



Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin

October to December 2012, England and Wales

Ministry of Justice Statistics bulletin

25 April 2013

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Introduction

This publication 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. Latest figures for the quarter October to December 2012 are provided compared to the same period in 2011 for each topic as well as reference to longer term trends, with the exception of the prison population where more recent data is available (31 March 2013).

The contents of the report will be of interest to the public, government policy makers, the agencies responsible for offender management at both national and local levels, and others who want to understand more about the prison population, probation caseload, licence recalls and returns to custody.

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 prison population and capacity of the prison estate; monitor effectiveness of probation service and whether resources are deployed efficiently; assess policy impacts (e.g. changes to sentencing guidance)
MPs and House of Lords	Statistics are used to answer parliamentary questions – approximately 100 are answered each year using prison and probation data
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 within each agency 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, e.g. data on female foreign national prisoners are included in 'The Criminalisation of Migrant Women' report published by the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge in July 2012
Journalists	Used as a compendium of robust data on offender management so that an accurate and coherent story can be told on the prison population and probation service

Voluntary sector	Data are used to inform policy work, responses to consultations and briefing papers by analysing trends and changes to the prison population, e.g. the Prison Reform Trust use published offender management data to compile the 'Bromley Briefing Prison Factfiles'
General public	Data are used to respond to ad-hoc requests and requests made under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act: offender management data is used to answer around 100 FOIs each year

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

- Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly: provides proven re-offending figures for offenders who were released from custody, received a noncustodial conviction at court, received a caution, reprimand, warning or tested positive for opiates or cocaine in the 12 months ending June 2011.
- Safety in Custody Statistics Quarterly update to December 2012 and 2012 annual tables: provides statistics on death, self harm and assault incidents whilst in prison custody.

Taken together, these publications present users with a more coherent overview of offender management including re-offending among both adults and young people and the safety of offenders whilst in prison custody.

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.

Table 1: Overview – latest period compared to the previous year

		Percentage change 31 March 2012	
	31 March 2013	to 31 March 2013	
Prison population	83,769	-4%	1
Remand	10,768	-10%	1
Untried	7,395	-6%	1
Convicted unsentenced	3,373	-16%	1
Jnder sentence Fine Defaulters	71,638 146	-4% 15%	1
Less than or equal to 6 months	4,623	-14%	1
Greater than 6 months to less than 12 months	2,381	-5%	,
12 months to less than 4 years	19,968	-8%	,
4 years or more (excluding indeterminate sentences)	25,995 13.385	3%	1
Indeterminate sentences Recalls	5,140	-3% -7%	,
Non criminal	1,363	12%	1
	October-December	Percentage change October-	_
	2012	December 2011 to 2012	
Prison receptions			
rirst receptions	26,278	-10%	1
Remand - untried	11,856	-10%	1
Remand - convicted unsentenced	8,943	-13%	,
Inder sentence	21,047	-9%	
Fine Defaulters	206	-24%	,
Less than or equal to 6 months Greater than 6 months to less than 12 months	9,569 2,225	-12% -4%	
Greater than 6 months to less than 12 months 12 months to less than 4 years	2,225 6,646	-4% -8%	
4 years or more (excluding indeterminate sentences)	2,250	-8% 2%	
Indeterminate sentences	151	-35%	
Prison discharges			
Determinate sentences	21,247	-1%	
Less than or equal to 6 months	9,265	-5%	
Greater than 6 months to less than 12 months	2,182	3%	
12 months to less than 4 years	7,275	1%	
4 years or more (excluding indeterminate sentences)	2,525	9%	
ndeterminate sentences	193	21%	
Indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP)	117	15%	
Life sentence	76	33%	
Average percentage of time served ⁽¹⁾			
Determinate sentences	51%	-2 pp	•
Less than or equal to 6 months	55%	1 pp	
Greater than 6 months to less than 12 months 12 months to less than 4 years	47% 48%	1 pp -1 pp	
4 years or more (excluding indeterminate sentences)	55%	-2 pp	
Probation starts		•	_
All court orders	38,718	-8%	
All community sentences	27,700	-9%	
Community order	27,115	-9%	
Other sentences	11,164	-5%	
Suspended sentence order	11,023	-5%	
Pre release supervision	11,284	-11%	
			_
	October-2012	Percentage change 31 October 2011 to 31 October 2012	
Persons supervised by the Probation Service			
All court orders	114,234	-9%	
All community sentences	78,263	-10%	
Community order	76,231	-9%	
All pre CJA orders	238	-50%	
Other sentences	38,510	-8%	
Deferred sentence	71	-12%	
Suspended sentence order	38,452	-8%	
All pre and post release supervision	111,859 70,128	1% -1%	
	70,120	-1% 5%	
Pre release supervision Post release supervision	42,162		_
Pre release supervision	42,162 October-December		_
Pre release supervision Post release supervision			
Pre release supervision Post release supervision Licence recalls	October-December 2012		
Pre release supervision	October-December		

¹⁾ Average percentage of time served includes time served on remand; change in percentages are given as percentage point change (pp).

Prison population

The prison population grew rapidly between 1993 to 2008 – an average of 4 per cent a year. This rapid rise was driven by:

- Increased numbers of people sentenced to immediate custody from 1993 to 2002.
- Increases in the average custodial sentence length and increased use of indeterminate sentences.
- Increase in numbers recalled to prison following breaches of the conditions of licence and these offenders spending longer in prison once recalled.

The rise in the prison population slowed considerably from the summer of 2008 with an average annual increase of 1 per cent (Figure 1.1), until the public disorder seen in UK cities from 6 to 9 August 2011 which had an immediate impact on the prison population.

The flatter trend prior to the disorder partly reflected the introduction of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (CJIA) 2008, which changed sentencing and offender management in ways which helped to reduce growth in the prison population. For more information, see CJIA 2008.

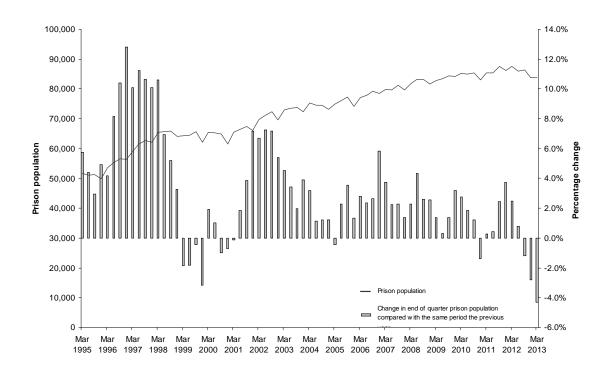
Other factors, over and above the direct impact of the 2011 public disorder, contributed to an increased prison population for a temporary period which now appears to be over. The falling remand population, and continued decline in the number of under-18s in custody during 2012 and into 2013, mean that the prison population is now tracking between the low and medium projections¹.

The 'Story of the Prison Population 1993 to 2012' provides an in-depth examination of what happened to the prison population between 1993 and 2012 and the major factors contributing to the changes in the prison population www.gov.uk/government/publications/story-of-the-prison-population-1993-2012

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¹ Prison population projections 2012-2018 available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-population-projections-ns

Figure 1.1: Quarterly prison population and annual percentage change, England and Wales, December 1995 to March 2013



The prison population at 31 March 2013 was 83,769, a decrease of 3,762 (4 per cent) compared to 31 March 2012 when the total population was 87,531.

At 31 March 2013, there were:

- 79,900 males in prison a fall of 4 per cent over the year
- 3,869 females in prison a fall of 8 per cent over the year

The overall decrease in the total prison population over the last year (31 March 2012 to 31 March 2013) comprised decreases in both the remand and the sentenced segments of the prison population.

The remand population fell by 1,139, or 10 per cent, between March 2012 and March 2013 (from 11,907 to 10,768), with decreases seen in both untried remand (down 495 or 6 per cent) and convicted unsentenced remand (down 644 or 16 per cent). Around 50-100 of this fall can be explained by a fall in the number on remand for offences related to the public disorder of 6-9 August 2011, as offenders have been processed through the courts and sentenced. More generally, throughout 2012 the falling remand population was in line with the falling number of people entering prison on remand (see receptions section). Most recently, the remand population has fallen following the introduction, in

December 2012, of measures restricting the use of remand for offenders who would be unlikely to receive a custodial sentence².

The sentenced population fell by 2,764, or 4 per cent, over the last year (from 74,402 in March 2012 to 71,638 in March 2013) – this accounted for almost three quarters of the total decrease in the prison population over the year to 31 March 2013. All age groups saw a fall with adults (age 21+) down 1,422 or 2 per cent; young adults (18-20) down 969 or 16 per cent; and 15-17 year olds down a third, falling by 373, to 712. Similar patterns were seen in both the male and female populations.

