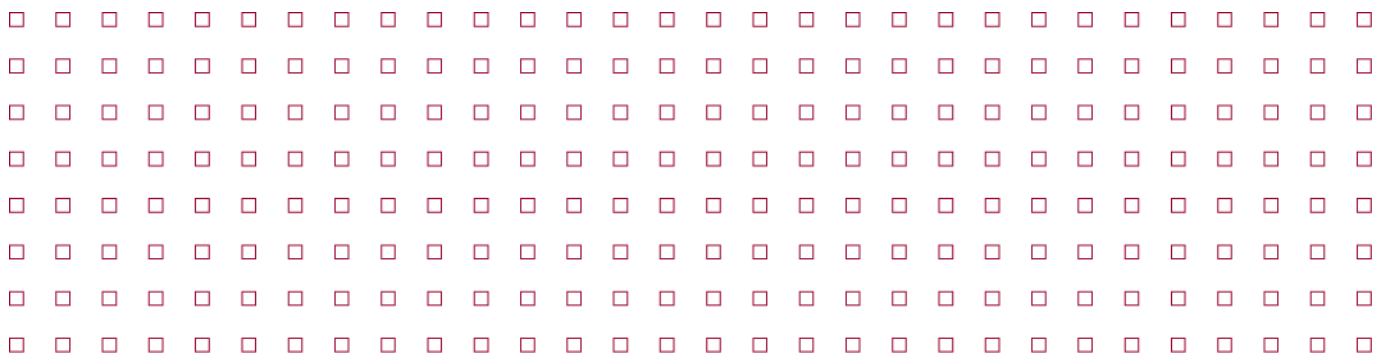# Consultation on offender management statistics including licence recalls and returns to custody

28 August 2009

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Foreword by the Ministry of Justice's Head of Profession

On 6 July 2009, the Rt Hon Jack Straw issued a Written Ministerial Statement on licence recalls and returns to custody which for the first time released statistics on whether or not offenders released on licence had been returned to custody www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement060709a.htm. The Statement also contained the commitment to ask the Head of Profession in the Ministry of Justice to work with the National Statistician to put the regular release of these statistics on a firm footing in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

In considering how the Ministry places these new statistics into the public domain regularly, we needed to ensure that they fitted coherently into our existing offender management publications.

The review has, therefore, looked at how the Ministry can best meet its commitment, and statistical best practice, to give a coherent overview of all statistics related to offender management. There will be a separate consultation on developments to reoffending statistics later this year.

This document sets out and seeks views on two key issues:

a. proposals for routine publication of statistical information on licence recalls and returns to custody;

b. proposals for a revised approach to publication of offender management statistics in order to integrate the new statistics.

This package of proposals represents a significant improvement in terms of:

- a wider range of data available routinely through our statistical publications;

- presentation of a coherent overview of offender management statistics to help understanding;

- simplifying access to information in line with the Code of Practice.

Views are invited from all users of offender management statistics. In order to ensure we can develop these proposals and publish statistics in a timely fashion, we are asking for responses by 16 October 2009.

Summary of the proposals

We are proposing that licence recall and return to custody figures are released quarterly on a provisional basis with final annual figures included in Offender Management Caseload Statistics – details below.

Secondly we propose rationalising the number of offender management publications to provide coherent quarterly and annual overviews of offender management on a wider range of statistics than currently and including the licence recall and return to custody statistics.

Finally we are proposing to include figures on End of Custody Licence (ECL) releases and recalls alongside statistics on releases and recalls of other licence types on a quarterly basis. We will maintain the current monthly ECL publication while the scheme is in operation.

Key questions for consultation

Question 1 - Does the package of additional statistics proposed for publication on licence recall and return to custody fully cover users' needs?

Question 2 – Do users support the introduction of a single quarterly publication of offender management statistics? - Supported by weekly and monthly information on prison population and capacity and the detailed annual Offender Management Caseload Statistics publication.

Question 3 – Are users content with the transition arrangements?

The proposals

Licence recalls and returns to custody

1. Statistics on licence recalls and returns to custody to be published quarterly on a provisional basis and integrated into a single publication alongside other offender management data.

2. Final figures to be published following the annual audit of data from all systems - which will take place at the end of every financial year – and published in Offender Management Caseload Statistics.

