



Ministry
of Justice



Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Update to September 2013

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

30 January 2013

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Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales. This publication updates statistics up to the end of September 2013. Supplementary tables, providing more in depth statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults on a calendar year basis, are also available alongside this table and can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics.

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

In interpreting the statistics contained within this bulletin, users are recommended to read with it the accompanying 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'¹ that includes technical and background information on the production of these statistics, and more information on data quality.

When considering particular statistics, readers should note the following:

- Risk of death, self-harm or assaults is distributed unevenly around the prison estate. Age, gender and time in custody, and random variation, explain many of the differences between prisons and particular risk groups.
- In prisons, as in the community, self-harm is often covert and assaults may go unreported. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Recording of self-harm and assault incidents in prison custody has improved over the years but it remains the case that they cannot be counted with absolute accuracy.

Although this publication concerns statistics, the incidents described in this report are, by their nature, tragic and distressing to the prisoners, their families and staff.

From time to time, events in prison custody and developments within and outside NOMS have changed the way safety in prisons is viewed and managed. Some have resulted in changes to the way offenders are managed. Others have affected the way statistics are collected and reported. The accompanying guide includes a timeline summarising some of the key events and developments that have affected safety in prison custody and supporting statistics. These help with interpretation of longer term trends.

¹ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Changes and revisions in this publication

There have been no changes since the last publication.

Users and uses of these Statistics

The cost of deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody, in both human and financial terms is high. This report adds to the body of learning in this area and supports work to prevent such tragedies in future. The contents support a wide range of operational and strategic decisions including:

- Management of risk;
- Deployment of staff (identification of high risk periods and locations etc.);
- Design of prison cells (identification and reduction of ligature points);
- Assessment of changes in sentencing and other policies affecting prisoners.

The statistics included in this publication are used extensively and meet a broad spectrum of user needs as shown below.

User	Summary of main statistical needs
MOJ Ministers	Use the statistics to monitor the safety and wellbeing of the prison population; assess policy impacts (e.g. changes to managing vulnerable prisoners)
MPs and House of Lords	Statistics are used to answer parliamentary questions – approximately 50 are answered each year
Policy teams	Statistics are used to inform policy development, to monitor impact of changes over time and to model future changes and their impact on the system
Agencies responsible for offender management	Current and historical robust administrative data are used to support performance management information at national and local levels to complement their understanding of the current picture and trends over time
Academia, students and businesses	Used as a source of statistics for research purposes and to support lectures, presentations and conferences
Journalists	Used as a compendium of robust data on safety in custody so that an accurate and coherent story can be told on the safety of the prison environment.
Voluntary sector	Data are used to monitor trends of the safety and wellbeing of prisoners, to reuse the data in their own briefing and research papers and to inform policy work and responses to consultations.
General public	Data are used to respond to ad-hoc requests and requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Recent requests include number of deaths, self-harm and assaults in prisons.

NOMS regularly receives requests for statistics for more recent, or different, date periods than those covered in published statistics. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, NOMS is generally unable to release statistics for periods beyond those published in Official Statistics publications.

Related publications

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin²: This provides key statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision. It covers flows into these services (receptions into prison or probation starts) and flows out (discharges from prison or probation terminations) as well as the caseload of both services at specific points in time.

Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly³: This provides proven re-offending figures for offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, received a caution, reprimand, warning or tested positive for opiates or cocaine.

Taken together, these publications present users with a more coherent overview of offender management, re-offending among both adults and young people and the safety of offenders whilst in prison custody.

Release Schedule

This bulletin was published on 30 January 2013 and includes statistics for the 12 month periods to end of September 2013.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 24 April 2014 and will cover 12 month periods to end of December 2013 and the detailed annual statistics for 2013. Statistics in the bulletin are provisional and will be reviewed in the next annual publication.

² Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

³ Proven Reoffending Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics

Key findings

Table 1: Safety in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	Sep 04	Sep 05	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13
Total deaths	215	175	156	182	165	166	193	198	194	198
Self-inflicted	103	84	61	87	70	61	60	58	56	63
Natural Causes	101	84	90	90	89	101	123	125	129	118
Homicide	1	3	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2
Other ¹	10	4	4	4	3	4	9	14	8	15
Self-harm incidents²	-	23,508	23,448	23,228	24,119	24,471	26,721	25,166	23,305	22,971
Males	-	10,277	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,240	16,994
Females	-	13,231	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	7,065	5,977
Assault incidents	12,213	14,004	14,926	15,298	15,896	15,363	14,508	15,088	14,965	13,696
Males	11,355	13,020	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,367	13,208
Females	858	984	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	598	488

1. 'Other' deaths include accidental and other difficult to classify deaths including those for which further information is awaited. A minority of the most recent two years figures are expected to be reclassified as natural causes.

2. A new system for monitoring self-harm was introduced in December 2002. As a result, recording of self-harm improved throughout 2003. 12 month periods that include parts of 2003 and earlier years are therefore under-reported by modern standards and have been omitted from this table.

- An increase in self-inflicted deaths contributed to a small increase in the overall number of deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to September 2013. Overall, the number of deaths in prison custody has remained between 193 and 198 in the last four years. Over the last 5 years the number of self-inflicted deaths has ranged between 56 and 63.
- Sharp falls in female self-harm incidents have driven down the overall number of self-harm incidents over the last three years, despite incidence of male self-harm increasing. The number of incidents of self-harm by female prisoners has fallen by over 50% since the 12 months to September 2010 from 12,407 incidents to 5,977 incidents.
- In contrast, incidents of male self-harm have seen year-on-year increases over the same period increasing from 14,314 incidents to 16,994 incidents. Despite these differences in trends, females still account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody.
- The number of incidents of recorded assaults (including fights) in prison custody has returned to a falling trend over the medium term; falling to 13,696 in the 12 months to September 2013 compared with 15,896 in September 2008. However, the falls occur amongst prisoners aged under 21 which have reduced by nearly 3,000 incidents since September 2008. In contrast assaults amongst adult prisoners (aged 21 and over) have increased by around 800 incidents over the same time period.
- The number of assaults on staff has remained broadly flat at around 3,000 incidents per year for the last 5 years. However, the number of serious assaults on staff, at 328, has increased to the highest number recorded in recent years from an unusually low 250 in the previous year.

1 Deaths in custody

In the 12 months to end of September 2013 there were 198 deaths in prison custody – an increase of 4 from the same 12 month period a year earlier. These deaths comprise of:

- **63 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, up from 56 in the previous year (13% increase);
- **118 deaths due to natural causes**, down from 129 in the previous year (9%);
- **2 apparent homicides**, up from 1 in the previous year;
- **15 other deaths**, all of which are yet to be classified awaiting further information. At this stage last year there were 11 deaths awaiting further information, of which 6 have since been reclassified.