These trends are consistent with those seen in prison receptions - falling numbers of both males and females entering prison on remand (both untried and convicted unsentenced remand), and large falls (particularly for males) in sentenced receptions.

Within the sentenced population, the only increase was for adults serving long determinate sentences of 4 years or more which continued to rise (up 3 per cent from 25,251 to 25,995), while the numbers serving shorter sentences fell.

The number of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (either a life sentence or an Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection – an IPP) fell by three per cent to 13,385. The rate of year-on-year growth in indeterminate sentences had slowed considerably following the changes introduced in the CJIA 2008 which restricted the use of IPPs. The IPP population is now starting to fall, reflecting both the rising numbers being released (see discharges section), and the sentencing changes introduced in December 2012³ which abolished the IPP and introduced the new Extended Determinate Sentence (EDS) which is available for offenders that would previously have received an IPP or an extended sentence.

Within the indeterminate sentenced population, 43 per cent were serving an IPP (5,809) while 57 per cent were serving life sentences (7,576). A total of 3,570 (61 per cent) IPP prisoners had passed their tariff expiry date. There were 42 offenders serving a whole life sentence as at 31 March 2013.

The number of non-criminals in prison rose by 141, or 12 per cent, to 1,363 at 31 March 2013.

The foreign national prisoner population was 10,725 as at 31 March 2013, accounting for 13 per cent of the prison population (the same proportion as in recent quarters). This figure includes Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs). When looking at the population excluding IRCs, 12 per cent were foreign national prisoners.

An increasing proportion of sentenced prisoners are serving sentences for the most serious offences. As at 31 March 2013, 27 per cent of the sentenced population had committed violence against the person offences, an increase from

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² Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012: <u>services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/legalaidsentencingandpunishmentofoffenders.html</u> ³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/<u>2012/10/part/3/chapter/5</u>

21 per cent in 2000. Similarly, the proportion serving sentences for sexual offences increased from 10 per cent in 2000 to 15 per cent in March 2013. In contrast, the number serving sentences for motoring offences has fallen steadily over time, now comprising 1 per cent of the sentenced population compared with 4 per cent in 2000 and the proportion serving sentences for burglary has fallen from 17 per cent in 2000 to 10 per cent as at 31 March 2013.

Prison receptions

In the quarter ending December 2012, there were 26,278 first receptions into prison, a fall of 10 per cent compared to the same period in the previous year. Within this group, male first receptions were down 10 per cent and female first receptions were down 8 per cent. These decreases are driven by the falling number of remand first receptions.

The number of untried receptions – those remanded in custody awaiting trial – fell from 13,208 in the quarter ending December 2011 to 11,856 in the quarter ending December 2012, a fall of 10 per cent. This decrease was seen for both males and females – down by 10 and 9 per cent respectively over the same period.

The number of convicted unsentenced receptions – those remanded in custody awaiting sentence – fell by 13 per cent in the quarter ending December 2012 compared to the same period in the previous year. Again the trend was seen for both males (down 12 per cent) and females (down 18 per cent).

For both types of remand, some of this fall is due to the remand measures introduced in December 2012 restricting the use of remand for offenders who would be unlikely to receive a custodial sentence⁴.

There was a 9 per cent fall in the number of prisoners received under sentence in the quarter ending December 2012 (21,047) compared to the quarter ending December 2011, with falls seen in all groups except long determinate sentences - the number of offenders entering prison to serve determinate sentences of 4 years or more rose by 2 per cent. Some of this fall can be attributed to the public disorder of August 2011 - many of these cases were sentenced during the period October to December 2011 therefore the number received under sentence was particularly high.

The number of offenders entering prison to serve an indeterminate sentence fell (down 35 per cent from 232 to 151 between the quarters ending December 2011

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⁴ Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012: services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/legalaidsentencingandpunishmentofoffenders.html

and December 2012) following the introduction of extended determinate sentences and the abolition of IPPs/EPPs⁵.

Prison discharges

In 2012, a total of 85,525 offenders were discharged from determinate sentences, no real change from 2011. Over the longer term, the number of discharges from determinate sentences remained relatively stable between 2002 and 2007 before rising in 2008 (due to a large rise in the numbers leaving prison having served short custodial sentences of less than 12 months – consistent with the growth in the short sentenced prison population at that time), and subsequently falling year on year. The numbers discharged from determinate sentences in both 2011 and 2012 were back down to the level seen in 2007.

