



Offender Management Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales

Quarterly: July to September 2023

Prison population: 31 December 2023

Main points

87,489 prisoners in England and Wales as at 31 December 2023



The total prison population was 7% higher than at the same point in the previous year.

19,028 first receptions into prison between July and September 2023



The number of first receptions represented a rise of 20% compared to the same period in 2022.

12,351 releases from sentences between July and September 2023



This was 3% higher than the same period in 2022.

53,087 adjudication outcomes between July and September 2023



This was a rise of 35% compared to the same period in 2022. Additional days were awarded as punishment on 1,177 occasions – this was 87% higher than the same period in 2022.

7,030 licence recalls between July and September 2023



This was a 13% increase on the same quarter in 2022.

No probation statistics in this publication

Please see the statistical notice in Chapter 6 for more information.

This publication provides offender management quarterly statistics for the latest date available and provides comparisons to the previous year.

For technical detail please refer to the accompanying guide, '[Guide to offender management statistics](#)'.

Statistician's comment

In this publication we are reporting on the prison population as at 31 December 2023, with comparisons to the same point in 2022. Over this 12-month period, the total prison population has risen by around 5,700 (which represents a 7% increase) to 87,489. The population as at 31 December 2023 was around 4,500 higher than pre-pandemic levels (for comparison, the 31 March 2020 prison population was 82,990).

The remand population trend that we have seen since early 2020 has continued (a 13% increase between 31 December 2022 and 31 December 2023). There were increases over the past 12 months in both elements of the remand population - the 'untried' population (those held pre-conviction) increased by 13% and the 'convicted unsentenced' population (those held after having been convicted but awaiting their sentencing outcome) increased by 14%. This likely reflects the impact of continuing court recovery following COVID-19 restrictions, resulting in an increase in the number of prisoners held on remand.

The remand prison population as at 31 December 2023 was 16,005. This represents the highest 31 December level for at least 50 years (effectively a 'record high').

The 'recall prison population' (those returned to prison for breaching their release conditions) was 12,068 as at 31 December 2023 (13% higher than 31 December 2022, and also a 31 December 'record high'). The increasing recall population is likely driven by a combination of factors such as a longer-term increase in the average length of determinate sentences and an increase in the number of people serving indeterminate sentences or sentences with an extended licence.

The prisoner flows data in this publication cover the period July to September 2023 (with the comparison period being July to September 2022). The number of prisoner first receptions from July to September 2023 was around 19,000 (20% higher than the equivalent period in 2022). This represents the highest 'July to September' figure for 6 years and is higher than the level of between 17,000 and 18,000 per quarter seen pre-pandemic.

