



The Free Speech Union

Court Data Analysis - December 2025

1 Executive Summary

In November 2025, the UK Justice Secretary announced plans to introduce jury-less courts for most cases currently heard in the Crown Court. While no final decision has been made, the Free Speech Union is concerned that the introduction of jury-less courts risks undermining fundamental protections for free expression in the UK. Juries have historically served as a vital safeguard against overreach in cases involving speech.

Our analysis of [Ministry of Justice data \(2017–2025\)](#) reveals significant differences in acquittal rates between courts with and without juries:

- **Overall Acquittal Rates:** Crown Court cases (with juries) show an average acquittal rate of **21.6%**, nearly double that of Magistrates' courts (**11.4%**). In the last three years, this gap has widened to **25.8% vs. 10.1%**.
- **Speech-Related Offences:** Acquittal rates are higher for offences involving speech or expression. Crown Court cases average **27.6%**, compared to **15.9%** in Magistrates' courts. Recent years show an even sharper contrast (**32.1% vs. 14.1%**).
- **Impact of Plea:** For Crown Court cases where defendants pleaded "Not Guilty," acquittal rates rise dramatically—**62.1% overall**, and **71.4% for speech offences**.

While case mix differences between courts remain a limitation, the aggregate data suggests that jury trials are associated with substantially higher acquittal rates, particularly for speech-related offences. This finding has significant implications for policy decisions on jury-less courts. Removing juries from most Crown Court cases could significantly alter acquittal rates, particularly for offences involving speech or expression.

2 Methodology & Key Findings

The Ministry of Justice provides criminal justice statistics, including conviction rates for both Magistrates' Courts and Crown Courts. Crown Court data also includes information on defendant pleas, enabling a more detailed analysis of acquittal rates. In addition, we have identified a subset of HO Offence Codes¹ that are likely to involve a significant element of speech or expression. These are listed in the table below:

¹ An HO (Home Office) offence code is a unique identifier used in England and Wales to classify specific criminal offences for statistical and recording purposes.



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HO Offence Code

- 00855 - Racially or religiously aggravated intentional harassment or alarm or distress - words or writing
- 06623 - Use of words or behaviour or display of written material intended or likely to stir up racial hatred
- 06624 - Publishing or distributing written material intended or likely to stir up racial hatred
- 06645 - Using words or behaviour or display of written material (acts intended to stir up religious or sexual orientation hatred)
- 06646 - Publishing or distributing written material (acts intended to stir up religious hatred)
- 00872 - Sending letters etc. with intent to cause distress or anxiety
- 00836 - Racially aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress
- 00843 - Religiously aggravated causing intentional harassment alarm or distress
- 00849 - Racially or religiously aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress
- 19541 - Summary offences under Malicious Communications Act 1988
- 19607 - Improper use of public electronic communications network
- 12512 - Causing harassment, alarm or distress
- 12509 - Causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress
- 12561 - Religiously aggravated harassment, alarm or distress
- 12563 - Racially or religiously aggravated harassment, alarm or distress
- 12582 - Racially or religiously aggravated harassment or alarm or distress - words or writing
- 12558 - Racially aggravated harassment, alarm or distress

Based on the Free Speech Union’s casework of more than 5,000 incidents since February 2020, we have observed that laws concerning “harassment, alarm, or distress” are increasingly being applied by UK authorities in ways that affect freedom of expression.

