AVERAGE TIME FROM ARREST TO SENTENCE FOR PERSISTENT YOUNG OFFENDERS:
JANUARY - DECEMBER 2006

By Trushar Pandya

This bulletin presents the latest figures on the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders. These figures 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.

From April 2007, the bulletin will publish new and more timely key national averages 2 months in arrears, alongside the established 3 months in arrears figures. For further details of this improvement to the bulletin, see the note on the DCA website at: www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/crjust.htm#part3.

Main Points

- The average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders (PYOs) in England and Wales was 72 days in 2006, up 4 days from 2005.

- The overall average time from arrest to sentence for cases sentenced in magistrates’ courts was 63 days in 2006 – up 3 days from the previous year. Cases sentenced in the Crown Court took an average of 214 days from arrest to sentence in 2006, up 23 days from 2005.

- 21 of the 42 Criminal Justice areas had achieved the target of 71 days or less for 2006 as a whole. For the fourth quarter of 2006, 21 of the areas had an average of 71 days or less.
Introduction

This bulletin contains statistics on the average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales.

This bulletin presents final figures for the year 2006. In addition to figures for the latest periods, the fourth quarter of 2006 and December 2006, it also contains updated figures for the earlier months and quarters of 2006 published in previous publications following the completion of the 2006 arrest dates survey – please see the Notes section for further details.

The main body of the bulletin is organised in three parts. This first part contains commentary on the latest figures, the second has detailed tables of results, and the final part comprises of notes on the methodology used and also includes contact points for comments and queries.

Average Interval from Arrest to Sentence

England and Wales

The average time between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders in 2006 was 72 days, up 4 days from 2005.

The average during October-December 2006 was 72 days, up 1 day from the previous quarter.

The monthly figure for December 2006 was 73 days, 3 days higher than in November.

Further figures can be found in table 1 (page 6). A graph showing monthly progress from January 1997 is shown in figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Average time between arrest and sentence for persistent young offenders England and Wales, January 1997 to December 2006
**Cases sentenced at Magistrates’ Courts**

For the year 2006, cases sentenced at magistrates’ courts represented 94 per cent of all PYO cases. As table 2 (page 7) shows, the overall average time from arrest to sentence for these cases was 63 days, up 3 days from 2005.

The average for October-December 2006 was 62 days, equalling the figure for the previous quarter.

The monthly figure for December 2006 was 63 days, 2 days higher than in November.

**Cases sentenced at the Crown Court**

The average time from arrest to sentence for cases sentenced at the Crown Court in 2006 was 214 days, up 23 days from 2005.

The average for October-December 2006 was 220 days, up 10 days from the previous quarter.

The monthly figure for December 2006 was 213 days, 2 days lower than in November. Further figures can be found in table 3 (page 8).

Cases sentenced at the Crown Court include both time spent in magistrates’ courts before committal to the Crown Court and time spent in Crown Court proceedings after committal. However, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of these periods separately.
The average arrest to sentence times for cases sentenced at the Crown Court and magistrates’ courts between January 1999 and December 2006 are shown separately in figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Average time from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders by sentencing court - England and Wales, January 1999 to December 2006**
Criminal Justice Area

Figures by criminal justice area are shown in tables 4 and 5 (pages 9 to 12) - the latter for magistrates’ court cases only.

For the year 2006, 21 of the 42 criminal justice areas had an average arrest to sentence time of 71 days or less, compared to 34 areas in 2005.

For the October-December quarter of 2006, 21 areas had an average of 71 days or less, down 3 from the previous quarter.

