



Crown Court

Annual Report 2006 - 2007

Southwark Crown Court

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Annual Report by the Resident Judge and Court Manager

RESIDENT JUDGE & COURT MANAGER COMMENTS:

The main workload at Southwark continues to be the trial of large and complex fraud cases. As of 1 June 2006, we became the Receiving Court for London of all fraud or money laundering cases estimated to last 6 weeks or more. All our figures should be seen against the background of this specialist work, which often involves substantial pre-trial preparatory hearings and post-trial (confiscation) hearings.

The number of outstanding cases has fallen to 870 cases after reaching a high of 1192 cases in May 2006. This reduction has been aided by a welcome change in committal paths, which commenced in October, and which had been anticipated to lead to fewer receipts. However, the Court faced the considerable challenge of gradually absorbing outstanding cases from the Middlesex Guildhall which was closing in March 2007. The two Courts forged a close working relationship to manage the transition of work and Southwark inherited approximately 120 additional cases.

The nature of our workload continues to have an adverse effect on waiting times for bail cases although the Court has consistently met all targets for custody cases. I am pleased to report that the Court has further reduced the ineffective trial rate and met the more demanding target set for the past year. The main causes of ineffective trials are non-attendance by prosecution witnesses and defendants and we continue to address this via close liaison with the CPS and CJUs through weekly 'Tracker Meetings' and Court User Committee Meetings which are held quarterly. The cracked trial rate has dropped slightly but the biggest cause is still the entering of late guilty pleas. The number of vacated trials average about 23 a month and reducing the number will be a focus of attention in the forthcoming year. With regard to the efficacy of Plea and Case Management Hearings, the recent appointment of four Higher Court Advocates should bring about an improvement in the resolution of any problems arising.

Usage of the Prison Video Link system has improved, with 190 such hearings held, which has helped to reduce the number of prisoners escorted to the Court for preliminary hearings. One PVL system has also been relocated to a non-jury courtroom so that we may use PVL more regularly and flexibly with a view to increasing the number of slots allocated by our calendar prison. The performance of the Prison Escort contractor has been very good but because of prison overcrowding there have been late collections of prisoners and some have been held outside London. The low complement of permanent police at the Court has been a cause for concern at times, but Xhibit has clearly improved the relay of essential court information to the CJUs in optimum time.

The number of witnesses attending court unnecessarily has only marginally increased in real terms but the number of witnesses waiting less than two hours remains encouragingly higher than the national average. There has also been a pleasing increase in juror utilisation which stands at 79.2%, the highest in London.

Substantial accommodation improvements have been made in recent years to juror and witness facilities and we are pleased that we have been able to provide excellent permanent accommodation to the SFO and HMRC as well as the Higher Court Advocates. During the year the Court has worked with many schools to provide work experience opportunities for students, and provided facilities for the Bar and criminal justice agencies for training purposes. A very successful Open Day was held in May 2006 which was attended by some 600 visitors – double the number that attended previously in 2004. The occasion gave the community the opportunity to question the judiciary, to observe mock trials and to familiarise themselves with the work of many other criminal justice agencies. The occasion featured on London Tonight news and raised funds for the Witness Service and a local children's charity.

All of the above has been achieved by a fine team of dedicated Judges and Recorders, and by the application and commitment of an excellent staff. We also continue to benefit from the concern and active support we have received from the Presiding Judges for the work at this Court, and wish to express our gratitude to them.

