



Foreign &  
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INSIGHT UK



# Crime and Justice

In 1937 the 999 system was introduced – in an emergency telephone 999 to call for police, fire or ambulance services.

There are 128,470 policemen and women in England and Wales (March 2002).

The criminal justice system costs over £12 billion a year to run.

*'A long line of cases shows that it is not merely of some importance, but it is of fundamental importance that justice should not only be done, but should manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be done.'*

Lord Justice Hewart

The law in England and Wales is based on Acts of Parliament and 'common law'. Common law has been developed over hundreds of years through the judgments given in court. The legal system in Northern Ireland is similar.

Scottish law is quite distinct, based on Roman civil legal principles as well as English law.

The number of crimes solved varies according to the nature of the crime: about 91% of murders/homicides and 68% of violent crime are solved, but only about 3% of crimes against individuals and their property.

***Around 2 million people are prosecuted in the courts each year.***

A person cannot be prosecuted for the same crime twice.



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## The POLICE

Each area of England and Wales has its own police force, maintained by a police authority.

The first proper police force in England was the Metropolitan Police, formed in London in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel. The policemen were known as 'peelers' or 'bobbies'. By 1849 there were over 5,000 police officers in London. The Detective Department was formed in 1842.

*There are around 7,000 regular officers in the Police Service in Northern Ireland.*

**The Police Service in Scotland is divided into eight 'territorial' police forces.**

The police investigate crimes, make sure people obey the law and maintain public order. They look after traffic safety and work to prevent crime.

*The National Criminal Intelligence Service gathers and analyses intelligence on serious and organised crime.*

HM Inspectors of Constabulary (HMIC) can inspect any police force. They report to the Home Secretary and publish their reports.

All police forces have a part-time volunteer force, known as special constables. They do routine policing when needed so that the regulars can concentrate on an emergency. There are over 20,000 special constables in England and Wales.

British Transport Police is the national police service in England, Scotland and Wales for public transport. In 2000/01 70,000 crimes were dealt with.

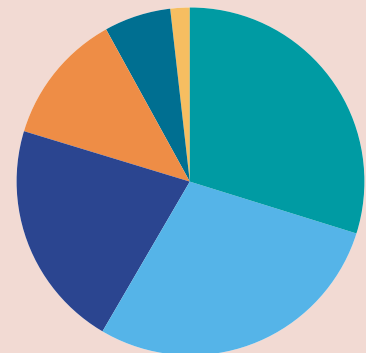
## CRIME

*In a study of 14- to 25-year-olds over half the males and a third of the females admitted to having committed a criminal offence at some time.*

**When an offence is reported to the police, the victim gives a statement and the police investigate the crime.**

*After identifying a suspect, the police will arrest them or report them to be summonsed by a court. The police make about two million arrests every year.*

Recorded crime by offence in Northern Ireland 2001/02



Key

- Theft 29.8%
- Criminal damage 28.6%
- Violent crime 21.3%
- Burglary 12.3%
- Fraud and forgery 6.2%
- Other offences 1.8%

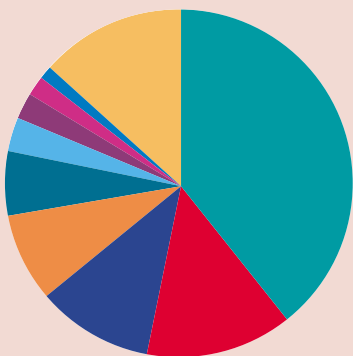
Source: Police Service of Northern Ireland



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A suspect who has been arrested will be informed of their rights and told by the police how to get free legal advice. They can consult a lawyer (solicitor) and have one with them at any police interview if they wish.

