



Ministry  
of Justice



# **Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Deaths in prison custody to December 2015 Assaults and Self-harm to September 2015**

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics bulletin

28 January 2016

## Contents

Introduction .....	- 3 -
Key findings .....	- 6 -
Deaths in custody .....	- 8 -
Self-harm .....	- 12 -
Assaults .....	- 15 -
References .....	- 19 -
List of tables and figures .....	- 20 -
Data Sources and Data Quality .....	- 21 -
Explanatory notes .....	- 21 -
Contact points .....	- 22 -

## 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 2015 and statistics on deaths in prison custody up to December 2015, and annual deaths tables. 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](http://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'<sup>1</sup> 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, 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***

---

<sup>1</sup> Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

This publication has updated figures on deaths to the end of December 2015 (including annual deaths tables for 2015), including a review on all deaths awaiting further information, and has updated figures for self-harm and assaults to the end of September 2015.

**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); and
- 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 date periods than those covered in published statistics. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, NOMS is unable to release figures for periods in advance of those published in Official Statistics publications.

**Related publications**

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

**Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin<sup>2</sup>:** 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 Quarterly<sup>3</sup>:** This provides proven re-offending figures for offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, received a caution or received a reprimand or warning.

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 28 January 2016 and includes statistics covering 12-month periods to end of September 2015 for self-harm and assaults and 12-month periods to end of December 2015 for deaths in prison custody.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 28 April 2016, covering 12-month periods to end of December 2015 for assaults and self-harm and March 2016 for deaths in prison custody.

---

<sup>2</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

<sup>3</sup> Proven Reoffending Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics)

## Key findings

**Table 1: Safety in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales, deaths to 12 months ending December 2015, assaults and self-harm to 12 months ending September 2015**

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

	12 months ending									
	Dec 06	Dec 07	Dec 08	Dec 09	Dec 10	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15
<b>Total deaths<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>153</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>257</b>
Self-inflicted	66	91	61	61	58	58	61	76	89	89
Natural Causes	83	89	99	104	126	122	123	131	145	146
Homicide	0	1	3	0	1	2	0	4	3	8
Other <sup>2</sup>	4	4	3	4	13	10	8	4	6	14

	12 months ending									
	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14	Sep 15
<b>Self-harm incidents<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>23,448</b>	<b>23,228</b>	<b>24,119</b>	<b>24,471</b>	<b>26,721</b>	<b>25,166</b>	<b>23,305</b>	<b>23,240</b>	<b>24,761</b>	<b>30,706</b>
Males	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,240	17,221	18,072	23,291
Females	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	7,065	6,019	6,689	7,415
<b>Assault incidents<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>14,926</b>	<b>15,298</b>	<b>15,896</b>	<b>15,363</b>	<b>14,508</b>	<b>15,088</b>	<b>14,965</b>	<b>14,207</b>	<b>15,886</b>	<b>18,874</b>
Males	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,367	13,697	15,298	18,134
Females	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	598	510	588	740

1. Figures include incidents at NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres.

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

### Deaths in prison custody

In the 12 months to December 2015 there were 257 deaths in prison custody; an increase of 14 compared to the 12 months ending December 2014. These deaths comprise of:

- 89 apparent self-inflicted deaths, no change on the same period in 2014.
- 146 deaths due to natural causes, consistent with 145 on the same period in 2014.
- 8 apparent homicides, up from 3 on the same period in 2014. Homicides are relatively rare, accounting for 3% of all deaths in the most recent period, and 1% over the last ten years.
- 14 other deaths, 7 of which remain classified as 'awaiting further information'.

### Self-harm

In the 12 months to September 2015 there were:

- 30,706 reported incidents of self-harm, up by 5,945 incidents (24%) from the same period in 2014.
- 359 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 294 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period of 2014 (up 22%).
- 8,964 prisoners reported to have self-harmed, up 1,453 (19%) on the same period in 2014.
- 105 individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners, up by 16 per 1,000 prisoners (18%) from the same period in 2014.

### Assaults

In the 12 months to September 2015 there were:

- 18,874 assault incidents, up 19% from 15,886 incidents in the same period of 2014.
- 220 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 188 in the same period of 2014.
- 2,606 serious assaults, up 30% on the same period of 2014.
- 14,247 prisoner on prisoner assaults, up 15% from 12,363 incidents in the same period of 2014.

