



Ministry
of Justice



Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Deaths in prison custody to December 2014 Assaults and Self-harm to September 2014

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

29 January 2015

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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 on assaults and self-harm up to September 2014 and statistics on deaths in prison custody up to December 2014. Supplementary tables, providing more in depth statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults on a calendar year basis, are also available alongside this bulletin 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

This publication has updated figures on deaths to the end of 2014, including a review on all deaths awaiting further information.

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

Data for self-harm incidents has been updated back to October 2013 increasing the number of incidents in the period October 2013 to June 2014 by approximately 160. This update to the underlying data will not be reflected in the annual supplementary tables until they are updated with the 2014 data in the release due in April 2015 but have been reflected in the quarterly and rolling 12 month figures in this bulletin.

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 frequently used to answer parliamentary questions
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 29 January 2014 and includes statistics covering 12-month periods to end of September 2014 for self-harm and assaults and 12 month periods to end of December 2014 for deaths.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 30 April 2015, covering 12-month periods to end of December 2014 for assaults and self-harm and March 2015 for deaths in prison custody.

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									
	Dec 05	Dec 06	Dec 07	Dec 08	Dec 09	Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14
Total deaths¹	175	153	185	166	169	198	192	192	215	243
Self-inflicted	78	66	91	61	61	58	58	61	75	84
Natural Causes	89	83	89	99	104	126	122	123	131	141
Homicide	3	0	1	3	0	1	2	0	4	3
Other ²	5	4	4	3	4	13	10	8	5	15

	12 months ending									
	Sep 05	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14
Self-harm incidents¹	23,508	23,448	23,228	24,119	24,471	26,721	25,166	23,305	23,240	24,748
Males	10,277	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,240	17,221	18,068
Females	13,231	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	7,065	6,019	6,680
Assault incidents¹	14,004	14,926	15,298	15,896	15,363	14,508	15,088	14,965	14,207	15,763
Males	13,020	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,367	13,697	15,206
Females	984	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	598	510	557

1. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

2. '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 243 in 2014 from 215 in 2013. The death rate increased to 2.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.6 the previous year. This increase is as a result of an increase in both natural cause and self-inflicted deaths.
- Self-inflicted deaths increased to 84 in 2014 from 75 in 2013; the second calendar year there has been a year-on-year increase. On a rolling 12 month basis self-inflicted deaths have been higher in each quarter than in the same quarter in any year since 2007. Quarterly figures remain volatile with the most recent quarter (October to December) experiencing a higher than usual number of self-inflicted deaths. The rate of self-inflicted deaths was 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners up from 0.9 deaths per 1,000 a year earlier.
- The number of self-harm incidents has increased to 24,748 incidents in the 12 months to end of September 2014, compared with 23,240 in the previous 12 month period. Self-harm in the male estate continues to increase with 18,068 incidents in the 12 months to September 2014, an increase of 847 incidents on the same period a year earlier. Self-harm in the female estate has also increased, ending 3 years of year-on-year falls.
- The number of incidents of recorded assaults (including fights) in prison custody has increased to 15,763 in the 12 months to the end of September 2014 compared with 14,207 in the 12 months to September 2013. This increase may be slightly overstated due to improvements in reporting of assault incidents.
- The number of assaults on staff has increased to 3,470 incidents in the 12 months to end of September 2014 from 3,178 in the 12 months to end of September 2013, the highest number since 2006. The number of serious assaults on staff has increased to 431 incidents from 328 in the previous year.

1 Deaths in custody

In 2014 there were 243 deaths in prison custody – an increase of 28 from the previous year. These deaths comprise of:

- **84 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, up from 75 in the previous year (12% increase);
- **141 deaths due to natural causes**, up from 131 in the previous year (8%);
- **3 apparent homicides**, down from 4 in 2013;
- **15 other deaths**, 14 of which are yet to be classified awaiting further information. At this stage last year there were 14 deaths awaiting further information, of which 10 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 the number 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									
	Dec 05	Dec 06	Dec 07	Dec 08	Dec 09	Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody^{1,2}	175	153	185	166	169	198	192	192	215	243
Self-inflicted	78	66	91	61	61	58	58	61	75	84
Natural Causes	89	83	89	99	104	126	122	123	131	141
Homicide	3	0	1	3	0	1	2	0	4	3
Other ³	5	4	4	3	4	13	10	8	5	15
<i>of which</i>										
Other/Non-natural	5	4	4	3	4	13	10	8	4	1
Awaiting further information	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	1	14
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.9
Self-inflicted	1.0	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9	1.0
Natural Causes	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.7
Deaths by Gender										
Male	168	147	177	161	162	190	187	188	209	230
Female	7	6	8	5	7	8	5	4	6	13

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

2. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

3. 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 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 two years are provisional.

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

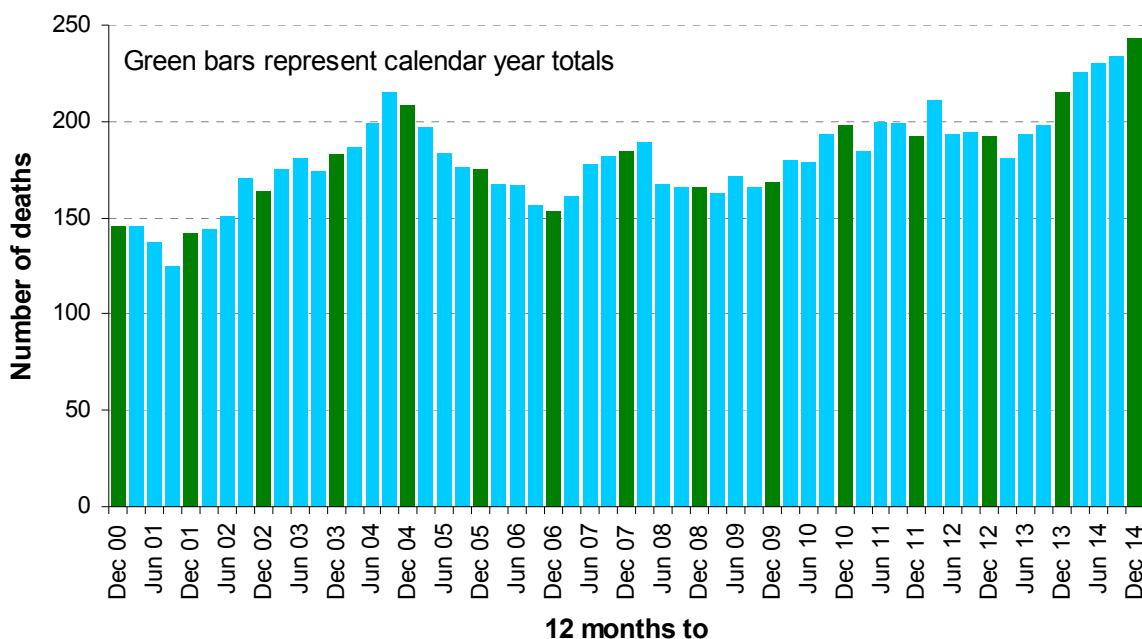
⁵ Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

1.1 Overall mortality

There were 243 deaths in prison custody in 2014. The majority of deaths in prison custody were from natural causes (141 deaths), with self-inflicted deaths making up just over one-third of deaths.