However, within the overall relatively flat trend, the number of young offenders (aged 15-20) discharged from prison has been falling – down 25 per cent since 2002 - whilst the number of adult discharges rose by 5 per cent over the same period.

The increase in adult determinate sentence discharges is solely due to an increase in those discharged from longer determinate sentences of 12 months or more, with sentences of 4 years or more up by 50 per cent and sentences of 12 months to less than 4 years up by 21 per cent. Discharges from sentences of less than 6 months fell by 21 per cent between 2002 and 2012.

An additional 733 offenders were discharged from indeterminate sentences in 2012 – up from 534 in 2011 and from 144 in 2002. The increases, both over the last year and the longer term, are mainly due to an increase in the number of offenders discharged from indeterminate sentences for public protection (up from 300 in 2011 to 444 in 2012).

Looking at the most recent quarter's figures, a total of 21,247 offenders were discharged from determinate sentences, a fall of one per cent from the quarter ending December 2011. Male discharges fell by one per cent and female discharges fell by three percent.

The decrease in discharges from determinate sentences was driven entirely by a 5 per cent fall in the number of discharges from the shortest (six months or less) sentences, which accounted for over 40 per cent of all discharges. For all other sentence length bands, the number of discharges rose with the largest increase seen in the 4 years or more sentence length band (up 9 per cent).

As well as those discharged from determinate sentences, a further 117 offenders were discharged from an Indeterminate sentence for Public Protection (IPP) and 76 from a life sentence in the quarter ending December 2012, up from 102 and

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⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/10/part/3/chapter/5

57 respectively the previous year. In addition, 36 indeterminate sentenced prisoners were removed under the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme (TERS) - this scheme allows indeterminate sentenced foreign national prisoners, who are liable to removal from the UK, to be removed from prison and the country upon, or any date after, the expiry of their tariff without reference to the Parole Board.

Those discharged from determinate sentences in the quarter ending December 2012 had, on average, served 51 per cent of their sentence in custody (including time on remand). On average males served a greater proportion of their sentence in custody – 52 per cent compared to 46 per cent for females in the quarter ending December 2012. This gender difference is consistent over time, and partly reflects the higher proportion of females who are released on Home Detention Curfew (HDC – under which certain offenders can be released on an electronically monitored curfew up to 135 days before the halfway point of their sentence when they would otherwise be released).

A total of 3,225 prisoners were released on HDC in the quarter ending December 2012, a 4 per cent decrease from the quarter ending December 2011. Prisoners released on HDC in the quarter ending December 2012 spent an average of 2.9 months on HDC, up slightly from 2.8 months in the quarter ending December 2011.

Probation

The total annual probation caseload (court orders and pre and post release supervision) increased by 39 per cent between 2000 and 2008 to 243,434. Since then the probation caseload has fallen year on year, reaching 224,823 at the end of 2012. The rise between 2000 and 2008 was driven by:

- Introduction of new court orders, in particular the Suspended Sentence Order (SSO) in 2005 (under the Criminal Justice Act 2003).
- Increase in pre and post-release supervision caseload due to:
 - continued growth in the number of offenders serving custodial sentences of 12 months or more who require supervision on release from custody,
 - offenders spending longer periods on licence after release from custody under CJA 2003.

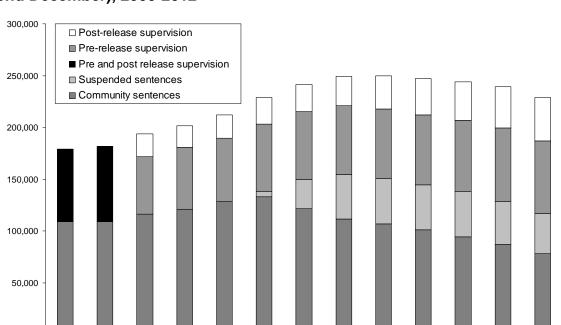


Figure 1.3: Number of offenders under Probation Service supervision (at end December), 2000-2012

The total court order caseload increased by 29 per cent between 2002 and 2007 but has since fallen each year. As at the end of 2012, the court order caseload was 114,234 - 9 per cent lower than the previous year and down 24 per cent from the peak in 2007. These caseload trends largely reflect similar trends in those starting Probation Service supervision where the number of court order starts increased by 30 per cent between 2002 and 2009, but has since fallen by 13 per cent to 145,218 in 2012. Additionally, the falling caseload since 2007 (and the fact that the caseload began to fall while starts were still rising) reflects a decrease in the average sentence length of community orders, down from 15.1 months in 2007 to 14.5 months in 2012. This reduction in length means that offenders spend less time on the caseload.

Note: the total number of offenders is overstated as some appear in more than one category

The number of offenders being supervised under community orders at the end of 2012 was 9 per cent lower than the previous year, continuing the downward trend seen since 2007; similarly, the number starting community orders fell for the third year running, down 8 per cent.

The SSO caseload fell by 8 per cent over the past year, the fourth consecutive annual fall. The number of offenders starting SSOs also fell for the second year running, down 5 per cent from the previous year.

The caseload of offenders supervised before or after release from prison increased by 1 per cent over the past year. This included a 5 per cent rise in the number supervised post release, which is consistent with the increasing numbers sentenced to long custodial sentences (who will therefore spend longer on licence after release). Starts of pre release supervision fell by 4 per cent between 2011 and 2012, consistent with trends in prison receptions where the number of

offenders starting prison sentences (excluding adults sentenced to less than 12 months who are not currently supervised on licence after release) fell by 5 per cent over the same period.

Since 2006, the number of offenders starting court order supervision for summary motoring offences has been steadily declining; this is consistent with sentencing trends. As a result, for offenders starting community orders, the proportion who had been convicted of an indictable offence increased from 51 per cent in 2006 to 54 per cent in 2012. For SSOs, the respective percentages were 58 and 70 per cent. These trends can also be seen in the caseload figures where by the end of 2012, 53 per cent of those on the community order caseload and 69 per cent of those on SSOs had been convicted of an indictable offence (compared to 50 and 57 per cent respectively in 2006).

Between 2006⁶ and 2012, there has been a marked increase in the number of offenders given curfew, specified activity and alcohol treatment requirements, whilst the use of accredited programme requirements has fallen. In the last three years, specified activity requirements have seen particularly large increases relative to other requirements. In terms of the combinations of requirements made under community orders and SSOs, we have seen large increases in the use of standalone curfew requirements, as well as combinations involving specified activity, curfew and alcohol treatment requirements; for SSOs there has also been a big rise in use of standalone unpaid work requirements. Those combinations which include accredited programmes have fallen substantially.

There were 116,876 terminations of community orders in 2012. Of these, 66 per cent had run their full course or were terminated early for good progress, the same proportion as in 2011. The successful completion rate for SSOs was 68 per cent in 2012, a slight increase from 67 per cent in 2011.

Following a generally increasing trend from 2006 to 2009, the total number of court reports has since fallen year on year, and in 2012 was 5 per cent lower than in 2011. This decrease was driven entirely by a fall in the number of standard PSRs prepared (down 21 per cent) whilst the use of Fast Delivery PSRs continued to rise (up 4 per cent), now accounting for 68 per cent of all PSRs completed in 2012 compared with 27 per cent in 2006. There was a slight decrease in the number of fast delivery *written* PSRs (down 2 per cent), whilst the number of *oral* reports prepared continued to increase (up 15 per cent).

Custodial sentences were given by the court in 89 per cent of the cases where a custodial sentence was proposed in PSRs. This compares to 32 per cent given custodial sentences where SSOs were proposed and 10 per cent where Community Sentences were proposed. It is clear that sentencers rarely give a lesser disposal than proposed in the PSR but often give a more severe one. The highest level of concordance between sentences proposed and given was for custodial sentences (89 per cent) followed by fine (72 per cent).

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⁶ 2006 is the first full year for which requirements information is available, as they were introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 2003 on 4th April 2005 to be made under the new community order and SSO sentences.

Licence recalls

Offenders serving a sentence of twelve months and over are released from prison, in most cases automatically at the half way point of their sentence, under licensed supervision to the Probation Service. They are all subject to a set of standard licence conditions, requiring them to report regularly to the Probation Service, live at an address approved by the Probation Service and to be of good behaviour.

A key element of public protection is that offenders released on licence should be effectively supervised in the community and swiftly recalled to custody if their behaviour gives cause for concern. It is explained to offenders at the outset that they may be recalled to custody if they breach any of the conditions of their licence.

There are various reasons why offenders are recalled to custody for breaching their licence conditions besides committing a further offence. For example, an offender may be recalled if there is any deterioration in behaviour which leads the Probation Service to conclude that there is an increased risk of the offender committing further offences.

