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Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to December 2024 Self-harm and Assaults to September 2024

Main Points

Number of deaths increased from the previous 12-month period



In the 12 months to December 2024, there were 342 deaths in prison custody, an **increase** of 10% from 311 deaths in the previous 12 months. Of these, 89 deaths were self-inflicted, a **decrease** of 7% from the 96 self-inflicted deaths in the previous 12 months.

The rate of self-harm increased in male and decreased in female establishments from the previous 12-month period



In the 12 months to September 2024, the rate of self-harm was 891 incidents per 1,000 prisoners (77,869 incidents), **up** 11% from the 12 months to September 2023 to a new peak, comprising of a 14% **increase** in male establishments to a new peak, but a 2% **decrease** in female establishments.



In the most recent quarter, self-harm incidents were **down** 1% to 20,214, and the rate was **down** 2% (with a 4% increase in male establishments, and a 15% decrease in female establishments).

The rate of individuals who self-harmed increased from the previous 12 month period



In the 12 months to September 2024, the rate of individuals who self-harmed was 157 individuals per 1,000 prisoners (13,724 individuals), **up** 8% from a rate of 146 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per individual **increased** slightly from 5.5 in the 12 months to September 2023 to 5.7 in the 12 months to September 2024.

The rate of assaults increased from the previous 12-month period



In the 12 months to September 2024, the rate of assaults was 342 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (29,881 assaults), **up** 14% from the 12 months to September 2023.



In the most recent quarter, assaults were **up** 5% to 7,901 incidents and the assault rate was **up** 4% to 90 assaults per 1,000 prisoners.

The rate of assaults on staff increased from the previous 12-month period



In the 12 months to September 2024, the rate of assaults on staff was 120 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (10,496 assaults on staff), **up** 19% from the 12 months to September 2023 to a new peak.



In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff was **up** 3% to 2,722 incidents.

The rate of serious assaults increased



In the 12 months to September 2024, the rate of serious assaults was 38 serious assaults per 1,000 prisoners (3,318 incidents), **up** 13% from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was **up** 9% to 27 per 1,000 prisoners (2,384 incidents), and the rate of serious assaults on staff was **up** 22% to 11 per 1,000 prisoners (972 incidents) in the 12 months to September 2024.

11% of all assaults were serious

If you are a journalist covering a suicide-related issue, please follow the Samaritans' [Media Guidelines for Reporting Suicide](#) because of the potentially damaging consequences of irresponsible reporting.

If you are struggling to cope, please call Samaritans for free on 116 123 (UK and the Republic of Ireland) or contact other sources of support, such as those listed on the NHS help for suicidal thoughts webpage. Support is available around the clock, every day of the year, providing a safe place for you, whoever you are and however you are feeling.

Statistician's comment

In the 12 months to December 2024, we have seen an increase in the number of deaths (10% increase). In the 12 months to September 2024, we have seen a 15% increase in the number of self-harm incidents and a 18% rise in the number of assault incidents compared with the previous year. The number of incidents of self-harm and assaults have increased in both male and female establishments over the past 12 months, with the number of assaults in female establishments and self-harm incidents in both male and female establishments reaching their highest level in the time series¹.

The number of deaths has increased from 311 to 342 in the 12 months to December 2024, with the rate of deaths increasing from 3.6 deaths per 1,000 prisoners to 3.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the same time period. There were 89 self-inflicted deaths in the latest year, a decrease from 96 in the previous year. The rate of self-inflicted deaths has remained broadly stable at around 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners since the 12 months to December 2017. There were 7 homicides in the 12 months to December 2024, an increase from 2 in the previous 12 months, and the highest number since 8 in the 12 months to December 2015.

There was an 11% increase in the rate^{2,3} of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2024, with the rate now peaking at 891 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. However, there continue to be notable differences in self-harm trends by gender. There was an increase in the rate of self-harm incidents in male establishments to a new peak (up 14% to 674 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) and a decrease in the rate in female establishments (down 2% to 5,906 per 1,000 prisoners). The rate is more than eight times higher in female establishments than male establishments, down from more than ten times higher in the previous 12 months. There was an increase in the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed in female establishments, from 16.8 to 18.2, but a decrease in the rate of females self-harming (down 9% to 325 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners). For males, there were increases in both the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed in male establishments (from 4.3 to 4.5) and the rate of individuals self-harming (up 9% to 150 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners).

The rate of assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased 14% to 342 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2024, and the rate of serious assaults increased 13% to 38 incidents per 1,000 prisoners over the same period. The rate of assaults was 65% higher in female establishments than in male establishments. In female establishments the rate increased by 13% to a peak of 549 per 1,000 prisoners, compared to an increase of 14% in male establishments (333 per 1,000 prisoners). However, the proportion of assaults in female establishments that were serious remains lower, at 8% compared with 11% in male

¹ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

² Rates reflect the changes in the number of incidents, as well as the changes in prison population over time. More information can be found in the accompanying guide. Data on population statistics are published in the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly publication <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>.

³ See *Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics* for a summary of how rates are calculated.

establishments, despite the rate of serious assaults now being higher in female establishments (up 37% to a rate of 45) than male establishments (up 11% to a rate of 38) for the first time in the time series.

The rate of assaults on staff increased 19% in the 12 months to September 2024, and both the number and rate of assaults on staff peaked in the latest 12 months. The rate increased in both male and female establishments, although it increased by more in female establishments (a 22% increase to a new peak of 286 per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (a 18% increase to a rate of 113 per 1,000 prisoners).

Background

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales, with figures in the summary tables in the quarterly publications presented on a 12-month rolling basis over an 11-year time series⁴. This release provides statistics on deaths of prisoners to the end of December 2024, and statistics on assaults and self-harm up to the end of September 2024.

