



Ministry  
of Justice



# **Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales Deaths in Custody to September 2014 Assaults and Self-harm to June 2014**

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics bulletin

30 October 2014

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## Introduction

Safety in custody statistics cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales. This publication updates statistics on assaults and self-harm up to June 2014 and statistics on deaths in prison custody up to September 2014. Supplementary tables, providing more in depth statistics on deaths, self-harm and assaults on a calendar year basis, are also available alongside this bulletin and can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics).

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

In interpreting the statistics contained within this bulletin, users are recommended to read with it the accompanying 'Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics'<sup>1</sup> 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.

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***

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<sup>1</sup> Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

In view of the high interest in deaths in prisons, we have reviewed our systems and are now in a position to publish this data one month in arrears rather than the previous four months. There are no changes to methodology or content of the statistics bulletin, and there is no impact to the availability or comparability of the time series. This change is not expected to result in any significant effect on the quality of the statistics presented.

Due to the change in the timeliness of the deaths in custody statistics an additional table showing deaths in custody for the 12 months to June 2014 (table 2.1) is included in this publication as a one off exercise.

Regular reviews are conducted of deaths classified as awaiting further information (AFI). Since the last publication 2 AFI deaths have been reclassified as natural cause deaths.

### **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 frequently used to answer parliamentary questions
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 Bulletin<sup>2</sup>***: 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 Quarterly<sup>3</sup>***: 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.

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 30 October 2014 and includes statistics covering 12-month periods to end of June 2014 for self-harm and assaults and 12 month periods to end of September 2014 for deaths.

The next publication of Safety in Custody statistics is scheduled to be published on 29 January 2015, covering 12-month periods to end of September 2014 and December 2014 respectively.

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<sup>2</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

<sup>3</sup> Proven Reoffending Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/proven-reoffending-statistics)

## Key findings

**Table 1: Safety 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	Sep 13	Sep 14
<b>Total deaths<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>176</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>235</b>
Self-inflicted	84	61	87	70	61	60	59	57	63	87
Natural Causes	85	90	89	90	101	123	127	130	123	133
Homicide	3	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	3
Other <sup>e</sup>	4	4	5	3	4	9	12	6	10	12

	12 months ending									
	Jun 05	Jun 06	Jun 07	Jun 08	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14
<b>Self-harm incidents<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>22,123</b>	<b>23,892</b>	<b>23,240</b>	<b>23,330</b>	<b>25,253</b>	<b>25,739</b>	<b>25,954</b>	<b>23,522</b>	<b>23,139</b>	<b>23,798</b>
Males	10,109	11,093	12,233	11,572	12,997	14,090	15,139	16,151	16,888	17,681
Females	12,014	12,799	11,007	11,758	12,256	11,649	10,815	7,371	6,251	6,117
<b>Assault incidents<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>13,459</b>	<b>14,898</b>	<b>15,082</b>	<b>15,877</b>	<b>15,434</b>	<b>14,713</b>	<b>14,739</b>	<b>15,320</b>	<b>14,045</b>	<b>15,441</b>
Males	12,534	13,727	13,997	14,905	14,630	14,054	14,036	14,709	13,540	14,887
Females	925	1,171	1,085	972	804	659	703	611	505	554

1. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

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

- The number of deaths in prison custody increased to 235 in the 12 months to the end of September 2014 from 198 in the same period the previous year. The death rate increased to 2.8 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.3 in the 12 months to the end of September 2013. This increase comes after a period of relative stability in the death rate in prisons. There was an increase in the number of self-inflicted deaths to 87 in the 12 months to September 2014 from 63 in the 12 months to September 2013. This is the highest number of self-inflicted deaths since 2007. The rate of self-inflicted deaths was 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners up from 0.8 deaths per 1,000 in the 12 months to the end of September 2013.
- The number of self-harm incidents has increased to 23,798 incidents in the 12 months to end of June 2014, compared with 23,139 in the previous 12 month period. However, there are differing trends between the male and female estates, with self-harm falling amongst female prisoners, down to 6,117 incidents from 6,251 a year earlier. In contrast, incidents of self-harm amongst male prisoners have increased to 17,681 incidents from 16,888 a year earlier. Despite these differences in trends, females still account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody.
- The number of incidents of recorded assaults (including fights) in prison custody has increased to 15,441 in the 12 months to the end of June 2014 compared with 14,045 in June 2013. This increase may be slightly overstated due to improvements in reporting of assault incidents. However, the rise is solely as a result of an increase in the number of assaults amongst adult prisoners, up 2,714 in the last 5 years. In contrast assaults amongst prisoners aged under 21 have continued to fall, a decline of 2,707 incidents in the last 5 years.

- The number of assaults on staff has increased to 3,427 incidents from 3,065 in the 12 months to end of June 2013, the highest number since 2006. The number of serious assaults on staff has increased to 395 incidents from 300 in the previous year.

# 1 Deaths in custody

In the 12 months to the end of September 2014 there were 235 deaths in prison custody – an increase of 37 from the previous year. These deaths comprise of:

- **87 apparent self-inflicted deaths**, up from 63 in the previous year (38% increase);
- **133 deaths due to natural causes**, up from 123 in the previous year (8%);
- **3 apparent homicides**, up from 2 in the previous 12 months;
- **12 other deaths** all of which are yet to be classified awaiting further information. At this stage last year there were 15 deaths awaiting further information, of which 9 have since been reclassified.

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

Annual supplementary tables published alongside this bulletin<sup>5</sup> 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 the number 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 05	Sep 06	Sep 07	Sep 08	Sep 09	Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14
<b>DEATHS</b>										
<b>Deaths in prison custody<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>176</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>235</b>
Self-inflicted	84	61	87	70	61	60	59	57	63	87
Natural Causes	85	90	89	90	101	123	127	130	123	133
Homicide	3	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	3
Other <sup>3</sup>	4	4	5	3	4	9	12	6	10	12
<i>of which</i>										
<i>Other/Non-natural</i>	4	4	5	3	4	9	12	3	4	0
<i>Awaiting further information</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	3	6	12
<b>Deaths per 1,000 prisoners</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>
Self-inflicted	1.1	0.8	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.0
Natural Causes	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6
<b>Deaths by Gender</b>										
Male	168	150	173	161	160	186	191	192	192	221
Female	8	6	9	5	6	7	8	2	6	14

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

2. Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

3. A small proportion of the most recent two years figures are expected to be reclassified as natural causes.

As there are a number of deaths yet to be classified it is likely that some of these deaths will be reclassified as natural cause deaths when sufficient information becomes available, and

<sup>4</sup> Prisons and Probation Ombudsman: Fatal Incident Reports [www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/prison-investigations.html)

<sup>5</sup> Deaths in Custody: Deaths tables at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

some may be reclassified as self-inflicted. For this reason all figures for the last three years are provisional.

### 1.1 Overall mortality

There were 225 deaths in prison custody in the 12 months to the end of September 2014; 37 more than a year earlier (figure 1).

**Figure 1: Number of deaths in prison custody, 2001 to 2014**

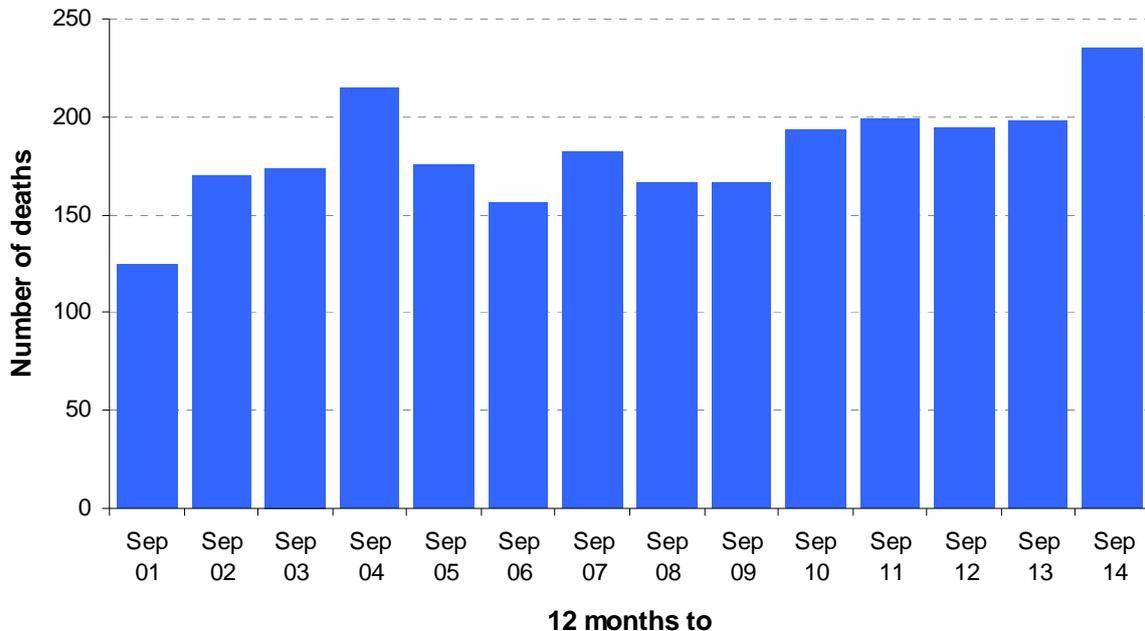
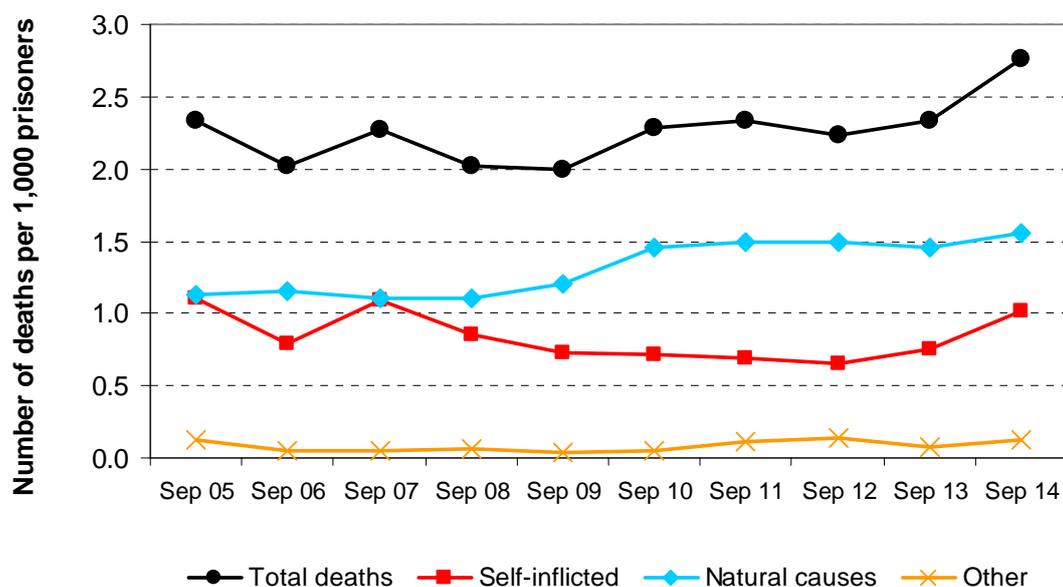


Figure 2 shows an increase in the death rate in the 12 months to September 2014 to 2.76 deaths per 1,000 prisoners compared with 2.34 in the previous 12 months. This increase comes from a period of relative stability in the death rate in prisons, although there were some fluctuations between years reflecting the natural variation that occurs with the frequency of deaths. The highest rate per 1,000 prisoners was 2.79 in 2004.

Figure 2: Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause, England and Wales



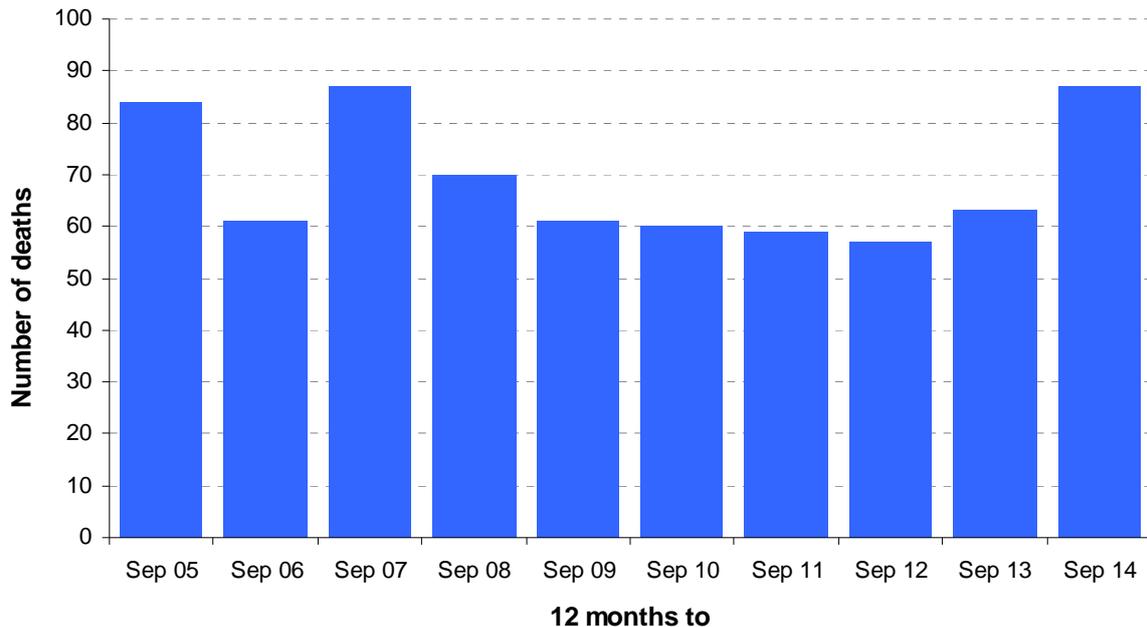
## 1.2 Self-inflicted deaths

- **87 self-inflicted deaths** in the period ending September 2014, 24 (38%) more than in the same period in 2013.
- The **rate of self-inflicted deaths increased to 1.0 per 1,000 prisoners**, from 0.8 in the previous year.
- Nine-in-ten self-inflicted deaths occur from hanging

*Self-inflicted deaths are any death of a person who has apparently taken his or her own life irrespective of intent.* This not only includes suicides but also accidental deaths as a result of the person's own actions. This classification is used because it is not always known whether a person intended to commit suicide.

The number of self-inflicted deaths increased by 24 to 87 deaths in the 12 months to the end of September 2014. This increase has occurred after a period of relatively stability and is the highest number in this 12 month period since 2007. As figure 3 shows an increase in a single year does not necessarily reflect a change in trend, with the number of self-inflicted deaths in 12 months to March 2009 falling back to trend. The highest number of self-inflicted deaths in this 12 month period was in 2004 when there were 103 self-inflicted deaths.

**Figure 3: Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody, 12 months September 2005 to September 2014**



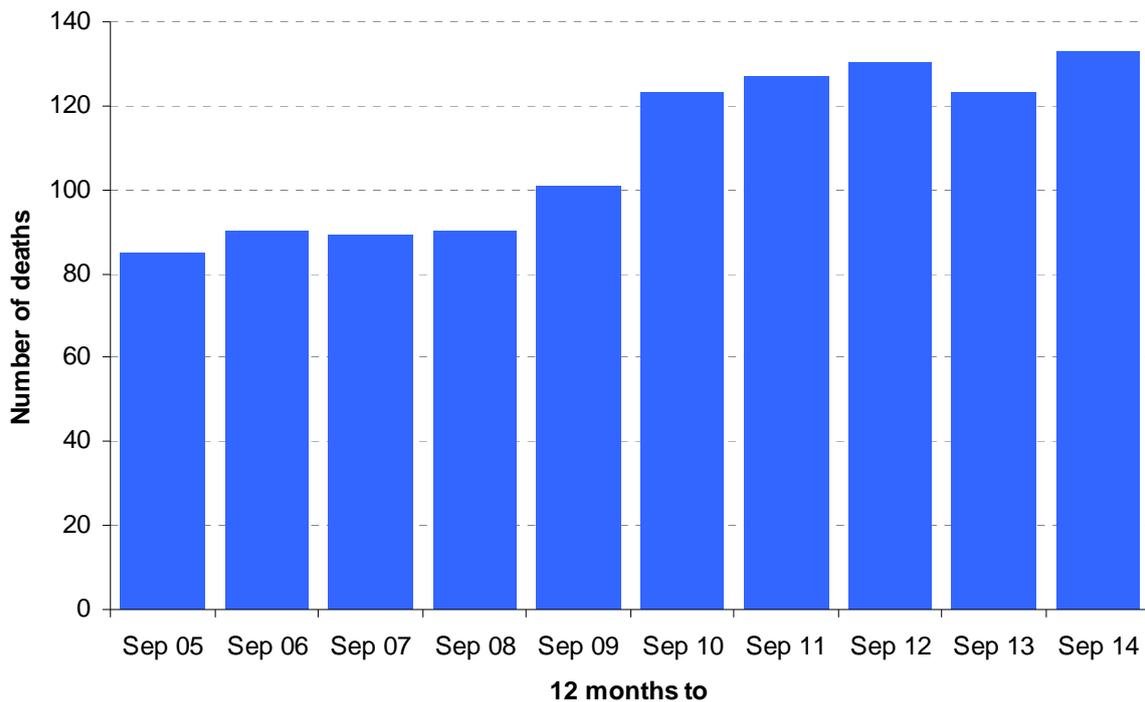
The rate of self-inflicted deaths has increased to 1.0 deaths per 1,000 prisoners from 0.8 in the 12 months to the end of September 2013 (figure 1). The rate of self-inflicted deaths was consistently above 1 death per 1,000 prisoners between 1993 and 2005, peaking at 1.4 deaths per 1,000 prisoners in 1999 (table 1.1 in the deaths supplementary tables).

### 1.3 Natural cause deaths

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

- **135 natural cause deaths in the 12 months to the end of September 2014**, 10 (8%) more than in the same 12 months in 2013;
- **1.6 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to September 2014, up from 1.5 natural cause deaths per 1,000 prisoners in the previous year.

**Figure 4: Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody, 12 months September 2005 to September 2014**



There are 135 natural cause deaths currently recorded for the 12 months to September 2014, 10 more than the same period in 2013. It is likely that some of the 12 deaths currently recorded as awaiting further information will be changed to natural cause deaths when further information becomes available.

At this stage last year there were:

- 15 deaths awaiting further information for the 12 months to September 2013; of these, 9 have now been re-classified; 6 to natural causes.

The uncertainty on these figures will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

Calendar year statistics shows that as the prison population ages<sup>6</sup> the number of natural cause deaths of older prisoners has also increased, with 70 of the 123 natural cause deaths (57%) in 2013 being of prisoners aged 60 and over. The trend over recent years has seen an increase in the proportion of natural cause deaths of prisoners aged 60 and over from around 38% in 2007.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the increase in prisoners aged 60 and over, the rate of natural cause deaths has remained relatively stable at around 1.5 deaths per 1,000 prisoners over the last 4 years which shows a reduction in natural cause deaths of prisoners aged under 60 over the same period.

<sup>6</sup> Offender Management Statistics [www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/offender-management-statistics-quarterly)

<sup>7</sup> Table 3.15, , Safety in Custody update to December 2013 Assault supplementary tables, [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

## 1.4 Homicides

*Homicides include any death of a person at the hands of another. This includes murder and manslaughter cases. As with self-inflicted deaths, the classification system does not make any judgement about intent.*

- **3 apparent homicides in the 12 months to the end of September 2014** compared with 2 in the same period in 2013;
- Homicides are relatively rare accounting for less than 1% of all deaths in prison custody.

Homicides in prison custody are relatively rare, ranging between 0 and 4 in any year.

Cell-sharing risk assessments were introduced in 2002 with the aim of reducing the risk of placing prisoners in cells where they may cause harm to their cell companion.

## 1.5 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.*

There were **12 other deaths in the 12 months to September 2014** (5% of all deaths). This number is not directly comparable with earlier years as some of the deaths in this category are likely to be reclassified (typically as natural cause deaths) following inquest. However, as a guide, at September 2013 there were 15 other deaths.

The numbers in this category have increased in recent years due to a number of cases that have proved difficult to classify.

- At publication of the year ending September 2013 statistics there were 15 deaths awaiting further information, of which 6 remain. 6 deaths were reclassified as natural causes and 3 as other/non-natural.

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

Some of the cases in the aggregated 'other' category appear to be drug related but there is insufficient information to classify any to be self-inflicted. The uncertainty will not be entirely removed until after inquest.

## 2 Self-harm

- Overall, the number of incidents of self-harm in prison custody has increased in the 12 months to June 2014 compared to the previous 12 months but with differing trends for males and females;
- **23,798 recorded incidents** in the 12 months to June 2014, compared with 23,139 in the previous year (table 3);
- **278 incidents per 1,000 prisoners** in the 12 months to June 2014, an increase from 272 in the previous year;
- **7,100 recorded individuals** – up from 6,823 in the previous year.
- On average, **3.4 self-harm incidents per prisoner** who self-harms - unchanged on the previous year

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 although there will still be incidents that are not detected.

Annual statistics suggest the key factors determining the risk of self-harm in custody are:

- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to self-harm than older prisoners<sup>8</sup>;
- Time in custody: A disproportionate amount of self-harm occurs in the early stages of custody<sup>9</sup>.
- Gender: Females are more likely to self-harm than males.

**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	Jun 13	Jun 14
<b>SELF-HARM</b>										
<b>Self-harm incidents</b>	<b>22,123</b>	<b>23,892</b>	<b>23,240</b>	<b>23,330</b>	<b>25,253</b>	<b>25,739</b>	<b>25,954</b>	<b>23,522</b>	<b>23,139</b>	<b>23,798</b>
Males	10,109	11,093	12,233	11,572	12,997	14,090	15,139	16,151	16,888	17,681
Females	12,014	12,799	11,007	11,758	12,256	11,649	10,815	7,371	6,251	6,117
<b>Self-harm individuals<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5,692</b>	<b>5,994</b>	<b>6,297</b>	<b>6,454</b>	<b>6,642</b>	<b>7,183</b>	<b>6,849</b>	<b>6,834</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>7,100</b>
Males	4,263	4,523	4,852	4,979	5,133	5,675	5,508	5,723	5,758	6,067
Females	1,429	1,471	1,445	1,475	1,509	1,508	1,341	1,111	1,065	1,033
<b>Self-harm incidents per 1,000 prisoners</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>278</b>
Males	143	153	163	150	165	176	188	195	208	217
Females	2,738	2,862	2,496	2,654	2,830	2,730	2,579	1,759	1,562	1,557
<b>Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>76</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>83</b>
Males	60	62	64	65	65	71	68	69	71	74
Females	326	329	328	333	348	353	320	265	266	263
<b>Self-harm incidents per individual</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Males	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9
Females	8.4	8.7	7.6	8.0	8.1	7.7	8.1	6.6	5.9	5.9
<b>Hospital Attendances</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>1,197</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,298</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>1,425</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>1,683</b>
Males	929	1,013	1,008	1,141	1,095	1,167	1,265	1,357	1,451	1,578
Females	229	244	189	192	203	161	160	167	147	105

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

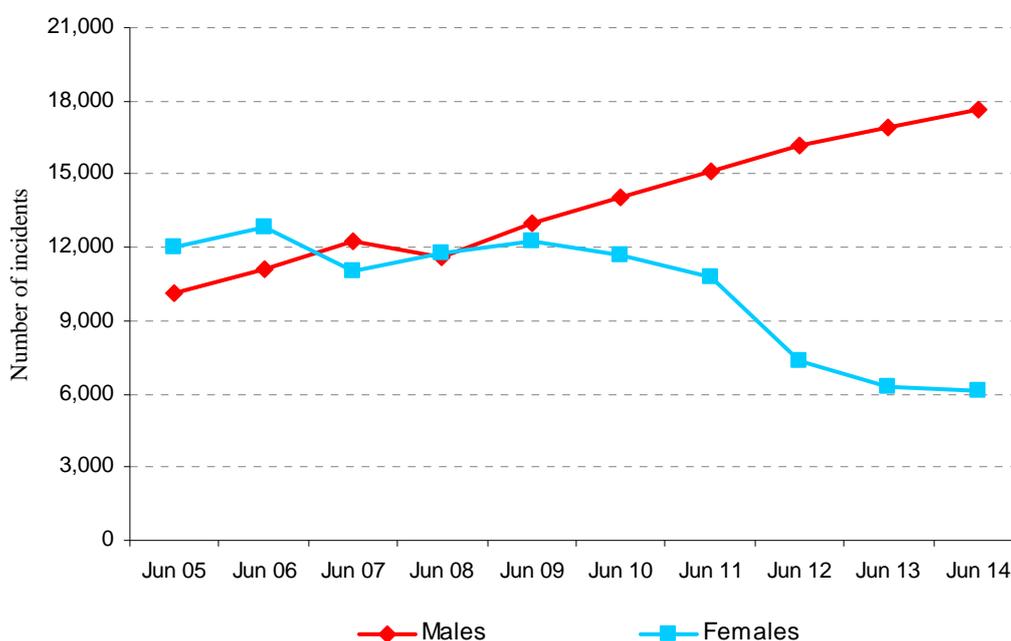
<sup>8</sup> Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.4

<sup>9</sup> Safety in Custody: Self-harm Table 2.5 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

Self-harm increased to 23,798 incidents in 12 months to June 2014 compared with the previous year. Over the longer term, the number of self-harm incidents followed an increasing trend since 2005 and peaked at 25,954 incidents in the 12 months to June 2011. Since then it fell to 23,139 incidents in the 12 months to June 2013 as a result of a reduction in self-harm amongst female prisoners.

Figure 5 shows that in the first half of the last 10 years levels of male and female self-harm were similar, but in the last 5 years the trend has diverged and followed opposite paths. As self-harm in custody differs between males and females it is better to consider the populations separately.

**Figure 5: Number of self-harm incidents in prison custody by gender**



## 2.1 Male self-harm

- 17,681 incidents of self-harm by male prisoners in the 12 months to June 2014, up from 16,888 incidents (5%) in the previous year.
- The rate of male self-harm continues to rise and has increased to 217 incidents per 1,000 prisoners compared with 208 in the previous 12 months.
- Since June 2005 male self-harm rates have increased by 52% from 143 incidents per 1,000 prisoners to 217 in the 12 months to June 2014.
- Of those male prisoners who self-harm, they carry out, on average, 2.9 self-harm incidents in the 12 months to June 2014, unchanged on the previous year.

The change in the prison population over time drives the number of self-harm incidents so to determine long-term trends it is better to consider the changes in rates of self-harm over time.

The rate of male individuals self-harming increased from 60 males per 1,000 prisoners to 71 males per 1,000 prisoners between 2005 and 2010. Since then the rate of increase was more gradual before another increase to 74 prisoners per 1,000 prisoners in the most recent 12 month period.

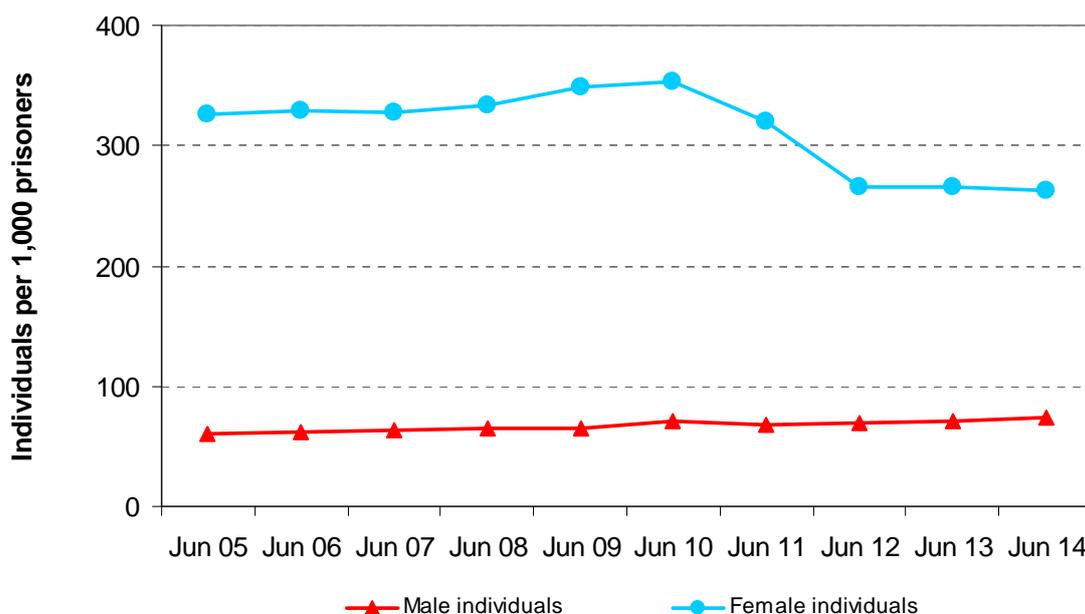
Although the rate of individuals self-harming has increased in the most recent 12 month period, the average number of self-harming acts those males commit on average is unchanged at 2.9 incidents. Over the longer term the number of self-harm incidents, on average, for each male was 2.4 self-harm incidents in 2005 where it remained broadly unchanged until 2010. In 2011 this increased to 2.7 incidents per male, on average, where it has gradually increased to 2.9 incidents, on average, in the 12 months to June 2014.

## 2.2 Female self-harm

- 6,117 incidents of self-harm by female prisoners in the 12 months to the end of June 2014, down from 6,251 incidents in the previous 12 months – a fall of 2% in the last year and 43% in the last three years;
- The rate of female self-harm in the 12 months to the end of June 2014 was 263 females per 1,000 prisoners compared with 266 in the previous 12 months;
- Female prisoners who self-harm, were responsible for 5.9 self-harm incidents on average in the 12 months to the end of June 2014, the same as in the previous 12 months.

In contrast to the trends of self-harm in male prisoners, the number and rate of incidents of female self-harm continue to fall, albeit at a slower rate than in the previous 2 years. However, figure 6 shows that the rate of females who self-harm is unchanged in the 12 months to end of June 2014 compared with the previous 12 months after two years of falls.

**Figure 6: Self-harming individuals per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales**



Despite the large falls in female self-harm over recent years, females still account for a disproportionate amount of self-harm in prison custody. In the 12 months to the end of June 2014, they accounted for:

- 26% of incidents but only 5% of the prison population.
- The rate of females self-harming, at 263 females per 1,000 prisoners, is significantly higher than the 74 males per 1,000 prisoners who self-harm.

### 3 Assaults (including fights)

- **15,441 assault incidents in the 12 months to the end of June 2014**, up from 14,045 incidents in the previous 12 months (an increase of 10%).
- The **rate of assaults is 181 incidents per 1,000 prisoners**, up from 165 incidents in the 12 months to end of June 2013.
- **3,427 assaults on staff in the 12 months to June 2014**, up from 3,065 incidents in the previous 12 months (an increase of 12%).
- The **rate of assaults on staff is 40 incidents per 1,000 prisoners, up from 36 in the previous 12 months.**
- **Serious assaults have increased to 1,817 incidents in the 12 months to June 2014** from 1,377 in the same period last year (an increase of 32%).
- **Serious assaults on staff have increased to 395 incidents** up from 300 in the 12 months to end of June 2013.

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.

**Table 4: Assault incidents Summary Statistics, England and Wales**

	12 months ending									
	Jun 05	Jun 06	Jun 07	Jun 08	Jun 09	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14
<b>ASSAULTS</b>										
<b>Assault incidents<sup>1 2</sup></b>	<b>13,459</b>	<b>14,898</b>	<b>15,082</b>	<b>15,877</b>	<b>15,434</b>	<b>14,713</b>	<b>14,739</b>	<b>15,320</b>	<b>14,045</b>	<b>15,441</b>
Male establishments	12,534	13,727	13,997	14,905	14,630	14,054	14,036	14,709	13,540	14,887
Female establishments	925	1,171	1,085	972	804	659	703	611	505	554
<b>Assault incidents per 1,000 prisoners</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>181</b>
Male establishments	178	190	186	194	186	175	174	177	167	182
Female establishments	211	262	246	219	186	154	168	146	126	141
<b>Serious assaults</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>1,470</b>	<b>1,523</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>1,341</b>	<b>1,338</b>	<b>1,377</b>	<b>1,817</b>
Male establishments	1,179	1,311	1,408	1,487	1,311	1,372	1,290	1,304	1,349	1,777
Female establishments	77	64	62	36	42	42	51	34	28	40
<b>Assaults on Staff</b>	<b>3,354</b>	<b>3,551</b>	<b>3,386</b>	<b>3,269</b>	<b>3,121</b>	<b>2,977</b>	<b>2,933</b>	<b>3,087</b>	<b>3,065</b>	<b>3,427</b>
Male establishments	3,009	3,064	2,924	2,860	2,821	2,763	2,686	2,902	2,885	3,265
Female establishments	345	487	462	409	300	214	247	185	180	162
<b>Assault on staff per 1,000 prisoners</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>
Male establishments	43	42	39	37	36	34	33	35	36	40
Female establishments	79	109	105	92	69	50	59	44	45	41
<b>Serious assaults on staff</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>395</b>
Male establishments	247	251	262	279	257	272	276	246	289	384
Female establishments	24	26	21	16	16	18	20	11	11	11

1.Data includes incidents at NOMS run Immigration Removal Centres

2. 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.

Assaults are dominated by what happens in the male prison estate, which accounts for 95% of the prison population.

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

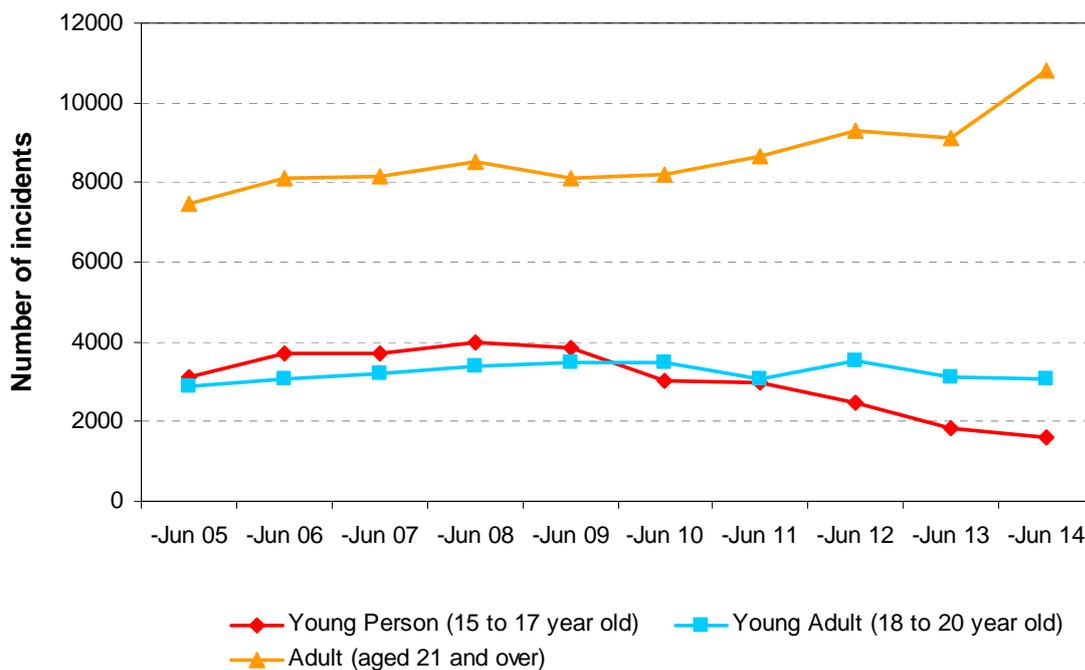
- Age: Younger prisoners are more likely to assault and be victims than older prisoners;<sup>10</sup>
- Time in custody: After the initial induction period, a disproportionate amount of assaults occurs in the early stages of custody.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.1 All Assaults

The number of recorded assault incidents has increased to 15,441 incidents in the 12 months to the end of June 2014 from 14,045 incidents in the same period last year. This increase is slightly overstated due to an improvement in reporting of assault incidents following changes in data assurance processes. Nevertheless, the reporting improvements do not account for all the increase.

Although the overall number of assault incidents has fallen in recent years, figure 8 shows that this has been primarily driven by falls in the parts of the prison estate holding under 21 year olds. Over the last 5 years, the number of assault incidents for 15 to 17 year olds has fallen by 2,273 incidents and for 18 to 20 year olds by 434 incidents. These falls are partly due to the falling prison population for these younger age groups. For the adult prison population, the number of assault incidents has increased by 2,714 over the same time period.

**Figure 7: Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner involved in incident**



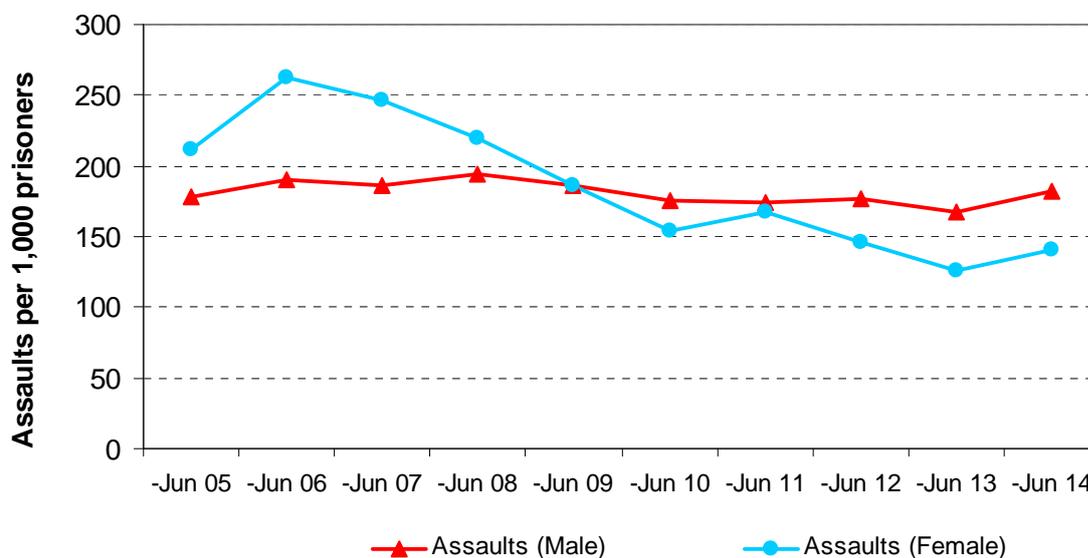
With 96% of assaults occurring in the male estate the rate of assaults overall is heavily biased towards the rate of assaults in the male estate. The rate of assaults for male prisoners has fallen in recent years from a high of 194 in 2008 to 182 in the 12 months to June 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.3

<sup>11</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.4 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

In the female estate, the rate of assaults has shown much more variation. It rose in the 12 months to end of June 2006 to 262 incidents per 1,000 prisoners but has fallen to 141 incidents per 1,000 prisoners in the most recent 12 months (see figure 9), almost halving the rate of assaults in female establishments in the last seven years.

**Figure 8: Total assaults per 1,000 prisoners by gender, England and Wales**



**Serious assaults**<sup>12</sup> increased in the 12 months to the end of June 2014 to 1,817 incidents from 1,377 incidents in the previous year – an increase of 32%. The number of serious assaults had previously peaked at 1,523 incidents in 2008, falling to a low of 1,338 incidents in the 12 months ending June 2012. As with all incidents, there is volatility in the time series of serious assault incidents, although there has been a general quarter on quarter upward trend since the beginning of 2012. The number of serious assaults has increased quarter on quarter since the July to September quarter in 2012 to 517 in April to June 2014.

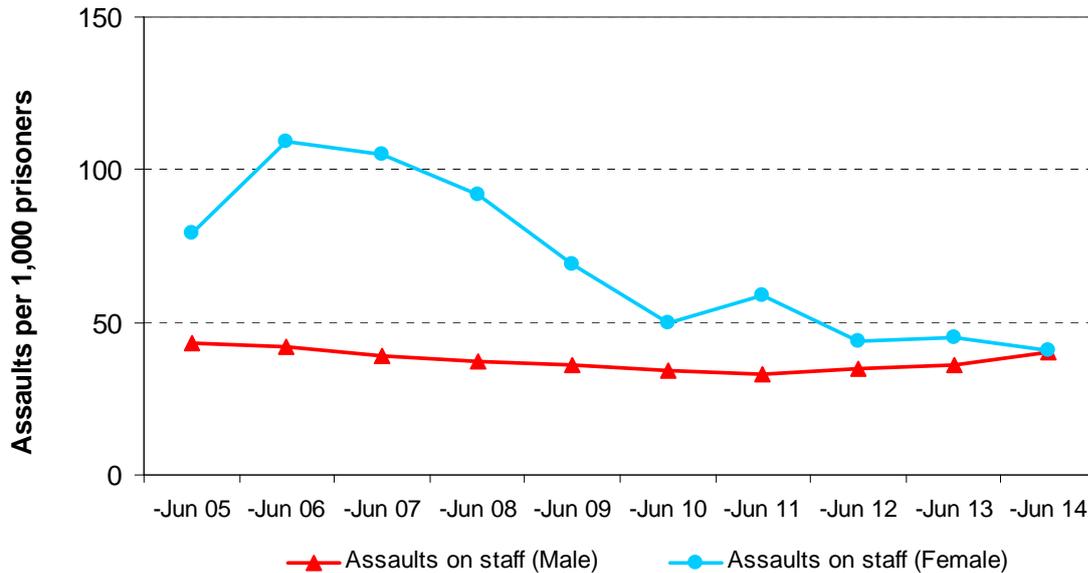
Serious assaults are those that are sexual assaults or result in serious injuries, hospital admittance as an in-patient or treatment for concussion.

### 3.2 Assaults on staff

In the 12 months to end of June 2014, there were 3,427 assaults on staff – up 12% on the previous year. The number of assaults on staff peaked at 3,551 incidents in 2006 and, with the exception of the 12 months ending June 2012, had been falling year on year.

<sup>12</sup> For the definition of serious assaults see the Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

**Figure 9: Total 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. In the 12 months to the end of June 2014, the rate of assaults on staff increased to 40 incidents per 1,000 prisoners from 36 in the previous year, the highest rate since the 2008.

As with all types of incident, there is volatility in the number of serious assaults on staff between short time periods. There were 395 serious assaults on staff in the 12 months to the end of June 2014 – an increase of 95 incidents on the previous year. This figure is the highest number of serious assaults on staff recorded since current recorded practices began in 2003. Quarterly data shows that the number of serious assaults on staff has, with the exception of January to March quarter 2014, increased since the beginning of 2012 rising from 60 incidents in January to March 2012 to 120 incidents in April to June 2014.

## References

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

- Prison and YOI inspections ([www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/?post\\_type=inspection&s&prison-inspection-type=prison-and-yoi-inspections](http://www.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspections/?post_type=inspection&s&prison-inspection-type=prison-and-yoi-inspections))

Independent Advisory Panel (IAP) on Deaths in Custody

- Deaths in state custody ([iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/](http://iapdeathsincustody.independent.gov.uk/))

Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)

- Deaths in Custody Study ([www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/deathscustodystudy.aspx))
- Deaths following police contact ([www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports\\_polcustody.aspx](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/en/Pages/reports_polcustody.aspx))

Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

- Fatal Incident reports ([www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/document/fii-report/))
- Annual reports ([www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports](http://www.ppo.gov.uk/document/annual-reports))

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

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

Ministry of Justice/NOMS

- Prison and Probation Statistics ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/about/statistics))
- Prison Service Orders ([www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos](http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psos))
- Prison Service Instructions ([www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis](http://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 website<sup>13</sup>. All tables refer to incidents in prison custody in England and Wales.

	<b>Table description</b>	<b>Period</b>
<b>Safety in Custody – Summary tables</b>		
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Table 2	Deaths in custody summary statistics	Oct 03 – Sept 14
Table 3	Self-harm summary statistics	Jul 04 – Jun 14
Table 4	Assaults summary statistics	Jul 03 - Jun 14
Table 5	Deaths in prison custody by apparent cause by quarter	Jan 00 – Sep 14
Table 6	Self-harm incidents by quarter	Oct 05 – Jun14
Table 7	Assault incidents by quarter	Jan 03 – Jun 14
<b>Safety in Custody – Figures</b>		
Figure 1	Number of deaths in prison custody	Jul 01 – Jun 14
Figure 2	Deaths per 1,000 prisoners by apparent cause	Jul 04 – Jun 14
Figure 3	Number of apparent self-inflicted deaths in prison custody	Jul 01 – Jun 14
Figure 4	Number of apparent natural cause deaths in prison custody	Jul 01 – Jun 14
Figure 5	Number of self-harm incidents by gender	Jul 05 – Jun 14
Figure 6	Self-harm individuals per 1,000 prisoners	Jul 05 – Jun 14
Figure 7	Number of assault incidents by age group of youngest prisoner	Jul 05 – Jun 14
Figure 8	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – total	Jul 04 – Jun 14
Figure 9	Assaults per 1,000 prisoners – on staff	Jul 04 – Jun 14
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Table 1.4	Annual deaths arising from incidents in prison custody but occurring elsewhere	1999 - 2013
Table 1.5	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by gender	1978 - 2013
Table 1.6	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody by age	1978 - 2013
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Table 1.13	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligatures used in hanging/self-strangulation	1999 - 2013
Table 1.14	Annual self-inflicted deaths in prison custody: Ligature points used in fatal hangings	1999 - 2013
Table 1.15	Annual natural cause deaths in prison custody by age group	2001 - 2013
Table 1.16	Annual self-inflicted deaths by establishment	1978 - 2013

<sup>13</sup> Safety in Custody: Assaults table 3.2 [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

Table 1.17	Annual natural cause deaths by establishment	1978 - 2013
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Table 3.15	Annual assaults on staff and on prison officers by establishment	2000 - 2013
Table 3.16	Annual prisoner on prisoner assaults by establishment	2000 - 2013
Table 3.17	Dates of prisons opening/closing and major re-roles of prisons	2001 - 2013

## 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'<sup>14</sup>

## Explanatory notes

The statistics in this bulletin relate to deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody in England and Wales.

### 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

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<sup>14</sup> Guide to Safety in Custody Statistics which can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/safety-in-custody-statistics)

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General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://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](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice)

[www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx](http://www.sps.gov.uk/FreedomofInformation/PrisonerDeaths.aspx)

[www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm](http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications.htm)

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