A death in prison custody is defined as ‘any death of a person in prison custody arising from an incident in or, on rare occasions, immediately prior to prison custody’.

All deaths in prison custody are subject to a police investigation and a coroner’s inquest. Once the inquest has been concluded, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman’s office publish a detailed ‘Fatal Incident Report’⁴ on the death. Until this time, for administrative and statistical purposes NOMS classify deaths by *apparent* cause of death.

Annual supplementary tables published alongside this bulletin⁵ show that the key population factors in determining risk of death in custody are:

- Age: Older prisoners are more likely to die of natural causes. Self-inflicted death risk varies with age peaking amongst prisoners in their 30s;
- Time in custody: Self-inflicted deaths are more likely in the early stages of custody;
- Gender: Female prisoners are less likely to die in custody.

Table 2: Deaths in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	Sep 04	Sep 05	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody¹	215	175	156	182	165	166	193	198	194	198
Self-inflicted	103	84	61	87	70	61	60	58	56	63
Natural Causes	101	84	90	90	89	101	123	125	129	118
Homicide	1	3	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2
Other ²	10	4	4	4	3	4	9	14	8	15
of which										
Other/Non-natural	10	4	4	4	3	4	7	12	3	0
Awaiting further information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	15
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.9	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3
Self-inflicted	1.4	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7
Natural Causes	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4
Deaths by Gender										
Male	195	167	150	173	160	160	186	191	192	192
Female	20	8	6	9	5	6	7	7	2	6

As there are a number of deaths yet to be classified it is likely that some of these deaths will be reclassified as natural cause deaths when sufficient information becomes

⁴ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html

⁵ Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

available, and some may be reclassified as self-inflicted. For this reason all figures for the last three years are provisional.

1.1 Overall mortality

There were 198 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to the end of September 2013; 4 more than the same period a year earlier. Figure 1 shows the number of deaths in prison custody has been relatively stable over the last four 12 month periods to September 2013, with the number of deaths ranging between 193 and 198. Despite the increase in the prison population between September 2002 and September 2013 the number of deaths in prison custody has remained relatively flat.

Figure 1: Number of deaths in prison custody, 12 months September 2001 to September 2013

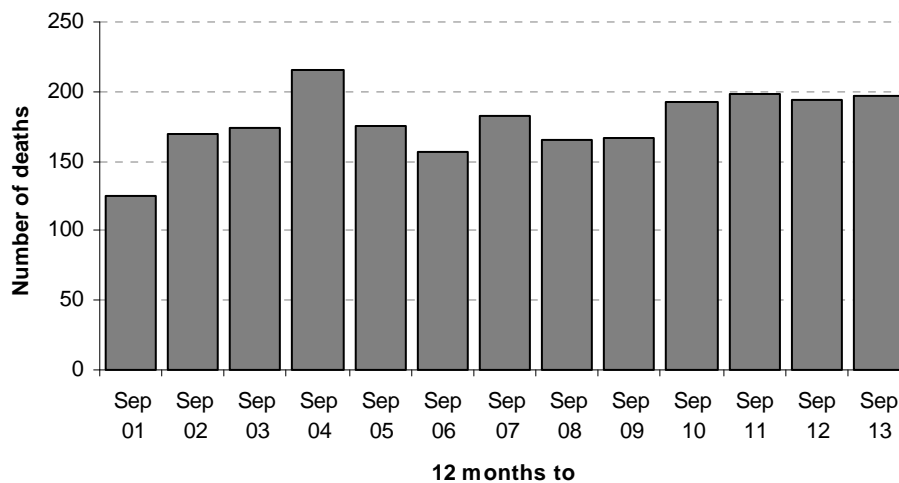
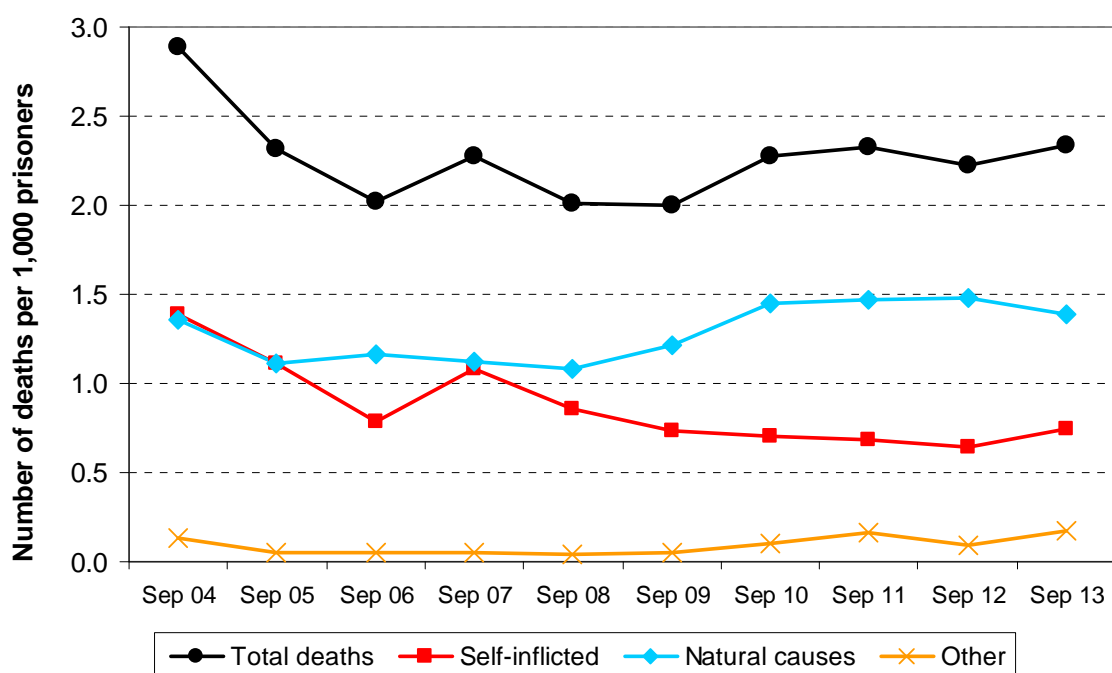


Figure 2 shows that the death rate in the last five years has varied between 2.0 and 2.3 deaths per 1,000 prisoners. The overall death rate shows a small increase in the latest 12 month period to a year earlier, although natural variation in the number of deaths can lead to small changes in either direction to both numbers and rates from one year to the next. The death rate peaked at around 2.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2004.

