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Analytical Services Group

The Northern Ireland Prison Population 2019/20

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Key Findings

Average Daily Prison Population

- ◆ The overall average daily prison population increased by 4.7% during 2019/20 to 1,516. Males rose from 1,384 to 1,442 while the female population increased from 65 to 74 (Table 1).
- ◆ The remand population increased by 12.9% from 436 in 2018/19 to 492 this year and is at its highest level since reporting by financial year began in 2014/15 (Figure 2 and Table 1).
- ◆ During 2019/20, the average daily immediate custody prison population increased by 1.2% to 1,018 (Figure 2 and Table 1).
- ◆ Prisoners aged between 30 to 39 years of age made up the largest proportion (34.4%) of the average daily immediate custody prison population (Table 2).
- ◆ The proportion of those aged between 18 and 20 years of age has increased for the first time since 2014/15, accounting for 3.1% of the total population during 2019/20 (Table 2).
- ◆ In terms of custodial sentence length, the average daily population decreased in the sentence categories, greater than five years but less than life, greater than three months but less than six months and less than or equal to three months. Increases were found in the remaining categories; life, greater than one year but less than five years and greater than six months but twelve months or less (Table 4).
- ◆ Violence Against the Person offences continued to account for the largest proportion of all principal offence categories (34.2%; Figure 6 and Table 6).

Receptions

- ◆ The number of receptions during 2019/20 was higher than the previous year, 5,322 compared to 5,252 during 2018/19, an increase of 1.3% (Figure 7 and Table 7).
- ◆ Remand receptions increased by 3.2% over the last year, up from 3,206 during 2018/19 to 3,310 during 2019/20 (Figure 8 and Table 7).
- ◆ The number of receptions for fine default (where the individual was received into custody solely for fine default offences) decreased by 40.2% from 371 in 2018/19 to 222 in 2019/20. This follows on from a decrease of 39.3% between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Figure 8 and Table 7).
- ◆ The largest number of immediate custody receptions were recorded within the 21 to 29 years age group, accounting for 689 (39.7%) of receptions (Table 8).
- ◆ A larger proportion of female receptions were sentenced to a custody sentence length of one year or less (85.6%) compared to males (76.8%; Table 10).
- ◆ Both Violence Against the Person and Public Order offences accounted for the largest proportion of immediate custody receptions, at 18.1% (313) and 17.5% (304) respectively (Table 12).
- ◆ 27.9% (31) of female immediate custody receptions in 2019/20 were for Theft offences, compared to 11.2% (182) of male receptions. The largest proportion of male receptions into immediate custody were for Public Order offences (18.2%; 295). By comparison, female receptions for Public Order offences accounted for 8.1% (9) this year, a decrease from 25.2% (26) in 2018/19 (Table 12).

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Introduction

This bulletin reports on key statistics relating to the average daily prison population levels and receptions for Northern Ireland during the 2019/20 financial year. It includes information by establishment, custody type, gender, age and sentence length and principal offence categories. The report also includes some international data for comparison purposes, as well as analysing trend data for the key statistics.

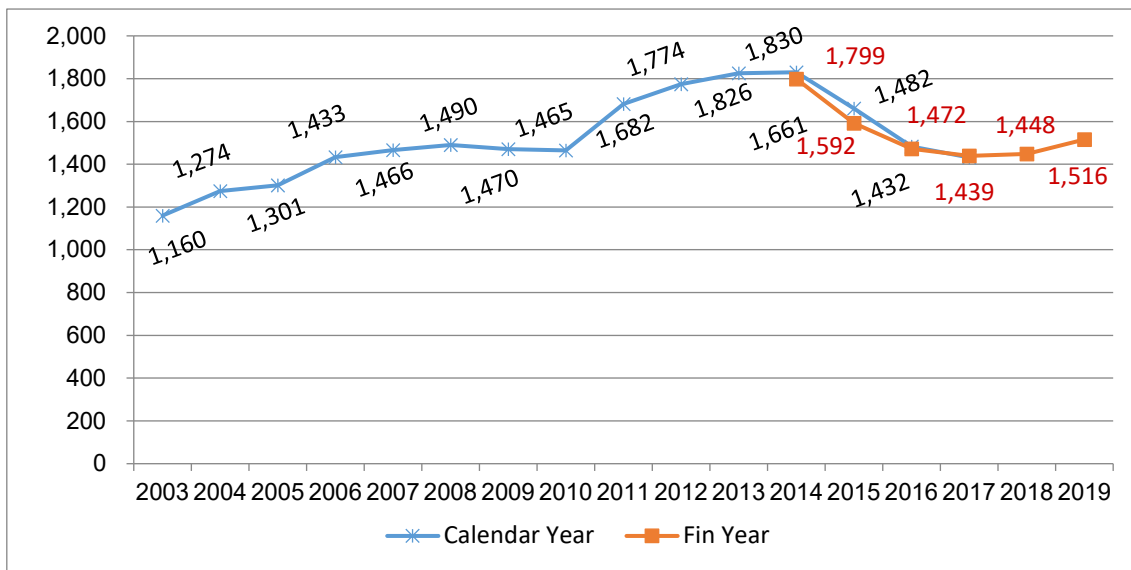
The data used in this bulletin are taken from the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Information System (PRISM). Details on the methodology used, data validation and definition of terms can be found in the Methodology and Counting Rules section at the back of this bulletin.

This is an annual National Statistics publication and the contents of this report will be of interest to the public, government policy makers, academics and others who want to understand more about the prison population in Northern Ireland. Further information on National Statistics and Users can be found at the back of this report.

1. Average Daily Prison Population

The average daily prison population for 2019/20 was 1,516, an increase of 4.7% compared to the 1,448 reported in 2018/19. This is the second year in a row in which the daily prison population has increased (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Average Daily Prison Population 2003-2019/20



The increase in the average daily prison population during 2019/20 was not consistent across all prison establishments, with the average daily population for Hydebank Wood Males decreasing from 98 during 2018/19 to 92 this year. Both Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood Females reported increases in their average daily population, with the daily average population of Maghaberry increasing from 839 in 2018/19 to 902 in 2019/20 and Hydebank Wood Females increasing from 65 to 74. The average daily population of Magilligan remained unchanged between 2018/19 and 2019/20 at 447 (Table 1).

The following sections look at average daily prison population by custody type and gender, as well as some of the characteristics of sentenced prisoners, namely age, sentence length and principal offence.

Average Daily Prison Population by Prisoner Type

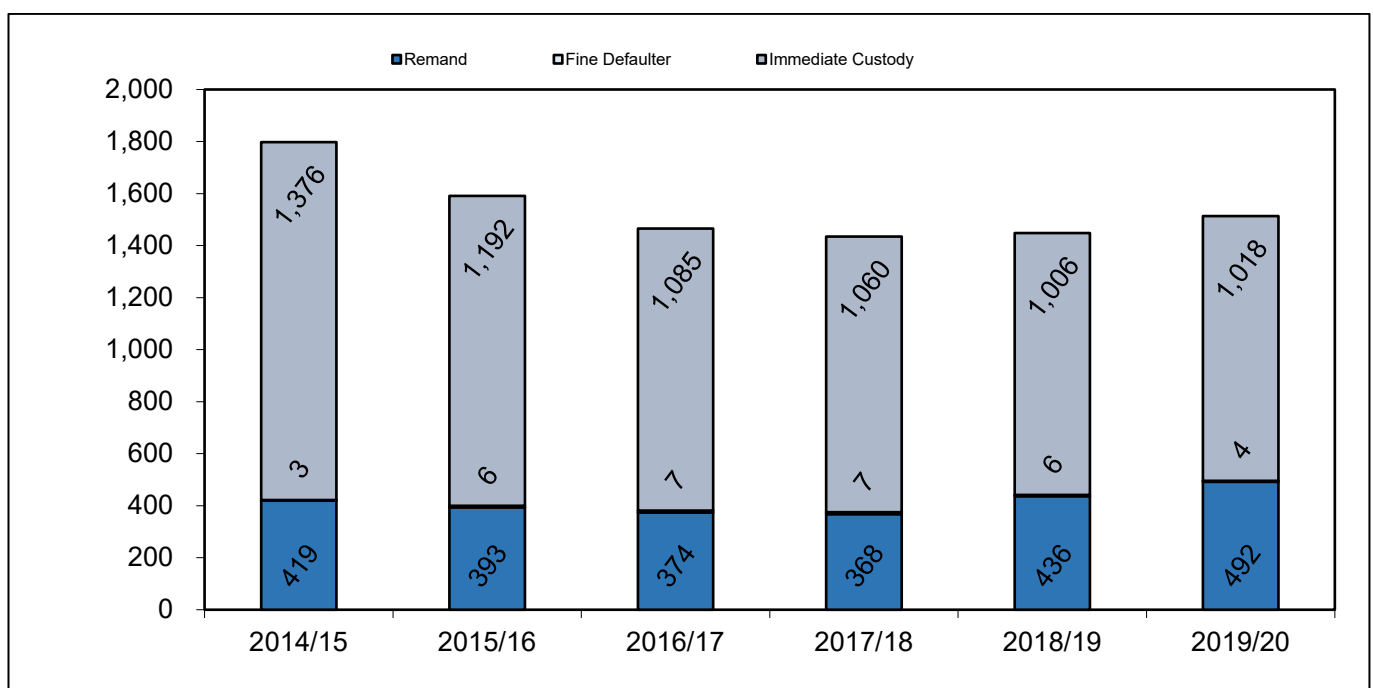
Remand Prisoners

The average daily remand prison population increased by 12.9% compared to the previous year, from 436 to 492. This is the highest average daily remand prison population since reporting by financial year started in 2014/15.

