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

Main Points

Number of deaths increased from the previous 12-month period



In the 12 months to December 2025, there were 394 deaths in prison custody, an **increase** of 15% from 342 deaths in the previous 12 months. Of these, 79 deaths were self-inflicted, a **decrease** of 12% from the 90 self-inflicted deaths in the previous 12 months.

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



In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of self-harm was 859 incidents per 1,000 prisoners (74,521 incidents), a 3.6% **decrease** from the 12 months to September 2024, with a 3.2% **decrease** in male establishments and a 2.8% **decrease** in female establishments.

In the most recent quarter, the rate of self-harm **decreased** by 1.2%, with a 0.9% **decrease** in the rate in male establishments and a 2.8% **decrease** in female establishments. The number of incidents **remained steady** (0.1% increase) at 18,601.

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



In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of individuals who self-harmed was 157 individuals per 1,000 prisoners (13,649 individuals), **remaining steady** (0.2% increase) at a rate of 157 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per individual **decreased** from 5.7 to 5.5 in the 12 months to September 2025.

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



In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of assaults was 364 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (31,555 assaults), **up** 6% from the 12 months to September 2024.

In the most recent quarter, assaults were **up** 3.2% to 8,194 incidents and the assault rate was **up** 1.8% to 93 assaults per 1,000 prisoners.

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



In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was 248 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (21,489 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults), **up** 10% from the 12 months to September 2024 (with a 9% **increase** in the rate in male establishments and a 26% **increase** in female establishments).

In the latest quarter, the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was **up** 4.9% to 5,697 incidents.

The rate of assaults on staff decreased



In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of assaults on staff was 119 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (10,326 assaults on staff), **down** 0.9% from the 12 months to September 2024 (with a 1.8% decrease

**from the previous
12-month period**

in the rate in male establishments, but a 9% increase in female establishments).

In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff **remained steady** (down 0.1%) at 2,564 incidents.

**The rate of serious
assaults increased**



In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of serious assaults was 41 serious assaults per 1,000 prisoners (3,544 incidents), **up** 8% from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was **up** 12% to 31 per 1,000 prisoners (2,652 incidents), while the rate of serious assaults on staff was **down** by 3.1% but remained at 11 per 1,000 prisoners (931 incidents) in the 12 months to September 2025.

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 2025, we have seen an increase in the number of deaths (15% increase). In the 12 months to September 2025, we have seen a 4.3% decrease in the number of self-harm incidents and a 6% rise in the number of assault incidents compared with the previous year. The number of incidents of assaults have increased in both male and female establishments over the past 12 months while the number of incidents of self-harm have decreased in both male and female establishments in the past 12 months. The number and rate of assaults in female establishments have reached their highest level in the time series¹.

The number of deaths has increased from 342 to 394 in the 12 months to December 2025, with the rate of deaths increasing from 3.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners to 4.5 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the same time period. Where the cause of death is known, this rise was mainly driven by a rise in deaths from natural causes. There were 79 self-inflicted deaths^{2,3} in the latest year, a decrease from 90 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 2025, an increase from 6 homicides in the previous 12 months. In the 5 years prior to 2024, there were 1 to 3 total homicides per year.

The rate^{4,5} of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2025 decreased by 3.6%. There was a decrease in the rate of self-harm incidents in both the male estate (down 3.2% to 652 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) and in the female estate (down 2.8% to 5,744 per 1,000 prisoners)⁶. The rate is nearly nine times higher in female establishments than male establishments. The decrease in the rate in the female estate was driven by a decrease in the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed in female establishments, from 18.2 to 17.1, while the rate of individuals self-harming increased slightly (by 3.7%). For the male establishments, the rate of individuals self-harming was unchanged (remaining at 150 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners), while the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed decreased by 3.2% (from 4.5 to 4.4).

The rate of assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased 6% to 364 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2025, and the rate of serious assaults increased 8% to 41 incidents per 1,000 prisoners over the same period. The rate of assaults was 83% higher in female establishments than in male establishments. In female establishments the rate of assault incidents increased by 17% to a peak of 644 per 1,000 prisoners, compared to an increase of 6% in male establishments (to 352 per 1,000 prisoners). The proportion of assaults in female establishments that were serious remains lower, at 7% compared with 12% in male establishments, despite the

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.

⁶ A greater percentage decrease in the female population than the male population means that female prisoners now make up a slightly smaller 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 decrease in the overall rate, causing it to decrease more than the male and female estates individually.

rate of serious assaults being higher in female establishments (up 2.4% to a rate of 46 per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (up 8% to a rate of 41 per 1,000 prisoners).

In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of assaults on staff decreased 0.9% to 119 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, with a 1.8% decrease in male establishments (to 111 per 1,000 prisoners) but a 9% increase in female establishments (to 311 per 1,000 prisoners). During the same period, the rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased 10% to 248 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, with a 9% increase in male establishments (to 244 per 1,000 prisoners) and a 26% increase in female establishments (to 335 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 series⁷. This release provides statistics on deaths of prisoners to the end of December 2025, and statistics on assaults and self-harm up to the end of September 2025.

The total prison population has remained steady in the latest year⁸ following a large increase in the prison population since 2021, particularly for certain population groups such as remand⁹. As at 31st December 2025 the prison population was around 200 (0.3%) higher than at the end of December 2024. The prison population as of 31st December 2025 remains around 7,800 or 10% higher than at the end of April 2021, with the male prison population increasing by 10% and the female prison population increasing by 6% 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 occurring¹⁰. 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.

