



Women In Prison - The Facts

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37% increase in the total number of women in prison (1,573 in Dec 1993, 2,150 in Dec 1995).

16% increase in the total prison population in the same period.

39% of women received into prison had no previous convictions.

37% of women received into prison during 1993 were fine defaulters.

22% of women received into prison were imprisoned for theft or goods handling

7% were imprisoned for violence against the person.

26% of women who were on remand subsequently received a prison sentence which meant that –

74% of women were in prison on remand before trial unnecessarily.

In October 1995 there were 2,049 women in prison in England and Wales. Almost half of these prisoners were mothers and 14% of them had children aged 2 or under.

56 women gave birth whilst imprisoned during the financial year 1993/4. All of these births were reported to have taken place in outside hospitals.

Between June 1994 and June 1995 115 babies were incarcerated in prison. There are only four mother and baby units in England and Wales with places for 68 mothers and babies. The units are in London, York, Wakefield and Cheshire. 68% of these mothers were imprisoned for non-violent offenses.

There have been 3 births in prison since 1983. These births had occurred in Styal during 1987/88 and two more in Holloway during 1988/89. The stated reason for the births taking place inside prison was that the period between going into labour and giving birth was too short for the women to be transferred to the local maternity hospital.

There are currently 14 prison establishments which hold women, of which 8 are closed prisons. It is current policy for young women and girls as young as 15 years to be held in prisons with adult women.

The average cost of keeping a woman in prison was £541 per week during the financial year 1992-93. however this did not include the cost of prison headquarters.

Figures courtesy of the Howard League for Penal Reform