- 166 prisoner on prisoner assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 147 in the same period of 2014.
- 2,008 serious prisoner on prisoner assaults, up 27% from 1,575 in the same period of 2014.
- 4,568 assaults on staff, up 30% from 3,503 incidents in the same period of 2014.
- 53 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 42 in the same period of 2014.
- 595 serious assaults on staff, up 33% from 446 in the same period of 2014.
- Since 2012, the number of serious assaults in total, and the number of serious assaults on staff have more than doubled.

# 1. Deaths in Prison Custody

In the 12 months to December 2015 there were:

- **257 deaths in prison custody**; an increase of 14 compared to the same period of 2014. This is a rate of **3.0** deaths per 1,000 prisoners, up from 2.8 in the previous 12 month period.
- **89 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, (a rate of **1.0** per 1,000 prisoners), consistent with the same period in 2014
- **146 deaths due to natural causes** (a rate of **1.7** per 1,000 prisoners), comparable with 145 on the same period in 2014
- **8 apparent homicides**, up from 3 on the same period in 2014.
- **14 other deaths**, 7 of which are yet to be classified.

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'<sup>4</sup> on the death. Until this time, for administrative and statistical purposes, NOMS classify deaths by *apparent* cause of death.

Annual supplementary calendar year tables on deaths are published alongside this bulletin<sup>5</sup>.

As there are a number of deaths yet to be classified, it is likely that some will be reclassified when sufficient information becomes available. For this reason all figures for the last two years are provisional.

## 1.1 Deaths in Prison Custody

*Natural cause deaths include any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.* The majority of deaths in prison custody were from natural causes (57% of all deaths), with self-inflicted deaths making up one-third of deaths. Natural cause deaths have been on a general upward trend over the last decade. This is contributed to by an aging prison population (see Offender Management Statistics Quarterly<sup>6</sup>).

*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.

*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.

*'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.*

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

<sup>4</sup> Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports [www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/)

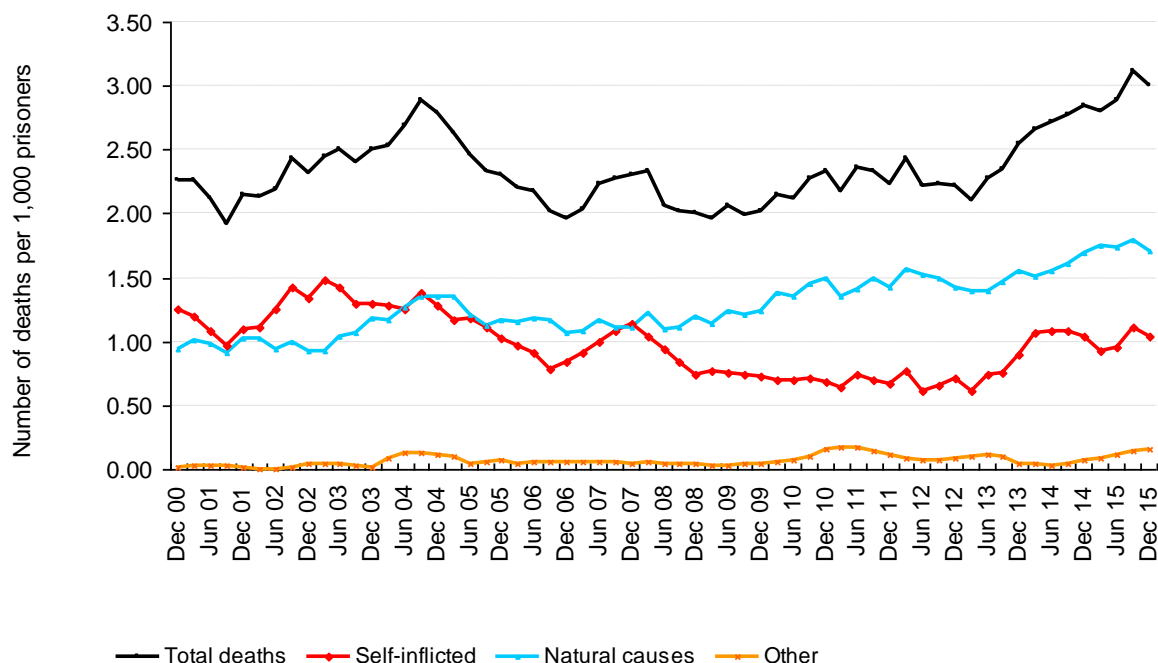
<sup>5</sup> Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

<sup>6</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)



death rate better shows the trend in deaths taking into account changes in the size of the prison population, see Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, 12 months ending December 2000 to 12 months ending December 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 month totals by quarter)**



The rate of deaths fell during 2005 and 2006 from a prior peak of 2.9 per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2004. Since March 2013, the rate of deaths has increased again, reaching a peak across the time series in the 12 months to September 2015 of 3.1 per 1,000 prisoners, falling slightly in the most recent period to a rate of 3.0 per 1,000.