The number of areas achieving the 71-day target, on a three-month rolling average basis, is shown in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Number of CJS areas within target by rolling three-month arrest to sentence averages – May 2006 to December 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rolling three month arrest to sentence averages</th>
<th>May-Jul</th>
<th>Jun-Aug</th>
<th>Jul-Sep</th>
<th>Aug-Oct</th>
<th>Sep-Nov</th>
<th>Oct-Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of areas</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>areas under 67 days</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areas between 67 and 71 days</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>areas over 71 days</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
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</table>

Basic Command Unit (BCU)

The BCU averages in 2006 are presented in table 6 (pages 13 to 19). These figures provide an indication of local performance at a lower level. As the source data is taken from the Police National Computer, these smaller geographical cases are police force based. However, it should be remembered that the processes involved in dealing with persistent young offenders from arrest to sentence are the responsibility of all CJS agencies.
Table 1: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
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<th>Number of cases&lt;sup&gt;(3)&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1999&lt;sup&gt;(2)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000&lt;sup&gt;(2)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001&lt;sup&gt;(2)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002&lt;sup&gt;(2)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>26,116</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26,083</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>26,363</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>27,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28,252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2004
- January – March: 70 days, 7,103 cases
- April – June: 68 days, 6,600 cases
- July – September: 68 days, 6,456 cases
- October – December: 69 days, 6,204 cases

2005
- January – March: 70 days, 6,592 cases
- April – June: 67 days, 7,017 cases
- July – September: 66 days, 6,915 cases
- October – December: 69 days, 6,513 cases

2006
- January – March: 74 days (+1), 7,177 cases (+51)
- April – June: 72 days (+1), 7,034 cases (+64)
- July – September: 71 days, 7,134 cases (+79)
- October – December: 72 days, 6,907 cases

2005
- January: 69 days, 2,181 cases
- February: 69 days, 2,085 cases
- March: 70 days, 2,326 cases
- April: 65 days, 2,318 cases
- May: 68 days, 2,280 cases
- June: 68 days, 2,419 cases
- July: 65 days, 2,225 cases
- August: 64 days, 2,301 cases
- September: 68 days, 2,389 cases
- October: 69 days, 2,286 cases
- November: 68 days, 2,395 cases
- December: 70 days, 1,832 cases

2006
- January: 74 days (+1), 2,346 cases (+15)
- February: 74 days (+1), 2,269 cases (+6)
- March: 74 days, 2,562 cases (+7)
- April: 71 days, 2,032 cases (+2)
- May: 72 days, 2,478 cases (+6)
- June: 73 days (+1), 2,524 cases (+14)
- July: 70 days, 2,281 cases (+9)
- August: 68 days, 2,580 cases (+9)
- September: 75 days, 2,273 cases (+8)
- October: 73 days (-1), 2,446 cases (+18)
- November: 70 days, 2,529 cases (+23)
- December: 73 days, 1,932 cases

Notes:

1. Figures for 1996 are not available for each month.
3. The number of cases figures can include records with unknown court codes, and for this reason these figures can be greater than the sum of the equivalent ones in the following tables for each type of court.
Table 2: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced at Magistrates’ Courts in England and Wales

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<td>2,097 (+8)</td>
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2004

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<td>407</td>
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<td>July – September</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>391</td>
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<td>October – December</td>
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2005

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2006

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2005

<table>
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<td>192</td>
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2006

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<td>155 (-1)</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<tr>
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Table 4a: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Criminal Justice Area, 2001 to 2006

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<th>Area(1)</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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Note:
(1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases prosecution and court proceedings may have been in different areas.
(2) Technical problems with local data transfer to the Police National Computer may have resulted in slight inaccuracies in Gwent's figures.
### Table 4b: Average number of days from arrest to sentence (three-month rolling averages) for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Criminal Justice Area for May 2006 to December 2006

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Note: Figures denoted by * are based on 40 or fewer cases and should be interpreted with particular care.

(1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been in different areas.

(2) Technical problems with local data transfer to the Police National Computer may have resulted in slight inaccuracies in Gwent’s figures.
Table 5a: Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced in Magistrates’ courts in England and Wales: by Criminal Justice Area, 2001 to 2006

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Note:
(1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases prosecution and court proceedings may have been in different areas.
(2) Technical problems with local data transfer to the Police National Computer may have resulted in slight inaccuracies in Gwent's figures.
Table 5b: Average number of days from arrest to sentence (three-month rolling averages) for persistent young offenders sentenced in Magistrates’ courts in England and Wales: by Criminal Justice Area for May 2006 to December 2006

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Note: Figures denoted by * are based on 40 or fewer cases and should be interpreted with particular care.
(1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been in different areas.
(2) Technical problems with local data transfer to the Police National Computer may have resulted in slight inaccuracies in Gwent’s figures.
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(continued)
Table 6: (continued) Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Basic Command Unit (BCU) within Criminal Justice Areas in 2006

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Table 6: (continued) Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Basic Command Unit (BCU) within Criminal Justice Areas in 2006

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Table 6: (continued) Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Basic Command Unit (BCU) within Criminal Justice Areas in 2006

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Table 6: (continued) Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Basic Command Unit (BCU) within Criminal Justice Areas in 2006

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<th>Area (1)</th>
<th>Basic Command Unit (BCU) (2)</th>
<th>January - December 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arrest to sentence (days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thames Valley</td>
<td>Aylesbury Vale</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chiltern Vale</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Oxfordshire</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading &amp; Wokingham</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slough &amp; District</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southern Oxfordshire</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thames Forest</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Berkshire</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclassified BCUs</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwickshire</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclassified BCUs</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Mercia</td>
<td>Herefordshire - E Division</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Worcestershire - D Division</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shropshire - F Division</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Worcestershire - C Division</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telford &amp; Wrekin - G Division</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclassified BCUs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>Aston</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belgrave Road</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birmingham Central</td>
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<td>Bloxwich</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bournville</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coventry Chace</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coventry Little Park</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coventry Stoney Stanton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dudley</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Halesowen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handsworth</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harborne</td>
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<td>Kings Heath</td>
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<td>Smethwick</td>
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<td>Solihull</td>
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<td>Stechford</td>
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<td>Walsall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>West Bromwich</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolverhampton East</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolverhampton West</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclassified BCUs</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 6: (continued) Average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders in England and Wales: by Basic Command Unit (BCU) within Criminal Justice Areas in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (1)</th>
<th>Basic Command Unit (BCU)(2)</th>
<th>January - December 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arrest to sentence (days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire</td>
<td>Bradford North</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bradford South</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calderdale</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapeltown</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City &amp; Holbeck</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huddersfield</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keighley</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Killingbeck</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wakefield</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weetwood/Pudsey</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclassified BCUs</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>Melksham</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Swindon</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Averages based on a small number of cases should be interpreted with particular care.

(1) The area classification is based on the Police Force that investigated the offence and entered the charge or summons details on the Police National Computer. In a small proportion of cases, prosecution and court proceedings may have been in different areas.

(2) Unallocated and spurious BCUs and BCUs with fewer than 25 cases are grouped into “Unclassified” category in this table.
Notes

1 The figures in this bulletin were produced by the Department for Constitutional Affairs with assistance from other criminal justice agencies, and cover cases sentenced in magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court in England and Wales.

2 The category of persistent young offender was defined in the Inter-Departmental circular *Tackling delays in the Youth Justice System* issued on 15 October 1997:

“A persistent young offender is a young person aged 10-17 who has been sentenced by any criminal court in the UK on three or more separate occasions for one or more recordable offence, and within three years of the last sentencing occasion is subsequently arrested or has an information laid against them for a further recordable offence.”

3 The calculation of the target figure of 71 days, and performance against that target, uses data from the Police National Computer and police forces. The data covers those individuals who fell within the definition of persistent young offender at the date of arrest, and also those who were brought within the definition by further convictions before the time of sentence.

4 The figures presented in this bulletin come from separate monitoring exercises covering offenders sentenced in each of the calendar years from 1996 to 2005, and for 2006 to January.

5 Offenders falling within the scope of the exercise were identified using information from the Police National Computer (Phoenix). Occasions on which offenders had been previously sentenced were counted for the whole of the UK if they included one or more offences falling within the definition. Convictions for offences that met the following criteria were counted in determining whether an offender had three qualifying sentencing occasions:

- Offences committed in the UK (including Channel Islands and Isle of Man) by youths aged 10-17 but not over 17 at the date of charge, summons, reporting or (in a few instances) arrest.
- The offender was 18 years of age or under at the start of the year in which they were sentenced for the offence.
- Where an offender was sentenced for more than one offence at a time only one offence was counted.
- Offences against which there was no conviction, for example, acquittals, were excluded.
- Offences for breaches of previous sentence orders (e.g. probation) are not normally counted.

6 Once offenders with three or more previous sentencing occasions had been identified, further sentencing occasions were examined to see if the date of the offence fell within three years of the previous sentencing occasion. If so, offences were then checked against the criteria below to determine whether to include them in the monitoring:

- Offences proceeded against in courts outside England and Wales were excluded.
- Offences handled by a police force outside England and Wales were excluded.
- As of this bulletin, any cases that are recorded on the PNC as charged on or after the 1st January 2005 with a breach of an anti-social behaviour order will be included in the PYO pledge figures.
7 For each of the studies covering the full years from 1996 to 2005, arrest dates (or laying of information dates where there was no arrest) were surveyed directly from police forces with the assistance of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary.

8 The survey of arrest dates for 2005 was completed in March 2006 (for cases sentenced in January to December 2005). A good level of response (slightly up from last year) was received from police forces with arrest dates for 98 per cent of sentencing occasions returned. The results from this exercise are used to estimate the interval from arrest to the ‘process stage data’ (in most cases the date of charge) as taken from the Phoenix computer. These estimates were added to the period from ‘process stage date’ to sentence to produce the overall arrest to sentence results for 2005.

9 For the overall England and Wales figures, the estimate of the time between arrest and process stage date calculated from the 2005 survey is 10.9 days, after an allowance has been made for the difference in response rates for earlier years. The estimates calculated from this survey will also be used to produce the arrest to sentence figures for 2006 until the next survey has been completed.

10 The survey of arrest dates includes all sentenced offences from a sample of occasions on which offenders fitting the criteria used for persistent young offenders were sentenced. Where the offender concerned was not arrested and was summonsed to attend court, the date of laying of information for the offence was used in place of the arrest date. Where more than one offence was sentenced on a given occasion, only the offence with the earliest arrest (or laying of information where there was no arrest) was included in the calculation of the average arrest to sentence time.

11 During the processing and analysis of the survey data consistency and validation checks are used to quality assure the data. The total sample size for the 2005 survey was 4,600 sentencing occasions. For the 1996 study the sample was taken from Phoenix; however, for later studies data was extracted on all persistent young offenders held on Phoenix and under 19 at the start of the year to which the figures refer, and this extract was then sampled by DCA.

12 The figures in this bulletin and those produced thereafter are calculated using an amended methodology to that used in publications prior to May 2006. The new methodology has been applied to remove the double counting of arrest to process times for those offences processed at arrest.

13 The new methodology has been applied to current and backdated periods, and therefore changes to previously published statistics are partly or wholly due to the change in the method of calculation and are indicated within the tables. Historical time-series of statistics are consistent within publications. However the figures produced in this, and subsequent, bulletins are not comparable with bulletins published before May 2006.
Further Information

www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/statpub.htm

It, together with other information about delay in persistent young offender cases can also be found on the Youth Justice Board's reducing delays internet site at:
www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/PractitionersPortal/PracticeAndPerformance/

15 This bulletin has been prepared by the Economics and Statistics Division of the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Any comments or suggestions on the publication would be welcomed. Enquires and requests for additional copies of this bulletin should be directed to Trushar Pandya at the address below:

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