The total prison population decreased in 2024⁵ following a large increase in the prison population from the second quarter of 2021, more so for certain population groups⁶. As at 31st December 2024 the prison population was around 2,100 or 2% lower than at the end of December 2023. The male population has decreased by 2% and the female population has decreased by 4% from the end of December 2023. The prison population as at 31st December 2024 remains around 7,500 or 10% higher than at the end of April 2021. The male population has increased by 10% and the female population has increased by 8% from the end of April 2021.

These changes in population should be borne in mind when interpreting changes in the numbers of incidents over the past year. In the context of substantial population change, rates per 1,000 prisoners more accurately describe changes in the likelihood of incidents occurring⁷. Data on deaths, self-harm and assaults are routinely presented as rates of incidents per 1,000 prisoners (as well as numbers) for all prisoners and for the male and female estates.

The comparability of statistics between 2020 and 2022 with other time periods is affected by the differing levels of restrictions implemented within prisons to limit and control the spread of the Covid-19 virus through the National Framework. These restrictions included the implementation of effective isolation of prisoners to reduce the spread of Covid-19, reverse cohorting of new prisoners into custody, and shielding of vulnerable prisoners.

In order to make the best use of capacity across the estate in the light of recent increases in the prison population, young people have routinely been retained in the Youth Custody Service (YCS) estate until their 19th birthday (rather than transferring to an adult prison on or soon after their 18th birthday, as previously occurred in most cases).

This means the age demographic in the young people's estate, but also in adult prisons, has been slightly different in the most recent few months, compared to previous years.

Supplementary annual tables, providing more in-depth statistics on a calendar year basis, underlying data files with pivot tables providing lower-level granularity, and a technical guidance document are also available alongside this bulletin, at www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics.

⁴ Data on deaths is published three months ahead of self-harm and assaults. Therefore, the deaths annual publication and tables are published alongside the Safety in Custody quarterly update to September publication.

⁵ The prison population decreased throughout 2024 due to factors including "End of Custody Supervised License" and earlier release from certain determinate sentences ("SDS40").

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly>. Quarterly population data to December 2024 is published in Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, England and Wales Quarterly.

⁷ The comparability over the year of other measures that are based on self-harming individuals (such as the number of incidents per self-harming individual, or the proportion of incidents requiring hospital attendance) are not affected by changes in population size.

Changes to the publication:

Self-harm and Assaults by sentence type

The annual self-harm and assaults tables are included within the next release (in April 2025), and include tables showing breakdowns by sentence type for self-harm (table 2.6) and assaults (table 3.5). The figures in these tables include a breakdown by sentence type for unrecalled sentences (fine defaulter, determinate sentence, imprisonment for public protection, life) and a total for recall sentences. The recalls include all recalls, and will in future split out recalls for those serving imprisonment for public protection sentences separately.

1 Deaths: 12 months ending December 2024

Number of deaths increased from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to December 2024, there were 342 deaths in prison custody, an **increase** of 10% from 311 deaths in the previous 12 months.

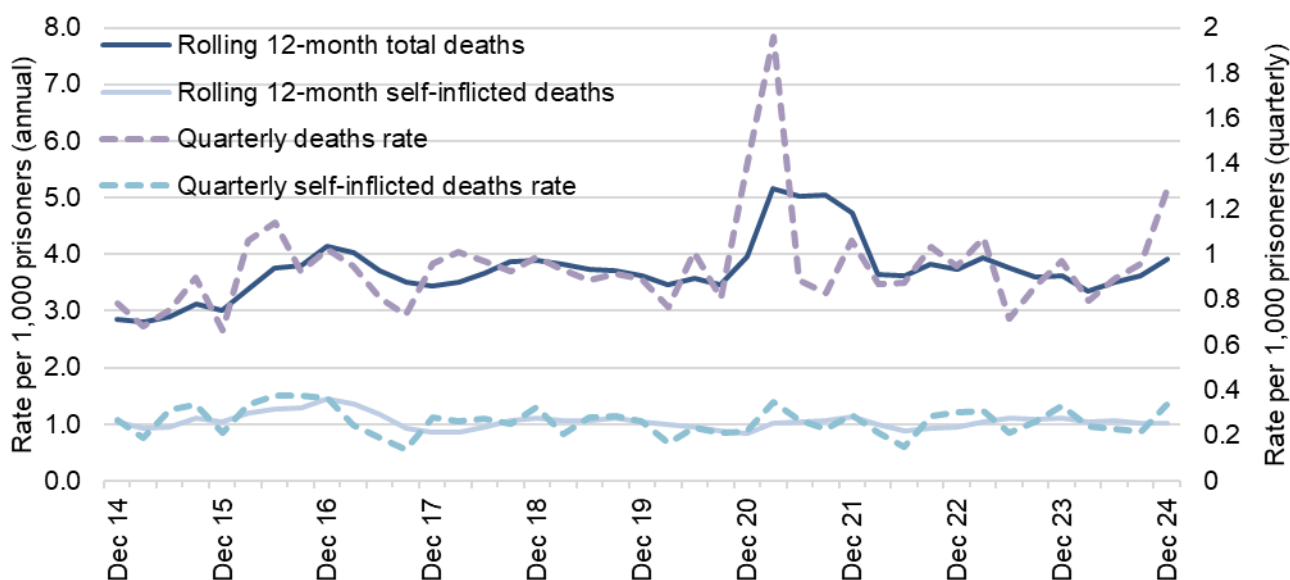
In the most recent quarter there were 110 deaths, a 31% **increase** from 84 deaths in the previous quarter.

