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Charges reported under the
Offensive Behaviour at Football
and Threatening Communications
(Scotland) Act (2012) in 2012-13

Crime and Justice



social
research

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Behaviour at Football and Threatening
Communications (Scotland) Act (2012) in
2012-13**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In the 2012-13 there were 268 charges of „offensive behaviour at regulated football matches“ reported by the police to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).
- In this period, the accused were mostly males (in 99% of all charges) and under the age of 30 (73.5%). Police reports noted the accused being under the influence of alcohol in 27.6% of charges.
- The Act criminalises hateful, threatening and otherwise offensive behaviour that is likely to incite public disorder in relation to football. Hateful behaviour was most common, in 46.6% of charges, threatening behaviour was second most common, in 44.4% of charges and other behaviour that a reasonable person would be likely to consider offensive was the category for 17.2% of charges. Some charges contained reference to more than one category.
- All 46 charges for other offensive behaviour related to behaviour which referenced support to terrorist organisations.
- Of the 268 charges, 125 included specific reference to religious and racial hatred as defined in the Act: 106 referred to religion and 19 to race. Three religions were the subject of charges: 88 charges (83.0%) were derogatory towards Roman Catholicism, 16 (15.1%) were derogatory towards Protestantism, and 2 (1.9%) were derogatory towards Judaism.
- A substantial proportion of the charges took place in Glasgow (42.2%) which may reflect the city’s hosting of matches which draw some of the largest crowds, at Celtic Park, Ibrox and Hampden stadiums.
- Sixty-two percent of charges occurred in a football stadium. Of these, 24.2% were at Celtic Park, 20.0% at Ibrox and 8.5% at Hampden. Twenty two percent of charges occurred on a main street in a town or city centre and 8.9% at a railway station or on public transport.
- The football affiliation of the accused was recorded by the police in 96% of the charges. Within the charges noted, 31.7% were described as having Rangers affiliations, 25.4% Celtic affiliations and 10.4% Hibernian affiliations.
- Charges were connected to 80 football fixtures. Four fixtures accounted for almost 25% of all charges (Celtic v Rangers on 29 April 2012; Hibernian v Hearts on 19 May 2012; Hamilton v Falkirk on 5 January 2013; and St Mirren v Hibernian on 16 February 2013).

- In 45.9% of charges the general community were the target of the abuse, specific members of the public were the target in 38.4% of charges and the police in 13.1%.
- For the full period of the first 13 months of the act, there were 87 convictions from 128 concluded charges which is an overall conviction rate of 68%.
- Section 6 of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act (2012) introduced the offence of „threatening communications“ to address threats of serious harm and threats that incite hatred on religious grounds. In 2012-13 there were 20 threatening communications charges reported to COPFS. Eight of these charges were football related incidents. Six of the charges related to charges which incited hatred on religious grounds, 14 of the charges related to threats of serious harm. These charges are not analysed in any more detail within this report because of the small number of charges and the consequent risk of the disclosure of the identities of the accused and the fact that cases may still be ongoing.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 14th December 2011 and came into force on 1 March 2012. The Act criminalises behaviour which is threatening, hateful or otherwise offensive at a regulated football match including offensive singing or chanting where it is likely to lead to public disorder. It also criminalises the communication of threats of serious violence and threats intended to incite religious hatred.

1.2 This report focuses on offensive behaviour at regulated football matches and provides an analysis of charges reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) in the first whole financial year of the Act (1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013). The Act was in force for a month preceding the 2012-13 financial year (ie March 2012), when 65 charges were reported to COPFS. Information about these charges is presented in Annex A.

1.3 This paper provides information about the locations, dates of charges, the nature of the offensive behaviour¹, the age and gender of the accused and the nature of the victims.

¹ Including where charges were added as a result of expressed hatred, or stirred up hatred, against people based on their membership, or presumed membership of a religious group, a social or cultural group with a perceived religious affiliation, or a group defined by reference to colour, race, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability.