Figure 2: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, England and Wales



1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

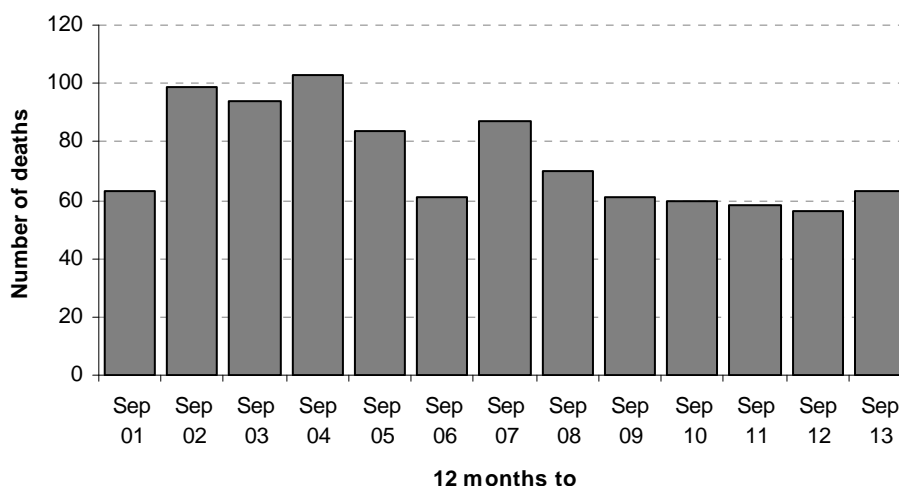
- **63 self-inflicted deaths** in 12 months to end of September 2013, 7 (13 per cent) more than in the same period in 2012.
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths, at 0.7 per 1,000 prisoners**, is amongst the lowest rate in the last 30 years.
- Up to end of 2012 there had been no deaths on the first day of custody since 2008
- Nine-in-ten self-inflicted deaths occur from hanging

Self-inflicted deaths are any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent. This not only includes suicides but also accidental deaths as a result of the person's own actions. This classification is used because it is not always known whether a person intended to commit suicide.

There has been an increase of 7 deaths in the 12 months to September 2013 compared with a year earlier, ending 5 years of year-on-year falls in the number of self-inflicted deaths. Despite this increase, the number of self-inflicted deaths, at 63, remains lower than the number of self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to September 2008 (figure 3).

The fall in the number of self-inflicted deaths over more recent years may be the result of a number of initiatives designed to reduce suicides in prison custody since 2007. These include every prison officer being issued with a tool to enable them to cut down a prisoner attempting suicide as swiftly as possible, the introduction of safer cells which minimise the number of points to which a prisoner could attach a ligature and the introduction of Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) plans which develop a plan for managing prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm dependent on the prisoner's needs.

Figure 3: Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody, 12 months September 2001 to September 2013



The declining number of self-inflicted deaths since 2002 is in contrast the increasing prison population over this time⁶. This is shown in the rate of self-inflicted deaths which has fallen by a greater percentage than the number of self-inflicted deaths. The rate of self-inflicted deaths has fallen from 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2004 to 0.7 self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2013 (figure 2).

Annual tables

On an annual calendar year basis supplementary tables are published providing more insights into self-inflicted deaths. These tables include personal characteristics, time in prison, sentence type, method of death, ligatures used and ligature points. The latest statistics are for 2012 and are published alongside each quarterly release. Statistics for 2013 are scheduled to be published with the next Safety in Custody statistics bulletin in April 2014.

The tables show:

- By the end of the 2012 calendar year, there have been no self-inflicted deaths on the day of arrival in prison⁷ since 2008. The numbers on the first and second full days also remain low, averaging less than one per quarter. This results from suicide prevention policies specifically targeting the early stages of custody.
- From 1989 to 2003, self-inflicted deaths were consistently higher than those due to natural causes⁸. Up to the 1980s, natural causes routinely accounted for the majority of deaths in prison custody. In the late 1980s, self-inflicted deaths started to increase. ‘Care in the community’ is sometimes cited⁹ as a reason for the increase as it is believed to have led to an increase in the proportions of prisoners with mental illness. The proportions of mentally ill in the prison population are not measured routinely so the actual change over time is unknown. The increase in numbers of self-inflicted deaths from the late 1980s is likely to be due to a combination of factors because it

⁶ Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

⁷ Safety in Custody Deaths: Table 1.7 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

⁸ Safety in Custody: Deaths Table 1.2

⁹ Mental Health of Prisoners (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2007) www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/thematic-reports-and-research-publications/mental_health-rps.pdf

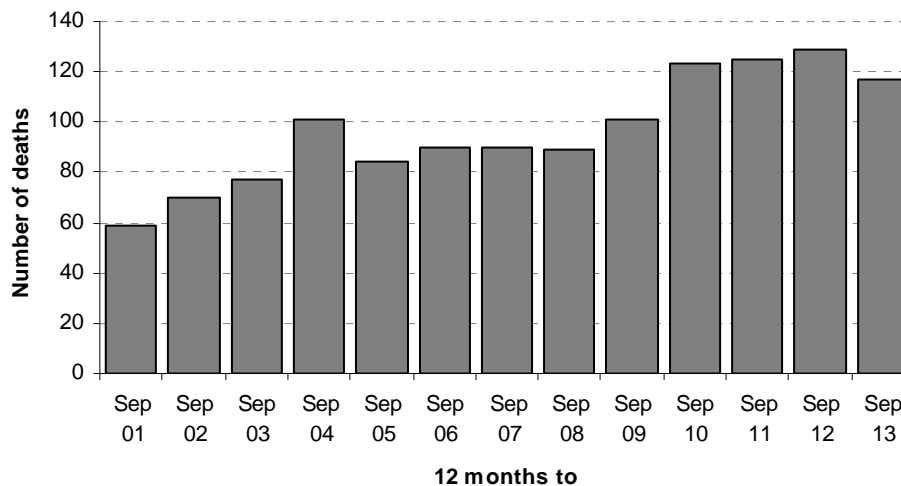
- Around nine-in-ten self-inflicted deaths occur from hanging, with bedding the most common ligature. The most common ligature point is the window, although despite the small increase in hangings the number of hangings using the window as a ligature point fell in 2012 (18 compared with 25 in 2011).
- Self-inflicted deaths occurred at 40 of the 134 establishments managed by the National Offender Management Service in 2012 with the number of self-inflicted deaths ranging between one and four at any single establishment with a self-inflicted death.

