



Offender Management Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales

Quarterly: January to March 2020

Prison population: 30 June 2020

Main points

79,514 prisoners in England and Wales as at 30 June 2020



The total prison population is 4% lower than the same point in the previous year, driven by a fall of around 3,500 between March and June 2020 as a result of COVID-19 disruption to courts.

17,092 first receptions into prison between January and March 2020



The number of first receptions represents a fall of 3% compared to the same period in 2019.

14,721 releases from sentences between January and March 2020



This is 5% lower than the same period in 2019. As the prison population shifts towards those serving longer sentences, we would expect fewer releases in a given period.

50,044 adjudication outcomes between January and March 2020



This is a fall of 8% compared to the same period in 2019. Additional days were awarded as punishment on 4,496 occasions – this is 17% lower than the same period in 2019.

6,690 licence recalls between January and March 2020



This is an 8% increase on the same quarter in 2019, driven by increases in recalls from determinate sentences of more than 12 months.

241,350 offenders on probation at the end of March 2020



This number has decreased by 5% compared to the number supervised as at 31 March 2019.

This publication provides offender management quarterly statistics for the latest date available and provides comparisons to the previous year.

For technical detail please refer to the accompanying guide, '[Guide to offender management statistics](#)'.

Statistician's comment

“Between 1993 and 2012 the prison population doubled (from around 44,000 to 86,000). Over the following 8 years there has been a period of stability (with the prison population remaining at around 85,000) – though there was a fall in the prison population of around 2,000 in early-2018 as a result of changes to Home Detention Curfew (HDC) policy. The population remained at around 83,000 until March 2020.

This period of relative stability since 2012 has occurred despite falling numbers of offenders being dealt with by courts and receiving immediate custodial sentences over the last decade. This alone should have caused a fall in the prison population, but any impact has in part been offset by a shift to more serious offences being dealt with by the courts, which in turn has led to longer immediate custodial sentences over this period. In addition, the recall population has also been increasing which in part will again be driven by prisoners serving longer sentences and therefore being subject to licence conditions for a longer period.

However, the recent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is clearly apparent in the latest prison population figures published today. The prison population as at 30 June 2020 was around 79,500 – this represents the lowest annual ('as at 30 June') population for 14 years, since 30 June 2006.

Much of this recent fall can be attributed to a significant drop in cases being dealt with by the courts. While the decrease in the prison population has been ongoing since the end of March, it has in recent weeks started to level off as can be seen in the published HMPPS weekly prison population figures, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prison-population-statistics>.

The most recent weekly management information published by HMPPS shows that the prison population has increased by around 100 (to 79,620) in the period since the end of June 2020.

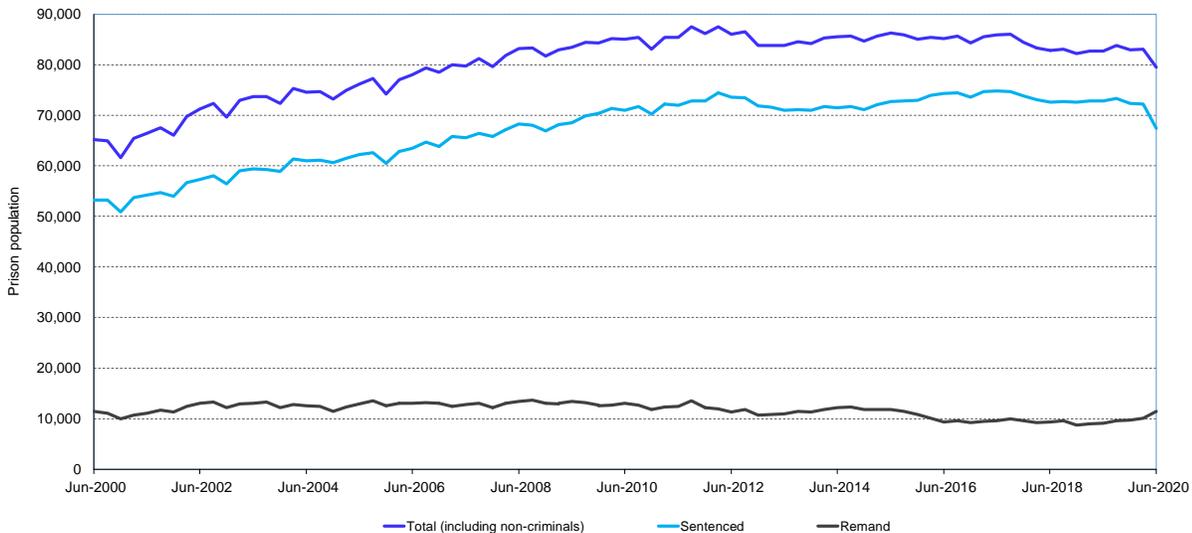
At this stage, it is difficult to determine what level the prison population is likely to return to as courts return to business and changes in the offence mix committed over this period are taken into account.”

