



Ministry
of Justice



Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Update to March 2014

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

31 July 2014

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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 March 2014. 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.

Changes and revisions in this publication

A review of the deaths awaiting further information (AFI) since the last publication has resulted in several of these being reclassified. This includes 1 AFI death changed to self-inflicted in 2013 increasing the number of self-inflicted deaths in 2013 to 75. A further 2 AFI

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

deaths in 2013 may be reclassified to self-inflicted depending on the outcome of their inquests.

Revisions have been made to the assaults data for April-December 2013. The statistics presented in the Safety in Custody bulletin for assaults and self-harm are based on data obtained from a central administrative system for recording incidents in prisons. For this reason it is entirely reliant on the data that prisons enter on the system. As part of an exercise to assess the completeness of this data prisons were required to check the assaults data on the system against their other records for the business year April 2013 to March 2014. Assaults were chosen as this data also feeds in to a metric which is used as part of the Prison Rating System. As a result of this exercise an additional 534 assaults were identified and recorded on the administrative system. Only a very small minority of these additional assaults were classified as a serious assault. This has resulted in revisions to the 2013 data.

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.
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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 31 July 2014 and includes statistics covering 12-month periods to end of March 2014.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 30 October 2014, covering 12-month periods to end of June 2014.

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									
	Mar 05	Mar 06	Mar 07	Mar 08	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14
Total deaths	197	168	161	189	163	180	185	211	181	225
Self-inflicted	87	74	72	85	64	59	54	67	52	88
Natural Causes	101	88	85	98	94	116	115	135	118	127
Homicide	2	3	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	3
Other ¹	7	3	4	5	2	5	14	8	9	7
Self-harm incidents	20,448	23,964	23,636	22,462	25,847	24,964	26,285	24,253	22,722	23,478
Males	9,849	10,639	12,357	11,309	12,686	13,780	14,769	16,202	16,399	17,474
Females	10,599	13,325	11,279	11,153	13,161	11,184	11,516	8,051	6,323	6,004
Assault incidents	13,025	14,832	14,780	15,644	15,775	14,916	14,473	15,577	14,083	15,033
Males	12,163	13,683	13,673	14,625	14,927	14,281	13,785	14,888	13,573	14,491
Females	862	1,149	1,107	1,019	848	635	688	689	510	542

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.

- The number of deaths in prison custody increased to 225 in the 12 months to the end of March 2014 from 181 in the same period the previous year. The death rate increased to 2.7 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.1 in the 12 months to the end of March 2013. This increase comes from a period of relative stability in the death rate in prisons. There was an increase in the number of self-inflicted deaths to 88 in the 12 months to March 2014 from 52 in the 12 months to March 2013. This is the highest number of self-inflicted deaths since 2005. The rate of self-inflicted deaths was 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners up from 0.6 deaths per 1,000 in the 12 months to the end of March 2013.
- The number of self-harm incidents has increased to 23,478 incidents in the 12 months to end of March 2014, compared with 22,722 in the previous 12 month period. However, there are differing trends between the male and female estates, with self-harm falling amongst female prisoners, down to 6,004 incidents from 6,323 a year earlier. In contrast, incidents of self-harm amongst male prisoners have increased to 17,474 incidents from 16,399 a year earlier. 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 increased to 15,033 in the 12 months to March 2014 compared with 14,083 in March 2013. This increase is slightly overstated due to improvements in reporting of assault incidents. However, the rise is solely as a result of an increase in the number of assaults amongst adult prisoners, up 2,050 in the last 5 years. In contrast assaults amongst prisoners aged under 21 have continued to fall, a decline of 2,792 incidents in the last 5 years.
- The number of assaults on staff has increased to 3,363 incidents from 2,964 in the 12 months to end of March 2013, the highest number since 2007. The number of serious assaults on staff has increased to 370 incidents from 269 in the previous year.

1 Deaths in custody

In the 12 months to the end of March 2014 there were 225 deaths in prison custody – an increase of 44 from the previous year. These deaths comprise of:

- **88 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, up from 52 in the previous year (69% increase);
- **127 deaths due to natural causes**, up from 118 in the previous year (8%);
- **3 apparent homicides**, up from 2 in the previous 12 months;
- **7 other deaths**, 6 of which are yet to be classified awaiting further information. At this stage last year there were 16 deaths awaiting further information, of which 11 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									
	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody¹	197	168	161	189	163	180	185	211	181	225
Self-inflicted	87	74	72	85	64	59	54	67	52	88
Natural Causes	101	88	85	98	94	116	115	135	118	127
Homicide	2	3	0	1	3	0	2	1	2	3
Other ²	7	3	4	5	2	5	14	8	9	7
<i>of which</i>										
Other/Non-natural	7	3	4	5	2	5	14	7	4	1
Awaiting further information	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	6
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.7
Self-inflicted	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.0
Natural Causes	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.5
Deaths by Gender										
Male	179	161	155	181	158	174	176	207	175	219
Female	18	7	6	8	5	6	9	4	6	6

