

Summary

Juvenile Crime Monitor 2017

Developments in registered juvenile crime from 2000 to 2017

The Juvenile Crime Monitor 2017 describes developments in juvenile crime registered by the police, the Public Prosecution Service and the courts from 2000 to 2017. The aim of the Juvenile Crime Monitor program is to provide a broad overview of developments in juvenile crime from various sources, and to discuss and compare these developments. The different sources in the latest Monitor include: police records of juvenile suspects, sentencing records of juvenile criminal offenders, and judicial statistics from other countries as well. The 2015 edition of the Juvenile Crime Monitor also included self-report measures of offending behavior by Dutch juveniles, which are obtained from a representative sample every five years. Juveniles are individuals between the ages of 12 and 23 years old. Besides describing developments in registered juvenile crime on the national level, the current edition also examines youth crime in so-called *hots spots* and (selected) municipalities and also the developments of juvenile crime in neighbouring countries.

Significant trends from 2012 to 2017

Trends in registered juvenile crime are predominantly decreasing

To examine whether the more long term decrease in juvenile crime (see figure S1) is also prevalent at the regional level, among specific subgroups, and for all types of criminal behaviour, more in-depth examinations are performed for the years 2012 to 2017. For specific regions, subgroups and types of offenses, the developments in juvenile crime, too, exhibit a downwards trend. The level of juvenile crime in 2016 is predominantly below the level of crime in 2012, regardless of region or subgroup. That said, the magnitude of the observed crime drop does differ per region or subgroup. Moreover, for some of these regions or subgroups juvenile crime does not decrease year after year, as there are isolated cases of juvenile crime levels remaining stable or even increasing.

Juvenile crime drop is prevalent among all age groups, most delinquent group becomes slightly older

Registered crime decreased for all age groups from 2007 to 2017. While 18- to 21-year-olds were mostly overrepresented in the juvenile criminal offender population up to and through 2012, the upper age range of the most delinquent group expands to 25 years after 2012.

Juvenile crime drops annually at the national level, intermittently at the municipal level, but with variation at the level of neighbourhoods

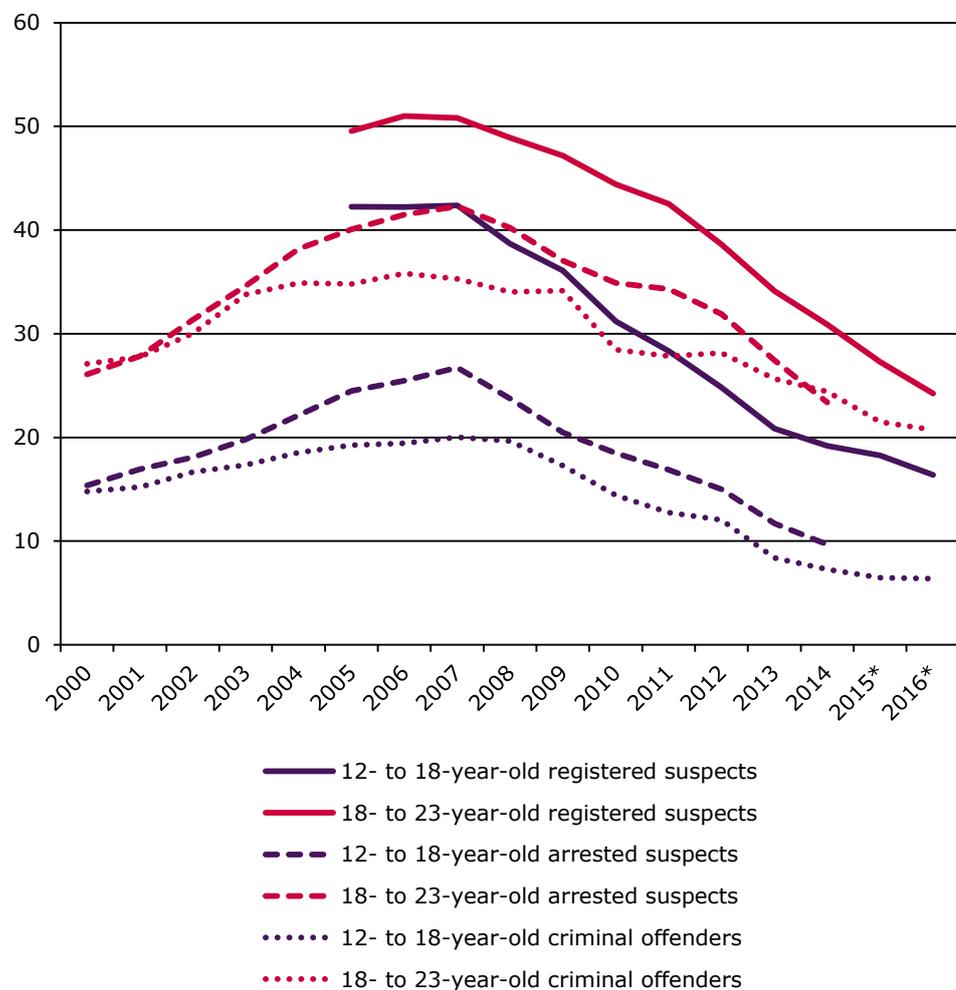
The decrease in juvenile crime is observed regardless of where juvenile suspects live or in which cities juvenile offenders commit crimes. However, the decrease in juvenile crime is not annually for each of the observed municipalities, but can be characterized as a intermittent drop. Also, at the more local level of neighbourhoods there is significant variation in the magnitude of the juvenile crime drop. For instance, in *hot spots* (i.e., neighbourhoods with relatively high levels of juvenile crime) the level

of juvenile crime decreases more strongly than the national average, but less so or not at all in other neighbourhoods.

The number of juveniles sentenced for digitalized and cybercrime is small, and is (still) not clearly identifiable in registration sources on the national level

The number of juveniles sentenced for digitalized or cybercrime consist of less than 1% of all juvenile criminal offenders. This figure significantly underestimates the number of juveniles who are actually involved in digitalized and cybercrime, because these types of offences are not yet clearly identifiable in police and court records on the national level.

Figure S1 Number of registered juvenile suspects and criminal offenders per 1.000 capita



* Preliminary rates.

Note. Registered suspects are individuals who have had police contact due to criminal involvement (figures available from 2005 and onwards); arrested suspects are individuals who have been reported to the Public Prosecution Service by the police due to criminal involvement (figures available from 2000 to 2015); criminal offenders are individuals who have been sentenced by the Public Prosecution Service or the courts (figures available for 2000 to 2017).

See Chapters 2 and 3 as well as Appendix 2, Table B7.1, for corresponding statistics.

Sources: HKS/BVH/SSB/OBJD; CBS/WODC

Greatest decrease in sanctions against juvenile offenders was from 2007 to 2013, afterwards the decrease weakens

The number of juveniles sanctioned with alternative community sentences issued by the organisation Halt, as well as the number of sanctions issued by the Publication Prosecution Service and the courts, decreases from 2007 to 2017. Up to 2013 this decrease was relatively strong, though it weakens afterwards. Particularly, the number of juveniles with a Halt referral stabilizes in recent years. This recent stability could be in part due to the introduction of the so-called Halt+ variant, which was introduced in 2013 and stimulates the referral of juvenile suspects and offenders to Halt by the Public Prosecution Service.

Also, the general decrease of the number of imposed sanctions is not observed for all types of sanctions. For example, the number of transactions (which are out-of-court settlements, usually involving a fine or community service) drops more sharply than penalty orders, which suggests that the latter is replacing the former (as intended by lawmakers).

Number of juvenile reoffenders decreases

The percentage of 12- to 18-year-olds and 18- to 25-year-olds that reoffend after at least one prior conviction decreases, though to a lesser extent than the general juvenile crime drop. In other words, while there is a general decrease in the number of juvenile offenders, the recidivism among those that remain remains more or less stable over time (whereas the latest cohort seems to show a slight increase in recidivism).

Prosecution of young adults as minors increases

Although there has been a decrease in the number of young adult criminal offenders, the percentage of criminal cases (with preliminary judgments) against young adults where they are sanctioned according to juvenile law increases.

Juvenile crime drop internationally observed

The Dutch drop in registered juvenile crime is not on its own. There is a similar decrease in the number of juvenile suspects and convicts in other countries as well, for 2007 to 2015. But, the number of registered juvenile suspects and convicts does fall more rapidly in the Netherlands, when compared with neighbouring nations.

Possible explanations for the juvenile crime drop

A monitor, such as the Juvenile Crime Monitor, is primarily a descriptive entity, and not necessarily means to clarify or explain observed developments. Still, some explanations for the juvenile crime drop are discussed, such as:

- Changes in registration practises, priority shifts regarding investigating juvenile crime as well as changes in police protocols have led to a shortage in enforcement practises, which may have contributed to the registered juvenile crime drop.
- The *crime debut* hypothesis suggests that an increase in security measures has made it more difficult for criminals to successfully commit crimes, particularly among less experienced offenders of property crimes, thus preventing criminal careers from 'taking off'.
- The *social media* hypothesis suggests that the registered drop in juvenile crime could be due to the increased digitalization of society, which includes, but is not limited to, the increased use of social media and mobile devices.
- The *changing sociocultural attitude* hypothesis suggests that the downward development in juvenile crime is due to a changing sociocultural attitude among

juveniles and parents towards risky behaviour, such as alcohol consumption, dropping out of school or delinquency.

Conclusion

Since 2007, juvenile crime has decreased in the Netherlands. This crime drop is observable in the registrations of the police and the judicial authorities as well as in self-report measures of juveniles themselves (see the Juvenile Crime Monitor 2015 for the results regarding self-report). The observed juvenile crime drop that started in 2007 continues up to 2017. Although the magnitude of the juvenile crime drop differs per region, subgroup or type of crime, and is not always annually, the overall trend shows a decrease in registered juvenile crime. That said, the monitor concerns *registered* juvenile crime. Hence, the monitor only concerns a part of all juvenile crime. It is likely that the juvenile crime registered by police is dropping more sharply than actual juvenile crime, for instance, due to changes in registration practices. A juvenile crime drop is also observed internationally, in countries surrounding the Netherlands, though the decrease in crime appears to be largest in the Netherlands.