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Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to March 2025 Self-harm and Assaults to December 2024

Main Points

Number of deaths
increased from the
previous 12-month
period



In the 12 months to March 2025, there were 399 deaths in prison custody, an **increase** of 37% from 291 deaths in the previous 12 months. Of these, 91 deaths were self-inflicted, the same number as in the previous 12 months.

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



In the 12 months to December 2024, the rate of self-harm was 910 incidents per 1,000 prisoners (79,027 incidents), **up** 10% from the 12 months to December 2023 to a new peak, comprising of a 9% **increase** in male establishments and a 7% **increase** in female establishments, both to a new peak.



In the most recent quarter, self-harm incidents were **down** 6% to 19,076, and the rate was **down** 3.4% (with a 3.0% decrease in both male and female establishments).

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



In the 12 months to December 2024, the rate of individuals who self-harmed was 160 individuals per 1,000 prisoners (13,897 individuals), **up** 6% from a rate of 151 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per individual **increased** slightly from 5.5 in the 12 months to December 2023 to 5.7 in the 12 months to December 2024.

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



In the 12 months to December 2024, the rate of assaults was 351 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (30,490 assaults), **up** 11% from the 12 months to December 2023.



In the most recent quarter, assaults were **down** 2.5% to 7,703 incidents and the assault rate **remained unchanged** at 90 assaults per 1,000 prisoners.

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



In the 12 months to December 2024, the rate of assaults on staff was 122 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (10,605 assaults on staff), **up** 13% from the 12 months to December 2023 to a new peak.



In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff was **down** 3.5% to 2,627 incidents.

The rate of serious assaults increased



In the 12 months to December 2024, the rate of serious assaults was 39 serious assaults per 1,000 prisoners (3,390 incidents), **up** 10% from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was **up** 9% to 28 per 1,000 prisoners (2,452 incidents), and

**11% of all assaults
were serious**

the rate of serious assaults on staff was **up** 12% to 11 per 1,000 prisoners (974 incidents) in the 12 months to December 2024.

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 March 2025, we have seen an increase in the number of deaths (37% increase). In the 12 months to December 2024, we have seen an 11% increase in the number of self-harm incidents and a 13% 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 291 to 399 in the 12 months to March 2025, with the rate of deaths increasing from 3.3 deaths per 1,000 prisoners to 4.6 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the same time period. This was driven by rises in deaths from natural causes and deaths awaiting further information. There were 91 self-inflicted deaths^{2,3} in the latest year, the same number as 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 March 2018. There were 7 homicides in the 12 months to March 2025, an increase from 1 in the previous 12 months.

There was a 10% increase in the rate^{4,5} of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to December 2024, with the rate now peaking at 910 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. There was an increase in the rate of self-harm incidents in male establishments to a new peak (up 9% to 687 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) and an increase in the rate in female establishments to a new peak (up 7% to 6,056 per 1,000 prisoners). The rate is almost nine times higher in female establishments than male establishments. The rise in female establishments was driven by an increase in the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed in female establishments, from 16.0 to 18.7, offsetting a decrease in the rate of females self-harming (down 8% to 324 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners). For males, there was a slight increase in the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed in male establishments (from 4.4 to 4.5) and an increase in the rate of individuals self-harming (up 7% to 153 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners).

The rate of assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased 11% to 351 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to December 2024, and the rate of serious assaults increased 10% to 39 incidents per 1,000 prisoners over the same period. The rate of assaults was 64% higher in female establishments than in male establishments. In female establishments the rate increased by 8% to a peak of 560 per 1,000 prisoners, compared to an increase of 12% in male establishments (342 per 1,000 prisoners). However, the proportion of assaults in female establishments that were serious remains lower, at 8% compared with 11% in male establishments, despite the rate of serious assaults being higher in female establishments (up

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

² Apparent cause is based on the HMPPS classification of deaths in prison custody. Self-inflicted deaths are any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent. This not only includes suicides but also accidental deaths as a result of the person's own actions. This classification is used because it is not always known whether a person intended to die by suicide.

³ Any death of a person who has voluntarily taken their own life - a verdict determined at inquest. As inquests will not have occurred at the time HMPPS publishes deaths statistics, HMPPS makes no attempt to attribute intent (which is the responsibility of the coroner/inquest). HMPPS does not produce official statistics on suicides but does monitor inquest verdicts to ensure that classifications of deaths are consistent.

⁴ 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>.

⁵ See *Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics* for a summary of how rates are calculated.

16% to a rate of 45 per 1,000 prisoners) than male establishments (up 10% to a rate of 39 per 1,000 prisoners).

The rate of assaults on staff increased 13% in the 12 months to December 2024, and both the number and rate of assaults on staff peaked in the latest 12 months. The rate increased similarly in both male and female establishments, a 13% increase to a rate of 115 per 1,000 prisoners in male establishments, and a 13% increase to a new peak rate of 289 per 1,000 prisoners in female establishments.

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 series⁶. This release provides statistics on deaths of prisoners to the end of March 2025, and statistics on assaults and self-harm up to the end of December 2024.

The total prison population has remained steady in the latest year⁷ following a large increase in the prison population since 2021, particularly for certain population groups such as remand⁸. As at 31st March 2025 the prison population was around 50 (less than 0.5%) higher than at the end of March 2024. The prison population as at 31st March 2025 remains around 10,000 or 13% higher than at the end of April 2021. Both the male and female population has increased by 13% from the end of April 2021.

These changes in population should be borne in mind when interpreting changes in the numbers of incidents over time. In the context of substantial population change, rates per 1,000 prisoners more accurately describe changes in the likelihood of incidents occurring⁹. 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, is slightly different 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ The prison population decreased throughout 2024 due to factors including "End of Custody Supervised License" and earlier release from certain determinate sentences ("SDS40").

