



Ministry  
of Justice

# **HM Prison and Probation Service Offender Equalities Annual Report**

**2023/24**

Ministry of Justice

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## Statistician's Comment

As in previous years, the prison population for the year ending March 2024 has remained as majority male, of white ethnic background, heterosexual, and reporting to follow Christian faiths. The largest proportion of prisoners are in the 30-39 age bracket.

The number of transgender prisoners recorded has continued to increase this year. As with last year, most transgender prisoners were legally male, from a white ethnic background, and held in the men's prison estate.

The number of mother and baby unit applications has risen this year, following a drop in the previous year. Most applications with a decision outcome were approved, as with previous years. The majority of applicants and self-declared pregnant prisoners were from a white ethnic background.

A higher proportion of younger, Jewish or Muslim, heterosexual prisoners, and prisoners from a black/ black British, mixed, or other ethnic background were on basic level incentives compared to the general prison population. A higher proportion of older, gay/ lesbian or bisexual prisoners, prisoners of Buddhist, Hindu or Sikh faith, and prisoners from an Asian/ Asian British ethnic background were on enhanced incentives compared with the general prison population.

The majority of accredited programmes starts and completions were by male, heterosexual prisoners, from a white ethnic background, who self-reported as single or not married/in a civil partnership.

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## **Products published to accompany the HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report 2023/24**

The following products are published as part of this release:

- An annual report, containing commentary on key trends over time for protected characteristics.
- A technical guide, providing further information on how the data are collected and processed; alongside relevant legislative or operational information relating to the topic area.
- A set of tables for each chapter, giving national trends over time; and covering key topic areas in this bulletin.

All 2023/24 products can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-offender-equalities-annual-report-2023-to-2024>

Previous editions can be found within the HMPPS annual offender equalities report collection page on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmpps-annual-offender-equalities-report>

Further prison and probation equalities data is routinely published in four other statistical releases: the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly, the Safety in Custody Statistics Bulletin, Deaths of Offenders in the Community and Proven Reoffending Statistics. Each source includes written commentary and data tables relating to various protected characteristics. A summary of what is covered can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report, with fuller details in the accompanying Technical Guide.

## Introduction

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice; with the goal of helping prison and probation services work together to manage offenders through their sentences.

The HMPPS Offender Equalities 2023/24 report contains the latest information on progress and achievements pertaining to equalities objectives, as stated in the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 lists nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This report focuses on those protected characteristics where data are collected and are of sufficient quality for statistics to be meaningful. In general, this report is limited to analysis on age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnicity), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation for these reasons. Where data are available for other protected characteristics at sufficient quality and with sufficient coverage to be meaningful, they are also presented and considered.

The report presents some analyses by individual characteristic and is meant to serve as a guide for further research. In many cases, more than one factor (e.g. age and another protected characteristic, criminal history, socio-economic) might have an effect on an outcome.

Data presented in this report have been drawn from administrative IT systems and data collections. 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.

# 1. Prison Population

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## **Males comprised 95.9% of the prison population**

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, males made up 95.9% of the total prison population and females 4.1%. Since the previous year, the female prison population has increased by 9.7% (from 3,315 to 3,635 prisoners) and the male population has increased by 3.9% (81,057 to 84,234 prisoners).

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## **White prisoners made up 68.3% (10,809) of the remand prison population and 73.7% (52,000) of the sentenced prison population<sup>1</sup>**

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, prisoners who self-declared as being from a black or black British ethnic background made up 12.9% (2,047) of the remand prison population and 12.1% (8,534) of the sentenced population. Prisoners who declared their ethnicity as Asian or Asian British represented 9.5% (1,506) of remand and 7.8% (5,530) of sentenced prisoners.

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## **A third (33.4% or 29,339) of prisoners were in the 30 to 39 age group**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the second largest age group was the 40 to 49 age group, which covered 20.7% (18,175) of the prison population. The younger prison population has been falling since 2013 whereas the over 30 prison population has been steadily rising. Prisoners that were under 25 made up 13.1% (11,509) of the population.

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## **Almost half (44.6% or 39,068) of the prison population that specified a religion or belief self-identified as being Christian**

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 31.0% (27,122) prisoners identified as having no religion and 18.2% (15,909) identified as being Muslim.

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## **In the latest quarter (March 2024), 97.0% (88,032) of prisoners who declared a sexual orientation reported that they were heterosexual**

This is broadly comparable with trends reported over the past eleven years.

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<sup>1</sup> The ethnicity “white” includes white British/ Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish, Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller and any other white background.

Data for prisoner protected characteristics summarised here (Tables 1\_1a and 1\_1b) relating to sex, age, ethnicity and religion or belief are published in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly (OMSQ).<sup>2</sup> This chapter therefore adds only a breakdown of data on sexual orientation of the prison population in England and Wales (Tables 1\_2 and 1\_3), which has not been published elsewhere.

**Of those prisoners who declared a sexual orientation<sup>3,4</sup>, 97.0% of prisoners stated that they were heterosexual in March 2024 (Table 1.3, Figure 1.1)**

Gay/Lesbian and Bisexual offenders accounted for 1.3% (945) and 1.5% (1,087) of the total prison population, respectively. Those who identified as “other” comprised 0.2% (175) of the total population<sup>5</sup>. These proportions were calculated excluding individuals whose sexual orientation is stated as “Refusal/Not Disclosed” or “Not Known”.

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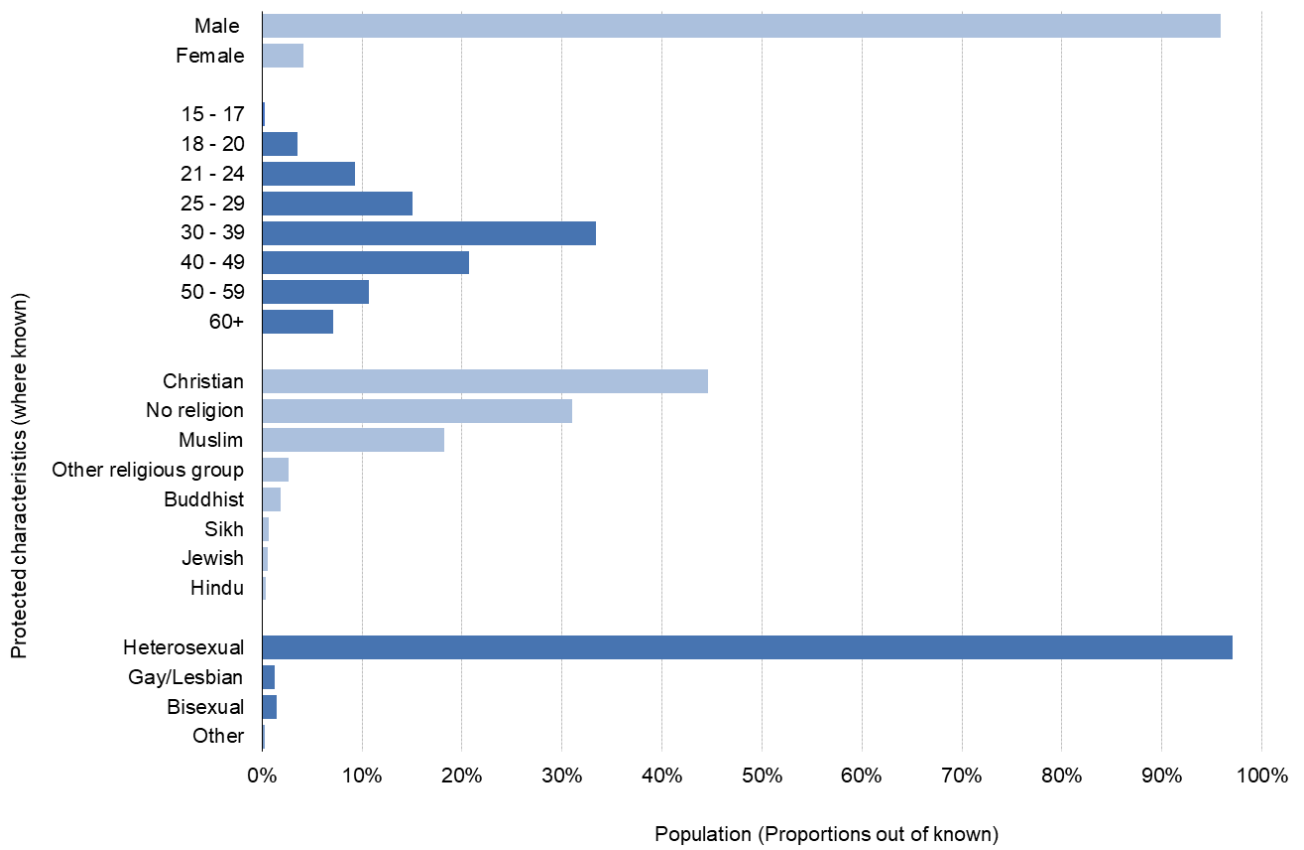
<sup>2</sup> OMSQ is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>.

<sup>3</sup> Sexual orientation is self-reported by prisoners, and likely to be under-reported. Data are drawn from internal Management Information and therefore differs from other population totals.

<sup>4</sup> The declaration rate for sexual orientation was 84%, based on an average of the prison population taken over the quarter (between January and March 2024).

<sup>5</sup> It is not possible to provide further information about the “other” category.

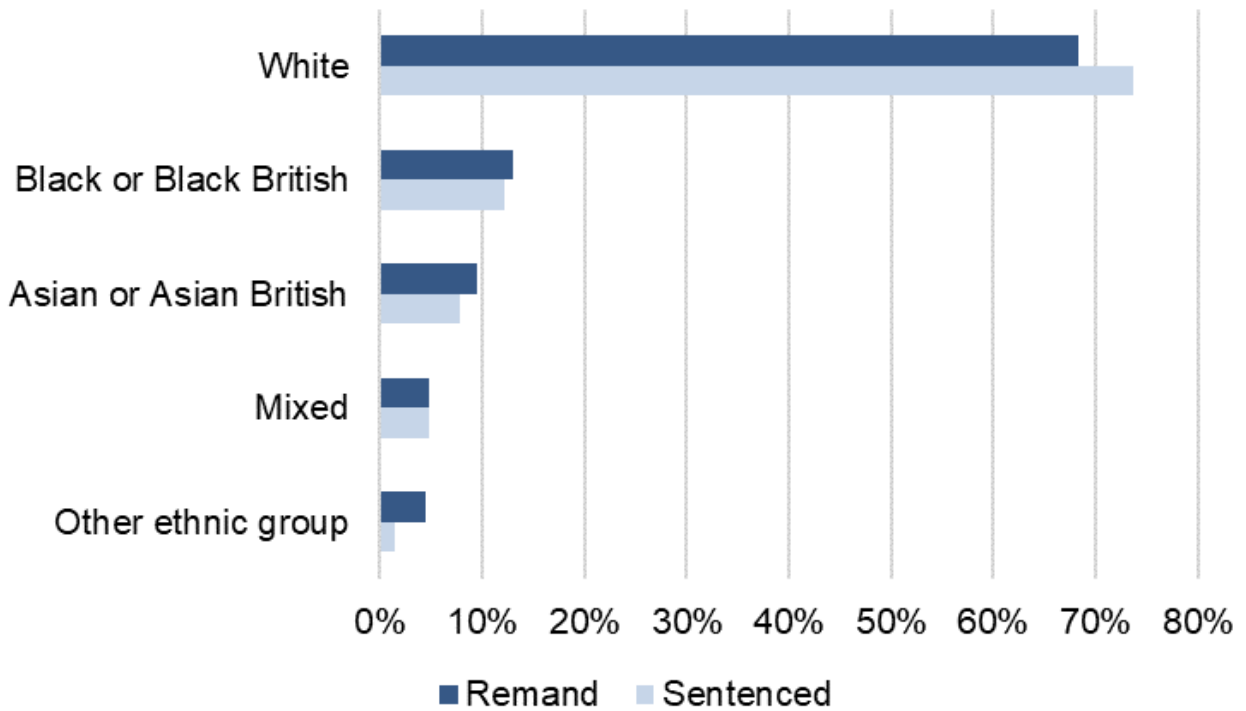
**Figure 1.1: Proportion of the Prison Population by Sex, Age, Religion and Sexuality, England and Wales, 2023/2024 (Source: Prison NOMIS, Tables 1\_1 and 1\_3)**





The breakdown of the ethnicity protected characteristic is presented separately for sentenced and remand prisoners as per figure 1\_2.

**Figure 1.2: Proportion of the Prison Population by Ethnic Group, sentenced and on remand, England and Wales, 2023/2024 (Source: Prison NOMIS, Tables 1\_2)**



## 2. Transgender Prisoners

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### **There were 295 transgender prisoners in the 2024 data collection**

This was an increase on the figure of 268 recorded in 2023.

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### **Most transgender prisoners reported their legal gender as male**

245 transgender prisoners (83%) reported their legal gender as male, 50 (17%) as female.

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### **Eleven per cent of transgender prisoners were from an ethnic minority background<sup>6</sup>**

Where ethnicity was known, 11% (31) of the transgender prison population were from an ethnic minority background, up from 10% of the transgender population in 2023.

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### **There were 10 prisoners known to have a Gender Recognition Certificate**

This is down from 13 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

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### **Most transgender prisoners were in the men's estate**

244 transgender prisoners (83%) were in the male estate and 51 (17%) were in the female estate.

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For the purposes of this report, transgender prisoners are defined as those individuals known within prison to be currently living in, or presenting in, a gender different to their legal gender<sup>7</sup> and who have had a local case board (as defined by 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender' policy framework<sup>8</sup>) and are known to the diversity and inclusion lead within the individual prison where they are housed.

Prisoners who have a full Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) are excluded from any analysis within this report. Only an overall count is provided to ensure compliance with the Gender

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<sup>6</sup> Figures for ethnic minority background excludes white ethnic minorities.

<sup>7</sup> Legal gender is the gender recorded on a person's birth certificate, or on their Gender Recognition Certificate where they have acquired one.

<sup>8</sup> This 2019 framework was revised in November 2024 so that transgender women and women with GRCs who retain their birth anatomy and/or have committed violent or sexual offences cannot be held in the general women's estate, unless an exemption is granted by a Minister. The framework can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-care-and-management-of-individuals-who-are-transgender>

Recognition Act 2004<sup>9</sup>. Statistics on the number of applications to the Gender Recognition Panel are published in Tribunals Statistics Quarterly at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics).

The figures reported in this bulletin give an estimate of the number of transgender prisoners and are likely to underestimate the true number. This is because some transgender prisoners, both with and without GRCs, may not have declared that they are transgender or had a local case board. Additionally, the prison population is dynamic, meaning prisoners may have entered or left prison outside the time period of the data collection.

Details of the number of transgender prisoners as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 were provided by Equalities Representatives in public and private prisons in England and Wales.

## **Legal Gender and Gender Identity**

There were 295 prisoners living in, or presenting in, a gender different from their legal gender and who have had a local case board. Of these, 245 (83%) reported their legal gender as male, 50 (17%) reported their legal gender as female.

When asked about the gender with which the prisoner identified from the following categories, 227 (77%) identified as transgender female<sup>10</sup>, 49 (17%) as transgender male,<sup>11</sup> 11 (4%) as non-binary<sup>12</sup> and 8 (3%) self-identified in a different way, or did not provide a response.

There were 10 prisoners known to have a Gender Recognition Certificate as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. These prisoners are not included in the transgender prisoner totals presented in this report.

Based on this exercise, there were 3.4 transgender prisoners reported per 1,000 prisoners in custody on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, an increase from 3.2 per 1,000 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The transgender

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<sup>9</sup> A count of the number of prisoners with a GRC was collected for the first time in 2021. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 makes it an offence to disclose that someone has a GRC, so it was necessary to ensure that prisoners' anonymity was maintained. Therefore, no information on the prisoners' other personal characteristics was collected, only the total number of these prisoners.

<sup>10</sup> Transgender females for this collection are defined as prisoners with a legal gender of male who identify as female.

<sup>11</sup> Transgender males are defined as prisoners with a legal gender of female who identify as male.

<sup>12</sup> Beginning with the 2021 collection, "non-binary" is presented as a category for the gender within which the prisoner identifies. Not all individuals who identify as non-binary are managed via Local Case Boards, so this is likely to result in an undercount of the number of non-binary individuals in the prison estate. Non-binary prisoners are managed in part of the prison estate which matches their legal gender.

prison population increased by 10% compared with 4% for the prison population over the same period.

## **Prison Establishments and Gender Identity**

Eighty-four of the 123 public and private prisons (68%) in England and Wales said that they had one or more transgender prisoners on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

Of the 295 transgender prisoners:

- Fifty-one (17%) were in female prisons. The majority of these (48) self-identified as transgender male, the remainder self-identified as transgender female, non-binary, in a different way<sup>13</sup>, or did not provide a response.
- Two hundred and forty-four (83%) were in male prisons. The majority of these (225) self-identified as transgender female, the remainder self-identified as transgender male, non-binary, in a different way, or did not provide a response.

## **Age**

Most (74%) self-declared transgender prisoners were aged between 20-49 years. Almost a third (31%) of the transgender prison population where age was reported, were aged between 30-39 years on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, a similar level as in March 2023 (30%). Only 1% were aged 18-19 years, whilst 9% were aged 60 and over.

Whilst the distribution across age ranges was broadly similar compared with last year, there was a fall in the percentage of transgender prisoners in the 20-29 age group, from 27% in 2023 to 22% this year.

There were percentage increases across age groups from 40-49, 50-59 and 60 and over (22%, 16% and 9% in 2024, respectively) compared with the previous year (20%, 15% and 7% respectively).

## **Ethnicity**

Thirty-one of the 295 transgender prisoners (11%) self-reported they were from an ethnic minority (excluding white ethnic) background and 257 (89%) were from a white (including white ethnic) background. The proportion of transgender prisoners from ethnic minority backgrounds was similar to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (10%).

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<sup>13</sup> An additional field is included in the collection form for self-described gender identity. This gives transgender individuals an opportunity to add any extra self-identifying information they feel is important.

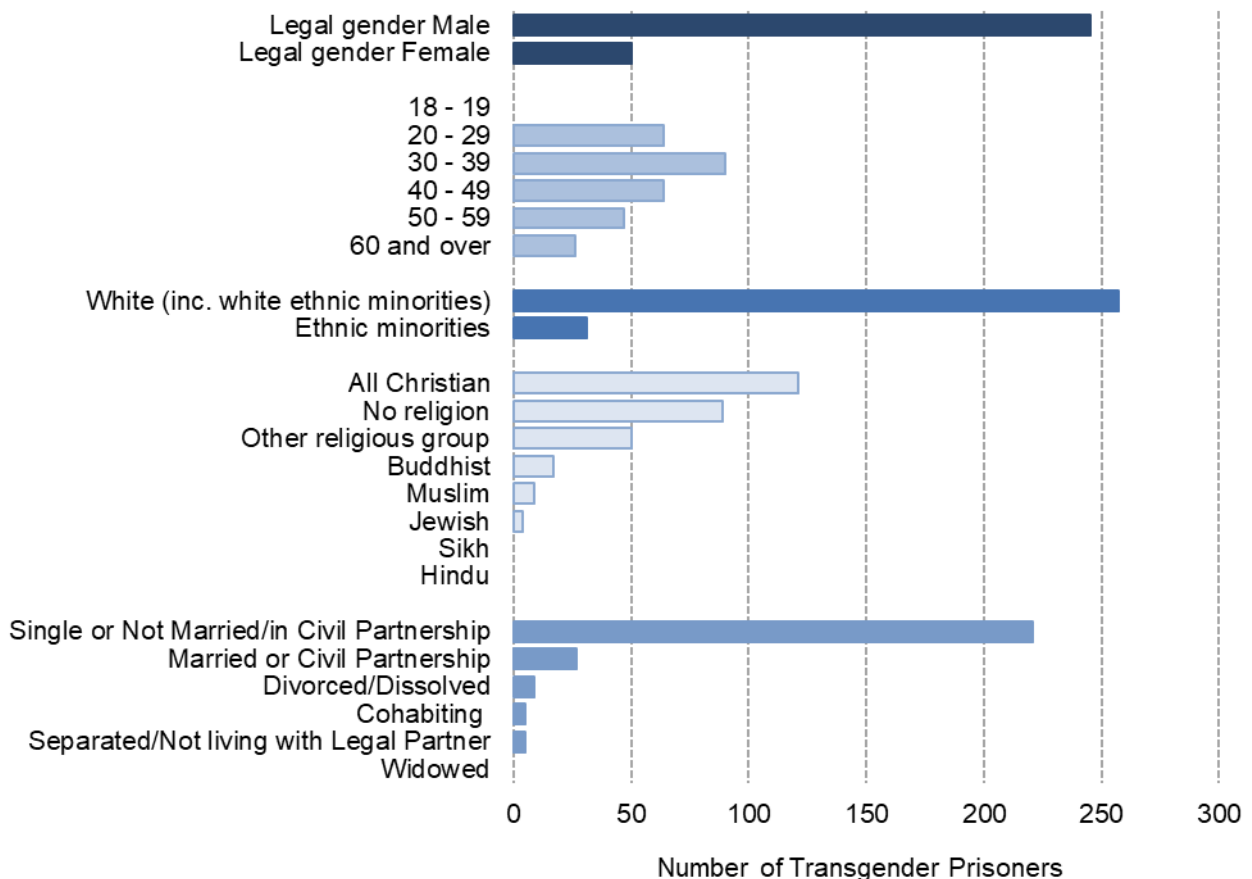
## Religion

On March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024, there were 121 transgender prisoners who self-identified as having a Christian religion, which was 41% of the total transgender prisoner population, down from 43% (112 prisoners) on the same date in 2023. Those who had no religion comprised 30% (89 prisoners) of the population this year, up from 28% (73 prisoners) last year. Seventeen per cent (50 prisoners) self-identified in the “other religious group” category (down from 18%, 47 prisoners in 2023).

## Marital status

Most of the transgender prisoner population (82%, 221 prisoners) were single, not married or not in a civil partnership on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, which is a slight increase when compared with 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, when 81% (190 prisoners) reported as being in the same category. Ten per cent (27 prisoners) of transgender prisoners reported being married or in a civil partnership compared with 11% (25 prisoners) in the previous year.

**Figure 2.1: Number of transgender prisoners by protected characteristic, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**  
(Source: Table 2.1)



### 3. Mother and Baby Units and Pregnant Prisoners

#### Mother and Baby Units

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##### **The total number of Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) applications increased when compared with the previous year**

Between April 2023 and March 2024, 92 applications were made for a place within an MBU compared with 80 in the year to March 2023<sup>14</sup>. In the 12-months ending March 2024, 54 applications (79% of the total recommended) were approved and 14 refused (21% of total recommended)<sup>15</sup>.

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##### **Over half of all MBU applications came from prisoners aged 30 or younger**

During the year ending March 2024, women who were aged 30 or younger made 50 applications (54% of the total) to MBUs<sup>16</sup>. Women who were older than 30 years old made 42 applications (46%). This compares to 41 (53%) and 36 applications (47%) for the younger and older age groups in the previous year, respectively.

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##### **The majority of MBU applications came from female prisoners from a white ethnic background<sup>17</sup>**

During the year ending March 2024, women who reported their ethnic background as white made 73 applications (79% of the total) to MBUs<sup>18</sup>. Women who stated they were from an ethnic minority background<sup>19</sup> made 19 applications (21% of the total). In the previous year there were 57 (74%) and 20 (26%) applications for prisoners of white, and ethnic minority backgrounds, respectively.

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<sup>14</sup> Applications received in one year may be approved or refused in a following year.

<sup>15</sup> The remaining applications were not accepted or refused as the prisoners were either released from custody, withdrew their application or a decision had not been reached by the time of reporting.

<sup>16</sup> This does not include anyone younger than 18 years of age.

<sup>17</sup> Chapter 1 of this publication contains breakdowns of the wider prison population including the annual total number of female prisoners.

<sup>18</sup> The white category includes white minorities.

<sup>19</sup> Ethnic minorities (excluding white minority) includes black/black British, Asian/Asian British, mixed ethnic groups and other ethnic groups.

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## **The majority of MBU applications came from prisoners who stated they follow no religion**

During the year ending March 2024, women who self-identified as following no religion made 44 applications (48% of the total) to MBUs. Women who identified with the Christian faith made 35 applications<sup>20</sup> (38%), and women who identified as from any other religious group made 13 applications<sup>21</sup> (14%). In the previous year there were 27 (36%), 39 (51%) and 10 (13%) applications from women who followed no religion, the Christian religion, and other religious groups, respectively.

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A Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) is a designated separate accommodation unit within a women's prison which enables mothers, where appropriate, to have their children with them. Women who are pregnant or who have children under the age of 18 months can apply for a place in an MBU<sup>22</sup>. General statistics on women in MBUs can be found in the HMPPS Annual Digest 2023/24<sup>23</sup>. This report provides details of the protected characteristics of women making applications to MBUs and the outcome of the application including approvals, refusals, and withdrawals.

There are currently six MBUs in operation across the women's prison estate which provide an overall total capacity of 64 places for mothers. However, there are a total of 70 places for babies, to allow for twins and multiple births.

It should be noted that:

- Multiple applications can be submitted by one woman<sup>24</sup>.
- Recommendations on applications (e.g. an approval or refusal) may not be made in the same reporting year as the application was received.
- Not all applications will receive a recommendation, as the application may not proceed for a number of reasons (e.g. a woman may withdraw her application or leave custody).

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<sup>20</sup> Christian religions include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican and other unspecified Christian denominations.

<sup>21</sup> Any other religion includes Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Quaker, Jehovah's Witness and other recognised religions or beliefs.

<sup>22</sup> Further details about the MBU admissions process are given in the Technical Guide as part of this statistical release.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-annual-digest-april-2023-to-march-2024>

<sup>24</sup> Multiple applications can be submitted by one woman over the duration of the financial year period; therefore, application volumes will usually be higher than counts for individual mothers.

- An approval to an MBU does not mean that a mother and baby/babies will be received into an MBU, as alternative arrangements could be made for care after the application is submitted.
- An application may be refused for several reasons, for example due to an interim Care Order by Children’s Services<sup>25</sup>. All recommendations are based on evidence of what is in the best interests of the baby/babies in each case, in consultation with the relevant professionals and partner agencies<sup>26</sup>.
- Every effort is made to ensure admissions processes are administered in a timely fashion to ensure any anxiety is reduced for applicants, however, unavoidable delays might arise in some cases. For example, where an assessment is being carried out by Children’s Services.

### **Approvals and Refusals for Mother and Baby Units by Protected Characteristics**

In the 12-months ending March 2024, 79% (54) of MBU applications were accepted and 21% (14) were rejected, out of a total of 68 applications where a decision was made by a board.

The proportion of applications accepted for those aged 30 or younger was higher (83% or 29) than for those women aged over 30 (76% or 25).

Women from a white ethnic background had a higher proportion of applications accepted (81% or 43) compared to those women from an ethnic minority background (73% or 11).

Around two-thirds of women who stated they were Christian (64% or 14) and women who followed other religions (67% or 8) had applications accepted.

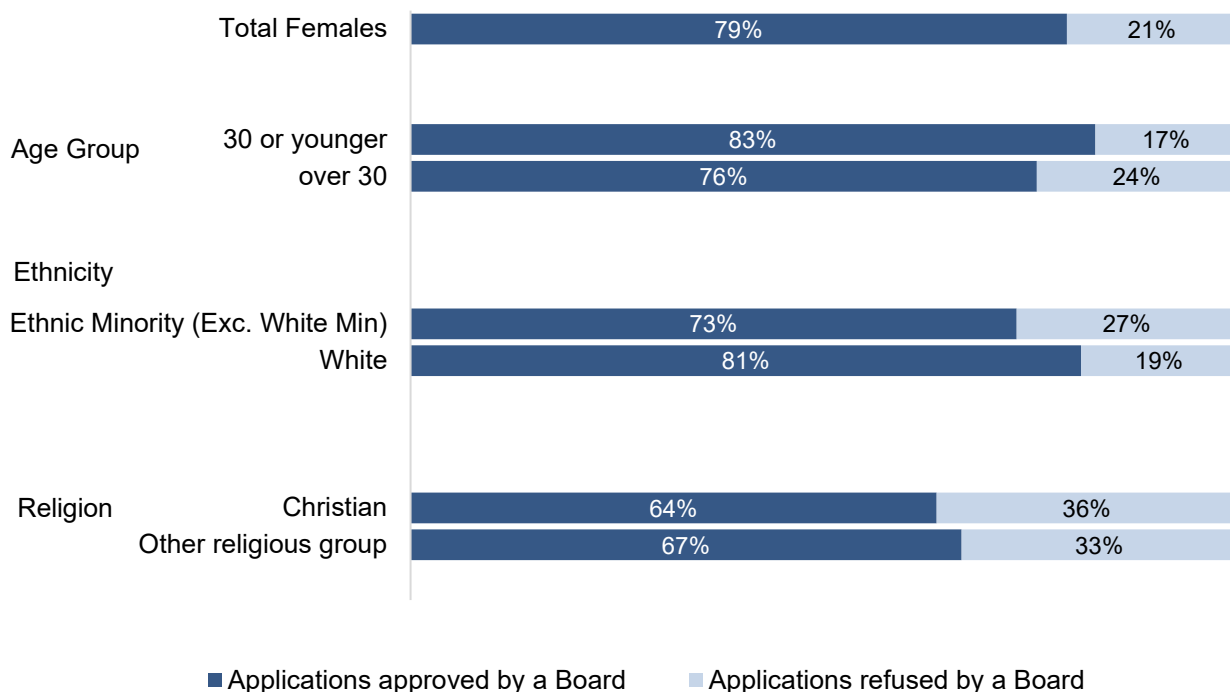
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<sup>25</sup>More information about care proceedings can be found online here: <https://www.gov.uk/if-your-child-is-taken-into-care/care-proceedings>

<sup>26</sup> The Prisons Policy Framework which includes details regarding applying for and facilitating Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) placements can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pregnancy-mbus-and-maternal-separation-in-womens-prisons-policy-framework>



**Figure 3.1: Proportion of MBU applications approved and refused, by protected characteristics, England and Wales, the 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 3.2)**



## Pregnant prisoners

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### **There were more pregnant prisoners this year compared to last year**

There were 215 self-declared pregnant women in prison in the period April 2023 to March 2024. For the year ending March 2023, this figure was 194.

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### **A slightly larger proportion of pregnant prisoners were over 30, compared to the proportion aged 30 and under**

In the 12-months to March 2024, the 111 pregnant prisoners who were aged over 30 made up 52% of the cohort. The remaining 48% (103) were 30 or younger.

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### **The majority of pregnant prisoners were from a white background**

In the 12-months to March 2024, 83% (117) of pregnant prisoners were from a white background<sup>27</sup>. The remaining 17% (37) were from an ethnic minority background<sup>28</sup>.

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### **Just over half of pregnant prisoners reported they followed a particular religion or belief**

In the 12-months to March 2024, 43% (91) followed Christianity<sup>29</sup>, 12% (26) followed another religious group<sup>30</sup> and 45% (96) reported that they didn't follow a religion.

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<sup>27</sup> The white category includes white ethnic minorities.

<sup>28</sup> Ethnic minorities (excluding white minority) includes black/black British, Asian/Asian British, mixed ethnic groups and other ethnic groups.

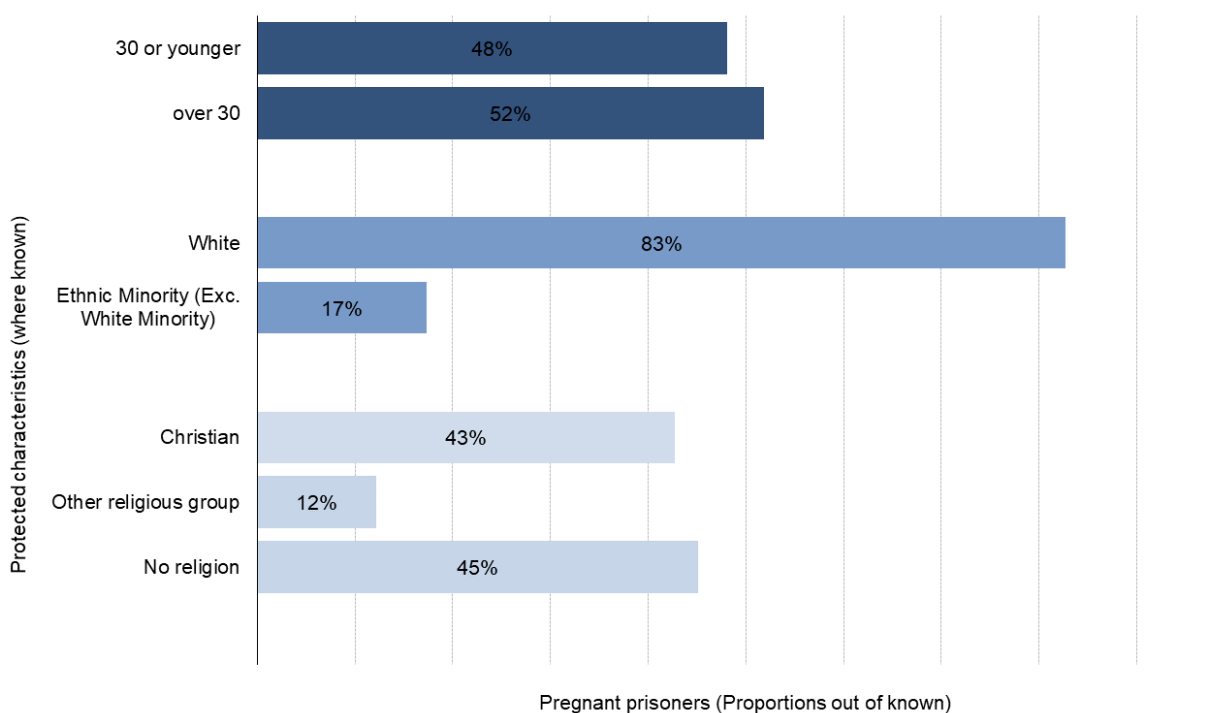
<sup>29</sup> Christian religions include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican and other unspecified Christian denominations.

<sup>30</sup> Includes Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Quaker, Jehovah's Witness and other recognised religions or beliefs.

Figure 3.2 shows the proportion of pregnant prisoners for the year ending March 2024, broken down by protected characteristic (Source: Table 3.3).

There was a higher proportion of pregnant prisoners who were 30 or under (48% or 103) in the year ending March 2024, compared to the previous year (43% or 78). There was also a lower proportion who reported their religion or belief as Christian (43% or 91, compared with 49% or 88 in the previous year) and a higher proportion reporting any other recognized religion or belief (12% or 26, compared with 8% or 14 in the previous year).

**Figure 3.2: Proportion of pregnant prisoners, by protected characteristic, England and Wales, in the 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 3.3)**



## 4. Incentives

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### **A higher proportion of female prisoners were on Standard incentives status, compared to male prisoners**

Compared to 45.0% of males, 54.7% of females had Standard incentive statuses. There was a lower proportion of female prisoners on a Basic or Enhanced incentive status, compared to male prisoners.

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### **As age increased, the proportion of prisoners on a Basic incentive status decreased**

The proportion of those on a Basic incentive status decreased from 19.2% of those aged 15-17 years to 0.8% of those aged 60+ years.

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### **Compared to the average, a lower proportion of prisoners from the “other”, mixed, and black or black British ethnicity groups had Enhanced incentive status, and a higher proportion had Basic incentive status**

A lower proportion of prisoners from the “other” (35.8%), mixed (43.5%), and black or black British (44.9%) ethnicity groups had an Enhanced incentive status, compared to an average of 49.3%. The opposite was seen for Basic incentive status, with 6.7% of prisoners from the “other”, 7.6% of prisoners from the black or black British and 8.4% of prisoners from the mixed ethnicity groups having a Basic incentive status, compared to an average of 5.3%.

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### **Prisoners who reported their religion or belief as Buddhist had the highest proportion with an Enhanced incentive status, while those reporting as Muslim had the highest proportion with Basic incentive status**

Prisoners who reported their religion or belief as Buddhist had the highest proportion of prisoners with an Enhanced incentive status (66.8%). Prisoners who reported their religion or belief as Muslim had the highest proportion of prisoners with a Basic (7.6%) incentive status.

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### **All sexual orientations other than heterosexual had a below average proportion of prisoners on Basic incentive status**

An overall average of 5.3% prisoners had a Basic incentive status, compared to 1.8% of Gay/Lesbian, 2.2% of Bisexual and 2.2% of prisoners who reported their sexual orientation as “other”.

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An incentives scheme (formerly known as Incentives and Earned Privileges - IEP) was introduced in 1995 with the expectation that prisoners would earn additional privileges through demonstrating responsible behaviour and participation in work or other constructive activity. It allows prisoners to earn privileges through good behaviour and engagement in the regime and rehabilitation. Privileges can also be lost through poor behaviour.

Between 1995 and 2019, the IEP scheme operated on four levels: Entry, Basic, Standard and Enhanced. In August 2019, the Entry level of the scheme was abolished. A small number of establishments continued to report against the Entry regime after this date and this is reflected in the data for 2019 and 2020. It was replaced by the Incentives Policy Framework (IPF) in January 2020. The new policy has a greater focus on incentivizing positive behaviour, providing consistency in key areas, whilst giving governors greater flexibility to tailor incentives to the local needs and challenges in their prison and to create levels above Enhanced. Thus, an Enhanced (extended) incentives level has been included in this publication from 2023 onwards.

Prisoners typically start on Standard level, and positive behaviour can be rewarded with progression to Enhanced, while poor behaviour can result in prisoners being placed on Basic – with the associated increase or reduction in privileges. Basic level provides access to the safe, legal, and decent requirement of a normally running regime.

### **General incentives trends (Source: Table 4.1)**

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, around half of all prisoners (49.3%) had an Enhanced incentive status, with 48.7% having an Enhanced (initial) and 0.6% having an Enhanced (extended) incentive status. Just under half (45.4%) of prisoners had a Standard incentive status (see Figure 4.2) and the remaining 5.3% of prisoners had a Basic incentive status (see Figure 4.3).

The proportion of prisoners with a Basic incentive status increased in 2024 (5.3%) compared to 2023 (4.1%), returning towards pre-pandemic levels (5.9% in 2019). The proportion of prisoners on Enhanced incentive status decreased slightly (50% in 2023 to 49.3% in 2024) along with the proportion on Standard incentive statuses (45.8% in 2023 to 45.4% in 2024).

### **Prisoner incentive status by protected characteristic as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (Table 4.1, Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3)**

Figure 4.1 shows a breakdown of prisoners on Enhanced (both initial and extended) incentive status by protected characteristic. Compared to the average proportion of all prisoners on an Enhanced incentive status, a higher proportion of prisoners who were: aged 40 and older, or from Asian or Asian British, or white ethnicity groups, or were Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, or “other” religion or belief, or who were bisexual, gay/lesbian or “other” sexual orientation had Enhanced incentive status.

**Figure 4.1: Percentage of prisoners with Enhanced incentives status, split by protected characteristic, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (Source: Table 4.1)**

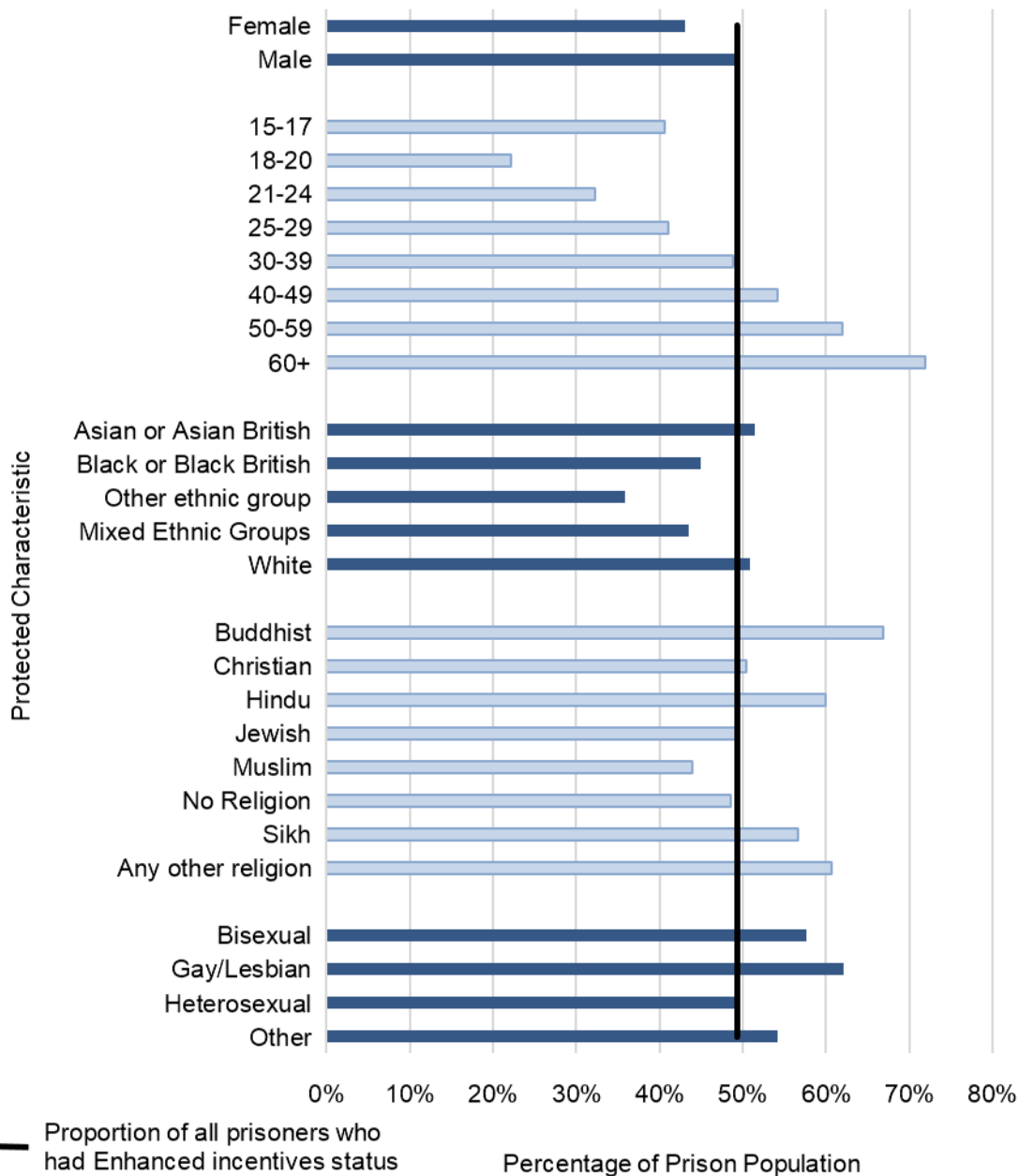


Figure 4.2 shows a breakdown of prisoners on Standard incentive status by protected characteristic. Compared to the average proportion of all prisoners on a Standard incentive status, a higher proportion of prisoners who were: female, or were aged between 18 and 39, or from “other”, mixed, or black or black British ethnicity groups, or who were Muslim or reported no religion had a Standard incentive status.

**Figure 4.2: Percentage of prisoners with Standard incentives status, split by protected characteristic, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (Source: Table 4.1)**

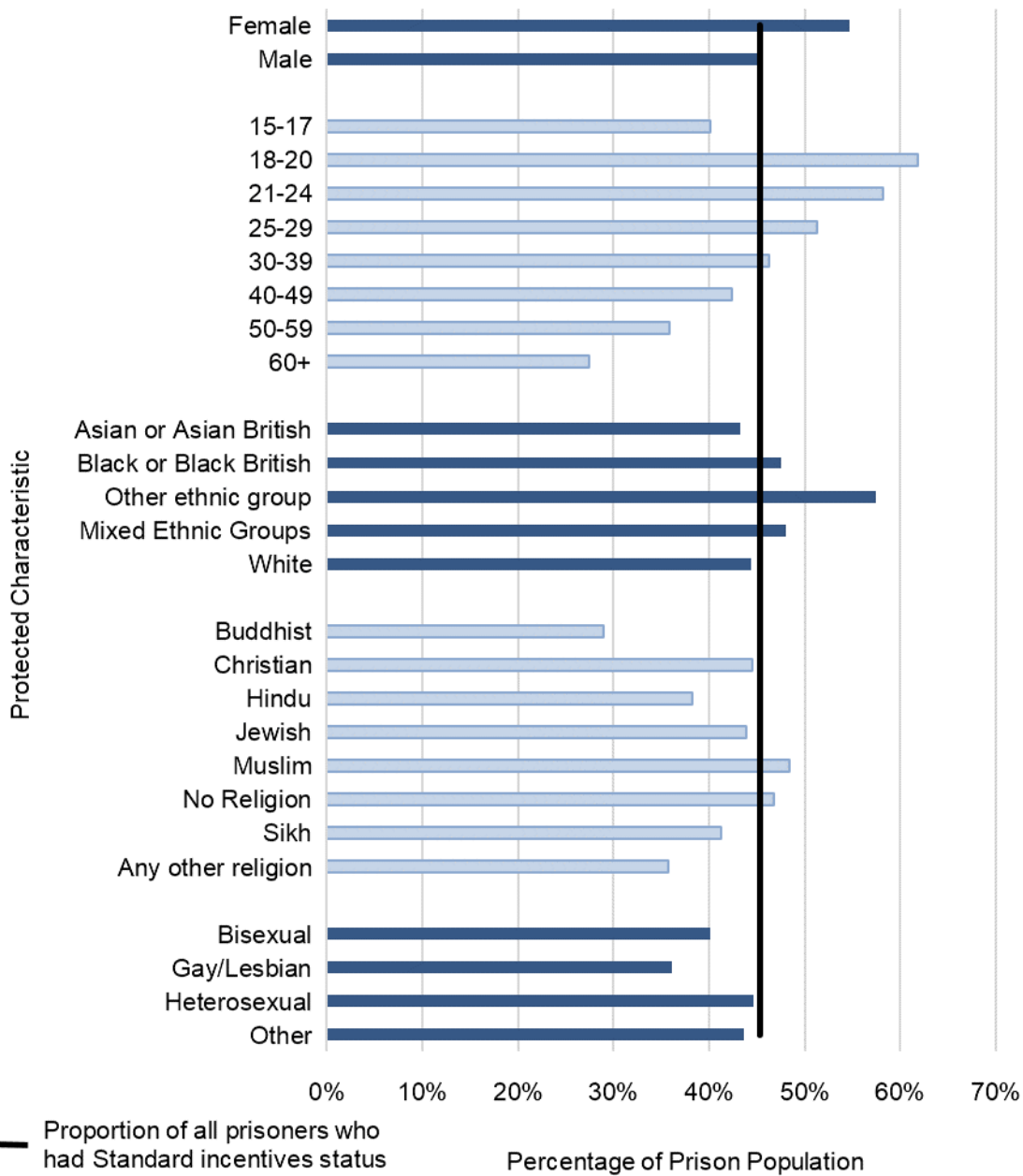
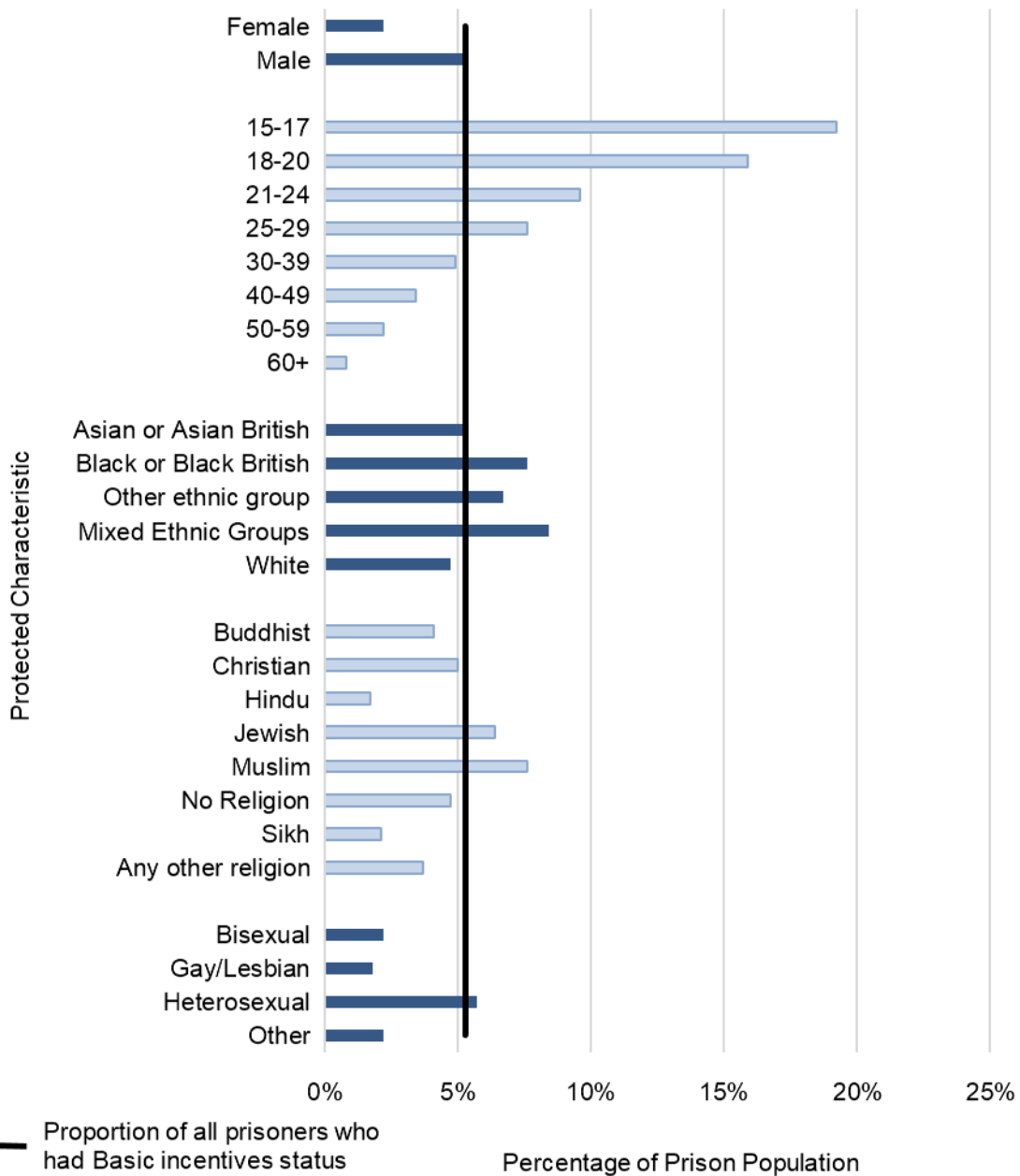


Figure 4.3 shows a breakdown of prisoners on Basic incentive status by protected characteristic. Compared to the average proportion of all prisoners on a Basic incentive status, a higher proportion of prisoners who were: aged under 30, or from mixed, black or black British, or “other” ethnicity groups, or who were Muslim or Jewish religion had Basic incentive status.

**Figure 4.3: Percentage of prisoners with Basic incentives status, split by protected characteristic, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (Source: Table 4.1)**



**Sex**

- A higher proportion of female prisoners had a Standard incentive status (54.7%) compared to male prisoners (45.0%).
- A lower proportion of female prisoners had an Enhanced incentive status (43.1%), compared to males (49.5%). The same was true for Basic incentive status, with 2.2% of female prisoners compared to 5.4% of male prisoners.



## Age

- As age increased, the proportion of prisoners on a Basic incentive status decreased, with 19.2% of those aged 15-17 years and 0.8% of those aged 60+ years on a Basic incentive status.
- Broadly, the proportion of prisoners with a Standard incentive status also decreased with age (from 61.9% of those aged 18-20 years to 27.4% of those aged 60+ years), with the exception of those aged 15-17 years (40.2% with a Standard incentive status).
- The opposite trend was seen for Enhanced incentive status, where the proportion of prisoners increased from 22.2% of those aged 18-20 years to 71.9% of those aged 60+ years with an Enhanced incentive status, with the exception of those aged 15-17 years (40.6% with an Enhanced incentive status).

## Ethnicity

- Where ethnicity was known, the “other ethnic group” had the highest proportion (57.5%) of prisoners on a Standard incentive status, and the lowest proportion (35.8%) of prisoners on an Enhanced incentive status.
- A lower proportion of prisoners from the mixed (43.5%), and black or black British ethnic group (44.9%) had an Enhanced incentive status, compared to an average of 49.3%. The opposite was seen for Basic incentive status, with 7.6% of prisoners from the black or black British, and 8.4% of prisoners from the mixed ethnic groups having a Basic incentive status, compared to an average of 5.3%.
- The white ethnicity group had the lowest proportion of prisoners on Basic incentive status, compared to all other ethnicity groups (4.7%, compared to an overall average of 5.3%).

## Religion or belief

- Where religion or belief was known, the Buddhist category had the lowest proportion of prisoners on a Standard incentive status (29.0%) and the highest proportion of prisoners on an Enhanced incentive status (66.8%), out of all belief or religion categories.
- Prisoners who reported their religion or belief as Muslim had the highest proportion of prisoners with a Standard (48.4%) and Basic (7.6%) incentive status, and the lowest proportion of prisoners with an Enhanced incentive status (44.0%), out of all religion or belief groups.
- Prisoners who reported their religion or belief as Hindu, Sikh or “Any other religion” had the lowest proportion of prisoners with a Basic incentive status (1.7%, 2.1% and 3.7%, respectively) out of all religion or belief categories. Conversely, these groups had above-average proportions of prisoners with an Enhanced incentive status (60.6% “Any other religion”, 60.0% Hindu, and 56.7% Sikh).

## Sexual Orientation

- Where sexual orientation was known, the groups who reported their sexual orientation as “Gay/Lesbian” or “Bisexual” had the lowest proportion of prisoners with a Standard incentive (36.1% and 40.1%, respectively) and the highest proportion of prisoners with an Enhanced incentive status (62.1% and 57.6%, respectively), out of all sexual orientations categories.

- There was an above average proportion of prisoners who reported they were heterosexual at Basic incentive status (5.7%). All other sexual orientation groups had a below average proportion of prisoners at this level, with 1.8% of Gay/Lesbian, 2.2% of Bisexual and 2.2% of prisoners who reported their sexual orientation as “other” on Basic incentives status.

## 5. Accredited Programmes for Offenders in Custody

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**Overview: There were 5,382 accredited programme starts and 4,886 completions in the year ending March 2024<sup>31</sup>**

This represents a 12% and 18% increase on starts and completions respectively, compared with the previous year.

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**Programme types: Nearly two-thirds (63%) of both starts and completions in the year ending March 2024 were general offending programmes**

Sexual offending treatment programmes comprised 21% of starts and 22% of completions. Considerably smaller proportions of starts and completions were for programmes relating to violence, domestic violence, substance misuse and extremism.

Mixed Cohort<sup>32</sup> and Next Generation<sup>33</sup> programmes are the latest programme types to be introduced. Starts for both programmes comprised 2% and less than 1% respectively, whilst completions made up 1% and less than 1%, respectively.

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**Sex: Of all accredited programme starts, and of all completions in the year ending March 2024, 97% were male and 3% were female offenders<sup>34</sup>**

Whilst these proportions for starts and completions are the same as for the previous 12-month period, the proportion of starts and completions for females has been slowly decreasing since equalities reporting started in 2019 (from 7% and 6% respectively). At the same time, the percentage of males starting and completing accredited programmes has been rising from 93% and 94% respectively since 2019.

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<sup>31</sup> Total volumes over the financial year for starts and completions will not necessarily match. This is because an offender who completed in the current financial year might have started the programme in previous years.

<sup>32</sup> Mixed Cohort programmes include Mixed Cohort New Me Strengths and Mixed Cohort Becoming New Me Plus. They are delivered to a cohort of offenders with a mix of offence related needs, rather than to one specific offence cohort.

<sup>33</sup> 'Building Choices' has been accredited for use as part of the Design and Testing phases of the Next Generation of Accredited Programmes change programme. Currently, the new programme is undergoing a Design Test at three prisons and has been accredited for those prison sites only. Building Choices is offered in two "pathways" - Moderate and High Intensity – with eligibility determined by an assessment for risk and need. For more information, see the accompanying Technical Guide.

<sup>34</sup> There were 140 starts and 69 completions where sex was not known.

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The proportion of the overall prison population who were female was 4% on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024<sup>35</sup>, and 4% of the total female prison population started an accredited programme.

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**Age group: The 30 to 39 age group accounted for the highest proportion of both starts and completions, each accounting for 37% of the total number**

The percentage of starts for offenders aged under 25 was 15% this year, compared with 14% for completions. Three per cent of both starts and completions were for offenders aged 60 and over.

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**Ethnic background: Of all accredited programme starts and completions, 76% were offenders from a white ethnic background (including white ethnic minorities)**

Offenders from an ethnic minority (excluding white ethnic minorities) background comprised 24% of all programme starts and the same proportion for completions.

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**Religion: Offenders self-reporting as Christian made up slightly more than half (52%) of starts and just under half (45%) of completions**

Offenders with no religion comprised 33% of all starts and 32% of completions, and those reporting a Muslim faith accounted for 16% each for both starts and completions.

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**Marital status: The majority of programme starts (87%) and completions (86%) were for offenders who self-reported as single or not married/in a civil partnership**

Seven per cent for each of starts and completions were for those reporting as married or in a civil partnership and 4% of both starts and completions were for those who reported cohabiting.

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**Sexual orientation: Where known, 96% of all starts and all completions were by offenders who self-reported as heterosexual**

The proportion of offenders identifying as bisexual or gay/lesbian was 2% and 1% respectively for both starts and completions.

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<sup>35</sup> Source: Chapter one of this publication (Prison Population), from Offender Management Statistics Quarterly: Oct to Dec 2023, table 1\_Q\_7 available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66784f50a7a18c1aa1a00efe/Prison-population-31-Mar-2024.ods>

HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) commission a range of accredited programmes<sup>36</sup> that vary in length, complexity, and mode of delivery. Programmes have been developed to target the offender risks and needs for different types of offending. 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-commissioned accredited programmes are subject to quality assurance processes to ensure programme integrity is maintained and developed<sup>37</sup>.

Accreditation is a system for ensuring that intervention programmes offered to offenders, which aim to reduce reoffending, have a proper theoretical basis, and are designed in accordance with the 'What Works' literature<sup>38</sup>.

The Correctional Services Advice & Accreditation Panel (CSAAP) helps HMPPS to accredit programmes by reviewing programme design, quality assurance procedures and findings, and programme evaluations. They make recommendations about whether to accredit to the HMPPS Rehabilitation Board. HMPPS is accountable for decisions to accredit programmes.

CSAAP members are independent, international 'what works' academics and practitioners. They include criminologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and sociologists. They review programmes against a set of criteria, drawn from the principles of effective interventions.

Throughout this chapter, starts and completions for accredited programmes are presented by offender characteristic. Whilst sex and age are routinely recorded for all offenders, other protected characteristics throughout the chapter are self-reported<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> A complete list of accredited programmes for offenders in custody can be found at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64085767e90e0740d3cd6fa3/HMPPS\\_Accredited\\_Programmes.docx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64085767e90e0740d3cd6fa3/HMPPS_Accredited_Programmes.docx)

<sup>37</sup> Details around the accreditation process can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/offending-behaviour-programmes-and-interventions#accreditation>

<sup>38</sup> 'What Works' literature is a broad body of literature, one example of which can be found at  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/offending-behaviour-programmes-and-interventions>

<sup>39</sup> Protected characteristic breakdowns are calculated excluding values for not known or not recorded.

## Offenders who started an Accredited Programme<sup>40,41,42</sup> (Tables 5.1 to 5.8)

In the 12-months ending March 2024:

- There were 5,382 accredited programme starts in the year ending March 2024. The number of starts was 12% higher compared with the year ending March 2023, when there were 4,820 starts. Volumes for starts have largely recovered to pre-pandemic levels<sup>43</sup>.
- **Programme Types:** Nearly two thirds (63%, 3,391) of starts were for general offending programmes and 21% (1,115) were for sexual offending-related programmes. The proportions of starts were much smaller for programmes relating to violence (7%, 363), domestic violence (5%, 263), substance misuse (2%, 90) and extremism (less than 1%, 24)<sup>44</sup>.
- Mixed Cohort and Next Generation programmes are the latest programme types to be introduced. They comprised just 2% (92) and 1% (44) of the total number of starts in the year to March 2024, respectively.
- **Sex:** Male offenders<sup>45</sup> made up 97% (5,083) of all accredited programme starts, while female offenders made up 3% (159) of all starts. Females comprised a higher proportion of extremism programme starts (13%, 3 starts), compared with males (88%, 21 starts).
- **Age Group:** The 30 to 39 years age group had the highest proportion of all programme starts (1,961), accounting for 37% of the total number. Twenty per cent (1,032) of all starts were in the 40 to 49 age group, whilst 19% (996) were in the 25-29 age group. The percentage of starts for offenders aged under 25 was lower this year (15%) compared with

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<sup>40</sup> Under exceptional circumstances, offenders can start more than one accredited programme in any financial year. The figures presented in this chapter refer to the number of starts and might not equal the number of offenders who started any given programme during the same financial year.

<sup>41</sup> All prison accredited programmes are suitable for males; with Thinking Skills Programme (TSP), Healthy Identity Intervention (HII), Control of Violence for Angry Impulsive Drinkers (COVAID) and Building Skills for Recovery (BSR) suitable for both males and females.

<sup>42</sup> In this publication, programmes are grouped into one of eight categories: Domestic Violence, Extremism, General Offending, Mixed Cohort, Next Generation, Sexual Offending, Substance Misuse or Violence.

<sup>43</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted accredited programme delivery. Delivery was mostly paused in March 2020 and, where delivery was able to resume under safe systems of work and infection control, it was limited to one-to-one or small group provision.

<sup>44</sup> The Thinking Skills Programme (TSP) (a general offending programme), also targets areas related to violence, and is accessed by people in prison and on probation with convictions for violence-related offences.

<sup>45</sup> All programmes relating to domestic violence and sexual offending treatment programmes are for males only.

the same period in 2023 (17%), whilst only 9% of starts were by those aged 50 and above this year.

- A higher proportion of starters for Next Generation and Violence programmes were in the under 25 years age brackets (53% and 28%, respectively), compared to overall programme starts.
- **Ethnic Background:** Around a quarter (24%, 1,247) of all programme starts were by offenders from an ethnic minority (excluding white ethnic minorities) background. The remaining 76% (3,978) of starts were by offenders from a white ethnic (including white ethnic minorities) background. A higher proportion of starts were by white offenders for substance misuse (95%) and sexual offending programmes (86%), while a higher proportion of starts for extremism and violence programmes were by offenders from an ethnic minority background (54% and 38%, respectively).
- **Religion:** Forty-five per cent (2,367) of all accredited programmes starts were by offenders who reported their religion as Christian. One-third (33%, 1,712) of starts were by offenders who reported no religion or belief. Offenders reporting a Muslim faith comprised 16% (849) of all starts.
- Offenders self-reporting as Christian made up more than half (52% and 51%) of mixed cohort and substance misuse programme starts, respectively. Conversely, only 17% of extremism programme starts were by offenders self-reporting as Christian. Those who self-reported no religion comprised 44% of substance misuse programme starts and 36% for each of sexual offending and mixed cohort programme starts.
- **Marital Status:** Eighty-seven per cent (4,268) of all starts were by offenders who self-reported they were single, not married and not in a civil partnership, whilst only 7% (333) reported they were married or in a civil partnership. Offenders cohabiting (living with their partner) made up 4% (188) of all starts. Single offenders or those not married or in a civil partnership comprised a higher proportion of starts for mixed cohort and substance misuse programmes (99% and 97% respectively) compared with their percentage of starts overall.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Where known, the majority (96%, 4,584) of starts were by offenders who self-reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual. A small proportion of starts were by offenders who self-identified as bisexual (2%, 83) and gay/lesbian (1%, 71). Where sexual orientation was reported, all (100%) offenders starting domestic violence (224), mixed cohort (86), substance misuse (60) and extremism (16) programmes identified as heterosexual. Where known, 99% (330) of starts for violence programmes were by offenders who self-identified as heterosexual. Bisexual and gay/lesbian offenders made up 6% and 5% respectively of sexual offending treatment programme starts.

## Offenders who completed an Accredited Programme<sup>46</sup> (Tables 5.9 to 5.16, Figure 5.1)

In the 12-months ending March 2024:

- There were 4,886 programme completions, an increase of 18% compared with 4,135 completions recorded in the previous financial year.
- **Programme Types:** The majority (63%, 3,091) of completions were for general offending programmes, followed by sexual offending programmes (22%, 1,094). Considerably smaller proportions of completions were for violence programmes (6%, 290), domestic violence programmes (5%, 248), substance misuse (2%, 77) and extremism (less than 1%, 19).
- New programmes for Mixed Cohort and Next Generation programme types comprised 1% (53) and less than 1% (14) respectively of the total number of completions this year.
- **Sex:** Of all completions, male offenders comprised 97% (4,689) and females made up 3% (129). Female offenders comprised 6% (18) of all violence programmes and 4% (111) of general offending programmes.
- **Age Group:** There were 1,780 offenders aged between 30 to 39 years completing accredited programmes, 37% of the total number. This age group accounted for 42% of substance misuse programme completions, and 39% of both general offending (1,176) and domestic violence (97) programme completions. While offenders aged 60 and over (163) comprised 3% of completions overall, they accounted for 11% (122) of sexual offender treatment programme completions. Offenders aged 18 to 20 (135) comprised 3% of the total number of completed accredited programmes, but 14% of completions for next generation programmes.
- **Ethnic Background:** Offenders from a white ethnic (including white ethnic minorities) background accounted for 76% (3,636) of all programme completions<sup>47</sup> and offenders from an ethnic minority (excluding white ethnic minorities) background accounted for 24% (1,165) of all programme completions. White offenders made up 95% (73) and 86% (927) completions for substance misuse and sexual offending treatment programmes, respectively. Offenders from minority ethnic backgrounds comprised 44% (8) and 39% (112) respectively of extremism and violence programme completions.

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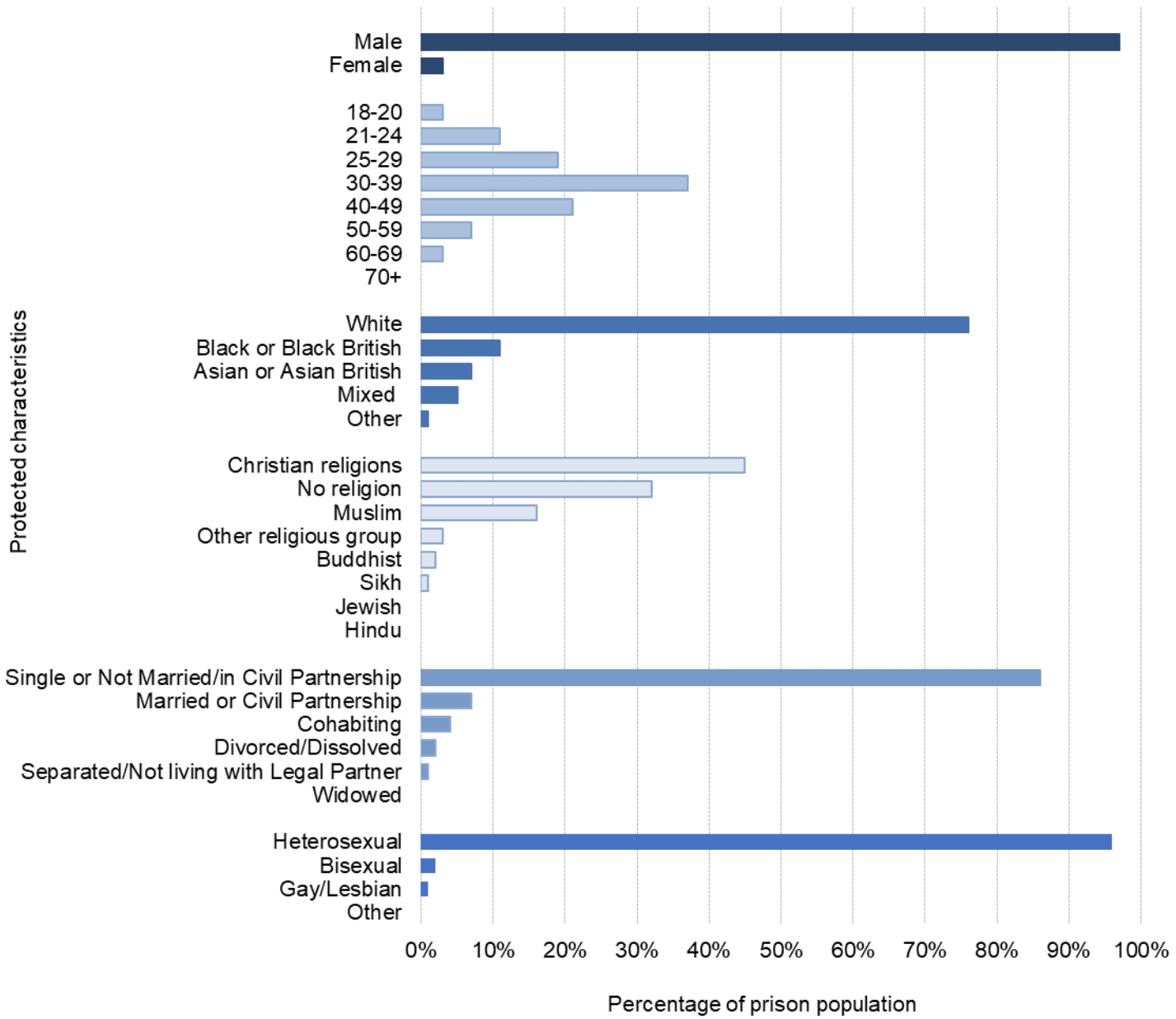
<sup>46</sup> Protected characteristic breakdowns are calculated excluding values for not known or not recorded.

<sup>47</sup> Chapter 1 of this publication (prison population) reports that on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 73% of the overall prison population were from a white ethnic background while 28% were from an ethnic minority (excluding white ethnic) background. Please note that the prison population count was a snapshot of the population on this date, whereas accredited programme completions data cover the full 12-month financial year period from April 2023 to March 2024 (Source: Offender Management Statistics Quarterly: Oct to Dec 2023, table 1\_Q\_7 at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66784f50a7a18c1aa1a00efe/Prison-population-31-Mar-2024.ods>).



- **Religion:** Offenders with a Christian religion comprised 45% (2,185) of all accredited programme completions, while those with no religion made up 32% (1,554). Offenders of Muslim faith accounted for 16% (785) of all accredited programme completions. Christian offenders comprised 57% of substance misuse (44) and mixed cohort (29) of programme completions, while offenders with no religion made up 38% and 35% respectively of substance misuse (29) and sexual offending treatment programme (382) completions.
- **Marital Status:** The majority of all accredited programme completions (86%, 3,884 completions) were by individuals who were single or not married/ in a civil partnership. However, when looking at specific programme types, a higher proportion of substance misuse programme completions (97%, 72) and violence programme completions (94%, 262) were by individuals who were single or not married/in a civil partnership compared to the overall total. Seven per cent (327) of completions overall were those reporting as married or in a civil partnership, whilst 4% (165) were by offenders who self-identified as cohabiting.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Ninety-six per cent (4,207) of completions were for offenders self-reporting their sexual orientation as heterosexual. Where sexual orientation was known, heterosexual offenders accounted for all (100%) of completions for domestic violence (219) and extremism programmes (12). Although offenders identifying as bisexual or gay/lesbian comprised 2% (78) and 1% (65) of overall programme completions, they made up 6% (54) and 5% (47) respectively of sexual offender treatment programme completions.

**Figure 5.1: Completions for accredited programmes in custody by protected characteristic, 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Tables 5.9 to 5.16)**



## Appendix: Additional Data Sources

### Links to equalities data sources formerly included in this report

Much of the equalities data which formed part of previously published editions of this report can be found in four published information sources. Each source includes written commentary and data tables relating to various protected characteristics.

- The Offender Management Statistics Quarterly includes detailed quarterly statistics on offenders in custody (including offence groups, sentence lengths and nationalities), and quarterly statistics on prison receptions, prison releases, adjudications, licence recalls and offenders under probation supervision: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>
- The Safety in Custody Statistics Bulletin which covers deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics>
- Deaths of Offenders in the Community, which covers deaths of offenders supervised in the community by the probation service in England and Wales: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/death-of-offenders-in-the-community>
- Proven Reoffending Statistics, covering offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, or received a caution or reprimand: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics>

A full breakdown of metrics and protected characteristic breakdowns included within these publications can be found in the Technical Guide accompanying this publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-offender-equalities-annual-report-2023-to-2024>

### Other sources of equalities information

In addition to data published in this report, HMPPS and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) publish equalities information in other sources:

- The HMPPS Staff Equalities Annual Report 2023/24 was published in a separate report on 28 November 2024. This publication includes equalities information for all civil servants employed by HMPPS: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmpps-annual-staff-equalities-report>
- The Women and the Criminal Justice System 2021, which specifically focuses on the typical experiences of people who come into contact with the criminal justice system, by sex, was published on 24 November 2022: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/women-and-the-criminal-justice-system>
- The Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System Statistics 2022 report was published as a separate report on 19 March 2024. This collection of reports compiles statistics from data sources across the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in England and Wales, to provide a

combined perspective on the typical experiences of different ethnic groups:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/race-and-the-criminal-justice-system>

## Further information

### Official Statistics

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### Contact

Press enquiries should be directed as per the Ministry of Justice Press Enquiries webpage:  
URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/media-enquiries>

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Laura Pearce, Responsible Statistician  
Courts and People  
Ministry of Justice, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ  
E-mail: [sueper\\_stats@justice.gov.uk](mailto:sueper_stats@justice.gov.uk)

Next Update: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**URL:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmpps-annual-offender-equalities-report>

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