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Analytical Services Group

The Northern Ireland Prison Population 2020/21

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Key Findings

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The reporting period for this publication coincides with the onset of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Northern Ireland. COVID-19 has had an impact throughout the justice system, with lockdowns and other restrictions severely affecting court processing times during 2020/21¹. This is reflected in the prison population, with a large increase in remand figures, a large decrease in immediate custody figures and the decrease in receptions numbers due to the effects of court activity. The Northern Ireland Prison Service also made the decision to use Prison Rule 27 (Temporary Release) to manage the prison population during the health emergency². As of 31 March 2021, 395 prisoners had been released temporarily in the 3 months preceding their actual release date under this scheme which was suspended with effect from 1 April 2021.

Average Daily Prison Population

- ◆ The overall average daily prison population decreased by 4.5% during 2020/21 to 1,448. Males fell from 1,442 to 1,393 while the female population decreased from 74 to 55 (Table 1).
- ◆ The remand population increased by 10.8% from 492 in 2019/20 to 545 this year and is at its highest level since reporting by financial year began in 2014/15 (Figure 2 and Table 1).
- ◆ During 2020/21, the average daily immediate custody population decreased by 11.8% to 898, the lowest level since reporting by financial year began in 2014/15 (Figure 2 and Table 1).
- ◆ Prisoners aged between 30 to 39 years of age made up the largest proportion (35.4%) of the average daily immediate custody prison population (Table 2).
- ◆ In terms of custodial sentence length, the average daily population slightly increased in the sentence categories, 'life' and 'greater than five years but less than life'. Decreases were found in the remaining custodial sentence length categories (Table 4).
- ◆ Violence Against the Person offences continued to account for the largest proportion of all principal offence categories (35.9%; Figure 6 and Table 6).

¹Source: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/case%20processing%20times%20202021.pdf>

²Source: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-prison-service-policy-temporary-release-coronavirus-covid-19-public-health-emergency>

Receptions

- ◆ The number of receptions during 2020/21 were significantly fewer than the previous year, at 4,323 compared to 5,322 during 2019/20, a decrease of 18.8% (Figure 7 and Table 7).
- ◆ Remand receptions decreased by 12.6% over the last year, down from 3,310 in 2019/20 to 2,894 during 2020/21, with immediate custody receptions falling by 29.8% from 1,734 to 1,218 (Figure 8 and Table 7).
- ◆ The number of receptions for fine default (where the individual was received into custody solely for fine default offences) decreased by 32.4% from 222 in 2019/20 to 150 in 2020/21. This follows on from a decrease of 40.2% between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (Figure 8 and Table 7).
- ◆ The largest number of immediate custody receptions were recorded within the 21 to 29 years age group, accounting for 473 (38.8%) of receptions (Table 8).
- ◆ A larger proportion of female receptions were sentenced to a custody sentence length of one year or less (86.8%) compared to males (76.2%; Table 10).
- ◆ Both Violence Against the Person and Public Order offences accounted for the largest proportion of immediate custody receptions, at 19.3% (235) and 17.2% (209) respectively (Table 12).
- ◆ 24.5% (13) of female immediate custody receptions in 2020/21 were for Criminal Damage offences, compared to 14.1% (164) of male receptions. The largest proportion of male receptions into immediate custody were for Violence against the Person offences (19.2%; 224). By comparison, female receptions for Violence against the Person offences accounted for 20.8% (11) this year (Table 12).

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Introduction

This bulletin reports on key statistics relating to the average daily prison population levels and receptions for Northern Ireland during the 2020/21 financial year. It includes information by establishments, custody type, gender, age, sentence length and principal offence categories. The report also includes some international data for comparison purposes, as well as analysing trend data for the key statistics.

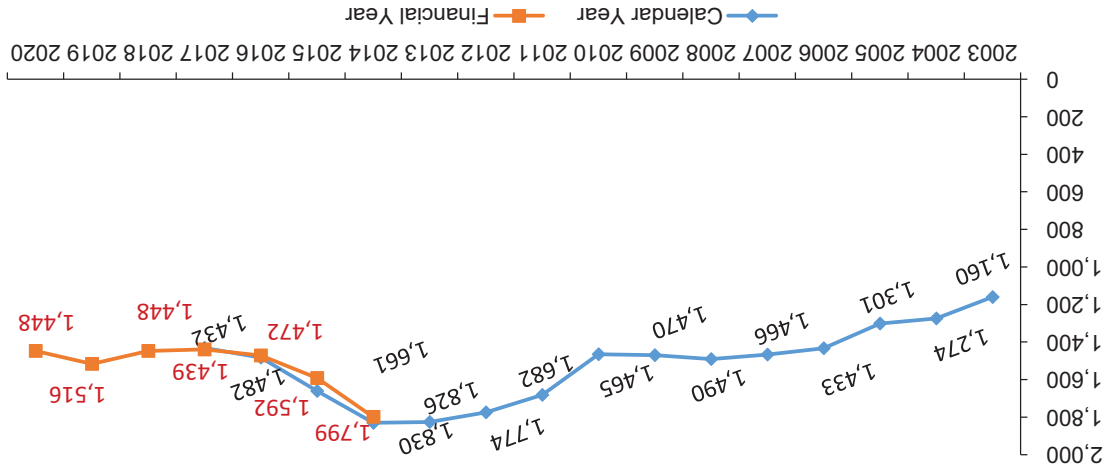
The data used in this bulletin are taken from the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Information System (PRISM). Details on the methodology used, data validation and definition of terms can be found in the Methodology and Counting Rules section at the back of this bulletin.

This is an annual National Statistics publication and the contents of this report will be of interest to the public, government policy makers, academics and others who want to understand more about the prison population in Northern Ireland. Further information on National Statistics and Users can be found at the back of this report.

1. Average Daily Prison Population

The average daily prison population for 2020/21 was 1,448, a decrease of 4.5% compared to the 1,516 reported in 2020/21. This is the same average daily population as in 2018/19 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Average Daily Prison Population 2003-2020/21



The decrease in the average daily prison population during 2020/21 was only found in three of the four prison establishments, with the average daily population for Maghaberry increasing from 902 during 2019/20 to 931 this year. For Hydebank Wood Males, there was a decrease from 92 during 2019/20 to 64 this year, Hydebank Wood Females reported a decrease from 74 in 2019/20 to 55 and for Magilligan the average daily population dropped from 447 in 2019/20 to 399 in 2020/21 (Figure 3 and Table 1).

The following sections look at average daily prison population by custody type and gender, as well as some of the characteristics of sentenced prisoners, namely age, sentence length and principal offence.

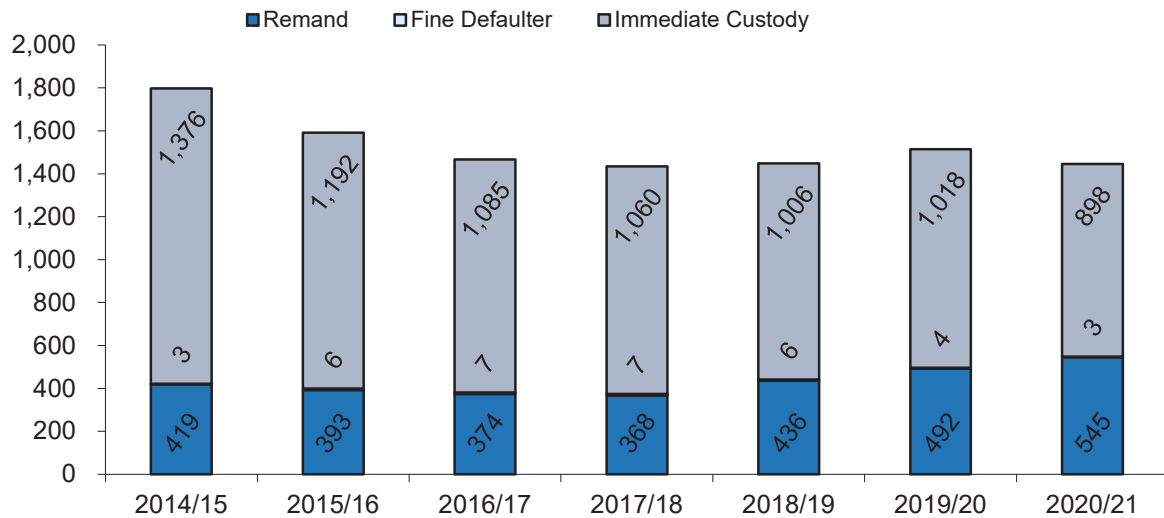
Average Daily Prison Population by Prisoner Type

Remand Prisoners

The average daily remand prison population increased by 10.8% compared to the previous year, from 492 to 545. This is the fourth consecutive year in which the average daily remand population has increased, and the highest since reporting by financial year started in 2014/15.