Number of self-inflicted deaths decreased from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to December 2024, there were 89 self-inflicted deaths, a **decrease** of 7% from 96 in the previous 12 months.

There were 29 self-inflicted deaths in the most recent quarter, a 53% **increase** from 19 in the previous quarter.

Figure 1: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of deaths per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending December 2014 to 12 months ending December 2024, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to December 2024, there were 342 deaths in prison custody (a rate of 3.9 per 1,000 prisoners), a 10% increase from 311 deaths in the previous 12 months (a rate of 3.6 per 1,000 prisoners). Long-term trends and more detail are presented in the annual tables⁸.

Over the same period, there were 192 deaths due to natural causes (a rate of 2.2 per 1,000 prisoners), a 2% increase from 188 deaths by natural causes in the previous 12 months (also a rate of 2.2 per 1,000 prisoners).

There were 89 apparent self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to December 2024 (a rate of 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners), a decrease of 7% from 96 self-inflicted deaths in the previous 12 months (a rate of 1.1 per 1,000 prisoners). The rate of self-inflicted deaths has remained broadly stable at around 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners since the 12 months to December 2017.

There were 7 homicides in the 12 months to December 2024, an increase from 2 in the previous 12 months, and the highest number since 8 in the 12 months to December 2015.

⁸ Data on deaths are published three months ahead of assaults and self-harm, therefore, the annual publication Deaths in prison custody for 1978 to 2024 is published in the Safety in Custody quarterly update to September 2024

There were 54 deaths recorded as 'Other' in the 12 months to December 2024, an increase from 25 in the previous 12 months. Of those 54 deaths, 45 are 'awaiting further information' prior to being classified. In some cases, the results of the toxicology and post-mortem tests are inconclusive, meaning classification cannot be arrived at until Coroner's inquest takes place (which can be a considerable time after the death). As a result, the number and rate of deaths in the individual categories are not directly comparable with earlier years: it is likely that numbers in some categories will be revised upwards once classifications have been finalised.

In the most recent quarter there were 110 deaths, a 31% increase from 84 deaths in the previous quarter. There were 29 self-inflicted deaths in the latest quarter, a 53% increase from 19 in the previous quarter. However, quarterly death figures should be considered with caution due to greater volatility and the potential for seasonal effects⁹.

⁹ Seasonal effects refer to variation in timeseries data that occur at regular intervals (typically intervals shorter than a year e.g. monthly or quarterly).

Key findings from deaths annual tables and deaths data tool

Sex

The overwhelming majority of deaths in custody in 2024 (97%) occurred in the male estate, a finding that has been consistent over time.

There were 9 deaths in the female estate, unchanged from 2023, accounting for around 3% of the total deaths. As a result, cross-tabulations of characteristics with sex (e.g. ethnicity by sex) are not presented below because the numbers of deaths in the female estate are too small for meaningful analysis.

There were 89 self-inflicted deaths in 2024, 85 of which occurred in the male estate (down from 93 in 2023) and 4 in the female estate (up from 3 in 2023).

Age

Prisoners aged 70 and over were more likely to die in custody compared to any other age group, with 47.3 incidents per 1,000 prisoners.

Out of 95 deaths amongst this age group, 92 were classified as natural causes, 1 was classified as self-inflicted and 2 are awaiting further information. Those aged over 50 accounted for 89% of all natural cause deaths in 2024.

Prisoners aged 60 to 69 had the highest rates of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths was highest for prisoners aged 60 to 69 (2.1 per 1,000 prisoners) in 2024, followed by the 40 to 49 and 50 to 59 age groups (both at 1.5 per 1,000 prisoners). The rates for these age groups were 1.2, 1.4 and 1.2 respectively in 2023. The number of self-inflicted deaths in the 60 to 69 age group peaked at 9 this year, however it has the highest rate due to the small prison population in that age group.

The highest number of self-inflicted deaths were in the 40 to 49 and 30 to 39 age groups in 2024, at 27 and 25 respectively, although the rates were lower for the 30 to 39 age group (0.9 per 1,000 prisoners) due to the higher prison population in this age group. Self-inflicted deaths make up a larger proportion of the deaths for younger age groups, reflecting the lower rates of death from natural causes.

Ethnicity

The rate of self-inflicted deaths was higher for White prisoners (1.3 per 1000 prisoners) than for prisoners of all other ethnic groups combined (0.3 per 1,000 prisoners) in 2024

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners increased from 1.1 in 2023 to 1.3 in 2024 for White prisoners and decreased from 1.1 in 2023 to 0.3 in 2024 for prisoners of all other ethnic groups combined. The fall in all other ethnic groups is driven primarily by the Black or Black British ethnic group where the rate decreased from 1.4 in 2023 to 0.1 in 2024.

Nationality

UK nationals had a higher rate of self-inflicted deaths than foreign nationals 2024 (1.1 per 1,000 prisoners compared to 0.7).

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners was 1.1 for UK nationals and 0.7 for foreign nationals in 2024, an increase from 1.0 for UK nationals and a decrease from 2.0 for foreign nationals in 2023. Prior to 2023, in recent years the rate of self-inflicted deaths had

been similar among UK and foreign nationals.

Self-inflicted deaths among foreign nationals accounted for 8% of all self-inflicted deaths in 2024, down from 22% in 2023.

Time in custody

In 2024, 19% of self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days of custody.

There were 17 self-inflicted deaths within the first 30 days of custody in 2024 (19% of all self-inflicted deaths), of which 12 occurred within the first week in custody (13%). In 2023, 18% of all self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days of custody, and 7% occurred within the first week.

