Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 3 (Senedd)
Meeting date: 17 November 2025
Meeting time: 13.30

For further information contact:
Rhys Morgan
Committee Clerk
0300 200 6565
SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting

(13:15-13:30)

Public meeting

(13:30 - 15:00)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(13:30)

2 Papers to note

(13:30- 13:35)

2.1 Correspondence to the Chair from Public Health Wales regarding policy priorities to inform the development of the Equality and Social Justice Committee's Sixth Senedd legacy report

(Pages 1 - 8)

2.2 Correspondence to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip regarding welcome tickets for asylum seekers

(Pages 9 - 10)

2.3 Correspondence from Sir Stephen Timms, Department for Work and Pensions to the Chair regarding guidance under the British Sign Language Act 2022

(Pages 11 - 14)

2.4 Correspondence from Dr Rob Jones to the Chair regarding the prisons and imprisonment fact file

(Pages 15 - 114)

2.5 Correspondence to the Legislation, Justice and the Constitution Committee from the Deputy First Minister regarding annual reports of the Inter-governmental relations secretariat

(Page 115)

2.6 Consultation response from Audit Wales regarding Post legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations Act

(Pages 116 - 135)

3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of today's meeting and for any items where the Committee's draft report on the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill is under consideration at its meeting on the 24 November

(13:35)

Private meeting

(13:35 - 15:00)

4 British Sign Language (Wales) Bill: consideration of draft report

(13:35-15:00) (Pages 136 - 207)

Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru
Rhif 2 Capital Quarter, Stryd Tyndall,
Caerdydd CF10 4BZ

Public Health Wales
2 Capital Quarter, Tyndall Street,
Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Tracey Cooper
☎ Llinell Uniongyrchol/ Dir Line: 02920 104300
Ebost/ Email: tracey.cooper3@wales.nhs.uk

Jenny Rathbone, MS
Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Senedd
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1SN

Ref:TC.CS.061125.JR

6 November 2025

Dear Jenny,

Equality and Social Justice Committee's
Sixth Senedd Legacy Report

I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you our public health policy priorities to inform the development of the Equality and Social Justice Committee's Sixth Senedd Legacy Report.

Public Health Wales is the national public health organisation for Wales. We exist to help all people in Wales live longer, healthier lives, and to make health part of every conversation about Wales' future.

We are highlighting five priority areas where we believe public health policy action can build a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Wales for the future, and support a strong sustainable health and care system.

By sharing these with you, we hope to support the work your Committee is doing to highlight the issues the Seventh Senedd, and your successor Committee may wish to consider.

1 Context

People in Wales are currently experiencing unfair and avoidable gaps in health and wellbeing. For example, women in the least deprived areas of Wales live 20 years more of their life in good health than those who live in the most deprived areas. In our most deprived communities, we also see three times as many avoidable deaths and 70% more child deaths. Without change, poor health in our most deprived communities will continue to result in increased demand for our public services.

Through a prevention-first approach to policy and by working together in partnership, we can overcome these challenges and build a healthier future for Wales. We know that every £1 invested in prevention returns £14 for society by creating healthier people, a stronger economy and lowered NHS costs.

Our five policy priorities

1. The best start in life builds lifelong health and wellbeing

The foundation for a life lived in good health is built in our early years.
Policies need to promote the wellbeing of babies and young children and protect children from harm, for example from adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and poverty, to give them the best chance to thrive through life.

- Consider children's wellbeing in all policy decisions.
- Deliver the Best Start in Life framework through cross-government leadership.
- Ensure comprehensive child health data to guide policy, target support, and track outcomes for babies and young children.
- Ensure every family can easily access Health Visitor support, and provide Flying Start based on need, not postcode.
- Embed trauma and adverse childhood experience-informed approaches from pre-pregnancy onwards.

2. Financial wellbeing drives better health and a prosperous economy

Secure and fairly rewarded work that pays a living wage is good for our health.
Healthy communities mean a healthy workforce, and a healthy, productive workforce is good for a prosperous Welsh economy.
Policies need to support people in Wales to find, stay in or return to healthy, safe and secure work.

- Ensure public bodies provide safe, secure jobs paying at least the Real Living Wage.
- Monitor progress on workplace equality, including gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gaps.
- Support people with health challenges to enter, stay in, or return to work.

- Link employment services with health support especially for those with long-term or mental health conditions so people get help when they need it.

3. Healthy lives start in our everyday places

When the places where we live, eat, shop, and play are healthy, it is easier for all of us to live healthier and happier lives.
National planning and other policies need to create and strengthen healthier places strategically, regionally and locally to support physical, mental and social health and wellbeing and reduce the appeal and availability of health harming products.
Healthy communities – characterised by healthy homes, sustainable transport, safe space for active travel, and green spaces – create additional benefits to the environment.

- Increase the availability of healthy and affordable homes, especially social housing.
- Raise standards in private rental housing.
- Reduce exposure and availability of tobacco and vapes by licensing retailers, and extend smoke-free zones.
- Make healthier food and drink the affordable, visible options in shops and restaurants, and restrict price promotions for less healthy food and drinks

4. Care tailored to local need builds health and resilience

Addressing the root causes of poor health—not just the consequences—means everyone in Wales can prosper and enjoy better health and wellbeing and our health system is resilient.
Policies need to address the needs of local people through earlier intervention and delivery of joined-up, effective care for the whole person when and where people need it.

- Increase the yearly share of the NHS budget spent on prevention and primary and community care instead of hospital treatment.
- Join up health and community care with public services and voluntary organisations to support the whole person.
- Invest in community health facilities, skilled staff, data and digital tools that link with health records to support early and preventative care.

5. A healthy planet protects our people now and in the future

The health of people and the planet are interconnected. Many actions that address climate change also support longer, healthier lives.
Policies need to focus on both preventing the health harms of climate change and tackling its root causes, especially for those most vulnerable and least able to adapt.

- Invest in safe walking and cycling routes, footpaths, and car-free town centres.

- Make public transport accessible and affordable, including free bus travel for young people.
- Protect communities from the health harms of climate change by tackling flooding, improving food security, ensuring sufficient and quality water for private supply, and expanding access to green spaces and tree cover

At Public Health Wales we welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Committee to inform the development of its Legacy Report, and we look forward to ongoing, constructive engagement with your successor Committee. If you would like more detailed information in relation to the specific interventions to tackle these five areas then please do not hesitate to contact us. I gave also attached the infographics for the summary and solutions for the priority areas for information.

Yours sincerely,

Tracey Cooper
Chief Executive, Public Health Wales

Copy: SeneddEquality@senedd.Wales

Webpage: https://phw.nhs.wales/
Email: phw.advocacy@wales.nhs.uk

Working Together for a Healthier Wales: Get to Know Us

Who we are, what we do, why it matters.

Who we are

Everyone in Wales deserves the chance to live a healthy life. That's what we work for every day.

Public Health Wales is the national public health organisation for Wales. We exist to help all people in Wales live longer, healthier lives.

With our partners, we aim to increase healthy life expectancy, improve health and wellbeing, and reduce inequalities for everyone in Wales, now and for future generations.

Prevent disease

Protect health

Improve wellbeing

Reduce health inequalities

What we do

We play a unique and vital role in population health by focussing on prevention and supporting healthcare.

We deliver national services, such as screening, vaccination, and public health protection programmes, to help people stay healthier for longer.

We also address the full range of issues that shape health. From preventing disease and protecting against threats, to reducing inequalities and shaping the conditions that support wellbeing.

As Wales's national public health organisation, we lead long-term prevention and population health efforts, working with partners across the country to help create healthy and prosperous communities.

Our goal is a Wales where everyone can live longer, healthier lives with fair and equal access to the things that support good health and wellbeing.

Our work covers:

Health Protection and Infection
Diagnosing, treating and controlling infectious diseases, environmental threats and public health emergencies.

Policy and Partnerships
Advising and supporting government and partners with trusted, expert public health insight.

Screening Services
Detecting conditions like cancer and newborn disorders early through national screening programmes.

Health Improvement
Supporting ways of living that improve health, from reducing smoking and substance use to better nutrition, physical activity, and mental wellbeing.

Research and Innovation
Improving health outcomes through evidence-based change and new ideas.

Surveillance and Intelligence
Turning data into actionable insights to inform decisions and raise awareness.

Why it matters

Not everyone in Wales has the same chance to live a healthy life.

Health isn't just about healthcare. Housing, education, jobs, income, and the environment all affect how long and well we live. That's why we work across sectors to put health at the heart of decisions about Wales's future.

By bringing evidence, partnership, and innovation together, we help to create the conditions for people and communities across Wales to thrive.

We are Public Health Wales.
Working together for a healthier Wales.

Working together for a healthier Wales: A summary

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES | Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru Public Health Wales

Longer, healthier lives and a fairer, more prosperous Wales - practical actions to make a difference.

The best start in life builds lifelong health and wellbeing

We need to prioritise the health and wellbeing of babies, children and young people so they can thrive today and shape resilient communities tomorrow.

This means families have access to the right support, safe places to play, and nurturing care. Children are protected from harm, including poverty and adverse childhood experiences, so they can grow up strong and healthy.

Financial wellbeing drives better health and a prosperous economy

We need to support more people to stay healthy and in work, and improve financial security so families can live well.

This means access to fair, secure jobs that pay a living wage, affordable childcare for working parents, and support for people with health issues to stay in or return to work. When families can afford essentials like healthy food and social connection, they stay healthier, and local economies benefit.

Healthy lives start in our everyday places

We need to make homes, shops, and public spaces healthier so it's easier for people to live well and avoid harmful habits.

This means healthy homes and food are affordable and accessible, and tobacco and vaping products are less visible, less appealing, and not seen as a normal part of daily life.

Care tailored to local need builds health and resilience

We need to strengthen primary and community care to prevent illness, respond early, and better meet the needs of supporting those with long term conditions.

This means services have the resources and staff to provide timely care that supports all aspects of people's wellbeing, close to home and when it's needed most.

A healthy planet protects our people now and in the future

We need to protect people and communities from the health risks of climate change and environmental harm.

This means clean air and water, access to healthy food and health services that can withstand extreme weather and disease. Pollution and environmental risks must be reduced to protect lives and mental wellbeing.

Working together for a healthier Wales: How we make change happen

Longer, healthier lives and a fairer, more prosperous Wales - practical actions to make a difference.

The best start in life builds lifelong health and wellbeing

The foundation for a life lived in good health is built in our early years.

- Consider children's wellbeing in all policy decisions.
- Deliver the Best Start in Life framework through cross-government leadership.
- Ensure comprehensive child health data to guide policy, target support, and track outcomes for babies and young children.
- Ensure every family can easily access Health Visitor support, and provide Flying Start based on need, not postcode.
- Embed trauma and adverse childhood experience-informed approaches from pre-pregnancy onwards.

Financial wellbeing drives better health and a prosperous economy

Secure and fairly rewarded work that pays a living wage is good for our health.

- Ensure public bodies provide safe, secure jobs paying at least the Real Living Wage.
- Monitor progress on workplace equality, including gender, ethnicity, and disability pay gaps.
- Support people with health challenges to enter, stay in, or return to work.
- Link employment services with health support especially for those with long-term or mental health conditions so people get help when they need it.

Healthy lives start in our everyday places

When the places where we live, eat, shop, and play are healthy, it is easier for all of us to live healthier and happier lives.

- Increase the availability of healthy and affordable homes, especially social housing.
- Raise standards in private rental housing.
- Reduce exposure and availability of tobacco and vapes by licensing retailers, and extend smoke-free zones.
- Make healthier food and drink the affordable, visible options in shops and restaurants, and restrict price promotions for less healthy food and drinks.

Care tailored to local need builds health and resilience

Addressing the root causes of poor health - not just the consequences - means everyone in Wales can prosper and enjoy better health and wellbeing and our health system is resilient.

- Increase the yearly share of the NHS budget spent on prevention and primary and community care instead of hospital treatment.
- Join up health and community care with public services and voluntary organisations to support the whole person.
- Invest in community health facilities, skilled staff, data and digital tools that link with health records to support early and preventative care.

A healthy planet protects our people now and in the future

The health of people and the planet are interconnected. Many actions that address climate change also support longer, healthier lives.

- Invest in safe walking and cycling routes, footpaths, and car-free town centres.
- Make public transport accessible and affordable, including free bus travel for young people.
- Protect communities from the health harms of climate change by tackling flooding, improving food security, ensuring sufficient and quality water for private supply, and expanding access to green spaces and tree cover.

Action across these five areas will help build a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Wales for the future and support a strong sustainable health and care system

Explore more online:
https://phw.nhs.wales/

To discuss further email:
phw.advocacy@wales.nhs.uk

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH/PO/565/25

Jenny Rathbone MS
Equality and Social Justice Committee

7 November 2025

Dear Jenny,

As the Committee are aware, I have been committed to introducing a *Welcome Ticket* intervention specifically designed to support asylum seekers with active claims, enabling access to free or discounted public transport. This is distinct from previous schemes familiar to Members, which were designed to assist Ukrainians, Afghans, and other refugee groups. The Welcome Ticket for asylum seekers aligns with the commitments set out in the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.

Officials have been working to explore how best this could be delivered. Following a comprehensive review of delivery, financial and policy risks, it has become clear that, while I remain committed to providing support, the model as currently designed cannot be delivered safely, affordably, or sustainably. Verification could not be completed through Clearsprings as initially proposed due to legal and contractual constraints. Following this, officials explored alternative delivery options. With no additional budget available to commission another delivery partner, the local authority route was considered as the next viable option. However, the operational demands on local authorities, including verification and application support, would have placed significant pressure on already stretched resources. There were also safeguarding and equality considerations for users of the Welcome Ticket that could not be fully mitigated within the current model. In addition, the projected delivery costs were significantly above the allocated budget.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Jane.Hutt@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jane.Hutt @gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Although I am disappointed that a new phase of the Welcome Ticket will not be delivered in this Senedd term, I remain firmly committed to addressing the transport and digital barriers faced by people seeking sanctuary when accessing essential services and community opportunities. Officials will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to explore practical alternatives within existing frameworks. Eligible asylum seekers will also continue to benefit from the existing free and discounted travel schemes for young people, older people, and disabled passengers.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, y Trefnydd a'r Prif Chwip
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip

THE RT HON. SIR STEPHEN TIMMS MP
Minister for Social Security and Disability
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London, SW1H 9NA

Minister.SSD@dwp.gov.uk

10 November 2025

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee
Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd,
Caerdydd
CF99 1SN

Dear Jenny,

Section 3 of the British Sign Language Act 2022

Thank you for your letter dated 16 October 2025 seeking further clarification on the British Sign Language Act 2022 and specifically section 3 which requires the Secretary of State to issue guidance.

The Government is committed to reducing the barriers Deaf people face in their everyday lives. As part of this, it is crucial to make sure that Government communications are as inclusive and accessible as possible, so that everyone has access to important information from the Government and is able to engage on issues that will affect them.

We continue to work across Government departments to improve the number of BSL communications produced, and this year each ministerial department was asked to produce a 5 year plan setting out how they plan to improve the use of BSL. These were published in July, alongside the third annual BSL report.

We also recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that Government departments and organisations improve the experience of Deaf people when they interact with the government.

As you rightly note, section 3 of the BSL Act 2022 requires the Government to issue guidance promoting the facilitation and use of BSL, including:

- advice for relevant departments on best practice to support BSL under both the Equality Act 2010 and BSL Act 2022
- advice on best practice for communicating with BSL users (both when interacting with individuals and when communicating with the general public), including case studies to show the value of providing BSL interpretation in communications with the public

The BSL Advisory Board, a non-statutory board of 17 mainly BSL users, will advise the Government on the guidance detailed in the BSL Act, and how to implement it to deliver the best possible support for the Deaf community. Work to develop the guidance has started. The final version will be published in due course with support from the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit. The BSL Advisory Board, having come to the end of its initial three year term, is in the process of being reappointed, and I envisage that its new membership should be in place by the end of the year. I think its likely that, once it starts meeting, it will set up a sub-group to support this piece of work.

I trust this supports you in your scrutiny of the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill and would welcome further dialogue as the Bill continues its passage through the Senedd.

With all best wishes,

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister of State for Social Security and Disability

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol

—

Equality and Social Justice Committee

Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN
SeneddCydraddoldeb@senedd.cymru
senedd.cymru/SeneddCydraddoldeb
0300 200 6565

—

Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN
SeneddEquality@senedd.wales
senedd.wales/SeneddEquality
0300 200 6565

The Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Minister for Social Security and Disability
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

16 October 2026

Dear Sir Stephen Timms MP

Section 3 of the British Sign Language Act 2022

I write in relation to the implementation of the British Sign Language Act 2022 ("the 2022 Act"), specifically section 3 which requires the Secretary of State to issue guidance.

Section 3 of the 2022 Act states:

3. Guidance on use of British Sign Language

(1) The Secretary of State must issue guidance, or arrange for guidance to be issued, about the promotion and facilitation of the use of British Sign Language.

(2) Guidance under this section may for example include—

(a) advice for relevant government departments on providing information to the Secretary of State in accordance with section 2(4),

(b) advice on best practice for communicating with British Sign Language users (both when interacting with individuals and when communicating with the public at large), and

(c) case studies to illustrate the value of providing British Sign Language interpretation in communications with the public.

(3) Guidance under this section must not include advice or other material which—

(a) relates only to Scotland and does not relate to reserved matters (within the meaning of the Scotland Act 1998);

(b) relates only to Wales and does not relate to reserved matters (within the meaning of the Government of Wales Act 2006).

(4) The Secretary of State must arrange for any guidance issued under this section to be published.

Section 4(4) of the 2022 Act provides that section 3 will come into force on such day as the Secretary of State appoints by regulations.

Please can you clarify when the Secretary of State intends to bring section 3 into force?

As you may be aware the Equality and Social Justice Committee is currently scrutinising the British Sign Language (Wales) Bill and an answer to the above question would greatly assist the Committee in its scrutiny.

Thank you in advance for considering this issue. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Welsh Parliament

Dr Robert Jones
Wales Governance Centre
School of Law and Politics
Law Building
Cardiff University
Museum Avenue
CF10 3AX

Email: jonesrd7@cardiff.ac.uk
Tel: 02920 874133

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

12 November 2025

Annwyl Jenny Rathbone MS,

Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre has today published *Prisons and Imprisonment in Wales: 2024 Factfile*. This latest report draws together information on prisons and sentencing published by the Ministry of Justice, including the recent W*elsh Justice Data: Annual Release*, as well as a raft of previously unseen data obtained via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Today's report includes findings that are likely to be of particular interest to the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee and its previous work on women in the criminal justice system *and* anti-racism. For example, despite the commitments set out in *Women's Justice Blueprint* to reduce the Welsh female prison population, today's report reveals that the number of Welsh women in prison increased for a fourth consecutive year in 2024 . The use of remand for women in Wales also increased last year and the number of those sentenced to immediate custody for one month or less rose by 51 per cent. Six years on since the *Women's Justice Blueprint* was first unveiled, the data presented in this latest *Factfile* raise yet further questions over the effectiveness of the Blueprint.

The latest Factfile also shows that individuals from non-White backgrounds in Wales continue to be over-represented in almost all stages of the criminal justice system. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds were once again over-represented among the Welsh prisoner and

probation population, were more likely to be remanded in custody, sentenced to longer prison terms, and required to serve a higher proportion of their sentence in prison.

By continuing to ask searching and far-reaching questions about the operation of the system in Wales, this report hopes to further contribute to political, academic and public debates on Welsh criminal justice. This includes the Committee's own efforts to subject these important areas to meaningful scrutiny.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, I hope that this report will be of interest.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Robert Jones

Prisons and Imprisonment in Wales

2024 Factfile

Dr Robert Jones

November 2025

Prifysgol Caerdydd
Cardiff University
Canolfan Llywodraethiant Cymru
Wales Governance Centre

Preface

About Us

The Wales Governance Centre is a research centre that forms part of Cardiff University's School of Law and Politics. The Centre's work on criminal justice began in 2018 with the launch of the *Justice and Jurisdiction* project. The project was funded by a combination of the Economic and Social Research Council, the Welsh Government and Cardiff University and concluded in 2020. A total of 11 reports were produced throughout the project and the information gathered heavily informed *The Welsh Criminal Justice System: On the Jagged Edge*, which was published by University of Wales Press in October 2022.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to staff at the Ministry of Justice who have handled and dealt with the many requests for information that have been made throughout the course of this research. I would also like to thank those who prepared, planned, supported and campaigned for (over many years) the very first *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release*. I am also indebted to Katie Bodinger at Cardiff University for her continued help and unwavering support.

Contact details

Dr Robert Jones

Senior Lecturer in the Welsh Criminal Justice System

Wales Governance Centre

Cardiff University

Law Building

Museum Avenue

CF10 3AX

Email: jonesrd7@cardiff.ac.uk

Contents

Executive Summary **4**

Notes on Text **8**

Introduction **10**

1. The Prison Population **12**

2. Women and Ethnicity **22**

Women 22

Ethnicity 32

3. Prisons in Wales **39**

Population 40

Release and Homelessness 44

Safety in Custody 49

4. The Courts and Sentencing **59**

Imprisonment Rates 63

Conclusion **71**

References **73**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the latest in the Wales Governance Centre's *Prison Factfile* series. The report draws together information on prisons and sentencing published by the Ministry of Justice, including the recent *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release,* as well as a raft of previously unseen data obtained via the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The aim of this latest Factfile is to contribute to a more territorially refined, critical, and informed discussion on imprisonment, criminal justice, and devolution in Wales. Some of the key facts and findings included in this report are outlined below.

THE PRISON POPULATION

- Having reached its highest level in 2023 since the Wales Governance Centre began collecting disaggregated data, the Welsh prisoner population fell by two per cent in 2024.

- Almost a third (30 per cent) of Welsh people in prison were being held in English prisons last year.

- Data obtained for the very first time show there were 192 Welsh-speaking prisoners held in Welsh prisons in 2024.

- The number of Welsh prisoners on remand continued to rise last year. Despite reaching record levels in 2023 (730), the number of Welsh prisoners on remand rose by a further 10 per cent in 2024 (804).

- At HMP Cardiff, more than half (56 per cent) of all prisoners were being held on remand in 2024.

- When combined, a third (33 per cent) of the Welsh prison population were either on remand or in prison having been recalled to custody in 2024.

WOMEN AND ETHNICTY

- Despite repeated commitments by the UK Government and Welsh Government to reduce the number of Welsh women in prison, the number of Welsh female prisoners increased for the fourth consecutive year in 2024 .

- Analyses of sentencing data show that in 2024 the number of women handed immediate custodial sentences in Wales reached its highest level since the outbreak of Covid-19.

- There was a 51 per cent increase in the number of women sentenced to immediate custody for one month or less in 2024. In total, around a quarter (24 per cent) of all women sentenced to immediate custody in Wales were handed sentences of up to one month or less last year.

- Although the *Women's Justice Blueprint* contains a commitment to 'building confidence' in the use of alternatives to remand in Wales, the proportion of Welsh women in prison on remand is increasing. While remand prisoners comprised 15 per cent of the Welsh female prison population when the *Blueprint* was published in 2019, almost a quarter (23 per cent) of Welsh women in prison were on remand last year.

- The number of women remanded at the magistrates' court in Wales increased by 25 per cent in 2024.

- Those belonging to a Black ethnic group in Wales were the most over-represented ethnic group in prison in 2024. There were 62 Black people from Wales in prison for every 10,000 of the population in 2024, compared to just 15 White people per 10,000 of the population.

- The average custodial sentence length in Wales between 2017 and 2024 was 9.4 months higher for Black defendants (25.2 months) than those from a White ethnic group (15.8 months).

- Between 2017 and 2024, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of Black defendants were remanded into custody at the Crown Court in Wales. This compares to just over half (52 per cent) of White defendants.

PRISONS IN WALES

- The average number of people held in the Welsh prison estate fell by two per cent in 2024.

- Since HMP Berwyn opened in 2017, the number of English prisoners held in Wales has increased by 191 per cent.

- On average, 1,861 prisoners from England were being held in Wales in 2024. That is the equivalent population of HMP Parc and represents a further increase on the level recorded in 2023 (1,780).

- The Ministry of Justice's early prison release scheme (SDS40) added to growing concerns over prisoner homelessness in England and Wales in 2024. There were 2,227 people released from Welsh prisons under SDS40 between September 2024 and March 2025.

- The number of those released from Welsh prisons without a fixed address to return to increased by 34 per cent in 2024.

- 560 prison leavers managed by Welsh probation services were rough sleeping on the day of their release in 2024/25.

- There were a record number (21) of deaths across the Welsh prison estate in 2024, 17 of which were recorded at HMP Parc.

- There were four self-inflicted deaths recorded across the Welsh prison estate in 2024, three of which were at HMP Parc.

- Of the 13,897 individuals who self-harmed in prison in England and Wales last year, 1,018 had a recorded origin address in Wales.

- There were increases in prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (2 per cent), assaults on staff (22 per cent), and self-harm incidents (11 per cent) across the Welsh prison estate in 2024.

THE COURTS AND SENTENCING

- Criminal court data show that the backlog of cases in the magistrates' court and Crown Court in Wales is growing. At the end of December 2024, there were 11,850 outstanding cases at the magistrates' court and 2,663 outstanding cases at the Crown Court.

- Although the 'in-country' imprisonment rate fell in Wales in 2024, the level recorded in Wales (167 per 100,000) continues to far exceed the rate recorded in any other country in western Europe.

- Disaggregated data also show that Wales has recorded a higher 'home address' imprisonment rate than England in each year since 2013.

- Based on home address, there were 154 Welsh people per 100,000 of the Welsh population in prison in 2024. This compared to a rate of 139 English prisoners per 100,000 of the population.

- When measured as a rate per 100,000 of the total population (all sexes), the Welsh female imprisonment rate (7.6 per 100,000) would have ranked third highest in western Europe in 2024.

NOTES ON TEXT

Welsh and English prison population data are now published by the Ministry of Justice as part of its *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release*. All data relating to the 'home address' of prisoners are based on a prisoner's origin address (home address on reception into custody). The Ministry of Justice states that around 97 per cent of prisoners have an origin location (i.e. addresses that are recorded on its central IT system). If no address is given, an offender's committal court address is used as a proxy for the area in which they are resident. Those with no recorded origin are typically foreign nationals or those recently received into custody. No address has been recorded and no court information is available for around three per cent of all prisoners; these figures are excluded from the data included in this report.