1.3 Natural cause deaths

Natural cause deaths include any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.

- **118 natural cause deaths in the 12 months to end of September 2013**, 11 (9 per cent) fewer than in the same 12 months in 2012;
- **1.4 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to end of September 2013, down from 1.5 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to end of September 2012.

Figure 4: Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody, 12 months September 2001 to September 2013



There are 118 apparent natural cause deaths currently recorded for the 12 months to September 2013. Although this is 11 lower than the number currently recorded for the 12 months to September 2012, it is likely that some of the 15 deaths currently recorded as awaiting further information will be changed to natural cause deaths when further information becomes available.

At this stage last year there were:

- 11 deaths awaiting further information for the 12 months to June 2012;
 - of these, 6 have now been re-classified with 3 of them re-classified to being a natural cause death.

The uncertainty on these figures will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

As the prison population ages¹⁰ the number of natural cause deaths has also increased. Over the last four years the number of natural cause deaths has been consistently above 100 deaths per year. There has been an increase in prisoners aged 60 and over, however, the rate of natural cause deaths has remained relatively stable at around 1.5 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the last 4 years.

1.4 Homicides

Homicides include any death of a person at the hands of another. This includes murder and manslaughter cases. As with self-inflicted deaths, the classification system does not make any judgement about intent.

- **2 apparent homicides in the 12 months to the end of September 2013** compared with 1 in the 12 months to end of September 2012;
- Homicides are relatively rare accounting for less than one per cent of all deaths in prison custody.

- Since 2000 there have been 18 apparent homicides in English and Welsh prisons up to the end of September 2013.
- In recent years, the number of homicides has varied between zero and three in any single year.
- In comparison between 1990 and 1999 there were 26 homicides.

Cell-sharing risk assessments were introduced in 2002 with the aim of reducing the risk of placing prisoners in cells where they may cause harm to their cell companion.

1.5 Other deaths

'Other' deaths include any death of a person whose death cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted or homicide. The category includes accidents and cases where the cause of death is unknown even after all of the investigations have been concluded.

There were **15 other deaths in the 12 months to end of September 2013** (8 per cent of all deaths). This number is not directly comparable with earlier years as some of the deaths in this category are likely to be reclassified as natural cause deaths following inquest. However, as a guide, at September 2012 there were 11 other deaths.

The numbers in this category have increased in recent years due to a number of cases that have proved difficult to classify.

- At publication of the 12 months to September 2012 there were 11 deaths awaiting further information, of which 5 remain. Of the 6 that have been reclassified, 3 were reclassified to natural causes and 3 to other non-natural.

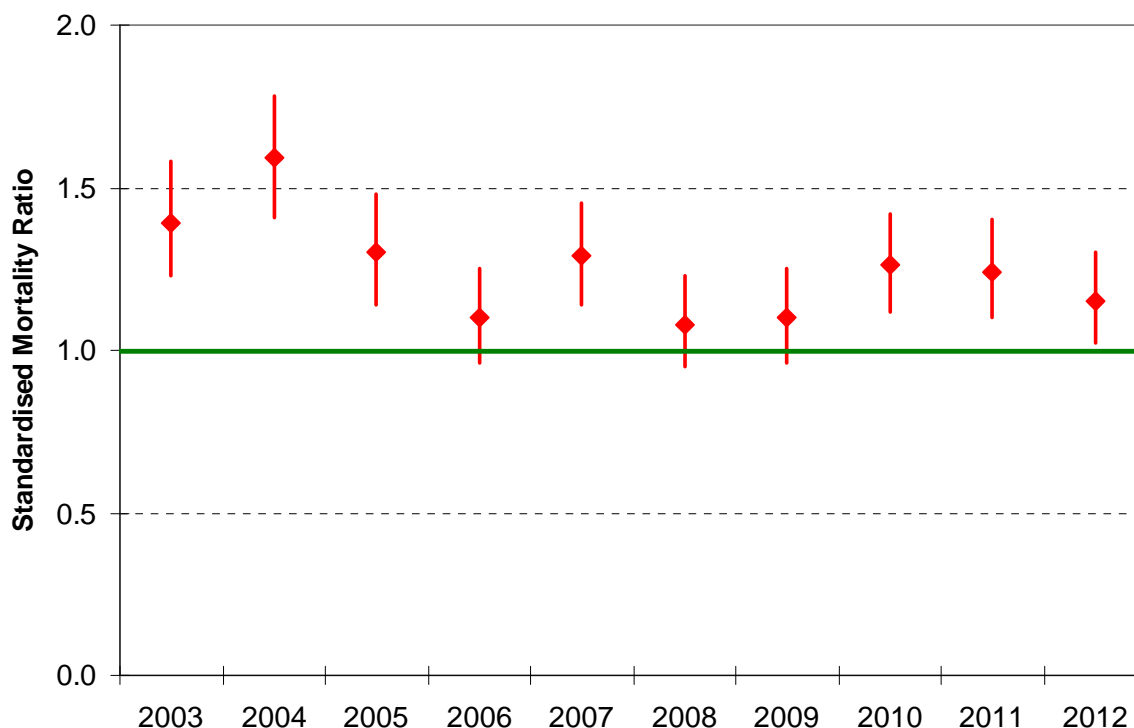
The majority of deaths for which information is awaited beyond three months are expected to be classified as either 'other/non-natural' or natural causes.

Some of the cases in the aggregated 'other' category appear to be drug related but there is insufficient information to classify any to be self-inflicted. The uncertainty will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

¹⁰ Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

1.6 Comparison of deaths in prison with those in the general population

Figure 5: Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population



The prison population is very different from the general population: 95 per cent of the prison population are male, there are no prisoners aged under 15 and relatively few are over 60. As a result, rates of deaths in prison custody cannot be compared directly with those for the general population. One technique used for comparing mortality rates for different populations is known as the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR).

Figure 5 is based on annual data and shows the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for the prison population and its 95 per cent confidence interval. It compares overall deaths with those of the general population of England and Wales taking into account differences in age and gender. If the minimum of the SMR confidence level of the SMR is above one, then this indicates that the mortality rate of the prison population is significantly higher than that of the general population. In seven out of the last ten years, prison mortality has been significantly higher than that of the general population.

The chart is updated annually on a calendar year basis when the underlying data become available.

2 Self-harm

- Overall, the number of incidents of self-harm in prison custody fell in the last 12 months but with differing trends for males and females;
- **22,971 recorded incidents** in the 12 months to the end of September 2013, compared with 23,305 in the previous 12 months – a fall of 1% (table 3);
- **272 incidents per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to the end of September 2013, an increase from 268 in the previous 12 months;
- **6,818 recorded individuals** – broadly unchanged on the previous 12 months.
- On average, **3.4 self-harm incidents per prisoner** who self-harms.

