

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW: POLICY, PRACTICE AND LEGISLATION

**Section 19: Data**

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Children and Young People's  
Centre for Justice

*Featured artwork created by children and young people with justice experience*

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# 1. Introduction

Wherever possible, children who come into conflict with the law should be diverted from formal systems altogether and their needs met through universal services. Where this is not possible, the child's needs should be met through Early and Effective Intervention or the Children's Hearing System. Despite the welfare-based Children's Hearing System having been in place for several years, some children in Scotland still get drawn into the adult justice system. Implementation of the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 will help to significantly reduce the number of children in the adult system; however, it will not eliminate this practice. Due to the dual system approach in Scotland the processes can be complex and difficult to understand. The [Child's Journey](#) and [Journey through Justice](#) are online interactive resources designed to help children, their families, and professionals understand the journey through the justice system.

As there are two separate - albeit linked - systems that children can become involved in, it can also be a challenge to monitor our national response to children who come into conflict with the law, and to identify whether we are responding in their best interests and meeting their developmental needs. Information is currently gathered by several organisations that children in conflict with the law may encounter - Police Scotland, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, Children and Families Social Work, Secure Care Services, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Justice Social Work, and the Scottish Prison Service<sup>1</sup>. A lot of the available information is analysed and published by the Scottish Government. However, within the Scottish Government this information spans different directorates/teams and is contained within different statistical collections.

A further challenge in accessing information on our response to children in conflict with the law is that the age categories used within the various published reports differ, and children (those under 18 years of age) are sometimes grouped with young people (those under 21 years old). Additionally, on occasion, the information on children is not contained within the main report but needs to be accessed through additional tables in the supporting files. For these reasons, this paper collates the regularly published official statistics in Scotland, which are known to Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ), in relation to children in conflict with the law. Specifically, this paper documents what data exists, and where and when it was published, as well as providing the available data for the past few years.<sup>2</sup> It also provides equality and diversity demographics where this is available or known to us. Hopefully this will make the information more accessible to individuals and organisations for whom it is relevant.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Recorded Crime

### 2.1 Police Scotland

The Scottish Policing Performance Framework Annual Reports used to include information on the number of detected crimes and offences by children and young people. However, since the establishment of Police Scotland and the merger of eight regional police forces, it

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<sup>1</sup> Although the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 has ended the detention of under-18s in Young Offender Institutions this did not come into force until August 28, 2024. The data contained in this report is retrospective and therefore the detention of children in Young Offender Institutions is still included.

<sup>2</sup> Information from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey has not been included as it is based on experiences and perceptions rather than children who have come into conflict with the law through detected crime.

<sup>3</sup> This paper is based on the official statistics known to CYCJ and our understanding and interpretation of them. Links are provided to the original data sources where more detailed information can be obtained.

has not been possible to access a national breakdown of the recorded crimes or offences alleged to have been committed by children. This is due to the crime recording systems used by Police Scotland having no facility whereby the age of the accused at the time of the offence can be easily extracted. The last figures available are therefore from the [2012/13 annual report](#).

More recently, however, Police Scotland have published some data (not official statistics) on the overall violent crimes recorded for accused aged 11-18 years old and on the use of police custody. The overall violent crime figures below are taken from the [Police Scotland Performance Report Quarter 4 2023/24](#) where there was a specific focus on children involved in violent crime. Overall violent crime comprises of murder, culpable homicide (common law), attempted murder, serious assault, robbery, common assault and common assault of emergency workers), although the vast majority recorded relates to common assaults.

| <b>OVERALL VIOLENT CRIMES RECORDED BY ACCUSED AGED 11-18 YEARS OLD</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>2019-20</b> | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> |
| <b>Number of Overall Violent Crimes Recorded</b>                       | 8577           | 7213           | 9125           | 9231           | 9053           |

The following police custody figures below are taken from the Police Scotland [Performance Report Quarter 4 2024/25, 2023/24, 2022/23](#) and 2021/22.

| <b>CHILDREN BROUGHT INTO POLICE CUSTODY / HELD FOR COURT<sup>4</sup></b>                         |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>Number of younger children arrested and accepted into police custody (not held overnight)</b> | 1,273          | 1,486          | 1,579          | 1,332          |
| <b>Number of younger children arrested and held overnight</b>                                    | 157            | 150            | 107            | 173            |
| <b>Number of younger children held over 24 hours</b>   | 46             | 28             | 33             | 36             |
| <b>Number of older children arrested and accepted into police custody (not held overnight)</b>   | 1,645          | 1,685          | 1,580          | 1,523          |
| <b>Number of older children arrested and held overnight</b>                                      | 447            | 457            | 455            | 507            |
| <b>Number of older children held over 24 hours</b>   | 204            | 240            | 180            | 168            |

<sup>4</sup> Younger children are defined as under 16 or 16/17 but subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order; Older children are defined as 16/17 and Not under Supervision. Overnight is determined as the period to time spent in custody which exceeds four hours and includes the period between 0000 and 0400 hours.

Police Scotland publish data on the use of force in relation to children. The data below has been taken from the [Use of Force External Performance Report Q4 2024-25, 2023-24, 2022-23 and 2021-22](#).

| USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS IN RELATION TO CHILDREN                             |         |         |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year   | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Number of incidents where use of force was used on Under 18's <sup>5</sup> | 811     | 869     | 1,115   | 1,313   |
| Number of Taser Uses on Under 18's <sup>6</sup>                            | 32      | 41      | 46      | 52      |

The [Police Scotland website](#) also contains information on the stop and search incidents recorded in relation to children.

| STOP AND SEARCH OF CHILDREN |         |       |       |         |       |       |         |       |       |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| Year                        | 2022-23 |       |       | 2023-24 |       |       | 2024-25 |       |       |
| Age in years                | 1-11    | 12-15 | 16-17 | 1-11    | 12-15 | 16-17 | 1-11    | 12-15 | 16-17 |
| Number of searches          | 28      | 1,989 | 2,126 | 25      | 2,433 | 2,248 | 50      | 3,316 | 3,121 |
| Positive Searches           | 6       | 405   | 666   | 5       | 433   | 639   | 3       | 504   | 715   |
| Positive Rate (%)           | 21.4    | 20.4  | 31.3  | 20.0    | 17.8  | 28.4  | 6.0     | 15.2  | 22.9  |

The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) have recently published their report [Racial Inequality in Scotland: State of the Nation – Volume 1](#) (CRER, 2025). The section on Youth Justice reported that children and young people from some ethnic groups (particularly African, Caribbean and Black groups) are over-represented in stop and search statistics. In relation to strip searching, they found that children and young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were twice as likely to be strip searched than others, with children and young people from African, Caribbean or Black backgrounds 7.4 times more likely to be strip searched relative to their share of the national population; and nearly four times as likely to be subjected to a strip search than white Scottish/British children and young people (CRER, 2025).

