



Crown Court

Annual Report 2006 - 2007

Doncaster Crown Court

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Annual Report by the Resident Judge and Court Manager

RESIDENT JUDGE & COURT MANAGER COMMENTS:

This court has a small but highly skilled and committed team of staff, willing to do additional work outside their grade to ensure the efficient despatch of work despite persistent understaffing and the demoralising affects of proposed regional pay. Their level of commitment is evident in our results; this court has performed substantially better against all targets than the average for England and Wales.

Over the past few years there has been a significant fall in trial receipts and this drop looked set to continue in the current financial year. However following a change in local policing policy we have seen a recent increase in receipts and with our colleagues in Doncaster Magistrates Court are monitoring progress at regular meetings with South Yorkshire Police, local legal professionals and CPS.

In anticipation of a fall in receipts we gave up 40 sitting days to Sheffield Combined Court and although this has resulted in a small decline in performance on the previous year, we still comfortably met all timeliness targets (**89.1%** of all cases dealt with within target times – target 78%) and more importantly substantially reduced the number of old cases. (**0 custody cases & only 4 bail cases over 36 weeks old**)

The Listing Officer has prioritised work and taken calculated risks to make best use of the judicial time available to her, achieving a very pleasing ineffective trial rate of **9.3%** with only **1** case being lost for lack of court time. This court liaises regularly with CPS and the Police Trials Unit to ensure trials are progressed in accordance with judicial orders and to reduce the number of trials ineffective due to the prosecution (**3 trials ineffective** -1 prosecution not ready, 2 prosecution witness absent) The remaining **16 trials** were lost due to the actions or omissions of the defence and the vast majority of these were due to the defendant failing to attend or otherwise being unfit to proceed. Action to address this and the high cracked trial rate are to be considered at the next Court User Committee.

This court has extensive facilities for prosecution witnesses, defence witnesses and jurors and we have been able to impose a smoking ban in advance of legislation with the agreement of members of the Court User Committee and without incident. A totally secure outside space has been set aside for jurors and the Witness Service will on request escort witnesses to an outside designated area. To improve the safety and comfort of all court users, the Court Manager has increased outside security patrols and persuaded the local authority to install litter bins in key areas.

The Victim Code of Practice in force from April 06 has caused us no difficulties; we are confident of our ability to meet our obligations and, through Xhibit, communicate information in a timely manner so that other agencies can meet theirs.

Due to prison overcrowding the number of instances of delay in bringing prisoners to court or clearing the cells have increased but these are not yet impacting too heavily on the business and we receive an otherwise excellent service from local GSL (PECS Contractor) employees.

This Court and the South Yorkshire area have the Charter Mark award for excellence in customer service and are involved in community engagement including work experience, school visits, community visits and various fund raising and re-cycling projects. Our criminal justice partners and legal professionals also joined with us in making the annual Crown Court Challenge a major success, which has received positive and extensive coverage in the local press.