1. All classifications of deaths remain provisional until confirmed at inquest.

2. A minority of the most recent two years figures for ‘other’ deaths are expected to be re-classified as natural causes

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

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

1.1 Overall mortality

There were 225 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to the end of March 2014; 44 more than a year earlier (figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of deaths in prison custody, 2001 to 2014

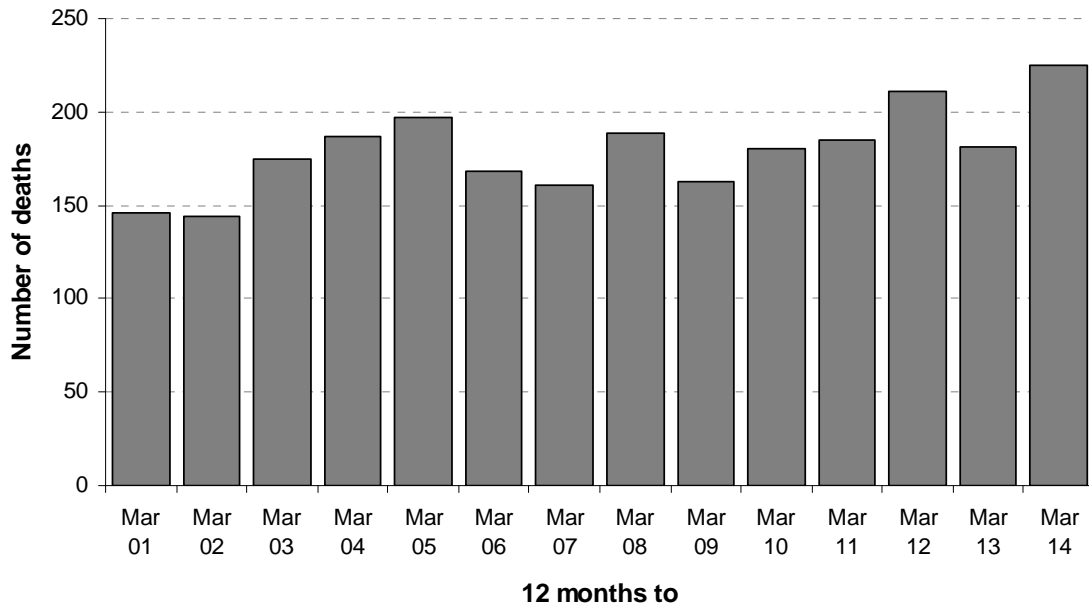
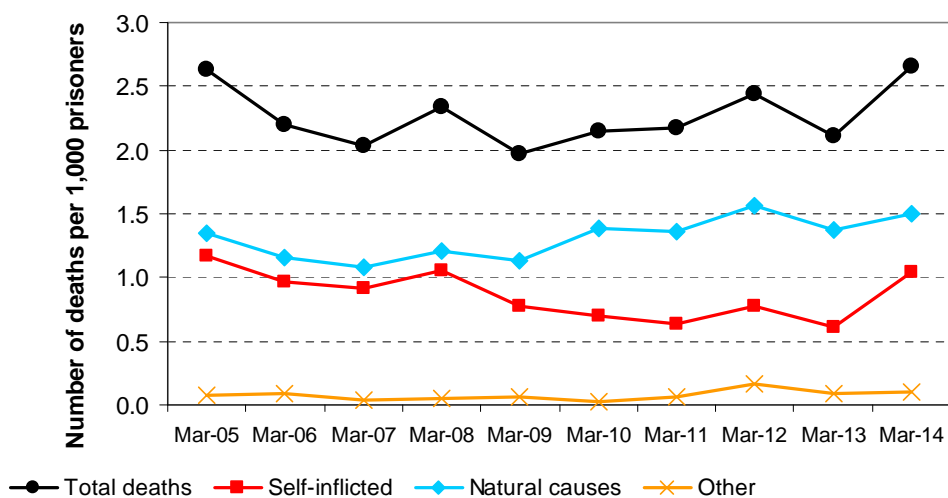


Figure 2 shows an increase in the death rate in the 12 months to March 2014 to 2.66 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.11 in the previous 12 months. This increase comes from a period of relative stability in the death rate in prisons, although there were some fluctuations between years reflecting the natural variation that occurs with the frequency of deaths. The highest rate per 1,000 prisoners was 2.79 in 2004.