3. The quarterly information will focus on:

   a. the number of offenders released each quarter and the caseload on each type of licence;

   b. the number of offenders recalled each quarter;

   c. the number of offenders who were returned to custody following recall each quarter;

   d. the number of offenders not returned to custody by the end of the quarter;

   e. for those returned to custody – the length of time between recall and return to custody;

   f. for those not returned to custody – the length of time since the recall was issued;

   g. where possible, figures will be broken down by type of licence release e.g. Home Detention Curfew, End of Custody Licence;

   h. performance against the licence recall target (tables 4 and 5 of the information release on licence recalls and returns to custody).

4. In addition to this, the annual statistics will provide

   a. final figures for each financial year;

   b. for those not returned to custody – the offence for which the original custodial sentence was given (table 2 of the information release);

   c. for those not returned to custody – the area in which the cases are being managed (table 3 of the information release);

    d.   performance against the licence recall target by area (table 6 of the information release).

5. The publication will harmonise the definitions for those not returned to custody with the current official statistics on End of Custody Licence releases and recalls where appropriate.

Wider proposals on offender management statistics

By adding in these extra statistics, we also need to consider how we best integrate these into the existing suite of offender management publications.

The current range of publications are:

- Weekly prison population management information – published on HMPS website every Friday (published as soon as available)

- Last Friday of month prison population management information – published on HMPS website in the middle of the following month

- Monthly Population in Custody tables (relate to last day of month) – MoJ Statistics Bulletin, published one month after end of month

- Monthly End of Custody Licence release and recall statistics – MoJ Statistics Bulletin, published one month after end of month

- Quarterly Probation Statistics Brief – MoJ Statistics Bulletin, published 4 months after quarter end

- Offender Management Caseload Statistics – annual National Statistics volume, published in summer of following year

- Statistics of Mentally Disordered Offenders – annual National Statistics volume, published in autumn/winter of following year

In providing statistics on licence recalls and returns to custody it is important that we consider the coherence of the overall picture. Currently prison receptions and releases (discharges) are only published annually in Offender Management Caseload Statistics. However, to set the licence recall process in context requires information on the numbers released from prison as, without this, meaningful statistics could not be produced. Additionally, End of Custody Licence is a particular type of licence release but in order to present this meaningfully, the statistics should be presented alongside other types of licence release.

The Ministry is therefore proposing to:

1. Standardise our offender management statistics into a single release once a quarter which provides a coherent overview of prison statistics, probation statistics, licence recalls and returns to custody.

2. Maintain the current monthly ECL releases and recalls statistics bulletin while the ECL scheme (a temporary measure) is in existence.

3. As of next Friday, 4 September, ensure that the weekly management information on prison population is pre-announced on the Statistics Hub. These weekly figures will be published as soon as the data is available each Friday (this will be between 10am and 3pm as the statistics relate to end of Thursday night and so the standard 9:30am publication cannot be achieved).

4. Produce the monthly prison population statistics in line with the Code of Practice based on the management information currently produced for the last Friday of the month. This provides figures earlier than the current population in custody monthly tables (which are based on last day of the month and published at the end of the following month).

5. Include the population in custody on current definition of last day of month as part of the quarterly release (and including full monthly series of the headline figures each quarter).

6. Maintain Offender Management Caseload Statistics as the repository for final annual figures and detailed tables (e.g. prison population and probation caseload by ethnicity), and include the following additional statistics:

   a. a chapter on flows and caseloads of mentally disordered offenders (this would replace much of the material in the current National Statistics annual bulletin Statistics on Mentally Disordered Offenders which would cease as a separate publication);

   b. more information in chapter 9 on recalls, including numbers not yet returned to custody and performance against targets (see above);

   c. add a table to chapter 4 on total probation caseload by area (similar to table 8 in the current probation statistics quarterly brief).

Summary of old and new publications

Subject area	Current publication	Proposed publication
Weekly prison population	Weekly prison population	Weekly prison population
Monthly prison population (last Friday of month basis)	Monthly prison population	Monthly prison population
Monthly population in custody (last calendar day of month)	a) Monthly population in custody statistics bulletin b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics	a) Quarterly offender management statistics bulletin b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics
Prison receptions and releases	Offender Management Caseload Statistics	a) Quarterly offender management statistics bulletin b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics
Licence recalls and returns to custody	Ad hoc	a) Quarterly offender management statistics bulletin (provisional data) b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics (final data)
Probation statistics	a) Quarterly probation statistics bulletin (provisional data) b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics (final data)	a) Quarterly offender management statistics bulletin (provisional data) b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics (final data)
Mentally disordered offenders flows and caseload	Mentally disordered offenders statistics bulletin	Offender Management Caseload Statistics
End of custody licence	a) Monthly end of custody licence statistics bulletin b) Offender Management Caseload Statistics	a) Monthly end of custody licence statistics bulletin b) Quarterly offender management statistics bulletin c) Offender Management Caseload Statistics

