

**CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**Thursday 13 March 2014 11:35 – 12:30**

**Meeting room 3, 1 Drummond Gate, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2QQ**

**Attendees:**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| David Blunt                       | Home Office  |
| Steve Bond                        | National Crime Registrar, Home Office                          |
| Professor Allan J Brimicombe      | University of East London                                      |
| Philippa Brimicombe (Secretariat) | National Statistician's Office                                 |
| Roma Chappell                     | Office for National Statistics                                 |
| Mike Elkins                       | Ministry of Justice  |
| Jeff Farrar                       | National Policing Lead for Statistics                          |
| John Flatley                      | Office for National Statistics                                 |
| Junaid Gharda                     | Learning and Skills Improvement Service                        |
| Mike Hough                        | Institute for Criminal Policy Research, School of Law, Birbeck |
| Glyn Jones                        | Welsh Government   |
| Professor Chris G Lewis           | University of Portsmouth                                       |
| Kieron Mahony (Secretariat)       | National Statistician's Office                                 |
| Jil Matheson                      | National Statistician  |
| Patricia Mayhew                   | Independent Criminological consultant                          |
| Professor Stephen Shute (Chair)   | University of Sussex   |
| Peter Spindler                    | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary                     |
| Mike Warren                       | Home Office  |
| Damien Wingfield                  | Home Office  |

**Apologies**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Michael Levi   | Professor of Criminology, Cardiff University |
| Diana Luchford | Home Office                                  |
| Tom Winsor     | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary   |

| <b>Agenda Item No.</b> | <b>Timings</b> | <b>Order of Business</b> |                   |  |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1.                     | 11:35 – 11:45  |                          |                   | Chair's announcements<br>Stephen Shute (Chair)                                   |
| 2.                     | 11:45 – 12:20  |                          | <b>CSAC(14)01</b> | Re-designation of Police Recorded Crime – Project Overview<br>Roma Chappell, ONS |
| 3.                     | 12:20 – 12:30  | Any other business       |                   | All members  |

**Date of the next meeting:**

- Wednesday 21 May 2014



- Members were informed that following Adrian Smith's review of consumer prices it has been agreed that an independent committee should be formed that replicates the CSAC model. This is seen as a positive for CSAC, as it is recognition of the work that it has done to date;
  - The Chair reminded members that CSAC is currently advertising a vacancy for a non-executive member, which is due to close on 18 March 2014;
  - It was noted that two non-executive members, Mike Hough and Pat Mayhew , have been providing advice to HMIC on its proposed methodology for the crime data integrity audit;
  - RSS hosted a workshop on the divergence between the Crime Statistics for England and Wales and Police Recorded Crime on 27 January 2014. The event was well attended and report will be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 21 May 2014.
- 1.2. David Blunt updated members on the recent analytical workshop for PCCs that has been hosted by the Home Office. It was noted that the event was well attended with around 35 forces represented. He informed members that feedback received after the event was positive and that there had been a lot of interest in tools that could be used for analysis such as iQuanta.
- 1.3. The Chair went on to inform members of his appearance at the APCC quarterly meeting on 18 March 2014 and his proposed engagement with Force Crime Registrars at their annual meeting in autumn 2014.

**Action 1:** The report from the RSS workshop on divergence between CSEW and PRC will be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 21 May 2014.

## **2. Re-designation of Police Recorded Crime – Project Overview - CSAC(14)01**

- 2.1. Roma Chappell introduced the paper and provided members with an overview of the Re-designation of Police Recorded Crime (PRC) project. It was noted that the project, which is being led by ONS, is a cross government project. The current plans include the publication of an action plan to ensure transparency. She provided a brief update of the proposed governance arrangements and pointed out that the Chair will be asked to act in an advisory capacity.
- 2.2. The following points were made in discussion:
- there was agreement by the Committee that the option not to apply for re-designation should not be considered, with it agreed that the information gathered through CSEW would not provide wide enough coverage;
  - the Committee was content with the overall plans but there needs to be more information on aspects relating to improving the quality of the underlying data;
  - it was recognised that looking at the quality of PRC data and the adequacy of the current system of data collection might best be considered by a separate working group. It was suggested that such a group would be led by the Home Office and run in parallel with the PRC project;

- concerns were expressed as to why the position had changed for PRC since its previous assessment in April 2011 with agreement that the current position is down to an accumulation of evidence in relation to quality;
- there was acknowledgement that the issue of quality in relation to administrative data is far wider than just crime data;
- it was agreed that the issue of the quality of PRC is key to ensure public confidence in the use of the data;
- it was recognised that there needs to be a more robust system in place for the training of Force Crime Registrars.

2.3. It was proposed that the Chair should consider writing to the Home Secretary setting out the views of the Committee in relation to the re-designation of PRC.

**Action 2:** The Chair will consider whether to write to the Home Secretary setting out the views of the Committee in relation to the re-designation of Police Recorded Crime.

### **3. HMIC Inspection Programme Update**

3.1. Peter Spindler provided an update on the HMIC Crime Data Integrity Inspection (CDI) programme with it noted that there will be a report published in April 2014 and that there will be further discussion at the next CSAC meeting on 21 May 2014.

**Action 3:** The HMIC CDI Inspection programme will be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 21 May 2014.

**CSAC Secretariat  
March 2014**

## CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Re-designation of Police Recorded Crime as National Statistics

#### Purpose

1. To inform the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee of the establishment of a cross-government project led by the Office for National Statistics to achieve the re-designation of the police recorded crime series as National Statistics.

#### Action

2. Crime Statistics Advisory Committee members are asked to:
  - i. note that ONS will publish an Action Plan to provide transparency on how work will be taken forward in response to the requirements set out by the UK Statistics Authority in the recent Crime Statistics assessment report and;
  - ii. consider and approve the arrangements for the Committee to provide advice to the project, in particular as set out in paragraphs 10, 11 and 12.

#### Background

3. In January 2014, the UK Statistics Authority<sup>1</sup> withdrew the National Statistics designation from police recorded crime statistics following a re-assessment of the crime statistics published by the ONS. This followed an accumulation of evidence that suggested the underlying data on crimes recorded by the police may not be reliable, such as:
  - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) assessments of data recording practices;
  - ONS's report, in January 2013, which raised concerns that the degree of compliance with the standards for police crime recording may be falling; and,
  - high profile concerns raised at the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) and the Home Affairs Select Committee during the latter part of 2013.
4. The Authority considered that ONS did not have sufficient information about the quality of police recorded crime data to provide assurance that the statistics based on these data meet users' needs. The Authority also stated that ONS does not have sufficient

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<sup>1</sup> [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-268---statistics-on-crime-in-england-and-wales.pdf](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-268---statistics-on-crime-in-england-and-wales.pdf)

information about the quality of these data to ensure that users are made fully aware of the limitations of such data and the resulting impact on their use of these statistics.

5. In a letter to the Chair of the PASC, Sir Andrew Dilnot also highlighted a concern that the Authority's earlier requirements, notably around the need for a rigorous audit of the quality of the data, had not been fully addressed to date.
6. The Authority removed the National Statistics designation from statistics based on recorded crime data until such time as ONS, working with the Home Office, HMIC, or other appropriate bodies, is able to demonstrate that the quality of the underlying data, and the robustness of the ongoing audit and quality assurance procedures, are sufficient to support the production of police recorded crime statistics to a level of quality that meets users' needs.
7. Once ONS believes that this has happened, as producers of the statistics, they may request that the Authority undertake a further re-assessment to determine whether or not police recorded crime data should then be re-designated as National Statistics.
8. The Authority set out 16 Requirements for ONS to respond to and a further eight Suggestions for Improvement (see Annex A). Of these, Requirements 5, 6 and 7 are crucial. They emphasise the fundamental importance of obtaining assurance on the quality of the data underlying police recorded crime figures; and of communicating regularly with users about the progress and results of evaluations of police recorded crime.

### **Establishment of project**

9. The ONS is establishing a project with the objective of re-gaining the National Statistics designation for police recorded crime. This project is currently in its initiation phase and we welcome the committee's views on our proposed workplan. The project will require extensive work with other departments, principally the Home Office and HMIC. While many of the requirements will need ONS to lead the response, most of them will need input from the other departments. Input required from the Home Office is likely to be significant in addressing requirements related to improvements to metadata on processes and data quality.
10. It is proposed that the project will be overseen by a high level strategic board, chaired by the ONS Divisional Director (Roma Chappell) who leads on crime statistics. Other members will include:
  - David Blunt (Home Office Chief Statistician)
  - Mike Warren (Home Office crime policy)
  - Damon Wingfield (Home Office, Crime Statistics)
  - Chief Constable Jeff Farrar (National Policing lead crime statistics)
  - Olivia Pinkney/Peter Spindler (HMIC lead on crime data integrity)
  - Peter Warner (Thames Valley Police, expert in NCRS)
  - Representative from the Welsh Government (to be confirmed)
  - User representative (to be confirmed)
  - Professor Stephen Shute (Chair of CSAC)

- John Flatley (ONS, Crime Statistics)
  - Mark Bangs (ONS, Crime Statistics).
11. There will also be a working level group, Chaired by John Flatley, which will draw in representation from both ONS and HO statistical teams (the latter, to include the Data Collection Group). HMIC will be invited to attend this working group meeting but in the first phase of the group's work the focus will be on issues being addressed by the ONS and HO teams. From autumn 2014, it is anticipated that HMIC will play a more active role once the findings from their national inspection are available. The secretariat for both groups will be provided by the ONS crime statistics team.
  12. In discussion with the Chair of CSAC, it is proposed that a small group of non-executive members act as a virtual reference group to be a sounding board for the work of the group. A lot of the work in the first half of the year will be concerned with improving the information to users about recorded crime and comments on drafts will be most welcome from the CSAC reference group.

### **Timetable and key milestones**

13. The requirements are focused on improvements in the following areas:
  - understanding of the needs of crime statistics users – including making an assessment of the extent to which the statistics meet these needs;
  - improving the published metadata on processes and roles and responsibilities of different departments and agencies involved in producing the ONS crime statistics; and,
  - improving the published metadata on the quality of data used in ONS crime statistics, including points in collection process that could lead to bias.
14. For the purpose of provisional timetabling and resource planning we have split the project into 4 workstreams. All of these timings are based on an initial judgement and subject to modification during the development of a fleshed out project initiation document. In particular, some of the workstreams may overlap and it may not be necessary to run them sequentially.
  - Work stream 1: project initiation & set up – setting up project board and working group; establishing a full project plan which will scope out the work streams including identifying issue owners, task and sub-tasks, milestones, critical dependencies and risk (requirement 10)– Timing: February - March 2014.
  - Work stream 2: improving metadata – extending and improving existing metadata (requirements 1, 2, 4, 7a, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16)– Timing: April– July 2014.

- Work stream 3: process mapping – improving our understanding of possible sources of bias and error in crime recording and documenting to meet users needs (requirements 3, 5a, 5b, 12). - Timing: July – October 2014.
- Work stream 4: user engagement to better understand and document user needs – This phase is dependent on having results from the ongoing HMIC inspections on force crime data, due for publication in Autumn 2014. Once these are available this phase will consist of an extensive programme of user engagement to explore and document user needs in the light of the HMIC findings (requirements 1, 5c, 5d, 7b, 7c, 11) - Timing: November 2014 – March 2015.

## Summary

15. The paper has outlined the background to the establishment of a project to respond to the UK Statistics Authority's assessment report on crime statistics published by ONS. In summary:

- ONS is in the process of initiating a cross-government project to take forward actions arising from the UK requirements;
- ONS will publish an action plan setting out the proposed work plan to ensure users are informed;
- ONS would welcome CSAC input via an advisory role in a reference group and through representation of the Chair on a strategic project board.

Roma Chappell  
Divisional Director Crime, Regional and Data Access Division  
Analysis & Dissemination Directorate  
Office for National Statistics  
March 2014



## List of requirements and suggestions for improvement

### Requirements

1. Extend the published information about uses of crime statistics and users' needs in relation to the statistics.
2. Provide more information to users about the nature and extent of changes made to police records, and how to interpret changes in the published crime statistics from one reference period to another.
3. Publish information about the roles and responsibilities of the departments involved in the production and publication of crime statistics.
4. Explain more fully how all the administrative data sources are used to produce statistics about crime.
5. a) Publish further detail about the processes used by police forces in updating and submitting data and by the Home Office in validating the data; b) collect information from the Home Office about the quality of the data received from police forces; c) consider the implications of this information for the production of statistics of a quality that meet users' needs; and d) reflect this within the published quality information for users.
6. Improve, and make more accessible, information about all aspects of the quality of crime statistics and the impact on their use.
7. a) Keep users informed about the progress of the HMIC audit; b) review published quality information in the light of the findings of the audit; and c) consider whether statistics based on police recorded crime data can be produced to a level of quality that meets users' needs, taking into account information gathered in the course of meeting this report's Requirements.
8. Publish, or clearly link to, information about the changes in the CSEW sample size and response rate over time and the impact of these changes on the quality of the statistics.
9. Work with the Home Office to publish information for users about police forces' progress in switching to use of the Data Hub, and the reason why this has taken so long.
10. Review the staffing profile of the crime statistics team with a view to providing assurance that it remains sufficiently resourced.
11. Review the content of statistical reports about crime, taking into account the information gathered in the course of addressing this report's recommendations. In doing this, consider: (a) whether the differences in recording practices across police

forces are such that they have an impact on the suitability of presenting statistics at a national level for recorded crime; and (b) the extent of user demand for a measure of reported crime derived from police administrative systems.

12. Publish more detailed contextual information to explain the impact on the published statistics of the full range of possible actions that can be taken by members of the public, police and other organisations following either being a victim of a crime, observing a crime or receiving a report of a crime.
13. Improve the accessibility of the crime statistics on the ONS website and publish information about the relationship between the crime statistics and other related statistics produced across the criminal justice system.
14. Provide guidance about the uses and purposes of the various statistics available about crime based on police data, and explain the distinct purpose of ONS statistics based on police recorded crime data.
15. Ensure that pre-release access for Crime is only granted where absolutely necessary.
16. Add the Homicide Index dataset to the Statement of Administrative Sources and include in the Statement information about the arrangements for auditing the quality of all the administrative data used to produce statistics about crime.

### **Suggestions for improvement**

1. Refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, The Use Made of Official Statistics when documenting use.
2. Create a Crime Statistics community on StatsUserNet to help investigate and document uses and users' needs.
3. Produce a diagrammatic representation showing how police recorded crime data are subject to bias and error at each stage of the recording process, perhaps as part of taking forward Suggestion 8.
4. Conduct a preparatory review of the investment that would be required to enhance the CSEW sample size, so that it addressed users' needs for police-force level crime statistics.
5. Publish the comparability paper when completed, provide a link to it from the crime statistics reports and provide links to any published GSS Theme group work on the comparability of crime statistics.
6. Provide a link to the statement about confidentiality and data security relating to CSEW from the ONS landing page for statistics about crime.
7. Continue to enhance the commentary, taking into consideration the points detailed in annex 2, in seeking to further improve the statistical reports.

8. Consider the case for developing a conceptual and presentational framework for crime statistics, as has been done for population and migration statistics.