

## Assessment of recorded crime data

### Response to the UK Statistics Authority following the follow-up meeting on Monday 9 June 2014

#### Principle 1

- *User engagement*


We engage with a range of users in different ways. For example, this can either be via consultations on the SG website, in person at User Days, meetings of the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee or internal SG analytical seminars as well as via email and telephone correspondence.

Work is currently underway to prepare a **consultation report** on the most recent consultation on recorded crime. It is aimed to publish this consultation report in July/August.

To provide users with an overview of the information which is available to them on Justice related topics, a **High Level Summary of Statistics Trends** is available on the Crime and Justice Statistics web page and is available here:

[http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice?utm\\_source=website&utm\\_medium=navigation&utm\\_campaign=statistics-topics](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice?utm_source=website&utm_medium=navigation&utm_campaign=statistics-topics)

Users are also able to download the following:

- i) a PDF version of all [Crime and Justice Trends](#) 
- ii) an Excel version of all [Crime and Justice Trends Charts and Data](#) 

The **Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief** contains an up to date summary of the most important statistics across the justice portfolio. These Monthly briefs can be accessed here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Justicebrief>

The most recent [Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief May 2014](#) contains information which can be regarded as up to date for the period up to 23rd May 2014.

In order to ensure that we meet the needs of less expert users, we plan to develop and publish a **User Guide** which should offer a valuable resource in terms of providing background and more detailed information about the collection, quality assurance and publication of statistics on police recorded crime (please see draft contents list of Recorded Crime User Guide contained within Annex A). Indeed users with differing levels of knowledge of police recorded crime data may find this User Guide helpful. The aim would be to update the User Guide throughout the course of the year.

A copy of the draft User guide is provided in Annex A of this document.

We also receive numerous requests from students, particularly those undertaking an Advanced Higher in Modern Studies on various crime related topics. We would aim to develop a separate section on ‘**Student Enquiries**’ on the website which would provide a place where students could find links to material of relevance to them.

- *Police Reform*

### **The origins of Police Reform**

Examination of the case for reforming our police services began with the publication of the report of the [Independent Review of Policing](#) by Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, Paddy Tomkins, in 2009 under the auspices of the Scottish Policing Board. In 2010 the police service began examining options for maintaining an effective frontline service with reduced funding as a result of the worsening prospects for public expenditure. The Sustainable Policing Team, of police officers and staff supported by Scottish Government officials, prepared a [report on the options](#).

### **Consultation on Police Reform**

The first police reform consultation “[A Consultation on the Future of Policing in Scotland](#)” was launched on 10 February 2011. The first consultation sought views on how to protect and improve the police service, including ways to create better partnership working with other organisations, and on future structural options for the police service. [An analysis report](#) of this consultation was published on 21 June 2011.

After a series of consultation events and substantive engagement with key stakeholders on the case for police reform in the summer of 2011, on 8 September 2011 the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, [announced in](#) Parliament the Scottish Government’s intention to legislate for a single police service.

Along with this announcement a consultation paper – “[Keeping Scotland Safe and Strong: A Consultation on Reforming Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland](#)” was published, setting out the Scottish Government’s proposals for how best to establish the single police and fire and rescue services and inviting comments to help shape the final proposals and legislation. This consultation received 145 written responses consultation responses and a [consultation analysis report](#) was published on 10 February 2012.

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Bill 2011 was formally introduced in Parliament on 12 January 2012 by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, and became an Act in August 2012. The Bill and its details of its passage through Parliament are available on the [Scottish Parliament website](#).

- The Bill [Equality Impact Assessment](#);
- The Bill [Business Regulatory Impact Assessment](#);

On 21 February 2012, the Justice Secretary announced that the Police Service of Scotland would become operational on 1 April 2013.

The [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#) brought together the eight former police forces, the Scottish Police Services Authority and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency into a single Police Service of Scotland from April 1, 2013. More detail on the legislation behind the reform and consultations undertaken are provided via the following link:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/policies/police-fire-rescue/police-scotland/LegislationPoliceServiceofScotland>

- *Uses and Users of Data*

We will include a section on 'Users and Uses of Data' in the forthcoming publication in October and will also include such material in the User Guide. These sections will be based on the information contained within the SG response to Question 2 but will be restructured. Specifically, the list of users and stakeholders will be collapsed and presented in possibly a tabular format. Instead of a list.

- *Demonstrate how we are responding to the needs of users*

We will include examples, in the forthcoming publications, of showing how we are responding to the needs of users by making reference to the inclusion of a table on handling offensive weapons etc.

- *Justice Analytical Programme 2014-15*

The Justice Analytical Programme 2014-15 is due to be published by the end of June 2014. A link will be available within the first paragraph on the following web page:

[http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice?utm\\_source=website&utm\\_medium=navigation&utm\\_campaign=statistics-topics](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice?utm_source=website&utm_medium=navigation&utm_campaign=statistics-topics)

- *Publication of Technical Report*

It is proposed to publish the Technical Report by October 2014.

- *Plans for future reporting*

We have been in discussions with analytical colleagues in Police Scotland (PS) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) to request that PS and SPA prepare and share their plans for publication of reports etc so that we can ensure there is a planned and co-ordinated release of information into the public domain.

This activity is discussed at meetings of the Policing Performance Practitioners Group (which includes representatives from the SG, PS and SPA). An example of the co-ordination of publication plans across the three organisations is illustrated in a visual timeline of the reporting cycle for June 2014 and is provided here:



Planning reporting  
timeline June 2014.doc

Please note that this is a document for internal use which has not been published externally.

- *Relationship among statistics from SG, PS and SPA*

We plan to include a section in the User Guide to inform users as to how statistics from the SG, PS and the SPA are related to one another. Such a section could also be updated to inform users as to related information published by PS and the SPA throughout the year.

- *Frequency of releases*

This topic was discussed at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

In 2010, JAS considered the quarterly release of crime statistics and investigated the potential need for a quarterly crime publication.

A scoping document was prepared and circulated to policy colleagues for comments. Once comments had been collated by email, a discussion note was prepared for a meeting with policy, alongside a draft document with a proposed publication structure.

It was at this meeting that the policy need for quarterly recorded crime data was assessed as not being as strong as first anticipated and it was decided at this stage not to pursue this further. One of the main issues was that data is collected on a cumulative quarterly basis. This data is useful for quality assurance purposes but is not considered fit for publication purposes for reasons outlined in the scoping document. In order to produce a quarterly publication, we would need to have access to up to date quarterly information and to do this would pose a considerable burden on the legacy police forces. At this stage it was decided not to pursue this project further.

However, as mentioned in previous discussions about the potential to review our revisions policy, changes to internal IT systems and the fact that we are now receiving data from a national management information system opens up the potential to review this practise. The Police Scotland system enables us to receive up to date quarterly data with minimum burden on the data supplier and this is something we can consider reviewing in the future. At present

however, we only have one year of data broken into actual quarters information and therefore no time series at which to present information.

The documentation referred to above is provided under separate email cover.

## Principle 2

- *Changes to classifications*

A section will be included in the User Guide. The material in this section will be maintained and updated on a regular basis. A link will also be provided to the Charge Code information which is published on the C&J section of the SG website and is updated on a monthly basis. This information is currently available at the foot of the following page:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/DataSource>

One example of where we would plan to do this is in relation to the review of the definition of serious assault as per the recommendation in the recent HMICS audit report published in December 2013.

- *Announce any forthcoming changes in legislation prior to commencement of the legislation*

Similarly, a section will be included in the User Guide with the material in this section being maintained and updated on a regular basis.

- *Revisions policy*

Prior to 2013-14, data was collected from the eight legacy police forces, each using different IT systems. Data was provided as snapshot at a point in time and the policy on revisions has always been that data is not updated following publication, with the exception of error corrections. There are a number of reasons why this has been the case. The capabilities of various different IT systems used by the police to extract information and the varying degrees of expertise within each legacy force, would make providing updates to past years data extremely burdensome on legacy police forces. In addition our own internal IT system was not flexible enough to allow changes to be easily made to whole sets of data at once.

However, a new internal IT system was put in place in JAS in 2010 which allows much more flexible management of recorded crime data. With the launch of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013, a new IT system was put in place to allow reporting of national level management information. It is this system which has been used to provide the 2013-14 data and will provide data going forward.

The development of a system which allows national level reporting and a more flexible internal data management system opens up potential to

reconsider the recorded crime data collection and in particular, our revisions policy. However, a change to the revisions policy would require serious consideration to think about how this would affect the data. In addition, we would seek to carry out a user consultation to scope out if this would be something of interest to users of the statistics.

- *Error corrections*

If there were any error corrections, we would aim to provide information on the scale of the corrections e.g. parking offences in legacy Grampian police.

- *Terminology*

We will review the terminology used previously to ensure that there is a clear distinction between error corrections and our revisions policy, in the forthcoming publication

- *'No-criming'*

As discussed at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June, we make reference to 'no criming' and aim to include information on the scale of 'no-criming' in the Technical report. However our previous discussions with Police Scotland would suggest that it may not be possible to obtain exact figures as an audit trail of changes to a crime record is not kept in this way. However in the Technical report, we will explain to users what we are thinking in relation the calculation of percentages on 'no-criming' and percentages of reclassifications.

