

The Age-Crime Curve

Criminal Justice

Offending rises in adolescence, peaks in the late teens, then falls away.

Age is one of the strongest and most repeated correlates of offending.

TYPICAL PEAK

Late teens for most offence types

PERSISTENT GROUP

A small minority of any cohort

- The curve appears across many countries and eras
- Most young offenders stop without intervention
- A small group offends over a long period
- Life events are linked to stopping offending
- Moffitt separates limited and persistent paths

LOOK FOR IT

Sampson and Laub link turning points such as work and partnership to desistance.

Educational reference. Peak ages vary by offence and by data source; arrest curves differ from self-report curves.