

Office for Statistics Regulation Assessment of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey Requirement 3 – Review of Resources

Background

1. The SCJS is a large-scale social survey which asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland, including crimes that haven't been reported to, or recorded by the police. The survey is important as it not only provides a picture of crime in Scotland, but also examines trends, over time, in the number and nature of crimes in Scotland, assesses varying risks and characteristics of crime for different groups of adults in the population, and allows the exploration of sensitive issues such as partner abuse and drug use.
2. An important role of the SCJS is to provide an alternative and complementary measure of crime to the [police recorded crime statistics](#), which provide statistics on crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland. The findings from the SCJS are used by policy makers across the public sector in Scotland to help understand the nature of crime in Scotland, target resources and monitor the impact of initiatives to target crime.
3. As part of their assessment of the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey (SCJS), the Office of Statistics Regulation asked the Scottish Government to '*review the resources allocated to the production of these statistics to ensure that they are sufficient to meet the standards of the Code of Practice and the obligation within it to serve the public good and publish the outcome of the review.*' This paper reviews the resource committed to and available to the SCJS, in light of the range of current needs and future priorities for survey delivery and development, within the standards of the Code of Practice and the obligation within it to serve the public good. The paper considers the process used for planning work and for prioritising required work within the SCJS team and the wider analytical unit.

Resources available to the SCJS

4. The SCJS Team is part of the Safer Communities Analytical Unit within Justice Analytical Services. Justice Analytical Services provides analytical advice and support in the areas of both criminal and civil justice, working with a range of key stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of available evidence and to maximise the use and impact of this evidence across the justice system.
5. The Safer Communities Analytical Unit (SCAU) is a multi-professional unit which provides evidence, analysis and advice, working across government and closely with a range of external stakeholders, including Police Scotland and other justice agencies to develop a shared understanding and promote use of the available evidence. Policy areas covered by the work of the unit include crime, policing, organised crime and counter terrorism, resilience, and community safety. Significant themes in the unit's current work are: violent crime, cybercrime, police reform and confidence in the police.

6. The SCJS is a key component of the SCAU and JAS more generally. The core SCJS team comprises a C1 statistician, a B3 social researcher and a B1 statistician. The current team structure is outlined on the SCJS website:
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/crime-and-justice-survey/contact>.
7. The team structure is fairly settled however staff do rotate in and out of the team as is common with analytical posts across government. This provides staff with new analytical opportunities and brings new perspectives on existing and ongoing work. However it also means some challenges in maintaining ongoing work and knowledge on the project which we manage with clear documentation including project plans, logs, electronic filing conventions and desk instructions.
8. In addition, the core SCJS team receives a range of additional support, including from:

Statisticians in the Scottish Government's Office of the Chief Statistician	Support the SCJS team with survey sampling, weighting, the SCJS technical report and other technical support, as required, including with the procurement of the survey and the SG Long Term Survey Strategy.
SCJS survey contractors	Responsible for data collection, coding, processing, some high-level analysis each year, technical reporting and support with a range of ongoing developments, as required.
Other UK crime survey teams	Ongoing communication on developments such as with the Crime Survey for England and Wales team on measuring fraud and computer misuse.
External commissioning	For example, we have previously commissioned academics to draft some of our reporting (of the SCJS self-completion modules on Drug Use, Partner Abuse and Sexual Victimization).
Others across the SCAU	Key elements of our ongoing SCJS 2018/19 questionnaire review are being led by a social researcher within the wider SCAU team while another member of the team is leading on work to consider cyber-crime.
JAS statistical support team	Quality assurance of analysis data tables provided by the survey contractor and, on an ongoing basis, extensive checking of the crime codes assigned to victim forms collected in the SCJS to ensure robust quality assurance in the set-up of the new contract and build confidence in the robustness of the resulting data and comparability with previous sweeps.

Planning and prioritising SCJS work

9. SCJS resources are reviewed each year as part of the analytical planning process that leads to the publication of the Justice Analytical Service Analytical Programme (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice>). In this process for 2016-17, following a process of engagement with users and policy colleagues designed to closely align our analysis with key priorities and the delivery of justice outcomes, we set priorities for the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey for the coming year and allocate

resources in a proportionate manner.

10. The core tasks of the SCJS team include:

- Managing and updating the SCJS questionnaire to ensure it continues to provide high quality evidence to support ongoing and emerging policy developments.
- Overseeing ongoing data collection.
- Analysis and dissemination of results in written reports produced by the team and wider engagement with a range of users.
- Providing SCJS data and results on the SCJS website and on the UK Data Archive.

11. However, in addition, as we are currently working with a new contractor, we have also prioritised additional resource on the quality assurance of the initial data and the processes surrounding data collection and assurance under the new survey contract. This is a vital part of our work, however we expect that the resources needed for this will reduce in future years as our contractor become more experienced and take on more of this burden. We will keep a close eye on this area during future resource planning to allow us to assess the impact of the move to annual fieldwork on the resources required for the SCJS.

12. Following the planning exercise which included user engagement and examination of analytical and justice priorities, a range of additional SCJS work for the forthcoming period has been has been prioritised around:

(i) Consistency - development and validation of robust and extensive data processing activities with the new survey contractor to ensure high-quality and consistent SCJS coding, data and results are derived from the survey, vital for SCJS users and ensuring continued public value of the survey.

(ii) Future Reporting - Detailed consideration and planning the structure of future reports, taking into consideration the reduced sample size, structured around user needs, resources available and robustness of results, to be published and shared with users to understand impacts and then to further consider and finalise plans for reporting.

(iii) Questionnaire Review - to ensure the survey continues to offer robust evidence on priority issues, but is used flexibly and develops to consider new and emerging priority topics (e.g. fraud and comp misuse).

(iv) Close monitoring to ensure active management of fieldwork performance. The effective delivery of fieldwork is essential for ensuring the quality (e.g. representativeness) of the data gathered.

(v) Cyber-crime - following the evolving development of survey information on fraud and computer misuse in the CSEW we are working closely with ONS and others to further consider and examine the changing nature of crime.

(vi) Repeat Victimization - building on the approach taken in 2014/15 SCJS, further consideration and development of reporting on repeat and multiple victimisation, recognising that the practice of capping the number of incidents in a series of crimes at 5 is being changed in the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

Conclusion

13. The delivery of the core SCJS tasks and the additional priority work is challenging, however by effectively and regularly planning we ensure that we prioritise the work of the immediate SCJS team and call on additional support, as required, for a range of ongoing work and additional developmental activity.

14. At present, there is a proportionate use of resources to deliver the priorities for the SCJS. The on-going working planning and prioritisation process allows us to keep resources under-review, ensuring we prioritise and efficiently use proportionate resource across the survey year and, where our priorities change over time, we can ensure that our resources can adapt and reflect any such changing priorities.

SCJS Project Team

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