



Crown Court

Annual Report 2006 - 2007

Lewes Crown Court

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Annual Report by the Resident Judge and Court Manager

RESIDENT JUDGE & COURT MANAGER COMMENTS:

Background

Lewes is a Tier 1 Senior Crown Court sitting 10 courts in three locations; Lewes, Hove and Brighton . Lewes is an extensive Georgian building, Hove and Brighton 1970's offices and court rooms. We take all class 1 cases in Sussex. HH Judge Richard Brown DL is the resident Judge. We have a further 7 circuit judges, two of whom sit on Civil and family jurisdiction cases. Two judges have murder tickets and a further 3 have attempted murder tickets. All Circuit judges have serious sex offence tickets. Five of our courts have video link equipment and a business case for a further 2 courts to have the facilities has been made. Court 1 at Hove has a large secure dock that takes up to 17 people following a successful extension of the previous accommodation and a business case for the same adaptation of court 2 at Hove has been made along with a case for the custody area to be extended to meet the capacity of the docks. Lewes has good facilities for witnesses and victims.

Work state

The 2 courts at Brighton were opened in July of 2006 and have had an immediate impact on the trial backlog bringing it down from just under a thousand to the present 864. The trial receipts have continued to rise, and that is combined with a steep climb in the number of multi handed cases which tend to be of drug related offences, and the increase in the length of trial as a result. Lewes has seen an increase in the number of cases using special measures and as a result we average around 50 cases at any one time that are fixed for trial using video link equipment. We have seen an increase in the use of video link from peoples homes or other establishments away from the court buildings .Waiting times remain of utmost concern, but cases are prioritised accordingly to ensure that custody cases and PYO cases are listed as soon as possible. Both the Judiciary and the executive work closely to strategically manage the backlog. Having the 10 courts spread over three very separate locations presents its own set of problems with listing cases and sitting the courts. The court was looking forward to receiving another CJ which would have made a significant difference to our ability to meet the demands of the workload efficiently, but that is not now going to happen and we face another Judge retiring in the spring of 2008. Lewes over the year only just missed the ineffective target, and that was down to a run of peculiar circumstances with one month in particular having defendants going sick, a host of other unforeseeable problems. The main reasons for ineffective trials has been overwhelmingly down to the defence. The Judiciary and the administration work hard to reduce this by good listing and careful management of cases. We are actively working to reduce the number of mention hearings needed and are implementing an administrative process. We have seen over 7 experienced staff leave Lewes this year through promotion, retirement and resignations and the headcount reductions has meant that Lewes has fewer staff than it did 3 years ago to deal with an increasing workload. It is the loss of experience that is most damaging. Despite this the court continues to be a "family", judiciary and staff working together including the private security guards and the cleaners to achieve the best possible results for all our users. It retains its reputation as one of the friendliest courts. We take great pride in our work and it is common following a visit from a High Court Judge or VIP that they comment on the commitment and passion that all of the team show in their work regardless of their role.

Relationships

Lewes judiciary and administration works closely with the CPS, Police, Witness Service, local bar and others on a range of meetings e.g. Court User meetings, JPM meetings, and Sussex CJB where we constantly analyse figures and workloads to bring about fundamental change to improve waiting times, witness care , case preparation etc. An imaginative innovation to help witness and police officers is the Resident Judge, Court Manager and Witness Service manager train all new CID officers in Sussex on Special measures, witness care and preparing for court, and do refresher training for all existing CID Officers. We enjoy a particularly close relationship with Witness Service and Victim support and the close liaison between them, the Resident Judge, Court Manager and listing means that we are very pro active in responding to witness needs directly in partnership with CPS, and defence.

Jurors

2006 saw the creation of a jury support system by the Court Manager that is likely to go national. The scheme was piloted in partnership with the Sussex Samaritans and has proved very successful in providing emotional and practical support to Jurors following their service should they need it. This has been an area that has never before been able to be addressed by the Service.

Community Contact

Lewes had the most successful open day of any court in the country in September , welcoming 2,404 visitors through its doors in one day. A total of over 8,000 visitors in the past 4 years. This is a great day for raising a positive profile of the Justice system to the greater public which benefits all the agencies and associated organisations that attend and have stands on this busy day. We are holding our second open evening soon for our closest 70 neighbours following an impact survey of them to assess what affect we have on their lives as they work and live around this building. We welcome dozens of students on work experience and host school and college visits when the Resident Judge and Court Manager will talk to them. The court visits schools and takes part in mock employer interviews and other employment sessions to help the youngsters prepare for adult life.

