

Safety in Custody Statistics

Quarterly Bulletin

January to March 2012

England and Wales

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Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody. This publication contains statistics relating to these incidents up to the period ending March 2012 in England and Wales.

This bulletin has been produced by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) of the Ministry of Justice. NOMS monitors deaths, self-harm and assaults in prisons and has a range of related measures to help monitor overall safety.

This is the first quarterly Safety in Custody Bulletin replacing the previous annual version. The reason for the change is to enable data to be released in a more timely manner than an annual bulletin allows. Key tables will now be produced quarterly, with additional tables produced annually (see [Appendix A](#) for a list of tables).

Although this publication concerns statistics, the incidents described in this report are, by their nature, tragic and distressing to the prisoners, their families and staff. NOMS remains committed to reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths, caring for prisoners at risk of self-harm, reducing violence in prison custody and learning from such incidents.

When considering particular statistics, readers should note the following:

- Risk of death, self-harm or assaults is distributed unevenly around the prison estate. This bulletin presents the figures broken down by key factors including age, gender and time in custody. These, and random variation, explain many of the differences between prisons and particular risk groups.
- In prisons, as in the community, self-harm is often covert and assaults may go unreported. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Recording of self-harm and assault incidents in prison custody has improved over the years but it remains the case that they cannot be counted with absolute accuracy.

From time to time, events in prison custody and developments within and outside NOMS have changed the way safety in prisons is viewed and managed. Some have resulted in changes to the way offenders are managed on a day to day basis. Others have affected the way statistics are collected and reported. The timeline in [Appendix B](#) summarises some of the key events and developments since 2000 that have affected safety in prison custody and supporting statistics. The list indicates major factors affecting safety in custody and helps in the interpretation of longer term trends.

The cost of deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody, in both human and financial terms is high. This report adds to the body of learning in this area and supports work to prevent such tragedies in future. The contents of the report will be of interest to government policy makers, the agencies responsible for offender management at both national level and within prisons, and others who have an interest in safety in prisons.

Data Sources and Quality

Data relating to deaths in prison custody are drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Prison Custody database. Figures are closely scrutinised and considered to be of high quality. Self-harm and assault figures have been drawn from the NOMS incident reporting system. Care is taken when processing and analysing the returns but the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. Although the figures are shown to the last whole number, they may not be accurate to that level. See [Appendix C](#) for details on data quality, sources and methodology.

Revisions

Figures for deaths during previous years may change due to late notifications and changes in classification following an inquest, which may not be concluded for several years after the death. Figures for self-harm and assaults for the previous year may be revised due to data corrections; earlier figures are not generally subject to revision. However, to produce a back dated time series of quarterly figures there have been some minor revisions to figures for earlier years. The changes do not affect reported trends.

Key changes to this report

Two existing categories of death 'other/non-natural' and 'awaiting further information' (also referred to as 'unclassified') have been merged into 'other'. The statistical reason for the change is that the aggregate figure is more suitable for determining trends.

To reflect the change to a quarterly publication, assaults and self-harm tables have been introduced with quarterly figures. For the quarterly update on deaths in custody it has been decided to present a 12 month moving total due to the volatility between each quarter. This approach helps focus on the longer term trends within this data and consistent with other publications on aspects of the Justice system such as reoffending. The main sections on deaths, self-harm and assaults are now self-contained with commentary focussed on longer term trends.

Related publications

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin: 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: This provides proven re-offending figures for offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, received a caution, reprimand, warning or tested positive for opiates or cocaine in the 12 months ending September 2010.

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.

Overview

Table 1: Deaths in Prison Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending								
	-Mar 04	-Mar 05	-Mar 06	-Mar 07	-Mar 08	-Mar 09	-Mar 10	-Mar 11	-Mar 12
DEATHS IN PRISON CUSTODY¹									
Total deaths	187	197	167	161	188	163	180	184	211
Self-inflicted	94	87	74	72	85	64	59	54	66
Natural Causes	86	101	87	85	98	94	117	114	129
Homicide	1	2	3	1	1	3	0	2	1
Other	6	7	3	3	4	2	4	14	15
<i>of which</i>									
<i>Other/Non-natural</i>	6	7	3	3	4	2	4	7	1
<i>Awaiting further information</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	14
Total deaths per 1,000 prisoners²	2.54	2.64	2.19	2.04	2.33	1.97	2.14	2.17	2.44
Self-inflicted	1.28	1.16	0.97	0.91	1.05	0.77	0.70	0.64	0.76
Natural Causes	1.17	1.35	1.14	1.08	1.21	1.13	1.39	1.34	1.49

1) Deaths in prison custody statistics are derived from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) deaths in custody database.

2) Death rates are derived by 1000 x (number of deaths in 12 months)/(average monthly population for 12 months)

Table 2: Self-harm and Assaults Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	Jan 10	Apr 10	Jul 10	Oct 10	Jan 11	Apr 11	Jul 11	Oct 11	Jan 12
	-Mar 10	-Jun 10	-Sep 10	-Dec 10	-Mar 11	-Jun 11	-Sep 11	-Dec 11	-Mar 12
SELF-HARM INCIDENTS¹									
Total self-harm incidents	6,928	6,698	6,901	6,452	6,234	6,367	6,113	5,934	5,611
Males	3,352	3,777	3,732	3,485	3,774	4,149	4,075	3,839	4,083
Females	3,576	2,921	3,169	2,967	2,460	2,218	2,038	2,095	1,528
Individuals self-harming in quarter²	2,119	2,233	2,432	2,348	2,426	2,453	2,413	2,348	2,269
Males	1,646	1,768	1,898	1,851	1,933	1,924	1,966	1,863	1,878
Females	473	465	534	497	493	529	447	485	391
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners³	325	315	323	311	292	298	279	275	256
Males	166	187	184	176	186	204	196	187	196
Females	3,334	2,738	2,962	2,966	2,314	2,120	1,915	2,064	1,449
Self-harm related hospital attendances	326	358	353	332	361	379	425	368	361
Males	274	325	311	283	326	345	377	327	323
Females	52	33	42	49	35	34	48	41	38
ASSAULT INCIDENTS¹									
Total assaults	3,511	3,653	3,715	3,477	3,650	3,917	4,063	3,827	3,725
Males	3,378	3,461	3,526	3,337	3,480	3,711	3,905	3,660	3,582
Females	133	192	189	140	170	206	158	167	143
Assaults per 1,000 prisoners³	165	172	174	167	171	184	186	178	170
Males	167	171	174	169	172	183	188	178	172
Females	124	180	177	140	160	197	148	165	136
Serious assaults	375	340	360	319	348	323	372	341	306
Males	365	329	348	308	336	306	362	330	293
Females	10	11	12	11	12	17	10	11	13
Assaults on staff	717	712	730	697	726	787	848	774	724
Males	677	649	662	648	665	716	795	727	679
Females	40	63	68	49	61	71	53	47	45
Assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners³	34	34	34	34	34	37	39	36	33
Males	33	32	33	33	33	35	38	35	33
Females	37	59	64	49	57	68	50	46	43
Serious assaults on staff	82	66	90	66	74	67	75	58	56
Males	78	61	84	62	69	62	70	54	54
Females	4	5	6	4	5	5	5	4	2
PRISON POPULATION⁴									
Males and Females	85,184	85,002	85,429	83,055	85,400	85,374	87,501	86,172	87,531
Males	80,894	80,735	81,150	79,054	81,148	81,189	83,245	82,112	83,313
Females	4,290	4,267	4,279	4,001	4,252	4,185	4,256	4,060	4,218

1) Self-harm and assault incidents are derived from the NOMS incident reporting system. They cannot be measured with absolute accuracy and although quoted to the last figure, should be treated as approximate. See Appendix C for further information.

2) Individuals self-harming in quarter are estimated using surname and date of birth. They cannot be measured with absolute accuracy and, although quoted to the last figure, should be treated as approximate. See Appendix C for further information.

