



Deaths of Offenders in the Community, England and Wales, 2018/19

Main Points

Deaths in the community rose by 13%	0	In 2018/19, there were 1,093 deaths of offenders in the community, up 13% from 964 deaths in 2017/18.
Proportion of deaths during court order supervision decreased Proportion of deaths during post release supervision increased	0	 49% (535) of deaths in the community were offenders serving court orders in 2018/19, a decrease from 56% (537) of deaths in 2017/18. 47% (515) of deaths in 2018/19 were offenders on post release supervision, up from 39% (374 deaths) in 2017/18.
		The type of supervision the offender was under was unknown in 4% of deaths.
The increase in self-inflicted deaths drove the rise in deaths in the community	0	Self-inflicted deaths increased by 19% from 283 in 2017/18 to 337 in 2018/19 (31% of all deaths).
		Deaths from natural causes increased by 7% from 308 in 2017/18 to 331 in 2018/19 (30% of all deaths).
		27% of deaths remained unclassified.
Proportion of deaths under CRC supervision fell	0	66% (716) of deaths in the community were offenders supervised by CRCs in 2018/19, a decrease from 69% (663) of deaths in 2017/18.
Proportion of deaths under NPS supervision increased	0	34% (377) of deaths in the community were offenders supervised by the NPS in 2018/19, an increase from 31% (301) of deaths in 2017/18.

Death of offenders in the community covers deaths of offenders supervised in the community by the probation service in England and Wales. Presented alongside figures in annual summary tables on a financial year basis over an 8-year time series. The tables, along with previous editions of the publication series, can be found at www.gov.uk/government/collections/death-of-offenders-in-the-community

Introduction

The Deaths of Offenders in the Community statistics bulletin covers the deaths of offenders in England and Wales that occurred while they were under probation supervision because they were:

- serving their court order sentences in the community (including community orders, suspended sentence orders); or
- on post-release supervision after completing a custodial sentence.

These figures refer to deaths of offenders occurring in the general public, with the exception of the small number of cases occurring to those residing in approved premises, which are also included in this publication.

Offenders under supervision in the community (other than, to an extent, those occurring in approved premises) are not in the care of HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) in the way they are when in custody. The main responsibilities of offender managers in the community are to assess, supervise and rehabilitate offenders. While they can encourage offenders to address issues affecting the offenders' health and wellbeing, their ability to manage these issues is limited. As a result, the level of responsibility and accountability of the probation service for the health and well-being of offenders is substantially different from that of the prison service in relation to deaths in custody.

Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014

The introduction of the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA)¹ in 2014/15 increased the number of offenders supervised by probation services. The Act created 23 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), a series of organisations established on 1 June 2014, responsible for the delivery of offender management to medium and lower-risk offenders in the community. The National Probation Service (NPS) was also established on 1 June 2014, and is responsible for the delivery of offender management to higher risk offenders in the community.

Statistics on deaths occurring in custody are published separately in the Safety in Custody Bulletin². These two sets of figures cannot be compared meaningfully.

Release Schedule

This bulletin was published on 31 October 2019, and includes statistics covering financial year periods from 2010/11 to 2018/19. The earliest period for which data are held across probation is 2010/11. As such, the data presented in this publication represent the complete available time series.

Financial year figures are collected on an annual basis during August and September of each year, and collated for publication during October.

The next release of Deaths of Offenders in the Community statistics, to include figures for the financial year 2019/20, is scheduled for October 2020.

¹ Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 (ORA): <u>www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/11/contents</u>

² Safety in Custody Statistics: <u>www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics</u>

Commentary

There were 1,093 deaths of offenders in the community in England and Wales in 2018/19, up 13% from 964 deaths in 2017/18. This is the highest number of reported deaths since the time series began in 2010/11. Of these, 66% (716) were deaths of offenders supervised by Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) in 2018/19, a decrease from 69% (663) in 2017/18. 34% (377) were deaths of offenders supervised by the National Probation Service (NPS) in 2018/19, an increase from 31% (301) deaths in 2017/18.

The Offender Rehabilitation Act in 2014/15 increased the number of offenders supervised by probation services as all offenders given custodial sentences became subject to a minimum of 12 months' supervision in the community upon release from prison. This consists of a period spent on licence, and, depending on the length of custodial sentence, a period on post-sentence supervision. Previously, only adults sentenced to over 12 months in custody and all young offenders were subject to statutory supervision.