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



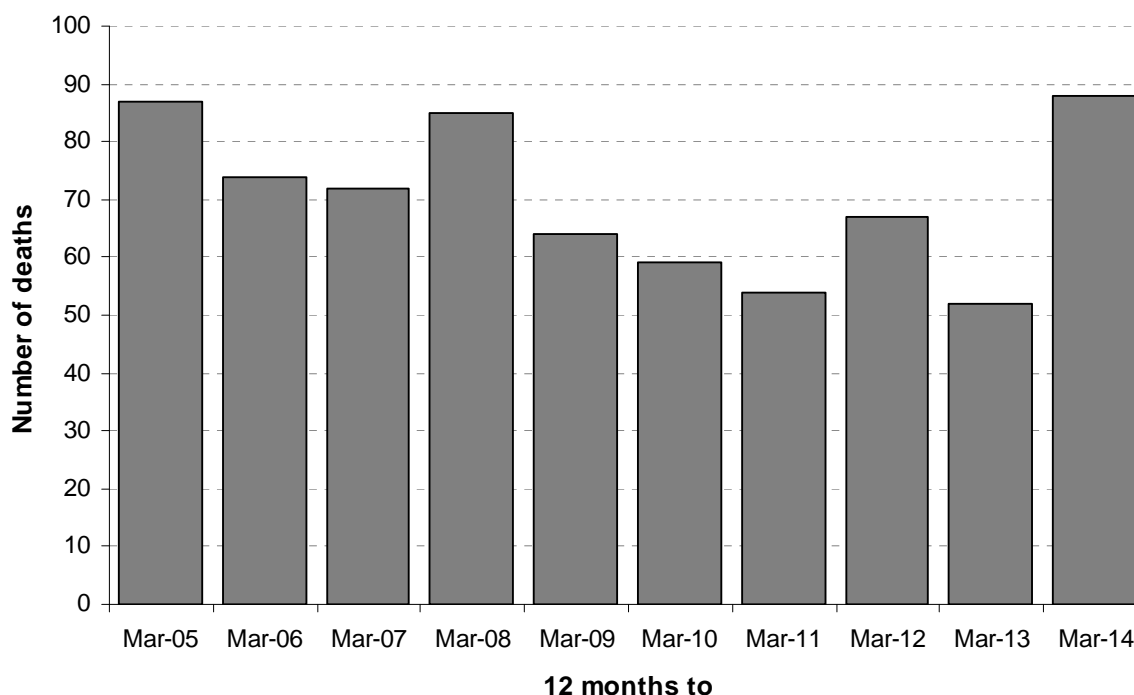
1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

- **88 self-inflicted deaths** in the period ending March 2014, 36 (69%) more than in the same period in 2013.
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths increased to 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners**, from 0.6 in the previous year.
- 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.

The number of self-inflicted deaths increased by 36 to 88 deaths in the 12 months to the end of March 2014. This increase has occurred after a period of relatively stability and is the highest number in this 12 month period since 2005. As figure 3 shows an increase in a single year does not necessarily reflect a change in trend, with the number of self-inflicted deaths in 12 months to March 2009 falling back to trend. The highest number of self-inflicted deaths in this 12 month period was in 2003 when there were 106 self-inflicted deaths.

Figure 3: Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody, 12 months March 2005 to March 2014



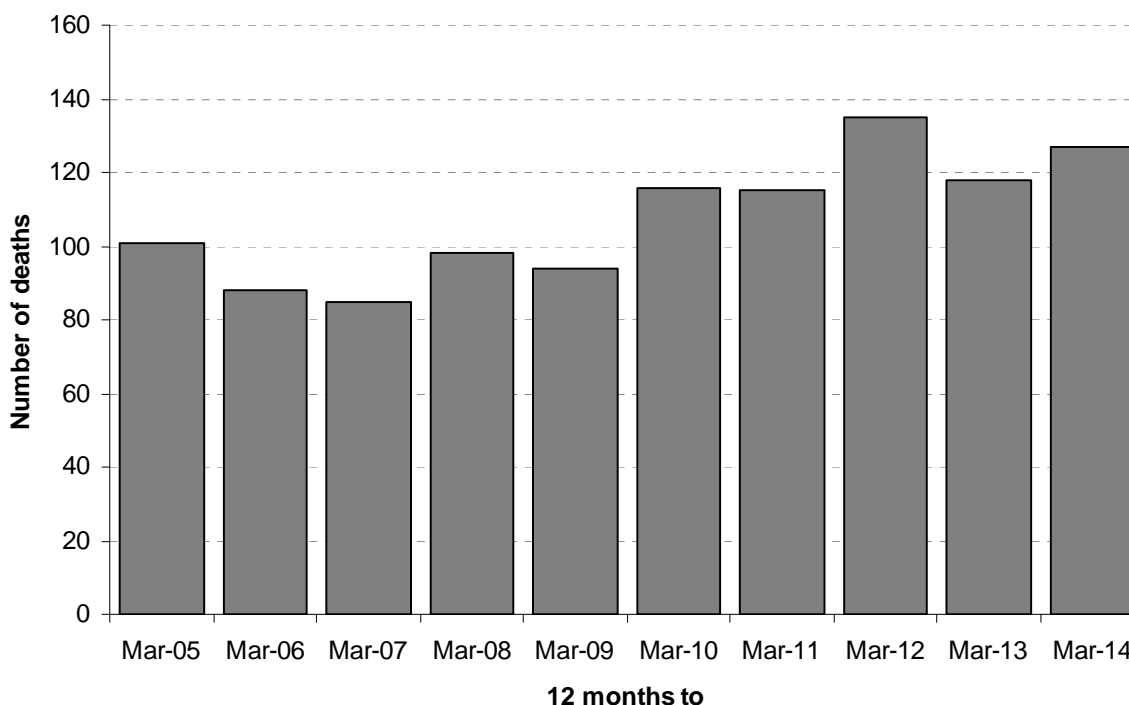
The rate of self-inflicted deaths has increased to 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners from 0.6 in the 12 months to the end of March 2013 (figure 1). The rate of self-inflicted deaths was consistently above 1 death per 1,000 prisoners between 1993 and 2005, peaking at 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in 1999 (table 1.1 in the deaths supplementary tables).