Although prior to June 2004, self-inflicted deaths had predominated within the rate of deaths, since this time onward, natural cause deaths have been the predominant driver of the rate of deaths. There has in general been a largely steady increase in the rate of natural cause deaths, reaching a peak across the time series in the 12 months to September 2015 of 1.8 per 1,000 prisoners, falling slightly in the most recent period to a rate of 1.7 per 1,000. Although this is partially explained by the aging prison population, there are many other factors involved.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths had reached its peak in the time series in the 12 months to March 2003 of 1.5 per 1,000 prisoners. After a period of fluctuations from 2004 to 2008, the self-inflicted death rate had stabilised until 2013, when the rate began to rise again, reaching a peak in the 12 months to September 2015 of 1.1 per 1,000 prisoners, falling slightly to 1.0 per 1,000 in the most recent period.

There were 8 apparent homicides in the 12 months ending December 2015. Since 1978 the number of homicides in prison custody ranged from 0 and 5 deaths in any 12 month period. The number of homicides has been higher in each of the 12 months ending in the last three quarters. Homicides in prison custody remain relatively rare, accounting for 3% of all deaths in the 12 months to December 2015, and 1% of all deaths in the last ten years. 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.

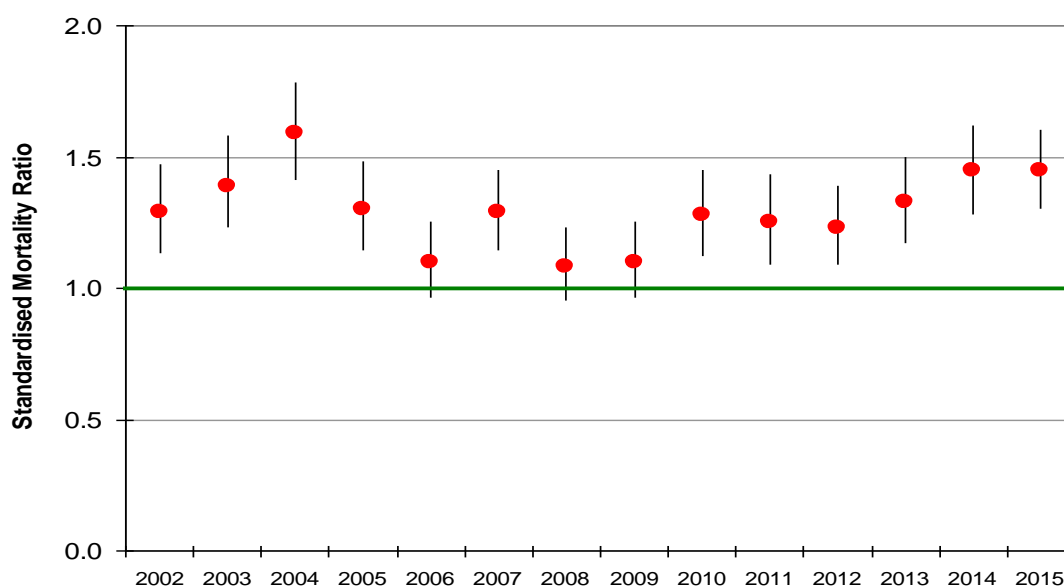
There were 14 other deaths in the 12 months ending December 2015 (5% of all deaths). This number is not directly comparable with earlier years as some of the deaths in this category are likely to be reclassified following inquest.

## 1.2 Comparison of deaths in prison custody with those in the general 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).

The Standard Mortality Ratio (SMR) provides a means of making like for like comparisons of the death rate in prison custody to that of the general population of England and Wales, by adjusting for age distribution and gender. Figure 2 below presents the SMR of the prison population, compared to the expected level from the general population. Where the likelihood of death is the same as would be expected based on the general population, the SMR would have a value of 1 (depicted by the green line - a ratio of 1:1). Due to the adjustments, there is a margin of error around the SMR estimates, depicted on the graph as the range of values covered by lines around the point estimates.