Following the Act, there has been a steady increase in the number of offenders who died under post-release supervision, and increased to a record high of 515 in 2018/19, a 38% increase from 374 in 2017/18. Deaths under post-release supervision increased from 39% of total deaths in 2017/18 to 47% in 2018/19, continuing a steady increase from 16% of total deaths in 2010/11.

The number of offenders who died serving court orders in the community remained relatively stable over this period, decreasing from 537 in 2017/18 to 535 in 2018/19. Deaths of offenders serving court orders decreased from 56% of total deaths in 2017/18 to 49% in 2018/19, continuing a downward trend from a peak across the time series of 72% in 2011/12 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Total death of offenders in the community, by type of supervision, England and Wales, 2010/11 to 2018/19

Deaths of offenders in the community (figure 1) showed a different trend to the total caseload of offenders supervised in the community (figure 2). Where the number of deaths increased 13% in 2018/19, the caseload decreased in the same period. The combined caseload court orders (including community orders and suspended sentence orders) and post-release supervision, showed a decrease of 4% from 191,267 at March 2018 to 183,852 at March 2019 (as published in the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly³). This change was driven by a 5% decrease in court orders and a 3% decrease in post-release supervision. Up to March 2017, the caseload and the number of deaths followed a similar trend.

Some caution should be used when considering caseload figures in conjunction with deaths. Offenders may appear both within the caseload figures of court orders (including community orders and suspended sentence orders) and post-release supervision. Accordingly, rates of deaths have not been calculated, and comparisons of trends in caseload to trends in deaths of offenders in the community should be seen as indicative.





Some caution should be used when considering caseload figures, as offenders may appear both within the caseload figures of court orders and post-release supervision, resulting in potential double-counting. The introduction of the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA) on 1 February 2015 caused an increase in the number of offenders on post-release supervision. Caution should be used when comparing periods prior to and after the introduction of ORA.

³ Probation caseload statistics are published in the Offender Management statistics quarterly at <u>www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly</u>

Apparent cause of death

There were 337 self-inflicted deaths in 2018/19, an increase of 19% from 283 in 2017/18. The increase in number of self-inflicted deaths drove the overall increase in the number of deaths in the community from 2017/18 to 2018/19. The self-inflicted deaths accounted for 31% of all deaths in 2018/19, up from 29% of all deaths in 2017/18, but a decrease from 2015/16 (37%).

There were 331 deaths from natural-cause in 2018/19, an increase of 7% from 308 deaths in 2017/18. Deaths due to natural causes account for 30% of all deaths in the community in 2018/19, a decrease from 32% of total deaths in 2017/18.

The number of deaths by natural causes has historically been higher than self-inflicted deaths, but the difference has narrowed since 2010/11. In 2018/19 self-inflicted deaths surpassed deaths from natural causes for only the second time (2015-16 previously).

There has been an increase in the proportion of deaths where the apparent cause was reported as unclassified in the last 4 years (27% in 2018/19).





The introduction of the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA) on 1 February 2015 caused an increase in the number of offenders on post-release supervision. Caution should be used when comparing periods prior to and after the introduction of ORA.

Gender and Age

In 2018/19 there were 946 male deaths, accounting for 87% of all deaths, with 32% due to natural causes and 30% self-inflicted. For males, 2015/16 was the only year in the time series to have higher numbers of self-inflicted deaths than deaths from natural causes.

There were 147 female deaths in 2018/19, accounting for 13% of all deaths. The main cause of female deaths in 2018/19 was self-inflicted (34%), followed by deaths from natural causes

(22%). In 2017/18, the highest proportion of female deaths were due to natural causes (33%).

At the time of death, 29% of males were aged 50 or over compared to 22% for females in 2018/19. For offenders supervised by the NPS 39% were aged 50 years and over at the time of death, compared to 22% of deaths in CRCs in 2018/19. Almost half (45%) of offenders who died under the supervision of a CRC were aged between 36-49, compared to 32% in the NPS.

Deaths under post-release supervision in the community

The number of deaths of offenders under post-release supervision in the community increased from 374 in 2017/18 to 515 in 2018/19, a 38% increase. The number of deaths under post-release supervision by NPS increased from 153 deaths in 2017/18 to 238 deaths in 2018/19 (56% increase), and the number of deaths of offenders under post-release supervision in CRCs increased from 221 in 2017/18 to 277 in 2018/19 (25% increase).