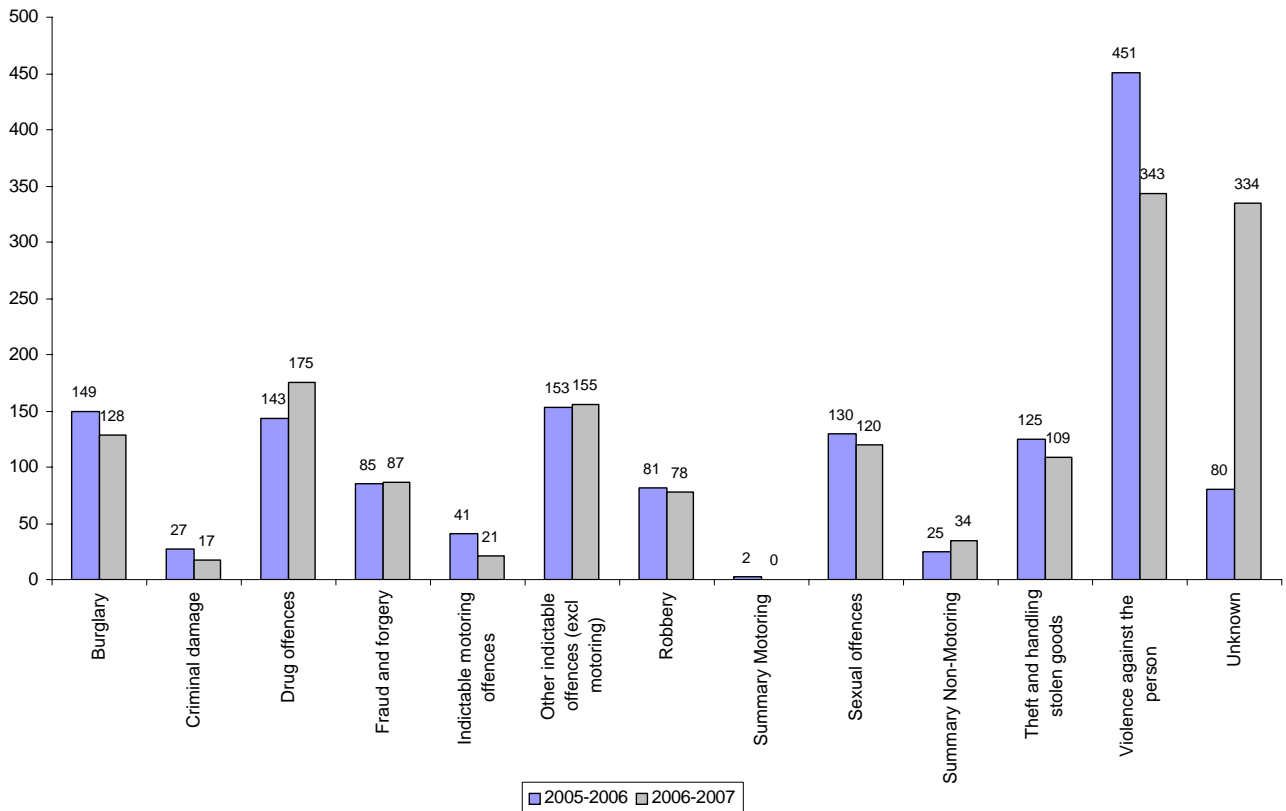
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RESIDENT JUDGE:	His Honour Judge Richard Brown DL	DATE:	June 07
COURT MANAGER:	Mr Dave Manning	DATE:-	June 07

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Crown Court Receipts by Offence Group

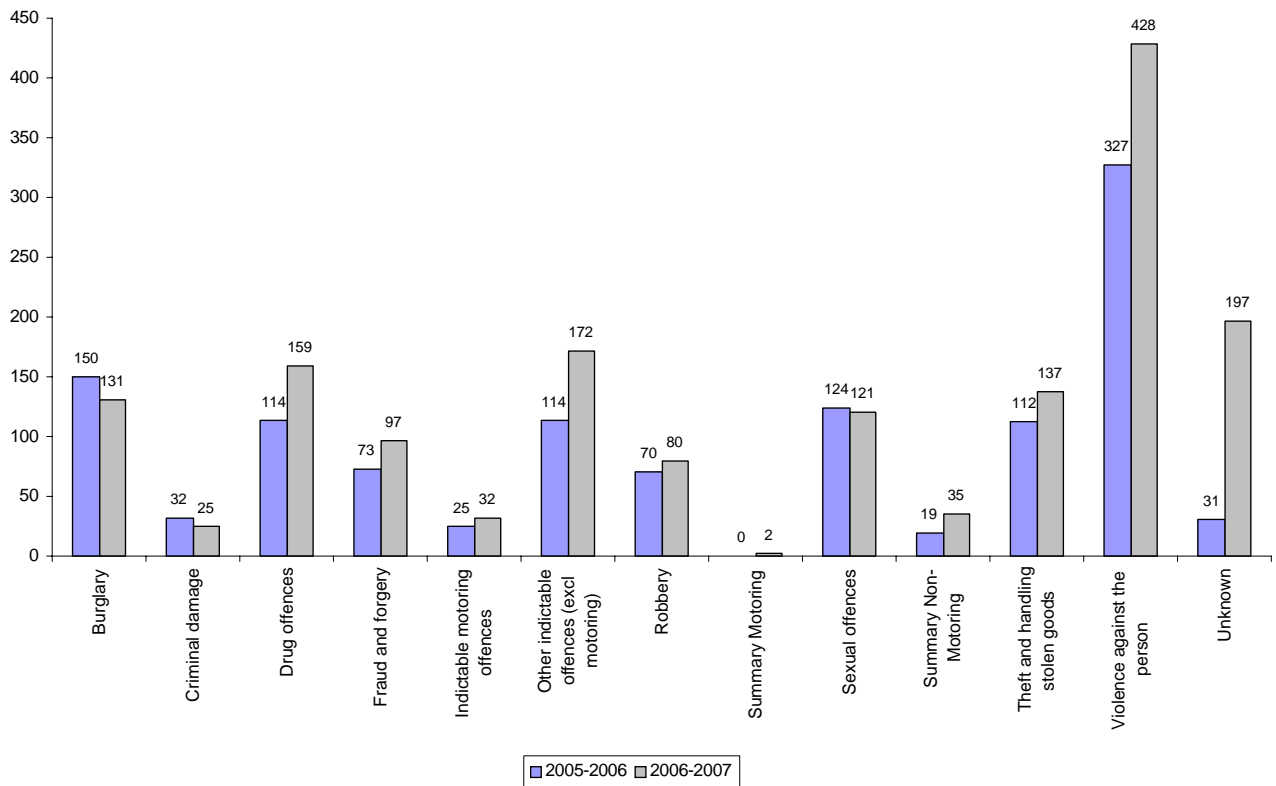
Group	2005-2006	% of Total	2006-2007	% of Total
Burglary	149	10%	128	8%
Criminal damage	27	2%	17	1%
Drug offences	143	10%	175	11%
Fraud and forgery	85	6%	87	5%
Indictable motoring offences	41	3%	21	1%
Other indictable offences (excl motoring)	153	10%	155	10%
Robbery	81	5%	78	5%
Summary Motoring	2	0%	0	0%
Sexual offences	130	9%	120	7%
Summary Non-Motoring	25	2%	34	2%
Theft and handling stolen goods	125	8%	109	7%
Violence against the person	451	30%	343	21%
Unknown	80	5%	334	21%
Total	1492	100%	1601	100%



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Crown Court Disposals by Offence Group

Group	2005-2006	% of Total	2006-2007	% of Total
Burglary	150	13%	131	8%
Criminal damage	32	3%	25	2%
Drug offences	114	10%	159	10%
Fraud and forgery	73	6%	97	6%
Indictable motoring offences	25	2%	32	2%
Other indictable offences (excl motoring)	114	10%	172	11%
Robbery	70	6%	80	5%
Summary Motoring	0	0%	2	0%
Sexual offences	124	10%	121	7%
Summary Non-Motoring	19	2%	35	2%
Theft and handling stolen goods	112	9%	137	8%
Violence against the person	327	27%	428	26%
Unknown	31	3%	197	12%
Total	1191	100%	1616	100%



