



Ministry
of Justice

Management Information bulletin on sexual assaults in prison custody

Ministry of Justice

29 January 2015

This ad-hoc management information bulletin presents interim analysis on sexual assaults reported in prisons.

Sexual assaults are included in the assault statistics published in the Safety in Custody statistics bulletin. However, the data for the interim analysis in this ad-hoc bulletin is not deemed to be of sufficient quality to be published as Official Statistics.

Assault incidents reported as a sexual assault cover a wide range of incidents from rape to inappropriate touching. Reported sexual assaults will also include incidents where there are attempts to retrieve drugs or other prohibited items that may be hidden on the victim. Whether an incident is deemed to be a sexual assault is determined by the perception of the victim. Any assault incident reported as a sexual assault is classified as a serious assault.

There was an increase in the number of sexual assaults reported in 2013. This increase may be a result of more public awareness of sexual assaults in the community and high profile trials for historic sex offences leading to victims of sexual assaults in prison becoming more willing to report such incidents.

Table 1 shows the number of sexual assault incidents that were recorded as being referred to the police or subject to adjudication at the initial stage of reporting the incident. Incidents referred to police will be where the police have been notified of the incident. Not all incidents referred to the police will be subject to a police investigation. Where the police decide not to investigate, then the incident may be subsequently referred for adjudication but the data will not always reflect this. Conversely, where an incident is initially referred to adjudication and during the course of the adjudication proceedings it is deemed that it should be referred for police investigation, this will also not always be reflected in the data. These data are as reported by establishments and cannot easily be quality assured. In addition the figures refer to incidents and not individuals. A single incident may result in more than one prisoner being charged with an offence.

Table 2 shows that the number and proportion of sexual assaults that are reported occur evenly across the week.

Table 3 shows that there are very few reported sexual assaults that result in a physical injury included in the definition of serious assaults. The highest number in a given year between 2002 and 2013 was 8 in 2006.¹

¹ Injuries in the serious assault definition are 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

Table 1: Number and percentage of reported sexual assault incidents initially referred to police or subject to adjudication by each year between 2002 and 2013

Year	Referred to police	Referrals for Adjudication	Referral route not reported, no further action taken or unknown assailants	No. of cases
2002	92 (64%)	69 (48%)	15 (10%)	143
2003	88 (67%)	58 (44%)	15 (11%)	131
2004	94 (65%)	66 (46%)	17 (12%)	144
2005	88 (63%)	72 (52%)	15 (11%)	139
2006	97 (66%)	68 (46%)	18 (12%)	148
2007	83 (61%)	65 (48%)	18 (13%)	135
2008	76 (63%)	63 (53%)	15 (13%)	120
2009	86 (67%)	76 (59%)	13 (10%)	129
2010	95 (72%)	74 (56%)	16 (12%)	132
2011	89 (69%)	74 (57%)	18 (14%)	129
2012	82 (73%)	53 (47%)	11 (10%)	113
2013	131 (77%)	85 (50%)	17 (10%)	170

1. Percentages do not add to 100, as incidents may be referred to police and then subsequently adjudication, or vice versa.
2. Police referrals are those cases referred to police whether or not they resulted in investigation or prosecution. Referrals for adjudications refer to incidents where one or more assailants were referred for adjudications whether or not they resulted in a proven offence.
3. Centrally held data cannot easily link the incident to the outcome of the police or adjudication referral.
4. Table reflects reported sexual assaults. Due to the nature of the type of assault not all sexual assaults may be reported.

Table 2: Number and percentage of reported sexual assault incidents by day of the week (2002-2013)

Day	Incidents	% of Total
Monday	234	(14%)
Tuesday	247	(15%)
Wednesday	226	(14%)
Thursday	258	(16%)
Friday	225	(14%)
Saturday	226	(14%)
Sunday	217	(13%)

1. Table reflects reported sexual assaults. Due to the nature of the type of assault not all sexual assaults may be reported.

Table 3. Number and proportion of serious physical injuries arising from reported sexual assault incidents each year between 2002 and 2013

Year	Serious physical injuries (no. of incidents)	% of incidents resulting in serious physical injury	Total incidents
2002	1	(1%)	143
2003	5	(4%)	131
2004	2	(1%)	144
2005	3	(2%)	139
2006	8	(5%)	148
2007	7	(5%)	135
2008	4	(3%)	120
2009	1	(1%)	129
2010	5	(4%)	132
2011	2	(2%)	129
2012	2	(2%)	113
2013	4	(2%)	170

1. Table reflects reported sexual assaults. Due to the nature of the type of assault not all sexual assaults may be reported.

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