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Safety in Custody Statistics, England and Wales: Deaths in Prison Custody to June 2026 Self-harm and Assaults to March 2026

Main Points

Number of deaths decreased from the previous 12-month period	↓	In the 12 months to June 2026, there were 359 deaths in prison custody, a decrease of 10% from 401 deaths in the previous 12 months. Of these, 71 deaths were self-inflicted, a decrease of 18% from the 87 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 March 2026, the rate of self-harm was 812 incidents per 1,000 prisoners (70,632 incidents), a 10% decrease from the 12 months to March 2025, with an 11% decrease in male establishments and a 4.5% decrease in female establishments. In the most recent quarter, the rate of self-harm decreased by 6%, with a 9% decrease in the rate in male establishments while remaining steady (a 0.4% decrease) in female establishments. The number of incidents decreased by 8% to 16,031.
The rate of individuals who self-harmed decreased from the previous 12-month period	↓	In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of individuals who self-harmed was 152 individuals per 1,000 prisoners (13,181 individuals), a decrease of 5% from a rate of 160 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per individual decreased from 5.6 to 5.4 in the 12 months to March 2026.
The rate of assaults decreased from the previous 12-month period	↓	In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of assaults was 354 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (30,820 assaults), down 0.5% from the 12 months to March 2025. In the most recent quarter, assaults were down 4.9% to 7,148 incidents and the assault rate was down 3.6% to 84 assaults per 1,000 prisoners.
The rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased from the previous 12-month period	↑	In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was 244 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (21,245 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults), up 2.9% from the 12 months to March 2025 (with a 2.1% increase in the rate in male establishments and a 19% increase in female establishments). In the latest quarter, the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was down 3.3% to 4,966 incidents.
The rate of assaults on staff decreased		In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of assaults on staff was 113 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (9,833 assaults on staff), down 7% from

from the previous 12-month period		the 12 months to March 2025 (with a 9% decrease in the rate in male establishments, but an 11% increase in female establishments). In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff decreased by 8% to 2,242 incidents.
The rate of serious assaults stayed the same		In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of serious assaults was 39 serious assaults per 1,000 prisoners (3,419 incidents), unchanged from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults was up 2.0% to 30 per 1,000 prisoners (2,571 incidents), while the rate of serious assaults on staff was down by 6% to 10 per 1,000 prisoners (871 incidents) in the 12 months to March 2026.
11% of all assaults were serious		

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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 June 2026, we have seen a decrease in the number of deaths (10% decrease). In the 12 months to March 2026, we have seen a 9% decrease in the number of self-harm incidents and the number of assault incidents remain steady (0.1% decrease) compared with the previous year. The number of incidents of assaults has decreased in male establishments but increased in 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 of assaults in female establishments has reached the highest level in the time series¹.

The number of deaths has decreased from 401 to 359 in the 12 months to June 2026, with the rate of deaths decreasing from 4.6 deaths per 1,000 prisoners to 4.1 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the same time period. There were 71 self-inflicted deaths^{2,3} in the latest year, a decrease from 87 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 June 2017. There were 8 homicides in the 12 months to June 2026, an increase from 7 homicides in the previous 12 months and a new peak in the time series. In the six years prior to the 12 months to June 2025, there were 0 to 3 total homicides per year.

The rate^{4,5} of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to March 2026 decreased by 10%. There was a decrease in the rate of self-harm incidents in both the male estate (down 11% to 610 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) and in the female estate (down 4.5% to 5,643 per 1,000 prisoners)⁶. The rate is over 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 18.1 to 16.6, while the rate of individuals self-harming increased (by 4.0%). For male establishments, the rate of individuals self-harming decreased from 152 to 144 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners, while the average number of incidents among those who self-harmed also decreased, by 5% (from 4.5 to 4.2).

The rate of assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners decreased by 0.5% to 354 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to March 2026, while the rate of serious assaults stayed the same at 39 incidents per 1,000 prisoners over the same period. In female establishments the rate of assault incidents increased by 15% to a peak of 660 per 1,000 prisoners, compared to a decrease of 1.5% in male establishments (to 342 per 1,000 prisoners). The rate of assaults was nearly twice as high in female establishments than in male establishments. The proportion of assaults in female establishments that were serious remains lower, at 7% compared with 11% in male establishments, despite the rate of serious assaults being higher in female establishments (down 0.9% to a rate of

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.

47 per 1,000 prisoners) than in male establishments (remaining steady [up 0.1%] at a rate of 39 per 1,000 prisoners).

In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of assaults on staff decreased 7% to 113 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, with a 9% decrease in male establishments (to 105 per 1,000 prisoners) but an 11% increase in female establishments (to a new peak of 311 per 1,000 prisoners). During the same period, the rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased 2.9% to 244 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, with a 2.1% increase in male establishments (to 240 per 1,000 prisoners) and a 19% increase in female establishments (to a new peak of 352 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 June 2026, and statistics on assaults and self-harm up to the end of March 2026.

