

## Executive summary

### Monitor Frequent Offenders 2017

The 11th edition of the Monitor Frequent Offenders reports on trends in the Dutch population of *high frequent offenders* (HFO's) for the years 2003 through 2015. This report includes the yearly number of HFO's, both in absolute terms as well as per capita, and year-by-year changes in population level characteristics, sanctioning practices and reoffending behaviour. Furthermore, specific types of HFO's receive special attention: young adult HFO's and high impact crime HFO's (high impact crimes include [street]robberies and burglary).

### General trends

In 2015 approximately 5,000 HFO's were identified by Dutch law enforcement. In 2003 these numbers nearly counted 9,000. While the number of HFO's decreased from 2003 through 2015, this decrease in HFO's was mostly limited to 2005 through 2010, when after these numbers stabilized. Therefore, the number of HFO's in 2015 differs little compared to the previous five years.

The 2015 population of HFO's consists mostly of men (95%). Furthermore, the average age is halfway between 30 and 40 years old, and the average criminal career of HFO's consists of 28 prior convictions. Lastly, the average age at which HFO's were first convicted was 19 years old.

While percentage-wise most HFO's are born in the Netherlands, the number of HFO's per capita is higher in certain subpopulations who were born outside of the Netherlands. The number of HFO's per capita decreases from 2003 through 2015, regardless of whether HFO's are examined as a group together or when divided by birth country.

HFO's mostly commit property offenses without violence and are generally sanctioned with a mandatory prison sentence. The ISD-measure (i.e., a forensic intervention/sanction for HFO's consisting of a maximum of two years imprisonment with the option of forensic treatment) is rarely sanctioned (at most for 7% of the HFO's in 2014 and 2015). These numbers are quite low, especially since the ISD-measure is meant for HFO's, who reoffend quickly and frequently (approximately 70-80% of HFO's reoffend within two years after a conviction).

### Young adults

In 2015 there were approximately 1,000 18- through 24-year-old HFO's, which is nearly half of the over 2,000 young adult HFO's that existed in 2003. Young adult HFO's are mostly men (98%) with an average age of 21 years, and on average had their first conviction at the age of 15. A little over 80% of the young adult HFO's in 2015 was born in the Netherlands.

While young adult HFO's mostly commit property offenses without violence – just as the total group of HFO's – they are more violent compared to the entire population

of HFO's. The most common judicial sanction among young adult HFO's is the mandatory prison sentence, though community service is relatively often sanctioned as well, compared to the entire HFO population. The ISD-measure is even more rarely sanctioned against young adult HFO's (each year at most for 1-2% of the young adult HFO's). Young adult HFO's are characterized by 70-75% reoffending rates within two years.

### **High impact crimes**

Because an official definition of what constitutes a high impact crime HFO is lacking, the current report proposes and examines different operationalizations of the concept. Depending on which alternative is chosen, the number of high impact crime HFO's ranges from dozens or hundreds to thousands high impact crime HFO's per year.

HFO's who had at least one high impact crime registered in the year they were also identified as HFO differ relatively little from the total population of HFO – they are a bit younger, started their criminal career a bit earlier and their career contains fewer convictions. High impact crime HFO's do receive more severe sentences, such as more and longer prison sentences as well as more ISD-measures. These sanction practices reflect the severity of their crimes.

### **Detention and ISD-measures**

Every year, for the period of 2003 through 2015, a minimum of 70% of the identified HFO's spends at least one day in detention. This percentage decreases in 2014 and 2015, as does the average length of detention. Since the introduction of the ISD-measure in 2004, the measure is applied to an increasingly 'less delinquent' group of HFO's over the years. For instance, in 2004 the average number of prior convictions for HFO's with an ISD-measure was 60, but in 2015 this average has decreased to just under 45 convictions.

### **Registration of criminogenic factors declines**

Judicial policies regarding the treatment of HFO's can no longer be supported on the basis of structured measures of recidivism risks, as the number of HFO's with complete and valid RISC assessments decreases from 50% in 2009 to 40% in 2015. Moreover, there are indications that HFO's that *do* have a valid RISC assessment differ from those that *do not*. Hence, the presented results of the RISC assessments may not be representative for the entirety of the HFO population. Also, due to a transition to a new version of the RISC measure in 2014, the RISC population values are no longer comparable over time. These issues may prevent the RISC from being usable in future (and current) monitoring or forensic research.

### **Conclusion**

In 2015 the HFO population is at one of its lowest levels since 2003 and 2004. The decrease in HFO's has mostly taken place in the years 2005 through 2010, when after the numbers of HFO's stabilizes. The decrease is observable among all sorts of

HFO's – young adults, high impact crime offenders, and also for different birth countries. The decrease in HFO crime is not an isolated phenomenon, but occurs alongside a more general decrease in crime, both nationally and internationally.