



An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

Criminal court cases activity from Quarter 1 2014/15 to Quarter 1 2022/23

This statistical bulletin is part of a series providing quarterly Official Statistics on first and second instance criminal case activity in the High, Sheriff, Justice of the Peace and Sheriff Criminal Appeal courts in Scotland.

Notice

In October 2020, to meet the needs of justice partners, court users and the media, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service commenced the publication of a monthly workbook of Management Information showing interim monthly business volumes and trends for first instance criminal cases calling at Scottish courts during the pandemic. The monthly workbook, which is not designated as Official Statistics, may be used alongside these quarterly Official Statistics. <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/official-statistics>

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

There were 22,543 first instance criminal cases registered in Scottish courts in Q1 2022/23, which is a 7% increase from the number registered in Q4 2021/22.

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 decrease of 9% to 37,174 trials when scheduled trials at the end of June 2022 are compared to those still to call as at the end of March 2022 (40,923). This reduction relates to Summary business.

In Q1 2022/23, the number of trials called was 20,807, an increase of 2% from the previous quarter.

Evidence led trials were 5% higher than the previous quarter with 2,217 taking place in Q1 2022/23 compared to Q4 2021/22 (2,117).

The percentage of trials adjourned due to lack of court time has risen from 1.4% in Q4 2021/22 to 1.9% in Q1 2022/23 – an increase of 0.5 percentage points, but remains lower than the pre-COVID position of 2.9% in 2019/20.

24,511 cases were concluded in Q1 2022/23 – an increase of 12% from Q4 2021/22 and exceeding the pre-COVID 2019/20 quarterly average of 23,476.

The High Court of Justiciary

The volume of indictments registered in the latest quarter has fallen by 6% to 224 in Q1 2022/23 from 238 in Q4 2021/22.

Evidence led trials in Q1 2022/23 have remained broadly consistent with Q4 2021/22, with 159 evidence led trials occurring in the period.

Trials scheduled at the end of June 2022 is 613, an increase of 9% when compared to 560 scheduled at the end of March 2022.

213 indictments were concluded in Q1 2022/23, which is 19% more than the number concluded in Q4 2021/22 (179).

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. Q1 2022/23 shows a decrease of 3% to 2,933 petitions when compared to Q4 2021/22.

The number of indictments registered in this reporting quarter remains consistent with the previous quarter with 1,395 indictments registered in Q1 2022/23.

As at the end of June 2022, the number of trials scheduled has gone up by 2% to 3,235 when compared to the end of March 2022 (2,274).

The volume of evidence led trials has grown by 6% this quarter from 229 in Q4 2021/22 to 242 in Q1 2022/23.

In Q1 2022/23, 1,421 indictments were concluded, which is an increase of 14% on the previous quarter (1,245).

The Sheriff Court – summary business

There has been a 5% rise in the volume of registered complaints from 13,591 in Q4 2021/22 to 14,329 in Q1 2022/23.

95% of domestic abuse court cases are heard at the Sheriff Summary Court. In Q1 2022/23, domestic abuse cases constitute 24% of the total summary complaints registered in the Sheriff Court. This figure is comparable with previous quarters.

In Q1 2022/23, the number of Sheriff Summary cases called for trial is 16,170 and the number of evidence led trials is 1,589 both of which are similar to the volumes in Q4 2021/22

The percentage of trials adjourned due to lack of court time for Q1 2022/23 remains consistent with Q4 2021/22 at 1.2%.

Domestic abuse cases account for 28% of Sheriff Summary trials called and 37% of those Sheriff Summary trials in which evidence was led.

As at the end of June 2022, the volume of Sheriff Summary trials scheduled is 27,525, which is a 10% drop from the end of March 2022.

Domestic abuse scheduled trials decreased by 11% to 5,213 over the same period.

In Q1 2022/23, there were 16,124 complaints concluded which is 7% higher than in Q4 2021/22. Domestic abuse cases account for a quarter of all cases concluded in the period.

The Justice of the Peace Court

For the reporting quarter, the number of cases registered has increased by 12% on the previous quarter to 6,595.

The volume of evidence led trials is 227 for Q1 2022/23 a 52% increase on Q4 2021/22 (149). 0.9% of trials were adjourned due to lack of court time in Q1 2022/23, which is comparable to the previous three quarters.

The number of trials scheduled at the end of June 2022 has fallen by 11% to 6,711 when compared to the end of March 2022.

6,753 complaints were concluded in the quarter, 23% more than the number of complaints concluded in Q4 2021/22.

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 and 16.

Data tables

The Q1 2022/23 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

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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 December 2022. 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>.