



Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to September 2017 Assaults and Self-Harm to June 2017

Main Points

**Number of deaths
continues to fall**



There were 300 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to September 2017, down from 324 in the previous year. Three of these were homicides, down from 5. There were 77 self-inflicted deaths, down 33 from 110 in the previous year, 5 of which were in the female estate, compared to 9 in the previous 12 months.

**Self-harm incidents
continue to rise,
reaching record
highs**



Self-harm reached a record high of 41,103 incidents in the 12 months to June 2017, up 12% from the previous year. The number of incidents requiring hospital attendance rose by 9% to 2,833. After a quarter-on-quarter decrease in the three months to March 2017, self-harm rose to a record high of 10,850 incidents (up 10%) in the latest quarter.

**Assaults and
serious assaults
continue to rise,
reaching record
highs**



Assaults have continued to increase, reaching a record high of 27,193 incidents in the 12 months to June 2017, up 14% from the previous year. Of these, 3,687 (14%) were serious assaults, up 17% from the previous year. In the most recent quarter, assault incidents increased by 6% to a new record high of 7,115.

**Prisoner-on-
prisoner assaults
continue to rise,
reaching record
highs**



There were 19,678 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, 10% from the previous year, and the highest in the time series. Of these, 2,911 (15%) were serious assaults, up 18% from the previous year. Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults saw a 7% increase in the latest quarter, reaching a new quarterly record high of 5,155.

**Assaults on staff
continue to rise,
reaching record
highs**



There were 7,437 assaults on staff, up 25% from the previous year. Serious assaults on staff reached 798 in the 12 months to June 2017, up 14% on the previous period. Assaults on staff increased by 9% in the latest quarter, reaching a new quarterly record high of 2,011 incidents.

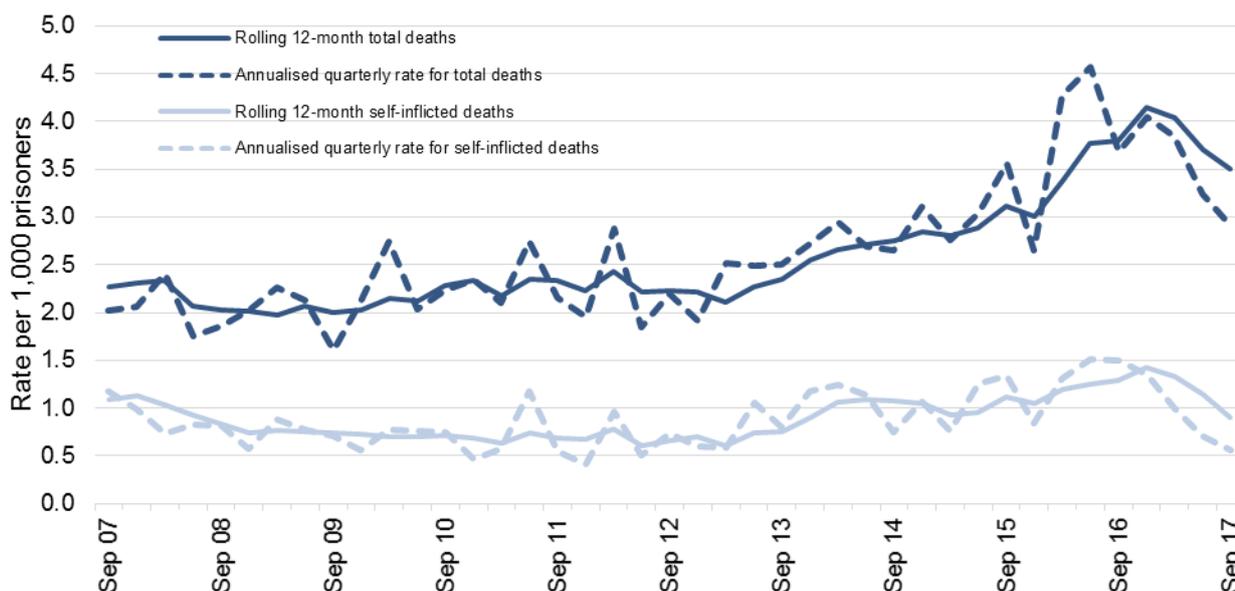
Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales, with figures in quarterly summary tables presented on a 12-month rolling basis over a 10-year time series. Supplementary annual tables, providing more in-depth statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults on a calendar year basis, underlying data files with pivot tables providing lower level granularity, and a guidance technical document are also available alongside this bulletin, and can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

1 Deaths: 12 months ending September 2017

Number of deaths continues to fall

In the 12 months to September 2017, there were **300** deaths in prison custody, down 24 from the previous year. Of these, **77** deaths were self-inflicted, down 33 from the previous year.

Figure 1: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of deaths per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending September 2007 to 12 months ending September 2017, with annualised quarterly rates¹



In the 12 months to September 2017 there were **300** deaths in prison custody, a decrease of **7%** from 324 in the previous year, at a rate of **3.5** deaths per 1,000 prisoners. The most recent quarter saw the lowest number of total deaths since the three months to December 2015. Quarterly death figures should be considered with caution due to greater volatility and the potential for seasonal effects. Long-term trends and more detail are presented in annual tables.

There were **77** apparent self-inflicted deaths, down **30%** from 110 in the previous year. On a rate basis this is **0.9** instances per 1,000 prisoners. Within the female estate, there were **5** self-inflicted deaths at a rate of **1.3** per 1,000 prisoners, down from 9 incidents in the previous 12 months. There were **3** apparent homicides, down from 5 in the previous year. Homicides in prison custody remain relatively rare, accounting for around 1% of all deaths over the last ten years.

There were **190** deaths due to natural causes, an increase of **2%** from 186 in the previous year. Natural-cause deaths were at a rate of **2.2** per 1,000 prisoners.

There were **30** deaths recorded as 'other' in the 12 months to September 2017, **25** of which are 'awaiting further information' prior to being classified. In some cases, the results of the toxicology and post-mortem tests are inconclusive, meaning classification cannot be arrived at until inquest (which can be a considerable time after the death), while other cases remain awaiting results at the time of publication. There has been a particularly high number of deaths awaiting further classification in this period. As a result, the number of deaths in the individual categories is not directly comparable with earlier years: it is likely that numbers in some categories will be revised upwards once classifications have been finalised.

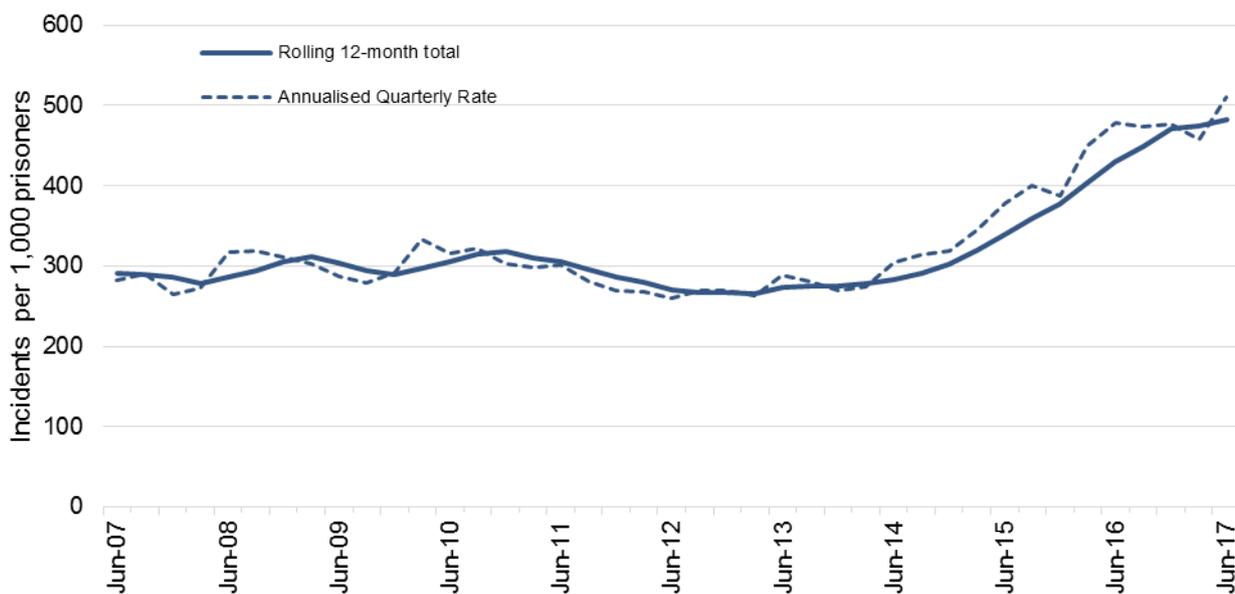
¹ The annualised quarterly rate is an estimate of the annual rate calculated from data in one quarter and also taking into account the number of days in that quarter.

2 Self-harm: 12 months to June 2017

Self-harm incidents continue to rise, reaching record highs

Self-harm has reached a record high of **41,103** incidents, up 12% from the previous year. The number of incidents also increased by 10% quarter on quarter, to a record high of **10,850** after a period of relative stability over the past four quarters. Incidents requiring hospital attendance rose by 9% to a record high of **2,833**.

Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending June 2007 to 12 months ending June 2017, with annualised quarterly rates

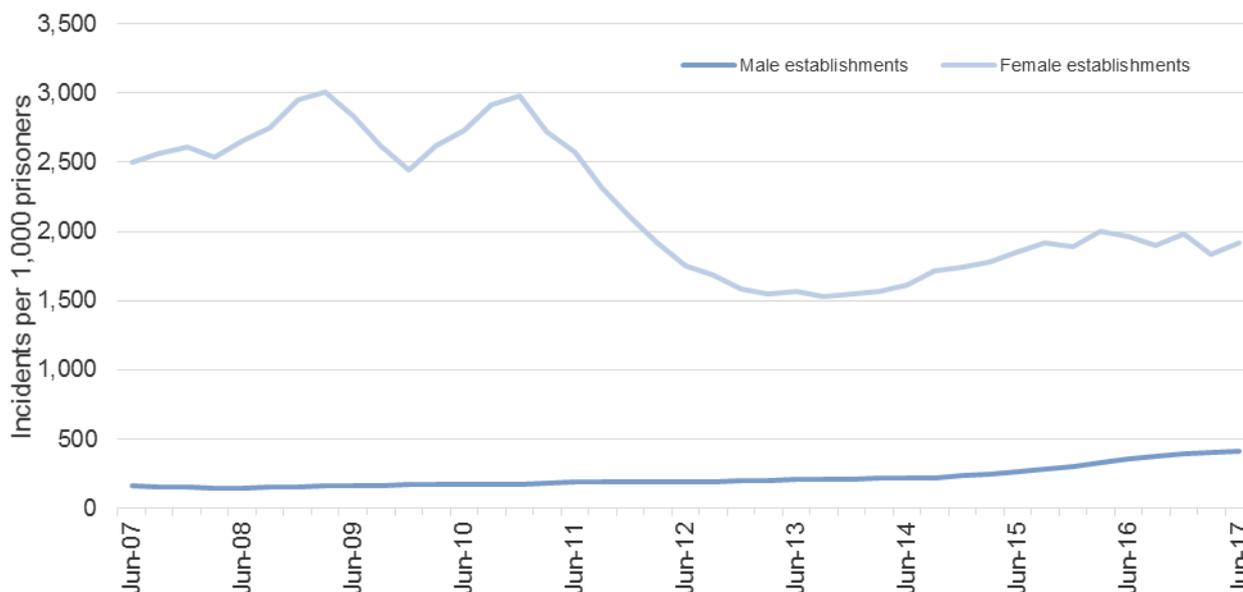


In the 12 months to June 2017, there were **41,103** reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of **482** per 1,000 prisoners), up 12% on the previous year. The number of self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance increased by 9% on the previous year to **2,833** while the proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance remained broadly similar at 6.9%. The number of self-harm incidents and those requiring hospital attendance are both the highest in the time series.

Following a period of relative stability at historic highs over the preceding four quarters, the quarterly rate of incidents increased to a record high in the three months to June 2017 with **10,850** incidents (up 10% on the previous quarter), **765** of which required hospital attendance.

The number of prisoners who self-harmed in the 12 months to June 2017 was **10,994** (a rate of **129** prisoners per 1,000), up 4% from the previous year. Those that self-harmed did so, on average, **3.7** times, although a small number of prolific self-harmers have a disproportionate impact on this figure. The majority of those who self-harm in prison do so only once a year. Additional detail on this can be found in the annual self-harm tables.

Figure 3: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners by gender of establishment, 12 months ending June 2007 to 12 months ending June 2017



Self-harm trends differ considerably by gender, with a rate of **413** incidents per 1,000 in male establishments (with incidents up 15% on the previous year) compared to a rate of **1,914** per 1,000 in female establishments (a reduction of 1% in the number of incidents from the previous year). In the 12 months to June 2017, the number of self-harm incidents per self-harming male increased from 3.1 in the previous year to 3.4. In contrast, self-harm prolificacy among females has dropped slightly, from 6.6 to 6.5 incidents per self-harming individual.

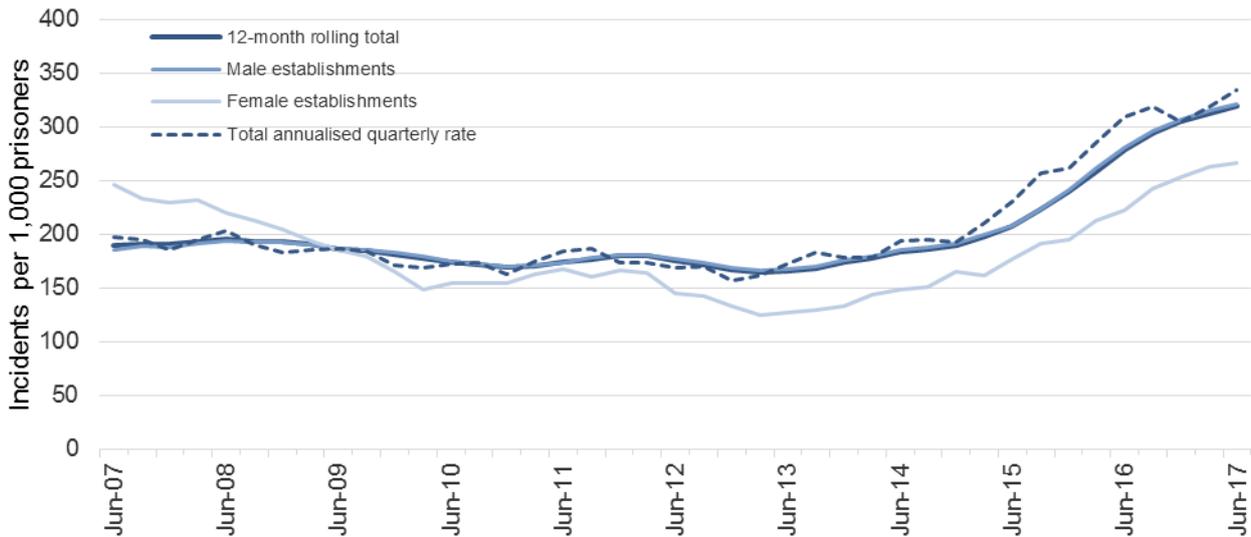
Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance has increased from the previous year in male establishments by 9% to **2,670**, and in female establishments by 4% to **163** incidents. While self-harmers in female establishments were roughly twice as prolific as those in male establishments, self-harmers in male establishments had nearly four times the proportion of self-harm incidents that required hospitalisation (7.9% in male establishments compared to 2.2% in female establishments).

3 Assaults: 12 months to June 2017

Assaults and serious assaults continue to rise, reaching record highs

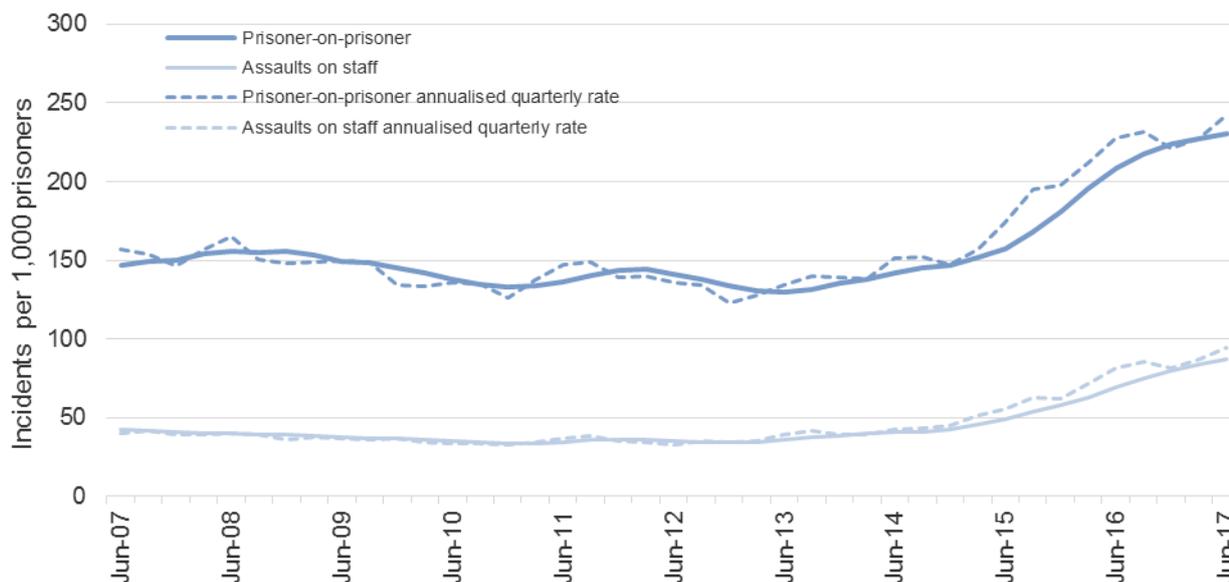
Assaults have continued to rise, reaching a record high of 27,193 incidents in the 12 months to June 2017, up 14% from the previous year. Of these, 3,687 were serious assaults, up 17% from the previous year, to the highest level in the time series. Quarterly assaults also rose by 6% to a record high of 7,115 incidents.

Figure 4: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total assaults by gender of establishment, 12 months ending June 2007 to 12 months ending June 2017, with annualised quarterly rates



In the 12 months to June 2017, there were **27,193** assault incidents (a rate of **319** incidents per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 14% on the previous year, and the highest level in the time series. In the latest quarter, there were **7,115** assaults, up 6% from the three months to March 2017.

Figure 5: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, 12 months ending June 2007 to 12 months ending June 2017, with annualised quarterly rates



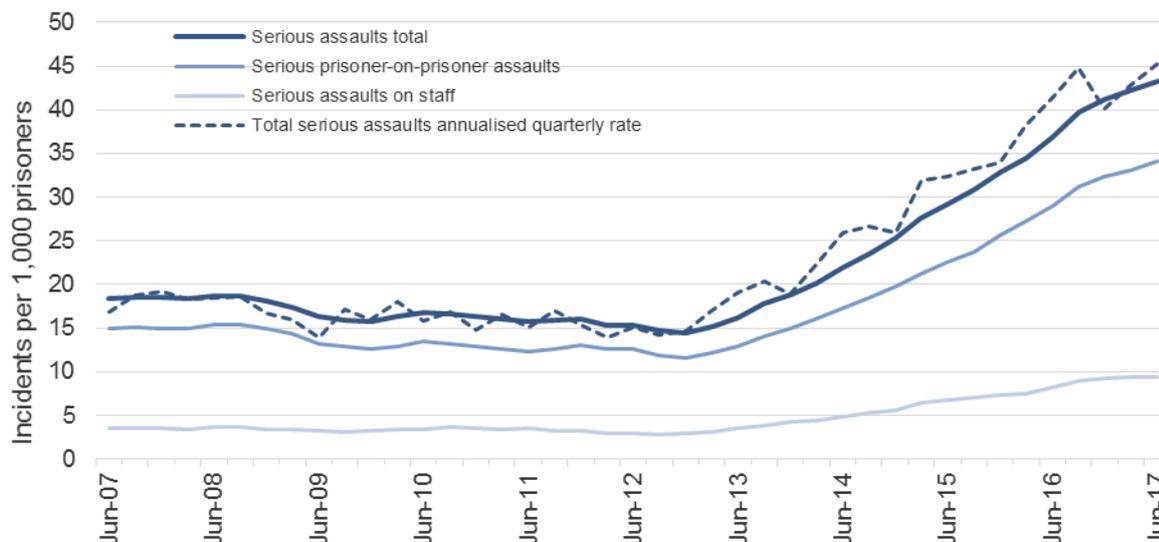
There were **19,678** prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the 12 months to June 2017 (a rate of **231** per 1,000 prisoners), up 10% on the previous year, and a record high. The latest quarter also saw a 7% increase in the number of incidents, reaching a record high of **5,155**.

Assaults on staff reached a record high of **7,437** in the 12 months to June 2017 (a rate of **87** per 1,000 prisoners), and are up 25% on the previous year. In the most recent quarter, assaults on staff rose by 9%, reaching a record high of **2,011** incidents.

3.1 Serious assaults

Serious assaults are those which fall into one or more of the following categories: a sexual assault, requires detention in outside hospital as an in-patient; requires medical treatment for concussion or internal injuries; or incurs any of the following injuries: a fracture, scald or burn, stabbing, crushing, extensive or multiple bruising, black eye, broken nose, lost or broken tooth, cuts requiring suturing, bites, temporary or permanent blindness².

Figure 6: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total serious assaults, serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, and serious assaults on staff, 12 months ending June 2007 to 12 months ending June 2017, with annualised quarterly rates



In the 12 months to June 2017, there were **3,687** serious assaults, up 17% on the previous year. Of these, **2,911** were serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, up 18% on the previous year. Over the same period, there were **798** serious assaults on staff, up 14% on the previous year.

In the latest quarter, there were **963** serious assaults, up 7% on the three months to March 2017, and a new record high. Of these, **766** were serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (up 8% to a new record high), and **204** were serious assaults on staff (up 6%).

After a prolonged period of stability in the time series, there has been a clear upward trend since December 2012 in serious assault incidents of all types. The number of serious assaults and serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults are at least 2.7 times higher than in the 12 months to June 2012, while serious assaults on staff have trebled.

² As noted in the Safety in Custody bulletin published on 27 July 2017, the definition of serious assaults will not be expanded to include incidents involving the throwing of urine or excrement, and spitting. This is to ensure comparability with previously published National Statistics. These incidents will continue to be reported as assaults, with a detailed breakdown included in the annual statistics.

Further Information

Accompanying files

As well as this bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

- A technical guide providing further information on how the data are collected and processed, as well as information on the revisions policy and legislation relevant to sentencing trends and background on the functioning of the criminal justice system.
- A set of summary tables for the latest quarter, and annual tables up to the latest calendar year.
- Underlying data files with pivot tables, giving lower level granularity.

National Statistics status

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.



All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's (UKSA) regulatory arm. The UKSA considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the UKSA promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

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