



Ministry  
of Justice



# **Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Update to June 2013**

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics bulletin

31 October 2013



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## Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales. This publication updates statistics up to the end of June 2013. Supplementary tables, providing more in depth statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults on a calendar year basis, are also available alongside this table and can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics).

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.

In interpreting the statistics contained within this bulletin, users are recommended to read with it the accompanying 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'<sup>1</sup> that includes technical and background information on the production of these statistics, and more information on data quality.

When considering particular statistics, readers should note the following:

- Risk of death, self-harm or assaults is distributed unevenly around the prison estate. Age, gender and time in custody, 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.

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.

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. Others have affected the way statistics are collected and reported. The accompanying guide includes a timeline summarising some of the key events and developments that have affected safety in prison custody and supporting statistics. These help with interpretation of longer term trends.

### ***Changes and revisions in this publication***

Some deaths classified as "awaiting further information" in the last publication have now been classified to either natural causes or non-natural deaths. These changes will affect

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<sup>1</sup> Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

statistics in death tables not related to self-inflicted deaths. Further details are given in the “others” section in the chapter covering deaths in custody.

The number of individuals self-harming has been revised downwards by around 175 individuals for the period to end of June 2012 from the number published last year.

**Users and uses of these Statistics**

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 support a wide range of operational and strategic decisions including:

- Management of risk;
- Deployment of staff (identification of high risk periods and locations etc.);
- Design of prison cells (identification and reduction of ligature points);
- Assessment of changes in sentencing and other policies affecting prisoners.

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 safety and wellbeing of the prison population; assess policy impacts (e.g. changes to managing vulnerable prisoners)  |
| MPs and House of Lords                       | Statistics are used to answer parliamentary questions – approximately 100 are answered each year  |
| 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 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   |
| Journalists                                  | Used as a compendium of robust data on safety in custody so that an accurate and coherent story can be told on the safety of the prison environment.  |
| Voluntary sector                             | Data are used to monitor trends of the safety and wellbeing of prisoners, to reuse the data in their own briefing and research papers and to inform policy work and responses to consultations.                     |
| General public                               | Data are used to respond to ad-hoc requests and requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Recent requests include number of deaths, self-harm and assaults in prisons.                                    |

NOMS regularly receives requests for statistics for more recent, or different, date periods than those covered in published statistics. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, NOMS is generally unable to release statistics for periods beyond those published in Official Statistics publications.

### **Related publications**

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

**Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin<sup>2</sup>**: 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<sup>3</sup>**: 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.

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.

### **Release Schedule**

This bulletin was published on 31 October 2013 and includes statistics for the 12 month periods to end of June 2013.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 30 January 2014 and will cover 12 month periods to end of September 2013. Statistics in the bulletin are provisional and will be reviewed in the next annual publication.

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<sup>2</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

<sup>3</sup> Proven Reoffending Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics)

## Key findings

**Table 1: Safety in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales**

|  | 12 months ending |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | Jun 04           | Jun 05        | Jun 06        | Jun 07        | Jun 08        | Jun 09        | Jun 10        | Jun 11        | Jun 12        | Jun 13        |
| <b>Total deaths</b>                    | <b>199</b>       | <b>184</b>    | <b>166</b>    | <b>178</b>    | <b>167</b>    | <b>171</b>    | <b>179</b>    | <b>199</b>    | <b>193</b>    | <b>193</b>    |
| Self-inflicted                         | 93               | 88            | 70            | 79            | 77            | 63            | 59            | 63            | 51            | 62            |
| Natural Causes                         | 94               | 91            | 90            | 94            | 87            | 103           | 114           | 118           | 133           | 114           |
| Homicide                               | 2                | 2             | 2             | 1             | 0             | 3             | 0             | 2             | 1             | 2             |
| Other <sup>1</sup>                     | 10               | 3             | 4             | 4             | 3             | 2             | 6             | 16            | 8             | 15            |
| <b>Self-harm incidents<sup>2</sup></b> | -                | <b>22,123</b> | <b>23,892</b> | <b>23,240</b> | <b>23,330</b> | <b>25,253</b> | <b>25,739</b> | <b>25,954</b> | <b>23,522</b> | <b>22,977</b> |
| Males                                  | -                | 10,109        | 11,093        | 12,233        | 11,572        | 12,997        | 14,090        | 15,139        | 16,151        | 16,741        |
| Females                                | -                | 12,014        | 12,799        | 11,007        | 11,758        | 12,256        | 11,649        | 10,815        | 7,371         | 6,236         |
| <b>Assault incidents</b>               | <b>12,192</b>    | <b>13,459</b> | <b>14,898</b> | <b>15,082</b> | <b>15,877</b> | <b>15,434</b> | <b>14,713</b> | <b>14,739</b> | <b>15,320</b> | <b>13,825</b> |
| Male establishments                    | 11,337           | 12,534        | 13,727        | 13,997        | 14,905        | 14,630        | 14,054        | 14,036        | 14,709        | 13,331        |
| Female establishments                  | 855              | 925           | 1,171         | 1,085         | 972           | 804           | 659           | 703           | 611           | 494           |

1. 'Other' deaths include accidental and other difficult to classify deaths including those for which further information is awaited. A minority of the most recent two years figures are expected to be reclassified as natural causes.

2. A new system for monitoring self-harm was introduced in December 2002. As a result, recording of self-harm improved throughout 2003. 12 month periods that include parts of 2003 and earlier years are therefore under-reported by modern standards and have been omitted from this table.