## 2.2 Recorded crime statistics

The Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services division (JAS) produces statistics on [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#). These are split by crime or offence group and by local authority, but not by age. Annual reports are published, with the latest report ([2024-2025](#)) being published in June 2025. [The Scottish Crime Recording Board](#) has been set up to support the production of accurate and objective statistics on crime in Scotland, and is chaired by JAS. As well as publishing annual National Statistics on recorded crime, a series of monthly Official Statistics were also introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a selection of research reports have been produced in recent years. The research reports provide some information in relation to children accused of offences and are detailed below.

[Recorded crime in Scotland: attempted murder and serious assault, 2008-2009 and 2017-2018](#). This report is based on a random sample of 1,101 police-recorded crimes of attempted murder and serious assault (550 from 2008-09 and 551 from 2017-18). The report details that in 2017-18, 17% of the serious assaults sampled involved at least one teenage

<sup>5</sup> Use of force includes: Handcuffs, Empty hand restraint/hold, Spit hood, Fast straps (leg restraint), Baton drawn, Baton strike, Baton restraint, PAVA drawn, and PAVA discharged.

<sup>6</sup> Taser Use includes: Drawn, Aimed, Red Dot, Arced, and Fired.

perpetrator (aged between 13 and 19) and 1% involved at least one perpetrator under 13 years old.

[Recorded Crime in Scotland: Robbery, 2008-09 and 2017-18](#). This report, which provides information on robberies recorded by the police, is based on a sample of police records from 2008-09 and 2017-18. The findings indicate that around one in five robberies (19%) involved at least one teenage perpetrator (aged 13-19) in 2017-18.

[Recorded crime in Scotland: 'Other sexual crimes', 2013-2014 and 2016-2017](#). This report, which provides information about 'Other sexual crimes' which have come to the attention of the police, is based on a sample of police records. The research estimates that the increase in sexual crimes over recent years is largely due to growth in cyber-enabled 'Other sexual crimes' such as 'Communicating indecently' and 'Cause to view sexual activity or images.' It reports that almost a quarter of cyber-enabled crimes of 'Communicating indecently' and 'Cause to view sexual activity or images' had a victim and perpetrator who were both aged under 16 in 2016-17 (compared to 8% for non-cyber-enabled crimes of this type).

[Recorded Crime in Scotland: Handling offensive weapons](#). This report provides information on crimes of handling offensive weapons recorded by the police and is based on a random sample of police-recorded crimes from April to September 2017. It indicates that around a quarter of perpetrators were teenagers (13-19 years old).

[Characteristics of police-recorded hate crime in Scotland: study](#). Based on a random sample of police recorded crimes in 2018-19, this report presents findings on the nature of hate aggravated crimes in Scotland. In 2018-19, where hate aggravated crimes did not involve a police officer in the line of duty and a perpetrator was identified, around one in five (22%) had at least one perpetrator under the age of 18.<sup>7</sup> An updated study [Police recorded hate crime – characteristics: updated study](#) published in 2023 did not provide any information about the involvement of children in these recorded crimes. There are new publications on hate crime with the latest report being published in May 2025 - [Hate crimes recorded by the police in Scotland, 2023-24](#). These reports do not include a breakdown by age.

[Non-Sexual Violence in Scotland](#). Published in 2019, this report brings together official data on non-sexual violence from a range of sources in Scotland. Overall, there is evidence of a decrease in non-sexual violence by children and young people, particularly 16–24-year-olds.

## 2.3 Homicide statistics

This statistical collection provides some information in relation to children accused of homicide. [Homicide in Scotland](#) statistics are published by the Scottish Government in October of each year, of which the latest is [Homicide in Scotland 2024-25](#). Based on the police-recorded crimes in these publications, the following table documents the number of children and young people accused of homicide by rate per million population over the past five years (not the actual number of children accused).

| CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCUSED OF HOMICIDE BY RATE PER MILLION POPULATION |        |         |         |         |         |         |
|--|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year   |        | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Under 16 years   | Male   | 0       | 1       | 2       | 2       | 3       |
|  | Female | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| 16-24 years  | Male   | 15      | 12      | 14      | 15      | 12      |

<sup>7</sup> Based on further analysis of the hate crime data.

|  |               |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | <b>Female</b> | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
|--|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|

## 2.4 Crimes and offences involving firearms statistics

There is also some information available on children from the [Crime and offences involving firearm statistics](#) collection. These reports provide information on crimes and offences recorded by the police in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved or where a firearm was stolen. The latest publication, [Recorded crimes and offences involving firearms: 2020-21 and 2021-22 statistics](#), was published in December 2023 by JAS. The main body of the report indicates that the main accused was under 16 years old in 16% of cleared up offences involving the use of a firearm (31 out of 195 offences) and that a further 22% of cleared up offences were committed by an accused aged 16 to 20 years (42 offences). In the supporting files the publication tables include further information in relation to children, which is detailed below.

| <b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCUSED IN OFFENCES INVOLVING THE ALLEGED USE OF A FIREARM</b> |               |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   |               | <b>2017-18</b> | <b>2018-19</b> | <b>2019-20</b> | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> |
| <b>Under 16 years</b>   | <b>Male</b>   | 23             | 20             | 19             | 23             | 31             |
|   | <b>Female</b> | 6              | -              | -              | -              | -              |
| <b>16-20 years</b>  | <b>Male</b>   | 40             | 18             | 32             | 21             | 41             |
|   | <b>Female</b> | 1              | 2              | 1              | -              | 1              |

The main firearms recorded in offences involving the alleged use of a firearm in 2021-22 were as follows:

- Under 16 years – 16 air weapon, 7 imitation, 1 unidentified and 7 other.
- 16-20 years – 1 shotgun, 4 pistol/revolver, 20 air weapon, 8 imitation, 4 unidentified and 5 other.