1.3 Natural cause deaths

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

- **127 natural cause deaths in the 12 months to the end of March 2014**, 9 (8%) more than in the same 12 months in 2013;
- **1.5 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to March 2014, up from 1.4 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the previous year.

Figure 4: Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody, 12 months March 2005 to March 2014



There are 127 natural cause deaths currently recorded for the 12 months to March 2014, 9 more than the same period in 2013. It is likely that some of the 6 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:

- 16 deaths awaiting further information for the 12 months to March 2013; of these, 11 have now been re-classified; 6 to natural causes.

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

Calendar year statistics shows that as the prison population ages⁶ the number of natural cause deaths of older prisoners has also increased, with 70 of the 123 natural cause deaths (57%) in 2013 being of prisoners aged 60 and over. The trend over recent years has seen an increase in the proportion of natural cause deaths of prisoners aged 60 and over from around 38% in 2007.⁷

Despite the increase in prisoners aged 60 and over, the rate of natural cause deaths has remained relatively stable at around 1.5 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the last 4 years

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

⁷ Table 3.15, , Safety in Custody update to December 2013 Assault supplementary tables, www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

which shows a reduction in natural cause deaths of prisoners aged under 60 over the same period.

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.

- **3 apparent homicides in the 12 months to the end of March 2014** compared with 2 in the same period in 2013;
- Homicides are relatively rare accounting for less than 1% of all deaths in prison custody.

Homicides in prison custody are relatively rare, ranging between 0 and 4 in any year.

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 **7 other deaths in the 12 months to March 2014** (3% 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 March 2013 there were 17 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 year ending March 2013 statistics there were 16 deaths awaiting further information, of which 5 remain. 6 deaths were reclassified as natural causes, 1 as self-inflicted and the others as other/non-natural.

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

2 Self-harm

- Overall, the number of incidents of self-harm in prison custody has increased in the 12 months to March 2014 compared to the previous 12 months but with differing trends for males and females;
- **23,478 recorded incidents** in the 12 months to March 2014, compared with 22,722 in the previous year (table 3);
- **278 incidents per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to March 2014, an increase from 265 in the previous year;
- **6,999 recorded individuals** – up from 6,772 in the previous year.
- On average, **3.4 self-harm incidents per prisoner** who self-harms-unchanged on the previous year

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 prisoners⁸;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody⁹.
- Gender: Females are more likely to self-harm than males.

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

	12 months ending									
	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14
SELF-HARM										
Self-harm incidents	20,448	23,964	23,636	22,462	25,847	24,964	26,285	24,253	22,722	23,478
Males	9,849	10,639	12,357	11,309	12,686	13,780	14,769	16,202	16,399	17,474
Females	10,599	13,325	11,279	11,153	13,161	11,184	11,516	8,051	6,323	6,004
Self-harm individuals¹	5,475	5,910	6,292	6,283	6,667	7,218	6,786	6,992	6,772	6,999
Males	4,100	4,392	4,844	4,811	5,165	5,635	5,478	5,728	5,694	5,969
Females	1,375	1,518	1,448	1,472	1,502	1,583	1,308	1,264	1,078	1,030
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	274	314	299	278	312	297	310	280	265	278
Males	140	148	166	148	162	173	183	196	201	217
Females	2,407	2,973	2,544	2,536	3,006	2,624	2,723	1,924	1,549	1,543
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners¹	73	77	80	78	80	86	80	81	79	83
Males	58	61	65	63	66	71	68	69	70	74
Females	312	339	327	335	343	371	309	302	264	265
Self-harm incidents per individual	3.7	4.1	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.4	3.4
Males	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9
Females	7.7	8.8	7.8	7.6	8.8	7.1	8.8	6.4	5.9	5.8
Hospital Attendances	1,082	1,266	1,202	1,299	1,325	1,293	1,404	1,544	1,556	1,636
Males	856	1,023	998	1,115	1,119	1,115	1,245	1,382	1,407	1,527
Females	226	243	204	184	206	178	159	162	149	109