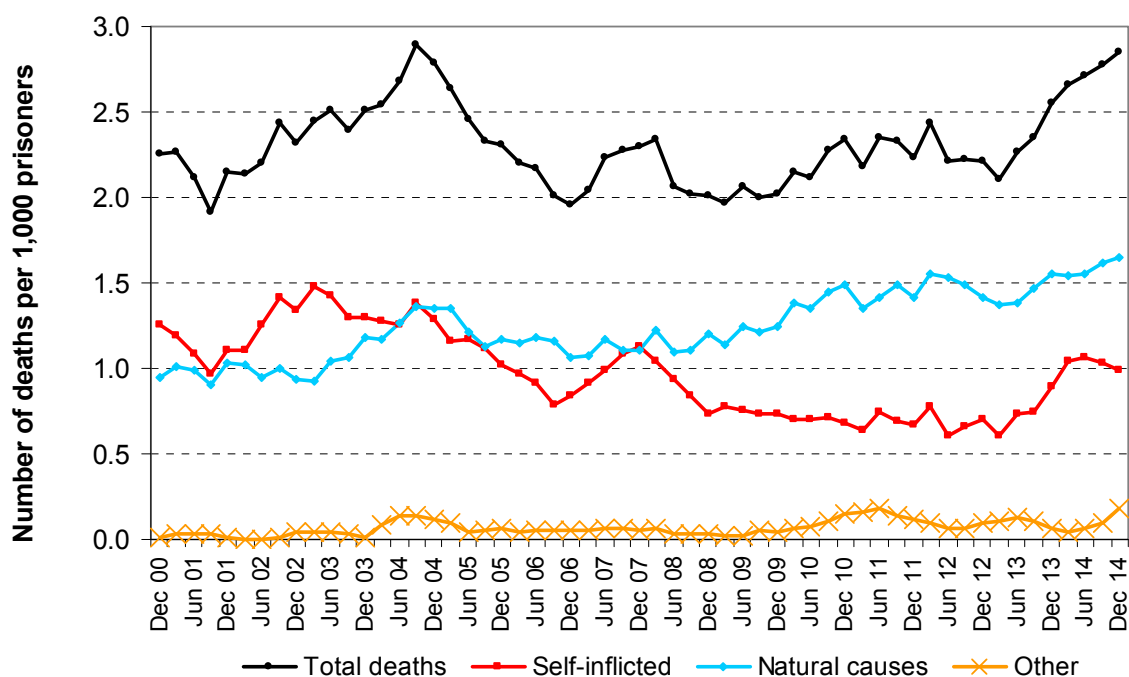
The 243 deaths in prison custody in 2014 was an increase of 28 on 2013 (figure 1) and is the highest number of deaths recorded in a calendar year. This increase has been the result of an increase in both natural cause and self-inflicted deaths. More discussion on the reasons for these increases follows in the relevant sections below.

Figure 1: Number of deaths in prison custody, 2001 to 2014 (rolling 12 months by quarter)



The prison population has increased over the last 10 years and, therefore everything else being equal, a corresponding increase in the number of deaths would be expected. The death rate better shows the trend in deaths taking into account changes in the size of the prison population. Figure 2, shows the death rate increased 2014 to 2.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.6 in 2013. This is the second year in which the death rate has increased after a period of relative stability.

Figure 2: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, England and Wales (rolling 12 months, quarterly)



1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

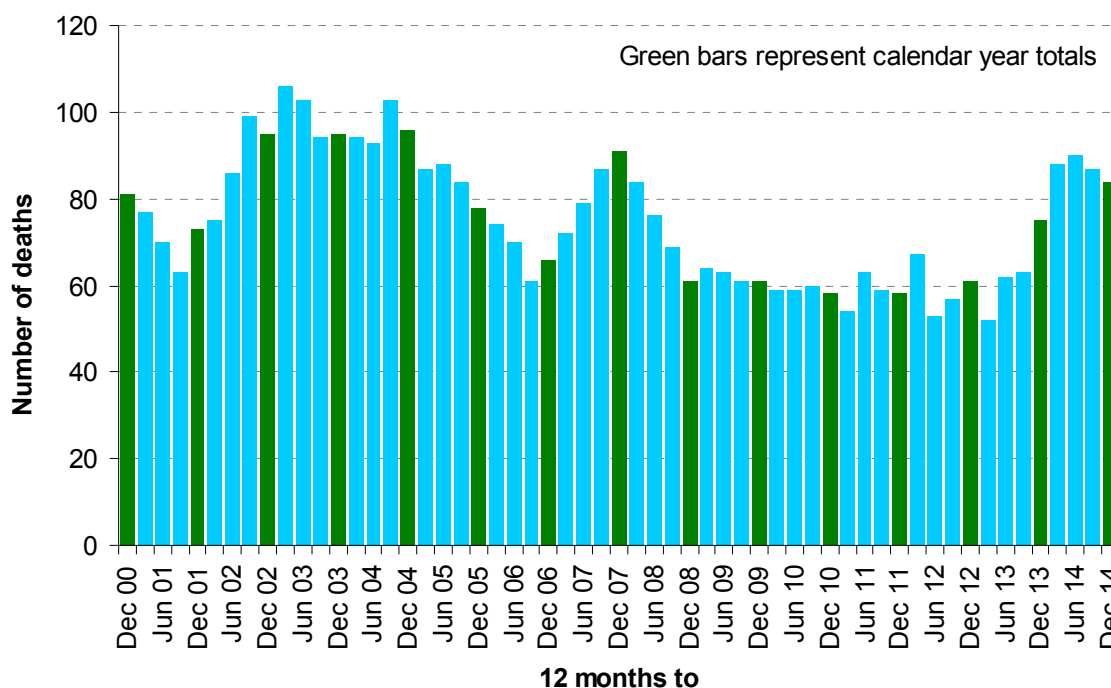
- **84 self-inflicted deaths** in 2014, 9 (12%) more than in 2013.
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths increased to 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners**, from 0.9 in the previous year.
- Nine-in-ten self-inflicted deaths occur from hanging
- 3 self-inflicted deaths of females

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.

Self-inflicted deaths increased to 84 in 2014 from 75 in 2013; the second calendar year there has been a year-on-year increase. On a rolling 12 month basis self-inflicted deaths have been higher for each quarter than in any year since 2007. Quarterly figures remain volatile with the most recent quarter (October to December) experiencing a higher than usual number of self-inflicted deaths.

The year-on-year increase is the highest calendar year figure since 2007. As figure 3 shows an increase in a single year does not necessarily reflect a change in trend, with an increase in the number of self-inflicted deaths in 2007 before falling back to trend the following year. The highest number of self-inflicted deaths in a calendar year was 96 in 2004. Prior to the increase in the last two years, the number of self-inflicted deaths between 2008 and 2012 was relatively stable at around 60 deaths a year.

