



Ministry
of Justice



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

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

29 October 2015

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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 on assaults and self-harm up to June 2015 and statistics on deaths in prison custody up to September 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.

Changes and revisions in this publication

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

This publication has updated figures on deaths to the end of September 2015, including a review on all deaths awaiting further information, and has updated figures for self-harm and assaults to the end of June 2015. From this publication onward, we have also increased the frequency of prisoner on prisoner assaults, and prisoner on prisoner serious assaults from annual to quarterly. These breakdowns, along with assaults on staff, are now the primary means by which violence in prisons is monitored by NOMS, and as such we have added them to the quarterly publication for transparency.

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 or received a reprimand or warning

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 29 October 2015 and includes statistics covering 12-month periods to end of June 2015 for self-harm and assaults and 12-month periods to end of September 2015 for deaths in prison custody.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 28 January 2016, covering 12-month periods to end of September 2015 for assaults and self-harm and December 2015 for deaths in prison custody.

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

³ Proven Reoffending Statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics>

Key findings

Table 1: Safety in Custody Summary Statistics, 12 months ending September 2006 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14	Sep 15
Total deaths¹	156	182	166	166	193	199	194	198	234	267
Self-inflicted	61	87	69	61	60	59	57	64	91	95
Natural Causes	90	89	91	101	123	127	130	123	136	153
Homicide	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	3	7
Other ²	4	5	3	4	9	12	6	9	4	12

	12 months ending									
	Jun 06	Jun 07	Jun 08	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14	Jun 15
Self-harm incidents¹	23,892	23,240	23,330	25,253	25,739	25,954	23,522	23,180	23,952	28,881
Males	11,093	12,233	11,572	12,997	14,090	15,139	16,151	16,918	17,672	21,702
Females	12,799	11,007	11,758	12,256	11,649	10,815	7,371	6,262	6,280	7,179
Assault incidents¹	14,898	15,082	15,877	15,434	14,713	14,739	15,320	14,045	15,548	17,581
Males	13,727	13,997	14,905	14,630	14,054	14,036	14,709	13,540	14,968	16,895
Females	1,171	1,085	972	804	659	703	611	505	580	686

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 September 2015 there were 267 deaths in prison custody; an increase of 33 compared to the 12 months ending September 2014. These deaths comprise of:

- 95 apparent self-inflicted deaths, up from 91 on the same period in 2014
- 153 deaths due to natural causes, up from 136 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.
- 12 other deaths, 8 of which remain classified as 'awaiting further information'

Self-harm

In the 12 months to June 2015 there were:

- 28,881 reported incidents of self-harm, up by 4,929 incidents (21%) from the same period in 2014
- 338 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 282 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period of 2014 (up 20%)
- 7,955 prisoners reported to have self-harmed, up 722 (10%) on the same period in 2014
- 93 individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners, up by 8 per 1,000 prisoners (9%) from the same period in 2014

Assaults

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

- 17,581 assault incidents, up 13% from 15,548 incidents in the 12 months to June 2014
- 206 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 183 in the same period of 2014

- 2,480 serious assaults up 34% on the same period in 2014. This is an 80% increase from the 12 months to June 2013.
- 13,373 prisoner on prisoner assaults, up 11% from 12,039 incidents in the 12 months to June 2014
- 156 prisoner on prisoner assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 142 in the 12 months to June 2014
- 1,914 serious prisoner on prisoner assaults up 31% from 1,463 in the same period of 2014
- 4,156 assaults on staff, up 20% from 3,458 incidents in the 12 months to June 2014
- 49 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 41 in the 12 months to June 2014
- 578 serious assaults on staff up 42% from 408 in the 12 months to June 2014

Deaths in custody

In the 12 months to September 2015 there were 267 deaths in prison custody; an increase of 33 compared to the same period of 2014. These deaths comprise of:

- **95 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, up from 91 on the same period in 2014 (4% increase)
- **153 deaths due to natural causes**, up from 136 on the same period in 2014 (13% increase)
- **7 apparent homicides**, up from 3 on the same period in 2014
- **12 other deaths**, 8 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: Male prisoners are more likely to die in custody.

Table 2: Deaths in Custody Summary Statistics, 12 months ending September 2006 to 12 months ending September 2015, England and Wales

	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	12 months ending		Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14	Sep 15
					Sep 10	Sep 11				
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody^{1 2}	156	182	166	166	193	199	194	198	234	267
Self-inflicted	61	87	69	61	60	59	57	64	91	95
Natural Causes	90	89	91	101	123	127	130	123	136	153
Homicide	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	3	7
Other ³	4	5	3	4	9	12	6	9	4	12
<i>of which</i>										
Other/Non-natural	4	5	3	4	9	12	6	9	4	4
Awaiting further information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.8	3.1
Self-inflicted	0.8	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.1
Natural Causes	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.8
Deaths by Gender										
Male	150	173	161	160	186	191	192	192	221	260
Female	6	9	5	6	7	8	2	6	13	7

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

2. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres.

3. A proportion of the most recent two years' figures for 'other' deaths are expected to be re-classified as natural causes or self-inflicted deaths.

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

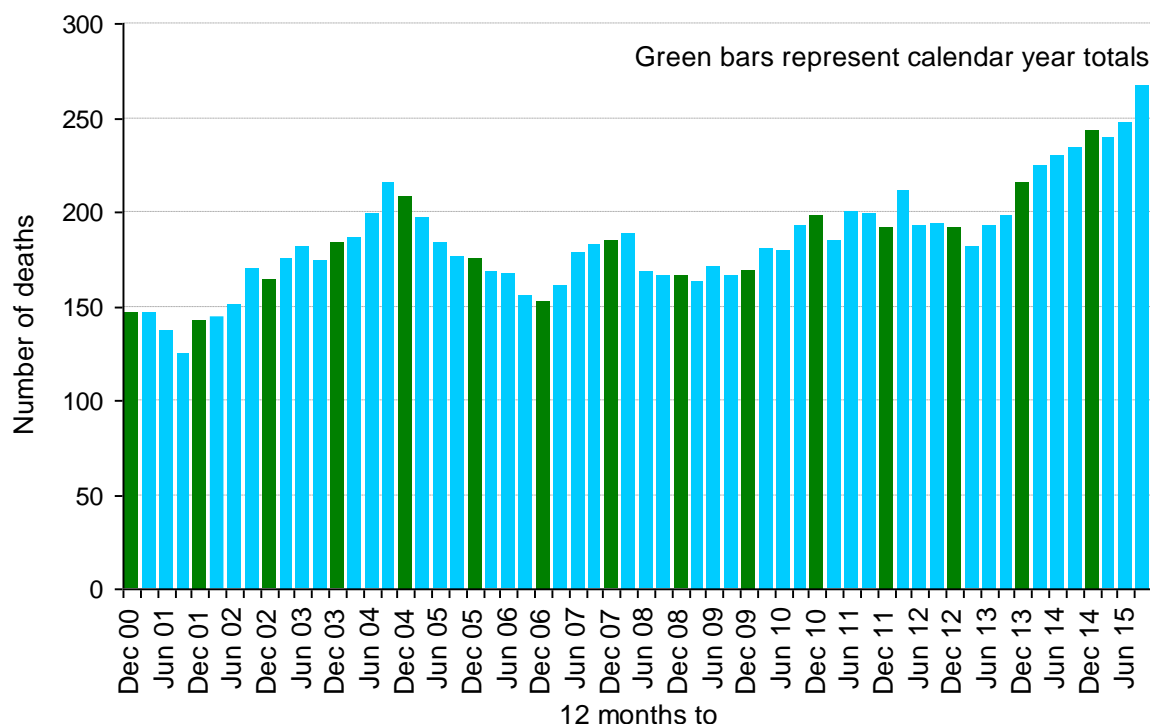
⁵ Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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 267 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to the end of September 2015. The majority of deaths in prison custody were from natural causes (153 from natural causes, representing 57% of all deaths), with self-inflicted deaths making up one-third of deaths.

