



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh  
The Probation Service

## PROBATION SERVICE RECIDIVISM STUDY 2008 - 2013



## **Summary**

The Probation Service and Central Statistics Office (CSO) have established a partnership to conduct research on recidivism and related issues among offenders on supervision in the community. This second study report is based on anonymised offender and offence information on a 2008 cohort of offenders from the Probation Service supervision database.

The study reports on recidivism within three years among that cohort using five years follow up of recorded crime and Court Service data held by the CSO. The study also examines variations in recidivism relating to type of original order, gender and age of the offender, category of original offence and of the subsequent offence.

This recidivism study provides a clear overview of community sanctions and their outcomes; informing the Service in the development and support of effective interventions in working to make our communities safer.

## **Key Findings**

- ❖ Almost 60% of offenders on Probation Service supervision had no conviction for a further offence committed within three years of the imposition of a Probation or Community Service order.
- ❖ The overall recidivism rate of offenders in the study was 41% over a three year period.
- ❖ There is a higher level of re-offending in the first year after the making of the supervision order in comparison with subsequent years within the 2008 cohort. The reduction between first and second year was more significant in the 2007 cohort.
- ❖ The recidivism rate decreased as the offender age increased.
- ❖ Male offenders represented 87% of the total population and had a higher recidivism rate than female offenders.
- ❖ Public Order was the most common original offence.
- ❖ The three most common offences for which offenders were reconvicted were the same as with the 2007 cohort: Public Order, Theft and Controlled Drugs Offences.

## **Introduction**

The Probation Service is an agency of the Department of Justice and Equality. The Probation Service is the lead agency in the assessment and management of offenders subject to community sanctions and supervision in the community.

The Probation Service provides probation supervision, community service, community return, offending behaviour programmes and specialist support services, to both adult and young offenders. The Probation Service also works to rehabilitate offenders in prisons and places of detention so as to reduce re-offending and facilitate resettlement and re-integration on discharge from custody.

The Probation Service makes an important contribution to reducing the level of crime by challenging offender behaviour and working with offenders to change their behaviour and make good the harm done by their offending. The Service works closely with the Courts Service, the Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Youth Justice Service and the Parole Board as well as partner bodies and organisations in the community for the effective management of offenders and reduction of re-offending.

In that context the measurement of recidivism and evaluation of what works in managing offenders in the community is a critical and important priority for the Probation Service. The Probation Service Recidivism Study: 2007-2011, published in 2012 was the first step in the Probation Service research on recidivism. That report looked at the two year recidivism rate of a cohort of offenders placed on supervision or community service in 2007. This current study progresses on that research. The Service plans to continue to publish reliable data, consistent with best international standards, on recidivism and related issues among offenders subject to Probation Service supervision in Ireland. The research is intended to inform and enhance interventions and practice for greater effectiveness and better outcomes.

This study uses offender and offence information on the 2008 cohort of offenders (population 3,761) from the Probation Service database, and from the recorded crime and Court Service data held by the CSO, to build a picture of recidivism among offenders subject to supervision by the Probation Service.

### **Aims of the Study**

- To establish reliable recidivism data on the particular cohort of Probation Service offenders studied;
- To analyse the data and evaluate and report the findings;
- To develop greater knowledge to support effective interventions and Service actions to reduce re-offending;
- To begin a process of identification of recidivism trends.

### **Population Studied**

The Probation Service deals with offenders in the community through a number of different legal mechanisms, including:

- Supervision of adult and young offenders who have been placed by the Court on,
  - Probation Orders or
  - Community Service Orders.
- Preparation of pre-sanction assessment reports at the direction of the Courts,
- Supervision of young offenders under the various provisions of the Children Act 2001,
- Supervision of adult offenders,

- On supervised temporary release from custody;
- Who are on post release supervision orders, under the Sex Offender Act 2001;
- Who are subject to partially or fully suspended sentences, with conditions of supervision;
- Those whose sentences have been temporarily and conditionally deferred by the Court.

Adults and young people on Probation Orders and Community Service Orders make up the majority of offenders subject to Probation Service interventions and are, therefore, the subject of this study. The study examines the full population of offenders in these two categories who, at any point between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, were made subject to either a Probation Order or a Community Service Order.

The study considers variations in recidivism as they relate to type of original Order, gender and age of the offender, the category of the original offence, (the offence for which the offender was made subject to the court order) and of the subsequent offence (the first offence of re-conviction).

Community Service, in Irish legislation, is an alternative to prison and as such is seen as a punitive rather than primarily a rehabilitative measure. It is not expected to target the offenders' behavioural risk factors to reduce the risk of re-offending. Where a community disposal is being considered by the Courts, a Probation Order may be regarded as the most appropriate means of addressing the multiple needs of higher risk offenders.

### **Methodology**

Discussions between the Probation Service and the CSO, prior to the 2012 study explored the possibility of utilising the parallel databases (Probation Service and CSO) to improve information on outcomes and subsequent criminal history of offenders that were subject to Probation Service interventions. Without a unique identifier the linking of the databases was not straightforward. A review of the databases highlighted common fields and a trial data matching project was commenced. This resulted in successful automatic matching in over 95% of cases. Manual matching of the remainder resulted in a 98% match.

Offenders, in this study, as in the 2012 study, have been matched across the two databases and statistical and data mining methods were used to identify offenders who have offended within three years following the imposition of the relevant order. A further two years was allowed for the conclusion of the Court process and the recording of the conviction for that offence.

This study gives information about offenders under Probation Supervision and Community Service in this jurisdiction and allows for some comparison with the earlier 2012 study and with similar studies in other jurisdictions. However, in comparing recidivism studies there is always a need for caution to ensure that like is being compared with like. Reference to other recidivism studies does not necessarily imply that recidivism has been defined and measured in the same fashion in different jurisdictions. Decision on at what point, to what degree and what caveats apply in comparing data sets can be very challenging. Many variables are in play and need to be taken into consideration to avoid comparing 'apples and oranges'.

### **Revision of 2007 data**

It is important to note that CSO data is 'live', i.e. it is constantly updated as information is received. For that reason the CSO revises its data reports from time to time. The CSO and Probation Service recognise the importance of revising data sets taking into account late or additional information in order to improve accuracy in reports. This may however give rise to some variations between the original and the revised data reports. Revised data on the 2007 cohort, the subject of the 2012 study, is included in Appendix 1 of this current report. As can be seen the revision of the data had the effect of increasing the recorded overall 2 year recidivism for the 2007 offender cohort from 37.2% in the original data to 41.7% in the revised data.

Bearing in mind earlier cautions about comparing "like with like" caution would have to be exercised therefore in comparing the revised data reports for the 2007 cohort with the unrevised data for the 2008 cohort.

### **Definition of Recidivism**

The selection of reconviction as the measure of recidivism was discussed in the 2012 study. For the current study of offenders supervised by the Probation Service in the community, re-conviction was again chosen as the most appropriate and rigorous indicator of recidivism.

All measures of recidivism have their limitations and as political and social values change, rates of reporting, detection, prosecution, conviction and sentence for crimes vary. This in turn will impact on recidivism whatever indicators or measures are used (Thornton 2012).

### **Calculating Reconviction**

Having decided on re-conviction as the indicator of recidivism, the time period during which any re-conviction is counted needs to be decided. Recidivism studies vary in this regard, basing recidivism rates on reconvictions counted after periods of one, two, four and six years. (O'Donnell, Baumer and Hughes 2008 page 133)

In counting reconvictions in these Probation Service studies on recidivism, two distinct and consecutive time periods are examined: a) the period allowed, following the imposition of the order, for a further offence to take place and b) the additional period allowed, after any further offence has occurred, for that offence to result in conviction, i.e. to progress through the criminal justice system from complaint to detect, arrest, charge and convict. There are cases where for various reasons offences do not progress through the criminal justice system for very many years (e.g. historical child abuse, where the offender absconds on bail, where there are prolonged judicial review procedures etc.) It is impractical to take account of these atypical situations in this study. At a more practical level, serious offences, prosecuted in the Higher Courts in this jurisdiction, will typically take about a year or more to progress through the system from charge to conviction.

Existing knowledge and research findings indicate that most re-offending takes place within the first two years after the original conviction. The 2012 study, reported on re-offending within two years among a 2007 cohort of offenders. A further two years follow-up was allowed for Court processes to be completed and conviction for such offences to be recorded

In this study, two and three year periods for re-offending are considered. Following the date of the imposition of the Probation or Community Service Order, any offence committed within 36 months for which a conviction is recorded within the following two years is counted as a reconviction.

