UK Statistics Authority

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Statistics on Crime, Road Traffic Collisions and the Security Situation in Northern Ireland

(produced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland)

Assessment Report 214

June 2012

About the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:
1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

i.   factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
ii.   the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
iii.   our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice.*

Contents

1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports[1] prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*[2]. The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*[3]. The report covers the set of statistics produced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) reported as follows:

Crime Statistics:
* *Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland*[4] (*Crime Trends*); and
* *Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland*[5] (*Crime FY*).

Road Traffic Collisions Statistics:
* *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties Northern Ireland: Financial Year* [6] (*RTC FY)*;
* *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties Northern Ireland: Key Statistics*[7] (*RTC KS*); and
* *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties Northern Ireland: Annual Report*[8] *(RTC Annual*).

Security Situation Statistics:
* *Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics*[9] (*Security FY*).

1.1.2 The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. The Act also allows the appropriate authority to request an assessment of other official statistics in order for them to gain National Statistics status. This report is in response to such a request in relation to the statistics published in the following releases:

* *Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update*[10] (*Crime Monthly*);
* *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Casualties Northern Ireland: Monthly Report*[11] (*RTC Monthly*); and

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[1] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html
[2] http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf
[3] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html
[4] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/update_crime_statistics.htm
[5] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/update_crime_statistics/updates_crime_statistics_archive.htm
[6] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics.htm
[7] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statisyics_archive.htm
[8] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statisyics_archive.htm
[9] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics.htm
[10] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/update_crime_statistics.htm#2011/12_crime_statistics_monthly_update

- *Security Situation Statistics: Monthly Update*[12] (*Security Monthly*).

1.1.3 Section 3 of this report adopts an 'exception reporting' approach – it includes text only to support the Requirements made to strengthen compliance with the *Code* and Suggestions made to improve confidence in the production, management and dissemination of these statistics. This abbreviated style of report reflects the Head of Assessment's consideration of aspects of risk and materiality[13]. The Assessment team nonetheless assessed compliance with all parts of the *Code of Practice* and has commented on all those in respect of which some remedial action is recommended.

1.1.4 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest**,** subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics listed under paragraph 1.1.1 are designated as National Statistics, and has determined that the statistics detailed in paragraph 1.1.2 can be designated as new National Statistics products, subject to PSNI implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by September 2012.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

1.3.1 The statistics covered in this report are generally well presented and informative. The statistics team is responsive to data requests and customer enquiries. PSNI has published a range of documents that support the releases, including useful overviews of aspects of quality that are relevant to the statistics. Comprehensive user guides present more detailed information for each subject area.

1.3.2 PSNI publishes a range of releases about crime, road traffic collisions and casualties, and the security situation but there is a lack of coherence between the outputs. The releases do not sufficiently explain the strengths and limitations of the statistics, or the scale of revisions made to the monthly statistics.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

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[11] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics.htm
[12] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics.htm
[13] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/criteria-for-deciding-upon-the-format-of-an-assessment-report.pdf

1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that PSNI could strengthen its compliance with the *Code*. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

Requirement 1 Publish statements to explain the nature and extent of revisions made, in particular to the provision of monthly statistics, at the same time that the statistics are released and ensure that all earlier releases are made accessible to users on the website (para 3.2).

Requirement 2 Improve the information about the known limitations of the statistics included in the releases; so that it describes the impact of known misreporting along with the strengths and limitations of the statistics in relation to the range of potential uses (para 3.3).

Requirement 3 Ensure that all releases include commentary and contextual information which aids user interpretation of the statistics (para 3.5).

2   Subject of the assessment

2.1   PSNI publishes monthly and annual statistics on a range of aspects of policing in Northern Ireland.

Crime Statistics

2.2   *Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland (Crime Trends)* is published three months after the end of each financial year. It provides an in-depth analysis of trends in recorded crimes by each type of offence and provides overall crime trends back to 1970. It also presents details of the type and age of victims, trends in detection rates, and a brief overview of geographic patterns of crime in Northern Ireland.

2.3   *Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland (Crime FY)* is published in May. It presents statistics on the numbers and types of crimes recorded by the police in the preceding financial year. The report presents key trends for each type of crime and statistics for offences recorded and detected by type of crime, area and district. The commentary considers changes in the statistics compared with the previous year. PSNI told us that it plans to consult with users on proposals to cease publication of the *Crime FY* release and instead to include the end of year statistics in the May release of *Crime Monthly.*

2.4   *Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update (Crime Monthly)* is published in 11 months of each year (the April figures are subsumed into the *Crime FY* release in May). It is released four weeks after the end of the month to which the statistics refer and contains a summary of the latest provisional police recorded crime statistics. The release presents statistics on the numbers of recorded crimes and the numbers of crimes which were cleared up through a formal sanction to the offender for the most recent 12 month period, compared with the previous 12 months. Every 3 months, the release includes statistics on offences involving knives or sharp instruments. These are not included each month as the statisticians only carry out quarterly checks on the data.

Road Traffic Collisions Statistics

2.5   *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties Northern Ireland: Financial Year (RTC FY)* is published each May. It provides statistics on collisions and casualties, causation factors and casualties by types of road users and age groups, including child casualties. The statistics are presented for each PSNI district and area.

2.6   *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties Northern Ireland: Key Statistics (RTC KS)* is published each May. It provides statistics for the previous calendar year, including statistics on collisions and casualties based on road user types, sex, age, location of incident and causation factors. Information is presented showing progress against the targets set out in *Northern Ireland's Road Safety Strategy to 2020*[14] published by the Department

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[14]http://www.doeni.gov.uk/roadsafety/northern_ireland_s_road_safety_strategy_to_2020_final_version.pdf

of the Environment (DoE). Statistics are presented on the number of injury road traffic collisions and casualties recorded by the police since 1931.

2.7   *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collision and Casualties Northern Ireland: Annual Report (RTC Annual)* is published each autumn. It contains commentary, tables and charts detailing the numbers and causes of casualties and collisions for the previous calendar year. It presents details of the locations of collisions, the types of vehicles involved, seatbelt usage and child casualties and identifies the types of road users that collisions were attributed to.

2.8   *Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Casualties Northern Ireland: Monthly Report (RTC Monthly)* is published two to three months after the period to which the statistics refer; it is released for the first eight months of the financial year with the statistics for the last four months included in the end of year release *RTC FY*. It presents statistics on road traffic casualties recorded by the police by month and on the number of casualties by road user type, age, gender and severity of injury.

Security Situation Statistics

2.9   *Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics (Security FY)* is published in May of each year. It presents security situation statistics for the previous financial year, along with trend information. More detailed statistics are provided on: types of incidents; casualties; type of firearms, ammunition and explosive finds; and persons arrested and subsequently charged.

2.10   *Security Situation Statistics: Monthly Update (Security Monthly)* is published 2 weeks after the end of the month to which the statistics refer and is released in 11 months of the year. It presents statistics about the type of incident by policing district and by urban and rural regions.

2.11   The crime, road traffic collisions and security situation statistics are used within PSNI to monitor trends and performance against key performance indicators in both the annual policing plan and at local policing area levels. They are also used to develop internal reports, identify road traffic collision hotspots and to assess the resources dedicated to emerging security situations. The statistics are widely used across government to inform ministers of trends and to develop policies, by the media to inform public debate, and by academics and public interest groups to inform research.

2.12   The data for these releases are sourced from internal PSNI administrative databases. PSNI told us that the estimated costs are £260,000 for crime, £134,000 for road traffic collisions and £93,000 for security situation statistics. The costs include staffing for the statisticians, all of whom are seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

3 Assessment findings

3.1 The annual road traffic collisions statistics are published in both calendar (*RTC Annual* and *RTC KS)* and financial (*RTC FY*) years. PSNI told us that this is in response to users' needs. However the introduction in *RTC Annual* and *RTC FY* is almost identical and provides no indication of why the statistics are released in this way, the benefits of the different timeframes or the different users targeted by each release. The calendar year releases present statistics relating to indicators, but do not clarify whether these are policing or government targets and how they impact on the statistics. *Crime FY* and *Crime Trends* both present statistics for the most recent financial year. We suggest that PSNI review the range of published statistics on crime and road traffic collisions and casualties with a view to providing a coherent range of releases.

3.2 PSNI publishes provisional monthly releases to provide timely statistics to users. PSNI has published a revisions policy[15] although this does not provide sufficient information about the nature and extent of revisions. The provisional figures for *Crime Monthly, RTC Monthly and Security Monthly* are updated when the statistics for the following month are published, although no information is provided about the size and impact of the revisions. The *Crime Monthly* releases are moved to an archive section of PSNI's website, which is accessible to users, although it is not clear if the statistics are revised for each month. Previous releases of *RTC Monthly* and *Security Monthly* are removed from PSNI's website and are no longer accessible to users. As part of the designation as National Statistics, PSNI should publish statements to explain the nature and extent of revisions made, in particular to the provision of monthly statistics, at the same time that the statistics are released and ensure that all earlier releases are made accessible to users on the website[16] (Requirement 1).

3.3 PSNI publishes detailed user guides and a summary quality report[17] for each set of statistics covered in this report. The user guides contain useful information about definitions, recording practices, confidentiality procedures, quality assurance, links to further research and publication arrangements.

- The crime user guide[18] details internal audits carried out by PSNI and provides estimates of the under-recording of crime. The crime user guide (along with *Crime FY* and *Crime Trends*) notes the limitations associated with statistics on recorded crime. It identifies, and links to, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey[19] published by the Department of Justice as an additional source of statistics on crime. However it provides no analysis comparing the statistics on the two sources, or their coherence.

- The road traffic collisions user guide[20] provides links to further research on hospital-collated RTC injuries but there is no discussion about the

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15 http://www.psni.police.uk/revisions_statement.pdf

16 In relation to Principle 2, Practice 6 and Principle 8, Practice 4 of the *Code of Practice*

17 http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/update_crime_statistics/officialstatistics.htm

18 http://www.psni.police.uk/user_guide.pdf

19 http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-s-r.htm

20 http://www.psni.police.uk/traffic_statistics_user_guide.pdf

strengths or weaknesses of the different recording methods, or an estimate of the under-recording in the RTC statistics.

- The security situation statistics user guide[21] does not provide any indication of the accuracy of the statistics. It points to other sources of information but does not discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the different sources. There is scope to provide more information about how the potential for misreporting impacts on the expected use of the statistics.

As part of the designation as National Statistics PSNI should improve the information about the known limitations of the statistics included in the releases; so that it describes the impact of known misreporting along with the strengths and limitations of the statistics in relation to the range of potential uses[22] (Requirement 2).

3.4   The user guides contain a great detail of information relating to the statistics. PSNI has also published a Statement of Administrative Sources[23] and information about the arrangements to protect confidentiality[24] and pre-release access[25]. To aid user interpretation we suggest that PSNI provide links in all the releases to the relevant metadata, including the user guides for each set of statistics and the quality reports.

3.5   The depth of analysis and amount of commentary presented alongside the statistics vary across the releases. The in-depth annual releases *RTC Annual* and *Crime Trends* present tables and graphs showing trends over a number of years along with commentary. These are mostly well presented with notes added to the tables and explanations of changes in methods, counting rules and legislation impacting on the statistics. The commentary is generally clear; the Assessment team has discussed with PSNI some aspects of the commentary and formatting of the graphs that could be improved. The remaining releases follow a structure which provides some key points at the beginning of the release followed by pages of charts and tables. *Security Monthly* is an exception as it is released as a set of tables without commentary. The key information from the user guides and quality reports could usefully be summarised at the beginning of the releases. PSNI told us that there is a strong user need to have the monthly and annual releases in the public domain in a timely manner; however there is scope to improve the commentary in all these releases, to identify relevant contextual information. As part of the designation as National Statistics PSNI should ensure that all releases include commentary and contextual information which aids user interpretation of the statistics[26] (Requirement 3). We suggest that in meeting this requirement PSNI consider the points detailed in annex 2.

3.6   PSNI publishes the statistics on its website in accessible formats. Excel tables are used to present road traffic collisions and crime statistics, although not all the releases link to these supporting tables. Trend data for security situation

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[21] http://www.psni.police.uk/security_situation_statistics_user_guide.pdf

[22] In relation to Principle 8, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

[23] http://www.psni.police.uk/administrative_sources.pdf

[24] http://www.psni.police.uk/psni_confidentiality_protection_statement_final.pdf

[25] http://www.psni.police.uk/psni_compliance.pdf

[26] In relation to Principle 8, Practices 1 and 2 of the *Code of Practice*

statistics are currently presented in PDF format for calendar[27] and financial[28] years. The statisticians told us that these are currently being reformatted into Excel tables to improve accessibility for users. We suggest that PSNI add links to the relevant Excel tables in each release to support the re-use of the statistics.

3.7   PSNI statisticians meet regularly with colleagues in the Home Office, the Department for Transport and the Scottish Government with the aim of improving the coherence of the statistics across the UK. The user guides provide links to the equivalent statistics for other parts of the UK but the releases do not provide clear links. We suggest that PSNI provide clear links to equivalent statistics for the other countries of the UK in the releases, and include information about the differences between the statistics.

3.8   PSNI publishes a spreadsheet[29] that presents provisional data on fatalities resulting from road traffic collisions, and updates this information on its website daily. In early January the DoE issues a press release containing the total number of fatalities for the previous calendar year, using figures taken from the PSNI spreadsheet of provisional data. The DoE press release includes a statement from the minister and supporting comments from an Assistant Chief Constable from PSNI[30]. These figures are widely reported in the media, some four months before PSNI releases the statistics for the calendar year in *RTC KS*. PSNI has made a commitment to bring forward the publication of *RTC Monthly* to early January. This release will present the provisional end of year figures published in the daily spreadsheet. PSNI will request that the DoE press releases about fatalities for the previous calendar year are based on the statistics published in *RTC Monthly* rather than on the spreadsheet of provisional data, and include a prominent link to the statistical release. PSNI also told us that it plans to work more closely with the DoE to improve the way in which these statistics are disseminated.

3.9   PSNI publishes a schedule for publications for the crime[31], road traffic collisions[32] and security situation[33] releases. In response to comments from the Assessment team, PSNI has updated these schedules to ensure that they cover a 12 month timetable.

3.10   The releases do not include the name and contact details of the responsible statistician. The Authority has agreed with PSNI an exemption from Protocol 2, Practice 6 of the *Code* for security reasons[34]. The releases contain clear contact details for the responsible department with an office address, email address, contact telephone and fax numbers and the PSNI's website address.

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[27]http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics/updates_cy_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics-2.htm
[28]http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics/updates_fy_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics.htm
[29] http://www.psni.police.uk/daily_fatal.pdf
[30] http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-doe-031211-fifty-nine-died?WT.mc_id=rss-news
[31] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/update_crime_statistics.htm
[32] http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_road_traffic_statistics.htm
[33]http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates_security_situation_and_public_order_statistics.htm
[34] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/exemption-requests/exemption-request---psni---160811.html

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1   This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the PSNI's statistics, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

Suggestion 1	Review the range of published statistics on crime and road traffic collisions and casualties with a view to providing a coherent range of releases (para 3.1).
Suggestion 2	Provide links in all the releases to the relevant metadata, including the user guides for each set of statistics and the quality reports (para 3.4).
Suggestion 3	Consider the points detailed in annex 2, in seeking to improve the statistical releases (para 3.5).
Suggestion 4	Add links to the relevant Excel tables in each release to support the re-use of the statistics (para 3.6).
Suggestion 5	Provide clear links to equivalent statistics for the other countries of the UK in the releases, and include information about the differences between the statistics (para 3.7).

Annex 2: Compliance with Standards for Statistical Releases

A2.1   In October 2010, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Releases*[35]. Whilst this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics,* the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and compliance with the *Code*. In relation to the statistical releases associated with Police Service for Northern Ireland Statistics, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.

A2.2   In implementing any Requirements of this report (at paragraph 1.5) which relate to the content of statistical releases, we encourage the producer body to apply the standards as fully as possible.

Appropriate identification of the statistics being released

A2.3   All releases indicate the time period and coverage of the statistics. *Security Monthly* does not state that the statistics are recorded by the police (though this can readily be deduced). All releases use standard headings, formatting and logos, and provide contact details for the responsible statistician.

Include commentary that is helpful to the non-expert and presents the main messages in plain English

A2.4   Generally the language used in the releases is straightforward, but in places the releases use acronyms that are not sufficiently explained, for example *Security Monthly* refers to 'RIR' but does not explain what this means.

A2.5   The presentation of the statistics varies across the releases. *RTC Annual* and *Crime Trends* present statistics in graphs and tables alongside descriptive commentary. Aside from the key points section, *Crime Monthly, RTC Monthly* and *RTC KS* do not present any commentary alongside the statistics to aid user interpretation*. Security Monthly* presents tables without commentary.

A2.6   *Crime Trends* and *Crime FY* both present figures for the most recent financial year. However the figures do not always match in both releases and it is not explained that these discrepancies could be due to different counting rules being applied.

Use language that is impartial, objective and professionally sound

A2.7   The language used in releases is impartial and objective. The statistics are described in an impartial way. The comparisons made are professionally sound.

Include information about the context and likely uses

A2.8   The releases (with the exception of *Crime Trends* and *RTC Annual*) do not set out the main uses of the statistics, although separate background user guides describe the uses.

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[35] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

A2.9   Each release provides a link to where more detailed information can be found in quality documents and user guides. These sources generally provide a comprehensive background to the statistics. In places these background documents do not explain why particular classifications have been chosen, for example the security situation releases do not explain the reasons why the security situation statistics are classified in a certain way by the police. Some, but not all, releases link to supporting Excel spreadsheets.

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A3.1   This assessment was conducted from December 2011 to March 2012.

A3.2   The Assessment team – Emily Gleeson and Catherine Barham – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of PSNI in December. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 12 January. The Assessment team subsequently met PSNI during January to review compliance with the *Code of Practice*, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

A3.3   Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare assessment reports.

A3.4   The Assessment team received 17 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

District Policing Partnership/local government	6
Central government	4
Police	3
Charity and voluntary organsiation	2
Independent public body	1
Academia	1

A3.5   Users reported finding the statistics comprehensive, useful and accessible. The statistics team was widely complimented for its responsiveness, courtesy and helpfulness to users. The road traffic collisions statistics generally met user needs, and the recent release of Excel tables containing relevant data was welcomed. Users suggested some additional variables and changes to recording methods that they would like. The crime statistics were considered to be useful and well presented. Some users would like to see further geographic breakdowns of the statistics and improved signposting to the metadata, and other users commented that the recent classification changes led to a loss of some detail. More detail was sought for the security situation statistics especially about the demographic characteristics of victims.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document