

Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service



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Dear Ms McNeill

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION S7W-02123 - *Times from indictment to trial in solemn*

The Cabinet Secretary in his response to the above PQ indicated that it related to operational matters within the responsibility of the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service corporate body. I am now writing in response to the matter raised.

S7W-02123 asks: *what the current average time is for domestic abuse cases to progress from indictment to trial in solemn proceedings in (a) the High Court and (b) the Sheriff Court.*

The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (the SCTS) uses live operational case management systems for the processing of criminal and civil court business. The information held on these systems is structured for operational needs, rather than for statistical reporting or research purposes. As such there is no existing aggregate data held in relation to the period between the registration date of an indictment to the trial diet.

The SCTS do publish data on the average time between the first appearance diet and evidence led trial. We publish this for both High Court and Sheriff Court indictments, however currently this is not available as a domestic abuse related subset. Roughly 9 in every 10 domestic abuse cases registered in Scottish courts are dealt with as Sheriff Court summary complaints. Given the relatively small volume of domestic abuse cases proceeding by indictment, these are not reported separately. We have, however, been able to use existing methodologies to break down the indictment data for this measure further to identify those which are domestic abuse related and have included these figures in the table below:

Average time (in weeks) between First Appearance diet and Evidence Led Trial for Domestic Abuse related Indictments

Jurisdiction	As at June 2026
High Court	48
Sheriff Court	15

Please note the following in relation to the data:

1. Figures are in weeks, where the evidence led trial occurred in the period shown and is based on the latest available information.
2. When an evidence led trial occurs, the trial date can be compared to the pleading diet date to obtain a measure of how long it has taken for the case to come to trial. Many factors can impact on the time between first appearance diet and trial diet e.g. court programme capacity, adjournments due to lack of court time, witness availability.
3. A case is identified as domestic abuse related when at least one of the following is present on the indictment:
 - A Domestic Abuse Aggravation, Domestic Abuse Statutory Aggravation or Domestic Abuse Statutory Aggravation involving a child is recorded against a charge.
 - A charge under the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 exists

For information on Sheriff Court summary domestic abuse cases (including the average time from the first appearance diet and evidence led trial diet) please see Tab 4b of the 'Courts and Tribunals Data Scotland: Criminal' publication, which can be accessed via the SCTS webpage.: [SCTS Statistics | Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service](#)

There has been a significant and sustained increase in the volume of solemn case registrations in both the High Court and the Sheriff Court. This pressure is most acutely felt in the High Court, where business volumes are outpacing capacity. In response to this the number of High Court venues will increase by four from January 2027.

In addition to the current 10 venues, the High Court will now sit in Airdrie, Dunfermline, Edinburgh and Glasgow Sheriff Courts.

The expansion will allow up to 26 trials a day compared to 16 at the start of this decade. An additional Preliminary Court in Glasgow will also run from October this year.

SCTS modelling projections show that business volumes will only increase further in the coming years. This will lead to lengthening journey times. The system has finite capacity, the availability of judiciary, Crown and defence resources are limiting factors on how much further expansion is possible.

Significant investment, by the Scottish Government, in criminal justice reform will be required over the coming years to ensure a modern, user focused, digitally enabled, integrated criminal justice system is able to meet the needs of Scotland's citizens.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre and published on the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mahesh Chohan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Chief Executive