2. METHOD

2.1 For this research, analysts from the Scottish Government undertook a review of case files from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) case management database. This database contains the information that is submitted to COPFS by the police after the accused are charged, including a description of the incident, information about the progression of the charge through the criminal justice system, the decisions that were made on whether or not to prosecute, the court's verdict and any penalties issued by the court after a conviction. Since this is a live database, information can be updated and changed during the life of the case. For instance if the Procurator Fiscal amends a charge, the database only holds details of the amended charge.

2.2 The COPFS case management database is not designed for routine analysis but has been used as the source for this one-off research project.

2.3 There are a number of points that should be kept in mind when reading this paper. First, this analysis is based on data that was reported to COPFS by the police and is therefore limited by what was included in their reports. Any analysis of, for example, the nature of the offensive behaviour and/or the links to drugs and alcohol depend on the extent to which this information is provided in the reports. This information may not have always been recorded by the police, for example where it was not viewed as directly relevant to the charge.

2.4 Second, the Act came into force on 1 March 2012, and so was in force for a month before the 2012-13 financial year that is the main subject of this report. Sixty five charges were reported to COPFS during that month of the 2011-12 financial year. Information about these charges is presented in Annex A.

2.5 Third, this report does not present information about the real or actual personal, social or cultural identities or backgrounds of victims that may have been the focus of an attack. The report does not include information, for example about the religious affiliations, ethnic origins or sexual orientation of victims. This is because the characteristics of the victim are not relevant to an assessment of whether a crime was committed and therefore are not required to be recorded in police prosecution reports.

2.6 Finally, the analysis of charges includes cases which are still underway and the findings may therefore be incomplete.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 All of the information reported in this report refers to the 2012-13 financial year.

3.2 Before providing further details of these charges, it is worth highlighting that these 268 charges do not relate to 268 separate incidents. Many of the incidents involved more than one accused and will therefore have generated more than one charge. The analysis therefore relates to more charges than separate incidents.

3.3 There were 178 separate „incidents“ or occasions where charges were issued at the same time to one or more people. Most (79.2%) incidents related to single charges being issued, 10.1% of incidents resulted in 2 charges and the remaining 10.6% of incidents involved 3 or more charges being issued at the same time.

Table 1: Number of Accused/Incident per Charge

Number of charges	Number of Separate Accused	Number of Separate 'Incidents'	% of 'Incidents'
1	141	141	79.2
2	35	18	10.1
3	12	4	2.2
4	15	4	2.2
5	30	7	3.9
6	10	2	1.1
7	7	1	0.6
8	0	0	0.0
9	9	1	0.6
Total	259	178	100.0

Sex/Age of the Accused

3.4 Within the 268 charges, which relate to 259 separate people, there were 256 male accused, and 3 female. Table 2 shows the age breakdown of the accused for each of the 268 offensive behaviour charges, 37.7% of charges related to accused who were aged between 21-30, 33.2% referred to those aged between 16 and 20. Fewer than 1% related to those over 60 and 2.6% to those under 16.

Table 2: Age Breakdown of Accused

Age Group	Number of Charges	%
Under 16	7	2.6
16-20	89	33.2
21-30	101	37.7
31-40	37	13.8
41-50	25	9.3
51-60	7	2.6
Over 60	2	0.7
Total	268	100.0

Alcohol and Drug Related Charges

3.5 The police reports described the accused as being under the influence of alcohol in 27.6% of the charges. This finding may under-report the links between alcohol and the offensive behaviour if there were cases where the police did not note that the accused had been drinking. It was also not possible to quantify the amount of alcohol consumed in any given case. Only a small number of charges involved drugs (1.5%). These were incidents where the police recorded that the accused was in possession of drugs or they suspected had taken drugs before the offence took place.

Table 3: Alcohol and Drug Related Charges

	Number of Charges	%
Drink	73	27.6
Drugs	4	1.5

Note: the rows show the number and proportion of drink/drugs in all charges. Some may have included both drink and drugs.

Nature of the Offence

3.6 The Act criminalises behaviour which is hateful (section 1(2)(a)-(c)), threatening (section 1(2)(d)) or otherwise offensive to a reasonable person (section 1(2)(e)) and is likely to incite public disorder.

