

### III The August 2011 riots: a statistical summary

On August 4 Mark Duggan was fatally shot in Tottenham, by police officers who had stopped the car in which he was a passenger. On the evening of 6th August, following a peaceful protest march to a Tottenham police station, organised by the victim's friends and family, the first outbreaks of public disorder occurred.

On 7th and 8th August there were further outbreaks of disorder, mainly across London, but also in Birmingham, Bristol and Liverpool. On 9th August, although the disorder in London had been largely been quelled there were further incidents outside the capital.

The Ministry of Justice produced statistical updates throughout August and September on those brought before the courts, for offences relating to this public disorder.

In October 2011 more detailed statistical publications were released relating to the offences committed and offenders prosecuted – see the Further Reading section. This article provides a summary of this information.

#### Headlines:

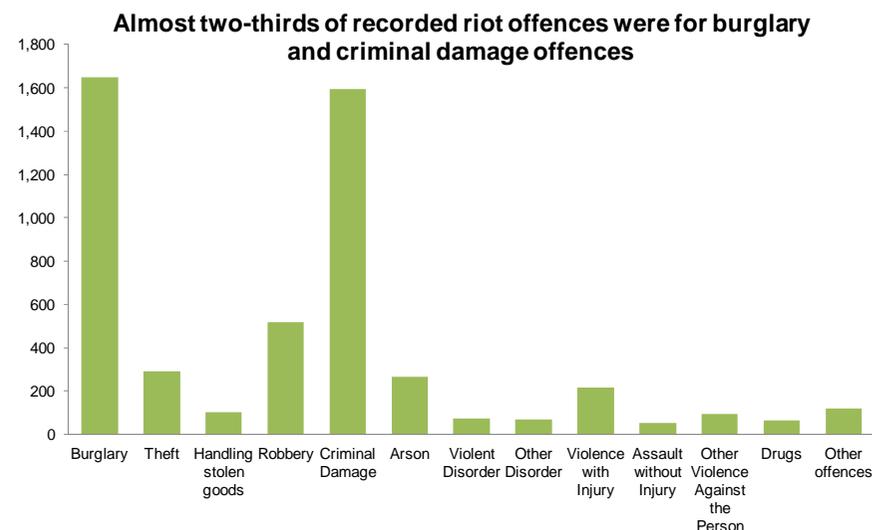
- 5,175 offences recorded by the police
- Almost 4,000 people arrested by early September
- By 12 October 1,984 suspects had faced prosecution with 686 offenders found guilty and 71 acquitted/dismissed.
- 551 sentences had been handed out and an immediate custodial sentence was given in 331 cases. The average custodial sentence length was 12.5 months.

#### Recorded crimes

Between 6th and 11th August 2011 the police recorded 5,175 disorder-related offences. There were 5,112 offences recorded in the ten police force areas where disorder was most extensive. The remaining 65 offences were committed in nine police force areas.

Two-thirds of the total offences were recorded by the Metropolitan police force. Approximately one-third of all offences recorded by the police were committed in five local authority areas: Croydon, Manchester, Birmingham, Southwark and Haringey.

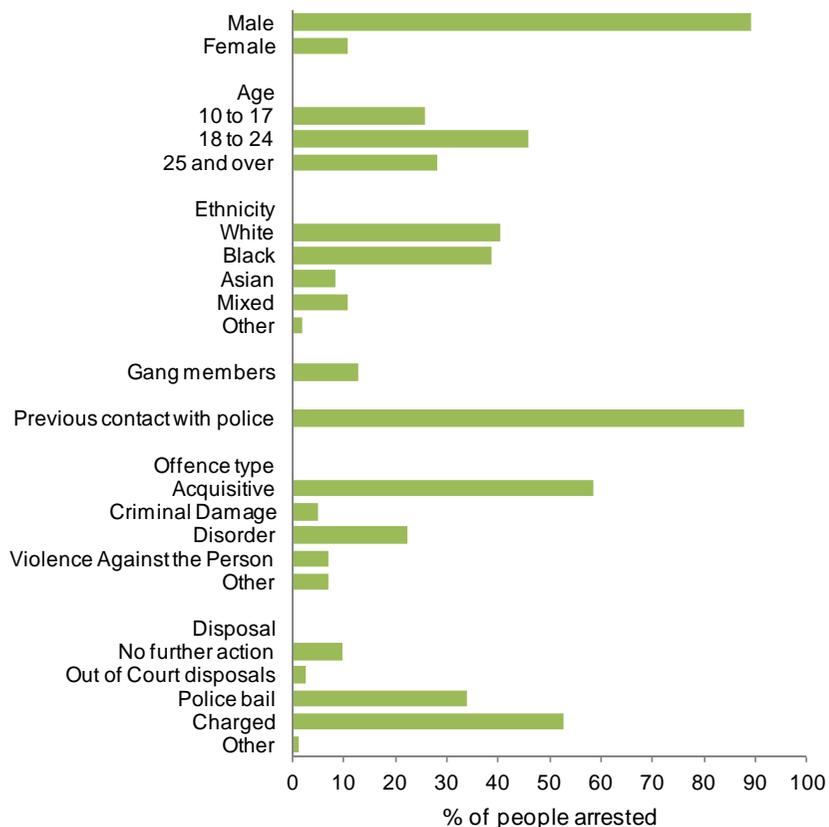
The majority of crimes (83%) were recorded on Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th August.



**Arrests**

The Home Office has collected arrest information from the ten police forces experiencing the most extensive disorder. By early September these forces had arrested almost 4,000 people. The majority of these arrests were made by the Metropolitan Police (62%), with West Midlands (16%) and Greater Manchester Police (8%) the next two largest.

**The 'average' person arrested was a young (white/black) male, aged under 25 previously known to the police, not a gang member, charged with an acquisitive offence**



In the immediate aftermath of the riots there was an assumption that much of the violence had been orchestrated by gangs. This was not backed up by the data with only 13% of those arrested nationally said to have a gang affiliation. The Home Office report discusses the issue of gang membership:

In terms of the role gangs played in the disorder, most forces perceived that where gang members were involved, they generally did not play a pivotal role. There were, however, a few examples provided which suggest orchestrated offending related to gang activity, including gang involvement in a serious firearms incident in the West Midlands.

**Court data**

By midday 12 October a total of 1,984 defendants had appeared at a Magistrates court for an initial hearing for a riot-related offence.

- Of those prosecuted, 686 had been found guilty while 71 were not convicted;
- Of those found guilty, 551 had been sentenced with the remaining 135 still awaiting sentence;
- Of those sentenced, 331 received an immediate custodial sentence.

Just over one half of those defendants awaiting a further court appearance, either for trial or sentence, had been remanded to custody.

The custody rate for riot-related offences is higher and the sentences handed out longer than for comparable offences.

- 42% of offenders sentenced at magistrates' courts for offences related to the public disorder received an immediate custody sentence.

- This compares to 12% of offenders who were sentenced to a custodial sentence for similar offences in England and Wales in 2010.
- The average custodial sentence length for offences related to the public disorder at magistrates' courts was 5.7 months compared to 2.5 months for offenders sentenced for similar offences in England and Wales in 2010.

**Prison population**

The remanding and sentencing to custody of people said to be involved in the riots has raised the prison population to record levels.

On 30 September 2011 there were 846 offenders in prison for offences related to the public disorder.

- 94% were male;
- 58% were aged 21 or older;
- 13% were foreign-national prisoners, similar to the proportion across the wider prison population.

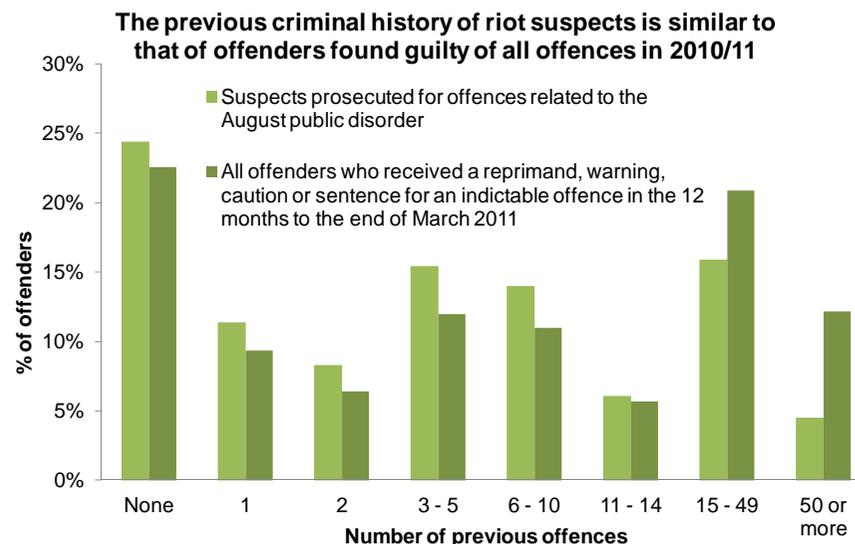
In response to an FoI request the Ministry of Justice released figures showing that on 9th September the foreign-national prisoners came from 44 different countries. Three quarters of those countries had either one or two nationals in prison for riot-related offences.

**Previous criminal history**

The Ministry of Justice has matched to the Police National Computer the details of those appearing before the courts to assess their previous criminal histories.

The suspects appearing before the courts for offences related to the August public disorder were more likely to have a previous conviction than the general public:

- 71% of adult males facing prosecution had at least one previous conviction compared to 28% of the general male population aged 18-52;
- 45% of males aged 10-17 facing prosecution had at least one previous conviction compared to 2% of the general male population aged 10-17.



Of those brought before the courts 26% had been in prison at least once before compared to 35% of offenders sentenced for an indictable offence in 2010/11.

It should be noted that these statistics compare offenders appearing before the courts for offences relating to the public disorder – some of

whom will not be convicted – with those found guilty of an offence in 2010/11.

### Socio-economic characteristics

The Ministry of Justice has matched information on those prosecuted for offences relating to the public disorder with benefit data for adults from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and school data for juveniles from the Department for Education (DfE).

#### Benefit data

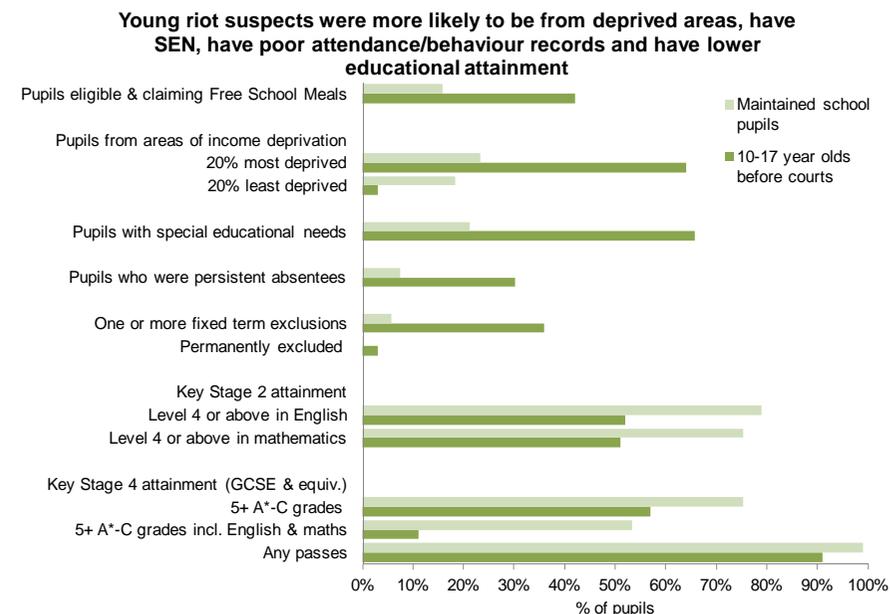
At midday on 28th September there were 1,344 people who had appeared before the courts, excluding those who had been found not guilty or whose case had been dismissed. In 78% of these cases a match was made with the DWP's National Benefits Database.

40% of adults appearing before the courts were claiming a DWP benefit on 8th August. 35% of adults were claiming an out-of-work benefit (Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity benefits or Income Support). This compares to 15% and 12% respectively amongst the working-age population of England and 48% and 45% respectively of all offenders sentenced for an indictable offence in 2010.

- Female suspects were more likely to be claiming benefits than males;
- Older suspects – aged 35 plus – were more likely to be claiming benefits than younger suspects;
- White suspects were more likely to be claiming benefits than other ethnic groups;
- Suspects in the North West and West Midlands were more likely to be claiming benefits than suspects in London.

### Educational status

At midday on 28th September there were 465 10-17 year olds who had appeared before the courts. In 83% of these cases a match was made with the DfE's National Pupil Database.



### Further reading

[Statistical bulletin on the public disorder of 6th-9th August 2011](#), Ministry of Justice, October 2011

[An Overview of Recorded Crimes and Arrests Resulting from Disorder Events in August 2011](#), Home Office, October 2011

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