RESIDENT JUDGE: HHJ Geoffrey Rivlin QC

DATE: _____

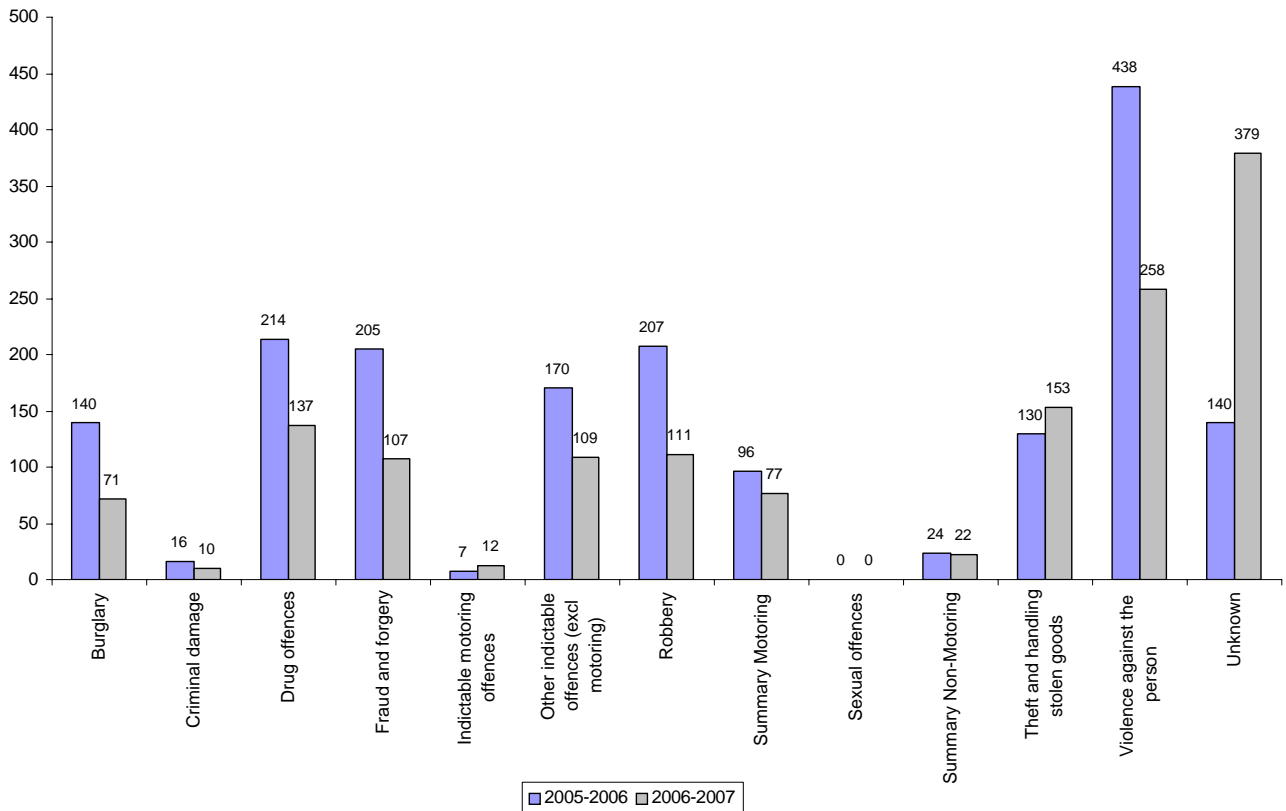
COURT MANAGER: Chris Harper OBE

DATE:- _____

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Crown Court Receipts by Offence Group