3.7 Hateful behaviour was most common, and used in 46.6% of the charges. There were 125 charges that included specific reference to religious, racial² or other forms of hatred. Table 4 shows a breakdown of the proportions of these for each type

² For the purpose of this analysis the “racial” category refers to behaviour which is defined as the subject of hatred in terms of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins.

of behaviour. Some charges may have included reference to more than one category.

3.8 Hateful behaviour relating to religious identity accounted for 39.6% of the total number of charges (although the motivation for some of these may have been to invoke a perceived racial or national identity) and 7.1% of the charges included racially offensive references. There were no reported charges for offensive behaviour targeting sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity.

3.9 Threatening behaviour was second most common, used in 44.4% of the charges, and includes fighting and aggressive behaviour e.g. between rival fans.

3.10 Other behaviour that a reasonable person would be likely to consider offensive was the category of 17.2% of the charges. All of these 46 charges noted behaviour which referenced terrorism and terrorist organisations.

Table 4: Nature of Offence

		Number of Charges	%
Hateful Behaviour		125	46.6
<i>of which:</i>	<i>Religion</i>	106	39.6
	<i>Race</i>	19	7.1
	<i>Sexual Identity</i>	0	0.0
	<i>Disability</i>	0	0.0
	<i>Transgender</i>	0	0.0
Threatening Behaviour		119	44.4
Otherwise Offensive Behaviour		46	17.2

Note: Some charges contained reference to more than one category.

3.11 Of the 106 charges including religious offence there were three religious groups that were the subject of the charges: 88 (83.0%) charges were derogatory towards Roman Catholicism, 16 (15.1%) were derogatory towards Protestantism and 2 (1.9%) were derogatory towards Judaism. Roman Catholicism was the main target of abuse within the charges which referred to religiously hateful behaviour and accounted for 32.8% of the total number of all charges.

Method of Abuse

3.12 Table 5 outlines the method of abuse used within the charge. These refer to the method in which the abuse or offensiveness was conveyed.

3.13 In just over half of the charges (51.1%) speech was the method of abuse used by the accused, singing in 41.8% and generally offensive behaviour in 30.6% of charges. „Generally offensive behaviour“ refers to behaviour used by the accused which could not be categorised as the use of a banner, gesture, speech or singing. It could include aggressive behaviour and/or fighting. It could also include fans running onto the pitch.

Table 5: Method of Abuse

Method of Abuse	Number of Charges	%
Banner	9	3.4
Gesture	48	17.9
Speech	137	51.1
Singing	112	41.8
Generally Offensive Behaviour	82	30.6

Note: Some charges contained reference to more than one category.

Location of Charges

3.14 Table 6 shows the local authority area where the charges occurred. A substantial proportion (42.2%) of the total charges occurred in Glasgow (113 charges). This is likely to reflect the fact that Glasgow is home to the three largest football stadiums in Scotland. Other local authority areas that are notable are Edinburgh (where there were 24 charges) and South Lanarkshire (where there 23 charges). There were no charges at all in 15 local authorities in Scotland.

3.15 Five charges related to offensive behaviour at a regulated football match outside Scotland. These charges relate to a match in Northumberland, England between Berwick Rangers and Rangers on 23rd February 2013 at Shielfield Park. Section 1 of the Offensive Behaviour etc. Act applies to incidents taking place around regulated football matches outside Scotland.

Table 6: Local Authority Area where Charges Occurred³

Local Authority Area	Number of Charges	%	Number of Charges Per 100,000 Population
Aberdeenshire	12	4.5	5
Angus	5	1.9	5
Dumfries & Galloway	6	2.2	4
Dundee City	14	5.2	10
East Lothian	1	0.4	1
Edinburgh, City of	24	9.0	5
Falkirk	12	4.5	8
Fife	7	2.6	2
Glasgow City	113	42.2	19
Highland	8	3.0	4
Moray	7	2.6	8
North Ayrshire	1	0.4	1
North Lanarkshire	9	3.4	3
Perth & Kinross	6	2.2	4
Renfrewshire	13	4.9	8
South Ayrshire	2	0.7	2
South Lanarkshire	23	8.6	7
Outside Scotland (Northumberland, England)	5	1.9	
Total	268	100.0	

Locus of Charges

3.16 The majority of charges (61.6%) took place at a football stadium, 22.4% occurred on a main street⁴ in a town or city centre and 6.3% were on public transport.

Table 7: Locus of Charges⁵

Locus of Offence	Number of Charges	%
Football Stadium	165	61.6
Main Street	60	22.4
Railway Station	7	2.6
Public Transport	17	6.3
Residential Area	8	3.0
Pub/Club/Bar	8	3.0
Other	3	1.1
Total	268	100.0

3.17 Table 8 shows the number of charges at football stadiums. The 3 largest football stadiums in Scotland were the locus for over half (52.7%) of all charges:

³ For Scottish Local Authority Areas population rate based on GROS mid-year population rates 2011. Available at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/2011/tables.html>.

⁴ Main street" refers to a public street in a town or city centre and is used in this report to distinguish between these areas and residential/suburban areas.

⁵ 'Other' refers to a betting shop and fast food restaurant.

there were 40 charges at Celtic Park (24.2%), 33 at Ibrox (20.0%) and 14 at Hampden Park (8.5%).

3.18 This information relates only to the stadium where the incident took place and does not identify the club affiliations of the victims or the accused, or whether these were „home“ or „away“ supporters.

Table 8: Charges from Incidents at Football Stadiums

Football Stadium	Number of Charges	%
Balmoor Stadium	6	3.6
Broadwood Stadium	6	3.6
Caledonian Stadium	6	3.6
Celtic Park	40	24.2
Glebe Park	5	3.0
Hampden Park	14	8.5
Ibrox Stadium	33	20.0
McDiarmid Park	6	3.6
Shielfield Park	5	3.0
Tannadice Park	10	6.1
Tynecastle Stadium	10	6.1
Other	24	14.5
Total	165	100.0

Football Affiliations of the Accused

3.19 The analysis included looking at the football affiliations of the accused, from information recorded by the police. The affiliation of the accused was noted in 258 of 268 case files (96%). The affiliation may have been apparent from the accused having a match ticket, or from their clothing (i.e. wearing a strip or scarf). Within the charges noted, 31.7% of the accused were described as having Rangers affiliations, 25.4% Celtic affiliations and 10.4% Hibernian affiliations.

