

Corrections in Nova Scotia: Key Indicators

NOVEMBER 2015

Correctional Services is one of the core business areas of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice. The division's head office is part of the Department of Justice headquarters in Halifax. The divisional head office consists of the Executive Director, Correctional Services, three directors who share responsibility for community- and custody-based administration, policy, programs, training, and operations, 11 managers and staff who manage a variety of administrative or program responsibilities, and six administrative support staff. Legislation governing the operation of the Correctional Services Division is the *Correctional Services Act*.

Correctional Services is responsible for the administration and operation of community- and custody-based programs and services for adult offenders and young persons. Within the Correctional Services core business area there are two programs: Community Corrections and Correctional Facilities. Each of these program areas is broken down into closely related activities that have a specific impact on the program's target group.

Community Corrections

The core businesses for Community Corrections are to provide selected alternative measures (i.e., adult diversion program) to assist the Court by diverting minor offences from the court process; to provide information to assist the Court in sentencing process(es); to administer and supervise community-based sentences of the Court; and, to provide programs that address dynamic criminogenic factors to assist with the successful reintegration of offenders into the community.

Community Corrections also operates the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre (HYAC). HYAC addresses the needs of moderate-high risk youth under court ordered community supervision in the greater Halifax area, by providing access to a number of services including, forensic youth mental health, education, employment support and addictions intervention. These youth cases are managed in a collaborative partnership with the IWK and the Department of Community Services.

Community Corrections has field offices across the province in: Amherst, Antigonish, Bedford, Bridgewater, Dartmouth, Digby, Glace Bay, Halifax, Kentville, Liverpool, Middleton, New Glasgow, North Sydney, Port Hawkesbury, Shelburne, Shubenacadie, Spryfield, Sydney, Truro, Windsor and Yarmouth.

Correctional Facilities

The core businesses of the Correctional Facilities program are: to provide safe and secure custody, direction and control of offenders; and, to provide programs that address dynamic criminogenic factors to assist with the successful reintegration of offenders into the community.

Adult correctional facilities are located in Dartmouth, Priestville, Gardiner Mines, and Yarmouth. The youth facility is in Waterville. The Cape Breton and Northeast Nova Scotia correctional facilities also can provide overnight accommodation for young persons and women.

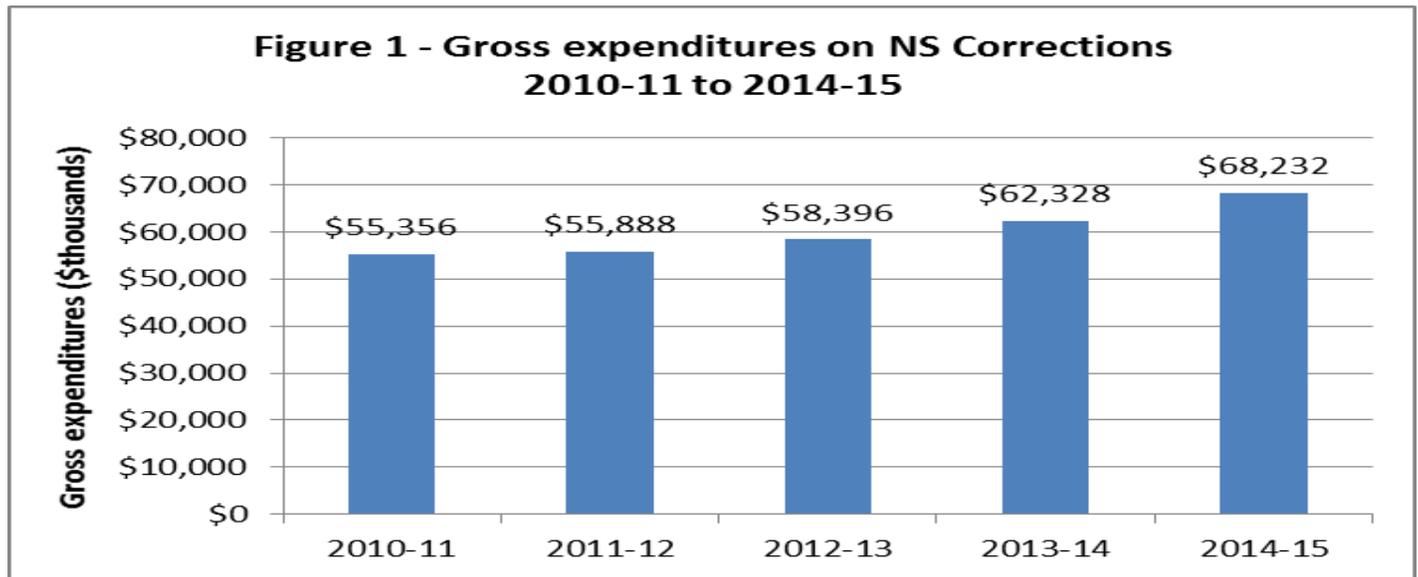
This document contains information on a number of key indicators relating to Correctional Services in Nova Scotia. Generally, data is provided for the most current five fiscal years so the reader can examine changes over time. Sources for the statistics include the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and Statistics Canada.¹

¹ A map illustrating the location of community corrections offices and correctional facilities in Nova Scotia can be found at: http://novascotia.ca/just/Corrections/_docs/cmc598.pdf.

Cost of corrections

The cost of Correctional Services is an indicator of the resources required to administer custodial and community-based sentences in the province. Fluctuations in the cost of corrections may be driven by a number of factors, including but not limited to: the level of crime, legislative and policy responses to crime, sentencing practices, and administrative changes relating to organizational structure and the delivery of services, as well as changes in salaries and benefits for staff.

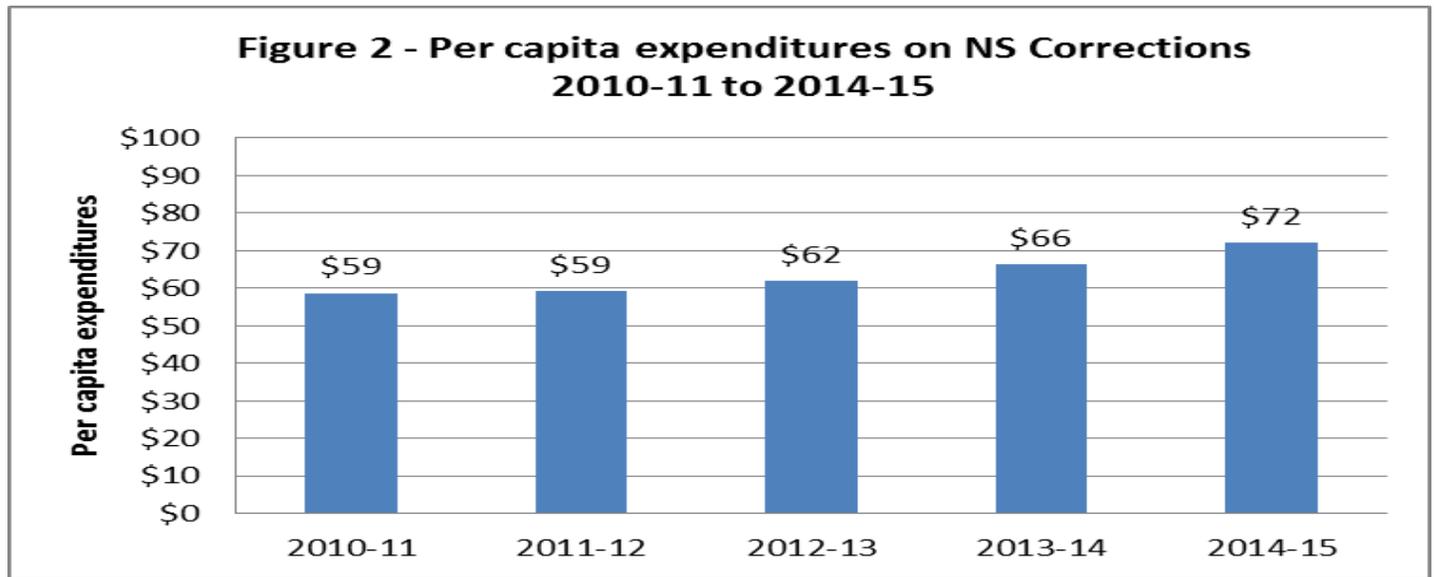
Figure 1 provides the gross operational expenditures for Correctional Services for the period 2010-11 to 2014-15. In 2014-15 gross expenditures increased by 9% over the previous year; part of a general increasing trend over time.² Over the five year period, gross expenditures increased by approximately \$12.9 million or 23%.



