



Prison Education Statistics and Accredited Programmes in custody April 2021 to March 2022

Main points

49,855 prisoners participated in courses.

39,419 prisoners participated in a course below level 2, 16,195 prisoners participated in a course of level 2 or higher. Prisoners can take multiple courses.

56,006 prisoners completed an initial Maths or English assessment

Of these prisoners, 53,743 took at least one Maths assessment and 53,787 took at least one English assessment. 52,136 prisoners took both.

Prisoners took 56,309 Maths and 56,576 English initial assessments

Most initial assessment results were at entry level 1 – 3, with 66% of Maths and 61% of English.

Overall, 27% of prisoners who took an initial assessment had a learning difficulty/disability (LDD) confirmed through an LDD assessment.

This varied across ethnic groups and was highest for prisoners from white groups at 29% and lowest for those from the other ethnic group at 17%.

16,866 prisoners participated in functional skills courses from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Over the same time period 10,755 prisoners achieved at least a partial grade

8,367 prisoners participated in English functional skills courses from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and in the same year 5,119 prisoners at least partially achieved a grade / level. 8,074 prisoners participated in Maths functional skills courses from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and in the same year 5,197 achieved a grade / level.

The number of starts for Accredited Programmes in custody increased

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, there were 2,297 Accredited Programme starts, a 209% increase when compared with the previous 12-month period.

The number of completions for Accredited Programmes in custody increased

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, 1,848 accredited programmes were completed by offenders, representing an increase of 122% compared with the previous 12-month period.

This publication covers initial assessment, participation and achievement for prisoner education, based on data from CURIOUS, reporting for the 2021/22 financial year.

The technical guide for the Prison Education Statistics March 2021 to April 2022 can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008724/Prison_Education_Statistics_2019-20_TechnicalGuide.pdf

For other feedback related to the content of this publication, please let us know at statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Statistician's Comment

Figures presented in this publication show prison education statistics from the Curious database and data on Accredited Programme participation for the 12 months ending 31 March 2022.

The statistics for 2020/21 and 2021/22 show the impact of regime changes to limit the spread of COVID-19. In March 2020 changes to the prison regime were introduced to protect the lives of those who live and work in our prisons. These regime changes were in place throughout 2021/22 except for the two months of October and November 2021. As of 9 May 2022, all regime changes have been removed.

Likely resulting from these regime changes, 2020/21 saw a sharp decline in the number of initial assessments, course participation, achievement, and accredited programme participation. In 2021/22 statistics across all these areas show a significant increase but are still lower than figures from 2019/20 and lower than historical trends would suggest.

Contents

Introduction	4
1. Initial Assessment for Maths and English	5
2. Participation & achievement	8
3. Accredited programmes for offenders in custody	10
Further information	14
Accompanying files	14
Contact	14

Introduction

This publication covers both prisoner education and accredited programme participation. Prison education is an important part of any prison's regime. Improving prisoner literacy and numeracy, providing vocational training, and other opportunities for personal development can give prisoners the knowledge and skills they need to get jobs on release and turn away from crime. Prison education is proven to have a positive impact; prisoners who engage with prison education are less likely to reoffend.¹ Accreditation is a system for ensuring that intervention programmes offered to offenders, which aim to reduce reoffending, have a proper theoretical basis, and are designed in accordance with the 'What Works' literature. HMPPS commissions a range of accredited programmes²; varying in length, complexity and mode of delivery. Programmes have been developed to target the risks and needs for different types of offending behaviour.

In 2016, responsibility for the budget which was used to commission most prison education in England moved from the Department of Education to the Ministry of Justice and in 2019 new education contracts were established. This reformed system moved decision-making on prison education closer to prison governors, who would be free to commission the education needed via two complementary frameworks - the Prison Education Framework (PEF) and Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). PEF provision includes a core curriculum of English, Maths, IT and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), whereas DPS provision is more niche and flexible, designed to allow governors to commission bespoke shorter-term provision, including careers guidance and sector-specific training such as roofing, or rail construction based on identified job market needs. Governors may use these complementary systems to make informed decisions on the education provided in their individual prison.

This report contains data from Year 1 of the new PEF contracts, April 2019 to March 2020 inclusive. It includes data on prisoners' initial English and maths levels on arrival, numbers participating in education, and data on the level of achievement in English, maths, and vocational training courses. These data are not a full picture of prison education – delivery outside of the primary PEF contracts, including all DPS provision, is not captured in this report. Private prisons which sit outside of PEF and the youth estate which has different education processes are also out of scope for this report. Prison education is a devolved matter in Wales and therefore Welsh prisons are also out of scope for this report.