Detailed proposals on quarterly offender management publication

We propose to introduce a new quarterly publication, combining the existing probation statistics quarterly brief with similar information on prisoners (some of which currently appears in the population in custody monthly tables), and including material on recalls from licence.

The quarterly statistics will no longer show the full detail of community sentences available before the Criminal Justice Act 2003 as the numbers are becoming very small.

The table below sets out the proposed coverage of the new bulletin.

Proposed table	Description	Current table (if exists) Pris = population in custody monthly tables Prob = probation statistics quarterly brief OMCS = offender management caseload statistics ECL = ECL releases and recalls bulletin Recall = information release on licence recalls and returns to custody
A. Prison population and probation caseload		
1	a) Probation caseload by type and sex b) Prison population by custody type – this will show monthly figures by sex and broad age group (15-17, 18-20, 21+)	a) Cut down version of Prob table 7 b) Similar to Pris table 1 and OMCS table 1.2
2	Court order caseload by sex and offence group	OMCS table 4.3
3	Prison pop by sex and offence group	Pris table 2 (all ages) and OMCS table 7.2
4	Court order caseload by tier	OMCS table 4.6
5	Sentenced prison pop by sex and sentence length	OMCS table 7.1 and Pris table 1
6	Probation caseload by area	Prob table 8
7	Prison pop by establishment	Similar to Pris table 4

	(grouped by region) – including split of UK and Foreign National prisoners	
8	Prison pop by country of nationality	OMCS table 7.14 and Pris table 5

B. Court reports

9	Number of reports by type	Prob table 10
10	Sentence recommendations (including concordance)	Prob table 11

C. Inflows

11	a) Offenders starting probation supervision by sex and type b) Prison receptions by sex, broad age group and custody type	a) Cut down version of Prob table 1 b) Similar to OMCS table 1.1 (but including custody type)
12	Court order starts by sex and offence group	OMCS table 3.3
13	Prison receptions (remand and sentenced) by sex and offence group	OMCS table 6.2
14	Court order requirements	Prob table 4
15	Most frequently used combinations of requirements	Prob table 3
16	Sentenced prison receptions by sex and sentence length, including tariff for indeterminate	Extended version of OMCS table 6.1
17	Offenders starting community order (CO) and suspended sentence order (SSO) supervision by tier	Prob table 6
18	Offenders starting CO and SSO supervision by area	Prob table 5

D. Outflows (provide context for the recall figures)

19	Terminations of court orders by sex and reason	Prob table 9
20	Prison releases by sex and type of release (ECL, HDC, parole, other licence, under 12 months and therefore not on licence)	Partly drawn from ECL table 1 and OMCS tables 9.1, 9.2, 9.3
21	ECL and HDC releases by offence group	ECL table 1 and OMCS table 9.16

E. Recalls		
22	a) Offender recalls and returns to custody by type of licence b) Estimated caseload by type of licence	a) Expanded version of Recall table 1 and ECL tables 3a/3b
23	Recall performance against targets (overall and by agency)	Recall tables 4 and 5
24	Average time between recall and return to custody (or since recall for those not yet returned to custody)	
Tables or detail we propose to drop from the existing monthly and quarterly bulletins		
1	Number of requirements attached to COs and SSOs	Prob table 2
2	Young offender prison population by age	Pris table 3

Transition arrangements

As it will take time to migrate fully to the new presentation, the Ministry is proposing:

- to publish an updated version of the information release on Licence Recalls and Returns to Custody – the original release is available at the bottom of the following link (www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement060709a.htm) - at end of October and January on the same day as other offender management publications;

- to move to the full integrated quarterly release in April 2010 when quarterly probation data for October to December 2009 are published; and cease monthly Population in Custody brief;

- to publish the integrated Offender Management Caseload Statistics annual publication in July 2010.

Contact details and further information

For queries, comments or further information on the issues set out in this note, please contact:

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