



Ministry  
of Justice



# **Offender Management Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales**

Quarterly January to March 2015

**Ministry of Justice**  
Statistical Bulletin

30 July 2015

## Introduction

This bulletin provides the latest statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or supervised in the community in England and Wales. The statistics are presented in detail, with commentary, and reference to longer term trends, in the following sections of the bulletin.

This bulletin covers the prison population as at 30 June 2015 and the probation caseload as at 31 March 2015, and compares them to the same time in the previous year.

This bulletin also covers prison receptions and probation starts, as the flows into these services, and releases from prison and probation terminations, as the flows out of these services. For each of these topics this bulletin reports on the quarter January to March 2015, compared to the same period in the previous year.

This edition of the bulletin is accompanied by two further documents. The “Statistical Notice and Consultation – Part 4” provides detail on the changes to the reporting of prison population statistics. This principally covers the introduction of more detailed sentence length breakdowns and the transition over to the offence groups that the Office for National Statistics introduced in 2013. The second document is the “Revision of Release on Temporary Licence figures”. This provides detail on the revisions made as a result of an error that has been identified in the figures on the sentence type breakdown for individuals released on temporary licence.

We are undertaking a short survey alongside this publication. This in order to understand how well our statistics meet user needs, gather feedback on the series, and help determine what areas future improvements should focus on. Users are encouraged to have their say at the link provided:  
[www.surveymonkey.com/s/3RM5K8D](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3RM5K8D)

Further information about background, data definitions, data quality issues, and users of the statistics are available in the accompanying document.

The next edition of this bulletin, covering the period April to June 2015, with prison population figures as at 30 September, will be published on 29 October at 9.30am.

## Key Findings

- The prison population has continued to increase, but has grown by less than 1% over the last twelve months. This overall increase was driven by a 2% increase in the sentenced population, the remand and non criminal population both decreased over the last twelve months.
- The sentenced prison population continues to shift towards a population serving longer determinate sentences. Over the last twelve months the sentenced population serving determinate sentences of four years or more continued to increase. It can now be reported that 5% of the prison population, is serving a determinate sentence of ten years or more.
- The prison population is also increasingly being made up of older prisoners. The numbers in the age groups 50 to 59, and 60 and over, continued to increase over the last year, and now are at their highest ever recorded levels. Taken together, those aged 50 and over, represented 1 in 14 prisoners on 30 June 2002, and as at 30 June 2015, represented 1 in 7 prisoners.
- Prison receptions and releases for determinate sentences decreased across all sentence lengths over the last year, apart from receptions for long determinate sentences of four years or more, which increased.
- While the total probation caseload rose by 1% between the quarters ending March 2014 and March 2015, that of the court order caseload fell by 1%.
- The number of offenders starting community orders fell by 5% over this period, whilst starts of suspended sentence orders with requirements attached increased by 2%. The fall in community order starts is consistent with quarter on quarter trends seen over the past couple of years, and with the trends in court sentencing statistics over the same period.
- The proportion of offenders not returned to custody by the end of June 2015, following a licence recall over the whole period 1999 to the end of March 2015, remained constant with only 6 in every 1,000 prisoners not being returned to custody.

## Prison population

The prison population grew rapidly between 1993 and 2008, at an average of 4% a year. This rapid rise was driven by:

- Increases in the number of people sentenced to immediate custody from 1993 to 2002;
- Increases in the average custodial sentence length and increased use of indeterminate sentences; and
- Increases in the number of offenders recalled to prison following breaches of their licence conditions, along with increases in the average length of time these offenders spent in prison once recalled.

The rise in the prison population slowed considerably from the summer of 2008, in part due to the introduction of the [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008](#), which changed sentencing and offender management in ways which helped to reduce growth in the prison population.

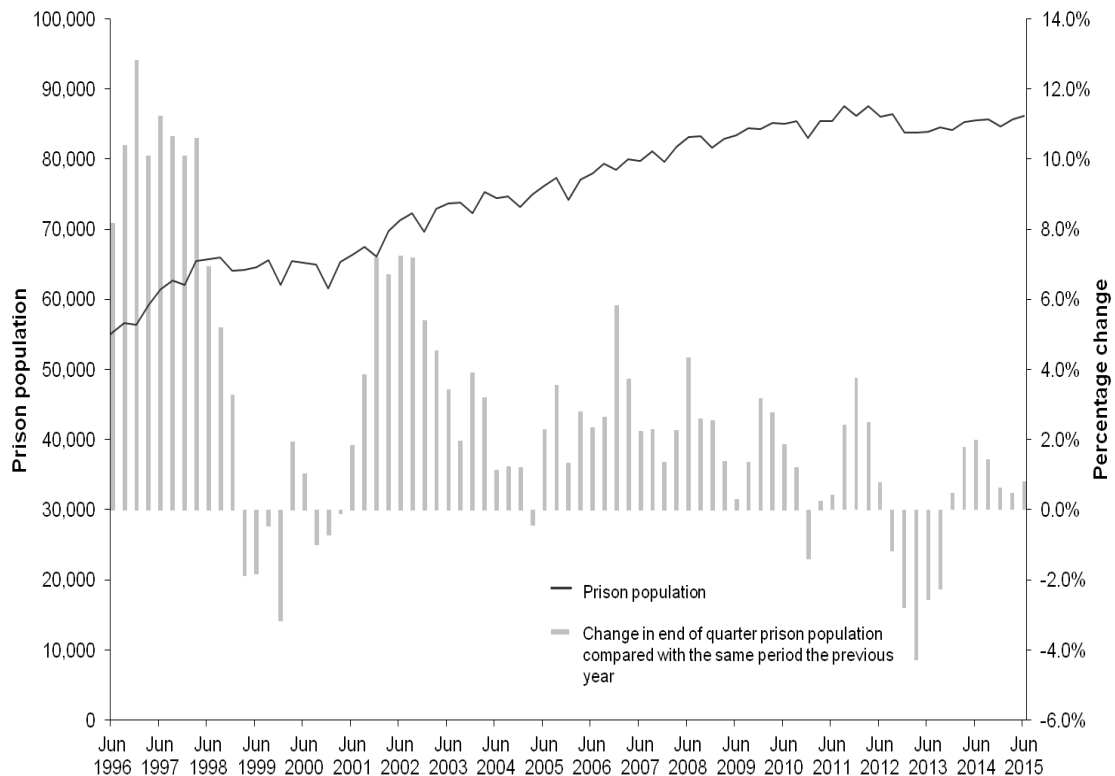
This flatter trend continued until the public disorder seen in UK cities from 6 to 9 August 2011 which had an immediate but temporary impact on the prison population. During 2012 and into 2013, the prison population began to fall due to a falling remand population and a continued decline in the number of under 18s in custody. The falling remand population during 2012 reflected falling volumes going through the courts plus the introduction of the [Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders \(LASPO\) Act](#) in December 2012. This Act restricted the use of remand for offenders who would be unlikely to receive a custodial sentence.

The [‘Story of the Prison Population 1993 to 2012’](#) is an in-depth look at what happened to the prison population between 1993 and 2012 and the major factors contributing to the changes.

Following the LASPO Act in December 2012, and up until the end of June 2013, the prison population stabilised. In particular, by March 2013 the remand population stopped falling as it had done since August 2011. After settling at a lower level the remand population then began to rise again from August 2013, and contributed to the sharp rise in the prison population seen between the end of August and October 2013. Overall, since June 2013 the prison population has increased, albeit at a slower rate than in previous years, typically growing at around 1% a year.

This edition of Offender Management Statistics Quarterly (OMSQ) includes the annual prison population tables. These provide a long run time series for many of the quarterly prison population tables, as well as additional further breakdowns.

**Figure 1: Quarterly prison population and annual percentage change, England and Wales, June 1996 to June 2015**



Growth in the size of the prison population has slowed slightly, growing at less than 1% over the last twelve months to 30 June 2015. This overall increase was driven by a 2% increase in the sentenced population, the remand and non criminal populations both decreased over the last twelve months.

Since late 2014, the remand population has steadily decreased to be at just under 12,000 prisoners, which is slightly less than last year. This is consistent with [Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly](#) which shows there to be a decreased number of outstanding cases in the Crown Court. It is too early to say if this is a change in the observed trend for the remand population since August 2013.

In this edition of OMSQ, as a result of improvements to IT, the presentation of particular prison population statistics has changed. From this quarter onwards more detailed sentence length breakdowns that are more reflective of the current sentencing framework used by the courts have been introduced. These new breakdowns enable better reporting on those prisoners in the population serving longer determinate sentences and Extended Determinate Sentences (EDS). Further information on these changes can be found in the “Statistical Notice and Consultation – Part 4”, which is published alongside this bulletin.

Whilst the sentenced population only increased slightly, its composition continued to change. The number serving sentences less than four years decreased whereas those serving determinate sentences of four years or

more continued to increase. Over the twelve months to June 2015, the number of prisoners serving these long determinate sentences increased by 6%. Much of this increase is attributable to the population serving an EDS; there were 1,946 prisoners serving an EDS on 30 June 2015, which is double the number from 12 months ago (1,043 prisoners on 30 June 2014).

On 30 June 2015, a third of the prison population was serving a determinate sentence of four years or more, or an EDS. As part of the more detailed breakdown on sentence lengths introduced, it can now be reported that 4,420 prisoners, representing 5% of the total prison population, were serving determinate sentences of ten years or more.

The number of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (IPP or life) was down 4% on the previous year, to 12,053. This decrease is explained entirely by a decrease in the IPP population. As a result of the abolition of the IPP sentence, offenders are no longer receiving these sentences and prisoners are only being released from this population. Since the IPP sentenced was abolished, the IPP population has fallen by almost a quarter from 6,020 as at the end of September 2012 to 4,614 as at the end June 2015. The number of IPP prisoners who are post-tariff has remained flat over the last year, meaning that the proportion of the population post-tariff has been increasing. For the first time more than three quarters of IPP prisoners are now post-tariff.

The number of life sentenced prisoners remained stable at slightly under 7,500. There were 51 whole-life prisoners at the end of June 2015, with five additional life prisoners being treated in secure hospitals. The whole-life population has decreased by one from the last quarter because of a successful appeal to quash a whole-life sentence.

This edition of OMSQ also makes, for prison population statistics only, the transition over to the offence groups that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) introduced in 2013. This improves consistency with other National Statistics publications on the Criminal Justice System in the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and the ONS. For this edition of OMSQ, we have also retained the figures on the old offence groups so that comparisons can be made. For more information on how these new offence groups compare to our previous offence groups please refer to the “Statistical Notice and Consultation – Part 4”, which is published alongside this bulletin.

The rise in the long determinate sentenced population is in line with the increasing number of sentenced sex offenders. At the end of June 2015 there were 11,490 sentenced sex offenders in the prison population, which is 10% higher than twelve months before, and 33% higher when compared to June 2010. Furthermore, when compared to the sentenced populations for other offence groups, the sex offender sentenced population has increased the most over this five year period. This is consistent with the recent [‘Crime in England and Wales’](#) bulletin from the Office for National Statistics that reported the highest number of sexual offences recorded by the police since 2002/03, for the year ending March 2015.

In contrast, the sentenced population for violence against the person offences has remained stable over the last year, and has decreased by 2% between June 2010 and June 2015. Whilst the sentenced population for violence against the person offences remains the largest sentenced population by offence group, this shows that the violence against the person offence group is no longer the key driver in prison population growth that it has been in the past.

There is no clear evidence to explain the growth in the recall population, which has increased by 17% over the year. Whilst the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 (ORA) expanded licence supervision, so that anyone sentenced to more than a day in prison will receive at least 12 months supervision on release, this only came into effect for those who committed an offence and were sentenced after 1 February 2015. As at 30 June 2015 there were 157 prisoners recorded as being recalled under ORA, representing only 3% of the recall population.

The age composition of the prison population has also changed and is increasingly being made up of older prisoners. The numbers in the age groups 50 to 59, and 60 and over, continued to increase over the last year, and now are at their highest ever recorded levels. Taken together, those aged 50 and over represented 1 in 14 prisoners on 30 June 2002, and as at 30 June 2015, represented 1 in 7 prisoners. In contrast, the populations of those aged 15 to 17, 18 to 20, and 21 to 24 have all decreased over the last year, and have fallen by almost a third compared to their highest level at the end of June 2009. This is consistent with the [Youth Justice annual statistics](#) and the [Criminal Justice System Statistics](#) on the declining number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System since 2006/07. Whilst these age group populations have changed the most, the majority of prisoners are still aged between 30 and 39, as has been the case for the last 20 years.

There was a decrease in the foreign national population in custody, which was down 3% on the previous year to 10,512 on 30 June 2015 (representing 12% of the prison population). Looking at the longer trend, the foreign national population increased from the year 2002 to its highest value of 11,498 as at the end of June 2008 when they accounted for 14% of the population. There was then a small decrease in the population until March 2011 when it fell to 10,745. Since then the foreign national population has remained stable, representing around 12-13% of the population.

## Prison receptions

First receptions count prisoners the first time they appear in prison from court. A prisoner's reception type is counted each time they are first received into custody as untried, convicted unsentenced, or sentenced prisoners from court. This means that prisoners can be counted in more than one of these categories if their custody status changes as they progress through the Criminal Justice System in the reporting period.

A total of 25,555 offenders were received into custody as first receptions in the quarter ending March 2015, a fall of 2% on the same quarter last year. There was no change in the number of untried receptions but there was a 5% fall in convicted unsentenced receptions. Sentenced receptions overall fell slightly (1%), with large decreases in fine defaulter and indeterminate receptions. In contrast there were increases in receptions to longer determinate sentences of between 12 months and four years, and more than four years.

There was a continued increase in sentenced receptions for burglary and sexual offences, but decreases in receptions for all other offence groups, in particular, theft and handling and robbery.



## Prison releases

A total of 17,300 offenders were released from custody in the quarter ending March 2015, a fall of 6% on the same quarter last year. This has been driven by decreases in the number of releases across all determinate sentence length bands. In contrast, releases from IPP and life sentences have increased by 6% and 31% respectively. There were 107 prisoners released from an IPP and a further 101 from a life sentence, making up a 17% increase in releases from indeterminate sentences when compared to the same period last year.

In addition, 19 indeterminate sentenced prisoners were removed under the Tariff Expired Removal Scheme (TERS) in the latest quarter. This scheme allows indeterminate sentenced foreign national prisoners, who are liable to removal from the UK, to be deported from the country on or after the date of their tariff expiry without referral to the Parole Board. The scheme began in May 2012, and by the end of March 2015 there had been 313 removals in total.

The number of releases on Home Detention Curfew (HDC) fell by 6% to 1,999 between the quarters ending March 2014 and March 2015. To be considered for release under HDC an offender must be serving a sentence of less than 4 years, and the number of offenders serving such sentences has been falling (see earlier population section). The decrease of 6% in the eligible population will have a direct impact on the number that can be considered for HDC release and the number that are subsequently released.

Alongside this quarter's publication there is statistical notice 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.

Between January and March 2015, there were 89,111 incidences of ROTL from prisons in England and Wales. This is a 29% decrease since the same period in 2014; with all types of licence showing decreases. The number of release incidences for females decreased by 24%, compared to a 29% decrease for males over the same period. The number of individuals given at least one instance of ROTL between January and March 2015 was 3,921, which represents a 29% decrease over the year. Of the individuals given at least one instance of ROTL, 21% were on an indeterminate sentence.

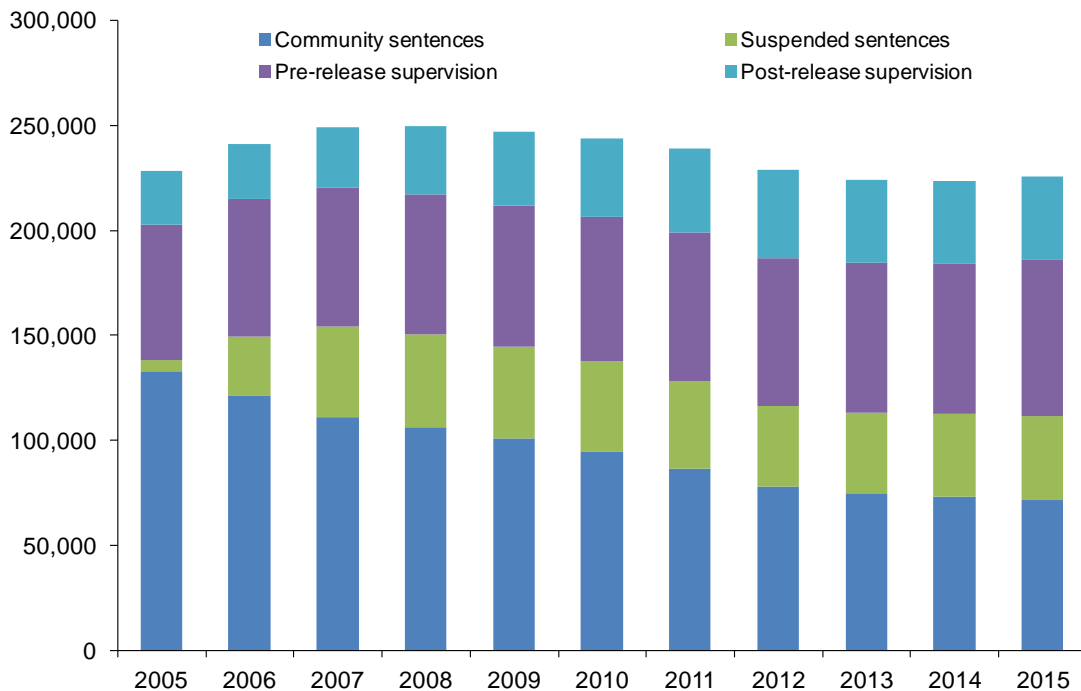
There were 32 recorded temporary release failures (TRFs) between January and March 2015, which is less than half of the number of failures seen in same quarter of the previous year. The number of recorded failures has continued to show a decrease in every quarter since April to June 2013.

## Probation

Transforming Rehabilitation is a reform programme that is changing the way offenders are managed in the community. Since 1 June 2014, Probation Trusts have been replaced by the National Probation Service (NPS), which manages the most high-risk offenders across seven divisions; and 21 new Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), who manage medium and low-risk offenders. At the end of March 2015 the probation caseload was still in transition with some cases held, both in the NPS and CRCs, pending transfer to the other organisation for reasons relating to effective risk management.

The total annual probation caseload (court orders and pre and post release supervision) increased by 39% between 2000 and 2008 to 243,434. Since then the probation caseload fell year on year, reaching 217,359 at the end of 2014. However, at the end of March 2015, the total caseload stood at 221,738, up 1% on the number one year earlier.

**Figure 2: Number of offenders under Probation Service supervision at end of December, 2005-2014 and end of March 2015**



The court order caseload (offenders on community orders (COs) and suspended sentence orders (SSOs)) fell slightly by 1%, with the CO caseload falling 2% but the SSO caseload rising by 3% between the quarters ending March 2014 and 2015. The number of offenders *starting* community orders fell by 5% over this period, whilst starts of SSOs with requirements attached

increased by 2%. The fall in community order starts is consistent with quarter on quarter trends seen over the past couple of years.

In addition, in the quarter ending March 2015 there were 2,392 starts of SSOs without requirements attached. This brings the total number of stand-alone SSOs starts to more than 15,000 since they were introduced under the LASPO Act 2012 (see **Data sources and quality section**).

The caseload of offenders supervised before or after release from prison increased by 3% between the quarters ending March 2014 and 2015, whilst the number of pre-release supervision starts has shown a steep rise of 68%, caused by the introduction of the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015. Under this Act all offenders given custodial sentences are now subject to statutory supervision on release from prison. Previously only adults sentenced to over 12 months in custody and all young offenders were subject to statutory supervision.

With regard to the number of requirements started under court orders, there has again been a notable rise in curfews and standalone curfews in particular. This may reflect the continuing impact of a mandatory punitive requirement in every community order, introduced from December 2013 under the Crime and Courts Act 2013. There has also been a significant increase in Prohibited Activity requirements in each of the last two quarters, although these make up only a small proportion (2%) of the total requirements made under orders.

Of the court orders terminated in the quarter ending March 2015, 69% of community orders were terminated successfully (they either ran their full course or were terminated early for good progress). For the supervision periods of suspended sentence orders, some 68% were terminated successfully over this period.

The number of court reports prepared by the Probation Service continued to fall – a total of 39,684 court reports were prepared in the quarter ending March 2015, 1% down on the quarter ending March 2014, reflecting the continuing downward trend in the number of cases being dealt with by the courts..

In general, courts follow the sentences proposed in Pre-sentence reports (PSRs), particularly where an immediate custodial sentence has been recommended. Around 88% of such proposed sentences in PSRs resulted in immediate custody.

## Licence recalls

A key element of public protection is that offenders released on licence should be effectively supervised in the community and swiftly recalled to custody if they breach their licence or if their behaviour gives cause for concern. It is explained to offenders at the outset that they are liable to be recalled to custody if they breach any of the conditions of their licence. There are various reasons why offenders are recalled to custody for breaching their licence conditions besides committing a further offence. For example, an offender may be recalled if there is any deterioration in behaviour which leads the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to conclude that there is an increased risk of the offender committing further offences.

Between April 1999 and March 2015, 190,714 of those released on licence were recalled to custody for breaching the conditions of their licence, e.g. failing to report to their probation officer. Of all those recalled over the period, 99.4% were returned by the end of June 2015. In the latest quarter there were 4,240 recalls, which included the recall of 112 offenders who were serving custodial sentences of less than twelve months. The ORA expanded licence supervision meaning that it is now possible to recall these offenders to custody.

Of all those released on licence and recalled to custody between April 1999 and March 2015, there were 1,135 who had not been returned to custody by the end of June 2015. This includes 4 people who had been recalled after a sentence of less than 12 months. The proportion of prisoners not returned to custody over this period is 0.6% and this is a relatively constant figure when compared to previous years. A further 18 offenders had not been returned to custody as of 30 June 2015 after recall between 1984 and April 1999, meaning the total number of offenders not returned to custody at the end of June 2015 was 1,153. These figures include some offenders believed to be dead or living abroad but who have not been confirmed as dead or deported.

Of the 1,153 not returned to custody by 30 June 2015, 147 had originally been serving a prison sentence for violence against the person offences and a further 40 for sexual offences.

## Contact points

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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)

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

This publication and associated spreadsheet files of the tables contained in this document and detailed information of definitions, sources and key legislative changes are available for download at:

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



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