Statistics on accredited programmes previously published in the HMPPS Annual Digest are included in this publication for the first time this year. This change aims to bring together two similar topics and improve the timeliness and transparency for the release of accredited programmes data. Further breakdowns for accredited programmes data will continue to be released as part of the HMPPS Offender Equalities Report.

In addition to this bulletin and the tables based on data from the Curious system for March 2021 to April 2022, we are publishing education data tables for the previous year's data. These tables provide statistics for prisoner education from March 2020 to April 2021 but are not included in this bulletin.

More information on the major caveats of this publication can be found in the technical guidance published alongside this report or in the footnotes of the relevant data tables.

¹ Prisoner Outcomes data from 2017

² A complete list of accredited programmes for offenders in custody can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960097/Descriptions_of_Accredited_Programmes_-_Final_-_210209.pdf

1. Initial Assessment for Maths and English

56,006 prisoners completed an initial Maths or English assessment

Of these prisoners, 53,743 took at least one Maths assessment and 53,787 took at least one English assessment. 52,136 prisoners took both.

Prisoners took 56,309 Maths and 56,576 English initial assessments

Most initial assessment results were at entry level 1 – 3, with 66% of Maths and 61% of English.

Overall, 27% of prisoners who took an initial assessment had a learning difficulty/disability (LDD) confirmed through an LDD assessment.

This varied across ethnic groups and was highest for prisoners from white groups at 29% and lowest for those from the other ethnic group at 17%.

In the year ending 31 March 2022, 56,006 prisoners completed an initial assessment³ which was registered on the Curious system. Initial assessments are taken before prisoners engage in learning and are separate to courses discussed in chapter 2. Tables 1.1-1.4 accompanying this publication contain information on these initial assessments.

A similar number of prisoners took Maths initial assessments (53,743) and English initial assessments (53,787) in the year ending March 2022. 52,136 prisoners took both.

In total there were 56,309 Maths and 56,576 English initial assessments in the year ending 31 March 2022. There are more initial assessments than prisoners taking them as it is possible for a Prisoner to take more than one initial assessment in each subject. Initial assessments provide an indication of someone’s levels of English and maths (see table below).

Initial assessment level / Course level	Example ⁴
Entry level 1,2 and 3	Entry level functional skills Entry level English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
Level 1	GCSE - grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G Level 1 functional skills Level 1 ESOL
Level 2	GCSE - grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C Level 2 functional skills Level 2 ESOL
Level 3	A level Level 3 ESOL Level 3 NVQ
Level 4 +	All higher-level courses

³ Prisoners may undertake each assessment more than once over an academic year. Prisoners are counted once for each distinct level of outcome they are assessed at and once in the totals.

⁴ Further information on course levels can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

Characteristics of prisoners taking initial assessments

66% of maths and 61% of English initial assessment outcomes were at the entry levels 1-3. This was common across most demographics with the following exceptions:

- 81% of female prisoners for maths
- 74% of other ethnic group prisoners for maths
- 72% of other ethnic group prisoners for English
- 56% of black ethnic group prisoners for English

26% of maths and 30% of English initial assessment outcomes were at level 1 and 7% of maths and 10% of English initial assessment outcomes were at Level 2 or above.

52% of entry level initial assessment outcomes were for Maths (48% English) and 46% of initial assessment outcomes above entry level were for maths (54% English), showing overall prisoner initial assessment outcomes were higher for English compared to maths.

Figure 1: The number of English and Maths initial assessments prisoners took by level in England, 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 (Source: Table 1.1)

