



An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

Criminal court cases activity from Quarter 1 2014/15 to Quarter 2 2023/24

This statistical bulletin is part of a series providing quarterly Official Statistics on first instance criminal case activity in the High, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace courts. Annual statistics for custody and remand, crime and offence breakdowns and criminal appeals are also provided.

Notice

On 1st April 2023, the planned recovery resource switch from summary to solemn business occurred meaning ten fewer Sheriff summary trial courts, two additional High Court and six additional Sheriff Solemn trial courts.

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) aims to provide the people, buildings and services to enable criminal cases to call in court. The statistics show the volume of criminal first and second instance court cases over time as they flow through court.

The statistics in this bulletin do not have information relating to accused persons in terms of what they were charged with or their resulting conviction or sentence as there are already well-established National Statistics on these aspects of criminal justice. This bulletin does not cover court cases relating to civil business. See the Scottish Government's website for statistics relating to criminal or civil justice:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice>

Commentary on high level trends in first instance criminal court case activity

All Criminal Courts

The volume of first instance criminal cases registered in Scottish courts has risen by 3% from the previous quarter with 23,283 cases registered in the period.

The number of trials scheduled is an indication of system capacity as it shows the volume of trial business at the end of each financial year or quarter. There has been a decrease of 1% to 27,911 trials when scheduled trials at the end of September 2023 are compared to those still to call as at the end of June 2023 (28,073).

16,417 trials were called in Q2 2023/24 which is comparable to the volume called in Q1 2023/24 (16,461)

Evidence led trials were up 3% on the previous quarter with 2,117 taking place in Q2 2023/24 compared to Q1 2023/24 (2,055).

In the second quarter of 2023/24, the percentage of trials adjourned due to lack of court time remained consistent with the previous quarter at 2.5%, and lower than the pre-COVID position of 2.9% in 2019/20.

The number of cases concluded is 1% higher than Q1 2023/24, with 22,479 cases concluded in Q2 2023/24.

The High Court of Justiciary

The volume of indictments registered is 9% higher for Q2 2023/24 (222) compared to Q1 2023/24 (203).

There was a 12% decrease in evidence led trials from 190 in Q1 2023/24 to 168 in Q2 2023/24.

Trials scheduled at the end of September 2023 is 651, showing a slight reduction when compared to the 654 scheduled at the end of June 2023.

A total of 245 indictments were concluded in Q2 2023/24, which is a fall of 10% from the number concluded in Q1 2023/24 (273).

The Sheriff Court – solemn business

The volume of petitions registered is a useful indicator of future levels of solemn business as petitions tend to become registered indictments at the High Court or Sheriff Court. The number of petitions registered in Q2 2023/24 is 2,923. This is comparable to the 2,928 reported in Q1 2023/24.

Indictments registered in Q2 2023/24 is 1,874, a decrease of 2% from 1,906 registered in Q1 2023/24.

As at the end of September 2023, the number of trials scheduled is 2,056 an 8% reduction when compared with the volume scheduled as at the end of June 2023 (2,223).

In Q2 2023/24, the volume of evidence led trials (337) has increased 4% from Q1 2023/24 (325).

2,089 indictments were concluded in Q2 2023/24, which is a 6% increase on the number concluded in Q1 2023/24 (1,964).

The Sheriff Court – summary business

There has been a rise of 4% in the volume of registered complaints from 16,023 in Q1 2023/24 to 16,623 in Q2 2023/24.

95% of domestic abuse court cases are heard at the Sheriff Summary Court. In Q2 2023/24, 21% of the total summary complaints registered in the Sheriff Court were domestic abuse cases. This proportion is similar to previous quarters.

There were 12,091 Sheriff Summary cases called for trial in Q2 2023/24, which is comparable to Q1 2023/24 (12,125). The number of evidence led trials has increased by 8% to 1,393 in the latest quarter compared to 1,295 in the previous quarter. Trials adjourned due to lack of court time remains consistent at 2.6% in Q1 and Q2 2023/24.

Domestic abuse cases account for 29% of Sheriff Summary trials called and 32% of those Sheriff Summary trials in which evidence was led.

