

# **User Guide to Recorded Crime Statistics in Scotland**

**Justice Analytical Services  
June 2016**

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## 1. Introduction

This user guide provides detailed information on the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* statistical bulletin series, published by the Scottish Government, and the data that are contained in the bulletin. It is designed to be a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the updates, issues, and classifications which are crucial to the production and presentation of crime statistics in Scotland.

The Scottish Government publishes figures on the levels and trends of crime in Scotland primarily based on two sets of crime statistics: the police recorded crime data and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS). Each source has different strengths and limitations but together they provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone. Further information on the SCJS can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey>

The statistical return from which most of the figures in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin are taken is a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland. Only data from the Police Service of Scotland, hereafter referred to as Police Scotland throughout this user guide, are included in the main findings and tables included in the bulletin. One return is made for each local authority in Scotland and these are aggregated to give a national total. Additionally, data on the total number of crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the [British Transport Police](#) and the [Ministry of Defence Police](#) in Scotland are included in the Annex of each bulletin.

In addition to the annual *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin, a number of companion bulletins based on police recorded crime data are published by the Scottish Government on domestic abuse, homicide, racist incidents and crimes and offences involving firearms. Furthermore, bulletins on drug seizures and police officer numbers are published by the Scottish Government on data collected from Police Scotland. Together these statistics are used to inform [National Outcome 9](#) – ‘we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger’ as well as [The Strategy for Justice in Scotland](#). These statistics are also used by a wide range of stakeholders to monitor trends, for policy research and development, and for research purposes.

In July 2014 the UK Statistics Authority published an [assessment](#) of statistics on *Recorded Crime in Scotland*. Having assessed the statistics based on police recorded crime data against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, the Authority concluded that they could not at present confer the designation of National Statistics on *Recorded Crime in Scotland*.

Scottish Government statistical bulletins based on police recorded crime data can be accessed from the publications area of the Crime and Justice Statistics section of the Scottish Government website at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Publications>

The User Guide to Recorded Crime Statistics in Scotland is part of a suite of documents, alongside the [Framework of Assurance](#) and the [Recorded Crime: Comparability of Police Scotland and Legacy Force Data](#) report, intended to support and inform users about police recorded crime statistics in Scotland.

For further information about *Recorded Crime in Scotland*, please email [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot).

Crime statistics for England and Wales and Northern Ireland are collected and published separately. The latest police recorded crime data for England and Wales and Northern Ireland can be accessed here:

- England and Wales:  
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/index.html>;
- Northern Ireland:  
[http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates\\_statistics.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics.htm).

## 2. Police reform

The [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#) changed the policing landscape in Scotland, replacing the previous eight police forces, the Scottish Police Services Authority and the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency. Police Scotland is now responsible for operational policing in Scotland and will be held to account by the Scottish Police Authority.

### 2.1 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 in Scotland](#) 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, comprised of police officers and staff supported by Scottish Government officials, prepared a [report on the options](#).

### 2.2 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 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 the details of its passage through Parliament are available on the [Scottish Parliament website](#). On 21 February 2012, the Justice Secretary announced that Police Scotland would become operational on 1 April 2013. More detail on the legislation behind the reform and consultations undertaken can be accessed here:

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

## **2.3 Police Scotland**

Police Scotland was formally established on 1 April 2013 and is responsible for policing across Scotland. Police Scotland is led by a Chief Constable and comprises police officers, police staff and special constables. The Chief Constable is supported by a command team of three Deputy Chief Constables, eight Assistant Chief Constables and three Directors.

Within Police Scotland there are thirteen local policing divisions<sup>1</sup>, each headed by a Local Police Commander. Alongside the local policing divisions, there are a number of national specialist divisions. Police Scotland's priorities are outlined in their [Annual Police Plan](#).

Police Scotland took over responsibility for policing in Scotland from the eight former police forces, the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. Further information on Police Scotland can be found on their website: <http://www.scotland.police.uk/>.

## **2.4 Scottish Police Authority**

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) was established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to maintain policing, promote policing principles and continuous improvement of policing. The SPA Board was appointed in October 2012. It holds the Chief Constable to account for the policing of Scotland, and the Chief Executive of the SPA to account for its role as employer of staff and the delivery of services to the board and policing.

The SPA Board has delegated responsibility to the Scottish Police Authority Chief Executive to provide support and advice to the board on strategic decisions regarding finance, human resource and any other area required. The Chief Executive also oversees the management of Forensic Services in Scotland to support Police Scotland to carry out operational policing. Further information on the Scottish Police Authority can be found on their website: <http://www.spa.police.uk/>.

## **2.5 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) provides independent scrutiny of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. HMICS has wide ranging powers to look into the "state, effectiveness and efficiency" of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority, including Forensic Services. Their approach is to support Police Scotland and the SPA to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.

HMICS also have a statutory duty to ensure that the Chief Constable of Police Scotland and the SPA meet their obligations in terms of best value and continuous improvement. HMICS also have an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

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<sup>1</sup> There were previously fourteen local divisions, with Aberdeen Division merging with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division to form the current North East Division as of 1 January 2016.

HMICS are empowered to do anything they consider necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with, the carrying out of their functions. The SPA and the Chief Constable must provide HMICS with such assistance and co-operation as they may require to carry out their functions and must comply with any reasonable request that they make. When HMICS publish a report, the SPA and the Chief Constable must also consider what HMICS have found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit. Where HMICS make recommendations, they will follow them up and report publicly on progress. Further information on HMICS can be found on their website: <http://www.hmics.org/>.

### **3. Roles of organisations**

This section provides information about the roles and responsibilities of the organisations involved in the publication and production of crime statistics in Scotland. The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and its associated secondary legislation and guidance set out the legislative framework for the new policing landscape and replaced previous legislation.

Chapter 12 of the Act provides information related to co-operation and the exchange of information across Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority:

#### **Co-operation between Scottish Police Authority and Police Service**

- The Authority and the chief constable may make arrangements under which:
  - the Authority is to provide assistance to the Police Service; or
  - the Police Service is to provide assistance to the Authority.
- Such assistance may involve:
  - members of the Authority’s staff providing services for the Police Service; or
  - constables or police staff providing services for the Authority.

#### **Police information**

- The Authority must provide the Scottish Ministers with such reports, statistics or other information relating to the Authority or the Police Service as they may reasonably require.
- Such information may, in particular, relate to:
  - the Authority or its functions,
  - the Police Service or police functions,
  - the state of crime.
- The chief constable must provide the Authority with such reports, statistics or other information relating to the Police Service, police functions or the state of crime as it may reasonably require.

The full Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 can be accessed here:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/8/contents>

#### **3.1 Police Scotland**

Police Scotland collect management information for operational policing purposes. This administrative data source is also used to provide a data return on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police, as well as the number cleared up, in a given financial year to the Scottish Government.

Police Scotland statistics are managed, collated and analysed by the Police Scotland Analysis and Performance Unit. Independent scrutiny of Police Scotland's performance is also undertaken by the SPA who examine statistical information at regular board meetings.

### **3.1.1 Crime Registrars**

The Crime Registrars within Police Scotland ensure that crimes in Scotland are recorded ethically. They also undertake internal audits of the crimes which are recorded. Three regional Crime Registrars are managed by the National Crime Registrar. As well as having regional responsibilities, these three registrars each lead on a specific aspect of crime recording: training; audit; and maintaining the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and the Scottish Government Counting Rules.

### **3.2 Scottish Police Authority**

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) is responsible for:

- policing principles set out in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012;
- delivering continuous improvement in policing; and
- holding the Chief Constable of Police Scotland to account.

The SPA use their performance framework to carry out their monitoring function of policing. The framework consists of:

- a self-assessment module for SPA to assess their own performance;
- a set of corporate support indicators; and
- Performance on a Page (PoP), a set of 20 high level strategic indicators.

Although the PoP is wider than recorded crime data, most of the information contained within it comes from Police Scotland. Further information on the SPA performance framework can be accessed here:

<http://www.spa.police.uk/performancepages/spaperformanceframework/>

### **3.3 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland**

Although Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) is not involved in the publication and production of crime statistics, HMICS does conduct regular audits of crime recording to ensure that crimes are recorded by the police in accordance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and the Scottish Government Counting Rules.

### **3.4 Scottish Government**

The Scottish Government collects data on police recorded crime from Police Scotland derived from administrative systems which it then publishes as official statistics. The primary aim of official statistics in Scotland is to provide an accurate up-to-date comprehensive and meaningful picture of the volume of crime with which the police in Scotland are faced, to support the formulation and monitoring of social policies by government and others.

The Scottish Government supports delivery of policies that are focused on the key national outcomes of:

- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient & responsive to people's needs

The evidence shapes, informs and measures progress towards the vision set out in [The Strategy for Justice in Scotland](#):

- A justice system that contributes positively to a flourishing Scotland, helping to create an inclusive and respectful society in which all people and communities live in safety and security, where individual and collective rights are supported, and where disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly.

### **3.4.1 ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee**

Statisticians in the Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services division are members of the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee. The remit of the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee is:

- Through liaison between users and providers of statistics on crime and justice: to identify the key strategic statistical information required by all interested parties; and to develop and implement a strategy for prioritising and meeting these needs while minimising the burden on data suppliers and maintaining data quality fit for purpose.

Further information on the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/crimereMIT>

## **4. Statistics from Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government**

Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and the Scottish Government all publish police recorded crime data in different ways to meet each organisation's requirements.

### **4.1 Police Scotland**

Police Scotland publishes management information on an annual and quarterly basis, by local authority and by police division, as well as at a national level.

These reports are produced to demonstrate Police Scotland's commitment to transparency (alongside other regular reporting activity to the Scottish Police Authority). The information within these reports is presented on a cumulative quarterly basis, with the first quarter of a reporting year containing 3 months of data (from April to June), the second containing 6 months of data (from April to September), etc. The reports are typically published within 2 months of the period to which they refer.

The Quarterly Management Information Reports make clear to users that the data they contain on recorded crime is based on the Administrative Data available to Police Scotland at that time and not the Official Statistics. The annual Official Statistics published by the Scottish Government on police recorded crime are based on the same Administrative Data which has undergone further quality assurance work, including additional dialogue with Police Scotland, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Police Scotland also provides regular reports to the scrutiny boards of Scotland's 32 local authorities as well as management information updates to the Scottish Police Authority which are discussed at the full public board meetings.

Police Scotland publishes all of these reports on the 'Our Performance' section of the Police Scotland website. The reports can be accessed here:  
<http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/our-performance/>.

### **4.2 Scottish Police Authority – building the evidence base of policing**

The Strategic Performance Framework of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) is underpinned by the four Strategic Policing Priorities set out by Scottish Ministers and the seven SPA Strategic Objectives within the SPA's Strategic Police Plan which was published in March 2013. The Strategic Police Plan, which is due to be reviewed during 2016, supports reporting against the Priorities and the underlying Strategic Objectives.

The SPA's Strategic Performance Framework gathers evidence from operational policing performance from Police Scotland, SPA Forensic Services and corporate performance activity, as well as relevant external evidence sources, for example academic and government publications, to provide additional and wider information to supplement the existing evidence picture. This provides a quarterly appraisal of both Police Scotland and SPA performance, published within the SPA Strategic Police Plan Delivery Review.

Conducting a regular evidence review reflects a similar approach to that taken by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), Scot Cen and What Works Scotland in their 4-year evaluation of Police and Fire Reform, commissioned by the Scottish Government. The aim of the SPA Evidence Review is to present a current assessment of policing performance, reflecting on the efficacy of the partnership between the SPA and Police Scotland, to continuously improve policing and deliver the overall benefits of police reform.

An Assessment Matrix has been used to evaluate the evidence collected by Police Scotland and the SPA. The Matrix has been developed from assessment criteria previously used in the SPA's Annual Review of Policing, a statutory document delivered every year and laid before Parliament. Evidence from Quarters One, Two, Three and Four inform production of the Annual Review of Policing.

Further information on the SPA Performance Framework and the Strategic Plan can be accessed here:

<http://www.spa.police.uk/performancepages/spaperformanceframework/>.

#### **4.2.1 Reporting against Police Scotland key performance measures**

Police Scotland publishes a quarterly performance report on the delivery of key objectives and performance measures contained within the Annual Police Plan. This report, and the data and evidence used to produce it, is analysed and assured by the SPA.

Further information on the full public board meetings of the SPA, including the papers, can be accessed here: <http://www.spa.police.uk/meetings-events/board-meetings/>.

#### **4.3 Scottish Government**

The Scottish Government publishes police recorded crime statistics on an annual basis in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series. The statistical return from which most of the figures in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin are taken is a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland. From 2013-14 onwards, only data from Police Scotland are included in the main findings and tables included in the bulletin. Prior to police reform the bulletin only contained data from the eight legacy police forces in the main findings and tables. Returns are submitted by the police at local authority level which allows a national total to be obtained. This was the case both prior to and post police reform.

Additional information on the data included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin, as well as on how and what the data can be used for, can be found in the Recorded Crime in Scotland Data Sources and Suitability document. The document can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/DataSource/RecordedCrimeSandS>.

The *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/>.

## 5. UK Statistics Authority assessment

The [UK Statistics Authority](#) (UKSA) undertook an assessment of *Recorded Crime in Scotland* statistics in 2014 and published its assessment report on 31 July 2014. The report states that the UKSA “cannot at present confer National Statistics status on these statistics”, whilst also recognising that the UKSA “have been impressed with features of the institutional framework in Scotland”, and noting that “Police Scotland is surrounded by a strong framework of inspection and regulation, including a National Crime Registrar, the Scottish Police Authority, and HMICS”.

The UKSA assessment report points to improvements statistics producers can make, and the Scottish Government are actioning these requirements for police recorded crime. The full assessment report can be accessed here:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-288---statistics-on-recorded-crime-in-scotland.pdf>.

### 5.1 Scottish Government plans

The Scottish Government pursues a range of actions, in consultation with users and stakeholders, with the overarching aim of improving the information being provided to users, to aid their understanding and interpretation of the statistics, including the strengths and limitations of the statistics, and how they can use the statistics. This includes providing more details on the quality assurance processes as well as the quality of the data, and an account of the results of audits by HMICS, to demonstrate how it assures itself of the quality of recorded crime statistics. Information assessing any risk and potential sources of error associated with the use of the underlying administrative data source has also been provided. The Scottish Government has undertaken the following:

- **Improved commentary and presentation of information in the statistical bulletin**
  - Improving commentary on the statistics by providing more context, where possible, to allow users to better understand the data.
  - More charts to illustrate trends within crime and offence groups, and improvements to existing charts to make them clearer and easier to understand.
  - Tables have been kept to a high level of geography and crime groups; however more time series data at local authority level is accessible online via Excel tables.
- **The publication of a Technical Report – Recorded Crime: Comparability of Police Scotland and Legacy Force Data**

The aim of the quality assurance exercise discussed in the [Recorded Crime: Comparability of Police Scotland and Legacy Force Data](#) report was to:

- investigate the comparability of Police Scotland data and legacy force data; and
- check the quality of recorded crime data supplied by the police.

- **The establishment of a Scottish Crime Recording Board**

The purpose of the Scottish Crime Recording Board is to support the production of accurate and objective statistics on crime in Scotland, and will ensure that crime data is comprehensive, consistent, transparent and trustworthy.

Further information on the remit and functions of the Board, its actions and its relationship to other forums can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/SCRB>.

- **The development of a Framework of Assurance**

The purpose of the [Framework of Assurance](#) can be summed up as the provision of evidence to inform judgements by the Scottish Government, as the statistics producers, and by users on:

- the suitability of the administrative data for use in producing official statistics;
- the factors that the Scottish Government needs to take into account in producing the official statistics; and
- the information that users need to know in order to make informed use of the statistics.

The aforementioned Scottish Crime Recording Board is responsible for approving any future changes to the Framework of Assurance.

- **The production of a User Guide**

As stated in the [Introduction](#), this user guide was prepared to provide detailed information on the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* statistical bulletin, published by the Scottish Government, and the data that are contained in the bulletin. It is designed to be a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the updates, issues, and classifications which are crucial to the production and presentation of crime statistics in Scotland. An updated version of this User Guide was prepared following the publication of the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2014-15* Official Statistics, and published in March 2016.