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 March 2026 the prison population was around 600 (0.7%) lower than at the end of March 2025. The prison population as of 31st March 2026 remains around 9,500 or 12% higher than at the end of April 2021, with the male prison population increasing by 12% and the female prison population increasing by 10% 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 March 2026 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 June 2026

Number of deaths decreased from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to June 2026, there were 359 deaths in prison custody, a **decrease** of 10% from 401 deaths in the previous 12 months.

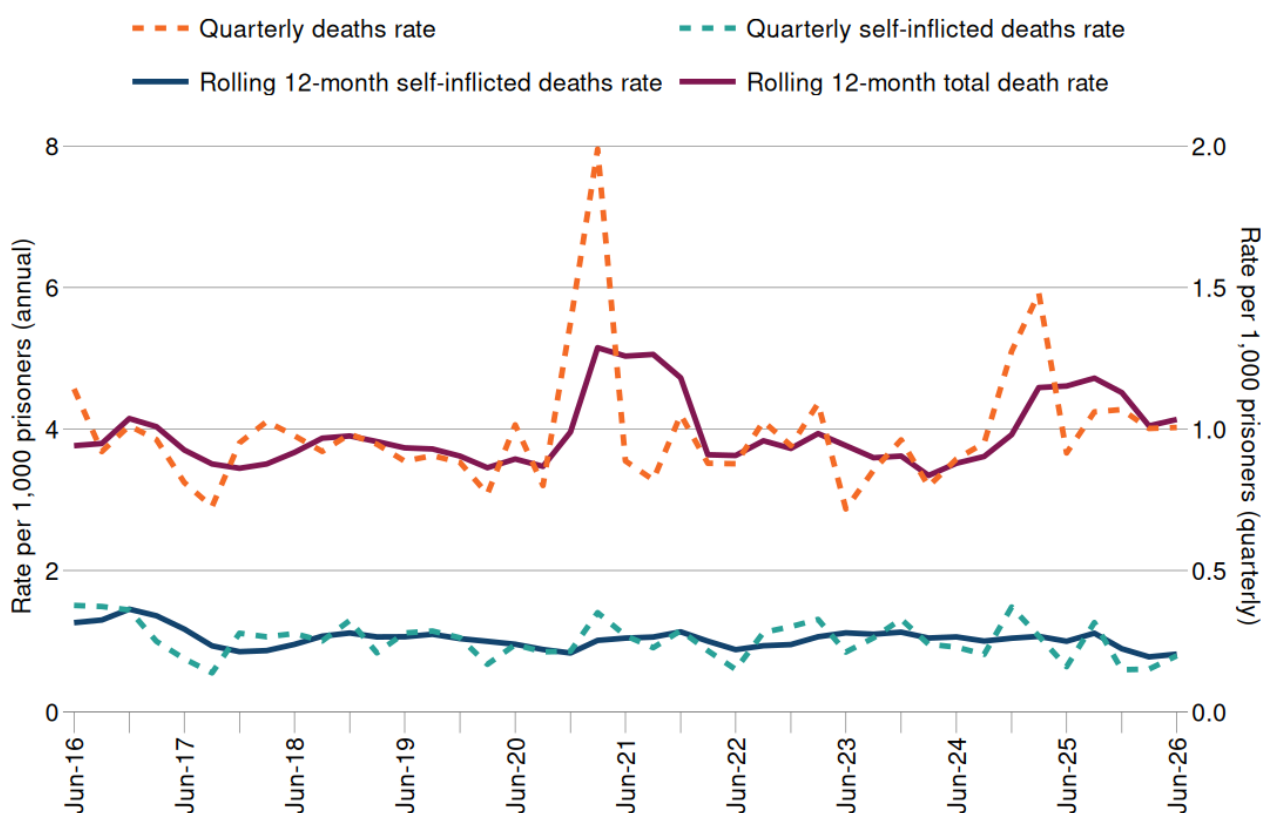
In the most recent quarter, there were 86 deaths, remaining **unchanged** from the previous quarter.

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

In the 12 months to June 2026, there were 71 self-inflicted deaths, an 18% **decrease** from 87 in the previous 12 months.

There were 17 self-inflicted deaths in the most recent quarter, an **increase** of 31% from 13 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 June 2016 to 12 months ending June 2026, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to June 2026, there were 359 deaths in prison custody (a rate of 4.1 per 1,000 prisoners), a 10% decrease from 401 deaths in the previous 12 months (a rate of 4.6 per 1,000 prisoners). Long-term trends and more detail are presented in the annual tables¹¹.

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

Over the same period, there were 208 deaths due to natural causes (a rate of 2.4 per 1,000 prisoners), a 13% decrease from 240 deaths by natural causes in the previous 12 months (a rate of 2.8 per 1,000 prisoners).

There were 71 self-inflicted deaths in the 12 months to June 2026 (a rate of 0.8 per 1,000 prisoners), a decrease of 18% from 87 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 June 2017.

There were 8 homicides in the 12 months to June 2026, an increase from 7 homicides in the previous 12 months and a new peak in the time series. In the six years prior to the 12 months to June 2025, there were between 0 and 3 total homicides per year.

There were 72 deaths recorded as 'Other' in the 12 months to June 2026, an increase of 7% from 67 in the previous 12 months. Of those 72 deaths, 33 were 'Other/Non-natural', a decrease of 43% over the same period. The other 39 deaths 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 a 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 86 deaths, remaining unchanged from the previous quarter.

There were 17 self-inflicted deaths in the latest quarter, an increase of 31% from 13 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 March 2026

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

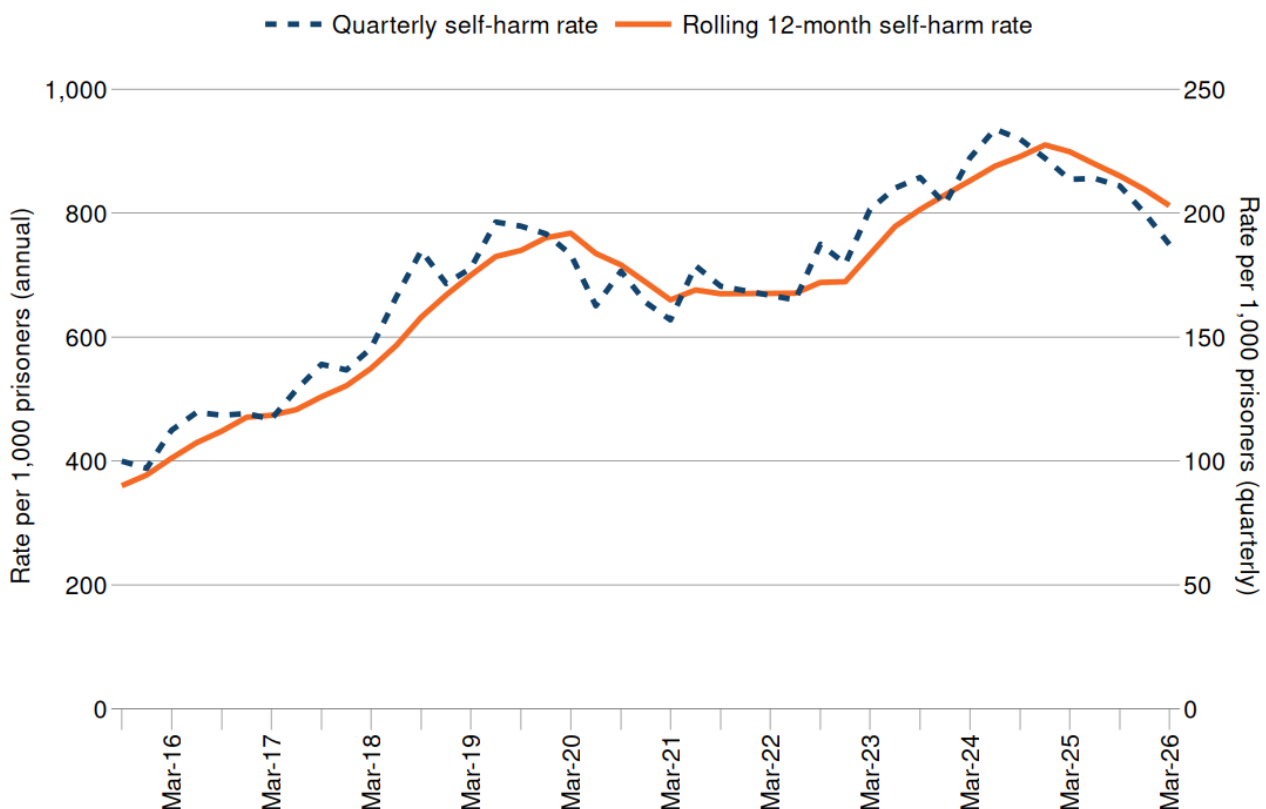
There were 70,632 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to March 2026, a 9% **decrease** from the previous 12 months, with a 10% **decrease** in male establishments and a 6% **decrease** in female establishments. Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **decreased** by 11% in male establishments and **decreased** by 4.5% in female establishments.

In the most recent quarter, there were 16,031 self-harm incidents, an 8% **decrease** compared to the previous quarter (decreasing 10% in male establishments and decreasing 0.8% in female establishments). Over the same period the rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners **decreased** 9% in male establishments and **remained steady** (a 0.4% decrease) in female establishments.

The number of individuals who self-harmed decreased in the latest year

There were 13,181 individuals who self-harmed in the 12 months to March 2026, a 4.7% **decrease** compared to 13,828 in the previous 12 months. The number of self-harm incidents per self-harming individual **decreased** 4.9% from 5.6 to 5.4 in the 12 months to March 2026.

Figure 2: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners, 12 months ending March 2016 to 12 months ending March 2026, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to March 2026, there were 70,632 reported incidents of self-harm (a rate of 812 per 1,000 prisoners). The number of incidents of self-harm decreased 9% from 77,904 in the previous 12 months. The rate of incidents in the latest 12 months decreased 10% from the previous 12 months.

On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the 3 months to March 2026 decreased by 8% from the previous quarter, from 17,338 to 16,031 incidents. The rate of incidents of self-harm in the three months to March 2026 decreased by 6% from the previous quarter to 187 incidents per 1,000 prisoners.

The number of individuals who self-harmed decreased by 4.7% to 13,181 in the latest 12 months, from 13,828 in the previous 12 months. The rate, or proportion, of prisoners self-harming also decreased (by 5%) to 152 self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners in the latest 12 months. The number of incidents per self-harming individual in the latest 12 months was 5.4, a decrease of 4.9% from 5.6 in the previous year. A small number of individuals who repeatedly self-harm have a disproportionate impact on this figure: just over a half (53%) of prisoners who self-harmed in 2025 did so more than once.

The number of self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance¹³ decreased by 10% (to 3,013 incidents) in the 12 months to March 2026 and decreased by 7% in the latest quarter (to 703 incidents). The proportion of incidents that required hospital attendance in the 12 months to March 2026 remained unchanged at 4.3%.

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 March 2026, there were 50,940 incidents in the male estate compared with 19,692 in the female estate, representing a 10% 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 (5,643 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) is over nine times higher than in the male estate (610 incidents per 1,000 prisoners).

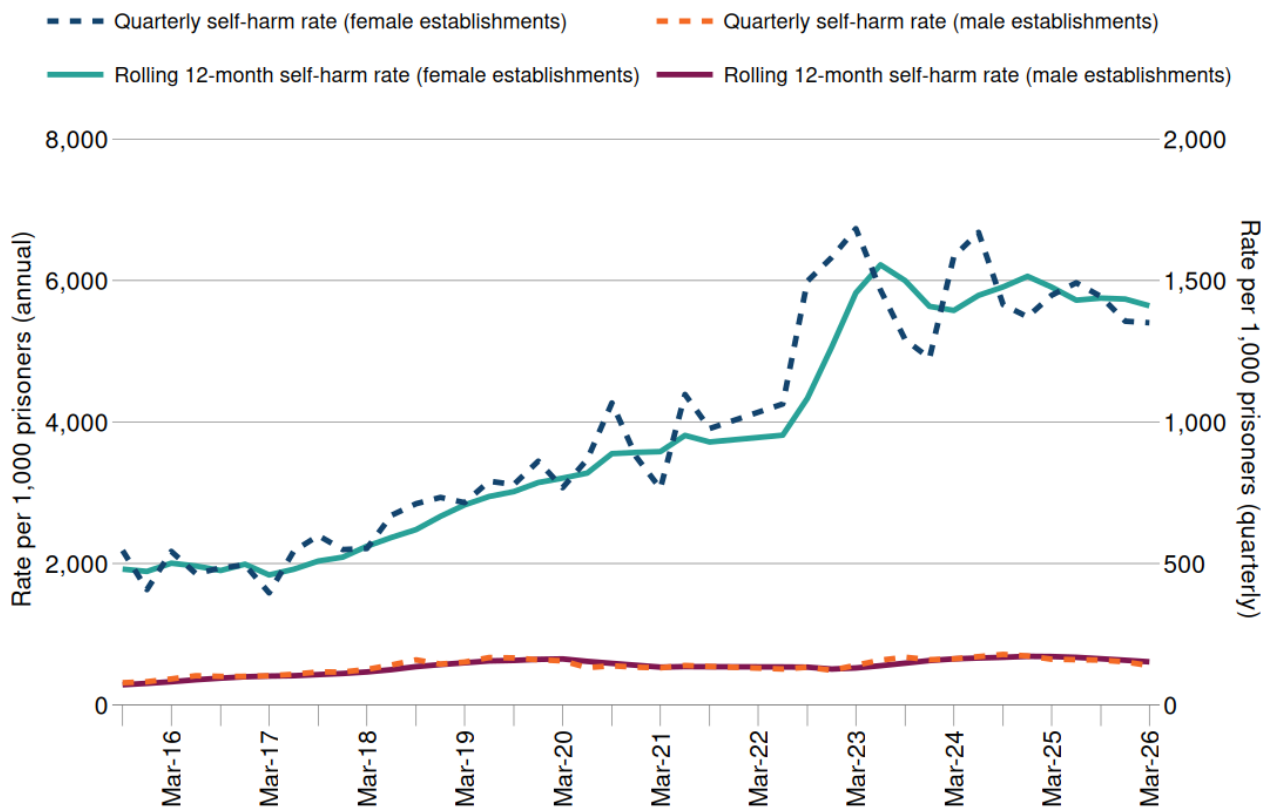
On a quarterly basis, the number of incidents in the three months to March 2026 decreased by 10% in male establishments and decreased by 0.8% in female establishments compared with the previous three months. The rate decreased by 9% in male establishments and remained steady (decreased by 0.4%) in female 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 March 2026 there was 16.6 incidents of self-harm per self-harming female, a decrease from 18.1 in the previous 12 months, compared with 4.2 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 340 individuals per 1,000 prisoners, an increase of 4.0% from 327 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 larger proportionate decrease in incidents per individual. The decrease in the rate of self-harm in the male estate was driven by both a smaller proportion of individuals self-harming and a decrease in the number of self-harm incidents per individual (with the proportion of males self-harming having decreased from 152 to 144 individuals per 1,000 prisoners).

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

Figure 3: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners by sex of establishment, 12 months ending March 2016 to 12 months ending March 2026



Self-harm incidents requiring hospital attendance decreased in male establishments by 9%, to 2,724 in the 12 months to March 2026, and the proportion of incidents requiring hospital attendance remained unchanged at 5.3%. In the female estate 289 self-harm incidents required hospital attendance, a 19% decrease from 355 incidents in the previous year, and the proportion of incidents in the female estate requiring hospital attendance decreased from 1.7% in the previous 12 months to 1.5% 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 March 2026

Assaults and serious assaults have stayed steady from the previous 12-month period

In the 12 months to March 2026, there were 30,820 assault incidents, **remaining steady** (0.1% decrease) from the previous 12 months. Of these, 3,419 were serious assaults, **remaining steady** (0.4% increase). The rate of assaults **decreased** by 0.5% to 354 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, and the rate of serious assaults **remained unchanged** at 39 per 1,000 prisoners in the latest 12 months.

Assaults **decreased** by 4.9% in the latest quarter to 7,148 incidents and the number of serious assaults **decreased** by 8% to 770 incidents.

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

The rate of assaults in male establishments **decreased** by 1.5% from the previous 12 months, while the rate in female establishments **increased** by 15%. Assault rates for the 12 months to March 2026 were nearly twice as high in female establishments (660 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.

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

There were 21,245 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the 12 months to March 2026, a 3.3% **increase** from the previous 12 months. The rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** 2.9% to 244 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. During this period, the rate **increased** 2.1% to 240 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in male establishments and **increased** 19% to 352 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in female establishments, reaching a new peak.

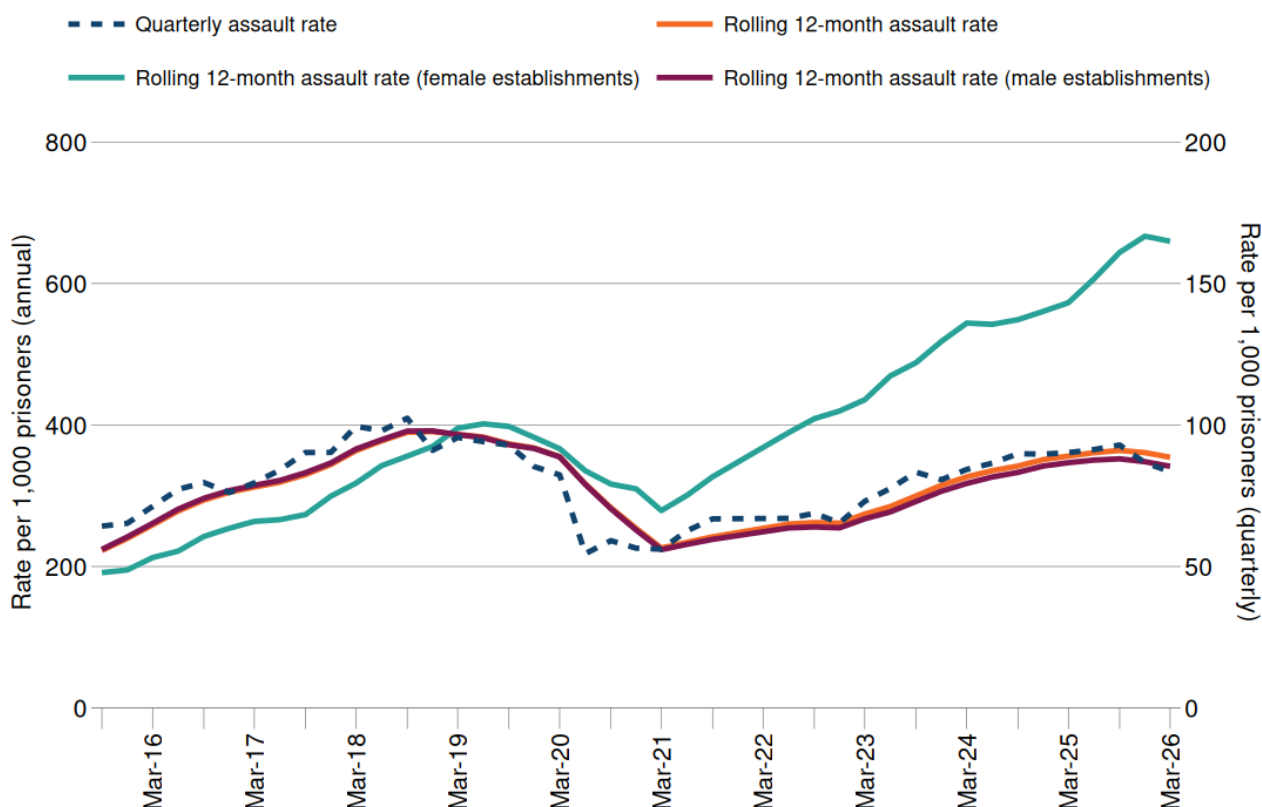
In the latest quarter, the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **decreased** 3.3% to 4,966 incidents.