Self-harm in prison custody is defined as, “any act where a prisoner deliberately harms themselves irrespective of the method, intent or severity of any injury.” Those who self-harm often do so covertly. In the community, such self-harm will often go undetected. In prisons, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted although there will still be incidents that are not detected.

Annual statistics suggest the key factors determining the risk of self-harm in custody are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to self-harm than older prisoners¹¹;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody¹².
- Gender: Females are more likely to self-harm than males.

Table 3: Self-harm in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending								
	Sep 05	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13
SELF-HARM									
Self-harm incidents	23,508	23,448	23,228	24,119	24,471	26,721	25,166	23,305	22,971
Males	10,277	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,240	16,994
Females	13,231	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	7,065	5,977
Self-harm individuals¹	5,760	6,020	6,352	6,521	6,831	6,958	6,868	6,803	6,818
Males	4,290	4,585	4,879	4,990	5,302	5,540	5,558	5,675	5,749
Females	1,470	1,435	1,473	1,531	1,529	1,418	1,310	1,128	1,069
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	311	303	290	294	294	315	295	268	272
Males	145	158	159	153	168	178	191	196	211
Females	2,994	2,670	2,568	2,746	2,621	2,912	2,313	1,695	1,518
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners¹	76	78	79	79	82	82	81	78	81
Males	60	63	64	64	67	69	69	68	71
Females	333	322	337	345	356	333	313	271	271
Self-harm incidents per individual	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.4
Males	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.0
Females	9.0	8.3	7.6	8.0	7.4	8.7	7.4	6.3	5.6
Hospital Attendances	1,186	1,233	1,230	1,337	1,266	1,379	1,497	1,490	1,600
Males	950	999	1,049	1,128	1,091	1,214	1,331	1,329	1,472
Females	236	234	181	209	175	165	166	161	128

1. Numbers of individuals should be treated as approximate as the details of prisoners are not always recorded against each self-harm incident.

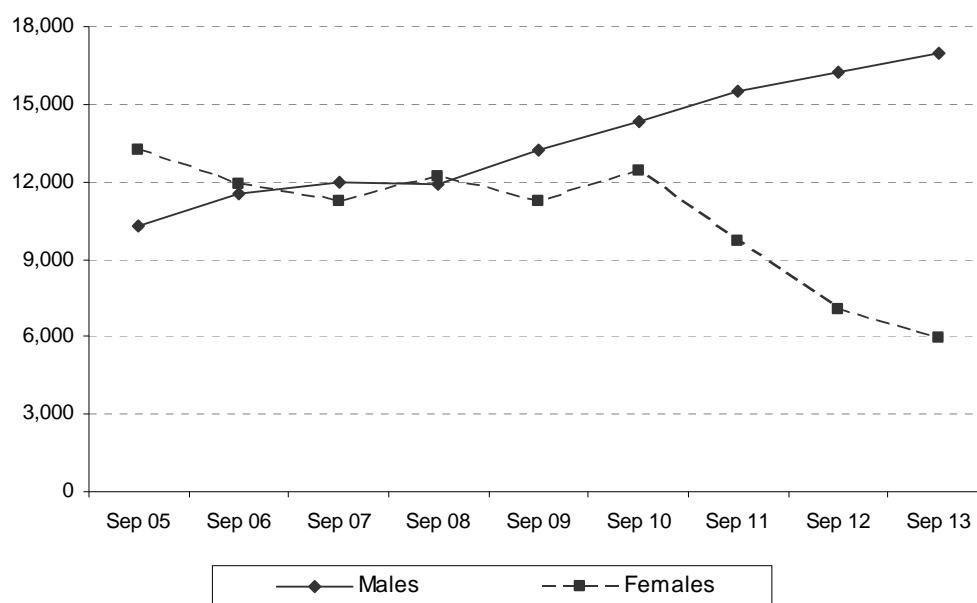
¹¹ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

¹² Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

In the last three years, self-harm has fallen to 22,971 incidents in the 12 months to the end of September 2013 from 26,721 incidents in the same period to September 2010. Whilst the number of incidents is falling, the number of reported individuals self-harming has seen a much smaller fall over the last three years. This implies that individuals that do self-harm, do so fewer times.

The changes in the overall level of self-harm have been driven by changes in the female prison population who account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm incidents within prisons. As figure 6 shows, this masks a differing trend among male prisoners and as self-harm in custody differs between males and females it is better to consider the populations separately.

Figure 6: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender



2.1 Male self-harm

- 16,994 incidents of self-harm by male prisoners in the 12 months to end of September 2013, up from 16,240 incidents (5%) in the previous 12 months.
- The rate of male self-harm continues to rise and has increased to 211 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to the end of September 2013 compared with 196 in the previous 12 months.
- Since September 2005 male self-harm rates have increased by 46 per cent from 145 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2005.
- 71 male prisoners per 1,000 prisoners are recorded to have self-harmed in the 12 months to the end of September 2013 – up from 68 male prisoners per 1,000 a year earlier.
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carry out, on average, 3.0 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to the end of September 2013, up from 2.9 incidents in the previous 12 months.

The change in the prison population over time drives the number of self-harm incidents so to determine long term trends it is better to consider the changes in rates of self-harm over time.

The rate of male individuals self-harming increased from 60 males per 1,000 prisoners to 69 males per 1,000 prisoners between the 12 months to end of September 2005 and the same period to end of September 2010. Since then the rate of increase has been more gradual.