Figure 3: Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody, rolling 12 month totals (quarterly) between December 2000 to December 2014



The rate of self-inflicted deaths has increased to 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in 2014 from 0.9 in 2013 (figure 2). This rate is the highest in a calendar year since 2007, although is slightly below the rate in the 12 months to March 2014. Despite the recent increase in the rate of self-inflicted deaths it remains lower than the period between 1993 and 2005 when it was consistently above 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners. The highest self-inflicted death rate in a calendar year was 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in 1999 (table 1.1 in the deaths supplementary tables).

Annual tables

The annual tables on deaths in prison custody have been updated with this publication to include the latest available statistics for deaths in 2014. These will be subject to further change as more of the deaths awaiting further information before classification are reclassified.

Gender

81 of the 84 self-inflicted deaths in prison custody were of male prisoners or detainees. There were 3 self-inflicted deaths of females. This is an increase of 1 on 2013, but numbers remain low and are lower than the number of self-inflicted deaths of females between 2002 and 2004.

Age

The age group with the highest number of self-inflicted deaths was the 30 to 39 year old age group with 25 deaths, an increase of 6 on 2013. This age group was the only age group with a increase of more than 2 in the number of self-inflicted deaths in prison custody in 2014 compared with the previous year. This age group has frequently had the highest number of self-inflicted deaths in prison custody since 1990.

There were 14 deaths in the 18-24 age groups compared with 12 in 2013. This was split by 6 in the 18 to 20 age group and 8 in the 21 to 24 age group, compared with 5 and 7 respectively in 2013. There were no self-inflicted deaths by 15 to 17 year olds in 2014.

Time in prison

There was 1 self-inflicted death in prison custody on the day of arrival into prison custody in 2014, the same level as in 2013. There were 13 deaths in prison custody in the first week of prison custody, 1 fewer than in 2013 and 21 self-inflicted deaths in the first 30 days, down 7 on 2013. Within this the number of deaths on either the first or second day in prison custody fell to 4 in 2014 from 8 in 2013. One-third of self-inflicted deaths are by prisoners who have been in custody for more than 1 year.

Moving between prisons is also recognised as a risk factor for self-inflicted deaths. There were 16 self-inflicted deaths by prisoners in the first week in a new prison, including those in prison custody for the first time. This is 1 fewer than in 2013. Six of these sixteen deaths were within 2 days of arriving in to the prison, compared with 11 in 2013.

Legal Status

The majority (58, or 7-in-10) of self-inflicted deaths were of sentenced prisoners, an increase of 11 on 2013. The number of self-inflicted deaths by remand prisoners fell to 18 in 2014 from 24 in 2013. The number of self-inflicted deaths by convicted prisoners awaiting sentencing increased to 6 in 2014 compared with 3 in 2013. 2 detainees died from a self-inflicted death in 2014.

Ethnicity

Most self-inflicted deaths in prison custody are by white males. In 2014, there were 71 self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by white prisoners, an increase of 12 on 2013. There were 3 self-inflicted deaths in each of Asian, black and mixed ethnicity groups, and 4 of other ethnicity. This is broadly in line with recent historical numbers.

All self-inflicted deaths by females were of white ethnicity.

Nationality

There were 71 deaths of UK nationals in 2014, up 5 on 2013. UK nationals accounted for 85% of self-inflicted deaths in 2014 consistent with recent years; in 8 of the last 10 years self-inflicted deaths by UK nationals have accounted for between 85% and 93% of self-inflicted deaths.

There were 6 self-inflicted deaths of nationals from the European Economic Area (EEA) in 2014, unchanged from 2013. There were 7 deaths of other foreign nationals in 2014.

Sentence type

Of those sentenced, the group with the most self-inflicted deaths was of prisoners serving determinate sentences of more than 4 years. In this group there were 23 self-inflicted deaths in 2014, compared with only 10 in 2013. This number is the highest number in this group this century. There were 8 self-inflicted deaths of lifers, broadly consistent with historic numbers and 7 self-inflicted deaths of Indeterminate Sentenced for Public Protection (ISPP) prisoners.

Method, ligatures and ligature points

The most common method of self-inflicted deaths remains hanging with 9-in-10 (78) deaths by this method in 2014, consistent with previous years.

There was an increase in deaths by suffocation, with 4 deaths by this method in 2014. Historically, there is typically just 1 self-inflicted death by suffocation in any year.

Bedding is the most common item used as a ligature in self-inflicted deaths by hanging. In 2014 over three-quarters (60) of these deaths bedding was used as the ligature item. This is an increase of 14 deaths on 2013 and in an increase in the proportion of self-inflicted deaths by hanging using this item. Between 2010 and 2013, 70% of self-inflicted deaths by hanging

used bedding as the ligature. Other ligatures used in 2014 were clothing (3), shoelaces (5) and belt (3). 7 other self-inflicted deaths used “other” ligatures – which includes curtains, towels and power cords.

The most common ligature point remains the window area, including window bars with 29 deaths using this as a ligature point in 2014, up from 23 in 2013. This accounts for approximately 37% of self-inflicted deaths by hanging in 2014. Although this is a higher proportion from the last two years, it is lower than the historical figure where typically at least one-half of all self-inflicted deaths by hanging used the window area prior to 2011. In contrast to the falling number and proportion of self-inflicted deaths using the window area over the longer term, there has been an increase in the number of self-inflicted deaths by hanging using the bed as a ligature point in the last two years. In 2014, there were 21 self-inflicted deaths by hanging that used the bed as a ligature point, up from 3 in 2013. The proportion of self-inflicted deaths by hanging using a bed as a ligature point remains unchanged at 27% in 2014, compared with 2013. Prior to 2013 the bed was used in fewer than one in five self-inflicted deaths by hanging.

By Prison

There were self-inflicted deaths at 52 establishments in 2014, compared with at 46 establishments in 2013. The highest number of self-inflicted deaths were at Elmley and Wandsworth with 4 self-inflicted deaths each. This is in line with recent years where the highest number of self-inflicted deaths at a single prison has been 4 in six of the last eight years. The two years where there have been more than 4 self-inflicted deaths at a single prison were 2010 when there was 6 deaths at one prison and 2013 where one prison had 5 deaths.

The number of self-inflicted deaths at individual prisons is volatile and can have sharp increases and decreases from one year to the next. The prisons with the highest number of self-inflicted deaths in 2013 were Wormwood Scrubs (5), Dovegate (4) and Woodhill (4). All these prisons have seen a decrease in the number of self-inflicted deaths in 2014 with 1 self-inflicted death at Wormwood Scrubs, none at Dovegate and 2 at Woodhill.

1.3 Natural cause deaths

- **141 natural cause deaths in 2014**, 10 (8%) more than in 2013;
- **1.7 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners** in 2014, up from 1.6 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the previous year.

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

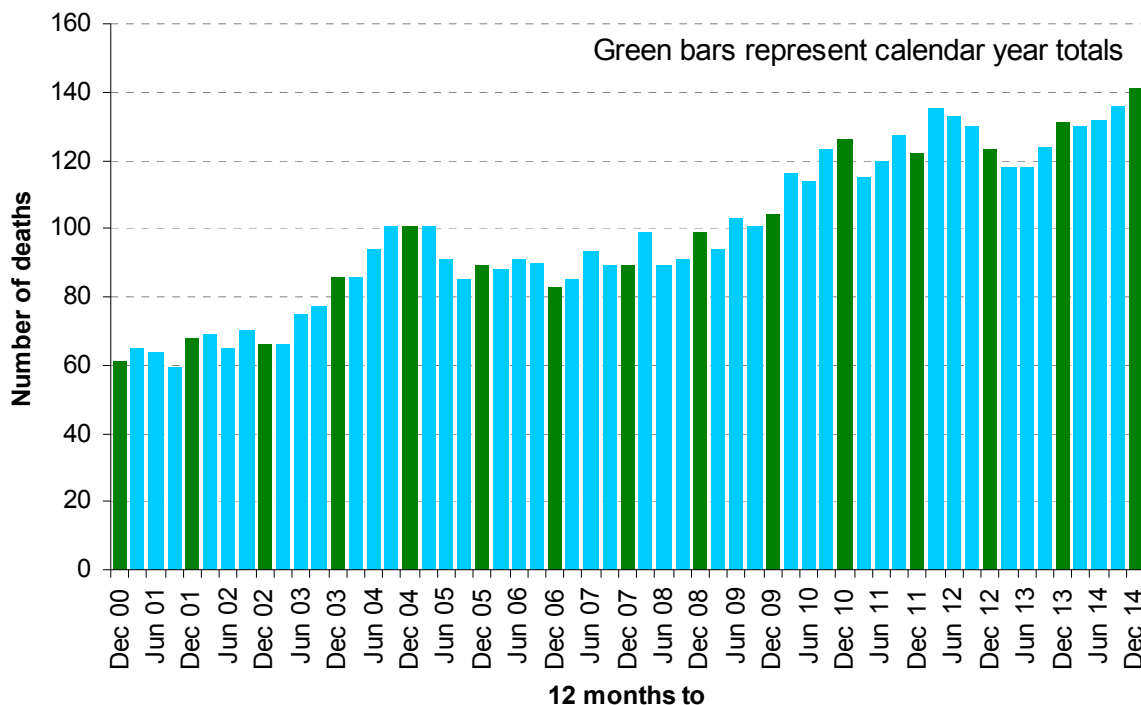
There were 141 deaths from natural causes in 2014. This figure is likely to increase as it is typical for some of the deaths awaiting further information to be reclassified as natural causes. The uncertainty on the figures will not be entirely removed until after inquest. The current figure is 10 (8%) higher than the number of natural cause deaths in 2013.

Figure 4 shows that natural cause deaths have been on a general upward trend over the last decade, albeit with fluctuations between reporting periods. This long term upward trend reflects the aging prison population, however in 2014 the continued rise in natural cause deaths was mainly due to an increase in deaths attributed to natural causes in younger age groups. Calendar year statistics show that as the prison population ages⁶ the number of natural cause deaths of older prisoners has also increased, with 75 of the 141 natural cause deaths (53%) in 2014 being of prisoners aged 60 and over. The trend over recent years has

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

seen an increase in the proportion of natural cause deaths of prisoners aged 60 and over from around 37% in 2007.⁷

Figure 4: Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody, rolling 12 months December 2000 to December 2014



In 2014 there was an increase in natural cause deaths in younger age groups with 2 natural cause deaths of 21 to 24 year olds, 3 of 25 to 29 year olds and 10 of 30 to 39 year olds. This compares with figures of 0, 2 and 6 respectively in 2013.

The rate of natural cause deaths has increased to 1.7 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in 2014 from 1.6 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in 2013.

There has also been an increase in natural cause deaths in females in 2014, with 10 deaths. Typically there are 3 or 4 natural cause deaths of females in a year in prison custody.

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 2014** compared with 4 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 since 1979.

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

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 2014** (6% 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 (typically as either natural cause or other/non-natural deaths) following inquest. However, as a guide, at time of the first publication of 2013 figures there were 14 other deaths.

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

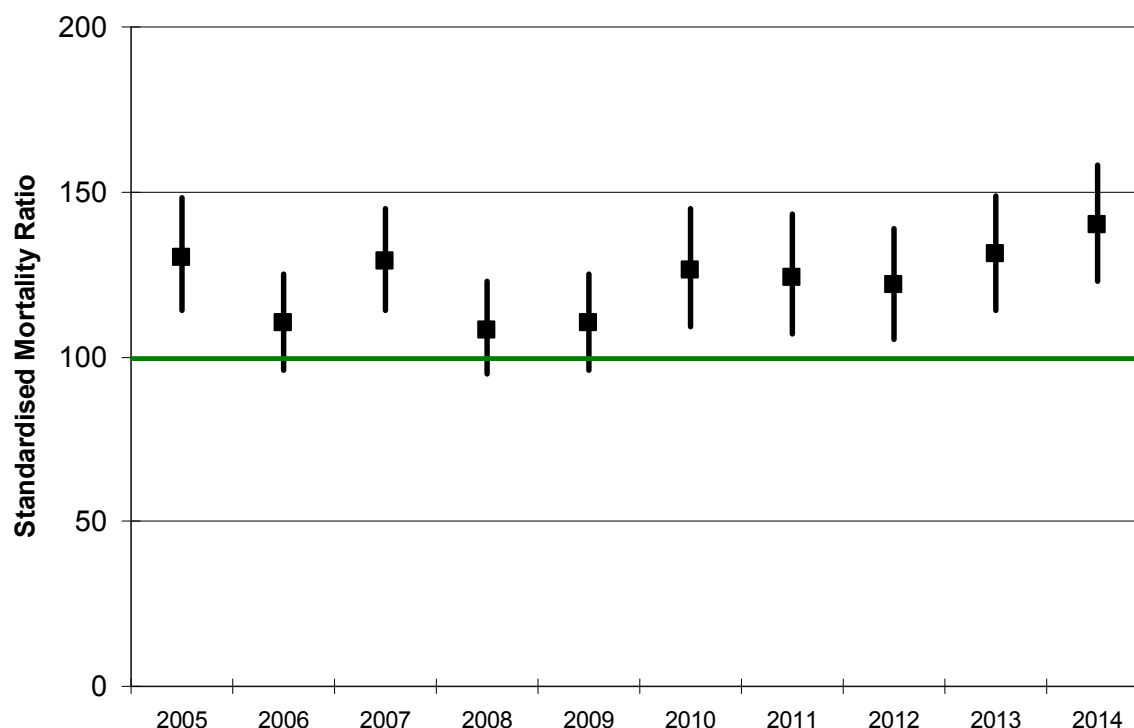
- At first publication of 2013 figures there were 14 deaths awaiting further information, of which 1 remains. 8 deaths were reclassified as natural causes, 1 as self-inflicted and 4 as other/non-natural.

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.

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% 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% 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 1, then this indicates that the mortality rate of the prison population is significantly higher than that of the general population. In 2014, the SMR for the prison population was significantly higher than the general population with a ratio of 1.40 with a lower bound 95% confidence interval of 1.23 and an upper bound of 1.50. In seven out of the last ten years, prison mortality has been significantly higher than that of the general population. The increase in the ratio in 2014 compared with 2013 is not significant.