**Figure 2: Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population, 2002 to 2015, England and Wales**



In 2015, the likelihood of prison mortality was 45%<sup>7</sup> greater than in the general population (with 90% confidence within a range of 30% to 60% greater likelihood). In seven out of the last ten years, the likelihood of prison mortality has been significantly higher than in the general population, however none of the apparent year on year changes to the SMR are

<sup>7</sup> In 2015, the SMR for the prison population was 1.45 with a lower bound 90% confidence interval of 1.30 and the upper bound of 1.60.

significant across the period. Figure 2 is updated annually on a calendar year basis when the underlying general population data<sup>8</sup> become available from the Office of National Statistics.

---

<sup>8</sup> Death figures for the general population, as used in SMR calculations, are derived from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Mortality Statistics at the following link [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/death-reg-sum-tables/2014/sb-deaths-first-release--2014.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/death-reg-sum-tables/2014/sb-deaths-first-release--2014.html) and national population figures come from the Population Projections Statistics at the following link: [www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/npp/national-population-projections/2014-based-projections/index.html](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/npp/national-population-projections/2014-based-projections/index.html)

## 2 Self-harm

In the 12 months to September 2015 there were:

- **30,706 reported incidents of self-harm**, up by 5,945 incidents (24%) on the same period in 2014
- **359 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, compared with 294 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period of 2014 (up 22%)
- **8,964 prisoners reported to have self-harmed**, up 1,453 (19%) on the same period in 2014
- **105 prisoners per 1,000 self-harmed**, up by 16 per 1,000 prisoners (18%) on the same period in 2014. Of those that self-harmed in the 12 months to September 2015, they self-harmed, on average, 3.4 times.

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.*” Neither this measure, nor self-harm outcome give an indication of attempted suicide. Although incidents of self-harm may include attempts at suicide, it is difficult to determine intent with sufficient accuracy to be recorded as such. While some incidents may result in serious outcomes, such as hospitalisation, the purpose or intent of an act may be unclear.

Those who self-harm often do so covertly. In the general population, 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.

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

### 2.1 Male self-harm

In the 12 months to September 2015 there were:

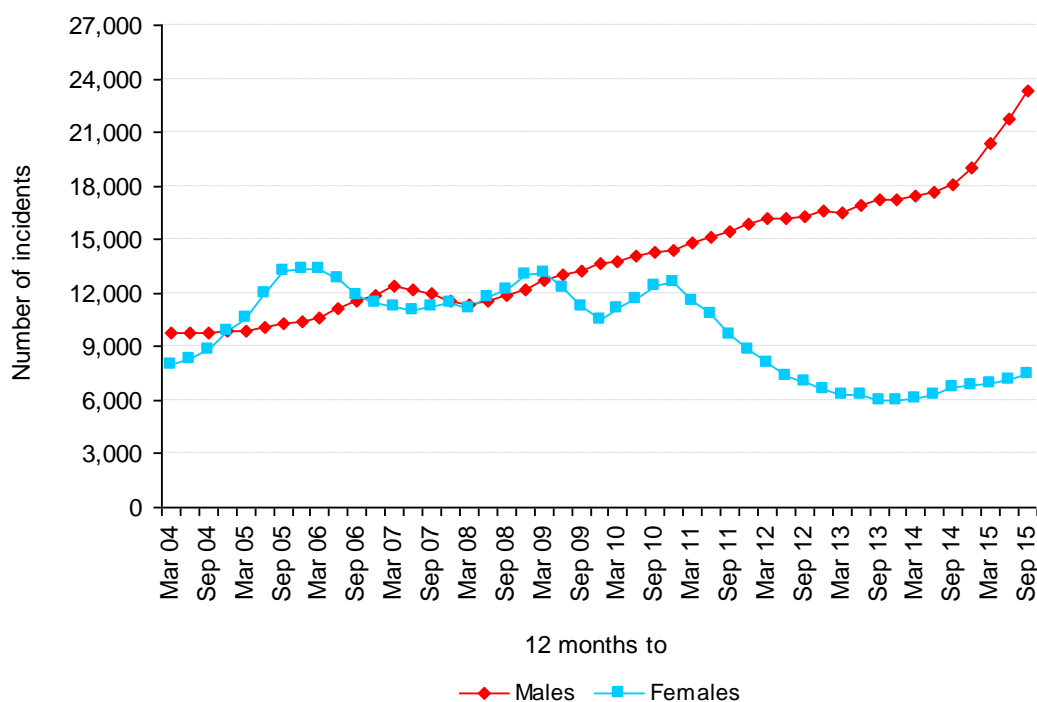
- **23,291 reported incidents of self-harm by male prisoners**, up 5,219 incidents (29%) in the previous year
- **285 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners**, up 63 (28%) compared with the previous 12 months
- **7,797 male prisoners self-harmed**, up 1,382 (22%) on the same period of 2014
- **1,900 hospital attendances** due to self-harm by males, up from 1,606 in the same period of 2014
- **95 male prisoners per 1,000 self-harmed**, up from 79 per 1,000 in the same period of 2014. Of those male prisoners who self-harmed, they carried out, on average, **3.0** self-harm incidents in the 12 months to September 2015, up from 2.8 incidents in the previous year

