

# Prison: the facts

## Bromley Briefings Summer 2016

Facts and figures provide a better basis than opinion for policy and practice change. Drawn largely from government sources, these facts chart the extraordinary rise in prison numbers over the last twenty years, inflation in sentencing and the social and economic consequences of overuse of custody. They reveal the state of our overcrowded prisons and the state of people in them, the impact of deep budget cuts, the pace and scale of change in the justice system and the scope for community solutions to crime.

**On 17 June 2016, the prison population in England and Wales was 84,405.<sup>1</sup>** Since 1993 the prison population in England and Wales has increased by more than 41,000 people, a 92% rise.<sup>2</sup>

**People in prison, prisoners and staff, are less safe than they were five years ago.** More prisoners were murdered, killed themselves, self-harmed and were victims of assaults.<sup>3</sup>

**290 people died in prison in the 12 months to March 2016, the highest number on record.** Over a third of these deaths were self-inflicted.<sup>4</sup>

**There were six homicides in prison in the 12 months to 2016, the highest number on record.<sup>5</sup>**

**Serious assaults in prison have more than doubled in the last three years.** There were 2,197 serious prisoner on prisoner assaults and 625 serious assaults on staff in 2015.<sup>6</sup>

**Sexual assaults have more than doubled since 2011.** There were 300 recorded assaults in 2015.<sup>7</sup>

**The National Tactical Response Group, a specialist unit assisting in safely managing and resolving serious incidents in prisons responded to over 400 incidents in 2014–15.<sup>8</sup>**

**Emergency services were called out more than 26,600 times to incidents in UK prisons in 2015.<sup>9</sup>**

**There has been a 57% increase in the number of fires in prison in the past year.** There were 1,935 fires in 2015—an average of more than 160 a month.<sup>10</sup>

**Rates of self-harm are at the highest level ever recorded.** There were 32,313 self-harm incidents in 2015—a nearly 40% rise in just two years.<sup>11</sup>

**People serving the indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) have one of the highest rates of self-harm in prison.** For every 1,000 people serving an IPP there were 550 incidents of self-harm. This compares with 324 incidents for people serving a determinate sentence, and is more than twice the rate for people serving life sentences.<sup>12</sup>

**Women accounted for 23% of all incidents of self-harm in 2015 despite representing just 5% of the total prison population.** This has fallen sharply since 2011 when women accounted for over a third of all incidents, and reflects a sharp rise in incidents amongst men.<sup>13</sup>

**The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman found that in 39 deaths in prison between June 2013 and June 2015, the prisoner was known, or strongly suspected, to have been using new psychoactive substances before their deaths.<sup>14</sup>**

**448 young people aged 15–24 have died in prison in the last 20 years.** 87% of these deaths were classified as self-inflicted.<sup>15</sup>

**The number of deaths from natural causes has nearly doubled in less than a decade.** 167 people died of natural causes in the 12 months to March 2016, a 12% increase on the previous year.<sup>16</sup>

**The average age of people dying from natural causes in prison between 2007 and 2010 was 56 years old.<sup>17</sup>**

1 Ministry of Justice (2016) Population and capacity briefing for Friday 17 June 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

2 Table A1.2, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: July to September 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

3 HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2015) Annual Report 2014–15, London: The Stationery Office

4 Table 1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

5 Table 2, Ibid.

6 Table 3.1, Ibid.

7 Table 3.9, Ibid.

8 National Offender Management Service (2015) Annual report and accounts 2014–2015, London: Ministry of Justice

9 Titheradge, N. (2016) BBC News, 'Emergency services called out to prison incidents 'every 20 minutes'', available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36259747>

10 House of Commons written question 26250

11 Table 2.1, Safety in custody quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

12 Table 2.6, Ministry of Justice (2016) Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Tables A1.1 and A1.14, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

13 Table 3.9, Safety in custody quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

14 Prisons and Probation Ombudsman website, <http://www.ppo.gov.uk/ombudsman-speaks-at-reform-roundtable-on-new-psychoactive-substances>, accessed on 13 May 2016

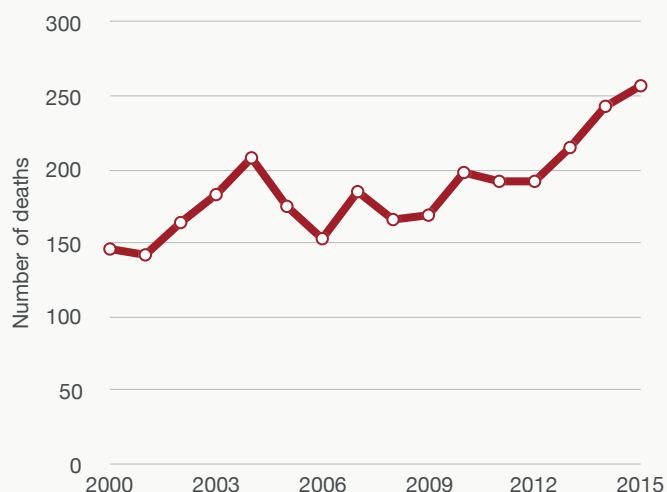
15 Table 1.3, Ministry of Justice (2016) Safety in custody quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

16 Table 1.1, Safety in custody quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

17 Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (2012) Learning from PPO investigations: Natural cause deaths in prison custody 2007–2010, London: Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

## Dying inside

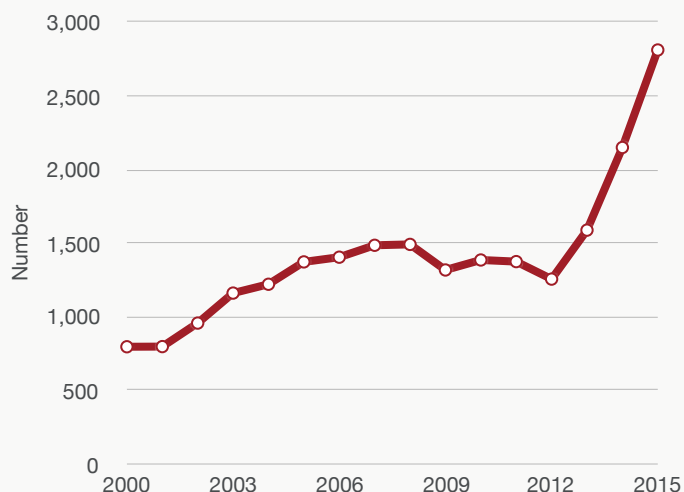
Record numbers of people are dying behind bars



Source: Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015

## Rising prison violence

Serious assaults have more than doubled in three years



Source: Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015

## Prison population and sentencing trends

### Use of custody

Between 1993 and 2015 the prison population in England and Wales increased by more than 41,000 people, a 92% rise.<sup>18</sup>

England and Wales have the highest imprisonment rate in Western Europe, locking up 147 people per 100,000 of the population. Scotland has a rate of 143 per 100,000 and Northern Ireland 78 per 100,000.<sup>19</sup>

On 17 June 2016, the prison population in England and Wales was 84,405.<sup>20</sup> Scotland's prison population was 7,678 and on 10 June Northern Ireland's prison population was 1,521.<sup>21</sup>

Prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending—46% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 60%. Over two-thirds (68%) of under 18 year olds are reconvicted within a year of release.<sup>22</sup>