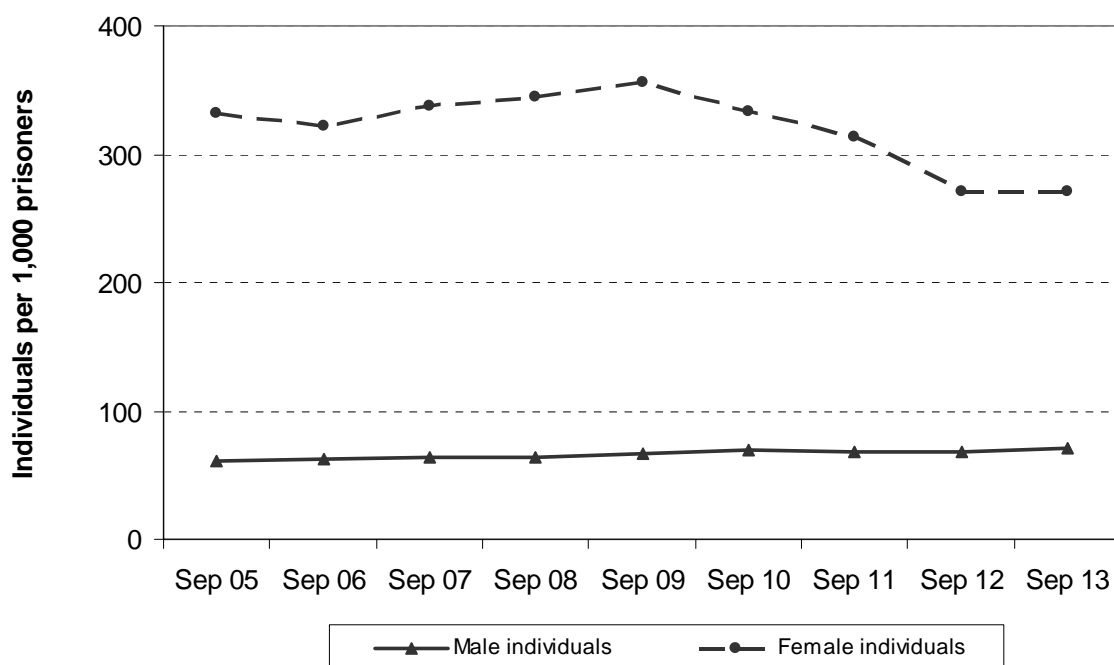
However, although the rate of individuals self-harming has levelled off over the last four years, the average number of self-harming acts those males commit on average has increased. In the 12 months to end of September 2010 male prisoners carried out 2.6 self-harm incidents on average. Over the last three years that has increased to 3.0 incidents per male who self-harms on average.

2.2 Female self-harm

- 5,977 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners in the 12 months to the end of September 2013, down from 7,065 incidents in the previous 12 months – a fall of 15 per cent in the last year and 52 per cent in the last three years;
- The rate of female self-harm in the 12 months to the end of September 2013 was 271 females per 1,000 prisoners unchanged from the previous 12 months;
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 5.6 self-harm incidents on average in the 12 months to the end of June 2013, down from 6.3 incidents in the previous 12 months.

In contrast to the trends of self-harm in male prisoners, the number and rate of incidents of female self-harm continue to fall. However, figure 7 shows that the rate of females who self-harm is unchanged in the 12 months to end of September 2013 compared with the previous 12 months after two years of large falls.

Figure 7: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales



Despite the large falls in female self-harm over recent years, females still account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody. In the 12 months to the end of September 2013 they accounted for:

- 26 per cent of incidents but only 5 per cent of the prison population.
- The rate of females self-harming, at 271 females per 1,000 prisoners, is significantly higher than the 71 males per 1,000 prisoners who self-harm.

In 2012, for the first time since the current recording system for self-harm started in 2003, there were more male prisoners than female prisoners who had self-harmed 20 times or more.

3 Assaults (including fights)

- **13,696 assault incidents in 12 months to September 2013**, down from 14,965 incidents in the previous year (a fall of 8%).
- The **rate of assaults, at 162 incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, is the lowest for 10 years.
- **3,042 assaults on staff in the 12 months to end of September 2013**, up from 3,014 incidents in the 12 months to September 2012 (an increase of 1%).
- The **rate of assaults on staff, at 36 incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, is amongst the lowest since 2000.
- **Serious assaults have increased to 1,476 incidents in the 12 months to September 2013** from 1,278 in the previous 12 months (an increase of 18%).
- **Serious assaults on staff have increased to 328 incidents in the 12 months to September 2013** from 250 in the previous 12 months (an increase of 31%).

Assaults in prison custody cover a wide range of violent incidents including fights between prisoners. NOMS does not use the Home Office counting rule definitions of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), affray etc. and figures cannot be compared directly.

Table 4: Assault incidents Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	-Sep 04	-Sep 05	-Sep 06	-Sep 07	-Sep 08	-Sep 09	-Sep 10	-Sep 11	-Sep 12	-Sep 13
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents	12,213	14,004	14,926	15,298	15,896	15,363	14,508	15,088	14,965	13,696
Male establishments	11,355	13,020	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,367	13,208
Female establishments	858	984	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	598	488
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	164	186	193	191	194	185	171	177	172	162
Male establishments	162	183	188	189	192	185	172	178	173	164
Female establishments	192	223	271	232	213	179	155	160	143	124
Serious assaults	1,202	1,300	1,392	1,489	1,532	1,326	1,410	1,352	1,278	1,476
Male establishments	1,133	1,231	1,328	1,434	1,487	1,291	1,366	1,303	1,248	1,444
Female establishments	69	69	64	55	45	35	44	49	30	32
Assaults on Staff	3,153	3,437	3,536	3,343	3,255	3,057	2,937	3,053	3,014	3,042
Male establishments	2,836	3,061	3,011	2,919	2,866	2,778	2,721	2,820	2,828	2,876
Female establishments	317	376	525	424	389	279	216	233	186	166
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	42	46	46	42	40	37	35	36	35	36
Male establishments	41	43	41	39	37	35	34	35	34	36
Female establishments	71	85	118	97	88	65	51	56	45	42
Serious assaults on staff	286	280	282	281	306	252	310	281	250	328
Male establishments	260	263	255	261	285	241	291	262	243	315
Female establishments	26	17	27	20	21	11	19	19	7	13

Gender refers to the type of establishment. Although predominantly the gender of the people involved in the assault will be the same as the type of establishment, in a small number of cases - typically assaults on staff - the gender may be different to the establishment type.

Assaults are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate which accounts for 95 per cent of the prison population.