Prosecution, conviction, and sentencing data broken down by police force area are used in this report to analyse trends and outcomes at courts in Wales and England. These data were gathered from the Ministry of Justice's *Outcomes by Offence data tool (Pivot Table): December 2024*. Although it is understood that not *all* people prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced at Welsh courts will be domiciled in Wales, there is an expectation that many people dealt with at courts in Wales will be domiciled in Wales (the same rule-of-thumb applies to England). Section 30 of the Courts Act 2003 directs that when individuals are required to appear before a magistrates' court they are required to appear in a place 'in the local justice area'. This includes a location in the local justice area in which the offence is alleged to have been committed, a place in which the person charged resides, a place in which witnesses (or the majority of witnesses) reside, or a place where other cases raising similar issues are being dealt with. There are 10 local justice areas in Wales following the introduction of the Local Justice Areas Order 2016.[1] At the Crown Court, Criminal Procedure Rule 9.3 states that in deciding the Crown Court centre at which trial will take place, one of the considerations should be the convenience of the court's location for parties and witnesses involved in the case.[2]

[1] North West Wales; North Central Wales; North East Wales; Montgomeryshire; Cardiff; Mid Wales; Gwent; Carmarthenshire; Ceredigion; West Glamorgan.
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/941/pdfs/uksiem_20160941_en.pdf

[2] Other considerations include how soon a suitable courtroom will become available; and the directions on the allocation of Crown Court business. https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/procedure-rules/criminal/docs/crim-proc-rules-2014-part-09.pdf

This report once again presents data relating to the accommodation status of those managed by Welsh probation services upon their release from custody. Settled accommodation is defined here as 'accommodation that provides a permanent independent housing solution, supported Housing and long term residential healthcare'. According to the Ministry of Justice, rough sleeping refers to a situation where an individual 'does not have any accommodation they are entitled to occupy, or they have accommodation they are entitled to occupy but they cannot be reasonably expected to occupy it for any reason. The individual sleeps in open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments) or in other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats or stations)'.

The *Factfile* includes data on the number of Welsh prisoners (based on home address) who self-harmed in 2024. According to the Ministry of Justice (2025/01), incidents where individuals have self-harmed are recorded on the Incident Reporting System. Although the system does not include the address of the prisoner, addresses has been added by matching onto the prison NOMIS system. The Ministry of Justice (2025/01) state that 'around half of the individuals that self-harmed' in the previous year did so on more than one occasion, the matching process, therefore, 'has looked up each individual prisoner rather than each incident, so has only linked to one address for each prisoner'. Prisoners that have left prison custody, changed address, then returned to prison custody to serve a new sentence are only recorded against the address which matched for them originally. The Ministry of Justice also note that there were a small number of individuals with no recorded address.

INTRODUCTION

Sentencing and prisons have been at the forefront of the UK Labour Government's political agenda since being elected in July 2024. Amidst rising prisoner numbers in England and Wales and repeated warnings of a looming 'capacity crisis', the Ministry of Justice introduced emergency early release measures (SDS40) in September 2024, with a total of 26,456 granted early release in the six months to March 2025 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/02). Despite offering some temporary respite to a system that was 'within days of collapse' (Independent Review of Prison Capacity, 2025: 61), however, prisons in England and Wales continue to be blighted by the many problems documented in previous *Factfiles*. These include, to name a few, rising levels of violence (HMIP, 2025a); self-harm (HMIP, 2025b), deaths in custody (INQUEST, 2025), and inadequate prison healthcare (Independent Monitoring Board, 2025).

For some, however, the last 12 months have offered *some* cause for optimism. In particular, a spree of independent reviews launched by the UK Government has added further significant weight to growing calls for urgent change. At a time when the number of remand prisoners in England and Wales is rising (see para 1.24), Part I of Sir Brian Leveson's *Independent Review of the Criminal Courts* (2025) underscored the need to tackle the existing case backlog in the criminal courts to reduce the remand population. The *Independent Sentencing Review's* (2025) proposals to overhaul sentencing policies and practices have also been widely welcomed by penal reformers and campaigners (Nacro, 2025; Prison Reform Trust, 2025). Its recommendations include measures to strengthen and improve alternatives to custody, support progression from custody into the community, and reduce the reliance on prison sentences in England and Wales.

But despite accepting many of the *Independent Sentencing Review's* recommendations, widespread concerns remain about the Westminster government's approach and intentions. The UK Government's Sentencing Bill, presented to Parliament in September, has abandoned some of the review's proposals and significantly watered down others (Leapman, 2025). At the same time, the government in Westminster continues on its seemingly relentless quest to expand prison capacity in England and Wales. This includes the Ministry of Justice's plans to

invest £2.3 billion to construct four new prisons by 2031. This as part of the government's efforts to 'lock up dangerous criminals' and 'keep the streets safe' (Ministry of Justice, 2024/01).[3]

In this latest *Prison Factfile,* we once again reflect on Wales' place within the broader context of these developments, policies, and debates. For the very first time, the *Factfile* draws upon Wales-only data made publicly available within the Ministry of Justice's (2025/03) inaugural *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release*.[4] The report also continues to present data gathered through the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and there is a continued focus on what sources of Wales-only data remain inaccessible, as well as what new and original sources of data have been added. By generating this analysis and making key sources of previously unavailable data accessible to a wider audience, this latest *Factfile* once again demonstrates what is possible when Wales is the subject of serious, in-depth research. By continuing to ask searching and far-reaching questions about the operation of the system in Wales, this report hopes to contribute to political, academic and public debates on Welsh criminal justice. Amidst rising levels of self-harm in Welsh prisons, the continuing use of short-term sentences, further rises in the use of remand, entrenched racial disproportionality, and yet another year where Wales tops western Europe's imprisonment charts, the need for a serious and sustained discussion over the current and future state of the Welsh criminal justice system simply cannot be overstated.

[3] 65 per cent of people sentenced to immediate custody in England and Wales in 2024 were convicted of a non-violent offence.

[4] The Wales Governance Centre was asked by the Ministry of Justice to identify a list of key 'priority areas' in January 2025 after a series of Freedom of Information requests for Wales-only data had been rejected by the Ministry of Justice in November 2024 on the basis that they were deemed to be 'vexatious' in nature.

1 THE PRISON POPULATION

1.1 The size and growth of the England and Wales prison population was the subject of considerable political discussion and debate in 2024. Following the election of the UK Labour Government in July, an automatic early release scheme (SDS40) was introduced in September to help alleviate the pressures being placed on prisons by rising prisoner numbers (Crerar et al. 2024). At the same time, however, rioting and demonstrations in July and August resulted in 497 people being handed immediate custodial sentences, adding further to the population pressures (Syal, 2025).

1.2 Despite the impact made by the disturbances last summer, the total number of prisoners in England and Wales decreased by two per cent in the 12 months to December 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/04).[5]

1.3 When broken down by 'home address', however, slightly different trends emerged between Wales and England in 2024. While the number of Welsh people in prison decreased by two per cent last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/05), the English prison population (based on home address) fractionally increased (1 per cent) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/06).[6]

1.4 One possible explanation for the differing trends in England and Wales is the impact made by the 2024 'summer riots'. While Ministry of Justice data show that 651 individuals were sentenced for offences relating to the disorder, only five of these cases were recorded in Wales. In total, 99 per cent of those sentenced for cases in connection with the public disorder were in England (Ministry of Justice, 2025/07). A request for a breakdown of the number of Welsh people (based on home address) sentenced to immediate custody for offences in connection with the 'summer disorder' was refused

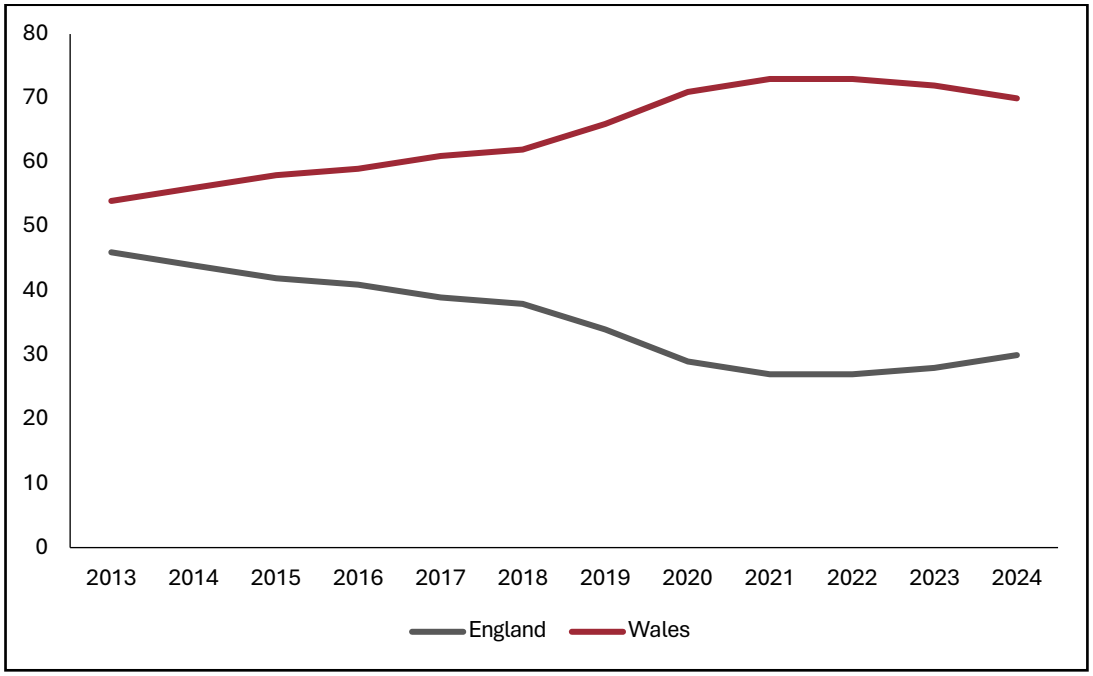
[5] From 87,489 in December 2023 to 85,372 in December 2024.
[6] English prisoners: From 80,715 in 2023 to 81,420 in 2024.
Welsh prisoners: From 5,034 in 2023 to 4,918 in 2024.

in September 2025 on the basis that the Ministry of Justice (2025/08) does 'not hold any information in the scope' of the request.

1.5 Although distances and dispersal continue to present a problem for thousands of Welsh prisoners (and their outside contacts) every year, the expansion of HMP Parc in 2015 and the opening of HMP Berwyn in 2017 has led to a significant increase in the number of Welsh prisoners being held in the Welsh prison estate over the last decade (see Figure 1.1).[7]

Figure 1.1

The percentage of Welsh prisoners being held in prisons in Wales and England, 2013 to 2024



1.6 The majority of Welsh people in the Welsh prison estate in 2024 were held at HMP Parc (41 per cent), followed by HMP Berwyn (19 per cent), HMP Cardiff (18 per cent), HMP Swansea (11 per cent), HMP Usk (six per cent) and HMP Prescoed (five per cent).

[7] The expansion of HMP Parc was announced in September 2013 (BBC News, 2013). The extension added 387 new prison places and was opened in January 2015.

1.7 Although the number held in Wales has increased in recent years, a significant number of Welsh prisoners continue to be held in prison accommodation in England. In 2024, almost a third (30 per cent) of prisoners from Wales were being held in English prisons, a slight increase on the level recorded in 2023.[8]

1.8 At the end of December 2024, Welsh people were being held in 109 prisons in England (Ministry of Justice, 2025/05).

1.9 The only adult prisons Welsh prisoners were *not* held in across England in December 2024 were HMP Cookham Wood, HMP Exeter, HMP and YOI Hatfield, HMP Humber, HMP Kirklevington Grange, HMP Leicester, and HMP and YOI Norwich.[9]

1.10 Because there are no high security prisons in Wales, all Welsh category A prisoners are held in high security prisons in England. On average, there were 34 prisoners from Wales held as category A in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/09).

1.11 Prison population data broken down by offence type show that almost a third (32 per cent) of Welsh people were in prison for violent offences in 2024. The second largest offence category for Welsh prisoners were those suspected or convicted of drug related offences (19 per cent) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/10).

1.12 Across England and Wales, the proportion of older people in prison has risen dramatically over the last two decades (Prison Reform Trust, 2023). The ageing prison population has led to growing concerns over the distinct health and social care needs of older people in custody. A report by the Senedd's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (2021: 63) into prison healthcare in Wales found that older prisoners are more likely to have 'greater and more complex health and social care needs', including chronic conditions, pain management problems, physical disabilities, and dementia.

[8] On average, 1,475 Welsh prisoners were being held in English prisons in 2024. This compared to 1,432 Welsh prisoners held in England in 2023.
[9] HMP Cookham Wood changed from a Young Offender Institution to male adult prison in August 2024.

1.13 The proportion of Welsh prisoners aged 50 or above has steadily increased in recent years. While prisoners aged 50 or above comprised 15 per cent of the Welsh prison population in 2017, this figure had risen to 18 per in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/11).[10]

1.14 The majority of Welsh people in prison in 2024 identified either as having 'no religion' (45 per cent) or as Christian (39 per cent) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/12).

1.15 Despite representing just 2.2 per cent of the Welsh population recorded in the 2021 Census, almost one in ten (9 per cent) of all Welsh prisoners between 2020 and 2024 identified as Muslim.[11]

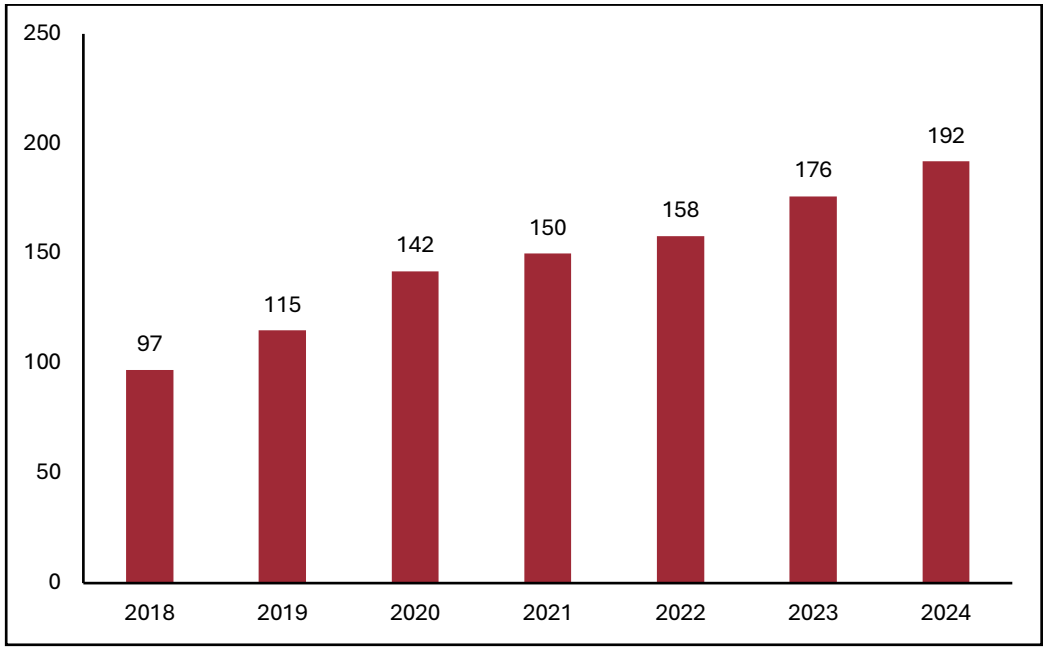
1.16 The lack of data and information on Welsh language in prisons has been a recurrent theme within parliamentary and academic debates on imprisonment in Wales over the last two decades (House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee, 2007; Jones, 2017; Jones and Davies, 2025). Although the Ministry of Justice (2024/02) published data on the number of Welsh-speaking prisoners for the first time in 2024, this was done so on an 'ad hoc' basis. Requests submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, therefore, remain the most reliable route to routinely accessing data on the number Welsh-speaking prisoners in England and Wales.

1.17 Official Ministry of Justice (2025/13) data show that, on average, there were 192 Welsh-speaking prisoners in Wales in 2024. Based on the average number of Welsh people (based on home address) held in Welsh prisons in 2024, the Ministry of Justice's figures show that just 5.3 per cent of the Welsh prison population were Welsh-speaking in 2024. Given that 12.6 per cent of the Welsh population aged 16 and above can speak Welsh (Office for National Statistics, 2022a), the information published by the Ministry of Justice adds to existing concerns about data inaccuracy and the potential undercounting of Welsh-speaking prisoners.

[10] From 742 in 2017 to 885 in 2024.
There were 359 Welsh people in prison aged 60 or above in 2024.
[11] There were 473 Muslim prisoners from Wales in 2023.

Figure 1.2

The average number of Welsh-speaking prisoners in Wales, 2018 to 2024



1.18 Despite repeated commitments by HMPPS to collect information on prisoners' Welsh language preferences, previous inspection reports at HMP Parc and HMP Berwyn suggest that this still does not happen consistently across the Welsh prison estate (HMIP, 2022a; 2022b).

1.19 At HMP Berwyn, where around two-thirds (65 per cent) of the prison population were from outside of Wales at the end of December 2024, Welsh speakers comprised just 4.1 per cent of the prison's overall population.

1.20 A recent study into the experiences of Welsh-speaking prisoners at HMP Berwyn found that prisoners had experienced both neglect and interference with their right to use Welsh at the prison. This included examples of prison staff at Berwyn telling prisoners to stop speaking Welsh, while others had been threatened with sanctions under the Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme for speaking Welsh, and had circumscribed their use of Welsh as a result (Jones and Davies, 2025).

1.21 On average, there were 57 Welsh-speaking prisoners held in English prisons in 2024. At the end of December 2024, Welsh-speaking prisoners were being held in 34 prisons in England (Ministry of Justice, 2025/13).

1.22 Ministry of Justice (2025/14) data show that there were 32 Welsh-speaking (band 3-5) prison officers in Wales (excluding HMP Parc) in 2024. On average, one in ten (10 per cent) prison officers in Wales were Welsh-speaking last year.

Figure 1.3

The proportion of Welsh prisoners who are Welsh speakers broken down by prison in Wales, December 2024

	Welsh-speaking prisoners	Welsh prisoners	% who are Welsh-speakers
Berwyn	79	663	11.9
Cardiff	12	572	2.1
Parc	47	1,435	3.3
Prescoed	4	155	2.6
Swansea	14	341	4.1
Usk[12]	23	201	11.4
Total	**179**	**3,367**	**5.3**

1.23 A significant challenge to emerge out of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the creation of a major backlog in criminal cases at the Crown Court in England and Wales (see 4.2). Due to a high volume of outstanding cases, the number of prisoners on remand awaiting trial or sentencing has markedly increased since 2019 (Ministry of Justice, 2024/03).

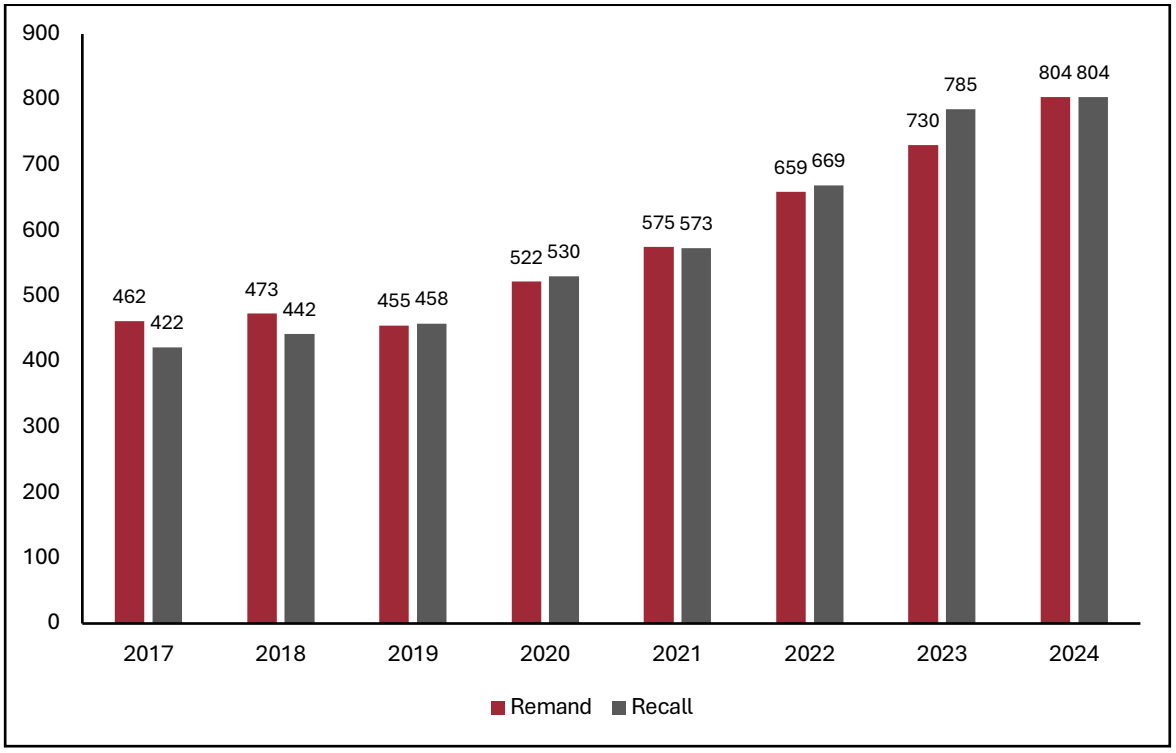
[12] There was a 425 per cent increase in the number of Welsh-speaking prisoners at HMP Usk in 2024. According to HMPPS, this sharp rise is due to an 'improvement to local recording practices' at the prison.

1.24 The number of remand prisoners in England and Wales increased by a further six per cent in 2024.[13] This included a seven per cent rise in the number of prisoners awaiting trial, and a six per cent increase in those awaiting sentencing (Ministry of Justice, 2025/04).[14]

1.25 *Prisons and Sentencing in Wales: 2023 Factfile* found that the number of Welsh prisoners on remand reached its highest level in 2023 (730) since the Wales Governance Centre began collecting data by sentence type in 2017. In 2024, however, the number of prisoners from Wales on remand rose by a further 10 per cent (804) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/15).

Figure 1.4

Welsh prisoner remand and recall population, 2017 to 2024



[13] From 16,005 in December 2023 to 17,023 in December 2024.
[14] Untried: From 10,487 in December 2023 to 11,195 in December 2024.
Unsentenced: From 4, 4,837 5,518 in December 2023 to 5,825 in December 2024.

1.26 Welsh prisoners on remand comprised 16 cent of the overall Welsh prison population in 2024. This compared to just 10 per cent of the prison population in 2019.

1.27 At HMP Cardiff, more than half (56 per cent) of all prisoners were being held on remand in 2024. This compared with 47 per cent in 2023 and just under a third (31 per cent) of prisoners in 2019 (before the outbreak of Covid-19) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/16).

1.28 Alongside those held on remand, prisoners who have been recalled to custody have also contributed significantly to rising prisoner numbers since 2019 (Rowland, 2024). This rise can be explained by the use of longer determinate sentences and an increase in the number of prisoners serving indeterminate sentences or sentences with an extended licence period (Ministry of Justice, 2024/03).

1.29 In 2022, the House of Commons Justice Committee (2022a: 43) called upon the UK Government to tackle the 'recall merry-go around' facing those sentenced to Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection (IPP). Despite being abolished as a sentence in 2012, the change did not apply to people retrospectively with the UK Government refusing calls to resentence those who have been detained for indefinite periods (Murray, 2023). As a result, hundreds of released IPP prisoners have subsequently been recalled to custody with the Chief Inspector of Probation, Martin Jones, warning that many prisoners are now 'trapped in the system' (Martin, 2025).

1.30 In June 2025, an expert working group convened by the Howard League for Penal Reform (2025: 5, 10) published proposals to help end the 'grave injustice' of IPP sentences and the 'momentous consequences' it has for those recalled. The group's recommendations included introducing a much higher threshold for recall, as well as independent scrutiny of recall decisions to ensure that the recall test 'has been properly applied' (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2025: 13).

1.31 Although the unreleased and recalled breakdown is unknown,[15] there were 52 Welsh prisoners serving Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/15).[16] One of which, Leroy Douglas from Cardiff, was sentenced to two-and-a-half years for a robbery offence in 2005, but continues to be held in prison (Lewis and Moffat, 2025).

1.32 The increasing use of recall can also be explained by major problems in probation services in England and Wales (Grehan, 2024; HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2020). A study by Mullen et al. (2022:10) identified that a shift towards 'risk management' culture has resulted in probation officers being 'too quick' to recall people to custody. To try and combat the rise in recalls, the Suitability for Fixed Term Recall Order 2024 was introduced in 2024 to reduce the amount of time that some recalled prisoners spend in custody.

1.33 Despite an overall reduction in the number of Welsh prisoners, the recall population increased by two per cent in 2024. 804 Welsh people were in prison having been recalled to custody last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/15).[17]

1.34 While those recalled to prison comprised approximately nine per cent of the Welsh prison population in 2017, recalled prisoners accounted for 16 per cent of Welsh prisoners in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/15).

1.35 When combined, a third (33 per cent) of the Welsh prison population were either on remand or in prison having been recalled to custody in 2024.

1.36 In 2024, there were 2,163 recalls into custody for breach of post-release licence by the probation service in Wales, excluding those returned to custody in connection with having been charged with a further offence (Ministry of Justice, 2025/17).

[15] A Freedom of Information request for a breakdown of those unreleased and recalled was submitted to the Ministry of Justice on 2 October 2025 but no response was received.
[16] There were 170 Welsh IPP prisoners in 2017.
[17] From 785 in 2023 to 804 in 2024.

1.37 There was a 45 per cent increase in the number of people recalled to custody for breach of post-release licence by the probation service in Wales in 2024. This compared to a 40 per cent increase recorded in England.[18]

1.38 Despite the fact that six per cent of the total probation caseload in England and Wales were managed by Welsh probation services in 2024,[19] eight per cent of all recalls into custody for breach of post-release licence were recorded in Wales last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/17; 2025/18).[20]

[18] England: From 18,814 in 2023 to 26,296 in 2024.
Wales: From 1,496 in 2023 in 2,163 in 2024.
[19] 14,546 people were supervised by Welsh probation services in 2024. The total for England and Wales was 239,985 in 2024.
[20] There were a total of 28,459 recalls for breach of post-release licence conditions in England and Wales in 2024.

2 WOMEN AND ETHNICITY

WOMEN

2.1 A particular problem faced by Welsh female prisoners and their families arises from the nature of the prison estate on which they are held. As there are no women's prisons in Wales, all Welsh female prisoners are imprisoned in England.

2.2 The 'distinct set of issues' facing Welsh women, including distances from home, problems maintaining family contact, and links with community-based services (Rees et al. 2017; House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee, 2007:19) has prompted the development of several initiatives and policies over the last decade. In May 2019, the Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice (2019: 1) published a *Women's Justice Blueprint* to help deliver services that are 'distinct to Wales' and included a commitment to help reduce the number of Welsh women in the criminal justice system (Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice, 2019).[21]

2.3 The Welsh Government's (2022a) *Delivering Justice for Wales* strategy reiterated its commitment to improving services for Welsh women and to diverting women away from the criminal justice system. This included recognition of the need to further develop the Women's Pathfinder Diversion Scheme and to 'embed good practice' and embolden 'radical change' across Wales (Welsh Government, 2022a: 11, 105) .

