

PRISONERS (EARLY RELEASE) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2025 DATA REPORT

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DATA SUMMARY

Background

The Prisoners (Early Release) (Scotland) Act 2025 ("The Act") received Royal Assent in January 2025 and came into force on 11 February 2025. The Act changed the point at which some prisoners, those sentenced to less than four years in prison (short-term prisoners), are released, from after 50% of their sentence has been served, to after 40%. It excluded prisoners serving all or part of their sentence for:

- sexual offences
- domestic abuse offences

When the change to automatic early release came into force on 11 February 2025, some prisoners were immediately eligible for release. These prisoners were released in groups in February and March 2025. Releases took place over the following three tranches.

- Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 February 2025
- Tuesday 4, Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 March 2025
- Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 March 2025

Since 20 March 2025, all eligible prisoners are now released as soon as they have served 40% of their sentence. The Act requires reporting on how the changes have operated following the end of the review period, which lasts for two years from the point at which section 1 of the Act came into force.

This report – which is not linked to the statutory requirement above - provides an overview of the operation of the Act from 11 February to 20 March 2025. SPS published data on the SPS website of the total numbers released following the end of each of the three tranches set out above.

SPS will publish a further report later in the year in setting out return to custody data in relation to the operation of the Act.

Data Reporting

In between 18 February and 20 March 2025, 312 individuals on short-term sentences were released early. This took place over 3 tranches:

Tranche	Number of releases (proportion of all releases)
1 (18-20 February 2025)	82 (26.3%)
2 (4-6 March 2025)	90 (28.8%)
3 (18-20 March 2025)	140 (44.9%)
Total	312

Further breakdowns are provided including the number of releases by sex; index offence grouping; sentence length; establishment; health board; and local authority.

Of those released:

Releases by sex

Sex	Number released (proportion of all releases)
Female	25 (8%)
Male	287 (92%)
Total	312

Releases by sentence length

Sentence length	Released (proportion of all releases)
0 to 6 months (0-180 days)	10 (3.2%)
6+ to 12 months (181-365 days)	45 (14.4%)
12+ months to 2 years (366-730 days)	148 (47.4%)
2+ years to 3 years (731-1,095 days)	58 (18.6%)
3+ to 4 years (1,096-1,460 days)	51 (16.3%)
Total	312

Releases by index offence grouping

Index offence groupings are shown here in order of sentence tariff carried (i.e. most serious offences first), as delineated in the official prison population statistics. Please note, <10 denotes 0 to 9.

Index offence grouping	Released (proportion)
Non-sexual crimes of violence	152 (48.7%)
Crimes of dishonesty	52 (16.7%)
Damage and reckless behaviour	<10
Crimes against society	69 (22.1%)
Antisocial offences	19 (6.1%)
Miscellaneous offences	<10
Road traffic offences	12 (3.8%)
Total	312

Releases by establishment

Please note, <5 denotes 0 to 4.

Establishment	Released
Addiewell	30
Barlinnie	65
Bella	<5
Castle Huntly	<5
Dumfries	6
Edinburgh	15
Glenochil	22
Grampian	21
Greenock	13
Inverness	<5
Kilmarnock	18
Lilias	<5
Low Moss	37
Perth	23
Polmont	49
Stirling	<5
Total	312

Both local authority and health board are assigned on the basis of the last known address for an individual in custody; they may not necessarily return to the same area.

Releases by Health Board

Both health boards and local authorities were assigned based on the last known address of the individual. Where a health board is not listed, there were no releases that fell within their remit. Please note, <10 denotes 0 to 9.

Health board	Released
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	19
NHS Borders	<10
NHS Dumfries and Galloway	13
NHS Fife	23
NHS Forth Valley	20
NHS Grampian	30
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	83
NHS Highland	10
NHS Lanarkshire	34
NHS Lothian	39
NHS Tayside	33
Outwith Scotland	<10
Total	312

Releases by Local Authority

Where a local authority is not shown, there were no releases that fell within their remit. Please note, <5 denotes 0 to 4.

Local Authority	Released
Aberdeen City	20
Aberdeenshire	7
Angus	6
Argyll and Bute	<5
City of Edinburgh	22
Clackmannanshire	6
Dumfries and Galloway	13
Dundee City	19
East Ayrshire	8
East Dunbartonshire	<5
East Lothian	<5
East Renfrewshire	<5
Falkirk	12
Fife	20
Glasgow City	56
Highland	8
Inverclyde	7
Midlothian	<5
Moray	<5
North Ayrshire	9
North Lanarkshire	23
Outwith Scotland	7
Perth and Kinross	8
Renfrewshire	11
Scottish Borders	<5
South Ayrshire	<5
South Lanarkshire	10
Stirling	6
West Dunbartonshire	6
West Lothian	9
Total	312

Returns to custody

In total, 17 individuals returned to custody prior to their 'original' Earliest Date of Liberation (EDL) - a rate of around 5%. Owing to the small numbers of individuals, it is not possible to publish any further breakdown of the figures without risking identification.

Please note, this report provides an overview of the number of individuals who returned to custody prior to their 'original' release date. For any individual who came in after the commencement date of the Act, their 'original' release date and their 'new' release date will be one and the same. For those who were in custody prior to the commencement date, their 'original' release date may have changed during their period of eligibility, owing to the ongoing operation of the courts during the process of warrant recalculation and release.

- Previously a total of 312 people released in this period, as a result of Early Release. Further analysis showed that only 311 of those released during this period were as a result of the change in legislation.

Scottish Prison Service