Assaults on staff decreased from the previous 12-month period

There were 9,833 assaults on staff in the 12 months to March 2026, a 7% **decrease** from the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults on staff also **decreased** by 7% to 113 incidents per 1,000 prisoners. During this period, the rate in male establishments **decreased** by 9% to 105 assaults per 1,000 prisoners but **increased** by 11% to a new peak of 311 assaults per 1,000 prisoners in female establishments.

In the latest quarter the number of assaults on staff **decreased** 8% to 2,242 compared to the previous quarter.

Figure 4: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of total assaults by sex of establishment, 12 months ending March 2016 to 12 months ending March 2026, with quarterly rates



In the 12 months to March 2026, assault incidents remained steady (a 0.1% decrease) at 30,820 (a rate of 354 incidents per 1,000 prisoners), from 30,849 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in the latest 12 months was lower, by 0.5%, than in the previous 12 months.

The number of assault incidents is higher than in the year to March 2020, immediately pre-pandemic, but still lower than the peak prior to the pandemic in the 12 months to March 2019¹⁴. The rate of assaults per 1,000 prisoners has also remained lower (a 9% decrease) than the pre-pandemic peak of the 12 months to March 2019, and was similar (0.3% lower) to the rate in the year to March 2020.

In the latest quarter there were 7,148 assaults, down 4.9% 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 decreased by 1.0% to 28,518 in the 12 months to March 2026 (a rate of 342 per 1,000 prisoners), from 28,808 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in male establishments in the latest 12 months was 1.5% lower than in the previous 12 months.

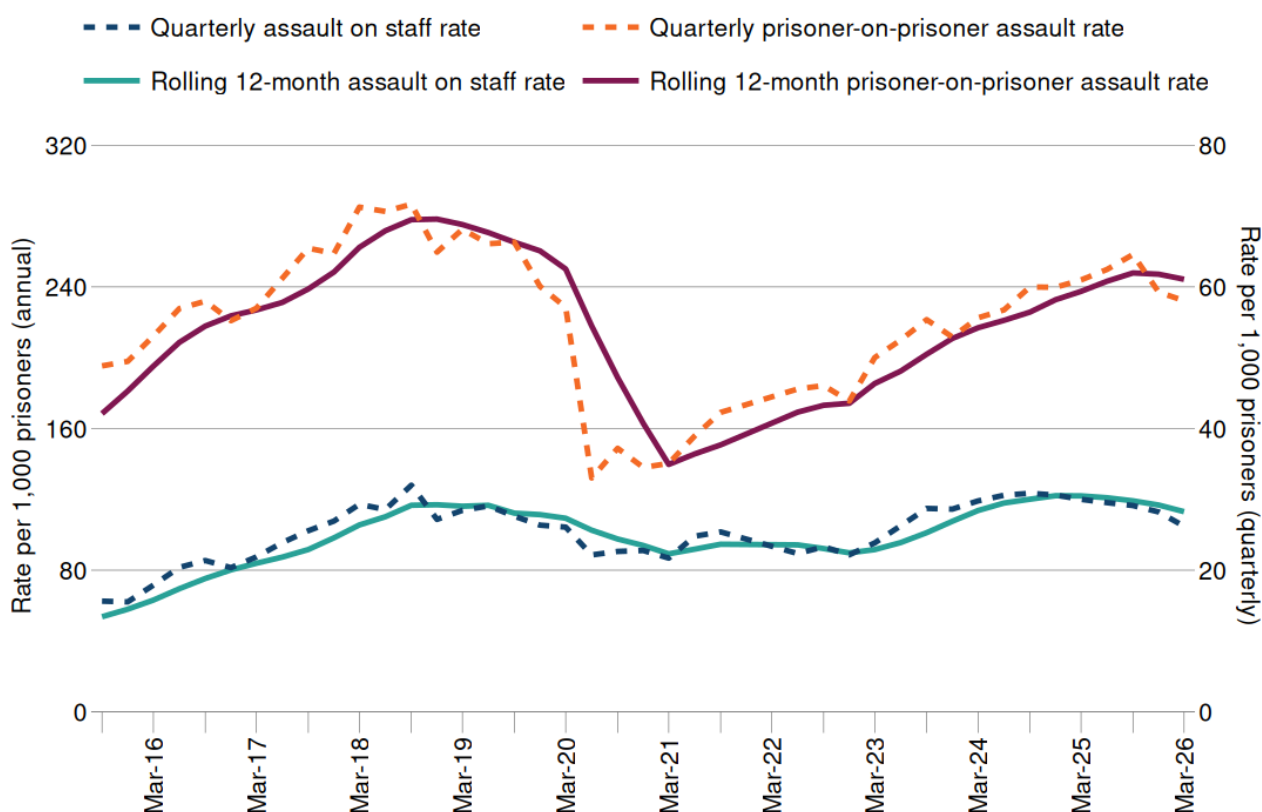
The number of incidents in female establishments increased by 13% to 2,302 incidents in the 12 months to March 2026 (a rate of 660 per 1,000 prisoners), from 2,041 in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults in female establishments in the latest 12 months was 15% higher than in the