Crown Court & Magistrates' Court Combined - Summary

Number of Appearances & Acquittal Rates

	Magistrates'	Crown	Crown	Magistrates'	Crown	Crown
	All Offences	All Offences	All Offences	Speech Offences	Speech Offences	Speech Offences
Acquittal Rates	All Pleas	All Pleas	Not Guilty Plea	All Pleas	All Pleas	Not Guilty Plea
Year ending June 2016	15.8%	19.7%	62.9%	22.5%	22.6%	62.3%
Year ending June 2017	12.8%	20.3%	60.0%	18.5%	23.1%	63.6%
Year ending June 2018	11.3%	20.1%	57.7%	13.9%	24.8%	64.4%
Year ending June 2019	11.2%	19.2%	56.5%	14.3%	24.7%	64.6%
Year ending June 2020	10.8%	17.9%	59.4%	15.0%	24.7%	73.6%
Year ending June 2021	10.5%	18.9%	68.3%	14.4%	25.4%	81.7%
Year ending June 2022	10.3%	21.5%	63.1%	15.1%	27.3%	77.7%
Year ending June 2023	10.3%	23.7%	64.9%	14.9%	29.2%	69.2%
Year ending June 2024	9.8%	26.5%	64.1%	13.4%	33.2%	78.9%
Year ending June 2025	10.3%	26.8%	65.2%	13.9%	33.2%	75.2%
All Years	11.4%	21.6%	62.1%	15.9%	27.6%	71.4%
Last 3 Years	10.1%	25.8%	64.7%	14.1%	32.1%	74.7%

	Magistrates'	Crown	Crown	Magistrates'	Crown	Crown
	All Offences	All Offences	All Offences	Speech Offences	Speech Offences	Speech Offences
Proceeded Against or Appeared for Trial	All Pleas	All Pleas	Not Guilty Plea	All Pleas	All Pleas	Not Guilty Plea
Year ending June 2016	1,498,018	86,060	26,689	20,755	434	154
Year ending June 2017	1,414,693	77,903	24,707	18,334	433	151
Year ending June 2018	1,355,021	72,162	22,336	16,483	484	174
Year ending June 2019	1,339,615	64,902	19,639	15,490	446	144
Year ending June 2020	1,104,938	52,348	14,056	11,266	376	110
Year ending June 2021	1,035,334	56,655	13,745	15,972	468	131
Year ending June 2022	1,114,357	62,757	18,401	15,095	605	179
Year ending June 2023	1,214,015	61,606	18,642	14,296	576	201
Year ending June 2024	1,287,226	72,741	22,523	14,249	789	232
Year ending June 2025	1,355,156	75,638	22,879	14,289	720	218
All Years	12,718,373	682,772	203,617	156,229	5,331	1,694

Notes

- 1) Within the crown court data, the plea was not always recorded. The relevant figures above only includes those definitely marked with a 'Not Guilty Plea'
- 2) For Crown Court, acquittal rate = (case discontinued + acquitted) / (appeared for trial)
- 3) For Magistrates' Court, acquittal rate = 1 - (convicted / (proceeded against - committed for trial at Crown Court))
- 4) 'Speech Offences' are defined according to a specific subset using the HO Offence Code. Not all of these offences will always include a speech or expression element
- 5) Data Source: Criminal Justice System Statistics: "Data Behind Interactive Tools: Crown Court June 2025"& "Data Behind Interactive Tools: Magistrates' Court June 2025"

The “Plea at Crown Court” data field included four possible values: **Guilty**, **Not Guilty**, **Not Known**, and **N/A**. Acquittal rates for Not Guilty pleas were significantly higher than the



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overall average—rising from **21.6% to 62.1%**. For speech-related offences, the increase was even more pronounced, jumping from **27.6% to 71.4%**.

A key limitation of this analysis is the likely difference in case mix between Crown Courts and Magistrates' Courts. To explore this further, we examined speech-related offences at the level of Home Office (HO) Offence Codes. This revealed notable variations by offence type. For example:

- **Offence Code 00855:** Crown Court acquittal rate of **37.3%**, compared to **11.8%** in Magistrates' Court.
- **Offence Code 12509:** Crown Court acquittal rate of **4.1%**, compared to **21.2%** in Magistrates' Court.

These disparities suggest that differences in offence composition may influence overall acquittal rates by court. Nevertheless, at an aggregate level—across several thousand cases—there remains a clear and marked difference in acquittal rates depending on whether a jury is present.