2.4 However, despite repeated commitments to reduce the number of Welsh women in prison, prisoner numbers in England and Wales are still projected to rise. In its *Prison Population Projections 2024 to 2029,* the Ministry of Justice's (2024/03) estimate that the number of adult female prisoners in England and Wales will rise by 11 per cent from 3,524 in September 2024 to 3,900 in September 2028. Based on disaggregated data

[21] The strategy was initially unveiled as the *Female Offending Blueprint for Wales.*

from December 2024, this will see the number of Welsh women in prison increase from 241 to 268 by the end of 2028.

2.5 One of the major problems surrounding the 'jagged edge' of justice in Wales is that policies devised by UK Government justice officials in Whitehall routinely fails to take account of the devolved legislative and policy landscape (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2022). Although the Ministry of Justice's (2024/03) latest projections include the caveat that their estimates do not take into account the impact that the newly established *Women's Justice Board* or its *Female Offender Strategy* will have on future numbers in England and Wales, there is no mention or consideration given to the impact that the Welsh Government's 'flagship' *Women's Justice Blueprint* may have in Wales.

2.6 Although the total number of Welsh prisoners (based on home address) marginally fell in 2024, the number of Welsh women in prison increased by 2 per cent last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/19).[22]

2.7 In December 2024, Welsh women were being held in all 12 women's prisons in England, with over three-quarters (77 per cent) of women placed at either HMP Eastwood Park in Gloucestershire (160) or HMP Styal in Cheshire (26).

2.8 The separation of women from children is often the issue most likely to affect the mental health and well-being of female prisoners. Throughout her review of women within the criminal justice system, Baroness Corston (2007: 30) was told that separation from children was emotional 'torture' for mothers in prison. The review (2007) found that 18,000 children a year are separated from their mothers by imprisonment.

2.9 On multiple occasions the Wales Governance Centre has requested data on the number of Welsh women in prison who are mothers to children under the age of 18. In response to a request in September 2023, the Ministry of Justice (2023) confirmed that

[22] From 244 Welsh female prisoners in 2023 to 251 in 2024.

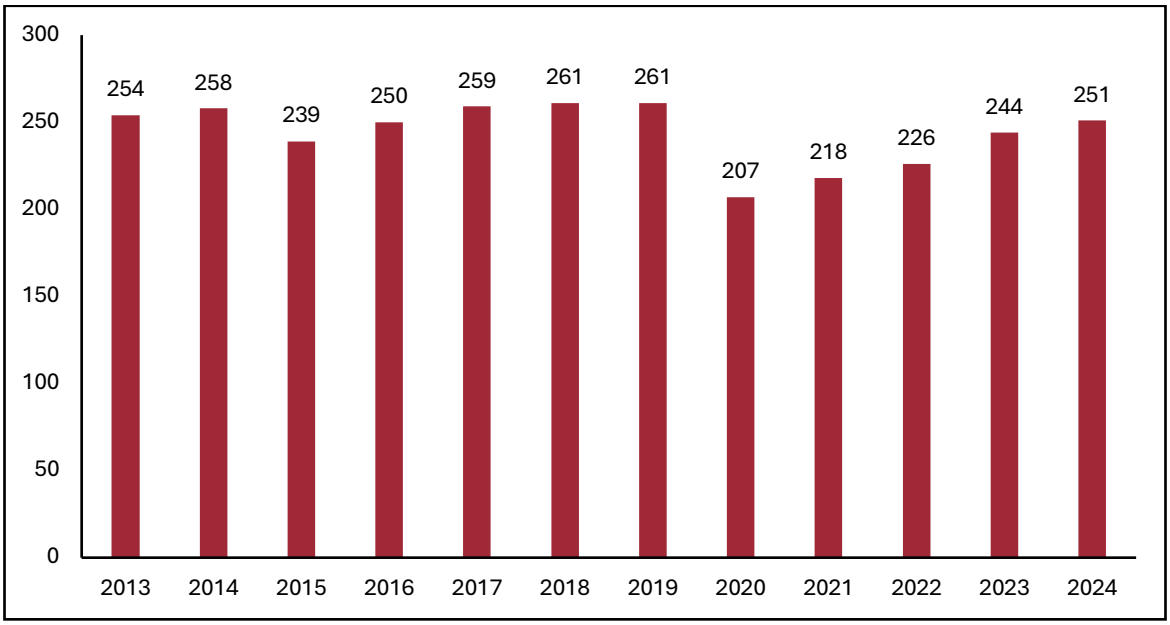
they held the data but that it was 'exempt from disclosure under section 22(1) of the FOIA, because it is intended for future publication'. When these data were eventually published as part of the Ministry of Justice's *Better Outcomes through Linked Data* (BOLD) in July 2024, they did not provide any Welsh disaggregation. In response to a follow-up request asking for a Welsh breakdown of the information included in the BOLD data set, the Ministry of Justice once again confirmed that it 'holds all of the information' requested, but refused the request on the basis that the 'cost of identifying those prisoners who entered prison from Welsh home addresses with children from individual case records would exceed the appropriate limit' set out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Although a new request for these data was submitted by the Wales Governance Centre in August 2025, this was once again turned down by the Ministry of Justice (2025/20).

2.10 Ministry of Justice (2025/21) data show that in the year ending March 2025, a total of 196 pregnant women had been held in prisons across England. The figures also reveal that 36 births were recorded in 2024/25.

2.11 A request for disaggregated information on the number of women from Wales included in the pregnancy and births data was rejected in July 2024. The Ministry of Justice (2024/04) confirmed that 'while separate data sets on pregnant women and their home location prior to entering custody exist, linking this information would be a complex process and would represent the creation of new data', something which the Freedom of Information Act 2000 does not oblige the Ministry of Justice to do. A request for a Welsh breakdown of the latest pregnancy and births statistics was submitted in preparation for this latest *Factfile* but was once again refused by the Ministry of Justice (2025/22).

Figure 2.1

The number of Welsh women in prison, 2013 to 2024



2.12 Analyses of sentencing data show that in 2024 the number of women handed immediate custodial sentences in Wales reached its highest level since the outbreak of Covid-19 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).[23]

2.13 The number of immediate custodial sentences handed out to women in Wales increased by 13 per cent in 2024.[24] While 2 per cent of all women sentenced in Wales were handed an immediate custodial sentence in 2019, the immediate custody rate for women increased to 3.6 per cent last year.

2.14 Previous research by the Wales Governance Centre has shown that women in Wales are more likely to be given shorter custodial sentences than men (Jones, 2019a; 2020; 2023; 2024). The frequent use of short-term sentences often brings considerable 'chaos and disruption' to the lives of women and their families (Corston, 2007: i), with

[23] 425 immediate custodial sentences were handed to women at courts in Wales in 2024.
[24] From 376 in 2023 to 425 in 2024.

women sentenced to short-term custodial sentences more likely to re-offend than those sentenced to a court order (Hillier and Mews, 2018).

2.15 Almost four in five (78 per cent) women sentenced to immediate custody in Wales were handed sentences of 12 months or less in 2024. This compared to 66 per cent of men sentenced to custody in Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).[25]

2.16 In 2024, around a quarter (24 per cent) of all women sentenced to immediate custody in Wales were handed sentences of up to one month or less. This compared to 12 per cent of men sentenced to immediate custody last year.[26]

2.17 There was a 51 per cent increase in the number of sentences of one month or less handed to women at courts in Wales in 2024.[27] On average, almost two women a week were sentenced to prison for one month or less at courts in Wales in 2024.

2.18 Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of women sentenced to prison for a month or less at courts in Wales in 2024 were convicted of theft. 14 per cent of women handed sentences of one month or less were convicted of summary non-motoring offences last year.[28]

2.19 Despite the Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government's (2019: 1) shared commitment to build 'confidence in alternatives to short-term custody' for women in Wales, 459 immediate custodial sentences of one month or less have been handed to women sentenced at courts in Wales since the *Women's Justice Blueprint* was published in 2019 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).

[25] There were 333 sentences of 12 months or less handed to women in 2024 and 3,092 handed to men.
[26] 101 sentences of one month or less were handed to women in Wales in 2024. This compared to 554 sentences of one month or less given to men.
[27] From to 67 in 2023 to 101 in 2024.
[28] 70 sentences of one month or less were handed to women convicted of thef offences in 2024.

2.20 90 per cent of all custodial sentences of one month or less given to women in Wales were at the magistrates' court in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/24).[29]

2.21 Analysis of court data by police force area show that just under half (47 per cent) of women sentenced to immediate custody at the magistrates' court in North Wales in 2024 received a sentence of one month or less. This compared to 35 per cent of women in Gwent, 30 per cent in South Wales, and 30 per cent in Dyfed Powys.

2.22 Between 2017 and 2024, 39 per cent of women who received an immediate custodial sentence at magistrates' courts in North Wales were sentenced to prison for one month or less. This compared to 29 per cent of women sentenced in Gwent, 28 per cent in Dyfed-Powys, and 27 per cent in South Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2025/24).

2.23 While the *Women's Justice Blueprint* clearly sets out the Ministry of Justice and Welsh Government's (2019:1) joint commitment to work with courts and sentencers to develop greater 'confidence in alternatives to short-term custody' across Wales, a snapshot survey carried out in 2022 found that around 50 per cent of Magistrates' Association members in Wales were aware of the Blueprint's existence. This, according to the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee's (2023: 23) *Women's Experiences in the Criminal Justice System* report, represents a 'particular concern'.

2.24 In its 2018 *Female Offender Strategy*, the Ministry of Justice (2018: 15) underlined the need for 'an entirely different approach' to the treatment of women in the criminal justice system. The strategy included a commitment to establishing five Residential Women's Centres across England and Wales to help 'see fewer women in custody' and to enhance support services in the community (Ministry of Justice, 2018: 8).

2.25 In May 2020, the then UK Justice Minister, Lucy Frazer QC, announced that the very first Residential Women's Centre would be sited in Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2020). The Ministry of Justice confirmed in August 2023 that the Residential Women's Centre will

[29] 91 sentences of one month or less were handed to women at the Magistrates' Court in 2024.

be located at a site in Swansea after it successfully appealed Swansea Council's decision to reject its planning application for the Centre in September 2022.

2.26 Unveiled as an 'alternative' to imprisonment for women convicted of 'low-level offences' (Ministry of Justice, 2020), according to HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) (2022) the centre will have capacity for 12 women who are from the 'local community or surrounding areas' and 'have been given a community sentence which includes a requirement to reside at the Residential Women's Centre'.

2.27 However, despite the UK Government's claims that the Residential Women's Centre will provide vital services to women and offer an 'alternative' to imprisonment, widespread concerns have already been raised about what the Howard League for Penal Reform (2022: 2) have described as an 'unevidenced experiment in wholly new residential provision'.

2.28 In response to the Senedd Cymru's Equality and Social Justice Committee's inquiry, *Women's experiences in the criminal justice system,* the Nelson Trust expressed deep concern over the requirement placed upon women to be resident at the Residential Women's Centre. Unlike other women's centres across England and Wales, fears have been raised that the residential aspect of the centre will simply 'replicate the harms of short-term prison sentences' (Nelson Trust, 2022:3). The Prison Reform Trust (2022: 2) have shared similar concerns about the Residential Women's Centre becoming a prison 'in all but name'.

2.29 One of the principal objections to the Residential Women's Centre is that, unlike other residential centres across England and Wales, the facility will be managed and run by the probation service. Under the auspices of HMPPS in Wales, there are credible and justifiable concerns that the Residential Women's Centre will simply act as a route into custody, rather than a route away from prison (see Carlen, 2002; Moore et al. 2018).

2.30 At the heart of these concerns is that, as already shown, the use of recall by probation services across England and Wales has increasingly become a route (back) into

custody in recent years (Ministry of Justice, 2024/03). To compound these fears, disaggregated data show that a higher percentage of recalls happen in Wales.

2.31 Between 2017 and 2024, a total of 1,009 women were recalled to custody in Wales for breach of post-release licence, excluding those returned to custody in connection with having been charged with a further offence (Ministry of Justice, 2025/25).

2.32 In 2024, 61 per cent (133) of all women recalled to custody in Wales were serving sentences of under 12 months. This is the same level (61 per cent) recorded for women recalled in England last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/25).[30]

2.33 Nine per cent of all women recalled to custody in England and Wales in 2024 were in Wales. This despite the fact that Welsh women comprised six per cent of the female prison population in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2025/25).[31]

2.34 One of the main arguments offered in support of the Residential Women's Centre is that it will divert women who might ordinarily receive short-term custodial sentences away from prison. These plans, however, are likely to do little for the increasing number of women in Wales who are being handed longer-term prison sentences.

2.35 Since 2017, the average custodial sentence length for women sentenced in Wales has increased from 7.2 months (2017) to 11.5 months (2024).[32] While just 2.3 per cent of women sentenced to immediate custody in 2017 received a sentence of four years or more, the proportion had more than trebled to 8 per cent of women in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).[33]

[30] 1,367 women sentenced to less than 12 months were recalled to custody in England in 2024.
[31] England: 2,242; Wales: 219.
[32] The Ministry of Justice announced changes to the way in which it develops and processes criminal court data in 2024 (including sentence length). Although the Ministry of Justice (2024/05: 5) claim that the changes 'have a limited impact on overall existing trends across the time series', there have been some alterations to the data included in previous Wales Governance Centre Factfiles. The data included in this report present the most up-to-date data available.
[33] 34 sentences of 4 years or more were handed to women in Wales in 2024.

2.36 With more women being sentenced to prison for longer in Wales, questions remain over what benefits, if any, the Residential Women's Centre will bring to women in Wales. This includes the increasing number of Welsh women in prison who are awaiting trial or sentencing.

2.37 Although the *Women's Justice Blueprint* contains a commitment to 'building confidence' in the use of alternatives to remand in Wales, the proportion of Welsh women in prison on remand is increasing. In 2019, the year that the *Blueprint* was launched by the Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice, those on remand comprised 15 per cent of the Welsh female prison population. In 2024, almost a quarter (23 per cent) of Welsh women in prison were being held on remand (Ministry of Justice, 2025/26).

2.38 On average, there were 57 Welsh women in prison on remand in 2024. This compared to 47 Welsh women the previous year.

2.39 There was a 16 per cent rise in the number of women remanded across all courts in Wales in 2024.[34] In total, 555 women were remanded into custody at either the magistrates' court (350) or Crown Court (205) in Wales last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/27).

2.40 A study by JUSTICE on the use of remand at the magistrates' court found that the processes for determining bail were often not 'followed properly' by magistrates in England and Wales. These failings serve to undermine the fairness of remand decisions reached by magistrates and can increase the likelihood that remand is 'imposed unnecessarily' (JUSTICE, 2023: 1). Although the Bail Act 1976 and Criminal Procedure Rules 2020 require magistrates to provide reasons for their decision to issue or refuse bail, explanations for these decisions are seldom provided.

[34] From 478 in 2023 to 555 in 2024.

2.41 Due to the smaller size of the prison estate, women are often remanded in prisons further away from home than men, a problem even more pronounced in the Welsh context (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2023).

2.42 While the Bail Act 1976 includes provisions which enable courts to remand people to prison for their 'own protection' against self-harm or the perceived danger of harm to others, the House of Commons Justice Committee's (2022b) *Women in Prison* inquiry found that this type of remand is used more often for women than men. The Committee (2022: 45) recommended that the UK Government amend the Bail Act 1976 'so that it is unlawful to remand anyone to custody for their own protection or welfare'. This recommendation was rejected by the UK Government in October 2022.

2.43 The number of women remanded at the magistrates' court in Wales increased by 25 per cent in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/27). [35]

2.44 2.5 per cent of all women appearing at the magistrates' court in Wales were remanded in 2024, compared with 1.9 per cent in 2023. In 2019, the year that the *Women's Justice Blueprint* was unveiled, 0.8 per cent of women in Wales were remanded at the magistrates' court.

2.45 Of those women remanded *and* sentenced at the magistrates' court in Wales, over half (54 per cent) went on to receive a non-custodial sentence in 2024. At the Crown Court, a third (34 per cent) of women remanded *and* sentenced there received a non-custodial sentence in 2024. [36]

[35] From 280 in 2023 to 350 in 2024.

[36] Those classified as receiving a non-custodial sentence here include those given a suspended sentence, a community sentence, a fine, an absolute discharge, a conditional discharge, compensation, or otherwise dealt with.
Magistrates' court: 129 women were remanded into custody and sentenced in 2023 and 70 received a non-custodial sentence.
Crown Court: 171 women remanded into custody were sentenced in 2024 and 58 received a non-custodial sentence.

2.46 38 per cent of women on trial at the Crown Court in Wales were remanded in 2024. This is the highest remand rate recorded for women at the Crown Court in Wales since 2012 and surpasses the (previously highest) rate recorded in 2023 (36 per cent) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/27).[37]

ETHNICITY

2.47 The Ministry of Justice's 2024 report, *Statistics on Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System 2022,* identified that minority ethnic groups are 'over-represented' within most stages of the criminal justice system in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2024/06: 3).[38] The findings showed that minority ethnic groups are more likely to be stopped and searched by police, arrested, and that a larger proportion of Black, Asian, and Mixed defendants are remanded in custody for indictable offences when compared to White defendants at the Crown Court (Ministry of Justice, 2024/06).

2.48 The Lammy Review in 2017 concluded that people from minority ethnic backgrounds in England and Wales are drawn disproportionately into the criminal justice system. The review found that despite comprising just 12 per cent of the population of England and Wales, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) men and women make up 25 per cent of its prison population (Lammy, 2017).

2.49 In March 2025, the Sentencing Council for England and Wales issued new guidance to judges to order a pre-sentence report if an individual is from a minority background.[39] The guidance was issued in response to data, research and evidence which reveals sentencing disparities (for certain offences) between white offenders and those from an ethnic minority background. According to the then Chairman of the Sentencing Council, Lord Justice William Davis, providing sentencers with as much information as possible about an individual's background offers 'one means by which such disparity

[37] 337 women were bailed at the Crown Court in 2024 and 205 were remanded.
[38] *Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System 2024* will be published by the Ministry of Justice on 27 November 2025.
[39] Similar guidance was also issued for judges sentencing young adults, pregnant women, and survivors of abuse.

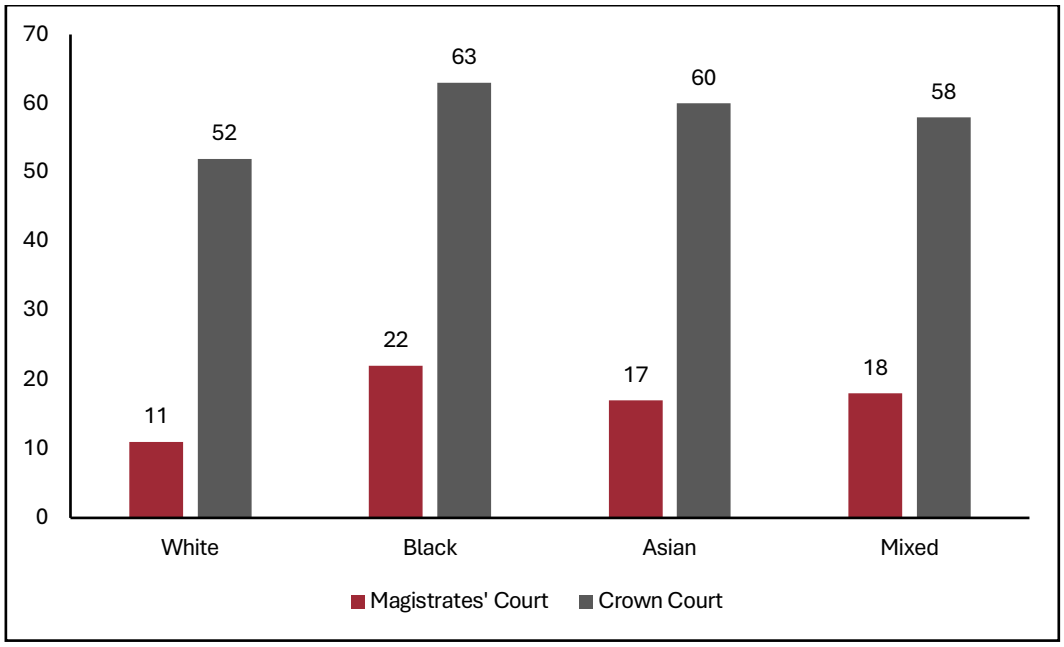
might be addressed' (Sentencing Council, 2025: 5). Despite the Sentencing Council's efforts, however, the plans were abandoned in March 2025 following an intervention by the then Justice Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, over fears that the proposals would have created a 'two-tier' justice system in England and Wales (Zeffman and Nevett, 2025).

2.50 While criminal justice is reserved to the UK Government, the Welsh Government has a clear set of responsibilities for promoting fairness and tackling all forms of discrimination in Wales. In July 2022, the Welsh Government published its *Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan* which includes a chapter dedicated to crime and justice. The plan sets out the Welsh Government's (2022b: 14) pledge to tackle inequality and racial disproportionality in Wales by creating 'an anti-racist criminal justice system'. In its 2024 Action Plan update, the Welsh Government (2024: 72-3) reiterated its 'steadfast' commitment to combating racism in the Welsh criminal justice system by working alongside 'criminal justice partners', encouraging anti-racist policy from the UK Government, and strengthening the evidence-base to identify racial disparity in the Welsh system.

2.51 Previous research by the Wales Governance Centre has uncovered the prevalence and extent of racial disproportionality within the Welsh criminal justice system. *Sentencing and Imprisonment in Wales* (Jones, 2019a), *Sentencing and Immediate Custody in Wales* (Jones, 2019b), the *Welsh Criminal Justice System: On the Jagged Edge* (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2022), *Prisons in Wales* (Jones, 2023), and *Prisons and Sentencing in Wales* (Jones, 2024) found that individuals from non-White backgrounds in Wales were over-represented in almost all stages of the criminal justice system. The latest data show that these trends continued in 2024.

Figure 2.2

The average remand rate (%) at the magistrates' court and Crown Court in Wales broken down by ethnic group, between 2017 and 2024



2.52 Consistent with trends observed on an England and Wales level, analysis of court data in Wales show that a higher proportion of Black, Asian and Mixed defendants are remanded to custody at both the magistrates' court and Crown Court.

2.53 Between 2017 and 2024, almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of Black defendants were remanded into custody at the Crown Court in Wales.[40] This compares to just over half (52 per cent) of White defendants (Ministry of Justice, 2025/27) (see Figure 2.2).

2.54 A fifth (22 per cent) of all Black defendants appearing at the magistrates' court in Wales between 2017 and 2024 were remanded into custody. This compares to 11 per cent of White defendants, 18 per cent of Mixed defendants, and 17 per cent of defendants from an Asian background (Ministry of Justice, 2025/27).[41]

[40] 712 Black defendants were remanded in custody at the Crown Court in Wales between 2017 and 2024.
[41] High levels of missing data place considerable limitations on what conclusions can be drawn from data by ethnic group at magistrates' Courts in England and Wales.

Figure 2.3

The percentage of English and Welsh people in the general population and in prison by ethnic group in 2024[42]

Ethnic Group	Prisoners	% of Prison population	% of General population	Rate of Representation in Prison
England				
White	57,712	70.9	81.1	0.87
Black	10,195	12.5	4.2	3
Asian	6,748	8.3	8.8	0.94
Mixed	3,945	4.9	3	1.6
Wales				
White	4,339	88.2	93.8	0.94
Black	171	3.5	0.9	3.9
Asian	162	3	2.4	1.3
Mixed	161	3.3	1.6	2.1

2.55 When analysed alongside Welsh population data drawn from the 2021 Census, Black individuals from Wales were the most over-represented ethnic group in prison in 2024, followed by those from a Mixed background and individuals belonging to an Asian ethnic group (see Figure 2.3) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/28; Office for National Statistics, 2022b).

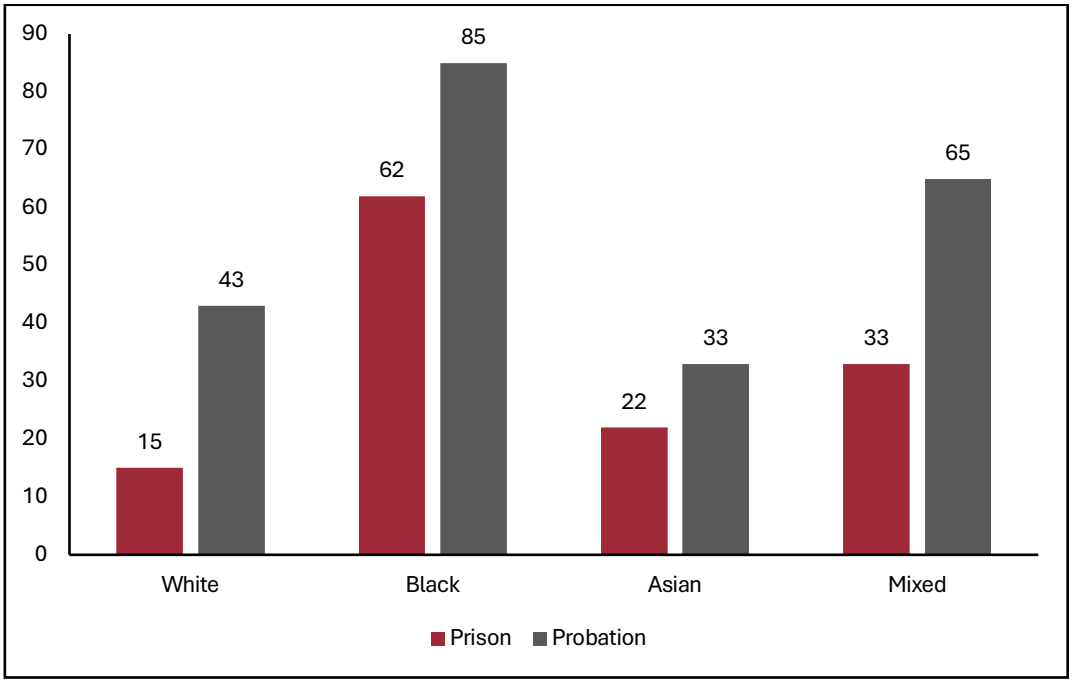
[42] The 'Asian' category included here does not include those identified as 'Chinese' in the 2021 census or within the Ministry of Justice's prison population statistics. Population by ethnicity (2021 census): White (2,915,843); Black (27,554); Asian (74,577); Mixed (48,602).

2.56 Consistent with the trends recorded in previous years, Welsh individuals from a White ethnic background were the only group to be (marginally) under-represented in prison in 2024.

2.57 English prisoners from a Black and Mixed ethnic group were also over-represented in prison in 2024. The level of over-representation for each of these groups, however, was higher in Wales than it was in England last year (see Figure 2.3) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/29; Office for National Statistics, 2022b).

Figure 2.4

Rates of imprisonment and probation supervision per 10,000 people by ethnic group in Wales in 2024[43]



[43] The 'Asian' category included in the prison data does not include those identified as 'Chinese' in the 2021 census or within the Ministry of Justice's prison population statistics . Population by ethnicity (2021 census): White (2,915,843); Black (27,554); Asian (74,577); Mixed (48,602). The Ministry of Justice's probation statistics, however, include those identified as 'Chinese' within the Asian category. The rate calculated for the Asian probation population include those who identify as Chinese (14,454). Population by ethnicity (2021 census): White (2,915,843); Black (27,554); Asian (89,031); Mixed (48,602).

2.58 There were 62 Black people from Wales in prison for every 10,000 of the population in 2024. This rate compared to just 15 White people per 10,000 of the population. There were 22 Asian people in prison per 10,000 and 33 people from a Mixed background per 10,000 in prison in 2024 (see Figure 2.4).

2.59 While White and Asian individuals were under-represented among the Welsh probation population in 2024, Ministry of Justice (2025/30) data show that people from a Black and Mixed ethnic group were over-represented.

2.60 For every 10,000 Black people living in Wales, 85 were under probation supervision in 2024. This compared to a rate of 65 per 10,000 for individuals from a Mixed background, 43 for White and 33 for those from an Asian ethnic group (see Figure 2.4).

2.61 Research has also shown that individuals from minority ethnic groups are more likely to receive longer custodial sentences. The Ministry of Justice's (2024/24) *Statistics on Ethnicity and the Criminal Justice System 2022* showed that Asian, Black, and Mixed defendants in England and Wales receive longer custodial sentences than White defendants sentenced for indictable offences.

2.62 The average custodial sentence length in Wales between 2017 and 2024 was 9.4 months higher for Black defendants (25.2 months) than those from a White ethnic group (15.8 months) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).

2.63 In 2024, the average length of a custodial sentence in Wales for Black defendants was 22.9 months, compared to 15.2 months for White defendants.

2.64 Individuals from a minority ethnic background are also more likely to serve a higher proportion of their determinate sentences in prison than White prisoners. *Prison, Probation and Sentencing in Wales* showed that between 2015 and 2018, Mixed prisoners from Wales (63 per cent) served a higher proportion of their determinate sentences in prison, followed by Black (61 per cent), White (57 per cent) and Asian (57 per cent) prisoners (Jones, 2020).

2.65 Between 2019 and 2023, Black (77 per cent) prisoners from Wales served a higher proportion of their determinate sentences in prison, followed by Mixed (70 per cent), White (64 per cent), and Asian (56 per cent) prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2024/07). A Freedom of Information request for 2024 data was submitted to the Ministry of Justice on 2 October 2025 but no response was provided.

2.66 In 2024, the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee's (2024) *Action, not words: towards an anti-racist Wales by 2030* acknowledged the extent of racial disproportionality across the Welsh criminal justice system. The Committee (2024:37) highlighted the 'difficulties' facing researchers who are forced to use freedom of information legislation to obtain basic data broken down by ethnic group in Wales. Drawing upon evidence received by the Wales Governance Centre, the Committee (2024: 37) recommended that the Welsh Government establish a Welsh Criminal Justice Observatory to help improve access to vital 'data and knowledge' in this area.

3 PRISONS IN WALES

3.1 The prison estate in Wales is comprised of five different establishments.

- HMP Berwyn in Wrexham is one of the largest prisons in western Europe. Opened in February 2017, the prison is a designated adult male category C training prison and holds Category B adult males on remand. At the end of June 2025, the prison held a total of 1,861 prisoners, including sentenced (1,676), remand (183) and those held for non-criminal offences (two) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/31).

- HMP Cardiff is a category B reception and resettlement prison that holds adult males served by courts in the local area. The prison holds a mixture of remanded, unsentenced, sentenced and recalled prisoners. At the end of June 2025, the population at HMP Cardiff was 742, the majority of which were on remand (403), followed by those who were sentenced (336) and prisoners held for non-criminal offences (three) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/31).

- HMP/ YOI Parc in Bridgend is a category C resettlement prison that holds convicted adult men, young adults (18-20), and young people (16-17) remanded and convicted. Currently operating as Wales' only privately run prison, HMP Parc was the very first prison to be built in England and Wales under the Private Finance Initiative. Following the construction of a new 'house-block' on the existing site in 2015, HMP Parc is one of the largest prisons in England and Wales. In June 2025, there were a total of 1,777 prisoners being held at the adult facility, including sentenced (1,669), remand (106), and non-criminal prisoners (two) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/31).

- HMP Swansea is a category B reception prison for adult males and serves local courts in south Wales. The prison population is a mixture of remanded, unsentenced, sentenced, and recalled prisoners. At the end of June 2025, the prison held a total of

388 prisoners, with 194 sentenced, 192 on remand, and two imprisoned for non-criminal offences (Ministry of Justice, 2025/31).

- HMP Usk and HMP Prescoed in Monmouthshire are two separate prisons located on different sites that are managed as a single establishment by HMPPS. HMP Prescoed is an adult male open prison that manages category D prisoners. HMP Usk operates as a small category C training prison which largely deals with offenders convicted under the Sex Offenders Act 1997. At the end of June 2025, HMP Usk and HMP Prescoed had a combined population of 506 prisoners, all of which were sentenced (Ministry of Justice, 2025/31).

POPULATION

3.2 The average number of people held in the Welsh prison estate surpassed 5,000 for the first time in 2022. Since HMP Berwyn became operational in 2017, the average number of prisoners held in Wales has increased by 34 per cent. There were 5,314 people held in the Welsh prison estate in 2024.[44]

3.3 Despite an overall reduction in the prison population in Wales, prisoner numbers marginally increased at HMP Parc (1 per cent) and HMP Berwyn (1 per cent) in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/32).

[44] From 3,962 in 2017 to 5,314 in 2024.

Figure 3.1

The average prison population in Wales by establishment, 2019 to 2024

Prison	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Berwyn	1,448	1,737	1,783	1,826	1,950	1,952
Cardiff	717	698	679	732	764	706
Parc	1,642	1,644	1,625	1,640	1,756	1,768
Swansea	417	362	319	375	416	392
Usk/Prescoed	523	462	454	497	520	496
Total	**4,747**	**4,902**	**4,860**	**5,069**	**5,406**	**5,314**

3.4 On average, 1,861 prisoners from England were being held in Welsh prisons in 2024. That is the equivalent population of HMP Parc and represents a further increase on the level recorded in 2023 (1,780) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/06).

3.5 More than a third (35 per cent) of all prisoners held in Wales in 2024 were from England.

3.6 Since HMP Berwyn opened in February 2017, the number of English prisoners held in Wales has risen by 191 per cent.[45] At the end of December 2024, 65 per cent of prisoners held at HMP Berwyn were from England.

3.7 In total, prisoners from 113 different local authorities in England were being held at HMP Berwyn in December 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/06).

3.8 Despite the claim in 2015 that HMP Berwyn would play a crucial role in 'being a regional prison serving the North West of England' (House of Commons Welsh Affairs

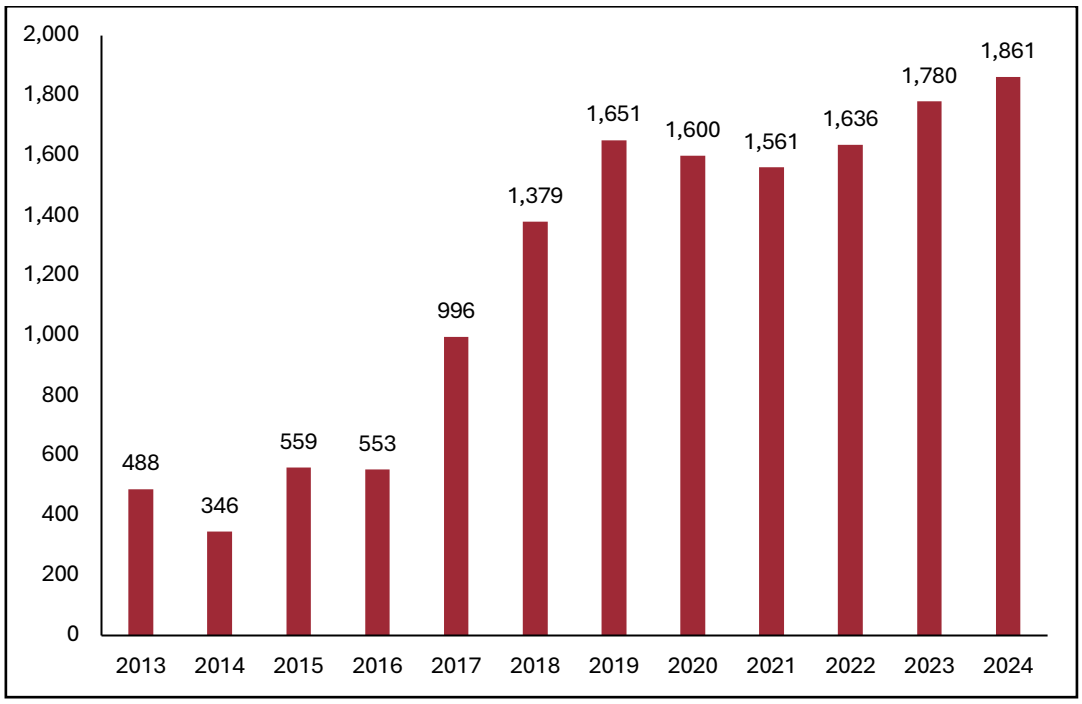
[45] From 622 in December 2016 to 1,807 in December 2024.

Committee, 2015: 11), prisoners from 80 English local authorities *outside* of North West England were also being held at HMP Berwyn in December 2024.

3.9 In total, 161 prisoners at HMP Berwyn had origin addresses in English local authorities outside the North West of England in December 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/06).

Figure 3.2

The average number of English prisoners held in Wales, 2013 to 2024



3.10 The number of first prison receptions in Wales increased by 5 per cent in 2024.[46] The largest increase was recorded at HMP Berwyn (19 per cent), followed by HMP Cardiff (14 per cent), HMP Swansea (5 per cent), and HMP Parc (3 per cent) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/33).

3.11 There were 550 additional receptions recorded at Welsh prisons in 2024 compared to the previous year.

[46] From 4,711 in 2023 to 5,261 in 2024.

Figure 3.3

The number of first prison receptions in Wales by establishment, 2019 to 2024

Prison	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Berwyn	57	826	1,100	943	1,029	1,228
Cardiff	2,459	2,047	2,457	1,973	1,924	2,197
Parc	345	275	353	321	391	401
Swansea	1,333	1,035	1,168	1,135	1,366	1,435
Usk	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	**4,194**	**4,183**	**5,078**	**4,372**	**4,711**	**5,261**

3.12 A study published by the Ministry of Justice in 2012 found that 15 per cent of prisoners reported being homeless prior to entering custody (Williams et al. 2012). In Wales, the latest information gathered from the Ministry of Justice show (when mapped onto prison reception data) that around a third (32 per cent) of all people arriving at prisons in Wales in 2024 had no fixed address (Ministry of Justice, 2025/34).

3.13 More than half (57 per cent) of all prisoners arriving at HMP Berwyn in 2024 had no fixed address. This compared to a quarter of prisoners who arrived at HMP Cardiff (26 per cent), HMP Swansea (24 per cent) and 13 per cent of prisoners at HMP Parc (Ministry of Justice, 2025/34).[47]

[47] The Ministry of Justice determined "No Fixed Address" (NFA) status using Basic Custody Screening Part 1 questions B3.1 ("What was your accommodation status before prison?") and B3.4 ("What type of housing did you live in before you came to prison?"). The system records only one No Fixed Address answer: if B3.1 is marked as NFA, B3.4 cannot be, and vice versa.
HMP Berwyn: 695; HMP Cardiff: 567; HMP Parc: 51; HMP Swansea: 337; HMP Usk/Prescoed: 0.

RELEASE AND HOMELESSNESS

3.14 The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 removed prisoners from the list of people given automatic 'priority need' status for temporary accommodation in Wales. Since its introduction there have been numerous calls to re-introduce priority need for prisoners amidst growing concerns over rising levels of rough sleeping and homelessness upon release (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2022; Mackie, 2017; Senedd Cymru's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, 2018; Shelter Cymru, 2017).

3.15 A survey carried out by Shelter Cymru in 2017 discovered that 13 per cent of rough sleepers in Wales first became homeless after being released from prison with no accommodation to return to (Jackson, 2018). The research also found that people were often recalled to prison because they had no fixed address. According to Jackson (2018: 29), this finding 'strongly suggests' that the removal of priority need status for prison leavers has been a 'contributing factor' to this problem.

3.16 In its *Ending Homelessness* White Paper published in October 2023, the Welsh Government (2023: 104) declared homelessness among prison leavers as 'one of the most significant challenges' to have faced homelessness teams in Wales over the last decade. Alongside anecdotal evidence from housing service providers, the most recent annual rough sleeper count revealed that two-thirds (43 per cent) of those rough sleeping in Wales had a history of serving time in prison (Welsh Government, 2023).

3.17 The most recent inspections carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) in Wales have raised several concerns about levels of prisoner homelessness upon release. Inspectors at HMP Swansea reported that 'a third of prisoners were either homeless or in transient accommodation' on the first night of their release (HMI Prisons, 2023: 52). At HMP Cardiff, HMI Prisons (2024: 5) found that 'too many' prisoners were being released as homeless or without sustainable accommodation and identified the problem as one of its six 'priority concerns'. At HMP Parc, inspectors found that there were gaps in the data available on prison release outcomes, with around 8 per cent of prisoners included in the data confirmed as having nowhere to sleep on the day of their

release (HMI Prisons, 2025a). At HMP Berwyn, HMI Prisons (2025b) found that only 41 per cent of prisoners went into their own home, rented property, or to live long term with family or friends upon their release. In the previous 12 months before HMI Prison's (2025b) visit, over 250 prisoners were released from HMP Berwyn as homeless. Most recently at HMP Usk/Prescoed, despite finding that 'positive accommodation outcomes' were reported in 90 per cent of cases at both prisons, inspectors discovered that access to accommodation and housing on release 'was becoming more difficult' (HMI Prisons, 2025c: 43).

3.18 The Ministry of Justice's early prison release scheme (SDS40) added to growing concerns over prisoner homelessness in England and Wales in 2024. For some, including HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, it was 'inevitable' that some prisoners would be released into homelessness and recalled to custody as a consequence of the UK government's policy (Vinter, 2024).

3.19 In September 2024, officials at Cardiff Council (2024) raised concerns about the additional pressures SDS40 were placing on accommodation services across the city (BBC News, 2024). Members of the Council's Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (2024: 4) were told that individuals due for release 'kept appearing and disappearing' from the lists provided to council staff, making it 'very difficult' for housing services to put the appropriate level of support in place.

3.20 Between September 2024 and March 2025, there were 2,227 people released from Welsh prisons under SDS40 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/02). During an inspection visit in January 2025, HMI Prisons (2025) found that 11 prisoners had been released from HMP Parc under SDS40 without anywhere confirmed to sleep on their day of release. The Ministry of Justice (2025/35) were unable to provide information to the Wales Governance Centre on the number of Welsh prisoners (based on home address) released as homeless under SDS40 because these data are drawn 'from different data sources'.

3.21 Ministry of Justice (2025/36) data obtained through the Freedom of Information Act 2000 show that 806 people were released from Welsh prisons without a fixed address to return to in 2024/25. This represents a 34 per cent increase on the level the year before.

3.22 On average, 15 people a week were released from Welsh prisons as homeless in 2024/25.

3.23 The majority of those released from prison as homeless in Wales were at HMP Cardiff (320), followed by HMP Berwyn (261), HMP Parc (111); HMP Swansea (110); and HMP Usk (four).

3.24 One in five (19 per cent) prisoners released from HMP Cardiff in the year ending March 2025 had no fixed address to return to. The number of those released from HMP Cardiff without a fixed address to return to increased by 13 per cent in 2024/25 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/36).[48]

3.25 On average, six people a week were released from HMP Cardiff as homeless in 2024/25.

3.26 *Prisons and Sentencing in Wales: 2023 Factfile* revealed that the number of those managed by Welsh probation services who were rough sleeping upon release from prison had quadrupled since 2021/22 (Jones, 2024). The latest data show that the number of those rough sleeping had increased by a further 12 per cent in Wales in 2024/25 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/37).[49]

3.27 Although the rate of rough sleeping upon release from prison continues to rise in Wales, it has done so at a much slower rate than England. In 2024/25, the number of those

[48] From 284 in 2023/24 to 320 in 2024/25.
[49] From 500 in 2023/24 to 560 in 2024/25.

managed by English probation services who were rough sleeping upon release increased by 46 per cent.[50]

3.28 560 prison leavers managed by Welsh probation services were rough sleeping on the day of their release in 2024/25 (Ministry of Justice, 2024/39).

3.29 Almost one in ten (9 per cent) of those managed by Welsh probation services were rough sleeping on the day of their release from prison in 2024/25.

Figure 3.4

Type of accommodation on release from custody, 2019/20 to 2024/25[51]

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Settled Accommodation	2,278	2,053	2,175	2,451	2,670	2,940
Other Housed	627	877	967	865	915	1,220
Bail/Probation Accommodation	482	433	574	721	900	1,190
Homeless, Not Rough Sleeping	581	400	314	106	105	45
Rough Sleeping	152	61	107	332	500	560
Unknown	1,284	911	295	197	100	140
Total	**5,404**	**4,735**	**4,432**	**4,672**	**5,190**	**6,095**

3.30 The number of those who were rough sleeping at 3 months post release from prison fell by 41 per cent in Wales in 2024/25 (Ministry of Justice, 2024/39). The number in England also decreased by 41 per cent last year.[52]

---

[50] England: From 7,855 in 2023/24 to 11,440 in 2024/25.
Wales: From 500 in 2023/24 to 560 in 2024/25.

[51] All cases from 2023/24 were rounded by the Ministry of Justice to the nearest multiple of 5 'to protect the disclosure of personal information of any individual'. There were 20 cases where individuals were housed in Home Office Immigration Enforcement accommodation on release in 2024/25.

[52] Wales: From 145 in 2023/24 to 85 in 2024/25.
England: From 3,230 in 2023/24 to 1,900.

3.31 While those rough sleeping at 3 months post release accounted for 4.7 per cent of the total outcomes recorded by Welsh probation services in 2023/24, this figure had decreased to 3.5 per cent in 2024/25.

3.32 Despite the continuing rise of rough sleepers in Wales, almost half (48 per cent) of those managed by Welsh probation services went into settled accommodation immediately following release in 2024/25 (Ministry of Justice, 2024/39). This compares to just 42 per cent of prison leavers entering settled accommodation in 2019/20.

3.33 The Welsh Government's *Ending Homelessness* White Paper has recently set out the government's plans to improve homelessness services for prison leavers in/from Wales. The changes include offering enhanced support to prisoners at the prison reception stage, proposals to use local connection at the prevention duty stage, and steps to ensure that prisoners can be considered homeless to secure early release (Welsh Government, 2023). The Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill was laid before the Senedd by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, Jane Bryant MS, in May 2025.

Figure 3.5

The number of prison releases in Wales by establishment, 2019 to 2024

Prison	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Berwyn	676	910	1,053	1,013	1,103	1,495
Cardiff	1,560	1,231	1,130	1,096	1,029	1,023
Parc	921	784	739	647	696	1,068
Prescoed	212	207	186	180	227	256
Swansea	845	789	619	717	746	748
Usk	59	83	61	64	54	69
Total	**4,273**	**4,004**	**3,788**	**3,717**	**3,855**	**4,659**

3.34 The number of releases from Welsh prisons increased by 21 per cent in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/38). In total, 89 prisoners a week were released from Welsh prisons into the community last year, an average of 17 releases per day across Welsh prisons in 2024. [53]

3.35 Data obtained via the Freedom of Information Act 2000 show that 1,899 Welsh prisoners (based on home address) were released under the SDS40 scheme between September 2024 and March 2025 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/39).

3.36 Prisoners given a determinate sentence are released from prison – in most cases automatically at the half-way point of their sentence[54]– under licensed supervision by the Probation Service. Released prisoners are subject to a set of standard licence conditions that require them to report regularly to the Probation Service. Those who are released under licence are subject to recall to prison immediately if the probation service reports than an individual has breached the conditions of their licence.

3.37 The number of supervised persons on licence in Wales increased by 16 per cent in 2024.[55] On average, there were 2,343 supervised persons on licence in Wales last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/40).

SAFETY IN CUSTODY

3.38 The topic of prison and prisoner safety in Wales was catapulted to the forefront of public and political debate in 2024 following a series of deaths at HMP Parc. According to the then Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice, there had been nine deaths recorded at HMP Parc between March and May 2024 alone (Argar, 2024).

[53] This figure is based on 260 working days in a year. If a prisoner has an automatic release date that falls on a weekend or Bank Holiday, they are released on the weekday before. The exception to this is prisoners serving very short sentences – of less than 5 days – where there is specific statutory provision for them to be released on a Saturday if their release date falls on a weekend.
https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2015-02-02/222892/

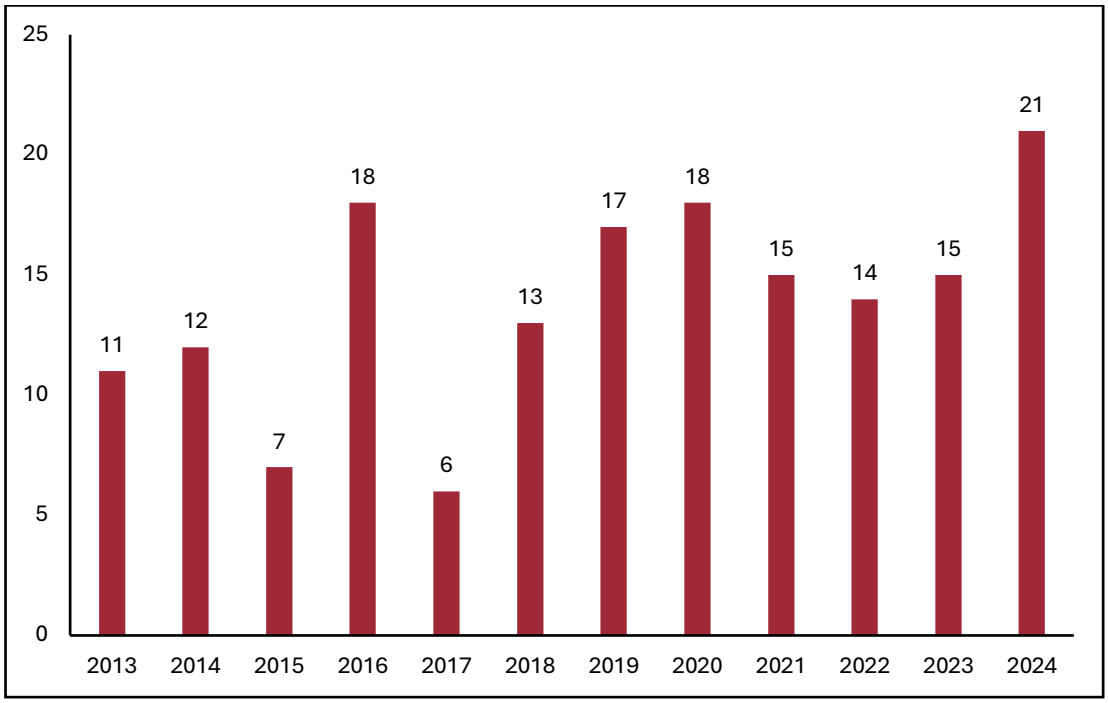
[54] For a detailed description of the differences between sentence lengths see Sentencing Council (2023).

[55] From 2,019 in 2023 to 2,343 in 2024.

3.39 There were a record number (21) of deaths across the Welsh prison estate in 2024, 17 of which were recorded at HMP Parc (Ministry of Justice, 2025/41).

Figure 3.6

The number of deaths in Welsh prisons, 2013 to 2024[56]



3.40 Following an unannounced inspection at the prison in January 2025, HMI Prisons (2025a: 3) concluded that there had been a 'serious deterioration' in standards at HMP Parc, with the prison 'troubled' by the steady flow of drugs into the prison. At least four of the deaths recorded at HMP Parc in 2024 are believed to be linked to drugs, with HMI Prisons (2025a: 3) suggesting that several were 'likely caused by synthetic opioids'. In May 2024, South Wales Police confirmed that a prison staff member had been arrested in connection with drug dealing offences at HMP Parc (Aitken, 2024).

[56] Data for 2024 capture those deaths recorded up to June 2024.

3.41 According to Ministry of Justice (2025/42) data, there was a 71 per cent increase in the number of drug finds at HMP Parc in 2024/25,[57] including a 57 per cent rise in the number of psychoactive substances.[58]

3.42 The recent deaths recorded in Wales have added further significant weight to longstanding concerns over prison safety in England and Wales. Analysis carried out by INQUEST (2020) into files on 61 inquests into deaths in prison custody uncovered a range of failings that have contributed to both self-inflicted and non-self-inflicted deaths since 2013. These include 'inconsistent and insufficient' mental health services; poor communication and information sharing between health officials and prison staff; poor emergency care including delays in calling for emergency services; problems relating to prescription and illicit drugs including delays in accessing medication; and 'wide-ranging failures' in providing basic medical care to prisoner suffering from physical and mental health problems (INQUEST, 2020: 7-8).

Figure 3.7

The number of self-inflicted deaths in Wales by establishment, 2019 to 2024

Prison	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Berwyn	1	0	0	0	1	**2**
Cardiff	2	3	3	1	0	**9**
Parc	0	1	1	0	3	**5**
Swansea	1	1	0	0	0	**2**
Usk/Prescoed	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Total	**4**	**5**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**18**

[57] From 659 in 2023/24 to 1,124 in 2024/25.
[58] From 304 in 2023/24 to 478 in 2024/25.

3.43 Ministry of Justice (2025/41) data show that there have been 18 confirmed self-inflicted deaths in Welsh prisons between 2020 and 2024. The majority of these deaths took place at HMP Cardiff (10), followed by HMP Parc (5), HMP Swansea (2) and HMP Berwyn (1).

3.44 There were four self-inflicted deaths recorded across the Welsh prison estate in 2024, three of which were at HMP Parc.

3.45 Disaggregated data obtained for the very first time from the Ministry of Justice show that of the 89 self-inflicted deaths recorded in England and Wales in 2024, four individuals had a recorded origin address in Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2025/43).

3.46 A report published by the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee (2018: 14) identified 'natural cause' deaths as the 'leading cause of mortality' in prisons in England and Wales. A recent study on healthcare in prisons in England and Wales found that prisoners are likely to die from 'natural causes' 20 years earlier than those held in the general population (The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death, 2024).

3.47 The Prison and Probation Ombudsman (2017) has determined that a large number of 'natural cause' deaths can be explained by inadequate prison healthcare as well as an increase in the older prisoner population. Evidence submitted by *South Wales Against Wrongful Conviction* to the Senedd Cymru's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's inquiry into prison healthcare in Wales described the poor treatment of elderly prisoners as a 'national scandal' that, in some cases, amounts to 'inhumane and degrading treatment' (South Wales Against Wrongful Conviction, 2019: 5).

3.48 Following two deaths at HMP Cardiff in 2019, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman concluded that the standard of health care provision at the prison 'was not equivalent' to what would be found in the community (Senedd Cymru's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, 2021: 28).