¹⁴ 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.

previous 12 months. The rate and number of incidents in the female estate are now at their highest level in the time series¹⁵.

In the latest quarter, the number of assaults in male establishments decreased by 3.6% to 6,659 incidents, compared to a decrease of 19% in female establishments (to 489 assaults). During this period the rate of assaults decreased 3.6% to 84 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, which comprises a 2.3% decrease in male establishments (to 81 assaults per 1,000 prisoners) and a 19% decrease in female establishments (to 143 assaults per 1,000 prisoners).

Figure 5: Quarterly 12-month rolling rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, 12 months ending March 2016 to 12 months ending March 2026, with quarterly rates



There were 21,245 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults¹⁶ in the 12 months to March 2026 (a rate of 244 per 1,000 prisoners), an increase of 3.3% from the 20,574 assaults in the previous 12 months. The rate of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the latest 12 months was 2.9% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the latest quarter, there were 4,966 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 3.3% decrease from 5,138 in the previous quarter.

There were 9,833 assaults on staff¹⁷ in the 12 months to March 2026 (a rate of 113 per 1,000 prisoners), a decrease of 7% from the 10,568 assaults in the previous 12 months. The rate of assaults on staff in the latest 12 months was also 7% lower than in the previous 12 months. In the

¹⁵ The time series for assault incidents starts in 2000, and self-harm incidents starts in 2004.

¹⁶ This figure includes any prisoner-on-prisoner assaults where there may also have been an assault on staff.

¹⁷ 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

latest quarter, there were 2,242 assault on staff incidents, a 8% decrease from 2,447 in the previous quarter.

The proportion of total assaults that were assaults on staff¹⁸ decreased to 32% in the 12 months to March 2026, from 34% in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to March 2026, the proportion of assaults that were on staff remained higher in female establishments (47%) than in male establishments (31%).

In male establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 2.6% to 20,017 incidents (240 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners) in the 12 months to March 2026, and the rate increased by 2.1%. Assaults on staff decreased by 9% to 8,748 incidents (105 incidents per 1,000 male prisoners), and the rate also decreased by 9%.

In female establishments, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 16% to 1,228 incidents (352 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to March 2026, and the rate increased by 19%. Assaults on staff increased by 9% to 1,085 incidents (311 incidents per 1,000 female prisoners) in the 12 months to March 2026, and the rate increased by 11%. For both prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and assaults on staff, both the number of incidents and the rate reached a new peak within female establishments in the latest 12 months.

¹⁸ 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

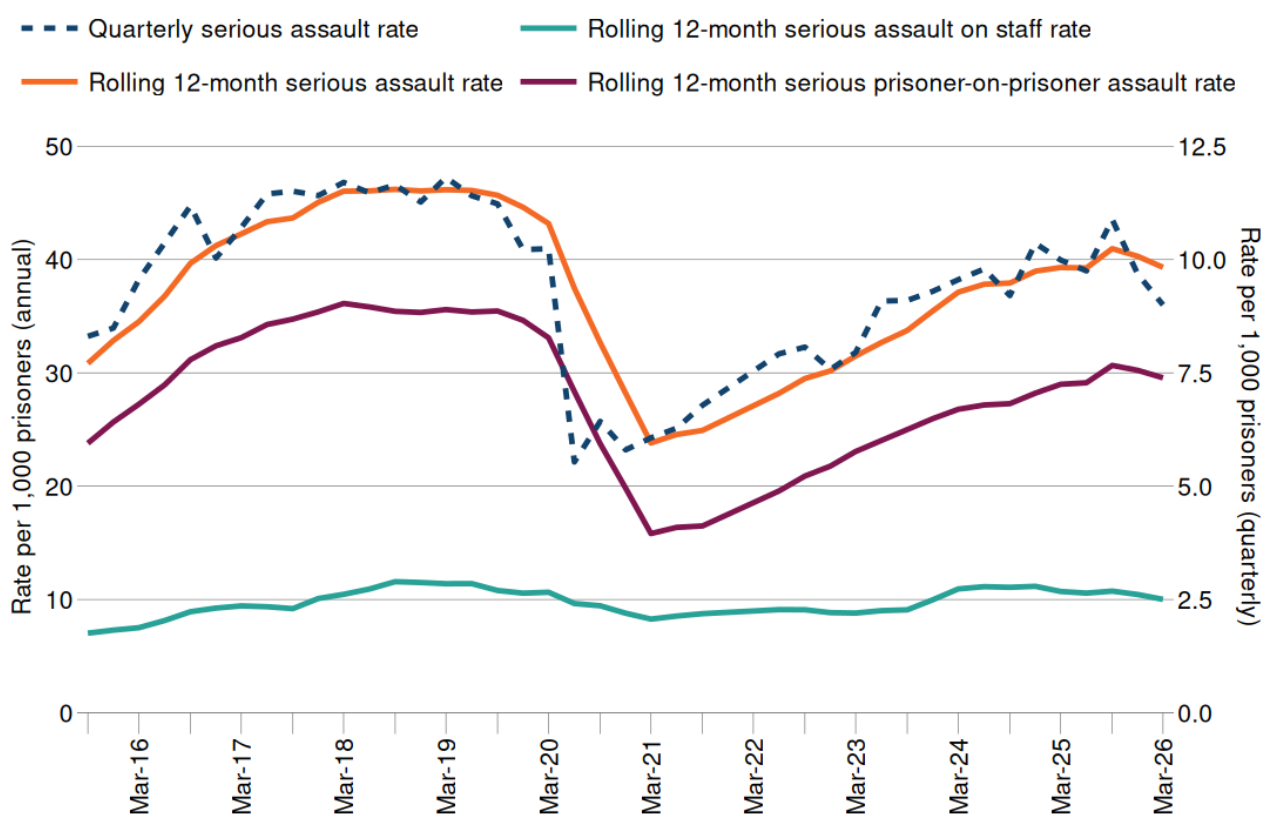
Of the 30,820 assault incidents, 3,419 (11%) were serious

In the 12 months to March 2026, there were 3,419 serious assault incidents, **remaining steady** (a 0.4% increase) from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults **remained unchanged** (39 per 1,000 prisoners) over the period.

Serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults **increased** by 2.3% to 2,571, while serious assaults on staff **decreased** by 6% to 871 in the 12 months to March 2026.

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 March 2016 to 12 months ending March 2026



In the latest 12 months, 11% of assaults were serious assaults. This is unchanged from 11% in the previous 12 months to March 2025 and has remained broadly consistent since 2019. The proportion of all assaults that were serious remained higher in male establishments (11%) than in female establishments (7%).

In the 12 months to March 2026, there were 3,419 serious assaults (a rate of 39 per 1,000 prisoners), remaining steady (a 0.4% increase) from the previous 12 months. The rate of serious

assaults in the latest 12 months was unchanged from in the previous 12 months. The rate was higher in female establishments (47 serious assaults per 1,000 prisoners) than male establishments (39 per 1,000 prisoners). In the latest quarter there were 770 serious assault incidents, an 8% decrease from 839 incidents in the previous quarter.

There were 2,571 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (a rate of 30 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to March 2026, a 2.3% increase from 2,512 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in the latest 12 months was 2.0% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the 12 months to March 2026, the rate of serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults increased by 6% in female establishments (to a new peak of 31 per 1,000 prisoners), while there was a 1.8% increase in male establishments (to 29 per 1,000 prisoners)¹⁹. In the latest quarter, there were 588 serious prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, a 5% decrease from the previous quarter²⁰.

There were 871 serious assaults on staff (a rate of 10 per 1,000 prisoners) in the 12 months to March 2026, a 6% decrease from 928 in the previous 12 months. The rate of serious assaults on staff was also 6% lower than in the previous 12 months, with the rate decreasing 15% in female establishments (to 15 incidents per 1,000 prisoners) and decreasing 6% in male establishments (to 10 incidents per 1,000 prisoners). In the latest quarter, the number of serious assaults on staff decreased to 188 incidents (a 16% decrease from the previous quarter).

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

²⁰ 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](#)²¹ 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.

²¹ 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

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly, using the details above, with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Next update: October 2026

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

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