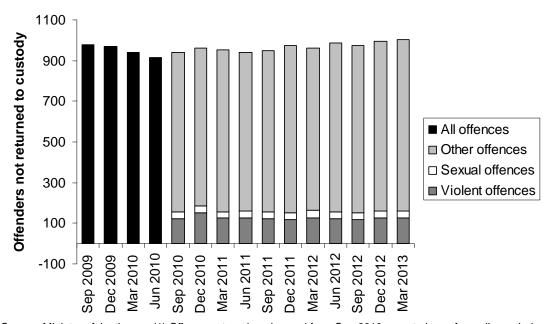
Over the period 1999 to 2012, a total of 610,000 offenders were released from prison on licence supervision. Between April 1999 and December 2012, 151,000 of those released on licence were recalled to custody for breaching the conditions of their licence, e.g. failing to report to their probation officer. Of all those recalled to custody, only 1,002 had not been returned to custody by the end of March 2013. This total may include some offenders believed to be dead or living outside of the UK but who have not been confirmed as dead or deported.

Of the 1,002 not returned to custody by 31 March 2013, 125 had originally been serving a prison sentence for violence against the person offences and a further 35 for sexual offences.

During the quarter ending December 2012, a total of 4,022 offenders had their licence revoked and were recalled. By 31 March 2013, 3,940 of these recalled offenders had been returned to custody and 82 had not been returned to custody.

The end-to-end measure across all agencies involved in the process is for 75 per cent of recalled offenders to be returned to custody within 74 hours for emergency recalls and 144 hours for standard recalls. In the quarter ending 31 December 2012, 3,684 (79 per cent) were returned within agreed timescales.

Figure 1.5: Number of offenders not returned to custody by quarter, by major offence group



Source: Ministry of Justice

(1) Offence categories changed from Sep 2010 so not shown for earlier periods

References

This publication and associated spreadsheet files of the tables contained in this document and detailed information of definitions, sources and key legislative changes are available for download at

 $\underline{www.gov.uk/government/publications/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-\underline{2}$

Bulletins from earlier related series are available at

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics

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Table 4.13: Concordance between sentences proposed and sentences given, where a PSR was prepared, January-December 2012, England and Wales

Licence recalls

- **Table 5.1:** Summary of licence recalls 1 January 1984 to 31 December 2012 and returns to custody by 31 March 2013, England and Wales
- **Table 5.2:** Summary of licence recalls to 31 December 2012 and returns to custody by 31 March 2013, England and Wales
- **Table 5.3:** Summary of number of offenders not returned to custody, as at 31 December 2010 to 31 March 2013, England and Wales
- **Table 5.4:** Number of offenders recalled from determinate and indeterminate sentences, by custody status, October-December 2011 to October-December 2012, England and Wales
- **Table 5.5:** Number of offenders recalled and not returned to custody by quarter, by offence as at 31 March 2012 to 31 March 2013, England and Wales
- **Table 5.6:** Number of offenders recalled by 31 December 2012 and not returned to custody by 31 March 2013, by Probation Trust, England and Wales
- **Table 5.7:** Length of time between recall and return to custody for recalled offenders, October-December 2011 to October-December 2012, England and Wales
- **Table 5.8:** Length of time since recall for those not returned to custody, October-December 2011 to October-December 2012, England and Wales
- **Table 5.9:** Performance against timescales for licence recalls returned to custody by agency, October-December 2011 to October-December 2012, England and Wales
- **Table 5.10:** Performance against timescales for licence recalls returned to custody by 31 March 2013 by agency, by Probation Trust, October-December 2012, England and Wales

Appendix A – Data sources and quality

The data presented in this publication are drawn from administrative IT systems. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the detail 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.

Impact of data quality issues: receptions data

Following the introduction and phased roll-out of a new case management system for prisons (prison-NOMIS) from May 2009, data collection issues emerged that affected the supply of data for statistical purposes. The vast majority of issues were resolved in March 2010; however, prison receptions data remains provisional subject to the outcome of data quality work.

Analysis of the receptions data in early 2010 identified a problem with the way reception dates were being handled in the data extract used centrally (operations within prisons were unaffected). In terms of producing the statistics, this potentially affected the period for which a given reception was counted, for example Q3 2010 versus Q4 2010.

