

**THE CRIME
STATISTICS
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This is the third Annual Report of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee, created in late 2011, to which I was appointed as Chair by Jil Matheson, the previous National Statistician. The impetus for the creation of the Committee was the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales*, a commission from the Home Secretary.

Throughout the period of this report the Committee has continued to offer advice and support on matters related to the measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales.

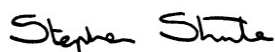
The Committee has continued its engagement with Police and Crime Commissioners, publishing guidance in May 2013 to support their work and that of their staff. This was reinforced by my attendance at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioner's quarterly meeting in March 2014.

The work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has been significant and the Committee has continued to provide HMIC with independent advice on the recent inspection programme of crime data integrity and its plans for future inspections.

As Chair I appeared before the Public Administration Select Committee to explain how the Committee has worked to support crime statistics since it was formed in December 2011. Not long after my appearance the de-designation of Police Recorded Crime data has meant that in the next year the Committee will play a key role by advising the Office for National Statistics as it works towards redesignation.

I believe that the challenges for the Committee over the next year will see it develop and this will be assisted by a self reflection exercise that will be carried out at the Committee's workshop later in the year.

I commend the Committee's third annual report to you.



Stephen Shute

October 2014

1.1 ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

The Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established through the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales* which was published on 6 June 2011¹. The Committee is comprised of a mix of officials from government departments, representatives from key stakeholder organisations, and a majority of 'non-executive' members representing academia, users, and the like. Members of the Committee are subject to a [Code of Practice](#).

The Chair of the Committee is Professor Stephen Shute, who was appointed to that role in December 2011 following an open competition.

The other non-executive members were also appointed through open competition. During 2013/14 they were:

- Professor Allan Brimicombe;
- Ms Giselle Cory (until November 2013);
- Mr Junaid Gharda;
- Professor Mike Hough;
- Professor Mike Levi;
- Professor Chris Lewis;
- Ms Patricia Mayhew OBE.

The Committee has seven permanent members. During 2013/14 they were:

- David Blunt - Head of Profession for Statistics at the Home Office;
- Roma Chappell - Director responsible for crime statistics at the Office for National Statistics (since August 2013);
- Tricia Dodd - Director responsible for crime statistics at the Office for National Statistics (until July 2013);
- Mike Elkin - Head of Profession for Statistics at the Ministry of Justice;
- Jeff Farrar - National Policing Lead for Statistics;
- Glyn Jones - Chief Statistician at Welsh Government;
- Diana Luchford - Director for Crime at the Home Office (since January 2014);
- Jae Samant - Director for Crime at the Home Office (until July 2013);
- Tom Winsor - Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

In addition, the Committee also has two ex-officio members. During 2013/14 they were:

Steve Bond – National Crime Registrar, Home Office;
Jill Matheson – National Statistician.

Further details of all current members can be found on the Committee membership page, see link, [Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Membership](#).

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.html>.

1.2 FUNCTIONS AND SCOPE

The Committee 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. It advises on how best to ensure that official statistics on crime for England and Wales are accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy, taking account of the needs of users and providers.

In carrying out its functions, the Committee has due regard to the needs of users and providers of data; the Code of Practice for Official Statistics; the legal framework in which the Committee operates; the wider affordability of proposals for change; burden or bureaucracy in respect of Police Recorded Crime and on the public who provide survey data; and international developments and obligations.

The Committee's [Terms of Reference](#) were established in December 2011. They include information on the role of the Committee, its principles and procedures, frequency of meetings, and current membership. The Committee has also established a web presence which includes a section on correspondence.²

ENGAGEMENT WITH POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

Throughout the period of this Report the Committee has continued to engage with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to provide advice on the use and interpretation of statistics. In May 2013 the Committee published guidance to support the work of the PCCs and their teams. The guidance includes:

- an overview of crime and policing statistics and advice for using these data publicly, aimed specifically at PCCs and their national body, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC);
- detailed technical descriptions and advice on the use, management, and collection of crime statistics for analysts working with PCCs;
- advice on presenting and reporting crime statistics, targeted at PCCs' media and communication teams.

In addition to the guidance, the Committee's Chair, Stephen Shute, attended the APCC quarterly meeting in March 2014 to present to the group an overview of the Committee and its work to-date. This was well received and is to be repeated on an annual basis.

HMIC'S INSPECTION PROGRAMME

One of the Committee's strategic functions is to provide advice to 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. Throughout the period of this report, the Committee considered and provided advice on HMIC's Inspection Programmes. This support also included two members of the Committee joining a working group to contribute to the development of HMIC's Crime Data Integrity Inspection.

² <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/crime-statistics-advisory-committee.html>.

DIVERGENCE BETWEEN CSEW AND PRC

It has long been recognised that there may be divergence between the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Police Recorded Crime (PRC) data. In September 2013 the Committee considered a paper which presented analysis of crime trends. Following discussion the Home Office were commissioned to consider in more depth the reasons for the increased divergence between CSEW and PRC.

On 27 January 2014 a workshop took place, hosted by the Royal Statistical Society, bringing together experts from ONS, the Home Office, Force Crime and Incident Registrars, academics and other interested parties. Attendees considered three key questions: is divergence a concern? what is contributing to the divergence? and is there additional evidence that needs to be considered? Responses from the workshop covered three topics: issues with police recorded crime, issues with the crime survey, and general 'divergence' issues. A paper is to be presented to the Committee at its meeting in May 2014, with any future work needed being fed into the 2014/15 work programme.

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY ON CRIME STATISTICS

In October 2013, the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) launched a study on crime statistics. This was part of a series of studies on statistics first announced in June 2012³. The Committee provided written evidence to PASC, and in December 2013, the Chair and a non-executive member of the Committee provided oral evidence. A report from PASC was published in early April 2014 and any actions that relate to the Committee will be included in the 2014/15 work programme.

REDESIGNATION OF PRC

One of the key aims of the Committee is to provide advice and support to producers of crime data to ensure that the information being published is accurate and trustworthy.

In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority withdrew the National Statistics designation for Police Recorded Crime (PRC) statistics following the re-assessment of the crime statistics published by ONS. The Committee held an extraordinary meeting in March 2014 to consider proposals for a project led by ONS to re-establish the National Statistics badge for PRC. The proposals recommended the establishment of a high level strategic board which will include the Chair of CSAC. The Committee agreed to this proposal and will receive reports from the project at all its meetings until re-designation is achieved. Any specific actions for the Committee will be built into the 2014/15 work programme.

FRAUD AND CYBERCRIME

As part of the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales it was recognised that there were significant gaps in the available statistics for fraud and cybercrime. Although some progress has been made over the past few years, the Committee were asked to consider additional measures being considered by the ONS. As a result of comments from the Committee in July 2013, ONS published an analysis alongside the statistics for Crime in England and Wales for the year ending March 2013.

³ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-administration-select-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/statistics/>

The Committee has continued to consider improvements in this area at its meetings in September and December, with a paper being released by ONS in January 2014 which sets out the current coverage of crime statistics including issues and planned improvements for cybercrime⁴. The improvement of statistics on fraud and cybercrime will continue to be considered by the Committee in its 2014/15 work programme.

REDUCING BURDEN

The Committee is committed to supporting changes that will reduce burden. At the meeting in September 2013 a proposal to introduce guidance to assist forces on what constitutes Additional Verifiable Information was approved. This recommendation saw the introduction of a 'Practitioners Guide to Additional Verifiable Information' which is to be adopted across all forces. The Chair informed the Home Secretary of this decision, see [correspondence](#).

As part of its business the Committee is committed to provide advice to the Home Office on any potential changes to the Notifiable Offences List (NOL). Throughout the period of this report the Committee has considered proposals to change the NOL and in September 2013, discussed a proposal to change the threshold that governs the process of adding offences to the NOL. The proposal suggested that going forward, only new Indictable Only (IO) offences should automatically be added to the NOL and the addition of any other new offences should be assessed on a case by case basis. Also under consideration is a weeding exercise to remove offences that have not been used over the last two years. This work is on-going.

⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/crime-statistics-methodology/methodological-notes/index.html>

FORWARD LOOK 2014/15

Following the report from PASC, it has been agreed that the Committee will carry out a self review in autumn 2014. This review will impact on the future priorities for the Committee for the rest of 2014/15 set out below

During 2014/15 the Committee plans to:

- Continue to look for ways to improve the presentation of crime statistics to ensure that users and the public have a clearer understanding of the overall picture of crime. This will include the continuing development of the presentation of fraud and cybercrime statistics;
- Continue to work with relevant parties to develop proposals for further reductions in existing bureaucracy and data burden;
- Support the on-going work to improve data on domestic abuse;
- Support the continued work to understand and improve the divergences between the Crime Survey for England and Wales and Police Recorded Crime;
- Support the work of the Police and Crime Commissioners through attendance at one of their quarterly meetings per year;
- Support and provide guidance on the work of HMIC's Inspection Programme;
- Provide advice to the ONS project for the re-designation of police recorded crime data;
- Increase engagement with key stakeholders, to include the annual attendance of the Home Office Minister with responsibility for crime at a Committee meeting⁵.

As was noted in the Committee's previous Annual Reports, the Work Programme is dependent on relevant resources being identified in government and beyond. Due regard will also be given to the demands upon the police service. In everything it does, the Committee is conscious that, at a time of public expenditure restraint, it is important that all resources are used to best purpose. The Committee strives to advise on priorities in a timely and informed way that facilitates the delivery of its Work Programme.

⁵ Note that the Rt Honourable Norman Baker, Home Office Minister of State, attended the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee on 21 May 2014.