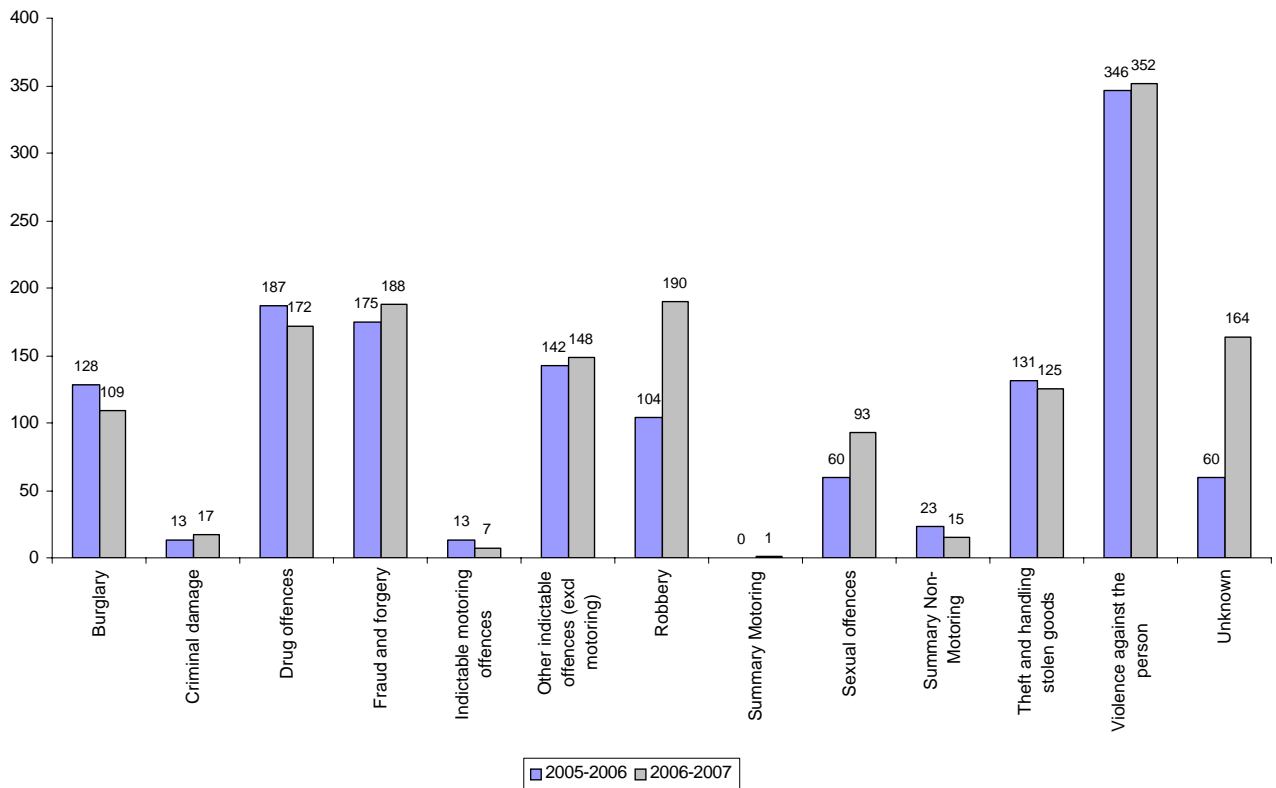
Group	2005-2006	% of Total	2006-2007	% of Total
Burglary	140	8%	71	5%
Criminal damage	16	1%	10	1%
Drug offences	214	12%	137	9%
Fraud and forgery	205	11%	107	7%
Indictable motoring offences	7	0%	12	1%
Other indictable offences (excl motoring)	170	10%	109	8%
Robbery	207	12%	111	8%
Summary Motoring	96	5%	77	5%
Sexual offences	0	0%	0	0%
Summary Non-Motoring	24	1%	22	2%
Theft and handling stolen goods	130	7%	153	11%
Violence against the person	438	25%	258	18%
Unknown	140	8%	379	26%
Total	1787	100%	1446	100%



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Crown Court Disposals by Offence Group

Group	2005-2006	% of Total	2006-2007	% of Total
Burglary	128	9%	109	7%
Criminal damage	13	1%	17	1%
Drug offences	187	14%	172	11%
Fraud and forgery	175	13%	188	12%
Indictable motoring offences	13	1%	7	0%
Other indictable offences (excl motoring)	142	10%	148	9%
Robbery	104	8%	190	12%
Summary Motoring	0	0%	1	0%
Sexual offences	60	4%	93	6%
Summary Non-Motoring	23	2%	15	1%
Theft and handling stolen goods	131	9%	125	8%
Violence against the person	346	25%	352	22%
Unknown	60	4%	164	10%
Total	1382	100%	1581	100%



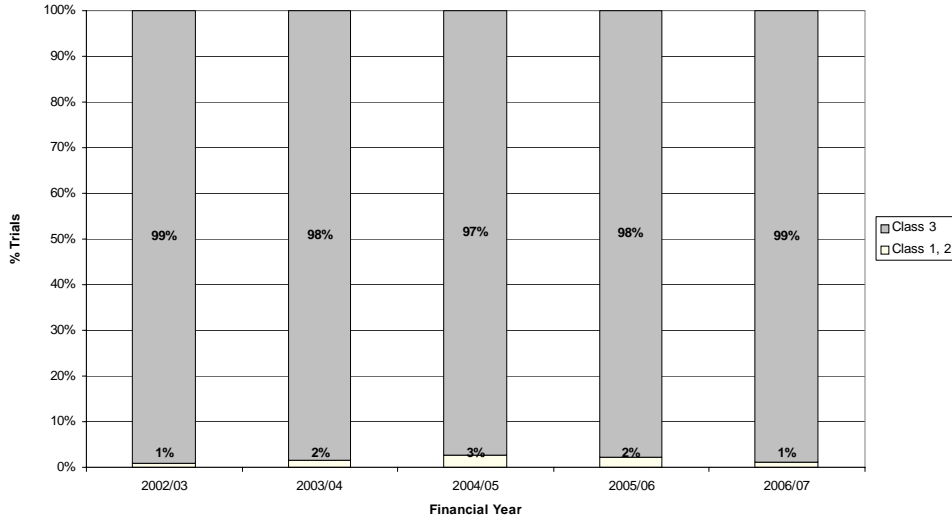
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Workload

