

Reducing Women’s Imprisonment Factsheet: Merseyside¹

- 213 immediate prison sentences were given to women in Merseyside in 2019, an increase from 203 in 2018 but a 21% decrease since 2009. These were mostly for non-violent offences and 70% were for less than six months.
- 39% of the prison sentences were for theft offences.
- The use of community sentences for women in Merseyside has decreased by 26% since 2009. The use of cautions decreased by 72% between 2008 and 2018.²

Figure 1: Use of immediate imprisonment for women, 2009-2019

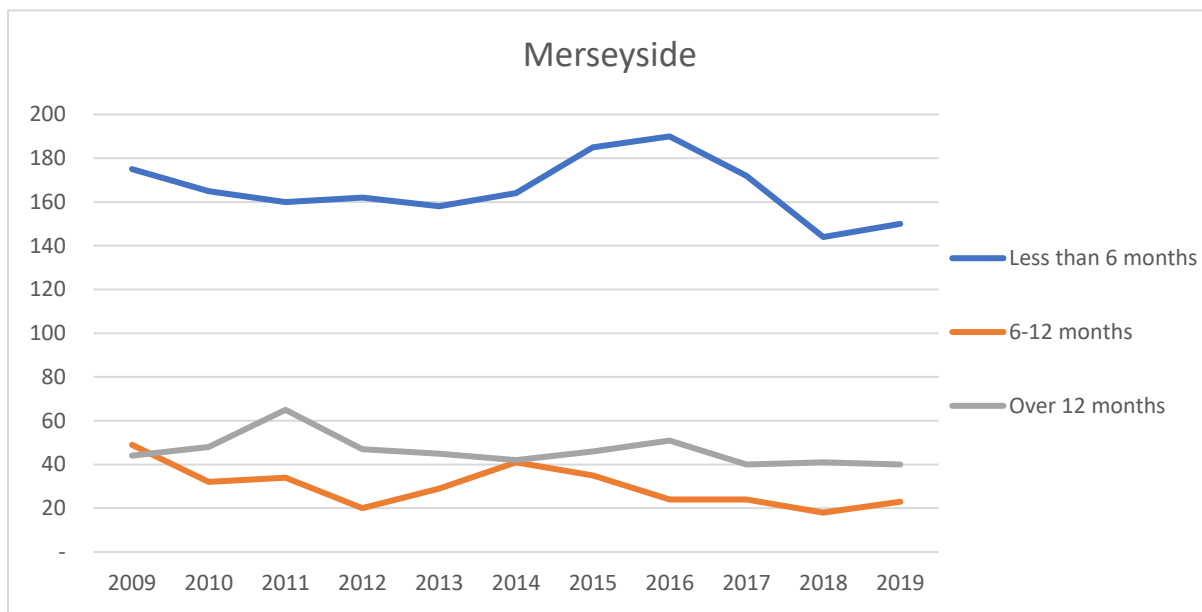
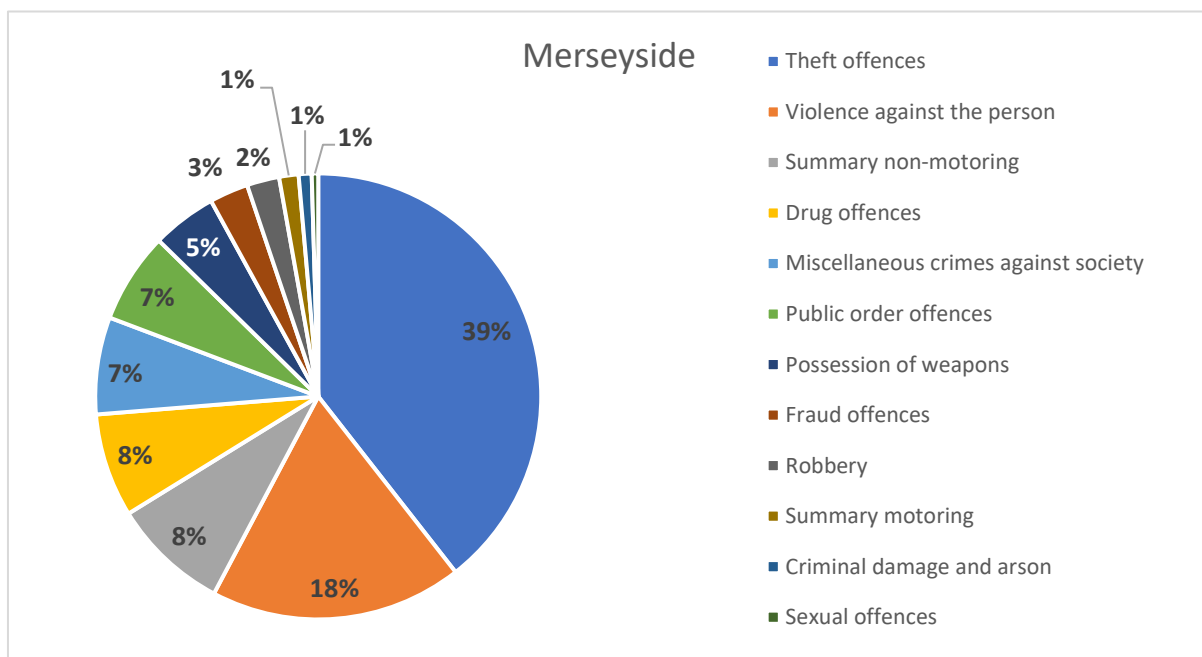