The 2012 study only considered re-offending within two years of the order. In addition to the revised two year recidivism data on the 2007 cohort as referred to above, data on the 2007 cohort was processed to identify convictions for offences committed in the third year following imposition of the order – Appendix 2 contains the three year recidivism data for 2007.

There can be considerable delay in return of information on convictions to the CSO evidenced by the revision this year of the 2012 findings. In this current study on recidivism among the 2008 cohort, the data gathered refers to any offence committed within 36 months of the making of the order for which a re-conviction is recorded within the following two years. This means that the five year study period extends to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 and that therefore some relevant data may not be available. The third year recidivism data for the 2008 cohort may be incomplete, in the absence of information on offences for which due process through the criminal justice system has not yet been finalised.

Bearing in mind cautions about comparisons expressed earlier in this study, only the unrevised two year data on the 2007 cohort and the current two year data on the 2008 cohort are directly compared as both are at the same point in the follow-up period and data availability.

### **Reconviction Consequences**

For recidivism measurement purposes this study does not report on the seriousness of the re-offending by individual offenders leading to reconviction. Minor offences and serious offences are treated as equivalent in so far as denoting recidivism is concerned.

The consequences of reconviction are similarly disregarded. Reconviction dealt with by way of a community sanction is not differentiated from reconviction leading to imprisonment. In future studies it is hoped that it will be possible to report on seriousness of re-offending and on imprisonment as a consequence of re-offending while subject to probation supervision.

### **Risk profiles**

This study does not examine or report on the risk of re-offending profiles or distribution in the 2008 offender cohort. The relevant datasets for the 2008 cohort do not contain offender risk profiles and were, therefore, not sufficiently developed to conduct such an examination in this study. It is hoped that in recidivism studies in the not-too-distant future it will be possible to review and examine recidivism in the context of assessed risk of offending profiles and distribution among the offender population subject to Probation Service supervision.

## **Findings**

### **1. Recidivism Level: The overall recidivism rate of offenders in the study over 3 years was 41.0%.**

The total population of offenders, subject to Probation Orders and Community Service Orders in 2008 studied was 3,761. Of that population just over two thirds (68%) were subject to Probation Orders and just under one third (32%) were subject to Community Service Orders.

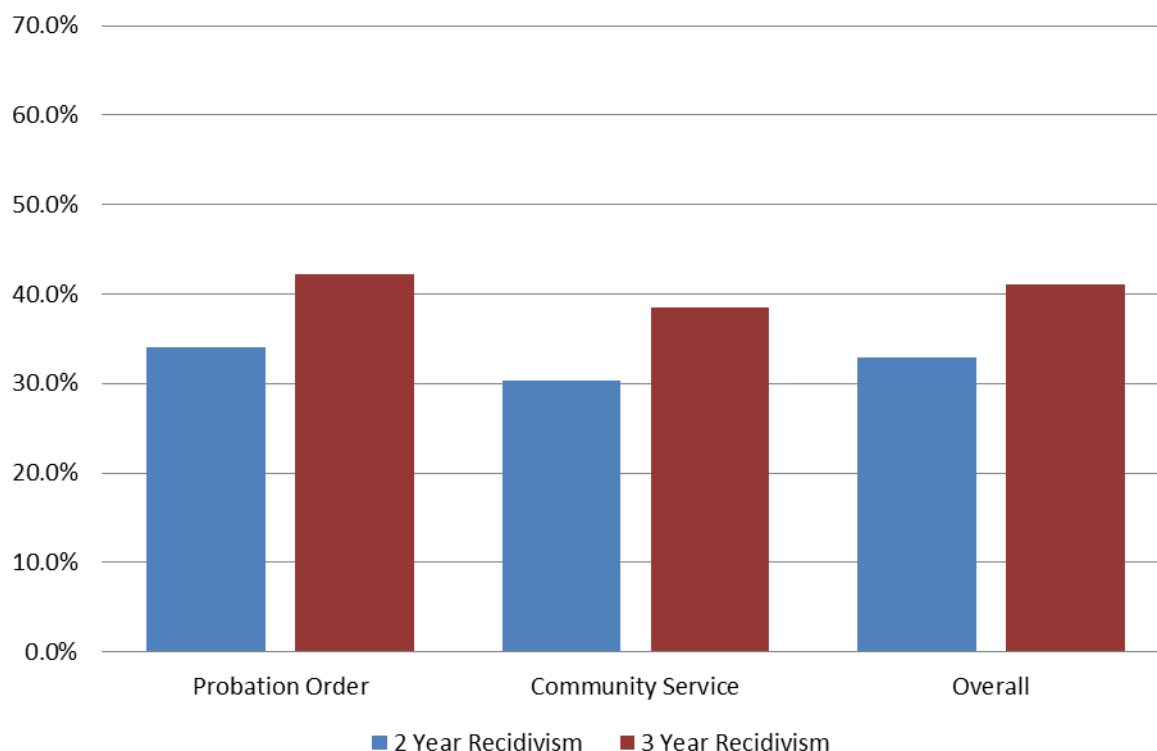
In this study, recidivism over two and three periods following the order are reported.

The overall recidivism among the full population after two years was 32.9% and 41% after three years. For offenders on Community Service Orders the recidivism after two years was 30.3% and 38.4% after three years. For offenders on Probation Supervision Orders the recidivism after two years was 34.1% and 42.3% after three years.

**Table 1: Recidivism by Type of Order – 2008 Cohort**

Type of Order	Population	Recidivism after 2 Years	Recidivism after 3 Years
Probation Order	2,556 (68%)	34.1%	42.3%
Community Service	1,205(32%)	30.3%	38.4%
Overall	3,761 (100%)	32.9%	41.0%

**Figure 1 2 and 3 Year Recidivism by Type of Order - 2008 cohort.**



**2. Gender and Recidivism: Males represented 87% of the total population and had a higher recidivism rate than females.**

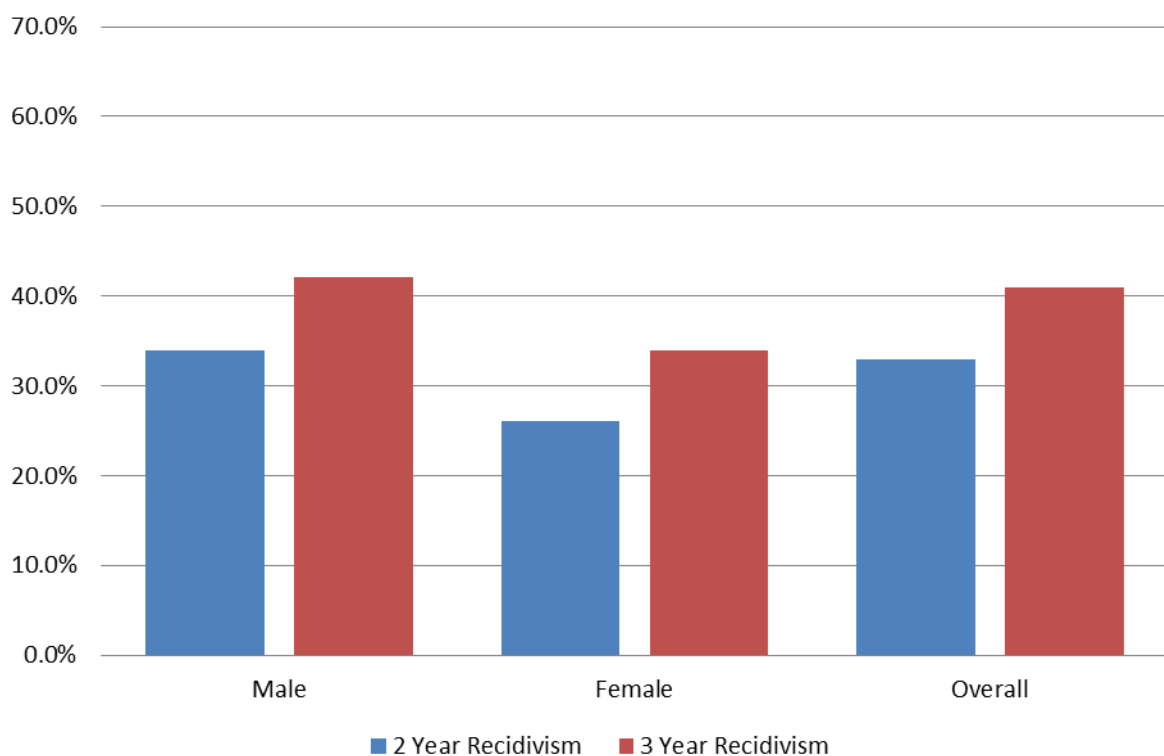
The population in the 2008 cohort was predominantly male; females comprised approximately one in seven of the population (3,261 males and 500 females). This distribution reflects the much lower rate of offending in the general population amongst females compared with males.

Males had a higher rate of recidivism than females. However, given the low rate of female offending, this difference was smaller than expected, at 42% for males compared with 34% for females (See Figure 2 and Table 2). These findings are to varying degrees consistent with studies from other jurisdictions as discussed in the 2012 study.

**Table 2: Recidivism by Gender 3 year reoffending – 2008 cohort**

Gender	Population	Recidivism after 2 Years	Recidivism after 3 Years
Male	3,261 (86.7%)	33.9%	42.1%
Female	500 (13.3%)	26.0%	34.0%
Total	3,761 (100%)	32.9%	41.0%

**Figure 2: Recidivism by Gender – 2008 cohort**





### 3. Age and Recidivism: The recidivism rate decreased as the offender age increased.

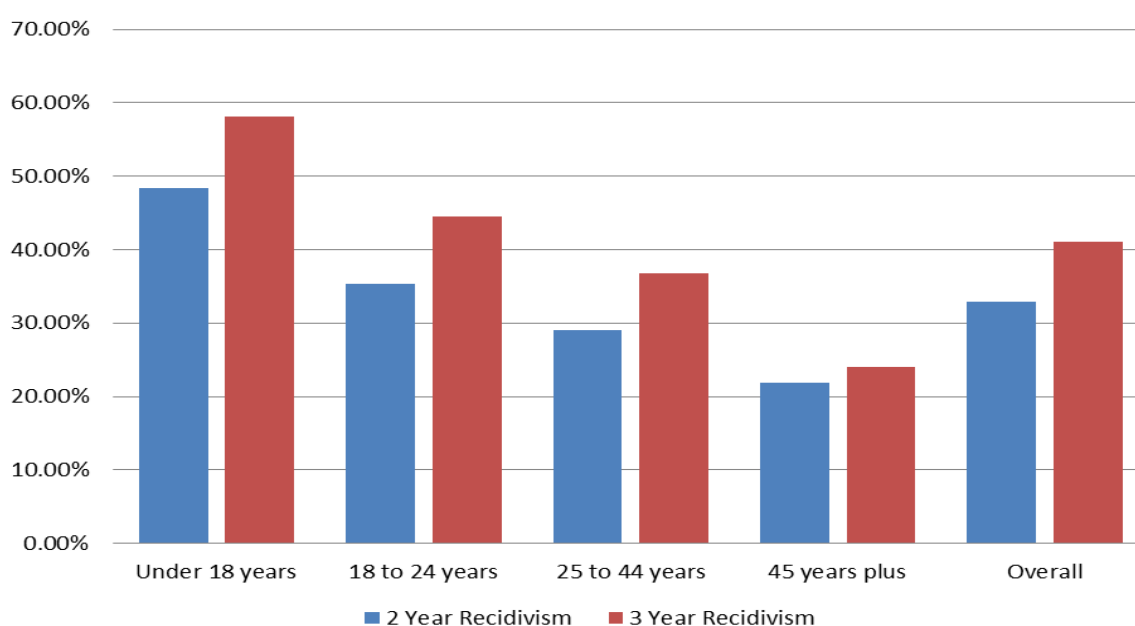
87% of the population in this study was aged between 18 and 45 years, with approximately 7% aged 17 years or younger and 6% aged 45 years and older. The greatest concentration of offenders (44%) was in the seven year age bracket from 18 to 25 years.

As might be expected from other studies elsewhere, there was a progressive reduction in recidivism through the different age groups studied. The most significant reduction in recidivism was that between those aged 17 years and under and those aged between 18 and 24 years, with change in the three year recidivism from 58.1% to 44.5%. While the re-offending level amongst young offenders under 18 years is high, this needs to be seen in the context of the small under 18 population. Where there is a relatively small population size caution must be exercised in interpreting data as in this instance. The population of young people subject to Probation supervision nevertheless, comprises the more difficult and challenging offenders as the majority of young offenders coming to An Garda Síochána attention are diverted at an earlier point out of the criminal justice system and engaged with other services.

**Table 3: Recidivism by Age – 2008 cohort**

Age Category	Population	Recidivism after 2 Years	Recidivism after 3 Years
Under 18 years	277 (7%)	48.4%	58.1%
18 to 24 years	1,650 (44%)	35.4%	44.5%
25 to 44 years	1,618 (43%)	29.1%	36.8%
45 years plus	216 (6%)	21.8%	24.1%
Overall	3,761 (100%)	32.9%	41.0%

**Figure 3: Recidivism by Age – 2008 cohort**



**4. Original Offence and Recidivism (any offence): Public Order was the most common original offence. Burglary had the highest recidivism.**

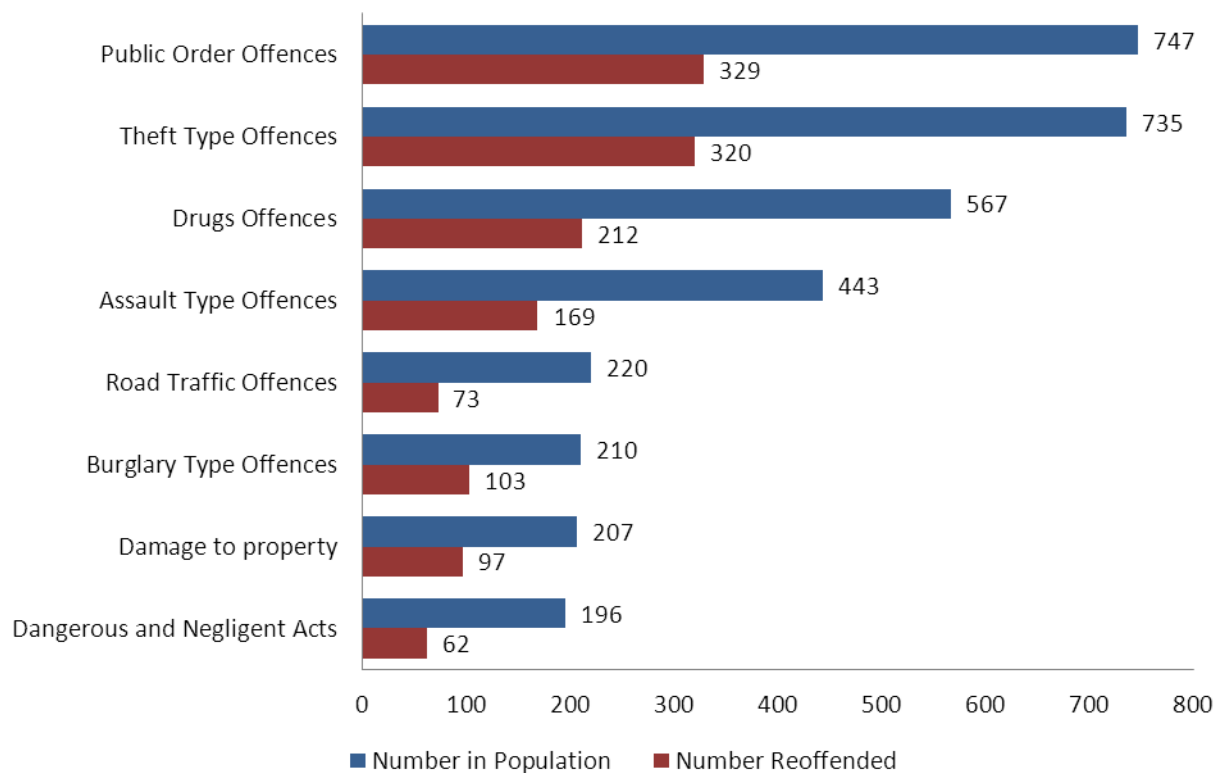
The original offences were divided into 16 sub-categories in accordance with CSO practice (See Appendix 4 for a full outline of the contents of the sub-categories). The frequency and recidivism (any new offence) for the eight largest sub-categories of original offences are described in Table 4. Offence categories have been excluded where the numbers were very low.

- The most common original offence types were Public Order, Theft and Drugs offences respectively.
- The original offence types with the highest recidivism (any offence) were Burglary, Damage to Property and Public Order respectively.
- Theft offences were the second largest original offence group and had above average recidivism (any offence) for this study at 34.6% after two years and 43.5% after three years.
- Offenders who had committed burglary offences, although a relatively small group within the population of this study, had the highest recidivism (for any offence) at 41.4% after two years and 49% after three years. Of those who did re-offend, one third were reconvicted for a public order offence. 10.7% were reconvicted for a further burglary offence (Table 5A Appendix 3).

**Table 4: Recidivism (any offence) by original offence ranked by number in 2008 cohort.**

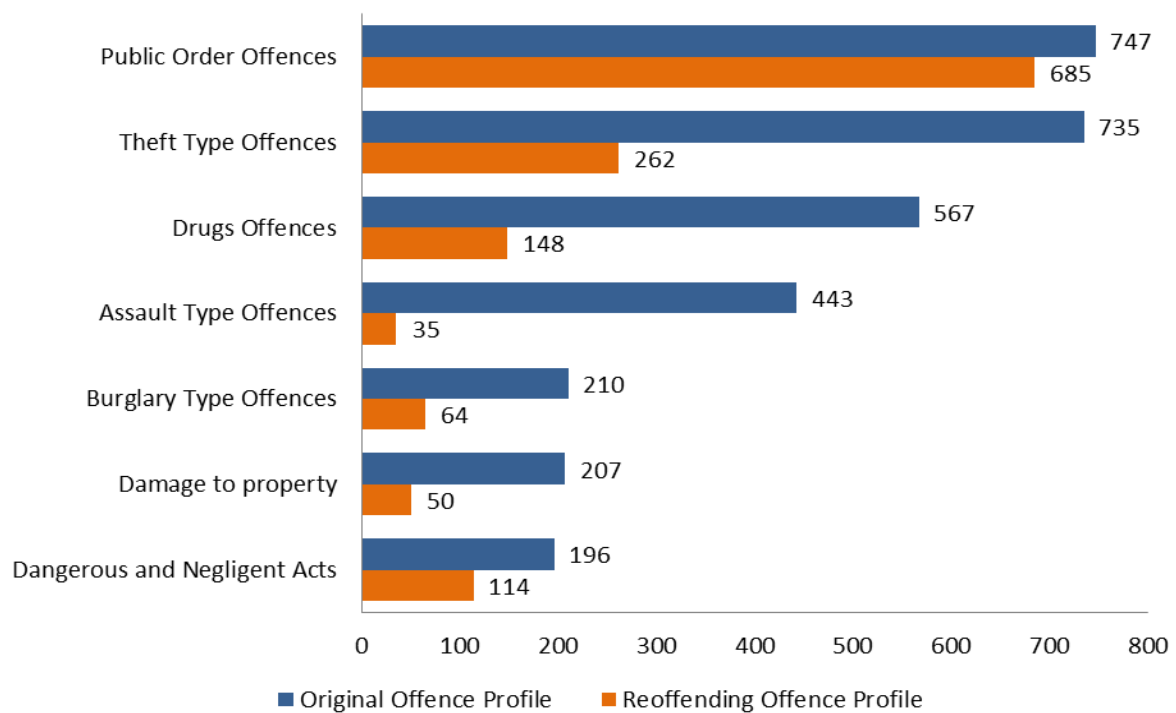
Original Offence	Number in Population	2 Year Recidivism	3 Year Recidivism
Public Order Offences	747	37.6%	44.0%
Theft Type Offences	735	34.6%	43.5%
Drugs Offences	567	30.2%	37.4%
Assault Type Offences	443	29.1%	38.1%
Road Traffic Offences	220	25.9%	33.2%
Burglary Type Offences	210	41.4%	49.0%
Damage to property	207	37.7%	46.9%
Dangerous and Negligent Acts	196	23.5%	31.6%

**Figure 4: Recidivism by original offence arranged by number in the population.**



The figure above reflects that the greatest number of offenders (747) were on supervision for a Public Order Offence. Of those 747 offenders, 329 reoffended (any offence).

**Figure 4a: Original Offences and Number of Re-offences by Offence Type.**



The figure above reflects that 747 offenders were on supervision for a Public Order Offence. Of all the reoffenders (1,543) in the study, 685 reoffended by committing a Public Order offence.

**5. Reconvicted offence: The three most common offences for which offenders were reconvicted were the same as the three most common original offences: Public Order, Theft and Drugs.**

Public Order represented the offence type of which offenders were most frequently reconvicted. Almost two thirds of offenders who had originally committed a public order offence and were re-convicted, were re-convicted for a further public order offence.

The law on public order offences in Ireland is outlined in the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994. This Act deals with behaviour in public places in Ireland. Offences extend from lesser transgressions including intoxication in a public place and disorderly conduct to assault with intent to cause bodily harm and violent disorder.

The Courts Service Annual Reports indicate that in 2008 there was 92% increase in public order and assault cases before the District Court, from 35,964 in 2007 to 69,248. In 2009 Offences involving public order and assault remained the second highest category of offence. 64,748 public order offences were brought before the District Court in 2009. In 2010 Offences involving public order and assault remained the second largest category of offence before the District Court. There were 63,550 offences involving 39,156 defendants.

A significant proportion of public order re-offending by persons subject to Probation Service supervision arise at the lower end of the offence scale outlined in the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994. The increased level of enforcement and prosecution described in the Courts Service Annual Reports from 2007 onwards will also have had a particular impact on reported recidivism. This study is not able to ascertain the relative seriousness of re-offending in comparison to original offending on the basis of data available. That is a question that is intended to be explored in recidivism studies in the future.

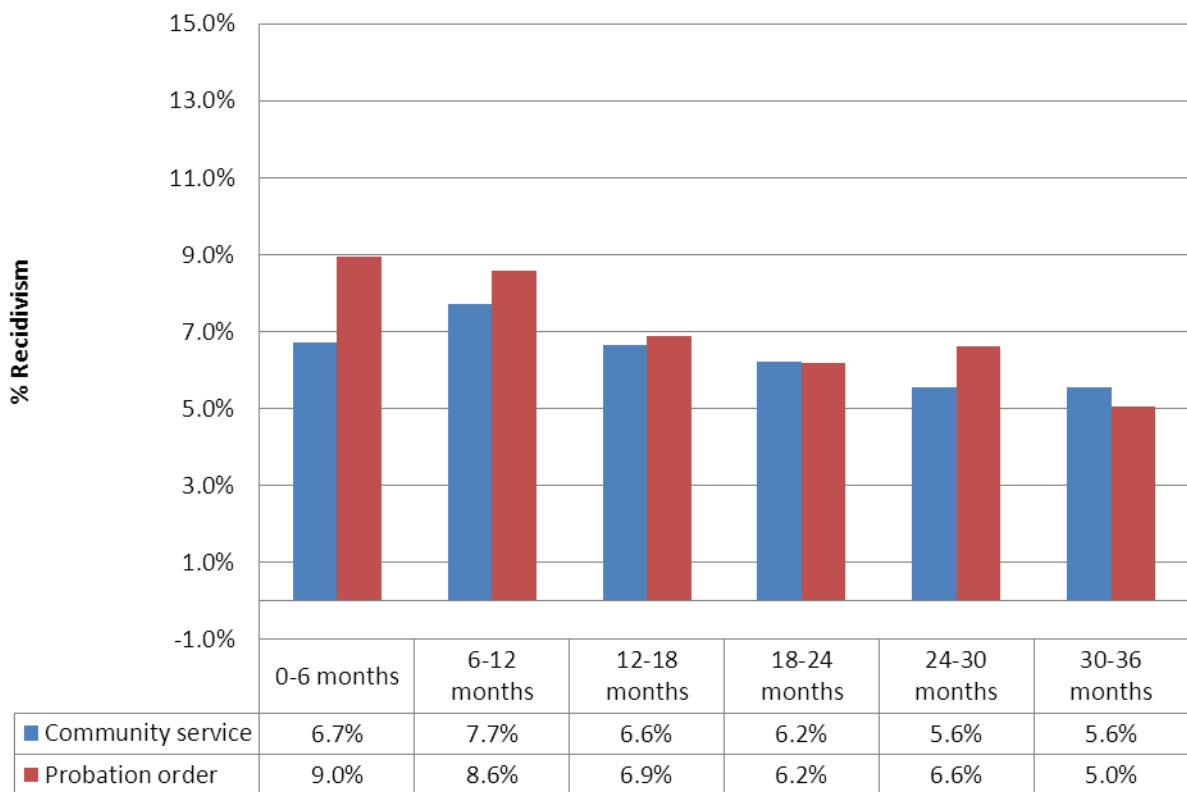
Within the three most common offence groups (public order, theft and drugs), a pattern in recidivism may be identifiable. Where the original offence was one of these three most common offence groups the offence of reconviction is most frequently from within that set of offence groups.

A detailed breakdown of the relationship between offence and the offence of reconviction are included in Tables 5 and 5A which are located in Appendix 3.

## 6. Timeframe and recidivism.

Recidivism studies in general, including the 2012 study, indicate that the majority of reoffending occurs in the first 12 months in the community following sentencing. The findings in this report do not follow that pattern. While there is a decline in reoffending from 8.2% in the first 6 months to 5.2% in the last 6 months, the steady decline in recidivism over time is less marked than in the 2012 study.

**Figure 6: Breakdown of recidivism over three years. Every 6 Months – 2008 Cohort.**



## 7. Comparison between 2007 and 2008 cohorts.

While these studies will, in due course, facilitate comparison between the 2007 and 2008 three year recidivism results, caution regarding comparing like with like would indicate that, currently, comparison between the unrevised 2007 and 2008 two year data sets is more prudent.

The following tables provide the comparison between the unrevised 2007 and 2008 cohorts by (i) Order Type, (ii) Gender and (iii) Age of offender.

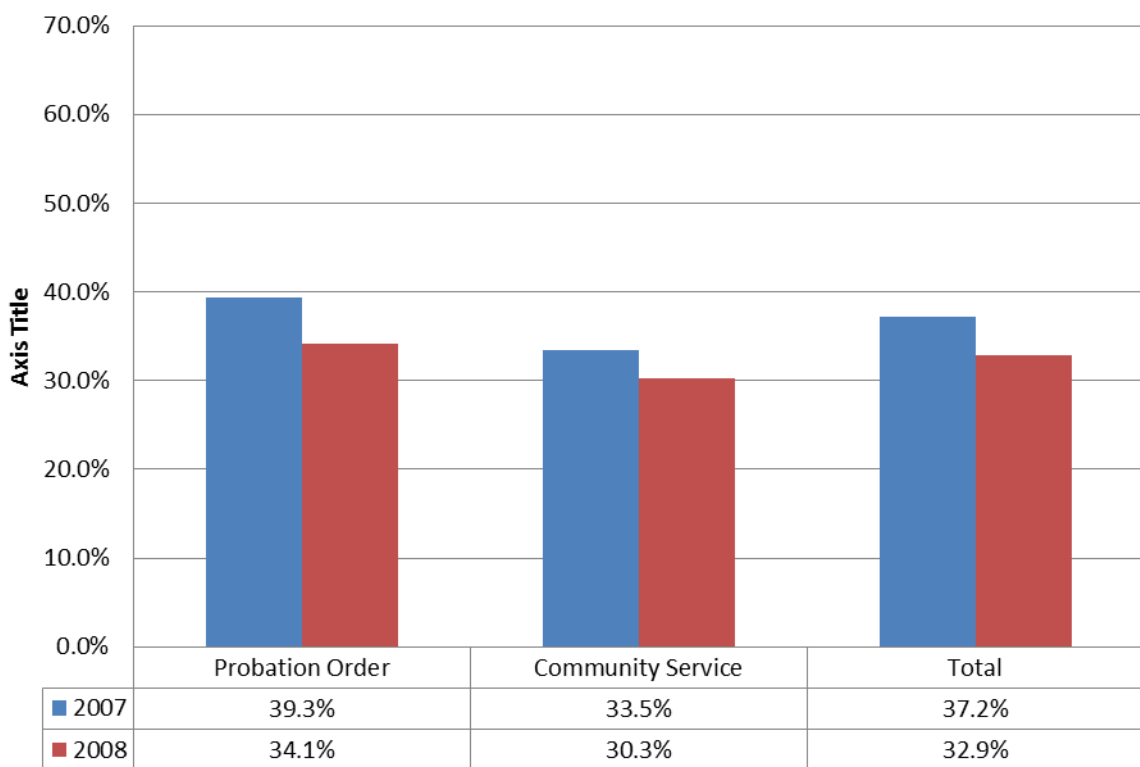
(i) Order Type:

Re-offending by persons on Probation Orders at 39.3% in the 2007 study has fallen to 34.1% in the 2008 report. Similarly the level for Community Service Orders at 33.5% in 2007 study has fallen to 30.3% in the 2008 report. The overall level of re-offending has fallen from 37.2% to 32.9%.

**Table 7: Comparison of 2007 cohort and 2008 cohort (2 year re-offending)**

Type of Order	2007	2008	Change 2007 - 2008
Probation Order	39.3%	34.1%	-5.2%
Community Service	33.5%	30.3%	-3.2%
Total	37.2%	32.9%	-4.3%

**Figure 7: Comparison 2007 cohort to 2008 cohort (2 year re-offending) by Order Type**



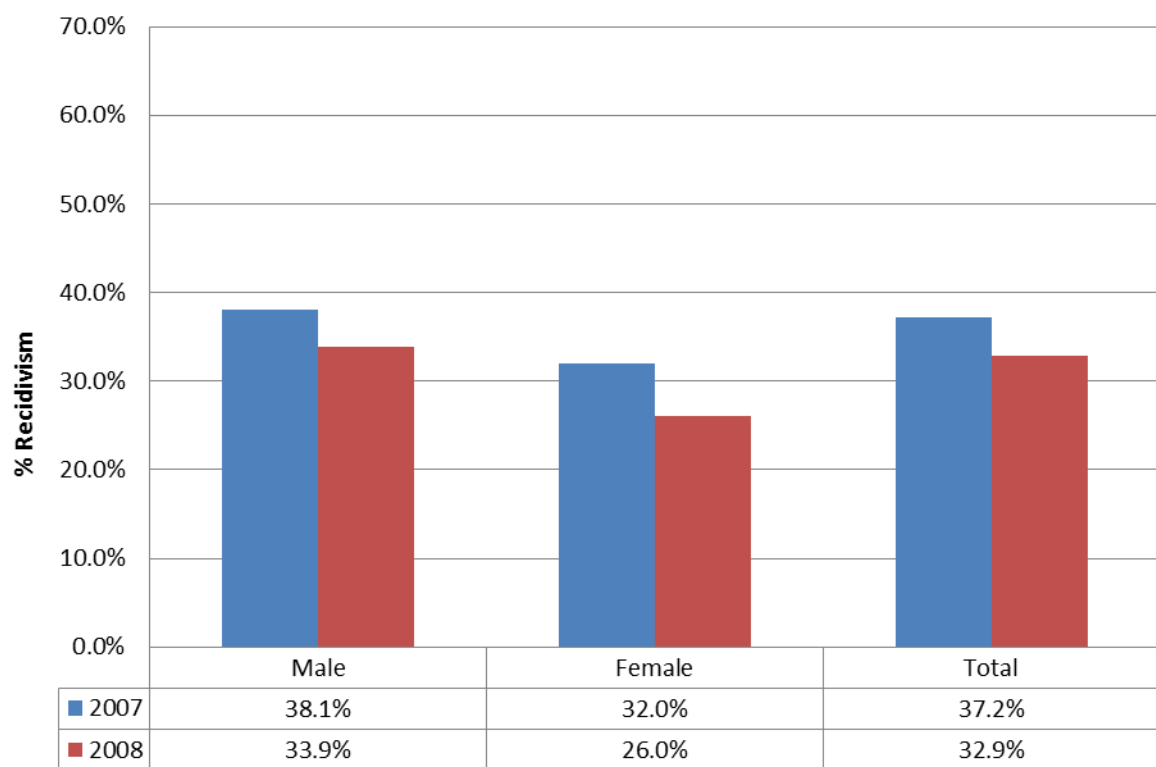
(ii) Gender:

Recidivism for both females and males declined between the 2007 and 2008 cohorts. In both studies females had a lower rate of recidivism than males but not as low as might be expected given the lower levels of female offending in general.