- In the 12 months to the end of June 2013 there were 193 deaths in prison custody. This is unchanged from the same 12 month period in 2012. The number of self-inflicted deaths increased by one-fifth to 62 deaths from 51 in the same period in 2012. The number of natural cause deaths is lower in the 12 months to end of June 2013 than the previous 12 months but it is likely that some of the deaths in the other category will later be reclassified as natural cause deaths as more information about these deaths is received.
- Overall self-harm continues to decline year-on-year but there are differing trends for male and female self-harm. Incidence of male self-harm has been gradually increasing since June 2005, although the rate of male individuals self-harming has stabilised at between 68 and 71 males per 1,000 prisoners in recent years. In 2012 the number of males self-harming more than 20 times outnumbered females for the first time since the current recording system began.
- In contrast, incidence of female self-harm has fallen by 42 per cent over the last two years largely driven by a reduction in the number of repetitive self-harmers. The rate of female prisoners self-harming fell by 25% from 353 females per 1,000 prisoners self-harming in the 12 months to June 2010 to 266 females per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to June 2013. This most recent 12 month period is up 1 from the same 12 month period a year earlier suggesting that the recent falls in female self-harm are levelling off. Despite the recent large falls incidence of female self-harm still accounts for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody.
- The number of assaults continue to decrease over a 12 month period, falling by 10% in the 12 months to June 2013 compared with the same period a year earlier. At 162 assaults per 1,000 prisoners the rate of assaults, including fights, in the 12 months to end of June 2013 was the lowest for 10 years. The rate of assaults on staff has remained unchanged for 4 years at 35 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. The number of serious assaults on staff has increased in the 12 month period to June 2013 to 301 incidents from an unusually low 257 incidents in the same 12 month period to June 2012. This returns the number of serious assaults on staff to the level seen in June 2011.

# 1 Deaths in custody

In the 12 months to end of June 2013 there were 193 deaths in prison custody – unchanged from the same 12 month period a year earlier). These deaths comprise of:

- **62 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, up from 51 in the previous year (22 per cent increase);
- **114 deaths due to natural causes**, down from 133 in the previous year (14 per cent);
- **2 apparent homicides**, up from 1 in the previous year;
- **15 other deaths**, 14 of which have yet to be classified awaiting further information. At this stage last year there were 14 deaths awaiting further information, of which 11 have since been reclassified.

A death in prison custody is defined as ‘any death of a person in prison custody arising from an incident in or, on rare occasions, immediately prior to prison custody’.

All deaths in prison custody are subject to a police investigation and a coroner’s inquest. Once the inquest has been concluded, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman’s office publish a detailed ‘Fatal Incident Report’<sup>4</sup> on the death. Until this time, for administrative and statistical purposes NOMS classify deaths by *apparent* cause of death.

Annual supplementary tables published alongside this bulletin<sup>5</sup> show that the key population factors in determining risk of death in custody are:

- Age: Older prisoners are more likely to die of natural causes. Self-inflicted death risk varies with age peaking amongst prisoners in their 30s;
- Time in custody: Self-inflicted deaths are more likely in the early stages of custody;
- Gender: Female prisoners are less likely to die in custody.

**Table 2: Deaths in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales**

|   | 12 months ending |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|---|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Jun 04           | Jun 05     | Jun 06     | Jun 07     | Jun 08     | Jun 09     | Jun 10     | Jun 11     | Jun 12     | Jun 13     |
|   |                  |            |            |            |            |            |            | (p)        | (p)        | (p)        |
| <b>DEATHS</b>                               |                  |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| <b>Deaths in prison custody<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>199</b>       | <b>184</b> | <b>166</b> | <b>178</b> | <b>167</b> | <b>171</b> | <b>179</b> | <b>199</b> | <b>193</b> | <b>193</b> |
| Self-inflicted                              | 93               | 88         | 70         | 79         | 77         | 63         | 59         | 63         | 51         | 62         |
| Natural Causes                              | 94               | 91         | 90         | 94         | 87         | 103        | 114        | 118        | 133        | 114        |
| Homicide                                    | 2                | 2          | 2          | 1          | 0          | 3          | 0          | 2          | 1          | 2          |
| Other <sup>2</sup>                          | 10               | 3          | 4          | 4          | 3          | 2          | 6          | 16         | 8          | 15         |
| <i>of which</i>                             |                  |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| Other/Non-natural                           | 10               | 3          | 4          | 4          | 3          | 2          | 6          | 13         | 5          | 1          |
| Awaiting further information                | -                | -          | -          | -          | -          | -          | -          | 3          | 3          | 14         |
| <b>Deaths per 1,000 prisoners</b>           | <b>2.7</b>       | <b>2.5</b> | <b>2.2</b> | <b>2.2</b> | <b>2.1</b> | <b>2.1</b> | <b>2.1</b> | <b>2.3</b> | <b>2.2</b> | <b>2.3</b> |
| Self-inflicted                              | 1.3              | 1.2        | 0.9        | 1.0        | 0.9        | 0.8        | 0.7        | 0.7        | 0.6        | 0.7        |
| Natural Causes                              | 1.3              | 1.2        | 1.2        | 1.2        | 1.1        | 1.2        | 1.3        | 1.4        | 1.5        | 1.3        |
| <b>Number of deaths by gender</b>           |                  |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
| Male  | 180              | 175        | 158        | 170        | 161        | 166        | 173        | 191        | 191        | 187        |
| Female                                      | 19               | 9          | 8          | 8          | 6          | 5          | 6          | 8          | 2          | 6          |

1. All classifications of deaths remain provisional until confirmed at inquest.

2. A minority of the most recent two years figures for ‘other’ deaths are expected to be re-classified as natural causes

<sup>4</sup> Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports [www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html)

<sup>5</sup> Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)