Recorded crimes by offence in England and Wales 2000



Key

● Theft and handling stolen goods	127,600	39.3%
● Drug offences	45,000	13.9%
● Violence against the person	35,500	10.9%
● Burglary	26,700	8.2%
● Fraud and forgery	19,100	5.9%
● Criminal damage	10,200	3.1%
● Motoring	7,700	2.4%
● Robbery	5,900	1.80%
● Sexual offences	3,900	1.2%
● Other offences	43,200	13.3%
<b>Total indictable offences</b>	<b>324,800</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Home Office *Criminal Justice System in England and Wales*.

After arrest, interviews and any more investigating, the police will decide whether to charge the suspect, to issue a formal caution or to release them with no further action. If the suspect is charged, they may be released on bail (allowed to go free on condition they appear in court) or in more serious cases kept in police custody until their case comes up in court.

The final court of appeal in England, Northern Ireland and Wales is the House of Lords. The High Court of Justiciary is the supreme court in Scotland.

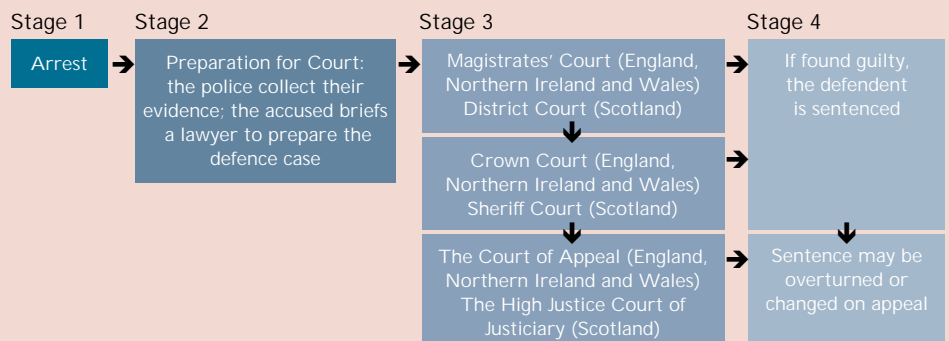
*Charges against and applications relating to children and young persons aged under 18 are dealt with by a youth court. This is made up of specially trained justices. It is not open to the public, and there must be at least one man and one woman among the three justices.*

Over 95% of all cases are dealt with completely at the magistrates' courts, usually by three Justices of the Peace (lay magistrates). Lay magistrates are advised on the law by professional clerks who are fully qualified lawyers.

## LEGAL SYSTEM

When someone is charged with a crime by the police, the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales or the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland and Scotland normally look at the case and decide whether it should go to court.

If it does, the case works like this:





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**More serious cases, appeals from the Magistrates' Courts and cases where the accused chooses to be tried by jury are heard at the Crown Court (Sheriff Court in Scotland).**

A Crown Court trial takes place before a judge and jury. The jury is made up of 12 people (15 in Scotland) who have been randomly chosen from the Electoral Register.

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the jury decides if the accused is 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. In Scotland the verdict can also be a 'not proven', where the accused is acquitted and free from further prosecution.

*During the trial, the prosecution and defence lawyers present their case, calling witnesses to support their case and cross-examining witnesses appearing for the other side.*

At the end of the trial, the judge sums up the case for the jury who then go into a private room to discuss their verdict.

If the accused is found guilty, the judge will decide on the sentence, the punishment for the crime.

## SENTENCES

There are four kinds of sentences: discharges, fines, community sentences and imprisonment. Fines are the most common. Imprisonment is the most severe penalty available to the courts and is usually only available for more serious offences.

*There are limits on the sentences magistrates can give.*

## COSTS

Nearly two-thirds of government spending on criminal justice system relates to the police.

In 1998/99, Home Office expenditure on crime prevention was approximately £12.6 million. The police and other criminal justice agencies also work on crime prevention.

**£250 million is being invested by the Government over three years from April 1999 to reduce the long-term rise in crime.**

In 1997/98 the estimated cost of court proceedings (excluding sentences) was £550 at magistrates' courts and £8,600 at the Crown Court. The estimated cost of a sentence was £250 at magistrates' courts and £23,900 at the Crown Court.

## Sources

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