



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Safety in Custody Statistics

Quarterly Update to June 2012

England and Wales

25 October 2012

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Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody. This publication contains statistics relating to these incidents up to the period ending June 2012 in England and Wales.

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

This is the second quarterly Safety in Custody statistical bulletin. Following feedback on the first version, some of the technical material has now been included in a separate 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'¹ that includes further information on data quality.

When considering particular statistics, readers should note the following:

- Risk of death, self-harm or assaults is distributed unevenly 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.

Although this publication concerns statistics, the incidents described in this report are, by their nature, tragic and distressing to the prisoners, their families and staff. NOMS remains committed to reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths, caring for prisoners at risk of self-harm, reducing violence in prison custody and learning from such incidents.

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. Others have affected the way statistics are collected and reported. The accompanying guide includes a timeline summarising some of the key events and developments that have affected safety in prison custody and supporting statistics. These help with interpretation of longer term trends.

The cost of deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody, in both human and financial terms is high. This report adds to the body of learning in this area and supports work to prevent such tragedies in future. The contents support a wide range of operational and strategic decisions including:

- Management of risk;
- Deployment of staff (identification of high risk periods and locations etc.);
- Design of prison cells (identification and reduction of ligature points);
- Assessment of changes in sentencing and other policies affecting prisoners.

¹ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

Each year, hundreds of requests for safety in custody information are received including Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information requests. The contents of this report help answer such requests and will be of interest to the general public, 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.

This bulletin is published alongside two inter-related bulletins:

Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin²: This provides key statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision. It covers flows into these services (receptions into prison or probation starts) and flows out (discharges from prison or probation terminations) as well as the caseload of both services at specific points in time.

Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly³: This provides proven re-offending figures for offenders who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, received a caution, reprimand, warning or tested positive for opiates or cocaine in the 12 months ending September 2010.

Taken together, these publications present users with a more coherent overview of offender management, re-offending among both adults and young people and the safety of offenders whilst in prison custody.

² Offender Management Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly

³ Proven Reoffending Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/reoffending/proven-re-offending

Key findings

Table 1: Safety in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending ¹									
	-Jun 03	-Jun 04	-Jun 05	-Jun 06	-Jun 07	-Jun 08	-Jun 09	-Jun 10	-Jun 11	-Jun 12
Total deaths	181	199	184	166	178	167	171	179	199	193
Self-inflicted	103	93	88	70	79	77	63	59	63	51
Natural Causes	75	94	91	90	94	87	103	115	118	126
Homicide	0	2	2	2	2	0	3	0	2	1
Other ²	3	10	3	4	3	3	2	5	16	15
Self-harm incidents³	-	-	22,123	23,892	23,240	23,330	25,253	25,739	25,954	23,435
Males	-	-	10,109	11,093	12,233	11,572	12,997	14,090	15,139	16,102
Females	-	-	12,014	12,799	11,007	11,758	12,256	11,649	10,815	7,333
Assault incidents	11,752	12,192	13,459	14,898	15,082	15,877	15,434	14,713	14,739	15,213
Males	11,014	11,337	12,534	13,727	13,997	14,905	14,630	14,054	14,036	14,610
Females	738	855	925	1,171	1,085	972	804	659	703	603

1. There have been no changes to the underpinning quarterly data for deaths since the last report. There have been minor changes to self-harm and assaults quarterly tables which are detailed in tables 6 and 7 available from the website.

2. 'Other' deaths include accidental and other difficult to classify deaths including those for which further information is awaited. A minority of the most recent two years figures are expected to be reclassified as natural causes.

3. A new system for monitoring self-harm was introduced in December 2002. As a result, recording of self-harm improved throughout 2003. 12 month periods that include parts of 2003 and earlier years are therefore under-reported by modern standards and have been omitted from this table.

Deaths

For the 12 months ending June 2012 (see tables 1 and 2), there were:

- 193 deaths in prison custody (a fall of three per cent compared to the previous 12 month period);
- 51 self-inflicted deaths (a fall of 19 per cent compared with previous 12 months);
- 15 'other' deaths (eight per cent of all deaths) - a fall of one death compared with the previous 12 months.

Annual numbers of deaths are volatile and rises or falls from one year to the next are not a good indicator of underlying trend.

- The most recent fall in the mortality rate to 2.2 deaths per 1,000 prisoners was preceded by a rise from 2.1 to 2.3 in the previous 12 months;
- Self-inflicted death rates have fallen from 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending June 2003 to 0.6 deaths per 1,000 in the 12 months ending June 2012.

Self-harm

For the 12 months ending June 2012 (see tables 1 and 3), there were:

- 23,435 self-harm incidents (a decrease of 10 per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 7,004 individuals who self-harmed (an increase of 2 per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- The rate of female individuals who self-harmed fell to 279 per 1,000 prisoners (a decrease of 13 per cent compared with the previous 12 months).

Trends for male and female self-harm are best considered separately:

- Male self-harm rates have increased over the last five years ending June, from 150 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners to 194 per 1,000 prisoners;
- Female self-harm rates have fallen over the last four years ending June particularly over the last year. For the 12 months ending June 2012 there were 1,750 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners (a reduction of 32 per cent compared with the previous 12 months).

A number of factors contributed to the change:

- Changes in the relative numbers of repetitive self-harmers: Numbers of female prisoners self-harming more than 20 times during a year fell from 126 in 2010 to 84 in 2011 compared with an increase for males from 53 to 69 over the same period;⁴
- Changes in the average number of times each individual self-harms: Average number of incidents per female self-harmer fell from 10.1 in 2010 to 7.1 in 2011 compared with males which increased from 2.7 to 2.8 over the same period;⁵
- A reduction in the number of female prisoners, who now form a smaller proportion of the overall prison population: 6.1 per cent in 2002 down to 4.9 per cent in 2011.

Assaults

In the 12 months ending June 2012 (see tables 1 and 4), there were:

- 15,213 assault incidents (a rise of three per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 175 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (a rise of one per cent);
- 3,070 assaults (20 per cent of all assaults) on staff (a rise of five per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 35 assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners (no change);
- 258 serious assaults on staff (a fall of 13 per cent compared with the previous 12 months).

Overall assault rates are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate which accounts for some 95 per cent of the prison population. Assault rates in the male prison estate have levelled while those in the female prison estate have fallen.

⁴ Safety in Custody: Self-harm table 2.12

⁵ Safety in Custody: Self-harm table 2.1

- Overall assault rates since 2003 have ranged between 163 and 195 per 1,000 prisoners;
- Having fallen for the preceding five years, assault rates on staff have remained at 35 per 1,000 prisoners for the last three years;
- Until 2009, assault rates in the female prison estate tended to be higher than in the male prison estate. Rates in the female prison estate have been lower for the last three years.

Population factors

Underlying changes in the prison population⁶ continue to affect the distribution of safety in custody risk.

- The prison population has been ageing – the mean age of prisoners increased from 32.6 years in 2002 to 34.0 in 2011;
- There are now proportionally fewer female prisoners – 6.1 per cent in 2002 down to 4.9 per cent in 2011.

⁶ Offender Management Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly

Deaths in custody

A death in prison custody is defined as ‘any death of a person in prison custody arising from an incident in or, on rare occasions, immediately prior to prison custody’.

All deaths in prison custody are subject to a police investigation and a coroner’s inquest. Once the inquest has been concluded, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman’s office publish a detailed ‘Fatal Incident Report’⁷ on the death.

The key population factors in determining risk of death in custody are:

- Age: Older prisoners are more likely to die of natural causes. Self-inflicted death risk varies with age peaking amongst prisoners in their 30s;
- Time in custody: Self-inflicted deaths are more likely in the early stages of custody;
- Gender: Female prisoners are less likely to die in custody.

Table 2: Deaths in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	-Jun 03	-Jun 04	-Jun 05	-Jun 06	-Jun 07	-Jun 08	-Jun 09	-Jun 10	-Jun 11	-Jun 12
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody¹	181	199	184	166	178	167	171	179	199	193
Self-inflicted	103	93	88	70	79	77	63	59	63	51
Natural Causes	75	94	91	90	94	87	103	115	118	126
Homicide	0	2	2	2	2	0	3	0	2	1
Other ²	3	10	3	4	3	3	2	5	16	15
<i>of which</i>										
<i>Other/Non-natural</i>	3	10	3	4	3	3	2	4	7	1
<i>Awaiting further information</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	14
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.2
Self-inflicted	1.4	1.3	1.2	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6
Natural Causes	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.4

1. All classifications of deaths remain provisional until confirmed at inquest.

2. A minority of the most recent two years figures for ‘other’ deaths are expected to be re-classified as natural causes

Overall mortality

For the 12 months ending June 2012 (see table 2), there were:

- 193 deaths in prison custody (a fall of three per cent compared to the previous 12 month period);
- 2.2 deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

Annual numbers of deaths are volatile and rises or falls from one year to the next are not a good indicator of underlying trend.

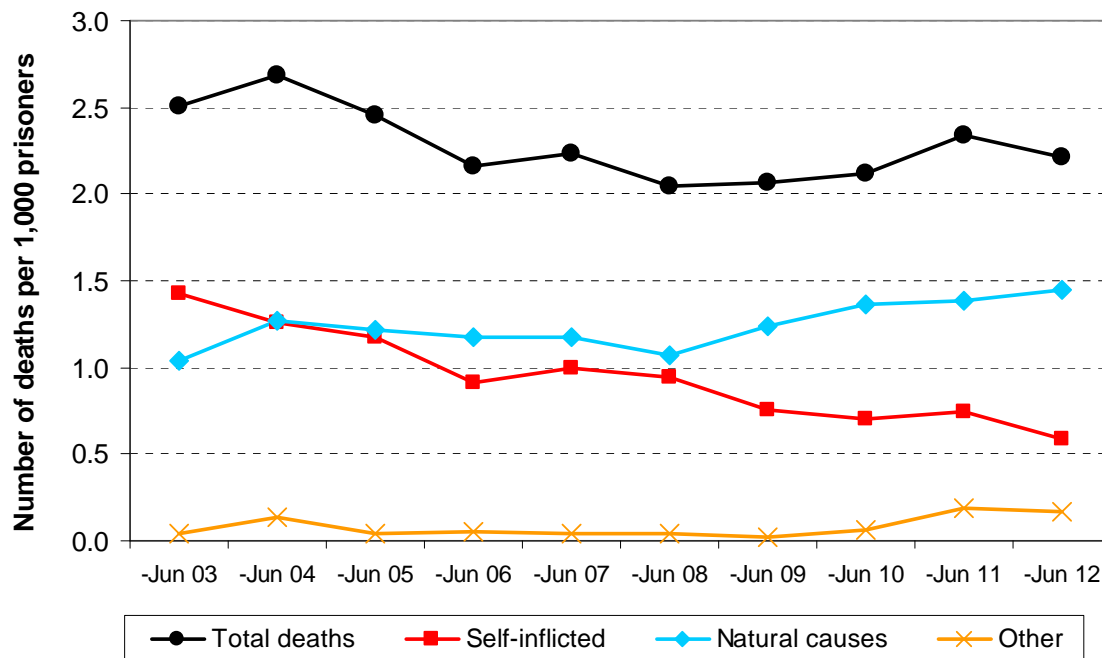
- The most recent fall in the mortality rate to 2.2 deaths per 1,000 prisoners was preceded by a rise from 2.1 to 2.3 in the previous 12 months;

Changes in the prison population – increased numbers and an increased average age have contributed to an increase in numbers of deaths in particular those relating to

⁷ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html

natural causes. The mean age of the prison population rose from 32.6 years in 2002 to 34.0 in 2011⁸.

Figure 1: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, England and Wales



Self-inflicted deaths

Self-inflicted deaths include any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent.

For the 12 months ending June 2012, there were:

- 51 self-inflicted deaths (a fall of 19 per cent compared with previous 12 months);
- 0.6 deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

As with overall deaths in prison custody, annual numbers of self-inflicted deaths are volatile and rises or falls from one year to the next are not a good indicator of underlying trend. Self-inflicted deaths and corresponding rates have been falling for some years and although the most recent figures show a further decrease, the underlying rates may be starting to level.

- Self-inflicted death rates have fallen from 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending June 2003 to 0.6 deaths per 1,000 in the 12 months ending June 2012.

The increase in 'other' deaths from 2010 and the decrease in self-inflicted deaths are unconnected. Classifications of deaths have always involved an element of uncertainty

⁸ Offender Management Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly

and although it is possible that a small proportion of 'other' deaths may be self-inflicted, the effect is not sufficient to adversely affect interpretation of trends.

Suicide prevention policies have specifically targeted the early stages of custody. There have now been no self-inflicted deaths on the day of arrival in prison⁹ since 2008. The numbers on the first and second full days also remain low, averaging less than one per quarter.

From 1989 to 2003, self-inflicted deaths were consistently higher than those due to natural causes¹⁰. Up to the 1980s, natural causes routinely accounted for the majority of deaths in prison custody. In the late 1980s, self-inflicted deaths started to increase. 'Care in the community' is sometimes cited¹¹ as a reason for the increase as it is believed to have led to an increase in the proportions of prisoners with mental illness. The proportions of mentally ill in the prison population are not measured routinely so the actual change over time is unknown. The increase in numbers of self-inflicted deaths from the late 1980s is likely to be due to a combination of factors because it started before the impact of the 1989 White Paper 'Caring for People: *Community Care in the next Decade and Beyond*' could have taken full effect.

Natural cause deaths

Natural cause deaths include any death of a person as a result of a naturally occurring disease process.

For the 12 months ending June 2012, there were:

- 126 natural cause deaths (a rise of seven per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

Natural cause rates have increased by around a half over the last ten years. A minority of the most recent deaths currently classified as 'other' in this report are likely to be classified as natural causes once more information becomes available. As a result, figures for the most recent two years are likely to be under-reported compared with earlier figures. Assuming five of the fifteen deaths are eventually reclassified as natural causes, then the numbers and rates in this report would be under-reported by some four per cent. The uncertainty on these figures will not be entirely removed until after inquest

⁹ Safety in Custody Deaths: Table 1.7 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

¹⁰ Safety in Custody: Deaths Table 1.2

¹¹ Mental Health of Prisoners (HM Inspectorate of Prisons 2007)
www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/thematic-reports-and-research-publications/mental_health-rps.pdf

Homicides

Homicides include any death of a person at the hands of another. This includes murder and manslaughter cases.

In the 12 months ending June 2012, there was one homicide compared with two in the previous 12 months. Annual numbers have varied between zero and three over the last 10 years.

Homicides are relatively rare accounting for less than one per cent of all deaths in prison custody. There were 14 in the 10 years from 2002 to 2011: an average of 1.4 per year. For the previous 10 years ending 2001 there were 22; an average of 2.2 per year.¹²

Other deaths

'Other' deaths include any death of a person whose death cannot easily be classified as natural causes, self-inflicted or homicide. The category includes accidents and cases where the cause of death is unknown even after all of the investigations have been concluded.

For the 12 months ending June 2012:

- there were 15 'other' deaths (eight per cent of all deaths) - a fall of one death compared with the previous 12 months;
- a minority of deaths in this category are likely to be natural cause deaths but this will not be confirmed until inquests have been concluded.

The numbers in this category have increased in recent years due to a number of cases that have proved difficult to classify. In July 2011, we reported that there were eight 'unclassified' deaths in 2010. At the time this report was being prepared, five remained. Of the three that were provisionally classified, two were 'other/non-natural' and one was 'natural causes'.

The majority of deaths for which information is awaited beyond three months are expected to be classified as 'other/non-natural'. Of the remainder, most will be natural causes.

Some of the cases in the aggregated 'other' category appear to be drug related but there is no reason to believe that any are self-inflicted. However, the uncertainty will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

As with homicides, 'other' deaths are best considered over long periods.

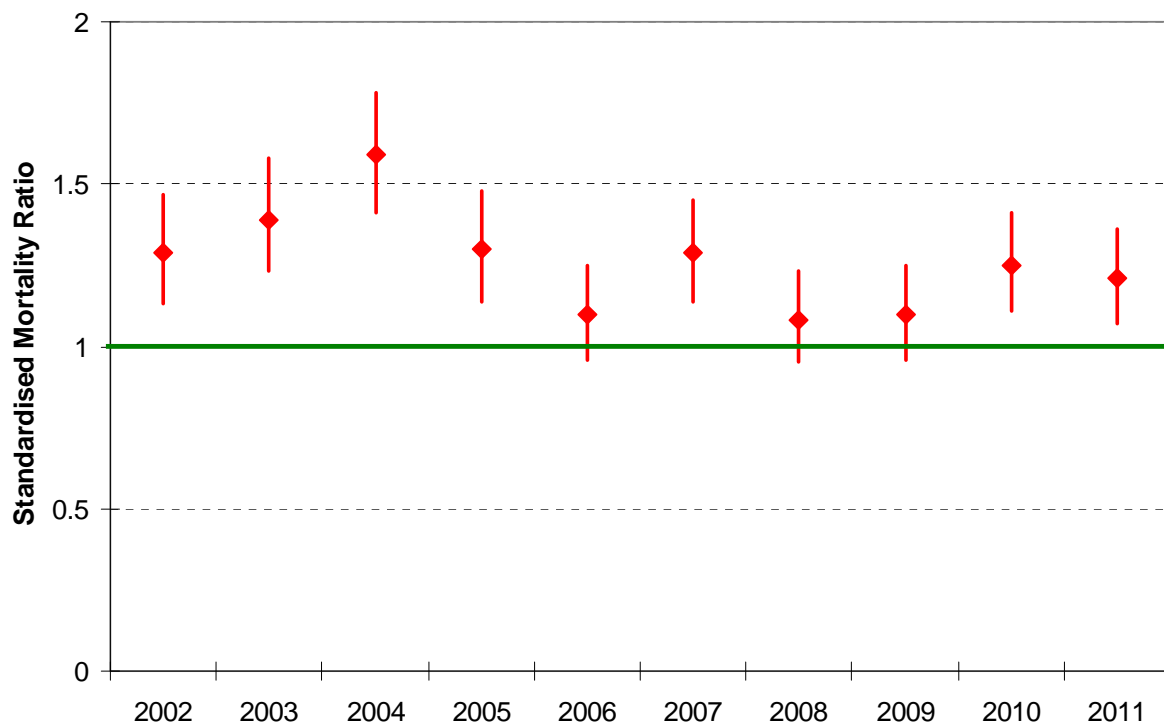
¹² Safety in Custody: Deaths Table 1.1 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

Comparison of deaths in prison with those in the general population

The prison population is very different from the general population: 95 per cent of the prison population are male, there are no prisoners aged under 15 and relatively few are over 60. As a result, rates of deaths in prison custody cannot be compared directly with those for the general population. One technique used for comparing mortality rates for different populations is known as the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR).

Figure 2 is based on annual data and shows the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for the prison population and its 95 per cent confidence interval. It compares overall deaths with those of the general population of England and Wales taking into account differences in age and gender. If the minimum of the SMR confidence level of the SMR is above one, then this indicates that the mortality rate of the prison population is significantly higher than that of the general population. In seven out of the last ten years, prison mortality has been significantly higher than that of the general population.

Figure 2: Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population



This chart is updated annually on a calendar year basis when the underlying data become available.

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.” Those who self-harm often do so covertly. In the community, such self-harm will often go undetected. In prisons, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted.

The key factors determining the risk of self-harm in custody are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to self-harm than older prisoners¹³;
- Gender: Female prisoners self-harm more frequently than males;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody¹⁴.

Table 3: Self-harm in Custody Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending							
	-Jun 05	-Jun 06	-Jun 07	-Jun 08	-Jun 09	-Jun 10	-Jun 11	-Jun 12
SELF-HARM								
Self-harm incidents¹	22,123	23,892	23,240	23,330	25,253	25,739	25,954	23,435
Males	10,109	11,093	12,233	11,572	12,997	14,090	15,139	16,102
Females	12,014	12,799	11,007	11,758	12,256	11,649	10,815	7,333
Self-harm individuals²	5,692	5,994	6,297	6,454	6,642	7,183	6,849	7,004
Males	4,263	4,523	4,852	4,979	5,133	5,675	5,508	5,836
Females	1,429	1,471	1,445	1,475	1,509	1,508	1,341	1,168
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	295	311	292	286	304	305	306	269
Males	143	153	163	150	165	176	188	194
Females	2,738	2,862	2,496	2,654	2,830	2,730	2,579	1,750
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners²	76	78	79	79	80	85	81	80
Males	60	62	64	65	65	71	68	70
Females	326	329	328	333	348	353	320	279
Self-harm incidents per individual	3.9	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.3
Males	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.8
Females	8.4	8.7	7.6	8.0	8.1	7.7	8.1	6.3
Hospital Attendances	1,158	1,257	1,197	1,333	1,298	1,328	1,425	1,512
Males	929	1,013	1,008	1,141	1,095	1,167	1,265	1,347
Females	229	244	189	192	203	161	160	165

1. A new system for monitoring self-harm was introduced in December 2002. As a result, recording of self-harm improved throughout 2003. 12 month periods that include parts of 2003 and earlier years are therefore under-reported by modern standards and have been omitted from this table.

2. Numbers of individuals should be treated as approximate as the details of prisoners are not always recorded against each self-harm incident.

¹³ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

¹⁴ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

For the 12 months ending June 2012 (see table 3), there were:

- 23,435 self-harm incidents (a decrease of 10 per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 7,004 individuals who self-harmed (an increase of 2 per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- The rate of female individuals who self-harmed fell to 279 per 1,000 prisoners (a decrease of 13 per cent compared with the previous 12 months).

Trends for male and female self-harm are best considered separately:

- Male self-harm rates have increased over the last five years ending June, from 150 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners to 194 per 1,000 prisoners;
- Female self-harm rates have fallen over the last four years ending June particularly over the last year. For the 12 months ending June 2012 there were 1,750 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners (a reduction of 32 per cent compared with the previous 12 months).

A number of factors contributed to the change:

- Changes in the relative numbers of repetitive self-harmers: Numbers of female prisoners self-harming more than 20 times during a year fell from 126 in 2010 to 84 in 2011 compared with an increase for males from 53 to 69 over the same period;¹⁵
- Changes in the average number of times each individual self-harms: Average number of incidents per female self-harmer fell from 10.1 in 2010 to 7.1 in 2011 compared with males which increased from 2.7 to 2.8 over the same period;¹⁶
- A reduction in the number of female prisoners, who now form a smaller proportion of the overall prison population: 6.1 per cent in 2002 down to 4.9 per cent in 2011.

The ageing prison population is also a factor. Younger prisoners are more likely to self-harm than older prisoners. For example, in 2011, prisoners aged 15 to 20 accounted for 11 per cent of the prison population¹⁷ but 21 per cent of all self-harm incidents. An increase in mean age of a population should imply lower self-harm rates but in practice self-harm trends are dominated by other factors such as numbers of repetitive self-harmers.

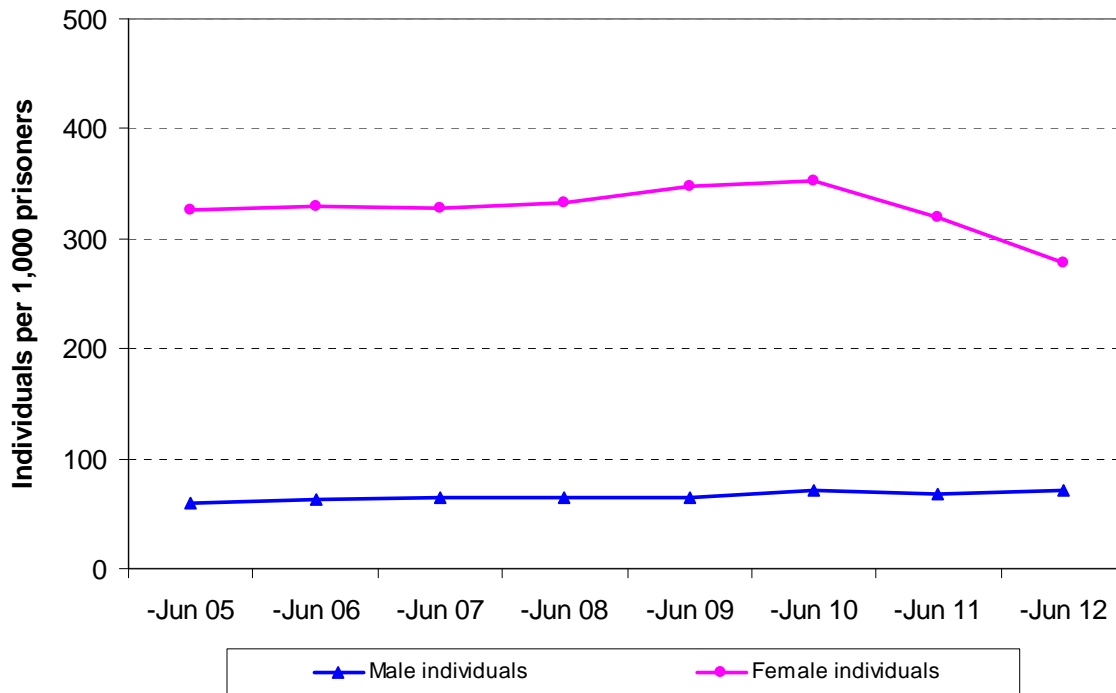
Until 2006, the female population accounted for more than half of all self-harm incidents in prison custody. That is no longer the case. For the 12 months ending June 2012 females accounted for 31 per cent of all self-harm incidents. The rates of female self-harm continue to be much higher than for males but the gap has decreased (see table 2). Figure 3 shows that while the rate of male individuals self-harming has remained fairly constant, the rate for females have fallen.

¹⁵ Safety in Custody: Self-harm table 2.12

¹⁶ Safety in Custody: Self-harm table 2.1

¹⁷ Offender Management Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly

Figure 3: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales



Improvements in the management of self-harm may have contributed to the fall in female self-harm but, given the differences between male and female self-harm, it seems likely that the overall health needs of the population have changed.

Although self-harm incidents in prison custody are relatively common, it remains the case that the majority of prisoners do not self-harm. Of the prisoners who did self-harm in 2011, 43 per cent of females and 60 per cent of males did so once, while six per cent of females and one per cent of males did so more than 20 times.

Although the proportions of prisoners who self-harm more than 20 times during a year are relatively small, they do account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm incidents. Since 2004, individuals self-harming more than 20 times in the year have accounted for between 33 per cent and 46 per cent of all self-harm incidents.

The early days of arriving in a prison are the highest risk times for self-harm with the incidence reducing over time. In 2011, approximately 23 per cent of self-harm incidents occurred within the first month of arriving in a prison. This proportion has been reducing in recent years down from 42 per cent in 2004.¹⁸ The reduction is, in part, due to the reduction in the female population but also prisoners being in custody for longer.

¹⁸ Safety in Custody Self-harm table 2.15 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

Assaults

Assaults in prison custody cover a wide range of violent incidents including fights between prisoners. NOMS does not use the Home Office counting rule definitions of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), affray etc. and figures cannot be compared directly.

The key population factors determining the risk of involvement in assaults are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to assault and be victims than older prisoners;¹⁹
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.²⁰

Table 4: Assault incidents Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	-Jun 03	-Jun 04	-Jun 05	-Jun 06	-Jun 07	-Jun 08	-Jun 09	-Jun 10	-Jun 11	-Jun 12
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents	11,752	12,192	13,459	14,898	15,082	15,877	15,434	14,713	14,739	15,213
Males	11,014	11,337	12,534	13,727	13,997	14,905	14,630	14,054	14,036	14,610
Females	738	855	925	1,171	1,085	972	804	659	703	603
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	163	164	180	194	189	195	186	174	174	175
Males	163	163	178	190	186	194	186	175	174	176
Females	168	191	211	262	246	219	186	154	168	144
Serious assaults	1,063	1,208	1,256	1,375	1,470	1,523	1,353	1,414	1,341	1,340
Males	1,009	1,139	1,179	1,311	1,408	1,487	1,311	1,372	1,290	1,307
Females	54	69	77	64	62	36	42	42	51	33
Assaults on Staff	2,862	3,084	3,354	3,551	3,386	3,269	3,121	2,977	2,933	3,070
Males	2,575	2,761	3,009	3,064	2,924	2,860	2,821	2,763	2,686	2,888
Females	287	323	345	487	462	409	300	214	247	182
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	40	42	45	46	43	40	38	35	35	35
Males	38	40	43	42	39	37	36	34	33	35
Females	66	72	79	109	105	92	69	50	59	43
Serious assaults on staff	230	286	271	277	283	295	273	290	296	258
Males	214	266	247	251	262	279	257	272	276	247
Females	16	20	24	26	21	16	16	18	20	11

In the 12 months ending June 2012 there were:

- 15,213 assault incidents (a rise of three per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 175 assaults per 1,000 prisoners (a rise of one per cent);
- 3,070 assaults (20 per cent of all assaults) on staff (a rise of five per cent compared with the previous 12 months);
- 35 assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners (no change);
- 258 serious assaults on staff (a fall of 13 per cent compared with the previous 12 months).

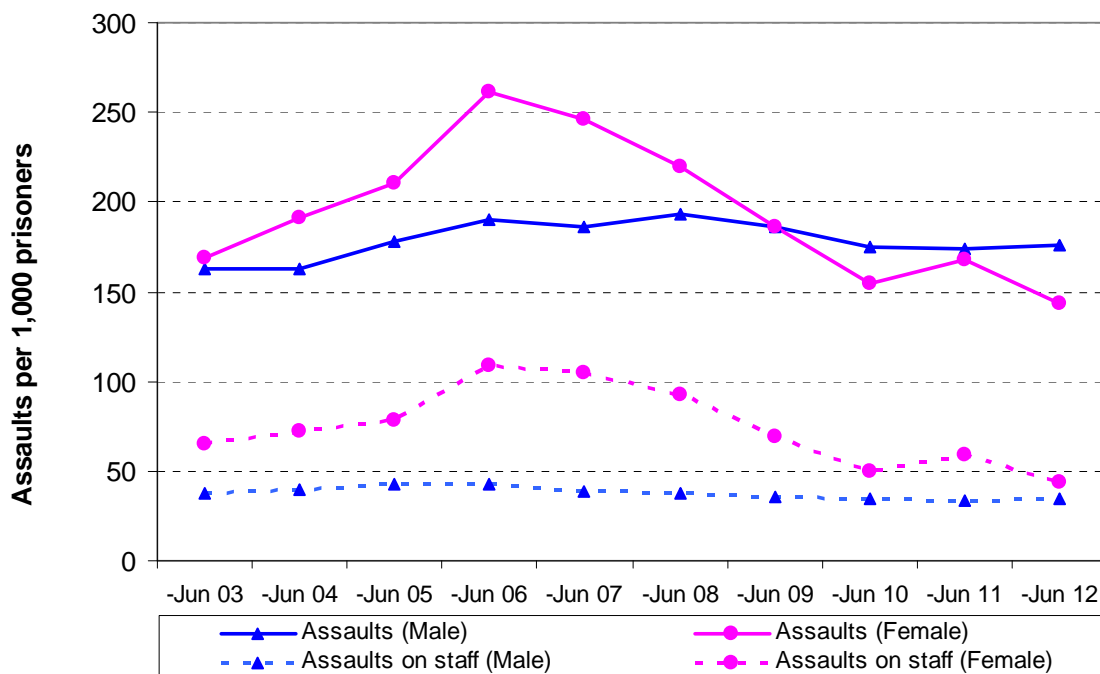
¹⁹ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

²⁰ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

Overall assault rates are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate which accounts for some 95 per cent of the prison population. Assault rates in the male prison estate have levelled while those in the female prison estate have fallen (see figure 4).

- Overall assault rates since 2003 have ranged between 163 and 195 per 1,000 prisoners;
- Having fallen for the preceding five years, assault rates on staff have remained at 35 per 1,000 prisoners for the last three years;
- Until 2009, assault rates in the female prison estate tended to be higher than in the male prison estate. Rates in the female prison estate have been lower for the last three years.

Figure 4: Total assaults and assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales



As with the overall rate, the rates of assaults on staff are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate. Rates in the male prison estate increased slightly to 35 per 1,000 prisoners while the figure for the female estate decreased to 43 per 1,000 - less than half the rate in some previous years. Assault rates in the female prison estate show a stronger downward trend but figures are more volatile.

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 may be identified as 'fighters'. The roles are determined by local investigation of the incident.

Younger prisoners are more frequently involved in violence than older prisoners. In 2011, prisoners aged 15 to 20 accounted for 11 per cent of the prison population²¹. However, they accounted 59 per cent of all fighters 46 per cent of assailants and 38 per cent of victims.²²

Compared with self-inflicted deaths and self-harm, the pattern of assaults in the early stages of custody is complex. The first few days in custody tend to be under-represented whereas the overall numbers in the first month are over represented. For example, between 2009 and 2011 assailants were involved in assault incidents an average of 6 per cent in their first seven days increasing to 18 per cent in their first 30 days. In the very early stages of custody, prisoners may be held in a first night centre or an induction wing. Others may be sent to a drug wing for detoxification. At some point, those prisoners will be transferred to the general prison population. The apparent increase in assaults at this time may simply reflect an increased opportunity for assaults – more prisoners more opportunity.

In the context of assault incidents, gender refers to the type of prison and not the gender of those involved in the incident. The reason for this is that in a small percentage of cases, assault incidents in a male prison will be on females – typically members of staff. Similarly, in female prisons, a small percentage of assaults will be on male staff.

²¹ Offender Management Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly

²² Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections (www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi)

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody (<http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/>)

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx)
- Deaths following police contact (www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx)

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

- Fatal Incident reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/investigating-fatal-accidents.html)
- Annual reports (www.ppo.gov.uk/annual-reports.html)

World Health Organisation (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD)

- ICD 10 (<http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2010/en>)

Ministry of Justice/NOMS

- Prison and Probation Statistics (www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation)
- Prison Service Orders (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos)
- Prison Service Instructions (www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis)

List of tables and figures

This is a list of quarterly and annual Safety in Custody Statistics tables and figures. Tables 1 to 4 and figures 1 to 4 are included in this publication. The remaining tables are available from the website²³. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

	Table description	Period
Safety in Custody – Summary tables		
Table 1	Safety in custody summary statistics	Jul 02 - Jun 12
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Jul 02 - Jun 12
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Jul 04 - Jun 12
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Jul 02 - Jun 12
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 - Jun 12
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Jan 04 - Jun 12
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Jan 02 - Jun 12
Safety in Custody – Figures		
Figure 1	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Jul 02 - Jun 12
Figure 2	Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population	2002-2011
Figure 3	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Jul 04 - Jun 12
Figure 4	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total and on staff	Jul 02 - Jun 12
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Table 1.1	Annual deaths in prison custody and rates by apparent cause	1978 - 2011
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Table 1.3	Annual deaths in prison custody by apparent cause and age band	1978 - 2011
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Table 1.5	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender	1978 - 2011
Table 1.6	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by age	1978 - 2011
Table 1.7	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by time in custody and current prison	1999 - 2011
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Table 1.12	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by method	1999 - 2011
Table 1.13	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation	1999 - 2011
Table 1.14	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligature points used in fatal hangings	1999 - 2011
Table 1.15	Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group	2001 - 2011
Table 1.16	Annual self-inflicted deaths by establishment	2001 - 2011
Table 1.17	Annual natural cause deaths by establishment	2001 - 2011
Table 1.18	Dates of opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011

²³ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

Table description		Period
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Table 2.4	Annual individuals self-harming by age group	2004 - 2011
Table 2.5	Annual self-harm incidents by time in current prison	2004 - 2011
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Table 2.7	Annual self-harm incidents by ethnicity	2004 - 2011
Table 2.8	Annual self-harm incidents by nationality type	2004 - 2011
Table 2.9	Individuals self-harming by nationality type	2004 - 2011
Table 2.10	Annual self-harm incidents by location	2004 - 2011
Table 2.11	Annual self-harm incidents by type of hospital attendances	2004 - 2011
Table 2.12	Annual self-harm frequency	2004 - 2011
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Table 2.14	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011
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Table 3.14	Annual assaults and prisoner on prisoner assaults by establishment	2000 - 2011
Table 3.15	Annual assaults on staff and on prison officers by establishment	2000 - 2011
Table 3.16	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011

Data Sources and Data Quality

The data presented in this publication are drawn from the NOMS Deaths in Custody Database and NOMS Incident Reporting System.

Information relating to deaths in prison custody is closely scrutinised and the data is considered to be of high quality. Classifications of deaths however, are not finalised until after inquest. As inquests may not be concluded until some years after a death, tables dependent on classifications should be treated as provisional. Changes do not generally affect reported trends.

As in the community, it is not possible to count self-harm and assaults incidents with absolute accuracy. In prison custody, however, such incidents are more likely to be detected and counted. The data presented in this report are considered satisfactory for determining trends but should not be treated as absolute.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the returns, the information 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 shown in the tables. Where figures in the tables have been rounded to the nearest whole number, the rounded components do not always add to the totals, which are calculated and rounded independently.

For a more detailed discussion about data sources and data quality see the 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'²⁴

Explanatory notes

The statistics in this bulletin relate to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales to the period ending June 2012. As this is the first time figures have been published for years ending June, there are no revisions to be reported.

This is the second quarterly safety in custody bulletin. Following feedback on the first edition some technical material has now been included in the accompanying 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

..	not available
0	nil or less than half the final digit shown
-	not applicable
(p)	Provisional data
(r)	Revised data

²⁴ Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found here www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from
www.statistics.gov.uk/

Ministry of Justice publishes data relating to offender management in England and Wales. Equivalent statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found at:
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice
www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm

Alternative formats are available on request from statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk
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