

Public perceptions of sentencing

National survey report

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Carolyn Black, Rachel Warren, and Rachel Ormston of Ipsos MORI Scotland
Professor Cyrus Tata of the University of Strathclyde

Analysis of a national quantitative survey on public perceptions of sentencing by Scottish courts prepared for the consideration of the Scottish Sentencing Council. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Council.

www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk
sentencingcouncil@scotcourts.gov.uk



Ipsos MORI
Social Research Institute

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Carolyn Black, Rachel Warren and Rachel Ormston

Ipsos MORI Scotland

Professor Cyrus Tata

University of Strathclyde



Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Glossary	2
Introduction and methods	4
Introduction	4
Methodology	4
General perceptions of sentencing	8
Awareness of sentencing in Scotland	8
Views on Scotland’s criminal justice system and sentencing practice	10
Sentencing young people	18
Attitudes to specific offences	21
Death by driving offences	21
Attitudes towards sexual offences	28
Conclusions	40
Attitudes to specific offences	41
References	44
Appendix A – Questionnaire	45

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Carolyn Black

Rachel Warren

Rachel Ormston

Glossary

Admonition – An admonition is where an accused person found guilty of a crime is warned not to offend again. It is recorded as a conviction and appears on their criminal record. No other penalty is given.

Aggravating/mitigating circumstances – Circumstantial factors that are likely to make a sentence more severe are called ‘aggravating’ and factors that are likely to make a sentence less severe are called ‘mitigating’.

Aggravating factors may include multiple fatalities/victims or other convictions for crimes the person has committed in the past.

Mitigating factors may include if the offender has demonstrated genuine remorse, if they are very young or very old or have health issues.

Community payback order (CPO) – This is an order that is community based. It is given as an alternative to a custodial (prison or detention) sentence. It can be made-up of one or more parts. There is a wide range of requirements which can be part of this order. These include:

- up to 300 hours unpaid work
- supervision – working with a social worker to change offending behaviour
- paying compensation (money) to the victim of the crime
- attending programmes – such as those dealing with domestic abuse or sexual offences
- receiving treatments – such as mental health, drug or alcohol.

Compensation order – Offenders convicted of an offence involving a victim can be ordered to pay money to that victim. The victim can be a person who has been injured, had property damaged or been distressed as a result of the crime. The offender pays the money to the court which gives it to the victim.

Custodial sentence – This is a sentence of imprisonment. Those over 21 are sent to prison and youths aged 16 to 21 are sent to a young offender’s institution.

Death by careless driving – When the offender’s driving falls below the standard expected of a competent and careful driver, resulting in the death of another person or persons.

Death by dangerous driving – When the offender’s driving falls far below the standard expected of a competent and careful driver and it would be obvious that driving in that way would be dangerous, resulting in the death of another person or persons.

Drug treatment and testing orders – These orders are designed to assist offenders to reduce their drug use and related offending.

Electronic tagging – People released from prison into the community during their sentence can be fitted with an electronic tag to let police know where they are. They must usually stay at an agreed address for about 12 hours every night. Other conditions can be set for each person depending on their offence. Any offender who breaks the curfew can be taken back to prison.

Historical offence – While there is no precise definition of this term, it typically describes a situation where there is a significant gap (often many years) between an offence occurring and it being reported and dealt with by the courts. Depending on when the offence was committed, the law or sentence levels that applied at the time may differ to those in place now. In that case, an offender will be subject to the law as it was when the offence was committed.

Plea – A plea is the answer the accused gives to the court at the beginning of a case when asked if they are guilty or not guilty of the offence.

Rehabilitation – This can be helping people to change their offending behaviour and live productive lives in society. This could be training in life skills within prison or in the community.

Re-offending – Re-offending is when a person who has committed an offence (or offences) already, commits another offence.

Scottish Sentencing Council – The Scottish Sentencing Council is an independent statutory advisory body with responsibility for preparing sentencing guidelines for the Scottish courts.

Introduction and methods

Introduction

Since its foundation in 2015, the Scottish Sentencing Council has held ongoing responsibilities to prepare sentencing guidelines for Scottish courts; publish guideline judgments issued by the courts, and publish information about the sentences handed down by the courts. Beyond these aspects of its role, the Council also conducts research and provides general advice on sentencing policy.

In its 2015-2018 business plan, the Scottish Sentencing Council committed to undertake work on a guideline on the sentencing of young people; two offence-specific guidelines, including causing death by driving offences, and preparatory work on sexual offences.

To inform these guidelines and scoping work, as well as its general advice on sentencing policy, the Council commissioned Ipsos MORI, the independent research organisation, to conduct research to advance understanding of current public knowledge about and attitudes towards sentencing in Scotland.

The research investigated:

- How lenient/punitive current sentencing is perceived to be
- Views on what the purposes of sentencing should be (in general and in specific types of cases – for example, sentencing young people)
- The accuracy of beliefs about current sentencing (e.g. the proportion of custodial sentences given)
- Views on what sentences ought to be given to particular offences (namely death by driving offences and sexual offences)
- How public views on sentencing vary depending on specific mitigating and aggravating factors
- Awareness of different sentencing options.

Methodology

The methodology for the research was a 15-minute telephone survey with 1000 adult residents in Scotland, conducted by Ipsos MORI's specialist telephone interviewing centre based in Edinburgh, with quotas set on region, gender, age and working status.

Fieldwork was conducted between 13th March and 7th April 2019.

Sampling

To ensure robust, representative findings, the telephone survey sample was generated using a combination of methods.

First, random digit dialling (RDD), which generates telephone numbers within a fixed area at random, thus ensuring the inclusion of numbers that are unlisted and ex-directory.

In combination with RDD, a supplementary approach was taken: targeted sampling including mobile phone numbers. This combination of approaches was taken to address the limitation of RDD – that it generates landline numbers only and thus excludes the estimated 17% of Scottish households which are mobile-only – typically the younger, more transient sections of society. Targeted sampling draws on data from the electoral roll and national consumer surveys to identify individuals who have agreed to be re-contacted for marketing and research purposes. The data available on these individuals includes a range of demographic information, thus allowing for the effective targeting of different groups.

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was drafted by Ipsos MORI with expert input from Sheriff Nigel Morrison QC, Professor Cyrus Tata and Dr Rachel McPherson, drawing on relevant existing material including questions from:

- the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (conducted by Ipsos MORI)
- the Crime Survey for England and Wales
- Ipsos MORI's survey on attitudes to guilty plea sentence reductions for the Sentencing Council for England and Wales (Dawes et al, 2011) and
- the Glasgow Household Survey (conducted by Ipsos MORI Scotland).

Following the initial draft of the questionnaire, cognitive testing interviews were conducted by telephone with 13 members of the public, primarily from Ipsos MORI Scottish Household Survey participants who had consented to re-contact for further research. Participants included a roughly even split by gender and a mix of age-groups and qualification levels (since educational status may impact on understanding of the questions).

This process helped to identify areas for improvement such as rewording questions where there appeared to be scope for misunderstanding or misinterpretation among respondents; and shortening or condensing answer options where participants found it difficult to recall the answer options in full. Most changes were made during the cognitive testing, so that they could be tested before the mainstage fieldwork.

Survey profile

The table below shows the breakdown of respondents by gender, age, working status and region. In almost all these respects, the sample is in line with the Scottish profile, with the exception of the youngest age group (18-34) which is below that of the population. Weighting however, was applied to account for the effects of any divergence from the population profile in the results.

Table 1 Sample profile versus population

	Sample	Scottish Profile
Male	49%	48%
Female	51%	52%
18-34	19%	30%
35 – 54	36%	33%
55+	45%	37%
Working full time	42%	42%
Not working full time	58%	58%
Central	11%	12%
Glasgow	11%	13%
Highlands and Islands	10%	8%
Lothians	14%	14%
Mid Lothian and Fife	12%	12%
North East Scotland	12%	14%
South	12%	13%
West	13%	13%
Refused to give postcode	5%	

Limitations of the research

As with any research project there were a number of limitations to this study:

1. The sentencing for any particular offence is influenced by a myriad of factors, including aggravating and mitigating factors, whether the offender has a criminal record, and the seriousness of the offence. We are therefore only able to say what respondents' thought sentences should be for the scenarios read to them, rather than for an entire class of offences (e.g. rape offences).
2. Participants in the survey were provided with hypothetical sentencing scenarios. In all cases, sentencing is a matter for the individual judge and will take into account all the facts of the case and the circumstances of the offender. Due to the limitations of a telephone survey, however, it was not possible to provide all the factors that might be taken into account in a courtroom setting. As a result, any likely sentence must be viewed as no more than indicative of the type of sentence that an offence of this nature may get. Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. The likely sentences should therefore not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.
3. Due to limitations of space, the questionnaire was not able to address the issue of offenders serving part of their sentence 'on licence' (i.e. are released from prison and serve the remainder of their sentence in the community but under certain conditions).

Interpretation of the data

Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100%, this can be explained by the rounding of results to the nearest 1% or the exclusion of don't know categories.

All percentages cited in this report are based on the weighted data and are rounded to the nearest whole number. All differences described in the text (e.g. between different groups of people) are statistically significant at the 95% level or above, unless otherwise specified. This means that the probability of having found a difference of at least this size, if there was no actual difference in the population, is 5% or less. The term 'significant' is used in this report to refer to statistical significance, and is not intended to imply substantive importance.

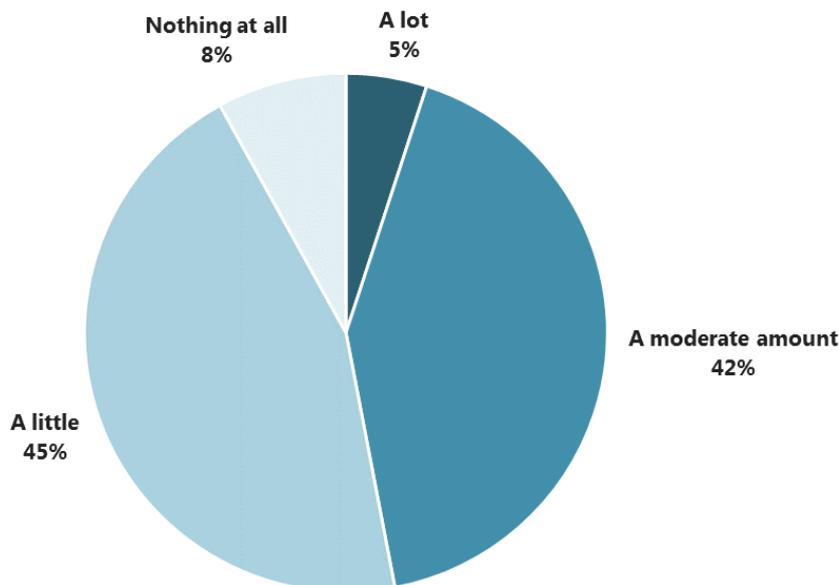
General perceptions of sentencing

In this chapter, we explore overall perceptions and awareness of sentencing among the general public. The report first covers self-assessed knowledge of the sentences given in Scottish courts and awareness of the different sentencing options available, and then goes on to discuss views on the fairness of the sentences given, community sentences, the purpose of sentencing, and the importance of mitigating and aggravating factors in sentencing.

Awareness of sentencing in Scotland

Overall, respondents were divided in terms of how much they felt they knew about sentencing, with around half (47%) feeling that they knew a moderate amount or a lot, and a similar proportion (53%) stating that they knew a little or nothing at all about the sentences given to people convicted of crimes in Scotland.

Figure 1.1: In general, how much, if anything, do you feel you know about the sentences given to people convicted of crimes in Scotland?



Base: 1001

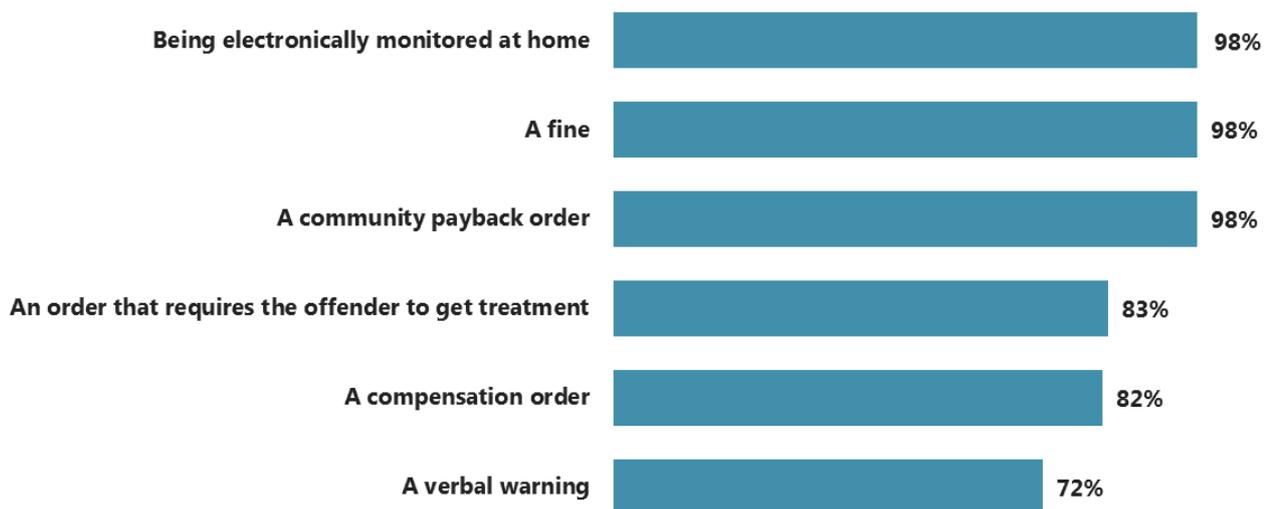
Self-assessed knowledge varied to some extent by level of education. Those with no formal qualifications were twice as likely as those with a degree or a school/college qualification to feel they knew nothing at all about sentencing (17%, compared with 7% and 6% respectively). There was no difference by age or gender.

Awareness of sentencing options

There was generally a high level of self-reported awareness of the existence of different sentencing options in Scotland with almost all respondents (98%) claiming to have heard of electronic monitoring, fines and a community payback order; and more than eight in ten saying they were aware of compensation orders (82%) and orders that require the offender to get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour (83%).

People were least likely to have heard of verbal warnings (admonitions) by the judge with just seven in ten (72%) respondents reporting to have heard of this type of sentence.

