User Guide to Recorded Crime Statistics in Scotland

Justice Analytical Services
June 2024

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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.

Figures on the levels and trends of crime in Scotland are 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 is available in the SCJS chapter.

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, split by 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 year ending March (Annual) bulletin.

In addition to the quarterly Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins, a number of companion bulletins based on police recorded crime data are published by the Scottish Government on domestic abuse, homicide, drug seizures and crimes and offences involving firearms. Further information is available in the Other statistical bulletins using police data chapter. Together these statistics are used to inform the Scottish Government's The Vision for Justice in Scotland - gov.scot (www.gov.scot). These statistics are also used by a wide range of stakeholders to monitor trends, for policy research and development, and for research purposes. Further information is available in the Users and uses of recorded crime statistics chapter.

Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland are designated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) as Accredited Official Statistics, meaning that they meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value. The statistics on recorded crime clear up rates remain published as Official Statistics. OSR confirmed the Accredited Official Statistics status of Recorded Crime in Scotland most recently in 2019. Further information is available in the UK Statistics Authority assessment chapter.

Scottish Government statistical bulletins based on police recorded crime data can be accessed from the Recorded Crime in Scotland collection of the Scottish Government website.

This User Guide is intended to support and inform users about police recorded crime statistics in Scotland.

For further information about Recorded Crime in Scotland, please email Justice_Analysts@gov.scot.

Crime statistics for England and Wales and Northern Ireland are collected and published separately. Further information is available in the Comparability across the UK chapter.

2. Police reform

2.1 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, a Deputy Chief Officer, Assistant Chief Constables and Directors.

Within Police Scotland there are thirteen local policing divisions[1], 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

His 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. Its 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 has 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 has an established role in providing professional advice and guidance on policing in Scotland.

[1] 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 is 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 publishes a report, the SPA and the Chief Constable must also consider what HMICS has found and take such measures, if any, as they think fit. Where HMICS makes recommendations, it will follow them up and report publicly on progress.

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.

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 to the Scottish Government on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police, as well as the number cleared up (detected), for each financial year.

Police Scotland statistics are managed, collated and analysed by the Police Scotland Demand & Productivity 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. Further information is available in the Crime Registrars chapter.

3.2 Scottish Police Authority

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) is responsible for:

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

The SPA use their strategic planning and performance framework to carry out their scrutiny and assurance function of policing. The framework consists of a range of plans and reports discussed publicly at the SPA's Board and Committees throughout the year, including:

- Annual Assessment of Policing – a statutory annual review of policing performance in Scotland, included in the overall Annual Report and Accounts
- Annual Police Plan Progress Reports – public bi-annual reviews of the evidence to support annual progress towards the Strategic Police Plan outcomes

- Police Scotland Performance Report - a public quarterly operational policing performance report aligned to the Annual Police Plan and Strategic Policing Priorities that includes both quantitative data and qualitative evidence.

- SPA Corporate Performance Report - a public quarterly report that includes SPA corporate performance information and monitors progress with the SPA Corporate Strategy.

- SPA Forensic Services Performance Report -- a public quarterly report that includes SPA forensic services performance information and progress with the Forensic Strategy.

3.3 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

Although His 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 Counting Rules. Further information on HMICS audits is available in the HMICS audits section of the Data suppliers' Quality Assurance principles, standards and quality checks chapter.

3.4 Scottish Government

The Scottish Government collects data on police recorded crime from Police Scotland and publishes this as National Statistics. The primary aim of National 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 in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe

- We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential

- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

The evidence shapes, informs and measures progress towards The Vision for Justice in Scotland.

3.5 Scottish Crime Recording Board

All of the aforementioned organisations work through the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB). Further information is available in the SCRB chapter.

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

Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) 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 SPA). 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. Further information is available in the Stage Four - Police Scotland internal and external reports – scrutiny and checking section within the Data suppliers' Quality Assurance principles, standards and quality checks chapter.

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 Accredited Official Statistics. The quarterly Accredited Official Statistics published by the Scottish Government on police recorded crime are based on the same Administrative Data, however these are presented on a rolling 12 month basis and have undergone further quality assurance work, including additional dialogue with Police Scotland, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information is available in the Producer's Quality Assurance investigations and documentation chapter.

Police Scotland publish more detailed information by multi-member ward with more detailed crime classifications on a quarterly basis. This information is published on the 'How we do it' section of the Police Scotland website.

Police Scotland also provides regular reports to the scrutiny boards of Scotland's 32 local authorities, as well as management information updates to the SPA which are used to inform member discussion at quarterly performance public board meetings and the SPA policing performance committee.

Police Scotland publishes all of these reports on the 'How we are performing' section of the Police Scotland website.

4.2 Scottish Police Authority – building the evidence base of policing

The strategic planning and performance framework of the SPA includes the Joint Strategy for Policing and a shared Performance and Accountability Framework with Police Scotland. These are shaped around five strategic outcomes, aiming to deliver the objectives of Policing 2026, performance standards to hold the Chief Constable to account, and underpinned by the seven Strategic Policing Priorities set out by Scottish Ministers in October 2016.

This SPA's Annual Review of Policing gathers evidence on 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 an appraisal of both Police Scotland and SPA performance each year, providing evidence of strategy, operational and organisational delivery.

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 reviewed by the SPA at its Policing Performance Committee.

Further information on the full public board meetings of the SPA, including the papers, can be accessed on their website.

4.3 Scottish Government

The Scottish Government publishes police recorded crime statistics on a quarterly basis in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin series. During the pandemic the annual bulletin was supplemented by monthly Official Statistics. These have since been discontinued and replaced by a quarterly Accredited Official Statistics bulletin which presents data on a rolling 12-month basis. The year ending March bulletin will be the main annual bulletin and will contain long term analysis. The statistical return from which most of the figures in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins are taken is a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland. Since 2013-14, only data from Police Scotland are included in the main findings and tables of the bulletin. Prior to police reform, the bulletin contained data from the eight legacy police forces. 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. Further

information is available in the Producer's Quality Assurance investigations and documentation chapter.

5. UK Statistics Authority assessment

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) is an independent body operating at arm's length from government, as a non-ministerial department. As such, the UKSA provides independent scrutiny of recorded crime and Scottish Crime and Justice Survey statistics through monitoring and assessment by its regulatory arm, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

The UKSA published an assessment report on Recorded Crime in Scotland in July 2014. The report stated that the UKSA "cannot at present confer National Statistics status on these statistics".

As a result of this, the 2013-14 and 2014-15 statistical bulletins on Recorded Crime in Scotland were both published as Official Statistics. The UKSA assessment report pointed to improvements that could be made to ensure these statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value as set out in the Code of Practice - with the aim of eventually re-designating these statistics as National Statistics. Since the July 2014 report a range of actions were taken forward by the Scottish Government and others to meet these requirements.

Following this work, the UKSA re-visited the designation of these statistics in September 2016 and confirmed the re-designation of the statistics that are presented in Recorded Crime in Scotland as National Statistics. In their letter to the Chief Statistician of the Scottish Government, the UKSA acknowledged "a range of improvements to the presentation of Recorded Crime in Scotland and supporting documentation, including the development of commentary and analysis that provides context to the statistics, helping to enhance users' understanding of the statistics". A separate letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Scottish Government from the UKSA detailed that "this leading approach is very welcomed given the high profile nature of statistics on police recorded crime".

The letter further welcomed "the proactive approach taken by the statistics team to investigate and better understand the recording and quality assurance of police recorded crime (and the) Scottish Government's commitment to demonstrate strong reassurance of police recorded crime statistics".

In 2019, OSR confirmed that the Recorded Crime in Scotland statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics, following a compliance check. They highlighted a range of positive examples around statistics production relating to user engagement, presentation of the statistics, and supporting quality information.

They also identified several areas where they see potential for improvement of the value of the statistics, including;

- improving the clarity and length of the publication

- updating the user guide

- considering the next steps for the ‘Clear up rates’ section, including publishing an action plan outlining the progress and plans for improvement of the ‘Clear up rates’ section of the publication.

- seeking opportunities to present more insight on the topic of recorded crime, engaging users in this and by bringing police workforce statistics into the main bulletin.

- improving guidance about the comparability of the statistics with related statistics across the UK

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the resultant increase in demand for associated analysis (for example the introduction of new monthly official statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police), work towards these recommendations was paused. However an updated version of the User Guide was published in September 2021 and further improvements have been made to the publication following feedback from the Consultation on the future of recorded crime and police activity statistics.

Statistics on recorded crime clear up rates remain Official Statistics due to the limited external assurance of these data. As highlighted above, OSR made a recommendation that the Scottish Government should consider next steps required to meet the requirements for National Statistics designation. The designation of clear up rates will be revisited by the OSR once we have undertaken further work.

The Office for Statistics Regulation introduced the term “Accredited Official Statistics” to describe statistics that had previously been designated as National Statistics by the OSR after a review of National Statistics designation in September 2023. The OSR published a summary of their findings explaining the change in terminology on the OSR website. The annual and quarterly Recorded Crime in Scotland publications have therefore been designated as Official Accredited Statistics since September 2023.

6. Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules

On 1 April 2004, the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) was introduced throughout Scotland. The SCRS was produced by the Scottish Crime Registrars' 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 (as developed in England & Wales and other countries internationally). This followed on from the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), which was introduced in England and Wales in April 2002.

The collective responsibility for maintaining and setting the SCRS lies with the key agencies that produce the statistics, working together on a collaborative basis. They do this primarily through the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) – for further information, please see the SCRB chapter.

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 proposes, with more serious criminal behaviour generally defined as a crime, and less serious as an offence (based on the sentence a perpetrator can expect). For further information, please see the Classification of crimes and offences chapter.

The aim of the SCRS is:

> To provide a more victim orientated approach that serves the needs of our communities, and ensures 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 Crime Records.

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.

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
- Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms in Scotland
- Drug Seizures and Offender Characteristics in 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.

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 report 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 report 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 report 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)

Where officers can identify the persons involved from an image or it is appropriate to carry out further enquiry to identify the persons and, on the balance of probabilities, the officer believes that a crime has occurred, an investigation should be considered and a crime recorded. Where the basis for recording the crime is based solely on visual recording evidence, it is important that the provenance of the recording can be established. It is not the intention of the SCRS to record as crimes all incidents that could be construed as crimes when viewed remotely. 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 report. 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 Counting Rules

The SCRB advise how crimes and offences should be recorded for statistical purposes, otherwise known as the 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 the SCRS in 2007, a recommendation was made that the Counting Rules should be reviewed. In consultation with Crime Registrars, it was agreed that the Counting Rules should be more in line with the SCRS, i.e. more victim focused. To this end, changes were made to a number of areas in relation to the Counting Rules as of 1 April 2008, 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 K of the SCRS.

6.4 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 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 SCRB, whereas no such distinction is made in England and Wales.

Further information is available in the Comparability across the UK chapter.

7. No Crime Records

Some crimes recorded by the police are subsequently classified as no crime, 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 classified as no crime. Further information is available in the SCRS chapter.

A crime, once recorded, should be classified as '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 and the respective Force has accepted the transfer of the crime.
>
> 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 Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Notice (COFPN).

The term 'No Crime' relates to crimes already recorded, and is therefore distinct from incident reports that are not classified as a crime (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.

The SCRS states:

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

Crime reports that are classified as 'no crime' 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 classifying as 'no crime' are particularly susceptible to local recording practice and the IT systems in use. A Police Scotland division having a high level of classifying as 'no crime' 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 classifying as ‘no crime’ might be indicative of a recording practice by which reports are retained as incidents only until a fuller investigation has taken place.

In 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) in its audit of crime and incident recording examined Police Scotland’s ‘no crime’ processes to determine if decisions to classify as ‘no crime’ were made correctly. In its audit, which examined 870 ‘no crime’ decisions across Scotland, HMICS found that 94.4% had been made correctly, which it described as good. Compliance was 96.0% in 2016 and 93.9% in 2014. Three divisions, Lothians and the Scottish Borders, Greater Glasgow and Lanarkshire achieved 100% compliance. 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 to explain the rationale for the no crime decision. Further information is available in the HMICS audits section within the Data suppliers' Quality Assurance principles, standards and quality checks chapter.

8. Crime Registrars

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) and one Deputy Crime Register (west), who are managed by the National Crime Registrar. As well as having regional responsibilities, the registrars undertake internal audits of the crimes which are recorded, and are also responsible for training and the maintenance of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules.

Crime recording sits within Governance, Audit and Assurance within ACC Professionalism and Assurance's business area within Police Scotland, which is within the portfolio of the Deputy Chief Constable (Professionalism, Strategy and Engagement).This removes the Crime Registrars from direct police operational activity and investigation, and ensures they are independent, separated from operational decision making and performance issues. Such an approach is consistent with views previously expressed by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS).[2]

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[3]. The crime management units are responsible for crime recording practice in their respective divisions. Their core function is ensuring SCRS compliance.

[2] HMICS - Crime Audit 2014 "The SCRS notes that the crime registrar should not be placed in a position where he or she is directly responsible for performance or reducing crime or is answerable to a line manager who has such responsibility." HMICS Crime Audit 2020.

[3] 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.

9. The Scottish Crime Recording Board

The role of the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) is 'to act as the guardian of, and ultimate decision maker on, issues related to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS)'. The SCRB supports the production of accurate and objective statistics on crime in Scotland, and meets at least once a year. The Board ensures that crime data is comprehensive, consistent, transparent and trustworthy. It takes into account the needs of both data 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 Statistics. Further information on the SCRB's remit is available, including details on the SCRB's purpose, objectives and functions, its working principles and membership.

The actions agreed at meetings of the SCRB, together with the outcomes achieved from those actions, are agreed between members, documented and are made publicly available. This is to provide reassurance that changes in classifications, aggregation and methods are discussed and agreed openly by key stakeholders for the wider benefit of users.

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.

The SCRB is chaired by the Justice Analytical Services division of the Scottish Government with representatives from Police Scotland (including the National Crime Registrar), the Scottish Police Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland (HMICS), the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), British Transport Police, Ministry of Defence Police, and other external stakeholders as appropriate.

The functions of the SCRB include:

- ownership of this User Guide, ensuring the Quality Assurance section transparently reflects quality assurance procedures;
- oversee and promote continuous improvement in quality assurance processes;
- oversee the maintenance and development of the SCRS (including the Counting Rules), and to approve all changes to it (a Technical Group, chaired by Police Scotland, supports the Board in this role);
- support HMICS in their Crime Audits.

10. Quality Assurance

A wide range of mechanisms are employed to ensure that police recorded crime data is robust. This section (which comprises Chapters 10-15) documents the steps undertaken to quality assure data that is captured and published as management information by Police Scotland, and analysed and turned into Accredited Official Statistics by the Scottish Government. This includes a summary of the quality checks made at each stage of the data journey, from capture to publication.

The process of producing Accredited Official Statistics on police recorded crime is complex. Data is collected in real time, as Police Officers respond to incidents and enter information into their Crime Management System. This is then updated on a continuous basis as investigations proceed and new information or evidence is obtained. Key decisions are made early in the process, including whether or not an incident constitutes a crime and if so what the classification of that crime should be, ultimately for statistical purposes.

Accredited Official Statistics and management information are derived from snapshots of crime recording databases. Due to the evolving nature of crime investigations, the timing of data extraction from Police Scotland databases will always have some impact on the resulting figures. A summary of how this affects the production of analysis on recorded crime is included in the discussion of data revisions within the Data suppliers' Quality Assurance principles, standards and quality checks and Producer's Quality Assurance investigations and documentation chapters.

The quality assurance (QA) processes in place focus on the accurate capture of data, consistency of recording, and the accurate transfer of processed data into a range of publications.

Not all crimes are reported to the police, and hence recorded by them. If a crime is left unreported or unrecorded, it will not be contained in the recorded crime statistics[4]. It is also worth noting that further decisions relating to the crime after Police Scotland's involvement e.g. following a court decision, will not be reflected in these data. Further information is available in the Risks, limitations and challenges of the recorded crime data chapter.

The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) Administrative Data Quality Assurance Toolkit provides guidance about acceptable levels of QA in respect of administrative data. This user guide draws on that guidance, recognising that QA of administrative data is more than just checking that the figures add up. It is an ongoing iterative process to assess the data's fitness to serve their purpose. It covers the entire statistical

[4] The Scottish Government's Statistical Bulletin *Recorded Crime in Scotland* provides more contextual detail, especially relating to the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey that paints a fuller picture of crime as perceived by victims (both recorded and non-recorded).

production process and involves monitoring data quality over time, and reporting on variations in that quality.

10.1 Summary of safeguards

Safeguards are in place throughout the collection and production lifetime of Recorded Crime statistics. These are shown schematically in Figure 10.1, along with who carries them out in Table 10.1. The safeguards exist to ensure that the data collection and analysis produce high-quality, complete statistics.

Figure 10.1: Data collection and quality assurance for Recorded Crime in Scotland

Table 10.1: Validation checks carried out during collection and publication of police recorded crime in Scotland

	Action	Who does it?
1.	Crime recording should be carried out in accordance with the Police Scotland Code of Ethics.	Police Scotland – reporting officer
2.	Police officers/staff use UNIFI crime management system to record a crime.	Police Scotland – reporting officer/ police staff
3.	Incident recorded with an appropriate crime type according to the SCRS and Crime Counting Rules.	Police Scotland – reporting officer/police staff
4.	Crime Management staff in each police division oversee the crime records.	Police Scotland – Crime Management Staff
5.	Check downloads – daily check to ensure data has been provided from each crime recording system.	Police Scotland – ICT and Demand Productivity Unit
6.	Check compliance with the SCRS. Crime Registrars provide independent scrutiny to assure the quality of crime records by undertaking audits. The national structure and links between crime registrars help to ensure data is consistent.	Crime Registrars
7.	Check extracts are complete and correct – sense check and comparisons on legacy system data.	Police Scotland – Demand Productivity Unit
8.	Crime reviews (from point 1 to point 8). HMICS assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of crime recording by Police Scotland and the extent to which recording practice complies with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules.	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS)
9.	Carry out checks according to the Government Statistical Service guidance to verify the validity of Police Scotland data. These consider whether the derived aggregated statistics are meaningful, and whether changes in time series and discontinuities can be explained.	Scottish Government, Justice Analytical Services
10.	Check for areas of sensitivity and potential data confidentiality issues.	Scottish Government, Justice Analytical Services
11.	Peer reviews within Justice Analytical Services. Publication according to the Code of Practice for Statistics	Scottish Government, Justice Analytical Services
12.	**Recorded Crime in Scotland published**	Scottish Government, Justice Analytical Services

10.2 Structure of the Quality Assurance section

This QA section provides evidence on:

- the suitability of the administrative data for use in producing National Statistics;
- factors that the statistical producer needs to take into account in producing the National Statistics;
- the information that users need to know to make informed use of the statistics.

This section should satisfy users that safeguards are in place to measure and report crime statistics, and that steps are in (or continue to be put in) place to improve processes and systems. Its purpose is to build users' confidence in the use of administrative data for statistical purposes and support their correct application in analysis. It also demonstrates what we do to deliver the highest quality data for users in the most proportionate way.

While the assurance processes and systems detailed must be taken in context with the information on limitations and risks of the data, the Scottish Government believes that there is sufficient evidence to provide users with confidence in the Police Recorded Crime Statistics.

This QA section is structured in accordance with the UKSA's aforementioned guidance on QA of administrative data, and the evidence is arranged around the key QA stages in the 'data journey':

Chapter 11 - Operational context and administrative data collection

In this chapter, we demonstrate and describe for users how we understand the environment and processes in which Recorded Crime in Scotland data are compiled and the factors which might affect the quality of the data. Includes QA Stage One - Dynamic capture of incident and crime data at source and QA Stage Two - Classifications of Crime and Incidents.

Chapter 12 - Communication with data supply partners

This chapter provides evidence of how the Scottish Government maintains and develops strong and effective relationships with Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) as data suppliers. It provides the clarity and structure to enable us to maintain a good understanding of the approaches adopted by Police Scotland and the SPA to ensure consistency in recording and quality levels.

Chapter 13 - QA principles, standards and quality checks by suppliers

This chapter describes the principles, processes and checks that are conducted by Police Scotland, and how these results are used to ensure continuous improvement

of the statistics. The work of other independent auditors, including HMICS and the SPA is also included here. Includes QA Stage Three - Updating records and revisions analysis and QA Stage Four - Police Scotland internal and external reports – scrutiny and checking.

Chapter 14 - Producer's QA investigations and documentation

This chapter includes the QA conducted by the Scottish Government. We set out how the findings from our own QA checks are supplemented by the knowledge gained through reviewing the other practice areas outlined above, and used to inform a published statement that sets out the basis of the producer's judgment about the quality of the administrative data. Includes QA Stage Five - Scottish Government Quality Assurance and publication of National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland.

Chapter 15 – Risks, limitations and challenges of the recorded crime data

This chapter includes an explanation of the limitations and risks of the underlying data, so that users can appreciate how these will affect their use of the statistics.

When considering the QA steps undertaken at each of these stages, relevant aspects of the UK Statistics Authority's Quality Management Actions (from the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data tool kit) have been considered. The key QA components that are currently in place or are being developed are listed below.

Quality Management Actions currently in place or under development

Investigate

- Police Scotland scrutiny of its data
- Scottish Government scrutiny of the data provided
- Crime Registrar's audit
- HMICS audit
- Bias, error and revisions analysis

Manage

- Scottish Crime Recording Board
- Strengthening relationships
- Feedback loops & learning processes
- Publishing audit reports
- Corroborating with other sources

Communicate

- Documentation of the statistical processes
- Regular dialogue between suppliers and providers
- Describe bias and errors to users
- User friendly website
- Statistics related updates for users (via ScotStat)

11. Operational context and administrative data collection

This section focusses on the environment and processes of Police Scotland as the collector of the data used to produce recorded crime statistics. We consider the operational context for the administrative data - why and how the data are collected and recorded, whether there are differences across areas in collection and recording of the data, and issues with data items - whether objective or based on subjective recording.

11.1 Background

The Scottish Government is responsible for the validation of police recorded crime data and the production and publication of police recorded crime statistics. The Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin presents statistics on crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland, disaggregated by crime/offence group and by local authority.

Police Scotland is responsible for operational policing in Scotland and is held to account by the Scottish Police Authority.

Police Scotland collect management information for operational policing purposes. This administrative data source is also used to provide the 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.

11.2 QA Stage One - Dynamic capture of incident and crime data at source

This section focuses on the capture of data in real time (as it happens), how the data are used for operational purposes (i.e. not for statistical purposes at this preliminary stage), and the immediate checking procedures that are in place.

11.2.1 Incident reporting

When a member of the public contacts the police to report a crime, the information provided is logged on an incident recording system. The police assess the circumstances of the incident and respond accordingly. Depending on the information supplied and the outcome of additional enquiries, the incident may result in the creation of one or more recorded crimes.

Police Scotland’s National Service Centre handles all incoming contacts via 999 and 101 as well as digital reporting via the Police Scotland Contactus (email) facility. Based across 3 sites located in Govan, Motherwell and Bilston Glen, the Service Centre operates 24 hours a day and employs over 500 staff. Incidents are recorded using a command and control incident recording system, STORM Unity, which provides a consistency in reporting.

The UNIFI crime recording system was rolled out across all Divisions in Scotland in December 2023.

The incident recording system is largely used for resource allocation purposes to deal with reported incidents. It captures the necessary information required to determine (in the first instance) whether it is likely that a crime has been committed. If that is the case, a crime report is raised on the crime recording system. The two systems operate independently. The incident recording system is not used extensively for statistical purposes, although Police Scotland does provide a breakdown of incident types in their Quarterly Management Information publication.

Over the financial year 2022-23, there were over 1.4 million incidents recorded on the systems (over 4,000 per day).

Once an incident is raised, an initial assessment is made and given an initial classification – the final classification may differ from the initial classification. Indicators are added such as whether there is a hate element (racism, sexual orientation, etc.).

Following the initial assessment, there are four outcomes:

1. No crime committed (no crime report raised);
2. Associated with another incident (where more than one person reports the same incident);
3. Transferred to another Force (where the case requires to be dealt with outside the Scottish Police Force); or
4. Crime committed (crime report raised).

11.2.2 Recorded Crime

Once a police officer has decided that a crime has occurred in relation to an incident (note that an incident may have a number of different crimes associated with it) then a crime report is created on the crime recording system. The crime is recorded with an appropriate crime type and assigned a Crime Reference number.

A detailed list of Charge Codes, as approved by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), are used by the police to record the relevant crime types. This is maintained on a monthly basis by the Scottish Government and circulated to crime registrars, to individuals within Police Scotland and to those within partner justice organisations.

11.3 QA Stage Two - Classifications of Crime and Incidents

This stage covers how a crime is defined. There are two crucially important elements to recording crime data for statistical and counting purposes. One is determining whether an incident involves a crime (or more than one crime), thus affecting the number of crimes counted. The other is determining the nature of crime and classifying it under the strict definitions in operation.

Two important aspects are ensuring consistency of recording across Scotland and consistency of recording over time (reflecting the changing nature of crime and how it's recorded).

11.3.1 Setting standards

Crime recording practice is governed by the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS). The SCRS provides a framework for deciding when an incident should be recorded as a crime, what type of crime should be recorded and how many crimes should be counted.

Further details are available in the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules chapter.

Details of the checks carried out are available in the QA principles, standards and quality checks by suppliers chapter.

12. Communication with Data Supply Partners

This chapter focusses on the relationship between Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and the Scottish Government (in terms of statistics production).

12.1 Cooperative relationships

This section considers how the Scottish Government establishes and maintains cooperative relationships with data suppliers, such as through a written agreement, identifying roles and responsibilities, understanding the process for data supply, scheduling and content specification, change management processes, and cooperative arrangements such as secondments.

12.1.1 Current Activity

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 and its associated secondary legislation and guidance set out the legislative framework and replaced previous legislation. Chapter 12 of the Act provides information related to co-operation and the exchange of information across the Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the SPA.

The Corporate Governance Framework was drawn up by the Scottish Government in consultation with the Scottish Police Authority (the Authority). It sets out the broad framework within which the Authority will operate and defines key roles and responsibilities which underpin the relationship between the Authority and the Scottish Government.

An Information Sharing Agreement is held between the Scottish Government and Police Scotland. This sets out the purpose of the data sharing, the relevant legislation and legal gateways, sets standards and helps both parties involved to be clear about their roles and responsibilities. The ISA is reviewed on an annual basis and updated where necessary.

12.1.2 Roles and responsibilities

The requirement to provide suitable statistical information to the Scottish Government is enshrined in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 mentioned above. Chapter 12 states that:

> (1) 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.
>
> (2) Such information may, in particular, relate to—
> (a) the Authority or its functions,
> (b) the Police Service or police functions,

(c) the state of crime.

(3) 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."

This ensures that the supply of data for Recorded Crime in Scotland is set in law.

12.1.3 Schedule

In compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics, the Scottish Government publish a timetable of statistical releases for twelve months ahead. The Scottish Government year-ahead schedule of publications provides information on the type, title, date of publication and contact details.

Since August 2022, the Scottish Government has published a quarterly Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin. This provides the latest statistics for the year ending the most recent quarter. Below are the publication months and the time periods they will contain:

- Year ending 31 March, published in June (previous annual publication)
- Year ending 30 June, published in August,
- Year ending 30 September, published in November,
- Year ending 31 December, published in February.

The year ending 31 March edition constitutes the main annual bulletin, and as such contains longer term analysis and additional commentary. This includes annual information on clear up rates and the estimated volume and type of cyber-crime recorded by the police. For this reason the release date is one month later than the other three quarterly bulletins, to allow additional time to produce the statistics.

The other three release throughout the year provide data for the latest rolling 5 years.

The Scottish Government provides Police Scotland with the publication plan in particular stating when the Scottish Government will be sending the data template to Police Scotland, when they should return it by and the planned publication date.

The Scottish Government and Police Scotland agree when Police Scotland will provide the Recorded Crime in Scotland data.

12.1.4 Content specification

Police Scotland are responsible for the content of their data collection and the Scottish Government are responsible for the content of the Recorded Crime in Scotland publication. The content of the publication is retained as far as possible to ensure continuity of data, though when changes are required, they are subject to formal Scottish Government statistical practice. Changes to the data entry and collection do not always take account of the consequences on the data for Recorded Crime in Scotland publication, however, updates to IT systems go through a request for change process in which downward data streams are considered for any knock on effects.

In terms of the content of the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin, any changes in this publication are the subject of a formal consultation complying with Scottish Government and UKSA rules. For more information see the Consultations section.

12.2 Change management process

Changes related to data collections and transfer, including the specification of the data required by the Scottish Government for the Recorded Crime in Scotland publication are discussed in regular meetings and implemented as required.

Changes are currently reported to users through a ScotStat notice and also in the statistical reports.

12.2.1 Crime code reviews

When a crime report is recorded it is allocated a crime type. This is converted into a crime code for Recorded Crime in Scotland purposes and these codes are subject to constant review, for example with legislative or definitional changes. There is a well-established process in relation to any changes relating to crime codes e.g. introduction of new crime codes following the introduction of new legislation, including correspondence with Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and discussions at meetings with the crime registrars. All changes to the crime codes must be approved by the Scottish Crime Recording Board. For more information see Classification of crimes and offences chapter.

12.2.2 Publication changes

If there are any proposals for changes to the publication, the Scottish Government Policy on Revisions and Corrections states that:

> "We will give as much notice as possible of changes to methodology, definitions or any other changes likely to lead to revisions along with an indication of their possible scale and nature.
>
> As far as possible we will consult users before making changes that affect statistics (for example, to coverage, definitions, or methods) or to publications.

Revisions will be subject to the same arrangements for publication and pre-announcement as other releases. Notification of forthcoming revisions will be included on the Scottish Government forthcoming publications schedule. We will also notify key users by e-mail.

We will provide a statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the same time as they are released.

Ideally previous versions of publications and data tables containing unrevised figures will be replaced and archived. This may not always be feasible. As a minimum all unrevised figures will be clearly marked and contain a link to the revised figures.

We will ensure that where time series are revised, or changes are made to methods or coverage, we produce consistent historical data, wherever possible, and user guidance. If it is not possible to produce consistent historical data then advice on potential effects will be given where possible."

The Scottish Government include information about the nature and extent of changes made to police crime records, and how to interpret these changes, in its corporate policy statement on its current practice on revisions and corrections.

Future changes to methods or classifications are announced in advance of the publication of Recorded Crime in Scotland through the release of emails to the ScotStat users email list (open to all expert and non-expert users who have expressed an interest in being kept informed about crime statistics). Such changes are also recorded in the Structure of crime and offence classifications chapter.

12.3 Regular communications

The Scottish Government uses the ScotStat mailing list for contacting and consulting users who have registered an interest in Recorded Crime in Scotland. The consultations chapter contains more information about feedback from previous consultations and upcoming consultations.

Scottish Government statisticians also attend the aforementioned Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB). These meetings are an opportunity to share experiences and discuss emerging issues relating to the police recorded crime statistics and the recording of the underlying administrative data. Through the SCRB, Scottish Government statisticians have had access to Police Scotland crime systems to conduct analysis of crime reports. Further information on the SCRB is available in the SCRB chapter.

Recorded Crime Statisticians maintain contact with data providers through regular communications, including monthly meetings with data providers and visiting data providers within Police Scotland. Such meetings provide a forum for Recorded Crime Statisticians to consult with data providers and bring any changes to data collection requirements to their attention. It also provides a forum for Police Scotland to advise

Recorded Crime Statisticians of any forthcoming changes to their administration systems that may affect the data collection.

There are regular secondments to HMICS from Police Scotland. The specialist nature of Justice Analytical Services, within the Scottish Government, makes inward secondments less feasible, but police policy division often employ police secondees. All of these connections help to ensure understanding across the different sectors of Recorded Crime in Scotland.

13. Data suppliers' Quality Assurance principles, standards and quality checks

This section focuses on the quality assurance (QA) procedures that Police Scotland have in place. It also considers the role of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in holding Police Scotland to account, for example by scrutinising their performance data.

13.1 Initial Quality Assurance processes

13.1.1 Incidents

When incidents are reported by the public to Police Scotland, the Service Advisor and Controller will carry out a thorough check of all the information being submitted (or equivalent person if the incident is being reported at a police station). This then allows a Service Advisor and/or controller to make a grading decision on the severity of the incident – which will in turn dictate the police response. For the higher graded calls (i.e. those of a more severe nature that may require an emergency response) – a resource will be dispatched to deal with the incident. For the lower graded calls, where an immediate response is not critical, the call may be transferred to the Resolution Team, who will liaise with the caller and may arrange an appointment with an officer as necessary or record a crime direct.

In addition to the checks made at the time of the initial report, some divisions also have incident review officers who will assess incidents that have been phoned in to ensure information has been entered and recorded accurately. This tends to focus on high-risk areas, such as victim-based incidents (like violent or sexual crime).

An incident will remain open until it has been closed by the area control room or Resolution Team, for onward management within the local division. When an incident has been closed, it must show whether or not a crime has been committed. If a crime has taken place then a crime report must be raised, and cross referred to the original incident (and vice-versa). If no crime has occurred (and the incident has been closed as a no-crime incident) then the incident must contain sufficient information to dispel the initial inference of criminality. An incident that provides a disposal of ‘no complaint’ is insufficient to negate any initial suggestion at the time of reporting that a crime had occurred. In some cases the Officer attending may report back the details as to the outcome of the incident to the Control Room, to allow application of the decision directly onto the incident.

HMICS conducted an audit of call handling and logging in 2015, followed up by update reports in 2017 and 2018 and by a review of the early implementation of the Contact Assessment Model in 2019. Both HMICS and Police Scotland also carry out regular audits of crime-related incidents, to ensure information has been recorded accurately (See Stage 2) and that all crime-related incidents lead to the creation of an associated crime report (covered in more detail below). This work also includes

sampling those incidents that were closed as non-crimes to ensure this decision was accurate and based on sufficient information to justify the decision not to crime.

13.1.2 Recorded Crime

Once a crime is established, a crime report is created, and this becomes the main vehicle for recording details of the investigation as it progresses.

An officer first enters the details of the crime in to the crime recording system (either manually directly onto the crime recording system, or by mobile working device). These details include location, time, victim details such as gender, age and address, witness details, and various flags such as alcohol involved, etc.

Officers are required to complete the crime report as soon as possible, preferably by the end of their tour of duty. There can be circumstances when a crime report is delayed, however the Scottish Crime Recording Standard states that this delay should not extend beyond 72 hours unless there are exceptional circumstances. All delays in recording crime which extend beyond 72 hours must have an explanation detailed in the incident report.

Once the initial report is raised, it is reviewed by the Crime Management Unit (CMU). Each division has a CMU, consisting of a crime manager and a supporting team. The CMU reads the circumstances of the crime report and assesses whether it has been recorded in line with the Scottish Crime Recording Standards.

Whilst the CMU may change the crime type or number of crimes relating to an incident – most often they will seek clarification from officers on specific details, to ensure crimes are recorded accurately. From the initial entry of the crime report into the crime recording system to the final sign-off, the CMU has the ability to dip into cases and flag up queries and reminders for the necessary information required to finalise the crime report. Through this process dialogue and feedback will flow between the relevant officers, their supervisors and the CMU – as records are updated and investigations progress. This will continue until such time as the officer's supervisor and CMU is satisfied that the crime report can be closed.

Each crime report retains an auditable trail of the queries raised by CMU as the case moves forward and officers' responses to them. The CMU can ask the Crime Registrars (who audit the quality of recorded crime, see Section 2) to intervene as necessary, to ensure crimes are appropriately recorded.

The points overleaf illustrate some of the more generic queries or comments that can be raised by the CMU as part of their role of quality assuring crime information.

- In incidents which potentially include multiple crimes – the CMU will remind officers to ensure that information is appropriately cross-referenced with other relevant records, to help ensure the total number of crimes are counted correctly.

Similar to the above, the CMU will seek to tease out the precise number of crimes in incidents reported where there may be more than one complainer or more than one type of crime. An example could be where a report of vandalism implies a second complainer beyond the main one referred to in the original report (through damage to two people's property). In this case the CMU would seek clarification about what happened to this second person and whether a second crime had taken place. Many incidents can also contain multiple types of crime – such as vandalism, breach of the peace and assault, and the CMU will review these carefully to ensure all crime is being classified and recorded in line with the counting rules and standards.

In cases involving injuries to a complainer, the CMU will prompt and remind officers to include updates on medical treatment and prognosis - including where insufficient information on injuries has been included in the initial record. This is a critical QA function as the nature of assault-based injuries will determine whether an incident is statistically counted as a serious assault or a common assault with or without injury).

The CMU also reminds officers to notify it if new information comes to light which may require changes to a crime's classification. Further updates should be timely and complainers should be kept informed.

The above section demonstrates that throughout the process of recording incidents and crimes, a considerable amount of scrutiny takes place involving a large number of officers and dedicated staff, to ensure crimes are recorded consistently and ethically.

13.2 Proactive Systemic Data Checks

The primary standard for recorded crime data in Scotland is the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS). The Standard advises on the recording of crime and is supported by 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'. Further information is available in the SCRS chapter.

The SCRS also requires that regular audits of crime recording are carried out to check that incidents are recorded correctly and to check whether recorded crimes have been counted and classified correctly. There are two regular audits of the data with respect to compliance with the SCRS: the first is a systematic and routine check by the Crime Registrars; the second, an independent regulatory audit by HMICS (as detailed below). Police Scotland audits are carried out in accordance with an established methodology developed by Police Scotland.

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the SCRS (and associated counting rules) lies with the Chief Constable of Police Scotland, discharged on a daily basis to the appointed Crime Registrars. All crime reports are subject to the

rules set out in the SCRS which are under constant review. Updates will normally be effective from 1 April each year.

The Command Area Crime Registrars sit within Governance, Audit and Assurance and operate independently of Divisions. In addition to their function of ensuring compliance with the SCRS, they provide guidance and training. Further information is available in the Crime Registrars chapter.

Each of the thirteen Police Scotland divisions has a Crime Manager who is responsible for local crime recording practices in their respective divisions.

The Crime Registrars are responsible for conducting audit of recording practices relating to:

- Crime Related Incidents and Associated Recorded Crime
- Crime Records Reclassified to 'No Crime' - these are reversals of an original assumption that an incident was a crime, based on additional information – for example a broken window may at first sight be considered an act of vandalism but further investigation confirms it was an accident.

The audit methodology is presently under review following HMICS Audit 2020 Inspection report.

The audits do not presently cover the 'clear-up' (detections) of crimes and offences.

This ongoing scrutiny provides an additional checking function highlighting consistency or differing practices between divisions, identifying common occurring errors where more explicit guidance might be necessary and differing performance between individuals' judgements. Each audit is followed up with targeted training and support, whereby a report on each division's results is prepared – to facilitate discussions with the local crime management team around any problems identified. The Registrars also retain the ability to conduct short-term follow up audits if significant room for improvement is flagged up for a particular division or crime type.

The results of these audits are provided to the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee of the Scottish Police Authority. In addition to this, the SCRB receives reports from the National Crime Registrar on the internal audit programme of police crime and offence data, and progress made in meeting recommendations from HMICS and previous internal audits. This gives everyone involved in the process of quality assuring and (or) producing the National Statistics an opportunity to discuss the results of these audits and raise any queries.

The results of these audits should also be seen in perspective with the other quality checks in place, especially the daily checking of all current records by the divisional supervisors.

Recorded crime data is collated by the Police Scotland in-house Demand & Productivity Unit which works to strict quality procedures. The Demand & Productivity Unit provides data for Police Scotland to assess its own performance and to report to the SPA.

13.3 Quality assurance safeguards

Recorded Crime in Scotland data is produced by Police Scotland about Police Scotland. Therefore, strict independence of reporting from core business is required to avoid any undue influence on the data.

Crime managers, who carry out the first level of checking of crime reports, have no responsibility to achieve targets and should therefore be free of influence, however their division does aim to achieve increased performance.

Crime registrars have no responsibility to achieve targets and are conscious of their role in maintaining an ethical approach to reporting and HMICS provides independent scrutiny of both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority to deliver services that are high quality, continually improving, effective and responsive to local needs.

The SPA exists to hold Police Scotland to account. They have a set of Performance Standards, derived from the Policing Principles, to hold the Chief Constable to account. They use Recorded Crime in Scotland as part of the evidence base to inform member briefings.

The SCRS is generally updated and published on an annual basis . Changes are approved via the Scottish Crime Recording Board (see Chapter 9).

One of the advantages of Police Scotland is the opportunity to improve the consistent application of the SCRS as only through such an approach can the public have full confidence and understanding as to the true extent of crime taking place.

13.4 Quality reports for the data

Crime registrars carry out an annual audit. These audits are fed back to divisional commanders, assistant chief constables in each command area and Police Scotland audit and risk board. The reports contain detail appropriate to the audience and actions, such as training and guidance, are taken on the basis of them.

The SPA has a statutory role in scrutinising the performance of Police Scotland. Established under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, its main functions are to maintain the police service, promote the policing principles and continuous improvement in the policing of Scotland, and to hold the chief constable to account. The SPA also provides independent scrutiny of Police Scotland's Performance by assessing delivery of both Police Scotland and SPA in delivery of the current Strategic Police Plan and associated business planning. The SPA has a role in

mitigating any risks of inconsistency or reporting conflicts through the Policing Committee and subsequently to the SPA Board.

It is evident from the work undertaken by crime registrars that high levels of service and investigation are being delivered across Police Scotland, despite some recording process errors being identified. Crime registrars are focussed on ensuring that such errors are overcome and that improvement activities will improve SCRS compliance rates moving forward.

13.5 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) audits

Reviews of incident and crime recording have formed a regular part of the HMICS scrutiny programme in recent years. Crime Audit 2020 was laid before parliament in March 2021, which follows similar audits of crime recording carried out by HMICS in 2016, 2014 and 2013 (conducted shortly after the creation of Police Scotland). These previous assessments were broadly satisfied with the arrangements at the time, while making specific recommendations for improvements, which were followed up in subsequent reviews. Following the most recent audit (Crime Audit 2020) an Action Plan to address the recommendations is being progressed by Police Scotland.

These audits provide an independent assessment of the state, efficiency and effectiveness of crime recording by Police Scotland and the extent to which recording practice complies with the SCRS and Counting Rules. They test the accuracy of both incident and crime recording in Scotland, and provide an independent layer of assurance to the data.

13.5.1 HMICS Crime Audit 2020

The most recent audit of incident and crime recording in 2020 found Police Scotland's compliance with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules is generally good at over 90%, although below the service's own target of 95% compliance. 91.4% of incidents had been closed correctly (Test 1) and 90.8% of crime was counted and classified correctly (Test 2). These compliance rates were lower than those found in the previous audit in 2016 when the results were 92.7% and 95.1% respectively.

Key Findings:

- There remains scope for improvement in the recording of sexual crime. 90.3% of sexual incidents were closed correctly (90.0% in 2016). However, only 86.1% were counted and classified correctly, lower than 2016 (91.4%). Only 80.1% were recorded within 72 hours of being reported to the police (83.9% in 2016).
- Of the 478 sexual crime records audited 58 (12.1%) were cyber-enabled crimes and 39 (67.2%) correctly had a cyber marker applied.

There remains scope for improvement in the recording of violent crime. 89.6% of violent incidents were closed correctly and 91.1% of violent crimes were counted and classified correctly, both lower than the audit results of 2016 (93% and 96% respectively). 92.2% of violent crimes were recorded within 72 hours of the incident being reported to the police (94.6% in 2016)

In the 2020 Crime Audit HMICS looked at domestic abuse offences, a category not examined in previous audits. Compliance for domestic abuse offences is good. 94.6% of domestic abuse incidents were closed correctly, a higher compliance rate than the other categories examined. 92.6% of domestic abuse crime records were counted and classified correctly. 95.2% of domestic abuse crimes were recorded within 72 hours of the incident being reported to the police, with ten of the thirteen divisions achieving over 95% compliance.

No-crimes relate to incidents where a crime report was created, but following investigation found not to be a crime. The audit found 94.4% of no crime decisions were correct, which is good. In 2016, the result was 96%. Three divisions achieved 100%: Lothians and the Scottish Borders, Greater Glasgow and Lanarkshire.

Divisional results varied, and compliance rates were lower than those found in 2016 in many areas. One division, Lanarkshire, performed better than Scotland as a whole in all categories of audit . The performance of one division, Dumfries and Galloway, had deteriorated since 2016 when it was found to perform consistently well. HMICS was told this was due to a period of temporary staff shortages.

Having identified that many issues in earlier audits were yet to be resolved, HMICS closed all previous recommendations and incorporated all outstanding issues within a set of six new recommendations for PS around their operational oversight of crime recording. HMICS urged Police Scotland to use the recommendations as a basis for an improvement plan which could be monitored and reported on regularly. This resulted in the Police Scotland Action plan. HMICS continues to monitor the progress of the Action plan and the six recommendations.

The full audit report can be accessed online. You can also access information on previous audits on the HMICS website.

13.5.2 Future HMICS Audits

There is not currently a confirmed date for the next Crime Audit, however HMICS has committed in its Scrutiny Plan 2022-2025 to undertake a further Crime Audit. In its latest review of the plan, HMICS stated it would defer the planned Crime Audit into Year 1 of its next 3-year programme (likely to be 2025/26) to allow for full implementation of the new national police Crime Management System. This audit will also consider, for the first time, detection of crime.

13.6 Conclusion (from the audits)

Evidence from the various audits conducted suggests that the accuracy of recorded crime data remains good at the national level (although some variation persists at the divisional level).

The value of both Police Scotland and HMICS audits is of most benefit when used constructively to improve officers' understanding of the crime classification system and how to get the classifications correct, first time. Internal circulations within Police Scotland suggest ongoing improvement, and as part of its standard functions the SCRB will continue to consider how all the audit activity undertaken can best inform and provide assurance to users of both Police Scotland's management information and the published National Statistics.

13.7 QA Stage Three - Updating records and revisions analysis

This stage considers how records can change over time as the information is refined. It considers how to present statistics derived from snapshot information and how such changes could be reported on.

13.7.1 Operational processes

One of the challenges of the recorded crime databases is that they are dynamic, i.e. constantly changing in real time as police investigations develop. Care is taken to analyse data from well regulated extracts so to ensure consistency of reporting.

Most aspects of recording crimes are subject to revisions from the initial recording of an incident to the final recording of a specific crime. Details of the crime report might change as investigations progress and intelligence is gleaned. Further information on this is available in the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules and the No Crime Records chapters.

Once the crime report is effectively finalised, changes only take place to the report if further information comes to light, even though other related information might provide a contextual update – i.e. if a court comes to a different decision than the police.

13.7.2 Quality Assurance procedures: Police Scotland Management Information

Police Scotland advise that when presenting analysis based on quarterly extracts of data, care needs to be taken when interpreting the results, given amendments to crime reports can always arise after the initial crime report is entered onto the crime recording system. Care needs to be taken when making statements, especially about fluctuations, as there will always remain the possibility that figures could be revised in future extracts of the data.

Further information on additional checks are available in the section/chapter on Producer's QA investigations and documentation.

13.8 QA Stage Four - Police Scotland internal and external reports – scrutiny and checking

This stage provides details on the Management Information (MI) reports Police Scotland produce for both internal purposes and public use. It also provides details of the data scrutiny and QA arrangements in place to mitigate the risk of errors occurring in the data extraction and report preparation processes.

13.8.1 Publications and Management Information Reports

Police Scotland publishes statistical information on a quarterly basis in the form of MI releases, typically around two months after the period to which they relate. These include:

- A quarterly MI Report for Scotland as a whole.
- A quarterly MI Report for each Council Area.
- A quarterly MI Report for each Police Division.

The figures in these reports provide provisional data for the current year and revised data for the previous year. These MI releases are not classified as Official Statistics and Police Scotland is not a registered producer of Official Statistics. They are produced to demonstrate Police Scotland's commitment to transparency (alongside other regular reporting activity to the Scottish Police Authority).

The data for these releases is also the main source of information for the Scottish Government's *Recorded Crime in Scotland* publications (quarterly National Statistics products). The figures in the Q4 MI release will in theory be consistent with the annual (year ending March) National Statistics publication (although they may end up differing as a consequence of amendments following QA carried out by Scottish Government statisticians – see Stage 5).

Police Scotland manages performance internally through the use of dynamic dashboards and oversight from various boards at national, regional and local levels. Performance reporting consists of:

- Annual Police Plan Bi-Annual Report (produced at the end of quarter 2 and combined with Chief Constable's Year End report at the end of quarter 4). This fully supports the legislative requirement to report on progress of the activities contained within the Annual Police Plan.

- Quarterly Performance Report (produced at the end of each quarter). This supports legislative reporting requirements but also provides a wider and more detailed picture of traditional policing performance measures,

supplemented with additional insight and narrative to the many different aspects of policing and corporate support functions.

- Chief Constable's Year End Report (produced at the end of quarter 4). Section 39 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act, 2012, SPA must prepare the Annual Review of Policing as soon as practicable after the end of each reporting year. In service of this report, the Chief Constable is required to provide, within three months of the end of the reporting year 2021/22, an assessment of the performance of the Police Service.

13.8.2 Scrutiny and Quality Assurance processes

This section provides details about the scrutiny and QA Police Scotland carry out in the process of preparing reports for public and internal consumption. This is set out in three sections: (a) routine data scrutiny and checking (b) diagnostic and analytical scrutiny; and (c) research and cross referencing of data.

13.8.2.1 (a) Routine data scrutiny and checking

The SEBP Data Repository is used by Police Scotland to pull together crime data from legacy forces and aggregate the information needed for national reporting purposes.

The SEBP Data Repository is used by the Statistical team within the DPU for many of their routine report outputs and adhoc analysis. Both SQL and SPSS are used to extract and process the data. Results are often exported to Excel as an intermediary step before preparing the final published product.

The SPSS code is often complex and well documented, with considerable attention to detail, e.g. re-coding records to correct recording differences between divisions.

As part of the processing of data, the SPSS code often includes routines to produce frequencies and cross-tabulations of existing and derived variables. This acts as a double-check for potential errors occurring as a result of recoding and aggregation, mitigating the risk of errors being introduced in the processing stage. Police Scotland have implemented additional internal quality assurance and checks for potential outliers since the completion of the UNIFI system roll out.

Processed data is scrutinised carefully when translated into final reports. This involves consistency checking between result sets, ensuring consistency between products, and checking totals, percentages etc. within result sets are calculated correctly. Reports are peer reviewed and signed off at a senior level prior to publication.

It is important that the data underpinning publications is held in a snapshot form (so that the content of publications can be replicated) and that the option remains for additional historical scrutiny and analysis if required.

Reports are shared widely across the police service and with relevant partner bodies (such as local authorities and the SPA). Feedback received may include queries on the data itself, but more often will ask for reasons behind levels or changes in the data, in order to understand trends or unusual figures.

It is rare for errors to be made in publications. When made, these are corrected either immediately or in the next release (depending on severity and frequency).

13.8.2.2 (b) Diagnostic and analytical scrutiny

A considerable amount of scrutiny over the data set is conducted within Police Scotland, mainly looking at emerging trends, geospatial analysis and outlier/exception spotting. Much of this analysis feeds into internal strategic reports that provide intelligence complimenting the data. Police Scotland use diagnostic products to interrogate its data and analyse trends. Exception reporting is undertaken whereby regular business intelligence analysis is carried out to understand trends for a range of crime types and performance indicators. This analysis is used to highlight both high and low levels of data in real time.

13.8.2.3 (c) Research and Cross-referencing of data

The incident recording system (STORM Unity) gathers information about the incident leading to the decision of whether a crime has been committed, before opening a crime report on the crime recording system. The crime report holds the incident reference number (where applicable), so that crimes may be related to incidents. Many incidents recorded do not result in a crime report and a unique incident may generate a number of different crimes.

At present the quarterly MI reports provide information on the number of incident types by force, division and local authority for the year to date compared with the previous year's figures.

13.9 Future developments

As of December 2023 a new national IT crime system has now been rolled out across all Divisions.

A data sub-group including representatives from Scottish Government and Police Scotland has been set up to consider the impact of the new Police Scotland crime management system (UNIFI) and to assess the capabilities of the system with respect to statistical reporting and data analysis. This group will develop recommendations on future analysis that could be produced as Official Statistics, with the use of UNIFI data. The group will report these recommendations to the Scottish Crime Recording Board for consideration. Users will be kept informed of any developments via ScotStat.

14. Producer's Quality Assurance investigations and documentation

This section looks at the Scottish Government's checks to consider whether the derived aggregated statistics are meaningful and seem correct.

14.1 Scottish Crime Recording Board

The Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) was set up 'to act as the guardian of, and ultimate decision maker on, issues related to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard'. It has three high level objectives: to support the production of accurate and objective statistics on crime in Scotland; to ensure crime data are comprehensive, consistent, transparent and trustworthy; and, to take into account the needs of both users and providers in the production of crime statistics, and to ensure this process is undertaken in a manner consistent with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The SCRB also provides support to HMICS in their Crime Audits.

Further details are available in the Scottish Crime Recording Board chapter.

14.2 QA Stage Five - Scottish Government Quality Assurance and publication of National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland

Scottish Government statisticians receive data from Police Scotland on a quarterly basis. The data are in the form of aggregate information, showing the number of crimes and detections recorded each quarter by crime code for each local authority in Scotland.

The data supplied is based on an extract from Police Scotland's live database. This data extract is referred to as MKQ (Made Known Quarterly) as the records are of crimes and offences that have been brought to the attention of the police. The dataset contains revisions to earlier quarters, most often due to details changing as crime investigations progress (see Stage Three), as well as figures for the latest quarter.

The data is used to produce the quarterly statistical bulletin series Recorded Crime in Scotland and to help with answers to ad-hoc queries, parliamentary questions and Freedom of Information requests. The statistical bulletins provide users with valuable insight into how the volume and nature of crime in Scotland changes over time.

The quarterly Accredited Official Statistics bulletins present information on the number of crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland in the most recent 12 months (year ending June, year ending September and year ending December). It also includes a comparison with the equivalent four previous years.

The annual (or year ending March) publications provide additional and more detailed commentary on the recording of crimes and offences, including time series analysis over the longer term (back to 1971), statistics on cyber-crimes and clear-up rates.

14.2.1 Quality Assurance processes

Whilst Scottish Government statisticians investigate the data provided in detail each quarter (the checking of data across the most recent four quarter period to ensure data consistency both as the year progresses and against the previous year's quarterly data), their main focus is on the end-year aggregates for inclusion in the annual statistical bulletin. The Quality Assurance (QA) checks take two forms: an in-depth look at how the current year's figures compared with those of the previous year; and a trends analysis looking for irregularities in time series data for broad aggregates.

14.2.1.1 Detailed current year checks

These checks are generated by the Scottish Government's SAS system and used to process the long-term current and historic information for publication. The system compares the latest year's figures to previous years for crime codes, by each local authority. It highlights instances where the data might warrant further investigation based on whether all the following conditions are met:

- The absolute percentage difference is greater than or equal to 25%,
- AND the absolute difference in number is greater than or equal to 20,
- AND the previous year's figure was greater than or equal to 10.

14.2.1.2 Manual long term analysis

This check looks at longer term trends at a crime group level for each local authority. This analysis highlights unusual breaks in the trend, prompting further investigation.

This all generates a detailed list of queries on anything that may at first appear unusual in the data, that the Scottish Government sends to Police Scotland's Analysis and Performance Unit (APU) for further investigation.

In response to the queries raised from the above checks, Police Scotland provide Scottish Government Statisticians with explanatory commentary based on their knowledge and intelligence, such as local initiatives and operations, which is then reflected where appropriate in the statistical publication.

During the QA checking process, it is possible for errors to be found in both the new reporting year's data as well as the data for previous years. Where errors are identified in the new reporting year's data, corrections are made. While we do not routinely revise figures for previous years, we are committed to correcting errors in the data and providing suitable explanations for any changes made to previously published data.

Following the conclusion of correspondence with Police Scotland, if Scottish Government Statisticians believe further investigation is required to understand the nature of any unusual or significant changes in the data, they have the option of raising this through the SCRB (for further information, see the SCRB chapter). This could lead to the SCRB asking the Crime Registrars to conduct a tailored audit of the relevant crime type to determine whether any change in recording practice had affected the final statistics. Further to this, statisticians would also seek to explore other sources of information to assess if they corroborate any new or developing trends in recorded crime (see the Corroborative analysis section below).

Once that stage of QA is completed, the data are then used to produce a set of data tables.

14.2.1.3 Revisions analysis

The Recorded Crime in Scotland Accredited Official Statistics bulletins are based on snapshot information extracted immediately following the year to which they relate (i.e. the 2023-24 (year ending March 2024) statistics will be based on data extracted and submitted by Police Scotland in April 2024). By comparing these figures with the equivalent snapshot in earlier years, statisticians can ensure that no systemic bias is introduced, despite any actual change in the data. There are therefore no planned revisions to report for future releases of the Accredited Official Statistics – notwithstanding that corrections to past data will always be made or highlighted to users where an error is discovered.

The bulletins include analysis on the extent of revisions made to recorded crime data following its original submission to Scottish Government Statisticians by Police Scotland. This compares the crime and offence data extracted by Police Scotland in the year it was initially extracted (i.e 2022-23 data extracted in April 2023 and published in June 2023) with the same set of data submitted one year later (i.e. 2022-23 crime and offence data extracted in April 2024). For more information see the Revisions Policy chapter.

This analysis confirms that the extent of further amendment to police crime and offence records is minimal at the Scotland level – giving users confidence that the published statistics remain a sufficiently accurate measure of police recorded crimes and offences. This analysis is completed annually to ensure that the extent of further amendment to data once it has been submitted to the Scottish Government remains minimal at the Scotland level and consistent with earlier years.

It is important that the impact of the ongoing revisions described above continues to be monitored as an aid to QA of the information. This relates both to Police Scotland's management information reports and the Scottish Government's Accredited Official Statistics. Where relevant, explaining the extent of changes in the data is important to help user understanding, especially when considering changes over time.

14.2.1.4 Corroborative analysis

Within the bulletins on recorded crime, Statisticians will provide comparisons with other published data where this is felt to be of value to users. To date the main focus has been on comparisons with the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.

a. Comparison with the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS)

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS) provides a complementary measure of crime compared with police recorded crime statistics. The survey provides information on the criminal justice system, on people's perception of crime and their attitudes towards a range of issues.

One of the key strengths of the SCJS is its ability to capture crimes that are not reported to, and subsequently not recorded by, the police. The SCJS provides an estimate of all crimes committed and therefore, can be used in conjunction with Recorded Crime to estimate the proportion of crimes not reported to the police. The latest published SCJS data (relating to 2021-22) estimated that 29% of crimes, as defined by the SCJS, were reported to the police, down from around 40% of crimes in previous years.

The Scottish Government's Recorded Crime bulletin contains a section Overall trends - Police Recorded Crime and the SCJS. The analysis is also threaded throughout the Recorded Crime in Scotland commentary, ensuring that readers are reminded of the scope of the Recorded Crime in Scotland statistics as a set of the full picture of crime in Scotland.

The SCJS Main Findings publication features a chapter called 'Bringing Together Crime Statistics' which compares the two sources. This is done by examining three broadly comparable sub-groups of crime which are covered by each source: violent crime, acquisitive crime and vandalism. Around three-fifths (58%) of 'all SCJS crime', as measured by the 2021/22 SCJS, fall into categories that can be compared with police recorded crime.

The dual purpose of the analysis is to present a balanced picture of crime in Scotland informed by both the SCJS and Recorded Crime in Scotland (maximising value and minimising risk of misinterpretation), and also to highlight how we can use the two statistical products together as complementary sources i.e. describing the additional analysis that is possible, the results of that analysis and what it means.

b. Homicide

In addition to the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin, the Scottish Government also publishes an annual bulletin on Homicides in Scotland. The data used in this bulletin are collected separately from the data included in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin where the data are extracted from police recording systems at different time points. In this bulletin, homicide cases are included against the year in which the

incident that led to the homicide is first recorded by the police. This is not necessarily the year in which the victim dies, the year in which the perpetrator is brought to trial for the crime, or the year in which the case is finally disposed of by the courts. This leads to minor differences between the figures reported in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin and the Homicide publication, as well as those reported by Police Scotland. This is explained in greater detail in the Recorded Crime in Scotland publication.

c. Hospital emergency admissions

The Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins include analysis comparing the number of emergency hospital admissions for assault. These are published in the Unintentional Injuries statistical publication from Public Health Scotland, part of NHS Scotland.

It is not possible to make direct comparisons between the two sources (as not all cases of police recorded attempted murder or serious assault may include an emergency admission to hospital – treatment might only be required within the Accident & Emergency department or the complainer may not wish to seek medical advice). However, as these sources both generally relate to how Scotland's emergency services respond to the most serious types of assault, it would be anticipated that both should show similar trends over time. The analysis in the bulletin confirmed this was the case – with the same trend of significant reductions in activity apparent for both the police and hospital admissions. This provided an additional level of assurance on the Police Scotland data regarding attempted murder and serious assault.

d. Fire-raising

The Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins include analysis comparing the number of crimes for fire-raising collected by Police Scotland with data on the number of fires attended by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). These are published in the SFRS statistical bulletin Fire and Rescue Statistics in Scotland (Incident data).

Whilst it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the two sources (as many fires are caused accidentally rather than as a result of a crime, and a fire may have ended before SFRS was required to attend), both relate to how Scotland's emergency services respond to fire. As such it would be anticipated that both should show similar trends over time. The analysis in the bulletin confirmed this was the case – with the same trend of significant reductions in activity apparent for both the police and fire services. This provided an additional level of assurance on the Police Scotland data regarding fire-raising.

e. International or sub national comparisons

Reassurance may also be gained if similar trends witnessed in Scottish data are seen by other countries, particularly those in the rest of the United Kingdom (accepting that definitions and counting rules are likely to be different). Shared

knowledge and collaboration can lead to greater intelligence and insight into the data and the trends they show.

Statistics for the recorded number of crimes in Scotland are not directly comparable with statistics collected in England and Wales for the recorded number of notifiable offences. This is mainly due to differences in the counting rules; for notifiable offences the counting system is, wherever possible, victim based rather than offence based. Further information is available in the Comparability across the UK chapter.

f. Other bulletins

The Scottish Government publishes companion statistical bulletins to Recorded Crime in Scotland that are based on individual level crime and offence data on a number of topics. Further information on these other sources of data are available within Chapter 23: Other Scottish Government publications using police data.

g. Future Analysis

Scottish Government statisticians will continue to scope out further sources of information as potential candidates for new corroborative analysis in future bulletins, as and when they become available.

14.3 Technical report on the comparability of recorded crime data

14.3.1 Switching source of Recorded Crime statistics from Legacy Force data to SCOMIS.

Prior to 2013-14, and with the establishment of Police Scotland, a new IT system (ScOMIS) was developed. This collated crime reports from across the variety of systems used by the eight legacy police forces into one central information management system and supplied 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.

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.

The Scottish Government were 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, was 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.

For further information see the Technical Report.

14.3.2 Switching source of Recorded Crime statistics from SCOMIS to SEBP.

14.3.2.1 Background

Between 2013-14 and 2019-20, the National Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland were produced using data extracted from a single Police Scotland IT system, called the Scottish Operational and Management Information System (ScOMIS). This data was then provided to the Scottish Government on a quarterly basis for the production of the National Statistics (see Annex 1 for more information).

In 2019, Police Scotland developed a new data repository called the Source for Evidence Based Policing (SEBP). This was designed, in part, to replace ScOMIS and therefore become the new official source of information for the recorded crime National Statistics.

At the March 2021 Crime Board, members approved the switch from ScOMIS to SEBP for the production of the National Statistics. This commenced with the 2020-21 reporting year.

Since then, Justice Analytical Services, with support from Police Scotland analysts, have completed a technical review of the impact this switch in sources had on the 2020-21 crime data, with a summary provided below.

14.3.2.2 Methods

Police Scotland analysts provided a comparable dataset extracted from both ScOMIS and SEBP. These datasets included the number of crimes both recorded and cleared up, by local authority for the 2020-21 financial year. As these were drawn from a live operational database at a different time from the extract used for the National Statistics, the findings below are based on 2020-21 figures that will differ slightly from those presented elsewhere in the 2020-21 bulletin.

14.3.2.3 Total recorded crimes

There was a strong degree of alignment between ScOMIS and SEBP for recorded crime in 2020-21. The technical review found that a very small number of additional crimes (representing just 0.2% of all crimes recorded in 2020-21) were included in SEBP but not ScOMIS. Both sources also showed strong alignment in terms of clear-up rates for recorded crimes. In 2020-21, the clear-up rate recorded by ScOMIS was 56.6%, whilst for SEBP it was 56.7%, a difference of 0.1 percentage

points. As such the impact on time-series analysis of changing sources to SEBP is negligible at the Scotland level.

This minimal difference largely related to some additional crimes of Vandalism etc. being recorded in SEBP rather than ScOMIS. As such the inclusion of those crimes in SEBP represents a small improvement to the administrative processes used by Police Scotland to capture crime data for statistical purposes.

14.3.2.4 Total recorded offences

There was also a strong degree of alignment between ScOMIS and SEBP for recorded Miscellaneous offences in 2020-21. This technical review found that a very small number of these cases (representing just 0.2% of all crimes recorded in 2020-21) were included in SEBP but not ScOMIS. As such the impact on time-series analysis of changing sources to SEBP for Miscellaneous offences is also negligible at the Scotland level.

The largest identified difference between the two sources was for Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences, where some offence types such as Unlawful use of a motor vehicle, Speeding etc. had additional offences recorded in SEBP but not ScOMIS. This discrepancy represented only 3% of all Motor vehicle offences recorded in 2020-21 and as such the alignment between the two sources was still considered to be good.

14.3.2.5 Summary of findings

As highlighted above, this 2020-21 technical review on the impact of changing from ScOMIS to SEBP, found strong alignment between both administrative systems for recorded crime. Some small discrepancies were identified, specifically around crimes of vandalism (some of which appear in SEBP but haven't been drawn through within ScOMIS). Whilst they have a small to negligible impact at the national level, they are concentrated amongst particular crime types within specific local authorities and therefore may have a slightly greater impact in these areas.

Further information on this change in sources for the National Statistics, including the analysis underpinning the above summary, is available to users on request (Justice_Analysts@gov.scot) .

14.4 Summary of Scottish Government policy and guidance on quality

The Scottish Government produces and publishes official statistics in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics, and other relevant guidance, including the Government Statistical Service (GSS) quality guidance.

Recorded crime statistics are subject to assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation, to ensure that the statistics meet the professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The code of practice covers a range of

criteria, one field being the quality of statistics. For more information see the UK Statistics Authority chapter.

It is possible for errors to be found in previous years data during the QA checks. While figures are not routinely revised by the Scottish Government, errors in the data are corrected, and suitable explanations for any changes to previously published data are provided. The process for doing this is set out in the Scottish Government Official Statistics Policy - Revisions and Corrections.

15. Risks, limitations and challenges of the recorded crime data

15.1 Main Risks

Ethical recording of crime is integral to modern policing and it is vitally important that crime recording and disposal practices are capable of withstanding rigorous scrutiny.

The HMICS 2020 Crime Audit stated that:

“Despite a slight increase in recent years recorded crime in Scotland remains at one of the lowest levels since 1974. A wide range of users rely on recorded crime statistics to monitor trends, to develop policy, and to carry out research. The public can use the statistics as a source of information to assess how safe their local area is and whether crime is decreasing or increasing. The police can use crime statistics to monitor trends and variations, ensuring that resources are deployed appropriately. It is essential that crimes are recorded accurately by Police Scotland, and that users have confidence in the crime statistics published by the Scottish Government.”

The main risks are around users misunderstanding or misusing the Scottish Government Accredited Official Statistics. However, there are also risks around the collection, collation and presentation of the data in the publications.

Recorded Crime in Scotland needs to be correctly understood and interpreted to avoid misuse, and there are risks and limitations of the data that could affect their application.

For users of recorded crime statistics, it is important to understand exactly what the data means and what its limitations are. The QA chapters are intended to increase users’ understanding of how the data is collected and statistics are developed, which should in turn improve the credibility and trust in the data. Further detail on the users and uses of crime are available in the Users and uses of recorded crime statistics chapter.

This User Guide will be reviewed annually in order to ensure it remains both up-to-date and fit for purpose. Changes to this User Guide will be approved by the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB).

15.2 Limitations of the statistics

There are limitations to the Recorded Crime in Scotland data as published, partly due to the limitations and risks associated with using Police Scotland administrative data:

- Recorded Crime in Scotland is a statistical report of Police recorded crime. It is important to note that this is not all crime. Some incidents are not reported to the

police and so may not be recorded as crimes and only data from Police Scotland is included in the main findings and tables in the statistical bulletin. We do however include a chapter on the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey which adds additional data, to give a wider picture of all crime.

The statistical return from which most of the figures in the Recorded Crime bulletin are taken is a simple count of the numbers of crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by Police Scotland at local authority level. One return is made for each local authority in Scotland and these are aggregated to give a national total.

It is not currently possible to publish recorded crime data at a lower geography than this. However, information on a subset of crimes and offences are collected at a low area level (data zones) for the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). This currently includes crimes of violence; domestic house breaking; drugs crimes; minor assault; and crimes of vandalism;

Collecting aggregated numbers of crimes and offences means there is no information about victims, perpetrators or about the individual crimes or offences and incidents. It is not at present feasible to publish recorded crime data with victim or perpetrator data included.

It should be noted that the nomenclature of some crime codes do lend themselves to providing information about victims, such as Sexual assault which has separate crime codes for victims aged 16 and over, between 13 and 15 years, and under 13 years.

Scottish Government statisticians have supplemented this limited detail about crimes by conducting manual reviews of crime records in targeted areas in order to improve understanding and gain valuable insight into specific types of crime, including Common Assault, 'Other sexual crimes', Fraud and most recently Cyber-crime.

Only data from Police Scotland are included in the main findings and tables in the bulletin. 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 section of the bulletin.

Amendments (such as the deletion of incidents found on investigation not to be criminal) will always arise after the end of the financial year and submission of data to the Scottish Government. However, new analysis on the extent of further amendment to police crime and offence records following their original submission, confirmed such changes to be minimal at the Scotland level. See Revisions Policy for more information.

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. This is an important distinction.

Trends in Recorded Crime in Scotland do not always demonstrate the obvious outputs; for example, if Police Scotland were to carry out a campaign on domestic violence, the increased attention and reporting of this type of crime could imply a rise in domestic violence, whereas the reality may be a positive picture of increased police activity, ultimately resulting in less domestic violence.

15.3 Challenges in using administrative data

Data producers should be very clear with users about the issues around the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. There can be limitations arising from differences in definitions preferred in the statistical and operational situations, changes in the operational definitions and circumstances over time, or a lack of standardisation in data collection procedures, IT systems and differing local policies and priorities.

Possible challenges in using administrative data for statistical purposes with respect to Recorded Crime in Scotland statistics are shown in Table 15.3.

Broadly these risks to the quality of the Recorded Crime in Scotland data can occur at:

the data collection stage – what is entered into the police recording system and how it is categorised;

at the transfer into SEBP for transmission to the Scottish Government;

at the statistical analysis and report writing stage; or

at the interpretation and use stage.

Potential risks in reporting and collecting crime data include under or over reporting, misclassification, processing errors, IT collation errors, analysis and interpretation errors.

Table 15.3: Challenges and mitigations of using administrative data

Risk	Mitigating action/people
Lack of standardised application of data collection: • inconsistencies in how divisions of Police Scotland interpret guidance • differences in the use of UNIFI crime recording system during transition from local systems for recording crime • the distortive effects of targets and performance management regimes • differing local priorities, e.g. some police areas might require higher levels of accuracy for certain crime types or information, but less so for other aspects that are important to the Scottish Government	Data is entered according to the Code of Ethics. Crime managers check their team's data, crime registrars provide consistent advice and next level check, HMICS audit the data and provide feedback. DPU provide oversight of collection.
Variability in data suppliers' procedures: • Police Scotland may not have direct control over the development of guidance for data entry • local checking of the data can be variable and might not identify incorrect coding or missing values • local changes in policy could impact on how the data are recorded or on the coverage of the statistics	Crime registrars advise on the SCRS and Counting Rules. Crime managers provide first level of local checking, with crime registrars providing independent review. Focus on certain crime types in certain areas or divisions may be reflected in crime reports. Police Scotland, with a single management structure should reduce the variability.
Quantity of data suppliers: • large number of police officers entering the data, spread geographically. • there are many data collectors (police officers in local authorities) providing their data to an intermediary organisation for supply to the Scottish Government via DPU.	The single Police Scotland, with a single management structure should reduce the risk, improving as Police Scotland beds in more.
Complexity and suitability of administrative systems: • administrative datasets can be complex containing large numbers of variables; it takes time, and therefore resource, to extract the data required by the Scottish Government • data collation can be hampered by IT changes in Police Scotland • data might need to be manipulated by Police Scotland to meet the structural requirements of the Scottish Government, leading to potential for errors	Recorded crime has been published for many years and the relationship between the administrative data and the published outputs are well established. However, IT changes need to be carefully managed, particularly with the proposed introduction of a new national IT system for Police Scotland.
Public perceptions: • lack of knowledge about use of personal data for statistical purposes • concern that personal data should be sufficiently anonymised and secured	The Scottish Government publication contains advice to data users about the limitations of the data. Police Recorded Crime data is provided at local authority level and contains no personal data.

15.4 Influence of Targets

The possible influence of targets on recorded crime statistics is a potentially significant issue.

Police Scotland has developed an outcomes focused performance framework to measure progress against delivery of the policing priorities outlined in the Annual Plan. The performance framework provides a mechanism to demonstrate progress towards their outcomes. Gathering data, narrative and insights together provides Police Scotland with an evidence base that demonstrates how they are achieving their outcomes.

It has been recognised by Police Scotland and its many scrutiny agencies, including public scrutiny, that targets could be a likely source of bias in recording crime. There is potential for such targets to bias data collection, and targets and inputs may be interpreted differently in different areas. These risks are recognised and acknowledged by those involved in the production of crime statistics, and to counter some of the potential biases that could be introduced into the data, there are layers of independent audit of recorded crime data.

Mitigating action has been introduced to protect the accuracy and quality of the underpinning data. The Police Scotland safeguards that exist are strongly promoted within Police Scotland to protect the data quality regardless of potential pressures (as described in the Operational context and administrative data collection chapter).

Given the perceived risk of targets introducing bias into crime recording, the independence of crime registrars is paramount. They are organisationally external to operational decision-making and therefore can ensure that the data is accurate to enable better, quicker and more consistent decision making on crime recording and interpretation of the SCRS.

The Scottish Government carries out comparisons of *Recorded Crime in Scotland* against other sources (as discussed under the Corroborative analysis section) to check for possible distortion effects of targets on *Recorded Crime in Scotland*, with sense checking underpinning the early checking of *Recorded Crime in Scotland* data provided from Police Scotland.

HMICS also stated in its Crime Audit 2016 that:

“Throughout the UK, there has long been concern that quantitative performance frameworks and targets, such as the one used by Police Scotland in its first three years of operation, may unduly influence crime recording decisions. In our audit, as in 2014, we found no overt evidence of performance targets affecting crime recording. Indeed, our 2016 audit results for violent crime suggest that any performance pressures that may have existed have eased further.” In its Crime Audit 2020 HMICS reported no change to this stated position.

15.5 Proportionality of Approach

To ensure that the scale of investigation and documentation for the Recorded Crime in Scotland statistics are proportionate to the statistical output, we used the 'Risk/profile matrix' proposed in the OSR's Administrative Data QA Toolkit. This section describes the analysis behind the decision to set the level of assurance[5] of Recorded Crime in Scotland as A3.

The level of assurance fundamentally influences the nature of the activities required for QA of the recorded crime data and is determined by considering the public interest profile of the statistics and the degree of concern about the data quality.

The assessment is that Recorded Crime in Scotland are level 3, i.e. statistics of potentially high data quality concern and high public interest. However, this level is also relevant where the data quality concerns are less but there is a high public interest in the statistics.

Recorded Crime in Scotland statistics are of high public interest and rank in the "higher" category of the public interest dimension.

In terms of the data quality dimension, the UKSA have noted that "in Scotland, there is less direct evidence of data problems at the operational level[6]", and so the data quality concerns may be considered to be medium level. Nonetheless, in the current climate of concern around police recorded data elsewhere in the UK, they have been rated as the higher level of concern. The high profile nature of these statistics ensures they are likely to remain at A3 for the foreseeable future. The consequence of the A3 risk level is that, as the statistical producer, the Scottish Government must carry out a comprehensive assurance and audit approach.

The Scottish Government will continue to monitor the profile and quality of these statistics with Police Scotland and other justice partners, and will inform users of any developments in this area, through the SCRB.

Level of concern over data quality	**Public Interest Profile: importance for informing decisions**		
	Lower	**Medium**	**Higher**
Lower level ('low')	A1	A1/A2	A1/A2
Medium ('medium')	A2	A2	A2/A3
Higher level ('high')	A3	A3	Recorded crime statistics A3

[5] The three tier system for defining the level of assurance appropriate for a particular set of statistics.
[6] UKSA AR

16. 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. The process for the creation and maintenance of the charge code list is detailed in Figure 16.1 below.

Charge codes are mapped to crime codes. The crime code list is split into nine crime and offence groups. The first six are referred to as crimes and the remaining three as offences. The nine crime and offence groups are split into 50 crime and offence categories, referred to as the 'top 50' categories, that are used in the presentation of recorded crime data. These 'top 50' categories along with the main types of crimes and offences included in each of the 'top 50' categories, are detailed in section 16.3 below.

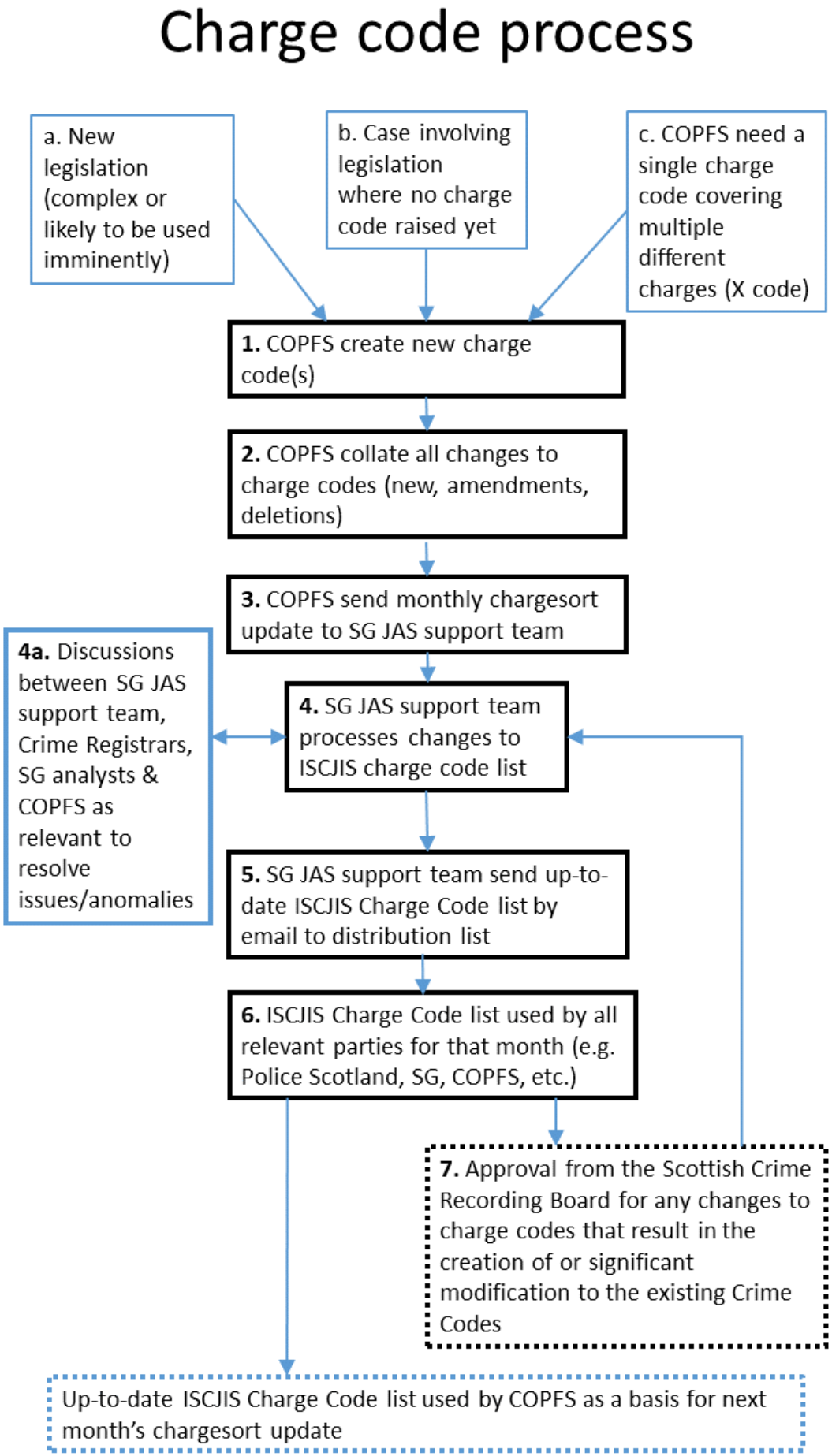
A full list of all the crime codes, around 500, used by the Scottish Government to classify crimes and offences can be accessed in Excel format in the Supporting Documents.

As highlighted in 14.3.1, the overall long term comparability of offence crime codes have been affected when Police Scotland was created. The crime codes affected are highlighted in the Excel file.

16.1 Maintenance of the charge code list

Figure 16.1 details the process for the creation and maintenance of the charge code list, with further detail included in the list below.

Figure 16.1: Process for the creation and maintenance of the charge code list



Process for the creation and maintenance of the charge code list

1. Introduction of new charge codes - COPFS generate the 16 digit charge (JD) codes. This can be as a result of:
   a. New legislation - Pro-actively generate new charge codes in advance (either when legislation is particularly complex, or when cases are likely to arise quite promptly).
   b. New legislation - When a case has arisen which requires a part of legislation that a charge code has not previously been generated for (i.e. await a case to come through the system as there may not be any such case for quite some time).

   Note: generally COPFS make the decision whether to pro-actively generate new charge codes in advance or to wait, but ad hoc discussion can be prompted by Scottish Government analysts, Police Scotland and/or Crime Registrars for the pro-active creation of charge codes as and when felt necessary.

   c.
      - When COPFS require a single charge code to encapsulate a combination of charges. These are referred to as “X codes”, e.g. NONC000000000002 - Abduction, Assault to Severe Injury, Permanent Disfigurement, Permanent Impairment & to Danger of Life.
      - X codes are used by COPFS, and are then shared electronically with, and used by, all Criminal Justice partners dealing with the case thereafter (e.g. the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service and the Criminal History System).
      - The need for X codes is legal in nature, although the reasons will differ in each case. One consequence is that a jury is required to return only one verdict covering all the circumstances of the case, rather than separate verdicts. It is also possible that the choice of charge may allow certain evidence to be led in relation to the joint charge that might not be admissible in respect of the individual charges.
      - X codes are re-used when available, and so only new combinations of charges result in the creation of a new X code. In general, X codes are only used for the most serious cases, and so the overall number of X codes are not likely to grow dramatically.
      - As X codes are ISCJIS charge codes, they are rightly included in the monthly charge code update.
      - In circumstances where COPFS issue a new "X" code, it is likely that the Police Scotland case was reported to the PF using the separate ISCJIS codes.
      - Police Scotland do not use X codes for recording purposes on those legacy crime systems which record crime using ISCJIS codes. X codes may be available for reporting cases to the PF in areas which have stand-alone case systems, but this does not affect recorded crime. X codes cannot be incorporated into Recorded Crime statistics as they incorporate multiple crimes & can cross categories/groups.
      - However, as the ISCJIS-SGJD mappings are issued monthly and invariably X codes are issued incrementally as Fastpaths outwith the main monthly charge code update, an X code could be used by an officer to record a crime in the time between issue and the main monthly charge code update (up to four weeks) when it is known that a specific charge code will be "X" mapped. Such an error can easily be

corrected if discovered at the time but, on the rare occasion when it is not noticed, an unrecorded statistic can slip through the net. This is only applicable in three Police Scotland Divisions (North East, Forth Valley and Fife, i.e. those that use CrimeFile as their crime recording system and therefore record crimes using ISCJIS charge codes). Crime Registrars North and East have put checks in place to ensure that this does not happen.

- For Court Proceedings statistical recording purposes, the Scottish Government Support team decide which is the most serious of the multiple charges in an X code and allocate the appropriate crime code accordingly, i.e. the main charge which will receive the most serious sentence if convicted (if the multiple charge contains an 'attempted' crime and a 'successful' less serious crime, then the crime code for the 'successful' crime is usually allocated). e.g. (with main crime underlined) 0HAM0ABD0ROBAMUR - Hamesucken, Abduction, Robbery, Attempted Murder.

2. Collate changes to charge codes
   COPFS collate on their system a list of all changes to charge codes required for that month, including any new codes, amendments and deletions (i.e. obsolete codes).

3. Send changes to the Scottish Government JAS support team
   COPFS send a monthly update to the Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services support team.
   - Amendments could be the result of decisions made/agreed by COPFS, Crime Registrars and/or the Scottish Crime Recording Board.

4. Processing changes
   The JAS support team processes all changes on the main ISCJIS Charge Code list.
   - Each charge code is mapped to a specific crime code (JD code) as per the crime/offence classifications used by the National Statistics.
   - As previously confirmed, X codes cannot be mapped to a specific crime code.
   - "M codes" are a further type of charge code which include a modifier. Normally , a single charge code can only map to one, and only one, crime code, but a modifier allows a single charge code to differentiate between multiple options, e.g. many SOSA crimes are split by male/female and so have 2 crime codes [1 male, 1 female], but only one charge code exists that covers both.
   - M codes are essentially used to split ISCJIS charge codes into specific crime categories where a single charge would suffice for reporting a case to COPFS. E.g. when the SOSA 2009 legislation was passed, the Scottish Government gave a commitment that statistics would be provided on the gender and age of victims, resulting in M codes being created for several SOSA crimes. Another example is the Theft by Housebreaking charge code, which uses three modifiers of Domestic Dwelling, Domestic Non-Dwelling and Other. The SOSA M codes are supplied by the Police to the COPFS and are the only modifiers on the COPFS database specifically required for statistical, rather than legal, purposes.
   - Note: both the police and COPFS use the term Modifier relating to charge codes in different ways. Charge codes used by COPFS can include

different modifiers for legal purposes, but these are not the same as the M codes used in Recorded Crime, e.g. where a knife is present but there is no evidence of this being used.

- The Scottish Government Support team are able to allocate a specific crime code against M codes for Criminal Proceedings statistical recording purposes, as COPFS and the courts only need the main charge details, and do not need the modifier information. The gender of the victim is not required for Criminal Proceedings statistics, only the gender of the perpetrator.

a. Any issues/anomalies are queried and resolved through discussion with COPFS, Crime Registrars & Scottish Government analysts.

5. Distribution of updated charge codes
   The Scottish Government JAS support team distributes the up-to-date ISCJIS Charge Code list by email to the agreed list which includes COPFS, Police Scotland Crime Registrars, individuals within Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and relevant individuals within partner justice organisations.

6. Usage of charge codes
   Crime Recording - Police record crimes against each individual charge code where the system permits, and on the remainder of systems it is recorded against the relevant section of legislation, for it to be subsequently mapped to the relevant crime code.

7. Notification of new or modified crime codes to users
   Any changes to charge codes that result in the creation of new, or significant modification to existing, crime codes require approval from the Scottish Crime Recording Board. The Board take a particular interest in any impact of proposed changes to statistical continuity (in particular between the different groups used to classify crimes and offences). Once agreed, JAS statisticians will notify statistical users.

16.2 Structure of crime and offence classifications

After extensive consultation with stakeholders and users (for more detail see consultation chapter), the Scottish Crime Recording Board approved an update to the structure of crime and offence classifications in 2022. The June 2022 publication of the National Statistics (now designated as Accredited Official Statistics) annual bulletin Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2021-2022 was the first time the new grouping structure was used to present the statistics.

These changes are outlined in section 16.2.19, with the new structure detailed in section 16.3.

Changes to both the magnitude of groups and the trend over time were analysed and are provided in the Technical Report on the statistical impact of changing to the new groups section of the Summary of responses report.

There was no change to the coverage of crimes and offences in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin series, all changes are purely presentational and have no impact on how a case is investigated or prosecuted. All changes were backdated within the

statistics so that there is no discontinuity to the time series, and for the year of 2021/22 only, we published tables using the old groups within the bulletin.

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.

16.2.1 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. The Scottish Crime Recording Board makes any decisions about the addition or removal of any crime codes. The changes are shown in the years in which they were implemented.

16.2.2 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 Scottish Crime Recording Standard chapter. 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.

16.2.3 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

16.2.4 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: Procuration of sexual services from child under 18 – Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005
- 18016 :Procuration 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

16.2.5 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

16.2.6 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

16.2.7 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 mischief. 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.

16.2.8 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 only applies to offences committed from 1 December 2010. Any offences committed prior to this date will be recorded using previous legislation.

The new legislation resulted in some increases in Sexual crimes. However, it is likely that the effect has been 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.

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

16.2.9 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 36 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

16.2.10 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.

16.2.11 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.

16.2.12 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

16.2.13 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

16.2.14 2016-17

The following new crime codes were introduced as a result of new legislation, the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, which came into force on 31 May 2016:

Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence:

- 11010: Slavery or forced labour
- 11011: Human organ offences

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 39023: Breach of a trafficking & exploitation order

The existing crime code 18009 – Immoral traffic (Group 2 – Sexual Crimes) will also be used to record some of the charges resulting from the new Act. No significant impact is envisaged for Group 2 as the new offences from the Act replace existing offences included within this group.

The following new codes were introduced as a result of new legislation, the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016:

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 44007: Psychoactive substance: production, import/export, supply or possession in custody
- 44008: Psychoactive substance: other offences

The following new crime code was introduced following the decision that 11008: Offences relating to serious organised crime, which previously sat within Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence, should be transferred to the Other crimes category within Group 5 – Other crimes. The decision was based on the fact that these are not technically violent crimes, and any associated violent crime related to an incident of serious organised crime would already be counted within Group 1:

Group 5 – Other crimes:

- 40001: Offences relating to serious organised crime

As a result, the following crime code has been removed:

Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence:

- 11008: Offences relating to serious organised crime

The following new crime code was introduced as of January 2017 as a result of new legislation, Smoking Prohibition (Children in Motor Vehicles) (Scotland) Act 2016, which came into force in December 2016. It is anticipated that this legislation will, for the most part, be enforced by local authorities, and so do not expect many of these offences to be recorded by Police Scotland.

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 50014 – Smoking in car with child

The following new crime code was introduced as of December 2016 as a result of new legislation, Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015, which came into force in December 2016.

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 55001 – Air weapons licensing offences

The following new offence code was introduced following the decision that 59001: Handling obscene material, which previously sat within Group 6 – Miscellaneous Offences, should be split into 2 separate offence codes. One new offence code (59004: Communications Act 2003 (sexual)) to cover sexual communication offences (i.e. the sending of sexual/offensive/obscene/ menacing messages by means of public electronic communications) and the original offence code (59001: Handling obscene material) to cover the displaying or distribution of obscene material, the import of prohibited goods to the UK or the sending of obscene or indecent articles through the post. This decision was based on a desire to identify what proportion of Handling Obscene Material offences were based on sexual communication offences, to support future consideration of the statistical classification of this offence. This change will have no impact on the overall figures for Group 6 – Miscellaneous Offences.

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 59004: Communications Act 2003 (sexual)

16.2.15 2017-18

The crime code 11003: Ill treatment of mental patients, within Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence, was renamed to become 11003: Ill treatment and neglect of mental patients and vulnerable adults, following the decision to move offences recorded under 85035: Offences relating to working with vulnerable adults, within Group 6 – Miscellaneous Offences, into Group 1 crimes instead. This had a negligible impact on the overall figures for Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence.

As a result, the following crime code was removed:

Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences:

- 85035: Offences relating to working with vulnerable adults

The following new crime codes will be introduced as a result of new legislation, the Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016, which is scheduled to come into force during 2017-18.

Group 2 – Sexual crimes

- 16039 – Threatening to disclose an intimate image
- 16040 – Disclosure of an intimate image

It is unclear at this time what impact these changes will have on the overall figures for Group 2 – Sexual crimes, although an increase is anticipated. There is likely to be some impact on the volume of Group 1 – Non-sexual crimes of violence, as crimes involving someone threatening to disclose an intimate image for the purpose of obtaining sexual favours, currently recorded as 7000: Threats and extortion, would move to Group 2. Further, the actual disclosure of someone's intimate image, currently recorded as 59004: Communications Act 2003 (sexual), would move to Group 2. As detailed below, offences recorded as 59004: Communications Act 2003 (sexual) are being transferred to Group 2 crimes anyway.

The following new crime code will be introduced following the decision that 59004: Communications Act 2003 (sexual), which currently sits within Group 6 – Miscellaneous Offences, should be transferred to the Other sexual crimes category within Group 2 – Sexual crimes. The decision was based on the fact that it is more appropriate for these offences to be recorded as sexual crimes. It is anticipated that this will have a small impact on the number of Group 2 crimes, although some of these crimes may be recorded under the new crime codes as detailed above.

Group 2 – Sexual crimes

- 16041 – Communications Act 2003 (sexual)

The following new crime code will be introduced, which will record crimes like shining a laser pen at an aircraft. It is not anticipated that this will have a significant impact on Group 4 crimes.

Group 4 – Fire-raising, vandalism etc.

- 33016 – Culpable and reckless conduct involving aircraft

As a result of this new crime code, and to ensure consistency, the counting rule for 33011: Culpable and reckless conduct has been changed from "One crime for each incident" to "One crime for each incident unless this involves a vehicle or train in which case a crime will be recorded for each vehicle or train". This may result in a slight increase, as previously any such conduct that involved more than one vehicle/train would have been recorded as one crime.

The following new crime codes were introduced to enable the separate identification of these crimes, as they were previously included as part of 43003: Having in a public place an article with a blade or point. This change will have no impact on the total for the Handling offensive weapons category.

Group 5 – Other crimes

- 43/07 – Possession of an offensive weapon (not elsewhere specified) in a school
- 43/08 – Having in a school an article with a blade or point

The following new crime codes were introduced following the decision that crimes of handling offensive weapons in public settings will no longer be subsumed when used to commit other criminal activity, as the criminal law views the possession of a

weapon in a public setting as a separate crime in its own right. Previously, statistics on handling offensive weapons only included crimes where the perpetrator had not committed further crimes with the weapon. If they had, then the weapon possession would be considered an aggravation of the main crime (e.g. serious assault) and would be 'subsumed' into the main crime.

Group 5 – Other crimes

- 43009 – Possession of offensive weapon used in other criminal activity
- 43010 – Having in a public place an article with a blade or point used in other criminal activity
- 43011 – Possession of offensive weapon in a prison used in other criminal activity
- 43012 – Having in a prison an article with a blade or point used in other criminal activity
- 43013 – Possession of offensive weapon in a school used in other criminal activity
- 43014 – Having in a school an article with a blade or point used in other criminal activity

Group 5 – Other crimes

- 44001 – Illegal importation of drugs
- 44002 – Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs
- 44003 – Supply, possession with intent to supply etc. of drugs
- 44004 – Possession of drugs
- 44005 – Drugs, money laundering related offences
- 44006 – Bringing drugs into prison
- 44007 – Psychoactive Substance: Production, supply or possession in custody
- 44008 – Psychoactive Substance: Other Offences
- 44099 – Drugs, other offences

Etizolam has been classified as a Class C drug by the May 2017 amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, along with several other designer benzodiazepine drugs.

16.2.16 2018-19

The Offensive Weapons Act received Royal Assent in May 2019. The Act will make it illegal to possess dangerous weapons in private, and will make it a criminal offence to dispatch bladed products sold online without verifying the buyer is over 18. The Act also makes it an offence to possess a corrosive substance in a public place, and has updated the definition of a flick knife to reflect changing weapons design. The Scottish Crime Recording Board will continue to monitor the implementation of this Act and users will be informed of what impact these changes will have on the presentation of the National Statistics.

During the 2018-19 financial year the Board made changes to the coding of crimes and offences as a result of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into force on 1st April 2019. The Act created a new offence of abusive behaviour as a course of conduct towards a partner or ex-partner. Previously, any criminal act which formed part of a domestic abuse incident (such as a Common assault or Threatening or abusive behaviour) was included within the statistics under the relevant crime or offence. Where there is

evidence of a course of conduct, new crime codes of Domestic abuse against a male or female victim have been created. Existing common law and statutory offences will continue to be used where appropriate in addition to the new crimes, with some exceptions (in particular Threatening and abusive behaviour), which will be included within the new crime.

As a result the following new crime codes have been added to the Crime code list:-

Group 1 – Crimes of violence

- 11012 – Domestic Abuse of MALE
- 11013 – Domestic Abuse of FEMALE

16.2.17 2019-20

Coronavirus restrictions crimes

On 23rd March 2020, a nationwide lockdown was imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with guidelines on movements for some days prior to that. This had a significant impact on daily living which also affected the number of crimes and offences recorded, to varying degrees. To inform users about the volume and type of crimes and offences recorded in Scotland during the pandemic, the Scottish Government introduced a new monthly series of Official Statistics from April 2020 onwards: Recorded Crime in Scotland - gov.scot (www.gov.scot).

The Coronavirus Act 2020 and Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 were implemented on 25th March and 27th March 2020, respectively, and resulted in new crimes being recorded - for example where someone, who had left the place they were living, did not have a reasonable excuse for this when asked by a police officer, and failed to comply with police advice or instruction to return there.

The following are a list of the new coronavirus codes:-

These have been recorded under a new crime group for Coronavirus restrictions

- 33017 - Coronavirus restrictions
- 33018 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (SPR)
- 33019 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£60)
- 33020 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£120)
- 33021 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£240)
- 33022 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£480)
- 33023 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (SPR)
- 33024 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£60)
- 33025 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£120)
- 33026 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£240)
- 33027 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£480)
- 33028 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to quarantine (SPR)
- 33029 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to quarantine (£480)
- 33030 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Contravene a requirement (SPR)
- 33031 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Contravene a requirement (£480)

- 33032 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading passenger info (SPR)
- 33033 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading passenger info (£480)
- 33034 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (SPR)
- 33035 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£60)
- 33036 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£120)
- 33037 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£240)
- 33038 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£480)
- 33039 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (quarantining) (SPR)
- 33040 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (quarantining) (£480)
- 33041 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Operator fail to provide passenger info
- 33042 - Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Testing offences

Driving under the influence

Changes to the Road Traffic Act 1988 which introduced new offences of driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle with concentration of a specified controlled drug above a specified limit came into force on 21st October 2019. While offences of driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle while impaired through alcohol or drugs already existed, evidence of impaired driving is not required for the new offences. This is likely to have resulted in additional offences being recorded in relation to drug driving within the Driving under the influence category (from October 2019).

Group 7: Motor vehicle offences

New crime codes:-

Driving motor vehicle while under influence of controlled drug above prescribed limit – new crime code **301007**

In charge of motor vehicle while under influence of controlled drug above prescribed limit – new crime code **301008**

16.2.18 2020-21

Cross-border crimes

A procedural change was made in April 2020 to how crimes which could involve a victim and a perpetrator in different physical locations (e.g. cyber-enabled crimes) are recorded. Prior to the 1st April 2020, these statistics excluded any crime with a victim in Scotland and a perpetrator who was confirmed by the police to be outside the United Kingdom when the crime took place. Following a recommendation by Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate for Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) to review recording practice in this area12, the Scottish Crime Recording Board approved a change so that from the 1st April these crimes are now included in the statistics. It should be noted that those cases with only a suspicion or insufficient evidence to confirm that the perpetrator was outside the UK were always included.

This change is likely to lead to the recording of additional crimes for those types of crime which could be committed using digital technologies. In 2020-21, we estimated

an additional 1,160 crimes being recorded, which represents less than 1% of all crime recorded in Scotland that year.

16.2.19 2021-22

Following extensive consultation (see Consultation section for more detail) the Scottish Crime Recording Board approved a number of changes to the way recorded crime statistics are classified and presented.

The Scottish Crime Recording Board decided that the previous set of crime and offence groups would be replaced. The new grouping structure retains a similar number of groups to the previous structure (9 vs 8), but provides more detail at the second level of disaggregation, with a 'top-50' category structure, compared to the previous ‘top-38’. The new grouping structure is presentented in section 16.3 Current Crime Code Classification.

The changes which have been made are highlighted below.

Non-sexual crimes of violence

- Split Homicide etc. into two categories: Murder and culpable homicide, and Death by dangerous driving
- Reclassify Common assault as a crime, sitting as its own category within the Non-sexual crimes of violence group, which includes:
    - 47001 Common Assault
    - 47006 Minor assault of an emergency worker
    - 47012 Common assault of a retail worker
- Reclassify Stalking (47009) as a crime, sitting within the Other non-sexual violence category of the Non-sexual crimes of violence group
- Move Female genital mutilation (11007) from Non-sexual crimes of violence – Other non-sexual violence to Non-sexual crimes of violence – Serious assault and attempted murder

Sexual crimes

- Split Other sexual crimes into five categories:
    - Causing to view sexual activity or images
    - Communicating indecently
    - Threatening to or disclosing intimate images
    - Indecent photos of children
    - Other sexual crimes

Crimes of dishonesty

No changes

Damage and reckless behaviour

- Change the name from Fire-raising, vandalism etc. to Damage and reckless behaviour
- Split Vandalism etc. into two categories: Vandalism and Reckless conduct

Crimes against society

- Change name from Other crimes to Crimes against society
- Split Drug crimes into two categories: Drugs – possession and Drugs – supply

Coronavirus Restrictions

No changes

Offences

- Split the Miscellaneous offences group into two groups: Antisocial offences and Miscellaneous offences (multiple new categories)
- Remove Common assault and Stalking (reclassifying as Non-sexual crimes of violence) , which includes:
    - 47001 Common Assault
    - 47006 Minor assault of an emergency worker
    - 47012 Common assault of a retail worker
    - 47009 Stalking
- Change name from Motor vehicle offences to Road traffic offences
- Crime codes relating to the (mis)use of bikes moved from Miscellaneous offences to Road traffic offences

The codes affected are:

- 78/001 Dangerously riding a bicycle or tricycle
- 78/002 Carelessly or inconsiderately riding a bicycle or tricycle
- 78/003 Drunk when riding a bicycle
- 78/099 Bicycles, other offences
- 79/001 Pedestrian traffic offences

Protection of Workers Act

The Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021 came into effect from 24 August 2021. The Act makes it an offence for a person to assault, threaten or abuse another person who is a retail worker and who is engaged, at the time of the offence, in retail work. Committing this offence while a retail worker is enforcing a statutory age restriction also constitutes an aggravation.

As a result the following new crime codes have been added to the Crime code list:-

Non-sexual crimes of violence

- 4003 - Serious Assault of a Retail Worker
- 47012 - Common Assault of a Retail Worker

Antisocial Offences

- 47013 - Threaten or Abuse Retail Worker

Breach of adult at risk banning order

From 1 April 2021, Adult Protection Act Offences (39/019) will no longer be counted as crimes. The reason for this is that the charge does not relate to a criminal offence and was created to allow the circumstances to be reported to the Procurator Fiscal. The Scottish Crime Recording Board reviewed the data recorded under this code and agreed not to back date this change as the numbers are negligible in the context of total recorded crime.

16.2.20 2022-23

Offensive Weapons Act

On 28th June 2022, Section 6 of the Offensive Weapons Act was implemented. This included the introduction of an offence of having a corrosive substance in a public place, including a new power of search for corrosive substances plus provisions in Part 3 (Sale and delivery of knives).

Part 4 of the legislation commenced on 27 March, 2023. This amends the definition of a flick knife to ensure that modern designs are also prohibited, and prohibits the possession in private of dangerous and offensive weapons to which Restriction of Offensive Weapons Act 1959 and Criminal Justice Act 1988 apply. The effect of Sections 44 and 46 is, coupled with existing law, to make it an offence as to the possession in any place of these weapons.

As a result the following new crime codes have been added to the Crime code list:-

Crimes against society

- 43/015 - Possession of a corrosive substance (Not used in crime)
- 43/016 - Possession of a corrosive substance (Used in other criminal activity)

- 43/017 - Possession of certain dangerous knives in a private place (Not used in crime)
- 43/018 - Possession of certain dangerous knives in a private place (Used in other criminal activity)
- 43/019 - Possession of prohibited offensive weapon in a private place (Not used in crime)
- 43/020 - Possession of prohibited offensive weapon in a private place (Used in other criminal activity)

16.2.21 2023-24

Online Safety Act 2023

As of 30th of January 2024, a new offence under the terms of Section 184 of the Online Safety Act 2023 came into effect. The new Offence of encouraging or assisting serious self-harm relates to a person carrying out an act (not described) which encourages or assists the serious self-harm of another person, and was intended to encourage or assist the serious self-harm of another person. This offence can be carried out online, in person or through any form of communication, thus does not solely relate to “online activity”.

As a result the following new crime code has been added to the Crime code list:-

- 11/015 - Encouraging or Assisting Serious Self-Harm (Online Safety Act, 2023)

16.3 Current Crime Code Classification

Crimes

Non-sexual crimes of violence

Murder and culpable homicide
- Murder
- Culpable homicide (Common Law)
- Corporate homicide

Death by dangerous driving
- 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

Serious assault and attempted murder
- Attempted murder
- Serious assault
- Causing injury etc. by Culpable & Reckless Conduct
- Illegal driver, disqualified/unlicensed etc. causing serious injury
- Serious assault of retail worker
- Female genital mutilation

Common assault

- Common Assault
- Minor assault of an emergency worker
- Common Assault of a Retail Worker

For the definition of Serious assault and the distinction between Serious assault and Common assault see SCRS manual

Robbery

- Robbery and assault with intent to rob

Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

- Domestic Abuse of Male
- Domestic Abuse of Female

Other non-sexual violence

- Threats and extortion
- Cruelty (neglecting & cause) to 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
- Forced Marriage
- Slavery or forced labour
- Human organ offences
- Offence of stalking
- Encouraging or assisting serious self-harm

Sexual Crimes

Rape and attempted rape

- Rape
- 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)
- Assault with intent to Rape
- Assault with intent to rape male (16+)
- Assault with intent to rape female (16+)
- Assault with intent to rape older male child (13-15)
- Assault with intent to rape older female child (13-15)
- Assault with intent to rape young male child (under 13)
- Assault with intent to rape young female child (under 13)

Sexual assault

- Sexual assault
- Sexual assault by penetration of male (16+)
- Sexual assault by penetration of female (16+)
- Sexual assault by penetration of male (13-15 years)
- Sexual assault by penetration of female (13-15 years)
- Sexual assault of male (16+)
- Sexual assault of female (16+)
- Sexual assault of older male child (13-15 years)
- Sexual assault of older female child (13-15 years)
- Sexual coercion of male (16+)
- Sexual coercion of female (16+)
- Sexual coercion of older male child (13-15 years)
- Sexual coercion of older female child (13-15 years)
- Assault by penetration of young male child (under 13)
- Assault by penetration of young female child (under 13)
- Sexual assault of young male child (under 13)
- Sexual assault of young female child (under 13)
- Cause young male child (under 13) to participate in sexual activity
- Cause young female child (under 13) to participate in sexual activity
- Sexual Intercourse with girl under 13
- Lewd and Libidinous practices

Causing to view sexual activity or images

- Coercing a person into being present/ looking at sexual activity
- Cause young child to be present/ look at sexual activity (under 13)
- Sexual exposure to a young child (under 13)
- Causing an older child (13-15) to be present/ look at sexual activity
- Sexual exposure older child (13-15)
- Public indecency
- Sexual exposure

Communicating indecently

- Communicating indecently
- Communicating indecently with young child (under 13)
- Communicate indecently older child (13-15)

Threatening to or disclosing an intimate image

- Threatening to disclose an intimate image
- Disclosure of an intimate image

Indecent photos of children

- Taking, distribution, possession etc of indecent photos of children

Crimes associated with prostitution

- Procuration (excluding homosexual acts)
- Brothel keeping
- Immoral traffic
- Offences related to prostitution
- Procuration of Homosexual Acts
- Soliciting services of person engaged in prostitution

Other sexual crimes

- Incest
- Illegal Homosexual Acts
- Attempt to commit unnatural crimes
- Voyeurism young child (under 13)
- Intercourse with older male child (13-15)
- Intercourse with older female child (13-15)
- Penetrative sexual activity with older male child (13-15)
- Penetrative sexual activity with older female child (13-15)
- Sexual activity with older male child (13-15)
- Sexual activity with older female child (13-15)
- Cause older male child (13-15) to participate in sexual activity
- Cause older female child (13-15) to participate in sexual activity
- Older male child (13-15) engaging in sexual conduct with another older child
- Older female child (13-15) engaging in sexual conduct with another older child
- Voyeurism older child (13-15)
- Communications Act 2003 (sexual)
- Voyeurism
- Sexual Intercourse with child under 16
- Carnal knowledge of mentally disordered person
- Householder permitting carnal knowledge of mentally disordered person
- Abducting girl under 18 woman mental disordered
- Person with custody & care of girl or other causing her seduction
- Clandestine Injury
- Conspiracy to commit sexual acts outside the U.K.
- Grooming of children for purposes of sexual offences
- Procuration of sexual services from child under 18
- Procuration of child under 18 for pornography
- Sexual abuse of trust of person under 18
- Sexual abuse of trust of mentally disordered person
- Bestiality
- Administering a substance for sexual purposes
- Possession of extreme pornography

Crimes of dishonesty

Housebreaking

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

- Attempted Housebreaking with intent to enter and steal domestic property (dwelling)
- Attempted Housebreaking with intent to enter and steal domestic property (non-dwelling)
- Attempted Housebreaking with intent to enter and steal other property

Theft by opening lockfast places

- Theft by opening lockfast places (excluding motor vehicle)
- OLP (excluding motor vehicle) with intent to steal
- Attempted OLP (excluding motor vehicle) with intent to steal

Theft from a motor vehicle

- Theft by OLP from a motor vehicle
- OLP with intent to steal from a motor vehicle
- Attempted OLP with intent to steal from a motor vehicle

Theft of motor vehicle

- Theft of a motor vehicle and contents incl. taking and driving
- Attempted theft of a motor vehicle

Shoplifting

- Theft by shoplifting

Other theft

- Theft not elsewhere classified (excl motor vehicles)
- Theft of Pedal Cycle
- Theft from a motor vehicle not classified elsewhere

Fraud

- Fraud (including Statutory Fraud)

Other crimes of dishonesty

- Prevention of Crimes
- Vagrancy and known thief
- In building with intent to steal
- Reset
- Breach of Trust and Embezzlement
- Forgery and Uttering (excl currency off)
- Bankruptcy
- Clandestine removal of boats
- Clandestine removal of other property
- Corruption
- Currency Offences
- Insider dealing
- Proceeds of Crime

Damage and reckless behaviour

Fire-raising

- Fire-raising excluding Muirburn
- Fire-raising – Muirburn

Vandalism

- Computer Misuse Act 1990 - causing damage
- Vandalism
- Malicious Damage

Reckless Conduct

- Reckless conduct with firearms
- Flying aircraft to danger life or property
- Endangering rail passengers
- Reckless driving at common law
- Culpable neglect of duty
- Endangering ship by breach of duty
- Supply of glue sniffing kits
- Reckless Conduct (not with firearms)
- Culpable and reckless conduct involving aircraft

Crimes against society

Crimes against public justice

- Election etc. offences
- Public mischief (inc wasting police time)
- Falsely accusing (named) person of crime
- Escape and rescue (inc custody + prison)
- Resisting arrest
- Personation of police
- Failing to give name or remain with constable
- Obstructing constable in pursuance of duty
- General attempts to pervert course of justice
- Failure to notify police/provision of false information
- Protection of vulnerable groups
- Contempt of court
- Failing to appear after undertaking to police
- Publishing info re person < 16 on trial
- Not appearing for trial following bail
- Bail offences other than absconding/re-offending
- Accused failing to appear at trial diet
- Witness, offences by
- Prevarication on oath etc
- Perjury and subordination
- Breach of non harassment order (criminal court)
- Breach of non harassment order (civil court)
- Breach of anti social behaviour order
- Breach of sex offender order
- Breach of parenting order
- Breach of risk of sexual harm order (SHO) or interim risk of SHO
- Breach of football banning order
- Breach of violent offender order
- Breach of Domestic abuse interdict
- Breach of Forced Marriage Protection Order

- Breach of Trafficking & Exploitation Order

Weapons possession (not used)

- Possession of an offensive weapon
- Restriction of offensive weapon
- Having in a public place an article with a blade or point
- Having in a prison an article with a blade or point
- Possession of a firearm in a prison
- Possession of an offensive weapon (not elsewhere specified) in a prison
- Possession of an offensive weapon (not elsewhere specified) in a school
- Having in a school an article with a blade or point
- Possession of a Corrosive Substance
- Possession of certain dangerous knives in a private place
- Possession of prohibited offensive weapon in a private place

Weapons possession (used)

- Possession of an offensive weapon used in other criminal activity
- Having in a public place an article with a blade or point used in other criminal activity
- Possession of offensive weapon in a prison used in other criminal activity
- Having in a prison an article with a blade or point used in other criminal activity
- Possession of offensive weapon in a school used in other criminal activity
- Having in a school an article with a blade or point used in other criminal activity
- Possession of a Corrosive Substance used in other criminal activity
- Possession of certain dangerous knives in a private place used in other criminal activity
- Possession of prohibited offensive weapon in a private place used in other criminal activity

Drugs – Supply

- Illegal importation of drugs
- Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs
- Supply, possession with intent to supply etc. of drugs
- Bringing drugs into prison
- Psychoactive Substance: Production, supply or possession in custody
- Psychoactive Substance: Other Offences
- Drugs, other offences

Drugs – Possession

- Possession of drugs

Other crimes against society

- Treason
- Sedition
- Official Secrets Act

- United Nations Sanctions Offences
- Protection of Cultural Property
- Mobbing and Rioting
- Public processions etc
- Trespass, crimes against public order
- Raves, crimes against public order
- Obstruct or hinder other emergency worker in pursuance of duty
- Terrorism - money laundering offences
- Prevention of Terrorism, other offences
- Explosive Substances Act 1883
- Unlawful use of explosives
- Reckless blasting
- Conspiracy
- Offences Relating to Serious Organised Crime
- Sacrilege
- Wrecking
- Piracy and Hijacking

Coronavirus restrictions crimes

Coronavirus restrictions

- Coronavirus restrictions
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£60)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£120)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£240)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to provide info (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£60)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£120)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£240)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading info (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to quarantine (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Fail to quarantine (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Contravene a requirement (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Contravene a requirement (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading passenger info (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Provide false/misleading passenger info (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£60)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£120)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£240)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (passenger info) (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (quarantining) (SPR)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Obstruct (quarantining) (£480)
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Operator fail to provide passenger info
- Coronavirus HEPR Intl Travel - Testing offences

Offences

Antisocial offences

Threatening and abusive behaviour

- Breach of the peace
- Threatening or abusive behaviour
- Offensive behaviour at football (under the Offensive behaviour at football and threatening communication Scotland Act 2012)
- Threatening communications (under the Offensive behaviour at football and threatening communication Scotland Act 2012)

Racially aggravated conduct

- Racially aggravated harassment
- Racially aggravated conduct

Drunkenness and other conduct

- Drunk and incapable and habitual drunkenness
- Drunk in charge of a child
- Drunk and attempting to enter licensed premises
- Drunk or drinking in unlicensed premises
- Disorderly on licensed premises
- Drunk in or attempting to enter designated sports ground
- Refusing to quit licensed premises
- Consumption of alcohol in designated places, byelaws prohibited
- Antisocial behaviour offences

Urinating etc.

- Urinating etc.

Miscellaneous offences

Community and public order offences

- False or hoax calls to emergency services
- Bomb Hoaxes
- Children & young person offences (not elsewhere classified)
- Employment of children
- Education Acts
- Tattooing of Minors Act 1969
- Child Minding and Day Care for Children
- Employment of children (non-industrial)
- Employment of children (industrial)
- Selling loose cigarettes
- Not displaying notice cigarettes sold to 16 and over
- Selling cigarettes to persons under 16
- Offences against selling spray paint to children
- Smoking in car with child
- Handling obscene material
- Sex shop offences
- Social Security Offences
- Pedlars Act & Off Against Certificates Issued by Local Auth

- Licensing offences (Civic Govt (S) Act 1982)
- Obstruction of local official
- Common stairs offences
- Civic Government (S) Act 1982 (not elsewhere classified)
- Obstruction by pedestrian
- Touting
- Weights & Measures Acts
- Registration of Business Names
- Prices Act 1974
- Goods & Services (price control) Acts
- Counter Inflation Act 1973
- Patents Acts
- Copyright Acts
- Fair Trading Act 1973
- Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976
- Consumer Protection Acts
- Consumer Credit Act 1974
- Trading offences
- Accommodation Agencies Act 1953
- Nursing Homes (Registration) (S) Act 1938
- Rent Acts
- Video Recordings Act 1984 (not elsewhere classified)
- Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949
- General post office/telecommunications offs
- Disclosure of information
- Interception of Communications Act 1984
- Data Protection Act 1984
- Computer Misuse Act 1990 - unauthorised access only
- Charitable collections offences
- Public utilities (gas electricity etc) legislation
- Supplementary benefits offences
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Census Acts
- Race Relations Act
- Social work and community service offences
- Child Support Act 1991

Environmental offences

- Petroleum Acts
- Energy Acts
- Salmon and freshwater fisheries offences
- Sea fisheries offences
- Factories legislation (not elsewhere classified)
- Fire Precautions Acts
- Health and Safety at Work Acts
- Employment and property protection legislation
- Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978
- Wages Councils Act 1979
- Trade Union & Labour Relations Act 1974
- Mines Acts

- Shops Acts
- Merchant Shipping Acts (not elsewhere classified)
- Parks etc
- Litter Offences
- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978
- Oil pollution in navigable waters
- Control of pollution
- Clean air Acts
- Sanitary laws
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Milk Acts
- Control of Food Premises Act 1977
- Water (S) Acts
- Town and country planning acts
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- Housing (S) Acts
- Caravan Sites & Control of Development Act 1960
- Methylated Spirits (Sale by Retail) (S) Act 1937
- Therapeutic Substances Act 1956
- Cinematograph Acts
- Other Environmental Offences
- Contravention of section 6(1) by continuing to operate proscribed process
- Failure to comply with or contravention of enforcement or prohibition notice
- Other conservation offences
- Offences relating to road works
- Lighting fires without consent of owner
- Lodging without consent of owner
- Agricultural offences
- Building legislation
- Aviation legislation
- Archaeological legislation

Licensing offences

- Betting
- Gaming
- Gaming by means of machines
- Lotteries and amusements with prizes
- Brokers (Licensed) and Auction Acts
- Crossbow Offences
- Firearms, Miscellaneous Offences
- Air weapons licensing offences
- Sale of drink to person under 18
- Employing a person under 18 in a bar
- Licensed person, employee or agent drunk in licensed premise
- Permitting riotous behaviour in licensed premises
- Permitting betting and gaming offences in licensed premises
- Contravening condition of premises with children's certificate
- Dealing wholesale other than from permitted premises

- Wholesaler selling liquor to person under 18
- Wholesaler permitting person under 18 to sell alcohol
- License holder of off sales permit person under 18 to sell alcohol
- Licensed persons, other offences
- Carriage of liquor in contract carriage
- Consuming outwith permitted hours
- Trafficking without a licence
- Club licensing offences
- Hawking excisable liquor
- Person under 18 buying excisable liquor or consuming in bar
- Consuming liquor on licensed premises on credit (other than hotels)
- Inducing holder of off-sales license to sell liquor illegally
- Purchasing excise liquor for consumption by person under 18
- Breaking sales restrictions on licences other than for pubs
- Alcohol offences, travelling to and from sporting event
- Sports ground offences (possessing alcohol etc)
- Confiscation of alcohol from person under 18
- Liquor licensing laws, other offences
- Pawnbrokers, Firearms Offences
- Hackney carriages offences
- Public service vehicles offences

Wildlife offences

- Cruelty to animals (ex dogs) inc killing and maiming cattle
- Rabies Orders
- Animals, offences involving (ex dogs, birds elsewhere classified)
- Birds, offences involving
- Pet and kept animals
- Cruelty to dogs
- Protection of livestock from dogs
- Guard Dogs Act 1975
- Dogs bred for fighting
- Keeping dogs under prop control, contravention of an order
- Hunting with dogs
- Cruelty to wild animals
- Offences involving badgers
- Other wildlife offences
- Dogs, other offences
- Possession of salmon or trout unlawfully obtained
- Possession of salmon or trout as result of offence
- Poaching and game laws
- Deer (S) Offences

Other misc. offences

- Aliens and Immigration Offences
- Offences relating to persons disqualified from working with children
- Prevent a person feeding a baby milk in a public place
- Keeping and Supply of Explosives
- Harbour Acts
- Absentees and deserters

- Naval military and air force, other offences
- Dog Fouling
- Smoking in public places
- Medical Acts
- Dentists Acts
- Nurses (S) Acts
- Opticians Acts
- Venereal Diseases Act 1917
- Poisons Act
- Medicines Acts
- National Health Service (S) Acts
- Railways
- Bigamy
- False declarations
- Births deaths marriages, registration offences
- Marriage (S) Act 1977
- Revenue and excise Offences (excluding Vehicle and Drugs)
- Prisons (S) Act 1989 (not elsewhere classified)
- Investment legislation
- Industrial training and statistics of trade offences
- Building Societies Act 1986
- Fire services legislation
- Emergency powers Acts
- Solicitors (S) Acts
- Local Government legislation
- Architects registration offences
- Estate Agents Acts
- Insurance Brokers (Registration) Act 1977
- Legal Aid and advice legislation
- Adoption (S) Act 1978
- Theatres Act 1968
- Industrial and provident societies offences
- Friendly Societies Acts
- Credit Union Acts 1979
- Lands Valuation (S) Act
- Scotland Act offences
- Ethical Standards in Public Life
- Pensions Acts
- Antisocial behaviour, landlord offences
- Offences under the Charities and Trustees Inv Act
- Failure to comply with a Property Factor Enforcement Order (PFEO)

Road traffic offences

Dangerous and careless driving

- Dangerous driving offences
- Driving carelessly

Driving under the influence

- Driving motor vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs

- In charge of motor vehicle while unfit through drink/drugs
- Driving motor vehicle with blood alcohol content above prescribed limit
- In charge of motor vehicle while blood alcohol content above limit
- Failure to provide breath specimen at roadside
- Failure to provide breath, blood or urine specimen at police station
- Driving motor vehicle while under influence of controlled drug above prescribed limit
- In charge of motor vehicle while under influence of controlled drug above prescribed limit

Speeding
- Speeding in Restricted Areas
- Other Speeding Offences

Unlawful use of motor vehicle
- Vehicle excise License Offences
- Using Motor Vehicle Without Test Certificate
- Driving While Disqualified from Holding or Obtaining Licence
- Driving Without a Licence (including under age)
- Driving Licence, Other Offences
- Failure to Insure Against Third Party Risks
- Insure Against Third Party Risks, Other Offences
- Registration or Identification Mark Offences (Not Lighting)

Vehicle defect offences
- Lighting Offences, Motor Vehicle
- Construction & Use Regulations (Other Than Lighting

Seat Belt Offences
- Seat Belt Offences

Mobile Phone Offences
- Mobile Phone Offences

Other road traffic offences
- Dangerously riding a bicycle or tricycle
- Carelessly or inconsiderately riding a bicycle or tricycle
- Drunk when riding a bicycle
- Bicycles, other offences
- Pedestrian traffic offences
- Driver's Neglect of Traffic Directions (Not Pedestrian Crossing)
- Driver's contravention of Pedestrian Crossing Regulations
- Accident Offences
- Parking Offences
- Failing to Provide Info to Identify Driver of Motor Vehicle
- Motorway Traffic Offences
- Clearway Offences
- Motor Vehicle Records of Work (eg Tachograph) Offences
- Motor Vehicle, Other Offences

17. Definitions

This chapter provides information on some of the definitions used within the Recorded Crime in Scotland publications.

17.1 Assault

In Scotland, assault is a common law offence. In order to distinguish between Serious and Common assaults, Police Scotland use a common definition for Serious assault:

“An assault or attack in which the victim sustains injury resulting in detention in hospital as an inpatient, for the treatment of that injury, or any of the following injuries whether or not detained in hospital:

- Fractures (the breaking or cracking of a bone. Note – nose is cartilage not bone, so a ‘broken nose’ should not be classified unless it meets one of the other criteria)
- Internal injuries
- Severe concussion
- Lacerations requiring sutures which may lead to impairment or disfigurement
- Any other injury which may lead to impairment or disfigurement.

When HMICS published an earlier audit of crime recording in 2013, they recommended that the definition used for serious assault within the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) be reviewed and clarified, as some police officers sought greater clarity from the existing guidance. In response to this, enhanced guidelines as to the interpretation of serious assault were introduced in January 2015.

When publishing their Management Information report for Quarter 4 2015-16 in June 2016, Police Scotland advised that this action may have resulted in some crimes that would have been seen previously as common assaults now falling into the category of serious assault.

17.2 Housebreaking

Housebreaking can be broken down into different building types: dwelling, non-dwelling and other property. Where ‘domestic dwelling’ is presented in the statistics, this refers to dwellings and non-dwellings only.

Dwelling is defined as a house which is being used for (or fit to be used for) residential purposes. Non-dwelling is defined as all roofed buildings used for domestic purposes other than dwellings (for example garages, garden huts, outhouses, etc.). Other property is defined as all roofed buildings not used for residential or domestic purposes (for example commercial premises). Further information on the different types of building included under each of these headings is available in the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (the manual that details rules and guidance for how crimes should be recorded).

17.3 Sexual crimes with victim aged under 18

Sexual crimes with victim aged under 18 is a subset of all Sexual crimes and includes a wide range of sexual crimes where the age of the victim could be identified.

The table below gives a list of the crimes included in this calculation. It should be noted that this is most likely an under count of sexual crimes with a victim under 18, as some of these crimes may be classified as a crime which does not specify the age of the victim. This will include where the perpetrator targets someone they believed to be a child (for example, through cyber-enabled sexual crime).

Crime

- Rape of older male child (13-15 years)[1]
- Rape of older female child (13-15 years)[1]
- Rape of young male child (Under 13)[1]
- Rape of young female child (Under 13)[1]
- Attempted rape older male child (13-15)[1]
- Attempted rape older female child (13-15)[1]
- Attempted rape young male child (under 13)[1]
- Attempted rape young female child (under 13)[1]
- Sexual assault by penetration of male (13-15 years)[1]
- Sexual assault by penetration of female (13-15 years)[1]
- Sexual assault of older male child (13-15 years)[1]
- Sexual assault of older female child (13-15 years)[1]
- Sexual coercion of older male child (13-15 years)[1]
- Sexual coercion of older female child (13-15 years)[1]
- Assault by penetration of young male child (under 13)[1]
- Assault by penetration of young female child (under 13)[1]
- Sexual assault of young male child (under 13)[1]
- Sexual assault of young female child (under 13)[1]
- Cause young male child (under 13) to participate in sexual activity[1]
- Cause young female child (under 13) to participate in sexual activity[1]
- Cause young child to be present/ look at sexual activity (under 13)[1]
- Communicating indecently with young child (under 13)[1]
- Sexual exposure to a young child (under 13)[1]
- Voyeurism young child (under 13)[1]
- Intercourse with older male child (13-15)[1]
- Intercourse with older female child (13-15)[1]
- Penetrative sexual activity with older male child (13-15)[1]
- Penetrative sexual activity with older female child (13-15)[1]
- Sexual activity with older male child (13-15)[1]
- Sexual activity with older female child (13-15)[1]
- Cause older male child (13-15) to participate in sexual activity[1]
- Cause older female child (13-15) to participate in sexual activity[1]
- Older male child (13-15) engaging in sexual conduct with another older child[1]
- Older female child (13-15) engaging in sexual conduct with another older child[1]
- Causing an older child (13-15) to be present/ look at sexual activity[1]
- Communicate indecently older child (13-15)[1]

- Sexual exposure older child (13-15)[1]
- Voyeurism older child (13-15)[1]
- Sexual intercourse with girl under 13 (offences prior to 1 December 2010)
- Sexual intercourse with child under 16 (offences prior to 1 December 2010)
- Abducting girl under 18 woman mental disordered
- Person with custody & care of girl or other causing her seduction
- Grooming of children for purposes of sexual offences
- Procuration of sexual services from child under 18
- Procuration of child under 18 for pornography
- Taking, distribution etc indecent photos of children
- Sexual abuse of trust of person under 18
- Lewd and libidinous practices[2]

Notes

1. These offences were not separately identifiable until the implementation of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 on 1 December 2010. The 2010-11 figures for these offences relate only to the period 1 December 2010 to 31 March 2011.
2. Lewd and libidinous practices are sexual crimes against children committed prior to 1 December 2010.

18. 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.

Police Scotland have used a bespoke data collection to capture information on the number of new crimes recorded under coronavirus related legislation and as a result it has not been possible to obtain information on the number of Coronavirus restrictions crimes which have been cleared up. These crimes are therefore not included in the clear up rate analysis. It is likely that the vast majority of these crimes were cleared up since many of these crimes are offences for which the offender is ‘caught in the act’ (similar to Motor vehicle offences).

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 are 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 have now fully rolled out their new crime recording system which opens 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.

A new system of recorded warnings – known as the Recorded Police Warning (RPW) scheme, was introduced by Police Scotland on 11 January 2016. The scheme allows police officers to make greater use of their discretion when dealing with minor crimes and offences, and replaces the Formal Adult Warning system. Some crimes and offences in this 2023-24 bulletin (as with previous bulletins) will have been dealt with by a RPW.

This scheme should not impact on clear up rate statistics as a RPW can only be issued where there is sufficient evidence to report a matter to the Crown (and hence meet the criteria for a ‘cleared-up’ crime or offence). To date there has been no evidence of any impact of RPWs on clear up rate statistics.

Statistics on recorded crime clear up rates remain Official Statistics due to a lack of external assurance of these data. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) made a recommendation that the Scottish Government should consider next steps required to meet the requirements for National Statistics designation. The designation of clear up rates will be revisited by the OSR once we have undertaken further work.

19. 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 2022 mid-year population was 622,820, and the Orkney Islands, where the 2022 mid-year population was 22,020.

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

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

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.

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:

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

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.

20. 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 to not constitute a crime or offence (see the No Crime Records chapter). In other cases the original crime or offence may be re-classified, which could shift the record between different crime or offence groups.

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.

Each submission of data to the Scottish Government contains revisions back to quarter 1 of the 2013-14 reporting year, reflecting the amendments described above. To assess the extent of these amendments, we have compared the crime and offence data published for 2022-23 (which was submitted to the Scottish Government in April 2023 with what was reported for the same period one year later (April 2024). Table 20.1 shows the results of this exercise.

Table 20.1: Revisions of crimes recorded by the police, Scotland, 2022-23

2022-23 Reporting Year				Number & Percentage
Crime or Offence Group	**Submitted in April 2023**	**Submitted in April 2024**	**Difference**	**% Difference**
Total Crime and Offences	**461,569**	**457,028**	**-4,541**	**-1.0%**
Total Crime	**289,362**	**287,690**	**-1,672**	**-0.6%**
Non-sexual crimes of violence	68,870	68,896	26	0.0%
Sexual crimes	14,602	14,551	-51	-0.3%
Crimes of dishonesty	103,393	102,306	-1,087	-1.1%
Damage and reckless behaviour	43,123	43,088	-35	-0.1%
Crimes against society	59,374	58,849	-525	-0.9%
Total Offences	**172,207**	**169,338**	**-2,869**	**-1.7%**
Antisocial offences	50,094	49,936	-158	-0.3%
Miscellaneous offences	12,793	12,636	-157	-1.2%
Road traffic offences	109,320	106,766	-2,554	-2.3%

As with our analysis in previous bulletins, the comparison presented below confirms that the extent of further amendment to police crime and offence records following the original submission of data continues to be minimal at the Scotland level. This gives users confidence that the published statistics for 2014-15 to 2022-23 recorded crimes and offences are reliable. On a proportional basis, the biggest impact is on the Crimes of dishonesty group, where a net 1,087 fewer crimes have been recorded

following no-criming and reclassification between groups. This has reduced the number of Crimes of Dishonesty by 1.1% from 103,393 to 102,306.

We repeat this exercise annually, as a quality assurance exercise, to confirm that further amendments remain minimal. Despite the fact only a very small proportion of records are amended following their original submission to the Scottish Government, it is important for Accredited Official Statistics purposes that time series are on a like-for-like basis. As such, the previous years data used in the current bulletin remains that which was submitted originally, to ensure this is consistent with the timetable followed for the submission of data each year (i.e. the same amount of time has elapsed for amendments to records for each reporting year).

This analysis demonstrates that a more up-to-date set of figures are available from Police Scotland than included in this Accredited Official Statistics publication. Given this the Scottish Crime Recording Board (SCRB) was asked to assess whether any amendment to our revisions policy should be made before the 2015-16 publication. In light of the minimal level of change following the original submission of data, the SCRB concluded in December 2015 that no changes were necessary to our revisions policy as our current approach was simple to understand and kept open the possibility of future publications coming out earlier in the year. As such, the existing revisions policy and practice will continue to be followed until such time as users request any reconsideration.

21. 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.

The SCJS is a national survey, obtaining responses from around 5,500 adults (aged 16 and over) living in private households.

The main aims of the SCJS 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
- 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
- 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 sensitive issues, including partner abuse, sexual victimisation, and stalking and harassment.

The estimated number of crimes from 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.

21.1 Comparing police recorded crime and the SCJS

Table 21.1 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 21.1: Recorded Crime in Scotland and SCJS compared

	Recorded Crime in Scotland	Scottish Crime and Justice Survey
Where do the data come from?	Administrative police records	Face-to-face interviews with residents from a nationally representative sample of the household population
Basis for inclusion	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
Frequency	Collected by rolling 12 month periods. Statistics released in an quarterly publication	Survey conducted annually, typically following the financial year, with a reference period extending around 25 months. Results previously published biennially, now annually
Strengths	• Covers the full range of crimes and offences • Provides data at a local level (and can be used for performance monitoring) • A good measure of rarer, more serious crimes that are well reported • Good measure of long-term trends	• Good measure of trends since 2008-09 • Captures information about crimes that are not reported to the police (including sensitive issues such as domestic abuse or drug use) • Able to provide information on the details and circumstances of crimes • Analyses crime for different demographic groups and victim-offender relationships • Provides information on multiple and repeat victimisation (up to 5 incidents in a series). • Provides attitudinal data (e.g. fear of crime or attitudes towards the criminal justice system)
Limitations	• Partially reliant on the public reporting crime • Reporting rates may vary by the type of crime (e.g. serious crime is more likely to be reported or housebreaking if a crime number is required for insurance purposes) • Trends can be affected by legislation; public reporting practices; police recording practices	• Does not cover all crimes (e.g. homicide, crimes without a specific victim, such as speeding, or crimes against businesses) • Does not cover the entire population (e.g. children, homeless people or people living in communal accommodation) • Less able to produce robust data at lower level geographies • Difficult to measure trends between survey years, especially in rarer forms of crime (such as more serious offences) • Estimates are subject to a degree of measurement error (confidence intervals)
What other data are collected?	• Additional statistical bulletins published, including on homicides, firearm offences and domestic abuse	• Public perceptions about crime • Worry about crime and the perceived likelihood of being a victim

	incidents	• Confidence in the police and the criminal justice system • Prevalence estimates on 'sensitive' topics (partner abuse, sexual victimisation, stalking and drug use). Reported on biennially

The differences outlined in Table 21.1 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
- 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 sex. 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 online.

22. 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 Justice_Analysts@gov.scot.

22.1 Web tables

The headline data is presented at Scotland and Local Authority level. The tables are available in an accessible excel format as supporting documents to the main bulletin.

22.2 Statistics.gov.scot

Recorded crime data are available from the Statistics.gov.scot website. Local authority and Scotland data are available on the website, with data available from 1996-97 onwards.

The recorded crime data can be found in the Crime and Justice topic area on the statistics.gov.scot 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 Road Traffic Offences or Coronavirus restriction crimes are not included. For further information on the reason behind this please see the section on Clear Up Rates.

22.3 Future Improvements

The 2021 consultation asked for feedback on potential future developments for statistics on recorded crime and police activity. This evidence will be used to inform longer term planning of these statistics, and users will be kept informed of any developments via ScotStat.

23. Other Scottish Government publications using police data

For those that are interested in the overall level of recorded crime in Scotland, the best source of data are the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins. As well as the annual bulletin, from August 2022, we have been publishing a quarterly bulletin which reports the most recent 12 months' worth of data.

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, Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms and Characteristics of police recorded hate crime in 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.

23.1 Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland

The Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland Official Statistics bulletin presents statistics on incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police, including the demographics of victims and perpetrators.

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 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.

From 1 April 2019, the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into effect. The Act created a new offence for circumstances where a person engages in a course of behaviour[7] which is abusive towards their partner or ex-partner. The Domestic Abuse

[7] A course of behaviour involves behaviour on at least two occasions

Recorded by the Police in Scotland bulletin also provides data on the number of incidents which included the recording of a crime as defined by this Act. Due to the different source for which these data are collected it is likely these figures may differ from the those presented in the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin.

The Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin uses Police Scotland's crime management system. The Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland bulletin uses information from the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD), which is not a crime recording system and exists to collate disparate pieces of information about incidents, allowing officers to build a narrative about people who have reported or been involved in an incident with a domestic abuse element.

Both of these systems are live operational databases, which means they constantly change as cases are entered into them and then reviewed. This can for example lead to some crime types being amended as investigations proceed, and given the different times of data extraction for the two statistical reports, some differences in the number of crimes shown are likely to occur.

For users interested in the volume of crimes recorded under the Domestic Abuse Act, the Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin will remain the primary source. For trends and characteristics of in domestic abuse incidents users should refer to the Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland bulletin.

The statistics reported in Domestic Abuse Recorded by the Police in Scotland do not reveal the incidence of all domestic abuse committed as 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.

23.2 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 50 category Murder and culpable homicide. The Murder and culpable homicide category contains the crimes of Murder and Culpable homicide (common law), as represented in the Homicide in Scotland bulletin, but also includes Corporate homicide, which is not detailed in the Homicide in Scotland bulletin.

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 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.

23.3 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 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.

23.4 Hate Crime incidents recorded by Police in Scotland

The latest information for the number of hate crimes incidents recorded by Police in Scotland and by aggravation types can be found here. Additional research into the characteristics around the nature of hate crime incidents was conducted on a random sample of 2020-21 incidents and are available as part of the Police recorded hate crime - characteristics: updated study - gov.scot (www.gov.scot), this is a follow up to the previous research looking at a sample from 2018-19 (Characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland: study).

The Hate Crime definition used in the above reports is any crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated (wholly or partly) by malice and ill-will towards a social group.

In the period covered by the above reports, the law recognised hate crimes as crimes motivated by prejudice based on these characteristics:

Disability,

Race,

Religion,

Sexual orientation,

Transgender identity.

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 which was introduced on 1st April 2024 includes additional aggravations of Age and Variations in Sex Characteristics. These will be included in any reporting covering 2024-25 onwards.

A person does not need to be a member of the social group being targeted by the perpetrator to be the victim of a hate crime. The law states that the identity of the victim is irrelevant as to whether something is a hate crime or not; the motivation of the perpetrator is the key factor in defining a hate crime.

This study on hate crime characteristics is to be seen as a follow-up to Hate crime: availability of information recorded by the police in Scotland.

The data available on race aggravation within the Characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland: study, supersede the information provided in the Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland bulletin presents statistics on racist incidents.

The Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin uses Police Scotland's crime management system for racially aggravated offences. The Characteristics of police recorded hate crime in Scotland: study uses information from the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD), which is not a crime recording system and exists to collate disparate pieces of information about incidents, allowing officers to build a narrative about people who have reported or been involved in an incident with a hate crime element.

Both of these systems are live operational databases, which means they constantly change as cases are entered into them and then reviewed. This can for example lead to some crime types being amended as investigations proceed, and given the different times of data extraction for the two statistical reports, some differences in the number of crimes shown are likely to occur.

23.5 Drug Seizures Recorded by the Police in Scotland

The Drug Seizures and Offender Characteristics 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 and Offender Characteristics bulletin also includes information on the number of drug seizures, the quantity of each type of drug seized and the characteristics of the perpetrators of drug possession crimes. Within the Crimes against society crime group, there are top 50 categories for Drug possession and Drug supply crimes. These categories are further broken down in Table A9 of the Recorded Crime in Scotland Annual bulletin.

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 and Offender Characteristics bulletin series.

23.6 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.

23.7 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.

23.8 Prison Statistics Scotland

The Prison Statistics Scotland publication provides statistics on the changing scale and nature of the prison population, including average daily population and counts of individuals by establishment, type of custody, index crime type and sentence length, characteristics of prisoners, and arrivals to and departures from penal establishments.

23.9 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. The bulletin also includes repeat non-court disposal rates for non-court disposals (direct measures) given by the police or the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

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.

24. Comparability across the UK

24.1 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).

Crime Statistics for England and Wales are published quarterly on the ONS website.

24.2 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.

24.3 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.

25. 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.

25.1 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.

25.2 Uses of recorded crime statistics

There are expert and non-expert users of crime statistics in all sectors, and from evidence gathered at previous Scottish Government crime statistics user events, 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.

The statistics are of interest to government and opposition politicians, and are frequently used by the media to inform the general public about crime and policing. They are also used by third sector organisations to monitor trends and support advocacy work and by Local Authorities to monitor trends and progress.

For further information on how are publications are used, please see the Consultation section.

25.2.1 Police Scotland

Crime data assists analysis of crime patterns, trends and fluctuations and support the National Intelligence Model. Accurate crime data illustrates to the police service, ministers, Local Government and the public at large how the police are performing and identifies areas, if any, which require greater resourcing.

Analysis of high-quality crime data allows the police to establish where, when, and how often crime is happening. This ensures they are best able to:

- tackle crime and the causes of crime;
- analyse crime patterns, trends and fluctuations;
- plan their work to achieve the best outcomes for victims and communities;

- provide the public, Government, local policing bodies and HMICS with an accurate picture of crime in a particular area;
- illustrate to the service and the public how Police Scotland is performing; and
- provide the victims of crime with appropriate access to victim services.

25.2.2 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.

25.2.2.1 The 2022 Vision for Justice in Scotland

The Vision for Justice in Scotland was published in February 2022. It updated the 2017 Justice Vision and Priorities published in 2017 and sets out a transformative vision for the whole justice system in Scotland. The 2022 strategy outlines how we will transform the justice system, through recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. A delivery plan for Year 1 (2022-23) was also published in

February 2022. Both the Vision and the Year 1 Delivery Plan were developed in close consultation with partners, including Police Scotland, COPFS and third sector groups. The development of the aims and outcomes of the document were supported by evidence from a range of sources, including the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, Recorded Crime data, and evidence provided from across teams within Justice Analytical Services.

The new strategy sets out three key priorities – making sure victims voices are heard, placing women and children at the heart of service delivery and reassessing the role that prisons and the use of imprisonment should play. The 2022 Justice Vision will be accompanied by a measurement framework and a Years 2-4 Delivery plan, which will set out the actions we intend to take to achieve the aims and outcomes of the strategy.

A fresh start for Scotland published in April 2023 sets out Scottish Government priorities for delivery by 2026. In November 2023, Scottish Government published a report that reviews progress since the publication of the *Vision for Justice*, and sets out a three year delivery plan for continuing to take forward delivery and reform with our partners.

For more information please see The Vision for Justice in Scotland and Vision for Justice in Scotland: three year delivery plan.

25.2.2.2 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. Note that the current SIMD uses data collected under the old grouping classification, 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 • Causing serious injury etc. by culpable and reckless conduct • 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
- Offences relating to Serious Organised Crime (now obsolete code)

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 Vandalism, reckless damage and malicious mischief (now obsolete code) Reckless damage (now obsolete code)
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 • Offences relating to Serious Organised Crime
Group 6: Miscellaneous offences	Includes: • Common assault • Common assault of 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 2020 was published on 28 January 2020. The SIMD website, contains further background information on SIMD.

25.2.2.3 Monthly Safer Communities and Justice Monthly Report

The Safer Communities and Justice Statistics Monthly Report contains an up to date summary of the most important statistics across the justice portfolio.

25.2.3 Media

Recorded crime statistics are widely reported in the media, reflecting the public interest in crime and the criminal justice system.

25.2.4 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.

25.2.5 Academia

Users within academia use recorded crime statistics, as part of a wide range of criminal justice research and for teaching purposes, to:

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

25.2.6 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.

26. 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.

26.1 User / Stakeholder Consultation 2021

A consultation was conducted from October - December 2021. The purpose of the consultation was to gather views on how best to ensure that Scotland's recorded crime statistics remain of high value, through their relevance to those who use them, and their capacity to support understanding of the important issues relating to crime in Scotland (alongside other complementary sources of official statistics and research), this built on evidence collected in the 2019 consultation.

The consultation was split into three parts;

- Part One: Proposal to introduce new crime groups in 2022
- Part Two: Dissemination of Recorded Crime Statistics
- Part Three: Police Activity Statistics

A summary of the responses to each of the sections is provided below, with more detail available in the Summary of responses publication.

26.1.1 Part One: Proposal to introduce new crime groups in 2022

Part One of the consultation built on earlier engagement with users in 2019 (see section 25.2), where they were asked to consider an alternative way to group and present recorded crime statistics. The 2021 consultation aimed to conclude the discussion through asking users if they had a preference between two options, one which retained fewer broader groups and a second that was more granular, with 16 groups.

Of the 17 written responses, seven did not note a preference. Six noted support for the granular approach, with some stating this appeared clearer and more transparent. Three responses preferred retaining fewer broader groups, noting that the broader groups with more categories would provide more concise and uncluttered headline figures, while ensuring detailed information is available from the categories. Finally, one response stated a preference for the more granular option, but keeping sexual crimes as one group.

Of those users who expressed an opinion on the grouping structure at the consultation events, most favoured a granular approach as a way to have more detailed information.

26.1.2 Part Two: Dissemination of Recorded Crime Statistics

Part Two of the consultation sought users' views on the way both the annual National Statistics and monthly Official Statistics on recorded crime in Scotland are presented and disseminated. This included questions on the content of these publications, their frequency and any potential analytical developments.

- Where an opinion was expressed, respondents were all supportive of the commentary for the annual statistics as a valuable way of understanding and contextualising the findings. While some were in favour of reducing the length of the bulletin, with more background information being provided in a separate User Guide, others retained a preference for a comprehensive commentary.

- Where an opinion was given, users found the information on cyber-crime in the 2020-21 bulletin useful.

- Many also expressed interest in the potential development of reports that rotate around certain themes, alongside a more general summary of long term trends on recorded crime.

- Most respondents were also in favour of having Excel format tables, and removing them from the bulletin.

- The clear majority of respondents who provided an opinion on analysis comparing police recorded crime statistics with the SCJS said that they found this useful.

- Where a preference was expressed, respondents were in favour of reducing the frequency of the monthly statistics publications, suggesting quarterly releases would best suit their needs.

- Of those respondents who provided an answer on the use of the User Guide, they referred to this as a useful document which complements the statistical bulletin

26.1.3 Part Three: Police Activity Statistics

Part Three of the consultation invited users to provide feedback on what other areas of policing in Scotland they would like to see the potential production of new statistics on, including how such data should be made available. For example, these may include the volume and type of incidents recorded by the police and information on incidents that involve a missing person.

Almost all who provided a response to this part of the consultation said that they would find the production of new Official Statistics on incidents recorded by Police Scotland of value.

There was interest in finding out more about what type of information could be produced in relation to incidents, and it was acknowledged that there would be a need to assess any limitations of this data.

26.1.4 Outcome

After considering the responses to this consultation, along with other feedback received from the associated events and feedback from the previous consultation, the Scottish Crime Recording Board approved a number of changes to the recorded crime statistics. These included:

- the current set of crime and offence groups will be replaced with a new set based on Option A (as described in the consultation). The 2021/22 annual Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics will be the first to reflect this change.
- common assault will be reclassified as a crime rather than an offence
- stalking will be reclassified as a crime rather than an offence
- common assault will be split into common assault with injury and common assault without injury, with the timing to be confirmed for the introduction of this change
- the annual Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics bulletin will be published in June, brought forward from September
- the annual Recorded Crime in Scotland National Statistics bulletin will be redesigned to ensure it meets accessibility requirements and statistical best practice
- the Recorded Crime Monthly Official Statistics will be discontinued following publication of the March 2022 bulletin in April 2022
- the Monthly Official Statistics will then be replaced with a quarterly release of National Statistics, which will present the latest rolling 12-month period.

26.1.4.1 Crime Grouping Structure

A revised crime and offence classification has been implemented. This retains a similar number of groups to the old structure, but provides more detail at the second level of disaggregation, with a 'top-50' category structure.

Additional tables will continue to be included within the statistics which will break down categories further for particular types of crimes where there is a known user interest. The new crime code classification is presented in section 16.3, with section 16.2.19 outlining the changes which have been made compared to the previous year.

26.1.4.2 Dissemination of Recorded Crime Statistics

The Scottish Crime Recording Board approved the discontinuation of the Monthly Official Statistics, with the final publication covering March 2022 (released in April 2022).

A quarterly release of National Statistics, which will present the latest rolling 12-month period, will be introduced from August 2022. The intention is that the first three quarterly products released each year (those covering the latest year ending June, September and December) would be;

- Similar in length to the monthly publications,
- Will report data for a rolling year, ending with the most recent quarter, and
- Will also include a 5-year rolling time series.

The quarterly release that corresponds with a full financial year (covering year ending March or Q4) will in effect become the new annual statistics, with longer time series analysis and additional commentary. This approach brings Scotland broadly into line with England & Wales, and their quarterly releases of recorded crime statistics by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

As part of the transition to a quarterly release schedule, and to ensure that data is published in as timely a manner as possible - the Annual National Statistics publication has been brought forward to June, rather than September.

The planned publication timetable for the new quarterly releases of National Statistics is shown below.

Year ending	**Publication Month**
30 June (Q1)	August
30 September (Q2)	November
31 December (Q3)	February
31 March (Q4) (Annual bulletin)	June

The 2021 consultation also asked for feedback on potential future developments for statistics on recorded crime and police activity. This evidence will be used to inform longer term planning of these statistics, and users will be kept informed of any developments via ScotStat.

26.1.5 Impact

The agreed changes to the grouping structure used to present recorded crime statistics are not insignificant and users may notice some change as we switch to the new groups.

To ensure no break or discontinuity to time series analysis, all tables within the 2021-22 statistics will be back revised. For the first year only, we will also provide the main tables of crimes and offences using the old grouping structure.

Those users who are familiar with the existing time series data for police recorded crime (based on the old groups) may notice some change as we switch to the new groups. The numbers of crimes and offences in certain groups will change and in some instances, the trend over time may also change.

These changes have been analysed and are provided in the Technical Report on statistical impact of changing to new groups section of the Summary of responses report.

26.2 User / Stakeholder Consultation 2019

A consultation was conducted in July - November 2019.

The consultation was split into three parts;

- Part One: Purpose and supporting principles
- Part Two: An alternative way to present recorded crime statistics
- Part Three: Cyber-crime in Scotland

In summary, all respondents were supportive of many of the proposals within the alternative grouping structure presented in this consultation. Users were keen to see a greater amount of disaggregation of the current grouping structure, so that the public could have a clearer understanding of the changing nature of crime in Scotland. Users also highlighted the importance of clarity about the types of behaviour included in each crime or offence group.

Respondents were generally supportive of several proposals laid out in the consultation, such as the reclassification of common assault from an offence to a crime. However, for other areas there was a more mixed response such as reclassifying aspects of prostitution and drug crime as an offence. Some users also questioned whether it was still relevant to maintain a distinction between crimes and offences in statistical publications.

There was clear interest from all respondents in having more information about cyber-crimes. Specifically, there was reference to the fact that as cyber-technologies are being increasingly used by more people to commit crimes it would be useful to know to what extent different crime groups are affected by this change in criminal behaviour.

Given the clear user support for such a change, a new cyber-crime chapter, which presented and discussed the latest available information on recorded cyber-crime in Scotland, was added to the 2020-21 Annual bulletin. This included an estimate of the proportion of recorded crime which is cyber-enabled and further detail about the characteristics of these cases (based on the review of a random sample of crime records).

Having reflected on the responses received to this consultation, the Scottish Crime Recording Board presented revised grouping structures for final consideration in Autumn 2021.

The full Summary of Responses to the 2019 consultation can be accessed online.

26.3 Earlier consultations

26.3.1 User/Stakeholder consultation 2015

A consultation was conducted in April - June 2015. The focus of this consultation was the seven annual statistical bulletins published at that time 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 reported on police data. The UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) pointed to improvements that could be made in its 2014 Assessment Report, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) published its Crime Audit 2014 report and a number of changes had been implemented for the Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2013-14 statistical bulletin following the establishment of Police Scotland (such as reporting at local authority level rather than the eight legacy police forces, and the presentation of limited time series for Group 6 – Miscellaneous offences and Group 7 – Motor vehicle offences to reflect the data comparability issues (per the Technical Report).

An innovative approach was taken that utilised a variety of consultation methods (including one-to-one and group discussions, as well as written communications) to capture the views of expert and non-expert users including 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 2014-15 and subsequent Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletins reflected on the findings from this consultation. The full results of the 2015 user consultation can be accessed online.

26.3.2 User/ Stakeholder consultation 2014

A Crime statistics user event in was held in Edinburgh in October 2014. A detailed report on the findings from this event, as well as the timetable and presentations, can be accessed online.

A user consultation was conducted in April - May 2014, the full results of which can be accessed online.

26.3.3 Future User/Stakeholder consultation

Going forward, users will be kept informed of any developments and upcoming consultations through the ScotStat network.

27. Potential future considerations

27.1 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 have recently introduced a new system to record crime. The introduction of this new system may provide opportunities to provide details on individual crimes (rather than aggregate information). We are beginning a scoping exercise looking at the potential of the new system and will keep users informed of any developments via ScotStat.

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
- Hate Crime Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland
- Recorded Crimes and Offences Involving Firearms, Scotland

27.2 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).

The Recorded Crime in Scotland bulletin's (from 2020/21 onwards) contains a chapter relating to cyber-crime. This topical section presents findings of a study into police recorded cyber-crime in Scotland, based on a random sample of police recorded crimes. This includes an estimate of the impact of a recent procedural change to the recording of international crime and details on the characteristics of cyber-crime.

With the new 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 data becomes available from the new IT system, we will keep under review how we can best collect data on cyber-enabled crime.

HMICS is acutely aware of the increase in cyber-enabled crime and anticipates this trend will only continue. Understanding the true nature and extent of cyber-enabled crime through use of cyber-crime markers is an area HMICS will continue to scrutinise in any relevant inspection work, as this is necessary to assess the scope of such activity to meet demand.