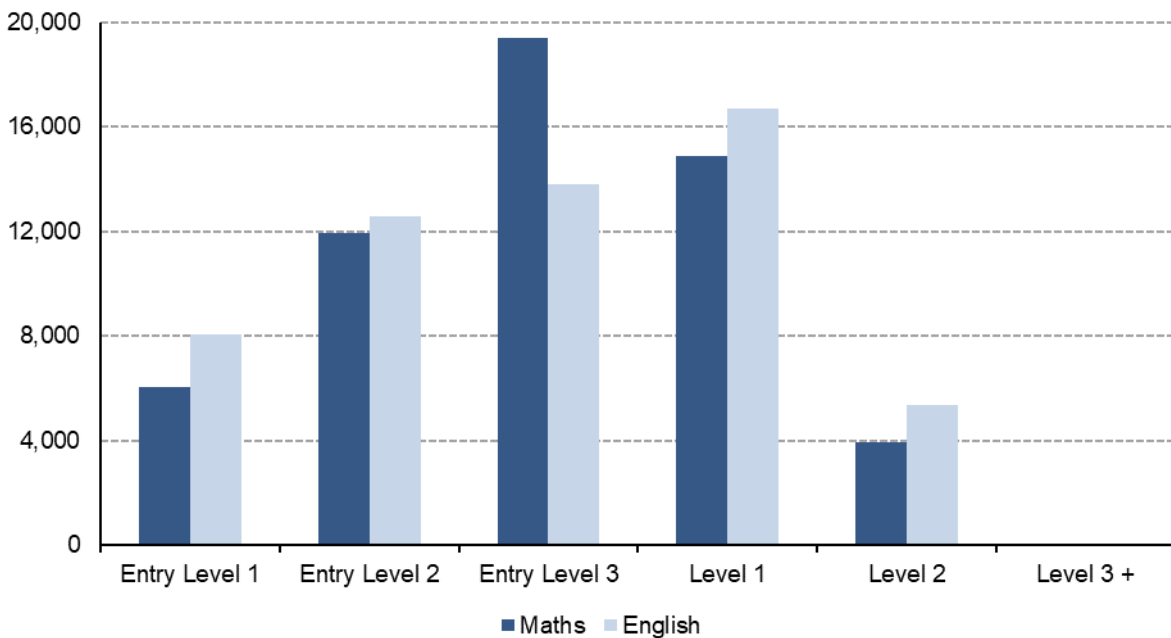
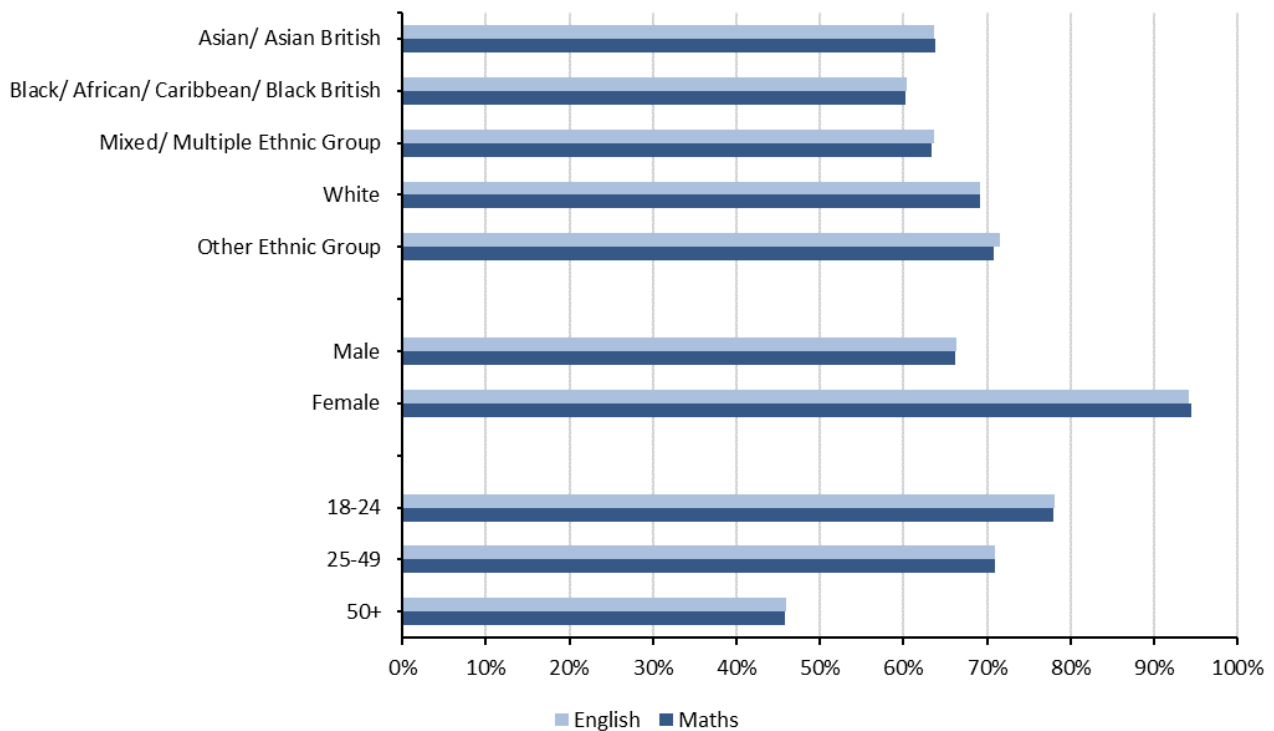


