















## HMPPS Annual Digest 2023/24

### Main points

<b>The number of escapes has increased</b>		There were 9 escapes in the 12 months to March 2024, 1 of which remained still at large 30 days after escape. This is an increase from 8 escapes the previous year, none of which remained still at large 30 days after escape.
<b>The number of absconds decreased and temporary release failures increased</b>	 	In the year ending March 2024, there were 58 absconds – an 8% decrease when compared with the previous 12-month period. There were 985 temporary release failures in the year ending March 2024, of which 59 were failures to return, and 18 of these were still at large after 30 days. The number of temporary release failures increased by 32% from the previous year.
<b>The percentage of prisoners in crowded conditions increased</b>		In the 12-months to March 2024, the crowding rate at establishments across England and Wales was 23.6%, up from 22.9% in the previous 12-month period.
<b>In the 12-months to March 2024, an average of 1,183 active prisoners were working in custody and subject to the PEA</b>		In the 12 months ending March 2024, an average of 1,183 prisoners worked each month and were subject to the Prisoner Earnings Act (PEA). This represents an increase of 8.8% on the previous year, when the number was 1,088 per month.
<b>rMDT is still yet to return to the levels required for reliable national or establishment-level estimates in 2023/24</b>		In the 12 months to March 2024, there were 51,452 random mandatory drug tests (rMDT) carried out nationally across all types of drugs. This was an increase from 41,308 the previous year but is still lower than 2019-20 when over 54,000 tests were conducted. In the 12 months to March 2024, the number of tests did not meet expected levels in any month and were below the almost 57,000 tests expected over the year.
<b>All forms of protesting behaviour increased in the latest year</b>		In the 12-months to March 2024, the number of incidents of all forms of protesting behaviour increased, with concerted indiscipline (52%) and incidents at height (50%) having the largest percentage increases.

<p><b>Finds of drugs, mobile phones and weapons increased, but alcohol has decreased</b></p>		<p>In the 12 months to March 2024 there were 21,145 incidents of drug finds, 10,669 incidents of mobile phone finds, and 11,641 incidents of weapons finds, increases of 44%, 36% and 24% respectively from the previous year. There were 9,136 incidents of alcohol finds, a decrease of 4% over the same period.</p>
<p><b>The proportion of prisoners with a Basic incentive status increased</b></p>		<p>In the year to March 2024, the proportion of prisoners with a Basic status was 4.9% (an annual average of 4,272 prisoners), increasing from the previous year when the proportion was 3.2% (an annual average of 2,657 prisoners)</p>
<p><b>The number of MBU applications increased</b></p>		<p>In the 12-months to March 2024, 92 applications were made to an MBU; compared with 80 in the previous reporting year.</p>
<p><b>The number of CAS-2 referrals increased by 15.7% in the latest year</b></p>		<p>There were 3,666 total referrals for the Community Accommodation Service in the 12-months to March 2024; an increase of 15.7% on the 3,168 referrals made in the previous year.</p>
<p><b>14.2% of HMPPS staff who declared their ethnicity were from ethnic minority backgrounds</b></p>		<p>This represents an increase of 1.5 percentage points compared with the previous year. Public Sector Prison (PSP) staff as a whole had the lowest ethnic minority representation in HMPPS which was likely driven by the underlying regional population composition.</p>

*This publication covers reporting up to and including the 2023/24 financial year. Data for the current reporting year covers the period between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024; and is referenced as “the 12-months to March 2024”, “the year ending March 2024” or “the latest year”.*

## Statistician's comment

Data presented in the HMPPS Annual Digest 2023/24 provides evidence of trends in performance measures across the prison and probation estates. For context, the prison population has increased in the year leading up to March 2024, continuing the upwards trends from 2020/21 and with the remand population reaching the highest level for at least the last 50 years.

We are now four years on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and performance covered within this report continues to return towards pre-pandemic levels. For example, the overall percentage of prisoners held in crowded accommodation has shown an upwards trend since 2020/21 and has now reached pre-pandemic levels.

The volume of escapes has remained consistently low, with no escapes by Category A prisoners. The number of absconds continues the downwards trend seen in the previous three years and remains at low levels. Although the number of ROTL failures has increased overall, this partly reflects an increase in ROTL use generally. Additionally, the number of ROTL failures categorised as failures to return has remained fairly stable since 2014/15, aside from a dip during the peak of the pandemic. Overall, the vast majority of releases on temporary licence are completed successfully without failure (over 99%).

Find incidents have continued to increase, surpassing pre-pandemic levels, accompanied by rises in all categories of incident except alcohol and mobile phones related items. Weapon finds fell sharply during COVID and have now increased to exceed pre-pandemic levels. There was also a notable increase in drug finds compared with the previous downwards trends, with substantial increases seen for Class B and psychoactive substances.

Numbers of applications to, and women received into, Mother and Baby Units have continued to increase, almost reaching pre-pandemic levels, whilst the number of births to pregnant women in prison has continued to rise for the fourth year in a row.

Protesting behaviour also continues to rise in all types compared to the previous year, with the number of Incidents at Height surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Incidents of Barricades and Concerted Indiscipline have approached pre-pandemic levels, whilst Hostage incident levels remain comparatively low.

Some other measures have also not reached pre-pandemic levels. For example, the proportion of prisoners on Basic incentives continues to rise, whilst prisoners on Enhanced incentives continues to decrease, although figures have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

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## **Products published to accompany the HMPPS Annual Digest 2023/24**

The following products are published as part of this release:

- A statistical bulletin, containing commentary on key trends over time in prison performance measures and probation.
- 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 and local level trends over time; and covering key topic areas in this bulletin.

## **Introduction**

His Majesty's 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. HMPPS replaced the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) on 1 April 2017.

The HMPPS Annual Digest 2023/24 includes for the first time, breakdowns on the number of prisoners held in double crowded accommodation in establishments in England and Wales.

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

### **Topics that are not included in this report**

Information on protected characteristics of offenders is not reported here but will be published in the Offender Equalities Annual Report 2023/24 on 28 November 2024.

A new centralised process for the referral of newly sentenced Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) to Home Office HOIE has been operating as the primary means of referral throughout 2023/24. Details of FNOs receiving a custodial sentence are captured and referred to HOIE within 10 days of being entered onto the prison database by default. Therefore, data on Foreign National Referrals will no longer appear in this publication.

Due to operational changes by prisons in response to the COVID-19 only incomplete data is available on prisoners working in prison and as such has not been included in the 2023/24 edition. Work is ongoing to improve data and a new measure is currently under development. This will be published once completed. Prison level data on Percentage of prisoners in purposeful activity is available in the Annual Prison Performance Ratings 2023/24 Official Statistics.

## **Related publications**

Offender management statistics quarterly provides detailed information on offenders held in prison custody and on probation.<sup>1</sup> It includes detailed breakdowns of the prison population, prison receptions and releases. It also covers statistics on adjudications and license recalls.

The HMPPS Offender Equalities Report provides protected characteristics breakdowns of placement on the incentives scheme and protected characteristic data on mother and baby units.<sup>2</sup>

The HMPPS Workforce Statistics provides prisons staff volumes and staff protected characteristics.<sup>3</sup>

## **Review of the publication**

We are continuing to review the purpose and content of the HMPPS Annual Digest. Many themes covered in this statistical release appear in related publications or could be included with material on similar topics published elsewhere. Please get in touch if you have views on the content and placement of related data across MoJ publications. Contact details are available on the last page of the publication.

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<sup>1</sup> Offender Management Statistics Quarterly is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>

<sup>2</sup> The latest HMPPS Offender Equalities Report is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmpps-annual-offender-equalities-report>

<sup>3</sup> HMPPS Workforce Statistics are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-offender-management-service-workforce-statistics>

# 1. Escapes, Absconds, Failure to Return from ROTL and Releases in Error

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## **The number of escapes has increased**

There were 9 escapes in the 12 months to March 2024, 1 of which remained still at large 30 days after escape. This is an increase from 8 escapes the previous year, none of which remained still at large 30 days after escape.

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## **The number of absconds has decreased**

There were 58 absconds in the year to March 2024, an 8% decrease from 63 absconds in the previous 12 months. Of the 58 prisoners who absconded, 26% (15 prisoners) remained at large for over 30 days, a decrease from 44% the previous 12 months (28 out of 63 prisoners).

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## **The number of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) failures has increased**

There were 985 temporary release failures in the year to March 2024, of which, 59 were failures to return, and 18 of these were still at large after 30 days.

The number of temporary release failures increased by 32% from 745 the previous year. In the same period ROTL increased by 10% from the previous year (from 386,435 to 425,095).

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## **The number of releases in error has increased**

There were 87 prisoners released in error in the latest year, an increase of 23% from 71 in the year ending March 2023.

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A new table has been included showing the number of temporary release failures broken down by reason for failure. This is included within the tables (table 1.3) and data tool for this year and will be included within the data tool only in future releases.

## **The number of escapes increased from 8 to 9 in the 12 months to March 2024 (Table 1.1, Figure 1.1)<sup>4</sup>**

In the 12 months ending March 2024, there were a total of 9 escapes, 7 of which occurred from contractor escorts and 2 occurred from an establishment. This is an increase from 8 in the year ending March 2023. One of the 9 escapees in the latest year remained at large 30 days after their escape.

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<sup>4</sup> Unlawfully-at-large incidents are categorised by the level of security measures the prisoner had to overcome to gain their liberty. A prisoner escapes from prison if they unlawfully gain their liberty by breaching the secure perimeter of a closed prison. A prisoner escapes from an escort if they are able to pass beyond the control of escorting staff and leave the escort, the vehicle or the premises (such as a court or hospital), please see the Guide to HMPPS Annual Digest for more information.

There were no Category A prisoner escapes from prisons or HMPPS escorts. In the last 28 years (since the financial year ending March 1997), there have been two Category A escapes, occurring in the 12 months ending March 2012 and 2013.

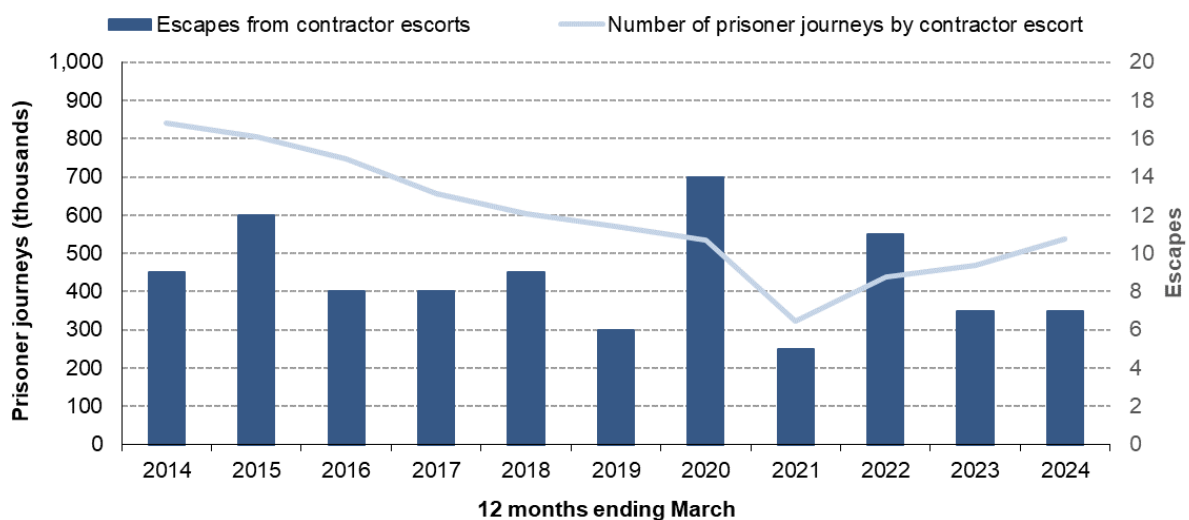
There were 2 escapes from prison in the latest year, which occurred at HMP Chelmsford and HMP Wandsworth. The number of escapes from prison has remained very low, not exceeding 4 in any financial year since the 12 months ending March 2005.

There were no escapes from HMPPS escorts in the latest year. The number of escapes from HMPPS escorts has remained very low, not exceeding 4 in any financial year since the year ending March 2007.

Due to the relatively low numbers, year-on-year changes should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 1.1 shows the number of contractor escort journeys and escapes from contractor escorts. There were 538,081 contractor escort journeys in the financial year to March 2024, a 15% increase from 469,370 the previous year. Of the 538,081 journeys in the latest year, 7 resulted in an escape, giving a rate of 1 escape per 77,000 contractor escort journeys in the latest year. The rate of escape from contractor escorts has remained consistently low at below 1 escape per 30,000 prisoner journeys each year since this series began in 2013.

**Figure 1.1: Contractor escort journeys and escapes from contractor escorts, the 12 months ending March 2014 to the 12 months ending March 2024**





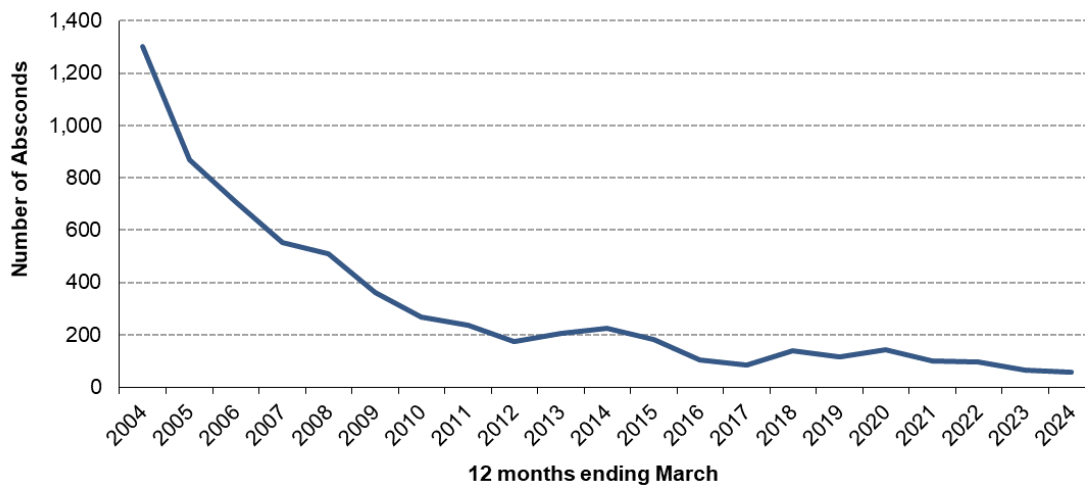
**The number of absconds decreased in the 12 months to March 2024 (Table 1.1, Figure 1.2)<sup>5</sup>**

There were 58 absconds in the year ending March 2024, an 8% decrease from 63 absconds in the previous year. The number of absconds has decreased in each of the last 4 financial years, falling from 143 in the 12 months to March 2020. Absconds had previously decreased substantially between the year ending March 2004 (1,301 absconds) and 2017 (86 absconds).

Of those who absconded in the 12 months to March 2024, 15 were still at large after 30 days. The percentage of prisoners who were at large after 30 days decreased from 44% in the previous year to 26% in the latest year.

Most abscond incidents in the 12 months to March 2024 were for prisoners whose main offence was theft offences or robbery offences. These offences also had the highest rates of absconds per 1,000 prisoners in open prisons (49 absconds per 1,000 prisoners with theft offences in open prisons and 45 absconds per 1,000 prisoners with robbery offences in open prisons).

**Figure 1.2: Absconds, the 12 months ending March 2004 to the 12 months ending March 2024**



<sup>5</sup> An abscond is an escape that does not involve overcoming a physical security barrier or restraint. It is only possible to abscond from open prison conditions.

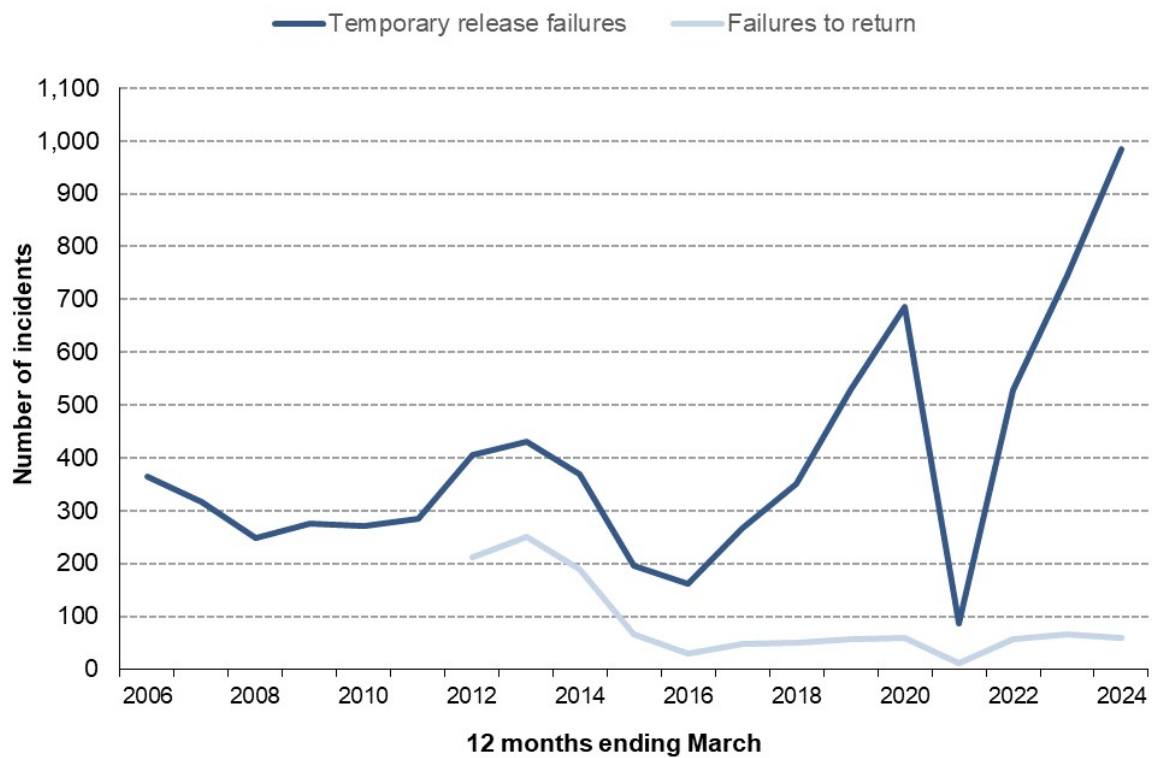
**The number of release failures from releases on temporary licence (ROTL) increased in the 12 months to March 2024 (Table 1.1, Figure 1.3)<sup>6</sup>**

In the year ending March 2024, there were 425,095 incidents of ROTL, a 10% increase from 386,435 incidents in the previous year. Of those 425,095 incidents of ROTL, 985 resulted in temporary release failures, where prisoners who have been released on temporary licence failed to fulfil all of the conditions of their release. This increased by 32% from 745 temporary release failures in the year ending March 2023.

Of the 985 temporary release failures, 38 were known to have had a primary reason of committing an offence during their release, 286 of returning late back to the prison, and 59 of being failures to return, resulting in prisoners being unlawfully at large.

Of the 59 failures to return in the year ending March 2024, 18 prisoners were still at large after 30 days.

**Figure 1.3: Temporary release failures from the 12 months ending March 2006 and failures to return from the 12 months ending March 2012, to the 12 months ending March 2024<sup>7</sup>**



<sup>6</sup> A temporary release failure occurs when a prisoner fails to adhere to any condition written into the licence that permits their temporary release. Failures to return after release on temporary licence are the subset of temporary release failures, where an offender has not returned to the establishment by midnight on the designated return date

<sup>7</sup> Data on the type of temporary release failure is not available for the full time series presented in figure 1.3. Data on failures to return was first available for the 12 months ending March 2012.

Figure 1.3 shows that the number of temporary release failures has increased in each of the last three years, and is now at a record high in the latest year. The number of prisoners that fail to return from ROTL generally mirrored the trend for all temporary release failures prior to the pandemic, but has been broadly stable at a lower proportion of total failures in recent years. The proportion of ROTL failures relating to prisoners who fail to return from ROTL decreased from 9% (65 out of 745) in the year to March 2023 to 6% (59 out of 985) in the year to March 2024, following a gradual decrease from 19% (30 out of 162) in the year to March 2016.

Most failure to return incidents in the year ending March 2024 were for prisoners whose main offence was theft offences (27%) or drug offences (25%).

Between 2013 and 2015 a series of changes were made to tighten ROTL policy, with the result that incidences of release fell dramatically. In 2019, the MOJ issued a new ROTL policy framework, which aimed to allow prison governors to consider ROTL earlier and more frequently because of its resettlement benefits. A large-scale MOJ study published in 2018 showed that increased use of ROTL in suitable cases was associated with a small but statistically significant reduction in reoffending.

These policy changes are reflected in both incidences of release and failure. There was a decrease in the number of incidences of release on temporary licence from 530,886 in the 2013/14 financial year to 320,582 in the 2015/16 financial year, before gradually increasing to 438,117 in the 2019/20 financial year. There was a large drop to 114,856 in the 2020/21 financial year due to COVID-19 restrictions, before increasing to 301,003 in the 2021/22 financial year and 425,095 in the 2023/24 financial year. The proportion of releases completed successfully without failure remains well over 99%.<sup>8</sup>

### **The number of releases in error increased in the 12 months to March 2024 (Table 1.1)**

In the 12 months to March 2024, 87 prisoners were released in error. This is a 23% increase from 71 the previous year, and the highest in the time series. The number of prisoners released in error had been broadly stable at around 50 per year since 2007.

In the year to March 2024, 70 releases in error occurred from prison establishments, while 17 were released in error at the courts. Releases in error from establishments could also be a result of errors by the court.

Due to the relatively low numbers, year-on-year changes should be interpreted with caution. The number of releases in error should be considered in the context of the number of releases in the same time period and changes in the operational environment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Data on the number of incidences of temporary release and individuals released, and the number of failures are reported within the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly bulletin: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

<sup>9</sup> The Offender Management Statistics Quarterly bulletin gives an indication of the number of prisoners released in any given period via the following link: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

## 2. Prison Crowding

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### **The average prison population increased compared with last year<sup>10</sup>**

In the year to March 2024, the average prison population in England and Wales was 87,129, compared with 81,822 in the previous year.

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### **The crowding rate of prisons in England and Wales increased**

In the 12-months to March 2024, the crowding rate at establishments across England and Wales was 23.6%, up from 22.9% in the previous 12-month period.

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### **Crowding rates were highest in private prisons**

Crowding rates have continued to be higher in private prisons. The private prison crowding rate was 26.9% for the latest 12-month period, compared to 22.7% in public prisons.

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Crowding is measured as the number of prisoners who, on the last day of the month, are held in a cell, room or dormitory where the number of occupants exceeds the baseline certified normal accommodation of the cell, room, or dormitory. This includes the number of prisoners held two to a single cell, three prisoners in a cell designed for one or two and all prisoners held in larger cells or dormitories where the occupancy exceeds the baseline certified normal capacity.<sup>11</sup>

The maximum level of crowding for each prison is set by senior operational managers in HMPPS in agreeing the operational capacity of each establishment.<sup>12</sup> No prison will be expected to operate at a level of crowding beyond that agreed by a senior operational manager.

### **The average prison population increased compared with last year (Table 2.1)**

In the 12-months to March 2024, the average population in prison was 87,129, an increase of 6.5% compared with the previous year, when the population was 81,822. In the year to March 2024, 20,533 prisoners were held in crowded accommodation conditions, which represents a crowding rate of 23.6%.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The average prison population is based on the number of months each prison is open in the reference financial year. The annual national total is the average of each monthly total.

<sup>11</sup> For example, if 12 prisoners occupy a dormitory with an uncrowded capacity of 10, then the 12 prisoners are counted as crowded.

<sup>12</sup> The operational capacity of a prison is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold, considering control, security, and the proper operation of the planned regime.

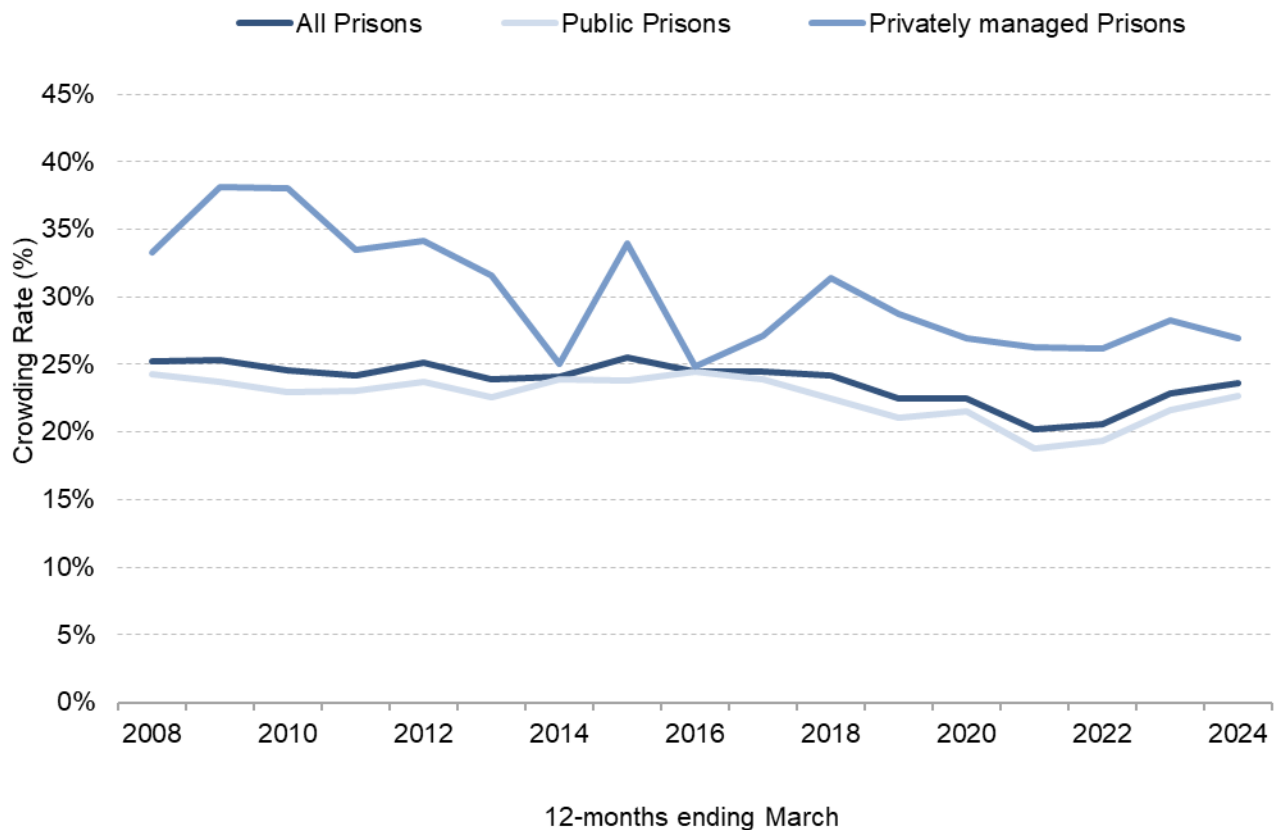
<sup>13</sup> Expressed as a proportion of the total average prison population.

**The crowding rate for public prisons is lower than the crowding rate for private prisons (Figure 2.1, Tables 2.2 and 2.4)**

The crowding rate in public prisons was 22.7% in the year to March 2024, compared with 21.6% in the previous year. In privately managed prisons, the crowding rate in the latest year was 26.9%, a slight fall from 28.3% in the previous year. The difference in crowding between public and privately managed prisons might be related to other factors, such as prison function.

Of all prisoners held in crowded conditions in the year to March 2024, 99.7% (20,470 prisoners) were held in doubled accommodation.<sup>14</sup> The doubled crowding rate, as a proportion of the total prison population, was 23.5% in the current reporting year. This is an increase from 22.8% in the previous year.

**Figure 2.1: Percentage of prisoners held in crowded conditions across Public and Privately managed Prisons in England and Wales, 12-months ending March 2008 to 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 2.2)**



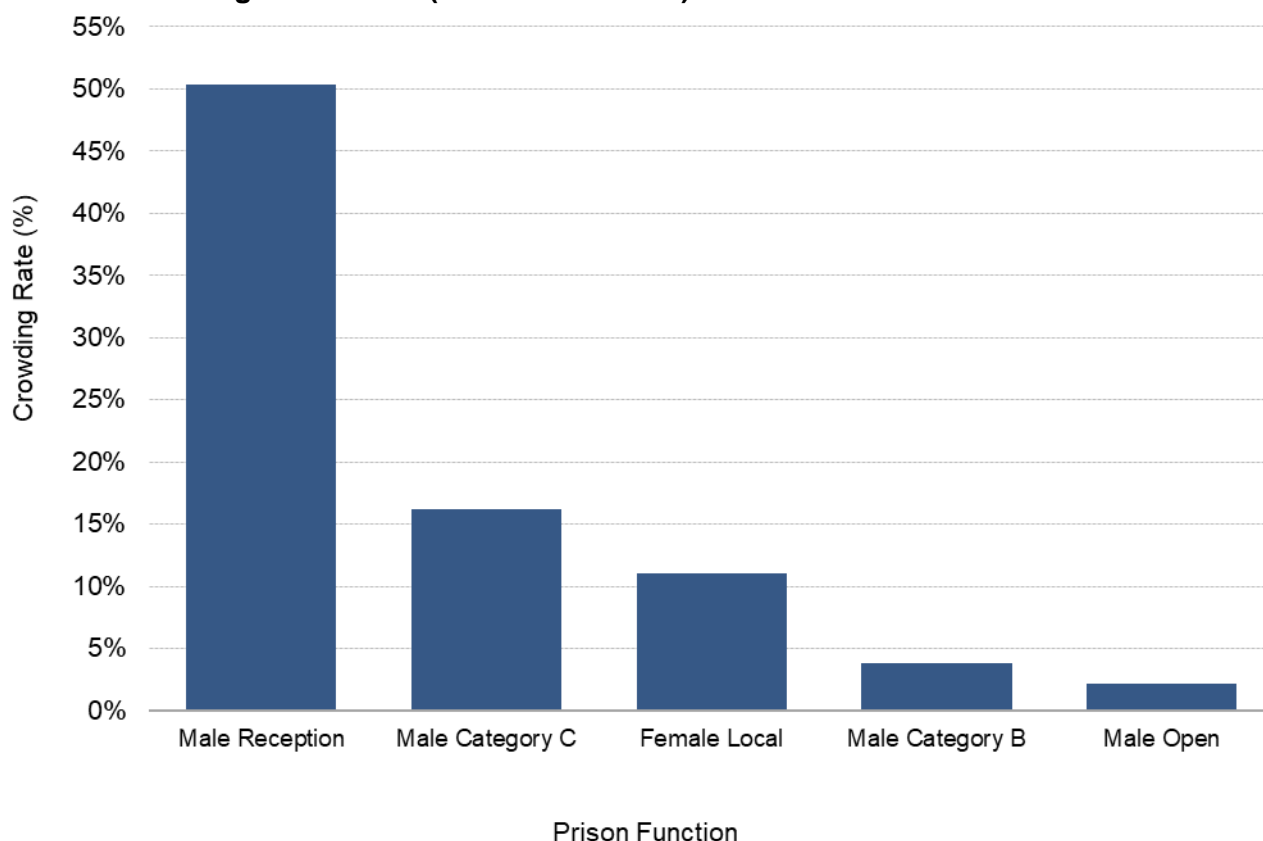
<sup>14</sup> Doubled accommodation is defined as two prisoners being held in a cell designed for one prisoner.

### The highest crowding rates are in Male Reception prisons<sup>15</sup> (Figure 2.2, Table 2.6)

Rates of crowding vary by prison function, and in the 12-months to March 2024, levels were highest in Male Reception prisons, where 50.3% (13,143) prisoners were held in crowded accommodation.<sup>16,17</sup>

In Male Category C prisons, the crowding rate was 16.2% in the year ending March 2024. The crowding rate in Female Local prisons was 11.0% for the same time period.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 2.2: Crowding rate in prisons across England and Wales, by prison function, 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 2.6)**



<sup>15</sup> Crowding is not evenly dispersed across the prison estate; it is particularly concentrated in Male Reception prisons, which are those that serve the courts of a specific area, and which predominantly hold remand and short sentenced prisoners.

<sup>16</sup> Rate of crowding is expressed as a proportion of the total prison population. The population in Male Reception prisons was 26,130 in the latest financial year. The total prison population across all estates in England and Wales was 87,129.

<sup>17</sup> Prison function is determined using the 2023/24 financial year list of functions.

<sup>18</sup> Crowding is less in Category B and C prisons as many of these are training prisons where activities are targeted at reducing re-offending by providing constructive regimes which address offending behaviour and improve opportunities on release.

### **3. Foreign National Offender Referrals**

Prior to April 2023, prisons were required to refer Foreign National Offenders (FNOs) to Home Office Immigration Enforcement (HOIE) within 10 working days of receiving a custodial sentence. If release was due within one calendar month, the referral was required to be made immediately. This was to ensure FNOs received due consideration for deportation/removal by the Home Office before their release.

A new centralised process for the referral of newly sentenced FNOs to Home Office HOIE has been operating as the primary means of referral throughout 2023/24. Details of FNOs receiving a custodial sentence are captured and referred to HOIE by default within 10 days of being entered onto the prison database. Therefore, the chapter on Foreign National Referrals will no longer appear in this publication. The table previously published here has also been discontinued.

## 4. Prisoners Working in Custody

Currently only incomplete data is available on prisoners working in prison and as such will not be included in the 2023/24 edition. Work is ongoing to improve data, and this will be published once completed. Prison level data on Percentage of prisoners attending purposeful activity is available in the Annual Prison Performance Ratings 2023/24 Official Statistics: [Prison Performance Ratings: 2023 to 2024 - Official statistics announcement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/prison-performance-ratings-2023-to-2024-official-statistics-announcement)



## 5. Prisoners Earnings subject to the Prisoners' Earnings Act 1996

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**In the 12-months to March 2024, a net sum of £22.5 million was earned by prisoners before the Prisoners' Earnings Act (PEA) levy was applied.<sup>19</sup>**

During the 12-months ending March 2024, a total of £22.5 million was earned before the Prisoners' Earnings Act levy was applied. This is a nominal increase of 16.0% compared with the same period last year, when £19.4 million was raised.

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**In the 12-months to March 2024, an average of 1,183 active prisoners were working on release on temporary licence and subject to the PEA levy.**

In the 12-months ending March 2024, an average of 1,183 prisoners worked each month and were subject to the PEA. This represents an increase of 8.8% on the previous year, when the number was 1,088 per month.

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**A total of £4.2 million was raised through the Prisoners' Earnings Act levy.**

An average of £296 per prisoner per month was raised through the levy; totalling £4.2 million raised for the year ending March 2024. Net earnings amounted to £1,286 per prisoner per month after the levy was applied.

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The Prisoner Earnings Act (PEA) commenced on 26 September 2011. It enables prison governors to impose a levy of up to and including 40% on net wages over £20 per week for prisoners who have been assessed as being of low risk of absconding or re-offending and allowed to work outside of the prison on temporary licence, to prepare for their eventual release. As per the Prison Rules 1999, all monies raised from the levy are sent to Victim Support, an independent charity in England and Wales that provides specialist practical and emotional support to victims and witnesses of crime.

For the year ending March 2021, most release on temporary Licence (ROTL) was suspended, except for key workers and compassionate releases as part of a range of measures to help to limit the transmission of COVID-19 across prisons. The increase seen in the past three financial years is due in part to the low base in the year ending March 2021 during the suspension of some ROTL cases, and a rise in the volume of the prison population, leading to higher numbers of prisoners working and money earned.

**Total net earnings and average net earnings per prisoner per month before the PEA levy increased from the year ending March 2023 to year ending March 2024 (Source: Tables 5.1 and 5.2)**

In the year to March 2024, prisoners' nominal net earnings before the levy under the Prisoners' Earnings Act (1996) amounted to £22.5 million. This was an increase of 16.0% (£3.1 million) from the previous year. Before the levy deduction, prisoners earned an

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<sup>19</sup> Net earnings are those after tax, national insurance, any court ordered payments or child maintenance payments.

average of £1,582 per month, £99 more than in the previous 12-month period. The average number of active prisoners per month was 1,183, an increase of 8.8% from last year when the number was 1,088.

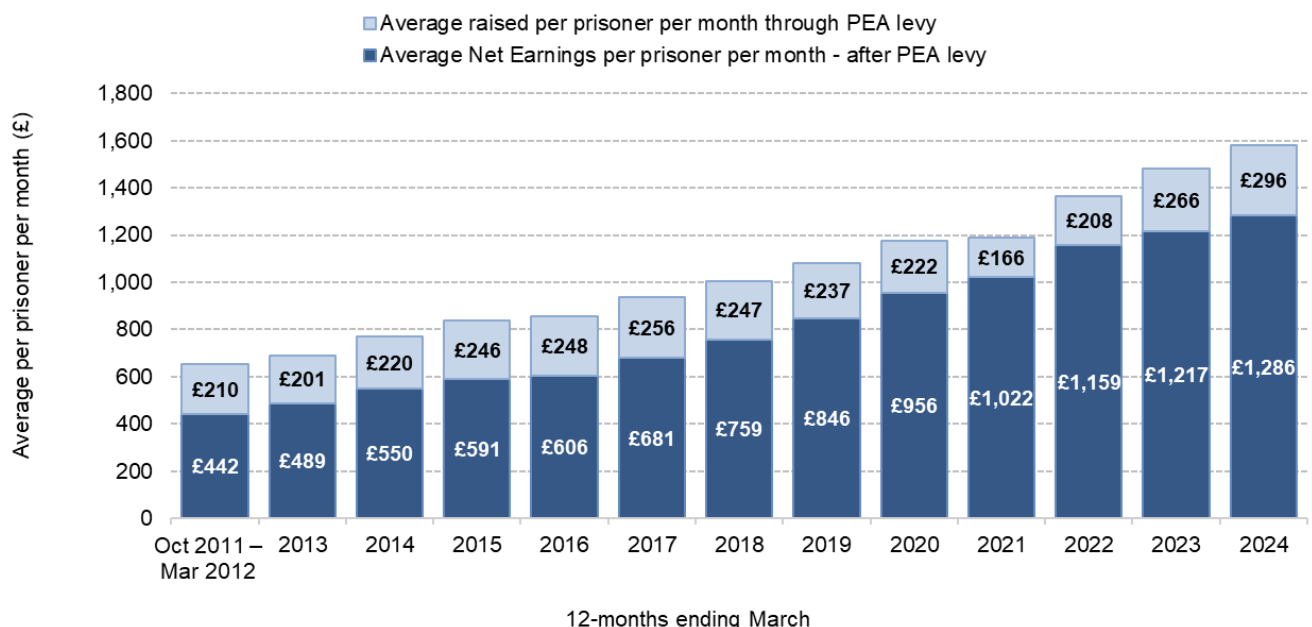
**Average nominal net earnings per prisoner per month after the PEA levy increased (Source: Tables 5.1 and 5.2, Figure 5.1)**

The proportion of prisoner earnings taken through the levy was 18.7% in 2023/24, an increase from 18.0% the year before. Average nominal net earnings per prisoner per month after the levy increased, and the average amount raised for the levy per prisoner per month also increased between the year ending March 2023 and the year ending March 2024 (Figure 5.1, Table 5.2).

After the levy deduction through the Prisoner’s Earnings Act (1996), prisoners earned an average of £1,286 per month in the 12-months ending March 2024, a 5.7% nominal increase in earnings (£69) on average per prisoner per month compared with the same period in the previous reporting year (when average nominal earnings totalled £1,217 per prisoner).

Through the levy deduction, £296 per prisoner per month was raised on average for the levy. The nominal amount raised increased by 11.3% (£30) per month per prisoner in the latest year compared with the year ending March 2023, when an average of £266 was raised per prisoner per month through the Prisoners’ Earnings Act levy.

**Figure 5.1: Average nominal net prisoner earnings after Prisoners’ Earnings Act levy deduction, and average raised through the levy per prisoner per month, the 6-months ending March 2012 to the 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 5.2)**

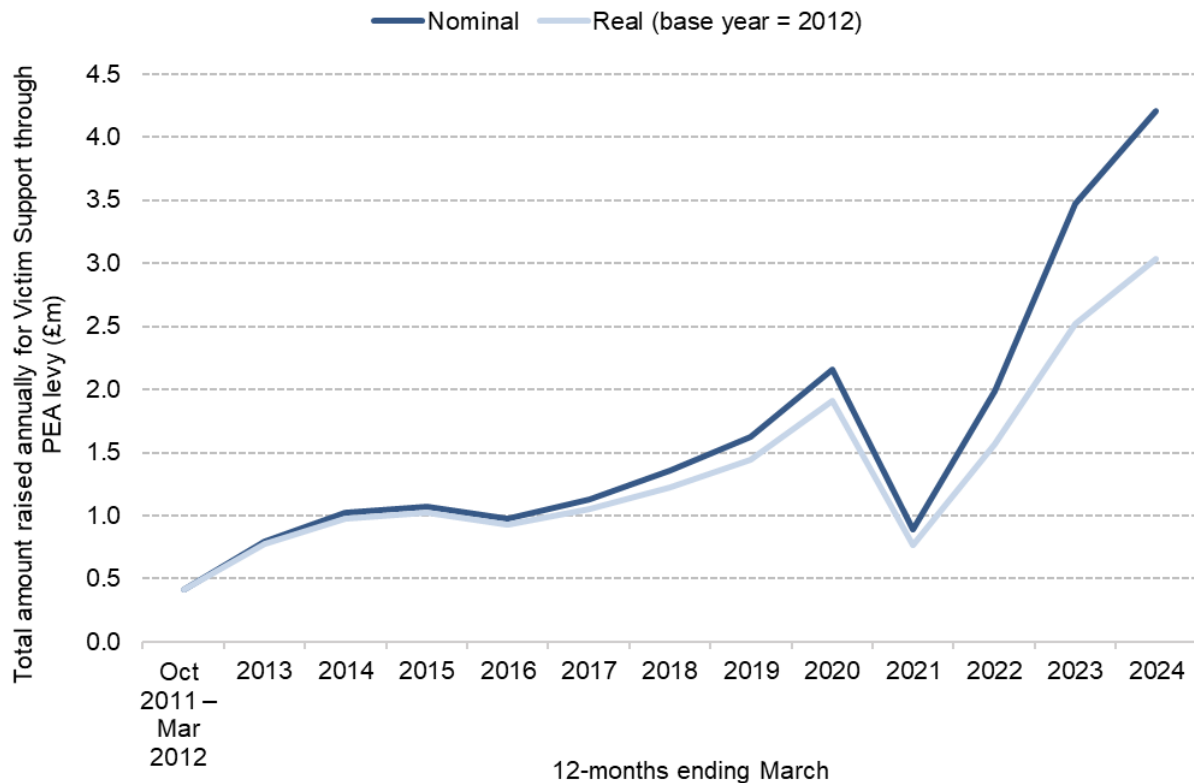


**Total monies raised for Victim Support through the PEA levy increased in nominal terms (Source: Table 5.1, Figure 5.2)**

In the 12-months to March 2024, £4.2 million was raised for Victim Support through the levy, compared with £0.8 million in the 12-months to March 2013, the first full

year for which data is available. The 2023/24 nominal amount of £4.2 million is equivalent to an inflation adjusted £3 million.<sup>20,21</sup> Figure 5.2 shows a year-on-year increase in monies raised since 2022/23 in real terms, indicating an above-inflation increase in the amount raised for Victim Support through the levy this year, and indeed in each year since roughly 2013/14.

**Figure 5.2: Total monies raised through prisoners’ earnings for Victim Support in nominal and real (inflation-adjusted) terms, the 6-months ending March 2012 to the 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 5.1)**



<sup>20</sup> Consumer price index calculated using Bank of England inflation calculator:

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>

<sup>21</sup> Inflation adjusted, i.e., “real terms”, monies raised were calculated using monthly Consumer Price Index inflation figures averaged for 2012 as the base year, which is the first year for which prisoner earnings data is held.

## 6. Random Mandatory Drug Testing

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### **rMDT is still yet to return to the levels required for reliable estimates in 2023-24.**

In the 12 months to March 2024, there were 51,452 random mandatory drug tests (rMDT) carried out nationally across all types of drugs. This was an increase from 41,308 the previous year but is still lower than 2019/20 when over 54,000 tests were conducted. In the 12 months to March 2024, the number of tests did not meet expected levels in any month and were below the almost 57,000 tests expected over the year.

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In the 12 months to March 2024, there were 51,452 random mandatory drug tests (rMDT) carried out nationally, an increase from 41,308 in 2022/23. However, in 2023/24 test volumes remained below pre-pandemic years, averaging less than 4,300 tests per month across an average of 110 prisons, compared to 4,500 across circa 120 prisons.

Due to reduced testing levels, reduced number of prisons with sufficient testing<sup>22</sup> and the need to update the testing panel, the data is currently not sufficient to robustly estimate the percentage positive. This is also affected by the changes in which prisons are meeting their testing requirements each month. Any changes in the monthly percentage positive levels could be driven by certain prisons reaching their required levels rather than underlying levels of drug use.

Since these issues affect both national estimates and prison level estimates, there are no tables accompanying this chapter of the HMPPS Digest.

A more detailed explanation of how rMDT operates is given in the Guide to the HMPPS Digest. This includes further details on why the numbers of participating prisons and testing volumes were considered too low to produce reliable and representative estimates.

### **Management of rMDT**

In normal circumstances, as part of HMPPS's comprehensive drug testing regime, a random sample of prisoners (5%, or 10% in prisons with under 400 prisoners) are subject to rMDT each month. This translated to over 54,000 tests completed in the year to March 2020, across all prisons. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, testing was suspended across prisons from April 2020 and only partially resumed from September 2020. Establishments were required to resume testing when they were operating at Stages 1 or 2 rather than at Stages 3 and 4 of the National Framework for managing COVID-19. This resulted in a significant drop in the number of completed tests throughout 2020/21, continuing into 2021/22. In April 2022 formal performance expectations around rMDT

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<sup>22</sup> The maximum number of prisons with at least one test in a single month in the 12 months to March 2024 occurred in July 2023 and was 113, however only 98 of these were testing at the required levels. This is well below the pre-COVID-19 average of c.120 prisons. Not testing in all prisons leads to estimates that are likely to be biased.

volumes were reinstated. Since then, testing levels have increased, with there being 25% more tests in the 12 months to March 2024, than the previous 12 months.

### **Testing Panel**

The extent to which the testing panel covers the drugs that are prevalent in prisons, in particular the latest compounds of Psychoactive Substances (PS) in use, is another determinant of the reliability of rMDT estimates. Time lags in updating the testing panel with new substances lead to underestimation of drug use because they cannot be detected. It has not been possible to draw conclusions about the level of misuse of drugs including PS for 2018/19 and 2019/20 because of two new compounds of PS in circulation in prisons which could not at the time be identified by the rMDT test. Steps have been taken to reduce considerably the time lags in updating the rMDT testing panel for new drugs. The improvements to this process are set out in the Guide to HMPPS Digest alongside the latest changes.

Because of the pause and subsequent disruption to testing due to the pandemic since 2020/21 and underestimation of drug use in 2018/19 and 2019/20 due to time lags in updating the testing panel for new PS, readers are referred to the findings in the HMPPS Digest for the period 2017/2018.<sup>23</sup> In 2017/18, the percentage of positive drug tests (including PS) was 21%.

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<sup>23</sup> The latest data including for 2017/18 and past trends are given in HMPPS Annual Digest: April 2019 to March 2020 edition (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-annual-digest-april-2019-to-march2020>). This includes full details of data quality which are summarised in the Guide to this year's HMPPS Digest

## 7. Protesting Behaviour

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### **Barricade/prevention of access incidents increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024 there were 1,827 barricade/prevention of access incidents, an increase of 33% from 1,371 in the previous 12-month period.

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### **Hostage incidents increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024 there were 58 incidents where prisoners took someone hostage, an increase of 14% from 51 in the previous 12 months.

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### **Concerted indiscipline incidents increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, the number of incidents of concerted indiscipline increased by 52% to 289. The number of these incidents which are counted as active, incidents involving aggression or violence, increased by 70% over the same period from 105 to 179 (62% of all concerted indiscipline incidents).

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### **Incidents at height increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, the number of incidents at height in prisons increased by 50% to 7,783 (compared with 5,188 in the previous year).

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A new table has been included showing the number of hostage incidents since the 12 months to March 2020, broken down by the type of hostage taken. This is included within the tables (table 7.2) and data tool for this year and will be included within the data tool only in future releases. As this is an addition of new data, we welcome any views on this including suggestions for further developments.

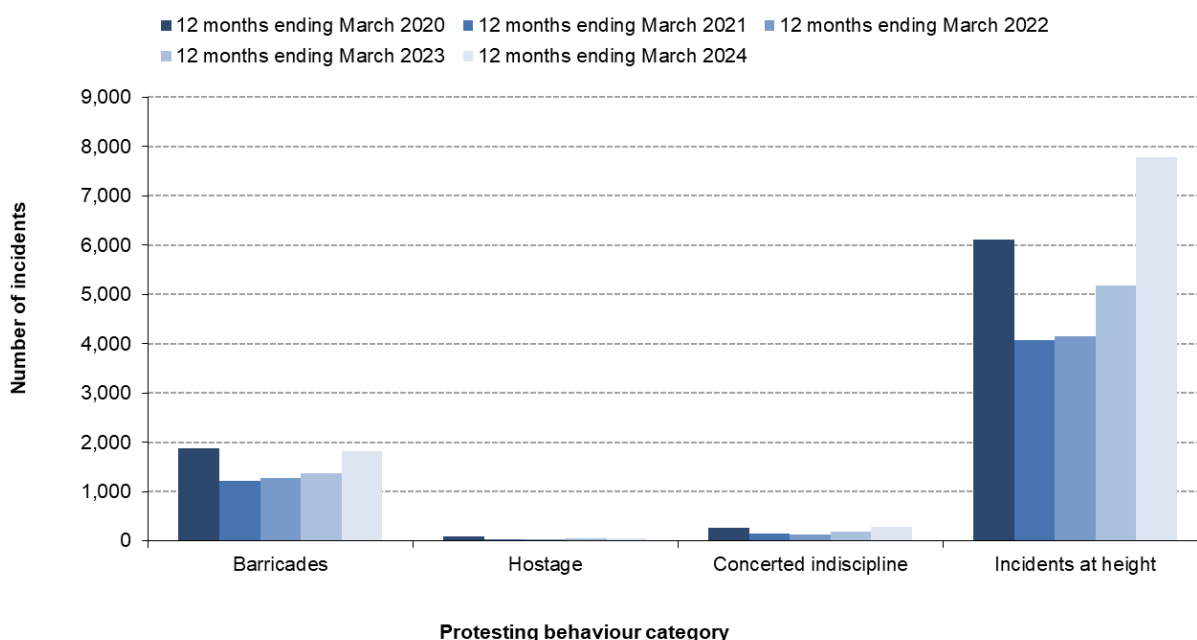
### **Incidents at height continue to be the most common form of protesting behaviour (Figure 7.1, Table 7.1)<sup>24</sup>**

In the 12 months to March 2024, the most common type of incidents of protesting behaviour were incidents at height (7,783 incidents), followed by barricades or prevented access (1,827 incidents), concerted indiscipline (289 incidents) and hostages (58 incidents). All types of incidents of protesting behaviour increased in the 12 months to March 2024 in comparison to the previous 12 months.

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<sup>24</sup> Please see the Guide to HMPPS Annual Digest for protesting behaviour definitions.

**Figure 7.1: Number of incidents in each category of protesting behaviour, 12 months ending March 2020 to 12 months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 7.1)**



**The number of incidents of prisoners using barricades or preventing access increased (Source: Protesting Behaviour data tool)**

There were 1,827 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024 where prisoners used barricades or prevented access. This represents an increase of 33% from 1,371 in the previous year, but a decrease of 3% from the peak of 1,882 in the 12 months to March 2020.

Over the same period, the rate of barricade incidents per 1,000 prisoners, which takes account of the changes in the prison population, increased 25% from 16.8 in the previous 12 months to 21.0 in the 12 months to March 2024<sup>25,26</sup>, but is still below the peak of 22.6 in the 12 months to March 2020.

**The number of hostage incidents increased<sup>27</sup> (Source: Protesting Behaviour data tool)**

The number of incidents where prisoners took someone hostage in prisons increased by 14% to 58 in the 12 months to March 2024 (compared with 51 in the previous year). However, this is a decrease of 55% from the peak of 129 incidents in the 12 months to March 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Rates are based on the latest prison population data published in Offender Management Statistics Bulletin within the following link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>.

<sup>26</sup> Please refer to the Guide to HMPPS Annual Digest Document for further information about how rates are compiled.

<sup>27</sup> Following internal checks on the quality of the data, the figures for hostage incidents in table 7.1 from the year ending March 2019 onwards have been revised slightly since previously published.

The rate of hostage incidents in the 12 months to March 2024 increased from 0.6 to 0.7 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in comparison to the previous year. However, this remains 56% lower than the peak of 1.5 incidents per 1,000 prisoners first seen in the 12 months to March 2016.

Of the 58 hostage incidents, a large majority (54 incidents) involved prisoners as hostages.

**The number of incidents of concerted indiscipline increased (Source: Protesting Behaviour data tool)**

The number of incidents of concerted indiscipline increased by 52% to 289 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024. Incidents of concerted indiscipline had been on a decreasing trend since a peak of 380 incidents in the 12 months to March 2017 but have now been on the increase since the 12 months to March 2022.

The increase in the latest year was driven primarily by incidents of concerted indiscipline described as active, which increased by 70%, from 105 to 179 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024. The proportion of incidents of concerted indiscipline described as active increased from 55% in the previous year to 62% in the latest year.

The rate of concerted indiscipline incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased from 2.3 in the 12 months to March 2023 to 3.3 in the 12 months to March 2024, although this remains 25% lower than the peak of 4.5 in the 12 months to March 2017.

**The number of incidents at height increased (Source: Protesting Behaviour data tool)**

The number of incidents at height increased by 50% to a new peak of 7,783 in the 12 months to March 2024 (compared with 5,188 in the previous year). The number of incidents at height was 27% higher in the latest year compared with the previous peak of 6,114 in the 12 months to March 2020.

The rate of incidents at height per 1,000 prisoners increased from 63.4 in the 12 months to March 2023 to 89.4 in the 12 months to March 2024 and is now 22% higher than the previous peak of 73.5 in the 12 months to March 2020.



## 8. Finds in Prison

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### **Total number of find incidents increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, the number of incidents of finds increased to 66,189 from 52,193 in the previous 12-month period, an increase of 27%.

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### **Number of drug finds in prisons increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, the number of incidents where drugs were found in prisons increased to 21,145 from 14,724 in the previous 12-month period, an increase of 44%.

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### **Number of mobile phone and SIM card finds increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, there were 10,669 incidents where mobile phones were found in prisons and 5,080 incidents where SIM cards were found. These are increases of 36% and 19% respectively, compared with the previous 12-month period.

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### **Number of incidents where weapons were found increased**

There were 11,641 incidents where weapons were found in the 12 months to March 2024. This is an increase of 24% compared to the previous year.

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### **Number of tobacco finds increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, there were 4,673 incidents where tobacco was found in prisons. This is an increase of 27% compared to the previous year.

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### **Number of alcohol finds decreased while distilling equipment finds increased**

In the 12 months to March 2024, there were 9,136 incidents where alcohol was found in prisons and 661 incidents where distilling equipment was found. This is a decrease of 4% for alcohol finds but an increase of 13% for distilling equipment finds, compared with the previous 12-month period.

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This chapter covers incidents where illicit items have been found in prisons. It is important to consider with incidents of finds in prisons, that an increase in numbers may be as a result of more items being found, although not necessarily attributable to any one particular security counter-measure, rather than more items being present in prisons.

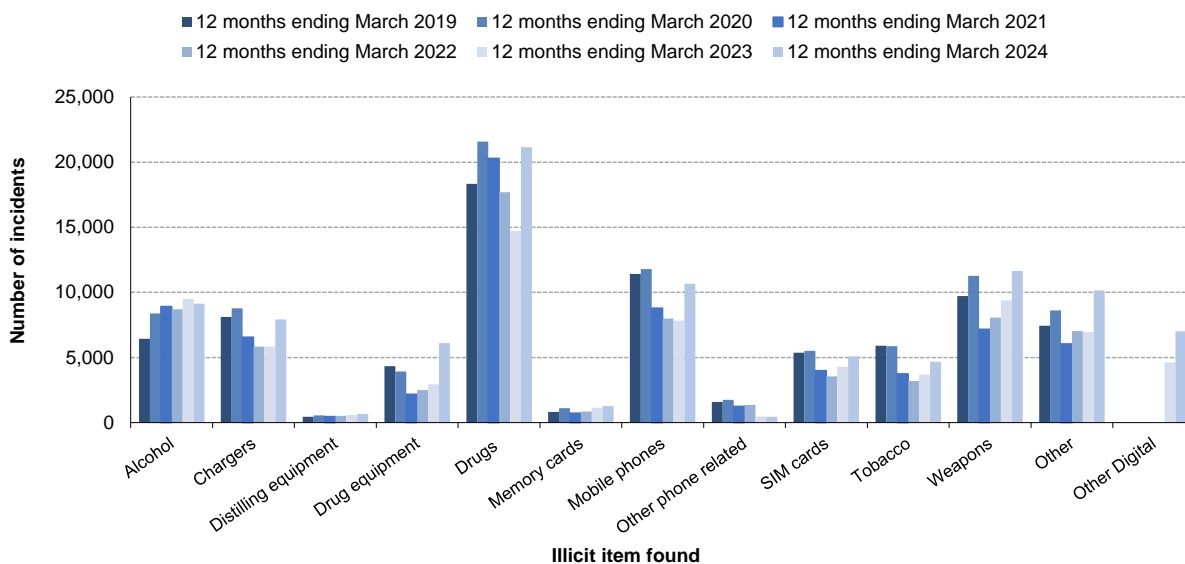
Table 8.2b shows the total weight of drugs found, by prison. We propose to remove this table from next year, subject to user feedback. This is because of the considerable limitations of this data: reporting has been shown to be variable in quality and susceptible to order effects, and because the weight of drugs is not separated by type of drug this data does not enable users to robustly gauge the number of drugs found or their impact on the prison (both density and dosage vary by drug type).

**The total number of incidents where items were found increased in the 12 months to March 2024 (Table 8.1)<sup>28</sup>**

In the 12 months ending March 2024, there were 66,189 find incidents; an increase of 27% from the 52,193 in the 12 months to March 2023. The number of find incidents has increased in each of the last two years following decreases during the pandemic period, and have now recovered to reach the highest level in the time series in the latest year.

In the year to March 2024, the most common types of illicit items found in prisons were drugs (21,145 incidents of finds); weapons (11,641); and mobile phones (10,669). There were increases in almost all categories of finds incidents, except for those where alcohol or other mobile phone related items were found, which decreased in the latest year by 4% and 6% respectively.

**Figure 8.1: Number of incidents where illicit items were found in prisons, 12 months ending March 2019 to 12 months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 8.1)**



**The number of finds of drugs increased in the 12 months to March 2024 (Figure 8.1, Finds data tool)**

In the 12 months ending March 2024, there were 21,145 finds of drugs in prisons; an increase of 44% from the 14,724 in the 12 months to March 2023. Incidents of drug finds had been on downwards trends since reaching a pre-pandemic peak of 21,575 in the 12 months to March 2020, until this recent sharp increase.

The number of incidents where drug equipment was found in prisons increased by 107% from 2,942 in the 12 months to March 2023 to 6,094 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024.

<sup>28</sup> There was a change in the way Finds were recorded in March 2022. This included changes to the way finds incidents are recorded as well as the introduction of new categories. Please see the Guide to HMPPS Annual Digest for more information.

## **The drug type accounting for the largest number of incidents where drugs were found in the 12 months to March 2024 were Class B drugs (Table 8.2a)**

There was an increase in incidents of finds where the drug type was unknown, increasing 55% to 7,294 finds, more incidents than any other drug category in this time period.<sup>29</sup>

There was a decrease in finds of Class A drugs, decreasing 4% to 795 finds. Class A drugs were found in 4% of drug find incidents<sup>30</sup>, 2 percentage points lower than the previous year. In contrast, there was an increase in finds of Class B drugs, increasing by 37% to 5,739 finds, more incidents than any other drug category (beside the Unknown category) in this time period. Class B drugs were found in 27% of drug find incidents, however, this was 2 percentage points lower than the previous year.

Psychoactive substances (PS), as defined in the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016<sup>31</sup>, were found in 4,819 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024. The number of finds of psychoactive substances has increased by 86% compared with the 12 months to March 2023, the largest increase of all drug type groups, and the percentage of drug finds that included psychoactive substances (PS) increased from 18% in the 12 months to March 2023 to 23% in the 12 months to March 2024.

There was a 18% increase in 'other' types of drugs found, to 3,082 finds.

## **The number of incidents where mobile phones were found increased, while the number of incidents where other mobile phone related items were found decreased (Figure 8.1, and Table 8.3)**

The number of incidents where mobile phones were found in prisons increased by 36% from 7,837 in the 12 months to March 2023, to 10,669 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024. Incidents of mobile phone finds had been on an upwards trend reaching a peak of 11,792 in the 12 months to March 2020 and had since been on a downwards trend until this latest increase. Despite this increase, the number of incidents where mobile phones were found remain below pre-pandemic levels.

The quantity of mobile phones found in prisons increased by 32% over this time period, from 11,129 in the 12 months to March 2023 to 14,702 in the 12 months to March 2024.

The number of incidents where other mobile phone related items were found in prisons decreased by 6%, with a decrease from 466 in the 12 months ending March 2023 to 438 in the 12 months ending March 2024.

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<sup>29</sup> There was a change in the way Finds were recorded in March 2022. This included the introduction of the drug type Ketamine as well as changes to the order drug types are presented to the reporter (with Unknown now being at the top of the list). For further information, please refer to the Guide to the HMPPS Digest.

<sup>30</sup> Figures on the percentage of incidents by class of drugs are approximations that assume no find incidents include multiple drugs within each class.

<sup>31</sup> In this Act "psychoactive substance" means any substance which is capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes it, and is not an exempted substance. Exempted substances are: controlled drugs, medicinal products, alcohol or alcoholic products, nicotine, tobacco products, caffeine or caffeine products or any substance which is ordinarily consumed as food, and does not contain a prohibited ingredient. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/2/contents>

### **The number of incidents where SIM cards were found increased (Figure 8.1 and Table 8.4)**

The number of incidents where SIM cards were found in prisons increased by 19% from 4,279 in the 12 months to March 2023, to 5,080 incidents in the 12 months to March 2024.

The quantity of SIM cards found increased in this period by 17%, from 6,634 SIM cards found in the 12 months to March 2023 to 7,737 in the latest 12-months.

### **The number of incidents where memory cards, chargers and other digital items were found increased (Figure 8.1)**

The number of incidents where memory cards were found in prisons increased 13%, from 1,134 in the 12 months ending March 2023 to 1,276 in the 12 months ending March 2024.

The number of incidents where chargers were found in prisons increased 36%, from 5,831 in the 12 months ending March 2023 to 7,925 in the 12 months ending March 2024.

The number of incidents where other digital items were found increased substantially, by 52%, from 4,616 in the 12 months ending March 2023 to 7,010 in the 12 months to March 2024.

### **The number of incidents where alcohol was found has decreased, while the number of incidents where distilling equipment was found increased (Figure 8.1)**

The number of incidents where alcohol was found in prisons decreased by 4%, from 9,480 in the year ending March 2023 to 9,136 in the year ending March 2024.

The number of incidents where distilling equipment was found increased 13%, from 583 in the year ending March 2023 to 661 in the year ending March 2024.

### **The number of incidents where tobacco was found increased (Figure 8.1)**

In the 12 months ending March 2024, there were 4,673 finds of tobacco in prisons, an increase of 27% from 3,694 incidents the previous year.

### **The number of incidents where weapons were found increased (Figure 8.1)**

The number of incidents where weapons were found in prisons increased 24% from 9,400 in the year ending March 2023 to 11,641 in the year ending March 2024. Weapon finds pre-pandemic had been on an increasing trend, peaking at 11,267 in the 12 months to March 2020. Weapon finds had a sharp drop at the start of the pandemic period, going from the peak in the 12 months to March 2020 to 7,178 in the 12 months to March 2021. Since then, weapon finds have been on an increasing trend and are now higher than pre-pandemic levels.

## 9. Incentives

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**The proportion of prisoners with basic incentives has risen compared with the previous year, while the proportion with an enhanced incentive has fallen.**

The proportion of prisoners with a Basic status was 4.9%, increasing from the previous year when the proportion was 3.2%. Conversely, the proportion of prisoners with an enhanced status fell from 51.3% in 2023 to 49.9% in 2024.

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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. The scheme allows prisoners to earn privileges through good behaviour and engagement in the regime and rehabilitation. Privileges can also be lost through poor behaviour.

The IEP scheme was replaced by the Incentives Policy Framework, which went fully live in January 2020. The new policy has a greater focus on incentivising 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.

There have been 5 incentive levels overall: Entry, Basic, Standard, Enhanced (initial) and Enhanced (extended) - although these have changed over time as levels have been added and phased out. Entry was introduced in 2013 and abolished in August 2019 while Enhanced extended began being measured from 2022.

Prisoners typically start on Standard level, and positive behaviour can be rewarded with progression to Enhanced, while poor behaviour can result in prisoners being downgraded to 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.

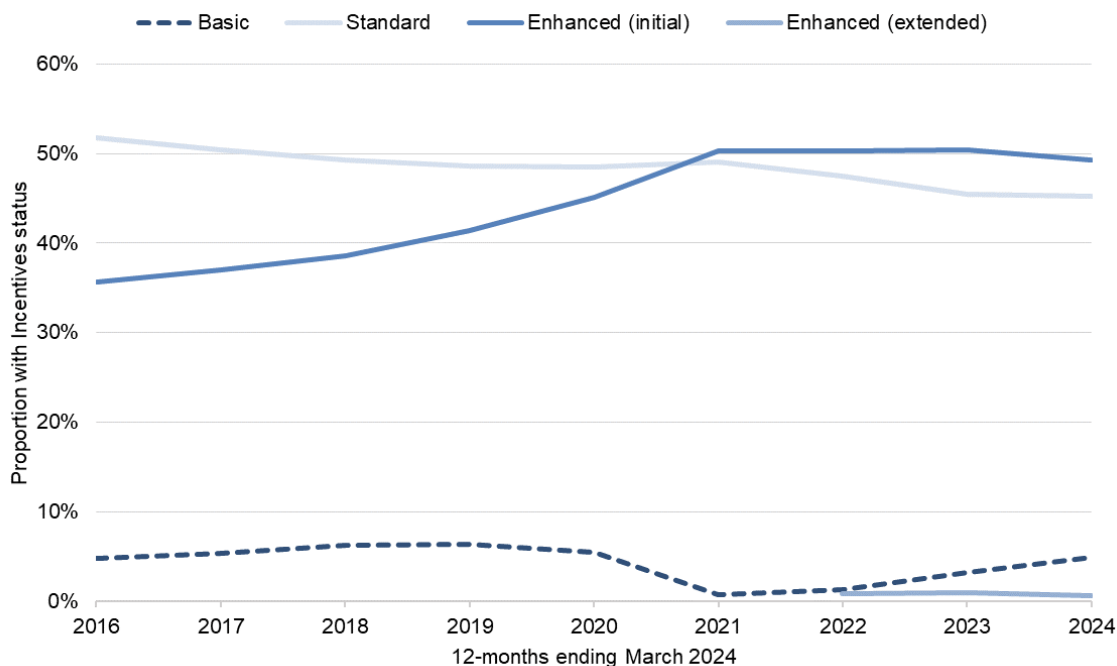
**The increase in the number of prisoners in the latest year follows through to an increase in prisoners on almost all status levels. However, the proportion on basic has risen, while the proportion on enhanced (both initial and extended) has reduced (Tables 9.1 and 9.2, Figure 9.1)**

In the year ending March 2024, an annual average of 4,272 prisoners (4.9%) had a Basic incentive status, an increase of 61% from the year ending March 2023 when an average of 2,657 prisoners (3.2%) had a Basic status. This continues the upwards trend from previous years, returning towards levels seen before 2021 - before COVID-19 mitigations suspended the use of Basic incentive levels.

Although the proportion of prisoners with a Standard incentive status was relatively stable from 2023 (45.4%) to 2024 (45.2%), this year marks the lowest proportion of prisoners with a Standard incentive status in the time series.

The proportions of prisoners on both Enhanced Initial (49.3%) and Enhanced Extended (0.6%) were lower in the year ending March 2024, compared to the proportions of prisoners on both Enhanced Initial (50.4%) and Enhanced Extended (0.9%) the previous year.

**Figure 9.1: Percentage of Prisoners on each incentive level, in the 12-months ending March 2016 to March 2024 (Source: Table 9.2)**



**Male YOIs had the largest proportion of prisoners with a Basic incentive status (Table 9.4)**

The proportion of prisoners assigned to each type of incentive status varied greatly by prison function, in the 12-months to March 2024. The prison function with the highest proportion of prisoners on Basic incentive status was Male YOIs (12.2% of prisoners). The prison functions with the highest proportion of prisoners on Standard incentive status were Male Reception and Female Local (67.1% and 62.8% of prisoners, respectively). The prison functions with the highest proportion of prisoners on Enhanced (Initial) incentive status were Female Open and Male Open (94.5% and 93.2% of prisoners, respectively).

## 10. Mother and Baby Units (MBUs), Pregnant Prisoners and Births

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### **The total number of 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>32</sup> In the 12-months ending March 2024, 54 applications were approved and 14 refused.<sup>33</sup>

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### **The number of women and babies received into MBUs increased for the third year running**

In the year to March 2024, 55 women and 50 babies were received into MBUs; compared with 52 women and 45 babies in the previous reporting year.

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### **There were 215 pregnant women in prison in the 12-month period of 2023/24**

Over the 12-month period of April 2023 to March 2024 there were 215 pregnant women in prison. This compares with 194 for the 2022/23 year.

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### **There was a total of 53 births to women spending time in custody in 2023/24**

Nearly all (52) of these births took place at a hospital.

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A Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) is a designated 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 up to and around the age of 18 months can apply for a place in an MBU. Details of the process are given in the Technical Guide accompanying this publication.

There are currently six MBUs in operation across the women's estate in England (there are no women's prisons in Wales). These provide an overall total capacity of 64 places for mothers and 70 places for babies to allow for twins and multiple births. Capacity has never been exceeded.

This report contains statistics for self-declared pregnant prisoners and births for the financial year 2023/24. This is the second year that figures have been shown for the total number of pregnant prisoners for the year and for individual months, instead of showing weekly snapshots.

The data represent women who have self-declared as pregnant and consent to sharing this information, having been made aware why their personal data is being monitored and how it will be used. HMPPS publish these data anonymously as part of aggregate totals, preventing identification of individuals and infringement of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.<sup>34</sup> It does not represent women who have reserved their right not to disclose this personal data to HMPPS, or who might

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<sup>32</sup> Applications received in one year may be approved or refused in a following year.

<sup>33</sup> The remaining applications were not accepted or refused as the prisoners were either released from custody or a decision had not been reached by the time of reporting.

<sup>34</sup> Where figures are so low that they risk identifying individuals, we have marked them as less than 3 to avoid identification.

have disclosed this data to healthcare providers in confidence. Self-declared data cannot be quality assured, and therefore accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

**There were 215 pregnant women in prison during the 12-month period from April 2023 to March 2024 (Table 10.2)**

There were 53 births in the year April 2023 to March 2024 for women in prison, with nearly all taking place at a hospital.

**The number of approvals for an MBU space has increased and refusals has dropped when compared to previous year (Figure 10.1, Table 10.1)**

In the 12-months ending March 2024, there were 92 applications for a place within an MBU, compared with 80 applications in the previous year.<sup>35</sup> Multiple applications can be submitted by the same individual, for example if they serve two separate sentences within the time frame and have eligible children on both occasions.

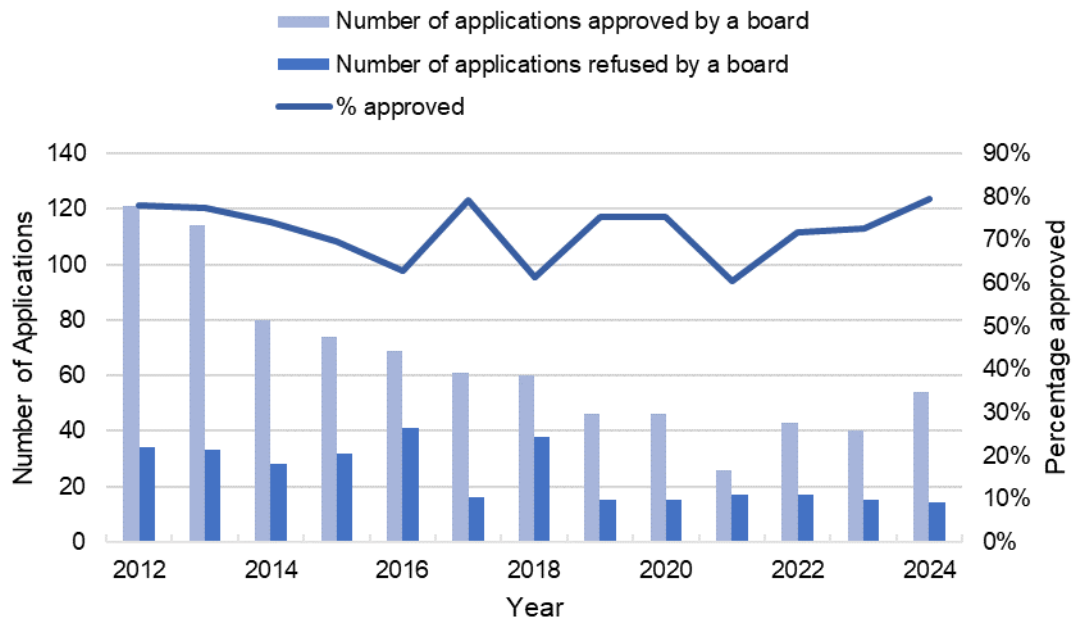
Of the 68 application decisions made across the reporting year, 79% (54 applications) were approved and 21% (14 applications) refused. The percentage of recommendations resulting in approval during the reporting year was at the highest rate observed since 2012 (it was 79% in 2014 also). Not all applications to MBUs will receive a decision as there are various reasons why an application may not proceed to an admissions board. For example, a woman may withdraw her application due to a change in her circumstances or because she is released on bail, or given a community sentence. Additionally, some decisions may be received in the following reporting year.

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<sup>35</sup> An application approval does not always mean a woman and her baby/babies will be received into an MBU, as alternative arrangements could be made for care after the application is submitted.



**Figure 10.1: Number of applications approved and refused into an MBU, the 12-months ending March 2012 to the 12-months ending March 2024<sup>36</sup> (Source: Table 10.1)**



**The number of women and babies received into MBUs increased compared to the previous reporting year (Table 10.1)**

During the latest financial year, 55 women and 50 babies were received into an MBU in England.<sup>37</sup> This compares with 52 women and 45 babies in the 12-months ending March 2023.

**The number of mothers and babies in an MBU at year end increased compared to the previous reporting year (Table 10.1)**

At the end of March 2024, 38 mothers and 36 babies were residing in an MBU in England. This compares with 33 mothers and 31 babies at the end of March 2023.

<sup>36</sup> The percentage of approved applications is the proportion of those who received a recommendation in the year (of approvals or refusals).

<sup>37</sup> The number of women received into an MBU does not necessarily equal the number of approvals within a financial year period. This is because an application for a woman can be approved in the previous financial year, but she does not enter the MBU until the current financial year.

# 11. Community Accommodation Service (CAS-2)

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## **The number of CAS-2 referrals increased by 15.7% between the 12-months ending March 2023, and the 12-months ending March 2024**

There were 3,666 total referrals for the Community Accommodation Service in the 12-months to March 2024, an increase of 15.7% on the 3,168 referrals made in the previous year. This was driven by an increase in the number of HDC referrals.

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## **Home Detention Curfew referrals increased by 23.2% between the 12-months ending March 2023, and the 12-months ending March 2024**

The number of Home Detention Curfew (HDC) referrals increased by 23.2% in the latest year, from 2,156 referrals in the year to March 2023 to 2,656 referrals in the latest year.

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## **New Alternative to custodial recall referrals more than doubled**

The number of Alternative to custodial recall referrals increased following their introduction – from 51 to 111 referrals between the years ending March 2023 and March 2024.

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## **Bail referrals increased by 0.6%**

Referrals relating to Bail increased by 0.6% from 857 to 862 between the years ending March 2023 and March 2024.

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## **CAS-2 referrals made at Male Category C prisons accounted for the highest volume of known prison referrals**

In the year to March 2024, 41.8% (1,347) of all prison referrals made (where the prison name was known), were from Male Category C prisons. The second highest proportion were from Male Reception prison with 40.3% (1,298).

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The Community Accommodation Service, Tier 2 (CAS-2) is a contracted service which provides short-term accommodation for those who have no suitable accommodation and may otherwise be held in custody. The service is available for those on Bail, Home Detention Curfew, on licence and at risk of recall due to loss of accommodation, and by discretion to those to be released as Homeless at Conditional Release date. The CAS-2 service provides up to 2 hours per week support to each resident; provision of CCTV in all female properties and several other properties; provision of Wi-Fi in all sites, with the issue of a basic smartphone to all residents and the rollout of wheelchair accessible bed spaces.

In the 12-months to March 2024, most CAS-2 referrals were made by prisons (88.3%) (**Table 11.1**)

## **The number of CAS-2 referrals increased in the 12-months to March 2024 after a fall in referrals in 2023 (Table 11.2)**

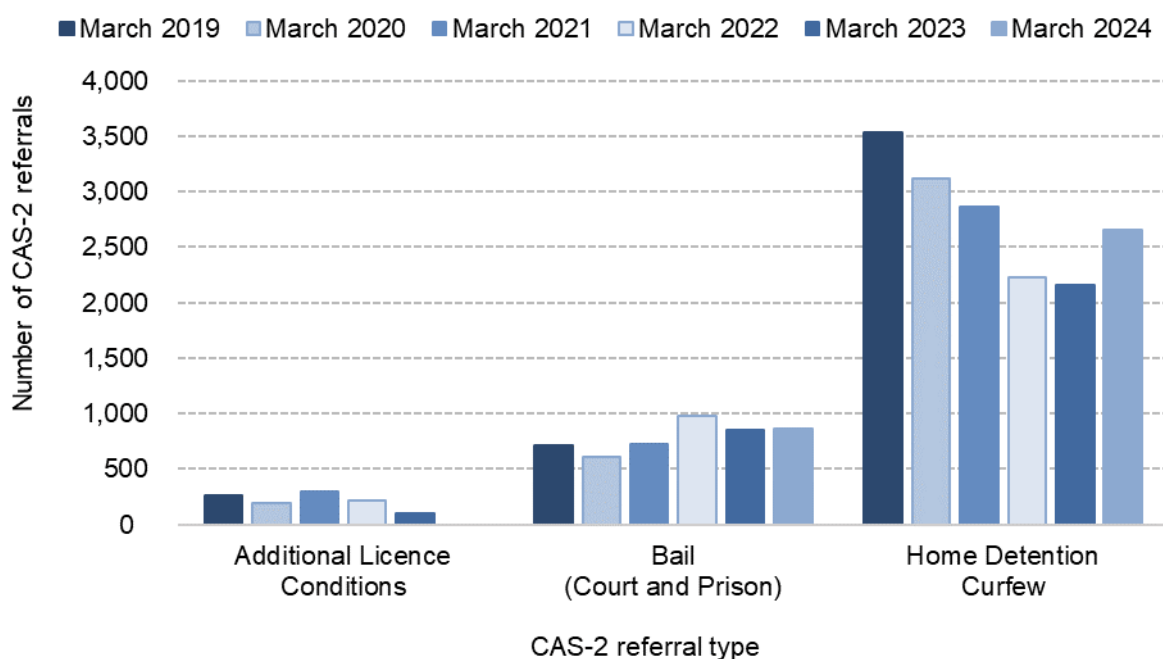
In the year ending March 2024, there were 3,666 referrals to CAS-2; an increase of 15.7% on the 3,168 made in the year to March 2023. In the year to March 2019, there was a large increase in referrals after the implementation of a new HDC policy instruction in January 2018, which increased demand for this service.

**Home Detention Curfew (HDC) accounted for 72.4% of the CAS-2 referrals made in the year to March 2024 (Figure 11.1, Table 11.2)**

HDC referrals accounted for 72.4% (2,656) of the total number of referrals. This is an increase in volume of 23.2% compared to the year ending 2023 (2,156). Prior to this, the number of HDC referrals peaked in the year ending 2019 (3,533) then fell by 39.0% to the year ending 2023.

In the year to March 2024, there was also an increase in referrals relating to Alternative to Custodial Recall by 117.6% (from 51 in the first year it was available, to 111 referrals) and a small increase to Bail (court and prison) referrals by 0.6% (from 857 to 862 referrals).<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 11.1: Number of CAS-2 referrals by referral type, for the 12-months ending March 2019 to the 12-months ending March 2024<sup>39</sup> (Source: Table 11.2)**



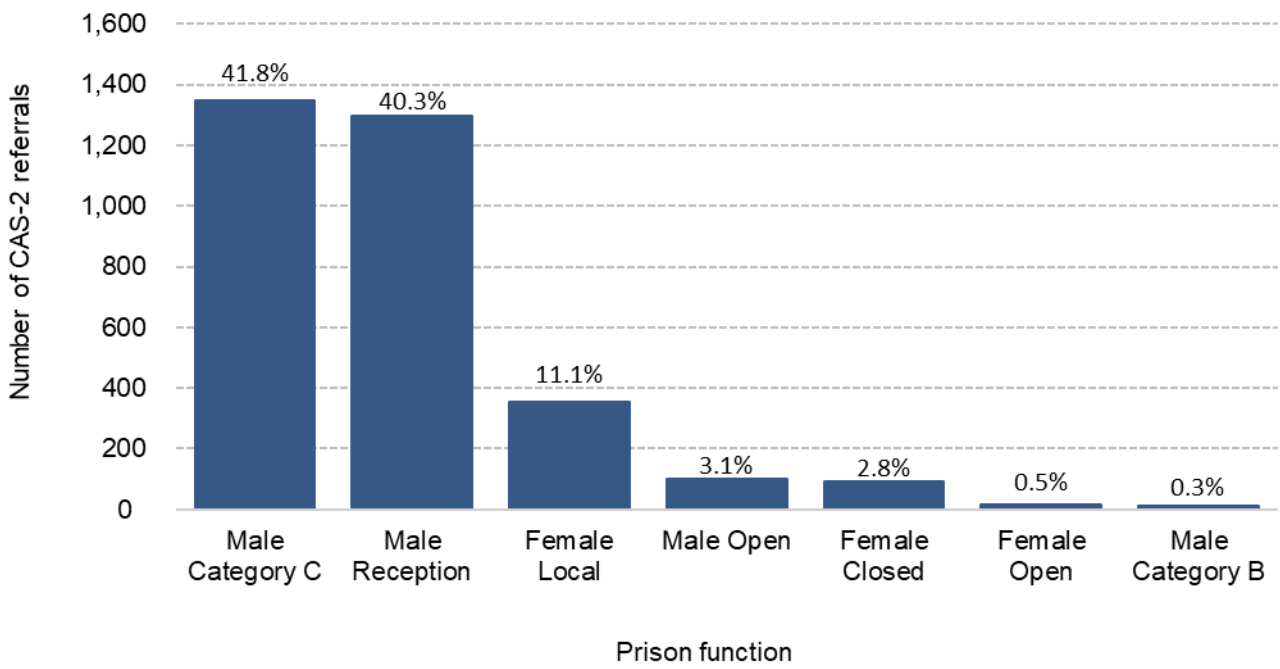
**Male Category C prisons had the highest volume of CAS-2 referrals (from known prisons) in the year to March 2024 (Figure 11.2, Table 11.3)**

In the year ending March 2024, 41.8% (1,347) of CAS-2 referrals by known prisons were from Male Category C prisons. CAS-2 referrals made by Male Reception prisons accounted for 40.3% (1,298) of the total number of known prison referrals made in the same period.

<sup>38</sup> Alternative to Custody Recall replaced Additional Licence Conditions from 1st October 2022, under the new CAS-2 Nacro contract.

<sup>39</sup> Figure 11.2 includes only the three referral types with the largest volume of referrals. Data for Additional Licence Conditions does not appear for March 2024, as this referral type no longer exists under the new CAS-2 Nacro contract and has been replaced by the Alternative to Custody Recall and Homeless at Conditional Release Date referral types.

**Figure 11.2: Number of referrals made to CAS-2 by selected Prison Function, for the 12-months ending March 2024 (Source: Table 11.3)**



## 12. Staff in Post

### Ethnic minorities staff

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#### A total of 69,053 (headcount) staff are in post at HMPPS

As at 31 March 2024, there were 69,053 (headcount) staff in post at HMPPS, 86.2% of whom had declared their ethnicity.

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#### Overall, 14.2% of individuals who declared their ethnicity were classified as ethnic minority.

This represents an increase of 1.5 percentage point compared with the previous year.

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#### Overall declaration rates have increased since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 (Table 12.2).

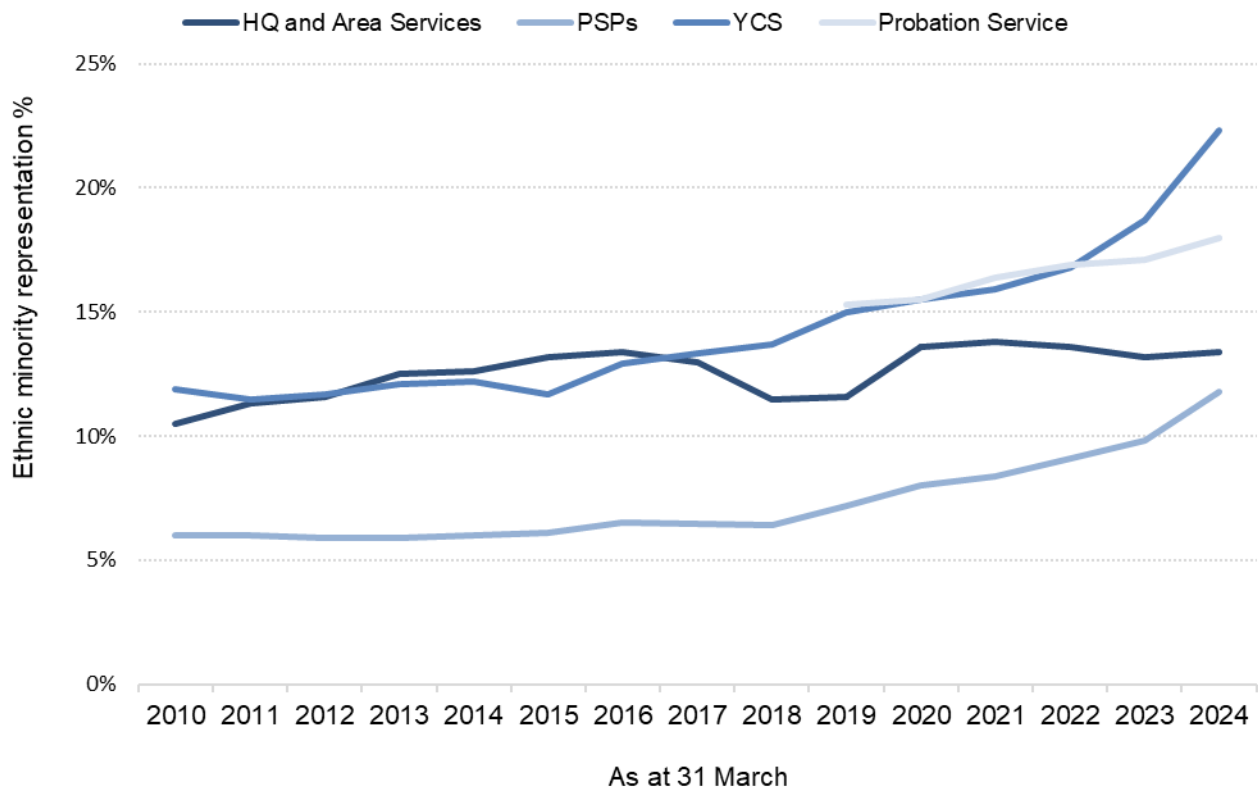
Across HMPPS overall, declaration rates have increased by 2.1 percentage points (from 84.1% as of 31 March 2023 to 86.2% as of 31 March 2024). HMPPS HQ and Area Services staff had the highest ethnicity declaration rate (87.9%), representing a 0.3 percentage point increase since the previous year. The highest increase in declaration rate was seen amongst staff in the Youth Custody Service (YCS) from 81.6% as at 31 March 2023 to 86.7% as at 31 March 2024. Over the same period, the declaration rate observed amongst staff in Public Sector Prisons (PSPs) was 84.8% at 31 March 2023 and 87.0% as at 31 March 2024. Finally, the ethnicity declaration rate amongst Probation Service staff also increased to 84.2% as at 31 March 2024; an increase of 2.1 percentage points compared to the previous year.

#### Public Sector Prisons have the lowest ethnic minority representation (Figure 12.1, Table 12.2)

	<b>Ethnic minority representation rate</b>	<b>Change since 31 March 2023</b>
PSP	11.8%	Increase of 2.1 percentage points
YCS	22.3%	Increase of 3.6 percentage points
HQ & Area Services	13.4%	Increase of 0.2 percentage point
Probation Service	18.0%	Increase of 0.9 percentage point
<b>HMPPS Total</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>Increase of 1.5 percentage points</b>

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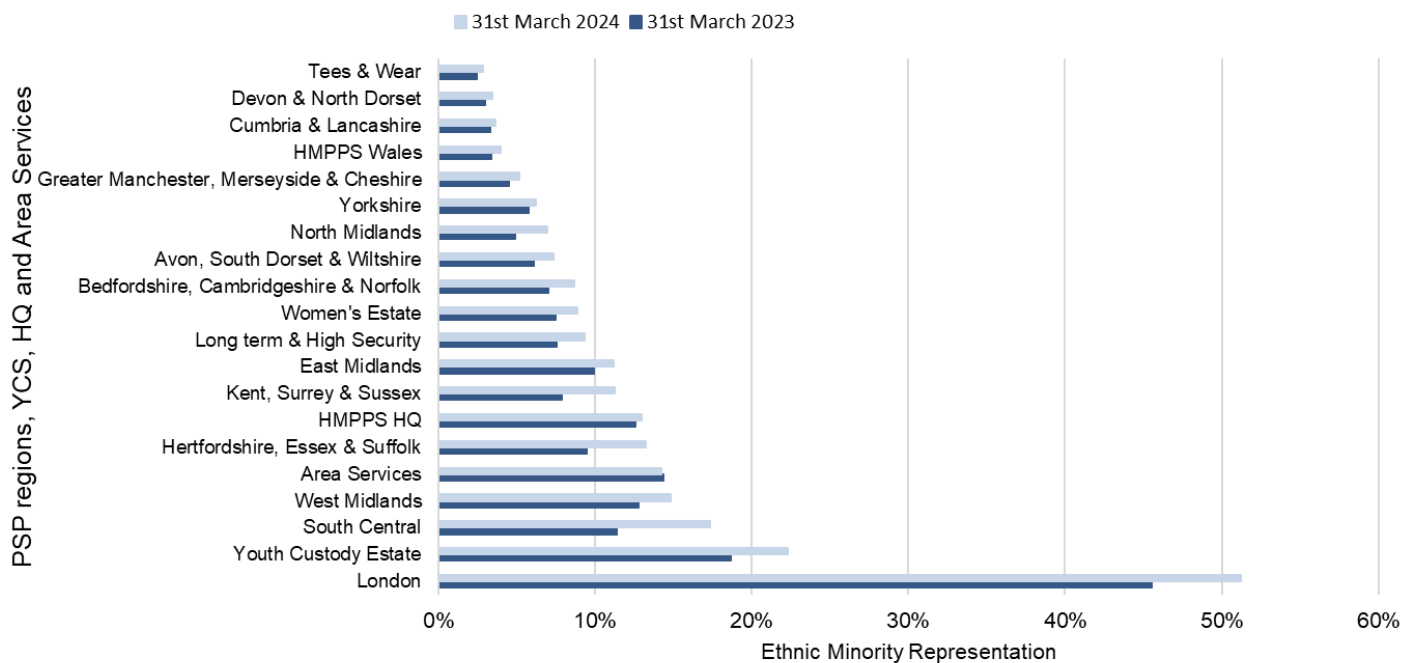
**Figure 12.1: Ethnic minority representation rates amongst HMPPS staff, as at 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2024 (Source: HM Prison and Probation Service workforce statistics publication)**



**The region with the highest ethnic minority representation was London (Figure 12.2, Table 12.2)**

Figure 12.2 shows the proportion of ethnic minority declared staff in PSP regions, the YCS and HQ & Area Services. Prison establishments within London had the highest representation rates with 51.2% of staff declaring their ethnicity as from ethnic minority backgrounds as at 31 March 2024. In contrast, establishments in Tees & Wear had the lowest representation rate of 2.9%. From 31 March 2023 to 31 March 2024, all PSP regions had seen their representation rates increase, where the largest increase was seen in South Central from 11.4% to 17.3%. The prison region with the lowest increase was Cumbria & Lancashire which saw a 0.3 percentage point increase.

**Figure 12.2: Percentage of Ethnic minority staff by PSP regions<sup>40</sup>, the YCS, HQ and Area Services, as at 31 March 2023 and 2024 (Source: Table 12.2)**



<sup>40</sup> Information reflects the latest regional management structure implemented. These structures do not necessarily reflect geographical border areas.

## Further information

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from:

**URL:** [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/uk-statistical-system)

Ministry of Justice publishes data relating to offender management in England and Wales.

Equivalent statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found at:

**URL:** [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice)

**URL:** [www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm)

## 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 the Service Users Equality Performance Team at the Ministry of Justice:

**Responsible Statistician:** Laura Pearce

**Email:** [SUEPer\\_Stats@justice.gov.uk](mailto:SUEPer_Stats@justice.gov.uk)

A copy of this report, the Technical Guide and accompanying tables can be found online:

**URL:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prison-and-probation-trusts-performance-statistics>

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