-21, the lowest proportion of the last decade.



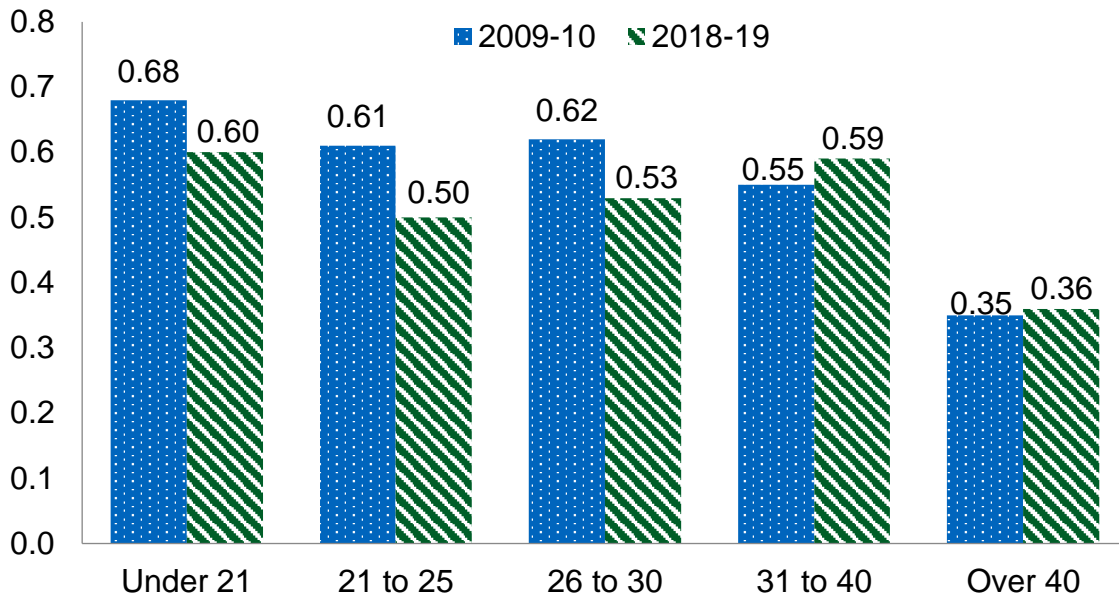
The 2020-21 data mainly reflects the impact of Covid-19 across the justice system, and should not be interpreted as indicative of longer term trends.

▶ **Community payback orders still more likely to have supervision than unpaid work.** There were 12,150 community payback orders imposed in 2021-22. This was 49% higher than in 2020-21 but still 28% lower than in 2019-20. The difficulties with delivering unpaid work due to Covid-19 was a major factor in more orders being issued with offender supervision requirements (71%) than unpaid work or other activity requirements (63%).



▶ **Reconviction rates are at one of their lowest levels in 22 years.** The average number of reconvictions per offender was 11% lower than it was a decade ago. The fall in the last decade was driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 12% for under 21s, 18% for 21-25 year olds, and 15% for 26-30 year olds. In contrast, average reconvictions increased for the older age groups over the decade, with increases of 7% for 31-40 year olds and 3% for those aged over 40.