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Financial Services.

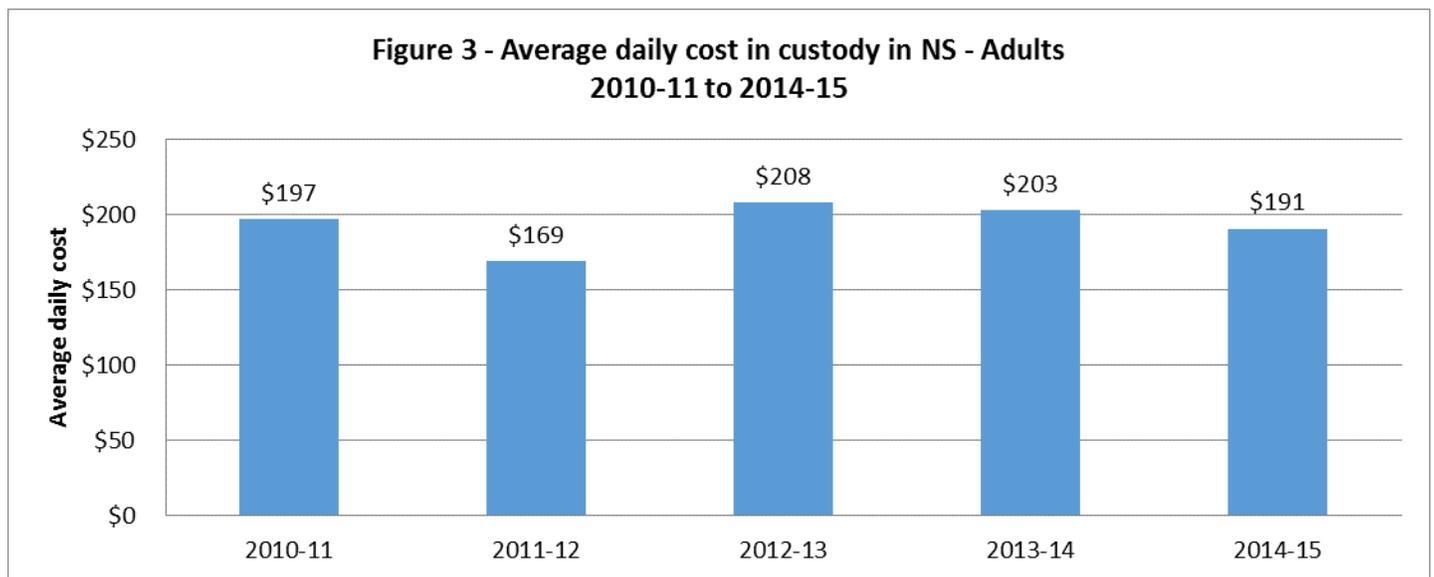
² Note that expenditure data can be subject to revision including changes in what types of expense data is reported (i.e., gross vs. net) as well as issues such as structural changes in the Correctional Services Division. The gross expenditures reported above for the period prior to 2014-15 may differ from what appears in the Department of Justice Accountability Report due to these factors.

Per capita expenditures for Correctional Services was \$72 in 2014-15 which was 9% higher than the prior year (Figure 2).³ Per capita expenditures have risen over time, increasing 22% over the past 5 years.



Source(s): Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Financial Services.
 Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 051-0005 - Estimates of population, Canada, provinces and territories.

Figure 3 provides the average daily cost per adult offender in custody, based on actual expenditures by adult offender correctional facilities, for the period 2010-11 to 2014-15. The average daily cost per adult offender was \$191 in 2014-15 which was 6% lower than 2013-14 and 3% lower than 2010-11.



Source: Policy, Planning and Research section, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

³ The per capita figures presented in Figure 2 were calculated by dividing the gross expenditures on Correctional Services by the total NS population.

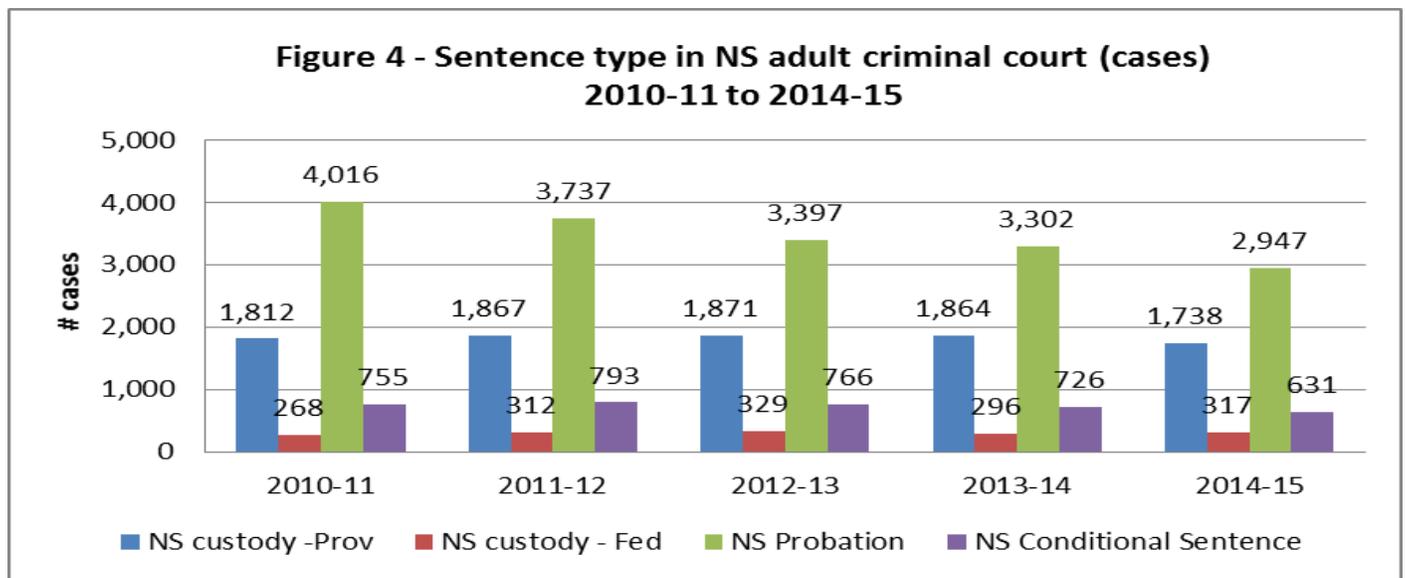
Court sentences – adult

Figure 4 provides the number of guilty cases in adult criminal court in Nova Scotia which had a custody sentence (federal, provincial), probation or a conditional sentence ordered by the court.⁴ These statistics provide an indicator of the number of ‘inputs’ into the adult correctional system. It should be noted that the sentences are not mutually exclusive and so a case may have more than one type of penalty (e.g., the offender may be given a period of custody as well as a period of probation).⁵

There was a decrease of 7% in the number of cases with a sentence of provincial custody in 2014-15 compared to 2013-14, while the number of cases with a sentence of probation decreased by 11%. Conditional sentences decreased by 13% in 2014-15 compared to the previous year.

