



# BROMLEY BRIEFINGS PRISON FACTFILE

April 2006

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*These 'Bromley Briefings' are being produced in memory of Keith Bromley, a valued friend of PRT and allied groups concerned with prisons and human rights. His support for refugees from oppression, victims of torture and the falsely imprisoned has made a difference to many people's lives. The Prison Reform Trust is grateful to the Bromley Trust for supporting the production of this briefing paper.*

Prison Factfile

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## Introduction

Our prison system has been overcrowded in every year for over a decade. Overcrowding has become a fact of prison life. Prisons should be places that hold securely, and make every effort to rehabilitate, serious and dangerous offenders. The skills and focus of those who run them should be wholly directed towards that aim, in the interests of public safety. Instead, rapidly rising numbers have reduced many prisons to locked warehouses in which prison officers are called upon to act merely as turnkeys, processing people in transit from overcrowded jail to overcrowded jail. This briefing sets out the state of our prisons and the wear and tear of year-on-year increases in the use imprisonment.

Last October the prison population in England and Wales reached its highest recorded total of 77,774 men, women and children. The entire prison system was just a few hundred cell spaces away from its total usable capacity. Newspapers at the time reported a kind of grim farce, with prisoners being held in police cells overnight and being moved up and down the country, but not staying long enough to warrant official activation of Operation Safeguard.

The annual Christmas slowdown in processing court cases pulled prison back from the brink of its capacity limit. From the beginning of 2006, the pace began to pick up again. Now the population is 77,004, just a couple of months, at the current rate, from reaching a new historic high. In the meantime, some 300 extra places have been added with just a few more in the pipeline. What is now becoming an annual crisis in capacity looks set to hit earlier and harder in 2006. Many people working in the sector are privately predicting the prison system to be entirely full by the summer, and even having to consider temporarily closing its doors. Moreover, the 2003 Criminal Justice Act is a ticking time-bomb with the capacity vastly to increase imprisonment into the medium and long term.

When the prison system fills up, many voices will call for more prisons. We can expect 'armchair governors' to propose old army camps, offshore

islands, oil rigs and ferries as stop gaps while yet more prisons are built. Certainly lack of capacity is a poor reason not to imprison people. The number of people imprisoned should not have to depend on the number of places available, but rather on the number of serious and violent offenders for whom prison is the proper punishment and the right place to ensure public safety and reduce re-offending.

However, the startling growth in prison numbers over the last ten years has not resulted from finding and catching more criminals. The numbers being dealt with by the courts have remained comparatively static. It is not caused by more people being found guilty of serious crimes. If that were the case, why would so much of the prison population increase be among non-violent women, shoplifters, petty fraudsters and those awaiting trial? It is caused by creeping inflation of sentences and a lack of confidence in effective community measures.

Where should public money be best invested to fight crime? What scope is there for early intervention, better parental supervision and support, and more preventative work with the young? How do we best deal with drug addiction, alcohol dependency and mental illness in our society? How do we free our prison staff and scarce prison resources to do their professional jobs: detaining and rehabilitating serious and violent criminals? This briefing is designed to inform and lend urgency to those questions.

Meanwhile, we are paying a high price for failing to reserve prison for serious and violent offenders. Reconviction rates have soared in line with rising numbers. In 1992 just over half (51 per cent) of all those released from custody were reconvicted within two years. By 2004, two in three people (67 per cent) leaving our overcrowded prison system had been reconvicted. Everyone wants prison to prevent re-offending, and thereby save the next victim of crime, but until, and unless, government succeeds in rebalancing the criminal justice system, it has little chance of doing so.

## Prison overview

**On 24 March 2006, the prison population in England and Wales stood at 77,004, a rise of 2,603 on the year before<sup>1</sup>.**

**The Scottish prison population averaged 6,779 in 2004/5, a rise of 2 per cent on the previous year.<sup>2</sup>**

**The prison population in Northern Ireland on 23 January 2006 was 1,313<sup>3</sup> up 103 on the year before.** Since reaching a low point of 926 in 2001, it has risen steadily.<sup>4</sup>

**England and Wales has the highest imprisonment rate in western Europe at 143 per 100,000 of the population.** France has an imprisonment rate of 88 per 100,000 and Germany has a rate of 97 per 100,000.<sup>5</sup>

**The number of prisoners in England and Wales has increased by over 25,000 in the last ten years.** In 1995, the average prison population was 50,962. When Labour came to power in May 1997, the prison population was 60,131. Previously, it took nearly four decades (1958-1995) for the prison population to rise by 25,000.<sup>6</sup>

**132,960 people were received into prison in England and Wales in 2004.<sup>7</sup>**

**The average age of those sentenced to custody in 2003 was 27.** A quarter was aged 22 or less.<sup>8</sup>

**The number of people found guilty by the courts has remained largely constant over recent years; it was 1,736,628 in 1993 and**

**1,816,676 in 2004.** Over the same time, the number of people given custody at magistrates' court has risen from 25,016 to 61,384. The number awarded custodial sentences at the Crown Court has risen from 33,722 to 44,938.<sup>9</sup>

**The number of women in prison has more than doubled over the past decade. On 24 March 2006, the women's prison population stood at 4,392.<sup>10</sup>** Ten years ago in 1995, the average female prison population was 1,998. Five years ago it stood at 3,355. In 2003, 13,000 women were received into prison.<sup>11</sup>

**Home Office research has found that 66 per cent of women prisoners are mothers, and each year it is estimated that more than 17,700 children are separated from their mother by imprisonment.<sup>12</sup>**

**On 24 March 2006 there were 11,200 people under 21 years old in prisons in England and Wales<sup>13</sup>.** Of these, more than 2,603 were children under 18. The number of children in prison has nearly doubled in the last ten years.<sup>14</sup>

**Over the last year, more than half of all prisons have been overcrowded.** At the end of January 2006, 78 of the 141 prisons in England and Wales were overcrowded.<sup>15</sup>

**The prison system as a whole has been overcrowded in every year since 1994.<sup>16</sup>**

**At the end of December 2004 just under 16,000 prisoners were doubling up in cells designed for one.<sup>17</sup>**

1. Prison population and accommodation briefing for 24 March 2006, NOMS, Estate Planning and Management Group.

2. Scottish Executive National Statistics, 26/8/05, <http://www.sps.gov.uk/newsroom/default.asp?NewsId=253>

3. NIPS, [www.niprisonerservice.gov.uk/facts\\_updated.cfm](http://www.niprisonerservice.gov.uk/facts_updated.cfm) 4. NIPS, <http://www.niprisonerservice.gov.uk/pop-arch.htm>

5. International Centre for Prison Studies, <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/rel/icps/worldbrief/europe.html>

6. Home Office (2003) Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002, London: Stationery Office.

7. Home Office (2005), Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004, London: Home Office 8. Ibid.

9. Home Office (2005). Sentencing Statistics 2004, London: Home Office

10. Prison population and accommodation briefing for 24 March, 2006, NOMS, Estate Planning and Management Group.

11. Home Office (2004) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2003 London: Home Office.

12. Hansard, House of Commons written answer 16th May 2003.

13. Prison population and accommodation briefing for 24 March, 2006, HM Prison Service, Estate Planning and Management Group

14. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office

15. NOMS (2006) Monthly Bulletin – January 2006, London

16. Home Office, Digest 4: Information on the Criminal Justice system in England and Wales, 1999, London: Home Office

17. Hansard, House of Commons written answers 15 March 2005 : Column 204W. The exact number is 15,786 prisoners.

**The government's five-year plan to reduce re-offending states: "Since 1997, spending on prisons has risen by more than 25% in real terms, and since 2001, spending on probation has risen by 39%." We now spend about £300 million a year on rehabilitative regimes in prison alone. Despite this investment, almost 60 per cent of people who pass through the criminal justice system re-offend within two years. This figure, which accounts for half of all crime, must be reduced. We need to make a step change to the way we manage the system if we are going to improve this significantly.<sup>18</sup>**

**It costs an average of £37,305 to keep a person in prison.<sup>19</sup>**

**Since Labour came to power in 1997, more than 17,000 additional prison places have been provided and 3,000 more are planned by spring 2006.<sup>20</sup>**

**The average cost of each prison place built since 2000 is £99,839.<sup>21</sup>**

**Research by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit highlighted in the Carter report ('Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime', December 2003) says that a 22 per cent increase in the prison population since 1997 is estimated to have reduced crime by around five per cent during a period when overall crime fell by 30 per cent. The report states: 'There is no convincing evidence that further increases in the use of custody would significantly reduce crime'.<sup>22</sup>**

**The Home Secretary has said: "More than half of all crime in this country is committed by people who have been through the criminal justice system. Prison does not work in stopping re-offending".<sup>23</sup>**

**Prison has a poor record for reducing re-offending – 67.4 per cent of all prisoners are reconvicted within two years of being released. For young men aged 18-21 it is 78.4 per cent.<sup>24</sup>**

**The government's five-year strategy to reduce re-offending states: "A large number of the people who pass through prisons are sentenced to short sentences, less than a year long." In 2004 61,670 offenders went into prison for less than 12 months. This includes many persistent but petty offenders, for whom prison is being used as a punishment of last resort; they are not dangerous to the public, but the system has not stopped their offending so far. But the kind of short prison sentences that are given to persistent petty offenders are not very effective either at punishing the offender, or at stopping them committing crime again. The offender is released without any requirements on them about what they should do back in the community, and often offends again."<sup>25</sup>**

**The Social Exclusion Unit has concluded that re-offending by ex-prisoners costs society at least £11 billion per year. Ex-prisoners are responsible for about one in five of all recorded crimes.<sup>26</sup>**

18. Home Office (2006), A Five Year Plan for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending, Cm 6717

19. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

20. Hansard, House of Commons 16 Mar 2005: Column 124VWH

21. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 30 June 2005 : Column 1669W

22. Carter (2003) Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime, London: Strategy Unit.

23. Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP, Hansard, House of Commons debates, 9 February 2005

24. Home Office (2005) Re-offending of adults: results from the 2002 cohort

25. Home Office (2006), A Five Year Plan for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending, Cm 6717

26. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

**Seven and a half per cent of the male population born in 1953 had been given at least one custodial sentence before the age of forty-six.** Thirty three per cent of men born in 1953 had at least one conviction for a 'standard list' offence before the age of forty-six.<sup>27</sup>

**Almost one in five (22 per cent) of people held on remand before trial in 2003 were acquitted or not proceeded against.**<sup>28</sup> The vast majority received no compensation for this period of incarceration.

**Half of all remand prisoners go on to receive a non-custodial sentence.** Of male prisoners held on remand in 2003, 49 per cent received a custodial sentence; of female remand prisoners, 60 per cent received a non-custodial sentence or were acquitted.<sup>29</sup>

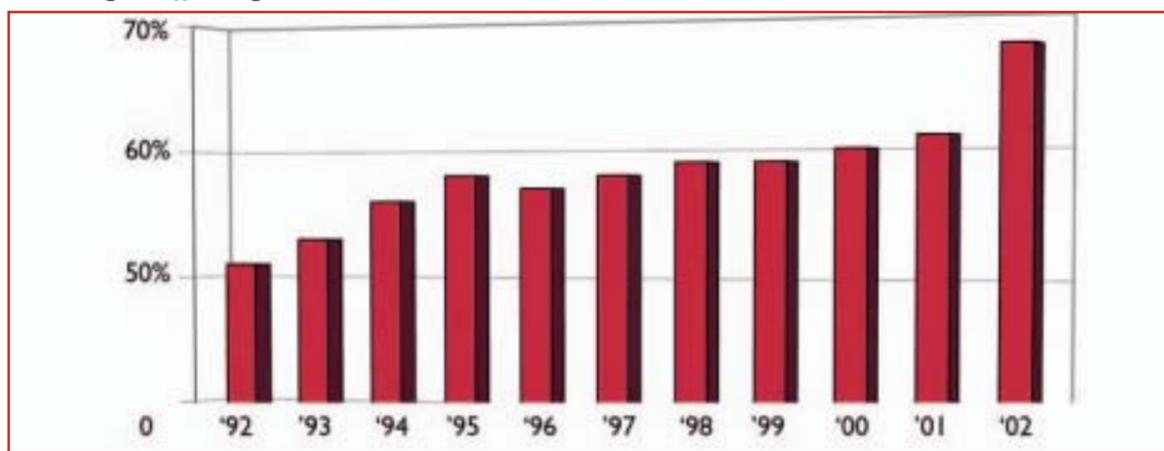
**The number of people in 2004 under pre or post release supervision by the Probation Service was 209,461.**<sup>30</sup> Under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, those serving sentences of under 12 months will be under

supervision on release for the first time. License and supervision will run to the end of the sentence for those who receive over 12 months (as opposed to ending three-quarters of the way through, as is now the case). The public protection sentences will carry extended periods of supervision.

**A survey conducted among prison healthcare managers across the UK found that a third of prisons surveyed had no HIV policy, one in five had no hepatitis C policy and well over half had no sexual health policy.** This is despite the fact that the most recent survey of prevalence in prison found HIV was 15 times higher than in the community.<sup>31</sup>

**The average daily food cost per person in prison service run prisons was £1.85 in 2004-2005 – split 20:40:40 between breakfast, lunch and dinner.**<sup>32</sup>

Percentage reoffending rates since 1992



27. Home Office (2001) 'Criminal careers of those born between 1953 and 1978'.

28. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004, London: Home Office

29. *ibid*

30. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

31. HIV and hepatitis in UK prisons: addressing prisoners' healthcare needs, Prison Reform Trust and National AIDS Trust, 2005

32. Hansard, House of Commons Written Answers 12 Dec 2005

## Prison overcrowding

**Prison overcrowding is defined by the Prison Service as a prison containing more prisoners than the establishment's Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA).** "CNA, or uncrowded capacity, is the Prison Service's own measure of accommodation. CNA represents the good, decent standard of accommodation that the service aspires to provide all prisoners."<sup>33</sup>

**The limit to overcrowding in prison is called the Operational Capacity.** The Prison Service defines it as: "the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime."<sup>34</sup>

**At the end of January 2006 78 prisons, 53 per cent of the estate, were overcrowded.** 10 were at more than 150 per cent of their CNA.<sup>35</sup>

**At the end of September 2005, the total prison population stood at fewer than**

**1,000 below the ceiling of Useable Operation Capacity.** The population had increased by 2,642 from the same time a year ago.<sup>36</sup>

**At the end of December 2004, just under 16,000 prisoners were held two to a cell designed for one person, the equivalent of 22 per cent of the prison population at that time.**<sup>37</sup>

**A study by the Prison Reform Trust and the National Council of Independent Monitoring Boards in September 2002 examined the impact of overcrowding.** Of the 103 Independent Monitoring Boards (the watchdogs appointed by the Home Secretary to monitor prison conditions) who responded, 77 expressed concern that overcrowding was threatening prison safety, leading to prisoners being held in inhuman, degrading and unsafe conditions and damaging attempts to maintain family support and reduce re-offending by prisoners.

*The ten most overcrowded prisons in England and Wales, January 2006*

Prison	In use CNA	Operational Capacity	Population	Percentage occupied
Preston	330	619	581	176
Shrewsbury	179	340	309	173
Leicester	206	385	349	169
Usk	150	250	246	164
Canterbury	196	314	313	160
Dorchester	147	260	232	158
Exeter	316	533	496	157
Altcourse	614	1,024	947	154
Lincoln	307	490	465	151
Wandsworth	958	1,439	1,450	151

*NOMS (2006) Monthly Bulletin – January 2006, London: Prison Service*

33. The Prison Service, Prison Service Order 1900, Certified Prisoner Accommodation

34. *ibid*

35. NOMS (2006) Monthly Bulletin – January 2006, London

36. Prison population and accommodation briefing for 16 September, 2005, NOMS, Estate Planning and Management Group.

37. Hansard, House of Commons written answers 15 March 2005 : Column 204W. The exact number is 15,786 prisoners.

*Prison overcrowding in England and Wales in the last eleven years (mid-year)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of places(CNA)</b>	<b>Number of prisoners</b>	<b>Percentage occupation</b>
1994	48,291	48,929	101%
1995	50,239	51,086	102%
1996	53,152	55,256	104%
1997	56,329	61,467	109%
1998	61,253	65,727	107%
1999	62,369	64,529	103%
2000	63,346	65,194	103%
2001	63,530	66,403	105%
2002	64,046	71,112	111%
2003	66,104	73,627	111%
2004	67,505	74,468	110%
2005	69,394	76,079	110%

## Sentencing trends

**The number of people found guilty by the courts has remained largely constant over recent years: it was 1,736,628 in 1993 and 1,816,676 in 2004.** The number given custody at magistrates' court has risen from 25,016 to 61,384. The number awarded custodial sentences at the Crown Court has risen from 33,722 to 44,938.<sup>38</sup>

**The number of people sentenced for violence against the person was 38,923 in 1993 and 39,257 in 2003.** The number of those awarded custodial sentences increased from 7,516 to 12,247.<sup>39</sup>

**The average length of a custodial sentence from a crown court has risen from 20 months in 1993 to 27 months in 2004.** Custody rate at crown court has risen from 49 per cent in 1993 to 61 per cent in 2004.<sup>40</sup>

**Use of prison in magistrates' court has risen from 6 per cent in 1993 to 16 per cent in 2004, meanwhile the use of the fine has shrunk from 46 per cent to 30 per cent.** In 2004, nine per cent of shoplifters with no previous convictions were sent to prison from magistrates' courts, against two per cent in 1993.<sup>41</sup>

**The government's five-year strategy to reduce re-offending states: "Until recently, collection rates for fines were poor. In 2001-02, payment rates were only 59 per cent.** This meant that judges and magistrates lost confidence in fines, and gave more community sentences instead. Collection rates are now far better – up to 81% – so we expect sentencers' use of them to rise again too."<sup>42</sup>

**The number of life sentence prisoners has increased considerably in recent years.**

There were 6,431 people serving life sentences at the end of December 2005, a rise of 12 per cent on the year before.<sup>43</sup> This compares with fewer than 4,000 in 1998 and 3,000 in 1992.<sup>44</sup>

**The number sentenced to life imprisonment each year has almost doubled over the past ten years from 252 in 1994 to 570 in 2004.**<sup>45</sup>

**England and Wales has the highest number of life sentenced prisoners in Europe.** It has more than Germany, France, Italy and Turkey combined.<sup>46</sup>

**People serving mandatory life sentences accounted for 59 per cent of all life sentence prisoners received into prison in 2004.**<sup>47</sup>

**Men serving determinate sentences of four years or more account for 40 per cent of the total increase in the prison population between 1993 and 2003.** Men serving between one and four years account for 27 per cent of the increase. Men on shorter sentences accounted for nine per cent.<sup>48</sup>

**Those serving sentences of six months or less make up over half of the 93,326 people received into prison under sentence in 2004.**<sup>49</sup>

**Theft and handling of stolen goods accounted for the largest number of immediate custodial receptions at over one-fifth.**<sup>50</sup>

38. Home Office (2005). Sentencing Statistics 2003/4 London: Home Office

39. *ibid*

40. Sentencing Guidelines Council and Sentencing Advisory Panel 'The sentence: sentencing trends at national and local level', January 2006

41. *ibid*

42. Home Office (2006), A Five Year Plan for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending, Cm 6717

43. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

44. Home Office (2003) Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002, London: Stationery Office.

45. Home Office (2005). Sentencing Statistics 2004, London: Home Office

46. Aebi, M (2003) Council of Europe Annual Penal Statistics, Survey 2003.

47. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

48. *ibid*

49. *ibid*

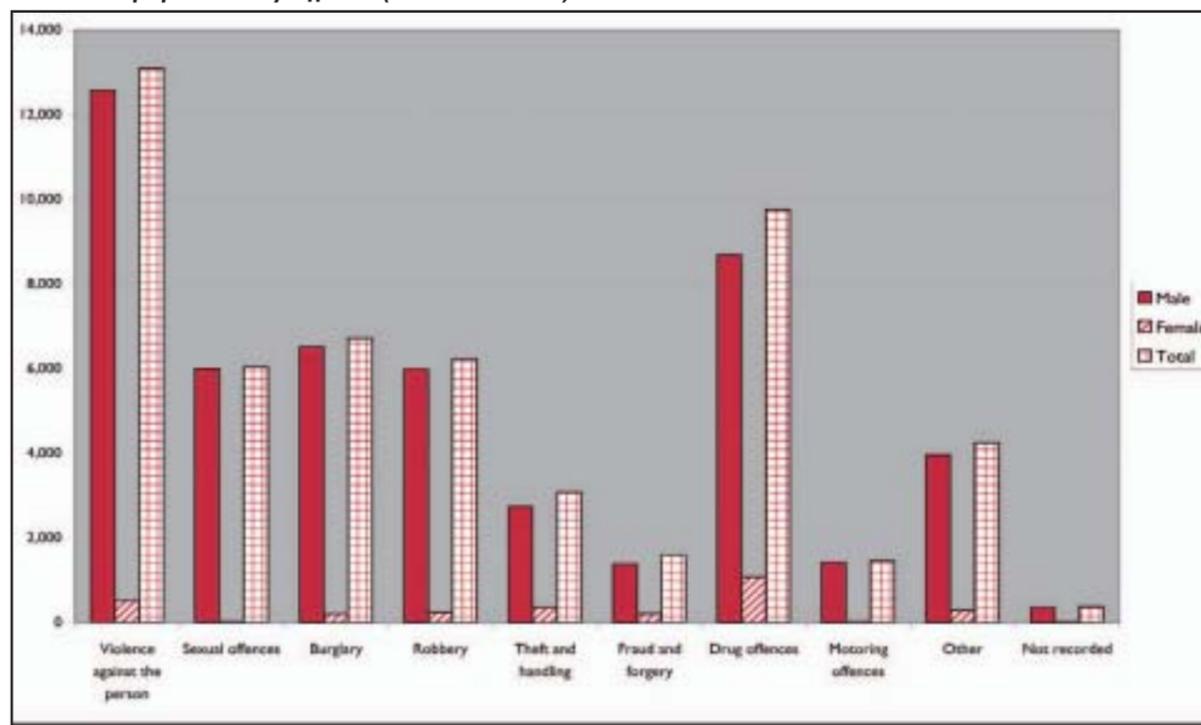
50. *ibid*

**75 per cent of those sentenced for theft and handling of stolen goods received sentences of less than six months.**<sup>51</sup>

**“Different courts can vary considerably in the way they sentence.** For example, in one area the average sentence length at crown courts increased by 13 months between 1993 and 2004, whilst in another similar area the increase has been 5 months. Similarly, during this

same period, the proportion of people sent to custody in one area increased by over 30 percentage points whilst in another similar area it only increased by around 3 percentage points”<sup>52</sup>

**Sentenced population by offence (December 2005)** <sup>53</sup>



51. *ibid*

52. Home Office (2006), *A Five Year Plan for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending*, Cm 6717

53. Home Office (2005) *Population in Custody, December 2005*, London: Home Office.

## Prison suicide

**The suicide rate for men in prison is five times that for men in the community.** Boys aged 15-17 are even more likely, 18 times more likely, to kill themselves in prison than in the community.<sup>54</sup>

**In 2005 there were 78 self-inflicted deaths in England and Wales, a significant fall from 95 deaths in 2004.**<sup>55</sup>

**There were 16 self-inflicted deaths during June 2005, the highest number of any calendar month on record.**<sup>56</sup>

**Of the 78 deaths in 2005, three were women over 21, down from 12 in 2004.** Ten women aged 18-21 and two juveniles, aged 15-17 took their own lives.

**Almost one third of suicides occur within the first week of someone arriving in custody and one in seven occur within two days of admission.**<sup>57</sup>

**Nearly two-thirds of those who commit suicide in prison have a history of drug misuse and nearly a third have a history of alcohol misuse.**<sup>58</sup>

**One study found that 72 per cent of those who commit suicide in prison had a history of mental disorder.** 57 per cent had symptoms suggestive of mental disorder at reception into prison.<sup>59</sup>

**More than half of suicide is in male local prisons and one in five suicides are in prison healthcare or segregation units.**<sup>60</sup>

**75 per cent of suicides in prisons between**

**2000 and 2004 took place in prisons that were overcrowded in that month.**<sup>61</sup>

**Number of self-inflicted deaths in Prison Service establishments 1997- 2005**

Year	Number	Rate of suicides per 100,000
1997	65	111
1998	76	127
1999	89	140
2000	80	124
2001	73	110
2002	95	130
2003	94	126
2004	95	127
2005	78	
Total	748	

**In 2005 115 people were successfully resuscitated by staff following serious self-harm incidents.**<sup>62</sup>

**In all, 20 per cent of men and almost 40 per cent of women entering custody say they have previously attempted suicide.** According to the Government's Social Exclusion Unit, more than 50 prisoners commit suicide shortly after release each year.<sup>63</sup>

**A Home Office study has found that the risk of death for men released from prison is forty times higher in the first week of release than for the general population.** This is ascribed largely to drug-related deaths. 342 deaths were recorded among men in the year after release from prison whereas, in a sample matched for age and gender in the general population, only 46 deaths would be expected.<sup>64</sup>

54. The Lancet, Vol 366, 2005, Suicides in male prisoners in England and Wales, 1978-2003, Seena Fazel et al

55. Information supplied by Safer Custody Group in NOMS.

56. NOMS, Performance Report on Offender Management Targets, April – June 2005

57. Joint Committee on Human Rights, Deaths in Custody, Third Report of Session 2004-2005.

58. Ibid.

59. Shaw J, Appleby L and Baker D (2003) Safer Prisons, A National Study of Prison Suicides 1999-2000 by the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness. London: Stationery Office

60. Joint Committee on Human Rights, Deaths in Custody, Third Report of Session 2004-2005.

61. House of Commons, Hansard 7 November 2005

62. NOMS (January/ February 2005) Safer Custody News, London: Prison Service.

63. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

64. Drug-related mortality among newly released offenders 1998 to 2000, Home Office online report 40/05

## Remand prisoners

**Almost one in five (22 per cent) of people held on remand before trial in 2003 were acquitted or not proceeded against.**<sup>65</sup> The vast majority received no compensation for this period of incarceration.

**Less than half of all remanded prisoners go on to receive a prison sentence.** 49 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women on remand in 2003 received an immediate custodial sentence.<sup>66</sup>

**The remand population in prison increased by 10 per cent to 12,535 from December 2004 to December 2005.** Within this total, the untried prisoner numbers increased by eight per cent to 8,025 and the convicted unsentenced population increased by 11 per cent to 4,510.<sup>67</sup>

**The largest percentage increases in the use of custodial remand from December 2004 to December 2005 were for fraud and forgery, robbery and sexual offences. These were up 47,31 and 26 per cent respectively.**<sup>68</sup>

**Two-thirds of people received into prison awaiting trial are accused of non-violent offences.** In 2004, 17 per cent were remanded into custody for theft and handling of stolen goods.<sup>69</sup>

**In 2004, 54,556 untried people were remanded into custody.** In the same year, 50,115 people were remanded into prison convicted but awaiting sentence.<sup>70</sup>

**At the end of December 2005, there were 843 women on remand, just over 1 in 5 of the women's prison population.** The women's

remand population was 12 per cent higher than the year before.<sup>71</sup>

**Women on remand have been one of the fastest growing groups among the prison population.** There was a 115 per cent increase in the number of women remanded into custody between 1994 and 2004, compared to a 20 per cent increase for men. 64 per cent of women entering custody are received on remand.<sup>72</sup>

**In 2002, the average age of a remand prisoner was 29.** More than one in five were under 21. Around five per cent were between 15 and 17 years old.<sup>73</sup>

**In 2004 32 people held in prison awaiting trial took their lives - a third of all prison suicides that year.** Overall, more than half of all suicides were committed by prisoners on remand.<sup>74</sup>

**Many remand prisoners harm themselves whilst in custody.** In 2003, remand prisoners accounted for a third of all self-harm incidents in prison.<sup>75</sup>

**According to research by the Office for National Statistics, more than a quarter of men on remand have attempted suicide at some stage in their life.** For women remand prisoners the figure is even higher. More than forty per cent have attempted suicide before entering prison.<sup>76</sup>

**On 30 June 2004 there were 2,200 people on remand awaiting trial for over three months – 29 per cent of the total.**<sup>77</sup>  
**A significant proportion of those held on**

65. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004, London: Home Office

66. *ibid*

67. Home Office (2004) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office

68. *Ibid.*

69. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office

70. *ibid.* The total number of people remanded into custody in a year cannot be calculated by adding together the two figures because there is double counting. A person may first enter the remand population awaiting trial. If subsequently convicted and then returned to custody to await sentence they will be counted in that category also.

71. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

72. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office

73. Home Office (2003) Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002, London: Stationery Office.

74. Figures supplied to PRT by Prison Service Safer Custody Group.

75. *ibid*

76. Singleton, N et al (1998) Psychiatric Morbidity among Prisoners in England and Wales, London: Office for National Statistics.

77. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

**remand have been in prison previously.** One study found that 65 per cent of respondents had been remanded into custody before.<sup>78</sup>

**Nearly three-quarters of men on remand and nearly half of women on remand have used at least one drug in the year before coming to prison.** Nearly a third of men used heroin in that year and more than forty per cent of women. Overall these figures are much higher than for sentenced prisoners.<sup>79</sup>

**Remand prisoners suffer from a range of mental health problems. According to the Office for National Statistics more than three-quarters of male remand prisoners suffer from a personality disorder.** One in ten have a functional psychosis and more than half experience depression. Nearly two-thirds of female remand prisoners suffer from depression. Once again, these figures are higher than for sentenced prisoners. Research has found that nine per cent of remand prisoners require immediate transfer to the NHS for mental health problems.<sup>80</sup>

**Remand prisoners are more likely than sentenced prisoners to have a history of living in unstable or unsuitable accommodation.** Research by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (Nacro) has suggested they are five times more likely to have lived in a hostel prior to imprisonment.<sup>81</sup>

**More than two thirds of all prisoners are unemployed when they go to jail.** But research has found that remand prisoners are less likely to have had a job before prison than sentenced

prisoners. The minority of remand prisoners who do have jobs are very likely to lose them whilst in prison.<sup>82</sup>

**One in four men and half of all women on remand receive no visits from their family.**<sup>83</sup>

**Prisoners on remand are half as likely to have received advice on resettlement as sentenced prisoners<sup>84</sup>, and will receive no discharge grant.**

**Prisons are failing to equip remand prisoners to prepare for trial.** 48 per cent of prison libraries in jails holding remand prisoners stock the standard legal texts that under Prison Service regulations they must provide.<sup>85</sup>

*Remand population by offence type (December 2005)<sup>86</sup>*

Offence group	Total
Violence against the person	2,998
Other	1,803
Drug offences	1,774
Burglary	1,340
Robbery-	1,226
Theft and Handling	1,162
Sexual offences	813
Not recorded	695
Fraud and Forgery	494
Motoring offences	230

78. Nacro (2000) Prisoner Resettlement Surveys, Unpublished.

79. Singleton, N et al (1998) Psychiatric Morbidity among Prisoners in England and Wales, London: Office for National Statistics.

80. *ibid*

81. Nacro (2000) Prisoner Resettlement Surveys, Unpublished.

82. *ibid*

83. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

84. *ibid*

85. Ruthven, D and Seward, E (2002), Restricted Access: Legal Information for Remand Prisoners, London: Prison Reform Trust.

## Recalls to prison<sup>87</sup>

**In the last five years there has been a 350 per cent increase in the number of offenders recalled to prison for apparent breach of their conditions.** This is despite the fact that the number of ex-prisoners on licence in the community has increased by less than 15 per cent. Rates of recall for those technically eligible have risen from 53 per cent in 2000 to 86 per cent in 2004.<sup>88</sup>

**Recalled prisoners now make up nearly 11 per cent of the population of local prisons.**<sup>89</sup>

**In 2003-2004, 8,103 prisoners were recalled to custody for breach of their licence conditions.** Over the last five years, the number of recalls has more than trebled from 2,337 in 2000-2001.

**Between April and June 2005, 2,100 people were recalled on a breach of their licence.** Of these the largest proportion, 30 per cent, were considered 'out of touch', 18 per cent were breached for problems with their behaviour, eight per cent for breaking their residency conditions and 18 per cent for 'other reasons'. Only a quarter were recalled to face a further charge.<sup>90</sup>

**Since the early release programme for prisoners, the Home Detention Scheme (HDC), was introduced seven years ago, more than 106,000 prisoners have been released early from prison.** The proportion recalled for breach of their HDC conditions has remained at around nine per cent each year. There are currently 3,045 prisoners on HDC.<sup>91</sup>

**Under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the time served under licence will increase hugely.** Those serving sentences of under a year will be under supervision for the first time; those serving long sentences will be under supervision for the whole sentence instead of until the three-quarters point, and the new public protection sentences will include long periods of licence.

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86. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

87. Unless otherwise stated, all facts in this section are drawn from PRT's briefing paper, Recycling Offenders through Prison, May 2005.

88. HMCIP, Recalled prisoners, December 2005

89. Ibid

90. NOMS Recall newsletter edition 7, annex A

91. NOMS briefing 24 March 2006

## Women in prison

**On 24 March 2006, the women's prison population stood at 4,392.**<sup>92</sup> In the last decade, the women's population has more than doubled. Ten years ago in 1995, the average women's prison population was 1,998. Five years ago in 1999, it stood at 3,355. In 2004, 12,554 women were received into prison.<sup>92</sup>

**Over a third of all adult women in prisons had no previous convictions – more than double the figure for men.**<sup>94</sup>

**At the end of December 2005, there were 717 women on remand, a fifth of the female prison population.**<sup>95</sup>

**Receptions of women remanded to prison increased from 3,714 in 1994 to 7,978 in 2004, an increase of 115 per cent.** Almost two-thirds of all women entering custody do so on remand.<sup>96</sup>

**Sixty-five per cent of women released from prison in 2002 were reconvicted within two years of release**<sup>97</sup>. This compares to fewer than four out of ten female ex-prisoners (38 per cent) ten years ago.<sup>98</sup>

**In 2004, 29 per cent of women in prison were from minority ethnic backgrounds.**<sup>99</sup> At the end of June 2005 there were 873 female foreign national prisoners, 19 per cent of the female population.<sup>100</sup>

**Of the sentenced female prison population, the majority are held for non-violent offences.** At the end of December 2005, the largest group (34 per cent,) were held for drug offences. Theft and fraud accounted for 17 per cent.<sup>101</sup>

**More women were sent to prison in 2004 for theft and handling stolen goods than any other crime.** Just under 3,000 women were received into custody for this offence. They accounted for more than a third (35 per cent) of all women sentenced to immediate custody in 2004.<sup>102</sup>

**The majority of women serve very short sentences. In 2004, nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) were sentenced to custody for six months or less.**<sup>103</sup>

**Most of the rise in the female prison population can be explained by a significant increase in the severity of sentences.** In the Crown Court in 1991, only eight per cent of women convicted of motoring offences went to prison. By 2001, that proportion had increased to 42 per cent. Similarly, a woman convicted of theft or handling at the Crown Court is now twice as likely to go to prison as in 1991. At magistrates' courts, the chances of a woman receiving a custodial sentence have risen seven-fold.<sup>104</sup>

**At the end of September 2004 the average distance female prisoners were held from their home was 62 miles.**<sup>105</sup> At the beginning of July 2004, just under half of all women in prison were held more than 50 miles from their home town or committal court address and nearly a quarter were held more than 100 miles away.<sup>106</sup>

**Women in prison suffer from numerous mental health problems.** Two-thirds of women show symptoms of at least one neurotic disorder such as depression, anxiety and phobias. More than half are suffering from a personality disorder.

92. Prison population and accommodation briefing for 24 March, 2006, NOMS, Estate Planning and Management Group.

93. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

94. *ibid* 95. *ibid* 96. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

97. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

98. Home Office Statistical Bulletin, Reoffending of adults: results from the 2002 cohort, 2005

99. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2003 London: Home Office.

100. *ibid*

101. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, Quarterly Brief April to June 2005, London: Home Office.

102. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

103. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

104. *ibid*

105. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 10 January 2005 : Column 342W; A prisoner's home area is defined as their home address on their reception into prison. For prisoners with no address, the address of the relevant committal court is used as the home address.

106. House of Commons, written parliamentary answer, Hansard 7 September, 2004.

Among the general population less than a fifth of women suffer from these disorders. Half of the women in prison are on prescribed medication such as anti-depressants or anti-psychotic medicine, and there is evidence that the use of medication increases whilst in custody.<sup>107</sup>

**Of all the women who are sent to prison, 37 per cent say they have attempted suicide at some time in their life.**<sup>108</sup>

**The number and rate of self-harm incidents is much higher amongst women than men.** In 2003, 30 per cent of women were reported to have harmed themselves, compared with six per cent of men. On average each woman who injured herself did so five times compared to twice for men. While women make up just six per cent of the prison population they accounted for nearly half (46 per cent) of all reported self-harm incidents.<sup>109</sup>

**Nearly two-thirds of women in prison have a drug problem.**<sup>110</sup> An early study concluded that around 40 per cent could be diagnosed as harmful or dependent users of drugs.<sup>111</sup>

**A quarter of women in prison have spent time in local authority care as a child.** Nearly 40 per cent of women in prison left school before the age of 16 and, almost one in ten was aged 13 or younger.<sup>112</sup>

**Over half the women in prison say they have suffered domestic violence and one in three has experienced sexual abuse.**<sup>113</sup>

**Around one-third of women prisoners lose their homes, and often their possessions, whilst in prison.**<sup>114</sup>

**Women prisoners are often inadequately prepared for release.** Only 24 per cent of women with a prior skill had the chance to put their skills into practice through prison work. Just 11 per cent of women received help with housing matters whilst in prison. Home Office research has found that 41 per cent of women in prison did not have accommodation arranged on release. Only a third of women prisoners who wanted help and advice about benefits and debt received it. 66 per cent of women in prison have dependent children under 18. 34 per cent of those had children under five, a further 40 per cent had children aged between 5 and 10. Each year it is estimated that more than 17,700 children are separated from their mothers by imprisonment.<sup>115</sup>

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107. Singleton et al (1998) Psychiatric Morbidity among Prisoners in England and Wales, London: Office for National Statistics.

108. Ibid

109. Prison Service (June 2004) Safer Custody News, London: Prison Service.

110. Borrill, J et al (2001) Differential substance misuse treatment needs of women, ethnic minorities and young offenders in prison: prevalence of substance misuse and treatment needs. Home Office online report: 33/03.

111. Singleton et al (1998) Psychiatric Morbidity among Prisoners in England and Wales, London: Office for National Statistics.

112. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid

## Mothers and fathers in custody, prisoners' children

**Home Office research has found that 66 per cent of women in prison have dependent children under 18.** 34 per cent of those had children under five, a further 40 per cent of children aged from five to ten.<sup>116</sup> Each year it is estimated that more than 17,700 children are separated from their mother by imprisonment.

**At least a third of mothers are lone parents before imprisonment.**<sup>117</sup>

**Only half of the women who had lived, or were in contact with, their children prior to imprisonment had received a visit from them since going to prison.**<sup>118</sup>

**One Home Office study showed that, for 85 per cent of mothers, prison was the first time they had been separated from their children for any significant length of time.** It also showed that 65 per cent of mothers in prison were receiving their first custodial sentence.<sup>119</sup>

**There are currently 84 places in mother and baby units in prisons reserved for mothers who have children under the age of 18 months.** In 2004, 114 women gave birth while serving a prison sentence.<sup>120</sup>

**Between April and September 2005 a total of 15 women were refused a place in a Prison Service mother and baby unit.**<sup>121</sup>

**HM Prisons Inspectorate has found that 25 per cent of women prisoners had their children's father or a spouse or partner caring for their children.** 25 per cent were cared for by their grandmothers; 29 per cent

were cared for by other family members or friends; and 12 per cent were in care, with foster parents, or had been adopted.<sup>122</sup>

**Just five per cent of women prisoners' children remain in their own home once their mother has been sentenced.**<sup>123</sup>

**For the first time the government has announced that records will be kept of prisoners' children.** Information will be recorded on the National Offender Management Information System.<sup>124</sup>

**Just over half (55 per cent) of male prisoners described themselves as living with a partner before imprisonment<sup>125</sup> and a third of female prisoners described themselves as living with a husband or partner before imprisonment.**<sup>126</sup>

**Research has found that 59 per cent of men<sup>127</sup> in prison and two-thirds of women in prison have dependent children under 18.**<sup>128</sup>

**It is estimated that 150,000 children have a parent in prison.** Seven per cent of children experience their father's imprisonment during their time at school.<sup>129</sup>

**Prisoners' families, including their children, often experience increased financial, housing, emotional and health problems during a sentence.** Nearly a third (30 per cent) of prisoners' children suffer significant mental health problems, compared with 10 per cent of children in the general population.<sup>130</sup>

116. Home Office Research Study 208, Women prisoners: a survey of their work and training experiences in custody and on release, 2001

117. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

118. *ibid* 119. Home Office Research Study 162 (1997), Imprisoned Women and Mothers, Home Office: London.

120. Hansard, House of Commons written answer 13 July 2005 121. Hansard, House of Commons written answer 2 Nov 2005

122. HM Prisons Inspectorate (1997) Women in Prison: A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, : Home Office.

123. Prison Reform Trust (2000) Justice for Women: The need for reform, London: Prison Reform Trust.

124. Hansard, House of Commons written parliamentary answers, 12 September 2004, Column 2635W.

125. Home Office (2001) Criminology Survey: Drugs Follow-Up, London: Home Office.

126. Hamlyn B and Lews D (2000) Women prisoners: a survey of their work and training experiences in custody and on release, Home Office Research Study 2000, London: Home Office.

127. Hansard, House of Commons, 28th April 2003.

128. Hamlyn B and Lews D (2000) Women prisoners: a survey of their work and training experiences in custody and on release, Home Office Research Study 2000, London: Home Office.

129. Department for Education and Skills, (2003) Every Child Matters, London: Stationery Office.

130. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit and Action for Prisoners' Families (2001)

No-one's Ever Asked Me, London: Action for Prisoners' Families and Young Voice (2001) Parenting Under Pressure, London: Young Voices.

**During their sentence, 45 per cent of people lose contact with their families and many separate from their partners.**<sup>131</sup>

**The Home Secretary has stressed the importance of family.** “As we consider the practical steps intended to equip offenders with the means to avoid re-offending we also need to remember the vital role of family, friends and community. I believe that we sometimes fail to give enough emphasis to the powerful impact of supportive relationships to prisoners – to realise that offenders often care deeply about letting down those closest to them, and want to show that they can change, but somehow just never get there. An offender is much less likely to re-offend if he feels part of a family and community, from which he receives support as well as owes obligations.”<sup>132</sup>

**The link between maintaining good family ties and reducing re-offending is acknowledged in the Home Office national action plan.**<sup>133</sup>

**Home Office research has found that maintaining family contact is associated with successful resettlement.** It found that prisoners who had at least one visit from family or partners were twice as likely to have an employment, education or training place arranged on release and three times more likely to have accommodation arranged as those who did not receive any visits. The frequency of visits also increased the likelihood of having a job or accommodation. The research concluded that

‘opportunities for involving families in the resettlement of prisoners should be increased’.<sup>134</sup>

**However, many prisoners are still held a long way from their homes.** At the end of September 2004 the average distance women in prison were held from their home or committal court address was 62 miles. Men were held an average of 51 miles from their home or committal court address. At the beginning of July 2004, 24,581 prisoners were held over 50 miles from their home town and 9,591 were held over 100 miles away.<sup>135</sup>

**In recent years, the number of prison visits has fallen despite an increasing prison population.**<sup>136</sup>

**The government’s Social Exclusion Unit has found that many families have difficulty getting through to prisons to book visits.**<sup>137</sup>

131. Nacro (2000) *The forgotten majority*, London: Nacro.

132. PRT Annual Lecture 2005, Rt Hon Charles Clark MP.

133. Home Office (2004) *Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan*, London: Stationary Office

134. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) *Resettlement outcomes on release from prison*, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office;

135. A prisoner’s home area is defined as their home address on their reception into prison. For prisoners with no address, the address of the relevant committal court is used as the home address. Hansard House of Commons written answers, 11 January 2005 : Column 490W; Letter from Paul Goggins, Minister for Prisons and Probation to Annette Brooke MP, 18th December 2003 and Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 7th September 2004.

136. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*, London: Social Exclusion Unit

137. *Ibid.*

## Social characteristics of prisoners

### Social characteristics of prisoners

(Source: Social Exclusion Unit Report 'Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners', July 2002)

Characteristic	General population	Prison population
Ran away from home as a child	11%	47% of male and 50% of female sentenced prisoners
Taken into care as a child	2%	27%
Regularly truanted from school	3%	30%
Excluded from school	2%	49% of male and 33% of female sentenced prisoners
No qualifications	15%	52% of men and 71% of women
Numeracy at or below Level 1 (level expected an 11 year-olds)	23%	65%
Reading ability at or below Level 1	21-23%	48%
Unemployed before imprisonment	5%	67%
Homeless	0.9%	32%
Suffer from two or more mental disorders	5% men and 2% women	72% male 70% female
Psychotic disorder	0.5% men and 0.6% women	7% of male and 14% of female sentenced prisoners
Drug use in the previous year	13% men 8% women	66% of male and 55% of female sentenced prisoners
Hazardous drinking	38% men and 15% women	63% of male and 39% of female sentenced prisoners

## Young people in prison (18-20 year olds)

**On 24 March 2006 there were 8,597 young people aged 18-20 in prison in England and Wales.**<sup>138</sup>

**In 2004 13,092 young people were sent to prison under sentence.** In the last ten years the number of sentenced young adults entering prison has increased by 21 per cent. Over that time the number of sentenced young women imprisoned has more than doubled.<sup>139</sup>

**Two-thirds of young people are sentenced to less than 12 months in custody.** The average time spent in custody for young adult prisoners serving less than 12 months is eight weeks and one day.<sup>140</sup>

**Whilst in custody many young adults are frequently moved around the prison estate causing great disruption and distress.** It also showed that, in general, they experience impoverished regimes.<sup>141</sup>

**Frequent movement means many young people are held long distances from home.** At the beginning of July last year more than a third (35 per cent) of all 18-20 year olds were being held more than 50 miles away from their home, just under a quarter (23 per cent) were being held between 50 and 100 miles away and more than one in ten (12 per cent) were being held over 100 miles away.<sup>142</sup>

**Reconviction rates are particularly high for young people.** 78.4 per cent of young men released from prison in 2002 were reconvicted within two years of release.<sup>143</sup>

**Nearly half (42 per cent) of first time offenders are young adults.**<sup>144</sup>

**Young offenders have poor literacy and numeracy skills.** Just under a third have basic skills deficits compared to under a quarter of those aged 25 and over in custody. Nearly three-quarters were excluded from school at some stage, and 63 per cent were unemployed at the time of their arrest.<sup>145</sup>

**Many young people in prison have housing problems and the majority are out of work.** Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) were unemployed at the time of arrest.<sup>146</sup> The Chief Inspector of Prisons estimated that one in five young prisoners had no idea where they would live on release.<sup>147</sup>

**Mental health problems, drug and alcohol abuse are common amongst young people in prison.** They are more likely than adults to suffer from mental health problems and are more likely to commit or attempt suicide than both younger and older prisoners (see below for statistics relating to 16-18 year olds).<sup>148</sup>

**Up to 30 per cent of young women in custody report having been sexually abused in childhood.**<sup>149</sup>

**It is estimated that a quarter of young male offenders are fathers and four out of ten female young offenders are mothers.**<sup>150</sup>

138. Home Office (2006) Population in Custody, 24 March, 2006, London: Home Office. This figure includes some 21 year-olds not classified as part of the adult population.

139. Office; Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office

140. Solomon, E (2004) A Lost Generation: the experiences of young people in prison, London: Prison Reform Trust.

141. Ibid 142. Ibid

143. Home Office Statistical Bulletin (2005), Re-offending of adults: results from the 2002 cohort;

144. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

145. Ibid 146. Ibid

147. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (1997), Young Prisoners: a thematic review, London: Home Office.

148. Singleton et al (2000) Psychiatric Morbidity among young offenders in England and Wales, London: Office for National Statistics.

149. Solomon, E (2004) A Lost Generation: the experiences of young people in prison, London: Prison Reform Trust.

150. A survey carried out by YoungVoice in 2001 found that 51 per cent of men in prison under the age of 23 and 79 per cent of women in the same age group were parents, YoungVoice (2001) Parenting Under Pressure, London: YoungVoice.

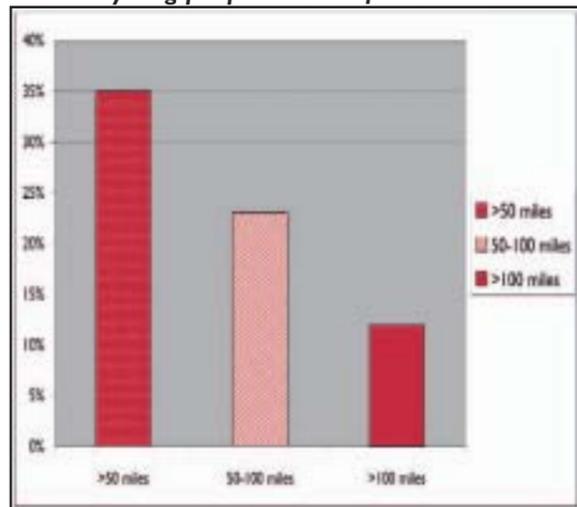
**Young offender institutions and juvenile establishments have the highest assault rates of any prisons in England and Wales.**<sup>151</sup>

**More than a third (35 per cent) of sentenced young men say they have gained a qualification whilst in prison.**<sup>152</sup>

**The Chief Inspector of Prisons has expressed concern about the future of young adults in the prison system.** “Now that the specific legal status of 18 to 21 year olds has ended, they no longer need to be held separately from adults once sentenced. Already,

some young offender institutions have extended their age range to 25. It is unclear how NOMS proposes to manage this population, and with what resources.... It is likely that an already inadequate provision will be stretched over a greatly expanded population, and that the outcome for young prisoners will be to diminish, not to enhance their prospects of rehabilitation.”<sup>153</sup>

*Distance young people are held from home*



151. Solomon, E (2003) A Measure of Success: An analysis of the Prison Service's performance against its Key Performance Indicators, London: Prison Reform Trust.

152. Home Office (2001) Jobs and Homes - a survey of prisoners nearing release, Findings 173, London: Home Office.

153. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2006) Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales 2004-2005, London: Stationery Office

## Children in Prison

**In December 2005 there were 2,134 15-17 year olds in prison and 216 12-15 year olds in privately run secure training centres.** There were 216 children in local authority secure children's homes.<sup>154</sup>

**The number of 15-17 year olds in prison has more than doubled over the last ten years.**<sup>155</sup>

**In 1992, only 100 children under 15 were sentenced to penal custody. Sentences were all awarded under the 'grave crimes' provision (Section 53 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933) for children who had committed serious offences such as robbery or violent offences.** In 2003 - 2004, 794 children under 15 were incarcerated but only 45 of these came into the same grave crimes sentencing framework (now Section 90/91 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000.)<sup>156</sup>

**Twenty-nine children have died in penal custody since 1990, most by self-inflicted death and one following restraint.**<sup>157</sup>

**Every year an estimated 70,000 school-age offenders enter the youth justice system.**<sup>158</sup>

**In August 2004, 14-year-old Adam Rickwood became the youngest child to die in penal custody in recent memory.**

**At the end of July 2004, more than a third of children in prison were held over 50 miles away from their home town.**<sup>159</sup>

**Reconviction rates are very high for children.** 82 per cent of all boys aged under 18 discharged from prison in 2001 were reconvicted within two years.<sup>160</sup>

**At the end of December 2005 more children were in prison for robbery than any other offence.**<sup>161</sup>

**Many children in prison have a background of severe social exclusion.** Of those in custody of school age, over a quarter have literacy and numeracy levels of an average seven-year old. Over half of those under 18 in custody have a history of being in local authority care, or of social services involvement and studies have found that 45 per cent have been permanently excluded from school.<sup>162</sup>

**Two fifths of boys and a quarter of girls in custody say they have experienced violence at home.** A third of girls and one in 20 boys say they have been subject to sexual abuse of some form.<sup>163</sup>

**Just over a third of boys and girls have felt unsafe at some time in their custody.** 10 per cent of boys and girls in prison say they have been hit, kicked or assaulted by a member of staff.<sup>164</sup>

**Behavioural and mental health problems are particularly prevalent amongst children in prison.** Of prisoners aged 16-20, around 85 per cent show signs of a personality disorder and ten per cent exhibit signs of psychotic illness, for example schizophrenia.<sup>165</sup>

**Drug and alcohol abuse are major problems.** Of prisoners aged 16-20, over half reported dependence on a drug in the year prior to imprisonment. Over half the female prisoners and two-thirds of the male prisoners had a hazardous drinking habit prior to entering custody.<sup>166</sup>

**In 2003- 2004, 3,337 children who were sent to prison had been assessed as vulnerable.**<sup>167</sup>

**Children make a high number of movements between jails to make way for new arrivals, disrupting education and training courses and leading to inconsistent support and supervision.** The NAO reports that there were 2,400 movements between April 2002 and January 2003.<sup>168</sup>

154. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

155. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

156. Youth Justice Board Annual Statistics 2003/4 157. <http://www.inquest.org.uk/>

158. HM Government – Reducing re-offending through skills and employment, CM 6702, December 2005

159. House of Commons, written parliamentary answer, Hansard 7 September 2005

160. Home Office (2004) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2003 London: Home Office.

161. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office. 162. Youth Justice Board Information, 2003

163. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit

164. HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Youth Justice Board, Juveniles in Custody, 2003-2004, London

165. Singleton et al (2000) Psychiatric Morbidity among young offenders in England and Wales, London: Office for National Statistics.

166. Ibid

167. Hansard House of Commons written answers 7 June 2004.

168. National Audit Office (2004) Youth Offending: The delivery of community and custodial sentences, London: Stationery Office.

## Minority ethnic prisoners

**Of all those sentenced to custody in the second quarter of 2005 one in five was from a minority ethnic group.**<sup>169</sup>

**At the end of June 2005, a quarter of the prison population, 19,366 prisoners, was from a minority ethnic group.**<sup>170</sup> This compares to one in 11 of the general population. There are two prisons, Feltham and Brixton in London, where minority ethnic prisoners make up the larger part of the population.<sup>171</sup>

**Overall black prisoners account for the largest number of minority ethnic prisoners (58 per cent) and their numbers are rising.**<sup>172</sup> Between 1999 and 2002 the total prison population grew by just over 12 per cent but the number of black prisoners increased by 51 per cent.<sup>173</sup>

**At the end of June 2005, 35 per cent (6,863) of minority ethnic prisoners were foreign nationals.**<sup>174</sup>

**Of the British national prison population, ten per cent are black and four per cent are Asian.** For black Britons this is significantly higher than the two per cent of the general population they represent.<sup>175</sup>

**In 2002, there were more African Caribbean entrants to prison (over 11,500) than there were to UK universities (around 8,000).**<sup>176</sup>

**Black people are five times more likely than white people to be stopped and searched.** Once arrested, black people are more likely to be remanded in custody than other offenders charged with similar offences. Results from five police pilot areas on magistrates' court decisions indicated that black and Asian defendants were less likely to be found not guilty than white defendants. Research also suggests that black prisoners are likely to be given longer sentences than either white or Asian prisoners. Once in prison, black people are more likely to be found guilty of disciplinary offences and less likely to have access to constructive activities.<sup>177</sup>

169. Phil Wheatley quoted in the Guardian, 17th December 2003.

170. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, Quarterly Brief April to June 2005

171. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, Quarterly Brief April to June 2005

172. Ibid

173. HM Prison Service and Commission for Racial Equality (2003) Implementing Race Equality in Prisons - a shared agenda for change, London: HM Prison Service.

174. Hollis et al (2003) Prison Population Brief England and Wales October 2003, London: Stationery Office

175. Ibid

176. HM Prison Service and Commission for Racial Equality (2003) Implementing Race Equality in Prisons - a shared agenda for change, London: HM Prison Service.

177. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit

## **Foreign national prisoners<sup>178</sup>**

**At the end of June 2006, there were 9,651 foreign national prisoners (defined as non-UK passport holders), making up 13 per cent of the overall prison population.<sup>179</sup>**

One in five women in prison, (873 in total), are foreign nationals.<sup>180</sup>

**Foreign national prisoners come from 168 countries, but over half are from just six countries (Jamaica, the Irish Republic, Nigeria, Pakistan, Turkey and India). A quarter are Jamaicans, by far the largest single group.**

**There has been a 152 per cent increase in foreign national prisoners in the last ten years, compared to a 55 per cent increase in British nationals.**

**In two prisons, the Verne in Dorset and the women's prison Morton Hall in Lincolnshire, foreign national prisoners make up half or more of the population. In sixteen prisons they make up a quarter or more.**

**A recent Prison Service survey found that nearly 90 per cent of prisons holding foreign national prisoners are not making regular use of the translation service available.**

**The vast majority of foreign national prisoners, (four out of ten sentenced men and eight out of ten sentenced women), have committed drug offences, mainly drug trafficking. Six out of ten foreign national prisoners are serving sentences of more than four years.**

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178. All the figures in this section, unless otherwise stated, are from Prison Reform Trust briefing paper (May 2004) *Forgotten Prisoners: the plight of foreign national prisoners in England and Wales*.

179. Home Office (2005) *Population in Custody, Quarterly Brief April to June 2005*

180. *Ibid.*

## Elderly prisoners (aged 60 and over)

**In 2004, there were more than 1,528 prisoners aged over 60 in England and Wales, a rise of 185 per cent over ten years.**<sup>181</sup> Prisoners aged over 60 are the fastest growing age group in prison.

**More than one in ten older prisoners belong to a minority ethnic group, far higher than the proportion of the general population.**<sup>182</sup>

**The majority of men in prison aged 60 and over (57 per cent) have committed sex offences.** The next highest offence type as a proportion of the elderly prison population is violence against the person (20 per cent) followed by drug offences (ten per cent).<sup>183</sup>

**The number and proportion of elderly prisoners serving long sentences has increased significantly.** Between 1995 and 2001, the number serving sentences of over four years more than tripled, increasing from 318 to 966. In 2001, 80 per cent of elderly prisoners were serving sentences of four years or more.<sup>184</sup> For male prisoners aged 60 and over, the average sentence length (excluding life-sentenced prisoners) increased by 2.3 months between 1998 and 2002 to 39.3 months. This compares to a 4.3 month increase for women prisoners aged 50 and over to 26.1 months.<sup>185</sup>

**The number and proportion of men aged over 60 sentenced to prison by the courts has increased significantly.** Between 1995 and 2000 the number of elderly males given custodial sentences increased by 55 per cent. In 1995 fines accounted for the majority of sentences (31 per cent). By 2000 imprisonment

accounted for the majority of sentences (31 per cent) and fines accounted for 24 per cent.<sup>186</sup>

**The significant rise in the number of male prisoners aged over 60 is not matched by a corresponding rise in the number of men convicted by the courts for indictable offences.** Between 1995 and 2000 the number of convictions for this age group increased by only eight per cent.<sup>187</sup>

**The increase in the elderly prison population is not explained by demographic changes, nor can it be explained by a so-called 'elderly crime wave'.** The increases are due to harsher sentencing policies which have resulted in the courts sending a larger proportion of criminals aged over 60 to prison to serve longer sentences. This has particularly been the case in relation to sex offenders and drug traffickers. The courts are also tending to imprison those older offenders whose crimes most challenge society's age-related stereotypes.<sup>188</sup>

**A Department of Health study conducted in 1999 - 2000 of 203 sentenced male prisoners aged 60 and over in 15 establishments in England and Wales (about one-fifth of that total population) reported that 85 per cent had one or more major illnesses noted in their medical records and 83 per cent reported at least one chronic illness or disability when interviewed.** The most common illnesses were psychiatric, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and respiratory.<sup>189</sup>

181. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office

182. Prison Reform Trust (2003) Growing Old in Prison, London: Prison Reform Trust.

183. Home Office (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, 2004 London: Home Office.

184. Frazer, L (2003) Ageing Inside, Bristol: Bristol University

185. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2004) 'No problems – old and quiet': Older prisoners in England and Wales A thematic review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, London: Stationery Office.

