

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

UK Statistics Authority, Meeting room 3, Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ

Tuesday 27 September 2016, 14:00 – 16:00

Agenda Item No.	Timings	Order of Business		
1.	14:00 – 14:05			<i>Introduction and announcements</i> Adrian Smith (Chair)
2.	14:05 – 14:10		NSCSAC(16)5	<i>Minutes, correspondence and matters arising from the meeting held on 5 May 2016</i> Adrian Smith (Chair)
3.	14:10 – 14:25		Oral update	<i>UK Statistics Authority update on regulatory view of crime and criminal justice statistics</i> Pat MacLeod
4.	14:25 – 14:35	For Discussion	NSCSAC(16)6	<i>HMIC Crime Data Integrity update</i> Mark Stainforth
5.	14:35 – 14:55		NSCSAC(16)7	<i>Child Abuse data - Report from Task & Finish Group</i> Allan Brimicombe and Fiona Glen
6.	14:55 – 15:25		NSCSAC(16)8	<i>Work to address high frequency victimisation in CSEW estimates</i> Emma Wright
7.	15:25 – 15:40		NSCSAC(16)9	<i>Proposed changes to presentation ONS crime statistics</i> Mark Bangs
8.	15:40 – 15:50		NSCSAC(16)10	<i>National Crime Registrar's Report</i> Steve Bond
9.	15:50 – 15:55	Issues log update		John Flatley
10.	15:55 – 16:00	Any other business		All Members

MINUTES OF
THE NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2016
Meeting room 3, 1 Drummond Gate, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2QQ

CHAIR

Roma Chappell Office for National Statistics

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Blunt	Home Office
Steve Bond	Home Office
Allan Brimicombe	University of East London
Jeff Farrar	National Policing Lead for Crime Statistics
Gavin Hales	Police Foundation
Chris Lewis	University of Portsmouth
Patricia Mayhew	Independent Criminological Consultant
Stephen Shute	University of Sussex
Mike Warren	Home Office

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

Mark Stainforth Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

SECRETARIAT

John Flatley	Office for National Statistics
Alison Wiles	Office for National Statistics

APOLOGIES

Adrian Smith	Chair, UK Statistics Authority Board
Steve Ellerd-Elliott	Ministry of Justice
Junaid Gharda	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire
Glyn Jones	Welsh Government
Tom Winsor	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

1. Chair's Introduction and announcements

- 1.1. Roma Chappell explained that, due to the incapacity of Adrian Smith, she had been asked to Chair the meeting in his absence.
- 1.2. The Chair informed members that, since the last meeting, Fiona Glen had resigned and that Adrian Smith had thanked her for her contribution to the work of the Committee during her tenure.

2. Minutes and matters arising from meeting held on 5 May 2016- NCSAC(16)5

- 2.1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.2. It was noted that four of the six actions from the last meeting had been completed and the other two formed agenda items.

2.3. Roma Chappell informed members of the Sunday Mail's coverage of the minutes and papers of the last meeting¹.

3. UK Statistics Authority update on crime and criminal justice statistics from a regulatory perspective

3.1. Pat MacLeod from the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory team joined the meeting to present an update to the Committee on work that the Authority was taking forward on crime statistics as part of its new Strategic Interventions Programme. Pat explained that hitherto the Authority's focus had been on issues of trust and the quality of the data used to compile the statistics. More recently, the Authority had turned their focus to looking at the public value of the statistics in terms of what they could add to the debate on crime and justice. A key question was how well the statistics were able to reflect the real world.

3.2. Pat outlined the work that had been started following the crime statistics seminar that the Authority had hosted in June 2015 which focused on what improvements could be made to the existing framework and how crimes that currently fall outside the scope of the framework could be captured. Work to date had included working with producers of statistics across the UK to review progress on actions arising from past assessment reports and to address issues raised following the June 2015 event. Pat said that they had also been having discussions with a range of experts and stakeholders to get a broader perspective of the needs of decision makers. One or more roundtable meetings were planned and Pat asked for expressions of interest from Committee members who would be interested in participating.

3.3. There was a question about whether other statistics were also being looked at as well as crime. Pat confirmed that this reflected a new approach for the regulatory team and that they would be taking a similar systemic view across other areas of statistics. Currently for example they were also focusing on health statistics and housing. In response to a question about the scope of the exercise, Pat said that the intention was to cover the full breadth of crime statistics across the whole of the UK and she understood that this Committee had a narrower focus. When asked about the process and next steps, Pat said she anticipated that a position paper would be produced early in 2017, following the first set of round table meetings.

3.4. Committee members interested in participating in the round table meetings were asked to contact Pat MacLeod direct (pat.macleod@Statistics.gov.uk).

Action 1: Secretariat to distribute a link to Authority's web pages which described the work.

4. HMIC Crime Data Integrity – NSCSAC(6)16

4.1. Mark Stainforth presented a paper that provided the Committee with an update on HMIC's ongoing Crime Data Integrity (CDI) inspections.

4.2. Mark reported that the first three inspection reports had been published at the end of August and that further reports would be published in batches with the second batch anticipated at the end of November. These had covered inspections in Greater

¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3750986/new-crime-index-used-police-says-burglary-twice-bad-child-abduction.html>

Manchester, Staffordshire and Sussex police forces. It was noted that the inspections pointed to a mixed picture and the Committee noted this indicated continuing inconsistency of approach across forces. It was agreed that if this reflected a more general position this would make the case for re-designation of recorded crime, as National Statistics, more challenging.

- 4.3. Mark was challenged about whether or not HMIC had acknowledged the improvements that had been made in crime recording since their 2014 inspections. Mark responded by saying that each report provided a balanced commentary, starting with noting the positive work that had been taken in response to previous recommendations before highlighting areas for improvement. However, he thought it inevitable that the media focused on failures and on the overall grading.
- 4.4. In discussion, it was noted that the 2014 samples had been too small to provide robust force level estimates and thus it was difficult to compare results force by force. However, the general pattern hitherto suggested that forces had taken steps to improve their recording processes and a greater proportion of incidents appeared to be recorded correctly than in 2014. However, a clearer picture will emerge as more forces have been inspected.
- 4.5. Stephen Shute reported that, as NSCSAC representative on the HMIC's external reference group, he had recently observed one of the audits. Stephen reported that he had been impressed with the rigor of the audit process.

Action 2: Secretariat to send a link to the HMIC inspection reports
<http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/publications/rolling-cdi-programme-reports/>.

5. Child abuse data – Report from Task and Finish Group NSCSAC(16)7

- 5.1. Allan Brimicombe, as Chair of the Task and Finish Group, presented its interim report to the Committee, which set out five proposals for taking this work forward.
- 5.2. There was a question about what age should be used to define a child noting different approaches across sources. Allan responded by saying that the lack of consistency was an issue identified by the Task and Finish Group.
- 5.3. There was another question about whether anything could be learned from the experience of other countries. Allan responded by saying that the Task and Finish Group had not reviewed international experience and this was something for them to consider further.
- 5.4. It was noted that the proposals outlined by the Task and Finish Group would require some additional resource to take forward. Roma Chappell said that ONS had secured some additional funding for crime statistics improvement work and a number of the proposals could be taken forward with such resource.
- 5.5. The Chair thanked Allan and the Task and Finish Group for their interim report and asked members to send any additional comments by correspondence.

Action 3: All members to send additional comments on the interim report on child

abuse data to the Secretariat.

6. Review of methodology for addressing high frequency victimisation in CSEW estimates- NSCSAC(16)8

- 6.1. Emma Wright, from ONS, presented a paper on proposals to amend the methodology used to estimate the number of incidents of crime experienced by repeat victims in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).
- 6.2. In discussion, some members were skeptical of the value of the changes proposed and concerns about creating another discontinuity in crime statistics. It was noted that this was a highly technical issue and one that was difficult for the non-expert to grasp. There was a concern that the resulting change in estimated crime could be misunderstood and had the potential to damage, rather than build, trust in the statistics. Therefore, ONS would need to communicate the reason for the change carefully.
- 6.3. However, the consensus was that the status quo could not be maintained and there was broad to change the methodology for addressing repeat victimisation within the CSEW by using crime-specific caps equivalent to the 98th percentile of the distribution of victim incident counts rather than a uniform cap of 5 incidents.
- 6.4. There was also agreement that it was important ONS produce a revised time series so that comparisons could be made on a consistent basis, while noting that this would take time to produce.
- 6.5. The Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of publishing uncapped estimates and the general view was that this would bring greater transparency and help demonstrate the rationale for retaining some method of statistical adjustment to outlying cases.

Action 4: Secretariat to inform the Committee when ONS publish its response to the recent consultation.

7. Proposed changes to presentation of ONS crime statistics- NSCSAC(16)9

- 7.1. Due to lack of time, the Chair proposed that members send comments by correspondence. These would then be summarised by the Secretariat and brought back to the next meeting, if further discussion was needed.

Action 5: Members to send comments on NSCSAC(16)9 paper by correspondence by end of November 2016.

8. National Crime Registrar's Report - NSCSAC(16)10

- 8.1. The Chair asked for questions or comment on Steve Bond's report to the Committee.
- 8.2. Jeff Farrar reported on that the College of Policing had now accepted the need for wider training on the NRCS/HOCR for other parts of the policing family (beyond Force

Crime Registrars) involved in crime recording. Jeff reported that the College are starting to scope how this can be taken forward acknowledging that a classroom-based course, like the FCR one, was impractical and that it was likely to take the form of an e-learning module. This progress was welcomed by the Committee.

9. Issues log update

- 9.1. John Flatley informed the Committee that the issues log had been updated and advised it would be used to prioritise issues for discussion at future meetings of the Committee.

10. Any other business

- 10.1. David Blunt asked for an update from ONS on plans to publish the Crime Severity Index that was discussed at the last meeting. John Flatley said that ONS were in the process of finalising the methodology and anticipated publishing in November 2016.

Action 6: Secretariat to send link to ONS Crime Index work when it is published.

NSCSAC Secretariat

20 October 2016

ACTION TABLE FROM MEETING OF 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

	ACTION	ACTIONEE	PRIORITY/COMPLETION DATE	PROGRESS
1	Secretariat to distribute a link to Authority's web pages which described the work.	Secretariat	High – October 2016	Complete
2	Secretariat to send a link to the HMIC inspection reports.	Secretariat	High – October 2016	Complete
3	All members to send additional comments on the interim report on child abuse data to the Secretariat.	All	High – end November 2016	
4	Secretariat to inform Committee members when ONS publish its response to the consultation of changes to the methodology for estimating repeat victimisation	Secretariat	High – October/November 2016	Complete
5	Members to send comments on the NSCSAC paper	All	High – end November 2016	On agenda for January

	16(9).			meeting
6	Secretariat to send link to ONS Crime Index work when it is published	Secretariat	High – November 2016	Complete

NSCSAC Issues Log – September 2016

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
<p>Accuracy of police recorded crime data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulation of evidence that police recorded crime led the UK Statistics Authority to withdraw National Statistics designation in January 2014. • HMIC inspection of Crime Data Integrity (published November 2014) found unacceptable level of under-recording of crime, particularly violent and sexual offences. • Widely accepted that police recorded crime will never be a good measure of “total crime” but accurate data critical in enabling police efficiency and effectiveness; ensuring victims received the service they require; and enable democratic accountability. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of significant improvement in crime recording processes. • ONS PRC re-designation board (Stephen Shute is NSCSAC representative) met in October to review and recommended draft evidence pack prepared by ONS. • Sir Tom Winsor wrote to Chief Constables in October 2015 announcing that HMIC would be returning to forces to inspect crime recording through a series of unannounced audits. • HMIC started new programme of inspections with first force visited in April 2016. This on-going programme will see all 43 forces inspected over 4 years. • ONS has shared initial evidence of improvements in crime recording with UKSA Monitoring & Assessment team. • HMIC released the results of the first 3 force inspections in August 2016 showing crime recording being rated as “good” in Sussex, “requiring improvement” in Staffordshire and “inadequate” in Greater Manchester. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS to document improvements in police recorded crime and publish in the autumn. • HMIC to provide national summary based on results of first 10 audits in their annual State of Policing Report in February 2017.
<p>Crime recording training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of the Home Office Counting Rules 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still awaiting an update from the College of Policing on their plans. 	

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
	<p>(HOCR) for recorded crime has been found to be one of the key reasons why reports of crime are not recorded correctly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIC's 2014 Crime Data Integrity inspection report recommended the need for training for all those involved in crime recording – echoing the view of NSCSAC • The College of Policing have developed and delivered a successful training programme for Force Crime Registrars • Training for others involved in crime recording is planned but not yet developed 			
<p>Coverage of fraud and cyber-crime in the official statistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that CSEW and PRC have failed to keep up to date with changing nature of crime and not up to the job of informing society's response to it. • Predecessor committee supported proposals to extend scope of police recorded fraud to cover reports to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau from industry bodies to provide a fuller picture and extend the CSEW to both fraud and some elements of cyber-crime. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to administrative and survey data on fraud have been made and new questions on fraud and cyber-crime were added to the CSEW on 1st October 2015. • Results of field test of new questions published by ONS as research outputs in October 2015 and generated considerable attention. • First official statistics from CSEW extension to cover Fraud and Computer Misuse Act offences to were published as experimental statistics on 21st July 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS will continue to release updates of the experimental statistics in future quarterly bulletins with first annual comparisons available in January 2018.

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remains issue that significant volume of fraud and cyber-crime experienced by private and public sector bodies will not be captured by existing sources. 			
Measurement of repeat victimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criticism that the current approach on the CSEW to dealing with repeat victimisation masks high level repeat victimisation experienced by some victims and risked giving a misleading view of the differential experience of male and female victims. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONS has established a project to review the current methodology for dealing with high frequency repeat victimisation and consulted the Government Statistical Service's Methodology Advisory Committee in November 2015. Independent survey methodologist commissioned to review options for alternative estimation methods and expected to report in Spring 2016. ONS published methodological review and consult with launched user consultation over change to method in July 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue to be discussed at the September NSCSAC meeting following end of user consultation.
Child abuse data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence base on the scale and trends in child abuse weak and not well covered by existing official statistics. At UKSA Better Statistics, Better Decisions event on crime statistics in June 2015, there was a call for a specific victim survey on child abuse to become part of the suite of official statistics on crime. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFG has been established to map child abuse data to identify existing sources which have potential to be included within the official statistics on crime. The TFG will also identify obvious gaps and make suggestions for how they can be filled. ONS has added some questions to the CSEW, from April 2015, in the self-completion module which asks adult respondents about experiences of abuse (emotional, physical and sexual) experienced as a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim report from TFG to be discussed at the September NSCSAC meeting.