Deaths under post-release supervision represented 25% of all deaths in the community while supervised by CRCs, and 22% of all deaths while supervised by the NPS. The sizeable increase in deaths since 2014/15 corresponds with the introduction of ORA.

There was an increase in the proportion of self-inflicted deaths under post-release supervision in CRCs between 2017/18 (30% of all CRC deaths) and 2018/19 (37% of all CRC deaths). Deaths under post-release supervision in the NPS saw a higher proportion of deaths due to natural causes between 2017/18 (40%) and 2018/19 (43%), and a lower proportion of self-inflicted deaths (23% in 2017/18 to 21% in 2018/19).

Approved Premises

Approved Premises (formerly known as probation/bail hostels) provide accommodation for offenders on post-release supervision (released from prison on licence) and those directed by the courts to live there as a condition of their court order. Staff provide supervision, support and ensure that residents comply with conditions of their licence or court order. Some of the deaths while resident in Approved Premises occurred away from the premises. We do not know of offenders in Approved Premises are on post-release supervision or on a court order.

There were 19 deaths of offenders with residence in Approved Premises in 2018/19. Deaths of offenders residing in Approved Premises accounted for 2% of all deaths of offenders in the community in 2018/19, up from 1% in 2017/18, and ranged from 9 to 19 deaths per year. The majority of deaths of offenders residing in Approved Premises across the time series were male. Due to the greater volatility due to low numbers, comparisons across time would not be meaningful.

National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC)

CRC's supervise more offenders in the community (58%) and are more likely to supervise offenders under a court order sentence (82% of those under a court order on 31st March 2019). The NPS supervised 59% of offenders under post-release supervision.

In 2018/19, 66% (716) of deaths of offenders in the community were under the supervision of CRCs and 34% (377) of deaths of offenders in the community were under the supervision of the NPS.

Offenders under the supervision of the NPS

For offenders under the supervision of the NPS, 63% (238) of deaths were offenders under post release supervision in 2018/19, up from 51% (153 deaths) in 2017/18. There was an increase in the number of deaths of offenders serving their court order in the community, up from 113 deaths in 2017/18 to 125 deaths in 2018/19.

Looking at apparent cause, there has been a large increase in the proportion of deaths by natural causes, up from 34% in 2017/18 to 41% in 2018/19. There was an increase in the number of self-inflicted deaths (from 77 in 2018/18 to 91 in 2018/19), but the proportion of total deaths for offenders under the supervision of the NPS decreased slightly, from 26% in 2017/18 to 24% in 2018/19.

Offenders under the supervision of the CRCs

For offenders under the supervision of CRCs, most of the deaths were offenders serving a court order in the community. 57% (410) of deaths were offenders serving their court order in the community in 2018/19, down from 64% (424) in 2017/18. The proportion of post release deaths under the supervision of CRCs increased from 33% (221) in 2017/18 to 39% (277) in 2018/19.

The proportion of self-inflicted deaths by offenders supervised by CRC's increased from 31% (206) in 2017/18 to 34% (246) in 2018/19, whereas the proportion of deaths by natural causes decreased from 31% (207) in 2017/18 to 25% (178) in 2018/19.



Figure 4: Numbers of deaths by classification in NPS and CRCs, 2018/19

Caution should be used when comparing percentages of apparent cause of death for CRCs and NPS due to the high proportion of deaths that are as yet unclassified.

List of tables

This is a list of annual Deaths of Offenders in the Community Statistics tables and figures. Figures 1 to 4 are included in this document. The summary tables are available from the website⁴. All tables refer to incidents occurring to offenders in the community in England and Wales and for 2010/11 to 2018/19 unless stated otherwise.

	Table description			
Deaths of Offenders in the Community – Summary tables				
Table 1	Deaths of offenders in the community by gender and apparent cause			
Table 2	Deaths of offenders in the community by gender and age band			
Table 3	Deaths of offenders in the community by gender and ethnic group			
Table 4	Deaths of offenders during post-release supervision in the			
	community after a custodial sentence, by gender and apparent cause			
Table 5	Deaths of offenders during court order supervision by apparent cause			
Table 6	Deaths of offenders in the community residing in Approved premises by apparent cause			
Table 7	Deaths of offenders in the community by CRC, 2014/15 to 2018/19			
Table 8	Deaths of offenders in the community by NPS Division, 2014/15 to 2018/19			
Table 9	Deaths of offenders in the community by Probation Trust, 2010/11 to 2013/14			
Deaths o	f Offenders in the Community – Figures			
Figure 1	Death of offenders in the community, by type of supervision			
Figure 2	Number of offenders supervised by the probation service at the end period by type			
Figure 3	Death of offenders in the community by apparent cause			

Figure 4 Relative distribution of deaths by classification in NPS and CRCs, 2018/19

⁴ <u>www.gov.uk/government/collections/death-of-offenders-in-the-community</u>

Glossary

- Approved premises Approved premises (formerly known as probation and bail hostels) accommodate offenders released from prison on licence, offenders directed to live there as part of their sentence (such as a requirement of a community order) and those directed to live there by the courts as a condition of bail. Their purpose is to provide an enhanced level of residential supervision in the community, as well as a supportive and structured environment.
- CommunityA series of organisations established on 1 June 2014, responsibleRehabilitationfor the delivery of offender management to medium and lower-riskCompany (CRC)offenders in the community.
- **Community order** Replaced all pre-Criminal Justice Act community sentences for adults. Under this order, a number of possible requirements must be added, such as supervision, unpaid work and drug treatment.
- CommunityThis places the offender under the supervision of the probationsentenceservice and there will be a range of requirements that must be
completed.
- Licence The period in which a prisoner is released from prison to serve the remainder of their sentence in the community. Offenders subject to post-release licence are required to adhere to specific conditions as part of their licence. Conditions for offenders released from determinate sentences are set by the governor/controller (on behalf of the Secretary of State) from the releasing prison for determinate sentences. Where the sentence is indeterminate, licence conditions are set by the Parole Board.
- National ProbationAn organisation established on 1 June 2014, responsible for the
delivery of offender management to higher risk offenders in the
community.
- Offender
Rehabilitation ActAn Act passed by parliament that made changes to the legislative
framework to support various reforms including ensuring offenders
released from custodial sentences of over 1 day will be subject to
a minimum of 12 months' supervision in the community, and
making available a new 'Rehabilitation Activity Requirement' as
part of a community order or suspended sentence order.
- Post-releaseOffenders released from prisons after completing their custodial
sentence are subject to supervision in the community. This
consists of a period spent on licence, and, depending on the
length of custodial sentence, a period on post-sentence
supervision. Prior to the Offender Rehabilitation Act, the
supervision period comprised only the licence period.

- **Post-sentence supervision** Provisions in the Offender Rehabilitation Act created a new supervision period to be served by offenders released from custodial sentences of more than 1 day but less than 2 years. The supervision period follows the licence period, and tops up the licence so that the total period under supervision in the community is 12 months. For example, an offender subject to a licence period of 4 months would then be subject to a supervision period of 8 months. The purpose of the post-sentence supervision period is the rehabilitation of the offender. As with licence conditions, requirements under the supervision period are imposed by the Secretary of State.
- Probation trusts Probation trusts were organisations who managed the delivery of probation services to offenders prior to implementation of the Offender Rehabilitation Act. Probation trusts ceased to exist on 31 May 2014.
- Suspended A court may give an offender a 'suspended' prison sentence if it believes the offence merits a custodial sentence of between 14 days and 2 years (or 6 months in the magistrates' court. The offender then serves their sentence in the community and must comply with conditions set out in the order made by the court. These conditions can last for up to two years. If the offender breaks these conditions, or commits another offence, they will usually have to serve the original sentence in prison in addition to the sentence they get for any new offence.

Categorisation of deaths

Each death has been classified as one of the following apparent causes, as allocated at the time of reporting based on information held and reported by the probation provider (NPS, CRC or Probation Trust) to HMPPS:

Accident	Any death of a person arising from external causes, accidental overdose/poisoning and deaths where taking a drug contributed to a death but not in fatal amounts.	
Homicide	Any death of a person at the hands of another (includes murder and manslaughter).	
Natural causes	Any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.	
Other	Any death of a person whose death cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted, accident or homicide. The cause of death may never be known even after all of the necessary investigations have taken place.	
Self-inflicted	Any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent.	
Unclassified	Any death where there is insufficient information to make a judgement about the cause at the time of reporting.	

Data sources and data quality

The data presented in this publication are drawn from manual returns collected annually from each National Probation Service (NPS) Division and each Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), and each Probation Trust prior to 2014/15. These returns may not capture all offenders that died during supervision in the community. The death of an offender may only come to light when they are informed by third parties such as the police, the medical profession or friends and family of the deceased.

Death classification figures in this bulletin are based on reports received by probation staff and their interpretation of these reports. These, in many cases, may not be the confirmed cause of death, but represent the apparent cause of death at the time deaths were reported to HMPPS. Because HMPPS' responsibility for the majority of these figures is predominantly in relation to the termination of the court order or post-release supervision, further information pertaining to the death that may influence subjective assessments of the apparent cause of death may not be subsequently reported to HMPPS. Therefore, while apparent cause of deaths in this bulletin reflects the classification made at the time of reporting, it may not reflect the final classification of deaths after inquest. Such reclassifications would not be expected to have a notable effect on reported trends.

Furthermore, at the time of reporting, probation staff may not have sufficient information regarding the circumstances of the death to assign an apparent cause. The results of any investigations or inquests following the death are not always circulated back to the probation providers. As such, a number of deaths remain unclassified each year, and many of these are unlikely to be subsequently updated. Accordingly, caution is advised when comparing deaths in individual categories across time.

As part of the Transforming Rehabilitation reform programme, Probation Trusts were replaced in June 2014 by the National Probation Service (NPS), which manages the most high-risk offenders across seven divisions; and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), who manage medium and low-risk offenders. There may be possible underreporting from the period during the transition. Figures for 2014/15 would include some deaths that occurred when the Probation Trusts existed but were reported by the NPS or CRCs that had been allocated responsibility for these offenders prior to their deaths.

Data on deaths of residents staying in Approved Premises may include those directed to reside there as part of their bail conditions. Where known, deaths of residents released on bail have been removed from the figures. Some deaths in Approved Premises occur away from the premises, as such it should not be inferred that all of such deaths were either directly supervised or occurring on the premises themselves.

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 possible, they should be regarded as approximate and not necessarily accurate to the last whole number shown in the tables.

Users and uses of these statistics

The statistics included in this publication have a wide range of uses, and this report adds to the body of learning in this area. It supports work to help identify possible means to reduce the risk of such tragedies occurring in future, meeting 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	
	offenders in the community; and to assess policy impacts (e.g.	
	changes to managing vulnerable offenders)	
MPs and House of	Statistics may be used to answer parliamentary questions	
Lords		
Monitoring and	E.g. Justice Select Committee. Deaths of Offenders in the	
Accountability	Community may be used as a primary data source for monitoring and for public accountability.	
Policy teams	Statistics are used to inform policy development, to monitor	
	impact of changes over time and to consider future changes and	
	their impact on the system	
Agencies	Current and historical administrative data are used to support	
responsible for	performance management information at national and local levels	
offender	to complement their understanding of the current picture and	
management	trends over time	
Academia, students	Used as a source of statistics for research purposes and to	
and businesses	support lectures, presentations and conferences	
Trade Unions	Used as a source of statistics to inform the work of the unions in	
	relation to the probation service.	
Journalists	Used as a compendium of data on deaths of offenders in the	
	community so that an accurate and coherent story can be told on	
	rehabilitation and events occurring to offenders in the community	
Voluntary sector	Data may be used to monitor trends of the safety and wellbeing of	
	offenders, to reuse the data in their own briefing and research	
	papers and to inform policy work and responses to consultations.	
General public	Data may be used to respond to ad-hoc requests made under the	
	Freedom of Information Act.	

HMPPS 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, HMPPS is unable to release figures for periods in advance of those published in Official Statistics publications. Furthermore, the figures appearing in this publication are received by HMPPS in annual returns during August and September of each year, meaning the publication date is the earliest that collated figures for the financial year are held and available for internal use also, meaning these figures are the most timely available held data.

Related publications

This bulletin is published alongside other inter-related bulletins:

Safety in Custody Statistics Quarterly Bulletin⁵: This covers deaths, assaults and self-harm occurring in prison custody. Although death in custody statistics are published on the same day as deaths of offenders in the community, attempts to compare these figures would not be meaningful and such comparisons should not be made.

Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin⁶: 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*⁷: 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.

*Community Performance Management Information release*⁸*:* A quarterly release of performance management information for the National Probation Service (NPS), Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs).

*Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) annual report*⁹: Presents statistics on the number of Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) eligible offenders in England and Wales, and information related to these offenders.

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.

⁵ <u>www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics</u>

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

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-performance-quarterly-management-information-release

⁹ <u>www.gov.uk/government/collections/multi-agency-public-protection-arrangements-mappa-annual-reports</u>

Contact points

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General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: <u>statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk</u>

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system

The 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 https://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm

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