3) Annualised rates are derived by 4 x 1,000 x (Number of incidents in quarter)/(average monthly population for quarter)

4) Prison population figures are from the Offender Management Statistics quarterly bulletin and are averaged across 3 months.

Deaths in custody

A 'death in prison custody' is defined as any death of a person in prison custody arising from an incident occurring during (or, on rare occasions, immediately prior to) prison custody. This includes deaths of prisoners while released on temporary license (ROTL) for medical reasons but excludes deaths of any prisoners released on other types of temporary license. Until cause of death is confirmed at inquest, each death in prison custody is provisionally classified under one of the following causes:

Self-inflicted: Any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent.

Natural causes: Any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.

Homicide: Any death of a person at the hands of another (this includes murder and manslaughter).

Other: Any death of a person whose death cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted or homicide. There are two sub-categories

- (i) *Other/Non-natural:* Accidents arising from external causes, accidental overdose/ poisoning and deaths where taking a drug contributed to a death but not in fatal amounts.
- (ii) *Awaiting further information (formerly 'unclassified'):* This category includes any deaths on which there is insufficient information to make a judgement about the cause of a deaths. The information awaited may refer to post mortem or toxicology reports, Prison and Probation Ombudsman reports or the findings of Coroners' inquest. In a small number of cases, the cause of death may never be known even after all of the necessary investigations have taken place.

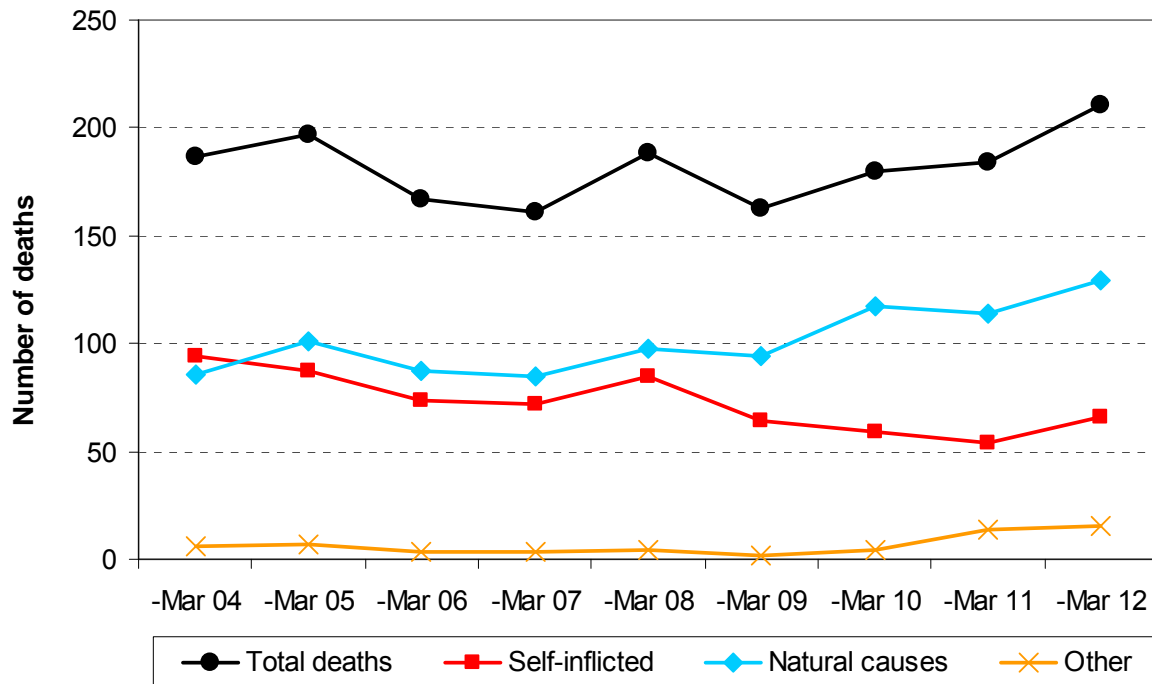
Overall mortality

For the 12 months ending March 2012, there were 211 deaths in prison custody.

The number of deaths in prison custody can vary considerably with trends best considered over a longer period; taking into account factors such as underlying changes in the prison population.

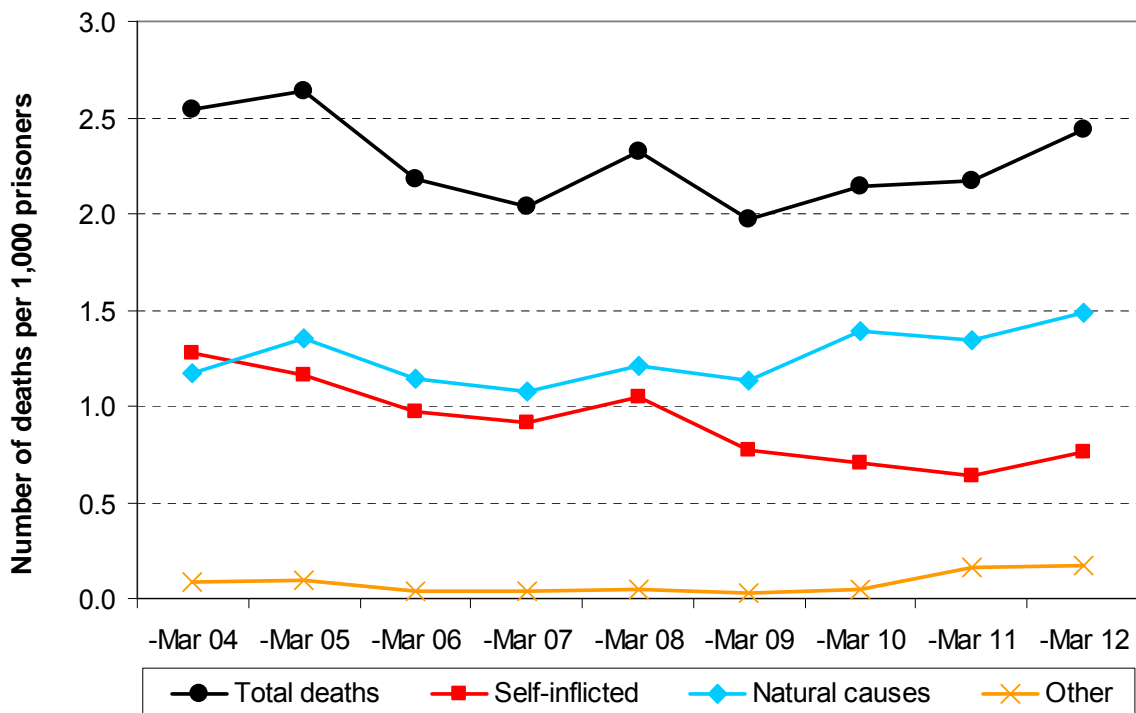
Since 2008, the total number of deaths has shown a general upward trend, rising from 163 in the 12 months to March 2009 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause, England and Wales



Changes in the prison population need to be taken into account when interpreting trends relating to deaths in prison custody. Figure 2 shows the annual numbers of deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

Figure 2: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, England and Wales



Since 2005, the overall annual mortality rate has fluctuated between 1.96 and 2.33 per 1,000 prisoners. Since 2007, the reduction in self-inflicted deaths have tended to be offset by an increase in 'natural cause' and from 2010, 'other' deaths (see figure 2).

Self-inflicted deaths

For the 12 months ending March 2012, there were 66 self-inflicted deaths.

The self-inflicted death rate in 2011 was 0.66 per 1,000 prisoners. Other than 2007, self-inflicted death rates have been reducing over the last 10 calendar years.

The increase in 'other' deaths from 2010 and the decrease in self-inflicted deaths are unconnected. Classifications of deaths have always involved an element of uncertainty and although it is possible that a small proportion of 'other' deaths may be self-inflicted, the effect is not sufficient to adversely affect interpretation of trends.

