

Executive Summary

CPS Data on Murder and Manslaughter Cases Involving Multiple Defendants - 2013

Methodology and Analysis

The CPS records the most serious offence with which a defendant is charged by the end of the prosecution under various “principal offence categories”. Offences of murder and manslaughter are recorded in the “Homicide” category, which includes offences of attempted murder / manslaughter, and conspiring or soliciting to commit murder / manslaughter, as well as a number of other offences.

In 2013 there were 124 cases in the “Homicide” category that involve multiple defendants. By examining the records of these cases on the CPS case Management System (CMS) we extracted all cases that relate to murder or manslaughter. The total number of relevant cases is 121.

We examined these 121 cases further, and recorded the following information in the first table on the spreadsheet, in respect of each defendant:

- Number of murder charges
- Number of manslaughter charges
- Number of lesser offences charged, in addition to murder and/or manslaughter
- Number of lesser offences charged, where the defendant is not charged with murder or manslaughter
- Total number of charges
- Number of convictions for murder, manslaughter and other offences.

The second table contains an analysis of the data in the first table. Whereas the first table provides data on charges and convictions, the second table provides total figures in relation to cases and defendants. This table provides a fuller picture of the way in which defendants have been charged in these cases.

Caveats

The data provided comes with the following caveats:

- This data should be read in conjunction with the Executive Summary.
- Where the case is finalised on the CPS Case Management System (CMS), and no result is recorded against a particular count, it is assumed that the defendant was acquitted, or the prosecution offered no evidence, on that count.
- Principal Offence Category 'Homicide' includes offences of murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, threats to kill, conspiring or soliciting to commit murder, infanticide, child destruction and causing death by dangerous driving.
- The Principal Offence Category is allocated at the conclusion of the prosecution proceeding against a defendant to indicate the type and seriousness of the charges brought.
- The Principal Offence Category indicates the most serious offence with which the defendant is charged at the time of finalisation. Where the nature of the charges alters during the life of a case, the Principal Offence at the time of finalisation may be different than would have seemed appropriate at an earlier stage of proceedings. In all such cases the Principal Offence category to be recorded is that which applies at finalisation, regardless of whether this is more serious, or less serious, than would have applied earlier in the life of the case.
- The Principal Offence Category comprises a range of individual offences. These cannot usually be disaggregated to report prosecutions data by specific offence.
- CPS data are available through its CMS and associated Management Information System (MIS). The CPS collects data to assist in the effective

management of its prosecution functions. The CPS does not collect data which constitutes official statistics as defined in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. These data have been drawn from the CPS's administrative IT system, which, as with any large scale recording system, is subject to possible errors with data entry and processing. The figures are provisional and subject to change as more information is recorded by the CPS.

- The official statistics relating to crime and policing are maintained by the Home Office and the official statistics relating to sentencing, criminal court proceedings, offenders brought to justice, the courts and the judiciary are maintained by the Ministry of Justice.
- Murder and manslaughter charges extracted from the 'Homicide' Category may include charges of attempted murder / manslaughter, and conspiring or soliciting to commit these offences.
- Where two or more defendants are charged on the same indictment with murder and/or manslaughter it is assumed that they were jointly charged in relation to the same victim.
- In some cases, the CMS records a guilty plea for a manslaughter charge, and a guilty verdict for a murder charge. We have examined these cases and confirmed that the charges relate to the same victim. We have therefore only recorded the murder conviction, as the manslaughter charge would have been left on the file.
- Where there is no conviction recorded against a defendant it may be for a number of reasons, including a prosecution decision not to proceed with the case.
- The data does not include single defendant murder cases where the defendant is alleged to have carried out the offence with another who is not tried on the same indictment, whether as a principal or a secondary party.

- On occasion, a defendant charged with a lesser offence in separate proceedings, may be joined to the proceedings in which defendants are charged with murder and / or manslaughter. When this occurs, the data relating to the defendant charged with the lesser offence may not be inputted with the data relating to the murder / manslaughter proceedings. As this is an unusual occurrence, it is not likely to significantly affect the data.