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**Analytical Services Group**

# **Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland (2011/12 Cohort)**

**Research and Statistical Bulletin 18/2014**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on the one year proven reoffending rate for the cohort of adults who received a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or were released from custody during 2011/12. An adult is defined as anyone aged 18 or over at the time of disposal or release from custody.
- Of the 28,751 adult offenders included in the 2011/12 cohort, 5,116 (18%) committed a proven reoffence within a year following being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial disposal at court or receiving a diversionary disposal. (Appendix 1, Table 1)
- Overall, 41% of the 5,116 who reoffended committed their first reoffence within the first three months following court sentencing, receiving a diversionary disposal or release from custody. (Appendix 1, Table 2)
- The number of reoffences within the year ranged from one to 30 per person. (Appendix 1, Table 3)
- In terms of offending history, 60% had committed previous offences, ranging from 1 to 576 distinct offences. Reoffending rates largely increased with the number of previous offences. (Appendix 1, Table 4)
- Overall, 11% of females and 19% of males or other genders had reoffended. (Appendix 1, Table 5)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults released from custody was 48%. (Appendix 1, Table 6)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults who received a community disposal at court requiring supervision was 33%. (Appendix 1, Table 6)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults who received a community disposal at court not requiring supervision was 18%. (Appendix 1, Table 6)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults who received a diversionary disposal was 14%. (Appendix 1, Table 6)
- The highest reoffending rates were found amongst those who had committed a baseline offence in the 'Robbery' category (44%), followed by 'Burglary' (37%). (Appendix 1, Table 7)

## CONTENTS

Contents	Page
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Methodology</b>	
2.1 Who is included in the cohort?	1
2.2 What are the baseline date, offence and disposal?	1
2.3 What are the observation and follow-up periods?	1
2.4 What counts as a reoffence?	1
2.5 Data Source	2
2.6 Data Quality and Validation	2
2.7 Interpreting Trends	2
<b>3. Findings</b>	
3.1 Overall Reoffending Rate	3
3.2 Reoffending Interval	3
3.3 Number of Proven Reoffences	4
3.4 Offending History	4
3.5 Gender	5
3.6 Age at Baseline	5
3.7 Disposal	5
3.8 Baseline Offence	6
3.9 Specified and Serious Offences	6
<b>Appendix 1 – Tables</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - References</b>	<b>13</b>

Figure	Page
<i>Figure 1: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group</i>	3
<i>Figure 2: Number of Proven Reoffences</i>	4
<i>Figure 3: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences</i>	4
<i>Figure 4: Reoffending Rate by Age at Baseline</i>	5
<i>Figure 5: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence</i>	6

Table	Page
Table 1: Reoffending Rate 2011/12	7
Table 2: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group	7
Table 3: Number of Proven Reoffences	8
Table 4: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences	8
Table 5: Reoffending Rate by Age and Gender	9
Table 6: Reoffending Rate by Disposal	10
Table 7: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence Category	11
Table 8: Baseline Offence Category by First Reoffence Category	11
Table 9a: Reoffending Rate by Specified and Serious Offences	12
Table 9b: Proportion of Offenders with a Baseline Specified and Serious Offences whose First Reoffence was also Specified and Serious	12

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Department of Justice's Analytical Services Group embarked on a project to revise the methodology used to calculate recidivism rates within Northern Ireland, bringing it more in line with established methodology in England and Wales. A brief summary of the approach used is given below. For a more detailed methodology refer to 'Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology: Methodology and Glossary Part 1' (Duncan, 2014).

This paper will provide information on the reoffending rates for the 2011/12 adult cohort. It should be noted that these figures have not been adjusted to make allowances for factors known to influence reoffending, such as gender, age and criminal history. Therefore, it is inappropriate to compare these findings straightforwardly with other similar results from within Northern Ireland or other jurisdictions. Section 3.1 provides adjusted reoffending rates for adults and discussion on comparison with the 2010/11 cohort.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Who is included in the cohort?

The cohort is made up of all adults who have been given a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or who have been released from custody<sup>1</sup> during the financial year 2011/12. An adult is defined as someone aged 18 or over at the time of disposal or release from custody.

### 2.2 What are the baseline date, offence and disposal?

The baseline date is the date of entry into the cohort. This is the date that a non-custodial sentence is given at court, a diversionary disposal imposed or an individual is released from custody. This date forms the starting point for the observation period. The baseline offence is the principal offence associated with this baseline date. Following consultation, it has been agreed that an offender will be counted once within each relevant disposal category, including the initial baseline disposal associated with their entry into the cohort and also disposal categories associated within any subsequent proven reoffences.

### 2.3 What are the observation and follow up periods?

The observation period is the window of time over which a person is observed following receipt of a diversionary disposal or non-custodial disposal at court or release from custody. A balance needs to be struck between the need for timely information and the need to make the reoffending rate as informative and meaningful as possible. For one year reoffending the observation period is one year and the follow up period is six months.

### 2.4 What counts as a reoffence?

Under one year proven reoffending methodology an offence is counted as a reoffence if it:

- occurs within the one year observation period.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes only those released from custody following the completion of a sentence and excludes fine defaulters, those bailed or released following a period on remand, subject to extradition or transfer to another secure hospital facility.

- has been committed within Northern Ireland.
- is prosecuted via the Police Service of Northern Ireland and not a third party (e.g. the Department of Social Development can bring some cases of benefit fraud).
- is not a breach offence (e.g. breach of a probation order).
- has been 'proven', meaning that a court conviction or diversionary disposal has been imposed by the end of the 6 month follow up period.

## **2.5 Data Source**

In Northern Ireland the main data source used to measure reoffending rates is supplied to the Department of Justice's Analytical Services Group from the Causeway Data Sharing Mechanism (DSM1). The information used is primarily created from an extract of records held on the Criminal Records Viewer (CRV). The CRV is held on Causeway and utilises data which originated from PSNI, along with data from Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service. Causeway is an interconnected information system, launched as a joint undertaking by the Criminal Justice Organisations (CJOs) in Northern Ireland.

Information is also provided from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) case management system (PRISM) and the Youth Justice Agency regarding releases from custody. Information on these offenders is matched to information taken from CRV.

## **2.6 Data Quality and Validation**

While every care has been taken in collating the data, they are subject to the limitations inherent in any large-scale recording system and to variation in recording practice over time. Validation exercises conducted have included comparing convictions data from Causeway with records from other agencies, including the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency with amendments made where appropriate.

## **2.7 Interpreting Trends**

The ability to compare and discuss trends in reoffending is important to its usefulness as a performance target within government. However, differences in the offending related characteristics of those included in each cohort make comparing reoffending rates problematic, across both time and jurisdictions. In addition, reoffending rates should not be used routinely to measure the comparative success of the different disposals, as no adjustments have been made to control for offender characteristics or factors relating to variations in sentencing. Although statistical techniques can be employed to control for differences within the cohorts, care should also be taken to understand the wider context within which the offending and reoffending has occurred. In this bulletin, the overall adult reoffending rate has been adjusted and compared to the 2010/11 findings and provides an estimate of change in reoffending between the two cohorts. For more information on the methodological approach used to adjust these figures please refer to 'Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology: Methodology and Glossary Part 2' (Duncan, 2014).

### 3. FINDINGS

In the following section the reoffending rates of the 2011/12 adult cohort will be presented in relation to the overall reoffending rate, reoffending interval, number of reoffences, offending history, gender, age, disposal, baseline offence and serious and scheduled offences.

#### 3.1 Overall Reoffending Rate

A total of 28,751 offenders were included in the 2011/12 adult cohort. Overall, 5,116 (18%) committed a proven reoffence within a year following being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial court disposal or a diversionary disposal.

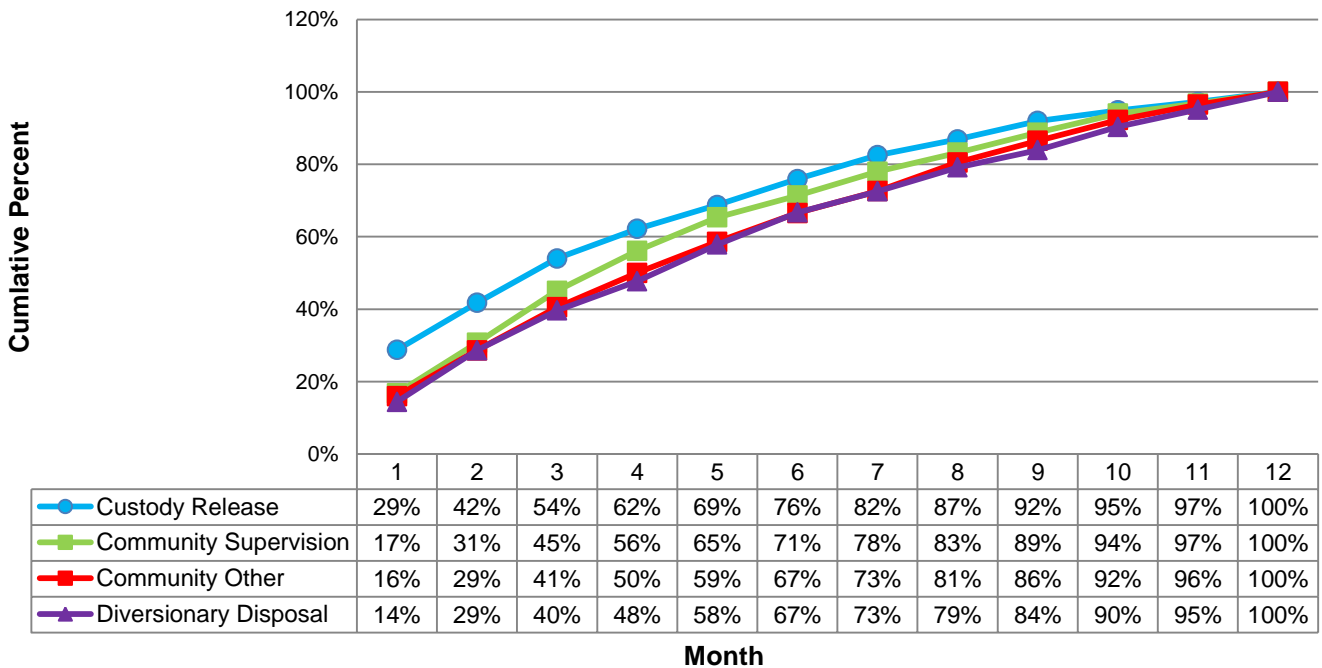
This represents a two percentage point increase on the 2010/11 reoffending rate, however after controlling for offender characteristics there appears to be no increase in reoffending behaviours but a decrease of one percentage point. (Appendix 1, Table 1) For further information on how information has been adjusted please refer to Duncan 2014 Methodology and Glossary Part 2.

#### 3.2 Reoffending Interval

Of the 5,116 adults who reoffended, 832 (16%) reoffended within the first month of being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial court disposal or a diversionary disposal. By three months, 2,083 (41%) had committed a further offence.

For those released from custody who reoffended, 54% had done so within the first three months of release; rising to 76% by the end of the first six months. Although all disposal groups followed this general trend, those released from custody reoffended more sharply within the first month of release from custody. (Appendix 1, Table 2)

**Figure 1: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group\***



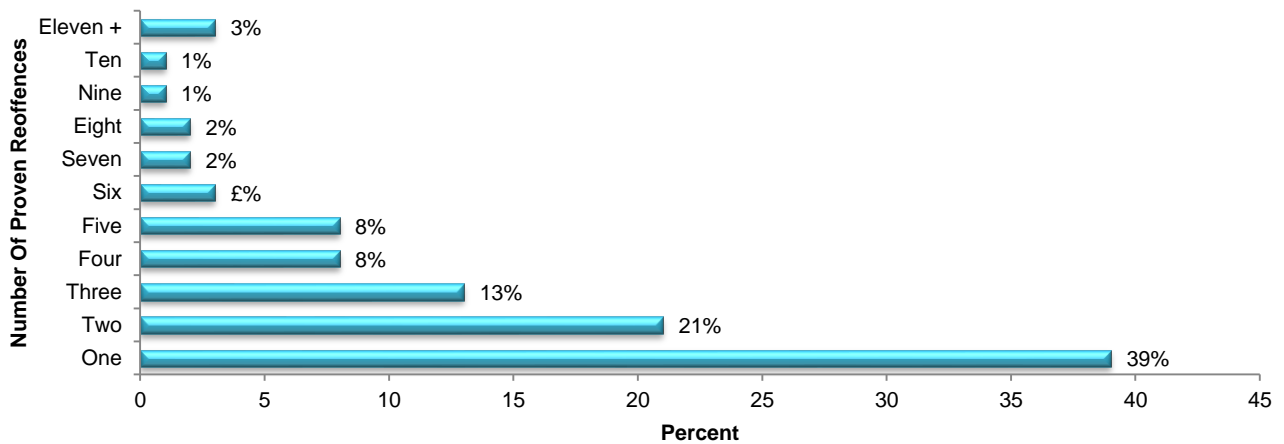
\*Offenders are counted once per disposal group, however they may appear in more than one group

### 3.3 Number of Proven Reoffences

During the observation year, the 5,116 people who reoffended committed a further 15,128 proven offences. This averages to three offences per reoffender and less than one offence per offender across the entire 2011/12 adult cohort.

Almost two fifths (39%) committed only one further offence within the observation year and 3% committed 11 or more reoffences. Overall, the number of reoffences ranged from one to 30. (Appendix 1, Table 3)

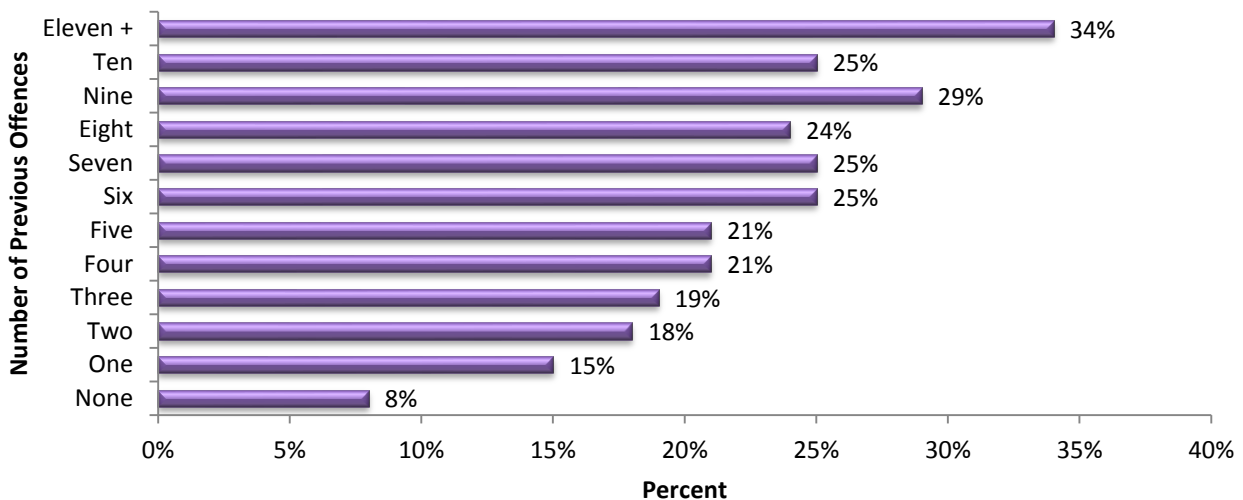
**Figure 2: Number of Proven Reoffences**



### 3.4 Offending History

Of the 28,751 adult offenders included in the 2011/12 adult cohort, 11,597 (40%) had no previous offences. (Appendix 1, Table 4) The remaining 17,154 (60%) had committed a total of 254,054 previous offences<sup>2</sup>, ranging from 1 to 576 offences. As shown in Figure 3 below, the reoffending rate overall tends to increase with the rate of previous convictions.

**Figure 3: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences**



<sup>2</sup> Offences included are those recorded on an offender's criminal record only.



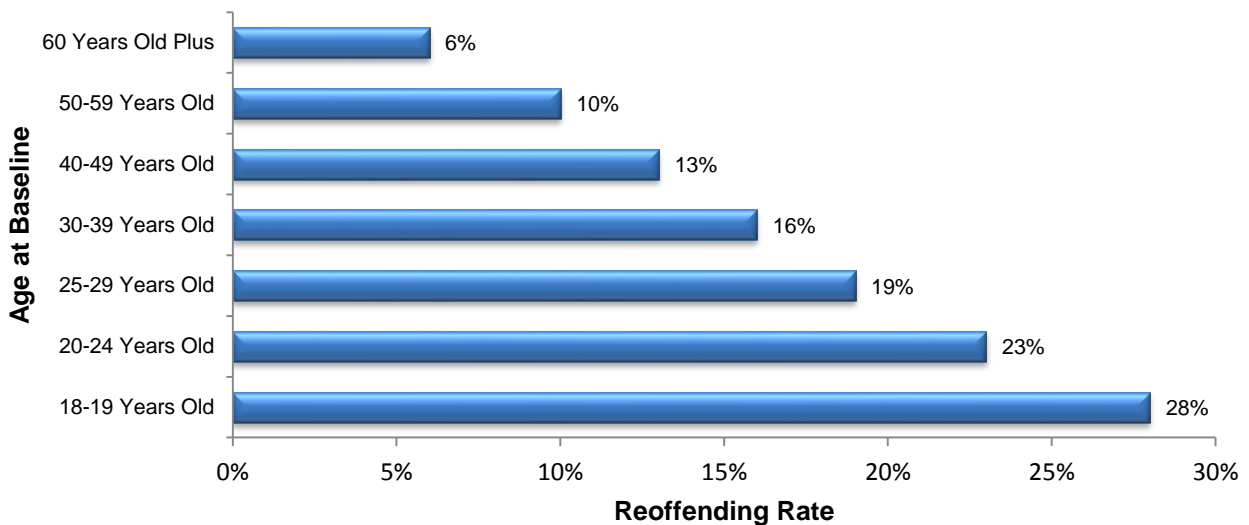
### 3.5 Gender

Of the 28,751 offenders in the cohort, 5,302 (18%) were female and the remaining 23,449 were male (82%) or other gender (<1%). Overall, 593 females (11%) and 4,523 males or 'other genders' (19%) had a proven reoffence within one year. (Appendix 1, Table 5)

### 3.6 Age at Baseline

As can be seen in Figure 4 below, the proportion of offenders who reoffend appears to consistently reduce as age increases. This is true for both males and females when looked at separately. (Appendix 1, Table 5)

**Figure 4: Reoffending Rate by Age at Baseline**



### 3.7 Disposal

Appendix 1 Table 6 provides a breakdown of reoffending by baseline disposal. Although separate disposals are listed, disposals are grouped into four main categories.

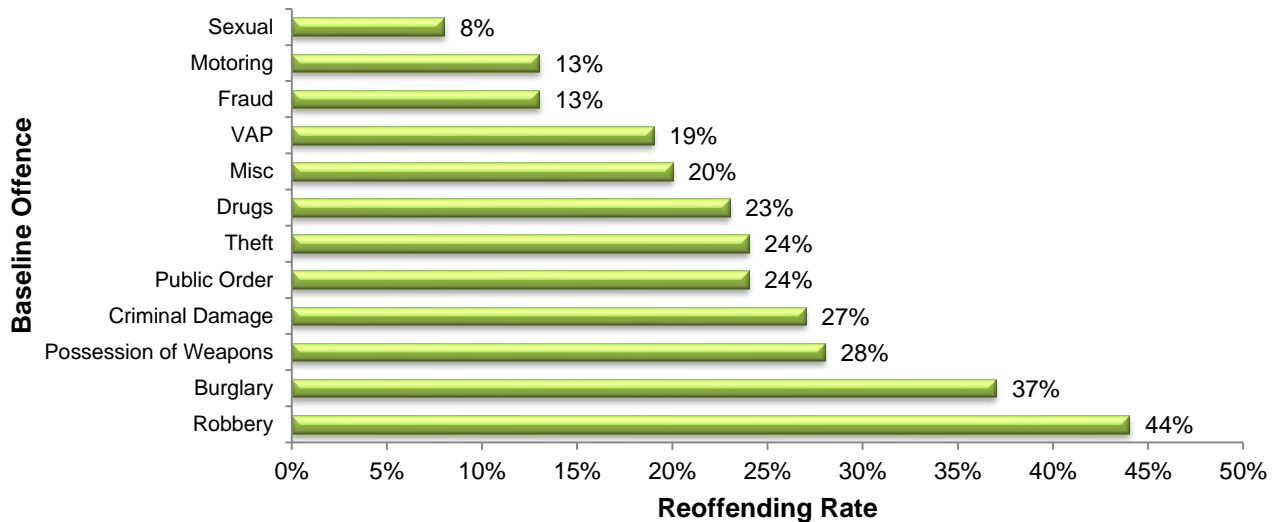
1. Adults released from custody or young offender centre during 2011/12. This group will include those released from serving a prison term only and those released under community supervision. Such disposals include custody probation order.
2. Adults given a non-custodial disposal at court that requires supervision in the community (such as a probation order).
3. Adults given a non-custodial disposal at court that does not require supervision in the community (such as a fine or a suspended sentence).
4. Adults given a diversionary disposal (such as a caution or an informed warning).

At 48% those with a custodial disposal have the highest reoffending rate, followed by non-custodial disposal with community supervision (33%), non-custodial disposal without supervision (18%) and finally diversionary disposals (14%). It should be noted this is not necessarily reflective of the impact of these disposals on reducing reoffending and may be the result of differences in criminogenic factors within each group.

### 3.8 Baseline Offence

Figure 5 below presents the reoffending rate by baseline offence category. Of those who committed a baseline offence of 'Robbery', 44% reoffended within the observation year, as did 37% of those with a baseline offence of 'Burglary'. Of those with a baseline 'Sexual' offence, 8% reoffended. (Appendix 1, Table 7)

**Figure 5: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence**



Appendix 1 Table 8 provides a breakdown of baseline offence category by first reoffence category. Although no definitive pattern emerged, it is interesting to note that, for those who committed a baseline offence of 'Violence Against the Person', 'Theft', 'Drugs', 'Public Order' and 'Motoring', the largest proportion of first reoffences were for offences in the same category.

### 3.9 Specified and Serious Offences

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008<sup>3</sup> includes a list of offences known as 'specified offences'. When committed, these specified offences can be dealt with via one of the new public protection sentences, also defined in the 2008 Order. Overall, 663 (2%) of the 28,751 adults had committed a baseline 'specified' offence. Of these, 144 (22%) went on to reoffend, 9 committing a further specified offence. (Appendix 1, Tables 9a and 9b)

A further list, detailing offences that should be regarded as 'serious offences', is included in the Order. Overall, 537 (2%) of the 28,751 adults had committed such offences were committed of whom 121 (23%) reoffended, 2 committing a further serious offence. (Appendix 1, Tables 9a and 9b)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2008/1216>

## APPENDIX 1- Tables

**Table 1: Reoffending Rate 2011/12\***

	Number of people in Cohort	Number who Reoffended within one Year	Actual Reoffending %	Predicted Reoffending %
2010/11	30,576	4,875	15.94	19.73
2011/12	28,751	5,116	17.79	22.88
Difference	-	-	1.85	3.15
Difference over and above predicted	-	-	<b>-1.30</b>	

\*see Duncan 2014 Methodology and Glossary Part 2

**Table 2: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group\***

Disposal Group	Time to Reoffence by Month												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Custody Release	197	89	84	56	45	49	45	30	35	20	16	19	685
Community Supervision	140	116	120	92	77	50	55	44	46	44	23	27	834
Community Other	597	471	444	354	320	298	226	295	222	215	158	132	3,732
Diversionsary Disposal	135	134	103	76	95	83	55	62	45	60	45	46	939
<b>Total</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>5,116</b>
<b>Percent</b>													
Custody Release	28.8%	13.0%	12.3%	8.2%	6.6%	7.2%	6.6%	4.4%	5.1%	2.9%	2.3%	2.8%	100%
Community Supervision	16.8%	13.9%	14.4%	11.0%	9.2%	6.0%	6.6%	5.3%	5.5%	5.3%	2.8%	3.2%	100%
Community Other	16.0%	12.6%	11.9%	9.5%	8.6%	8.0%	6.1%	7.9%	5.9%	5.8%	4.2%	3.5%	100%
Diversionsary Disposal	14.4%	14.3%	11.0%	8.1%	10.1%	8.8%	5.9%	6.6%	4.8%	6.4%	4.8%	4.9%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Cumulative Percent</b>													
Custody Release	28.8%	41.8%	54.0%	62.2%	68.8%	75.9%	82.5%	86.9%	92.0%	94.9%	97.2%	100%	
Community Supervision	16.8%	30.7%	45.1%	56.1%	65.3%	71.3%	77.9%	83.2%	88.7%	94.0%	96.8%	100%	
Community Other	16.0%	28.6%	40.5%	50.0%	58.6%	66.6%	72.6%	80.5%	86.5%	92.2%	96.5%	100%	
Diversionsary Disposal	14.4%	28.6%	39.6%	47.7%	57.8%	66.7%	72.5%	79.1%	83.9%	90.3%	95.1%	100%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>40.7%</b>	<b>50.1%</b>	<b>58.7%</b>	<b>66.6%</b>	<b>72.8%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>	<b>86.1%</b>	<b>91.9%</b>	<b>96.2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\*Individual disposals will not sum to overall total. For each of these groupings, only the first instance a person is included in this category is counted.

**Table 3: Number of Proven Reoffences**

Number of Proven Reoffences	Number of Adult Offenders	Percent of Proven Reoffences
One	2,020	39.5%
Two	1,098	21.5%
Three	682	13.3%
Four	414	8.1%
Five	251	4.9%
Six	162	3.2%
Seven	112	2.2%
Eight	100	2.0%
Nine	67	1.3%
Ten	60	1.2%
Eleven +	150	2.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,116</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences**

Number of Previous Offences	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
None	898	11,597	7.7%
One	446	3,073	14.5%
Two	359	1,988	18.1%
Three	268	1,429	18.8%
Four	214	1,040	20.6%
Five	187	888	21.1%
Six	192	762	25.2%
Seven	152	613	24.8%
Eight	138	571	24.2%
Nine	143	489	29.2%
Ten	107	427	25.1%
Eleven +	2,012	5,874	34.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,116</b>	<b>28,751</b>	<b>17.8%</b>

**Table 5: Reoffending Rate by Age\* and Gender**

Gender	Age*	Reoffended	Total	One Year Proven Reoffending Rate
<b>Female</b>	18-19 Years Old	48	356	13.5%
	20-24 Years Old	147	1,077	13.6%
	25-29 Years Old	97	816	11.9%
	30-39 Years Old	154	1,264	12.2%
	40-49 Years Old	106	1,104	9.6%
	50-59 Years Old	32	486	6.6%
	60 Years Old Plus	9	199	4.5%
	<b>Total Female</b>		<b>593</b>	<b>5,302</b>
<b>Male and Other Gender**</b>	18-19 Years Old	679	2,271	29.9%
	20-24 Years Old	1,372	5,574	24.6%
	25-29 Years Old	824	4,141	19.9%
	30-39 Years Old	898	5,198	17.3%
	40-49 Years Old	498	3,639	13.7%
	50-59 Years Old	197	1,823	10.8%
	60 Years Old Plus	55	803	6.8%
	<b>Total Male</b>		<b>4,523</b>	<b>23,449</b>
<b>Total</b>	18-19 Years Old	727	2,627	27.7%
	20-24 Years Old	1,519	6,651	22.8%
	25-29 Years Old	921	4,957	18.6%
	30-39 Years Old	1,052	6,462	16.3%
	40-49 Years Old	604	4,743	12.7%
	50-59 Years Old	229	2,309	9.9%
	60 Years Old Plus	64	1,002	6.4%
	<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>5,116</b>	<b>28,751</b>

\*Age at Baseline Date

\*\*Only two 'Other gender' were recorded. These individuals have been included with the Male group to avoid spurious identification

**Table 6: Reoffending Rate by Disposal**

Disposal Group	Disposal**	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate*
<b>Custody Release</b>	Life Licenses	3	11	-
	Extended Custodial Sentences	1	3	-
	Determinate Custodial Sentences	77	211	36.5%
	Custody Probation Order	18	83	21.7%
	Imprisonment	521	1,043	50.0%
	Young Offender Centre	81	114	71.1%
	Juvenile Justice Centre Orders	1	2	50.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>47.6%</b>
<b>Community Supervision</b>	Attendance Centre	0	2	-
	Combination Order	100	272	36.8%
	Probation Order	409	1,157	35.4%
	Community Service Order	361	1,201	30.1%
	Youth Conference Order	18	35	-
	Community Responsibility Order	3	4	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>2,556</b>	<b>32.6%</b>
<b>Community Other</b>	Suspended Imprisonment	1,019	3,300	30.9%
	Monetary Penalty	2,838	16,693	17.0%
	Bound Over	79	246	32.1%
	Conditional Discharge	216	790	27.3%
	Absolute Discharge	14	60	23.3%
	Other Disposal	32	180	17.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,732</b>	<b>20,198</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
<b>Diversionsary Disposal</b>	Caution	859	6,368	13.5%
	Youth Conference Plan	62	195	31.8%
	Informed Warning	30	313	9.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>6,838</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>		<b>5,116</b>	<b>28,751</b>	<b>17.8%</b>

\*- Percentage cannot be shown as denominator is less than 50.

