**Notes on** **Prosecutions for combinations of offences CSV**

Background

The CSV files accompanying this document containsstatistics showing a) the numbers of defendants prosecuted for different combinations of offences at magistrates’ courts for each offence in calendar years 2018 to 2022.

Most of the information in the ‘Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2022’ publication is reported on a ‘principal offence basis’[[1]](#footnote-2). This means that where a defendant is proceeded against for more than once offence, they will only be counted for their principal offence. The Statistics in the accompanying CSV provide the number of defendants prosecuted for particular offences and the number of defendants prosecuted for each combination of two offences irrespective of whether those offences are principal or non-principal.

This CSV builds on the experimental ‘Prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence’ CSV which was published for the first time alongside the ‘Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2017’ publication[[2]](#footnote-3). This CSV shows an alternative way of presenting the data, and explanation of the different methodologies is provided below.

Methodology has since been streamlined since 2018 to accurately identify defendants and include Common Platform. We would particularly welcome feedback from users on its use and future inclusion in the report.

How to use

The meanings of the columns in the Prosecutions CSV are as follows:

* **year –** year of appearance.
* **offence\_x** & **offence\_y** – offences, shown at the offence level.
* **n\_defendants\_offence\_x** – the total number of defendants prosecuted for offence\_x. Includes defendants prosecuted for one or more counts of offence\_x, and defendants prosecuted for offence\_x alongside other offence.
* **n\_defendants\_offences\_x\_and\_y** – the number of defendants prosecuted for both offence \_x and offence\_ y. Includes defendants prosecuted for these offences alongside additional offences.

To find the total number of defendants prosecuted for a particular offence, refer to columns “offence\_x” and “n\_defendants\_offence\_x”. This will include defendants for whom offence\_x was the principal offence for which they were dealt with and defendants for whom offence\_x was their non-principal offence. To find which offences defendants were prosecuted for alongside a particular “offence\_x”, filter on the offence of interest and refer to columns “offence\_y” and “n\_defendants\_offences\_x\_and\_y”.

As an example, to find which offences defendants were prosecuted for alongside *‘8.21 Engage in controlling / coercive behaviour in an intimate / family relationship’,* filter to offence\_ x = *‘8.21 Engage in controlling / coercive behaviour in an intimate / family relationship’* and refer to “offence\_y” and “n\_defendants\_offences\_x\_and\_y” columns. Table 1 shows an extract from the 2018 ‘Defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences’ dataset.

**Table 1: Extract from the 2018 ‘defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences’ CSV**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **year** | **offence \_x** | **n\_defendants \_offence\_x** | **offence\_y** | **n\_defendants\_ offences\_x\_and\_y** |
| 2018 | 8.21 Engage in controlling / coercive behaviour in an intimate / family relationship | 920 | 105 Common assault and battery | 457 |
| 2018 | 8.21 Engage in controlling / coercive behaviour in an intimate / family relationship | 920 | 8.01 Assault occasioning actual bodily harm | 200 |

Table 1 can be interpreted as follows: In 2018, a total of 920 defendants were prosecuted for ‘engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate/family relationship’ as either a principal or a non-principal offence. Of those defendants, 457 were also prosecuted for ‘common assault and battery’ and 200 were also prosecuted for ‘assault occasioning actual bodily harm’.

‘Common assault and battery’ and ‘assault occasioning actual bodily harm’ were the two offences for which defendants were most commonly prosecuted in combination with ‘engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate/family relationship’. Further combinations can be found in the accompanying CSV.

Note that some of the 920 defendants prosecuted for ‘engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate/family relationship’ may have been prosecuted for multiple counts this offence. Such defendants are only counted once. Similarly, Table 1 shows 457 defendants prosecuted for both ‘engaging in controlling or coercive behaviour in an intimate/family relationship’ and ‘common assault and battery’. Defendants prosecuted for multiple counts or either or both offences are only counted once.

Comparison with other products published alongside the ‘Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly’

The Statistics accompanying this note count defendants on a different basis to the other products published alongside the ‘Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly’. Other accompanying products are presented on either a ‘principal offence’ basis or an ‘all offence’ basis. Using products published alongside ‘Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2018’ to illustrate the differences, taking the number of prosecutions for offence ‘1 Murder’ in 2018 as an example:

* 635 defendants were prosecuted for murder as their principal offence (source: ‘Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data’ tool)
* 658 defendants were prosecuted for at least one count of murder (source: the “n\_defendants\_offence\_x” column of the ‘Defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences’ CSV). This ‘defendant basis’ figure is higher because it includes defendants for whom another offence was the principal offence for which they were prosecuted[[3]](#footnote-4)
* Defendants were prosecuted for a total of 681 counts of murder (source: All offence prosecutions and convictions by Home Office offence code’ tool). This ‘all offence’ figure is higher because some defendants were prosecuted for multiple counts of murder.