In 2024, when including prisoners who have been transferred between prisons, 25 self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days in the current prison (28%), of which 14 occurred within the first week (16%). In 2023, 27% of all self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days in the current prison, and 11% occurred within the first week.

Sentence type

Prisoners who were on remand continue to have a higher rate of self-inflicted deaths than sentenced prisoners.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners was 1.8 for prisoners on remand (a decrease from 1.9 in 2023) and 0.8 for sentenced prisoners (a decrease from 0.9 in 2023).

In 2024, 34% of all self-inflicted deaths were by prisoners on remand, an increase from 30% of all self-inflicted deaths in 2023.

Offence

In 2024, 36% of self-inflicted deaths were by prisoners remanded or sentenced for offences of violence against the person.

Prisoners who were remanded or sentenced for offences of violence against the person (36%), sexual offences (19%), and miscellaneous crimes against society (12%) accounted for the majority of self-inflicted deaths.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners was 1.1 for violence against the person offences (a decrease from 1.2 in 2023), 1.1 for sexual offences (an increase from 0.9 in 2023), and 3.0 for miscellaneous crimes against society offences (a decrease from 4.6 in 2023).

Method of self-inflicted death

Hanging remains the most common method of self-inflicted death in 2024, accounting for 70% of all incidents.

The percentage of self-inflicted deaths due to hanging decreased from 77% in 2023 (74 deaths) to 70% in 2024 (62 deaths), continuing a downward trend from 93% of all self-inflicted deaths in 2015. The percentage due to self-strangulation increased from 6% in 2023 (6 deaths) to 13% in 2024 (12 deaths).

Of the 74 self-inflicted deaths with method of hanging or self-strangulation in 2024, bedding remains the most commonly used ligature type (accounting for 66% of these incidents). The

bed is the most commonly used ligature point (accounting for 27% of these incidents in 2024, up from 19% in 2023), followed by the window (24% of these incidents in 2024, down from 28% in 2023).

2 Self-harm: 12 months to September 2024

The rate of self-harm incidents increased in the male estate and decreased in the female estate from the previous 12-month period

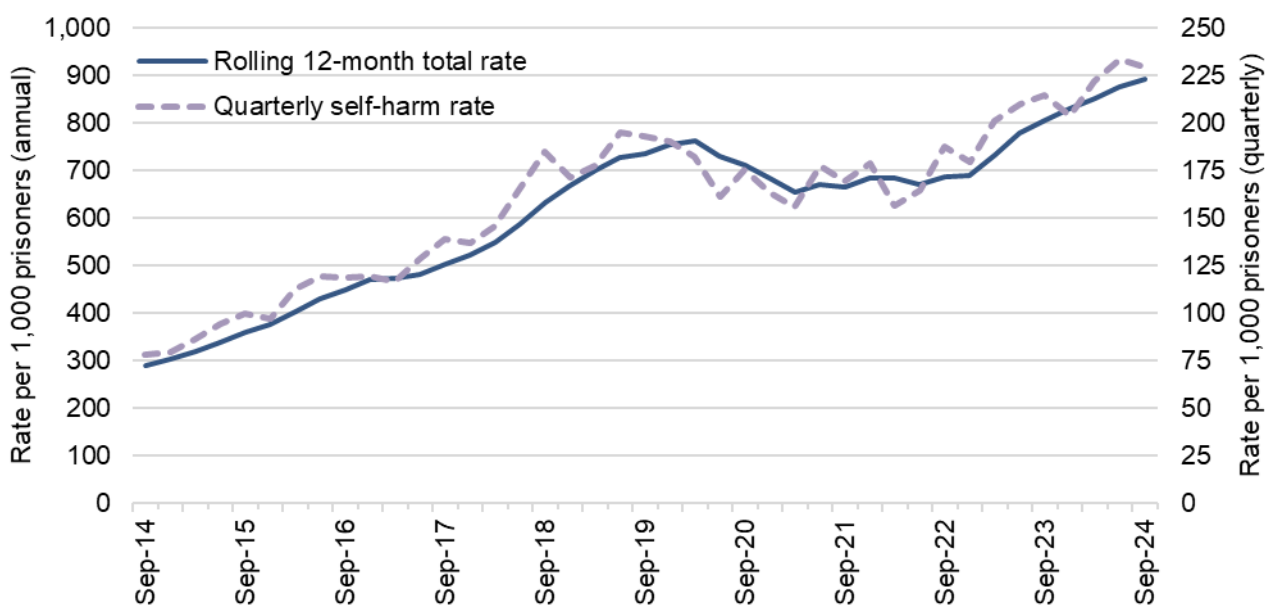
There were 77,869 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to September 2024, a 15% **increase** from the previous 12 months (an 18% **increase** in male establishments and a 7% **increase** in female establishments). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **increased** by 14% in male establishments and **decreased** by 2% in female establishments.

In the most recent quarter, there were 20,214 self-harm incidents, **down** 1% on the previous quarter (a 6% **increase** in male establishments and a 15% **decrease** in female establishments). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **increased** 4% in male establishments and **decreased** 15% in female establishments.

The number of individuals who self-harmed increased by 12% in the latest year

There were 13,724 individuals who self-harmed in the 12 months to September 2024, a 12% **increase** from 12,296 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per individual **increased** slightly from 5.5 in the 12 months to September 2023 to 5.7 in the 12 months to September 2024.

Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending September 2014 to 12 months ending September 2024, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to September 2024, there were 77,869 reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of 891 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 15% from 67,825 in the previous 12 months. The rate of incidents in the latest 12 months increased 11% from the previous 12 months, and both the number and rate of self-harm incidents are now at their highest level in the time series¹⁰.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to September 2024 decreased by 1% from the previous quarter, decreasing from 20,319 to 20,214 incidents. Additionally, the rate of incidents of self-harm in the three months to September 2024 decreased by 2% from the previous quarter, decreasing from 234 to 230 incidents per 1,000 prisoners.