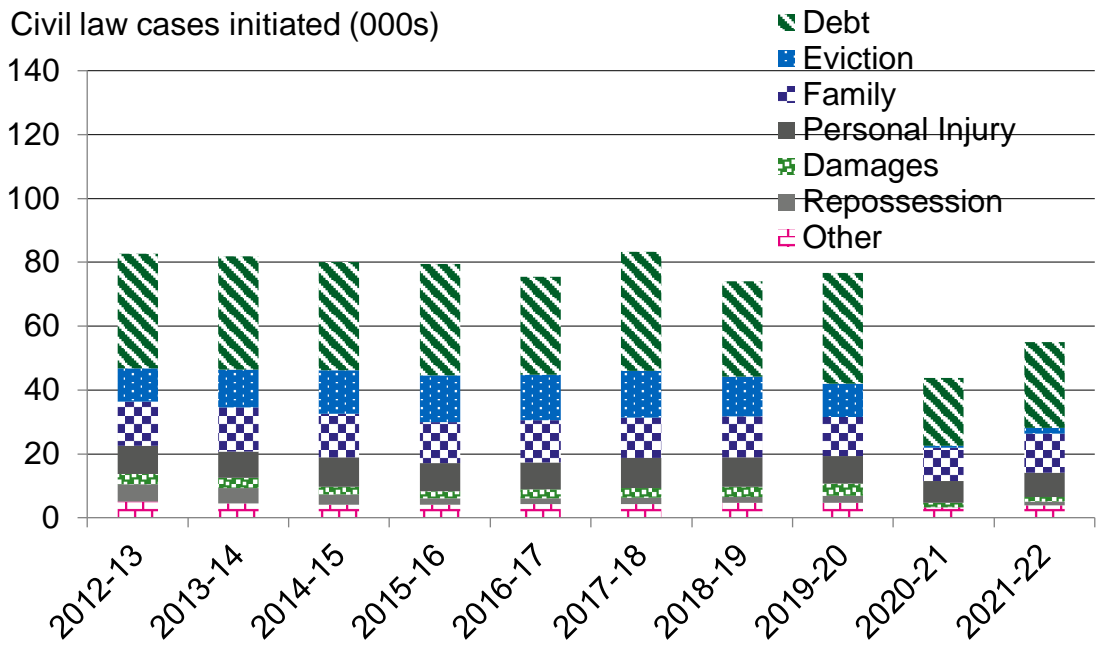
Average reconvictions per offender



▶ **No. of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds down by over 30 per cent in last 10 years.** [Statistics published by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration \(SCRA\)](#) show that, in 2021-22, 2,398 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a decrease of 31% since 2012-13.

▶ **\* New \*** The most recent ten years show a general downward trend in initiated cases, though the latest figures show some recovery from 2020-21. There were 53,866 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2021-22 (excluding summary applications). This represents an increase of 23% from 2020-21.

▶ **\* New \*** Most case types increased since 2020-21, except damages which fell marginally. The highest increases were in repossessions (up 1,204%) and evictions (up 200%). The increase in repossessions follows a large Covid-related fall in 2020-21 to a record low. The increase in initiations in 2021-22 brings numbers closer to the pre-pandemic levels but still 46% lower than in 2019-20. Evictions too are still substantially lower than pre-pandemic levels (84% down on 2019-20). Personal injury (up 12%) and family (up by 17%) recorded the lowest increases. Damages saw a 4% decrease from 2020-21.





