



## Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to September 2018 Assaults and Self-harm to June 2018

### Main Points

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Number of deaths increases compared to the previous 12 month period</b></p>   |  | <p>There were 325 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to September 2018, up 8% from the previous year. Of these, 5 were homicides, up from 3 incidents in the previous year. There were 87 self-inflicted deaths, up from 78 in the previous year, 4 of which occurred in the female estate, compared to 5 incidents in the previous 12 months.</p>  |
| <p><b>Self-harm incidents continue to rise, reaching new record high</b></p>        |  | <p>In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 49,565 incidents of self-harm, up 20% from the previous year. The number of self-harming individuals increased by 10% to 12,142. Quarterly self-harm incidents rose by 13% to 13,662 incidents.</p>   |
| <p><b>Assaults and serious assaults continue to rise, reaching record highs</b></p> |  | <p>There were 32,559 assault incidents in the 12 months to June 2018, up 20% from the previous year. In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 3,951 serious assaults, up 7% from the previous year. Both of these figures are the highest in the time series. In the most recent quarter, assaults increased by 5% to 8,689 incidents.</p>  |
| <p><b>Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults continue to rise, reaching record highs</b></p> |  | <p>There were 23,448 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the 12 months to June 2018, up 19% from the previous year. Of these, 3,063 (13%) were serious assaults, an increase of 5% in the number of serious incidents from the previous year. Both figures are record highs. Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults saw an increase of 6% in the latest quarter, with 6,283 incidents.</p>   |
| <p><b>Assaults on staff continue to rise, reaching record highs</b></p>             |  | <p>There were 9,485 assaults on staff in the 12 months to June 2018, up 27% from the previous year. There has been a change in how these incidents are recorded since April 2017 which may have contributed to the increase. See the guide for more information. Of these, 947 were serious assaults on staff, up 19% from the previous year. In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff increased by 4% to a new record high of 2,515 incidents.</p> |

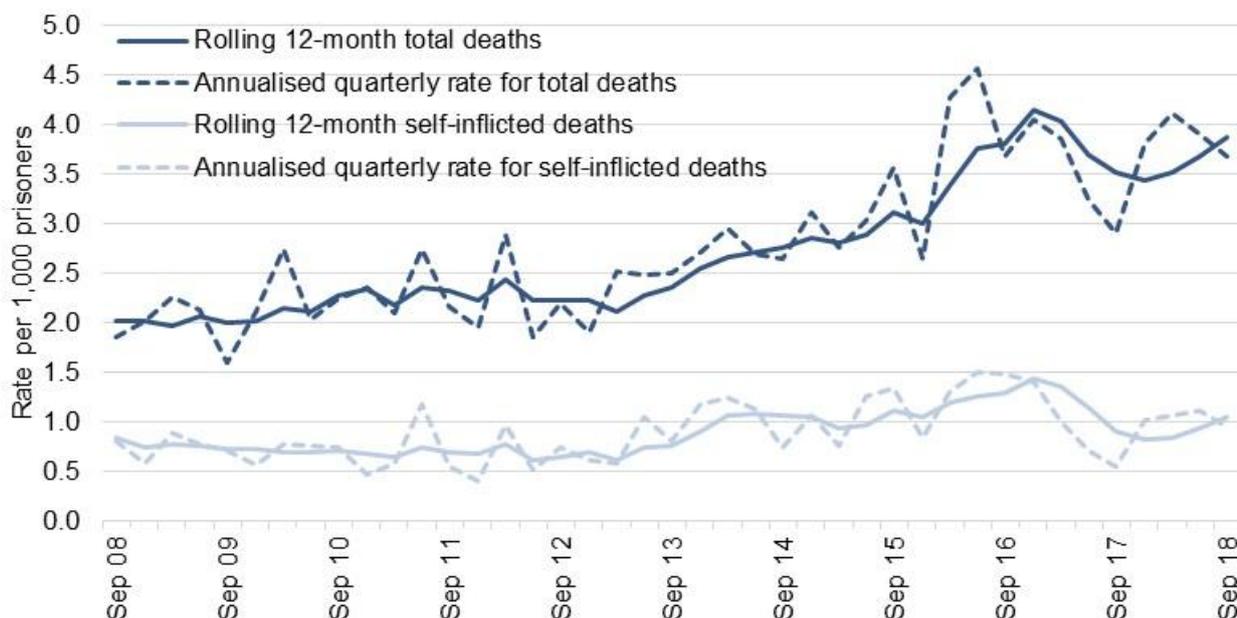
*Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody and HMPPS Immigration Removal Centres in England and Wales, with figures in quarterly summary tables presented on a 12-month rolling basis over an 11-year time series. Supplementary annual tables, providing more in-depth statistics 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, at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics).*

# 1 Deaths: 12 months ending September 2018

## Number of deaths increases

In the 12 months to September 2018, there were 325 deaths in prison custody, up 25 from the previous year. Of these, 87 deaths were self-inflicted, up 9 from the previous year.

**Figure 1: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of deaths per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending September 2008 to 12 months ending September 2018, with annualised quarterly rates<sup>1</sup>**



In the 12 months to September 2018, there were 325 deaths in prison custody, an increase of 8% from 300 in the previous year, at a rate of 3.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners. The most recent quarter saw the number of deaths decrease to 77, down 4 from the three months to June 2018. 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 87 apparent self-inflicted deaths, up 12% from 78 in the previous year. On a rate basis this is 1.0 instances per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2018. Within the female estate, there were 4 self-inflicted deaths at a rate of 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners during this period, down from 5 self-inflicted deaths in the previous 12 months.

There were 5 apparent homicides, up from 3 incidents 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 165 deaths due to natural causes, a decrease of 16% from 197 in the previous year. Natural-cause deaths were at a rate of 2.0 per 1,000 prisoners.

There were 68 deaths recorded as 'other' in the 12 months to September 2018, 61 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 high number of deaths awaiting further classification in this period which makes comparison difficult.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

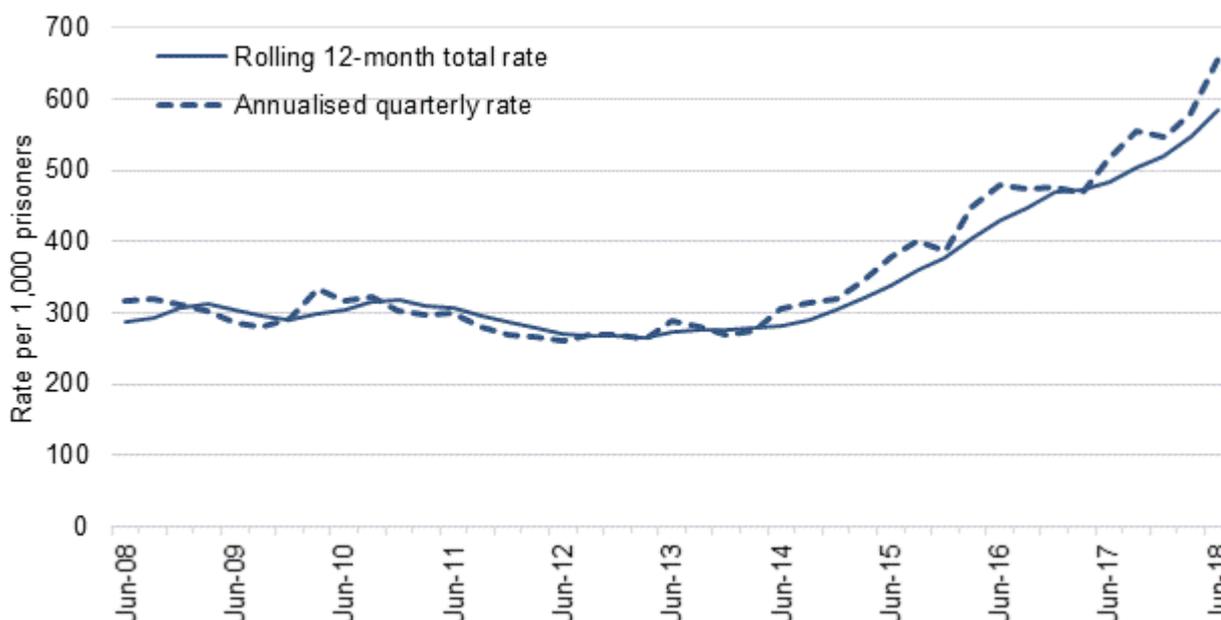
As a result, the number of deaths in the individual categories is not directly comparable with earlier years; it is likely that the figures in some categories will be revised upwards once classifications have been finalised.

## 2 Self-harm: 12 months to June 2018

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

In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 49,565 incidents, up 20% from the previous year, and a new record high. On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents is up 13% at 13,662. Incidents requiring hospital attendance increased by 11% to 3,151, the highest figure in the time series.

**Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending June 2008 to 12 months ending June 2018, with annualised quarterly rates**

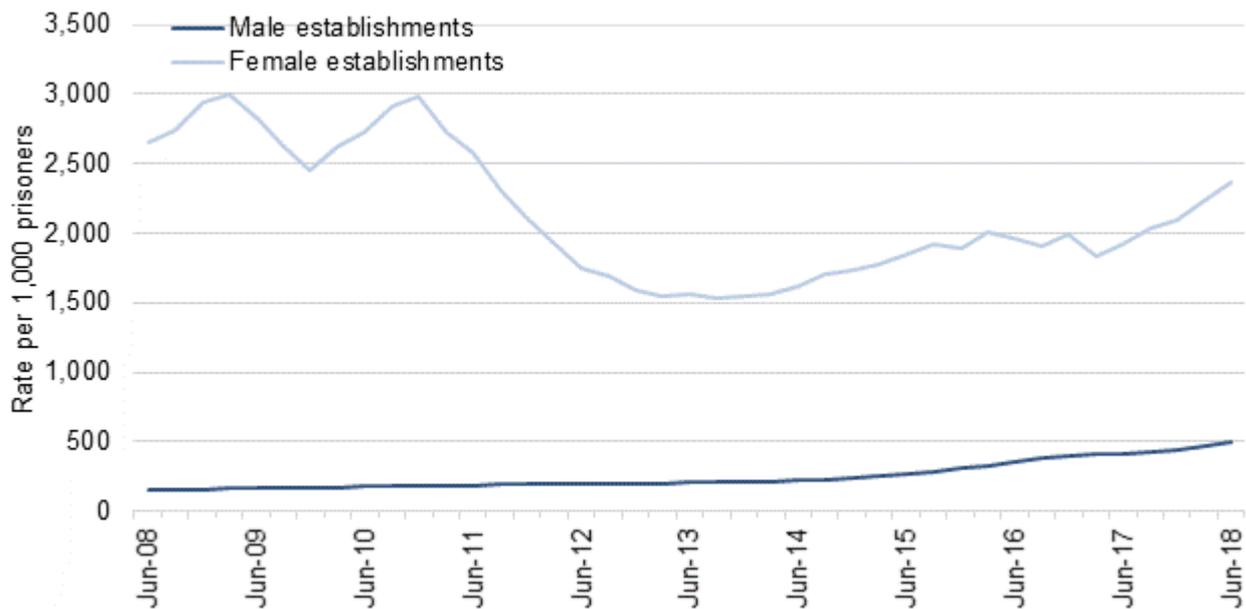


In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 49,565 reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of 585 per 1,000 prisoners), up 20% from the previous year. The number of self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance increased by 11% to 3,151. The proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance decreased by 0.5 percentage point to 6.4%.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to June 2018 increased to 13,662 (up 13% on the previous quarter), 833 of which required hospital attendance.

The number of prisoners who self-harmed in the 12 months to June 2018 was 12,142 (a rate of 143 prisoners per 1,000), up 10% from the previous year, and the highest figure in the time series. Those that self-harmed did so, on average, 4.1 times, although a small number of prolific self-harmers have a disproportionate impact on this figure.

**Figure 3: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners by gender of establishment, 12 months ending June 2008 to 12 months ending June 2018**



Self-harm trends differ considerably by gender, with a rate of 498 incidents per 1,000 in male establishments (with incidents up 20% from the previous year) compared to a rate of 2,366 incidents per 1,000 in female establishments (an increase of 24% in the number of incidents from the previous year). In the 12 months to June 2018, the number of self-harm incidents per self-harming male increased from 3.4 in the previous year to 3.7, while self-harm prolificacy among females increased from 6.6 in the previous year to 7.6 incidents per self-harming individual.

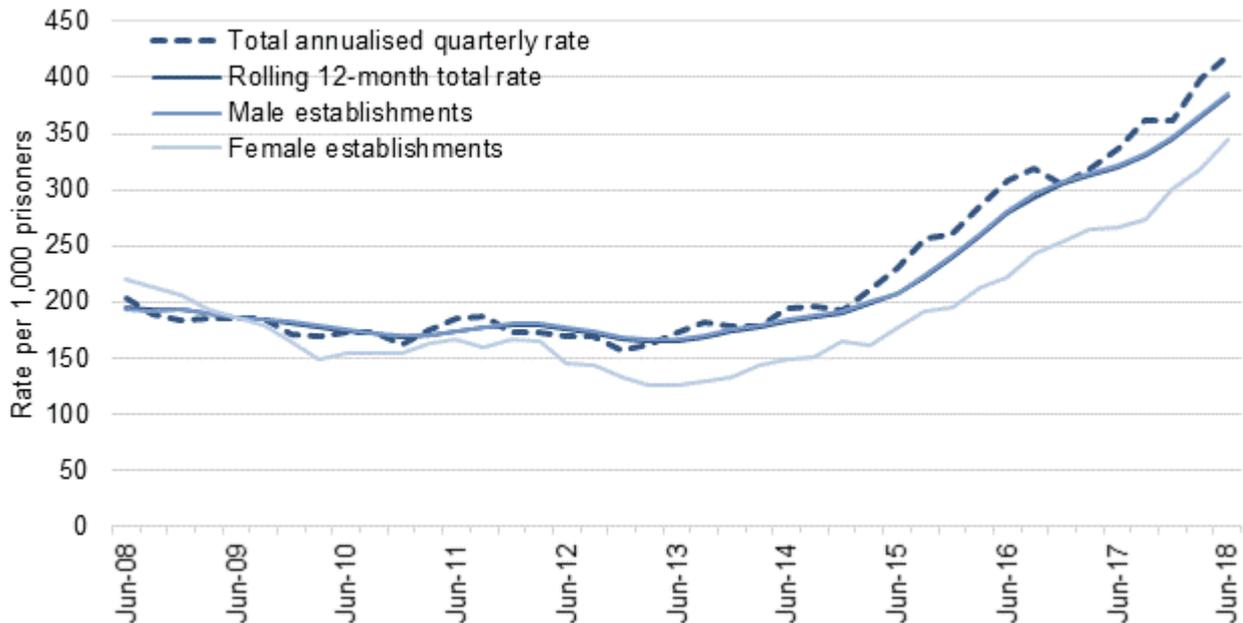
Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance have increased in male establishments by 10% to 2,959, and increased in female establishments by 19% to 192. While self-harmers in female establishments were, on average, involved in twice as many incidents as those in male establishments, the proportion of incidents that required hospitalisation was higher in male establishments, at 7.3% compared to 2.1% in female establishments. The need for hospitalisation is not a straightforward indicator of the severity of the self-harm incident because it is affected by the type of injury suffered and the availability of medical services at the prison.

### 3 Assaults: 12 months to June 2018

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

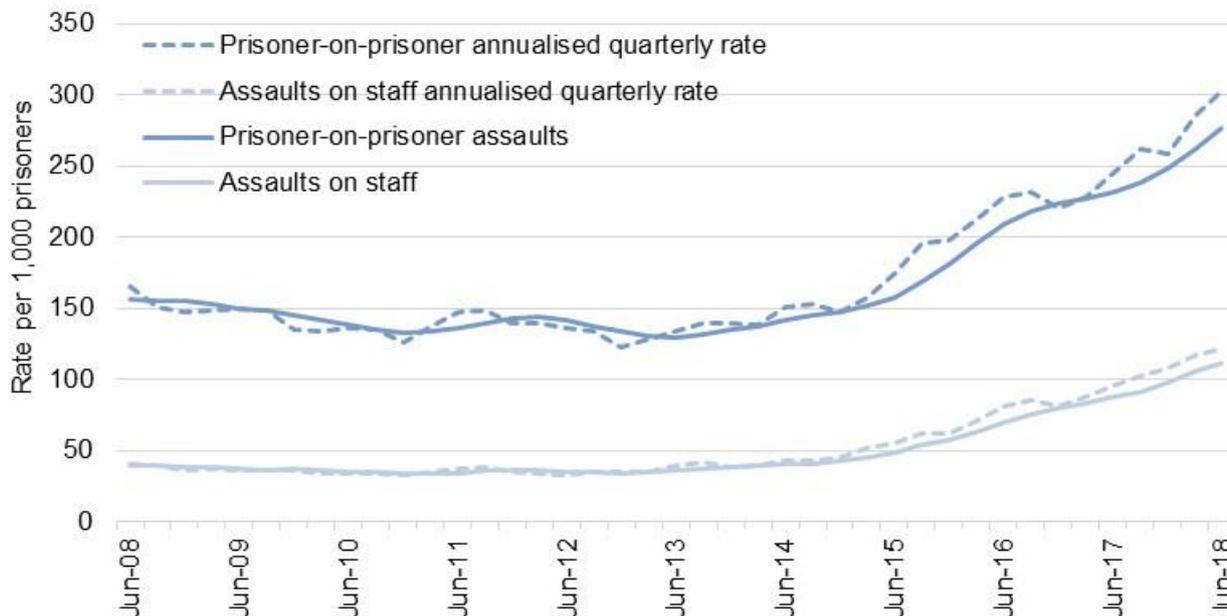
In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 32,559 assault incidents, up 20% from the previous year. Of these, 3,951 were serious, up 7% from the previous year. Both of these figures are the highest in the time series. Similarly, quarterly assault rate increased by 5% to 8,689 incidents.

**Figure 4: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total assaults by gender of establishment, 12 months ending June 2008 to 12 months ending June 2018, with annualised quarterly rates**



In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 32,559 assault incidents (a rate of 384 per 1,000 prisoners), up 20% from the previous year, and a new record high. In the latest quarter, there were 8,689 assaults, up 5% from the three months to March 2018.

**Figure 5: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, 12 months ending June 2008 to 12 months ending June 2018, with annualised quarterly rates**



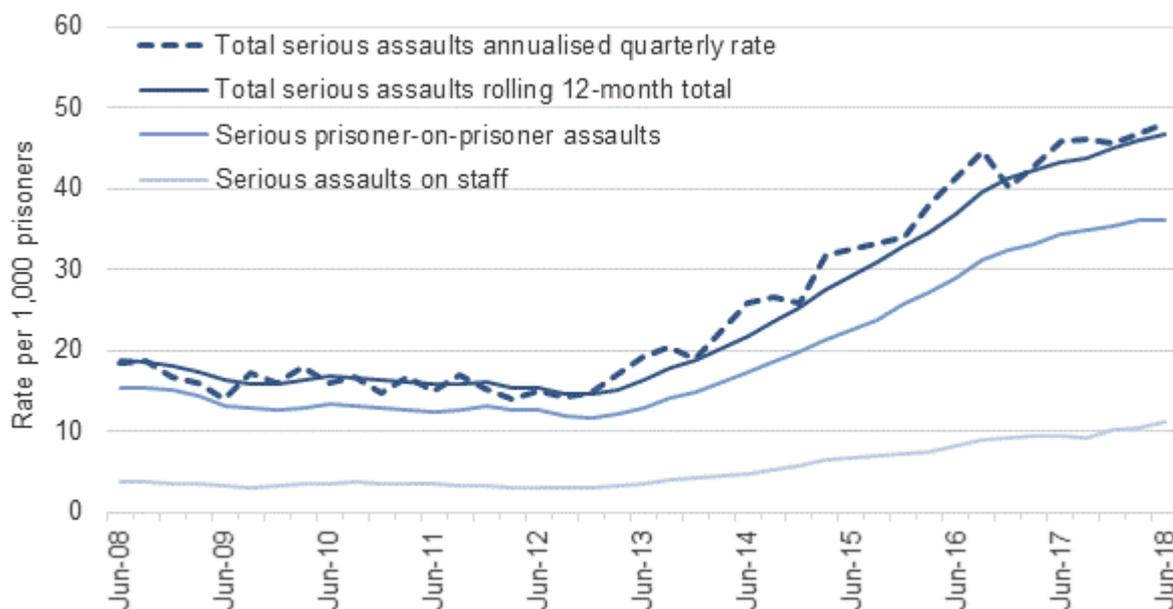
There were 22,448 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the 12 months to June 2018 (a rate of 277 per 1,000 prisoners), up 20% from the previous year, and a new record high. The latest quarter saw 6,283 incidents, an increase of 6% from the previous period.

There were 9,485 assaults on staff in the 12 months to June 2018 (a rate of 112 per 1,000 prisoners), up 27% from the previous year. This is the highest level in the time series. In the latest quarter, assaults on staff increased by 4% to a new record high of 2,515 incidents. There has been a change in how assaults on staff have been recorded since April 2017. This has simplified how incidents involving staff are identified, however it is possible this has increased the recording of incidents.

### 3.1 Serious assaults

Serious assaults are those which fall into one or more of the following categories: a sexual assault; an assault which 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 blindness.

**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 2008 to 12 months ending June 2018, with annualised quarterly rates**



In the 12 months to June 2018, there were 3,951 serious assaults, up 7% from the previous year. Of these, 3,063 (or 78%) were serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, an increase of 5% in the number of incidents from the previous year. Over the same period, there were 947 serious assaults on staff, up 19% from the previous period. All of these figures are the highest in the respective time series.

In the latest quarter, there were 999 serious assaults, up 3% from the three months to March 2018. Of these, 761 (or 76%) were serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, (same as previous quarter) and 260 were serious assaults on staff (up 18%).

## 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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