

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL****Community Safety Committee****31 August 2016****Perth and Kinross Reconviction Rates 2013-14****Report by Director (Housing and Social Work)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report advises the Community Safety Committee on the Scottish Government reconviction figures for Perth and Kinross for 2013-14, the most recent year for which figures are available. Overall Perth and Kinross are the sixth best performing Local Authority Group for the reconviction rate and the seventh best performing Local Authority Group for the average number of convictions per offender. On each measure of reconviction, Perth and Kinross are placed well below the Scottish average.

**1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 Reducing offending is one of the 12 priority areas for action in the Scottish Government's Justice Strategy. Reconviction Rates continue to be used as a key measure of progress in achieving this reduction. Reducing reconviction rates is therefore one of the Scottish Government's National Indicators and locally, is an indicator in the Perth and Kinross Single Outcome Agreement.
- 1.2 In May 2016, the Scottish Government published its annual reconviction rate data. (See Appendix I) The data concerned the 2013-14 cohort of offenders and their rates of reconviction within a follow-up period of one year after their original conviction.
- 1.3 The reconviction rate data is published in relation to Community Justice Authorities and Local Authority Groups within Community Justice Authority areas. The Scottish Government data measures reconviction rates using two measures of reconviction. These are 'reconviction rate' and 'average number of reconvictions per offender.'
- 1.4 The 'reconviction rate' is the percentage of offenders in the cohort who were reconvicted one or more times within one year from the date of their index conviction. For example, a reconviction rate of 25% would mean that a quarter of offenders were reconvicted at least once in the year following their original conviction. This measure provides an indication of the progress in tackling overall offender recidivism.
- 1.5 However, it is acknowledged that this measure is not sensitive enough to detect individual-level progress as a result of interventions and programmes which may have been successful in reducing the number of reconvictions, but not complete desistance from crime by an offender. Therefore, a second

measure of reconviction, 'average number of reconvictions per offender' is also used.

- 1.6 The 'average number of reconvictions per offender' is a measure of the number of times offenders in a cohort are reconvicted within one year from the date of their index conviction. For example, if the average number of reconvictions per offender was 0.50, this would mean that on average, offenders have half a reconviction in the one year follow up period. As this measure is an average, this figure will include some offenders who have no reconvictions and some offenders who have multiple convictions.

## **2. PERTH AND KINROSS RECONVICTION FIGURES 2013-14: MAIN FINDINGS**

- 2.1 There were 912 offenders in the 2013-14 Perth and Kinross cohort who were reconvicted within one year of their index conviction giving a reconviction rate of 24.1%. This means that less than a quarter of offenders whose index convictions were located in Perth and Kinross were reconvicted at least once in the year following their index conviction.
- 2.2 The average of number of reconvictions for Perth and Kinross for the same offender cohort is 0.41. This means that on average, offenders have less than half a reconviction in the one year follow up period. As this measure is an average, this figure includes some offenders who have no reconvictions in the one year follow up period and some offenders who have multiple reconvictions.
- 2.3 Men have higher reconviction rates and a higher average number of reconvictions than women in Perth and Kinross. Reconviction rates were 24.6% for men and 21.3% for women with the average number of reconvictions 0.42 for men and 0.36 for women.
- 2.4 Younger offenders in Perth and Kinross have higher reconviction rates than older offenders. Offenders under 21 had a reconviction rate of 33.3% and an average number of reconvictions of 0.54. This compares favourably with the 31-40 age group which had a reconviction rate of 25.3% and an average number of reconvictions of 0.48.
- 2.5 Offenders with short custodial sentences were more likely to be reconvicted in Perth and Kinross than offenders with longer custodial sentences. Offenders with custodial sentences of 0-3 months had a reconviction rate of 53.5% and an average number of reconvictions of 0.95. This is compared with offenders who received a 3-6 month custodial sentence who had a reconviction rate of 44% and an average number of reconvictions of 0.85.
- 2.6 Crimes of dishonesty were the index crime type with the highest number of reconvictions in Perth and Kinross. Offenders who had originally committed a crime of dishonesty had a reconviction rate of 40.8% and an average number of reconvictions of 0.82. This is compared with the index crime type of

damage which had the second highest number of reconvictions, with a reconviction rate of 34.1% and an average number of reconvictions of 0.59.

