

Sentencing statistics

Table 1: Number of adults sentenced for animal cruelty offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, 2010-2020

Section of Animal Welfare Act 2006	Sex	Number of adults sentenced										
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering	Female	309	351	394	369	268	205	178	189	192	157	94
	Male	457	550	576	492	445	317	287	316	297	278	153
	Unknown	66	92	109	132	75	76	107	83	119	116	51
	Total	832	993	1,079	993	788	598	572	588	608	551	298
S5 & 32(1): Carrying out, permitting or causing to be carried out or failing to prevent prohibited procedure on a protected animal	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	4	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	0
	Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total	4	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	2
S6(1) & (2) & 32(1): Removing or causing or permitting or failing to prevent removal of dog's tail other than for medical treatment	Female	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	0	5	7	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Unknown	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	0	7	10	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	1
S7 & 32(1): Administration of poisons etc to a protected animal	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
	Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
S8 & 32(1): Offences relating to animal fights	Female	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Male	2	9	13	11	9	4	2	5	9	0	0
	Unknown	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	2	9	13	12	9	8	2	5	9	0	0

S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice	Female	64	101	134	108	92	79	61	52	56	38	15
	Male	85	136	159	166	137	103	80	54	76	61	29
	Unknown	11	28	34	31	34	26	26	25	24	37	4
	Total	160	265	327	305	263	208	167	131	156	136	48
Total	Female	376	456	532	477	360	285	239	241	248	195	109
	Male	557	700	759	671	595	426	370	379	384	342	183
	Unknown	77	120	144	164	110	105	133	108	143	153	57
	Total	1,010	1,276	1,435	1,312	1,065	816	742	728	775	690	349

Section of Animal Welfare Act 2006	Sex	Percentage of adults sentenced ¹										
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering	Female	40%	39%	41%	43%	38%	39%	38%	37%	39%	36%	38%
	Male	60%	61%	59%	57%	62%	61%	62%	63%	61%	64%	62%
	Unknown											
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
S5 & 32(1): Carrying out, permitting or causing to be carried out or failing to prevent prohibited procedure on a protected animal	Female	0%	-	-	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	-
	Male	100%	-	-	100%	100%	-	100%	100%	100%	100%	-
	Unknown											
	Total	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%
S6(1) & (2) & 32(1): Removing or causing or permitting or failing to prevent removal of dog's tail other than for medical treatment	Female	-	29%	22%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	0%	-	0%
	Male	-	71%	78%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	100%	-	100%
	Unknown											
	Total	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%
S7 & 32(1): Administration of poisons etc to a protected animal	Female	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	-
	Male	100%	-	100%	-	100%	-	-	100%	-	-	-
	Unknown											
	Total	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%

S8 & 32(1): Offences relating to animal fights	Female	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	-	-
	Male	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	-	-
	Unknown											
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%
S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice	Female	43%	43%	46%	39%	40%	43%	43%	49%	42%	38%	34%
	Male	57%	57%	54%	61%	60%	57%	57%	51%	58%	62%	66%
	Unknown											
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total	Female	40%	39%	41%	42%	38%	40%	39%	39%	39%	36%	37%
	Male	60%	61%	59%	58%	62%	60%	61%	61%	61%	64%	63%
	Unknown											
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹Percentage calculations do not include cases where the sex was unknown.

Table 2: Sentencing outcomes for adults sentenced for animal cruelty offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, 2010-2020

Section of Animal Welfare Act 2006	Outcome	Number of adults sentenced										
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering	Discharge	140	168	177	130	79	51	44	46	26	21	12
	Fine	192	203	175	169	145	95	114	113	152	110	65
	Community sentence	367	399	465	423	278	239	210	193	216	201	117
	Suspended sentence	74	131	149	177	184	147	128	173	144	151	64
	Immediate custody	47	81	101	78	77	55	61	49	61	61	36
	Otherwise dealt with	12	11	12	16	25	11	15	14	9	7	4
	Total	832	993	1079	993	788	598	572	588	608	551	298
S8 & 32(1): Offences relating to animal fights	Discharge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Fine	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Community sentence	1	0	2	5	0	0	0	4	2	0	0
	Suspended sentence	0	3	5	1	4	5	0	1	4	0	0
	Immediate custody	1	6	5	6	4	3	2	0	3	0	0
	Otherwise dealt with	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	2	9	13	12	9	8	2	5	9	0	0
S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice	Discharge	41	50	90	49	50	36	18	15	20	11	1
	Fine	46	93	86	93	73	46	46	45	45	57	21
	Community sentence	50	89	121	97	85	68	72	42	51	41	15
	Suspended sentence	11	20	16	48	31	30	21	17	25	24	8
	Immediate custody	7	6	7	8	10	21	6	8	7	1	2
	Otherwise dealt with	5	7	7	10	14	7	4	4	8	2	1
	Total	160	265	327	305	263	208	167	131	156	136	48

Table 3: Final average custodial sentence lengths (ACSL) in months for adults sentenced to immediate custody under section 4 and section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, 2010-2020

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering ¹	Mean	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7
	Median	2.8	2.8	3.7	3.9	3.3	3.7	4.0	3.7	4.0	3.7	4.2
S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice ²	Mean	3.2	2.6	3.0	2.1	2.4	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.5	*	*
	Median	2.8	2.7	3.3	2.1	2.5	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	*	*

Table 3a: Pre guilty-plea average custodial sentence lengths (ACSL) for adults sentenced to immediate custody under section 4 and section 9 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, 2010-2020

		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering ¹	Mean	4.2	4.6	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.7	5.1	4.9	5.2	5.0	5.3
	Median	4.2	4.2	4.9	4.7	4.9	4.2	5.3	5.0	5.6	5.3	5.6
S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice ²	Mean	4.2	3.4	4.3	2.9	3.4	4.7	4.8	4.5	5.0	*	*
	Median	3.3	3.9	4.9	2.22	3.15	4.5	5.63	4.55	4.4	*	*

* = ACSL has not been calculated where the number of offenders sentenced to immediate custody is fewer than 5.

Table 4: Final sentence length distributions for adults sentenced to immediate custody for animal cruelty offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, 2010-2020

Section of Animal Welfare Act 2006	Sentence band ²	Number of adults sentenced to immediate custody										
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering ¹	Less than 1 month	2	3	3	1	5	4	1	1	1	0	1
	1 to 2	9	16	13	11	10	7	8	7	4	6	3
	2 to 3	18	24	23	20	17	11	17	9	15	15	9
	3 to 4	6	12	27	11	25	14	8	14	11	14	4
	4 to 5	9	17	25	26	13	12	20	11	22	18	14
	5 to 6 months	3	9	9	9	7	7	7	7	8	7	5
	Total	47	81	100	78	77	55	61	49	61	60	36
S8 & 32(1): Offences relating to animal fights	Less than 1 month	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	1 to 2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	2 to 3	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	3 to 4	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
	4 to 5	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0
	5 to 6 months	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Total	1	6	5	6	4	3	2	0	3	0	0
S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice	Less than 1 month	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
	1 to 2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	1
	2 to 3	1	2	1	3	5	8	0	3	3	0	0
	3 to 4	0	1	3	1	0	2	1	3	1	0	1
	4 to 5	2	1	1	0	1	4	2	0	1	1	0
	5 to 6 months	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0
	Total	7	6	7	8	10	21	6	8	7	1	2

Section of Animal Welfare Act 2006	Sentence band ²	Proportion of adults sentenced										
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
S4 & 32(1): Causing, permitting or failing to prevent unnecessary suffering ¹	Less than 1 month	4%	4%	3%	1%	6%	7%	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%
	1 to 2	19%	20%	13%	14%	13%	13%	13%	14%	7%	10%	8%
	2 to 3	38%	30%	23%	26%	22%	20%	28%	18%	25%	25%	25%
	3 to 4	13%	15%	27%	14%	32%	25%	13%	29%	18%	23%	11%
	4 to 5	19%	21%	25%	33%	17%	22%	33%	22%	36%	30%	39%
	5 to 6 months	6%	11%	9%	12%	9%	13%	11%	14%	13%	12%	14%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
S8 & 32(1): Offences relating to animal fights	Less than 1 month	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	0%	-	-
	1 to 2	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	-	0%	-	-
	2 to 3	0%	50%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	-	0%	-	-
	3 to 4	0%	17%	0%	67%	25%	33%	0%	-	33%	-	-
	4 to 5	0%	17%	40%	17%	50%	33%	50%	-	33%	-	-
	5 to 6 months	100%	0%	60%	17%	0%	33%	0%	-	33%	-	-
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
S9 & 32(2): Failing to ensure needs of animal are met as required by good practice	Less than 1 month	14%	17%	14%	25%	20%	10%	17%	13%	0%	0%	0%
	1 to 2	29%	17%	14%	25%	20%	10%	17%	0%	14%	0%	50%
	2 to 3	14%	33%	14%	38%	50%	38%	0%	38%	43%	0%	0%
	3 to 4	0%	17%	43%	13%	0%	10%	17%	38%	14%	0%	50%
	4 to 5	29%	17%	14%	0%	10%	19%	33%	0%	14%	100%	0%
	5 to 6 months	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	17%	13%	14%	0%	0%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Court Proceedings Database, Ministry of Justice