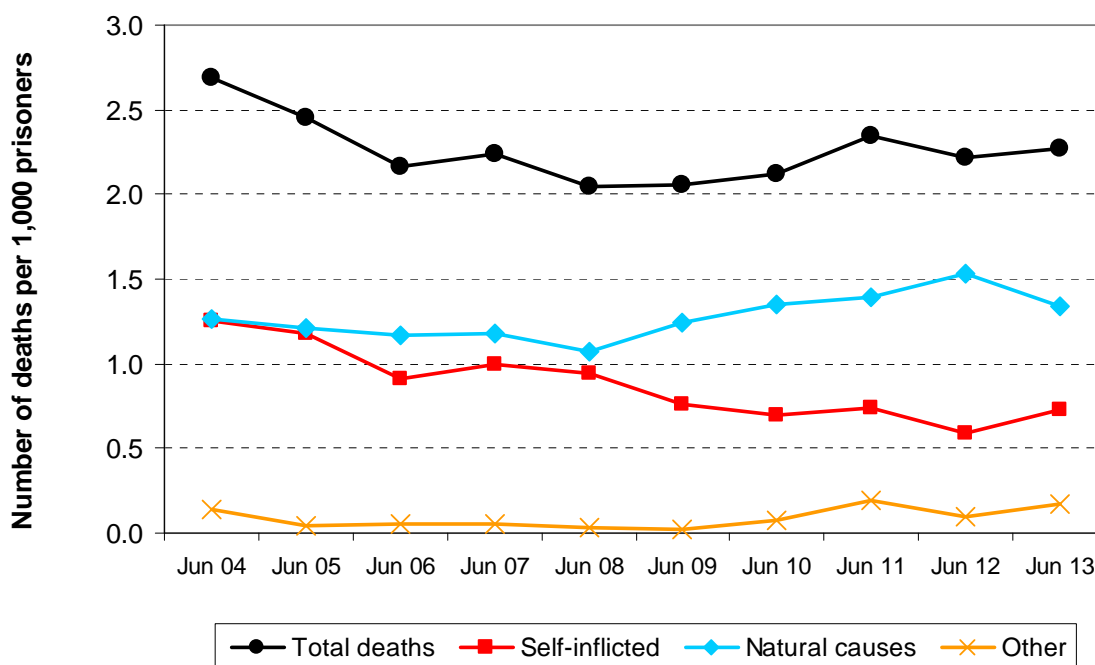
As there are a number of deaths yet to be classified it is likely that some of these deaths will be reclassified as natural cause deaths when sufficient information becomes available, and some may be reclassified as self-inflicted. For this reason all figures for the last three years are provisional.

## 1.1 Overall mortality

The number of deaths in prison custody is unchanged in the 12 months to the end of June 2013 compared with the same period a year earlier. This broadly follows recent trend where the number of deaths in prison custody has been stable.

Figure 1 shows that the death rate in the last eight years has varied between 2.0 and 2.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners. It also shows that whilst the historical rate for self-inflicted and natural cause deaths were broadly in line they have followed different trends since 2007/08.

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



## 1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

- The number and rate of self-inflicted deaths are on a declining trend over the longer term
- **62 self-inflicted deaths** in 12 months to end of June 2013, 11 (22 per cent) more than in the same period in 2012.
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths, at 0.7 per 1,000 prisoners**, is amongst the lowest rate in the last 30 years.
- Up to end of 2012 there had been no deaths on the first day of custody since 2008
- Nine-in-ten self-inflicted deaths occur from hanging

*Self-inflicted deaths are any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent.* This not only includes suicides but also accidental deaths as a result of the person's own actions. This classification is used because it is not always known whether a person intended to commit suicide.

At 62 self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to June 2013, the number of self-inflicted deaths has returned to a medium term trend of being relatively unchanged compared with historical trends. The 51 self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to June 2012 was unusually low compared with recent years and may reflect the volatility that can occur with statistics on deaths. Over the longer term, self-inflicted deaths have fallen by one-third from 93 self-inflicted deaths 10 years ago.

Considering the death rate over the longer term will take into account any changes into the size of the prison population which may exaggerate or mask under-lying trends in self-inflicted deaths. Table 2 and figure 1 show that since the 12 months to end of June 2004 the rate of self-inflicted deaths has fallen by around one-half from 1.3 deaths per 1,000 prisoners to 0.7 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the most recent period.

#### *Annual tables*

On an annual calendar year basis supplementary tables are published providing more insights into self-inflicted deaths. These tables include personal characteristics, time in prison, sentence type, method of death, ligatures used and ligature points.

These tables show:

- that there have now been no self-inflicted deaths on the day of arrival in prison<sup>6</sup> since 2008. The numbers on the first and second full days also remain low, averaging less than one per quarter. This results from suicide prevention policies specifically targeting the early stages of custody.
- From 1989 to 2003, self-inflicted deaths were consistently higher than those due to natural causes<sup>7</sup>. Up to the 1980s, natural causes routinely accounted for the majority of deaths in prison custody. In the late 1980s, self-inflicted deaths started to increase. 'Care in the community' is sometimes cited<sup>8</sup> as a reason for the increase as it is believed to have led to an increase in the proportions of prisoners with mental illness. The proportions of mentally ill in the prison population are not measured routinely so the actual change over time is unknown. The increase in numbers of self-inflicted deaths from the late 1980s is likely to be due to a combination of factors because it started before the impact of the 1989 White Paper 'Caring for People: *Community Care in the next Decade and Beyond*' could have taken full effect.
- Around nine-in-ten self-inflicted deaths occur from hanging, with bedding the most common ligature. The most common ligature point is the window, although despite the small increase in hangings the number of hangings using the window as a ligature point fell in 2012 (18 compared with 25 in 2011).
- Self-inflicted deaths occurred at 40 of the 134 establishments managed by the National Offender Management Service in 2012 with the number of self-inflicted

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<sup>6</sup> Safety in Custody Deaths: Table 1.7 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

<sup>7</sup> Safety in Custody: Deaths Table 1.2

<sup>8</sup> Mental Health of Prisoners (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2007)

[www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/thematic-reports-and-research-publications/mental\\_health-rps.pdf](http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/thematic-reports-and-research-publications/mental_health-rps.pdf)

deaths ranging between one and four at any single establishment with a self-inflicted death.

### 1.3 Natural cause deaths

*Natural cause deaths include any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.*

- **114 natural cause deaths in the 12 months to end of June 2013**, 19 (14 per cent) fewer than in the same 12 months in 2012;
- **1.3 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to end of June 2013, down from 1.5 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to end of June 2012.

The number of natural cause deaths in the 12 months to end of June 2013 is likely to increase as a result of some of the 14 deaths awaiting further information being reclassified as natural cause deaths when further information is received.

At this stage last year there were:

- 14 deaths awaiting further information for the 12 months to June 2012;
  - of these, 11 have now been re-classified with 7 of them re-classified to being a natural cause death.