The proportion of prisoners on remand has increased each year, rising from 23.3% during 2014/15 to 24.7% during 2015/16, 25.4% during 2016/17, 25.6% during 2017/18, 30.1% during 2018/19, 32.4% during 2019/20 and 37.7% during 2020/21 (Figure 2 and Table 1).

In certain circumstances remands can be held in Magilligan. During 2020/21 there was an average remand population of 7 at Magilligan.

Figure 2: Average Daily Prison Population by Prisoner Type, 2014/15-2020/21

Immediate Custody Prisoners

During 2020/21 the average daily immediate custody prisoner population was 898, a decrease of 11.8% from the previous year's level of 1,018. This is the lowest the average daily immediate custody prisoner population has been since reporting by financial year started in 2014/15 and the first time this number has been below 1,000 (Figure 2).

The Department of Justice recently published statistics on prosecutions and convictions for 2020³. This showed that overall custodial convictions during the 2020 calendar year decreased, from 3,218 during 2019 (-20.4%) to 2,561 during 2020.

Fine Default and Non-Criminal Prisoners

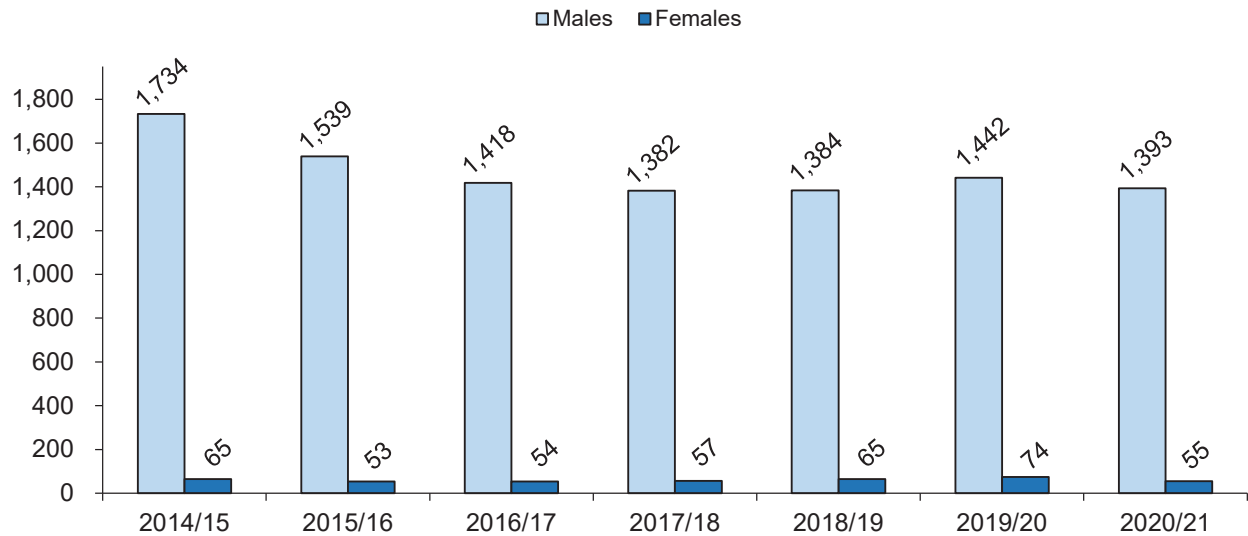
The average daily fine default and non-criminal prisoner (immigrant detainee) population account for a small proportion of the overall average daily prison population (0.2% for fine default and 0.1% for non-criminal). Figures for both have remained fairly similar over each of the last five financial years with fine defaults never exceeding a daily average of seven and non-criminal never accounting for more than a daily average of five since 2014/15 (Table 1).

³Source: (<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/court-prosecutions-and-out-court-disposals-statistics-northern-ireland-2020>)

Average Daily Prison Population by Gender

Males account for the vast majority of the average daily prison population (96.2%) and fell by 3.4% from 1,442 during 2019/20 to 1,393 this year. The average daily female prison population also fell, but by a much greater rate from 74 during 2019/20 to 55 during 2020/21, a decrease of 25.9% (Figure 3 and Table 1).

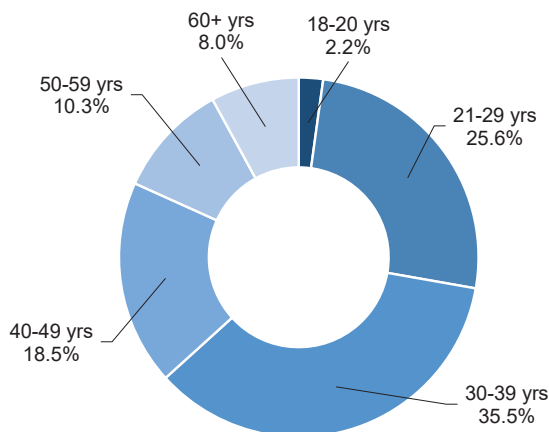
Figure 3: Average Daily Prison Population by Gender, 2014/15-2020/21



Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Current Age

Prisoners aged between 30 and 39 years of age were the largest age group of the immediate custody prisoner population during 2020/21 (35.4%), the third year in succession this has been the case. In the four years prior to 2018/19, prisoners aged 21 to 29 years had accounted for the largest proportion of the immediate custody prison population. During 2020/21, the 30 to 39 years age group was followed by those aged 21 to 29 years (25.6%), 40 to 49 years (18.5%), 50 to 59 years (10.3%), 60+ years (8.0%) and 18 to 20 years (2.2%). While the average daily number of immediate custody prison population aged 50 to 59 years (93) and 60+ years (71) has remained similar to the previous year all other age groups show a decrease. The proportions of 18 to 20 years (2.2%) and 21 to 29 years (25.6%) have decreased compared to the previous year (3.1% and 28.8% respectively during 2019/20) to the lowest levels since 2014/15, while the proportion of all other age groups show small increases (Figure 4 and Table 2).

Figure 4: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, 2020/21

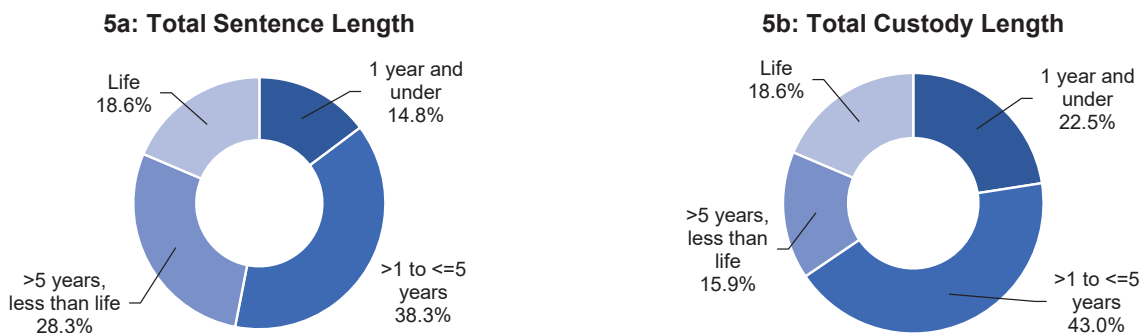


Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Sentence Length

Figures 5a and 5b show the breakdown of total sentence length and total custody length for prisoners under sentence of immediate custody during 2020/21. In terms of custodial sentence length, compared to 2019/20, the average daily population increased in the sentence categories, life and greater than five years but less than life. Decreases were found in the remaining categories; greater than one year but less than five years and greater than six months but less than twelve months and three month or less (Table 4).

More detailed sentence length information can be found in Table 3 and Table 4 in the tabular appendix at the back of this report.

Figure 5: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Sentence Length, 2020/21

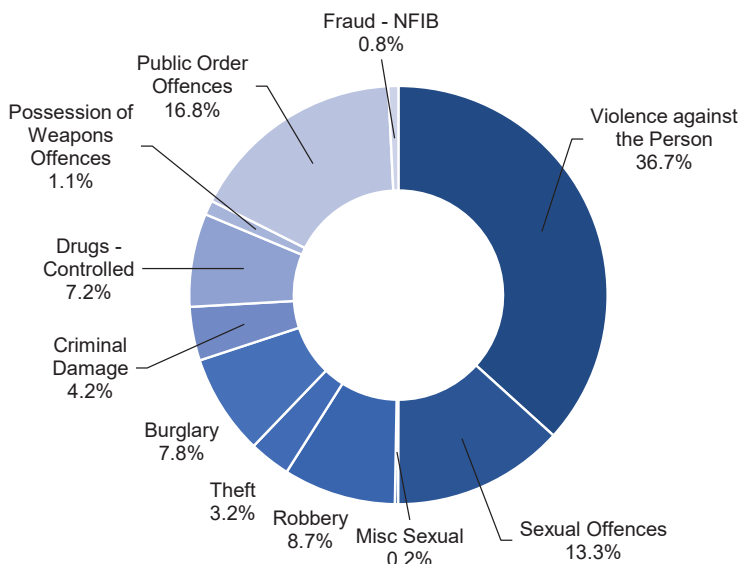


Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Principal Offence

Some 35.9% (322) of principal offences during 2020/21 were categorised as Violence against the Person, with 16.4% (147) categorised as Public Order Offences and 13.0% (117) categorised as Sexual Offences (Figure 6). These categories have consistently represented the three largest proportion of principal offences since offence classification was revised in 2015/16, with the overall breakdown remaining similar each year. Sexual Offences was the only major category to show an increase in the average daily number in immediate custody 117 during 2020/21 compared to 112 during 2019/20 (Table 6).

Please note that as of 2020/21, a further revision of offence classifications has taken place. This has resulted in the introduction of a new category – Liquor Licence, and the splitting of the Drugs Offences and Fraud categories into Drugs – Controlled and Drugs – Other, and Fraud – National Fraud Investigation Bureau (NFIB) and Fraud – Other.

Figure 6: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Principal Offence, 2020/21



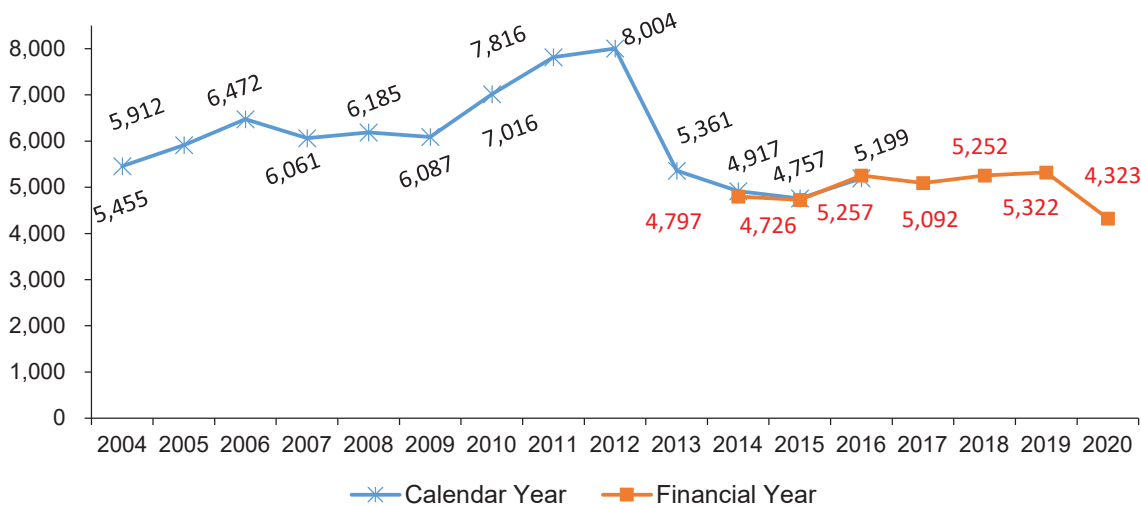
2. Receptions into Prison

The number of receptions into prison decreased by 18.8%, from 5,322 in 2019/20 to 4,323 in 2020/21 (Figure 7). The 4,323 receptions were made by 2,498 prisoners, giving a reception rate of 1.7, a much lower reception rate than 1.8 during 2019/20 (5,322 receptions for 2,961 prisoners). This is the lowest number of receptions recorded since reporting by financial year began in 2014/15.

Female receptions into Hydebank Wood decreased by 29.6% from 409 in 2019/20 to 288 in 2020/21. This decrease was found in all custodial categories, with remand falling from 276 during 2019/20 to 214 during 2020/21 and immediate custody decreasing from 111 during 2019/20 to 53 during 2020/21 (Table 7).

Male receptions into Maghaberry and Magilligan decreased by 25.6% from 4,462 during 2019/20 to 3,759 this year (Table 7).

Figure 7: Prison Receptions, 2004-2020/21



Young male receptions into Hydebank Wood decreased by 38.8% over the last year (from 451 to 276). This was largely a consequence of the 31.3% decrease in remand receptions for this group (down from 304 in 2019/20 to 209 in 2020/21), and the 54.8% decrease in receptions into immediate custody, which fell from 126 last year to 57 this year (Table 7).

In certain circumstances, Magilligan can house remand prisoners, resulting in 21 remand receptions, compared to 26 during the previous year.

Across all establishments, the number of receptions for fine default fell, with an overall decrease of 32.4%, from 222 during 2019/20 to 150 this year. This is on top of the 40.2% decrease in receptions for fine default reported between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The subsequent sections of this report examine receptions by custody type and gender, as well as some of the characteristics of immediate custody prisoner receptions, namely age, sentence length and principal offence.

Please note, that there was a revision to the methodology used to calculate receptions in 2020/21. As a result, the findings of the 2020/21 year may not be directly comparable to previous years of the report.

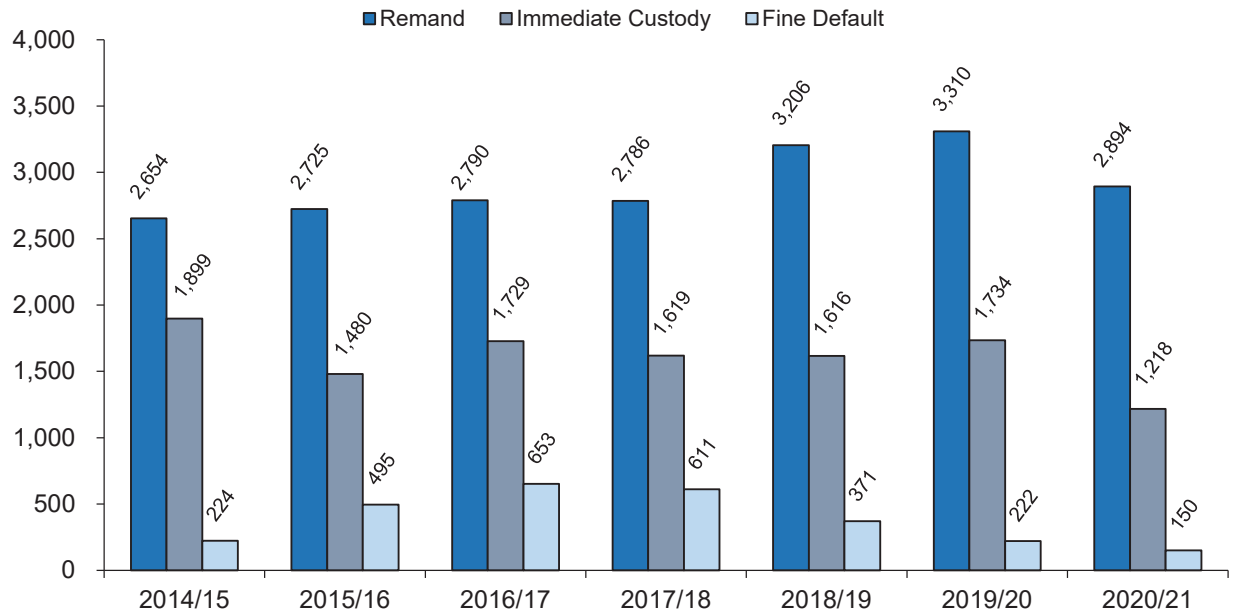
Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type

Remand Prisoners

Remand receptions decreased by 12.6% over the last year, down from 3,310 in 2019/20 to 2,894 during 2020/21. This resulted in remand receptions accounting for 66.9% of total receptions in 2020/21, an increase from 62.2% in 2019/20. The 66.9% reported this year is the highest proportion of remand reception recorded since the current time series moved to a financial year basis in 2014/15 (Figure 8 and Table 7).

Immediate Custody Prisoners

Receptions into immediate custody decreased 29.8% during 2020/21, to 1,218 compared to 1,734 the previous year. Male receptions into immediate custody in Maghaberry decreased by 26.4% over the last year (from 1,489 to 1,086) with receptions into immediate custody at Hydebank Wood young males falling by 54.8% from 126 during 2019/20 to 57 during 2020/21. Similarly, receptions into immediate custody in Hydebank Wood females fell by 52.3% from 111 in 2019/20 to 53 during 2020/21, Magilligan reported a slight increase in receptions into immediate custody, up from 8 during 2019/20 to 12 this year (Table 7).

Figure 8: Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type, 2014/15-2020/21

Fine Default and Non-Criminal Prisoners

The number of receptions for fine default (where the individual was received into custody solely for fine default offences) decreased by 32.4%, from 222 in 2019/20 to 150 in 2020/21, building on the substantial yearly decreases found from 2017/18 onwards (Figure 8 and Table 7).

Due to the way in which the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) case management system (PRISM) inputs individual information, the methodology used in this report to compute receptions may under count the total number of fine default receptions, with further detail on this contained in the Definitions section of this report. Nevertheless, this methodology is consistent in its approach taken in previous years

The number of non-criminal (immigrant detainee) receptions increased from 56 during 2019/20 to 61 during 2020/21, accounting for 1.4% of all receptions (Table 7).

Prison Receptions by Gender

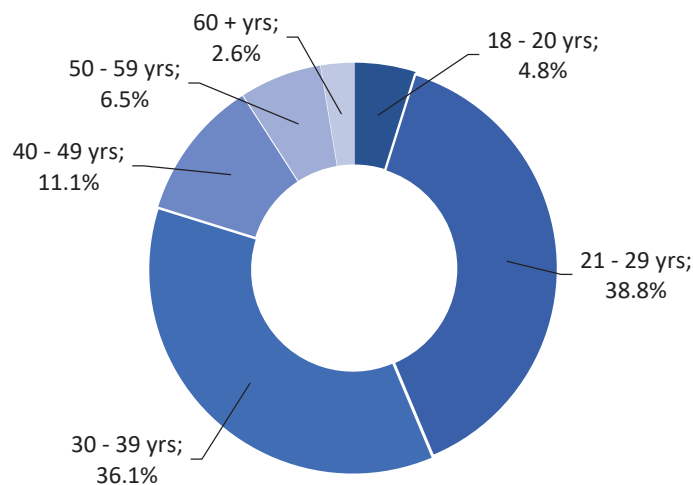
The total number of male receptions decreased by 17.9%, from 4,913 during 2019/20 to 4,035 during 2020/21. The number of female receptions decreased by 29.6% from 409 during 2019/20 to 288 during 2020/21. In both cases, this decrease can be found in both the number of receptions into remand and immediate custody.

Receptions for fine default decreased for both males (-34.3%; 201 to 132) and females (-14.3%; 21 to 18) (Table 7).

Immediate Custody Receptions by Age at Reception

The largest number of immediate custody receptions were recorded within the 21 to 29 years age group, accounting for 473 (38.8%) of receptions, followed by the 30 to 39 years age group with 440 (36.1%) (Figure 9 and Table 8).

Figure 9: Immediate Custody Receptions by Age at Reception, 2020/21



Immediate Custody Receptions by Sentence Length

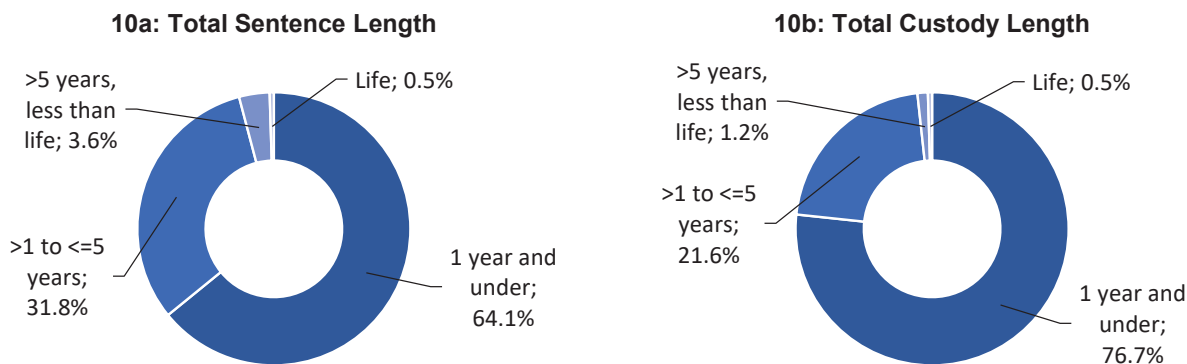
Figure 10a and Figure 10b show the breakdown of sentences for immediate custody receptions for both the total sentence length and the custody sentence length.

Primarily, in terms of the prison population, the custody length imposed is of greater significance than the total sentence length (which includes the licence element), as it is the custody length which determines how long a person must initially spend in custody. Figure 10b shows that custody sentences of one year and under accounted for the largest proportion of sentenced receptions (76.7%) which is similar to the 77.4% reported for this category last year.

The proportion of custody sentences greater than one year and less than or equal to five years increased slightly at 21.6% (263 receptions) in 2020/21 compared to 19.6% (340 receptions) the previous year.

Looking at gender and sentence length, Table 10 shows that 86.8% (46) of females receptions were sentenced to one year or less in custody, compared to 76.2% (888) of males. Looking at sentences of six months or less, 62.3% (33) of female receptions received sentences of this length compared to 48.2% (561) of male receptions (Table 10).

Figure 10: Immediate Custody Receptions by Sentence Length, 2020/21



Immediate Custody Receptions by Principal Offence

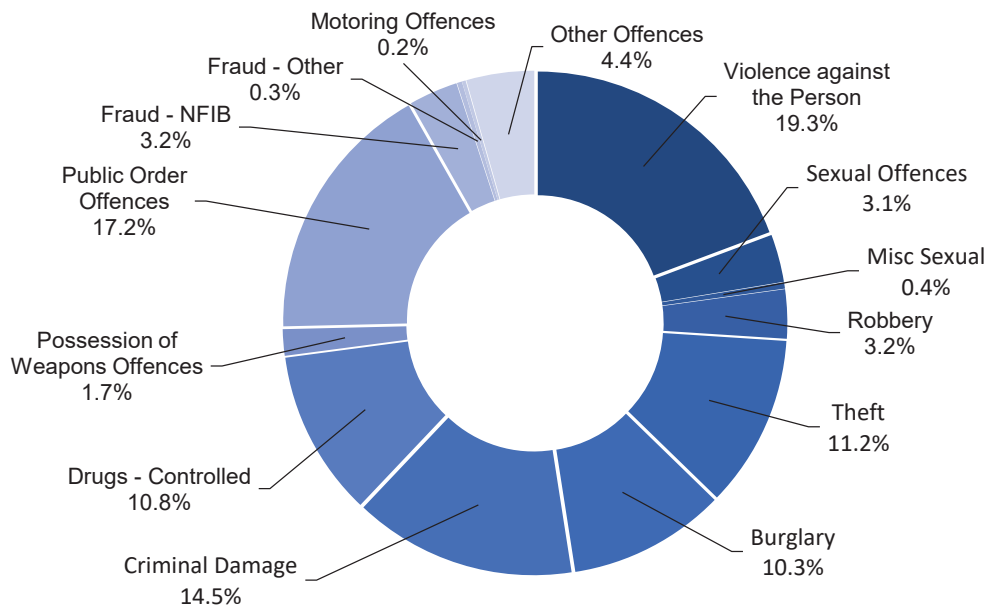
Violence against the Person and Public Order offences accounted for the largest proportions of immediate custody receptions by principal offence, at 19.3% (235) and 17.2% (209) respectively.

The proportionate breakdown of each offence category during 2020/21 remained broadly similar to those reported in the 2019/20 (Figure 11 and Table 12).

In terms of gender, the largest number of female receptions into immediate custody related to Criminal Damage (24.5%; 13), followed by Violence against the Person (20.8%: 11), with Theft and Drugs – Controlled both falling to a third of the previous year’s numbers (from 31 to 9 and 12 to 4 respectively). By comparison, in 2020/21, 19.2% (224) of male immediate custody receptions were for Violence against the Person, 17.4% (203) were for Public Order Offences, and 14.1% (164) were for Criminal Damage.

While overall, Violence against the Person and Public order offences account for the largest proportions of receptions into immediate custody, as in previous years, for the first time Criminal Damage has displaced Theft as the third largest proportion accounting for 14.5% of all receptions into immediate custody this year compared to 10.5% during 2019/20 (Table 12).

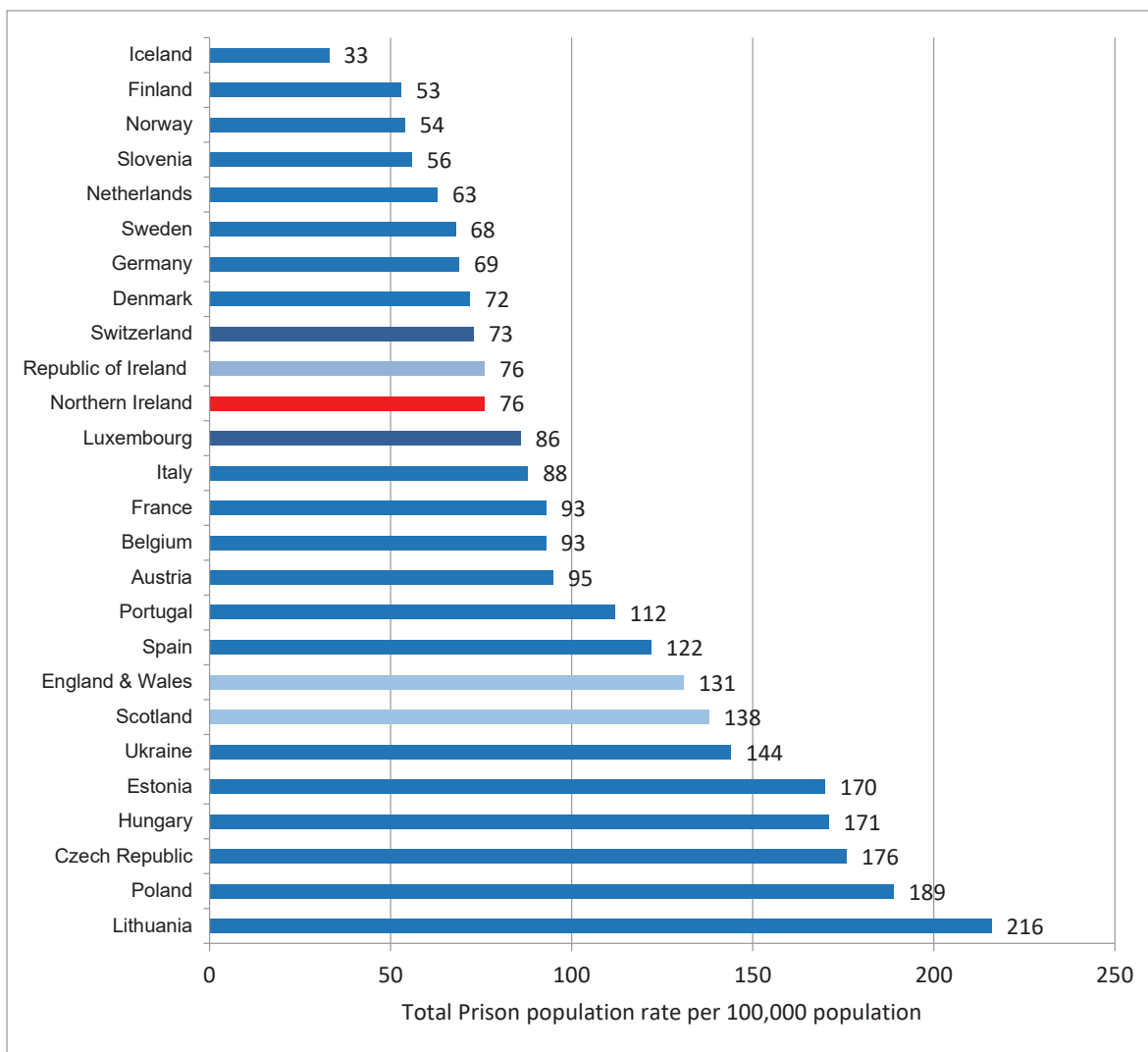
Figure 11: Immediate Custody Receptions by Principal Offence, 2020/21



3. International Comparisons

A range of international prison comparisons are published in the World Prison Brief which can be found [here](#)⁴. One such comparison relates to the prison population as a rate of every 100,000 of the overall population within each jurisdiction. Figure 12 shows the prison population per 100,000 people in the population for a selection of European countries, with the information based on the latest available at the start of September 2021. As illustrated in this figure, Northern Ireland has a rate of 76 prisoners for every 100,000 people in the population. The equivalent figure for Scotland was 138 and England and Wales was 131. With a rate of 76, the Republic of Ireland's rate was the same as that of Northern Ireland.

Figure 12: Prison Population per 100,000 Population, Selected European Jurisdictions



⁴Source: World Prison Brief, accessed in September 2021
https://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=14&=Apply

Tabular Annex⁵

Table 1: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population by Prisoner Type, Gender and Establishment

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Remand	Maghaberry	310	353	405	478
	Magilligan	2	5	7	7
	Hydebank Wood Males	37	51	47	33
	Hydebank Wood Females	19	26	33	27
	Total	368	436	492	545
Immediate Custody	Maghaberry	538	480	493	450
	Magilligan	427	442	440	391
	Hydebank Wood Males	56	46	45	30
	Hydebank Wood Females	38	38	41	27
	Total	1,060	1,006	1,018	898
Fine Default	Maghaberry	6	5	3	2
	Magilligan	0	0	1	1
	Hydebank Wood Males	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood Females	1	0	0	0
	Total	7	6	4	3
Non-Criminal	Maghaberry	2	1	1	1
	Magilligan	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood Males	2	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood Females	0	0	0	0
	Total	4	1	1	2
Males	1,382	1,384	1,442	1,393	
Females	57	65	74	55	
Establishment	Maghaberry	857	839	902	931
	Magilligan	430	447	447	399
	Hydebank Wood Males	95	98	92	64
	Hydebank Wood Females	57	65	74	55
	Total	1,439	1,448	1,516	1,448

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
Females may include Transgender persons

⁵For presentational purposes, the tables in this report commence in 2017/18. Tables back to 2014/15 can be found in excel format (<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/ni-prison-service-statistics>).

Table 2: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Current Age

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2019/21
Males	18 - 20 Years	34	27	30	18
	21 - 29 Years	340	304	285	225
	30 - 39 Years	326	320	335	308
	40 - 49 Years	158	163	174	161
	50 - 59 Years	98	90	87	88
	60 + Years	66	63	67	70
	Total	1,022	968	978	871
Females	18 - 20 Years	2	2	1	1
	21 - 29 Years	9	7	8	5
	30 - 39 Years	8	11	15	11
	40 - 49 Years	11	10	9	5
	50 - 59 Years	6	6	5	4
	60 + Years	1	2	2	1
	Total	38	38	41	27
All	18 - 20 Years	36	29	32	20
	21 - 29 Years	349	312	293	230
	30 - 39 Years	334	331	350	319
	40 - 49 Years	169	174	182	166
	50 - 59 Years	104	96	92	93
	60 + Years	67	65	69	71
	Total	1,060	1,006	1,018	898

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 3: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, Gender and Sentence Length

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/2020			2020/2021		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Adult Males (Aged 21 and Over)												
Life	148	148	148	150	150	150	157	157	157	160	160	160
>10 Years, less than life	104	58	0	101	54	0	97	53	0	96	50	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	156	102	22	164	96	27	166	85	29	152	90	29
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	63	45	37	62	39	35	50	40	32	48	35	30
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	85	60	43	74	67	52	71	68	57	62	58	55
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	127	98	115	92	102	123	111	104	113	103	101	99
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	128	202	192	130	176	152	121	187	160	108	170	144
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	92	173	75	81	155	79	91	158	72	63	114	56
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	61	78	15	64	79	11	61	73	7	42	54	8
≤3 Months	22	22	0	23	24	0	19	19	0	15	16	0
No Licence	0	0	339	0	0	313	0	0	315	0	0	267
Missing	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	3	4	4	4
Total	988	988	988	941	941	941	947	947	947	852	852	852
Young Males (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0		0
>10 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	4	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	0
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	2	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	2	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	1
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	6	4	5	4	2	2	6	3	3	4	2	2
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	8	10	7	5	8	5	4	9	10	4	6	7
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	7	12	6	6	7	1	4	8	3	2	5	2
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	5	7	1	5	6	0	5	5	0	3	3	0
≤3 Months	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
No Licence	0	0	15	0	0	17	0	0	11	0	0	7
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	34	34	27	27	27	30	30	30	18	18	18
All Males	1,022	1,022	1,022	968	968	968	978	978	978	871	871	871
Adult Females (Aged 21 & Over)												
Life	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6
>5 Years, less than life	3	1	0	5	1	0	4	0	0	4	2	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	13	12	10	13	12	9	15	14	10	11	11	9
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	5	8	4	6	9	5	9	13	4	2	4	1
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	6	7	0	4	6	0	4	5	1	2	3	1
≤3 Months	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
No Licence	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	18	0	0	9
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	36	36	36	36	36	36	39	39	39	26	26	26
Young Females (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
≤3 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
No Licence	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
All Females	38	38	38	38	38	38	41	41	41	27	27	27

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 4: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Sentence Length

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/2021		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Males												
Life	149	149	149	151	151	151	158	158	158	160	160	160
>10 Years, less than life	104	58	0	101	54	0	97	53	0	96	50	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	160	102	22	167	96	27	169	85	29	154	91	29
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	65	45	37	62	40	35	52	41	32	49	35	30
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	86	60	43	74	67	52	75	70	59	63	59	56
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	133	102	121	96	104	125	117	106	116	107	103	101
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	136	212	199	135	184	156	126	196	170	111	176	151
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	99	185	80	87	162	80	95	166	75	65	120	59
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	66	85	15	69	85	11	65	79	8	45	57	8
≤3 months	23	23	0	25	26	0	21	21	0	16	17	0
No Licence	0	0	354	0	0	330	0	0	327	0	0	274
Missing	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	3	4	4	4
Total Males	1,022	1,022	1,022	968	968	968	978	978	978	871	871	871
Females												
Life	7	7	7	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6
>5 Years, less than life	3	1	0	5	1	0	4	0	0	4	2	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	13	12	10	13	12	9	16	14	11	12	12	9
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	6	9	4	7	10	5	10	13	4	2	4	1
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	6	7	0	4	6	0	4	6	1	2	3	1
≤3 months	2	3	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
No Licence	0	0	17	0	0	17	0	0	19	0	0	10
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Females	38	38	38	38	38	38	41	41	41	27	27	27
All												
Life	156	156	156	158	158	158	165	165	165	166	166	166
>5 Years, less than life	267	161	22	273	150	27	270	139	29	253	142	29
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	433	431	410	381	407	378	384	427	387	343	384	347
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	105	194	84	94	172	85	105	179	80	68	123	60
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	72	92	16	73	91	12	70	84	9	47	60	8
≤3 months	25	26	0	27	28	0	22	22	0	17	18	0
No Licence	0	0	371	0	0	347	0	0	345	0	0	284
Missing	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	3	3	4	4	4
Total	1,060	1,060	1,060	1,006	1,006	1,006	1,018	1,018	1,018	898	898	898

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Components may not sum to totals due to rounding
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 5: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, Gender and Principal Offence

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AGED 21 AND OVER								
Violence against the Person	344	14	316	16	323	16	306	13
Sexual Offences	104	2	102	2	109	1	114	1
Misc. Sexual	5	0	1	0	3	0	2	0
Robbery	90	3	82	1	86	1	72	1
Theft	34	5	36	5	32	5	25	2
Burglary	59	0	53	0	63	3	64	1
Criminal Damage	34	1	41	1	38	1	33	2
Drug Offences	90	3	81	2				
Drugs - Controlled					88	4	60	1
Drugs - Other					0	0	0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	13	0	14	0	14	0	10	0
Public Order Offences	159	5	164	7	146	5	140	4
Fraud	6	1	5	0				
Fraud - NFIB					3	1	7	0
Fraud - Other					2	0	2	1
Motoring Offences	25	0	13	0	13	1	0	0
Liquor Licence					0	0	0	0
Other Offences	25	2	33	2	27	1	17	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total Aged 21 and Over	988	36	941	36	947	39	852	26
AGED LESS THAN 21								
Violence against the Person	11	0	6	0	8	1	2	0
Sexual Offences	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	4	0	5	0	4	0	4	0
Theft	2	0	3	0	2	0	1	0
Burglary	4	0	3	0	4	0	4	0
Criminal Damage	3	0	3	0	3	0	2	0
Drug Offences	1	0	1	0				
Drugs - Controlled					2	0	2	0
Drugs - Other					0	0	0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Public Order Offences	8	1	5	1	3	0	3	1
Fraud	0	0	0	0				
Fraud - NFIB					0	0	0	0
Fraud - Other					0	0	0	0
Motoring Offences	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Liquor Licence					0	0	0	0
Other Offences	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged Less than 21	34	2	27	2	30	1	18	1
ALL	1,022	38	968	38	978	41	871	27

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32

Table 6a: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Males	Violence against the Person	354	322	331	309
	Sexual Offences	104	102	111	116
	Misc. Sexual	5	1	3	2
	Robbery	94	86	91	76
	Theft	36	39	34	25
	Burglary	63	56	66	68
	Criminal Damage	37	43	41	34
	Drug Offences	91	82		
	Drugs - Controlled			91	62
	Drugs - Other			0	0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	13	14	14	10
	Public Order Offences	167	168	149	143
	Fraud	6	5		
	Fraud - NFIB			3	7
	Fraud - Other			2	2
	Motoring Offences	25	14	13	0
	Liquor Licence			0	0
	Other Offences	26	33	28	17
	Missing	0	0	1	0
	Total		1,022	968	978
Females	Violence against the Person	14	16	17	13
	Sexual Offences	2	2	1	1
	Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0
	Robbery	3	1	1	1
	Theft	6	6	6	3
	Burglary	1	0	3	1
	Criminal Damage	2	1	1	2
	Drug Offences	3	2		
	Drugs - Controlled			4	1
	Drugs - Other			0	0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	0	0
	Public Order Offences	6	8	5	4
	Fraud	1	0		
	Fraud - NFIB			1	0
	Fraud - Other			0	1
	Motoring Offences	0	0	1	0
	Liquor Licence			0	0
	Other Offences	2	2	1	0
	Missing	0	0	0	0
	Total		38	38	41

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Table 6b: Average Daily Northern Ireland Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
All	Violence against the Person	368	338	348	322
	Sexual Offences	106	104	112	117
	Misc. Sexual	5	1	3	2
	Robbery	97	88	92	76
	Theft	42	45	39	28
	Burglary	64	57	69	68
	Criminal Damage	38	45	42	36
	Drug Offences	94	84		0
	Drugs - Controlled			94	63
	Drugs - Other			0	0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	13	14	14	10
	Public Order Offences	173	176	154	147
	Fraud	7	5		0
	Fraud - NFIB			5	7
	Fraud - Other			2	3
	Motoring Offences	25	14	14	0
	Liquor Licence			0	0
	Other Offences	27	35	30	17
	Missing	0	0	1	0
	Total		1,060	1,006	1,018

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Table 7: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type, Gender and Establishment

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Remand	Maghaberry	2,216	2,560	2,704	2,450
	Magilligan	19	26	26	21
	Hydebank Wood Males	305	351	304	209
	Hydebank Wood Females	246	269	276	214
	Total	2,786	3,206	3,310	2,894
Immediate Custody	Maghaberry	1,361	1,373	1,489	1,096
	Magilligan	7	11	8	12
	Hydebank Wood Males	134	129	126	57
	Hydebank Wood Females	117	103	111	53
	Total	1,619	1,616	1,734	1,218
Fine Default	Maghaberry	532	308	181	125
	Magilligan	1	1	2	0
	Hydebank Wood Males	20	25	18	7
	Hydebank Wood Females	58	37	21	18
	Total	611	371	222	150
Non-Criminal	Maghaberry	61	47	47	51
	Magilligan	6	5	5	4
	Hydebank Wood Males	7	5	3	3
	Hydebank Wood Females	2	2	1	3
	Total	76	59	56	61
Males		4,669	4,841	4,913	4,035
Females		423	411	409	288
Establishment	Maghaberry	4,170	4,288	4,421	3,722
	Magilligan	33	43	41	37
	Hydebank Wood Males	466	510	451	276
	Hydebank Wood Females	423	411	409	288
	Total	5,092	5,252	5,322	4,323

Females may include Transgender persons

Table 8: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Age at Reception

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Males	18 - 20 Years	121	116	119	55
	21 - 29 Years	626	604	661	457
	30 - 39 Years	457	465	505	421
	40 - 49 Years	164	199	191	127
	50 - 59 Years	90	86	101	74
	60 + Years	44	43	46	31
	Total	1,502	1,513	1,623	1,165
Females	18 - 20 Years	13	10	8	4
	21 - 29 Years	37	30	28	16
	30 - 39 Years	27	33	42	19
	40 - 49 Years	20	16	14	8
	50 - 59 Years	15	10	15	5
	60 + Years	5	4	4	1
	Total	117	103	111	53
All	18 - 20 Years	134	126	127	59
	21 - 29 Years	663	634	689	473
	30 - 39 Years	484	498	547	440
	40 - 49 Years	184	215	205	135
	50 - 59 Years	105	96	116	79
	60 + Years	49	47	50	32
	Total	1,619	1,616	1,734	1,218

Females may include Transgender persons

Table 9: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Age at Reception, Gender and Sentence Length

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Adult Males (Aged 21 & Over)												
Life	13	13	13	13	13	13	16	16	16	6	6	6
>10 Years, less than life	12	7	0	12	6	0	19	8	0	7	1	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	59	19	4	58	17	4	45	22	5	34	13	2
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	27	11	8	29	16	12	29	8	3	24	9	4
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	49	31	18	57	30	23	49	16	10	46	14	14
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	112	59	50	104	58	47	141	74	51	93	49	36
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	194	168	136	195	183	131	206	205	164	194	172	127
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	264	382	121	252	361	131	298	417	140	214	309	128
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	379	419	35	393	426	20	418	454	22	302	344	27
≤3 months	271	271	0	282	285	0	279	280	0	190	193	0
No Licence	0	0	995	0	0	1,014	0	0	1,089	0	0	766
Missing	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4	0	0	0
Total	1,381	1,381	1,381	1,397	1,397	1,397	1,504	1,504	1,504	1,110	1,110	1,110
Young Males (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
>10 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	3	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	0
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	0
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	2	1	1	3	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	2
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	10	2	2	5	2	2	14	3	3	5	1	2
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	15	15	15	13	13	8	14	17	22	9	10	7
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	25	32	6	27	31	8	18	31	10	11	18	6
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	37	42	1	37	41	3	38	40	1	19	19	0
≤3 months	27	27	0	25	25	0	25	25	0	5	5	0
No Licence	0	0	95	0	0	91	0	0	81	0	0	38
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	121	121	121	116	116	116	119	119	119	55	55	55
All Males	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,513	1,513	1,513	1,623	1,623	1,623	1,165	1,165	1,165
Adult Females (Aged 21 & Over)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	15	7	9	17	10	4	25	14	13	11	5	6
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	19	25	7	17	22	7	23	30	10	8	12	4
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	41	44	1	33	36	1	40	43	2	16	18	1
≤3 months	26	27	0	25	25	0	14	15	0	13	13	0
No Licence	0	0	87	0	0	81	0	0	78			38
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	104	104	104	93	93	93	103	103	103	49	49	49
Young Females (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	2	2	0	5	5	0	2	2	0	1	1	0
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	2	3	0	1	1	0	3	3	0	1	1	0
≤3 months	7	7	0	4	4	0	2	2	0			4
No Licence	0	0	12	0	0	10	0	0	7	0	0	0
Total	13	13	13	10	10	10	8	8	8	4	4	4
All Females	117	117	117	103	103	103	111	111	111	53	53	53

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 10: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Sentence Length

	2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			2020/21		
	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length	Total Length	Custody Length	Licence Length
Males												
Life	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	16	6	6	6
>10 Years, less than life	12	7	0	12	6	0	19	8	0	7	1	0
>5 Years & ≤10 Years	62	19	4	60	17	4	49	23	5	36	13	2
>4 Years & ≤5 Years	28	12	8	31	17	13	31	9	4	26	9	4
>3 Years & ≤4 Years	51	32	19	60	31	24	53	17	11	48	16	16
>2 Years & ≤3 Years	122	61	52	109	60	49	155	77	54	98	50	38
>1 Year & ≤2 Years	209	183	151	208	196	139	220	222	186	203	182	134
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	289	414	127	279	392	139	316	448	150	225	327	134
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	416	461	36	430	467	23	456	494	23	321	363	27
≤3 months	298	298	0	307	310	0	304	305	0	195	198	0
No Licence	0	0	1,090	0	0	1,105	0	0	1,170	0	0	804
Missing	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4	0	0	0
Total Males	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,513	1,513	1,513	1,623	1,623	1,623	1,165	1,165	1,165
Females												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5 Years, less than life	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	17	8	10	17	10	4	26	15	14	12	6	6
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	21	27	7	22	27	7	25	32	10	9	13	4
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	43	47	1	34	37	1	43	46	2	17	19	1
≤3 months	33	34	0	29	29	0	16	17	0	14	14	0
No Licence	0	0	99	0	0	91	0	0	85	0	0	42
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Females	117	117	117	103	103	103	111	111	111	53	53	53
All												
Life	14	14	14	15	15	15	16	16	16	6	6	6
>5 Years, less than life	77	27	4	73	23	4	69	32	5	44	15	2
>1 Year & ≤5 Years	427	296	240	425	314	229	485	340	269	387	263	198
>6 Months & ≤12 Months	310	441	134	301	419	146	341	480	160	234	340	138
>3 Months & ≤6 Months	459	508	37	464	504	24	499	540	25	338	382	28
≤3 Months	331	332	0	336	339	0	320	322	0	209	212	0
No Licence	0	0	1,189	0	0	1,196	0	0	1,255	0	0	846
Missing	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	4	4	0	0	0
Total	1,619	1,619	1,619	1,616	1,616	1,616	1,734	1,734	1,734	1,218	1,218	1,218

Life includes those detained at the Secretary of State's Pleasure
 Females may include Transgender persons

Table 11: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Age at Reception, Gender and Principal Offence

	2017/18		2018/19		2018/19		2020/21	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AGED 21 AND OVER								
Violence against the Person	253	19	234	25	268	17	213	11
Sexual Offences	54	1	60	1	70	1	37	0
Misc. Sexual	8	0	3	0	8	0	5	0
Robbery	49	3	54	0	45	0	34	2
Theft	133	33	177	24	168	29	123	8
Burglary	91	1	119	5	157	7	115	2
Criminal Damage	148	7	127	7	150	12	153	11
Drug Offences	134	7	174	5				
Drugs - Controlled					164	12	123	4
Drugs - Other					0	0	0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	16	0	19	0	31	0	20	1
Public Order Offences	300	18	253	21	282	9	195	5
Fraud	19	3	10	1				
Fraud - NFIB					16	5	36	0
Fraud - Other					2	1	3	1
Motoring Offences	94	3	64	0	51	4	3	0
Liquor Licence					0	0	0	0
Other Offences	82	8	103	4	88	6	50	4
Missing	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0
Total Aged 21 and Over	1,381	104	1,397	93	1,504	103	1,110	49
AGED LESS THAN 21								
Violence against the Person	23	3	27	3	24	4	11	0
Sexual Offences	1	0	0	0	4	0	1	0
Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	8	0	8	0	12	0	3	0
Theft	22	2	19	2	14	2	5	1
Burglary	14	1	15	0	14	0	8	0
Criminal Damage	14	4	15	0	19	1	11	2
Drug Offences	2	0	11	0				
Drugs - Controlled					13	0	5	0
Drugs - Other					0	0	0	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	4	0	5	0	2	0	0	0
Public Order Offences	25	3	11	5	13	0	8	1
Fraud	0	0	0	0				
Fraud - NFIB					0	0	3	0
Fraud - Other					0	0	0	0
Motoring Offences	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Liquor Licence					0	0	0	0
Other Offences	5	0	3	0	4	1	0	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged Less than 21	121	13	116	10	119	8	55	4
ALL	1,502	117	1,513	103	1,623	111	1,165	53

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20. Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32

Table 12a: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Males	Violence against the Person	276	261	292	224
	Sexual Offences	55	60	74	38
	Misc. Sexual	8	3	8	5
	Robbery	57	62	57	37
	Theft	155	196	182	128
	Burglary	105	134	171	123
	Criminal Damage	162	142	169	164
	Drug Offences	136	185		
	Drugs - Controlled			177	128
	Drugs - Other			0	0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	20	24	33	20
	Public Order Offences	325	264	295	203
	Fraud	19	10		
	Fraud - NFIB			16	39
	Fraud - Other			2	3
	Motoring Offences	97	66	51	3
	Liquor Licence			0	0
	Other Offences	87	106	92	50
	Missing	0	0	4	0
	Total		1,502	1,513	1,623
Females	Violence against the Person	22	28	21	11
	Sexual Offences	1	1	1	0
	Misc. Sexual	0	0	0	0
	Robbery	3	0	0	2
	Theft	35	26	31	9
	Burglary	2	5	7	2
	Criminal Damage	11	7	13	13
	Drug Offences	7	5		
	Drugs - Controlled			12	4
	Drugs - Other			0	0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	0	1
	Public Order Offences	21	26	9	6
	Fraud	3	1		
	Fraud - NFIB			5	0
	Fraud - Other			1	1
	Motoring Offences	3	0	4	0
	Liquor Licence			0	0
	Other Offences	8	4	7	4
	Missing	1	0	0	0
	Total		117	103	111

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20

Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Table 12b: Northern Ireland Prison Receptions under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Gender and Principal Offence

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
All	Violence against the Person	298	289	313	235
	Sexual Offences	56	61	75	38
	Misc. Sexual	8	3	8	5
	Robbery	60	62	57	39
	Theft	190	222	213	137
	Burglary	107	139	178	125
	Criminal Damage	173	149	182	177
	Drug Offences	143	190		
	Drugs - Controlled			189	132
	Drugs - Other			0	0
	Possession of Weapons Offences	20	24	33	21
	Public Order Offences	346	290	304	209
	Fraud	22	11		
	Fraud - NFIB			21	39
	Fraud - Other			3	4
	Motoring Offences	100	66	55	3
	Liquor Licence			0	0
	Other Offences	95	110	99	54
	Missing	1	0	4	0
	Total		1,619	1,616	1,734

Females may include Transgender persons

NFIB – National Fraud Investigation Bureau

Revisions were undertaken to the offence classification categories during 2019/20

Details of these revisions can be found in the 'Offence Groupings' section on page 32.

Methodology and Counting Rules

National Statistics

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Department of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Users

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
DoJ Minister/Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service	Use the statistics to monitor the prison population and capacity of the prison estate
NI Assembly	Statistics are used to answer assembly questions
Policy teams in DoJ	Statistics are used to inform policy development and to monitor impact of changes over time and the impact they have 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 within each agency to complement their understanding of the current picture and trends over time

User	Summary of main statistical needs
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 prison population
General public	Data are used to respond to ad-hoc requests and requests made under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

Data Source

The data used in this bulletin are derived from analysing the daily prison population for a given year, taken from the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Information System (PRISM). As this is mainly an administrative database, rigorous validation procedures are followed to ensure the data presented is as accurate as possible. More details on the validation procedures followed are included in the Data Quality and Validation Section of this report. Whilst these procedures were carried out by the Analytical Services Group of the Department of Justice, the data is subject to the limitations inherent in any large scale recording system and to variation in recording practice over time.

Unlawfully at large prisoners are excluded from these numbers.

Discontinuities

This bulletin was subject to a consultation exercise, during April/May 2018, regarding proposed changes to the reporting period. Details of this consultation can be found at:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/results-2018-consultation-review-reporting-period-published-annual-national-statistical-publication>

The consultation invited responses to the proposal of using financial year data as the main reporting period for future publications. The responses were favourable, with no objections to the proposed changes. As a result, this publication focuses mainly on data by financial year.

Definitions

Average Prisoner Population

Daily prison population snapshots are downloaded from the PRISM system as at midnight; the average daily prisoner population for a given year is derived from the average of these.

Receptions Data

Receptions are counted whenever there is an entry into prison (committal) and/or a change in a prisoner's custody type from one day to the next. For example, if during the time period in question a prisoner is committed into prison as a remand prisoner, then without being released is sentenced, this would count as one remand reception and one sentenced reception.

However, if a sentenced prisoner receives another sentence whilst currently serving a sentence, this will not be counted as a new sentenced reception, as the custody type has not changed.

If a prisoner is released and is subsequently committed on the same or different custody status this is counted as a new reception.

The receptions data are based on the premise that when a person is received more than once during a year he/she will be counted separately on each occasion, including each occasion of change of status between remand and sentenced/Fine Default during the same period of custody.

Caution needs to be exercised when looking at fine default receptions. Fine default prisoners are counted on the prison system as sentenced prisoners, so if a prisoner is sentenced and subsequently (without being released) serves some time as a fine default prisoner their status does not change. In essence this means that a fine default reception is only picked up if there is a change from remand to fine default, or if they are committed to prison as a fine default prisoner. Therefore fine default receptions shown in this report may well undercount the actual number of fine default receptions. This is not an issue when calculating the fine default average prison population figures as they can be identified as fine defaults.

If a prisoner is committed and released on the same day then they will not be included in this analysis as the daily population snapshot is taken at midnight.

From 2009 onwards the methodology for producing receptions data changed, so too has the source from whence the data originates. Therefore caution should be exercised when making comparisons with data before 2009.

Age

For the daily averages the age of a prisoner is calculated at the time of the snapshot.

For receptions data, the age of a prisoner is calculated at age of the reception.

Some of the tables in this bulletin refer to 'adult' and 'young' prisoners. An 'adult' is aged 21 years and over and a 'young' prisoner is aged under 21 years.

Offence Grouping

An extensive exercise was carried out in late 2013 by statisticians across Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland, to reclassify all offences into main offence groupings, as far as possible, that are more in line with England and Wales. Due to this exercise receptions data published prior to 2009 on offence groupings will not be directly comparable with those from 2009 onwards. Data relating to averages pre 2013 on offence groupings will also not be directly comparable, as data published on averages pre 2013 used the old classification system. A review was also carried out in 2017 which resulted in two offence categories being re-classified. The two groupings which are affected are Public Order and Other Offences. Recalls and revocation of licence offences are no longer classified as Other Offences; they are now classified as Public Order Offences. As a result of these changes, it is not possible to compare any data relating to these two categories contained in this report with any data relating to these two categories from previous reports. However, all data contained in this report for previous years have been revised to take this new methodology into account.

During 2019/20 a further review of these categories was undertaken with the aim of achieving more standardised reporting of offence classifications across the justice system in Northern Ireland. This resulted in the Drug Offence category being split into two categories called Drugs

– Controlled and Drugs – Other. The Fraud category was split into two categories called Fraud – NIFB and Fraud – Other, and a new category called Liquor Licence was created. As a consequence of these changes, there may also be slight variances in the category within which some cases are counted across the period of this publication.

Principal Offence

Where a person is received under sentence for two or more offences, only the principal offence is used. Following a review during 2013 by statisticians in the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland, an updated algorithm for calculating principal offence was adopted. Details on this can be found in a special paper using the link <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/methodology-paper-adoption-and-implementation-principal-offence-northern-ireland>.

Due to the way data is stored and extracted in PRISM, sentence lengths for each individual offence cannot be extracted; as such calculating principal offence using actual sentence length is not possible. Instead principal offence using the principal at trial algorithm is used as the basis for calculating principal offence for prison statistics. This calculates principal offence based on the offence that has the statutory highest maximum sentence. For offences with the same highest maximum sentence then further flags are used to calculate the principal offence. More detail on this can be found in the above report. Due to slight differences in data, the methodology is adapted for Prison purposes. PRISM holds a flag which determines if the offence is a main offence or not; this flag is used in the Prison methodology. The actual offence date is held in PRISM but due to difficulties extracting this, it cannot be used as a method for calculating principal offence. As such this step in the process is replaced by ordering based on the numerical offence code for each offence.

Sentence Length

If a person is received under sentence for two or more offences at the same time, sentence length is taken as the longest of any concurrent sentences, with consecutive sentences being treated as one sentence equal in length to the sentences added together.

However, if a sentenced prisoner receives another sentence whilst currently serving a sentence, the sentence details of the first sentence are used to work out sentence lengths.

Type of Prisoner

Currently there are three prison establishments in Northern Ireland - HMP Magilligan, HMP Maghaberry and Hydebank Wood. Female prisoners are held in a separate unit within Hydebank Wood.

Whilst the prison population consists mainly of offenders sentenced by the courts to immediate custody for criminal offences, it also includes fine defaults, remand prisoners and a small number of non-criminal prisoners.

Fine defaulters are those who have been given a fine by the courts and have not paid the fine within a stipulated time, and have then been the subject of a warrant issued by the court. The duration of sentence is dependent upon the amount of the unpaid fine and ranges from one week where the default is £200 or less, to ten years where the default exceeds £1 million.

Remand prisoners include those charged with an offence and whom the courts have ruled should be detained in custody pending trial; those whom the courts have permitted to be released on bail pending trial but have not as yet met the conditions (usually financial) of the bail; those who had been released on bail but have subsequently been re-admitted to prison because they breached a condition of bail; and those who have been found guilty by the court but have been ordered to be detained in custody pending sentence.

Non-criminal prisoners are mainly made up of those being held under the terms of the Immigration Act.

Data Quality and Validation

The steps taken to quality assure this information for statistical purposes are described below.

The data used to derive the information originates from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) case management system (PRISM). This is a live recording system which is used extensively by NIPS for day to day case management purposes. As such the information extracted, while subject to human data entry error, needs to be highly accurate as it is the main information tool used to manage prisoners on a day-to-day basis, to list their status/privileges and, for that matter to regulate discharge dates/record sentence lengths. It is used not only by

Prison Service Staff but also Probation Staff. The data from which the average population and receptions information are derived are therefore core fields, the accuracy of which is a requirement for the effective handling of day-to-day prison operations.

It is perhaps important to emphasise that Prison Service Staff themselves have a vested interest in the complete reliability of the data populated into the fields used for this analysis. Information is not derived from subsidiary screens which do not contribute to the officer's own capacity to discharge his/her duties or which can be bypassed without impacting immediately on the officer's own work.

The procedure undertaken to derive the statistics now has the following stages. A data download is extracted from PRISM which includes details on individual prisoners. This is imported into the statistical package SPSS and this data is used as the primary source of information to calculate the prison population. Rigorous validation exercises are then conducted to ensure that the information produced is as accurate as possible.

These Data Quality and Validation procedures can be split into two parts, firstly ensuring the data from PRISM is accurate and up to date. For this purpose, manual checks are carried out and data corrected to ensure:

- that all sentenced prisoners have a sentence length;
- that there are no sentence lengths that are discrepant (e.g. murder offences attracting a sentence of 7 days);
- that the total effective sentence adds up to the custody sentence plus the licence sentence;
- that the stated age of prisoners is appropriate and realistic (e.g. no-one aged 8,108, etc.);
- that the gender of prisoners is appropriate for the prison establishment (e.g. no male prisoners in a female prison); and
- that a general check of the data as a whole suggests no other anomalies.

Any such discrepancies identified at this stage (for which there may on, albeit rare, occasion be a valid reason) are checked out against the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS), the Criminal Records Viewer and additional screens on PRISM itself. Any issues are resolved on an individual basis.

Secondly, an extensive manual cross checking exercise is conducted using PRISM to ensure that after manipulating the data, the information produced is correct. A list of all receptions for each prisoner is listed and details are then cross checked manually against the records held on PRISM.

After validating and updating the database using the above method, 2.3% of sentence lengths were changed and 3.6% of offence groupings were changed. Whilst these checking procedures are extensive and robust, it is not possible to validate every case so it is worth noting that the statistics contained in the publication are inevitably subject to the limitations inherent in any large-scale recording system and to variations in recording practice over time. However, as PRISM is used extensively for the operation of the core business and the fields used are fields in the accuracy of which officers themselves have a strong vested interest, one can now be confident in the accuracy and robustness of the source administrative data to a degree much greater than would normally be the case with administrative systems requiring lower degrees of operational precision.

Following guidance provided by the Office for National Statistics on the Quality Assessment of Administrative Data, information pertaining to data quality and validation is continually being assessed.

Presentation

For ease of use figures in pie charts are given as whole numbers whereas percentages throughout the text are to one decimal point.

Whilst tables of information have been included in the tabular appendix containing data for the last four financial years, similar tables are also published alongside this bulletin in Microsoft Excel format containing data for the last five financial years.

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