⁸ <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.

⁹ 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 by method

The annual self-harm tables are included within this release and include a table showing breakdowns by method of self-harm (table 2.2). The methodology for assigning the type of self-harm method has been improved, and as a result this table has been revised for years since 2013 (the earliest year for which the underlying incident information was recorded using consistent questions).

As part of this improvement, the updated figures now record all types of self-harm identified (rather than selecting a single type hierarchically), and as more than one type of self-harm may be recorded for some incidents, the actual total number of different types of self-harm will be greater than or equal to the number of self-harm incidents.

Assaults by type of assault

The annual assaults tables are included within this release and include a table showing breakdowns by type of assault (table 3.8), which has now been updated to give breakdowns by type of assault, whether there was an assault on staff, and if so, the type of staff assaulted. Previous versions of this table did not fully describe assaults where prisoners and staff were both assaulted. These assaults were placed in the prisoner-on-prisoner category with no further breakdown. The latest version gives a fuller and more accurate breakdown, by providing a breakdown of these categories to show if staff were also assaulted and if the member of staff assaulted was a prison officer.

Users should nevertheless be aware that, even within this improved breakdown, incident records only report one type of assault per incident, with the "prisoner-on-prisoner" option taking precedence, followed by "prisoner-on-staff", "prisoner-on-other", then "other". This means that an assault by a prisoner on both another prisoner and a member of staff must be recorded as "prisoner-on-prisoner", so "prisoner-on-staff" does not include all assaults on staff.

Self-harm and Assaults by sentence type

The annual self-harm and assaults tables include tables showing breakdowns by sentence type for self-harm (table 2.6) and assaults (table 3.5). The figures in these tables have previously included a breakdown by sentence type for unrecalled sentences (fine defaulter, determinate sentence, imprisonment for public protection, life) and a total for recall sentences¹⁰. The recall total in these tables still includes all recalls, but the tables now additionally split out recalls for those serving imprisonment for public protection sentences.

¹⁰ Those held in custody for breaching the terms of their licence conditions following release into the community. See the guide to offender management statistics within the [Offender Management Statistics Quarterly](#) publication for more detail

1 Deaths: 12 months ending March 2025

Number of deaths increased from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to March 2025, there were 399 deaths in prison custody, an **increase** of 37% from 291 deaths in the previous 12 months.

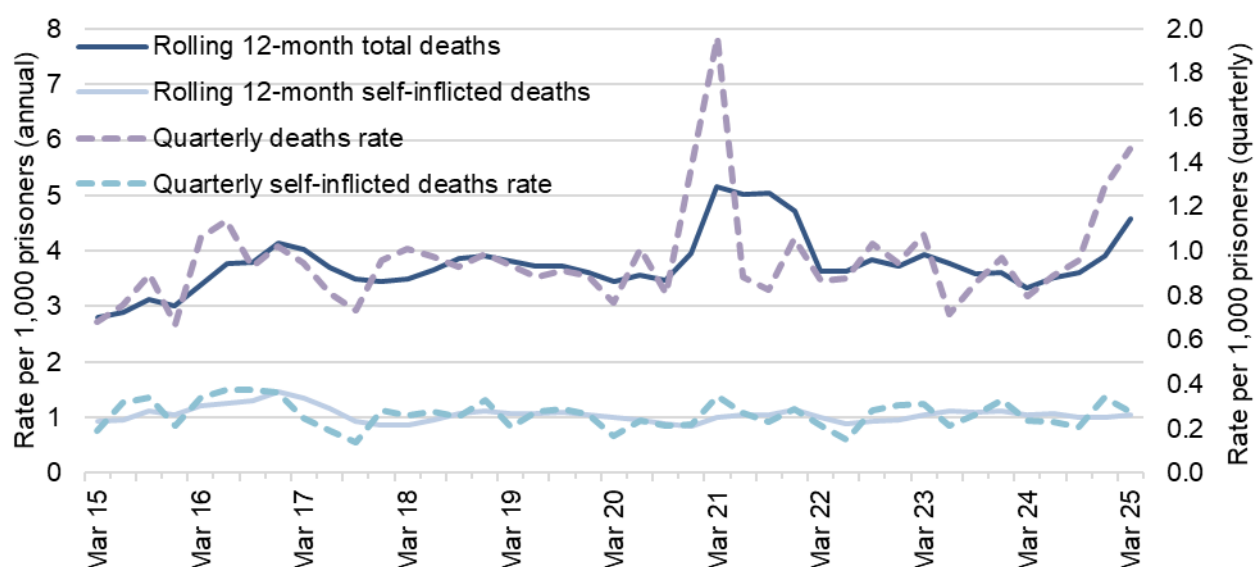
In the most recent quarter there were 127 deaths, a 15% **increase** from 110 deaths in the previous quarter.

Number of self-inflicted deaths remained the same as the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to March 2025, there were 91 self-inflicted deaths, the same number as in the previous 12 months.

There were 24 self-inflicted deaths in the most recent quarter, a 17% **decrease** from 29 in the previous quarter.

Figure 1: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of deaths per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending March 2015 to 12 months ending March 2025, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to March 2025, there were 399 deaths in prison custody (a rate of 4.6 per 1,000 prisoners), a 37% increase from 291 deaths in the previous 12 months (a rate of 3.3 per 1,000 prisoners). Long-term trends and more detail are presented in the annual tables¹¹.

Over the same period, there were 227 deaths due to natural causes (a rate of 2.6 per 1,000 prisoners), a 30% increase from 174 deaths by natural causes in the previous 12 months (a rate of 2.0 per 1,000 prisoners). This is the second highest level of deaths due to natural causes in the time series, lower only than the 12 months ending March 2021 (during COVID).

There were 91 apparent self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to March 2025 (a rate of 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners), the same number of self-inflicted deaths as in the previous 12 months (also a

¹¹ 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

rate of 1.0 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 March 2018.

There were 7 homicides in the 12 months to March 2025, an increase from 1 homicide in the previous 12 months. In most calendar years there are usually between 0 and 3 total homicides.

There were 74 deaths recorded as 'Other' in the 12 months to March 2025, an increase from 25 in the previous 12 months. Of those 74 deaths, 68 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 127 deaths, a 15% increase from 110 deaths in the previous quarter. There were 24 self-inflicted deaths in the latest quarter, a 17% decrease from 29 in the previous quarter. However, quarterly death figures should be considered with caution due to greater volatility and the potential for seasonal effects¹².

¹² Seasonal effects refer to variation in time series data that occur at regular intervals (typically intervals shorter than a year e.g. monthly or quarterly).

2 Self-harm: 12 months to December 2024

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

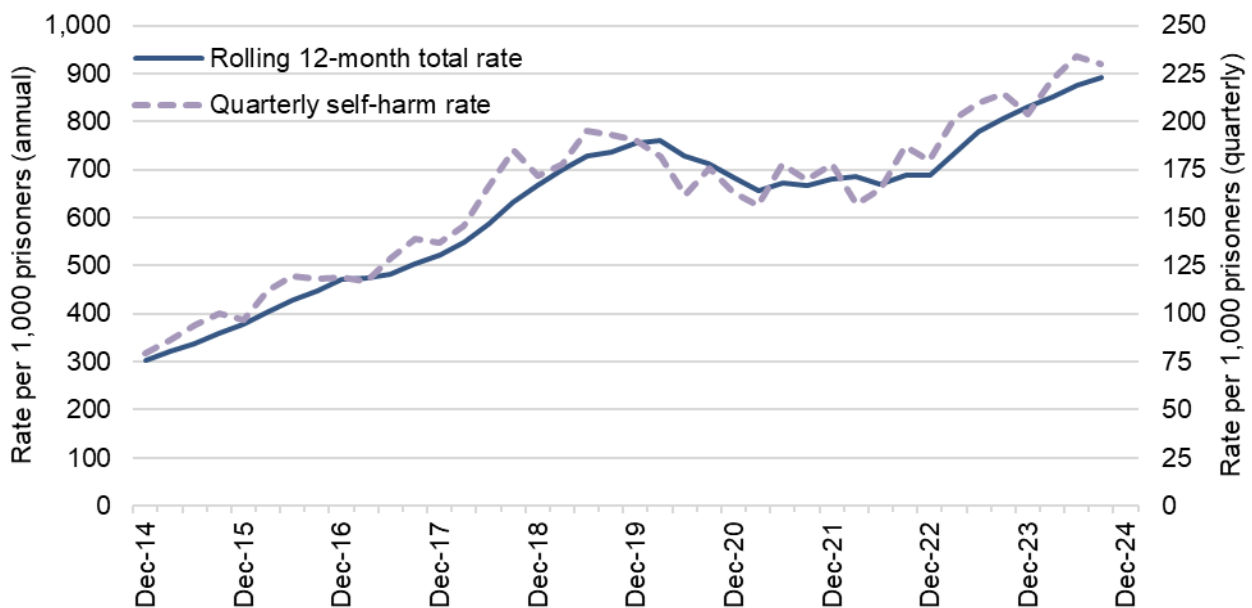
There were 79,027 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to December 2024, an 11% **increase** from the previous 12 months (an 11% **increase** in male establishments and a 12% **increase** in female establishments). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **increased** by 9% in male establishments and **increased** by 7% in female establishments.

In the most recent quarter, there were 19,076 self-harm incidents, **down** 6% on the previous quarter (a 5% **decrease** in male establishments and a 7% **decrease** in female establishments). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **decreased** 3.0% in male establishments and **decreased** 3.0% in female establishments.

The number of individuals who self-harmed increased by 8% in the latest year

There were 13,897 individuals who self-harmed in the 12 months to December 2024, an 8% **increase** from 12,922 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per self-harming individual **increased** slightly from 5.5 in the 12 months to December 2023 to 5.7 in the 12 months to December 2024.

Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents 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 79,027 reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of 910 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 11% from 70,927 in the previous 12 months. The rate of incidents in the latest 12 months increased 10%¹³ from the previous 12 months, and both the number and rate of self-harm incidents are now at their highest level in the time series¹⁴.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to December 2024 decreased by 6% from the previous quarter, decreasing from 20,214 to 19,076 incidents. Additionally, the rate of incidents of self-harm in the three months to December 2024 decreased by 3.4% from the previous quarter, decreasing from 230 to 222 incidents per 1,000 prisoners.

The number of individuals who self-harmed increased by 8% to 13,897 in the latest 12 months (a rate of 160 individuals per 1,000 prisoners), from 12,922 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 6% 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 also 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 (54%) of prisoners who self-harmed in 2024 did so more than once.

The number of self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance¹⁵ increased by 4% (to 3,475) in the 12 months to December 2024 but decreased by 22% in the latest quarter (to 777 incidents). The proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance decreased from 4.7% in the 12 months to December 2023 to 4.4% in the 12 months to December 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 December 2024, there were 57,242 incidents in the male estate compared with 21,785 in the female estate, representing an 11% increase in male establishments and a 12% increase in female establishments compared to the previous year. However, the rate of self-harm in the female estate (6,056 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) was almost nine times higher than in the male estate (687 incidents per 1,000 prisoners). The number of incidents and rate of self-harm in both the male and female estate are all now at the highest level in the time series.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to December 2024 decreased by 5% in male establishments and decreased by 7% in female establishments compared with the previous three months. For male establishments, this reflects the second highest number of incidents in a quarter across the time series, a drop from the highest number of incidents in the previous quarter. In contrast, this is the lowest number of incidents in a quarter for female establishments in 2024. The rate in both male establishments and female establishments decreased by 3.0% over the same period compared to the previous three months.