Figure 2 shows the proportion of the prison population who completed an initial assessment in the year from 1 April 2021 to the 31 March 2022. On average 67% of the prison population completed an initial assessment from 1 April to the 31 March. 94% of Female prisoners completed an initial assessment compared to 66% of Male prisoners. Only 46% of prisons 50+ completed an initial assessment, which is lower than the other age bands 18 – 24 (78%) and 25 – 49 (71%). For Ethnicity the 60% of the black, African, Caribbean and black British ethnic group prison population had completed an initial assessment, the lowest of all ethnic groups. The other ethnic group had the highest proportion with 78% of prisoners in the population completing an initial assessment.

Figure 2: The proportion of the prison population that completed an initial assessment by prisoner characteristics in England, 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 (Source: Table 1.2, 1.3 and OMSQ statistics)



27% of prisoners that took an initial assessment had a learning difficulty / disability (LDD) confirmed through an LDD assessment. The remaining 73% were either confirmed not to have an LDD or were not assessed⁵.

These proportions varied by ethnic group, with the highest rate of confirmed LDD among the white ethnic group:

- 29% of white ethnic group prisoners
- 28% of a mixed or multiple ethnic group prisoners
- 24% of black African, Caribbean, or black British ethnic group prisoners
- 21% of Asian or Asian British ethnic group prisoners
- 17% of other ethnic group prisoners
- 21% of prisoners where ethnicity was unknown or not provided⁶

⁵ Learning difficulty / disability assessments are not required for all prisoners; we do not know how many of the prisoners that were not assessed have an LDD.

⁶ There were 519 Prisoner records where the ethnicity was not known and could not be found through linking with other data sources

2. Participation & achievement

49,855 prisoners participated in courses.

39,419 prisoners participated in a course below level 2, 16,195 prisoners participated in a course of level 2 or higher. Prisoners can take multiple courses.

36% of prisoners participating in courses had a learning difficulty / disability confirmed through an LDD assessment, higher than the 27% of those at initial assessment

All other characteristics of prisoners participating in courses were very similar to those taking initial assessments.

16,866 prisoners participated in functional skills courses from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Over the same time 10,755 prisoners achieved at least a partial grade

8,367 prisoners participated in English functional skills courses from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and in the same year 5,119 prisoners at least partially achieved a grade / level.

8,074 prisoners participated in Maths functional skills courses from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and in the same year 5,197 achieved a grade / level.

In the tables that accompany this bulleting Table 2.1 contains statistics for prisoner participation in courses and Table 2.2 contains statistics for course achievement, these are different to initial assessments.

The total number of prisoners participating in courses was 49,855 and 41,344 prisoners achieved a full or partial grade or level. The distribution of course participation and achievement were similar across all prisoner characteristics except for prisoner learners participating in courses who have been assessed as having a learning difficulty or disability - 33% compared to the 27% in the English and 26% in the maths initial assessments.

On average 69% of prisoner learners were participating in a course Level 1 or higher (31% participated in entry level courses). The following prisoner characteristic categories had different proportions in participation in entry level courses compared to the average:

- 73% of black, African, Caribbean, or black British ethnic group prisoner learners, the highest for all ethnic groups (27% are participating in entry level courses)
- 53% of other ethnic group prisoner learners
- 65% of prisoner learners with a learning difficulty / disability

On average 72% of prisoner learners achieved a full or partial grade or level in a course Level 1 or higher (28% achieved in entry level courses). Prisoners with the following characteristics saw different levels of achievement to the average:

- 77% of black, African, Caribbean, or black British ethnic group prisoner learners, the highest for all ethnic groups (23% are achieving in entry level courses)
- 57% of other ethnic group prisoner learners
- 69% of prisoner learners with a learning difficulty or disability

Functional skills courses

Table 2.3 accompanying this publication shows participation and achievement in all functional skills courses. Functional skills courses are offered as part of the core curriculum. Functional Skills are the fundamental English, Maths and ICT skills that people need for their working and personal lives. People can study for the qualifications in practical ways and apply core skills to real-life situations. A functional skills level 2 is equivalent to a GCSE.

There were 16,866 prisoners participating in at least one functional course, and 10,755 prisoners that achieved a full or partial grade in one or more functional skills courses. Entry level English (7,476) and entry level maths (7,107) had the highest level of participation by prisoner learners compared to other levels and subjects. This is the same for prisoner learners achieving full or partial grade / level with 4,347 prisoners achieving entry level English functional skills courses and 4,363 achieving entry level maths functional skills courses.

3. Accredited programmes for offenders in custody

The number of starts for Accredited Programmes in custody increased

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, there were 2,297 Accredited Programme starts, a 209% increase when compared with the previous 12-month period.

The number of completions⁷ for Accredited Programmes in custody increased

From 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, 1,848 accredited programmes were completed by offenders, representing an increase of 122% compared with the previous 12-month period.

Accreditation is a system for ensuring that intervention programmes offered to offenders, which aim to reduce reoffending, have a proper theoretical basis, and are designed in accordance with the 'What Works' literature.

HMPPS commissions a range of accredited programmes⁸; varying in length, complexity and mode of delivery. Programmes have been developed to target the particular risks and needs for different types of offending behaviour. To achieve accreditation, programmes must be assessed to make sure they are targeting the right people, focusing on the right things, and being delivered in a way that is most likely to reduce reoffending. All HMPPS-commissioned accredited programmes are subject to quality assurance processes to ensure programme integrity is maintained and developed.

Changes to the delivery of Accredited Programmes⁹ in custody has resulted in a downward trend in volumes for starts and completions since 2010 (Figures 3.1 and 3.2, Tables 3.1 to 3.3)

In the year to March 2022, the number of starts and completions increased by 209% and 122% respectively, compared with the same period in 2021. Since 2010, volumes of starts and completions have fallen due to changes in Accredited programme delivery in custody. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted on the delivery of accredited programmes in custody. Delivery was mostly paused in March 2020 and where delivery was able to resume under safe systems of work and infection control, it was significantly curtailed to one-to-one or small group delivery. This impacted on the numbers unable to progress, with impacts still occurring up to March 2022. Initial priority was given to completing for those whose programmes were paused during 2019/20, hence more completions than starts in this reporting period. Whilst delivery of accredited programmes recommenced during 2020/21, levels were significantly curtailed with ongoing disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, levels of starts and completions have continued to recover during the 2021/22 financial year.

⁷ Total volumes over the financial year for starts and completions will not necessarily match. This is because an offender who completed in the current financial year might have started the programme in previous years.

⁸ A complete list of accredited programmes for offenders in custody can be found at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960097/Descriptions_of_Accredited_Programmes_-_Final_-_210209.pdf

⁹ In this publication, programmes are grouped into one of six categories: Domestic Violence, Extremism, General Offending, Sexual Offending, Substance Misuse or Violence. For monitoring purposes, Offender Behaviour Programmes (OBPs) in custody include domestic violence, violence and general offending completions but exclude sexual offender treatment and substance misuse programmes, which are reported separately.

Accredited programme delivery in custody has changed significantly since 2010. New programmes have been introduced: Building Better Relationships (BBR), Healthy Sex Programme (HSP), Resolve, Horizon; with Kaizen introduced in 2017. Kaizen and Horizon have replaced all the delivery of Core and Extended Sex Offender Treatment Programmes in custody. This transition to newer programmes accounted for some of the decrease in sex offender treatment programmes. To support delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21, alternative delivery formats were approved to enable delivery of 1:1 and smaller groups where this had previously not been available to support some delivery activity in accredited programmes. These alternative delivery formats remain available for use as required, although the expectation is for sites to deliver at optimum levels.

The longer-term decrease in Accredited Programme starts and completions has been primarily driven by the change of programme ownership – and responsibility for running substance misuse accredited programmes - from HMPPS to NHS. As of 1 April 2011, local NHS partnerships assumed these responsibilities. The large decreases seen reflect the fact that more offenders are completing programmes run by the NHS, rather than HMPPS.

There has also been a reinvestment from shorter, moderate intensity programmes in favour of longer, higher intensity programmes along with the introduction of some 1:1 programmes. The number of commissioned completions has therefore decreased despite maintaining investment.

Starts^{10,11} for Accredited Programmes¹² delivered in custody (see Figure 3.1, Table 3.1)

Starts in HMPPS-commissioned accredited programmes delivered in custody rose by 209%, when compared with 2021. The increase in programmes started comes after a decline in starts since 2019/20, due to the impact on programme delivery brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this, Accredited Programme starts had been decreasing year-on-year since 2010, when the time series began.

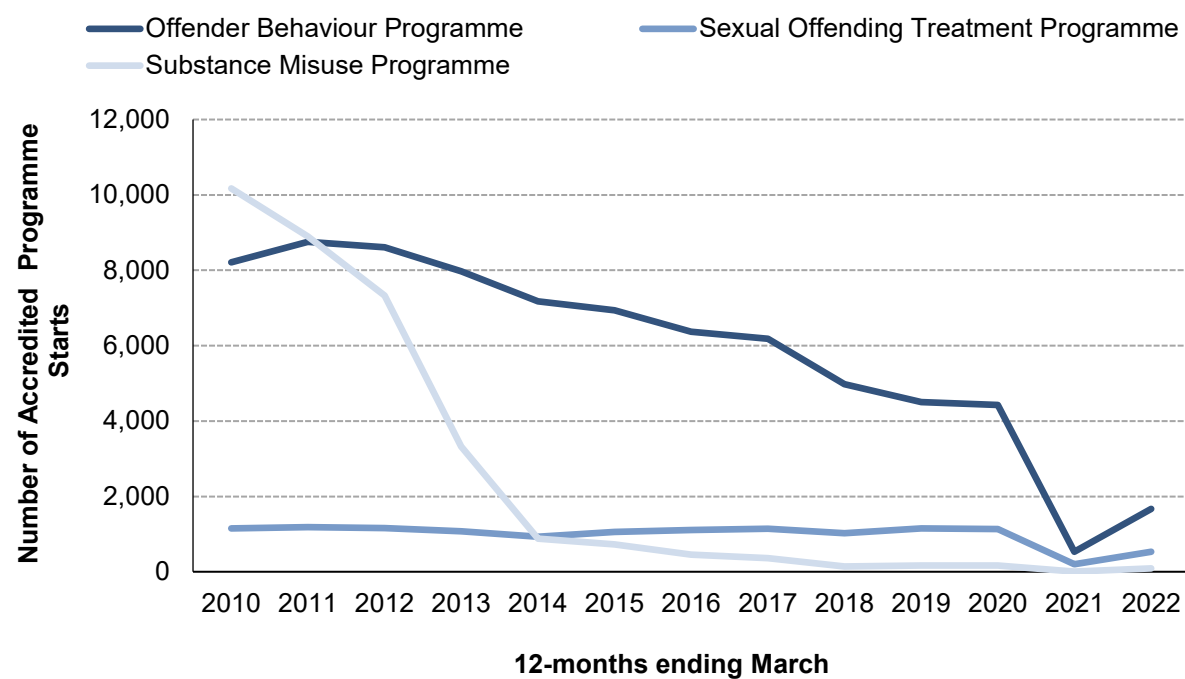
Programmes to address general offending were by far the most common with 44% of starts from this category. This was followed by programmes to address sexual offending and programmes addressing violence, each accounting for 23% of the total volume of starts. Domestic violence, substance misuse and extremism programmes accounted for a much lower proportion of starts in 2022, at 5%, 4% and 1% respectively.

¹⁰ Under exceptional circumstances, offenders in custody can start more than one accredited programme in any financial year. The figures presented in this chapter refer to the number of starts and might not equal the number of offenders who started any given programme during the same financial year.

¹¹ From 23rd March 2020, changes to usual operations of accredited programme delivery were implemented in response to the impact of COVID-19 in prisons. In most cases, no new programme starts occurred from this date and these were scaled down in accordance with local infection control requirements. Delivery began to recovery in mid-2020 as prisons began to commence delivery again however the number of starts remained significantly lower due to only being able to deliver one to one or small group activity.

¹² Programmes relating to domestic violence and sexual offending are available for male prisoners only. Certain programmes relating to general offending (KAINOS and New Me Strengths) and violence (Kaizen Violence, Identity Matters and Becoming New Me) are available for male prisoners only.

Figure 3.1: Number of starts for accredited programmes in custody, 12-months ending March 2010 to 12-months ending March 2022 (Source: Table 3.1)

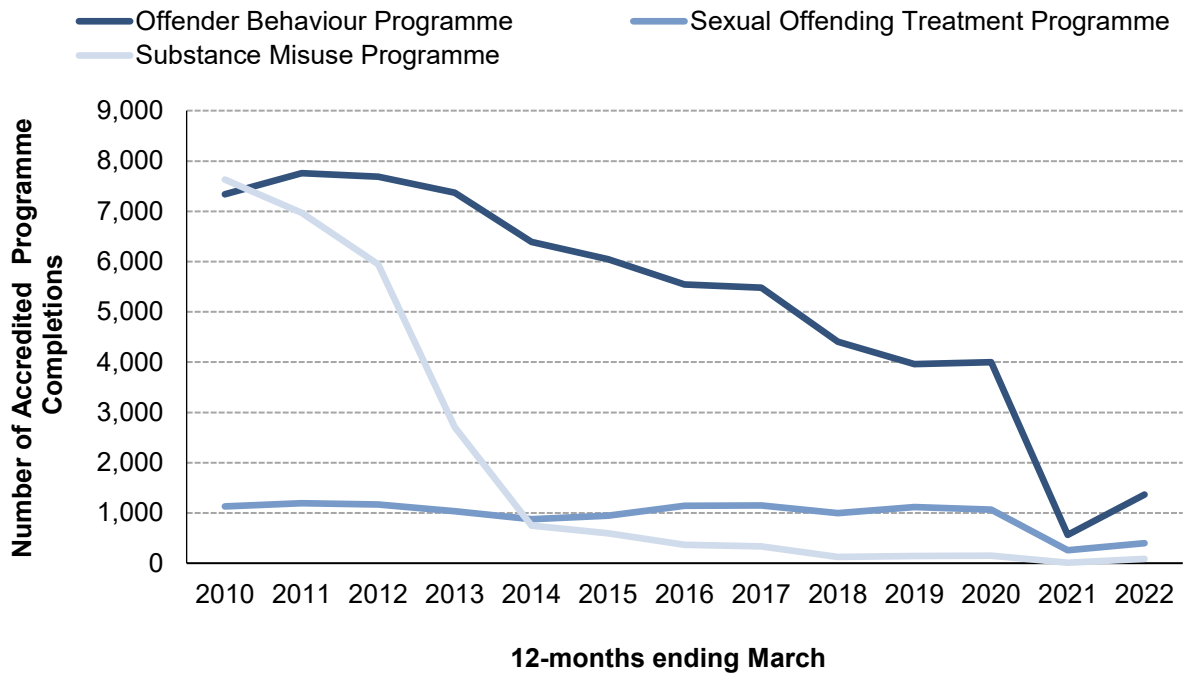


Accredited Programmes completed in custody remained stable in the last year (Figure 3.2, Tables 3.2 and 3.3)

The effects of programme delivery resulting in changes to prison operating regimes during the COVID-19 pandemic caused sharp fall in the number of completions between March 2020 and March 2022. During the latest year, volumes have started to recover and there were 1,848 completions in the year ending March 2022, up from 833 during the same period in 2021: representing an increase of 122%. This follows a period of relative stability with only a 5% decrease in the number of programme completions between the year ending March 2018 and the year ending March 2020.

Programmes to address general offending were the most common type of completion with 47% of completions in this category. The next most common type of programme completed were sexual offending programmes and violence programmes at 22% and 21% respectively.

Figure 3.2: Number of completions for accredited programmes in custody, 12-months ending March 2010 to 12-months ending March 2022 (Source: Table 3.2)



Further information

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from: statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system

Accompanying files

The following products are published as part of this release:

- A statistical bulletin, containing commentary on key trends over time in prison performance measures and probation.
- A technical guide, providing further information on how the data are collected and processed.
- A set of tables for each chapter, covering key topic areas in this bulletin.
- A set of tables for the OLASS 2018/19 data.

Contact

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

Tel: 020 3334 3536

E-mail: newsdesk@justice.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Sam Rushbrook, Responsible Statistician and Head of Service Users Equalities Performance Data and Evidence as a Service

Ministry of Justice, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

E-mail: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

URL: www.gov.uk/government/collections/prisons-and-probation-statistics

© Crown copyright

Produced by the Ministry of Justice

Alternative formats are available on request from statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk