

# User Consultation on Content Changes to the Northern Ireland Prison Population Report - Results

June 2023



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This report is available on: [Department of Justice website](#) (opens in a new window)

Feedback on this report can be provided directly to Analytical Services Group at the email address listed above.

# 1 | Background

Analytical Services Group (ASG), the statisticians within the Department of Justice (DoJ) produce the Northern Ireland Prison Population report, an annual national statistics publication produced on a financial year basis.

In early 2022, ASG decided to review the content and format of the report with a view to modernising the appearance and design in line with their other publications, and making four proposed changes to the content -

- 1) Prior to 2021/22, further data breakdowns in the report were for those sentenced to immediate custody. In response to an increase in requests for remand data, ASG proposed the inclusion of additional detail for remand, to match that provided for immediate custody data (**Proposal 1**).
- 2) Prior to 2021/22, receptions were defined as both a committal into prison and/or a change in an individual's custody type from one day to the next. An individual can have multiple receptions within one custodial period if their committal type changes while in custody. There was a chance therefore of the reader misunderstanding when viewing reception numbers and misinterpreting them as committal numbers. For this reason

and also to add value to the report, ASG proposed the inclusion of a section on committal numbers for the financial year (**Proposal 2**).

- 3) ASG proposed the inclusion of data on discharges/releases (**Proposal 3**).
- 4) Information on age and gender is included within the report so ASG proposed the addition of religious group information (**Proposal 4**).

A consultation went live between 31<sup>st</sup> May and 24 June 2022, to gather feedback and support on the four proposed content changes. The consultation was produced using Citizen Space - the NI Government online consultation tool, and was advertised on the Departmental intranet and Twitter page.

The following chapter provides an overview of the consultation findings.

## 2 | Summary of Responses

There were a total of 13 responses to the consultation - six were Department of Justice users, three were other Northern Ireland Civil Service/non-NICS public sector users and four were Other users.

Respondents reported that the main reasons for using the publication were -

- Monitoring and benchmarking (7);
- General information (7);
- Briefing (eg. Minister or colleagues) (6), and
- Personal use (5).

The majority of respondents were supportive of the four proposed changes -

- “Proposal 1: The inclusion of additional detail for remand data” was supported by all 13 respondents.
- “Proposal 2: The inclusion of a section on committal ” was supported by all 13 respondents.
- “Proposal 3: The inclusion of data on discharges/releases” was supported by all 13 respondents.
- “Proposal 4: The addition of religious group information” was supported by 11 users; two users were against it with one stating they didn’t feel adding the information would benefit the statistics and the other feeling it to be irrelevant due to the court sentencing the inmate. Given the support from the majority of respondents ASG decided to proceed with the proposal.

## 2 | Summary of Responses

Respondents were also given the option to provide any amendments, feedback or general comments that they would like considered for this or future publications. They provided two responses -

Respondent Comment	ASG Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Number of registered disabled as per disability discrimination act prisoners residing in committed population.”</li></ul>	NIPS does record disability where prisoners self-declare, however, medical markers set by healthcare staff cover a broad range of conditions, both mental and physical, are not shared in all cases due to medical confidentiality requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Number of people awaiting deportation”</li></ul>	The Home Office serves ‘intention to deport’ notices on foreign nationals and would be best placed to provide this information.

## 3 | Proposed Changes

ASG wishes to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation. Based on the responses provided, there was wide support for the four proposed changes, these were implemented in the release of the Northern Ireland Prison Population 2021/22 report which was published in September 2022

The publication can be found at:

[NI Prison Service Statistics | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](https://justice-ni.gov.uk/nis/statistics)

Some users provided details to be added to a mailing list for the publication. For the 2021/22 report, ASG received advice however not to circulate notices to mailing lists during the period of National Mourning following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Users will however be notified of the 2022/23 publication.