# Prisons

## Summary statistics on prisons

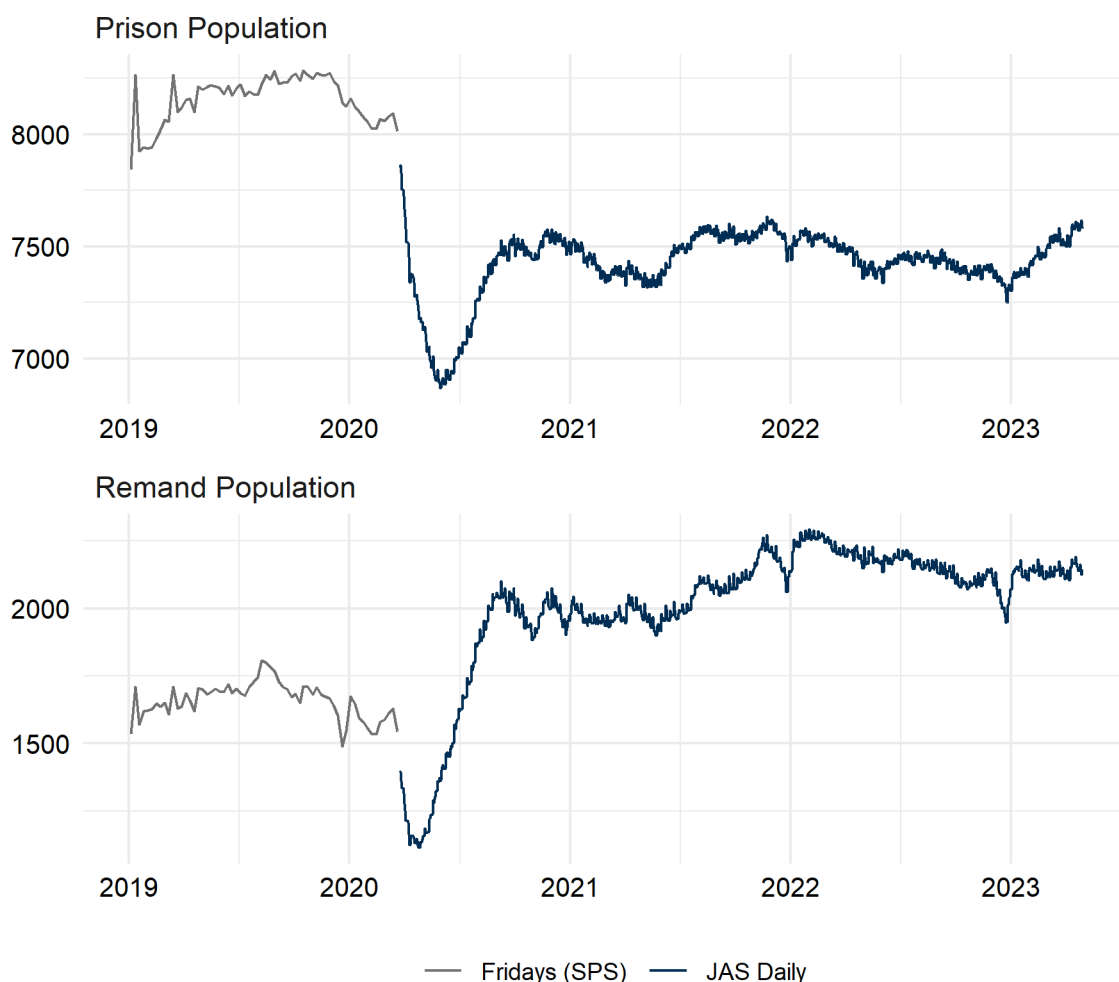
**\* New \***

▶ **The prison population has risen from its lowest point at the end of May 2020.** [Friday population figures published by the Scottish Prison Service](#), show that the prison population rose from around 7,500 in April 2018 to around 8,300 in November 2019, but fell sharply in the early days of the lockdown in 2020. This was due to a drop in the number of sentenced admissions following the Covid-19 outbreak and the early release of prisoners.

▶ The population has since stabilised between 7,300 and 7,600 and was 7,588 on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

▶ The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020, but grew to over 2,000 by September 2020. The remand population has grown significantly since, and exceeded previous records on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 to a new peak of 2,292. It has since fallen slightly to 2,140 (28% of the total prison population) on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

Chart: Prison populations (total and remand), January 2019 to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023



## Further detail on prison population

**\* New \***

In April 2023 (up until the morning of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023):

- the population increased by 81 to 7,588
- 2,140 were on remand: 1,842 (24%) untried & 298 (4%) awaiting sentence
- 66% of arrivals were untried (600 of 910), and 15% awaiting sentence (137)

While the overall prison population is lower than pre-pandemic levels, the number of people held on remand remains at a historic high. The changing population levels across groups that are required by law to be housed separately – like those on remand – pose difficulties in the management of the prison population.

The remand population grew during March through November 2021, exceeding its previous recorded peak. In line with previous years, overall numbers and remand populations fell during December 2021, hitting a low of 7,433 (2,061 remand) over Christmas before rebounding.

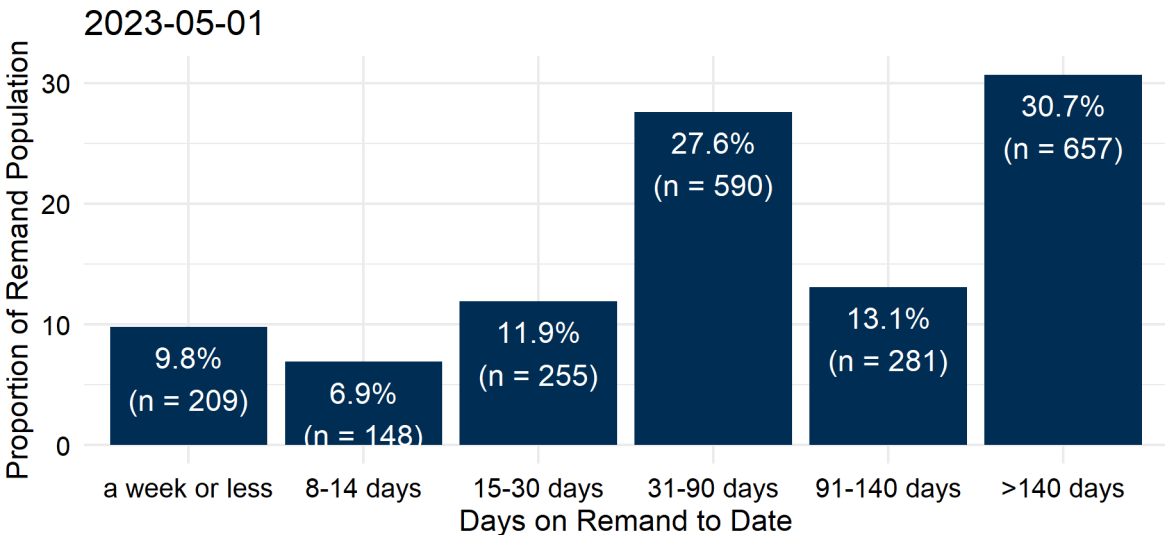
The remand population peaked on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 at 2,292 (30%) – the highest daily number on record. On 25<sup>th</sup> December the prison population hit its lowest level since recovery from the pandemic system shock in July 2020 (7,251; remand 1,950).

## Time on Remand to Date

**\* New \***

Among the 2,140 people on remand as of the morning of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023, the median continuous time spent with this status to date was 71.5 days.

Chart: Banded continuous time on remand to date



**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

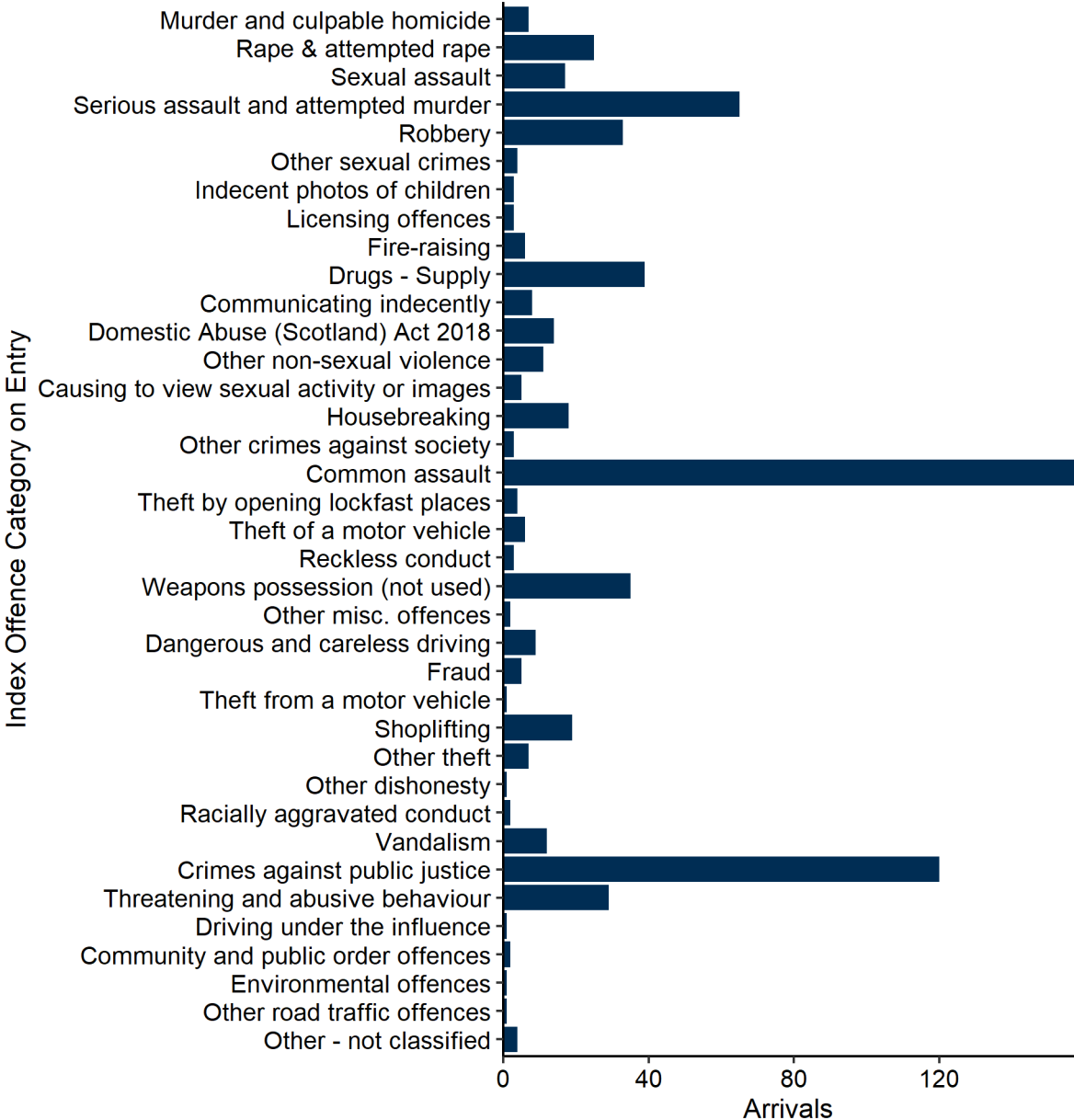
an extended period, but do not reflect the relationship between these times on remand and the ongoing court procedure(s) to which they relate.

