Statistical Notice

Improvements to Criminal Statistics 2008, Sentencing Statistics 2008 and Women and the Criminal Justice System

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Statistical Notice – changes to statistical publications

Introduction
On the 28 January 2010 the Ministry of Justice are due to publish three statistical publications:

- Criminal Statistics
- Sentencing Statistics
- Women in the Criminal Justice System.

A number of changes and improvements have been made to these publications, all of which are outlined below.

Improvements and changes to the publications

Criminal Statistics

The chapters have been re-ordered to lead the reader through the criminal justice system more intuitively, from crime, out of court disposal and court action. Two new tables have been added this year to help the reader understand the information in context:

- One table on cautions to show the proportions of offenders cautioned for each offence group by gender (table 3A).
- The second new table shows the conviction rate i.e. the proportion of convictions compared to prosecutions for each offence group (table 6.1). This table has been introduced as it is frequently asked for by readers.

Sentencing Statistics

Two tables have been added this year to sentencing statistics:

- One to show persons sentenced for firearms offences liable for the mandatory minimum custodial sentence (table 2.7). This table has been added due to the large volume of requests for information we receive on this area of sentencing. We already publish a table showing numbers receiving other mandatory minimum sentences (e.g. for a third conviction of domestic burglary).
- Another to show the number of offenders sentenced by sex, age and offence group at all courts (table 1.6). This table has been added as it shows a breakdown not already covered in the publication but frequently required.

One data table has been removed from this edition. This previously showed the number and proportion of parents made to pay a fine or compensation on behalf of their child. Data quality checks have revealed the reporting of such sentences to be incomplete. Work to improve reporting is ongoing and these statistics will be re-instated when Ministry of Justice statisticians are satisfied that the data received are complete and suitable for publication.

Women and the CJS

From 2004 to 2008 the women’s report contained web-links to relevant government publications, but there was no supporting interpretation of the tables and graphs. At the request of Maria Eagle MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice) and Vera Baird QC MP (Solicitor General) the report was reproduced to its pre-2004 comprehensiveness.
Last year’s publication was the first detailed publication about Women in the CJS in five years.

Its aims were to look at potential disproportionality with respect to the experiences and representation of women in the CJS as victims, suspects, defendants, offenders and employees.

It also looked at the trends in the last 5 years (since the last full report) to fill in the evidence gap in the key statistics with regards to the representation and experiences of women in the CJS and how they compared to men.

Following discussions with the women’s Independent Advisory Group on the publication, the following changes were made: major comparisons between women and men would only be between the latest available data and the previous year; data from the Witness and Victim Experience Survey (WAVES) would be included in Chapter 1 (Victims of crime); and the main categories used to examine the data for women and men would be:

- Age group
- Offence type
- Police force area – this is a completely new addition, which brings this report closer to linked publications – Criminal Statistics and Statistics on Race and the CJS.

Other changes
There has been a minor amendment to classification of sex following the introduction of the Libra case management system during 2008. Offenders at magistrates’ courts can now be recorded as sex ‘Not Stated’ as well as ‘Male’, ‘Female’, or ‘Other’. In 2008 1.5 per cent of offenders sentenced were recorded as sex ‘Not Stated’. Amendments to the data tables have had to be made to accommodate this new category. Tables split by gender are now formatted as males, females and then ‘all persons’ which includes the ‘Not Stated’ category. Some detailed tables have therefore been omitted from the publication.

Contact details and further information
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