

Delay and Backlog

Criminal Justice

What waiting does to a criminal case, and why delay is a justice problem.

Time from offence to outcome degrades evidence, resolve and confidence in the process.

COMMON MEASURE

Days from charge to disposal

KNOCK-ON EFFECT

Case attrition and witness attrition

- Backlogs grew in many systems after 2020
- Witnesses withdraw as delay lengthens
- Memory quality declines with time
- Remand populations rise with listing delay
- Delay is a resource problem before a legal one

LOOK FOR IT

A case listed two years ahead may lose the witness the case depends on.

Educational reference. Backlog statistics are published per jurisdiction and are not directly comparable across systems.