For the third year in a row, there were no self-inflicted deaths on the day of arrival in a prison during 2011. The numbers on the first and second full days also remain low averaging less than one per quarter.

Natural cause deaths

For the 12 months ending March 2012, there were 129 natural cause deaths.

Numbers of natural cause deaths and rates have been increasing since 2006. In 2011, numbers continued to rise but rates fell for the first time since 2006. The prison population has been ageing and staying in custody for longer which may explain the trend.

Up to the 1980s, natural causes routinely accounted for the majority of deaths in prison custody. That changed between 1989 and 2003 when self-inflicted deaths were consistently higher than those due to natural causes¹. The historical pattern of natural cause deaths in prison custody routinely exceeding self-inflicted deaths has now returned.

Some of the deaths currently classified as 'other' in this report are likely to be classified as natural causes once more information becomes available. As a result, numbers and rates of natural cause deaths may be slightly under-reported. The effect is not sufficient, to adversely affect interpretation of trends.

¹ See table 1.2 in Safety in Custody Statistics deaths tables

Homicides

There has been one homicide in the 12 months ending March 2012. Annual numbers have varied between 0 and 3 over the last 10 years.

Homicides are relatively rare accounting for less than one per cent of all deaths in prison custody. There were 14 in the 10 years from 2002 to 2011; an average of 1.4 per year. For the previous 10 years ending 2001 there were 22; an average of 2.2 per year.

Other deaths

There were 15 'other' deaths in the period ending March 2012. Numbers in this category have varied between 1 and 16 over the last 10 years.

In 2011 'Other' deaths accounted for 7.3 per cent of all deaths during the year.

This category has been increasing in recent years due to a number of cases that have proved difficult to classify. In July 2011, we reported that there were eight 'unclassified' deaths in 2010. At the time this report was being prepared, five remained. Of the three that were provisionally classified, two were 'other/non-natural' and one was 'natural causes'.

On the balance of probability, the majority of deaths for which information is awaited beyond three months will eventually be classified as 'other/non-natural'. Of the remainder, most will be natural causes.

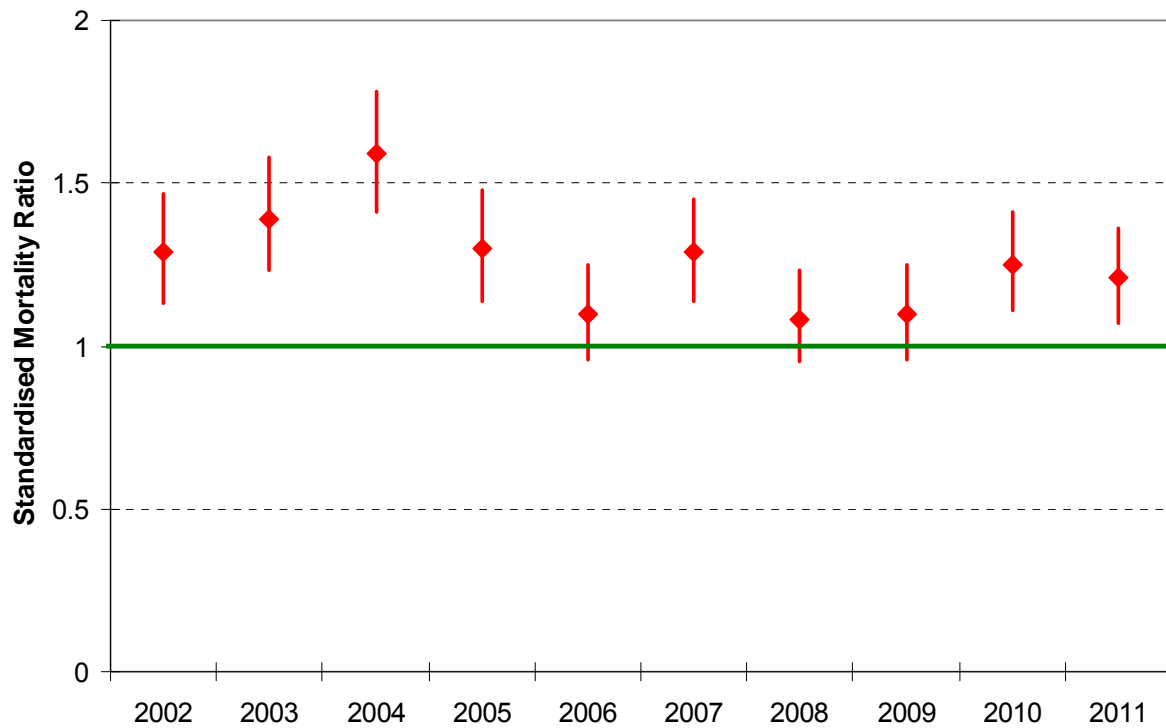
Some of the cases in the aggregated 'other' category appear to be drug related but there is no reason to believe that any are self-inflicted. However, the uncertainty will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

Comparison of deaths in prison with those in the general population

The prison population is very different from the general population: 95 per cent of the prison population are male, there are no prisoners aged under 15 and relatively few are over 60. As a result, rates of deaths in prison custody cannot be compared directly with those for the general population. One technique used for comparing mortality rates for different populations is known as the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR).

Figure 3 shows the SMR for the prison population and its 95 per cent confidence interval. It compares overall deaths with those of the general population of England and Wales taking into account differences in age and gender. An SMR above one means that prisoners are more likely to die than an equivalent cross section of the general population.

Figure 3: Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population



In 2011, the SMR for the prison population was 1.21. For 2011, the lower limit is above one indicating that after age and gender differences are taken into account the mortality rate in prison custody was higher than in the general population. At least some of the difference is explained by the prison population having a higher turnover and proportionally more health problems than the general population.

Table 3: Annual deaths in prison custody, England and Wales

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Prison Population¹	70,861	73,038	74,658	75,980	78,151	80,380	82,636	83,559	84,725	85,951
Deaths in prison custody²	164	183	208	174	153	185	165	169	197	192
Self-inflicted	95	95	96	78	67	92	61	61	58	57
Natural Causes	66	86	101	88	83	89	98	105	125	119
Homicide	0	1	2	3	0	2	3	0	1	2
Other	3	1	9	5	3	2	3	3	13	14
<i>of which</i>										
Other/Non-natural	3	1	9	5	3	2	3	3	8	2
Awaiting further information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	12
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners³	2.32	2.51	2.79	2.29	1.96	2.31	2.00	2.02	2.33	2.25
Self-inflicted	1.34	1.30	1.29	1.03	0.86	1.14	0.74	0.73	0.68	0.66
Natural Causes	0.93	1.18	1.35	1.16	1.06	1.11	1.19	1.26	1.48	1.38
Other	0.04	0.01	0.12	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.15	0.16
Standardised mortality ratio (SMR)⁴	1.29	1.39	1.59	1.30	1.10	1.29	1.08	1.10	1.25	1.21
SMR Confidence interval	(1.13-1.47)	(1.23-1.58)	(1.41-1.78)	(1.14-1.48)	(0.96-1.25)	(1.14-1.45)	(0.95-1.23)	(0.96-1.25)	(1.11-1.41)	(1.07-1.36)
Self-inflicted deaths by time in current prison⁵	95	95	96	78	67	92	61	61	58	57
On day of arrival	1	2	4	0	2	1	3	0	0	0
1st or 2nd full day	12	13	13	13	3	5	5	9	4	4
3 days to 7 days	17	12	13	2	3	11	3	10	6	9
8 days to 30 days	22	16	23	17	12	17	10	6	7	8
31 days to 3 months (90 days)	20	18	19	12	20	23	15	16	15	16
days)	12	16	9	20	12	15	12	13	8	8
6 months to 1 year	8	6	12	4	7	9	8	5	8	5
Over one year	3	12	3	10	8	11	5	2	10	7

1) Prison population figures are from the Offender Management Statistics quarterly bulletin and are averaged across 12 months.