## 2.2 Female self-harm

In the 12 months to end of September 2015 there were:

- **7,415 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners**, up 726 incidents (11%) on the same period in 2014
- **1,909 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners**, up 197 (12%) compared with the previous 12 months
- **1,167 female prisoners self-harmed**, up 71 (6%) on the previous 12 months
- **156 hospital attendances** due to self-harm by females, up from 120 (30%) in the same period of 2014
- **301 female prisoners per 1,000** self-harmed, up from 281 in the same period of 2014. Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for **6.4** self-harm incidents on average, up 0.3 incidents on the same period in 2014

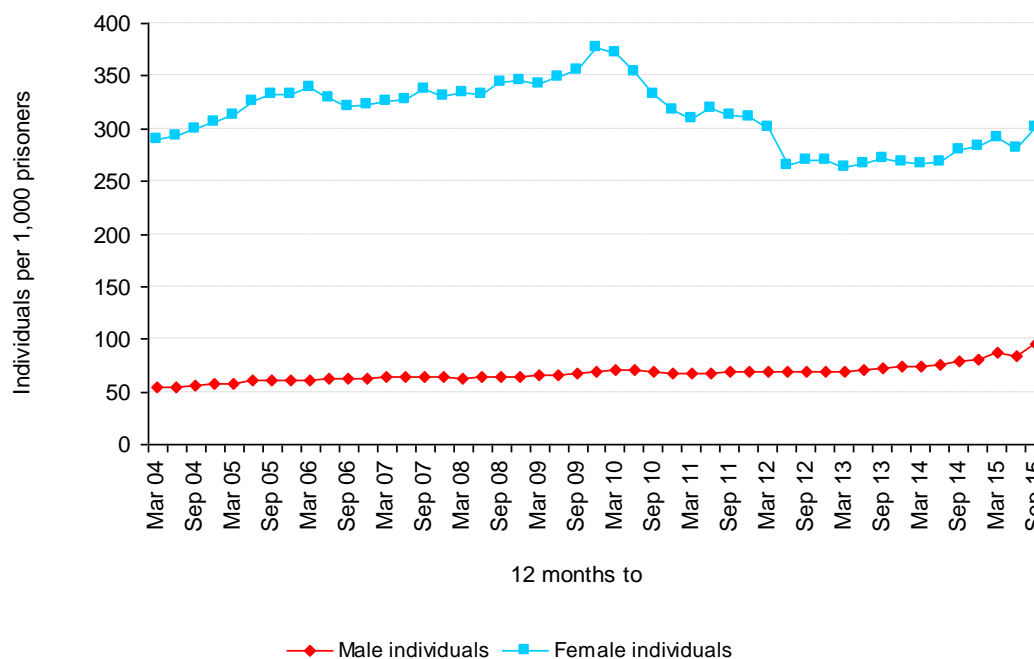
**Figure 3: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender, 12 months ending March 2004 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales**



Across the time series, there has been a steady increase in the number of incidents of self-harm among males. Since the 12 months ending September 2014, there has been a notable acceleration in the rate of this increase, to a peak of 23,291 incidents of self-harm among males in the 12 months ending September 2015.

For females, although from 2011 onward there were substantial reductions in the number of self-harm incidents from a peak of 13,361 incidents in the 12 months ending December 2005, since 2014 there has been a trend for increasing incidents of self-harm among females, albeit still considerably below past levels, reaching 7,415 incidents in the 12 months ending September 2015.