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of first results from new CSEW questions on child abuse were published in August 2016. • 	
Crime Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summing individual offences into a police recorded crime total takes no account of the crime mix. Case has been made that a weighted index which takes account of seriousness of crime would provide a more helpful measure for the police and decision makers. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSCSAC Task & Finish Group has been established to review work being taken forward by ONS to explore the feasibility of incorporating a crime severity index as part of the official statistics. • The Policing Journal published a follow-up paper by Sherman et al, in April 2016, on the Cambridge Crime Harm Index which attracted media interest and a number of police forces have contacted ONS about the ongoing work. • NSCSAC advised that ONS should complete work on index and publish as experimental statistics and seek user feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS working to complete crime index and plan to release before the end of the 2016 calendar year. Views from users will then be sought on value of new index.
Extending the official statistics on police recorded crime to cover more detail of the nature/circumstances of the offences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User demand for more detailed breakdowns of police recorded crime. This was highlighted as weaknesses in relation to both domestic violence and child abuse. • Official statistics are currently restricted to aggregate counts of offences and necessary for users to make Fol requests to forces in order to obtain basic information. 	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all police forces expected to be live on the Home Office Data Hub (HODH) by April 2016 which will contain record level detail on individual offences. • This will provide valuable breakdowns such as age/sex of victim and victim/offender relationships. • Experimental statistics, based on a sub-set of forces, were published in the Compendium publication Focus on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HO and ONS statisticians in discussion about the use of HODH data in official statistics in preparation for data coming on stream during 2016/17.

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
<p>Improve communication and presentation of crime statistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS are working to improve the presentation and communication of their quarterly crime statistics. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Violence & Sexual Offences in February 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a first step the statistical bulletin has been shortened from 100 to 40 pages to make the main findings more accessible. • ONS working up further changes including a shift towards leading with rates, rather than numbers, and describing the distribution of crime victimisation to better inform the public and decision makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue to be discussed at the September NSCSAC meeting.
<p>Improved measures of police performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded crime an inadequate measure of broader demand on the police. • The National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR) could be incorporated within a common framework alongside the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). 	<p>Medium term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions being held within the Police Service/College of Policing about developing better metrics. • Letter sent from Chair of NSCSAC to National Statistician (March 2016) supporting proposal in Curtis review that HO should take back ownership of NSIR, review it and incorporate alongside NCRS. In turn, National Statistician advised the Home Secretary on the benefits of this recommendation. • Home Secretary responded to National Statistician and work ongoing to address this issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSCSAC to maintain a watching brief.
<p>Perceived tension between crime recording standards relating to sexual offences (e.g. sexting) and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been recent revived media interest in the perceived tension between the crime recording rules and the 	<p>Medium term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Police Chiefs Council was reported, in the media, to be developing new guidelines on how to handle this issue. The existing NPCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue to be added to the agenda for discussion at a future NSCSAC meeting.

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
<p>“criminalising” of children</p>	<p>possible “criminalising” of children engaged in sexting (i.e. the sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones). Some of the media reporting could serve to undermine public trust in crime statistics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In part, this is due to a misunderstanding of the difference between the requirement within the Home Office Counting Rules to record an offence (committed under Protection of Children Act 1978) and guidance around possible future disclosure of the offence (e.g. during a criminal record check). There is also misunderstanding as to what “criminalising” means. There is an absence of hard evidence as to the reality of this in practice, for example there is no data that shows how many, if any, children, have been subject of formal criminal action (charge/caution) as a consequence. 		<p>position was set out by the lead, CC Olivia Pinkney, in September 2015.¹</p>	
<p>Joining up crime and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was also criticism that a 	<p>Longer term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HO, MoJ and ONS have collaborated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longer term ambition could be to

¹ <http://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/sexting-and-social-media-police-will-always-try-to-avoid-criminalising-young-people>

Issue	Key Points	Timeframe	Latest Developments	Next Steps
criminal justice statistics	lack of a common definitional framework across the crime and the criminal justice system makes it difficult for users.		<p>successfully in the past in production of compendium publications which join up their statistics, e.g. Sexual Offending, Race and the CJS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work ongoing to develop a systems diagram helping guide users through the labyrinth of crime and justice statistics. 	use linked up data sets to enhance or replace existing official statistics outputs.
Utilizing new sources of data (e.g. from other crime agencies, private sector & Big Data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The official statistics on crime published by ONS do not include crimes dealt with by agencies other than the territorial police forces (e.g. National Crime Agency and the UK Border Force) • Private sector could provide much more data on crime (e.g. private security firms may help with cyber-crime). • Big Data may have the potential to improve crime statistics. 	Longer term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work not actively being progressed at this time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSCSAC to establish a Task & Finish Group in 2016/17 to scope out possible work.

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Update report of HMIC's crime data integrity inspection

NSCSAC(16)6

Purpose/Issue

1. This paper is to update the committee on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's Crime Data Integrity (CDI) inspection programme. This report is intended to keep the committee informed of the findings of the inspection programme to date and for the committee to consider any implications from these findings for the use of published crime data.

Action

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

Background

3. In January 2014, the UK Statistics Authority published its Assessment of sets of statistics about crime that are published by ONS and reported in Crime in England and Wales and associated publications.¹ Among the statistics assessed were those on police recorded crime.
4. As a result of the Assessment, the Authority removed National Statistics status from statistics based on recorded crime data supplied by police forces and Action Fraud to the Home Office:

'until such time that ONS, working with the Home Office, HMIC or other appropriate bodies, is able to demonstrate that the quality of the underlying data, and the robustness of the ongoing audit and quality assurance procedures, are sufficient to support its production of statistics based on recorded crime data to a level of quality that meets users' needs.'
5. Following HMIC's 2014 inspection of crime data integrity across all forces in England and Wales HMIC reported that an estimated 1 in 5 offences (19%) that should have been recorded as crimes were not. The crimes that were most under-recorded were violence against the person offences (33%) and sexual offences (26%).
6. HMIC is now undertaking a further set of crime data integrity inspections across all 43 police forces in England and Wales. These are unannounced visits, and on this occasion include a statistically robust audit in each force with a confidence interval of circa. +/- 3 percent. Forces will be awarded a graded judgment.² This programme of inspections is expected to continue until the end of 2019.

¹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-crime-in-england-and-wales/>

² <http://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/crime-data-integrity/crime-data-integrity-programme-judgment-criteria/>

Inspection update

7. The CDI audit and fieldwork has now been completed in six police forces:

- Sussex;
- Greater Manchester;
- Staffordshire;
- Avon and Somerset;
- Northumbria; and
- Merseyside.

A seventh inspection is ongoing in Devon and Cornwall.

8. Reports³ have been published (25 August 2016) for the first three of these forces, and moderated graded judgments applied as follows:

- Sussex - **Good**;
- Greater Manchester - **Inadequate**; and
- Staffordshire – **Requires Improvement**.

The reports for the further four forces named above are currently scheduled to be published during w/c 28 November 2016.

9. In these three forces officers and staff were found to have made progress in placing the victim at the forefront of their crime-recording decisions. In addition good progress had been made against recommendations made to forces following the 2014 inspection.

10. The higher level audit results for those forces for which reports have been published are as follows:

Force	(% of reports of crime that are recorded)		
	All crime	Violence	Sexual offences
Sussex	94.59	95.67	95.61
GMP	85.49	75.36	91.71
Staffordshire	91.02	89.95	94.72

11. Common themes for the under-recording of crime were found to be officers and staff not understanding their responsibilities for crime-recording, underpinned by limited supervision to support officers and staff in making good and prompt crime-recording decisions.

12. In no case did HMIC identify performance pressures, such as crime targets, as a cause for the decision not to record a reported crime.

Mark Stainforth
Assistant Portfolio Director, HMIC
06 September 2016

³ <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/rolling-cdi-programme-reports/>

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Child Abuse Data Task and Finish Group: Interim Report

NSCSAC(16)7

Purpose

1. This paper provides an update on the work carried out to date of the Committee's Child Abuse Data Task and Finish Group. It maps out the current landscape of statistical information available on child abuse, and provides recommendations on potential improvements.

Action

2. The Committee are asked to consider the issues covered in this paper and give their views on the current proposals.

Background

3. Over the last 30 years there has been increasing concern about child abuse in the wake of high profile cases, and a growing awareness of the scale of abuse previously hidden from public view. However, it has been recognised that the official statistics on crime in England and Wales are currently limited in respect to their coverage of child abuse.
4. The Committee established a Child Abuse data Task and Finish Group following its meeting in September 2015. The group has been tasked with:
 - mapping out existing data sources on child abuse which could be used to improve the official crime statistics;
 - investigating the quality of such data sources;
 - identifying gaps in the evidence base; and,
 - making recommendations for improvements to the official statistics for consideration by the full committee.
5. The group was chaired by Allan Brimicombe and, in addition to fellow NSCAC member Fiona Glen; a number of external experts were invited to join. These included: Daniel Brown (Department for Education); Alison Green (Home Office); Pam Miller (NSPCC); Amy Nicholas (Department of Health); Sophie Riley (Home Office), and Joe Traynor

(ONS). Hitherto, the group has met on three occasions and this paper provides an update on its work to date.

Data Sources

6. Data sources can be divided into two main categories those relating to administrative data and those relating to other sources such as surveys. **Administrative data** refers to information collected primarily for administrative (not research) purposes. This type of data is collected by government departments and other organisations for the purposes of registration, transaction and record keeping, usually during the delivery of a service. **Survey Data** collects information from a sample of individuals in a systematic way. For child abuse the use of surveys is particularly difficult.

Administrative data

7. The Group recognised the increasing role that administrative data can play in the production of official statistics, such as evidence provided by the police in recording offences, and cases referred to social services (data provided by local authorities to the Department for Education (DfE)). However, cases referred to the police and social services will never be able to provide a complete picture of child abuse. As with any crime, perpetrators have a significant interest in avoiding detection and continually employ new techniques in both committing the offence and avoiding discovery. For child abuse the problem of detection is made worse as child victims can be subject to manipulation and coercion and are often unable to adequately comprehend, assess, or report the situation to the relevant authorities.
8. In addition, the Group found a lack of any consistent definition of child abuse with current definitions tending to reflect an institution's functional requirements; producing discontinuities between data sources. For example data from the police currently reflects [Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\) for recorded crime](#). Since there is no current requirement in official returns to distinguish between those offences committed against adult victims and those committed against child victims only a small proportion of data on crimes committed against children is available. The exception is sexual assaults where official returns distinguish between offences against victims under the age of 13, under the age of consent (16), and adults. However, the Home Office are currently in the process of implementing a new data collection system, the Home Office Data Hub (HODH). The Hub has been designed to replace the current spreadsheet based system with automated data capture of richer record level data from force crime recording systems.

9. This allows the police to supply more detailed information such as age of the victim. It should therefore be possible distinguish those crimes committed against any age group including children and has the potential to lead to a substantial improvement in the data available on crimes committed against children. At present not all police forces are submitting data via the HODH and the quality of the data is still being evaluated.
10. The definitions of which crimes the police should consider as constituting abuse are identified on the College of Policing website¹. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 irrespective of their situation, and most crimes are covered including human trafficking and child sexual exploitation. The only significant omissions are straightforward property offences where the child is the victim.
11. Overall responsibility for child protection in England lies with the DfE which provides substantial data on child abuse and neglect. The annually published data sources (children in need data, and looked after children data) are badged as National Statistics, and provide detailed information on children involved with social services or who are looked after by the state. Official statistics are available on the numbers of children being referred to social services, on child protection plans or on child protection registers. Specifically, data is available on children who have specific primary need of abuse or neglect, which is broken down by age and other breakdowns which include gender and local authority. Looked after children data also provides the number of looked after children due to abuse or neglect.
12. When a child is referred to children's social care with a request for services to be provided, an assessment is carried out, and many factors identified at the end of child assessment are associated with child abuse e.g. trafficking, gangs, self harm, domestic violence, going missing etc. This can provide a greater level of detail into the nature of child abuse, and the factors also represent some key definitions of child abuse, broken down by local authority. Each local authority has a data confidence indicator alongside their data, suggesting an awareness of data quality.
13. Children in need data records the number of children passing through the social services system, so higher or lower numbers don't equate to children being more or less safe, or at more or less risk of child abuse. Some children at risk of harm may not have been identified, and increases could mean more abuse is coming to the attention of social

¹ <http://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-abuse/key-definitions/#child-abuse>

services, not that overall abuse has increased. In addition, a referral to social services doesn't necessarily mean that child abuse has occurred. Similarly, changes in the number of referrals can be affected by changing legislation, and changing public concerns about the safety of children.

14. Current research suggests that as few as 1 in 8 victims of child sexual abuse come to the attention of professionals, as highlighted in the Children's Commissioner report ['Protecting Children from Harm: A critical assessment of child sexual abuse in the family network in England and priorities for action, 2015'](#).
15. Data sources reviewed by the group were on the whole published by each of the responsible government department or organisation on an annual basis. The only consistent attempt to draw these different sources of data together and make sense of them has been undertaken by the NSPCC in their publication "How Safe are our Children?" For the last four years this publication has provided an overview of the child protection landscape and compiled what it considers to be the most robust and up-to-date child protection data that exists. Whilst the NSPCC effort in this respect is laudable it does indicate that there is a need for the most relevant sources of data (administrative, survey, or other) on child abuse to be published together as a single official statistics product with some statistical commentary.
16. In considering the uses of administrative datasets the group also considered the work of the English Children's Commissioner, working with DfE analysts who employed Multiple System Estimation (MSE) methods to estimate the prevalence of child sexual abuse in England².
17. This approach had previously been used to obtain an estimate for the prevalence of modern slavery³. Much like child sexual abuse, victims of modern slavery may not report to authorities. The MSE technique was applied to data gathered on victims of child sexual abuse from the Police, the voluntary sector and local authorities. By identifying those individuals who featured on only one list and no other, and the size of all possible overlaps between lists, an estimate was calculated by fitting an appropriate mathematical model.

2

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Protecting%20children%20from%20harm%20-%20full%20report.pdf>

³ Silverman, B (2014) Modern slavery: an application of Multiple Systems Estimation

18. This methodological technique and the underlying data has not been evaluated by the group, however the group recognised its value not least because it could potentially produce a much cheaper way to provide an annual national prevalence figure than a general population survey. MSE was therefore considered worthy of further investigation.
19. Overall a wide range of administrative data sources were investigated by the group, including: Child protection charity data; mortality data, and; Justice data (See Annex A for a summary list). One of the most relevant appeared to be data provided by the National violence Surveillance Network (NVSN) that collates hospital data from emergency departments, minor injury units and walk-in centres. Currently it provides the only national measure of children under 10 who have been victim of violent crime – and is a good indicator of physical abuse. The group considered the merits of the data and have discussed whether such data could be joined up or linked with other health or social care data which is not currently available to those outside these professions such as the HSCIC Child Protection –Information Sharing (CP-IS) system.

Survey data on child abuse

20. Over the last two decades there have been few attempts at estimating child abuse using large scale social surveys. Two of the most significant attempts have been made by the NSPCC. In 2000 the NSPCC published the first [UK-wide study of child maltreatment](#). This was followed ten years later with a much larger study The National Survey of Child safety and Victimization interviewing over 6,000 young adults, teenagers, children and parents of younger children. The report looks at their experiences of abuse and neglect. It examines the impact of abuse and highlights that many children experiencing abuse by their parents or carers also experience other forms of abuse from other people. This survey still provides the only current UK-wide research-based indication of current prevalence rates and the impact of child abuse and neglect. The survey was asked of parents (of under 11s), young people (11-17) and young adults (18-24).
21. More recently the ONS took a different tack to providing survey evidence of child abuse. Using the 2015/16 Crime Survey for England and Wales the ONS asked adults aged between 16 and 59 about their experiences of abuse during childhood, providing evidence on the occurrence of child abuse over the last three decades. The figures published in the [Abuse during childhood: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2016](#) in August 2016 provide information on childhood abuse by category of abuse, number of types of abuse, survivor/perpetrator relationships and personal and household characteristics of survivors. The survey also provided more

detailed analysis on sexual assault such as the age at which the abuse occurred, length of time over which the abuse took place, and the year of abuse. The dataset did not measure peer on peer abuse, and did not attempt to measure the current prevalence of child abuse.

22. The group discussed the merits or otherwise of a victimisation survey of children or young adults. Annex B includes a summary table of the main survey data. Whilst it was recognised that a general population survey of children may provide one approach to filling the gap between the true prevalence rate and rates derived from administrative data the group also recognised a number of complex issues.
23. One of main challenges surrounds requiring “informed” consent from parents or guardians for a survey of children. It is unlikely in cases of abuse by a parent or guardian that such consent for a child to take part in a survey (either in their own home or at school or other educational setting) would be given. Clearly, this would result in an undercount of abuse which may well be significant. For example, the recent CSEW module estimated that 10% of cases of sexual assaults against children were committed by a parent or step parent. A second challenge, given the relatively low prevalence of child abuse, is a large sample survey would be required to yield sufficient number of victims for analysis which would mean such an endeavour would be costly.
24. There are also ethical considerations around the duty of care that would exist on the part of the survey sponsor to report any ongoing abuse reported by a child to the relevant authorities. A further duty of care may exist where abused children were emotionally harmed by being questioned about their experiences.
25. Whilst the group discussed these issues it did not conclude whether or not a survey of children on abuse would be pragmatic or indeed beneficial. The group did however recognise that they should continue to consider the merits of a child survey before drawing any firm conclusions.

Other sources of Data on child abuse

26. All child abuse data sources that have been reviewed by the Task and Finish Group can be found in the spreadsheet provided separately. The data sources are structured around specific child abuse measures, for example; dataset number 1 child homicides recorded by the police will include information on where this data is published, where the data is derived from, whether official statistics, owner, geographic coverage/unit,

description, comparable across the UK, update cycle, reference period, latest release and strengths and weaknesses. The Group discussed and evaluated the strengths and limitations of the data sources available for England and Wales and focused primarily on those underlying data sets that included more than one measure of child abuse.

Proposals

27. The following five proposals are based on the findings of the Child Abuse Data Task and Finish Group, on potential improvements to the existing official statistics

1. ONS will develop a consistent definition of child abuse for official statistics to be published against.
2. ONS will give further consideration to defining a clear set of administrative sources which provide the best evidence of child abuse and publish these as a single report, with commentary, on a regular basis.
3. ONS should publish Home Office Data Hub data on crimes committed against children that constitute child abuse as part of their regular outputs once such data becomes available.
4. ONS will evaluate the use of Multiple System Estimation (MSE) techniques in measuring child sexual exploitation and its uses.
5. ONS will continue to consider the merits of survey data.

Allan Brimicombe

Chair of the Child Abuse Statistics Task and Finish Group

September 2016

ANNEX A -Table 1 Summary of the main sources of information on child abuse

Dataset Group	Dataset	Measures/Description of Measures	Owner
Police recorded crime (PRC)	Police recorded crime quarterly data returns	- Number of recorded sexual offences against children, cruelty and neglect offences, and obscene publications offences	Home Office
	Home Office Data Hub (HODH)	- Central database of record-level crime data provided to HO by police force - Flags for all sexual offences related to children, child sexual exploitation, and a flag for offences related to domestic abuse - Age and sex of victims of police recorded crimes	Home Office
	Homicide Index	- Child homicides recorded by the police	Home Office
Mortality Statistics	Death Registrations	- Child mortality statistics include deaths registered by age, sex and selected underlying cause of death. Includes mortality rates and numbers of deaths over time	ONS
	Child death reviews	- Child death reviews completed during the year, including information on circumstances of the death, whether abuse or neglect was a factor, child characteristics and whether the death was deemed to have any modifiable factors.	Department for Education
	Suicide data	- Deaths of 15 to 19 year olds recorded as intentional self harm or event of undetermined intent and deaths of 10-14 year olds recorded as intentional self harm.	ONS
Social services data	Children in need census data	- Referrals accepted by social services, assessments and primary needs/factors - Numbers of children on a child protection plan or on the child protection register, composition and length of plans/registers and re-registrations	Department for Education
	Looked after children dataset	- Number of looked after children, due to abuse or neglect - Proportion of looked-after children who have three or more placements during the year - Number of children who started to be looked after during the year, due to abuse or neglect	Department for Education
	HSCIC - Social Services data shared with NHS: CP-IS (Child Protection Information Sharing system)	- Social services data shared with NHS on: Child protection plans, looked after children (State) and prebirth child protection plans	Health and Social Care Information Centre
Child protection charity datasets	Child Line contact data	- Contacts with ChildLine from counselling sessions with children and young people via phone call, email or online chat.	NSPCC
	NSPCC helpline data	- Calls emails, exits and online reporting to NSPCC's UK 24/7 helpline for those concerned about a child.	NSPCC
	Internet Watch Foundation data	- Measure of child abuse images on the internet	Internet Watch Foundation
Criminal Justice System datasets	Criminal Justice System (MOJ) subsets	- Proceedings for sexual offences against under 16s - Conviction tables (e.g. sexual offences against under 16s)	Ministry of Justice
	Crown Prosecution Service dataset	- Underlying CPS data relating to child abuse - includes pre-charge decisions, total prosecutions, homicide prosecutions, offences against the person prosecutions and sexual offences prosecutions	Crown Prosecution Service
Other admin data sources	National Referral Mechanism (NRM) child trafficking data	- Child trafficking data, using NRM data and referral data	UK Human Trafficking Centre / National Crime Agency
	Hospital data	- Number of children under the age of 10 who have been victims of violent crime	Violence Research Group

Annex B Table 2 Summary of the main survey data on child abuse

Dataset	Measures/Description of Measures	Owner
Crime Survey for England and Wales	- Abuse during childhood (non-recent), measured for the first time in 2015/2016 in a new self-completion module covering psychological, physical and sexual abuse - Violent incidents experienced by 10 to 15 year olds	ONS
National Survey of Child Safety and Victimization	- Abuse or neglect reported by children when asked in a UK-wide survey	NSPCC
Survey by the Office of the Children's Commissioner	- Large survey administered by the Children's Commissioner on adult survivors of child sexual abuse (part of compendium of child sexual abuse)	Office of the Children's Commissioner
Ofcom survey data	- Survey data on online harm (part of NSPCC compendium of online harm data)	Ofcom

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Review of methodology for addressing high frequency repeat victimisation in Crime Survey for England and Wales estimates

NSCSAC(16)8

Purpose

1. This paper provides a summary of ONS work to review the methodology used for addressing high frequency repeat victimisation in Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) estimates. The paper describes the review of current and possible alternative methods, the public consultation to seek feedback from users on the recommendations coming out of this review, and the final recommendations being made on the methodology that should be used going forward.

Action

2. The Committee are asked to consider the issues covered in this paper and give their views on the proposal to:
 - a) Change the methodology for addressing repeat victimisation within the CSEW by using crime-specific caps equivalent to the 98th percentile of the distribution of victim incident counts rather than a uniform cap of 5 incidents.
 - b) Undertake further qualitative research to better understand the scale of repeat victimisation for those respondents who state that the number of incidents experienced is "too many to count". This research would then lead to further consideration of how best to estimate such victimisation.
 - c) Work towards finalising a new methodology and revising the back-series in time for publication in July 2018 (when CSEW estimates for year ending March 2018 will be published).

Background

3. In cases of repeat victimisation, the CSEW (and its predecessor the British Crime Survey) has always only included the first five incidents of a series in the estimate of the total number of incidents of crime from the survey. When the CSEW was first designed in 1982 it was set up as a one-off research project with one of its principal aims to understand how much crime went unreported to the police recorded crime. At that time, those involved in the initial design could not have foreseen that the survey's outputs would later become official statistics with its headline estimates viewed as a key social indicator.
4. As one of the primary objectives of the first survey was to compare the volume of crime estimated by the survey with police recorded crime figures, it was decided to mimic the Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime. Thus in relation to respondents who reported having experienced several incidents of crime as part of a single series it was decided to apply an arbitrary cap of 5 when grossing up the number of incidents. The 1982 BCS Technical report noted that "the police would treat some of the series of incidents concerned as a single, serial offence" and thus it "would not be desirable to weight up by number of incidents where this number is particularly high" as it would make comparisons between the two sources problematic.

5. Subsequently, as the survey became continuous and great importance was placed on having a consistent time series there was a reluctance to change the methodology. In addition, it was recognised that if repeat victimisation was left unaddressed, survey estimates of incidents of crime would be subject to large sample variability from year to year (although estimates of the number of victims of crime are not affected). This would result in the publication of incident rates which would fluctuate widely between survey years, making it difficult to discern trends.
6. However, there has been criticism of this methodology for a number of years particularly in relation to its impact on estimates domestic violence where repeat victimisation is more commonly experienced^{1,2}. Thus, ONS committed to reviewing the method for addressing high frequency repeat victimisation in the survey.
7. Analysis of the effect of the current methodology on estimates of incidents of crime was presented to the Government Statistical Service Methodology Advisory Committee in November 2015, and members of the committee agreed that the current methodology should be reviewed and alternative options considered.
8. Following this, ONS commissioned a review of the current and alternative methods for addressing high frequency repeat victimisation. This review was carried out by Joel Williams, Head of Survey Methods at the social research agency TNS BMRB, and independently peer reviewed.

Review of current and alternative methods

9. The [review](#) identified that whilst the current methodology of capping at 5 incidents in a series is effective at reducing random sampling error, there is a clear risk that it introduces additional error (downward bias) given its substantial impact on the point estimate for some crime types, in particular violence.
10. Five alternative methods were considered in the review:
 - a) Annual count with a uniform respondent cap threshold of y same-perpetrator incidents for any single crime type (i.e. a generalisation of the current method in which $y=5$)
 - b) As a) but with different cap thresholds for different crime types
 - c) An annualised average of the uncapped counts for each crime type, as recorded in the most recent years of data
 - d) As c) but with different values of t for different crime types
 - e) Instead of counts, track the proportion of the population with different ranges of counts (e.g. 0 ; $1-y$; $>y$)
11. The evaluation assessed the distribution of victim form incident counts over the period 2003-15, the random sampling error that could be expected under each method, the expected difference in the level of the estimates under each method, and alternatives to reporting the number of victimisation incidents.
12. Following the analysis, Joel Williams proposed a set of recommendations:
 - a) Moving away from the current methodology of capping at 5 repeat incidents for any specific type of crime

¹ http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/72272/4/Violence_Society_Research_briefing_1.pdf

² <http://www.civitas.org.uk/archive/pdf/CivitasReviewJun07.pdf>

- b) Adopting a lighter cap at the 98th or 99th percentile of victim incident counts for each crime type
- c) Using multiple year aggregations, rather than single year, to estimate the number of incidents for some crime types which would smooth sampling variability
- d) More prominent use of confidence intervals around the estimates to inform users of the precision of the figures
- e) Giving greater prominence to more robust estimates of prevalence of single and repeat victimisation of crime presented alongside the number of incidents
- f) Exploring the feasibility of developing new questions which might provide a better measure of repeat victimisation (than simply trying to count the number of incidents). The current questions assume that respondents can translate their experience of repeat victimisation into a number of discrete events and some respondents will simply not be able to do so as some crimes are more of a lived experience or ongoing process of victimisation.

Consultation

13. Alongside the publication of the review ONS launched a public consultation which ran for 10 weeks from 6 July 2016 to 13 September 2016. It was published on the [consultations section](#) of the ONS website and launched alongside a [media article](#). It was also promoted via the ONS Twitter account, on the RSS StatsUserNet site and emails were sent to known stakeholders and other potentially interested parties to alert them to the consultation.
14. Users were provided with a copy of the review and invited to respond to an online survey to share their views regarding the recommendations made.

Consultation results

15. Overall there were 33 responses to the consultation; however, not every respondent fully completed the survey. Annex A provides greater detail on the responses received, including a range of quotes from the responses to each question.
16. Of the 33 responses 5 users did not fully complete the survey, only answering the yes/no questions and not providing any information about themselves. Of the 28 remaining responses 19 told us their name/ organisation. Respondents included:
 - Academics (University of East London, Lancaster University, Kings College London and the University of Portsmouth)
 - Welsh Government
 - Scottish government
 - Crime and Policing Analysis team from the Home Office
 - Third sector groups with an interest in domestic violence and abuse submitted responses (including, Women's aid, SafeLives, RISE and The Mankind Initiative).
17. When asked if the current methodology of capping counts of repeat incidents at 5 should be changed, 23 of the 28 respondents stated that it should and only 3 stated that they thought it should stay the same. Two users did not answer the yes/no question, one of whom stated they were open to changes to the methodology so long as the estimates remain robust in order to show meaningful trends.

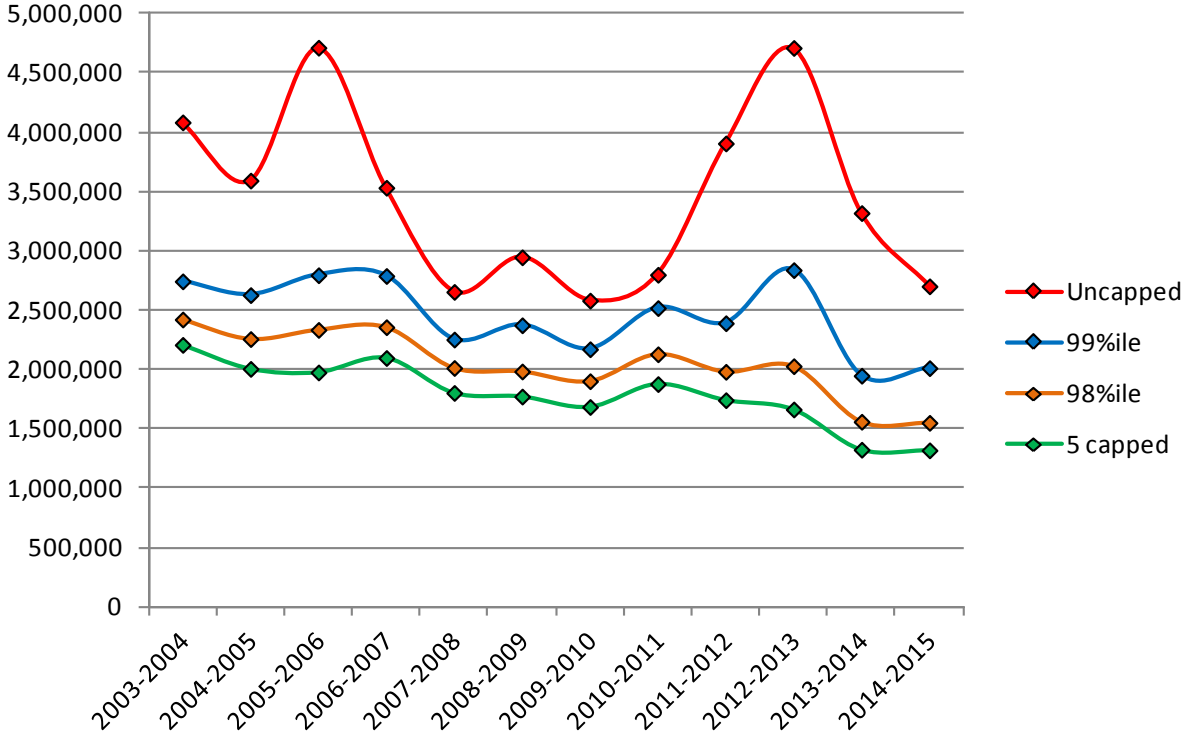
18. Approximately half of respondents thought that the proposed methodology of capping at the crime-specific 98th or 99th percentile was a suitable alternative to the current cap of 5. Those respondents who considered it not to be an appropriate alternative were mainly users interested in domestic violence and abuse statistics, although one of these groups differed in this regard and were in favour of the percentile approach. Users who agreed that this was a suitable alternative were more concerned about the importance of the aggregate CSEW time series. Of those respondents favouring the proposal, 5 stated a preference for the 98th percentile, 3 preferred the 99th percentile and 6 users did not state a preference.
19. When asked what their views are on the use of annualised multiple year aggregations, users had split opinions. Of the 21 responses to this question, roughly half supported the proposal and felt that the adverse effect on timeliness was an acceptable compromise to better reflect repeat victimisation. However, many of these respondents said they would not favour aggregation across different time periods for different crime types as it would be more difficult to interpret trends and be confusing for users. Roughly half of respondents were not in favour of any use of annualised multiple year aggregations at all, these users were concerned with maintaining the timeliness of the statistics and the ability to track yearly trends. When asked if they were prepared to accept a discontinuity to the series between 2001/02 and previous survey years when annualised multiple year aggregations would not be possible to calculate, the majority of respondents stated that this would be acceptable.
20. When asked whether creating a comparable time series was a priority, roughly half of respondents stated that the time series should be revised. Although users weren't in agreement as to how far back the data should be revised, some users said that up to 10 years of data would be enough whereas other users were concerned that revisions should go back as far as 1981 or 1995 (the crime peak) in order to avoid confusing and misleading users who may compare across time periods that would no longer be comparable. Roughly a quarter of respondents were not in favour of revising the back-series, and the remaining respondents did not state a preference in the yes/no question.
21. Respondents to the consultation were also asked for their views on giving greater prominence to prevalence rates and developing new questions to better capture experiences of repeat victims. There were mixed views from the 23 users who responded to this question. Of those users who agreed such an approach would be beneficial, most felt that it was important that both prevalence rates and incident counts were presented, rather than prevalence rates alone. Very few users stated that prevalence rates should be presented instead of the number of incidents.

Proposal

22. Based on the consultation responses it is proposed that:
- a) The use of annualised multiple year aggregations is not adopted. Although some users strongly advocated this approach, most respondents felt that the use of different time periods for different crime types would lack transparency and be confusing for users. Using the same time period for every crime type (for example, three years) would introduce an unnecessary loss of timeliness for most crime types where the use of multiple year aggregations is not necessary to provide stable estimates.
 - b) The 98th percentile of victim incident counts for each crime type (calculated over a number of years) is used as a cap on the number of repeat incidents any one respondent can report – the

research paper indicates that if these caps were calculated using data for 2003-15, then the cap of 5 would increase to 12 for violence and sexual offences, and 18 for threats. The use of the 98th rather than 99th percentile is recommended due to the increased volatility of single year point estimates when the 99th percentile is used as the cap basis (see chart 1 and Annex B).

Chart 1 Single year point estimates (number of violent incidents) under 4 estimation methods



23. However, it could be argued that capping at the 98th percentile (or even the 99th percentile) still results in a number of victims who experience the highest levels of repeat victimisation having the majority of the incidents they report being excluded from the headline measure of crime. Some users who responded to the consultation strongly stated that we should not be excluding the experiences of these victims from our statistics.

24. One way to respond to this criticism would be to publish uncapped estimates alongside the capped estimates to show the total number of incidents experienced in any one year. An alternative possible method could be that in addition to capping at the 98th percentile, those incidents excluded by this cap are averaged across multiple years in order to include the highest frequency repeat victimisations within the estimates without impacting unduly on estimates of change over time.

25. If either of these approaches were to be taken, further consideration would be required to address existing data quality issues. When victims report the number of incidents to the survey they are asked how many times the incident occurred each quarter with the option to give a number between 1 and 96 or 97 which includes victims with over 96 incidents and victims who said it was “too many to count”. Thus, if a victim states “too many to count” for each of the four quarters within the previous 12 months, this would be recorded as 388 (4*97) incidents, and once weighted (with

an average weight of around 1,000 for each respondent), would equate to a single survey respondent contributing around 400,000 incidents to the annual estimates. To find out more information about respondents who report there were “too many incidents to count” it is proposed to conduct a qualitative study with such victims to better understand whether these totals may suffer from systematic as well as random measurement error. Such a study could also be used to explore alternative questions designed to yield more informative measures of repeat victimisation.

Next steps and timetable

26. A response to the consultation will be published on the ONS website in October 2016. This will summarise the responses received and the change to the methodology that will be implemented going forward.
27. Making these methodological changes and revising the back series is a substantial piece of work. It is estimated that it would be the equivalent of one year’s work for a Senior Research Officer to complete this work. Funding is available as part of the Crime Statistics Improvement Project to take this work forward, but there is an opportunity cost as the work may result in other areas of improvement work being delayed or cancelled.
28. Given the further work needed to investigate how best to quantify “too many to count” and determine the feasibility of revisions prior to 2001/02, it is not feasible to implement the new methodology with the revised back series by next July (for the Year ending March 2017 publication) and therefore it is likely that this will instead be implemented in time for the publication in July 2018 (Year ending March 2018).

Emma Wright
Head of Crime Statistics Improvement, ONS
20 September 2016

Annex A – Consultation responses

1. The first question asked ‘Do you agree that the current methodology of capping counts of repeat incidents at 5 should be changed? Please explain your response.’ 28 people answered this question, 23 (82%) responded ‘Yes’, 3 (11%) responded ‘No’ and 2 (7%) did not say. Reasons given for changing the methodology included:

- “To better understand the true levels of repeat victimisation and who it effects”.
- “5 is too small...whilst 5 is unusually high for the majority of people who suffered crime, there are patterns in repeat victimisation that a cap limits our understanding of (i.e. domestic abuse, crime against younger people, socio-economic status)”.
- “The current methodology of capping repeat incidents at 5 results in a misleading picture of the rate of violent crime that hides the gendered nature of domestic abuse”
- “While the cap is in place we will only receive misleading information”
- “It is clear from the analysis presented in the technical paper that capping counts at 5 for all crime types significantly suppresses the raw data for certain crime types...”

Reasons given for not changing the methodology included:

- “Given the way in which crime counts are totalled up to produce trend measures it is absolutely imperative that a cap on numbers of repeat incidents is maintained to enable a sensible and proportionate estimate of crime to be produced”.
- “There is a risk of measurement error, the need to ensure a high level of accuracy, ensure timeliness, protect trend data”.

2. The second question asked ‘Is the proposed methodology of capping at the crime-specific 98th or 99th percentile a suitable alternative? Please explain your response, including your preference for which percentile should be used.’ 24 people answered this question, 12 (50%) responded ‘Yes’, 10 (42%) responded ‘No’ and 2 (8%) did not say. Of those who said that the proposed methodology was a suitable alternative, 5 (36%) thought the 98th percentile should be used, 3 (21%) thought the 99th percentile should be used, and 6 (43%) did not express a preference.

Those in support of the proposed methodology commented that:

- “analyses conducted by TNS-BMRB for this consultation demonstrate that this methodology would be a suitable alternative” and that “this would allow for a much more accurate understanding of the incidents of domestic abuse”.
- “capping crime specific 98th or 99th percentile would provide a suitable alternative”
- “This will provide sufficient accuracy re repeat victimisation”
- “this would be a huge improvement from before, and I prefer the 98th percentile”
- “The 98th percentile is less arbitrary than the current cap while still limiting the level of volatility added to the series. We believe that use of the 99th percentile would add too much volatility to the series for violence (and therefore potentially overall CSEW crime), based on the information presented in Figure 4 of the independent review.”

Reasons given for the proposal not being a suitable alternative included;

- “this still produces extreme counts for what may be low level but repeated victimisations. Repeat victimisation is important but needs to be measured differently and addressed separately, from the regular crime count”. The user also commented that the regular crime count is “already too wide in its inclusion of a lot of low level crime to provide a robust and consistent measure of criminality in the nation”
- “All of the problems of systematic under-estimation of the scale of crime and systematic bias in the distribution of different crime types and for particular groups of victims apply equally to

capping at 5 counts, the 98th percentile or the 99th percentile” The user goes on to say that “Although the 99th percentile might be “close” to the 100th percentile (representing all reported data), a considerable number of crimes are still excluded”.

- “We instead support the abolition of capping”
- “it would be minimally better than capping at five... a better solution would be to remove cap entirely”

3. The third question asked ‘What are your views on the use of annualised multiple year aggregations of data to report some crime types, and the use of different time periods for different crime types? Please explain your response.’ 21 people answered this question, 4 (19%) were in favour of this approach, 5 (23%) were in favour but said they didn’t like different time periods for different crime types, 9 (43%) were not in favour of this approach, 2 (9%) were in favour but noted that there would be difficulties in this approach and 1 person (5%) said that they didn’t know. Comments given in support of the proposal included:

- “These are useful for considering trends alongside annual figures for the current year”.
- “We consider the use of annualised multiple year aggregations of data to be a well-established technique to deal with the issue of volatility in data over time, where the sample size of the data is not large enough to deliver acceptable levels of volatility on an annual basis” however this user also stated that “The use of different time periods for different crime types is likely to reduce clarity, coherence and comparability”.
- “The benefits of bringing data together from across multiple years are of particular interest given the smaller sample sizes in Scotland. If this option is pursued, we’d imagine that the potential benefits of aggregations of multi-year data would need to be balanced against the practical challenges in developing the required multi-year datasets, and also in communicating the approach used and results to users.”

Comments given against the proposal included:

- “We do not support the use of annualised multiple year aggregations of data. As stated above, a key use of the CSEW is to show changes in the level of crime, for all CSEW crime and certain crime types. Annualised multiple year aggregations will mean this is only possible over the medium and longer term, and the CSEW will cease to be as useful to show short term changes in crime which we think would be significant loss of information”
- “It depends on the crime, but generally this would appear to add confusion rather than clarity. If the crime is relatively rare however and one wanted to measure trends then there may be a good purpose”.
- “Different time periods for different crime types would be difficult to get across to the reader and I would prefer to avoid this. I would also prefer not to have to go back more than 3 years”.
- “We would caution especially against the use of different time periods for different crime types, which we think would complicate the comparison and interpretation of trends data” the user also commented that “we would argue for analysis plans to be set a priori, rather than making post-hoc adjustments to the time periods used to report crimes of different types”.

4. The fourth question asked ‘The use of annualised multiple year aggregations of data would affect the timeliness of the data. Do you think that the effect on timeliness would be an acceptable compromise to better reflect high frequency repeat victimisation in the estimates? Please explain your response.’ 23 people answered this question, 13 (57%) responded ‘Yes’, 4 (17%) responded

'No' and 6 (26%) did not say in the yes/no question. Reasons given for accepting the effect on timeliness included:

- "The increased accuracy which would be achieved in relation to high frequency repeat victimisation justifies this. If it led to a more accurate and better representation of individual's experiences, we would accept that data needed to be aggregated"
- "The use of annualised multiple year aggregations of data would have a minor effect on the timeliness of the data. After an initial transition period new estimates would be calculate on an annual basis with a small time lag. The minor effect on the timeliness would be an acceptable compromise in order to increase the relevance, accuracy, clarity, coherence and comparability of the crime statistics in England and Wales".
- "We think that improving the analysis by removing the cap is more important than concerns about preserving the time series. We believe that it is also important that the crime survey captured experiences of power and control and the impact this has on the victims".

Reasons given for not accepting the effect on timeliness included:

- "I have said yes but I'm not really sure about this. 3 years is a long time to wait and the lack of timeliness would mean that evidence to act is not available"
- "Making the data less timely appears to be a step backwards. The overlapping time periods are confusing, and this approach seems more convoluted than the current cap, or the proposed 98th/99th percentile cap."
- "We do not recommend the use of annualised multiple year aggregations"
- "In this instance, we believe that the main face-to-face survey should concentrate on timely and robust estimates rather than trying to better reflect high repeat victimisation."

5. The fifth question was 'Revising previous CSEW figures based on any new methodology to create a comparable time series would be a substantial task. Do you consider this to be a priority in relation to your use of crime statistics? Please explain your response.' 24 people answered this question, 11 (46%) responded 'Yes', 6 (25%) responded 'No' and 7 (29%) did not say in the yes/no question. Reasons given for this not being a priority included:

- "My use of such crime statistics is minimal and does not need such new methodologies. Would suggest we set a (previously defined) number of users calling for this change before we go ahead".
- "Not a priority, as noted the current list of recordable crimes is too wide. It would be simple to establish a more focussed and reliable index of major crimes with which to measure overall crime trends".
- One user referred to their answer to the previous question: "We think that improving the analysis by removing the cap is more important than concerns about preserving the time series. We believe that it is also important that the crime survey captured experiences of power and control and the impact this has on the victims".

Reasons given for this being a priority included:

- "We think it is important to release an updated time series at the same time as any estimates are produced on a new basis. This is in order to avoid confusing and inadvertently misleading users of such an important series, who may try to compare across time periods that are no longer comparable. Therefore we consider this to be an absolute priority and would be very concerned if ONS undermined the comparability of the CSEW series over the last 35 years."
- "Without a backseries a discontinuity will be introduced into the time series. It would be useful to see the trend over the last decade at least".

- “an important task to do if the new methodology is adopted for sake of comparison and crime trend analysis”
 - “For those who rely on ONS published statistics on crime in England and Wales, including policy makers, civil society, and the public, the creation of a comparable time series based on a new methodology is a priority”.
6. The sixth question asked ‘Would you be prepared to accept a discontinuity between survey years prior to 2001/02 (when the survey was not continuous and use of annualised multiple year aggregations is not possible) and 2001/02 onwards? Please explain your response.’ 23 people answered this question, 15 (65%) responded ‘Yes’, 4 (17%) responded ‘No’ and 4 (17%) were not able to say. Comments given included:
- “Yes – data users would still have access to 15 years worth of data, enabling analysis of trends”
 - “A time series from 2001/02 would be fine in itself for studying the trend and evidencing prevalence and incidence of repeat victimisation”
 - “While we would prefer that there was not a discontinuity between survey years we would be prepared to accept a discontinuity in order to improve the analysis and consequently the data used for planning current and future service provision”.
 - “Given that the impact of capping on trends in violent crime has been demonstrated to be so significant, it is important to be able to re-asses crime trends in England and Wales producing and alternative methodology as far back as possible, preferable to the beginning of the data series in 1982, but at least as far back as the 1990’s where crime rates in England and Wales currently reach a peak”.
 - Crime and Policing Analysis believe that one of the strengths of the CSEW is that the same methodology has been used since the first survey 35 years ago. This consistent methodology means that there is 35 year time series of crime that can be cross compared against other surveys and sources of information to understand criminal behaviour and potentially identify worrying signs in emerging statistics. We would not want to see a break in the existing time series. A break in the series would be particularly unhelpful given the crime ‘peak’ was in the 1995 survey, and we would no longer be able to measure trends from this point.
7. The seventh question asked ‘What are your views on giving greater prominence to prevalence rates and developing new questions to better capture the experience of repeat victims? Please explain your response.’ Of the 23 responses to this question there were mixed opinions on whether this would approach would be suitable. Of those who commented they were in favour of this approach many commented that this should be done alongside calculating the number of incidents. Comments in favour of this approach included:
- “This would be an excellent step forward – it is very important to have a clear picture of both numbers (i.e. how many incidents) but also how many victims to give an indication of repeat incidents and victims”
 - “It seems a worth area to explore further –but again may have implications for the continuity of the time series data”.
 - “Prevalence data are preferable to incidence data, as they are easier to understand and more robust”
 - “It is essential to give greater prominence to rates as the current methodology results in inaccurate data about the prevalence for women experiencing it. Yes most definitely new questions should be developed to better capture the experience of repeat victims. You must as a minimum ask a question about coercive and controlling behaviour and frequency of occurrence of such behaviour, establish this and capture behaviours such as stalking”

- “Alongside the collection of data on the prevalence of incidents of physical and sexual abuse there should also be priority given to collecting information on the context of abuse (for example, did the abuse cause fear)”.

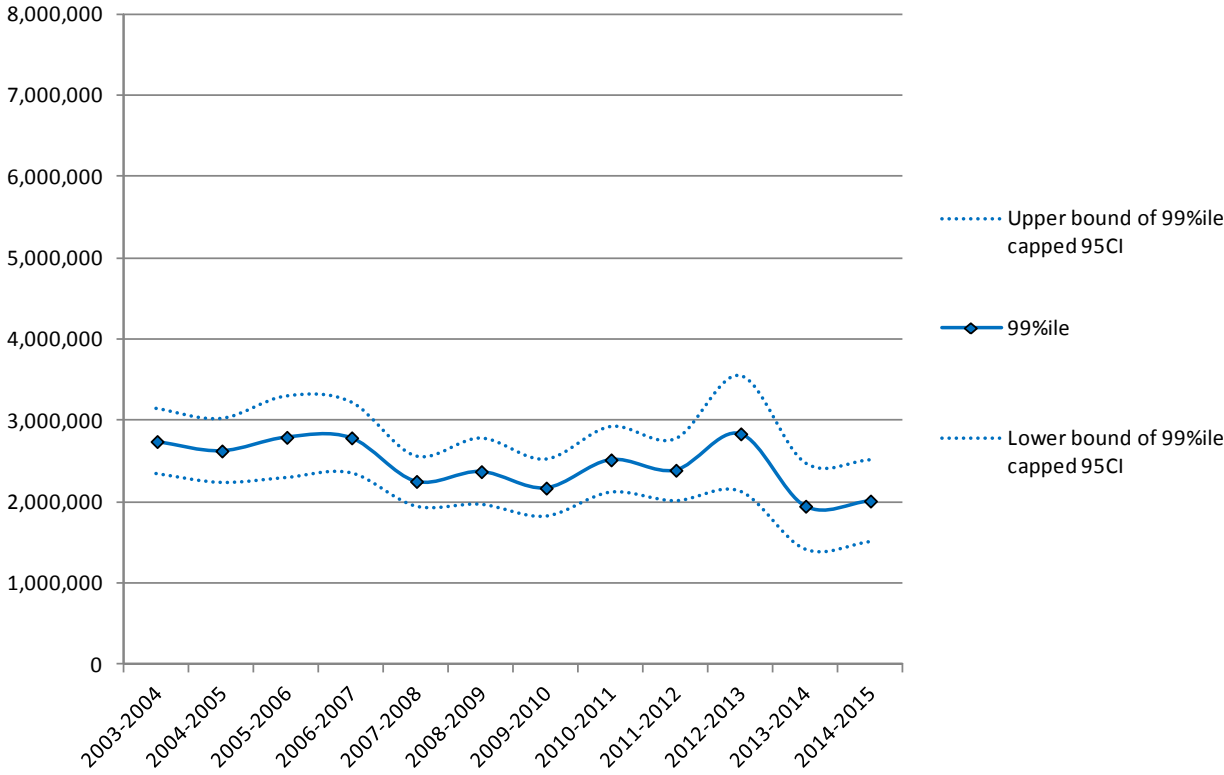
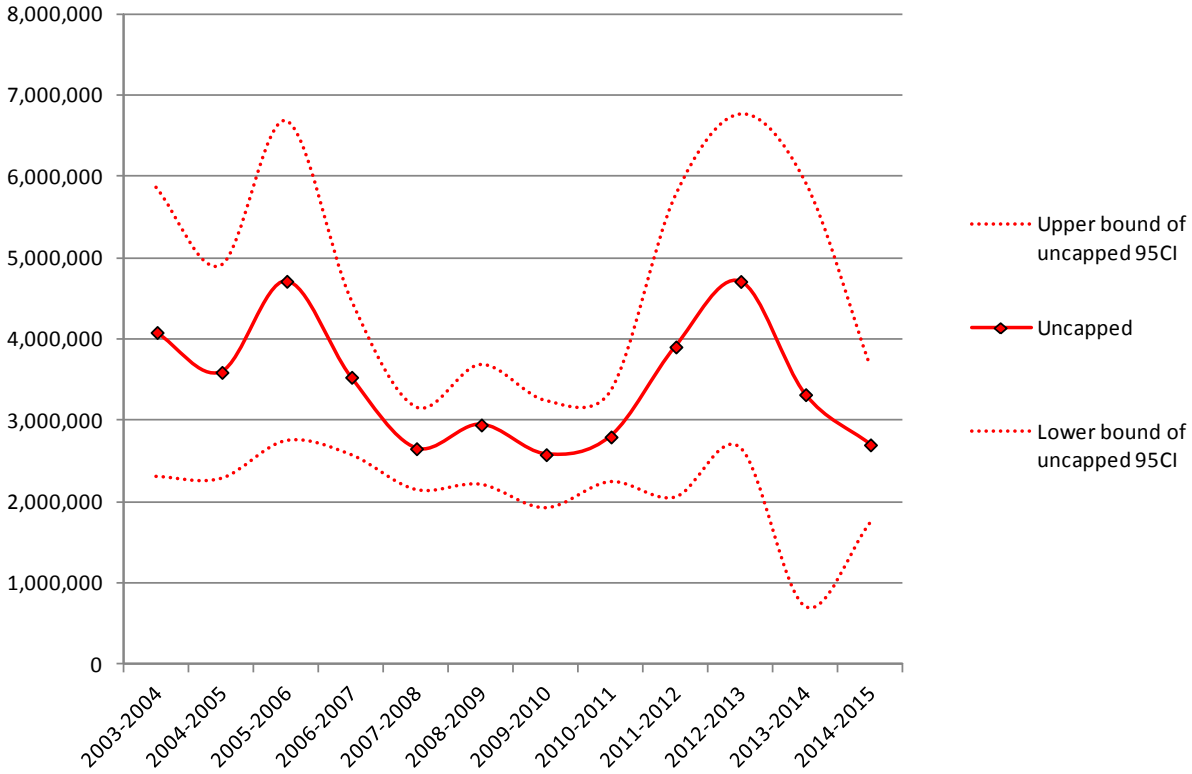
Comments not in favour of this approach include:

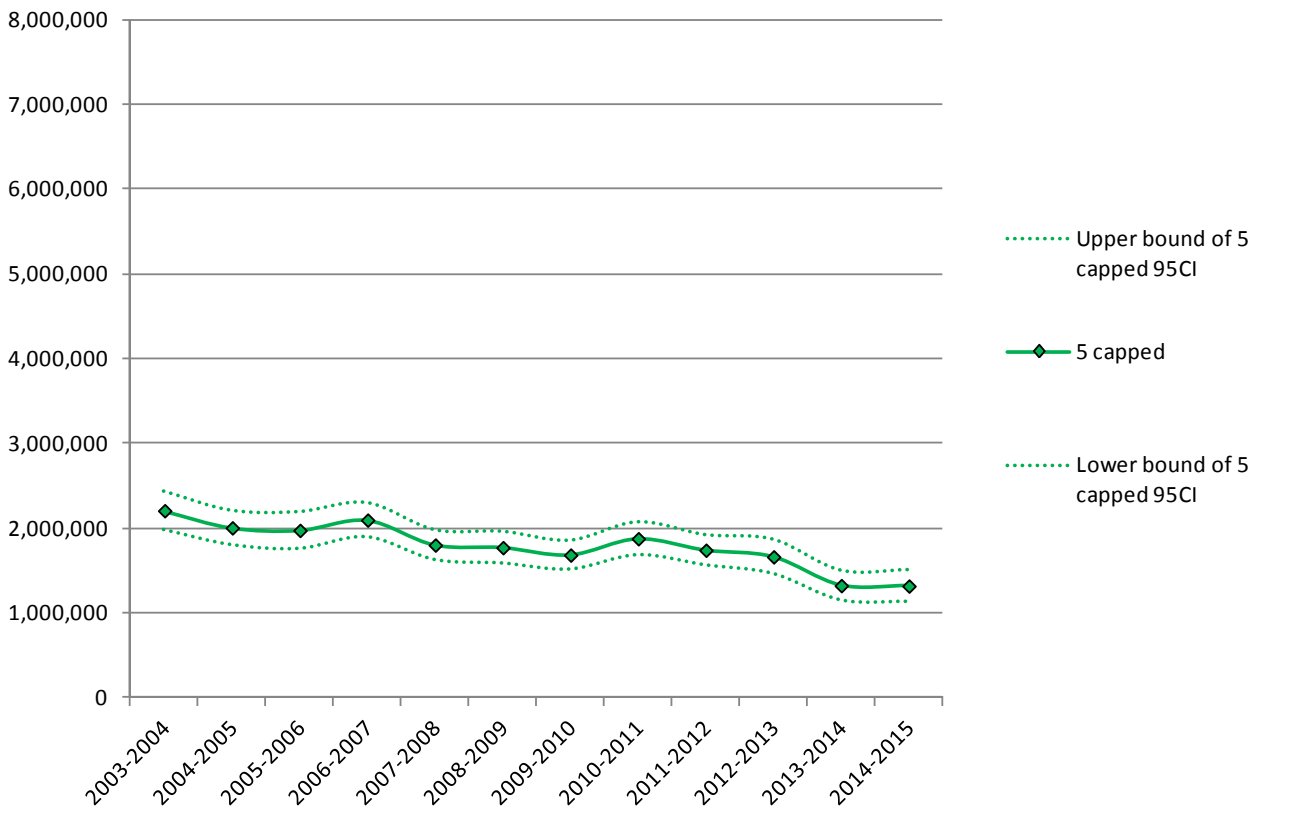
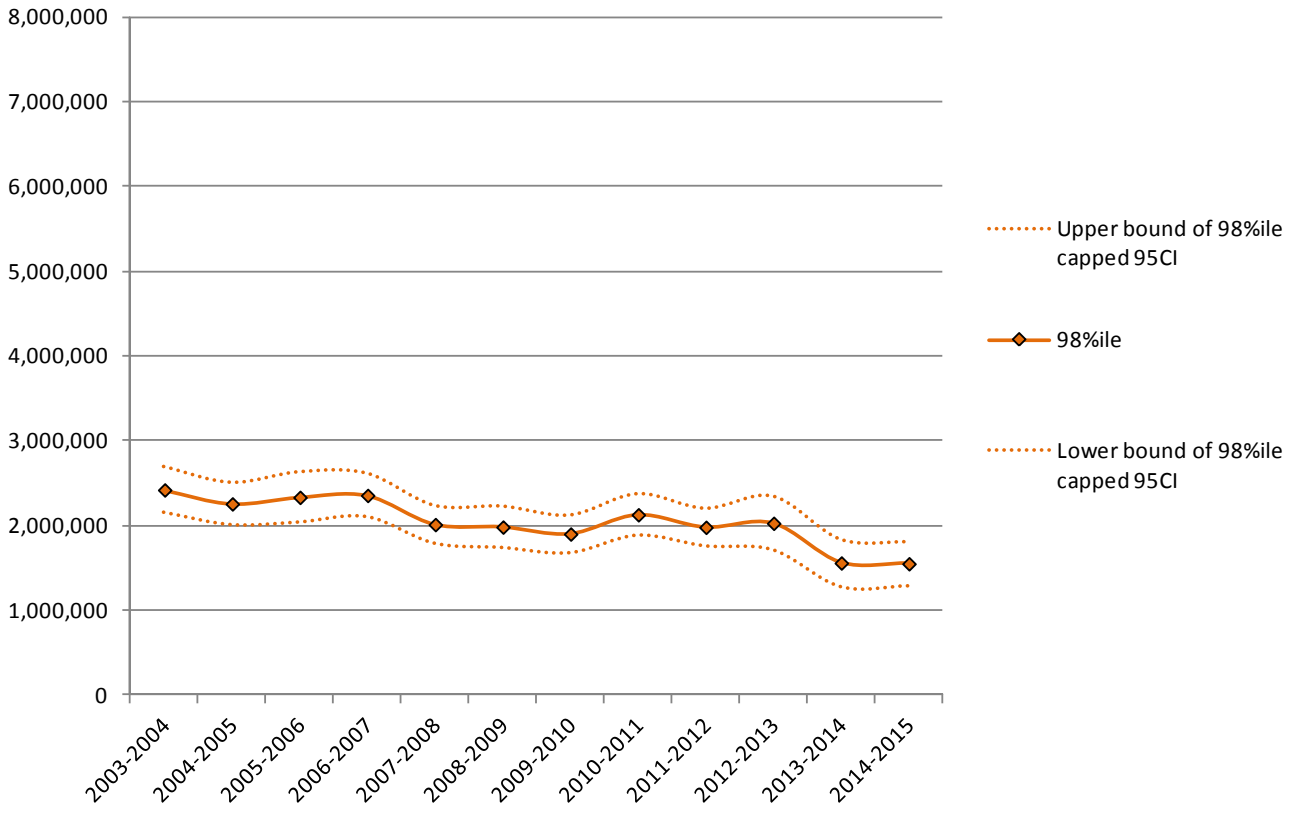
- “The ONS already publishes estimates of crime prevalence, this should be maintained. However the primary purpose of the CSEW is to produce estimates of crime which are also comparable with police recorded crime and with other European and International measures of crime. The primary unit of the measurement of crime in the CSEW must continue to be number of crimes” although the user goes on to say “we would welcome some further investigation of the experiences of repeat victims”
- “We understand the priority for CSEW as producing estimates of crime which are comparable to police data and other data sets so to that extent the primary focus would be estimates of crime. Prevalence data is valuable however not at the expense of number of reported incidents.”

8. Finally respondents were asked if they had any other comments. Comments included:

- “The capping methodology produces inaccurate estimates of crime that are systematically biased in specific ways whatever the level of the cap is set at. It is possible to increase the accuracy of crime estimates by deriving them from all reported crimes without increasing volatility over time by utilising three year rolling averages. A move away from capping to deriving crime estimates based on all reported crimes would increase: relevance, accuracy, clarity, coherence and comparability of crime statistics and would thus better conform to ONS quality principles”.
- “The survey must collect data in the gender of the victim and of the perpetrator and their relationship. These data must be used in the survey’s analysis.
- “I would commend the previous proposal to establish an index of high level serious crimes for the main crime trend measure, as at present the police trend is distorted by including too many low level high volume crime reports. Including repeat victimisation risks producing the same distortion in the survey trends and would reduce not add clarity to the statistics”.

Annex B Single year point estimates (number of violent incidents) under 4 estimation methods with confidence intervals





NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proposed presentational changes to ONS crime statistics

NSCSAC(16)9

Purpose/Issue

1. This paper outlines proposed presentational changes to the official statistics on crime in England and Wales published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Action

2. The Committee are asked to consider the proposed changes and give their views on whether ONS should put these into practice.

Background

3. One of the corporate priorities of ONS is to improve the accessibility of our official statistics. There has been a range of activity across the office including:
 - the development of a new corporate website with improved search functionality;
 - launch of parallel [ONS Visual](#) website to carry more engaging interactive content aimed primarily at the “citizen user”; and,
 - changes to the format and length of statistical bulletins to make the key messages clearer and more accessible.
4. In line with these corporate initiatives, the ONS crime statistics team have been working on improvements to our standard outputs. In moving to the new ONS format, we have managed to reduce the length of the regular quarterly bulletin from 100 printed pages to around 40. This has been achieved largely by focusing on notable changes rather than providing a commentary on every offence category.
5. To ensure users can still access commentary on specific crime types, the team is currently working on a series of short ‘overview’ articles which will provide users with more detail and context which is not covered by the quarterly bulletin. The first of these articles, an [‘Overview of fraud statistics’](#), was published in July.
6. This paper outlines further proposals to improve the ONS bulletin by giving greater emphasis to rates of crime as headline figures as well as in the broader commentary and charts describing crime levels and trends.
7. Official statistics on crime in England and Wales have for a long time used **volumes of crime** as headline measures, both in terms of the number of crimes recorded by the police and estimates of the number of crimes from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). There is also an extensive range of CSEW data tables providing estimated **prevalence rates** (i.e. the proportion of the population that have been victims) and **incidence rates** (the number of crime incidents per 1,000 population) for different crime types. Police recorded crime

rates (i.e. the number of crimes recorded per 1,000 population) are also used in presenting local area statistics.

8. Consequently the media reporting, which is the medium through most citizens absorb the statistics, lead on volumes. Reporting on volumes of crime alone is not the most helpful way of communicating to citizens, for example, their risk of falling victim of crime.

Rationale for changing the existing presentation

9. We believe that greater prominence should be given to rates of crime as these provide a more meaningful measure, which citizen users should find more understandable. For example, the CSEW headline estimate from the latest bulletin of 6.3 million incidents expressed as a prevalence rate indicates that 15.2% of adults were a victim of at least one crime in the 12 months prior to interview. Similarly, the 4.5 million crimes recorded by the police is equivalent to 79 offences per 1,000 population. These measures put the volume of crime in context. Informing the public that, for example 2 in every 100 households were victims of burglary in the last year compared with 9 in 100 in the mid-1990s is a more meaningful way of describing the downward trend in crime than simply saying the volume of burglaries has dropped by 71% since 1995.
10. The use of crime rates in presenting trends over time also has the advantage of taking into account changes in the resident population of England and Wales. Changes in the crime rate over time more reliably represent changes in the risk of being a victim of crime, where trends in volumes of crime could be influenced by changes in size of the population.
11. Crime statistics produced in other countries make extensive use of rates (alongside volumes) in presenting their figures. In the United States, reporting of statistics from the [National Crime Victimization Survey](#) is primarily based on crime rates and this is also true of reports on [Canada's victimisation survey](#).
12. There has also been much recent discussion of methods for handling repeat victimisation in CSEW estimates of the number of incidents of crime. ONS commissioned an independent [methodological review](#) and this concluded that the practice of estimating the volume of crime was itself problematic given its skewed distribution. This review recommended that ONS should give greater prominence to measures of prevalence and consider developing ordinal or categorical approaches to measuring repeat victimisation rather than interval measures. So, for example instead of asking victims to provide the number of times that they experienced the same crime in the previous year the survey could carry other questions with broader categories which would be easier to answer accurately and with significantly less measurement error. This would in-turn reduce the volatility of the estimates from one year to the next.
13. Presenting police recorded crime as rates per 1,000 population enables more meaningful comparisons of crime levels in different areas. Police force areas vary considerably in population size; an important factor in determining the volume of crime in an area. For example, West Yorkshire police recorded around 96,000 theft offences in 2015/16 compared with 22,000 in Cleveland police force area, but rates of theft in both areas were similar (around 40 crimes per 1,000 population). One important caveat concerning the interpretation of crime rates for some urban areas is that these can be distorted in areas where the resident population is substantially smaller than the daytime population, for example where

large numbers of people commute to work. In such areas the statistics will overstate rates of crime and we are careful to stress these caveats to users. Where the effect is pronounced (e.g. in the City of London) we do not present rates of crime.

What would change?

14. The proposed presentational changes would affect the following elements of the ONS statistical bulletins:

Commentary: Descriptions of the latest crime levels and trends would be changed to focus more on prevalence rates and incidence rates, though volumes of crime would continue to be presented. Annex A provides an example of how the commentary could be changed.

Charts in the bulletin: Charts in the statistical bulletin would be updated to be based on crime rates. Annex B gives examples of existing and proposed chart formats.

Reference tables: No major changes to reference tables are proposed. Where percentage change figures are presented these would be changed to be based on comparisons of crime rates rather than volumes.

15. There are a number of different approaches that could be taken in the presentation of headline figures summarising all CSEW crime. While the calculation of prevalence and incidence rates for individual crime types is relatively straightforward, for all CSEW crime it is more complicated. The prevalence of all CSEW crime (15.2% in the latest figures) provides a simple headline figure, but it is based on the assumption that, for household level crimes like burglary or vehicle-related theft, all adults in the household are victims. In this sense it could be seen as overstating the extent of victimisation among the adult population. Alternative approaches to summarise all CSEW crime include an incidence rate (based on estimated number of CSEW incidents divided by the adult population) or presenting separate rates for personal crimes and household crimes.

Risks of making these changes

16. There is a risk that, in the short term, changes to the existing presentation could confuse users who are used to the existing format. To help manage this risk we would make clear what had changed and would keep changes to table and figure numbering to a minimum.
17. There can sometimes be small differences in trends when comparing changes in volumes of crime and changes in rates. While both trends are already presented in the official statistics, a move to presenting rates-based trends more prominently could cause confusion among users over which measure they should use. For example, CSEW estimates for the survey year ending March 2016 showed an 11% non-significant fall in the number of incidents of domestic burglary alongside a statistically significant 13% fall in the number of households that were victims (derived from the prevalence rate). This would need to be explained to users.
18. There may be a risk in giving less prominence to volumes of crime, at a time when fraud and computer misuse are soon to be incorporated into the Official Statistics from the CSEW. It could appear that ONS are attempting to suppress

large volume estimates of crime once the new figures are incorporated. To help mitigate this risk ONS would continue to present volumes of crime, alongside rates. Also, the incorporation of new fraud and computer misuse data will inflate rates of crime as well as volumes.

Timing

19. If the Committee agree that these presentational changes would be an improvement, the first statistical bulletin in which they could be implemented would be the 'Focus on Property crime: 2015 to 2016' scheduled for release on 24th November 2016. The change would be adopted in the regular quarterly bulletin due for publication in January 2017.

John Flatley and Mark Bangs
ONS Crime Statistics and Analysis Team

September 2016

Annex A: Examples of commentary from quarterly crime statistics bulletin

Extract from statistical bulletin ‘Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2016’; an example of the **existing commentary**, based primarily on number of incidents of crime.

Interpreting trends in violent crime

Main findings

Over the longer-term, levels of violent crime measured by the CSEW have shown substantial falls.

CSEW findings for the latest survey year, however, show no change in levels of violence compared with the previous survey year, although it is too early to say whether this represents a change in the long-term downward trend. [Research](#) from Cardiff University, based upon a survey of hospital emergency departments and walk-in centres in England and Wales, shows a similar trend in violence-related attendances for treatment.

There was a 27% increase in violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the latest year compared with the previous year and the latest figures represent the highest number recorded in a 12-month period since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002.

Improvements in crime recording processes and practices by the police are thought to be the main drivers behind recent trends in violent against the person offences rather than a “real” increase in such offences. Furthermore, the expansion of the harassment category (a sub-category of “Violence without injury”) in April 2015 to include 2 additional offences that were previously non-notifiable, has also contributed to the rise. Further details are available under the sub-heading “Police recorded crime” within this section.

The police recorded 571 homicides in the latest year, 34 more than in the previous year, an increase of 6%. This is among the highest number of homicides recorded in any 12-month period over the last 5 years, however, over the longer-term, there has been a general downward trend in recorded homicides. The recording of homicides is not prone to changes in recording practice by the police.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

CSEW violence includes incidents with and without injury, covering both completed and attempted incidents.

Latest CSEW data showed there were an estimated 1.3 million incidents of violence experienced by adults aged 16 and over in the latest survey year; no change from the previous survey year (the apparent 3% fall was not statistically significant). There was an apparent 15% decrease in the sub-category of “violence with injury” and an apparent 9% increase in the sub-category of “violence without injury”, although neither of these changes were statistically significant (Figure 3).

The estimated number of CSEW violence incidents rose sharply through the early 1990s (peaking in 1995) and then fell steeply until the survey year ending March 2002. The underlying trend in violence between the survey year ending March 2002 and survey year ending March 2014 has been declining, but the last two survey years indicate a slowing rate of decline.

Around 2 in every 100 adults were a victim of CSEW violent crime in the latest survey year, compared with around 3 in 100 adults in the survey year ending March 2006 and 5 in 100 adults in 1995 (the peak year).

...

Police recorded crime

Violent offences in police recorded data are referred to as “violence against the person” and include homicide, violence with injury and violence without injury. As with the CSEW, both actual and attempted assaults are included in the figures.

There was a 27% increase in the number of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the latest year (up to 994,444) compared with the previous year. Improvements in crime recording practices and processes are thought to be a significant driver of this change.

The “violence without injury” sub-category showed an increase of 39% over the same period (up to 562,615 offences), while the “violence with injury” sub-category showed a smaller increase of 15% (up to 431,258 offences).

The increase in “violence without injury” is partially due to a 90% rise in harassment offences in the latest year compared with the previous year (up to 155,809 from 81,796). The rise in harassment is almost entirely the result of the expansion of this category in April 2015 to include 2 additional notifiable offences that were previously not included in the police recorded crime series. These are “Disclosure of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause distress or anxiety” and “Sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety”; the latter thought to account for around 95% of these newly added offences. Overall, the expansion of the harassment category is thought to account for around half of the increase in “violence without injury”¹⁶.

The increase in the “violence with injury” sub-category includes a 20% rise in the number of attempted murder offences (a volume increase of 114) in the latest year. Attempted murder has risen in 26 of the 44 police forces (including the British Transport Police) in England and Wales; these figures may also have been influenced by improvements in crime recording. Prior to the recent tightening of recording practices, it is possible that some police officers may have been applying Crown Prosecution Service charging standards (guidelines on what charges should be brought against suspects) when deciding what type of crime to record rather than basing the decision on the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR), which require offences to be recorded in line with the criminal offence committed. Attempted murder is an important example of this potential issue, as offences may have previously been recorded (and charged) as another type of violent crime that is easier to prove in court, such as “assault with intent to cause serious harm”.

Every police force recorded a rise in violence in the latest year compared with the previous year. In percentage terms, the largest increase was reported by West Yorkshire Police, which recorded an additional 21,749 offences compared with the previous year (an increase of 76%, up to 50,264). Other large increases included Warwickshire Police (up 71%, to 8,387 offences), Northumbria Police (up 64%, to 21,678) and West Mercia Police (up 58%, to 22,932)

Mock-up example of **proposed commentary** giving greater prominence to rates

Interpreting trends in violent crime

Main findings

Over the longer term, levels of violent crime measured by both the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and police recorded crime have shown substantial falls.

CSEW findings for the latest survey year (ending March 2016), however, show no change in levels of violence compared with the previous year, although it is too early to say whether this represents a change in the long-term downward trend. Research from Cardiff University based upon a survey of hospital emergency departments and walk-in centres shows a similar trend.

There was a 26% increase in the rate of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2016 compared to the previous year and the latest figures represent the highest violence against the person offence rate since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in the year ending March 2003.

However, improvements in crime recording processes by the police are thought to be the main driver of this change rather than a 'real' increase in violence against the person offences and recent changes in recording practice make interpreting trends difficult.

In the year ending March 2016, the police recorded 571 homicides, 34 more than in the previous year, which represents an increase of 6%. The recording of homicides is not prone to changes in recording practice by the police.

CSEW

CSEW violence includes incidents with and without injury, covering both completed and attempted incidents.

Latest CSEW estimates show the likelihood of being a victim of violence was 1.8% (equivalent to 824,000 adult victims) in the survey year ending March 2016; no change from the previous year (also 1.8%). The subcategories of 'violence with injury' (0.9%) and 'violence without injury' (0.9%) also showed no change when compared with the previous year.

The survey year ending March 2016 showed that there were an estimated 1.3 million incidents of violence experienced by adults aged 16 and over.

Looking at longer term trends, the estimated likelihood of being a victim of CSEW violence rose sharply through the early 1990s, (peaking at 4.8% in the year ending December 1995), then fell steeply until the year ending March 2002 survey (to 3.2%), returning to year ending December

1991 levels. The underlying trend in violence between the year ending March 2004 and year ending March 2014 surveys has been declining (likelihood of being a victim falling from 3.4% and 1.8%) but has levelled out in the last two survey years.

In the latest survey year adults were over a third less likely to be a victim of violence (2 in 100) than in the survey year ending March 2006 (3 in 100 adults) and over three-fifths less likely than the peak level in 1995 (5 in 100 adults).

...

Police recorded crime

Violent offences in police recorded data are referred to as 'violence against the person' and include homicide, violence with injury, and violence without injury. As with the CSEW, both actual and attempted assaults are included in the figures.

There was a 26% increase in the offence rate of violence against the person offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2016 (17 per 1,000 population) with 994,444 offences recorded by the police. Improvements in crime recording processes by the police are thought to be the main driver of this change.

The 'violence without injury' subcategory showed an increase in the offence rate of 38% over the same period (up to 10 offences per 1,000 population), while the 'violence with injury' subcategory showed a smaller increase of 14% (up to 8 offences per 1,000 population).

The increase in 'violence without injury' is partially due to an 89% rise in the rate of harassment offences in the year ending March 2016. The rise in harassment is almost entirely the result of the expansion of this category in April 2015 to include 2 additional offences ('disclosure of private sexual photographs and films with the intent to cause distress or anxiety' and 'sending letters with intent to cause distress or anxiety') that were previously non-notifiable.

The increase in the 'violence with injury' category includes a 19% rise in the rate of attempted murder offences (an increase of 114 offences) in the year ending March 2016. Attempted murder has risen in 26 of the 44 police forces (including the British Transport Police) in England and Wales. Although consistent with the increase in homicide over the same period, figures for attempted murder may have been influenced by improvements in crime recording. Prior to the recent tightening of recording practices it is possible that some police officers may have been applying Crown Prosecution Service charging standards (guidelines on what charges should be brought against suspects) when deciding what type of crime to record rather than basing the decision on the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). Attempted murder is an important example of this potential issue as offences may have previously been recorded (and charged) as another type of violent crime that is easier to prove in court, such as 'wounding with intent'.

Every police force recorded a rise in violence in the year ending March 2016 compared with the previous year. In percentage terms, the largest rate increase was reported by West Yorkshire Police, which recorded an additional 10 offences per 1,000 population compared with the previous year (up to 22, an increase of 75%). Other large rate increases included Warwickshire

Police (up to 15 per 1,000 population, 70%), Northumbria Police (up to 15 offences per 1,000 population, 64%) and West Mercia Police (up to 18 offences per 1,000 population, 57%)

The existing format summary tables would continue to be used in the new format bulletin, though percentage changes would be based on rates rather than numbers:

Table 1a: CSEW incidence rates and numbers of incidents for year ending March 2016 and percentage change¹

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 and over/households				
Offence group ²	Apr '15 to Mar '16		April 2015 to March 2016 compared with:			
	Rate per 1,000 population ³	Number of incidents (thousands) ⁴	Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '05 to Mar '06	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '14 to Mar '15
			Number of incidents - percentage change and significance ⁵			
Violence	28	1,268	-67 *	-36 *	-33 *	-3
with injury	13	575	-75 *	-47 *	-47 *	-15
without injury	15	693	-56 *	-23 *	-16	9
Robbery	3	154	-55 *	-49 *	-36 *	73 *
Theft offences ⁶	..	3,704	-68 *	-35 *	-28 *	-8 *
Theft from the person	8	363	-47 *	-35 *	-34 *	-19
Other theft of personal property	17	764	-63 *	-34 *	-21 *	4
Unweighted base - number of adults	35,324					
Domestic burglary	29	701	-71 *	-32 *	-32 *	-11
in a dwelling	20	495	-72 *	-31 *	-33 *	-11
in a non-connected building to a dwelling	9	206	-68 *	-33 *	-30 *	-9
Other household theft	28	672	-57 *	-17 *	-28 *	-12 *
Unweighted base - number of households	35,248					
Vehicle-related theft	47	878	-79 *	-48 *	-25 *	-5
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	28,252					
Bicycle theft	26	327	-50 *	-22 *	-37 *	-14
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	16,811					
Criminal damage	50	1,209	-63 *	-54 *	-43 *	-9
Unweighted base - number of households	35,248					
ALL CSEW CRIME ⁶	..	6,334	-67 *	-40 *	-33 *	-6 *

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

1. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A1 and A2.

2. Section 5 of the [User Guide](#) provides more information about the crime types included in this table.

3. Rates for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted per 1,000 adults; rates for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted per 1,000 households; rates for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted per 1,000 vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.

4. Data may not sum to totals shown due to rounding.

5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

6. It is not possible to construct a rate for all theft offences or CSEW crime because rates for household offences are based on rates per household, and those for personal offences on rates per adult, and the two cannot be combined.

Table 1b: CSEW prevalence rates and numbers of victims for year ending March 2016 and percentage change¹

England and Wales		Adults aged 16 and over/households				
Offence group ²	Apr '15 to Mar '16		April 2015 to March 2016 compared with:			
	Percentage, victims once or more ³	Number of victims (thousands) ⁴	Jan '95 to Dec '95	Apr '05 to Mar '06	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '14 to Mar '15
			Numbers of victims - percentage change and significance ⁵			
Violence	1.8	824	-57 *	-29 *	-31 *	1
with injury	0.9	417	-65 *	-39 *	-41 *	-3
without injury	0.9	430	-50 *	-20 *	-20 *	4
Robbery	0.3	127	-54 *	-45 *	-35 *	49
Theft offences ⁶	10.6	4,868	-62 *	-26 *	-25 *	-7 *
Theft from the person	0.7	338	-48 *	-34 *	-32 *	-17
Other theft of personal property	1.5	679	-59 *	-33 *	-20 *	7
Unweighted base - number of adults	35,324					
Domestic burglary	2.3	554	-69 *	-29 *	-32 *	-13 *
in a dwelling	1.6	385	-71 *	-30 *	-35 *	-15 *
in a non-connected building to a dwelling	0.7	176	-68 *	-29 *	-27 *	-9
Other household theft	2.3	551	-48 *	-8 *	-25 *	-9 *
Unweighted base - number of households	35,248					
Vehicle-related theft	4.0	748	-75 *	-43 *	-23 *	-2
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	28,252					
Bicycle theft	2.3	296	-47 *	-18 *	-32 *	-10
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	16,811					
Criminal damage	3.7	905	-57 *	-47 *	-36 *	-1
Unweighted base - number of households	35,248					
ALL CSEW CRIME⁷	15.2	6,983	-57 *	-29 *	-26 *	-4

Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales, Office for National Statistics

1. More detail on further years can be found in Appendix tables A3 and A8.

2. Section 5 of the [User Guide](#) provides more information about the crime types included in this table.

3. Percentages for violence, robbery, theft from the person and other theft of personal property are quoted for adults; percentages for domestic burglary, other household theft, and criminal damage are quoted for households; percentages for vehicle-related theft and bicycle theft are quoted for vehicle-owning and bicycle-owning households respectively.

4. Where applicable, numbers in sub-categories will not sum to totals, because adults/households may have been a victim of more than one crime.

5. Statistically significant change at the 5% level is indicated by an asterisk.

6. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal theft crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household theft crime.

7. This is the estimated percentage/number of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime.

Table 2: Police recorded crimes – rate, number and percentage change for year ending March 2016^{1,2,3}

England and Wales					
Offence group	Apr '15 to Mar '16		April 2015 to March 2016 compared with:		
	Rate per 1,000 population	Number of offences	Apr '05 to Mar '06	Apr '10 to Mar '11	Apr '14 to Mar '15
			Number of offences - percentage change		
VICTIM-BASED CRIME	60	3,451,940	-30	-4	9
Violence against the person offences	17	994,444	19	49	27
Homicide	0	571	-25	-11	6
Violence with injury ⁴	8	431,258	-21	17	15
Violence without injury ⁵	10	562,615	91	90	39
Sexual offences	2	106,378	76	97	21
Rape	1	35,798	148	125	22
Other sexual offences	1	70,580	54	86	20
Robbery offences	1	50,904	-48	-33	1
Robbery of business property	0	5,421	-38	-30	0
Robbery of personal property	1	45,483	-49	-34	1
Theft offences	31	1,760,305	-36	-16	0
Burglary	7	400,361	-38	-23	-3
Domestic burglary	3	193,773	-36	-25	-2
Non-domestic burglary	4	206,588	-40	-22	-4
Vehicle offences	6	366,715	-54	-18	4
Theft of a motor vehicle	1	82,047	-66	-30	8
Theft from a vehicle	4	239,082	-53	-24	1
Interfering with a motor vehicle	1	45,586	-36	52	19
Theft from the person	1	83,315	-33	-10	6
Bicycle theft	2	86,616	-23	-21	-7
Shoplifting	6	336,708	14	10	3
All other theft offences ⁶	8	486,590	-37	-22	-1
Criminal damage and arson	9	539,909	-54	-22	7
OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	8	441,007	-14	-8	9
Drug offences	3	147,557	-17	-37	-13
Trafficking of drugs	0	25,402	0	-21	-6
Possession of drugs	2	122,155	-20	-39	-15
Possession of weapons offences	0	25,502	-36	-3	16
Public order offences	4	204,616	-8	18	28
Miscellaneous crimes against society	1	63,332	-15	32	21
TOTAL FRAUD OFFENCES⁷	11	621,017	5
TOTAL RECORDED CRIME - ALL OFFENCES INCLUDING FRAUD⁷	79	4,513,964	-19	9	8

Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics.

2. Police recorded crime statistics based on data from all 44 forces in England and Wales (including the British Transport Police).

3. Appendix tables A4 and A7 provide detailed footnotes and further years.

4. Includes attempted murder, intentional destruction of viable unborn child, causing death by dangerous driving/careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs, more serious wounding or other act endangering life (including grievous bodily harm with and without intent), causing death by aggravated vehicle taking and less serious wounding offences.

5. Includes threat or conspiracy to murder, harassment, other offences against children and assault without injury (formerly common assault where there is no injury).

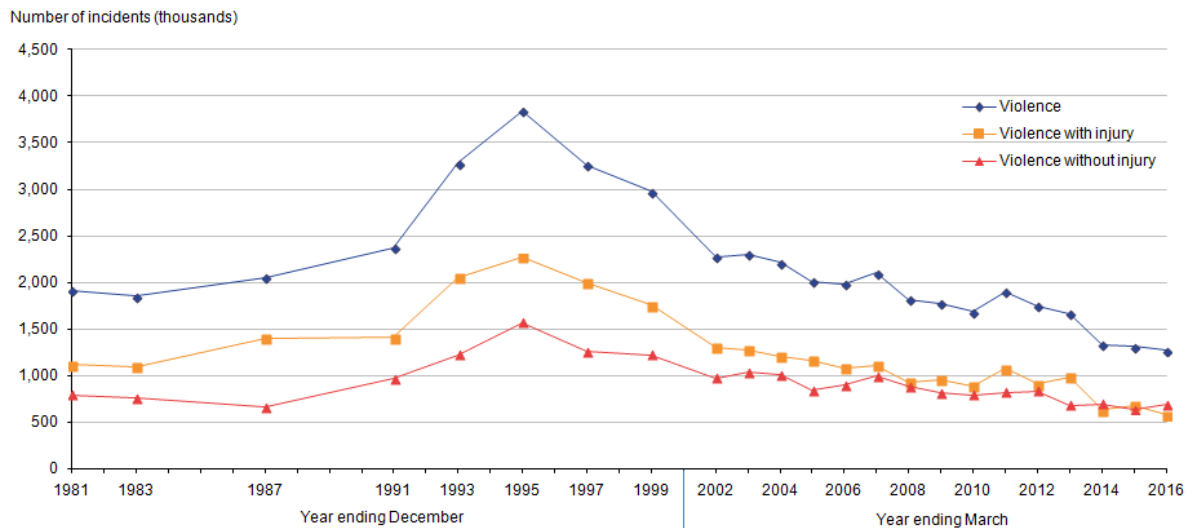
6. All other theft offences now includes all 'making off without payment' offences recorded since year ending March 2003. Making off without payment was previously included within the fraud offence group, but following a change in the classification for year ending March 2014, this change has been applied to previous years of data to give a consistent time series.

7. Total fraud offences cover crimes recorded by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau via Action Fraud, Cifas and Financial Fraud Action UK. Action Fraud have taken over the recording of fraud offences on behalf of individual police forces. Percentage changes compared with earlier years are not presented, as fraud figures for year ending March 2006 and year ending March 2011 covered only those crimes recorded by individual police forces. Given the addition of new data sources, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with earlier years.

Annex B: Examples of existing and proposed bulletin charts

Existing – presenting estimated numbers of offences

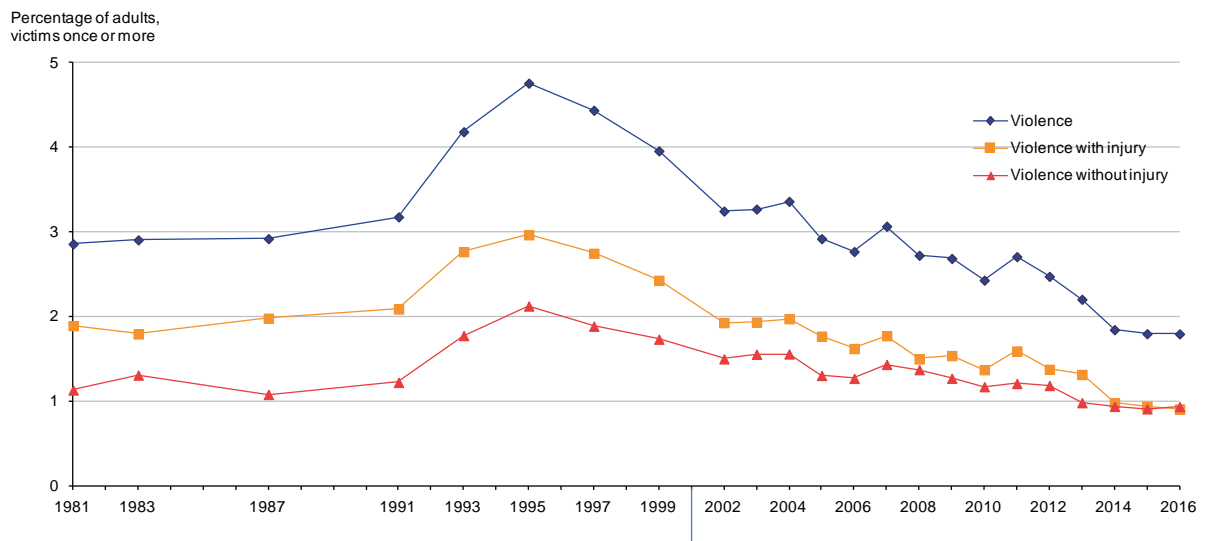
Figure 3: Trends in violence, Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2016



Notes: 1. Prior to the year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (that is, a moving reference period). Year-labels for the year ending March 2002 identify the CSEW year of interview.

Proposed – presenting estimated prevalence of victimisation

Figure 3: Trends in violence, Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2016



Notes: 1. Prior to the year ending March 2002, CSEW respondents were asked about their experience of crime in the previous calendar year, so year-labels identify the year in which the crime took place. Following the change to continuous interviewing, respondents' experience of crime relates to the full 12 months prior to interview (that is, a moving reference period). Year-labels for the year ending March 2002 identify the CSEW year of interview.

NATIONAL STATISTICIAN'S CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report of National Crime Registrar

NSCSAC(16)10

Purpose/Issue

1. This paper is the regular report to the Committee from the National Crime Registrar. These reports are intended to either outline any proposed changes to the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) in detail where the committee's advice is sought or to inform the committee of non-significant changes for information. These reports have also been used to inform members of other developments that may impact on the quality of crime recording.

Action

2. There are two revisions to the HOCR planned for April 2017 as set out below. The Committee is invited to note the contents of this paper.

Background

3. In establishing the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee to give independent advice on proposed changes to the Home Office Counting Rules for police recorded crime it was agreed that the National Crime Registrar (NCR) had delegated authority to determine, in agreement with the Chair, whether changes proposed to the HOCR were significant enough that they required referral to the committee for consideration prior to implementation. It was agreed that minor changes would be reported for information only.

Crime Recording Strategic Steering Group

4. The National Crime Recording Strategic Steering group (NCRSSG) has met once since the last meeting of the committee, in June 2016. The SSG continued to focus on their oversight of Home Office actions in relation to the ONS re-designation project (some of which may continue after re-assessment) and considered and endorsed two proposals for revisions to the HOCR for 2017 which are set out below.

Recording of Burglary

5. In June of this year the committee was invited to comment on a paper relating to a proposal to change the basis for recording crimes of burglary. (That paper is attached at Annex A for reference). Committee members were supportive of that proposal which has now been agreed by the Home Secretary. We are now working with the crime recording working group to develop the necessary revisions to the HOCR and to ensure that the rules support a straightforward and consistent approach to support implementation in April 2017.

Recording of Malicious Communications

6. In April 2015 the offence of sending a malicious communication became notifiable following a change in the law that elevated it to an “either way” matter with higher sentencing and Crown Court possibilities. The offence was added to the HOCA Harassment classification 8L. At the same time the new offence of “disclosing private sexual images with intent to cause distress” (otherwise referred to as revenge porn) also became part of Harassment.
7. It was accepted at that time that this would be likely to lead to a significant rise in numbers of harassments recorded and in turn to a noticeable rise in Violence without Injury into which Harassment falls. This has been the case with harassment having nearly doubled. To provide greater transparency and improved statistics the NCRSSG endorsed a proposal to create a new classification within the HOCA for Malicious Communications and thus to disaggregate them from Harassment. This has been agreed by the Home Secretary. This will have no effect on the overall number of crimes recorded.

Training for Force Crime Registrars

8. The committee has previously expressed a close interest in the plans for formal training and accreditation for registrars. Since the last meeting of the committee one further training course has been held lasting for a full week. Twelve delegates attended and all successfully achieved accreditation as being operationally competent (100% pass rate). To date seventy individuals have taken and passed the formal course. The College are now looking to schedule further courses for the spring/autumn of 2017 as part of on-going business as usual to ensure that as normal staff churn occurs, newly appointed staff are able to be trained and accredited. The College continues to consider training for the wider community involved in crime recording.

Force Crime Registrar Conference

9. The Home Office will host a two day conference for crime registrars during November 2016. This will be the third such annual conference. At the time of writing the agenda is still under development. It is planned that this will be a more tactical event with opportunities for delegates to engage in more workshop style sessions and opportunities for networking and sharing of experiences and issues.

Steve Bond
National Crime Registrar
12 September 2016

CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Police Recorded Crime - Burglary

Annex A

Purpose/Issue

1. This paper is to update the Committee on the proposals to change the current sub-categorisation of burglary within the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR).

Action

2. The Committee is invited to note the content of this paper and to offer any comment they may consider appropriate.

Background

3. In June of this year the committee provided comment on NSCSAC paper (attached as Annex A) which set out Home Office proposals to consult on a change to the way that the offence of burglary is sub-categorised within the police recorded crime series. Committee responses were in support of the proposal as set out.
4. Since then the Home Office, working with police force practitioners and the ONS has consulted on the implementation of the proposed revision to the recording classifications. There has been widespread support for the need for change. In particular, there has been universal support for the a change to the current narrow definition of a “dwelling”.
5. However, during that consultation process a number of concerns were raised as to the practical application of the proposed headline categories and on technical challenges in clearly defining the “community” element of burglary as proposed. Having considered this extensively the Crime Recording Technical Working Group (TWG) put forward an alternative approach which has subsequently been endorsed by the National Crime Recording Strategic Steering Group (SSG). This would see the establishment of two new sub-categories:

Burglary – Residential
Burglary – Business and Community

Revised Proposal

6. The proposed revised definition (for recording purposes) of burglary are set out below:

CLASSIFICATION: RESIDENTIAL

The classification of residential burglary includes all buildings or parts of buildings that are within the boundary of, or form a part of, a dwelling and includes the dwelling itself, vacant dwellings, sheds, garages, outhouses, summer houses and any other structure that meets the definition of a building. It also includes other premises used for residential purposes such as houseboats, residential care homes and hostels. Where an outbuilding **within such a boundary but not forming part of the dwelling building**, such as a garage or workshop is used solely for business purposes this should be recorded as burglary – business and community. Where both a dwelling house and an outbuilding used for business purposes (**belonging to the same victim**) are subject of a burglary at the same time, then only the residential burglary is to be recorded.

Vacant, new build, partially complete or properties under renovation will be recorded according to the purpose for which they are intended.

CLASSIFICATION: BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

The classification of business and community burglary includes all buildings or parts of buildings that are used **solely and exclusively for business purposes** or are otherwise entirely outside the classification of residential burglary such as a place of worship. Where an outbuilding is **within the boundary of a dwelling, but not forming part of the dwelling building**, such as a garage or workshop and is used solely for business purposes this should be recorded as burglary – business and community. Where both a dwelling house and an outbuilding used for business purposes (**belonging to the same victim**) are subject of a burglary at the same time then only the residential burglary is to be recorded.

Vacant, new build, partially complete or properties under renovation will be recorded according to the purpose for which they are intended.

CONSIDERATION

7. Whilst this represents a somewhat different stance to that originally presented to the Committee it continues to deliver many of the improvements and benefits previously outlined. In particular, in reducing the guidance and rules needed and in reducing or eliminating the possible perverse incentives that targets may have created around the current narrower definition of a dwelling. The proposed change should not have any impact on the overall numbers of burglaries recorded by the police but, as with the previous proposal, lead to some discontinuity at the sub-category level.

John Flatley
Secretariat
11 October 2016

CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Police Recorded Crime - Burglary

Annex A

Purpose/Issue

1. This paper is to advise the committee of proposals to consult on a change to the current sub-categorisation of burglary within the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR).

Action

2. The committee is invited to consider this proposal and to offer any advice they may consider appropriate.

Background

3. The HOCR set out that offences of burglary should be recorded as either Dwelling or other than a Dwelling. The resulting data is used to publish the statistics on this basis. This has been the case for many years. From at least 2002 until 2010 national targets were set in respect of dwelling burglaries either for detections for burglary or reductions in numbers, or both. To support this, counting rules for burglary became increasingly complex with many requests for clarification as to exactly what should be included and excluded in defining a dwelling. For example, this led to rules specifying that a garage attached to the main house, but without a connecting door, was not part of the dwelling whilst a similar garage with a connecting door was part of the dwelling. Other examples related to lengthy debates as to when a house under renovation or only partially completed was to be treated as a dwelling for burglary recording purposes.
4. Some recent sentencing decisions in courts have made clear that a detached garage or outbuilding within the curtilage of the property should be treated in just the same way as the main house itself. In common law, which derives from English law, curtilage has been defined as "the open space situated within a common enclosure belonging to a dwelling-house." Black's Law Dictionary of 1891 defined it as: "The enclosed space of ground and buildings immediately surrounding a dwelling-house".

PROPOSED FUTURE RECORDING

5. A proposal to change the sub-categorisation of police recorded burglary was considered and agreed by the National Crime Recording Strategic Steering Group (NCR SSG). The proposal was to move away from the current split and adopting in its place a new arrangement that will see recording as either:
 - Burglary – Business
 - Burglary – Domestic and other
6. The proposed definition (for recording purposes) of business and domestic/other is as set out below:

CLASSIFICATION: BUSINESS

The classification of business burglary includes all buildings or parts of buildings that are used **solely and exclusively for business purposes**. Where an outbuilding to domestic premises (such as a garage or workshop) is used solely for business purposes this should be recorded as burglary – business. Where both a domestic house and an outbuilding used for business purposes are subject of a burglary at the same time then only the domestic burglary is to be recorded.

Vacant, new build, partially complete or properties under renovation will be recorded according to the purpose for which they are intended.

CLASSIFICATION: DOMESTIC AND OTHER

The classification of domestic burglary includes all buildings or parts of buildings that are NOT used solely for business purposes. This will include dwellings, vacant dwellings, sheds, garages, outhouses, summer houses and any other structure that meets the definition of a building. Where an outbuilding such as a garage or workshop is used solely for business purposes this should be recorded as burglary – business. Where both a domestic house and an outbuilding used for business purposes (by the same victim) are subject of a burglary at the same time then only the domestic burglary is to be recorded.

Vacant, new build, partially complete or properties under renovation will be recorded according to the purpose for which they are intended.

CONSIDERATIONS

7. The proposed change should not have any impact on the overall numbers of burglaries recorded by the police. There would be a shift in the time series for the sub-categorisation of police recorded burglary between domestic and non-domestic and it would not be possible to produce a back series on the new basis for the two sub-categories. While all burglaries currently recorded as dwellings would fall into the proposed domestic classification, the new category would see some offences fall into it which previously would have been recorded in the “other than a dwelling sub-category. Mostly this would be cases where unattached garages, outbuildings, garden sheds and similar are targeted. Burglaries of properties which are not used solely and exclusively for business purposes, such as places of worship, would also move into the new “domestic and other” sub-category.
8. This proposal has been welcomed by the national Technical Working Group of Force Crime Registrars who believe it provides for some significant simplification of the current more complex rules. As an indicator a first draft of a revised burglary section of the HOCR sees a reduction from 37 to 26 pages of guidance and advice with further simplification suggested.
9. It also reduces the risk of perverse incentives around recording where, for example, performance measures around dwelling burglaries exist.
10. It also has merit in bringing the recording of thefts from non-connected buildings (such as garages and garden sheds) belonging to households into line with the

classification used in the Crime Survey for England and Wales which are currently included within “domestic burglary”.

11. There would be some costs in implementing this change, largely resulting from a need to change the labelling of burglary sub-categories on force IT systems. However, if this change were to be implemented from April 2017 and forces given sufficient notice it is anticipated that such work could be rolled up with other routine changes required annually and thus any implementation costs would be marginal.

John Flatley
Secretariat
6 June 2016