The uncertainty on these figures will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

As the prison population ages<sup>9</sup> the number of natural cause deaths has also increased. Over the last four years the number of natural cause deaths has been consistently above 100 deaths per year. Despite the increase in prisoners aged 60 and over, the last four years the rate of natural cause deaths has remained relatively stable at around 1.3 deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

### 1.4 Homicides

*Homicides include any death of a person at the hands of another. This includes murder and manslaughter cases. As with self-inflicted deaths, the classification system does not make any judgement about intent.*

- **2 apparent homicides in the 12 months to the end of June 2013** compared with 1 in the 12 months to end of June 2012;
- Homicides are relatively rare accounting for less than one per cent of all deaths in prison custody.

- Since 2000 there have been 18 apparent homicides in English and Welsh prisons.
- In recent years, the number of homicides has varied between zero and three in any single year.
- In comparison between 1990 and 1999 there were 26 homicides.

The reduction in homicides since 2000 compared with the previous ten years coincides with the introduction of a cell-sharing risk assessment in 2002. This assessment aims to assess that before prisoners share cells that they are not a risk to their cell companion(s).

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<sup>9</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

## 1.5 Other deaths

'Other' deaths include any death of a person whose death cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted or homicide. The category includes accidents and cases where the cause of death is unknown even after all of the investigations have been concluded.

There were **15 other deaths in the 12 months to end of June 2013** (8 per cent of all deaths). This number is not directly comparable with earlier years as some of the deaths in this category are likely to be reclassified as natural cause deaths following inquest. However, as a guide, at June 2012 there were also 15 other deaths.

The numbers in this category have increased in recent years due to a number of cases that have proved difficult to classify.

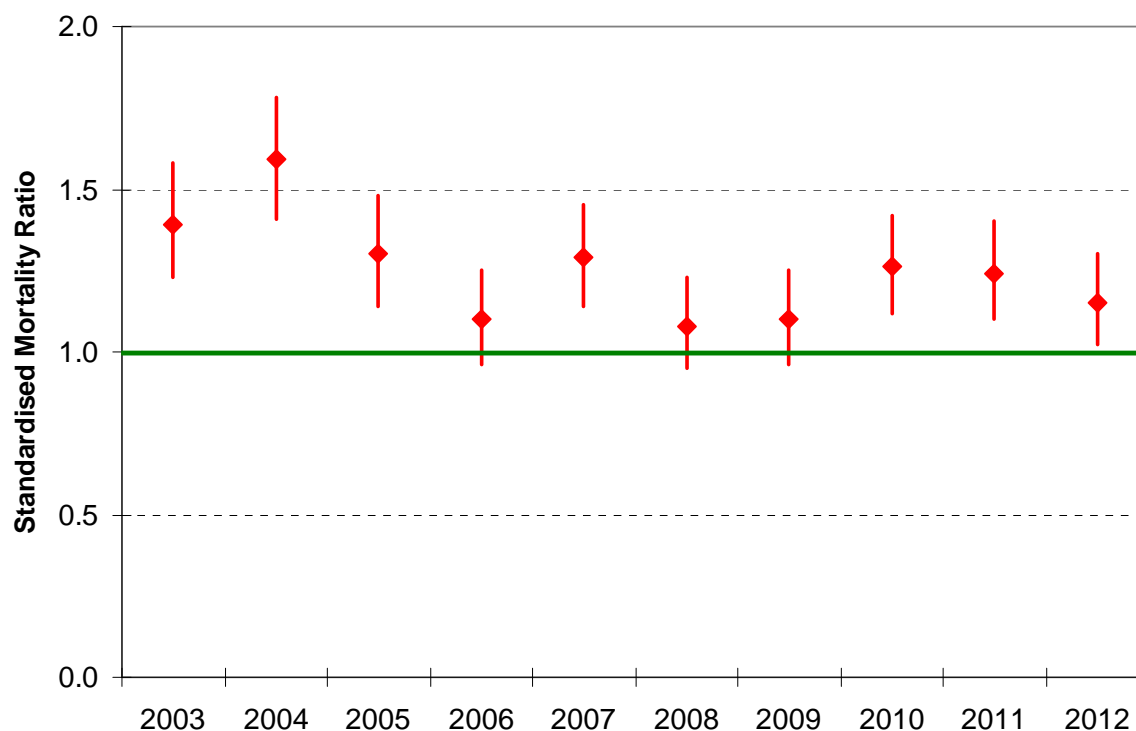
- In October 2012, for the 12 months to June 2012 there were 14 deaths awaiting further information, of which 3 remain. Of the 11 that have been reclassified, 7 were reclassified to natural causes and 4 to other non-natural.

The majority of deaths for which information is awaited beyond three months are expected to be classified as either 'other/non-natural' or natural causes.

Some of the cases in the aggregated 'other' category appear to be drug related but there is insufficient information to classify any to be self-inflicted. The uncertainty will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

## 1.6 Comparison of deaths in prison with those in the general population

Figure 2: Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison 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 2 is based on annual data and shows the Standardised Mortality Ratio (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. If the minimum of the SMR confidence level of the SMR is above one, then this indicates that the mortality rate of the prison population is significantly higher than that of the general population. In seven out of the last ten years, prison mortality has been significantly higher than that of the general population.

The chart is updated annually on a calendar year basis when the underlying data become available.

## 2 Self-harm

- Overall, the number of incidents of self-harm in prison custody falls year-on-year but with differing trends for males and females;
- **22,977 recorded incidents** in the 12 months to the end of June 2013, compared with 23,522 in the previous 12 months – a fall of 2 per cent (table 3);
- **270 incidents per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to the end of June 2013, unchanged from the previous 12 months;
- **6,823 recorded individuals** – broadly unchanged on the previous 12 months.
- On average, **3.4 self-harm incidents per prisoner** who self-harms.

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.” Those who self-harm often do so covertly. In the community, such self-harm will often go undetected. In prisons, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted although there will still be incidents that are not detected.

Annual statistics suggest the key factors determining the risk of self-harm in custody are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to self-harm than older prisoners<sup>10</sup>;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody<sup>11</sup>.