Comparison with ‘Prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence’ published May 2018

In May 2018, we published ‘Prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence’ CSV as part of the ‘Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2017’ publication. The ‘Defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences’ CSV accompanying this file builds on that and presents data on a different basis to offer a slightly different interpretation of patterns of offending. Both use different methods to offer insight into patterns of types of offences for which defendants are prosecuted and associated offences. Both methods are valid and have different strengths and limitations. The key differences between these methods are outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2: differences between products**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product** | **Defendants prosecuted for combinations of offences** | **Prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence** | **Reason for presenting on defendant-basis as of May 2019** |
| **First published:** | Published May 2019 | Published May 2018 |  |
| **How does it count…** | Counts **defendants** | Counts **offences** |  |
| …a defendant prosecuted for one count of offence x? | One defendant counted within n\_defendants\_offence\_x | Not counted – only counts non-principal offences | Includes total numbers of defendants prosecuted for each offence, which are on a different basis to the rest of the publication. This is the first time these have been published, which adds new insight. |
| …a defendant prosecuted for multiple counts of offence\_x? | One defendant counted within n\_defendants\_offence\_x | Multiple non-principal offences counted | Aids interpretability and brings the statistics more in line with the rest of the bulletin, which is focused on numbers of defendants. |
| …a defendant prosecuted for offences A (principal offence), B & C (non-principal offences)? | Counts the defendant for combinations AB, BC and AC (i.e. three times) | Count the defendant for combinations AB and AC (i.e. twice)  Combination BC not counted as neither is a principal offence | To include interactions between non-principal offences and remove trends caused by certain offences being more likely to appear as either the principal or non-principal offence |

We welcome feedback from users on which method of presentation best suits their needs.

An example of some analysis using the Statistics ‘Prosecutions for non-principal offences, by principal offence’ published in May 2018 is the ONS ‘Sexual offending: victimisation and the path through the criminal justice system’ report published in December 2018[[4]](#footnote-5).

Other notes

* Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts. This is particularly important for non-principal offences, which have not been subject to the same level of validation as the principal offence datasets. Consequently, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations, such as risks of inconsistent offence coding or erroneous data entry, are taken into account when those data are used.
* A defendant may be prosecuted for more than two offences, so they may be counted in more than one offence combination. Because of this, values for “n\_defendants\_offences\_x\_and\_y” will not sum to the total number of defendants and values should not be added together.
* While we have made every effort to ensure data presented are accurate, there are a small number of offences where data submitted to us had an incorrect or invalid offence code. These are labelled as ‘Not Known’ in the “offence\_x” and “offence\_y” columns
* Data on defendants prosecuted are drawn solely from the magistrates’ courts records. For some offences, cases may bypass the magistrates’ courts and go straight to the Crown Court, so these records will not appear in the prosecutions data.

Data supplier

Criminal Courts & Sentencing Data and Statistics   
Data and Analysis  
Ministry of Justice

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Contact: [CJS\_Statistics@justice.gov.uk](mailto:CJS_Statistics@justice.gov.uk)

Further information on data sources and definitions can be found in the guidance document produced alongside the main report - Guide to Criminal Justice Statistics at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2022>

The main bulletin and accompanying tables and tools can also be accessed.

1. See the ‘*Guide to Criminal Justice Statistics’* accompanying this publication for further information on the ‘principal offence’ and how it is determined. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2017) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Where defendants were prosecuted for murder as a non-principal offence, they may have been prosecuted for an offence with an equally severe statutory maximum penalty, or been dealt with for a different offence at magistrates’ court and sent to the Crown Court for trial for murder. Explanation of how the principal offence is selected in the prosecutions data is available in the ‘Guide to Criminal Justice Statistics’ accompanying this publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffendingvictimisationandthepaththroughthecriminaljusticesystem/2018-12-13#court-proceedings](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/sexualoffendingvictimisationandthepaththroughthecriminaljusticesystem/2018-12-13#court-proceedings) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)