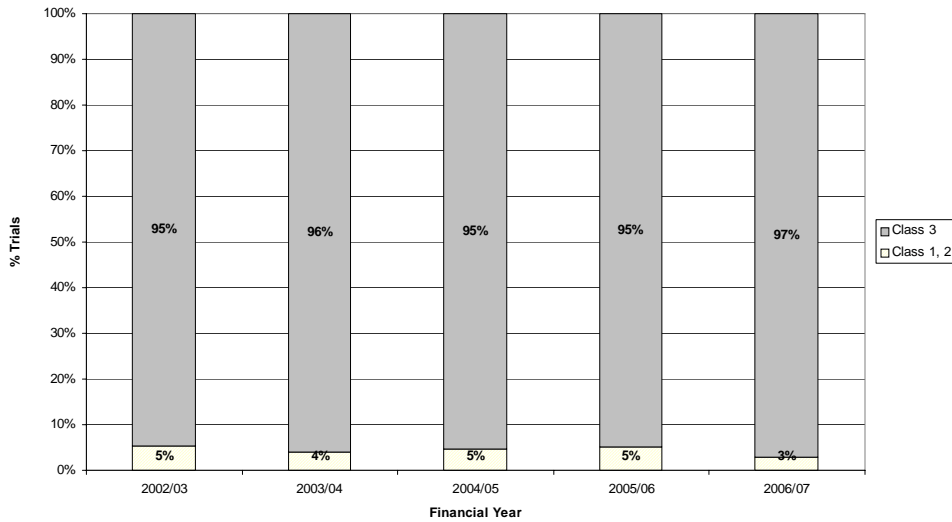
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Workload

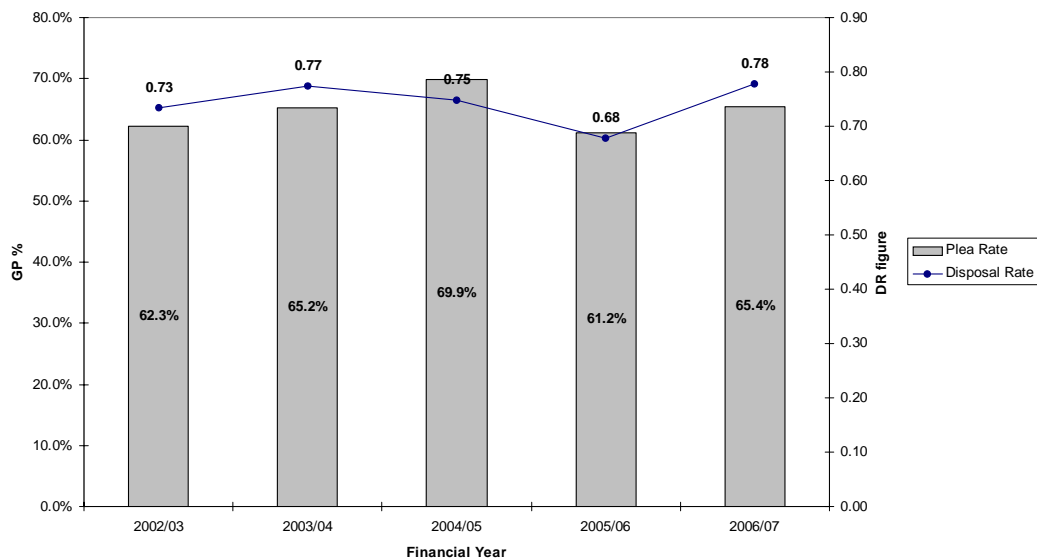
	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Trial Receipts	77,765	1,385	1,399	1,404	1,492	1,601	7.3%
Class 1, 2	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	3%	-45.5%
Class 3	94%	95%	96%	95%	95%	97%	2.5%

Trial Receipts by Class



	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Sentence Receipts	35,959	412	537	537	753	768	2.0%
Appeal Receipts	13,004	225	220	215	250	231	-7.6%
Disposals	79,045	1,329	1,365	1,291	1,236	1,635	32.3%
Plea Rate	66%	62.3%	65.2%	69.9%	61.2%	65.4%	6.9%
Disposal Rate	0.75	0.73	0.77	0.75	0.68	0.78	14.9%

Guilty Plea Rate and Disposal Rate



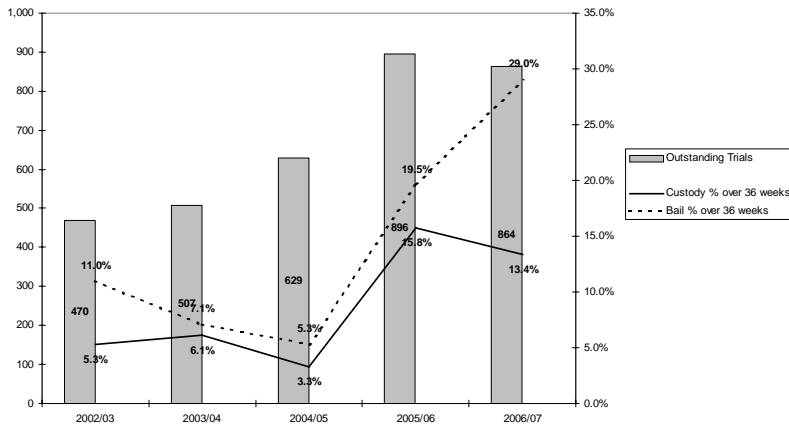
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Outstanding Cases