**Table 3: Self-harm in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales**

|  | 12 months to  |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | Jun 05        | Jun 06        | Jun 07        | Jun 08        | Jun 09        | Jun 10        | Jun 11        | Jun 12        | Jun 13        |
| <b>SELF-HARM</b>   |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |               |
| <b>Self-harm incidents</b>                                   | <b>22,123</b> | <b>23,892</b> | <b>23,240</b> | <b>23,330</b> | <b>25,253</b> | <b>25,739</b> | <b>25,954</b> | <b>23,522</b> | <b>22,977</b> |
| Males  | 10,109        | 11,093        | 12,233        | 11,572        | 12,997        | 14,090        | 15,139        | 16,151        | 16,741        |
| Females  | 12,014        | 12,799        | 11,007        | 11,758        | 12,256        | 11,649        | 10,815        | 7,371         | 6,236         |
| <b>Self-harm individuals<sup>1</sup></b>                     | <b>5,692</b>  | <b>5,994</b>  | <b>6,297</b>  | <b>6,454</b>  | <b>6,642</b>  | <b>7,183</b>  | <b>6,849</b>  | <b>6,834</b>  | <b>6,823</b>  |
| Males  | 4,263         | 4,523         | 4,852         | 4,979         | 5,133         | 5,675         | 5,508         | 5,723         | 5,758         |
| Females  | 1,429         | 1,471         | 1,445         | 1,475         | 1,509         | 1,508         | 1,341         | 1,111         | 1,065         |
| <b>Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners</b>               | <b>295</b>    | <b>311</b>    | <b>292</b>    | <b>286</b>    | <b>304</b>    | <b>305</b>    | <b>306</b>    | <b>270</b>    | <b>270</b>    |
| Males  | 143           | 153           | 163           | 150           | 165           | 176           | 188           | 195           | 206           |
| Females  | 2,738         | 2,862         | 2,496         | 2,654         | 2,830         | 2,730         | 2,579         | 1,759         | 1,558         |
| <b>Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners<sup>1</sup></b> | <b>76</b>     | <b>78</b>     | <b>79</b>     | <b>79</b>     | <b>80</b>     | <b>85</b>     | <b>81</b>     | <b>78</b>     | <b>80</b>     |
| Males  | 60            | 62            | 64            | 65            | 65            | 71            | 68            | 69            | 71            |
| Females  | 326           | 329           | 328           | 333           | 348           | 353           | 320           | 265           | 266           |
| <b>Self-harm incidents per individual</b>                    | <b>3.9</b>    | <b>4.0</b>    | <b>3.7</b>    | <b>3.6</b>    | <b>3.8</b>    | <b>3.6</b>    | <b>3.8</b>    | <b>3.4</b>    | <b>3.4</b>    |
| Males  | 2.4           | 2.5           | 2.5           | 2.3           | 2.5           | 2.5           | 2.7           | 2.8           | 2.9           |
| Females  | 8.4           | 8.7           | 7.6           | 8.0           | 8.1           | 7.7           | 8.1           | 6.6           | 5.9           |
| <b>Hospital Attendances</b>                                  | <b>1,158</b>  | <b>1,257</b>  | <b>1,197</b>  | <b>1,333</b>  | <b>1,298</b>  | <b>1,328</b>  | <b>1,425</b>  | <b>1,524</b>  | <b>1,569</b>  |
| Males  | 929           | 1,013         | 1,008         | 1,141         | 1,095         | 1,167         | 1,265         | 1,357         | 1,424         |
| Females  | 229           | 244           | 189           | 192           | 203           | 161           | 160           | 167           | 145           |

1. Numbers of individuals should be treated as approximate as the details of prisoners are not always recorded against each self-harm incident.

In the last two years self-harm has fallen to 22,977 incidents in the 12 months to the end of June 2013 from 25,954 incidents in the same period to June 2011. Whilst the number of

<sup>10</sup> Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

<sup>11</sup> Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

incidents is falling the number of reported individuals self-harming has remained broadly unchanged for the last two years. This implies that individuals that do self-harm do so fewer times.

The changes in the overall level of self-harm have been driven by changes in the female prison population who account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm incidents within prisons. This masks a differing trend among male prisoners and as self-harm in custody differs between males and females it is better to consider the populations separately.

## 2.1 Male self-harm

- 16,741 incidents of self-harm by male prisoners in the 12 months to end of June 2013, up from 16,151 incidents (4 per cent) in the previous 12 months.
- The rate of male self-harm continues to rise and has increased to 206 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to the end of June 2013 compared with 195 in the previous 12 months.
- Since June 2005 male self-harm rates have increased by 44 per cent from 143 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to June 2005.
- 71 male prisoners per 1,000 prisoners are recorded to have self-harmed in the 12 months to the end of June 2013 – up from 69 male prisoners per 1,000 a year earlier.
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carry out, on average, 2.9 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to the end of June 2013, up from 2.8 incidents in the previous 12 months.

The change in the prison population over time drives the number of self-harm incidents so to determine long term trends it is better to consider the changes in rates of self-harm over time.

The rate of male individuals self-harming increased from 60 males per 1,000 prisoners to 71 males per 1,000 prisoners between the 12 months to end of June 2005 and the same period to end of June 2010. Since then the rate of increase has largely levelled off.

