

# Corrections in Nova Scotia: Key Indicators

November 2013

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, nine 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 is 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 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.

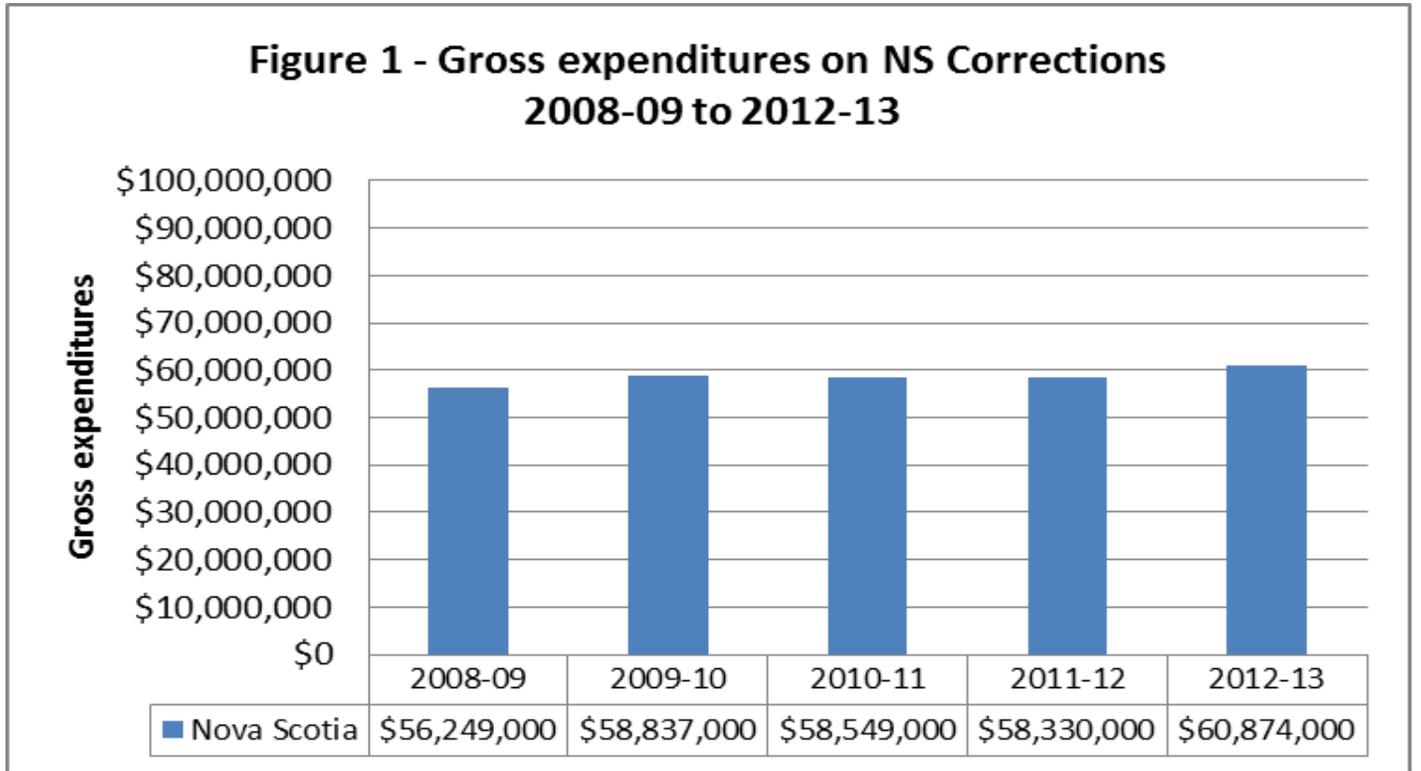
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<sup>1</sup> A map illustrating the location of community correction offices and correctional facilities can be found using the following URL: <http://novascotia.ca/just/Corrections/docs/cmc598.pdf>.

## 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, federal funding and administrative changes relating to organizational structure and the delivery of services, as well as changes in salaries and benefits for staff.

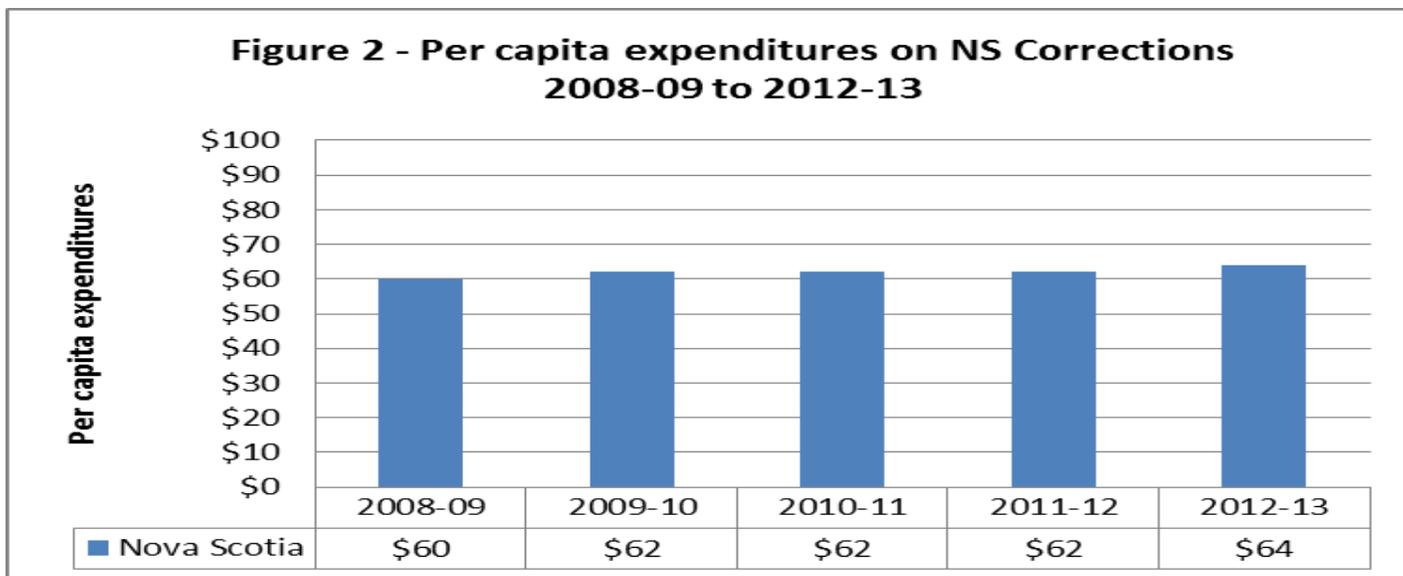
Figure 1 provides the gross operational expenditures for Correctional Services for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. Comparing the gross expenditures for 2012-13 to 2011-12, there was a 4% increase.<sup>2</sup> Over the five year period the gross expenditures ranged from a high of close to \$61 million dollars to a low of \$56 million dollars with an increase of 8% comparing 2008-09 to 2012-13.



Source: Nova Scotia Department of Justice Accountability Reports 2008-09 to 2012-13.

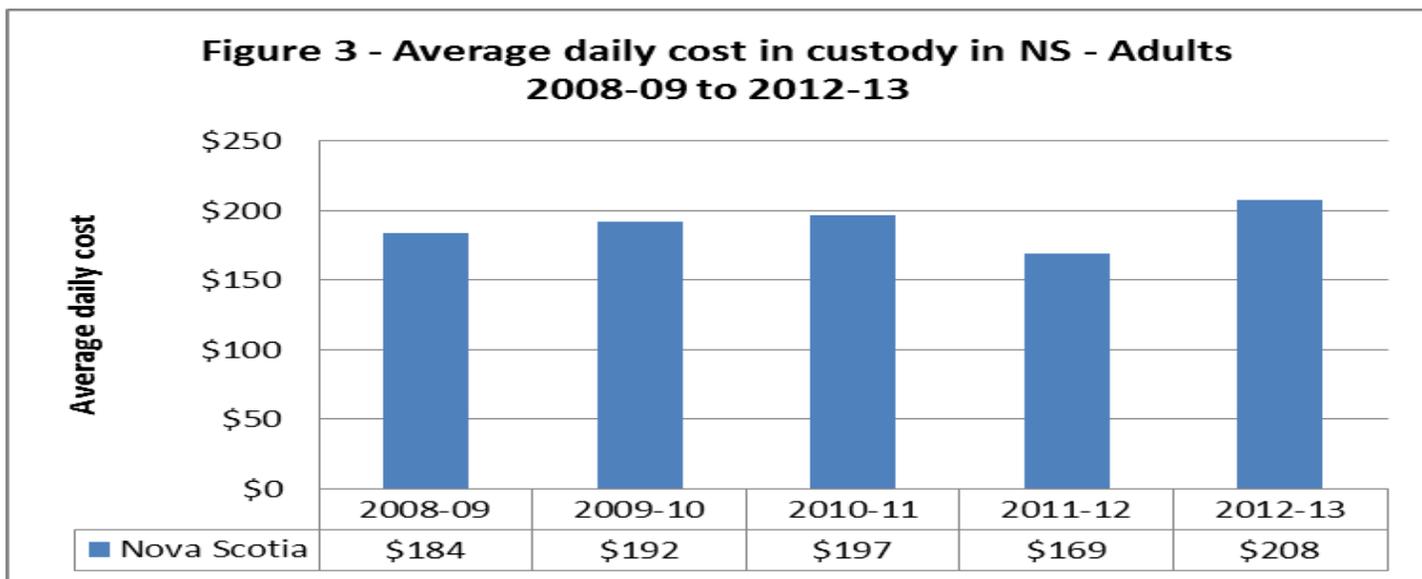
<sup>2</sup> Note that prior to 2008-09 the province reported on net operational expenditures rather than gross operational expenditures in the departmental accountability report.

Figure 2 provides the per capita cost for Correctional Services for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13.<sup>3</sup> Per capita expenditures increased by 3% between 2011-12 and 2012-13. Over the five year period, the per capita cost ranged from a high of \$64 to a low of \$60.



Source(s) : Nova Scotia Department of Justice Accountability Reports 2008-09 to 2012-13  
 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 for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. The average daily cost in 2012-13 increased by 23% compared to 2011-12 due to an increase in expenditures and also a decrease in the average daily count of adult offenders. Over the five year period, the average daily cost varied from a high of \$208 to a low of \$169.



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.

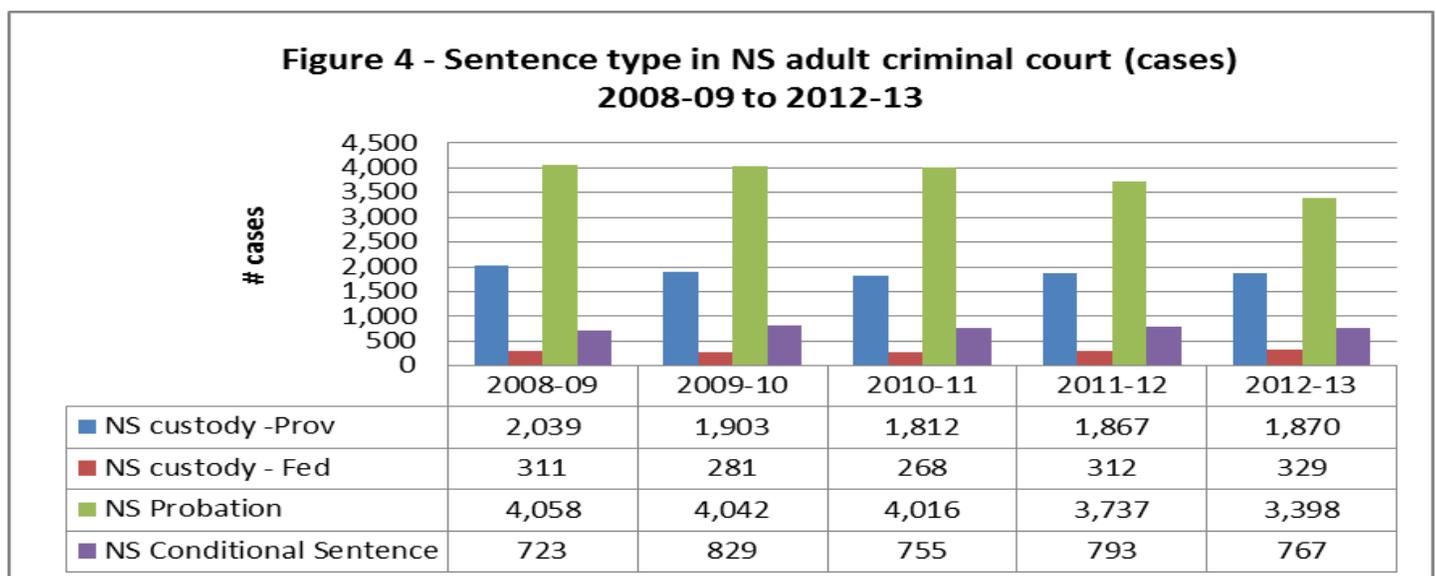
## Court sentences – adult

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 data in Figure 4 indicates that the number of offenders sentenced to provincial custody in 2012-13 was relatively stable compared to 2011-12, while the number sentenced to probation decreased by 9%. Conditional sentences decreased by 3% in 2012-13 compared to the previous year.

Over the five year period, the number of cases with provincial sentenced custody ranged from a high of 2,039 to a low of 1,812 while cases involving federal custody varied from a high of 329 to a low of 268. Cases with probation ranged from 4,058 to a low of 3,398. Conditional sentences ranged from 829 to 723.

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



Source: Policy, Planning and Research, 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 graph are cases with either a fine, restitution, or some ‘other’ sentence.

