

# PRISON SENTENCES OF 12 MONTHS OR LESS

Key Facts and Statistics

## FACT 1

**49,647**  
**PEOPLE RECEIVED SHORT PRISON SENTENCES  
(OF 12 MONTHS OR LESS) IN 2024**

## FACT 2

Short prison  
sentences make up



**4%**

of all primary  
sentences imposed in  
England & Wales

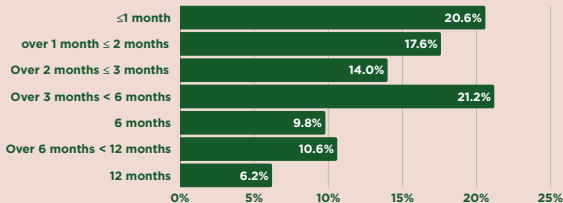


**62%**

of all prison  
sentences in  
England & Wales

## FACT 3

### Breakdown of Short Sentences, 2024

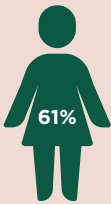


## FACT 4

### Most common offences leading to short prison sentences

	Individuals sentenced in 2024
1. Theft from a shop	11,012
2. Assault of an emergency worker	3,106
3. Common assault and battery	3,077
4. Breach of Restraining Order	2,654
5. Burglary (in a building other than a dwelling)	2,429
6. Knife possession (having an article with a blade or point in public)	2,326

FACT 5



of all women and



of all men sentenced to prison received a short prison sentence in 2024

FACT 6

Re-offending rates, 2023

For all sentences: 27%



For prison sentences  $\geq 12$  months: 21%



For prison sentences  $< 12$  months: 60%



For prison sentences  $\leq 6$  months: 63%



**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.

PRODUCED BY THE

SENTENCING  
ACADEMY

Facts 1-5: 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 6: 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 C2a.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-october-to-december-2023>