

Ministry of Justice – Department for Education linked dataset – England

Research Priorities

About the dataset

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) – Department for Education (DfE) linked dataset provides deidentified data on childhood characteristics and education outcomes of young people linked to data on their interactions with the criminal justice system. The data includes those offenders with at least one record from 2000 or later, who were on the Police National Computer at the end of May 2025 and were matched to individuals on the National Pupil Database.

This data linkage includes 23 DfE datasets, including data on academic achievement, pupil absence and pupil exclusions. It also includes 11 MoJ datasets, including data on offenders' criminal histories, court appearances and time in prison. Each dataset has a unique ID variable that can be used to link across the datasets.

The MoJ-DfE linked dataset presents a unique opportunity to understand links between childhood characteristics, educational outcomes and (re)offending.

Research topics

We welcome applications exploring policy-focused questions based on the following themes. Other research questions are also welcomed providing you can evidence policy-relevance. Please see the [MoJ Areas of Research Interest \(2025\)](#) which sets out MoJ's evidence priorities

Reducing reoffending: understanding characteristics, needs and risks factors of offenders

1. Is there an association between particular interactions with the education system and offending, and if so, is one of these factors typically the driver?
2. How are the relationships between educational and criminal justice outcomes impacted by demographic factors?
3. What are the protective and risk factors for the likelihood of committing crimes and how do these differ across crime types?
4. How do education or children's social care and adversity interact?
5. What is the influence of early education or children's social care on later prison outcomes, including length of prison sentences and re-offending? What is the impact of people's level of educational attainment on offending?
6. How can disparities in the youth justice system be addressed? Why are some children criminalised and others are not?

Safer Streets mission: advance our understanding and generate new knowledge to support the UK Government's objectives for the [Safer Streets Mission](#).

1. To explore education, social care, health and demographic backgrounds and outcomes for children who have committed knife offences, anti-social behaviour (ASB) or Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) offences.
2. To understand what drivers and outcomes make young people more likely to engage in knife crime, including links to social care and educational outcomes.
3. To evaluate the impact of early interventions and education policies on different areas of youth justice offending, for example, knife crime, VAWG and ASB.

This is not an exhaustive list. Other questions are also welcomed providing you can demonstrate policy-relevance and likelihood of impact and uptake.