2) Deaths in prison custody statistics are derived from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) deaths in the custody database. Classifications are provisional until confirmed at inquest.

3) Annual rates are derived using: $1,000 \times (\text{Number of deaths in year}) / (\text{average monthly population for year})$

4) See Appendix B and the associated technical note 'Reporting of deaths in custody' on the website.

5) Prisoners who die on the date of arrival will typically have been in the prison for less than 12 hours. The one to two days category includes any death after midnight on the date of arrival and before midnight on the second complete day in the prison. Care needs to be taken when interpreting numbers of deaths in the early days of custody as the actual number of deaths in precise 24 hours time slots is not always known precisely due to uncertainty about the exact time of incident/death.

Self-harm

Self-harm in prison custody is defined as, “*any act where a prisoner deliberately harms themselves irrespective of the method, intent or severity of any injury.*” In the community, self-harm is often covert. In prisons, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted.

Information on self-harm is collected through the NOMS incident reporting system which collects data on a range of incidents including deaths and assaults. The parts of the system relating to self-harm were revised and changes implemented in December 2002. Relatively complete data are available from 2004 onwards although it remains the case that self-harm incidents cannot be counted with absolute accuracy.

Key self-harm statistics are summarised in Table 3. Although the number of self-harm incidents is provided, this particular measure, in isolation, is not a good indicator of underlying trend as a small number of individuals account for a large proportion of self-harm incidents. When considering trends in self-harm measures relating to both individuals and incidents should be considered.

There were 5,611 self-harm incidents perpetrated by 2,269 individuals during the quarter ending March 2012.

Having increased sharply between 2009 and 2010, self-harm rates have since been falling, reaching 260 per 1,000 prisoners in the last quarter (see table 1).

The continued fall in recorded self-harm is mostly due to a reduction in the number of female prisoners who now form a smaller proportion of the overall prison population: 6.1 per cent in 2002 down to 4.9 per cent in 2011. As a disproportionate amount of self-harm is perpetrated by female prisoners, any relative change to the male/female prison population disproportionately affects overall self-harm rates.

An additional reason for the change is the ageing prisoner population. Since 2002, the mean age of both male and female prisoners has been rising. As younger prisoners are more likely to self-harm than older prisoners, self-harm rates tend to fall as the mean age rises. In 2011, prisoners aged 15 to 20 accounted for 11 per cent of the prison population but 21 per cent of all self-harm incidents.

In 2011, the rates of female self-harm were approximately 11 times higher than for males. However, repetitive self-harmers impact on this comparison. An alternative comparison uses proportions of the male and female prison population who self-harm. In 2011, the equivalent of seven per cent of the male population self-harmed compared with 29 per cent of females (individuals self-harming /average population). Another comparison uses average numbers of self-harm incidents. In 2011, male prisoners who self-harmed averaged 2.8 incidents over the year compared with an average of 7.1 incidents for females.

Historically, female prisoners accounted for more than half of all self-harm incidents but this is no longer the case as illustrated in Figure 4.

The annual numbers of individual female self-harmers in 2011 was 11 per cent lower than the 2008 peak. Over the same time period, the number of incidents fell 32 per cent.

The difference may be explained by a relatively higher reduction in the number of female repetitive self-harmers in prison custody. The most recent quarter, continues that trend – fewer individual self-harmers and incidents.

The majority of prisoners do not self-harm. In 2011, 43 per cent of females that self-harmed and 60 per cent of males did so once, while six per cent of females and one per cent of males did so more than 20 times.

A small proportion of individuals account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm. Since 2004, individuals self-harming more than 20 times in the year have accounted for between 33 per cent and 46 per cent of all self-harm incidents.

The early days of arriving in a prison are the highest risk times for self-harm with the incidence reducing over time. In 2011, approximately 23 per cent of self-harm incidents occurred within the first month of arriving in a prison (Table 4). This proportion has been reducing in recent years down from 42 per cent in 2004. The reduction is, in part, due to the reduction in the female population.

Figure 4: Quarterly self-harm incidents and individuals by gender, England and Wales

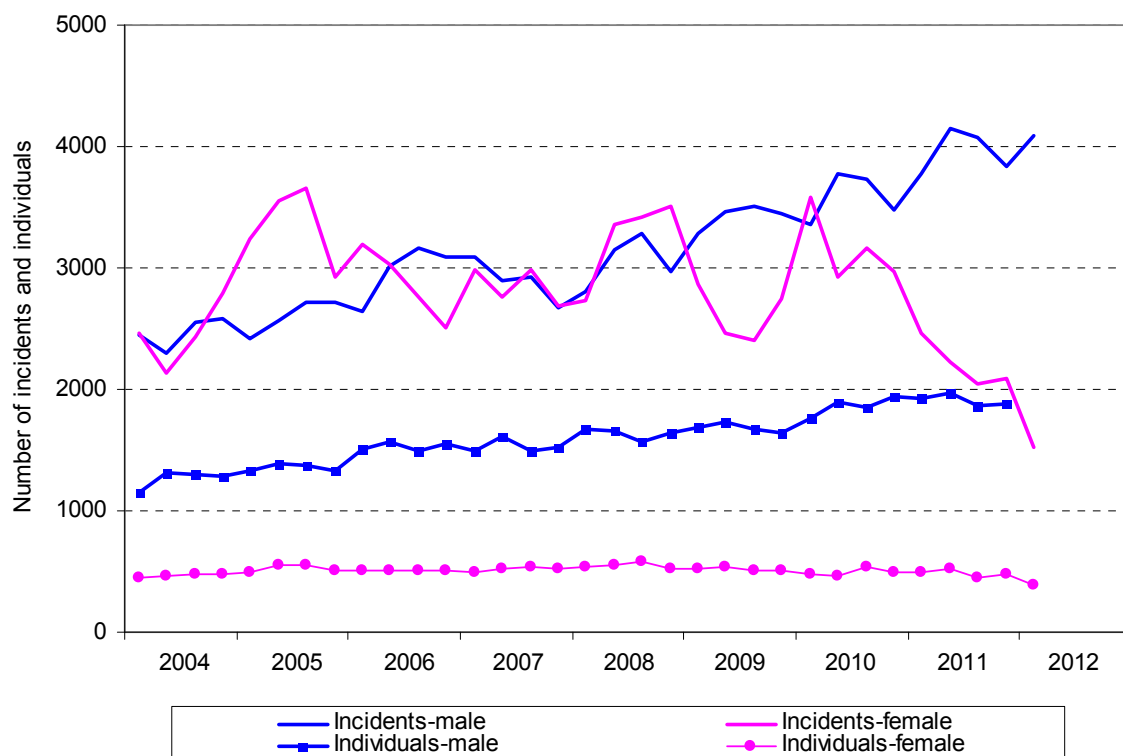


Figure 4 illustrates how numbers of female self-harm incidents are relatively volatile compared with numbers of individuals self-harming. The low points for female self-harm in 2009 and more recently, indicate that there was less repetitive self-harm at those times.