Figure 1.2: Which, if any, of the following sentences had you heard of before today?



Base: 1001

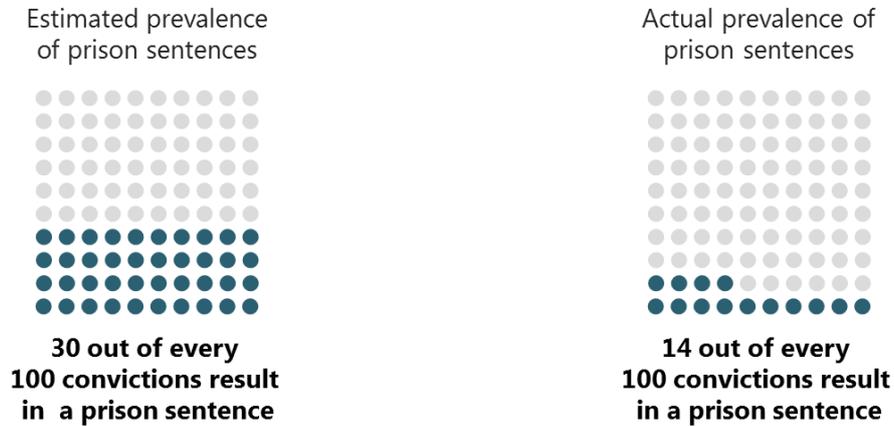
Custodial Sentences

Respondents tended to overestimate the incidence of prison sentences, which is perhaps consistent with previously noted low awareness of other sentencing options (TNS, 2007). Fewer than one in five (19%) respondents correctly placed the proportion of custodial sentences as a percentage of all sentences in Scotland between 10% and 20%.

The average (mean) estimate given of the percentage of custodial sentences was nearly a third (30%), and the median estimate was a quarter (25%), compared with the actual 2017-2018 figure of just 14%. While this tendency to overestimate the prevalence of custodial sentences was common among all demographic groups and education levels, it was most pronounced amongst those with no formal qualifications, with the mean estimate among this group being 35%. It was also more pronounced among women than men with the mean estimate among women being a third of sentences (33%) compared with just a quarter (26%) among men. Those who felt they knew a lot or a moderate amount

about the sentences given in Scotland also tended to overestimate the incidence of prison sentences, giving an average of 29%, though the mean figure was highest amongst those who felt they knew nothing at all about sentencing (36%).

Figure 1.3: Estimated versus actual¹ prevalence of custodial sentences

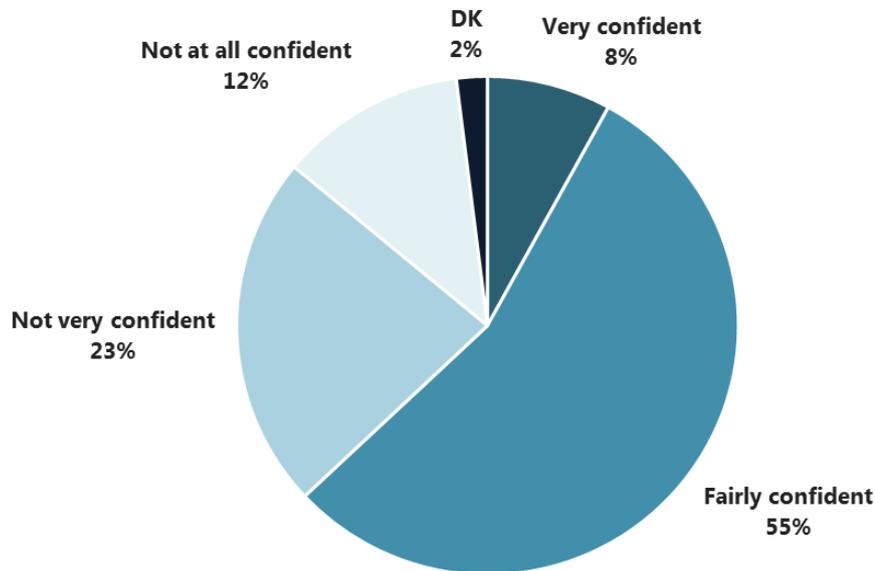


Views on Scotland's criminal justice system and sentencing practice

Confidence in the fairness of the system

One of the Scottish Sentencing Council's statutory objectives is to promote greater awareness and understanding of sentencing policy and practice. This may have the effect of promoting public confidence in the Scottish justice system as a whole. Overall, a majority of respondents expressed confidence in the fairness of Scotland's criminal justice system. Just under two thirds (63%) stated that they were confident that Scotland's criminal justice system is fair to all, while just over a third (35%) of respondents expressed a lack of confidence in the system.

¹ Based on 2017-18 data: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/criminal-proceedings-scotland-2017-18/pages/17/>

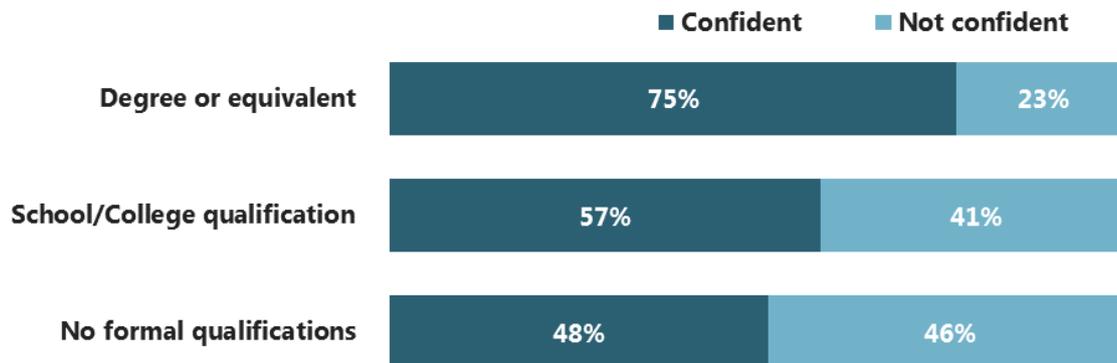
Figure 1.4: How confident are you that Scotland's criminal justice system as a whole is fair to all?

Base: 1001

Confidence levels were higher among more highly educated respondents than among less qualified respondents, with three quarters (75%) of those with a degree or an equivalent qualification expressing confidence in the fairness of the system, compared with 57% of those with school or college qualifications and fewer than half of those (48%) with no formal qualifications. This perhaps suggests that efforts to improve understanding and engagement with would be best focused amongst this latter group.

Self-assessed knowledge of sentencing was also related to confidence in the system. Those who felt they knew a lot or a moderate amount about sentencing were more likely to say they were not confident in the fairness of the system (43%) compared with those who stated that they know a little (28%) or nothing at all (22%).

Further, those who thought that crime in their local area had increased were more likely to express a lack of confidence in the fairness of the system. Almost half of those who reported an increase in local crime levels (45%) stated that they were not confident Scotland's criminal justice system is fair to all, compared with 29% of those who thought crime levels had stayed the same and 38% of those who felt crime levels had decreased.

Figure 1.5: Confidence in the fairness of Scotland's criminal justice system by highest qualification²

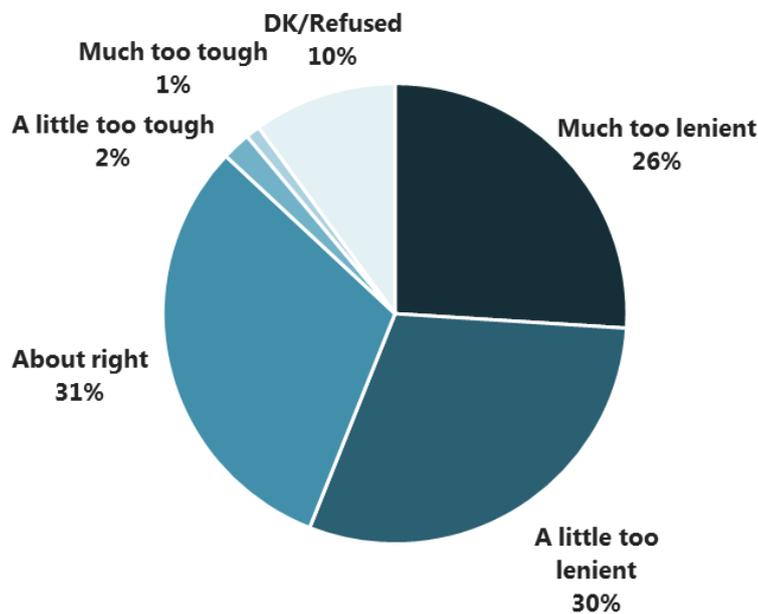
Base: Degree (369); School/College (459); No qualifications (103)

General views on the sentences handed out in Scotland's courts

Asked about their general views on the sentences handed out by courts in Scotland, a majority (56%) expressed the view that the sentences given tend to be too lenient, including over a quarter (26%) who felt they were much too lenient, while just under a third (31%) felt they were about right, and three per cent felt they were too tough on average. This is consistent with much existing research on public attitudes to sentencing, which has been marked by an overwhelming sense of leniency across the demographic spectrum (Hough et al, 2013).

² Don't know responses have not been included in this chart

Figure 1.6: In general, would you say that sentences given by the courts in Scotland tend to be....



Base: 1001

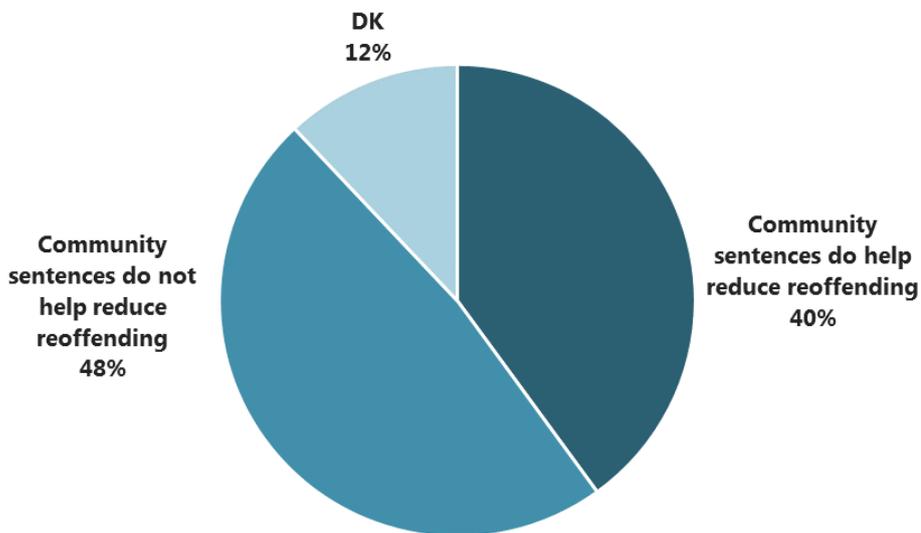
Perceptions of current sentencing practice varied to some extent by level of education. Forty-four per cent of graduates thought sentences tended to be 'about right', more than double the proportion of those with no formal qualifications (19%) and considerably more than the 25% of those with school and college qualifications who held the same view. Correspondingly, those with no formal qualifications were almost twice as likely as those with higher education to express a view that sentences tended to be too lenient (70%, compared with 39%).

Views on Community Sentences

In 2017-2018 in Scotland, 20% of the sentences handed down by courts in Scotland were community sentences, which can take a wide range of forms, most commonly through a community payback order (CPO), which can encompass offender supervision, compensation, unpaid work or other activity, mental health treatment, drug and alcohol treatment and mandatory participation in programmes aimed at rehabilitation. Drug testing orders and restriction of liberty orders which may include electronic monitoring are other community sentence options. But how does the public view the use of these sentences?

Views on the effectiveness of community sentences were mixed. Around half of respondents expressed a view that community sentences do not help to reduce reoffending (48%), while four in ten expressed a view that they *are* an effective means of reducing rates of reoffending (40%).

Figure 1.7: Thinking about community sentences, which of the following statements comes closest to your view?



Base: 1001

Those with a degree or equivalent tended to be more positive about community sentences with over half of this group (54%) stating that they felt community sentences *do* help to reduce reoffending, compared with one third of those with a school or college qualification (33%) and just under a third of those with no formal qualifications (30%).

Views on the purpose of sentencing

The Scottish Sentencing Council published guidelines in 2018 setting out the principles and purposes of sentencing. They identified the below five key purposes of sentencing, presented “in no particular order”, indicating they may have different weight depending on the context:

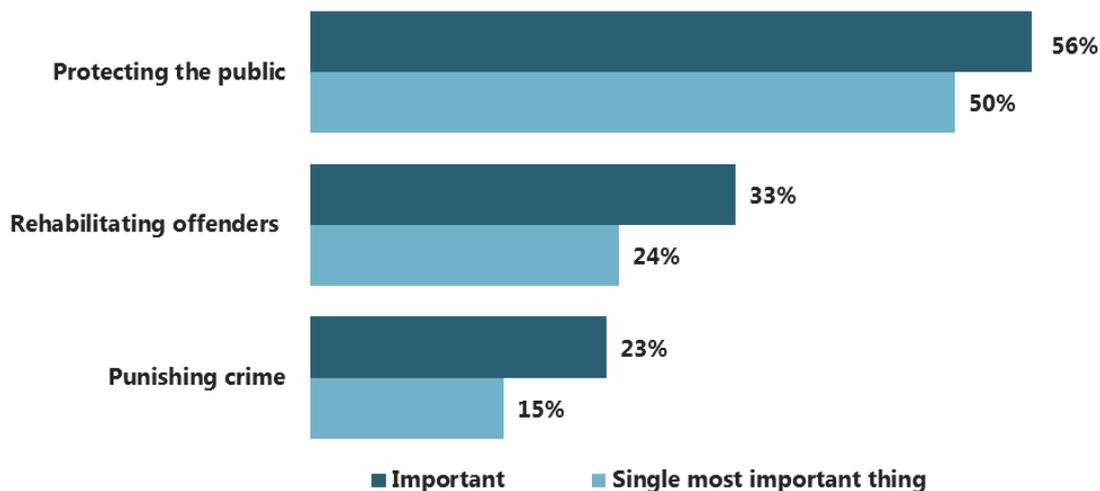
- Protection of the public through preventative measures and by deterring offending behaviour
- Punishment of offenders
- Rehabilitation of offenders
- Giving the offender the opportunity to make amends
- Expressing disapproval of criminal behaviour

Respondents were asked about what they felt sentencing should be trying to achieve, and were asked to consider the importance of three of the potential purposes of sentencing from the SSC’s 2018

publication: protecting the public, rehabilitating offenders and punishing crime. They were first asked which they thought were important, followed by which they thought was *most* important. The majority of respondents (56%) felt that protecting the public was one of the most important things that sentencing should be trying to achieve, while views on other potential aims were more mixed. One in three respondents (33%) felt that rehabilitating offenders should be an important consideration in sentencing, while around a quarter (23%) cited punishing crime as an important aim.

Views on the single most important thing sentencing should be trying to achieve were broadly consistent with this, with half of respondents giving priority to protecting the public (50%), a quarter giving priority to the rehabilitation of offenders (24%) and 15% giving priority to punishing crime.

Figure 1.8: Which, if any of the following do you think are the most important things Scottish Courts should be trying to achieve when setting sentences?³



Base: 1001

Those with a degree or equivalent qualification were more likely to give weight to rehabilitating offenders in their responses, with 42% of this group identifying it as one of the most important considerations in sentencing (compared with 28% of those with a school/college qualification and 25% of those with no formal qualifications). Indeed, one third of this group (33%) selected it as the single most important thing sentencing should be trying to achieve (compared with 20% of those with school/college qualifications and 16% of those with no formal qualifications).

Younger respondents were also more likely to give priority to rehabilitating offenders than the oldest respondents, with 30% of 18-34 year olds identifying it as the most important aim (compared with 21% of those aged 55+), while older respondents were more likely to give priority to punishing crime with

³ 9% of respondents answered that they could not choose one aim only when asked about their views on the single most important thing sentencing should be trying to achieve.

almost one in five (18%) of those aged of 55+ and of 35-54 year olds (17%) identifying it as the most important aim, compared with just 10% of 18-34 year olds.

Mitigating and aggravating circumstances

Judges can consider numerous contextual factors when sentencing offenders, which they balance alongside the facts of the case to decide on the most appropriate sentence. These fall into two broad categories – aggravating factors, which may lead the judge to decide on a tougher sentence, and mitigating circumstances, which may lead the judge to hand out a more lenient sentence. Examples of aggravating factors include significant previous convictions, the involvement of multiple victims or multiple incidents, evidence of prior planning, or a lack of remorse; while common mitigating factors include evidence of the offender's previous good character, or shown remorse following arrest, or that the offender is very young or very old. Pleading guilty can also sometimes be taken into account when setting a sentence. Respondents were asked about three circumstances judges might consider when deciding on what sentence to give an offender. They were asked in each case whether they felt the sentence given should be tougher, more lenient or no different as a result.

Broadly speaking, respondents felt that sentences should be tougher because of the two potentially aggravating circumstances (showing a lack of remorse and repeat offending) but no different as a result of pleading guilty, which in reality might result in a decreased sentence.

Repeat offending

Nine in ten (90%) respondents held the view that a repeat offender should receive a tougher sentence than a first-time offender, with just seven per cent arguing that it should make no difference to the sentence given, or that the sentence given should be more lenient.

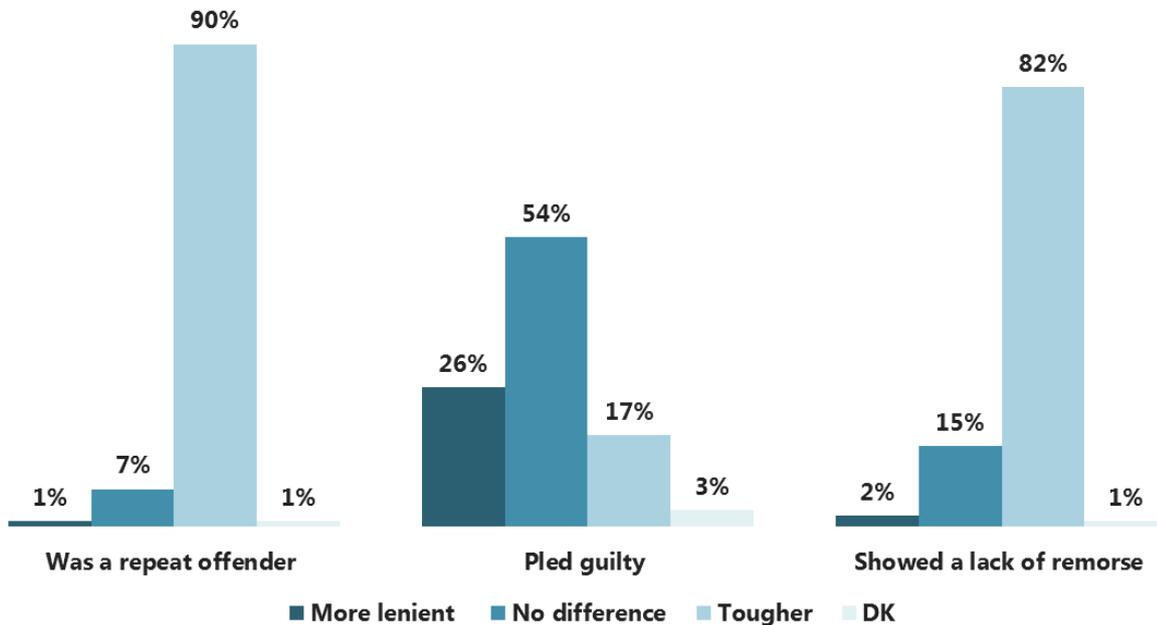
Lack of remorse

Similarly, eight in ten (82%) respondents felt that an offender who showed a lack of remorse should receive a tougher sentence on these grounds with just 15% saying that it should make no difference to the sentence given.

Guilty Plea

The majority of respondents (54%) felt that pleading guilty should make no difference to the sentence given to an offender generally. Just a quarter of respondents (26%) felt that an offender who pled guilty to an offence should be given a more lenient sentence and almost one in five felt that the sentence should be tougher as a result of the guilty plea (17%).

Figure 1.9: Please tell me whether you think it SHOULD make the sentence tougher, more lenient, or if it should make no difference if the person convicted...

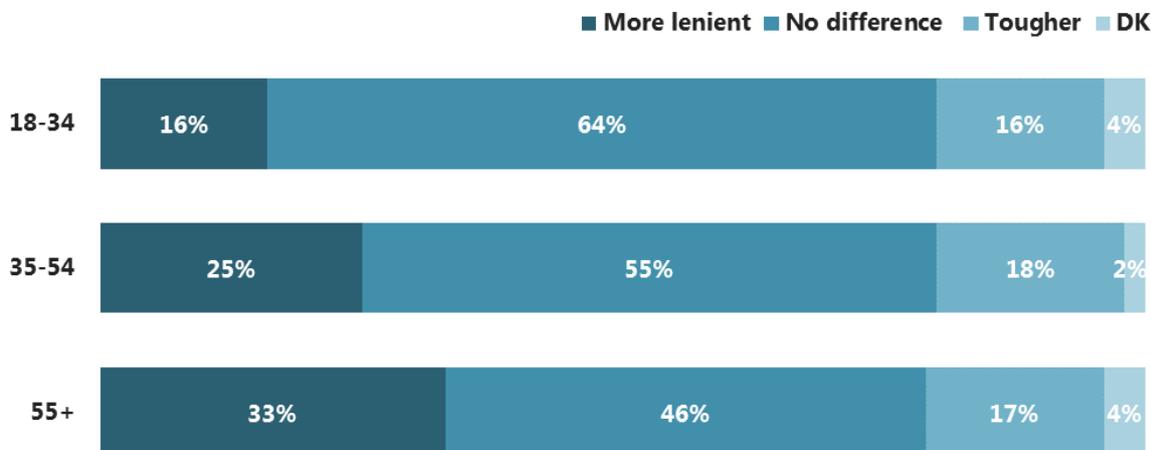


Base: 1001

Views on whether a guilty plea should change the sentence imposed varied to some extent by age, with the oldest respondents tending to be more lenient in their attitudes than younger respondents.

A third of those in the top age bracket, aged 55+, (33%) felt that an offender who pled guilty should receive a more lenient sentence as a result of the plea, compared with just 25% of those aged 35-54 and just 16% of those aged 18-34.

Figure 1.10: Please tell me whether you think it SHOULD make the sentence tougher, more lenient, or if it should make no difference if the person convicted pled guilty



Base: 18-34 (190) 34-54 (361) 55+(449)

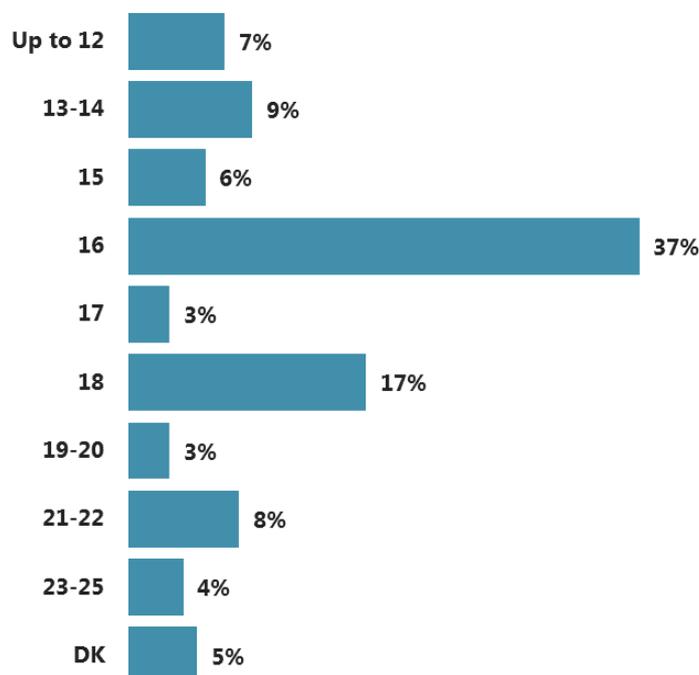
Sentencing young people

The way in which young people are dealt with by the criminal justice system is substantially different from the way in which older people are dealt with. Those under the age of 12 cannot be prosecuted, while children aged 12-15 or more can be prosecuted in the criminal courts (subject to the guidance of the Lord Advocate) or referred to the children's hearings system (SPICe, 2016). Custodial sentencing practices also differ among under 21 year olds: 13-15 year olds may be detained in secure accommodation for the safety of the public, and 16-21 year olds can be sentenced to detention in a young offenders' unit. More generally, judges may give more lenient sentences to younger offenders, though there are currently no strict guidelines on the upper age at which an offender can be considered 'young'.

The SSC is in the process of developing a new guideline on the sentencing of young people. It raises the question of whether a more nuanced approach should be taken to sentencing this group, taking into account the particular personal characteristics of the young person concerned such as their age and maturity, and the link between experience of trauma and traumatic bereavement on young offending (SSC business plan, 2018).

In this context, respondents were asked a range of questions on the sentencing of young people. Firstly, they were asked about the age up to which they felt an offender should be treated as a 'young person' for sentencing.

A very wide range of ages were given: at the lower end, 7% of respondents said 12 years old or under, while at the higher end, 5% of respondents answered 23 years old or over. However, over a third of respondents (37%) felt 16 was the appropriate age, and the average (mean) age given was 16.74.

Figure 1.11: Up to what age do you think someone should count as a 'young person' for sentencing?

Base: 1001

Secondly, respondents were asked what the sentencing of young people should aim to achieve, and were presented with the same potential considerations as when asked about the purpose of sentencing generally: rehabilitating offenders, protecting the public, and punishing crime.

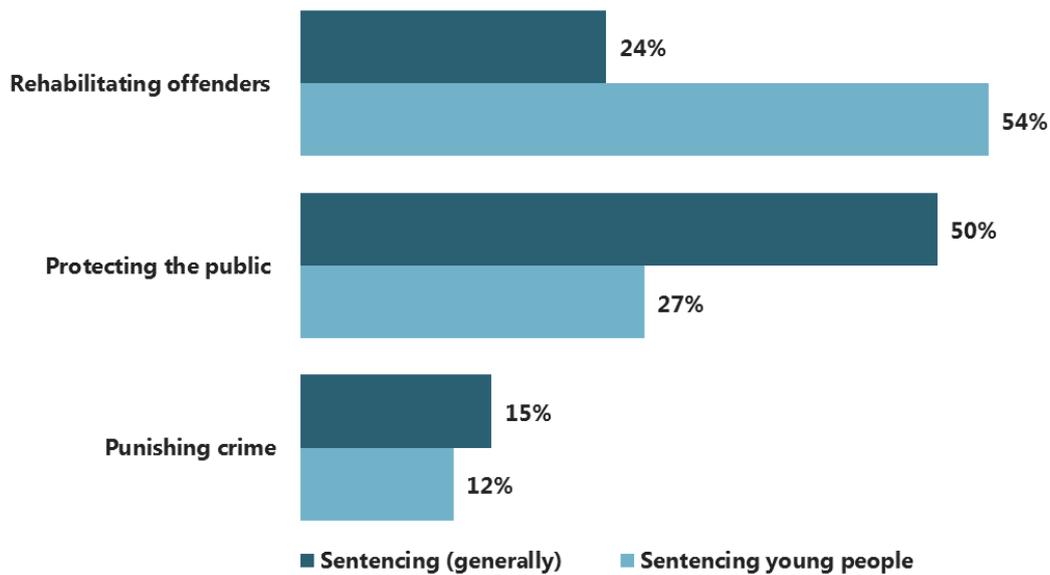
Generally, it was felt that sentencing younger offenders should serve a different purpose to sentencing in general, with greater emphasis on rehabilitation. Almost six in ten respondents felt that rehabilitation was one of the most important things the sentencing of young people should be trying to achieve (59%) and more than half of respondents identified it as the single most important thing to consider (54%). This emphasis on rehabilitation was higher still amongst those with a degree or equivalent. Seven in ten (70%) graduates identified it as an important consideration, compared with 55% of those with a school/college qualification and 45% with no formal qualifications; and almost two thirds (64%) considered it to be the single most important purpose of sentencing young people (compared with 50% and 40% of those with school/college qualifications and no qualifications respectively).

Protecting the public was thought to be the second most important consideration when sentencing young people, with a third (32%) of respondents identifying this as an important consideration and almost three in ten (27%) identifying it as the single most important consideration.

Punishing crime was considered to be the least important consideration of the three with fewer than one in five (17%) people expressing a view that it was one of the most important things the sentencing of

young people should be trying to achieve, and just one in ten (12%) respondents identifying it as the single most important consideration. Those who were not confident in the fairness of the criminal justice system were more likely to prioritise this aim (18% compared with 9% of those who said they *were* confident); as were those whose self-assessed knowledge of the criminal justice system was lowest (22% of those who felt they knew “nothing at all” about the system, compared with 10% who felt they knew a little and 12% who felt they knew a lot/moderate amount).

Figure 1.12: Views on the single most important thing Scottish courts should be trying to achieve when sentencing in general and when sentencing young people



Base: 1001

Attitudes to specific offences

The research aimed to explore Scottish public perceptions and understanding of sentencing in a number of specific areas, in addition to general attitudes. Previous research has shown that there is disparity between overall perspectives of sentencing and views about current sentencing practices for individual offences – specifically, that the public believe that sentences are too lenient in the abstract, but underestimate the severity of the sentences imposed for offences in practice (Hough et al, 2013; Cuthbertson, 2013; and Roberts et al, 2008).

In this chapter, we therefore cover views on sentencing five specific offences: causing death by careless driving; causing death by dangerous driving; rape; historical sexual assault and possession of indecent images of children. These offences have been selected because they reflect the two of the key areas in which the Scottish Sentencing Council has committed to developing specific sentencing guidelines in its 2018 business plan – death by driving offences and sexual offences.

It is important to note that it is not possible for a single survey to do justice to the full range of possible kinds of offences covered by these broad areas. While they have been narrowed down to five specific offences, we still cannot include all of the possible variation which may influence sentencing decisions – if we changed even one element of the descriptions provided to respondents, we do not know how perceptions may change.

Respondents were read case study style descriptions of the two death by driving offences and two of the three sexual offences. They were then asked for their views, unprompted, on what sentence they personally thought the offenders should get; what they thought the offenders *would* in reality get for the offences; and how they felt different circumstances should influence the sentences given. The full questionnaire is available in Appendix A.

Death by driving offences

Since the introduction of the Road Traffic Act 1960, causing death by means of a motor vehicle has been treated separately from murder and culpable homicide under statutory law, and is now specifically provided for by the UK-wide Road Traffic Act 1988. The two offences explored in the research were:

- death by careless driving, defined as when the offender's driving falls below the standard expected of a competent and careful driver, resulting in the death of another person or persons.
- death by dangerous driving, defined as when the offender's driving falls far below the standard expected of a competent and careful driver and it would be obvious that driving in that way would be dangerous, resulting in the death of another person or persons.

Scenario A: Death by careless driving

The first scenario described a case of death by careless driving. Respondents were presented with the following description:

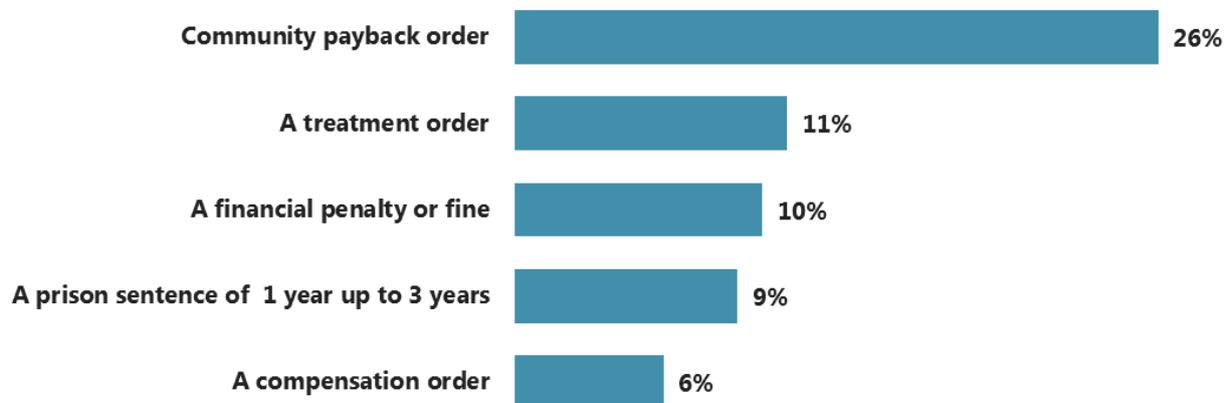
The offender is a 32 year-old man, with no previous criminal convictions. On his way to work, he was driving within the speed limit along a country road in daylight. On approaching a junction, he was distracted by an insect and did not notice an oncoming car. He pulled out in front and the two cars collided. The driver of the other car, a 26-year-old woman, was killed. The offender was breathalysed and the test result was negative. He pled guilty to causing death by careless driving.

Asked what sentence they personally thought the offender should get for this offence, respondents' answers ranged widely, from no sentence beyond disqualification from driving (6%), to a prison sentence of more than fifteen years (1%). The most common response was a community payback order, which was felt to be the most appropriate sentence by over a quarter of respondents (26%). Overall, one in five (21%) respondents thought the offender should get a prison sentence. This view was more common among younger respondents, held by 27% of 18-34 year olds compared with just 19% of 35-54 year olds and the same percentage of those aged over 55.

The likely sentence for the scenario presented to respondents was estimated to be a community payback order⁴. This is in line with the most common answer given. However, the results indicate that respondents are more likely to think that a custodial sentence or a financial penalty would be appropriate than is currently practice, and less likely to consider a community sentence.

⁴ Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

Figure 1.13: In addition to being disqualified from driving, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this specific case? (Death by Careless Driving, top 5 mentioned)

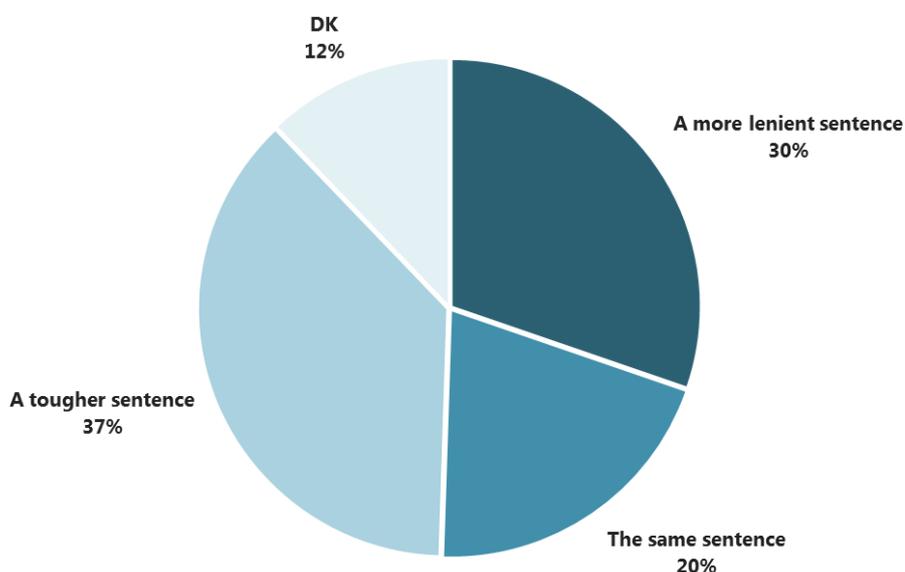


Base: 993⁵

Asked about what sentence they thought the offender would, *in reality*, get for this specific offence, respondents were divided. It was most common for respondents to express a view that the sentence given by the court would be tougher than the sentence that they personally felt the offender should get, with almost four in ten (37%) giving this answer. However, a similar proportion (30%) felt that the sentence given would be more lenient than the one they felt the offender should get. Just one in five respondents (20%) thought that the sentence given would be the same as the sentence they personally felt was appropriate. Those with a degree or equivalent were more likely to think the sentence given would be tougher than the one they would personally suggest (42%) compared with those with a school/college qualification or with no formal qualifications (34% and 31%, respectively).

⁵ As noted in the methodology, respondents were asked in advance of hearing the scenario if they would like to skip each particular offence for reasons of sensitivity so bases in this chapter may not reflect the full sample.

Figure 1.14: And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?



Base: 993

The question of whether the actual sentence for this offence would be more lenient, the same or tougher varied by the respondent’s suggested sentence. Those who thought a community sentence or a financial penalty should be imposed were more likely to say that they thought the actual sentence would be tougher than those who thought a custodial sentence would be appropriate.

Table 2: Whether actual sentence would be more lenient, the same or tougher by the top five sentences suggested

	Sentence respondents think the offender <i>should</i> get				
	Financial penalty	Community payback order	Compensation order	Treatment order	1-3 years in prison
Thinks actual sentence would be more lenient	21%	20%	38%	23%	49%
Thinks actual sentence would be the same	28%	26%	14%	22%	19%
Thinks actual sentence would be tougher	45%	47%	42%	46%	22%
Don't know	6%	7%	6%	10%	9%
<i>Bases</i>	103	264	61	115	82

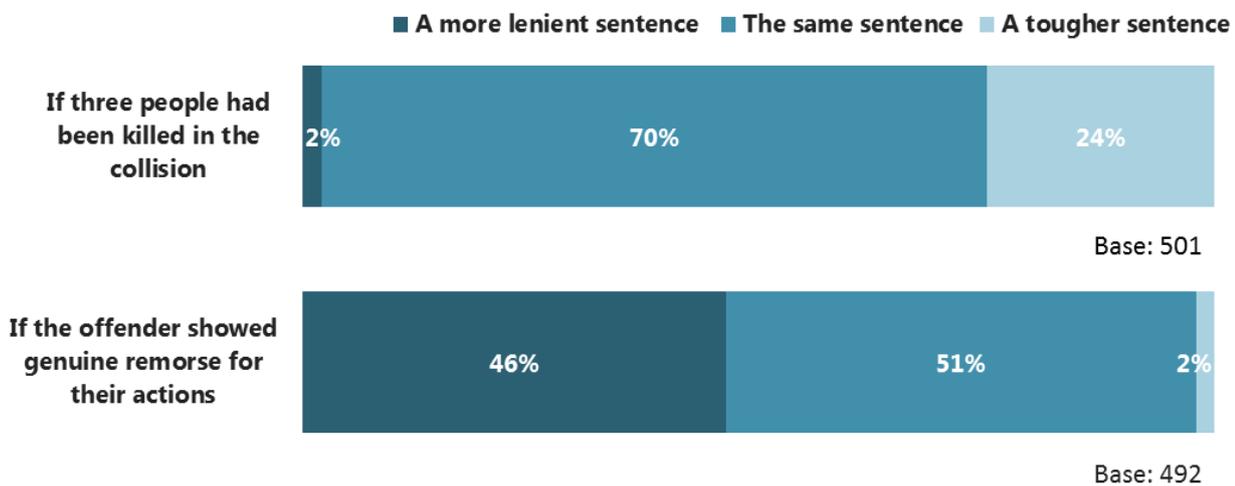
To further explore attitudes to how potential mitigating and aggravating factors should be taken into account when sentencing, half of the respondents were then asked if they would change the sentence if

the offender expressed genuine remorse and the other half were asked if they would change the sentence if three individuals had been killed rather than one.

Almost half of the respondents asked (46%) felt that the offender should receive a more lenient sentence if he showed genuine remorse for his actions, while half felt this should make no difference to the sentence given to the offender (51%).

Most respondents, however, (70%) felt that the sentence should be no different if three people had been killed in the collision, as opposed to just one, with just a quarter (24%) expressing a view that the sentence should be tougher as a result of multiple fatalities.

Figure 1.15: Views on the sentence the offender should receive for death by careless driving in different circumstances



Death by Dangerous Driving

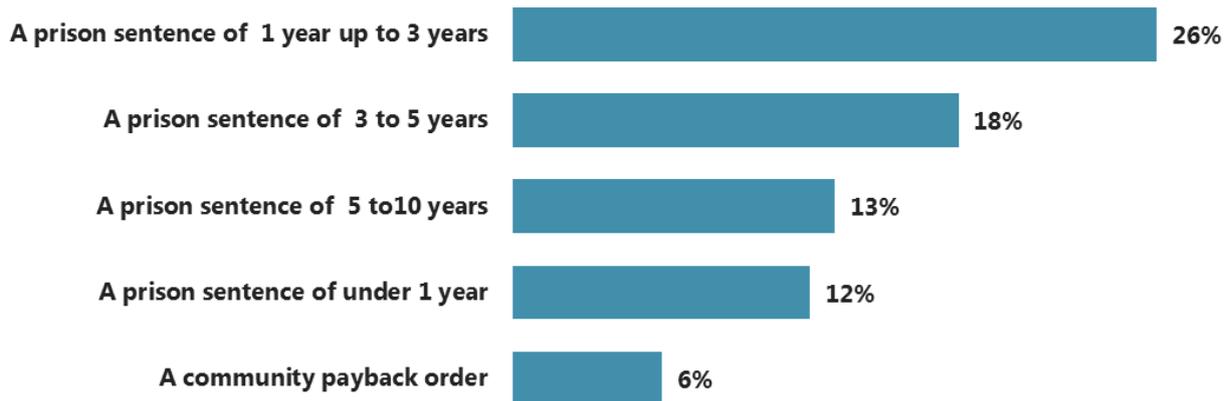
The second scenario described a case of death by dangerous driving. Respondents were presented with the following description:

The offender is a 32 year-old man, with no previous criminal convictions. On his way to work, he was driving 70 mph in a 50 mph zone during wet weather with poor visibility. When approaching a sharp bend, he did not slow down and lost control of the vehicle, colliding with an oncoming car. The driver of the other car was killed. The offender was breathalysed and the test result was negative. He pled guilty to causing death by dangerous driving.

Most respondents, indeed almost eight in ten, (77%) felt that the offender should receive a prison sentence for this offence. While there was a wide range of views on the length that the sentence should be, the most popular response was a prison sentence of 1 to 3 years, given by over a quarter of respondents (26%), followed by a prison sentence of 3 to 5 years, given by a further fifth of respondents (18%).

The estimated likely sentence⁶ for the scenario provided is a four year custodial sentence. While around a fifth of respondents were in line with probable sentencing practice, the majority were more lenient, thinking either a shorter prison sentence (38%) or a non-custodial sentence (23%) would be an appropriate sentence.

Figure 1.16: In addition to being disqualified by driving, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this specific case? (Death by Dangerous Driving)

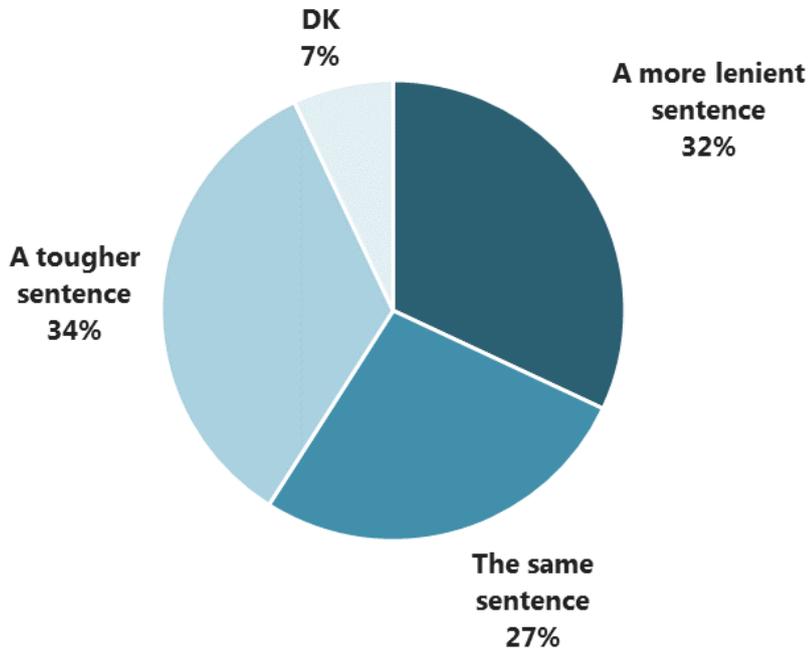


Base: 993

Around a third thought that the actual sentence would be more lenient (32%) than what they thought appropriate, with the same proportion believing the sentence given in reality would be tougher (34%) and three in ten of the view that the offender would get the same sentence in reality (27%).

⁶ Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

Figure 1.17: And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?



Base: 993

Again, views on the leniency of sentences in reality differed by what a respondent thought the sentence for death by dangerous driving should be. Those who thought a community payback order would be appropriate were likely to think a tougher sentence would be given (84%), an accurate perception based on the statistics. Among those who thought a custodial sentence was required, the longer the prison sentence thought appropriate, the more likely they were to believe the actual sentence would be too lenient.

Table 3: Whether actual sentence would be more lenient, the same or tougher by the top five sentences suggested

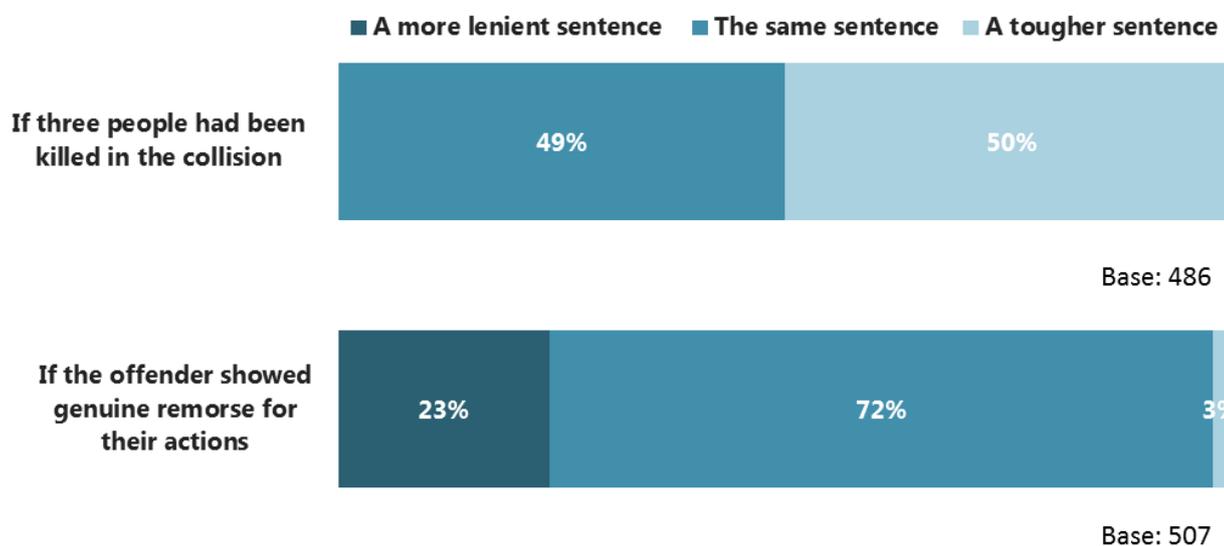
	Sentence respondents think the offender <i>should</i> get				
	Community payback order	Under 1 year in prison	1-3 years in prison	3-5 years in prison	5-10 years in prison
Thinks actual sentence would be more lenient	5%	23%	34%	37%	48%
Thinks actual sentence would be the same	11%	29%	33%	36%	29%
Thinks actual sentence would be tougher	84%	38%	25%	24%	20%
Don't know	0%	10%	7%	3%	3%
<i>Bases</i>	57	134	258	173	130

Respondents were then asked for their views on how various circumstances should influence the sentence given in this scenario. Generally, respondents were tougher in their responses in comparison with the death by careless driving scenario.

Half of the respondents asked (50%) were of the view that if three people had been killed in this collision, rather than one, the sentence given should be tougher – more than twice the number who expressed this view in relation to the death by careless driving scenario (24%).

Consistent with this, only half as many respondents (23%) felt that if the offender expressed genuine remorse for their actions they should receive a more lenient sentence compared with those who expressed this view in relation to the death by careless driving offender (46%).

Figure 1.18: Views on the sentence the offender should receive for death by dangerous driving in different circumstances



Attitudes towards sexual offences

Sexual offences are an area of increasing public concern, particularly in light of recent high profile campaigns such as the #metoo movement. As such, the Scottish Sentencing Council plan to create sentencing guidelines for this category of offences. A large number of offences fall under the umbrella of 'sexual offences' – the Sentencing Council for England and Wales' 2014 Sexual Offences Guidelines included guidelines for sentencing over 50 offences. This poses a challenge both for developing coherent, comprehensive, consistent guidelines, and for understanding public attitudes to sentencing sexual offences, which are likely to vary widely depending on factors including the age of the victim(s) and the nature/severity of the offence (as shown in McNaughton-Nicholls et al, 2012).

For reasons of sensitivity, respondents were only asked about two of the three sexual offences scenarios as it was felt that hearing all three scenarios would cause an unnecessary level of distress in some

respondents. Furthermore, respondents were told what each scenario covered before it was read out so that they could decide if they wished to continue or not (see full questionnaire in Appendix A).

Scenario C - Rape offence

Respondents were presented with the following scenario:

The offender is a 32 year-old man, with no previous criminal convictions. He invited his neighbour to his flat to watch a film. During the film he made sexual advances which she turned down; he then locked her in the flat and raped her. The victim was left bruised and upset. After she left, she rang the police and he was arrested and then tried and convicted of rape.

They were then asked what they thought the sentence for this offence should be – in addition to being added to the sex offenders' register.

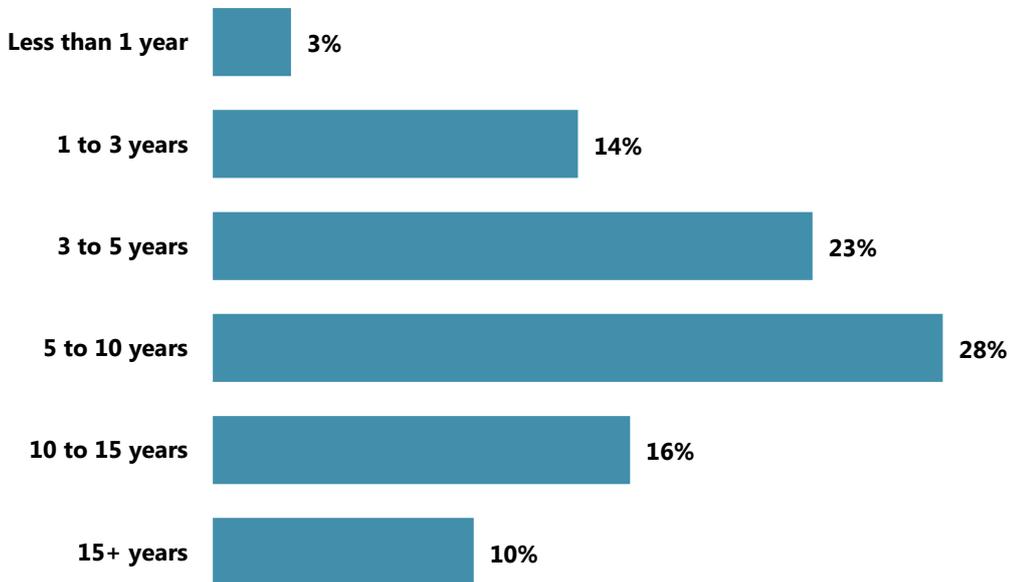
The vast majority of respondents (94%) said that they thought that the offender should be given a prison sentence, 2% thought that the offender should receive treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour, 2% did not know what sentence should be imposed and 1% said the death penalty⁷. The length of the custodial sentence they believed appropriate varied. The most common response was a sentence of 5-10 years (28%), followed by a sentence of 3 to 5 years (23%).

The likely sentence estimated for the rape offence presented was a custodial sentence of 5 to 6 years⁸. It therefore appears that the sentence that respondents most commonly thought appropriate was in line with actual sentencing practice for the offence of rape – although 26% thought a tougher sentence should apply in this case, while 40% suggested a shorter prison sentence.

⁷ The final 1% were coded as 'other' as answer categories were too small for analysis.

⁸ Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

Figure 1.19: Thinking about the specific case I have just read to you, in addition to being added to the sex offenders' register, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this offence?



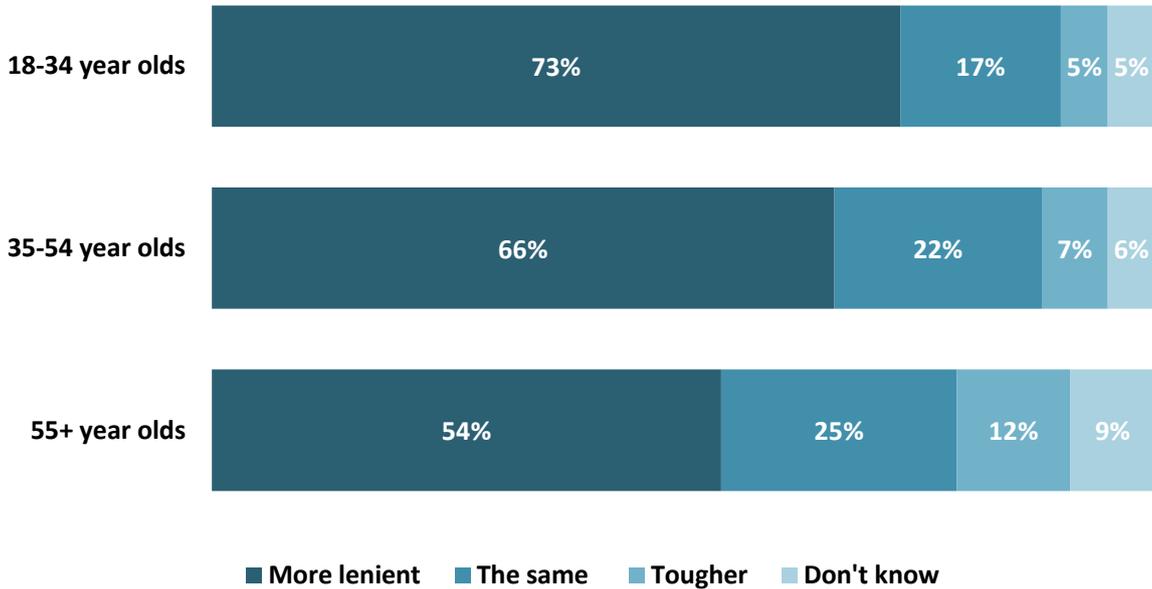
Base: 655⁹

However, respondents tended to believe what they thought appropriate was more punitive than what the courts would apply in reality, in line with previous research (McNaughton-Nicholls et al, 2012). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) thought that the offender would, in reality, get a more lenient sentence, while a fifth (21%) thought that they would get the same sentence. Only 8% thought that the offender would get a tougher sentence.

Perceptions of the leniency of actual sentences given for rape offences differed by age. Those aged 18-34 were most likely to think that the sentence given in reality would be more lenient than what they thought would be right (73%) when compared with 35-54 year olds (66%) and those aged 55 and over (54%).

⁹ Respondents were only asked about two of the three sexual offences to mitigate against respondent fatigue and distress which is reflected in the base sizes

Figure 1.20: And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?



Base: 651

When broken down by what sentence they thought should apply, respondents were still unlikely to think that a tougher sentence would be imposed in practice. However, the longer the sentence they thought appropriate, the more likely they were to think that a more lenient sentence would apply in reality.

Table 4: Whether actual sentence would be more lenient, the same or tougher by the prison sentences suggested

	Sentence respondents think the offender <i>should</i> get					
	Under 1 year in prison	1-3 years in prison	3-5 years in prison	5-10 years in prison	10-15 years in prison	More than 15 years in prison
Thinks actual sentence would be more lenient	41%	47%	57%	67%	80%	91%
Thinks actual sentence would be the same	47%	35%	27%	22%	10%	3%
Thinks actual sentence would be tougher	12%	9%	8%	7%	7%	5%
Don't know	0%	10%	7%	5%	4%	2%
<i>Bases</i>	93	156	188	94	59	93

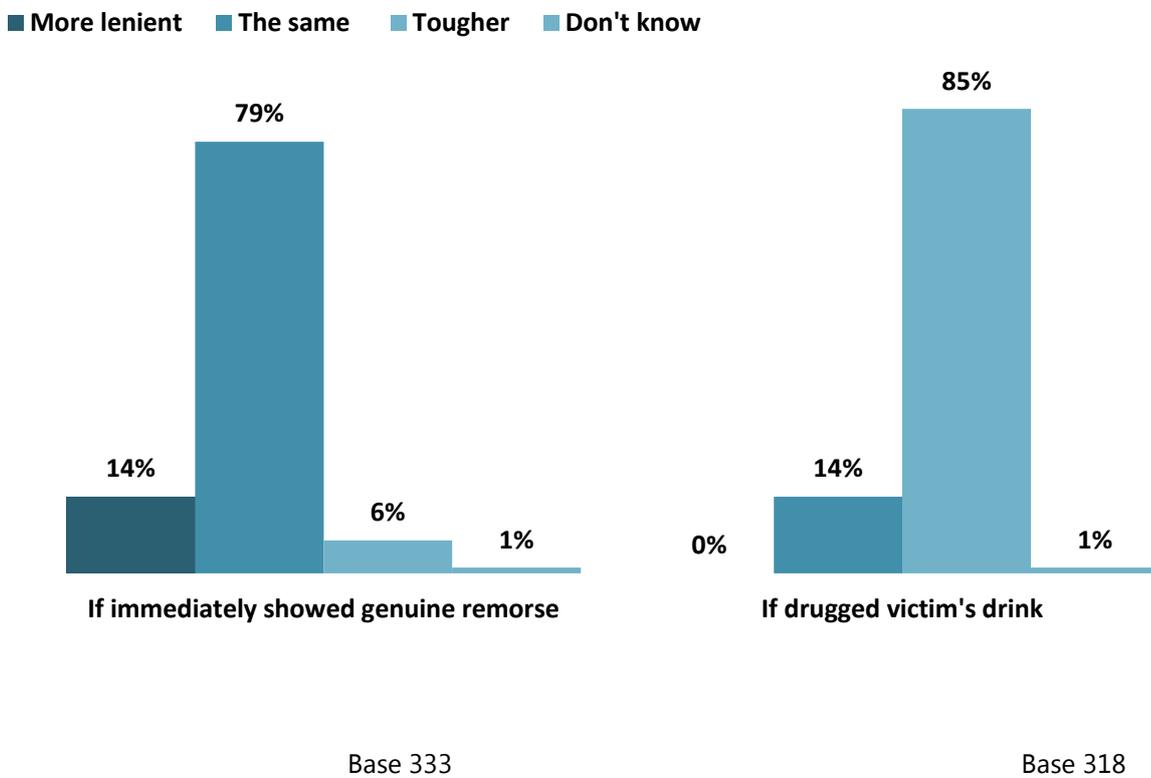
Respondents were then asked to consider aggravating and mitigating factors that may affect the offender’s sentence. In this scenario respondents were much more likely to think the sentence should be

changed as a result of the aggravating factor (drugging the victim’s drink) than the mitigating one (immediately showing genuine remorse).

Only 14% felt that the offender should receive a more lenient sentence if he immediately showed genuine remorse for his actions, while more than three-quarters (79%) felt this should make no difference to the sentence given to the offender.

In contrast, 85% believed that the offender should get a tougher sentence if he drugged the victim’s drink, while 14% said that he should receive the same sentence.

Figure 1.21: Views on the sentence the offender should receive for rape when taking into account aggravating and mitigating factors



Scenario D: Historical sexual offence

There has been a rise in the awareness of historical sexual offences following recent high profile cases. This means that there has been an increase in the proportion of court cases, and judges having to set sentences on crimes, which in some cases, happened many years ago. This creates a number of challenges for selecting an appropriate sentence.

Respondents were presented with the following scenario:

35 years ago, the offender, who was 18 at the time, sexually assaulted two girls aged 17, touching them inappropriately beneath their clothing. The girls did not alert the police until a year ago. The offender was tried and convicted of the sexual assaults. Since then the offender, now 53, has committed no other offences. This was his first conviction.

Views on an appropriate sentence for this offence varied considerably, with no clear preference emerging. A community payback order was suggested by 13%; a prison sentence of 3-5 years by 12%; a prison sentence of 1-3 years by 12%; an order that requires the offender to get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour by 9%; and a prison sentence of 5-10 years by 9%. In total under half of respondents thought that the offender should be given a prison sentence (46%).

While the challenges of sentencing historic offences mean it is more difficult to estimate the likely sentence in this case, it was suggested that the specific scenario described would be likely to attract a community payback order¹⁰. This suggests that, in general, respondents tended to be more severe in their preferred sentences than actual practice.

There were some clear variations in the perceived appropriate sentence by age of respondents. While 53% of both those aged 18-34 and 35-54 thought that the offender should receive a custodial sentence, only 35% of those aged 55 and over thought the same.

¹⁰ Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

Figure 1.22: Thinking about the specific case I have just read to you, in addition to being put on the Sex Offenders' Register, what sentence do you PERSONALLY think an offender SHOULD get for this offence?

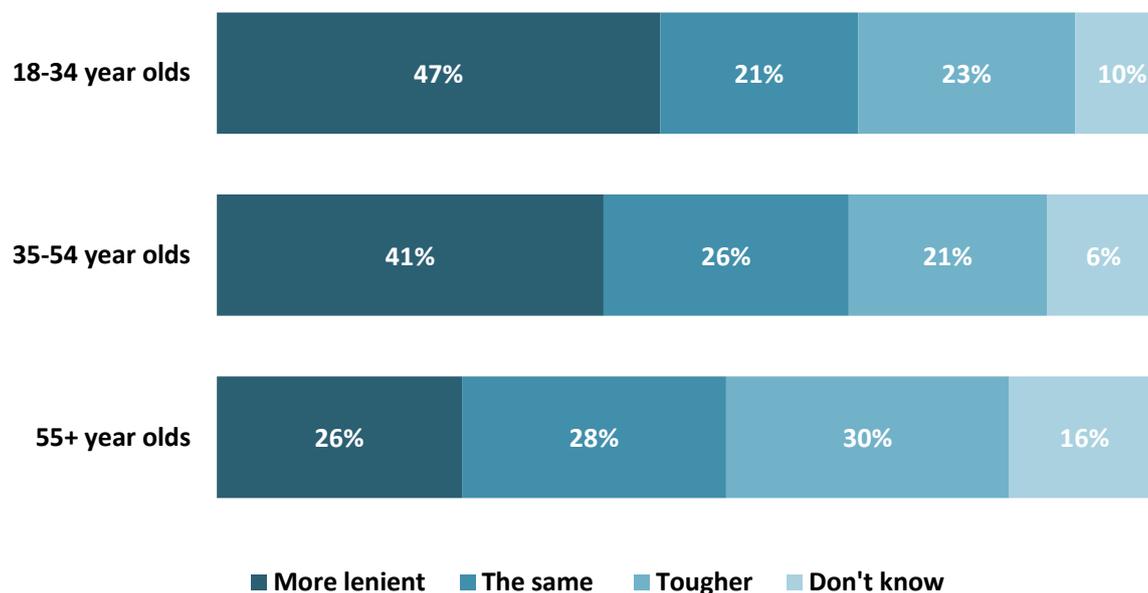


Base 631

When asked how the actual sentence would compare to what they thought it should be, more than a third (37%) of respondents thought that the offender would get a more lenient sentence in reality. A quarter (25%) thought he would receive a tougher sentence and the same proportion thought he would receive the same sentence.

Again, this varied by age: 18-34 year olds and 35-54 year olds were both more likely than those aged 55 and over to think that the actual sentence would be more lenient than what they believed appropriate (47% and 41%, compared with 26%) and those aged 55 and over were more likely to believe the sentence would in reality be tougher (30% of those aged 55 and over, compared with 23% of 18-34 year olds and 21% of 35-54 year olds).

Figure 1.23: And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?



Base: 18-34 (117) 35-54 (226) 55+ (287)

The relationship between the sentence that a respondent thought should apply, and what they thought would be imposed in reality was less clear cut in the historical sexual offence scenario than in the other offence scenarios. There was still a clear difference between custodial sentences and non-custodial sentences – those who thought a non-custodial sentence appropriate were more likely to think that a tougher sentence would be applied in reality than those who thought a prison sentence should apply. However, there was not a clear relationship with length of prison sentence.

Table 5: Whether actual sentence would be more lenient, the same or tougher by the top 5 sentences suggested for this case of a historical sexual offence

	Sentence respondents think the offender <i>should</i> get				
	A community payback order	A treatment order	1-3 years in prison	3-5 years in prison	5-10 years in prison
Thinks actual sentence would be more lenient	14%	7%	56%	71%	58%
Thinks actual sentence would be the same	31%	35%	25%	18%	26%
Thinks actual sentence would be tougher	43%	43%	11%	8%	13%
Don't know	12%	15%	7%	3%	2%
<i>Bases</i>	90	54	76	72	55

Scenario E: Indecent images of children

Respondents were presented with the following scenario:

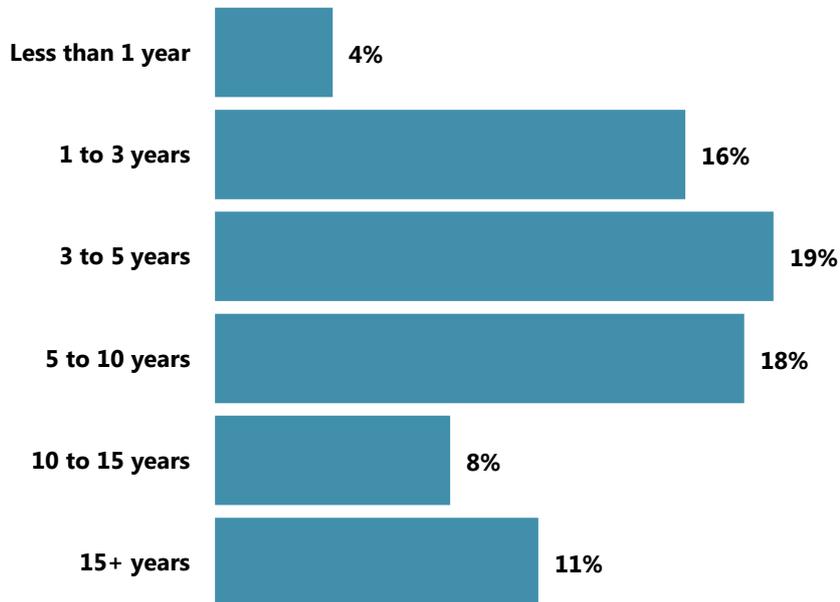
The offender, a 32 year-old man with no previous convictions, took his laptop to a local computer repair shop to have a virus removed. The staff member repairing the laptop found a small number of images of children aged 8-10 without clothing on his hard drive and alerted the police. The offender was convicted of possession of indecent photographs of children.

Overall, just over three-quarters (77%) of respondents thought that this offender should get a custodial sentence – although what they believed to be an appropriate sentence length varied. The most common responses were a prison sentence of 1-3 years (16%), a prison sentence of 3-5 years (19%), and a prison sentence of 5 to 10 years (18%). Only 11% thought that the offender should receive a community order that requires them to get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour and 2% thought he should receive a community payback order.

The scenario described (a first time offence, in which the images did not include abuse) would in practice be likely to attract a community payback order¹¹. This indicates that public opinion for this offence is much more severe than in practice.

¹¹ Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

Figure 1.24: Thinking about the specific case I have just read to you, in addition to being added to the Sex Offenders Register, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this offence? Prison sentences

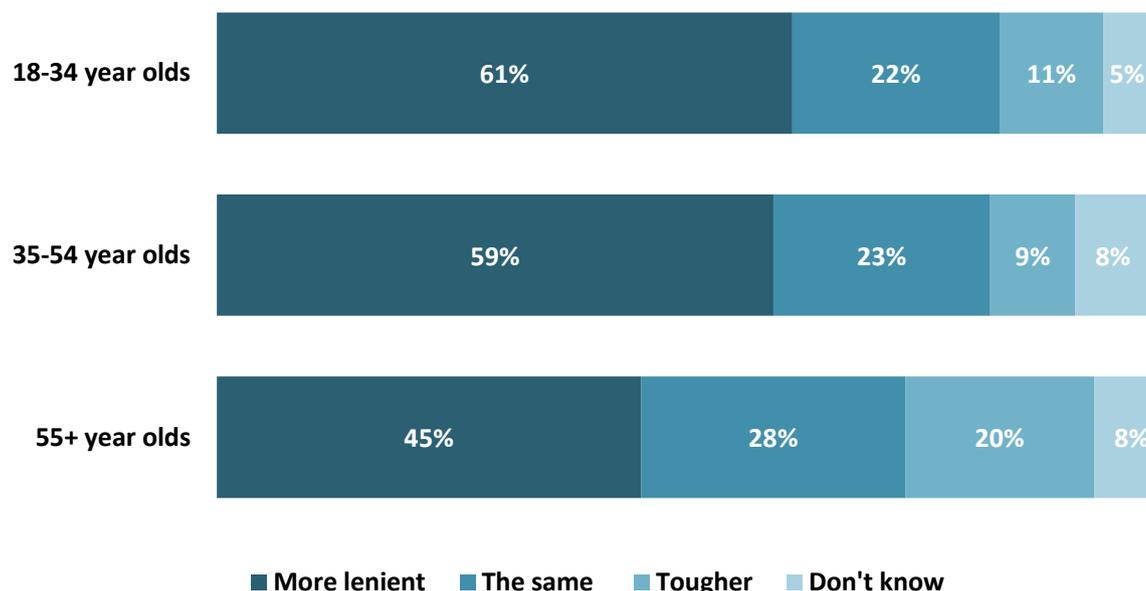


Base: 633

A majority (55%) of respondents thought that the sentence handed out in reality would be more lenient than they believed it should be, 24% thought it would be the same sentence and 14% thought it would be a tougher sentence.

As with the historical sexual offence, there were age differences. Those aged 55 and over were around twice as likely as those aged 18-34 years old and 35-54 years old to think that the actual sentence would be tougher than they thought appropriate (20%, compared with 11% and 9%, respectively).

Figure 1.25: And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?



Base: 18-34 (122) 35-54 (238) 55+ (273)

There was a clear linear relationship between the length of the prison sentence respondents thought should apply and how lenient they thought the real sentence would be – the longer they thought the sentence should be, the more likely they were to think that the sentence imposed in reality would be more lenient.

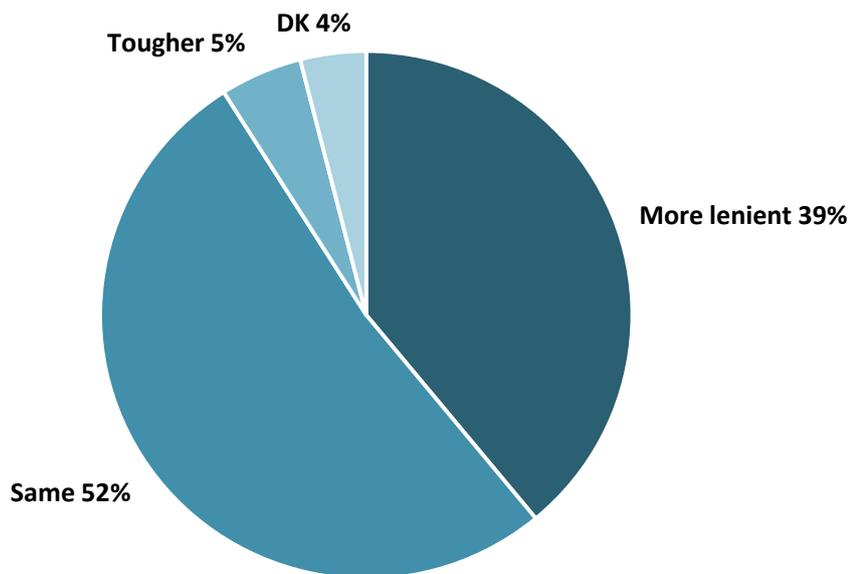
Table 6 Whether actual sentence would be more lenient, the same or tougher by the prison sentences suggested for this case of possession of indecent images of children¹²

	Sentence respondents think the offender <i>should</i> get				
	1-3 years in prison	3-5 years in prison	5-10 years in prison	10-15 years in prison	15+ years in prison
Thinks actual sentence would be more lenient	61%	56%	68%	87%	86%
Thinks actual sentence would be the same	28%	32%	22%	6%	6%
Thinks actual sentence would be tougher	7%	6%	8%	4%	6%
Don't know	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%
<i>Bases</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>118</i>	<i>109</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>64</i>

¹² The prison sentence of less than 1 year has been excluded from the table due to small base size

Respondents were asked how, if at all, the sentence should change if the offender was aged 19 and the child in the image was 15. Around half (52%) said that the sentence should stay the same, while 39% thought that the offender should get a more lenient sentence.

Figure 1.26: Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if the offender was 19 and the child in the photograph was 15 would you say they should receive...?



Base 633

Conclusions

Overall levels of self-reported awareness of sentencing was mixed with 47% feeling that they knew a lot or a moderate amount, and 53% stating that they knew a little or nothing at all about the sentences given to people convicted of crimes in Scotland. That said, it was common for respondents to have at least heard of the different non-custodial sentences that can be imposed in Scotland. However, while they may have heard of the different non-custodial sentences, when asked in general terms, there was a tendency to overestimate the proportion of convictions that result in prison sentences.

This suggests that there is scope for more to be done in terms of raising awareness about sentencing, and reasons why a non-custodial sentence may be imposed rather than a prison sentence.

The majority of respondents were confident that Scotland's criminal justice system is fair to all, but a still substantial portion were not (35%). Confidence levels varied with level of education. The belief that the system as a whole is not fair was correlated with the view that sentences given by the courts in Scotland are too lenient and that community sentences do not help reduce reoffending. While we cannot draw conclusions about causality, this suggests that it may be beneficial to raise awareness around the different sentences available to judges and, in particular, the aims and effectiveness of non-custodial sentences to increase confidence.

Overall, respondents felt that the examples of factors that would be expected to increase a sentence (a lack of remorse and repeat offending) should lead to tougher sentences. However, they did not consider that sentences should be affected by the factor included that would likely result in a reduced sentence (pleading guilty). This followed through into the scenarios for cases of death by dangerous driving and rape but not in the scenario for the case of death by careless driving in which respondents were more sympathetic in relation to the specific aggravating (killed three rather than one individual) and mitigating (showed genuine remorse) factors. This could indicate that more information is needed to demonstrate what factors judges take into account when sentencing.

Those with no formal qualifications tended to hold more negative and punitive views on sentencing in Scotland than those who held school/college qualifications, or a degree or equivalent. They were:

- more likely to say they knew nothing at all about sentencing
- more likely to overestimate the prevalence of prison sentences
- less likely to feel that the system was fair
- more likely to think that sentences were too lenient.

This suggests that if trying to improve public understanding of sentencing in Scotland the SSC need to carefully consider how best to communicate information in a way that is accessible to all levels of comprehension and to engage with people's concerns.

There was little consensus on the age up to which an offender could be considered a 'young person' for sentencing. But there was a larger emphasis on rehabilitating young offenders than offenders in general. This suggests that if an age limit for a 'young person' is set the SSC will need to articulate carefully why that age has been selected given public disagreement.

Attitudes to specific offences

Our ability to draw any clear comparisons between what sentences people tend to favour in specific scenarios and what they imagine the courts do, with what sorts of sentences the courts typically do pass was limited. This is due to the fact that the official available information contains some important limitations. Official data in Scotland tends to be recorded for a variety of purposes and so data tends not to be sensitive to features which may be particularly relevant to sentencing (McPherson and Tata 2018; Tata and Hutton 2003). It has been suggested that by collecting and making high quality data publicly available confidence in sentencing could be enhanced, not least as the sorts of sentences people would like to see passed may not be as different to the reality of sentencing as people tend to imagine (Hough and Roberts 2002; Hutton and Tata 2010). Furthermore, sentencing is a matter for the individual judge and will take into account all the facts of the case and the circumstances of the offender – involving a level of detail we were unable to include in the case study scenarios.

Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

In addition to exploring attitudes to offending in general, this report has examined attitudes to a number of specific offences on which the Scottish Sentencing Council is in the process of developing guidelines, including death by driving offences and sexual offences.

In each case, people were asked what sentence they thought should be imposed. For four of the five scenarios, the most commonly suggested sentence given in each scenario was broadly in line with estimated likely sentences¹³. The exception to this was the possession of indecent images of children scenario, in which most respondents suggested more severe sentences in comparison with expert views of likely practice. However, for none of the five scenarios did a *majority* of people suggest a sentence in line with estimated likely sentencing practice. And for each scenario, a very wide range of sentences were

¹³ Likely sentences for these specific scenarios have been agreed based upon sentencing data, where available, and the professional experience of the report authors, their consultants, members of the Scottish Sentencing Council, and the Council's secretariat. However, the likely sentences should not be viewed as confirming how these or similar offences would in fact be dealt with.

suggested by the public. There is thus a clear lack of public consensus on what sentences should be imposed for the types of offences discussed.

As noted earlier, previous research suggests that the public believe that sentences are too lenient in the abstract, but underestimate the severity of the sentences imposed for offences in practice (Hough et al, 2013; Cuthbertson, 2013; and Roberts et al, 2008). However, this research found a more nuanced picture suggesting that public attitudes vary depending on both the specific offence in question, and what they thought the sentence should be. These two factors interact in different ways for each of the offences considered.

People were most likely to indicate that they thought sentences would be more lenient in reality than the sentence they personally favoured with respect to rape and the possession of indecent images of children. As discussed earlier, interpreting whether or not these perceptions are accurate is complicated by the lack of detailed data on actual sentencing practice for different kinds of offences – we cannot confidently say if actual sentences would be more lenient or tougher. However, the estimated likely sentences for the scenarios described in the survey suggest that, with respect to rape, the perception that the sentence imposed would be more lenient in reality is potentially erroneous. The likely sentence for the rape described would be 5-6 years in prison. Over half of respondents suggested sentences for rape that were either similar to, or lower than, this estimate, but most thought the actual sentence would be more lenient.

With respect to indecent images of children, in contrast, there does appear to be a public preference for tougher sentences than those that might be handed out for the kind of offence described in the survey. The scenario described (a first time offence, in which the images did not include abuse) would in practice be quite likely to attract a community payback order. However, just under half of respondents (46%) felt that the offender should serve a prison term.

The public also tended to favour tougher penalties for the historic sexual offence case. While the challenges of sentencing historic offences mean it is more difficult to estimate the likely sentence in this case, it was estimated that the specific scenario described would be likely to attract a community payback order. The public varied widely in the sentence they thought should be imposed in this case, but almost half (46%) felt it should result in a prison sentence. And those who felt a prison sentence *should* be imposed tended to think (arguably correctly) that the *actual* sentence would be more lenient.

There was even more variation in public perceptions of whether the sentences imposed for death by driving offences would be tougher, more lenient, or about the same as the sentences they personally favoured. Again, views varied substantially by the sentence people themselves favoured, which also varied widely, from community payback orders to 10 or more years in prison. For example, those who favoured community sentences for death by dangerous driving expected actual sentences would be tougher (correctly, based on an estimated tariff of 4 years), while those who favoured prison sentences of

5-10 years were split between those who (arguably correctly) thought the actual sentence might be more lenient, and those who thought it would be the same or even tougher.

Overall then, there is a great deal of variation in public perceptions of both what sentence is appropriate for a given offence, and whether or not the 'actual' sentence would be likely to be tougher, more lenient, or about the same than the one they prefer. This suggests that any communications with the public to try and increase understanding of the rationale for sentencing, or for any new guidelines the Scottish Sentencing Council might produce, will need to be highly nuanced in taking account of these complexities.

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Appendix A – Questionnaire

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF SENTENCING – Ipsos MORI TELEPHONE SURVEY INTERNAL & CLIENT USE ONLY

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is XXX. I'm calling from Ipsos MORI Scotland, the independent research organisation. We're conducting a short survey looking at people's views on the sentences given to people convicted of different crimes, on behalf of the Scottish Sentencing Council.

(INTERVIEWER – IF ASKED: The Scottish Sentencing Council is an independent advisory body. They prepare guidelines on sentencing for Scottish Courts and information about sentences for the public and others.)

Can you spare 15 minutes or so to answer some questions please?

Q1	Yes	1
	No	2

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO READ OUT IF NECESSARY:

- I'd like to assure you that all of the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. We use what we find out to look at, for example, what percentage of people hold different views - It will not be possible to identify any particular individuals in the results.
- You do not need to be an expert to take part – we are interested in everyone's views, regardless of how much they do or don't know about sentencing at the moment.
- The survey will help the Scottish Sentencing Council understand what the public thinks about different sentencing options. It will help inform their work with the public and with judges.

MRS STATEMENT AND GDPR CONSENT (READ OUT TO ALL RESPONDENTS): Before we begin, I'd like to inform you that Ipsos MORI is a member of the Market Research Society. All information that you give us will be treated in the strictest confidence and your identity will not be passed on to any third parties or connected to your answers in any way without your consent.

GDPR CONSENT:

A few of the questions ask about some quite sensitive issues (IF ASKED – this includes sentencing of sexual offences and death by driving offences). Taking part is completely voluntary – you are free to stop the interview at any time and to skip any questions you do not wish to answer. Your answers will be kept for up to six months, will be only accessible to the research team, and will be securely deleted once the research is finished.

Are you happy to take part?

Yes – consent to take part
 No – THANK AND CLOSE

Section 1 - Screening and background questions

We need to interview a representative spread of the Scottish population, so I'd like to begin by asking a few questions about you.

[Mobile sample only]

MOB **Are you currently driving, operating machinery or in any other environment which makes it unsafe for us to talk?**

IF RESP SAYS THEY ARE ON HANDSFREE, PLEASE CODE YES

SINGLE CODE

Yes

1

No

2

INTERVIEWER: **In that case I'll call back another time. Thank you.**
 HANG UP

[ASK ALL]Wo

Screener 1 **Do you work in the Criminal Justice System?**

(INTERVIEWER USE ONLY: If asked, this could include Sheriffs, lawyers, anyone working for the Scottish Courts, police, children's reporters, prison officers, children's panel members and Directors of Social Work)

Yes

1

No

2

IF YES – Unfortunately, people who work in the Criminal Justice System are not eligible to participate in this survey. Thank you very much for your time. CLOSE INTERVIEW

[ASK ALL]

AGE **Please could you tell me your age at your last birthday?**

WRITE IN NUMBER.

1 Numeric range (18 – 99)

2 Don't know

3 Refused

GENDER **Which of the following describes how you think of yourself?**

SINGLE CODE ONLY. READ OUT

1 Male

2 Female

3 Or in another way?

4 Refused

ASK RANDOM DIGIT DIALLING SAMPLE ONLY

REGION **Please could you tell me your post code? This won't be included in the results of the survey, we just need to make sure we get a good mix of respondents from all parts of the country.**

ENTER:

REFUSED

ASK MOBILE SAMPLE ONLY:

SINGLE CODE ONLY

IN SCOTLAND **Are you currently living in Scotland?**

1 Yes

2 No

3 REF

ASK ALL

WORK **And are you.....**

Working Full-time	1
Working Part-time	2
Not working	
If not working Are you...?	
Looking after home	3
Unemployed	4
Unemployed (not registered but seeking work)	5
Retired	6
Student	7
Not working other (inc. sick or disabled)	8
Other	9
Don't know	10

Section 2 - General perceptions of sentencing

READ OUT: I'd like to start by asking you some general questions about sentences for people convicted of crimes in Scotland.

GENQ1

[ASK ALL]

[SINGLE CODE]

How confident are you that Scotland's criminal justice system as a whole is fair to all?

(Adapted from Attitudes to Guilty Pleas, Sentencing Council, 2011)

READ OUT

1 Very confident

2 Fairly confident

3 Not very confident

4 Not at all confident

5 Don't know

GENQ2

[ASK ALL]

[SINGLE CODE]

In general, how much, if anything, do you feel you know about the sentences given to people convicted of crimes in Scotland?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

Would you say you know...?

- 1 A lot
- 2 A moderate amount
- 3 A little
- 4 Nothing at all
- 5 Don't know

GENQ3

[ASK ALL]

SINGLE CODE

In general, would you say that sentences given by the courts in Scotland tend to be.....

[REVERSE ORDER]

too tough, about right or too lenient?

[If too tough ask:] Would you say they were much too tough or a little too tough]

[If too lenient ask:] Would you say they were much too lenient or a little too lenient]

- 1 Much too tough**
- 2 A little too tough**
- 3 About right**
- 4 A little too lenient**
- 5 Much too lenient**
- 6 Don't know**
- 7 Refused**

(From Attitudes to Guilty Pleas, Sentencing Council, 2011)

[INTERVIEWER – IF ASKED, WE MEAN THE HIGH COURTS, SHERIFF COURTS AND JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURTS]

GENQ5-Q11

[ASK ALL]

As you may be aware, as well as prison sentences there are a number of other sentences Courts in Scotland can give to people convicted of crimes. Which, if any, of the following sentences had you heard of before today? Had you heard of...?

	Yes	No	Don't know
A verbal warning by the judge			
A fine			
A community payback order, where the offender has to carry out unpaid work			
A compensation order where an offender is ordered to pay			

money to a victim.			
An order that requires the offender get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour			
Being electronically monitored at home, for example tagging			

GENQ12

[SINGLE CODE]

[ASK ALL]

For every 100 adult offenders that are convicted in the Scottish Courts, how many do you think are issued a prison sentence?

GENQ13

[ASK ALL]

[SINGLE CODE]

In addition to prison sentences, the Scottish courts also have a range of community sentences available. Community sentences may include having to carry out unpaid work and having to report regularly to a social worker.

Thinking about community sentences, which of the following statements comes closest to your view:

SELECT ONE

- 1 Community sentences do help reduce reoffending OR
 2 Community sentences do not help reduce reoffending?
 (Don't know)

GENQ14

[ASK ALL]

Different people have different views about the purpose of sentences for people convicted of crimes.

Which, if any, of the following do you think are the most important things Scottish Courts should be trying to achieve when setting sentences?

READ OUT ALL THE ANSWER OPTIONS, THEN CODE ALL MENTIONS.

ROTATE ORDER of A to C

- a) Protecting the public
 b) Punishing crime
 c) Rehabilitating offenders
 d) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) All equally important (SINGLE CODE)
 e) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Something else. Please say what [code]
 f) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Don't know (SINGLE CODE)

GENQ15

[ASK ALL WHO CHOSE MORE THAN ONE AT (GENQ14)]

And which one of these do you think is the single most important thing the Courts should be trying to achieve when setting sentences?

[IF ASKED, READ OPTIONS AGAIN]

- a) Protecting the public
 b) Punishing crime

- c) Rehabilitating offenders
 d) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Cannot choose one only
 e) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Something else. Please say what [code]
 f) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Don't know

GENQ16 -23

[ASK ALL]

I am going to read out some things that might be taken into account by judges when they decide on a sentence. For each one, please tell me whether you think it SHOULD make the sentence tougher, more lenient, or if it should make no difference. So, what if the person convicted ...

	Tougher	More lenient	No difference	Don't know
Is a repeat offender				
Pled guilty				
Shows a lack of remorse				

GENQ24

[ASK ALL]

Judges can give more lenient sentences to young people. Up to what age do you think someone should count as a "young person" for sentencing?

ENTER AGE (RANGE 1-40), OR 'Don't know'

ENQ25

[ASK ALL]

[MULTICODE OK]

And thinking specifically about sentences for young people who have committed crimes, which, if any, of the following do you think are the most important things Scottish Courts should be trying to achieve when sentencing a young person?

READ OUT ALL THE ANSWER OPTIONS, THEN CODE ALL MENTIONS.

ROTATE ORDER of A to C

- a) Protecting the public
 b) Punishing crime
 c) Rehabilitating offenders
 d) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) All equally important (SINGLE CODE)
 e) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Something else. Please say what [code]
 f) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Don't know (SINGLE CODE)

GENQ26

[ASK ALL WHO CHOSE MORE THAN ONE AT (GENQ25)]

[SINGLE CODE]

And which one of these do you think is the single most important thing the Courts should be trying to achieve when setting sentences for young people? READ OUT AGAIN IF NECESSARY

ROTATE ORDER of A to C

- a) Protecting the public
 b) Punishing crime

- c) Rehabilitating offenders
- d) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) All equally important (SINGLE CODE)
- e) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Something else. Please say what [code]
- f) DO NOT READ OUT (SPONTANEOUS CODE ONLY) Don't know (SINGLE CODE)

Section 3 – Case study scenarios

For the following questions, I am going to describe a number of different offences. Some of these questions relate to sensitive topics. If you do not wish to answer a particular question, please just say "I'd prefer to skip that".

The first two offences I'm going to describe are death by driving offences.

- 1 Continue
- 2 Respondents requested to skip – SKIP TO SCENARIO C

Scenario A – Death by Careless Driving

READ OUT: The offender is a 32 year-old man, with no previous criminal convictions. On his way to work, he was driving within the speed limit along a country road in daylight. On approaching a junction, he was distracted by an insect and did not notice an oncoming car. He pulled out in front and the two cars collided. The driver of the other car, a 26-year-old woman, was killed. The offender was breathalysed and the test result was negative. He pled guilty to causing death by careless driving.

S1 Now, thinking about all of the different types of sentences we've talked about so far, in addition to being disqualified from driving, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this specific case?

DO NOT READ OUT

IF RESPONDENT SAYS PRISON SENTENCE PROMPT THEM FOR LENGTH OF SENTENCE

- 1 A verbal warning or admonition by the judge
- 2 A financial penalty or fine
- 3 A community payback order
- 4 A compensation order
- 5 An order that requires the offender get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour
- 6 Being electronically monitored at home
- 7 A prison sentence of under 1 year
- 8 A prison sentence of more than 1 year up to 3 years
- 9 A prison sentence of more than 3 years up to 5 years
- 10 A prison sentence of more than 5 years up to 10 years
- 11 A prison sentence of more than 10 years up to 15 years
- 12 A prison sentence of more than 15 years
- 13 Other (write in)
- 14 Don't know

S2 And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]**[SINGLE CODE ONLY]**

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

SPLIT SAMPLE (randomly assign half of all respondents to each of SA3a and SA3b)

S3a Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if the offender showed genuine remorse for their actions, would you say he should receive...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]**[SINGLE CODE ONLY]**

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

SPLIT SAMPLE (other half of the sample)

S3b Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if three people had been killed in the collision rather than one would you say the offender should receive ...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]**[SINGLE CODE ONLY]**

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

Scenario B – Death by Dangerous Driving

READ OUT: The offender is a 32 year-old man, with no previous criminal convictions. On his way to work, he was driving 70 mph in a 50 mph zone during wet weather with poor visibility. When approaching a sharp bend, he did not slow down and lost control of the vehicle, colliding with an oncoming car. The driver of the other car was killed. The offender was breathalysed and the test result was negative. He pled guilty of causing death by dangerous driving.

S4 In addition to being disqualified from driving, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this specific case?

DO NOT READ OUT**IF RESPONDENT SAYS PRISON SENTENCE PROMPT THEM FOR LENGTH OF SENTENCE**

- 1 A verbal warning or admonition by the judge

- 2 A financial penalty or fine
- 3 A community payback order
- 4 A compensation order
- 5 An order that requires the offender get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour
- 6 Being electronically monitored at home
- 7 A prison sentence of under 1 year
- 8 A prison sentence of more than 1 year up to 3 years
- 9 A prison sentence of more than 3 years up to 5 years
- 10 A prison sentence of more than 5 years up to 10 years
- 11 A prison sentence of more than 10 years up to 15 years
- 12 A prison sentence of more than 15 years
- 13 Other (write in)
- 14 Don't know

S5 And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

SPLIT SAMPLE – ASK OF HALF

S6a Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if the offender showed genuine remorse for their actions would you say he should receive...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 [Don't know]
- 5 Refused

SPLIT SAMPLE – ASK OF HALF

S6b Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if three people had been killed in the collision rather than one would you say they should receive ...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know

5 Refused

READ OUT: The next three scenarios I'm going to read cover sexual offences.

- 1 Continue
- 2 Respondents requested to skip – SKIP TO SCENARIO B

SPLIT SAMPLE – Ask roughly one third of participants Scenarios C and D only, one third D and E only and one third C and E only.

Scenario C – Rape

READ OUT: The first scenario is about rape. Are you OK to go ahead with this example?

- 1 Continue
- 2 Respondents requested to skip – SKIP TO SCENARIO D

READ OUT: The offender is a 32 year-old man, with no previous criminal convictions. He invited his neighbour to his flat to watch a film. During the film he made sexual advances which she turned down; he then locked her in the flat and raped her. The victim was left bruised and upset. After she left, she rang the police and he was arrested and then tried and convicted of rape.

S7 Thinking about the specific case I have just read to you, in addition to being added to the Sex Offenders Register, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this offence?

DO NOT READ OUT

IF RESPONDENT SAYS PRISON SENTENCE PROMPT THEM FOR LENGTH OF SENTENCE

- 1 A verbal warning or admonition by the judge
- 2 A financial penalty or fine
- 3 A community payback order
- 4 A compensation order
- 5 An order that requires the offender get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour
- 6 Being electronically monitored at home
- 7 A prison sentence of under 1 year
- 8 A prison sentence of more than 1 year up to 3 years
- 9 A prison sentence of more than 3 years up to 5 years
- 10 A prison sentence of more than 5 years up to 10 years
- 11 A prison sentence of more than 10 years up to 15 years
- 12 A prison sentence of more than 15 years
- 13 Other (write in)
- 14 Don't know

S8 And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence

- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

SPLIT SAMPLE – ASK OF HALF

S9a Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if the offender immediately expressed genuine remorse would you say he should receive...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

SPLIT SAMPLE – ASK OF HALF

S9b Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if the offender had drugged the victim's drink so she could not resist, would you say they should receive ...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

Scenario D – Historical sexual offence

READ OUT: The next scenario is about a historical sexual offence. Are you OK to go ahead with this example?

- 1 Continue**
- 2 Respondents requested to skip – SKIP TO SCENARIO E**

READ OUT: 35 years ago, the offender, who was 18 at the time, sexually assaulted two girls aged 17, touching them inappropriately beneath their clothing. The girls did not alert the police until a year ago. The offender was tried and convicted of the sexual assaults. Since then the offender, now 53, has committed no other offences. This was his first conviction.

S10 Thinking about the specific case I have just read to you, in addition to being put on the Sex Offenders Register, what sentence do you PERSONALLY think an offender SHOULD get for this offence?

DO NOT READ OUT

IF RESPONDENT SAYS PRISON SENTENCE PROMPT THEM FOR LENGTH OF SENTENCE

- 1 A verbal warning or admonition by the judge
- 2 A financial penalty or fine
- 3 A community payback order
- 4 A compensation order
- 5 An order that requires the offender get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour
- 6 Being electronically monitored at home
- 7 A prison sentence of under 1 year
- 8 A prison sentence of more than 1 year up to 3 years
- 9 A prison sentence of more than 3 years up to 5 years
- 10 A prison sentence of more than 5 years up to 10 years
- 11 A prison sentence of more than 10 years up to 15 years
- 12 A prison sentence of more than 15 years
- 13 Other (write in)
- 14 Don't know

S11 And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

Scenario E – Indecent images of children

READ OUT: The final scenario is about indecent images of children. Are you OK to go ahead with this example?

- 1 Continue**
- 2 Respondents requested to skip – SKIP TO EDUC**

READ OUT: The offender, a 32 year-old man with no previous convictions, took his laptop to a local computer repair shop to have a virus removed. The staff member repairing the laptop found a small number of images of children aged 8-10 without clothing on his hard drive and alerted the police. The offender was convicted of possession of indecent photographs of children.

S12 Thinking about the specific case I have just read to you, in addition to being put on the Sex Offenders Register, what sentence do you personally think an offender SHOULD get for this offence?

DO NOT READ OUT

IF RESPONDENT SAYS PRISON SENTENCE PROMPT THEM FOR LENGTH OF SENTENCE

- 1 A verbal warning or admonition by the judge

- 2 A financial penalty or fine
- 3 A community payback order
- 4 A compensation order
- 5 An order that requires the offender get treatment or participate in a programme to address the causes of their behaviour
- 6 Being electronically monitored at home
- 7 A prison sentence of under 1 year
- 8 A prison sentence of more than 1 year up to 3 years
- 9 A prison sentence of more than 3 years up to 5 years
- 10 A prison sentence of more than 5 years up to 10 years
- 11 A prison sentence of more than 10 years up to 15 years
- 12 A prison sentence of more than 15 years
- 13 Other (write in)
- 14 Don't know

S13 And do you think in reality the offender WOULD get the same sentence, a tougher sentence or a more lenient sentence?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

S14 Thinking again about the scenario I've just described, if the offender was 19 and the child in the photograph was 15 would you say they should receive...?

[REVERSE ORDER FOR HALF OF RESPONDENTS]

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A more lenient sentence
- 2 The same sentence
- 3 A tougher sentence
- 4 Don't know
- 5 Refused

READ OUT: Finally, just a couple more questions about you.

ASK ALL

CRIME

How much would you say the crime rate in your local area has changed since two years ago? Would you say there is more, less or about the same?

IF MORE / LESS, PROBE: **A little or a lot?**

[SINGLE CODE ONLY]

- 1 A lot more
- 2 A little more
- 3 About the same

- 4 A little less
- 5 A lot less
- 6 DK

Educ What is the highest educational or professional qualification you have obtained? DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

No formal qualification	1
'O' Grade, Standard Grade, GCSE, Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2	2
Vocational qualification (SVQ1-2 or equivalent)	3
Higher grade, A-levels, SVQ level 3 or equivalent	4
HND, HNC, RSA Higher Diploma, SVQ Level 4-5 or equivalent	5
First degree, higher degree or equivalent professional qualification	6
Other (WRITE IN)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

END That's the end of the interview. Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions. Just to remind you that all your answers will be kept in strictest confidence, in accordance with GDPR.

If you've been a victim of crime you can get support from Victim Support – an independent charity which supports people who've been affected by crime or traumatic events. Their free and confidential support line is 08 08 16 89 111

Would you like contact details of support organisations for people who've suffered from sexual abuse or bereavement?

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre - 0808 802 9999 (12-2.30 & 7-9.30)

Cruse Bereavement Care - 0808 808 1677

Carolyn Black

Associate Director

carolyn.black@ipsos.com

Rachel Warren

Research Executive

rachel.warren@ipsos.com

For more information

4 Wemyss Place
Edinburgh
EH3 6DH

t: +44 (0)131 220 5699

www.ipsos-mori.com

<http://twitter.com/IpsosMORI>

About Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute

The Social Research Institute works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its c.200 research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. This, combined with our methods and communications expertise, helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.

Scottish Sentencing Council
Parliament House
Parliament Square
Edinburgh
EH1 1RQ

sentencingcouncil@scotcourts.gov.uk
www.scottishsentencingcouncil.org.uk

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