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The Northern Ireland Prison Population 2017/18

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Key Findings

Average Daily Prison Population

- ◆ The overall average daily prison population fell by 2.2% during 2017/18 to 1,439, males decreased by 2.5% to 1,382 while the female population increased from 54 to 57.
- ◆ Since reporting by financial year began (2014/15), the remand population has fallen, however it has done so at a decreasing yearly rate (-6.2%, -4.8% and -1.6%).
- ◆ During 2017/18 the average daily immediate custody prison population fell by 2.3% to 1,060, the lowest decrease since 2014/15.
- ◆ Prisoners aged between 21 to 29 years of age continue to make up the largest proportion of the average daily immediate custody prison population (32.9%), however the proportion this represents has been falling (37.6% during 2014/15).
- ◆ The proportion of those aged between 30 and 39 years of age has been increasing, 26.2% during 2014/15 to 31.5% during 2017/18.
- ◆ In terms of custodial sentence length, the number serving greater than 3 months and less than or equal to 12 months increased from a daily average of 264 during 2016/17 to 286 during 2017/18.
- ◆ Violence against the person offences continue to account for the largest proportion of all principal offence categories (34.7%).
- ◆ The decrease in the average daily immediate custody prison population from 2016/17 to 2017/18 was not evident across all offence categories, the following saw their numbers increase: misc. sexual, robbery, theft, motoring offences and fraud.

Receptions

- ◆ The number of receptions during 2017/18 was lower than the previous year, 5,092 compared to 5,257 during 2016/17, a decrease of 3.1%.
- ◆ Remand receptions remained stable, 2,790 during 2016/17 and 2,786 during 2017/18, whereas the number of immediate custody prison receptions decreased from 1,729 to 1,619.
- ◆ Only two age groups saw an increase in receptions; those aged between 30 and 39 years (+15) and those aged 60+ (+5).
- ◆ A larger proportion of female receptions were sentenced to a custody sentence length of six months or less (69.2%) compared to males (50.5%).
- ◆ The number of female receptions sentenced to less than or equal to three months custody doubled from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (17 to 34), and the proportion this accounted for increased from 16.2% to 29.1% with the increase in proportions being significant.
- ◆ Public order offences accounted for the largest proportion of male receptions (21.6%), while theft offences accounted for the largest proportion of female offences (29.9%).
- ◆ The only offence category in which the change in the share of immediate custody receptions from the previous year was significant was drug offences, falling from 11.6% to 8.8%.

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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 2017/18 financial year. It includes information by establishment, custody type, gender, age and 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.

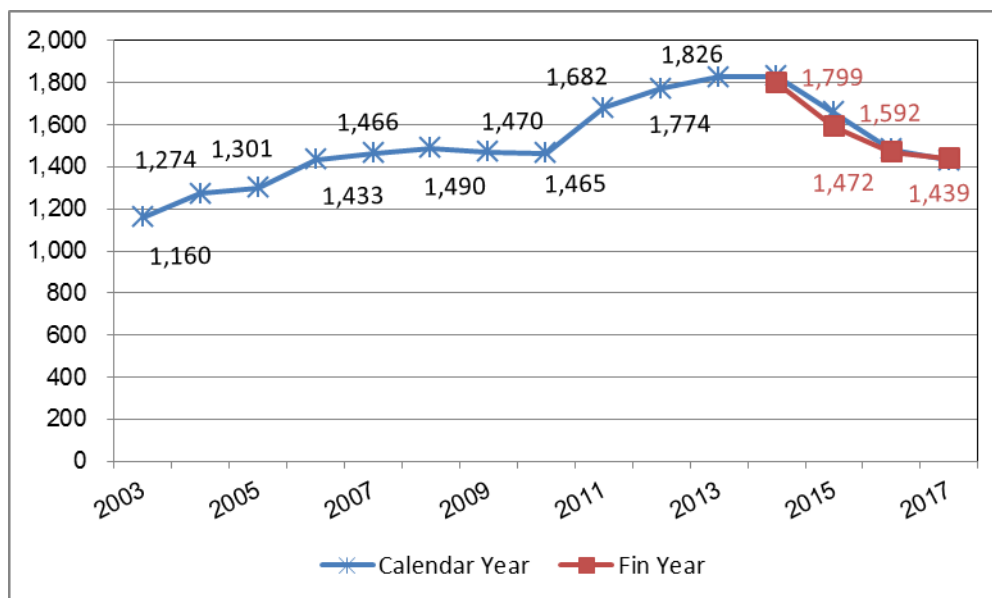
The data used in this bulletin are taken from the Northern Ireland Prison Service Management Information System (PRISM). Details on the methodology used, data validation and definition of terms can be found in the Methodology and Counting Rules section at the back of this bulletin.

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 2017/18 was 1,439, a decrease of 2.2% from the 2016/17 level of 1,472. Reporting on a financial year basis, began with 2014/15 data, since then the average daily prison population has been falling, albeit at a decreasing yearly rate (-11.5%; -7.5%; and -2.2%). (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Average Daily Prison Population 2003-2017/18



The fall in the average daily prison population during 2017/18 was not apparent across all prison establishments; the average daily prison population for females at Hydebank Wood College increased from 54 during 2016/17 to 57 during 2017/18. (Figure 3 and Table 1)

The following sections look at the 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

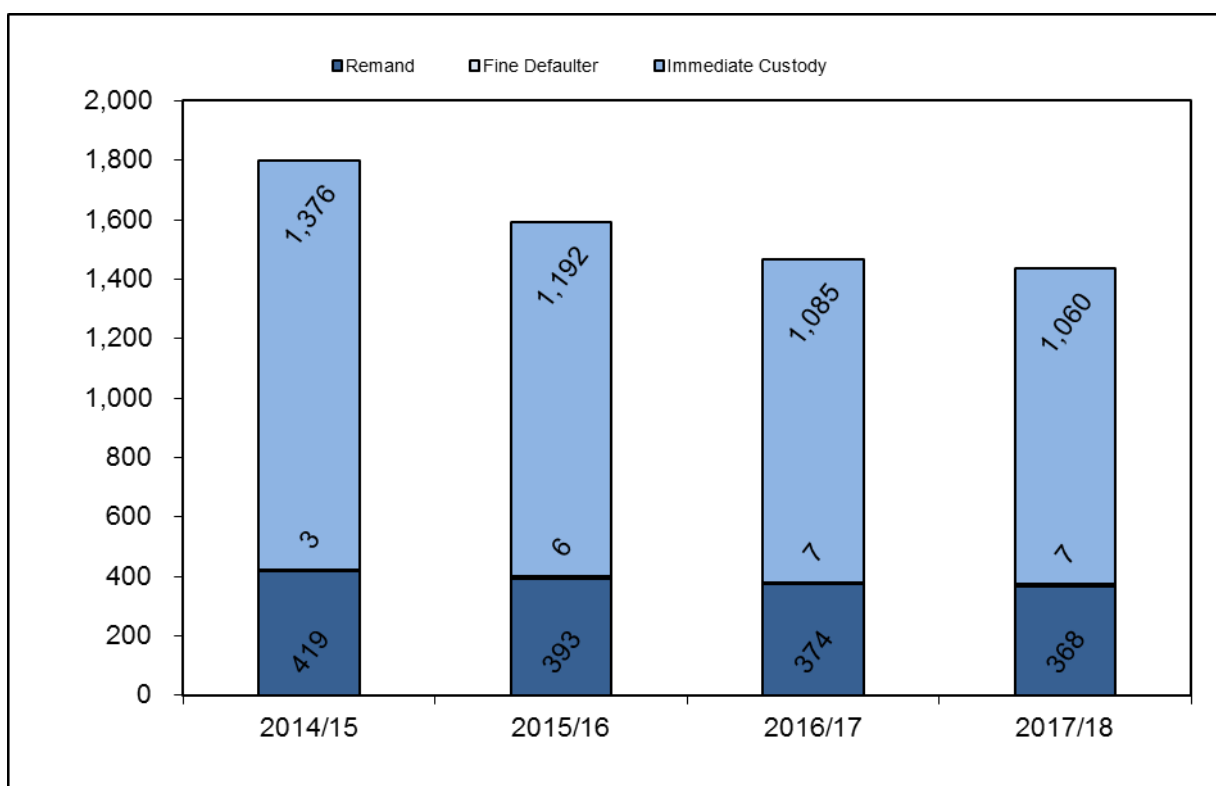
Remand Prisoners

The average daily remand prison population decreased by 1.6% compared to the previous year, from 374 to 368. Since reporting by financial year started, the remand population has fallen year on year; however, like the total average daily prison population it has done so at a decreasing rate (-6.2%, -4.8% and -1.6%).

Although the remand population has been falling, the proportion of prisoners on remand since 2014/15 has increased year on year (23.3%, 24.7%, 25.4% and 25.6%), this is due to the sentenced population falling at a larger rate than the remand population (-13.4%, -9.0% and -2.3%). (Figure 2 and Table 1)

In certain circumstances remands can be held in Magilligan and during 2017/18 there was an average daily remand population of 2.

Figure 2: Average Daily Prison Population by Prisoner Type, 2014/15-2017/18



Immediate Custody Prisoners

During 2017/18 the average daily immediate custody prisoner population was 1,060, a decrease of 2.3% from the previous year's level of 1,085. Although the immediate custody prisoner population fell during 2017/18, this percentage decrease was the lowest since reporting on financial year began during 2014/15 (-13.4%, -9.0% and -2.3%). (Figure 2)

The Department of Justice recently published statistics on prosecutions and convictions for 2017. This showed that overall custodial convictions during the calendar year 2017 fell slightly; from 2,953 during 2016 to 2,910 during 2017 (-1.5%). (link: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/research-and-statistics-bulletin-162018-court-prosecutions-convictions-and-out-court-disposals>)

This overall increase in custodial convictions masks differing trends recorded in the Crown and Magistrates' Court. Custodial convictions fell in the Crown Court, from 741 during 2016 to 651 during 2017, while custodial convictions in the Magistrates' Court increased; from 2,212 during 2016 to 2,259 in

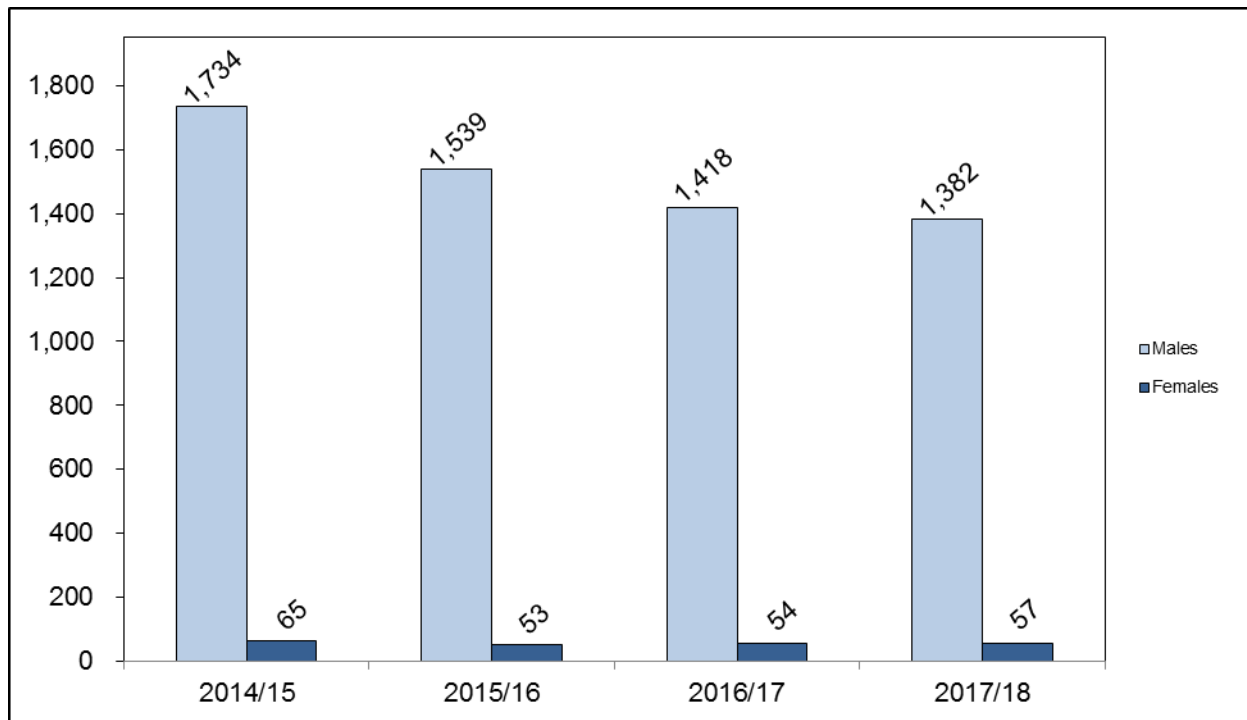
2017. The higher custodial conviction numbers in the Crown Court during 2016 was a result of the resolution of the Legal Aid Dispute (which started in May 2015 and saw a number of solicitors and counsels withdraw their representation from a range of court cases which in turn affected disposals and delay within the Crown Court). Upon the resolution of this during January 2016, the courts worked through the backlog of cases caused by the dispute resulting in an increase in disposals during 2016 in the Crown Court and in turn the larger numbers of custodial convictions in 2016. (link <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>)

Fine Default and Non-Criminal Prisoners

Once again the average daily fine default and non-criminal prisoner (immigrant detainee) population account for only a small proportion of the overall average daily prison population (0.5% for fine default and 0.3% for non-criminal). Figures for both have remained stable since last year (7 in both years for fine default and 5 for non-criminal in 2016/17 and 4 in 2017/18). (Table 1)

Average Daily Prison Population by Gender

Figure 3: Average Daily Prison Population by Gender, 2014/15-2017/18



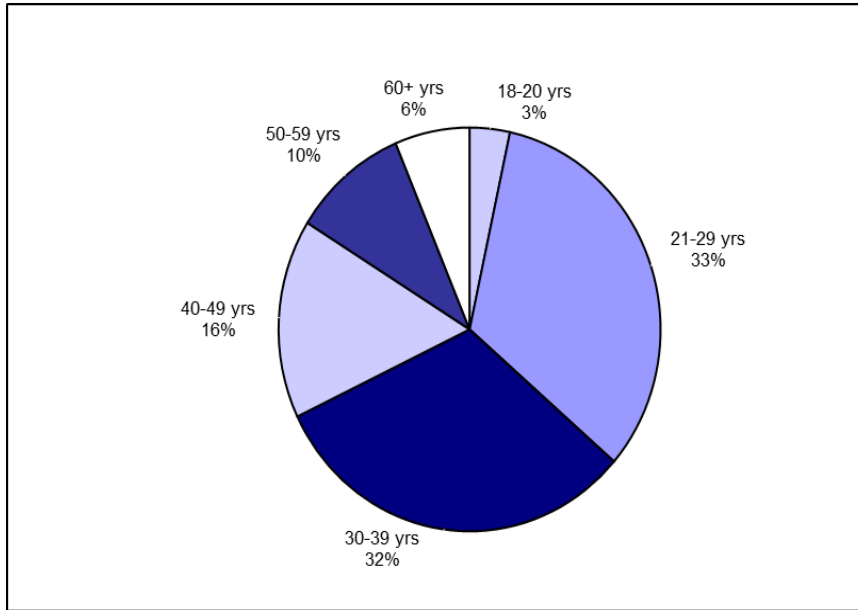
As the majority of the prison population is made up of males (96.0%), it is not surprising that like the overall prison population the male population fell (-2.5%); from 1,418 during 2016/17 to 1,382 in 2017/18. The male population is at its lowest level since reporting on financial year began. (Figure 3)

The female population increased from 54 during 2016/17 to 57 during 2017/18.

Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Current Age

Prisoners aged between 21 to 29 years of age, make up the largest proportion of the immediate custody prisoner population (32.9%). While this age group have traditionally been the largest age group, the proportion this represents has been falling in recent years (37.6% during 2014/15, 34.4% during 2015/16, 34.1% during 2016/17 and 32.9% during 2017/18). At the same time, the proportion of those aged between 30 to 39 years of age has been increasing (26.2% during 2014/15 to 31.5% during 2017/18). This has resulted in the number aged 20 to 29 years and the number aged 30 to 39 converging (349 and 334 respectively). (Figure 4 and Table 2)

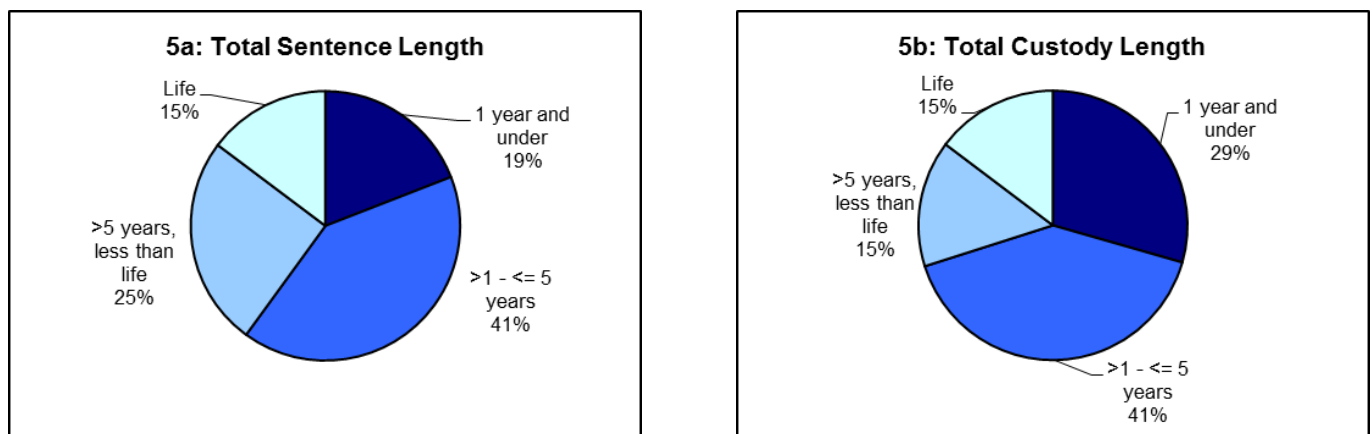
Figure 4: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Current Age, 2017/18



Over the last three years, there has also been an increase in the absolute and relative numbers for those aged over 60 years. The average daily immediate custody population for this age group was 61 during 2014/15 and 67 during 2017/18, and now represents 6.3% of the immediate custody prisoner population compared to 4.4% during 2014/15. (Table 2)

Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Sentence Length

Figure 5: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Sentence Length, 2017/18



Figures 5a and 5b show the breakdown of total sentence length and total custody length for prisoners under sentence of immediate custody during 2017/18. While the sentenced population decreased during 2017/18 relative to the previous year, this was not the case across all sentence length groups. In terms of custodial sentence length, the number serving greater than 6 months and less than or equal to 12 months, and greater than 3 months and less than or equal to 6 months increased (173 to 194 and 91 to 92 respectively). (Table 4)

The proportion of the sentenced population who had no licence element in their sentence decreased from 37.3% during 2016/17 to 35.0% during 2017/18 (405 to 371). (Table 4)

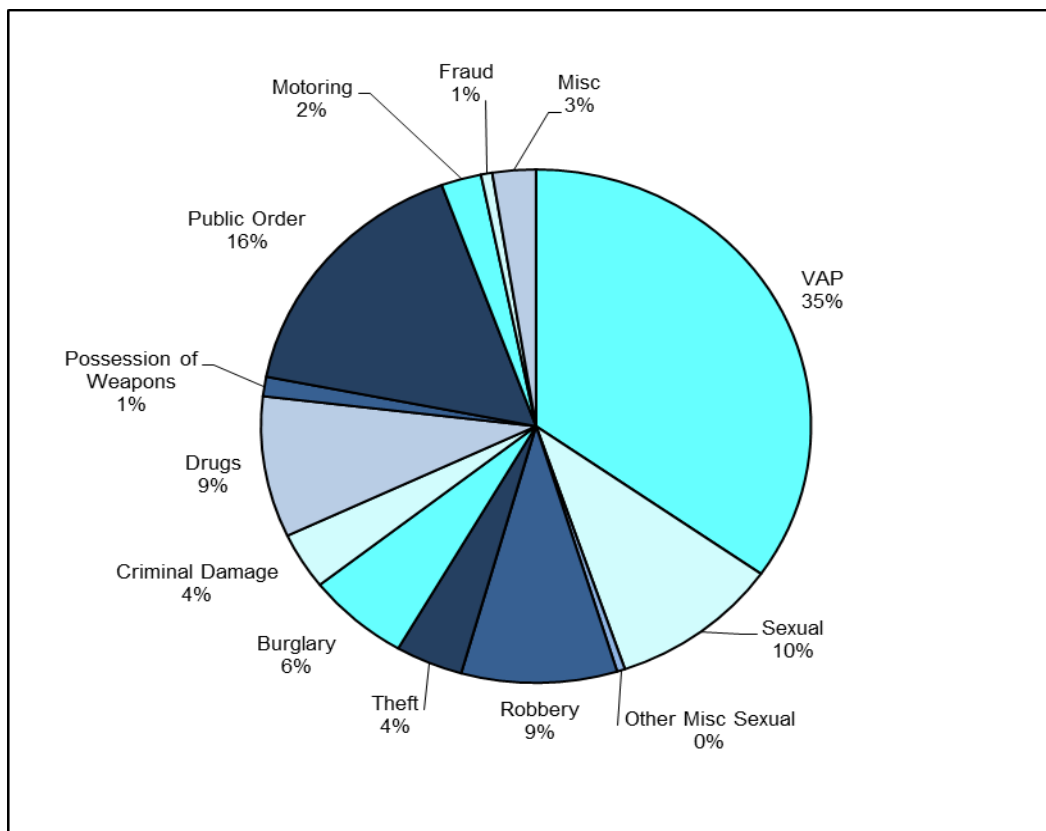
More detailed sentence length information can be found in Table 3 and Table 4 in the tabular appendix at the back of this report.

Average Daily Immediate Custody Prison Population by Principal Offence

With 34.7% of principal offences during 2017/18 being categorised as violence against the person offences, this category accounted for the largest proportion of offences. The breakdown of offences by principal offence categories have remained largely the same over the last two years, with no significant differences between changes in each category as a proportion of the overall total. (Figure 6 and Table 6)

Not all principal offence categories decreased in numbers over the last two years, the following saw their numbers increase: misc. sexual, robbery, theft, motoring offences and fraud.

Figure 6: Average Daily Prison Population under Sentence of Immediate Custody by Principal Offence, 2017/18

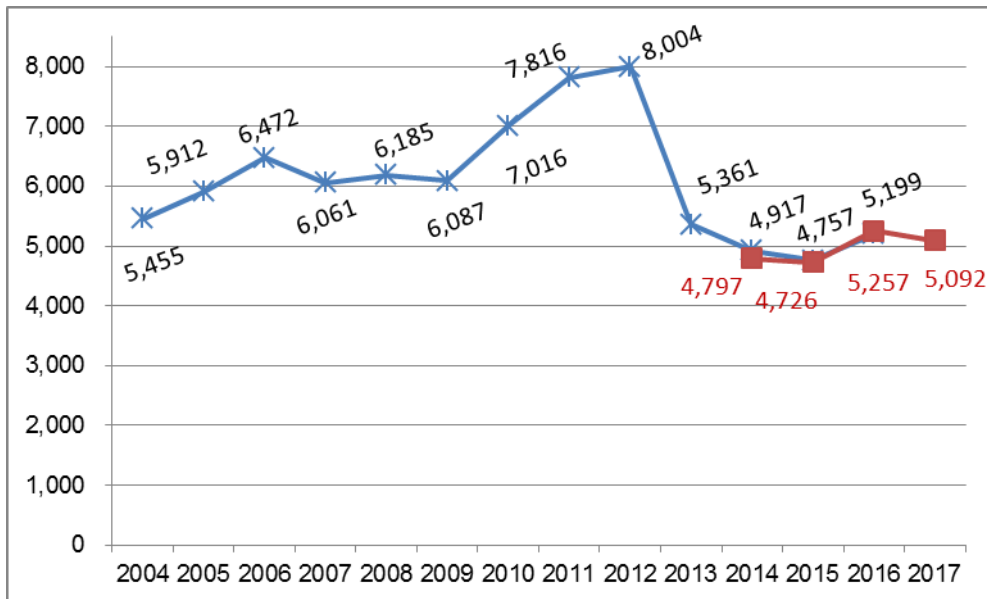


2. Receptions into Prison

As was the case with the average daily prison population, the number of receptions during 2017/18 was lower than the previous year, 5,092 compared to 5,257, a decrease of 3.1%. (Figure 7) The 5,092 receptions were made by 2,686 prisoners, giving a reception rate of 1.9, this compares to a reception rate of 1.7 during 2016/17 (5,257 receptions for 3,095 prisoners).

Female receptions in Hydebank Wood College increased from 410 to 423; this was due to an increase in immediate custody and remand receptions (+12 and +11 respectively). Whereas, fine default receptions for females decreased by 10. (Table 7)

Figure 7: Prison Receptions, 2004-2017/18



Young male receptions (Hydebank Wood College) decreased by 8.8% (511 to 466), whereas males in Maghaberry and Magilligan together decreased by 3.1% (4,336 to 4,203). (Table 7)

As stated on Page 5, in certain circumstances Magilligan can house remand prisoners, this has resulted in 33 receptions during 2017/18.

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.

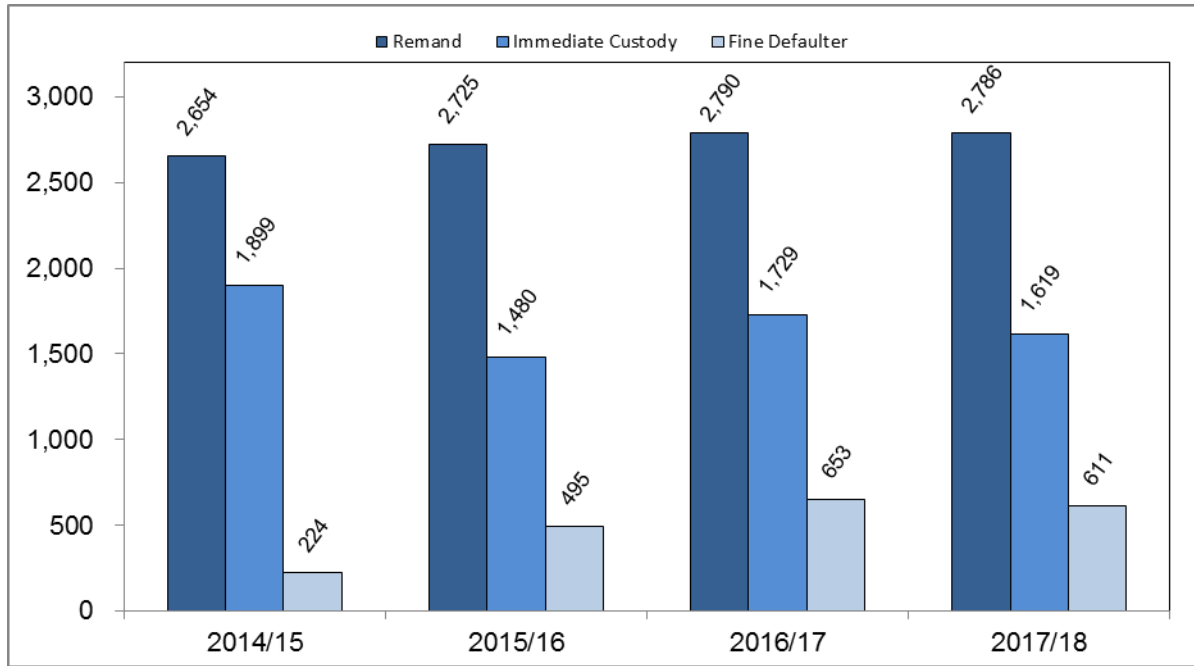
Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type

Remand Prisoners

The number of remand receptions during 2017/18 was similar to the number during the previous year (2,790 and 2,786 respectively), while the proportion of receptions that were recorded as remand increased from 53.1% during 2016/17 to 54.7% during 2017/18. (Figure 8 and Table 7)

Immediate Custody Prisoners

Immediate custody prison receptions decreased from 1,729 during 2016/17 to 1,619 during 2017/18, a decrease of 6.4%. Although the number of sentenced receptions decreased this wasn't the case across gender categories. Female sentenced receptions increased; from 105 during 2016/17 to 117 during 2017/18, but as female sentenced receptions make up only 7.2% of all sentenced receptions this increase wasn't large enough to be reflected in the overall sentenced reception numbers. (Table 7)

Figure 8: Prison Receptions by Prisoner Type, 2014/15-2017/18

Fine Default and Non-Criminal Prisoners

Fine default receptions decreased from 653 during 2016/17 to 611 during 2017/18 (-6.4%), however the 2017/18 figure was still well above the figure recorded during 2014/15 and 2015/16 (224 and 495 respectively). (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. Nevertheless this methodology is consistent in its approach across years. More detail can be found on this in the Definitions section under the Reception heading at the back of this report.

The number of non-criminal (immigrant detainee) receptions decreased from 85 during 2016/17 to 76 during 2017/18, and accounted for 1.5% of all receptions. (Table 7)

Prison Receptions by Gender

The total number of male receptions decreased by 3.7%; from 4,847 during 2016/17 to 4,669 during 2017/18. Although male receptions decreased across all custodial categories, the decrease can largely be attributed to the decrease in male immediate custody receptions; falling from 1,624 to 1,502. (Table 7)

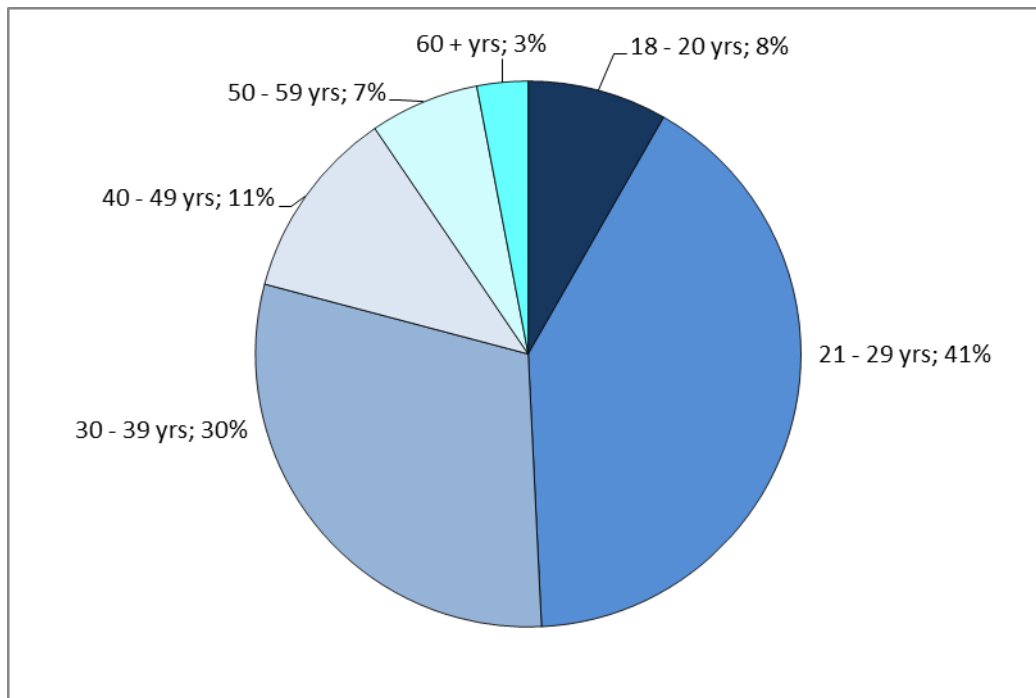
Unlike males, the number of female receptions increased during 2017/18; from 410 to 423. As female receptions only accounted for 8.3% of all receptions, this increase wasn't reflected in an increase in the total receptions figure. Female receptions increased for both remand and sentenced receptions. (Table 7)

Immediate Custody Receptions by Age at Reception

As was the case in previous years, those aged between 21 and 29 years of age had the largest number of immediate custody receptions (41.0%); this was the same for males and females. (Figure 9 and Table 8)

Not all age groups recorded the decrease in receptions during 2017/18 that was apparent at the overall level. Receptions for those aged between 30 and 39 and those aged 60+ increased during 2017/18 compared to the previous year (+15 and +5 respectively).

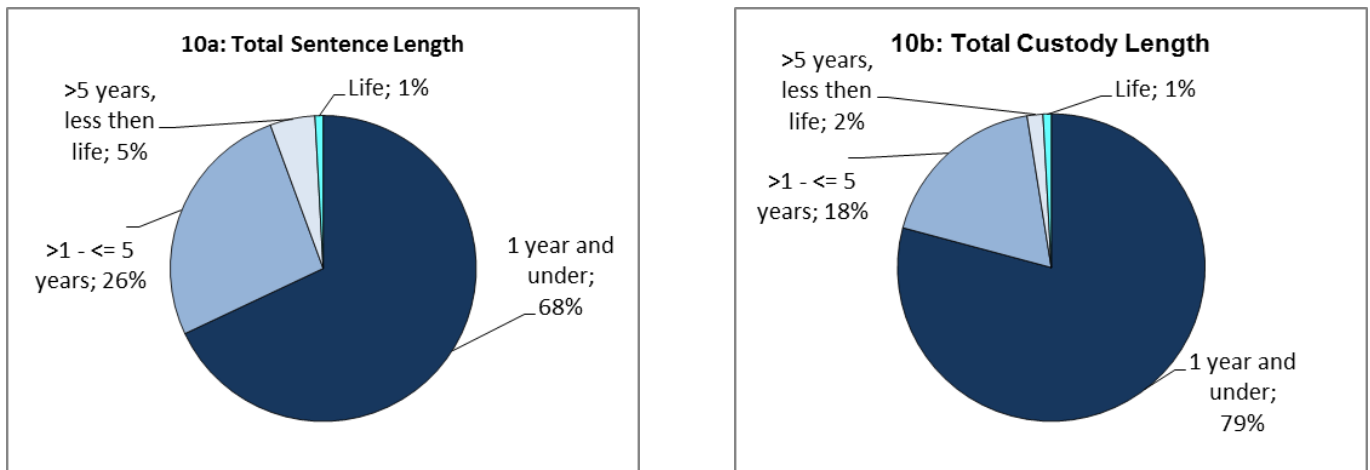
Figure 9: Immediate Custody Receptions by Age at Reception, 2017/18



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.

Figure 10: Immediate Custody Receptions by Sentence Length, 2017/18



Primarily, in terms of the prison population, the custody length imposed is of greater significance than the total sentenced 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 1 year and under accounted for the largest proportion of sentenced receptions (79.1%), this proportion increased from the previous year's figure of 75.3%. This change can be attributed to an increase in receptions where the custody sentence length was 6 months or less, as opposed to those greater than 6 months and less than or equal to 12 months (+32 and -53 respectively). (Table 10)

The largest decrease in custody sentence length occurred for those custody sentences that are greater than one year and less than or equal to 5 years (from 388 in 2016/17 to 296 in 2017/18). The proportion this represents also decreased between the two years, and was the only one where the change in proportion between 2016/17 and 2017/18 was significant (22.4% to 18.3% respectively).

Looking at gender and sentence length, Table 10 shows that a larger proportion of female receptions were sentenced to six months or less custody (69.2%) compared to males (50.5%).

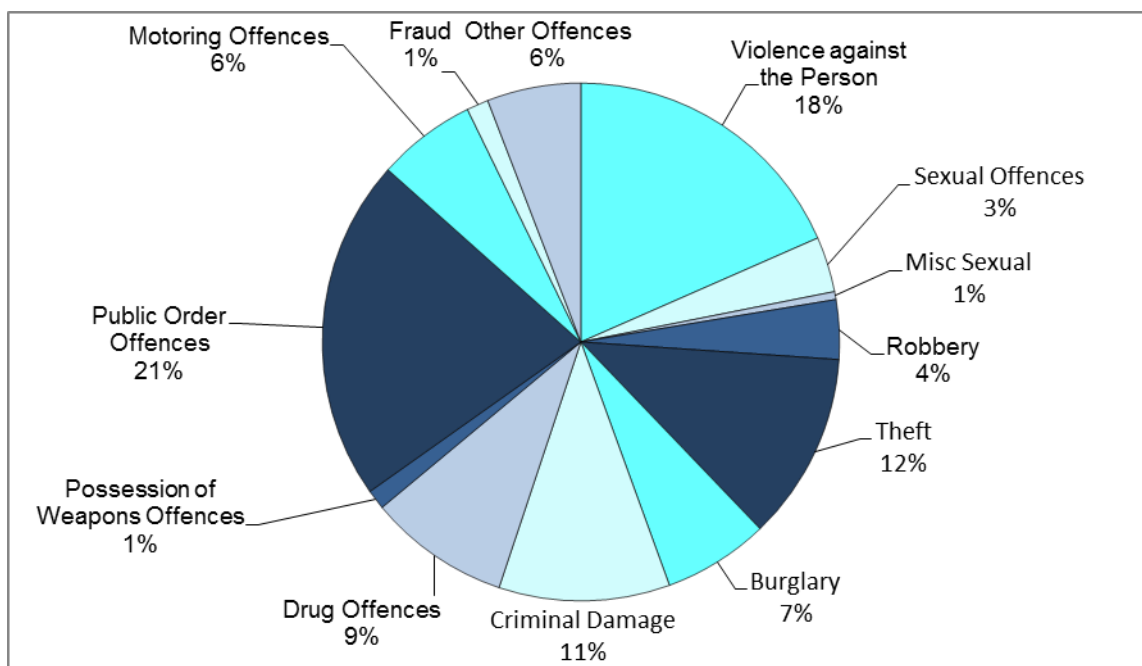
The number of female receptions sentenced to less than or equal to three months custody, doubled from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (17 to 34) and the proportion this accounted for increased from 16.2% to 29.1% with the increase in proportions being significant.

In terms of male custody sentence length, the only group in which the change in the share of immediate custody receptions from 2016/17 to 2017/18 was significant, was for custody sentence lengths greater than one year and less than or equal to two years (15.7% during 2016/17 and 12.2% during 2017/18).

Immediate Custody Receptions by Principal Offence

Public order offences continue to account for the largest proportion of all immediate custody receptions, (21.4% during 2017/18). While this group accounted for the largest proportion of male immediate custody receptions (21.6%), this was not the case for females as it was the third largest and accounted for 17.9%. The largest proportion of offences for females was theft offences, with almost 30% of principal offences falling into this category. (Figure 11 and Table 12)

Figure 11: Immediate Custody Receptions by Principal Offence, 2017/18



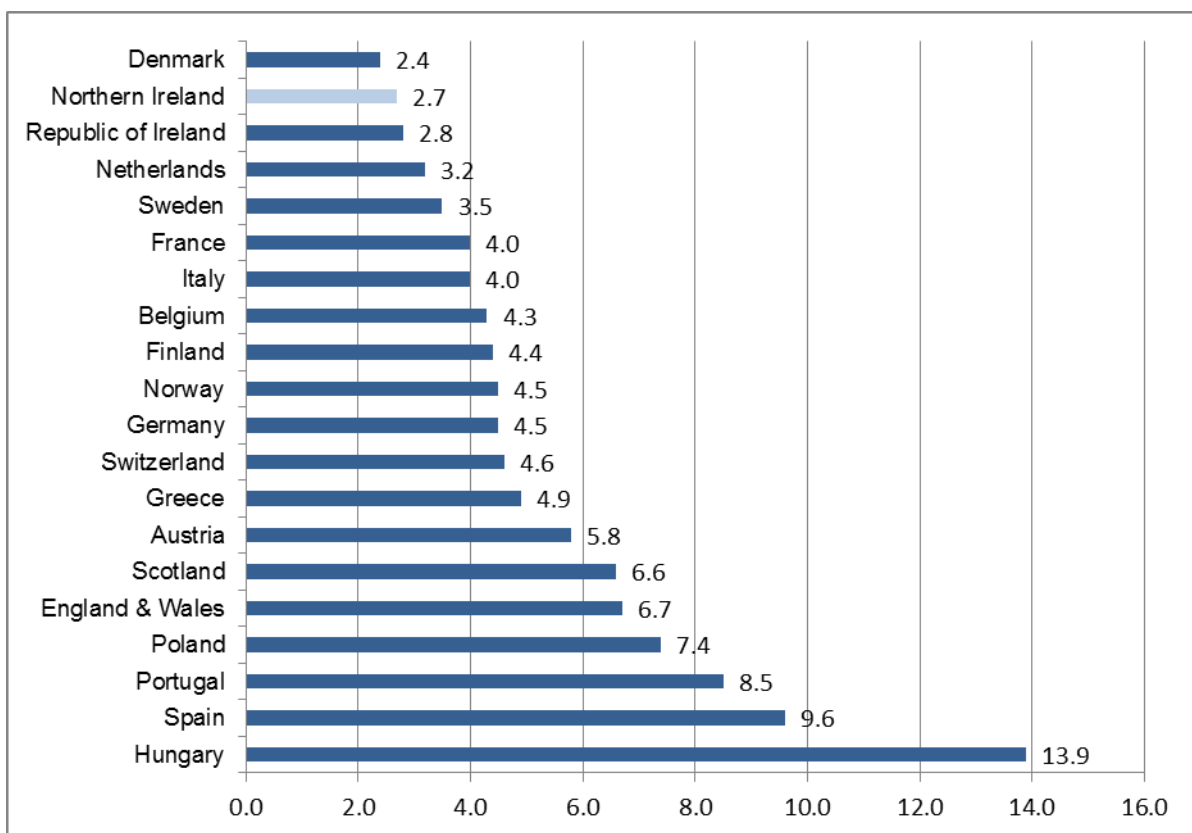
Although immediate custody receptions decreased from 2016/17 to 2017/18, this was not the case across all principal offence categories as almost half of all categories increased in numbers over the two years. These included; public order offences (+18, 5.5%), robbery (+16, 36.4%), motoring offences (+9, 9.9%), theft (+8, 4.4%), fraud (+7, 46.7%). and criminal damage (+3, 1.8%). The largest decreases occurred across the following categories; violence against the person (-62, 17.2%), drug offences (-58, 28.9%) and other offences (-25, 20.8%).

The only offence category in which the change in the share of immediate custody receptions from the previous year was significant was drug offences, falling from 11.6% to 8.8%.

3. International Comparisons

The Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) published the “World Female Imprisonment List (4th edition)” in November 2017 (Link: http://www.prisonstudies.org/research-publications?shs_term_node_tid_depth=27). This report shows the number of women and girls held in penal institutions in 221 prison systems in independent countries and dependent territories. The report includes information on both pre-trial detainees/remand prisoners and those who have been convicted and sentenced. Figure 12 shows the female prison population per 100,000 people in the population (the female prison population rate) for a selection of European countries, and the information is based on the latest available at the end of September 2017. As illustrated in this figure, Northern Ireland has one of the lowest rates, with 2.7 female prisoners for every 100,000 people in the population. The equivalent figure for Scotland was 6.6 and England and Wales was 6.7. With a rate of 2.8, the Republic of Ireland’s rate was more in line with that of Northern Ireland.

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



Source: World Female Imprisonment List (4th Edition)

Notes: Information is the latest available as at the end of September 2017

Tabular Annex

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

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Remand	Maghaberry	357	339	319	310
	Magilligan	0	0	0	2
	Hydebank Wood College Males	41	36	36	37
	Hydebank Wood College Females	21	18	18	19
	Total	419	393	374	368
Immediate Custody	Maghaberry	671	584	541	538
	Magilligan	556	506	452	427
	Hydebank Wood College Males	106	66	57	56
	Hydebank Wood College Females	44	35	35	38
	Total	1,376	1,192	1,085	1,060
Fine Defaulter	Maghaberry	2	5	6	6
	Magilligan	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood College Males	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood College Females	0	1	0	1
	Total	3	6	7	7
Non Criminal	Maghaberry	1	2	2	2
	Magilligan	0	0	0	0
	Hydebank Wood College Males	0	0	2	2
	Hydebank Wood College Females	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	2	5	4
Males		1,734	1,539	1,418	1,382
Females		65	53	54	57
Establishment	Maghaberry	1,031	931	869	857
	Magilligan	556	506	453	430
	Hydebank Wood College Males	147	102	96	95
	Hydebank Wood College Females	65	53	54	57
	Total	1,799	1,592	1,472	1,439

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

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

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
MALES	18 - 20 years	66	42	37	34
	21 - 29 years	504	400	360	340
	30 - 39 years	354	333	299	326
	40 - 49 years	210	199	184	158
	50 - 59 years	138	120	110	98
	60 + years	59	62	60	66
	Total	1,333	1,157	1,051	1,022
FEMALES	18 - 20 years	2	0	1	2
	21 - 29 years	13	10	10	9
	30 - 39 years	7	7	8	8
	40 - 49 years	14	9	7	11
	50 - 59 years	7	6	5	6
	60 + years	2	2	2	1
	Total	44	35	35	38
ALL	18 - 20 years	68	43	38	36
	21 - 29 years	517	410	370	349
	30 - 39 years	361	340	308	334
	40 - 49 years	224	208	192	169
	50 - 59 years	146	126	115	104
	60 + years	61	65	63	67
	Total	1,376	1,192	1,085	1,060

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

	2014/15			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18		
	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	165	165	165	156	156	156	154	154	154	148	148	148
>10yrs, less than life	114	71	0	116	68	0	108	60	0	104	58	0
>5yrs and <=10yrs	259	114	18	235	117	21	189	109	21	156	102	22
>4yrs and <=5yrs	88	56	42	74	51	41	57	51	39	63	45	37
>3yrs and <=4yrs	115	95	81	98	93	74	84	75	59	85	60	43
>2yrs and <=3yrs	147	157	173	130	133	154	111	104	115	127	98	115
>1yr and <=2yrs	166	268	233	134	247	200	138	209	172	128	202	192
>6mths and <=12mths	113	211	101	90	152	57	94	150	67	92	173	75
>3mths and <=6mths	77	106	19	60	75	8	57	78	17	61	78	15
<=3 months	22	23	0	21	21	0	22	23	0	22	22	0
No Licence	0	0	434	0	0	403	0	0	370	0	0	339
missing data	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,115	1,115	1,115	1,014	1,014	1,014	988	988	988
YOUNG MALES (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>10yrs, less than life	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
>5yrs and <=10yrs	8	1	0	5	3	0	3	1	0	4	0	0
>4yrs and <=5yrs	4	1	0	2	1	0	2	1	0	2	1	0
>3yrs and <=4yrs	7	3	2	3	1	1	2	0	0	2	0	0
>2yrs and <=3yrs	11	7	8	7	3	5	6	4	4	6	4	5
>1yr and <=2yrs	12	18	19	5	11	11	8	11	8	8	10	7
>6mths and <=12mths	10	19	9	10	14	4	8	12	5	7	12	6
>3mths and <=6mths	10	13	2	6	7	1	5	6	0	5	7	1
<=3 months	3	3	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0
No Licence	0	0	25	0	0	20	0	0	20	0	0	15
missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	66	66	66	42	42	42	37	37	37	34	34	34
ALL MALES	1,333	1,333	1,333	1,157	1,157	1,157	1,051	1,051	1,051	1,022	1,022	1,022
ADULT FEMALES (Aged 21 and Over)												
Life	8	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
>5yrs, less than life	5	2	0	6	3	0	2	1	0	3	1	0
>1yr and <=5yrs	16	13	10	12	11	11	11	9	8	13	12	10
>6mths and <=12mths	7	11	6	5	7	2	10	10	3	5	8	4
>3mths and <=6mths	5	6	0	5	6	0	4	6	2	6	7	0
<=3 months	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0
No Licence	0	0	18	0	0	15	0	0	14	0	0	15
missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	42	42	42	34	34	34	33	33	33	36	36	36
YOUNG FEMALES (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5yrs, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>1yr and <=5yrs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
>6mths and <=12mths	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
>3mths and <=6mths	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<=3 months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Licence	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
ALL FEMALES	44	44	44	34	34	34	35	35	35	38	38	38

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

	2014/15			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18		
	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	166	166	166	156	156	156	154	154	154	149	149	149
>10yrs, less than life	115	71	0	117	68	0	109	60	0	104	58	0
>5yrs and <=10yrs	266	115	18	240	119	21	192	110	21	160	102	22
>4yrs and <=5yrs	91	57	42	76	52	42	60	52	39	65	45	37
>3yrs and <=4yrs	122	99	83	101	94	75	86	75	59	86	60	43
>2yrs and <=3yrs	158	164	181	137	136	159	117	108	120	133	102	121
>1yr and <=2yrs	178	286	252	140	258	211	145	220	179	136	212	199
>6mths and <=12mths	123	230	109	100	167	62	102	162	72	99	185	80
>3mths and <=6mths	87	119	21	66	82	8	62	84	17	66	85	15
<=3 months	25	26	0	23	24	0	24	25	0	23	23	0
No Licence	0	0	459	0	0	423	0	0	390	0	0	354
missing data	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total Males	1,333	1,333	1,333	1,157	1,157	1,157	1,051	1,051	1,051	1,022	1,022	1,022
FEMALES												
Life	8	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
>5yrs, less than life	5	2	0	6	3	0	2	1	0	3	1	0
>1yr and <=5yrs	17	13	11	12	11	11	11	9	8	13	12	10
>6mths and <=12mths	7	12	6	5	7	2	10	11	3	6	9	4
>3mths and <=6mths	6	7	0	5	6	0	4	6	2	6	7	0
<=3 months	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	3	0
No Licence	0	0	19	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	0	17
missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Females	44	44	44	35	35	35	35	35	35	38	38	38
ALL												
Life	174	174	174	162	162	162	160	160	160	156	156	156
>5yrs, less than life	386	188	18	362	190	21	302	170	21	267	161	22
>1yr and <=5yrs	566	618	569	465	551	497	419	465	405	433	431	410
>6mths and <=12mths	131	243	115	105	174	64	112	173	75	105	194	84
>3mths and <=6mths	93	126	22	71	88	9	67	91	19	72	92	16
<=3 months	26	28	0	25	25	0	25	26	0	25	26	0
No Licence	0	0	478	0	0	438	0	0	405	0	0	371
missing data	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total	1,376	1,376	1,376	1,192	1,192	1,192	1,085	1,085	1,085	1,060	1,060	1,060

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

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AGED 21 AND OVER						
Violence against the Person	386	18	362	15	344	14
Sexual Offences	128	0	111	0	104	2
Misc Sexual	6	0	4	0	5	0
Robbery	112	2	86	1	90	3
Theft	49	2	31	5	34	5
Burglary	61	0	60	0	59	0
Criminal Damage	38	4	37	2	34	1
Drug Offences	84	3	92	2	90	3
Possession of Weapons Offences	14	0	15	0	13	0
Public Order Offences	177	4	166	3	159	5
Motoring Offences	20	0	18	0	25	0
Fraud	7	0	4	1	6	1
Other Offences	31	1	27	2	25	2
Missing	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged 21 and Over	1,115	34	1,014	33	988	36
AGED LESS THAN 21						
Violence against the Person	12	0	8	0	11	0
Sexual Offences	2	0	0	0	0	0
Misc Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	5	0	4	0	4	0
Theft	4	0	4	0	2	0
Burglary	7	0	4	1	4	0
Criminal Damage	5	1	2	0	3	0
Drug Offences	0	0	0	0	1	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	1	0	0	0	0	0
Public Order Offences	5	0	11	0	8	1
Motoring Offences	1	0	2	0	0	0
Fraud	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Offences	1	0	1	0	1	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged Less than 21	42	1	37	1	34	2
ALL	1,157	35	1,051	35	1,022	38

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

Due to revisions in classification for Public Order and Other Offences, data prior to 2015/16 will not be consistent across these categories. The revision involved reclassifying Recall Offences from Other to Public Order Offences

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

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
MALES	Violence against the Person	397	370	354
	Sexual Offences	130	112	104
	Misc Sexual	6	4	5
	Robbery	117	90	94
	Theft	53	35	36
	Burglary	67	64	63
	Criminal Damage	43	39	37
	Drug Offences	84	92	91
	Possession of Weapons Offences	15	15	13
	Public Order Offences	182	177	167
	Motoring Offences	21	20	25
	Fraud	7	4	6
	Other Offences	33	28	26
	Missing	1	0	0
Total		1,157	1,051	1,022
FEMALES	Violence against the Person	18	16	14
	Sexual Offences	0	0	2
	Misc Sexual	0	0	0
	Robbery	2	1	3
	Theft	2	5	6
	Burglary	0	1	1
	Criminal Damage	4	3	2
	Drug Offences	3	2	3
	Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	0
	Public Order Offences	4	3	6
	Motoring Offences	0	0	0
	Fraud	0	1	1
	Other Offences	1	2	2
	Missing	0	0	0
Total		35	35	38
ALL	Violence against the Person	416	386	368
	Sexual Offences	130	112	106
	Misc Sexual	6	4	5
	Robbery	119	91	97
	Theft	55	40	42
	Burglary	68	64	64
	Criminal Damage	47	42	38
	Drug Offences	87	95	94
	Possession of Weapons Offences	15	15	13
	Public Order Offences	187	180	173
	Motoring Offences	21	20	25
	Fraud	7	6	7
	Other Offences	32	30	27
	Missing	1	0	0
Total		1,192	1,085	1,060

Components may not sum to totals due to rounding

Females may include Transgender persons

Due to revisions in classification for Public Order and Other Offences, data prior to 2015/16 will not be consistent across these categories. The revision involved reclassifying Recall Offences from Other to Public Order Offences

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

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Remand	Maghaberry	2,122	2,170	2,239	2,216
	Magilligan	0	0	0	19
	Hydebank Wood College Males	350	340	316	305
	Hydebank Wood College Females	182	215	235	246
	Total	2,654	2,725	2,790	2,786
Immediate Custody	Maghaberry	1,611	1,253	1,473	1,361
	Magilligan	0	0	0	7
	Hydebank Wood College Males	185	143	151	134
	Hydebank Wood College Females	103	84	105	117
	Total	1,899	1,480	1,729	1,619
Fine Defaulter	Maghaberry	184	405	547	532
	Magilligan	0	0	0	1
	Hydebank Wood College Males	19	35	38	20
	Hydebank Wood College Females	21	55	68	58
	Total	224	495	653	611
Non Criminal	Maghaberry	19	24	77	61
	Magilligan	0	0	0	6
	Hydebank Wood College Males	1	1	6	7
	Hydebank Wood College Females	0	1	2	2
	Total	20	26	85	76
Males		4,491	4,371	4,847	4,669
Females		306	355	410	423
Establishment	Maghaberry	3,936	3,852	4,336	4,170
	Magilligan	0	0	0	33
	Hydebank Wood College Males	555	519	511	466
	Hydebank Wood College Females	306	355	410	423
	Total	4,797	4,726	5,257	5,092

Females may include Transgender persons

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

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
MALES	18 - 20 years	172	141	145	121
	21 - 29 years	775	606	713	626
	30 - 39 years	445	354	449	457
	40 - 49 years	239	192	170	164
	50 - 59 years	120	69	105	90
	60 + years	45	34	42	44
	Total	1,796	1,396	1,624	1,502
FEMALES	18 - 20 years	8	7	9	13
	21 - 29 years	32	37	37	37
	30 - 39 years	25	27	20	27
	40 - 49 years	23	5	19	20
	50 - 59 years	12	8	18	15
	60 + years	3	0	2	5
	Total	103	84	105	117
ALL	18 - 20 years	180	148	154	134
	21 - 29 years	807	643	750	663
	30 - 39 years	470	381	469	484
	40 - 49 years	262	197	189	184
	50 - 59 years	132	77	123	105
	60 + years	48	34	44	49
	Total	1,899	1,480	1,729	1,619

Females may include Transgender persons

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

	2014/15			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18		
	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	12	12	12	10	10	10	16	16	16	13	13	13
>10yrs, less than life	18	13	0	18	8	0	12	5	0	12	7	0
>5yrs and <=10yrs	70	15	2	42	29	7	45	17	5	59	19	4
>4yrs and <=5yrs	45	20	14	18	6	5	45	16	3	27	11	8
>3yrs and <=4yrs	74	30	19	46	29	10	77	29	10	49	31	18
>2yrs and <=3yrs	137	83	83	96	54	34	139	69	60	112	59	50
>1yr and <=2yrs	227	233	175	148	159	104	230	234	190	194	168	136
>6mths and <=12mths	327	448	142	252	303	56	289	411	153	264	382	121
>3mths and <=6mths	447	498	34	362	392	16	363	417	38	379	419	35
<=3 months	265	270	1	253	255	0	263	265	0	271	271	0
No Licence	0	0	1,140	0	0	1,003	0	0	1,004	0	0	995
missing data	2	2	2	10	10	10	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total	1,624	1,624	1,624	1,255	1,255	1,255	1,479	1,479	1,479	1,381	1,381	1,381
YOUNG MALES (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
>10yrs, less than life	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5yrs and <=10yrs	1	0	0	3	1	1	4	0	0	3	0	0
>4yrs and <=5yrs	3	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	0
>3yrs and <=4yrs	7	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	1
>2yrs and <=3yrs	10	3	6	7	2	2	11	5	6	10	2	2
>1yr and <=2yrs	19	20	15	8	9	7	25	21	14	15	15	15
>6mths and <=12mths	37	48	9	43	46	6	32	48	18	25	32	6
>3mths and <=6mths	60	65	4	48	51	1	36	38	1	37	42	1
<=3 months	34	35	0	31	31	0	32	32	0	27	27	0
No Licence	0	0	136	0	0	123	0	0	106	0	0	95
missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	172	172	172	141	141	141	145	145	145	121	121	121
ALL MALES	1,796	1,796	1,796	1,396	1,396	1,396	1,624	1,624	1,624	1,502	1,502	1,502
ADULT FEMALES (Aged 21 and Over)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
>5yrs, less than life	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	0
>1yr and <=5yrs	26	19	15	7	3	4	17	11	10	15	7	9
>6mths and <=12mths	20	25	8	16	18	3	30	32	5	19	25	7
>3mths and <=6mths	30	33	0	34	37	2	31	36	5	41	44	1
<=3 months	17	17	0	19	19	0	16	16	0	26	27	0
No Licence	0	0	72	0	0	68	0	0	75	0	0	87
missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	95	95	95	77	77	77	96	96	96	104	104	104
YOUNG FEMALES (Aged Less than 21)												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>5yrs, less than life	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
>1yr and <=5yrs	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	1
>6mths and <=12mths	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	3	0	2	2	0
>3mths and <=6mths	5	5	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	2	3	0
<=3 months	2	2	0	3	3	0	1	1	0	7	7	0
No Licence	0	0	8	0	0	6	0	0	8	0	0	12
Total	8	8	8	7	7	7	9	9	9	13	13	13
ALL FEMALES	103	103	103	84	84	84	105	105	105	117	117	117

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

	2014/15			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18		
	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	13	13	13	10	10	10	16	16	16	14	14	14
>10yrs, less than life	18	13	0	19	8	0	12	5	0	12	7	0
>5yrs and <=10yrs	71	15	2	45	30	8	49	17	5	62	19	4
>4yrs and <=5yrs	48	20	14	18	7	6	47	17	3	28	12	8
>3yrs and <=4yrs	81	30	20	46	29	10	80	29	10	51	32	19
>2yrs and <=3yrs	147	86	89	103	56	36	150	74	66	122	61	52
>1yr and <=2yrs	246	253	190	156	168	111	255	255	204	209	183	151
>6mths and <=12mths	364	496	151	295	349	62	321	459	171	289	414	127
>3mths and <=6mths	507	563	38	410	443	17	399	455	39	416	461	36
<=3 months	299	305	1	284	286	0	295	297	0	298	298	0
No Licence	0	0	1,276	0	0	1,126	0	0	1,110	0	0	1,090
missing data	2	2	2	10	10	10	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total Males	1,796	1,796	1,796	1,396	1,396	1,396	1,624	1,624	1,624	1,502	1,502	1,502
FEMALES												
Life	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
>5yrs, less than life	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	0
>1yr and <=5yrs	26	19	15	8	3	4	19	13	11	17	8	10
>6mths and <=12mths	21	26	8	16	19	4	33	35	5	21	27	7
>3mths and <=6mths	35	38	0	37	40	2	34	39	5	43	47	1
<=3 months	19	19	0	22	22	0	17	17	0	33	34	0
No Licence	0	0	80	0	0	74	0	0	83	0	0	99
missing data	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Females	103	103	103	84	84	84	105	105	105	117	117	117
ALL												
Life	13	13	13	10	10	10	17	17	17	14	14	14
>5yrs, less than life	91	29	2	65	38	8	62	22	5	77	27	4
>1yr and <=5yrs	548	408	328	331	263	167	551	388	294	427	296	240
>6mths and <=12mths	385	522	159	311	368	66	354	494	176	310	441	134
>3mths and <=6mths	542	601	38	447	483	19	433	494	44	459	508	37
<=3 months	318	324	1	306	308	0	312	314	0	331	332	0
No Licence	0	0	1,356	0	0	1,200	0	0	1,193	0	0	1,189
missing data	2	2	2	10	10	10	0	0	0	1	1	1
Total	1,899	1,899	1,899	1,480	1,480	1,480	1,729	1,729	1,729	1,619	1,619	1,619

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

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
AGED 21 AND OVER						
Violence against the Person	229	17	301	24	253	19
Sexual Offences	50	0	54	2	54	1
Misc Sexual	9	0	13	0	8	0
Robbery	23	1	37	0	49	3
Theft	139	16	138	25	133	33
Burglary	72	4	109	0	91	1
Criminal Damage	114	19	138	13	148	7
Drug Offences	120	3	189	8	134	7
Possession of Weapons Offences	21	0	22	1	16	0
Public Order Offences	295	12	283	10	300	18
Motoring Offences	74	2	81	2	94	3
Fraud	17	0	11	4	19	3
Other Offences	88	3	103	7	82	8
Missing	4	0	0	0	0	1
Total Aged 21 and Over	1,255	77	1,479	96	1,381	104
AGED LESS THAN 21						
Violence against the Person	34	1	31	4	23	3
Sexual Offences	0	0	1	0	1	0
Misc Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	2	0	7	0	8	0
Theft	25	1	18	1	22	2
Burglary	21	2	14	1	14	1
Criminal Damage	23	2	17	2	14	4
Drug Offences	2	1	4	0	2	0
Possession of Weapons Offences	3	0	1	0	4	0
Public Order Offences	18	0	34	1	25	3
Motoring Offences	4	0	8	0	3	0
Fraud	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Offences	9	0	10	0	5	0
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Aged Less than 21	141	7	145	9	121	13
ALL	1,396	84	1,624	105	1,502	117

Females may include Transgender persons

Due to revisions in classification for Public Order and Other Offences, data prior to 2015/16 will not be consistent across these categories. The revision involved reclassifying Recall Offences from Other to Public Order Offences

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

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
MALES	Violence against the Person	263	332	276
	Sexual Offences	50	55	55
	Misc Sexual	9	13	8
	Robbery	25	44	57
	Theft	164	156	155
	Burglary	93	123	105
	Criminal Damage	137	155	162
	Drug Offences	122	193	136
	Possession of Weapons Offences	24	23	20
	Public Order Offences	313	317	325
	Motoring Offences	78	89	97
	Fraud	17	11	19
	Other Offences	97	113	87
	Missing	4	0	0
	Total	1,396	1,624	1,502
FEMALES	Violence against the Person	18	28	22
	Sexual Offences	0	2	1
	Misc Sexual	0	0	0
	Robbery	1	0	3
	Theft	17	26	35
	Burglary	6	1	2
	Criminal Damage	21	15	11
	Drug Offences	4	8	7
	Possession of Weapons Offences	0	1	0
	Public Order Offences	12	11	21
	Motoring Offences	2	2	3
	Fraud	0	4	3
	Other Offences	3	7	8
	Missing	0	0	1
	Total	84	105	117
ALL	Violence against the Person	281	360	298
	Sexual Offences	50	57	56
	Misc Sexual	9	13	8
	Robbery	26	44	60
	Theft	181	182	190
	Burglary	99	124	107
	Criminal Damage	158	170	173
	Drug Offences	126	201	143
	Possession of Weapons Offences	24	24	20
	Public Order Offences	325	328	346
	Motoring Offences	80	91	100
	Fraud	17	15	22
	Other Offences	100	120	95
	Missing	4	0	1
	Total	1,480	1,729	1,619

Females may include Transgender persons

Due to revisions in classification for Public Order and Other Offences, data prior to 2015/16 will not be consistent across these categories. The revision involved reclassifying Recall Offences from Other to Public Order Offences

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
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 defaulter 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 further review was 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.

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 College. Female prisoners are held in a separate unit within Hydebank Wood College.

Whilst the prison population consists mainly of offenders sentenced by the courts to immediate custody for criminal offences, it also includes fine defaulters, 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, 4% of sentence lengths were changed and 11.2% 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.

Analysis

Significant Testing

Findings in this report were compared using statistical testing. This was done to provide a level of confidence as to whether there was a real difference in findings between years or categories, or whether apparent differences were simply within the range expected with chance variation. The test employed was a Chi Square, which tests for association between two categorical variables - for example, gender (males and females) and offence category (Theft and non-Theft). Where a statistically significant result was found (i.e. a result with a probability of less than 5.0% under chance conditions) this has been reported in the text.

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, the tables are also published alongside this bulletin in Microsoft Excel.

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