The proportion of prisoners on remand has increased each year, rising from 23.3% during 2014/15 to 24.7% during 2015/16, 25.4% during 2016/17, 25.6% during 2017/18, 30.1% during 2018/19, and 32.4% during 2019/20 (Figure 2 and Table 1).

In certain circumstances remands can be held in Magilligan. During 2019/20 there was an average remand population of 7 at Magilligan.

Figure 2: Average Daily Prison Population by Prisoner Type, 2014/15-2019/20



Immediate Custody Prisoners

During 2019/20 the average daily immediate custody prisoner population was 1,018, an increase of 1.2% from the previous year's level of 1,006. This the first time the immediate custody prisoner population has risen year on year since 2014/15. However, even with this increase, the average daily immediate custody prisoner population in 2019/20 is still below the averages between 2014/15 and 2017/18 which ranged between 1,060 and 1,376, compared to 1,018 this year (Figure 2).

The Department of Justice recently published statistics on prosecutions and convictions for 2019. This showed that overall custodial convictions during the 2019 calendar year increased, from 3,001 during 2018 to 3,218 during 2019 (+7.2%). This information is published [here](#)¹.

The overall increase in custodial convictions was driven by both an increase in custodial convictions in the Magistrates' Court which was up from 2,423 during 2018 to 2,614 during 2019 (+7.9%) and custodial convictions in the Crown Court which also increased from 578 during 2018 to 604 during 2019 (+4.5%).

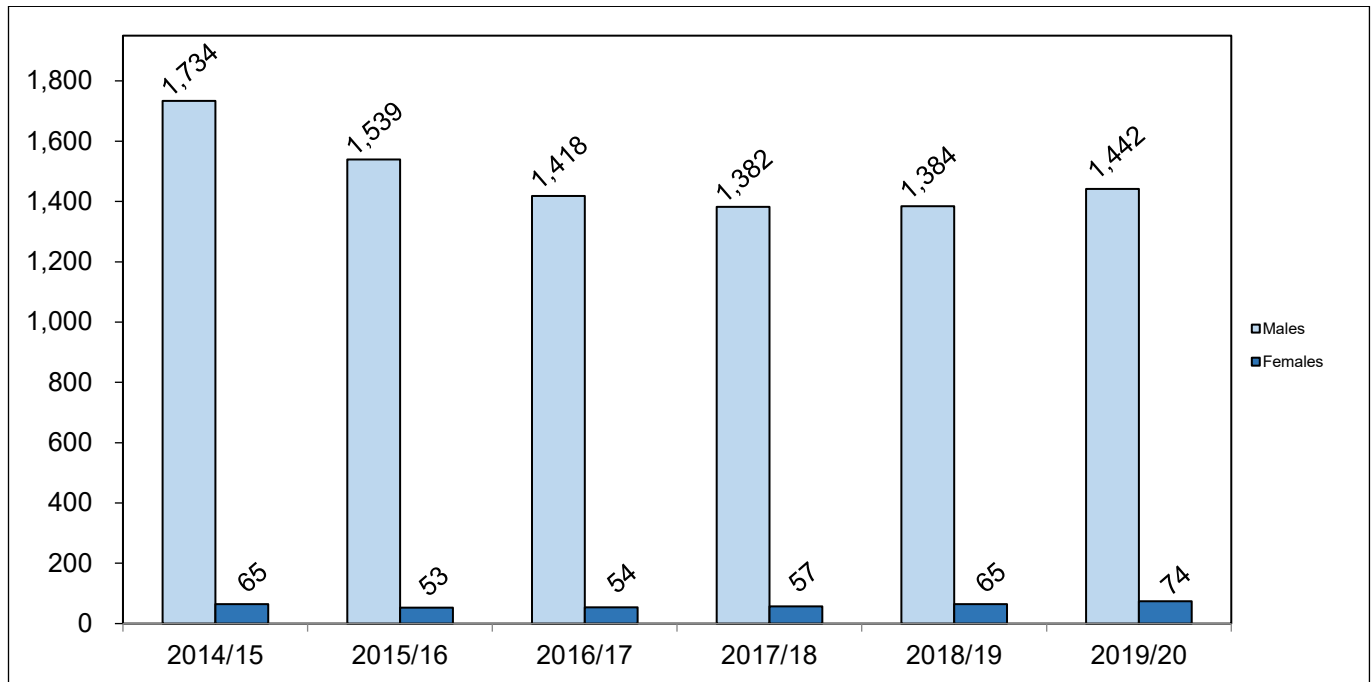
¹Source: (<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/court-prosecutions-convictions-and-out-court-disposals-ni-2019>)

Fine Default and Non-Criminal Prisoners

The average daily fine default and non-criminal prisoner (immigrant detainee) population account for a small proportion of the overall average daily prison population (0.3% for fine default and 0.1% for non-criminal). Figures for both have remained fairly similar over each of the last five financial years with fine defaults never exceeding a daily average of seven and non-criminal never accounting for more than a daily average of five since 2014/15 (Table 1).

Average Daily Prison Population by Gender

Figure 3: Average Daily Prison Population by Gender, 2014/15-2019/20

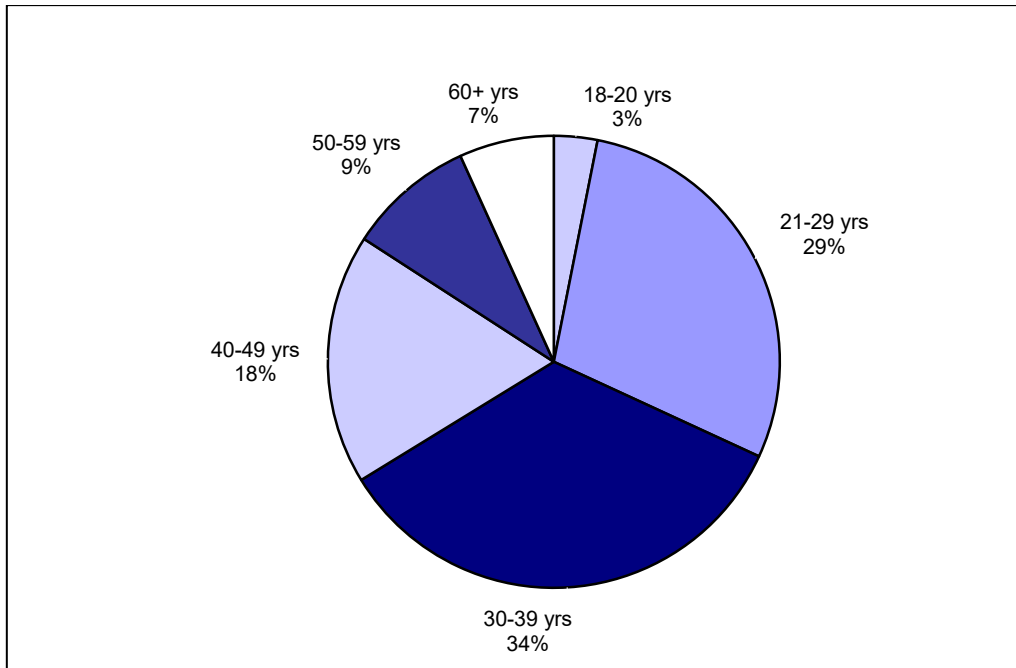


While males account for the vast majority of the average daily prison population (95.1%), and the average daily male prison population rose very slightly, up 4.2% from 1,384 during 2018/19 to 1,442 this year, the average daily female prison population rose by a greater rate from 65 during 2018/19 to 74 during 2019/20, an increase of 13.8% (Table 1).

Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Current Age

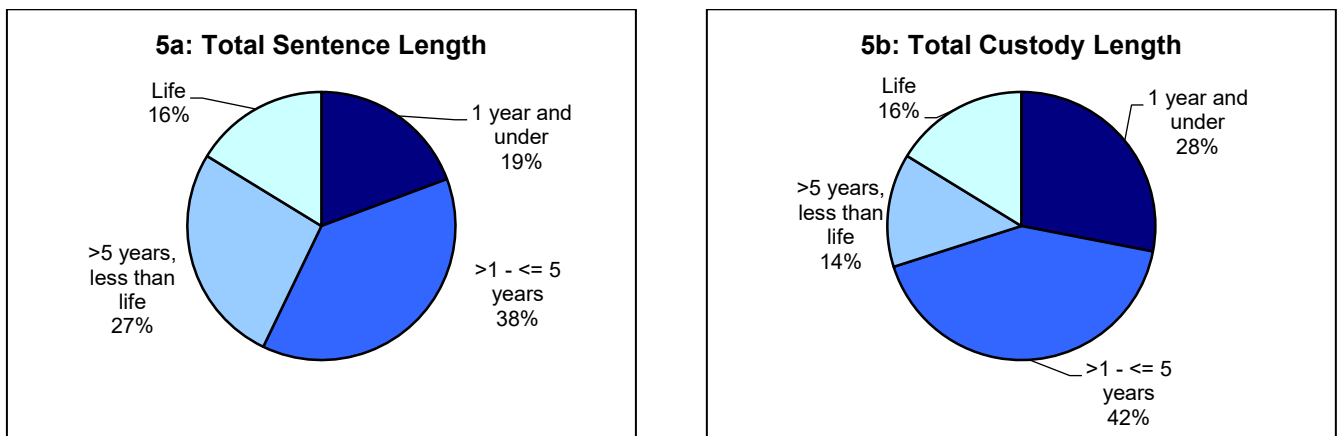
Prisoners aged between 30 and 39 years of age were the largest age group of the immediate custody prisoner population during 2019/20 (34.4%), the second year in succession this has been the case. In the four years prior to 2018/19, prisoners aged 21 to 29 years had accounted for the largest proportion of the immediate custody prison population. During 2019/20, the 30 to 39 years age group was followed by those aged 21 to 29 years (28.8%), 40 to 49 years (17.9%), 50 to 59 years (9.0%), 60+ years (6.8%) and 18 to 20 years (3.1%). The number and proportion of the average daily immediate custody prison population aged 18 to 20 years has increased for the first time since 2014/15 when it accounted for 4.9% (68), from 2.9% (29) in 2018/19 to 3.1% (32) of the overall total reported this year, though the proportion of the average daily immediate custody prison population aged 18 to 20 years in 2019/20 is still lower than the proportion in 2017/18 of 3.4% (36) (Figure 4 and Table 2).

Figure 4: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, 2019/20



Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Sentence Length

Figure 5: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Sentence Length, 2019/20



Figures 5a and 5b show the breakdown of total sentence length and total custody length for prisoners under sentence of immediate custody during 2019/20. In terms of custodial sentence length, compared to 2018/19, the average daily population decreased in the sentence categories, greater than five years but less than life, greater than three months but less than six months and less than or equal to three months. Increases were found in the remaining categories; life, greater than one year but less than five years and greater than six months but twelve months or less (Table 4).

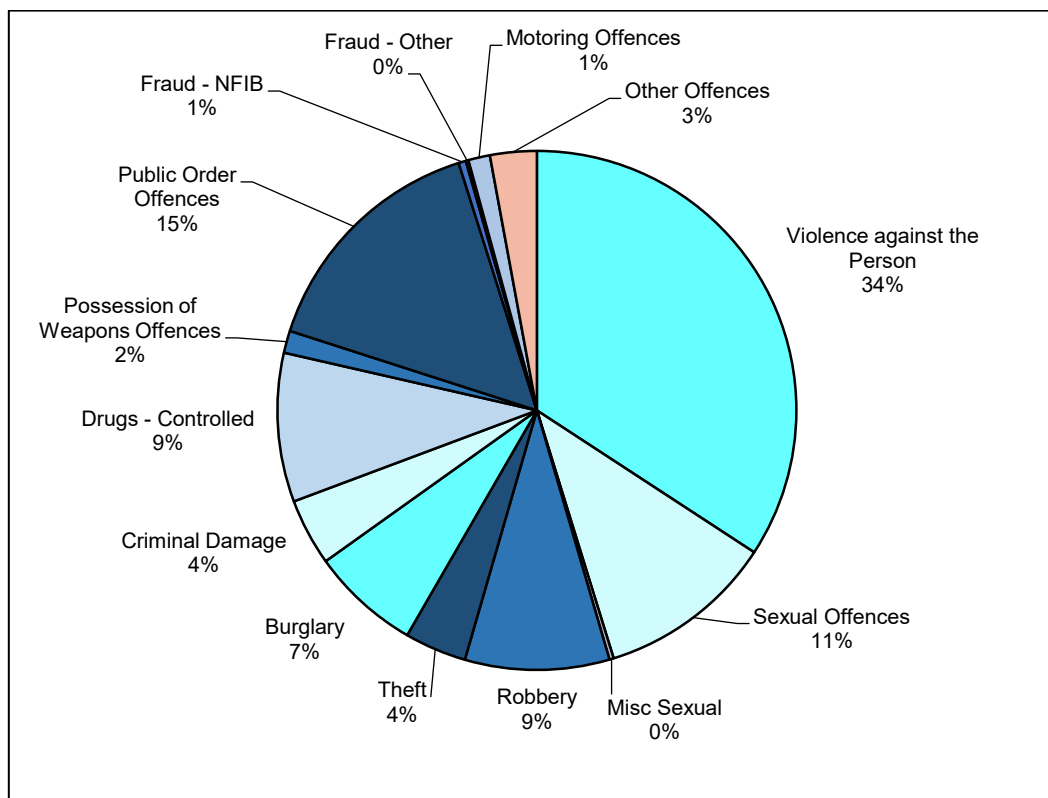
More detailed sentence length information can be found in Table 3 and Table 4 in the tabular appendix at the back of this report.

Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Principal Offence

Some 34.2% (348) of principal offences during 2019/20 were categorised as Violence against the Person, with 15.2% (154) categorised as Public Order Offences and 11.0% (112) categorised as Sexual Offences (Figure 6). These categories have consistently represented the three largest proportion of principal offences since offence classification was revised in 2015/16, with the overall breakdown remaining similar each year (Table 6).

Overall, the breakdown of offences by principal offence categories has remained largely the same over the last three years (Table 6).

Figure 6: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Principal Offence, 2019/20



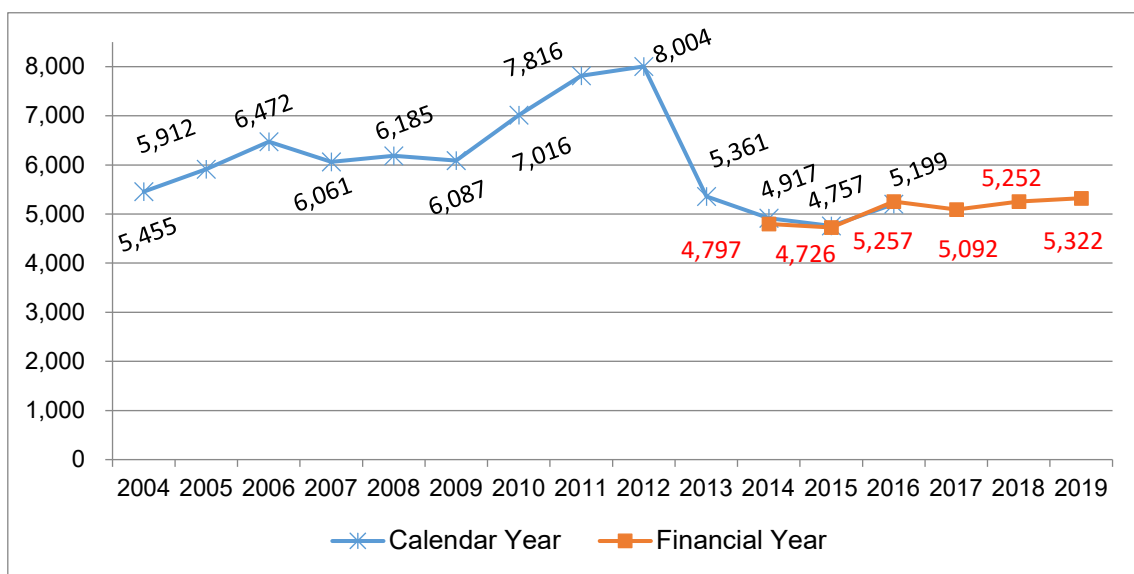
2. Receptions into Prison

The number of receptions into prison increased by 1.3%, from 5,252 in 2018/19 to 5,322 in 2019/20 (Figure 7). The 5,322 receptions were made by 2,961 prisoners, giving a reception rate of 1.8, similar to a reception rate of 1.8 during 2018/19 (5,252 receptions for 2,977 prisoners).

Female receptions into Hydebank Wood College decreased slightly from 411 in 2018/19 to 409 in 2019/20. This was largely a consequence of a decrease in receptions for fine default, down from 37 during 2018/19 to 21 during 2019/20, as female remand receptions increased from 269 in 2018/19 to 276 in 2019/20 and female receptions into immediate custody also increased, from 103 last year to 111 this year (Table 7).

Male receptions into Maghaberry and Magilligan increased by 3.0% from 4,331 during 2018/19 to 4,462 this year (Table 7).

Figure 7: Prison Receptions, 2004-2019/20



Young male receptions into Hydebank Wood College decreased by 11.6% over the last year (from 510 to 451). This was largely a consequence of the 13.4% decrease in remand receptions for this group (down from 351 in 2018/19 to 304 in 2019/20), with a smaller decrease in receptions into immediate custody, which fell from 129 last year to 126 this year (Table 7).

In certain circumstances, Magilligan can house remand prisoners, resulting in 26 remand receptions, the same as the previous year.

Across all establishments, with the exception of Magilligan, the number of receptions for fine default fell dramatically, with an overall decrease of 40.2%, from 371 in 2018/19 to 222 this year.

The subsequent sections of this report examine receptions by custody type and gender, as well as some of the characteristics of immediate custody prisoner receptions, namely age, sentence length and principal offence.

Please note, the methodology used to calculate receptions was refined in 2019/20 to improve the accuracy of these data. As a result, the findings of the 2019/20 year may not be directly comparable to previous years of the report.

Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type

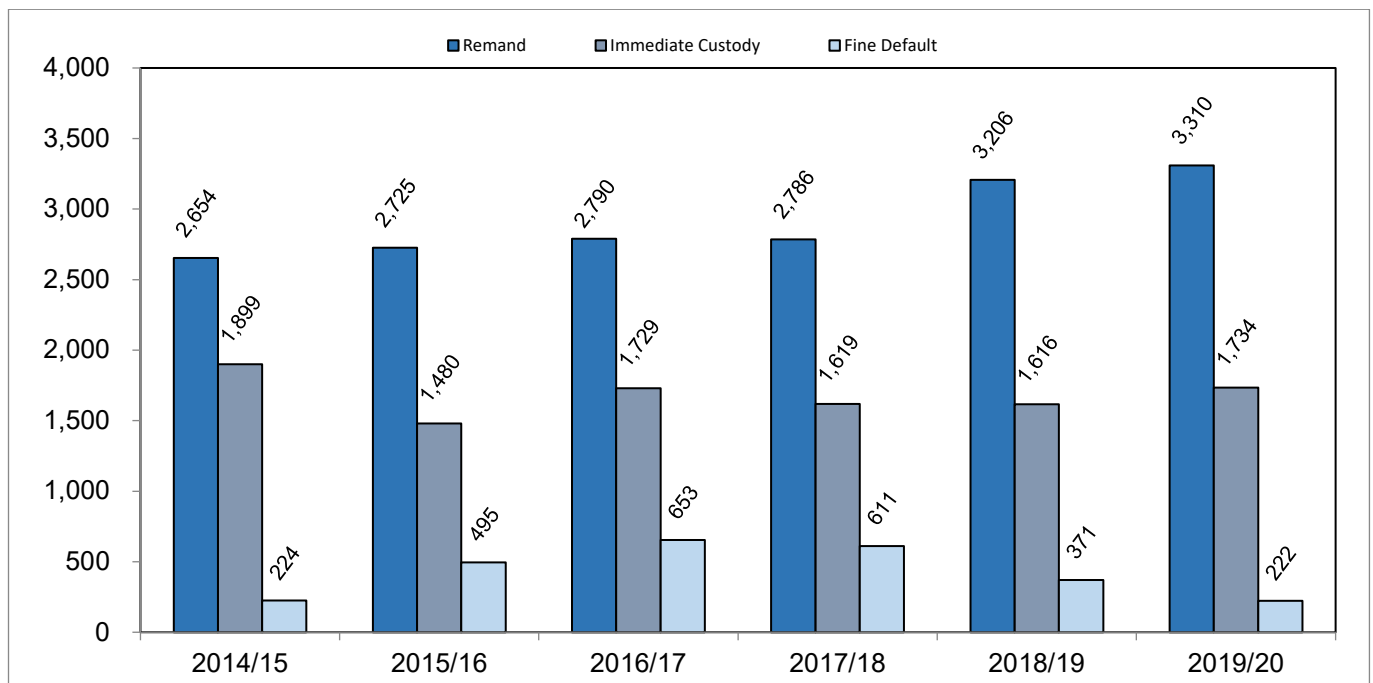
Remand Prisoners

Remand receptions increased by 3.2% over the last year, up from 3,206 in 2018/19 to 3,310 in 2019/20. This resulted in remand receptions accounting for 62.2% of total receptions in 2019/20, similar to 61.0% in 2018/19. The 62.2% reported this year is the highest proportion of remand reception recorded since the current time series moved to a financial year basis in 2014/15 (Figure 8 and Table 7).

Immediate Custody Prisoners

Receptions into immediate custody increased during 2019/20, to 1,734 compared to 1,616 the previous year. Male receptions into immediate custody in Maghaberry increased by 8.4% over the last year (from 1,373 to 1,489) with receptions into immediate custody at Magilligan and Hydebank Wood College young males falling slightly. Receptions into immediate custody in Hydebank Wood females increased from 103 in 2018/19 to 111 during 2019/20 (Table 7).

Figure 8: Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type, 2014/15-2019/20



Fine Default and Non-Criminal Prisoners

The number of receptions for fine default (where the individual was received into custody solely for fine default offences) decreased by 40.2%, from 371 in 2018/19 to 222 in 2019/20, continuing the substantial decrease reported between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Figure 8 and Table 7).

Due to the way in which the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) case management system (PRISM) inputs individual information, the methodology used in this report to compute receptions may under count the total number of fine default receptions, with further detail on this contained in the Definitions section of this report. Nevertheless, this methodology is consistent in its approach taken in previous years

The number of non-criminal (immigrant detainee) receptions decreased from 59 during 2018/19 to 56 during 2019/20, accounting for 1.1% of all receptions (Table 7).

Prison Receptions by Gender

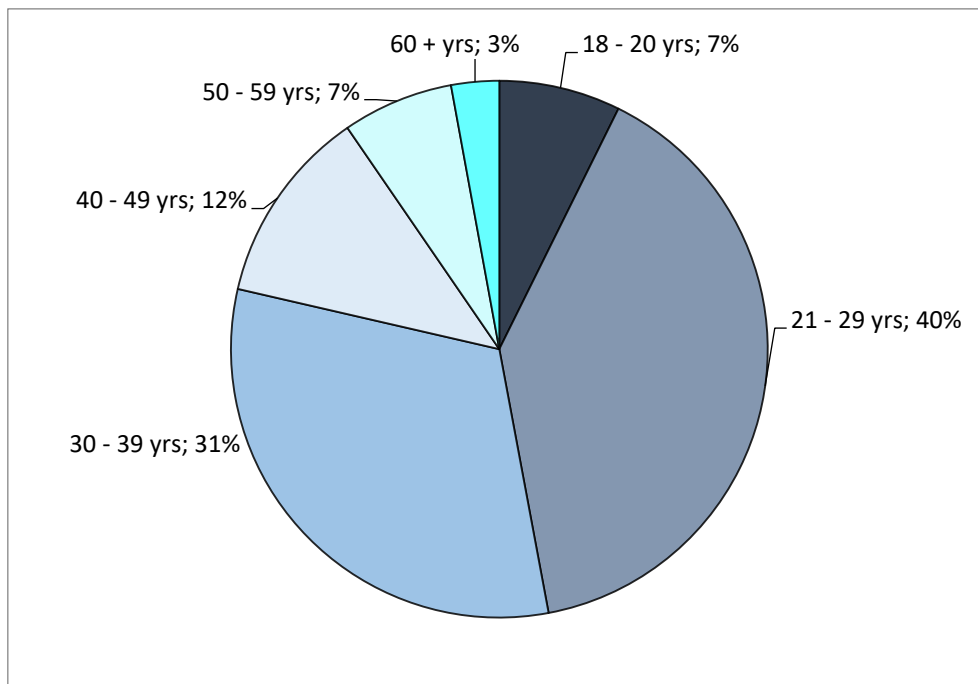
The total number of male receptions increased by 1.5%, from 4,841 during 2018/19 to 4,913 during 2019/20. This was largely a consequence of the increase in both remand and immediate custody receptions into Maghaberry (from 2,560 to 2,704 and 1,373 to 1,489 respectively). The number of female receptions decreased slightly from 411 during 2018/19 to 409 during 2019/20. As previously explained, this was largely due the decrease in female fine defaults which were down 43.2% from 37 during 2018/19 to 21 in 2019/20, as female receptions into immediate custody rose by 7.8% from 103 in 2018/19 to 111 in 2019/20, with a small increase in female remand receptions, up 2.6% from 269 in 2018/19 to 276 this year.

Receptions for fine default decreased for both males (-39.8%; 334 to 201) and females (43.2%; 37 to 21)

Immediate Custody Receptions by Age at Reception

The largest number of immediate custody receptions were recorded within the 21 to 29 years age group, accounting for 689 (39.7%) of receptions, followed by the 30 to 39 years age group with 547 (31.5%) (Figure 9 and Table 8).

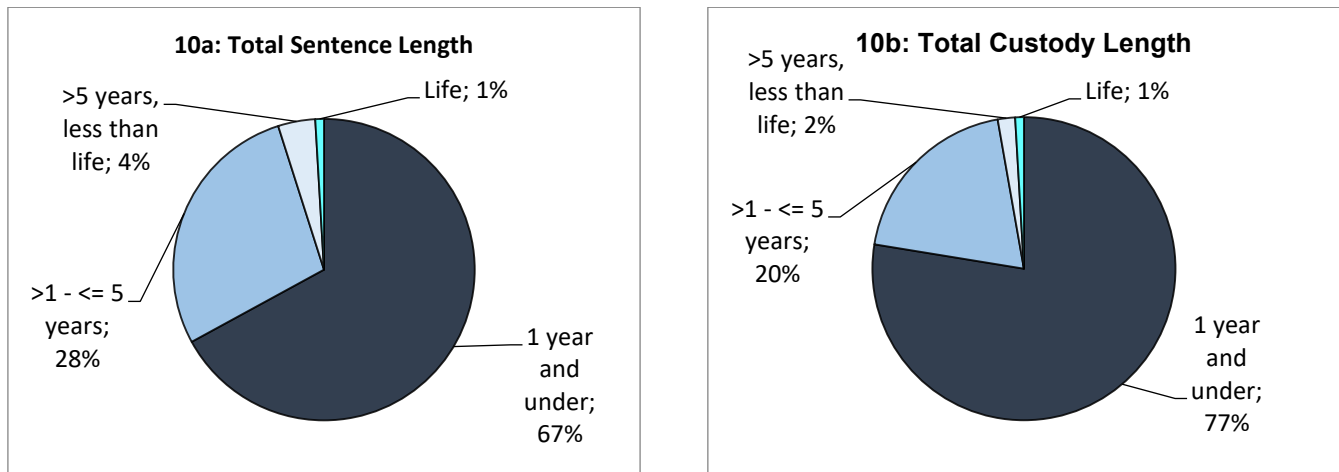
Figure 9: Immediate Custody Receptions by Age at Reception, 2019/20



Immediate Custody Receptions by Sentence Length

Figure 10a and Figure 10b show the breakdown of sentences for immediate custody receptions for both the total sentence length and the custody sentence length.

Figure 10: Immediate Custody Receptions by Sentence Length, 2019/20



Primarily, in terms of the prison population, the custody length imposed is of greater significance than the total sentence length (which includes the licence element), as it is the custody length which determines how long a person must initially spend in custody. Figure 10b shows that custody sentences of one year and under accounted for the largest proportion of sentenced receptions (77.4%) which is similar to the 78.2% reported for this category last year.

The proportion of custody sentences greater than one year and less than or equal to five years was mostly unchanged at 19.6% (340 receptions) in 2019/20 compared to 19.4% (314 receptions) the previous year.

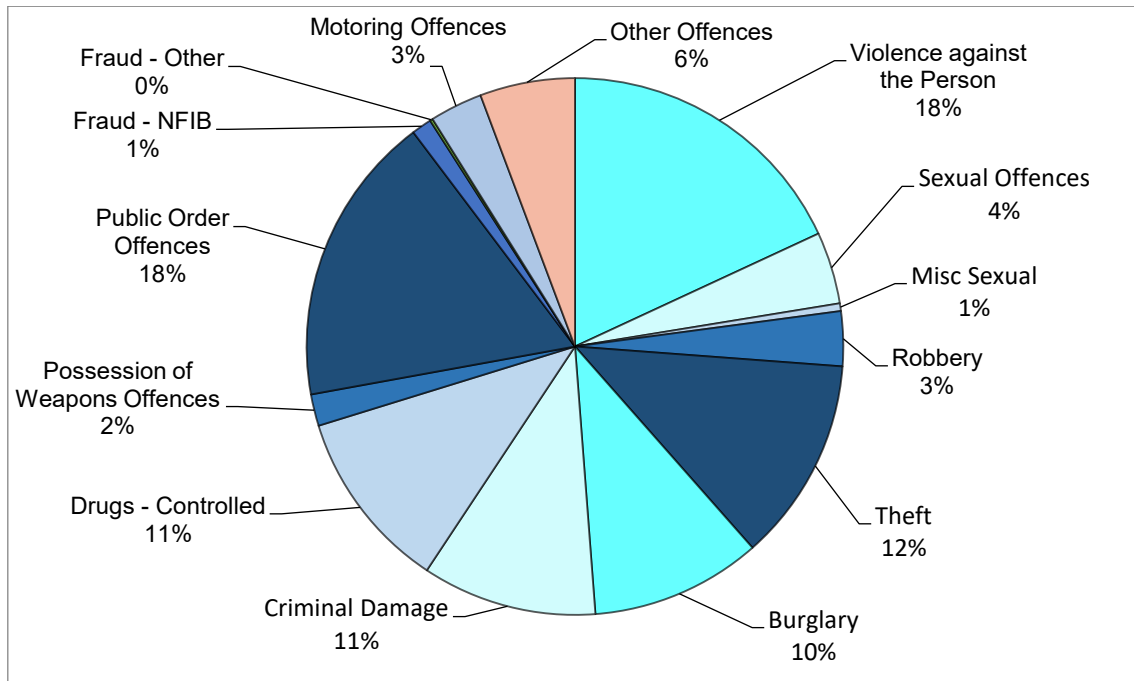
Looking at gender and sentence length, Table 10 shows that 85.6% (95) of females receptions were sentenced to one year or less in custody, compared to 76.8% (1,247) of males. Looking at sentences of six months or less, 56.8% (63) of female receptions received sentences of this length compared to 49.2% (799) of male receptions (Table 10).

Immediate Custody Receptions by Principal Offence

Violence against the Person and Public Order offences accounted for the largest proportion of immediate custody receptions by principal offence, at 18.1% (313) and 17.5% (304) respectively.

The proportionate breakdown of each offence category during 2019/20 remained broadly similar to those reported in the 2018/19 (Figure 11 and Table 12b).

Figure 11: Immediate Custody Receptions by Principal Offence, 2019/20

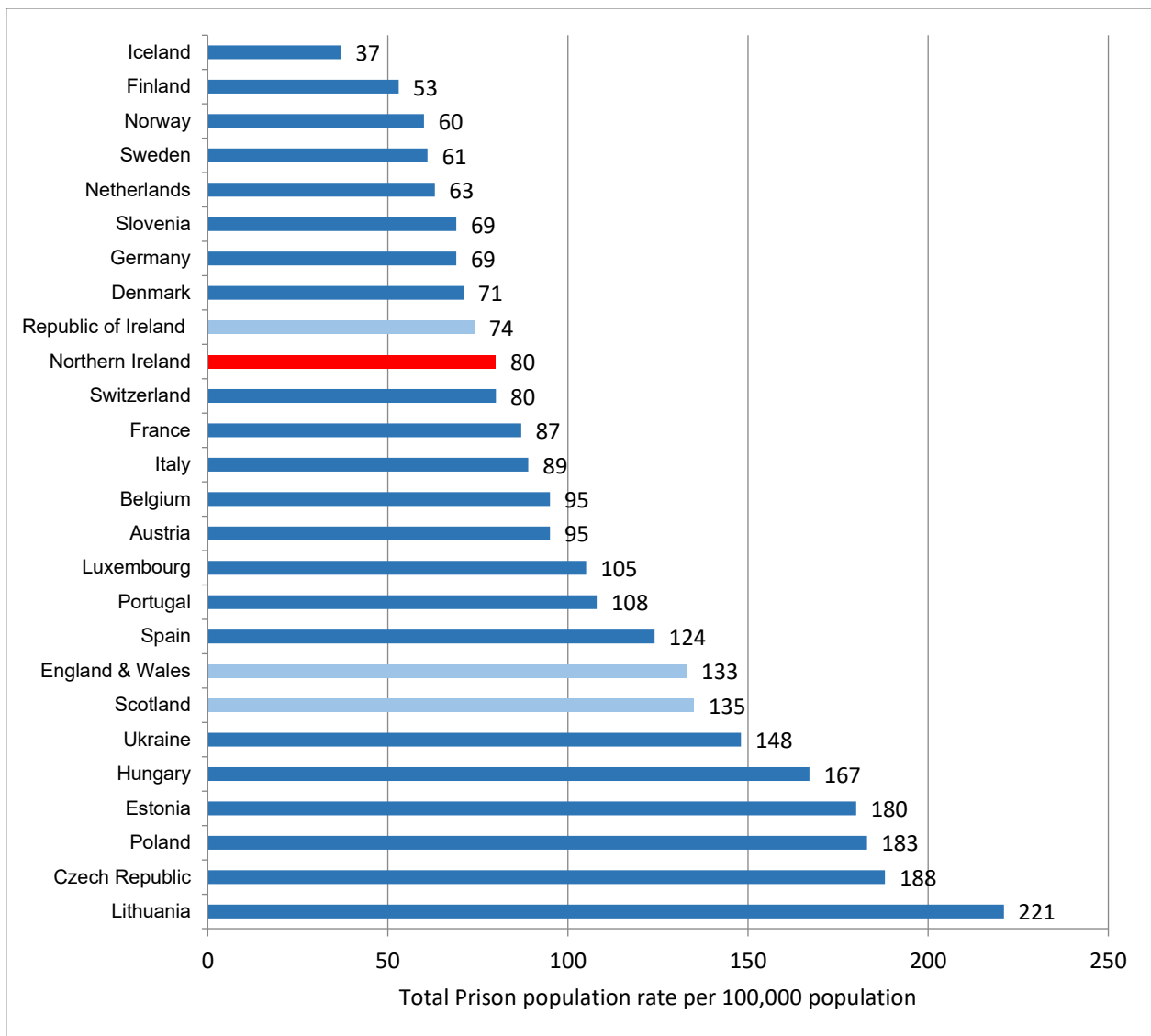


In terms of gender, the largest number of female receptions into immediate custody related to Theft (27.9%; 31), followed by Violence against the Person (18.9%: 21), with Public Order Offences falling sharply from 25.3% (26) during 2018/19 to 8.1% (9) in 2019/20. By comparison, in 2019/20, 18.2% (295) of male immediate custody receptions were for Public Order Offences, 18.0% were for Violence against the Person (292), and 11.2% (182) were for Theft. The proportion of male immediate custody receptions for these three categories remained similar to the previous year which were 17.4%, 17.2% and 13.0% respectively (Table 12a).

3. International Comparisons

A range of international prison comparisons are published in the World Prison Brief which can be found [here](#)². One such comparison relates to the prison population as a rate of every 100,000 of the overall population within each jurisdiction. Figure 12 shows the prison population per 100,000 people in the population for a selection of European countries, with the information based on the latest available at the end of August 2020. As illustrated in this figure, Northern Ireland has a rate of 80 prisoners for every 100,000 people in the population. The equivalent figure for Scotland was 135 and England and Wales was 133. With a rate of 74, the Republic of Ireland's rate was more in line with that of Northern Ireland.

Figure 12: Prison Population per 100,000 Population, Selected European Jurisdictions



²Source: World Prison Brief, accessed in September 2020
https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=14&=Apply

Tabular Annex³

Table 1: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population by Prisoner Type, Gender and Establishment

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Remand	Maghaberry	319	310	353	405
	Magilligan	0	2	5	7
	Hydebank Wood College Males	36	37	51	47
	Hydebank Wood College Females	18	19	26	33
	Total	374	368	436	492
Immediate Custody	Maghaberry	541	538	480	493
	Magilligan	452	427	442	440
	Hydebank Wood College Males	57	56	46	45
	Hydebank Wood College Females	35	38	38	41
	Total	1,085	1,060	1,006	1,018
Fine Default	Maghaberry	6	6	5	3
	Magilligan	0	0	0	1
	Hydebank Wood College Males	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood College Females	0	1	0	0
	Total	7	7	6	4
Non-Criminal	Maghaberry	2	2	1	1
	Magilligan	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood College Males	2	2	0	0
	Hydebank Wood College Females	0	0	0	0
	Total	5	4	1	1
Males		1,418	1,382	1,384	1,442
Females		54	57	65	74
Establishment	Maghaberry	869	857	839	902
	Magilligan	453	430	447	447
	Hydebank Wood College Males	96	95	98	92
	Hydebank Wood College Females	54	57	65	74
	Total	1,472	1,439	1,448	1,516

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
Females may include Transgender persons

³For presentational purposes, the tables in this report commence in 2016/17. Tables back to 2014/15 can be found in excel format [here](https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/prison-population) (<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/prison-population>).

Table 2: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Current Age

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Males	18 - 20 Years	37	34	27	30
	21 - 29 Years	360	340	304	285
	30 - 39 Years	299	326	320	335
	40 - 49 Years	184	158	163	174
	50 - 59 Years	110	98	90	87
	60 + Years	60	66	63	67
	Total	1,051	1,022	968	978
Females	18 - 20 Years	1	2	2	1
	21 - 29 Years	10	9	7	8
	30 - 39 Years	8	8	11	15
	40 - 49 Years	7	11	10	9
	50 - 59 Years	5	6	6	5
	60 + Years	2	1	2	2
	Total	35	38	38	41
All	18 - 20 Years	38	36	29	32
	21 - 29 Years	370	349	312	293
	30 - 39 Years	308	334	331	350
	40 - 49 Years	192	169	174	182
	50 - 59 Years	115	104	96	92
	60 + Years	63	67	65	69
	Total	1,085	1,060	1,006	1,018

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 3: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, Gender and Sentence Length

	2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Adult Males (Aged 21 and Over)												
Life	154	154	154	148	148	148	150	150	150	157	157	157
>10 Years, less than life	108	60	0	104	58	0	101	54	0	97	53	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	189	109	21	156	102	22	164	96	27	166	85	29
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	57	51	39	63	45	37	62	39	35	50	40	32
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	84	75	59	85	60	43	74	67	52	71	68	57
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	111	104	115	127	98	115	92	102	123	111	104	113
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	138	209	172	128	202	192	130	176	152	121	187	160
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	94	150	67	92	173	75	81	155	79	91	158	72
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	57	78	17	61	78	15	64	79	11	61	73	7
≤3 Months	22	23	0	22	22	0	23	24	0	19	19	0
No Licence	0	0	370	0	0	339	0	0	313	0	0	315
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	3
Total	1,014	1,014	1,014	988	988	988	941	941	941	947	947	947
Young Males (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
>10 Years, less than life	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	3	1	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	2	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	0
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	2
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	6	4	4	6	4	5	4	2	2	6	3	3
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	8	11	8	8	10	7	5	8	5	4	9	10
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	8	12	5	7	12	6	6	7	1	4	8	3
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	5	6	0	5	7	1	5	6	0	5	5	0
≤3 Months	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0
No Licence	0	0	20	0	0	15	0	0	17	0	0	11
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	37	37	37	34	34	34	27	27	27	30	30	30
All Males	1,051	1,051	1,051	1,022	1,022	1,022	968	968	968	978	978	978
Adult Females (Aged 21 & Over)												
Life	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6
>5 Years, less than life	2	1	0	3	1	0	5	1	0	4	0	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	11	9	8	13	12	10	13	12	9	15	14	10
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	10	10	3	5	8	4	6	9	5	9	13	4
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	4	6	2	6	7	0	4	6	0	4	5	1
≤3 Months	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0
No Licence	0	0	14	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	18
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	33	33	33	36	36	36	36	36	36	39	39	39
Young Females (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
≤3 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
No Licence	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Total	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
All Females	35	35	35	38	38	38	38	38	38	41	41	41

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 4: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Sentence Length

	2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Males												
Life	154	154	154	149	149	149	151	151	151	158	158	158
>10 Years, less than life	109	60	0	104	58	0	101	54	0	97	53	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	192	110	21	160	102	22	167	96	27	169	85	29
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	60	52	39	65	45	37	62	40	35	52	41	32
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	86	75	59	86	60	43	74	67	52	75	70	59
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	117	108	120	133	102	121	96	104	125	117	106	116
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	145	220	179	136	212	199	135	184	156	126	196	170
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	102	162	72	99	185	80	87	162	80	95	166	75
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	62	84	17	66	85	15	69	85	11	65	79	8
≤3 months	24	25	0	23	23	0	25	26	0	21	21	0
No Licence	0	0	390	0	0	354	0	0	330	0	0	327
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	3
Total Males	1,051	1,051	1,051	1,022	1,022	1,022	968	968	968	978	978	978
Females												
Life	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6
>5 Years, less than life	2	1	0	3	1	0	5	1	0	4	0	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	11	9	8	13	12	10	13	12	9	16	14	11
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	10	11	3	6	9	4	7	10	5	10	13	4
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	4	6	2	6	7	0	4	6	0	4	6	1
≤3 months	1	1	0	2	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	0
No Licence	0	0	15	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	19
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Females	35	35	35	38	38	38	38	38	38	41	41	41
All												
Life	160	160	160	156	156	156	158	158	158	165	165	165
>5 Years, less than life	302	170	21	267	161	22	273	150	27	270	139	29
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	419	465	405	433	431	410	381	407	378	384	427	387
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	112	173	75	105	194	84	94	172	85	105	179	80
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	67	91	19	72	92	16	73	91	12	70	84	9
≤3 months	25	26	0	25	26	0	27	28	0	22	22	0
No Licence	0	0	405	0	0	371	0	0	347	0	0	345
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	3
Total	1,085	1,085	1,085	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,006	1,006	1,006	1,018	1,018	1,018

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 5: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, Gender and Principal Offence

	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AGED 21 AND OVER								
Violence against the Person	362	15	344	14	316	16	323	16
Sexual Offences	111	0	104	2	102	2	109	1
Misc. Sexual	4	0	5	0	1	0	3	0
Robbery	86	1	90	3	82	1	86	1
Theft	31	5	34	5	36	5	32	5
Burglary	60	0	59	0	53	0	63	3
Criminal Damage	37	2	34	1	41	1	38	1
Drug Offences	92	2	90	3	81	2		
Drugs - Controlled							88	4
Drugs - Other							0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	15	0	13	0	14	0	14	0
Public Order Offences	166	3	159	5	164	7	146	5
Fraud	4	1	6	1	5	0		
Fraud - NFIB							3	1
Fraud - Other							2	0
Motoring Offences	18	0	25	0	13	0	13	1
Liquor Licence							0	0
Other Offences	27	2	25	2	33	2	27	1
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total Aged 21 and Over	1,014	33	988	36	941	36	947	39
AGED LESS THAN 21								
Violence against the Person	8	0	11	0	6	0	8	1
Sexual Offences	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	4	0	4	0	5	0	4	0
Theft	4	0	2	0	3	0	2	0
Burglary	4	1	4	0	3	0	4	0
Criminal Damage	2	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
Drug Offences	0	0	1	0	1	0		
Drugs - Controlled							2	0
Drugs - Other							0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Public Order Offences	11	0	8	1	5	1	3	0
Fraud	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Fraud - NFIB							0	0
Fraud - Other							0	0
Motoring Offences	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Liquor Licence							0	0
Other Offences	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged Less than 21	37	1	34	2	27	2	30	1
ALL	1,051	35	1,022	38	968	38	978	41

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32

Table 6a: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Males	Violence against the Person	370	354	322	331
	Sexual Offences	112	104	102	111
	Misc. Sexual	4	5	1	3
	Robbery	90	94	86	91
	Theft	35	36	39	34
	Burglary	64	63	56	66
	Criminal Damage	39	37	43	41
	Drug Offences	92	91	82	
	Drugs - Controlled				91
	Drugs - Other				0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	15	13	14	14
	Public Order Offences	177	167	168	149
	Fraud	4	6	5	
	Fraud - NFIB				3
	Fraud - Other				2
	Motoring Offences	20	25	14	13
	Liquor Licence				0
	Other Offences	28	26	33	28
	Missing	0	0	0	1
	Total		1,051	1,022	968
Females	Violence against the Person	16	14	16	17
	Sexual Offences	0	2	2	1
	Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0
	Robbery	1	3	1	1
	Theft	5	6	6	6
	Burglary	1	1	0	3
	Criminal Damage	3	2	1	1
	Drug Offences	2	3	2	
	Drugs - Controlled				4
	Drugs - Other				0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	0	0
	Public Order Offences	3	6	8	5
	Fraud	1	1	0	
	Fraud - NFIB				1
	Fraud - Other				0
	Motoring Offences	0	0	0	1
	Liquor Licence				0
	Other Offences	2	2	2	1
	Missing	0	0	0	0
	Total		35	38	38

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Table 6b: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
All	Violence against the Person	386	368	338	348
	Sexual Offences	112	106	104	112
	Misc. Sexual	4	5	1	3
	Robbery	91	97	88	92
	Theft	40	42	45	39
	Burglary	64	64	57	69
	Criminal Damage	42	38	45	42
	Drug Offences	95	94	84	
	Drugs - Controlled				94
	Drugs - Other				0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	15	13	14	14
	Public Order Offences	180	173	176	154
	Fraud	6	7	5	
	Fraud - NFIB				5
	Fraud - Other				2
	Motoring Offences	20	25	14	14
	Liquor Licence				0
	Other Offences	30	27	35	30
	Missing	0	0	0	1
	Total		1,085	1,060	1,006

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Table 7: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type, Gender and Establishment

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Remand	Maghaberry	2,239	2,216	2,560	2,704
	Magilligan	0	19	26	26
	Hydebank Wood College Males	316	305	351	304
	Hydebank Wood College Females	235	246	269	276
	Total	2,790	2,786	3,206	3,310
Immediate Custody	Maghaberry	1,473	1,361	1,373	1,489
	Magilligan	0	7	11	8
	Hydebank Wood College Males	151	134	129	126
	Hydebank Wood College Females	105	117	103	111
	Total	1,729	1,619	1,616	1,734
Fine Default	Maghaberry	547	532	308	181
	Magilligan	0	1	1	2
	Hydebank Wood College Males	38	20	25	18
	Hydebank Wood College Females	68	58	37	21
	Total	653	611	371	222
Non-Criminal	Maghaberry	77	61	47	47
	Magilligan	0	6	5	5
	Hydebank Wood College Males	6	7	5	3
	Hydebank Wood College Females	2	2	2	1
	Total	85	76	59	56
Males		4,847	4,669	4,841	4,913
Females		410	423	411	409
Establishment	Maghaberry	4,336	4,170	4,288	4,421
	Magilligan	0	33	43	41
	Hydebank Wood College Males	511	466	510	451
	Hydebank Wood College Females	410	423	411	409
	Total	5,257	5,092	5,252	5,322

Females may include Transgender persons

Table 8: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Age at Reception

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Males	18 - 20 Years	145	121	116	119
	21 - 29 Years	713	626	604	661
	30 - 39 Years	449	457	465	505
	40 - 49 Years	170	164	199	191
	50 - 59 Years	105	90	86	101
	60 + Years	42	44	43	46
	Total	1,624	1,502	1,513	1,623
Females	18 - 20 Years	9	13	10	8
	21 - 29 Years	37	37	30	28
	30 - 39 Years	20	27	33	42
	40 - 49 Years	19	20	16	14
	50 - 59 Years	18	15	10	15
	60 + Years	2	5	4	4
	Total	105	117	103	111
All	18 - 20 Years	154	134	126	127
	21 - 29 Years	750	663	634	689
	30 - 39 Years	469	484	498	547
	40 - 49 Years	189	184	215	205
	50 - 59 Years	123	105	96	116
	60 + Years	44	49	47	50
	Total	1,729	1,619	1,616	1,734

Females may include Transgender persons

Table 9: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Age at Reception, Gender and Sentence Length

	2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Adult Males (Aged 21 & Over)												
Life	16	16	16	13	13	13	13	13	13	16	16	16
>10 Years, less than life	12	5	0	12	7	0	12	6	0	19	8	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	45	17	5	59	19	4	58	17	4	45	22	5
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	45	16	3	27	11	8	29	16	12	29	8	3
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	77	29	10	49	31	18	57	30	23	49	16	10
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	139	69	60	112	59	50	104	58	47	141	74	51
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	230	234	190	194	168	136	195	183	131	206	205	164
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	289	411	153	264	382	121	252	361	131	298	417	140
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	363	417	38	379	419	35	393	426	20	418	454	22
≤3 months	263	265	0	271	271	0	282	285	0	279	280	0
No Licence	0	0	1,004	0	0	995	0	0	1,014	0	0	1,089
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4
Total	1,479	1,479	1,479	1,381	1,381	1,381	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,504	1,504	1,504
Young Males (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0
>10 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	4	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	0
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	2	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	1
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	3	0	0	2	1	1	3	1	1	4	1	1
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	11	5	6	10	2	2	5	2	2	14	3	3
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	25	21	14	15	15	15	13	13	8	14	17	22
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	32	48	18	25	32	6	27	31	8	18	31	10
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	36	38	1	37	42	1	37	41	3	38	40	1
≤3 months	32	32	0	27	27	0	25	25	0	25	25	0
No Licence	0	0	106	0	0	95	0	0	91	0	0	81
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	145	145	145	121	121	121	116	116	116	119	119	119
All Males	1,624	1,624	1,624	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,513	1,513	1,513	1,623	1,623	1,623
Adult Females (Aged 21 & Over)												
Life	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	17	11	10	15	7	9	17	10	4	25	14	13
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	30	32	5	19	25	7	17	22	7	23	30	10
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	31	36	5	41	44	1	33	36	1	40	43	2
≤3 months	16	16	0	26	27	0	25	25	0	14	15	0
No Licence	0	0	75	0	0	87	0	0	81	0	0	78
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	96	96	96	104	104	104	93	93	93	103	103	103
Young Females (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	3	3	0	2	2	0	5	5	0	2	2	0
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	3	3	0	2	3	0	1	1	0	3	3	0
≤3 months	1	1	0	7	7	0	4	4	0	2	2	0
No Licence	0	0	8	0	0	12	0	0	10	0	0	7
Total	9	9	9	13	13	13	10	10	10	8	8	8
All Females	105	105	105	117	117	117	103	103	103	111	111	111

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 10: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Sentence Length

	2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Males												
Life	16	16	16	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	16
>10 Years, less than life	12	5	0	12	7	0	12	6	0	19	8	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	49	17	5	62	19	4	60	17	4	49	23	5
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	47	17	3	28	12	8	31	17	13	31	9	4
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	80	29	10	51	32	19	60	31	24	53	17	11
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	150	74	66	122	61	52	109	60	49	155	77	54
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	255	255	204	209	183	151	208	196	139	220	222	186
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	321	459	171	289	414	127	279	392	139	316	448	150
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	399	455	39	416	461	36	430	467	23	456	494	23
≤3 months	295	297	0	298	298	0	307	310	0	304	305	0
No Licence	0	0	1,110	0	0	1,090	0	0	1,105	0	0	1,170
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4
Total Males	1,624	1,624	1,624	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,513	1,513	1,513	1,623	1,623	1,623
Females												
Life	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	19	13	11	17	8	10	17	10	4	26	15	14
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	33	35	5	21	27	7	22	27	7	25	32	10
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	34	39	5	43	47	1	34	37	1	43	46	2
≤3 months	17	17	0	33	34	0	29	29	0	16	17	0
No Licence	0	0	83	0	0	99	0	0	91	0	0	85
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Females	105	105	105	117	117	117	103	103	103	111	111	111
All												
Life	17	17	17	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	16
>5 Years, less than life	62	22	5	77	27	4	73	23	4	69	32	5
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	551	388	294	427	296	240	425	314	229	485	340	269
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	354	494	176	310	441	134	301	419	146	341	480	160
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	433	494	44	459	508	37	464	504	24	499	540	25
≤3 Months	312	314	0	331	332	0	336	339	0	320	322	0
No Licence	0	0	1,193	0	0	1,189	0	0	1,196	0	0	1,255
Missing	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4
Total	1,729	1,729	1,729	1,619	1,619	1,619	1,616	1,616	1,616	1,734	1,734	1,734

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure

Females may include Transgender persons

Table 11: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Age at Reception, Gender and Principal Offence

	2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AGED 21 AND OVER								
Violence against the Person	301	24	253	19	234	25	268	17
Sexual Offences	54	2	54	1	60	1	70	1
Misc. Sexual	13	0	8	0	3	0	8	0
Robbery	37	0	49	3	54	0	45	0
Theft	138	25	133	33	177	24	168	29
Burglary	109	0	91	1	119	5	157	7
Criminal Damage	138	13	148	7	127	7	150	12
Drug Offences	189	8	134	7	174	5		
Drugs - Controlled							164	12
Drugs - Other							0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	22	1	16	0	19	0	31	0
Public Order Offences	283	10	300	18	253	21	282	9
Fraud	11	4	19	3	10	1		
Fraud - NFIB							16	5
Fraud - Other							2	1
Motoring Offences	81	2	94	3	64	0	51	4
Liquor Licence							0	0
Other Offences	103	7	82	8	103	4	88	6
Missing	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0
Total Aged 21 and Over	1,479	96	1,381	104	1,397	93	1,504	103
AGED LESS THAN 21								
Violence against the Person	31	4	23	3	27	3	24	4
Sexual Offences	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	0
Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	7	0	8	0	8	0	12	0
Theft	18	1	22	2	19	2	14	2
Burglary	14	1	14	1	15	0	14	0
Criminal Damage	17	2	14	4	15	0	19	1
Drug Offences	4	0	2	0	11	0		
Drugs - Controlled							13	0
Drugs - Other							0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	1	0	4	0	5	0	2	0
Public Order Offences	34	1	25	3	11	5	13	0
Fraud	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Fraud - NFIB							0	0
Fraud - Other							0	0
Motoring Offences	8	0	3	0	2	0	0	0
Liquor Licence							0	0
Other Offences	10	0	5	0	3	0	4	1
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged Less than 21	145	9	121	13	116	10	119	8
ALL	1,624	105	1,502	117	1,513	103	1,623	111

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32

Table 12a: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Males	Violence against the Person	332	276	261	292
	Sexual Offences	55	55	60	74
	Misc. Sexual	13	8	3	8
	Robbery	44	57	62	57
	Theft	156	155	196	182
	Burglary	123	105	134	171
	Criminal Damage	155	162	142	169
	Drug Offences	193	136	185	
	Drugs - Controlled				177
	Drugs - Other				0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	23	20	24	33
	Public Order Offences	317	325	264	295
	Fraud	11	19	10	
	Fraud - NFIB				16
	Fraud - Other				2
	Motoring Offences	89	97	66	51
	Liquor Licence				0
	Other Offences	113	87	106	92
	Missing	0	0	0	4
	Total		1,624	1,502	1,513
Females	Violence against the Person	28	22	28	21
	Sexual Offences	2	1	1	1
	Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0
	Robbery	0	3	0	0
	Theft	26	35	26	31
	Burglary	1	2	5	7
	Criminal Damage	15	11	7	13
	Drug Offences	8	7	5	
	Drugs - Controlled				12
	Drugs - Other				0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	1	0	0	0
	Public Order Offences	11	21	26	9
	Fraud	4	3	1	
	Fraud - NFIB				5
	Fraud - Other				1
	Motoring Offences	2	3	0	4
	Liquor Licence				0
	Other Offences	7	8	4	7
	Missing	0	1	0	0
	Total		105	117	103

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20

Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Table 12b: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
All	Violence against the Person	360	298	289	313
	Sexual Offences	57	56	61	75
	Misc. Sexual	13	8	3	8
	Robbery	44	60	62	57
	Theft	182	190	222	213
	Burglary	124	107	139	178
	Criminal Damage	170	173	149	182
	Drug Offences	201	143	190	
	Drugs - Controlled				189
	Drugs - Other				0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	24	20	24	33
	Public Order Offences	328	346	290	304
	Fraud	15	22	11	
	Fraud - NFIB				21
	Fraud - Other				3
	Motoring Offences	91	100	66	55
	Liquor Licence				0
	Other Offences	120	95	110	99
	Missing	0	1	0	4
	Total		1,729	1,619	1,616

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20

Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Methodology and Counting Rules

National Statistics

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Department of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Users

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
DoJ Minister/Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service	Use the statistics to monitor the prison population and capacity of the prison estate
NI Assembly	Statistics are used to answer assembly questions
Policy teams in DoJ	Statistics are used to inform policy development and to monitor impact of changes over time and the impact they have 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 within each agency 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 prison population
General public	Data are used to respond to ad-hoc requests and requests made under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

Data Source

The data used in this bulletin are derived from analysing the daily prison population for a given year, taken from the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Information System (PRISM). As this is mainly an administrative database, rigorous validation procedures are followed to ensure the data presented is as accurate as possible. More details on the validation procedures followed are included in the Data Quality and Validation Section of this report. Whilst these procedures were carried out by the Analytical Services

Group of the Department of Justice, the data is subject to the limitations inherent in any large scale recording system and to variation in recording practice over time.