¹⁰ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

The number of individuals who self-harmed increased by 12% to 13,724 in the latest 12 months (a rate of 157 individuals per 1,000 prisoners), from 12,296 in the previous 12 months, the highest number of individuals within the time series. The rate, or proportion, of prisoners self-harming in the latest 12 months was 8% higher than in the previous 12 months, also reaching a new peak. The number of incidents per self-harming individual in the latest 12 months peaked at 5.7, a slight increase from 5.5 in the previous year. A small number of individuals who repeatedly self-harm have a disproportionate impact on this figure: just over a half (53%) of prisoners who self-harmed in 2023 did so more than once.

The number of self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance¹¹ increased by 14% (to 3,552) in the 12 months to September 2024 and also by 14% in the latest quarter (to 996 incidents). The proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance has remained stable at 4.6% in the 12 months to September 2024.

Self-harm levels differ considerably by gender. Although the number of incidents in the female estate is smaller than in the male estate, the rate of self-harm per 1,000 prisoners is much higher. In the 12 months to September 2024, there were 56,457 incidents in the male estate compared with 21,412 in the female estate, representing an 18% increase in male establishments and a 7% increase in female establishments compared to the previous year. However, the rate of self-harm in the female estate (5,906 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) was more than eight times higher than in the male estate (674 incidents per 1,000 prisoners), despite a 14% increase in male establishments and a 2% decrease in female establishments¹². The difference in the rate has narrowed in the latest 12 months, down from more than ten times higher in the previous 12 months. The number of incidents and rate of self-harm in the male estate, and the number of incidents in the female estate are now at the highest level in the time series.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to September 2024 increased by 6% in male establishments and decreased by 15% in female establishments compared with the previous three months. For male establishments, this reflects the highest number of incidents in a quarter across the time series. In contrast, this is the lowest number of incidents in a quarter for female establishments in 2024 so far. This is also true for rates, with male establishments seeing a 4% increase compared to the previous three months, and female establishments seeing a 15% decrease over the same period.

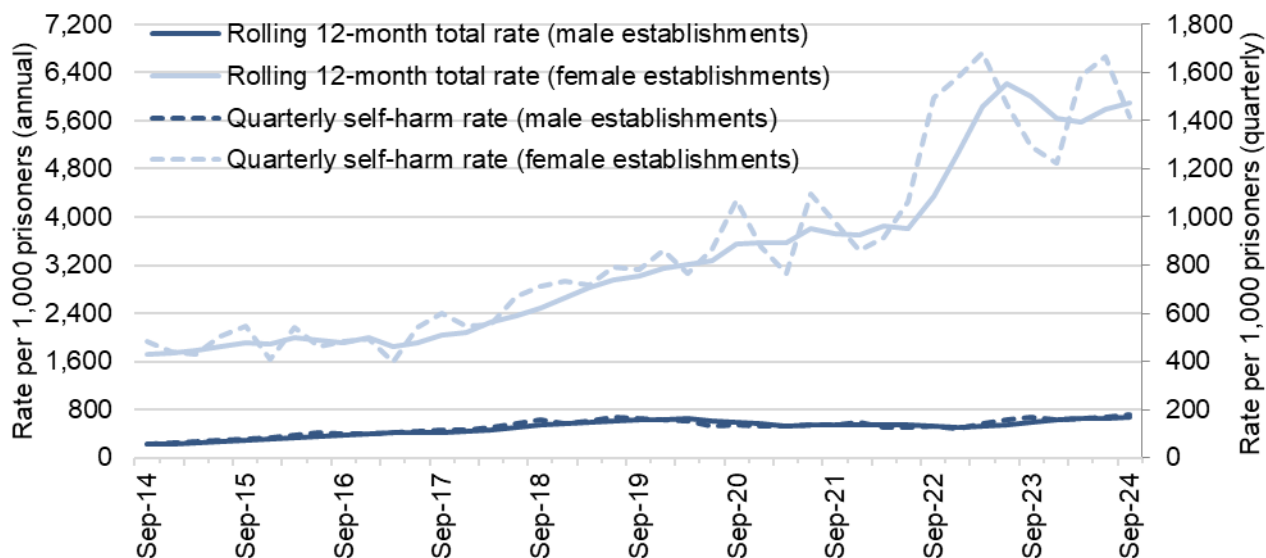
The number of incidents per individual who self-harmed in female establishments was four times that in male establishments. In the 12 months to September 2024 there was 18.2 incidents of self-harm per self-harming female, an increase from 16.8 in the previous 12 months, compared with 4.5 incidents per self-harming male, an increase from 4.3 in the previous 12 months.

The proportion of females self-harming in the latest 12 months was 325 individuals per 1,000 prisoners, a decrease of 9% from 357 individuals per 1,000 prisoners in the previous 12 months. This decrease in the rate of self-harm in the female estate was driven by the decrease in the proportion of females self-harming. The increase in the rate of self-harm in the male estate is driven by an increase in both the proportion of males self-harming (9% increase to 150 individuals per 1,000 prisoners), and the number of self-harm incidents per individual (5% increase to 4.5 incidents per individual).

¹¹ An incident of self-harm requiring hospitalisation does not only reflect the seriousness of the incident. This also depends on the healthcare facilities at the establishment, which vary across the estate.

¹² The average female population increased 9% between the 12 months to September 2023 and the 12 months to September 2024, which meant that despite an increase in the number of self-harm incidents in female establishments (a 7% increase in the 12 months to September 2024), the rate per 1,000 prisoners decreased (a 2% decrease) in the same time period.

