



Ministry  
of Justice

# **Technical Document:**

## **Prison Education Statistics April 2021 to March 2022**

Ministry of Justice

Official Statistics Bulletin

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# Guide to Prison Education Statistics

## Introduction

In 2016, responsibility for the budget which was used to commission most prison education in England moved from the Department of Education to the Ministry of Justice and in April 2019 new education contracts were established. This document provides a technical guide and glossary to accompany the statistics presented in the report Prison Education Statistics 2021/22.

Data have been drawn from an administrative IT system called CURIOUS. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the level of detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system. Details of all administrative data sources used in the production of this release can be found in the Ministry of Justice Statement of Administrative Sources<sup>1</sup>.

## Data sources and data quality

### Coverage

All public prisons, and some private prisons, in England are included within CURIOUS. At present, the Welsh estate is not included within CURIOUS. They are currently looking to introduce CURIOUS into their prisons. The youth estate is also not included, although again discussions are ongoing in this area.

Only Prisoner Education Framework (PEF) commissioned education is captured on CURIOUS and the Prisoner Education Statistics 2021 – 22 only covers CURIOUS data. The PEF delivers a core curriculum of English, Maths, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), digital skills and a range of relevant vocational training and *is* included on CURIOUS. Alongside this, Governors can choose to purchase additional specialist provision to meet learner needs *via* use of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). Information on DPS *is not* included on CURIOUS. Information is only entered on CURIOUS if someone has gone through an education induction or enrolled on a course. **CURIOUS does not capture information on all offenders.**

### Quality

Data presented in the publication cover those prisoners who self-select into education that has been procured within prisons through PEF contracts and is recorded on the CURIOUS IT system. The content of data available through this IT system therefore present two limitations.

First, self-selection into education is problematic because no information is gathered on those who do not participate. Data on both participants and non-participants could provide insight into both who receives education and why prisoners participate in education.

Second, while all prisons provide education through PEF contracts which is recorded on the CURIOUS IT system, receipt of DPS procured education is not recorded on the system. The amount of funding a Governor chooses to allocate to education procurement through DPS

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ministry-of-justice-statistics-policy-and-procedures>

varies by prison. As a result, high numbers of prisoners could be engaged in education procured through DPS instead of PEF but available data does not count this. The data presented in this publication is therefore a likely understatement of all education provided and received in prisons.

## **Disclosure policy**

It is MoJ disclosure policy to assess the risk of disclosure of sensitive information about identifiable individuals and the consequent harm that disclosure could cause. This risk is then balanced against the loss of utility of statistics that have been suppressed.

Sensitive information includes protected characteristics such as race, disability, sexuality or religion of the individuals, or incidents that happen to staff that could cause distress to the individual or their family if they were disclosed.

In this publication, it has been assessed that the risk of identification of individuals is minimal and that much of the information presented is not sensitive. In most cases it has been concluded that the utility to users of unsuppressed statistics outweighs the small risk to individuals involved.

## **Revisions**

In accordance with Principle 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the Ministry of Justice is required to publish transparent guidance on its policy for revisions. A copy of this statement can be found at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/statistics/mojstats/statistics-revisions-policy.pdf>

The reasons for statistics needing to be revised fall into three main categories. Each of these and their specific relevance to the Prison Education Statistics bulletin are addressed below:

### *1. Changes in source of administrative systems or methodology*

There are no changes in the source of administrative systems or methodology to report.

### *2. Receipt of subsequent information:*

The nature of any administrative system is that there may be time lags between when data is recorded and when it is available for analysis. This means that any revisions or additions may not be captured in time to be included in the subsequent publication.

### *3. Errors in statistical systems and processes:*

Occasionally errors can occur in statistical processes; procedures are constantly reviewed to minimise this risk. Should a significant error be found, the publication on the website will be updated and an errata published documenting the revision.

## Symbols and conventions

..	Not available
0	Nil
-	Not applicable or unreliable (less than 30 observations – used when calculating rates/percentages).
~	Denotes suppressed values of 2 or fewer or other values which would allow values of 2 or fewer to be derived by subtraction. Low numbers are suppressed to prevent disclosure in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1998.
(p)	Provisional data
(r)	Revised data

# **Glossary**

## **Initial assessments**

All prisoners undertaking education in prison have an initial educational assessment. There are initial assessments for Maths and English, with most prisoners sitting both. These assessments are designed to assess a prisoner's level of knowledge in these subjects. Prisoners often receive a new initial assessment when they move prison in the new PEF system recorded through CURIOUS. This is different to the old Offender Learning & Skills Service (OLASS), where prisoners had to wait 6 months before taking another one.

CURIOUS data count the number of people that received each grade at initial assessment for English and Maths. This means that prisoners taking more than one initial assessment will be counted once in the sub totals if the results are at the same grade or twice in the sub totals if the results are at different grades across the Maths and English tests.

## **Learning Difficulty / Disability assessments**

Learning Difficulty / Disability (LDD) assessments take place using both rapid and in-depth screeners. Not all prisoners taking initial assessments or participating in courses have received an LDD assessment. We do not distinguish between these in the publication tables. It is possible there are more prisoners with LDDs that have not been assessed.

Data cleaning was carried out to remove self-declared LDDs from the data set.

## **Ethnicity**

Prisoner records in the CURIOUS IT system have been matched with NOMIS data system records. Ethnicity recorded in NOMIS has been used in this analysis. There are a small proportion of prisoners whose CURIOUS ethnicity record has been used as they could not be matched to the NOMIS data system.

## **Age Group**

Prisoners under 18 have been excluded from the analysis presented in this publication. Remaining prisoners have been divided into three age group categories

- 18 – 24
- 25 – 49
- 50 and over

Some prisoner records on CURIOUS have more than one recorded date of birth. If the age was the same or within 1 year of the earliest recorded date of birth, then that date of birth was chosen for all records associated with that prisoner. Those prisoners with more than one date of birth and the age was not within those boundaries mentioned previously, were allocated to unknown age group.

## **Gender**

There were some prisoner records on CURIOUS which have more than one gender which was not transgender. For the small number of prisoners, the gender was allocated as not known. Due to the low number of transgender prisoners' figures have been suppressed to prevent disclosure.

## **Participation in courses**

A prisoner counts as participating in courses they have registered to attend and the course has start and end date between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 but does not track actual attendance.

When considering the number of prisoners participating in courses by level of course, each prisoner is counted once at each level.

e.g. If a prisoner participates in two level 1 courses, they count as one prisoner taking a level one course. If a prisoner participates in one level 1 course and one level 2 course they count as one prisoner participating at each level.

### **Achievement**

An individual may achieve a course, partially achieve a course or withdraw from a course:

- Achieving a course - is to complete all the work and get a grade or level;
- Partially achieving a course - indicates the prisoner has completed all work required for the course to date, but is awaiting a final exam or coursework;
- Withdrawal from a course – means the prisoner stopped taking the course at that prison.

Statistics in the publication are based on number of prisoners achieving. Like for participation, when considering the number of prisoners achieving in courses by level of course, each prisoner is counted once at each level.

When a prisoner is transferred between establishments, they are withdrawn from the course in the establishment they are leaving and will appear as a fresh participation at the new establishment – if they decide to continue taking the course. If a new CURIOUS record is created this could lead to this prisoner being double counted.

### **Rate of Achievement**

Rate of achievement is the proportion of prisoner participating in courses that achieve or partially achieve a grade or level in at least one course.

### **Functional Skills Courses**

Functional skills courses are offered as part of the core curriculum. Functional skills are the fundamental English, Maths and ICT skills that people need for their working and personal lives. Prisoners study for the qualifications in practical ways and apply core skills to real-life situations. A functional skills level 2 is equivalent to a GCSE.

### **Initial Assessment and Course Levels**

<b>Initial Assessment Level / Course Level</b>	<b>Example</b>
Entry level 1,2 and 3	Entry level functional skills Entry level English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
Level 1	GCSE - grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G Level 1 functional skills Level 1 ESOL
Level 2	GCSE - grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C Level 2 functional skills Level 2 ESOL
Level 3	A level Level 3 ESOL Level 3 NVQ
Level 4 +	All higher-level courses

A complete list of levels and examples can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

## Accredited Programmes

### Offending behaviour programme (OBP) completion rates and volumes in custody and the community

<b>Rationale</b>	<b>The purpose of this measure is to monitor the number of accredited programmes as per manual guidance, the appropriate allocation of potential participants to accredited programmes, and to monitor the completion rates of accredited programmes.</b>
<b>Technical description</b>	<p>OBPs are rehabilitation programmes designed to encourage participants to develop self-awareness in recognising risk and success/protective factors and developing skills in how to manage and build them more effectively. The ethos is built on a strengths based focus giving status to existing skills and providing opportunity to develop 'new me' skills. These programmes are fully or provisionally accredited by the Correctional Services Accreditation and Advisory Panel (CSAAP). In custody they are known as Living Skills programmes.</p> <p>For monitoring purposes, OBPs in custody include domestic violence, violence and general offending completions but exclude sexual offender treatment and substance misuse programmes, which are reported separately.</p> <p>OBP completions in the community exclude domestic violence and sex offender treatment programmes, which are measured separately. They include substance misuse programmes.</p>
<b>Data source</b>	<p>In custody: Monthly data from prison establishments collated in central performance systems.</p> <p>In the community: NPS/ CRCs data collated in central performance systems</p>
<b>Calculation (volumes)</b>	<p>This indicator is a simple count of the number of OBP completions.</p> <p>A completion is counted when a participant completes an accredited programme and all appropriate reports and documents are completed and returned where required and recorded as such on the appropriate systems.</p> <p>Completions in custody and completions in the community are recorded separately.</p>
<b>Calculation (Percentage of milestone)</b>	The volume of OBP completions as a percentage of the milestone target number of completions.