The volume of Sheriff Summary trials scheduled as at the end of September 2023, has risen by 3% since the end of June 2023 to 21,792. Domestic abuse scheduled trials decreased by 1% to 4,191 over the same period.

Q2 2023/24 saw 15,566 complaints concluded which is an increase of 3% compared to the volume concluded in Q1 2023/24. Broadly speaking, 23% of these conclusions were domestic abuse cases.

The Justice of the Peace Court

The number of cases registered in the reporting period rose by 1% to 4,564 when compared to Q1 2023/24.

The volume of evidence led trials is 219 for Q2 2023/24 is an 11% decrease on Q1 2023/24 (245). 0.9% of trials were adjourned due to lack of court time in Q2 2023/24, which is similar to the previous quarter (1.0%).

As at the end of September 2023, the number of trials scheduled has decreased by 15% to 3,412 when compared to the end of June 2023 (3994).

4,579 complaints were concluded in the latest quarter, 6% less than the number of complaints concluded in Q1 2023/24.

Commentary on high level trends in second instance criminal court case activity

Commentary is provided once a year when the annual update is made to the appeals data tables. Please see QCC bulletins 4, 8, 12, 16 and 20.

Data tables

The Q2 2023/24 Excel workbook with interactive tables and charts is located on webpage: <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>

Background

This is the latest bulletin in a series of quarterly reports on criminal court activity and can be viewed on webpage: <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>

Revisions and corrections

There are no revisions or corrections to report.

Guidance on definitions and data

See the Glossary and Data Notes worksheet within the Excel workbook.

Shaping Scotland's Court Services

As part of [Shaping Scotland's Court Services](#) work, a number of courts closed with relevant live business transferring to receiving courts.

Closed Court	Receiving Court
<i>End of November 2013</i>	
Annan JP Court Cumbernauld JP Court Dornoch Sheriff and JP Court Irvine JP Court Kirkcudbright Sheriff and JP Court Motherwell JP Court Portree JP Court Rothesay Sheriff Court Stornoway JP Court Wick JP Court	Dumfries JP Court Coatbridge JP Court Tain Sheriff and JP Court Kilmarnock JP Court Dumfries Sheriff and JP Court Hamilton JP Court Portree Sheriff Court Greenock Sheriff and JP Court Stornoway Sheriff Court Wick Sheriff Court
<i>End of May 2014</i>	
Arbroath Sheriff and JP Court Cupar Sheriff and JP Court Stonehaven Sheriff and JP Court	Forfar Sheriff and JP Court Dundee Sheriff and JP Court Aberdeen Sheriff and JP Court
<i>End of July 2015</i>	
Dingwall Sheriff and JP Court Duns Sheriff and JP Court Haddington Sheriff and JP Court Peebles Sheriff and JP Court	Inverness Sheriff and JP Court Jedburgh Sheriff and JP Court Edinburgh Sheriff and JP Court Selkirk Sheriff and JP Court

Contacts

Press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed to the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service communications office.

Tel: 0131 444 3310

Email: communications@scotcourts.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to the Management Information Analysis Team of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service:

Paul Bremner
Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service
Saughton House
Broomhouse Drive
Edinburgh
EH11 3XD
Tel: 0131 444 3452

Email: mianalysis@scotcourts.gov.uk

Further information about Official and National Statistics in Scotland is available from <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/producingstats>

Access to official statistics in their final form before they are published is restricted. The following list details who received pre-release access to the statistics in their final form within the maximum period of 5 working days before publication:

Executive Director, Court Operations, SCTS
Director of Operations Delivery, SCTS
Principal Clerk of Session & Justiciary, SCTS
Deputy Principal Clerk of Justiciary, SCTS
Director of Corporate Communications, SCTS
Media Officer, Corporate Communications, SCTS
Web developer, Change and Digital Innovation, SCTS
Head of Policy, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Statistician, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Statistician, Justice Analytical Services, Scottish Government
Media Officer, Justice Communications, Scottish Government
Policy Implementation Manager, Criminal Justice Division, Scottish Government

The next quarterly bulletin of Criminal Court statistics will be published in March 2024. The exact date of the report will be announced via the Scottish Government's Forthcoming Publications Schedule - <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ForthcomingPubs> at least 4 weeks in advance and on the SCTS' Official Statistics webpage <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>.