Ministry of Justice

Guide to HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report

2025-26

Ministry of Justice

Contents

Introduction 3

1. Prison Population 9

2. Transgender Prisoners 10

3. Mother and Baby Units and Pregnant Prisoners 11

4. Incentives 12

5. Accredited Programmes 13

6. Prisoner Education 17

Links to equalities data sources formerly included in this report ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Glossary 28

Introduction

This document provides further detail on the statistics presented in the report HMPPS Annual Offender Equalities Report 2025-26.

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ); with the goal of helping prison and probation services work together to manage offenders through their sentences.

Overview of HMPPS Annual Offender Equalities Report

This section describes the timing and frequency of the publication, the revisions policy relating to the statistics published, and provides information relating to data coverage, sources, and suppression.

Timeframe and Publishing Frequency of Data

This publication is produced on an annual basis and, alongside historical data, provides information relating to financial year 2025-26, the latest financial year period for which data are available. The next publication is provisionally scheduled for release in November 2027.

The purpose and content of the HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report is currently being reviewed. Please get in touch if you have views on the continuation of the HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report in its current form, the content, or the possible placement of related data across MoJ publications. Contact details are available on the last page of the publication.

Revisions Policy

In accordance with Principle 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the Ministry of Justice is required to publish transparent guidance on its policy for revisions. A copy of this statement can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ministry-of-justice-statistics-policy-and-procedures

The reasons for statistics needing to be revised fall into three main categories. Each of these and their specific relevance to the HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report are addressed:

1. Changes in Source of Administrative Systems or Methodology

The data within this publication come from a variety of administrative systems. This technical document will present where there have been revisions to data accountable to switches in methodology or administrative systems. In addition, statistics affected within the publication will be appropriately footnoted.

2. Receipt of Subsequent Information

The nature of any administrative system is, there may be time lags with regards to when data is recorded. This means that any revisions or additions might not be captured in time to be included in the subsequent publication.

3. Errors in Statistical Systems and Processes

Occasionally errors can occur in statistical processes; procedures are constantly reviewed to minimise this risk. Should a significant error be found, the publication on the website will be updated and errata slip published documenting the revision.

About the Data

Data published in this report, and sourced from other statistical publications, were drawn from both administrative IT systems and manual data collection returns. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the level of detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale reporting system.

There were several areas where data is unavailable or otherwise cannot be included for some protected characteristics. Pregnant prisoners and Transgender prisoners are unique, small cohorts covered within separate chapters; the small volumes mean that it is not possible to provide breakdowns within these chapters across some protected characteristics (namely sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership) in order to maintain confidentiality. Likewise, it is also not possible to include breakdowns by Pregnancy and maternity, or Gender Reassignment across other chapters. Disability data for offenders also continues to be limited. Efforts are being made to improve the coverage of these data.

It is important to note that the data presented highlight areas where there were differences in the results between groups and where practitioners and others might wish to undertake more in-depth analysis to understand further the reasons for such differences. This should not be equated with discrimination, as there are many reasons why apparent disparities might exist.

Data Sources and data quality

Data on offenders have been drawn from a range of different sources. Data on the prison population[1] are published by the Ministry of Justice. These data are drawn from administrative systems and the data quality is generally assessed to be good, except for data on prisoner sexual orientation which is assumed to be low quality. Sexual orientation is self-reported by prisoners, and likely to be under-reported as well as prone to bias towards heterosexuality. Data for other topic areas are sourced from the HMPPS Performance Hub,

[1] Prison population data can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

Case Management systems; Mother and baby unit and pregnant prisoner data collections, and in the case of transgender statistics, a specialised annual data collection administered by individual prison establishments.

Education data have been drawn from an administrative IT systems called CURIOUS 1 (covering April 2025 to March 2026) and CURIOUS 2 (covering October 2025 to March 2026). Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the level of detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system. Accredited programmes data is collected monthly from each prison establishment and collated centrally on the HMPPS Performance Hub[2][3]

Coverage

Prison Population and Incentives

Coverage for prison population and incentives statistics includes all prisoners in public and private young offender institutions (YOIs) and adult establishments across England and Wales.

Transgender prisoners

Coverage for the transgender prison population is adult prisoners in public and private establishments across England and Wales, counted as a snapshot collection on 31st March each year. Any individual counted within the collection must meet specific definitional criteria, as outlined below in chapter 2 notes.

Mother and baby units (MBUs) and pregnant prisoners

Coverage for mother and baby unit statistics includes all applications and outcomes (approved/refused) made within the time period April 2025 to March 2026 across the Women's prison estate.[4] The women's prison estate houses women aged 18 years and above.

There are currently six MBUs in operation across the women's prison estate at time of publication, which provide an overall total capacity of 64 places for mothers. However, there are a total of 70 places for babies, to allow for twins and multiple births.

Pregnant prisoner statistics include all self-declared pregnant adult prisoners in the women's prison estate in England and Wales within the time period April 2025 to March 2026.

Accredited Programmes

For this publication, accredited programmes are interventions accredited by the HMPPS Rehabilitation Board following advice and recommendations from the Correctional Services Advice and Accreditation Panel (CSAAP). The statistics cover adult prisoners in public and

[2] The HMPPS Performance Hub is an internal management information system.
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/ministry-of-justice-statistics-policy-and-procedures
[4] There are no women's prisons in Wales at the time of publication.

private establishments across England and Wales, but may exclude CSAAP-accredited programmes commissioned by organisations other than HMPPS, such as the NHS. Some legacy programme types are for male prisoners only, particularly domestic violence, sexual offending treatment, general offending and violence programmes. Further information is provided in section 5, Accredited Programmes.

