

The Case Funnel

Criminal Justice

Why most offences never reach a courtroom, and where cases drop out.

Every stage of the process removes cases, so the system narrows sharply from report to trial.

SHAPE

Wide at report, narrow at trial

WHERE LOSS OCCURS

Mostly before charge, not at trial

- Only some offences are reported to police
- Only some reports are recorded as crimes
- A minority of recorded crimes are detected
- Not every detected case is charged
- Most charged cases end in a guilty plea

LOOK FOR IT

Contested trials decide a small fraction of the cases the system starts with.

Educational reference. Attrition rates differ by offence and jurisdiction; sexual offence attrition is studied separately.