Table 4: Self-harm summary statistics, England and Wales

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Prison population¹	74,657	75,979	78,127	80,216	82,572	83,560	84,725	85,374
Males	70,209	71,512	73,680	75,842	78,158	79,277	80,489	81,189
Females	4,448	4,467	4,447	4,374	4,414	4,283	4,236	4,185
Self-harm incidents^{2,3}	19,702	23,781	23,400	23,000	25,234	24,184	26,979	24,648
Males	9,874	10,420	11,899	11,592	12,219	13,706	14,346	15,837
Females	9,828	13,361	11,501	11,408	13,015	10,478	12,633	8,811
Individuals self-harming⁴	5,243	5,560	5,845	6,122	6,325	6,444	6,623	6,854
Males ⁵	4,003	4,215	4,529	4,785	4,936	5,117	5,376	5,621
Females ⁵	1,240	1,345	1,316	1,337	1,389	1,327	1,247	1,233
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	264	313	300	287	306	289	318	289
Males	141	146	161	153	156	173	178	195
Females	2,210	2,991	2,586	2,608	2,949	2,446	2,982	2,105
Individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners	70	73	75	76	77	77	78	80
Males	57	59	61	63	63	65	67	69
Females	279	301	296	306	315	310	294	295
Self-harm incidents per individual^{3,5}	3.8	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.8	4.1	3.6
Males	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.8
Females	7.9	9.9	8.7	8.5	9.4	7.9	10.1	7.1
Self-harm related hospital attendances	1,093	1,219	1,214	1,290	1,290	1,304	1,369	1,533
Males	873	985	1,001	1,104	1,083	1,131	1,193	1,375
Females	220	234	213	186	207	173	176	158
Self-harm incidents by age group								
15-17 year olds	1,074	1,260	1,011	1,101	1,473	1,102	730	722
18 - 20	3,687	5,033	4,998	4,559	5,114	4,435	5,080	4,457
21-24	4,057	4,265	4,034	4,818	5,373	4,452	5,678	5,491
25-29	3,407	4,184	4,334	3,932	3,787	4,117	4,555	4,433
30-39	3,977	5,100	4,960	4,419	5,496	5,052	6,105	5,244
40-49	1,172	1,834	2,400	2,272	2,094	2,362	2,317	2,581
50-59	167	184	234	238	350	603	824	604
60 and over	30	39	23	80	71	84	166	106
Not recorded	2,131	1,882	1,406	1,581	1,476	1,977	1,524	1,010
Self-harm incidents by time in current prison								
On day of arrival	328	284	343	335	352	400	346	215
1st or 2nd full day ³	697	732	741	759	755	700	634	494
3 days to 7 days	1,399	1,572	1,445	1,434	1,417	1,365	1,173	1,111
8 days to 30 days	3,696	4,114	4,399	3,754	4,081	3,558	3,340	2,711
31 days to 3 months	4,695	5,735	5,856	5,397	5,880	5,022	5,785	4,078
3 months to 6 months	3,028	3,737	3,743	3,824	4,448	3,729	4,293	3,756
6 months to 1 year	1,795	2,893	2,764	2,569	2,769	2,851	3,334	3,741
Over 1 year	1,797	2,674	2,417	3,079	3,850	4,203	6,238	7,282
Unknown	2,267	2,040	1,692	1,849	1,682	2,356	1,836	1,260

(1) As published in Offender Management Caseload Statistics Quarterly Bulletin

(2) A new system for monitoring self harm was introduced in December 2002 and as a result recording of self harm improved throughout 2003. Numbers before 2004 have therefore not been included as they are not directly comparable with later figures.

(3) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

(4) The numbers of different individuals has been revised and is now based on unique surname and date of birth. The alternative method based on unique prisoner numbers has proven to be less consistent over time due to changes in the prison numbering system. Neither method produces absolute numbers of unique individuals but the current method has advantages in that it is more consistent over time

Assaults

Assault incidents² cover a wide range of possible offences including grievous bodily harm (GBH), aggravated bodily harm (ABH), affray etc.

A particular assault is classified as serious if:

- it is a sexual assault
- it results in detention in outside hospital as an in-patient
- it requires medical treatment for concussion or internal injuries
- the injury is a fracture, scald or burn, stabbing, crushing, extensive or multiple bruising, black eye, broken nose, lost or broken tooth, cuts requiring suturing, bites or temporary or permanent blindness.

There were 3,725 assault incidents during the quarter ending March 2012. Of these, 724 were on staff.

Since January 2010, annualised assault rates have ranged between 165 and 186 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners (see figure 5).

The role of individual prisoners in assault incidents cannot always be distinguished. In some incidents, it is clear which prisoners are assailants and which are victims while in other incidents the roles are blurred. In the latter cases, those involved may be identified as 'fighters'. The roles are determined by local investigation of the incident.

Younger prisoners are more frequently involved in violence than older prisoners. In 2011, prisoners aged 15 to 20 accounted for 11 per cent of the prison population. However, they accounted 59 per cent of all fighters 46 per cent of assailants and 38 per cent of victims.

In the context of assault incidents, gender refers to the type of prison and not the gender of those involved in the incident. The reason for this is that in a small percentage of cases, assault incidents in a male prison will be on females – typically members of staff. Similarly, in female prisons, a small percentage of assaults will be on male staff.

Unlike self-harm, assault rates in male and female prisons are relatively similar. In 2011, the annual assault rate in male prisons was 180 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners compared with 167 in female prisons. Until 2008, assault rates in female prisons were consistently higher than in male prisons. That trend has now reversed with rates in male prisons now being higher.

² PSI 47/2011 Prisoner Discipline Procedures uses the following questions to determine whether an assault was committed

- Did the accused prisoner apply force to another person, or act in such a way that another person was in fear of force being applied to them?
- Was the force unlawful, i.e. more than was reasonable in the circumstances for self-defence against an assault or to prevent a serious crime?

The overall assaults rate on staff is dominated by what happens in the male prison estate. Rates in the male prison estate fell to 33 per 1,000 prisoners in the last quarter and to 43 per 1,000 in the female estate.

