

Key Statistics: Self-inflicted deaths in prison custody

- There were 74 self-inflicted deaths in prison custody during the 12 month period to the end of December 2013. In comparison, there were 60 self-inflicted deaths in the same 12 month period during 2012. This increase has occurred after a period of relative stability and is the highest number in a calendar year since 2007. Over the last five years the number of self-inflicted deaths has ranged from 61 to 74.
- The increase in a single year does not necessarily reflect a change in trend. Falls or rises from one year to the next are not good indicators of underlying trends. The highest number of self-inflicted deaths in custody was in 2004 when there were 96 self-inflicted deaths.
- The rate of self-inflicted deaths rose from 0.7 to 0.9 deaths per 1,000 prisoners between 2012 and 2013, but remains one of the lowest rates recorded in the last 30 years. 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.
- There were 12 apparent self-inflicted deaths of 18-24 year olds in custody between January and December 2013 (the most recent year for which statistics are available by age-group). All of these deaths were males. Since 2007, the annual number of self-inflicted deaths in this age group has ranged between 9 and 17.
- Rates of self-inflicted death vary with age, the highest rates for both males and females in custody are observed amongst prisoners in their 30s. In 2013, there were 18 self-inflicted deaths among prisoners aged 30-39.
- In 2013, 18-24 year olds made up around 25% of the adult population in custody and were involved in 16% of self-inflicted deaths.
- In 2013, approximately five percent of the prison population was female and 95% was male. Most self-inflicted deaths in prison custody are of male prisoners (72 male and 2 female in 2013).
- From 1st April 2007 until 31st December 2013 there were 84 recorded self-inflicted deaths among 18-24 year olds in custody; this represents 19% of all recorded self-inflicted deaths in custody in this period.

Table 1: Total number of self-inflicted deaths in custody and percentage of all self-inflicted deaths by age group (April 2007-December 2013¹)

	Total number of self-inflicted deaths in custody: April 2007-December 2013	Percentage of all self-inflicted deaths in custody
15-17	4	1%
18-20	33	7%
21-24	51	12%
25-29	79	18%
30-39	109	25%
40-49	102	23%
50-59	48	11%
60 and over	15	3%
Total	441	100%

1) The period from April 2007 to December 2013 (the most recent data available) throughout this document reflects the period for which the Review is responsible.

Table 2: Total number of self-inflicted deaths in custody by gender (April 2007-December 2013)

	Total number of self-inflicted deaths in custody by gender: April 2007- December 2013	
	MALE	FEMALE
15-17	4	0
18-20	32	1
21-24	49	2
25-29	78	1
30-39	101	8
40-49	99	3
50-59	47	1
60 and over	15	0
Total	425	16

Sources:

Safety in Custody Statistics England and Wales: Update to December 2013 (MoJ, 2014)

Safety in Custody statistics: Deaths in prison custody, 1978-2013 (MoJ, 2014)

ANNEX 1

The information contained in this annex is unpublished and if any of the information is made public this could breach the Official Statistics Code of Practice. If there is a desire to quote these figures publicly the Chief Statistician at MoJ must be contacted and made aware.

Self-inflicted deaths of 18-24 year olds between 1 April 2007 and 31 December 2013 by self-reported ethnicity, sentence type and offence type.

Table 1: Self-inflicted deaths by ethnicity UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS –NOT FOR WIDER CIRCULATION

Ethnicity	Apr-Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
White	8	10	12	8	14	7	10	69
Asian	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	4
Black	4	1	0	0	1	2	1	9
Mixed	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	12	12	15	8	16	9	12	84

Table 2: Self-inflicted deaths by sentence type UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS –NOT FOR WIDER CIRCULATION

Sentence Type	Apr-Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Unsentenced	4	4	3	3	4	2	5	25
Convicted Unsentenced	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	5
Less than 6 months	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	5
6 months and less than 12 months	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	4
12 months and less than 4 years	1	2	5	4	8	1	2	23
4 years or more excluding Life	1	2	2	0	1	4	1	11
ISPP	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	5
Life	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	6
Total	12	12	15	8	16	9	12	84

Table 3: Self-inflicted deaths by offence type**UNPUBLISHED STATISTICS –NOT FOR WIDER CIRCULATION**

Main Offence Type	Apr- Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Arson and Criminal Damage	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Burglary	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	5
Common assault	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Drug offences	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Immigration offence	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other criminal offences	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	7
Possession of an offensive weapon	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Robbery	2	0	3	1	2	1	1	10
Sexual offences	1	2	0	0	3	2	1	9
Theft and handling	1	4	0	0	1	1	0	7
Violence against the person	6	3	7	4	8	4	6	38
Total	12	12	15	8	16	9	12	84

NB: This table represents the data as reported and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics standards