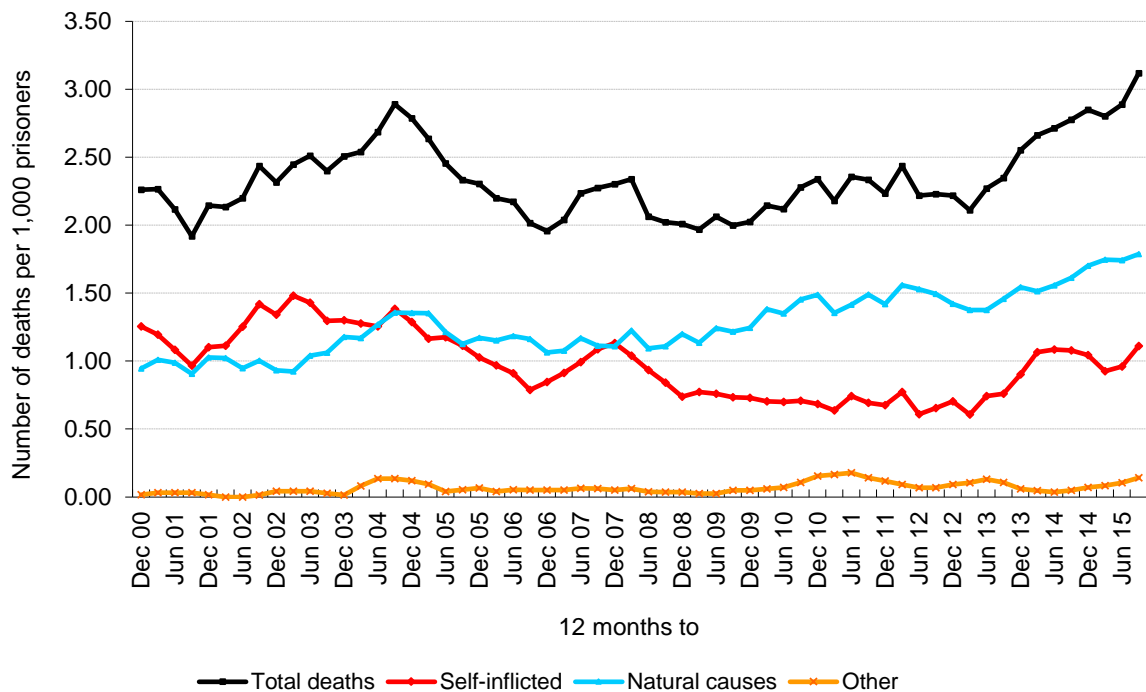
Figure 1: Number of deaths in prison custody, December 2000 to September 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 month totals by quarter)



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 3.1 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.8 in the 12 months to September 2014.

The overall rate of deaths in prison custody had 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 48% from March 2013 to September 2015. The latest data brings the rate up beyond the previous peak seen in September 2004.

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



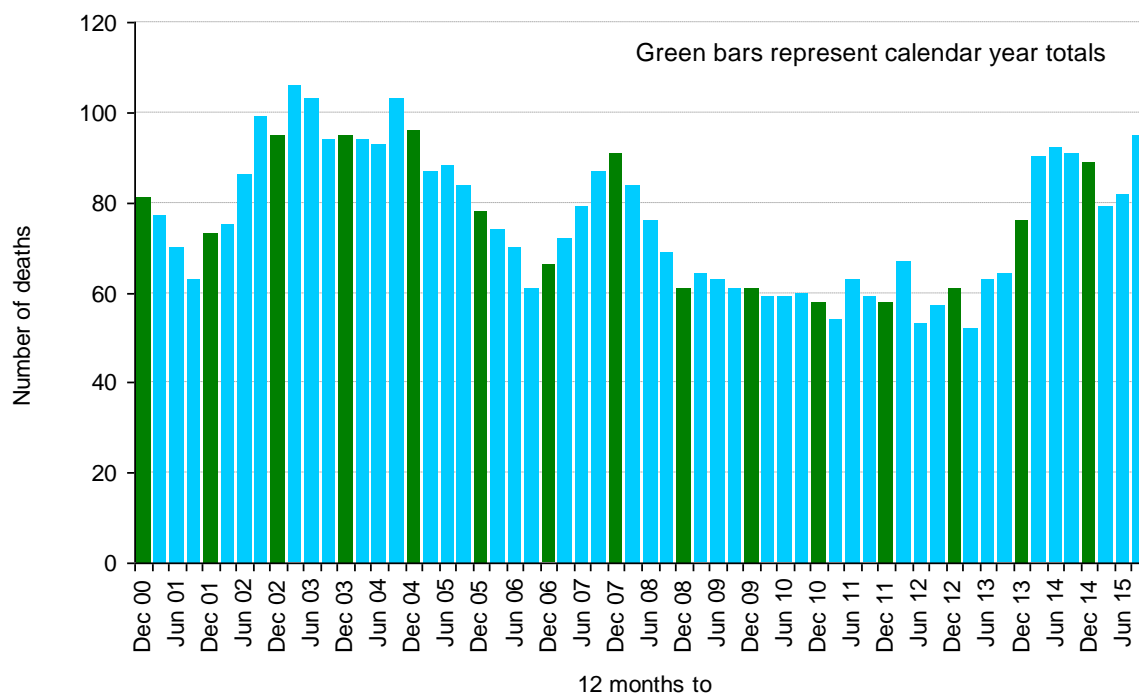
1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

- **95 self-inflicted deaths** in the 12 months to September 2015, 4 more than the 12 months ending September 2014 (a 4% increase)
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths remained at 1.1 per 1,000 prisoners**, compared to 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 increased to 95 in the 12 months ending September 2015 compared to 91 in the same period of 2014. Quarterly figures remain volatile.

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



1.3 Natural cause deaths

- **153 natural cause deaths** in the 12 months ending September 2015, 17 more than in the 12 months ending September 2014 (a 13% increase)
- The **rate of natural cause deaths increased to 1.8 deaths per 1,000 prisoners** from 1.6 in the previous year

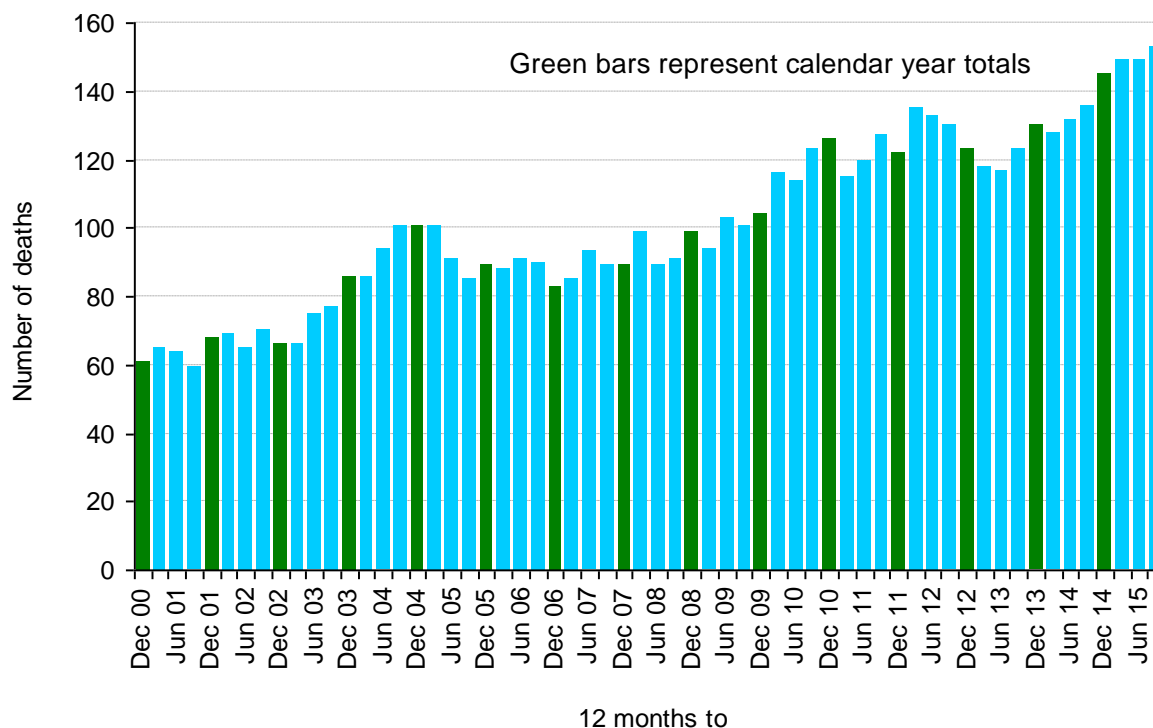
Natural cause deaths include any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.

There were 153 deaths from natural causes in the 12 months ending September 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 17 (13%) higher than the number of natural cause deaths in the 12 months ending September 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 Offender Management Statistics Quarterly⁶).

⁶ Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

Figure 4: Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody, 12 months ending December 2000 to 12 months ending September 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 September 2015 compared with 3 in the 12 months ending September 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 September 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 September 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 September 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.

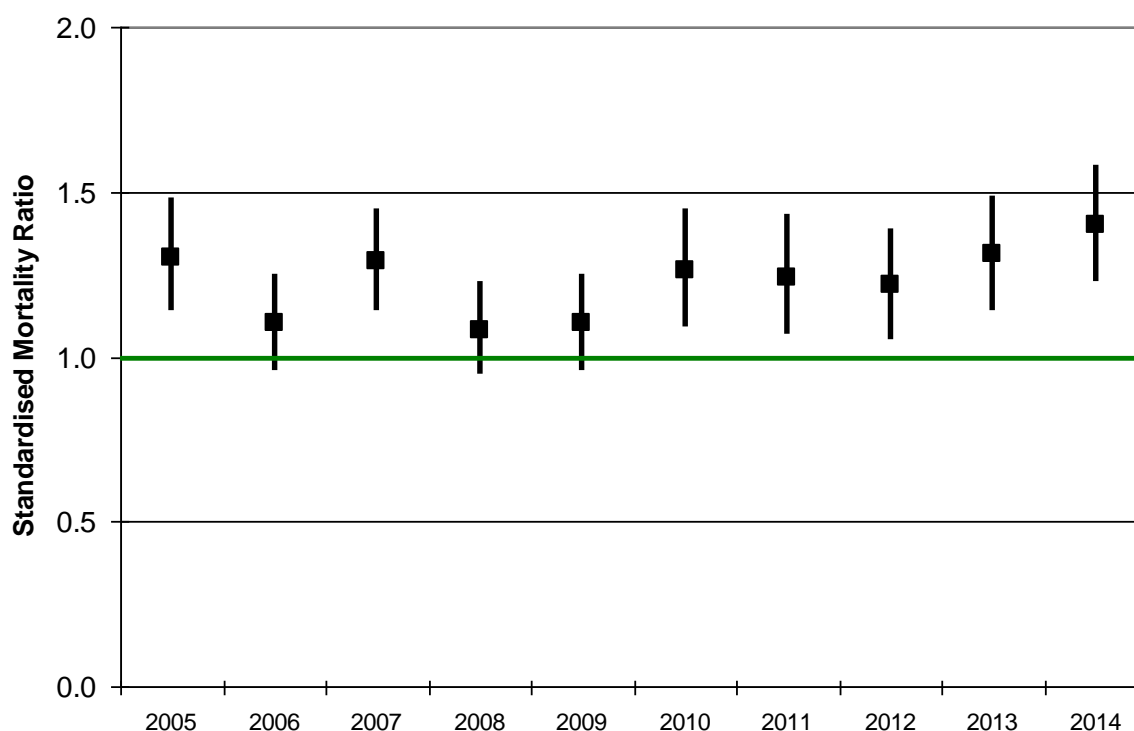
There were **12 other deaths** in the 12 months ending September 2015 (4% of all deaths). This number is not directly comparable with earlier years as some of the deaths in this category are likely to be reclassified (typically as either natural cause or other/non-natural deaths) following inquest.

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

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).

The Standard Mortality Ratio (SMR) provides a means of making like for like comparisons of the death rate in prison custody to that of the general population of England and Wales, by

adjusting for age distribution and gender. Figure 5 above presents the SMR of the prison population, compared to the expected level from the general population. Where the likelihood of death is the same as would be expected based on the general population, the SMR would have a value of 1 (depicted by the green line - a ratio of 1:1). Due to the adjustments, there is a margin of error around the SMR estimates, depicted on the graph as the range of values covered by lines around the point estimates.

In 2014, the likelihood of prison mortality was 40%⁷ greater than in the general population (with 95% confidence within a range of 23% to 58% greater likelihood). In seven out of the last ten years, the likelihood of prison mortality has been significantly higher than in the general population, however none of the apparent year on year changes to the SMR are significant across the period.

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

⁷ In 2014, the SMR for the prison population was 1.40 with a lower bound 95% confidence interval of 1.23 and the upper bound of 1.58.

2 Self-harm

In the 12 months to June 2015 there were:

- **28,881 reported incidents of self-harm**, up by 4,929 incidents (21%) on the same period in 2014
- **338 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, compared with 282 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the same period of 2014 (up 20%)
- **7,955 prisoners reported to have self-harmed** in the 12 months to June 2015, up 722 (10%) on the same period in 2014
- **93 individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners**, up by 8 per 1,000 prisoners (9%) 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.*” This measure is not an indication of attempted suicide. Though incidents of self-harm may include attempts at suicide, it is difficult to determine the intent of the prisoner with sufficient accuracy to be recorded as such. While some incidents may result in serious outcomes, such as hospitalisation, the purpose or intent of an act may be unclear. The nature of self-harm outcomes are not an indication of attempted suicide.

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 prisoners⁸;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody⁹.
- Gender: Females are more likely to self-harm than males.

⁸ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

⁹ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Table 3: Self-harm in Custody Summary Statistics, 12 months ending June 2006 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales

	Jun 06	Jun 07	Jun 08	Jun 09	12 months ending		Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14	Jun 15
SELF-HARM										
Self-harm incidents¹	23,892	23,240	23,330	25,253	25,739	25,954	23,522	23,180	23,952	28,881
Males	11,093	12,233	11,572	12,997	14,090	15,139	16,151	16,918	17,672	21,702
Females	12,799	11,007	11,758	12,256	11,649	10,815	7,371	6,262	6,280	7,179
Self-harm individuals²	5,994	6,297	6,454	6,642	7,183	6,849	6,834	6,823	7,233	7,955
Males	4,523	4,852	4,979	5,133	5,675	5,508	5,723	5,758	6,186	6,862
Females	1,471	1,445	1,475	1,509	1,508	1,341	1,111	1,065	1,047	1,093
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	311	292	286	304	305	306	270	273	282	338
Males	153	163	150	165	176	188	195	209	218	266
Females	2,862	2,496	2,654	2,830	2,730	2,579	1,759	1,567	1,612	1,849
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners²	78	79	79	80	85	81	78	80	85	93
Males	62	64	65	65	71	68	69	71	76	84
Females	329	328	333	348	353	320	265	266	269	281
Self-harm incidents per individual	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.6
Males	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.2
Females	8.7	7.6	8.0	8.1	7.7	8.1	6.6	5.9	6.0	6.6
Hospital Attendances	1,257	1,197	1,333	1,298	1,333	1,444	1,524	1,597	1,696	1,909
Males	1,013	1,008	1,141	1,095	1,172	1,281	1,357	1,450	1,590	1,764
Females	244	189	192	203	161	163	167	147	106	145

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 incident.

The number of reported self-harm incidents increased by 21% in the 12 months to June 2015 to 28,881, compared with 23,952 incidents in the same period a year earlier.

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

2.1 Male self-harm

In the 12 months to June 2015 there were:

- **21,702 reported incidents of self-harm by male prisoners**, up 4,030 incidents (23%) in the previous year
- **266 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners**, up 48 (22%) compared with the previous 12 months
- **6,862 male prisoners self-harmed**, up 676 (11%) on the same period in 2014
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carried out, on average, 3.2 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to June 2015, up from 2.9 incidents in the previous year

The number of reported male self-harm incidents increased by 23% in the 12 months to June 2015 to 21,702 incidents compared with 17,672 incidents in the 12 months to June 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 266 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to June 2015 compared with 218 incidents per 1,000 prisoners a year earlier.

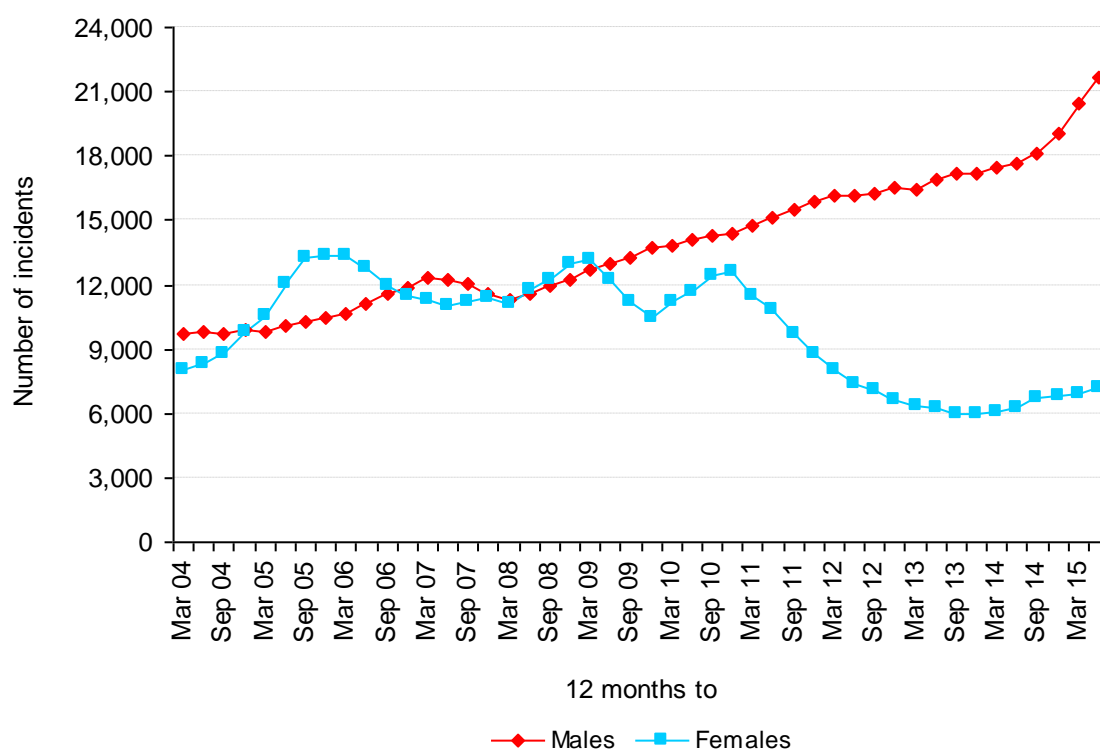
The number of male prisoners reported to have self-harmed has increased to 6,862 in the 12 months to June 2015, from 6,186 in the 12 months to June 2014 (an increase of 11%).

However, approximately 4% 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 11% year-on-year to 84 males per 1,000 male prisoners from 76 males per 1,000 male prisoners.

Self-harm by male prisoners has been steadily increasing over the longer term time series presented. Since the 12 months to June 2006 the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 male prisoners has increased by 74%. The rate of male prisoners self-harming per 1,000 male prisoners has increased by 35%.

Figure 6: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender, 12 months ending March 2004 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



2.2 Female self-harm

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

- **7,179 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners**, up 899 incidents (14%) on the same period in 2014
- **1,093 female prisoners self-harmed**, up 46 (4%) on the previous 12 months
- **281 females per 1,000 female prisoners**, up 12 per 1,000 female prisoners (4%) on the previous 12 months
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 6.6 self-harm incidents on average, up 0.6 incidents (10%) on the same period in 2014

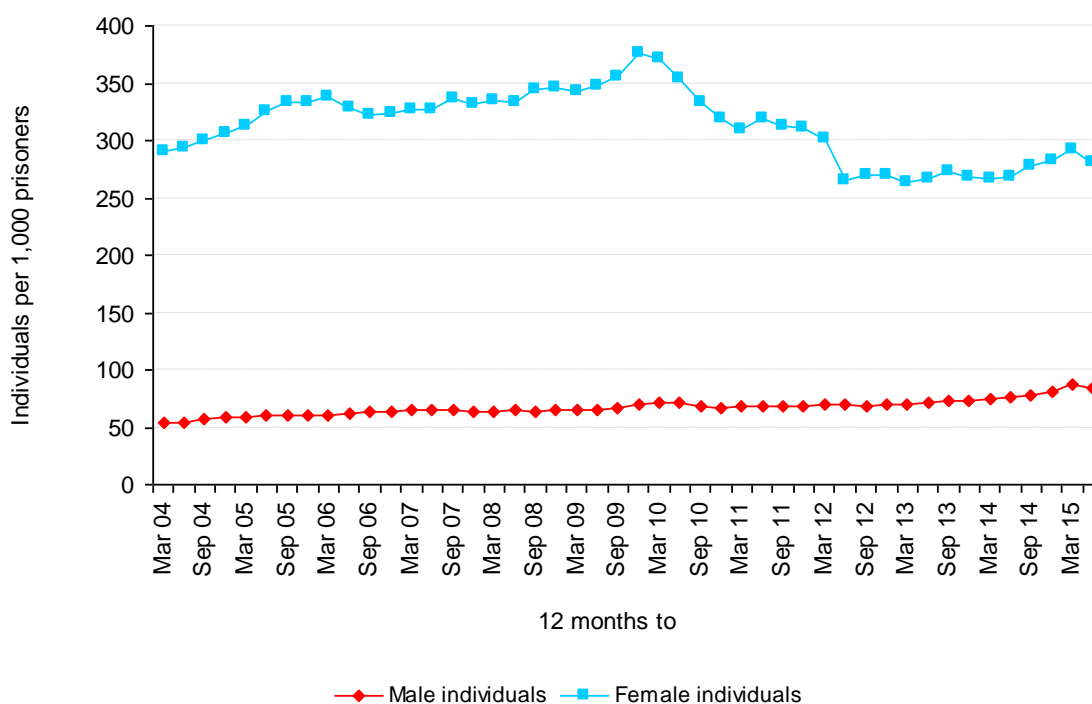
The number of reported female self-harm incidents increased by 14% in the 12 months to June 2015 to 7,179 incidents compared with 6,280 incidents in the same period the previous

year. The rate of self-harm incidents increased to 1,849 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners compared with 1,612 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners.

The number of female prisoners recorded to have self-harmed in the 12 months to June 2015 increased to 1,093 prisoners from 1,047 prisoners in the 12 months to June 2014. Over the same period, the rate of female prisoners self-harming increased to 281 females per 1,000 female prisoners from 269 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.

Between the 12 months ending June 2006 and 12 months ending June 2010, the rate of female self-harming individuals had increased from 329 to 353 per 1,000 female prisoners. After this time, a substantial reduction in the rate of female self-harming individual was sustained from 12 months ending June 2012 to June 2014, 265 to 269 per 1,000 female prisoners. In the most recent year, there has been a slight increase in the rate to 281 per 1,000, although still substantially below the earlier part of the time series.

Figure 7: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending March 2004 to 12 months ending June 2015, 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 Offender Management Statistics)¹⁰.

¹⁰ Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

3 Assaults (including fights)

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

- **17,581 assault incidents**, up 13% from 15,548 incidents in the same period of 2014
- **206 assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 183 on the same period in 2014
- **2,480 serious assaults** up 34% from 1,854 in the 12 months to end of June 2014
- **13,373 prisoner on prisoner assaults**, up 11% from 12,039 incidents in the 12 months to June 2014
- **156 prisoner on prisoner assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 142 in the 12 months to June 2014
- **1,914 serious prisoner on prisoner assaults** up 31% from 1,463 in the same period of 2014
- **4,156 assaults on staff**, up 20% from 3,458 incidents in the same period of 2014
- **49 assault on staff incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 41 on the same period in 2014
- **578 serious assaults on staff** up 42% from 408 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, 12 months ending June 2006 to 12 months ending June 2015, 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
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents^{1 2}	14,898	15,082	15,877	15,434	14,713	14,739	15,320	14,045	15,548	17,581
Male establishments	13,727	13,997	14,905	14,630	14,054	14,036	14,709	13,540	14,968	16,895
Female establishments	1,171	1,085	972	804	659	703	611	505	580	686
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	194	189	195	186	174	174	176	165	183	206
Male establishments	190	186	194	186	175	174	177	167	185	207
Female establishments	262	246	219	186	154	168	146	126	149	177
Serious assaults	1,375	1,470	1,523	1,353	1,414	1,341	1,338	1,377	1,854	2,480
Male establishments	1,311	1,408	1,487	1,311	1,372	1,290	1,304	1,349	1,813	2,435
Female establishments	64	62	36	42	42	51	34	28	41	45
Prisoner on prisoner assaults	11,320	11,723	12,693	12,376	11,672	11,601	12,316	11,036	12,039	13,373
Male establishments	10,648	11,104	12,130	11,879	11,243	11,168	11,896	10,716	11,634	12,922
Female establishments	672	619	563	497	429	433	420	320	405	451
Prisoner on prisoner assaults per 1,000 prisoners	147	147	156	149	138	137	141	130	142	156
Male establishments	147	148	158	151	140	138	144	132	144	158
Female establishments	150	140	127	115	101	103	100	80	104	116
Serious prisoner on prisoner assaults	1,084	1,189	1,254	1,091	1,134	1,049	1,098	1,096	1,463	1,914
Male establishments	1,050	1,149	1,235	1,067	1,109	1,019	1,075	1,079	1,435	1,887
Female establishments	34	40	19	24	25	30	23	17	28	27
Assaults on Staff	3,551	3,386	3,269	3,121	2,977	2,933	3,087	3,065	3,458	4,156
Male establishments	3,064	2,924	2,860	2,821	2,763	2,686	2,902	2,885	3,286	3,930
Female establishments	487	462	409	300	214	247	185	180	172	226
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	46	43	40	38	35	35	35	36	41	49
Male establishments	42	39	37	36	34	33	35	36	41	48
Female establishments	109	105	92	69	50	59	44	45	44	58
Serious assaults on staff	277	283	295	273	290	296	257	300	408	578
Male establishments	251	262	279	257	272	276	246	289	396	562
Female establishments	26	21	16	16	18	20	11	11	12	16

1. Figures include incidents at NOMS operated Immigration Removal Centres.

2. Gender refers to the type of establishment. In general the gender of the people involved in the assault will be the same as the type of establishment, in a minority 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%¹¹ of the prison population.

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

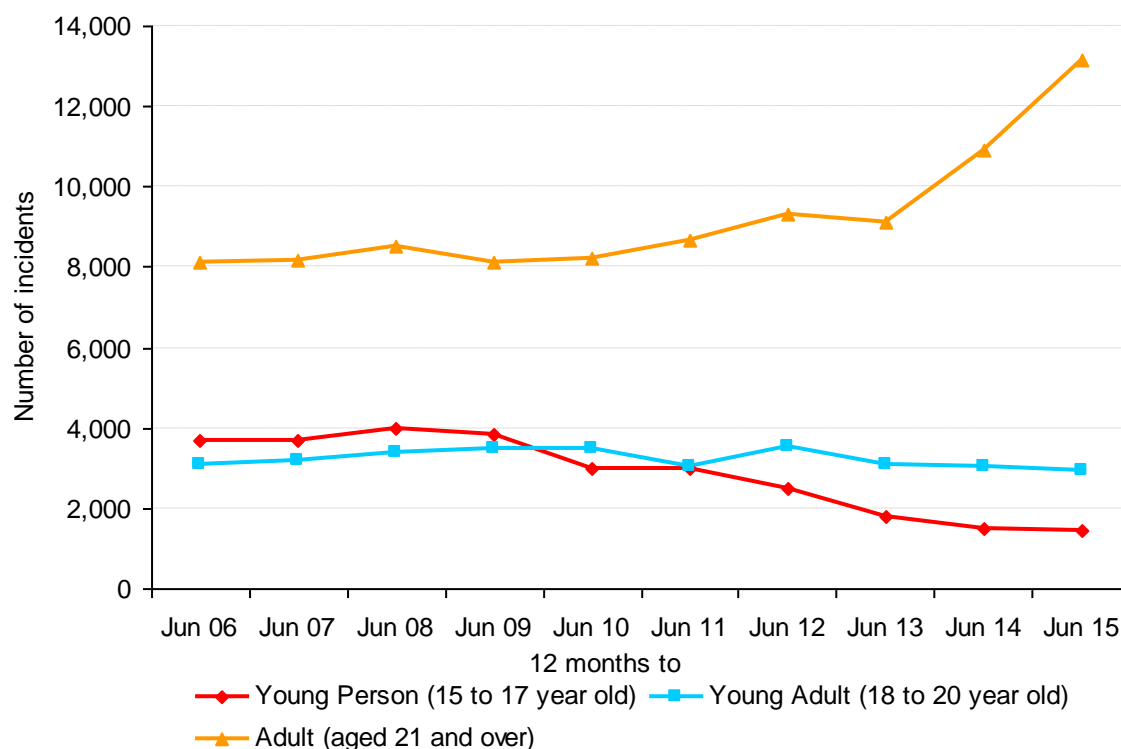
- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to assault and be victims than older prisoners;¹²
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.¹³

3.1 All Assaults

There were 17,581 recorded assault incidents in the 12 months to the end of June 2015 at a rate of 206 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This was an increase of 2,033 incidents (13%), or 23 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (13%), 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 60% since June 2010. In the 12 months to June 2015 there were 13,132 assaults involving only adults, an increase of 4,917 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.

Figure 8: Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner involved in incident, 12 months ending June 2006 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



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

¹¹ Offender Management Statistics www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

¹² Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

¹³ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

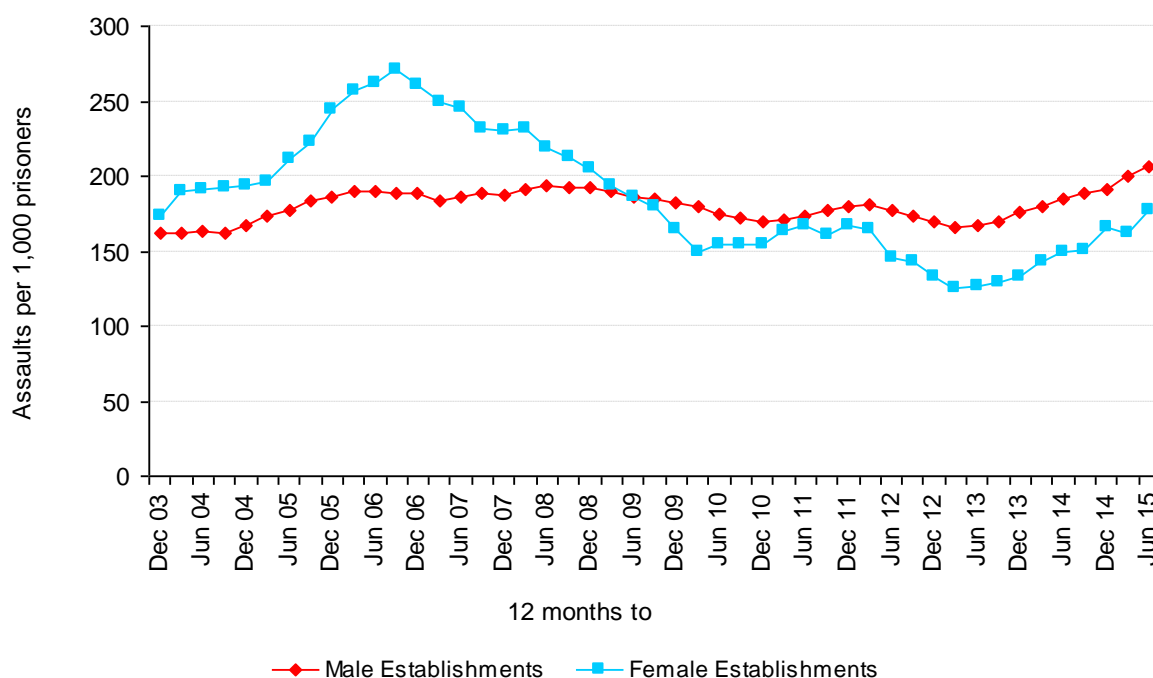
years. The number of assaults involving 15 to 17 year olds has fallen by over 60% from its peak in the 12 months to June 2008 to 1,434 assault incidents in 2015. This fall in the 15 to 17 year old age group has been driven by the fall in the number of 15 to 17 year olds held in prison custody, and does not present any evidence in itself of this age group becoming less violent.

Comparisons between the male and female estate

The rate of assaults for male prisoners increased to 207 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to June 2015, compared with 185 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 194 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in June 2008 (the previous peak in the time series) to 167 assaults per 1,000 male prisoners in June 2013.

In the female estate, there were 177 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to June 2015, up from 149 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 262 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in the 12 months to June 2006 to 126 assaults per 1,000 female prisoners in June 2013.

Figure 9: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



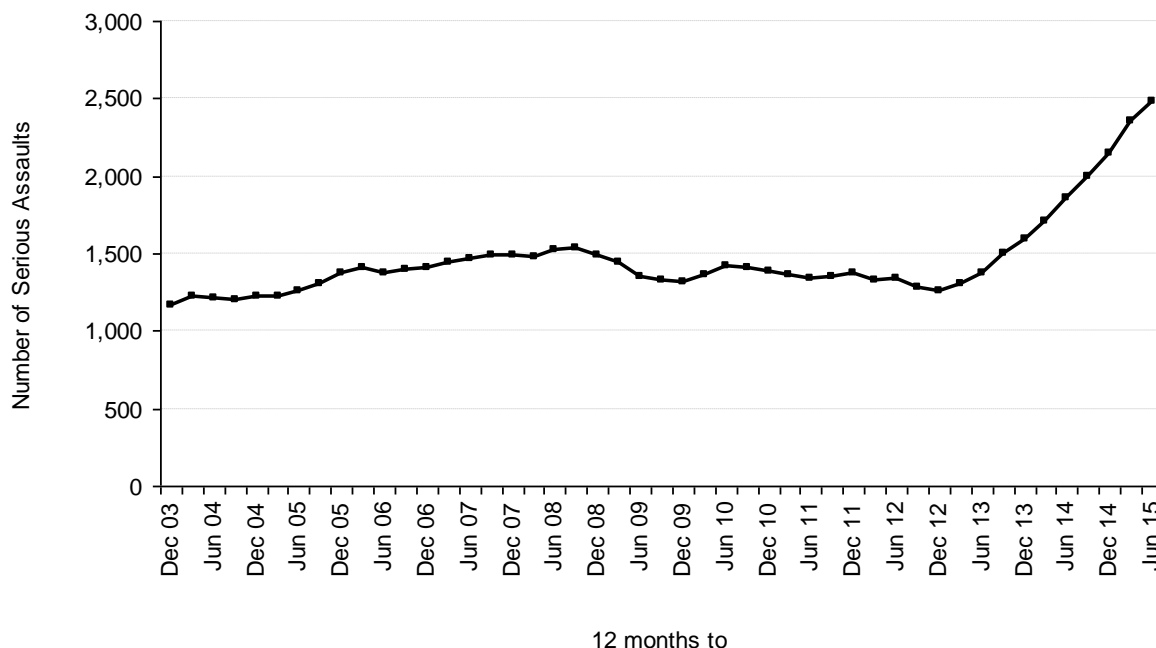
Serious assaults¹⁴

After a period of falling numbers of serious assaults between June 2008 and June 2012, serious assaults then rose from 1,338 incidents in the 12 months to June 2012 to 2,480 incidents in the 12 months to June 2015, a rise of 85%.

¹⁴ For the definition of serious assaults see the Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics. www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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).

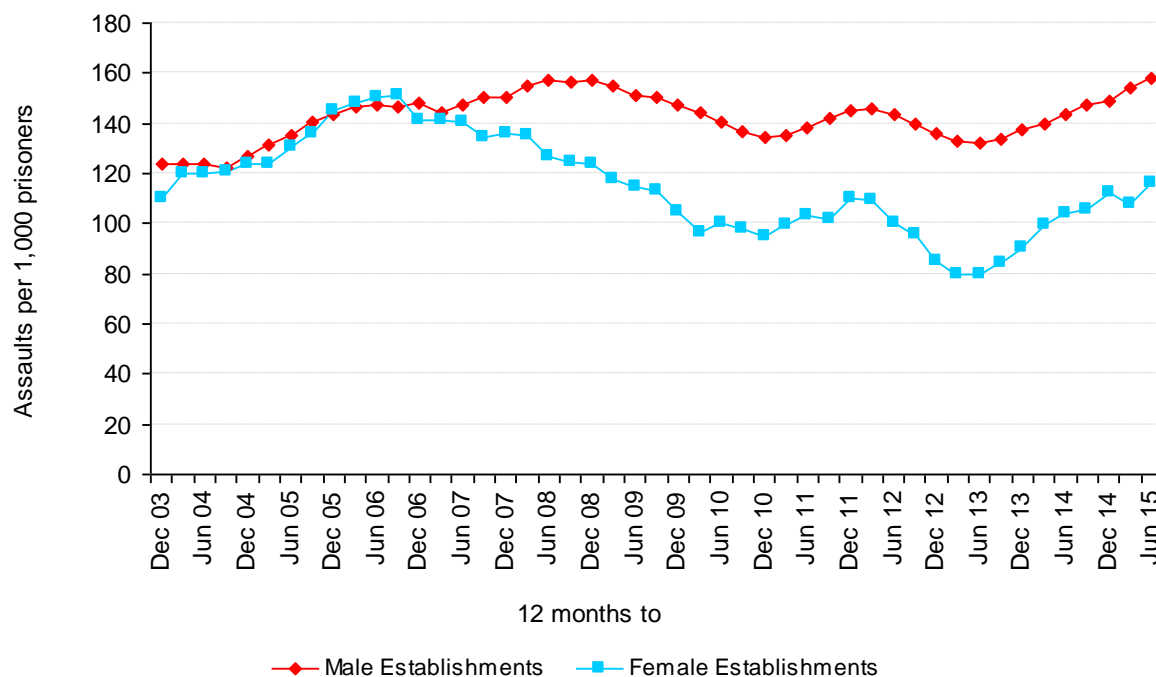
Figure 10: Serious assaults by quarter, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



3.2 Prisoner on prisoner assaults

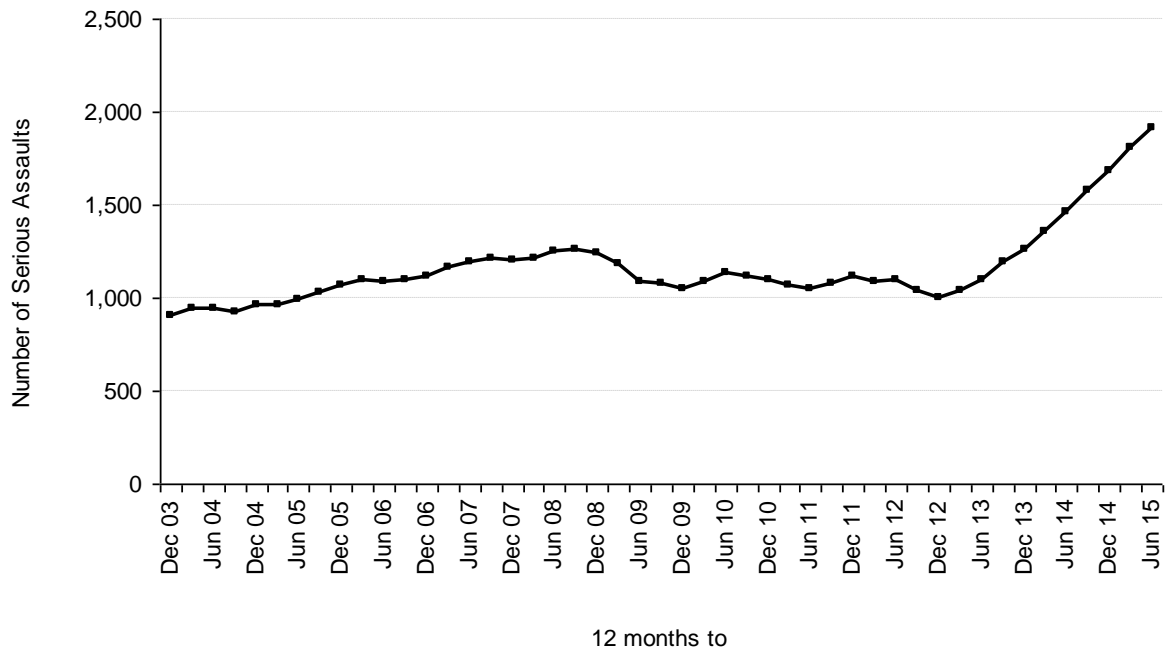
There were 13,373 prisoner on prisoner assaults in the 12 months to June 2015 at a rate of 156 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This is an increase of 1,334 (11%) assaults, or 14 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (10%) on the 12 months to June 2014.

Figure 11: Total prisoner on prisoner assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



There were 1,914 serious prisoner on prisoner assaults on in the 12 months to the end of June 2015 – an increase of 451 incidents (31%) on the previous year.

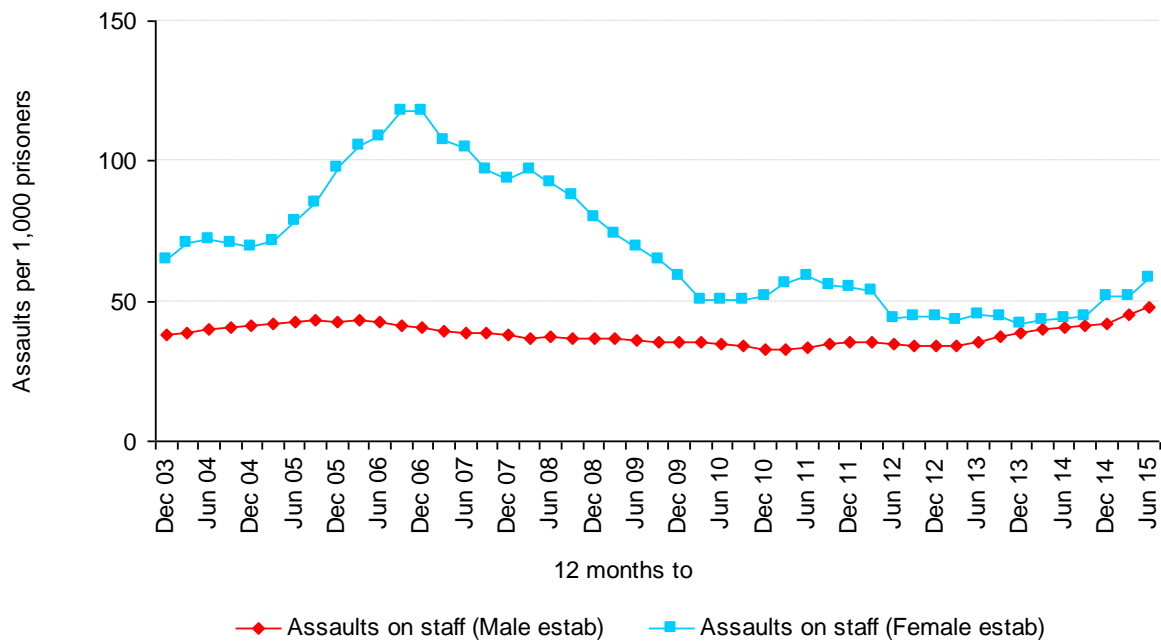
Figure 12: Number of serious prisoner on prisoner assaults, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



3.3 Assaults on staff

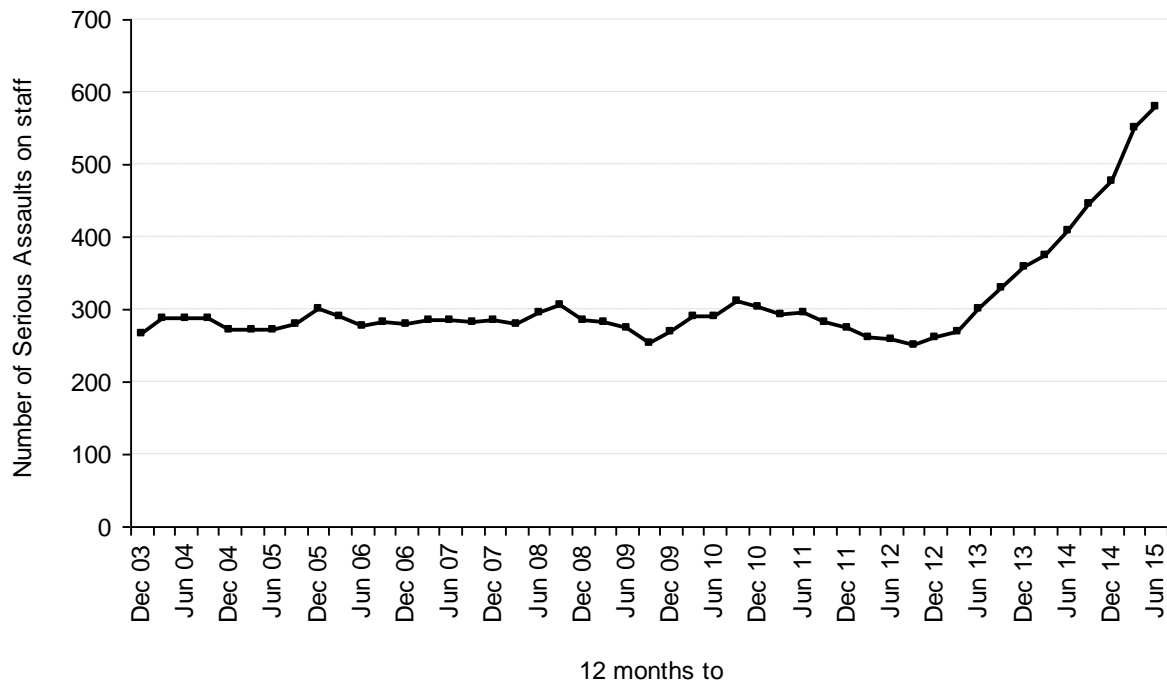
There were 4,156 assaults on staff in the 12 months to June 2015 at a rate of 49 assaults per 1,000 prisoners. This is an increase of 698 (20%) assaults, or 8 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (20%) on the 12 months to June 2014.

Figure 13: Total assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending June 2015, England and Wales (rolling 12 months by quarter)



There were 578 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to the end of June 2015 – an increase of 170 incidents (42%) on the previous year.

Figure 14: Number of serious assaults on staff, 12 months ending December 2003 to 12 months ending June 2015, 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 (www.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 (www.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 Safety in Custody Statistics tables and figures. Tables 1 to 4 and figures 1 to 4 are included in this publication. The remaining tables, and previously published annual tables, are available from the website¹⁵. 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	Jul 05 – Sep 15
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Oct 05 – Sep 15
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Jul 05 – Jun 15
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Jul 05 – Jun 15
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 – Sep 15
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Jan 04 – Jun 15
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Jan 03 – Jun 15
	Safety in Custody – Figures	
Figure 1	Number of deaths in prison custody	Jan 00 – Sep 15
Figure 2	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Jan 00 – Sep 15
Figure 3	Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody	Jan 00 – Sep 15
Figure 4	Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody	Jan 00 – Sep 15
Figure 5	Standardised Mortality Ratio	Jan 04 – Dec 14
Figure 6	Number of self-harm incidents by gender	Apr 03 – Jun 15
Figure 7	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Apr 03 – Jun 15
Figure 8	Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner	Jul 05 – Jun 15
Figure 9	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total	Jan 03 – Jun 15
Figure 10	Number of serious assaults	Jan 03 – Jun 15
Figure 11	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – prisoner on prisoner	Jan 03 – Jun 15
Figure 12	Number of serious prisoner on prisoner assaults	Jan 03 – Jun 15
Figure 13	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – on staff	Jan 03 – Jun 15
Figure 14	Number of serious assaults on staff	Jan 03 – Jun 15

¹⁵ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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'¹⁶

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

¹⁶ 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 enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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