

# **Safety in Custody 2010 England and Wales**

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics bulletin

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# Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults among prisoners in custody. This publication contains statistics relating to deaths in custody and assaults from 2001 to 2010 and self-harm in prison custody from 2004 to 2010 in England and Wales.

This bulletin has been produced by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Ministry of Justice. NOMS monitors deaths, self-harm and assaults in prisons and has a range of related measures to help monitor overall safety.

Although this publication concerns statistics, the incidents described in this report are, by their nature, tragic and distressing to the prisoners, their families and the staff who look after them. The National Offender Management Service remains committed to managing self-harm and reducing violence in prison custody.

When considering particular statistics readers should note the following:

- Incidence of self-harm or assault is unevenly distributed around the prison estate. This bulletin presents the figures broken down by key factors including age, gender and time in custody. These, and random variation, explain many of the differences between prisons and particular risk groups.
- In prisons, as in the community, self-harm is often covert and assaults may go unreported. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Recording of self-harm and assault incidents in prison custody has improved over the years but it remains the case that they cannot be counted with absolute accuracy.

From time to time, events in prison custody and developments within and outside NOMS have changed the way safety in prisons is viewed and managed. Some have resulted in changes to the way offenders are managed on a day to day basis. Others have affected the way statistics are collected and reported. The timeline in Appendix A summarises some of key events and developments since 2000 which have affected safety in prison custody and supporting statistics. The list is not comprehensive but does give an indication of the major factors affecting safety and helps in the interpretation of the longer term trends.

The contents of the report will be of interest to government policy makers, the agencies responsible for offender management at both national level and within prisons, and others who have an interest in safety in prisons.

Data Sources and Quality: The figures throughout this bulletin have been drawn from administrative IT systems. Care is taken when processing and analysing the returns but the detail collected is subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large scale recording system. Although the figures are shown to the last whole number the figures may not be accurate to that level. See Appendix B for further details on data sources and quality.

Revisions: Figures for deaths during previous years may change due to late notifications and changes in classification following an inquest, which may happen several years after the death. Figures for self-harm and assaults for the previous year may be revised due to data corrections; earlier figures are not generally subject to revision. However in this publication the numbers of individuals self-harming since 2004 have been revised to correct for errors where the initial data was incomplete.

There are currently eight deaths from 2010 which are recorded in a new “unclassified” category. In most cases, it is possible to classify a death as either apparent self-inflicted, suspected natural causes, apparent homicide or “other non-natural,” however, there are cases where this is not possible. In previous years, the small number of such cases have been included in “other non-natural” category. However, during 2010 there has been an increase in these cases; for example, where prisoners are found unresponsive in bed (with no known underlying medical condition); these are now being shown separately.

# Summary

This publication comments on trends relating to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody up to the end of 2010. The underlying trends for each are assessed on changes to annual rates.

## Deaths in custody

In 2010, there were 196 deaths in custody, an increase from 169 in 2009 due to an increase in deaths from natural causes. There were 58 deaths classified as self-inflicted, maintaining the lower level seen for 2008 and 2009. However, it should be noted that there are eight deaths for 2010 which have not yet been classified.

The death rate for 2010 was 2.31 deaths per 1,000 prisoners. This rate is higher than the 2009 figure (2.02 per 1,000) but lower than the peak in 2004 (2.79 per 1,000). Death rates by cause have not been presented for 2010 because the numbers are provisional and are likely to be revised.

The standardised mortality ratio (SMR) for 2010 was 1.25 (range 1.11-1.41), higher than it had been for the previous two years. This ratio compares the death rate in custody with the death rate in the general population, adjusting for age and gender. A ratio higher than 1 indicates that, after adjusting for age and gender, there is a higher rate of death in custody than in the general population. The ratio is not an exact figure. Its confidence interval describes the range in which the true value is likely to lie. For 2010, the lower limit of the range is higher than 1 which indicates that the death rate in custody is higher than in the general population. See Appendix B for further details.

**Table 1: Summary statistics (deaths in custody), England and Wales**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Prison Population<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>66,301</b>	<b>70,778</b>	<b>73,038</b>	<b>74,657</b>	<b>75,979</b>	<b>78,127</b>	<b>80,216</b>	<b>82,572</b>	<b>83,559</b>	<b>84,725</b>
<b>Deaths in prison custody<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>142</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>196</b>
Self-inflicted	73	95	95	95	78	67	92	60	60	58
Natural Causes	68	66	86	102	88	83	91	99	105	124
Other non-natural	1	3	1	9	5	3	0	3	3	5
Homicide	0	0	1	2	3	0	2	3	0	1
Unclassified	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
<b>Rates per 1,000 prisoners<sup>(3)</sup></b>										
<b>Deaths in prison custody<sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>2.29</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>2.31</b>
Self-inflicted deaths	1.10	1.34	1.30	1.27	1.03	0.86	1.15	0.73	0.72	-
Natural cause deaths	1.03	0.93	1.18	1.37	1.16	1.06	1.13	1.20	1.26	-
<b>Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR)<sup>(4)</sup></b>		1.29	1.39	1.59	1.30	1.10	1.29	1.08	1.10	1.25
SMR confidence interval		(1.13-1.47)	(1.23-1.58)	(1.41-1.78)	(1.14-1.48)	(0.96-1.25)	(1.14-1.45)	(0.95-1.23)	(0.96-1.25)	(1.11-1.41)

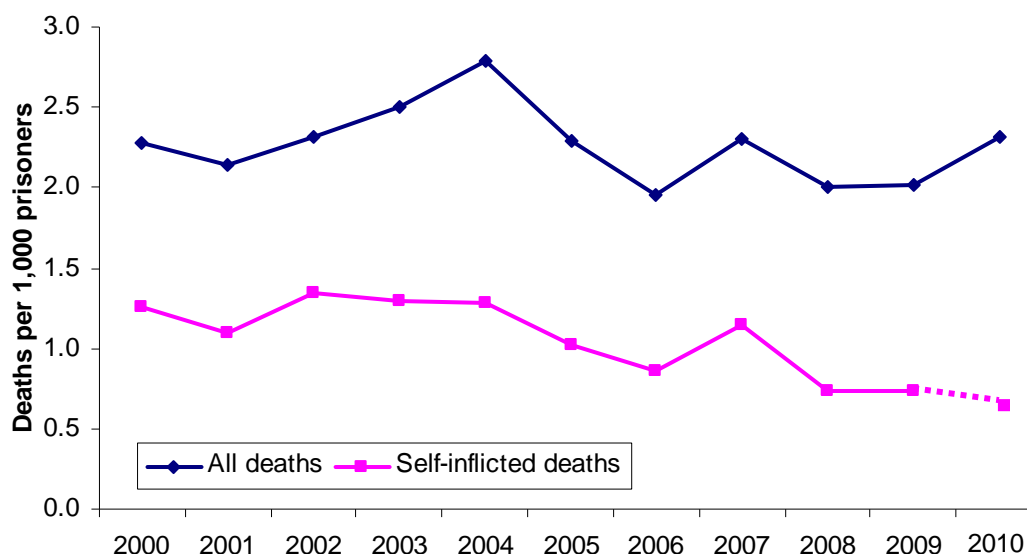
1) Prison population averaged across 12 months. See MoJ's Offender Management annual statistics 2010 Table A1.2.

2) Deaths in prison custody statistics are derived from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) deaths in the custody database which contains details of all deaths in prison custody for England and Wales from 1978.

3) These rates have been calculated using the average prison population for each year. Rates are not shown for 2010 self-inflicted and natural causes deaths due to the relatively high number of currently unclassified deaths.

4) See Appendix B and the associated technical note 'Reporting of deaths in custody' on the website.

**Figure 1: Rates of deaths in prison custody per 1,000 prisoners**



\* The rate for self-inflicted deaths in 2010 is shown as a dotted line because the number of self-inflicted deaths is provisional.

### Self-harm and Assaults

The numbers of self-harm incidents increased sharply between 2009 and 2010, from 24,184 to 26,983 continuing the overall upward trend since 2004, when relatively complete data collection began. The number of individuals self harming showed a less marked increase from 6,450 to 6,639 and the number of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners also increased (from 289 in 2009 to 318 in 2010).

There is a marked difference between male and female prisoners: around 7 per cent of male prisoners self-harm compared to 30 per cent of female prisoners.

**Table 2: Summary statistics (self-harm and assault), England and Wales**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Prison Population<sup>1</sup></b>	66,301	70,778	73,038	74,657	75,979	78,127	80,216	82,572	83,559	84,725
<b>Self-harm incidents<sup>2</sup></b>	-	-	-	19,694	23,781	23,400	23,001	25,234	24,184	26,983
<b>Individuals self-harming</b>	-	-	-	5,384	5,761	5,904	6,112	6,458	6,450	6,639
<b>Assault incidents<sup>3</sup></b>	10,719	11,562	11,876	12,613	14,411	15,057	15,272	15,959	15,185	14,356
<b>Incidents per 1,000 prisoners</b>										
<b>Self-harm incidents</b>	-	-	-	264	313	300	287	306	289	318
<b>Assault incidents<sup>3</sup></b>	162	163	163	169	190	193	190	193	182	169

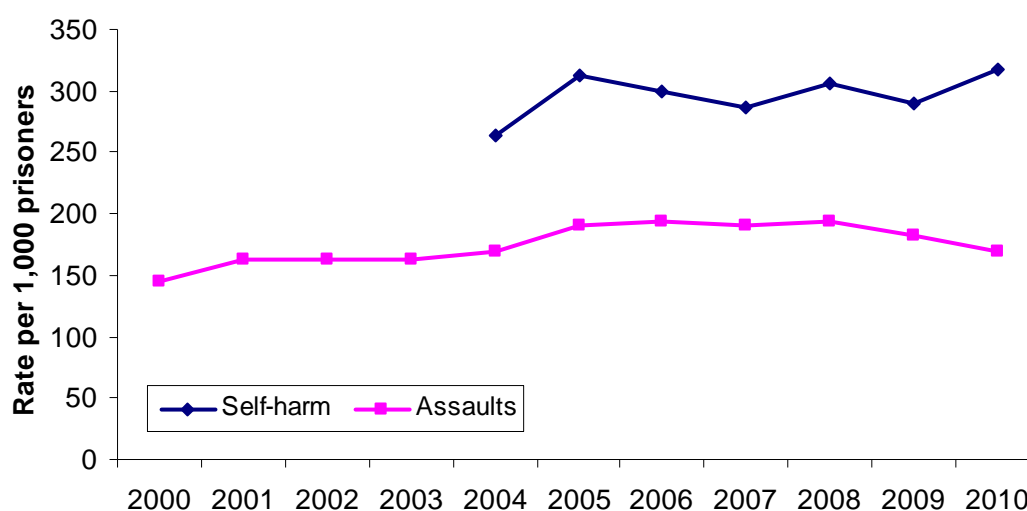
1) Prison population averaged across 12 months. See Offender Management annual statistics 2010 Table A1.2.

2) Self-harm statistics are derived from the NOMS incident reporting system. A new system for monitoring self-harm was introduced in December 2002 and as a result recording improved throughout 2003. Statistics collected before 2004 are not comparable with more recent figures.

3) Assault statistics are derived from the NOMS incident reporting system. For more information on offences and punishments see Adjudication tables in Offender Management annual statistics.

Assault incidents fell in 2010, continuing the downward trend since a peak in 2008. The number of assault incidents per 1,000 population decreased from 182 in 2009 to 169 in 2010. In 2010, there were 14,356 assault incidents of which just under 10 per cent were classified as serious, compared with 9 per cent of the 15,185 assaults in 2009. There were 2,856 assaults on staff, of which 304 were classified as serious. Assaults on staff were highest in 2006 at 3530 and since then have fallen year on year.

**Figure 2: Rates of self-harm and assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners**



# Deaths in prison custody

A self-inflicted death is defined as any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent. Death by natural causes is defined as any death of a person as a result of naturally occurring disease process. A homicide is defined as any death of a person at the hands of another, including murder and manslaughter. Other deaths are classified as non-natural when they cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted or homicide. These include accidents arising from external causes, accidental overdose/ poisoning and deaths where taking a drug contributed to a death but not in fatal amounts. This category has previously also included a small number of otherwise difficult to classify deaths. (See Appendix B for further details.) In 2010 a new category 'Unclassified' has been introduced. Once these deaths are classified, figures in the other categories will rise accordingly. Therefore figures within categories of deaths for 2010 are provisional and not directly comparable with figures for earlier years. (See introduction.)

There are currently 58 self-inflicted deaths recorded for 2010, comprising 57 deaths of male prisoners and 1 death of female prisoners (Table 3). Rates for self-inflicted deaths by gender have not been calculated for 2010 because the number of deaths is provisional and is likely to be revised.

**Table 3: Self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender, England and Wales**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>PRISON POPULATION<sup>2</sup></b>										
<b>Male and Female</b>	<b>66,301</b>	<b>70,778</b>	<b>73,038</b>	<b>74,657</b>	<b>75,979</b>	<b>78,127</b>	<b>80,216</b>	<b>82,572</b>	<b>83,560</b>	<b>84,725</b>
Male	62,561	66,479	68,613	70,209	71,512	73,680	75,842	78,158	79,277	80,489
Female	3,740	4,299	4,425	4,448	4,467	4,447	4,374	4,414	4,283	4,236
<b>SELF-INFLICTED DEATHS<sup>(3), (4)</sup></b>										
<b>Male and Female</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>58 <sup>(p)</sup></b>
Male	67	86	81	83	74	64	84	60	58	57 <sup>(p)</sup>
Female	6	9	14	13	4	3	8	1	3	1 <sup>(p)</sup>
<b>SELF-INFLICTED DEATHS PER 1,000 PRISONERS</b>										
<b>Male and Female</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.73</b>	-
Male	1.07	1.29	1.18	1.18	1.03	0.87	1.11	0.77	0.73	-
Female	1.60	2.09	3.16	2.92	0.90	0.67	1.83	0.23	0.70	-

p) = provisional

1) In 2010 a new category of 'unclassified' was introduced. The line in the table indicates that numbers in each category are not comparable with earlier years. Rates are not shown for 2010 self-inflicted and natural causes deaths due to the relatively high number of currently unclassified deaths.

2) Prison population averaged across 12 months. See Offender Management annual statistics Table A1.2.

3) Deaths in prison custody figures include all deaths of prisoners arising from incidents during prison custody. These include deaths of prisoners while released on temporary license (ROTL) for medical reasons. In recent years, around 30% of self-inflicted deaths in prison custody have occurred in hospitals or hospices.

4) The NOMS classification of self-inflicted deaths includes a wider range of deaths than suicides.

Table 4 shows the numbers of self-inflicted deaths by time in current prison. Of the 58 self-inflicted deaths so far recorded for 2010, 17 occurred within one month of arriving in the current prison.

**Table 4: Self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in current prison, England and Wales**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>TIME IN CURRENT PRISON</b> <sup>(2), (3), (4), (5)</sup>										
<b>All</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>58</b> <sup>(p)</sup>
On day of arrival	2	1	2	4	0	2	1	3	0	0 <sup>(p)</sup>
1st or 2nd full day	4	12	13	13	13	3	5	5	9	4 <sup>(p)</sup>
3 days to 7 days	8	17	12	13	2	3	11	3	10	6 <sup>(p)</sup>
8 days to 30 days	22	22	16	23	17	12	17	10	6	7 <sup>(p)</sup>
31 days to 3 months	15	20	18	19	12	20	23	15	16	15 <sup>(p)</sup>
3 months to 6 months	8	12	16	9	20	12	15	12	13	8 <sup>(p)</sup>
6 months to 1 year	9	8	6	12	4	7	9	8	5	8 <sup>(p)</sup>
Over one year	5	3	12	3	10	8	11	5	2	10 <sup>(p)</sup>

p) = provisional

1) In 2010 a new category of 'unclassified' was introduced. The line in the table indicates that numbers in each category are not comparable with earlier years.

2) Deaths in prison custody figures include all deaths of prisoners arising from incidents during prison custody. These include deaths of prisoners while released on temporary license (ROTL) for medical reasons. In recent years, around 30% of self-inflicted deaths in prison custody have occurred in hospitals or hospices.

3) The NOMS classification of self-inflicted deaths includes a wider range of deaths than suicides.

4) Time in custody refers to time spent on current offence/prison number. Some prisoners may have previously spent time in prison custody for a different offence with a different prison number but this is not included.

5) Care needs to be taken when interpreting numbers of deaths in the early days of custody as number of deaths in precise 24 hours time slots is not known accurately due to uncertainty in the exact time of death.



# Self-harm

Self-harm in prison custody is defined as, “any act where a prisoner deliberately harms themselves irrespective of the method, intent or severity of any injury.” In the community, self-harm is often covert. In prisons, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. The system for recording these incidents was implemented in December 2002 and relatively complete data is available from 2004 onwards.

Key self-harm statistics are summarised in Table 5. Although the number of self-harm incidents is provided, this particular measure, in isolation, is not a good indicator of underlying trend as a small number of individuals account for a large proportion of self-harm incidents.

**Table 5: Self-harm summary statistics by gender, England and Wales**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 <sup>(r)</sup>	2010
<b>POPULATION<sup>(1)</sup></b>							
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>74,657</b>	<b>75,979</b>	<b>78,127</b>	<b>80,216</b>	<b>82,572</b>	<b>83,560</b>	<b>84,725</b>
Males	70,209	71,512	73,680	75,842	78,158	79,277	80,489
Females	4,448	4,467	4,447	4,374	4,414	4,283	4,236
<b>INDIVIDUALS SELF-HARMING<sup>(4)</sup></b>							
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>5,384</b>	<b>5,761</b>	<b>5,904</b>	<b>6,112</b>	<b>6,458</b>	<b>6,450</b>	<b>6,639</b>
Males	4,038	4,288	4,506	4,695	4,954	5,126	5,406
Females	1,346	1,473	1,398	1,417	1,504	1,324	1,233
<b>INDIVIDUALS SELF-HARMING PER 1,000 PRISONERS</b>							
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>78</b>
Males	58	60	61	62	63	65	67
Females	303	330	314	324	341	309	291
<b>SELF-HARM INCIDENTS<sup>(2), (3)</sup></b>							
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>19,694</b>	<b>23,781</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>23,001</b>	<b>25,234</b>	<b>24,184</b>	<b>26,983</b>
Males	9,866	10,421	11,899	11,593	12,219	13,707	14,350
Females	9,828	13,360	11,501	11,408	13,015	10,477	12,633
<b>SELF-HARM INCIDENTS PER 1,000 PRISONERS</b>							
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>318</b>
Males	141	146	161	153	156	173	178
Females	2,210	2,991	2,586	2,608	2,949	2,446	2,982

r) Figures for 2009 have been revised throughout these tables.

1) Prison population averaged across 12 months. See Offender Management annual statistics Table A1.2.

2) A new system for monitoring self harm was introduced in December 2002 and as a result recording of self harm improved throughout 2003. Numbers before 2004 have therefore not been included as they are not directly comparable with later figures.

3) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

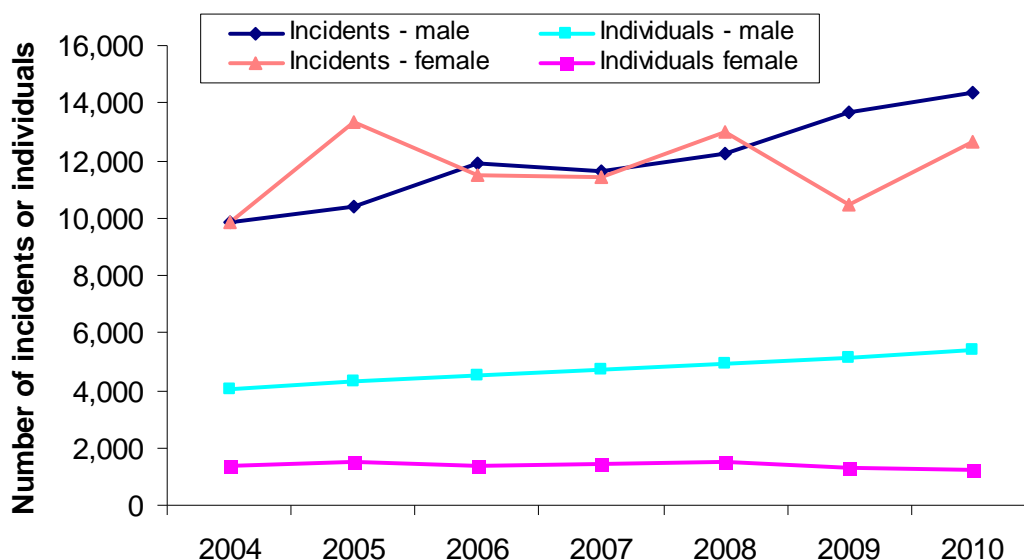
4) Figures for male and female incidents of self-harm have been revised as previously some incidents were mis-classified.

In 2010, a total of 6,639 individual prisoners were recorded as having self-harmed, comprising 5,406 males and 1,233 females. The overall number of individuals self-harming per 1,000 prisoners increased slightly from 77 in 2009 to 78 in 2010. Although the rates of self-harming for female prisoners remain considerably higher than for male prisoners (291 females self-harmed per 1,000 prisoners compared with 67 males per 1,000 prisoners), the rate has continued to slowly increase among males while it has

decreased for females (from 309 per 1,000 prisoners in 2009 to 291 in 2010).

The numbers of self-harm incidents increased sharply between 2009 and 2010, from 24,184 to 26,983 incidents following an overall upward trend since 2004, when relatively complete data collection began. This increase was seen for both males and females. The overall number of self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners increased from 289 in 2009 to 318 in 2010. For females there were 2,982 incidents of self-harm per 1,000 female prisoners in 2010, compared with 178 incidents of self-harm per 1,000 male prisoners.

**Figure 3: Number of self-harm incidents and individuals self-harming, by gender**



Among individuals who self-harm, the average number of incidents during 2010 was 4.1. Female prisoners who self-harm do so more frequently than male prisoners (an average of 10.2 incidents for females compared with an average of 2.7 incidents for males).

In 2010, among prisoners who self-harmed, 42 per cent of females and 62 per cent of males did so once, while 10 per cent of females and 1 per cent of males did so more than 20 times. The number of prisoners self-harming more than 20 times increased between 2009 and 2010 from 150 to 180. This provides some explanation of the increase in the number of incidents since, among male and female prisoners who self-harm, the 3 per cent of individuals who had more than 20 incidents of self-harm during 2010 accounted for 41 per cent of self-harm incidents.

Prisoners aged 15 to 20 years committed 5,783 incidents of self-harm in 2010. This represented 21 per cent of all incidents during the year while this age group represented only 11 per cent of the prison population. (Table 6)

**Table 6: Self harm incidents by age group and gender, England and Wales**

Age group	2004 <sup>(r)</sup>	2005 <sup>(r)</sup>	2006 <sup>(r)</sup>	2007 <sup>(r)</sup>	2008 <sup>(r)</sup>	2009 <sup>(r)</sup>	2010
<b>MALES AND FEMALES<sup>(1), (2)</sup></b>							
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>19,694</b>	<b>23,781</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>23,001</b>	<b>25,234</b>	<b>24,184</b>	<b>26,983</b>
15-17 year olds	1,074	1,260	1,011	1,101	1,473	1,085	725
18 - 20	3,686	5,034	4,998	4,559	5,115	4,388	5,058
21-24	4,055	4,266	4,033	4,817	5,370	4,437	5,668
25-29	3,409	4,185	4,334	3,932	3,787	4,105	4,552
30-39	3,971	5,096	4,960	4,421	5,498	5,035	6,095
40-49	1,171	1,834	2,400	2,272	2,094	2,346	2,319
50-59	167	184	234	238	350	598	825
60 and over	30	39	23	80	71	83	166
Not recorded	2,131	1,883	1,407	1,581	1,476	2,107	1,575
<b>MALES<sup>(3)</sup></b>							
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>9,866</b>	<b>10,421</b>	<b>11,899</b>	<b>11,593</b>	<b>12,219</b>	<b>13,707</b>	<b>14,350</b>
15-17 year olds	482	610	697	504	770	751	611
18 - 20	1,582	1,816	2,105	2,031	2,000	2,454	2618
21-24	1,659	1,721	1,984	2,087	2,206	2,318	2806
25-29	1,742	1,701	2,158	1,988	2,022	2,194	2434
30-39	2,413	2,471	2,802	2,699	2,738	2,960	2988
40-49	608	802	861	974	1,141	1,323	1374
50-59	99	133	198	139	192	258	273
60 and over	27	17	21	70	52	63	122
Not recorded	1254	1150	1073	1101	1098	1386	1124
<b>FEMALES<sup>(3)</sup></b>							
<b>All Ages</b>	<b>9,828</b>	<b>13,360</b>	<b>11,501</b>	<b>11,408</b>	<b>13,015</b>	<b>10,477</b>	<b>12,633</b>
15-17 year olds	592	650	314	597	703	334	114
18 - 20	2,104	3,218	2,893	2,528	3,115	1,934	2440
21-24	2,396	2,545	2,049	2,730	3,164	2,119	2862
25-29	1,667	2,484	2,176	1,944	1,765	1,911	2118
30-39	1,558	2,625	2,158	1,722	2,760	2,075	3107
40-49	563	1,032	1,539	1,298	953	1,023	945
50-59	68	51	36	99	158	340	552
60 and over	3	22	2	10	19	20	44
Not recorded	877	733	334	480	378	721	451

r) = revised

1) A new system for monitoring self harm was introduced in December 2002 and as a result recording of self harm improved throughout 2003. Numbers before 2004 have therefore not been included as they are not directly comparable with later figures.

2) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

3) Figures for male and female incidents of self-harm have been revised as previously some incidents were mis-classified.

In 2010, 5,705 or 21 per cent of self-harm incidents occurred within the first month of arriving in a prison (Table 7).

**Table 7: Self-harm incidents by time in current prison, England and Wales**

	2004 <sup>(r)</sup>	2005 <sup>(r)</sup>	2006 <sup>(r)</sup>	2007 <sup>(r)</sup>	2008 <sup>(r)</sup>	2009 <sup>(r)</sup>	2010
<b>MALES AND FEMALES<sup>(1), (2)</sup></b>							
<b>All</b>	<b>19,694</b>	<b>23,781</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>23,001</b>	<b>25,234</b>	<b>24,184</b>	<b>26,983</b>
On day of arrival	427	407	613	587	543	636	554
1st or 2nd full day <sup>(3)</sup>	695	732	741	759	757	700	636
3 days to 7 days	1,396	1,574	1,445	1,434	1,418	1,365	1,175
8 days to 30 days	3,697	4,111	4,399	3,753	4,080	3,558	3,340
31 days to 3 months	4,750	5,796	5,925	5,468	5,954	5,084	5,860
3 months to 6 months	2,969	3,681	3,674	3,756	4,375	3,668	4,222
6 months to 1 year	1,794	2,891	2,765	2,569	2,769	2,851	3,337
Over 1 year	1,797	2,673	2,417	3,080	3,851	4,207	6,238
Unknown	2,169	1,916	1,421	1,595	1,487	2,115	1,621
<b>MALES<sup>(3)</sup></b>							
<b>All</b>	<b>9,866</b>	<b>10,421</b>	<b>11,899</b>	<b>11,593</b>	<b>12,219</b>	<b>13,707</b>	<b>14,350</b>
On day of arrival	338	300	458	451	426	474	448
1st or 2nd full day	459	453	452	456	435	392	333
3 days to 7 days	809	854	815	749	727	727	559
8 days to 30 days	1,754	1,770	2,190	1,883	1,912	1,839	1,420
31 days to 3 months	2,142	2,150	2,737	2,463	2,582	2,658	2,378
3 months to 6 months	1,303	1,361	1,600	1,534	1,804	1,884	1,945
6 months to 1 year	863	1,189	1,248	1,319	1,369	1,675	2,068
Over 1 year	932	1,183	1,318	1,633	1,863	2,668	4,073
Unknown	1,266	1,161	1,081	1,105	1,101	1,390	1,126
<b>FEMALES<sup>(3)</sup></b>							
<b>All</b>	<b>9,828</b>	<b>13,360</b>	<b>11,501</b>	<b>11,408</b>	<b>13,015</b>	<b>10,477</b>	<b>12,633</b>
On day of arrival	89	107	155	136	117	162	106
1st or 2nd full day	236	279	289	303	322	308	303
3 days to 7 days	587	720	630	685	691	638	616
8 days to 30 days	1,943	2,341	2,209	1,870	2,168	1,719	1,920
31 days to 3 months	2,608	3,646	3,188	3,005	3,372	2,426	3,482
3 months to 6 months	1,666	2,320	2,074	2,222	2,571	1,784	2,277
6 months to 1 year	931	1,702	1,517	1,250	1,400	1,176	1,269
Over 1 year	865	1,490	1,099	1,447	1,988	1,539	2,165
Unknown	903	755	340	490	386	725	495

r) = revised

1) A new system for monitoring self harm was introduced in December 2002 and as a result recording of self harm improved throughout 2003. Numbers before 2004 have therefore not been included as they are not directly comparable with later figures.

2) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

3) Figures for male and female incidents of self-harm have been revised as previously some incidents were mis-classified.

# Assaults

Assault incidents fell in 2010 to 14,356 incidents, continuing the downward trend since a peak in 2008. The number of assault incidents per 1,000 population decreased from 182 in 2009 to 169 in 2010.

In 2010, of the 14,356 assault incidents, just under 10 per cent were classified as serious, compared with 9 per cent of the 15,185 assaults in 2009 (see Appendix B for definitions). 1,350 of these incidents occurred in male establishments and 44 occurred in female establishments.

There were 2,856 assaults on staff in 2010, of which 304 were classified as serious. Assaults on staff were highest in 2006 at 3530 and since then have fallen year on year. However, serious assaults on staff showed a slight increase from 269 in 2009 to 304 in 2010.

The proportion of people involved in assault incidents decreases with age.

**Table 8: Assault summary statistics by gender, England and Wales**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>POPULATION<sup>(1)</sup></b>										
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>66,301</b>	<b>70,778</b>	<b>73,038</b>	<b>74,657</b>	<b>75,979</b>	<b>78,127</b>	<b>80,216</b>	<b>82,572</b>	<b>83,559</b>	<b>84,725</b>
Males	62,561	66,479	68,613	70,209	71,512	73,680	75,842	78,158	79,277	80,489
Females	3,740	4,299	4,425	4,448	4,467	4,447	4,374	4,414	4,283	4,236
<b>ASSAULT INCIDENTS<sup>(2), (3)</sup></b>										
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>10,719</b>	<b>11,562</b>	<b>11,876</b>	<b>12,613</b>	<b>14,411</b>	<b>15,057</b>	<b>15,272</b>	<b>15,959</b>	<b>15,185</b>	<b>14,356</b>
Males	10,085	10,814	11,068	11,752	13,323	13,895	14,268	15,054	14,479	13702
Females	634	748	808	861	1,088	1,162	1,004	905	706	654
<b>ASSAULT INCIDENTS PER 1,000 PRISONERS</b>										
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>169</b>
Males	161	163	161	167	186	189	188	193	183	170
Females	170	174	183	194	244	261	230	205	165	154
<b>SERIOUS ASSAULTS</b>										
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>1,160</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>1,404</b>	<b>1,485</b>	<b>1,491</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>1,394</b>
Males	756	917	1,095	1,137	1,306	1,344	1,435	1,448	1,283	1350
Females	40	39	65	83	66	60	50	43	36	44
<b>ASSAULTS ON STAFF</b>										
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>2,851</b>	<b>2,893</b>	<b>3,204</b>	<b>3,502</b>	<b>3,530</b>	<b>3,267</b>	<b>3,198</b>	<b>3,083</b>	<b>2,856</b>
Males	2,412	2,553	2,592	2,895	3,067	3,006	2,857	2,846	2,831	2636
Females	288	298	301	309	435	524	410	352	252	220
<b>SERIOUS ASSAULTS ON STAFF</b>										
<b>Males and Females</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>304</b>
Males	169	188	247	246	277	254	266	264	257	285
Females	12	8	20	26	22	25	19	19	12	19

1) Prison population averaged across 12 months. See Offender Management annual statistics Table A1.2.

2) Prison violence can be measured in a number of ways. This report focuses on assault incidents including fights. A new Key Performance Indicator for serious assaults was introduced in 2003/04 and as a result reporting of all assault incidents improved. Reported incidents before 2005 are therefore not directly comparable with later figures.

3) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count assault incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

The role of individual prisoners in assault incidents cannot always be distinguished. In some incidents it is clear which prisoners are assailants and which are victims while in other incidents the roles are blurred. In the latter cases those involved are identified as 'fighters'. The roles are determined by local investigation of the incident.

In 2010, those aged 15 to 20 years old accounted for 49 per cent of total prisoner assailants, 58 per cent of total prisoner fighters, and 41 per cent of total prisoner victims. These percentages decrease with each successive 10-year age bracket. (Table 9)

**Table 9: Assault incidents by role and age, England and Wales**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 <sup>(r)</sup>	2009
<b>MALE AND FEMALE PRISONER ASSAILANTS<sup>(1), (2)</sup></b>										
<b>All age bands</b>	<b>5,223</b>	<b>5,097</b>	<b>4,994</b>	<b>5,161</b>	<b>6,464</b>	<b>6,799</b>	<b>6,535</b>	<b>7,170</b>	<b>6,913</b>	<b>6,965</b>
15-17	1,192	1,087	810	891	1,431	1,620	1,491	1,866	1,751	1,495
18-20	1,527	1,394	1,307	1,271	1,591	1,775	1,641	1,753	1,920	1,929
21-25	834	895	978	994	1,130	1,047	1,082	1,161	1,074	1,184
26-29	712	670	777	899	904	948	990	1,012	859	920
30-39	773	836	884	857	1,039	986	882	916	861	933
40-49	133	175	186	201	305	314	360	368	358	401
50-59	41	30	37	32	41	83	67	73	70	74
60 and over	9	10	13	16	22	26	22	21	19	26
Unknown <sup>(3)</sup>	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	3
<b>MALE AND FEMALE PRISONER FIGHTERS</b>										
<b>All Age Bands</b>	<b>6,978</b>	<b>7,556</b>	<b>7,718</b>	<b>7,666</b>	<b>9,556</b>	<b>10,447</b>	<b>11,386</b>	<b>11,627</b>	<b>11,257</b>	<b>10,778</b>
15-17	2,461	2,329	2,213	2,052	3,264	3,654	4,045	4,248	3,184	2,898
18-20	2,419	2,836	2,637	2,463	3,065	3,184	3,564	3,617	3,917	3,395
21-25	781	924	1,113	1,146	1,162	1,290	1,318	1,369	1,494	1,635
26-29	580	640	736	894	919	1,009	1,103	1,033	1,190	1,227
30-39	615	685	815	885	924	997	989	994	1,059	1,169
40-49	104	119	180	207	191	270	317	309	363	382
50-59	16	21	17	15	24	35	40	36	37	56
60 and over	2	2	7	4	7	8	10	21	12	15
Unknown <sup>(3)</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>MALE AND FEMALE PRISONER VICTIMS</b>										
<b>All Age Bands</b>	<b>3,918</b>	<b>4,281</b>	<b>4,158</b>	<b>4,270</b>	<b>5,298</b>	<b>5,631</b>	<b>5,783</b>	<b>6,424</b>	<b>5,899</b>	<b>5,591</b>
15-17	762	706	519	518	926	966	999	1,242	994	873
18-20	1,082	1,043	958	937	1,199	1,235	1,248	1,475	1,569	1,395
21-25	651	745	802	805	857	977	1,017	1,049	1,004	1,025
26-29	560	701	710	757	891	907	947	1,023	871	782
30-39	660	824	879	904	1,037	1,069	1,084	1,072	972	926
40-49	156	189	217	254	315	364	392	457	374	430
50-59	33	54	55	77	55	85	74	80	90	116
60 and over	14	19	18	18	18	28	22	26	25	44
Unknown <sup>(3)</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(r) Figures for 2009 have been revised.

1) A new Key Performance Indicator for serious assaults was introduced in 2003/04 and as a result reporting of all assault incidents improved. Reported incidents before 2005 are therefore not directly comparable with later figures.

2) In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count assault incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing figures shown here with other sources where data may be less complete.

3) The unknown category used here refers to identified prisoners whose ages were not recorded on the system at the time of the incident.

# Appendix A

## Timeline

2000

- March: Zahid Mubarek murdered by racially motivated cell mate at HM Young Offenders Institution Feltham

2002

- December: New self-harm monitoring form introduced
- New Cell Sharing Risk Assessment (CSRA) form introduced

2003

- January: Prison Service Order (PSO) 2700, "Suicide and Self Harm Prevention" launched

2004

- Joint Commission on Human Rights publishes, "Report on Deaths in Custody"
- April: Apparent homicide of Shahid Aziz – Leeds
- May: PSO 2750, "Violence Reduction Strategy" launched

2006

- New at risk prisoner care planning system, "Assessment Care in Custody and Teamwork" (ACCT) launched
- Home Office and Department of Health create Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody
- Zahid Mubarek inquiry finishes

2007

- Prison staff issued with cut down tools
- March: Baroness Jean Corston publishes, a "Review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice system"
- October: PSO 2700 revised
- December: Lord Carter publishes, "Proposals for the efficient and sustainable use of custody in England and Wales"

2008

- March: Robert Fulton publishes, "Independent review of the Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody"

2009

- January: Review of NOMS Violence Reduction Strategy commenced
- March: Lord Harris appointed of Chair of newly-formed Independent Advisory Council on Deaths in Custody

# Appendix B

## Data Sources, Quality and Methodology

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. While the figures shown have been checked as far as practicable, they should be regarded as approximate and not necessarily accurate to the last whole number.

## Deaths in prison custody information

The data presented in this publication is drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Prison Custody database and administrative IT systems.

Deaths in prison custody should more correctly be described as deaths arising from incidents during custody or, on rare occasions, immediately prior to custody as actual deaths may occur some time after the initial incident.

Data includes deaths of prisoners while Released On Temporary License (ROTL) for medical reasons but excludes deaths of any prisoners released on other types of temporary license for the following reasons:

- The incident leading to a death does not occur within the direct control of the state (for example, an overdose or fatal road traffic accident)
- ROTL deaths cannot be counted accurately as they are not always reported to NOMS.

The Prison and Probation Ombudsman has the discretion to investigate such deaths.

The actual cause of death, whether suicide, murder or self-inflicted as determined at inquest, may be unknown for several years. This means that published numbers of deaths by apparent cause can change over time. In a small proportion of cases the cause may never be known.

Information on deaths in prison custody comes from a range of sources:

- Historical archives
- Prisoner records
- Incident Operations Unit
- NOMS strategic IT systems including IRS, IIS and NOMIS
- Prisons
- Prison and Probation Ombudsman investigations
- Coroners

The NOMS central database stores data on deaths in prison custody from 1978. Not every piece of information is available from 1978 as information



such as ethnicity, nationality, date prisoner arrived in prison etc. has been added to the database at different times.

The NOMS system of classifying deaths has evolved specifically to help place reliable numbers of deaths in prison custody in the public domain without undue delay.

Comparison of NOMS classification of deaths with other systems:

- NHS: International Classification of Diseases ICD versions 9/10
- Prison and Probation Ombudsman: Self-inflicted, Natural causes, Substance abuse, Homicide, Accidental
- Police: Inquest verdicts (for example, Suicide, Open verdict, Non-dependent drug abuse, Natural causes, Sudden deaths, Inquest pending , Inquest not held)

Similar variations occur with other prison systems. As a result, when comparing published deaths in prison custody for England and Wales, it is important to consider whether or not the definitions used are comparable.

A number of other organisations use a category, “drug-related death.” While NOMS monitors drug related deaths, it does not use this category because there are relatively few drug-related deaths in prison custody.

Comparison of NOMS Classification of Deaths system with ICD Codes

The main international system for death classification is part of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) currently on version 10. The NOMS classifications can be matched to these. Researchers wishing to compare deaths in prison custody for England and Wales with those from other sources should be aware of the following:

ICD9 comparison

- The apparent self-inflicted deaths category is a close match to E950-959, E980-E989 excluding E988.8
- Apparent homicide is a close match to: E960-E969, E979, E999.
- Apparent other non-natural is a close match E800-E869, E880-E929 and, if any occurred, legal intervention (E970-E978) and operations of war (E990-E998). This category also includes some otherwise difficult to classify deaths.

ICD 10 comparison

- The apparent self-inflicted deaths category is a close match and ICD10: Intentional Self-harm(X60-X84) and ICD10: Event of Undetermined Intent (Y10-Y34).
- Apparent homicide is a close match to ICD10:Assault (X85-Y09)
- Apparent other non-natural is a close match to ICD10 Accident (V01-X59.) This category also includes some otherwise difficult to classify deaths.

### **Self-harm Information**

Detailed information on each self-harm incident in prison custody comes from the NOMS incident reporting system (IRS) and more recently NOMIS (the new prison IT system). Such information began to be collected in the early 1990s. The focus then was on reporting serious incidents but the range of data has expanded to include all self-harm incidents whether or not an injury was sustained.

The current self-harm monitoring system started in December 2002 but because recording of self-harm improved throughout 2003 the data used in this report is 2004 to 2009.

In prisons, as in the community, it is not possible to count self-harm incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. Care needs to be taken when comparing NOMS self-harm statistics with other sources where data may be less complete.

### **Assaults information**

An assault is classified as serious if:

- it is a sexual assault
- it results in detention in outside hospital as an in-patient
- it requires medical treatment for concussion or internal injuries
- the injury is a fracture, scald or burn, stabbing, crushing, extensive or multiple bruising, black eye, broken nose, lost or broken tooth, cuts requiring suturing, bites or temporary or permanent blindness.

Information on assaults comes from the NOMS incident reporting system, IIS and NOMIS. Detailed recording of information on each assault incident began in the mid 1990s. The early focus was on serious incidents. Fights between prisoners (assault incidents where there was no clear assailant and victim), were reported less often.

All assault incidents, including fights, are now reported irrespective of whether an injury was sustained. Due to changes in categorisation of data, information prior to 2000 is not directly comparable with that collected later.

## **Reporting rates**

Throughout this bulletin rates of events per 1,000 prisoners have been calculated using the average prison population over the year, calculated as the average of the 12 month-end prison populations during each year (published in the Offender Management Caseload Statistics annual tables). This average population can also be interpreted as 'prisoner-years'. However it does not take into account all the individuals who are in custody at any point during the year, and therefore are potentially at risk of experiencing the event. In future bulletins we will review some of the rates to take account of all at-risk individuals.

## **Standardised mortality ratio**

The standardised mortality ratio (SMR) compares the death rate in custody with the death rate in the general population, adjusting for age and gender. When the rates are equal the ratio is 1. A ratio higher than 1 indicates that, after adjusting for age and gender, there is a higher rate of death in custody than in the general population. However the ratio is not an exact figure, but has a confidence interval, which gives the range in which the true value is likely to lie. If this range includes 1, this indicates that the difference between deaths rates in custody and in the general population is not statistically significant. The accompanying technical note "Reporting of deaths in custody" provides further details.

## Contact points for further information

The current edition of this publication and more detailed spreadsheets are available for download at [www.justice.gov.uk/publications/safer-custody.htm](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/safer-custody.htm)

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

Tel: 020 3334 3536

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

**Steve Ellerd-Elliott**

Performance, Information and Analysis Group  
NOMS Agency  
Clive House  
70 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9EX

Tel: 030 0047 6325

General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