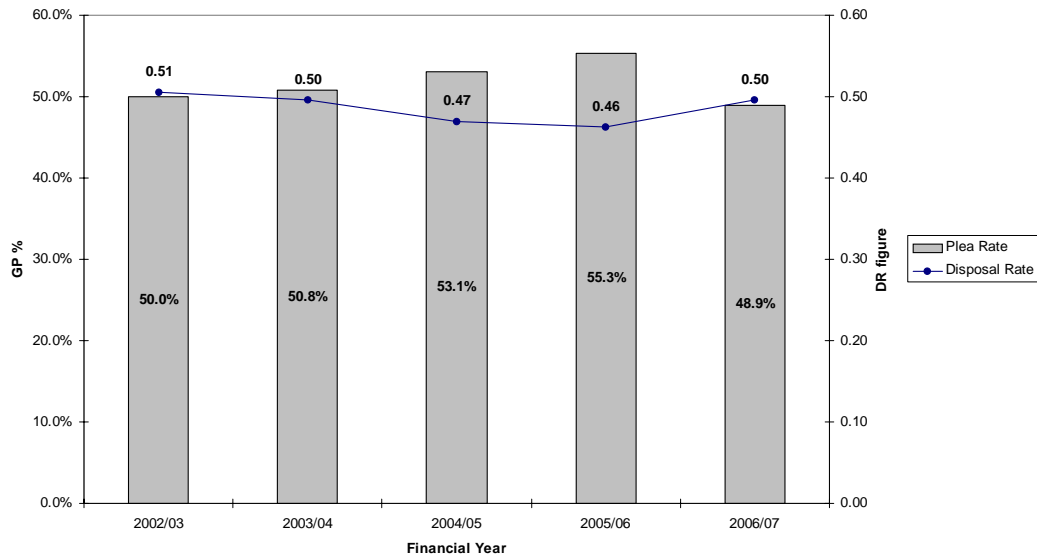
	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Trial Receipts	77,765	1,741	1,514	1,434	1,791	1,446	-19.3%
Class 1, 2	6%	1%	2%	3%	2%	1%	-46.0%
Class 3	94%	99%	98%	97%	98%	99%	1.0%

Trial Receipts by Class



	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Sentence Receipts	35,959	487	419	412	545	496	-9.0%
Appeal Receipts	13,004	101	122	126	169	116	-31.4%
Disposals	79,045	1,643	1,533	1,411	1,505	1,626	8.0%
Plea Rate	66%	50.0%	50.8%	53.1%	55.3%	48.9%	-11.6%
Disposal Rate	0.75	0.51	0.50	0.47	0.46	0.50	7.2%

Guilty Plea Rate and Disposal Rate



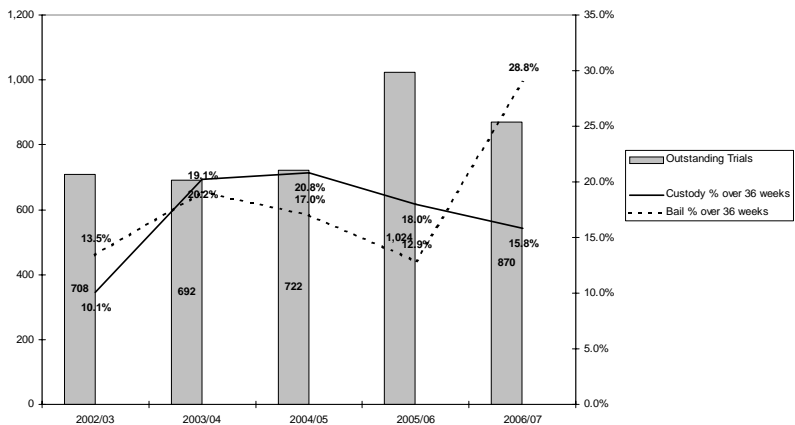
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Outstanding Cases

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Outstanding Trials	31,593	708	692	722	1,024	870	-15.0%
Custody % over 16 weeks	27%	19.3%	27.1%	28.2%	31.7%	23.7%	-25.2%
Custody % over 36 weeks	10%	10.1%	20.2%	20.8%	18.0%	15.8%	-12.2%
Bail % over 16 weeks	30%	26.1%	26.3%	30.2%	39.6%	35.7%	-9.9%
Bail % over 36 weeks	13%	13.5%	19.1%	17.0%	12.9%	28.8%	123.9%

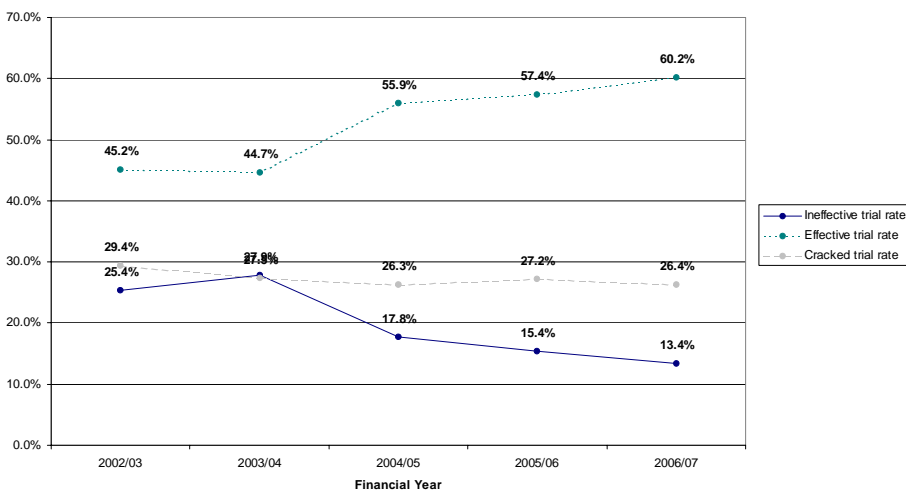
Outstanding Cases and the proportion over 36 weeks



Cracked and Ineffective

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Trials listed (number)	37,149	1,346	1,224	894	930	888	-4.5%
Ineffective trial rate	12%	25.4%	27.9%	17.8%	15.4%	13.4%	-12.8%
Effective trial rate	48%	45.2%	44.7%	55.9%	57.4%	60.2%	4.9%
Cracked trial rate	39%	29.4%	27.5%	26.3%	27.2%	26.4%	-3.1%

Ineffective, Effective and Cracked Trials

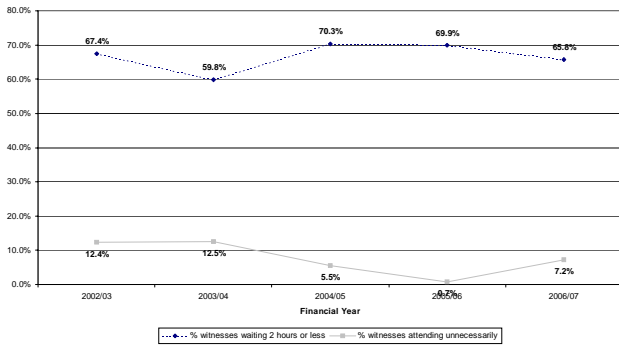


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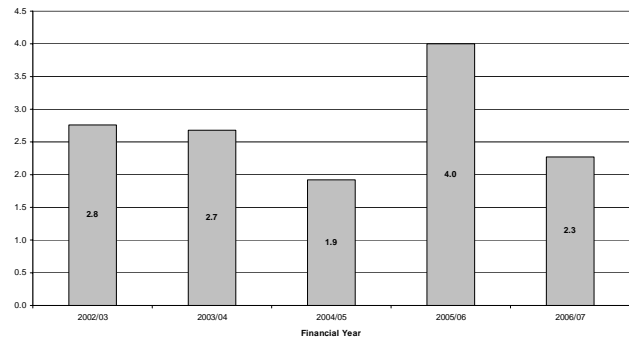
Witness and Juror service¹

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Juror days as % of attendance	60%	81.3%	72.7%	70.1%	76.1%	79.2%	4.1%
% witnesses waiting 2 hours or less	48.0%	67.4%	59.8%	70.3%	69.9%	65.8%	-5.9%
% witnesses attending unnecessarily	43.2%	12.4%	12.5%	5.5%	0.7%	7.2%	952.3%
Hours waited (witnesses attending unnecessarily)	2.7	2.8	2.7	1.9	4.0	2.3	-43.2%

Percentage of Witnesses Waiting Within Target and Proportion Waiting Unnecessarily



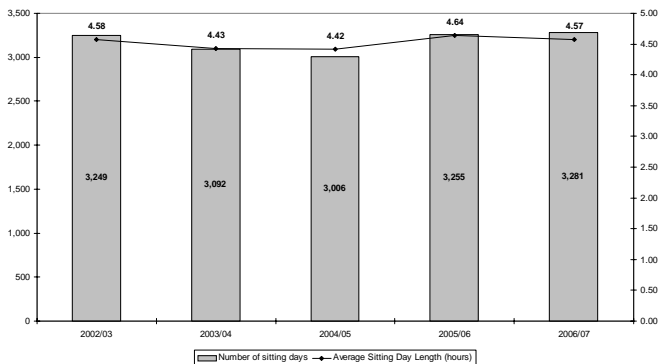
Average Waiting Time for Witnesses Attending Unnecessarily (hours)



Sitting Days

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Average Trial Hearing Time (hours)	9.6	9.1	14.2	12.1	12.4	12.5	0.3%
Average Sitting Day Length (hours)	4.37	4.58	4.43	4.42	4.64	4.57	-1.5%
Number of sitting days	105,629	3,249	3,092	3,006	3,255	3,281	0.8%

Number of Sitting Days & Average Length of Sitting Day



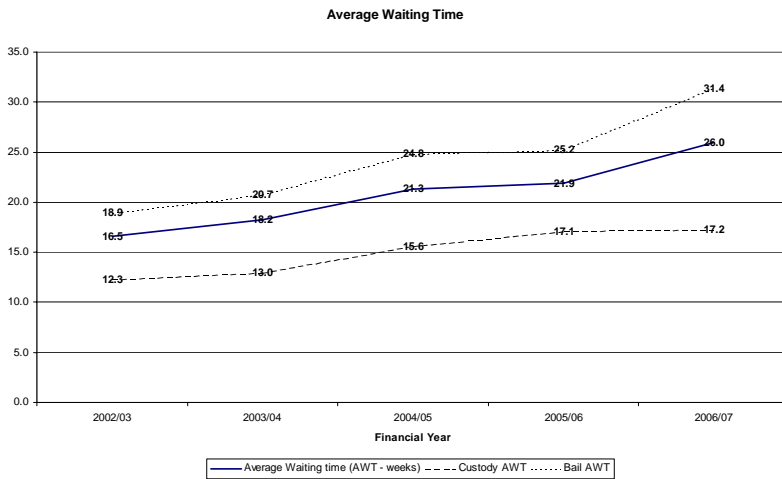
¹ Witness Survey data are from the combined June and November survey
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Waiting Times

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
Average Waiting time (AWT - weeks)	17.0	16.5	18.2	21.3	21.9	26.0	18.6%
Custody AWT	13.8	12.3	13.0	15.6	17.1	17.2	0.7%
Bail AWT	18.7	18.9	20.7	24.8	25.2	31.4	24.5%



PSAs

	EW 06/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Diff
% Defendants commencing in target	75.4%	71.3%	71.3%	68.4%	65.9%	58.8%	-10.8%
Committal for Trial	67.0%	63.5%	65.6%	60.7%	52.7%	45.7%	-13.3%
Sent for Trial	73.5%	78.1%	70.6%	63.6%	64.0%	55.0%	-14.1%
Committal for Sentence	89.9%	79.8%	84.7%	90.8%	92.4%	90.6%	-2.0%
Appeal	86.2%	93.2%	86.3%	86.4%	95.4%	91.3%	-4.3%

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