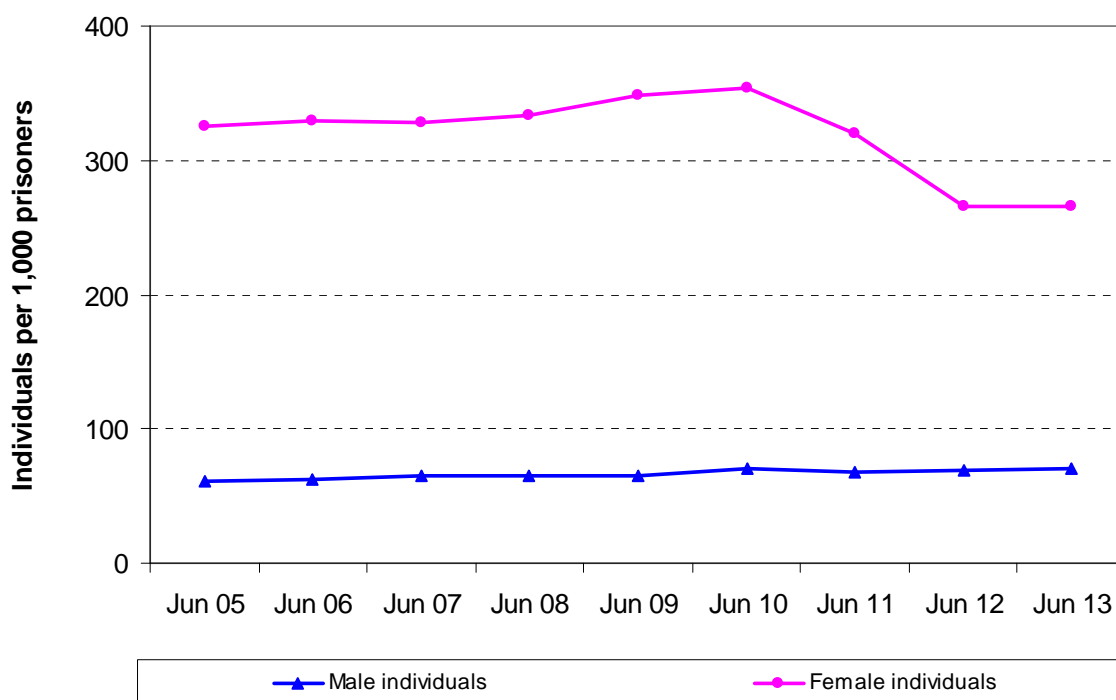
However, although the rate of individuals self-harming has levelled off over the last four years, the average number of self-harming acts those males commit on average has increased. In the 12 months to end of June 2010 male prisoners carried out 2.5 self-harm incidents on average. Over the last three years that has increased to 2.9 incidents per male who self-harms on average.

## 2.2 Female self-harm

- 6,236 incidents in the 12 months to the end of June 2013 female self-harm, down from 7,371 incidents in the previous 12 months – a fall of 15 per cent in the last year and 42 per cent in the last two years;
- The rate of female self-harm in the 12 months to the end of June 2013 was 266 females per 1,000 prisoners compared with 265 in the previous 12 months;
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 5.9 self-harm incidents on average in the 12 months to the end of June 2013, down from 6.6 incidents in the previous 12 months

In contrast to the trends of self-harm in male prisoners, the number and rate of incidents of female self-harm continue to fall. However, figure 3 shows that the rate of females who self-harm is broadly unchanged in the 12 months to end of June 2013 compared with the previous 12 months after two years of large falls.

**Figure 3: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales**



Despite the large falls in female self-harm over recent years, females still account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody. In the 12 months to the end of June 2013 they accounted for:

- 27 per cent of incidents but only 5 per cent of the prison population.
- The rate of females self-harming, at 266 females per 1,000 prisoners, is significantly higher than the 71 males per 1,000 prisoners who self-harm.

In 2012, for the first time since the current recording system for self-harm started in 2003, there were more male prisoners than female prisoners who had self-harmed 20 times or more.



### 3 Assaults

- **13,825 assault incidents in 12 months to June 2013**, down from 15,320 incidents in the previous year (a fall of 10%);
- The **rate of assaults, at 162 incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, is the lowest for 10 years;
- **3,019 assaults on staff in the 12 months to end of June 2013**, down from 3,087 incidents in 2011/12 (a fall of 2%);
- The **rate of assaults on staff, at 35 incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, is amongst the lowest since 2000.

Assaults in prison custody cover a wide range of violent incidents including fights between prisoners. NOMS does not use the Home Office counting rule definitions of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), affray etc. and figures cannot be compared directly.

Assaults are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate which accounts for 95 per cent of the prison population.

The key population factors determining the risk of involvement in assaults are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to assault and be victims than older prisoners;<sup>12</sup>
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 4: Assault incidents Summary Statistics, England and Wales**

|  | Jun-04        | Jun-05        | Jun-06        | Jun-07        | 12 months ending |               | Jun-10        | Jun-11        | Jun-12        | Jun-13        |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  |               |               |               |               | Jun-08           | Jun-09        |               |               |               |               |
| <b>ASSAULTS</b>                              |               |               |               |               |                  |               |               |               |               |               |
| <b>Assault incidents</b>                     | <b>12,192</b> | <b>13,459</b> | <b>14,898</b> | <b>15,082</b> | <b>15,877</b>    | <b>15,434</b> | <b>14,713</b> | <b>14,739</b> | <b>15,320</b> | <b>13,825</b> |
| Male establishments                          | 11,337        | 12,534        | 13,727        | 13,997        | 14,905           | 14,630        | 14,054        | 14,036        | 14,709        | 13,331        |
| Female establishments                        | 855           | 925           | 1,171         | 1,085         | 972              | 804           | 659           | 703           | 611           | 494           |
| <b>Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners</b> | <b>164</b>    | <b>180</b>    | <b>194</b>    | <b>189</b>    | <b>195</b>       | <b>186</b>    | <b>174</b>    | <b>174</b>    | <b>176</b>    | <b>162</b>    |
| Male establishments                          | 163           | 178           | 190           | 186           | 194              | 186           | 175           | 174           | 177           | 164           |
| Female establishments                        | 191           | 211           | 262           | 246           | 219              | 186           | 154           | 168           | 146           | 123           |
| <b>Serious assaults</b>                      | <b>1,208</b>  | <b>1,256</b>  | <b>1,375</b>  | <b>1,470</b>  | <b>1,523</b>     | <b>1,353</b>  | <b>1,414</b>  | <b>1,341</b>  | <b>1,338</b>  | <b>1,371</b>  |
| Male establishments                          | 1,139         | 1,179         | 1,311         | 1,408         | 1,487            | 1,311         | 1,372         | 1,290         | 1,304         | 1,343         |
| Female establishments                        | 69            | 77            | 64            | 62            | 36               | 42            | 42            | 51            | 34            | 28            |
| <b>Assaults on Staff</b>                     | <b>3,084</b>  | <b>3,354</b>  | <b>3,551</b>  | <b>3,386</b>  | <b>3,269</b>     | <b>3,121</b>  | <b>2,977</b>  | <b>2,933</b>  | <b>3,087</b>  | <b>3,019</b>  |
| Male establishments                          | 2,761         | 3,009         | 3,064         | 2,924         | 2,860            | 2,821         | 2,763         | 2,686         | 2,902         | 2,842         |
| Female establishments                        | 323           | 345           | 487           | 462           | 409              | 300           | 214           | 247           | 185           | 177           |
| <b>Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners</b>  | <b>42</b>     | <b>45</b>     | <b>46</b>     | <b>43</b>     | <b>40</b>        | <b>38</b>     | <b>35</b>     | <b>35</b>     | <b>35</b>     | <b>35</b>     |
| Male establishments                          | 40            | 43            | 42            | 39            | 37               | 36            | 34            | 33            | 35            | 35            |
| Female establishments                        | 72            | 79            | 109           | 105           | 92               | 69            | 50            | 59            | 44            | 44            |
| <b>Serious assaults on staff</b>             | <b>286</b>    | <b>271</b>    | <b>277</b>    | <b>283</b>    | <b>295</b>       | <b>273</b>    | <b>290</b>    | <b>296</b>    | <b>257</b>    | <b>301</b>    |
| Male establishments                          | 266           | 247           | 251           | 262           | 279              | 257           | 272           | 276           | 246           | 290           |
| Female establishments                        | 20            | 24            | 26            | 21            | 16               | 16            | 18            | 20            | 11            | 11            |

Gender refers to the type of establishment. Although predominantly the gender of the people involved in the assault will be the same as the type of establishment, in a small number of cases - typically assaults on staff - the gender may be different to the establishment type.

<sup>12</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

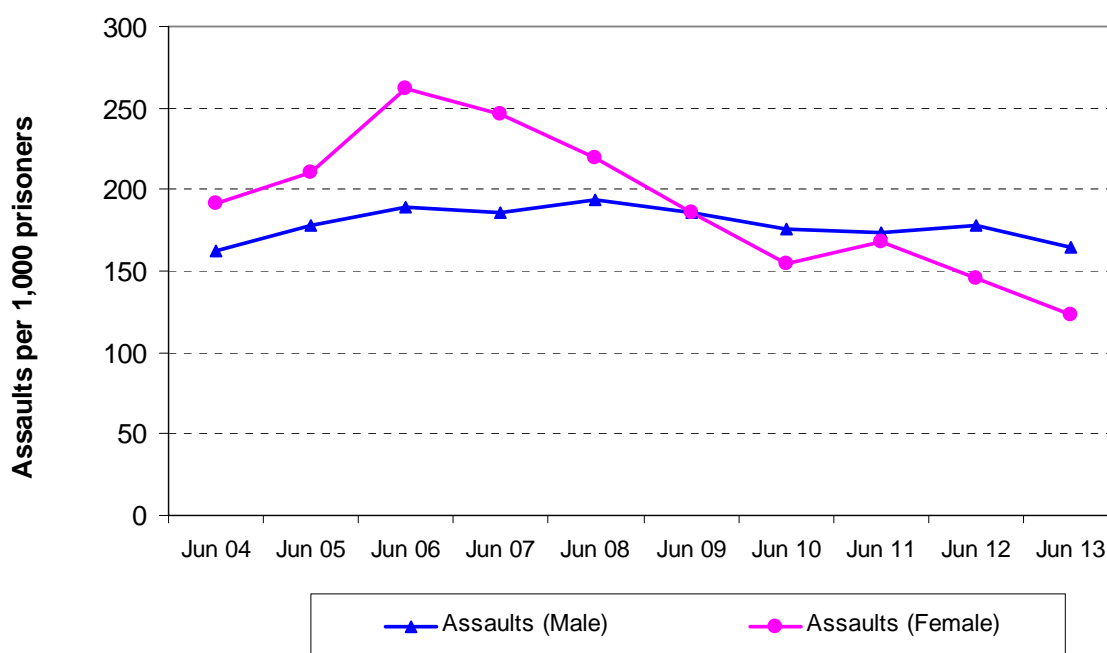
<sup>13</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

### 3.1 All Assaults

Both the number of assaults in prison custody and the assault rate per 1,000 prisoners have fallen sharply over the last 12 months. This reverses the rise seen in the previous 12 months and returns to a falling trend over the medium term.

Assault incidents have been on a downward trend since June 2008 when they peaked at 15,877 incidents, albeit with a temporary departure from this trend in 2011/12.

**Figure 4: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales**



With 95 per cent of assaults occurring in the male estate the rate of assaults overall is heavily biased towards the rate of assaults in the male estate. The rate of assaults for male prisoners has fallen in recent years from a high of 194 in the 12 months to June 2008 to 164 in the 12 months to June 2013. This is the lowest rate for 10 years.

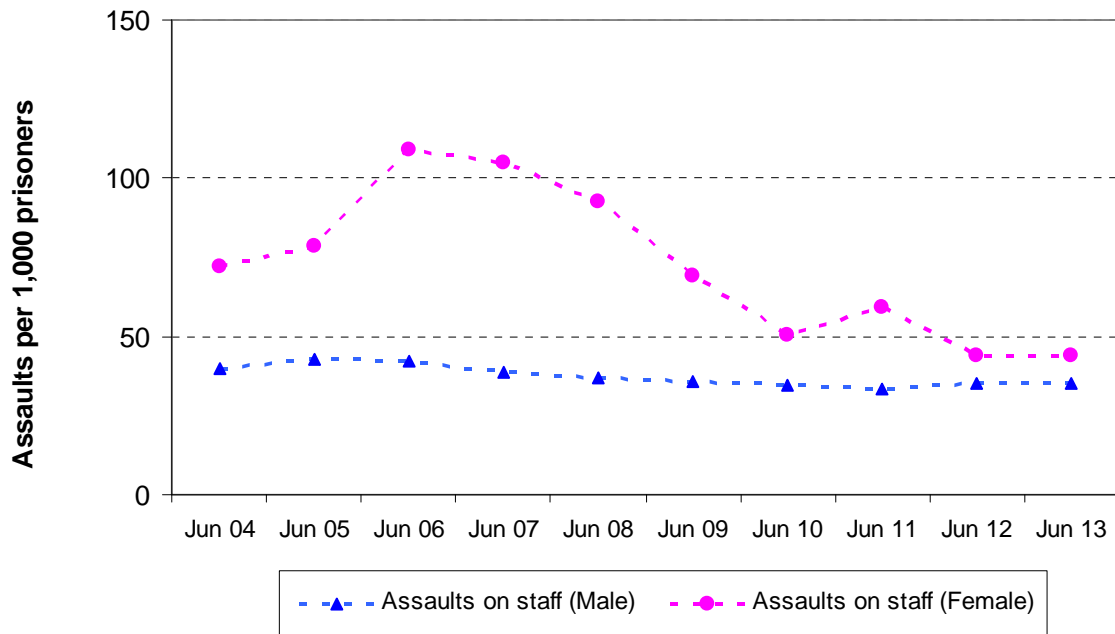
In the female estate the rate of assaults has shown much more variation. It rose sharply in the 12 months to June 2006 to 262 incidents per 1,000 prisoners but has fallen to 123 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to June 2013 (see figure 4), halving the rate of assaults in female establishments in the last seven years.

Serious assaults increased in the most recent 12 months period to June 2013 to 1,371 incidents from 1,338 incidents in the previous 12 month period. This follows a period of a falling trend in the number of serious assaults since June 2008.

### 3.2 Assaults on staff

In the 12 months to end of June 2013 there were **3,019 assaults on staff** – down 2% on the previous year. In 2003/04 they accounted for around one-in-four assault incidents but for the last six years this has reduced to around one-in-five assault incidents in prison custody.

**Figure 5: Total assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales**



As with the overall rate, the rates of incidents involving assaults on staff are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate. Rates in the male prison estate have been between 33 and 35 incidents per 1,000 prisoners for the last four years, while over the same period the figure for the female estate has been between 44 and 59 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. Assault rates in the female prison estate show a stronger downward trend over the longer term.

Serious assaults on staff have increased in the 12 months to June 2013 to 301 incidents compared with 257 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to June 2012 - which was one of the lowest number of recorded serious assaults on staff in any 12 month period since current recording procedures began in 2003. The increase in the latest 12 month period returns the number of serious assaults on staff to the level seen in the 12 months to June 2011.

## References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections ([www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi))

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody ([iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/](http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/))

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study ([www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx))
- Deaths following police contact ([www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports\\_polcustody.aspx](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx))

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

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

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

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

Ministry of Justice/NOMS

- Prison and Probation Statistics ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics))
- Prison Service Orders ([www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos](http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos))
- Prison Service Instructions ([www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis](http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis))

## List of tables and figures

This is a list of quarterly and annual Safety in Custody Statistics tables and figures. Tables 1 to 4 and figures 1 to 4 are included in this publication. The remaining tables are available from the website<sup>14</sup>. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

|   | <b>Table description</b>   | <b>Period</b>   |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <b>Safety in Custody – Summary tables</b> |  |                 |
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| Table 2                                   | Deaths in custody summary statistics   | Apr 03 - Jun 13 |
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| Table 1.3                                 | Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and age band                               | 1978 - 2012     |
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| Table 1.5                                 | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender                                     | 1978 - 2012     |
| Table 1.6                                 | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by age  | 1978 - 2012     |
| Table 1.7                                 | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in custody and current prison         | 1999 - 2012     |
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| Table 1.9                                 | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by ethnicity                                  | 1999 - 2012     |
| Table 1.10                                | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by nationality type                           | 1999 - 2012     |
| Table 1.11                                | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by sentence type                              | 1999 - 2012     |
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| Table 1.13                                | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation | 1999 - 2012     |
| Table 1.14                                | Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligation points used in fatal hangings       | 1999 - 2012     |
| Table 1.15                                | Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group                                   | 2001 - 2012     |
| Table 1.16                                | Annual self-inflicted deaths by establishment  | 1978 - 2012     |
| Table 1.17                                | Annual natural cause deaths by establishment   | 1978 - 2012     |
| Table 1.18                                | Annual deaths by establishment   | 1978 - 2012     |
| Table 1.19                                | Dates of opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons                                       | 2001 - 2012     |

<sup>14</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

### **Self-harm tables**

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| Table 2.4  | Annual individuals self-harming by age group                   | 2004 - 2012 |
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| Table 3.2  | Annual assault incidents and prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by gender         | 2000 - 2012 |
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| Table 3.6  | Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by ethnicity                            | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.7  | Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by nationality type                     | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.8  | Annual assault incidents by assailant / victim type                                      | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.9  | Annual sexual assault incidents by assailant / victim type                               | 2000 - 2012 |
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| Table 3.12 | Annual assault incidents by type of injury   | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.13 | Annual assault related hospital attendances / treatment for concussion/internal injuries | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.14 | Annual assaults and prisoner on prisoner assaults by establishment                       | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.15 | Annual assaults on staff and on prison officers by establishment                         | 2000 - 2012 |
| Table 3.16 | Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons                           | 2001 - 2012 |

## Data Sources and Data Quality

The data presented in this publication are drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Custody Database and NOMS Incident Reporting System.

Information relating to deaths in prison custody is closely scrutinised and the data is considered to be of high quality. Classifications of deaths however, are not finalised until after inquest. As inquests may not be concluded until some years after a death, tables dependent on classifications should be treated as provisional. Changes do not generally affect reported trends.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the information collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. While the figures shown have been checked as far as 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.

Self-harm and assault incidents in custody are more likely to be detected and counted than those occurring in the community. However, some incidents in custody will remain undetected and therefore go unreported.

For a more detailed discussion about data sources and data quality see the 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'<sup>15</sup>

## Explanatory notes

The statistics in this bulletin relate to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales to the period ending June 2013.

### Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

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

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<sup>15</sup> Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://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](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice)

[www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx](http://www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx)

[www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm)

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