1. Population

The prison population stood at 79,514 on 30 June 2020.

The sentenced prison population stood at 67,352 (85% of the prison population); the remand prison population stood at 11,388 (14%) and the non-criminal prison population stood at 774 (1%).

Figure 1: Prison population, June 2000 to 2020 (Source: Table 1.1)



The total prison population as at 30 June 2020 represented the lowest annual ('as at 30 June') population in 14 years, since 30 June 2006.

Remand prison population

Following a decreasing trend in the remand population since 2014, the remand population has dramatically increased over the latest 12-month period (between June 2019 and June 2020). As at 30 June 2020, the remand population was 11,388. This is the highest annual ('as at 30 June') figure in five years.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected normal court operations. Management Information recently released by the Ministry of Justice¹ suggests that the number of outstanding cases ("caseload") for both Magistrates Court and Crown Court have shown a substantial increase since March 2020 – which has resulted in prisoners being held on remand for longer.

Between June 2019 and June 2020, the total remand population increased by 25%. The number of males and females in custody on remand rose by 26% (to 10,788) and 9% (to 600) respectively.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2020>

60% of those in custody on remand were being held for either:

- Violence against the person (25% of the remand population)
- Drug offences (23%)
- Theft Offences (12%).

The current rise is primarily due to marked increases of 52% in the “Drug offences” remand population and 32% in the “Violence against the person” remand population.

Sentenced prison population

The sentenced population was 5,627 (7%) lower than the same point 12 months earlier. This annual change is by far the largest (in both percentage terms and absolute terms) annual change in the sentenced prison population since the start of the current time-series (back to 2002).

Broadly speaking, the longer-term trend shows marked decreases in prisoners serving short sentences of less than 4 years and increases in prisoner numbers serving longer determinate sentences of 4 years plus.

However, over the latest 12 month period there have been decreases in the sentenced prisoner population across all sentence lengths except for the very longest sentences (a 1% annual increase in the sentenced population serving determinate sentences of ‘14 years or more’, and an 8% increase in those serving ‘Extended Determinate Sentences (EDSs)’).

Sexual offenders

While this is one of the largest offence group of sentenced prisoners, their number has continued to fall since mid-2018 after a record high since at least 2002. There was a 7% decrease (to 12,318) in the sentenced sexual offender population in the 12 months to 30 June 2020.

'Violence Against the Person (VATP)' and 'Possession of Weapons' offences

Three in every ten (29%) sentenced prisoners is in prison for a VATP offence. This proportion has increased from the ‘one in four’ (25%) level seen in recent years.

The number of prisoners serving sentences for a 'Possession of Weapons' offence decreased by 21% between June 2019 and June 2020 (to 2,375), after a continuing rise since at least 2015.

Extended Determinate Sentences (EDS)

EDSs were made available for courts to impose from 13 April 2015. On 30 June 2020, 5,815 prisoners were serving such sentences; an 8% increase compared to the same time last year.

Indeterminate sentences

As at 30 June 2020, there were 8,954 (8,618 male; 336 female) indeterminate sentenced prisoners (those serving Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentences and life sentences) in the prison population. This represents an annual decrease of 4%.

