Government Statistical Service

CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Wednesday 8 May 2013, from 14:30 until 16:45 (14:00 for refreshments)
Home Office - Room 3A at 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF

Agenda Item No.	Timings	Order of Business		
1	14:30 – 14:35	Welcome		Welcome and announcements *Stephen Shute (Chair)*
2.	14:35 – 14:40	For discussion	**CSAC (13) 7**	Matters Arising from the meeting held on 23 January 2013 *Stephen Shute (Chair)*
3.	14:40 – 15:10		**CSAC (13) 8**	Update on the recommendations from the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics (England and Wales) *John Flatley (ONS)*
4.	15:10-15:30		**Oral Update**	HMIC 2013/14 Inspection Programme *Ann-Marie Field (HMIC)*
5.	15:30-15:50		**CSAC (13) 9**	E-Crime and Fraud *Mark Bangs (ONS)*
6.	15:50-16:10		**CSAC (13) 10**	Divergence between CSEW and PRC – Committee Response *Mark Bangs (ONS)*
7.	16:10-16:30		**CSAC (13) 11**	*Guidance for Police and Crime Commissioners* *Sophie Riley (Home Office)*
8.	16:30 – 16:35		**CSAC(13) 12**	National Crime Registrar's Report *Steve Bond (HO)*
9.	16:35– 16:45	Any other business		All members

Dates of the next meeting:

- Thursday 19 September 2013 14:00 – 16:30
- Tuesday 3 December 2013 14:00 – 16:30

Members Attending:

Professor Stephen Shute (Chair)	University of Sussex
David Blunt	Home Office
Steve Bond	National Crime Registrar, Home Office
Professor Allan J Brimicombe	University of East London
Tricia Dodd	Office for National Statistics
Mike Elkins	Ministry of Justice
Jeff Farrar	Association of Chief Police Officers
Junaid Gharda	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
Mike Hough	Institute for Criminal Policy Research, School of Law, Birbeck
Sarah A Jones (Secretariat)	National Statistician's Office
Michael Levi	Professor of Criminology, Cardiff University
Professor Chris G Lewis	University of Portsmouth
Kieron Mahony (Secretariat)	National Statistician's Office
Jil Matheson	National Statistician
Patricia Mayhew	Independent Criminological consultant
Jaee Samant	Home Office

Others Attending:

Ann-Marie Field	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Nina Jones	Welsh Government
Olivia Pinkney	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

Apologies:

Giselle Cory	Victim Support
Glyn Jones	Welsh Government

CSAC (13)

MINUTES OF THE CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON 8 May 2013

HOME OFFICE 2 MARSHAM STREET, LONDON, SW1P 4DF

CHAIR

Stephen Shute	University of Sussex

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Blunt	Home Office
Steve Bond	Home Office
Allan Brimicombe	University of East London
Tricia Dodd	Office for National Statistics
Jeff Farrar	Association of Chief Police Officers
Junaid Gharda	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
Mike Hough	Institute for Criminal Policy Research, School of Law, Birkbeck
Mike Levi	Cardiff University
Jil Matheson	National Statistician
Patricia Mayhew	Independent Criminological Consultant
Jaee Samant	Home Office

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Ann–Marie Field	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (for Tom Winsor)
John Flatley	Office for National Statistics (agenda items 8, 9 &10)
Nia Jones	Welsh Government (for Glyn Jones)
Olivia Pinkney	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (for Tom Winsor)
Peter Warner	Head of Programme at Thames Valley Police (with Jeff Farrar)

SECRETARIAT

Sarah A Jones	National Statistician's Office
Kieron Mahony	National Statistician's Office

APOLOGIES

Giselle Cory	Victim Support
Mike Elkins	Ministry of Justice
Glyn Jones	Welsh Government
Chris G Lewis	University of Portsmouth

1.0 Welcome

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including two new permanent members, Jeff Farrar and Junaid Gharda. He congratulated Douglas Paxton and Tricia Dodd on their new roles and thanked them for their contribution to the work of

the Committee. Members were informed that Roma Chappell will be replacing Tricia in the autumn.

1.2 He noted the annual report is in preparation for 2012/13 but was not ready for this meeting. He informed members the document will be circulated for comment before being submitted to the Home Secretary.

1.3 The Chair updated members about his meeting with Mark Castle, Chief Executive of APCCS, held in March to discuss the impact of the appointment of Police Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and their relationship with the Committee. There were two options - direct representation at the Committee which could mean up to four representatives as APCCs had four groups with different political interests, or, forge a close working relationship with PCCs by offering them guidance and support and attending their own meetings to explain the work of the Committee. Members agreed the Chair's recommendations of option 2 for the foreseeable future.

2.0 Matters Arising from the meeting held on 23 January 2013 – CSAC (13)07

2.1 It was noted that the minutes had been approved via correspondence and were available on the Committee's webpages.

2.2 The actions from the previous meeting were either on the agenda or in progress.

3.0 Update on the recommendation from the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics (England and Wales) – CSAC(13)08

3.1 John Flatley introduced the paper and explained that the majority of the recommendations were already implemented. Members' attention was drawn to the two outstanding recommendations related to the handling of fraud and ASB incident data and the role of the Committee in respect to HMIC's data quality inspection programme.

3.2 Members noted that ASB incident data is currently outside of the remit of the Committee, and suggested that it should consider its governance in the longer term. The Committee agreed to commission a paper for the September meeting.

3.3 The Committee agreed to postpone discussion about the recommendation relating to HMIC till the next item on the agenda.

ACTION 1: Secretariat to arrange for the September meeting, for the presentation of a paper setting out the present position of ASB incident data and options for change.

4.0 HMIC 2013/14 Inspection Programme – oral update

4.1 Ann-Marie Field and Olivia Pinkney explained the current position with the HMIC consultation on its Inspection Programme for 2013/14. HMIC have proposed that the following six areas of policing would benefit from inspection:

1. Freeing up police time – an examination of how police efficiency and working practices should be improved through the use of modern technology.

2. Preventive policing – an examination of police efficiency and effectiveness in preventing crime.

3. Police attendance – an inspection of police efficiency and effectiveness in responding to calls from the public.

4. Police leadership and culture – an examination of the way the leadership of the police has responded to the findings of HMIC' s reports on police integrity1 and of the Leveson Inquiry report.2

5. Crime data integrity – an inspection of the effectiveness of the police in dealing with reports of crime by members of the public.

6. Police use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) – an examination of the police use of ANPR to prevent crime.

4.2 HMIC reported that responses were largely positive with some concerns its inspections may have an additional burden on resources. The following points were made in discussion:

- Members noted that the Programme would included inspections required by PCCs and that this would place an additional burden on HMIC which may impact their ability to focus on other work;
- Members welcomed HMIC's plans to work in partnership with the police forces which had piloted direct entry technology before the system was rolled out nationally;
- This approach would mean it more likely that good practice would be spread amongst police forces increasing the likelihood that police time would be freed up;
- Members were also concerned about the impact on data quality of the direct entry technology and suggested that HMIC should work with a small group of experts, nominated by the Committee, over the summer to mitigate this risk;
- HMIC welcomed this offer and agreed to report back to the Committee in September;
- Members were agreed that the impact of inspection should be to improve trust in crime statistics; and,
- They noted HMIC's plans for handling the outcomes of their 2012/13 Inspection Programme.

ACTION 2: The Chair reiterated that he would sign off a response to the HMIC consultation by the end of the week that would then be shared with other members.

ACTION 3: The Committee offered support and assistance to HMIC by nominating representatives to join a working group over the summer to help with guidance on their Crime Data Integrity Inspection.

ACTION 4: Members agreed to add HMIC's detailed plans for its Crime Data Integrity Inspection to the agenda of the September meeting.

5.0 E-Crime and Fraud – CSAC (13) 9

5.1 John Flatley introduced the paper in which the Committee was asked to consider three questions:

I. Is the Committee content with the steps being taken to improve the coverage of fraud in the published crime statistics?

II. Does the Committee agree with the proposed approach outlined in this paper for ONS to trial the addition of selected fraud and cyber crime offences to the CSEW main crime count?

III. Does the Committee have any other comments or suggestions to steer the future of this work?

5.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- Members were pleased with the progress that ONS had made on this issue but noted that more work was necessary on geography;
- It was suggested that ONS prepare an article for publication so as to inform users of current thinking.

ACTION 5: ONS to work with Mike Levi regarding geographical boundaries highlighted in paragraph 13 of the paper.

ACTION 6: ONS to prepare an article for publication about e-crime to inform use about current thinking.

6.0 Divergence between CSEW and PRC- Committee Response – CSAC (13) 10

6.1 John Flatley presented this paper that sought members' views on issues concerned with a possible divergence between CSEW and PRC following the ONS publication of the "Analysis of Variation in Crimes Trends" on 24 January 2013 and Professor Tim Hope's article about the "grey figure" in police recorded crime.

6.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- Members noted that HMIC had also undertaken some research into this topic;
- There was support for a review of all the evidence in order to prepare a proposal for the Committee;
- Such a review was essential before writing to the Home Secretary; and,
- Members agreed to exploring the possibility of an organisation like the RSS hosting a public meeting to consider the evidence with output from such a meeting contributing to a further paper to the Committee;
- It was noted that members attending such a meeting would not do so as representatives of the Committee.

ACTION 7: Secretariat to arrange for an approach to be made to the RSS to ask whether it would be prepared to host a public meeting to consider the evidence relating to the divergence between CSEW and PRC data with output from such a meeting contributing to a further paper to the Committee.

7.0 Guidance for Police and Crime Commissioners – CSAC (13) 11

7.1 David Blunt presented three sets of guidance to be issued to PCCs and their teams on best practice of using crime and policing statistics.

7.2 The Committee welcomed the guidance and agreed for the information to be sent on behalf of the Committee to PCCs and uploaded onto the CSAC, HMIC and PCCs website. It was confirmed the guidance for analysts would be supplemented with workshops in Autumn 2013.

ACTION 8: Home Office to arrange for guidance to be issued.

8.0 National Crime Registrar's Report – CSAC (13) 12

8.1 The Committee noted the paper.

9.0 AOB

9.1 The Chair has been invited to attend a quarterly PCC meeting to explain the Committee's role, giving him the opportunity to remind PCCs of the statistical guidance discussed above. Alternatively, the Chair may be able to deliver a presentation at the PCC Annual Conference to increase the Committee's profile along as well emphasising the importance the proper use of crime statistics.

9.2 It was noted that there had been some adverse publicity in the press recently about crime rates giving credence to the view that crime statistics were inaccurate. The Committee encouraged ONS to contact the journalist responsible to discuss the issue and invite him/her to a future press conference.

ACTION 9: ONS to contact the Journalist responsible to invite them to a future press conference.

CSAC Secretariat
13 May 2013

Government Statistical Service

CSAC (13) 8

Paper on progress implementing recommendations from the National Statistician's review of crime statistics for England and Wales

Purpose

1. To inform the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee of progress made in responding to the recommendations made in the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics.

Action

2. To review actions taken and consider whether further steps are necessary to respond more fully to the recommendations.

Summary

3. The Home Secretary accepted all eight of the recommendations made in the National Statistician's independent Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales (National Statistician, 2011). **The recommendations are outlined in the table in Annex A** with action taken to date and issues for further consideration.

4. There has been significant progress made implementing the recommendations. ONS judge actions on six of the eight recommendations to be complete.

5. The two that remain open raise issues around:

    - handling of fraud and ASB incident data including future governance of the latter; and,
    - role of the Advisory Committee with respect to HMIC's future data quality inspection programme.

John Flatley, Office for National Statistics
23 April 2013

Annex A: Progress implementing recommendations

Recommendation	Action taken to date	Issues to consider
1: The body responsible for the publication of crime statistics should seek to improve the presentation of the statistics to give users and the public a clearer understanding of the overall picture of crime, by providing the major and other sources of crime statistics together with additional contextual information.	Building on work undertaken by Home Office statistical colleagues prior to the transfer of responsibility on 1 April 2012, the ONS have revised the content and format of the crime statistics publications. Changes include: • introduction of a standard quarterly release putting the latest figures in longer-term context • inclusion of additional data to give a fuller picture of crime such as: incidents of anti-social behavior recorded by the police; crime survey data relating to children; fraud reported to and recorded by Action Fraud; non-notifiable crime dealt with by the courts and results from the new Commercial Victimisation Survey (see below). • production of 3 supplementary themed based reports (on Violent Crime; Property Crime and Cross-cutting issues) to provide more in-depth analysis on specific topics. Other work in the pipeline includes: • from early May 2013, the corporate Improving Dissemination Programme will see the Crime & Justice theme web landing page revamped to include more accessible summary formats (such as Infographics and video-clips) • from July 2013, changes to the presentation of crime statistics (as approved by the Advisory Committee) to improve public understanding	Given the considerable changes made it is proposed that no further changes be made for a year or so and pending more user feedback. However, the inclusion of new data sources has raised questions about the handling/governance of some of these data streams, in particular the fraud data and ASB incident data. The issue of fraud is the subject of a separate committee paper. The ASB incident data is currently based on the National Standard for Incident Recording and there are questions about the future status of this and consideration needs to be given to options such as bringing it within the framework for HO Counting Rules for recorded crime.

Recommendation	Action taken to date	Issues to consider
2. The experimental statistics on crimes against 10-15 year olds developed from the recent extension of the British Crime Survey should be incorporated without delay into the headline statistical releases on crime.	From April 2012, ONS have incorporated these in the regular quarterly statistical releases on crime.	No further action needed.
3. The Home Office should implement its plans for a telephone survey of businesses in 2011/12, and consideration should be given to running regular surveys on crimes against businesses in future years.	A telephone survey was conducted by independent survey contractor (TNS-BMRB) in summer 2012 covering business premises in 4 sectors (manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; transportation and storage; and accommodation and food services activities). Funding is available for surveys in 2013 and 2014. Headline results from the 2012 survey were released in the quarterly crime statistics published by ONS in January 2013 and will be updated annually as new results become available.	No further action needed at this time but future scope of survey may be an issue where advice from the committee may be sought in due course.
4. The National Statistician should establish an independent Advisory Committee to advise: • the Home Secretary on any changes to the data requirements from the police needed for crime statistics, and on any changes to the Home Office Counting Rules; • and the producer body on changes to coverage, definitions or methodology and on the handling of any such changes.	The committee was established in October 2012 and has already provided advice to the Home Secretary and ONS on matters including: • reduction in the number of categories in the notifiable offence list collected by the Home Office from the police • changes on the presentation of offences in the National Statistics published by the ONS.	No further action needed.

Recommendation	Action taken to date	Issues to consider
5. Responsibility for the publication of crime statistics should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics	Responsibility was transferred with effect from 1 April 2012.	No further action needed.
6. Responsibility for the contract management of the British Crime Survey, the processing and compilation of results from the British Crime Survey, and the compilation of the police recorded crime estimates, should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics. Home Office statisticians should work with the Office for National Statistics in the compilation and publication of both sources to retain criminological expertise and links with crime policy development.	Responsibility was transferred with effect from 1 April 2012. Home Office statisticians have worked closely with ONS colleagues in the compilation and publication of crime statistics since the transfer of responsibility. Opportunities for secondments between the two teams have been utilised to build/share expertise. Joint learning seminars continue to be held to share knowledge.	No further action needed.
7. Responsibility for the collection and validation of recorded crime data from the police should remain with the Home Office.	As this recommended the status quo, no action needed.	Not applicable.

Recommendation	Action taken to date	Issues to consider
8. Quality assurance of police recording of crime should be re-focused by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on risk areas in terms of the statistical quality of the data, informed by statistical analysis and taking into account other relevant contextual issues. The existing audit programme should be built upon with due regard to burdens on the police.	The committee is due to consider the statistical analysis published by the ONS in January 2013 examining trends in recorded crime and the Crime Survey. The HMIC are due to present proposals to the committee, for comment, concerning their inspection programme for 2013/14.	The National Statistician suggested that the Advisory Committee could advise HMIC on the statistical requirements for police recorded crime, and the risk areas where audit should be targeted. The committee will want to consider their advice to HMIC on priority areas for future inspection while being mindful of the need to balance data quality with burden of inspections on forces.

CSAC (13)9

Discussion paper on the coverage of fraud and cyber crime in National Statistics on Crime in England and Wales

Purpose

1. To provide the Committee with a summary of issues and recent developments around the coverage of fraud and cyber crime in the National Statistics on crime and highlights some questions for consideration by the Committee.

Action

2. The Committee are asked to note the issues covered in this paper, give consideration to the questions highlighted (listed below) and advise on any additional steps that should be taken to improve on the coverage of fraud and cyber-crime in the ONS crime statistics.

    - Are the committee content with the steps being taken to improve the coverage of fraud in the published crime statistics?
    - Does the committee agree with the proposed approach outlined in this paper for ONS to trial the addition of selected fraud and cyber crime offences to the CSEW main crime count?
    - Does the committee have any other comments or suggestions to steer the future of this work?

Background

3. The National Statistician's review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales noted that there were significant gaps in the crime statistics related to fraud and cyber-crime (i.e. crime enabled by the internet and new technology). Some of the key issues surrounding the coverage of fraud and cyber crime in crime statistics were discussed by a group of Committee members at the CSAC workshop in November, and the group felt that these issues should be considered by the full Committee.

4. The true scale of fraud and cyber crime is unknown. Estimates of the extent of these problems vary considerably, and such estimates are often produced by organisations with a vested interest in inflating the scale of the problem (e.g. computer virus software companies).

5. Fraud offences have long been included within the police recorded crime series and in published National Statistics on crime. However, while fraud offences appear in the Notifiable Offence List, it is known to be substantially under-reported to the police. A number of factors are likely to influence reporting rates, including the ambiguity over whether a crime has taken place and who the victim is, and the fact that the police

are not always the first port of call for victims, particularly in banking related fraud where a large proportion of financial loss through fraud is reported to the financial institution. Given the range authorities and bodies which exist (e.g. Trading Standards Institute, Financial Ombudsman Service, Action Fraud) it is also likely that victims will not have a clear understanding of the appropriate reporting procedure.

6. **There has been a significant change in the recording, for statistical purposes, of fraud crimes by the Police.** Over the last year police forces have progressively moved to a system of recording all frauds centrally via the Action Fraud national reporting centre and from April 1st 2103 all forces have completed this transition. This means that there will be no frauds covered within the police recorded crime data in future ONS statistical bulletins on crime, although the historic back series will still be presented. This is discussed in more detail later in this paper (see paragraph 16). It is not clear how this might affect reporting rates and little is currently known about public awareness of Action Fraud, though questions could be added to the CSEW for this purpose.

7. Not all cyber-crime involves fraud. Other types of crime may also take place on the internet (for example, cyber stalking, bullying or sexual grooming). The European Commission communication 'Towards a general policy on cyber crime' set out three categories of cyber-crime:

    - Traditional forms of crime such as fraud or forgery, though committed over electronic communication networks and information systems;
    - Publication of illegal content over electronic media (e.g. child sexual abuse material or incitement to racial hatred); and,
    - Crime unique to electronic networks, e.g. attacks against information systems, and hacking.

8. It is not currently possible to separately identify cyber-crimes from other crimes in either the police recorded crime series or the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The internet and new technology has provided a new means for criminals to attempt to defraud and commit other types of crime. Where such attempts are reported to the police, the Home Office counting rules dictate that they should be included under the relevant recorded crime category (e.g. fraud by false representation). As such, much of cyber-crime is covered by existing offences, though a number of specific offences have been added to the statute book (e.g. Computer Misuse Act 1990) where the existing law did not provide the means to prosecute offenders. **The Home Office are currently testing a system to flag cyber-crimes in the police recorded crime dataset.** This is currently a voluntary data collection, but if piloted successfully it is possible that future datasets could include this cyber-crime flag as part of the compulsory data supplied to the Home Office.

Conceptual challenges in measuring fraud and cyber-crime

9. The measurement of fraud and cyber-crime presents a number of specific challenges relating to:

    - Identifying specific cyber-crimes in existing crime datasets
    - Determining who is the victim (e.g. in cases of plastic card fraud is it the card holder or the financial institution?)
    - Establishing a meaningful basis for counting and costing cyber-crimes (including attempts)
    - Jurisdictional issues (i.e. identifying where the crime took place)

10. It is important to recognise that cyber-crime is a modus operandi rather than a distinctive offence. For this reason, **most cyber-crimes cannot be identified separately in the crime data**, but many such crimes will be covered under other offence types (e.g. cyber-stalking is an act of harassment, cloning of credit cards is an act of fraud). If successful, the new system to flag cyber-crimes in the police recorded crime dataset may help with this.

11. Cyber-crime and fraud also present challenges in terms of identifying a victim. For example, where an individual has been a victim of plastic card fraud and money fraudulently charged to their card has been reimbursed by the bank, **it could be argued that the bank was the victim rather than the individual who has incurred no financial loss**. However in addition, the individuals may themselves feel they have been victimised because of the level of intrusion and the inconvenience caused. It is difficult to think of an analogous position with conventional crime types.

12. A further measurement challenge presented by cyber-crime is that the internet provides the means for criminals to attempt to commit this type of crime on a grand scale. The victim-focused National Crime Recording Standard requires that an offence should be recorded for each individual victim. Thus **a single act of a uploading a computer virus or sending a malicious e-mail may impact on thousands of people and could (in theory) result in thousands of crimes being recorded.** This presents a conceptual challenge compared with more traditional acquisitive crimes such as domestic burglary or car theft.

13. Cyber-crime and fraud are also more complex than more conventional crime in terms of jurisdiction. The ONS crime statistics aim to provide a measure of crime committed in England and Wales. Thus, a robbery experienced by a victim on holiday abroad will not appear in either the police recorded crime or CSEW series. **By its nature, cyber-crime crosses geographical boundaries and cyber-space itself is difficult to pin down to geographical territories**. While it is often possible to identify where the victim or victims reside, it is often not possible to identify where the offence originated. Centralised reporting systems (like Action Fraud) also mean that it often not possible to provide any sub-national breakdowns of the data. This raises another conceptual challenge.

14. Given the challenges outlined above, the Home Office has an ongoing programme of research focusing on improving the measurement of fraud and cyber crime. This is intended to improve understanding of fraud and cyber crime and the extent of these problems. Although it is not designed to deliver data for inclusion in the National Statistics on crime, the work may help to inform the further development of such statistics in the future. A summary of this research is provided in Annex A.

Developments in fraud and cyber-crime statistics

15. In recent years, to help address the known limitations of fraud data in the police recorded crime series and provide a fuller picture of the scale of these types of crime, a number of additional data sources on fraud have been added to the annual published statistics on 'Crime in England and Wales'. These included:

- Information from Action Fraud (a national reporting centre that records incidents of fraud directly from the public and organisations)
- Information from the UK Cards Association (the payment card industry body) on plastic card fraud and from CIFAS (an industry association aiming to prevent fraud).
- Analysis of questions on fraud from the CSEW

16. **Since April 2012, the ONS have incorporated a new data stream from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) which collates and analyses data from Action Fraud (the public facing arm of the NFIB which acts as a national reporting centre** recording incidents of fraud directly from the public and organisations), CIFAS (a UK-wide fraud prevention service) and the UK Cards Association. In parallel with this there has been a move towards the central recording of fraud offences. As of 1 April 2013, all police forces in England and Wales refer reports of fraud, including financially motivated e-crime, to Action Fraud, and fraud offences will no-longer be included in the police recorded crime data in published national statistics on crime.

17. The NFIB dataset published as part of the national statistics on crime includes a more detailed breakdown of fraud offences than currently reported on in the police recorded crime data, including some specific categories that cover cyber-crime fraud (e.g. purchase fraud relating to online shopping and auctions, and a set of fraud offences relating to computer misuse). Since the NFIB dataset is subject to ongoing development, they should not yet be seen as providing an authoritative measure of fraud. Over time the NFIB expect to extend data coverage by taking in more sources of data on fraud from additional financial and industry bodies. It should also be noted that the NFIB data encompasses fraud for the whole of the UK and it is not currently possible to reliably separate data for England and Wales.

18. **ONS have also added data on plastic card fraud from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) into the quarterly crime statistics bulletin.** This provides trends in rates of victimisation among plastic card users. Data on crime against businesses from the 2012 Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS) are now

also included in the ONS quarterly statistical bulletin; these include some figures on fraud experienced across the business sectors surveyed (though not without problems – see paragraph 22). In addition, a forthcoming ONS release on property crime includes more detailed analysis of CSEW data on credit card fraud and on mass marketing fraud (e.g. lottery/prize draw scams, and bogus high yield investments).

Are the committee content with the steps being taken to improve the coverage of fraud in the published crime statistics?

Further developments and additional data sources

19. The CSEW does not capture much of fraud or cyber-crime in its main crime count. The theft of a credit card (which is subsequently cloned and used fraudulently) will be captured but not the subsequent fraudulent use (and there is some evidence to suggest that a card is stolen in a minority of plastic card frauds). In part, this reflects the ambiguity over the identification of the victim (the individual or the financial institution). There have been modules of questions added from time to time which have been useful in exploring the prevalence of some of the more widely reported crimes, but these have not been included in the main count of crime produced by the CSEW, e.g.

    - identity fraud
    - computer virus and hacking
    - plastic card fraud
    - mass marketing fraud
    - 'romance' fraud

    Other victimisation surveys (e.g. the Scottish Crime and Victimisation Survey) are no more advanced in terms of their coverage of fraud and cyber crime. Annex B contains a list of questions on fraud and cyber crime included in the 2013/14 CSEW.

20. **There may be the potential to add further questions to the CSEW in the future to collect information on levels of fraud and cyber-crime victimisation, and to add these crimes into the main CSEW crime count.** This would be the first addition to the main crime count since the survey began. **One concern over this change is that, given the potential to commit these offences on a grand scale, the number of victims of attempted frauds or cyber crimes might be so large that it has a disproportionate influence in driving overall crime trends.** Attempted fraud and cyber crime are also likely to be very difficult to measure in terms of getting accurate recall information from respondents.

21. One option to address these issues would be to adopt a different approach to counting these crimes by **excluding attempts to commit fraud** and cyber crime and counting only the successful crimes in the main CSEW crime count. The risks outlined above could also be managed by including only specific crimes which respondents are more likely to accurately recall such as plastic card fraud, identity theft, hacking of email accounts. ONS are considering a trial of this approach.

Does the committee agree with the proposed approach outlined in this paper for ONS to trial the addition of selected fraud and cyber crime offences to the CSEW main crime count?

22. The Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS), last run in 2012, provides data on fraud against business premises in England and Wales. As the CVS uses a premises-based sample the survey is likely to underestimate the scale of fraud in the business sectors covered by the survey (e.g. as most company websites are run from a head office rather than local premises). A more accurate estimate might be gained through conducting a head office survey of businesses (one of the options being considered for future runs of the CVS) as there is likely to be more information about fraud offences at this level, particularly fraud targeted at businesses websites. However, there may be reluctance on the part of business to provide this information where they are concerned that disclosure might lead to reputational or commercial damage.

Does the committee have any other comments or suggestions to steer the future of this work?

John Flatley and Mark Bangs
Crime Statistics and Analysis Team
Office for National Statistics
April 2013

Annex A: Summary of ongoing Home Office research to further develop measures of cyber crime.

As part of a wider cyber crime research programme, the Home Office Cyber Crime Research Team is undertaking work to help improve the quality and range of cyber crime measures available. These activities will help to inform our understanding of the scale of different types of cyber crime and how it is changing over time. Activities undertaken include the following.

- Addition of a cyber crime flag into the police recorded crime dataset. This flag will provide an improved national and local picture of the prevalence of different types of cyber-enabled crimes. The flag will also help provide a richer picture of the nature of these crimes as we will be able to obtain further information through the Home Office Data Hub, for example, in relation to victims and offenders linked to these crimes. The flag has been piloted with two forces in March 2013 and data will be collected voluntarily from other forces in 2013/14, with a view to mandatory collection in 2014/15 if successful. (NB. The flag will not include fraud and financially motivated e-crime as these crimes are now being reported to and recorded by Action Fraud).

- Identification of the best available published measures through the cyber crime 'stocktake' – a review of the published academic, industry and government literature on cyber crime.

- Addition of cyber crime questions to the Commercial Victimisation Survey to obtain information on business experiences of cyber crime (in four business sectors only).

- Revision of cyber crime questions for the 2013/14 wave of the Crime Survey for England and Wales.

- Work to improve our knowledge around the characteristics and career pathways of cyber offenders – including analysis of Crown Prosecution Service case files and the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey.

- Wider engagement with academics and cross-government stakeholders to collectively encourage the improvement of cyber crime data.

- There are a number of other activities the Cyber Crime Research Team intend to explore in future to help improve measurement of cyber crime, this includes:

    - Working with security providers (e.g. anti-virus providers) and private sector businesses to better understand and make use of the data they collect.
    - Working with other agencies and government departments e.g. BIS, to help improve the surveys they undertake on cyber crime.
    - Working with local police forces to explore the attrition rates of cyber crimes from the initial reporting and investigation stages, through to prosecution and sentencing. Such work could help identify key factors that may be preventing some cyber crimes from being investigated or from achieving CJS outcomes.

Annex B: Fraud and cyber crime questions in the 2013/14 Crime Survey for England and Wales

ONLINE SECURITY MODULE

The questions below are preceded by a series of questions on the use of the internet including frequency and nature of use.

- In the last 12 months, have you personally experienced any of the things mentioned on this card while using the internet? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

  A computer virus
  Loss of money
  Unauthorised access to/use of personal data (e.g. e-mail account/bank account)
  Upsetting images/illegal images
  Abusive/threatening behaviour
  None of these

- You said that you personally experienced loss of money in the last 12 months as a result of using the internet. How much money did you lose?

- You said that you had experienced a [incident from list above] in the last 12 months. Did you report this to anyone?

- Who did you FIRST report the computer virus to?

- Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way [xxxx], or [yyyy] handled this matter?

  Very satisfied
  Fairly satisfied
  A bit dissatisfied
  Very dissatisfied
  SPONTANEOUS ONLY: Too early to say

- Some people have emotional reactions after such incidents. Overall, how much were you emotionally affected by your experience of a computer virus?

  Very much
  Quite a lot
  Just a little
  Or not at all?

- Which of these things [on showcard] do you typically do to keep yourself safe online, including protecting your personal details on the internet?

  Install anti virus or other security software
  Install a firewall on your computer
  Download software updates and patches whenever prompted
  Use complex passwords (contain letters, numbers and symbols)
  Use a different password for each different online account
  Check for signs that a site is secure when buying online (closed padlock sign/https website address)
  Protect your home wireless connection (wi-fi) with a password

Delete suspicious emails without opening them
Log out of websites when you are finished
Be cautious using public wi-fi / insecure wi-fi
Only use credit cards (not debit or charge cards)
None of these

FINANCIAL LOSS AND FRAUD MODULE

- Do you own or use any plastic payment cards, such as bank, debit, credit or store cards? Please exclude business account and fuel cards.

- In the last 12 months, that is since the first of [DATE], have any of your cards been used **without your permission or prior knowledge** to take money from your bank or building society accounts or to charge money to your credit or debit cards?

- [Apart from what you've just mentioned, in the last 12 months, have you had money taken from your bank or building society accounts in some [other] way which involved your personal details being used **without your permission or prior knowledge**?

- On how many SEPARATE OCCASIONS in the last 12 months have you had money taken from your bank or building society accounts or money charged to your debit or credit cards WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION OR PRIOR KNOWLEDGE?

- Were any of your cards ACTUALLY stolen from you at any point before money was taken from your bank, building society or credit card account?

- Was] anything [else] ACTUALLY stolen from you at any point before money was taken from your bank or building society account? For example, a cheque book or a pass book or something else that could explain how the money was taken.

- [Still thinking only about the LAST OCCASION do you know whether money was taken as a result of an email that you received or a link that you opened into a fake website?

- Still thinking only about the last occasion this happened, how much money, if any, did you lose? Please DON'T include any money that was subsequently refunded by your bank, building society or credit card company but DO include any additional charges or costs that you incurred as a result of the incident.

- How did you **first** find out that money had been taken from your bank, building society, or credit card account? CODE ONE ONLY

  By yourself – saw unrecognised transaction on statement or found money missing from account
  By yourself – card was refused
  By yourself - other
  Contacted/told by a financial institution (bank, building society or credit card company)
  Contacted/told by the police
  Another way (SPECIFY)

- [You mentioned that you were contacted by the police/ a financial institution.] Did you report the incident to anyone [else], or did they come to know about it in another way? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

  The police

Your bank, building society, or credit card company
Action Fraud
Someone else (SPECIFY)
No-one

- Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way [xxxx] handled this matter?

  Very satisfied
  Fairly satisfied
  A bit dissatisfied
  Very dissatisfied
  SPONTANEOUS ONLY: Too early to say

- Some people have emotional reactions after incidents in which they are the victim of crime. Overall, how much were you emotionally affected by someone taking money from your bank, building society or credit card account without your permission? Were you affected:

  Very much
  Quite a lot
  or just a little
  or not at all?

- Nowadays, do you typically do any of the following to avoid someone obtaining your bank, building society or credit card account details? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

  A. Shred / burn / destroy financial documents (e.g. receipts, statements)
  B. Regularly check transactions on bank statements
  C. Frequently change 'PIN' numbers
  D. Keep record of 'PIN' number separately from cards/no record of 'PIN' numbers kept
  E. Only use cash points that are inside
  F. Never use cash points
  G. Check if cash points appear to have been tampered with
  H. Only use a credit card rather than debit card online
  I. Have separate card to use for online purchases only
  J. Use computer security measures (e.g. firewall, anti-virus software)
  K. Only purchase items from secure websites (e.g. padlock icon)
  L. Avoid purchasing items on the internet
  M. Shield PIN number at cash points / in shops/restaurants etc.
  N. Keep card in view when paying in restaurants etc
  O. Taken out insurance against loss of cards/card fraud
  P. Some other type of precaution
  Q. None of these

- How worried are you about someone using your credit cards or bank cards, or using your card details to buy things or withdraw cash without your permission?

  Very worried
  Fairly worried
  Not very worried
  Not at all worried

MASS-MARKETING FRAUD MODULE

- Looking at this card, have you personally EVER received any emails, texts, letters or

phone calls from **an individual or a company that you've never heard of before** about any of the following? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

A. A big win in a lottery, prize draw, sweepstake or competition that you haven't entered
B. The chance to make an investment with a guaranteed high return (e.g. shares, art, fine wine, etc.)
C. Someone who invites you to get to know them with a view to a possible friendship or relationship (this may be via a website)
D. Help in moving large sums of money from abroad
E. Help in releasing an inheritance
F. An urgent request to help someone get out of some sort of financial trouble
G. A job offer, a franchise offer or other business opportunity
H. A loan on very attractive terms
I. Adopting or buying a pet
J. Some other type of similar request
SPONTANEOUS ONLY: Never read or listen to messages like these
K. None of these

- Now thinking about the LAST 12 MONTHS, have you personally received any of these emails, texts, letters or phone calls from **an individual or a company that you've never heard of before**? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

  [List as above]

- Have you responded to [any of the communications/the communication] you have received in the LAST 12 MONTHS from **an individual or a company that you've never heard of before**?

- I'd now like you to think about any communication you've received in the LAST 12 MONTHS relating to a lottery, prize draw, sweepstake or other competition win that you haven't entered. Did any of the emails, texts, letters or phone calls you received ask you to do any of the things on this card? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

  Send or transfer money (e.g. Western Union, Ukash)
  Provide bank details
  Provide any other financial details (e.g. credit card, Paypal account)
  Provide any other personal information (e.g. address, passport number)
  To contact them/someone else
  Didn't read communication(s)/listen to all the message(s)
  SPONTANEOUS ONLY: Can't remember exactly
  None of these

- How did you receive any of these communications about lottery, prize draw, sweepstake or other competition wins? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

  Online (by email, via a website)
  By text
  By post
  By phone call
  In person
  DO NOT PROMPT: Can't remember

- Can I just check, have you responded to any of these requests in the LAST 12 MONTHS?

- You mentioned earlier that you received a communication asking you to provide your bank details. Did you do this as requested?

With respect to INVESTMENTS WITH HIGH YIELD RETURN FRAUD, respondents are asked:

- How did you receive any of these communications about an investment with a guaranteed high return? CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Online (by email, via a website)
By text
By post
By phone call
In person
DO NOT PROMPT: Can't remember

- In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you sent off or transferred any money in connection with a guaranteed high return investment?

- In the LAST 12 MONTHS have you personally purchased any tickets which you paid for in advance using the internet or over the phone? This could be tickets for cinema, festivals, sporting events, theatre or flights for example.

- Have any of the tickets that you've purchased not been received by you or have turned out to be fake when you went to use them? Fake tickets include those where access to an event is denied or you haven't received what you paid for, such as a flight.

CSAC(13) 10

Paper on the 'grey figure' in police recorded crime – Professor Tim Hope
(Divergence between CSEW and PRC – Committee Response)

Purpose

1. To provide a short summary of a research paper by Tim Hope, Professor of criminology at the University of Salford. The paper looks at police crime recording practices, and covers issues similar to those highlighted in the recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) methodological paper examining trends in crime measured by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the police recorded crime series (Annex A).

Action

2. In consideration of their response to the ONS methodological paper on crime trends, the Committee is invited to note Professor Hope's paper. Having consulted with the Chair, the Committee is invited to consider whether it might be appropriate to write to the Home Secretary about this issue.

Discussion

3. Professor Hope's paper (Annex B) explores the gap between the number of crimes reported to the police and the number of these which actually get recorded, known as the 'grey figure' in recorded crime. The analysis used is based on comparable crimes across the two main crime datasets – police recorded crime and the CSEW, covering the period 1981 to 2004.

4. The principal hypothesis given to explain the gap between crimes reported and recorded relates to variation in police crime recording practices. Specifically, that due to the requirement for police officers to take on additional work as a result of recording a crime, in periods when crime rates are higher and workload pressures are greater, the police are less likely to record a crime. Thus the gap between reported crime and recorded crime would increase during higher crime periods, and the converse would be true when crime rates are lower and police have more resources available to record and follow-up crimes. It is also suggested that performance targets to reduce crime might also act as a further disincentive for the police to record crimes during higher crime periods. This effect is illustrated using analysis of trends in burglary offences, and the ratio between reported crime and recorded crime.

Mark Bangs, Office for National Statistics
April 2013

Annex A

Analysis of variation in crime trends:

A study of trends in 'comparable crime' categories between the Crime Survey for England and Wales and the police recorded crime series between 1981 and 2011/12

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24 January 2013

John Flatley and Jenny Bradley

Crime, Regional and Data Access Division

Foreword

Professor Stephen Shute

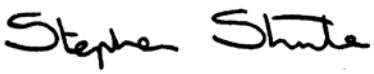
Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory

Committe

Appropriate use of crime and policing statistics is essential if public trust and confidence in those statistics, in the Police and Crime Commissioners, and in the police service is to be maintained; equally, if there is misleading or inappropriate use that may easily undermine trust and confidence. As the Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee, I welcome the publication of this report which provides important new information to help users interpret trends in crime. I also strongly support the public interest that crime statistics are accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy.

The Crime Statistics Advisory Committee is a non-statutory body which was established by the National Statistician in 2011. It functions as a strategic, high-level advisory body offering independent advice to the Home Secretary, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on matters related to the measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales.

This Report was developed with the support of the Committee. In due course, the Committee will consider how to respond to the Report's findings.



Introduction

The National Statistics on crime for England and Wales are primarily based on two different sources: the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which was until April 2012 known as the British Crime Survey, and the police recorded crime series which is complied from data supplied by the police on the number of crimes they record which fall into the notifiable category[1].

One of the motivations behind the launch of the survey in 1982 was to assess the scale of the gap between crimes recorded by the police and that experienced by the population resident in households. A consistent finding from the survey has been that a substantial proportion of crime experienced by the public (around 61% in 2011/12) goes unreported to the police. Reporting rates vary by the type of offence and are lowest for offences such as vandalism (34% in 2011/12) and highest for offences such as theft of a vehicle (94% in 2011/12). This variation in reporting rates partly reflects the victim's perceived seriousness of the offence. It is also thought to be related to practical considerations, for example the need to obtain a crime reference number from the police to validate an insurance claim.

Making direct comparisons between the two series is problematic due to important differences between them. The survey's coverage (until the fairly recent extension to children) has been restricted to the adult population resident in households whereas the police recorded crime series covers a wider population (e.g. children, commercial bodies, overseas visitors) and a wider set of offences (e.g. homicide and crimes without a direct victim, such as drug possession).

However, in broad terms, the CSEW and recorded crime series have displayed similar trends for overall crime (with some divergence due to reporting and recording changes) with rises from the early 1980s to peaks in the early to mid-1990s and falls thereafter. CSEW crime rose steadily in the decade from 1981 and continued to rise during the early 1990s, peaking in 1995. Subsequently, CSEW crime fell markedly between 1995 and the 2004/05 survey.

Since 2004/05 the underlying trend in CSEW crime has continued to be downward with some fluctuation in year-to-year estimates, although these falls in CSEW crime have been at a slower rate than those seen in the police recorded crime series. This has raised questions as to whether or not the two series are drifting apart. This paper describes the results of statistical analyses to explore this issue. It builds on work undertaken by analysts in HMIC and the Home Office Statistics Unit[2].

[1] Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury plus a few additional closely-related summary offences dealt with by magistrates.

[2] The authors would like to acknowledge the input of Lawrence Morris (HMIC) and Phil Hall (Home Office Statistics Unit) in developing the analysis presented in this report.

Background

Quality of crime recording by the police

To ensure consistency, police recording practice is governed by the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales (see Home Office, 2011). The HOCR have existed in one form or another since the 1920s. However, in 1998 there were substantial changes which expanded the coverage of notifiable offences to include certain additional summary offences and counts became more victim-based (the number of victims was counted rather than the number of offences).

A critical report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in 2000 (Povey, 2000) was influential in the development of the NCRS which was subsequently introduced in April 2002. The HMIC inspection, that preceded the NCRS, showed there was a problem with differing interpretation of the HOCR which resulted in inconsistent recording practices across forces. Research undertaken during the Inspection showed:

- offences wrongly classified;
- the inappropriate 'no criming'[3] of a record subsequent to it being recorded;
- the failure to record the correct number of crimes;
- an error rate of between 15% and 65% of the crime records examined[4]; and,
- inappropriate reclassifying of recorded crimes.

Two different models were used to describe the then police approach to crime recording, as outlined below.

The 'prima facie' versus 'evidential ' model for crime recording

[3] Police forces record some crimes which are subsequently 'no crimed' where it is judged by the police that no crime actually took place. The HOCR set out circumstances under which a crime report may be 'no crimed' (see section 3.4 of the User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales). Crime reports that are 'no crimed' are removed from police crime data and thus from the police recorded crime statistics.

[4] An exercise was undertaken to determine each forces 'recording rate' by determining the number of crimes found on the command and control logs which had been recorded on each force's crime system.

The 2000 HMIC Inspection found that the above models were not mutually exclusive pointing out that “the recording of crimes involves a complex interaction of the unique circumstances surrounding each crime incident, a force organisational approach and style, and the recording officer's views.”

However, the Inspection found that officers:

- tended to use an 'evidential and detection based' rather than a 'prima facie' model of recording;
- generally applied an evidential test of 'beyond reasonable doubt' to record a crime; and,
- tended to use a lower standard to classify a crime as detected or 'no-crimed'.

The HMIC concluded that the overall effect of this practice was that:

- recorded crime levels were reduced;
- the level of 'no-crimes' increased, thereby further reducing the level of recorded crime; and
- detection rates were increased.

The 2000 HMIC report commented that the then “police approach goes beyond challenging and validating whether a crime has in fact occurred with officers taking into account a number of other factors before deciding whether to record the crime or not”. These included:

- can the victim be contacted?
- is the victim co-operative?
- can the offence be detected?
- is the Crown Prosecution Service likely to prosecute?

In response to this critical report, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) working in collaboration with Home Office statisticians developed the NCRS (Simmons et al., 2003). The NCRS aimed to ensure greater consistency between forces in recording crime and to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording with the police being required to record any allegation of crime unless there was credible evidence to the contrary (i.e. to adopt the ‘prima facie’ model described above).

While the NCRS was formally introduced in April 2002 some forces had adopted key elements of the standard earlier and compliance with it continued to improve in the years following its formal introduction. Both the change to coverage of the HOCR, in 1998, and introduction of NCRS resulted in an increase in the number of crimes recorded by the police. Certain offences, such as the more minor violent crimes, were more affected by these changes than others.

It would be naïve to believe that the introduction of NCRS, in and of itself, ensured that all notifiable offences reported by victims were subsequently recorded by the police. However, the Audit Commission carried out regular independent audits of police data quality between 2003/04 and 2006/07. In their final assessment published in September 2007 (Audit Commission, 2007) they commented that “The police have continued to make significant improvements in crime recording performance and now have better quality crime data than ever before”. The Commission found:

- 38 forces (88% of the 43 forces[5]) were assessed as "good" or "excellent" for crime data quality, which represented a substantial improvement from 12 in 2003/04 (28%)
- the remaining five forces (12%) were judged "fair"; and,
- no forces were assessed as having "poor" crime data quality in either the 2005/06 or 2006/07 audits.

The system for recording crime in England and Wales by the police is widely recognised by international standards to be one of the best in the world. Few other jurisdictions have attempted to develop such a standardised approach to crime recording and some of those that have base their approach on the England and Wales model (e.g. Australia, Northern Ireland).

The independent inspections of police recording carried out by the Audit Commission ceased in 2007. Both the UK Statistics Authority (2010) and the National Statistician (2011) in their separate reports on crime statistics highlighted concerns voiced to them during their reviews about the absence of such periodic audits. Anecdotal evidence suggested that performance pressures led some officers to bend the rules, for example to record a notifiable offence as an incident of anti-social behaviour or crime-related incident which would not appear in the crime figures.

A HMIC quality review in 2009 into the way in which police forces record most serious violence (which at the time was part of a central Government target) found some variation in recording which they partly attributed to the lack of independent monitoring of crime records.

In line with a recommendation in the National Statistician's review of crime statistics (2011), HMIC carried out a review of police crime and incident reports in all forces in England and Wales during 2011 (HMIC, 2012). The review only looked at a small number of crimes and incident records (fewer than 6,000 across England and Wales) and the results can not be extrapolated to provide national estimates. The inspection found that of the incidents looked at:

- three-quarters of forces were judged to have made correct crime recording decisions 90% or more of the time with an average of 92% of incidents correctly finalised, indicating a good national standard;
- while the majority of police forces performed well, there remained a wide variation in the quality of decision making associated with the recording of crime (a range of between 86% and 100% from the lowest to the highest performing force) which was a cause for concern.

The 2011 HMIC inspection identified a number of forces whose crime recording was of sufficient concern to require a follow up inspection in 2012 and we understand the results of these inspections will be published in due course.

Quality of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

The CSEW is widely viewed as a gold-standard survey by national and international standards. It has served as a model for other countries to follow. The CSEW has maintained a relatively high response rate over time (for example, 75% or more since 2001/02) at a time when other similar surveys have seen reductions in response rates. The survey has employed a consistent approach

[5] The audits excluded the British Transport Police.

to counting crime with the victimisation methodology and the crime types included in the main count of crime remaining comparable over time.

The CSEW is a face-to-face victimisation survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. A key aim of the survey is to provide robust trends for the crime types and population it covers; the survey does not aim to provide an absolute count of crime and has notable exclusions. The CSEW excludes fraud and those crimes without a specific identifiable victim (e.g. possession of drugs). As a survey that asks people whether they have experienced victimisation, homicides cannot be included. The CSEW does not cover the population living in group residences (e.g. care homes or halls of residence) or other institutions, nor does it cover crime against commercial or public sector bodies.

For the crime types and population it covers, the CSEW provides a better reflection of the true extent of crime experienced by the population resident in households in England and Wales than police recorded statistics because the survey includes crimes that are not reported to, or recorded by, the police. The primary purpose of the CSEW is to provide national level estimates and robust estimates of crime are not available at police force area level.

Since its inception, the CSEW has been conducted by an independent survey research organisation using trained interviewers to collect data from sampled respondents. The interviewers have no vested interest in the results of the survey. As such, the survey is widely seen to operate as an independent reality-check of the police figures which are prone to changes in public reporting rates, police recording practices and, to some extent, police deployment and activity. The independence of the survey has been further strengthened by the transfer of responsibility from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in April 2012.

The survey is weighted to adjust for possible non-response bias to ensure the sample reflects the profile of the general population. The CSEW was first conducted in 1982 (covering crime in 1981) and ran at mostly two-year intervals until 2001, when it became a continuous survey. The core sample is designed to be representative of the population of households in England and Wales and people living in those households.

Prior to 2001/02, CSEW respondents were asked about their crime-related experiences in the previous calendar year but when the CSEW changed to a continuous survey, respondents were asked about crime in the 12 months prior to interview. Since becoming a continuous survey, CSEW estimates are published based on interviews carried out over a 12-month period; e.g. for the publication of the 2011/12 CSEW, estimates were derived from interviews carried out between April 2011 and March 2012 (referred to as the year ending March 2012). Further details on the methodology of the survey can be found in Chapter 2 of the User Guide to Crime Statistics.

Comparing police recorded crime and the CSEW

It is not possible to match CSEW microdata (i.e. the individual records of survey respondents) to police recorded crime records. Thus it is not possible to determine whether a crime that a respondent said they reported to the police actually appeared on a police incident log and, if so, to identify how it was actually recorded.

As described above, the two series cover different populations and different offences. To improve comparisons, analysts have focused on a ‘comparable’ sub-set of offences that are covered by both series (see Annex A). This comparable sub-set is obtained by making various adjustments to the recorded crime categories to maximise comparability with the CSEW. However, in categories where it is not possible to distinguish victims resident in households from other victims they are not adjusted to exclude victims of commercial offences and offences committed against those under 16. As such, it should be recognised that this ‘comparable’ series remains broadly rather than directly comparable and that the offence classification system used in the survey can only approximate that used by the police. Thus the mapping between CSEW categories and police recorded offence codes are approximate and categories will not be directly equivalent in all cases.

There are other acknowledged methodological limitations of the survey which might also affect the comparability. Being based on a sample of the population, estimates have a margin of quantifiable and (non quantifiable) error associated with them. The latter includes: when respondents have recalled crimes in the reference period that actually occurred outside that period (‘telescoping’); crimes that did occur in the reference period may not have been mentioned at all, either because respondents failed to recall a fairly trivial incident or, conversely, because they did not want to discuss a serious incident, such as a sexual assault; some may have said they reported a crime to the police when they did not (a 'socially desirable' response); and, some incidents reported during the interview could be miscoded (‘interviewer/coder error’).

While the CSEW sample is relatively large by national standards, it is not big enough to produce estimates at police force area level so it cannot be used to make comparisons below England and Wales. Thus, while comparisons of trends at a macro level can be made to assess the validity of trends in police recorded crime it is not possible to do so at police force area level.

Analysis of trends in comparable crime

The analysis below compares trends in the comparable sub-set of offences between the two series. The CSEW figures are restricted to those offences that respondents reported to the police (i.e. by the respondent themselves, someone else or by the police coming to know about it in another way).

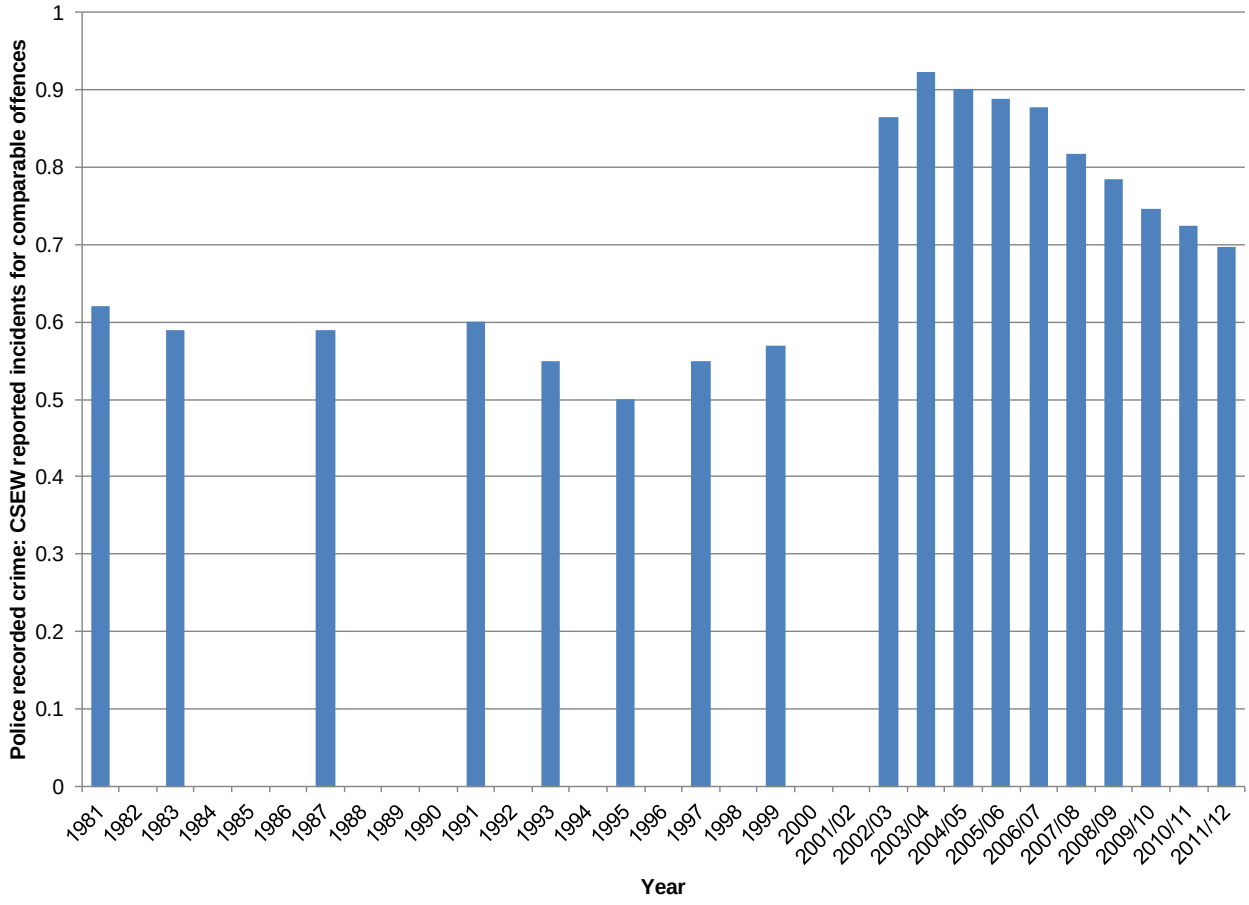
Figure 1 shows, prior to the introduction of the HOCR and NCRS the volume of comparable police recorded crime was between 50% and 62% of the total estimated to be reported to the police from the comparable categories on the survey. This suggests at the time that a relatively large volume of reports were not ultimately being recorded by the police which is consistent with the picture of recording described in the 2000 HMIC report (see above).

As expected, this proportion increased substantially around the time of NCRS introduction and from 2002/03 remained close to 90% for a number of years. Again, this pattern is consistent with the switch to a more victim-focused method of recording where the police were required to record a victim’s report if it amounted to a crime in law and there was no credible evidence to the contrary.

However, from 2007/08 onwards there have been year on year reductions with the ratio falling to 70% for the latest year available. One might expect some variation in the ratio between the two series due to the inherent variability of sampling associated with the survey. However, the

consistent downward trend seen since 2007/08 suggests it reflects a real change in the relationship between the two series.

Figure 1: Ratio between CSEW reported incidents and crimes recorded by the police (in comparable sub-set)[1]



1. The offences included in the comparable sub-set for the period 1981 to 1999 differ slightly from those used from 2002/03 onwards due to changes in offence coverage.

As Table 1 shows, with regard to the impact this has had on the volume of offences, since 2002/03 the police recorded crime series shows a reduction of 41% in the comparable sub-set of offences used here but the survey only 26%. This difference in the rate of reduction has been driven by trends over the last 5 years: between 2002/03 and 2006/07 the rate of reduction in the two series was the same (at 11%) whereas since then the rate of reduction for recorded crime has been around twice the rate as seen in the survey (17%).

Table 1 Volume and percentage reduction in comparable crime categories, 2002/03 to 2011/12

	2002/03	2006/07	2011/12	Percentage change 2002/03 - 2006/07	Percentage change 2006/07 - 2011/12	Percentage change 2002/03 - 2011/12
Police recorded crime	3,231,367	2,881,327	1,922,643	-11	-33	-41
CSEW	3,727,000	3,305,000	2,749,000	-11	-17	-26

There is no obvious methodological change to the survey that might explain this differential:

- response rates have remained consistently high and the profile of respondents has not changed to a significant degree;
- since 2001/02 there has been no change in the survey contractor which might have an impact on the consistency of approach, for example to data collection or offence coding;
- there has been no deterioration in the quality of offence coding as evidenced by repeat coder variability studies;
- while there have been changes in the sample design, these are not thought to have introduced any bias to the estimates;
- it is unlikely that levels of 'social desirability' in survey responses has changed over time, such as more respondents saying they have reported crime to the police when they hadn't.

One possible explanation is the phenomenon of 'telescoping' whereby respondents report having experienced victimisation outside the reference period (for example, inadvertently recalling a burglary that happened 13 months ago in the last 12 month reporting period). This is a source of measurement error that will be present across the life of the survey but it might be possible that, at a time when crime has been falling, the scale of it increases. If so, this might contribute to the gap between the two series.

Given the consistent pattern, one possible hypothesis is that there has been a gradual erosion of compliance with the NCRS such that a growing number of crimes reported to the police are not being captured in crime recording systems. There are a range of possible drivers for this including:

- lack of awareness or adequate understanding of the NCRS as time passes from its launch leading to some officers recording 'as charged' or 'if detected' which might result from staff turnover and lack of sufficient on-going training;
- performance pressures associated with targets (e.g. to reduce crime or increase detection rates) acting as perverse incentives for some crimes to be downgraded from notifiable into non-notifiable categories or as ASB or as crime-related incidents (which are not captured in data returned to the Home Office);
- though forces have continued with their own internal audits, the cessation of independent audits from 2006/07 onwards may have reduced the focus on addressing non-compliance;
- the move to Neighbourhood Policing in recent years may also have led to more low level crimes being dealt with informally and outside the formal crime recording system; and,

- in the context of pressure on police budgets and a general policy shift to promote greater officer discretion, a return to a more evidential recording model.

Analysis by offence type is presented in Annex B and shows this trend is evident across most offence groups with some exceptions, such as robbery, theft from the person and bike theft where the pattern is less clear. However, if there has been downgrading of offences within the police series or a dropping out of crimes into anti-social behaviour or other crime-related incidents (see below), it makes comparisons at offence level difficult. If there has been systematic downgrading of incidents by the police, for example of domestic burglary as criminal damage and criminal damage as anti-social behaviour it is difficult to make offence level comparisons without evidence of the degree of leakage from one category to another.

An alternative hypothesis is that police forces were over-zealous in the early years of NCRS and erred on the side of recording when there was a doubt about whether or not the incident reported amounted to a crime in law. This would account for the high ratios in the years around the introduction of the NCRS. However, one might have expected that following a downward correction trends would flatten out rather than continue to fall as they have done.

The above analysis cannot provide a definitive answer to these points or confirm or disprove these hypotheses. Nor, in the absence of regular independent audits since 2006/07 is it possible to draw on evidence to assess whether or not compliance with the NCRS has indeed changed over time.

It is important to note that the above analysis does not suggest that the general pattern of recorded crime falling since 2002/03 should be questioned. Rather it suggests that the rate of reduction suggested by the recorded crime series may overstate the actual level of reduction experienced by the general population, notably since 2006/07.

The quality of crime recording by the police remains amongst the best in the world. However, this analysis raises questions about whether there has been a degree of degradation of that quality over time.

The implications of this paper will be considered by the independent Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC) whose role includes advising on how best to ensure that official statistics on crime are accurate, transparent and trustworthy.

Annex A: Comparable subset of crime

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) provides a measure of the level of crime committed against the population resident in households in England and Wales, whereas recorded crime is a measure of those crimes reported to the police (estimated to be only 43% of CSEW comparable crime in 2011/12) and then recorded by them. The CSEW includes crimes that are not reported to or recorded by the police, but is limited to crimes against people resident in households and also does not cover all crime types.

By adjusting each series, comparisons can be made between police recorded crime and the adult element of the CSEW (those aged 16 and over) allowing a better interpretation of overall crime trends. The need for this comparison has been particularly important during periods when various changes have been made to the police recording of crime.

In order to compare the crime rates measured by the CSEW and police recorded crime, a comparable subset of crimes has been created for a set of offences that are covered by both measures. Various adjustments are made to the recorded crime categories to maximise comparability with the CSEW but they are not adjusted to exclude victims of commercial offences and offences committed against those under 16. Over three-quarters of CSEW offences reported via interviews in recent years fall into categories that can be compared with crimes recorded by the police (Box 1).

Box 1: Comparable subset of crime[6]

CSEW category	**Recorded crime offence and code included**	
Vehicle thefts	(37.2) (45) (48) (126)	Aggravated vehicle taking Theft from a vehicle Theft and unauthorised taking of motor vehicle Vehicle interference and tampering
Burglary	(28A) (28B) (28C) (28D) (29)	Burglary in a dwelling Attempted burglary in a dwelling Distraction burglary in a dwelling Attempted distraction burglary in a dwelling Aggravated burglary in a dwelling
Bicycle theft	(44)	Theft of unauthorised taking of pedal cycle
Theft from the person	(39)	Theft from the person
Vandalism	(56) *(56A)* *(56B)* (58A) *(58B)* (58C) *(58D)* (58E) *(58F)* (58G) *(58H)*	*Arson* *Arson endangering life* *Arson not endangering life* Criminal damage to a dwelling *Criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling* Criminal damage to a vehicle *Other criminal damage* Racially/religiously aggravated criminal damage to a dwelling *Racially/religiously aggravated criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling* Racially/religiously aggravated criminal damage to a vehicle *Racially/religiously aggravated other criminal damage*

[6] The offences of Arson (56, 56A, 56B), Other Criminal damage (58D) and Racially/religiously aggravated criminal damage to building other than a dwelling have been omitted from the comparable sub-set used in this report as these will largely comprise crimes against the non-household population.

	(58J)	*Racially/religiously aggravated criminal damage*
Assault without injury	(104) (105A) (105B)	Assault without injury on a constable Assault without injury Racially/religiously aggravated assault without injury
Assault with minor injury and wounding	(5) (5A) (5D) (8A) (8D) (8F) (8G) (8H) (8J) (8K) (8N) (8P)	More serious wounding or other act endangering life Inflicting grievous bodily harm (GBH) with intent Assault with intent to cause serious harm Less serious wounding Racially/religiously aggravated less serious wounding Inflicting GBH without intent Actual bodily harm (ABH) and other injury Racially/religiously aggravated inflicting of GBH without intent Racially/religiously aggravated ABH or other injury Poisoning or female genital mutilation Assault with injury Racially/religiously aggravated assault with injury
Robbery	(34B)	Robbery of personal property

The mapping between CSEW categories and police recorded offence codes are approximate and categories will not be directly equivalent in all cases.

Crimes excluded from comparable subset

Recorded crimes:

The violent offences of: ‘Homicide’; ‘Attempted murder’; ‘Intentional destruction of an unborn child’; the five offences of ‘Causing death by driving’; ‘Endangering life’; ‘Endangering railway passengers’; ‘Endangering life at sea’; ‘Possession of weapons’; ‘Harassment’; ‘Cruelty to or neglect of children’; ‘Abandoning a child under the age of two years’; ‘Child abduction’; ‘Procuring illegal abortion’; all ‘Sexual offences’; ‘Robbery of business property’; ‘Non-domestic burglary’; ‘Proceeds of crime’; ‘Theft in a dwelling’; ‘Theft by an employee’; ‘Theft of mail’; ‘Arson’; ‘Criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling’; ‘Other criminal damage’; ‘Dishonest use of electricity’; ‘Shoplifting’; ‘Theft from automatic machine or meter’; ‘Handling stolen goods’; ‘Other theft or unauthorised taking’; all ‘Fraud and forgery’; ‘Threat etc. to commit criminal damage’; all ‘Drug offences’ and all ‘Other’ offences.

CSEW:

‘Other household theft’ and ‘Other thefts of personal property’.

Annex B: Analysis by crime type

Table B1. Ratio between police recorded crime and CSEW personal crimes (in comparable sub-set)

	All personal crime	Violence	Robbery	Theft from the person
	Ratio of police recorded crime to CSEW reported crime (confidence interval)			
2002/03	0.78 (0.70 - 0.88)	0.84 (0.73 - 0.99)	0.62 (0.51 - 0.80)	0.67 (0.57 - 0.82)
2003/04	0.79 (0.72 - 0.88)	0.89 (0.78 - 1.02)	0.62 (0.51 - 0.80)	0.58 (0.49 - 0.69)
2004/05	0.86 (0.78 - 0.96)	0.94 (0.84 - 1.08)	0.66 (0.54 - 0.87)	0.66 (0.56 - 0.80)
2005/06	0.87 (0.79 - 0.97)	0.97 (0.86 - 1.12)	0.59 (0.48 - 0.78)	0.66 (0.56 - 0.81)
2006/07	0.84 (0.77 - 0.93)	0.96 (0.85 - 1.09)	0.61 (0.49 - 0.82)	0.57 (0.49 - 0.69)
2007/08	0.85 (0.77 - 0.94)	0.98 (0.87 - 1.12)	0.56 (0.44 - 0.75)	0.55 (0.47 - 0.67)
2008/09	0.79 (0.72 - 0.88)	0.93 (0.82 - 1.08)	0.65 (0.52 - 0.84)	0.42 (0.36 - 0.50)
2009/10	0.78 (0.71 - 0.88)	0.92 (0.81 - 1.07)	0.45 (0.36 - 0.58)	0.54 (0.45 - 0.66)
2010/11	0.78 (0.70 - 0.86)	0.87 (0.77 - 0.99)	0.57 (0.44 - 0.78)	0.56 (0.47 - 0.68)
2011/12	0.72 (0.65 - 0.80)	0.83 (0.73 - 0.96)	0.48 (0.39 - 0.63)	0.51 (0.43 - 0.62)

Table B2. Ratio between police recorded crime and CSEW household crimes (in comparable sub-set)

	All household crime	Burglary	Vehicle theft	Home vandalism	Vehicle vandalism	Bike theft
	Ratio of police recorded crime to CSEW reported crime (confidence interval)					
2002/03	0.91 (0.88 - 0.93)	0.84 (0.76 - 0.93)	0.92 (0.87 - 0.99)	0.93 (0.80 - 1.11)	1.08 (0.95 - 1.24)	0.55 (0.48 - 0.65)
2003/04	0.97 (0.94 - 1.00)	0.80 (0.73 - 0.89)	0.98 (0.92 - 1.05)	1.04 (0.90 - 1.23)	1.23 (1.09 - 1.42)	0.67 (0.58 - 0.79)
2004/05	0.92 (0.89 - 0.95)	0.89 (0.81 - 0.98)	0.92 (0.86 - 0.98)	0.89 (0.78 - 1.05)	1.10 (0.98 - 1.24)	0.61 (0.53 - 0.72)
2005/06	0.90 (0.88 - 0.93)	0.78 (0.71 - 0.87)	0.97 (0.91 - 1.04)	0.83 (0.73 - 0.97)	1.09 (0.98 - 1.22)	0.57 (0.50 - 0.66)
2006/07	0.89 (0.86 - 0.91)	0.75 (0.68 - 0.83)	0.99 (0.93 - 1.06)	0.83 (0.73 - 0.96)	0.95 (0.86 - 1.06)	0.66 (0.58 - 0.76)
2007/08	0.82 (0.79 - 0.84)	0.74 (0.67 - 0.82)	0.94 (0.87 - 1.02)	0.79 (0.69 - 0.92)	0.80 (0.72 - 0.90)	0.60 (0.52 - 0.70)
2008/09	0.77 (0.74 - 0.79)	0.73 (0.66 - 0.81)	0.89 (0.83 - 0.97)	0.75 (0.65 - 0.87)	0.74 (0.67 - 0.82)	0.53 (0.47 - 0.61)
2009/10	0.72 (0.70 - 0.75)	0.73 (0.66 - 0.82)	0.87 (0.80 - 0.95)	0.58 (0.51 - 0.68)	0.74 (0.66 - 0.83)	0.53 (0.46 - 0.62)
2010/11	0.71 (0.69 - 0.73)	0.64 (0.58 - 0.71)	0.88 (0.81 - 0.97)	0.66 (0.57 - 0.80)	0.68 (0.61 - 0.77)	0.53 (0.47 - 0.61)
2011/12	0.69 (0.66 - 0.71)	0.63 (0.57 - 0.71)	0.83 (0.76 - 0.91)	0.61 (0.52 - 0.73)	0.66 (0.59 - 0.74)	0.59 (0.52 - 0.68)

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Annex B

Whatever happened to the *grey figure*? Recording crime in England and Wales, 1981-2004

By **Tim Hope**, Professor of Criminology
University of Salford, Manchester

A crime is recorded by the police mainly because it is reported by the public, usually by victims. In an ideal world, there should be no gap or 'error' between the rate of reporting incidents *to* the police and the rate of recording *by* the police. Yet in the early days of the British Crime Survey, it became apparent that a substantial gap or *Grey Figure* existed between the two (Bottomley and Pease, 1986). In its review of crime statistics, the Home Office (2000) thought the Grey Figure resulted from inconsistencies in recording practice between police forces. The *National Crime Recording Standard* (NCRS) sought to abolish discretionary recording practices by including further amendment of the *Counting Rules*, implemented from April 2002.

The rate of discretionary police crime recording is affected by a number of factors, for instance: an *obligation* to record crime, due, for example, to public pressure (as in the case of sexual violence) or in responding to insurers' claim requirements regarding theft and loss; accounting to the public (the NCRS principle of *victim-focussed recording* means counting more of what is already recorded); and demonstrating effectiveness (between 1999 and 2004 the Home Office obliged the police to achieve specified reductions in domestic burglary, theft of vehicles, and robbery). The obligation to 'do something', therefore, leads to additional workload and performance pressures on the police. Unfortunately, both are measured by the rate of recorded crime. Different circumstances lead to different pressures and different discretionary performance adjustments: when crime is going up, the pressure to do something is magnified at the same time as workload pressure is increasing; but when it is dropping, the police can afford to do more as long as they have the same resources at their disposal.

To test this notion, two indices were constructed (data are from *Crime in England and Wales, 2003/04*): (1) a *Volume of Reported Crime Index* (defined as the product of the Victimisation Rate (Table 2.02) and the proportion of incidents reported to the police (Table 3.02), with 1981 = 100); and (2) a *Grey Figure Rate* – the proportion of crimes reported to the police that appear to have been recorded (defined as the ratio of offences recorded by police (Table 3.04) to comparable crimes reported to police (Table 3.02)). A comparison is made between the period 1981-1991, well before either the drop in crime or the implementation of the NCRS, and 1991-2003/04, during which the number of recorded crimes dropped (indicated by the Volume Reported Crime Index) and the NCRS was introduced.

The BCS records separately Burglary with Loss and Nil-Loss Burglaries (including attempted burglaries). Figures 1 and 2 show the different ways in which the Grey Figure responded to changes in the volume of these offences. Both offences were subject to the same crime reduction performance pressure. However, while Burglary involving loss also entails (insurance-required) recording obligations, attempted and nil-Loss Burglaries do not. This can be seen in the much lower recording rate for the latter. Figure 1 shows that when the volume of Burglaries with Loss went up, the recording rate went down, presumably reflecting a workload adjustment. Happily, when the volume of reported with loss burglaries declined in the second period and the concomitant workload pressure subsided, the

police could afford to let the recording rate rise again (almost to the maximum), thus satisfying their recording obligation without prejudicing their performance requirement.
Conversely, neither obligation nor crime reduction requirement apply to Attempted and Nil-Loss Burglaries, so that the recording rate remained low and constant across both periods, irrespective of a similar boom-and-bust trend in the volume of this crime. Furthermore, since the volume of Attempts and Nil-Loss Burglaries reported had declined less than the volume of with-loss burglaries, the former now become a proportionately bigger part of the total burglary figure. This encouraged the view that the Government's crime reduction programme might have worked because what had been thought of as the rate of unsuccessful burglaries (i.e. those that did not entail loss) appeared to have increased.

Of course, none of these figures shed any light whatsoever on what drives the 'real' rate of burglary in the community; but it does suggest how police practice responds to the changing demands made upon the police service. Nevertheless, the practice of publishing the data that would allow us to see if the Grey Figure still existed was discontinued following the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard.

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Tim Hope is Professor in Criminology at the University of Salford, Manchester. He has been a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research, University of Edinburgh.

APPENDIX

Figure 1:

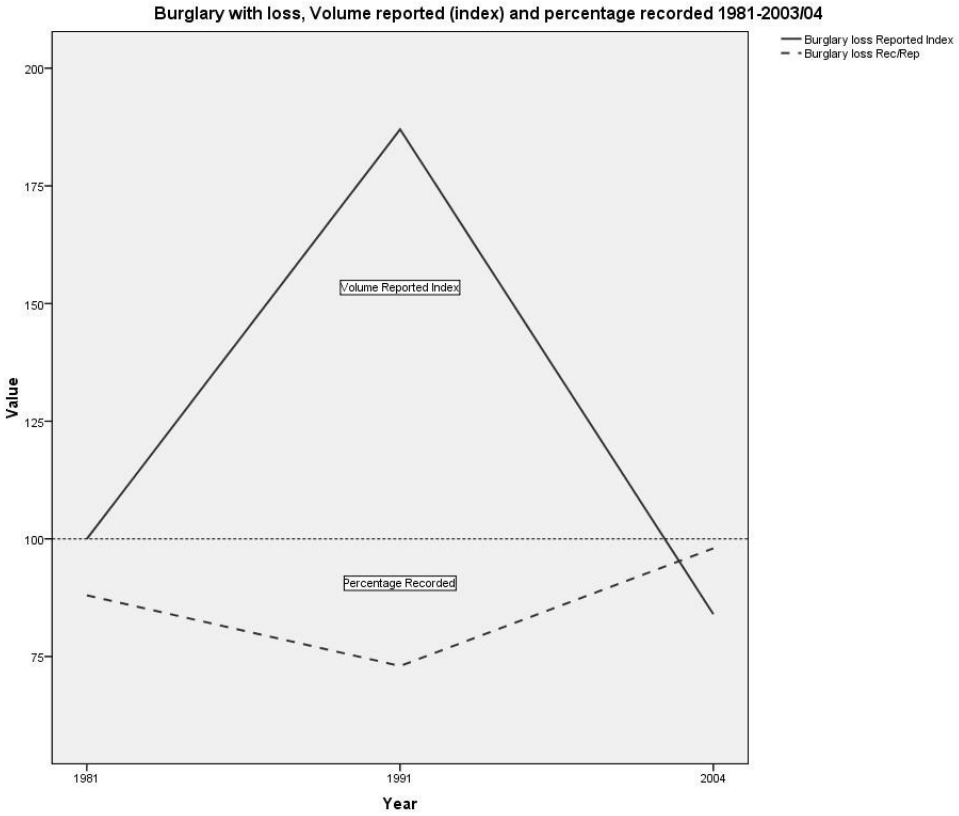
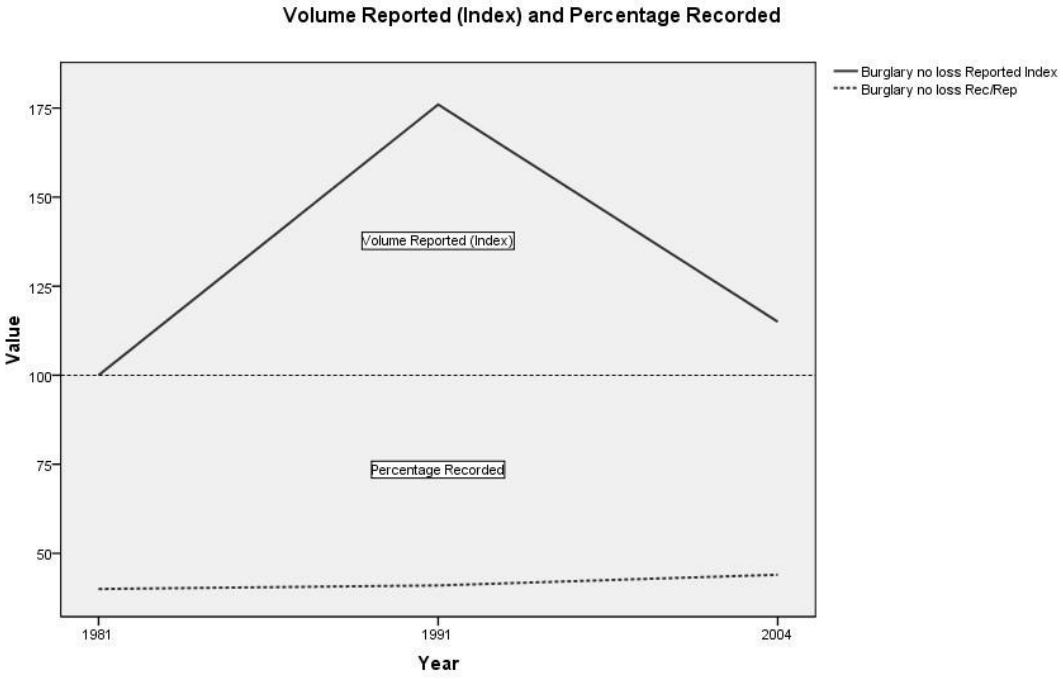


Figure 2:

Burglary No loss, Reported and Recorded, 1981 - 2003/04



CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Statistical guidance for Police and Crime Commissioners

CSAC(13)11

Purpose/Issue

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress on the guidance to be issued to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and their teams on best practice of using crime and policing statistics.

Action

2. The Committee is invited to note the contents of this paper and attached guidance and agree to the plans for dissemination in May.

Background

3. At the Committee's meeting in September 2012 it agreed that it would be beneficial to provide some statistical guidance to PCC candidates during the election campaign and to PCCs once in post. Hence, the Chair wrote to candidates on 8 October 2012 encouraging the accurate use of statistics and provided general guidelines to follow when using statistics publicly. The Chair wrote again to elected PCCs on 27 February 2013 informing them of plans to provide guidance to support them and their teams on using crime and policing statistics and to invite analysts working within their offices to attend workshops on specialist statistical topics in the autumn. In response to this letter, several PCC offices responded positively and welcomed the support being offered.

4. The Home Office (HO) set up a stakeholder group to seek views and advice on the content and coverage of the guidance with representatives from HO policy and analytical teams, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), College of Policing (CoP), Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). This group has met twice and decided to produce three sets of guidance to be issued under the auspices of the Committee and contain the following:

   I. An overview of official statistics, main crime and policing outputs and advice for using data publicly, aimed specifically at PCCs and the APCC

   II. Detailed technical descriptions and recommendations on data use, management and collection, aimed at analysts within PCC teams

   III. Guidelines for presenting and reporting on statistics, targeted at PCC media and communication teams.

5. Drafts of the guidance have been circulated to stakeholders for editing and quality assurance and final versions are attached for the Committee's consideration. Subject to the Committee being content with the guidance, it is intended to publish the documents on the CSAC web pages and notify all PCCs via the APCC secretariat.

6. Plans to invite analysts to workshops in the autumn include using these events to demonstrate the tools and systems available such as iQuanta's website, HMIC's crime and policing comparator and police.uk, as well as providing an opportunity to build networks and answer enquiries.

Home Office Statistics
2 May 2013

CSAC (13) 11.1

Statistical guidance on crime and policing statistics

For Police and Crime Commissioners

May 2013

Statistical guidance on crime and policing statistics for Police and Crime Commissioners

Contents

Foreword

Professor Stephen Shute

Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee

Appropriate use of crime and policing statistics is essential if public trust and confidence in those statistics and in the police service is to be maintained. As the Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC), I welcome the publication of this guidance which aims to provide assistance to you on best practice of using crime and policing statistics in accordance with the principles outlined by the UK Statistics Authority. I also strongly support the commitment to ensure that crime statistics are accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy, and endorse the work that is already underway on improving public trust in statistics. You can play an important role in ensuring that the good work continues and I hope you will find this guidance a useful and practical tool.

The guidance is divided into three main parts: an overview of the importance of statistics, advice for using data publicly and the main crime and policing outputs available; more detailed technical descriptions; and recommendations on management of data and guidelines for presenting data.

This guidance was developed with the support of the Committee and I would like to thank colleagues in the Home Office for leading on the production and development of this guidance. I am also grateful to colleagues in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the College of Policing for their contributions.

Introduction

Purpose of this guidance: Making statistics work for you

This document is designed to provide guidance on best practice for using crime and policing statistics to improve understanding and interpretation of the data and to help build and maintain public trust in official information. The guidance presents recommended best practice in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority framework[1] and its Code of Practice[2]. Statistics on crime and policing are available from different sources; are produced in a number of different outputs; and have differing strengths and limitations so being able to 'unlock' and accurately interpret the data is vital. These statistics can help in holding your Chief Constable to account when:

- reviewing force performance management and setting priorities;
- communicating with the public and informing public debate;
- developing evidence based decisions.

The guidance brings together information on the collection, presentation and management of data as well as the sources of statistics available into a comprehensive toolkit for you. This is the first of three documents available and contains advice on using data publicly and the crime and policing outputs available. The second part of the series presents more detail on the sources of crime and policing statistics and technical descriptions to provide statistical guidance for your analysts, and the third gives a summary for communication teams on presenting data.

Benefits of statistics

Statistical analysis can make an important contribution to the delivery of an effective and efficient police service and to how police and their partners tackle crime. It can be used to identify the nature of a crime problem, understand the most cost-effective ways of addressing the problem, and monitor and evaluate any initiatives implemented to address the problem. An analysis of the nature of a crime problem is usually a critical first step to ensure that community needs are being met, and there are wide ranges of statistics that can be used to help with this.

To monitor and assess force performance and to demonstrate to the public how forces are performing you will likely to be using, interpreting and reporting on statistics generated nationally and locally. However, not all statistical evidence is robust and evidence of effectiveness in one context may not translate easily to another. There is growing interest in making greater use of statistics and data analysis within policing and making good use of them can be hugely beneficial.

[1] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/index.html
[2] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

Importance of public trust in statistics

The Government, the UK Statistics Authority and CSAC[3] are committed to enhancing the integrity, both actual and perceived, of official statistics and place great importance in ensuring that the public have ready access to information and trust what they see. Therefore, statistics that have been compiled, quality assured and presented in a transparent way, will help to enhance the integrity of both the statistics and the producers of them.

In addition, the release of official reports into the public domain in an orderly manner, in accordance with the Authority's code, promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation. These recommendations serve to: ensure a trustworthy service to users; avoid the perception that the release of statistics have been delayed or withheld; and prevent exposure of producers to suggestions of misuse.

Treating own statistics as official

As producers of information, in accordance with the requirements which Parliament has placed on Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) about the provision and publication of information to the public[4], this guidance is based on the UK Statistics Authority framework for *official* statistics but we would encourage you to view it as a benchmark when producing and publishing any set of statistical information.

More details on the UK Statistics Authority, the Code of Practice and official statistics can be found in Annex A of this document.

[3] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/crime-statistics-advisory-committee.html

[4] The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011 (2011 No. 3050), as amended by The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2012 (2012 No. 2479)

Using data publicly

Statistics are tools that can turn data into useful information that can then be used to raise awareness, influence behaviour and voters, and help to drive local accountability and transparency. Good and accurate use of statistics can help to establish credibility, increase influence and contribute over time to enhanced reputation. Poor use of statistics can lead to loss of trust and reduced authority. You, therefore, have a critical role in presenting data clearly to ensure that your communities and partners understand the data you make available to them.

The way statistical data are summarised or presented can lead to wrong conclusions being drawn even if the statistics are correct. It is important, therefore, to ensure that they are quoted accurately using reliable (published) sources that are properly referenced and caveated where necessary.

Statistics are a hugely important and influential resource, but if they are not understood then they are not doing as much good as they could, and run the risk of being misinterpreted.

Six guidelines with examples

The following are some general tips to ensure the best presentation.

1. *Show the full picture*
   When writing about statistics do not just pick out the successes, show a balance of results. Do not just say there was a change (e.g. a fall in crime), always also say either what it fell from or what it fell to.

2. *Don't claim too much*
   Be cautious about saying that you can "prove" or "show" that policies have worked using statistics. It is often better to say that they "indicate" or "suggest". For example:
   "There was a 27 per cent fall in knife homicides in areas piloting my knife crime initiatives, from 199 in 2011/12 to 145 in 2012/13, compared with a 13 per cent increase in areas where these initiatives have not yet been implemented (55 to 62, respectively). These data suggest that my initiatives may be contributing to a fall in knife-related deaths."

3. *Compare similar data*
   It is usually best to compare changes year-on-year using identical time periods. For example:
   "Crime in September to December 2012 is down 40 per cent compared with the same period the year before."

This ensures seasonal factors are not mis-interpreted. It should be noted that it is not always appropriate to compare forces as they vary in terms of population and geographical size and composition.

4. *Be clear where the statistics are from*
   State the data source(s) that the statistics come from. For example:
   "There was a fall of x% in police recorded crime..." or *"According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales..."*
   If applicable, include web links and table or chapter references to allow readers to see the underlying data for themselves.

5. *When numbers are small (e.g. less than 100) beware of percentages*
   Small numbers are better quoted directly. For example:
   "There were 11 homicides recorded by Barsetshire Police in 2011/12, down from 19 the previous year."
   If you must use percentages always include the actual numbers so that readers don't over-interpret accuracy. For example:
   "Homicides in Barsetshire were down 42 per cent (from 19 in 2010/11 to 11 in 2011/12)".
   For small numbers, also consider using simple proportions. For example: *"Attempted murders recorded by Barsetshire Police were down by a fifth" – rather than "fell 20 per cent".* But still quote exact numbers.

6. *Be clear about limitations or quality issues affecting the data*
   Explain how big the survey or study sample sizes were, response rates, whether the results were nationally representative, whether there were changes to the way data were collected / recorded and (if appropriate) whether results are statistically significant. If these details are too technical, consider using footnotes or notes to editors.

Examples of good and bad use of stats

Example 1

Good: *"Police recorded crime fell by 5 per cent in the year to September 2012 compared with a year earlier."*

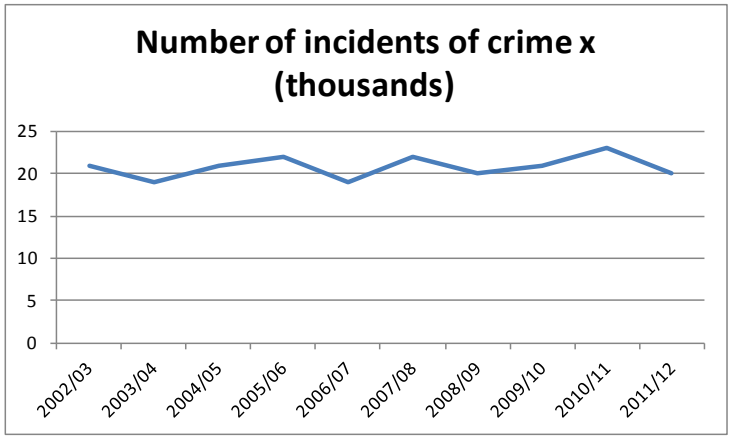
Bad: *"Crime is down by 5 per cent."* – What is the source? Down 5 per cent compared to when?

Example 2

Good: "*There was one homicide recorded by Barsetshire Police in 2011/12, compared with two recorded the previous year."(Percentage changes are not appropriate when presenting small numbers).*

Bad: "*There was a 50 per cent fall in homicides between 2010/11 and 2011/12.*"

Example 3



Good: "According to the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales , crime x fell by 13 per cent in the last year, however the trend has been relatively flat since 2002/03."

– i.e. don't just focus on the most recent quarter/year, put it into context.

Bad: *"Crime x fell by 13 per cent in the year to 2011/12"*

Crime and policing statistics outputs

There are various sources of crime statistics that can be used to assess force progress. However, it is often unclear which is the most appropriate to use in different circumstances. This section provides a summary of the statistics produced on crime and policing and when it is appropriate to use them.

Outline of outputs available

The two main sources of national crime statistics are police recorded crime (PRC) and the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

Police recorded crime: All recorded crime data comes from police force recording systems. Police crime recording practice is governed by the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The NCRS was introduced in April 2002 to promote greater consistency and transparency of crime recording between forces. Crime data are collected from each police force for all crimes within the Notifiable Offence List and according to Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). The guidance notes to the counting rules provide a good background as to how PRC figures are recorded and the circumstances under which crimes are included in or omitted from the figures.

PRC is the most appropriate data source for sub-regional analysis. It is the only available data source for certain crimes such as homicide and victimless crimes (e.g. drug possession offences).

Crime Survey for England and Wales: formerly known as the British Crime Survey (BCS), this is a face-to-face victimisation survey in which people aged 16 and over resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. Respondents to the survey are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues, such as the police and the criminal justice system and their perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour. Since January 2009, CSEW has also asked children aged 10 to 15 about their experience of crime in the previous 12 months.

CSEW is the most appropriate data source for looking at long term trends, especially if going back beyond 2002 (as this was when the NCRS was introduced therefore making PRC data from 2002/03 incomparable with pre-2002/03 PRC data). It is also appropriate for short -term trends (preferably used alongside the PRC data to give a full as picture as possible), although, given that these are based on a sample, small changes should be treated with caution as they may not represent a real underlying change.

More details on the main differences between these two sources and the limitations associated with them are presented in Annex B of this document.

Crime recording standards

Crime statistics would become meaningless without integrity in recording of crime. NCRS was originally proposed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) after a highly critical review of forces' crime recording procedures by HMIC and was adopted in 2002. This standard has been very important in maintaining the credibility and comparability of crime recording. The general principle of NCRS is that where a victim makes a report of crime it *will be recorded where there is no credible evidence to the contrary.* For the public to have confidence in the police there is a minimum expectation that the police will accurately record crimes and it is important that victim reports are not discounted without good reason. There have been a number of reports and reviews on crime recording in recent years by both HMIC and the National Statistician (amongst others) and they have all concluded that NCRS remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Concerns have been expressed about the possible erosion of compliance by some forces with the NCRS leading to some crimes reported to the police not being recorded accurately.

The HOCR sets out that each police force should have a Force Crime Registrar (FCR) who acts as final arbiter for crime recording and detection decisions in line with the HOCR and NCRS. FCRs have an in-depth level of knowledge about NCRS and the HOCR and also act as the link between the force and the Home Office. He or she can advise on the processes that need to be followed to ensure that recording in a force has integrity and is comparable with other forces. The role of FCR is crucial in ensuring that the statistics eventually made available to the public and on which decision- making is based are both accurate and comparable.

Anti -social behaviour recording standards

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents are recorded by the police in accordance with the National Standards for Incident Recording (NSIR) which sets out the same 'victim -focused' approach that applies to police recorded crime. NSIR was introduced in 2007 to provide standards and guidance to forces on the recording of all incidents reported to them that fall outside of notifiable crime. ASB figures are published by ONS, however they are not accredited National Statistics as opposed to the main recorded crime collection. ONS has also published findings on perceptions and experiences of ASB from the 2011/12 CSEW and experience of ASB reported by businesses from the 2012 Commercial Victimisation Survey (CVS). Data on Anti-social behaviour orders breached issued by courts are compiled by MOJ and published by the Home Office.

Other policing outputs

Police personnel: Forces collect a variety of data relating to police personnel. These include police numbers in post; by force; by rank; by gender and ethnicity breakdowns. These are published by the Home Office and used widely by HMIC.

Victim satisfaction: There is also a requirement of the Home Office for police forces to conduct victim satisfaction surveys with specified victim groups and return data on a quarterly basis. The purpose of returning data from force surveys to the Home Office is to enable the calculation of victim satisfaction measures for dissemination via iQuanta and the HMIC Crime and Policing Comparator.

Complaints against the police: The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) produces statistics on complaints against the police and on deaths during or following police contact.

Criminal justice: Forces also collect and make available to the MoJ and the Home Office a range of crime outcome information, including: police cautions (reprimand or warnings for juveniles), Penalty Notice for Disorder (PNDs); cannabis warnings; and offences taken into consideration (TiCs). These are published regularly by the MoJ and Home Office. MoJ also collects and publishes data on court outcomes and sentencing; prison and probation data; proven re-offending; and criminal histories.

Further details of the crime statistics available in National Statistics, on police force area, local area and neighbourhood data can be found at Annex C.

Who to contact for further guidance

The following may be contacted for guidance or support with statistical queries:

crimestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A: Background of the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority[5] was established in 2008 by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and is an independent body operating at arm's length from the government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament.

The Authority has two main functions:

- oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) - its executive office
- independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all *official* statistics produced in the UK.

The Authority's statutory 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 protect the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and ensure good practice in relation to official statistics.

Official Statistics

An enormous amount of information about the UK is recorded through the medium of official statistics and produced largely by statisticians operating under the umbrella of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) within public bodies. The statistics provide valuable information fundamental to :

- both efficient management and the democratic process;
- promoting transparency and enabling the public to hold to account all organisations that spend public money; and
- internal management decisions and policy making.

A system for governing production and use of official statistics was created by the Authority to enhance trust in the statistical system in terms of quality and impartiality by ensuring the right range of statistics is produced, high and consistent professional standards are maintained, and official statistics are well explained, leading to better decision-making in the public interest.

The National Statistician[6] issued guidance on the principles that government bodies should consider when deciding whether or not a particular set of data should be treated as official statistics.[7]

[5] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/index.html

[6] The National Statistician is a Crown appointment as the Statistics Authority's and the Government's principal adviser on official statistics, head of the Government Statistical Service, and is also the Authority's Chief Executive and Permanent Secretary.

[7] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-guidance/index.html

Code of Practice: Overview

The Code, produced and published by the UK Statistics Authority, provides a common standard for good practice to all bodies producing official statistics in the UK and by so doing, helps to ensure a coherent and trustworthy service to users.

The *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*[8] *comprises*

eight high level principles: (see box).

- Principle 1: Meeting user needs
- Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity
- Principle 3: Integrity
- Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality
- Principle 5: Confidentiality
- Principle 6: Proportionate burden
- Principle 7: Resources
- Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

These principles are supplemented by 74 specific practices. In most cases these practices are not prescriptive, in recognition of the fact that there are often a number of different ways of complying with them, and that these will vary according to the specific context in which the statistics are produced.

In relation to the eight principles and supplementary practices the Code also contains three more detailed protocols (see box).

- Protocol 1: User engagement
- Protocol 2: Release practices
- Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Pre-release access - what it is

Pre-release access (PRA) is the practice of making official statistics, and the written commentary that accompanies them, available in advance of their publication to specified individuals only on a 'need to know' basis. PRA is restricted and legislated

[8] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

by the Pre-release access to Official Statistics Order 2008. Procedures and compliance are strict and are overseen in the UK by the UK Statistics Authority.

In England and Northern Ireland, PRA is granted for a period of 24 hours before the official time of release and differs from regulations in Wales and Scotland.

Supplementary guidance relating to PRA has also been issued to accompany the Code of Practice.

Breaches and the consequences of them

A breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics occurs where one or more provisions of the Code are not followed. Breaches must be reported immediately to the body producing the statistics and the UK Statistics Authority may then carry out an investigation. Consequences of breaches include the following:

- may lead to organisations/persons involved in breaches being excluded from future pre-release access
- damages the reputation of the recipient organisation
- undermines public trust in statistics

A real life example of the Home Office coming under criticism for practices inconsistent with the Code, which made headline national news, involved a press release on knife crimes issued on 11 December 2008. This included early information on hospital admissions for knife related injuries against the advice of Department of Health statisticians. It resulted in an apology having to be made in the House of Commons for the premature use of a figure. Subsequently, the UK Statistics Authority, when it launched its Code of Practice on 6 January 2009, also referred to the same press release for its selective comparisons, lack of contextual information, and drawing of inappropriate conclusions (amongst other things). The report can be accessed here.

Though a breach may undermine public trust in statistics, being open about the occurrence of breaches offers a level of public accountability of the statistical service. It enhances transparency, and therefore helps to build trust in it.

Annex B: Differences between CSEW and PRC

	CSEW (England and Wales only)	*PRC (England and Wales only)*
Source of data	Large, nationally representative, sample survey of households in England and Wales. However, estimates are subject to a degree of uncertainty associated with sampling (i.e. not possible to ask everybody about their crime experiences so a representative selection of people are asked and their responses are used to represent everybody) and respondents recalling past events.	Data from forces' crime systems - either the data comes via the Data Hub[9] or forces not yet on the Data Hub complete a monthly return (these forces will migrate onto the hub during 2013/14). This source provides whole counts rather than survey estimates.
Coverage of crimes	Includes some crimes that may not have been reported to, or recorded by, the police.	Only those crimes reported to, and recorded by, the police, therefore does not provide complete coverage. From April 2013, will no longer cover fraud as these incidences will be recorded by Action Fraud[10]. Home Office Counting Rules may prevent some crimes being recorded e.g. in some cases only the 'principle' crime is recorded.
Crime victims covered	A survey of people resident in households therefore excludes crimes against businesses and those not resident in households. Coverage extended in 2009 to include children aged 10-15 resident in households.	Covers crimes against all types of victims, including both public and private sector organisations (e.g. shoplifting). The data also include crimes committed against people not resident in the UK (e.g. tourists) that CSEW does not cover.
Crime types covered	Survey is based on victim's experience of crimes and so does not include crimes that have no	Only notifiable crime types covered including 'victimless' crimes (e.g. drugs possession) and homicides (both of

[9] The Data Hub is a data warehouse which holds data for individual offences. It is designed to align with management information systems used in many police forces, allowing for the creation of automated extracts from one system to the other without the need for the completion of aggregate data collection forms. This should deliver long-term cost reductions in data collection processes and offers new and improved ways of analysing data.

[10] During the latter half of 2012/13, the responsibility for recording fraud offences has been gradually transferring away from police forces such that, from April 2013, all fraud offences will be recorded by Action Fraud.

	victim who can subsequently be interviewed, e.g. homicides and drug possession offences. Resulting headline figures also exclude offences difficult to estimate from a relatively small sample, e.g. sexual offences. Self-completion modules cover sexual and domestic violence and use of illicit drugs.	which the CSEW does not cover). The latter are well covered as nearly all homicides come to the attention of the police.
Long term trend analysis	Survey is designed to provide a reliable and consistent measure of trends/patterns of victimisation so is a good measure of long term crime trends as not affected by changes in police recording practices.	Subject to changes in recording practices[11] so not suitable for long term trend analysis. In the past, the UK Statistics Authority has criticised inappropriate comparisons made by politicians using this series. Most crime comparisons since 2002/03 can be made on a consistent basis.
Sub-regional data	Not appropriate to use for crime statistics in areas lower the police force due to low and/or non-representative samples at this level.	Is the primary source of local area crime statistics and for lower-volume crimes, e.g. homicides.
Time period covered	Respondents are asked about their experience of crimes in the 12 months preceding the interview. For example, the 2011/12 survey is based on interviews between April 2011 and March 2012 and so the reference period for estimates includes incidents experienced by respondents between April 2010 and February 2012. This results in a degree of time lag, and a smoothing of the estimates compared with PRC figures.	Based on the date that the crime is recorded by the police. For example, estimates for 'the year ending September 2012' will include all crimes recorded by the police between October 2011 and September 2012, i.e. regardless if the incident took place before this period. The Savile incidents highlight this – although some of these took place as far back as the 1960s, these incidents would actually show up in the PRC statistics in 2012 when they were recorded by the police.
Limitations	CSEW is not appropriate for sub-regional data due to low/non-representative sample sizes at these levels.	PRC statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area

[11] E.g. with the introduction of National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002.

	The CSEW is based on victim's experience of crimes and so does not include crimes that have no victim who can subsequently be interviewed, e.g. homicides and drug possession offences. The CSEW only covers people living in private households and therefore excludes crimes against individuals living in institutions and businesses. A separate survey, the Commercial Victimisation Survey, covers businesses. Although the CSEW covers children aged 10 to 15, but the figures are not directly comparable with those from the adult survey and should not be combined.	could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. Some crime types are also more influenced by police activity than others (e.g. drug offences). PRC is not suitable for long term analysis that go back beyond 2002 (pre NCRS) making data incomparable. It is however the most appropriate source for short term trends (preferably used alongside the CSEW data to give as full a picture as possible).

Annex C: Police recorded crime data outputs

Where can you go to find...?	Type of data source	What data does it use?	What level of geographical detail does it show?	How often is it updated?	What crime classification system does it use?	Where can you access it/find out more?
1.Published official/national crime statistics	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes comprehensive reports of police recorded crime figures. These include a series of data tables for different crime types and different geographical levels.	Police forces submit recorded crime data that is subject to a rigorous quality assurance process. These are designated **National Statistics**[1]. Includes data for the British Transport Police (BTP).	Police force and local level[2]	Quarterly	10 main crime offence groups (but lower-level breakdowns available)	http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Crime+in+England+and+Wales
2. Comparisons of data on recorded crime[3] between all police forces in England and Wales.	HMIC[4] Crime & Policing Comparator	Published ONS National Statistics (as 1, above), excluding BTP.	Police force level	Quarterly	17 main crime groupings (but lower-level breakdowns available)	http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/
3.Local level data (in form of crime maps) Neighbourhood policing information	Police.uk	Police forces submit recorded crime data that is not subject to the same rigorous level of quality assurance process as ONS. Also includes geo-code data, police disposal data, criminal justice outcomes and ASB data.	Street level (minimum of 8 addresses), can be aggregated to higher levels	Monthly	14 main crime groupings (but lower-level breakdowns available)	http://www.police.uk/
4.Local area level comparisons	Compare Your Area	Published ONS National Statistics (as 1, above), excluding BTP.	Local level[2]	Quarterly	11 crime groupings	http://www.police.uk/
5.Police performance and community safety data	iQuanta	Provisional data before they are finalised and published as National statistics (1, above), excluding BTP.	Police force level, Local level[2] and local strategic partnership level (regional)	Monthly or Quarterly depending on data feed	HMIC crime tree 17 main crime groupings (as 2, above) and former iQuanta crime categories	Restricted to users in police forces and Community Safety Partnerships. For more information email iquanta@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

1. See the Code of Practice for Official Statistics for more information: http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html
2. Local level data covers Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas. There are currently 310 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in England and 22 in Wales, the majority of which correspond to local authority areas. They are made up of representatives from the police and police authority, the local council, and the fire, health and probation services.
3. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
4. As well as being able to compare recorded crime levels with any police force in England and Wales, the Crime and Policing Comparator also allows comparisons of crime levels in a particular force with a subset of forces with similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics (similar to what is available for local areas on Compare Your Area). It also provides data for anti-social behaviour, quality of service, finances and workforce numbers for all police forces in England and Wales

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Statistical and analytical guidance on crime and policing statistics

For analysts working for Police and Crime Commissioners

May 2013

Statistical and analytical guidance on crime and policing statistics for analysts working for Police and Crime Commissioners

Contents

Foreword

Professor Stephen Shute

Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee

Appropriate use of crime and policing statistics is essential if public trust and confidence in those statistics and in the police service is to be maintained. As the Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC), I welcome the publication of this guidance which aims to provide assistance to you on best practice of using crime and policing statistics in accordance with the principles outlined by the UK Statistics Authority. I also strongly support the commitment to ensure that crime statistics are accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy, and endorse the work that is already underway on improving public trust in statistics. You can play an important role in ensuring that the good work continues and I hope you will find this guidance a useful and practical tool.

The guidance is divided into three main parts: an overview of the importance of statistics, advice for using data publicly and the main crime and policing outputs available; more detailed technical descriptions; and recommendations on management of data and guidelines for presenting data.

This guidance was developed with the support of the Committee and I would like to thank colleagues in the Home Office for leading on the production and development of this guidance. I am also grateful to colleagues in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the College of Policing for their contributions.

Introduction

Purpose of this guidance: Making statistics work for you

This document is designed to provide guidance on best practice for using crime and policing statistics to improve understanding and interpretation of the data and to help build and maintain public trust in official information. The guidance presents recommended best practice in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority framework[1] and its Code of Practice[2]. Statistics on crime and policing are available from different sources; are produced in a number of different outputs; and have differing strengths and limitations so being able to 'unlock' and accurately interpret the data is vital. These statistics can help in holding your Chief Constable to account when:

- reviewing force performance management and setting priorities;
- communicating with the public and informing public debate;
- developing evidence based decisions.

The guidance brings together information on the collection, presentation and management of data as well as the sources of statistics available into a comprehensive toolkit for you. This is the second of three documents available and provides detail on the sources of crime and policing statistics and technical descriptions. The first part of the series offers advice to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) on using data publicly and an overview of the crime and policing outputs available. and the third gives a summary for communication teams on presenting data.

Benefits of statistics

Statistical analysis can make an important contribution to the delivery of an effective and efficient police service and to how police and their partners tackle crime. It can be used to identify the nature of a crime problem, understand the most cost-effective ways of addressing the problem, and monitor and evaluate any initiatives implemented to address the problem. An analysis of the nature of a crime problem is usually a critical first step to ensure that community needs are being met, and there are wide ranges of statistics that can be used to help with this.

To monitor and assess force performance and to demonstrate to the public how forces are performing you will likely to be using, interpreting and reporting on statistics generated nationally and locally. However, not all statistical evidence is robust and evidence of effectiveness in one context may not translate easily to another. There is growing interest in making greater use of statistics and data analysis within policing and making good use of them can be hugely beneficial.

[1] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/index.html
[2] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority[3] was established in 2008 by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and is an independent body operating at arm's length from the government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament.
The Authority has two main functions:

- oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) - its executive office
- independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all *official* statistics produced in the UK.

The Authority's statutory 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 protect the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and ensure good practice in relation to official statistics.

Official statistics

An enormous amount of information about the UK is recorded through the medium of official statistics and produced largely by statisticians operating under the umbrella of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) within public bodies. The statistics provide valuable information fundamental to:

- both efficient management and the democratic process;
- promoting transparency and enabling the public to hold to account all organisations that spend public money; and
- internal management decisions and policy making.

A system for governing production and use of official statistics was created by the Authority to enhance trust in the statistical system in terms of quality and impartiality by ensuring the right range of statistics is produced, high and consistent professional standards are maintained, and official statistics are well explained, leading to better decision-making in the public interest.

[3] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/index.html

What are official statistics?

The National Statistician[4] has issued guidance on the principles that government bodies should consider when deciding whether or not a particular set of data should be treated as official statistics[5]. The Statistics Authority places particular weight on the following two considerations:-

- the data are used publicly by the organisation in support of major decisions on policy, resource allocation or other topics of public interest, or
- the data attract public controversy when published and the Authority takes the view that public debate would be better informed if the figures are, in future, handled as official statistics.

What makes official statistics different to other statistics

The following points can be used to explain the differences between official and other statistics. Official statistics being those that:

- are used in big decision- making and policy evaluation
- inform government
- inform the public about government
- are produced within legislative framework and follow international standards
- are candidates for the National Statistics kite mark

Treating own statistics as official

As producers of information, in accordance with the requirements that Parliament has placed on PCCs about the publication and provision of information to the public[6], the next section outlines the principles of good practice for *official* statistics but it is encouraged that these be viewed as a benchmark when producing and publishing any set of statistical information.

Code of Practice: Overview

[4] The National Statistician is a Crown appointment as the Statistics Authority's and the Government's principal adviser on official statistics, head of the Government Statistical Service, and is also the Authority's Chief Executive and Permanent Secretary.

[5] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-guidance/index.html

[6] The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011 (2011 No. 3050), as amended by The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) (Amendment) Order 2012 (2012 No. 2479)

The Code of Practice[7] for official statistics, produced and published by the UK Statistics Authority, provides a common standard for good practice to all bodies producing official statistics in the UK and by so doing, helps to ensure a coherent and trustworthy service to users.

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics comprises eight high level principles.

- Principle 1: Meeting user needs

  The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.

- Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

  Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.

- Principle 3: Integrity

  At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.

- Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

  Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.

- Principle 5: Confidentiality

  Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.

- Principle 6: Proportionate burden

  The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

- Principle 7: Resources

  The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively

- Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

  Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.

In relation to the eight principles and supplementary practices the Code also contains three more detailed protocols: on user engagement; on the release of statistics; and on the use of administrative data for statistical purposes (see box below).

[7] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

- Protocol 1: User engagement

  Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.

- Protocol 2: Release practices

  Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation[8].

- Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

  Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.

Compliance with the Code is a statutory requirement for National Statistics and good practice for all official statistics, although the Authority reserves the right to comment on the use of official statistics.

National Statistics

National Statistics are a subset of official statistics that have been certified by the UK Statistics Authority as compliant with its Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Accredited 'National Statistics' are identified by the following quality mark:

It is important to note the provision of the UK National Statistics Publication Hub which is a website bringing together information about releases from across the UK statistical system. It is a central point of access for National Statistics in the UK.

Crime and policing statistics outputs

Overview

Statistics are extremely valuable as they can help to measure performance through monitoring and evaluation, and thus help to hold officials to account. There are various sources of crime statistics that can be used to assess force progress and these can be used in different circumstances. However, it is often unclear which is the most appropriate to use in different circumstances. This section provides a summary of the statistics produced on crime and policing and when it is appropriate to use them.

Explanation of the Annual Data Requirement

The Annual Data Requirement (ADR) is a statutory requirement[8] that sets out the data that police forces in England and Wales must collect and return centrally, at what frequency and in what format. It is a robust process that brings requests for police data together, thereby reducing uncoordinated or duplicate requests for information. The ADR is the main way in which data are collected to the required standard and on a comparative basis and is reviewed annually, with changes being subject to Ministerial agreement. Some of the 26 data series (for more detail see Annex A) collected through the ADR form National Statistics that are subject to stringent reporting and validation standards, as well as being used to provide important management information used by both the Home Office and other stakeholders such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

Outline of outputs available

The two main sources of national crime statistics are the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime (PRC). The table below highlights the main differences between the two sources.

[8] The statutory basis for the ADR is set by the 1996 Police Act and was further strengthened in the 2011 Police and Social Responsibility Act.

	CSEW (England and Wales only)	*PRC (England and Wales only)*
Source of data	Large, nationally representative, sample survey of households in England and Wales. However, estimates are subject to a degree of uncertainty associated with sampling (i.e. not possible to ask everybody about their crime experiences so a representative selection of people are asked and their responses are used to represent everybody) and respondents recalling past events.	Data from forces' crime systems - either the data comes via the Data Hub[9] or forces not yet on the Data Hub complete a monthly return (these forces will migrate onto the hub during 2013/14). This source provides whole counts rather than survey estimates.
Coverage of crimes	Includes some crimes that may not have been reported to, or recorded by, the police.	Only those crimes reported to, and recorded by, the police, therefore does not provide complete coverage. From April 2013, will no longer cover fraud as these incidences will be recorded by Action Fraud[10]. Home Office Counting Rules may prevent some crimes being recorded e.g. in some cases only the 'principle' crime is recorded.
Crime victims covered	A survey of people resident in households therefore excludes crimes against businesses and those not resident in households. Coverage extended in 2009 to include children aged 10 to15 resident in households.	Covers crimes against all types of victims, including both public and private sector organisations (e.g. shoplifting). This data also includes crimes committed against people not resident in the UK (e.g. tourists) which the CSEW does not.
Crime types covered	Survey is based on victim's experience of crimes and so does not include crimes that have no victim	Only notifiable crime types covered including 'victimless' crimes (e.g. drugs possession) and homicides

[9] The Data Hub is a data warehouse which holds data for individual offences. It is designed to align with management information systems used in many police forces, allowing for the creation of automated extracts from one system to the other without the need for the completion of aggregate data collection forms. This should deliver long-term cost reductions in data collection processes and offers new and improved ways of analysing data.

[10] During the latter half of 2012/13, the responsibility for recording fraud offences has been gradually transferring away from police forces such that, from April 2013, all fraud offences will be recorded by Action Fraud.

	who can subsequently be interviewed, e.g. homicides and drug possession offences. Resulting headline figures also exclude offences difficult to estimate from a relatively small sample, e.g. sexual offences. Self-completion modules cover sexual and domestic violence and use of illicit drugs.	(both of which the CSEW does not cover). The latter are well covered as nearly all homicides come to the attention of the police.
Long term trend analysis	Survey is designed to provide a reliable and consistent measure of trends/patterns of victimisation so is a good measure of long term crime trends as not affected by changes in police recording practices.	Subject to changes in recording practices[11] so not suitable for long term trend analysis. In the past, the UK Statistics Authority has criticised inappropriate comparisons made by politicians using this series. Most crime comparisons since 2002/03 can be made on a consistent basis.
Sub-regional data	Not appropriate to use for crime statistics in areas lower the police force due to low and/or non-representative samples at this level.	Is the primary source of local area crime statistics and for lower-volume crimes, e.g. homicides.
Time period covered	Respondents are asked about their experience of crimes in the 12 months preceding the interview. For example, the 2011/12 survey is based on interviews between April 2011 and March 2012 and so the reference period for estimates includes incidents experienced by respondents between April 2010 and February 2012. This results in a degree of time lag, and a smoothing of the estimates compared with PRC figures.	Based on the date that the crime is recorded by the police. For example, estimates for 'the year ending September 2012' will include all crimes recorded by the police between October 2011 and September 2012, i.e. regardless if the incident took place before this period. The Savile incidents highlight this – although some of these took place as far back as the 1960s, these incidents would actually show up in the PRC statistics in 2012 when they were recorded by the police.
Limitations	CSEW is not appropriate for sub-regional data due to low/non-representative sample sizes at these levels.	PRC statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More

[11] E.g. with the introduction of National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002.

	The CSEW is based on victim's experience of crimes and so does not include crimes that have no victim who can subsequently be interviewed, e.g. homicides and drug possession offences. The CSEW only covers people living in private households and therefore excludes crimes against individuals living in institutions and businesses. A separate survey, the Commercial Victimisation Survey, covers businesses. Although the CSEW covers children aged 10 to 15, but the figures are not directly comparable with those from the adult survey and should not be combined.	proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. Some crime types are also more influenced by police activity than others (e.g. drug offences). PRC is not suitable for long term analyses that go back beyond 2002 (pre National Crime Recording Standard-NCRS) making data incomparable. It is however the most appropriate source for short term trends (preferably used alongside the CSEW data to give as full a picture as possible).

Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), formerly known as the British Crime Survey (BCS), is a face-to-face victimisation survey in which people aged 16 and over resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. Respondents to the survey are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues, such as the police and the criminal justice system and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour. Since January 2009, the CSEW has also asked children aged 10 to 15 about their experience of crime in the previous 12 months.

The CSEW is carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

CSEW is the most appropriate data source for looking at long term trends, especially if going back beyond 2002 (as this was when the NCRS was introduced therefore making PRC data from 2002 onwards incomparable with pre-2002 PRC data). It is also appropriate for short term trends (preferably used alongside the PRC data to give a full a picture as possible), although, given that these are based on a sample, small changes should be treated with caution as they may not represent a real underlying change. (See section on collecting your own data , sample surveys and variability)

More information is given in the User Guide.

Users can download CSEW datasets from the CSEW section of the UK Data Archive

Limitations:

CSEW is NOT appropriate for sub-regional data due to low/non-representative sample sizes at these levels.

The CSEW is based on victim's experience of crimes and so does not include crimes that have no victim who can subsequently be interviewed, e.g. homicides and drug possession offences.

The CSEW only covers people living in private households and therefore excludes crimes against individuals living in institutions and businesses. (But see section on Commercial Victimisation Survey).

The CSEW covers children aged 10 to 15, but the figures are not directly comparable with those from the adult survey and should not be combined.

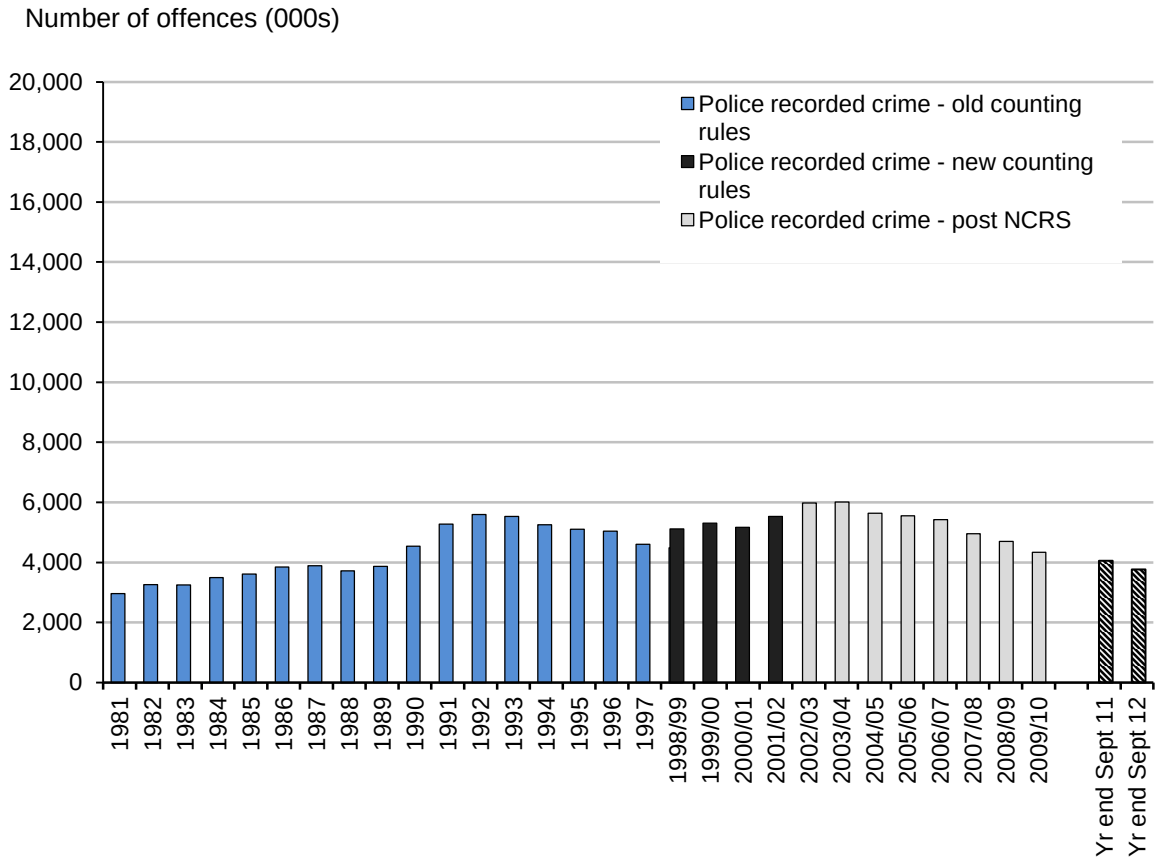
Police recorded crime

Crime statistics would become meaningless without integrity in recording of crime. All recorded crime data comes from police force recording systems. Police crime recording practice is governed by the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The NCRS was introduced in April 2002 to promote greater consistency and transparency of crime recording between forces. Crime data are collected from each police force for all crimes within the Notifiable Offence List and according to Home Office Counting Rules. The guidance notes to the counting rules provide a good background as to how PRC figures are recorded and the circumstances under which crimes are included in or omitted from the figures.

NCRS was originally proposed by the Association of Chief Police Officers after a highly critical review of forces' crime recording procedures by HMIC and was adopted in 2002. This standard has been very important in maintaining the credibility and comparability of crime recording. The general principle of NCRS is that where a victim makes a report of crime it *will be recorded where there is no credible evidence to the contrary.* For the public to have confidence in the police there is a minimum expectation that police will accurately record crimes and it is important that victim reports are not discounted without good reason. There have been a number of reports and reviews on crime recording in recent years by both HMIC and the National Statistician (amongst others) and they have all concluded that NCRS remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Concerns have been expressed about the possible erosion of compliance by some forces with NCRS leading to some crimes reported to the police not being recorded accurately.

The effect of changes to the HOCR can be seen in the bar chart below.



The chart shows that police recorded crime increased during most of the 1980s, reaching a peak in 1992, and then fell each year until 1998/99 when the expanded coverage and changes in the HOCR resulted in an increase in recorded offences. This was followed by the introduction of the NCRS in April 2002 which led to a rise in recording in 2002/03 and 2003/04. Following the bedding in of these changes, trends have been generally more consistent between the two series since 2003/04, with the exception of some short term fluctuations in recent years.

PRC data are used to produce a number of different data outputs that can be used by police forces, government departments and the public alike. Although all are based on data from police forces, the coverage and presentation of the outputs differ as shown in the table below.

PRC is the most appropriate data source for sub-regional analysis. It is the only available data source for certain crimes such as homicide and victimless crimes (e.g. drug possession offences).

Limitations:

PRC statistics, like any administrative data, are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends.

Some crime types are also more influenced by police activity than others (e.g. drug offences). These issues need to be taken into account when using these data. You should also note the possibility of under-reporting/recording. HMIC carries out inspections and reviews into the police recording of crime. As incidents are categorised based on a balance of probabilities, there is a degree of discretion in how some crimes are counted which can lead to a loss of confidence in some PRC figures.

PRC is NOT suitable for long -term analysis that goes back beyond 2002 (pre NCRS) as data are incomparable. It is however the most appropriate source for short-term trends (preferably used alongside CSEW data to give as full a picture as possible).

Further details of crime statistics available in National Statistics, on police force area, local area and neighbourhood data can be found in the table below.

Police recorded crime data outputs

Where can you go to find...?	Type of data source	What data does it use?	What level of geographical detail does it show?	How often is it updated?	What crime classification system does it use?	Where can you access it/find out more?
1.Published official/national crime statistics	The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes comprehensive reports of police recorded crime figures. These include a series of data tables for different crime types and different geographical levels.	Police forces submit recorded crime data that is subject to a rigorous quality assurance process. These are designated **National Statistics**[1]. Includes data for the British Transport Police (BTP).	Police force and local level[2]	Quarterly	10 main crime offence groups (but lower-level breakdowns available)	http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Crime+in+England+and+Wales
2. Comparisons of data on recorded crime[3] between all police forces in England and Wales.	HMIC[4] Crime & Policing Comparator	Published ONS National Statistics (as 1, above), excluding BTP.	Police force level	Quarterly	17 main crime groupings (but lower-level breakdowns available)	http://www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator/
3.Local level data (in form of crime maps) Neighbourhood policing information	Police.uk	Police forces submit recorded crime data that is not subject to the same rigorous level of quality assurance process as ONS. Also includes geo-code data, police disposal data, criminal justice outcomes and ASB data.	Street level (minimum of 8 addresses), can be aggregated to higher levels	Monthly	14 main crime groupings (but lower-level breakdowns available)	http://www.police.uk/
4.Local area level comparisons	Compare Your Area	Published ONS National Statistics (as 1, above), excluding BTP.	Local level[2]	Quarterly	11 crime groupings	http://www.police.uk/
5.Police performance and community safety data	iQuanta	Provisional data before they are finalised and published as National statistics (1, above), excluding BTP.	Police force level, Local level[2] and local strategic partnership level (regional)	Monthly or Quarterly depending on data feed	HMIC crime tree 17 main crime groupings (as 2, above) and former iQuanta crime categories	Restricted to users in police forces and Community Safety Partnerships. For more information email iquanta@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

1. See the Code of Practice for Official Statistics for more information: http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html
2. Local level data covers Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas. There are currently 310 Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in England and 22 in Wales, the majority of which correspond to local authority areas. They are made up of representatives from the police and police authority, the local council, and the fire, health and probation services.
3. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
4. As well as being able to compare recorded crime levels with any police force in England and Wales, the Crime and Policing Comparator also allows comparisons of crime levels in a particular force with a subset of forces with similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics (similar to what is available for local areas on Compare Your Area). It also provides data for anti-social behaviour, quality of service, finances and workforce numbers for all police forces in England and Wales.

Police force level data

Police recorded crime is available at force level from several different sources:

- ONS/Home Office open data tables
- HMIC Crime and policing comparator
- Police.uk
- iquanta

The uses and limitations of these sources are detailed below.

It should be noted that it is not always appropriate to compare forces as they vary in terms of population and geographical size and composition. Using Compare Your Area may be more appropriate.

Data quoted from police force's own websites should be referred to as 'provisional figures' as they have not been quality assured by the Home Office.

Police recorded crime published by the Office for National Statistics and Home Office Open Data tables

PRC data are supplied to the ONS by the Home Office, which is responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police (BTP).

These data are supplied to the Home Office on a monthly basis in an aggregated return for each crime within the notifiable offence list and are quality assured by the Home Office Statistics Unit on a quarterly basis before being supplied to ONS for final preparation and publication as National Statistics. Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious offences, 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. However, in some cases only the principal offence will be recorded.

Users can download open data tables from the Home Office pages on gov.uk

More information is given in the User Guide.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Crime and Policing Comparator

The Crime and Policing Comparator is HMIC's online tool that brings together data from all 43 police forces across England and Wales for the past three years. Users can use the four interactive charts to choose the forces and data they are interested in and then generate their own graphs. It displays the police recorded crime statistics

as published as National Statistics. It also allows users to compare forces over time, or make comparisons between forces.

The Crime and Policing Comparator provides a comparison of data on:

- recorded crime
- anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- quality of service
- finances and workforce

The data are published quarterly and the most recent data available are for 2011 and 2012. The data are from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Police Objective Analysis financial estimates and the Annual Data Requirements (ADRs) provided by forces.

police.uk

This is a publicly available website that provides street level crime counts in 2 formats: maps and charts (Compare Your Area).

Map

The crime map provides information on crimes, ASB and justice outcomes in a local area (a 'justice outcome' is a crime that has been resolved by the police or a court) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland displayed on a map.

It is possible to physically draw an area on a map, although as it is not saved it is difficult to re-create it.

Limitations of crime map data

The crime counts are based on data submitted by the police separately from the PRC data used in the National Statistics.

These data are not subject to the same rigorous quality assurance process as the National Statistics data published by ONS (and used for the HMIC Crime and Policing Comparator and Compare Your Area tools).

The data only map those crimes with geographical location information, i.e. crimes without this information are excluded from the map, but an indication of the number of crimes that fall into this category at force level is provided.

It is difficult to aggregate the street level data to larger geographical areas (e.g. from Community Safety Partnerships to regional level) due to boundary issues (as a street may lie across two distinct geographical areas), although currently data are aggregated to neighbourhood and force level.

The data are not fully quality assured before being put on the website and therefore may be prone to errors. Errors identified in previous months may not be corrected.

A process known as ‘no-criming’ results in crimes being removed if after initial recording it is determined that no crime was actually committed (e.g. an offence of criminal damage was found to be the result of natural causes – high winds blew down a fence). Because the crime mapper data are collated monthly, there will be differences in the levels of ‘no-criming’ compared with National Statistics data (which cover a three-month period).

Compare Your Area

The charts on this page let users compare levels of crime in a local area with areas that have similar socio-economic characteristics (taken together, these areas are known as your area's 'Most Similar Group', or MSG[12]). They can also compare levels of crime in the local area with other areas in the police force. The charts help users to understand more about:

- how crime in ‘city/town’ compares with crime in other similar areas
- how crime in ‘city/town’ compares with crime in the police force area
- how crime has changed over time in ‘city/town’ and in the police force area.

iQuanta

iQuanta is a web-based service provided to operational staff in police forces, Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and HMIC.

iQuanta makes available analyses of crime, policing performance and community safety data. The analyses are provided in a range of graphical charts and tables and allow users to compare their area against peers, identify significant changes and track progress. Analyses are available at Force, Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and CSP level. The iQuanta service’s aim is primarily to support local performance management through regular and timely analysis.

iQuanta allows users to access provisional data before finalised National Statistics are published. Accordingly, the service is accessible only to accredited users and has clear terms and conditions set out limiting public use of the data before the statistics are officially published.

iQuanta contains some unpublished police recorded crime data as they are received on a monthly basis (whereas the National Statistics are only published quarterly). However, unlike the quarterly statistics, the data is not reconciled and so may be different from final published figures.

[12] Most Similar Groups (MSGs) are groups of police force areas that have been found to be the most similar to each other based on an analysis of demographic, social and economic characteristics which relate to crime. MSGs are designed to help make fair and meaningful comparisons between forces. Forces operate in very different environments and face different challenges. It can be more meaningful to compare a force with other forces which share similar social and economic characteristics, than, for example, a neighbouring force.

The figures should therefore only be used for informal indications of trends.

More information is available from iquanta@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Fraud and forgery data

The measurement of fraud is challenging as it is a deceptive crime which is difficult to detect accurately and is often targeted at organisations rather than individuals. It is known to be under-reported to the police and difficult to measure using a household survey. Fraud data from a range of sources are presented in the ONS quarterly statistical bulletins on crime in England and Wales to provide a more complete picture.

These include:

• Police recorded crime;

• National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB);

• National Fraud Authority;

• CSEW plastic card fraud module; and

• UK Cards Association.

For further information on sources of fraud data and the nature, extent and economic impact of fraud in the UK see ONS quarterly releases and the User Guide.

Commercial Victimisation Survey

This is a survey of crimes against businesses in four industry sectors (manufacturing, wholesale and retail, transportation and storage, and accommodation and food), i.e. not the whole of the business population.

Available statistics currently include the number of incidents, incidence rates, and prevalence rates for a variety of crimes by sector and business size.

The first of three surveys was carried out in 2012 and headline results were published in January 2013. . More detailed findings are due to be published in July 2013.

Statistical time trends are not currently available. Future surveys may rotate some sectors to provide an insight to crime in other sectors.

Results are only available at the national level.

Anti-social behaviour data

The term ‘anti-social behaviour’ (ASB) was formalised in the late 1990s to describe a wide range of the nuisance, disorder and crime that adversely affect people’s daily lives.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defined ASB in law as ‘acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household’.

In many cases these ASB incidents may still be crimes in law, such as littering or dog fouling, but they are not of a level of severity that would result in the recording of a notifiable offence. Thus, they are not included in the main police recorded crime collection.

While incidents are recorded by the police under the National Standards for Incident Recording (NSIR) in accordance with the same ‘victim focused’ approach that applies for police recorded crime, the figures are not accredited National Statistics and are not subject to the same level of quality assurance as the main recorded crime collection. A recent report HMIC (HMIC, 2012) raised some concerns over the recording of ASB incidents. From the small number of ASB incidents reviewed (around 1,000 across England and Wales):

• some incidents recorded by the police as ASB should have instead been recorded as notifiable crimes – findings show that these varied in number between police forces; and

• there was poor identification of repeat, vulnerable and intimidated victims of ASB at the first point of contact.

It is known that a small number of police forces are erroneously duplicating some occurrences of a singular ASB incident where multiple calls have been made.
The variation in the type of ASB incident recorded into the three new strands of ‘Personal’, ‘Nuisance’ and ‘Environmental’ (from 2011/12 onwards) across police forces suggests that there are some discrepancies in how police forces are categorising incidents.

ASB incident data recorded by the police are published within the ONS’ Annual release; and data on anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued by courts and proved to have been breached in court are compiled by the Ministry of Justice and published by the Home Office.

In April 2013, ONS published a Short Story on Anti-Social Behaviour, 2011/12, which presents findings on perceptions and experience of ASB from the 2011/12 CSEW and findings on experience of ASB reported by businesses from the 2012 CVS, ASB incident data recorded by the police and data on anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued by courts and proved to have been breached in court.

Police Personnel - Home Office

Forces submit a variety of data to the Home Office relating to police personnel. These include police numbers in post; by force; by rank; by gender and ethnicity breakdowns. In general these are sourced from the forces human resource systems. They are published by the Home Office and used particularly by HMIC for:

- value for money profiles and adapting to austerity reports for police number projections; and
- monitoring police performance and frontline policing. Police personnel statistics have also been used to review pay negotiations.

The Home Office releases a six-monthly bulletin, 'Police service strength'.

User satisfaction surveys

It is a requirement of the Home Office, (under the ADR) for police forces to conduct victim (user) satisfaction surveys with specified victim groups and return data on a quarterly basis. The purpose of returning data from force surveys to the Home Office is to enable the calculation of victim satisfaction measures for dissemination via iQuanta, as well as being published on the HMIC Crime and Policing Comparator.

Victim satisfaction surveys are structured around a number of core questions, exploring satisfaction responses across four stages of interaction: initial contact, actions, follow-up, treatment, plus the whole experience. The four groups of victims considered are: domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime, and racist incidents.

Victim satisfaction surveys aim to:

- take account of the experience of victims not just at the initial stage of police action, but in the subsequent activity.
- provide information about victim experience which can be actioned by forces and authorities to improve service delivery.
- standardise the ways in which victim feedback is gathered and reported.

Guidance on conducting victim satisfaction surveys across the service is available on the POLKA website and on iQuanta, which includes instruction on the survey process, sampling and using the data survey process.

Value for money profiles

These profiles provide comparative information on costs, funding, council tax, staffing levels, sickness, and staff turnover. They also contain information on how satisfied victims are with the service they receive. The information comes from the CIPFA and Police Objective Analysis financial estimates and from the ADR provided by forces.

A profile is produced for each force. These are compared with averages – either the average of forces within England and Wales or other similar forces.
The profiles are primarily designed for management teams in forces (i.e. command team / heads of department), but are also useful for exploring where to ask questions about value for money.

Variables covered:

- analysis of cost and workforce data, including the different police functions
- workforce (by rank, joiners/leavers, length of service)
- call volumes and incident data
- crime detections data for each category of crime
- detections by type of data
- "no crime data"
- satisfaction data

It should be noted that the workforce data within the profiles published annually in the autumn is based on the latest data provided by forces. It therefore includes any revisions to data submitted by forces since the release of the Home Office publication 'Police Service Strength England and Wales' in the previous July and in some cases figures within the profiles will not align directly to published National Statistics.

More information and the latest profiles for 2011 and 2012 are available at http://www.hmic.gov.uk/data/value-for-money-data/

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Since April 2009, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has collected data from police forces after the end of every quarter, and used it to produce a report, called a 'Police Complaints Information Bulletin'. These bulletins show the force data against a number of indicators that have previously been agreed and tested with forces and policing organisations. At the end of each year, the IPCC also uses the data collected to produce an Annual Police Complaints Statistics report for England and Wales. This report assesses how well the police complaints system is working overall.

Forces have a statutory duty to refer all deaths following police contact, including those that occur in or following police custody, to the IPCC. The IPCC reports on these deaths as part of their annual statistics into deaths during or following police contact.

Criminal justice statistics

Forces collect and make available to the MoJ and the Home Office a range of crime outcome information including:

- police cautions (reprimand or warnings for juveniles);
- penalty notice for disorder (PNDs);
- cannabis warnings; and
- offences taken into consideration (TiCs).

These are published regularly by MoJ and the Home Office. MoJ also collects and publishes data on court outcomes and sentencing, prison and probation data, proven re-offending and criminal histories. In addition Anti Social Behaviour Orders data is collected by MoJ and published by the Home Office.

The table below gives a summary of the publications produced by MoJ.

It should be noted that Home Office statistics tend to present numbers of offences, whereas MoJ statistics are based on the number of offenders. As one offender can commit one or more offences, and one offence can be committed by one or more offender, these figures cannot be directly linked or compared.

Title	*Coverage*	*Web link*
Criminal Justice System Statistics	A quarterly National Statistics publication, covering offenders dealt with by formal police cautions, reprimands or warning, or criminal court proceedings in England and Wales. Detailed data for the calendar year covered are published separately in six volumes of supplementary tables. It presents long term trends in out of court disposals, convictions and sentencing.	**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-justice-statistics--2**
Knife possession sentencing quarterly brief	Contains key statistics describing trends in cautioning and sentencing, probation supervision and the prison population for offences involving the possession of a knife or offensive weapon in England and Wales.	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/knife-possession-sentencing-quarterly-brief--2
Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin	A National Statistics publication providing key statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision. It covers flows into these services (receptions into prison or probation starts) and flows out (discharges from prison or probation terminations) as well as the caseload of both services at specific points in time.	**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/offender-management-statistics-quarterly--2**

Proven Re-offending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin	Gives proven re-offending figures for offenders, who were released from custody, received a non-custodial conviction at court, received a caution, reprimand, warning or tested positive for opiates or cocaine. Proven re-offending is defined as any offence committed in a one year follow-up period and receiving a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one year follow-up or within a further six month waiting period.	**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proven-re-offending--2**
Local Adult Re-offending	Contains re-offending data at the following geographic levels: Regions within England and Wales; Probation Trusts; Local Authorities. It is used as a performance measure to assess Probation Trust performance through the probation trust rating system. Unlike proven re-offending statistics this measure uses four caseload snapshots of all offenders under probation supervision in the community at the end of a quarter and captures any re-offending in the three months following these snapshots which is proved by court conviction or caution in the three month follow up or within a further three months waiting period.	**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-adult-reoffending**
Youth Justice Statistics	These statistics concentrate on the flow of young people through the Youth Justice System using information published by the Home Office, MoJ, ONS, Youth Offending Teams and youth secure estate providers.	**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-justice-statistics**
Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) Statistics England and Wales	Covers ASBOs issued and breached, based on ASBOs issued after application by a relevant body to magistrates' courts (acting in their civil capacity) or to county courts and ASBOs issued following conviction for a criminal offence either by magistrates' courts (acting in their criminal capacity) or the Crown Court.	**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/anti-social-behaviour-order-statistics-england-and-wales-2011--2**

Using data publicly

Overview

Statistics are tools that can turn data into useful information that can then be used to raise awareness, influence behaviour and voters, and help to drive local accountability and transparency. Good and accurate use of statistics can help to establish credibility, increase influence and contribute over time to enhanced reputation. Poor use of statistics can lead to loss of trust and reduced authority. You, therefore, have a critical role in presenting data clearly to ensure that your communities and partners understand the data you make available to them.

The way statistical data are summarised or presented can lead to wrong conclusions being drawn even if the statistics are correct. It is important, therefore, to ensure that they are quoted accurately using reliable (published) sources that are properly referenced and caveated where necessary.

Statistics are a hugely important and influential resource, but if they are not understood then they are not doing as much good as they could, and run the risk of being misinterpreted.

If you intend to publish any data you should ensure that you have the right/appropriate permission to publish it and it would be advisable to follow the code of practice for official statistics where appropriate.

It is advisable to provide contact details to which the users can direct any comments/questions regarding the release.

Making data available – transparency

It is best practice to make the data presentable, accessible and easy to use/interpret. Data should be released in a format that is accessible to everyone and for this reason html based publications are recommended. It is also important that the data contained or referred to in the release are also made available to as wide an audience as possible. This can be achieved via open source data formats such as an open document spreadsheet (ODS)[13] or comma –separated value (CSV)[14]. It is also best practice to provide the data used to make any charts or figures.

This allows users to conduct their own further analysis and understand where claimed results or statements came from.

[13] An **ODS** file format is the default format for spreadsheets that are created and saved using the Open Office office suite.
[14] A **CSV** file stores tabular data (numbers and text) in plain-text form.

Making data available/transparent can also be helpful to the data suppliers as it may reduce the number of Freedom of Information requests or other queries that have to be answered.

Statistics should be written in a neutral unbiased style with factual analysis and no assumptions. Data must be properly managed and fit for purpose. Doing too much with data may lead users to be confused and may lose focus. Data may be misinterpreted and this also risks the loss of key messages.

Presentation and commentary

A release of any data should include clear, easy to read/use tables and charts where appropriate. The data should also be accompanied by explanatory commentary in order to aid user interpretation. Any data supplied should be accompanied by the appropriate limitations and caveats.

It is important to ensure that there are explanations of all methods, calculations and conclusions derived from the data. It is also important that users are made aware of which changes are statistically significant and which are not.

Charts and figures are a good way of giving a clear pictorial story but they should be drawn in an accurate and impartial way. Care should be taken when choosing scales, axes and labels and data points.

The source of the data should be referred to in the table or chart, and the title should explain what is being shown.

More guidance is given on the Government Statistical Service website and at the DataUnitWales website.

Confidentiality

It is essential to ensure that you comply with all legislation surrounding confidentiality. In particular it is important to ensure that you do not release data that are disclosive. This entails not only ensuring that statistical releases do not reveal the identity of an individual but also that any data you release cannot be combined with any other publicly available data set in order to do so.

It is also important to keep any confidential information secure. It is advisable to allow only the necessary staff access to confidential data and to ensure that those staff are aware of their responsibility to protect this data and the regulations surrounding the release of it.

Some further guidance on statistical disclosure control can be found on the ONS website as well as the Scottish government's website.

Presenting a balanced picture and drawing on other data sources where necessary

Statistics ought to be presented objectively, impartially and removed from political messages. It increases trust if you present an un-biased view of the data.

In order to present a balanced picture, it is useful to use other data sources to complement your own data, e.g. data from other forces, the CSEW, other government departments, other nations, academic research etc. Drawing on data from multiple sources helps to provide the wider context for your data and allows users to see how your data fits in to the bigger picture.

Mentioning other data sources in any release also gives you the opportunity to provide reasons and explain discrepancies with other data sources on your own terms, which can reduce confusion amongst the user community.

It is important always to cite the source of any data you use and to provide the user with a link to the data. It is also important when using other data sources to provide the user with an awareness of the limitations and caveats of that data source.

Data quality and reliability

It is important to provide the users with an idea of the quality and reliability of the data being provided and to make the user aware of any issues surrounding the quality.

If data are provisional, i.e. subject to change, then this should be communicated and made clear to the user.

If any data are found to be incorrect or inaccurate it is important to address this promptly. The offending data should be corrected or removed with an accompanying note to explain the changes made. It is recommended that users are alerted to these errata as quickly as possible.

Six guidelines with examples

The following are some general tips to ensure the best presentation.

1. *Show the full picture*
   When writing about statistics do not just pick out the successes, show a balance of results. Do not just say there was a change (e.g. a fall in crime), always also say either what it fell from or what it fell to.

2. *Don't claim too much*
   Be cautious about saying that you can "prove" or "show" that policies have worked using statistics. It is often better to say that they "indicate" or "suggest". For example:
   "There was a 27 per cent fall in knife homicides in areas piloting my knife crime initiatives, from 199 in 2011/12 to 145 in 2012/13, compared with a 13 per cent increase in areas where these initiatives have not yet been implemented (55 to 62, respectively). These data suggest that my initiatives may be contributing to a fall in knife-related deaths."

3. *Compare similar data*
   It is usually best to compare changes year-on-year using identical time periods. For example:
   "Crime in September to December 2012 is down 40 per cent compared with the same period the year before."
   This ensures seasonal factors are not mis-interpreted. It should be noted that it is not always appropriate to compare forces as they vary in terms of population and geographical size and composition.

4. *Be clear where the statistics are from*
   State the data source(s) that the statistics come from. For example:
   "There was a fall of x% in police recorded crime..." or *"According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales..."*
   If applicable, include web links and table or chapter references to allow readers to see the underlying data for themselves.

5. *When numbers are small (e.g. less than 100) beware of percentages*
   Small numbers are better quoted directly. For example:
   "There were 11 homicides recorded by Barsetshire Police in 2011/12, down from 19 the previous year."
   If you must use percentages always include the actual numbers so that readers don't over-interpret accuracy. For example:
   "Homicides in Barsetshire were down 42 per cent (from 19 in 2010/11 to 11 in 2011/12)".
   For small numbers, also consider using simple proportions. For example: *"Attempted murders recorded by Barsetshire Police were down by a fifth" – rather than "fell 20 per cent".* But still quote exact numbers.

6. *Be clear about limitations or quality issues affecting the data*
   Explain how big the survey or study sample sizes were, response rates, whether the results were nationally representative, whether there were changes to the way data were collected / recorded and (if appropriate) whether results are statistically significant. If these details are too technical, consider using footnotes or notes to editors.

Examples of good and bad use of stats

Example 1

Good: *"Police recorded crime fell by 5 per cent in the year to September 2012 compared with a year earlier."*

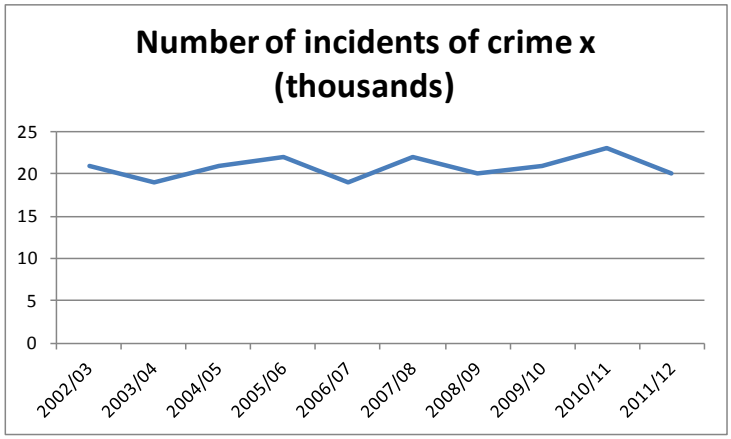
Bad: *"Crime is down by 5 per cent."* – What is the source? Down 5 per cent compared to when?

Example 2

Good: "*There was one homicide recorded by Barsetshire Police in 2011/12, compared with two recorded the previous year."(Percentage changes are not appropriate when presenting small numbers).*

Bad: "*There was a 50 per cent fall in homicides between 2010/11 and 2011/12."*

Example 3



Good: "According to the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales , crime x fell by 13 per cent in the last year, however the trend has been relatively flat since 2002/03."

– i.e. don't just focus on the most recent quarter/year, put it into context.

Bad: *"Crime x fell by 13 per cent in the year to 2011/12"*

Ensuring the integrity of data

Importance of public trust in statistics

The Government, the UK Statistics Authority and CSAC are committed to enhancing the integrity, both actual and perceived, of official statistics and place great importance in ensuring the public have ready access to information and trust what they see. Statistics therefore need to be of assured quality, and be compiled and presented in a transparent way that does not expose producers to suggestions of misuse. In accordance with the Code of Practice principles, the release of official reports into the public domain in an orderly manner promotes public confidence, trust and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation. It helps to avoid the perception that the release has been delayed or withheld or that figures have been open to political 'spin' ahead of their release.

Pre-release access - what it is

Pre-release access (PRA) is the practice of making official statistics, and the written commentary that accompanies them, available in advance of their publication to specified individuals only on a 'need to know' basis. PRA is restricted and legislated by the Pre-release access to Official Statistics Order 2008. Procedures and compliance are strict and are overseen in the UK by the UK Statistics Authority.

In England and Northern Ireland, PRA is granted for a period of 24 hours before the official time of release and differs from regulations in Wales and Scotland.

Supplementary guidance relating to PRA has also been issued to accompany the Code of Practice.

The relevant principles and practices aligned to the Code of Practice are below:

Protocol 2, Practice 7: Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.

Protocol 2, Practice 8: Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication.

Breaches and the consequences of them

A breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics occurs where one or more provisions of the Code are not followed. The UK Statistics Authority may investigate possible breaches. Examples of breaches include the following:

- leaks - giving an indication of the content or direction of change e.g. if results were favourable.
- sharing statistics with colleagues not granted pre-release access such as line managers.
- leaving statistics unattended on desks or printers
- saving statistics in shared work areas

Breaches must be reported immediately to the body producing the statistics. A breach;

- may lead to organisations/persons involved in breaches being excluded from future pre-release access
- damages the reputation of the recipient organisation
- undermines public trust in statistics

Though a breach may undermine public trust in statistics, being open about the occurrence of breaches offers a level of public accountability of the statistical service. It enhances transparency, and therefore helps to build trust in it.

A real life example of the Home Office coming under criticism for practices inconsistent with the Code, which made headline national news, involved a press release on knife crimes issued on 11 December 2008. This included early information on hospital admissions for knife related injuries against the advice of Department of Health statisticians. It resulted in an apology having to be made in the House of Commons for the premature use of a figure. Subsequently, the UK Statistics Authority, when it launched its Code of Practice on 6 January 2009, also referred to the same press release for its selective comparisons, lack of contextual information, and drawing of inappropriate conclusions (amongst other things). The report can be accessed here.

Collecting your own data

Is the data already available?

An essential first step in planning the collection of data is to determine what is already available by reviewing existing data. This is important for many reasons. There may already be sufficient information to understand/address the issue so further data collection is unnecessary. By considering and reviewing what data is available the burden on police forces, and other relevant organisations, can be significantly reduced.

There may be no valid, reliable and relevant data available. Existing evidence or data may be inconclusive, poor quality or may not be relevant to the specific circumstances of the local crime problem. In addition, any single source may be sample specific, time specific, or context specific, so may not be comparable or applicable to other sources.

Before embarking on data collection, review existing data from a range of sources on crime and policing to understand what is available. Data is collected on crime and policing in a number of ways, including from police forces in police recorded crime data or in victimisation surveys, such as the Crime Survey for England and Wales (see section Crime and policing statistics outputs).

Survey, census and administrative data

There are three main types of quantitative data collection:

- census
- administrative data
- sample survey

A census refers to data collection about every unit in a group or population. A census is expensive to run and time consuming.

Administrative data are collected as a result of an organisation's day-to-day operations. The response burden is low as the data is already collected, but data items may be limited to essential administrative information, giving less detail than a survey. Human resource records for police staff is an example of administrative data.

In a sample survey, only part of the total population is approached for data. This is cheaper than a census and less time-consuming. Using a sample survey would mean that the data will be more relevant than administrative data. CSEW is an example of a sample survey.

A census aims to collect information from every individual in the population. However, in reality the census figures are still estimates due to non-response to the census. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) adjusts their census estimates for non-response so that it is representative of the entire population.

The key advantages of a census are accuracy and reliable statistics for small sub-groups and small geographies. The main disadvantages are cost and the time it takes to make results available.

In a survey only a sample of the total population is selected to complete the survey. The results of the survey are then used to make assumptions about the whole population.

The key advantages of a survey over a census are the speed of producing results (as there are less data to process) and that it is much cheaper which allows for more questions and more detailed questions to be asked. The burden on the public is considered much lower as only a sample of the population is selected to respond.

The disadvantages of a survey are around accuracy, as it is only possible to produce an estimate as a result of only using a sample (although steps are taken to reduce this where possible and large samples can produce very precise estimates). The sampling technique also means that it may not be possible to produce estimates for small groups or small areas if there are not enough people selected in these groups to make appropriate inferences.

You can find more information about sampling strategies and the way error is introduced through the survey process on the ONS methodology pages.

How to collect the data

Provide consistent guidance to those providing you with data

When requesting data, make sure the guidance provided is consistent with clear and comprehensive instructions. Be clear about the intended use of the data by explaining why the data is being collected and how it will be used. Reassure data providers about data protection practices, including how the data will be anonymised, if necessary.
Police recorded crime data is an example of a Home Office data collection that has specific, consistent guidance associated with it. To ensure consistency, police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS).These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales.

Survey questionnaire design

There is a lot to consider when *designing* a questionnaire. A well-designed questionnaire efficiently collects the required data with a minimum number of errors. It facilitates the coding and capture of data and it leads to an overall reduction in the cost and time associated with data collection and processing. Before you can design the questionnaire, you must identify the objectives, data needs and analysis.

There is a lot to consider when *developing* a questionnaire. The following is a list of some key points to think about:

- Does the question elicit the information required?
- Are the words simple, direct and familiar to all respondents?
- Do the questions read well? Does the overall questionnaire flow well?
- Are the questions clear and as specific as possible?
- Does the questionnaire begin with easy and interesting questions?
- Is there a specific time reference?
- Are any of the questions double-barrelled? i.e. does it ask about more than one concept in the same question?
- Are any questions leading or loaded? These will undermine confidence in your results and invalidate your findings
- Should the questions be open- or close-ended?
- Are the questions applicable to all respondents?

Once the questionnaire is designed, it must be tested before you can proceed with the data collection.

For more detailed guidance on questionnaire design, see ONS teaching resources Section D: Questionnaire Design.

In addition, Chapter 4 of *Marketing Research and Information Systems* gives a good overview of questionnaire design.

Data collection techniques

Data collection techniques include interviewer-administered methods carried out in person or over the telephone, or self-completion questionnaires via e-mail, post, in person or electronically over the internet.

The choice of method depends on various factors, such as complexity and length of questionnaire, sensitivity of requested information, geographical dispersion of survey population, cost and time frame.

The differences between face-to-face, telephone and postal surveys, in terms of these factors, are outlined in The Magenta Book.

Sample surveys

How many to survey

It is cheaper, quicker and more practical to choose a suitable representative sample to provide estimates instead of looking at every case. However, there are a number of points to consider before sampling and a calculator to determine an appropriate sample size:

- What are the key estimates for the study?
- How precise do those estimates need to be? (i.e. what size of standard error or confidence interval can be tolerated?)
- Are there key sub-groups for which separate estimates will be needed?
- Does the survey need to be large enough to detect change over time between surveys, or differences between key sub-groups?

The basic formula that survey statisticians use to determine the sample size (*n*) is:

$$n = \frac{Z^2(p)(1-p)}{E^2}$$

where Z is the z-score associated with the confidence level required, E is the required precision, and p is the occurrence rate within the population.

More detailed guidance on sample sizes is available from the National Audit Office in *A Practical Guide to Sampling*

Who to survey and how

There are many different ways to select a sample. Popular methods of sampling are listed below:

- Simple random - ensures every member of the population has an equal chance of selection.
- Stratified - the population is sub-divided into homogenous groups, for example regions, size or type of establishment.
- Quota - the aim is to obtain a sample that is representative of the population. The population is stratified by important variables and the required quota is obtained from each stratum. However, if the sample is non-random, findings cannot be generalised to the population.
- Cluster - units in the population can often be found in geographical groups or clusters e.g. schools, households. A random sample of clusters is taken, then all units within those clusters are examined.
- Systematic - after randomly selecting a starting point in the population between 1 and *n*, every *nth* unit is selected, where *n* equals the population size divided by the sample size.
- Convenience - using those who are willing to volunteer, or cases which are presented to you as a sample.

There are advantages and limitations associated with each method. In order to decide which method is right for your data collection exercise it is important to consider the following:

- Is generalisability needed? If yes, consider using simple random, systematic or convenience sampling.

- Are sub-groups required? If yes, consider using quota, cluster, stratified or systematic sampling methods.
- Are population estimates required, rather than just estimates of respondents to the survey? If yes, consider using a random sample.

More detailed guidance on sampling methodologies is available from the National Audit Office in *A Practical Guide to Sampling*

Variability

For a survey the aim is to select a sample which gives an estimate as close to the real answer as possible. However, if you were to repeat a survey and sample different people, you would probably get a different answer. A confidence interval provides a way of assessing the precision and reliability of the survey estimate of the true population value.

This process also means that changes over time must be carefully assessed to ensure that the difference is due to a real change and is not just the result of chance due to the estimates coming from a survey. Whether the change is significant or not should be formally calculated before any claim of change is made.

Confidence intervals

A confidence interval is an indicator of uncertainty, i.e. the extent to which the estimate may differ from the true population value. The larger the confidence interval, the less precise the estimate.

Usually 95 per cent confidence intervals are reported on. A 95% confidence interval can be interpreted as the interval within which 95 times out of 100 the true value will lie if the sample were repeated 100 times.

Most basic statistics text books provide instructions on calculating confidence intervals. There are also a number of on-line calculators that can be employed or statistical software can be used.

Response rates

A response rate is the number who responded to the survey divided by the number in the original sample. It is usually expressed as a percentage. The type of response rate will depend on the sampling method – it may be the household response rate or the person response rate.

A low response rate means that there are fewer people in the sample to use to estimate the whole population. This is likely to introduce some errors. A low response rate can be an indicator that bias has been introduced into the estimates if the response rates vary for individuals/households by characteristics relevant to the

survey or characteristics that might effect the concept that the survey is trying to measure.

There are two main aspects to non-response:

- refusals i.e. respondents who decline to take part in the survey and
- non-contacts i.e. respondents who could not be contacted during the survey period.

Respondents who refuse to take part in a survey tend to have different characteristics to those who took part and to those who could not be contacted.

ONS are carrying out some work to look at the characteristics of non-responders to the CSEW by linking their survey records with Census records.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance processes should not be an afterthought. Ideally plans for quality assurance processes and standards should be included throughout the work. It is important to complete validation checks on record/source data before it is used to create output. This prevents the need to repeat analysis if errors are found and need to be corrected.

Quality is often thought about in terms of whether the statistics or data are fit for purpose. However, there is no universal definition of quality as it often means something different to different people.

Quality assurance covers the procedures focused on providing confidence that quality requirements have been met. The aim of quality assurance is to prevent, reduce or limit the occurrence of errors in a statistical product.

Quality is sometimes thought about simply in terms of accuracy. The European Statistical Service outlines six different dimensions of quality. Details of these can be found on Eurostat's website. The wider dimensions consider aspects like timeliness and relevance of the output.

Further advice can also be found from the ONS quality centre and from the Government Statistical Service.

Validating and checking best practice

The types of checks carried out will depend on the data being used. Checks should be included at each stage of the process from data collection through to publication.

For example, validation checks can be included for the record level data that has been collected:

- Are there any missing data fields where the values can be identified and added?
- Are there any 'future dates' for events which have occurred and therefore are clearly incorrect?
- Are there any individuals with an unrealistic birth date – age 180

It may be decided to do more detailed validation on all records with extreme values as part of the quality assurance process.

Checks can also be carried out on aggregate data or the statistical outputs that have been calculated. These checks may be only around the accuracy of the calculations but should consider incorporated wider checks of the data. For example:

- Check that the total for each force sums to the overall total
- Check that percentages sum to 100%
- Try to use different forms of calculating statistics to check you get the same answer
- Compare the monthly value to 12 months before and look for sharp or significant changes
- Look for unusual patterns in the overall trend or for outliers

Providing indication of quality of statistics

It is important to provide information to users on the quality of published statistics. Metadata should be provided to explain the data, for example:

- how the data was collected
- the time period it covers
- any cleaning that has been done before processing the data
- any definitions
- any caveats on how the data can be used

Indicators of quality can also be provided around the statistics such as confidence intervals around estimates derived from survey results (see detail below).

Similarly analysis can be conducted to decide whether a change is statistically significant and this can also be highlighted in the output.

It is important to recognise that changes that are not statistically significant could be the result of chance and therefore cannot inform conclusions.

For administrative data indicators are more likely to be around coverage and estimate of completeness.

Getting statistics checked by others

It is good practice to ensure appropriate and proportionate quality assurance processes are carried out by different people to those who have produced the statistics. It is important to ensure that those asked to complete quality assurance checks have the technical skills and knowledge so that errors can be identified.

It is important to track the checks that have been carried out on an output and who has completed these checks. If any errors found are noted then when the analysis is next completed steps can be added to try and avoid these errors in the first place. Tracking the quality assurance process in a spreadsheet or document gives an audit trail.

Analysing Data

Relationships and correlations

When comparing two data sets it is important that any underlying differences are understood. An example would be comparing two police forces crime figures and thinking that the one with the highest number of crimes meant that you were more likely to be a victim of crime in that area, when in reality it's just because it has a larger population. Likewise, when taking crimes from a survey and comparing with police recorded crime its important to understand the differences in the way the crimes were defined, recorded and any limitations in terms of who is covered by both data sets. This enables the user to rule out known causes of differences in the figures before claiming any kind of result.

It is also important to realise that even when all known differences in data sets are taken into account the fact that two numbers are statistically different does not suggest a cause. It merely suggests the numbers are unlikely to be different purely by chance. The user can speculate at a cause for the difference but the statistics can not back that up unless additional data is used which either favours or rules out the chosen interpretation.

Likewise, a correlation does not imply causation. What this means is that just because two parameters are correlated does not imply the two are linked or that one causes the other. It is instead statistical evidence for a connection but not for a direct cause. The famous example of this is if a graph is plotted of shoe size vs. reading age there is a striking correlation. However, this does not imply that the size of people's feet controls how good at reading they are. Instead the hidden third parameter here is age which is linked to both the size of people's feet and their reading age.

Limitations / caveats

When using any kind of data it is important to read and understand any caveats and limitations associated with that data. It is also important to think about any additional limitations that may or may not have been thought about or mentioned. The user will be unable to claim any kind of result unless they are aware of the limitations of the data because without that knowledge its possible the result you have found is actually just a known caveat of the data.

Common limitations to consider would be the geographical location covered, population surveyed, how measurements were made or recorded, time periods covered, changes to definitions of the terms used, changes to recorded practices / survey questions or sample sizes. This list is not by any means comprehensive.

Seasonal effects

One particular effect to be aware of with any data set collected over a period of time is whether there is any seasonal effect. If there is likely to be, then comparisons should only be made using the comparable periods of time, for example, complete years or the same months / quarters.

For example, the number of drink driving related offences is known to be higher in December than other months. Therefore to look at the number of drink driving offences over the last three years you would not compare December to January, but you could compare January to January, December to December, December and January to December and January or compare complete years.

Statistical significance for survey data

The user of data should understand what results are statistically significant and what things are just down to random variation. With any data set there will be a degree of random variation and these need to be taken into account. Statistics gives us the ability to test how likely our results are to be down to that random variation alone by using a statistical test and therefore statistically significant results are those which are unlikely to be down to random variation alone.

What this means in practice is that for example just because there were X% more crimes recorded by a force in year one than year two does not necessarily mean that you are more likely to be a victim of crime in that year or that year one was a particularly bad year for crimes. Neither of these statements can be shown to be true with a statistical test as they are speculated *causes* of the difference that could not be ruled out or confirmed without additional data.

However, a statistical test can rule out the converse hypothesis or null hypothesis which in this example would be that a person is equally likely to be a victim of crime in each year.

There are also tests which identify statistically significant correlations and a range of other results. It's important to use an appropriate test and understand the caveats and limitations of each test which thus whether they can be applied in this particular situation.

Who to contact for further guidance

The following may be contacted for guidance or support with statistical queries:

crimestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A: Annual Data Requirement 2013/14

Data series that are collected from police forces in England and Wales during 2013/14:

Homicide
Recorded crime, detections & outcomes
Recorded crime – hate crime
Recorded crime – date of birth and gender collections for victims of sexual and violent crime
Recorded crime-metal theft
Arrests
Offences involving the use of firearms
Use of PACE powers
Use of knives & other sharp instruments
Motoring Offences
Penalty notices for disorder
Breath tests
Issue of firearm certificates
Deaths in police custody
Setting up of cordons under the Terrorism Act
Road traffic accidents: casualties
Number of incidents recorded through NSIR
Drug seizures
Performance Information and HMIC data
User satisfaction: performance measure
Forensic Support
Warrants (failure to appear)
Prolific and other priority offenders
Police personnel
Complaints and related conduct statistics
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA)
Cyber crime (voluntary collection)

CSAC (13) 11.3

Statistical guidance on crime and policing statistics

For communication and media teams working for Police and Crime Commissioners

May 2013

Statistical guidance on crime and policing statistics for media and communication teams working for Police and Crime Commissioners

Contents

Foreword

Professor Stephen Shute

Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee

Appropriate use of crime and policing statistics is essential if public trust and confidence in those statistics and in the police service is to be maintained. As the Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC), I welcome the publication of this guidance which aims to provide assistance to you on best practice of using crime and policing statistics in accordance with the principles outlined by the UK Statistics Authority. I also strongly support the commitment to ensure that crime statistics are accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy, and endorse the work that is already underway on improving public trust in statistics. You can play an important role in ensuring that the good work continues and I hope you will find this guidance a useful and practical tool.

The guidance is divided into three main parts: an overview of the importance of statistics, advice for using data publicly and the main crime and policing outputs available; more detailed technical descriptions; and recommendations on management of data and guidelines for presenting data.

This guidance was developed with the support of the Committee and I would like to thank colleagues in the Home Office for leading on the production and development of this guidance. I am also grateful to colleagues in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the College of Policing for their contributions.

Introduction

Purpose of this guidance: Making statistics work for you

This document is designed to provide guidance on best practice for using crime and policing statistics to improve understanding and interpretation of the data and to help build and maintain public trust in official information. The guidance presents recommended best practice in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority framework[1] and its Code of Practice[2]. Statistics on crime and policing are available from different sources; are produced in a number of different outputs; and have differing strengths and limitations so being able to 'unlock' and accurately interpret the data is vital. These statistics can help in holding your Chief Constable to account when:

- reviewing force performance management and setting priorities;
- communicating with the public and informing public debate;
- developing evidence based decisions.

The guidance brings together information on the collection, presentation and management of data as well as the sources of statistics available into a comprehensive toolkit for you. This is the third document available in this set and gives a summary on presenting data for communication teams. The first part of the series offers advice on using data publicly and presents the crime and policing outputs available and the second part contains more detail on the sources of crime and policing statistics and technical descriptions for analysts working for a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Benefits of statistics

Statistical analysis can make an important contribution to the delivery of an effective and efficient police service and to how police and their partners tackle crime. It can be used to identify the nature of a crime problem, understand the most cost-effective ways of addressing the problem, and monitor and evaluate any initiatives implemented to address the problem. An analysis of the nature of a crime problem is usually a critical first step to ensure that community needs are being met, and there are wide ranges of statistics that can be used to help with this.

To monitor and assess force performance and to demonstrate to the public how forces are performing you will likely to be using, interpreting and reporting on statistics generated nationally and locally. However, not all statistical evidence is robust and evidence of effectiveness in one context may not translate easily to another. There is growing interest in making greater use of statistics and data analysis within policing and making good use of them can be hugely beneficial.

[1] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/about-the-authority/index.html
[2] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

Using data publicly

Statistics are tools that can turn data into useful information that can then be used to raise awareness, influence behaviour and voters, and help to drive local accountability and transparency. Good and accurate use of statistics can help to establish credibility, increase influence and contribute over time to enhanced reputation. Poor use of statistics can lead to loss of trust and reduced authority. You, therefore, have a critical role in presenting data clearly to ensure that your communities and partners understand the data you make available to them.

The way statistical data are summarised or presented can lead to wrong conclusions being drawn even if the statistics are correct. It is important, therefore, to ensure that they are quoted accurately using reliable (published) sources that are properly referenced and caveated where necessary.

Statistics are a hugely important and influential resource, but if they are not understood then they are not doing as much good as they could, and run the risk of being misinterpreted.

Six guidelines with examples

The following are some general tips to ensure the best presentation.

1. *Show the full picture*
   When writing about statistics do not just pick out the successes, show a balance of results. Do not just say there was a change (e.g. a fall in crime), always also say either what it fell from or what it fell to.

2. *Don't claim too much*
   Be cautious about saying that you can "prove" or "show" that policies have worked using statistics. It is often better to say that they "indicate" or "suggest". For example:
   "There was a 27 per cent fall in knife homicides in areas piloting my knife crime initiatives, from 199 in 2011/12 to 145 in 2012/13, compared with a 13 per cent increase in areas where these initiatives have not yet been implemented (55 to 62, respectively). These data suggest that my initiatives may be contributing to a fall in knife-related deaths."

3. *Compare similar data*
   It is usually best to compare changes year-on-year using identical time periods. For example:
   "Crime in September to December 2012 is down 40 per cent compared with the same period the year before."
   This ensures seasonal factors are not mis-interpreted. It should be noted that it is not always appropriate to compare forces as they vary in terms of population and geographical size and composition.

4. *Be clear where the statistics are from*
   State the data source(s) that the statistics come from. For example:
   "There was a fall of x% in police recorded crime..." or *"According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales..."*
   If applicable, include web links and table or chapter references to allow readers to see the underlying data for themselves.

5. *When numbers are small (e.g. less than 100) beware of percentages*
   Small numbers are better quoted directly. For example:
   "There were 11 homicides recorded by Barsetshire Police in 2011/12, down from 19 the previous year."
   If you must use percentages always include the actual numbers so that readers don't over-interpret accuracy. For example:
   "Homicides in Barsetshire were down 42 per cent (from 19 in 2010/11 to 11 in 2011/12)".
   For small numbers, also consider using simple proportions. For example: *"Attempted murders recorded by Barsetshire Police were down by a fifth" – rather than "fell 20 per cent".* But still quote exact numbers.

6. *Be clear about limitations or quality issues affecting the data*
   Explain how big the survey or study sample sizes were, response rates, whether the results were nationally representative, whether there were changes to the way data were collected / recorded and (if appropriate) whether results are statistically significant. If these details are too technical, consider using footnotes or notes to editors.

Examples of good and bad use of stats

Example 1

Good: *"Police recorded crime fell by 5 per cent in the year to September 2012 compared with a year earlier."*

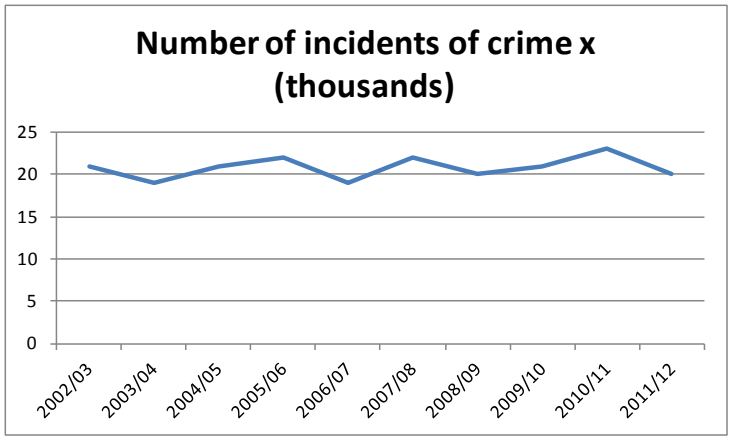
Bad: *"Crime is down by 5 per cent."* – What is the source? Down 5 per cent compared to when?

Example 2

Good: "*There was one homicide recorded by Barsetshire Police in 2011/12, compared with two recorded the previous year."(Percentage changes are not appropriate when presenting small numbers).*

Bad: "*There was a 50 per cent fall in homicides between 2010/11 and 2011/12."*

Example 3



Good: "According to the 2011/12 Crime Survey for England and Wales , crime x fell by 13 per cent in the last year, however the trend has been relatively flat since 2002/03."

– i.e. don't just focus on the most recent quarter/year, put it into context.

Bad: *"Crime x fell by 13 per cent in the year to 2011/12"*

Ensuring the integrity of data

The guidance contained within this document has been compiled to assist in the appropriate use of crime and policing statistics; to make crime statistics comprehensible and accessible and for the public to have increased trust and confidence in them.

It includes recommended best practices for *official* statistics, in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority framework, but we would encourage that these be viewed as a benchmark when producing and publishing any set of statistical information.
If you intend to publish any data you should ensure that you have the right/appropriate permission to publish it and it would be advisable to follow the Code of Practice for official statistics where appropriate.

It is also advisable to provide contact details to which the users can direct any comments/questions regarding the release.

Consequences of misusing statistics publicly could lead to damaged reputation of the recipient organisation as well as undermining public trust in statistics.

Who to contact for further guidance

The following may be contacted for guidance or support with statistical queries:

crimestats@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
crimestatistics@ons.gsi.gov.uk

CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report of National Crime Registrar

CSAC(13)12

Purpose/Issue

1. This paper is the regular report to the Committee from the National Crime Registrar. In accordance with the Committee's terms of reference, these reports are intended to either outline any proposed changes to the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) in detail or, where there is no need to do so, to advise accordingly.

Action

2. The Committee is invited to note the contents of this paper

Background

3. As set out in the Committee's terms of reference, the National Crime Registrar (NCR) has delegated authority to determine as an ex officio member whether proposed changes to the HOCR or the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) require referral to it for consideration prior to implementation. There are no significant changes agreed or proposed at present .It is normal practice for the Home Office to update and re-issue the HOCR annually and the 2013/14 HOCR were published in April as planned.

Future of Detections

4. In my last report I provided the committee with an update on the Home Office plans to consider moving away from the current detections regime and move instead to a broader basket of outcomes. This plan reflected the growing view that the current position does not reflect the broadening of out of court disposals (and may in fact be a barrier to their use) and that merely showing large numbers of crimes as undetected does not adequately explain in a transparent way many of the reasons why this may be the case.

5. The Home Office conducted a public consultation during the autumn of 2012 on this proposal. In outline, the consultation proposed a revised framework for recorded crime outcomes, which would provide information on the outcomes of 100% of crimes providing much greater transparency and supporting accountability further empowering local communities to hold their chief officer and Police and Crime Commissioner to account for tackling crime locally.

6. That consultation closed on the 7th December and the Home office published a response to the consultation in January 2013.The results indicated broad support for the key principles whilst also raising a wide ranging number of questions and points around the detail and the time scales in which any changes might be

adopted. Following consideration of those views Minister concluded that we should adopt a phased approach. In April 2013 the existing methods of detection were revised to become known as “outcomes” and the use of community based resolutions was added to the list of recognised outcomes. We are now working with stakeholders and a small number of forces to establish the wider framework for implementation in April 2014.

7. In July this year the Home Office will publish the usual annual statistical bulletin on detections for the year 2012/13. Future annual publications will be titled as “Outcomes”

House of Lords Debate – Crime Recording

8. Members may be interested to note the details of a recent debate in the Lords which focussed on police recorded crime statistics. The debate arose following a question posed:

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the response of United Kingdom police forces to performance indicator management with particular reference to the reliability of published United Kingdom crime figures. And the full debate can be read in Hansard via the following link

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/130319-gc0001.htm#13031986000224

Crime Recording Strategic Steering Group

9. As advised in my last report we have now established this group. However a decision was taken to defer the first meeting (originally scheduled for April) following the appointment of new portfolio lead for ACPO.

Steve Bond
National Crime Registrar
19 April 2013