Figure 5: Total assaults and assaults on staff, England and Wales

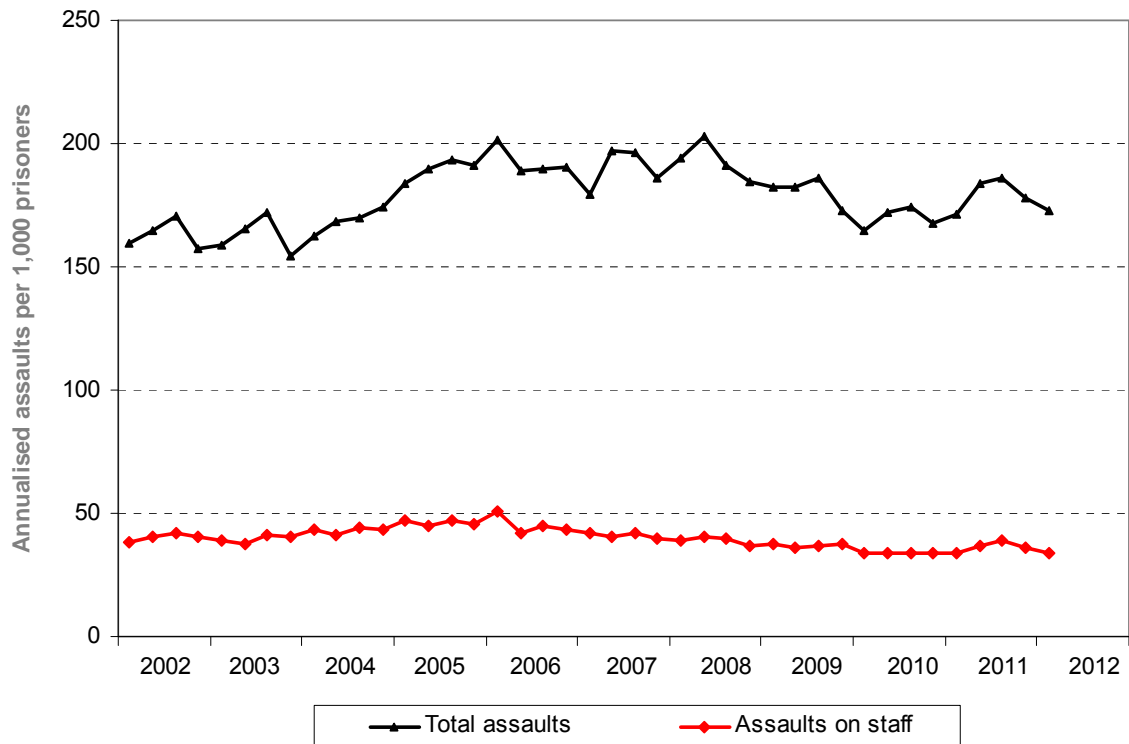


Table 5: Assault summary statistics, England and Wales

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Prison population¹	70,861	73,038	74,658	75,980	78,151	80,380	82,636	83,559	84,725	85,951
Males	66,562	68,613	70,209	71,513	73,703	76,006	78,222	79,277	80,489	81,763
Females	4,299	4,425	4,449	4,467	4,448	4,374	4,414	4,283	4,236	4,188
Assault incidents^{2,3}	11,562	11,877	12,616	14,413	15,057	15,272	15,959	15,185	14,356	15,457
Males	10,814	11,069	11,753	13,325	13,895	14,268	15,054	14,479	13,702	14,756
Females	748	808	863	1,088	1,162	1,004	905	706	654	701
Assaults per 1,000 prisoners⁴	163	163	169	190	193	190	193	182	169	180
Males	162	161	167	186	189	188	192	183	170	180
Females	174	183	194	244	261	230	205	165	154	167
Serious assaults	956	1,160	1,220	1,372	1,404	1,485	1,491	1,318	1,394	1,367
Males	917	1,095	1,137	1,306	1,344	1,435	1,448	1,282	1,350	1,321
Females	39	65	83	66	60	50	43	36	44	46
Assaults on staff	2,851	2,893	3,204	3,502	3,530	3,279	3,219	3,083	2,856	3,135
Males	2,553	2,592	2,895	3,067	3,006	2,869	2,867	2,831	2,636	2,903
Females	298	301	309	435	524	410	352	252	220	232
Assaults per 1,000 prisoners⁴	40	40	43	46	45	41	39	37	34	36
Males	38	38	41	43	41	38	37	36	33	36
Females	69	68	69	97	118	94	80	59	52	55
Serious assaults on staff	196	267	272	299	279	285	284	269	304	274
Males	188	247	246	277	254	266	265	257	285	255
Females	8	20	26	22	25	19	19	12	19	19
Prisoner assailants	5,097	4,994	5,162	6,464	6,799	6,535	7,171	6,895	7,223	7,010
15-17	1,087	810	891	1,431	1,620	1,491	1,866	1,748	1,501	1,320
18-20	1,394	1,307	1,271	1,591	1,775	1,641	1,753	1,917	2,010	1,891
21-25	895	978	994	1,130	1,047	1,082	1,161	1,068	1,242	1,362
26-29	670	777	899	904	948	990	1,013	858	969	963
30-39	836	884	858	1,039	986	882	916	859	982	951
40-49	175	186	201	305	314	360	368	356	405	392
50-59	30	37	32	41	83	67	73	69	79	66
60 and over	10	13	16	22	26	22	21	19	28	29
Unknown	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	7	36
Prisoner fighters	7,556	7,718	7,666	9,556	10,447	11,386	11,627	11,215	11,031	10,401
15-17	2,329	2,213	2,052	3,264	3,654	4,045	4,248	3,183	2,928	2,632
18-20	2,836	2,637	2,463	3,065	3,184	3,564	3,617	3,907	3,438	3,456
21-25	924	1,113	1,146	1,162	1,290	1,318	1,369	1,483	1,701	1,634
26-29	640	736	894	919	1,009	1,103	1,033	1,179	1,272	1,105
30-39	685	815	885	924	997	989	994	1,050	1,222	1,103
40-49	119	180	207	191	270	317	309	363	393	383
50-59	21	17	15	24	35	40	36	37	60	62
60 and over	2	7	4	7	8	10	21	12	16	26
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Prison victims	4,281	4,158	4,271	5,298	5,631	5,783	6,424	5,896	5,865	5,381
15-17	706	519	518	926	966	999	1,242	994	884	742
18-20	1,043	958	937	1,199	1,235	1,248	1,475	1,568	1,449	1,296
21-25	745	802	805	857	977	1,017	1,049	1,003	1,092	1,033
26-29	701	710	758	891	907	947	1,023	871	847	816
30-39	824	879	904	1,037	1,069	1,084	1,072	972	975	958
40-49	189	217	254	315	364	392	457	374	451	407
50-59	54	55	77	55	85	74	80	89	121	98
60 and over	19	18	18	18	28	22	26	25	46	29
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

(1) Prison population figures are from the Offender Management Statistics quarterly bulletin and are averaged across 12 months

(2) Prison violence can be measured in a number of ways. This report focuses on assault incidents including fights. A new Key Performance Indicator for serious assaults was introduced in 2003/04 and as a result reporting of all assault incidents improved. Reported incidents before 2005 are therefore not directly comparable with later figures. In particular, although figures for 2000 to 2002 have been included they are under reported by modern standards. It is now expected that all assaults, including fights, should be reported whether or not there was an injury. As this was not the case in the past care needs to be taken when interpreting changes over the years.

(3) Assault incidents are derived from the NOMS incident reporting system. They cannot be measured with absolute accuracy and although quoted to the last figure, should be treated as approximate. See Appendix C for further information

(4) Annual assault rates are derived by 1,000 x (number of incidents in year)/(average monthly population for year)

References

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody (<http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/>)

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx)
- Deaths following police contact (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx)

Prison Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

- Fatal Incident reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/investigating-fatal-accidents.html)
- Annual reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/annual-reports.html)

World Health Organisation (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD)

- ICD 10 (<http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en>)

Ministry of Justice/NOMS

- Prison and Probation Statistics (www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation)
- Prison Service Orders (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos)
- Prison Service Instructions (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis)

Appendix A List of tables and figures

This is a list of the quarterly and annual tables in this Safety in Custody Statistics publication and associated death, self-harm and assaults spreadsheet files available from the website. They refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

	Table description	Period
Safety in Custody – Summary tables		
Table 1	Deaths in prison custody summary statistics	Apr 09 - Mar 12
Table 2	Quarterly self-harm and assaults summary statistics	Apr 09 - Mar 12
Table 3	Annual summary statistics (deaths)	2002 - 2011
Table 4	Annual summary statistics (self-harm)	2004 - 2011
Table 5	Annual summary statistics (assaults)	2002 - 2011
Figure 1	12 month moving total numbers of deaths by apparent cause	2002 - 2011
Figure 2	Annual deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	2002 - 2011
Figure 3	Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population	2002 - 2011
Figure 4	Quarterly self-harm incidents and individuals by gender	Jan 02 - Mar 12
Figure 5	Quarterly total assaults and assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners	Jan 02 - Mar 12
Deaths tables		
Table 1.1	Annual deaths in prison custody and rates by apparent cause	1978 - 2011
Table 1.2	Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and gender	1978 - 2011
Table 1.3	Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and age band	1978 - 2011
Table 1.4	Annual deaths arising from incidents in prison custody but occurring elsewhere	1999 - 2011
Table 1.5	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender	1978 - 2011
Table 1.6	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by age	1978 - 2011
Table 1.7	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in custody and current prison	1999 - 2011
Table 1.8	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by type of custody	1999 - 2011
Table 1.9	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by ethnicity	1999 - 2011
Table 1.10	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by nationality type	1999 - 2011
Table 1.11	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by sentence type	1999 - 2011
Table 1.12	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by method	1999 - 2011
Table 1.13	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation	1999 - 2011
Table 1.14	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligature points used in fatal hangings	1999 - 2011
Table 1.15	Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group	2001 - 2011
Table 1.16	Annual self-inflicted deaths by establishment	2001 - 2011
Table 1.17	Annual natural cause deaths by establishment	2001 - 2011
Table 1.18	Dates of opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011
Self-harm tables		
Table 2.1	Annual self-harm summary	2004 - 2011
Table 2.2	Annual self-harm incidents by method	2004 - 2011
Table 2.3	Annual self-harm incidents by age group	2004 - 2011
Table 2.4	Annual individuals self-harming by age group	2004 - 2011