- **The preparation of a Scottish Crime and Justice Survey and Recorded Crime in Scotland analytical paper**

The purpose of this [analytical paper](#) is to bring together the two main sources of crime statistics in Scotland: the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) and *Recorded Crime in Scotland*. The paper emphasises the need for two sources of crime statistics, highlighting the relative strengths and weaknesses of each source that make them more appropriate in different contexts and for different purposes. Differences between the two data sources create challenges in making direct comparisons, particularly when assessing trends over time. Therefore, comparisons can only be made using the broadly comparable subset of crimes. The report contains analysis that compares

police recorded crime statistics to the results of the SCJS. This analysis is useful in assessing the scale of the difference between the volume of crime that is recorded by the police and the level of crime that is estimated to be experienced by the adult population in Scottish households.

This analysis will be updated within *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014-15: Main Findings*, which will be published on 15 March 2016.

- **The inclusion of a chapter on the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin**

The chapter brings together police recorded crime and the SCJS to present a clearer picture of crime in Scotland, providing comprehensive data to inform and support users of the statistics. It presents a summary of both sources, outlines high-level trends, both overall and by crime group, presents some of the challenges in making comparisons, and details how the Scottish Government recommends that comparisons should be made using a comparable subset of crime.

- **Improved engagement with a wider range of users**

The Scottish Government is committed to user engagement and the establishment of a broad evidence base to inform future publications. A substantial consultation exercise was undertaken in 2015. The focus of this consultation was on the suite of publications based on police data, which includes the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series.

A variety of consultation methods were used to capture the views of users. The approach had been designed to improve engagement with a wider range of users. One-to-one interviews, discussion groups and written surveys were used to target known users (both expert and non-expert), while online survey and social media aspects were openly advertised through mailing lists and Twitter.

The results of this consultation can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/StakeCon/RCUC2015>

This consultation builds on previous and on-going engagement around crime statistics, including:

- a user event held in October 2014:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime>
- a survey-based consultation on the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* publication – the results are available here:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/StakeCon/RCUC2014>
- survey-based consultation activities on the SCJS:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey/consultation>

## 6. Scottish Crime Recording Standard and the Scottish Government Counting Rules

On 1 April 2004, the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard \(SCRS\)](#) was introduced throughout Scotland. The SCRS was produced by the Scottish Crime Registrar's Group and agreed by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), following research that identified the need to develop a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording. This followed on from the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), which was introduced in England and Wales in April 2002.

Any reference to 'crime' in the SCRS, and in this section, also refers to offences under statute. Crimes and offences are grouped under recognised categories for statistical purposes as defined by the Scottish Government. For further information on the classification of crimes and offences, please see the section on [Classification of Crimes and Offences](#).

The aim of the SCRS is:

- to provide a more victim oriented approach, and ensure uniformity in crime recording practices throughout Scotland.

The following principles apply:

- All reports of incidents, whether crime related or not, will result in the creation of an incident report which is auditable;
- Following initial registration, an incident will be recorded as a crime in all cases if:
  - the circumstances amount to a crime defined by Scots Law or an offence under statute, determined by Police Scotland based on their knowledge of the law and counting rules; and
  - there is no credible evidence to the contrary;
- Once recorded, a crime will remain recorded unless there is credible evidence to disprove that a crime had occurred. For further information on this please see the section on [No Criming](#).

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the SCRS lies with the Chief Constable of Police Scotland, overseen by the Crime Registrars through their audit programme and discharged by Crime Managers on a daily basis. All crime records are subject to the rules set out in the SCRS which are under constant review. Updates to the Counting Rules will normally be effective from 1 April each year.

All crimes must be recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and within a period of 72 hours from the time the incident is first notified. In most cases, this will result in details of the reported crime being submitted to the crime system prior to termination of duty. If no crime is recorded within 72 hours, the reason for the delay must be fully explained and justified within the incident log. In exceptional circumstances, a maximum of 7 days is permitted to take into account situations outwith Police Scotland control.

The SCRS is published on the Scottish Government website and can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/SCRB/SCRSmanual>.

The crimes and offences data included in the following statistical bulletins published by the Scottish Government are recorded according to the SCRS:

- [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Homicide in Scotland](#)
- [Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland](#)

## **6.1 Recording a crime**

An incident will be recorded as a crime if,

- the circumstances amount to a crime defined by Scots Law or an offence under statute; and
- there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

Where children under 8 are reported as having been involved in criminal behaviour, prior to recording a crime record, the police officer involved must determine whether a crime in fact has been committed, or whether it was accidental/unintentional.

The degree to which Police Scotland investigate an initial report from a victim, or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim, to establish whether a crime has occurred or not, will vary with the circumstances of the report. Such investigation may range from questioning over the telephone when the initial report is made, to fuller investigation of the circumstances surrounding the allegation. However, it is envisaged that such further investigations to facilitate the crime recording decision would be the exception, not the norm.

Where officers can identify the persons involved from an image and, on the balance of probabilities, the officer believes that a crime has occurred, an investigation should be considered. If enquiry establishes that a crime has occurred, a crime record should be raised.

Where a crime type has been amended on a crime record, particularly if a crime is being upgraded or downgraded, the rationale must be noted on the crime record to justify the decision made, thereby providing an audit trail.

Where there is uncertainty, the Crime Registrar will determine whether a crime should be recorded and/or the appropriate crime classification.

## **6.2 Circumstances where a crime may not be recorded**

### **6.2.1 Where no crime has occurred**

If an apparent crime related incident proves not to involve criminality, the incident record disposal will clearly depict the circumstances dispelling criminality. If, following the creation of a crime report, subsequent investigation proves that no crime occurred, the crime report will be marked accordingly. A full description of steps taken and the reason behind the change in status will be detailed in the crime report.

Exceptions to this are:

- where duplicate or multiple crime or incident records have been raised, cross-referencing to the master record is necessary;
- when investigation has established that the crime occurred outside Police Scotland's jurisdiction.

### **6.2.2 Recording on other systems (including conditional offers, self-generated reports, etc.)**

The exceptions to the Principles are where standing agreement with the [Procurator Fiscal](#) or the [Children's Reporter](#) exists precluding the requirement to raise a crime record; for example, Conditional Offers or Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to moving Road Traffic Offences, where these are not always recorded on a crime recording system, although are recorded on an auditable system for statistical purposes.

All incidents coming to the attention of the police will be registered by the creation of a report, which is auditable. This practice ensures that Police Scotland has all available information to hand when determining possible crimes, and will allow an audit trail to be created for future audit and inspection purposes. Where a report is recorded as a crime initially and does not require immediate police response (e.g. self-generated reports), it is not always necessary for an incident record to be created. However, where the report is not initially recorded as a crime, an auditable incident record should be registered (whether on the Incident System or some other accessible and auditable means).

Self-generated reports are reports generated by Police Scotland themselves and are identified through Police Scotland undertaking proactive policing measures, but can also be brought to the attention of Police Scotland by members of the public. In such circumstances the complainer is likely to be recorded as 'Procurator Fiscal'.

### **6.2.3 Unable to confirm details of initial report**

Where a complainer reports an incident which initially indicates a crime may have occurred, and where reasonable enquiry has been made to contact the complainer in order to obtain the details of the alleged crime but without success, no crime report need be created. However, the incident must be endorsed with a record of the attempts made.

Where a complainer reports an incident which initially indicates a crime may have occurred and where sufficient detail has been recorded on the incident, a crime

report must be raised, even though the police have been unable to contact the complainer to obtain further information.

#### **6.2.4 No victim, witness etc. traced**

Where there are grounds to suspect that a crime may have taken place but no victim (or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim) can immediately be found or identified, the matter should be recorded as an incident until such time as confirmation of a crime can be ascertained. Where a crime record is not being raised, the auditable incident record must be fully updated to explain the circumstances.

#### **6.2.5 Public order incident**

In the case of a public order incident where, on the arrival of the police, there is no continuing disorder and no specific intended victim, the incident will not be routinely recorded as a crime. Reasonable enquiries should be undertaken to identify specific victims and secure any supporting evidence that would enable further police action in terms of arrest or summons. Where enquiries fail to identify any victim or produce supporting evidence, the incident will remain recorded as an incident only. Where police arrive at a scene and witness disorder, they will deal with the matter appropriately, and where crime is apparent, record the crime(s) as required. Where there is no specific intended victim, and where an officer warns an offender to stop the unlawful behaviour and the offender heeds the warning, and no further action is taken, no crime report is required.

#### **6.2.6 Visual recording systems (e.g. CCTV)**

It is not the intention of the SCRS to record as crimes all incidents that could be construed as crimes when viewed remotely. Incident reports from visual recording systems should be treated as reports by a third party coming to the attention of the police. For example, where, as a result of events, police officers attend the scene of a disturbance but all parties have left, this should be recorded as an incident only rather than as a recorded crime.

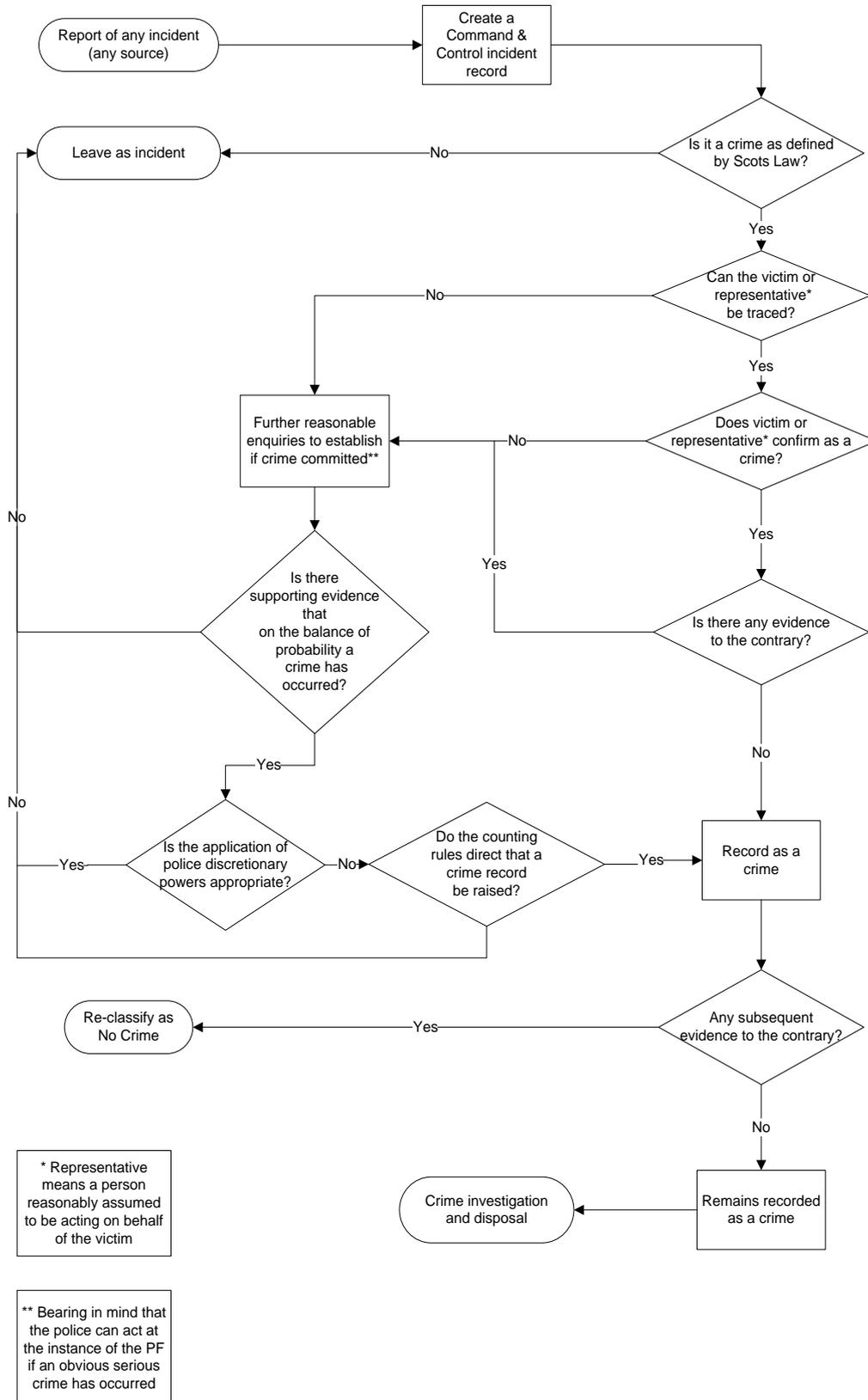
#### **6.2.7 Anonymous reports**

Anonymous reports of crime must be supported by corroborative evidence prior to the creation of a crime record. Where a victim's details are withheld from the police, the circumstances reported will normally be recorded as an incident only until such times as victim details are made known.

### 6.3 Crime recording flowchart

Figure 6.1 shows the decision-making process that Police Scotland undertakes from when an incident is first reported until its final classification, be that remain as an incident, be classified as a crime or an offence, or be no crimed.

Figure 6.1: Crime recording flowchart



## 6.4 Scottish Government Counting Rules

The Scottish Government advise Police Scotland how crimes and offences should be recorded for statistical purposes, otherwise known as the Scottish Government Counting Rules. The Counting Rules provide a national standard for the recording and counting of crimes and offences recorded by Police Scotland, known as 'recorded crime'.

During an HMICS Inspection on SCRS in 2007, a recommendation was made that the Counting Rules should be reviewed. As part of this review, following consultation with Crime Registrars, the Scottish Government advised that as of 1 April 2008 the Counting Rules should be more in line with the SCRS, i.e. more victim focused.

In line with the 'more victim focused' approach to crime recording, from 1 April 2008 changes were made to a number of areas in relation to the counting rules, and this should be borne in mind when comparing/reviewing crime records and statistics prior to this date. For further information on the Counting rules and how they should be applied please see [Section L of the SCRS](#).

## 6.5 England and Wales – National Crime Recording Standard and Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime

In England and Wales, the recording of crime statistics are based on the [National Crime Recording Standard \(NCRS\)](#) and [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(HOCR\)](#). The NCRS was introduced nationally in England and Wales on 1 April 2002 with the aim of promoting greater consistency between police forces in the recording of crime and to take a more victim oriented approach to crime recording.

Like the SCRS, its Scottish counterpart, the NCRS aims to give consistency in crime recording. The main principles of the NCRS for England and Wales are similar to the SCRS with regard to when a crime should be recorded. However there are various differences between the respective Counting Rules, in that they specify different approaches for counting the number of crimes that should be recorded as a result of a single incident. Crimes recorded in England and Wales tend to be incident based with the Principle Crime Rule of the HOCR stating:

- If the sequence of crimes in an incident, or a complex crime, contains more than one type of crime, then count the most serious crime.

This is in contrast to the SCRS and Scottish Government Counting Rules, under which each of the individual crimes or offences would be separately recorded in most cases. For example, an incident where an intruder breaks into a home and assaults the sole occupant would be recorded as two crimes in Scotland, while in England and Wales it would be recorded as one crime.

There are rules relating to subsuming crimes in Scotland, but these relate mainly to crimes of dishonesty and damage to property, where all crimes occur at the same time, at the same locus and to the same victim. For example, when a house is broken into, property stolen and other property within the house damaged. For further information on the subsuming of crimes in Scotland please see [Section D of the SCRS](#).

In addition, there is the Finished Incident Rule in the HOCR which does not apply in Scotland. The Finished Incident Rule states:

- An incident comprising a sequence of crimes between the same offender (or group of offenders) and the same victim should be counted as one crime if reported to the police all at once.

In Scotland, similar rules exist for the recording of historical crime, such as sexual crimes or violent crime, where a number of crimes are made known to Police Scotland at the same time. However in Scotland, where individual dates and times are known or where a different locus is identified, separate crimes will be recorded.

All crimes are recorded by the police in England and Wales, but they are split into two categories: notifiable and non-notifiable crimes, with the HOCR applying to notifiable crimes. Only those crimes that are notifiable are submitted to the Home Office in statistical returns and then in turn published by ONS in their quarterly Statistical bulletin *Crime in England and Wales*.

Notifiable crimes include all crimes that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious crimes, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely-related summary offences dealt with by magistrates, such as assault without injury.

Non-notifiable crimes are crimes dealt with exclusively by a magistrates' court or by the police issuing a Penalty Notice for Disorder or a Fixed Penalty Notice. Along with non-notifiable offences dealt with by the police (such as speeding), these include many offences that may be dealt with by other agencies, for example, prosecutions by TV Licensing or vehicle registration offences by the DVLA.