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

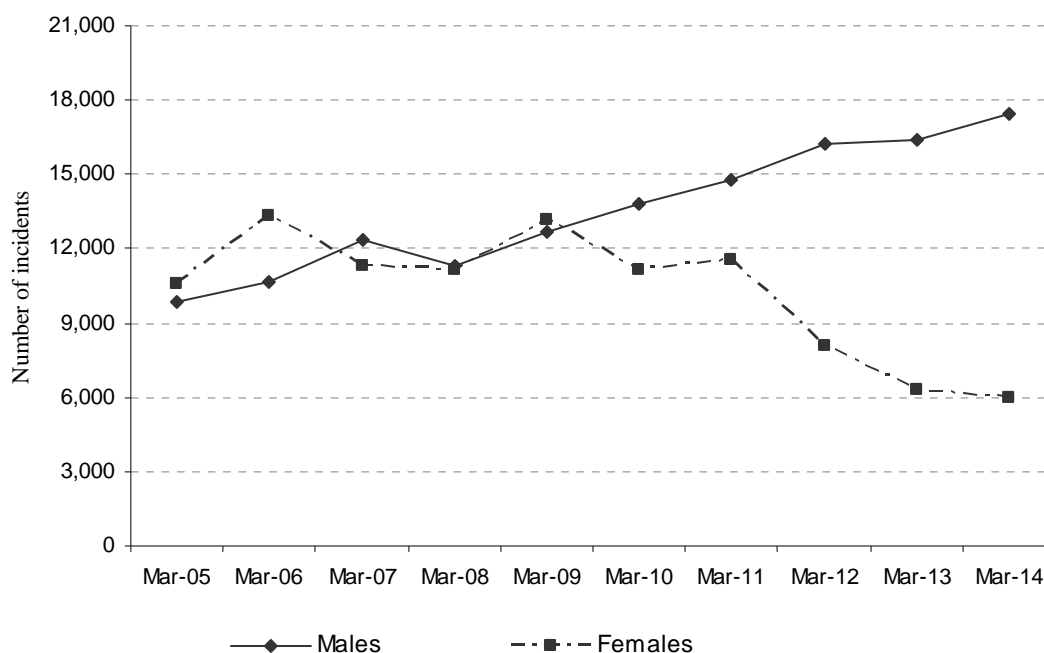
⁸ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

⁹ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Self-harm increased to 23,478 incidents in 12 months to March 2014 compared with the previous year. Over the longer term, the number of self-harm incidents followed an increasing trend since 2005 and peaked at 26,285 incidents in the 12 months to March 2011. Since then it fell to 22,722 incidents in the 12 months to March 2013 as a result of a reduction in self-harm amongst female prisoners.

Figure 6 shows that in the first half of the last 10 years levels of male and female self-harm were similar, but in the last 5 years the trend has diverged and followed opposite paths. As self-harm in custody differs between males and females it is better to consider the populations separately.

Figure 5: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender



2.1 Male self-harm

- 17,474 incidents of self-harm by male prisoners in the 12 months to March 2014, up from 16,399 incidents (7%) in the previous year.
- The rate of male self-harm continues to rise and has increased to 217 incidents per 1,000 prisoners compared with 201 in the previous 12 months.
- Since March 2005 male self-harm rates have increased by 55% from 140 incidents per 1,000 prisoners to 217 in the 12 months to March 2014.
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carry out, on average, 2.9 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to March 2014, unchanged on the previous year.

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 58 males per 1,000 prisoners to 71 males per 1,000 prisoners between 2005 and 2010. Since then the rate of increase was more gradual before another increase to 74 prisoners per 1,000 prisoners in the most recent 12 month period.