According to the National Audit Office, there is no consistent correlation between prison numbers and levels of crime.<sup>23</sup> International comparisons also show there is no consistent link between the two.<sup>24</sup>

18 Table A1.2, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: July to September 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

19 International Centre for Prison Studies website, [http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison\\_population\\_rate?field\\_region\\_taxonomy\\_tid=14](http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=14), accessed on 21 June 2016

20 Ministry of Justice (2016) Population and capacity briefing for Friday 17 June 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

21 Scottish Prison Service website and Northern Ireland Prison Service website, accessed on 21 June 2016

22 Tables C1a, C2a and C1b, Ministry of Justice (2016) Proven reoffending statistics quarterly: July 2013 to June 2014, London: Ministry of Justice

23 National Audit Office (2012) Comparing International Criminal Justice Systems, London: National Audit Office

24 Lappi-Seppälä, T (2015) Why some countries cope with lesser use of imprisonment, available at <http://bit.ly/Tapio>

Prison sentences are getting longer. The average prison sentence is now more than three months longer than ten years ago—16.2 months. For more serious, indictable offences, the average is 56.8 months—18 months longer than a decade ago.<sup>25</sup>

Greater use of long custodial sentences accounted for 66% of the rise in the prison population between 1993 and 2012. The number of people serving sentences of four years or more, including indeterminate sentences, increased by 26,600.<sup>26</sup> They now account for nearly three in five (56%) sentenced prisoners.<sup>27</sup>

Short prison sentences are less effective than community sentences at reducing reoffending.<sup>28</sup> Despite this, nearly half (48%) of all people entering prison under sentence are serving a sentence of six months or less.<sup>29</sup>

### Life and indeterminate sentences

Increasing numbers of people in prison don't know if, or when, they might be released. Indeterminate sentences account for 16% of the sentenced prison population, up from 9% in 1993.<sup>30</sup>

11,505 people are currently serving indeterminate sentences. 64% are serving a life sentence (7,372) while the remaining 36% (4,133) are serving an Indeterminate sentence for Public Protection (IPP).<sup>31</sup>

25 Table Q5.1b, Ministry of Justice (2016) Criminal justice statistics quarterly: December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

26 Ministry of Justice (2013) Story of the prison population: 1993–2012 England and Wales, London: Ministry of Justice

27 Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

28 Ministry of Justice (2013) 2013 Compendium of re-offending statistics and analysis, London: Ministry of Justice

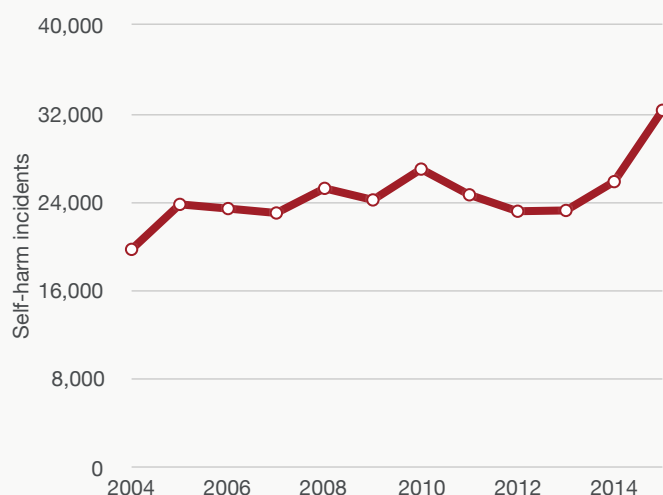
29 Table A2.6, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics annual tables 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

30 Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Justice (2013) Story of the prison population: 1993–2012 England and Wales, London: Ministry of Justice

31 Table 1.9, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

## Rising self-harm

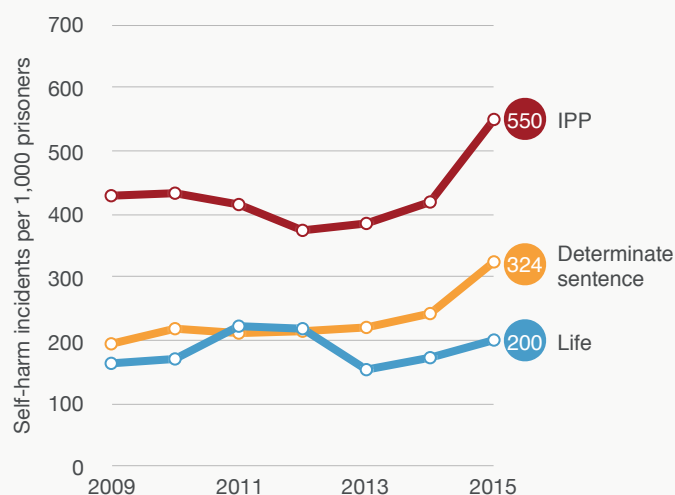
Incidents have risen by nearly 40% in just two years



Source: Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015

## Risk of harm?

IPP prisoners are more likely to self-harm



Source: Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015 and Offender management statistics prison population 2015

**Four-fifths (81%) of people serving an IPP sentence are still in prison despite having passed their tariff expiry date—the minimum period they must spend in custody.**<sup>32</sup>

**People were held for 44 months beyond tariff on average**—however many still in prison will have been held for considerably longer.<sup>33</sup>

**The rate of release for IPP prisoners has increased in the past year.** In 2015 for every 1,000 people serving an IPP sentence 121 were released.<sup>34</sup>

**England and Wales have more than twice as many people serving indeterminate sentences than France, Germany and Italy combined—the highest in Europe by a significant margin.**<sup>35</sup>

**People serving mandatory life sentences are spending more of their sentence in prison.** On average they spend 17 years in custody, up from 13 years in 2001.<sup>36</sup>

**Lifers continue to serve their sentence on release from prison for the rest of their lives.** They are subject to monitoring and restrictions and can be returned to custody at any point if they break the terms of their licence.

**There are currently 54 people serving a whole life sentence—they are unlikely to ever be released.**<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Justice (2016) Deposited paper DEP2016-0328, London: House of Commons Library

<sup>34</sup> Table A3.3 and A1.13, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics annual tables 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Table A1.12, Ministry of Justice (2014) Offender management statistics prison population 2014, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>35</sup> Table 7, Aebi, M., et al. (2015) Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics, Survey 2014, Strasbourg: Council of Europe

<sup>36</sup> Table A3.4, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics annual tables 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Table A3.5, Ministry of Justice (2014) Offender management statistics annual tables 2010, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>37</sup> Table 1.9, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

## People on remand

**People remanded to custody to await trial are innocent until proven guilty.** 40,458 people were sent to prison before their trial in 2015.<sup>38</sup>

**Three-fifths (60%) of people entering prison on remand awaiting trial are accused of non-violent offences.** 17% were for theft offences, and 10% for drug offences.<sup>39</sup>

**People on remand currently make up 12% of the total prison population—10,066 people.** The majority are awaiting trial (68%), whilst the rest await sentencing.<sup>40</sup>

**Two in every five self-inflicted deaths in 2015 were by prisoners held on remand.**<sup>41</sup>

**One in ten people (10,897) remanded in custody were subsequently acquitted.** A further 15% of people (15,564) received a non-custodial sentence.<sup>42</sup>

**People spend an average of just over 10 weeks in custody whilst on remand.**<sup>43</sup> However, some may be held considerably longer.