Figure 3: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners by gender of establishment, 12 months ending September 2014 to 12 months ending September 2024



Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance increased in male establishments by 14%, to 3,137 in the 12 months to September 2024, but the proportion of incidents requiring hospital attendance decreased from 5.7% in the previous 12 months to 5.6% in the latest 12 months¹³. In the female estate 415 self-harm incidents required hospital attendance, a 12% increase from 371 incidents the previous year. The proportion of incidents in the female estate requiring hospital attendance remained stable at 1.9% in the 12 months to September 2024 compared to the previous 12 months.

As Figure 3 shows, over the last decade there has been more variation in the quarterly rate of self-harm in the female estate than in the male estate. This may in part reflect the impact of the small number of individuals who repeatedly self-harm being greater in the female estate. Fluctuations in the quarterly rates of self-harm in the female estate have been wider since the start of the pandemic.

¹³ An incident of self-harm requiring hospitalisation does not only reflect the seriousness of the incident. This also depends on the healthcare facilities at the establishment, which vary across the estate.

3 Assaults: 12 months to September 2024

Assaults and serious assaults increased from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to September 2024, there were 29,881 assault incidents, an 18% **increase** from the previous 12 months. Of these, 3,318 were serious assaults, **up** 17%. Rates of assault **increased** by 14% to 342 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, and the rate of serious assaults **increased** by 13% to 38 per 1,000 prisoners in the latest 12 months.

Assaults **increased** by 5% in the latest quarter to 7,901 incidents while the number of serious assaults **decreased** by 6% to 807 incidents.

The rate of assault per 1,000 prisoners remained higher in female than male establishments

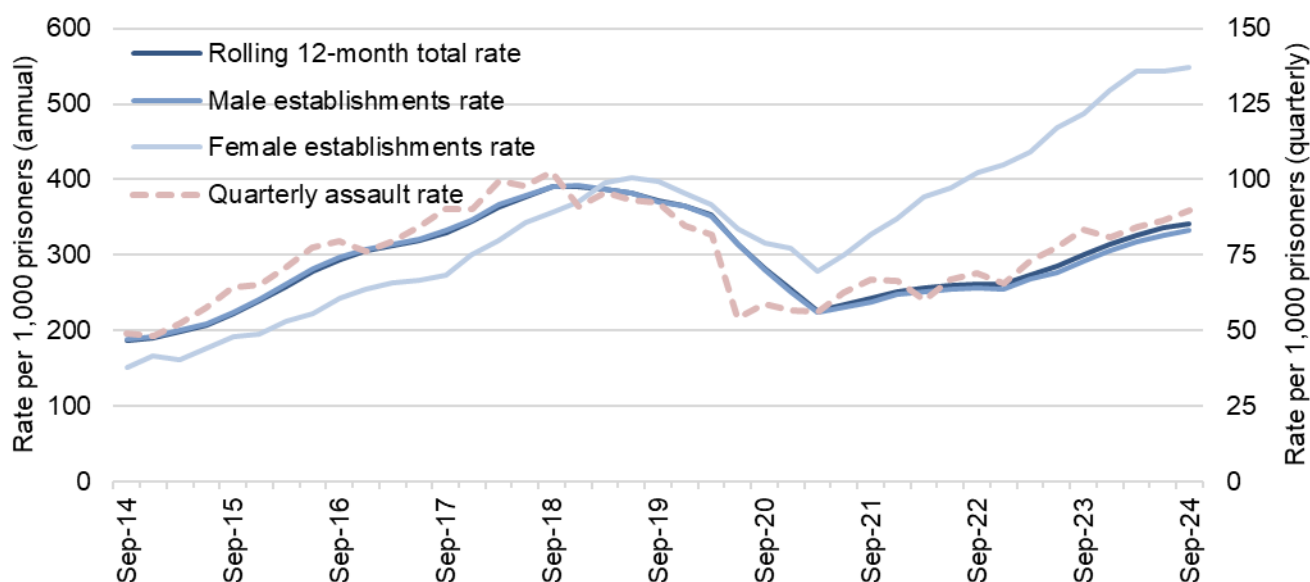
The rate of assault in male establishments **increased** by 14% from the previous 12 months, while the rate in female establishments **increased** by 13%. Assault rates for the 12 months to September 2024 remained higher in female establishments (549 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (333 incidents per 1,000 prisoners). Both the number of incidents and the rate reached a new peak in female establishments in the latest 12 months.

Assaults on staff increased from the previous 12-month period

There were 10,496 assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2024, a 23% **increase** from the previous 12 months and a new peak. In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff **increased** by 3% to 2,722 incidents.

In the latest 12 months, the rate of assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners **increased** by 19% to 120 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, also a new peak. During this period, the rate in male establishments **increased** by 18% to 113 assaults per 1,000 prisoners and **increased** by 22% to a new peak of 286 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in female establishments.

Figure 4: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total assaults by gender of establishment, 12 months ending September 2014 to 12 months ending September 2024, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to September 2024, assault incidents increased by 18% to 29,881 (a rate of 342 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) from 25,226 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in the latest 12 months was 14% higher than in the previous 12 months. The number and rate of assault

incidents remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, with the rate of assault incidents in the latest year being 9% lower than the rate of assaults in the 12 months to September 2019.

In the latest quarter there were 7,901 assaults, up 5% from the previous quarter. The number of assaults and the quarterly rate remain lower than their peak in the July to September 2018 quarter.

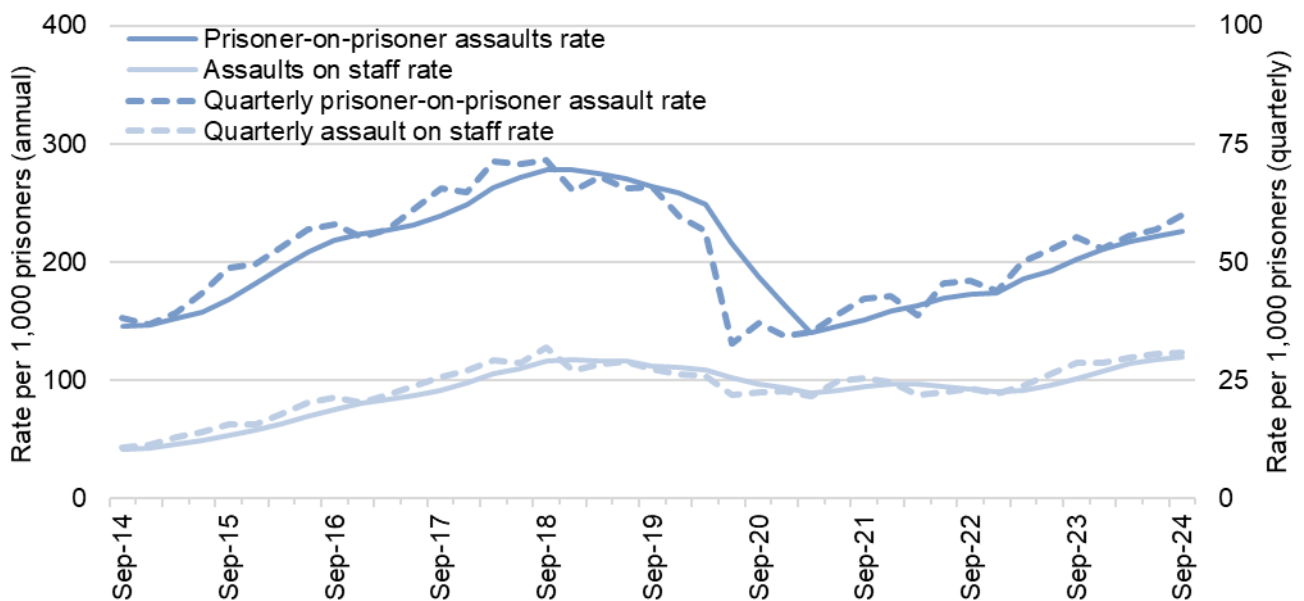
The number of incidents in male establishments increased by 18% to 27,890 in the 12 months to September 2024 (a rate of 333 per 1,000 prisoners), from 23,596 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in male establishments in the latest 12 months was 14% higher than in the previous 12 months.

The number of incidents in female establishments increased by 22% to 1,991 incidents in the 12 months to September 2024 (a rate of 549 per 1,000 prisoners), from 1,630 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in female establishments in the latest 12 months was 13% higher than in the previous 12 months. The rate and number of incidents in the female estate are now at their highest level in the time series¹⁴, while remaining lower than the pre-pandemic level in male establishments.

Assault rates have been higher in female establishments than in male establishments since the 12 months to September 2019, after previously being higher in male establishments. The rate of incidents increased by 10% in female establishments in the latest quarter (a rate of 141 per 1,000 prisoners), which has resulted in an increase in the relative difference between the rate in female establishments and the rate in male establishments in the latest year.

In the latest quarter, the number of assaults in male establishments increased by 5% to 7,386 incidents, compared to an increase of 10% in female establishments (to 515 assaults). During this period the rate of assaults increased by 4% to 90 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, which comprises a 3% increase in male establishments (to 88 assaults per 1,000 prisoners) and a 10% increase in female establishments (to 141 assaults per 1,000 prisoners).

Figure 5: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, 12 months ending September 2014 to 12 months ending September 2024, with quarterly rates



¹⁴ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

There were 19,721 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults¹⁵ in the 12 months to September 2024 (a rate of 226 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 16% from the 16,998 assaults in the previous 12 months. The rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the latest 12 months was 12% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter, there were 5,268 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 7% increase from 4,937 in the previous quarter.

There were 10,496 assaults on staff¹⁶ in the 12 months to September 2024 (a rate of 120 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 23% from the 8,515 assaults in the previous 12 months and a new peak in the time series. The rate of assaults on staff in the latest 12 months was 19% higher than in the previous 12 months, and reached a new peak. In the latest quarter, there were 2,722 assaults on staff, an increase of 3% from 2,654 incidents in the previous quarter.

The proportion of assaults on staff¹⁷ increased to 35% of all incidents in the 12 months to September 2024 from 34% in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to September 2024, the proportion of assaults that were on staff remained higher in female establishments (52%) than in male establishments (34%).

In male establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 16% to 18,753 incidents (224 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2024, and the rate increased by 12%. Assaults on staff increased 22% to reach a new peak of 9,458 incidents, and the rate increased by 18% to 113 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners.

In female establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 13% to 968 incidents (267 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2024, and the rate increased by 4%. Assaults on staff increased by 32% to 1,038 incidents (286 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2024, and the rate increased by 22%. In the 12 months to September 2024, the rates and numbers of both prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff in female establishments all reached new peaks, with the increase in assaults on staff being much larger.

¹⁵ This figure includes any prisoner-on-prisoner assaults where there may also have been an assault on staff.

¹⁶ There was a change in how staff assaults have been recorded from April 2017, this has simplified how incidents involving staff are identified, however it is possible this has increased the recording of incidents. Please see the Guide to Safety in Custody statistics for further information

¹⁷ Some assault incidents may be recorded as both a prisoner-on-prisoner assault and an assault on staff, so the sum of the two categories may exceed the total number of assaults

Serious assaults

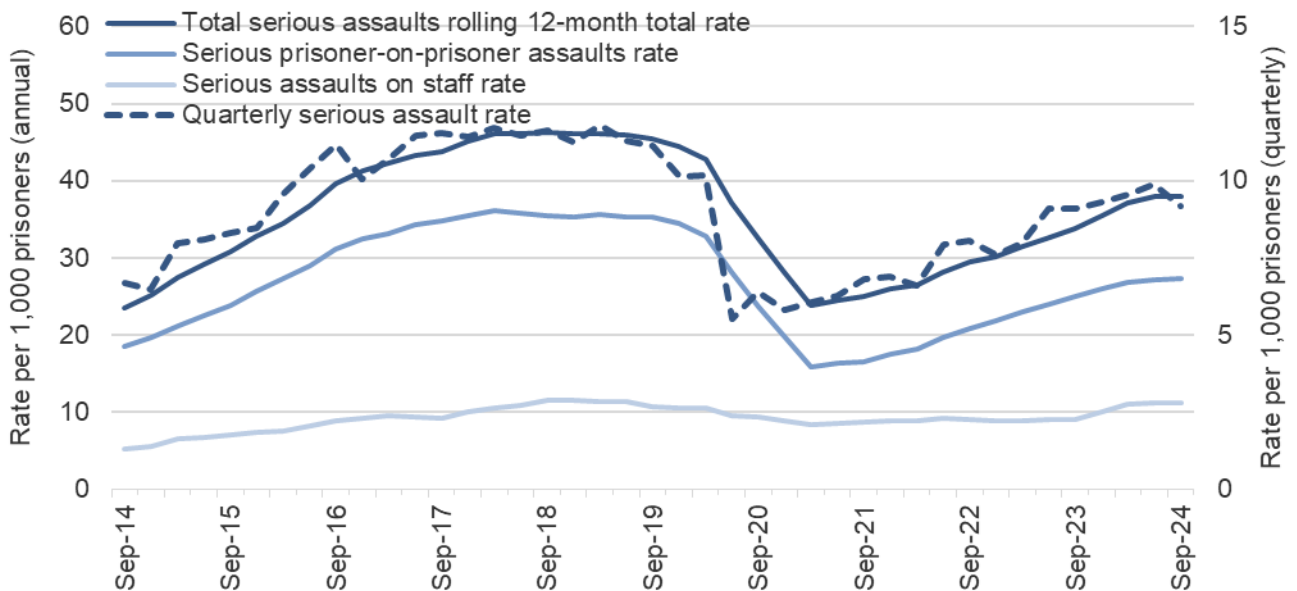
Of the 29,881 assault incidents, 3,318 (11%) were serious

In the 12 months to September 2024, there were 3,318 serious assault incidents, a 17% **increase** from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults **increased** by 13% over the period.

Serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** by 13% to 2,384, and serious assaults on staff **increased** by 27% to 972 in the 12 months to September 2024.

Serious assaults are those which fall into one or more of the following categories: a sexual assault; requires detention in outside hospital as an in-patient; requires medical treatment for concussion or internal injuries; or incurs any of the following injuries: a fracture, scald or burn, stabbing, crushing, extensive or multiple bruising, black eye, broken nose, lost or broken tooth, cuts requiring suturing, bites, temporary or permanent blindness.

Figure 6: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total serious assaults, serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, and serious assaults on staff, 12 months ending September 2014 to 12 months ending September 2024



In the latest 12 months, 11% of assaults were serious assaults. This is unchanged from 11% in the previous 12 months to September 2023 and has remained broadly consistent throughout the time series. The proportion of all assaults that were serious remained higher in male establishments (11%) than in female establishments (8%).

In the 12 months to September 2024, there were 3,318 serious assaults (a rate of 38 per 1,000 prisoners), a 17% increase from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults in the latest 12 months was 13% higher than in the previous 12 months. Both the number and rate of serious assaults peaked in the latest 12 months in female establishments, and the rate was higher in female establishments than male establishments for the first time. In the latest quarter, there were 807 serious assaults, a 6% decrease from the previous quarter.

There were 2,384 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (a rate of 27 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2024, a 13% increase from 2,104 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the latest 12 months was 9% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to September 2024, the rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 19% in female establishments to a new peak (to a rate of 26 per 1,000

prisoners), while there was a 9% increase in male establishments (to a rate of 27 per 1,000 prisoners)¹⁸. In the latest quarter, there were 593 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 5% decrease from the previous quarter.

There were 972 serious assaults on staff (a rate of 11 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2024, a 27% increase from 765 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults on staff was 22% higher than in the previous 12 months, and the rate increased by more in female establishments (a 65% increase, to a peak of 19 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (a 20% increase, to 11 incidents per 1,000 prisoners). In the latest quarter, the number of serious assaults on staff decreased by 10% to 217 incidents.

¹⁸ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

Further Information



Accredited official statistics status

National Statistics are [accredited official statistics](#)¹⁹ that meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's (UKSA) regulatory arm. The UKSA considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2013. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'.

It is the Ministry of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected for National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the UKSA promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Future publications

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

Accompanying files

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

- A technical guide providing further information on how the data are collected and processed, as well as information on the revisions policy and legislation relevant to sentencing trends and background on the functioning of the criminal justice system.
- A set of summary tables for the latest quarter, and annual tables up to the latest calendar year.
- Underlying data files with pivot tables, giving lower level granularity.

¹⁹ Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Contact

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

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

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Prison Safety Statistics Analysis Team

Data and Analysis

Ministry of Justice

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Email: OMSQ-SiC-publications@justice.gov.uk

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URL: www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

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