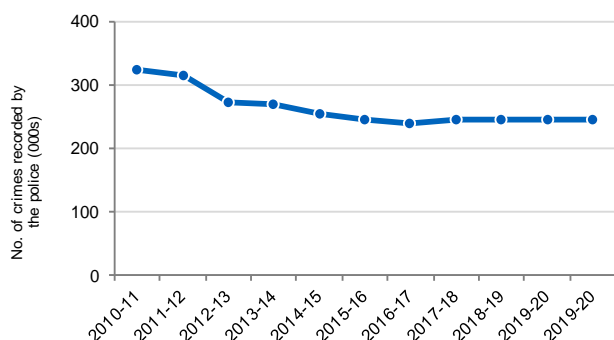


# Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief | September 2021

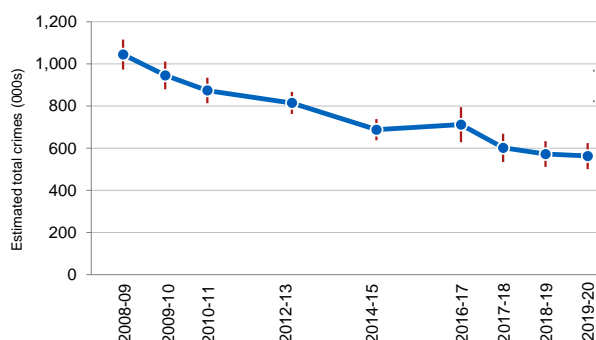


## Crime

- **\* New \* Police recorded crime at one of the lowest levels since 1974 and is down 22% since 2011-12.** Between 2019-20 and 2020-21, the number of crimes recorded remained almost unchanged. The 2020-21 figure includes 20,976 crimes under Coronavirus legislation (compared to 107 in 2019-20). All other crimes collectively decreased by 8%.



- **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.



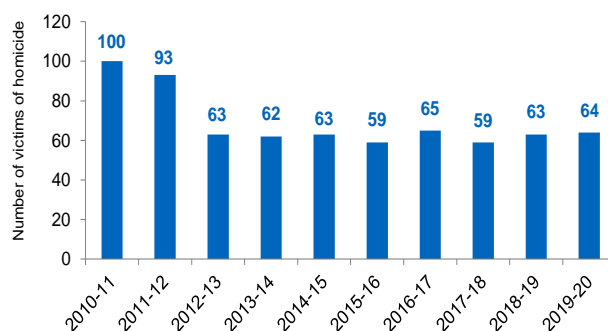
- **\* New \* Violent crime has fallen over the long term.** Non-sexual crimes of violence recorded by the police fell by 4%, to 8,972 in 2020-21. This decrease is due to the recording of fewer crimes across every category except "other" violence, which rose by 22%. This is due to an increase in online crimes of threats and extortion. Overall, non-sexual crimes of violence remain at a lower level than all years between 1980 and 2011-12. The SCJS shows 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.

- **\* New \* Sexual crimes fell for a second consecutive year.** Sexual assault, and rape & attempted rape, both fell between 2019-20 and 2020-21, while other sexual crimes continued to rise. Overall, sexual crimes remain at one of their highest levels. 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) estimates that 3.6% of adults experienced at least one serious sexual assault since the age of 16, unchanged from 2008-09.

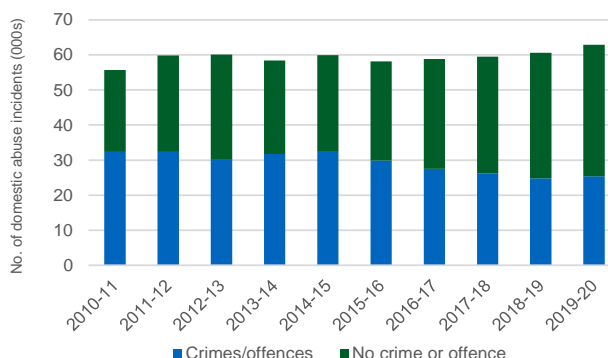
- **Women more likely to experience partner abuse.** The SCJS, for 2018-20, estimates that 3.2% of respondents had experienced partner abuse in the year prior to interview. A higher proportion of women than men experienced this, at 3.7% and 2.6% respectively.

- **\* New \* Increase in crime clear up rate.** The clear up rate for all recorded crimes was 56.3% in 2020-21, up from 51.5% in 2019-20. This is the largest increase on record and likely reflects the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the volume and types of crime recorded.

- **No. of victims of homicide at around the same level in the last eight years.** There were 64 homicide victims recorded by the police in Scotland in 2019-20, a 36% decrease from 2010-11. Since 2012-13, the number of victims of homicide each year ranged between 59 and 65.



- **Increase in recorded domestic abuse incidents.** There were 62,907 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in 2019-20, an increase of 4% on 2018-19. In 2019-20, 40% of all incidents recorded by the police included the recording of at least one crime or offence.

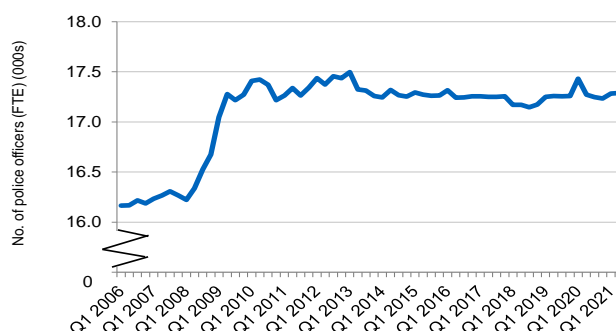


## Shorter Term Crime Trends

- **\* New \* The number of crimes recorded by the police in August 2021 was lower than the same month of the previous two years.** Police recorded crime was 4% lower in August 2021 than the same month of 2020 (when pandemic restrictions were in place) and was 8% lower than August 2019 (pre-pandemic and restrictions on movement).

## Policing

- **There were 17,289 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in Scotland on 30 June 2021.** This was 1,055 (+6.5%) more officers compared to the position at 31 March 2007.

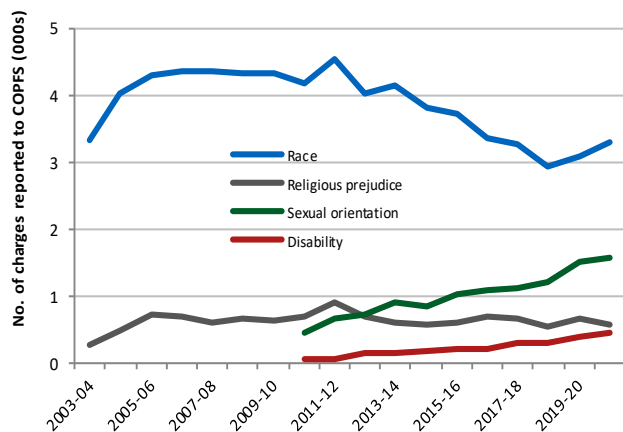




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## Hate Crime

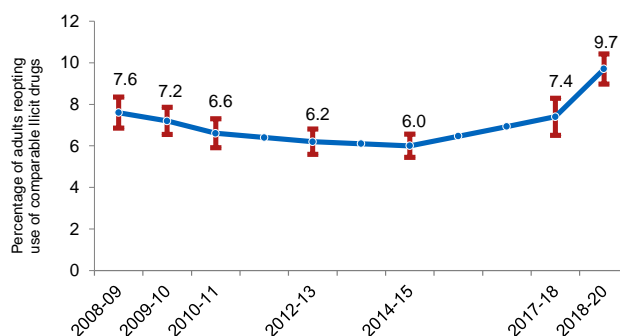
- **Increase in hate crime charges.** There has been an increase in the number of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 for race, sexual orientation and disability aggravated hate crime charges, with a decrease in religious aggravated charges and a slight decrease in transgender identity aggravated charges. Racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, followed by crimes with a sexual orientation aggravator.



- **Numbers stable for police recorded hate crime.** Between 2014-15 & 2019-20, the number of hate crimes recorded by the police was relatively stable, at around 6,300 to 7,000. In 2019-20, 62% of hate crimes included an aggravator for race, 20% sexual orientation, 8% religion, 4% disability and 1% transgender identity. The remaining 5% included multiple hate aggravators.

## Drugs

- **Self-reported illicit drug use amongst adults has increased in recent years.** Where the drug types included in the SCJS are generally consistent over time, self-reported use has risen since 2008-09 and 2017-18 (from 7.6% in 2008-09 and 7.4% in 2017-18, to 9.7% in 2018-20). Between 2017-18 and 2018-20, self-reported use of any drug listed in the survey during the 12 months prior to interview, increased from 9.5% to 13.5%. In the 12 months prior to interview, those aged 16-24 were the most likely to have reported using drugs and cannabis was the drug most commonly used by adults.

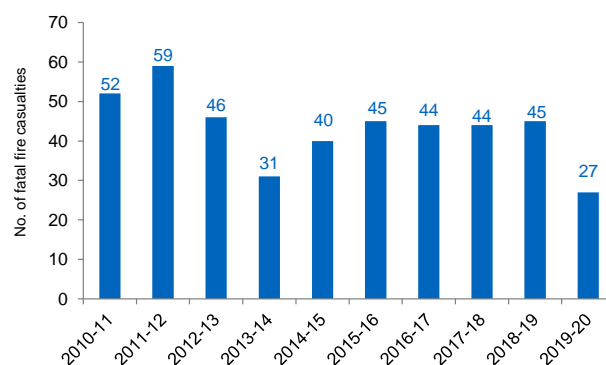


To have a more comparable measure since 2008-09, the figures in this chart exclude poppers, glues, solvents, gas or aerosol and prescription only painkillers not prescribed to the respondent.

## Community Safety

- **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%).

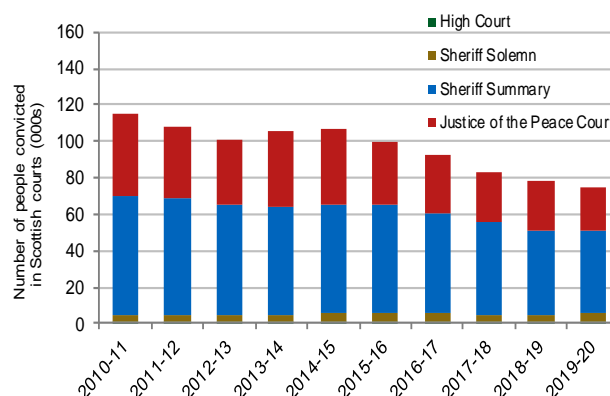
- **Most adults feel safe walking alone after dark.** The SCJS found that over three-quarters (77%) of adults said that they felt very or fairly safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark in 2019-20, unchanged from 2018-19 (78%) but an increase from 66% in 2008-09.
- **Most adults say police are doing a good or excellent job.** The SCJS reports 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 fallen 37% in the last decade.** In 2019-20, there were 24,472 fires in Scotland, down 9% on 2018-19 and 37% lower than in 2010-11. There were 27 fire fatalities in 2019-20 - 48% lower than in 2010-11 and the lowest in the last decade.



- **Sharp fall in emergency hospital admissions due to assault since 2010-11.** In 2019-20, there were 2,280 emergency hospital admissions due to assault, including 541 due to assault with a sharp object. These were both 50% lower than in 2010-11.

## Criminal and Civil Proceedings

- **Lowest number of convictions in last 10 years.** In 2019-20, the number of people convicted in Scottish courts fell by 4% from 2018-19 to 75,251. This is in line with the general downward trend of the last ten years.



- **Fall in convictions in most categories between 2018-19 & 2019-20.** There were notable falls in the number of convictions for unlawful use of a motor vehicle (down 18% or 1,358 fewer convictions), drug crimes (down 11% or 575), and shoplifting (down 9% or 533). However, convictions for violent crimes increased by 11% in 2019-20, with more than half of this increase accounted for by new offences under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 (206 convictions).
- **Rise in community sentences in 2019-20.** The number of community sentences rose by 7% between 2018-19 and 2019-20, from 15,211 to 16,296. The proportion of all convictions resulting in a community sentence rose to 22%, the highest in the past decade.

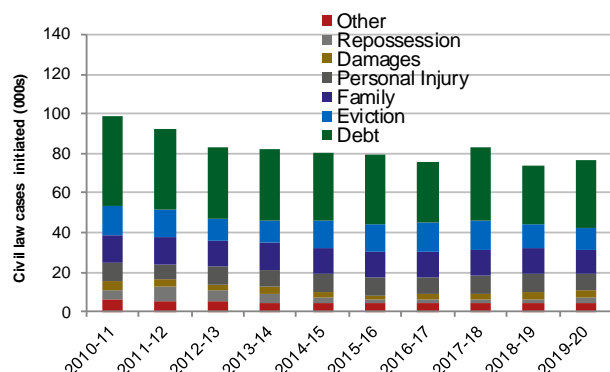


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## \* New \* No. of children referred to SCRA on offence grounds down by almost 60 per cent in last 10 years.

Statistics published by the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) show that, in 2020-21, 2,207 children were referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. This constitutes a decrease of 59% since 2011-12.

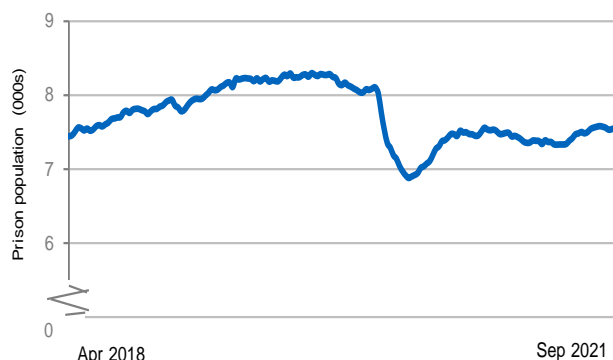
## Long-term downward trend in initiated civil law cases, normalising after the rise in caseload in 2017-18. There were 74,400 civil law cases initiated across the Court of Session and sheriff courts in 2019-20 (excluding summary applications). This represents a rise of 3% from 2018-19.



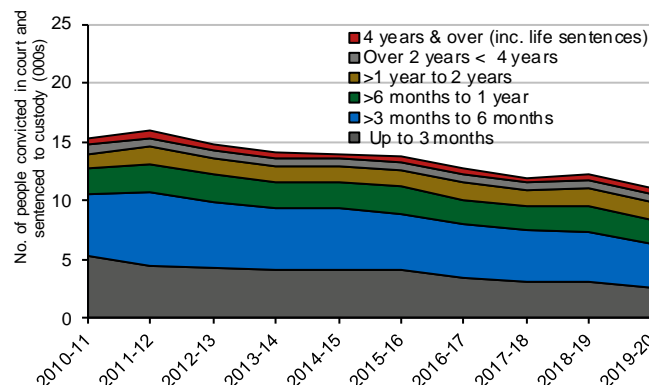
## There was an even split of case types either increasing or decreasing since 2018-19. Increases were seen in damages (up 23%), repossessions (up 18%) and debt (up 16%). Decreases were recorded in evictions (down 15%), family and personal injury (both down 6%). Debt actions remain the most common, constituting 46% of principal crimes. Family and eviction actions were second and third most common, at 16% and 14% respectively.

## Prisons & Community Sentences

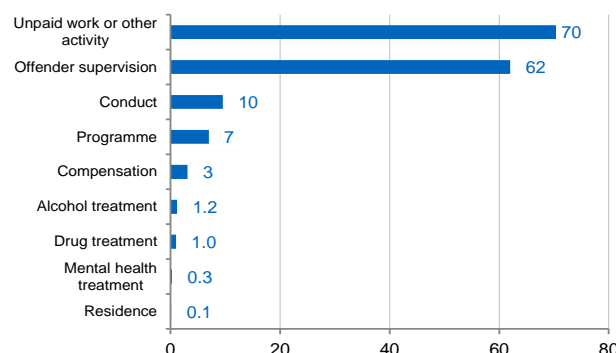
The prison population has risen from its lowest point at the end of May 2020. Daily population figures for Friday published by the Scottish Prison Service, show that the prison population rose from around 7,500 in April 2018 to around 8,300 in November 2019, but fell sharply in the early days of lockdown. This was due to a drop in the number of sentenced admissions following the Covid-19 outbreak and the early release of prisoners. After a period of stability (around 7,400 from February 2021), the prison population overall has grown to 7,578 at 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The remand population was at its lowest point of 1,114 on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020, but grew to over 2,000 by September 2020. Since then, it has remained relatively stable, sitting at 2,072 on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (27% of the overall prison population).