**Remand prisoners receive no financial help from the Prison Service at the point of release.**<sup>44</sup> Those acquitted receive no compensation.

<sup>38</sup> Table A2.3, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics annual tables 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>39</sup> Table A2.4i, Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

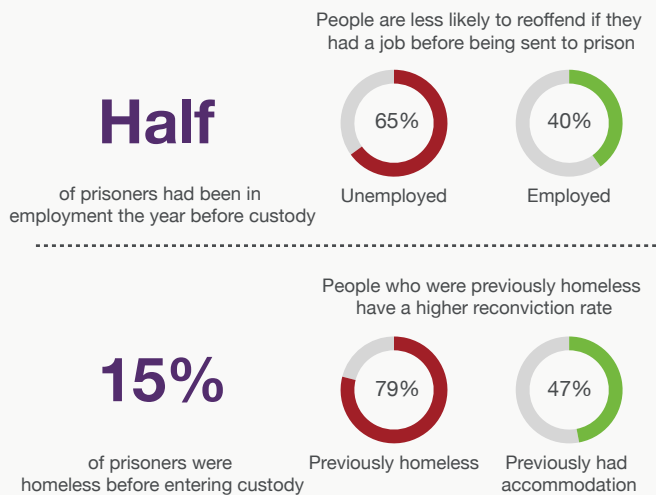
<sup>41</sup> Table 1.8, Ministry of Justice (2016) Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>42</sup> Table Q4.4, Ministry of Justice (2016) Criminal justice statistics quarterly: December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Justice (2015) Deposited paper DEP2015-0181, London: House of Commons Library

<sup>44</sup> Citizens Advice (2007) Locked Out: CAB evidence on prisoners and ex-offenders, London: Citizens Advice

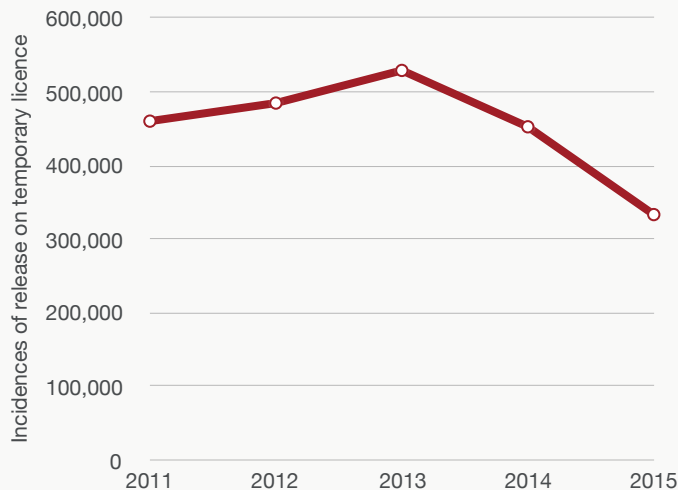
## Having a home and a job affect reoffending



Source: Ministry of Justice (2010) Compendium of reoffending statistics

## Prepared for release

Use of release on temporary licence has fallen by over a third



Source: Offender management statistics annual tables 2015

## Performance and outcomes

### Reoffending

**Prison has a poor record for reducing reoffending—46% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release.** For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 60%.<sup>45</sup>

**48% of women leaving prison are reconvicted within one year.**<sup>46</sup> For women who have served more than 11 previous custodial sentences, the reoffending rate rises to 77%.<sup>47</sup>

**Over two-thirds (68%) of under 18 year olds are reconvicted within a year of release.**<sup>48</sup>

**Short prison sentences are less effective than community sentences at reducing reoffending.** People serving prison sentences of less than 12 months had a reoffending rate seven percentage points higher than similar offenders serving a community sentence—they also committed more crimes.<sup>49</sup>

**Reoffending by all recent ex-prisoners costs the economy between £9.5 and £13 billion annually.** As much as three quarters of this cost can be attributed to former short-sentenced prisoners: some £7–10bn a year.<sup>50</sup>

45 Tables C1a and C2a, Ministry of Justice (2016) Proven reoffending statistics quarterly: July 2013 to June 2014, London: Ministry of Justice

46 Table 8.10, Ministry of Justice (2014) Women and the Criminal Justice System, London: Ministry of Justice

47 Tables S5.26 and S5.28, Ministry of Justice (2012) Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System 2011, London: Ministry of Justice

48 Table C1b, Ministry of Justice (2016) Proven reoffending statistics quarterly: July 2013 to June 2014, London: Ministry of Justice

49 Ministry of Justice (2013) 2013 Compendium of re-offending statistics and analysis, London: Ministry of Justice

50 National Audit Office (2010) Managing offenders on short custodial sentences, London: The Stationery Office

### Release on temporary licence (ROTL)

**In 99.95% of cases ROTL is completed successfully.**<sup>51</sup> In 2012, just 26 cases involved the prisoner being arrested on suspicion of committing an offence.<sup>52</sup>

**Despite this, new restrictions on ROTL have seen a 37% drop in its use in the last two years.** At the time restrictions were introduced the success rate was 99.93%.<sup>53</sup>

**Almost two-thirds (65%) of voluntary and private sector providers of ROTL placements surveyed said they had seen a decrease in ROTL—**with some organisations reporting that their ROTL placements had “completely stopped” or become “almost impossible”.<sup>54</sup>

**During 2014–15, there were a total of 1,273 people, on average only 368 per month, working out of the prison on licence.**<sup>55</sup>

**They paid £246 per month on average to the Prisoners’ Earnings Act levy—the equivalent of nearly 30% of their net earnings.**<sup>56</sup>

51 Table A3.7, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics prison releases 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

52 Ministry of Justice (2014) Statistical Notice: Releases on temporary licence, 2012, London: Ministry of Justice

53 Table A3.7, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics prison releases 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

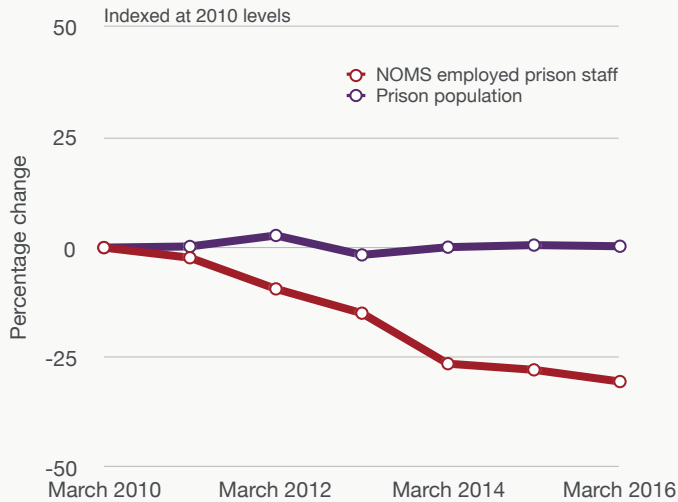
54 Prison Reform Trust and Clinks (2016) Inside Out: The role of the voluntary and private sector in providing opportunities for rehabilitation for people on temporary release, London: Clinks

55 Table 20, Ministry of Justice (2015) National Offender Management Service annual report 2014/15: Management information addendum, London: Ministry of Justice

56 Ibid.

## Public sector prison staff

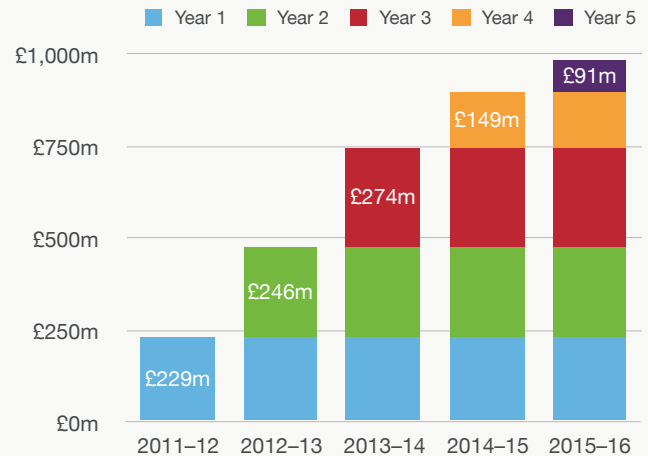
Staff numbers are falling—but the prison population isn't



Sources: NOMS workforce statistics bulletin: March 2016 and Offender management statistics

## More with less

NOMS has seen nearly £1000m cut from its budget



Source: NOMS Business Plan 2014-15 and Annual Report 2014-15

## Prison service resources and staffing

**The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has reduced its budget by nearly a quarter since 2010-11.** Between 2010-11 and 2014-15 it delivered cumulative savings of almost £900m.<sup>57</sup>

**NOMS has a savings target of a further £91m for 2015-16.**<sup>58</sup>

**The cost of a prison place reduced by 18% between 2009-10 and 2014-15.** The average annual overall cost of a prison place in England and Wales is now £36,259.<sup>59</sup>

**The daily prison food budget within public sector prisons for 2014-15 was £2.02 per person.**<sup>60</sup>

**There are now fewer staff looking after more prisoners.** The number of staff employed in the public prison estate has fallen by 30% in the last six years—13,720 fewer staff looking after nearly 450 more people.<sup>61</sup>

**Staff shortages have required the use of detached duty.** During June 2015, there were 270 people deployed to a different prison to ensure that there was a safe number of staff.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> National Offender Management Service (2015) Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15, London: The Stationery Office

<sup>58</sup> House of Commons written question 5958

<sup>59</sup> Table 1, Ministry of Justice (2015) Costs per place and costs per prisoner, NOMS annual report and accounts 2014-15: Management information addendum, London: Ministry of Justice and Table 42, Ministry of Justice (2011) National Offender Management Service Annual Report 2009/10: Management Information Addendum, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Justice (2015) Freedom of Information request FOI 96015, available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/438939/dailyfood-allowance-per-prisoner.doc](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/438939/dailyfood-allowance-per-prisoner.doc)

<sup>61</sup> Table 2, Ministry of Justice (2016) National Offender Management Service workforce statistics: March 2016, London: Ministry of Justice and Table A1.1 and 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>62</sup> House of Commons written question 10508

## Overcrowding

**The prison system as a whole has been overcrowded in every year since 1994.**<sup>63</sup> Overcrowding affects whether activities, staff and other resources are available to reduce risk of reoffending. At the end of May 2016, 74 of the 118 prisons in England and Wales were overcrowded.<sup>64</sup>

**21,755 people were held in overcrowded accommodation on average in 2014-15—more than a quarter of the prison population.** The majority were doubling up in cells designed for one.<sup>65</sup>

**Private prisons have held a higher percentage of their prisoners in overcrowded accommodation than public sector prisons every year for the past 17 years.**<sup>66</sup>

**By June 2020 the prison population is projected to reach 89,600.**<sup>67</sup>

## Treatment and conditions

**The proportion of prisons whose performance is “of concern” or “of serious concern” almost doubled from one in eight (13%) in 2012-13, to one in four (24%) in 2014-15.**<sup>68</sup>

**Prisons are getting bigger. 48% of prisoners are now held in prisons of 1,000 places or more.**<sup>69</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Home Office (1999) Digest 4: Information on the criminal justice system in England and Wales, London: Home Office

<sup>64</sup> Ministry of Justice (2016) Monthly population bulletin May 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>65</sup> Ministry of Justice (2015) Prison and probation performance statistics 2014 to 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Table A1, Ministry of Justice (2015) Prison Population Projections 2015-2021, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>68</sup> Ministry of Justice (2015) Prison Annual Performance Ratings 2014/15, London: Ministry of Justice and Prison performance digest 2012-13

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Justice (2016) Monthly population bulletin March 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

Nearly 8,700 prisoners are working in the public prison estate, and a further 2,700 are working in private prisons. In 2014–15 they worked a total of 14.9 million hours.<sup>70</sup>

## People in prison—a snapshot

Men represent 95% of the prison population in England and Wales. Unless otherwise stated, references to people in prison largely concern men.

### Children and young adults

The number of children (under-18s) in custody has fallen by 71% in the last eight years.<sup>71</sup> They are also committing fewer crimes—with proven offences down by 71% from their peak in 2006.<sup>72</sup>

At the end of March 2016 there were 882 children in custody in England and Wales. 33 children were aged 14 or younger.<sup>73</sup>

29% of children in custody in 2014–15 were there for non-violent crimes.<sup>74</sup>

Fewer than 1% of all children in England are in care,<sup>75</sup> but they make up over half (52%) of children in secure training centres and almost two-fifths (38%) of children in young offender institutions.<sup>76</sup>

One in five children in custody surveyed reported that they had learning difficulties.<sup>77</sup>

Three-quarters of children in prison had an absent father, one-third had an absent mother. Two-fifths had been on the child protection register or had experienced neglect or abuse.<sup>78</sup>

Use of restraint on children is increasing. In 2015 there were 28 incidents of restraint per 100 children in custody, up from 18 in 2010.<sup>79</sup> There were 429 injuries reported as a result of restraint in 2015.<sup>80</sup>

Assault rates amongst children in custody are rising. In 2015 there were 16 assaults per 100 children in custody, up from 9 in 2010.<sup>81</sup>

70 House of Commons written question 16429

71 Table 2.1, Youth Justice Board (2016) Monthly youth custody report—March 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

72 Table 4.2, Ministry of Justice (2016) Youth Justice Statistics 2014–15 England and Wales, London: Ministry of Justice

73 Table 2.1 and 2.8, Youth Justice Board (2016) Monthly youth custody report—March 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

74 Table 7.5a, Ministry of Justice (2016) Youth Justice Statistics 2014–15 England and Wales, London: Ministry of Justice

75 Department for Education (2015) Children looked after in England year ending 31 March 2015, London: DfE and Table MYE2, Office for National Statistics (2015) Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, mid-2014, London: ONS

76 Redmond, A. (2015) Children in Custody 2014–15, London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons

77 Gyateng, T., et al. (2013) Young People and the Secure Estate: Needs and Interventions, London: Youth Justice Board

78 Jacobson J. et al (2010) Punishing Disadvantage: a profile of children in custody, London: Prison Reform Trust

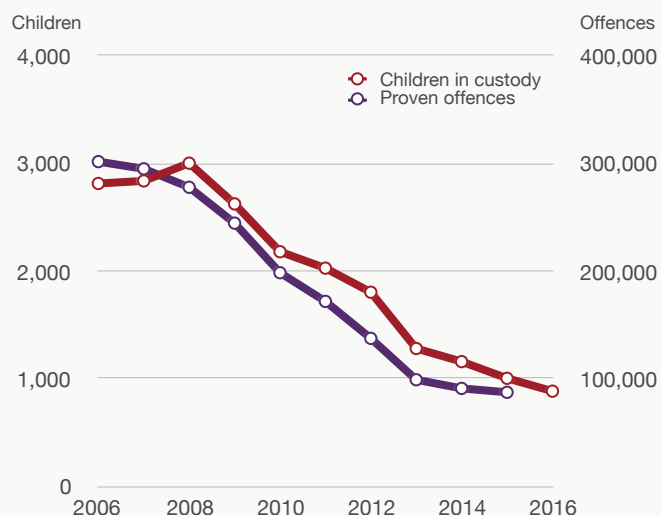
79 Table 8.3, Youth Justice Board (2016) Youth Justice Statistics 2014–15 England and Wales, London: Ministry of Justice

80 House of Commons written question 28142

81 Table 8.3, Youth Justice Board (2016) Youth Justice Statistics 2014–15 England and Wales, London: Ministry of Justice

## Prison works?

Child custody has dropped significantly—and so has offending



Source: Youth Justice Board Monthly youth custody report March 2016 and Youth Justice Statistics 2014–15

4,668 young adults (aged 18–20) are currently in prison in England and Wales.<sup>82</sup>

There are now 43% fewer young adults in prison in England and Wales than in 2011.<sup>83</sup>

The minimum age that a person can be prosecuted in a criminal trial in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is 10 years. This compares to 12 years in Canada, 13 years in France, 14 years in Germany and China, and 15 years in Sweden. In Scotland the age of criminal responsibility is eight years, but the minimum age for prosecution is 12.<sup>84</sup>

### Women

The number of women in prison nearly trebled between 1993 and 2005. Numbers have started slowly to reduce, but there are still 1,900 more women in prison today than there were twenty years ago.<sup>85</sup>

On 17 June 2016 there were 3,861 women in prison in England and Wales.<sup>86</sup>

8,818 women entered prison in 2015. 45% of them first entered prison on remand.<sup>87</sup>

82 Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

83 Ibid. and Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

84 Jacobson, J. and Talbot, J. (2009) Vulnerable Defendants in the Criminal Courts: a review of provision for adults and children, London: Prison Reform Trust; and <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/03/27140804>

85 Table A1.2, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Table 1.1, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: July to September 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

86 Ministry of Justice (2016) Population and capacity briefing for Friday 17 June 2016, London: Ministry of Justice

87 Table A2.1i, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics annual tables 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

## Majority of women commit non-violent crimes

Women sent to prison under sentence, 2015



Source: Offender management statistics annual tables 2015

**Most women entering prison under sentence (85%) have committed a non-violent offence.** 42% entered custody under sentence in 2015 for theft and handling stolen goods.<sup>88</sup>

**Most women entering prison serve very short sentences.** 61% of sentenced women entering prison in 2015 were serving six months or less.<sup>89</sup> In 1993 only a third of women entering custody were sentenced to six months or less.<sup>90</sup>

**53% of women in prison reported experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child, compared to 27% of men.**<sup>91</sup>

**46% of women in prison report having suffered a history of domestic abuse.**<sup>92</sup>

### Prisoners' families

**More than double the number of children are affected by parental imprisonment than divorce in the family.**<sup>93</sup> Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales had a parent in prison at some point in 2009.<sup>94</sup>

**It is estimated that in 2010 more than 17,240 children were separated from their mother by imprisonment.**<sup>95</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Table A2.8i, Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Table A2.6, Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Hedderman, C. (2012) Empty cells or empty words, government policy on reducing the number of women going to prison, London: Criminal Justice Alliance

<sup>91</sup> Ministry of Justice (2012) Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>92</sup> Baroness Corston (2007) A Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System, London: Home Office

<sup>93</sup> Office for National Statistics (2011) Divorces in England and Wales 2009, Fareham: Office for National Statistics

<sup>94</sup> Ministry of Justice (2012) Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>95</sup> Wilks-Wiffen, S. (2011) Voice of a Child, London: Howard League for Penal Reform

**Between 13–19% of women in prison are estimated to have one or more dependent children.**<sup>96</sup>

**Parental imprisonment approximately trebles the risk for antisocial or delinquent behaviour by their children.**<sup>97</sup>

**Over half (54%) of prisoners interviewed had children under the age of 18 when they entered prison.** The vast majority felt they had let their family down (82%).<sup>98</sup>

**40% of prisoners said that support from their family, and 36% said that seeing their children, would help them stop reoffending in the future.**<sup>99</sup>

**Women are often held further away from their families, making visiting difficult and expensive.** The average distance is 60 miles, but many are held considerably further away.<sup>100</sup>

### Foreign national prisoners

**The term 'foreign national prisoner' encompasses many different people.** They may have come to the UK as children with parents, or be second generation immigrants; they may be asylum seekers or been given indefinite leave to remain as a refugee; they could be European nationals; those who have entered the UK illegally or were in the UK as students, visitors or workers who have got involved in the criminal justice system.

**Foreign nationals (non-UK passport holders) currently make up 12% of the prison population in England and Wales.** On 31 March 2016 there were 9,971 foreign nationals in prison.<sup>101</sup>

**Foreign national prisoners come from 166 countries, but over half are from nine countries (Poland, Ireland, Romania, Jamaica, Albania, Lithuania, Pakistan, Somalia and India).**<sup>102</sup>

**Nearly half (49%) of foreign nationals serving a sentence in prison are there for non-violent offences.**<sup>103</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Ministry of Justice (2015) Female offenders and child dependents, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>97</sup> Murray, J., & Farrington, D. P. (2008) 'The effects of parental imprisonment on children'. In M. Tonry (Ed.), Crime and justice: A review of research (Vol. 37, pp. 133-206). Chicago: University of Chicago Press

<sup>98</sup> Ministry of Justice (2012) Prisoners' childhood and family backgrounds, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Women in Prison (2013) State of the estate—Women in Prison's report on the women's custodial estate 2011–12, London: Women in Prison

<sup>101</sup> Table 1.7, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> House of Commons written question 228242

Currently 13% of women in prison are foreign nationals<sup>104</sup>—some of whom are known to have been coerced or trafficked into offending.

One in ten foreign national women serving a sentence in prison are there for fraud and forgery offences (usually possession of false documents), and nearly one in three (31%) are there as a result of drugs offences.<sup>105</sup>

More than 29,000 foreign national offenders have been removed from the UK since 2010.<sup>106</sup>

418 people were in prison held solely under immigration powers on 4 January 2016.<sup>107</sup>

### Minority ethnic prisoners

26% of the prison population, 21,879 people, are from a minority ethnic group.<sup>108</sup> This compares to 14% of the general population.<sup>109</sup>

One in 10 British prisoners are black and 6% are Asian.<sup>110</sup> For black Britons this is significantly higher than the 2.8% of the general population they represent.<sup>111</sup>

According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, there is now greater disproportionality in the number of black people in prisons in the UK than in the United States.<sup>112</sup>

The number of Muslim prisoners has more than doubled over the past 13 years. In 2002 there were 5,502 Muslims in prison, by 2016 this had risen to 12,543. They now account for 15% of the prison population.<sup>113</sup>

Muslims in prison are far from being a homogeneous group. Some were born into Muslim families, and others have converted. 41% are Asian, 31% are black, 14% are white and 8% are mixed.<sup>114</sup>

104 Table 1.7, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

105 Table A1.9, Ministry of Justice (2014) Offender management statistics annual tables 2013, London: Ministry of Justice

106 House of Commons written question 30064

107 Home Office (2016) Immigration statistics, October to December 2015, Detention. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2015/detention#immigration-detainees-in-prisons>

108 Table 1.4, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

109 Table A3.5.2, Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) How fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010, London: Equality and Human Rights Commission

110 Table A1.8, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

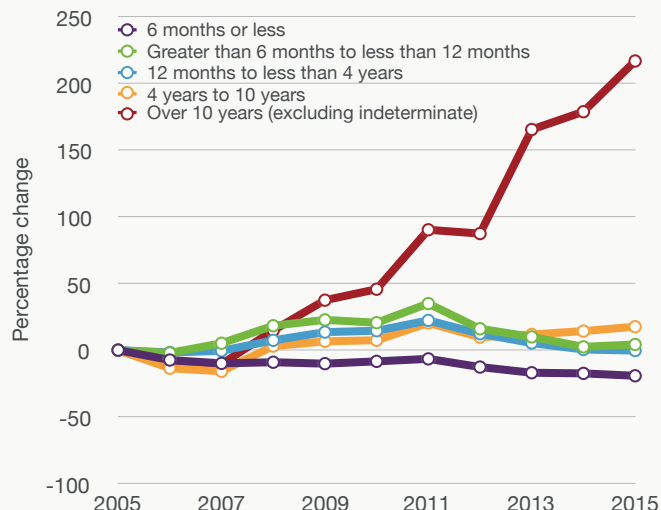
111 Table 4, Office for National Statistics (2011) Population Estimates by Ethnic Group 2002 – 2009, London: Office for National Statistics

112 Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) How fair is Britain? London: Equality and Human Rights Commission

113 Table A1.8, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

114 Table A1.12, Ministry of Justice (2014) Offender management statistics annual tables 2013, London: Ministry of Justice

### Determined to keep them locked up The increase in long, determinate sentences



Source: Ministry of Justice (2016) Criminal justice statistics December 2015

Black and minority ethnic and Muslim prisoners often report more negatively about their experience in prison and relationships with staff. Fewer said they felt safe on their first night or at the time of the inspectorate's survey; fewer had a member of staff they could turn to for help, and more said they had been victimised by staff.<sup>115</sup>

4% of prisoners say they are Gypsy, Romany or Traveller.<sup>116</sup> However, "there is evidence of a possible reluctance by many prisoners to identify themselves as such."<sup>117</sup>

### Older people

With prison sentences getting longer, people are growing old behind bars. People aged 60 and over are the fastest growing age group in the prison estate. There are now nearly triple the number there were 15 years ago.<sup>118</sup>

People aged 50 and over currently make up 15% of the prison population. There are 12,577 people aged 50 and over in prison in England and Wales—4,373 are aged 60 and over.<sup>119</sup>

On 30 June 2015 there were 134 people in prison aged 80 and over. 123 were sentenced when they were over the age of 70.<sup>120</sup>

115 HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2015) Annual Report 2014–15, London: The Stationery Office

116 Ibid.

117 Department for Communities and Local Government (2012), Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers, London: CLG

118 Table A1.6, Ministry of Justice (2015) Offender management statistics prison population 2015, London: Ministry of Justice and Table 1.3, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

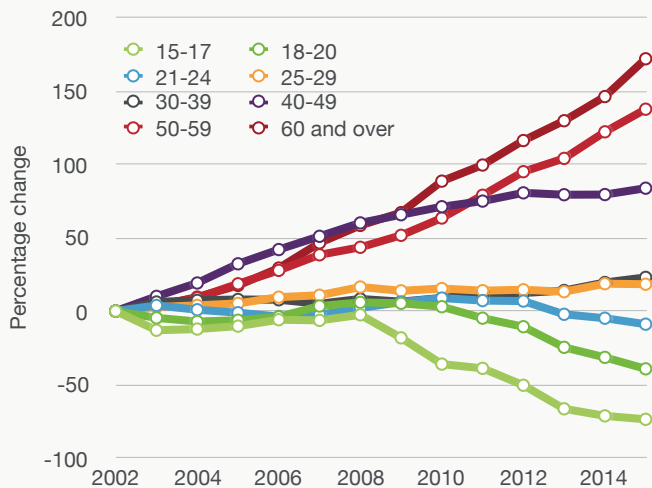
119 Table 1.3, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

120 House of Lords written question HL1895 and HL2447



## Growing old behind bars

Over 50s now account for 15% of the prison population



Source: Offender management statistics, Prison population 2015

**42% of men in prison aged over 50 have been convicted of sex offences.** The next highest offence category is violence against the person (25%) followed by drug offences (11%).<sup>121</sup>

**As the prison population ages, more prisoners will die of natural causes while in prison.** 113 people aged 50 or over died of natural causes whilst in prison in 2015—more than double the number a decade ago.<sup>122</sup>

## Disability and health

### Disability

**36% of prisoners are estimated to have a physical or mental disability.** This compares with 19% of the general population.<sup>123</sup>

**18% of people in prison are estimated to have a physical disability.**<sup>124</sup>

### People with learning disabilities and difficulties

**20–30% of people in prison are estimated to have learning disabilities or difficulties that interfere with their ability to cope with the criminal justice system.**<sup>125</sup> However, inspectors found that the system is failing to identify people with learning disabilities and difficulties adequately.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>121</sup> Table A1.4, Ministry of Justice (2014) Offender management statistics annual tables 2013, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>122</sup> Table 1.3, Ministry of Justice (2016) Safety in custody statistics quarterly update to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>123</sup> Ministry of Justice (2012) Estimating the prevalence of disability amongst prisoners: results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Loucks, N. (2007) No One Knows: Offenders with Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities. Review of prevalence and associated needs, London: Prison Reform Trust

<sup>126</sup> Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2015) A joint inspection of the treatment of offenders with learning disabilities within the criminal justice system - phase two in custody and the community, London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons

**Nearly a third (32%) of people assessed in prison said they had a learning disability or difficulty.**<sup>127</sup>

**23% of children in custody have very low IQs of below 70, and a further 36% have an IQ between 70–80).**<sup>128</sup>

**Four-fifths of prisoners with learning disabilities or difficulties report having problems reading prison information—they also had difficulties expressing themselves and understanding certain words.**<sup>129</sup>

**Independent inspectors found that “little thought was given to the need to adapt regimes to meet the needs of prisoners with learning disabilities who may find understanding and following prison routines very difficult.”**<sup>130</sup>

**Prisoners with learning disabilities or difficulties are more likely than other prisoners to have broken a prison rule; they are five times as likely to have been subject to control and restraint, and around three times as likely to report having spent time in segregation.**<sup>131</sup>

**The government has invested £75m in liaison and diversion services in police custody suites and the criminal courts, leading to 53% population coverage across England.** Full roll out of services has yet to be announced.

**Prisoners with learning disabilities or difficulties were almost three times as likely as other prisoners to have clinically significant anxiety or depression, and most were both anxious and depressed.**<sup>132</sup>

### Mental health

**26% of women and 16% of men said they had received treatment for a mental health problem in the year before custody.**<sup>133</sup>

**25% of women and 15% of men in prison reported symptoms indicative of psychosis.**<sup>134</sup> The rate among the general public is about 4%.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Skills Funding Agency (2015) OLASS English and maths assessments: participation 2014/15, London: SFA

<sup>128</sup> Harrington, R., and Bailey, S. (2005) Mental health needs and effectiveness of provision for young offenders in custody and in the community. London: Youth Justice Board

<sup>129</sup> Talbot, J. (2008) Prisoners' Voices: Experiences of the criminal justice system by prisoners with learning disabilities and difficulties, London: Prison Reform Trust

<sup>130</sup> Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2015) A joint inspection of the treatment of offenders with learning disabilities within the criminal justice system - phase two in custody and the community, London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons

<sup>131</sup> Talbot, J. (2008) Prisoners' Voices: Experiences of the criminal justice system by prisoners with learning disabilities and difficulties, London: Prison Reform Trust

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>134</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>135</sup> Wiles, N., et al. (2006) Self-reported psychotic symptoms in the general population, The British Journal of Psychiatry, 188: 519-526

**46% of women prisoners report having attempted suicide at some point in their lives.** This is more than twice the rate of male prisoners (21%) and higher than in the general UK population (6%).<sup>136</sup>

**Suicide rates are significantly higher in custody than amongst the general population.** In 2015 the rate of self-inflicted deaths amongst the prison population was 120 per 100,000 people, amongst the general population it is 10.8 per 100,000 people.<sup>137</sup>

**70% of people who died from self-inflicted means whilst in prison had already been identified with mental health needs.** However, the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) found that concerns about mental health problems had only been flagged at reception in just over half of these cases.<sup>138</sup>

**The PPO's investigation found that nearly one in five of those diagnosed with a mental health problem received no care from a mental health professional in prison.**<sup>139</sup>

**71% of transfers from prison to secure hospitals under the Mental Health Act between April to September 2015 took more than 14 days, the Department of Health's expectation.**<sup>140</sup>

**9,093 people have been referred for mental health treatment since the start of liaison and diversion services in England.** 13% were detained under the Mental Health Act and 3% were admitted to a mental health hospital.<sup>141</sup>

## Drugs

**Former Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick has said that new psychoactive substances (NPS) are now "the most serious threat to the safety and security of jails".**<sup>142</sup> They are a source of debt and associated bullying as well as a threat to health.<sup>143</sup>

**There were 851 recorded seizures of NPS in prison during October and November 2015.**<sup>144</sup>

**The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman found that in 39 deaths in prison between June 2013 and June 2015, the prisoner was known, or strongly suspected, to have been using NPS before their deaths.**<sup>145</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>137</sup> Table 2, Ibid. and Office for National Statistics (2016) Suicides in the United Kingdom, 2014 Registrations, Newport: Office for National Statistics

<sup>138</sup> Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (2016) Prisoner mental health, London: PPO

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> House of Commons written question 18773

<sup>141</sup> House of Commons written question 27917

<sup>142</sup> HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2015) Changing patterns of substance misuse in adult prisons and service responses, London: HMIP

<sup>143</sup> HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2014) Annual Report 2013-14, London: The Stationery Office

<sup>144</sup> House of Lords written question HL4385

<sup>145</sup> Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (2015) Learning lessons bulletin: New psychoactive substances, London: PPO

**9% of prisoners reported that they had been pressured to give away their prescribed medication.**<sup>146</sup>

**7% of men and 7% of women in prison reported that they had developed a problem with diverted medication.**<sup>147</sup>

**Levels of drug use are high amongst offenders, with highest levels of use found amongst most prolific offenders.** 64% of prisoners reported having used drugs in the four weeks before custody.<sup>148</sup>

**15% of men and women in prison are serving sentences for drug offences.**<sup>149</sup>

**66% of women and 38% of men in prison report committing offences to get money to buy drugs.**<sup>150</sup>

**Nearly half of women in prison report having committed offences to support someone else's drug use.**<sup>151</sup>

**Reconviction rates more than double for prisoners who reported using drugs in the four weeks before custody compared with prisoners who had never used drugs (62% vs. 30%).**<sup>152</sup>

## Alcohol

**In almost half (47%) of all violent crimes the victim believed the offender or offenders to be under the influence of alcohol.**<sup>153</sup>

**70% of prisoners surveyed said that they had been drinking when they committed their offence.** 38% of people surveyed in prison believed that their drinking was a big problem.<sup>154</sup>

**Men and women in prison who reported drinking daily had an average of 20 units per day.** This was equivalent to drinking four bottles of wine or ten pints of beer in a single day.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>146</sup> HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2015) Changing patterns of substance misuse in adult prisons and service responses, London: HMIP

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>149</sup> Table 1.2b, Ministry of Justice (2016) Offender management statistics quarterly: October to December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>150</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>151</sup> Light, M. et al. (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>152</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

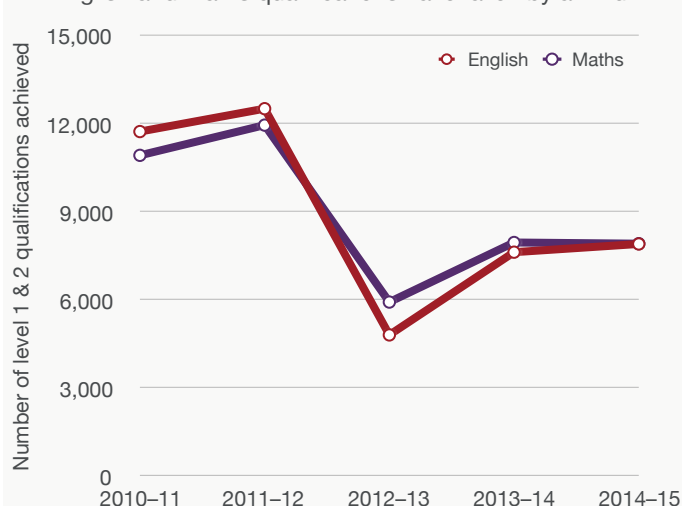
<sup>153</sup> Table 3.11, Office for National Statistics (2016) Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences : Year ending March 2015, Nature of Crime Tables—violence, London: Office for National Statistics

<sup>154</sup> Alcohol and Crime Commission (2014) The Alcohol and Crime Commission Report, London: Addaction

<sup>155</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice.

## Time well spent?

English and maths qualifications have fallen by a third



Source: OLASS: participation and achievement by equality and diversity & English and maths Level: 2010/11 to 2014/15

Inspectors said that “prison regimes did not give sufficient priority to education and training as a means of reducing reoffending or rehabilitating offenders”.<sup>162</sup>

The number of people achieving level 1 or 2 qualifications (GCSE level) has plummeted—falling by 37% in English and 34% in Maths between the 2011–12 and 2014–15 academic years.<sup>163</sup>

The number of people in prison studying for an Open University degree has fallen by 37% since 2010.<sup>164</sup>

Prisoners who had attend vocational training in prison are more likely to secure employment shortly after release<sup>165</sup>—a view endorsed by Ofsted.<sup>166</sup>

## Housing and employment

15% of newly sentenced prisoners reported being homeless before custody—9% were sleeping rough.<sup>167</sup>

11% of prisoners released from custody in 2014–15 had no settled accommodation.<sup>168</sup> Inspectors have said that the figures are “misleading” as “they do not take into account the suitability or sustainability of the accommodation.”<sup>169</sup>

A third of prisoners reported being in paid employment in the four weeks before custody. 13% reported never having had a job.<sup>170</sup>

Just over a quarter (27%) of people had a job on release from prison in 2014–15.<sup>171</sup> Outcomes for women are significantly worse than for men, with fewer than one in 10 women entering employment on release.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Skills Funding Agency (2015) OLASS: participation and achievement by equality and diversity & English and maths Level: 2010/11 to 2014/15, London: SFA

<sup>164</sup> Allison, E. and Sloan, A. (2015), Prison education still at the back of the class, as Gove takes new course, Guardian online, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/aug/04/michael-gove-prison-education-justice-secretary-jail>

<sup>165</sup> Brunton-Smith, I. and Hopkins, K (2014) The impact of experience in prison on the employment status of longer-sentenced prisoners after release, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>166</sup> Ofsted (2014) The report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills 2013/14: Further education and skills, London: The Stationery Office

<sup>167</sup> Ministry of Justice (2012) Research Summary 3/12, Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>168</sup> Table 10, Ministry of Justice (2015) NOMS Annual Report 2014/15: Management Information Addendum, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>169</sup> Criminal Justice Joint Inspection (2014) Resettlement provision for adult offenders: Accommodation and education, training and employment, London: HMIP

<sup>170</sup> Ministry of Justice (2012) The pre-custody employment, training and education status of newly sentenced prisoners, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>171</sup> Table 8, Ministry of Justice (2015) NOMS Annual Report 2014/15: Management Information Addendum, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>172</sup> Table 2, Ministry of Justice (2013) NOMS Offender equalities annual report 2012–13, London: Ministry of Justice

## Social and economic disadvantage

### Education and skills

Following a review of prison education by Dame Sally Coates, prison governors will be given control over their education budgets, the power to change providers, and be held to account for their educational outcomes.<sup>156</sup>

42% of prisoners had been expelled or permanently excluded from school.<sup>157</sup>

Half (51%) of people entering prison were assessed as having literacy skills expected of an 11 year old<sup>158</sup>—over three times higher than in the general adult population (15%).<sup>159</sup>

Purposeful activity includes education, work and other activities to aid rehabilitation whilst in prison.

However, purposeful activity outcomes are at the lowest level inspectors have ever recorded—they were only good or reasonably good in around a quarter of prisons.<sup>160</sup>

Prison education standards are deteriorating. Almost three-quarters of prisons inspected by Ofsted were judged as requiring improvement or inadequate for learning and skills.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>156</sup> Coates, S. (2016) Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prison, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>157</sup> Ministry of Justice (2010) Compendium of reoffending statistics, London: Ministry of Justice

<sup>158</sup> Skills Funding Agency (2015) OLASS English and maths assessments: participation 2014/15, London: SFA

<sup>159</sup> Figure 1.1, Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2012) The 2011 Skills for Life Survey: A Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and ICT Levels in England, London: BIS

<sup>160</sup> HM Chief Inspector of Prisons (2015) Annual Report 2014–15, London: The Stationery Office

<sup>161</sup> Ofsted (2015) The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills 2014/15, Manchester: Ofsted

**Just 16% of people leaving prison and referred to the Work Programme have found a job which they have held for six months or more.**<sup>173</sup> Of these, a third have subsequently gone back to Jobcentre Plus.<sup>174</sup>

**The Prime Minister announced that the Civil Service will Ban the Box**—removing the need to disclose unspent convictions at the initial job application stage.<sup>175</sup>

**Only 12% of employers surveyed said that they had employed somebody with a criminal record in the past three years.** One in five employers said they either did or were likely to exclude them from the recruitment process.<sup>176</sup>

### Financial exclusion

**Almost three-quarters of prisoners surveyed said finance, benefits and debt were a very significant need on release—second only to accommodation.**<sup>177</sup>

**The discharge grant has remained fixed at £46 since 1997.** Thousands of prisoners are ineligible, including those released from remand, fine defaulters and people serving less than 15 days.<sup>178</sup>

**People released from prison are more likely to be claiming benefits than other ex-offenders.** More than half of people released from prison were claiming out-of-work benefits one month afterwards, with two-fifths still claiming benefits two years after release.<sup>179</sup>

173 Table 2.8, Department for Work and Pensions (2016) Work Programme Official Statistics to December 2015, London: DWP

174 Department for Work and Pensions Tabulation Tool, accessed on 5 May 2016, available at [http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/WorkProg/wp\\_cuml\\_jo/payment\\_group/completed/a\\_cnjo\\_r\\_payment\\_group\\_c\\_completed\\_dec15.html](http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/WorkProg/wp_cuml_jo/payment_group/completed/a_cnjo_r_payment_group_c_completed_dec15.html)

175 Prime Minister's prison reform speech, delivered on 8 February 2016, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prison-reform-prime-ministers-speech>

176 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2010) Disadvantaged Groups in the Labour Market, London: CIPD

177 Figure C.5, Meadows, L. et al (2010) Investigating the Prisoner Finance Gap across four prisons in the North East, London: DWP

178 Prison Service Instruction 72/2011 Discharge, Annex B

179 Ministry of Justice (2014) Experimental statistics from the 2013 MoJ /DWP /HMRC data share: Linking data on offenders with benefit, employment and income data, London: Ministry of Justice

**A third of prisoners reported that they did not have a bank account; of whom 31% had never had one.**<sup>180</sup>

**Two-thirds of families said their debts had increased since the imprisonment of their relative.** The same proportion of former prisoners felt that their debts had worsened during their sentence.<sup>181</sup>

**More than four in five former prisoners surveyed said their conviction made it harder to get insurance and four-fifths said that when they did get insurance, they were charged more.** The inability to obtain insurance can prevent access to mortgages and many forms of employment or self-employment.<sup>182</sup>

### Community solutions to crime

**78% of unpaid work requirements were successfully completed from April to December 2014**—the highest proportion to date.<sup>183</sup>

**However, use of community sentences has nearly halved (44%) in the past decade.**<sup>184</sup>

**85% of victims and 80% of offenders surveyed as part of a government funded £7m seven year research programme were either 'very' or 'quite' satisfied with their restorative conference.**<sup>185</sup>

**27% fewer crimes were committed by offenders who had experienced restorative conferencing, compared with those offenders who did not.**<sup>186</sup>

180 Bath, C., and Edgar, K. (2010) Time is Money: Financial responsibility after prison, London: Prison Reform Trust

181 Bath, C., and Edgar, K. (2010) Time is Money: Financial responsibility after prison, London: Prison Reform Trust

182 Ibid.

183 Ministry of Justice (2015) National Offender Management Service annual report 2014/15: Management information addendum, London: Ministry of Justice

184 Table Q5.1b, Ministry of Justice (2016) Criminal justice statistics quarterly: December 2015, London: Ministry of Justice

185 Shapland, J et al (2007) Restorative Justice: the views of victims. The third report from the evaluation of three schemes. Ministry of Justice Research Series 3/07. London: Ministry of Justice

186 Restorative Justice Council (2011) What does the Ministry of Justice RJ research tell us? London: RJC, available at [http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/resource/ministry\\_of\\_justice\\_evaluation\\_of\\_restorative\\_justice/](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/resource/ministry_of_justice_evaluation_of_restorative_justice/)

The Prison Reform Trust works to create a just, humane and effective penal system. To find out more and support our work: [www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/supportourwork](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/supportourwork)



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