

Is it spent?

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 gives people with spent convictions and cautions the legal right not to disclose them when applying for most jobs and for other purposes, like when buying insurance.

Apart from those individuals who are given prison sentences of more than 4 years, most people with convictions will benefit from it at some point in their lives. The table below sets out the time it takes for the main sentences to become spent following the changes that were introduced in 2014. This is known as the 'rehabilitation period' for the conviction. A conviction may have a number of rehabilitation periods depending on the sentence – in this situation, the longest one applies.

If you have access to the internet, you can also use our online tool www.disclosurecalculator.org.uk

Prison sentences & Community orders (with a buffer period)

Sentence		Time it takes to become spent	
		Adult (18+) at conviction/disposal	Young person (U18) at conviction/disposal
Prison (including suspended prison sentences)	Over 4 years or a public protection sentence	Never spent	Never spent
	More than 30 months and less than (or equal to) 4 years	Full sentence + 7 years*	Full sentence + 3 ½ years*
	More than 6 months and less than (or equal to) 30 months	Full sentence + 4 years*	Full sentence + 2 years*
	Less than (or equal to) 6 months	Full sentence + 2 years*	Full sentence + 18 months*
Community order / Youth rehabilitation order		Full length of the order + 1 year	Full length of the order + 6 months

*Sentence length includes time spent on licence

Other community sentences (with no buffer period)

Sentence/Disposal	Time it takes to become spent (from date of conviction)	
	Adult (18+) at conviction/disposal	Young person (U18) at conviction/disposal
Fine	1 year	6 months
Conditional discharge	Length of the order	Length of the order
Absolute discharge	Spent immediately	
Conditional caution / youth conditional caution	3 months (or when it ends, if earlier)	3 months
Simple caution / youth caution	Spent immediately	
Compensation order	Once it is paid in full	
Bind over	Length of the order	
Hospital order (with or without restrictions)		
Referral order		
Reparation order	Spent immediately	
Endorsement (imposed by a court)	5 years	2 ½ years
Motoring disqualification (imposed by a court)	Length of the disqualification	
Relevant order	Length of the order	

For information about other sentences, military convictions, the impact of multiple convictions and jobs that require spent convictions to be disclosed, visit hub.unlock.org.uk and select “Rehabilitation of Offenders Act”.

Unlock Helpline – confidential peer advice on overcoming the effects of criminal convictions

Call: 01634 247350 **Email:** advice@unlock.org.uk **Write:** Helpline, Unlock, Maidstone Community

Support Centre, 39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1HH

For online self-help information, visit hub.unlock.org.uk