



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Understanding the Justice Outcome Data on the police.uk website

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Introduction

Since the 31st May 2012, the Home Office, National Policing Improvement Agency and Ministry of Justice have published data about justice outcomes on the police.uk website¹ (www.police.uk/), showing what happened next after the crimes displayed on the website were committed. This information allows links to be made between individual crimes and their subsequent outcomes in England and Wales.

The primary purpose of publishing these data is to increase transparency and aid public understanding about what happened after crimes were committed in their local area. However, while the outcome data on police.uk are presented against individual streets, when aggregated the published data overlaps with existing statistical publications within the Ministry of Justice and Home Office.

This ad hoc statistical notice is designed to explain:

- a) what outcome data have been released on the police.uk website
- b) how these data have been compiled and the strengths and limitations of this process
- c) the links between these data and other statistics published by the Ministry of Justice

What outcome data have been released on the police.uk website?

The outcome data allows users to see, for individual crimes, the actions taken by the police following the crime being reported and, if a suspect was charged in relation to that crime, the outcome reached at the subsequent court hearing.

As part of this release, data are presented about the actions taken by the police for those crimes recorded since April 2012. However, additional data about the outcomes reached at court may be available for some crimes recorded since January 2012, if:

- a) a suspect has been identified and charged in relation to that crime, and
- b) a court hearing has taken place

Where police or court outcome data are available for a crime, one or several of the outcomes given overleaf are displayed.

¹ Does not include Justice Outcome data from the British Transport Police

Justice outcomes displayed on the police.uk website

Outcome displayed	Description
Under investigation	This crime is currently being investigated by the police
Suspect charged	A suspect has been charged and the case sent to court
No further action at this time	There is insufficient evidence to bring anyone to justice at this time. The investigation may be reopened if more information becomes available
Unable to prosecute suspect	This could be for several reasons e.g. the prosecution consider it unlikely the suspect will be convicted due to insufficient evidence
Suspect charged with this and other crimes	A suspect admitted to this and other crimes which will be considered together
Offender given penalty notice	The police have given the offender a fixed penalty notice
Offender given caution	The offender was warned about their behaviour, and could be taken to court if they commit another crime.
Local resolution	The offender has been put in contact with those affected to repair the harm done and find a positive way forward
Court case unable to proceed	This could be for several reasons e.g. the case is dismissed due to insufficient evidence or a witness being absent
Defendant sent to Crown Court	A case heard in the magistrate's court has been passed to the Crown Court for trial or sentencing
Awaiting court outcome	The suspect is now going through the magistrate's or Crown Court
Defendant found not guilty	The defendant was found not guilty of the crime by magistrates or a judge and jury in the Crown Court
Offender given absolute discharge	The court found the offender guilty but took no further action, usually because it was a minor crime.
Offender given conditional discharge	The offender was found guilty but released by the court, and could be punished for this crime if they break the law again
Offender ordered to pay compensation	The court found the offender guilty and ordered them to pay compensation to the victim or court.
Offender fined	The court found the offender guilty and fined them; they may also have to pay compensation to the victim.
Offender deprived of property	The court found the offender guilty and ordered that their property be confiscated
Offender given community sentence	The court gave the offender a sentence in the community which could include unpaid work, or a curfew and wearing a tag
Offender given suspended prison sentence	The offender could be sent to prison if they commit another crime
Offender sent to prison	The offender was sent to prison immediately
Offender otherwise dealt with	The court dealt with the offender in another way e.g. a hospital order

How have these data been compiled?

Data about police actions have been compiled directly from the crime recording systems used in each police force in England and Wales. These are the same systems used to display the individual crime data points on the police.uk website and, as a result, information about the actions taken by the police are available for all crimes recorded since April 2012.

Data about outcomes reached at court have been compiled from an extract of the Police National Computer (PNC) held by the Ministry of Justice. However, the PNC does not record the location of individual crimes in the same detail as presented on the police.uk website. It has therefore been necessary to match the outcome data held on the PNC to the information about individual crimes held on each police force's crime recording system.

The matching algorithms attempt to link the data together through the use of a number of different variables. These include:

Variable	Description
Crime reference number	A unique number allocated to a crime/offence within a police force area
Arrest summons number	A unique reference number given to every new "case" (arrest/summons details) entered into the IT system. This reference number will be generated by the PHOENIX system or by a local police force computer system (prior to entry into the PHOENIX system)
Custody system number	Used by a police force when they detain an offender for a reported offence
Home Office offence code	Five digit offence code used by the Home Office and the Criminal Justice System
Crime category	High level offence grouping. Each category includes group offences used by police forces
Date of offence	Date the offence was committed
Postcode of offence	Postcode of where the offence was committed

All of these variables are available within the PNC but, owing to the different crime recording systems and different business processes used by different forces, not all variables are available for every force. The matching process therefore attempts to join the data together using a number of different combinations of these linking variables. These combinations are listed in full at **Annex A**.

It is not possible to successfully match every record using this process and therefore some court outcomes that have been reached will not be available on the police.uk website. This is to be expected given that the IT systems used in this process were never designed with this purpose in mind and there is therefore no single common identifier available to match the data upon.

A supporting CSV file (Match rate by Police Force Area) showing the percentage of crimes recorded since January 2012 - for which a suspect has been charged – that have been successfully matched against the court records held on the PNC is available at:

www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/ad-hoc

The Ministry of Justice will continue to develop and improve the matching process with police forces following the initial release of the outcome data, but users should exercise caution when assessing the data in areas where police forces have particularly low match rates.

In addition, users should avoid taking an aggregate of the court outcome data displayed on the police.uk website as a measure of the overall number of court outcomes reached in any particular month. Not all court outcomes will be available on the website due to the imperfections in the matching process outlined above, and any outcomes reached in the month for crimes reported to the police prior to January 2012 will not be displayed at all. In the first few months following the release of justice outcome data on police.uk, this will affect many cases as the latest figures show it takes 155 days, on average, between a crime being committed and the subsequent court case completing.

How do these data differ from other statistics published by the Ministry of Justice?

The Ministry of Justice publish quarterly statistics on justice outcomes in the Criminal Justice Statistics bulletin - www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/criminal-justice/criminal-justice-statistics.

These statistics include data about police outcomes such as Penalty Notices for Disorder, cautions, and cannabis warnings in addition to data about the outcomes reached at court. The headline data in this presentation include all summary cases heard at the courts and therefore will not match the figures presented on police.uk which only give notifiable offences. The closest comparison between the data presented on police.uk and this bulletin is Tables 6.3-6.6 in Chapter 6 which present information on Offences Brought to Justice

The latest statistics from this series for each police force area (Number of convictions by Police Force Area) are available at: www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/ad-hoc

The main differences between these statistics and the outcome data included on the police.uk website are as follows:

Outcomes displayed on police.uk website	Outcomes included in statistics above
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For recorded crimes reported since 1st January 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all recorded crimes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only where data matched between crime recording systems and PNC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data excluded due to matching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For outcomes reached by the end of the previous month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For outcomes reached by the end of the penultimate previous month
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes additional information about police actions, such as the charging of suspects, and local resolutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not include this additional information

CSV file

A supporting CSV file on police data information from the police.uk website can be found on the MoJ website: www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/ad-hoc

Annex A: Combinations of variables used in the matching process

Matching stage	Arrest summons number	Crime reference number	Custody system number	Home Office offence code	Home Office offence category	Date of offence	Postcode of offence
1	√	√		√		√	√
2	√		√	√		√	√
3	√	√			√	√	√
4	√		√		√	√	√
5	√	√		√			√
6	√		√	√			√
7	√	√				√	√
8	√		√			√	√
9	√	√			√		√
10	√		√		√		√
11		√		√		√	√
12			√	√		√	√
13		√			√	√	√
14			√		√	√	√
15	√	√		√		√	
16	√		√	√		√	
17	√	√			√	√	
18	√		√		√	√	
19	√			√		√	√
20	√				√	√	√
21	√	√					√
22		√		√			√
23			√	√			√
24		√				√	√
25			√			√	√
26		√			√		√
27			√		√		√
28	√	√		√			
29	√	√				√	
30		√		√		√	
31			√	√		√	
32	√	√			√		
33		√					√
34		√			√	√	
35			√		√	√	
36	√			√		√	