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Analytical Services Group

Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland (2010/11 Cohort)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This bulletin provides information on the one year proven reoffending rate for a cohort of adults who received a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or were released from custody during 2010/11. An adult is defined as anyone aged 18 and over at this point.
- Of the 30,576 adult offenders included in the 2010/11 cohort, 4,875 (16%) committed a proven reoffence within a year following being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial disposal at court or receiving a diversionary disposal.
- Overall, 42% of the 4,875 who reoffended committed their first reoffence within the first three months following court sentencing, receiving a diversionary disposal or release from custody.
- The number of reoffences within the year ranged from one to 30.
- In terms of offending history, 63% had committed previous offences, ranging from 1 to 573 distinct offences. Reoffending rates largely increased as the number of previous offences increased.
- Overall, 9% of females and 17% of males had reoffended.
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults released from custody was 45%.
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults who received a community disposal at court requiring supervision was 30%.
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults who received a community disposal at court not requiring supervision was 16%.
- The one year proven reoffending rate for adults who received a diversionary disposal was 13%.
- The highest reoffending rates were found amongst those who had committed a baseline offence in the 'Robbery' category (40%), followed by 'Burglary' (36%).

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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'.

This paper will provide information on the reoffending rates for the 2010/11 adult 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 adults who have been given a non-custodial disposal at court, a diversionary disposal or who have been released from custody¹ during the financial year 2010/11. An adult is defined as someone aged 18 and 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 is the observation and follow up period?

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 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. This issue will be more widely discussed in the next paper in this series.

3. FINDINGS

In the following section the reoffending rates of the 2010/11 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

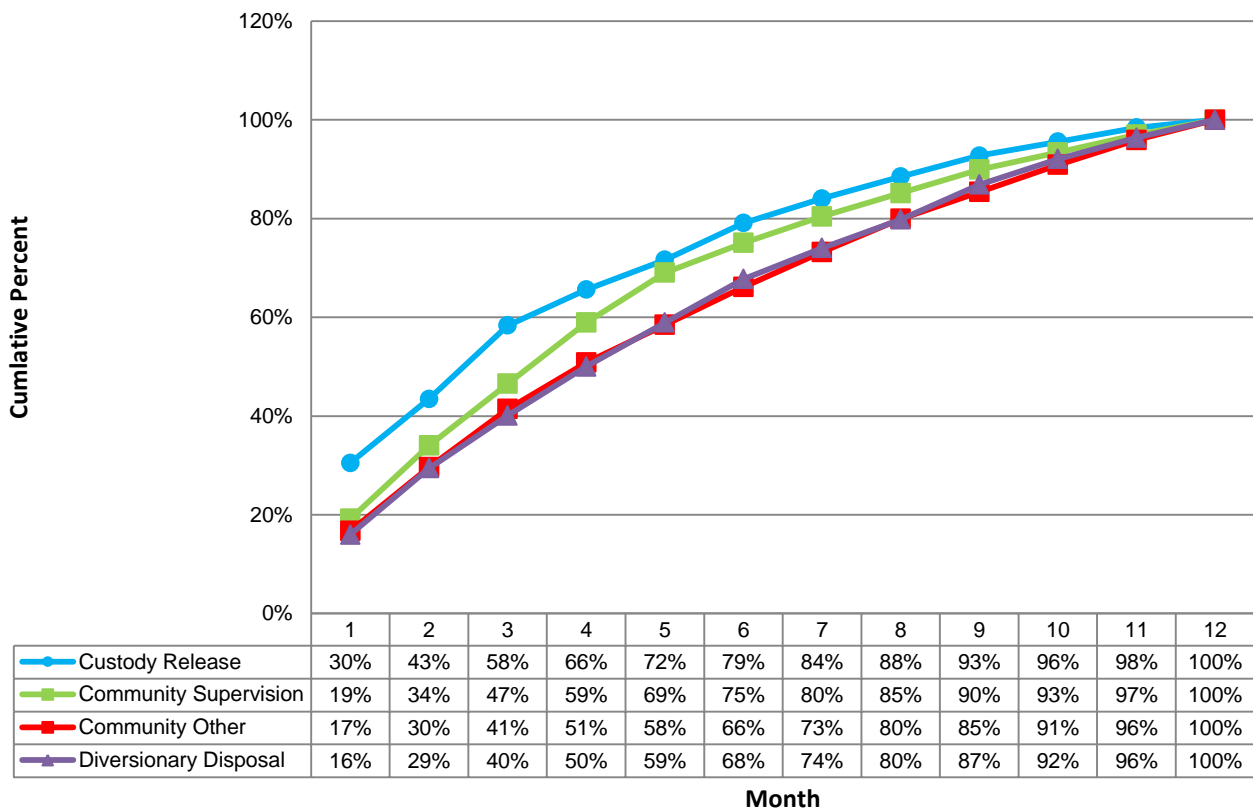
A total of 30,576 offenders were included in the 2010/11 adult cohort. Overall, 4,875 (16%) committed a proven reoffence within a year following being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial court disposal or a diversionary disposal.

3.2 Reoffending Interval

Of the 4,875 adults who reoffended, 828 (17%) reoffended within the first month of being released from custody, receiving a non-custodial court disposal or a diversionary disposal. By three months, 2,026 (42%) had committed a further offence.

For those released from custody who reoffended, 58% had done so within the first three months of release; rising to 79% by the end of the first six months. Although all disposal groups followed this general trend, those released from custody appeared to rise more sharply than the other groups.

Figure 1: Reoffending Interval by Disposal Group*



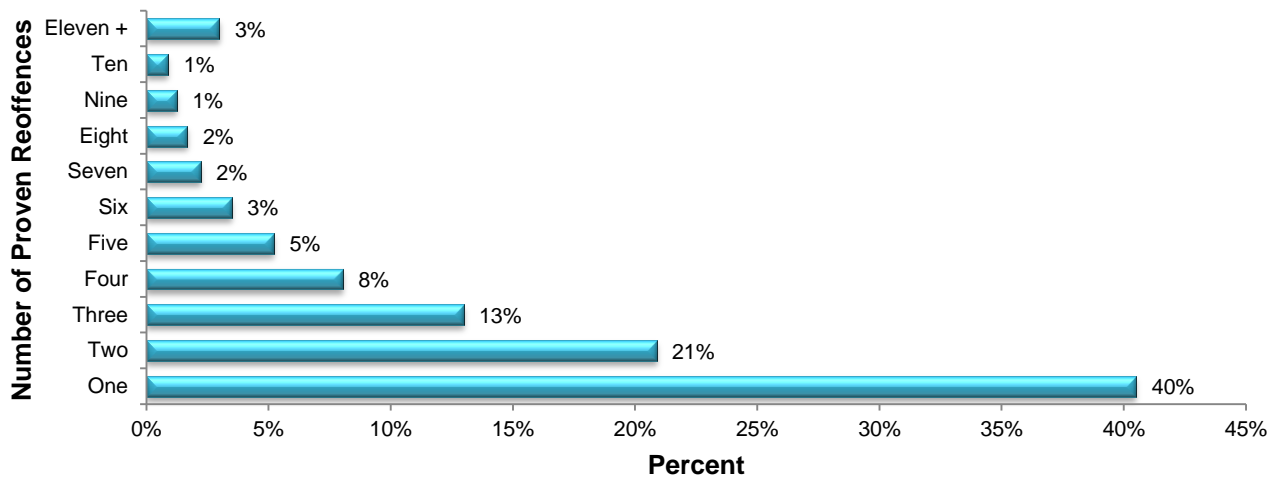
*Offenders are counted once per disposal group, however they may appear in more than one group

3.3 Number of Proven Reoffences

During the observation year, the 4,875 people who reoffended committed a further 14,193 proven offences. This averages to three offences per reoffender and less than one offence across the entire 2010/11 adult cohort.

Approximately two fifths (40%) 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.

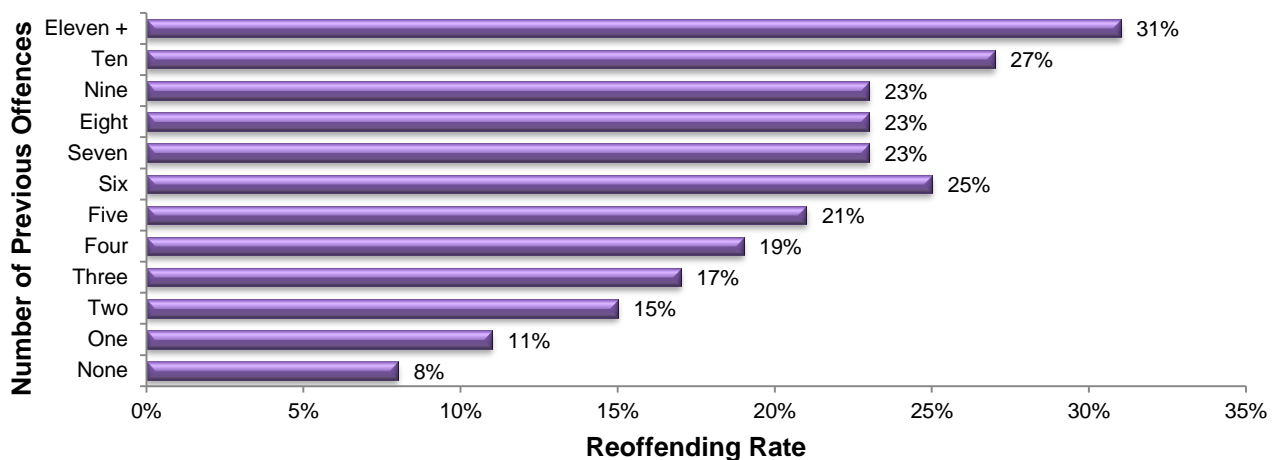
Figure 2: Number of Proven Reoffences



3.4 Offending History

Of the 30,576 adult offenders included in the 2010/11 adult cohort, 11,389 (37%) had no previous offences. The remaining 19,187 (63%) had committed a total of 247,679 previous offences², ranging from 1 to 573 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



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

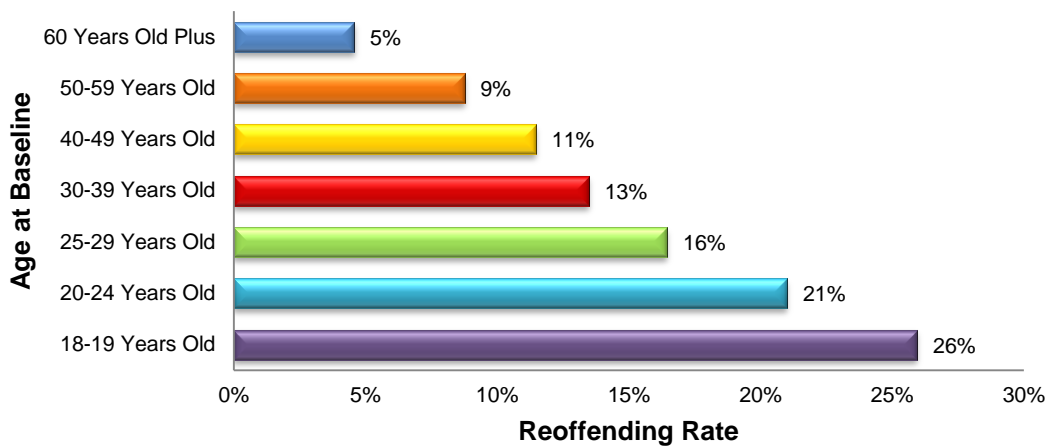
3.5 Gender

Of the 30,576 offenders in the cohort, 5,619 (18%) were female and the remaining 24,957 were male (82%) or other gender (<1%). Overall, 522 (9%) females, 4,353 (17%) males and no 'other genders' 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 consistently reduce as age increases. This is largely true for both males and females when looked at separately. However, female offenders appear to have an additional peak in the 40-49 year old age group (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 baseline disposal. Although separate disposals are listed, disposals are grouped into four main categories.

1. Adults released from custody or young offender centre during 2010/11. 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).

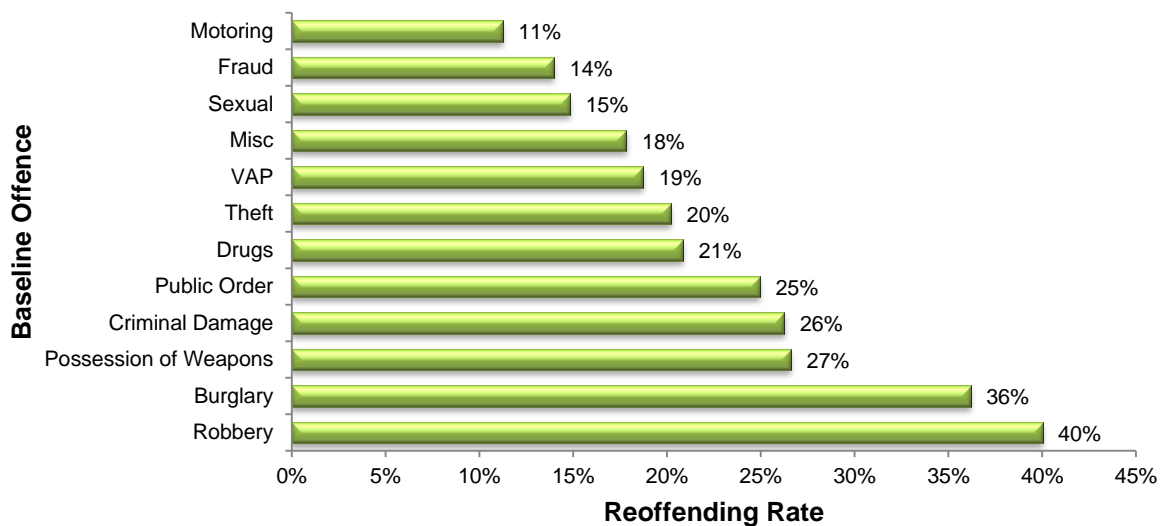
At 45% those with a custodial disposal have the highest reoffending rate, followed by non-custodial disposal with community supervision (30%), non-custodial disposal without supervision (16%) and finally diversionary disposals (13%). It should be noted this is not necessarily reflective of the impact 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', 40% reoffended within the observation year, as did 36% of those with a baseline offence of 'Burglary'. Of those with a baseline 'Motoring' offence, 11% reoffended.

Appendix 1, Table 6 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', 'Burglary', 'Drugs', 'Public Order' and 'Motoring', the largest proportion of first reoffences were for offences in the same category (see Table 7).

Figure 5: Reoffending rate by Baseline Offence



3.9 Specified and Serious Offences

The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008³ 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, 534 (2%) of the 30,576 adults had committed a baseline 'specified' offence. Of these, 135 (25%) went on to reoffend, 24 committing a further specified offence.

A further list, detailing offences that should be regarded as 'serious offences', is included in the Order. Overall, 435 (1%) such offences were committed of whom 106 (24%) reoffended, 7 committing a further serious offence.

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	18-19 Years Old	53	443	12%
	20-24 Years Old	128	1,041	12%
	25-29 Years Old	86	885	10%
	30-39 Years Old	103	1,341	8%
	40-49 Years Old	114	1,176	10%
	50-59 Years Old	32	509	6%
	60 Years Old Plus	6	224	3%
	Total Female		522	5,619
Male and Other Gender**	18-19 Years Old	737	2,602	28%
	20-24 Years Old	1341	5,953	23%
	25-29 Years Old	783	4,398	18%
	30-39 Years Old	817	5,496	15%
	40-49 Years Old	458	3,814	12%
	50-59 Years Old	174	1,845	9%
	60 Years Old Plus	43	849	5%
	Total Male		4,353	24,957
Total	18-19 Years Old	790	3,045	26%
	20-24 Years Old	1,469	6,994	21%
	25-29 Years Old	869	5,283	16%
	30-39 Years Old	920	6,837	13%
	40-49 Years Old	572	4,990	11%
	50-59 Years Old	206	2,354	9%
	60 Years Old Plus	49	1,073	5%
	Overall Total		4,875	30,576

*Age at Baseline Date

**Only one 'Other' gender was recorded. This person has been included with the Male group to avoid spurious identification

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	172	73	84	41	34	42	28	25	24	16	16	9	564
Community Supervision	133	103	87	86	70	42	37	33	33	24	25	21	694
Community Other	582	449	411	327	267	266	247	234	190	191	175	143	3,482
Diversionsary Disposal	163	137	109	101	91	90	64	59	72	53	44	37	1,020
Total	828	628	570	475	385	384	333	307	290	253	234	188	4,875
Percent													
Custody Release	30%	13%	15%	7%	6%	7%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	100%
Community Supervision	19%	15%	13%	12%	10%	6%	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%	3%	100%
Community Other	17%	13%	12%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	5%	5%	5%	4%	100%
Diversionsary Disposal	16%	13%	11%	10%	9%	9%	6%	6%	7%	5%	4%	4%	100%
Total	17%	13%	12%	10%	8%	8%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	100%
Cumulative Percent													
Custody Release	30%	43%	58%	66%	72%	79%	84%	88%	93%	96%	98%	100%	
Community Supervision	19%	34%	47%	59%	69%	75%	80%	85%	90%	93%	97%	100%	
Community Other	17%	30%	41%	51%	58%	66%	73%	80%	85%	91%	96%	100%	
Diversionsary Disposal	16%	29%	40%	50%	59%	68%	74%	80%	87%	92%	96%	100%	
Total	17%	30%	42%	51%	59%	67%	74%	80%	86%	91%	96%	100%	

*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	1,974	40%
Two	1,017	21%
Three	632	13%
Four	391	8%
Five	254	5%
Six	170	3%
Seven	108	2%
Eight	81	2%
Nine	60	1%
Ten	43	1%
Eleven +	145	3%
Total	4,875	100%

Table 4: Reoffending Rate by Number of Previous Offences

Number of Previous Offences	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
None	866	11,389	8%
One	489	4,426	11%
Two	358	2,459	15%
Three	299	1,716	17%
Four	226	1,214	19%
Five	203	956	21%
Six	193	772	25%
Seven	141	614	23%
Eight	126	538	23%
Nine	110	488	23%
Ten	108	405	27%
Eleven +	1,756	5,599	31%
Total	4,875	30,576	16%

Table 5: Reoffending Rate by Disposal

Disposal Group	Disposal**	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate*
Custody Release	Life Licenses	2	7	-
	Extended Custodial Sentences	2	4	-
	Determinate Custodial Sentences	29	82	35%
	Custody Probation Order	25	79	32%
	Imprisonment	466	1,035	45%
	Young Offender Centre	62	94	66%
	Juvenile Justice Centre Order	1	2	-
	Total	564	1,265	45%
Community Supervision	Attendance Centre	0	1	-
	Combination Order	94	251	37%
	Probation/Supervision Order	363	1,146	32%
	Community Service Order	272	1,013	27%
	Youth Conference Order	23	46	-
	Community Responsibility Order	1	1	-
	Total	694	2,330	30%
Community Other	Suspended Imprisonment	758	2,636	29%
	Monetary Penalty	2,764	18,346	15%
	Bound Over	45	226	20%
	Conditional Discharge	234	788	30%
	Absolute Discharge	21	98	21%
	Other Disposal	28	239	12%
	Total	3,482	21,473	16%
Diversionsary Disposal	Caution	951	7,022	14%
	Youth Conference Plan	44	135	33%
	Community Based Restorative Justice	0	1	-
	Informed Warning	38	440	9%
	Total	1,020	7,562	13%
Overall Total		4,875	30,576	16%

*- 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, the first instance a person is included in this category is counted only.

Table 6: Reoffending Rate by Baseline Offence Category

Baseline Offence Group	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Violence Against the Person	621	3,321	19%
Sexual	20	135	15%
Robbery	30	75	40%
Theft	492	2,435	20%
Burglary	102	282	36%
Criminal Damage	312	1,189	26%
Drugs	382	1,832	21%
Possession of Weapons	79	297	27%
Public Order	566	2,269	25%
Motoring	1,809	16,109	11%
Fraud	26	186	14%
Miscellaneous	436	2,446	18%
Total	4,875	30,576	16%

Table 7: 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*	157	1	0	54	5	54	39	5	117	122	3	64
Sexual**	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	8	3	0	1
Robbery**	1	0	3	5	3	2	4	1	3	5	0	3
Theft	53	1	2	188	18	22	29	6	41	81	5	46
Burglary	10	0	2	14	21	10	3	2	11	14	0	15
Criminal Damage	60	0	1	31	7	27	26	6	57	64	1	32
Drugs	41	2	0	31	6	30	109	7	42	89	1	24
Possession of Weapons	7	0	2	8	1	5	12	1	15	19	0	9
Public Order	83	3	1	41	6	46	44	6	152	107	0	77
Motoring	138	1	3	107	23	63	109	16	132	1,088	4	125
Fraud**	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	13	2	3
Miscellaneous	66	1	0	29	10	25	29	8	84	95	3	86
Total	622	10	14	510	101	286	406	59	663	1,700	19	485
Percent												
VAP*	25%	0%	0%	9%	1%	9%	6%	1%	19%	20%	0%	10%
Sexual**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robbery**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Theft	11%	0%	0%	38%	4%	4%	6%	1%	8%	16%	1%	9%
Burglary	10%	0%	2%	14%	21%	10%	3%	2%	11%	14%	0%	15%
Criminal Damage	19%	0%	0%	10%	2%	9%	8%	2%	18%	21%	0%	10%
Drugs	11%	1%	0%	8%	2%	8%	29%	2%	11%	23%	0%	6%
Possession of Weapons	9%	0%	3%	10%	1%	6%	15%	1%	19%	24%	0%	11%
Public Order	15%	1%	0%	7%	1%	8%	8%	1%	27%	19%	0%	14%
Motoring	8%	0%	0%	6%	1%	3%	6%	1%	7%	60%	0%	7%
Fraud**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	15%	0%	0%	7%	2%	6%	7%	2%	19%	22%	1%	20%

*Violence against the person

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

Table 8a: Reoffending Rate by Specified and Serious Offences

Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 List	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Specified Offences	135	534	25%
Serious Offences	106	435	24%

Table 8b: Proportion of Offenders with a Baseline Specified and Serious Offences whose First Reoffence was also Specified and Serious

Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 List	Reoffended	Total	One year Proven Reoffending Rate
Specified Offences	24	135	18%
Serious Offences	7	106	7%

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