Unlawfully at large prisoners are excluded from these numbers.

Discontinuities

This bulletin was subject to a consultation exercise, during April/May 2018, regarding proposed changes to the reporting period. Details of this consultation can be found at:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/results-2018-consultation-review-reporting-period-published-annual-national-statistical-publication>

The consultation invited responses to the proposal of using financial year data as the main reporting period for future publications. The responses were favourable, with no objections to the proposed changes. As a result, this publication focuses mainly on data by financial year.

Definitions

Average Prisoner Population

Daily prison population snapshots are downloaded from the PRISM system as at midnight; the average daily prisoner population for a given year is derived from the average of these.

Receptions Data

Receptions are counted whenever there is an entry into prison (committal) and/or a change in a prisoner's custody type from one day to the next. For example, if during the time period in question a prisoner is committed into prison as a remand prisoner, then without being released is sentenced, this would count as one remand reception and one sentenced reception.

However, if a sentenced prisoner receives another sentence whilst currently serving a sentence, this will not be counted as a new sentenced reception, as the custody type has not changed.

If a prisoner is released and is subsequently committed on the same or different custody status this is counted as a new reception.

The receptions data are based on the premise that when a person is received more than once during a year he/she will be counted separately on each occasion, including each occasion of change of status between remand and sentenced/Fine Default during the same period of custody.

Caution needs to be exercised when looking at fine default receptions. Fine default prisoners are counted on the prison system as sentenced prisoners, so if a prisoner is sentenced and subsequently (without being released) serves some time as a fine default prisoner their status does not change. In essence this means that a fine default reception is only picked up if there is a change from remand to fine default, or if they are committed to prison as a fine default prisoner. Therefore fine default receptions shown in this report may well undercount the actual number of fine default receptions. This is not an issue when calculating the fine default average prison population figures as they can be identified as fine defaults.

If a prisoner is committed and released on the same day then they will not be included in this analysis as the daily population snapshot is taken at midnight.

From 2009 onwards the methodology for producing receptions data changed, so too has the source from whence the data originates. Therefore caution should be exercised when making comparisons with data before 2009.

Age

For the daily averages the age of a prisoner is calculated at the time of the snapshot.

For receptions data, the age of a prisoner is calculated at age of the reception.

Some of the tables in this bulletin refer to 'adult' and 'young' prisoners. An 'adult' is aged 21 years and over and a 'young' prisoner is aged under 21 years.

Offence Grouping

An extensive exercise was carried out in late 2013 by statisticians across Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland, to reclassify all offences into main offence groupings, as far as possible, that are more in line with England and Wales. Due to this exercise receptions data published prior to 2009 on offence groupings will not be directly comparable with those from 2009 onwards. Data relating to averages pre 2013 on offence groupings will also not be directly comparable, as data published on averages pre 2013 used the old classification system. A review was also carried out in 2017 which resulted in two offence categories being re-classified. The two groupings which are affected are Public Order and Other Offences. Recalls and revocation of licence offences are no longer classified as Other Offences; they are now classified as Public Order Offences. As a result of these changes, it is not possible to compare any data relating to these two categories contained in this report with any data relating to these two categories from previous reports. However, all data contained in this report for previous years have been revised to take this new methodology into account.

During 2019/20 a further review of these categories was undertaken with the aim of achieving more standardised reporting of offence classifications across the justice system in Northern Ireland. This resulted in the Drug Offence category being split into two categories called Drugs – Controlled and Drugs – Other. The Fraud category was split into two categories called Fraud – NIFB and Fraud – Other, and a new category called Liquor Licence was created. As a consequence of these changes, there may also be slight variances in the category within which some cases are counted across the period of this publication.

Principal Offence

Where a person is received under sentence for two or more offences, only the principal offence is used. Following a review during 2013 by statisticians in the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland, an updated algorithm for calculating principal offence was adopted. Details on this can be found in a special paper using the link <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/methodology-paper-adoption-and-implementation-principal-offence-northern-ireland>.

Due to the way data is stored and extracted in PRISM, sentence lengths for each individual offence cannot be extracted; as such calculating principal offence using actual sentence length is not possible. Instead principal offence using the principal at trial algorithm is used as the basis for calculating principal offence for prison statistics. This calculates principal offence based on the offence that has the statutory highest maximum sentence. For offences with the same highest maximum sentence then further flags are used to calculate the principal offence. More detail on this can be found in the above report. Due to slight differences in data, the methodology is adapted for Prison purposes. PRISM holds a flag which determines if the offence is a main offence or not; this flag is used in the Prison methodology. The actual offence date is held in PRISM but due to difficulties extracting this, it cannot be used as a method for calculating principal offence. As such this step in the process is replaced by ordering based on the numerical offence code for each offence.

Sentence Length

If a person is received under sentence for two or more offences at the same time, sentence length is taken as the longest of any concurrent sentences, with consecutive sentences being treated as one sentence equal in length to the sentences added together.

However, if a sentenced prisoner receives another sentence whilst currently serving a sentence, the sentence details of the first sentence are used to work out sentence lengths.

Type of Prisoner

Currently there are three prison establishments in Northern Ireland - HMP Magilligan, HMP Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood College. Female prisoners are held in a separate unit within Hydebank Wood College.

Whilst the prison population consists mainly of offenders sentenced by the courts to immediate custody for criminal offences, it also includes fine defaults, remand prisoners and a small number of non-criminal prisoners.

Fine defaulters are those who have been given a fine by the courts and have not paid the fine within a stipulated time, and have then been the subject of a warrant issued by the court. The duration of sentence is dependent upon the amount of the unpaid fine and ranges from one week where the default is £200 or less, to ten years where the default exceeds £1 million.

Remand prisoners include those charged with an offence and whom the courts have ruled should be detained in custody pending trial; those whom the courts have permitted to be released on bail pending trial but have not as yet met the conditions (usually financial) of the bail; those who had been released on bail but have subsequently been re-admitted to prison because they breached a condition of bail; and those who have been found guilty by the court but have been ordered to be detained in custody pending sentence.

Non-criminal prisoners are mainly made up of those being held under the terms of the Immigration Act.

Data Quality and Validation

The steps taken to quality assure this information for statistical purposes are described below.

The data used to derive the information originates from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) case management system (PRISM). This is a live recording system which is used extensively by NIPS for day to day case management purposes. As such the information extracted, while subject to human data entry error, needs to be highly accurate as it is the main information tool used to manage prisoners on a day-to-day basis, to list their status/privileges and, for that matter to regulate discharge dates/record sentence lengths. It is used not only by Prison Service Staff but also Probation Staff. The data from which the average population and receptions information are derived are therefore core fields, the accuracy of which is a requirement for the effective handling of day-to-day prison operations.

It is perhaps important to emphasise that Prison Service Staff themselves have a vested interest in the complete reliability of the data populated into the fields used for this analysis. Information is not derived from subsidiary screens which do not contribute to the officer's own capacity to discharge his/her duties or which can be bypassed without impacting immediately on the officer's own work.

The procedure undertaken to derive the statistics now has the following stages. A data download is extracted from PRISM which includes details on individual prisoners. This is imported into the statistical package SPSS and this data is used as the primary source of information to calculate the prison population. Rigorous validation exercises are then conducted to ensure that the information produced is as accurate as possible.

These Data Quality and Validation procedures can be split into two parts, firstly ensuring the data from PRISM is accurate and up to date. For this purpose, manual checks are carried out and data corrected to ensure:

- that all sentenced prisoners have a sentence length;
- that there are no sentence lengths that are discrepant (e.g. murder offences attracting a sentence of 7 days);
- that the total effective sentence adds up to the custody sentence plus the licence sentence;
- that the stated age of prisoners is appropriate and realistic (e.g. no-one aged 8,108, etc.);
- that the gender of prisoners is appropriate for the prison establishment (e.g. no male prisoners in a female prison); and
- that a general check of the data as a whole suggests no other anomalies.

Any such discrepancies identified at this stage (for which there may on, albeit rare, occasion be a valid reason) are checked out against the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS), the Criminal Records Viewer and additional screens on PRISM itself. Any issues are resolved on an individual basis.

Secondly, an extensive manual cross checking exercise is conducted using PRISM to ensure that after manipulating the data, the information produced is correct. A list of all receptions for each prisoner is listed and details are then cross checked manually against the records held on PRISM.

After validating and updating the database using the above method, 2.3% of sentence lengths were changed and 3.6% of offence groupings were changed. Whilst these checking procedures are extensive and robust, it is not possible to validate every case so it is worth noting that the statistics contained in the publication are inevitably subject to the limitations inherent in any large-scale recording system and to variations in recording practice over time. However, as PRISM is used extensively for the operation of the core business and the fields used are fields in the accuracy of which officers themselves have a strong vested interest, one can now be confident in the accuracy and robustness of the source administrative data to a degree much greater than would normally be the case with administrative systems requiring lower degrees of operational precision.

Following guidance provided by the Office for National Statistics on the Quality Assessment of Administrative Data, information pertaining to data quality and validation is continually being assessed.

Presentation

For ease of use figures in pie charts are given as whole numbers whereas percentages throughout the text are to one decimal point.

Whilst tables of information have been included in the tabular appendix containing data for the last four financial years, similar tables are also published alongside this bulletin in Microsoft Excel format containing data for the last five financial years.

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