Table description	Period
Table 2.5 Annual self-harm incidents by time in current prison	2004 - 2011
Table 2.6 Annual self-harm incidents by type of custody	2004 - 2011
Table 2.7 Annual self-harm incidents by ethnicity	2004 - 2011
Table 2.8 Annual self-harm incidents by nationality type	2004 - 2011
Table 2.9 Individuals self-harming by nationality type	2004 - 2011
Table 2.10 Annual self-harm incidents by location	2004 - 2011
Table 2.11 Annual self-harm incidents by type of hospital attendances	2004 - 2011
Table 2.12 Annual self-harm frequency	2004 - 2011
Table 2.13 Annual self-harm incidents by establishment	2004 - 2011
Table 2.14 Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011
Assaults tables	
Table 3.1 Annual prison assault summary statistics	2002 - 2011
Table 3.2 Annual assault incidents and prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by gender	2000 - 2011
Table 3.3 Annual assault incidents and prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by age	2000 - 2011
Table 3.4 Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by time in current prison	2000 - 2011
Table 3.5 Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by type of custody	2000 - 2011
Table 3.6 Annual Prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by ethnicity	2000 - 2011
Table 3.7 Annual Prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by nationality type	2000 - 2011
Table 3.8 Annual assault incidents by assailant / victim type	2000 - 2011
Table 3.9 Annual sexual assault incidents by assailant / victim type	2000 - 2011
Table 3.10 Annual assault incidents involving weapons	2000 - 2011
Table 3.11 Annual assaults on staff	2000 - 2011
Table 3.12 Annual assault incidents by type of injury	2000 - 2011
Table 3.13 Annual assault related hospital attendances / treatment for concussion/internal injuries	2000 - 2011
Table 3.14 Annual assault incidents (Including fights) by establishment	2000 - 2011
Table 3.15 Annual assaults on staff by establishment	2000 - 2011
Table 3.16 Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011

Appendix B Timeline

This is a list of key events and developments since 2000 that have affected safety in prison custody and supporting statistics. The list is not comprehensive but does give an indication of the major factors affecting safety in custody and helps in the interpretation of longer term trends.

2000

- March: Zahid Mubarek murdered by racially motivated cell mate at HM Young Offenders Institution Feltham

2002

- December: New self-harm monitoring form introduced
- New Cell Sharing Risk Assessment (CSRA) form introduced

2003

- January: PSO 2700, *'Suicide and Self Harm Prevention'* launched

2004

- Joint Commission on Human Rights publishes, *'Report on Deaths in Custody'*
- April: Apparent homicide of Shahid Aziz – Leeds
- May: PSO 2750, *'Violence Reduction Strategy'* launched

2006

- New at risk prisoner care planning system, *'Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork'* (ACCT) launched
- Home Office & Department of Health set up Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody
- Zahid Mubarek inquiry finishes

2007

- Prison staff issued with cut down tools
- March: Baroness Jean Corston publishes, a *'Review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice system'*
- October: PSO 2700 revised
- December: Lord Carter publishes, *'Proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales'*

2008

- March: *'Independent review of Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody'* (Robert Fulton)

2009

- January: Review of NOMS Violence Reduction Strategy commenced
- March: Lord Harris appointed Chair of new Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody

2010

- February: First Quick Time Learning Bulletin published

2011

- April: PSI *'Cell Sharing Risk Assessment'* is published

2012

- January: Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody granted a further three year term by Ministers
- February: PSI *'Safer Custody'* published replacing PSOs 2700, 2750 and 2710
- May: Review of unclassified deaths between 2010 and 2011 (Mc Feeley)

Appendix C Data Sources, Quality and Methodology

Summary

The data relating to deaths in prison custody presented in this publication is drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Prison Custody database. The data are closely scrutinised and are considered to be of high quality. However, it is in the nature of deaths, that numbers may change over time as new information emerges in particular following inquests which often take place some years after a death. Overall numbers of deaths in prison custody should be absolute. However, a single reclassification of a death following inquest will affect numerous tables in this publication. Tables dependent on classification of deaths should therefore be treated as provisional.

The data relating to self-harm and assault incidents in this publication are drawn from the NOMS Incident Reporting System which collects information on a range of different types incidents.

- Although care is taken when processing and analysing returns related to these incidents, 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.
- In prisons, as in the community, self-harm is often covert and assaults may go unreported. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Recording of self-harm and assault incidents in prison custody has improved over the years but it remains the case that they cannot be counted with absolute accuracy.

Quality of data may be measured using the six dimensions of data quality Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, Coherence and Comparability. A full review of quality is beyond the scope of this bulletin but the table at the end of this appendix provides a basic assessment of accuracy for the main data streams in this report: deaths, self-harm and assaults.

Change to how statistics on deaths are presented in this report

In the previous bulletin, published in July 2011, a new 'unclassified' category of death was introduced. At the time, it was unclear how these deaths would eventually be classified. Although it has always been the case that classifications may change as new information emerges, the approach attracted criticism that self-inflicted or other violent deaths may be hidden in this new category.

In the majority of cases, deaths in prison custody are quickly classified. For the remaining deaths, further information may be required before a classification can be made. The information awaited may refer to post mortem or toxicology reports, Prison and Probation Ombudsman report or the Coroner's inquest. In a few cases, the cause of death may never be known even after all of the necessary investigations have taken place. Such cases have always existed but, in 2010, numbers appeared to increase.

Of the deaths for which further information is awaited after three months, we have concluded that, the majority will end up classified as 'other/non-natural'. Most of the remaining deaths in this category will be natural causes. Only a small proportion are expected to be self-inflicted although there will remain an element of uncertainty that will not be removed until after inquest.

The revised approach consists of four main categories and two sub categories:

- Self-inflicted
- Natural causes
- Homicide
- Other -*consisting of the two sub categories:*
 - Other/non-natural
 - Awaiting further information (formerly 'unclassified')

The only essential change is that two of the existing categories are now aggregated. The statistical reason for this change is that the two sub-categories, reported on previously, are relatively volatile changing quickly over time as new information emerges. As a result, they are not, in isolation, suitable for determining trends. However, the aggregate 'other' category is relatively stable and therefore more useful for determining trends.

The types of deaths included in the aggregate 'other' category include:

- Deaths following a fall
- Adverse reaction to medical treatment
- Refusal of medical treatment
- Drug related

In some jurisdictions, drug related deaths are reported separately. NOMS chose not to report such deaths separately because it blurs the boundary with self-inflicted deaths that might then be underreported. The current classification system means that drug related deaths are distributed amongst more than one category: a small percentage of self-inflicted deaths (drug overdoses), a small percentage of natural cause deaths (those where drugs contributed to a premature death) and a larger proportion of the other category. Given the wide variety of deaths in the 'other category' numbers in each type are relatively small and so it is difficult to assess underlying trends. As the category appears to be on the increase, we will keep the matter under review.

Deaths in prison custody data

Sources of data

The data relating to deaths in prison custody presented in this publication is drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Prison Custody Database. Data recorded on that database comes from a number of sources including:

- Historical archives (Death registers)
- Prisoner records
- NOMS strategic IT systems including; NOMS Incident Reporting System (IRS), NOMIS (which replaced LIDS) and Accommodation and Occupancy (A&O) database (which replaced IIS)
- Prisons
- Prison and Probation Ombudsman fatal incident investigations
- Coroners

The database contains summary details of each death in prison custody since 1978. Some data, such as ethnicity and nationality, were added later.

NOMS system for classifying deaths in prison custody

A 'death in prison custody' is any death of a person in prison custody arising from an incident occurring during (or, on rare occasions, immediately prior to) prison custody. This includes deaths of prisoners while Released on Temporary License (ROTL) for medical reasons but excludes deaths of any prisoners released on other types of temporary license.

