

**THE CRIME
STATISTICS
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This is the fourth and final Annual Report of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (CSAC), to which, following advertisement and open competition, I was appointed as Chair in 2011 by Dame Jil Matheson, the previous National Statistician, with the endorsement of the Home Secretary. The impetus for CSAC's creation was the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales*, a commission from the Home Secretary. The Committee consisted of a mix of key stakeholders alongside a majority of 'non-executive' members who, like the Chair, were appointed following advertisement and open competition. The National Statistician was an ex-officio member.

In June 2015, John Pullinger, the current National Statistician, announced his wish to re-establish the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee with revised terms of reference which focus its accountability to the National Statistician. John Pullinger has appointed Professor Sir Adrian Smith, the Deputy Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, to lead the re-established committee which will become known as the National Statistician's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee.

For that reason, this is the final Annual Report of the outgoing Crime Statistics Advisory Committee. It covers the period from April 2014 (the beginning of the financial year) until the end of August 2015. As well as summarizing the work of Committee during this period, the Report also provides an opportunity to reflect on the Committee's achievements since its inception in late 2011.

The role of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee has been to offer independent advice and support to the Home Secretary, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) on matters related to the measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales. It has been rewarding to have seen the standing of the current Committee grow across the four years it has operated. It is still a young committee but, in a complex and sensitive area, it has not been afraid to break new ground or propose radical change.

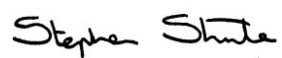
Much of the Committee's focus in the last year has been on matters concerning the quality of Police Recorded Crime. This has been a particular issue following the UK Statistics Authority's decision, in January 2014, to withdraw the National Statistics designation for Police Recorded Crime. It has also been informed by the critical findings of HMIC's inspection of Crime Data Integrity in 2013/14. Because of these developments, the Committee has necessarily devoted a significant amount of its time to considering and supporting a variety of initiatives to address concerns about crime recording with the aim of restoring public trust. The Committee has also given advice on improvements to the official statistics on crime, including on the presentation and collection of data on fraud and cybercrime. Both will continue to be priority areas for the successor committee and key to ensuring crime statistics remain relevant to users.

That the Committee has been able to achieve so much in a relatively short period of time is a reflection of the quality of its membership and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the members who have laboured so hard to take its agenda forward. The Committee's work will now continue under the aegis of the successor body and I was delighted to learn that many members of CSAC have indicated their willingness to continue to serve under its new Chair. This is important work of national significance and I wish Professor Sir Adrian Smith every success in taking it forward. I have agreed to support him on the new Committee.

The bedrock of any advisory committee is always the expertise of those who serve on it. But that is never sufficient for success; the Committee must also be well supported. Throughout its life, the Crime Statistic Advisory Committee has been blessed with an able and hard-working Secretariat. It is invidious to pick out particular individuals but I could not close this foreword without acknowledging the debt the Committee owes to Kieron Mahony who led CSAC's

Secretariat from October 2011 to March 2015. His work was subsequently taken on by Philippa Brimicombe and now rests with John Flatley. To them all I extend my warm thanks.

I commend the Committee's fourth, and final, report to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Shute". The script is cursive and fluid.

Stephen Shute

30 November 2015

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*.¹ 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 retiring Chair of the Committee, Professor Stephen Shute, was appointed to that role in December 2011 following an open competition.

The other non-executive members were also appointed through open competition. During 2014/15 they were:

- Professor Allan Brimicombe;
- Mr Junaid Gharda;
- Ms Fiona Glen (from July 2014);
- Professor Mike Hough (until November 2014);
- Professor Mike Levi;
- Professor Chris Lewis;
- Ms Patricia Mayhew OBE.

The Committee also had seven permanent members. During 2014/15 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;
- Mike Elkins - Head of Profession for Statistics at the Ministry of Justice (until August 2014);
- Steve Ellerd-Elliott - Head of Profession for Statistics at the Ministry of Justice (September 2014);
- Jeff Farrar – Chief Constable Gwent Police and National Policing Lead for Crime Statistics;
- Glyn Jones - Chief Statistician at Welsh Government;
- Diana Luchford - Director for Crime at the Home Office;
- Sir Tom Winsor - Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

In addition, the Committee had two ex-officio members. During 2014/15 they were:

Steve Bond – National Crime Registrar, Home Office;
Dame Jill Matheson – National Statistician (until June 2014);
John Pullinger – National Statistician (from July 2014).

Further details of the Committee membership can be found on the [Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Membership](#) webpage.

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 was designed to function 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 (PRC) and on the public who provide survey data; and international developments and obligations.

The Committee's Terms of Reference were established in December 2011. These Terms of Reference provide information on the role of the Committee, its principles and procedures, frequency of meetings, and current membership. The Committee established a web presence which includes a section on correspondence.²

REDESIGNATION OF PRC AS NATIONAL STATISTICS

One of the key aims of the Committee is to provide advice and support to the producers of crime data to ensure that the information published is accurate and trustworthy. The withdrawal by the UK Statistics Authority, in January 2014, of the National Statistics designation for Police Recorded Crime (PRC) statistics may have damaged public trust in these figures.

During this reporting period the Committee has focused on work being undertaken to improve PRC. The Chair of CSAC has represented the Committee on a high-level strategic board led by ONS to oversee this work. The Committee has also supported the changes made by ONS to improve its metadata on Police Recorded Crime and the strengthening of the Home Office Counting Rules for PRC that was introduced in April 2015.

The Committee has emphasised the importance of proportionate training for all police officers and police staff involved in crime recording. The Committee advocated the need to develop an accredited training course for Force Crime Registrars (FCRs) and welcomes the work the College of Policing is doing to make this a reality with the first courses already underway. The Chair attended the FCRs' annual conference in October 2014 where he set out the Committee's view that trained and accredited FCRs would help to bring greater consistency to recording across forces. Once the FCR training has been rolled out, which we hope to see completed during 2015/16, the Committee considers that the development of basic training on crime recording for all front-line officers and others involved in crime recording decisions to be an essential element in securing the sustained improvement in the accuracy of PRC..

HMIC'S INSPECTION PROGRAMME

One of the Committee's core functions is to provide advice on matters related to the

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

measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales. In its previous annual report, the Committee's involvement in providing advice on the development of HMIC's 2013/14 Crime Data Integrity inspection was highlighted.

In the period covered by this report, the Committee has considered the implications of this inspection for the official statistics and, in particular, the work needed to address effectively HMIC's recommendations which are critical to building trust in Police Recorded Crime statistics. The Committee concluded that ongoing independent external scrutiny of police recording of crime is essential to ensure future data integrity and for restoration of National Statistics status for PRC.

IMPROVING STATISTICS ON DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Committee's advice was sought over proposed changes to improve information available on the number of recorded crimes involving some element of domestic abuse and to identify the level of repeat victimisation for such crimes. The committee supported the proposed changes, taking the view that this would give greater visibility to such crimes in the official statistics.

The Committee also discussed some of the definitional challenges involved in developing a measure of repeat victimization. To support this work, a member of the Committee was made available to support a Home Office led group which was established to examine this issue.

FRAUD AND CYBERCRIME

Improving measurement of fraud and cybercrime has been a continuing focus of the Committee, as outlined in previous Annual Reports. During this reporting period, the Committee has commented on proposals by ONS to incorporate, within the Police Recorded Crime measure of fraud, cases referred by industry bodies to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau for police investigation.

The Committee has also kept a watching brief on separate work by ONS to extend the Crime Survey for England and Wales to cover fraud offences and other cybercrime during 2015/16. The Committee views this as another area where improvement is essential if trust in crime statistics is to be enhanced. The re-constituted committee will need to consider and advise ONS on how the new data should be presented within the official statistics on crime.

REDUCING BURDEN

Since its inception the Committee has supported changes that will reduce burden. During this reporting period, the Committee considered a proposal by the Home Office to weed the Notifiable Offence List (NOL), that is the offences that form part of the PRC collection. The purpose of this weeding exercise was to remove from the NOL those, largely historical, offences whose removal could reduce a recording burden on forces. While the Committee supported this proposal it was not accepted by Home Office ministers under the previous Coalition Government.

TRANSPARENCY

The Committee considered, at its May 2014 meeting, a proposal by the Home Office to disaggregate 'no crime' data. The Committee was supportive of the introduction of 'cancelled' and 'transferred' crime records as this will give greater transparency and allow more meaningful comparisons of the proportion of incidents initially recorded as crimes that the police subsequently decide are not crimes as defined by the Home Office Counting Rules.

At its final meeting, in May 2015, the Committee considered the value of adding additional context to Police Recorded Crime statistics by developing wider measures of demand on the police. This is a topical issue and the re-constituted committee will want to review the current arrangements for incident recording of non-notifiable crime and consider the benefits of any changes going forward.

CRIME INDEX

At its last meeting, in May 2015, the Committee also returned to the issue of whether or not there was value in ONS developing a Crime Index which gives greater weight to serious crimes than is the case with a total in which serious and less serious incidents are treated equally. The Committee was supportive of ONS carrying out further feasibility work and bringing back options to the re-constituted committee for consideration. The danger is that adding another measure to the suite of official statistics on crime may add confusion. This will need to be weighed against the benefit of having a more subtle measure of crime to assist decision makers and inform users of the statistics.

REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S IMPACT

The table below captures the major issues on which the Committee has given advice since its inception. It demonstrates that it has been wide ranging in the areas it has considered. It also demonstrates that its advice has prompted improvements in the measurement, collection and presentation of Crime Statistics in England and Wales. Some of these may have led to small and incremental improvements in the trustworthiness of the statistics while others have had more far reaching impact.

Issue	Advice given	Outcome
Advise on proposed changes to the classifications and categories used for collection of police recorded crime.	(i) Merge classifications in respect of 'Assault with injury', 'Wounding and endangering life', 'Racially and religiously aggravated criminal damage' and 'Cruelty to children'. (ii) Restrict the merging of 'other offences against the state' to two categories based on their seriousness. (iii) Collapse the twelve offences within 'other offences' classification into one code, with the exception of 'aiding suicide' which should remain as a separate code.	Advice accepted by the Home Secretary and change implemented from April 2012 resulting in a rationalisation of categories while maintaining coherence.
Advise on proposed revisions to the presentation of official statistics on police recorded crime.	(i) Organising Police Recorded Crime under two broad categories – 'Victim based crime' and 'Other crimes against society'. (ii) Categorising violence against the person offences as 'Homicide', 'Violence with injury' and 'Violence without injury'. (iii) Introducing a new high-level categorisation of 'Theft offences'. (iv) Displaying 'Rape' as a separate sub-	Advice accepted by the Home Secretary and change implemented from July 2012 resulting in better communication

	<p>category within 'Sexual offences' .</p> <p>(v) Separating the high volume, well-known crimes of 'Shoplifting', 'Theft from the person' and 'Bicycle theft' out from 'Other theft offences'.</p> <p>(vi) Presenting 'Robbery' as a standalone category for police recorded crime (as it is now) and CSEW crime (rather than under violent crime) to improve consistency.</p> <p>(vii) Splitting the 'Other miscellaneous' category in to 'Possession of weapons offences', 'Public order offences' and 'Miscellaneous crimes against society' to provide a clearer picture of the types of crimes.</p> <p>(viii) Moving selected offences in to different groups to reflect better the nature of the offences (e.g. moving offences relating to the possession of weapons and the offence of 'Public fear, alarm or distress' from 'Violence against the person – without injury', as these offences involve no actual violence, to new sub-categories within 'Other crimes against society' named 'Possessions of weapons offences' and 'Public order offences').</p> <p>(ix) Removing the 'Household' and 'Personal' crime labels in the presentation of CSEW offences, using categories based on specific crime types instead.</p>	<p>of the nature and harm of offences and bringing more consistency in the reporting of CSEW and PRC.</p>
<p>Consider divergence between Police Recorded Crime and Crime Survey for England and Wales.</p>	<p>Advised ONS to put into the public domain analysis showing divergence between CSEW and PRC.</p>	<p>ONS published report in January 2013 which brought into focus concerns about the degradation of quality in police recorded crime.</p>
<p>Provide guidance documentation on Crime Statistics for Police Crime Commissioners.</p>	<p>The guidance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overview of crime and policing statistics, and advice for using these data publicly, aimed specifically at PCCs; • detailed technical descriptions and advice on the use, management, and collection of crime statistics for analysts 	<p>PCCs better informed about crime statistics, their uses and limitations.</p>

	<p>working with PCCs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advice on presenting and reporting crime statistics, targeted at PCCs' media and communication teams. 	
<p>Advise on how to improve the consistency in use of 'Additional Verifiable Information' to inform decisions to cancel incidents initially classified as crimes.</p>	<p>Commented on draft guidance to assist forces on what constitutes Additional Verifiable Information.</p> <p>In considering the proposal to introduce guidance on Additional Verifiable Information the Committee noted:</p> <p>(i) There would be no change to the Home Office Counting Rules and the guidance will provide clarity and advice for Force Crime Registrars.</p> <p>(ii) It will be clear that no policies, procedures or audit requirements that are in place should exceed the requirements set out in the guidance.</p>	<p>A 'Practitioners Guide to Additional Verifiable Information' was produced by the Home Office and sent to all forces leading to greater consistency in recording.</p>
<p>Extending the main victimisation module in the Crime Survey for England and Wales to cover elements of cyber crime</p>	<p>Supported the addition of new questions to the Crime Survey for England and Wales including fraud and other types of cybercrime.</p>	<p>ONS developing new questions for testing and then adoption into the main CSEW which will enhance trust in the statistics by addressing an important gap.</p>
<p>HMIC inspection of crime recording.</p>	<p>Gave advice on methodology to be used in the national inspection and audit of Crime Data Integrity to ensure the results would be robust and fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Advice taken on board by HMIC which contributed to the most thorough inspection of crime recording ever carried out with far reaching conclusions.</p>
<p>Training and accreditation of Police Force Crime Registrars.</p>	<p>Advocated that the role of FCRs should be professionalised through formal training and accreditation to improve their standing and status.</p>	<p>The College of Policing have developed and are rolling out a training and accreditation programme.</p>
<p>Improve information</p>	<p>Gave advice on identification of victims</p>	<p>Home Office</p>

<p>available on the number of recorded crimes involving some element of domestic abuse and to identify the level of repeat victimisation for such crimes.</p>	<p>of domestic abuse and repeat victims in support of Home Office proposals to collect this data.</p> <p>CSAC member represented on HO working group looking at the issue in more detail.</p>	<p>started new collection to identify offences with a domestic abuse element from April 2015 and a flag for repeat victimisation from April 2016. In due course, this will give better information to the users of the statistics about an important policy area and make the statistics more useful.</p>
<p>Re-designation of Police Recorded Crime as a National Statistic.</p>	<p>Provided high-level strategic advice to ONS.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
<p>Explore the feasibility of a weighted index of crime</p>	<p>Established a Task and Finish Group to explore the feasibility of developing an index, based on crime severity, as an alternative to an unweighted crime total.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>