

Offenders Currently Unlawfully at Large (UAL)

UAL offenders were a high risk and need group, with violent offence convictions and incidents involving an escape.

Why we did this study

Conditional release to the community is an important strategy for offender management in order to support their reintegration. Offenders unlawfully at large (UAL) present a challenge for correctional jurisdictions; however, there is limited research examining this population. The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence and profile of offenders currently UAL in the community.

What we did

Using snapshot data, the sample for this study included offenders currently UAL in the community as of November 27, 2022. Data related to demographics, sentence, offence, Security Threat Group affiliation (STG), criminogenic risk and need information, institutional behaviour, and release characteristics of UAL offenders were considered.

What we found

As of November 27, 2022, 470 offenders were currently UAL in the community: 93% ($n = 435$) men and 7% ($n = 35$) women. For men offenders, 34% ($n = 147$) were Indigenous, 13% ($n = 56$) were Black, and 39% ($n = 169$) were White. For women offenders, 57% ($n = 20$) were Indigenous and 26% ($n = 9$) were White. On average, men were 35 years of age and women were 32 years of age at release.

Among men offenders, the average amount of time they have currently been UAL is 13 years ($SD = 14.8$) and for women offenders, it is 5 years ($SD = 9.4$).

For men, 47% ($n = 205$) were serving a sentence of less than 4 years, 38% ($n = 166$) between 4 and 10 years. Four percent ($n = 17$) of men were serving an indeterminate sentence. For women, the majority (74%, $n = 26$) were serving a sentence of less than four years. Over half of men (57%, $n = 246$) and women (54%, $n = 19$) were serving a sentence for a violent offence. Six percent ($n = 24$) of men were STG affiliated.

While incarcerated, 31% ($n = 133$) of men offenders and 51% ($n = 18$) of women offenders had a guilty disciplinary charge, which included minor and serious charges. A large proportion of UAL offenders also had institutional incidents

(56%, $n = 242$ men and 71%, $n = 25$ women). Examining types of incident, 25% ($n = 107$) of men offenders and 31% ($n = 11$) of women offenders had an incident involving an escape.

At release¹, 43% ($n = 113$) of men offenders were assessed as high static risk, 54% ($n = 144$) as high dynamic need, 43% ($n = 106$) as medium reintegration potential, and 54% ($n = 135$) as medium motivation. For women offenders, 52% ($n = 15$) were assessed as medium static risk, 69% ($n = 20$) as high dynamic need, 71% ($n = 20$) as medium reintegration potential, and 57% ($n = 16$) as medium motivation.

With respect to criminogenic need domains at release, the majority of men and women scored moderate to high on all need domains, with substance abuse and personal/emotional being the most salient need domains.

In terms of release type for men offenders, 51% ($n = 223$) had a non-discretionary release and 49% ($n = 211$) had a discretionary release. Similarly, 51% ($n = 18$) of women offenders had a non-discretionary release and 49% ($n = 17$) had a discretionary release. Twenty-three percent of men ($n = 98$) and 17% ($n = 6$) of women had a residency condition.

What it means

Results showed that in general, UAL offenders were a high risk and need group, where over half were serving a sentence for a violent offence. In addition, a large proportion of both men and women had guilty disciplinary charges and institutional incidents. Overall, this suggests that continued focus on correctional interventions, both in the institution and community, is important to assist in the successful reintegration of offenders and potentially reduce the proportion of UAL offenders.

For more information

For questions and/or more information, please email [Research Branch](#). You can also visit the [Research Publications](#) section for a full list of reports and one-page summaries.

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¹ Missing risk, need, reintegration potential, motivation, and criminogenic need domain ratings ranged from 37% to 54% as the majority of these offenders were admitted to federal custody prior to the implementation of these intake assessments.