



Safety in Custody Statistics Quarterly Update to September 2012

England and Wales

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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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 September 2012 in England and Wales. This bulletin is accompanied by summary tables and more detailed breakdowns which can be found at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody>.

The statistics contained within this bulletin are Official Statistics and are produced in accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Ministry of Justice.

In interpreting the statistics contained within this bulletin, users are recommended to read with it the accompanying 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'¹ that includes technical and background information on the production of these statistics, and more 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. Age, gender and time in custody, 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.

Changes and revisions in this publication

All summary tables showing 12 month totals have been moved forward to cover the 12 months to end September. Within the assaults section of this bulletin the labelling of the gender category has been changed to reflect the fact that the statistics report whether the assault occurred in a male or female establishment rather than a definitive statement of the gender of those involved in the assault. Whilst assaults in a male prison will predominantly involve males on males, in a small number of cases assaults – mostly on staff – can involve a female and vice versa in a female prison. This is a change in labelling only and not a

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

change in what statistics are published. There is no change to the underlying methodology of collating assault statistics.

In Table 2 in the accompanying summary spreadsheet, there are some minor revisions to quarterly death statistics; three deaths have been reclassified from “other” to “Natural Cause” deaths following receipt of further information.

Users and uses of these Statistics

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.

The statistics included in this publication are used extensively and meet a broad spectrum of user needs as shown below.

User	Summary of main statistical needs
MOJ Ministers	Use the statistics to monitor the safety and wellbeing of the prison population; assess policy impacts (e.g. changes to managing vulnerable prisoners)
MPs and House of Lords	Statistics are used to answer parliamentary questions – approximately 100 are answered each year
Policy teams	Statistics are used to inform policy development, to monitor impact of changes over time and to model future changes and their impact on the system
Agencies responsible for offender management	Current and historical robust administrative data are used to support performance management information at national and local levels to complement their understanding of the current picture and trends over time
Academia, students and businesses	Used as a source of statistics for research purposes and to support lectures, presentations and conferences
Journalists	Used as a compendium of robust data on safety in custody so that an accurate and coherent story can be told on the safety of the prison environment.
Voluntary sector	Data are used to monitor trends of the safety and wellbeing of prisoners, to reuse the data in their own briefing and research papers and to inform policy work and responses to consultations.
General public	Data are used to respond to ad-hoc requests and requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. Recent requests include number of deaths, self-harm and assaults in prisons.

NOMS regularly receives requests for statistics for more recent, or different, date periods than those covered in published statistics. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, NOMS is generally unable to release statistics for periods beyond those published in Official Statistics publications.

Related publications

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.

Release Schedule

This bulletin was published on 31 January 2013 and includes statistics for 12 month periods ending September in each year since 2004. Statistics over these periods have not been released previously.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 25 April 2013 and will cover 12 month periods to end of December 2012. All statistics remain provisional and will be reviewed in the next publication. The next publication will also update the annual tables with statistics at an establishment level to include 2012.

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									
	-Sep 03	-Sep 04	-Sep 05	-Sep 06	-Sep 07	-Sep 08	-Sep 09	-Sep 10	-Sep 11	-Sep 12
Total deaths	174	215	175	156	182	165	166	193	198	194
Self-inflicted	94	103	84	61	87	70	61	60	58	56
Natural Causes	77	101	84	90	90	89	102	123	125	126
Homicide	1	1	3	1	2	3	0	1	1	1
Other ¹	2	10	4	4	3	3	3	9	14	11
Self-harm incidents²	-	-	23,508	23,448	23,228	24,119	24,471	26,721	25,166	23,134
Males	-	-	10,277	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,138
Females	-	-	13,231	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	6,996
Assault incidents	11,855	12,213	14,004	14,926	15,298	15,896	15,363	14,508	15,088	14,803
Males	11,088	11,355	13,020	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,214
Females	767	858	984	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	589

1. '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.

2. 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 September 2012 (see tables 1 and 2), there were:

- 194 deaths in prison custody, compared with 198 in the previous 12 month period - a fall of two per cent;
- 56 self-inflicted deaths, compared with 58 in the previous 12 months - a fall of three per cent;
- 11 'other' deaths (six per cent of all deaths) - compared with 14 in 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 mortality rate was 2.2 deaths per 1,000 prisoners down from 2.3 per 1,000 prisoners for the previous 12 months;
- Self-inflicted death rates have fallen from 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending September 2004 to 0.6 deaths per 1,000 in the 12 months ending September 2012.

Self-harm

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

- 23,134 self-harm incidents, compared with 25,166 incidents in the previous 12 months – a fall of eight per cent;
- 6,956 individuals who self-harmed, compared with 6,868 individuals in the previous 12 months – a rise of one per cent;
- The rate of female individuals who self-harmed fell by over 10 per cent from 313 individuals per 1,000 prisoners to 278 individuals per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending September 2012.

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

- Male self-harm rates have increased over the last five 12 month periods ending September, from 153 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2008 to 195 per 1,000 prisoners in 2012;
- In contrast, female self-harm rates have fallen over the same period, particularly over the last three years, from 2,746 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2008 to 1,678 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2012.

Annual figures shows that a number of factors have 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;
- 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;
- 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 September 2012 (Tables 1 and 4) there were:

- 14,803 assault incidents, compared with 15,088 in the previous 12 months – a fall of two per cent;
- 170 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 177 in the previous 12 months – a fall of four per cent;
- 2,992 assaults on staff (20 per cent of all assault incidents) compared with 3,053 in the previous 12 months – a fall of two per cent;
- 34 assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 36 in the previous 12 months – a fall of six per cent;
- 252 serious assault incidents involving an assault on staff, compared with 281 in 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.

- Overall assault rates since 2003 have ranged between 163 and 195 per 1,000 prisoners;

- 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 four 12 month periods.

Population factors

Underlying changes in the prison population⁴ 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.

⁴ 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’⁵ on the death. Until this time, for administrative and statistical purposes NOMS classify deaths by *apparent* cause of death.

Annual statistics⁶ show that 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									
	-Sep 03	-Sep 04	-Sep 05	-Sep 06	-Sep 07	-Sep 08	-Sep 09	-Sep 10	-Sep 11	-Sep 12
DEATHS										
Deaths in prison custody¹	174	215	175	156	182	165	166	193	198	194
Self-inflicted	94	103	84	61	87	70	61	60	58	56
Natural Causes	77	101	84	90	90	89	102	123	125	126
Homicide	1	1	3	1	2	3	0	1	1	1
Other ²	2	10	4	4	3	3	3	9	14	11
of which										
Other/Non-natural	2	10	4	4	3	3	3	6	4	0
Awaiting further information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	11
Deaths per 1,000 prisoners	2.4	2.9	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.2
Self-inflicted	1.3	1.4	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6
Natural Causes	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	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 September 2012 (see table 2), there were:

- 194 deaths in prison custody, compared with 198 in the previous 12 month period – a fall of two per cent;
- 56 self-inflicted deaths – the lowest in any 12 month period to September over the last 10 years.
- 126 Natural cause deaths – the highest in any 12 month period to September over the last 10 years.
- 2.2 deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

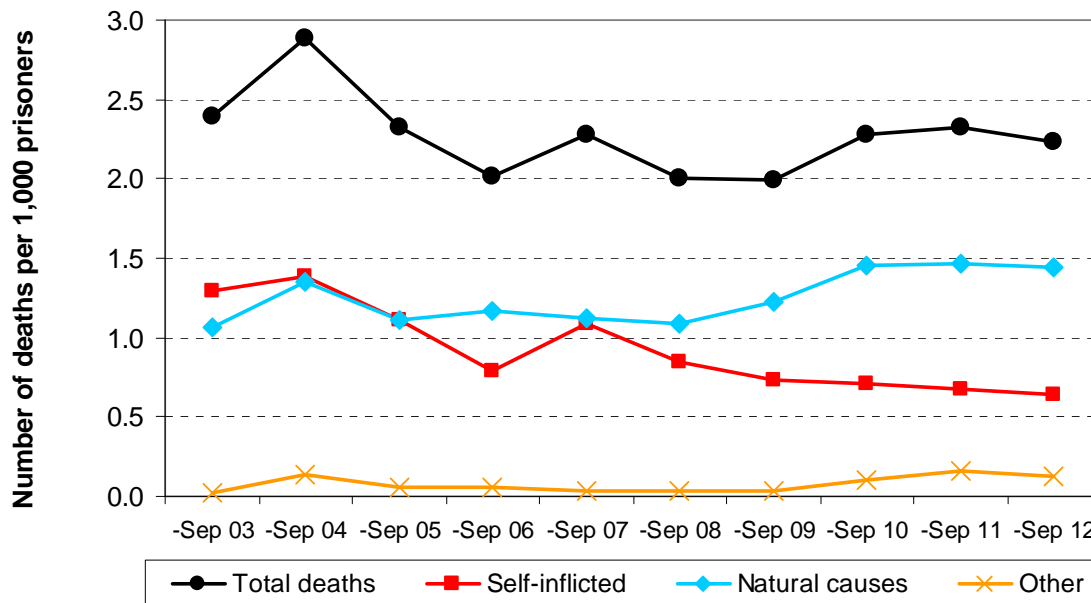
Caution should be taken when interpreting increases and decreases in numbers between years. Statistics on deaths in prison custody are largely driven by the composition and size

⁵ Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html

⁶ Deaths in Custody: www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/statistics/prison-probation/safety-custody/safety-in-custody-deaths-jun-12.xls

of the prison population. For example, in recent years the prison population has increased with an increasing male to female prisoner ratio. The increase in the number of natural cause deaths has coincided with an increase in the mean age of the prison population, which rose from 32.6 years in 2002 to 34.0 in 2011⁷.

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 September 2012, there were:

- 56 self-inflicted deaths, compared with 58 over the previous 12 months and the lowest level in any 12 month period to end of September over the last 10 years;
- 0.6 deaths per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 0.7 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the preceding 12 months.

The number of self-inflicted deaths and corresponding rates have been declining for some years and although, at 56, the most recent figures are at their lowest for at least 10 years, the underlying rates have only shown slight changes in recent years. After relatively large decreases in the rate of self-inflicted deaths per 1,000 prisoners between 2005 and 2008, the last 3 years have seen negligible falls in the death rate.

- Self-inflicted death rates have fallen from 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending September 2004 to 0.6 deaths per 1,000 in the 12 months ending September 2012.

⁷ Offender Management Statistics www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/oms-quarterly

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 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 prison⁸ 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 causes⁹. 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 cited¹⁰ 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 September 2012, there were:

- 126 natural cause deaths, compared with 125 in the previous 12 months – the highest number of natural cause deaths in any 12 month period over the last 10 years;
- 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners.

Natural cause rates have increased by around a half over the last ten years but like self-inflicted deaths the rate of natural cause deaths is largely unchanged over the last three 12 month periods to end of September. Although the table shows a change of 0.1 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over this period this is mostly due to rounding.

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. If, for example, 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

Homicides

⁸ Safety in Custody Deaths: Table 1.7 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

⁹ Safety in Custody: Deaths Table 1.2

¹⁰ 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 include any death of a person at the hands of another. This includes murder and manslaughter cases.

In the 12 months ending September 2012, there was one homicide, the same as 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.¹¹

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 September 2012:

- there were 14 'other' deaths (six per cent of all deaths) - a fall of three deaths 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'
- In July 2012 we reported that there were twelve 'unclassified' deaths in 2011 of which ten remain. Of the two that were provisionally classified both were classified as natural causes.

The majority of deaths for which information is awaited beyond three months are expected to be classified as either 'other/non-natural' or 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.

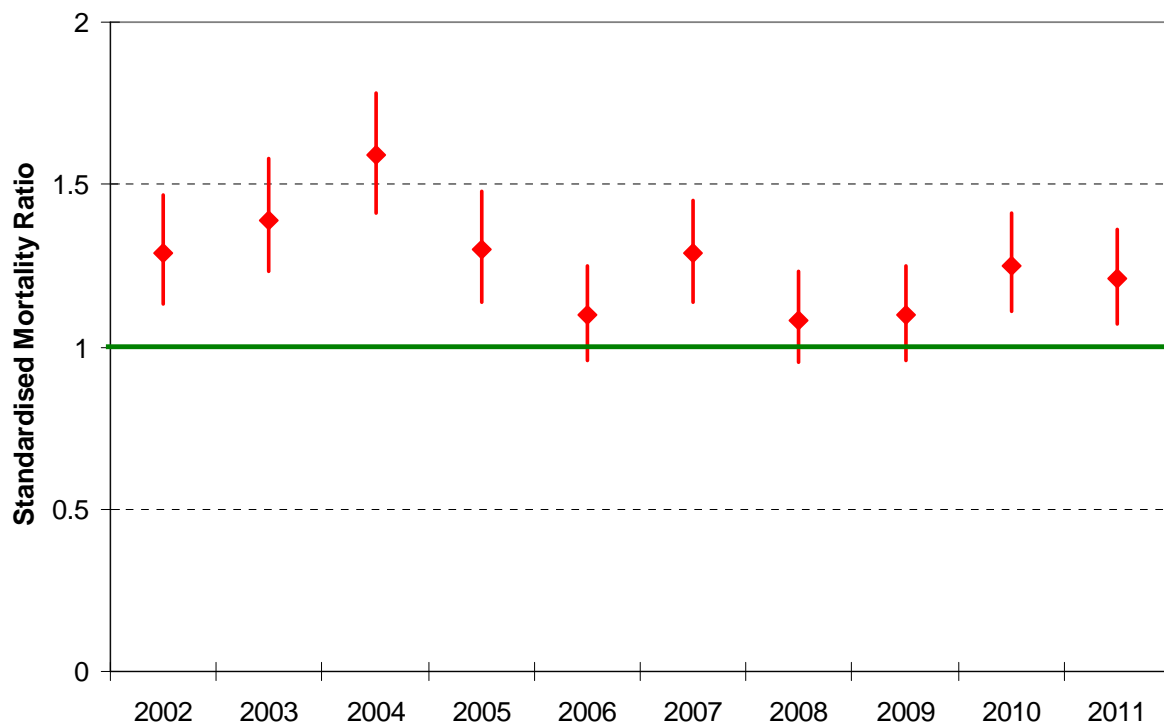
¹¹ Safety in Custody: Deaths Table 1.1 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

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 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 prisoners¹²;
- Gender: Female prisoners self-harm more frequently than males;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody¹³.

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

	12 months ending							
	-Sep 05	-Sep 06	-Sep 07	-Sep 08	-Sep 09	-Sep 10	-Sep 11	-Sep 12
SELF-HARM								
Self-harm incidents	23,508	23,448	23,228	24,119	24,471	26,721	25,166	23,134
Males	10,277	11,534	12,004	11,924	13,224	14,314	15,480	16,138
Females	13,231	11,914	11,224	12,195	11,247	12,407	9,686	6,996
Self-harm individuals¹	5,760	6,020	6,352	6,521	6,831	6,958	6,868	6,956
Males	4,290	4,585	4,879	4,990	5,302	5,540	5,558	5,797
Females	1,470	1,435	1,473	1,531	1,529	1,418	1,310	1,159
Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners	311	303	290	294	294	315	295	266
Males	145	158	159	153	168	178	191	195
Females	2,994	2,670	2,568	2,746	2,621	2,912	2,313	1,678
Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners¹	76	78	79	79	82	82	81	80
Males	60	63	64	64	67	69	69	70
Females	333	322	337	345	356	333	313	278
Self-harm incidents per individual	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.3
Males	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.8
Females	9.0	8.3	7.6	8.0	7.4	8.7	7.4	6.0
Hospital Attendances	1,186	1,233	1,230	1,337	1,266	1,379	1,497	1,474
Males	950	999	1,049	1,128	1,091	1,214	1,331	1,315
Females	236	234	181	209	175	165	166	159

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

¹² Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

¹³ Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

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

- 23,134 self-harm incidents, compared with 25,166 incidents in the previous 12 months – a fall of eight per cent;
- 6,956 individuals who self-harmed, compared with 6,868 individuals in the previous 12 months – a rise of one per cent;
- The rate of female individuals who self-harmed fell by over 10 per cent from 313 individuals per 1,000 prisoners to 278 individuals per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months ending September 2012.

There are contrasting trends between male and female self-harm:

- Male self-harm rates have increased over the last four 12 month periods ending September, from 168 self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2009 to 195 per 1,000 prisoners in 2012;
- In contrast, female self-harm rates have fallen over the same period, particularly over the last three years, from 2,621 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2009 to 1,678 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in 2012.

The fall in the number of female self-harm incidents is partly driven by slightly fewer females in the prison population. However, as the rate of self-harm incidents also falls it shows there are other factors that have driven the lower number of self-harm incidents in the female prison population.

The decrease in the number and rate of female self-harm incidents between 2009 and 2011 corresponds with a decrease in the numbers of repetitive female 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.¹⁴
- 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;¹⁵

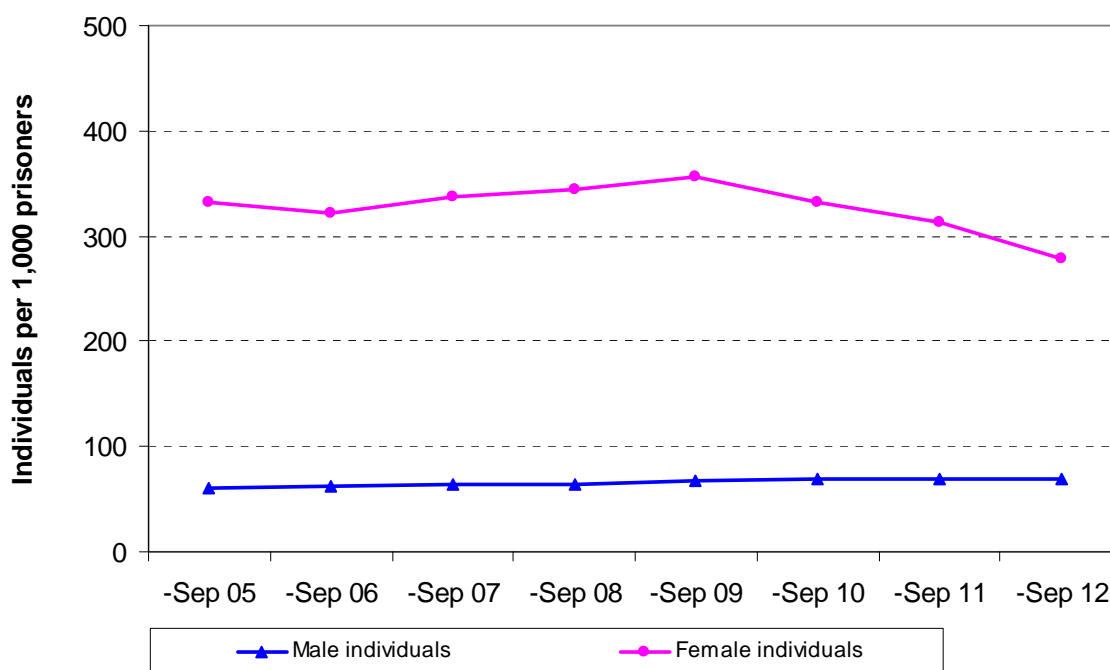
Statistics for 2012 are due to be available with the next publication of this bulletin in April 2013.

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 September 2012 females accounted for 30 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 has fallen.

¹⁴ Safety in Custody: Self-harm table 2.12

¹⁵ Safety in Custody: Self-harm table 2.1

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 2004.¹⁶ The reduction is, in part, due to the reduction in the female population but also prisoners being in custody for longer.

¹⁶ 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;¹⁷
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.¹⁸

Table 4: Assault incidents Summary Statistics, England and Wales

	12 months ending									
	-Sep 03	-Sep 04	-Sep 05	-Sep 06	-Sep 07	-Sep 08	-Sep 09	-Sep 10	-Sep 11	-Sep 12
ASSAULTS										
Assault incidents	11,855	12,213	14,004	14,926	15,298	15,896	15,363	14,508	15,088	14,803
Male establishments	11,088	11,355	13,020	13,719	14,283	14,949	14,594	13,848	14,416	14,214
Female establishments	767	858	984	1,207	1,015	947	769	660	672	589
Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners	163	164	186	193	191	194	185	171	177	170
Male establishments	163	162	183	188	189	192	185	172	178	171
Female establishments	174	192	223	271	232	213	179	155	160	141
Serious assaults	1,094	1,202	1,300	1,392	1,489	1,532	1,326	1,410	1,352	1,287
Male establishments	1,031	1,133	1,231	1,328	1,434	1,487	1,291	1,366	1,303	1,258
Female establishments	63	69	69	64	55	45	35	44	49	29
Assaults on Staff	2,865	3,153	3,437	3,536	3,343	3,255	3,057	2,937	3,053	2,992
Male establishments	2,576	2,836	3,061	3,011	2,919	2,866	2,778	2,721	2,820	2,809
Female establishments	289	317	376	525	424	389	279	216	233	183
Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners	39	42	46	46	42	40	37	35	36	34
Male establishments	38	41	43	41	39	37	35	34	35	34
Female establishments	66	71	85	118	97	88	65	51	56	44
Serious assaults on staff	243	286	280	282	281	306	252	310	281	252
Male establishments	225	260	263	255	261	285	241	291	262	245
Female establishments	18	26	17	27	20	21	11	19	19	7

Gender refers to the type of establishment. Although predominantly the gender of the people involved in the assault will be the same as the type of establishment, in a small number of cases - typically assaults on staff - the gender may be different to the establishment type.

In the 12 months ending September 2012 there were:

- 14,803 assault incidents, compared with 15,088 in the previous 12 months – a fall of two per cent;
- 170 assaults per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 177 in the previous 12 months – a fall of four per cent;
- 2,992 assaults on staff (20 per cent of all assault incidents) compared with 3,053 in the previous 12 months – a fall of two per cent;
- 34 assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 36 in the previous 12 months – a fall of six per cent;
- 252 serious assault incidents involving an assault on staff, compared with 281 in the previous 12 months.

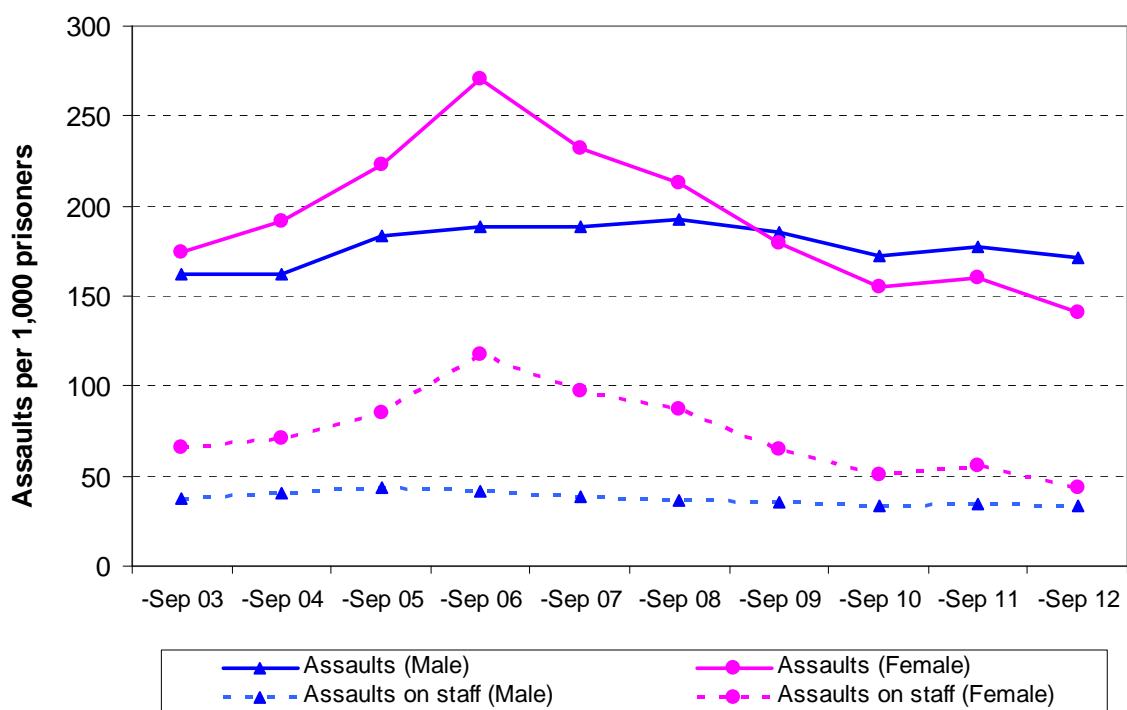
¹⁷ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

¹⁸ 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;
- 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 four 12 month periods.

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 incidents involving assaults on staff are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate. Rates in the male prison estate remained at between 34 and 35 incidents per 1,000 prisoners for the last four 12 month periods ending September, while over the same period the figure for the female estate fell from 65 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the 12 months to September 2009 to 44 per 1,000 in the 12 months to September 2012. Assault rates in the female prison estate show a stronger downward trend over the longer term, although there was a brief departure from this trend during 2011.

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.

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 (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 (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 website¹⁹. 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	Oct 02 - Sep 12
Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Oct 02 - Sep 12
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Oct 05 - Sep 12
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Oct 02 - Sep 12
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 - Sep 12
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Oct 05 - Sep 12
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Oct 02 - Sep 12
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Figure 1	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Oct 02 - Sep 12
Figure 2	Annual Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) for prison population	2002-2011
Figure 3	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Oct 05 - Sep 12
Figure 4	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total and on staff	Oct 02 - Sep 12
	Deaths tables	
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
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Table 1.8	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by type of custody	1999 - 2011
Table 1.9	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by ethnicity	1999 - 2011
Table 1.10	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by nationality type	1999 - 2011
Table 1.11	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by sentence type	1999 - 2011
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: Ligation 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

¹⁹ Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/prisons-and-probation/safety-in-custody

Self-harm tables

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Table 2.11	Annual self-harm incidents by type of hospital attendances	2004 - 2011
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Table 2.14	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2011

Assaults tables

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Table 3.3	Annual assault incidents and prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by age	2000 - 2011
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Table 3.5	Annual prisoner assailants, victims and fighters by type of custody	2000 - 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.

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.

Self-harm and assault incidents in custody are more likely to be detected and counted than those occurring in the community. However, some incidents in custody will remain undetected and therefore go unreported.

For a more detailed discussion about data sources and data quality see the 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'²⁰

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 September 2012. As this is the first time figures have been published for years ending September, 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

²⁰ 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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statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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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