Table 9: Football Affiliation of the Accused⁶

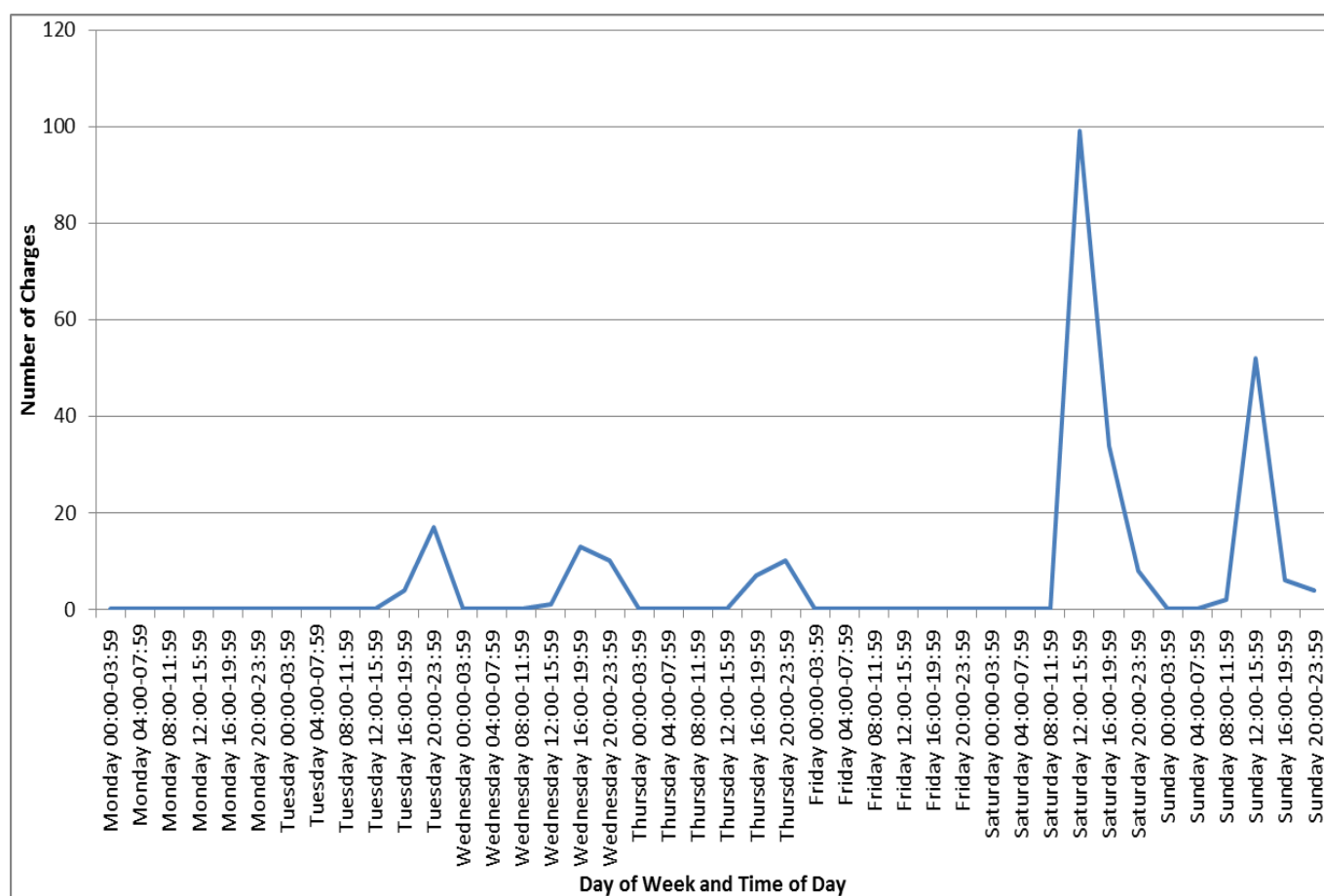
Football Affiliation	Number of Charges	%
Ayr United	6	2.2
Celtic	68	25.4
Dundee	12	4.5
Falkirk	17	6.3
Hamilton	9	3.4
Hearts	13	4.9
Hibs	28	10.4
Rangers	85	31.7
Other	20	7.5
Unknown	10	3.7
Total	268	100.0

Timing of Charges

3.20 Chart 1 outlines the peak days of week and times of day for charges taking place. The main peak times are Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings and, to a lesser extent, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. This is consistent with the timings of football matches.

⁶ „Other“ refers to the football affiliation of the accused with football clubs with 4 or fewer charges. Due to the low number of charges, these clubs are not identified for to prevent disclosure of identities.

Chart 1: Day of Week and Time of Day



Football Fixtures

3.21 Table 10 shows a breakdown of the football fixtures where there were charges. Within the period of this analysis there were charges connected to 80 fixtures from the 2012-13 season, 71 domestic fixtures and 9 international matches.

3.22 The fixture with the highest number of charges was the Hamilton versus Falkirk game on 5 January 2013, where there were 23 charges, making up 8.6% of the total. These charges were the result of a police operation around the fixture where there was fighting on the streets of Hamilton prior to the game. Other fixtures with a relatively high number of charges were the Celtic versus Rangers match on 29th April 2012 at Celtic Park, St Mirren versus Hibs on 16 February 2013 at St Mirren Park, and Hibernian versus Hearts on 19th May 2012 at Hampden Park in the Scottish Cup Final.

3.23 As noted earlier, the number of police charges issued at any given fixture may not represent the amount of offensive behaviour at or around a match and may also be influenced by the decisions the police have made about when and where to deploy their officers and their enforcement strategies. A fuller account of the relative prevalence and distribution of this behaviour would need to consider qualitative information about the context of the events and the policing operations.

Table 10: Football Fixtures Associated with Charges

Date of Fixture	Fixture	Number of Charges	%
25/03/2012	Rangers v Celtic	9	3.4
15/04/2012	Celtic v Hearts	6	2.2
29/04/2012	Celtic v Rangers	19	7.1
19/05/2012	Hibs v Hearts	10	3.7
29/07/2012	Brechin City v Rangers	5	1.9
02/08/2012	Dundee v Dinamo Moscow	7	2.6
11/08/2012	Peterhead v Rangers	5	1.9
30/08/2012	Rangers v Falkirk	5	1.9
15/09/2012	Annan Athletic v Rangers	5	1.9
26/09/2012	Rangers v Motherwell	5	1.9
28/11/2012	Hearts v Celtic	6	2.2
18/12/2012	Rangers v Annan Athletic	5	1.9
29/12/2012	Queens Park v Rangers	7	2.6
05/01/2013	Hamilton v Falkirk	23	8.6
12/02/2013	Celtic v Juventus	5	1.9
16/02/2013	Clyde FC v Rangers FC	6	2.2
16/02/2013	Falkirk v Dunfermline	5	1.9
16/02/2013	St Mirren v Hibs	11	4.1
19/02/2013	St Johnstone v Celtic	6	2.2
23/02/2013	Berwick Rangers v Rangers	6	2.2
Other Fixture		112	41.8
Total		268	100.0

Note: The „other fixture“ row includes the total charges from the 60 fixtures where there were four or fewer charges.

Victims

3.24 Information about the people targeted by offensive behaviour likely to incite public disorder is not separately recorded in the police report. For the purpose of this report the researchers made an assessment of who the main victims were, based on the police’s description of the incident. Victims were identified as the main target for the offensive behaviour. The victim could have been a specific member of the public, the police, a worker, a footballer or the general „community“ (if, for example, someone was singing an offensive song that was not directed at any specific person but was directed at or could be offensive to passers-by, people in the vicinity or opposing fans). Each charge may have included multiple victim „types“.

3.25 The „community“ were the victim of offensive behaviour in 45.9% of the charges. Specific members of the public were targeted in 38.4% of charges, the police in 13.1%, and workers (such as security staff, transport workers, footballers, and football coaches/managers) in 10.8% of charges.

Table 11: Victims of the Offensive Behaviour

Victim	Number of Charges	%
Community	123	45.9
Member of the Public	103	38.4
Police	35	13.1
Worker	29	10.8
Unidentified	2	0.7

Note: the number of charges do not add up to 268 because some charges related to behaviour which targeted more than one victim or victim type.

Criminal Proceedings

3.26 As explained in COPFS Hate Crime in Scotland 2012-13, court proceedings were commenced in 219 (82%) of charges.

3.27 The COPFS case management database provides information about convictions for concluded charges. This is provisional information and subject to change as charges are dealt with in the system. It shows that in 2012-13 there were 62 convictions from 95 concluded charges (43% of charges had been concluded at the time of this analysis). This is a conviction rate (ie the proportion of concluded charges that resulted in convictions) of 65%. In 2011-12 there were 25 convictions from 33 concluded charges, a conviction rate of 76%. For the full period of the first 13 months of the act, there were therefore 87 convictions from 128 concluded charges which is an overall conviction rate of 68%.

3.28 Charges that conclude quickly may not be representative of all charges. They may have concluded quickly because they were the most straightforward cases or those where there was an early guilty plea. It is therefore possible that final conviction rates will be different from those quoted here.

3.29 The main court disposals for convictions in 2012-13 are shown in table 12. The most common disposal recorded was a monetary penalty which was given in 61.3% of charges, a community penalty (a community payback order) was given in 17.7% of charges, a football banning order in 8.1% of charges (this number only represents the occasions when these orders were handed out as the main disposal for the charge – they can also be awarded in conjunction with other disposals), a warning was given in 4.8% of charges and imprisonment in 3.2% of charges.

Table 12: Main court disposals

Disposal	Number of Charges	%
Absolute discharge	3	4.8
Community Penalty	11	17.7
Custody	2	3.2
Football Banning Order	5	8.1
Monetary Penalty	38	61.3
Warning	3	4.8
Total	62	100.0

Section 6 of the Act - Threatening Communications

3.30 The Act also introduced measures to address threats of serious harm and threats that incite hatred on religious grounds, not confined to football settings. In 2012-13 there were 20 threatening communications charges reported to COPFS. Eight of these charges were football related incidents. Six of the charges related to charges which incited hatred on religious grounds, 14 of the charges related to threats of serious harm. These charges are not analysed in any more detail within this report because of the small number of charges and the consequent risk of the disclosure of the identities of the accused and the fact that cases may still be ongoing.

Annex A – Section 1 2011-12

The Act came into Force on 1 March 2012, which was the final month of the 2011-12 financial year. For completeness here are the main tables for charges reported in 2011-12.

Table 1: Number of Accused/Incident per Charge

Number of Charges	2011-12		
	Number of Separate Accused	Number of Separate 'incidents'	% of 'incidents'
1	14	14	70.0
2	4	2	10.0
3	4	2	10.0
8	8	1	5.0
33	28	1	5.0
Total	58	20	100.0

Table 2: Age Breakdown of Accused

Age Group	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Under 16	0	0.0
16-20	7	10.8
21-30	21	32.3
31-40	17	26.2
41-50	19	29.2
51-60	1	1.5
Over 60	0	0.0
Total	65	100.0

Table 3: Alcohol and Drug Related Charges

	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Drink	41	63.1
Drugs	3	4.6

Table 4: Nature of Offence

		2011-12	
		Number of Charges	%
Hateful Behaviour		19	29.2
<i>of which:</i>	<i>Religion</i>	16	24.6
	<i>Race</i>	3	4.6
	<i>Sexual Identity</i>	0	0.0
	<i>Disability</i>	0	0.0
	<i>Transgender</i>	0	0.0
Threatening Behaviour		47	72.3
Otherwise Offensive Behaviour		2	3.1

Table 5: Method of Abuse

			2011-12	
Method of Abuse	Number of Charges		%	
Banner	1		1.5	
Gesture	3		4.6	
Speech	14		21.5	
Singing	8		12.3	
Generally Offensive Behaviour	44		67.7	

Table 6: Location of Charges

				2011-12		
Local Authority Area	Number of Charges	%		Number of Charges Per 100,000 Population		
Aberdeen City	2	3.1		1		
Dundee City	2	3.1		1		
Edinburgh, City of	1	1.5		0		
Falkirk	1	1.5		1		
Glasgow City	51	78.5		9		
South Ayrshire	8	12.3		7		
Total	65	100.0				

Table 7: Locus of Charges

Locus of Offence	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Football Stadium	13	20.0
Main Street	5	7.7
Railway Station	34	52.3
Residential Area	10	15.4
Other	3	4.6
Total	65	100.0

Table 8: Charges from Incidents at Football Stadiums

Football Stadium	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Ibrox Stadium	7	53.8
Other	6	46.2
Total	13	100.0

Table 9: Football Affiliation of the Accused

Football Affiliation	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Celtic	5	7.7
Hibs	36	55.4
Rangers	14	21.5
Other	5	7.7
Unknown	5	7.7
Total	65	100.0

Table 10: Football Fixtures Associated with Charges

Date of Fixture	Fixture	2011-12	
		Number of Charges	%
10/03/2012	Ayr United v Hibs	43	66.2
18/03/2012	Celtic v Kilmarnock	5	7.7
25/03/2012	Rangers v Celtic	6	9.2
Other Fixture		11	16.9
Total		65	100.0

Table 11: Victims of the Offensive Behaviour

Victim	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Community	24	36.9
Member of the Public	42	64.6
Other	5	7.7

Table 12: Recorded Disposals

Disposal	2011-12	
	Number of Charges	%
Community Penalty	4	16.0
Custody	4	16.0
Football Banning Order	1	4.0
Monetary Penalty	15	60.0
Warning	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

Annex B – Section 6 2011-12

The Act also introduced measures to address threats of serious harm and threats that incite hatred on religious grounds, not confined to football settings. In 2011-12 there were 5 threatening communications charges reported to COPFS. All of these charges referred to threats of serious harm. These charges are not analysed in any more detail within this report because of the small number of charges and the consequent risk of the disclosure of the identities of the accused and the fact that cases may still be ongoing.

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