\*\*Individual disposals will not sum to disposal groups or overall total. For each of these groupings, only the first instance a person is included in this category is counted.

**Table 7: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence Category**

Baseline Offence Group	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Violence Against the Person	722	3,803	19.0%
Sexual	11	144	7.6%
Robbery	32	72	44.4%
Theft	525	2,177	24.1%
Burglary	129	348	37.1%
Criminal Damage	334	1,223	27.3%
Drugs	433	1,864	23.2%
Possession of Weapons	92	331	27.8%
Public Order	601	2,473	24.3%
Motoring	1,782	13,945	12.8%
Fraud	31	239	13.0%
Miscellaneous	424	2,132	19.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,116</b>	<b>28,751</b>	<b>17.8%</b>

**Table 8: Baseline Offence Category by First Reoffence Category**

Baseline Offence Category	First Reoffence Category											
	VAP	Sexual	Robbery	Theft	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Possession of Weapons	Public Order	Motoring	Fraud	Miscellaneous
VAP*	199	2	2	83	19	39	57	4	135	133	1	48
Sexual**	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0
Robbery**	6	0	1	5	4	0	5	0	1	7	0	3
Theft	67	1	9	223	16	22	43	4	32	76	3	29
Burglary	22	0	0	37	11	11	13	1	13	12	2	7
Criminal Damage	73	1	3	43	12	30	47	1	59	45	1	19
Drugs	59	2	1	35	9	17	138	5	49	97	0	21
Possession of Weapons	15	0	3	15	2	6	10	3	18	15	0	5
Public Order	141	0	1	48	6	33	44	11	173	111	0	33
Motoring	177	2	1	177	14	51	122	14	134	1,007	9	74
Fraud**	4	0	0	6	0	1	3	0	1	14	1	1
Miscellaneous	67	2	2	48	6	29	33	2	80	87	0	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Percent</b>												
VAP*	27.6%	0.3%	0.3%	11.5%	2.6%	5.4%	7.9%	0.6%	18.7%	18.4%	0.1%	6.6%
Sexual**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robbery**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theft	12.8%	0.2%	1.7%	42.5%	3.0%	4.2%	8.2%	0.8%	6.1%	14.5%	0.6%	5.5%
Burglary	17.1%	0.0%	0.0%	28.7%	8.5%	8.5%	10.1%	0.8%	10.1%	9.3%	1.6%	5.4%
Criminal Damage	21.9%	0.3%	0.9%	12.9%	3.6%	9.0%	14.1%	0.3%	17.7%	13.5%	0.3%	5.7%
Drugs	13.6%	0.5%	0.2%	8.1%	2.1%	3.9%	31.9%	1.2%	11.3%	22.4%	0.0%	4.8%
Possession of Weapons	16.3%	0.0%	3.3%	16.3%	2.2%	6.5%	10.9%	3.3%	19.6%	16.3%	0.0%	5.4%
Public Order	23.5%	0.0%	0.2%	8.0%	1.0%	5.5%	7.3%	1.8%	28.8%	18.5%	0.0%	5.5%
Motoring	9.9%	0.1%	0.1%	9.9%	0.8%	2.9%	6.8%	0.8%	7.5%	56.5%	0.5%	4.2%
Fraud**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	15.8%	0.5%	0.5%	11.3%	1.4%	6.8%	7.8%	0.5%	18.9%	20.5%	0.0%	16.0%

\*Violence against the person

\*\* Percentage cannot be shown as denominator is less than 50.

**Table 9a: Reoffending Rate by Specified and Serious Offences**

<b>Criminal Justice (NI ) Order 2008 List</b>	<b>Reoffended</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>One year Proven Reoffending Rate</b>
Specified Offences	144	663	21.7%
Serious Offences	121	537	22.5%

**Table 9b: Proportion of Offenders with a Baseline Specified and Serious Offences whose First Reoffence was also Specified and Serious**

<b>Criminal Justice (NI ) Order 2008 List</b>	<b>Reoffended</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>One year Proven Reoffending Rate</b>
Specified Offences	9	144	6.3%
Serious Offences	2	121	1.7%



## APPENDIX 2 - References

Duncan. L. (2014) '*R & S Bulletin 4/2014 Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology: Methodology and Glossary Part 1*'. Department of Justice  
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