



Department of
Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk

Analytical Services Group

Youth Reoffending in Northern Ireland (2011/12 Cohort)

Research and Statistical Bulletin 19/2014

L Duncan

December 2014

Produced by Analytical Services Group,
Department of Justice.

For further information write to:

**Analytical Services Group,
Department of Justice,
Laganside House,
Belfast
BT1 3LA**

Telephone: 028 9072 4538

Email: statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

This bulletin is available on the Internet at:

www.dojni.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on the one year proven reoffending rate for the cohort of youths who received a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or were released from custody during 2011/12. A youth is defined as anyone aged 17 or under at the time of disposal or release from custody.
- Of the 2,592 young offenders included in the 2011/12 youth cohort, 753 (29%) committed a proven reoffence within a year following being released from custody, given a non-custodial disposal at court or receiving a diversionary disposal. (Appendix 1, Table 1)
- Almost half (46%) of the 753 who reoffended committed their first reoffence within the first three months following being given a non-custodial disposal, receiving a diversionary disposal or release from custody. (Appendix 1, Table 2)
- The number of reoffences within the year ranged from one to 32. (Appendix 1, Table 3)
- In terms of offending history, 44% had committed previous offences ranging from one to 74 distinct offences. Reoffending rates increased with the number of previous offences. (Appendix 1, Table 4)
- Overall, 16% of females and 33% of males had reoffended. (Appendix 1, Table 1)
- Of the 36 youths released from custody, 25 committed a proven reoffence. (Appendix 1, Table 5)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for youths who received a community disposal at court requiring supervision was 56%. (Appendix 1, Table 5)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for youths who received a community disposal at court not requiring supervision was 48%. (Appendix 1, Table 5)
- The one year proven reoffending rate for youths who received a diversionary disposal was 26%. (Appendix 1, Table 5)
- The highest reoffending rates were found amongst those who had committed a baseline offence in the 'Criminal Damage' category (39%), followed by 'Drugs' (37%). (Appendix 1, Table 6)

CONTENTS

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	
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
3. Findings	
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
Appendix 1 – Tables	7
Appendix 2 - References	10

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 by Age and Gender	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 Disposal	9
Table 6: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence Category	9
Table 7: Reoffending Rate by Specified and Serious Offences	9

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the Department of Justice Analytical Services Group embarked on a project to revise the methodology used to calculate recidivism rates within Northern Ireland, bringing it more into 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 youth cohort. Findings from this cohort will be used as a baseline for subsequent years. 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.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Who is included in the cohort?

The cohort is made up of all youths who have been given a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or who have been released from custody¹ during the financial year 2011/12. A youth is defined as someone aged 17 or under 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.

¹ This 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. At present no suitable model can be found in order to adjust reoffending information on the youth cohort in isolation. However a model has been produced that models the reoffending behaviours of the entire cohort (both adults and youths). 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 youth 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 2,592 young offenders were included in the 2011/12 cohort. Overall, 753 (29%) committed a proven reoffence within a year following being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial disposal at court or a diversionary disposal. (Appendix 1, Table 1)

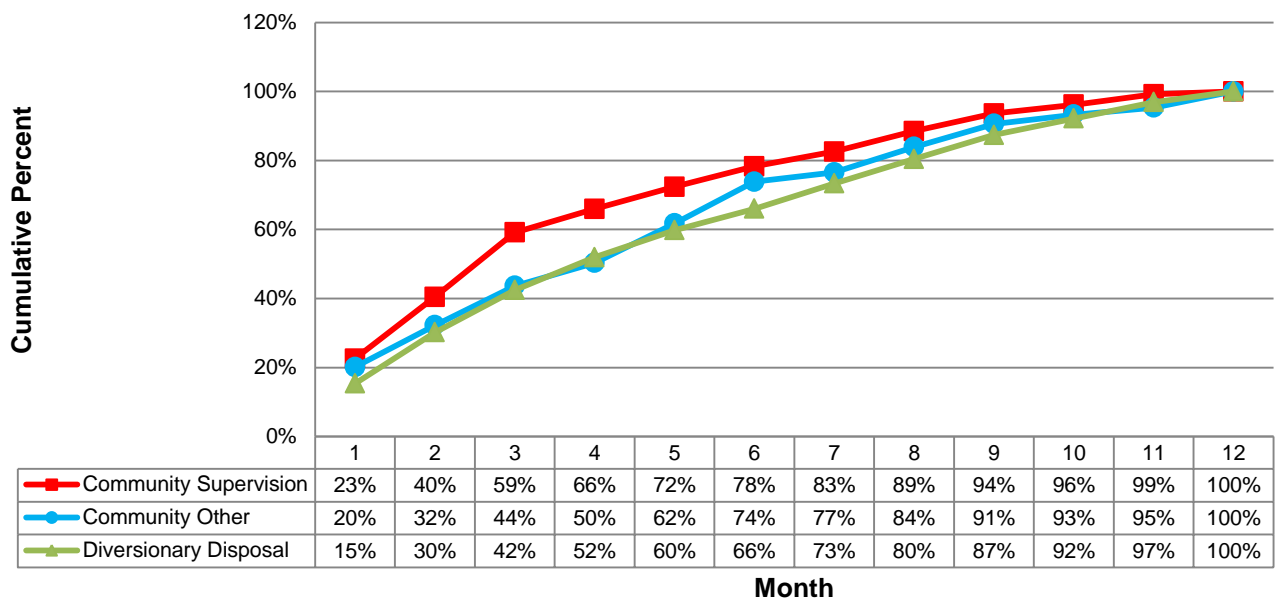
It has not been possible to produce an accurate model of reoffending for the youth cohort. No adjusted figures to aid comparison can therefore be produced at this stage. However based on the full cohort of adult and youth offenders there appears to be a 1 percentage point decrease in reoffending behaviours. (Duncan 2014 Methodology and Glossary Part 2)

3.2 Reoffending Interval

Of the 753 youths who reoffended, 129 (17%) reoffended within the first month release from custody, receiving a non-custodial disposal at court or a diversionary disposal. By three months, 344 (46%) had committed a further offence. (Appendix 1, Table 2)

Of the 36 youths released from a custodial setting, 25 reoffended, 19 within the first quarter. Due to the small number of these releases, they have not been included in Figure 1 below. All disposal groups appear to follow a similar general trend, with reoffending rising sharply in the first few months following release from custody, receiving a non-custodial disposal at court or a diversionary disposal. (Appendix 1, Table 2)

Figure 1: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group*



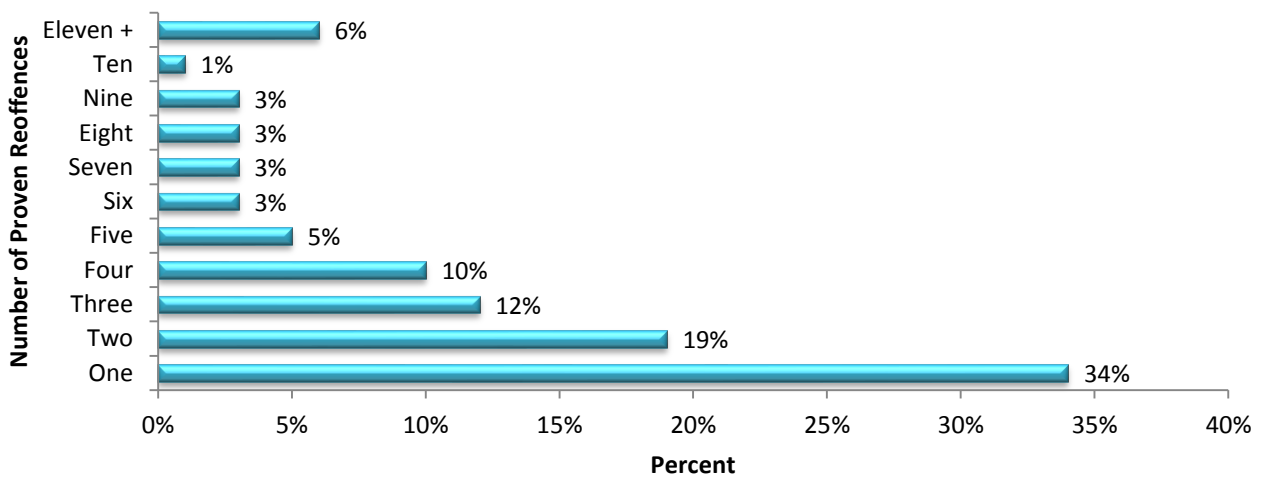
*Offenders are counted once per disposal group, however they may appear in more than one group

3.3 Number of Proven Reoffences

During the observation year, the 753 youths who reoffended committed a further 2,801 proven offences. This averages as four offences per reoffender and one offence per offender across the entire 2011/12 youth cohort.

Over a third (34%) committed only one further offence within the observation year and 6% committed 11 or more reoffences. Overall, the number of reoffences ranged from one to 32. (Appendix 1, Table 3 and Figure 2)

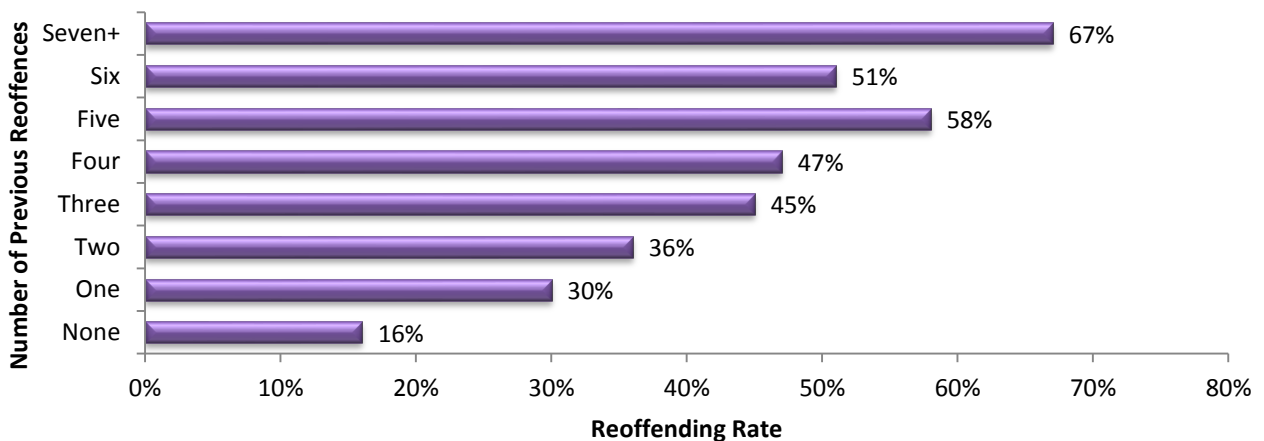
Figure 2: Number of Proven Reoffences



3.4 Offending History

Of the 2,592 youth offenders included in the 2011/12 youth cohort, 1,450 (56%) had no previous offences. The remaining 1,142 (44%) had committed a total of 5,850 previous offences², ranging from one to 74 distinct offences. As shown in Figure 3 below, the reoffending rate appears, in general, to increase as the number of previous offences increases. (Appendix 1, Table 4)

Figure 3: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences



² Offences included are those recorded on an offender's criminal record only.

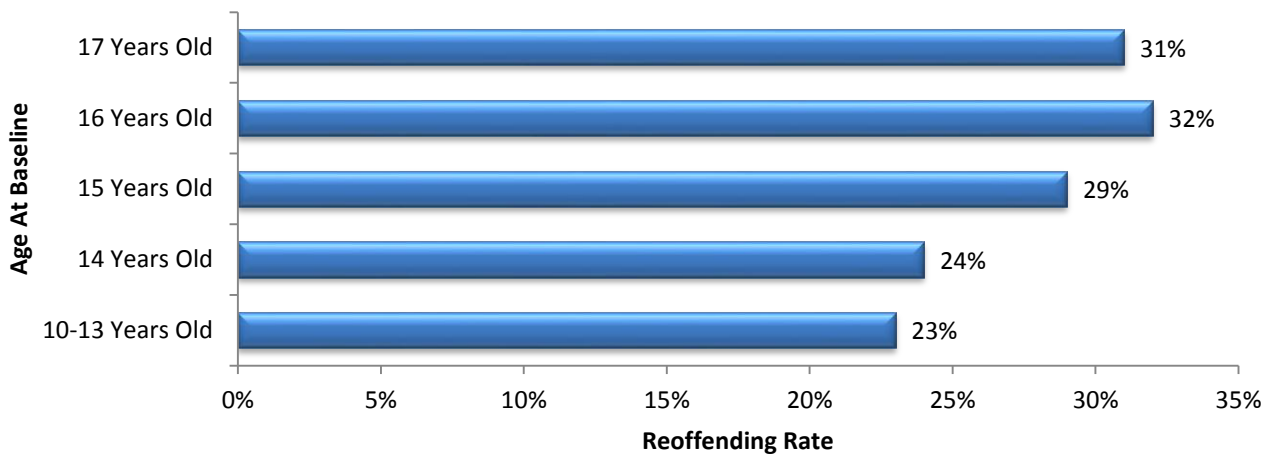
3.5 Gender

Of the 2,592 youths in the cohort, 579 (22%) were female and the remaining 2,013 were male (78%). Overall, 16% of females and 33% of males had a proven reoffence within one year.

3.6 Age at Baseline

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

Figure 4: Reoffending Rate by Age at Baseline



3.7 Disposal

Appendix 1, Table 5 provides a breakdown of reoffending by disposal. Although separate disposals are listed, disposals are grouped into four main categories.

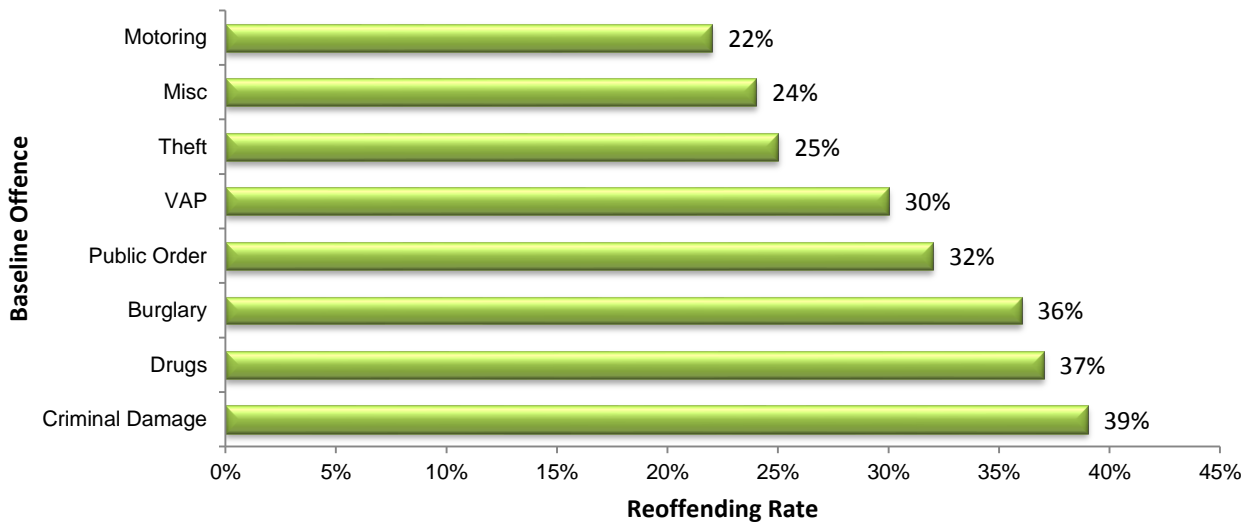
1. Youths released from custody or young offender centre during 2011/12. This group will include those released from serving a prison term only and those released under community supervision. Such disposals include juvenile justice centre orders.
2. Youths given a non-custodial disposal at court that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

Of those released from custody, 25 of the 36 reoffended following release. Of those given a non-custodial court disposal with community supervision, 56% reoffended, for non-custodial court disposals without supervision (48%) and, finally, for diversionary disposals (26%). 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 'Criminal Damage', 39% reoffended within the observation year, as did 37% of those with a baseline offence of 'Drugs'. Of those with a baseline 'Motoring' offence 22% reoffended. Due to small numbers, Sexual, Robbery, Possession of Weapons and Fraud offences have not been included in Figure 5. Table 6 provides a breakdown of all baseline offence categories.

Figure 5: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence



3.9 Specified and Serious Offences³

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 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, 112 (4%) of the 2,592 youths had committed a baseline 'specified' offence. Of these, 32 (29%) went on to reoffend, two of whom committing a further specified offence. (Appendix 1, Table 7)

A further list, detailing offences that should be regarded as 'Serious offences,' is also included in the 2008 Order. Overall, 104 (4%) of the 2,592 youths had committed a baseline 'serious' offence. Of these, 31 (30%) went on to reoffend, two of whom committing a further serious offence. (Appendix 1, Table 7)

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

APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Reoffending Rate by Age and Gender

Gender	Age*	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Female	10-13 Years Old	11	73	15.1%
	14 Years Old	14	95	14.7%
	15 Years Old	17	111	15.3%
	16 Years Old	30	151	19.9%
	17 Years Old	22	149	14.8%
	Total Female		94	579
Male	10-13 Years Old	60	230	26.1%
	14 Years Old	62	223	27.8%
	15 Years Old	113	344	32.8%
	16 Years Old	184	514	35.8%
	17 Years Old	240	702	34.2%
	Total Male		659	2,013
Total	10-13 Years Old	71	303	23.4%
	14 Years Old	76	318	23.9%
	15 Years Old	130	455	28.6%
	16 Years Old	214	665	32.2%
	17 Years Old	262	851	30.8%
	Overall Total		753	2,592

* Age at Baseline Date

Table 2: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group**

Disposal Group	Time to Reoffense by Month												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Custody Release	8	6	5	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	25
Community Supervision	53	42	44	16	15	14	10	14	12	6	7	2	235
Community Other	30	18	17	10	17	18	4	11	10	4	3	7	149
Diversionsary Disposal	84	81	67	52	43	34	40	39	38	26	26	17	547
Total	129	110	105	68	61	54	47	48	44	29	34	24	753
Percent													
Custody Release*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Supervision	22.6%	17.9%	18.7%	6.8%	6.4%	6.0%	4.3%	6.0%	5.1%	2.6%	3.0%	0.9%	100%
Community Other	20.1%	12.1%	11.4%	6.7%	11.4%	12.1%	2.7%	7.4%	6.7%	2.7%	2.0%	4.7%	100%
Diversionsary Disposal	15.4%	14.8%	12.2%	9.5%	7.9%	6.2%	7.3%	7.1%	6.9%	4.8%	4.8%	3.1%	100%
Total	17.1%	14.6%	13.9%	9.0%	8.1%	7.2%	6.2%	6.4%	5.8%	3.9%	4.5%	3.2%	100%
Cumulative													
Custody Release*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Supervision	22.6%	40.4%	59.1%	66.0%	72.3%	78.3%	82.6%	88.5%	93.6%	96.2%	99.1%	100%	
Community Other	20.1%	32.2%	43.6%	50.3%	61.7%	73.8%	76.5%	83.9%	90.6%	93.3%	95.3%	100%	
Diversionsary Disposal	15.4%	30.2%	42.4%	51.9%	59.8%	66.0%	73.3%	80.4%	87.4%	92.1%	96.9%	100%	
Total	17.1%	31.7%	45.7%	54.7%	62.8%	70.0%	76.2%	82.6%	88.4%	92.3%	96.8%	100%	

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

**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 Youth Offenders	Percent of Proven Reoffences
One	256	34.0%
Two	143	19.0%
Three	94	12.5%
Four	73	9.7%
Five	40	5.3%
Six	25	3.3%
Seven	22	2.9%
Eight	21	2.8%
Nine	23	3.1%
Ten	10	1.3%
Eleven +	46	6.1%
Total	753	100%

Table 4: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences

Number of Previous Offences	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
None	238	1,450	16.4%
One	105	353	29.7%
Two	66	184	35.9%
Three	55	122	45.1%
Four	44	94	46.8%
Five	41	71	57.7%
Six	29	57	50.9%
Seven+	175	261	67.0%
Total	753	2,592	29.1%

Table 5: Reoffending Rate by Disposal

Disposal Group	Disposal**	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Custody Release	Young Offender Centre/Imprisonment	7	11	-
	Juvenile Justice Centre Order/Determinate Custodial Sentence	19	26	-
	Total	25	36	
Community Supervision	Combination Order	5	9	-
	Probation Order	36	59	61.0%
	Community Service Order	14	27	-
	Youth Conference Order	194	335	57.9%
	Community Responsibility Order	21	31	-
	Total	235	418	56.2%
Community Other	Suspended Imprisonment	24	43	-
	Monetary Penalty	38	104	36.5%
	Bound Over	2	5	-
	Conditional Discharge	70	125	56.0%
	Absolute Discharge	4	9	-
	Other Disposal	30	54	55.6%
	Total	149	311	47.9%
Diversionsary Disposal	Caution	256	920	27.8%
	PPS Ordered YCP	244	679	35.9%
	Informed Warning	122	703	17.4%
	Total	547	2,145	25.5%
Overall Total		753	2,592	29.1%

* - 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 6: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence Category

Baseline Offence Group	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate*
Violence Against the Person	190	639	29.7%
Sexual*	4	29	-
Robbery*	4	10	-
Theft	109	444	24.5%
Burglary	31	87	35.6%
Criminal Damage	123	318	38.7%
Drugs	42	115	36.5%
Possession of Weapons*	8	38	-
Public Order	111	344	32.3%
Motoring	59	265	22.3%
Fraud*	2	13	-
Misc	70	290	24.1%
Total	753	2,592	29.1%

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

Table 7: Reoffending Rate by Specified and Serious Offences

Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 List	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Specified Offences	32	112	28.6%
Serious Offences	31	104	29.8%

APPENDIX 2 - References

Duncan. L. (2014) '*R & S Bulletin 4/2014 Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology: Methodology and Glossary Part 1*'. Department of Justice
<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/reoffending-stats-and-research.htm>

Duncan. L. (2014) '*R & S Bulletin 5/2014 Youth Reoffending in Northern Ireland (2010/11 Cohort)*'. Department of Justice <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/reoffending-stats-and-research.htm>

Duncan. L. (2014) '*R & S Bulletin 17/2014 Northern Ireland Reoffending Methodology: Methodology and Glossary Part 2*' Department of Justice 2014
<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/reoffending-stats-and-research.htm>

Department of Justice

Financial Services Division,
Analytical Services Group
Department of Justice
Laganside House
Oxford Street
Belfast, BT1 3LA

Email: statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 028 9072 4538

Web page: www.dojni.gov.uk