## 2.5 Domestic abuse statistics

The [Domestic Abuse in Scotland statistics](#) collection also contains information on children. This collection is published by JAS on an annual basis. The latest report, [Domestic abuse: statistics 2023-24](#), was published in November 2024. The following information has been taken from this collection of statistical reports to provide a picture of the number of children alleged to have been involved in incidents of domestic abuse over the past five years.

| <b>INCIDENTS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE RECORDED INVOLVING SUSPECTED CHILDREN</b> |  |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>  |  | <b>2019-20</b> | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> |
| <b>Under 16 years</b>  | <b>Male</b>                              | 373            | 393            | 579            | 83             | 73             |
|  | <b>Female</b>                            | 91             | 76             | 194            | 22             | 12             |
|  | <b>Not recorded or other<sup>8</sup></b> | 1              | 13             | 10             | -              | -              |

<sup>8</sup> 'Not recorded or other' includes both incidents where gender has not been recorded and is therefore unknown (almost 100% of Not recorded or other cases) and incidents where the victim or accused was recorded as transgender.

|                    |  |       |     |     |     |     |
|--------------------|--|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>16-18 years</b> | <b>Male</b>                              | 1,024 | 919 | 939 | 716 | 670 |
|                    | <b>Female</b>                            | 316   | 333 | 284 | 285 | 242 |
|                    | <b>Not recorded or other<sup>4</sup></b> | 5     | 18  | 5   | 6   | 7   |

Additionally, data contained in the supporting files indicates that in 2023-24 there were 68 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police where both the victim and accused were under the age of 16 years. When the number of incidents where the victim and accused were both under the age of 19 years was calculated, this rose to 729.

## 2.6 Drug seizures statistics

The [Drug seizures and offender characteristics statistics](#) collection is published by JAS and provides information on drug seizures recorded by the police. The latest report [Drug Seizures and Offender Characteristics, 2024-25](#) published in January 2026 indicates that children and young people aged 0-19 made up around 10.5% of individuals accused of drug possession crimes in 2024-25. No further information about children is provided within this statistical collection.

## 3. Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration Statistical Analyses

Where children are alleged to have committed an offence, they can be referred to the Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) on offence grounds.<sup>9</sup> SCRA publish [official statistics](#) on an annual basis. Information from these official statistics has been drawn together below to provide information for the past five years.

The table below provides information on referrals to the Reporter on offence grounds over the past five years. Further information on the age and sex of children referred is provided in the official statistics.

| <b>OFFENCE REFERRALS TO THE REPORTER</b>                    |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>Total number of offence referrals</b>                    | 5,282          | 5,474          | 6,382          | 7,615          | 6,466          |
| <b>Total number of children referred on offence grounds</b> | 2,207          | 2,398          | 2,590          | 2,701          | 2,447          |
| <b>Total number of children with joint reports</b>          | 1,090          | 1,233          | 1,309          | 1,329          | 1,302          |
| <b>Joint report – not in custody</b>                        | 1,078          | 1,224          | 1,299          | 1,322          | 1,299          |
| <b>Joint report – in custody</b>                            | 56             | 53             | 35             | 30             | 34             |

The latest report indicates that in 2024-25, of the 1,299 children who were jointly reported to the Procurator Fiscal (PF) and the Reporter whilst they were not in custody, where the PF

<sup>9</sup> Children aged 8-17 years were able to be referred to the Reporter on offence grounds until November 2019. However, with the raising of the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years in Scotland children under 12 are no longer referred on offence grounds.

had made a decision, 76.4% of cases were subsequently referred to the Reporter. In contrast, of the 34 children where joint reports were made whilst they were in custody, where the PF had decided, 67.7% were retained by the PF. Once the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 is fully implemented then all applicable under 18s will need to be jointly reported, so we will expect to see an increase in these figures.

In 2024-25, there were 2,447 children referred to the Reporter on offence grounds. They were referred for 11,978 alleged offences. The following table shows the number of alleged offences over the past five years broken down by police crime grouping<sup>10</sup>.

| <b>NUMBER OF ALLEGED OFFENCES BY 12-17 YEAR OLDS REFERRED TO THE REPORTER</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2042-25</b> |
| <b>Non-sexual crimes of violence</b>  | 2,452          | 2,899          | 3,285          | 3,862          | 3,302          |
| <b>Sexual crimes</b>  | 394            | 435            | 542            | 422            | 383            |
| <b>Crimes of dishonesty</b>   | 1,314          | 1,238          | 1,880          | 2,427          | 2,293          |
| <b>Damage and reckless behaviour</b>  | 1,492          | 1,661          | 1,996          | 2,077          | 1,706          |
| <b>Crimes against society</b>   | 1,091          | 1,181          | 1,381          | 1,529          | 1,608          |
| <b>Antisocial offences</b>  | 1,841          | 1,882          | 1,881          | 2,062          | 1,678          |
| <b>Miscellaneous offences</b>   | 230            | 196            | 257            | 259            | 228            |
| <b>Road traffic offences</b>  | 280            | 325            | 480            | 560            | 780            |
| <b>Coronavirus restrictions</b>   | 48             | 15             | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| <b>Total alleged offences</b>   | 9,142          | 9,832          | 11,702         | 13,198         | 11,978         |

The report indicates that within these groupings, the most common types of alleged offences were threatening or abusive behaviour, assault, and shoplifting.

The following table provides information on Reporter decisions in relation to children referred on offence grounds for the past five years.

| <b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN REFERRED ON OFFENCE GROUNDS WITH REPORTER DECISIONS, BY DECISION*</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>Arrange a Children's Hearing (on new grounds)</b>  | 79             | 102            | 79             | 59             | 37             |
| <b>No Hearing – CSO not necessary</b>   | 831            | 858            | 990            | 1,051          | 830            |
| <b>No Hearing – CSO not necessary and refer to LA</b>                                       | 533            | 650            | 792            | 845            | 792            |

<sup>10</sup> These police crime groupings were updated in 2023 by the Scottish Crime Recording Board

|  |       |       |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>No Hearing – Current order/measures sufficient</b>                  | 883   | 868   | 882   | 936   | 893   |
| <b>No Hearing – Insufficient evidence</b>                              | 131   | 137   | 164   | 179   | 109   |
| <b>No Hearing – Insufficient evidence and refer to Local Authority</b> | 6     | 24    | 28    | 31    | 20    |
| <b>No jurisdiction</b>   | 10    | 45    | 29    | 35    | 27    |
| <b>Total</b>   | 2,124 | 2,339 | 2,590 | 2,733 | 2,425 |

\*Data in this table relates to cases decided in the year group as opposed to referrals received in it.

\*\*The totals do not equal the sums as children can be referred more than once in the year and may have multiple Reporter decisions. The totals count each child once.

The information provided in the table below details the number of secure authorisations made by Children’s Hearings over the past five years. It should be noted that not all children with secure authorisations will have been referred on offence grounds and not all authorisations will necessarily have been implemented.

| <b>SECURE AUTHORISATIONS MADE BY CHILDREN’S HEARINGS</b>   |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>Number of children with secure authorisations made by hearings within interim orders</b>                | 73             | 68             | 84             | 98             | 67             |
| <b>Number of children with secure authorisations made by hearings within Compulsory Supervision Orders</b> | 69             | 65             | 71             | 80             | 66             |

Movement Restriction Conditions (MRC)<sup>11</sup> can be included in interim orders or Compulsory Supervision Orders to restrict a child’s movements which are monitored via an electronic monitoring device. Sections 83(5) and 83(6) of the Children’s Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 set out the criteria by which they can be made. The table below shows the number of children with MRC’s made for the past four years.

| <b>MOVEMENT RESTRICTION CONDITIONS MADE BY CHILDREN’S HEARINGS</b>              |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>Number of children with Movement Restriction Conditions made by hearings</b> | 17             | 24             | 17             | 28             |

<sup>11</sup> In 2024-25 there were also 20 children subject to Restricted Movement Requirements as a condition of a Community Payback Order, nine as a condition of Bail and one as a condition of Parole Licence - [https://www.g4s.com/en-gb/-/media/g4s/unitedkingdom/indexed-files/files/electronic-monitoring-scotland/g4s\\_statistical\\_bulletin\\_2025.ashx](https://www.g4s.com/en-gb/-/media/g4s/unitedkingdom/indexed-files/files/electronic-monitoring-scotland/g4s_statistical_bulletin_2025.ashx)

## 4. Children's Social Work Statistics

[Children's Social Work Statistics](#) are published on an annual basis by the Scottish Government Children and Families Directorate. They are split into three publications which provide information on looked after children, child protection, and secure care. The child protection statistics also include information on children in the Care and Risk Management (CARM) process.

The CARM process, or an equivalent formal risk management process, should be used where parts of a child's behaviour may pose an imminent risk of serious harm, or has caused serious harm to themselves or others. However, initial consideration as to whether child protection actions are required is critical. The following information about CARM (or equivalent) processes has been taken from the additional tables of the [Children's Social Work Statistics: Child Protection 2024-25](#).

This is the second year that this information has been collected. During 2024-25 there were 153 recorded referrals to CARM, of those referred 12% were female and 88% male. The age range for females referred was 13-18 years and for males referred was 12-18 years. There were 329 CARM meetings recorded during the year, 117 initial meetings and 212 review meetings. Children were present in 122 of these meetings. The concerns noted at the CARM meetings were violence (61% of children), substance use (39%), non-violent offences (36%), unauthorised absences (29%), victimisation (26%), harmful sexual behaviour (23%), health neglect (19%), non-suicidal injury (12%), suicidal ideation (9%), and other concerns (15%).

Data was collected on the number of times various assessment tools were used to support the understanding of need: START:AV (118), AIM3 (53), YLSCMI 2 (2), and other (54). In 100 meetings, it was recorded that no assessment tool was used. Data indicates that children in the CARM (or equivalent) process engaged in further incidents of serious harm 35 times. During the year it was recorded that 86 children exited the CARM process. Of those exiting the CARM process, 63 exited due to improved outcomes/risk reduction, 2 received a custodial sentence and 21 exited for another reason. It should be noted that not all local authorities were able to provide data. Further details on referrals, meetings and concerns by local authority are provided in the report.

The following two tables are taken directly from the [Children's Social Work Statistics – Secure Care 2024-25](#) report and provide the information known about the capacity of secure care accommodation and about children in secure care accommodation over the past eleven years. It should be noted that not all children are accommodated in secure care due to coming into conflict with the law. The legislative changes enacted on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024 ending the use of Young Offender Institutes for under 18s and enabling all children to be detained in secure care whether through remand or sentencing is anticipated to have an impact on the demographic of admissions from this date onwards [The Children \(Care and Justice\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024 \(Commencement No. 1 and Transitional Provision\) Regulations 2024](#).

## Secure accommodation usage during the year, 2014-2025 [Note 1].

| Usage during the year                                       | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Percentage change since previous year |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Admissions  | 232  | 249  | 256  | 248  | 210  | 217  | 194  | 177  | 149  | 154  | 149  | 128  | -14%                                  |
| Discharges  | 226  | 245  | 253  | 257  | 213  | 210  | 194  | 178  | 160  | 144  | 150  | 136  | -9%                                   |
| <b>Average number of residents</b>                          | 74   | 82   | 85   | 76   | 80   | 79   | 82   | 76   | 74   | 59   | 60   | 58   | -3%                                   |
| Average number of residents from within Scotland            | 67   | 76   | 72   | 56   | 45   | 53   | 53   | 47   | 41   | 37   | 48   | 53   | 10%                                   |
| Average number of residents from outside Scotland           | 7    | 6    | 13   | 19   | 35   | 26   | 28   | 29   | 33   | 22   | 12   | 6    | -50%                                  |
| Minimum number of residents                                 | 60   | 71   | 77   | 67   | 73   | 71   | 75   | 64   | 65   | 45   | 49   | 51   | 4%                                    |
| Maximum number of residents                                 | 84   | 89   | 90   | 87   | 86   | 88   | 88   | 84   | 82   | 70   | 68   | 65   | -4%                                   |
| Number of nights emergency/ short-term beds used [Note 2]   | 5    | 146  | 50   | 90   | 284  | 398  | 209  | 40   | 20   | 17   | 11   | 145  | 1218%                                 |
| Number of residents using emergency/ short-term beds [Note] | 3    | 13   | 11   | 25   | 42   | 55   | 28   | 17   | 8    | 5    | 6    | 12   | 100%                                  |

[Note 1] Children can be admitted and discharged more than once during the year.

## Children in secure accommodation by sex, age, disability, and length of stay on 31 July 2014-2025 [Note 1].

| Category                   | Subcategory                | 2014      | 2015      | 2016      | 2017      | 2018      | 2019      | 2020      | 2021      | 2022      | 2023      | 2024      | 2025      | Percentage of 2025 total |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Sex                        | Male                       | 52        | 59        | 65        | 46        | 39        | 60        | 44        | 44        | 33        | 36        | 39        | 40        | 77%                      |
| Sex                        | Female                     | 29        | 26        | 23        | 34        | 43        | 24        | 37        | 34        | 34        | 24        | 15        | 12        | 23%                      |
| Age                        | 13 years old or under      | 5         | 7         | 9         | 14        | 12        | *         | 5         | 9         | 7         | 5         | 5         | 4         | 8%                       |
| Age                        | 14 years                   | 12        | 18        | 18        | 18        | 18        | *         | 13        | 13        | 18        | 16        | 3         | 6         | 12%                      |
| Age                        | 15 years                   | 31        | 28        | 27        | 26        | 25        | 21        | 26        | 16        | 18        | 13        | 18        | 12        | 23%                      |
| Age                        | 16 years or over           | 33        | 32        | 34        | 22        | 27        | 55        | 37        | 40        | 24        | 26        | 28        | 30        | 58%                      |
| Disability [Note 2]        | Yes                        | -         | -         | 34        | 27        | 39        | 27        | 7         | 18        | 21        | 17        | 20        | 8         | 15%                      |
| Disability [Note 2]        | No/unknown                 | -         | -         | 54        | 53        | 43        | 57        | 74        | 60        | 46        | 43        | 34        | 44        | 85%                      |
| Length of stay at year end | Less than 1 month          | 13        | 17        | 20        | 26        | 10        | 21        | 17        | 17        | 12        | 9         | 7         | 8         | 15%                      |
| Length of stay at year end | 1 month to under 2 months  | 14        | 16        | 14        | 13        | 14        | 16        | 14        | 10        | 10        | 12        | 6         | 4         | 8%                       |
| Length of stay at year end | 2 months to under 3 months | 14        | 13        | 14        | 12        | 13        | 9         | 6         | 5         | 10        | 11        | 9         | 6         | 12%                      |
| Length of stay at year end | 3 months to under 6 months | 23        | 26        | 24        | 25        | 27        | 22        | 18        | 29        | 18        | 12        | 19        | 16        | 31%                      |
| Length of stay at year end | 6 months to under 1 year   | 9         | *         | 10        | *         | 14        | 11        | 16        | 14        | 13        | 14        | 10        | 13        | 25%                      |
| Length of stay at year end | 1 year or more             | 8         | *         | 6         | *         | 0         | 5         | 2         | 3         | 4         | 2         | 3         | 5         | 10%                      |
| <b>Total</b>               |                            | <b>81</b> | <b>85</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>84</b> | <b>81</b> | <b>78</b> | <b>67</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>54</b> | <b>52</b> | <b>100%</b>              |

[Note 1] For cells shown as " - ", figures are not available. Cells containing " \* " represent small numbers that are suppressed to maintain confidentiality. Other cells may be suppressed to avoid calculation of other suppressed values.

[Note 2] Since 2016, the binary question was asked: "does the young person have a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities?". Prior to 2016, additional support needs categories were asked for.

The following table details the number of children in secure care by ethnic group, disability status and religion over the past five years.

### Number of children admitted to secure care by ethnic group, disability status and religion 2020-25 [Note 1]

| Category                               | 2020       | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       | 2025       | Percentage of total in 2025 | Percentage of all children in Scotland [Note 2] |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Ethnic group</b>                    |            |            |            |            |            |            |                             |   |
| White                                  | 174        | 163        | 135        | 148        | 139        | 120        | 94%                         | 89%   |
| Mixed or Multiple                      | 9          | 3          | 6          | 2          | 3          | 1          | 1%                          | 3%  |
| Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British | 4          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 4          | 3%                          | 5%  |
| African, Caribbean or Black            | 4          | 8          | 4          | 1          | 4          | 2          | 2%                          | 2%  |
| Other Ethnic Background                | 2          | 2          | 3          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0%                          | 1%  |
| Not known                              | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 2          | 1          | 1%                          | -   |
| <b>Disability status</b>               |            |            |            |            |            |            |                             |   |
| Yes                                    | 20         | 37         | 39         | 45         | 49         | 28         | 22%                         | 9%  |
| No/Unknown                             | 174        | 140        | 110        | 109        | 100        | 100        | 78%                         | 91%   |
| <b>Religion</b>                        |            |            |            |            |            |            |                             |   |
| None                                   | 120        | 88         | 104        | 125        | 115        | 78         | 61%                         | 62%   |
| Church of Scotland                     | 0          | 3          | 2          | 3          | 0          | 1          | 1%                          | 10%   |
| Roman Catholic                         | 2          | 11         | 7          | 3          | 1          | 4          | 3%                          | 12%   |
| Other Christian                        | 10         | 11         | 2          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 1%                          | 4%  |
| Muslim                                 | 3          | 3          | 3          | 1          | 2          | 5          | 4%                          | 4%  |
| Buddhist                               | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0%                          | 0%  |
| Sikh                                   | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0%                          | 0%  |
| Jewish                                 | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0%                          | 0%  |
| Hindu                                  | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0%                          | 1%  |
| Pagan                                  | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0%                          | 0%  |
| Other Religion                         | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 0%                          | 0%  |
| Not known                              | 59         | 58         | 30         | 22         | 27         | 39         | 30%                         | 6%  |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>194</b> | <b>177</b> | <b>149</b> | <b>154</b> | <b>149</b> | <b>128</b> | <b>100%</b>                 | <b>100%</b>                                     |

[Note 1] Young people can be admitted and discharged more than once during the year.

[Note 2] Scotland percentages are based on the 2022 census (0-19 years). Some census categories have been combined to correspond to categories presented here.

The information in the following three tables has been obtained from the data provided in the additional tables for the past five years. Further detail broken down by gender can be found in the additional tables. There is also information in the additional tables on the number and rates of children admitted to secure care accommodation by local authority.

| Number of children admitted to secure care by placement prior to admission |      |      |             |             |             |
|--|------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Year   | 2020 | 2021 | 2022<br>-23 | 2023<br>-24 | 2024<br>-25 |
| Parental home, Relative or Friend  | 58   | 39   | 21          | 44          | 51          |
| Foster Care or Children's Home   | 39   | 35   | 46          | 31          | 21          |
| Residential School   | 64   | 59   | 52          | 59          | 30          |
| Young Offenders Institution or Prison                                      | *    | *    | *           | 1           | 6           |
| Secure care  | *    | *    | 11          | 5           | 8           |
| Other  | 26   | 27   | 23          | 9           | 11          |
| Unknown  | *    | *    | 1           | 0           | 1           |

| Number of children admitted to secure care by legal reason for admission |             |             |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Year   | 2020<br>-21 | 2021<br>-22 | 2022<br>-23 | 2023<br>-24 | 2024<br>-25 |
| Section 44 (1)   | 0           | 0           | 4           | 2           | 5           |
| Section 205  | 0           | 0           | 1           | -           |             |
| Section 208  | *           | 1           | 2           | 3           | 5           |
| Section 143  | 5           | 0           | 4           | 3           | 6           |
| Compulsory Supervision Order   | 10          | 14          | 27          | 35          | 41          |
| Interim Supervision Order  | 11          | 37          | 39          | 26          | 11          |
| Committal to place of safety or temporary detention – Section 51         | 32          | 8           | 11          | 2           | 42          |
| Pending a decision by the Reporter                                       | 60          | 52          | 33          | 30          | 7           |
| Other  | 55          | 35          | 31          | 44          | 11          |
| Unknown  | *           | 2           | 2           | 4           | 0           |

| Number of children discharged from secure care by destination on discharge |      |      |             |             |             |
|--|------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Year   | 2020 | 2021 | 2022-<br>23 | 2023-<br>24 | 2024-<br>25 |
| Parental home, Relative or Friend  | 59   | 42   | 26          | 37          | 41          |
| Foster Care or Children's Home   | 35   | 25   | 35          | 23          | 16          |
| Residential School   | 47   | 56   | 37          | 53          | 43          |
| Young Offenders Institution or Prison                                      | 5    | 7    | 6           | 5           | 16          |
| Secure care  | *    | 8    | 6           | 3           | 5           |
| Other  | 41   | 36   | 34          | 29          | 15          |
| Unknown  | *    | 4    | N/A         | 0           | 0           |

The number of individuals being discharged to a Young Offenders Institute is expected to increase from September 2024 onwards due to the ending of Young Offender Institutes for under 18s.

It is noted that 'Other' placement may include supported accommodation, independent living, hospital, assessment centre and close support.

## 5. Criminal proceedings

JAS publish information on [Criminal Proceedings in Scotland](#). This is published on an annual basis, the latest of which is the [2023-24 report](#), which was published in December 2025. The reports provide statistics on criminal proceedings concluded in Scottish courts, as well as on a range of measures available as alternatives to prosecution issued by both the police and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. The latest report does not generally provide information on age, so children and young people are not separated out. The exception to this is the reporting on Early and Effective Intervention (EEI), which is a police disposal available only for 12- to 17-year-olds. The 2023-24 report notes a 48% decrease in the number of EEI's following a change in how police are recording these types of disposals.

However, in the [main supporting file](#) there is information available in relation to the convictions of under 16s- and 16–17-year-olds. The information on non-court disposals for children, the number of children proceeded against in court, and the main crimes/offences by outcomes of court proceedings has been taken from the supporting [file 2023-24 Youth Convictions](#).

## 5.1 Non-court disposals

In Scotland, there are several non-court disposals that can be utilised for children where police have reason to believe that they have committed an offence and meet the necessary criteria. The use of these disposals for 12- to 17- year-olds over the past three years is detailed in the table below. It should be noted that Recorded Police Warnings (RPW) and Antisocial Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notices (ASBFPN) cannot be issued to children under the age of 16, or to children aged 16 or 17 who are subject to a Compulsory Supervision Order. The Early and Effective Intervention Disposal is due to come out of this publication in the future due to Police Scotland changes in recording.

| <b>12- TO 17-YEAR-OLDS RECEIVING NON-COURT DISPOSALS</b> |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> |
| <b>ASBFPN*</b>   | 202            | 182            | 166            |
| <b>Other Police Disposal</b>                             | 423            | 491            | 318            |
| <b>Early and Effective Intervention***</b>               | 5,001          | 5,091          | 2,636          |
| <b>Recorded Police Warning</b>                           | 1,301          | 1,336          | 1,383          |
| <b>COPFS** Disposals</b>                                 | 265            | 209            | 160            |
| <b>All</b>   | <b>7,192</b>   | <b>7,309</b>   | <b>4,663</b>   |

\*ASBFPN = Antisocial behaviour fixed penalty notice; \*\*COPFS = Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service;

\*\*\*Where recorded on the Criminal History System

## 5.2 Court proceedings and outcomes

In Scotland, children aged 12 years and over can be prosecuted in the criminal justice system. The table below shows the number of 12- to 17-year-old children proceeded against in court by offence/crime type over the past three years.

| <b>12- TO 17-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN PROCEEDED AGAINST IN COURT</b> |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> |
| <b>Non-sexual crimes of violence</b>                          | 185            | 206            | 122            |
| <b>Sexual crimes</b>  | 12             | 13             | 8              |
| <b>Crimes of dishonesty</b>                                   | 63             | 54             | 41             |
| <b>Damage and reckless behaviour</b>                          | 28             | 40             | 22             |
| <b>Crimes against society</b>                                 | 162            | 146            | 142            |
| <b>Coronavirus restrictions</b>                               | 2              | -              | -              |
| <b>Antisocial offences</b>                                    | 73             | 56             | 62             |
| <b>Miscellaneous offences</b>                                 | 2              | 3              | 3              |
| <b>Road traffic offences</b>                                  | 93             | 114            | 116            |
| <b>All crimes and offences</b>                                | <b>620</b>     | <b>632</b>     | <b>516</b>     |

The table below shows the outcomes for 12- to 17-year-olds proceeded against in court over the past three years.

| <b>12- TO 17-YEAR-OLDS PROCEEDED AGAINST IN COURT BY OUTCOME OF COURT PROCEEDINGS</b> |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Outcome</b>  | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> |
| <b>Not guilty</b>   | 86             | 96             | 46             |
| <b>Other Sentence*</b>  | 185            | 156            | 146            |
| <b>Remit to Children’s Hearing</b>  | 22             | 64             | 38             |
| <b>Community sentence</b>   | 192            | 170            | 130            |
| <b>Custody</b>  | 21             | 16             | 24             |
| <b>Financial penalty</b>  | 114            | 130            | 132            |

\*The other sentence options appear to include Admonishment and Absolute Discharge.

In the supporting files, one of the main Criminal Proceedings in Scotland 2023-24 tables provides information on the number of children convicted broken down by gender. This information is detailed in the table below and shows the number of children convicted over the past five years.

| <b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN CONVICTED*</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>                          | <b>2019-20</b> | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> |
| <b>All under 16 years**</b>          | <b>15</b>      | <b>7</b>       | <b>2</b>       | <b>6</b>       | <b>2</b>       |
| <b>Male under 16 years</b>           | 15             | 6              | 2              | 3              | 1              |
| <b>Female under 16 years</b>         | -              | 1              | -              | 3              | 1              |
| <b>All 16-17 years</b>               | <b>1,004</b>   | <b>536</b>     | <b>532</b>     | <b>530</b>     | <b>468</b>     |
| <b>Male 16-17 years</b>              | 884            | 482            | 473            | 472            | 399            |
| <b>Female 16-17 years</b>            | 120            | 54             | 59             | 58             | 69             |

\*Includes age not known; uses mid-year population estimate for those aged 8 upwards.

\*\*Uses mid-year population for those aged 8-15.

## 6. Justice Social Work statistics

The Scottish Government publishes [Justice Social Work Statistics](#) on an annual basis. These are compiled each year by JAS and provide information on justice social work reports, community payback orders, drug treatment and testing orders, diversion from prosecution, fiscal work orders, bail supervision, structured deferred sentences, throughcare, pre-release reports, home detention curfew assessments and court-based services.

The reports provide some of this information for the group of 16- to 17-year-olds who are involved with Justice Social Work. The information below is taken from [Justice Social Work Statistics: 2024-23 – Part 1](#) and [Justice Social Work Statistics in Scotland: 2024-25 – Part 2](#). It should be noted that the figures in the tables below also include the small number of children under 16 that became involved with Justice Social Work.

### 6.1 Diversion from prosecution

Where children are reported to the Procurator Fiscal for an alleged offence and the nature of the offence does not demand prosecution in court, then diversion from prosecution can be

considered as a prosecutorial action so that a meaningful intervention can be put in place to address the child’s needs. There is a rebuttable presumption for children that an alternative to prosecution will be in the public interest, and where an identifiable need has contributed to the alleged offence, then active consideration will be given to diversion.

The data in the table below (taken from [Justice Social Work 24-25 tables](#)) provides information on the number of 16- to 17-year-olds where diversion from prosecution was commenced over the past five years.

| <b>NUMBER OF DIVERSION FROM PROSECUTION CASES COMMENCED</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>16–17-year-olds</b>                                      | 590            | 692            | 659            | 854            | 829            |
| <b>Percentage of cases across all ages</b>                  | 26.5           | 25.9           | 25.1           | 25.5           | 23.1           |

## 6.2 Justice social work reports

A justice social work report must be requested where a person is under 21. The table below shows the number of justice social work reports submitted for 16- to 17-year-olds over the past five years.

| <b>NUMBER OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK REPORTS SUBMITTED</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>16– 17-year-olds</b>   | 307            | 330            | 361            | 251            | 244            |
| <b>Percentage of cases across all ages</b>                      | 2.0            | 1.6            | 1.5            | 1.0            | 0.9            |

## 6.3 Social work orders

The following tables and information provide details of social work orders commenced or imposed for 16- to 17-year-olds over the past five years.

| <b>FISCAL WORK ORDERS COMMENCED</b>        |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>                                | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>16- 17-year-olds</b>                    | 3              | 7              | 6              | 1              | 0              |
| <b>Percentage of cases across all ages</b> | 2.5            | 9.2            | 4.4            | 1.0            | 0.0            |

| COMMUNITY PAYBACK ORDERS COMMENCED  |         |         |         |         |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year                                | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| 16- 17-year- olds                   | 151     | 157     | 134     | 95      | 92      |
| Percentage of cases across all ages | 1.8     | 1.3     | 0.9     | 0.6     | 0.6     |

| STRUCTURED DEFERRED SENTENCES IMPOSED |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year                                  | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| 16- 17-year- olds                     | 45      | 43      | 65      | 44      | 40      |
| Percentage of cases across all ages   | 10.0    | 4.6     | 4.9     | 3.1     | 2.5     |

Over the past five years, only two Drug Treatment and Testing Orders were commenced for children. One of these was in 2020-21, and the other in 2021-22.

The number of 16–17-year-olds who commenced supervised bail in 2024-25 was 34. This is the first year for which these figures are reported.

Whilst information is provided about gender and ethnicity for the above data this is not provided by age.

## 7. Prison statistics

The Scottish Government's [Prisons Statistics](#) collection is published by JAS. There is also now an interactive analysis tool that allows the statistics to be explored by age. The most recent report is the [Scottish prison population statistics 2024-25](#). Based on the information within the supplementary tables in the supporting files, the following tables have been developed to provide information on the number of children in custody and the legal status of them, the index offence, length of index sentence, and average time spent in custody. These statistics will become obsolete now that the Children (Care and Justice) (Scotland) Act 2024 is in force. It may be some time before we start to get the equivalent depth of real time data from the secure centres, although that is certainly the ambition of Social Work Scotland.

| NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN SPENDING ANY TIME IN PRISON OVER THE PAST YEAR BY LEGAL STATUS |         |         |         |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Untried  | 56      | 53      | 38      | 21      | 12      |
| Convicted awaiting sentence  | 26      | 21      | 13      | 10      | 6       |
| Sentenced  | 17      | 8       | 10      | 7       | 2       |
| Unknown  | -       | -       | 2       | 1       | -       |

| <b>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN SPENDING ANY TIME IN PRISON OVER THE YEAR BY THE INDEX OFFENCE GROUP 2024-25</b> |                |                                    |                  |
|---|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
|   | <b>Untried</b> | <b>Convicted Awaiting Sentence</b> | <b>Sentenced</b> |
| <b>Non-sexual crimes of violence</b>  | 6              | 4                                  | 1                |
| <b>Sexual crimes</b>  | 1              | -                                  | 1                |
| <b>Crimes of dishonesty</b>   | -              | -                                  | -                |
| <b>Damage and reckless behaviour</b>  | 1              | -                                  | -                |
| <b>Crimes against society</b>   | 3              | 3                                  | -                |
| <b>Antisocial offences</b>  | 2              | -                                  | -                |
| <b>Miscellaneous offences</b>   | -              | -                                  | -                |
| <b>Road traffic offences</b>  | -              | -                                  | -                |
| <b>Other jurisdiction charge</b>  | -              | -                                  | -                |
| <b>Other – not classified</b>   | -              | -                                  | -                |

| <b>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN SPENDING ANY TIME IN PRISON OVER THE YEAR BY THE LENGTH OF THEIR INDEX SENTENCES 2023-24</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Index sentence length</b>  | <b>Number of individuals spending any time in prison over the year</b> |
| <b>0&lt;=3 months</b>   | -  |
| <b>3&lt;=6 months</b>   | -  |
| <b>6&lt;=12 months</b>  | -  |
| <b>12&lt;=18 months</b>   | -  |
| <b>18&lt;=24 months</b>   | 1  |
| <b>2&lt;=4 years</b>  | 1  |
| <b>4&lt;=10 years</b>   | -  |
| <b>10+ years</b>  | -  |
| <b>Life</b>   | -  |

| <b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS CHILDREN CONTINUOUSLY SPENT IN PRISON PRIOR TO DEPARTURE</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
| <b>Average number of days served continuously</b>                                      | 57             | 36             | 48             | 29             | 64             |

Although data is provided on ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and nationality this is not broken down by the under 18 group. CRER (2025) reported that in 2023-24, 13.4% of children and young people in custody were from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, meaning that they are more likely to be in custody than their expected rate given the national population statistics. Additionally, although there has been a decrease in children and young people in custody in Scotland over recent years, children and young people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds appear to have been excluded from this shift with numbers in custody remaining stable during this time.

## 8. Reconviction of offenders statistics

The [Reconviction of Offenders Statistics](#) collection is published by JAS. The statistics provide reconviction rates for offenders released from custody or given non-custodial sentences. Whilst in the main body of the reports the youngest age grouping is all those under 21, the additional local authority reconvictions table in the supporting files provides some information on under 18-year-olds. Specifically, it can be grouped by all under 18-year-olds, 17-year-olds and 16-year-olds and details the number of children reconvicted, reconviction rate, number of reconvictions, and the average number of reconvictions per child. It can also be broken down by local authority area and gender.

Based on the [Reconviction rates in Scotland: 2021 to 2022 offender cohort](#) additional tables, as well as those for previous years, the tables below provide information on the reconviction rates<sup>12</sup> for all children for the latest five years of data available. This set of data is available at a slower rate than other data sets, as there is a one-year follow-up period that reconvictions are counted in to calculate one year reconviction rates.

| RECONVICTION RATES FOR ALL UNDER 18-YEAR-OLDS |         |         |         |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year  | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| Number of children                            | 788     | 725     | 590     | 284     | 308     |
| Number of children reconvicted                | 295     | 281     | 179     | 92      | 110     |
| Reconviction Rate (%)                         | 37.4    | 38.8    | 30.3    | 32.4    | 35.7    |
| Number of reconvictions                       | 649     | 565     | 329     | 160     | 205     |
| Average number of reconvictions per child     | 0.82    | 0.78    | 0.56    | 0.56    | 0.67    |

| RECONVICTION RATES FOR 17-YEAR-OLDS       |         |         |         |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year                                      | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| Number of children                        | 577     | 533     | 433     | 227     | 250     |
| Number of children reconvicted            | 213     | 205     | 132     | 75      | 93      |
| Reconviction Rate (%)                     | 36.9    | 38.5    | 30.5    | 33.0    | 37.2    |
| Number of reconvictions                   | 442     | 381     | 237     | 121     | 171     |
| Average number of reconvictions per child | 0.77    | 0.71    | 0.55    | 0.53    | 0.68    |

| RECONVICTION RATES FOR 16-YEAR-OLDS |         |         |         |         |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Year                                | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 |
| Number of children                  | 211     | 192     | 157     | 57      | 58      |
| Number of children reconvicted      | 82      | 76      | 47      | 17      | 17      |
| Reconviction Rate (%)               | 38.9    | 39.6    | 29.9    | 29.8    | 29.3    |
| Number of reconvictions             | 210     | 184     | 92      | 39      | 34      |

<sup>12</sup> The definitions of reconviction rate and average number of reconvictions per offender are described in the statistical bulletin.

|  |      |      |      |      |      |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Average number of convictions per child</b> | 1.00 | 0.96 | 0.59 | 0.68 | 0.59 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|

The body of the report [Reconviction rates in Scotland: 2021-2022 offender cohort](#) provides details of subsequent non-court disposals for Early and Effective Intervention and Restorative Justice Warnings, which are police disposals only available for 12- to 17-year-olds. The tables below provide information on these for the latest five years available.

| <b>INDIVIDUALS GIVEN POLICE DISPOSALS AND SUBSEQUENT NON-COURT DISPOSALS, BY DISPOSAL TYPE – POLICE DISPOSAL: EARLY AND EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>2017-18</b> | <b>2018-19</b> | <b>2019-20</b> | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> |
| <b>Number of individuals</b>   | 4,316          | 3,691          | 3,741          | 3,191          | 4,036          |
| <b>Repeat non-court disposal rate</b>  | 22.2           | 22.8           | 20.3           | 23.0           | 24.9           |
| <b>Average number of repeat non-court disposals per individual</b>   | 0.39           | 0.37           | 0.34           | 0.42           | 0.46           |

| <b>INDIVIDUALS GIVEN POLICE DISPOSALS AND SUBSEQUENT NON-COURT DISPOSALS, BY DISPOSAL TYPE – POLICE DISPOSAL: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WARNING</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>2017-18</b> | <b>2018-19</b> | <b>2019-20</b> | <b>2020-21</b> | <b>2021-22</b> |
| <b>Number of individuals</b>  | 333            | 255            | 290            | 143            | 227            |
| <b>Repeat non-court disposal rate</b>   | 24.9           | 22.7           | 19.3           | 29.4           | 21.6           |
| <b>Average number of repeat non-court disposals per individual</b>  | 0.45           | 0.35           | 0.27           | 0.43           | 0.33           |

## 9. Conclusion

There is a reasonable amount of information available in relation to how we respond to children who come into conflict with the law in Scotland. However, due to the number of organisations involved, the dual system approach and the wide spread of places where this information is published, it is not always easy to find and access. This is further compounded by the different age categorisations used across the statistical collections. The fact that information on children (all those under 18 years old) is not always reported within the main body of reports may serve to hide the fact that in Scotland there are still children who are being responded to within the criminal justice system designed for adults. A new way of publishing this data that increases the visibility of the numbers of children being proceeded against in the criminal justice system is required.