

14 October 2021

Mr Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Convener

As part of the committee's briefing on the *Community Justice: Sustainable alternatives to custody* briefing paper on 30 September 2021, members requested further information on some areas. This information is set out below.

Variation in use of community sentences by crime type

The table below uses data from the annual Scottish Government Criminal Proceedings Scotland publications to show the proportion of people being sentenced to community sentences, as opposed to custody, by main crime types.

Proportion of those given a community sentence, compared to custody					
Crime type	2016	2017	2018	2019	Percentage point change
Crimes of dishonesty	45.9	44.3	39.9	46.3	0.4
Fire-raising, vandalism, etc.	67.1	63.6	59.8	63.0	-4.1
Miscellaneous offences	67.6	66.8	64.8	67.0	-0.7
Motor vehicle offences	75.2	73.9	75.2	77.8	2.6
Nonsexual crimes of violence	37.1	38.0	33.5	40.4	3.3
Other crimes	57.6	56.4	54.1	58.8	1.1
Sexual crimes	53.5	56.1	54.6	59.2	5.7

Victim notification scheme

Community justice is not part of this scheme, so it's not something that we looked at as part of this work.

This is a scheme run by the Scottish Prison Service and only applies to offenders who were sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment or more. It allows victims of crime to receive information about the offender involved, including when they are released, if they are transferred out of the country, or if they are eligible for temporary release. Victims of offenders who are sentenced to less than 18 months imprisonment are entitled to know when the offender is released, or if they escape.

National comparisons of community justice funding

Members were interested in how the proportion of justice funding in Scotland that is spent on community justice compared to countries with lower incarceration rates. We were unable to find any existing published analysis on this and making these comparisons within different justice systems is likely to be complex.

I hope the committee finds this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Boyle
Auditor General for Scotland