Although the data remains provisional pending a full solution – we are working to develop a new data extract to provide these statistics in future – further analysis has shown that the issues predominantly affected 2010, with data from 2011 onwards impacted less.

While the data may not be accurate to the last digit, it is considered robust enough for analysis of broad trends; both over time, and between different types of reception.

Pre-sentence court reports (PSR) data

Evidence provided by Probation Trusts suggested that published statistics on the number of PSRs prepared by each trust were lower than those statistics produced by their internal case management systems.

The PSR data collection process in place until 31 March 2012 entailed each trust providing monthly data on the number of reports prepared that month, with the data extracted on or just after the 15th of the following month, e.g. data for July collected on 15th August. On investigation it emerged that many trusts, particularly those in large metropolitan areas, enter some PSRs onto case

management systems after this date due to data collection practicalities. To address this issue, trusts were asked to submit each monthly return two months later than previously to allow time for additional reports to be recorded, and the impact on the statistics was assessed.

This new extended data collection process has been introduced for data from April 2012, and we estimate that the statistics now capture between 1 and 3 per cent more PSRs per quarter as reported within Tables 4.12 and 4.13.

Subsequent data quality work has shown that the introduction of a longer time lag between the date a PSR is prepared and when data is extracted from case management systems, i.e. more than two months, would capture more court report data (over and above the additional 1 to 3 per cent now included in the two most recent quarters). However, these further increases were mostly seen in the number of court reports prepared for breaches, court reviews and deferred sentences (see below). For standard and fast delivery pre-sentence reports, a two month time lag captures the vast majority of data and there are diminishing returns in extending the data collection period any further.

During the data quality work described above, it emerged that previously published data for court reviews, PSR breach reports and deferred sentences was incomplete in terms of coverage across all trusts and that there were inconsistencies between trusts in the coverage and content of the data extracted from their case management systems. This data has therefore been removed from Table 4.12 for all quarters – the estimated impact on the total number of reports written is a reduction of around 4,500 reports per quarter.

It is hoped that with the introduction and phased rollout of a national management information system for all Probation trusts (nDelius), more accurate and complete data can be produced on PSR breach reports in future. This will be kept under review.

HDC eligibility

Following the identification of a data processing error in the calculation of the number of offenders eligible for HDC in 2011, revised figures have been published within Annual Table A3.4. The number of offenders eligible for HDC increased (up 2 per cent), the impact of which is a 3 percentage point fall in the release rate from previously published figures.

In addition, in order to bring the coverage of HDC eligibility in line with all other prison population data, figures from 2011 have been taken from a different source resulting in a break in series from 2011. To aid comparison, 2011 figures have been presented using both data sources. The impact of the change in data source is a 2 per cent increase in the number eligible for HDC which results in a slight fall in the release rate (down 1 percentage point).

The increase in the number of offenders identified as being eligible for HDC in the new data source is due to improved recording of release dates which enables more prisoners to be captured in the 'eligible' category. Using the previous data source, if the release date for an offender was missing, they would have been excluded from the eligible category as it would not have been possible to determine at which point they were eligible to be released under HDC.

Indeterminate sentences for public protection

Information relating to tariffs for IPP and DPP prisoners and those serving life sentences is held by the Offender Management and Public Protection Group, NOMS, in the Public Protection Unit Database (PPUD).

Licence recalls and returns to custody

Returned to custody – the figures for those returned to custody include people who have died or been deported by the UK Borders Agency as prior to 2007 this information was not collected separately. The information held centrally records whether or not recalled offenders are still wanted for return to custody but for those offenders no longer wanted for return to custody, information is not held on whether the recall was completed by actual return to custody or because the offender died or was deported.

Not returned to custody – this includes those offenders believed to be dead or living outside of the UK but who have not been confirmed as dead or deported.

Symbols used

	not available
0	Nil or less than half the final digit shown
-	not applicable
*	One or both of the comparison figures are less than 50
(p)	Provisional data
(r)	Revised data

Revisions policy

Figures for prison receptions and discharges for each of the first three quarters of the calendar year are generally revised alongside figures for quarter 4 in the October to December publication each year. Prison population, probation and licence recall figures are not routinely revised, but are corrected if an error is identified.

Any revisions will be accompanied by an explanation for the revision and its impact, along with – where appropriate - an assessment of whether the impact is in line with previous revisions (for example when updating from provisional to final prison discharges data).

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from www.statistics.gov.uk

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.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm

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