The number of incidents per individual who self-harmed in female establishments was more than four times that in male establishments. In the 12 months to December 2024 there was 18.7 incidents of self-harm per self-harming female, an increase from 16.0 in the previous 12 months, compared with 4.5 incidents per self-harming male, an increase from 4.4 in the previous 12 months.

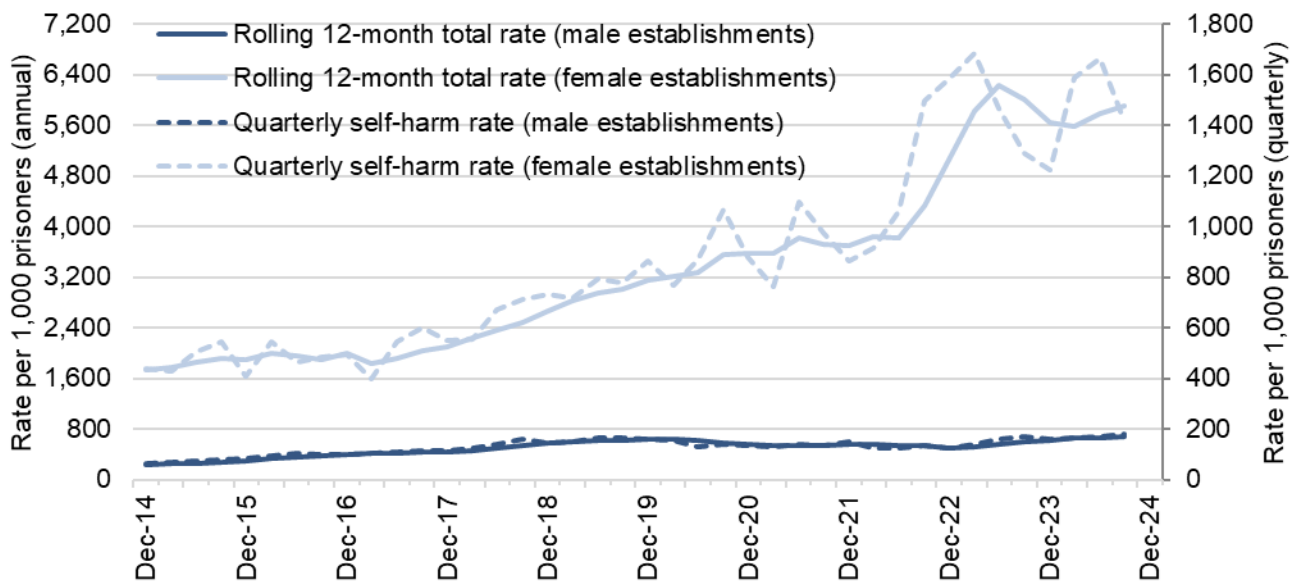
¹³ A greater percentage increase in the female than the male population means that female prisoners now make up a slightly larger proportion of the overall estate in the latest period. Because the rate of female self-harm is much higher than that of male self-harm, this shift in the population composition has contributed to the increase in the overall rate, causing it to rise more than the male and female estates individually.

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

¹⁵ 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.

The proportion of females self-harming in the latest 12 months was 324 individuals per 1,000 prisoners, a decrease of 8% from 352 individuals per 1,000 prisoners in the previous 12 months. The increase in the rate of self-harm in the female estate occurred despite the decrease in the proportion of females self-harming, as a result of the increase in incidents per individual. In contrast, the increase in the rate of self-harm in the male estate is driven by an increase in the proportion of males self-harming (7% increase to 153 individuals per 1,000 prisoners).

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



Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance increased in male establishments by 3.8%, to 3,083 in the 12 months to December 2024, but the proportion of incidents requiring hospital attendance decreased from 5.8% in the previous 12 months to 5.4% in the latest 12 months¹⁶. In the female estate 392 self-harm incidents required hospital attendance, a 3.2% increase from 380 incidents the previous year, but the proportion of incidents in the female estate requiring hospital attendance decreased from 2.0% in the previous 12 months to 1.8% in the latest 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.

¹⁶ 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.

Key findings from the additional self-harm tables for 2024

Custody type

In the 12 months to December 2024, in the male estate, the rate of self-harm was slightly higher among remand prisoners than among sentenced prisoners (665 incidents per 1,000 prisoners on remand and 654 incidents per 1,000 sentenced prisoners). In the female estate, the rate of self-harm was also higher among remand prisoners than among sentenced prisoners (7,436 incidents per 1,000 prisoners on remand and 5,287 incidents per 1,000 sentenced prisoners).

In the male estate, the number of self-harm incidents for prisoners on remand increased by 21%, from 8,899 in 2023 to 10,743 in 2024, with the rate increasing 10%, and the number of self-harm incidents for sentenced prisoners increased by 8%, from 40,494 to 43,916, with the rate increasing by 9%. Within the sentenced population, the rate was much higher for recalled prisoners (1,204 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) compared to the sentenced population overall (654 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) in 2024.

