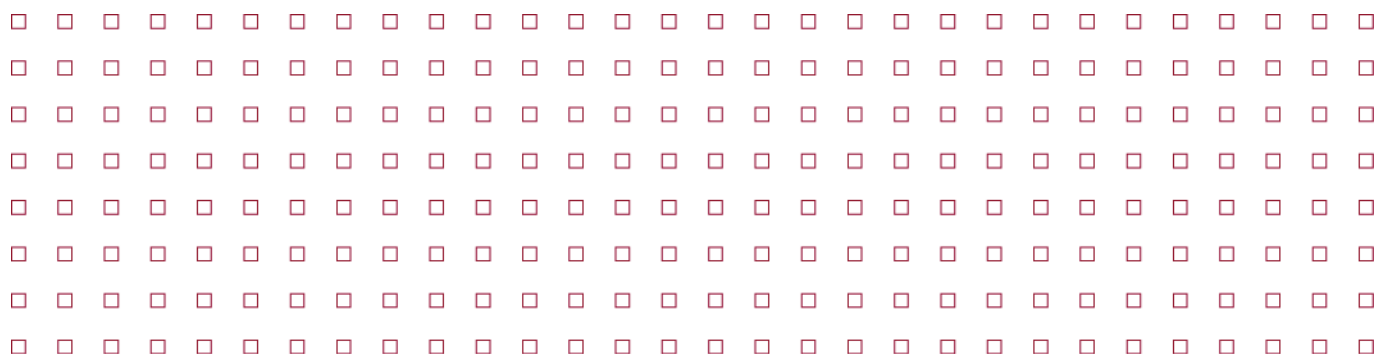


Open Data Strategy 2012–15

June 2012



Open Data Strategy 2012–15

**This information is also available on the Ministry of Justice website:
www.justice.gov.uk**

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Introduction

Transparency is an integral part of the Coalition Government's vision for how public services should be delivered. By making public services more transparent the Government is aiming to: improve engagement with public services, including choice; drive improved service delivery including efficiency; promote social and economic growth; and increase the accountability of public services.

The unprecedented release of justice data places MoJ at the forefront of transparency across Government. Over the next two years we will embed the progress made to date and are also determined to go further, while remaining mindful of operational and resource constraints. In addition, across the wider public sector we are extending the scope of the Freedom of Information Act to more organisations through the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. We will also make more information available sooner by commencing provisions in the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 to reduce the point at which historical records are made available at The National Archives and other places of deposit from thirty to twenty years and similarly reduce the maximum lifespan of certain Freedom of Information exemptions.

The MoJ is committed to providing data to the public that is meaningful, accessible and re-useable, and to build on the significant progress made to date. So far MoJ has released data in a number of areas, including:

- SCS salaries and organograms (annual snapshot);
- GPC spend (monthly);
- Spend greater than £25,000 (monthly);
- Anonymised individual-level re-offending data for each Local Authority, Probation Trust and prison establishment (quarterly);
- Anonymised individual-level sentencing outcome data for each court (annual);
- Sentencing outcome data for every court for 2005-2010 (annual); and
- Court-level performance data, in particular timeliness of criminal, civil and family proceedings, including criminal end-to-end timeliness (quarterly).

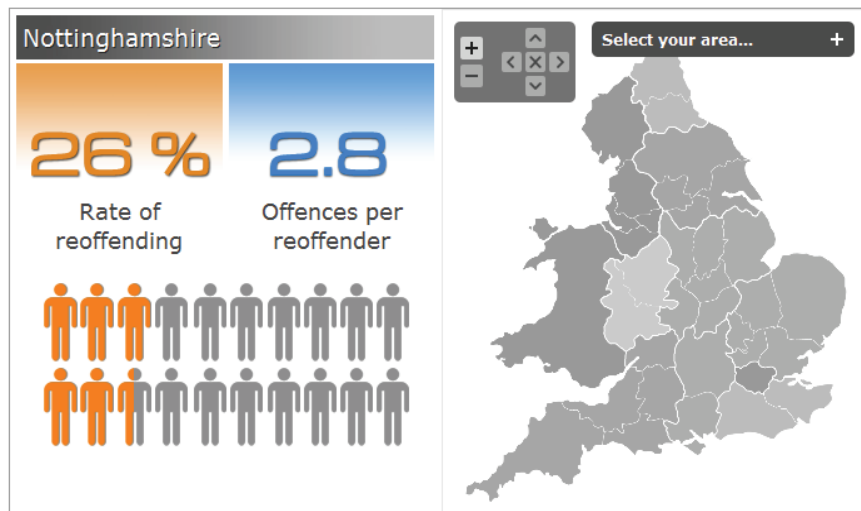
We have provided explanatory information on the Open Justice microsite that aims to give people a clearer understanding of how the justice system operates and what conclusions can, and cannot, be drawn from the justice data. This information and accessible visualisations can be found here: <http://open.justice.gov.uk/> (see below for more information). This is evidence of work to bring together our open data, transparency and public engagement commitments to support transformation and reform in these areas of MoJ business. In line with the first and second Public Information Principles, we are

clear that information must be treated as a valuable asset and be properly managed.

The Open Justice microsite (<http://open.justice.gov.uk>)

Reoffending at local level

Find out how likely it is that offenders in your area will go on to commit further crimes, and how many crimes they will typically commit. You can search according to your local council.



The Open Justice microsite (<http://open.justice.gov.uk>) presents some of the justice data we have released in a format accessible for the public, with relevant contextual information alongside to help explain how the justice system operates and what can, and cannot, be inferred from the data. The datasets are:

- Sentencing data for every magistrates' and Crown court;
- Re-offending data for every Probation trust, Local Authority and prison establishment; and
- Court timeliness data for criminal, civil and family courts.

The site allows members of the public to see how the justice system is operating in their area and compare different areas: the example above shows what the re-offending data by Local Authority looks like. The other datasets are navigated in a similar way. The site presents the information in a visually engaging way designed to increase the public's understanding of the justice system.

As well as the data and contextual information the site also includes sections on mythbusting and ways for the public to get involved with the justice system locally.

We will work hard to embed the new data releases, while seeking to improve data quality in all our business areas. We do not propose any significant new data collections in order to limit the burdens placed on frontline staff: we aim to make better use of the data we already collect.

Moving forward

We will move towards a data release regime driven by user need. We have plans to build on recent data sharing and releases across Government, and provide more data to service providers. In addition, we will continue to build in transparency considerations when designing and procuring services in the future, for example by ensuring that administrative data systems are able to provide flexible data extracts in a re-useable format. We are also fully committed to making our data available under the Open Government Licence, and in re-useable formats in accordance with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standards. We have released some data in csv format (W3C 3*) to date but will look to make data available in rdf format (W3C 5*) in the future.

The transparency agenda is also integral to our departmental transformation programme – ‘Transforming Justice’. A fundamental part of our vision of Justice Transformed 2015 is ‘Increasing responsibility and power of the citizen’, and the publication of data on court results and the effectiveness of sentences, for example, will help to achieve this. Another key element of our vision is ‘Changing how we provide services to the public’, and to achieve this we are reforming the criminal, civil and family courts systems to make them more transparent and simple to use and developing our capability in conducting customer and behavioural insight research. As we begin to develop our strategy and vision for 2020 and beyond, we will retain a focus on the transparency agenda, in particular when considering how we should deliver our services to the public. We will achieve this by recognising where changes in the way public services are delivered present a challenge to transparency by potentially reducing the scope of the Freedom of Information Act, and ensuring that appropriate measures, for example publication requirements, are put in place to ensure that openness and accountability are maintained and enhanced.

MoJ is leading work on post-legislative scrutiny of the Freedom of Information Act¹ and on new European Union Data Protection instruments.² These and their potential implications are of relevance to, and will inform, MoJ’s future approach to data handling and freedom of information. There is also a proposed revision of the directive on the re-use of public sector information which is highly relevant to our work on open data.³

¹ (<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/justice-committee/news/foi-v/>)

² (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/data-protection/news/120125_en.htm)

³ (http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/index_en.htm)

Governance

In order to drive this work forward we have appointed Antonia Romeo as the board-level transparency champion. She will chair the MoJ's Transparency Committee and so be responsible for all work that MoJ undertakes in this area; this will include consideration of information governance, especially around individual-level data, and ensuring that MoJ is on track to deliver its transparency commitments and input into cross-government thinking. Antonia will also chair the Behavioural Insight Steering Group which will be responsible for identifying priority areas where behavioural insight will deliver change and efficiencies and ensuring we have the capability to deliver against these. MoJ and the Home Office will continue to operate the Crime and Justice Transparency Strategic Group to provide cross-departmental strategic oversight of transparency in the crime and justice sectors.

This strategy sets out what the MoJ will deliver under each of the five thematic areas (Big data, My data, Customer satisfaction and experience data, Information markets, and Data quality) and each proposal is assessed against each of the six Cabinet Office overarching benefits of Open Data – accountability, choice, public service productivity, public service delivery, social growth and economic growth.

Big data

MoJ collects a large range of statistical information on the operation of the services it delivers including: the criminal, civil and family courts; tribunals; prisons and probation; and re-offending. A guide to the data MoJ publishes can be found here: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics>. The department has released an unprecedented amount of data over 2011–12, including:

- Anonymised individual-level re-offending data for each Local Authority, Probation Trust and prison establishment (quarterly);
- Anonymised individual-level sentencing outcome data for each court (annual);
- Sentencing outcome data for every court for 2005–2010 (annual); and
- Court-level performance data, in particular timeliness of criminal, civil and family proceedings, including criminal end-to-end timeliness (quarterly).

We are committed to increasing the transparency of the services we deliver but will not release information that is inaccurate and would present a misleading picture to users. Although we continue to examine the quality of the data we hold (see below), we have opened up the vast majority of the data that is of sufficient quality. However, there is more we can do, in line with the sixth Public Information Principle ('Public information is published').

To date all our data have been supplied online as this presents the best opportunity for making them available to a wide audience and as cost-effectively as possible. Re-useable data have been published on <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics> with data in an accessible format published on the Open Justice site and we would aim to continue this going forward. However, we need to remember that not every member of the public uses the internet, and so we will investigate improving accessibility in alternative formats, in line with the Government's approach to assisted digital as part of the 'digital by default' strategy.

We will explore:

- Making current criminal court listings data available in a re-useable format (Start – April 2012; finish – December 2012);
- Making a greater range of information available on criminal court listings, such as offence charged (Start – April 2012; finish – December 2012);
- Making data available offline where needed based on understanding audience requirements, in addition to online, to ensure that we reach the widest possible audience (Start – April 2012; finish – September 2012);
- With the judiciary the potential for wider publication of judges' sentencing remarks to aid public understanding, in advance of legislation that will enable broadcasting of sentencing remarks (Start – April 2012; finish – September 2012); and

- the feasibility of making data available on the three largest tribunal jurisdictions (employment, immigration and asylum and social security and child support) available at a site-specific level and in a re-useable format (Start – April 2012; finish – March 2013).

These data will enable increased understanding and local engagement with the justice system (benefits: choice, public service productivity, public service delivery and social and economic growth).

My data

We are keen to examine ways in which the data MoJ holds on individuals can be made available to them in order to empower citizens and promote engagement with the system, in line with the seventh Public Information Principle ('Citizens can access information about themselves') . Currently there is no IT platform to collate and display information relating to individual users' interactions with MoJ's services but we will test the feasibility of providing such a service.

We will:

- explore the feasibility of establishing a 'Mypage' service containing information on individual users' interactions with MoJ services (Start – April 2012; finish – July 2012); and
- Continue to work with the Home Office and police forces on the provision of trailblazer initiatives such as 'TrackMyCrime' (Avon and Somerset police). This work will be on-going over 2012–13 and 2013–14.

A 'Mypage' service would supply service users with relevant information on their interactions with MoJ's services (benefits: accountability, public service productivity, public service delivery, social growth).

'Track my Crime' provides victims with up-to-date information on the progression of their case. Further trailblazer projects are being considered at the moment. (benefits: accountability, public service productivity, public service delivery, social growth).

Customer satisfaction and experience data

We have previously conducted a number of user satisfaction and experience surveys that provided us with high-level information on users' experiences and the factors associated with satisfaction. Building on the data from these surveys, we are now working towards developing targeted research and analysis to provide greater insight into user experiences, to improve future services and outcomes. This work will be led by a new Behavioural Insight Steering Group, chaired by Antonia Romeo, Director-General responsible for Transforming Justice.

We will:

- Continue to use the British Crime Survey (BCS) to measure whether the public think the CJS is fair and effective, and other attitudes to the CJS (both the public in general, and victims specifically). This work will be on-going over 2012–13 and 2013–14;
- Expand our use of the BCS to examine public perceptions of the Family Justice System by adding questions to the survey. These questions will be included from April 2012;
- Undertake an evidence and practice review examining the needs of victims, the effectiveness of support services for victims, how to measure outcomes for victims, and how to assess the quality of support providers (Start – October 2011; finish – December 2012);
- Establish the capability to conduct customer and behavioural insight research into justice users to meet the priority needs established by the Steering Group (Capability building to April 2012 – March 2014, undertaking insight work ongoing); and
- Source evidence of what the public are interested in, and the extent to which we are delivering on this, by testing the Open Justice microsite with members of the public – this information will be used both for evaluation purposes and to inform what data and contextual information we publish in the future (Start – April 2012; finish – September 2012).

The BCS data will help Government to understand public attitudes to justice as well as providing information about their experiences and contact with justice agencies. The BCS will be used to examine how the CJS is viewed by the public; to what extent the public see the CJS as being fair and/or effective; and what their perceptions of sentencing are. The BCS will also be used to explore factors that are associated with positive or negative attitudes, and how attitudes vary among different groups of people (benefits: accountability, public service delivery, social growth).

The evidence and practice review will be used to develop guidance for practitioners and commissioners of victim support services to help improve the services provided (benefits: accountability, public service productivity, public service delivery, social growth).

The justice users customer and behavioural insight capability will support business areas in identifying relevant information about users' needs, as well as their characteristics, perceptions and behaviours; this information will help understand how services can be designed to best support and meet customers' needs (benefits: public service productivity, public service delivery).

Information markets

We are keen to explore the benefits that could result from our data being shared with service providers and researchers, and used creatively by data developers, in line with the fifth Public Information Principle ('Information is re-used'). We will also undertake robust economic benefits assessments to drive work in the future.

Access to re-offending data in particular is a critical key enabler to the implementation of payment by results and driving a focus on outcomes through the system. At present some charities and private sector companies have no access to information on re-offending rates of people they are working with, which can restrict practice. Enabling providers to access data will strengthen the market and stimulate innovation.

Furthermore, while re-offending data are increasingly available in the system it is difficult for all providers to use them to understand and drive their performance. The data laboratory and matching service would allow, for the first time, local service providers to have quick and easy access to management information on re-offending of the people they are working with, allowing them to respond and change once they know more about the success of their interventions.

We will:

- Run a series of engagement activities with data developers, and the private sector, over 2012-13 and 2013-14 to refine our data releases and move towards the demand-led regime we aspire to. We will hold a variety of events including roundtables and webchats. We will use the open data activists who sit on the Crime and Justice Transparency Sector Panel as well as the newly-established Open Data Institute to help identify key stakeholders, and build on the current Cabinet Office relationships with this community (Start – June 2012; finish – March 2014).
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a data laboratory and data matching service for use by service providers (Start – April 2012; finish – October 2012);
- Continue to engage effectively with the Crime and Justice Transparency Sector Panel. The issue of anonymisation has already been discussed (see published minutes), as has the ICO's guidance on anonymisation.
- Undertake robust assessments of the potential economic benefits that could arise from release and re-use of our data (Start – April 2012; finish – March 2013).

Learning from the engagement events will help move MoJ towards a demand-led regime and better focus our efforts to provide data and wider information that are useful to developers and the public (benefits: accountability, choice, social and economic growth).

Establishing a data laboratory and matching service will make MoJ data available to a wider audience of customers in a way that is tailored to their needs (benefits: accountability, choice, public service productivity public service delivery, social and economic growth).

Continued engagement with the Crime and Justice Transparency Sector Panel will challenge, support and advise both the MoJ and Home Office on the delivery of transparency. (benefits: accountability, choice, social and economic growth).

Robust benefits assessments will help to make the case for economic growth resulting from the transparency agenda (benefits: economic growth).

Data quality

We monitor quality regularly to ensure that the data we present and release through transparency is as accurate as possible, in line with the third Public Information Principle ('Information is fit for purpose'). This involves validation and querying with data inputters to drive improved data quality for important items, while reducing the burden in terms of the total amount of data collected.

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