Between November 2022 and November 2024, in order to make the best use of capacity across the estate in the light of recent increases in the prison population, young people were routinely 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ The prison population decreased throughout 2024 due to factors including “End of Custody Supervised License” and earlier release from certain determinate sentences (“SDS40”).

⁹ <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.

¹⁰ 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.

1 Deaths: 12 months ending December 2025

Number of deaths increased from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to December 2025, there were 394 deaths in prison custody, an **increase** of 15% from 342 deaths in the previous 12 months.

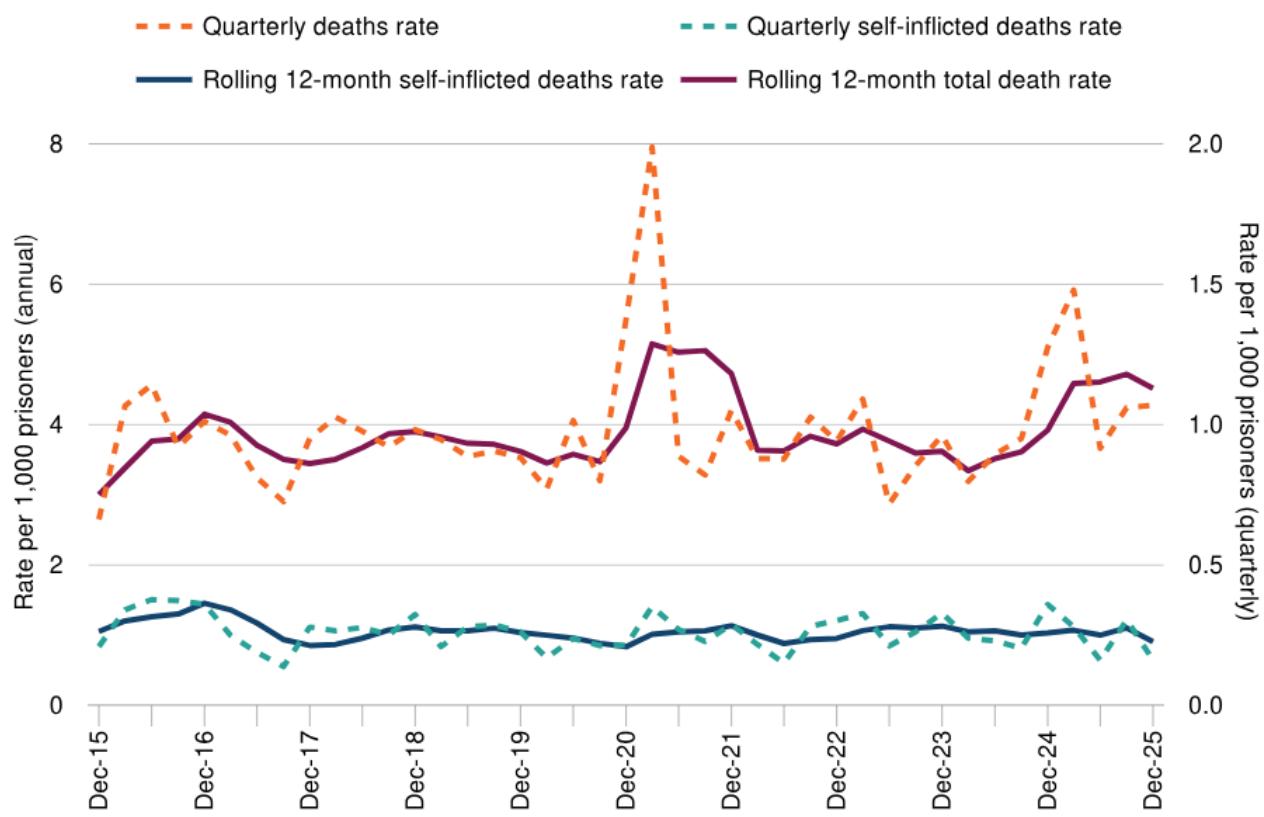
In the most recent quarter there were 93 deaths, **remaining steady** with a small decrease of 1 from 94 deaths in the previous quarter.

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

In the 12 months to December 2025, there were 79 self-inflicted deaths, a 12% **decrease** from 90 in the previous 12 months.

There were 14 self-inflicted deaths in the most recent quarter, a 48% **decrease** from 27 in the previous quarter. Quarterly deaths figures should be considered with caution due to greater volatility.

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



In the 12 months to December 2025, there were 394 deaths in prison custody (a rate of 4.5 per 1,000 prisoners), a 15% increase from 342 deaths in the previous 12 months (a rate of 3.9 per 1,000 prisoners). The number of deaths is now at the highest level in the time series, although the

rate of total deaths per 1,000 prisoners remains below the peak during the pandemic. Long-term trends and more detail are presented in the annual tables¹¹.

Over the same period, there were 224 deaths due to natural causes (a rate of 2.6 per 1,000 prisoners), an 8% increase from 207 deaths by natural causes in the previous 12 months (a rate of 2.4 per 1,000 prisoners). This is the highest number and rate of deaths due to natural causes in the time series outside of years impacted by the COVID pandemic.

There were 79 self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to December 2025 (a rate of 0.9 per 1,000 prisoners), a decrease of 12% from 90 self-inflicted deaths in the previous 12 months (a 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 December 2017.

There were 7 homicides in the 12 months to December 2025, an increase from 6 homicides in the previous 12 months. In the five years prior to 2024, there were between 1 and 3 total homicides per year.