There were 1,969 IPP prisoners as at 30 June 2020 which represents a decrease of 15% in the last 12 months. This figure has decreased since the June 2012 peak of 6,080, however the number of IPP prisoners who have been recalled to custody continues to increase; in the past year the recalled IPP population has grown by 22% (to 1,359).

The proportion of the IPP population who are post-tariff continues to increase; 94% of IPP prisoners were post-tariff as of 30 June 2020 compared to 92% at the same time the previous year.

The number of life sentenced prisoners (6,985) has decreased by 1% compared to 30 June 2019. There were 63 whole-life prisoners at the end of June 2020, with 3 additional life prisoners being treated in secure hospitals.

Recall to custody

The prison population who have been recalled to custody (9,226 prisoners) increased by 24% over the year leading up to 30 June 2020. This can be attributed to the rise in the number of offenders serving longer sentences, which are subsequently recalled shortly after.

Foreign National Offenders (FNOs)

There were 9,308 (2,360 remand, 6,230 sentenced and 718 non-criminal) foreign nationals held in custody and the HMPPS-operated Immigration Removal Centre (IRC, at Morton Hall) as at 30 June 2020; representing 12% of the total prison population.

In contrast to the large annual fall in the total prison population, the number of FNOs in the prison (and HMPPS IRC) population has increased by 2% compared to 30 June 2019. This can be attributed to the effect of COVID-19 on the normal operations of FNO early removal schemes.

The most common nationalities after British Nationals in prisons are Albanian (12% of the FNO prison population), Polish (10%), Romanian (8%), Irish (7%) and Lithuanian (5%).

2. Prison receptions and admissions

17,092 offenders were received into custody as first receptions in the latest quarter.

9,881 remand first receptions, 7,167 sentenced first receptions and 44 civil non-criminal first receptions.

Offender first receptions

The total number of first receptions during Q1 2020 was 3% lower than the same quarter in 2019. This is in line with the longer falling trend over the past 15 years.

There were 2,623 first receptions of foreign nationals during Q1 2020 (down 2% compared with January to March 2020). The five foreign nationalities with the highest numbers of first receptions in the latest quarter were: Romanian (435), Polish (373), Albanian (289), Irish (134) and Lithuanian (130). When taken together, these five nationalities accounted for around half (52%) of the 2,623 first receptions of foreign nationals between January to March 2020.

Prison admissions

There was a 4% increase in the number of untried admissions (to 7,356), but the level of convicted unsentenced admissions decreased (by 1%, to 4,877). The number of sentenced prisoner admissions was 9% lower than the same quarter in 2019 (to 12,527).

Conversely there was a 9% increase in the number of recall admissions (to 6,494) in the latest quarter (compared to the same period in 2019). Of these, the number of recall admissions from determinate sentences increased by 8% and those from indeterminate sentences increased by 23%.

Almost half of all sentenced admissions during the quarter were for sentences of six months or less (5,857, 47% of sentenced admissions). This sentence length band has seen a 3% decrease in the number of admissions when compared with the same quarter last year.

Former Members of the Armed Forces

When individuals are first received into custody, they complete a Basic Custody Screening (BCS) process. This serves to identify their needs in areas including employment, childcare and healthcare. As part of this process, they are asked whether they had served in the armed services.

Between January and March 2020, 243 matched individuals first received into custody answered that they had served in the armed services - this represented 2% of those who provided a response to the question at the point of their first reception during the latest quarter

3. Releases

14,721 offenders were released from custody in the latest quarter.

14,531 releases from determinate sentences and 190 from indeterminate sentences.

Prison releases from custodial sentences

There were 5% fewer releases during the quarter ending March 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019.

There were large decreases in the number of releases from short sentences (less than 4 years) but an increase (3%) in releases from longer determinate sentences (4 years or more) compared to the same quarter in 2019. This reflects the general trend in the prison population away from short sentenced offenders, to those serving longer determinate sentences.