186. Ibid

187. Ibid

188. Ibid

189. Prison Reform Trust (2003) Growing Old in Prison, London: Prison Reform Trust.

**More than half of all elderly prisoners suffer from a mental disorder.** The most common disorder is depression which often emerges as a result of imprisonment.<sup>190</sup>

**In 2003, 21 people aged over 65 died of natural causes whilst in prison.**<sup>191</sup>

Most older prisoners are held more than 50 miles from home, causing particular problems for visitors, many of whom are themselves older people.<sup>192</sup>

**A thematic review of older prisoners by HM Inspectorate of Prisons published in December 2004 found little evidence that their individual needs were being assessed or provision made for them.** It concluded 'Prisons are primarily designed for, and inhabited by, young and able-bodied people; and in general

the needs of the old and infirm are not met'.<sup>193</sup> A number of academic studies and a report by the Prison Reform Trust and the Centre for Policy on Ageing have also concluded that the health, social care, rehabilitation and resettlement needs of older prisoners are not being satisfactorily met.

**Despite the dramatic rise in the number of elderly prisoners the Home Office has no plans to put in place a separate national strategy for elderly prisoners.**<sup>194</sup> However the Department of Health plans to develop a health policy for older prisoners.<sup>195</sup>

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190. Ibid

191. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 10th February 2004.

192. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2004) 'No problems – old and quiet': Older prisoners in England and Wales A thematic review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, London: Stationery Office.

193. Ibid.

194. Hansard, written answers May 1st 2000.

195. Personal communication between PRT, CPA and Department of Health

## Mental health needs of prisoners<sup>196</sup>

**“On the wing there was plenty of evidence of behaviour brought on by mental distress...** one young man only ever wore the same pair of jeans and a green nylon cagoule. He never wore shoes or socks, never went out on exercise, hardly ever spoke to anyone and was understood to have been taken advantage of sexually by predatory prisoners. He was in his early 20s with many years in prison still ahead of him. Another had a habit of inserting objects into his body: a pencil in an arm, matchsticks in his ankles.”<sup>197</sup>

**The government’s five year plan to reduce re-offending states: “We continue to imprison too many people with mental health problems.** Dangerous people with mental health problems must be kept secure, and treatment is available for severe personality disorders in prison. Those with the most serious problems can also be transferred to secure hospital places. But the majority of offenders with lower level disorders are not dangerous and could be better treated outside the prison system without any risk to the public.”<sup>198</sup>

**Many prisoners have mental health problems.** 72 per cent of male and 70 per cent of female sentenced prisoners suffer from two or more mental health disorders. One in five prisoners have four of the five major mental health disorders.<sup>199</sup>

**Neurotic and personality disorders are particularly prevalent** - 40 per cent of male and 63 per cent of female sentenced prisoners have a neurotic disorder, over three times the level in the general population. Sixty-four per cent of male and 50 per cent of female sentenced prisoners have a personality disorder.

**A significant number of prisoners suffer from a psychotic disorder.** Seven per cent of male and 14 per cent of female sentenced

prisoners have a psychotic disorder; 14 and 23 times the level in the general population.

**There has been a significant increase in reported incidents of self-harm amongst prisoners: 17,294 in 2003.** This is partly a reflection of the Prison Service collecting more accurate statistics on self-harm after changing its procedures last year.<sup>200</sup> Overall nearly a third of women in prison injure themselves (on average five times) and six per cent of men (on average twice).<sup>201</sup>

**Revised figures, collected by the Prison Service in 2005 show that 597 out of every 1,000 women and 50 out of every 1,000 men harm themselves while in prison.**<sup>202</sup>

**A high proportion of prisoners have been treated in psychiatric hospitals** - 20 per cent of male and 15 per cent of female sentenced prisoners have previously been admitted for in-patient psychiatric care.

**In 2002 there were 39,000 admissions to prison health care centres.** The Department of Health estimates that about 30 per cent of these, approximately 11,800, were for mental health reasons.<sup>203</sup>

**The number of restricted patients under the Mental Health Act was 3,282 in 2004, the highest for a decade. 831 people were transferred from prison to hospital.** 485 of these were on remand. In 2003 there were 721 transfers. People released from restricted hospitals have an eight per cent reconviction rate after two years.<sup>204</sup>

**At any one time there are likely to be at least 40 prisoners having been assessed who are waiting three months or more before being transferred to hospital.** Many prisoners also have long waits before an assessment takes place.<sup>205</sup>

196. All the statistics in this section are taken from Singleton et al (1998) *Psychiatric Morbidity among Prisoners in England and Wales*, London: Office for National Statistics, unless otherwise stated.

197. Erwin James, Foreword to *Troubled Inside: Responding to the mental health needs of men in prison*, Prison Reform Trust, 2005

198. Home Office (2006), *A Five Year Plan for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending*, Cm 6717

199. Paul Goggins, minister for prisons and probation speaking in a debate on prisons and mental health, Hansard, 17th March 2004.

200. Prison Service (February 2004) *Safer Custody News*, London: Prison Service.

201. Prison Service (June 2004) *Safer Custody News*, London: Prison Service.

202. Information provided by the Prison Service’s women’s team, September 2005.

203. Hansard House of Commons written answers, 18 Mar 2003

204. Home Office Statistical Bulletin, *Statistics of Mentally Disordered Offenders 2004*, December 2005

205. Hansard House of Commons, 17th March 2004.

**There are now mental health in-reach teams in 102 prisons.<sup>206</sup>**

**Prison regimes do little to address the mental health needs of prisoners.** Research has found that 28 per cent of male sentenced prisoners with evidence of psychosis reported spending 23 or more hours a day in their cells - over twice the proportion of those without mental health problems.

**Prisoners with severe mental health problems are often not diverted to more appropriate secure provision.** The Chief Inspector of Prisons has estimated, based on visits to local prisons, that 41 per cent of prisoners being held in health care centres should have been in secure NHS accommodation.<sup>207</sup> Research has found that there are up to 500 patients in prison health care centres with mental health problems sufficiently ill to require immediate NHS admission<sup>208</sup>. The government has committed itself to a programme of standardising court diversion schemes across the country.<sup>209</sup>

**The failure to transfer prisoners to secure provision is particularly acute for women prisoners.** A study which looked at 44 women from Holloway prison who had been referred to secure hospitals found that half were turned down. Compared to those who were allowed to have beds, the rejected women were more likely to have harmed themselves, to have suffered childhood abuse, to have committed serious offences and to be seen as violent or dangerous. The research concluded that their rejection was the result not simply of difficulties in treating them but also of “inadequate service provision”<sup>210</sup>.

**The resettlement needs of prisoners with mental health problems are not being met.** Research found that 96 per cent of mentally-disordered prisoners were put back into the

community without supported housing, including 80 per cent of those who had committed the most serious offences; more than three quarters had been given no appointment with outside carers.<sup>211</sup>

**Mental health problems amongst prisoners are often linked to previous experiences of violence at home and sexual abuse.** About half of women and about a quarter of men in prison have suffered from violence at home while about one in three women report having suffered sexual abuse compared with just under one in 10 men.

**Half of all those sentenced to custody are not registered with a GP prior to being sent to prison.<sup>212</sup>**

206. Hansard, House of Commons 2 February 2005

207. HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2004) Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales 2002-2003, London: Stationery Office.

208. Reed, J. (2003) Mental Health Care in Prisons, *British Journal of Psychiatry* 182, p287-288.

209. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 12 September 2005, column 2570W.

210. Gorsuch, N. Unmet need among disturbed female offenders. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry*, 9, 3, 1998.

211. Melzer et al (2002) Prisoners with psychosis in England and Wales: a one-year national follow-up study, *The Howard Journal* 41, page 1-13.

212. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

## Drugs

**The number of people in prison for drug offences is high and growing.** At the end of December 2005, 17 per cent of male sentenced prisoners had been convicted of drug offences. In 1995 drug offences accounted for ten per cent of male sentenced prisoners. For the sentenced female prison population at the end of December 2005 drug offences accounted for 35 per cent of prisoners, by far the largest proportion. In 1995 they accounted for 27 per cent of the sentenced female prison population.<sup>213</sup>

**There is a much wider group of prisoners whose offence is in some way drug related.** Shoplifting, burglary, vehicle crime and theft can be linked to drug misuse. Over half of prisoners (55 per cent) report committing offences connected to their drug taking, with the need for money to buy drugs the most commonly cited factor.<sup>214</sup>

**A study for the Home Office found that almost half of recently sentenced male prisoners (47 per cent) had used heroin, crack or cocaine in the 12 months prior to imprisonment.** Heroin was the drug most likely to be used on a daily basis. Overall, 73 per cent of respondents had taken an illegal drug in the year before entering prison.<sup>215</sup>

**Half of Scottish prisoners have reported that they had used drugs in prison at some point in the past.** 76 per cent of these said that their use had decreased while in prison.<sup>216</sup>

**In some inner city local prisons as many as eight out of ten men are found to have class A drugs in their system on reception<sup>217</sup> and in the local women's**

**prison, Styal, the same number of new arrivals are thought to have drug problems.**<sup>218</sup> However a range of studies places the mean figure at 55 per cent – this equates to approximately 74,250 people who use class A drugs entering prison each year (based on annual receptions of 135,000).<sup>219</sup>

**Many prisoners have never received help with their drug problems.** According to the Social Exclusion Unit officers at HMP Manchester have estimated that 70 per cent of prisoners come into the jail with a drugs misuse problem but that 80 per cent of these have never had any contact with drug treatment services.<sup>220</sup>

**Drug use amongst prisoners in custody is reported to be high.** A recent Home Office study found that four out of ten prisoners said they had used drugs at least once whilst in their current prison, a quarter had used in the past month and 16 per cent in the past week. Cannabis and opiates were the drugs most often used. Almost a third of prisoners reported cannabis use and one in five opiate use in their current prison, while nine per cent and 10 per cent respectively reported using these drugs in the past week.<sup>221</sup> Another Home Office study found that three-quarters of prisoners interviewed had taken drugs in prison, most often heroin (53 per cent) and cannabis (55 per cent).<sup>222</sup>

**All prisoners are subject to random mandatory drug tests. Recorded drug use in 2004-2005 was 11.6 per cent against a target of ten per cent.**<sup>223</sup> But a recent Home Office study found that 'mandatory drug testing results generally underestimate the level of drug misuse as reported by prisoners'.<sup>224</sup>

213. Home Office (2005) Population in Custody, December 2005, London: Home Office.

214. Ramsay, M. (ed) (2003), Prisoners' drug use and treatment: seven studies, Home Office Research Findings 186, London: Home Office.

215. Ibid

216. Scottish prison service, Annual Prison Survey, 2005

217. Interview with Prison Service Director General, Phil Wheatley, Independent, December 1st 2003.

218. HM Prisons Inspectorate (2004) Report on a full unannounced inspection of HMP and YOI Styal 19-23 January 2004, London: Home Office.

219. Government reply to the first report from the Home Affairs Committee on the Rehabilitation of Prisoners Session 2004-2005, HC193

220. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

221. Singleton et al (2005) The impact and effectiveness of Mandatory Drugs Tests in prison, Findings 223 London: Home Office.

222. Edgar K, and O'Donnell I (1998), Mandatory drug testing in prisons, RDS Study 189, Home Office, London.

223. Prison Service (2005), Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005, London: Stationery Office.

224. Singleton et al (2005) The impact and effectiveness of Mandatory Drugs Tests in prison, London: Home Office.

**In 2003-2004 there were more than 53,000 entrants to detoxification programmes for drug misuse.** This is nearly double the target of 27,000 entrants by April 2004.<sup>225</sup> Detoxifications are not normally carried out in prison health care centres and the current practice is to recommend nine to 10 day programmes.<sup>226</sup> Information on the proportion of entrants who complete the programmes is not collated by the Home Office nor is there routine recording of what proportion of prisoners who have received detoxification enter one of the Prison Service's drug rehabilitation programmes.<sup>227</sup>

**Concerns have been raised about the quality of detoxification, especially for prisoners who have been dependent on crack cocaine.**<sup>228</sup> Research has found that arrangements for detoxification appear to vary considerably between different prisons.<sup>229</sup>

**In 2004-2005, 7,119 prisoners entered Prison Service drug treatment programmes against a target of 6,200 entries.**<sup>230</sup>

**The rate of completion for drug treatment programmes run by the Prison Service is up to 65 per cent from just over 50 per cent last year. In 2004-2005 of the 4,600 out of 7,119 entrants completed.**<sup>231</sup>

**Methadone maintenance programmes are in place in women's prisons and there are plans to expand provision in the male estate.**<sup>232</sup>

**The Prison Service does not keep records of the percentage of prisoners with drug problems who actually receive treatment**

**but according to Home Office research just ten per cent of prisoners who had drugs problem were engaged in intensive drug rehabilitation.** More than four out of ten prisoners who had used drugs in the previous year wanted drug treatment but were not yet receiving any.<sup>233</sup> The Home Office acknowledges that it is currently resourced only to meet approximately 30 per cent of the rehabilitation needs of drug misusing prisoners.<sup>234</sup>

**Nine out of ten young adult prisoners say they used drugs prior to imprisonment but only one in three Young Offender Institutions provide intensive drug treatment programmes.**<sup>235</sup>

**Transfers between prisons due to overcrowding often disrupt drug treatment.** Recent research found that a third of prisons were unlikely to be able to continue the treatment of prisoners transferred to them.<sup>236</sup>

**Drug use on release from prison is very high.** One Home Office survey of prisoners who had mostly served short sentences and had used drugs in the 12 months before imprisonment, found that 77 per cent admitted taking illegal drugs since release.<sup>237</sup>

**The Social Exclusion Unit found that the 'chances of continuing drugs programmes and support on release are very slim' and concluded, 'prisoners are often viewed as 'new cases' when they are released and have to join the back of the queue'.**<sup>238</sup> The Home Office has no comprehensive tracking systems in place to monitor access to community drug treatment but is currently developing work in this area.<sup>239</sup>

225. Prison Service (2004), Annual Report and Accounts 2003/2004, London: Stationery Office.

226. Hansard, House of Commons, written parliamentary answer 25th June 2003... 227. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 17th June 2003.

228. HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation (2001) Through the Prison Gate: Thematic Review by HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation, London: Stationery Office.

229. Home Office; (2003) Differential substance misuse, treatment needs of women, ethnic minorities and young offenders in prison: prevalence of substance misuse and treatment needs, Home Office Online Report 33/03.

230. Prison Service (2005), Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005, London: Stationery Office and Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 15th November, 2004.

231. Ibid 232. Ibid. 233.183 Ramsay, M. (ed) (2003), Prisoners' drug use and treatment: seven studies, Home Office Research Findings 186, London: Home Office.

234. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, 12th February 2003.

235. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

236. 186 National Audit Office (2002) Reducing Re-offending, London: National Audit Office.

237. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit

238. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit

239. Government reply to the first report from the Home Affairs Committee on the Rehabilitation of Prisoners Session 2004-2005, HC193

## Alcohol<sup>240</sup>

**Nearly two-thirds of sentenced male prisoners (63 per cent) and two-fifths of female sentenced prisoners (39 per cent) admit to hazardous drinking which carries the risk of physical or mental harm. Of these, about half have a severe alcohol dependency.**

**Thirty-four per cent of prisoners in Scotland have indicated that their drinking was a problem outside, 23 per cent that they drank alcohol in the morning, 30 per cent that drinking affected their family relationships, 20 per cent their ability to hold down a job. 40 per cent reported that they were drunk at the time of their offence.<sup>241</sup>**

**Forty-four per cent of young adults (18-24) are binge drinkers. 27 per cent of binge drinkers admitted committing an offence in the past 12 months – compared with 13 per cent of drinkers who did not binge.<sup>242</sup>**

**It is common for prisoners who have alcohol problems to also have drug problems. Just over a quarter of male prisoners and about a fifth of female prisoners who are hazardous drinkers are dependent on at least one type of illicit drug.**

**In 2002/2003 an estimated 6,400 prisoners undertook alcohol detoxification programmes, and an estimated 7,000 more prisoners undertook detoxification for combined alcohol and drug misuse.**

**There are no specific accredited alcohol treatment programmes with ring-fenced funding in prisons in England and Wales.**

**A Prison Service survey conducted in 2003, that received responses from half of all prisons in England and Wales, identified only one prison that had a dedicated alcohol strategy.**

**In December 2004 the Prison Service published its long awaited Alcohol Strategy for Prisoners, which focuses primarily on improving consistency of alcohol measures across the prison estate and builds on existing good practice. But it has not been supported by additional resources.**

**The annual estimated cost of alcohol-related crime and public disorder is up to £7.3 bn.**

<sup>240</sup>. All the figures in this section are from Prison Reform Trust briefing paper (January 2004) Alcohol and re-offending: who cares?

<sup>241</sup>. Scottish prison service, Annual Prison Survey, 2005

<sup>242</sup>. Home Office (2003), Findings from the 2003 offending, crime and justice survey: alcohol-related crime and disorder- 261

## Homelessness and unemployment

**Each year, about 90,000 prisoners are released in England and Wales. Of these, 30 per cent, (just under 30,000), will have nowhere to live, having lost their housing as a result of their imprisonment.**<sup>243</sup> This is despite the fact that stable accommodation can reduce re-offending by over 20 per cent.<sup>244</sup> The Home Office claims that recent progress on supporting prisoners to find accommodation has led to significant improvements and that currently only 19 per cent of prisoners leave custody without an address to go to.<sup>245</sup>

**A survey by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development showed that people with a criminal record are part of the 'core jobless group' that more than 60 per cent of employers deliberately exclude when recruiting.**

**One-third of prisoners were not in permanent accommodation prior to imprisonment.**<sup>247</sup> However a more recent survey found that 14 per cent of men, 20 per cent of women and 10 per cent of young offenders were not in permanent accommodation before custody.<sup>248</sup>

**Home Office research into the resettlement of short term prisoners found that more than half (51 per cent) had housing problems prior to imprisonment.**<sup>249</sup>

**Around one in every 20 prisoners was sleeping rough before they were sent to prison.**<sup>250</sup>

**The majority of prisoners depend on housing benefit to help with their rent before they enter custody.** However, entitlement to Housing Benefit stops for all sentenced prisoners expected to be in prison for more than 13 weeks. This means that any prisoners have very little chance of keeping their tenancy open until the end of their sentence and lose their housing.

**The Home Office has found that women prisoners are particularly likely not to have accommodation arranged for their release.** Just 62 per cent of women had accommodation arranged, compared with 90 per cent of young male offenders and 69 per cent of adult men.<sup>251</sup> Housing advisors have been recruited for all women's local prisons.<sup>252</sup>

**The Revolving Doors Agency has found that 49 per cent of prisoners with mental health problems had no fixed address on leaving prison.** Of those who had a secure tenancy before going to prison, 40 per cent lost it on release.<sup>253</sup>

**The Big Issue conducted the largest survey of its vendors in 2001. More than one-third of Big Issue vendors are ex-prisoners.** Only 13 per cent received any form of resettlement advice before their release from prison.

**A Home Office study found recently that only one in five prisoners who need help with accommodation get support or advice.** It also found that two-thirds of prisoners with no accommodation arranged on release had not received any housing support. The same study found that only half of those who had received some form

243. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office

244. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

245. Government reply to the first report from the Home Affairs Committee on the Rehabilitation of Prisoners Session 2004-2005, HC193

246. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Labour Market Outlook, Summer 2005

247. Home Office (2001) Jobs and Homes - a survey of prisoners nearing release, Findings 173, London: Home Office.

248. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office

249. Home Office (2003) The resettlement of short term prisoners: an evaluation of seven pathfinder programmes, Findings 200, London: Home Office.

250. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office

251. Ibid.

252. Hansard, House of Lords, 28th October, 2004, Column, 1480.

253. Revolving Doors Agency (2002) Where Do They Go? Housing, Mental Health and Leaving Prison, London: Revolving Doors.

of help had an address to go to on release. The study concluded that 'many prisoners would like help looking for accommodation but do not receive it'.<sup>254</sup>

**Research by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee found that only 19 per cent of prisoners received advice or guidance about accommodation.**<sup>255</sup>

**Getting ex-prisoners into stable housing can act as a gateway to effective resettlement.** Home Office research has found that prisoners who have accommodation arranged on release are four times more likely to have employment, education or training arranged than those who do not have accommodation in place.<sup>256</sup> Homelessness can also prevent ex-prisoners from accessing support services such as benefits or registering with a GP<sup>257</sup>.

**The Prison Service states that currently in about 50 prisons some form of housing advice and support service is available.**<sup>258</sup>

**Two-thirds of prisoners are unemployed at the time of imprisonment - around 13 times the national unemployment rate.** A recent Home Office study found that fourteen per cent of prisoners said they had never had a paid job before custody.<sup>259</sup>

**Around two-thirds of those who do have a job lose it whilst in custody.**<sup>260</sup>

**Research by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee found that two-thirds of prisoners have no job on release.**<sup>261</sup>

**A Home Office survey carried out in 2003 found that only a quarter of prisoners had a paid job arranged after release and a further five per cent had a training or education place arranged.** Of those who had a job arranged only three quarters expected it to be permanent. Six out of ten prisoners did not have any employment, education or training on release.<sup>262</sup>

**The same study found that of those who had an employment, training or education place to go to on release only 15 per cent had arranged this through the Prison Service or a voluntary agency working in the prison.** More than half said it had been arranged through family, friends or personal contacts. The study highlighted the value of personal contacts and support networks in helping prisoners find employment or training.<sup>263</sup>

**In 2004-2005, 37,733 prisoners had a job, education or training place arranged on release, more than the key performance indicator target of 34,890 prisoners, and about a third of all those people who leave prison in a year.** Data is not collected to establish whether or not these prisoners accessed the places that they said had been arranged for them or for how long.<sup>264</sup>

**Prisoners face great difficulties finding employment after release.** A criminal record, low educational attainment, health problems and a lack of stable housing can make it problematic for prisoners to find a job. In 2002 the government published the 'Breaking the Circle'

254. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office;

255. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Rehabilitation of Prisoners, First Report of Session 2004-2005, Volume 1 and 2.

256. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office; Home Office (2001) Jobs and Homes - a survey of prisoners nearing release, Findings 173, London: Home Office

257. Social Exclusion Unit (2002) Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, London: Social Exclusion Unit.

258. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Rehabilitation of Prisoners, First Report of Session 2004-2005, Volume 1 and 2.

259. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office; Home Office (2001) Jobs and Homes - a survey of prisoners nearing release, Findings 173, London: Home Office.

260. Home Office (2001) Through the Prison Gate: a joint thematic review by HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation, London: Stationery Office.

261. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Rehabilitation of Prisoners, First Report of Session 2004-2005, Volume 1 and 2.

262. Niven, S and Stewart, D (2005) Resettlement outcomes on release from prison, Home Office Findings 248, London: Home Office; Home Office (2001) Jobs and Homes - a survey of prisoners nearing release, Findings 173, London: Home Office

263. Ibid.

264. Prison Service (2005), Annual Report and Accounts 2004/2005, London: Stationery Office

consultation which, while maintaining public safety, proposed important amendments to the 1973 Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Despite a positive response to this thorough-going consultation no action has been taken as yet to introduce amendments which for many ex-prisoners, with clear exceptions, would reduce the time period during which criminal convictions must be disclosed.

**A Home Office study which followed up prisoners between two and 12 months after release found that only half had done some paid work; two per cent were on a government training scheme, and 48 per cent had not found any work.** Of those who had done some paid work, nearly two-thirds found it after leaving prison. Only 9 per cent arranged a job whilst in custody.<sup>265</sup>

**Ex-prisoners make up two to three per cent of the average monthly inflow to the unemployment total.**<sup>266</sup>

**Home Office research has found that employment reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half.**<sup>267</sup> However, studies have identified that it is not merely the fact of having a job that is associated with reduced re-offending, but the stability and quality of that employment along with the level of satisfaction expressed toward it.<sup>268</sup>

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265. Stewart, D An evaluation of basic skills training for prisoners, Home Office Findings 260, London: Home Office Feb 2005.