The key population factors determining the risk of involvement in assaults are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to assault and be victims than older prisoners;¹³
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.¹⁴

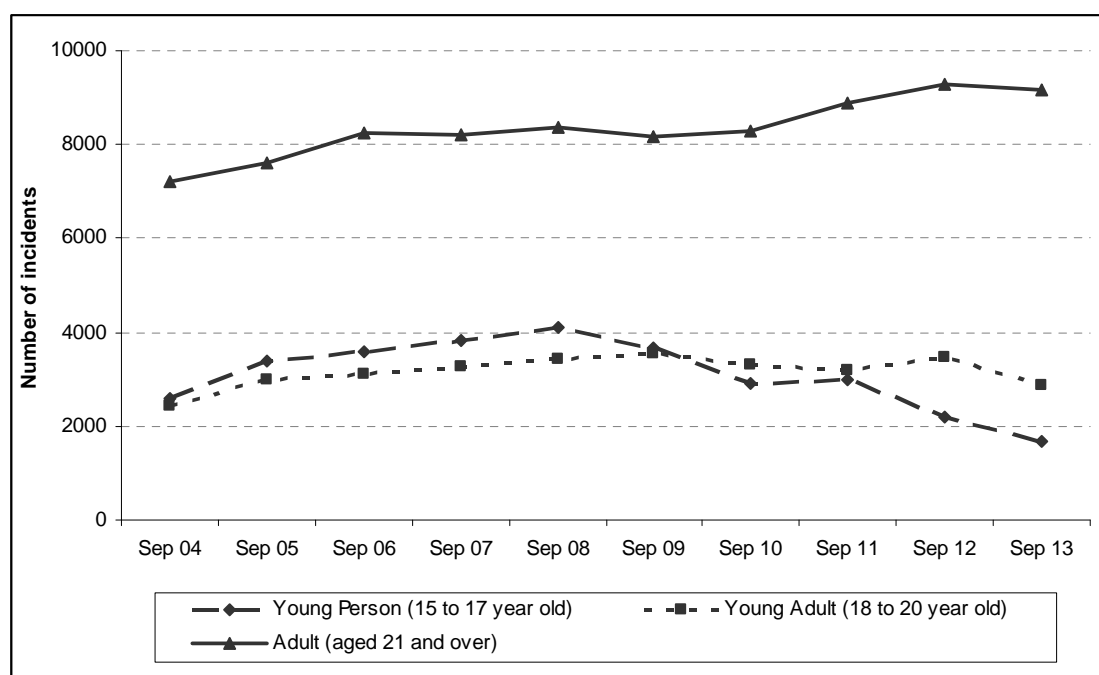
3.1 All Assaults

Both the number of assaults in prison custody and the assault rate per 1,000 prisoners have fallen sharply over the last 12 months. This reverses the rise seen in the previous 12 months and returns to a falling trend over the medium term.

Assault incidents have been on a downward trend since September 2008 when they peaked at 15,896 incidents.

Although the overall number of assault incidents has fallen in recent years, figure 8 shows that this has been primarily driven by falls in the parts of the prison estate holding under 21 year olds. Over the last 5 years the number of assault incidents for 15 to 17 year olds has fallen by 2,421 incidents, and by 562 incidents for 18 to 20 year olds. These falls are partly due to the falling prison population for these younger age groups. For the adult prison population, the number of assault incidents has increased by 783 over the same time period, with most of the increase occurring between the 12 months to September 2010 and the 12 months to September 2012. Over the last 12 months the number of assaults involving adult prisoners has fallen slightly from 9,298 incidents to 9,163 incidents.

Figure 8: Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner involved in incident



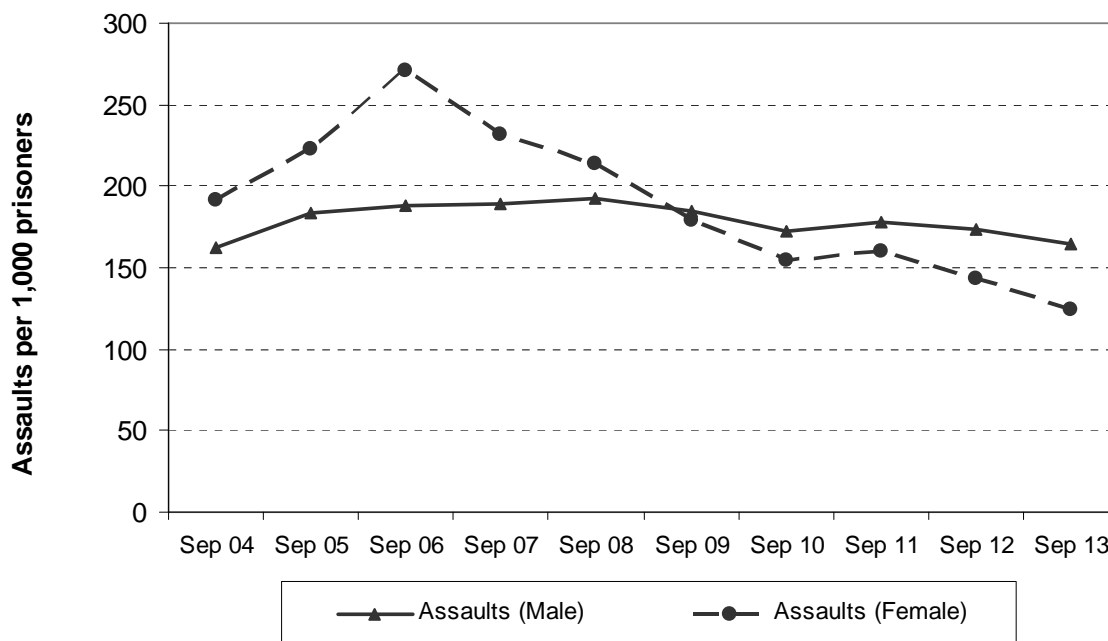
With 95 per cent of assaults occurring in the male estate the rate of assaults overall is heavily biased towards the rate of assaults in the male estate. The rate of assaults for male prisoners has fallen in recent years from a high of 194 in the 12 months to September 2008 to 164 in the 12 months to September 2013. This is the lowest rate for 10 years.

¹³ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

¹⁴ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

In the female estate the rate of assaults has shown much more variation. It rose in the 12 months to September 2006 to 271 incidents per 1,000 prisoners but has fallen to 124 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2013 (see figure 9), halving the rate of assaults in female establishments in the last seven years.

Figure 9: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales



Serious assaults¹⁵ have increased in the most recent 12 month period to September 2013 to 1,476 incidents from 1,248 incidents in the previous 12 month period – an increase of 18%. The quarterly trend over the year shows that the number of assault incidents classified as serious has been increasing each quarter¹⁶. The number of serious assaults in this 12 month reporting period peaked at 1,532 incidents in the 12 months to September 2008. Since then the number of serious assaults fell between the 12 months to September 2010 and the 12 months to September 2011, but has risen again in the 12 months to September 2013.