There were 190 releases from indeterminate sentences (85 IPP, 105 Life) between January and March 2020, a 12% decrease from the same period in 2019. The number of IPP and life releases fell by 10% and 13% respectively.

While the number of IPP releases tended to be around 130 and above per quarter in previous years, the number of released IPP prisoners is now declining, and is expected to continue in future quarters.

Releases on Home Detention Curfew (HDC)

2,978 offenders were released on HDC during the latest quarter – this represents a fall of 6% compared to the same quarter in 2019. This fall in the number released on HDC reflects the reduction in the size of the pool of offenders eligible for HDC (2% lower than the same period in 2018).

Releases on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

There were 98,938 incidences of ROTL during the quarter ending March 2020, which is a 2% increase on the same quarter last year.

4,957 individuals were given at least one incidence of ROTL between January and March 2020 - an increase of 16% compared to the same quarter in 2019.

There were 204 recorded Temporary Release Failures (TRFs) between January and March 2020. This is an increase of 18 compared with the previous quarter and an increase of 46 compared with the same period the previous year. TRFs as a proportion of temporary release incidences remain at a low level, with approximately only 1 in every 485 incidences of temporary release resulting in a failure between January and March 2020.

Prisoner transfers

There was a total of 20,898 recorded incidences of prisoner transfer during the latest quarter (2% decrease from last year). The majority of these (73%) were routine inter-prison transfers. 17,359 prisoners had at least one incidence of a transfer in quarter ending December 2019.

4. Adjudications

Summary of quarterly statistics

There were 50,044 adjudication outcomes between January and March 2020.

This is a decrease of 8% on the same quarter in the previous year. Additional days were awarded as punishment on 4,496 occasions in this quarter.

63% of all adjudications were proven.

Around a third (33%) of proven adjudications were for offences of unauthorised transactions, closely followed by disobedience and disrespect (30%). The number of proven adjudications for 'unauthorised transactions' and 'disobedience/disrespect' fell by 7% (to 10,386) and 11% (to 9,446) respectively on the same quarter of the previous year. The number of proven offences for violence has decreased by 12% (to 4,830) following a period of high volumes since Q3 2018 and throughout 2019. Since then this the growth is slowing down.

There was a 9% decrease in the number of proven adjudications (to 31,546) from the same quarter in 2018. This resulted in a 10% fall in the number of punishments (to 51,984).

Additional days were awarded as punishment on 4,496 occasions between January and March 2020; this is 17% lower than the same period in 2019. A total of 76,063 days was awarded in the latest quarter – this represents a decrease of 18% from the same quarter in 2019 (93,015 days between January and March 2020).

The average number of punishments per offence was 1.65. This has remained unchanged compared with figures seen in recent quarters.

More information about the trends in Adjudications between 2011 and 2018 can be found in '[The Adjudications Story](#)' publication.

5. Licence Recalls

The number of licence recalls between January and March 2020 was 6,690, of which 594 were recalls from Home Detention Curfew (HDC).

The total number of recalls increased by 8% compared to the same quarter in 2019.

The total number of quarterly recalls has generally been increasing since October-December 2016. Although the number of recalls increased by 8% from the same quarter a year ago, it represents a decrease of 1% from the previous quarter. There has been a marked increase in the number of quarterly recalls since 2018, partly due to increased HDC recalls and recalls of offenders from determinate sentences of 12 months or more.

The number of quarterly recalls of offenders released from a sentence of under 12 months has been relatively stable in recent years, averaging about 2,257 each quarter since January-March 2018.

After a fall in the number of offenders recalled from a sentence of over 12 months from early 2016 to mid-2017, the number of these recalls (including recalls of those with indeterminate sentences) has continued to trend upwards. Between January and March 2020, there were 4,374 offenders recalled from a sentence over 12 months, an increase of 10% in comparison to the same quarter in the previous year.

There usually is more than one reason for recalling an offender on licence. In recent quarters, about 4 in 10 recalls involved the offender recalled for facing further charges. Non-compliance was given as one of the reasons for recalling in about 7 out of 10 recalls in January-March 2020, consistent with recent quarters.