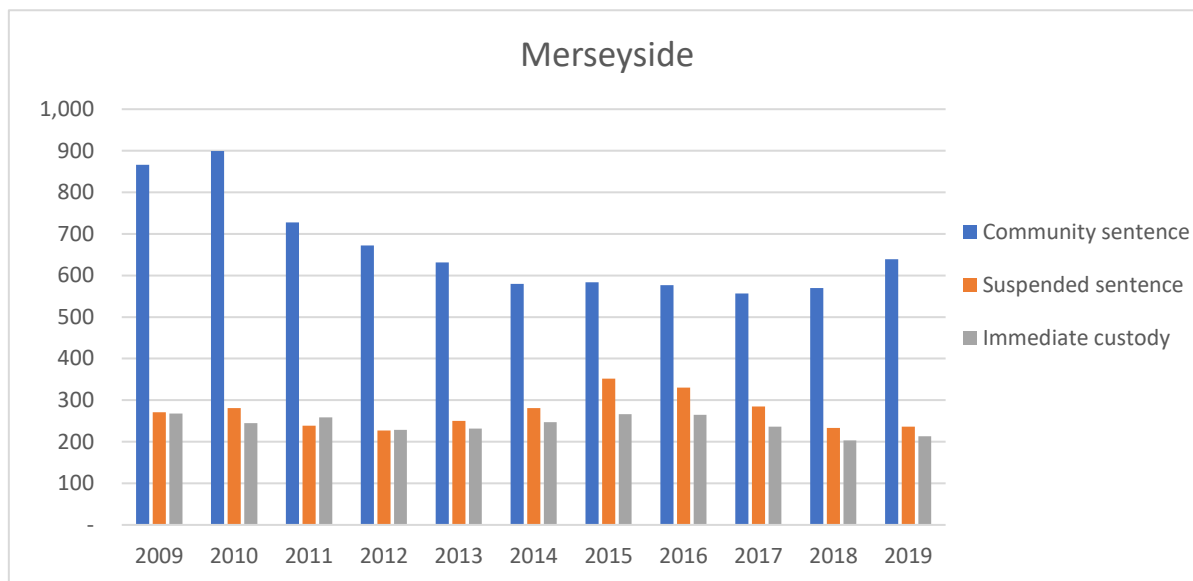
Figure 2: Imprisonment of women by offence group, 2019



¹ The data in this fact sheet is taken from the following source unless otherwise indicated: Ministry of Justice (2020) Court Outcomes by Police Force Area Data Tool, Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2019, London: MoJ

² Ministry of Justice (2019) Out of Court Disposals Data Tool, Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2018, London: MoJ; please note cautions data for 2019 has not yet been made available

Figure 3: Sentencing of women to Community Orders, Suspended Sentences and Immediate Imprisonment, 2009-2019



Why focus on reducing women’s imprisonment – the national picture³

The women’s prison population in England and Wales more than doubled between 1995 and 2010 – from under 2,000 women to over 4,000. The number has since declined but this remains one of the highest rates of imprisonment for women in Western Europe.

- The women’s prison population on 25 September 2020 was 3,213 compared to 3,859 a year earlier.⁴
- There were 7,050 first receptions of women to prison in 2019, of which 46% were remands. This is down from 7,745 first receptions of women to prison in 2018, 43% of which were remands.⁵
- The most common offence for which women are remanded to custody is theft.⁶
- 65% of immediate prison sentences given to women in 2019 were for less than six months.
- Around 17,000 children are affected by maternal imprisonment each year, with mothers much more likely than fathers to be the primary or sole carer.⁷
- Nearly 60% of women in prison who have had an assessment have experienced domestic abuse.⁸ The real figure is likely to be much higher.⁹
- 55.8% of women released from prison reoffend within a year compared to 26% of women sentenced to a community order.¹⁰

Go to <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/women/resourcesandpublications> for information resources to inform the development of effective local women’s criminal justice strategies.

See also www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/women/news.

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³ All statistics refer to England and Wales unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ Ministry of Justice (2020) [Prison population figures: 2020](#), London: MoJ

⁵ Ministry of Justice (2020) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2019, London: MoJ. A first reception is defined as ‘a measure which counts a prisoner’s first movement into custody following a court hearing for a particular set of offences committed’.

⁶ Ministry of Justice (2020) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2019, published 30 April; cited in Howard League for Penal Reform (2020) [Reset: Rethinking remand for women](#), London: Howard League

⁷ Kincaid, Roberts and Kane (2019) [Children of Prisoners, Fixing a broken system](#), Nottingham: Crest Advisory

⁸ Ministry of Justice (2018) [Female Offender Strategy](#), London: MoJ

⁹ Gelsthorpe, L., Sharpe, & Roberts, J. (2007) Provision for Women offenders in the community London: Fawcett Society. See also: [The Disabilities Trust \(2019\) Making the link: Female offending and brain injury, London: The Disabilities Trust](#). Of 173 women screened at HMP Drake Hall by the Disabilities Trust, 64% reported a history indicative of brain injury and for most this was caused by domestic violence.

¹⁰ Hedderman, C. and Jolliffe, D. (2015) ‘The impact of prison for women on the edge: paying the price for wrong decisions’, *Victims and Offenders: An international journal of evidence-based research, policy and practice*. 10 (2), pp.152-178