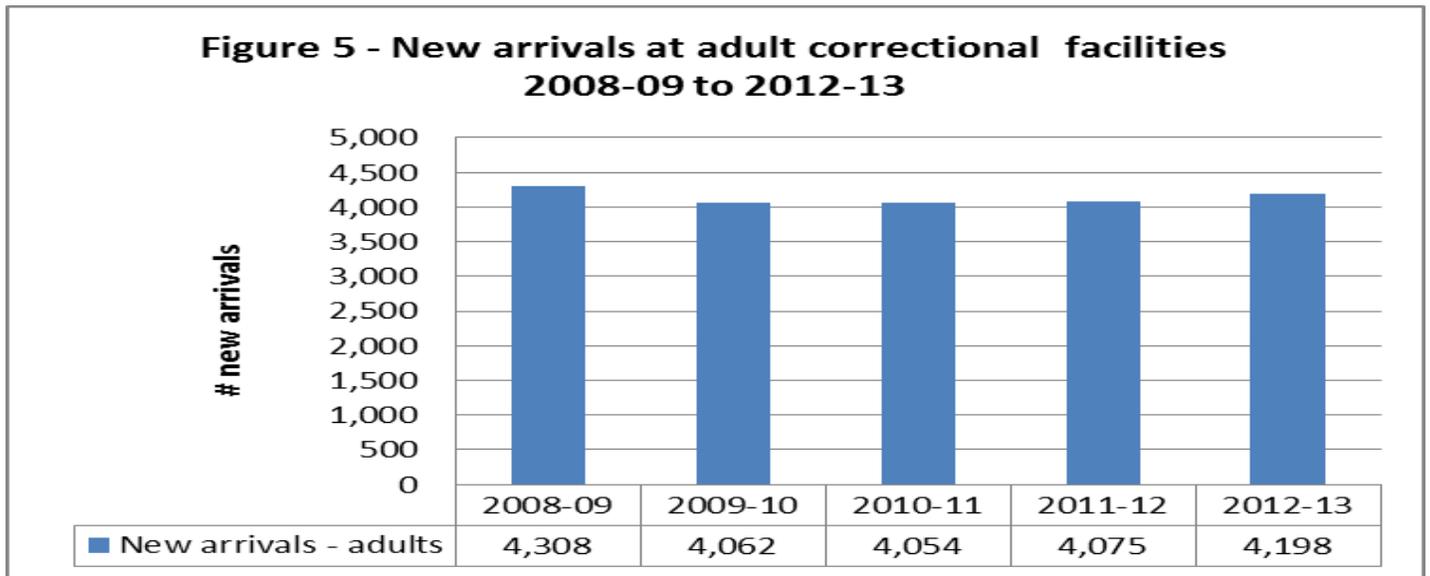
<sup>5</sup> Total cases with a custody sentence can be calculated by adding together the number of cases where provincial custody was ordered and the number of cases where federal custody was ordered. For 2012-13 the total cases where custody was ordered totaled 2,199.

## New arrivals at adult correctional facilities

The statistics presented below are for the number of new arrivals in adult correctional facilities for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. Reasons for why an adult is in a facility include: being sentenced to 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, etc.). New arrivals do not include the transfer of individuals between correctional facilities.

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 accounts for the greatest number of new arrivals.

Figure 5 shows the number of new arrivals at adult correctional facilities over the five-year period. In 2012-13, the number of new arrivals was 4,198, a 3% increase from the previous year. Over the five year period, the number of new arrivals fluctuated ranging from a high of 4,308 to a low of 4,054.



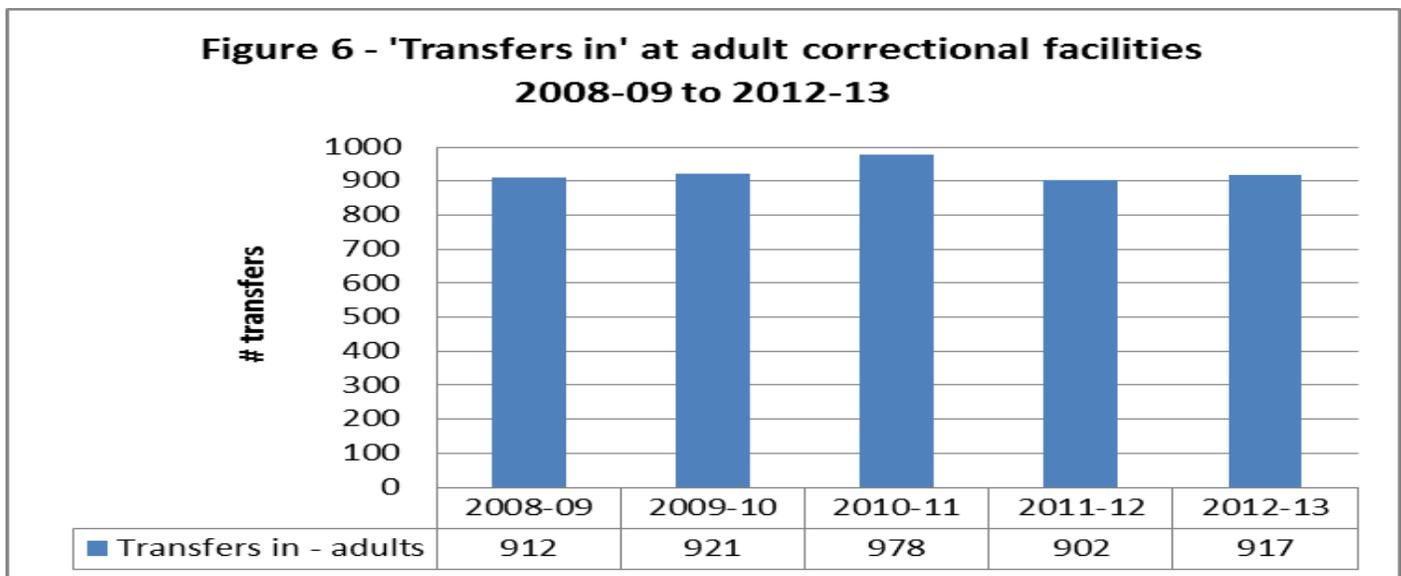
Source: Correctional Services Division, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

## 'Transfers in' at adult correctional facilities

The statistics presented below are for the number of 'transfers in' for adult correctional facilities in Nova Scotia for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. 'Transfers in' provide an indicator of the movement of individuals from one correctional facility to another. The offender could be in sentenced custody or remand at the time the transfer occurs. Typical reasons for why a transfer occur include: overcrowding; incompatibility between persons who are incarcerated (e.g., conflict or violence); or, the individual has to attend court in a specific location and needs to be in a correctional facility in proximity to a court.

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 accounts for the greatest number of transfers.

The data in Figure 6 indicates that the number of 'transfers in' at adult facilities in 2012-13 was 917, a 2% increase from the previous year. Over the five year period, the number of 'transfers in' ranged from a high of 978 to a low of 902.



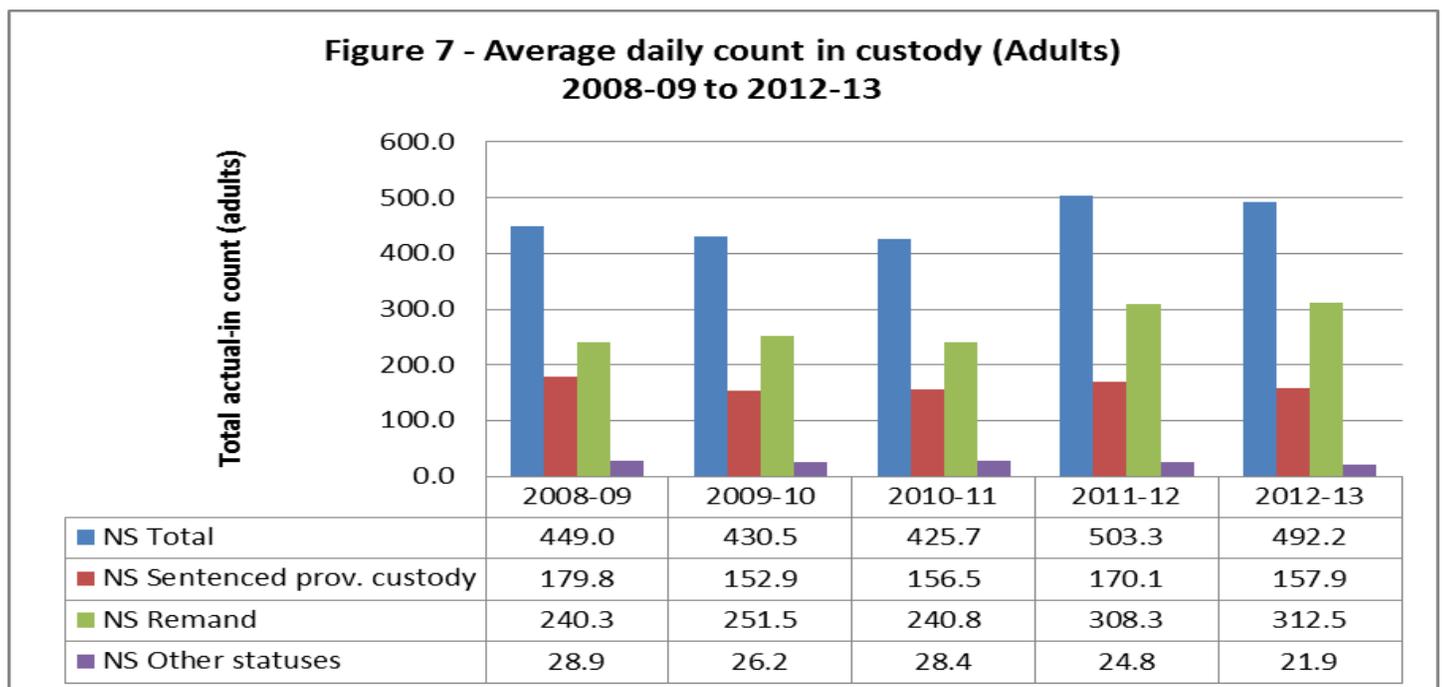
Source: Correctional Services Division, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

## Average daily count – adults

The average daily count of offenders reflect the numbers of offenders 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>6</sup>

Figure 7 provides data relating to the average daily count of adults in custody. The overall count of adults in custody decreased by 2% between 2011-12 and 2012-13 while those in sentenced custody decreased by 7%. The count for offenders on remand was relatively stable between 2011-12 and 2012-13 with a 1% increase.

Over the five year period, the total daily count varied from a high of 503.3 to a low of 425.7. Offenders in sentenced custody varied from a high of 179.8 to a low of 152.9 while the number on remand ranged from a high of 312.5 to a low of 240.3. There was a consistent pattern of offenders on remand outnumbering those in sentenced custody.



	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
% NS Sentenced prov. custody <sup>7</sup>	40%	36%	37%	34%	32%
% NS Remand	54%	58%	57%	61%	63%
% NS Other	6%	6%	7%	5%	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.

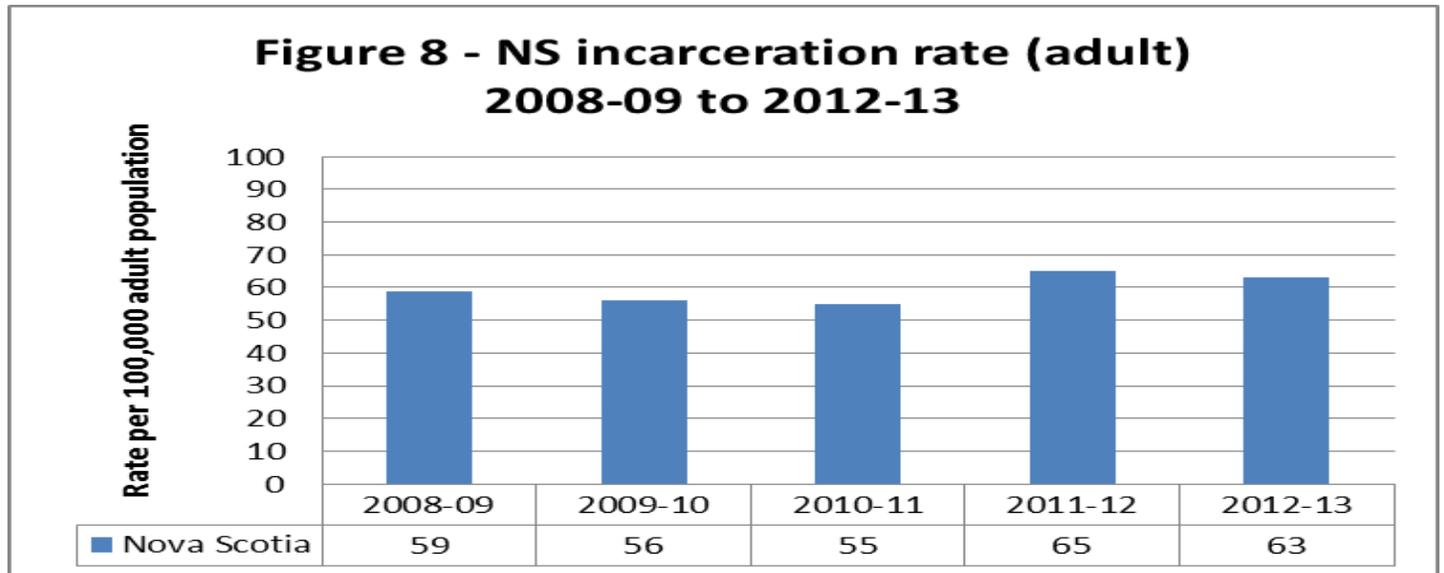
<sup>6</sup>As of March 2013, there were 554 beds in adult facilities of which approximately 10% were for adult female offenders. Close to two-thirds of the adult beds were located in the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF).

<sup>7</sup> Due to rounding some percentages may not total to 100%.

## Incarceration rate – adult

Figure 8 provides the incarceration rate for Nova Scotia during the period 2008-09 to 2012-13.<sup>8</sup> Between 2012-13 and 2011-12, the rate decreased by 3%. Over the five year period, the incarceration rate fluctuated from a high of 65 per 100,000 population to a low of 55 per 100,000 population.

Historically, the Nova Scotia incarceration rate has been lower than the national rate.<sup>9</sup>



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>8</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.

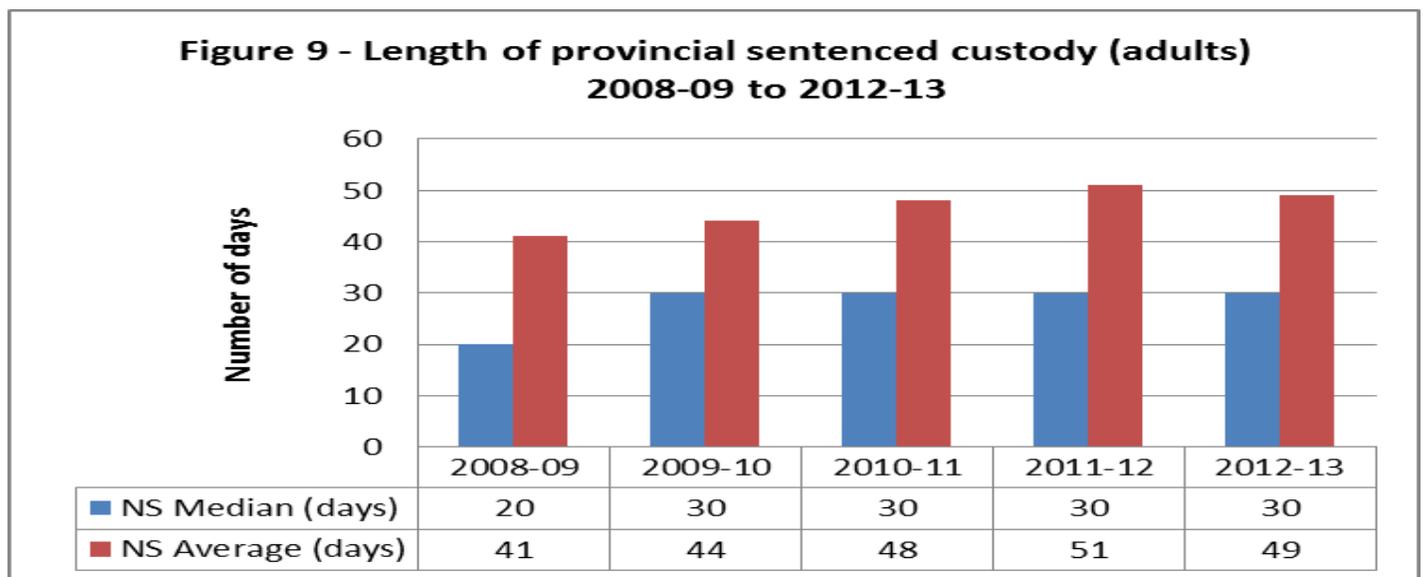
<sup>9</sup> The Nova Scotia incarceration rate was below the national rate for the period 2008-09 to 2011-12. At the time that this fact sheet was published, national data wasn’t available for 2012-13.

## 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 9 provides information on the length of provincial custody sentences ordered by adult criminal courts in Nova Scotia for 2008-09 to 2012-13. The median sentence length for custody in 2012-13 was 30 days, the same figure as in 2011-12.<sup>10</sup> The average (mean) number of days in sentenced custody for 2012-13 was 49, a 4% decrease compared to the previous year.

The median length of provincial sentenced custody has been 30 days for the past four years as compared to 20 days in 2008-09. The average (mean) sentence has generally trended upward over the last 5 years.



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

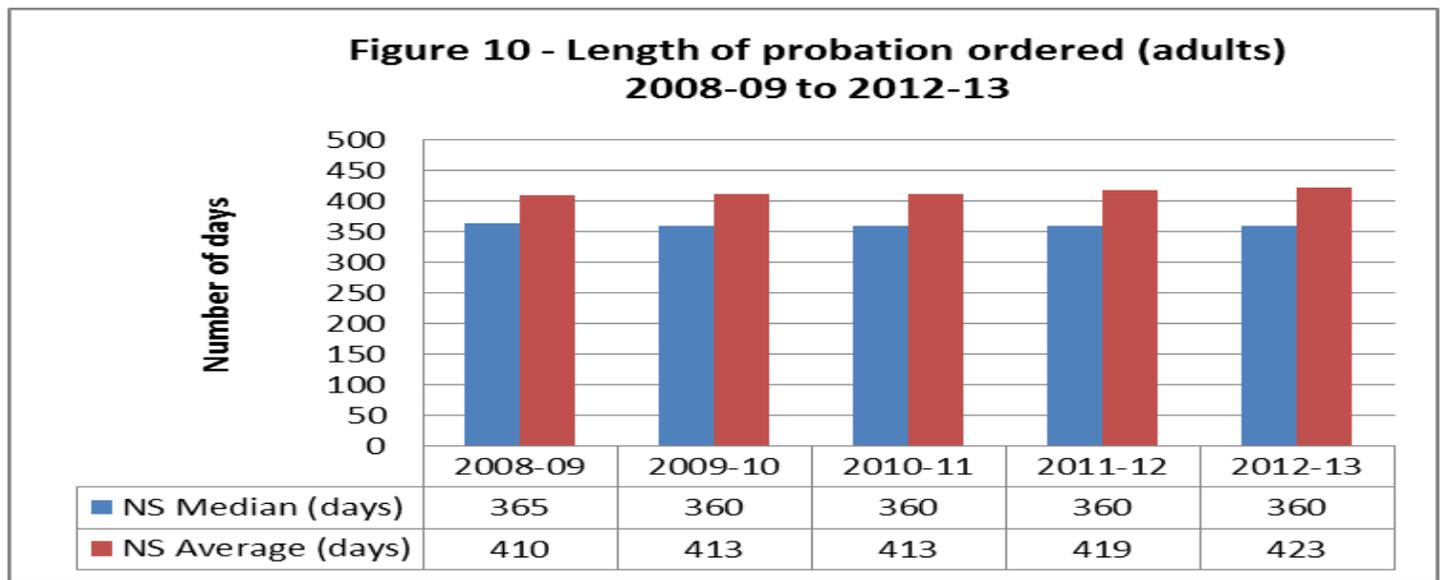
<sup>10</sup>The median is the middle value in a series of numbers ordered by size. The cases used in this analysis include only those where an offender was sentenced to provincial custody. Cases where the offender was sentenced to federal custody are excluded from the analysis.

## Sentence length for probation – adult

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

Figure 10 provides information on the length of probation ordered by adult criminal courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. The median sentence length of probation for 2012-13 was 360 days the same figure as 2011-12. The average (mean) sentence length of probation for 2012-13 was 423 days, a 1% increase compared to 2011-12.

Over the past four years, the median length of probation ordered has been stable at 360 days. The average (mean) number of days ordered ranged from a high of 423 to a low of 410 days between 2008-09 and 2012-13.



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>11</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 could involve correctional facilities as well as the Sheriff Services section of the Court Services Division which transports prisoners to and from institutions and all levels of court.

In 2012-13, there were 8 major incidents of which 7 related to an adult correctional facility and 1 to a youth facility. Of the 7 incidents related to an adult facility, there were 6 which took place at one of the facilities and 1 which occurred during a prisoner transport by Sheriff Services.

The specifics associated with the 6 incidents at an adult facility are identified below. 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 2012-13 involving adult correctional facilities</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident</b>
6-April-2012	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
24-May-2012	Escape from Cape Breton Correctional Facility
11-August-2012	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
8-September-2012	Disturbance at Cape Breton Correctional Facility
2-October-2012	Assault at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility
4-October-2012	Assault at Southwest 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 2012-13.

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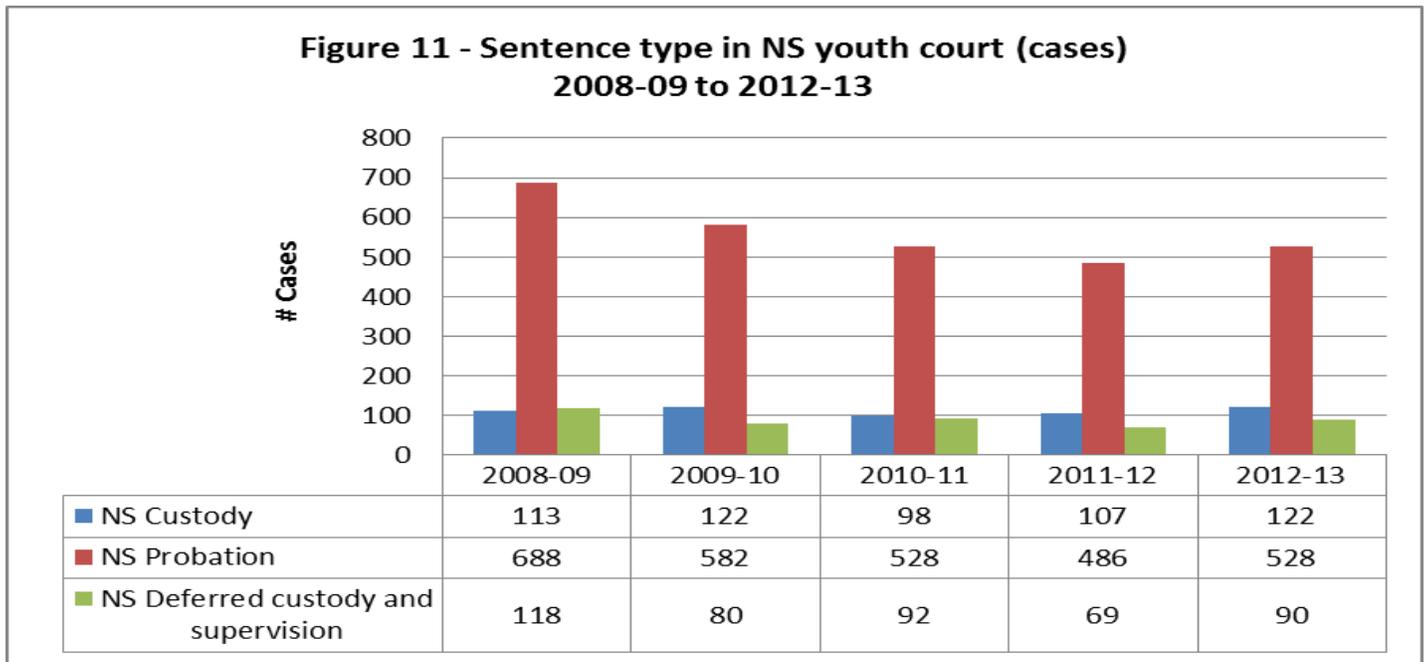
<sup>11</sup>The policy document – ‘Disclosure of Information on Major Incidents Involving Persons in Custody’ can be found at: [http://novascotia.ca/just/global\\_docs/Disclosure%20Policy\\_Major%20Incidents.pdf](http://novascotia.ca/just/global_docs/Disclosure%20Policy_Major%20Incidents.pdf).

## Court sentences – youth

Figure 11 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 increased by 14% between 2011-12 and 2012-13 while the number sentenced to probation increased by 9%. An increase also occurred in sentences with deferred custody and supervision (30%) following a drop in 2011-12.

Over the five year period, the number of cases where a youth was sentenced to custody varied from a high of 122 to a low of 98, while the number of cases where a youth was sentenced to probation ranged from 688 to 486 cases. Cases with deferred custody and supervision ranged from 118 to 69. The number of cases with probation consistently outnumbered the other sentence types over the five year period.



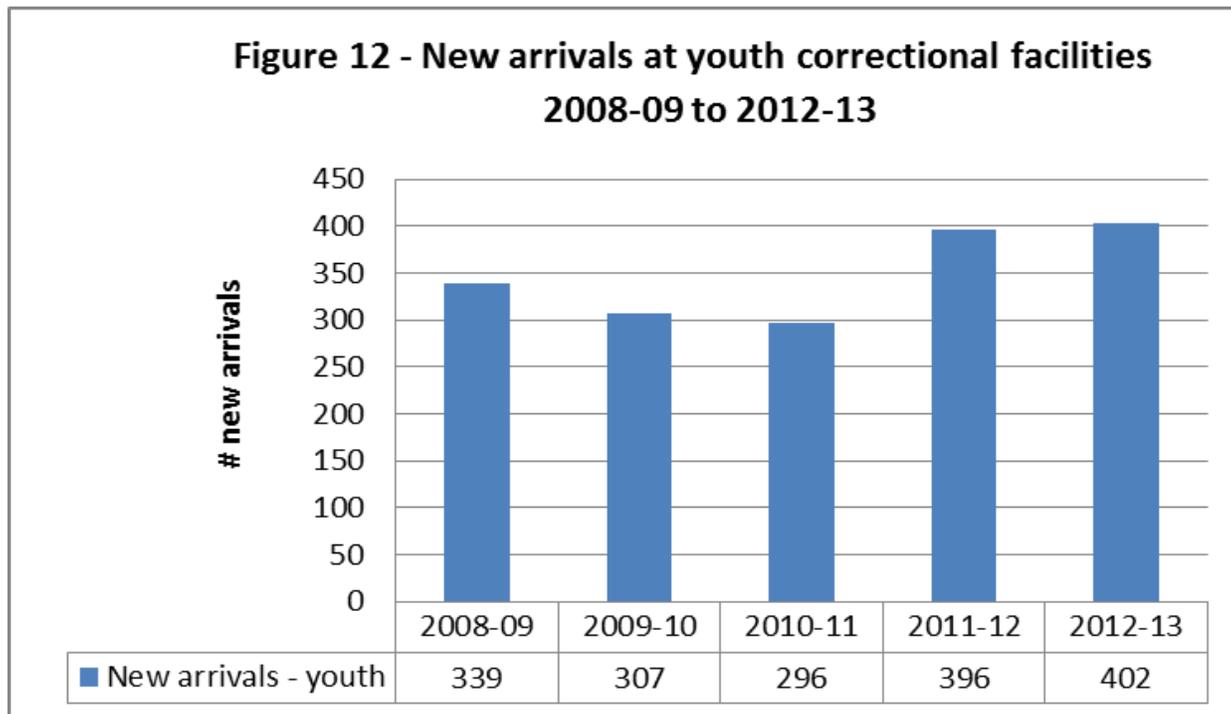
Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

## 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 period 2008-09 to 2012-13. Reasons for why a youth is in a facility include: being sentenced to open, open/secure or secure custody: and, being remanded to custody. New arrivals do not include the transfer of individuals between correctional facilities.

Two youth correctional facilities were operating in Nova Scotia during this time period, specifically: the Nova Scotia Youth Facility (NSYF); and, the Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility (CBYDF).<sup>12</sup> Of the two youth facilities, the Nova Scotia Youth Facility is the largest and accounts for the greatest number of new arrivals.

Figure 12 shows the number of new arrivals at youth facilities over the five year period. In 2012-13, the number of new arrivals was 402, a 2% increase from the previous year. Over the five year period, the number of new arrivals ranged from a high of 402 to a low of 296.



Source: Correctional Services Division, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

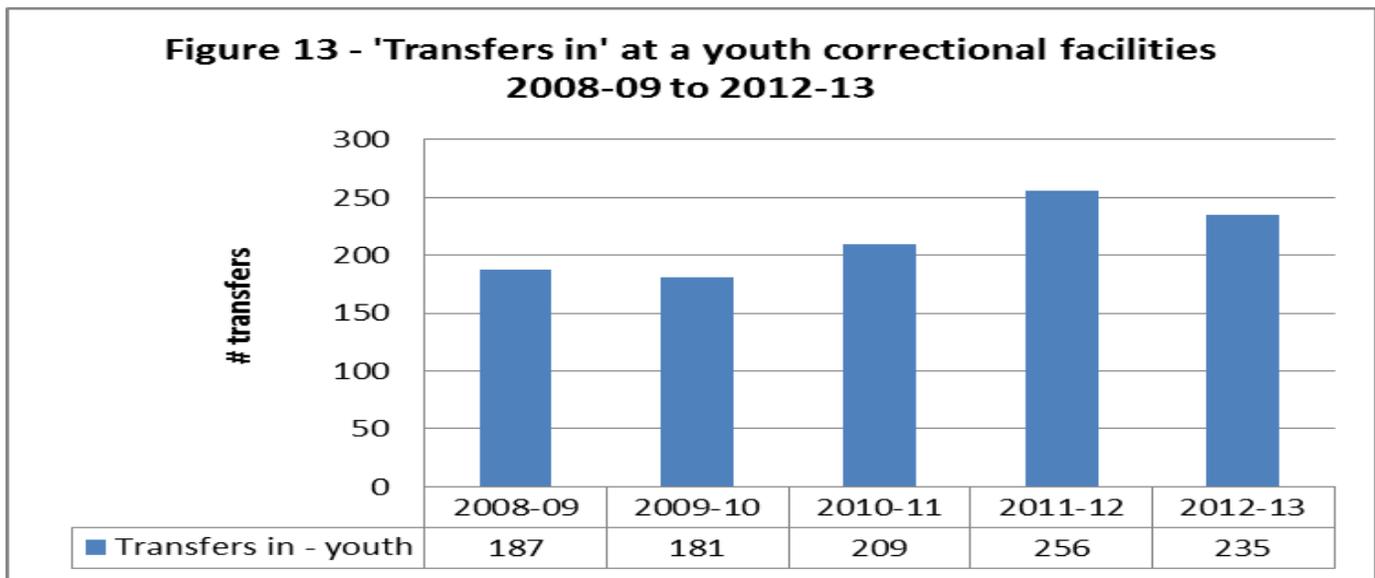
<sup>12</sup> The Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility is designed as a short-term term detention facility.

## 'Transfers in' at youth correctional facilities

The statistics presented below are for the number of 'transfers in' for youth correctional facilities in Nova Scotia for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. 'Transfers in' provide an indicator of the movement of youth from one correctional facility to another. The individuals could be in sentenced custody or remand at the time the transfer occurs. A typical reason for why a transfer to a youth facility occurs is that a youth has to attend court in a specific location and needs to be in a correctional facility in proximity to the court.

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

The data in Figure 13 indicates that the number of transfers at youth correctional facilities in 2012-13 was 235, an 8% decrease from the previous year. Over the five year period, the number of 'transfers in' ranged from a high of 256 to a low of 181.



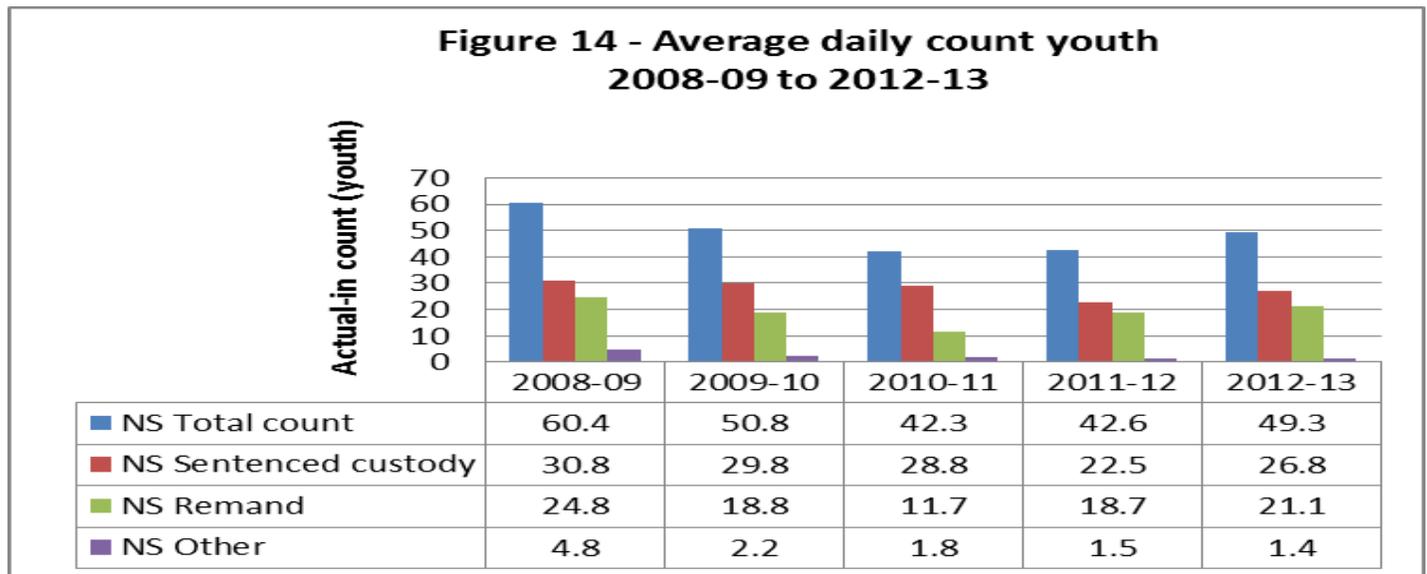
Source: Correctional Services Division, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

## Average daily count – youth

The average daily count of offenders reflect the numbers of youth offenders 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>13</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 14 provides data relating to the average daily count of youth in custody. The total count of youth in custody increased by 16% from 2011-12 to 2012-13 with increases noted both in sentenced custody (19%) and remand (13%).

Over the five year period, the total average daily count figure varied from a high of 60.4 to a low of 42.3 while the sentenced custody count ranged from 30.8 to 22.5. The remand count varied from 24.8 to 11.7 while the ‘other’ count (e.g., Provincial Director remand) ranged from 4.8 to 1.4. 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.



	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
% NS Sentenced custody	51%	59%	68%	53%	54%
% NS Remand	41%	37%	28%	44%	43%
% NS Other	8%	4%	4%	4%	3%

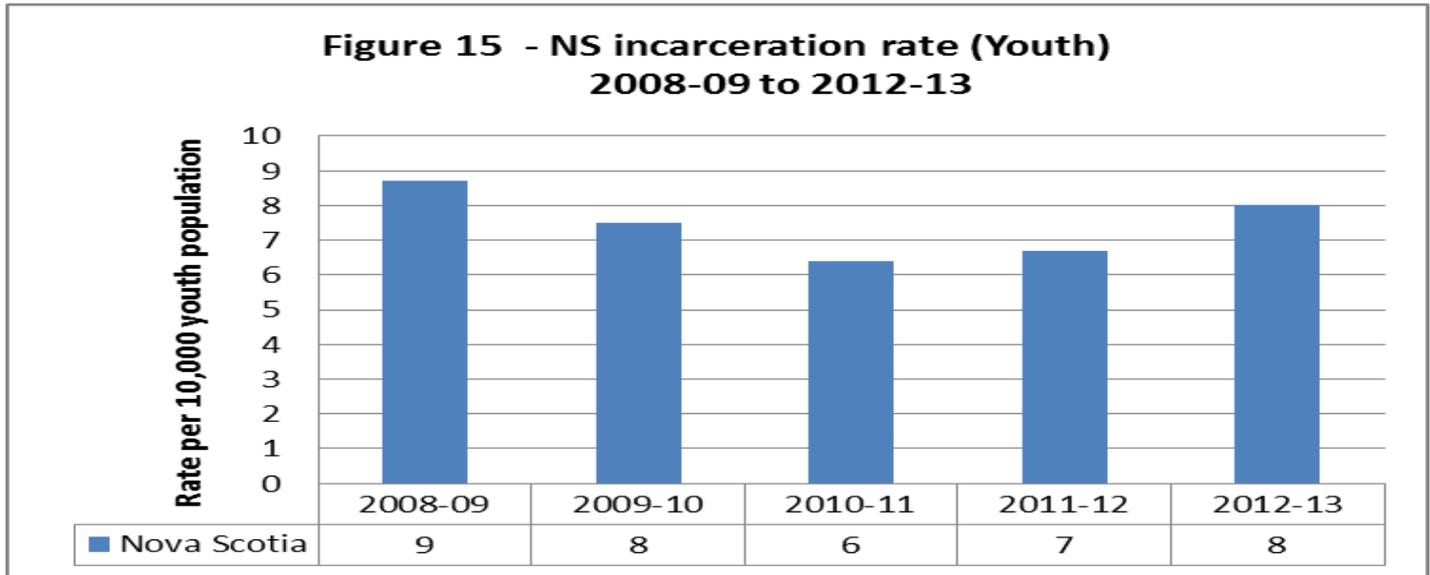
Source(s): Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice.

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

<sup>13</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 15 provides data on the youth incarceration rate in Nova Scotia for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. Between 2011-12 and 2012-13 a 14% increase occurred. Over the five year period, the youth incarceration rate varied from a high of 9 per 10,000 youth population to a low of 6 per 10,000 youth population.<sup>14</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>14</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.

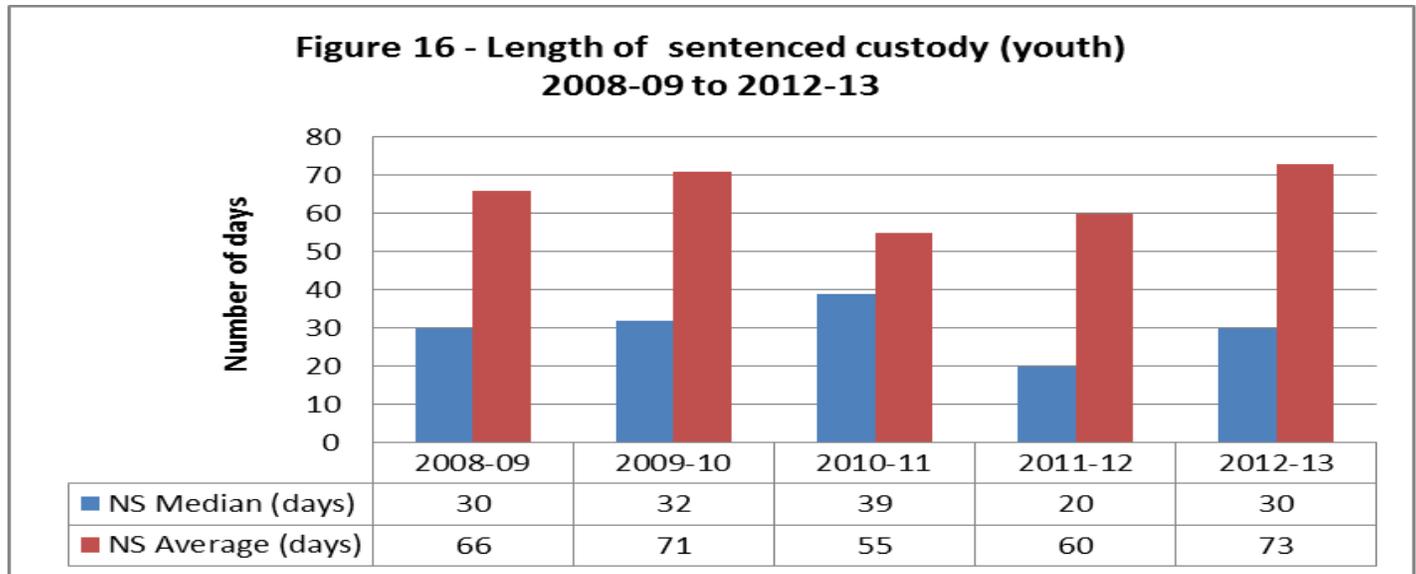
The incarceration rate for youth is calculated as the total daily count figure divided by the size of the population 12 to 17 years of age and standardized per 10,000 youth population.

## Sentence length for custody - youth

Figure 16 provides information on the length of custody ordered by youth courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. This information is useful for administrative planning in specific areas such as programming.

The median length of sentenced custody for 2012-13 was 30 days which was 50% higher than the preceding year while the average (mean) sentence length for custody in 2012-13 was 73 days which was 22% higher than the preceding year.

Over the five year period, the median number of days varied from 39 to 20 while the average (mean) number of days ranged from 73 to 55.



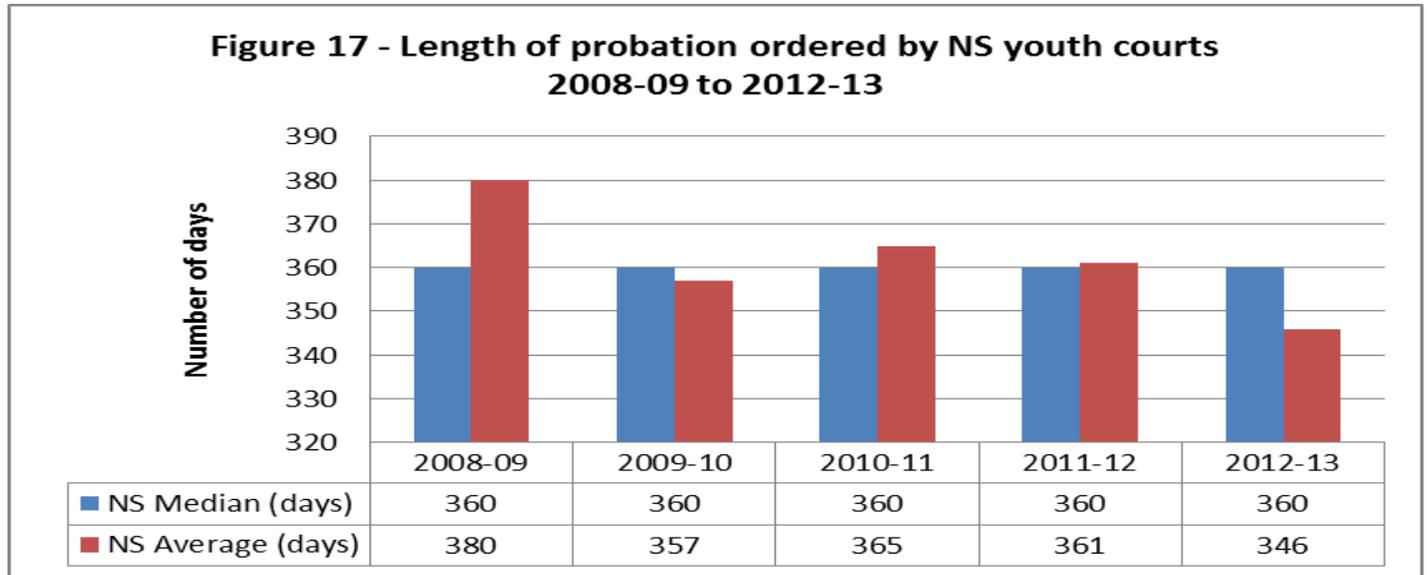
Source: Policy, Planning and Research, Nova Scotia Department of Justice

## Sentence length for probation – youth

Statistics on length of probation ordered provide information on the amount of time that youth are allowed to remain at large in the community while subject to the conditions outlined in a probation order.

Figure 17 provides information on the length of probation ordered by youth courts in Nova Scotia for the period 2008-09 to 2012-13. The median length of probation ordered was 360 days in 2012-13 which was unchanged from the preceding year. The average (mean) sentence length for probation for 2012-13 was 346 days, a 4% decrease from 2011-12.

Over the five year period 2008-09 to 2012-13, the median length of probation remained constant at 360 days while the average (mean) length of probation ranged from a high of 380 days to a low of 346 days.



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

## Major incidents - youth

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’. 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 could involve correctional facilities as well as the Sheriff Services section of the Court Services Division which transports prisoners to and from institutions and all levels of court.

In 2012-13 there were 8 major incidents of which 1 related to a youth correctional facility and 7 related to an adult correctional facility. The specifics associated with the incident at the youth facility are identified below. 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 2012-13 involving youth correctional facilities</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident</b>
4-January-2013	Bomb threat at Nova Scotia Youth Facility

Source(s): Nova Scotia Department of Justice. See <http://novascotia.ca/just/updates.asp>.  
Nova Scotia Department of Justice Accountability Report 2012-13.

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

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