Education Statistics

The CURIOUS 1 and 2 system covers public, private, Welsh and youth establishments. However, this publication includes only CURIOUS 1 and 2 data for those aged 18 and above in adult prisons in England. This is because:

- Education in Wales is a devolved matter.
- The youth estate is covered by separate education contracts / services.

CURIOUS 1 covers education taken by prisoners in the period April 2025 to March 2026. CURIOUS 2 covers education taken by prisoners in the period October 2025 to March 2026.

Quality

Data quality is assessed to be good where published. Where data does not meet quality standards the data are excluded from the release.

Population and Incentives

Prison population and prisoner incentives statistics are reported as at a specified point in time (31 March[5]). This reflects current reporting practice in HMPPS statistical publications for incentives and is the basis on which data for incentives status are collected. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

Transgender prisoners

Details of the number of transgender prisoners were provided by public and private prisons in England and Wales, as at 31 March each year. Data collections occurred in March and April 2016, March and April 2017, March - May 2018, March and April 2019, April and May 2021, March and April 2022, March and April 2023, March and April 2024, March and April 2025 and March and April 2026. This collection did not take place in 2020 due to operational changes across all prisons in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The figures are a snapshot estimate of the number of transgender prisoners and are likely to underestimate the true number. There might be some transgender prisoners who have not

[5] Apart from for years 2005 – 2011 where this data was not available for all protected characteristics being analysed, and data was used as at 30 June.

declared that they are transgender or had a local transgender case board, and some who have a Gender Recognition Certificate.

MBU and pregnant prisoners

MBU data are collected from prison establishments with MBU units by means of a monthly return submitted via HMPPS Performance Hub; a secure web-based data collection and management information reporting system. Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system.

Pregnancy and births data are collected in a separate weekly data collection from women's establishments, with further information included in Chapter 3 of this guide. Figures are likely to underestimate the true number of pregnant prisoners as only self-declared pregnancies are included.

Accredited Programmes

The accuracy of the data is assessed to be good where published, as it is based on direct administrative records maintained by prison staff and programme administrators. However, occasional manual data entry errors or misreporting by prisons might affect the precision of some variables, particularly those related to programme completion. Error-checking processes, including cross-validation with prisoners' records and regular audits, help mitigate these risks. The data are collected on a rolling monthly basis, and updates can be made to existing records where warranted. Standardised reporting templates are used across all establishments.

Further information on the measures included in this report and metadata details can be found in the accredited programmes section of this guide.

Education Statistics

All public prisons deliver PEF-commissioned or PES-commissioned education and are therefore required to record this data on CURIOUS 1 and 2 as a mandatory requirement.

For private prisons:

• Four private prisons deliver education commissioned under PEF, and therefore reporting on CURIOUS is mandatory.

• Mandatory reporting on CURIOUS for the remaining private prisons with non-PEF contracts was gradually phased in from 2021, with this data being assured from mid 2024, meaning that volumes may be underestimated prior to this point.

Due to the data quality of non-PEF private prisons only being assured since mid-2024, no commentary has been provided in the report for private prison education.

Data presented in the publication cover those prisoners who self-select into education. Self selection into education is problematic because no information is gathered on those who do not participate. Data on both participants and non-participants would be required to provide more insight into both who receives education and why prisoners participate in education.

Information is only entered on CURIOUS once a prisoner has gone through an education induction or enrolled on a course. CURIOUS does not capture information on all prisoners.

Use of Percentages

Percentages are provided to enable comparisons for each of the protected characteristics and are used to represent the proportion (e.g. prisoners of Black/Black British, or Asian/ Asian British ethnic background) within a particular population, and to represent the proportion of a specific outcome (e.g. those at basic level incentives) for a group (e.g. female prisoners).

When calculating percentages, any unreported/ unknown data in a protected characteristic group (e.g. ethnicity, religious beliefs) have been excluded from the analysis to avoid anomalies.

Unknown incentives status have also been removed from percentages in different status group to remove anomalies.

Suppression of data

To reduce the risk of individuals being identified in the data, some low values have not been disclosed, where data is deemed sensitive. These figures are shown as a '~' in the data tables. Low numbers are suppressed to prevent disclosure, and identification of individuals, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The level of suppression required is determined according to the Government Statistical Service (GSS) methodology guidance[6]. Values are either suppressed at a level of 2 and below, or 5 and below as per disclosure guidance; this is noted on each set of tables as appropriate.

Use of Technical Terms and Abbreviations

Where terms are abbreviated as a useful means to avoid repetition, the full term is used in the first instance, and thereafter abbreviations are used.

Technical terms have been avoided as much as possible. Where technical terms are included, explanations or links to further information have been included as footnotes. This guide contains a glossary to explain key terms relating to protected characteristics.

[6] https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/gssgsr-disclosure-control-guidance-for-tables-produced-from-administrative-sources/

1. Prison Population

Prison establishments record details for individual inmates on the prison IT system (Prison-NOMIS). The information recorded includes details such as date of birth, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, custody type, offence, reception and release dates and, for sentenced prisoners, sentence length. Prison population data is routinely published as part of the MOJ and HMPPS Offender Management Statistics Quarterly, with further technical details available in the 'Guide to offender management statistics' published with each edition. The most recent version can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

A breakdown of the prison population by sexual orientation is not included in the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly but is included within the HMPPS Offender Equalities Annual Report.

2. Transgender Prisoners

Transgender prisoners are defined for the purposes of this report as those individuals known within prison to be currently living in, or are presenting in, a gender different to their biological sex and who have had a local case board (as defined by 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender' policy framework[7]).

Policy Framework

The current policy framework was published in 2019[8]. This was revised in February 2023, January 2024 and then most recently in November 2024. These revisions ensure that transgender women, including those with Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs), who retain their birth anatomy and/or have committed violent or sexual offences cannot be held in the general women's estate, unless an exemption is granted by a Minister.

Prisoners with Gender Recognition Certificates

Those completing the data returns were asked to exclude prisoners with GRCs from their data. This is because the Gender Recognition Act 2004 makes it a criminal offence to disclose that someone holds a GRC unless a relevant exemption within the Act applies. A count of the number of prisoners with a GRC was collected for the first time in 2021. The Gender Recognition Act 2004 makes it an offence to disclose that someone has a GRC, so it was necessary to ensure that prisoners' anonymity was maintained. Therefore, no information on the prisoners' other personal characteristics was collected, only the total number of these prisoners. Statistics on the number of all applications to the Gender Recognition Panel are published in Tribunal Statistics Quarterly at www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics.

[7] This replaced PSI 17/2016 – The Care and Management of Transgender Offenders in August 2019.

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-care-and-management-of-individuals-who-are-transgender

3. Mother and Baby Units and Pregnant Prisoners

Mother and Baby Units

Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) are discrete specialist accommodation units for women with children up to age of 18 months, or up to the age of two above where exceptional criteria is met, managed and supported by both operational prison staff and qualified nursery professionals. Founded on the principles of various primary legislation, they promote and facilitate the development and maintenance of relationships between women and their children during a pivotal attachment and development period, if it is in the best interests of the child. Women who are pregnant or who have children up to and around the age of 18 months can apply for a place in an MBU.

MBU applications are considered by a multi-disciplinary Admissions Board, consisting of an Independent Chair, MBU Manager, Community/Prison Offender Manager, and having input from the Local Authority Children's Services. The Board makes a recommendation to the Governor/ Director of a prison with an MBU on whether a child and mother should be admitted to such a unit, with the best interests of the child being the primary consideration, alongside the safety and welfare of other mothers and babies on the unit. An applicant has the right to appeal a decision not to allocate a place on an MBU, with appeals determined by the HMPPS Women's Group.

Pregnant Prisoners

Pregnancy data is captured and collated locally by establishments across the female estate who submit weekly returns to the HMPPS Women's Group. The data collection includes the number of self-declared pregnant women in custody and the number of births in hospital, in transit, and in prison.

Pregnancy and births data include women who have self-declared as pregnant and consent to sharing this information, having been made aware why their personal data is being monitored and how it will be used. It does not represent women who have reserved their right not to disclose this personal data to HMPPS, or who might have disclosed this data to healthcare providers in confidence.

4. Incentives

An incentives scheme (formerly known as Incentives and Earned Privileges - IEP) was introduced in 1995 with the expectation that prisoners would earn additional privileges through demonstrating responsible behaviour and participation in work or other constructive activity. The scheme allows prisoners to earn privileges through good behaviour and engagement in the regime and rehabilitation. Privileges can also be lost through poor behaviour.

The IEP scheme was replaced by the Incentives Policy Framework, which went fully live in January 2020. The current policy has a greater focus on incentivising positive behaviour, providing consistency in key areas. It gives governors greater flexibility to tailor incentives to the local needs and challenges in their prison and to create incentive levels above Enhanced.

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

Prisoners typically start on Standard level, and positive behaviour can be rewarded with progression through incentive levels but can also be lost by moving down an incentive level(s) for poor behaviour with the associated increase or reduction in privileges.

Incentives figures are taken as a snapshot at a moment in time, however Incentives status is very dynamic, changing rapidly to reflect behaviour of prisoners. As such, a snapshot at a given moment of time might not reflect the overall pattern across the year. Caution should be used in consideration of the splits of Incentives by protected characteristic, as while these accurately represent Incentives status on 31 March of any given year, this might not give a typical reflection of the Incentives levels of each protected characteristic across the entire financial year.

The Incentives population in these tables will not match those in the HMPPS Annual Digest tables as data sources differ.

5. Accredited Programmes

Accreditation Process

HMPPS offers a range of accredited programmes varying in length, complexity, and mode of delivery, and that have been designed to target the most evidenced risks and needs for offending behaviour. To achieve accreditation, programmes must be assessed to make sure they are targeting the right people, focusing on the right things, and being delivered in a way that evidence shows is most likely to reduce reoffending. All HMPPS accredited programmes are monitored to give programme integrity.

All the interventions included within this publication are accredited by the HMPPS Rehabilitation Board based on advice and recommendations from the Correctional Services Advice & Accreditation Panel (CSAAP)[9]. This includes programmes that have been designed and developed by HMPPS and programmes designed by external providers such as Delight Services.

Accredited programmes are routinely reviewed as part of the CSAAP process for accreditation. Accreditation can be granted for a period of up to five years, at which point a programme must be resubmitted. The accreditation process includes reviewing the latest theory and evidence that underpins a programme to ensure that they are as effective as possible in reducing reoffending. This can result in minor changes being required to a programme, or an entirely new programme being developed. Re-accreditation may also not be sought if there has been a substantial drop in the need for a programme. Due to this review process, many of the programmes in this publication which were delivered in previous years, have been replaced or are no longer delivered.

Non-accredited Programmes

There are also numerous non-accredited group-based interventions targeted at a range of criminogenic needs and delivered within the criminal justice system. Although these interventions are not subject to CSAAP accreditation, they should be considered through appropriate alternative governance processes, such as the HMPPS National Framework for Interventions. Data for non-accredited programmes are currently not available.

Categories of Accredited Programmes

For reporting continuity, programmes delivered during 2025-26 are grouped into eight categories. These categories include the current accredited programme offer and legacy programmes that were rolling down during the transition to Building Choices. They therefore

[9] More information on the accreditation process can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/offending-behaviour-programmes-and-interventions

describe programmes appearing in the 2025-26 statistics and should not be interpreted as eight distinct parts of the current HMPPS programme offer.

- ***Domestic Violence programmes*** are targeted at males who have offended against an intimate partner within the context of a heterosexual relationship. The aim is to reduce violent behaviour in heterosexual intimate relationships.

- ***Extremism programmes***, including Healthy Identity Intervention (HII), are designed for those who have been convicted of extremist offences. They aim to support desistance and disengagement from extremism. They are designed to encourage stronger positive and pro-social aspects of identity, to help individuals develop resilience and to support them to identify ways of meeting their identity needs. For example, the need for belonging or recognition, without involvement in extremism.

- ***General Offending programmes*** consist of a range of interventions based on life skills acquisition and cognitive behavioural theory. They are designed to address the link between thinking, attitudes, beliefs and offending**.** Participants are encouraged to learn and practice life skills, such as problem solving, social skills, self-control and positive relationships, that will help them on their journey towards desistence from offending.

- ***Mixed Cohort programmes*** include Becoming New Me Plus (BNM+) or New Me Strengths (NMS). These programmes may be delivered as a single strand approach for those with general violence, general offending, interpersonal violence, or sexual offending. If delivered to a single cohort, they are reported under the relevant offence cohort. However, the Mixed Cohort BNM+ and NMS are delivered to a group of individuals with a mix of offence-based needs, where suitable.

- ***Next Generation of Accredited Programmes and Building Choices -*** The Next Generation of Accredited Programmes (Next Gen) was a programme of change across the Interventions Services accredited programme offer; it was not a distinct type of rehabilitative intervention. As part of Next Gen, HMPPS developed Building Choices, an accredited rehabilitative programme designed to reduce reoffending. Building Choices reflects a move away from classifying provision primarily by offence type, recognising that many underlying criminogenic factors are common across offence types and cohorts.
-
    - As part of the Next Generation of Accredited Programmes, IS has developed a new programme: Building Choices. The Building Choices programme has been designed with a person-first approach at its core, recognising and addressing the individual needs of participants in order to address both offence-specific and wider offending behaviour risks and needs to target the versatility of offending behaviour. Building Choices is offered in two “pathways”: Moderate and High Intensity. The moderate intensity pathway targets those who are assessed as medium risk of reoffending and medium need, while the High Intensity pathway targets those who are assessed as medium and above risk of reoffending and high need. Adapted versions of both pathways will be available for those with Learning Disabilities and Challenges (LDC).

- Building Choices will succeed most of the legacy Interventions Services' accredited programmes except for the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) and the Healthy Sex Programme (HSP), which will be retained and join Building Choices as part of the Next Gen offer. HII and HSP are designed to target the rehabilitative needs of very specific cohorts of offenders, which can be best met and addressed with the specialist input from HII and HSP.

- The national rollout of Building Choices across custody and community completed training delivery at the end of October 2025. Building Choices is now the main accredited programme offer in both custody and community. During 2025-26, legacy programmes rolled down as prison sites and probation regions completed training and transitioned to Building Choices, with new starts on legacy programmes ceasing in line with local rollout timetables. The 2025-26 statistics therefore reflect a transitional year in which Building Choices volumes increased while volumes for many legacy programmes decreased.

- ***Sexual Offending programmes (SOTPs)*** aim to reduce offending by men convicted of sexual offences. Sexual offending does not have a single cause, and so treatment needs to address a range of risk factors. HMPPS provides a range of programmes which are offered according to the level of risk and need of the offender. A treatment pathway for males with learning disabilities also available.

- ***Accredited substance misuse programmes[10]*** are recovery focused, and based on life skills acquisition, cognitive behavioural theory, and a programme which combines cognitive behavioural and educational approaches. All the programmes are designed to address the link between substance misuse and offending. It should be noted that the HMPPS suite uses the umbrella term of 'substance misuse interventions' which covers both alcohol and drug treatment, with some programmes addressing both. These are largely commissioned by the NHS.

- ***HMPPS Violence programmes*** had expanded from moderate dose cognitive skills and anger management programmes to more specialised and high intensity programmes for high risk and personality disordered males and women. The current suite of programmes (in this reporting period) incorporates the most contemporary research and evidence in neuro-cognition and desistance theories and methods. The programmes also target associated and contributory risk factors including weapons and peer/gang related behaviours as well as work on identity.

Programme starts and completions

[10] NHS have now assumed responsibility for accredited substance misuse programmes, with just one contracted prison retaining delivery in Wales.

For the purposes of this publication, a programme start is counted as attendance at the first session of the programme and a programme completion is counted on attendance at the last session of the programme.

Programmes may also have other components which do not form part of these statistics, for example, pre- and post-evaluation measures, post-programme reports and pre- and/or post-programme sessions with the Offender Manager.

This data should not be used for the purposes of attempting to calculate completion rates. Starts from one year may complete in a subsequent year, and completions in one year may have started in a previous year.

6. Prisoner Education

The 2025/26 reporting year saw significant changes to the delivery and recording of prison education. From October 2025, Core Education provision in most prison regions moved from the Prisoner Education Framework (PEF) to the Prisoner Education Service (PES) contracts, alongside a move from the CURIOUS 1 management information system to CURIOUS 2.

The move to CURIOUS 2 was not solely an administrative system change. It coincided with the introduction of new education contracts, with significant structural changes to both the contracted services and the wider system in which they operate. There was also a significant reduction in the volume of delivery commissioned through Core Education contracts, due to rising cost pressures across education services. Although the data structures of CURIOUS 1 and CURIOUS 2 differ, the main data fields required to produce the existing publication tables are available in both systems.

Coverage of the 2025/26 data

As a result of the transition, data for 2025/26 are reported separately for different groups of prisons and periods:

- **April to September 2025:** CURIOUS 1 data covering the final six months of PEF for most public prisons.
- **April to September 2025:** CURIOUS 1 data for most privately managed prisons.
- **April 2025 to March 2026:** CURIOUS 1 data for prisons in the West Midlands reporting group (also called 'Lot 10'), which remained under PEF throughout the 2025/26 reporting year.
- **October 2025 to March 2026:** CURIOUS 2 data covering the first six months of PES for most public prisons.

These datasets should therefore **not be combined to produce a continuous annual time series**. Differences between periods may reflect changes in contractual or structural arrangements, education provision, recording systems and supplier behaviour, as well as genuine changes in participation or achievement.

Data quality and comparability

The transition from CURIOUS 1 to CURIOUS 2 may have affected data quality and completeness. As with the introduction of any new administrative system, there is a risk that some learners or learning activities were not recorded consistently during transition and implementation. It is not currently possible to quantify fully the effect of these issues on the published figures.

There are also several factors that affect comparisons between the PEF and PES periods:

- **Delivery around the transition:** Participation and achievement may be weighted towards the first six months of the reporting year due to suppliers bringing PEF activity to a conclusion within that time period.
- **Learners crossing the PEF/PES boundary:** suppliers were instructed to withdraw learners from CURIOUS 1 and re-enrol them in CURIOUS 2 when PES was introduced. Where this process was followed, learning records were closed in CURIOUS 1 and new records created in CURIOUS 2. Variation in how this was implemented may affect the distribution of starts, withdrawals and achievements around October 2025 (when transfer from CURIOUS 1 to CURIOUS 2 happened).
- **Changes to enrolment recording:** CURIOUS 2 may show a larger difference between participation and achievement data due to the fact that under this system, as soon as a prisoner attends the initial session, they are then recorded as enrolled.
- **Changes to contractual incentives:** the introduction of PES brought a more efficient assessment system which may lead to a reduction in assessments seen in the data.
- **System implementation issues:** known issues affecting attendance and allocation were identified during the early months of CURIOUS 2. Although these do not directly affect all measures presented in this publication, it is difficult to distinguish fully between changes arising from the implementation of PES and CURIOUS 2, changes in recording practice, and genuine changes in education activity.
- **Level 4 achievements:** Level 4 achievement data supplied through the Open University were not available within CURIOUS 2 for the 2025/26 reporting period. Figures based on CURIOUS 2 therefore do not include these achievements.

Counting learners across reporting groups

Learners may appear in more than one reporting group within the publication. For example, a learner who received an assessment in a West Midlands (Lot 10) prison and subsequently received another assessment in a PES prison may be counted in both sets of figures. In previous years, where these prisons formed part of the same reporting population, the learner would generally have been counted once.

Figures for separate reporting groups should therefore **not be summed to derive a unique total number of learners**.

Interpretation of the statistics

Users should exercise caution when comparing 2025/26 figures with previous years or when comparing the PEF and PES periods within 2025/26. The transition involved simultaneous changes to the contractual framework, education provision, administrative system and recording practices.

Consequently, differences between PEF and PES figures **should not be interpreted as changes in prisoner education performance alone**. The two periods are not directly

comparable, and a continuous time series spanning the PEF/PES transition should not be constructed.

Much of the equalities data which formed part of previously published editions of this report can be found in four published information sources; namely the Offender Management Statistics Quarterly, the Safety in Custody Statistics Bulletin, Deaths of Offenders in the Community and Proven Reoffending Statistics. Each source includes written commentary and data tables relating to various protected characteristics.

Offender Management Statistics Quarterly (OMSQ)

The Offender Management Statistics Quarterly bulletin, April to June 2026 was released on 29 October 2026.[11] The latest version of the OMSQ can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly

Topic	**Metric**	**Protected Characteristic breakdowns available**
Prison population (data at 31 March; 'Prison Population: 30 September 2026' tables)	Number of prisoners in establishments across England and Wales	**Age and sex:** male and female offenders by age group from 15 years of age. Use the totals, which are the sum of remand, sentenced and non-criminal prisoner populations (table 1_Q_6) **Ethnicity and sex:** male and female offenders by 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns and sentence type (table 1_Q_7) **Religion and sex:** male and female

[11] At the time of publishing this report, the latest release of Offender Management Statistics Quarterly: April to June 2025 was released on 31st October 2025. For the purposes of comparison of figures from earlier editions of HMPPS Offender Equalities report, use the OMSQ figures from the October to December edition as outlined above, which refer to the end of the 2024-25 financial year at 31st March 2025.

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
		offenders by religion or belief (table 1_Q_8)
	Proportion of prison population who are sentenced	**Age and sex:** male and female offenders by age group from 15 years of age. Use the figures for the sentenced population only (exclude remand and non-criminal prisoner populations) to calculate proportions, excluding values for not known or not recorded. For example, to calculate the sentenced only population for male and female prisoners aged between 15 to 17 years (the numerator), the denominator would be the figure for male and female prisoners aged between 15 to 17 for the whole prison population (including remand, sentenced and non-criminal prisoners) (table 1_Q_1)
	Adjudication outcomes: • Proven • Dismissed • Not proceeded with • Others	**Sex:** males and females (able 4.Q.1) **Age:** age group from 15 years of age (table 4.Q.3)

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
Prison Adjudications[12] (January to March 2026)		**Ethnicity:** 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns (table 4.Q.4) **Religion:** religion or belief categories (table 4.Q.5) (Prison Adjudications: 2026)
	Proven adjudications by type of offence	**Age and sex:** males and females by age group from 15 years of age (Adjudications .csv dataset) **Ethnicity and sex:** males and females by 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns (Adjudications .csv dataset) **Religion and sex:** males and females by religion or belief categories (Adjudications .csv dataset) Bespoke pivot tables will need to be generated to obtain this data. Ensure the outcome variable is set to "Proved" in the filters field. Select the "Offence" variable to the columns field,

[12] Adjudications data for the period January to March 2025 is available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2025

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
		protected characteristics variables to the rows field and the “Count” variable to the values field of the pivot table.
	Punishment outcomes by offence: • Additional days added • Caution • Cellular confinement • Exclusion from associated work • Extra work • Forfeiture of privileges • Removal from activity/living unit • Stoppage of earnings • Other	**Sex:** males and females **Age:** age group from 15 years of age **Ethnicity:** 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns **Religion:** religion or belief categories (Prison Adjudications: 2023, table 4_A_2)
	Average number of punishments per offence	**Sex:** males and females **Age:** age group from 15 years of age **Ethnicity:** 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns **Religion:** religion or belief categories (table 4_A_8) The average number of punishments is calculated from the total number of punishments divided by the total number of offences.

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
Community Orders and Suspended Sentence Orders (calendar year data for COs and SSOs; data at 31 December for previous cautions and convictions data)	Offenders supervised by the Probation Service, at end of period, under Community Orders (COs)	**Age and sex:** males and females by age group from 18 years of age (table A4.16) **Ethnicity and sex:** males and females by ethnic group breakdowns (Chinese ethnicity persons are included in the Other ethnicity category) (table A4.17)
	Offenders supervised by the Probation Service, at end of period, under Suspended Sentence Orders (SSOs)	**Age and sex:** males and females by age group from 18 years of age (Probation: 2023, table A4.16) **Ethnicity and sex:** males and females by ethnic group breakdowns (Chinese ethnicity persons are included in the Other ethnicity category) (table A4.17)
	Offenders under supervision by the Probation Service, at end of period by number of previous cautions or convictions (number groupings for previous cautions or convictions are: 0, 1-2, 3-6, 7-10, 11-14, 15 or more)	**Age and sex:** males and females by age group from 15 years of age (categories are 15-17, young adults 18-20, adults) (usually table A4.21)
Release on Temporary Licence	Incidences of release on temporary licence	**Ethnicity and sex:** male and female by 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns (table A3.8)

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
(calendar year Prison Releases data)	Individuals released on temporary licence	**Ethnicity and sex:** male and female by 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns (table A3.8)
	Incidences of release on temporary licence: • Special Purpose Licence • Resettlement Day Release • Resettlement Overnight Release • Childcare Resettlement Release	**Sex:** males and females (table A3.7)
	Individuals released on temporary licence: • Determinate sentences • Indeterminate sentences • Recall • Other sentence type	**Sex:** males and females (table A3.7)
Temporary Release Failures (calendar year Prison Releases data)	Number of recorded Temporary Release Failures: • Determinate sentences • Indeterminate sentences	**Sex:** males and females (table A3.7)
	Failures per 100,000 incidences of release	**Sex:** males and females (table A3.7)
	Number of recorded Temporary Release Failures	**Ethnicity and Sex:** male and female by 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns (table A3.8)

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
Home Detention Curfew (HDC) (April 2025 to March 2026 Prison Releases data)	• Number released on HDC by sentence length: • Less than or equal to 6 months • Greater than 6 months to less than 12 months • 12 months to less than 2 years • 2 years to less than 4 years • 4 years to less than 5 years • 5 years to less than 7 years • 7 years to less than 10 years • 10 years to less than 14 years • 14 years or more	**Sex:** males and females (table 3.Q.10) **Ethnicity and sex:** male and female by 5+1 ethnic group breakdowns (table 3.Q.11) **Population:** males and females (table 3.Q.12)
	Population on HDC at end of period (31st December)	

Safety in Custody Statistics Bulletin

Safety in Custody quarterly bulletin, June 2026 was released on 29 October 2026. The bulletin contains calendar year annual tables for self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales. For all editions of this bulletin, link to: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
Deaths in prison	Number of deaths	**Sex:** males and females (Safety in Custody summary tables, table 2, available quarterly) **Age:** age group from 15 years of age (deaths data tool, available quarterly) **Ethnicity:** self-inflicted deaths by ethnicity type (Safety in Custody Deaths annual tables, available annually, table 1.5) **Nationality:** self-inflicted deaths by nationality type (Safety in Custody Deaths
	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	
	Number of self-inflicted deaths	
	Self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners	
	Number of natural cause deaths	

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
	Natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners	annual tables, available annually, table 1.6) Bespoke datasets can be generated using the pivot table in the deaths data tool.
	Number of homicides	
Self-harm (Tables: Self-harm in prison custody 2004 to 2024)	Number of self-harm incidents	**Sex:** males and females (Safety in Custody summary tables, table 3, available quarterly) **Age:** age group from 15 years of age (Safety in Custody self-harm annual tables, available annually, tables 2.3 and 2.4) **Ethnicity:** self-harm by ethnicity type (Safety in Custody self-harm annual tables, available annually, tables 2.7 and 2.8) **Nationality:** self-harm by nationality type (Safety in Custody self-harm annual tables, available annually, tables 2.9 and 2.10) Bespoke datasets can be generated using the pivot table in the deaths data tool.
	Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	
	Number of self-harm individuals	
	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	
	Number of self-harm incidents per individual	
Assaults (Tables: Assaults in prison custody 2000 to 2024)	Number of assailants, fighters, and victims	**Sex:** males and females (Safety in Custody summary tables, table 4, available quarterly) **Age:** age group from 15 years of age (Safety in Custody assaults annual tables, available annually, table 3.3) **Ethnicity:** ethnicity type (Safety in Custody assaults annual tables, available annually, table 3.6) **Nationality:** nationality type (Safety in Custody assaults annual tables, available annually, table 3.7) Bespoke datasets can be generated using the pivot table in the deaths data tool.

Deaths of Offenders in the Community

The latest available edition of the Deaths of Offenders in the Community Bulletin, annual update to March 2026, covering deaths of offenders supervised in the community by the probation service in England and Wales was published on 29 October 2026 and can be accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/death-of-offenders-in-the-community

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
Deaths of offenders in the community	Deaths of offenders in the community	**Age group:** age bands from 18 years of age **Sex:** male and female **Ethnicity:** 5+1 category breakdown These data are available in a data tool released alongside this publication. Bespoke datasets can be generated using the pivot table in the deaths data tool.

Proven Reoffending Statistics bulletin

The proven reoffending statistics bulletin was released on 29 October 2026. This publication will include statistics related to the cohort periods October to December 2024. For this, and previous editions of this bulletin, refer to: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics

Topic	Metric	Protected Characteristic breakdowns available
Proven reoffending	Proportion of offenders who reoffend (%)	**Age:** from 10 years of age, categorised into age groups (table A3) **Age and sex:** adult and juvenile offenders by sex (table A2) **Ethnicity:** Adult proven reoffending data (table A7a) **Ethnicity:** Juvenile proven reoffending data (table A7b)
	Average number of reoffences per reoffender	
	Number of reoffences	
	Number of reoffenders	
	Number of offenders in cohort	

Glossary

Ethnic Group Classification

To enable meaningful time series comparisons and to avoid disclosing confidential or personal information about offenders, this report continues to present data using the 5 + 1 ethnic groupings (Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Other ethnic group, Mixed ethnic group, White, Not Stated) classification that has traditionally been presented in the HMPPS Equalities Annual report. Data collected are based on the 18 + 1 classification used in the 2021 Census[13]. In a small number of cases, collected or stored data may still be based on the old 16 + 1 2001 census classifications, however, these align to the same 5 + 1 classifications meaning there is no impact on comparability.

Ethnic minority

Where possible, ethnicity is presented in aggregated form using the 5 + 1 approach outlined above. Where the above approach could pose disclosure risks, those from the black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnic background categories are grouped together (referred to as the 'ethnic minority' group) and compared to those in the white group. The government's recommendation[14] is to compare all ethnic minorities (including white minority groups) to the white group, so that all ethnic minorities are considered together, where possible. We have included white minorities in the white group here to retain consistency and comparability with previous publications but will keep this approach under review for future publication.

We also acknowledge that grouping ethnicity in this way does not capture the different outcomes of people within these groups. However, it is necessary to not risk disclosure of personal information, and from a statistical perspective, to consider groups with sufficient numbers to make meaningful comparisons. The comparisons presented maintain consistency with previous iterations of this bulletin and is consistent with the approach used in other statistical publications.

Sex

Sex commonly refers to 'biological sex'. This report uses the term 'sex' when describing the differences between men and women in the data. Sex is different to gender identity, which is how an individual sees and describes themself.

Sex is recorded as either male or female in the data (e.g. on p-NOMIS, or collected as part of the Transgender data collection). In the incentives data, sex is derived from the main function of the prison to which the prisoner is assigned.

[13] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/ethnic-groups/#2021-census

[14] https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity

Transgender

For the purposes of this report, transgender prisoners are defined as those individuals known within prison to be currently living in, or presenting in, a gender identity that is different to their biological sex. They will have had a Local Case Board (as defined by 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender' policy framework[15]) and are known to the staff within the individual prison where they are located.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is a term used in this report in relation to transgender individuals. This could include identifying as male, female, non-binary, or in another way (such as, but not limited to, gender fluid, intersex, or cross dresser).

Sexual Identity

Sexual identity is one part of the umbrella concept of "sexual orientation". Sexual identity does not necessarily reflect sexual attraction or sexual behaviour – these are separate concepts which the Office for National Statistics (ONS) currently does not measure and are therefore not specifically included in prison management information systems.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by legislation. Sexual orientation is an umbrella term which encompasses several dimensions including sexual identity, attraction and behaviour. For the purposes of the legislation, sexual orientation is not defined in terms of any specific dimension. Data collected are based on the categories in the 2021 ONS Census (Heterosexual, Gay/ Lesbian, Bisexual, Other).

Religious or belief

Within this report, religion or belief is reported using the 8+1 religion classification approach from the 2021 ONS Census, where the reported population size is large enough. For cohorts with a smaller population size, the 3+1 approach is used.[16] Additional breakdowns for the Christian category has also been provided, where numbers allow.

Initial assessments

All prisoners who enter custody are required to undertake an initial educational assessment. There are initial assessments for maths and English, with most prisoners sitting both. These assessments are designed to assess a prisoner's level of knowledge in these subjects. Once a prisoner has undertaken an initial assessment in English or maths, this assessment should follow them across establishments. If a prisoner is released and then re-enters

---

[15] The framework can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-care-and-management-of-individuals-who-are-transgender

[16] https://www.beta.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/ethnicgroupnationalidentitylanguageandreligionvariablescensus2021/religion/classifications

custody, and the assessment is outdated (over 12 months old), the prisoner can take another initial assessment.

CURIOUS data count the number of people that received each grade at initial assessment for English and maths. This means that prisoners taking more than one initial assessment will be counted once in the sub totals if the results are at the same grade or twice in the sub totals if the results are at different grades across the maths and English tests. The only deviation from this is if a learner has multiple tests listed for the same day, then the lowest grade is chosen.

Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (for CURIOUS 1 only)

Prisoners can receive both a rapid and in-depth screener for Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (LDD). Prisoners receive a rapid screener when they enter custody and an in-depth screener is only completed if the prisoner meets criteria based off the rapid screener, and then enrols onto an education course.

Across a year, prisoners may have multiple entries for their LDD data, and their most recent entry is used. LDD screening is only repeated when something significant has changed or where it's deemed necessary.

How LDD has been defined can be seen in the table below:

LDD Grouping	Primary Health Problem listed on CURIOUS 1
Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (LDD)	• "Mental health difficulty" • "Social and emotional difficulties" • "Disability affecting mobility" • "Other learning difficulty" • "Moderate learning difficulty" • "Dyslexia" • "Hearing impairment" • "Dyscalculia" • "Visual impairment" • "Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes)" • "Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. Dyspraxia)" • "Speech, Language and Communication Needs" • "Autism spectrum disorder" • "Severe learning difficulty" • "Other disability" • "Other physical disability" • "Asperger's syndrome" • "Profound complex disabilities"
No Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (No LDD)	• "Temporary disability after illness (for example post-viral) or accident" • "No need"
Not Known	• "Not provided" • "Prefer not to say"

	• Missing data

As LDD status uses enrolment data, LDD status can only be determined for prisoners who have enrolled on a course. In other instances, prisoners are given the LDD status “Did not enrol on a course in the last financial year”.

Matching education data to prisoner characteristics

Prisoner characteristics were primarily generated from NOMIS data, where their most recent entry was used. NOMIS was used to find prisoner sex, ethnicity, and date of birth.
There are a small number of records in the CURIOUS system that do not match to any known record in the NOMIS system, and these records were removed from the publication.

Ethnicity

Where ethnicity was missing from NOMIS, CURIOUS ethnicity data was used. This only applies to course participation/achievement data, as ethnicity data was not available for initial assessments on CURIOUS.

Age Group

Age was calculated using the date of the assessment or course start, as applicable.

Prisoners under 18 at this point have been excluded from the analysis presented in this publication. Remaining prisoners have been divided into three age group categories

- 18 – 24 years
- 25 – 49 years
- 50 and over

Courses in CURIOUS

Course data on CURIOUS includes both accredited and unaccredited education courses. To obtain information on course levels, CURIOUS course data for accredited courses is matched to the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS)[17]. Overall total course volumes therefore include all courses, whereas breakdowns by course level only cover accredited courses.

The enrolment data on CURIOUS includes both courses with multiple units and stand-alone course units. Both have been included in this publication as “courses”.

Participation in courses

A prisoner counts as participating in a course when they have registered to attend, and the course has a start date between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2026.

When considering the number of prisoners participating in courses by level of course, each prisoner is counted once at each level. For example, if a prisoner participates in two Level 1 courses, they count as one prisoner taking a Level 1 course. However, if a prisoner participates in one Level 1 course and one Level 2 course, then they count as one prisoner participating at each level.

[17] LARS learning aims. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/learning-aim-reference-service-lars

Achievement

An individual may achieve in a course, partially achieve in a course, or withdraw from a course:

- Achieving a course – the prisoner has completed all the work and has been awarded a grade or level;
- Partially achieving a course - the prisoner has completed all work required for the course to date, but is awaiting a final exam or coursework;
- Withdrawal from a course – the prisoner stopped taking the course at that prison.

Statistics in the publication are based on number of prisoners achieving a course. As with participation, each prisoner is counted once at each level when considering the number of prisoners achieving a course by level of the course.

Functional Skills Courses

Functional skills courses are offered as part of the core curriculum. Functional skills courses include accredited English, maths, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. These provide the fundamental skills that people need for their working and personal lives. Prisoners study for the qualifications in practical ways and apply core skills to real-life situations. A functional skills level 2 is equivalent to a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Other examples of equivalent qualifications can be seen in the table below.

Initial Assessment / Course Level	Example
Entry level 1,2 and 3	Entry level functional skills Entry level English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
Level 1	GCSE - grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G Level 1 functional skills Level 1 ESOL
Level 2	GCSE - grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A*, A, B, C Level 2 functional skills Level 2 ESOL
Level 3	A level (Advanced Level) Level 3 ESOL Level 3 NVQ (National Vocational Qualification)
Levels 4 - 8	All higher-level courses

A complete list of levels and examples can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels