

- CPS data on successful rape prosecutions include not only cases initially charged and flagged as rape, but also cases where a conviction was obtained for an alternative or lesser offence. The data is used for CPS case management purposes, alongside the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data on convictions of cases charged and convicted for rape. The flag is applied from the onset of the case; this flag will remain in place even if the rape charge is subsequently amended. The MoJ data is provided to contextualise the CPS performance data. This is for a calendar, rather than financial, year and only includes cases where the final conviction was for rape.
- Since 2007-08⁷, CPS performance management data has illustrated an increase of 10% in the volume of prosecutions and 19% in the volume of defendants convicted; the volume of defendants prosecuted has fallen slightly over the last year to 3,864;
- However, in 2011-12, most Areas⁸ increased the proportion of cases charged by CPS following referral from the police;
- More than half of the Areas⁹ also increased their caseload as a proportion of all indictable only offences;
- CPS successful outcomes¹⁰ rose by 4% in the last year to 62.5% - the highest recorded CPS conviction rate for rape since recording began;
- Ten Areas improved their attrition in the last year, three by over 10%;
- Guilty pleas increased even more - by 4.2% - from 35.7% in 2010-11 to 39.9% in 2011-12. Of all successful outcomes, 64% were due to guilty pleas, an increase of 3% from 61% in the previous year;
- Unsuccessful outcomes due to victim issues fell from 13.9% to 12% in 2011-12;
- A sample of approximately 25% of rape cases in each Area were assessed in more detail as part of the VAWG Assurance system bi-annually identifying local good practice and improvements;
- By February 2012, 849 rape specialist prosecutors were trained in the merits-based approach to deal with rape prosecutions;
- Guidance on charging perverting the course of justice in cases involving complainants in rape and/or domestic violence cases was published in July 2011; all potential cases were referred to the DPP for decisions for one year;
- A number of case studies are provided illustrating improvements in rape prosecutions through the merits-based approach; the introduction of Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Units; victim confidence; youth cases; multi-agency training and local support for victims through Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs).

Sexual offences (excluding rape)

- 8,334 defendants were prosecuted in 2011-12 for sexual offences, excluding rape;
- The proportion of successful outcomes rose to 75.7%, with a rise of nearly 3% in guilty pleas to 63% (83% of all successful outcomes);

⁷ CPS monitoring of rape cases started later than domestic violence.

⁸ 10 Areas increased their Charge to No Further Action ratio

⁹ Eight Areas increased their rape caseload as a percentage of all indictable only offences

¹⁰ Outcomes from charge to conviction.

Information on prosecutions and convictions is published quarterly by the Ministry of Justice, however, detail offence level data, e.g. rape, is only published annually for the complete calendar year, to ensure that all data has been received and validation processes have been completed.

CPS performance management data

There was a rise in the proportion of cases that were charged of those referred to the CPS by the police for charging decisions. In 2011-12, 42.1% were charged – a rise of 5.4ppt from the previous year³⁶. However accuracy of flagging of cases has fluctuated over the year, falling to 93.5% by the end of 2011-12.

From CPS data, 3,627 (97%) of cases initially flagged as rape were finally prosecuted for the principal offence³⁷ categories of 'sexual offences, including rape' or more serious principal offences of 'homicides' or 'offences against the person'. Of these 3,397 were for sexual offences including rape; four for homicide and 226 for offences against the person.

The CPS case management data (table 5) shows, the volume of defendants prosecuted has fallen slightly over the last year by 8% to 3,864, with successful prosecutions³⁸ falling slightly in volume by 2% to 2,414. However, eight Areas have improved their caseload as a proportion of all indictable only offences.

In 2011-12 there was a 4ppt reduction in rape attrition. The proportion of convictions, out of all cases prosecuted, has risen from 58.6% in 2010-11 to 62.5% in 2011-12. This is the highest recorded conviction rate for rape to date. In the last year fewer cases were discontinued – only 16.2% of all cases, a fall of 2.2ppt.

Guilty pleas increased even more - by 4.2ppt - from 35.7% in 2010-11 to 39.9% in 2011-12. Of all successful outcomes 64% were due to guilty pleas, an increase from 61% in the previous year.

Out of all reasons for unsuccessful outcomes, jury acquittals rose slightly - from just under 48% in 2010-11 to 51% in 2011-12. The rise in jury acquittals continues to suggest that more work may be needed with partners to address public awareness and challenge myths and stereotypes, which have traditionally led to high jury acquittal rates in sexual offence cases.

³⁶ Ten Areas increased the proportion of cases charged of those forwarded to CPS by the police for charging decisions.

³⁷ See Glossary for CPS definitions of 'principal offence' and the different categories. The principal offence category data recorded by the CPS in the Case Management System are understated when compared to overall prosecution volumes in the same period. Outcomes which resulted in an administrative finalisation or incomplete proceedings, where a principal offence category is not allocated, have been excluded.

³⁸ Outcomes from charge to conviction.