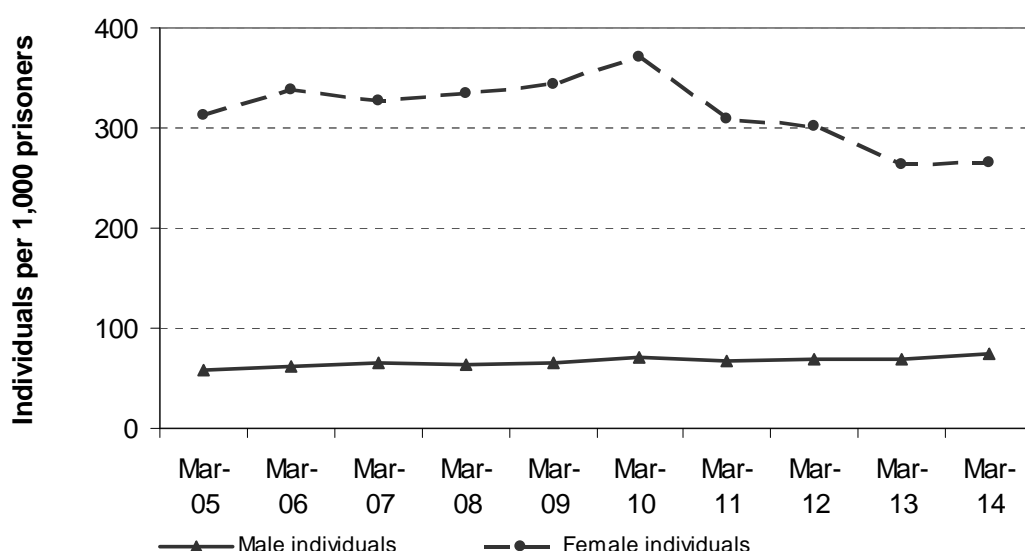
Although the rate of individuals self-harming has increased in the most recent 12 month period, the average number of self-harming acts those males commit on average is unchanged at 2.9 incidents. Over the longer term the number of self-harm incidents, on average, for each male was 2.4 self-harm incidents in 2004 where it remained broadly unchanged until 2010. In 2011 this increased to 2.7 incidents per male, on average, where it has gradually increased to 2.9 incidents, on average, in the 12 months to March 2014.

2.2 Female self-harm

- 6,004 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners in the 12 months to the end of March 2014, down from 6,323 incidents in the previous 12 months – a fall of 5% in the last year and 48% in the last three years;
- The rate of female self-harm in the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 265 females per 1,000 prisoners compared with 264 in the previous 12 months;
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 5.8 self-harm incidents on average in the 12 months to the end of March 2014, down from 5.9 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, albeit at a slower rate than in the previous 2 years. However, figure 7 shows that the rate of females who self-harm is unchanged in the 12 months to end of March 2014 compared with the previous 12 months after two years of falls.

Figure 6: 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 March 2014, they accounted for:

- 26% of incidents but only 5% of the prison population.
- The rate of females self-harming, at 265 females per 1,000 prisoners, is significantly higher than the 74 males per 1,000 prisoners who self-harm.

3 Assaults (including fights)

- **15,033 assault incidents in the 12 months to the end of March 2014**, up from 14,083 incidents in the previous 12 months (an increase of 6%).
- The **rate of assaults is 178 incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 164 incidents in the 12 months to end of March 2013.
- **3,363 assaults on staff in the 12 months to March 2014**, up from 2,964 incidents in the previous 12 months (an increase of 12%).
- The **rate of assaults on staff is 40 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 35 in the previous 12 months.**
- **Serious assaults have increased to 1,699 incidents in the 12 months to March 2014** from 1,303 in the same period last year (an increase of 23%).
- **Serious assaults on staff have increased to 370 incidents** up from 269 in the 12 months to end of March 2013.

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									
	Mar-05	Mar-06	Mar-07	Mar-08	Mar-09	Mar-10	Mar-11	Mar-12	Mar-13	Mar-14
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents	13,025	14,832	14,780	15,644	15,775	14,916	14,473	15,577	14,083	15,033
Male establishments	12,163	13,683	13,673	14,625	14,927	14,281	13,785	14,888	13,573	14,491
Female establishments	862	1,149	1,107	1,019	848	635	688	689	510	542
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	174	194	187	193	190	178	170	180	164	178
Male establishments	173	190	183	191	190	179	171	181	166	180
Female establishments	196	256	250	232	194	149	163	165	125	139
Serious assaults	1,219	1,402	1,448	1,481	1,443	1,367	1,358	1,332	1,303	1,699
Male establishments	1,137	1,337	1,390	1,439	1,395	1,334	1,312	1,287	1,277	1,661
Female establishments	82	65	58	42	48	33	46	45	26	38
Assaults on Staff	3,280	3,582	3,393	3,247	3,191	3,027	2,857	3,157	2,964	3,363
Male establishments	2,966	3,110	2,917	2,820	2,868	2,813	2,618	2,933	2,787	3,201
Female establishments	314	472	476	427	323	214	239	224	177	162
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	44	47	43	40	39	36	34	36	35	40
Male establishments	42	43	39	37	37	35	32	36	34	40
Female establishments	71	105	107	97	74	50	57	54	43	42
Serious assaults on staff	271	290	284	278	282	289	293	260	269	370
Male establishments	244	267	263	260	263	276	273	244	260	362
Female establishments	27	23	21	18	19	13	20	16	9	8

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% of the prison population.

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

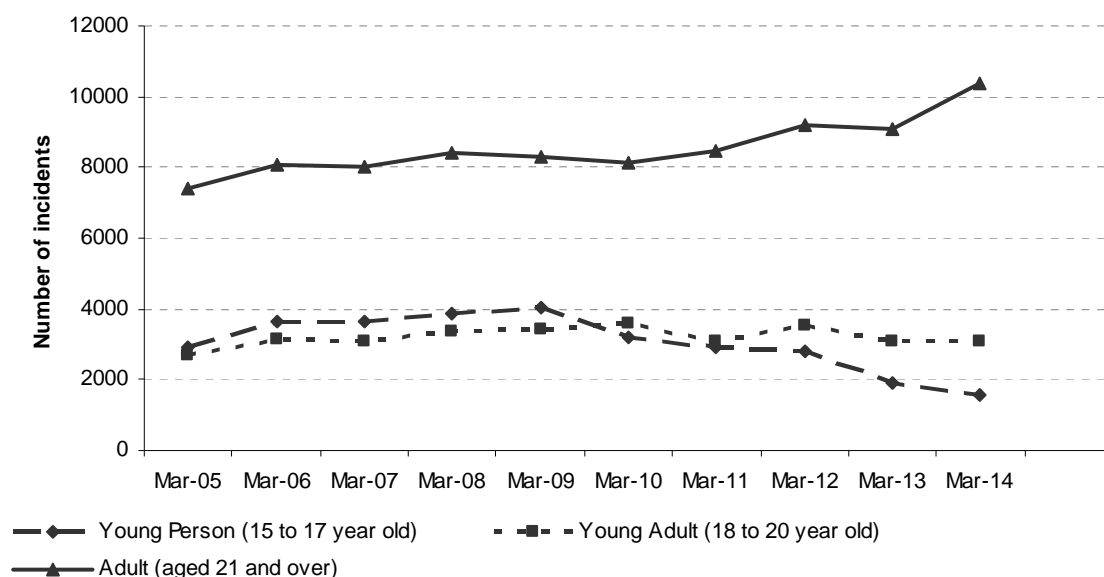
- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to assault and be victims than older prisoners;¹⁰
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.¹¹

3.1 All Assaults

The number of recorded assault incidents has increased to 15,033 incidents in the 12 months to the end of March 2014 from 14,083 incidents in the same period last year. This increase is slightly overstated due to an improvement in reporting of assault incidents following changes in data assurance processes. Nevertheless, the reporting improvements do not account for all the increase. Despite the rise in assault incidents this year they are still less than the 12 months to end of March 2009 when they peaked at 15,775 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 2,450 incidents and for 18 to 20 year olds by 342 incidents. 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 2,050 over the same time period.

Figure 7: Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner involved in incident



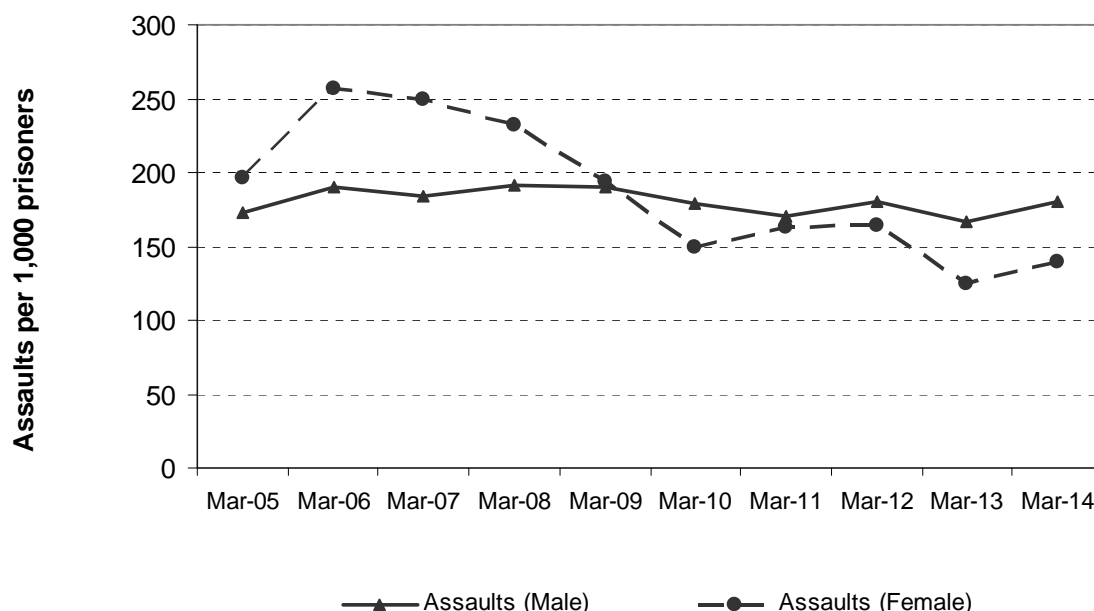
With 96% of assaults occurring in the male estate the rate of assaults overall is heavily biased towards the rate of assaults in the male estate. The rate of assaults for male prisoners has fallen in recent years from a high of 192 in 2008 to 180 in the 12 months to March 2014.

¹⁰ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

¹¹ 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 end of March 2006 to 256 incidents per 1,000 prisoners but has fallen to 139 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the most recent 12 months (see figure 9), halving the rate of assaults in female establishments in the last seven years.

Figure 8: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales



Serious assaults¹² increased in the 12 months to the end of March 2014 to 1,699 incidents from 1,303 incidents in the previous year – an increase of 23%. The number of serious assaults had previously peaked at 1,481 incidents in 2008, falling to a low of 1,303 incidents in the 12 months ending March 2013. As with all incidents, there is volatility in the time series of serious assault incidents, although there has been a general quarter on quarter upward trend since the beginning of 2012. The number of serious assaults has increased quarter on quarter since Q3 2012 to 464 in January to March 2014.

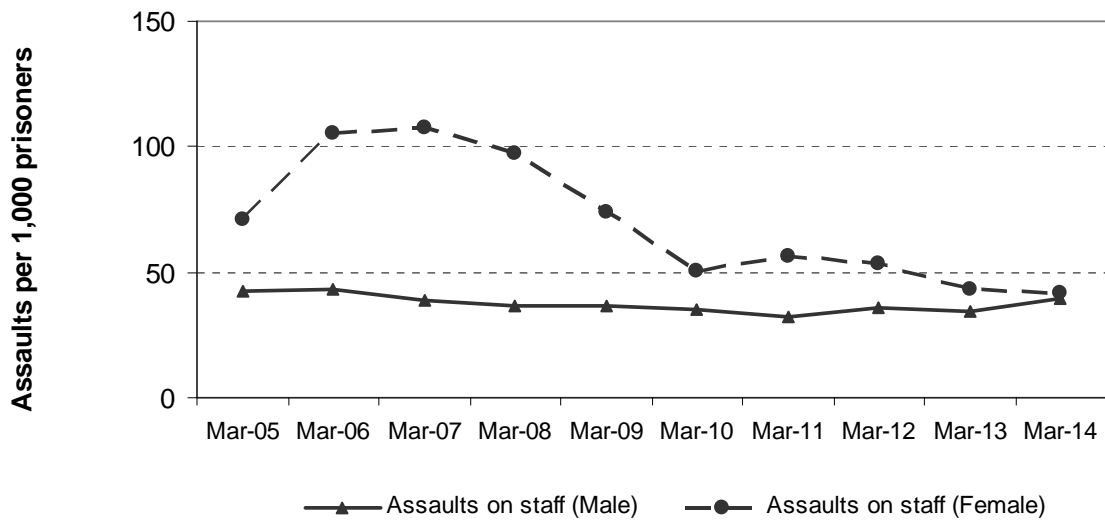
Serious assaults are those that are sexual assaults or result in serious injuries, hospital admittance as an in-patient or treatment for concussion.

3.2 Assaults on staff

In the 12 months to end of March 2014, there were 3,363 assaults on staff – up 12% on the previous year. The number of assaults on staff peaked at 3,582 incidents in 2006 and, with the exception if the 12 months ending March 2012, had been falling year on year.

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

¹² For the definition of serious assaults see the Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics. www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics



As with the overall rate, the rates of incidents involving assaults on staff are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate. In the 12 months to the end of March 2014, the rate of assaults on staff increased to 40 incidents per 1,000 prisoners from 35 in the previous year, the highest rate since the 2008.

As with all types of incident, there is volatility in the number of serious assaults on staff between short time periods. There were 370 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to the end of March 2014 – an increase of 101 incidents on the previous year. This figure is the highest number of serious assaults on staff recorded since current recorded practices began in 2003. Quarterly data shows that the number of serious assaults on staff steadily increased during 2012 from 60 incidents in the first quarter of 2012 to 69 incidents in the first quarter of 2013. From the April to June 2013 quarter there was then an increase to 96 incidents per quarter but has dropped back to 80 incidents in the first quarter of 2014.

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 website¹³. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

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Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Apr 03 - Mar 14
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Apr 04 – Mar 14
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Apr 03 - Mar 14
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 – Mar 14
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Oct 05 – Mar 14
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Figure 5	Number of self-harm incidents by gender	Dec 05 – Mar 14
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¹³ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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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'¹⁴

Explanatory notes

The statistics in this bulletin relate to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales.

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

¹⁴ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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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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