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Outstanding Trials	31,593	470	507	629	896	864	-3.6%
Custody % over 16 weeks	27%	24.1%	24.0%	27.0%	32.5%	33.2%	2.2%
Custody % over 36 weeks	10%	5.3%	6.1%	3.3%	15.8%	13.4%	-15.3%
Bail % over 16 weeks	30%	26.7%	29.9%	40.3%	37.1%	31.9%	-14.0%
Bail % over 36 weeks	13%	11.0%	7.1%	5.3%	19.5%	29.0%	48.7%

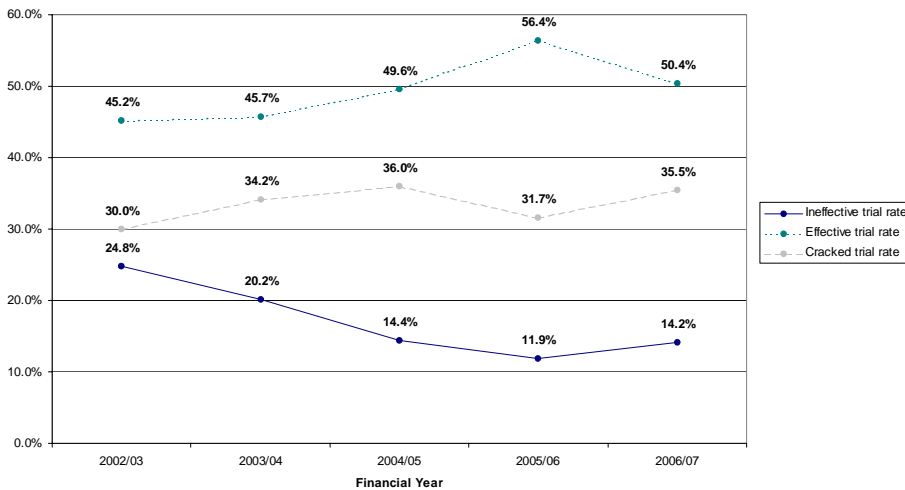
Outstanding Cases and the proportion over 36 weeks



Cracked and Ineffective

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Trials listed (number)	37,149	940	893	744	679	854	25.8%
Ineffective trial rate	12%	24.8%	20.2%	14.4%	11.9%	14.2%	18.8%
Effective trial rate	48%	45.2%	45.7%	49.6%	56.4%	50.4%	-10.7%
Cracked trial rate	39%	30.0%	34.2%	36.0%	31.7%	35.5%	12.1%

Ineffective, Effective and Cracked Trials



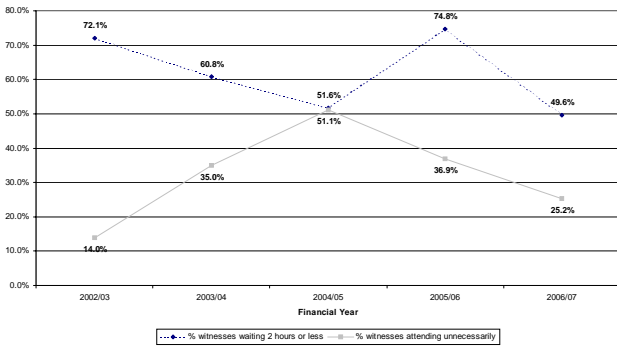
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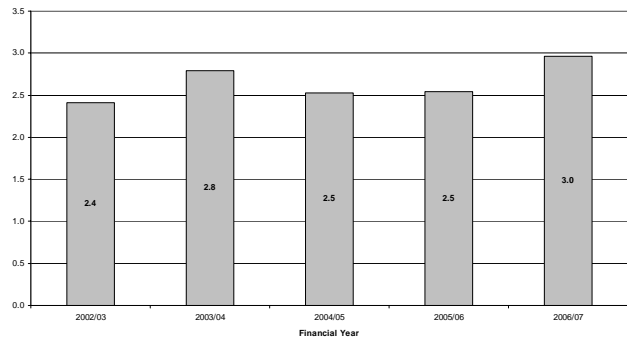
Witness and Juror service¹