**Table 7a: – Comparison 2007 cohort to 2008 cohort (2 year re-offending) by Gender**

Gender	2007	2008	Change 2007 - 2008
Male	38.1%	33.9%	-4.2%
Female	32.0%	26.0%	-6.0%
Total	37.2%	32.9%	-4.3%

**Figure 7a: – Comparison of 2007 cohort and 2008 cohort (2 year re-offending) by Gender**



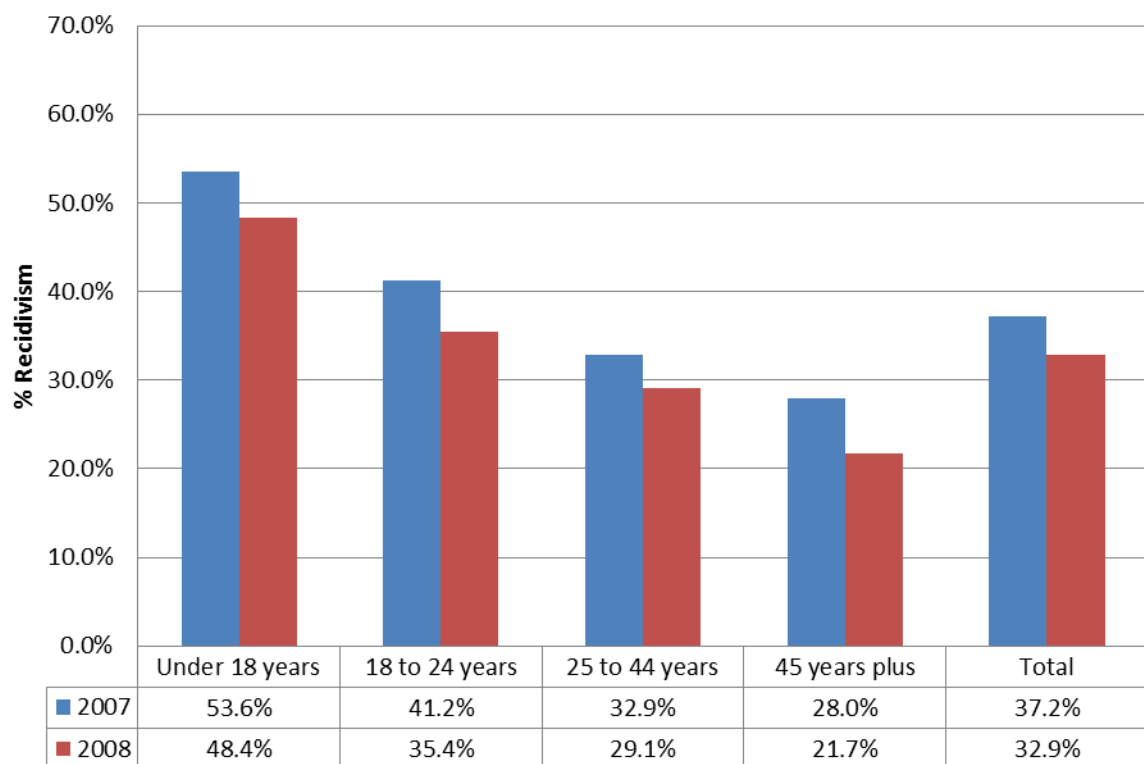
(iii) Age:

The pattern of decreasing recidivism with age was similar for both studies with the decrease between 2007 and 2008 consistent across the age categories.

**Table 7b: – Comparison 2007 cohort to 2008 cohort (2 year re-offending) by Age**

Age Category	2007	2008	Change 2007 - 2008
Under 18 years	53.6%	48.4%	-5.2%
18 to 24 years	41.2%	35.4%	-5.8%
25 to 44 years	32.9%	29.1%	-3.8%
45 years plus	28.0%	21.7%	-6.3%
Total	37.2%	32.9%	-4.3%

**Figure 7b: – Comparison 2007 cohort to 2008 cohort (2 year re-offending) by Age**





## **Discussion**

In criminology, measuring recidivism is an established method for examining the effects of penal interventions. The work of the CSO, along with the co-operation of criminal justice agencies, has opened up opportunities to do significant recidivism research on community sanctions in Ireland.

This study follows on from the study of the 2007 cohort, published in November 2012, as part of the Probation Service research and evaluation strategy and plan to study and report reliable data, consistent with best international standards, on recidivism and related issues among adult offenders subject to Probation Service supervision in Ireland.

It uses offender and offence information on a 2008 cohort of offenders (population 3,761) as the study group from the Probation Service database, with the recorded crime and Court Service data held by the CSO, to build a picture of recidivism among offenders subject to supervision by the Probation Service.

As outlined, this study reports on the population of offenders who were made subject of either a Probation Order or a Community Service Order between January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 and December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008. The study does not include offenders subject to supervision arising from other legislative provisions such as the Sex Offender Act 2001 or certain provisions of the Children's Act 2001.

The Probation Service does hope, in the future, to research and publish studies on the management of sex offenders, young offenders and females.

In this study on the 2008 cohort two and three year recidivism periods are studied. How data is recorded, how recidivism has been calculated and cautions that may apply is described in the Methodology section of this report.

Key findings include:

- ❖ The three year recidivism of the 2008 cohort was 41.0%, meaning that almost 60% of offenders on Probation Service supervision had no further conviction within the study.
- ❖ The recidivism rate decreased as the offender age increased.
- ❖ Male offenders represented 87% of the total population and had a higher recidivism rate (42.1%) than female offenders (34.0%).
- ❖ Public Order was the most common original offence (20%) and it was also the most common offence of reconviction (44%).
- ❖ While Burglary represented less than 6% of the original offences type, these offenders had the highest rate of recidivism. Of those who did reoffend, 33% were convicted of a Public Order offence.
- ❖ The three most common offences for which offenders were reconvicted Public Order (44%), Theft (17%) and Drugs (9.6%) were the same as the three most common original offences: Public Order (20%), Theft (19.5%) and Drugs (15.1%).
- ❖ There is a higher level of re-offending in the first year after the making of the supervision order in comparison with subsequent years within the 2008 cohort. The reduction between first and second year was more significant in the 2007 cohort.

Those aged under 18 years, while a small population, had a significantly higher recidivism at almost 48.4% after two years and 58.1% after three. The reduction in recidivism as age increases was most marked between those aged under 18 years of age and those aged from 18 to 25 years. This may reflect the policy of diverting many young offenders out of the criminal justice system and the impact of co-ordinated approach of youth justice strategies.

Public Order was identified as the most significant offence in this study both in initial offending and the most frequent offences for which offenders were reconvicted. Almost two thirds of offenders who had originally committed a public order offence were convicted for a further public order offence. The increased level of enforcement and prosecution (92% increase between 2007 and 2008) described in the Courts Service Annual Reports from 2007 onwards may also have had a particular impact on reported offending and recidivism.

The Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994 extends to a very wide range of offending from relatively minor transgressions to more serious offences. It appears that a significant proportion of public order re-offending by persons subject to Probation Service supervision arises at the lower end of the offence scale outlined in the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act, 1994. This possible explanation requires further investigation.

Most Public Order and some other less serious offending may be, in some instances, interpreted as a reduction in offending seriousness and part of a desistance process in which offenders gradually detach from criminal behaviour and lifestyle rather than at one-fell-swoop cease offending. However, there is insufficient information on specific offences in this study to test this hypothesis.

As referred to in last year's study some important general caveats should be noted regarding the issues and principles in this recidivism research.

Reconviction rates are only a proxy of re-offending and do not fully pick up on the quantity, nature or seriousness of any such re-offending. As a measure of the effectiveness of sanctions, they do not consider what the re-conviction rate would be if the particular sanction was not applied (Raynor and Vanstone 1996).

Further, it is also important to recognise that "reconviction and re-imprisonment rates are influenced by legislation, sentencing practice, resource levels of criminal justice agencies, as well as volumes of crimes committed and rates of detection and resolution" (Nadesu 2008). These factors may have had an impact in this study.

Recidivism is not always defined and measured in the same way across different countries and studies. This is particularly important in seeking comparison between jurisdictions. It is often more appropriate to compare the trends rather than the actual figures given the differences in how recidivism is measured. Many trends found in this study are consistent with recidivism studies from comparable jurisdictions as referred to in the 2012 study.

This study does not allow for comparison with similar offenders dealt with differently in this jurisdiction, including by fines and imprisonment. Recidivism of offenders subjected to different penalties can, at times, be ascribed as much to the characteristics of the offender and possibly other factors, as to the impact of the penalties. Once such characteristics are taken into account the

difference in average reconviction rates for different types of disposals are often found to be less marked.

It is important in comparing different disposals to take account of the static risk factors known to be consistently associated with higher rates of recidivism: “Age at first offence, nature and extent of previous offending and experience of previous sentences” (Hedderman 2009) are known to be such factors. By taking these into account the relative effectiveness of different sanctions for different offender groups can be more accurately assessed.

### **Future Direction**

This study is the second publication of recidivism among a cohort of offenders subject to Probation Service supervision. Many of the limitations of the study have been referred to elsewhere in this report on the study. These projects, in partnership with the CSO, conducting standardised measurements of recidivism amongst diverse groups of offenders will, it is hoped, continue to develop and extend the scope and detail of information that can be gleaned to provide a clearer overview of community sanctions and their outcomes. This in turn will inform the Probation Service in developing interventions and enhancing practice for better outcomes.

This study does not examine or report on the risk of re-offending profiles or distribution in the 2008 offender cohort. The relevant risk datasets for the 2008 cohort were not sufficiently developed at the time to conduct an examination in this study. It is hoped that in recidivism studies in the not-too-distant future it will be possible to review and examine recidivism in the context of risk of offending profiles and distribution among the offender population subject to Probation Service supervision. This will include comparing the assessed risk level of the offender at the time of commencing and completing supervision. This information, coupled with reconviction data, will allow for evidence based judgements about how likely offenders are to benefit from different probation interventions and what changes occur.

For recidivism measurement purposes, this study did not report on the relative seriousness of the re-offending by individual offenders leading to reconviction. Minor offences and serious offences are treated as equivalent in denoting recidivism. The consequences of reconviction are similarly disregarded. Reconviction dealt with by way of a community sanction is also not differentiated from reconviction leading to imprisonment. In future studies it is hoped that it will be possible to report on seriousness of re-offending and on imprisonment as a consequence of re-offending while subject to probation supervision.

Information from other studies indicates a strong link between recidivism and the number and history of previous convictions. Examination of these factors will require additional data mining and co-operation from other criminal justice sources.

Future Probation Service studies will also seek to examine outcomes in relation to specific cohorts of offenders including those who:

- Are subject to part suspended sentences;
- Are subject to orders under the Children Act;
- Have committed sexual offences;
- Are on supervised release from custody;
- Are minority offender populations such as women, over 45 year olds and ethnic groups.

## Appendix 1

### Updated Data (2 years) for the 2007 Cohort

	Re-offence within two years			Recidivism rate %
	yes	No	Total	
<b>Total offenders</b>	1,491	2,085	3,576	41.7
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	1,323	1,763	3,086	42.9
Female	168	322	490	34.3
<b>Male age group</b>				
<18	99	57	156	63.5
18-24	657	701	1,358	48.4
25-44	521	891	1,412	36.9
45-64	45	103	148	30.4
65 +	1	11	12	8.3
<b>Female age group</b>				
<18	16	9	25	64.0
18-24	59	109	168	35.1
25-44	85	183	268	31.7
45-64	8	20	28	28.6
65 +	0	1	1	0.0
<b>All persons age group</b>				
<18	115	66	181	63.5
18-24	716	810	1,526	46.9
25-44	606	1,074	1,680	36.1
45-64	53	123	176	30.1
65 +	1	12	13	7.7
<b>Probation type</b>				
Community service	499	783	1,282	38.9
Probation order	992	1,302	2,294	43.2
<b>Probation referral offence</b>				
01 Homicide offences	1	2	3	33.3
02 Sexual offences	6	26	32	18.8
03 Attempts/Threats to Murder, assaults, harassments and related offences	139	276	415	33.5
04 Dangerous or negligent acts	53	102	155	34.2
05 Kidnapping and related offences	0	2	2	0.0
06 Robbery, extortion and hijacking offences	29	60	89	32.6
07 Burglary and related offences	103	90	193	53.4
08 Theft and related offences	313	378	691	45.3
09 Fraud, deception and related offences	11	42	53	20.8
10 Controlled drug offences	184	384	568	32.4
11 Weapons and explosives offences	44	55	99	44.4
12 Damage to property and to the environment	81	94	175	46.3
13 Public order and other social code offences	386	323	709	54.4
14 Road and traffic offences	96	167	263	36.5
15 Offences against Government, justice procedures and organisation of crime	44	63	107	41.1
16 Offences not elsewhere classified	1	7	8	12.5
Not stated	0	14	14	0.0

## Appendix 2

### Updated Data (3 years) for the 2007 Cohort

	Re-offence within three years			Recidivism rate %
	Yes	No	Total	
<b>Total offenders</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>3,562</b>	<b>48.9</b>
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	1,542	1,536	3,078	50.1
Female	199	285	484	41.1
<b>Male age group</b>				
<18	108	48	156	69.2
18-24	765	586	1,351	56.6
25-44	613	798	1,411	43.4
45-64	55	93	148	37.2
65 +	1	11	12	8.3
<b>Female age group</b>				
<18	16	9	25	64.0
18-24	71	95	166	42.8
25-44	104	160	264	39.4
45-64	8	20	28	28.6
65 +	0	1	1	0.0
<b>All persons age group</b>				
<18	124	57	181	68.5
18-24	836	681	1,517	55.1
25-44	717	958	1,675	42.8
45-64	63	113	176	35.8
65 +	1	12	13	7.7
<b>Probation type</b>				
Community service	577	702	1,279	45.1
Probation order	1,164	1,119	2,283	51.0
<b>Probation referral offence</b>				
01 Homicide offences	1	2	3	33.3
02 Sexual offences	7	25	32	21.9
03 Attempts/Threats to Murder, assaults, harassments and related offences	162	253	415	39.0
04 Dangerous or negligent acts	65	90	155	41.9
05 Kidnapping and related offences	0	2	2	0.0
06 Robbery, extortion and hijacking offences	40	49	89	44.9
07 Burglary and related offences	120	73	193	62.2
08 Theft and related offences	355	335	690	51.4
09 Fraud, deception and related offences	15	38	53	28.3
10 Controlled drug offences	231	337	568	40.7
11 Weapons and explosives offences	52	48	100	52.0
12 Damage to property and to the environment	95	80	175	54.3
13 Public order and other social code offences	435	274	709	61.4
14 Road and traffic offences	114	149	263	43.3
15 Offences against Government, justice procedures and organisation of crime	48	58	106	45.3
16 Offences not elsewhere classified	1	7	8	12.5

### Appendix 3

**Table 5: Breakdown of Offences and Re-offences – 2008 Cohort**

Reoffence Original Offence	Public Order Offences	Theft Type Offences	Drugs and Related Offences	Offences against Government, Justice	Dangerous / Negligent Acts	Burglary Type Offences	Damage To Property and Environment	Assault Type Offences	Weapons & Explosives Offences	Other Offences	Total Offended	Did Not Reoffend	Total Offenders
Public Order Offences	213	25	17	18	25	7	10	6	6	2	329	418	747
Theft Type Offences	122	98	14	28	14	18	9	2	3	12	320	415	735
Drugs and Related Offences	63	37	50	12	24	9	3	6	5	3	212	355	567
Assault Type Offences	77	11	16	17	17	6	11	10	4	0	169	274	443
Burglary Type Offences	34	24	8	9	5	11	5	2	4	1	103	107	210
Damage To Property and Environment	40	21	12	6	3	3	5	2	3	2	97	110	207
Road and traffic offences	23	15	10	8	6	3	1	4	2	1	73	147	220
Dangerous / Negligent Acts	29	7	3	6	12	0	1	1	1	2	62	134	196
Weapons & Explosives Offences	29	7	7	2	5	3	2	0	3	0	58	61	119
Offences against Government, Justice	31	3	3	13	1	1	1	1	2	1	57	81	138
Robbery Type Offences	11	4	5	3	1	3	1	0	1	2	31	42	73
Other Offences	13	10	3	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	32	74	106
Total	685	262	148	124	114	64	50	35	34	27	1,543	2,218	3,761

### Appendix 3

**Table 5A: Percentage breakdown of Offences and Re-offences – 2008 Cohort**

Reoffence Original Offence	Public Order Offences	Theft Type Offences	Drugs and Related Offences	Offences against Government, Justice	Dangerous / Negligent Acts	Burglary Type Offences	Damage To Property and Environment	Assault Type Offences	Weapons & Explosives Offences	Other Offences	Total Offended
Public Order Offences	64.7%	7.6%	5.2%	5.5%	7.6%	2.1%	3.0%	1.8%	1.8%	0.6%	100.0%
Theft Type Offences	38.1%	30.6%	4.4%	8.8%	4.4%	5.6%	2.8%	0.6%	0.9%	3.8%	100.0%
Drugs and Related Offences	29.7%	17.5%	23.6%	5.7%	11.3%	4.2%	1.4%	2.8%	2.4%	1.4%	100.0%
Assault Type Offences	45.6%	6.5%	9.5%	10.1%	10.1%	3.6%	6.5%	5.9%	2.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Burglary Type Offences	33.0%	23.3%	7.8%	8.7%	4.9%	10.7%	4.9%	1.9%	3.9%	1.0%	100.0%
Damage To Property and Environment	41.2%	21.6%	12.4%	6.2%	3.1%	3.1%	5.2%	2.1%	3.1%	2.1%	100.0%
Road and traffic offences	31.5%	20.5%	13.7%	11.0%	8.2%	4.1%	1.4%	5.5%	2.7%	1.4%	100.0%
Dangerous / Negligent Acts	46.8%	11.3%	4.8%	9.7%	19.4%	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	3.2%	100.0%
Weapons & Explosives Offences	50.0%	12.1%	12.1%	3.4%	8.6%	5.2%	3.4%	0.0%	5.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Offences against Government, Justice	54.4%	5.3%	5.3%	22.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	3.5%	1.8%	100.0%
Robbery Type Offences	35.5%	12.9%	16.1%	9.7%	3.2%	9.7%	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%	6.5%	100.0%
Other Offences	40.6%	31.3%	9.4%	6.3%	3.1%	0.0%	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%	3.1%	100.0%
Total	44.4%	17.0%	9.6%	8.0%	7.4%	4.1%	3.2%	2.3%	2.2%	1.7%	100.0%

## **Appendix 4**

### **ICCS Offence Groups**

<b>01</b>	<b>Homicide offences</b>	<p>Murder</p> <p>Manslaughter</p> <p>Infanticide</p> <p>Manslaughter (traffic fatality)</p> <p>Dangerous driving causing death</p>
<b>02</b>	<b>Sexual offences</b>	<p>Rape of a male or female</p> <p>Rape Section 4</p> <p>Unlawful carnal knowledge / Criminal law (Sexual Offences Act) 2006</p> <p>Buggery</p> <p>Sexual offence involving mentally impaired person</p> <p>Aggravated sexual assault</p> <p>Sexual assault</p> <p>Incest</p> <p>Child pornography offences</p> <p>Child pornography – obstruction of warrant</p> <p>Gross indecency</p>
<b>03</b>	<b>Attempts or threats to murder, assaults, harassments and related offences</b>	<p>Murder-attempt</p> <p>Murder-threat</p> <p>Assault causing harm</p> <p>Poisoning</p> <p>Assault or obstruction of Garda/official, resisting arrest</p> <p>Minor assault</p> <p>Coercion</p> <p>Harassment, stalking, threats</p> <p>Demanding payment of debt causing alarm</p> <p>Housing Act</p> <p>Menacing phone calls</p> <p>Incitement to hatred offences</p>
<b>04</b>	<b>Dangerous or negligent acts</b>	<p>Dangerous driving causing serious bodily harm</p> <p>Driving/In charge of a vehicle while over legal alcohol limit</p> <p>Driving/In charge of a vehicle under the influence of drugs</p> <p>Endangerment with potential for serious harm or death</p> <p>Abandoning a child, child neglect and cruelty</p> <p>Unseaworthy/dangerous use of boat or ship</p> <p>False alarm/interference with aircraft or air transport facilities</p> <p>Endangering traffic offences</p>
<b>05</b>	<b>Kidnapping and related offences</b>	<p>False imprisonment</p> <p>Abduction of person under 16 years of age</p> <p>Human trafficking offences</p>
<b>06</b>	<b>Robbery, extortion and hijacking offences</b>	<p>Robbery of an establishment or institution</p> <p>Robbery of cash or goods in transit</p> <p>Robbery from the person</p> <p>Blackmail or extortion</p> <p>Carjacking, hijacking/unlawful seizure of aircraft/vessel</p>



<b>07</b>	<b>Burglary and related offences</b>	Aggravated burglary Burglary (not aggravated) Possession of an article (with intent to burgle, steal, demand)
<b>08</b>	<b>Theft and related offences</b>	Theft/Unauthorised taking of vehicle Interfering with vehicle (with intent to steal item or vehicle) Theft from person Theft from shop Theft from vehicle Theft/ Unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle Theft of, or interference with, mail Handling or possession of stolen property Theft of other property
<b>09</b>	<b>Fraud, deception and related offences</b>	Fraud, deception, false pretence offences Forging an instrument to defraud Possession of an article for use in fraud, deception or extortion Falsification of accounts Offences under the Companies Act Offences under the Investment Intermediaries Act Offences under the Stock Exchange Act Money laundering Embezzlement Fraud against the European Union Importation/Sale/Supply of tobacco Counterfeiting notes and coins Counterfeiting of goods Bad debts criminal (Debtors Ireland) Corruption (involving public office holder)
<b>10</b>	<b>Controlled drug offences</b>	Importation of drugs Cultivation or manufacture of drugs Possession of drugs for sale or supply Possession of drugs for personal use Forged or altered prescription offences Obstruction under the Drugs Act
<b>11</b>	<b>Weapons and explosives offences</b>	Causing an explosion Making of explosives Possession of explosives Chemical weapons offences Discharging a firearm Possession of a firearm Possession of offensive weapons (not firearms) Fireworks offences (for sale, igniting etc.)

<b>12</b>	<b>Damage to property and to the environment</b>	Arson Criminal damage (not arson) Litter offences
<b>13</b>	<b>Public order and other social code offences</b>	Affray/Riot/Violent disorder Public order offences Drunkenness offences Air rage-disruptive or drunken behaviour on aircraft Forcible entry and occupation (not burglary) Trespass on lands or enclosed areas Liquor licensing offences Registered clubs offences Special restaurant offences Provision of intoxicating liquor to under 18 year olds Purchase or consumption of alcohol by under 18 year olds Sale of intoxicating liquor to under 18 year olds Brothel keeping Organisation of prostitution Prostitution, including soliciting etc. Offences under the Betting Acts Collecting money without permit, unauthorised collection Offences under Gaming and Lotteries Acts Permit/License offences for casual/street trading Allowing a child (under 16 years) to beg Bigamy Bestiality Indecency
<b>14</b>	<b>Road and traffic Offences (NEC)</b>	Driving licence- failure to have, produce etc. Insurance-failure to have, produce, display etc. No tax, non-display of tax, unregistered vehicle etc. Misuse of trade licence Misuse of trailers, weight and other offences Obstruction under road traffic acts Other road offences Road transport – carriage of goods offences Public Service vehicle offences Light rail offences (Luas)

**15 Offences against  
Government,  
justice procedures  
and organisation  
of crime**

Treason  
Breaches of Offences Against the State Acts  
Breaches of Official Secrets Act  
Impersonating member of An Garda Síochána  
Electoral offences including personation  
Public mischief-annoying phone calls, wasting police time  
Criminal Assets Bureau offences  
Non-compliance with Garda direction  
Criminal organisation offences (organised crime)  
Conspiracy to commit a crime  
Perjury  
Interfering with a jury (embracery)  
Assisting offenders  
Public mischief, pervert course of justice, conceal offence  
Escape or help to escape from custody  
Prison offences  
Breach of Domestic Violence Order (protection, safety, barring)  
Breach of order under Family Law Act  
Breach of bail  
Failure to comply under Sex Offenders Act  
Other failure to comply with court order, jury summons, warrant etc.

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