## Sexual offending treatment programme (SOTP) completion volumes in the community

<b>Rationale</b>	<b>The purpose of this measure is to monitor the completion of sexual offending treatment programmes (SOTPs) and to make sure participants are appropriately allocated to and supported to complete SOTPs.</b>
<b>Technical description</b>	Sexual offending treatment programmes are designed to encourage participants to develop self-awareness in recognising risk and success/protective factors and developing skills in how to manage and build them more effectively. The aim to reduce offending by men convicted of sexual offences. A range of programmes is available for those who commit sexual offences according to the level of risk and need of the offender.
<b>Data source</b>	In custody: Monthly data from prison establishments collated in central performance systems.  In the community: NPS/ CRCs data collated in central performance systems.
<b>Calculation (volumes)</b>	This indicator is a simple count of the number of SOTP completions.  A completion is counted when a participant completes an accredited programme and all appropriate reports and documents are completed and returned, where required, and recorded as such on the appropriate system.  Completions in custody and completions in the community are recorded and reported separately.
<b>Calculation (Percentage of milestone)</b>	The volume of SOTP completions as a percentage of the milestone target number of completions.

All of the interventions included within this publication are accredited via CSAAP. It includes programmes that have been designed and developed by HMPPS and also programmes designed by external providers such as the Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust (RAPt 12 Step programmes) and Delight Services (COVAID) and Kainos Community (challenge to change).

It is important to note there are also numerous non-accredited group-based interventions targeted at a range of criminogenic needs which are delivered within the criminal justice system. Data for non-accredited programmes are currently not available.

Many programmes included in this review are no longer accredited, have been subsequently replaced or are no longer delivered. Accredited programmes are routinely reviewed as part of the CSAAP process for accreditation. CSAAP can grant accreditation for a period of up to five years, at which point a programme must be resubmitted. The accreditation process includes reviewing the latest theory and evidence that underpins a programme to ensure that they are as effective as possible in reducing reoffending. This can result in minor changes being required to a programme, or an entirely new programme being developed. Re-accreditation may also not be sought if there has been a substantial drop in the need for a programme.

HMPPS has a range of accredited programmes, varying in length, complexity and mode of delivery. Programmes have been developed to target the particular risks and needs for different types of offending behaviour. To achieve accreditation, programmes must be assessed to make sure they are targeting the right people, focusing on the right things, and being delivered in a way that is most likely to reduce reoffending. All HMPPS accredited programmes are monitored to give programme integrity.

In this publication, programmes are grouped into one of five categories: Domestic Violence, General Offending, Sexual Offending, Substance Misuse or Violence:

- Domestic Violence programmes are targeted at males who have offended against an intimate partner within the context of a heterosexual relationship. The aim is to reduce violent behaviour in intimate relationships.
- General Offending programmes consist of a range of interventions based on life skills acquisition and cognitive behavioural theory. They are designed to address the link between thinking, attitudes, beliefs and offending. Participants are encouraged to learn and practice life skills, such as problem solving, social skills, self-control and positive relationships, that will help them on their journey towards desistance from offending.
- Sexual Offending programmes aim to reduce offending by men convicted of sexual offences. Sexual offending does not have a single cause, and so treatment needs to address a range of risk factors. HMPPS provides a range of programmes which are offered according to the level of risk and need of the offender. A treatment pathway for males with learning disabilities is also available. The current commissioning strategy including SOTPs, are set out in the NOMS Commissioning Intentions 2014, and companion documents.
- HMPPS accredited substance misuse interventions are recovery focused, and based on life skills acquisition, cognitive behavioural theory, and a programme which combines cognitive behavioural and educational approaches. All of the programmes are designed to address the link between substance misuse and offending. It should be noted that the HMPPS suite uses the umbrella term of 'substance misuse interventions' which covers both alcohol and drug treatment, with some programmes addressing both.
- HMPPS Violence programmes have expanded from moderate dose cognitive skills and anger management programmes to more specialised and high intensity programmes for high risk and personality disordered males and women. The current suite of programmes incorporates the most contemporary research and evidence in neuro-cognition and desistance theories and methods. The programmes also target associated and contributory risk factors including weapons and peer/gang related behaviours as well as work on identity.

For the purposes of this publication, a programme start is counted as attendance at the first session of the programme and a programme completion is counted on attendance at the last session of the programme.

Programmes may also have other components which do not form part of these statistics, for example, pre and post evaluation measures, post-programme reports and pre and/or post programme sessions with the Offender Manager.

This data should not be used for the purposes of attempting to calculate completion rates. Starts from one year may complete in a subsequent year, and completions in one year may have started in a previous year.