

INTRODUCTION OF PROVISIONAL (2-MONTH IN ARREARS) AVERAGE ARREST TO SENTENCE STATISTICS FOR PERSISTENT YOUNG OFFENDERS

March 2007

Background

The persistent young offender's bulletin presents the latest figures on the average time from arrest to sentence for those young people that persistently re-offend. The figures in the bulletin are used to monitor the pledge to halve the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales from 142 days in 1996 to 71 days.

Information

Since 1997, the published bulletin has presented National Statistics 3-months in arrears of the reference period. This means that the bulletin released in March 2007 reports on all periods up to and including December 2006, but not for any period after that month. The reason for the lag time between release and reporting periods has in the past been that insufficient data are captured by the Police National Computer to allow the production of more up-to-date figures of sufficient quality.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has monitored the collection of data by the Police National Computer over the past year. What has been observed from this analysis is that from January 2005 around 95% of records are inputted 2-months in arrears in England and Wales, with a further 5% of records inputted in the third month. This volume of early inputting has improved markedly since the publication was introduced – see Annex A. However, it should be noted that early data remains limited for cases heard in Crown Courts, and that the local picture is mixed with some Criminal Justice System areas inputting more early data than others.

The collection of more data at an earlier stage has meant that statistics 2-months in arrears have become much closer to the published National Statistics for England and Wales overall and for cases heard in Magistrates' Courts. The difference between the figures 2- and 3-months in arrears for all cases and those heard in Magistrates' Courts has been of the order of one or two days from January 2005 to November 2006 – see Annex B.

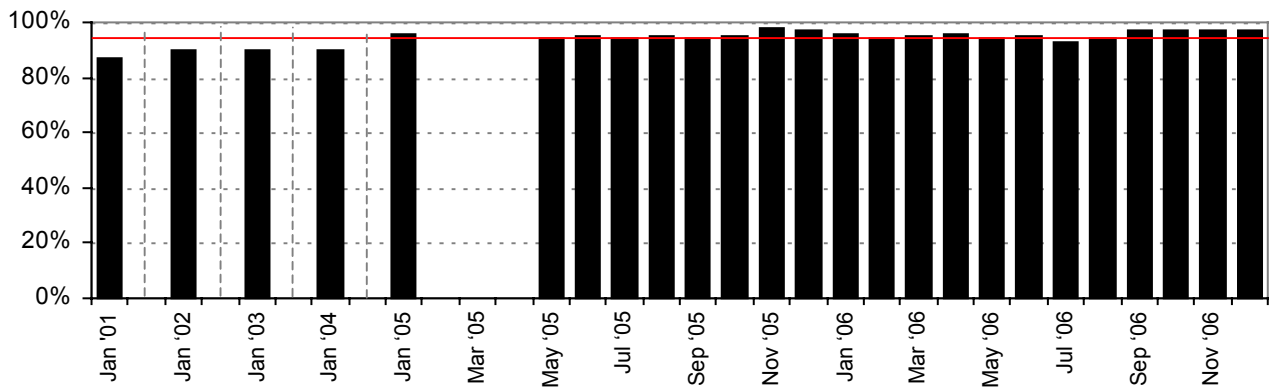
Action

The improvement in the data collection will allow the Department for Constitutional affairs to publish provisional statistics for all cases heard in England and Wales and for cases heard in Magistrates' Courts that are 2-months rather than 3 months in arrears of the reporting period. These new figures will be made available in all publications from April 2007 onward. They will mean that our bulletins provide a more timely picture of national-level performance against the PYO pledge.

The provisional figures will be pre-adjusted to correct for the expected variation between the initial 2-month-arrears statistic, and the finalised 3-month statistic that will be available in the following month. The adjustment aims to take account of seasonal factors by looking at the equivalent calendar month in the previous year, and assessing the extent to which the 2-month to 3-month variation in this period differed from the overall average variation across the last 12 months. A worked example to illustrate the adjustment technique is given at Annex C.

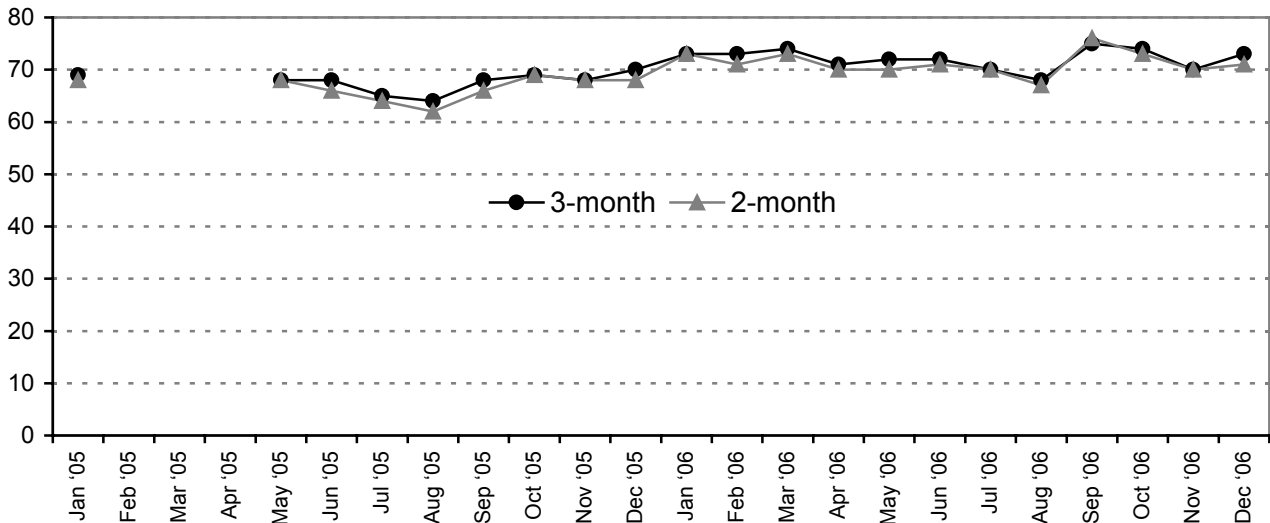
Annex A

Percentage of monthly Persistent Young Offenders records inputted on the Police National Computer in England and Wales 2-months in arrears



Annex B

Number of days from arrest to sentence for Persistent Young Offenders in England and Wales based on 2- and 3-months of data



Annex C

Worked example – adjustment to the 2-month arrest to sentence statistic

Month	Difference between 2- and 3- month statistics (Column A)	Monthly differences from the 12-month rolling average (Column B)
January	2	+0.5
February	2	+0.5
March	1.5	0
April	1.5	0
May	1.5	0
June	1.5	0
July	1	-0.5
August	1	-0.5
September	1.5	0
October	1.5	0
November	1	-0.5
December	2	+0.5

Given the example data in the table opposite:

- The 12-month rolling average of differences between 2- and 3-month statistics (from January to December) is 1.5 days – see Column A.
- The variation from the 12-month rolling average is between -0.5 to +0.5 days – see Column B.

Therefore in January of the next year:

- The overall estimate is the 1.5 days of the rolling average mentioned above *plus* the 0.5 days of variation from last January, which gives an overall estimated difference of 2 days.
- The adjusted 2-month statistics will thus be the arrest to sentence time plus 2 days.