3.49 Between 2020 and 2024, there were a total of 49 deaths across the Welsh prison estate with the cause of death attributed to 'natural causes' (Ministry of Justice, 2025/41). While a third (33 per cent) of all prisoners in the Welsh prison estate were held at HMP Parc during this period, over half (53 per cent) of all natural cause deaths in Wales were recorded at HMP Parc between 2020 and 2024.[59]

3.50 In 2024, there were eight 'natural cause' deaths recorded at HMP Parc.

3.51 In August 2024, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman published the findings of its reinvestigation into the death of Mr Aaron Nunes at HMP Parc in February 2016. Mr Nunes died in hospital of septic shock and diabetic ketoacidosis. The Ombudsman's (2024:1) initial report stated that the care received by Mr Nunes at the prison was 'equivalent to that he could have expected to receive in the community'. An inquest into Mr Nunes' death later concluded that the direct cause of his death was 'his failure to manage his own health adequately' (Prison and Probation Ombudsman, 2024:1). However, following legal action taken by Mr Nunes' mother, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman reinvestigated his death and found that a 'large number of significant failings' had in fact contributed to Mr Nunes' death. According to the Ombudsman (2024:4) 'Parc could not offer the clinical care and observation required to meet Mr Nunes' complex healthcare needs safely'. Ultimately, Mr Nunes' death could have been prevented had he 'received dental and diabetic healthcare of an acceptable standard' at HMP Parc.

3.52 In the most recent round of adult prison inspections in Wales, HMI Prisons found that 59 per cent of its previous recommendations on safety in Welsh prisons had been achieved in full, six per cent were partially achieved and a third (34 per cent) had not been achieved (see Figure 3.8).

[59] There were 26 natural cause deaths recorded at HMP Parc between 2020 and 2024.

Figure 3.8

HMI Prisons recommendations on prison safety achieved by Welsh prisons between 2023 and 2025

	Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved	Total
Berwyn	0	1	1	2
Cardiff	5	0	1	6
Parc	0	0	4	4
Swansea	12	0	5	17
Usk/Prescoed	2	1	0	3
Total	**19**	**2**	**11**	**32**

3.53 The introduction of measures to combat the spread of Covid-19 in prisons contributed to a significant reduction in the number of safety related incidents recorded across England and Wales. In Wales, there was a decline in the number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults (39 per cent), assaults on staff (46 per cent), and incidents of self-harm (24 per cent) between 2020 and 2022 (Jones, 2023).[60]

3.54 Although the safety in custody measures suggested that significant improvements were made across England and Wales, the impact of Covid-19 restrictions and the associated regime changes in prisons 'muddled the picture' somewhat (Prison Reform Trust, 2023: 4). HMI Prisons (2021: 3) found that rather than ceasing, patterns of 'violence, intimidation and bullying' had simply 'taken other forms'.

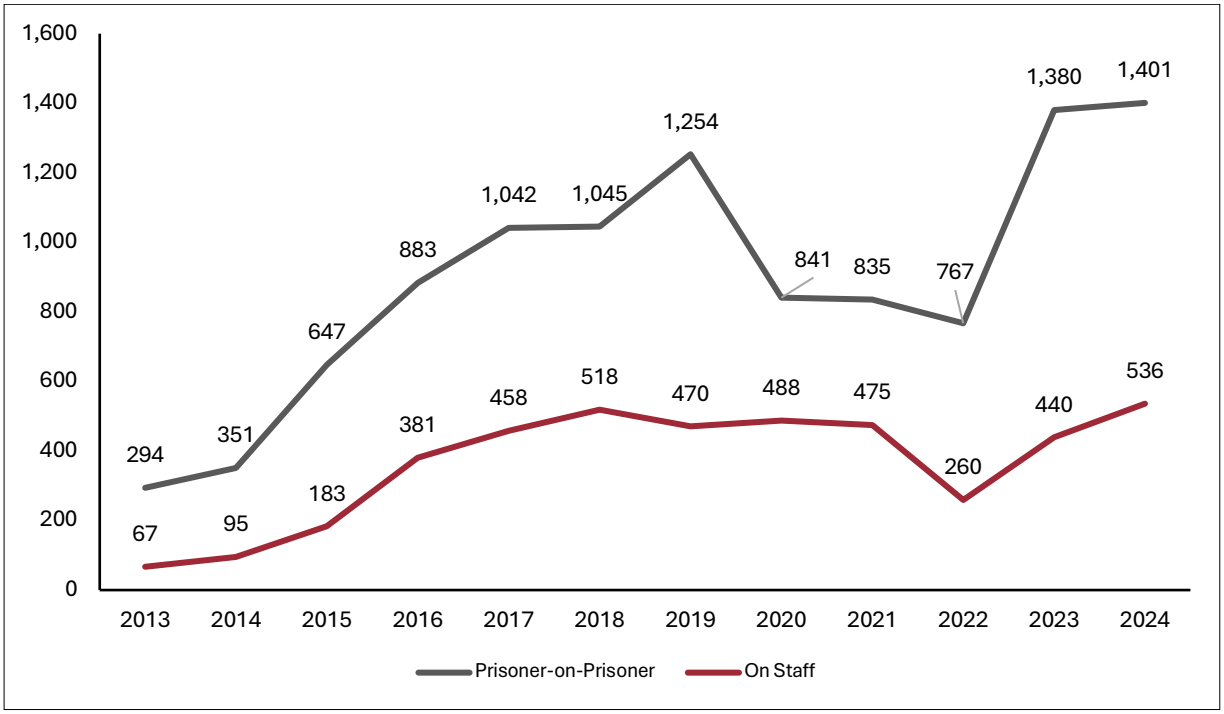
3.55 As prisons return to their 'normal regimes' and the prison population continues to rise across England and Wales, prison safety has rapidly deteriorated. In Wales, there have been year on year increases in the number of assault incidents since 2022.

[60] All data relating to 'Safety Statistics in Custody' at HMP Parc include incidents within the adult facility and the Young Persons' Unit. The Ministry of Justice confirmed in 2018 that they do not have a mechanism for 'separating incidents involving under-18s from those involving adults' at the prison.

3.56 Although the total number of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults in Wales increased by 2 per cent in 2024, the number of incidents fell in four out of five Welsh prisons.[61] The 15 per cent increase recorded at HMP Parc, however, was enough to cause the all-Wales level to rise (Ministry of Justice, 2025/41).[62]

Figure 3.9

Prisoner-on-Prisoner assaults and Assaults on Staff and in Wales, 2013 to 2024



3.57 Assaults on prison staff also rose (22 per cent) in 2024.[63] At HMP Berwyn, there was a 42 per cent increase last year, with the number of recorded incidents also increasing at HMP Cardiff (22 per cent), HMP Swansea (17 per cent), and HMP Parc (3 per cent) (Ministry of Justice, 2024/44).[64]

[61] From 1,380 in 2023 to 1,401 in 2024.
[62] HMP Berwyn: From 605 in 2023 to 599 in 2024; HMP Cardiff: From 207 in 2023 to 191 in 2023; HMP Parc: From 474 in 2023 to 543 in 2024; HMP Swansea: From 70 in 2023 to 60 in 2024; HMP Usk/Prescoed: From 24 in 2023 to 8 in 2024.
[63] From 440 in 2023 to 536 in 2024.
[64] HMP Berwyn: From 186 in 2023 to 264 in 2024; HMP Cardiff: From 41 in 2023 to 50 in 2024; HMP Parc: From 190 in 2023 to 195 in 2024; HMP Swansea: From 23 in 2023 to 27 in 2024. There was no total available for HMP Usk/Prescoed in 2023.

3.58 Although the Ministry of Justice's *Safety in Custody* statistics include information on the number of assaults on prison staff, these data do not provide details of the number of assaults that have been reportedly committed *by* prison staff. Despite well documented accounts and testimonies of staff violence against prisoners (e.g. Davis, 2003; Scraton and McCulloch, 2009; Woolf, 1991), Scott (2020) has argued that there remains a 'crisis of visibility' when it comes to prison officer violence in England and Wales.

3.59 The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture's (2020: 6) inquiry into inhumane or degrading treatment in the prison estate uncovered evidence of 'unjustified violence' by prison staff towards prisoners in England and Wales. The Committee (2020: 6) found that the problem is compounded by the fact that the necessary accountability procedures are 'underdeveloped' including reporting systems and oversight structures that can help to monitor and tackle prison officer violence.

3.60 Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice (2025/44) through the Freedom of Information Act 2000 show that there were at least nine cases where prison staff in Wales were subject to either Investigations or Conduct and Discipline for charge of 'Assault/Unnecessary use of force' on a prisoner in 2023/24. Six of these cases were recorded at HMP Berwyn.[65]

3.61 In September 2025, five staff members at HMP Parc were sacked following an investigation into leaked messages which made fun of self-harm incidents and an assault committed by a member of staff. South Wales Police confirmed in September that criminal proceedings into the case had ended (Lewis, 2025).

3.62 Data obtained by the Wales Governance Centre show that there were 7,842 prescribed complaint forms (COMP1, COMP 1A, COMP 2) submitted by prisoners in Wales in

---

All data relating to 'Safety Statistics in Custody' at HMP Parc include incidents within the adult facility and the Young Persons' Unit. The Ministry of Justice confirmed in 2018 that they do not have a mechanism for 'separating incidents involving under-18s from those involving adults' at the prison.

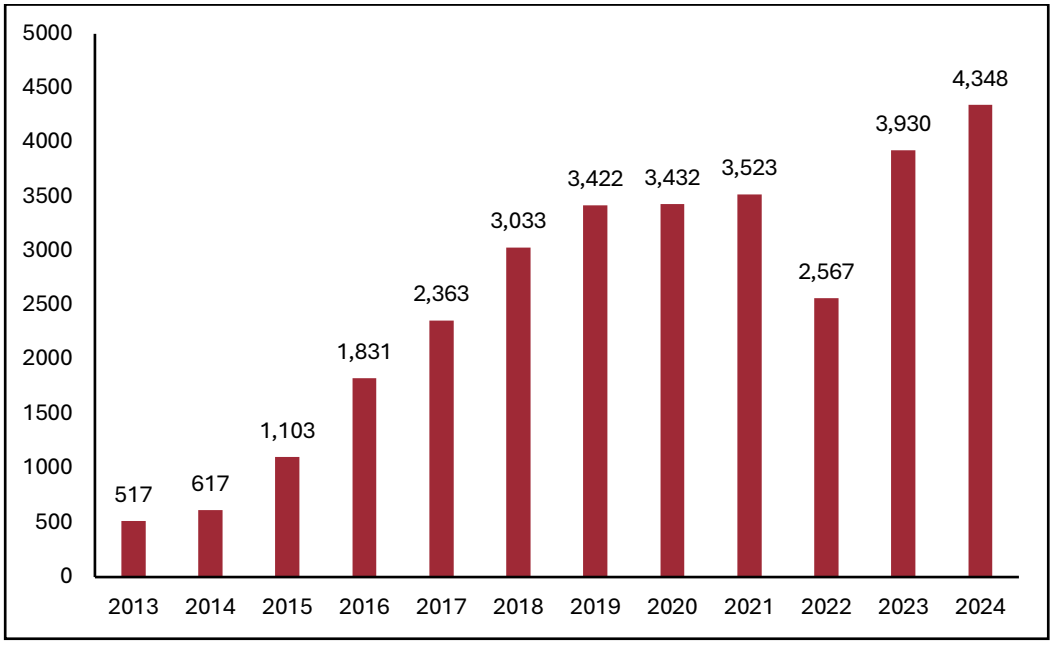
[65] A total for HMP Swansea was not provided as values of 1 or 2 are suppressed by the Ministry of Justice to prevent disclosure in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

2024. The majority of these were submitted by prisoners at HMP Berwyn (4,866), followed by HMP Cardiff (1,792), HMP Swansea (611), HMP Usk (424), and HMP Prescoed (149). HMP Parc are excluded from the data because they are a privately operated prison (Ministry of Justice, 2025/45).

3.63 Despite reaching their highest ever level in 2023 (Jones, 2024), the number of self-harm incidents recorded in Welsh prisons increased by a further 11 per cent in 2024.[66]

Figure 3.10

Self-harm incidents in Wales, 2013 to 2024



3.64 Although the number of incidents fell at HMP Usk/Prescoed (56 per cent) and HMP Parc (10 per cent) last year, self-harm incidents rose at HMP Berwyn (48 per cent), HMP Cardiff (16 per cent), and HMP Swansea (17 per cent) in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/41).[67]

[66] From 3,930 in 2023 to 4,348 in 2024.

[67] HMP Berwyn: From 1,142 in 2023 to 1,692 in 2024; HMP Cardiff: From 470 in 2023 to 545 in 2024; HMP Parc: From 2,133 in 2023 to 1,914 in 2024; HMP Swansea: From 158 in 2023 to 185 in 2024; HMP Usk/Prescoed: From 27 in 2023 to 12 in 2024.

3.65 Of the 13,897 individuals who self-harmed in prison in England and Wales in 2024, 1,018 had a recorded origin address in Wales. At a time when the number of individuals who self-harmed in England and Wales increased by 8 per cent, the number of Welsh prisoners (based on home address) who self-harmed rose by 14 per cent last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/01).[68]

3.66 A thematic report in 2024 into the use of care and separation units (CSUs) in English prisons found that CSUs have become the 'default setting' for managing and caring for prisoners, often 'with severe or challenging mental health needs' (Independent Monitoring Board, 2024: 2). Although the Prison Rules 1999 state that prisoners will be placed in segregation because their behaviour may 'put people in danger', 'cause problems for the rest of the prison', or for their own safety, CSUs are a 'frequently used tool' for managing those with mental health problems, including prisoners at risk of self-harm (Independent Monitoring Board, 2024: 2). Data on the number of prisoners held in Care and Separation Units in Welsh prisons was provided to the Wales Governance Centre in October 2025 following a request to the Ministry of Justice under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. These data have not been included here as a query seeking clarification about the data (and their meaning) has yet to be responded to.

[68] From 890 individuals in 2023 to 1,018 in 2024.

4 THE COURTS AND SENTENCING[69]

4.1 The Covid-19 restrictions put in place by the UK Government, particularly in relation to court proceedings, were responsible for major disruption to the 'normal system flow of individuals' through the criminal justice system in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2021a: 2).

4.2 A significant consequence of the restrictions has been the creation of a major backlog in the number of open criminal cases at the Crown Court in England and Wales. According to the Independent Review of the Criminal Courts, led by Sir Brian Leveson, 'broader systemic inefficiencies', the growing complexity of criminal trials, and the increased caseloads following the pandemic have exacerbated the capacity problems facing the system (Independent Review of the Criminal Courts, 2025: 123). At the end of December 2024, there were almost 75,000 outstanding criminal cases at the Crown Court in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2025/46).

4.3 In Wales, the backlog has placed additional pressure upon a court system already under significant strain. Since 2010, 23 Crown and magistrates' courts have closed across Wales, fuelling concerns around insufficient access to justice and the capacity of the Welsh court system (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2023; Newman and Dehaghani, 2023) (see Map 4.1).

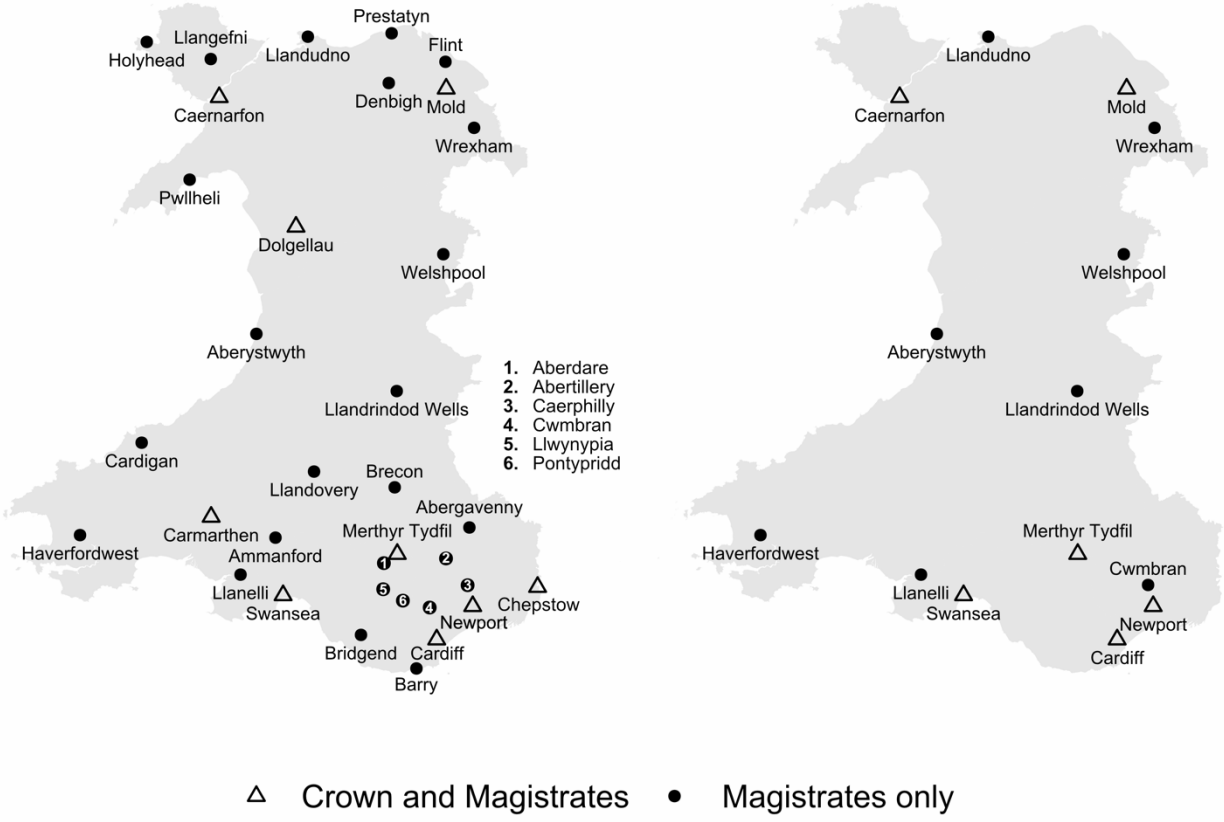
4.4 Disaggregated criminal court data show that the backlog of cases in the magistrates' court and Crown Court in Wales is also growing. In 2024, the average number of

[69] The Ministry of Justice announced changes to the way in which it develops and processes criminal court data in 2024. Although the Ministry of Justice (2024/05:5) claim that the changes 'have a limited impact on overall existing trends across the time series', there have been some alterations to the data included in previous Wales Governance Centre Factfiles. The data included in this report present the most up-to-date data available.

outstanding cases in the magistrates' court reached 13,494 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/47).[70]

Map 4.1

Crown and magistrates' courts in Wales, 2010 (left) to 2023 (right)[71]



4.5 At the end of December 2024, a total of 11,850 cases were outstanding at the magistrates' court in Wales.

---

[70] The magistrates caseload data for previous years has been revised by HMCTS following work to improve its data and management information. HMCTS found that the magistrates' courts open caseload data had been 'significantly overstated' in its previous statistics. These changes mean that comparisons between 2023 data have not been made here.

[71] Adapted from Jones and Wyn Jones (2022).

4.6 The backlog at the Crown Court in Wales is also severe. The average number of outstanding cases in 2024 increased by 15 per cent.[72] While there were a total of 6,785 'receipts' last year, only 6,607 cases were 'disposed' of (Ministry of Justice, 2025/46).

4.7 In December 2024, there were 2,663 outstanding cases at the Crown Court in Wales. This represents a 7 per cent increase on the level recorded in 2023 (2,480).

4.8 The backlog in cases across England and Wales has seen the number of prosecutions decline dramatically since the outbreak of Covid-19. In Wales, prosecutions fell by more than a quarter (27 per cent) in 2020,[73] with prosecutions falling at a slightly higher rate (31 per cent) in England (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23). Although the number of prosecutions has steadily increased since 2020, the level recorded in Wales in 2024 still remains lower than the number before the outbreak of Covid-19.[74]

4.9 The number of convictions recorded in Wales has also fallen since 2019. However, while the level has yet to return to its pre-pandemic level, convictions have increased in Wales by 34 per cent since 2020.[75]

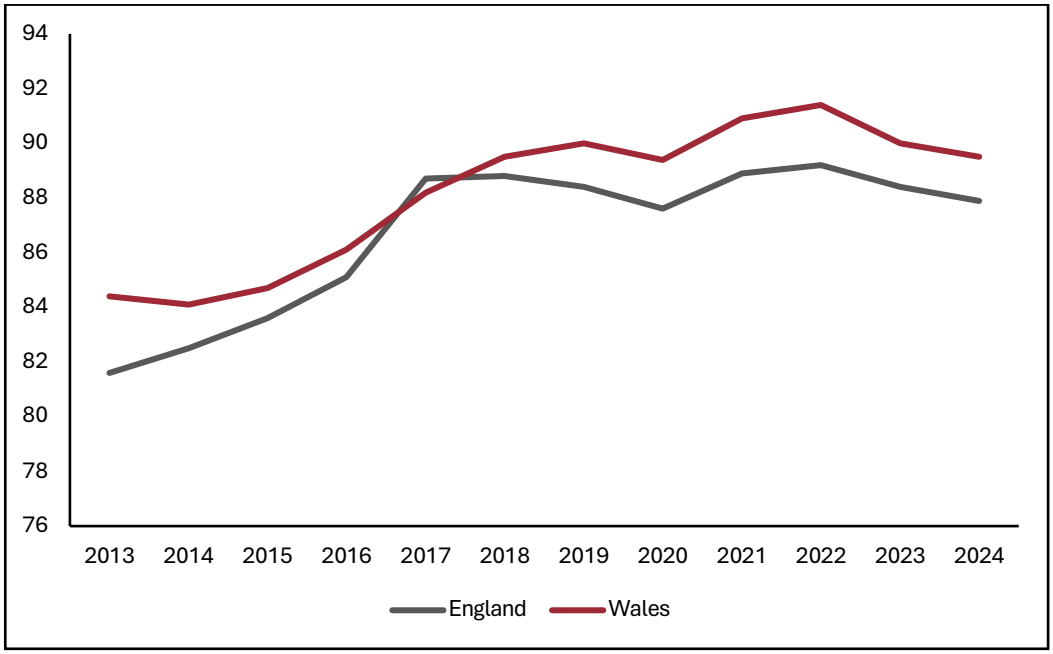
4.10 On average, the proportion of cases resulting in a conviction has been higher in Wales (87.9 per cent) than in England (86.6 per cent) since 2013 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).

4.11 In 2024, the conviction rate in Wales (89.5 per cent) was once again higher than the level recorded in England (87.9 per cent). Data published by the Ministry of Justice show that 2017 remains the only year where the conviction rate in England (88.7 per cent) has surpassed the level reached in Wales (88.2 per cent) since 2013 (see Figure 4.1) (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).[76]

[72] From 2,327 in 2023 to 2,680 in 2024.
[73] From 95,655 prosecutions in 2019 to 69,737 in 2020.
[74] From 95,655 in 2019 to 93,708 in 2024.
[75] From 62,396 in 2020 to 83,829 in 2024.
[76] The Ministry of Justice announced changes to the way in which it develops and processes criminal court data in 2024. Although the Ministry of Justice (2024/22:5) claim that the changes 'have a limited impact on overall existing trends across the time series', there have been some alterations to the data included in previous Wales Governance Centre Factfiles. The data included in this report present the most up-to-date data available.

Figure 4.1

Conviction rates in Wales and England, 2013 to 2024



4.12 The reduction in the flow of cases through the criminal courts has also impacted on the number of individuals being sentenced across Wales. In 2024, the number of people sentenced at the Crown Court in Wales remained lower (3 per cent) than the level recorded in 2019.[77]

4.13 In England, the number of those sentenced at the Crown Court was 14 per cent higher in 2024 than it was in 2019.[78] While those sentenced at the Crown Court rose by 11 per cent in England in the year ending December 2024, the number only increased by 9 per cent in Wales.[79]

[77] From 4,811 in 2019 to 4,687 in 2024.
[78] From 69,610 in 2019 to 79,591 in 2024.
[79] England: From 71,986 in 2023 to 79,591 in 2024.
Wales: From 3,981 in 2022 to 4,229.

4.14 The total number of immediate custodial sentences handed out in Wales increased by ten per cent in 2024. In England, immediate custodial sentences rose by 11 per cent last year (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).[80]

IMPRISONMENT RATES

4.15 Changing sentencing practices and the increasing use of immediate custodial sentences have played a majorly significant role in driving up prisoner numbers in England and Wales since the 1990s (Roberts and Ashworth, 2016; Millie et al. 2003; Sentencing Council, 2018). However, while increases from the early 1990s have almost exclusively been attributed to the rise in the number of offenders sentenced to immediate custody (Ministry of Justice, 2016), and inflated sentence lengths (Howard League for Penal Reform, 2024), in recent years the growing remand and recall population have significantly added to the prison population (Ministry of Justice, 2024/09).

4.16 In May 2024, The Institute for Criminal Policy Research published the fourteenth edition of the *World Prison Population List* (Fair and Walmsley, 2024). First produced by the Home Office in 1999, the most recent report provides a breakdown of imprisonment rates for 223 prison systems worldwide using a calculation based on the number of people held in prison in national borders. Since it was first published in 1999, England and Wales has recorded the highest (or joint highest) rate of imprisonment in Western Europe in eight of the fourteen *World Prison Population Lists*.[81]

4.17 On average, there were 86,802 people in prison on any given day in England and Wales in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/04).

[80] Wales: From 4,296 in 2023 to 4,687 in 2024.
England: From 60,378 in 2022 to 67,005 in 2023.
[81] England and Wales (145 per 100,000) had the joint highest prison population along with Scotland (145 per 100,000) in the most recent edition (Fair and Walmsley, 2024).

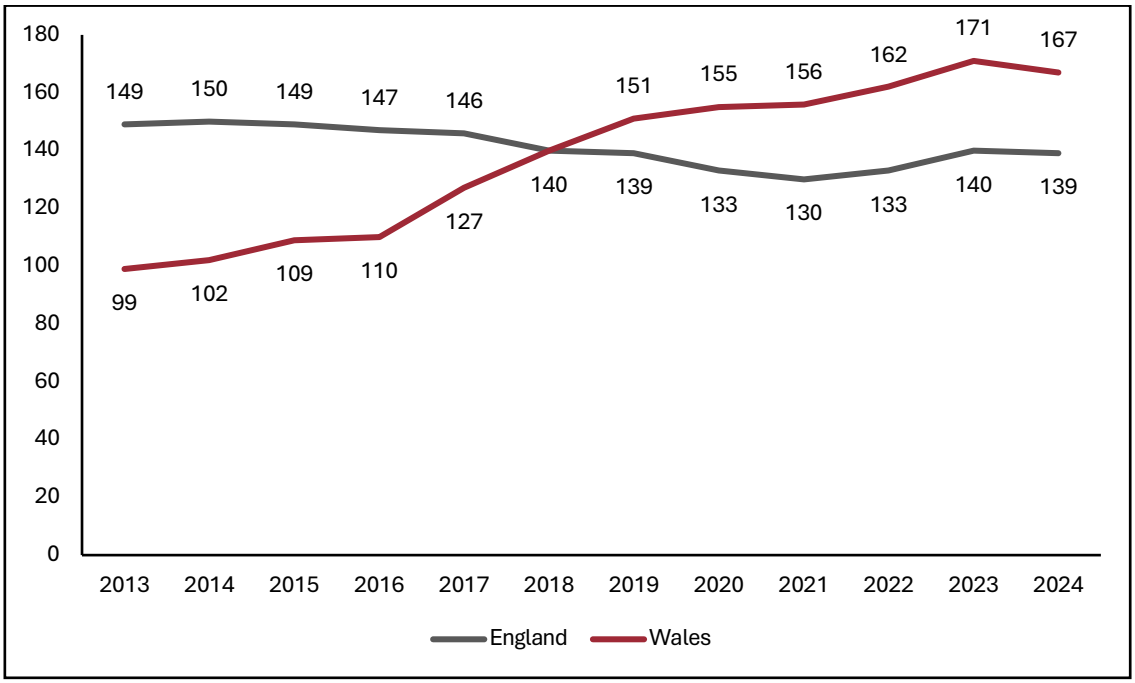
4.18 Taking all fourteen published *World Prison Population Lists* together, England and Wales has recorded the highest average prison population rate (140 per 100,000) in western Europe since 1999.

4.19 With a combined population of 61,806,682, the England and Wales imprisonment rate was 140 prisoners per 100,000 population in 2024 (Office for National Statistics, 2024).[82]

4.20 There were 81,488 people held in 115 English prisons in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2024/34). Based on the 'in-country' method used in the *World Prison Population List*, England's rate of imprisonment was 139 per 100,000 in 2024.

Figure 4.2

Prison population rates per 100,000 in England and Wales using 'in-country' method, 2013 to 2024



[82] England: 58,620,101; Wales: 3,186,581.

4.21 On average, 5,314 people were held in Welsh prisons in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/32). Based upon the number of prisoners held in the Welsh prison estate, Wales had an 'in-country' imprisonment rate of 167 prisoners per 100,000 in 2024.

4.22 Wales has now recorded a higher 'in-country' imprisonment rate than England every year since 2019 (see Figure 4.2).

4.23 In 2021, the then UK Conservative Government's *Prisons Strategy* White Paper re-outlined the government's long-standing commitment to expanding prison capacity in England and Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2021b). Through its *Four New Prisons Programme*, the Ministry of Justice (2022: 2) planned to create 'at least' 6,240 additional prison places across four sites in England (Jones et al. 2022). The newly elected UK Labour government's *10-Year Prison Capacity Strategy* has reiterated the Westminster government's commitment to prison expansion, including the construction of 14,000 prison places by 2031 (Ministry of Justice, 2024/08).

4.24 A snapshot of 2025 data show that the 'in country' imprisonment rate in Wales remains significantly higher than the level recorded in England. Drawing upon prison population data for June 2025, the 'in-country' rate of imprisonment in Wales was 166 per 100,000, compared to a rate of 140 per 100,000 in England (Ministry of Justice, 2025/31).[83]

4.25 While Scotland recorded the joint highest imprisonment rate (140 per 100,000) in western Europe in the *World Prison Population List* published in May 2024 (Fair and Walmsley, 2024), the imprisonment rate in Wales exceeds the level recorded in any other country in western Europe.

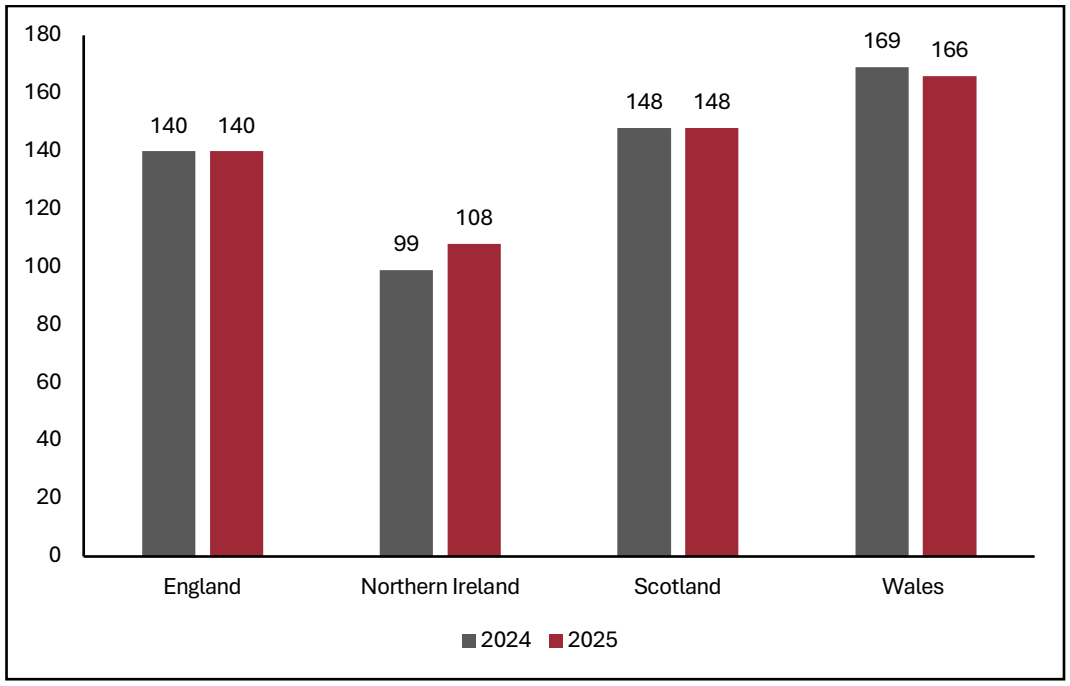
4.26 Although prisoner numbers are rising across all parts of the United Kingdom (UK), data from June 2025 show that Wales comfortably boasts the highest UK imprisonment rate (166 per 100,000), followed by Scotland (148), England (140), and Northern Ireland (108) (National Records of Scotland, 2024; Northern Ireland Department of Justice,

[83] England: Population – 58,620,101; Prisoner population – 82,916.
Wales: Population – 3,186,581; Prisoner population – 5,434.

2025; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 2024; Scottish Prison Service, 2025).[84]

Figure 4.3

Prison population rates per 100,000 in the United Kingdom using 'in-country' method, June 2024[85] and June 2025

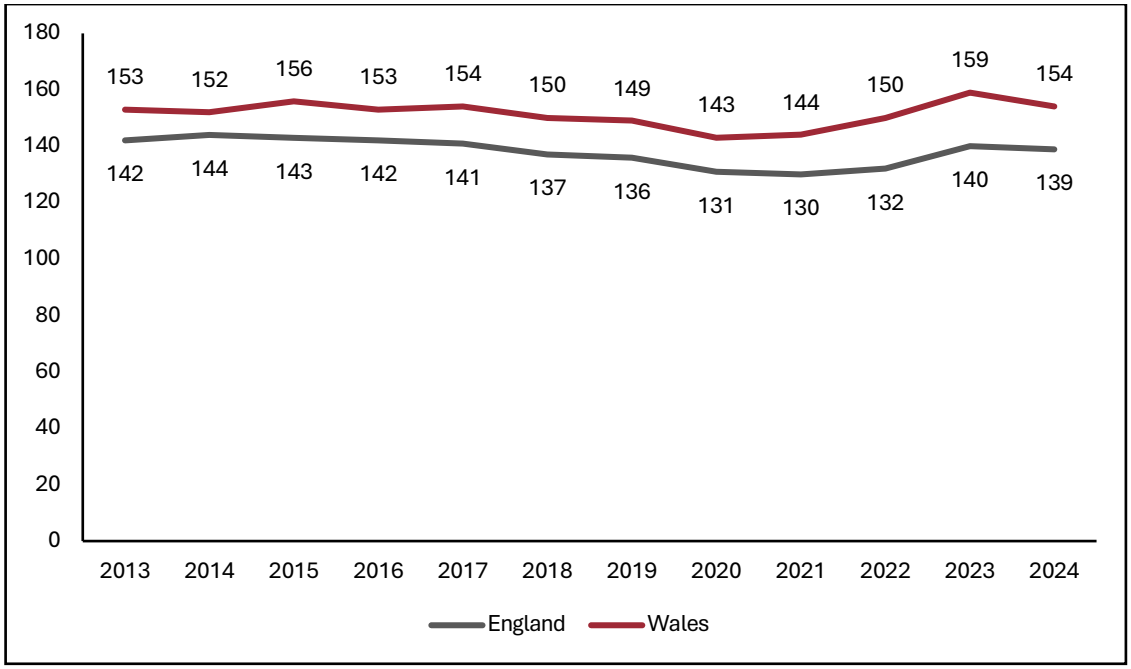


4.27 The Wales Governance Centre's *Sentencing and Immediate Custody in Wales* (2019) report used disaggregated data to provide an alternative calculation of prison rates in England and Wales using home address. According to the Ministry of Justice, there were a total of 86,338 people in prison with a home address in either England or Wales in 2024 (Ministry of Justice, 2025/05; 2025/06).

[84] Scotland: Population – 5,490,100; Prisoner population – 8,145.
Northern Ireland: Population – 1,920,400; Prisoner population – 2,065.
[85] Prison population (June 2024): England: 81,967; Northern Ireland: 1,905; Scotland: 8,140; Wales: 5,393.

Figure 4.4

Prison population rates per 100,000 in England and Wales using 'home address', 2013 to 2024[86]



4.28 'Home address' data show that Wales has recorded a higher rate of imprisonment than England in every year since 2013 (see Figure 4.4).

4.29 In 2024, there were 154 Welsh prisoners per 100,000 of the Welsh population. This compared to a rate of 139 English prisoners per 100,000 of the population of England.[87]

4.30 The general Welsh population would need to increase by 380,000 to bring the Welsh imprisonment rate in line with England's in 2024. Alternatively, the English prisoner total

[86] The population data used here are from multiple years (Office for National Statistics, 2024). The spike in the Welsh imprisonment rate recorded between 2021 and 2022 can be explained by the combined effects of an increase in the prisoner population and the use of 2021 Census data which saw the general population decrease in Wales. Revised mid-year population estimates for 2022 were published by the ONS in November 2023. The 2022 figures have been updated here to reflect these data.

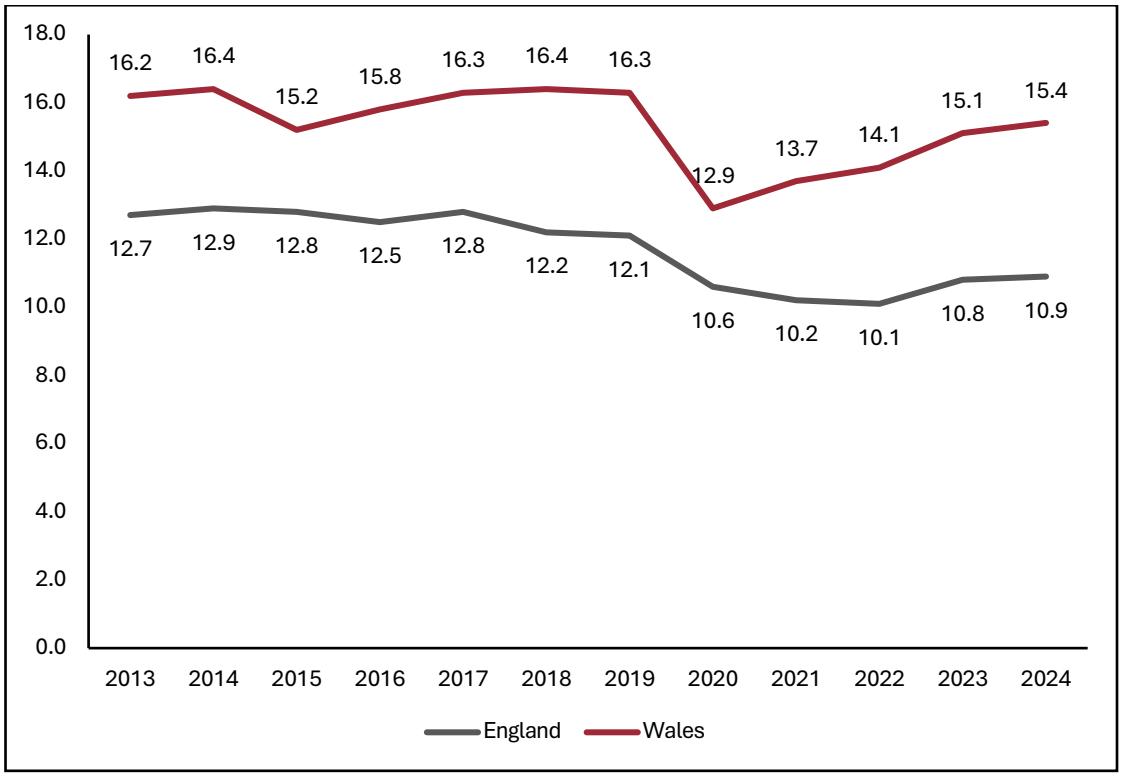
[87] England: Population – 58,620,101; English prisoners (based on home address): 81,420.
Wales: Population – 3,186,581; Welsh prisoners (based on home address): 4,918.

recorded in 2024 would need to rise by 9,000 (11 per cent) to achieve an imprisonment rate equal to Wales.

4.31 1 in every 648 people from Wales were in prison in 2024. This figure compares to 1 in every 720 people from England.

Figure 4.5

The female imprisonment rate (per 100,000 women) in England and Wales, 2013 to 2024[88]



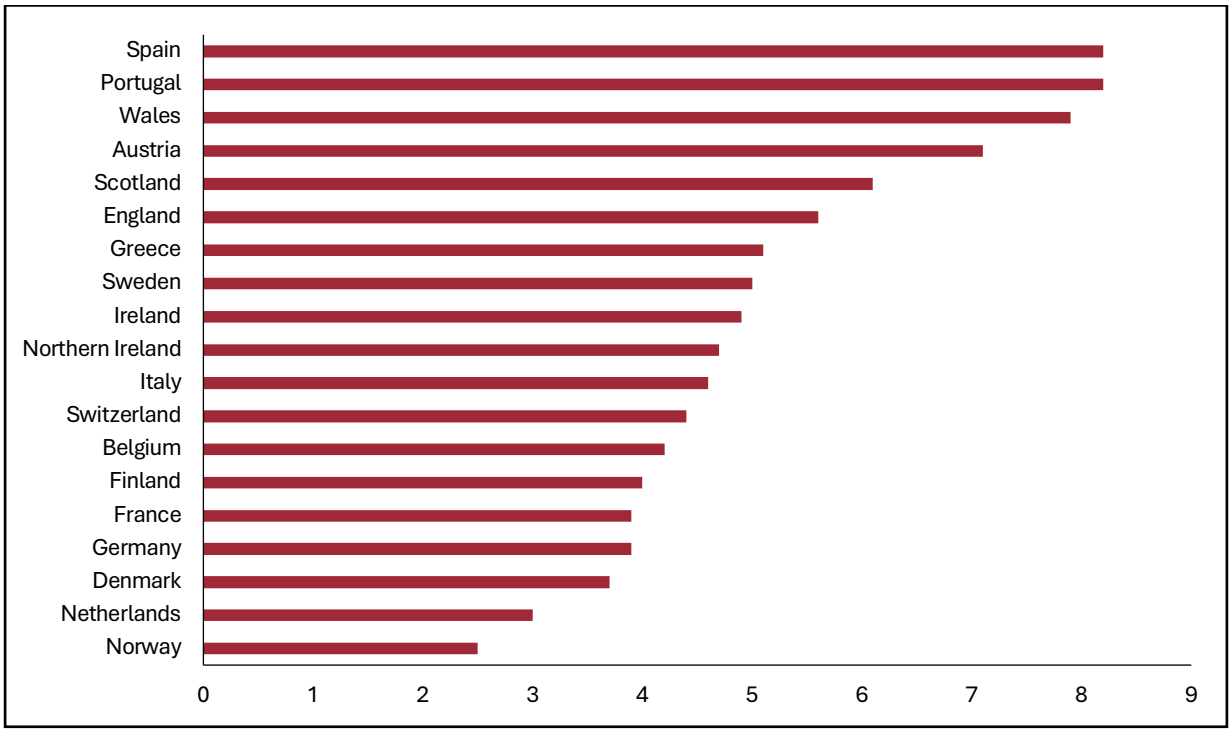
[88] The population data used here are from multiple years (Office for National Statistics, 2024).

4.32 *The Welsh Criminal Justice System: On the Jagged Edge* uncovered for the very first time that Wales has consistently recorded a higher female prison population rate (per 100,000 women) than England (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2022).

4.33 When measured as a rate per 100,000 of the total population (all sexes), the Welsh female imprisonment rate in 2024 (7.9 per 100,000) would have ranked third highest in western Europe (Fair and Walmsley, 2025). Only the rate recorded in Spain (8.2 per 100,000) and Portugal (8.2 per 100,000) exceeded the female imprisonment rate in Wales (7.6 per 100,000) in 2024.

Figure 4.6

The female imprisonment rate (per 100,000) in western Europe, 2024



4.34 Despite sparking some initial interest and concern (House of Commons Westminster Hall Debate, 22 January 2020; Morris, 2019; Rees, 2019), little has been done to understand or explain Wales' high imprisonment rate (Jones and Wyn Jones, 2022). Despite several opportunities to do so, UK and Welsh Government officials have

repeatedly failed to account for the fact that Wales has consistently recorded a higher rate of imprisonment than England, not to mention any other country in western Europe. When asked by the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Committee (2025) for his 'reaction' to Wales's table topping imprisonment rate in July 2025, Lord Timpson failed to offer any kind of explanation for the rate consistently recorded in Wales.

4.35 One suggested explanation for the high rate of imprisonment in Wales is that the use of community sentences has declined in recent years (National Assembly for Wales Debate, 22 January 2019). Between 2010 and 2024, there has been a 62 per cent decrease in the number of community sentences handed out at courts in Wales (Ministry of Justice, 2025/23).[89]

4.36 According to HM Inspectorate of Probation (2019: 5), this decline has reflected the 'lack of judicial confidence' that magistrates and judges have had in the probation service since the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 was introduced almost a decade ago. These changes, however, fail to explain why the rate in Wales is higher than it is in England, where identical changes were made to probation services, and further underlines the need for research into this urgent and important problem.

[89] From 11,518 in 2010 to 4,362 in 2024.

CONCLUSION

The last 12 months have been another difficult year for prisons in Wales. Despite the UK Government's resolve that it will eventually deliver improvements to prisons through a 'sweep of flagship' reforms (Lord Timpson, 2025:1), many of the challenges facing Welsh prisons and prisoners persist. In some areas, the data presented in this latest *Factfile* reveal that the problems are getting worse. Prisoner safety levels, for example, continue to deteriorate, with the number of prisoner deaths and incidents of self-harm reaching record levels in Wales in 2024. Those leaving prison as 'rough sleepers' rose further, as did the number of those held in prison having been remanded and recalled. Despite a small reduction in the total number of Welsh people in prison last year, Wales' imprisonment rate once again exceeded the level reached anywhere else in western Europe.

But it is not only the UK Government who are accountable for the problems identified in this latest *Factfile*. Indeed, despite the introduction of Welsh Government policies and initiatives to help tackle racial discrimination in the criminal justice system and reduce the number of women in the criminal justice system, these areas continue to be marred by poor outcomes. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds in Wales, for example, are once again over-represented among the Welsh prisoner and probation population. Individuals belonging to an ethnic minority in Wales are more likely to be remanded in custody, sentenced to longer prison terms, and required to serve a higher proportion of their sentence in prison. While the UK Justice Secretary raised concerns about the possibility of creating a 'two-tier' system for ethnic minorities and non-ethnic minorities in response to the Sentencing Council's proposals in March 2025, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that such a 'two-tier' system already exists in Wales when confronted with the data presented here.

The Welsh Government's *Women's Justice Blueprint* also continues to flatter to deceive. Despite its many promises and pledges to help divert women from the criminal justice system and promote the use of alternatives to custody, the number of Welsh women in prison increased for the fourth consecutive year in 2024. More women sentenced at courts in Wales received custodial sentences of a month or less last year, and the use of remand increased

further. Six years on since the *Women's Justice Blueprint* was first introduced in May 2019, the data presented in this latest *Factfile* raise urgent and important questions over the effectiveness of the Blueprint and the need for a renewed or radically different approach in Wales. Ahead of the 2026 Senedd election, this is something that all political parties in Wales should be paying serious attention to.

Beyond these continuing problems, however, there have been *some* positive developments over the last year. Thirteen years on since the Wales Governance Centre first began collecting Wales-only prison data through the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Ministry of Justice's decision to begin routinely publishing these data represents a significant milestone. These releases will undoubtedly improve transparency and scrutiny over the Welsh criminal justice system and can support the development of (much needed) high-quality, rigorous, and critical academic work on the criminal justice system in Wales. However, despite agreeing to provide most of the data included in the Wales Governance Centre's list of priority areas, there remain many important sources of data excluded from the *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release*. It is hoped that further data sources will be added to these important and much needed releases in the years to come.

REFERENCES

Aitken, C. (2024), 'Prison employee arrested in drug supply probe'. *BBC Wales News*, 16 May 2024. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4n1n1d643ro [Accessed on 9 September 2024]

Argar, E. (2024), *Parc Prison*. Volume 750: debated in the House of Commons on Monday 13 May 2024. London: House of Commons. Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-13/debates/05471D5C-AF57-4BF4-A493-5BA887736BC6/ParcPrison [Accessed on 9 September 2024].

BBC News (2013), 'Details of Parc Prison's £35m expansion at Bridgend unveiled'. *BBC Wales News*, 5 September 2013. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-23966323 [Accessed on 17 August 2023]

BBC News (2024), 'Early release puts strain on housing, says council'. *BBC News*, 26 September 2024. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c78d7l4jxq4o [Accessed on 12 August 2025]

Cardiff Council (2024), *Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting Minutes, 23 September 2024*. Cardiff: Cardiff Council. Available at: https://cardiff.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s81169/Minutes%2023.09.24.pdf?LLL=0 [Accessed on 12 August 2025]

Carlen, P. (2002), *Women and Punishment: The Struggle for Justice*. London: Routledge.

Corston, Baroness Jean (2007), *The Corston Report*. London: Home Office. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130206102659/http:/www.justice.gov.uk/publications/docs/corston-report-march-2007.pdf [Accessed on 26 June 2023]

Crerar, P., Syal, R. and Elgot, J. (2024), 'Starmer 'shocked' about prisons crisis as early release scheme prepared'. *The Guardian*, 10 July 2024. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/jul/10/starmer-prisons-crisis-early-release-scheme [Accessed on 13 September 2024]

Davis, A. (2003), *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press.

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (2020), *Report to the United Kingdom Government on the visit to the United Kingdom carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 13 to 23 May 2019*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe:

Fair, H. and Walmsley, R. (2024), *World Prison Population List*. 14th Edition. London: Institute for Criminal Justice Policy Research. Available at: https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_prison_population_list_14th_edition.pdf [Accessed on 24 July 2024]

Fair, H. and Walmsley, R. (2025), *World Female Imprisonment List*. Sixth Edition. London: Institute for Criminal Justice Policy Research. Available at: https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_female_imprisonment_list_6th_edition.pdf [Accessed on 18 August 2025]

Grehan, K. (2024), *Recalls in crisis: What needs to change?* London: Revolving Doors. Available at: https://revolving-doors.org.uk/recalls-in-crisis-what-needs-to-change/ [Accessed on 14 August 2024]

Hillier, J. and Mews, A. (2018), *Do offender characteristics affect the impact of short custodial sentences and court orders on reoffending?* Analytical Summary 2018. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5af9497eed915d0deef5b3d1/do-offender-characteristics-affect-the-impact-of-short-custodial-sentences.pdf [Accessed on 23 August 2023]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2021), *What happens to prisoners in a pandemic?* A Thematic Review by HM Inspectorate of Prisons. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/02/What-happens-to-prisoners-in-a-pandemic.pdf [Accessed on 5 July 2023]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2022a), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Parc*. 21–22 June and 4–8 July 2022. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/10/Parc-adults-web-2022.pdf [Accessed on 7 September 2023].

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2022b), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Berwyn*. 16–17 and 23–27 May 2022. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/09/Berwyn-web-2022.pdf [Accessed on 7 September 2023].

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2023), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Swansea. 21 February–10 March 2023*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2023/06/Swansea-web-2023.pdf [Accessed on 7 September 2023]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2024), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Cardiff. 29 January – 5 February 2024*. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/19/2024/04/Cardiff-web-2024.pdf [Accessed on 8 May 2024].

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2025a), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Wakefield*. 30 June – 10 July 2025. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/19/2025/09/Wakefield-web-2025.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2025b), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP & YOI Eastwood Park*. 17 June – 3 July 2025. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/19/2025/09/Eastwood-Park-web-2025.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2025c), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Parc*.6-17 January 2025. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/19/2025/04/Parc-web-2025.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2025d), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Berwyn*. 27 January – 7 February 2025. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/19/2025/05/Berwyn-web-2025.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2025e), *Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP Usk/Prescoed*. 12-22 May 2025. London: HM Inspectorate of Prisons. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/19/2025/08/Usk-and-Prescoed-web-2025.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

HM Inspectorate of Probation (2019), *Report of the Chief Inspector of Probation*. March 2019. Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/03/HMI-Probation-Chief-Inspectors-Report.pdf [Accessed on 25 October 2023]

HM Inspectorate of Probation (2020), *A thematic review of probation recall culture and practice*. November 2020. Manchester: HM Inspectorate of Probation. Available at: https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/11/Recall-thematic.pdf [Accessed on 14 August 2024]

House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee (2018), *Prison health*. Twelfth Report of Session 2017–19. October 2018. London: Stationary Office. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhealth/963/963.pdf [Accessed on 15 August 2024]

House of Commons Justice Committee (2022a), *IPP Sentences*. Third Report of Session 2022–23, September 2022. London: Stationary Office. Available at: https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/28825/documents/173974/default/ [Accessed on 12 September 2024]

House of Commons Justice Committee (2022b), *Women in Prison*. First report of session 2022-23. 26 July 2022. London: Stationary Office. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmjust/265/report.html [Accessed on 22 August 2025]

House of Commons Justice Committee (2023), *The Role of Adult Custodial Remand in the Criminal Justice System*. 10 January 2023. London: Stationary Office. Available at: https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33530/documents/182421/default/ [Accessed on 22 August 2025]

House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee (2007), *Welsh Prisoners in the Prison Estate*. Third Report of Session 2006-07, May 2007. London: Stationary Office. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmwelaf/74/74.pdf [Accessed on 15 August 2023]

House of Commons Westminster Hall Debate (2020), *Commission on Justice in Wales*. Volume 670: debated on Wednesday 22 January 2020. London: House of Commons. Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-22/debates/45A32F4F-4FD7-4AE5-99B6-2780FD13082B/CommissionOnJusticeInWales [Accessed on 6 September 2023]

Howard League for Penal Reform (2022), *Written evidence submission to the Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on Women's experiences in the criminal justice system*. London: Howard League for Penal Reform. Available at: https://business.senedd.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=483&RPID=1051057524&cp=yes [Accessed on 12 September 2023).

