

# DISCHARGES

Key Facts and Statistics

## FACT 1

### A DISCHARGE CAN EITHER BE:



- **conditional** (meaning that certain requirements are attached, and the individual could be sentenced for the original offence if they re-offend), or



- **absolute** (without conditions)



Conditional discharges are more common, making up

**90%**

of all discharges

## FACT 2

DISCHARGES ARE USUALLY GIVEN FOR THE LEAST SERIOUS OFFENCES. A DISCHARGE MEANS THAT THE PERSON IS RELEASED FROM COURT WITHOUT FURTHER ACTION.

**29,708**

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN 2024,

OF WHICH **26,750** WERE **CONDITIONAL**  
AND **2,958** WERE **ABSOLUTE**

## FACT 3



Discharges make up

**3%**

of all primary sentences imposed in England & Wales

**FACT 4**

**Absolute and conditional discharges are most commonly associated with different kinds of offences.**

<b>Top 5 offences leading to <u>conditional</u> discharges</b>	<b>Individuals sentenced in 2024</b>
1. Theft from a shop	4,851
2. Criminal or malicious damage offence	2,229
3. Possession of a controlled drug - Class B (cannabis)	2,104
4. Common assault and battery	2,014
5. Assault of an emergency worker	1,194

**FACT 5**

<b>Top 5 offences leading to <u>absolute</u> discharges</b>	<b>Individuals sentenced in 2024</b>
1. Vehicle insurance offences - summary	695
2. Vehicle registration and excise license offences	234
3. Possession of a controlled drug - Class B (cannabis)	148
4. Truancy	143
5. Other railway offences	125

**FACT 6**



of all women and



of all men sentenced in 2024 received a discharge

**FACT 7**

**Re-offending rates**

For all sentences: 27%



For discharges: 27%



For prison sentences: 39%



For court orders (suspended sentence and community): 34%



**Note:** The MoJ defines reoffending as any offence committed in a one-year follow-up period that leads to a court conviction, caution, reprimand, or warning.

Facts 1-6: Data calculated from Ministry of Justice (2025), Criminal Justice Statistics Quarterly: December 2024, published 15<sup>th</sup> of May. Outcomes by offence data tool, Table 2.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024>

Fact 7: Data calculated from Ministry of Justice (2025). Proven reoffending statistics: October to December 2023, published 30<sup>th</sup> of October. Proven reoffending tables (3 monthly), October 2023 to December 2023, Table C1a.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-october-to-december-2023>