The number of cases with a provincial custody sentence was relatively stable over the period 2011-12 to 2013-14 before decreasing in 2014-15. The number of cases with a probation sentence had a declining trend over the five year period decreasing by 27%. The number of cases with a conditional sentence decreased by 16% over the five year period and has been trending down since 2011-12.

Probation was the most frequently ordered sentence in each of the last five years.



Source: Policy, Planning and Research section, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

⁴ This analysis employs the Statistics Canada definition of a case which is – ‘one or more charges against an accused person or company that were processed by the courts at the same time and received a final decision. A case combines all charges against the same person having one or more key overlapping dates (date of offence, date of initiation, date of first appearance, date of decision, or date of sentencing) into a single case.’ Excluded from the chart are cases with either a fine, restitution, or some ‘other’ sentence.

⁵ Total cases with a custody sentence can be calculated by adding together the number of cases where provincial custody was ordered and the number of cases where federal custody was ordered. For 2014-15 the total cases where custody was ordered totaled 2,055.

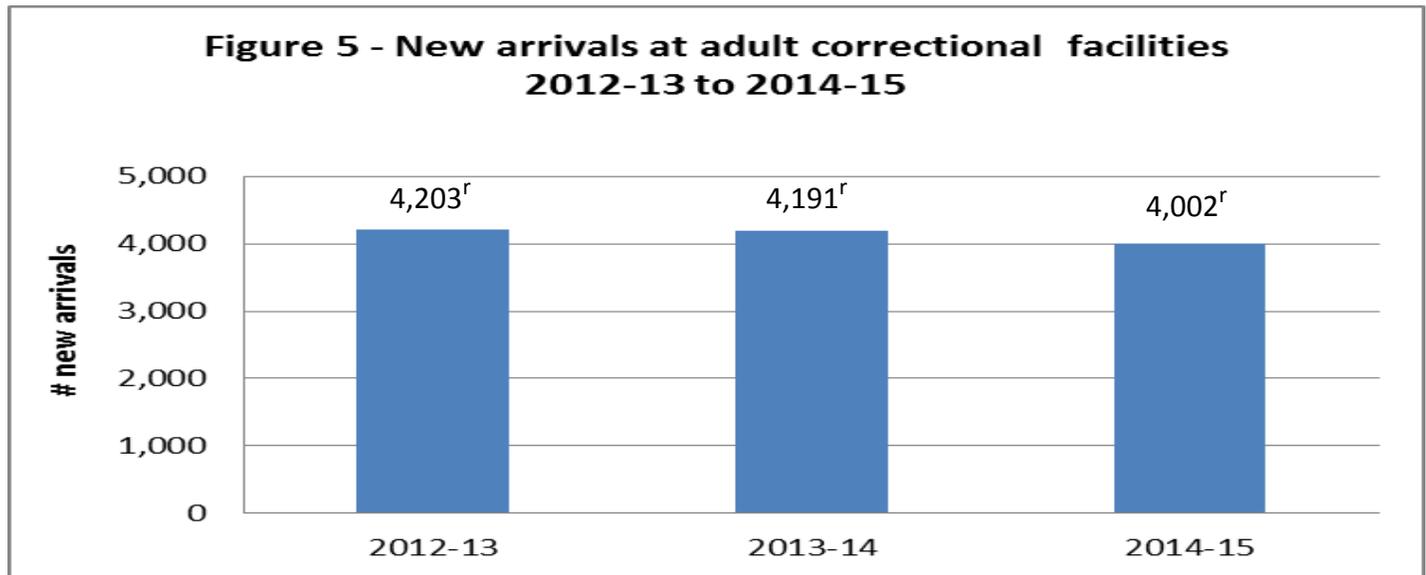
New arrivals at adult correctional facilities

The statistics presented below are for the number of new arrivals in adult correctional facilities for the years 2012-13 to 2014-15. New arrivals (adult facilities) are counted as intakes only (e.g., from non-custody status to custody, transfer from another jurisdiction, or conditional sentence to custody). An individual could have more than one new arrival at a correctional facility during a fiscal year. New arrivals do not include the transfer of individuals between correctional facilities within the province.

Reasons why an adult is in a correctional facility include: being sentenced to provincial custody; being remanded to provincial custody; or, some other reason (e.g., parole suspension; federal inmate in custody at provincial institution in advance of court hearing, breach of a court order, etc.).

Six adult correctional facilities in Nova Scotia were operating during this time period, specifically: Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility; Cape Breton Correctional Facility and Southwest Correctional Facility were in operation for all 3 fiscal years. The Antigonish and Cumberland correctional facilities were in operation until their decommissioning in January 2015; the Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility commenced operation in February 2015. Of the adult facilities, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility is the largest and accounted for the greatest number of new arrivals.

In 2014-15 there were 4,002 new arrivals at adult correctional facilities in the province (Figure 5). There was a decreasing trend in the number of new arrivals from 2012-13 to 2014-15 with a decrease of 5% over the 3 year period.



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Source: Correctional Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice (Justice Enterprise Information Network JEIN report).

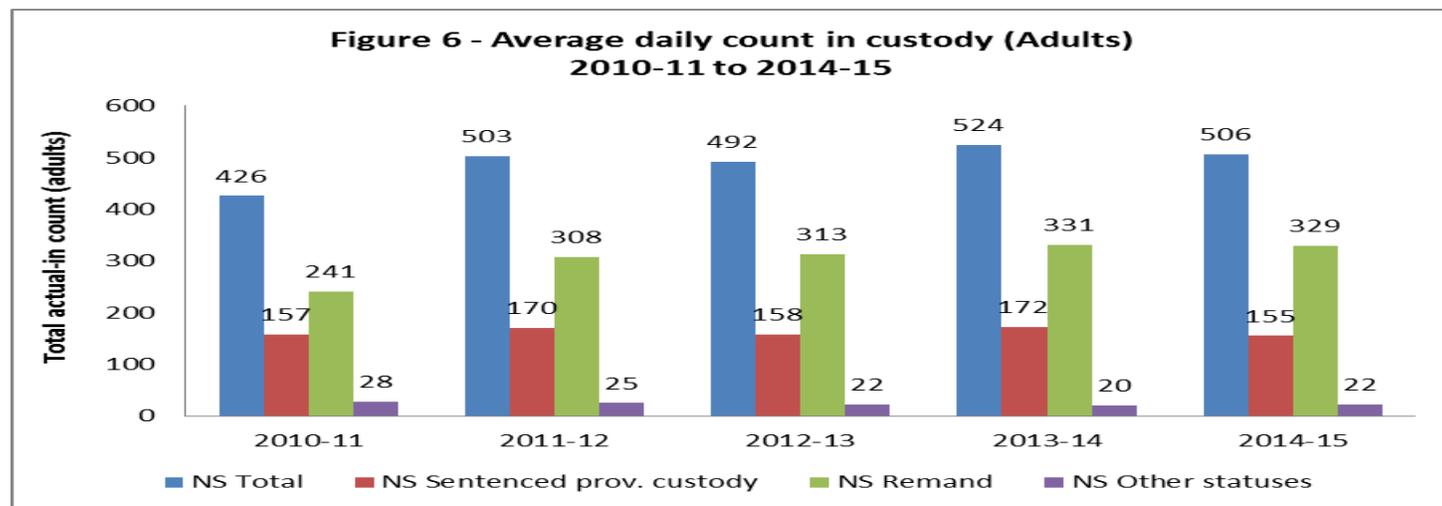
Average daily count – adults

The average daily count of adults in custody reflects the number of adults physically in a provincial correctional facility at the time of the daily count. Daily counts are useful for describing the make-up of the custodial population in terms of custody status: sentenced custody (i.e., person in a correctional facility as a result of a court-ordered sentence), remand (i.e., temporary detention in a facility pending trial or sentencing) and other forms of detention (e.g., immigration holds, federal inmates, etc.). These statistics are helpful in looking at specific policy issues relating to custodial populations as well as operational issues relating to correctional facility capacity.⁶

In 2014-15, there was an average of 506 adults in custody on any given day. This is a decrease of 18 inmates or 4% from the prior year (Figure 6). The number of adults in provincial sentenced custody decreased by 10% while the number on remand remained stable.⁷

Over the five year period, the total average daily count increased by 19%. This increase was driven by a 36% increase in the number of adults in remand. The number in sentenced custody remained stable over the five years.

Offenders on remand consistently outnumbered those in sentenced custody over the five year period. In 2014-15, nearly two-thirds (65%) were on remand while slightly less than one-third (31%) were in sentenced custody.



	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
% NS Sentenced provincial custody ⁸	37%	34%	32%	33%	31%
% NS Remand	57%	61%	63%	63%	65%
% NS Other statuses	7%	5%	4%	4%	4%

Source(s): Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 251-0005 - Average counts of offenders in provincial and territorial programs.

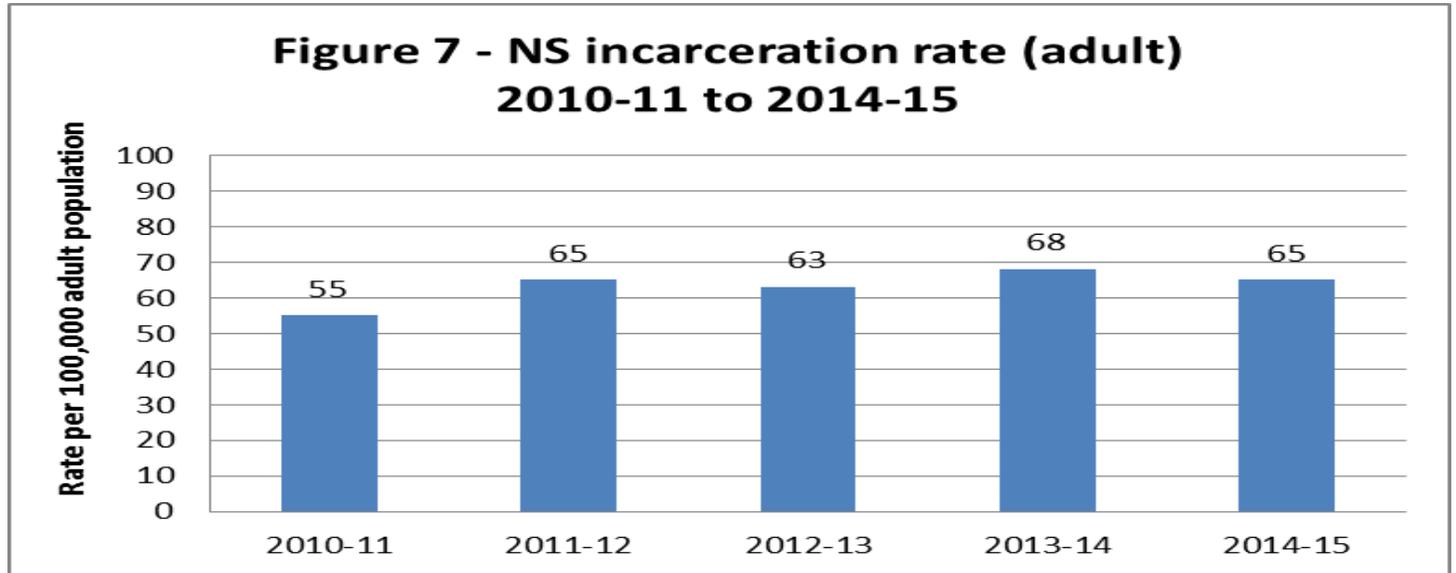
⁶ Adult correctional facilities vary in size with the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (300 inmates) having the largest capacity while the facility with the smallest capacity was the Southwest Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (38 inmates).

⁷ While the average daily count figures reported above are rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity of presentation, calculations use the average daily count figure rounded to one decimal place which can slightly affect the percentages reported.

⁸ Due to rounding, some percentages may not total to 100%.

Incarceration rate – adult

Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, the adult incarceration rate decreased by 4% (Figure 7).⁹ Following an increase in 2011-12, the incarceration rate has remained relatively stable over the past 4 years.¹⁰



Source(s): Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 251-0005 - Average counts of offenders in provincial and territorial programs, annual

⁹The incarceration rate for adults is calculated as the total daily count figure divided by the size of the adult population and standardized per 100,000 population. The provincial incarceration rate is an indicator of the proportion of Nova Scotia residents, in a given year, who are in custody (sentenced custody, remand, “other status”) in provincial institutions. It excludes federal institutions, but includes federally sentenced offenders in provincial institutions.

¹⁰While the incarceration rate figures reported above are rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity of presentation, calculations use the incarceration rate figure rounded to one decimal place which can slightly affect the percentages reported.

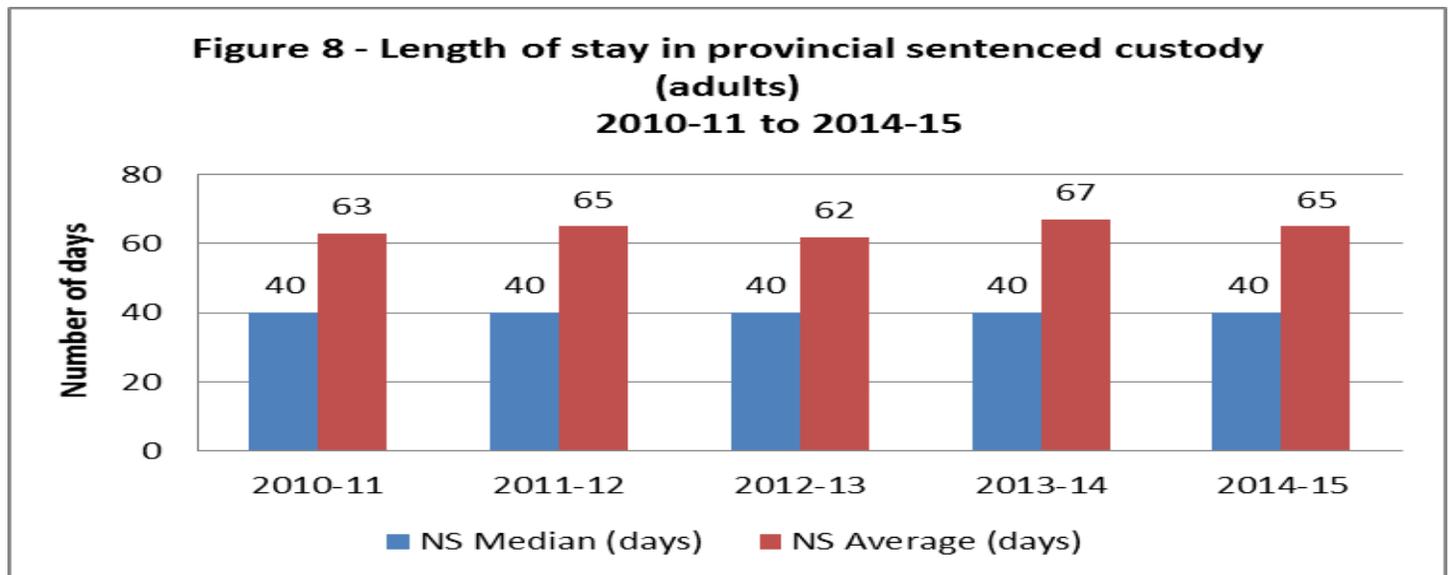
Length of stay in provincial sentenced custody – adult

Statistics on length of stay in custody provide information on the amount of time offenders spend in a facility prior to release. This information is useful for administrative planning in specific areas such as programming. It should be noted that the length of time spent in a facility may not equal the length of time ordered by the court due to earned remission (i.e., reduced time in custody due to good behaviour).

Figure 8 provides information on the length of stay in provincial sentenced custody in Nova Scotia adult correctional facilities for the period for 2010-11 to 2014-15.¹¹

The median length of stay for sentenced custody in 2014-15 was 40 days and was unchanged over the five year time period.¹² The average number of days spent in sentenced custody for 2014-15 was 65.

The average stay over this time period was relatively stable ranging from a low of 62 days to a high of 67.



Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

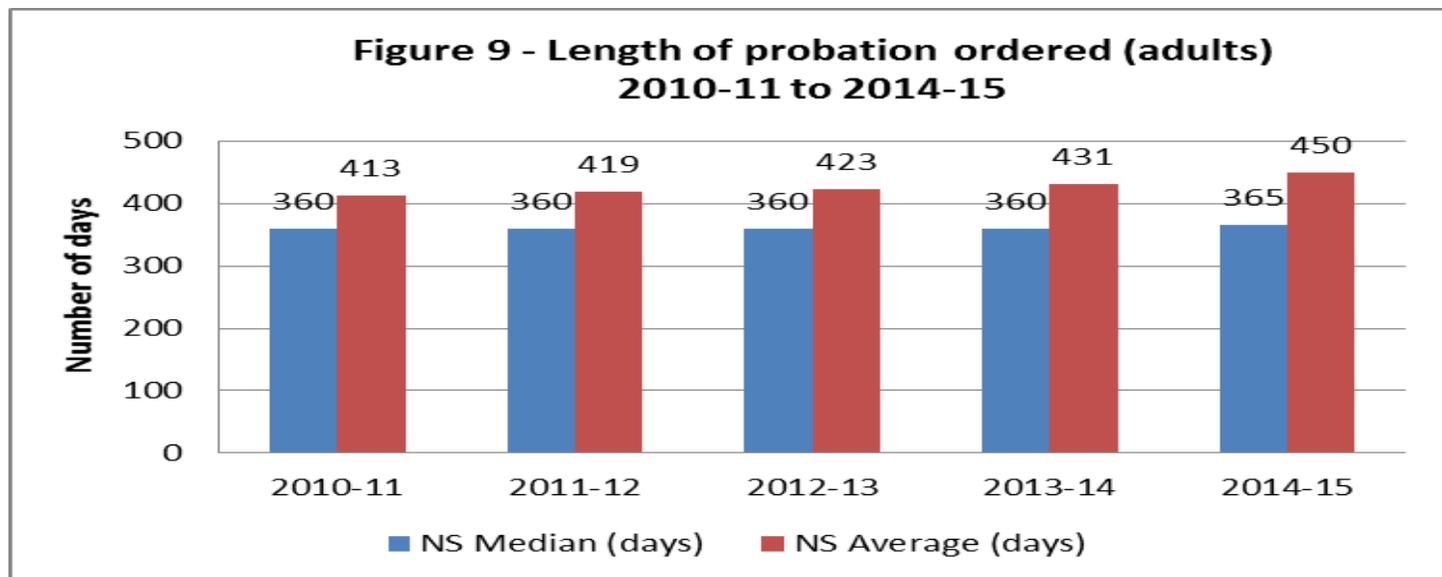
¹¹ The average (mean) and median length of stay in provincial sentenced custody is an estimate calculated based on two-thirds of the aggregate sentence length (days). This assumes that inmates have earned one-third remission for their sentences.

¹² The median length of stay is the midpoint of the sorted data for length of custody (days), where exactly half the data are above and half below the midpoint.

Sentence length for probation – adult

Statistics on sentence length for probation provide information on the amount of time that adult offenders are subject to probation conditions imposed by the courts on a probation order.

Figure 9 provides information on the length of probation ordered by adult criminal courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2010-11 to 2014-15. The median length of probation ordered in 2014-15 was 365 days and which was a slight increase (5 days or 1%) over the previous year. The average length of probation ordered in 2014-15 was 450 days, a 4% increase compared to the previous year. Over the five year period, there was an upward trend in average length of probation.



Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

Major incidents - adults

Major incidents involving persons in custody are defined in the Nova Scotia Department of Justice policy – ‘Disclosure of information on major incidents involving persons in custody’¹³. Major incidents include, but are not limited to: assault in custody requiring hospitalization, death in custody, escape from custody, seizure of explosives or firearms, or a riot. Major incidents involve correctional facilities, however, in some instances the issue which arises may also involve the work of other stakeholder organizations such as the Court Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

In 2014-15, there were eleven major incidents in adult correctional facilities. The specifics associated with incidents at adult facilities are identified below.¹⁴ Note that the date listed is when the major incident report was published rather than when the specific incident occurred. Typically, major incident reports are issued either on the day that the incident occurred or on the day following however, in some cases, the time elapsed could be several days.

List of major incidents in 2014-15 involving adult correctional facilities	
Date	Incident
7-Apr-2014	Death in custody at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
2-Jun-2014	Offender admitted to hospital as a result of a physical altercation with another offender at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
22-Jun-2014	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
24-Jun-2014	Early release from Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
3-Nov-2014	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
7-Nov-2014	Mistaken release from Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
8-Dec-2014	Early release from Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
15-Dec-2014	Offender admitted to hospital as a result of a physical altercation with another offender at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
15-Dec-2014	Offender admitted to hospital as a result of a physical altercation with another offender at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
11-Mar-2015	Offender admitted to hospital as a result of a physical altercation with another offender at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
27-Mar-2015	Assault at Cape Breton Correctional Facility

Source(s): Nova Scotia Department of Justice. See <http://novascotia.ca/just/updates.asp>.

¹³The policy document – ‘Disclosure of Information on Major Incidents Involving Persons in Custody’ can be found at: http://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/Disclosure%20Policy_Major%20Incidents.pdf.

¹⁴ There were no major incidents involving a youth facility in 2014-15.

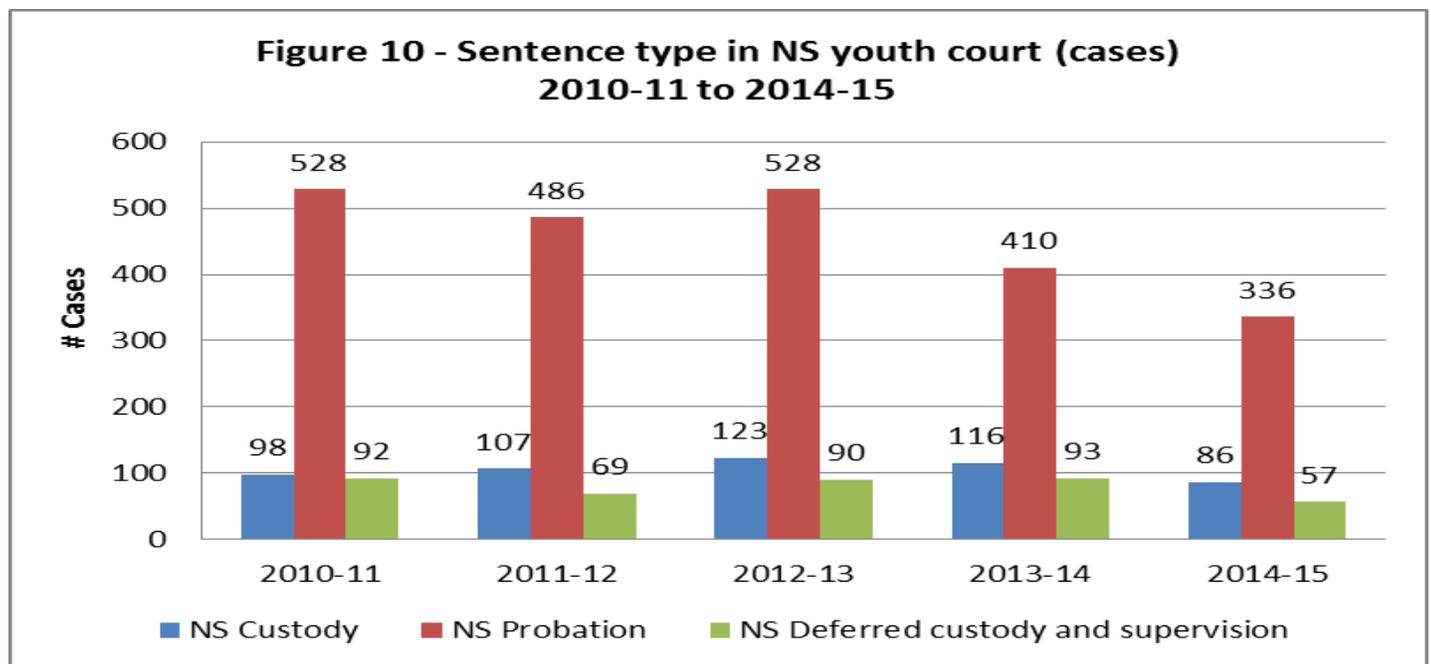
Court sentences – youth

Figure 10 provides the number of guilty cases in youth court in Nova Scotia which had sentences of custody, probation or deferred custody and supervision (i.e., sentence placing the youth in the community subject to certain conditions such that if adhered to, results in the youth serving the remainder of the custody term in the community). These statistics provide an indicator of the number of ‘inputs’ into the youth correctional system. It should be noted that the sentences are not mutually exclusive and so a case may have more than one type of penalty (e.g., the youth may be given a period of custody as well as a period of probation).

Decreases occurred for all three sentence types in 2014-15. The number of youth court cases with custody sentences decreased by 26% between 2013-14 and 2014-15, the number with probation decreased by 18% and the number with deferred custody and supervision sentences decreased by 39%.

There was a general decreasing trend in sentences with probation over the past 5 years with an overall decrease of 36%. The number of custody and deferred custody and supervision sentences were more variable.

The number of cases with probation consistently outnumbered the other sentence types.



Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

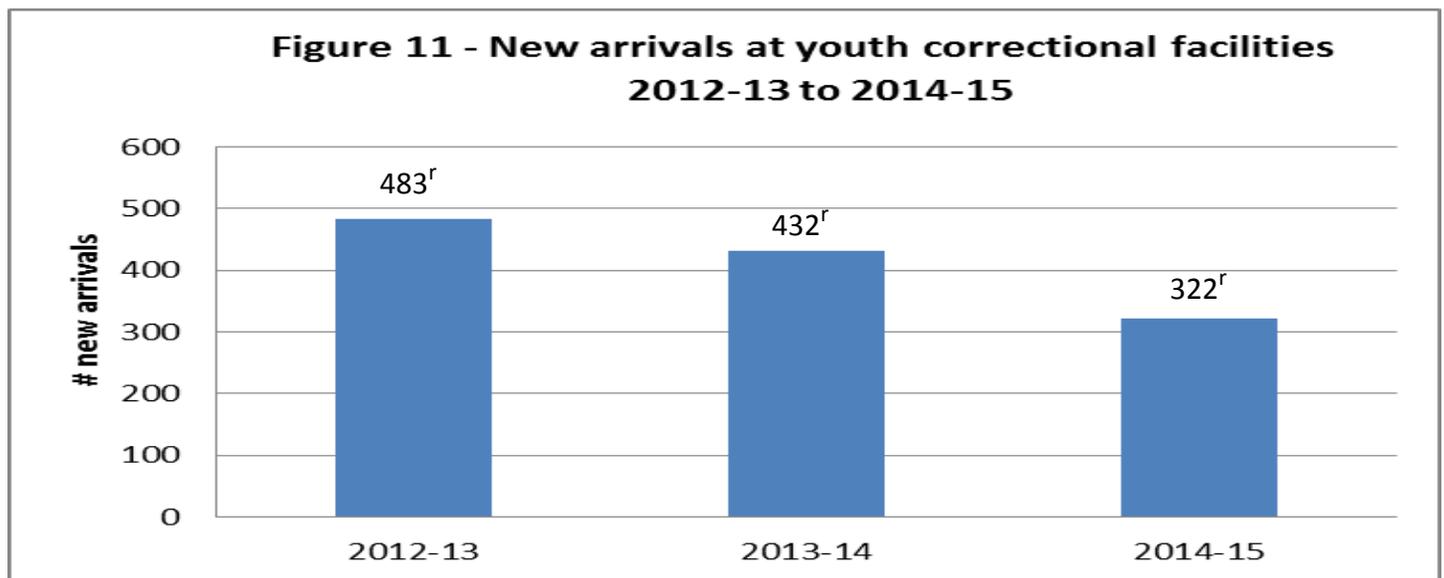
New arrivals at youth correctional facilities

The statistics presented below are for the number of new arrivals at youth correctional facilities in Nova Scotia for the years 2012-13 to 2014-15. New arrivals (youth facilities) are counted as intakes only (e.g., from non-custody status to custody, transfer from another jurisdiction, or deferred custody to custody). New arrivals do not include the transfer of individuals between correctional facilities within the province. An individual could have more than one new arrival at a correctional facility during a fiscal year.

Reasons why a youth is in a facility include: being sentenced to open, open/secure or secure custody; being remanded to custody; or, breach of a court order.

Two youth correctional facilities were operating in Nova Scotia during this time period: the Nova Scotia Youth Facility (NSYF); and, the Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility (CBYDF).¹⁵ Of the two youth facilities, the Nova Scotia Youth Facility is the largest and accounts for the greatest number of new arrivals.

In 2014-15, there were 322 new arrivals at youth correctional facilities, a 25% decrease from the previous year and a 33% decrease from 2012-13 (Figure 11).



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Source: Correctional Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice (Justice Enterprise Information Network JEIN report).

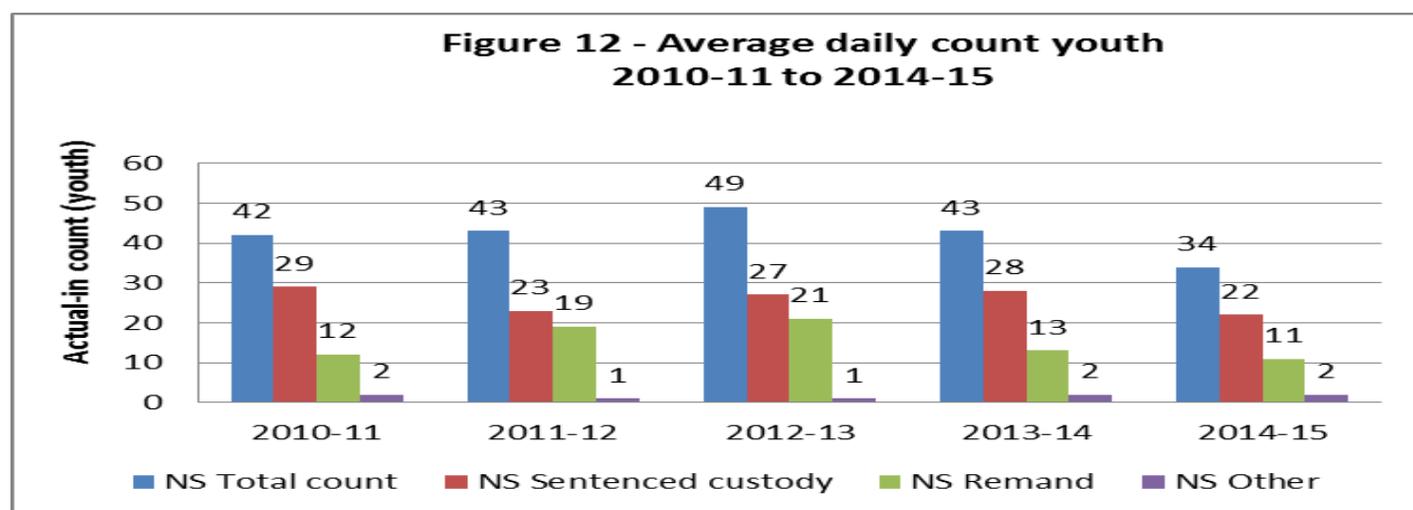
¹⁵ The Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility is designed as a short-term term detention facility.

Average daily count – youth

The average daily count of youth in custody reflects the number of youth physically located in a correctional facility at the time of the daily count (midnight on a specified day). Average daily counts are useful for describing the make-up of the youth custodial population in terms of custody status: sentenced custody, remand (also sometimes referred to as pre-trial detention) and other forms of detention (e.g., Provincial Director remand, etc.).¹⁶ These statistics can be helpful in looking at specific policy issues relating to different types of custodial populations as well as operational issues relating to correctional facility capacity.

In 2014-15, there was an average of 34 youth in custody on any given day including 22 in sentenced custody, 11 in remand and 2 on other statuses (Figure 12). The total count of youth in custody decreased by 21% from 2013-14 to 2014-15 with a decrease in both sentenced custody (23%) and remand (18%).¹⁷

Unlike the adult custodial population, the average daily count of youth in sentenced custody was consistently higher than the number on remand throughout this time period. In 2014-15, 63% of the youth custodial population were in sentenced custody, while 31% were on remand.



	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
% NS Sentenced custody	68%	53%	54%	65%	63%
% NS Remand	28%	44%	43%	30%	31%
% NS Other	4%	3%	3%	5%	6%

Source(s): Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 251-0008 - Youth correctional services, average counts of young persons in provincial and territorial correctional services.

¹⁶A Provincial Director remand occurs when there is reasonable grounds to believe that a youth has breached a condition associated with supervision in the community. When this occurs, the designated Provincial Director orders the youth to be held in custody until such time that a review can be conducted.

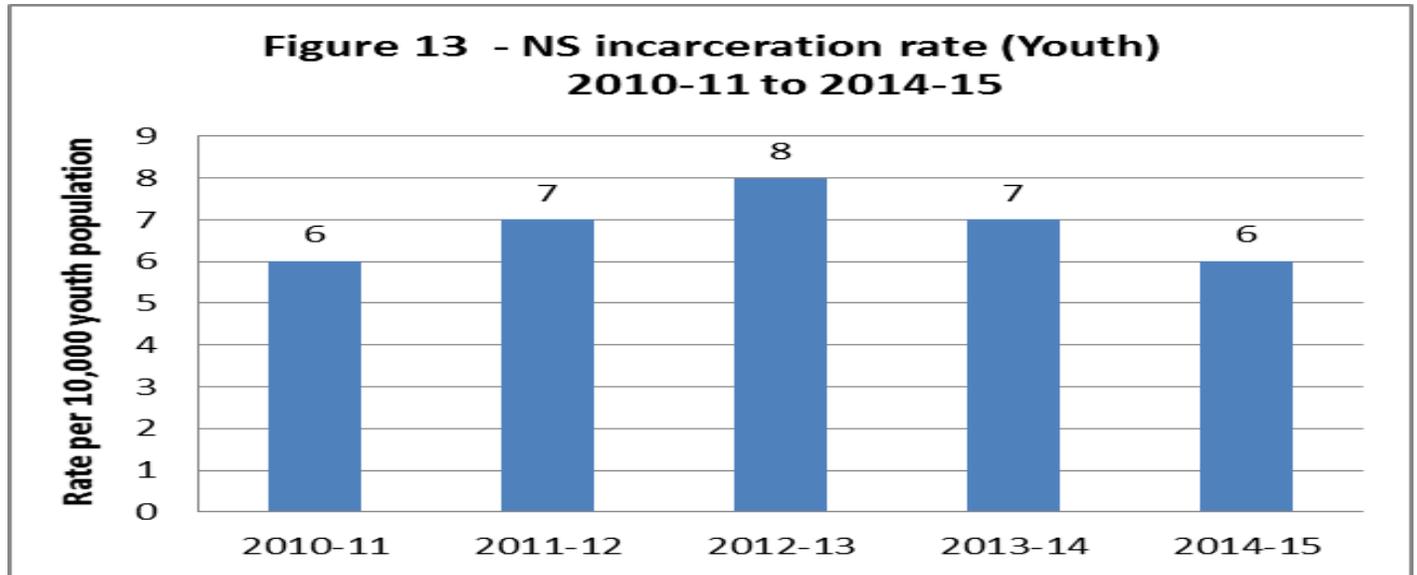
¹⁷ While the average daily count figures reported above are rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity of presentation, calculations use the average daily count figure rounded to one decimal place which can slightly affect the percentages reported. In addition, it also affects the average daily count figure as is evident for the 2014-15 figures where the total reported is 34 but the sum of the individual figures, each of which were rounded, is 35.

Incarceration rate – youth

Between 2010-11 and 2012-11 the youth incarceration rate in Nova Scotia increased while for 2012-13 to 2014-15 a decrease occurred (Figure 13).

Comparing 2014-15 to 2013-14, a decrease of 14% occurred while comparing 2014-15 to 2010-11 the rate was relatively similar.¹⁸

Over the five year period, the youth incarceration rate ranged between 6 and 8 youth incarcerated per 10,000 youth population.¹⁹



Source(s): Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 251-0008 - Youth correctional services, average counts of young persons in provincial and territorial correctional services.

¹⁸ While the incarceration rate figures reported above are rounded to the nearest whole number for simplicity of presentation, calculations use the incarceration rate figure rounded to one decimal place which can slightly affect the percentages reported. For 2010-11 the incarceration rate was 6.4 per 10,000 youth while the 2014-15 figure was 5.8 per 10,000 youth population both of which are rounded to 6 per 10,000 youth population in Figure 13.

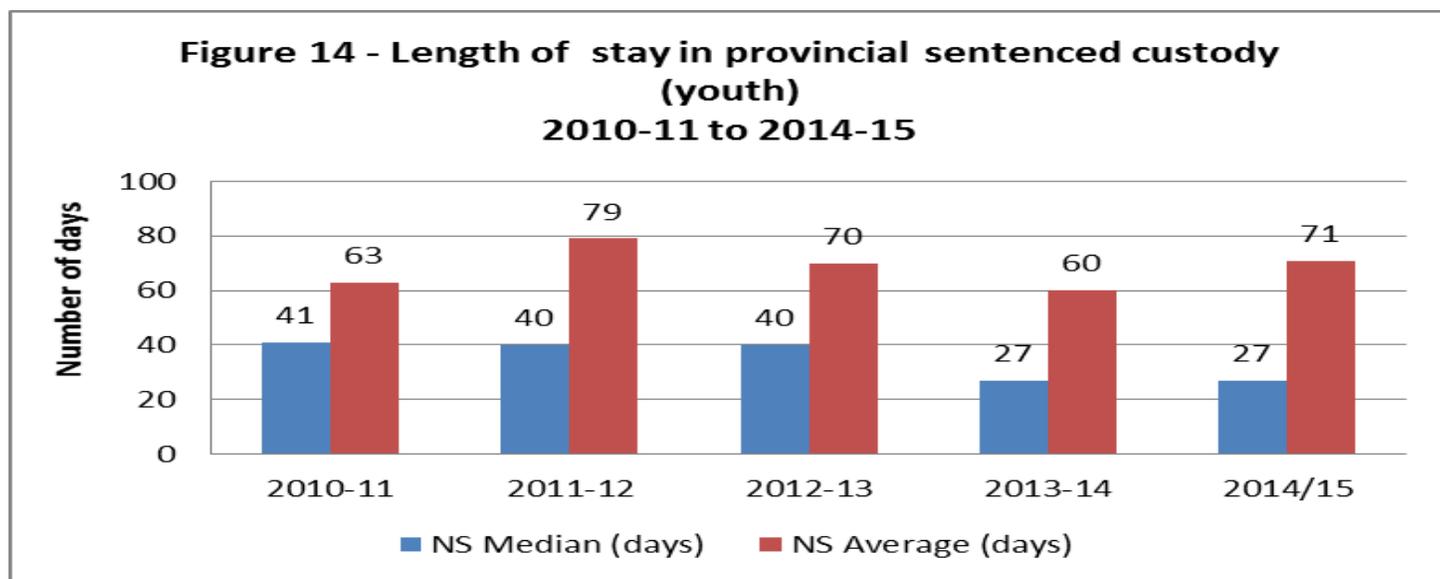
¹⁹The youth incarceration rate is an indicator of the proportion of Nova Scotia youth who are in custody (sentenced custody, remand, “other status”) in a provincial youth facility. It is calculated as the total daily count figure divided by the size of the population 12 to 17 years of age and standardized per 10,000 youth population.

Length of stay in provincial sentenced custody – youth

Statistics on length of stay in custody provide information on the relative amount of time youth spend in a facility. This information is useful for administrative planning in specific areas such as programming. Average length of stay for youth in provincial sentenced custody is an estimate using the custody portion of youth custody and supervisions sentences.

The median length of stay for youth in sentenced custody in 2014-15 was 27 days, remaining stable from the previous year (Figure 14).²⁰ The average length of stay in sentenced custody for 2014-15 was 71 days, an 18% increase compared to the previous year.

The median length of stay in provincial sentenced custody was stable over the period 2010-11 to 2012-13 but then decreased in 2013-14 and remained stable in 2014-15. The average stay over this time period varied from a low of 60 days to a high of 79 days.



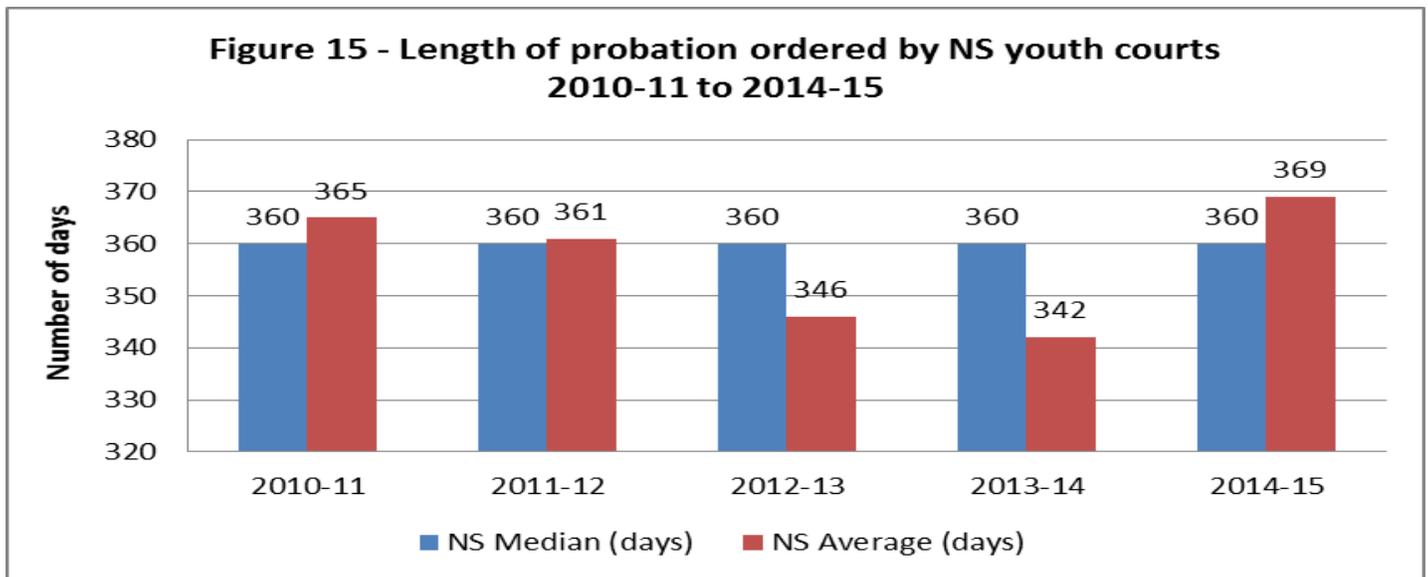
Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

²⁰ The median length of stay is the midpoint of the sorted data for length of custody (days), where exactly half the data are above and half below the midpoint.

Sentence length for probation – youth

Statistics on sentence length for probation provide information on the amount of time that young offenders are subject to probation conditions imposed by the courts on a probation order while in the community.

Figure 15 provides information on the length of probation ordered by youth courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2010-11 to 2014-15. The median length of probation ordered was 360 days in 2014-15 and was unchanged over the five year period. The average length of probation orders for 2014-15 was 369 days, an 8% increase from 2013-14. Over the five year period, the average length of probation had a decreasing trend from 2010-11 to 2013-14 before increasing in 2014-15.



Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

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