



Offender Management Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales

Quarterly: October to December 2023 (inc. annual calendar year 2023)

Prison population: 31 March 2024

Main points

87,869 prisoners in England and Wales as at 31 March 2024



The total prison population was 4% higher than at the same point in the previous year.

17,242 first receptions into prison between October and December 2023



The number of first receptions represented a rise of 5% compared to the same period in 2022.

11,931 releases from sentences between October and December 2023



This was 1% lower than the same period in 2022.

55,348 adjudication outcomes between October and December 2023



This was a rise of 34% compared to the same period in 2022. Additional days were awarded as punishment on 1,358 occasions – this was 90% higher than the same period in 2022.

7,152 licence recalls between October and December 2023



This was a 17% increase on the same quarter in 2022.

238,765 offenders under probation supervision as at 31 December 2023



This is 1% lower than at the same point in 2022.

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](#)'.

Change to publication table formatting

In response to user needs – including those using screen-readers and other accessibility equipment, and making the data more machine readable – we have reformatted the data tables for Population, Receptions, Releases and Adjudications chapters. This has also changed the table numbering. An **Old to New Table Index** has been published to help guide users.

Restricted Patients

This can now be found on its own page (to help users searching from the gov.uk home page). Please see the 'Related content' link on the right hand side of the OMSQ publication page.

Statistician's comment

In this publication we are reporting on the prison population as at 31 March 2024, with comparisons to the same point in 2023. Over this 12-month period, the total prison population has risen by around 3,500 (which represents a 4% increase) to 87,869. The population as at 31 March 2024 was around 4,900 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 March 2023 and 31 March 2024). There were increases over the past 12 months in both elements of the remand population - the 'untried' population (those held pre-conviction) increased by 10% and the 'convicted unsentenced' population (those held after having been convicted but awaiting their sentencing outcome) increased by 19%. 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 March 2024 was 16,458. This represents the highest level for at least 50 years (effectively a 'record high').

The 'recall prison population' (those returned to prison for breaching their release conditions) was 12,344 as at 31 March 2024 (8% higher than 31 March 2023, and also a 31 March '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 October to December 2023 (with the comparison period being October to December 2022). The number of prisoner first receptions from October to December 2023 was around 17,200 (5% higher than the equivalent period in 2022).

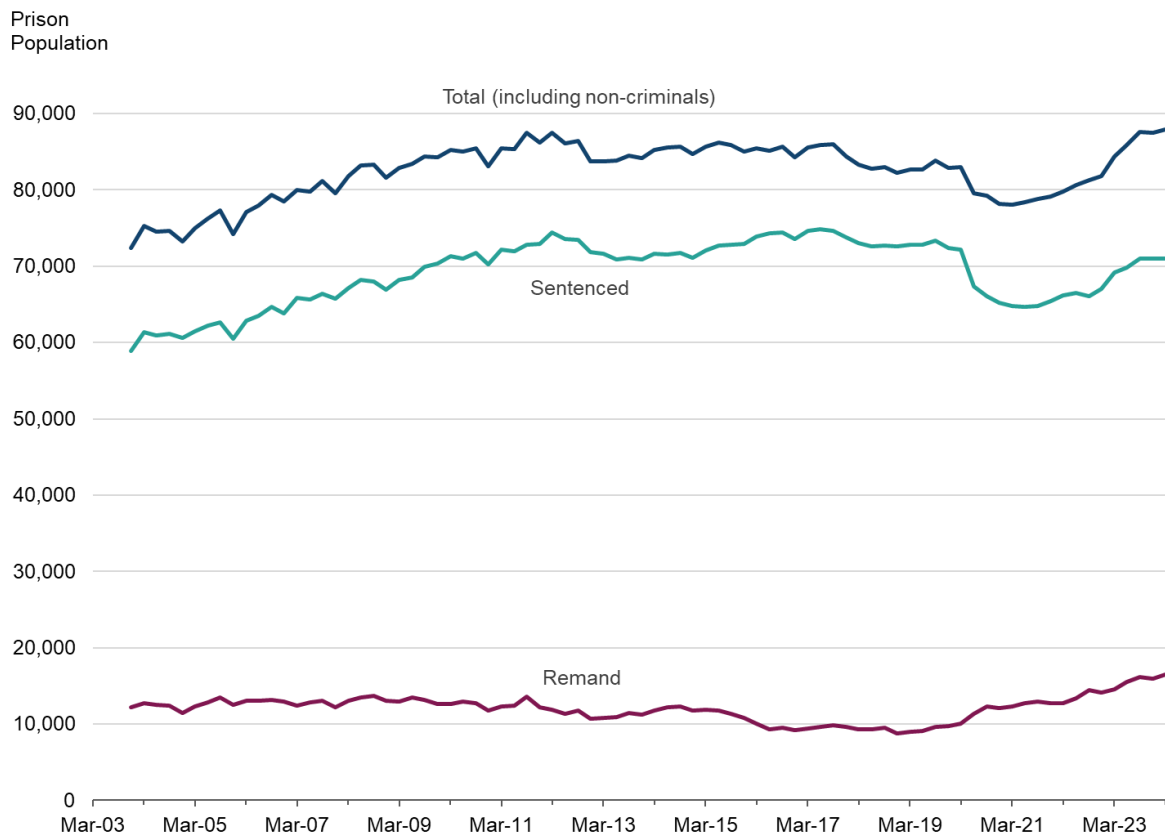
For the second successive quarter, Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) and incidences of prisoner transfers between prisons have 'bounced back' to pre-COVID levels. There were around 111,000 incidences of ROTL between October and December 2023, as well as around 21,400 prisoner transfers.

1. Population

The prison population stood at 87,869 on 31 March 2024.

The sentenced prison population stood at 70,999 (81% of the total); the remand prison population stood at 16,458 (19%) and the non-criminal prison population stood at 412 (less than 0.5%).

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



Remand prison population

The 31 March 2024 remand population figure of 16,458 is 13% higher than in March 2023 and is the highest figure in at least the last fifty years. The untried prison population rose by 10% (to 10,680) when compared to the end of March 2023 whilst the convicted unsentenced population rose by 19% (to 5,778) over the same period.

Most of those in custody on remand were being held for either violence against the person (44% of the untried population and 31% of the convicted unsentenced population); or drug offences (13% of the untried population and 19% 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 (57% increase in the untried population, 89% increase in the convicted unsentenced population in the last 12 months). Data improvement work has resulted in some large percentage

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

changes for other offence groups too, including a number of 'summary non-motoring' prisoners being reassigned to a different offence group.

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 the same, or greater, proportional representation in the remand population than they do in the sentenced population.

Sentenced prison population

The sentenced population was 70,999 which is a 3% increase from the same point 12 months earlier. The largest percentage increase, 10%, was seen for those serving an Extended Determinate Sentence (see below). Meanwhile decreases were seen in the population serving shorter sentences, including a fall of 32% in those serving a sentence of greater than 6 months to less than 12 months, and in the non-criminal population, which is down by 38%.

End of Custody Supervised Licence (ECSL), which has been in operation since October 2023, will have influenced the prison population by releasing specific groups of offenders up to 18 days early (changed to 'around 35-60 days' early for certain eligible prisoners from mid-March 2024).

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 6%, 6%, and 5% respectively in the 12 months to 31 March 2024).

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 March 2024, 8,135 prisoners were serving such sentences; a 10% increase compared to the same time last year. Prisoners serving EDS account for 9% of the total prison population.

Indeterminate sentences

On 31 March 2024, there were 8,526 (8,181 male; 345 female) 'unreleased' prisoners serving indeterminate sentences (Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) and life sentences). This is largely the same as 31 March 2023 (a less than 0.5% increase).

The number of 'unreleased' prisoners serving life sentences (7,346) has increased by 3% compared to one year ago whereas the number of 'unreleased' IPP prisoners fell by 13% to 1,180. 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 (60%) 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 6% to 853 when compared to 31 March 2023, whilst the number of 'recalled' IPP prisoners saw a 4% increase to 1,616.

Recall to custody

The population recalled to custody (12,344 prisoners) has increased by 8% 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 10,422 (3,422 remand, 6,632 sentenced and 368 non-criminal) foreign nationals held in custody on 31 March 2024; representing 12% of the total prison population. The number of FNOs in the prison population has increased by 3% compared to 31 March 2023, similar to the percentage growth in the number of British Nationals. This increase was driven by a 9% increase in the FNO remand population and a 4% increase in the sentenced FNO population. The non-

criminal Foreign National population fell by 40% over the same period. The most common nationalities after British Nationals in prisons are Albanian (12% of the FNO prison population), Polish (9%), Romanian (7%), Irish (6%) and Jamaican (4%).

2. Prison receptions and admissions

Summary of annual statistics

70,828 individuals were received into custody as first receptions in 2023.

This represents a 12% increase from the previous year

First receptions

The number of annual first prison receptions was broadly stable during the 15-year period between 1994 and 2009 (with an average of around 129,200 each year). Since 2011 the number of annual first prison receptions had fallen year-on-year to a low of 59,440 in 2021. However, in 2022 and 2023 the number of first receptions increased again, to 70,828. This figure remains below pre-pandemic levels (there were 72,172 first receptions in 2019).

First prison receptions of Foreign Nationals

Around 18% of the total first prison receptions in 2023 were of foreign nationals, this is a slightly increasing trend over the past few years.

Five nationalities accounted for just under half (46%) of the total foreign national first prison receptions in 2023: Albanian (2,171), Romanian (1,522), Polish (1,233), Irish (552), and Lithuanian (470).

Prison admissions

In 2023, there were 36,412 untried prison admissions (i.e. for those on pre-trial remand); this is 17% higher than in 2022. Most untried prison admissions during 2023 were for an alleged violence against the person (VATP) or drug offence, with 46% of the total untried prison admissions during 2023 being for one of those alleged offences.

There were 22,734 convicted unsentenced entries to custody during 2023 (i.e. after having been found guilty at court but awaiting their sentencing hearing), a 19% increase from 2022. For convicted unsentenced admissions for males, around 44% of prison admissions during 2023 was for a VATP or drug offence. For women, 49% of convicted unsentenced prison admissions were for a VATP or theft offence.

There were 46,519 sentenced admissions to prison in 2023, an 8% rise compared to 2022. Almost half (47%) of sentenced admissions during 2023 were for sentences of less than 12 months.

Compared to 2022, there was a 8% increase in the numbers of immediate custodial (non-remand and non-fine defaulter) sentenced admissions. There were some changes across offence groups, linked to data improvement work (including reclassifying a number of 'summary non-motoring' prisoners). The largest proportionate increases for recorded offence groups occurred for sexual offences, theft offences and VATP with a 21%, 17% and 16% increase respectively. The largest proportionate decreases occurred for summary non-motoring and criminal damage and arson with a 43% and 31% decrease respectively.

After being released from custody, if an offender breaches their licence conditions, they can be recalled to custody. During 2023, there were 26,373 recall admissions to custody, this is a 18% increase compared to 2022; driven by a 35% increase in recall admissions from determinate sentences of less than 12 months. In 2023, recall admissions from determinate sentences of 12 months or more represented 56% of all recall admissions.

Summary of quarterly statistics

The total number of first receptions between October to December 2023 was 5% higher than the same quarter in 2022. The number of first receptions are now in line with levels observed pre-pandemic, which were around 17,000 to 18,000 per quarter.

Compared to the same quarter in 2022, both remand and recall admissions increased. Untried remand admissions increased by 10%, while convicted unsentenced remand admissions rose by 14%. Recall admissions were up 17%.

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 October and December 2023, 172 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.

In October 2023, the MoJ published the latest release of 'Ex-Service Personnel in the Prison Population' – which included an estimate of the numbers and characteristics of ex-service personnel in the prison population. This was published as part of the Offender Management Statistics; April to June 2023 here: [Offender Management Statistics quarterly: April to June 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2023)

3. Releases

Summary of annual statistics

48,301 offenders were released from custody during 2023.

47,830 releases from determinate sentences and 471 from indeterminate sentences.

Prison releases from custodial sentences

In 2023, there were 47,830 offenders released from determinate sentences, an increase of 3% from 2022; however, this remains below pre-pandemic levels (an average of around 69,000 per year from 2015-2019)

There was a 3% fall in the number of releases from determinate sentences of '4 years or more', as compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, the number of releases from determinate sentences of 'less than 4 years' rose by 5% compared to the previous year.

The number of males and females released from determinate sentences increased by 3% and 6%, respectively between 2022 and 2023.

471 offenders were released from indeterminate sentences in 2023; a 2% decrease overall compared to 2022. This was driven by releases from IPP sentences which decreased by 10%, whereas releases from life sentences increased by 4%.

The mean sentence length for those released from determinate sentences in 2023 was 25.4 months (a fall from 25.8 months for those released in 2022), confirming the observation from 2022 that the longer-term trend of annual increases, which began in 2015, has ended. The equivalent median sentence length remained at 12.0 months for the fourth year running. Mean time served (including time spent on remand) also fell for the second consecutive year, from 15.5 months in 2022 to 15.3 months in 2023. The equivalent median figure remained the same as in 2022, at 6.0 months.

Releases on Home Detention Curfew (HDC)

7,920 offenders were released on HDC in 2023, this is 9% lower than in 2022. The number of offenders potentially eligible for HDC (based on their sentence length) rose by 9% over the same period.

Of offenders released on HDC in 2022 (the latest year for which recall data is currently available), 15% were recalled, a slightly lower proportion than the previous year's 16%.

Releases on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

In 2023, there were 416,621 incidences of ROTL. This is 11% higher than in 2022 and reflects the return to normal prison activity (including ROTL) as the post-COVID recovery continues. However, this figure remains 5% below 2019's figure of 436,531 incidences of ROTL.

The number of individuals released on temporary licence rose by 4% from 2022 to 7,359, however this figure remains below that seen pre-pandemic, 16% below the highest number of individuals released on temporary licence, which was seen in 2019 (8,740).

Prisoner transfers

As with ROTL above, the incidences of prisoner transfer have also increased compared to 2022, rising 13% to 83,224. This figure remains below that seen pre-pandemic, 3% lower than 2019's figure. The number of individuals who received at least one transfer in the period also increased by 13%, to the highest figure since 2017 (59,906).

Summary of quarterly statistics

11,931 offenders were released from custody in the latest quarter.

11,809 releases from determinate sentences and 122 from indeterminate sentences.

Prison releases from custodial sentences

Between October and December 2023, the number of prisoners released slightly decreased compared to that observed in the same period in 2022 with an overall 1% decrease. The biggest increase was seen for releases from extended determinate sentences (EDS) compared to the same quarter in 2022 (25%), whereas the largest decrease was observed for releases from sentences of 7 years to less than 10 years (-28%).

Releases on Home Detention Curfew (HDC)

The number of offenders released on HDC in the latest quarter dropped to 1,965, a decrease of 3% 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 13% (11,643) compared to the same quarter in 2022.

Releases on Temporary Licence (ROTL)

There were 110,971 incidences of ROTL during the quarter ending December 2023, which (as the post-COVID recovery continues) represents a 12% increase compared to the same quarter in 2022. 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 October and December 2023 continued to rise also, up 6% from the same quarter in 2022. 4,508 individuals were released on temporary licence in the latest quarter.

There were 272 Temporary Release Failures (TRF) between October and December 2023. This represents a rate of around 1 TRF for every 400 incidences of ROTL.

Prisoner transfers

Between October and December 2023 there were 21,411 incidences of prisoner transfer, with 18,492 prisoners having at least one incidence of transfer. Both figures represent increases since the same period of 2022, with rises of 16% and 18% respectively, as transfers continue to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

4. Adjudications

Summary of annual statistics

There were 203,696 adjudication outcomes in 2023.

65% of these adjudications were proven.

During 2023 there were 203,696 adjudications – this is a rise of 31% compared to 2022. Of these, proven adjudications increased from 102,792 to 132,202 (a 29% increase) over the same period, driven most strongly by a large increase in ‘unauthorised transactions’. This rise in adjudications can be seen across most demographic groups.

After a substantial fall observed in 2020 and 2021, the total number of proven adjudications for ‘unauthorised transactions’ (those include possession of alcohol, drugs and other prohibited items), has increased by 36% (to 40,411). Proven adjudications for ‘disobedience and disrespect’ offences, increased by 21% (to 41,996). These offences account for 31% and 32% of the total respectively in 2023 and along with ‘violence’ (14% of the total), these make up the three biggest offence groups for proven adjudications. Other than ‘violence’, all major adjudication offence types returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

Use of ‘Additional Days’ as punishment

The upward trend in the number of occasions where additional days were awarded reached a peak in 2018. While periods of national lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions saw decreases in the use of ‘additional days’ as punishment, this has risen from 2,571 occasions (2022) to 4,430 in the latest year. This remains lower than pre-pandemic levels (of around 20,000 incidences of additional days awarded per year).

When additional days were awarded as punishment in 2023, an average of 16 additional days were added (this has remained unchanged compared to 2022).

Summary of quarterly statistics

There were 55,348 adjudication outcomes between October and December 2023.

This is an increase of 34% on the same quarter in the previous year. Additional days were awarded as punishment on 1,358 occasions in this quarter.

Two thirds (63%) of adjudications were proven.

There was a 31% increase in the number of proven adjudications (to 34,626) from the same quarter in 2022. This in turn contributed to a 56% rise in the number of punishments (to 71,650).

There were increases in the number of proven adjudications across all major adjudication offence types. Almost a third (32%) of proven adjudications were for offences of ‘unauthorised transactions’, with the next largest category being ‘disobedience and disrespect (31%)’.

The number of proven adjudications for 'unauthorised transactions' rose by 36% (to 11,057), while 'disobedience and disrespect' offences increased by 23% (to 10,761).

The number of proven adjudications for 'violence' in the latest quarter increased by 19% (to 4,652) 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 1,358 occasions between October and December 2023; this has almost doubled compared with the same period in 2022. A total of 22,107 days were awarded in the latest quarter – this has also almost doubled compared with the same quarter in 2022 (11,660 days between October and December 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 October and December 2023 was 7,152, of which 399 were recalls from Home Detention Curfew (HDC).

The total number of recalls increased by 17% 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 17% 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 (3,025) representing an increase of 5% from the previous quarter and an increase of 27% 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 October and December 2023, there were 4,127 recalls of such offenders, representing a slight decrease of 0.5% from the previous quarter but an increase of 11% 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 5% being Asian in the latest figures.

There usually is more than one reason for recalling an offender on licence. Of recalls in October-December 2023, about 26% involved a charge of further offending, 77% involved non-compliance, 34% involved failure to keep in touch, and 26% involved failure to reside. These proportions have remained relatively stable.

Between October and December 2023, 146 IPP prisoners and 58 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 an increase of 41% from a year ago. This increase mainly involves IPP prisoners, and it coincides with a reduction in the quarterly recall IPP population in prison for the first time in 3 years.

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 December 2023, there were 2,401 who had not been returned to custody by the end of March 2024.

A further 15 offenders had not been returned to custody as of March 2024 after recall between 1984 and April 1999, meaning the total number of offenders not returned to custody at the end of March 2024 was 2,416. These figures include some offenders believed to be dead or living abroad but who have not been confirmed as dead or deported.

Of the 2,416 not returned to custody by 31 March 2024, 362 had originally been serving a prison sentence for violence against the person offences and a further 73 for sexual offences.

6. Probation

An update on the Probation data transition to more modern data processing methods is included at the end of this section, under ‘Probation data process transition’.

Summary of annual statistics

The total number of offenders on probation (i.e., court orders and pre/post-release supervision) at the end of December 2023 was 238,765.

This represents a 1% decrease compared to the end of December 2022 and an increase of 9% compared to December 2013.

Latest figures continue to show that the trends in probation starts and caseload volumes are at similar levels to those observed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic²; this follows increases more broadly since operational restrictions³ introduced in response to the pandemic, were lifted in late spring 2020.

Caseload

Following year on year decreases up to 2014, the number of offenders supervised by the Probation Service reached a series peak of 267,146 in 2016. However, at the end of December 2020, the total probation caseload stood at 223,973, representing a 10% decrease compared to the figure of 247,759 reported at the end of 31 December 2019 and a 16% decrease since 2016. By the end of December 2021, the probation caseload had risen to 238,500 and then stabilised, increasing by less than 1% between December 2021

² Total caseload as at 31 December 2019 (i.e. the last reporting period prior to the pandemic) stood at 247,759. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/981212/Probation_Q4_2020.ods.

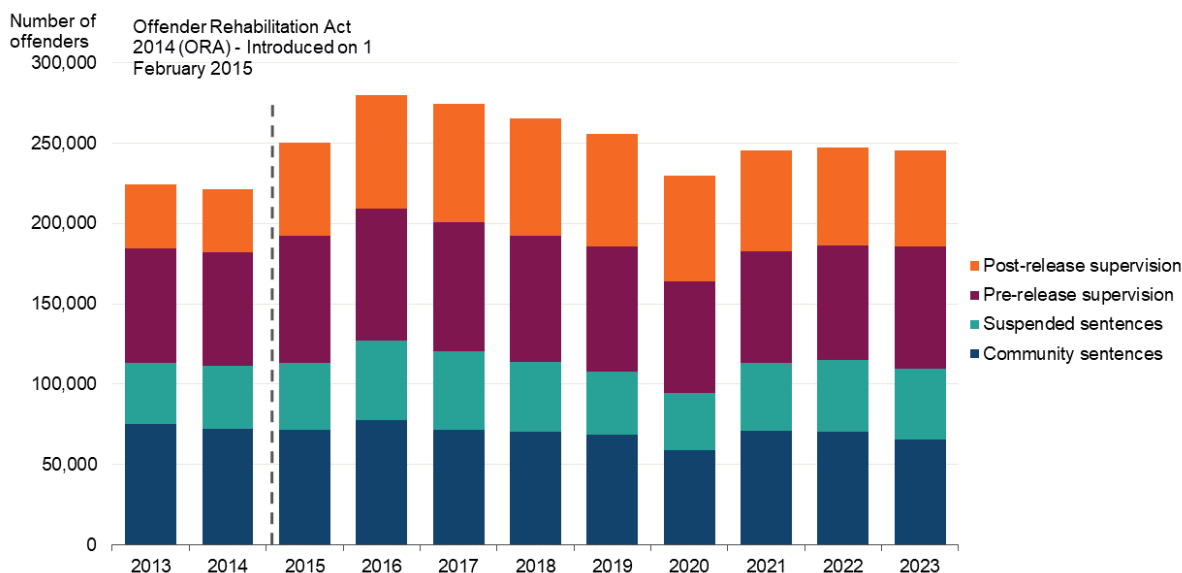
³ This included temporary court closures.

and December 2023 (238,765), indicating that caseload figures have been recovering to pre-pandemic levels⁴.

The increase in the probation caseload between 2014 and 2016 can be explained by the implementation of the Offender Rehabilitation Act (ORA) in February 2015 under which all offenders on a custodial sentence are subjected to statutory supervision on release from prison. Previously, only adults sentenced to over 12 months in custody and all young offenders were subject to statutory supervision.

Between 2014 and 2016, the number of offenders supervised before or after release from prison increased by 37% to 149,522. At the end of December 2023, this figure stood at 135,370, representing an increase of 2% compared to 2022, but still 8% below the figures recorded at the end of December 2019.

Figure 2: Number of offenders under Probation Service supervision, 31 December 2013 to 2023



Source: The table of data that this graph is based on is labelled as ‘Table 6.13.’ in the annual Probation tables from 2023. In Probation tables published between 2018 and 2022, this table is labelled as ‘Table 4.13’. In Probation tables published prior to 2018, this table is labelled as ‘Table 4.7’⁵.

The total court order caseload was relatively stable between 2013 (110,950) and 2015 (111,422) and then increased in 2016 by 12% to 124,643. Following a gradual decline between 2016 and 2019, it decreased over the next year by 12% to stand at 93,027 at the end of December 2020, and then rose by 19% to 110,965 in the year up to December

⁴ Total caseload as at 31 December 2019 (i.e. the last reporting period prior to the pandemic) stood at 247,759. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/981212/Probation_Q4_2020.ods.

⁵ The number of offenders on the probation caseload in 2020 was substantially reduced as a result of the operational restrictions that were put in place on the 23 March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the impact of these operational restrictions continued into subsequent periods, figures in more recent periods have recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

2021 and again to 112,851 at the end of December 2022, before decreasing by 4% to 107,785 at the end of December 2023.

Following a 4% decrease in the number of offenders on a community order (CO) from 2013 to 2015, the number increased in 2016 before decreasing to 58,402 at the end of December 2020. This figure then increased by 20% to 70,371 at the end of December 2021, the highest figure since 2017, but decreased slightly over the year 2022 to 70,051, and then decreased by 7% to 65,400 as of 31 December 2023. The number of offenders on a suspended sentence order (SSO) with requirements increased from 38,227 in 2013 to 49,541 in 2016. The number subsequently decreased again to stand at 35,198 at the end of December 2020, followed by increases of 19% and 6% to 41,892 and 44,258 in years 2021 and 2022 respectively, before stabilising between 2022 and 2023.

Starts

The total number of offenders starting court order or pre-release supervision by the Probation Service in 2023 increased by 3% to 141,127 compared with 2022, and this was primarily due to an 8% increase in the number of offenders starting pre-release supervision.

Between 2013 and 2019, the number of court order starts decreased by 26% to 104,038, and then by 23% to a series low of 79,621 in 2020. In 2021, court order starts increased by 16% to 92,718, but subsequently decreased again by 3% to 89,885 in 2022, before remaining constant between 2022 and 2023, to 90,014. For example, COs starts decreased by 2% between 2022 and 2023, the smallest year-on-year change since 2019, while starts for SSO with requirements increased by 4% over the same period.

The average length of CO starts increased slightly from 13.4 months in 2022 to 13.6 months in 2023. The average length of SSO with requirements starts also increased slightly from 18.0 months to 18.1 months over the same period.

As a result of ORA being implemented in February 2015, the number of offenders starting pre-release supervision in custody increased by 114% from 45,063 in 2014 to 96,594 in 2016. Between 2019 and 2020, this figure decreased by 20% to 65,505 and then, unlike court order starts, which saw an increase in 2021, decreased by 8% in 2021 and by 12% in 2022, before increasing by 8% in 2023, the first year-on-year increase in pre-release supervision since 2016.

Pre-sentence reports

Between 2013 and 2019, the total number of pre-sentence reports (PSRs) prepared by the Probation Service decreased by 37% to 103,004, reflecting the downward trend in the

number of offenders sentenced in all courts over the same period⁶ ⁷. This number then fell by 34% in 2020 to a series low of 68,077 before increasing by 30% in 2021 to 88,657⁸, decreasing in 2022 by 6% to 83,240, and increasing in 2023 by 10% to 91,368.

Summary of quarterly statistics

Starts

Between October and December 2023, 39,956 offenders started court order or pre-release supervision by the Probation Supervision (Figure 3), representing a decrease of 3% on the previous quarter and an increase of 3% compared to the same quarter a year ago.

During the quarter October to December 2023, 23,880 offenders started court orders, representing a 1% decrease compared to the previous quarter and a 5% increase compared to the same quarter in the previous year. The number of offenders starting community orders decreased by 2% compared to the previous quarter and increased by 4% compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

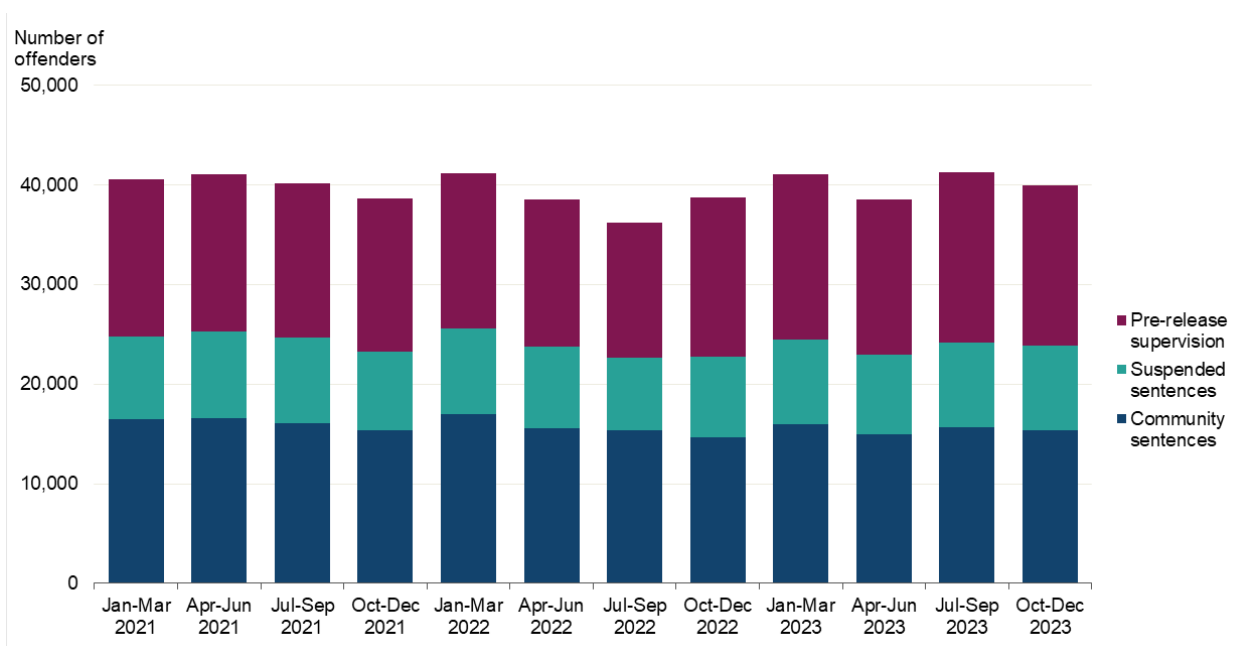
The number of offenders who started suspended sentence orders with requirements between October and December 2023 was fairly similar to that in the previous quarter (seeing a decrease of 0.2%). However, it has increased by 6% to 8,548 compared with the same quarter in the previous year. Those starting pre-release supervision decreased by 6% in comparison with the last quarter and increased by 1% compared with the same quarter last year to 16,090.

Figure 3: Number of offenders starting supervision under the Probation Service, January to March 2021 to October to December 2023

⁶ Table Q5.1a in the Criminal Justice System Quarterly Statistics publication states the number of offenders sentenced at all courts in the 12 months ending June 2012 to the 12 months ending June 2022. This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-june-2022>.

⁷ In the year ending June 2019, the number of offenders given sentences for community sentences, SSOs and custodial sentences decreased by 43%, 13% and 25% respectively compared to the year ending June 2012; a decrease of 35% was seen when comparing the combined number of these sentences across this period.

⁸ A sharp decrease in offenders sentenced between April and June 2020 caused by temporary court closures resulting from COVID-19 operational restrictions was followed by increases over the latter end of 2020 and into 2021 due to courts reopening and increasing workload again. The combined number of offenders sentenced to community sentences, SSOs and custodial sentences, consequently, increased by 6% between June 2020 and June 2021, potentially contributing to the rise in PSRs prepared over 2021.



Source: Table 6.1 of the quarterly probation tables⁹.

Overall, between October and December 2023, 25,090 requirements were started under COs and 15,887 under SSOs, representing an increase of 8% and 10% respectively compared to the same period in the previous year. In the latest quarter, increases were seen across most requirement types under CO and SSOs. Furthermore, rehabilitation remains the most common requirement included within a CO and SSO and, compared to the same quarter a year ago, the number of rehabilitation requirements started under COs rose by 10% to 11,151 and rose by 8% to 7,129 under SSOs.

Under COs, mental health treatment (MHTR), drug treatment, and alcohol treatment requirements increased by 77% to 654, by 31% to 1,196, and by 23% to 1,099, respectively, compared to the same period last year. Under SSOs, MHTR, drug treatment, and alcohol abstinence and monitoring requirements increased by 56% to 376, by 38% to 815, and by 25% to 517, respectively, compared to the same period last year.

The increase in MHTRs within COs and SSOs over recent quarters is linked to a scaling up of the availability to sentence to this requirement across the criminal courts of England. This follows the introduction of new MHTR services provided by NHS England and is part of an initiative¹⁰ that aims to reduce reoffending and short custodial sentences by addressing the underlying mental health issues which may be contributing towards offending behaviours.

In terms of the most frequently used combinations of requirements under COs, rehabilitation combined separately with MHTR, drug treatment and alcohol treatment requirements increased by 58%, 23% and 17% respectively in October to December 2023

⁹ The number of offenders on the probation caseload in 2020 was substantially reduced as a result of the operational restrictions that were put in place on the 23 March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the impact of these operational restrictions continued into subsequent periods, figures in more recent periods have recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

¹⁰ The initiative started in 2017 in five areas, with a national roll out to be completed by mid-2024.

compared to the same period a year ago. Conversely, there was a 10% decrease over the same period for rehabilitation combined with accredited programmes. Under SSOs, rehabilitation combined separately with MHTR, drug treatment, and unpaid work requirements increased by 57%, 41%, and 10% respectively.

Terminations

Of the 14,662 COs and 7,227 SSOs terminated between October and December 2023, 70% and 78% respectively were terminated successfully, i.e., ran their full course, or were terminated early for good progress.

Pre-sentence reports

In the quarter October to December 2023, the total number of PSRs prepared by the Probation Service was similar to that in the previous quarter, decreasing by less than 1% to 22,916, and increasing by 5% compared to the same quarter in 2022.

The number of SSOs proposed in PSRs has been steeply declining since 2018. This decline is associated with the change in 2018 of the guidelines to probation staff on recommending suspended sentence orders in PSRs¹¹. As a result, concordance rates for SSOs should be interpreted with caution. In the year ending December 2023, 88% of immediate custodial sentences proposed in PSRs resulted in that sentence being given, representing the highest concordance between sentence proposed and sentence given, excluding SSOs.

Probation data process transition

As stated in the [April to June 2023 edition of the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly publication](#), the Probation Statistics team have begun the process of transitioning their 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.

As part of this transition, provisional probation starts, caseload, and termination figures sourced using the new data processing method have been produced and are presented in this section as comparative statistics, accompanied by an explanation of some of the more apparent differences that have arisen using the new process.

¹¹ The Sentencing Council guideline, effective from 1 February 2017, provides guidance for sentencers on the imposition of community and custodial sentences, and is available at: <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/overarching-guides/magistrates-court/item/imposition-of-community-and-custodial-sentences/>.

Starts

Table 1: Offenders starting court order and pre-release supervision by the Probation Service, by sentence type, October to December 2023, England and Wales, sourced using the current and new data process

Sentence type	Current (Published)	New (Provisional)	Difference
All court orders and pre-release supervision	39,956	39,782	-0.4% (-174)
All court orders	23,880	23,897	0.1% (17)
All community sentences	15,335	15,333	<0.1% (-2)
Community orders	15,198	15,196	<0.1% (-2)
Other sentences	8,550	8,569	0.2% (19)
Suspended sentence orders with requirements	8,548	8,567	0.2% (19)
Pre-release supervision	16,090	15,899	-1.2% (-191)

While most of the differences under the new data process are minimal, the most apparent variance arises when comparing pre-release supervision starts figures. Around 85% of the difference between the current and the new data process for pre-release supervision starts can be attributed to duplicate records of offenders within the current data. While these records are not filtered out using the current process, due to limitations of the data extraction process, the slightly lower figure of pre-release supervision starts produced by the new process is more reflective of the actual number of offenders that began pre-release supervision in this period.

The remaining difference of around 15%, can be attributed to differences in the timing of when the data was extracted from the data source between the current and new data processing methods.

Caseload

Table 2: Offenders supervised by the Probation Service by sentence type, at end of 31 December 2023, England and Wales, sourced using the current and new data process

Sentence type	Current (Published)	New (Provisional)	Difference
All supervision	238,765	238,938	0.1% (173)
All supervision in the community	164,359	164,136	-0.1% (-223)
All court orders	107,785	107,962	0.2% (177)
All community sentences	65,400	65,513	0.2% (113)
Community orders	64,832	64,935	0.2% (103)
Other sentences	44,259	44,350	0.2% (91)
Suspended sentence orders with requirements	44,256	44,347	0.2% (91)
All pre- and post-release supervision	135,370	135,405	<0.1% (35)

Again, while most of the differences are minimal, we have found that the majority can be attributed to variations in the timing of data extraction from the data source between the current and new data processing methods.

Terminations

Table 3: Percentage of terminations of community orders, by reason, October to December 2023, England and Wales, sourced using the current and new data process

Reason	Current (Published)	New (Provisional)	Difference
Community orders			
Ran their full course	63%	63%	..
Terminated early for good progress	7%	7%	..
Terminated early for failure to comply with requirements	11%	11%	..
Terminated early for conviction of offence	13%	13%	..
Terminated early for other reasons	6%	6%	..
Total community order terminations	14,662	14,553	-0.7% (-109)
Suspended sentence orders with requirements			
Ran their full course	78%	78%	..
Terminated early for good progress	0%	0%	..
Terminated early for failure to comply with requirements	8%	8%	..
Terminated early for conviction of offence	13%	13%	..
Terminated early for other reasons	1%	1%	..
Total Suspended sentence orders with requirements	7,227	7,203	-0.3% (-24)

“..” denotes not available.

Next steps

It should be noted that all comparative figures sourced under the new data process are **provisional** and the Probation Statistics team are continuing to explore and understand any variances against published figures. Once the process is finalised, and the probation data published in this publication are fully transitioned to the new data process, the Probation Statistics team will look to provide a historical timeseries of figures, updated using the new process.

Further information

This publication presents quarterly data trends (as well as annual 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](#)¹² 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

Press enquiries should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/media-enquiries>

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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¹² Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.