266. D Fletcher, D Woodhill and A Herrington (1998) Building Bridges into Employment and Training for Ex-offenders, London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

267. F Simon and C Corbett (1996) An evaluation of prison work and training, London: Home Office.

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## Education

**More than half of all prisoners are at or below the level expected of an 11 year old in reading, two-thirds in numeracy and four-fifths in writing.**<sup>269</sup>

**More than half of male and more than two-thirds of female adult prisoners have no qualifications at all.**<sup>270</sup>

**Only one prisoner in five is able to complete a job application form.**<sup>271</sup>

**Nearly half of male sentenced prisoners were excluded from school<sup>272</sup> and nearly a third of all prisoners were regular truants whilst at school.**<sup>273</sup>

**In 2002-2003 an average of £1,185 per prisoner was spent on education in jails.** This is less than half the average cost of secondary school education at £2,590 per student per year, which many prisoners have missed.<sup>274</sup> But government funding for prison education more than doubled in five years from £47.5m in 1999-2000 to £122m in 2004-2005.<sup>275</sup>

**According to the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit in the Department for Education and Skills, just under a third of the prison population is attending education classes at any one time.**<sup>276</sup>

**Research by NATFHE and the Association of College Lecturers has found that only one third of education managers regularly receive prisoners' records following transfers.**<sup>277</sup>

**Research highlighted by the government's Social Exclusion Unit has found that**

**prisoners who do not take part in education or training are three times more likely to be re-convicted.** This research has yet to be tested empirically by the Home Office and the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee concluded that 'more research is needed to isolate the impact of education and training'.<sup>278</sup>

**The Social Exclusion Unit also found that basic skills learning can contribute to a reduction in re-offending of around 12 per cent.**<sup>279</sup> However, the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee has expressed concern that 'the heavy concentration on basic skills qualifications is based on little more than a hunch' and urged the government to undertake more research.<sup>280</sup>

**Prison Service targets for the number of prisoners achieving different skills qualifications were significantly exceeded in 2004-2005.** Prisoners achieved 162,966 key work skills awards, and 58,947 basic skills awards.<sup>281</sup> However, Home Office research found that improvements in literacy and numeracy were not significantly related to prisoners' chances of finding employment or re-offending after release. Factors such as links with previous employers and family contacts were more strongly related to employment outcomes.<sup>282</sup>

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## Prison work and volunteering

Overall there are around 24,000 work places for prisoners across the estate in workshops, catering, cleaning, land based activities and day release programmes - the majority is menial work<sup>283</sup>. This means that a maximum of just under a third of the prison population is engaged in work activities at any one time.

An average of 10,000 prisoners are employed in nearly 300 workshops across the prison estate in a diverse range of industries that include; clothing and textiles, woodwork, engineering, print and laundries.<sup>284</sup>

Forty per cent of the 10,000 prisoners who work across these industries work for 'contract services' and are producing goods and services for an external, commercial market. This ranges from laundry contracts for hospitals to manufacturing camouflage jackets for the Ministry of Defence.<sup>285</sup>

Clothing and textiles is the biggest employer in prison workshops with roughly 3,000 prisoners involved across 60 prisons. Almost all (95 per cent) of textile products are for the internal market.<sup>286</sup>

An internal Prison Service review of workshops suggested that the focus should be almost totally on the internal market as demand was so high due to the rise in prison numbers over the last decade.<sup>287</sup>

There are around 1,500 people in the open prison estate who go out to work in full time paid employment during the day on day release.<sup>288</sup> They are, generally, long term prisoners who are in the final stages of their period in custody and preparing to return to the community.

In 2000-2001, 21 prison farms were in operation, including 12 dairy units, with a total of 295 prisoners employed. The Prison Service plans to close 12 farms by the end of 2006 and focus instead on horticultural activities.<sup>289</sup>

The current average rate of pay for employed prisoners is £8 per week. The Prison Service sets a minimum rate of pay which is currently £4.00 per week but each prison has devolved responsibility to enable it to set its own pay rates.<sup>290</sup>

The Prison Service has acknowledged that prison industries have 'rather got left behind by other developments within the system' and that providing work opportunities for prisoners is not currently a central and essential part of the of the prison regime.<sup>291</sup>

Since 1984, 2,100 serving prisoners have given in excess of 300,000 hours of service to the community through Community Service Volunteers.<sup>292</sup>

One in 14 prisoners participate in an activity to help other prisoners, such as the Listeners scheme.<sup>293</sup>

The Inside Out Trust runs charity workshops in the prison system. Work includes making benches, restoring bicycles, sewing machines or hearing aids. As at January 2005, they had over 1,000 men and women at work in 75 prisons.<sup>294</sup>

283. House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, Rehabilitation of Prisoners, First Report of Session 2004-2005

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285. Ibid. 286. Ibid.

287. Prison Service (2003) Report of the Industries Review Team, An internal review of the strategic oversight and management of public sector prison industries in England and Wales, London: Prison Service

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## Prison Service performance and staffing

**In 2004-2005, the Prison Service met seven of its 11 main key performance indicators.<sup>295</sup>**

**The Prison Service managed a marked growth in the number of basic skills courses prisoners achieved.** The total number has increased from 43,731 to 58,947, an increase of 35 per cent over the year<sup>295</sup>. Overall, more than 10 per cent of adults in England and Wales who received basic qualifications did so in prison.<sup>297</sup>

**It also just met its overcrowding target by having 23.7 per cent of prisoners held in “accommodation units intended for fewer prisoners”, the target was under 24 per cent.<sup>298</sup>** In 2003-4 a lower target was set of 18 per cent of all prisoners held two in a cell designed for one. In that year the Prison Service failed to meet the target, instead putting 21.7 per cent in such accommodation.<sup>299</sup>

**Targets on deaths in custody, drug use, ethnic diversity among the staff and staff sickness were also not met.** Some progress towards them had been made in all areas.

**The Prison Service is faced with high sickness levels amongst prison officers.** The average staff sickness rate in 2004-2005 was 12.7 per cent. This is an improvement on 13.3 per cent in the previous year and 14.7 per cent in the year before that.<sup>300</sup>

**There has been a high turnover of prison governors. In the five years to March 2002**

**just under a third of all prisons (44) had had four or more governors or acting governors in charge.<sup>301</sup>** The average tenure for governing governors in an establishment is one year and nine months<sup>302</sup>.

**The under-representation of staff from minority ethnic groups is particularly marked at a senior level in the Prison Service.** In 2003-4 there were no senior operational managers in charge of prisons (governing governors) from a minority ethnic group and just three per cent of senior operational managers were from a minority ethnic group.<sup>303</sup>

**The number of ethnic minority staff in the Prison Service overall is 5.7 per cent.** It has grown steadily for many years.<sup>304</sup>

295. HM Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts, April 2004, March 2005, Home Office: London

296. *ibid*

297. Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP, Where next for penal policy?, Prison Reform Trust Annual Lecture, 2005

298. HM Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts, April 2004 - March 2005, Home Office: London

299. HM Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts, April 2003 - March 2004, Home Office: London

300. HM Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts, April 2004 - March 2005, Home Office: London

301. Hansard, House of Commons written answer 31st January, 2003.

302. Hansard, House of Commons written answer 19th January, 2004.

303. Hansard, House of Commons Written Answers, 23rd March 2004.

304. HM Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts, April 2004 - March 2005, Home Office: London

## Private prisons<sup>305</sup>

**There are eleven privately run prisons in England and Wales.** Nine have been built and are run by the private sector under PFI contracts – Dovegate, Altcourse, Ashfield, Forest Bank, Lowdham Grange, Parc, Rye Hill, Bronzefield and Peterborough the only prison which accommodates both men and women on the same site. In addition there are two prisons (the Wolds and Doncaster) that were built and financed by the public sector but are run by private companies under management only contracts.

**Serco is the largest provider of private prisons, operating Dovegate, Ashfield, Lowdham Grange and Doncaster.** Falck AS, formerly owned by Group 4, which is the holding company for GSL, operates Rye Hill, Altcourse and the Wolds. UK Detention Services Ltd, owned by the Paris based multi-national corporation Sodexho, operates Forest Bank, Bronzefield and Peterborough. Securicor Justice Services (now owned by Group 4 Securicor) operates Parc prison.

**Private prisons account for ten per cent of the prison population holding around 7,500 prisoners.**

**Pay and conditions for staff in private prisons are inferior compared to the public sector with estimates that staff in private prisons are up to 70 per cent worse off than their public sector counterparts.<sup>306</sup>**

**Overall private prisons have lower staff/prisoner ratios than public prisons, with an average of 17 per cent fewer staff per prisoner than public prisons.<sup>307</sup>**

**The National Audit Office has highlighted the high turnover of staff in the seven PFI built and managed prisons.** For example Dovegate lost nearly 30 per cent of its staff in 2001-2002. The staff losses were far higher than in public prisons which on average lost just six per cent of staff in the same year.<sup>308</sup>

**Prison officers working in private prisons tend to have little or no prior experience of working in prisons and have generally been in their post for much less time than their public sector counterparts.<sup>309</sup>**

**Staffing problems mean some private prisons struggle to create a safe environment for prisoners.** There were a high level of assaults at Dovegate, Ashfield, Rye Hill, Forest Bank and Altcourse and prisoners in these jails expressed concerns about their safety due to the relative inexperience of staff. These concerns have been raised by the Chief Inspector of Prisons in recent reports on Rye Hill and Forest Bank in particular.<sup>310</sup>

**The overall average amount of time that prisoners spend in purposeful activity in private prisons is higher than in the public sector.** In 2003-2004 in private prisons it was 26.7 hours, higher than the public sector average of 23.2 hours<sup>311</sup>.

**The UK has the most privatised prison system in Europe, and although there are not as many private jails as in the United States the proportion of prisoners in private prisons is higher.**

305. For full details on the performance of private prisons, the companies and their profits see Prison Reform Trust (2005) Private Punishment: Who Profits?, London: Prison Reform Trust.

306. Sachdev, S (2004) Paying the cost? Public Private Partnerships and the public service workforce, London: Catalyst.

307. Ibid.

308. National Audit Office (2003) The Operational Performance of PFI Prisons, London: Stationery Office.

309. Ibid.

310. HM Inspectorate of Prisons reports on Rye Hill (April 2005) and Forest Bank (August 2005)

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## Long term trends and future prison building

**The government has increased the number of prison places by around 17,000 since 1997.** The total operational capacity of the prison estate is planned to reach 79,100 by June 2006, and 80,400 by 2007.<sup>312</sup>

**The Home Office had to withdraw the long-term prison population projections released in January 2005 because growth was clearly exceeding them.** The new projections released in July 2005 predict a population of up to 91,500 by 2010<sup>313</sup>. The current prison population already exceeds the high projection.

**HMP Peterborough, a new purpose-built prison, opened in March 2005 providing 840 places, 480 for men and 360 for women.**

**The National Offender Management Service owns two sites, one in Merseyside and one in London, with outline planning consent to build two 600 place prisons.**<sup>314</sup>

**The Budget 2003 settlement provided funds to acquire at least two more sites in 2004-05 for the future development of 'large multi-function 1,500 place prisons'.**<sup>315</sup>

**The Scottish prison population is predicted to rise to 9,300 by 2015.**<sup>316</sup>

**The prison population is expected to rise in Northern Ireland by 6 per cent, year on year for the next five years, and by 5 per cent in the following years, with the population of life sentenced prisoners up by 50 per cent within 10 years.**<sup>317</sup>

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312. Hansard, House of Commons, written answer, 2 November 2005

313. Home Office, Updated and Revised Prison Population Projections 2005-2011, July 2005, Home Office: London

314. Hansard, House of Commons written answers, November 15th 2004.

315. Ibid.

316. BBC News online, 25/11/2005

317. Interview with Robin Masfield, Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, 12 February 2006 – Belfast Telegraph

## Recent Prison Reform Trust publications and briefings

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- Prison Overcrowding: The Inside Story, 2002 - £7.50
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- Criminal Treatment: The Imprisonment of Asylum Seekers, 2002 - £5.00
- Barred Citizens: Volunteering and Active Citizenship by Prisoners, 2002 - £10.00
- A Measure of Success: An Analysis of the Prison Service's Performance Against its Key Performance Indicators 2003-2004, - £5.00
- Troubled Inside: Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Women in Prison, 2003 - £9.00
- The Decision to Imprison: Sentencing and The Prison Population, 2003 - £10.00
- Growing Old in Prison - A Scoping Study on Older Prisoners, 2003 - £9.00
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- Alcohol and Re-offending - who cares?, 2004 (Briefing Paper)
- Prisoners' Information Book, Male Prisoners and Young Offenders, 2003
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Prison Reform Trust, 15 Northburgh Street, London EC1V 0JR.  
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