### **Principle 3**

- *Police reform – new structures*

We will include a section in the forthcoming publication and a more detailed section in the User Guide on the new organisational structures following police reform. This will include reference to the previous SG response to Question 12 and the material contained within the set of slides presented by Police Division at the meeting on 8 May.

- *Crime registrars – structure and meeting arrangements*

A new crime registrar structure was put in place following the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013, together with the roles of the national crime registrar and three regional crime registrars.

Information on the new structure of the crime registrars and the meeting arrangements will be included in the User Guide.

Reference will also be made, in this section, to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard Meeting Structure note which was circulated at a previous UKSA/SG meeting.

- *Roles and responsibilities*

We will publish information in the forthcoming publication and a more detailed section in the User Guide on roles and responsibilities.

- *Link to transcript from First Ministers Questions following Sunday Herald article earlier this year*

Link provided to transcript in email of 13 June 2014

- *Quarterly data from the police*

Please refer to the response to 'Frequency of releases' within Principle 1.

#### **Principle 4**

- *Technical report*

We propose to publish the Technical report by October 2014.

Please find attached an extract of the draft Technical report which provides information on Contents, Introduction, Background/Common issues and Methodology. It also provides details of the section on Crime Group 1, namely Non-sexual crimes of violence, by way of an example of the information which is presented for each of the seven groups.



UKSA Assessment  
- Technical re...

- *Policies and Procedures*

Crime recording practice is governed by the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) and the Scottish Government Counting Rules. In fact this information is contained within a single document and this manual provide a framework for deciding when an incident should be recorded as a crime, what type of crime should be recorded and how many crimes should be counted. The reference to the "Scottish Government Counting Rules" is largely a historical reference. The manual is reviewed, maintained and updated by members of the SCRS Technical Working group and then taken to the Scottish Crime Registrars Group.

The national crime registrar has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) and Counting Rules manual for 2014-15 with the intention of publishing this manual on the Police Scotland external website.

JAS will also make this information available in the User Guide on the SG website.

- *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey – Analysis of Scottish Crime and Justice Survey and Police Recorded Crime Groups*

A copy of the final draft of the analytical paper has been prepared and has been sent to the UK Statistics Authority under separate cover.

It is our intention to publish the analytical paper and a publication date will be arranged upon completion of the primary publication of the self-report findings from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS). For information, one of these SCJS reports will be published on Tuesday 24 June and a further two SCJS reports will be published on Wednesday 25 June.

- *Data Quality*

Within the Scottish Government, Justice Analytical Services (JAS) is responsible for the collection, quality assurance and publication of police recorded crime statistics. A wide range of mechanisms are employed to ensure the robustness of police crime data.

Data is collected on a cumulative quarterly basis from the police and a number of detailed quality assurance checks are carried out by JAS. This includes the checking of data across the cumulative quarters to ensure data consistency as the year progresses; checking data across legacy police force areas to ensure consistency and confirming local differences; and comparing figures year on year, investigating where significant differences appear. All issues are referred back to the appropriate points of contact within the police to ensure that anomalies are addressed and that the final resulting data is an accurate reflection of police activity within each financial year period.

In April 2004, the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) was introduced throughout Scotland. The standard was produced by the Scottish Crime Registrar's Group and agreed by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, following research that identified the need to develop a more victim orientated approach to crime recording.

JAS is a member of the Scottish Crime Registrars' Group. This group was established to support consistency in implementing the SCRS and associated counting rules. The group discusses matters arising from the application of the SCRS and is also responsible for maintaining and updating the counting rules.

HMICS also conducts national reviews of incident and crime recording, with one of the aims being to assess compliance with crime recording standards. The most recent such review was conducted just after the creation of the Police Scotland, on 1 April 2013, with the report being published in December 2013. As part of this review, JAS met with the HMICS lead to discuss issues



related to crime recording and proposed changes to the structure of the crime registrars group etc.

Information on quality, including strengths and limitations, potential bias and error in the recording process, will be included in the forthcoming publication in October 2014.

The Technical report will also provide information on data quality. The Technical report will detail the quality assurance work carried out for each of the seven crime groups and will consider the comparability of ScOMIS data with data previously supplied by legacy police forces. Data for five years prior to the establishment of Police Scotland has been analysed.

A section on data quality will also be included in the User Guide. This approach has the benefit of being able to update this section during the course of the year. For example, additional information will be included following the publication of HMICS' next audit report (which is expected to be published in early 2015).

- *HMICS*

We will include a section on the HMICS in the forthcoming publication. This will include references to the HMICS Review of Crime Recording (Dec 2013) and will comprise both the findings from the most recent audit and the relevant recommendations.

This section will also highlight planned forthcoming audit work in late 2014.

- *Police Scotland Audit work*

Plans for Police Scotland audit work were discussed at meetings of the crime registrars and some initial findings were discussed at a meeting earlier this year. Police Scotland audit work together with HMICS audit plans are discussed at the SCRG meetings (where there is HMICS representation).

The next meeting of the SCRS Technical Working Group is scheduled for week beginning 4 August and the next meeting of the SCRG is scheduled for week beginning 25 August.

- *Links between publications on crime statistics and with other statistical bulletins published by Justice Analytical Services*

We will develop a section which provides an overview of the publications on crime statistics (based on data returns from Police Scotland (and previously legacy police forces)) and which then goes on to explain to users the various links between the statistics and how they are related.

A summary of this work will be included in the forthcoming publication but the details will be contained within the User Guide.

- *Information on comparability with England and Wales .*

Link provided to paper by ONS in email of 13 June 2014

## **Principle 5**

No further evidence was requested.

## **Principle 6**

- *Burden on individual police officers in collecting the data.*

The following is a copy of the new Crime Managers bulletin (for Quarter 1 2014-15). It is produced on a quarterly basis and the purpose is to provide crime managers and their staff with updates and guidance to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS). The bulletin also provides an overview of the latest changes to the SCRS and Counting Rules manual for 2014-15.



Bulletin (2).pdf

## **Principle 7**

- *Resources*

Reference has been made previously to the Chief Statistician providing more resources to the team.

## **Principle 8**

- *Commentary*

Following police reform, the commentary section of the forthcoming publication will change from that provided in previous publications. The previous police force level commentary will be replaced and a new section will look in more detail at each of the crime groups, top 32 level crimes and local authority level data, along with longer term time trends.

The detailed commentary will be prepared upon completion of the data quality assurance exercise and once we have data in its final form, from which the tables (upon which the commentary is based) will be produced.

A copy of a document which provides a skeleton outline of the bulletin is provided under separate cover.

- *Individual level data*

Individual level data would allow us to analyse in more detail the characteristics of crimes (e.g. locus), victims and perpetrators (e.g. age and gender) which is not feasible through the aggregate data we hold at present. This information would enable us to respond to more ad hocs, PQs and FoI requests that we can currently answer using aggregated data. For example, we would potentially be in a better position to establish the number of knife crimes (for example serious assault where a knife was involved) as this is something we cannot currently measure.

However, at present, legacy force IT systems are still in use for the purposes of recording crime data. As a result, a national source of individual level data that we would be able to access for data collection purposes is not yet feasible.

- *Statement of Administrative Sources*

A link was provided to the updated Statement of Administrative Sources for police statistics, in the email of 13 June 2014.

- *Data Sources and Suitability*

The Data Sources and Suitability document on recorded crime is currently being updated to reflect the changes following police reform and the quality assurance work which is currently being undertaken.

## **Protocol 2**

- *Provision of pre-release access list*

An Excel spreadsheet which illustrated the likely pre-release access list is provided in the email of 13 June 2014.

- *Provision of statistical news release from last publication (2012-13).*

A link was provided to the statistical new release and the ministerial news release, in the email of 13 June 2014.

## **Assessment of recorded crime statistics**

**Response to the UK Statistics Authority following the follow-up meeting on Monday 9 June 2014**

### **Recorded Crime User Guide**

**Draft contents list:**

- 1. Users and Uses of statistics**
- 2. Consultations**
- 3. Revisions Policy**
- 4. Police Reform**
- 5. Statistics from the Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority - how they relate to each other**
- 6. Classification of crimes and offences**
- 7. Clear-up rates**
- 8. Changes to classifications/new legislation – i) recent and ii) forthcoming**
- 9. Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules manual**
- 10. Crime Registrars – structure and meetings**
- 11. Roles and responsibilities**
- 12. Policies and procedures**
- 13. Data Quality i) Crime Registrar internal audits, ii) HMICS audits including Dec '13 report, iii) quality assurance work with Police Scotland, iv) Technical Report and v) Any potential bias and error in recording process**
- 14. Comparability**
- 15. Accessibility of data**
- 16. Recorded Crime statistics and statistics based on other data returns from Police Scotland**
- 17. Potential future considerations i) individual level data return and ii) frequency of releases**

**June 2014  
Justice Analytical Services  
Scottish Government**