Between January and March 2020, 89 IPP prisoners and 46 prisoners serving a life sentence were re-released, having previously been returned to custody for a breach of licence conditions.

Offenders not returned to custody

Of all those released on licence and recalled to custody due to breaching the conditions of their licence between April 1999 and March 2020, there were 1,935 who had not been returned to custody by the end of June 2020.

A further 17 offenders had not been returned to custody as of June 2020 after recall between 1984 and April 1999, meaning the total number of offenders not returned to custody at the end of June 2020 was 1,952. These figures include some offenders believed to be dead or living abroad but who have not been confirmed as dead or deported.

Of the 1,952 not returned to custody by 30 June 2020, 327 had originally been serving a prison sentence for violence against the person offences and a further 59 for sexual offences

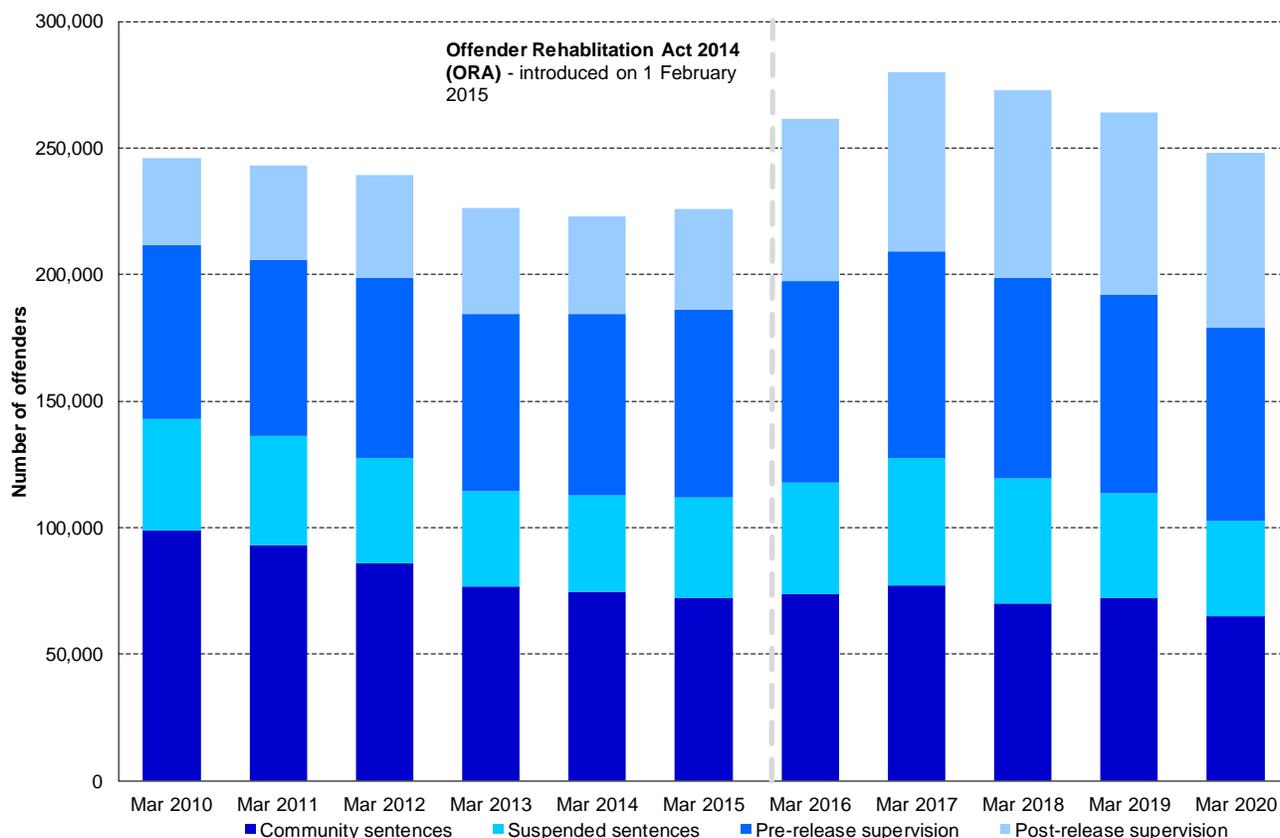
6. Probation

The total number of offenders on probation (i.e. court orders and pre/post-supervision) at the end of March 2020 was 241,350.

This represents a 5% decrease compared to the end of March 2019.

As at 31 March 2020, there were 241,350 offenders supervised by the Probation Service (Figure 2), representing a 5% decrease compared to the 31 March 2019. Over the same period, court order caseload decreased by 9% from 111,667 to 101,300, with the number of offenders on a community order (CO) decreasing by 10% and those on a suspended sentence order (SSO) with requirements decreasing by 8%. The total caseload of offenders supervised before or after release from prison at the end of March 2020 was 144,614, representing a decrease of 3% since the end of March 2019.

Figure 2: Number of offenders under Probation Service supervision, 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020 (source for 2018 to 2020: Table 4.6; source for years prior to 2018: Table 4.7)



Between January to March 2020, 25,851 offenders started court orders, representing a 14% decrease compared to the same quarter a year ago. Over the same period, the number of offenders starting COs decreased by 18% to 17,844 and the number of offenders starting SSOs with requirements decreased by 7% to 7,630. Additionally, those starting pre-release supervision decreased by 9% to 19,543.

Between January to March 2020, 27,521 requirements started under COs, with decreases in almost all requirement types compared to the same period a year ago. In particular, drug and alcohol

treatment requirements decreased by 25% and 12% respectively, while unpaid work, rehabilitation, and accredited programme requirements decreased by 19%, 18%, and 12% respectively. Under SSOs, 13,042 requirements started between January and March 2020, with unpaid work, drug treatment, and rehabilitation requirements decreasing by 8%, 7%, and 4% respectively since the same period a year ago. While accredited programme and alcohol treatment requirements increased by 4% and 3% respectively over the same period.

In terms of the most frequently used combinations of requirements, the rehabilitation requirement remains the most common requirement included within a CO or SSO. Under COs, rehabilitation requirements, and rehabilitation combined separately with drug treatment and unpaid work requirements decreased by 18%, 25%, and 18% respectively in January to March 2020 compared to the same period a year ago. Under SSOs, rehabilitation alone and rehabilitation combined with drug treatment requirements decreased by 5% and 10% respectively, whilst rehabilitation combined with curfew requirements increased by 4%.

Of court orders terminated from January to March 2020, 68% of 18,546 COs and 74% of 7,627 SSOs (for the supervision period) were terminated successfully, i.e. ran their full course or were terminated early for good progress.

In the quarter January to March 2020, there was an 18% decrease in the number of pre-sentence reports (PSRs) prepared by the Probation Service compared to the same quarter in 2019. 89% of custodial sentences proposed in PSRs resulted in that sentence being given in the year ending March 2020, representing the highest concordance between sentence proposed and sentence given.

Further information

This publication presents quarterly and annual data trends.

Our statisticians regularly review the content of publications. Development of new and improved statistical outputs is usually dependent on reallocating existing resources. As part of our continual review and prioritisation, we welcome user feedback on existing outputs including content, breadth, frequency and methodology. Please send any comments you have on this publication including suggestions for further developments or reductions in content.

Accompanying files

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

- A '[Guide to Offender Management Statistics](#)', which provides comprehensive information about data sources and quality, as well as key legislative changes.
- A document outlining the '[Users of Offender Management Statistics](#)'
- A set of data tables, covering each section of this bulletin, including a prison population data tool.

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 Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority 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 Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Contact

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Email: newsdesk@justice.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division of the Ministry of Justice:

Nick Mavron, Head of Prison, Probation, Reoffending and PbR Statistics

Ministry of Justice, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gov.uk

Next update: 29 October 2020

URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

© Crown copyright Produced by the Ministry of Justice

Alternative formats are available on request from statistics.enquiries@justice.gov.uk