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

2 Self-harm

- In the 12 months to September 2014 there were
- **24,748 reported incidents of self-harm**, up by 1,508 incidents (6%) on the same period in 2013
- **293 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, compared with 275 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period in 2013 (up 7%)
- **7,465 prisoners reported to have self-harmed** in the 12 months to September 2014, up 509 (7%) on the same period in 2013
- **89 individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners**, up by 7 per 1,000 prisoners (9%) on the same period in 2013.

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									
	Sep 05	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14
SELF-HARM										
Self-harm incidents¹	23,508	23,448	23,228	24,119	24,471	26,721	25,166	23,305	23,240	24,748
Males	10,277	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,240	17,221	18,068
Females	13,231	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	7,065	6,019	6,680
Self-harm individuals²	5,760	6,020	6,352	6,521	6,831	6,958	6,868	6,803	6,956	7,465
Males	4,290	4,585	4,879	4,990	5,302	5,540	5,558	5,675	5,885	6,381
Females	1,470	1,435	1,473	1,531	1,529	1,418	1,310	1,128	1,071	1,084
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	311	303	290	294	294	315	295	268	275	293
Males	145	158	159	153	168	178	191	196	214	222
Females	2,994	2,670	2,568	2,746	2,621	2,912	2,313	1,695	1,531	1,710
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners²	76	78	79	79	82	82	81	78	82	89
Males	60	63	64	64	67	69	69	68	73	79
Females	333	322	337	345	356	333	313	271	272	277
Self-harm incidents per individual	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.3
Males	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8
Females	9.0	8.3	7.6	8.0	7.4	8.7	7.4	6.3	5.6	6.2
Hospital Attendances	1,186	1,233	1,230	1,337	1,266	1,379	1,497	1,490	1,646	1,717
Males	950	999	1,049	1,128	1,091	1,214	1,331	1,329	1,515	1,598
Females	236	234	181	209	175	165	166	161	131	119

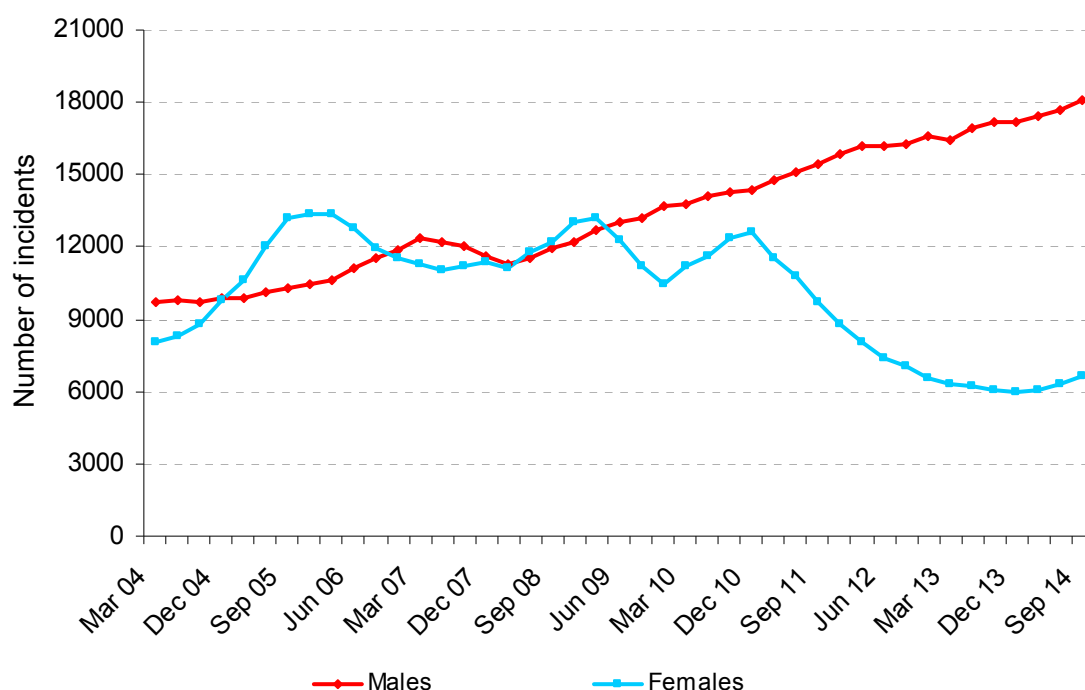
The number of reported self-harm incidents increased by 6% in the 12 months to September 2014 to 24,748 compared with 23,240 incidents in the same period a year earlier.

As self-harm rates differ between males and females it is best to consider the trends separately.

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

Figure 6: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender, (rolling 12 months by quarter)



2.1 Male self-harm

- In the 12 months to September 2014 there were:
- **18,068 reported incidents of self-harm by male prisoners**, up 847 incidents (5%) in the previous year.
- **222 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners**, up 8 (4%) compared with the previous 12 months.
- **6,381 male prisoners self-harmed**, up 496 (8%) on the same period in 2013.
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carried out, on average, 2.8 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to June 2014, down 0.1 incidents on the previous year.

The number of reported male self-harm incidents increased by 5% in the 12 months to September 2014 to 18,068 incidents compared with 17,221 incidents in the 12 months to September 2013. This continues the long term trend of the number of self-harm incidents amongst male prisoners increasing.

The number of incidents is affected by changes in the size of the prison population. The rate per 1,000 prisoners accounts for changes in the prison population. This also increased over the period to 222 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2014 compared with 214 incidents per 1,000 prisoners a year earlier.

The number of male prisoners reported to have self-harmed has increased to 6,381 in the 12 months to September 2014 from 5,885 in the 12 months to September 2013 (an increase of 8%). However, approximately 5% of male self-harm incidents do not have the prisoner's details recorded and so the actual number of males self-harming is likely to be higher.

The rate of male prisoners self-harming increased by 8% year-on-year to 79 males per 1,000 male prisoners from 73 males per 1,000 male prisoners.

Self-harm by male prisoners has been increasing over the longer term. Since the 12 months to September 2005 the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 male prisoners has increased by 53%. The rate of male prisoners self-harming per 1,000 male prisoners has increased by 32%.