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Juror days as % of attendance	60%	61.7%	54.6%	52.5%	53.8%	55.5%	3.2%
% witnesses waiting 2 hours or less	48.0%	72.1%	60.8%	51.6%	74.8%	49.6%	-33.7%
% witnesses attending unnecessarily	43.2%	14.0%	35.0%	51.1%	36.9%	25.2%	-31.6%
Hours waited (witnesses attending unnecessarily)	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.5	2.5	3.0	16.6%

Percentage of Witnesses Waiting Within Target and Proportion Waiting Unnecessarily



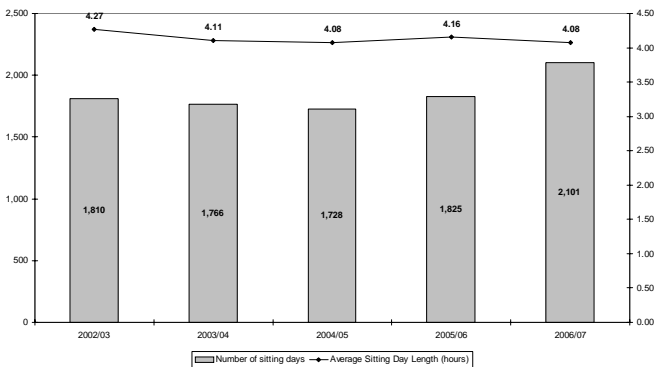
Average Waiting Time for Witnesses Attending Unnecessarily (hours)



Sitting Days

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Average Trial Hearing Time (hours)	9.6	8.9	8.8	8.4	9.1	8.0	-12.2%
Average Sitting Day Length (hours)	4.37	4.27	4.11	4.08	4.16	4.08	-2.0%
Number of sitting days	105,629	1,810	1,766	1,728	1,825	2,101	15.1%

Number of Sitting Days & Average Length of Sitting Day



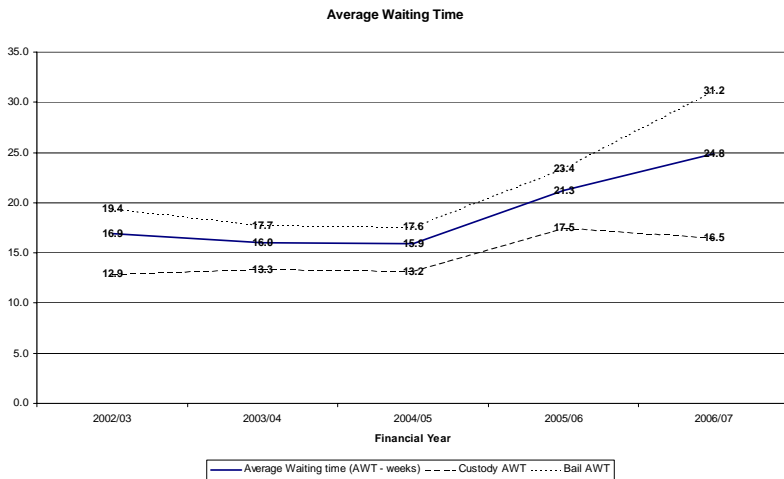
¹ Witness Survey data are from the combined June and November survey
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Waiting Times

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Average Waiting time (AWT - weeks)	17.0	16.9	16.0	15.9	21.3	24.8	16.8%
Custody AWT	13.8	12.9	13.3	13.2	17.5	16.5	-5.6%
Bail AWT	18.7	19.4	17.7	17.6	23.4	31.2	33.4%



PSAs

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
% Defendants commencing in target	75.4%	70.4%	71.8%	73.6%	62.7%	58.8%	-6.3%
Committal for Trial	67.0%	65.7%	67.9%	68.4%	49.2%	44.6%	-9.4%
Sent for Trial	73.5%	70.8%	71.4%	72.4%	53.4%	63.0%	18.0%
Committal for Sentence	89.9%	73.5%	79.8%	79.7%	87.5%	83.5%	-4.6%
Appeal	86.2%	86.0%	77.4%	87.2%	78.0%	61.1%	-21.7%

Percentage Cases Commencing Within Target
(Trials 16 weeks, Sent for Trial 26 weeks, Sentence 10 weeks, Appeal 14 weeks)