There were 84 deaths recorded as 'Other' in the 12 months to December 2025, an increase from 39 in the previous 12 months. Of those 84 deaths, 54 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 93 deaths, remaining steady with a small decrease of 1 from 94 deaths in the previous quarter. There were 14 self-inflicted deaths in the latest quarter, a 48% decrease from 27 in the previous quarter. However, quarterly death figures should be considered with caution due to greater volatility and the potential for seasonal effects¹².

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 2025 is published in the Safety in Custody quarterly update to September 2025

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).

Key findings from deaths annual tables and deaths data tool

Sex

The overwhelming majority of deaths in custody in 2025 (97%) occurred in the male estate, a finding that has been consistent over time.

There were 13 deaths in the female estate, an increase from 9 in 2024, accounting for around 3% of the total deaths. In comparison the average female prison population in 2025 was 4% of the total prison population. 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 79 self-inflicted deaths in 2025, 75 of which occurred in the male estate (down from 86 in 2024) and 4 in the female estate (unchanged from 2024).

Age

Prisoners aged 70 and over were more likely to die in custody compared to any other age group, with 52.1 incidents per 1,000 prisoners.

Out of 109 deaths amongst this age group, 107 were classified as natural causes and 2 were classified as self-inflicted. Those aged over 50 accounted for 86% of all natural caused deaths in 2025.

Prisoners aged 50 to 59 had the highest rates of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths was highest for prisoners aged 50 to 59 (1.7 per 1,000 prisoners) in 2025, up from a rate of 1.5 per 1,000 prisoners in 2024. The next highest rate was for prisoners aged 60 to 69 (at 1.3 per 1,000 prisoners) in 2025, down from a rate of 2.1 in 2024.

The highest number of self-inflicted deaths were in the 30 to 39 age group in 2025, at 28, although the rate was lower for the 30 to 39 age group (1.0 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 (1.1 per 1,000 prisoners) than for prisoners of all other ethnic groups combined (0.4 per 1,000 prisoners) in 2025

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners decreased from 1.3 in 2024 to 1.1 in 2025 for White prisoners and increased from 0.3 in 2024 to 0.4 in 2025 for prisoners of all other ethnic groups combined.

Self-inflicted deaths among all other ethnic groups combined accounted for 11% of all self-inflicted deaths in 2025, up from 7% in 2024. In comparison, the average prison population for all other ethnic groups combined in 2025 accounted for 27% of the total prison population.

Nationality

UK nationals had a slightly higher rate of self-inflicted deaths than foreign nationals 2025 (0.9 per 1,000 prisoners compared to 0.8).

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners was 0.9 for UK nationals and 0.8 for foreign nationals in 2025, a decrease from 1.1 for UK nationals and an increase from 0.7 for foreign nationals in 2024.

Self-inflicted deaths among foreign nationals accounted for 11% of all self-inflicted deaths in 2025, up from 8% in 2024. In comparison, the average prison population for foreign nationals in 2025 accounted for 12% of the total prison population.

Time in custody

In 2025, 22% 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 2025 (22% of all self-inflicted deaths), of which 7 occurred within the first week in custody (9%). In 2024, 19% of all self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days of custody, and 13% occurred within the first week. These trends have remained broadly stable since 2018.

In 2025, when including prisoners who have been transferred between prisons, 22 self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days in the current prison (28%), of which 10 occurred within the first week (13%). In 2024, 28% of all self-inflicted deaths occurred within the first 30 days in the current prison, and 16% 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 1.5 for prisoners on remand (a decrease from 1.8 in 2024) and 0.7 for sentenced prisoners (a decrease from 0.8 in 2024).

In 2025, 34% of all self-inflicted deaths were by prisoners on remand, unchanged from 2024. In comparison, the average prison population for prisoners on remand accounted for 20% of the total prison population in 2025.

Offence

In 2025, 37% 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 (37%), sexual offences (20%), theft offences (15%) and miscellaneous crimes against society (14%) accounted for the majority of self-inflicted deaths.

The rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners was 0.9 for violence against the person offences (a decrease from 1.1 in 2024), 1.0 for sexual offences (a decrease from 1.1 in 2024), 1.6 for theft offences (an increase from 1.3 in 2024) and 2.9 for miscellaneous crimes against society offences (a decrease from 3.3 in 2024).

Method of self-inflicted death

Hanging remains the most common method of self-inflicted death in 2025, accounting for 72% of all incidents.

The percentage of self-inflicted deaths due to hanging increased from 69% in 2024 (62 deaths) to 72% in 2025 (57 deaths), reversing a downward trend since 93% of all self-inflicted

deaths in 2015. The percentage due to self-strangulation increased from 13% in 2024 (12 deaths) to 18% in 2025 (14 deaths).

Of the 71 self-inflicted deaths with a method of hanging or self-strangulation in 2025, bedding remains the most commonly used ligature type (accounting for 65% of these incidents). The bed is the most commonly used ligature point (accounting for 30% of these incidents in 2025, up from 27% in 2024), followed by the window (28% of these incidents in 2025, up from 24% in 2024).

