



Ministry
of Justice

Statistical Note and Consultation - changes to Criminal Justice Statistics

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Introduction

The [Criminal Justice Statistics quarterly](#) presents key statistics on activity in the Criminal Justice System for England and Wales providing users with information about proven offending and its outcomes. This document sets out a number of proposed changes to the publication, which aim to improve the way in which information is made available to users.

The Criminal Justice Statistics was first published in 2011, bringing together data previously published within the Criminal Statistics (annual) and Sentencing Statistics (quarterly and annual) series. Several changes have been made to the commentary since 2011, but limited changes have been made to the way in which data are made available to users.

Aims of the consultation

This consultation reflects an internal review which the producers of Criminal Justice Statistics have undertaken to consider how:

- the publication can better meet user needs,
- the dissemination of information can be improved.

A separate review has also been conducted on the motoring offences tables.

As a result of this internal review some changes have already been implemented (See Annex A).

Further changes are proposed for implementation in the 2014 annual publication and future quarterly editions. This document sets out these changes and users' views are invited on these changes.

Key questions for users

1. **What information from Criminal Justice Statistics quarterly publication do you currently use?**
2. **Do you agree with the proposed changes to the Criminal Justice Statistics quarterly publication?**

How to tell us your comments

Comments are requested by **22 January 2015**

Enquiries and responses in relation to this consultation should be directed to Darren Barton at the address below.

Please put 'Consultation Response' in the title of any emails:

Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Justice Statistics Analytical Services

Ministry of Justice 7th Floor
102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

What we will do with your comments

We will provide feedback on all of your comments in the next edition of Criminal Justice Statistics published on 19 February 2015 and clarify what we propose to do as a result of them.

Proposed changes for future editions of Criminal Justice Statistics

1. Clearly differentiate between the annual and the quarterly publications

A wide variety of additional information is released in the annual calendar year end publication, in addition to the information presented in the quarterly updates:

- 5 year criminal justice system outcome by offence (pivot table).
- 5 year outcome by offence table.
- Motoring tables
- CSV files on cautions / PNDs / Crown Court / Magistrates Court outcomes etc.

To make users more aware of what information is published and with what frequency, we will ensure the website, the introduction to the publication and the tables themselves clearly state the differences between the information published at the annual calendar year end and quarterly points. The title of the publication will also specifically mention the inclusion of annual tables.

2. Changes to the structure of Criminal Justice Statistics publications

Currently the Criminal Justice Statistics quarterly publications include 79 tables and the annual publication (12 months to December) includes 169 tables. It is proposed to greatly decrease the number of tables and instead provide additional information in a more flexible format, such as using pivot tables and CSVs.

Subsequent to consultation and discussions with internal departmental users key tables will be identified, with the aim that the quarterly publication will provide a short snapshot of approximately 10 tables and the annual publication a more detailed publication of approximately 30 tables.

The additional information will be made available in a similar form to the outcome by offence pivot table produced in the [Criminal Justice Statistics: December 2013](#) publication described above.

By reducing the number of tables and instead providing information in a more flexible format, it will become far easier for users to locate and extract the specific information they require

3. Inclusion of quarterly data

Currently all information in Criminal Justice Statistics is provided on a 12 months to basis, primarily due to seasonal trends such as the reduction in proceedings, convictions and sentences over the Christmas period due to fewer courts sitting at this time.

However, presenting information on a 12 month basis means it takes longer to pick up any changes in trend. It is proposed that selected quarterly information is presented in addition to the 12 months to statistics, to flag up any recent changes more prominently. The commentary will discuss the seasonal element while bringing out quarterly changes.

4. Separation of indictable offences into 'indictable only' and 'triable either way' offences

This change will bring Criminal Justice Statistics publication in to line with other Departmental Publications (e.g. Court Statistics Quarterly). Information will be presented by four offence groups rather than the current three:

1. 'Indictable Only' offences, which can only be tried on indictment in the Crown Court by a judge and jury
2. 'Triable-either-way' offences which are triable either summarily in a magistrate's court or on indictment in the Crown Court,
3. Summary motoring
4. Summary non-motoring.