### Remand Arrival Offences

**\* New \***

There were 682 remand arrivals to prison with known offence types in April, awaiting trial or sentence for the following alleged offences.

Chart: Index offence category on entry of arrivals to remand



**Note:** Double-counting may occur where an individual arrives, is absent from prison for one or more nights in the month, and then returns before the end of the period. Where an individual has multiple alleged offence types in a single stint, the offence towards the top of the list in the chart is used as the index offence.

# Topic Page

## Civil Justice Statistics in Scotland 2021-22

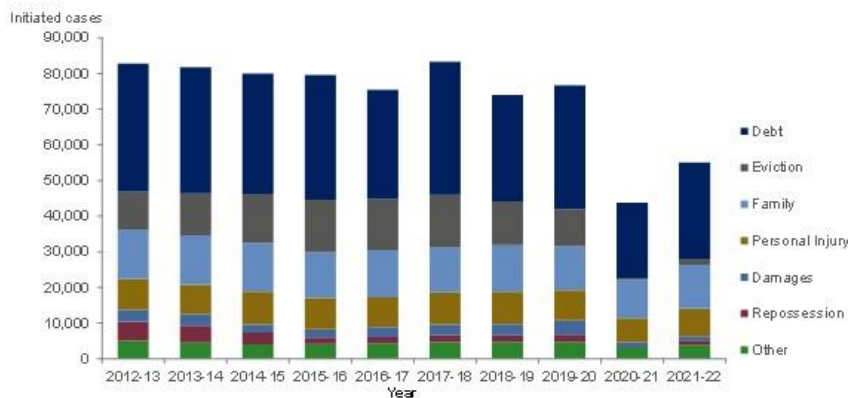
### Civil justice statistics in Scotland 2021-22



Civil justice is concerned with the rights and obligations of people and organisations. One way of resolving civil law disputes is for a case to be brought to court. Common types of cases where civil law is used include debt, divorce and claims for personal injury.

The Coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on civil justice during the latest two financial years. This resulted in lower volumes of cases being initiated.

► The most recent ten years show a general downward trend in initiated cases, latest figures show some recovery from last year.



► All initiated case types decreased since 2012-13, but evictions saw the biggest fall. Family recorded the lowest decrease



**84%** ↓

**1,700 Evictions**  
Decreased from 10,500 in 2012-13



**25%** ↓

**27,000 Debt cases**  
Decreased from 35,900 in 2012-13



**11%** ↓

**12,300 Family cases**  
Decreased from 13,900 in 2012-13

All figures are rounded to the nearest 100

Justice Analytical Services

# Sources and Further Information

## Sources and further information

The information presented in this report is primarily drawn from a range of Official Statistics sources. In the case of 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 National Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland.
- [Homicide in Scotland Statistics](#). Annual National 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 National Statistics on criminal proceedings concluded in Scottish courts and on a range of measures available as alternatives to prosecution.
- Annual [Civil Justice Statistics](#) bulletin. This contains Official Statistics on civil justice and court reform as recorded by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS).
- [Scottish Prison Population statistics](#). Official statistics on Scottish prison populations, exploring population levels and composition and change over time.
- [SCTS Official Statistics](#). Includes quarterly data on fines, financial penalty collection rates, and criminal court activity in Scotland.

### 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 2019-20.
- [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland](#). Annual National Statistics on justice social work activity in Scotland.

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