Each death in prison custody is provisionally classified as one of the following:

- **Self-inflicted**
Any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent.
- **Natural causes**
Any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.
- **Homicide**
Any death of a person at the hands of another (includes murder and manslaughter).
- **Other**
Any death of a person whose death cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted or homicide. These include
 - (i) *Other/Non-natural*: Accidents arising from external causes, accidental overdose/ poisoning and deaths where taking a drug contributed to a death but not in fatal amounts.
 - (ii) *Awaiting further information*: This category includes any deaths for which there is insufficient information to make a judgement about the cause of death. The information awaited may refer to post mortem or toxicology reports, Prison and Probation Ombudsman report or the Coroner's inquest. In a small number of cases the cause of death may never be known even after all of the necessary investigations have taken place.

All deaths in prison custody are subject to a coroner's inquest. It is the responsibility of the coroner to determine the cause of death. The NOMS system for classifying deaths provides a provisional classification for administrative and statistical purposes. The final classification is only determined at inquest.

Exclusions

Data in this publication includes deaths of prisoners while Released on Temporary License (ROTL) for medical reasons but excludes deaths of any prisoners on other types of ROTL because the incident leading to a death does not usually occur within the direct control of the state. For example; an overdose or fatal road traffic accident. In addition, ROTL deaths cannot be counted accurately because:

- They are not always reported to NOMS immediately.
- When prisoners do not return to custody, they are declared as being unlawfully at large. Unless all such prisoners can be accounted for, the numbers dying while on ROTL cannot be measured with certainty.

Although non-medical ROTL deaths are excluded from deaths in prison custody figures, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman has the discretion to investigate them. A non-medical ROTL death may be included if the investigation concluded that the incident leading to the death occurred while in prison custody. We are not aware of any such cases but they are possibility.

Comparability of deaths figures with those from other sources

The NOMS system of classifying deaths evolved specifically to help place reliable numbers of deaths in prison custody in the public domain without undue delay. This section shows how they compare with other sources in particular

- International Classification of Diseases ICD versions 9/10
- Prison and Probation Ombudsman: *Self-inflicted, Natural causes, Substance abuse, Homicide, Accidental*
- Police: *Inquest verdicts (for example, Suicide, Open verdict, Non-dependent drug abuse, Natural causes, Sudden deaths, Inquest pending , Inquest not held)*

Similar variations occur with other prison systems. As a result, when comparing published deaths in prison custody for England and Wales, it is important to consider whether or not the definitions used are comparable.

A number of other organisations use a category, "*drug-related death.*" While NOMS monitors drug related deaths, it does not use this category because it can blur the boundary with self-inflicted deaths.

The main international system for death classification is part of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) currently on version 10. The NOMS classifications can be matched to these. Researchers wishing to compare deaths in prison custody for England and Wales with those from other sources should be aware of the following:

ICD9 comparison

- The apparent self-inflicted deaths category is a close match to E950-959, E980-E989 excluding E988.8
- Apparent homicide is a close match to: E960-E969, E979, E999.
- Apparent other non-natural is a close match E800-E869, E880-E929 and, if any occurred, legal intervention (E970-E978) and operations of war (E990-E998). This category also includes some otherwise difficult to classify deaths.

ICD 10 comparison (see <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en>)

- The apparent self-inflicted deaths category is a close match and ICD10: Intentional Self-harm(X60-X84) and ICD10: Event of Undetermined Intent (Y10-Y34).
- Apparent homicide is a close match to ICD10:Assault (X85-Y09)
- Apparent other non-natural is a close match to ICD10 Accident (V01-X59.) This category also includes some otherwise difficult to classify deaths.

Prison Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

PPO's responsibilities include investigating fatal incidents in prison custody and approved premises and they report on these independently from NOMS. In the PPO's 2010/11 annual report the following categories for death were used:

- Natural causes
- Self-inflicted
- Illicit drug overdose
- Accidental and other
- Unclassified

Fatal self-administered illicit drug overdoses in prison custody are relatively rare but such deaths would be included in the NOMS 'self-inflicted' category. 'Accidental and other' is similar to NOMS 'other/non-natural category

PPO statistics on deaths relate to investigations started into deaths within their scope. As this is broader than NOMS deaths in prison custody, their figures will tend to be slightly higher and cannot be directly compared.

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

IPCC's responsibility includes investigating and reporting on a range of deaths

- road traffic fatalities
- fatal shootings
- deaths in or following police custody
- apparent suicides following release from custody
- other deaths following police contact including those following police contact

(See http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx)

In their 2011 report they used the following categories:

- Natural causes (exc. cardiac arrest)
- Natural causes and alcohol/ drugs

- Cardiac arrest
- Cardiac arrest and alcohol/ drugs
- Cardiac arrest and internal organ failure
- Stab wounds
- Restraint related
- Asphyxiation and drug overdose
- Awaited

These categories are not directly comparable with those used in NOMS

Self-harm information

Sources of data

Detailed information on each self-harm incident in prison custody comes from the NOMS Incident Reporting system (IRS). Such information began to be collected in the early 1990s. The focus then was on reporting serious incidents but the range of data has since expanded to include all self-harm incidents whether or not an injury was sustained. From 2009, prisons increasingly began to use P NOMIS for entering incident data. From April 2012 all self-harm data is sourced from P NOMIS. The transition to the new system did affect recording of self-harm but not enough to unduly affect underlying trends.

The current self-harm monitoring system started in December 2002 but because recording of self-harm improved throughout 2003, the data used in this report is from 2004 onwards.

In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self-harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing NOMS self-harm statistics with other sources where data may be less complete.

Assaults information

Sources of data

Information on assaults comes from the NOMS incident reporting system. Detailed recording of information on each assault incident began in the mid 1990s. The early focus was on serious incidents. Fights between prisoners (assault incidents where there was no clear assailant and victim), were reported less often. All assault incidents, including fights, are now required to be reported irrespective of whether an injury was sustained. Due to changes in categorisation of data, information prior to 2000 is not directly comparable with that collected later.

Reporting rates

Throughout this bulletin rates of events per 1,000 prisoners have been calculated using the average prison population over the year, calculated as the average of the 12 month-end prison populations during each year (published in the Offender Management Caseload Statistics annual tables). This average population can also be interpreted as 'prisoner-years'. However, it does not take into account all the individuals who are in custody at any point during the year, and therefore are potentially at risk of experiencing the event.

Populations with a relatively high turnover $\{(number\ of\ individuals\ in\ period)/(average\ population\ for\ period)\}$ will tend to have higher risk of self-inflicted deaths, self-harm and assaults. In future bulletins we will review some of the rates to take account of all at-risk individuals.

Standardised mortality ratio

The standardised mortality ratio (SMR) compares the death rate in custody with the death rate in the general population, adjusting for age and gender. When the rates are equal the ratio is 1. A ratio higher than 1 indicates that, after adjusting for age and gender, there is a higher rate of death in custody than in the general population. However the ratio is not an exact figure, but has a confidence interval, which gives the range in which the true value is likely to lie. If this range includes 1, this indicates that the difference between deaths rates in custody and in the general population is not statistically significant. The accompanying technical note "Reporting of deaths in custody" provides further details.

Symbols used

..	not available
0	nil or less than half the final digit shown
-	not applicable
(p)	Provisional data
(r)	Revised data

Revisions policy

Figures for deaths in prison custody reflect the latest available information at the time information was compiled for the quarterly report. Figures are not finalised until after inquest which may not be completed until several years.

Self-harm and assault incidents cannot be measured with absolute accuracy. Figures in this publication should be treated as approximate and provisional, In general, figures for the most recent four quarters will be revised to reflect the latest available information. Figures for earlier years are not normally revised, but would be corrected if either errors are identified or back dated times series are required to support new measures.

Contact points

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