5. Inclusion of lower level offence information (annual publication only)

A high proportion of the FOI queries received ask for out of court disposals, prosecutions, convictions and sentences by specific offences, broken down by age and gender. At the current time, information is not published to a lower level beyond what is available in the outcome by offence pivot table¹, produced as of Criminal Justice Statistics: December 2013 publication. It is proposed to publish information at this more detailed level alongside future annual editions of the publication. This will initially be as an experimental output, which will be made available for an initial 3 month period. User feedback will be reviewed after 3 months and a decision will be taken as to whether to include it as part of future annual Criminal Justice Statistics publications.

6. Changes to the motoring offence tables (annual publication only)

Currently the motoring offence tables are published on an all offence basis, unlike the rest of the publication which is predominantly published on a principal offence basis². It is proposed that in future publications motoring offences tables should also be provided on a principal offence, to bring the chapter in line with the rest of the publication. This will enable comparisons to be made across other chapters and removes the risk of confusion between motoring conviction and sentencing figures in the motoring chapter differing from those elsewhere in the publication. Additionally sentencing data can be difficult to interpret on an all offence basis, particularly for more serious offences when custodial sentences and/or disqualifications may be imposed. Findings of guilt will continue to be provided additionally on an all offence basis.

As with the rest of the publication, it is proposed that the number of motoring tables be greatly reduced. Instead the data will be made available in a similar format to the outcome by offence pivot table produced in the Criminal Justice Statistics: December 2013 publication.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/311455/cjs-outcomes-by-offence-2009-2013.xls

² When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences, the principal offence is the one 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.

Contact Details

We would welcome views on the proposed changes detailed above and any further comments on the accessibility, content or structure of the Criminal Justice Statistics publications <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-quarterly-statistics-june-2014> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly-december-2013> to ensure we meet user needs in an efficient and effective way.

Please provide comments to:

Darren Barton

Justice Statistics Analytical Services

Ministry of Justice 7th Floor

102 Petty France, London

SW1H 9AJ

Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

This annex documents changes that were introduced in the 2013 December publication and 2014 June publication as a result of the internal consultation.

Changes made to the 2013 December (annual) publication (published in May 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly-december-2013>

1. Introduction of pivot table and CSV datasets to replace supplementary volumes 1 – 5

A pivot table (CJS Outcomes by offence, 2009-2013)³ showing detailed outcomes by offence was introduced to replace the old supplementary volume 5. This pivot table enables users to easily extract outcomes data by offence and by gender and age group and provides five year trends. New CSV datasets⁴ (Magistrates, Crown Court, PND by police force area, cautions by police force area and court outcomes by police force area) were released to replace the old supplementary volumes 1-4. These changes enabled us to discontinue over 100 separate tables, making it far easier for users to locate their required information, as well as providing five years trends where previously only the most recent year's data was made available.

2. Rationalisation of sentencing tables and introduction of sentencing CSV dataset

Tables within the sentencing chapter were rationalised leading to a reduced number of absolute tables. Additionally a sentencing CSV dataset was released alongside the publication⁵. These changes make it easier for users to locate the sentencing information of interest.

3. Removal of Offences chapter

Tables within the previously included offences chapter were moved to the overview, out of court disposals and convictions sections. This change ensures tables are located within the appropriately labelled chapter and make it easier for users to locate required information.

Changes made to this publication (2014 June published in November 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-quarterly-statistics-june-2014>

1. Inclusion of all recordable offences in the offending histories chapter

This quarter new tables have been introduced to ensure all recordable offences are covered, therefore tables now include summary offences recorded on the Police

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/311455/cjs-outcomes-by-offence-2009-2013.xls

⁴ Available on the publication main page <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly-december-2013>

⁵ Available on the publication main page <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-statistics-quarterly-december-2013>

National Computer as well as indictable offences. This change will provide a greater understanding of criminal history of offenders.

2. Changes to First Time Entrants data

After consulting users in previous edition of this publication, this quarter a new Data Tool and CSV file have been introduced to enable users to interrogate all data on First Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice System, and tables showing First Time Entrants by police force area have been removed.

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