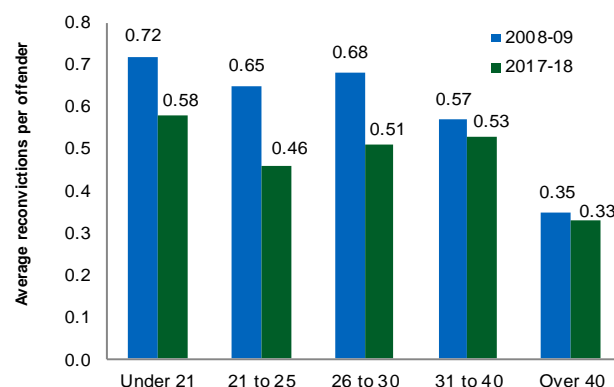
## Average custodial sentence is almost a year. For those who are convicted in court and sentenced to custody, the average sentence in 2019-20 was almost a year (356 days) in length. This was 9% longer than in 2018-19 and 29% longer than in 2010-11 (9¼ months). The proportion of people receiving a sentence of up to one year or less fell to 75% in 2019-20, the lowest proportion of the last decade.



## 70% of community payback orders issued with unpaid work. There were 16,710 community payback orders imposed during 2019-20, 1% more than in 2018-19. Seventy per cent of these had an unpaid work or other activity requirement, while 62% had an offender supervision requirement. Community payback orders accounted for around 96% of all social work orders imposed in 2019-20.



## Reconviction rates are at their lowest level for 21 years. The average number of reconvictions per offender was 23% lower than it was a decade ago. The fall in the last decade was mostly driven by younger age groups, with average reconvictions decreasing by 19% for under 21s, 29% for 21-25 year olds, and 25% for 26-30 year olds. Average reconvictions also decreased for the older age groups over the decade, but to a lesser degree, with a 7% decrease for 31-40 year olds and 6% for the over 40s.



## Any Queries?

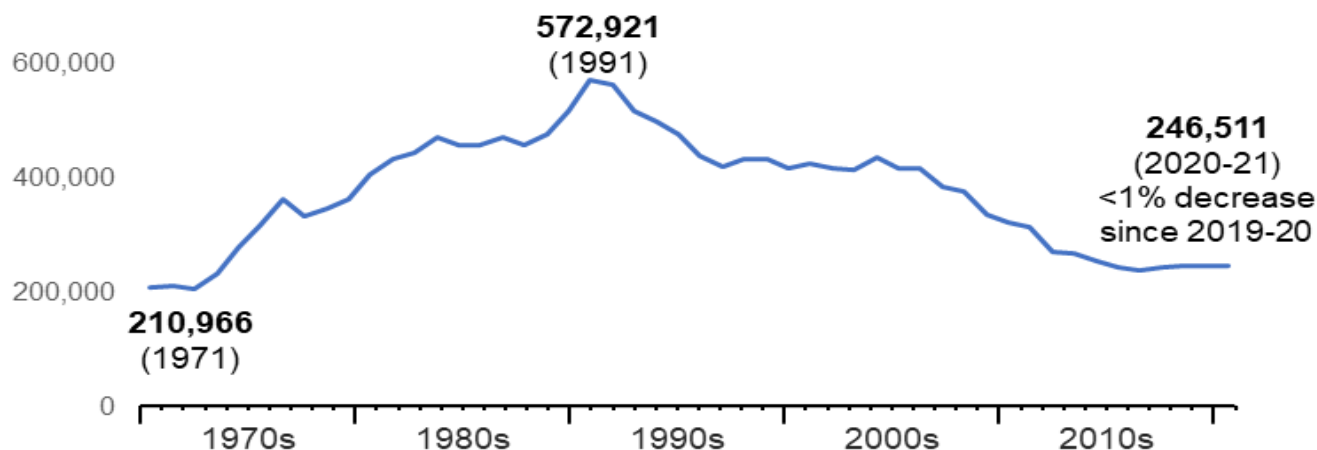
If you require further information on any of the statistics in this brief, please contact [Justice\\_Analysts@gov.scot](mailto:Justice_Analysts@gov.scot) or speak to Alan Fleming (0782 501 1477). Monthly reports with more detail on how COVID-19 has affected the justice system are available [here](#).



## Monthly Feature : Main infographic from Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2020-21

### Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2020-21

The number of crimes recorded by the police rose steadily from the 1970s to the early 1990s. Since then crime has generally fallen.



### Change in Crimes

Since 2011-12, most types of crime have fallen, though Sexual crime has increased.



Change since: 2011-12 2019-20

#### Non-sexual crimes of violence



#### Sexual crimes



#### Crimes of dishonesty



#### Fire-raising, vandalism etc.



Justice Analytical Services

For further information please contact the Recorded Crime Team, Safer Communities Analytical Unit, Justice Analytical Services at [justice\\_analysts@gov.scot](mailto:justice_analysts@gov.scot).