In the female estate, the number of self-harm incidents for prisoners on remand increased by 20%, from 5,457 in 2023 to 6,563 in 2024, with the rate increasing by 5%, and the number of incidents for sentenced prisoners increased by 7%, from 13,267 to 14,216, with the rate increasing by 5%. Within the sentenced population, the rate was much higher for recalled prisoners (7,950 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) compared to the sentenced population overall (5,287 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) in 2024.

For the overall prison estate, the rate of self-harm incidents for prisoners on remand (1,016 per 1,000 prisoners) was higher than the rate for sentenced prisoners (833 per 1,000 prisoners). Within the sentenced population, the rate was higher for recalled prisoners (1,466 per 1,000 prisoners) and IPP prisoners (1,198 per 1,000 prisoners) in 2024¹⁷. The rate for IPP prisoners increased 3.1% from a rate of 1,162 in 2023, and the rate for recalled prisoners increased 14% from a rate of 1,291 in 2023.

Method

Changes have been made to the methodology for counting methods of self-harm detailed in the “changes to this publication” section.

The most common **method for self-harm** in prison was cutting/scratching: 54% of incidents of self-harm involved cutting/scratching in 2024, down from 57% in 2023, while 25% of self-harm incidents involved self-strangulation in 2024, up from 21% in 2023.

Incidents involving cutting/scratching increased 9% in the male estate in 2024. Cutting/scratching was involved in 64% of self-harm incidents in the male estate, down from 66% in 2023.

In the female estate, cutting/scratching decreased 3.2%, and was involved in 28% of self-harm incidents in the female estate in 2024, down from 33% in 2023. Self-strangulation increased 40%, and was involved in 59% of self-harm incidents in the female estate in 2024, up from 47% in 2023.

¹⁷ These rates include all recalled prisoners and all IPP prisoners so some of the population in these categories will overlap.

Location

The most common **location for self-harm** in prison was in cells and common areas¹⁸. For males, 72% of self-harm incidents were in cells and common areas in 2024, compared to 81% of self-harm incidents by females.

Males were more likely than females to self-harm in segregation units (10% of incidents by males compared to 7% of incidents by females) and in vulnerable prisoner units (7% of incidents by males compared to 1% of incidents by females), whereas females were more likely to self-harm in health care locations (5% of incidents by females compared to 3% of incidents by males) and in induction areas (4% of incidents by females compared to 1% of incidents by males) in 2024.

Time in current prison

23% of self-harm incidents occurred within the first 30 days in custody (22% in the male estate and 25% in the female estate). These figures have remained broadly stable in the male estate, but increased by 4 percentage points in the female estate compared to 2023.

Frequency

Just over a half of individuals (54%) who self-harmed in 2024 did so **more than once** during the year. 54% of males and 57% of females who self-harmed during 2024 did so more than once during the calendar year.

Over the last 10 years, the proportion of males who self-harmed who self-harmed more than once has increased 10 percentage points from 44% to 54%, while the proportion of females who self-harmed more than once has stayed broadly stable over the same period.

12% of self-harming females self-harmed more than 20 times in 2024 (unchanged from 2023), 7% self-harmed 50 or more times (unchanged), and 4.4% self-harmed 100 or more times (up from 3.6%).

3.9% of self-harming males self-harmed more than 20 times in 2024 (unchanged from 2023), 0.8% self-harmed 50 or more times (up from 0.7%), and less than 0.1% self-harmed 100 or more times (down from 0.1%).

Age

The highest rates of self-harm incidents and individuals self-harming were in the younger age groups in 2024, continuing trends in recent years.

The highest rates of self-harm incidents were in the 18-20 (1,938 incidents per 1,000 prisoners), 25-29 (1,401 per 1,000 prisoners) and 21-24 (1,325 per 1,000 prisoners) age groups at the time of the incident. In male establishments, the highest rate was in the 25-29 age group (995 per 1,000 prisoners). In female establishments, the rate was highest in the 18-20 age group (50,261 per 1,000 prisoners).

The highest rates of individuals self-harming were also in the 18-20 (259 individuals who self-harmed per 1,000 prisoners), 25-29 (218 per 1,000 prisoners) and 21-24 (215 per 1,000 prisoners) age groups.

Ethnicity

The rate of self-harm per 1,000 prisoners was highest for white prisoners (1,147 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) followed by prisoners from the mixed ethnic group (588) in 2024. The rates were lowest

¹⁸ The "normal" category includes non-specialist areas such as cells and common areas.

for Asian prisoners (192) in 2024. This is consistent with recent years and this relative pattern across ethnic groups is seen in both the male and female estates.

Nationality

The rate of self-harm per 1,000 prisoners remained higher for British prisoners (989 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) than for foreign nationals (322 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) in 2024.

The rate for British prisoners increased by 12% from 885 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2023, while the rate for foreign nationals decreased by 9% from 355 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2023.

Hospital attendance

The proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance was 4.4% in 2024, and 97% of self-harm incidents that resulted in hospital attendance were for a visit to A&E and did not require staying as an inpatient in 2024. These are broadly consistent with recent years.

In male establishments 5.4% of all self-harm incidents resulted in hospital attendance in 2024, down from 5.8% in 2023. In female establishments 1.8% of all self-harm incidents resulted in hospital attendance in 2024, down from 2.0% in 2023. 97% of self-harm incidents in male establishments and 94% of self-harm incidents in female establishments that resulted in hospital attendance were for a visit to A&E and did not require staying as an inpatient in 2024.

3 Assaults: 12 months to December 2024

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

In the 12 months to December 2024, there were 30,490 assault incidents, a 13% **increase** from the previous 12 months. Of these, 3,390 were serious assaults, **up** 12%. Rates of assault **increased** by 11% to 351 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, and the rate of serious assaults **increased** by 10% to 39 per 1,000 prisoners in the latest 12 months.

Assaults **decreased** by 2.5% in the latest quarter to 7,703 incidents while the number of serious assaults **increased** by 10% to 890 incidents.

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

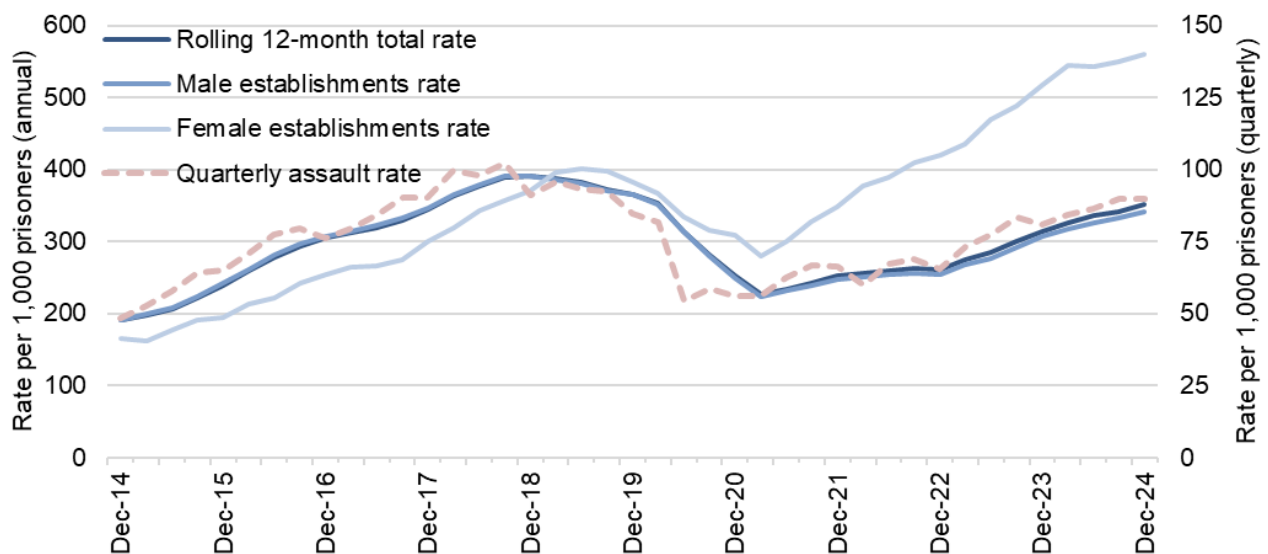
The rate of assault in male establishments **increased** by 12% from the previous 12 months, while the rate in female establishments **increased** by 8%. Assault rates for the 12 months to December 2024 remained higher in female establishments (560 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (342 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 10,605 assaults on staff in the 12 months to December 2024, a 15% **increase** from the previous 12 months and a new peak. In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff **decreased** by 3.5% to 2,627 incidents.

In the latest 12 months, the rate of assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners **increased** by 13% to 122 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, also a new peak. During this period, the rate in male establishments **increased** by 13% to 115 assaults per 1,000 prisoners and **increased** by 13% to a new peak of 289 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 December 2014 to 12 months ending December 2024, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to December 2024, assault incidents increased by 13% to 30,490 (a rate of 351 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) from 26,924 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in the latest 12 months was 11% higher than in the previous 12 months. The number of assault incidents was now higher than in the calendar year prior to the pandemic (12 months to December 2019), but still lower than the pre-pandemic peak in 2018. The rate of assault incidents remained lower than pre-pandemic levels, with the rate of assault incidents in the latest year being 4.7% lower than the rate of assaults in the 12 months to December 2019.

In the latest quarter there were 7,703 assaults, down 2.5% 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 13% to 28,474 in the 12 months to December 2024 (a rate of 342 per 1,000 prisoners), from 25,143 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in male establishments in the latest 12 months was 12% higher than in the previous 12 months.

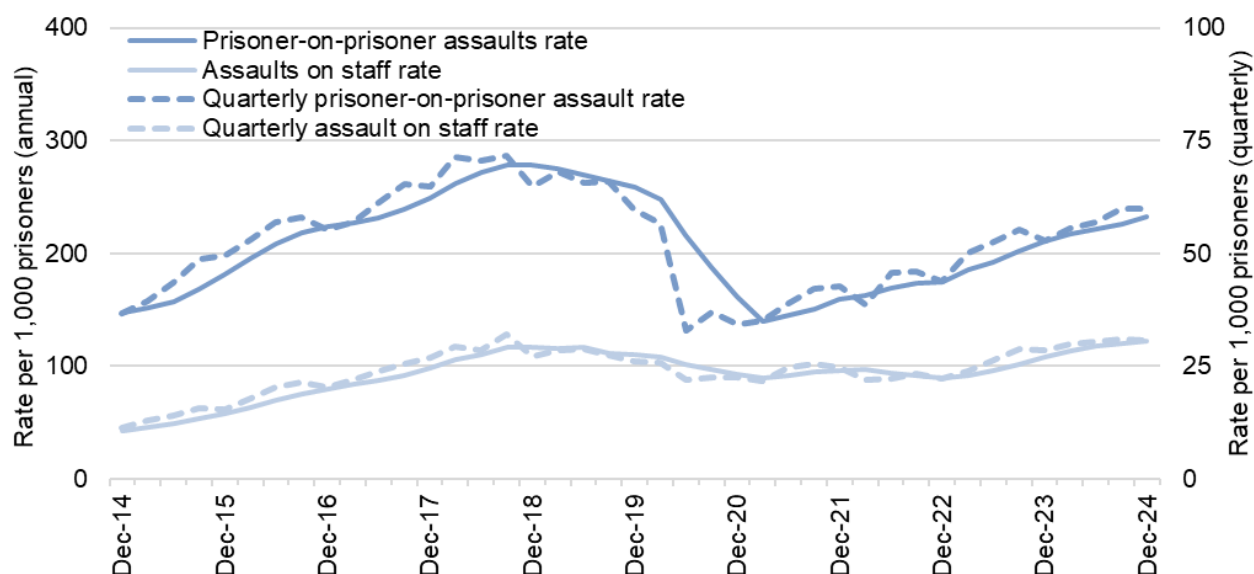
The number of incidents in female establishments increased by 13% to 2,016 incidents in the 12 months to December 2024 (a rate of 560 per 1,000 prisoners), from 1,781 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in female establishments in the latest 12 months was 8% higher than in the previous 12 months. The rate and number of incidents in the female estate are now at their highest level in the time series¹⁹, 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 December 2019, after previously being higher in male establishments.

In the latest quarter, the number of assaults in male establishments decreased by 3.0% to 7,168 incidents, compared to an increase of 3.9% in female establishments (to 535 assaults). During this period the rate of assaults remained unchanged at 90 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, but this resulted from a 0.7% decrease in male establishments (to 87 assaults per 1,000 prisoners) offsetting an 8% increase in female establishments (to 153 assaults per 1,000 prisoners).

¹⁹ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

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



There were 20,215 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults²⁰ in the 12 months to December 2024 (a rate of 233 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 12% from the 18,033 assaults in the previous 12 months. The rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the latest 12 months was 10% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter, there were 5,148 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 2.3% decrease from 5,269 in the previous quarter.

There were 10,605 assaults on staff²¹ in the 12 months to December 2024 (a rate of 122 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 15% from the 9,204 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 13% higher than in the previous 12 months. Both the number of incidents and the rate reached a new peak. In the latest quarter, there were 2,627 assaults on staff, a decrease of 3.5% from 2,722 incidents in the previous quarter.

The proportion of assaults on staff²² increased to 35% of all incidents in the 12 months to December 2024 from 34% in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to December 2024, the proportion of assaults that were on staff remained higher in female establishments (51%) than in male establishments (34%).

In male establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 12% to 19,224 incidents (231 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners) in the 12 months to December 2024, and the rate increased by 11%. Assaults on staff increased 15% to reach a new peak of 9,567 incidents, and the rate increased by 13% to a new peak of 115 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners.

In female establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 8% to 991 incidents (275 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to December 2024, and the rate increased by 3%. Assaults on staff increased by 18% to 1,038 incidents (289 incidents per 1,000 female

²⁰ This figure includes any prisoner-on-prisoner assaults where there may also have been an assault on staff.

²¹ 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.

²² 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.

prisoners) in the 12 months to December 2024, and the rate increased by 13%. In the 12 months to December 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.

Serious assaults

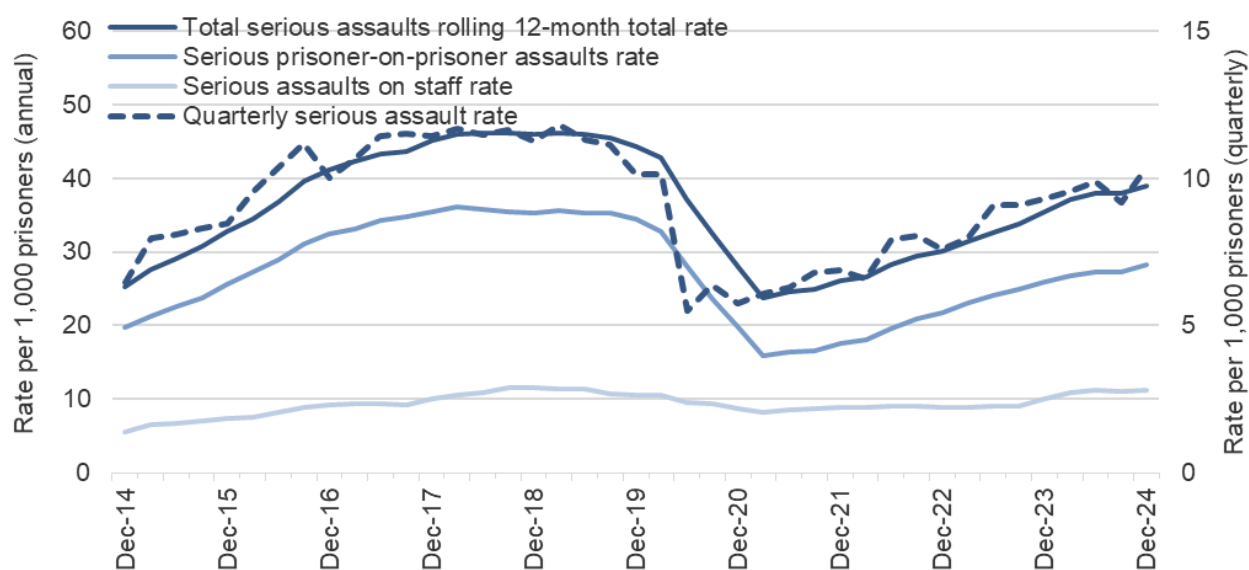
Of the 30,490 assault incidents, 3,390 (11%) were serious

In the 12 months to December 2024, there were 3,390 serious assault incidents, a 12% **increase** from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults **increased** by 10% over the period.

Serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** by 10% to 2,452, and serious assaults on staff **increased** by 14% to 974 in the 12 months to December 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 December 2014 to 12 months ending December 2024



In the latest 12 months, 11% of assaults were serious assaults. This is unchanged from 11% in the previous 12 months to December 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 December 2024, there were 3,390 serious assaults (a rate of 39 per 1,000 prisoners), a 12% increase from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults in the latest 12 months was 10% 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 second year in a row after being higher for the first time in the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter, there were 890 serious assaults, a 10% increase from the previous quarter.

There were 2,452 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (a rate of 28 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to December 2024, a 10% increase from 2,220 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 December 2024, the rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 6% in female establishments (to a new peak of 26 per 1,000 prisoners), while there was a 9% increase in male establishments (to 28 per 1,000 prisoners)²³. In the latest quarter, there were 652 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 10% increase from the previous quarter.

There were 974 serious assaults on staff (a rate of 11 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to December 2024, a 14% increase from 853 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults on staff was 12% higher than in the previous 12 months, and the rate increased by more in female establishments (a 31% increase, to a peak of 19 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (a 11% increase, to 11 incidents per 1,000 prisoners). In the latest quarter, the number of serious assaults on staff increased by 14% to 248 incidents²⁴.

²³ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

²⁴ Due to a low number of incidents for serious assaults, a small increase or decrease in incidents can lead to a large percentage change.

Key findings from additional assaults tables for 2024

The annual assaults tables include a further breakdown of the assaults figures, including a breakdown by prisoner role within each incident. A definition of each of the roles is shown below:

- **Assailant:** This refers to assault incidents in which there is a clear aggressor (assailant) and victim. Such incidents arise from offences of grievous bodily harm (GBH) and actual bodily harm (ABH).
- **Fighter:** This refers to assault incidents in which there is no clear aggressor or victim. Such cases arise from offences of affray.
- **Victim:** This refers to assault incidents in which there is a clear aggressor (assailant) and victim. Such incidents arise from offences of GBH and ABH.

Age

Prisoners in the 18-20 year **age-group** had the highest rates of incidents where they were involved as assailants (855 per 1,000 prisoners), fighters (939 per 1,000 prisoners) and victims (373 per 1,000 prisoners).

In general, the rate of incidents is higher where those involved are from the younger age-groups.

Custody type

Prisoners on **remand** had higher rates of assailants, fighters and victims than sentenced prisoners in 2024. The rate in the sentenced population increased more than in the remand population for assailants and victims in latest 12 months, whilst increasing by the same amount for fighters.

For assailants the rates per 1,000 prisoners increased 7% for prisoners on remand, from 344 in 2023 to 366 in 2024, and increased 13% for sentenced prisoners from 200 in 2023 to 225 in 2024.

For fighters the rates per 1,000 prisoners increased 8% for prisoners on remand, from 305 in 2023 to 330 in 2024, and increased by 8% for sentenced prisoners from 158 in 2023 to 171 in 2024.

For victims the rates per 1,000 prisoners increased 9% for prisoners on remand, from 194 in 2023 to 212 in 2024, and increased by 11% for sentenced prisoners from 111 in 2023 to 123 in 2024.

Ethnicity

Prisoners from the black and mixed **ethnic groups** had the highest rates of assailants and fighters, whilst prisoners from ethnic groups recorded as other had the highest rate for victims. For black prisoners there were 435 assailants per 1,000 prisoners, 392 fighters and 149 victims. For prisoners from the mixed ethnic group there were 414 assailants per 1,000 prisoners, 342 fighters and 152 victims.

White and Asian prisoners had the lowest rates for assailants, fighters and victims. For white prisoners there were 233 assailants per 1,000 prisoners, 171 fighters and 144 victims. For Asian prisoners there were 192 assailants per 1,000 prisoners, 187 fighters and 138 victims.

Sexual assaults

There were 512 **sexual assaults**²⁵ recorded in custody in 2024, a 15% increase from 447 sexual assaults in custody in 2023 and the highest number in the time series. Over the same period the rate of sexual assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased 13%, from 5.2 in 2023 to 5.9 in 2024.

In female establishments, sexual assaults increased by 9%, from 54 in 2023 to 59 in 2024, with the rate per 1,000 prisoners increasing 4% from 15.7 to 16.4. In male establishments, there was a 15% increase, from 393 in 2023 to 453 in 2024, with the rate per 1,000 prisoners increasing 14% from 4.8 to 5.4.

Weapons

There were 7,963 **assaults where weapons were recorded** in 2024. This represents 26% of total assaults, which is the highest proportion in the time series.

Of the weapons used in assaults, 28% were recorded as spitting and 11% were recorded as a blunt instrument. The proportions of each type of weapon are all similar to 2023 figures.

Injuries

There were 3,096 **serious injuries** as a result of assaults in prison in 2024, a 17% increase from 2,650 serious injuries in 2023.

Of those serious injuries, 20% resulted in a black eye in 2024, 19% were cuts requiring sutures, 15% resulted in extensive or multiple bruising, 13% were from bites, and 12% resulted in a fracture. These proportions are all similar to 2023 figures.

There were also 14,297 minor injuries as a result of assaults in prison in 2024, a 10% increase from 13,011 minor injuries in 2023.

Hospital attendance

0.2% of assault incidents required attendance at hospital as an inpatient. 2.1% required treatment for concussion or internal injuries. These figures remain broadly stable relative to previous years.

²⁵ Sexual assaults are any assault where the victim believes it to have been of a sexual nature, and where all of the following occur – they intentionally touch another person, the touching is sexual, the victim does not consent to the touching, they do not reasonably believe the other person consents, and the touching can be with any part of the body or with anything else.

Further Information



Accredited official statistics status

National Statistics are [accredited official statistics](#)²⁶ 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.

²⁶ 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 and Analysis Team

Data and Analysis

Ministry of Justice

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

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

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Next update: July 2025

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

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