### 3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY GROUPS AND NATIONAL DATA

3.1 Figures for Perth and Kinross compare extremely favourably with figures for Scotland. The overall reconviction rate and average number of reconvictions for Perth and Kinross is lower than the figure for Scotland.

3.2 Reconviction rates and average number of reconvictions for the measures previously discussed: males and females; different age groups; custodial sentence lengths and crime types all show that the Perth and Kinross figures are also lower than the figures for Scotland.

3.3 When compared with the reconviction rates of the other 24 Local Authority Groups, Perth and Kinross has the 6th best overall reconviction rate.

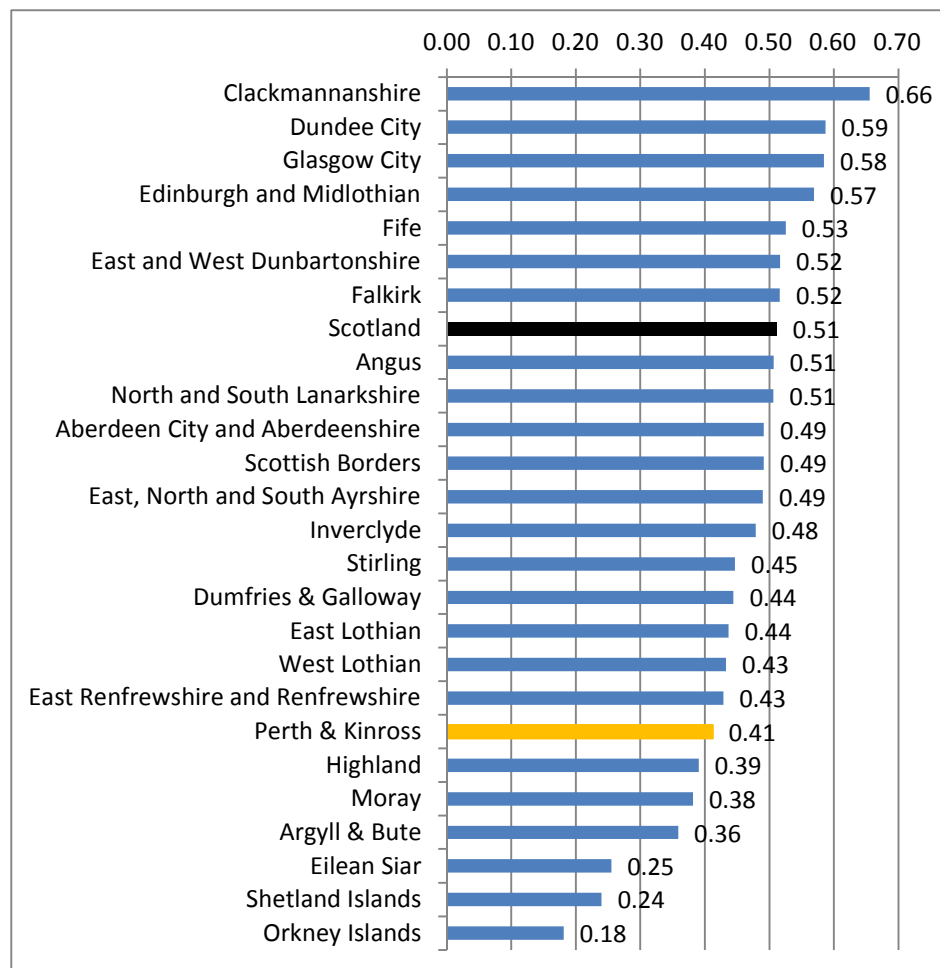


Figure 1. Reconviction Rate 2013-14 for all 25 Local Authority Groups

3.4 Perth and Kinross figures were in the top 5 best performing Local Authority Groups for:

- Male offenders
- Offenders aged 21-25
- Offenders aged 26-30
- Offenders aged 40+

The lowest performing measures for Perth and Kinross when compared with the other Local Authority Groups were crimes of dishonesty and offenders aged under 21 which were 13th and 14th respectively.

3.5 Perth and Kinross also has the 7th best overall average number of reconvictions when compared with the other Local Authority Groups. Perth and Kinross figures were in the top 5 best performing Local Authority Groups for:

- Offenders aged 21-25
- Offenders who were given a custodial sentence

The lowest performing measures for Perth and Kinross when compared with the other Local Authority Groups were offenders aged 31-40 and crimes of dishonesty which were 13th and 14th respectively.

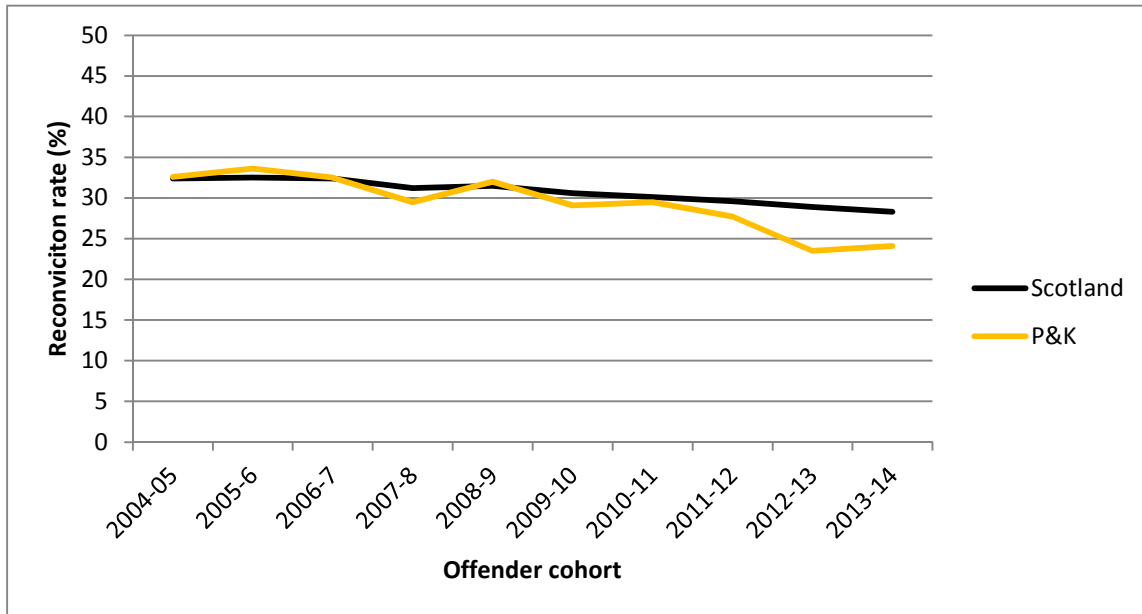
3.6 From a Tayside Community Justice Authority perspective, Perth and Kinross also compares extremely favourably with the other Tayside Local Authority Groups. Perth and Kinross has the lowest overall reconviction rate and the lowest overall average number of reconvictions when compared with Dundee and Angus.

3.7 When considering the range of measures previously discussed, Perth and Kinross also has the lowest reconviction rate on all measures when compared with Dundee and Angus, apart from for offenders given a custodial sentence of 0-3 months and offenders given a custodial sentence of 6 months to 2 years.

3.8 Perth and Kinross also has the lowest average number of reconvictions for all measures when compared with Dundee and Angus, apart from for female offenders which sees Angus with the same average number of reconvictions.

#### **4. TREND DATA: PERFORMANCE SINCE 2004-05**

4.1 The reconviction rate and the average number of reconvictions per offender for Scotland are both at their lowest for 17 years. In Perth and Kinross, the reconviction rate has fallen 8.5 percentage points since 2004-05, from 32.6% to 24.1%. Similarly, the average number of reconvictions has fallen by 0.25, from 0.66 to 0.41.



*Figure 2. Reconviction Rate 2004-05 to 2013-14 for Perth and Kinross Local Authority Group and Scotland.*

- 4.2 Both the reconviction rate and average number of reconvictions have risen slightly for the 2013-14 cohort of offenders in Perth and Kinross by 0.6 percentage points and 0.03 respectively, when compared with the data for the 2012-13 cohort of offenders. While there has been a decrease of 33 in the number of offenders reconvicted since 2012-13, there has been a slight rise in both measures of reconviction.
- 4.3 This is attributable to an increase of 20 in the number of reconvictions for the 2013-2014 offender cohort. As Perth and Kinross has a relatively small number of offenders and reconvictions, small changes in the number of offenders or number of reconvictions can lead to larger changes in measures of reconviction.
- 4.4 However, the overall trend for Perth and Kinross since 2004-05 is one of a reducing reconviction rate and average number of reconvictions.

## **5. LIMITATIONS OF USING RECONVICTION RATE DATA**

- 5.1 Reconviction rates continue to be one of the main measures of the criminal justice system in Scotland used to determine the effectiveness of punishment and rehabilitation of offenders. However, a limitation of using reconviction rates is that they act as a proxy measure of recidivism as not all offences reported to the police or recorded by the police result in a conviction.
- 5.2 From a local perspective, there are a further two key reasons why measures of reconviction are of limited usefulness. Firstly, measures of reconviction do not take account of underlying population size and characteristics of offenders (age, gender, crime, disposal, ethnicity, deprivation etc.) in each area. When these differences are controlled for, local differences in reconviction rates

almost disappear. Therefore, apparent differences in reconviction rates are primarily attributable to variation in these characteristics rather than differences in performance between Local Authority Groups.

- 5.3 Secondly, reconviction rates are affected by a range of variables so it would be difficult to determine what factors are responsible for any observed changes to reconviction rates, and hence to make an informed judgement on 'what worked' (or didn't work) in terms of actions. For example, reconviction rates can be influenced by local variations in practice and wider systemic and structural changes over time, including changes in police/prosecution policy and practice and legislation.

## **6. NEW MODEL FOR COMMUNITY JUSTICE: AN OUTCOME-FOCUSSED APPROACH**

- 6.1 For the reasons outlined above, the Scottish Government's new model of Community Justice will see the establishment of a National Outcomes and Performance Framework that shifts the focus away from reconviction rates as the main measure of performance and instead adopts an outcome-focussed approach, designed to deliver the Scottish Government's Vision for Community Justice.
- 6.2 The new Performance Framework is intended to enable partners to focus on improvements that are of relevance to their local area, rather than simply being a performance management tool.
- 6.3 Therefore, there is likely to be far less focus on reconviction rates as a measure of performance at a local level as Community Justice Partners concentrate on developing and implementing local community justice improvement plans to highlight how the nationally determined common outcomes will be achieved.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 7.1 The current approach adopted by the Community Safety Service of partnership working with stakeholders and communities to reduce reoffending is continuing to produce positive results. This is evidenced by the most recent reconviction rate figures which see Perth and Kinross the sixth best performing Local Authority Group in Scotland.
- 7.2 Since 2004-05, the overall trend for Perth and Kinross is one of a reducing reconviction rate and figures for Perth and Kinross continue to be below the Scotland and Tayside figures.
- 7.3 Continuing to reduce the number of offenders who reoffend and are subsequently reconvicted presents significant challenges to all partners involved in Criminal Justice System. However, the introduction of a new outcome-focussed approach to performance will enable partners to focus on improvements that are of direct local relevance. Therefore the Service will continue to work with partners and communities to provide a co-ordinated

approach towards the needs of those within the Criminal Justice System in order to reduce reoffending.

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the contents of the report
- (ii) Instruct the Executive Director to being forward a further report to Committee in 12 months' time on the reconviction figures for the 2014-15 cohort of offenders following publication by the Scottish Government.

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**Approved**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Date</b>
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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>N/A</b>
Workforce	<b>N/A</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>N/A</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>N/A</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>N/A</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>N/A</b>
Risk	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	
External	
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>N/A</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
  - (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
  - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

The Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2013/2018 set out five strategic objectives:

- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iv) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (v) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives



## 2. Resource Implications

### Financial

2.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### Workforce

2.2 There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 There are no asset management implications arising from this report.

## 3. Assessments

### Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

(i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

The proposals have been considered under the Act and no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

### Sustainability

3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.

Not relevant.

## Legal and Governance

- 3.4 There are no legal governance issues associated with this report.

## Risk

- 3.5 Not relevant

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

- 4.1 Not relevant

### External

- 4.2 Not relevant

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 Not relevant

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report:

## **3. APPENDICES**

Appendix I - Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin – Reconviction Rates in Scotland: 2013-14 Offender Cohort