2.2 Female self-harm

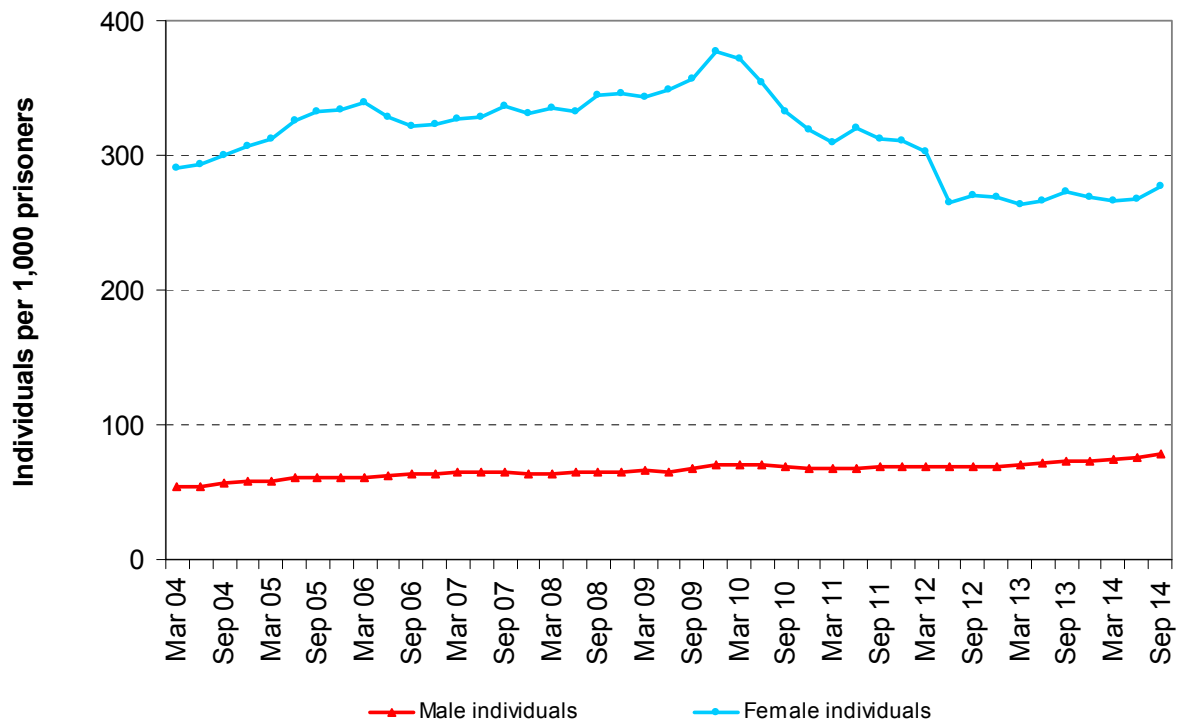
- In the 12 months to end of September 2014 there were:
- **6,680 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners**, up 661 incidents (11%) on the same period in 2013;
- **1,084 female prisoners self-harmed**, up 13 (1%) on the previous 12 months
- **277 females per 1,000 female prisoners**, up 5 per 1,000 female prisoners (2%) on the previous 12 months;
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 6.2 self-harm incidents on average, up 0.6 incidents (11%) on the same period in 2013.

The number of reported female self-harm incidents increased by 11% in the 12 months to September 2014 to 6,680 incidents compared with 6,019 incidents in the same period the previous year. The rate of self-harm incidents increased to 1,710 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners compared with 1,531 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners. This increase reverses the downward trend seen since 2010.

The number of female prisoners recorded to have self-harmed in the 12 months to September 2014 increased to 1,084 prisoners from 1,071 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2013. The rate of female prisoners self-harming increased 277 females per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2014 compared with 272 per 1,000 female prisoners in the same period a year earlier. (figure 7). As with males there are a small percentage of female self-harm incidents where the individual involved is not recorded.

This has reversed the recent falling trend of self-harm by female prisoners which fell by over 50% between the 12 months to September 2010 (12,407 incidents) and the 12 months to September 2013 (6,019 incidents). Over the same period the rate of females who self-harmed fell by 18% (333 females per 1,000 female prisoners and 272 females per 1,000 female prisoners respectively).

Figure 7: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



Despite the falls seen in recent years, self-harm by females continue to account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody – females accounted for 27% of self-harm incidents in this reporting period but only make up around 5% of the prison population.

3 Assaults (including fights)

- **15,763 assault incidents in the 12 months to the end of September 2014**, up from 14,207 incidents in the previous 12 months (an increase of 11%).
- **184 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to the end of September 2014**, up from 168 incidents in the 12 months to end of September 2013.
- **3,470 assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2014**, up from 3,178 incidents in the previous 12 months (an increase of 9%).
- **40 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 38 in the previous 12 months.**
- **1,958 serious assault incidents in the 12 months to September 2014**, an increase from 1,497 in the same period last year (an increase of 31%).
- **431 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2014**, up from 328 in the 12 months to end of September 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									
	-Sep 05	-Sep 06	-Sep 07	-Sep 08	-Sep 09	-Sep 10	-Sep 11	-Sep 12	-Sep 13	-Sep 14
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents^{1,2}	14,004	14,926	15,298	15,896	15,363	14,508	15,088	14,965	14,207	15,763
Male establishments	13,020	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,367	13,697	15,206
Female establishments	984	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	598	510	557
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	186	193	191	194	185	171	177	172	168	184
Male establishments	183	188	189	192	185	172	178	173	170	186
Female establishments	223	271	232	213	179	155	160	143	129	142
Serious assaults	1,300	1,392	1,489	1,532	1,326	1,410	1,352	1,278	1,497	1,958
Male establishments	1,231	1,328	1,434	1,487	1,291	1,366	1,303	1,248	1,464	1,920
Female establishments	69	64	55	45	35	44	49	30	33	38
Assaults on Staff	3,437	3,536	3,343	3,255	3,057	2,937	3,053	3,014	3,178	3,470
Male establishments	3,061	3,011	2,919	2,866	2,778	2,721	2,820	2,828	3,002	3,308
Female establishments	376	525	424	389	279	216	233	186	176	162
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	46	46	42	40	37	35	36	35	38	40
Male establishments	43	41	39	37	35	34	35	34	37	40
Female establishments	85	118	97	88	65	51	56	45	45	41
Serious assaults on staff	280	282	281	306	252	310	281	250	328	431
Male establishments	263	255	261	285	241	291	262	243	315	418
Female establishments	17	27	20	21	11	19	19	7	13	13

1. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

2. 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

¹⁰ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

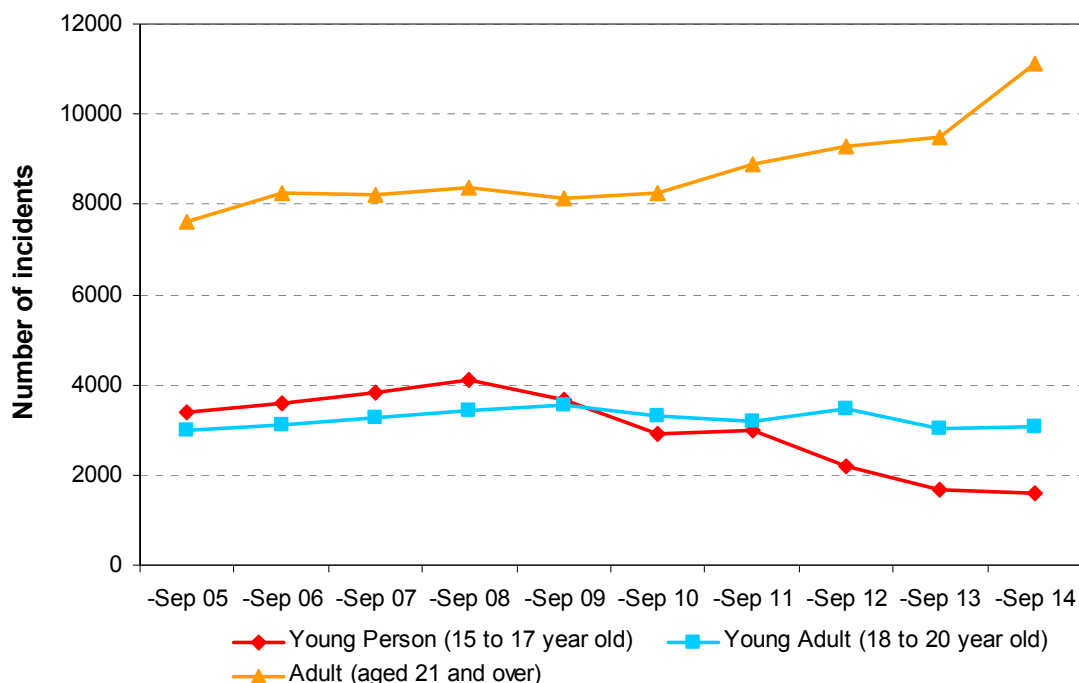
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody. ¹¹

3.1 All Assaults

There were 15,763 record assault incidents in the 12 months to the end of September 2014 at a rate of 184 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This was an increase of 1,556 incidents (11%), or 16 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (10%), over the same period last year. This increase may be 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.

There are differing trends between different age groups (figure 8). The increase in assaults primarily occurs amongst adult (those aged 21 and over) prisoners; this has consistently increased since 2010. In the 12 months to September 2014 there were 11,136 assaults involving only adults, an increase of 2,864 incidents since the corresponding period in 2010. This increase will be, in part, due to the increase in this cohort of the prison population. Assault incidents where the youngest person involved was aged between 18 and 20 years old has remained broadly unchanged at around 3,000 incidents a year over the last 10 years. The number of assaults involving 15 to 17 year olds has fallen by over 50% from its peak in the 12 months to September 2008 to 1,577 assault incidents in 2014. This fall in the 15 to 17 year old age group has been driven by the fall in the number of 15 to 17 year olds held in prison custody, and does not present any evidence in itself of this age group becoming less violent.

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



Comparisons between the male and female estate

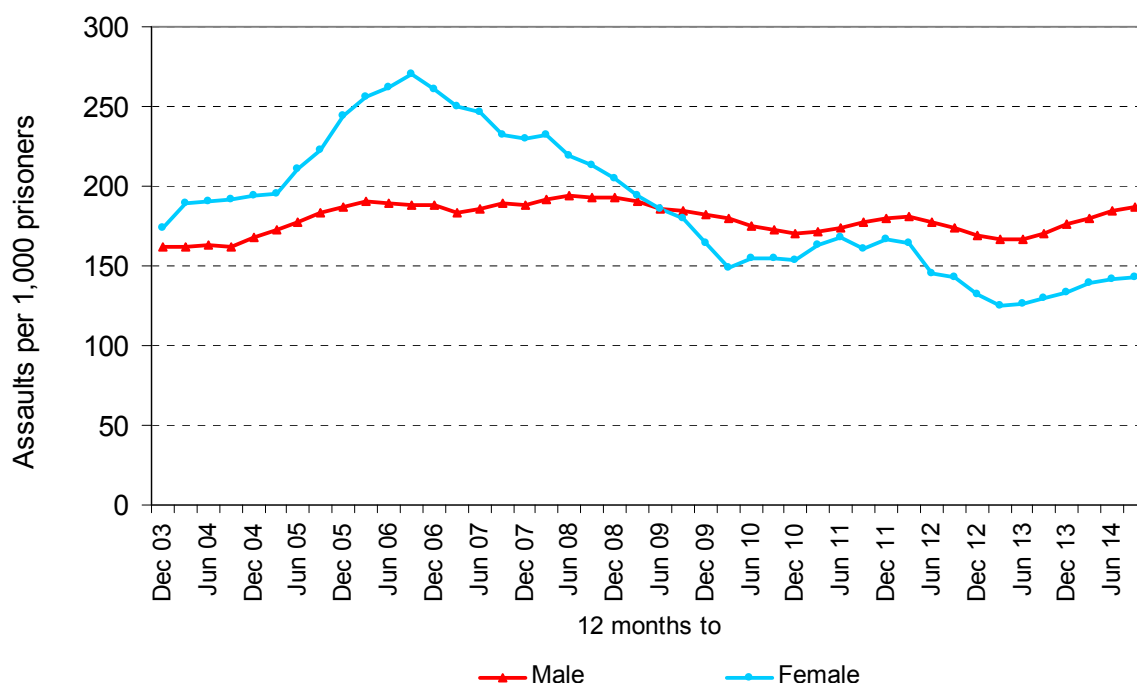
With 96% of assaults occurring in the male estate, the overall rate of assaults is heavily biased towards the rate of assaults in the male estate.

¹¹ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

The rate of assaults for male prisoners increased in the 12 months to September 2014 to 186 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 170 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in the same period a year earlier. The increase has come after a period of falling trend which saw the rate of assaults falling from 192 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in the 12 months to September 2008 to 170 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in the 12 months to September 2013.

In the female estate, there were 142 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2014, up from 129 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2013. This increase has come after a period of falling trend. The rate of assaults in the female estate fell from a peak of 271 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2006 to 129 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2013 – almost halving the rate of assaults in female establishments over the period.

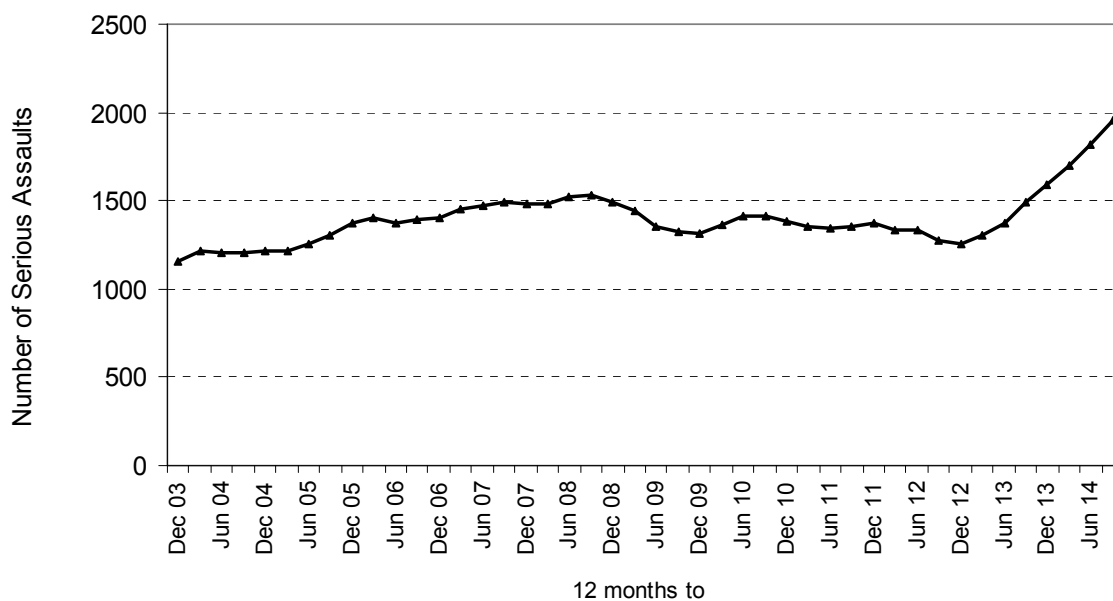
Figure 9: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



Serious assaults¹² increased in the 12 months to the end of September 2014 to 1,958 incidents from 1,497 incidents in the previous year – an increase of 31%. 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 (figure 10). The number of serious assaults has increased quarter on quarter since the July to September quarter in 2012 to 572 in June to September 2014.

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

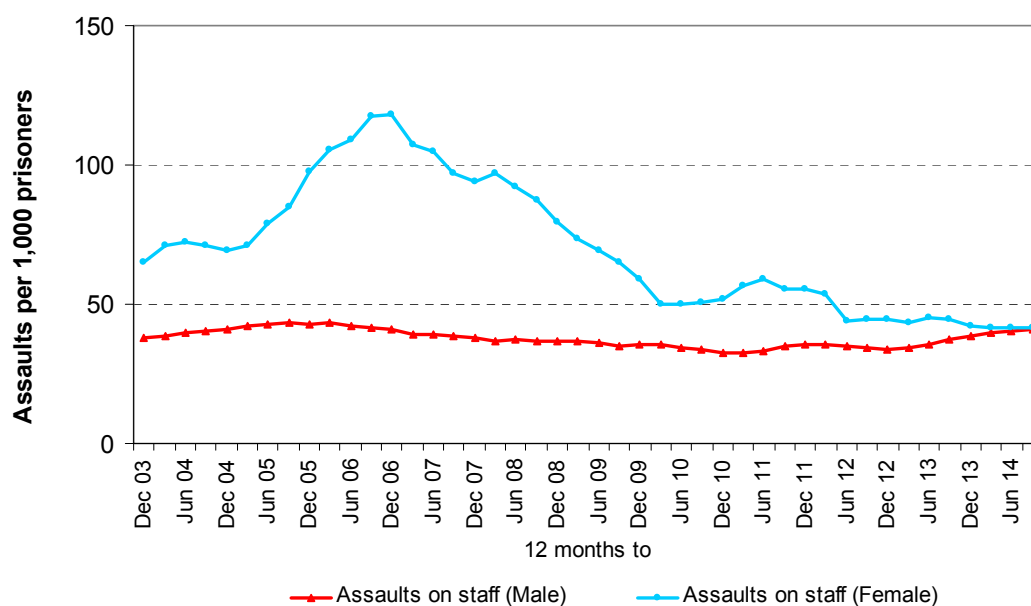
Figure 10: Serious assaults by quarter (rolling 12 month totals), England and Wales



3.2 Assaults on staff

There were 3,470 assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2014 at a rate of 40 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This is an increase 292 (9%) assaults, or 2 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (5%) on the 12 months to September 2013. The number of assaults on staff had been on a generally downward trend between the 12 months to September 2006 and the 12 months to September 2012 but has increased in the last two years.

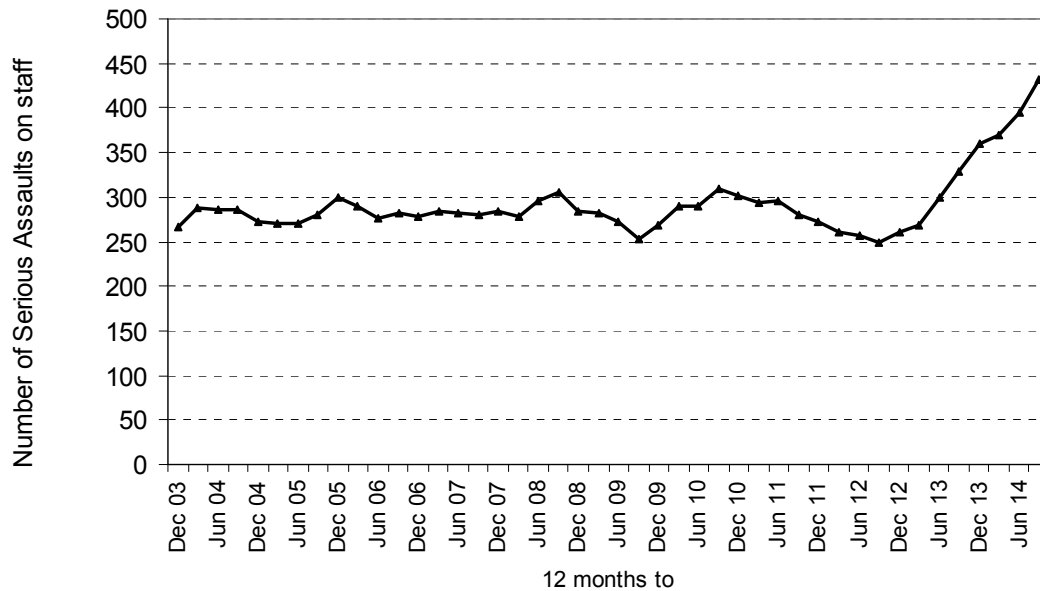
Figure 11: Total assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



There were 431 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to the end of September 2014 – an increase of 103 incidents on the previous year. This figure is the highest number of

serious assaults on staff recorded since current recorded practices began in 2003 (figure 12). Quarterly data shows that the number of serious assaults on staff has, with the exception of January to March quarter 2014, increased since the beginning of 2012 rising from 60 incidents in January to March 2012 to 127 incidents in June to September 2014.

Figure 12: Number of serious assaults on staff (rolling 12 months by quarter), England and Wales



References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections (www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/)

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody (<http://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/document/fii-report/)
- Annual reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports/)

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

- ICD 10 (<http://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.

	Table description	Period
	Safety in Custody – Summary tables	
Table 1	Safety in custody summary statistics	Jan 04 – Dec 14
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Jan 04 – Dec 14
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Oct 04 – Sep 14
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Oct 04 - Sep 14
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 – Dec 14
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Jan 04 – Sep 14
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Jan 03 – Sep 14
	Safety in Custody – Figures	
Figure 1	Number of deaths in prison custody	Dec 00 – Dec 14
Figure 2	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Dec 00 – Dec 14
Figure 3	Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody	Dec 00 – Dec 14
Figure 4	Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody	Dec 00 – Dec 14
Figure 5	Standardised Mortality Ratio	Dec 04 – Dec 14
Figure 6	Number of self-harm incidents by gender	Jan 04 – Sep 14
Figure 7	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Jan 04 – Sep 14
Figure 8	Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner	Sep 05 – Sep 14
Figure 9	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total	Jan 03 – Sep 14
Figure 10	Number of serious assaults	Jan 03 – Sep 14
Figure 11	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – on staff	Jan 03 – Sep 14
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Table 1.4	Annual deaths arising from incidents in prison custody but occurring elsewhere	1999 - 2014
Table 1.5	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender	1978 - 2014
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Table 1.7	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in custody and current prison	1999 - 2014
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Table 1.9	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by ethnicity	1999 - 2014
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Table 1.11	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by sentence type	1999 - 2014
Table 1.12	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by method	1999 - 2014
Table 1.13	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation	1999 - 2014
Table 1.14	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligature points used in	1999 - 2014

¹³ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

	fatal hangings	
Table 1.15	Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group	2001 - 2014
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Table 3.16	Annual prisoner on prisoner assaults by establishment	2000 - 2013
Table 3.17	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2013

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 enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: 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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