Howard League for Penal Reform (2024), *Sentencing Inflation: A Judicial Critique*. London: Howard League for Penal Reform. Available at: https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Sentencing-inflation-a-judicial-critique_September-2024.pdf [Accessed on 9 September 2024]

Howard League for Penal Reform (2025), *Ending the detention of people on IPP sentences: expert recommendations*. London: Howard League for Penal Reform. Available at: https://howardleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Ending-the-detention-of-people-on-IPP-sentences.pdf [Accessed on 7 October 2025]

Independent Monitoring Board (2024), *Segregation of men with mental health needs: A thematic monitoring report*. London: Independent Monitoring Board. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/13/2024/01/Segregation-thematic-2024.pdf [Accessed on 14 October 2025]

Independent Monitoring Board (2025), *Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Gartree*. 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024. London: Independent Monitoring Board. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/13/2025/05/Gartree-IMB-2023-24-annual-report.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Independent Review of the Criminal Courts (2025), *Independent Review of the Criminal Courts: Part I*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686be85d81dd8f70f5de3c1f/35.49_MOJ_Ind_Review_Criminal_Courts_v8b_FINAL_WEB.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Independent Review of Prison Capacity (2025), *Independent Review of Prison Capacity*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6890b2b4dc6688ed508783d5/independent-prison-capacity-review-report_.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Independent Sentencing Review (2025), *Independent Sentencing Review: Final report and proposals for reform*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/682d8d995ba51be7c0f45371/independent-sentencing-review-report-part_2.pdf [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

INQUEST (2020), *Deaths in Prison: A national scandal*. London: INQUEST. January 2020. Available at: https://www.inquest.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=bb400a0b-3f79-44be-81b2-281def0b924b [Accessed on 14 August 2024].

INQUEST (2025), 'Deaths in prison increase by 30% compared to previous 12 months'. *INQUEST*, 31 July 2025. London: INQUEST. Available at: https://www.inquest.org.uk/deaths-in-prison-increase-by-30-compared-to-previous-12-months [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Jackson, R. (2018), *Trapped on the Streets: Understanding Rough Sleeping in Wales*. Swansea: Shelter Cymru. Available at: https://sheltercymru.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Trapped-on-the-Streets-Full-Report.pdf [Accessed on 6 September 2023].

Jones, R. (2019a), *Sentencing and Immediate Custody in Wales: A Factfile*. Cardiff: Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. Available at: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1417339/Sentencing-and-Immediate-Custody-in-Wales-A-Factfile-140119.pdf [Accessed on 15 August 2023]

Jones, R. (2019b), *Sentencing and Imprisonment in Wales: 2018 Factfile*. Cardiff: Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. Available at: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1547914/WGC-Report-SentencingandImprisonment04.pdf [Accessed on 15 August 2023]

Jones, R. (2020), *Prison, Probation and Sentencing in Wales: 2019 Factfile*. Cardiff: Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. Available at: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/2446129/Prison,-Probation-and-Sentencing-in-Wales-2019-Factfile.pdf [Accessed on 15 August 2023]

Jones, R. (2023), *Prisons in Wales: 2022 Factfile*. Cardiff: Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. Available at: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2779833/Prisons-in-Wales-2022-Factfile.pdf [Accessed on 11June 2025]

Jones, R. (2024), *Prisons and Sentencing in Wales: 2023 Factfile*. Cardiff: Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University.
Available at: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2873031/Prisons-and-Sentencing-in-Wales-2023-Factfile.pdf [Accessed on 11June 2025]

Jones, R. and Davies, G. (2025), 'Rights, Pains and Illusions: The Experiences of Welsh-Speakers at Wales' 'Flagship' Prison'. *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* , 1-13. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.70001.

Jones, R. and Wyn Jones, R. (2022), *The Welsh Criminal Justice System: On the Jagged Edge*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Jones, R., Hart, E. and Scott, D. (2022), *The Four New Prisons Programme. Chorley Prison: The Case Against*. November 2022. Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University. Available at: https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2685211/Chorley-Super-Prison-The-Case-Against-1.pdf [Accessed on 12 September 2023]

JUSTICE (2023), *Remand Decision-Making in the Magistrates' Court: A Research Report*. London: JUSTICE. Available at: https://files.justice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/16103002/Remand-Decision-Making-in-the-Magistrates-Court-November-2023-1.pdf [Accessed on 11 August 2025]

Lammy, D. (2017), *The Lammy Review. An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf [Accessed on 16 August 2024].

Leapman, B. (2025), 'David Gauke Interview: 'This is a turning point'. *Inside Time*. 1 October 2025. Available at: https://insidetime.org/comment/david-gauke-interview-this-is-a-turning-point/ [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Lewis, A. (2025), 'Five prison staff sacked over leaked messages'. *BBC News*, 18 September 2025. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgy3xjdmvmo [Accessed on 22 September 2025]

Lewis, A. and Moffat, D. (2025), 'Man still in prison 20 years after stealing phone'. *BBC News*, 14 September 2025. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yev505n5wo [Accessed on 16 September 2025]

Lord Timpson (2025), *Letter to the Chair of the House of Commons Justice Select Committee*. 19 June 2025. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/48504/documents/254058/default/ [Accessed on 9 October 2026]

Mackie, P. (2017), Written evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's inquiry into Rough Sleeping in Wales. Available at: http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s71916/RS11%20-%20Peter%20Mackie.pdf [Accessed on 6 September 2023].

Martin, A. (2025), 'End scandal of indefinite jail terms, Britain's probation chief urges Starmer'. *The Independent*, 31 August 2025. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/ipp-sentence-martin-jones-probation-b2792229.html [Accessed on 12 September 2025]

Millie, A., Jacobson, J. and Hough, M. (2003), 'Understanding the growth in the prison population in England and Wales'. *Criminal Justice*, 3 (4): 369-387.

Ministry of Justice (2016), *Story of the Prison Population: 1993 – 2016, England and Wales*. London: Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Justice (2018), *Female Offender Strategy*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719819/female-offender-strategy.pdf [Accessed on 15 August 2023]

Ministry of Justice (2020), '*Funding boost to steer more women away from crime'*. 4 May 2020. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-boost-to-steer-more-women-away-from-crime [Accessed on 15 August 2023]

Ministry of Justice (2021a), *Offender Management Statistics Quarterly. July to September 2020*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2020 [Accessed on 24 August 2023]

Ministry of Justice (2021b), *Prisons Strategy White Paper*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038765/prisons-strategy-white-paper.pdf [Accessed on 12 September 2023]

Ministry of Justice (2022), *Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Four New Prisons Programme*. May 2022. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1079048/robin-seaton-new-prisons-sro.pdf [Accessed on 12 September 2023]

Ministry of Justice (2023), *Parental Imprisonment (Wales)*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2024/01), '*Thousands of new prison places to be built to keep streets safe'*. *Ministry of Justice*, 11 December 2024. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-new-prison-places-to-be-built-to-keep-streets-safe#:~:text=Thousands%20of%20new%20prison%20places%20to%20be,in%20parallel%20with%20the%20Independent%20Sentencing%20Review [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2024/02), *Statistics on Welsh Speaking Offenders*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistics-on-welsh-speaking-offenders [Accessed on 10 June 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2024/03), *Prison Population Projections 2024 to 2029, England and Wales*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6750480cd12a2dad3bc97a80/Prison_Population_Projections_2024_to_2029.pdf [Accessed on 19 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2024/04), *Pregnant Welsh women in prison and the number of births - 2024*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2024/05), *A Technical Guide to Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6644d215f34f9b5a56adc889/criminal-justice-statistics-technical-guide-december-2023.pdf [Accessed on 3 June 2024]

Ministry of Justice (2024/06), *Ethnicity in the Criminal Justice System 2022*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65b22b781702b1000dcb126d/Statistics_on_Ethnicity_and_the_Criminal_Justice_Sysytem_2022.pdf [Accessed on 30 July 2024].

Ministry of Justice (2024/07), *The proportion of sentenced served by Welsh people broken down by ethnic group* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2024/08), *Ten-Year Prison Capacity Strategy*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67586f828a1ef8f66413b9c2/24.231_MOJ_10-Year_Capacity_Strat_Pub_v10.1_WEB.pdf [Accessed on 12 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/01), *Self-harm in prison – Welsh prisoners*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/02), *Standard Determinate Sentence 40 (SDS40): September 2024 to March 2025*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-determinate-sentence-40-sds40-september-2024-to-march-2025 [Accessed on 7 October 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/03), *Welsh Justice Data: Annual Release 2025*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welsh-justice-data-annual-release-2025 [Accessed on 29 September 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/04), *Offender Management Statistics quarterly: October to December 2024 (Prison Population)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2024 [Accessed on 5 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/05), *Welsh people in prison* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/06), *English people in prison* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/07), *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: October to December 2024* (Statistics on Summer disorder starting on 30th July 2024). London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024 [Accessed on 21 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/08), *Summer Disorder Statistics - Wales and England*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/09), *Welsh people in prison by security category* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/10), *Welsh people in prison by offence type* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/11), *Welsh people in prison by age* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/12), *Welsh people in prison by religious identity* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/13), *Welsh-speaking prisoners in England and Wales* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/14), *Welsh-speaking staff in Wales in 2024*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/15), *Welsh people in prison by sentence type* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/16), *Prison population data tool: 31 March 2025*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2024 [Accessed on 19 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/17), *The number of people received back into custody for breach of post-release licence, excluding those returned to custody for the commission of a further offence*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/18), *Offender Management Statistics quarterly: October to December 2024 (Probation)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2024 [Accessed on 5 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/19), *Welsh women in prison* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/20), *Parental Imprisonment (Wales)*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/21), *HMPPS Annual Digest, April 2024 to March 2025 [Mother and Baby Units, Pregnant Prisoners and Births)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-annual-digest-april-2024-to-march-2025 [Accessed on 20 August 2025].

Ministry of Justice (2025/22), *Pregnant Welsh women in prison and the number of births - 2025*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/23), *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: October to December 2024* (Outcomes by Offence Data Tool). London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024 [Accessed on 21 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/24), *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: December 2024 (Magistrates' court data tool)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024 [Accessed on 21 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/25), *Women recalled to custody [multiple years]*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/26), *Welsh women in prison by sentence type* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/27), *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: December 2024 (Remands data tool)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024 [Accessed on 21 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/28), *Welsh people in prison broken down by ethnic group* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/29), *English people in prison broken down by ethnic group* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/30), *People managed by Welsh probation services broken down by ethnic group* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/31), *Prison population: 30 June 2025*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2025 [Accessed on 19 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/32), *Prison Population Figures: 2024* [multiple months]. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-population-monthly-prison-figures-2024 [Accessed on 20 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/33), *Offender Management Statistics quarterly: October to December 2024 (Prison Receptions)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2024 [Accessed on 5 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/34), *The number of people arriving at prison reception as homeless*. London: Ministry of Justice. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/35), *SDS40 releases in Wales and no fixed address*. London: Ministry of Justice. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/36), *The number of people released from prison as homeless broken down by prison* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/37), *Offender Accommodation Outcomes, update to March 2025*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-accommodation-outcomes-update-to-march-2025 [Accessed on 19 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/38), *Offender Management Statistics quarterly: October to December 2024 (Prison Releases)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-october-to-december-2024 [Accessed on 5 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/39), *The number of Welsh prisoners released under SD4S0*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/40), *Offenders supervised by the Probation Service in Wales under post-release licence* [multiple years]. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/41), *Safety in Custody Statistics: quarterly update to December 2024* (multiple years). London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/safety-in-custody-quarterly-update-to-december-2024 [Accessed on 3 September 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/42), *HMPPS Annual Digest, April 2024 to March 2025 [Finds in Prison)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmpps-annual-digest-april-2024-to-march-2025 [Accessed on 20 August 2025].

Ministry of Justice (2025/43), *Welsh prisoners and self-inflicted deaths – 2024*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/44), *Assaults committed by prison staff - 2024*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/45), *Prisoner complaints in Wales*. Data obtained from the Ministry of Justice via the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Ministry of Justice (2025/46), *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: December 2024 (Crown Court Data Tool)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024 [Accessed on 19 August 2025]

Ministry of Justice (2025/47), *Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly: December 2024 (Magistrates' court Data Tool)*. London: Ministry of Justice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2024 [Accessed on 19 August 2025]

Moore, L., Scraton, P. and Wahidin, A. (2018), *Women's imprisonment and the case for abolition Critical Reflections on Corston Ten Years On*. London: Routledge.

Morris, S. (2019), 'Wales has highest incarceration rate in western Europe – study'. *The Guardian*. 16 January 2019. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jan/16/wales-has-highest-incarceration-rate-in-western-europe-prison-population-england (Accessed on 6 September 2023]

Mullen, P., Dick, D. and Williams, A. (2022), *What Next for Probation?* London: Revolving Doors. Available at: https://revolving-doors.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Probation-Lived-Experience-Inquiry-34pp-A4-2-1.pdf [Accessed on 10 September 2024].

Murray, J. (2023), 'UK government rejects call to resentence prisoners detained indefinitely'. *The Guardian*. 9 February 2023. London: *The Guardian*. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/feb/09/uk-government-rejects-call-resentence-prisoners-detained-indefinitely [Accessed on 7 October 2025]

Nacro (2025), 'Nacro responds to the government announcement that they will accept key recommendations set out in the Sentencing Review'. *Nacro*. 22 May 2025. Available at: https://www.nacro.org.uk/news/nacros-response-the-government-announces-it-will-accept-key-recommendations-set-out-in-the-sentencing-review/ [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

National Assembly for Wales (2019), *Plenary Debate*, 22 January 2019. Available at: http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5419#C158045 [Accessed on 24 October 2023).

National Records of Scotland (2024), *Mid-Year Population Estimates*. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland. Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates [Accessed on 13 September 2024].

Nelson Trust (2022), Written evidence submission to the Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on Women's experiences in the criminal justice system. Stroud: The Nelson Trust. Available at: https://business.senedd.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=483&RPID=1051057524&cp=yes [Accessed on 12 September 2023).

Newman, D. and Dehaghani, R. (2023), 'Court Closures: Experiences from Wales'. *Amicus Curiae,* 5(1): 1-24.

Northern Ireland Department of Justice (2025), *Weekly Situation Reports 2023/2024*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Department of Justice. Available at: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/weekly-situation-reports-20242025 [Accessed on 11 August 2025]

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2024), *Mid-Year Population Estimates*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Available at: https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/Statistical%20Bulletin%20-%202022%20Mid-year%20Population%20Estimates%20for%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf [Accessed on 13 September 2024]

Office for National Statistics (2022a), *Welsh Language, Wales: Census 2021*. Office for National Statistics. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/bulletins/welshlanguagewales/census2021 [Accessed on 10 June 2025]

Office for National Statistics (2022b), *Census 2021: Population broken down by Ethnic Group, England and Wales*. London: Office for National Statistics Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/census [Accessed on 6 September 2023]

Office for National Statistics (2024), *Estimates of the population for England and Wales*. London: Office for National Statistics Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/estimatesofthepopulationforenglandandwales [Accessed on 6 August 2024]

Prison and Probation Ombudsman (2017), *Annual report 2016-2017*. London: Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

Prison and Probation Ombudsman (2024), *Independent investigation into the death of Mr Aaron Nunes, a prisoner at HMP Parc, on 21 February 2016*. London: Prison and Probation Ombudsman. Available at: https://cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/sites/14/2024/08/F2697-16-Death-Mr-Aaron-Nunes-in-hospital-Parc-21-02-2016-NC-22-30-27-3.pdf [Accessed on 9 September 2024].

Prison Reform Trust (2022), Written evidence submission to the Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on Women's experiences in the criminal justice system. Available at: https://business.senedd.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=483&RPID=1051057524&cp=yes [Accessed on 12 September 2023).

Prison Reform Trust (2023), *Prison: The Facts. Bromley Briefings Summer 2023*. London: Prison Reform Trust. Available at: https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/prison_the_facts_2023.pdf [Accessed on 7 February 2024]

Prison Reform Trust (2025), 'PRT Comment: Independent Sentencing Review'. *Prison Reform Trust*. 22 May 2025; Available at: https://prisonreformtrust.org.uk/prt-comment-independent-sentencing-review-2/ [Accessed on 6 October 2025]

Rees, J. (2019), 'Wales has 'highest imprisonment rate' in western Europe'. *BBC Wales News*, 16 January 2019. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46878107 [Accessed on 6 September 2023]

Rees, A., Staples, E. and Maxwell, N. (2017), *Evaluation of Visiting Mum Scheme*. Cardiff University: Cardiff. Available at: http://orca.cf.ac.uk/112243/1/Final-PACT-report-Final-version.-12.7.17.pdf [Accessed on 17 August 2023]

Roberts, J. and Ashworth, A. (2016), 'The Evolution of Sentencing Policy in England and Wales, 2003-2015'. *Crime and Justice*, 45(1): 307-358.

Rowland, C. (2024), *The Crisis in Prisons*. London: Institute for Government. Available at: https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/crisis-prisons#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20people%20released,for%2014%25%20of%20all%20prisoners [Accessed on 14 August 2024)

Scottish Prison Service (2025), *Data, Research and Evidence: Prison Population* [multiple years]. Edinburgh: Scottish Prison Service. Available at: https://www.sps.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/data-research-and-evidence [Accessed on 13 September 2024]

Scott, D. (2020), '*Prison officer violence: The crisis of visibil*ity'. Centre for Crime and Justice Studies. 27 February 2020. Available at: https://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/resources/prison-officer-violence-crisis-visibility [Accessed on 11 September 2024]

Scraton, P. and McCulloch, J. (2009), *The Violence of Incarceration*. Oxon: Routledge.

Senedd's Cymru's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (2018), *Life on the streets: Preventing and tackling rough sleeping in Wales*. Cardiff: Senedd Cymru. Available at: http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11517/cr-ld11517-e.pdf [Accessed on 6 September 2023].

Senedd Cymru's Equality and Social Justice Committee (2023), *Women's Experiences in the Criminal Justice System*. Cardiff: Senedd Cymru. Available at: https://senedd.wales/media/rdxhi4s4/cr-ld15713-e.pdf [Accessed on 7 September 2023]

Senedd Cymru's Equality and Social Justice Committee (2024), *Action, not words: towards an anti-racist Wales by 2030*. Cardiff: Senedd Cymru. Available at: https://senedd.wales/media/klicd313/cr-ld16408-e.pdf [Accessed on 20 August 2024]

Senedd Cymru's Equality and Social Justice Committee (2025), The criminal justice system in Wales: Ministerial scrutiny session—session 2. Cardiff: Senedd Cymru. Available at: https://record.senedd.wales/Committee/15520#A98786 [Accessed on 22 August 2025]

Senedd Cymru's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (2021), *Health and Social Care Provision in the Adult Prison Estate in Wales*. Cardiff: Senedd Cymru. Available at: https://senedd.wales/media/ct4f03nb/cr-ld14318-e.pdf [Accessed on 7 September 2023]

Sentencing Council for England and Wales (2018), *Written evidence submission to the House of Commons Justice Committee's Prison Population 2022: planning for the future inquiry*. London: Sentencing Council for England and Wales. Available at: http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/justice-committee/prison-population-2022/written/78134.pdf [Accessed on 17 June 2024]

Sentencing Council for England and Wales (2023), *Determinate prison sentences*. London: Sentencing Council. Available at: https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/sentencing-and-the-council/types-of-sentence/determinate-prison-sentences/ [Accessed on 20 September 2023]

Sentencing Council for England and Wales (2025), *Letter to Shabana Mahmood, Lord Chancellor*. 10 March 2025. London: Sentencing Council. Available at: https://sentencingcouncil.org.uk/media/5qpepuwk/20250310-letter-from-lord-justice-william-davis-to-lord-chancellor-on-imposition-for-publication.pdf [Accessed on 7 October 2025]

Shelter Cymru (2017), Written evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's inquiry into Rough Sleeping in Wales. Available at: http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s71911/RS06%20-%20Shelter%20Cymru.pdf [Accessed on 6 September 2023].

South Wales Against Wrongful Conviction (2019), *Written evidence submission to the National Assembly's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Inquiry into Prison Healthcare in Wales*. May 2019. Available at: http://senedd.assembly.wales/documents/s90468/HSP10%20-%20South%20Wales%20against%20Wrongful%20Conviction.pdf [Accessed on 10 September 2024].

Syal, R. (2025), 'MoJ readies extra prison places in case summer riots happen again'. *The Guardian*, 9 March 2025. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/mar/09/moj-readies-extra-prison-places-in-case-summer-riots-happen-again [Accessed on 14 August 2025]

The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (2024), *Inside Prison Healthcare*. London: The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death. Available at: https://www.ncepod.org.uk/2024prisonhealthcare/Inside%20Healthcare_full%20report.pdf [Accessed on 22 August 2025]

Vinter, R. (2024), ''Prisons need reform': service lets down those who need help, freed inmates say'. *The Guardian*, 10 September 2024. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/sep/10/inevitable-some-will-get-recalled-concern-as-1700-prisoners-released-early [Accessed on 11 September 2024]

Welsh Government (2022a), *Delivering Justice for Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/delivering-justice-for-wales-may-2022-v2.pdf [Accessed on 12 September 2023]

Welsh Government (2022b), *Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/anti-racist-wales-action-plan_0.pdf [Accessed on 12 September 2023]

Welsh Government (2023), *Ending Homelessness in Wales: White Paper*. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-10/ending-homelessness-white-paper_0_0.pdf [Accessed on 12 March 2024]

Welsh Government (2024), *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan: 2024 Update*. Cardiff. Welsh Government. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/anti-racist-wales-action-plan-2024.pdf [Accessed on 22 August 2025]

Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice (2019), *Female Offending Blueprint for Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Available at: https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/female-offending-blueprint_3.pdf [Accessed on 10 August 2023]

Williams, K., Poyser, J. and Hopkins, K. (2012), *Accommodation, homelessness and reoffending of prisoners: Results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey*. Research Summary 3/12. London: Ministry of Justice.

Woolf, Lord. (1991), *Prison Disturbances April 1990*. Report of an Inquiry by The Rt Hon Lord Justice Woolf and His Honour Judge Stephen Tumin, HMSO, London, February 1991.

Zeffman, H. and Nevett, J. (2025), 'Sentencing guidelines ditched after 'two-tier' row'. BBC News, 31 March 2025. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yg887m6qdo [Accessed on 7 October 2025]

Wales Governance Centre
Cardiff University
Law Building
Museum Avenue
Cardiff CF10 3AX

wgc@cardiff.ac.uk

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: HID-PO-575-25

Mike Hedges MS
Chair
Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
Senedd Cymru

11 November 2025

Dear Mike,

I am writing to inform you that the Independent Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Secretariat has now published its annual reports covering the periods 2022–2023 and 2023–2024. These reports have been prepared using existing published information drawn from supporting documents; published Communiqués and quarterly transparency reporting on the gov.uk web pages. As these are independent reports, we have reviewed them solely for factual accuracy. These reports can be accessed here.

As previously notified, the Welsh Government previously published its own IGR Overview reports covering the same periods, in line with the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement as laid before the Senedd on 18 November 2021. These reports can be accessed here.

I have copied this letter to the Chairs of the following Senedd Committees: Children, Young People and Education; Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure; Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations; Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs; Equality and Social Justice; Finance; Health and Social Care; and Local Government and Housing.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400
Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Archwilio Cymru
Audit Wales

Date issued: November 2025

Post legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations Act: evidence to the Equality and Social Justice Committee

1 This written evidence is provided to inform the Committee's post-legislative scrutiny of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It addresses the key questions posed by the Committee's inquiry and builds on our oral evidence on 30 June 2025.

Q1. How far are the intended objectives of the Act being achieved?

Effectiveness of the Act and its implementation – our audit findings and recommendations

Overall findings

2 Our statutory report, 'No time to lose', sets out our assessment of the extent to which public bodies are acting in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle. This assessment is based on a substantial evidence base, gathered between 2020-2025. It builds on our first statutory report under the Act, So what's different?, in May 2020.

3 Overall, our latest report finds that, 10 years in, the Act has increased in prominence and is influencing longer-term planning, decision-making and working practices within public bodies. However, we also see examples of little or no explicit consideration of the Act. We see variation in practice within organisations, and within and between sectors.

4 More broadly, we observe that accelerating progress under the Act starts with prioritising prevention. We emphasised this because of the upward trends in demand over the 10 years since the Act was passed and the scale of the financial pressures now facing public bodies.

5 Our report highlights that the health system in particular has some way to go in implementing the Act. The Act's objectives align with what health bodies are seeking to achieve. However, the Act has not necessarily had the prominence that it needs to shape strategic planning and decision making.

6 Our report also shares examples of where the health system is struggling to make the shift to prevention. For example, previous work highlighted that there is more to do to shift resources from secondary to primary care and to ensure primary care has the necessary visibility and focus in decision-making and scrutiny. We also identify the lack of a coherent, strategic approach to preventing cancer.

7 In particular, we have found there is still much to do across public bodies on applying the sustainable development principle to corporate functions, including workforce planning, financial planning and asset management. This is despite the Welsh Government's core guidance on the Act setting out seven areas where the 'change needs to happen'. These are corporate functions that are important in promoting and embedding wider application of the Act.[1]

8 Given all of this, we find the Act is not driving the system-wide change that was intended. Public bodies need better data, a clearer picture of resource implications and a better means of understanding impact to ensure they can effectively apply the sustainable development principle.

9 However, there is only so much that individual public bodies can do. Bodies are working in an environment that does not always promote that change. We consider that there is scope to change wider systems and processes to help ensure the Act's objectives can be achieved. The Act is aimed at driving system change, but there are limits to what legislation can achieve in isolation. There needs to be more focus on complementary factors, such as performance frameworks, funding, and other guidance to facilitate greater progress.

What we recommended and why

10 We made four recommendations to the Welsh Government in No time to lose. They are strategic in nature, focused on the Welsh Government's role as the system-leader. Our report included some additional detail and context but, in short, our recommendations were that:

- Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should now clearly set out a scope and timetable for its own post-legislative evaluation and any changes to the Act.
- Recommendation 2: The Welsh Government should work with public bodies to explore and agree what can reasonably be done to

[1] The seven areas are corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, risk management, and performance management.

minimise funding uncertainties and aid their medium and longer-term planning where possible.

- Recommendation 3: The Welsh Government should explore ways of encouraging investment in prevention.
- Recommendation 4: The Welsh Government should work with public bodies to take a fresh look at the assessment of performance and impact under the Act.

11 We chose not to make recommendations to other public bodies. This is because we have made recommendations relevant to the application of the sustainable development principle through other examinations over the past five years. The Commissioner has also made far-reaching recommendations in his Future Generations Report 2025.

Recommendation 1

12 We made recommendation 1 because the Act is a significant piece of legislation, and it represents good governance to review its effectiveness. This recommendation also reiterates one of two recommendations in So what's different?.

