



Ministry
of Justice



Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Deaths in prison custody to June 2015 Assaults and Self-harm to March 2015

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

30 July 2015

Contents

Introduction	- 3 -
Key findings	- 6 -
Deaths in custody	- 8 -
Self-harm	- 15 -
Assaults	- 19 -
References.....	- 24 -
List of tables and figures	- 25 -
Data Sources and Data Quality	- 27 -
Explanatory notes	- 27 -
Contact points	- 28 -

Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales. This publication updates statistics on assaults and self-harm up to March 2015 and statistics on deaths in prison custody up to June 2015. Supplementary tables, providing more in depth statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults on a calendar year basis, are also available alongside this bulletin and can be found at 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'¹ 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, 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.

¹ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Changes and revisions in this publication

This publication has updated figures on deaths to the end of June 2015, including a review on all deaths awaiting further information.

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); and
- 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 frequently used to answer parliamentary questions
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 date periods than those covered in published statistics. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, NOMS is unable to release figures for periods in advance of those published in Official Statistics publications.

Related publications

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin²: 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 Quarterly³: 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 30 July 2015 and includes statistics covering 12-month periods to end of March 2015 for self-harm and assaults and 12-month periods to end of June 2015 for deaths in prison custody.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 29 October 2015, covering 12-month periods to end of June 2015 for assaults and self-harm and September 2015 for deaths in prison custody.

² Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

³ Proven Reoffending Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics

Key findings

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

	12 months ending									
	Jun 06	Jun 07	Jun 08	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14	Jun 15
Total deaths¹	167	178	168	171	179	200	193	193	230	247
Self-inflicted	70	79	76	63	59	63	53	62	91	82
Natural Causes	91	93	89	103	114	120	133	117	132	148
Homicide	2	1	0	3	0	2	1	2	3	7
Other ²	4	5	3	2	6	15	6	12	4	10

	12 months ending									
	Mar 06	Mar 07	Mar 08	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15
Self-harm incidents¹	23,964	23,636	22,462	25,847	24,964	26,285	24,253	22,780	23,529	27,315
Males	10,639	12,357	11,309	12,686	13,780	14,769	16,202	16,445	17,442	20,409
Females	13,325	11,279	11,153	13,161	11,184	11,516	8,051	6,335	6,087	6,906
Assault incidents¹	14,832	14,780	15,644	15,775	14,916	14,473	15,577	14,083	15,051	16,885
Males	13,683	13,673	14,625	14,927	14,281	13,785	14,888	13,573	14,492	16,257
Females	1,149	1,107	1,019	848	635	688	689	510	559	628

1. Figures include incidents at NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres

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

Deaths in prison Custody

In the 12 months to June 2015 there were 247 deaths in prison custody; an increase of 17 compared to the 12 months ending June 2014. These deaths comprise of:

- 82 apparent self-inflicted deaths, down from 91 on the same period in 2014
- 148 deaths due to natural causes, up from 132 on the same period in 2014
- 7 apparent homicides, up from 3 on the same period in 2014. Homicides are relatively rare, accounting for 3% of all deaths in the most recent period, and 1% over the last ten years.
- 10 other deaths, 5 of which remain classified as 'awaiting further information'

Self-harm

In the 12 months to March 2015 there were:

- 27,315 reported incidents of self-harm, up by 3,786 incidents (16%) from the same period in 2014
- 320 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 278 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period of 2014 (up 15%)
- 8,227 prisoners reported to have self-harmed, up 1,197 (17%) on the same period in 2014
- 96 individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners, up by 13 per 1,000 prisoners (16%) from the 12 months to March 2014

Assaults

Changes to quality assurance processes in 2013 led to improved reporting of assaults.

In the 12 months to March 2015 there were:

- 16,885 assault incidents, up 12% from 15,051 incidents in the 12 months to March 2014
- 198 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 178 in the same period of 2014
- 3,887 assaults on staff, up 15% from 3,372 incidents in the 12 months to March 2014

- 46 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 40 in the 12 months to March 2014
- 2,350 serious assaults up 38% on the same period in 2014. This is an 80% increase from the 12 months to March 2013.
- 551 serious assaults on staff up 48% from 373 in the 12 months to March 2014

Deaths in custody

In the 12 months to June 2015 there were 247 deaths in prison custody; an increase of 17 compared to the same period of 2014. These deaths comprise of:

- **82 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, down from 91 on the same period in 2014 (10% decrease)
- **148 deaths due to natural causes**, up from 132 on the same period in 2014 (12% increase)
- **7 apparent homicides**, up from 3 on the same period in 2014
- **10 other deaths**, 5 of which are yet to be classified

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’⁴ 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 bulletin⁵ 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. In absolute terms, the peak of self-inflicted deaths is amongst prisoners in their 30s, although when considering rates, the peak is amongst prisoners in their 40s and 50s;
- 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

	Jun 06	Jun 07	Jun 08	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14	Jun 15
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody^{1,2}	167	178	168	171	179	200	193	193	230	247
Self-inflicted	70	79	76	63	59	63	53	62	91	82
Natural Causes	91	93	89	103	114	120	133	117	132	148
Homicide	2	1	0	3	0	2	1	2	3	7
Other ³	4	5	3	2	6	15	6	12	4	10
<i>of which</i>										
Other/Non-natural	4	5	3	2	6	15	6	11	3	5
Awaiting further information	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	1	1	5
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.7	2.9
Self-inflicted	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.1	1.0
Natural Causes	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.7
Deaths by Gender										
Male	159	170	162	166	173	191	191	187	219	241
Female	8	8	6	5	6	9	2	6	11	6

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

2. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

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

⁴ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/

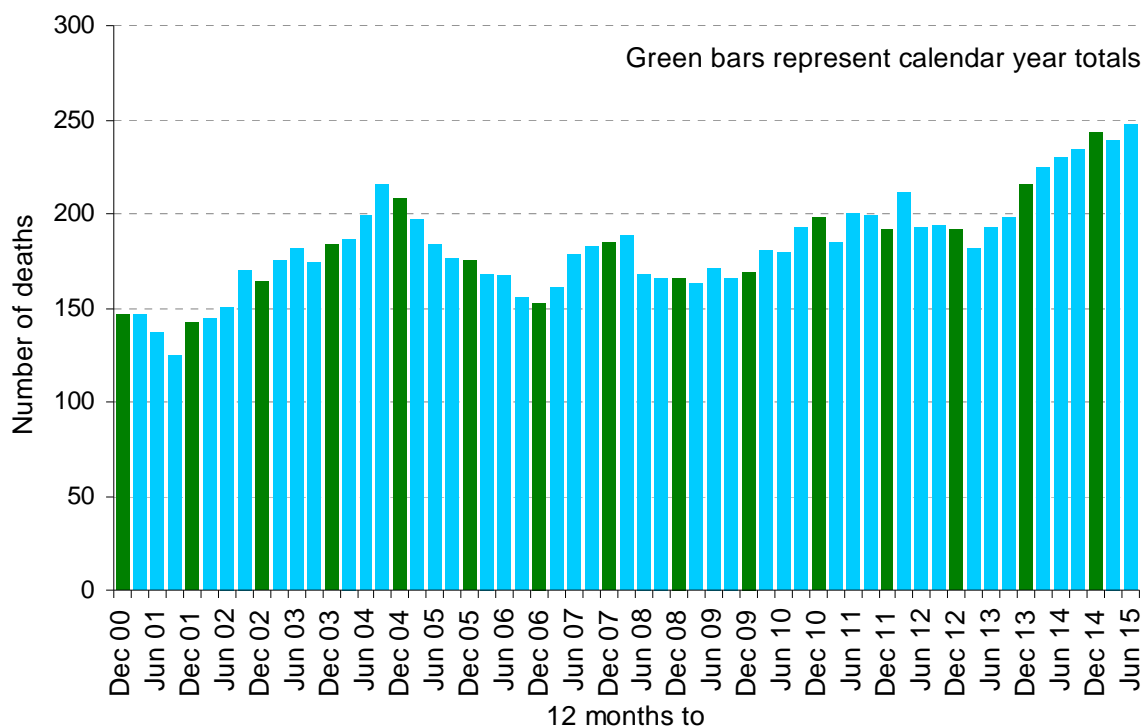
⁵ Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

As there are a number of deaths yet to be classified, it is likely that some 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 two years are provisional.

1.1 Overall mortality

There were 247 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to the end of June 2015. The majority of deaths in prison custody were from natural causes (148 from natural causes, representing 60% of all deaths), with self-inflicted deaths making up one-third of deaths.

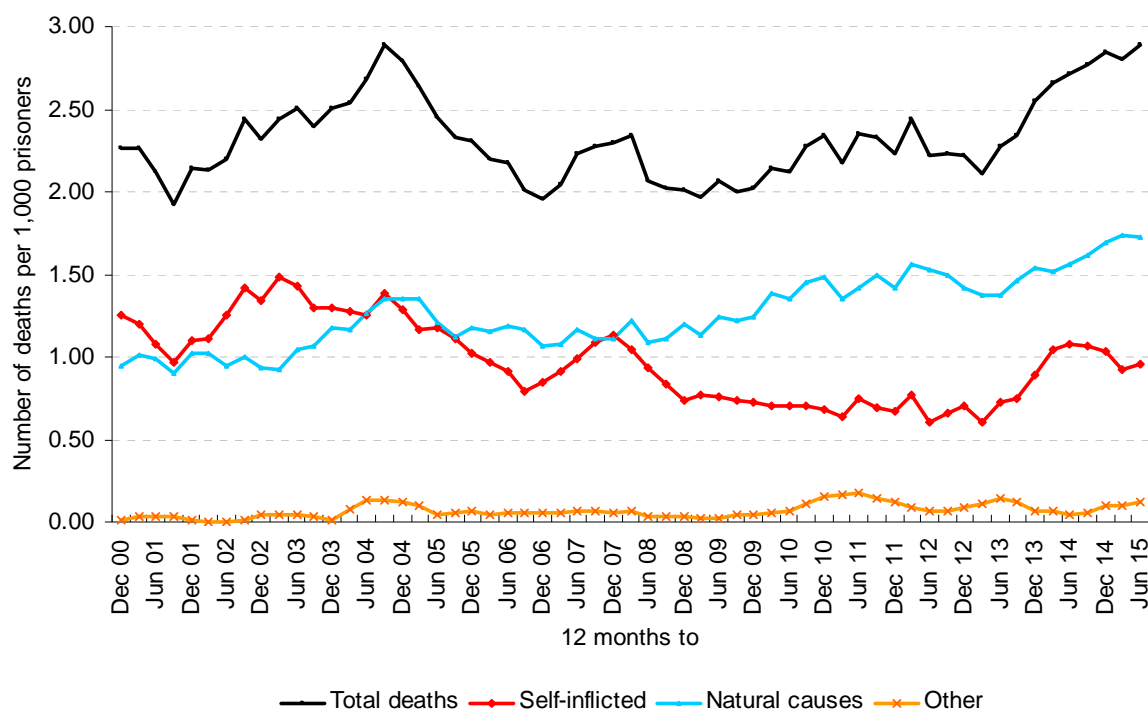
Figure 1: Number of deaths in prison custody, 2000 to June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 month totals by quarter)



The prison population has increased over the last 10 years, and therefore, everything else being equal, a corresponding increase in the number of deaths would be expected. The death rate better shows the trend in deaths taking into account changes in the size of the prison population. Figure 2, shows the 12 month rolling death rate increased to 2.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.7 in the 12 months to June 2014.

The overall rate of deaths in prison custody peaked in September 2004. It then fell by 32% between September 2004 and December 2006. Despite some fluctuations between reporting periods, it was relatively stable up to the end of 2012. Since then, it has increased by 37% from March 2013 to June 2015. This brings the rate up to the same level seen in the peak of September 2004.

Figure 2: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, 2000 to June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 month totals by quarter)



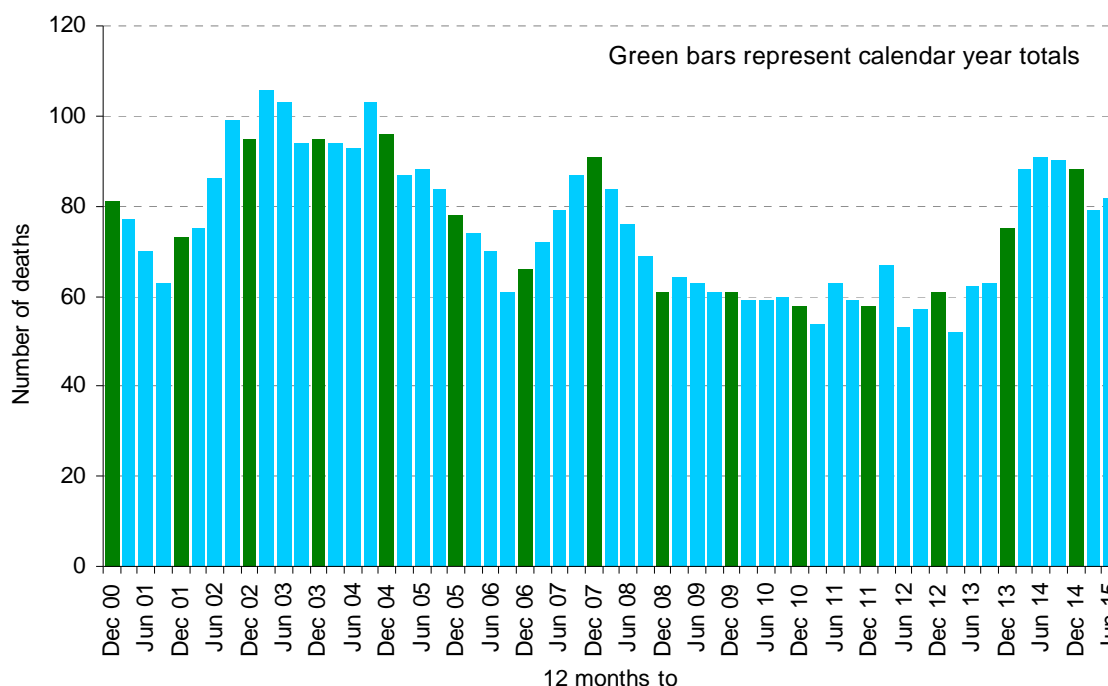
1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

- **82 self-inflicted deaths** in the 12 months to June 2015, 9 fewer than the 12 months ending June 2014 (a 10% reduction)
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths decreased to 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners**, from 1.1 in the previous year

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.

Self-inflicted deaths decreased to 82 in the 12 months ending June 2015 compared to 91 in the same period of 2014. Quarterly figures remain volatile. The 12 month rolling numbers of self-inflicted deaths (see figure 3) and corresponding rate (figure 2) have both increased compared to the 12 months ending March 2015.

Figure 3: Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody, 2000 to June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 month totals by quarter)



1.3 Natural cause deaths

- **148 natural cause deaths** in the 12 months ending June 2015, 16 more than in the 12 months ending June 2014 (a 12% increase)
- The **rate of natural cause deaths increased to 1.7 deaths per 1,000 prisoners** from 1.6 in the previous year

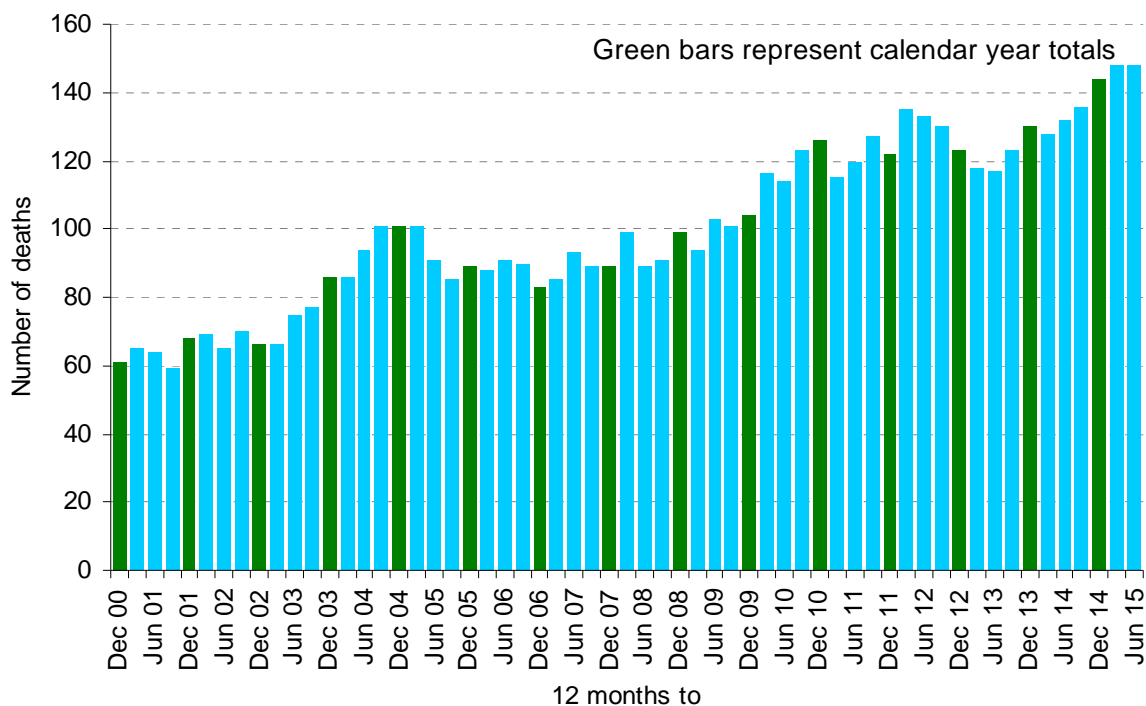
Natural cause deaths include any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.

There were 148 deaths from natural causes in the 12 months ending June 2015. This figure is likely to increase as it is typical for some of the deaths awaiting further information to be reclassified as natural causes. The uncertainty on the figures will not be entirely removed until after inquest. The current figure is 16 (12%) higher than the number of natural cause deaths in the 12 months ending June 2014.

Figure 4 shows that natural cause deaths have been on a general upward trend over the last decade, albeit with fluctuations between reporting periods. This is contributed to by an aging prison population (see page 6 of the NOMS Annual Offender Equalities report⁶).

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/noms-annual-offender-equalities-report-2013-to-2014

Figure 4: Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody, 2000 to June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 month totals by quarter)



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.

- **7 apparent homicides** in the 12 months ending June 2015 compared with 3 in the 12 months ending June 2014
- Homicides are relatively rare, accounting for 3% of all deaths in the most recent period, and 1% over the last ten years.

The 7 apparent homicides in the 12 months ending June 2015 mark an apparent change from recently seen trends. Since 1978 the number of homicides in prison custody ranged from 0 and 5 deaths in any 12 month period. Homicides in prison custody are still relatively rare, accounting for 3% of all deaths in the 12 months to June 2015, and 1% of all deaths in the last ten years. The annual rate of homicide was highest in 1978 with 0.12 per 1,000 prisoners compared with 0.08 for the 12 months ending June 2015.

Cell-sharing risk assessments were introduced in 2002 with the aim of reducing the risk of placing prisoners in cells where they may cause harm to their cell companion.

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 **10 other deaths** in the 12 months ending June 2015 (4% 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 (typically as either natural cause or other/non-natural deaths) following inquest.

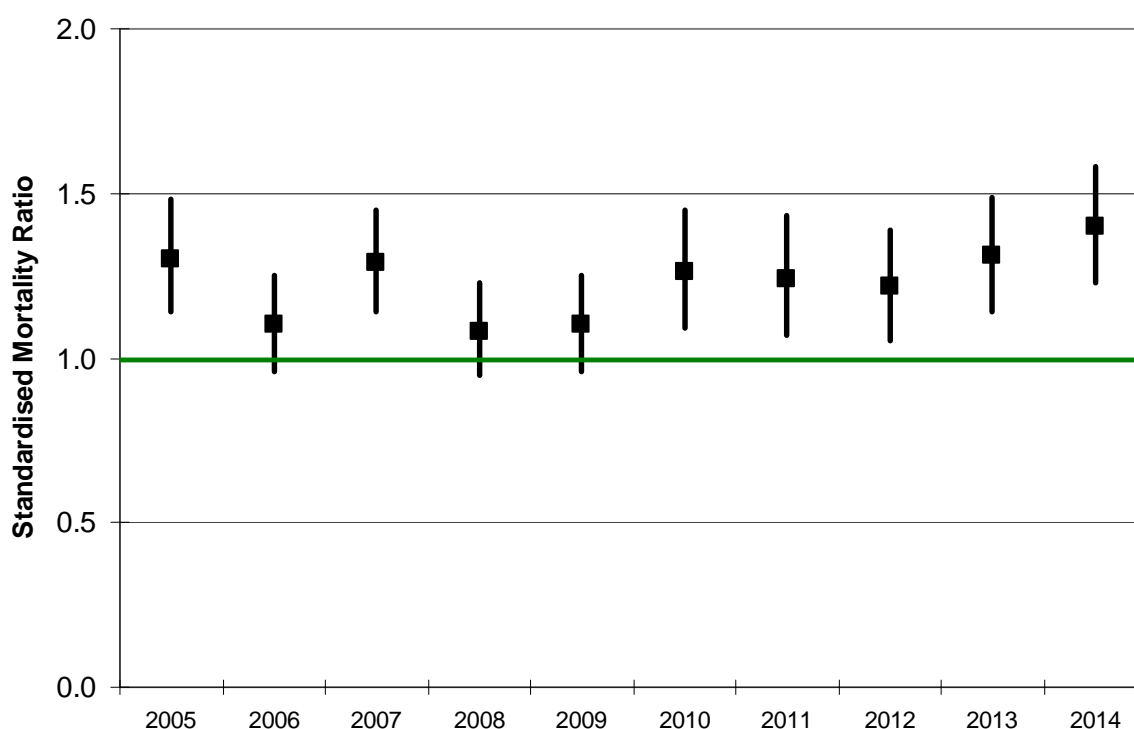
The numbers in this category have increased in recent years due to a number of cases that have proved difficult to classify.

The majority of deaths for which information is awaited beyond three months are expected to be classified as either 'other/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 5: Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population, 2005 to 2014, England and Wales



The prison population is very different from the general population: 95% 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 5 is based on annual data and shows the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for the prison population and its 95% 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 1, then this indicates that the mortality rate of the prison population is significantly higher than that of the general population. In 2014, the SMR for the prison population was significantly higher than the general population with a ratio of 1.40 with a lower bound 95% confidence interval of 1.23 and an upper bound of 1.58. In seven out of the last ten years, prison mortality has been significantly higher than that of the general population. The increase in the ratio in 2014 compared with 2013 is not significant.

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

2 Self-harm

In the 12 months to March 2015 there were:

- **27,315 reported incidents of self-harm**, up by 3,786 incidents (16%) on the same period in 2014
- **320 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, compared with 278 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period of 2014 (up 15%)
- **8,227 prisoners reported to have self-harmed** in the 12 months to March 2015, up 1,197 (17%) on the same period in 2014
- **96 individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners**, up by 13 per 1,000 prisoners (16%) on the same period in 2014

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 prisoners⁷;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody⁸.
- Gender: Females are more likely to self-harm than males.

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

	Mar 06	Mar 07	Mar 08	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15
SELF-HARM										
Self-harm incidents¹	23,964	23,636	22,462	25,847	24,964	26,285	24,253	22,780	23,529	27,315
Males	10,639	12,357	11,309	12,686	13,780	14,769	16,202	16,445	17,442	20,409
Females	13,325	11,279	11,153	13,161	11,184	11,516	8,051	6,335	6,087	6,906
Self-harm individuals²	5,910	6,292	6,283	6,667	7,218	6,786	6,992	6,772	7,030	8,227
Males	4,392	4,844	4,811	5,165	5,635	5,478	5,728	5,694	5,992	7,094
Females	1,518	1,448	1,472	1,502	1,583	1,308	1,264	1,078	1,038	1,133
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	314	299	278	312	297	310	280	266	278	320
Males	148	166	148	162	173	183	196	201	216	251
Females	2,973	2,544	2,536	3,006	2,624	2,723	1,924	1,552	1,564	1,779
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners²	77	80	78	80	86	80	81	79	83	96
Males	61	65	63	66	71	68	69	70	74	87
Females	339	327	335	343	371	309	302	264	267	292
Self-harm incidents per individual	4.1	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.5	3.9	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3
Males	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9
Females	8.8	7.8	7.6	8.8	7.1	8.8	6.4	5.9	5.9	6.1
Hospital Attendances	1,266	1,202	1,299	1,325	1,293	1,425	1,547	1,556	1,642	1,808
Males	1,023	998	1,115	1,119	1,115	1,263	1,385	1,407	1,533	1,666
Females	243	204	184	206	178	162	162	149	109	142

1. Figures include incidents at NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres

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

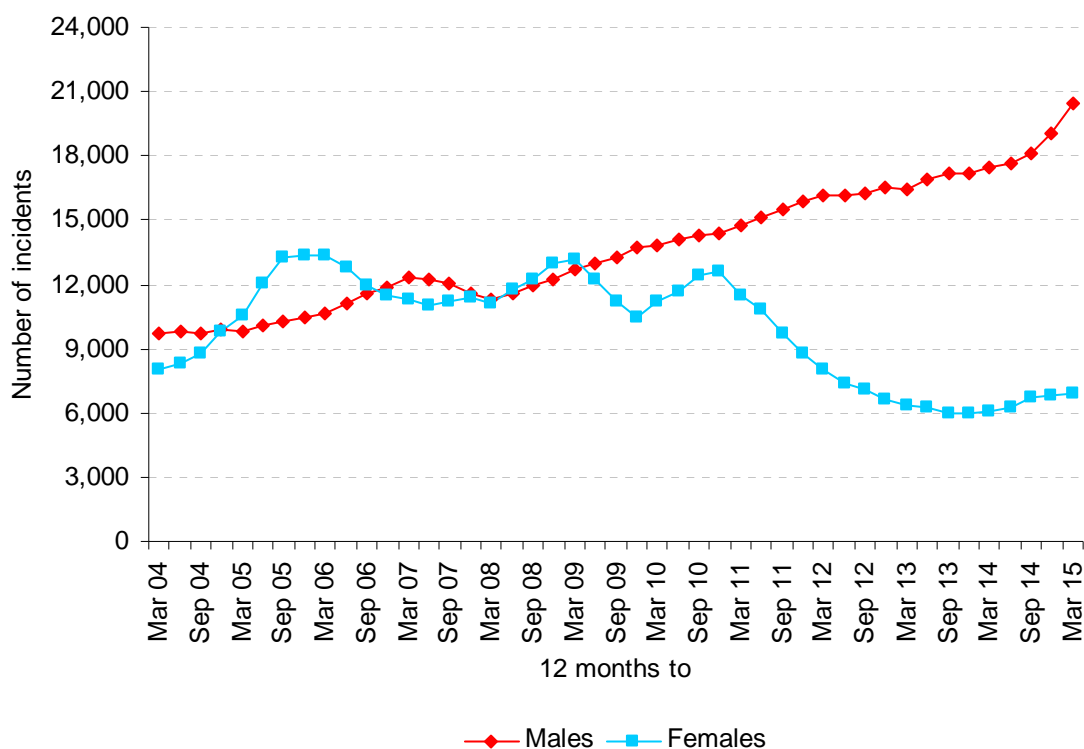
The number of reported self-harm incidents increased by 16% in the 12 months to March 2015 to 27,315, compared with 23,529 incidents in the same period a year earlier.

⁷ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

⁸ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

As self-harm rates differ between males and females it is best to consider the trends separately.

Figure 6: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



2.1 Male self-harm

In the 12 months to March 2015 there were:

- **20,409 reported incidents of self-harm by male prisoners**, up 2,967 incidents (17%) in the previous year
- **251 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners**, up 35 (16%) compared with the previous 12 months
- **7,094 male prisoners self-harmed**, up 1,102 (18%) on the same period in 2014
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carried out, on average, 2.9 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to March 2015, the same as the previous year

The number of reported male self-harm incidents increased by 17% in the 12 months to March 2015 to 20,409 incidents compared with 17,442 incidents in the 12 months to March 2014. This continues the long term trend of the number of self-harm incidents amongst male prisoners increasing.

The number of incidents is affected by changes in the size of the prison population. The rate per 1,000 prisoners accounts for changes in the prison population. This also increased over the period to 251 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to March 2015 compared with 216 incidents per 1,000 prisoners a year earlier.

The number of male prisoners reported to have self-harmed has increased to 7,094 in the 12 months to March 2015, from 5,992 in the 12 months to March 2014 (an increase of 18%). However, approximately 5% of male self-harm incidents do not have the prisoner's details recorded and so the actual number of males self-harming is likely to be higher.

The rate of male prisoners self-harming increased by 18% year-on-year to 87 males per 1,000 male prisoners from 74 males per 1,000 male prisoners.

Self-harm by male prisoners has been increasing over the longer term. Since the 12 months to March 2006 the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 male prisoners has increased by 70%. The rate of male prisoners self-harming per 1,000 male prisoners has increased by 43%.

2.2 Female self-harm

In the 12 months to end of March 2015 there were:

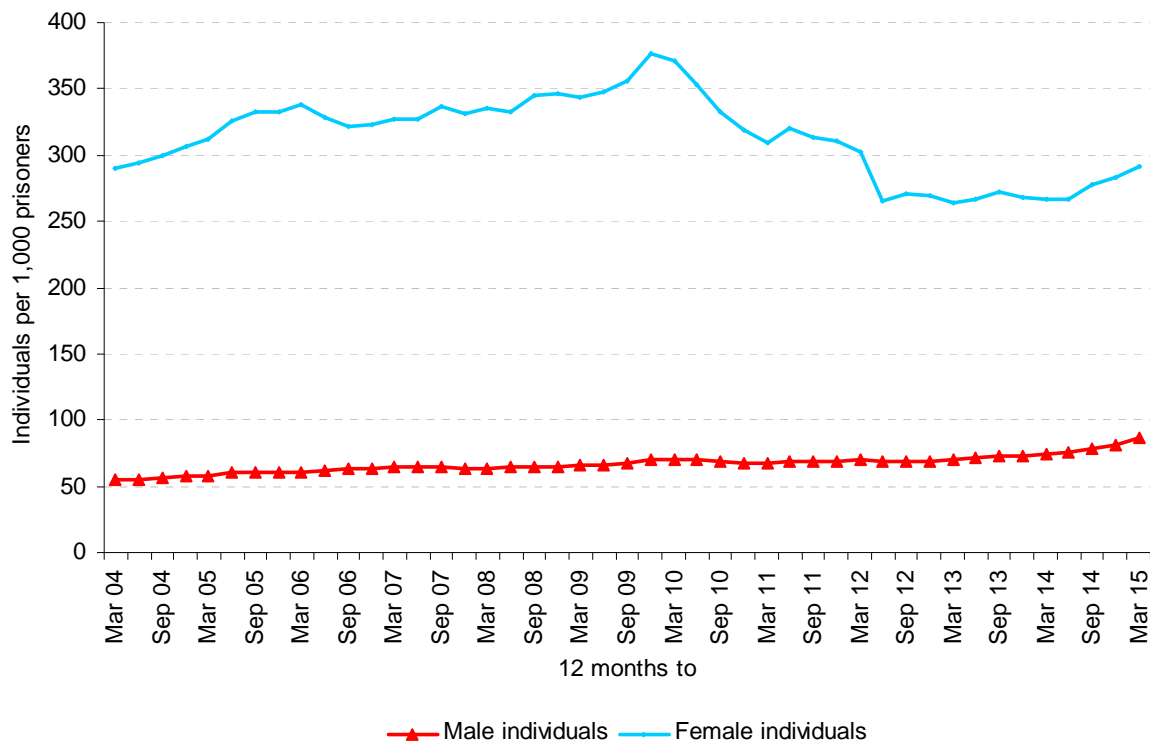
- **6,906 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners**, up 819 incidents (13%) on the same period in 2014
- **1,133 female prisoners self-harmed**, up 95 (9%) on the previous 12 months
- **292 females per 1,000 female prisoners**, up 25 per 1,000 female prisoners (9%) on the previous 12 months
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 6.1 self-harm incidents on average, up 0.2 incidents (3%) on the same period in 2014

The number of reported female self-harm incidents increased by 13% in the 12 months to March 2015 to 6,906 incidents compared with 6,087 incidents in the same period the previous year. The rate of self-harm incidents increased to 1,779 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners compared with 1,564 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners.

The number of female prisoners recorded to have self-harmed in the 12 months to March 2015 increased to 1,133 prisoners from 1,038 prisoners in the 12 months to March 2014. Over the same period, the rate of female prisoners self-harming increased to 292 females per 1,000 female prisoners from 267 per 1,000 female prisoners (figure 7). As with males there is a small percentage of female self-harm incidents where the individual involved is not recorded.

The increase in self-harm incidents among female prisoners comes on the back of a period of falling incidents which nearly halved between the 12 months to March 2011 (11,516 incidents) and the 12 months to March 2014 (6,087 incidents). At the same time, the rate of females prisoners self-harming fell by 14% from 309 females per 1,000 female prisoners to 267 females per 1,000 female prisoners.

Figure 7: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



Despite the falls seen in recent years, self-harm by females continue to account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody – females accounted for 25% of self-harm incidents in this reporting period but only make up around 5% of the prison population (see NOMS Annual Offender Equalities Report)⁹.

⁹ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/noms-annual-offender-equalities-report-2013-to-2014

3 Assaults (including fights)

Changes to quality assurance processes in 2013 led to improved reporting of assaults. In the 12 months to March 2015 there were:

- **16,885 assault incidents**, up 12% from 15,051 incidents in the same period of 2014
- **198 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 178 on the same period in 2014
- **2,350 serious assaults** up 38% from 1,705 in the 12 months to end of March 2014
- **3,887 assaults on staff**, up 15% from 3,372 incidents in the same period of 2014
- **46 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 40 on the same period in 2014
- **551 serious assaults on staff** up 48% from 373 in the same period of 2014

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.

Table 4: Assault incidents Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	Mar 06	Mar 07	Mar 08	Mar 09	Mar 10	Mar 11	Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents¹²	14,832	14,780	15,644	15,775	14,916	14,473	15,577	14,083	15,051	16,885
Male establishments	13,683	13,673	14,625	14,927	14,281	13,785	14,888	13,573	14,492	16,257
Female establishments	1,149	1,107	1,019	848	635	688	689	510	559	628
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	194	187	193	190	178	170	180	164	178	198
Male establishments	190	183	191	190	179	171	181	166	180	200
Female establishments	256	250	232	194	149	163	165	125	144	162
Serious assaults	1,402	1,448	1,481	1,443	1,367	1,358	1,332	1,303	1,705	2,350
Male establishments	1,337	1,390	1,439	1,395	1,334	1,312	1,287	1,277	1,666	2,310
Female establishments	65	58	42	48	33	46	45	26	39	40
Assaults on Staff	3,582	3,393	3,247	3,191	3,027	2,857	3,157	2,964	3,372	3,887
Male establishments	3,110	2,917	2,820	2,868	2,813	2,618	2,933	2,787	3,203	3,686
Female establishments	472	476	427	323	214	239	224	177	169	201
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	47	43	40	39	36	34	36	35	40	46
Male establishments	43	39	37	37	35	32	36	34	40	45
Female establishments	105	107	97	74	50	57	54	43	43	52
Serious assaults on staff	290	284	278	282	289	293	260	269	373	551
Male establishments	267	263	260	263	276	273	244	260	364	534
Female establishments	23	21	18	19	13	20	16	9	9	17

1. Figures include incidents at NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres

2. 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.

Assaults are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate, which accounts for 95%¹⁰ 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;¹¹
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.¹²

¹⁰ NOMS Annual Offender Equalities report: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/noms-annual-offender-equalities-report-2013-to-2014

¹¹ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

¹² Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

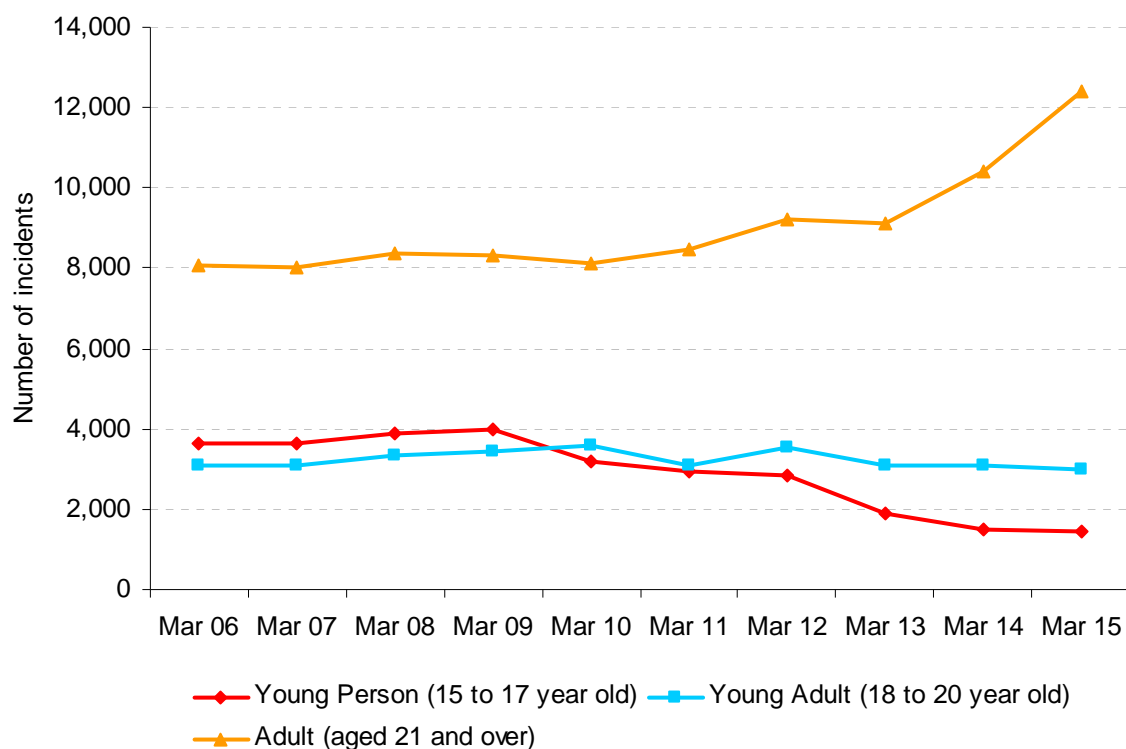
3.1 All Assaults

There were 16,885 recorded assault incidents in the 12 months to the end of March 2015 at a rate of 198 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This was an increase of 1,834 incidents (12%), or 20 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (11%), over the same period last year.

There are differing trends between different age groups (figure 8). The increase in assaults primarily occurs amongst adult (those aged 21 and over) prisoners, which has increased by over 50% since March 2010. In the 12 months to March 2015 there were 12,415 assaults involving only adults, an increase of 4,306 incidents since the corresponding period in 2010. In addition to an element of improved reporting, there has also been an increase in the numbers within this cohort of the prison population.

Assault incidents where the youngest person involved was aged between 18 and 20 years old has remained broadly unchanged at around 3,000 incidents a year over the last 10 years. The number of assaults involving 15 to 17 year olds has fallen by over 60% from its peak in the 12 months to March 2009 to 1,441 assault incidents in 2015. This fall in the 15 to 17 year old age group has been driven by the fall in the number of 15 to 17 year olds held in prison custody, and does not present any evidence in itself of this age group becoming less violent.

Figure 8: Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner involved in incident, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)

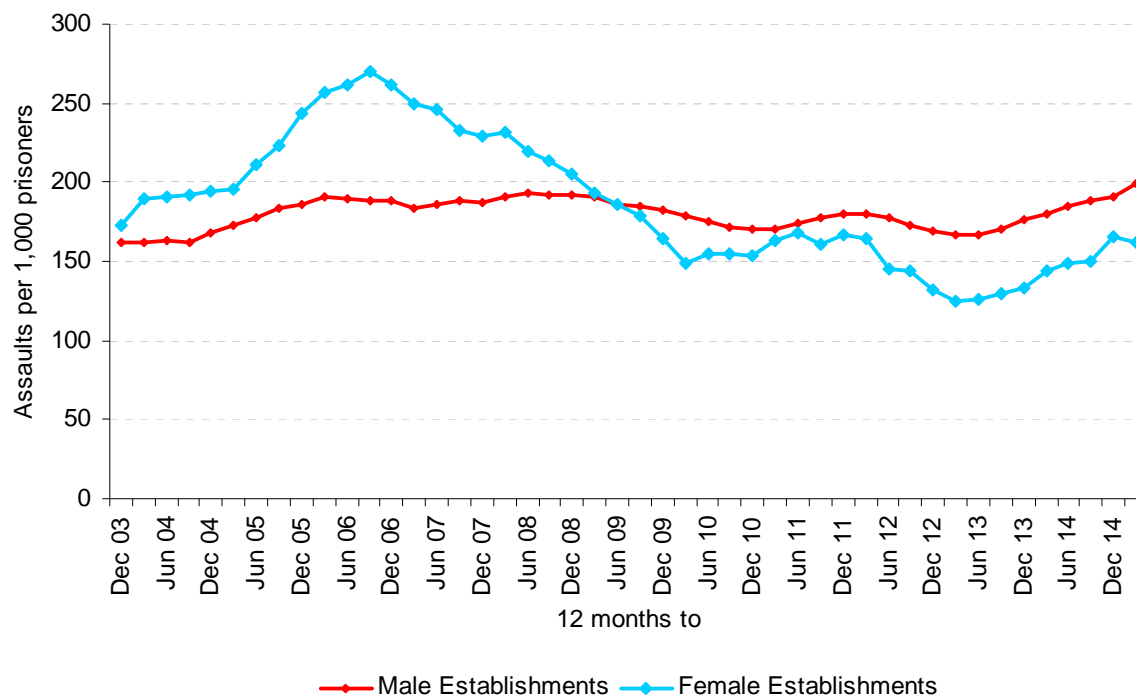


Comparisons between the male and female estate

The rate of assaults for male prisoners increased to 200 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to March 2015, compared with 180 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in the same period of 2014. The increase has come after a period of falling trend which saw the rate of assaults falling from 191 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in March 2008 to 166 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in March 2013.

In the female estate, there were 162 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to March 2015, up from 144 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the same period of 2014. The rate of assaults in the female estate had halved between 2006 and 2013, from a peak of 256 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to March 2006 to 125 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in March 2013.

Figure 9: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



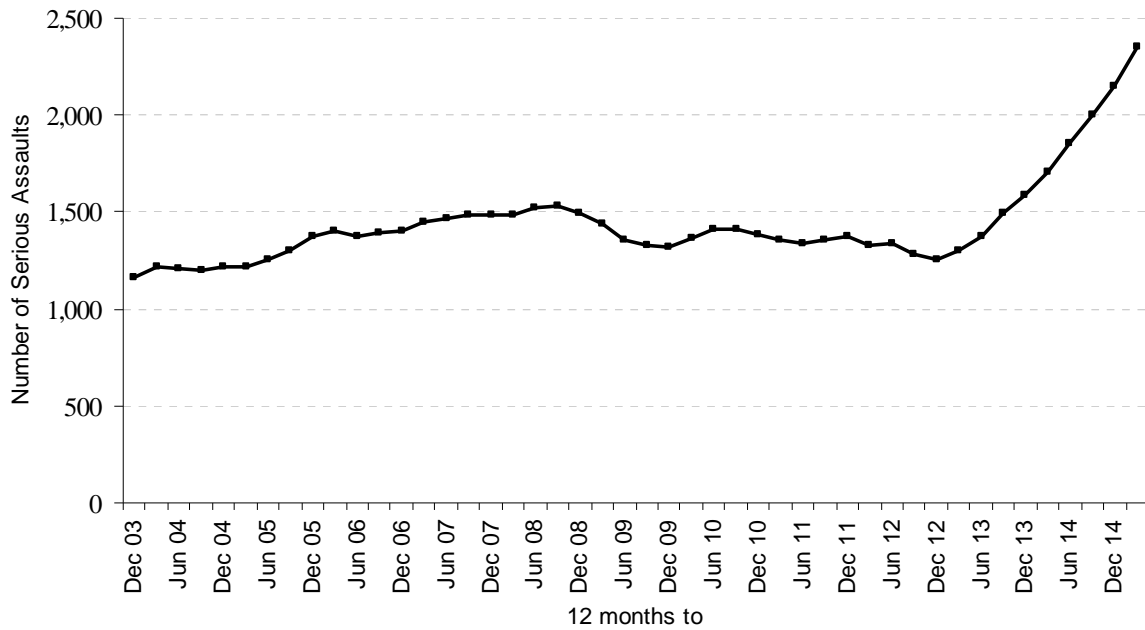
Serious assaults¹³

After a period of falling numbers of serious assaults between March 2008 and March 2013, serious assaults then rose from 1,303 incidents in the 12 months to March 2013 to 2,350 incidents in the 12 months to March 2015, a rise of 80%.

As with all incidents, there is volatility in the time series of serious assault incidents although there has been a general quarter on quarter upward trend since December 2012 (figure 10).

¹³ For the definition of serious assaults see the Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics. www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

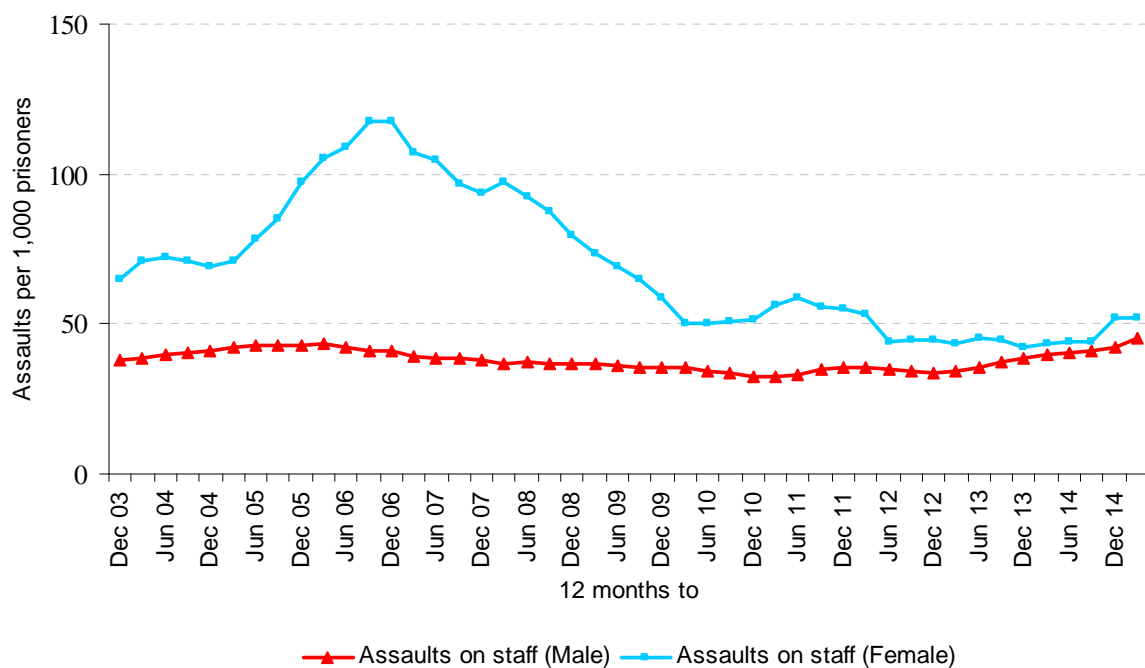
Figure 10: Serious assaults by quarter, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



3.2 Assaults on staff

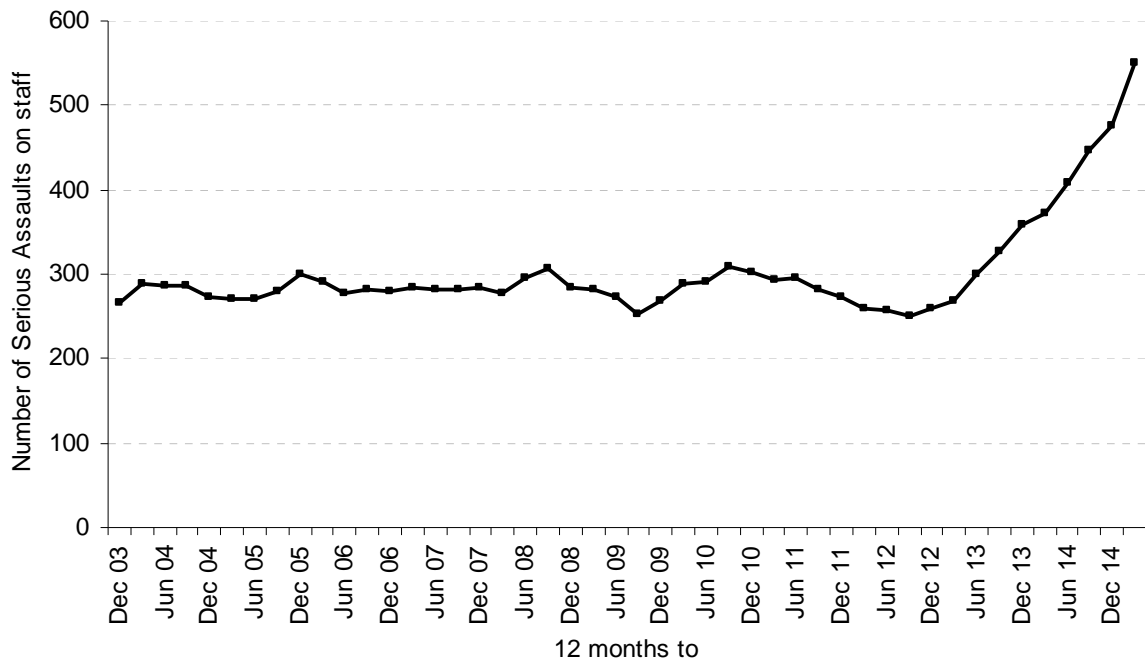
There were 3,887 assaults on staff in the 12 months to March 2015 at a rate of 46 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This is an increase of 515 (15%) assaults, or 6 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (15%) on the 12 months to March 2014.

Figure 11: Total assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



There were 551 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to the end of March 2015 – an increase of 178 incidents (48%) on the previous year.

Figure 12: Number of serious assaults on staff, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections (www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/)

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody (iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/)

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx)
- Deaths following police contact (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx)

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

- Fatal Incident reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/)
- Annual reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports/)

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

- ICD 10 (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)
- Prison Service Orders (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos)
- Prison Service Instructions (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 website¹⁴. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

	Table description	Period
Safety in Custody – Summary tables		
Table 1	Safety in custody summary statistics	Apr 05 – Jun 15
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Jul 05 – Jun 15
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Apr 05 – Mar 15
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Apr 05 – Mar 15
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 – Jun 15
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Jan 04 – Mar 15
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Jan 03 – Mar 15
Safety in Custody – Figures		
Figure 1	Number of deaths in prison custody	Jan 00 – Jun 15
Figure 2	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Jan 00 – Jun 15
Figure 3	Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody	Jan 00 – Jun 15
Figure 4	Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody	Jan 00 – Jun 15
Figure 5	Standardised Mortality Ratio	Jan 04 – Dec 14
Figure 6	Number of self-harm incidents by gender	Apr 03 – Mar 15
Figure 7	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Apr 03 – Mar 15
Figure 8	Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner	Apr 05 – Mar 15
Figure 9	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total	Jan 03 – Mar 15
Figure 10	Number of serious assaults	Jan 03 – Mar 15
Figure 11	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – on staff	Jan 03 – Mar 15
Figure 12	Number of serious assaults on staff	Jan 03 – Mar 15
Deaths tables		
Table 1.1	Annual deaths in prison custody and rates by apparent cause	1978 - 2014
Table 1.2	Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and gender	1978 - 2014
Table 1.3	Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and age band	1978 - 2014
Table 1.4	Annual deaths arising from incidents in prison custody but occurring elsewhere	1999 - 2014
Table 1.5	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender	1978 - 2014
Table 1.6	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by age	1978 - 2014
Table 1.7	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in custody and current prison	1999 - 2014
Table 1.8	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by type of custody	1999 - 2014
Table 1.9	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by ethnicity	1999 - 2014
Table 1.10	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by nationality type	1999 - 2014
Table 1.11	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by sentence type	1999 - 2014
Table 1.12	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by method	1999 - 2014
Table 1.13	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation	1999 - 2014
Table 1.14	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligature points used in	1999 - 2014

¹⁴ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

	fatal hangings	
Table 1.15	Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group	2001 - 2014
Table 1.16	Annual self-inflicted deaths by establishment	1978 - 2014
Table 1.17	Annual natural cause deaths by establishment	1978 - 2014
Table 1.18	Annual deaths by establishment	1978 - 2014
Table 1.19	Dates of opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2014

Self-harm tables

Table 2.1	Annual self-harm summary	2004 – 2014
Table 2.2	Annual self-harm incidents by method	2004 – 2014
Table 2.3	Annual self-harm incidents by age group	2004 – 2014
Table 2.4	Annual individuals self-harming by age group	2004 – 2014
Table 2.5	Annual self-harm incidents by time in current prison	2004 – 2014
Table 2.6	Annual self-harm incidents by type of custody	2004 – 2014
Table 2.7	Annual self-harm incidents by ethnicity	2004 – 2014
Table 2.8	Annual self-harm incidents by nationality type	2004 – 2014
Table 2.9	Individuals self-harming by nationality type	2004 – 2014
Table 2.10	Annual self-harm incidents by location	2004 – 2014
Table 2.11	Annual self-harm incidents by type of hospital attendances	2004 – 2014
Table 2.12	Annual self-harm frequency	2004 – 2014
Table 2.13	Annual self-harm incidents by establishment	2004 – 2014
Table 2.14	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 – 2014

Assaults tables

Table 3.1	Annual prison assault summary statistics	2000 – 2014
Table 3.2	Annual assault incidents and prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by gender	2000 – 2014
Table 3.3	Annual assault incidents and prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by age	2000 – 2014
Table 3.4	Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by time in current prison	2000 – 2014
Table 3.5	Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by type of custody	2000 – 2014
Table 3.6	Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by ethnicity	2000 – 2014
Table 3.7	Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by nationality type	2000 – 2014
Table 3.8	Annual assault incidents by assailant / victim type	2000 – 2014
Table 3.9	Annual sexual assault incidents by assailant / victim type	2000 – 2014
Table 3.10	Annual assault incidents involving weapons	2000 – 2014
Table 3.11	Annual assaults on staff	2000 – 2014
Table 3.12	Annual assault incidents by type of injury	2000 – 2014
Table 3.13	Annual assault related hospital attendances / treatment for concussion/internal injuries	2000 – 2014
Table 3.14	Annual assaults by establishment	2000 – 2014
Table 3.15	Annual assaults on staff and on prison officers by establishment	2000 – 2014
Table 3.16	Annual prisoner on prisoner assaults by establishment	2000 – 2014
Table 3.17	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 – 2014

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'¹⁵

Explanatory notes

The statistics in this bulletin relate to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales.

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

¹⁵ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found at 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 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

www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx

www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm

Alternative formats are available on request from statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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