**Figure 4: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending March 2004 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)**



When considering this as rates, despite the falls seen between 2009 and 2012, self-harm by females has continued to account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody. Females accounted for around a quarter of self-harm incidents in this reporting period, but only make up around 5% of the prison population (see Offender Management Statistics)<sup>9</sup>.

The rate of self-harm among female prisoners fell after a peak of 377 per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months ending December 2009, reaching the lowest rate of 265 per 1,000 in the 12 months ending June 2012. Since this time there has been a gradual increase in the rate among females, reaching 301 per 1,000 in the 12 months ending September 2015.

The rate of self-harm among male prisoners has steadily increased across the time series, reaching a peak of 95 self-harming males per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending September 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

### 3 Assaults (including fights)

In the 12 months to September 2015 there were:

- **18,874 assault incidents**, up 19% from 15,886 incidents in the same period of 2014
- **220 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 188 on the same period in 2014
- **2,606 serious assaults** up 30% from 1,998 in the previous year
- **14,247 prisoner on prisoner assaults**, up 15% from 12,363 incidents in the previous 12 months
- **166 prisoner on prisoner assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 147 in the same period of the previous year
- **2,008 serious prisoner on prisoner assaults** up 27% from 1,575 in the same period of 2014
- **4,568 assaults on staff**, up 30% from 3,503 incidents in the same period of 2014
- **53 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 42 on the same period in 2014
- **595 serious assaults on staff** up 33% from 446 in the same period of 2014

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.

Assaults are dominated by incidents in the male prison estate, which accounts for 95%<sup>10</sup> of the prison population.

#### 3.1 All Assaults

##### *Comparisons between the male and female estate*

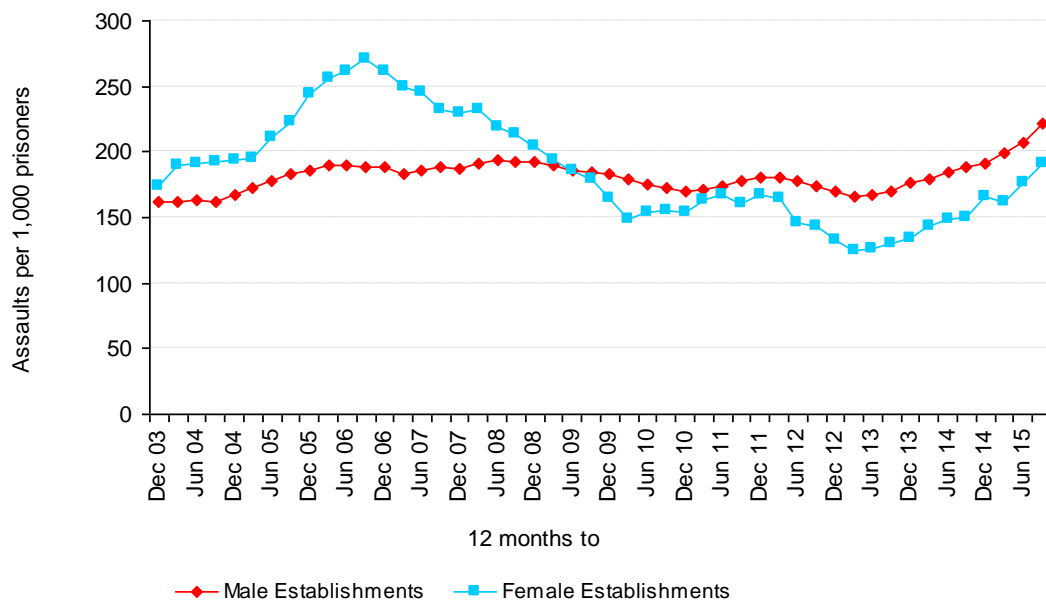
Since 2005, assaults in the male estate had ranged within 170 to 200 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners. Since the start of 2015, this level has been exceeded. The rate of assaults for male prisoners increased to 222 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2015, compared with 188 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in the same period of 2014.

In the female estate, after a period in which assault rates generally decreased from 2006 to 2013, the rate of assaults in the female estate has been increasing. There were 191 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2015, up from 151 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the same period of 2014. The rate of assaults in the female estate had halved between 2006 and 2013, from a peak of 271 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to September 2006 to 125 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in April 2013.

---

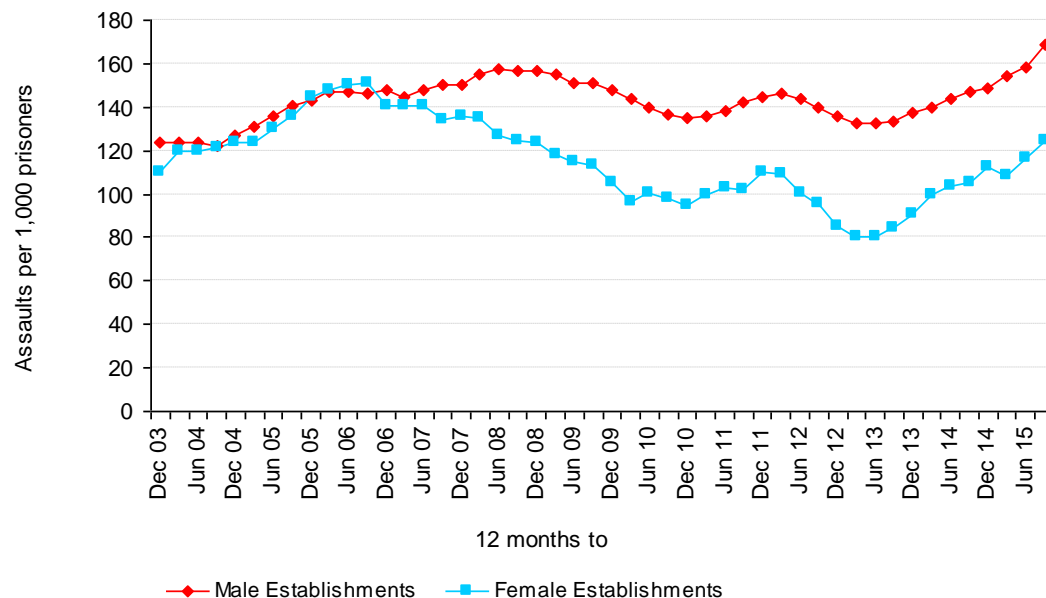
<sup>10</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

**Figure 5: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)**



### 3.2 Prisoner on prisoner assaults

**Figure 6: Total prisoner on prisoner assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)**

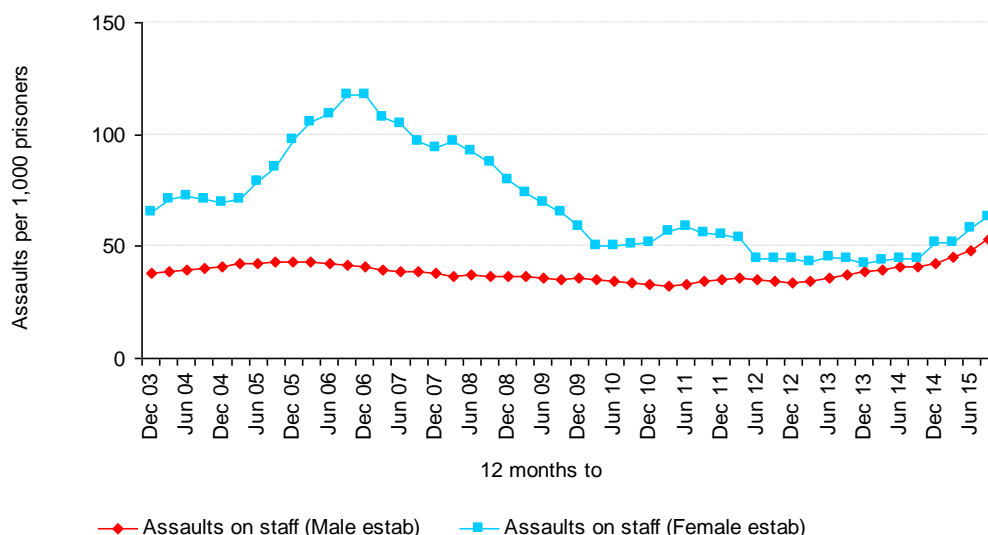


As seen in figure 6 above, while the rate of prisoner on prisoner assaults in the female estate had in general reduced from 2006 to June 2013, no clear trend was seen in the same period in the male estate. However since June 2013, the rate of prisoner on prisoner assaults in both the male and female estate has been rising.



### 3.3 Assaults on staff

**Figure 7: Total assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)**



There are notable differences in the time series of the rates of assaults on staff within male and female establishments (to note, this is based on the gender of the prisoners, and does not give any indication of the gender of the staff involved). Although in the female estate a substantial reduction in the rate of assaults on staff had been seen from 2007 to 2009, followed by a relatively static period, since 2014 the rate of assaults on staff in the female estate has begun to rise again. In the male estate, after a prolonged period remaining fairly static, since 2013 the rate of assaults on staff has continued to rise.

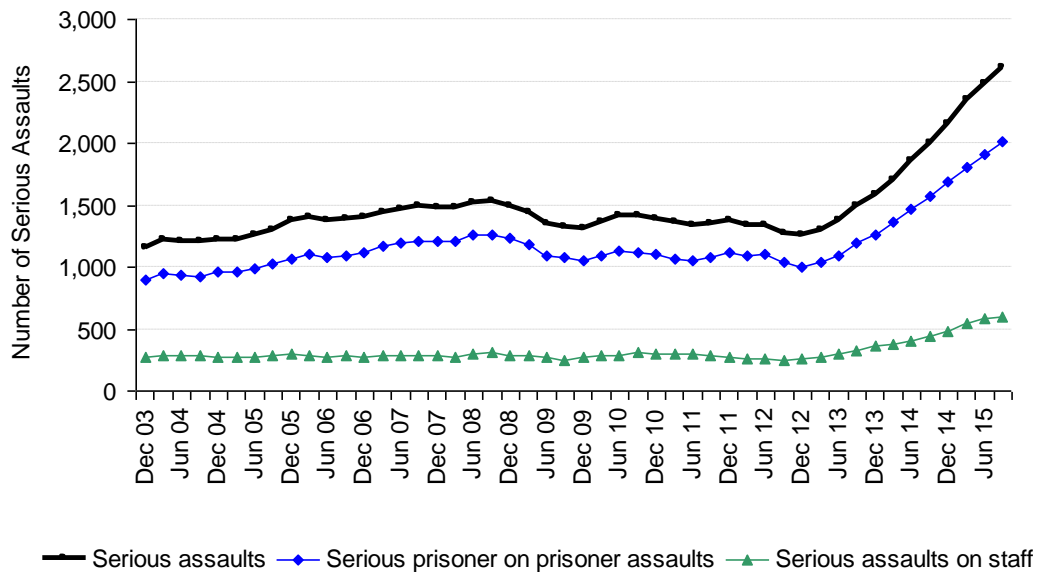
### 3.4 Serious assaults

After a prolonged period of stability in the time series of serious<sup>11</sup> assault incidents of all types, there has been a clear quarter on quarter upward trend since December 2012 in serious assaults, serious prisoner on prisoner assaults and serious assaults on staff (see figure 8).

Since 2012, the number of serious assaults in total, and the number of serious assaults on staff have more than doubled.

<sup>11</sup> For the definition of serious assaults see the Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

**Figure 8: Number of serious assaults total, serious prisoner on prisoner assaults, and serious assaults on staff, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)**



## References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections ([www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/inspections/))

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody ([iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/](http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/))

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study ([www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx))
- Deaths following police contact ([www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports\\_polcustody.aspx](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx))

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

- Fatal Incident reports ([www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/))
- Annual reports ([www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports/](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports/))

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

- ICD 10 ([apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en](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](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics))
- Prison Service Orders ([www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos](http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos))
- Prison Service Instructions ([www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis](http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis))

## List of tables and figures

This is a list of quarterly Safety in Custody Statistics tables and figures. Table 1 and figures 1 to 8 are included in this document. The remaining tables, and previously published annual tables, are available from the website<sup>12</sup>. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

---

<b>Table description</b>	
<b>Safety in Custody – Summary tables</b>	
Table 1	Safety in custody summary statistics
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter
<b>Safety in Custody – Figures</b>	
Figure 1	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause
Figure 2	Standardised Mortality Ratio
Figure 3	Number of self-harm incidents by gender
Figure 4	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender
Figure 5	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total
Figure 6	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – prisoner on prisoner
Figure 7	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – on staff
Figure 8	Number of serious assaults, total, prisoner on prisoner and on staff

---

---

<sup>12</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

## 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'<sup>13</sup>

## 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

---

<sup>13</sup> Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

## Contact points

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

**Kate Shaw**

Planning and Analysis Group  
NOMS Agency  
Clive House  
70 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9EX

General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

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

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](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice)

<http://www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx>

<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm>

Alternative formats are available on request from [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright. Produced by the Ministry of Justice.