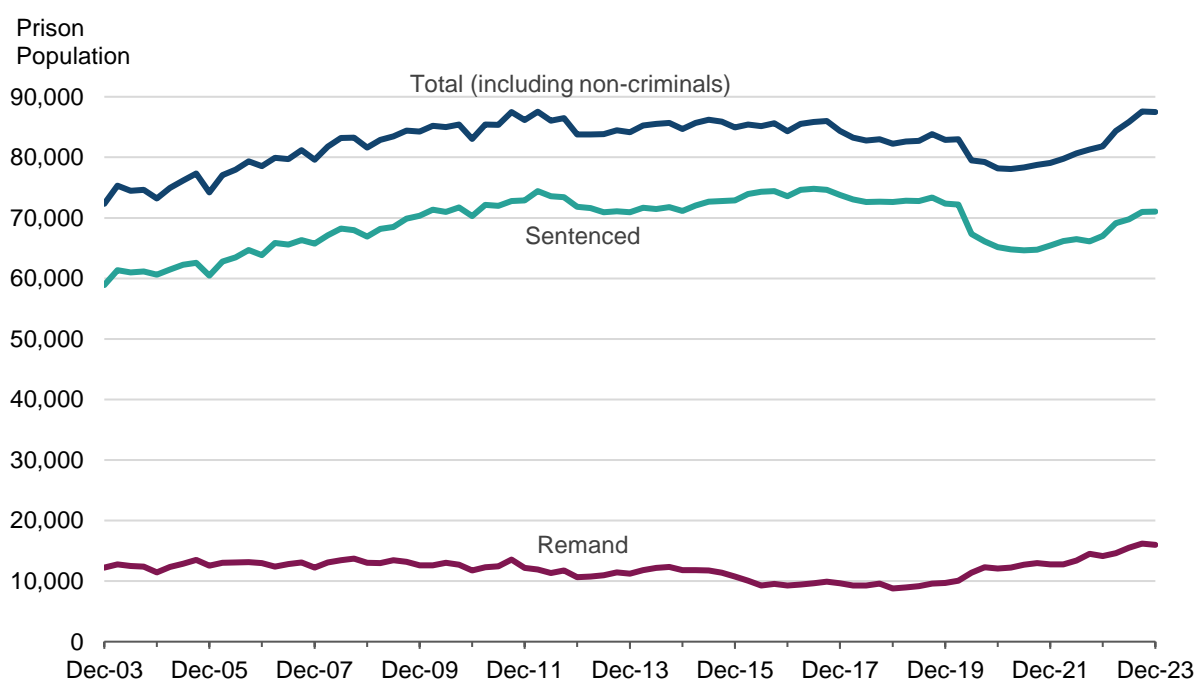
For the first quarter since the pandemic, Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and incidences of prisoner transfers between prisons have 'bounced back' to pre-COVID levels. There were around 110,000 incidences of ROTL between July and September 2023, as well as around 22,000 prisoner transfers.

1. Population

The prison population stood at 87,489 on 31 December 2023.

The sentenced prison population stood at 71,042 (81% of the total); the remand prison population stood at 16,005 (18%) and the non-criminal prison population stood at 442 (1%).

Figure 1: Prison populations, December 2003 to 2023 (Source: Table 1.1 and previous Offender Management Statistics Quarterly publications)



Remand prison population

The December 2023 remand population figure of 16,005 is 13% higher than in December 2022 and is the highest December figure in at least the last fifty years. The untried prison population rose by 13% (to 10,487) when compared to the end of December 2022 whilst the convicted unsentenced population rose by 14% (to 5,518) over the same period.

Most of those in custody on remand were being held for either violence against the person (45% of the untried population and 30% of the convicted unsentenced population); or drug offences (14% of the untried population and 21% of the convicted unsentenced population). The introduction of new domestic abuse legislation active from June 2022¹ appears to be a contributing factor to a substantial increase in the number of prisoners associated with a violence against the person offence (71% increase in the untried population, 85% increase in the convicted unsentenced population in the last 12 months).

While white prisoners make up 73% of the sentenced population, they make up only 66% of the remand population. All other reported ethnic groups have a larger proportional representation in the remand population than they do in the sentenced population.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-non-fatal-strangulation-offence-comes-into-force>

Sentenced prison population²

The sentenced population was 71,042 which is a 6% increase from the same point 12 months earlier. The largest percentage increases were seen in the recall population, the number of people serving determinate sentences of less than or equal to six months and those serving an Extended Determinate Sentence (see below).

Most prisoners under an immediate custodial sentence have been convicted of a violence against the person offence (32%), sexual offence (20%) or drug offence (17%). All three offence groups have seen increases in their population over the last year (of 11%, 11%, and 10% respectively in the 12 months to 31 December 2023).

Extended Determinate Sentences (EDS)

EDS constitute a custodial term, the majority of which is served in prison, followed by an additional extended period of licence in the community. They can be imposed if the offender is found guilty of, or has a previous conviction for, a specific sexual, violent, or terrorist offence. On 31 December 2023, 7,984 prisoners were serving such sentences; a 12% increase compared to the same time last year. Prisoners serving EDS account for 9% of the total prison population.

Indeterminate sentences

On 31 December 2023, there were 8,535 (8,195 male; 340 female) 'unreleased' prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) and life sentences). This is largely the same as 30 September 2022 (a less than 0.5% increase).

The number of 'unreleased' prisoners serving life sentences (7,308) has increased by 3% compared to one year ago whereas the number of 'unreleased' IPP prisoners fell by 12% to 1,227. At point of sentencing, offenders are given a minimum time period ("tariff") that they must serve in prison before they can apply to the Parole Board for release. The majority (58%) of the remaining 'unreleased' IPP prisoners have been held for at least ten years beyond the end of their tariff.

The number of 'recalled' prisoners serving life sentences increased by 16% to 876 when compared to 31 December 2022, whilst the number of 'recalled' IPP prisoners saw an 8% increase to 1,625.

Recall to custody

The population recalled to custody (12,068 prisoners) has increased by 13% relative to the total a year earlier. The increasing recall population is likely driven by a combination of factors such as a longer-term increase in the average length of determinate sentences and an increase in the number of people serving indeterminate sentences or sentences with an extended licence.

Foreign National Offenders (FNOs)

There were 10,423 (3,333 remand, 6,697 sentenced and 393 non-criminal) foreign nationals held in custody on 31 December 2023; representing 12% of the total prison population. The number of FNOs in the prison population has increased by 6% compared to 31 December 2022, similar to the percentage growth in the number of British Nationals. This increase was driven by a 13% increase in the FNO remand population and a 7% increase in the sentenced FNO population. The non-criminal Foreign National population fell by 33% over the same period. The most common nationalities after British Nationals in prisons are Albanian (13% of the FNO prison population), Polish (9%), Romanian (7%), Irish (6%) and Jamaican (4%).

² The sharp fall (-65% compared to December 2022) in the summary non-motoring immediate custodial sentenced population is primarily the result of data quality improvement work which has updated the offence group for some prisoners that were previously recorded in this category.

2. Prison receptions and admissions

19,028 offenders were received into custody as first receptions in the latest quarter.

12,747 were remand first receptions, 6,193 were sentenced first receptions and 88 were civil non-criminal first receptions.

Offender first receptions

The total number of first receptions between July and September 2023 was 20% higher than the same quarter in 2022. The number of first receptions have now exceeded levels observed pre-pandemic, which were around 17,000 to 18,000 per quarter.

There were 3,342 first receptions of foreign nationals between July and September 2023, which is 21% higher compared to the same period in 2022. The representation of foreign nationals amongst first receptions has remained the same since 2020, at around 18%. The five foreign nationalities with the highest numbers of first receptions in the latest quarter were: Albanian (534), Romanian (355), Polish (337), Irish (135), and Lithuanian (113). When taken together, these five nationalities accounted for 44% of the 3,342 first receptions of foreign nationals in Q3 (July to September) 2023.

Prison admissions

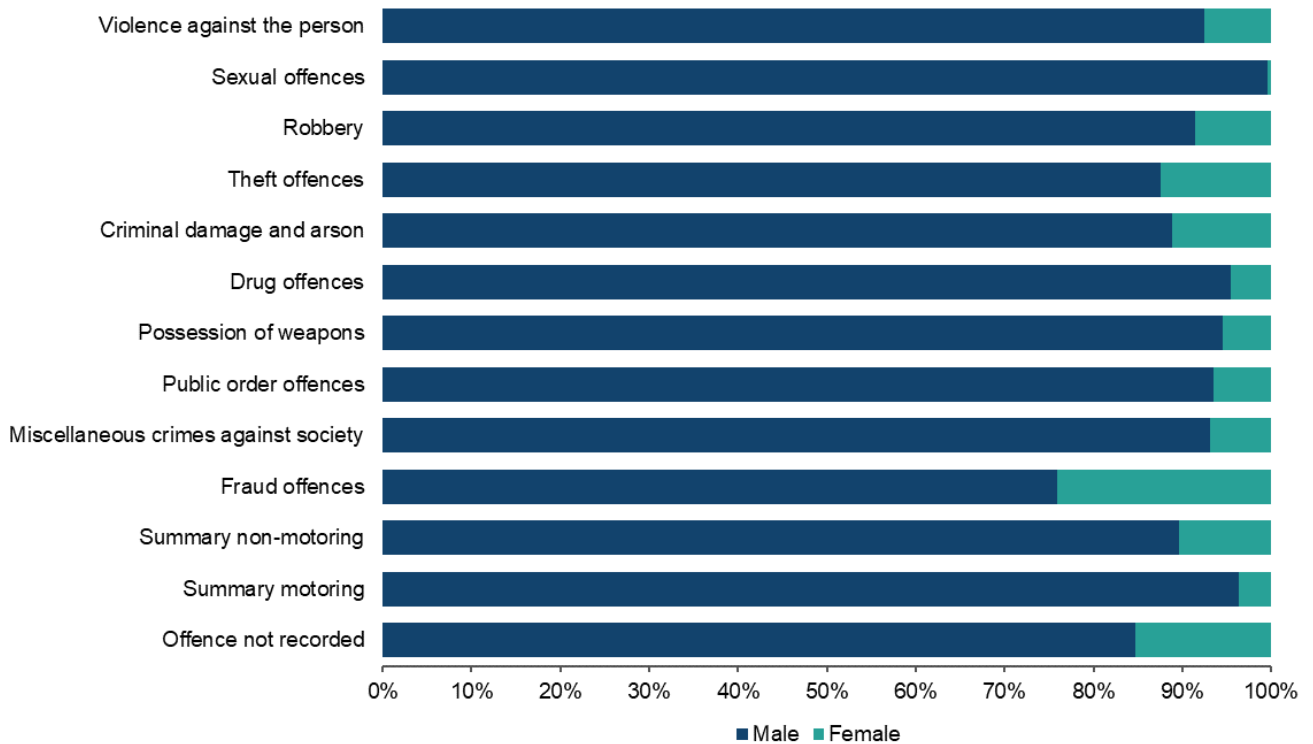
Compared to the same quarter in 2022, both remand and recall admissions increased. Untried remand admissions increased by 21%, while convicted unsentenced remand admissions rose by 39%. Recall admissions were up 19%.

When considering immediate custodial sentenced admissions, violence against the person had the largest number of sentenced admissions overall, accounting for 23% of all immediate custodial admissions. The number of immediate custodial sentenced admissions for drug offences increased by 70% when compared to the same period last year. The largest overall decrease occurred in the summary non-motoring group, down by 43% (this is likely attributable to offence code data improvement work – to reassign those recorded on summary breach codes to their original offence group).

Compared to females, males made up a larger proportion of sentenced admissions across each offence group, but there are certain offences where this difference was more pronounced - sexual offences and summary motoring (see figure 2 below).

When compared with the same quarter last year, there were increases in sentenced admissions across all sentence length bands, except for sentences of greater than 6 months to less than 12 months, which fell 5%. The largest percentage increase was for sentenced admissions for determinate sentences of 14 years or more (excluding indeterminate sentences) which rose 87%.

Figure 2: Representation (percentage) of male and female immediate custodial sentenced prisoner admissions in each offence group between July and September 2023 (Source: Table 2.5b)



Former Members of the Armed Forces

When individuals are first received into custody, they complete a Basic Custody Screening (BCS) process. This serves to identify their needs in areas including employment, childcare and healthcare. As part of this process, they are asked whether they had served in the armed services. Between July and September 2023, 161 matched individuals first received into custody answered that they had served in the armed services - this represented 3% of those who provided a response to the question at the point of their first reception during the latest quarter.

3. Releases

12,351 offenders were released from custody in the latest quarter.

12,237 releases from determinate sentences and 114 from indeterminate sentences.

Prison releases from custodial sentences

The number of prisoner releases between July and September 2023 was 3% higher than the same quarter in 2022. This was largely driven by increased releases from determinate sentences of less than 5 years.

Releases on Home Detention Curfew (HDC)

In June 2023 the maximum length of time an individual could be released early on HDC increased from 135 days to 180 days. This has resulted in large increases in the number of people eligible for HDC.

There were 1,783 offenders released on HDC in the latest quarter, a decrease of 20% compared to the same period last year. The number of offenders who might have been eligible for HDC (based on sentence length) over the same period was up 10% (11,136) compared to the same quarter in 2022.

Releases on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

ROTL numbers have continued to increase as shown by the 13% increase in ROTL incidences in the quarter ending September 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. In the latest quarter there were 110,238 incidences of ROTL, which reflects a return to pre-pandemic levels (of around 110,000 per quarter). Of the ROTL incidences in the latest quarter, 66% were for 'Work Related' reasons.

The number of individuals receiving at least one incidence of ROTL between July and September 2023 continued to rise following the changes to prison regimes, up 6% from the same quarter in 2022. 4,520 individuals were released on temporary licence in the latest quarter.

There were 250 Temporary Release Failures (TRF) between July and September 2023 which represents a rate of around 1 TRF for every 441 incidences of ROTL. This is compared to 1 TRF for every 502 incidences of ROTL in the same quarter last year.

Prisoner transfers

Between July and September 2023 there were 22,060 incidences of prisoner transfer, with 18,853 prisoners having at least one incidence of transfer. Both figures represent increases since the same period of 2022, with both having risen by 21%, and both figures represent a return to pre-pandemic levels (of around 22,000 transfers per quarter, and 18,000 prisoners having at least one transfer).

4. Adjudications

There were 53,087 adjudication outcomes between July and September 2023.

This is an increase of 35% on the same quarter in the previous year. Additional days were awarded as punishment on 1,177 occasions in this quarter.

Two thirds (65%) of adjudications were proven.

There was a 34% increase in the number of proven adjudications (to 34,484) from the same quarter in 2022. This in turn resulted in a 38% rise in the number of punishments (to 62,054).

A third (32%) of proven adjudications were for offences of 'disobedience and disrespect', with the next largest category being 'unauthorised transactions' (30%).

There were increases in the number of proven adjudications across all adjudication offence types. Comparing July to September 2023 with the same period in 2022, the largest percentage rise was for 'wilful damage', which rose by 56% (to 3,999). The number of proven adjudications for 'violence' in the latest quarter increased by 15% (to 4,685) compared to the same period in 2022. This is still below pre-pandemic levels (there were 4,830 proven adjudications for 'violence' between January and March 2020).

Additional days were awarded as punishment on 1,177 occasions between July and September 2023; this is a 87% rise compared with the same period in 2022. A total of 17,977 days were awarded in the latest quarter – this is a 91% rise compared with the same quarter in 2022 (9,400 days between July and September 2022).

More information about the trends in Adjudications between 2011 and 2018 can be found in '[The Adjudications Story](#)' publication.

5. Licence Recalls

The number of licence recalls between July and September 2023 was 7,030, of which 385 were recalls from Home Detention Curfew (HDC).

The total number of recalls increased by 13% compared to the same quarter in 2022.

The total number of quarterly recalls trended upwards between October-December 2016 and July-September 2019. There was a marked increase in the number of quarterly recalls from early 2018 to July-September 2019, mostly due to increases in the number of HDC recalls and recalls of offenders from determinate sentences of 12 months or more. These numbers then began to fall, and the downward shift was accelerated by the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions. Following relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions in early 2021, the number of quarterly recalls has generally gone up with the latest figure being an increase of 13% from a year ago.

Following relative stability up to January-March 2020, the number of quarterly recalls of offenders released from a sentence of under 12 months (ORA recalls) noticeably began to fall, falling below 2,000 for the first time since July-September 2016, partly due to the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions. The relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions and the unification of the probation services in June 2021 (where these offenders are now recalled under a set of requirements different from that under the old Community Rehabilitation Companies) have contributed to increases in these numbers, with the latest figure (2,881) representing an increase of 5% from the previous quarter and an increase of 34% from a year ago. Increases in these recalls have mostly driven increases in overall recall numbers since the unification in mid-2021.

The pattern in quarterly recalls of offenders with a sentence of 12 months or more (including those with indeterminate sentences) used to mirror that of the overall quarterly recalls during relative stability in ORA recalls. In recent quarters, the share of these recalls has dropped from about 2 out of 3 to about 6 out of 10 recalls, coinciding with increases in ORA recalls. Between July and September 2023, there were 4,149 recalls of such offenders, representing an increase of 2% from the previous quarter and an increase of 2% from a year ago.

Ethnicity proportions in quarterly recalls have remained relatively stable, with about 8 in 10 recalls being white, 8% being black and 4% being Asian in the latest figures.

There usually is more than one reason for recalling an offender on licence. Of recalls in July-September 2023, about 26% involved a charge of further offending, 76% involved non-compliance, 33% involved failure to keep in touch, and 27% involved failure to reside.

Between July and September 2023, 100 IPP prisoners and 50 prisoners serving a life sentence were rereleased, having previously been returned to custody for a breach of licence conditions. The total of these releases is unchanged from the same quarter a year ago.

Offenders not returned to custody

Of all those released on licence and recalled to custody due to breaching the conditions of their licence between April 1999 and September 2023, there were 2,361 who had not been returned to custody by the end of December 2023.

A further 15 offenders had not been returned to custody as of December 2023 after recall between 1984 and April 1999, meaning the total number of offenders not returned to custody at the end of December 2023 was 2,376. These figures include some offenders believed to be dead or living abroad but who have not been confirmed as dead or deported.

Of the 2,376 not returned to custody by 31 December 2023, 353 had originally been serving a prison sentence for violence against the person offences and a further 75 for sexual offences.

6. Probation

Statistical notice

As we transition from legacy systems to more modern data processing methods to enable greater functionality that, in turn, can present further opportunities for more thorough, accurate and timely analysis, and insight, publication of the July to September 2023 probation statistics has been postponed and will be published, alongside the statistics for October to December 2023, in April 2024.

At the same time, we are also reviewing how we publish probation statistics, and where they should be located. This pause in publication, which was preannounced in earlier editions of this publication, will allow us to focus on transitioning our data processes, make improvements to our publication, and develop these statistics to meet new and developing user needs. Users can contact us via the email address probation-statistics-enquiries@justice.gov.uk if they have any queries.

This decision has been discussed with both the Head of Profession for Statistics in the Ministry of Justice and the Office for Statistics Regulation. Moving to the new system retains our commitment to customer needs, delivering quality and value, and consolidating the trustworthiness of these statistics.

Further information

This publication presents quarterly data trends.

Our statisticians regularly review the content of publications. Development of new and improved statistical outputs is usually dependent on reallocating existing resources. As part of our continual review and prioritisation, we welcome user feedback on existing outputs including content, breadth, frequency, and methodology. Please send any comments you have on this publication including suggestions for further developments or reductions in content.

Accompanying files

As well as this bulletin, the following products are published as part of this release:

- A 'Guide to Offender Management Statistics', which provides comprehensive information about data sources and quality, as well as key legislative changes.
- A document outlining the 'Users of Offender Management Statistics'
- A set of data tables, covering each section of this bulletin, including a prison population data tool.

National Statistics status

National Statistics are [accredited official statistics](#)³ that 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 UK Statistics Authority's (UKSA) regulatory arm. The UKSA considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in July 2012. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.



It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for 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.

Contact

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Non-Press enquiries about the **Probation chapter** of this publication should be sent to: probation-statistics-enquiries@justice.gov.uk

Non-Press enquiries about all **other chapters** of this publication should be sent to: OMSQ-SiC-publications@justice.gov.uk

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URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

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³ Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.