2 Self-harm: 12 months to September 2025

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

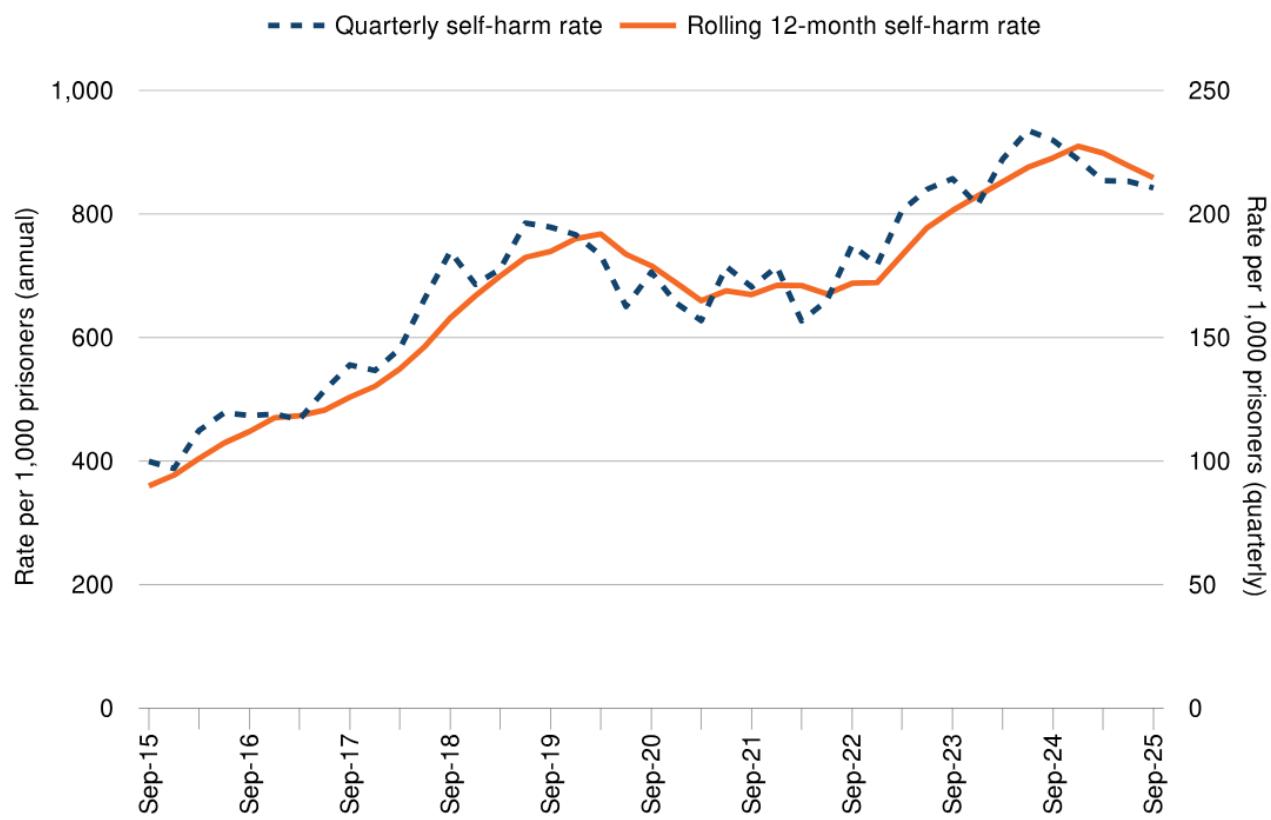
There were 74,521 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to September 2025, a 4.3% **decrease** from the previous 12 months, with a 3.8% **decrease** in male establishments and a 6% **decrease** in female establishments. Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **decreased** by 3.2% in male establishments and **decreased** by 2.8% in female establishments.

In the most recent quarter, there were 18,601 self-harm incidents, **remaining steady** (0.1% increase) compared to the previous quarter (remaining steady in male establishments [a 0.5% increase] and decreasing in female establishments by 0.8%). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **decreased** 0.9% in male establishments and **decreased** 2.8% in female establishments.

The number of individuals who self-harmed remained steady (0.5% decrease) in the latest year

There were 13,649 individuals who self-harmed in the 12 months to September 2025, **remaining steady** (0.5% decrease) compared to 13,717 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per self-harming individual **decreased** 3.8% from 5.7, to 5.5 in the 12 months to September 2025.

Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending September 2015 to 12 months ending September 2025, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to September 2025, there were 74,521 reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of 859 per 1,000 prisoners). The number of incidents of self-harm decreased 4.3% from 77,888 in the previous 12 months. The rate of incidents in the latest 12 months decreased 3.6% from the previous 12 months¹³.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to September 2025 remained steady (increased 0.1%) from the previous quarter, increasing from 18,574 to 18,601 incidents. The rate of incidents of self-harm in the three months to September 2025 decreased by 1.2% from the previous quarter to 211 incidents per 1,000 prisoners.

The number of individuals who self-harmed remained steady (decreased by 0.5%) at 13,649 in the latest 12 months, from 13,717 in the previous 12 months. The rate, or proportion, of prisoners self-harming also remained steady (at 157 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners) in the latest 12 months, increasing slightly by 0.2% to a new peak. The number of incidents per self-harming individual in the latest 12 months was 5.5, a decrease of 3.8% from 5.7 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 attendance¹⁴ decreased by 14% (to 3,039) in the 12 months to September 2025 and decreased by 7% in the latest quarter (to 752 incidents). The proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance decreased from 4.6% in the 12 months to September 2024 to 4.1% in the 12 months to September 2025.

Self-harm levels differ considerably by sex. 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 2025, there were 54,311 incidents in the male estate compared with 20,210 in the female estate, representing a 3.8% decrease in male establishments and a 6% decrease in female establishments compared to the previous year. The rate of self-harm in the female estate (5,744 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) is nearly nine times higher than in the male estate (652 incidents per 1,000 prisoners).

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to September 2025 remained steady (0.5% increase) in male establishments and decreased by 0.8% in female establishments compared with the previous three months. The rate decreased by 0.9% in male establishments and decreased by 2.8% in female establishments in the latest quarter.

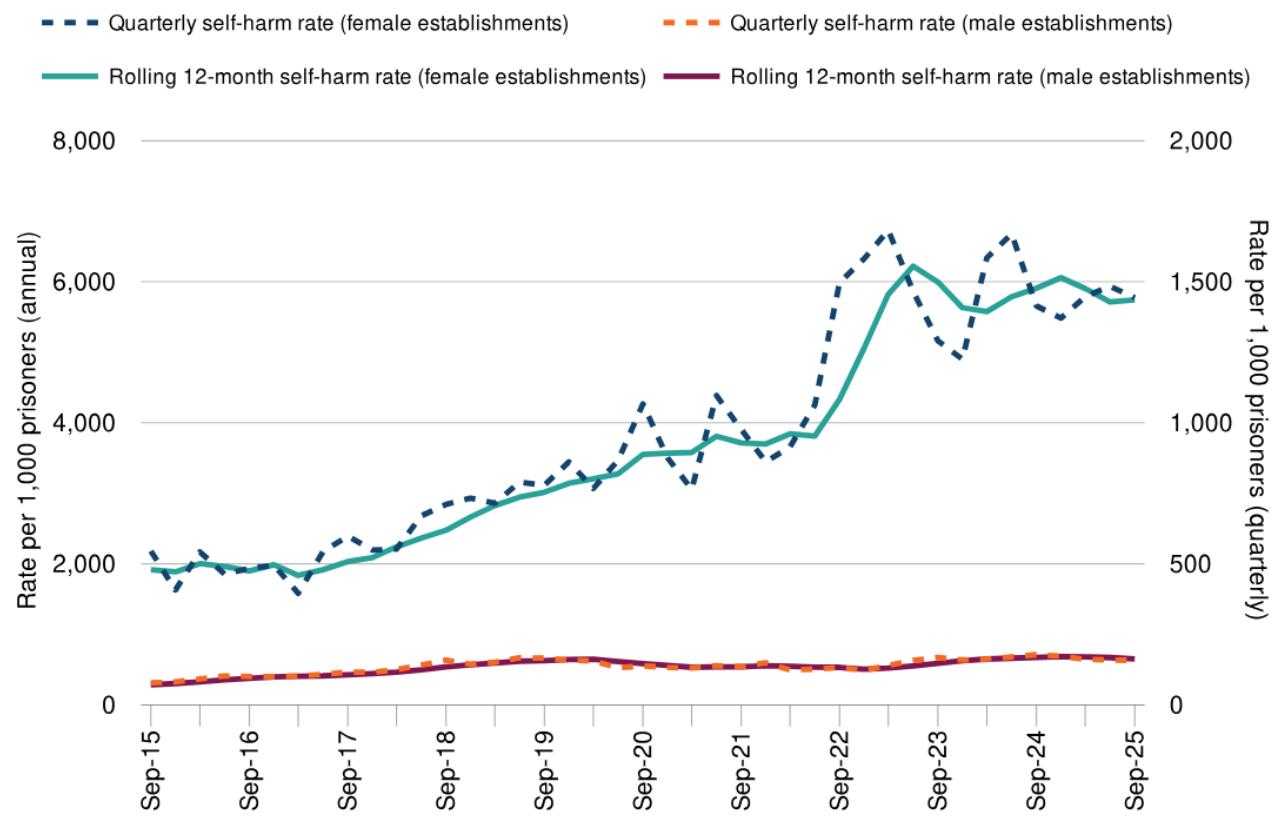
The number of incidents per individual who self-harmed in female establishments was almost 4 times that in male establishments. In the 12 months to September 2025 there was 17.1 incidents of self-harm per self-harming female, a decrease from 18.2 in the previous 12 months, compared with 4.4 incidents per self-harming male, a decrease from 4.5 in the previous 12 months.

The proportion of females self-harming in the latest 12 months was 336 individuals per 1,000 prisoners, an increase of 3.7% from 324 individuals per 1,000 prisoners in the previous 12 months. The decrease in the rate of self-harm in the female estate occurred despite this increase in the proportion of females self-harming, as a result of the decrease in incidents per individual. Similarly, the decrease in the rate of self-harm in the male estate was driven by the decrease in the number of self-harm incidents per individual (the proportion of males self-harming remained steady at 150 individuals per 1,000 prisoners).

¹³ A greater percentage decrease in the female population than the male population means that female prisoners now make up a slightly smaller 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 decrease in the overall rate, causing it to decrease more than the male and female estates individually.

¹⁴ 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.

Figure 3: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners by sex of establishment, 12 months ending September 2015 to 12 months ending September 2025



Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance decreased in male establishments by 12%, to 2,751 in the 12 months to September 2025, and the proportion of incidents requiring hospital attendance decreased from 5.6% in the previous 12 months to 5.1%. In the female estate 288 self-harm incidents required hospital attendance, a 30% decrease from 412 incidents the previous year, and the proportion of incidents in the female estate requiring hospital attendance decreased from 1.9% in the previous 12 months to 1.4% 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.

3 Assaults: 12 months to September 2025

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

In the 12 months to September 2025, there were 31,555 assault incidents, a 6% **increase** from the previous 12 months. Of these, 3,544 were serious assaults, **up** 7%. The rate of assault **increased** by 6% to 364 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, and the rate of serious assaults **increased** by 8% to 41 per 1,000 prisoners in the latest 12 months.

Assaults **increased** by 3.2% in the latest quarter to 8,194 incidents and the number of serious assaults **increased** by 14% to 959 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 6% from the previous 12 months, while the rate in female establishments **increased** by 17%. Assault rates for the 12 months to September 2025 remained higher in female establishments (644 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (352 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.

Prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased from the previous 12-month period

There were 21,489 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the 12 months to September 2025, a 9% **increase** from the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter, the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** 4.9% to 5,697 incidents.

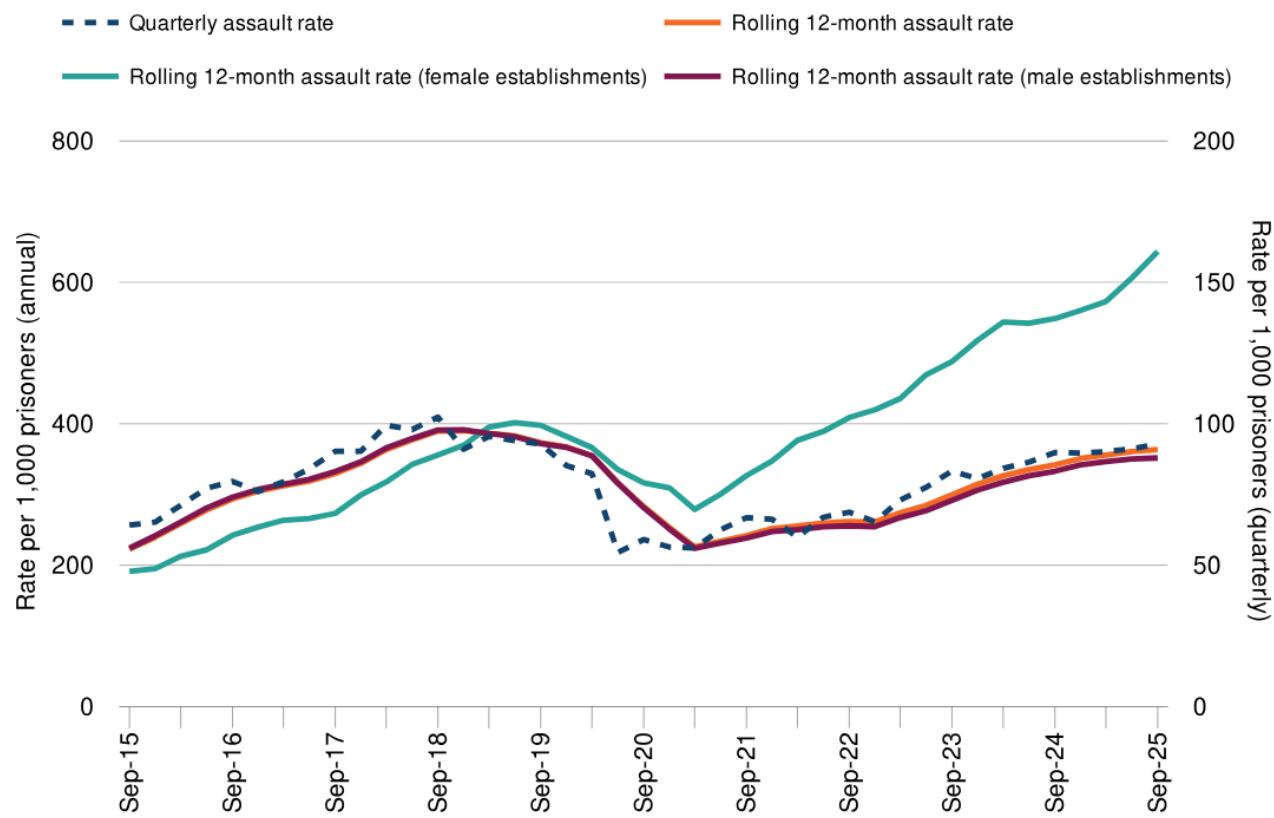
In the latest 12 months, the rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** 10% to 248 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. During this period, the rate **increased** 9% to 244 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in male establishments and **increased** 26% to 335 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in female establishments, reaching a new peak.

Assaults on staff decreased from the previous 12-month period

There were 10,326 assaults on staff in the 12 months to September 2025, a 1.6% **decrease** from the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff **remained steady** (down 0.1%) compared to the previous quarter, at 2,564 incidents.

In the latest 12 months, the rate of assaults on staff **decreased** by 0.9% to 119 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. During this period, the rate in male establishments **decreased** by 1.8% to 111 assaults per 1,000 prisoners but **increased** by 9% to 311 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in female establishments.

Figure 4: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total assaults by sex of establishment, 12 months ending September 2015 to 12 months ending September 2025, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to September 2025, assault incidents increased by 6% to 31,555 (a rate of 364 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) from 29,885 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in the latest 12 months was 6% higher than in the previous 12 months. The number of assault incidents is now higher than in the 12 months to September 2019 (prior to the pandemic), but still lower than the peak in the 12 months to September 2018¹⁵. The rate of assaults per 1,000 prisoners has remained lower than pre-pandemic levels of the 12 months to September 2019.

In the latest quarter there were 8,194 assaults, up 3.2% 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 5% to 29,290 in the 12 months to September 2025 (a rate of 352 per 1,000 prisoners), from 27,895 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in male establishments in the latest 12 months was 6% higher than in the previous 12 months.