13 This Act is also particularly broad ranging, given that it covers most of the devolved public sector and relates across public bodies' services and functions. Therefore, any challenges or inefficiencies are likely to add up in wasted time and costs. Given the pressures facing public bodies, there is also a significant opportunity cost if capacity is not being used as effectively as it could be.

14 In the spirit of the legislation, it seems appropriate that public bodies and other stakeholder should have the opportunity to share their views and experiences 10 years on. For example, our experience of delivering sustainable development examinations under section 15 of the Act has identified opportunities to strengthen this part of the legislation to improve both efficiency and effectiveness (see also **paragraphs 39 to 57**).

15 There have also been wider changes in other legislation and the number of bodies covered by the Act's well-being duty which may have a bearing on the Act.

Recommendation 2

16 Recommendation 2, about minimising uncertainty in funding, captures a consistent theme across our work, for example in recent reports on Affordable Housing and the Wales Infrastructure Investment Strategy. It also comes through in our general engagement with public bodies.

17 Public bodies continually describe the difficulty of planning in the face of short-term funding cycles, late notifications, unexpected in-year allocations of specific grants (which may have to be spent at short-notice) and capital funding that is not backed by revenue. These issues can result in funding not being used in a planned way to secure value for money and better outcomes for the long term, aligned to bodies' objectives. It also seems that these factors can make it more difficult for public bodies to invest in prevention, which is likely to require a sustained funding commitment.

18 While we have continued to highlight the need for public bodies to take a longer-term view of their finances to help them plan for these uncertainties, we think it is also important for the Welsh Government to act. The Welsh Government faces its own uncertainties but should explore and agree what can reasonably be done to minimise funding uncertainties for public bodies to aid their medium and longer-term planning.

Recommendation 3

19 As prevention is at the forefront of No time to lose, we made this recommendation to support a shift to a more preventative public service model. We recognise that investing in prevention is a challenge given the pressures public bodies face.

20 Beyond the requirement to apply the ways of working, there is a need for changes in process and some more technical solutions to facilitate the aims of the Act. Specifically on prevention, it is very difficult to categorise spend as preventative. However, it is important to understand the current baseline to inform decisions about increasing investment and understanding the value for money that is being achieved. CIPFA are doing interesting work to develop a method (we have connected the Commissioner and CIPFA on this).

21 There are also opportunities to look at how the Welsh Government's budget process could further embed prevention to ensure national funding is allocated with that purpose. For example, bringing together funding streams across different parts of the system.

22 In addition to this, there are opportunities to look at what could be done to further incentivise or protect preventative spend at a local level. This could involve removing ringfencing, or in some cases might mean the protection of certain funding for prevention.

23 Our recommendation differs from the Commissioner's recommendation on ringfencing spend for prevention that increases over time but encourages the Welsh Government to explore complementary ways of incentivising investment in prevention. In setting out a range of opportunities, it covers

strengthening the understanding of preventative spend. This is similar to a separate recommendation from the Commissioner on mapping preventative spend.

Recommendation 4

24 The backdrop to this recommendation is that our work on the setting of well-being objectives has found gaps in performance measures or a focus on outputs, rather than measures that reflect the long term, cross-cutting outcomes bodies are seeking to achieve.

25 Other work, notably in local government, has highlighted limitations of performance measures and a lack of focus on measuring outcomes. There is also a lack of national comparative performance information for local government, which makes benchmarking difficult.

26 Interestingly, the Act does not require public bodies to take account of the national indicators when developing their local measures. This appears to be a missed opportunity. We think it would be beneficial to look at performance assessment under the Act. This could help strengthen performance measures at individual bodies, enable benchmarking where feasible, and connect local and national measures. We note that Public Health Wales made a similar point about adapting performance arrangements to take account of national indicators in their written response to the inquiry.

27 This would not need to be, and we would not recommend, anything restrictive. It would be important to maintain a focus on flexibility so that bodies' measures appropriately reflect their objectives.

Effectiveness of the Act and its implementation: the Auditor General's duties under section 15

28 The section 15 duties focus on the application of the sustainable development principle. This is (as far as we know) a unique focus for audit work.

29 We have developed our audit approach over the two reporting periods. We initially undertook an extensive programme of work, engaging stakeholders and piloting a new audit approach. This included developing a set of 'positive indicators' that describe what good could look like for each way of working.

30 Designing a bespoke approach helped to ensure clarity on the requirements of the Act and gave it the prominence it needed in the early

days of public bodies' implementation. We received positive feedback for adopting this approach.

31 Our aim was that, over time, we would incorporate the assessment of the sustainable development principle into wider audit work. Specifically, the examinations of steps to meet well-being objectives, which takes us into functions and activities that we may be reviewing for other purposes. Assessing the setting of well-being objectives is more likely to be a standalone review, given its specific nature.

32 We consulted on this approach for the second reporting period, then began integrating the examinations alongside our value for money work from 2020. As a result, we have embedded consideration of the Act across our performance audit processes, from scoping through to project learning. The positive indicators continue to inform our audit criteria.

33 In practice, this means that we now carry out more examinations than the minimum number required under the Act. It also means that, even where we are not carrying out a comprehensive assessment of the application of the sustainable development principle, we often build in consideration of at least some of the ways of working.

34 Carrying out our examinations of steps to meet well-being objectives in this way also allows us to effectively address the sustainable development principle as a major factor in the arrangements bodies have in place to secure value for money. We think this comes out clearly in No time to lose.

35 We also welcome the opportunity to report our findings to the Senedd in each reporting period, sharing key messages and themes from our work. The medium-term cycle ensures we have a large body of work to draw from. Publishing alongside the Commissioner's report also provides a fuller picture of what is known about bodies' implementation of the Act.

36 Overall, we consider that we have developed an effective approach to delivering section 15 examinations. At the same time, we continue to look for ways we can refine and strengthen how we assess the ways of working as part of value for money considerations. We have also identified ways the Act could be strengthened to enable us to add more value and increase efficiency (see **paragraphs 46 to 57**).

Coordination between the Auditor General and the Future Generations Commissioner

37 We have good working relationships across the two organisations. This is set out in an MoU. The MoU also provides various examples of how we coordinate functions in practice. These include:

- seeking the Commissioner's advice when scoping examination work; and
- taking account of advice and recommendations made by the Commissioner when undertaking future examination work.

38 We have a long-established working relationship that serves both organisations well. However, there are some inherent complications in the division of responsibilities across the Auditor General and Commissioner that could, in theory, cause difficulty (see **paragraphs 62 to 66**). While this has been avoided to date, that cannot be guaranteed for the long term, particularly where there are changes in key personnel.

Q2. Any action which should be taken to improve the effectiveness of the Act and its implementation, including any specific drafting issues

Opportunities to improve the section 15 duty on the Auditor General

39 We think that additional flexibility in the Act's provisions for section 15 examinations is merited. In short, it would enable us to add more value and carry out our work in a more efficient and proportionate way within our resource envelope and with less impact on the Auditor General's discretion to decide on his work programme amid competing demands.

40 We said this when commenting previously as part of the Welsh Government's consultation on extending the well-being duty to more bodies (as happened in June 2024). And we raised the same issue when providing estimated costs for the Welsh Government's regulatory impact assessment for the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024, which has shortened the reporting cycle for our work under the Act.

41 Section 15 requires us to examine, at least once in a reporting period, the setting of well-being objectives and steps to meet them at each body. It is therefore focused on discrete elements of activity, rather than how public bodies are implementing the legislation overall. This effectively means we gain insight into some specific activities (which is useful). However, the duty does not lend itself to a broader understanding of how public bodies are implementing the Act, unless we are able to incorporate the examinations in wider, routine performance audit work.

42 We are also less able to gather such a broader assessment at Welsh Government Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs), and to some extent the Welsh Government itself. This is because of the absence of a duty to be satisfied

as to arrangements for securing value for money (which applies in local government and the NHS).

43 The provisions also mean that we must carry out an examination of the setting of well-being objectives at all bodies in each cycle. However, bodies are not required to set well-being objectives to a particular timetable, and objectives are sometimes set for the long term, which is in keeping with the Act.

44 In some instances where objectives were not set in the reporting period, we examined how bodies reviewed their well-being objectives to assure themselves that they are still providing the right direction. Public bodies must review their objectives each year and whenever the national well-being goals are changed. A review may lead to changes in the well-being objectives.

45 We would favour a broader examination power rather than duty, for example along the lines of:

> 'The Auditor General may assess the extent to which public bodies are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle as required by this Act'.

This would allow us to continue to undertake examinations of both the setting of well-being objectives and steps to meet them, but with more freedom to prioritise coverage.

46 Such a duty would also allow us to carry out more work focused on steps within the same resource envelope (however, see also **paragraph 76**). We could replace work on objective setting with additional work on steps if, for example, a body had not set new well-being objectives or if we considered that that would add more value. A more flexible power would also render academic any confusion about the difference between setting and reviewing objectives. It would lend itself to examinations of either, ensuring we can programme our work to fit with public bodies' planning arrangements and other relevant considerations.

47 A power such as this would also enable us to undertake section 15 examinations across multiple bodies, with in-depth work at a sample. This could be a more proportionate and efficient way of covering the sustainable development principle at some, particularly smaller, bodies. This could include producing a single report for such an examination, rather than reporting to individual bodies.[2] Carrying out examinations across multiple

[2] While there is no duty to report on individual examinations, we think it is important to communicate our findings and promote accountability. Invariably, this reporting would also include recommendations for improvement.

bodies could also provide opportunities to examine more steps at these bodies over the reporting period.

48 The focus of the Auditor General's current duty on individual bodies is arguably also at odds with the sustainable development principle and its emphasis on integration, involvement and collaboration, which tend towards a less individual body focus. A more flexible power would allow us to prioritise more cross-body issue or place-based examinations.

49 We think this additional flexibility is especially important now that the well-being duty has been extended to more public bodies, taking the number from the original 44 to 56.[3] There is also the prospect of further bodies being added through other policy developments. While our work suggests bodies still have some way to go in their application of the sustainable development principle, we consider that arrangements have matured in a way that supports a change in focus for the section 15 duty.

50 A more flexible power would also help us manage the impact of moving from a five to four-year reporting period because of Senedd Reform. It would help ensure we can focus our work effectively, while taking a proportionate approach, in a shorter timeframe.

51 It could help us to deliver the examinations in a more economical way, particularly at smaller ALBs. So far, we have sought to avoid charging fees for the section 15 examinations, as it would have a significant impact on bodies' overall audit fees, particularly for smaller bodies. By integrating the examinations where we can, we have been able to deliver these without charging additional fees to public bodies in the second reporting period.

52 For bodies where we cannot carry out routine ongoing performance audit work (see **paragraph 42**), we covered the cost in the second reporting cycle through funding we received from the Welsh Consolidated Fund (WCF). That funding was approved via our estimate to the Senedd, and in part the examinations at these bodies was at the expense of other work.

53 We have already sought a relatively small amount of WCF funding to accommodate demands from new bodies coming under the Act and the effect of Senedd reform which results in a need to undertake 25% more examinations in any given period. Given the general pressures on finances, we costed this on a minimum required extent of work basis, though a

[3] On 18 September 2025, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning announced that the functions of the Centre for Digital Public Services would be merged into the Welsh Government in April 2026, meaning the number of bodies subject to the well-being duty would reduce to 55, at least in the short-term.

greater extent of work may be desirable to fully meet the objectives of the Act.

54 It is also worth noting that, as there is less opportunity to integrate work at ALBs because of the general absence of a value for money arrangements duty, we will look to embed examinations as part of our national value for money studies programme. While this approach is necessary because of the legal constraints on central government audit work, it is less suitable for ongoing consideration of the sustainable development duty than the approaches available in local government and the NHS.

55 The greater flexibility that would be provided by a power along the lines set out at **paragraph 45** could help to reduce the need for further increased WCF funding and impacts on our wider programme of work. It should also help deal with the problem of interference with the Auditor General's independence in setting his work programme that arises from being required to undertake examinations at each public body in each electoral cycle.

56 To be clear, we are not suggesting changing the duty for the Auditor General to report to the Senedd in accordance with the current cycle (see also **paragraph 35**). This would help to ensure a meaningful and continuing coverage of the sustainable development principle across our work.

57 There is also potential to give the Auditor General the power to assess public bodies' progress towards their well-being objectives. This would complement work on setting and taking steps to meet well-being objectives (see **paragraphs 62-66**). Currently, there is rather confusingly provision for work assessing bodies' progress by the Commissioner in both section 18(b) of the Act (as part of a general duty) and in section 20(2)(b) (as a power in relation to particular bodies). However, whether in the form of a power or a duty, having such work undertaken by a separate body to that undertaking reviews of whether well-being objectives are set and pursued in accordance with the sustainable development principles is inherently less efficient and less effective than having these functions taken by the same body. Indeed, the Commissioner noted in his submission to the committee that section 20 reviews are resource intensive.

Other drafting issues

58 There are some other elements of drafting that could be improved. Some are minor oddities, for example, PSBs are required to send the Auditor General their well-being assessments, plans, annual reports and details of associated scrutiny. However, our examinations relate to individual public bodies (and not PSBs), but public bodies are not required to send us any

such information. It would be more efficient for all concerned if the Act were revised to provide the Auditor General with a right of access to such information that he considers necessary for the exercise of his functions under the Act, as is usual in public sector audit, rather than just having a standing requirement for PSBs to send assessments etc.

59 Indeed, the absence of such access rights is an oddity in its own right. Fortunately, it has not been a significant problem to date, but it has the potential to create substantial practical barriers to the delivery of sustainable development examinations. The risk of this becoming a real problem increases if more bodies whose accounts are not audited by the Auditor General become subject to the well-being duty.

60 The absence of such statutory access rights also contrasts with the robust access to information provisions that accompany the Auditor General's accounts audit and other examination functions. This perhaps risks signalling that the Act is not quite as serious a matter as that other work.

61 There is also incoherence in reporting and laying provisions in the Act in relation to the Commissioner's accounts and annual report. There are overlapping, dual report laying requirements in paragraphs 17 and 21 of Schedule 2 to the Act. These are practically managed by the Welsh Ministers arranging for the Auditor General to lay reports on their behalf. While this works, it is not entirely satisfactory, and if the opportunity for tidying the legislation is available it would be appropriate to address this.

62 Other more material matters relate to the Auditor General's and Commissioner's closely related responsibilities. As mentioned at **paragraph 57**, the Commissioner has a duty to monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met (section 18(b)). There is, therefore, a disjuncture between the assessment of how well-being objectives are set and steps to meet them are carried out (Auditor General's responsibilities) and the assessment of progress.[4]

63 The monitoring and assessment of progress towards objectives would fit well with the Auditor General's existing examinations. In examining the setting of well-being objectives, we already consider how public bodies have taken account of past performance and how they intend to monitor progress towards their well-being objectives. It would also fit with wider performance audit work where we may review performance management arrangements (health and local government bodies).

[4] The Commissioner has made clear that exercising the section 18(b) duty is very difficult, even impossible. He has highlighted public bodies' piecemeal approach to the setting of well-being objectives as the cause of this difficulty.

64 And a broader power for the Auditor General, as described in **paragraph 445**, could enable proportionate assessment of progress in meeting well-being objectives (as part of consideration of whether they are pursuing sustainable development, i.e. improving well-being, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, as required by section 2 of the Act). A broader power would enable a generally more integrated and proportionate approach, allowing the work to deliver greater value for a given level of resource.

65 We also consider that such a development would enable a clearer and more coherent delineation of responsibilities between the Auditor General and the Commissioner. We consider that it is generally helpful that there is separation between functions that concern advice, guidance and encouragement (i.e. largely functions of the Commissioner) and review functions. This is chiefly because where advisory functions are combined with review functions, there is a danger of undermining (or appearing to undermine) the objectivity of the review functions. It is for this reason that auditors are generally prohibited from providing advisory services by the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard.

66 The current division of functions in the Act, while seeming to broadly set out such a separation, is, however, not quite coherent, as indicated at **paragraph 57**. This leads to confusion on the part of public bodies, as the Commissioner has mentioned in his written submission, and this is not conducive to successful implementation.

67 Most importantly, any developments in overseeing progress towards well-being objectives need to be seen in the context of our recommendation 4 (the need to take a fresh look at performance assessment under the Act – see **paragraphs 24 to 27**). Progress on this should facilitate a more effective and consistent assessment of progress.

Q3. Consider whether the review and reporting requirements under the Act are being met

68 We are confident that we are meeting the reporting requirements of section 15 examinations, but we do not have a role in checking public bodies' compliance with the requirement to review and report annually on their well-being objectives. Therefore, we cannot give a complete answer on the extent to which all bodies covered by the Act are meeting those requirements.

69 Neither do we have an explicit role in examining how public bodies review their well-being objectives. However, as noted in **paragraph 44** we have examined how bodies are reviewing their well-being objectives where they

had not, and did not intend to set, new objectives within the reporting period.

70 In those cases, we developed audit criteria, drawing on the Welsh Government's guidance on the Act and seeking the views of the Commissioner. We also shared the criteria with Welsh Government officials. However, the information we could draw on from guidance was limited (see **paragraph 78**).

71 In carrying out our work on well-being objectives, we have seen that certain bodies had not reviewed them for some time. More generally, the need to improve performance measures is a barrier to effective annual reporting. We found that:

- public bodies often did not have the right performance measures in place to help them understand progress and impact against their objectives;
- measures were typically more focused on activities and outputs than outcomes; and
- some public bodies had not set out specific measures to accompany the objectives.

Where measures have not been set out alongside the objectives, this clearly makes it difficult to communicate progress transparently. Again, progress on our recommendation 4 would help to address this.

Q4. The effectiveness of guidance made under the Act

72 There is fairly extensive Welsh Government guidance to accompany the Act. Nevertheless, since the guidance was drafted, the collective understanding of the legislation across public bodies and wider stakeholders has matured, and there is potential for the guidance to be further developed to reflect this. The Commissioner also has a role in providing advice to public bodies and has a range of tools to support them.

Gaps in guidance

73 There would, however, seem to be some key gaps in the guidance produced under the Act. In particular, it appears that there is a lack of guidance to democratically constituted public bodies on how to reconcile political mandates with the duty to set and take steps to meet well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle duty. This seems particularly pertinent in terms of 'taking account of the importance of involving other persons with an interest in achieving the well-

being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population' (section 5(2)(c)).

74 Indeed, this complexity arose in our examination of the setting of well-being objectives at the Welsh Government in 2021. Putting the well-being objectives at the heart of the programme for government was appropriate, but the reality of setting well-being objectives soon after an election requires government to ensure that programme reflects the sustainable development principle, which has inevitable challenges following an election. We found that, ultimately, the Welsh Government had not provided clear supporting evidence to show how it has applied the sustainable development principle when setting its well-being objectives.

75 There also seems to be an issue of the Act effectively providing dual sources of guidance, albeit with one source (the Commissioner) this is labelled as 'advice or assistance'. It may be worth considering whether arrangements for guidance could be made more streamlined and more robust, so strengthening the position of the Commissioner. This could perhaps be done by transferring the Welsh Ministers' function of issuing guidance (section 14) to the Commissioner.

76 Clearer guidance could also help public bodies set out clear well-being objectives and associated steps. Public bodies have freedom to pitch their objectives as they see fit, and this is important. However, objectives can be high level and the accompanying information on steps may be limited. This has implications for how bodies measure progress towards them and how the Commissioner can effectively monitor them.

77 There is also a question of whether corporate enablers, such as financial planning, should automatically be considered steps to meet well-being objectives, even if not explicitly listed as steps in the well-being statement. This would recognise their vital role is supporting overall delivery of the well-being objectives, and the read across to the areas 'where the change needs to happen' described in the Act's guidance (see **paragraph 7**).

78 Through our work we have also identified that the expectations relating to how public bodies should review their well-being objectives could be clearer. Guidance states that public bodies should, when reviewing their objectives, consider whether they 'remain consistent with the sustainable development principle'. This could entail quite detailed and resource-intensive work, and it would be helpful to clarify whether and how this differs from how bodies should apply the sustainable development principle when setting their well-being objectives. We think additional clarity would be helpful as we expect public bodies will be doing these reviews in different ways with varying levels of consideration of the sustainable development principle.

Changes since the Act was introduced

79 Since the Act was passed, other related legislation has come into force. For example, the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, which was developed with the Well-being of Future Generations Act in mind.

80 While undoubtedly intended to be complementary and supportive, there is potential for confusion between some of the provisions. The Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act places a requirement on public bodies to seek consensus with social partners when setting well-being objectives. It may be helpful to clarify expectations on consensus and how it relates to involvement under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

81 There is also an opportunity to clarify the relationship with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This requires Natural Resources Wales to lead on preparing areas statements, but there is potential overlap between these and PSBs' well-being assessments and plans.

82 Similarly, the relationship between the Regional Partnership Boards and PSBs, and alignment of the RPBs' population needs assessment and PSBs' well-being assessment, could be clearer.

83 Overall, it appears that public bodies may be struggling with the need to service different requirements and comply with multiple duties. Linked to this, the volume of reporting requirements under different duties, especially for smaller bodies, may be burdensome and difficult to bring together.

84 There may also be a need to update the guidance following action government takes in response to the Auditor General and Commissioner's recent recommendations. Specifically, recommendation 1 (post-legislative evaluation) and recommendation 4 (assessment of performance).

Q5. How far the Act has been legally binding and enforceable

85 The legislation does not lend itself to legal enforcement of its requirements, as it is based on 'ways of working'. Application of the ways of working are context dependent – the way and degree to which they are applied will vary depending on the policy area and a range of other factors. However, there are some opportunities to strengthen accountability under the Act.

86 Given that the ways of working model is a deliberate design choice, it is difficult to see how the legislation could easily be revised towards a standards and enforcement model. It is also important to consider the consequences of such a change, which could increase litigation and cost. We generally see merit in avoiding litigation in favour of co-operation.

Impact assessment

87 One option may be to consider whether there would be merit in requiring bodies to assess the impact of their decisions on future generations. Like the Public Sector Equality Duty, this would entail decision makers demonstrating how they have taken account of the long term as part of the decision-making process. This could aid transparency. It could also enable enforcement to a degree through Judicial Review.

88 However, this would add to a long list of impact assessments that are already required. While many bodies already carry out 'integrated impact assessments', there are both advantages and disadvantages associated with this. Such a requirement would also have to be set in the context of existing weaknesses in public bodies' approaches to impact assessments.[5]

89 Therefore, if a requirement to undertake impact assessments was introduced in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, there would need to be further development of the integrated impact assessment model and associated guidance to support public bodies. Simply adding another requirement would not be helpful. However, an integrated model could be an opportunity to streamline and strengthen impact assessments more generally.

Strengthening performance management and reporting

90 We made recommendation 4 in No time to lose (assessment of performance) with a view to strengthening the accountability arrangements that support the Act (see **paragraphs 24 to 27**). While this is not the same as enforcement, it is an important means of driving improvement, ensuring transparency and assessing value for money.

91 Making these improvements would not only support accountability for delivery at a local level but improve the national picture of how activity by individual bodies is contributing to the well-being of Wales. It could enable comparisons of performance and build understanding of performance across different parts of the system/ sectors.

[5] In our 2022 report, Equality impact assessments: More than a tickbox?, we found equality impact assessments were still often treated as a tickbox exercise, that qualitative information was patchy, and highlighted concerns that diverse groups were not being involved often enough. We also raised a recommendation for the Welsh Government around working towards a shared understanding of what good looks like for an integrated impact assessment.

Our role in providing challenge

92 The Auditor General is not an enforcer, but alongside the Commissioner has a key role in ensuring accountability for delivering on the Act.

93 We have deliberately developed our audit approach over time to balance an emphasis on learning and improvement with challenge. We stated that our expectations would grow in the second reporting period.

94 Our increased expectations are reflected in our published outputs, including No time to lose, which sets out a clear message that we are not seeing the system-wide change intended. Other examples include:

- Springing Forward, where we said that many councils had not yet considered how they could use the sustainable development principle to help them develop their approaches to workforce and assets.
- Our affordable housing report, which stated 'The lack of a long-term approach to affordable housing hampers progress and contributes to an unstable pattern of spending and delivery'.
- Our cancer services review, where we made clear recommendations on the need for a coherent, long-term strategic approach for cancer and a strategic approach to population health improvement and disease prevention.

95 The nature of the sustainable development principle means it is difficult to say that a body has fully applied it. It is also often difficult to say that a body has categorically not applied it, but we nevertheless challenge public bodies and highlight where they need to go further in applying the ways of working.

96 We report our findings to public bodies (despite the fact there is no duty to do so, and the only reporting duty is to the Senedd at the end of each reporting period). Following this:

- We ask that bodies complete a formal response to our recommendations (management response form). We consider the response and request further information where we think it necessary.
- Our reports and the organisations' responses are presented to audit committees. Those committees can then track activity against those recommendations.
- We also follow-up on our recommendations.

97 We think it would be helpful to extend the Auditor General's power to issue Public Interest Reports (paragraph 19 of Schedule 8 of the Government of Wales Act 2006) so as to include matters arising in the course of section 15 sustainable development principle examinations. This would put our assessments of the sustainable development principle on the same serious

footing as financial matters. This would require a small amendment of paragraph 19 of Schedule 8 to the Government of Wales A 2006. Amending paragraph 18 of that Schedule so as to give statutory access rights for section 15 examinations would also be helpful.

Q6. How far the Act has represented, and will continue to represent, value for money

98 We have continued to stress that the sustainable development principle is a value for money issue. Public bodies will not be able to assure themselves that they are delivering real value money if they do not:

- think about costs over the longer term;
- consider how they can act preventatively to stop costs from occurring or escalating;
- work with partners to deliver more efficiently or effectively;
- understand what people want and need from their services; and
- consider how they can maximise value by delivering a broader range of benefits.

We note that other public bodies have reflected this in their consultation responses.

99 However, this is a different question from whether the legislation itself has represented and will continue to represent value for money. That is a difficult question to answer, due to the nature of the legislation. Implementing the Act is not tied to one specific activity or function; it is meant to be pervasive and requires regular action across organisations. A large number of inputs and outcomes would need to be weighed, and this would be very difficult or impossible.

100 While the true breadth of activity will be difficult (if not impossible) to capture, organisations may be able to provide information on how much corporate capacity they have devoted to putting necessary systems and processes in place. This could include updating/ developing templates and tools for staff, delivering training and carrying out required activity for the PSBs they are involved with.

101 We have not conducted work on the value for money of the Act (this is beyond the scope of the Auditor General's section 15 duty) and only bodies themselves would have information on time spent. However, when it comes to effectiveness, we find there is more that could be done to improve implementation of the legislation (as described above).

102 Many of the improvements that need to be made by bodies extend beyond the direct scope of the legislation. For example, good data, clarity on the

resources required to deliver various ambitions and the right performance measures. These are also the foundations that public bodies need to ensure they are delivering value for money more generally. It will be important for public bodies to continue strengthening them, particularly given the financial challenges they face.

103 We have also already identified opportunities to add more value and increase efficiency in our audit work under the Act (see **paragraphs 39 to 57**).

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted