



Ministry  
of Justice

## **Statistical Notice**

Revision of Release on Temporary  
Licence figures

30 July 2015

## Summary

This statistical notice is to advise users that an error has been identified in the figures on the sentence type breakdown for individuals released on temporary licence (ROTL) that are reported in the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly (OMSQ) series. This error was a result of a misclassification for statistical reporting purposes only; locally held data within prisons was unaffected, as was the management of offenders within prisons.

The misclassification identified only affects reported statistics on the categorisation of the type of sentence being served by the individual released on temporary licence. All other ROTL related statistics that the Ministry of Justice publishes each quarter in OMSQ are unaffected; in particular, there is no revision to the total number of individuals receiving ROTL, the total number of incidences and breakdown by type of licence of ROTL, or the total number and type of temporary release failures.

In accordance with the Ministry of Justice policy statement on statistical revisions, it is necessary for published figures to be revised where an error is identified in statistical systems or processes. Revised figures have therefore been provided alongside this statistical notice.

## Change in methodology

The process for reporting the sentence type of a prisoner released on temporary licence previously relied on information about the length of sentence being served by the prisoner. Routine data checks identified, in the data for ROTL only, an inconsistency between the sentence length variable and other variables that record the reason why a prisoner is being held in custody. This has resulted in a number of life sentenced prisoners being incorrectly allocated to the category for determinate sentenced prisoners.

Further investigation has identified an alternative method for categorising individuals by the type of sentence being served which instead incorporates other available information. This new methodology allows prisoners not serving an immediate custodial sentence (for example, fine defaulter or civil prisoners) to be identified separately, rather than also being included as a determinate sentenced prisoner. It also allows recalled prisoners to be identified separately, rather than being included under their original sentence type. In a small number of cases, the information used to identify the type of sentence under the new methodology is incomplete in centrally held data, and while it will be held locally in case files, it is necessary to introduce a new category of 'sentence type not recorded' for statistical reporting purposes.

This new methodology and new set of categories have been adopted immediately in the July 2015 edition of OMSQ, and will be used in future publications. Revised

figures for previously published data in OMSQ are provided alongside this statistical notice. Users should be aware that these revisions supersede any previously published data on ROTL. These classifications will be applied to temporary release failures in due course.

A new prison database system was introduced mid 2009 (P-Nomis). The migration of data from the old system (LIDS) to P-Nomis affected the supply of data for statistical purposes from July 2009 to February 2010. This is unchanged by the new methodology and data for 2009 and 2010 remain unavailable.

## Revised tables

Two sets of revised figures regarding the sentence type breakdown for individuals released on temporary licence are issued as Excel tables with this notice. In addition to including the revised figures, the figures that had originally been reported and the size of the revisions are also provided. Where previously published tables have been revised, an 'r' has been added to make it clear to users that this is the case.

The first set of figures, published in Table 1, revise the quarterly ROTL statistics that had previously been published from the period January to March 2013 in Table 3.4 of OMSQ. Revised quarterly figures have also been included in Table 3.4 of the July 2015 edition of OMSQ, covering the quarters in the latest period from January to March 2014 to January to March 2015, and can be accessed at the following link: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

The second set of figures, published in Table 2, revise the annual ROTL statistics that were published in Table A3.6 in the last edition of OMSQ in April 2015. Revised annual figures have also been included in Table A3.6 (r) of the annual releases tables which have been republished, covering the years from 2002 to 2014, and can be accessed at the following link: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2014-and-annual](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2014-and-annual)

## Impact of the revisions

Revised figures show that the number of individuals released on temporary licence that were serving a life sentence had been under reported. These individuals were previously allocated to the 'determinate sentence' category resulting in an over reporting, for statistical purposes only, of the number of individuals in this category.

Furthermore, the addition of three further categories of 'recall', 'other sentence type' and 'sentence type not recorded' has resulted in a number of individuals being

moved out of each of the previous categories of ‘determinate’, ‘life’ and ‘IPP’ and into one of the new categories. The impact of this change is small with less than two percent of individuals moving category as a result of this change.

The total number of individuals released on temporary licence remains unchanged and Table 3, below, shows the impact this reclassification has on the annual 2014 figures.

*Table 3: Individuals released on temporary licence annually by sentence type<sup>(1)</sup>  
England and Wales, 2014*

<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>Previously published</b>	<b>Revised</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Individuals released on temporary licence</b>	<b>8,803</b>	<b>8,803</b>	<b>0</b>
Determinate sentences	7,627	7,017	- 610
Indeterminate sentences	1,176	1,642	+ 466
<i>Indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP)</i>	801	797	- 4
<i>Life sentence</i>	375	845	+ 470
Recall	-	80	+ 80
Other sentence type <sup>(2)</sup>	-	54	+ 54
Sentence type not recorded	-	10	+ 10

(1) Sentence type is based on the prisoner’s custody type at the point of their first ROTL of the year.

(2) Includes fine defaulters and non-criminal prisoners.

In the last edition of OMSQ, published in April 2015, one of the key findings reported on ROTL was:

“The number of individuals given at least one instance of ROTL between October and December 2014 was 4,154, which represents a 29% decrease over the year. Of the individuals given at least one instance of ROTL, 14% were on an indeterminate sentence.”

Although the number of individuals remains unchanged, the proportion of those individuals serving an indeterminate sentence was previously underestimated.

Following the revisions, this finding should be updated to:

“Of the individuals given at least one instance of ROTL [between October and December 2014], 21% were on an indeterminate sentence.”

All other findings reported in OMSQ regarding the total number of individuals receiving ROTL, the total number of incidences and breakdown by type of licence of ROTL, and the total number and type of temporary release failures are unaffected by these revisions.

## Contacts

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[statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from:

[statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system](http://statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system)

Statistics on release on temporally licence are published as part of the releases chapter in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly. The latest edition reports up to the period January to March 2015, and is available online at:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)



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