

# Corrections in Nova Scotia: Key Indicators

DECEMBER 2014

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 and operations, ten 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 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 Amherst, Antigonish, Dartmouth, Sydney (Gardiner Mines) and Yarmouth. The youth facility is in Waterville. There is also a small satellite youth detention facility for overnight accommodation located with the Cape Breton Correctional Facility.<sup>1</sup>

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. The sources for the statistics contained in this document are the Financial Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice; the Policy, Planning and Research Unit of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice; Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics; and, the Correctional Services Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

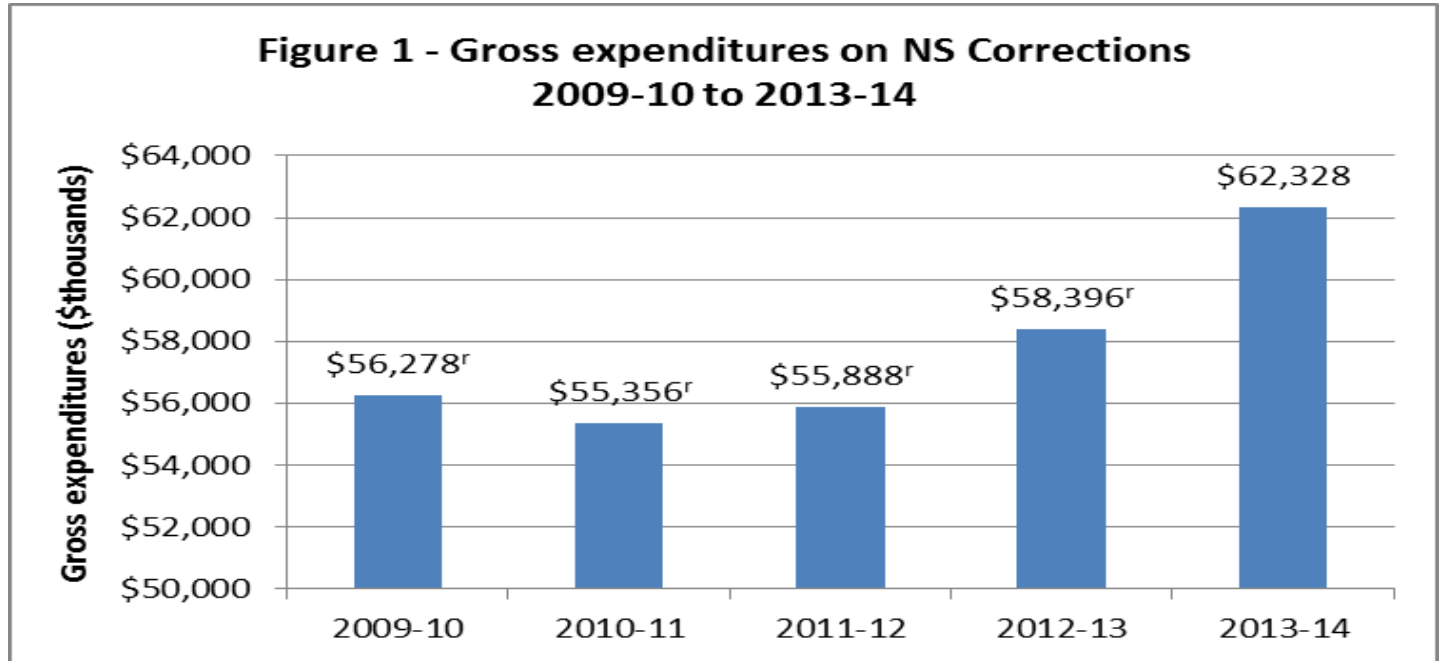
---

<sup>1</sup> A map illustrating the location of community correction offices and correctional facilities can be found using the following URL: <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 2009-10 to 2013-14. In 2013-14 gross expenditures increased by 7% over the previous year part of a general increasing trend since 2010-11.<sup>2</sup> Over the five year period gross expenditures increased by 11%.

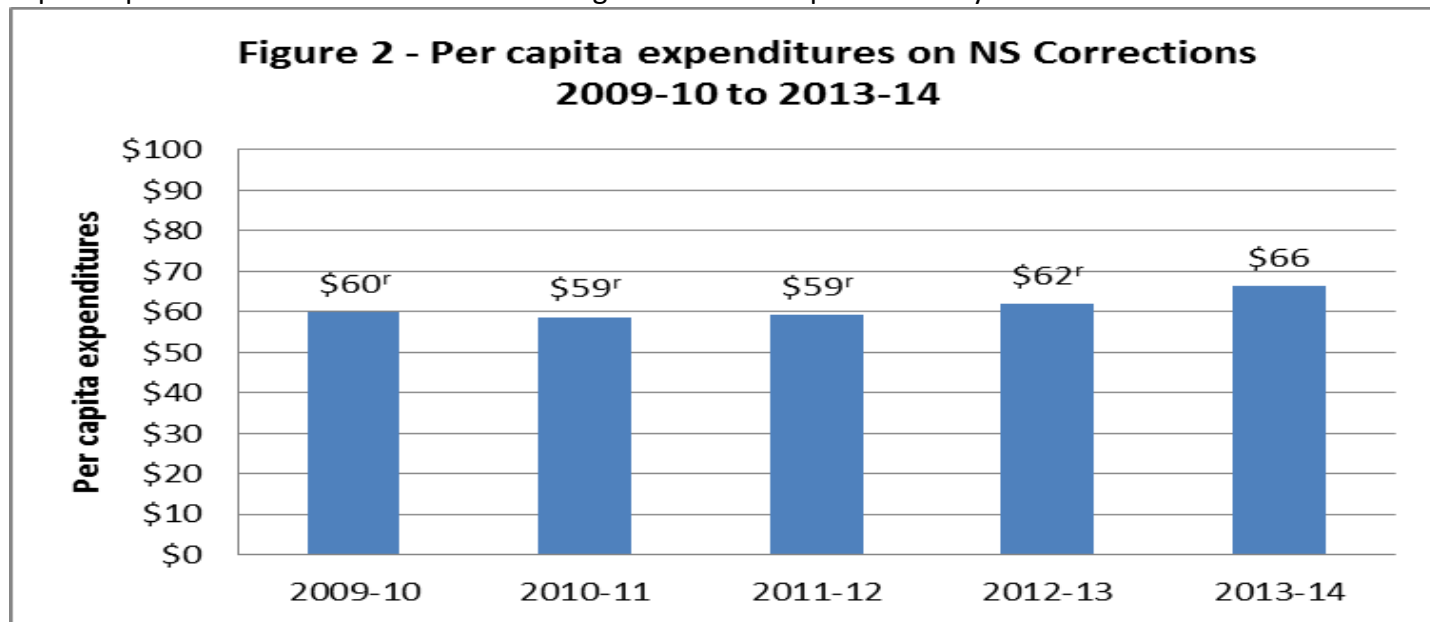


r - revised

Source: Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Financial Services.

<sup>2</sup> 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 2013-14 may differ from what appears in the Department of Justice Accountability Report due to these factors.

Figure 2 provides the per capita cost for Correctional Services for the period 2009-10 to 2013-14.<sup>3</sup> Per capita expenditures were 6% higher in 2013-14 than the prior year and 10% higher compared to 2009-10. Per capita expenditures have shown an increasing trend over the past several years.

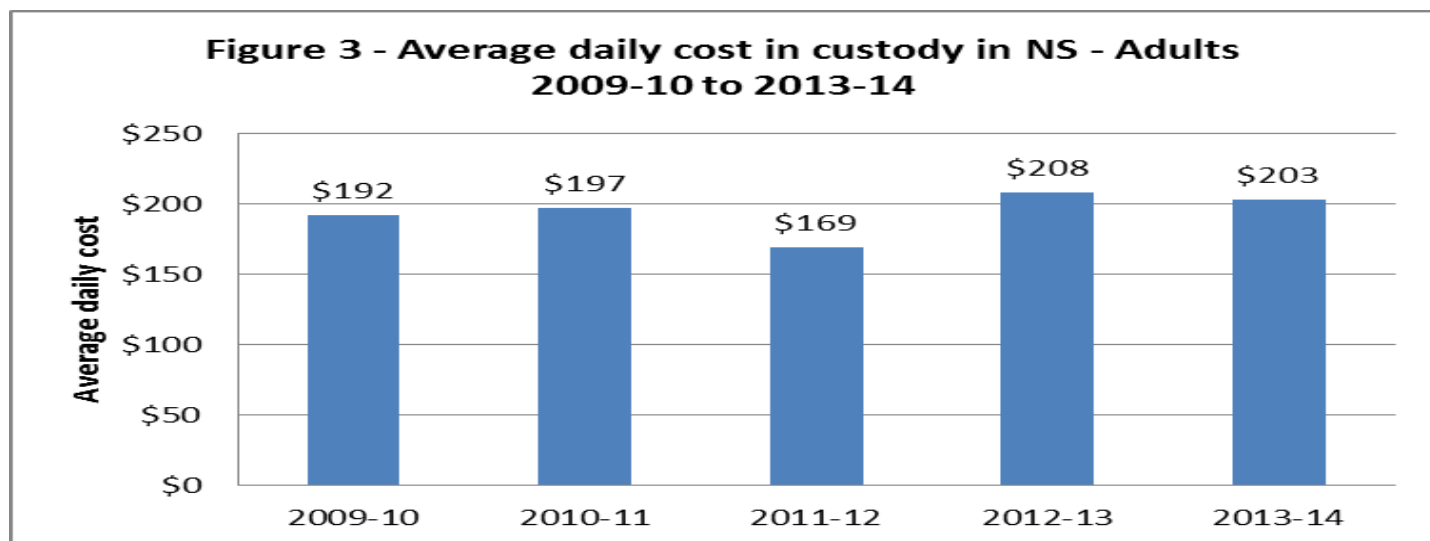


r - revised

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 2009-10 to 2013-14. The average daily cost in 2013-14 was 2% lower than 2012-13 but 6% higher than 2009-10.



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

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

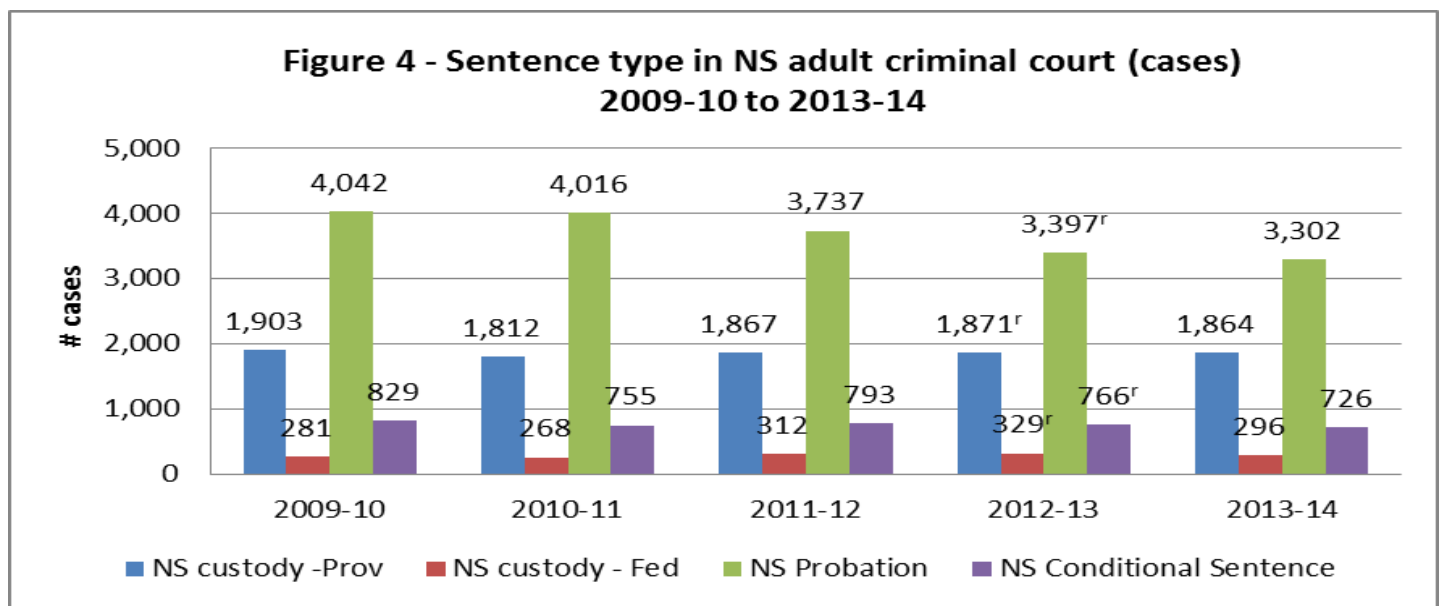
## Court sentences – adult

Figure 4 provides the number of guilty cases in adult criminal court in Nova Scotia which either had a custody sentence (federal, provincial), probation or a conditional sentence ordered by the court.<sup>4</sup> 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).<sup>5</sup>

The number of offenders sentenced to provincial custody in 2013-14 was relatively stable compared to 2012-13, while the number sentenced to probation decreased by 3%.<sup>6</sup> Conditional sentences decreased by 5% in 2013-14 compared to the previous year.

The number of cases with a custody sentence (provincial) was relatively stable over the period 2011-12 to 2013-14 following a decrease from 2009-10 to 2010-11. The number of cases with a probation sentence had a declining trend over the five year period decreasing by 18%. The number of cases with a conditional sentence decreased by 12% over the five year period with a declining trend since 2011-12.

There was a consistent pattern of cases with probation being the most frequently ordered sentence in each of the five years.



r – revised

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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 2013-14 the total cases where custody was ordered totaled 2,160.

<sup>6</sup>Note that there was a revision to 2012-13 figures due to the availability of an updated (2013) offence library provided by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) at Statistics Canada. Use of up-to-date offence libraries is necessary for DoJ case processing figures to remain consistent with those produced by CCJS.

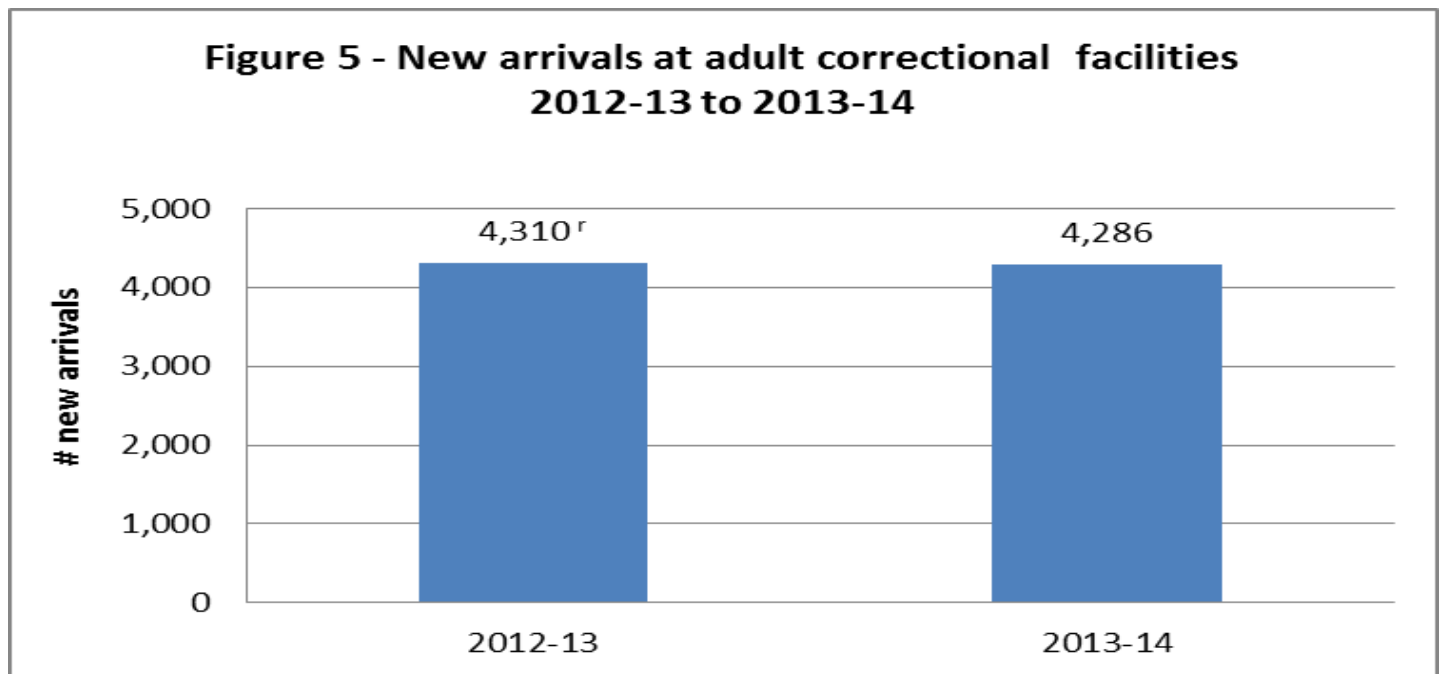
## New arrivals at adult correctional facilities )

The statistics presented below are for the number of new arrivals in adult correctional facilities for the years 2012-13 and 2013-14. 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.

Reasons for 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.).

Five adult correctional facilities in Nova Scotia were operating during this time period, specifically: Antigonish Correctional Facility; Cape Breton Correctional Facility; Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility; Cumberland Correctional Facility; and, Southwest Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. Of the five adult facilities, the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility is the largest and accounted for the greatest number of new arrivals.

Figure 5 shows the number of new arrivals at adult correctional facilities for 2012-13 and 2013-14. The number of new arrivals in 2013-14 (4,286) was relatively stable compared to 2012-13 (4,310).<sup>7</sup>



r - revised

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

<sup>7</sup> In 2014 there was a change to the programming of the report on the Justice Enterprise Information Network (i.e., Admissions Report) which provides the statistics for new arrivals. This led to a revision in the figures for 2012-13.

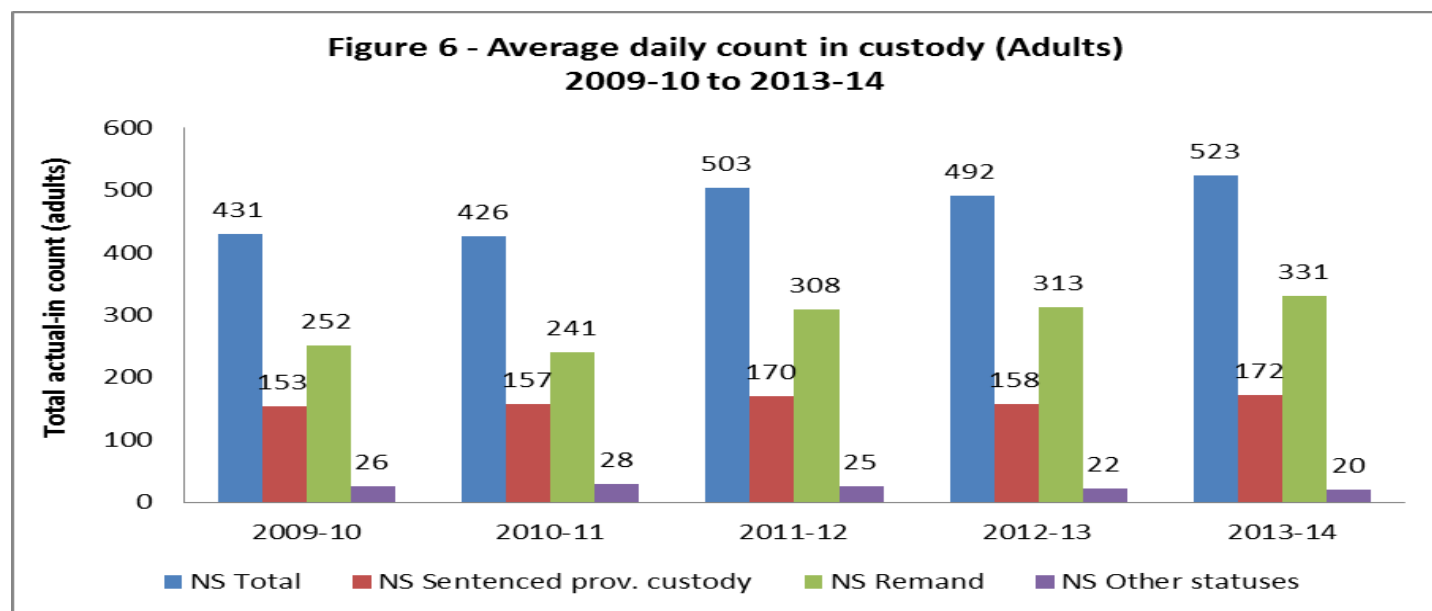
## Average daily count – adults

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 detained in correctional institution as a result of a court-ordered sentence), remand (i.e., temporary detention of person in a correctional institution pending trial or sentencing) and other forms of detention (e.g., immigration holds, etc.). These statistics can be helpful in looking at specific policy issues relating to the different types of custodial populations as well as operational issues relating to correctional facility capacity.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 6 provides data relating to the average daily count of adults in custody. The overall count of adults in provincial custody increased by 6% between 2012-13 and 2013-14. The count for adults in provincial sentenced custody increased by 9% while for remand it increased by 6% over the same time period.

Over the five year period, the total average daily count increased by 21% with increases for both provincial sentenced custody (12%) and remand (31%). ‘Other’ statuses decreased by 23%. The average daily count for remand has trended upward since 2010-11.

Offenders on remand consistently outnumbered those in sentenced custody over the five year period. In 2013-14, nearly two-thirds (63%) were on remand while one-third (33%) were in sentenced custody.