Magistrates' Court & Crown Court Speech Offences - Breakdown (All Years)

Offence Code	Description	Magistrates' Court, All Pleas	Crown Court, All Pleas
		Number	Acquittal%
00855	Racially or religiously aggravated intentional harassment or alarm or distress - words or writing	33,829	11.8%
06623	Use of words or behaviour or display of written material intended or likely to stir up racial hatred	71	69.0%
06624	Publishing or distributing written material intended or likely to stir up racial hatred	63	21.7%
06645	Using words or behaviour or display of written material (acts intended to stir up religious or sexual orientation hatred)	41	47.2%
06646	Publishing or distributing written material (acts intended to stir up religious hatred)	14	0.0%
00872	Sending letters etc. with intent to cause distress or anxiety	16,234	15.2%
00836	Racially aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress	161	22.1%
00843	Religiously aggravated causing intentional harassment alarm or distress	7	28.6%
00849	Racially or religiously aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress	50	12.5%
19541	Summary offences under Malicious Communications Act 1988	353	27.1%
19607	Improper use of public electronic communications network	13,053	14.2%
12512	Causing harassment, alarm or distress	42,264	15.6%
12509	Causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress	39,791	21.2%
12561	Religiously aggravated harassment, alarm or distress	5	0.0%
12563	Racially or religiously aggravated harassment, alarm or distress	36	19.4%
12582	Racially or religiously aggravated harassment or alarm or distress - words or writing	10,030	11.6%
12558	Racially aggravated harassment, alarm or distress	227	18.6%
		156,229	15.9%

Magistrates', Speech Offences, All Pleas		Crown, Speech Offences, All Pleas	
Number	Acquittal%	Number	Acquittal%
2,528	37.3%	5,331	27.6%
18	38.9%		
29	10.3%		
4	0.0%		
10	0.0%		
1,527	27.8%		
1	0.0%		
0	0.0%		
2	50.0%		
143	18.9%		
116	15.5%		
139	2.9%		
734	4.1%		
0	0.0%		
0	0.0%		
79	22.8%		
1	0.0%		

3 Data Weaknesses

As noted in the footnote to the main results table, some data fields—such as the defendant's plea—were incomplete. Where necessary, we excluded any data points that could not be confidently assigned to a specific category.

The Ministry of Justice also identifies several important data limitations, qualifications, and explanatory notes in its published tables. For completeness, these are reproduced in full below.



Crown Court Data Tool

Note Number	Note text
Note 1	Ahead of the 2023 Q2 CJSQ publication, work was undertaken to develop the processing of criminal court outcome data. As a result, figures from 2017 onwards were revised using more accurate and reliable data processing methods. We advise users to apply caution when comparing trends from 2017 onward with those from earlier periods. For further details, please refer to the technical appendix published alongside the 2023 Q2 report (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65bd02dd63a23d0013c8213a/criminal-justice-statistics-technical-appendix-june-2023.pdf).
Note 2	Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented 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. 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.
Note 3	These figures are presented on a principal-offence basis - i.e. reporting information relating to the most serious offence that a defendant was dealt with for. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence 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.
Note 4	These figures are presented on a principal-disposal basis - i.e. reporting the most severe outcome issued for the offence. This does not apply to the 'Compensation' pivot tool which is presented on an all-disposal basis, providing a count of compensation orders issued, regardless of whether this was the most serious disposal. For data prior to 2017, this is limited to the four most serious disposals recorded for an offence only.
Note 5	Offences dealt with at magistrates' court and subsequently committed to the Crown Court for trial or sentence are counted separately at each stage of the process, based on the year in which they receive an outcome at each respective court. For example, an offence committed from the magistrates' court in 2022 may not receive a final outcome at the Crown Court until a subsequent year, meaning the prosecution and conviction are counted separately in different years. As a result, the number of convictions (or other outcomes) in a given year may exceed the number of prosecutions. Similarly, an offence convicted in one year may be sentenced the following year, meaning that the number of sentences issued may not match the number of convictions in any given year. Additionally, more offences can be added to the indictment at the Crown Court after committal, meaning the number of outcomes at Crown Court for a given offence could exceed those at magistrates' court. A defendant may also be dealt with for a different offence at the Crown Court than for which they were originally proceeded against at magistrates' court. For example, an individual initially prosecuted for murder may be convicted at Crown Court for manslaughter. This could also result in the total outcomes for a given offence exceeding the original number of prosecutions.
Note 6	It is not advised to use this data to calculate conviction rate (the number of convictions as a proportion of total prosecutions). This is due to the Court Proceedings Database counting two separate records at two separate stages (one at magistrates' court, one at Crown Court). An individual may be convicted in a different year from when they were initially prosecuted, or the principal offence may differ between these stages. As a result, this rate is not an accurate measure of the proportion of prosecutions that result in a conviction.
Note 7	If a value does not appear within a filter (for example, a specific HO offence code), this represents a nil return.
Note 8	Indictable only offences are the most serious and must be dealt with at the Crown Court; summary offences are the least serious and must be heard at magistrates' courts; and triable-either-way offences are of intermediate severity and may be dealt with at either court based on the circumstances of the case. Indictable only and triable-either-way offences are often referred to collectively as 'indictable'.
Note 9	Offence groupings are continually revised using the Offence Group Classification published alongside this report to reflect offences accurately. Therefore users should exercise caution when comparing these figures to those previously published.
Note 10	The offence groupings used in this tool broadly align with the groups presented by the Home Office counting rules, but these categorisations will not match completely in terms of group names or the codes included. These differences result from a range of factors, including differences in the offences included (e.g. the Home Office only include recorded crime) and the focus of each classification.
Note 11	The HO offence code '09909' is known to have been commonly used as a miscellaneous code by court admin as well as for its intended purpose. This only applies to data prior to 2017.
Note 12	We advise caution when comparing ACSL for sexual offences prior to 2017. As a result of new processing from 2017 onwards, the methodology for principal offence and disposal is more robust and captures sentencing outcomes that were previously missed. This has led to an increase in extended custodial sentences, which has driven an increase in sentence length for sexual offences from 2017 onwards as defendants sentenced for these offences mainly receive these serious sentences.
Note 13	Police Force Area relates to the location of the court that dealt with the offence, which may not necessarily correspond to where the offence took place or which Police Force investigated the case.
Note 14	Committal hearings were abolished in 2013 and defendants are now sent for trial at the Crown Court.
Note 15	Ambiguity in the status of small business owners can occasionally lead to defendants that were recorded as a company being prosecuted for offences not typically associated with companies, or receiving disposals only available to people, such as community or custodial sentences.
Note 16	The age of a defendant relates to their age at the date of disposal at court, not their age when committing the offence. Defendants with a recorded age of under 10 or over 120 years are assumed to be admin errors and grouped into 'age not known'.
Note 17	For data prior to 2017, if there was an apparent anomaly in a defendant's age, records may have been automatically assigned a default age of 25 for an adult or 17 for a juvenile, meaning that these ages are overcounted. Additionally, if a defendant's date of birth was unknown they may have been assigned one of these default ages.
Note 18	Adults are defined as defendants aged 21 and over, young adults as those aged 18 to 20, and children as those under 18.
Note 19	The number of defendants committed for sentence from the magistrates' court in the Crown Court datasets are higher from 2017 onwards due to the new defendant on case methodology at Crown Court.
Note 20	A defendant's ethnicity is categorised based on the 18+1 self-identified classification used in the 2011 Census. Broader groupings are available using the 'Ethnicity' variable, with the specific ethnic groups available using the 'Detailed Ethnicity' variable. The 'Not applicable' category includes where the defendant has been recorded as being a company, public body, etc. The 'Unknown' category includes all others for whom ethnicity information is not available, either because they have chosen not to state their ethnicity or because no information has been recorded.
Note 21	Immediate custody includes detention in a Young Offender Institution, detention and training orders and all other sentences of imprisonment.
Note 22	Community sentences includes disposals such as curfew orders, community punishment orders, rehabilitation orders, community service, reparation orders, drug treatment orders and other community orders
Note 23	Otherwise dealt with on finding of guilty includes one day in police cells, disqualification order, restraining order, confiscation order, travel restriction order, disqualification from driving, hospital orders, guardianship orders, recommendation for deportation and other disposals.
Note 24	Sentences of imprisonment for public protection were introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003, and abolished by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.
Note 25	There are known issues with the driving disqualification data; for example, there are cases where an offender is not recorded as having been disqualified for an offence where a disqualification should be mandatory.
Note 26	The new category 'Other disposal without conviction' has been added to more accurately capture disposals for defendants who not convicted, such as defendants who are found unfit to plead, and includes hospital orders, restraining order or other ancillary order without conviction. Unfitness to plead is when a defendant cannot understand or participate in a criminal trial (which could be due to e.g. a mental health condition, learning disability or other neurodiverse condition). In these cases, the full criminal trial is paused and the defendant has a "fact-finding" hearing with a jury to determine if they "did the act". If an unfit to plead defendant has been found to have "done the act", they will receive an outcome of a hospital order, a supervision order or be acquitted. Prior to 2017, unfit to plead was categorised as a sentence outcome but this has since been identified as inaccurate as unfitness to plead is a process, rather than an outcome. The previous unfit to plead category has therefore been moved into 'other'. New data processing methods after 2017 have enabled us to identify disposals given to defendants who are not convicted, such as defendants who are unfit to plead, and are now presented in the 'Other disposal without conviction' category. Please note that defendants who are found unfit to plead and are acquitted are not captured in this category. They will be captured under the 'acquitted' category. If a defendant is found not guilty by reason of insanity, this will also be captured under the 'acquitted' category when it is recorded as the principal disposal but commonly these defendants will also receive hospital orders as a secondary outcome. Work is undergoing to identify further disposals without conviction from the centrally collated court dataset.



Magistrates' Court Data Tool

Note 1	In Q2 2023 CJSQ publication, work was undertaken to develop the processing of criminal court sentencing data. As a result, figures were revised from 2017 onwards due to more accurate and reliable methods for data processing for information on prosecutions, convictions, sentencing and remands. We advise users to apply caution when comparing trends between 2017 and 2016 where detailed offences or specific sentencing outcomes may increase or decrease. Please see technical guide and detailed technical appendix for more details.
Note 2	Offence groups and offence types are continually revised using the Offence Group Classification published alongside this report to reflect offences accurately. Users should exercise caution when comparing these figures to those previously published.
Note 3	The figures given in the pivot table relate to defendants for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence 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.
Note 4	Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented 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. 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.
Note 5	If a value does not appear within a filter (for example, a specific HO code), this represents a nil return.
Note 6	A defendant who is committed from magistrates' courts to the Crown Court may not have both courts' processes complete within the same year, in which case they would be counted for each stage in the year that the court where it took place completed. This means that for a given year, convictions may exceed prosecutions or sentences may not equal convictions. Defendants who appear before both courts may also be convicted at the Crown Court for a different offence to that for which they are counted as having been originally proceeded against at magistrates' court, where the offence is changed after committal.
Note 7	It is not advised to use this data to calculate conviction rate (the number of convictions as a proportion of the number of prosecutions). This is due to the Court Proceedings Database counting two separate records at two separate stages (one for prosecution, one for conviction). We cannot track the defendant throughout their court journey and an individual may appear at each court in separate years, or for a different principal offence at different stages. As a result, this rate is not an accurate measure of the proportion of prosecutions that result in a conviction.
Note 8	Data are given on a principal disposal basis - i.e. reporting the most severe sentence for the principal offence.
Note 9	As a result of new processing from 2017 onwards, the methodology for principal offence and disposal is more robust and includes the broadest range of sentencing outcomes. We advise users to apply caution when comparing volumes of some disposals prior to 2017 with those after 2017 - the disposals most affected are: extended determinate sentences, special sentences for offenders of special concern, hospital orders, suspended sentences and community sentences. Volumes of these have increased in the new system from 2017 onwards. This has also led to a decrease in offenders otherwise dealt with, receiving victim surcharge, compensation or crown court/police cells. Please see technical guide and detailed technical appendix for more details.
Note 10	Where a case is entered on the Common Platform, it is possible to count the prosecutions at magistrates' court separately for trial and sentence cases that are sent to the Crown Court as well as for offences disposed at the magistrates' court. This is because Common Platform is one streamlined system for both courts. This has led to a slight increase in the published number of prosecutions for indictable offence, however the number of cases where a defendant receives a disposal separately at magistrates' court and Crown Court is small.
Note 11	Indictable only offences are the most serious and must be tried at the Crown Court; summary offences are the least serious and must be tried at magistrates' courts; and triable-either-way offences are of intermediate severity and may be tried at either court based on the circumstances of the case. Indictable only and triable-either-way offences are often referred to collectively as 'indictable'. See accompanying technical guide for further details.
Note 12	The more detailed offence groups shown in this table broadly align with the groups presented by the Home Office counting rules, but these categorisations will not match completely in terms of group names or the codes included. These differences result from a range of factors, including differences in the offences included (e.g. the Home Office only include recorded crime) and the focus of each classification.
Note 13	From 2017, where validation checks on the data have not able to identify the correct five-digit Home Office offence code, we have labelled these records as offence 'not known' (or offence code '99999') in order to increase transparency for users of our data. Records will appear under 'not known' for offence type, offence group, offence and detailed offence variables. For more information see 'offence not known' within "A Technical Guide to Criminal Justice Statistics".
Note 14	We advise caution when comparing ACSL for sexual offences prior to 2017. As a result of new processing from 2017 onwards, the methodology for principal offence and disposal is more robust and captures sentencing outcomes that were previously missed. This has led to an increase in extended custodial sentences, which has driven an increase in sentence length for sexual offences from 2017 onwards as defendants sentenced for these offences mainly receive these serious sentences.
Note 15	Ambiguity in the status of small business owners can occasionally lead to defendants recorded as companies receiving sentences only available to people, such as community or custodial sentence lengths.
Note 16	Following the introduction of Single Justice Procedure (SJP) offences in the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, adults tried for summary non-imprisonable offences at the magistrates' court can be dealt with remotely (the defendant does not need to physically attend court). Typical examples of these offences are 'Television licence evasion' and 'Speeding'. Such records appear in the police force area data under 'Not known'. Caution should be taken when interpreting trends by Police force area as particular courts may be allocated all the SJP offences for the entire region. Currently, in centrally collated sentencing data, we can only identify those recorded and processed on the Automated Track Case Management System (ATCM) as Single Justice Procedure (SJP) cases, from 2017 onwards. This will not be a total count of SJP records, as many are still processed through LIBRA case management system. For overall count of SJP cases, please refer to the Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly (https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/criminal-court-statistics). Caution should be taken when interpreting trends by Police force area as particular courts may be allocated all the SJP offences for the entire region.



Magistrates' Court Data Tool (Continued)

Note 17	<p>Committal hearings were abolished in 2013 and defendants are now sent for trial at the Crown Court.</p> <p>Figures for ethnicity are categorised using the 5+1 self-identified classification based on the 18+1 classification used in the 2011 Census for indictable offences only. The not applicable category for self-identified ethnicity includes all individuals tried for summary offences, for whom the quality of the data available is insufficient to justify inclusion, and all companies. The not stated category includes all others for whom ethnicity information is not available, either because they have chosen not to state their ethnicity or because no information has been recorded.</p>
Note 18	<p>18+1 classification for ethnicity was published in data tools alongside the 2022 publication. Bringing 'Ethnicity' (5+1 classification) above 'Detailed ethnicity' (18+1 classification) in the rows of the pivot tool will show what is included in the 5+1 classification</p>
Note 19	<p>Adults are those offenders aged 21 and over, whilst children are aged under 18 and young adults are aged 18-20.</p>
Note 20	<p>Prior to 2017, data validations were applied to the age variable in the dataset. If there is an apparent anomaly in a defendant's age, or date of birth was unknown, records may have been automatically assigned a default age of 25 for an adult or 17 for a juvenile, meaning that these ages were overcounted. To improve the accuracy of the 'age range' variable for 2017 onwards, defendants with an unknown date of birth are grouped within 'unknown age'. We advise users to apply caution when comparing ages between years as prior to 2017 the age ranges 16-17 and 25+ include a substantial number of defendants with unknown date of birth. Additionally, prior to 2017, 'unknown age' was applied to records over age 99, this is now valid up to age 120.</p>
Note 21	
Note 22	<p>Police Force Areas provide breakdowns of where offences were dealt with (not where they were committed).</p> <p>The new category 'Other disposal without conviction' has been added to more accurately capture disposals for defendants who not convicted, such as defendants who are found unfit to plead, and includes hospital orders, restraining order or other ancillary order without conviction.</p> <p>Unfitness to plead is when a defendant cannot understand or participate in a criminal trial (which could be due to e.g. a mental health condition, learning disability or other neurodiverse condition). In these cases, the full criminal trial is paused and the defendant has a "fact-finding" hearing with a jury to determine if they "did the act". If an unfit to plead defendant has been found to have "done the act", they will receive an outcome of a hospital order, a supervision order or be acquitted.</p> <p>Prior to 2017, unfit to plead was categorised as a sentence outcome but this has since been identified as inaccurate as unfit to plead is a process, rather than an outcome. The previous unfit to plead category has therefore been moved into 'other'.</p> <p>New data processing methods after 2017 have enabled us to identify disposals given to defendants who are not convicted, such as defendants who are unfit to plead, and are now presented in the 'Other disposal without conviction' category.</p> <p>Please note that defendants who are found unfit to plead and are acquitted are not captured in this category. They will be captured under the 'acquitted' category. If a defendant is found not guilty by reason of insanity, this will also be captured under the 'acquitted' category when it is recorded as the principal disposal but commonly these defendants will also receive hospital orders as a secondary outcome. Work is undergoing to identify further disposals without conviction from the centrally collated court dataset.</p>
Note 23	
Note 24	<p>The number of defendants where their proceedings were discontinued, discharged, dismissed or withdrawn at magistrates' court have decreased due to a new processing system of criminal courts data from 2017 as the correct sentencing outcome is now prioritised as the principal offence.</p>
Note 25	<p>Due to previous processing of the data, fine amounts higher than values of £10,000 were omitted from the data before 2017. These are now included in the data as investigations showed these values were possible for companies.</p>
Note 26	<p>As a result of new processing from 2017 onwards, we are now able to capture additional records where the case has concluded but the disposal given is not known. This has led to an increase in the disposal not known category.</p>
Note 27	<p>The number of defendants sentenced to compensation orders on all disposal basis at magistrates' court has increased in the new system due to an increase in the offence '17000 – keeping a motor vehicle on highway without a current vehicle excise licence (MOT)'. We advise users to apply caution when comparing trends for the number of compensation orders on all disposal basis before 2017.</p>
Note 28	<p>Average calculations for custodial sentence length, fines and compensation exclude records where amounts are zero, e.g. 0 months in custody or £0 ordered under fine or compensation. Total volumes presented include these records, including "Compensation (All disposal)" and relevant breakdowns of the 'Sentence outcome' and 'Detailed sentence outcome' filters.</p>
Note 29	<p>Otherwise dealt with on finding of guilty includes one day in police cells, disqualification order, restraining order, confiscation order, travel restriction order, disqualification from driving, hospital orders, guardianship orders, recommendation for deportation and other disposals.</p>
Note 30	<p>The offence code for Bribery of foreign public officials, 09909, is known to be commonly used as a miscellaneous code by courts as well as for its intended purpose.</p>
Note 31	<p>There are known issues with the disqualification data; for example, there are cases where an offender is not recorded as having been disqualified for an offence where a disqualification should be mandatory.</p>
Note 32	<p>Offenders endorsed (issued with penalty points on their driving licence) without being being disqualified for the specific offence for which they were endorsed. Please note this the number of offenders endorsed, rather than the total number of points awarded. Offenders may still be disqualified under section 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (penalty point system) if they have accumulated enough points.</p>
Note 33	<p>Type and period of disqualification for motoring offences, alongside a motoring offence flag, have been added to the Outcomes by Offence, magistrates' and Crown Court data tools in 2022 following the discontinuation of the motoring data tool.</p>
Note 34	<p>The motoring data tables and tools now include driving disqualification lengths for those disqualified due to accumulating 12 or more penalty points for motoring offences under section 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988. This has led to an increase in the number of defendants receiving a disqualification of six months, which is the minimum length of a disqualification under this section. For consistency, this type of disqualification is separated out in the tables and tools as 'points disqualification'.</p>
Note 35	<p>Youth Courts are categorised as magistrates' courts in the data. This will impact the figures for indictable only defendants at the magistrates' court which will include a high volume of juveniles.</p>