3.2 Assaults on staff

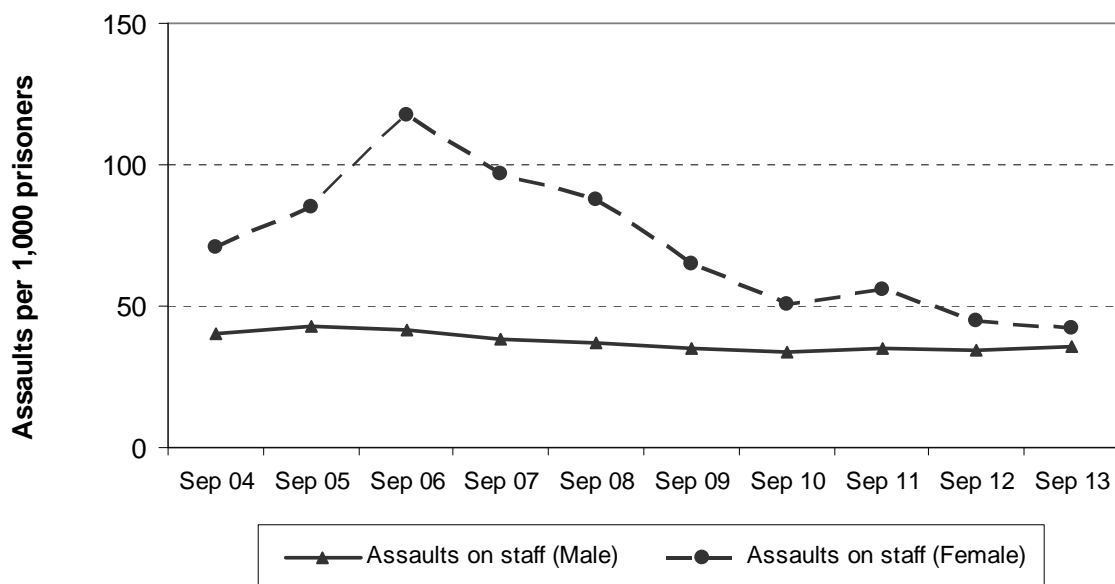
In the 12 months to end of September 2013 there were 3,042 assaults on staff – up 1% on the previous year. In 2003/04 they accounted for around one-in-four assault incidents but for the last six years this has reduced to around one-in-five assault incidents in prison custody.

As with the overall rate, the rates of incidents involving assaults on staff are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate. Rates in the male prison estate have been between 34 and 36 incidents per 1,000 prisoners for the last four years, while over the same period the figure for the female estate has been between 42 and 56 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. Assault rates in the female prison estate show a stronger downward trend over the longer term.

¹⁵ For the definition of serious assaults see the Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics. www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

¹⁶ Table 7, Safety in Custody statistics, update to September 2013 summary tables www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Figure 10: Total assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales



There were 328 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2013 – an increase of 78 incidents on the previous 12 month period. This figure is the highest number of serious assaults on staff recorded since current recorded practices began in 2003, although a similar increase in the 12 months to September 2010 was followed by two years of falling numbers of serious assaults on staff. Quarterly data shows that the most recent increase has largely occurred in the two quarters since April 2013.¹⁷

¹⁷ Table 7, Safety in Custody statistics, update to September 2013 summary tables
www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections (www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi)

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody (iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/)

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx)
- Deaths following police contact (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx)

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

- Fatal Incident reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/investigating-fatal-accidents.html)
- Annual reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/annual-reports.html)

World Health Organisation (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD)

- ICD 10 (apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en)

Ministry of Justice/NOMS

- Prison and Probation Statistics (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics)
- Prison Service Orders (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos)
- Prison Service Instructions (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis)

List of tables and figures

This is a list of quarterly and annual Safety in Custody Statistics tables and figures. Tables 1 to 4 and figures 1 to 4 are included in this publication. The remaining tables are available from the website¹⁸. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

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Safety in Custody – Summary tables		
Table 1	Safety in custody summary statistics	Apr 03 - Sep 13
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Apr 03 - Sep 13
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Apr 04 – Sep 13
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Apr 03 - Sep 13
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 – Sep 13
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Oct 05 – Sep 13
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Jan 03 – Sep 13
Safety in Custody – Figures		
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Figure 2	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Sep 04 – Sep 13
Figure 3	Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody	Sep 01 – Sep 13
Figure 4	Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody	Sep 01 – Sep 13
Figure 5	Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population	2002 - 2012
Figure 6	Number of self-harm incidents by gender	Sep 05 – Sep 13
Figure 7	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Sep 05 – Sep 13
Figure 8	Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner	Sep 04 – Sep 13
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Figure 4	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – on staff	Sep 04 – Sep 13
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Table 1.1	Annual deaths in prison custody and rates by apparent cause	1978 - 2012
Table 1.2	Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and gender	1978 - 2012
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Table 1.4	Annual deaths arising from incidents in prison custody but occurring elsewhere	1999 - 2012
Table 1.5	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender	1978 - 2012
Table 1.6	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by age	1978 - 2012
Table 1.7	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in custody and current prison	1999 - 2012
Table 1.8	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by type of custody	1999 - 2012
Table 1.9	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by ethnicity	1999 - 2012
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Table 1.12	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by method	1999 - 2012
Table 1.13	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation	1999 - 2012
Table 1.14	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligature points used in fatal hangings	1999 - 2012
Table 1.15	Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group	2001 - 2012
Table 1.16	Annual self-inflicted deaths by establishment	1978 - 2012

¹⁸ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Table 1.17	Annual natural cause deaths by establishment	1978 - 2012
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Table 3.13	Annual assault related hospital attendances / treatment for concussion/internal injuries	2000 - 2012
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Table 3.15	Annual assaults on staff and on prison officers by establishment	2000 - 2012
Table 3.16	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2012

Data Sources and Data Quality

The data presented in this publication are drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Custody Database and NOMS Incident Reporting System.

Information relating to deaths in prison custody is closely scrutinised and the data is considered to be of high quality. Classifications of deaths however, are not finalised until after inquest. As inquests may not be concluded until some years after a death, tables dependent on classifications should be treated as provisional. Changes do not generally affect reported trends.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the information collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. While the figures shown have been checked as far as practicable, they should be regarded as approximate and not necessarily accurate to the last whole number shown in the tables. Where figures in the tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number, the rounded components do not always add to the totals, which are calculated and rounded independently.

Self-harm and assault incidents in custody are more likely to be detected and counted than those occurring in the community. However, some incidents in custody will remain undetected and therefore go unreported.

For a more detailed discussion about data sources and data quality see the 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'¹⁹

Explanatory notes

The statistics in this bulletin relate to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales to the period ending June 2013.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

..	not available
0	nil or less than half the final digit shown
-	not applicable
(p)	Provisional data
(r)	Revised data

¹⁹ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from
www.statistics.gov.uk

Ministry of Justice publishes data relating to offender management in England and Wales. Equivalent statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice

www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx

www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm

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

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