

The Learning Prison

The following figures were included in *The Learning Prison*, published 12 February 2010.

In January 2010 there were 82,761 people being held in prisons in England and Wales with around a further 9,000 held in Scottish and Northern Irish prisons¹.

Projected prison population (end June 2009 figures)

Year	High	Medium	Low
2010	88,100	86,400	84,400
2011	90,500	87,900	85,100
2012	92,100	88,700	85,000
2013	93,000	88,600	84,100
2014	94,200	89,000	83,600
2015	95,800	89,700	83,400

Source: Ministry of Justice, *Prison Population Projections (England and Wales) 2008 – 2015*, September 2008

Numbers serving different lengths of sentence

Sentence	March 2008	March 2009
Remand	13,073	12,987
Under 6 months	5,706	5,243
6 months to 12 months	2,698	2,491
12 months to 4 years	23,260	23,922
Over 4 years	23,561	24,279
Indeterminate	10,911	12,228

Source: 'Population in Custody', March 2009, *MOJ Statistical Bulletin*, 30 April 2009

Costs

- The Prison Service's operating costs for 2006–7 were £1.9 billion. A former prisoner who reoffends costs the criminal justice system an average of £65,000 up to the point of re-imprisonment; it then costs an average of £40,992 a year to keep them there².
- The cost of the criminal justice system has risen from 2 per cent of GDP to 2.5 per cent over the last 10 years. The cost of recidivism to the UK tax payer is an estimated £11 billion a year, a higher per capita level than any EU country or the US².

¹ HM Prison Service, *Prison Population and Accommodation Briefing*, 15 January 2010; Scottish Prison Service (SPS), *Prison Population at 15 January 2010*; Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), *Prison Population at 18 January 2010*. Unless otherwise stated in this report, prison population figures are based on England and Wales.

² E Solomon, C Eades, R Garside, M Rutherford, *Ten Years of Criminal Justice under Labour: An Independent Audit*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2007:

www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus55/ten-years-of-labour-2007.pdf

Complex needs

- Over half of those under 18 in custody have a history of being in care or involvement with social services³.
- Black people are six times more likely to be in prison than white people: black and minority ethnic people accounted for 26 per cent of the male prison population and 28 per cent of the female population in June 2006⁴.
- Young black people and those of 'mixed' ethnicity are likely to receive more punitive sentences than their white contemporaries⁵.
- In the last 10 years the number of foreign nationals in prison has doubled and now represents over 14 per cent of the total prison population in England and Wales⁶.
- In 1995 the average female prison population was 1,998; at the time of writing this figure had more than doubled⁷.
- The Corston Report (*A Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System*) estimated that around 12 per cent of female prisoners have children⁸.
- Estimates of the total number children who experience a parent being in prison each year vary from 120,000 to 160,000⁸.
- Thirty per cent of prisoners were regular truants from school and nearly half of school-age offenders were excluded at the time arrest⁹.
- More than half of male and 72 per cent of female prisoners had no qualifications when sentenced and 37 per cent were at or below level 1 skills in reading⁹.
- In the academic year 2007/8 providers worked with 115,807 people¹⁰. Offender participation in OLASS provision rose from 30 to 36 per cent in its first year of operation. The latest figures supplied by OLASS show engagement levels up to 42 per cent in 2008/09¹¹.

³ Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley Briefings: Prison Factfile*, May 2007

⁴ Ministry of Justice, *Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System – 2006: A Ministry of Justice Publication under Section 95 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991*, 2007: www.justice.gov.uk/docs/race-and-cjs-stats-2006.pdf

⁵ House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, *Young Black People and the Criminal Justice System: Second Report of Session 2006–07, Volume I*, The Stationery Office, 2007: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmhaff/181/181i.pdf

⁶ HM Prison Service, 'Foreign National Prisoners': www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/adviceandsupport/prison_life/foreignnationalprisoners/

⁷ HM Prison Service, *Prison Population and Accommodation Briefing*, 2 October 2009, *op. cit.*

⁸ J Corston, *The Corston Report: A review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system*, Home Office, 2007

⁹ Social Exclusion Unit, *Reducing Reoffending by Ex-prisoners*, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ Provided by LSC. See also Learning and Skills Council, *Making Skills Matter: LSC Annual Report and Accounts 2008–2009*, 2009

¹¹ OLASS, *Officer Learning and Skills: Taking the next step*, LSC, 2008. Latest figures supplied by officials 2010.