All crimes and offences recorded by Police Scotland are submitted to the Scottish Government in their statistical return and published in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin. It should be noted that in Scotland crimes and offences are grouped under recognised categories for statistical purposes as defined by the Scottish Government, whereas no such distinction is made in England and Wales.

## 7. No criming

Some crimes recorded by the police are subsequently 'no crimed', where it is determined by the police that no crime actually took place. The Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) sets out circumstances under which a crime report may be 'no crimed'.

A crime, once recorded, should be classified as a 'No Crime' if one of the following criteria is satisfied:

- Following the report of an incident and a crime recorded, additional credible information becomes available which determines that no crime has been committed.
- The crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of Police Scotland.
- The crime was committed in another Police Scotland division and has been transferred to that division for recording.
- A procedural error has been made for a non-victim based crime/offence, e.g. [Section 1](#) warning not given for Road Traffic Offence, mistake made on an Anti-Social Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notice (ASBFPN) or a Crown Office Fixed Penalty Notice (COFPN).

The term 'No Crime' relates to crimes already recorded, and is therefore distinct from incident reports that are not crimed (i.e. not recorded as crimes in the first place). It should be noted that 'No Crime' is a final disposal and should not be applied as an interim measure to any recorded crime. The 'No Crime' rule can be applied to crimes/offences recorded at any time during the financial year and may include crimes/offences reported in previous financial years. The Crime Registrar is the final arbiter for all 'No Crimes'. The reason for the 'No Crime' must be explained in detail in the crime/incident report along with the details of the requesting and authorising officer. For further information please see [Section E of the SCRS](#).

Crime reports that are 'no crimed' are removed from police crime data and thus from the police recorded crime statistics. The majority of 'no crime' decisions are made by the police before data are submitted to the Scottish Government.

Great care is needed in interpreting 'no crime' data. The proportion of 'no crimes' does not in itself infer high or low compliance with the overall requirements of the SCRS. Levels of 'no criming' are particularly susceptible to local recording practice and the IT systems in use. A Police Scotland division having a high level of 'no crimes' may be indicative of that division having a local recording process that captures all reports as crimes at the first point of contact and before any further investigation has taken place to consider the full facts. Equally a division with a low level of 'no crimes' might be indicative of a recording practice by which reports are retained as incidents only until a fuller investigation has taken place.

In 2014, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) in their audit of crime and incident recording examined Police Scotland's 'no crime' processes to determine if decisions to 'no crime' were made correctly. In HMICS's audit, which looked at almost 1,000 'no crime' decisions, they found that nationally

the 'no crime' compliance rate was 94%. The range for correct 'no crime' decisions was between 83% and 100% across all divisions of Police Scotland. It should be noted that non-compliance in the audit does not necessarily infer an incorrect 'no crime' decision. It will also include cases where there was insufficient information in the crime/incident report for HMICS to make an informed judgement.

## 8. Crime Registrars – structure and meetings

The Crime Registrars within Police Scotland ensure that crimes in Scotland are recorded ethically. They also undertake internal audits of the crimes which are recorded.

### 8.1 Structure

A new crime registrar structure was put in place following the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013. The overall responsibility for compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) lies with the Chief Constable of Police Scotland. Crime recording is led on a day-to-day basis by the National Crime Registrar. There are three regional Crime Registrars (north, east and west), who are managed by the National Crime Registrar. As well as having regional responsibilities, these three registrars each lead on a specific aspect of crime recording: training; audit; and maintaining the Counting Rules.

Crime recording sits within the risk and business assurance section of the corporate services business area within Police Scotland, which is within the portfolio of the Deputy Chief Constable (Designate), led by the Director of Corporate Services. This removes the Crime Registrars from direct police operational activity and investigation, and ensures they are separated from operational decision making and performance issues.

Day-to-day crime recording decisions are made by Crime Managers who lead crime management units. There are thirteen such units in Police Scotland, one in each division<sup>2</sup>. The crime management units are responsible for crime recording practice in their respective divisions. Their core function is ensuring SCRS compliance. The overall crime registrar structure within Police Scotland is shown in [Figure 8.1](#).

The Review of Incident and Crime Recording by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), published in December 2013, gave the following recommendation:

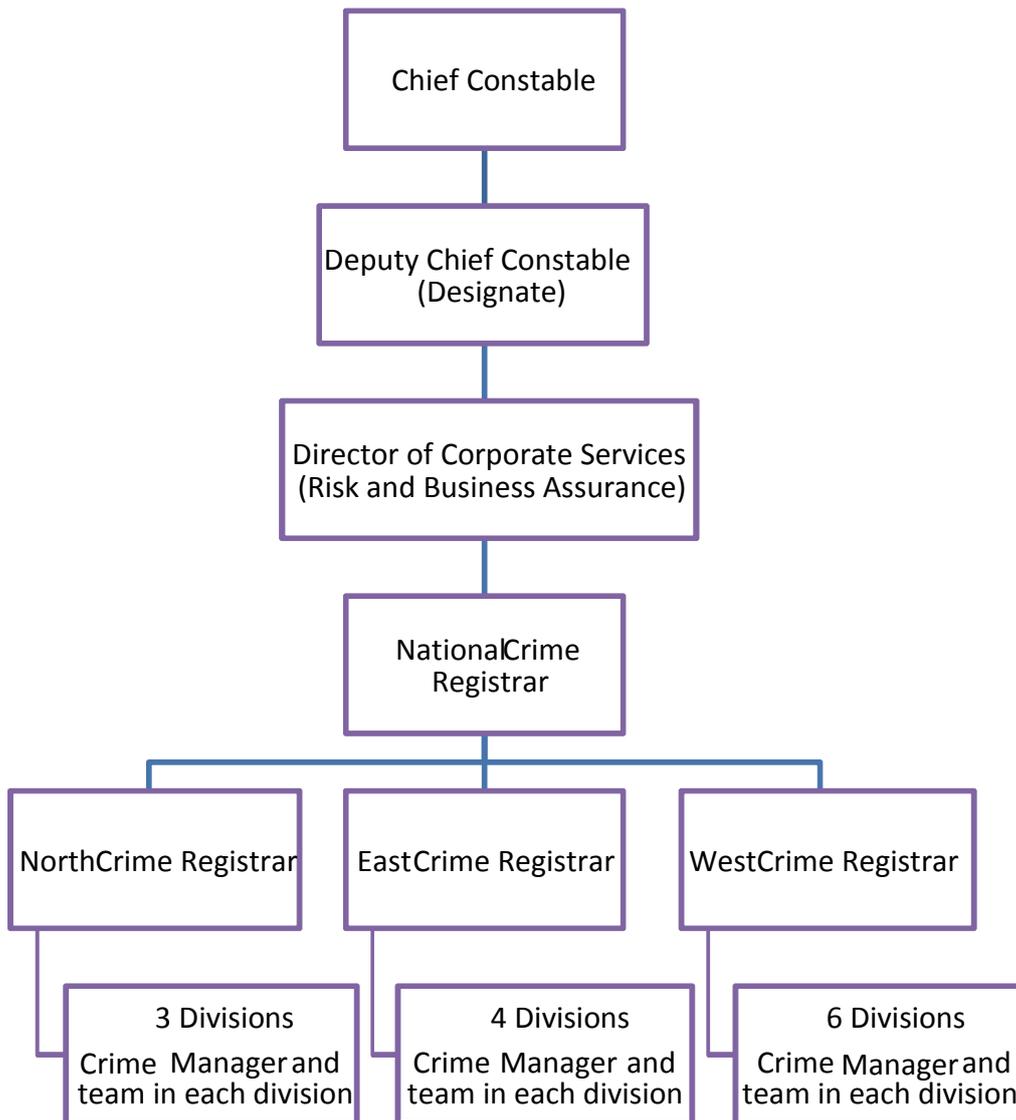
- Police Scotland should review the new crime registrar structure and governance arrangements for crime recording one year after their implementation. The review should include consideration of whether sufficient resources are available for auditing incident and crime records, and whether the dual roles held by some crime managers raise a possible conflict of interest with ethical crime recording in contravention of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard

The crime registrar role is under regular scrutiny and a number of improvement actions have already been progressed.

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<sup>2</sup> There were previously fourteen local divisions, with Aberdeen Division merging with Aberdeenshire and Moray Division to form the current North East Division as of 1 January 2016.

Figure 8.1: Crime registrars structure



## 8.2 The Scottish Crime Recording Board

The Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) has been set up to support the production of accurate and objective statistics on crime in Scotland, and meets several times a year. The Board ensures that crime data is comprehensive, consistent, transparent and trustworthy. It takes into account the needs of both users and providers in the production of crime statistics and ensures that this process is undertaken in a manner consistent with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The SCRB is chaired by the Justice Analytical Services division of the Scottish Government and a wide range of organisations are represented including Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority, HMICS and the Crown and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

One of the functions of the SCRB is the ownership of the Framework of Assurance for crime and offence data, ensuring it transparently reflects quality assurance procedures, and to use the Framework of Assurance to oversee and promote continuous improvement in quality assurance processes.

Another of the SCRB's functions is to oversee the maintenance and development of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules (SCRS), and to approve all changes to them.

Further information on the Scottish Crime Recording Board's remit, including details on the SCRB's purpose, objectives and functions, its working principles and membership, can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/SCRB>.

The actions agreed at meetings of the SCRB are published, together with the outcomes achieved from those actions, and can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/SCRB/SCRBmeet>

The SCRB replaced the previous Scottish Crime Registrars' Group, which met quarterly and was established to support consistency in implementing the SCRS and associated Counting Rules. The SCRB built upon and widened the remit and membership of the Scottish Crime Registrars' Group, following recommendations from HMICS in its 2013 Review of Incident and Crime Recording.

## 9. Data quality

Within the Scottish Government, the Justice Analytical Services (JAS) division 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 recorded crime data.

Police Scotland submits recorded crime data to the Scottish Government in actual quarters, and not on a cumulative quarterly basis. This allows Police Scotland to submit revised quarters throughout the financial year. The data are extracted and submitted in a format that can be uploaded into our SAS systems, reducing the likelihood of human error when preparing data.

A number of detailed quality assurance checks are carried out by JAS. This includes: the checking of data across the four quarters of the financial year period to ensure data consistency both as the year progresses and against the previous year's quarterly data; checking data across local authority areas to ensure consistency and confirming local differences; and comparing figures year on year, investigating where substantial differences appear.

Any oddities in the data are then brought to the attention of Police Scotland's Analysis and Performance Unit for clarification. Where errors are identified, corrections are made to the data, and where the data is genuine, explanations are sought to explain the oddities, such as local initiatives and operations.

Once that stage of quality assurance is completed, the data are then used to produce a set of data tables which allow a sense check of figures to take place. Once the police are happy that the final resulting data are an accurate reflection of police activity within each financial year period, they then confirm this in writing, via email. The data are then considered ready for publication.

During the quality assurance checking process, it is possible for errors to be found in data for previous years. While we do not routinely revise figures, we are committed to correcting errors in the data and providing suitable explanations for any changes made to previously published data.

Prior to the establishment of Police Scotland and their performance management system, Scottish Operational and Management Information System (ScOMIS), data were collected from the legacy police forces on a cumulative quarterly basis. This meant that any revisions made to the data after initial submission to the Scottish Government were applied cumulatively to the data as a whole. The discovery of anomalies by quarter was much less straightforward as a result, as data could only be checked across the cumulative quarters for data consistency.

Previously, data was returned by the eight legacy forces on Excel templates and some manual manipulation had to be applied to get the data ready for upload into the system. This meant that there was some opportunity for human error when preparing the data.

The Scottish Government has published a statement on administrative sources for police recorded crime data. The statement can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/AdminSourcesPolice>

## 9.1 Police Scotland audits

Within Police Scotland, internal audits are undertaken by the three Crime Registrars together with Crime Managers. Each of the thirteen Police Scotland divisions has a Crime Manager. The Crime Managers are responsible for local crime recording practices in their respective divisions.

The Crime Registrars undertake biannual audits of a proportion of crimes and incidents, including a no crime audit. Quarterly inter-divisional crime audits take place, overseen by Crime Registrars, where divisional Crime Managers independently review a selection of crime reports from a different division within Police Scotland. The purpose of these inter-divisional audits is to raise the standard of crime recording, promoting standardisation across Scotland.

From April 2015 onwards, and in line with a recommendation made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) in their 2014 Crime Audit, updates on the results of these internal audits (together with Police Scotland's actions against other recommendations) are presented to the Audit and Risk Committee of the Scottish Police Authority. Papers from the Committee's meetings are published at the link below:

<http://www.spa.police.uk/meetings-events/audit-and-risk-committee/>

Prior to the production of the 2015-16 bulletin on police recorded crime, we will ask the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) to consider what role there may be for these internal audits to support the process of producing the Official statistics and how they may provide further information to users on the quality of the data. Users will be informed of the outcome of these discussions through the published Actions and Outcomes from SCRB meetings, which can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/SCRB/SCRBmeet>

The SCRB, which is chaired by the Justice Analytical Services division of the Scottish Government, has an agreed function to consider regular reports from the National Crime Registrar on his internal audit programme of crime and offence data, and progress in meeting recommendations from HMICS and previous internal audits.

For further information on the SCRB, please see the section on the [Scottish Crime Recording Board](#).

### 9.1.1 Audit types

Police Scotland conduct three types of internal audit that test the compliance with the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard \(SCRS\)](#):

- Audit Type 1: Crime related incidents and associated recorded crime – conducted biannually by Crime Registrars;
- Audit Type 2: Recording of specific crime types (Divisional Crime Audit) – conducted quarterly by Crime Managers;
- Audit Type 3: Crime records reclassified to no crime – conducted biannually by Crime Registrars.

In order to allow each of the thirteen divisions a reasonable period of time to ensure that records are complete and compliant with the SCRS, Police Scotland internal audits are generally undertaken three months after the date of the incident/crime. Any records incomplete at the time of audit are audited based on the information available to the Crime Registrars or Crime Managers at the time.

- **Audit Type 1: Crime related incidents and associated recorded crime**

This audit type contains two separate tests. Compliance in each of the two tests is achieved by a result of 95% or above.

**Test 1 – Crime related incidents**

- That incidents, initially indicating a crime or apparent criminal activity and finally classed as a non-crime, contain a satisfactory explanation to eliminate any inference of criminality and fully justify the incident being a non-crime.
- That for each incident, it is clearly indicated on the incident report whether it was a crime or non-crime.
- Where an incident is confirmed as a crime, the corresponding crime record can be traced.

**Test 2 – Recorded crime**

- The correct application of the SCRS on recorded crimes in respect of the Scottish Government Counting Rules and the correct classification of crimes. In terms of compliance with the SCRS, each individual crime over or under-recorded, or incorrectly classified, is counted as having failed the audit.

- **Audit Type 2 – Recording of specific crime types (Divisional Crime Audit)**

To ensure that a number of different areas of crime recording are covered by Audit Type 2, samples are taken from a number of different crime types, be it a crime and offence group, or crime records marked as a particular type of crime or offence, such as those involving domestic abuse.

This type of audit tests the correct application of the SCRS on recorded crimes and offences in respect of the Scottish Government Counting Rules and the correct classification of crimes. In terms of compliance with the SCRS, each individual crime over or under-recorded, or incorrectly classified, is counted as having failed the audit.

Compliance in this audit is achieved by a result of 95% or above.

- **Audit Type 3 – Crime records reclassified to No Crime**

The SCRS states:

- Once recorded, a crime will remain recorded unless there is credible evidence to disprove that a crime had occurred.

This audit type tests the correct application of this statement in respect of recorded crimes which have been reclassified to no crime following police enquiry into the reported circumstances. In terms of compliance with SCRS, each individual crime reclassified incorrectly is counted as having failed the audit.

Compliance in this audit is achieved by a result of 95% or above.

## **9.2 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland audits**

HMICS conducts national reviews of incident and crime recording, with one of the aims being to assess compliance with crime recording standards.

### **9.2.1 HMICS Review of Incident and Crime Recording 2013**

HMICS conducted a national review of incident and crime recording between July and August 2013, shortly after the creation of Police Scotland. The timing of this review allowed HMICS the opportunity to consider emerging arrangements for the management of crime recording within a, then, newly-established national police service and to assess compliance with crime recording standards since 1 April 2013.

HMICS reviewed documents relating to crime recording and spoke with a range of people involved in the recording process. HMICS also examined 1,501 incident records relating to domestic abuse, sexual offences, assault and robbery. This review of incident and crime recording was published in December 2013.

The key findings of the review were:

- Of the 1,501 records examined by HMICS, 93% complied with the SCRS. Compliance rates varied according to crime type, ranging from 99% for domestic abuse to 89% for sexual offences.
- Responsibility for compliance with the SCRS lies with the Chief Constable and is discharged on a daily basis by Crime Registrars. At the time of this review, Police Scotland was proposing to implement new governance arrangements for crime recording and to rationalise the number of Crime Registrars in line with the new structures of Police Scotland.
- HMICS were pleased to hear that most of the officers and staff they spoke to were encouraged to record crime accurately and ethically. However, while the majority of those HMICS spoke to said they had heard strong messages from the Chief Constable and others about the importance of accurate and ethical crime recording, such messages were not always reaching frontline personnel.
- Almost everyone HMICS spoke to during their review said improved incident and crime recording systems would facilitate compliance with crime recording

standards. HMICS welcomed Police Scotland's plans to address deficiencies in existing systems by rolling out a national incident recording system and a national crime recording system by 2015.

- Awareness of the SCRS was good, although some officers and staff did not feel confident that they were correctly applying rules regarding the classification of crimes. HMICS found that a more strategic approach to initial and refresher training would promote consistency and accuracy in crime recording decisions.
- Scrutiny and audit of crime recording decisions varied slightly across Scotland. While HMICS found evidence that scrutiny and audit were mostly proportionate and risk-based, HMICS felt that there could be more emphasis on a 'right first time' approach. Police Scotland should continue to use the results of scrutiny and audit to drive improvement at all levels.
- Adherence to the SCRS across Scotland is generally good and HMICS were impressed by the knowledge and commitment of many officers and staff. HMICS identified several areas in which Police Scotland could improve its approach to crime recording and maintain the progress that has already been made since the introduction of the SCRS in 2004.

The full report of the national review of incident and crime recording can be accessed here:

<http://www.hmics.org/publications/hm-inspectorate-constabulary-scotland-review-incident-and-crime-recording-december-2013>.

### **9.2.2 HMICS Crime Audit 2014**

In autumn 2014, HMICS conducted another crime recording audit, seeking to provide greater information on which to base the assessment of the validity of crime statistics in Scotland. The aim of this audit was to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of crime recording by Police Scotland and the extent to which recording practice complies with the SCRS and Scottish Government Counting Rules.

The completion of this crime audit was welcomed following increased scrutiny of crime statistics in Scotland. In addition, in its assessment of police recorded crime statistics published by the Scottish Government, the UK Statistics Authority highlighted the importance of a comprehensive and independent audit of crime data. The aim of HMICS's Crime Audit 2014 was to test the accuracy of incident and crime recording in Scotland. This follows on from and builds upon the audit conducted between July and August 2013. The results were intended to:

- Provide the public and key stakeholders with greater information on which to base their assessment of the trustworthiness and validity of crime statistics;
- Highlight to Police Scotland areas of good practice or areas for improvement and/or increased internal audit and scrutiny;
- Assess the extent to which recommendations made in the 2013 review of incident and crime recording have been taken into account; and

- Address the need for a comprehensive, independent audit of crime data as highlighted by the UK Statistics Authority.

The full terms of reference of the crime audit can be accessed here:

<http://www.hmics.org/publications/hmics-crime-audit-2014-terms-reference>.

The result of HMICS's Crime Audit 2014, conducted between September and October 2014 on incidents recorded between 1 April 2014 and 30 June 2014, was published in November 2014. The key findings of the audit were:

- The quality of most incident and crime recording decisions by Police Scotland is good. 92% of incidents were closed correctly and 94% of crime was counted and classified correctly. There is however scope for improvement, particularly in relation to areas such as sexual offences and non-crime related incidents. Correct closure means either that:
  - the incident was closed as non-crime related and contained sufficient information to dispel any inference of criminality; or
  - the incident indicated a crime had occurred and a crime record was traced.
- A few divisions performed very well, achieving high compliance rates in all or most areas. The performance of these divisions demonstrates that compliance with the SCRS and Counting Rules can be achieved when crime recording is well-managed locally and appropriately scrutinised. Conversely, a few divisions performed poorly.
- There is scope for improvement in the recording of sexual crimes. 89% of sexual offence related incidents were closed correctly and 90% were recorded within a reasonable timescale. The referral of incidents to specialist investigation units makes it more likely that recording will be delayed.
- Violent incidents reported to the police are closed correctly in 92% of cases. 94% of resulting crimes are counted and classified correctly. There remain challenges in the classification of violent crime, particularly around serious assaults, robberies and attempted murders.
- Scrutiny of housebreaking by crime management units resulted in good recording practice. 94% of housebreaking related incidents were closed correctly and 95% of resulting crimes were counted and classified correctly.
- The recording of hate crime was excellent and achieved the highest compliance rate of 97% in the audit. However, a recurring issue with regards to the classification of some hate crime should be addressed.
- Only 87% of the non-crime related incidents examined by HMICS were closed correctly. Scrutiny of incidents reported to the police is a weakness in most divisions. Non-crime related incidents are those which were potentially crime related when created, but which were eventually closed as being non-crime related.

- There remains scope for improvement regarding timely crime recording decisions, particularly in relation to sexual crimes. In general however, HMICS felt that timeliness had improved since their previous audit. HMICS found that 97% of crimes were recorded within 72 hours of being reported to the police.
- No-criming practice is generally good but could be improved in some divisions. No-criming practice is best in those divisions where one person, or a small group of people, are tasked with authorising all no-criming decisions, allowing them to develop expertise and ensuring a consistent approach. No-crimes are incidents that were originally thought to have been a crime but were later classified as not being a crime following additional investigation.
- The quality of no-crime decisions in relation to rape is very good. These decisions are subject to significant scrutiny at divisional and national levels giving us confidence they are made correctly and consistently across Scotland.
- Previous recommendations made by HMICS regarding crime recording have been the subject of a Police Scotland action plan. There has been good progress to date and HMICS will follow up on these recommendations in more detail in a future review of crime recording. HMICS have welcomed regular dialogue with Police Scotland about crime recording practice.
- Day-to-day crime recording decisions are overseen by crime management units and consideration should be given to how best to safeguard the independence of their decision making.
- There is a good system of internal auditing of crime recording within Police Scotland. The results of the internal audits are broadly similar to our own which should provide assurance to the Scottish Police Authority, local scrutiny and engagement bodies and the Scottish Government as to their accuracy.
- There is an opportunity for greater external scrutiny of crime recording by the Scottish Police Authority and local authority scrutiny and engagement bodies. This will broaden and strengthen the existing assurance framework around crime data.
- While there remains variation in crime recording practice across Scotland, Police Scotland is committed to improving consistency and achieving greater compliance with the SCRS. Variations in legacy force practices are being identified and eliminated. HMICS would expect to see steady improvement in compliance rates in internal audits by Police Scotland and in future audits by HMICS.

The full audit report can be accessed here:

<http://www.hmics.org/publications/hmics-crime-audit-2014>

### **9.2.3 HMICS Independent Assurance Review Police Scotland - Call Handling**

In 2015, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice asked HMICS to carry out a review of call handling by Police Scotland following a tragic incident. HMICS reviewed the capacity within police service centres and control rooms to receive, manage, answer and

prioritise calls; the capability of systems and the training provided to staff; and the processes which ensure that all calls are handled and dispatched appropriately.

As part of the review, HMICS conducted an audit of calls made to the police via the 999 emergency and 101 non-emergency numbers. HMICS audited 1,501 randomly selected calls and sought to report on statistically significant call results at a Scotland-wide level with a confidence interval of 95%  $\pm$ 1.5%. The audit of each call involved listening to the call and reviewing any incident that resulted. The quality of the police response was assessed against several criteria. In relation to all calls, HMICS assessed whether the service advisor was polite, helpful and professional, and whether the call result was appropriate. In relation to calls that resulted in incidents, HMICS checked that the information given by the caller was accurately recorded on the incident; whether the best opening and closing codes were used; and whether the incident was graded correctly. HMICS also assessed whether the incident was closed correctly, which correlates with the SCRS Test 1 applied in their crime audits. As the focus of the review was on call handling, HMICS did not go on to apply an SCRS Test 2 as they would in a crime audit (i.e. they did not assess crime reports to check that all crimes were counted and classified correctly).

HMICS found that 95.1% of incidents were closed correctly in accordance with the SCRS. Although the results are not directly comparable to those in the Crime Audit 2014 (the calls in the call audit were randomly selected and related to a broad range of subjects whereas the crime audit mostly involved targeting specific, often high risk incident types such as sexual offences), it is nevertheless worth noting that the compliance rate in this call audit (95.1%) was higher than that in the Crime Audit 2014 (92%). HMICS believe this improvement reflects work Police Scotland has undertaken in response to their previous recommendations.

The wider call handling review resulted in 30 recommendations being made. The recommendations most relevant to the call audit are those relating to improving training (Recommendation 14) and quality assurance (Recommendation 25). In particular, HMICS felt there was much that the call handling function within Police Scotland (known as C3) could learn from the audit and assurance framework surrounding crime recording and the work done by Crime Registrars. Following the call audit, HMICS have also provided feedback on their findings from an SCRS perspective to Police Scotland's Crime Registrars and have suggested the possibility of extending the internal SCRS audit or other quality assurance process to encompass initial call taking.

HMICS has committed to undertaking a further audit of call handling once key stages of Police Scotland's change project for the C3 function have been delivered. The timescale is therefore not set, but anticipate that it may be later in 2016.

The full review report can be accessed here:

<http://www.hmics.org/publications/hmics-independent-assurance-review-police-scotland-call-handling-final-report>.

#### **9.2.4 Future HMICS Audits**

HMICS plan to conduct another audit of crime recording in 2016. The exact timing is still to be determined but HMICS expect to undertake the audit around spring / summer.

HMICS have already sought initial views from the SCRB regarding the scope of the crime audit, and will continue to consult with them and other stakeholders once scoping for this audit begins in earnest in early 2016.

Taken together, HMICS' call and crime audits provide a strong degree of assurance about the quality of crime recording.

### 9.3 Technical report on the comparability of recorded crime data

With the establishment of Police Scotland, a new IT system called the Scottish Operational and Management Information System (ScOMIS), was developed. This collates crime reports from across the variety of systems used by the eight legacy police forces into one central information management system and supplies the Scottish Government with recorded crime data. Previously, the Scottish Government collected recorded crime data from the eight legacy police forces, who in turn had extracted the data from their own systems.

There were two aims to the report:

- To investigate the comparability of ScOMIS data and legacy force data; and
- Check the quality of recorded crime data supplied by the police.

The Technical Report on the comparability of recorded crime data should be read alongside this user guide and the [Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin series](#), as these provide context and background information on recorded crime data.

To enable a full check of whether data extracted from ScOMIS were comparable with legacy force data, ScOMIS was populated with data for 2008-09 onwards. These data were then compared with the data previously submitted by the legacy forces. To be as thorough as possible, this was done at local authority level for all 470 crime codes over the five year period between 2008-09 and 2012-13. Any differences were then investigated by Police Scotland and rectified if appropriate.

The majority of differences between the data sources were due to the fact that a snapshot of historical data was being compared to a more up-to-date snapshot of data. There were two reasons why the recorded crime data may have changed in the time period between the two snapshots:

- **Changes made as a result of on-going police investigation.** This includes the reclassification of crimes and offences and no criming, i.e. where it is determined by the police that no crime actually took place. It is not possible to know the extent to which differences between ScOMIS and previous data are due to these types of changes – this is explored further in the [Extent of changes](#) section of this user guide.
- **Changes to crime codes.** A number of changes have been made to crime codes over the period 2008-09 to 2012-13, as well as changes to how particular incidents are recorded by the police. These changes do not affect the accuracy or comparability of recorded crime data previously published by the Scottish Government.

A number of specific issues with the data were identified:

- **Issues relating to ScOMIS.** Two issues were discovered with the way ScOMIS was extracting data from the legacy force systems. Both of these issues have since been rectified by Police Scotland.
- **Issues relating to legacy force data.** The issues identified with legacy forces' data collections include recording errors as well as specific data errors on a small number of crime codes. The majority of errors identified in this section were corrected with the publication of the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2013-14* bulletin. However, the overall comparability of Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences has been affected by these errors.
- **Changes in reporting practices.** There were a large number of queries raised with Police Scotland regarding Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences. They related to both the comparability and the quality of the data. It was determined, that with the establishment of Police Scotland there had been a standardisation of the reporting practices for what data should and should not be included in data returns to the Scottish Government. These included offences recorded as a result of the Scottish Safety Camera Programme, offences arising from the DVLA issuing tickets, offences resulting from the Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme and offences recorded as a result of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. With the standardisation in reporting practices, the overall comparability of Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences has been affected. This is true for comparing the data pre and post reform as well as when just comparing the data pre reform.

In terms of comparability, the Scottish Government are satisfied that crime data, Groups 1 to 5, are comparable pre and post reform. This means there is no break in the time series for this data.

However the overall comparability for offences data, Groups 6 and 7, has been affected by some of the issues relating to legacy force data and changes in recording practices. For Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences, all crime codes are fully comparable from 2008-09 onwards and overall comparisons for Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences should only be made for 2008-09 onwards. There are greater comparability issues for Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences and overall comparisons for Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences should not be made prior to 2013-14. This is discussed fully in Section 7 of the [Recorded Crime: Comparability of Police Scotland and Legacy Force Data](#) report.

Overall, the Scottish Government are confident that ScOMIS provides data which are accurate and reliable for inclusion in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletins. With the inconsistencies in the data due to different reporting practices in the legacy forces, the Scottish Government will ensure that these are taken into account when disseminating recorded crime statistics and complete explanations will be provided in the bulletins of what is and what is not comparable.

The full version of the report can be accessed here:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/TechnicalReport>.

## 10. Classification of crimes and offences

Charge codes are issued by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). They are used to classify crimes and offences based on the relevant section of legislation that they fall under. The detailed list of charge codes as approved by the COPFS is maintained and updated on a monthly basis by the Scottish Government. Prior to publication, it is circulated to Police Scotland Crime Registrars, individuals within Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and relevant individuals within partner justice organisations for comment.

Once any updates and/or amendments have been agreed for each month, the updated charge codes list is then published by the Scottish Government. The latest version on the charge code list can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/DataSource/chargecodes>.

Charge codes are mapped to crime codes. The crime code list is split into seven crime and offence groups. Groups 1 to 5 are referred to as crimes and Groups 6 and 7 as offences. The seven crime and offence groups are split into 35 crime and offence categories, referred to as the top 35 categories, that are used in the presentation of recorded crime data. These top 35 categories along with the main types of crimes and offences included in each of the top 35 categories, are detailed within Chapter 7 - Classification of Crimes and Offences of the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2014-15* bulletin.

A full list of all the crime codes, around 470, used by the Scottish Government to classify crimes and offences can be accessed in Excel format here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRecordedCrime/Classification>

The crime codes within Groups 6 and 7 which are non-comparable have also been highlighted in the Excel file.

## **11. Structure of crime and offence classifications**

On occasion, the structure of the classifications used to compile recorded crime statistics may change. Importantly however, the overall number of crimes and offences are not reduced in any way. There has been no change to the coverage of crimes and offences in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series and most changes are presentational, with some crimes or offences moving between crime groups or being separated out of the existing top 35 categories or crime codes. If any crime codes are merged, all crimes and offences that would have previously been recorded under the individual crime codes will still be recorded under the new combined crime code.

The main drivers for any structural changes in the crime and offence classifications are the implementation of new legislation or the desire for crimes and offences to be separately identifiable.

### **11.1 Changes to crime and offence classifications**

Details of changes within the crime and offence classifications from 2004-05 onwards are shown below; this includes any known future changes. If any crime codes are added or removed, these decisions are always taken in conjunction with the agreement of Crime Registrars in Police Scotland. The changes are shown in the years in which they were implemented.

#### **11.1.1 2004-05**

The introduction of the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard \(SCRS\)](#) in 2004-05 has helped maintain a consistent approach to recording crime. For further information on the SCRS, please see the section on the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard](#). As anticipated this increased the numbers of minor crimes recorded by the police, such as minor crimes of vandalism and minor thefts. However, it was not anticipated that the SCRS would have a notable impact on the figures for more serious crimes such as Serious assault, Sexual assault, Robbery or Housebreaking.

Unfortunately it was not possible to estimate the exact impact of the new recording standard on the recorded crime figures because around the time that the new standard was implemented, police also introduced centralised call centres which encouraged the reporting of incidents to the police.

#### **11.1.2 2005-06**

The top 35 category Petty assault was renamed Minor assault.

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes and offences separately:

Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence:

- 11007: Female genital mutilation – Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005

Group 2 – Sexual crimes:

- 18014: Grooming of children for purposes of sexual crimes – Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 35005: Obstruct or hinder other emergency worker in pursuance of duty – Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005
- 39016: Breach of parenting order – Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 47006: Minor assault of an emergency worker – Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005
- 47007: Antisocial behaviour offences – Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004
- 50011: Offences relating to persons disqualified from working with children – Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- 50012: Prevent a person feeding a baby milk in a public place – The Breastfeeding etc. (Scotland) Act 2005
- 50013: Offences against selling spray paint to children – Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004
- 85034: Antisocial behaviour, landlord offences – Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004

### 11.1.3 2006-07

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes separately:

Group 2 – Sexual crimes:

- 18015: Procurement of sexual services from child under 18 – Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- 18016 :Procurement of child under 18 for pornography – Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 39017: Breach of risk of sexual harm order (SHO) or interim risk of SHO – Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- 39018: Breach of football banning order – Police Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006

### 11.1.4 2007-08

Within the Other miscellaneous offences category in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences the crime code 48000: False calls to emergency services and bomb hoax was removed and replaced with two separate crime codes: 48001: False or hoax calls to emergency services and 48002: Bomb hoaxes. This change will not affect comparability over time.

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes and offences separately:

Group 2 – Sexual crimes:

- 18017 Soliciting services of person engaged in prostitution – Prostitution (Public Places) (Scotland) Act 2007

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 85035: Offences relating to working with vulnerable adults – Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

#### **11.1.5 2008-09**

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes separately:

Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence:

- 3004: Causing death by careless driving – Road Safety Act 2006
- 3005: Illegal driver involved in fatal accident – Road Safety Act 2006
- 3006: Corporate homicide – Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

#### **11.1.6 2009-10**

Within the Vandalism etc. category in Group 4 – Fire-raising, vandalism etc. the crime code 33001: Vandalism, reckless damage and malicious mischief was removed and replaced with three separate crime codes: 33012: Vandalism, 33013: Reckless Damage and 33014: Malicious Damage. This change will not affect comparability over time.

The crime code 59003: Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children was introduced and included in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences, within the Other miscellaneous offences category. This was done so that such offences could be separately identified. Previously such offences would have been included within the same top 35 category, under the crime code 59001: Handling obscene material. It was not possible to disaggregate any crimes that would have been recorded as 59003: Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children prior to 2009-10. As some offences, that would have previously been classified as 59001: Handling obscene material, will no longer be classified as such, caution should therefore be taken when comparing this crime code with previous years.

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes and offences separately:

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 39019: Breach of adult at risk banning order – Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- 39020: Breach of violent offender order – Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 60008: Refusing to quit licensed premises – Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005
- 85036: Offences under the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 – Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005

Following the introduction of the crime code 60008: Refusing to quit licensed premises there was a decrease in the number of offences recorded under the crime code 60006: Disorderly on licensed premises in 2009-10. Some offences that would have previously been recorded as 60006: Disorderly on licensed premises were now recorded as 60008: Refusing to quit licensed premises. It is not possible to quantify the number of offences that were recorded differently following the introduction of the crime code 60008: Refusing to quit licensed premises. As a result, caution should therefore be taken when comparing the crime code 60006: Disorderly on licensed premises with previous years.

#### **11.1.7 2010-11**

The Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 came into force on 1 December 2010. The Act replaces a number of common law crimes including Rape, Clandestine injury to women and Sodomy with new statutory sexual crimes. The Act provides a statutory description of consent, which is defined as free agreement and provides a non-exhaustive list of factual circumstances during which consent will be deemed to be absent.

The Act created a number of new 'protective' offences, which criminalise sexual activity with children and mentally disordered persons. There are separate offences concerning young children (under 13 years) and older children (13-15 years).

The new legislation will only apply to offences committed from 1 December 2010. Any offences committed prior to this date will be recorded using the previous legislation.

The new legislation resulted in some increases in Sexual crimes. However, it is likely that the effect will be to change the distribution of these crimes among the subcategories. For example, some crimes previously categorised as Lewd and libidinous practices will now be classified as Sexual assault.

The introduction of the new legislation resulted in some crimes that would previously have been classified in either the Breach of the peace or Other miscellaneous offences top 35 categories being classified as Sexual crimes. Most of these are now classed in the top 35 category Other sexual crimes. However, it is not possible to quantify the number of crimes that this change affects.

Any sexual crime which occurred prior to 1 December 2010 will be recorded in line with the appropriate legislation in place at that time. If the conduct occurred both prior to and after 1 December 2010 the appropriate offences under the old and new legislation are recorded. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing Sexual crimes with previous years.

Within Group 2 – Sexual crimes the top 35 categories Indecent assault and Lewd and indecent behaviour were combined and renamed Sexual assault. In addition a new top 35 category, Prostitution, was added to Group 2 – Sexual crimes. The Prostitution category only contained one crime code when it was introduced, 18010: Offences related to prostitution. Further information on the changes in the top 35 categories within Group 2 – Sexual crimes can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Group2OffenceComparabi>

The crime code 18011: Clandestine injury was removed due to the introduction of new crime codes, as a result of the implementation of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, where crimes previously classified as this crime could now be classified elsewhere.

The following new crime codes were introduced within Group 2 – Sexual crimes as a result of implementation of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009:

- 14001: Rape of male (16+)
- 14002: Rape of female (16+)
- 14003: Rape of older male child (13-15 years)
- 14004: Rape of older female child (13-15 years)
- 14005: Rape of young male child (Under 13)
- 14006: Rape of young female child (Under 13)
- 15001: Assault with intent to rape male (16+)
- 15002: Assault with intent to rape female (16+)
- 15003: Assault with intent to rape older male child (13-15)
- 15004: Assault with intent to rape older female child (13-15)
- 15005: Assault with intent to rape young male child (under 13)
- 15006: Assault with intent to rape young female child (under 13)
- 16001: Sexual assault by penetration of male (16+)
- 16002: Sexual assault by penetration of female (16+)
- 16003: Sexual assault by penetration of male (13-15 years)
- 16004: Sexual assault by penetration of female (13-15 years)
- 16005: Sexual assault of male (16+)
- 16006: Sexual assault of female (16+)
- 16007: Sexual assault of older male child (13-15 years)
- 16008: Sexual assault of older female child (13-15 years)
- 16009: Sexual coercion of male (16+)
- 16010: Sexual coercion of female (16+)
- 16011: Sexual coercion of older male child (13-15 years)
- 16012: Sexual coercion of older female child (13-15 years)
- 16013: Coercing a person into being present/ looking at sexual activity
- 16014: Communicating indecently
- 16015: Assault by penetration of young male child (under 13)
- 16016: Assault by penetration of young female child (under 13)
- 16017: Sexual assault of young male child (under 13)
- 16018: Sexual assault of young female child (under 13)
- 16019: Cause young male child (under 13) to participate in sexual activity
- 16020: Cause young female child (under 13) to participate in sexual activity
- 16021: Cause young child to be present/ look at sexual activity (under 13)
- 16022: Communicating indecently with young child (under 13)
- 16023: Sexual exposure to a young child (under 13)
- 16024: Voyeurism young child (under 13)
- 16025: Intercourse with older male child (13-15)
- 16026: Intercourse with older female child (13-15)
- 16027: Penetrative sexual activity with older male child (13-15)
- 16028: Penetrative sexual activity with older female child (13-15)
- 16029: Sexual activity with older male child (13-15)
- 16030: Sexual activity with older female child (13-15)

- 16031: Cause older male child (13-15) to participate in sexual activity
- 16032: Cause older female child (13-15) to participate in sexual activity
- 16033: Older male child (13-15) engaging in sexual conduct with another older child
- 16034: Older female child (13-15) engaging in sexual conduct with another older child
- 16035: Causing an older child (13-15) to be present/ look at sexual activity
- 16036: Communicate indecently older child (13-15)
- 16037: Sexual exposure older child (13-15)
- 16038: Voyeurism older child (13-15)
- 17003: Sexual exposure
- 17004: Voyeurism
- 18018: Taking, distribution, possession etc. of indecent photos of children
- 18019: Sexual abuse of trust of person under 18
- 18020: Sexual abuse of trust of person of mentally disordered person
- 18023: Administering a substance for sexual purposes

On 6 October 2010, the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 was implemented. This introduced a statutory provision to combat Threatening or abusive behaviour (section 38). Unlike the common law offence of Breach of the peace, where it is necessary to show a 'public element' to the conduct, there is no requirement in this legislation to demonstrate the offending behaviour was in a public place.

Section 39 of this Act introduced the specific offence of "stalking". Formerly this offence would have been recorded under the common law offence of Breach of the peace. Crimes of Stalking and of Threatening and abusive behaviour were included in the Other miscellaneous offences category in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences, whereas, they would have previously have been included in the Breach of the peace category in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences.

The following new crime codes were introduced in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences as a result of implementation of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010:

- 47008: Threatening or abusive behaviour
- 47009: Offence of stalking

As these two offences would have previously been classified as the crime code 47002: Breach of the peace, caution should therefore be taken when comparing this crime code with previous years.

Within the Vandalism etc. category in Group 4 – Fire-raising, vandalism etc. the crime code 33013: Reckless damage was removed as crimes classified under it should be classified under two other existing crime codes: 33011: Culpable and reckless conduct (not with firearms) or 33012: Vandalism. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing these two crime codes with previous years.

Within Group 3 – Crimes of dishonesty, there was a reclassification of thefts from ATMs and fuel pumps, which took effect from 1 April 2010. Prior to this such crimes would have been recorded within the Theft by opening lockfast places (OLP)

category under the crime code 20001: Theft by opening lockfast places (excluding motor vehicle). Such crimes will now be classified under the crime code 25000: Fraud, within the Fraud category. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing these two crime codes and top 35 categories with previous years.

In addition within Group 3 – Crimes of dishonesty, there was also a reclassification of crimes of forgery and uttering, which also took effect from 1 April 2010. Prior to this such crimes would have been recorded within the Other dishonesty category under the crime code 26000: Forgery (other). Such crimes will now be classified under the crime code 25000: Fraud, within the Fraud category. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing these two crime codes and top 35 categories with previous years.

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes separately:

Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence:

- 11008: Offences relating to Serious Organised Crime – Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 38019: Protection of vulnerable groups – The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act 2007

The following new crime code was introduced as this was the first year a crime was recorded under the relevant legislation:

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 34004: United Nations Sanctions Offences – Iraq (United Nations Sanctions) Order 2000

### **11.1.8 2011-12**

On 1 March 2012, the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act 2012 was implemented. The Act introduced two new offences, Offensive behaviour at football and Threatening communications. The following new crime codes were introduced in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences as a result of implementation of the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act 2012:

- 47010: Offensive behaviour at football (under the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Scotland Act 2012)
- 47011: Threatening communications (under the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Scotland Act 2012)

The crime code 59003: Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children was moved from the Other miscellaneous offences category in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences to the Other sexual crimes category in Group 2 – Sexual crimes, following the introduction of the similar crime code 18018: Taking, distribution, possession etc. of indecent photos of children, in 2010-11. This change was back revised to when the crime code 59003: Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children was

introduced in 2009-10. This means that since 2009-10 all such crimes are now classified as crimes and not offences.

In April 2011, crimes of Handling an offensive weapon and Drug crimes in prisons were reclassified from the Other miscellaneous offences category in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences to the categories of Handling offensive weapons and Drugs in Group 5 – Other crimes respectively. This means that prior to 2011-12 these prison related crimes would have been classified as offences. Therefore caution should be used when making any comparison over time for the crime code 85001: Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989 (not elsewhere classified), where the crimes of Handling an offensive weapon and Drug crimes in prisons would have previously been classified. For 2011-12, it was not possible to disaggregate either the crimes of Handling an offensive weapon or Drug crimes that took place in prison from the crimes that did not take place in prisons.

There were a number of changes to the crime groups and top 35 categories:

- Group 2 was renamed Sexual offences, in line with the naming convention of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, from Crimes of indecency.
- The top 35 category Serious assault etc. was split into two new categories: Homicide and Attempted murder and serious assault.
- The top 35 category Prostitution was replaced by a new category called Offences associated with prostitution. This includes the crimes in the old Prostitution category as well as the following crimes that were previously included in the Other sexual crimes category: Soliciting services of person engaged in prostitution, Brothel keeping, Immoral traffic and Procuration.
- The top 35 category Other sexual crimes includes: Other sexually coercive conduct, Other sexual crimes involving 13-15 year old children, Taking, distribution, possession etc. of indecent photos of children, Incest, Unnatural crimes, Public indecency and Sexual exposure.
- The top 35 category Minor assault was renamed Common assault. In turn crime codes 47001: Minor assault and 47006: Minor assault of an emergency worker were similarly renamed 47001: Common assault and 47006: Common assault of an emergency worker respectively.
- The top 35 category Breach of the peace was changed to Breach of the peace etc. The category has been renamed as it now includes the following offences in addition to Breach of the peace: Threatening or abusive behaviour, Offence of stalking, Offensive behaviour at football (under the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Scotland Act 2012) and Threatening communications (Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications Act 2012). Threatening or abusive behaviour and the Offence of stalking were included in the Other miscellaneous offences category in 2010-11. As these offences would have previously been classified as crime code 47002: Breach of the peace, any comparisons over time for the offence of Breach of the peace should be made using the top 35 category Breach of the peace etc.
- The top 35 category Drunk driving was renamed Driving under the influence, to reflect the fact that this category includes offences relating to driving while under the influence of drugs as well as offences relating to drink driving.

The crime code 4001: Causing injury etc. by culpable and reckless conduct was introduced and included in Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence, within the

Attempted murder and serious assault category. This was done so that such crimes could be separately identified. Previously such crimes would have been included within the same top 35 category, under the crime code 4000: Serious assault. This change will not affect comparability over time.

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify these crimes separately:

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 39021: Breach of domestic abuse interdict – Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011
- 39022: Breach of forced marriage protection order – Forced Marriage etc. (Protection and Jurisdiction) (Scotland) Act 2011

### **11.1.9 2012-13**

From April 2012, it was possible to disaggregate crimes of Handling an offensive weapon and Drug crimes in prisons. This resulted in the introduction of four new crime codes in Group 5 – Other crimes:

43004: Having in a prison an article with a blade or point

43005: Possession of a firearm in a prison

43006: Possession of an offensive weapon (not elsewhere specified) in a prison

44006: Bringing drugs into prison

Within the Other sexual crimes category in Group 2 – Sexual crimes, the crime code

59003: Taking, distribution etc. indecent photos of children was combined with

18018: Taking, distribution, possession etc. of indecent photos of children and then removed. This change will not affect comparability over time.

### **11.1.10 2013-14**

Prior to 2013-14, Group 2 was called Sexual offences, as this corresponds to the name of the legislation, Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009, covering these crimes. This led to some confusion as to whether this group was being included in crimes or offences. To emphasise that these are crimes, as they always have been, Group 2 was renamed Sexual crimes. The corresponding name changes were made to the other top 35 categories and individual crime codes in Group 2.

The top 35 category Homicide was renamed Homicide etc. to reflect that this category contains the crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law), as well as the crimes of Causing death by dangerous driving, Death by careless driving when under influence of drink or drugs, Causing death by careless driving, Illegal driver involved in fatal accident and Corporate homicide. The change in the category name was to avoid confusion with the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin. In the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin, the crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law) are collectively referred to as Homicide.

The top 35 category Drunkenness was renamed Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct. The name change was to reflect better the type of offences that are included in this category. In addition, the crime code 72008: Consumption of alcohol in designated places, byelaws prohibited was moved to this top 35 category from the

Other miscellaneous offences category. This was done as the Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct category more accurately reflects the nature of the offences recorded under the crime code 72008: Consumption of alcohol in designated places, byelaws prohibited. This change was backdated so that all offences recorded as crime code 72008: Consumption of alcohol in designated places, byelaws prohibited are now included in the Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct category. Therefore, comparisons over time for these two top 35 categories have not been affected.

Three new categories were added to the then top 32 categories, making it the top 35 categories. The three new categories, and the rationale behind their inclusion are:

- The category Urinating etc. was added. This category contains one crime code, 47003: Urinating etc. Previously this crime code would have been included in the Other miscellaneous offences category. This was done so that the large number of offences of Urinating etc. could be separately identified and not just classified in the Other miscellaneous offences category. Other categories like the Other miscellaneous offences category are intended for grouping together crimes and offences that are not recorded in large numbers. This change has been backdated so that all offences recorded as crime code 47003: Urinating etc. are now classified in the Urinating etc. category. Therefore, comparisons over time for these two top 35 categories have not been affected.
- The category Seat belt offences was added. This category contains one crime code, 323000: Seat belt offences. Previously this crime code would have been included in the Other motor vehicle offences category. This was done so that the large number of seat belt related offences could be separately identified and not just classified in the Other motor vehicle offences category. Other categories like the Other motor vehicle offences category are intended for grouping together crimes and offences that are not recorded in large numbers. This change has been backdated so that all offences recorded as crime code 323000: Seat belt offences are now classified in the Seat belt offences category. Therefore, comparisons over time for these two top 35 categories have not been affected.
- The category Mobile phone offences was added. This category contains one crime code, 324000: Mobile phone offences. Previously this crime code would have been included in the Other motor vehicle offences category. This was done so that the large number of driving related mobile phone offences could be separately identified and not just classified in the Other motor vehicle offences category. Other categories like the Other motor vehicle offences category are intended for grouping together crimes and offences that are not recorded in large numbers. This change has been backdated so that all offences recorded as crime code 324000: Mobile phone offences are now classified in the Mobile phone offences category. Therefore, comparisons over time for these two top 35 categories have not been affected.

Within the Other miscellaneous offences category in Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences, the crime code 51010: Dangerous Dogs, failure to control, supervise, destroy was combined with the crime code 51012: Offences involving dangerous dogs and then removed. This change will not affect comparability over time.

### **11.1.11 2014-15**

The crime code 18024: Possession of extreme pornography was introduced and included in Group 2 – Sexual crimes, within the Other sexual crimes category. This was done so that such crimes could be separately identified. Previously such crimes would have been classified as offences in the Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences category Other miscellaneous offences, under the crime code 59001: Handling obscene material. It was not possible to disaggregate any crimes that would have been recorded as 18024: Possession of extreme pornography prior to 2014-15. As some offences that would have previously been classified as 59001: Handling obscene material will no longer be classified in this way, caution should therefore be taken when comparing this crime code with previous years.

The following new crime code was introduced as a result of new legislation and there was a requirement to identify this offence separately:

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 85037: Failure to comply with a Property Factor Enforcement Order (PFEO) – Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011

### **11.1.12 2015-16**

The following new crime codes were introduced in the Other violence category of Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence as a result of new legislation, and there was a requirement to identify these crimes separately:

- 4002: Illegal driver, disqualified/unlicensed etc. causing serious injury
- 11009: Forced Marriage

## 12. Clear up rates

The definition of "cleared up" is noted below. This definition came into force with effect from 1 April 1996.

A crime or offence is regarded as cleared up where there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots law to justify consideration of criminal proceedings, notwithstanding that a report is not submitted to the procurator fiscal because either

(i) by standing agreement with the procurator fiscal, the police warn the accused due to the minor nature of the offence, or

(ii) reporting is inappropriate due to the non-age of the accused, death of the accused or other similar circumstances.

For some types of crime or offence, the case is cleared up immediately because the offender is "caught in the act", e.g. motoring offences. In Scots law, the confession of an accused person to a crime would not in general be sufficient to allow a prosecution to be taken, as corroborative evidence is required. Thus, a case cannot be regarded as "cleared up" on the basis of a confession alone. In some cases there is sufficient evidence but a prosecution cannot be brought, for example, because the accused has left the country. In such cases, the offender is said to have been traced and the crime is regarded as cleared up. The other terms in the definition describe the various actions that must be taken by the police against offenders.

Certain motor vehicle offences are not always recorded in cases where the police are unable to clear up the offence, for example, speeding offences where the driver is untraceable. Clear up rates for motor vehicle offences in these circumstances are artificial. Thus, clear up rates for the Group 7: Motor Vehicle Offences are not included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin.

Crimes and offences are included against the year in which they are recorded by the police. This is not necessarily the year in which the crime or offence took place, the year in which the accused is brought to trial for the crime or offence, or the year in which the case is finally disposed of by the courts.

Crimes or offences recorded by the police as cleared up in one financial year, year y, may have been committed and therefore recorded in a previous year, i.e. year y-1. This means that the number of crimes or offences cleared up are being expressed as a percentage of a different set of crimes or offences. This means that clear up rates in excess of 100% can arise in a given year. Clear up rates are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{number of crimes cleared up in year y}}{\text{total number of crimes recorded in year y}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

Prior to the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2014-15* bulletin, statistics on clear up rates were presented on a rounded basis, as they are only an approximation of the amount of crime cleared up each year (given the imperfect nature of this measure as outlined above). From the 2014-15 bulletin onwards, clear up rates will be presented to one-decimal place. Whilst this is still only an approximation of the amount of crime cleared up, this change will provide more clarity on how clear up rates vary over time.

The best method to measure the count of crimes cleared up would be to take the number of crimes recorded and the subset of those which have been cleared up by the police. However due to the aggregate way in which the data is obtained, it is not possible to do this at present.

Police Scotland are working on the development of a single crime recording system which when available, may open up the potential for more individual level crime data to be available. This may make it possible to obtain a more accurate count of crimes cleared up which have been recorded in that same period. This is something we will investigate with Police Scotland and consult users on in due course.

### 13. Crimes and offences per population rates

Within the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin the rates of crimes and offences per 10,000 population are given. This allows comparisons to be made between areas that take account of the underlying populations. For example, meaningful comparison can then be made between areas such as Glasgow City, where the 2014 mid-year population was 599,650, and the Orkney Islands, where the 2014 mid-year population was 21,590.

Crimes and offences per 10,000 population rates are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{total number of recorded crimes} \times 10,000}{\text{mid-year population estimate} \quad 1}$$

When calculating the rates of crimes and offences per 10,000 population, the relevant mid-year population estimates produced by the National Records of Scotland are used. The mid-year population estimates can be accessed here: <http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates>.

Index rates per 10,000 population are additionally presented in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin. The base figure used in all such indices is the Scotland figure, with Scotland having an index value of 100.

The indices are calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{area of interest per 10,000 population rate} \times 100}{\text{Scotland per 10,000 population rate} \quad 1}$$

The indices allow different geographic areas to be compared to each other in relation to how they compare to the Scottish level. An index value of over 100 means the area of interest has a higher level than Scotland and vice versa.

## 14. Revisions policy

Amendments to crime and offence records will always arise after data has been submitted by Police Scotland to the Scottish Government. Some crime or offence records may, on further investigation by the police, be re-designated not to constitute a crime or offence (a process known as 'no-criming'). In other cases the original crime or offence may be re-classified, which could shift the record between different crime or offence groups (for example, if a common assault was found on further investigation to be a serious assault, it would switch from Group 6 - Miscellaneous offences to Group 1 - Non-sexual crimes of violence).

These amendments to crime and offence records, which arise after data has been submitted by Police Scotland to the Scottish Government, are not included in subsequent *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series. No revisions to previously published data are made. However, any discrepancies or errors that are discovered in the recorded crime data will always be corrected. There has been no change to the revisions policy. The practice of basing these statistics on datasets which are downloaded immediately following the financial year to which they relate is consistent both pre and post police reform.

Following the implementation of the Scottish Operational Management Information System (ScOMIS) in Police Scotland, each quarterly submission of data to the Scottish Government contains revisions back to Quarter 1 of the 2013-14 reporting year, reflecting the amendments described above. In light of the reduced burden on both the police and the Scottish Government to make revisions to previously published statistics, the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) reconsidered the revisions policy for the recorded crime Official Statistics.

An exercise was undertaken to compare the crime and offence data published for 2013-14 (which was submitted to the Scottish Government in April 2014) with what ScOMIS reported for the same period one year later (April 2015). The results of this exercise are shown in the table below.

Crime or Offence Group	Number & Percentage			
	2013-14 Reporting Year			
	April 2014	April 2015	Difference	% Difference
<b>Total Crime and Offences</b>	<b>771,678</b>	<b>771,414</b>	<b>-264</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Total Crime</b>	<b>270,397</b>	<b>269,092</b>	<b>-1,305</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>
Group 1 Non Sexual Violent Crime	6,785	6,768	-17	-0.3%
Group 2 Sexual Crime	8,604	8,747	143	1.7%
Group 3 Crimes of Dishonesty	137,324	136,475	-849	-0.6%
Group 4 Fire Raising / Vandalism etc.	54,418	54,221	-197	-0.4%
Group 5 Other Crimes	63,266	62,881	-385	-0.6%
<b>Total Offences</b>	<b>501,281</b>	<b>502,322</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Group 6 Miscellaneous Offences	207,190	206,973	-217	-0.1%
Group 7 Motor Vehicle Offences	294,091	295,349	1,258	0.4%

This analysis demonstrated that a more up-to-date set of figures was available from ScOMIS for 2013-14 than included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2014-15* publication. The analysis confirmed that the extent of further amendment to police crime and offence records following the original submission of data was minimal at

the Scotland level. This gives users confidence that the published statistics for 2013-14 still provide a sufficiently accurate measure of the extent of police recorded crimes and offences. On a proportional basis the biggest impact was on Group 2 Sexual crime, where a net 143 additional crimes have been recorded following reclassification from other groups. This had increased the number of sexual crimes by 1.7% from 8,604 to 8,747.

The SCRB carefully considered this analysis, and made the decision that the Official Statistics should continue to follow the existing revisions policy and practice until such time as users request any reconsideration. The revisions analysis exercise will be undertaken again prior to, and reflected within, the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2015-16* bulletin.

## 15. Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

There are two principal sources of crime statistics in Scotland, namely police recorded crime, published in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin, and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), a national survey which asks respondents about their experiences of crime. Each source has strengths and limitations, but together they provide a more comprehensive picture of crime and help to measure the extent and impact of crime in Scotland.

### 15.1 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey

The SCJS is a national survey, obtaining responses from around 6,000 adults (aged 16 and over) living in private households.

The main aims of the SCJS have recently been refreshed – they are to:

- Enable the Scottish population to tell us about their experiences of, and attitudes to, a range of issues related to crime, policing and the justice system, including crime not reported to the police, and services provided to victims of crime;
- Provide a valid and reliable measure of adults' experience of crime, including services provided to victims of crime;
- Examine trends, over time, in the number and nature of crimes in Scotland, providing a complementary measure of crime compared with police recorded crime statistics; and
- Examine the varying risk and characteristics of crime for different groups of adults in the population.

Respondents are selected at random from the Postal Address File and participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. The survey is based on face-to-face interviews and respondents are also asked to answer a separate self-completion module on more confidential and sensitive issues, including drug taking, partner abuse, sexual victimisation and stalking.

The estimated number of crimes produced by crime surveys is higher than the level of crime recorded by the police. This shows that, for many reasons, not all crime comes to the attention of the police. Therefore, a key strength of the SCJS is its ability to capture crimes that are not reported to, and therefore not recorded by, the police. The information provided by such surveys complements the information compiled by Police Scotland, as well as exploring other issues such as the impact of crime on victims, public anxieties and reactions to crime and attitudes towards the police and other parts of the criminal justice system.

Further information on the SCJS can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey>.

### 15.2 Comparing police recorded crime and the SCJS

[Table 15.1](#) presents an overview of recorded crime and the SCJS, highlighting the strengths and limitations of each source as well as the additional information offered by each. Neither source alone is able to provide the full picture of crime in Scotland.

Instead, they are complementary, together providing a more comprehensive representation of crime in Scotland.

Table 15.1: Recorded crime and SCJS compared

	<b>Recorded Crime</b>	<b>Scottish Crime and Justice Survey</b>
<b>Where do the data come from?</b>	Administrative police records	Face to face interviews with residents from a nationally representative sample of the household population
<b>Basis for inclusion</b>	Crimes recorded by the police in Scotland, governed by the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules.	Trained coders determine whether experiences of victimisation in the last 12 months constitute a crime and assign an offence code.
<b>Frequency</b>	Collected by financial year. Statistics released in an annual publication.	Continuous survey with results currently published biennially.
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covers the full range of crimes and offences.</li> <li>• Provides data at a local level (and can be used for performance monitoring).</li> <li>• A good measure of rarer, more serious crimes that are well reported.</li> <li>• Good measure of long-term trends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good measure of trends since 2008-09.</li> <li>• Captures information about crimes that are not reported to the police (including sensitive issues such as domestic abuse or drug use).</li> <li>• Provides information on multiple and repeat victimisation (up to 5 incidents in a series).</li> <li>• Analyses risk for different demographic groups and victim-offender relationships.</li> <li>• Provides attitudinal data (e.g. fear of crime or attitudes towards the criminal justice system).</li> </ul>
<b>Limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partially reliant on the public reporting crime.</li> <li>• Reporting rates may vary by the type of crime (e.g. crimes more likely to be reported include serious crime and crimes such as housebreaking where recording is required for insurance purposes).</li> <li>• Trends can be affected by legislation; public reporting practices; police recording practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not cover all crimes (e.g. homicide or 'victimless' crimes such as speeding).</li> <li>• Does not cover the entire population (e.g. children, homeless people or people living in communal accommodation).</li> <li>• Unable to produce robust data at lower level geographies.</li> <li>• Difficult to measure trends between survey sweeps in rarer forms of crime (such as more serious offences).</li> <li>• Subject to quantifiable/non-quantifiable error.</li> </ul>
<b>What other data are collected?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional data on homicides, racist incidents, domestic abuse incidents and firearm offences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public perceptions about crime.</li> <li>• Worry about crime and the perceived likelihood of being a victim.</li> <li>• Confidence in the police and the criminal justice system</li> <li>• Prevalence estimates on 'sensitive' topics (partner abuse, sexual victimisation, stalking and drug use).</li> </ul>

The differences outlined in [Table 15.1](#) should be noted when considering how to use results derived from each source of crime statistics.

For example, police recorded crime results cover a wider range of crimes than the SCJS, and recorded crime data should be used for more local-level crime analysis or where it is important to consider:

- crimes against victims who are under 16 years of age, living in group residences/ institutions, or without a fixed address;
- crimes without a single identifiable victim; or
- crimes against commercial or public sector bodies.

Recorded crime statistics are largely dependent on the public reporting crimes to the police and, as a result, provide a good measure of crimes that are well reported to the police. A key strength of the SCJS, however, is its ability to capture crimes that are not reported to, and therefore not recorded by, the police.

The SCJS provides information on the characteristics of victims and offenders, such as their age and gender. Information is also collected on their views and attitudes on policing and the wider criminal justice system.

Differences between the two data sources create challenges in making direct comparisons, particularly when assessing trends in crime over time. For example, due to changes in the survey methodology, consistent data is currently only available for the survey since 2008-09, so recorded crime data should be used when considering crime over a longer time period.

Further information on the comparability of the two data sources can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey/publications/SCJSPRCanalyticalpaper>.

This analysis will be updated within *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2014-15: Main Findings*, which will be published on 15 March 2016.

## 16. Accessibility of recorded crime data

The data included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series can be accessed in a number of different ways and formats. This is in addition to the data that are included in the bulletins themselves. Clearly, only a limited selection of tables can be included in each bulletin. However, further analysis of recorded crime statistics can be supplied on request. This includes available information relating to time periods other than those covered in the current bulletin. In certain cases a fee is charged. For details of what can be provided, please e-mail [JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot](mailto:JusticeAnalysts@gov.scot).

### 16.1 Web tables

The headline data is presented at Scotland level, with additional data at local authority level. Following the establishment of Police Scotland, data is no longer presented at legacy police force level. The *Recorded Crime in Scotland* web tables can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Datasets/RecCrime>.

### 16.2 Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

Recorded crime data are available from the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) website. Local authority and Scotland data are available on the SNS website, with data available from 1996-97 onwards. Data are given for overall total, crime groups, the previous top 32 categories as well as other specific groupings of interest, such as crimes against the person and crimes against property.

The recorded crime data can be found in the Crime and Justice topic area on the SNS website. The data provided are crimes and offences recorded by the police, clear up rates and crimes and offences rates per 10,000 population. Please note that clear up rates for Group 7: Motor Vehicle Offences are not included. For further information on the reason behind this please see the section on [Clear Up Rates](#). The SNS website can be accessed here:

<http://www.sns.gov.uk/>.

## 17. Other statistical bulletins using police data

For those that are interested in the overall level of recorded crime in Scotland the best source of data is the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin. In addition, the Scottish Government publishes four topic specific bulletins that are based on police recorded crime data. The bulletins are: *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland*, *Homicide in Scotland*, *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland* and *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms*. The Scottish Government also used to publish *Firearm Certificates, Scotland* but responsibility for future publications has transferred to Police Scotland. The relationship between the data included in these bulletins and the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin are detailed below.

The Scottish Government also publishes two other bulletins based on data collected from the police: *Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland* and *Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics, Scotland*.

In addition, the Scottish Government publishes bulletins that cover the criminal justice system once crimes and offences have been recorded by the police. They are: *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland*, *Prison Statistics Scotland* and *Reconviction Rates in Scotland*.

### 17.1 Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland

The *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin presents statistics on domestic abuse, based on details of incidents. A statistical collection on domestic abuse (previously referred to as domestic violence) was recommended in the Report of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland 'Hitting Home - A Report on the Police Response to Domestic Violence 1997'.

The definition of domestic abuse used by the police is:

'Any form of physical, sexual or mental and emotional abuse [that] might amount to criminal conduct and which takes place within the context of a relationship. The relationship will be between partners (married, cohabiting, civil partnership or otherwise) or ex-partners. The abuse can be committed in the home or elsewhere'.

The data in *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin are collected via a separate data collection from the police and is a simple count of the numbers of incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police using the definition shown above. It is likely that some of the incidents will involve repeat victims or perpetrators. As a result, incident numbers will be higher than the actual number of unique victims or perpetrators. Not all incidents will result in the recording of a crime or offence.

We therefore recommend that users interested in domestic abuse should refer directly to the *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin series.

The *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubDomesticAbuse>.

The statistics reported in *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland* do not reveal the incidence of all domestic abuse committed since not all incidents are reported to the police. There is an additional source for information on domestic abuse in Scotland: the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) contains a self-completion section on partner abuse.

The results of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey Partner Abuse self-completion module can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey/publications>.

## 17.2 Homicide in Scotland

The *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin presents statistics on the number of homicide cases recorded in Scotland, where a single case of homicide is counted for each incident involving Murder or Culpable homicide (common law), irrespective of the number of victims or accused.

The *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin contains the top 35 category Homicide etc. The Homicide etc. category contains the crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law), as represented in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin, but also comprises the following crimes, which are not detailed in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin:

- Causing death by dangerous driving;
- Causing death by careless driving when under influence of drink or drugs;
- Causing death by careless driving;
- Illegal driver involved in fatal accident; and
- Corporate homicide.

The *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin contains more detailed information on the two crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law), which are collectively referred to as Homicide in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin. The data in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin are collected via a separate data collection from the police and are collected on an individual case basis. This means that characteristics of victims and accused, such as age and gender, as well as the circumstances of the homicide, are collected and then included in the bulletin. Additional details relating to the method, motive and relationship between the victim and the accused are also shown.

The data contained within the *Homicide in Scotland* and the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletins will differ from each other for the following reasons:

- The *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin does not cover all of the crimes included within the Homicide etc. category detailed in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin (as specified above).
- The data in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin are collected from the police separately to the data presented in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin and are collected on an individual case basis.
- The data are extracted from police recording systems at different time points, which may result in reclassification of crimes, such as attempted

murder to murder, not being included in the collections for the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin, but are reflected in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin.

We therefore recommend that users interested in Homicide statistics should refer directly to the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin series.

The *Homicide in Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubHomicide>.

The *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin series contains data on the number of homicides where the relationship of the victim to the accused was either partner or ex-partner. The term partner or ex-partner includes: spouse, separated or divorced spouse, cohabitee, lover, boy/girlfriend and ex-boy/girlfriend. This corresponds to data that are also included in the *Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin series.

The *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin series contains data on the number of homicides where the main method of killing was with a firearm. This corresponds to data that are also included in the *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletin series.

### **17.3 Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland**

The *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin presents statistics on racist incidents. This statistical collection was set up in response to the recommendations set out in the MacPherson Report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry from 1999.

The definition of a racist incident used for the *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin series is the same as the definition given in that report:

"A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person."

The data in *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police* bulletin are collected via a separate data collection from the police and are for each recorded racist incident. The return is a simple count of the number of incidents recorded by the police and the crimes or offences, victims/complainers and perpetrators arising from these incidents. In an incident, one or more victim/complainer may be involved, and there may be one or more perpetrator. There may be no criminal element to a racist incident, or several crimes or offences may be recorded by the police in connection with it.

The *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin covers crimes and offences which were the result of racist incidents, but not all of these crimes and offences are separately identifiable as such. Within Group 6, there are two specific crime codes in the Other miscellaneous offences category for racially aggravated offences: 47004: Racially aggravated harassment and 47005: Racially aggravated conduct. The two crime codes for racially aggravated offences are given in Table A9 of the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin.

We therefore recommend that users interested in racist incidents, and the crimes and offences that result from these incidents, should refer directly to the *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin series.

The *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubRacistIncidents>.

There are plans to scope out what potential there is for a new and wider bulletin on the topic of Hate Crime which would ultimately replace the *Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin.

#### **17.4 Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland**

The *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletin presents statistics on those crimes and offences recorded by the police in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved or where a firearm was stolen.

The *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin covers crimes and offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved or where a firearm was stolen, but they are not separately identifiable as such.

The data in *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletin are collected via a separate data collection from the police and are collected for each incident where a crime or offence has allegedly involved a firearm. The exception to this is the crime code 55000: Firearms, miscellaneous offences. These offences mainly relate to the possession, handling and distribution of firearms and ammunition. Prior to 2005-06, data returns for the *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletin did include the crime code 55000: Firearms, miscellaneous offences. However, it became apparent from discussions with the police that not all such incidents were being included. It was therefore decided to remove these incidents from the main tables and to provide a separate table which presents the totals for these offences based on data from the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* data returns.

For all crimes and offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved, the date, location, type of firearm and how the firearm was used in the crime or offence are collected. For crimes and offences in which fatal or non-fatal injury is caused, details of the age and gender of the victims are collected. For offences that are cleared up, details of the age and gender of accused are collected.

We therefore recommend that users interested in statistics on crimes and offences in which a firearm was alleged to have been involved or where a firearm was stolen should refer directly to the *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletin series.

The *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubFirearms>.

The *Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland* bulletin series contains data on the number of homicides where the main method of killing was with

a firearm. This corresponds to data that are also included in the *Homicide in Scotland* bulletin series.

## 17.5 Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland

The *Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin presents statistics for drug seizures made by the police in Scotland. This includes the aggregated number of drug seizures and the quantity of each type of drug seized. The statistics in this bulletin series relate to drugs controlled under the [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#). The Act divides drugs into three categories, class A, B and C, according to their harmfulness. A full list of drugs in each category is given in [Schedule 2 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#), as amended by Orders in Council.

In addition to the number of drug related crimes recorded by the police in Scotland that are included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series, the *Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin also includes information on the number of drug seizures and the quantity of each type of drug seized. Within Group 5, there is a top 35 category for Drug crimes. The Drug crimes category is further broken down in Table A7 of the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series.

We therefore recommend that users interested in statistics on the number of drug seizures, and the quantity of each type of drug seized, should refer directly to the *Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletin series.

The *Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/DrugSeizures>.

## 17.6 Firearm Certificate Statistics, Scotland

The Firearm Certificate Statistics, Scotland bulletin presented statistics on the number of firearm and shotgun certificates on issue under the [Firearms Act 1968](#) (as amended), covering certificates issued by the police in Scotland. The bulletin also provided information on the number of registered firearm dealers, visitor permits and European Firearms Passes (EFPs) issued.

Following publication of the *Firearm Certificates, Scotland, 2014-15* Official Statistics, responsibility for future publications of this data transferred from the Scottish Government to Police Scotland. Users were notified of this change through a SCOTSTAT update on the 5th October 2015. Police Scotland will consider on an ongoing basis the best way to produce information on Firearm Certificates, in consultation with users.

Users are advised to direct any future queries for statistical information on Firearm Certificates to Police Scotland via their contact point at the following link, where requests will get forwarded to the relevant analytical team:

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/contact-us-form>.

Previous *Firearm Certificate Statistics, Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubFirearmCertificates>.

## 17.7 Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics, Scotland

*Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics, Scotland* is a quarterly publication that presents statistics on the number of full-time equivalent police officers in Scotland. Data are as at the end of the respective quarter: Q1 = 31 March, Q2 = 30 June, Q3 = 30 September and Q4 = 31 December. Data on the number of full-time equivalent police officers in Scotland are available from Q3 in 2003.

The *Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics, Scotland* publications can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PublicationPoliceStrength>.

## 17.8 Criminal Proceedings in Scotland

The *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland* bulletin presents statistics on criminal proceedings concluded in Scottish courts. This includes a summary of crimes and offences dealt with by courts, sentencing outcomes and characteristics of convicted offenders. Additional information on a range of non-court disposals issued by the police and by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) are also presented.

Statistics dealing with recorded crime, included in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin and companion bulletins, and court proceedings statistics, included in the *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland* bulletin, are not directly comparable. *Recorded Crime in Scotland* counts the number of crimes recorded, whilst *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland* counts the number of court and non-court proceedings. For example, a person may be proceeded against for more than one crime involving more than one victim in a single proceeding. This would be counted as one proceeding in *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland* but as more than one crime in *Recorded Crime in Scotland*. There is the possibility that the crime recorded by the police may be reviewed in the course of judicial proceedings, for example, COPFS may decide not to undertake any proceedings. In addition, a crime may be recorded by the police in one year and the associated court proceedings concluded in a subsequent year.

The *Criminal Proceedings in Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubCriminalProceedings>.

## 17.9 Prison Statistics Scotland

The *Prison Statistics Scotland* publication provides statistics on the changing scale and nature of the prison population, including population by establishment, type of custody, crime type and sentence length, characteristics of prisoners, receptions to / liberations from penal establishments and ten year population projections. It also provides contextual explanation of the historical drivers of changes in the population.

The *Prison Statistics Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubPrisons>.

## 17.10 Reconviction Rates in Scotland

The *Reconviction Rates in Scotland* bulletin presents reconviction rates for offenders released from custody or given non-custodial sentences. These are broken down by age, sex, sentence type, main crime, conviction history, and geographical area.

Recidivism is where someone, who has received some form of criminal justice sanction (such as a community sentence or a fine), goes on to commit another offence. Determining recidivism is important, as it illustrates the effectiveness of the criminal justice system on the punishment and rehabilitation of offenders.

Reconviction rates are a proxy measure for recidivism, as reconvictions are a subset of actual reoffending. Not all offences which are committed will necessarily result in a conviction in court. For example:

- not all offences are reported to the police;
- of those offences that are reported and recorded, not all result in an offender being identified and charged, and a report being sent to the Procurator Fiscal;
- of those cases which are reported to the Procurator Fiscal, it may be decided to take no proceedings, or to employ some alternative to prosecution, such as a warning letter or a fiscal fine;
- where persons are prosecuted, the proceedings may end up being dropped, e.g. witnesses fail to turn up, or the accused is acquitted.

The *Reconviction Rates in Scotland* bulletins can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubReconvictions>.

## **18. Comparability across the UK**

### **18.1 England and Wales**

Recorded crime statistics for England and Wales are not directly comparable with those in Scotland. The recorded crime statistics for Scotland are collected on the basis of the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard \(SCRS\)](#), which was introduced in 2004. In England and Wales the recording of crime statistics are based upon the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), which was introduced in 2002, and Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime. As explained in the section on the [National Crime Recording Standard and Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime](#), although the main principles of the SCRS and the NCRS are the same, there are differences between the respective Counting Rules and therefore differences in crime recording practices.

In addition, differences in legislation and common law have also to be taken into account when comparing the crime statistics for England and Wales and Scotland. A guide to the comparability of recorded crime data between England and Wales and Scotland has been published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and can be accessed here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/compendiums/compendium-of-uk-statistics/social-indicators/data-catalogue/index.html>.

Crime Statistics for England and Wales are published quarterly on the ONS website and can be accessed here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/index.html>.

### **18.2 Northern Ireland**

The legal system in Northern Ireland is based on that of England and Wales, and the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) has the same notifiable offence list for recorded crime as used in England and Wales. In addition, the PSNI has adopted the [NCRS](#) and [Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime](#) that apply in England and Wales. Thus, there are similar comparability considerations between recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland and Scotland to those detailed above for comparing the crime statistics for England and Wales and Scotland.

Crime statistics for Northern Ireland are collected and published separately. The latest police recorded crime data for Northern Ireland can be accessed here:

[http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates\\_statistics.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics.htm).

### **18.3 Internationally**

Due to differences in legislation, there are also comparability issues when comparing the statistics for the recorded number of crimes and offences given in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin internationally. Data users are always advised to consult any relevant and accompanying metadata, and to proceed with caution when formulating any arguments or drawing any conclusions from international recorded crime comparisons.

## **19. Users and uses of recorded crime statistics**

The *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin is the primary source of detailed and reliable information on recorded crimes and offences in Scotland. The recorded crime data are a high profile justice issue which attracts considerable media and political interest.

### **19.1 Users of recorded crime statistics**

Recorded crime statistics are used throughout the Scottish Government, as well as by a variety of stakeholders including local authorities, Police, Scottish Prison Service, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), local and central government, community partnerships, charities and support groups, academics, students, private sector organisations and interested members of the public.

The Scottish Government engages with a range of users in different ways. This can include consultations on the Scottish Government website; in person at User Days; meetings of the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee; or internal Scottish Government analytical seminars. Users are also engaged via: email; ScotStat emails; direct correspondence with individuals; and telephone correspondence.

### **19.2 Uses of recorded crime statistics**

There are expert and non-expert users of crime statistics in all sectors, and from the evidence gathered at the Scottish Government crime statistics user event held in Edinburgh on 6 October 2014, it appears that there is little or no association between the level of expertise and the reason why the statistics are used. Level of expertise is more related to how focussed on the crime statistics the user is – in other words, users whose work is focussed heavily on crime statistics tend to be more expert than those whose use of crime statistics is only a small part of their job.

For further information on this event, please see the [Crime statistics user event](#) section.

#### **19.2.1 Central and Local Government**

Users within the Scottish Government and local authorities use recorded crime statistics to inform elected members about:

- progress, to aid strategic assessment of crimes and priorities;
- which communities need focussed attention; and
- which crimes need focussed attention.

The Scottish Government and Local Authorities also use recorded crime statistics to inform colleagues, stakeholders and members of the public about:

- progress, e.g. using the crime statistics as progress indicators and/or to contextualise other information and sources of evidence about delivery of outcomes;
- changes and trends over time, to support development of policies and initiatives to improve outcomes; and

- interactions with other policy developments and initiatives. For example, with health issues (particularly regarding drugs and alcohol), and when assessing the likely impact of bringing more people into an area e.g. during an application to build affordable housing.

Recorded crime statistics are also used to predict the impact of changes in policies, as well as benchmarking and monitoring.

The recorded crime data are also used to answer Parliamentary Questions, Ministerial Correspondence and Freedom of Information requests as well as to provide briefing material to ministers. The data are also used in Scottish Government campaigns, such as [No Knives, Better Lives](#). In addition, recorded crime data are annually supplied for inclusion in international compendiums, such as the [Eurostat Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics](#) and the [United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems](#).

In addition, the Scottish Government responds to requests from various groups, such as students looking for information to aid their studies, and private sector organisations, ranging from insurance companies who wish to know about crime in different parts of Scotland to utilities providers who want to ensure the safety of their employees before they visit particular areas.

The Scottish Government receives numerous requests from students, particularly those undertaking an Advanced Higher in Modern Studies, on various crime related topics. As a result, a separate section for ‘Student Enquiries’ has been developed on the Crime and Justice section of the Scottish Government website. This provides a place where students can find links to material that should be of relevance to them and aid them in their studies. The Student Enquiries section can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Enquiries>.

#### **19.2.1.1 Scotland Performs**

Scotland Performs measures and reports on the progress of government in Scotland in creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. Progress towards the Purpose is tracked by seven Purpose Targets, and it is supported by 16 National Outcomes and 50 National Indicators, covering key areas of health, justice, environment, economy, and education. Further information on Scotland Performs can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms>.

The National Outcomes can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome>.

Statistics on crimes and offences are used to inform National Outcome 9 – we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger’. National Outcome 9 can be accessed here: <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome/crime>.

#### **19.2.1.2 The Strategy for Justice in Scotland**

The Strategy for Justice in Scotland sets out in one place the Scottish Government’s collective approach to delivering an effective and efficient justice system for Scotland.

At its heart are the Justice Outcomes, demonstrating how Scotland's justice system is contributing to Scotland's National Outcomes and making a tangible difference to the lives of the people of Scotland. Progress in delivering these outcomes is overseen by the Justice Board. The Justice Board consists of Scottish Government directors, non-executive directors and heads of public-sector justice organisations, such as Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. The Justice Board works to ensure the effective operation of the justice system in Scotland.

The Strategy for Justice in Scotland can be assessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/justicestrategy>.

### **19.2.1.3 Justice Dashboard**

The Justice Dashboard was developed to provide a strategic view of performance and delivery, and to ensure accountability and a consistent approach to performance measurement across the Justice portfolio. It was developed in conjunction with the Justice Board, and consists of a set of key indicators based around the justice outcomes. These show progress in the delivery of our work in justice and reflect the Scotland Performs approach to monitoring the delivery of National Outcomes using a series of National Indicators. Trend information is summarised in simple, colour-coded graphic form on the Scottish Government website and is consistent with the general methodological approach used by Scotland Performs to determine direction of travel.

The Dashboard is updated with the latest available data and is reviewed on a regular basis. All data in the Dashboard are already publicly available; the Dashboard brings this data together in a single, consistent way.

The main audiences for the Justice Dashboard are those interested in Scotland's justice sector, including the public, and the leaders and senior managers from across Scotland's justice sector. The Dashboard will support and enable better communication and understanding between individuals and organisations of statistical information to assess and demonstrate performance in delivering justice outcomes.

The Justice Dashboard can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/partnerstories/Justice-Dashboard>.

### **19.2.1.4 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation**

Recorded crime data are used in the development of the crime domain of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The data used to compile the SIMD crime domain are a subset of all crimes and offences. Those crimes and offences included are shown below:

## **SIMD crime domain: crimes and offences**

### **Group 1: Non-sexual crimes of violence**

Includes:

- Murder
- Attempted murder
- Culpable homicide (common law)
- Causing death by dangerous driving
- Death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs
- Causing death by careless driving
- Illegal driver involved in fatal accident
- Corporate homicide
- Serious assault
- Robbery and assault with intent to rob
- Threats and extortion
- Cruel and unnatural treatment of children
- Child stealing (plagium)
- Exposing child under 7 to risk of burning
- Abortion
- Concealment of pregnancy
- Possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life, commit crime etc.
- Abduction
- Ill treatment of mental patients
- Cruel and unnatural treatment of an adult
- Drugging
- Chemical weapon offences
- Female genital mutilation

### **Group 2: Sexual crimes**

Includes:

- Rape (crime prior to 1 December 2010)
- Rape of male (16+)
- Rape of female (16+)
- Rape of older male child (13-15 years)
- Rape of older female child (13-15 years)
- Rape of young male child (under 13)
- Rape of young female child (under 13)
- Attempted rape (crime prior to 1 December 2010)
- Attempted rape male (16+)
- Attempted rape female (16+)
- Attempted rape older male child (13-15)
- Attempted rape older female child (13-15)
- Attempted rape young male child (under 13)
- Attempted rape young female child (under 13)
- Illegal homosexual acts
- Bestiality
- Assault to commit unnatural crimes

### **Group 3: Crimes of dishonesty**

Includes:

- Theft by housebreaking domestic property (dwelling and non-dwelling)
- Housebreaking with intent to steal domestic property (dwelling and non-dwelling)
- Attempted housebreaking with intent to enter and steal domestic property (dwelling and non-dwelling)

### **Group 4: Fire-raising, vandalism etc.**

Includes:

- Fire-raising
- Muirburn
- Reckless conduct with firearms
- Flying aircraft to the danger of life or property
- Endangering rail passengers
- Reckless driving at common law
- Culpable neglect of duty
- Endangering ship by breach of duty, obtain ship by misrepresentation
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Culpable and reckless conduct (not with firearms)
- Vandalism
- Malicious mischief

### **Group 5: Other crimes**

Includes:

- Illegal importation of drugs
- Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs
- Supply, possession with intent to supply etc. of drugs
- Possession of drugs
- Drugs, money-laundering offences
- Drugs, other offences

### **Group 6: Miscellaneous offences**

Includes:

- Common assault
- Common assault on an emergency worker

The data used in the SIMD crime domain are collected via a separate data collection from the standard recorded crime data collection and are subject to a rigorous data quality assurance exercise before they are used in the index. SIMD 2012 was published on 18 December 2012.

The SIMD website, which contains further background information on SIMD, can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>.

### **19.2.1.5 Measuring Deprivation Advisory Group**

The Measuring Deprivation Advisory Group (MDAG) is made up of a combination of data suppliers and users of the SIMD. The group provides advice on issues such as the needs of users, development priorities, methodological options, quality of outputs, and dissemination and guidance on the use of outputs.

The MDAG webpage provides meeting papers and more information on the group's remit. The Group's page can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/scotstat/mdagmeetings>.

### **19.2.1.6 Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Brief**

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.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/Justicebrief>.

## **19.2.2 Third Sector**

Users within the Third Sector use recorded crime statistics to:

- understand progress, changes and trends over time, to support development of policies and initiatives to improve outcomes;
- influence others by using statistics to support arguments that there are issues needing addressed (e.g. statistics are used to provide evidence that domestic abuse against men is an issue);
- contextualise other information; and
- plan.

## **19.2.3 Academia**

Users within academia use recorded crime statistics to:

- understand and explore changes in society;
- contextualise qualitative work to deepen and justify arguments; and
- predict the impact of changes in policies.

## **19.2.4 Private Sector**

Users within the private sector use recorded crime statistics to:

- assess the risk of areas, before employees are sent to work in these areas, i.e. utility companies; and
- enhance their products by including crime information, i.e. maps.

## 20. Consultations

The Justice Analytical Services (JAS) division of the Scottish Government has a strong history of consulting with the users and stakeholders of its statistical publications. This is consistent with the guidance laid out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

Users of recorded crime statistics will be informed of the details of forthcoming consultation activity via the [ScotStat](#) network. To ensure you receive up to date information on recorded crime or any other statistical publications, please register your interests by [subscribing to ScotStat](#).

### 20.1 User / Stakeholder Consultation 2015

A consultation was conducted from 14th April 2015 until 19th June 2015. The focus of this consultation was the seven annual statistical bulletins published by the Scottish Government based on returns from Police Scotland at that time. These were:

- [Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Firearm Certificate Statistics, Scotland](#)
- [Homicide in Scotland](#)
- [Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Recorded Crime in Scotland](#)
- [Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland](#)

The main objectives of the consultation were to:

- Understand who the users are, what their requirements for data are and how they would benefit from any new suggested structure/content;
- Identify improvements that will ease and increase the use of police data in the future; and
- Guide the future strategy for how, when and what we publish regarding police data.

There were several reasons to consult further with the users and stakeholders of police recorded crime statistics at this time, and reflect on how we report on police data. The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) published its [Assessment Report](#) on *Recorded Crime in Scotland* statistics in July 2014, which points to improvements the Scottish Government could make. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) published its [Crime Audit 2014 report](#) in November 2014. A number of changes had been implemented for the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2013-14* statistical bulletin following the establishment of Police Scotland, the ensuing consultation activity in 2014 and the publication of the aforementioned UKSA and HMICS reports.

The changes included:

- Reporting recorded crime statistics at Scotland and local authority levels only, as it was no longer meaningful to present these statistics for the eight legacy police forces;
- Limited presentation of time series for Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences and Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences to reflect the data comparability issues

identified during the quality assurance exercise as detailed in the [Technical Report](#);

- Publication of additional supporting information in the accompanying documentation: this User Guide to Recorded Crime Statistics in Scotland, the [Framework of Assurance](#) and the [Technical Report](#).

An innovative approach was taken that utilised a variety of consultation methods to capture the views of users and to ensure it was fully inclusive for experts and non-experts alike. This included one-to-one interviews, group discussions both in person and online, written questionnaires, social media interaction and an online survey. Views were received from policy colleagues, analysts from the Scottish Parliament and local authorities, Police Scotland, HMICS, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), academics, representatives of third sector organisations, subscribers of ScotStat and the general public.

The production of the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2014-15* bulletin reflected on the findings from this consultation:

### Structure

The structure of the 2014-15 bulletin was redesigned in response to a number of seemingly contradictory findings: the users liked the accessibility and ease of navigation of the existing format; but the length of the bulletin was prohibitive and unwieldy; and most users would not advocate the removal of any element of the publication nor reduce the level of commentary included. The new structure built on the existing format, but added in layers of sub-division to make it clearer where specific types of information could be found.

For example, Chapter 3 of the 2014-15 bulletin presents the latest statistics for total recorded crime, before providing a dedicated section for each of the crime groups. Each crime group section is sub-divided into segments that provide information on the Number of crimes recorded, Data considerations, Data validation and Data comparisons. These segments are in the same order for each of the crime groups. This same format is then used to present the latest statistics for total recorded offences and the two associated offence groups.

### Frequency

The annual frequency of Scottish Government recorded crime publications was not changed as most users were content with this. Those users that required more frequent (either six monthly or quarterly) data generally made use of Police Scotland Management Information instead of the annual bulletins. In response to the demand for greater clarity around the link between these sources, additional detail has been incorporated into the 2014-15 bulletin.

### Clarity

Segments on data considerations were included against each crime group section (where relevant) of Chapter 3 of the 2014-15 bulletin. These segments not only include information on any factors that might impact on interpretation of the statistics, but also include any feedback supplied by Police Scotland on possible reasons for changes in the number of crimes/offences recorded over the year. This was in response to views that there can be ambiguity around why crimes might have risen or fallen (for example, due to an increase in police focus on certain crimes) and that contextual information would improve understanding of the statistics.

### Level of Geography

The 2014-15 bulletin still presents recorded crime statistics at Scotland and local authority levels only. Although most users were satisfied with that level of geography, further breakdowns of interest would be urban and rural, city-to-city comparisons for crime and clear up rates, and smaller local data such as at ward or data zone level. Individual-level information would also be welcomed by users. As the Scottish Government currently receives recorded crime data from the police as a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the police at local authority level, it is not currently possible to publish recorded crime data at a lower geography than this. The forthcoming implementation of a new national IT system for Police Scotland could allow the Scottish Government to publish data at other geographic levels.

### Crime Group Classification

Further clarification of the statistical distinction between 'crimes' and 'offences' was included within the 2014-15 bulletin. A specific Total Offences section of the commentary was also included to mirror the section on Total Crimes that had previously been presented. This was in response to views that this distinction between 'crimes' and 'offences' may not be well understood by non-expert users due to the interchangeable use of these terms in everyday language.

The 23rd July meeting of the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) agreed to convene a bespoke working group, chaired by the Scottish Government, to consider how the current Crime Groupings could be reviewed and how stakeholders could be invited to contribute their views to the process. This was in response to views that there is room for improvement in some areas of the current system of crime classification such as the Non-sexual crimes of violence category, particularly around Serious assault and Common assault, and other new forms of crime, such as cyber-crime, being captured adequately.

### Infographics

A summary infographic was included at the start of the 2014-15 bulletin, and additional graphics were incorporated into the commentary in Chapter 3 that also serve to mark the start of each crime/offence group segment. This was in response to general enthusiasm for infographics among users, both expert and non-expert.

The full results of the 2015 user consultation can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/StakeCon/RCUC2015>.

## **20.2 Crime statistics user event 2014**

On Monday 6 October 2014, the Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services division held a Crime statistics user event in Edinburgh. The aim of this event was to bring together producers and users of Scottish crime statistics to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, uses and potential uses of the statistics contained in the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series and the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), and more specifically:

- gather more detailed information about the uses, users, and users' views of the statistics contained in both the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin series and the SCJS;

- inform users about on-going work with Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority, and explain the roles and responsibilities of the organisations involved in the production and publication of crime statistics;
- present and discuss with users analysis comparing the police recorded crime statistics and the SCJS;
- discuss the extent to which statistics based on police recorded crime data and the SCJS meets users' needs, and what can be done to improve that if necessary;
- investigate users' need for more detailed record level crime data, or updates / changes to the format in which crime statistics are published.

There were over 50 attendees, representing expert and non-expert users of crime statistics from a wide variety of public sector, voluntary sector and academic organisations.

A detailed report on the findings from this event can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/CrimeStatsEvent/UserViews>.

The timetable and presentations from the event can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/CrimeStatsEvent>.

### **20.3 User / Stakeholder Consultation 2014**

Prior to police reform, the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* statistical bulletin presented statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland at a legacy police force level. Following the establishment of Police Scotland, it was no longer meaningful to present recorded crime statistics for the eight legacy police forces. As a result, the Scottish Government needed to make some changes to how it publishes the information and the format it is provided in. To help decide the future format, the Scottish Government invited users to provide feedback, by means of a consultation, on how they would prefer to receive data in relation to Police Scotland. The consultation was open from 4 April 2014 until 9 May 2014.

Two main themes emerged from the responses to the consultation:

- the publication of data more regularly; and
- data should be published at a lower geographic level.

The full results of the 2014 user consultation can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/StakeCon/RCUC2014>.

This was the second consultation on the *Recorded Crime in Scotland* bulletin, with the previous consultation being undertaken in winter 2009. The results of this consultation can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/StakeCon/RecCrimeCons>.

## **20.4 Survey of users of crime and justice statistics website**

In late 2010, a survey was conducted of the Crime and Justice Statistics section of the Scottish Government website. The purpose of this survey was to obtain the views of users on various aspects of the website, including the content and format, and any ways in which they felt it could be improved.

A report summarising the findings from this survey can be accessed here:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/jaswebsurvey>.

## **21. Potential future considerations**

### **21.1 Individual level data**

Currently the Scottish Government collects aggregated numbers of crimes and offences from Police Scotland, meaning that no information about victims, perpetrators or the individual crimes or offences and incidents are available.

We note that some of our users have an interest in more analysis of individual level crime data, which would allow, for example, new information on the age and gender of victims and perpetrators. Police Scotland are working on the development of a single crime recording system which when available, may lead to new opportunities in this area. As the development of Police Scotland's recording system proceeds, we will consult with our statistical users at the appropriate time.

It should be noted that the Scottish Government does publish companion Official Statistics bulletins that are based on individual level crime and offence data on a number of topics:

- [Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Homicide in Scotland](#)
- [Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland](#)
- [Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland](#)

### **21.2 Cyber-crime**

Where reported to the police, Cyber-Enabled crime will be recorded under the specific offence code for the registered crime (for example fraud, including online banking fraud and mass marketing fraud, and thefts such as using technology to steal personal data). With the development of the single crime recording system referred to above, provision has been made for the inclusion of a 'cyber-crime' marker that will be able to provide a more accurate understanding of where there has been a Cyber element to a crime. As these IT developments progress, we will keep under review how these statistics can best incorporate any new information on cyber-enabled crime.

It is worth noting that HMICS have said they will consider cyber-crime when setting future scrutiny programmes.

### **21.3 Crime classifications**

The Official Statistics on police recorded crimes and offences are split into seven recognised categories (as defined by the Scottish Government). HMICS noted in its 2014 audit of recorded crime that there should be a consideration of whether the current crime categories continue to reflect the public's perception of crime. The July 2015 meeting of the Scottish Crime Recording Board agreed to set up a working group to investigate this issue further and produce options for how a review could be taken forward. As a result, research is underway to develop a deeper understanding of the range of offences that are recorded under Common assault, which includes around 58,000 offences a year. This research will inform the Board so that it can make an evidence-based recommendation to present to users before making a final decision on any proposed change.

## **21.4 Open data**

We note that some users are supportive of the publication of non-personal data in an open format. Consideration is being given to the way users can access data, such as providing data in an open data format, consistent with the wider Scottish Government Open Data Strategy.