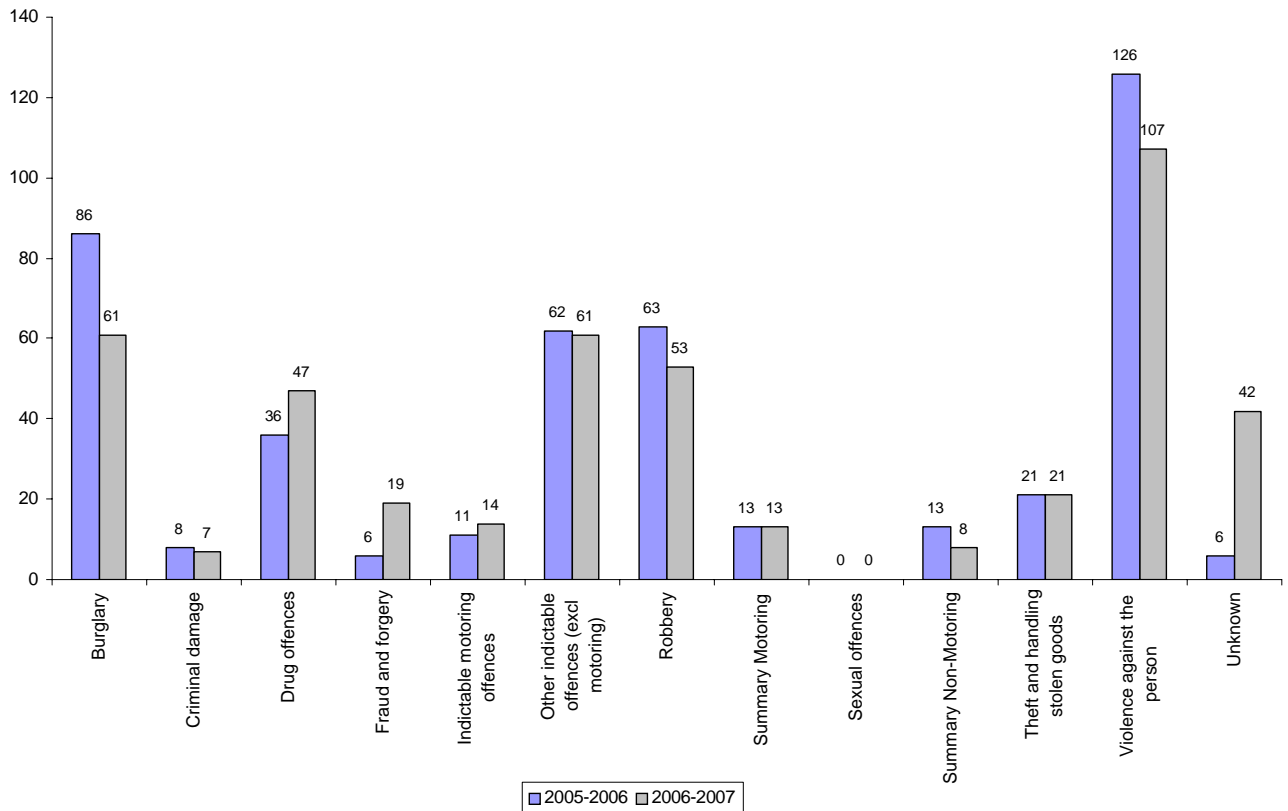
In Feb/ March 07 the court building was re-decorated and upgraded including the installation of a secure dock, additional TV link facility, increased colour cameras and a new fire alarm and has now been designated as suitable for terrorist and other high profile trials. The number of cases to be sent here and the consequent affect on local business is not yet clear but contingency plans are being considered. Doncaster will become one of the approved terrorist venues outside London which should raise our profile and hopefully the morale of and value placed on our staff.

RESIDENT JUDGE:	Her Honour Judge Jacqueline Davies	DATE:	24 May 07
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COURT MANAGER:	Maureen Ellis	DATE:-	24 May 07
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Crown Court Receipts by Offence Group

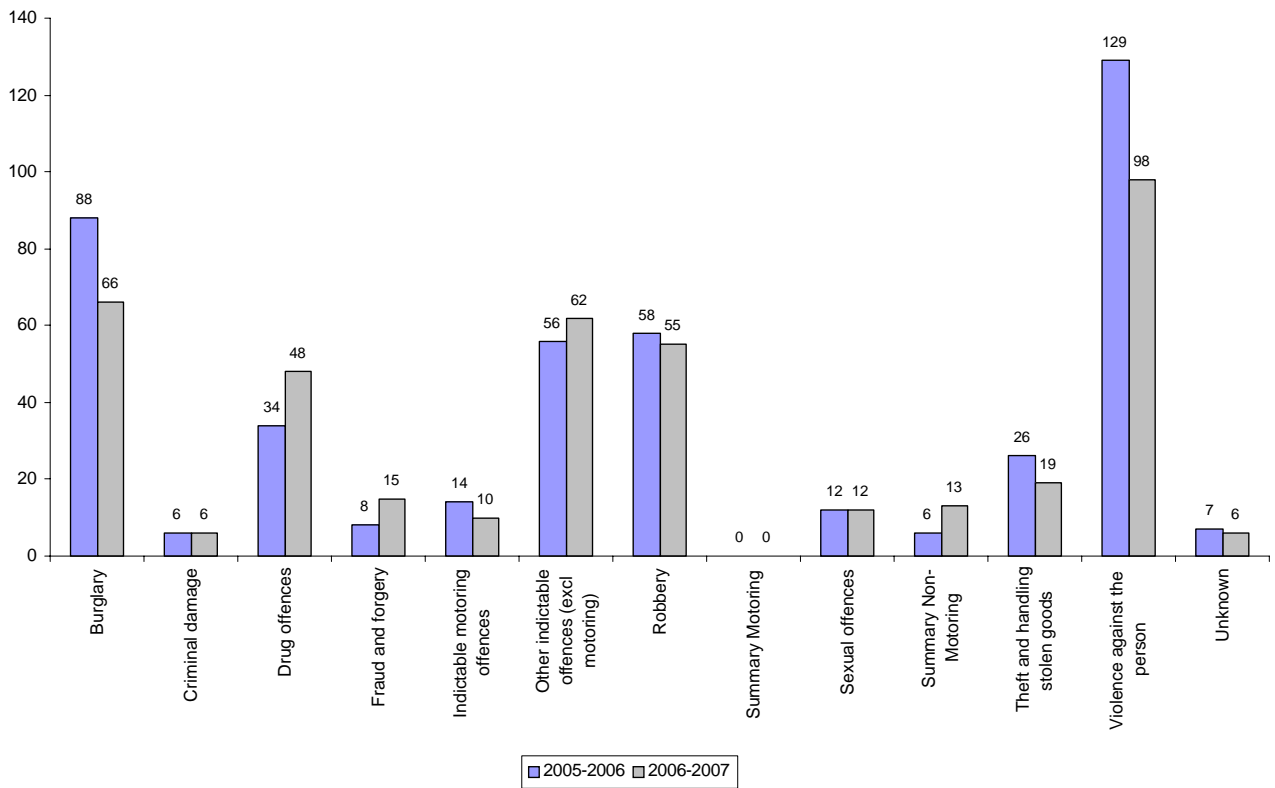
Group	2005-2006	% of Total	2006-2007	% of Total
Burglary	86	19%	61	13%
Criminal damage	8	2%	7	2%
Drug offences	36	8%	47	10%
Fraud and forgery	6	1%	19	4%
Indictable motoring offences	11	2%	14	3%
Other indictable offences (excl motoring)	62	14%	61	13%
Robbery	63	14%	53	12%
Summary Motoring	13	3%	13	3%
Sexual offences	0	0%	0	0%
Summary Non-Motoring	13	3%	8	2%
Theft and handling stolen goods	21	5%	21	5%
Violence against the person	126	28%	107	24%
Unknown	6	1%	42	9%
Total	451	100%	453	100%



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Crown Court Disposals by Offence Group

Group	2005-2006	% of Total	2006-2007	% of Total
Burglary	88	20%	66	16%
Criminal damage	6	1%	6	1%
Drug offences	34	8%	48	12%
Fraud and forgery	8	2%	15	4%
Indictable motoring offences	14	3%	10	2%
Other indictable offences (excl motoring)	56	13%	62	15%
Robbery	58	13%	55	13%
Summary Motoring	0	0%	0	0%
Sexual offences	12	3%	12	3%
Summary Non-Motoring	6	1%	13	3%
Theft and handling stolen goods	26	6%	19	5%
Violence against the person	129	29%	98	24%
Unknown	7	2%	6	1%
Total	444	100%	410	100%



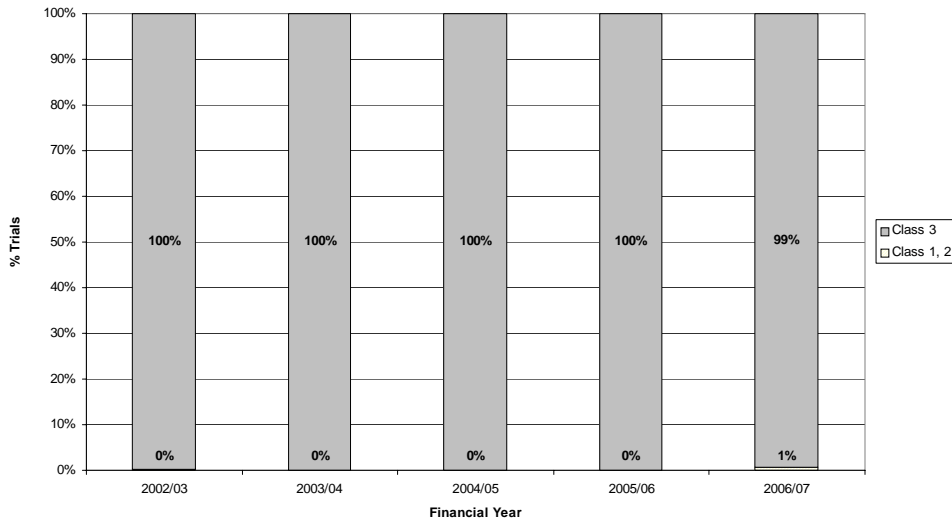
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Workload

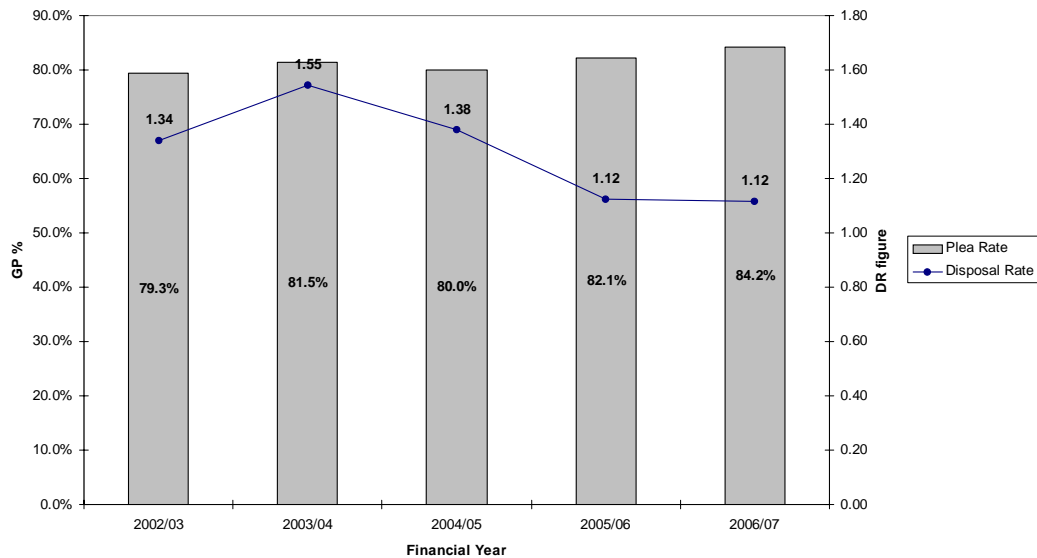
	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Trial Receipts	77,765	639	581	520	452	454	0.4%
Class 1, 2	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0.0%
Class 3	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	-0.7%

Trial Receipts by Class



	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Sentence Receipts	35,959	322	304	254	300	380	26.7%
Appeal Receipts	13,004	64	43	67	94	73	-22.3%
Disposals	79,045	521	643	549	476	431	-9.5%
Plea Rate	66%	79.3%	81.5%	80.0%	82.1%	84.2%	2.5%
Disposal Rate	0.75	1.34	1.55	1.38	1.12	1.12	-0.5%

Guilty Plea Rate and Disposal Rate



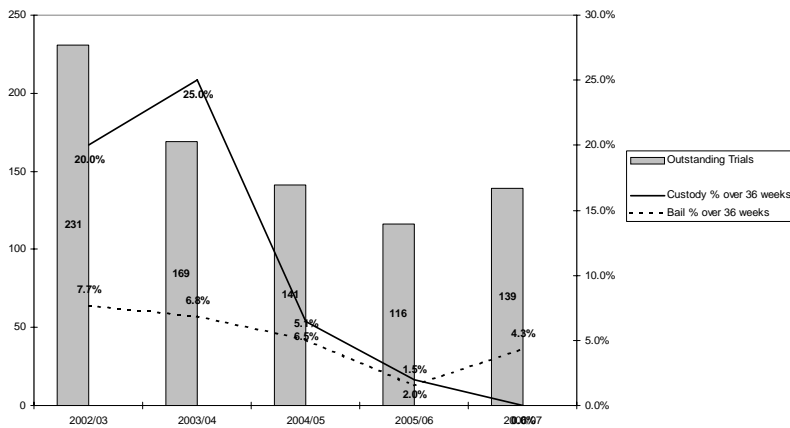
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Outstanding Cases

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Outstanding Trials	31,593	231	169	141	116	139	19.8%
Custody % over 16 weeks	27%	10.0%	12.5%	21.0%	22.0%	12.8%	-42.0%
Custody % over 36 weeks	10%	20.0%	25.0%	6.5%	2.0%	0.0%	-100.0%
Bail % over 16 weeks	30%	24.9%	23.6%	26.6%	25.8%	26.1%	1.3%
Bail % over 36 weeks	13%	7.7%	6.8%	5.1%	1.5%	4.3%	187.0%

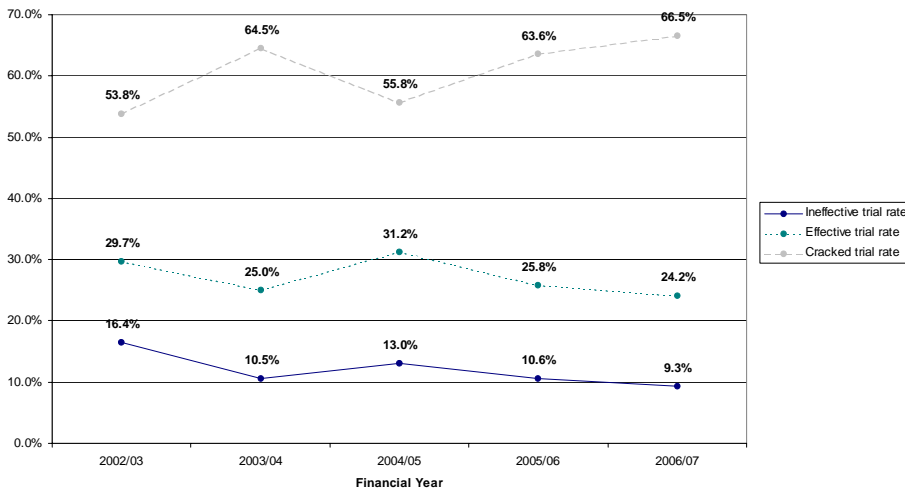
Outstanding Cases and the proportion over 36 weeks



Cracked and Ineffective

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Trials listed (number)	37,149	286	352	269	198	215	8.6%
Ineffective trial rate	12%	16.4%	10.5%	13.0%	10.6%	9.3%	-12.3%
Effective trial rate	48%	29.7%	25.0%	31.2%	25.8%	24.2%	-6.1%
Cracked trial rate	39%	53.8%	64.5%	55.8%	63.6%	66.5%	4.5%

Ineffective, Effective and Cracked Trials



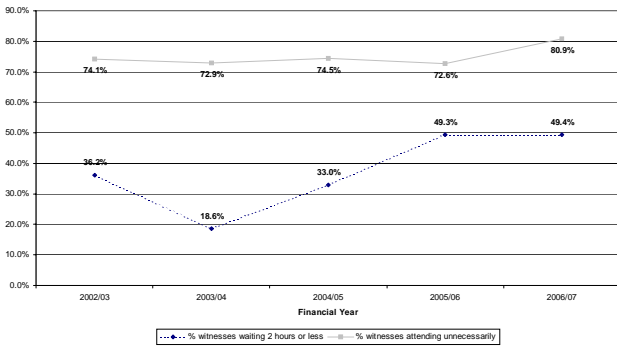
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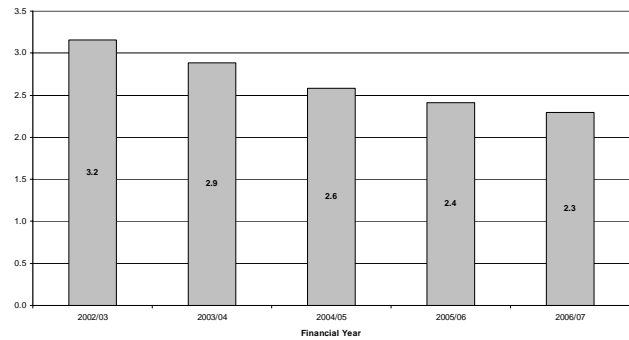
Witness and Juror service¹

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Juror days as % of attendance	60%	45.3%	46.0%	46.7%	34.8%	41.6%	19.6%
% witnesses waiting 2 hours or less	48.0%	36.2%	18.6%	33.0%	49.3%	49.4%	0.2%
% witnesses attending unnecessarily	43.2%	74.1%	72.9%	74.5%	72.6%	80.9%	11.4%
Hours waited (witnesses attending unnecessarily)	2.7	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.3	-4.9%

Percentage of Witnesses Waiting Within Target and Proportion Waiting Unnecessarily



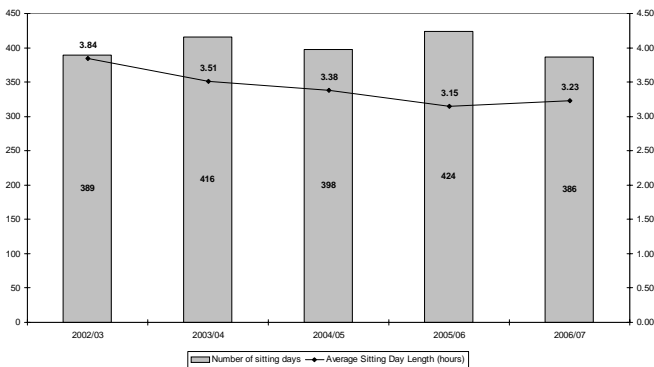
Average Waiting Time for Witnesses Attending Unnecessarily (hours)



Sitting Days

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Average Trial Hearing Time (hours)	9.6	3.1	5.0	4.0	3.2	4.5	40.3%
Average Sitting Day Length (hours)	4.37	3.84	3.51	3.38	3.15	3.23	2.5%
Number of sitting days	105,629	389	416	398	424	386	-9.0%

Number of Sitting Days & Average Length of Sitting Day



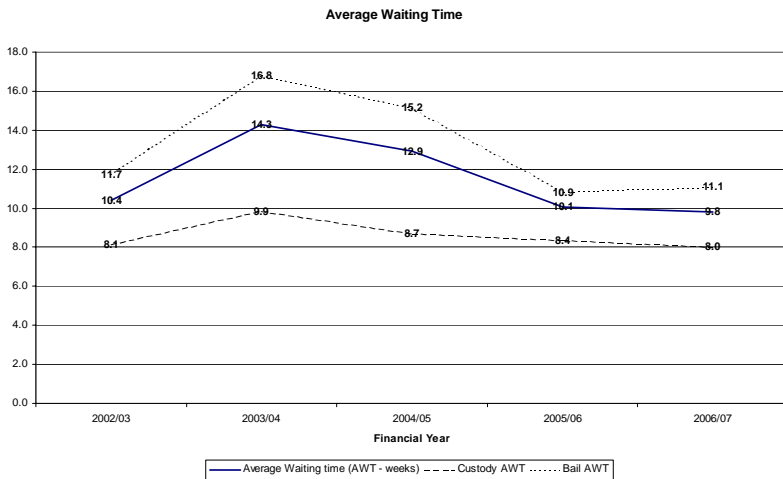
¹ Witness Survey data are from the combined June and November survey
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Waiting Times

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Average Waiting time (AWT - weeks)	17.0	10.4	14.3	12.9	10.1	9.8	-2.3%
Custody AWT	13.8	8.1	9.9	8.7	8.4	8.0	-4.1%
Bail AWT	18.7	11.7	16.8	15.2	10.9	11.1	2.3%



PSAs

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
% Defendants commencing in target	75.4%	89.1%	78.1%	80.9%	91.4%	89.1%	-2.5%
Committal for Trial	67.0%	83.4%	67.6%	74.7%	84.3%	81.7%	-3.1%
Sent for Trial	73.5%	88.2%	85.4%	77.7%	96.0%	97.9%	1.9%
Committal for Sentence	89.9%	97.8%	94.1%	93.0%	97.5%	94.7%	-2.9%
Appeal	86.2%	94.2%	91.2%	91.3%	97.6%	89.7%	-8.1%