	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
% NS Sentenced provincial	36%	37%	34%	32%	33%
% NS Remand	58%	57%	61%	63%	63%
% NS Other statuses	6%	7%	5%	4%	4%

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

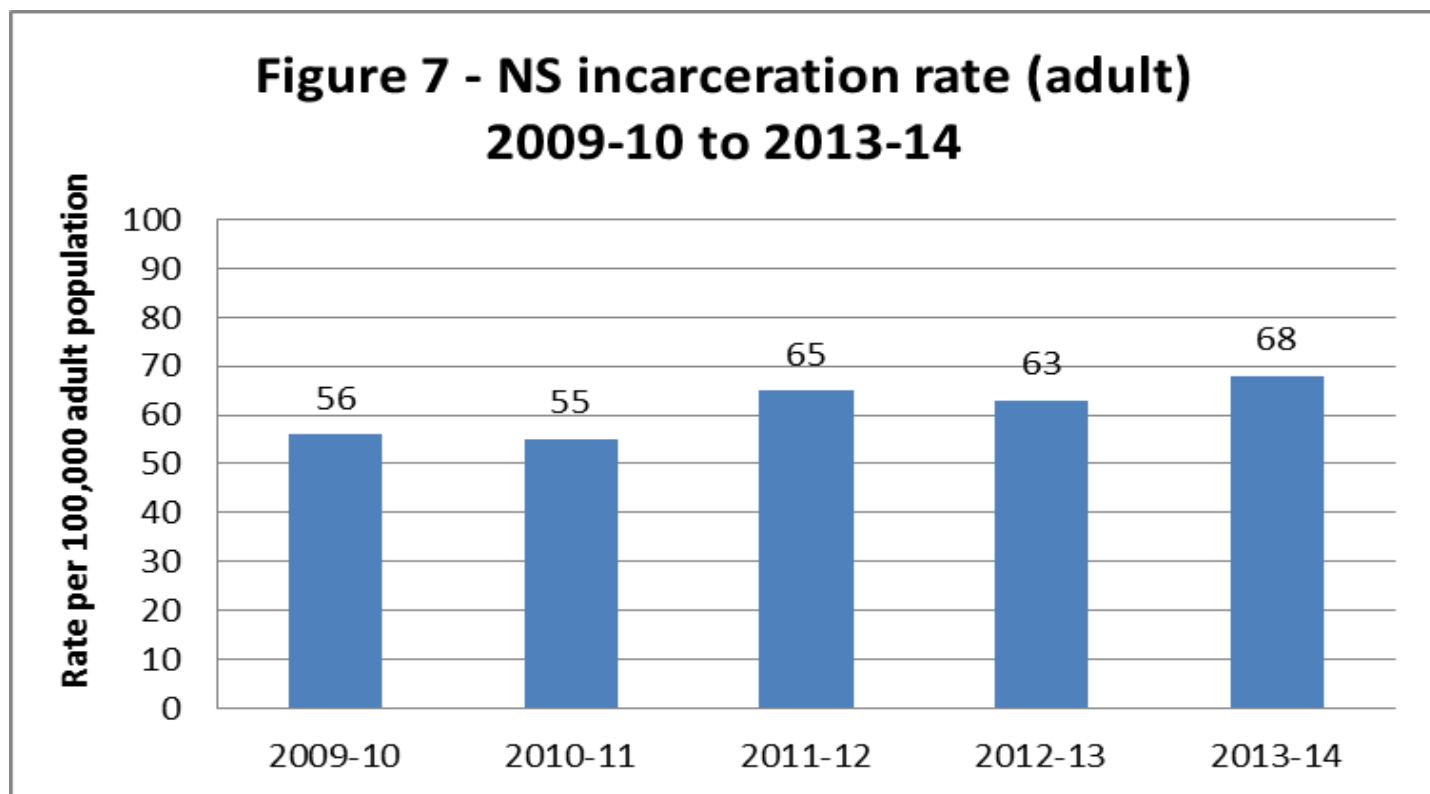
Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 251-0005 - Average counts of offenders in provincial and territorial programs.

<sup>8</sup>As of March 2014, there were 554 beds in adult facilities of which approximately 9% were for adult female offenders. Close to two-thirds of the adult beds were located in the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNCSF).

<sup>9</sup> Due to rounding some percentages may not total to 100%.

## Incarceration rate – adult

Figure 7 provides the incarceration rate for Nova Scotia during the period 2009-10 to 2013-14.<sup>10</sup> Between 2012-13 and 2013-14, the rate increased by 8%. Over the five year period there was an increase of 21% with a general upward trend.



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

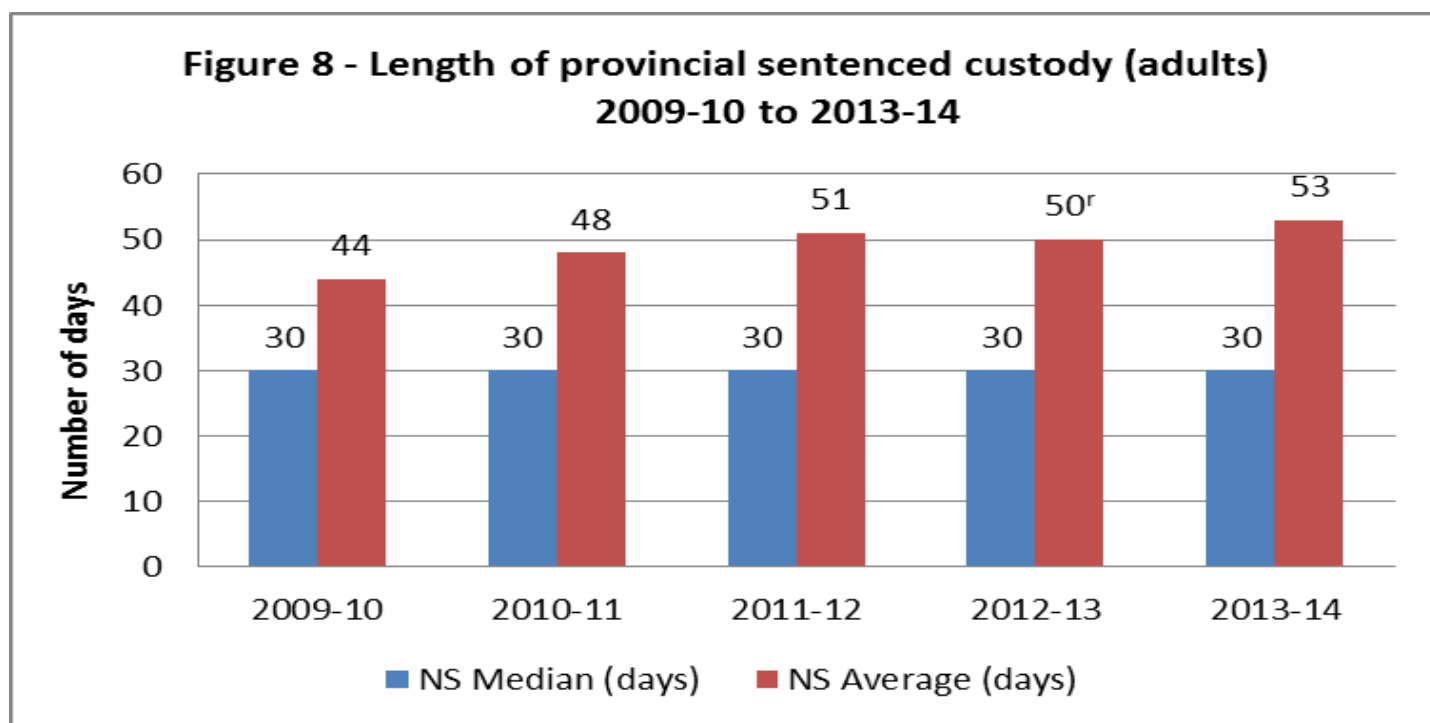
<sup>10</sup>The incarceration rate for adults is calculated as the total daily count figure divided by the size of the adult population and standardized per 100,000 population. The provincial incarceration rate is an indicator of the proportion of Nova Scotia residents, in a given year, who are in custody (sentenced custody, remand, "other status") in provincial institutions. It excludes federal institutions, but includes federally sentenced offenders in provincial institutions.

## Sentence length for custody – adult

Statistics on sentence length for custody provide information on the relative amount of time offenders spend in a facility. 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 provincial custody sentences ordered by adult criminal courts in Nova Scotia for 2009-10 to 2013-14. The median sentence length for custody in 2013-14 was 30 days and was unchanged over the five year time period.<sup>11</sup> The average number of days in sentenced custody for 2013-14 was 53, a 6% increase compared to the previous year.<sup>12</sup>

The median length of provincial sentenced custody was stable at 30 days over the five year period. The average (mean) sentence increased by 20% over this time with a general increasing trend.



r - revised

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

<sup>11</sup>The median is the middle value in a series of numbers ordered by size. The cases used in this analysis include only those where an offender was sentenced to provincial custody. Cases where the offender was sentenced to federal custody are excluded from the analysis.

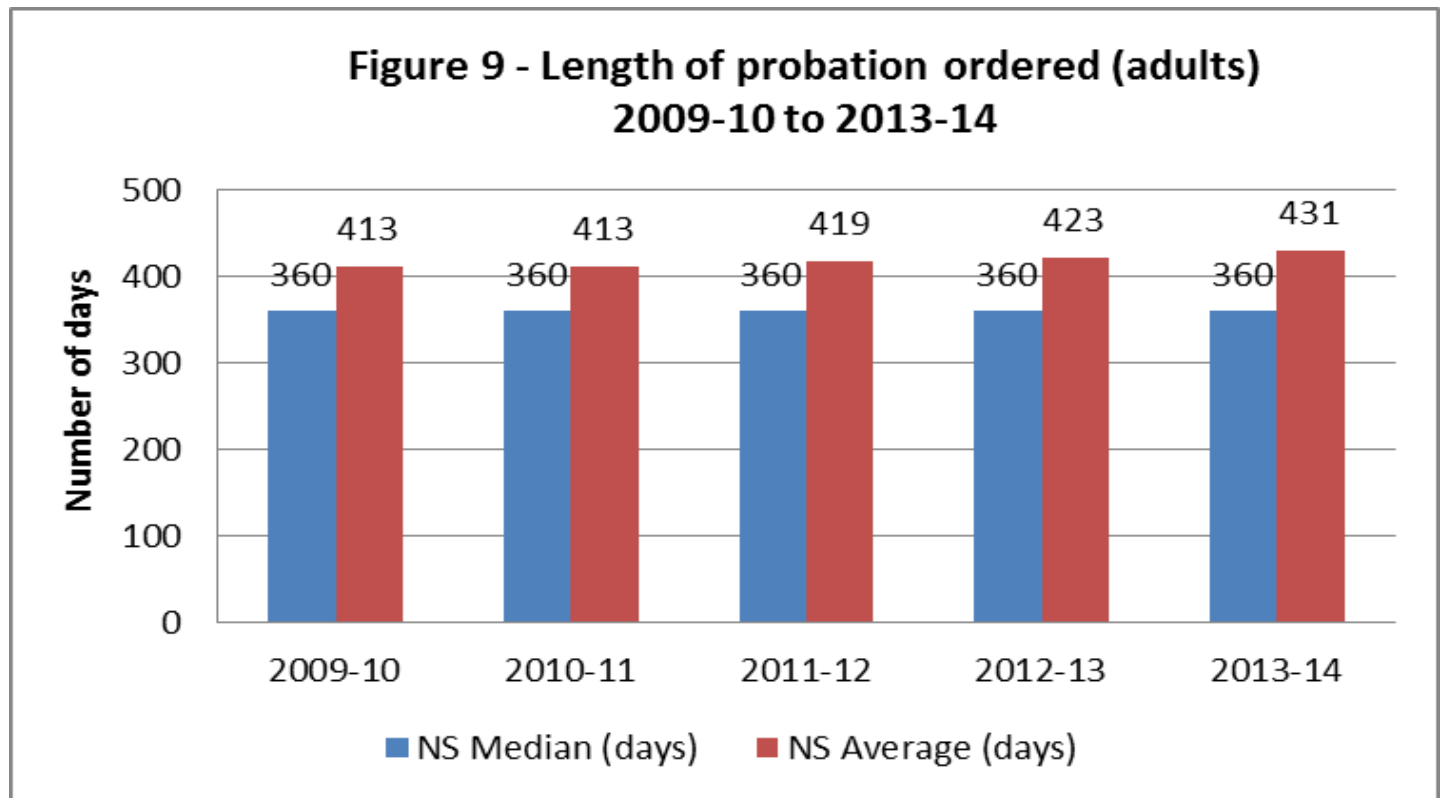
<sup>12</sup> Note that there was a revision to the 2012-13 figure for NS Average (days) due to the availability of an updated (2013) offence library provided by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) at Statistics Canada. Use of up-to-date offence libraries is necessary for DoJ case processing figures to remain consistent with those produced by CCJS.



## 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 while in the community.

Figure 9 provides information on the length of probation ordered by adult criminal courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2009-10 to 2013-14. The median sentence length of probation for 2013-14 was 360 days and was unchanged over the five year period. The average sentence length of probation for 2013-14 was 431 days, a 2% increase compared to 2012-13. Over the five year period the average number of days of probation increased by 4% with a slight upward trend since 2010/11.



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’<sup>13</sup>. 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 2013-14, there were eight major incidents in adult correctional facilities. The specifics associated with the eight incidents at adult facilities are identified below.<sup>14</sup> 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.

<b>List of major incidents in 2013-14 involving adult correctional facilities</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident</b>
11-Jun-2013	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
8-July-2013	Death at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
12-August-2013	Disturbance at Cape Breton Correctional Facility
21-October-2013	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
28-October-2013	Incident at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
14-February-2014	Incident at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
13-March-2014	Incident at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
25-March-2014	Incident at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility

Source(s): Nova Scotia Department of Justice. See <http://novascotia.ca/just/updates.asp>.  
Nova Scotia Department of Justice Accountability Report 2013-14.

---

<sup>13</sup>The 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](http://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/Disclosure%20Policy_Major%20Incidents.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> There was one incident which occurred relating to a youth facility during the 2013-14 fiscal year. The Department of Justice became aware of an early release of a young person from the Nova Scotia Youth Facility in Waterville due to a miscommunication within Court Services regarding sentence orders. A major incident report was published by the Department of Justice on November 18.

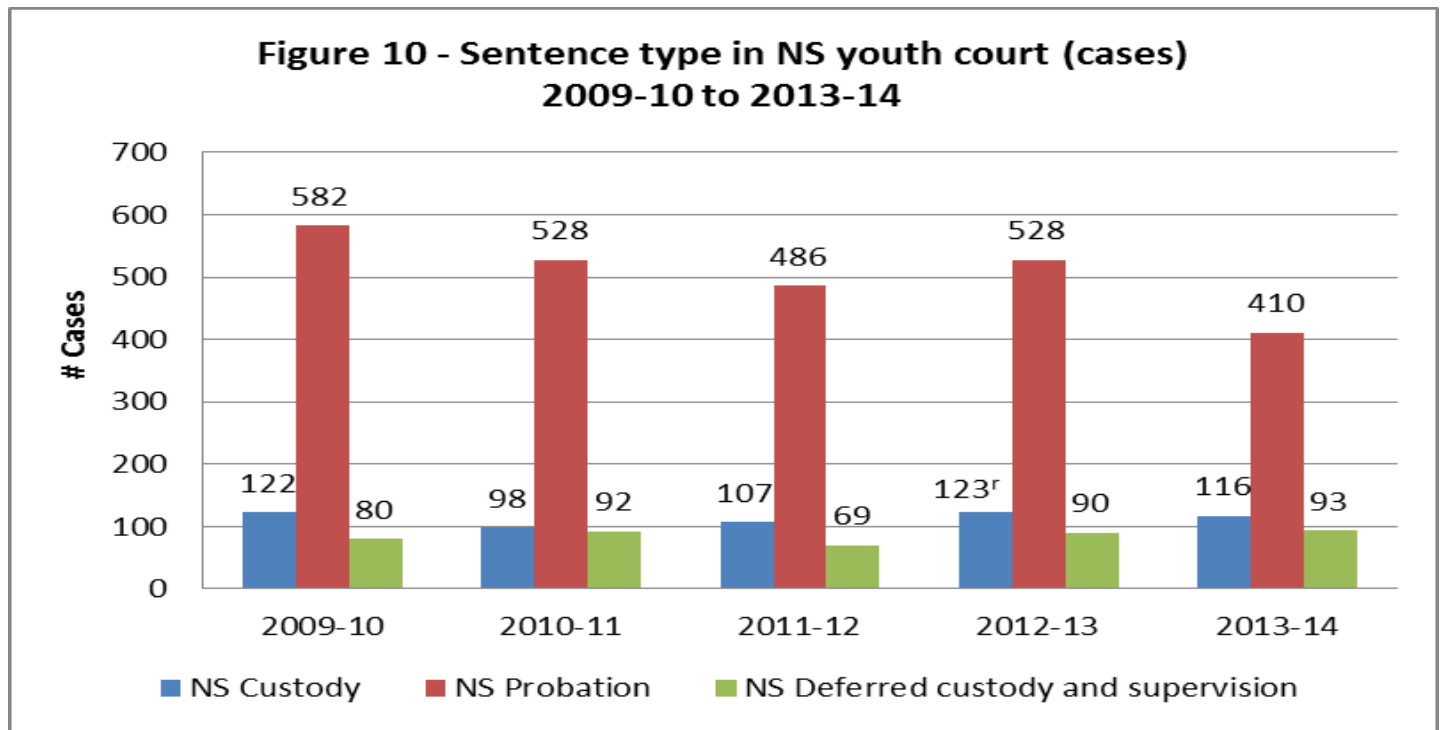
## Court sentences – youth

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).

The number of youth sentenced to custody decreased by 6% between 2012-13 and 2013-14 while the number sentenced to probation decreased by 22%. Sentences with deferred custody and supervision increased by 3% from 2012-13.<sup>15</sup>

The number of cases where a youth was sentenced to custody decreased by 5% over the five year period while for probation the decrease was larger (30%). There was a general decreasing trend in sentences with probation.

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



r - revised

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

<sup>15</sup> Note that there was a revision to the 2012-13 figure for NS Custody (cases) due to the availability of an updated (2013) offence library provided by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) at Statistics Canada. Use of up-to-date offence libraries is necessary for DoJ case processing figures to remain consistent with those produced by CCJS.

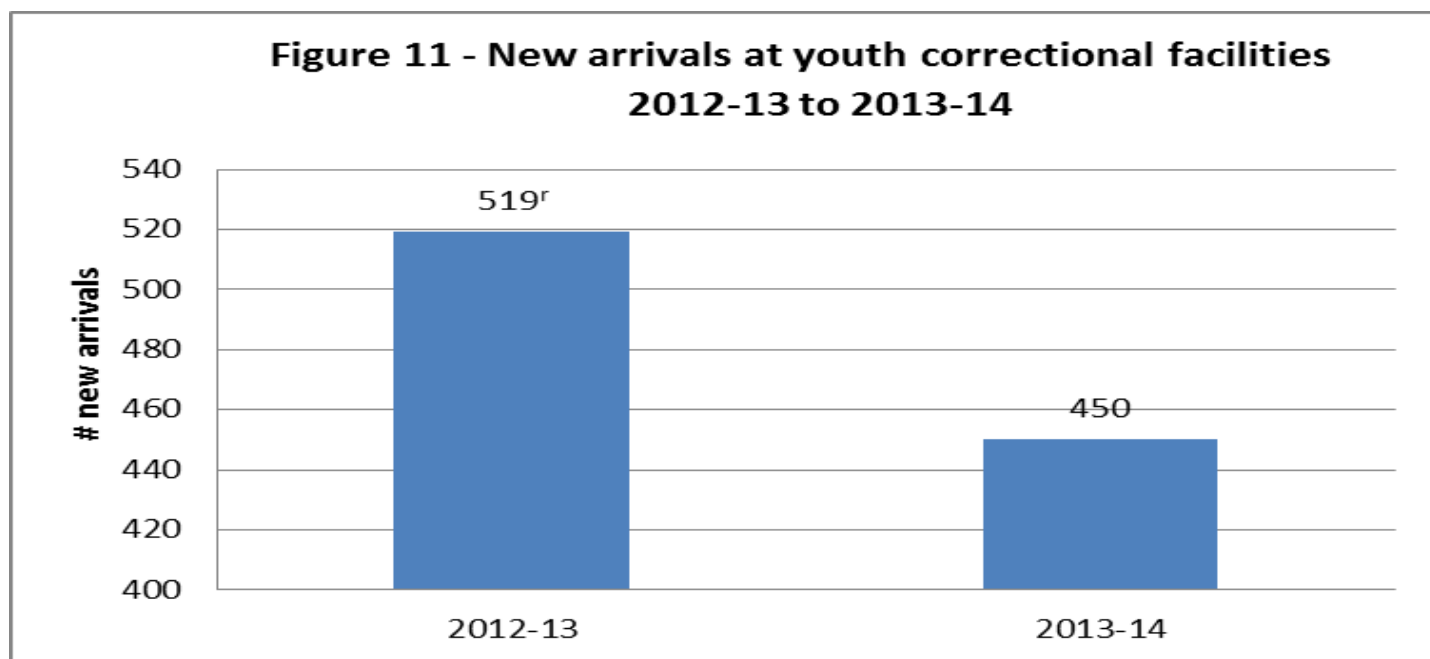
## New arrivals at youth correctional facilities )

The statistics presented below are for the number of new arrivals at youth correctional facilities in Nova Scotia for the years 2012-13 to 2013-14. 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. An individual could have more than one new arrival at a correctional facility during a fiscal year.

Reasons for 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).<sup>16</sup> Of the two youth facilities, the Nova Scotia Youth Facility is the largest and accounts for the greatest number of new arrivals.

Figure 11 shows the number of new arrivals at youth facilities for the two years. In 2013-14, there were 450 new arrivals at youth correctional facilities, a 13% decrease from the previous year.<sup>17</sup>



r - revised

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

<sup>16</sup> The Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility is designed as a short-term term detention facility.

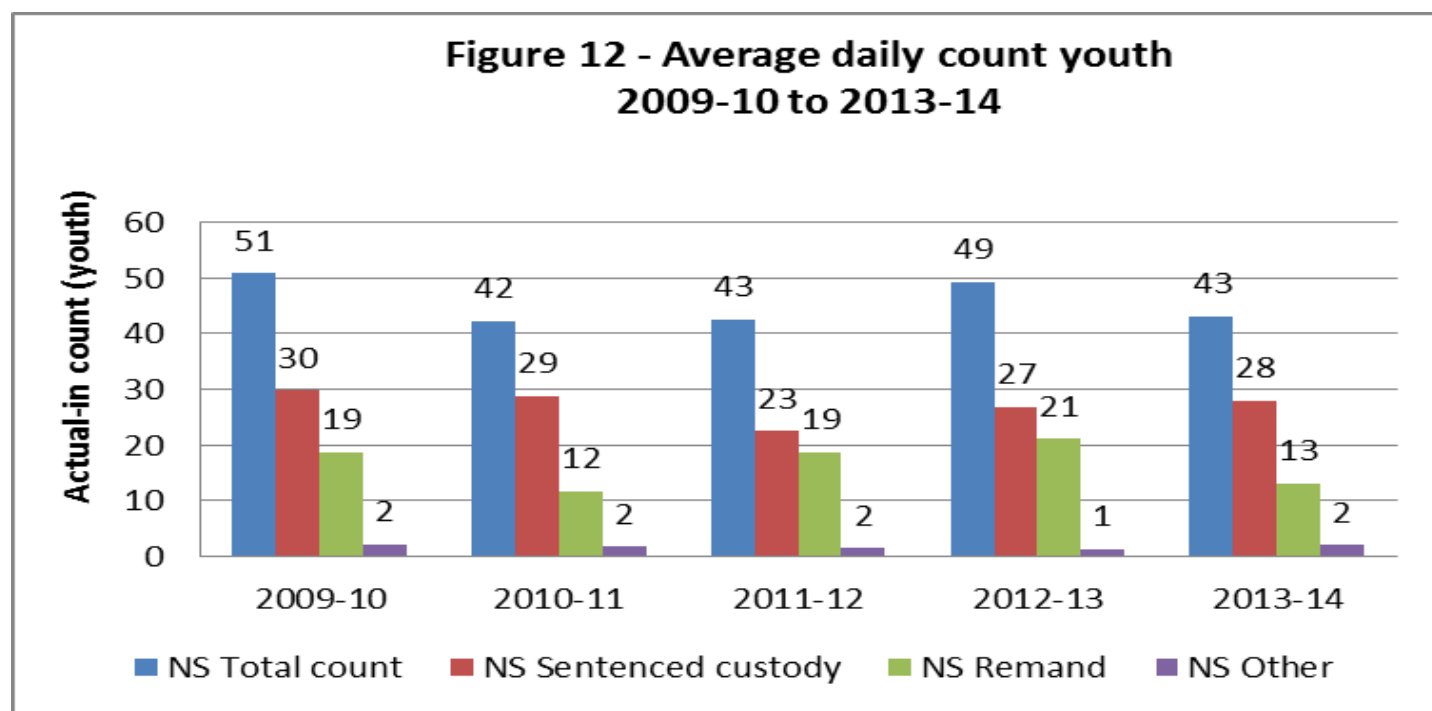
<sup>17</sup> In 2014 there was a change to the programming of the report on the Justice Enterprise Information Network (i.e., Admissions Report) which provides the statistics for new arrivals. This led to a revision in the figures for 2012-13.

## 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.).<sup>18</sup> 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.

Figure 12 provides data relating to the average daily count of youth in custody. In 2013-14, there was an average of 43 youth in custody on any given day including 28 in sentenced custody, 13 in remand and 2 on other statuses. The total count of youth in custody decreased by 12% from 2012-13 to 2013-14 with an increase in sentenced custody (4%) but a decrease in remand (38%).

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 2013-14, 65% of the youth custodial population were in sentenced custody, while 30% were on remand.



	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
% NS Sentenced custody	59%	68%	53%	54%	65%
% NS Remand	37%	28%	44%	43%	30%
% NS Other	4%	4%	4%	3%	5%

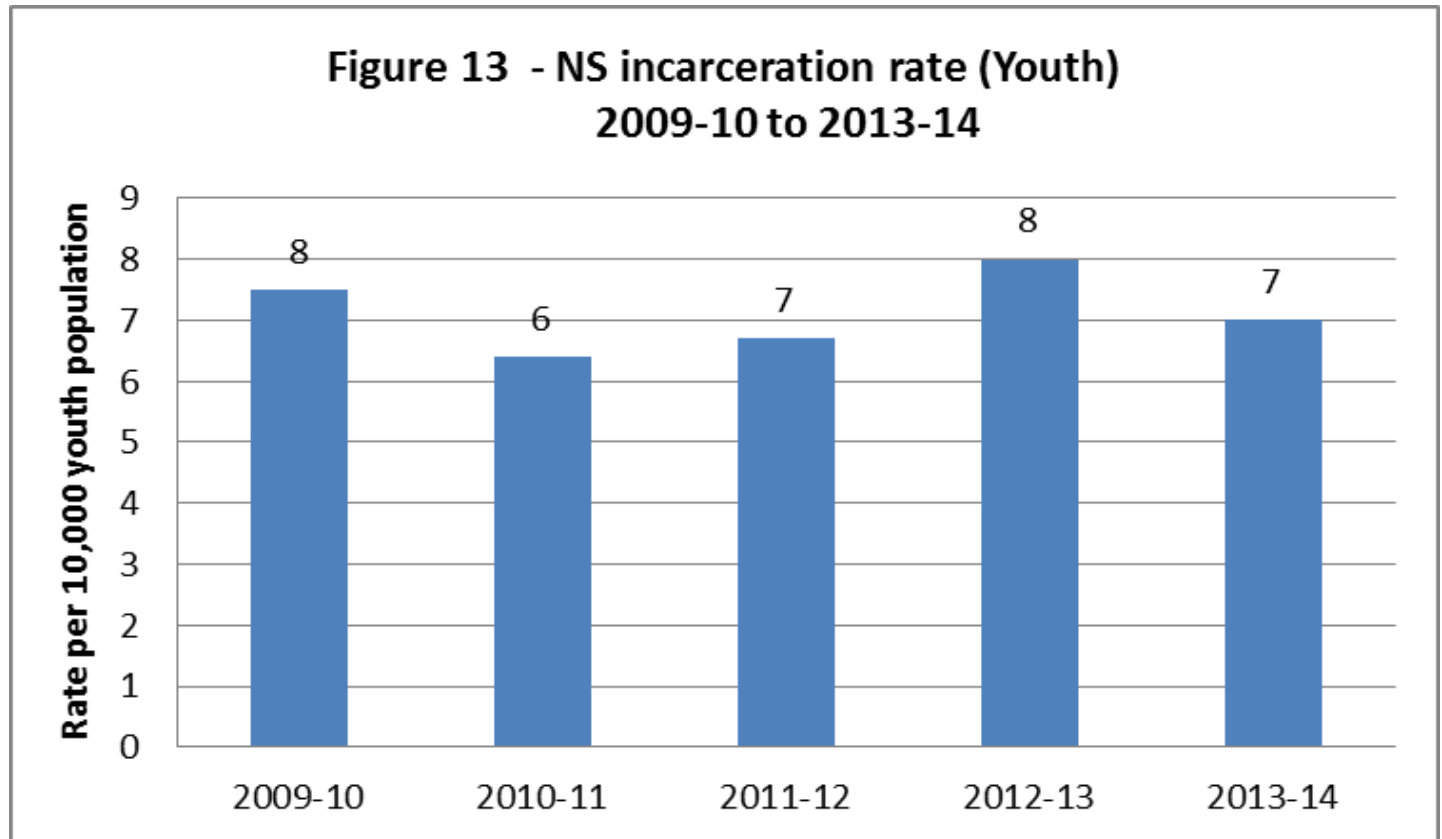
Source(s): Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

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

<sup>18</sup>A 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.

## Incarceration rate – youth

Figure 13 provides data on the youth incarceration rate in Nova Scotia for the period 2009-10 to 2013-14. Between 2012-13 and 2013-14 a 13% decrease occurred, the same level of increase comparing 2013-14 to 2009-10. Over the five year period, the youth incarceration rate fluctuated between 6 youth incarcerated per 10,000 youth population and 8 youth per 10,000 youth population.<sup>19</sup>



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

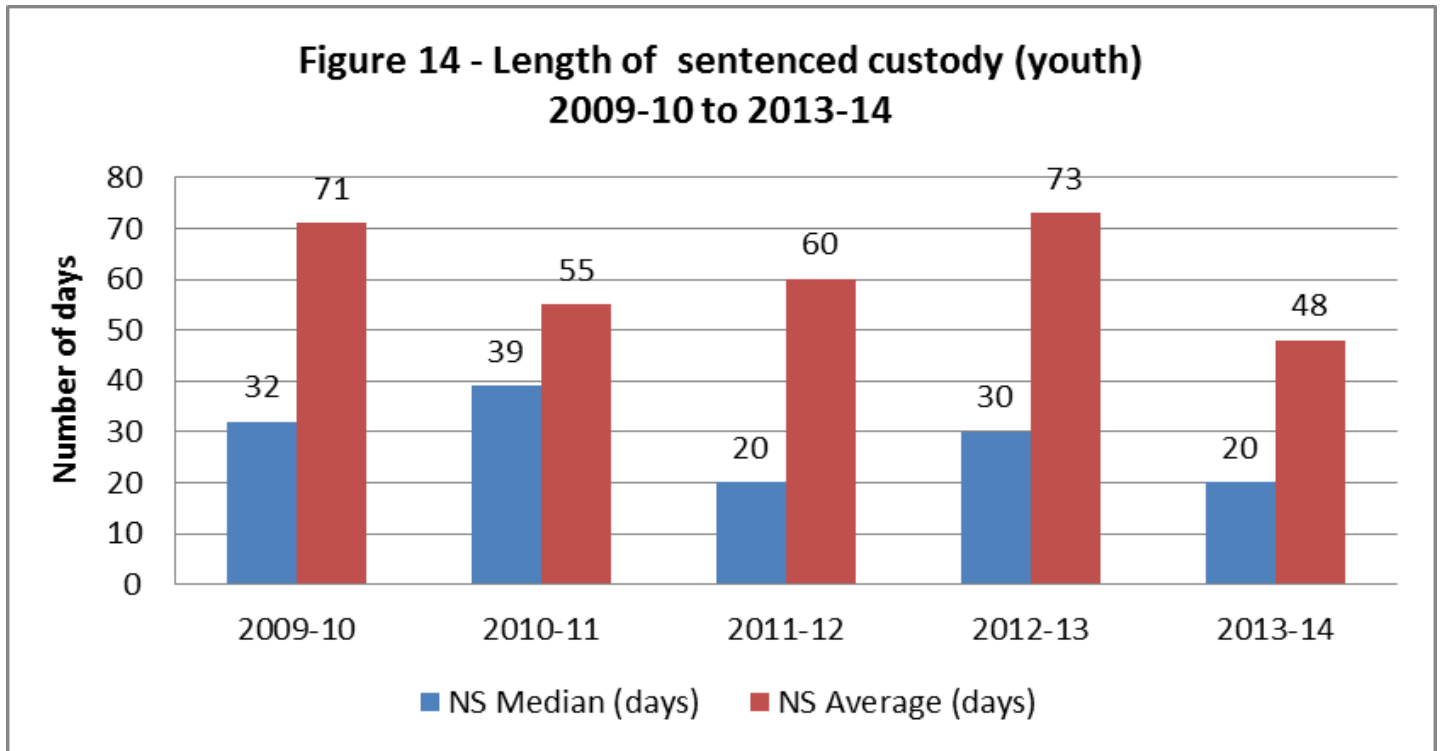
Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 251-0008 - Youth correctional services, average counts of young persons in provincial and territorial correctional services.

<sup>19</sup>The 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.

## Sentence length for custody - youth

Figure 14 provides information on the length of custody ordered by youth courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2009-10 to 2013-14. This information is useful for administrative planning in specific areas such as programming.

The median length of sentenced custody for 2013-14 was 20 days which was 33% lower than the preceding year, while the average sentence length for custody in 2013-14 was 48 days which was 34% lower than the preceding year. Both the median and average length of sentenced custody fluctuated over the five year period.

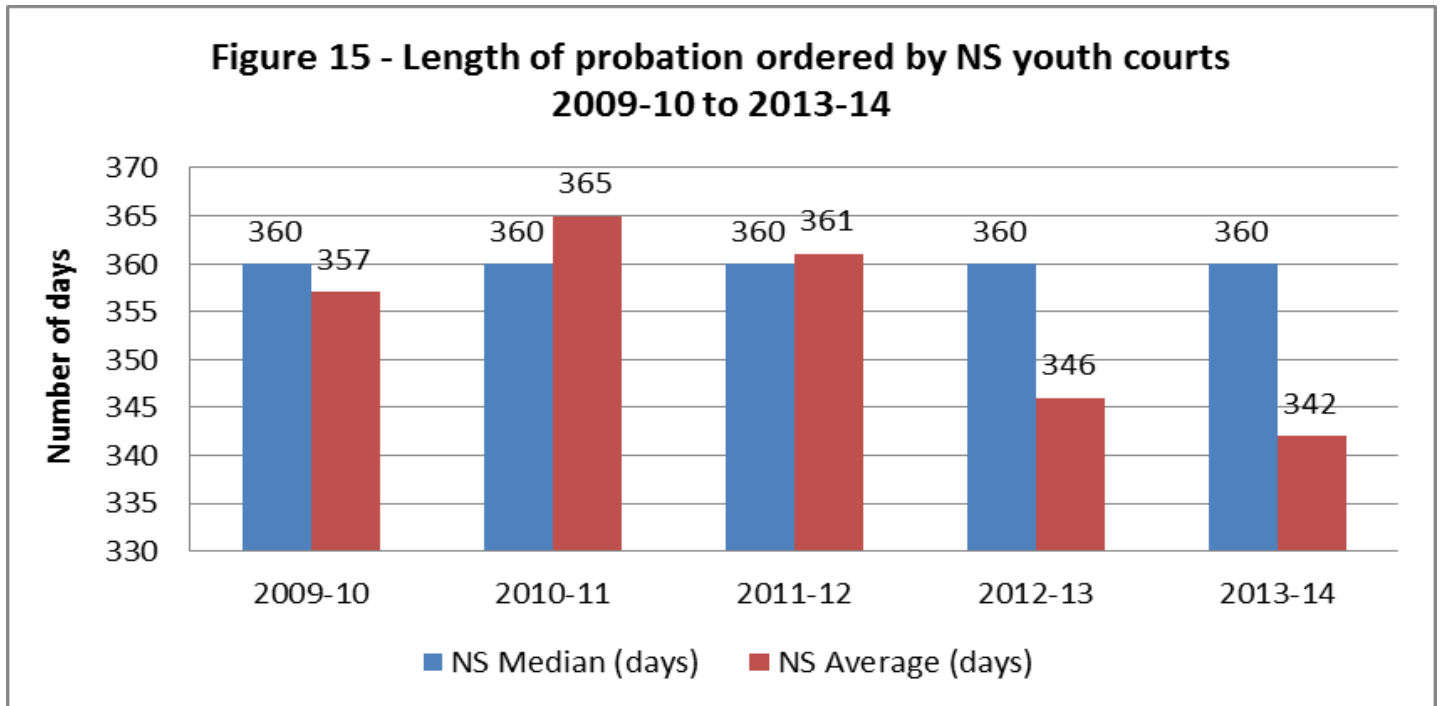


Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

## 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 2009-10 to 2013-14. The median length of probation ordered was 360 days in 2013-14 and was unchanged over the five year period. The average sentence length for probation for 2013-14 was 342 days, a 1% decrease from 2012-13. Over the five year period, the average length of probation decreased by 4% with a decreasing trend from 2010-11.



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



If you have any questions relating to the content of this document please contact:

The Office of the Executive Director

Correctional Services Division

Nova Scotia Department of Justice

PO Box 7

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2L6

902-424-7460