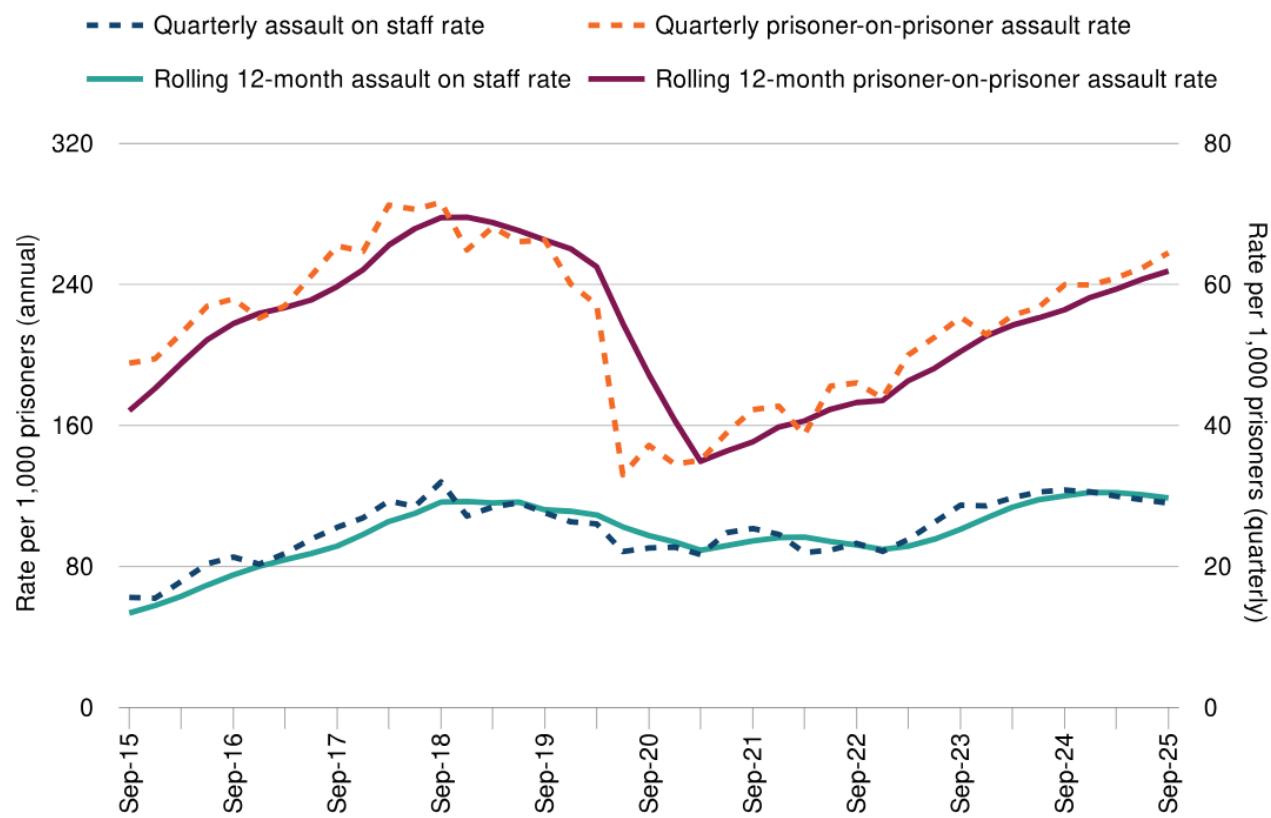
The number of incidents in female establishments increased by 14% to 2,265 incidents in the 12 months to September 2025 (a rate of 644 per 1,000 prisoners), from 1,990 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in female establishments in the latest 12 months was 17% higher than in the previous 12 months. The rate and number of incidents in the female estate are now at their highest level in the time series¹⁶.

¹⁵ From April 2018, assault figures exclude incidents occurring within the youth estate so figures from before this time are not fully comparable to those after the exclusion.

¹⁶ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

In the latest quarter, the number of assaults in male establishments increased by 2.5% to 7,554 incidents, compared to an increase of 13% in female establishments (to 640 assaults). During this period the rate of assaults increased 1.8% to 93 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, which comprises a 1.1% increase in male establishments (increasing to 89 assaults per 1,000 prisoners) and an 11% increase in female establishments (to 178 assaults per 1,000 prisoners). In the latest quarter, both the number and rate of assault incidents peaked in female establishments.

Figure 5: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, 12 months ending September 2015 to 12 months ending September 2025, with quarterly rates



There were 21,489 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults¹⁷ in the 12 months to September 2025 (a rate of 248 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 9% from the 19,726 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 5,697 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 4.9% increase from 5,432 in the previous quarter.

There were 10,326 assaults on staff¹⁸ in the 12 months to September 2025 (a rate of 119 per 1,000 prisoners), a decrease of 1.6% from the 10,493 assaults in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults on staff in the latest 12 months was 0.9% lower than in the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter, assaults on staff remained steady at 2,564 incidents (a slight decrease of 0.1%) from the previous quarter.

¹⁷ This figure includes any prisoner-on-prisoner assaults where there may also have been an assault on staff.

¹⁸ 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

The proportion of assaults on staff¹⁹ decreased to 33% of all incidents in the 12 months to September 2025 from 35% in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to September 2025, the proportion of assaults that were on staff remained higher in female establishments (48%) than in male establishments (32%).

In male establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 8% to 20,310 incidents (244 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2025, and the rate increased by 9%. Assaults on staff decreased by 2.4% to 9,233 incidents (111 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners), and the rate decreased by 1.8%.

In female establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 22% to a new peak of 1,179 incidents (335 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2025, and the rate increased by 26%, also to a new peak. Assaults on staff increased by 5% to 1,093 incidents (311 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2025, and the rate increased by 9%. Both the number of incidents and the rate of assaults on staff within female establishments have also reached a new peak.

¹⁹ 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

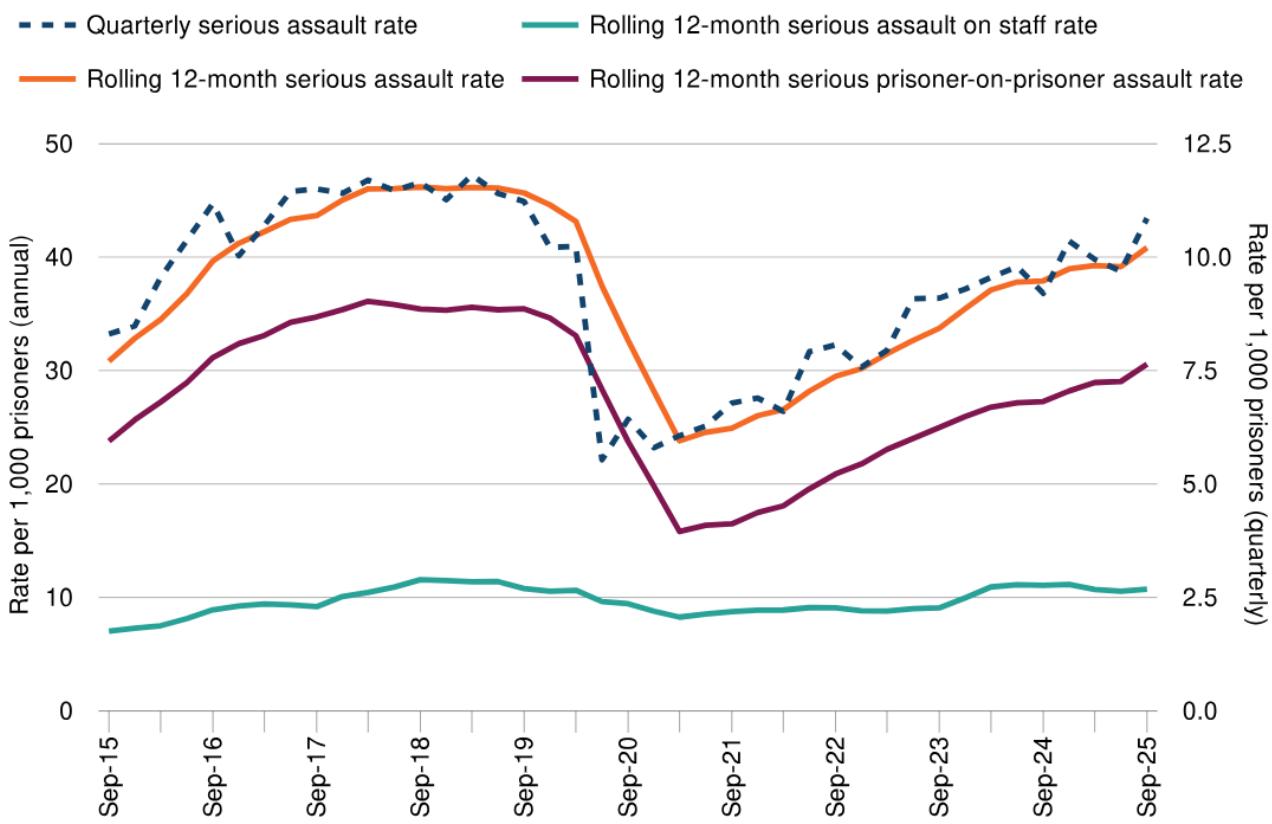
Of the 31,555 assault incidents, 3,544 (11%) were serious

In the 12 months to September 2025, there were 3,544 serious assault incidents, a 7% **increase** from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults **increased** by 8% over the period.

Serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** by 11% to 2,652, while serious assaults on staff **decreased** by 3.8% to 931 in the 12 months to September 2025.

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 2015 to 12 months ending September 2025



In the latest 12 months, 11% of assaults were serious assaults. This is unchanged from 11% in the previous 12 months to September 2024 and has remained broadly consistent throughout the time series. The proportion of all assaults that were serious remained higher in male establishments (12%) than in female establishments (7%).

In the 12 months to September 2025, there were 3,544 serious assaults (a rate of 41 per 1,000 prisoners), a 7% increase from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults in the latest 12 months was 8% higher than in the previous 12 months. The rate was higher in female

establishments (46 serious assaults per 1,000 prisoners) than male establishments (41 per 1,000 prisoners) for the second year in a row and has reached a new peak within female establishments. In the latest quarter there were 959 serious assault incidents, a 14% increase from 844 incidents in the previous quarter.

There were 2,652 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (a rate of 31 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2025, an 11% increase from 2,384 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the latest 12 months was 12% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to September 2025, the rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 15% in female establishments (to a new peak of 29 per 1,000 prisoners), while there was a 12% increase in male establishments (to 31 per 1,000 prisoners)²⁰. In the latest quarter, there were 731 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 16% increase from the previous quarter²¹.

There were 931 serious assaults on staff (a rate of 11 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to September 2025, a 3.8% decrease from 968 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults on staff was 3.1% lower than in the previous 12 months, with the rate decreasing 11% in female establishments (to 17 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) and decreasing 2.5% in male establishments (to 10 incidents per 1,000 prisoners). In the latest quarter, the number of serious assaults on staff increased to 231 incidents (a 1.8% increase from the previous quarter).

²⁰ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

²¹ Due to a low number of incidents for serious assaults, a small increase or decrease in incidents can lead to a large percentage change.

Further Information



Accredited official statistics status

National Statistics are [accredited official statistics](#)²² 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.

²² 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

Analysis Directorate

Ministry of Justice

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

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

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Next update: April 2026

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