

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland: Quality Report

Last updated December 2015

Background Quality Report: Police Recorded Crime Statistics for Northern Ireland

Dimension	Assessment by the author
Introduction	<p data-bbox="424 253 839 288">Context for the quality report.</p> <p data-bbox="424 309 1406 405"><i>The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) produces statistics on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data.</i></p> <p data-bbox="424 443 1406 808"><i>Recorded crime figures reflect the number and types of crimes (notifiable offences) that are reported to the police, or that the police are made aware of. To ensure consistency, police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces. An alternative but complementary measure of crime, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS), is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. Each source of crime information has different strengths and limitations but can be looked at together to provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone.</i></p> <p data-bbox="424 846 1406 1211"><i>A record should be made of all incidents reported to PSNI, in compliance with the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). These records may be made on the Contact Record Management System (CRMS), the Command & Control System (CCS) or directly onto the Occurrence Management System (NICHE). Once details of crimes have been input onto NICHE they are passed to Occurrence & Case Management Teams within PSNI for ensuring crimes are identified and correctly recorded through application of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). Staff in PSNI's Statistics Branch then run a suite of validation checks on the recorded crime data to improve accuracy.</i></p> <p data-bbox="424 1249 1406 1653"><i>Police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland are published throughout the year as monthly updates providing a summary of the latest figures. These monthly updates are provisional and subject to change, with figures in the latest update superseding figures published previously. The monthly update presenting the finalised figures for the financial year is published in May of each year. An annual bulletin providing longer term trends and more detailed commentary is published once a year in July/August. All recorded crime bulletins are placed on the PSNI website. The publication dates for these bulletins are pre-announced and can be found via the UK National Statistics Publication Hub. They are also made available via the Police Service of Northern Ireland Internet site: Crime publication schedule.</i></p> <p data-bbox="424 1691 1406 1854"><i>In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority cancelled the designation of police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales in January 2014 because of concerns regarding the quality and integrity of police recorded crime; the lack of assurance of the data integrity in Scotland resulted in the designation of these statistics being cancelled in July 2014.</i></p> <p data-bbox="424 1892 1406 2085"><i>As a result of these concerns, the Authority commenced a reassessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland in June 2014. In addition to this assessment, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) was invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014, similar to those they conducted in England & Wales during 2014.</i></p>

	<p>The UK Statistics Authority assessment report, published on 28th May 2015, judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland could remain designated as a National Statistic in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (subject to implementing two requirements and reporting on these to the Authority by December 2015).</p> <p>Further details of these two reports and PSNI's response in relation to all requirements and recommendations can be found in Section 1 (page 2) of the User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Since the publication by the UK Statistics Authority in January 2015 of a <u>Regulatory Standard for the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data</u>, the PSNI's recorded crime statistics have been assessed against this standard using the most comprehensive assurance level available. While no changes or improvements to existing processes were identified through this assessment, improvements and clarifications have been made to existing documentation. As a result, the statisticians are satisfied that there are adequate controls in place to ensure that the PSNI recorded crime data quality meets the required standards.</p> <p>The Crime User Guide available on the PSNI website provides background information on various aspects of crime recording including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions relating to crimes, incidents and outcomes; • Recording practices, including PSNI data collection, quality and audit processes; • Data timeliness and availability; and • The geographic areas for which crime figures are available
<p>Relevance</p>	<p>The degree to which the statistical product meets user needs in both coverage and content.</p> <p>The Police Service of Northern Ireland publishes figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data. The types of offences committed, geographic location of where crimes occurred and the age and gender of victims of crime are the main pieces of information published. Further detail is available in the Crime User Guide section 4 (data availability) and section 7 (geographic recording of crime).</p> <p>Recorded crime figures are an important indicator of police workload, and can be used for local crime pattern analysis and provide a good measure of trends in well-reported crimes. They are used widely within PSNI as management information, to monitor performance on crime and detection rate targets against the Policing Plan, to inform PSNI policy and to provide information in support of operational research identifying appropriate allocation of police resource. Other uses of the crime figures are outlined in section 2.3 of the Crime User Guide.</p> <p>To ensure consistency, police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales. Although the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Home Office, the same recording practices are followed and applied within Northern Ireland. However differences in legislation between the two jurisdictions must be taken into account when making comparisons between police recorded crime statistics for England & Wales and those for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland are published as</p>

	<p>described previously. Requests for crime classifications or types of data not already available in the public domain are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis.</p>
Accuracy and Reliability	<p>The proximity between an estimate and the unknown true value.</p>
	<p>Data are gathered from a PSNI operational system and statisticians from the branch have been closely involved in the design and output requirements of this system. Each crime and detection on this system which is included within the recorded crime statistics is individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules by PSNI's Statistics Branch. This enables comparability with other police forces in England & Wales.</p> <p>Data quality checks are conducted regularly throughout the year to identify and correct inconsistencies within the data and to minimise any over-recording of crime.</p> <p>In addition to the quality checks Statistics Branch have an audit process for examining incident reports that do not result in a crime being recorded. The compliance rates which result from these audits give an indication of how much crime might be missed from the crime figures. Common mistakes and problems are identified and guidance is provided as necessary with the aim of minimising the under-recording of crime.</p> <p>Further details on PSNI's recording process and data quality can be found in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the Crime User Guide.</p> <p>Each bulletin identifies if data are provisional or finalised, and whether figures supersede those previously published. A revisions policy is also available on the PSNI website.</p>
Timeliness and Punctuality	<p>Timeliness refers to the time gap between publication and the reference period. Punctuality refers to the gap between planned and actual publication dates.</p>
	<p>There is a lag of around four weeks between the end of the month and publication of the monthly bulletin. Each monthly crime bulletin highlights the percentage of crime records that have completed the validation process for the period of time covered within the bulletin, to give an indication of how complete the in-year data is. Ideally the percentage of crime records still under process for the latest month covered would be less than 5%.</p> <p>Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the monthly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year (in May). This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data.</p> <p>The publication dates for these bulletins are pre-announced and can be found via the UK National Statistics Publication Hub. They are also made available via the Police Service of Northern Ireland Internet site: Crime publication schedule.</p> <p>The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheet is published once the latest Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates are released. Further details on the timeliness of recorded crime figures can be found in section 4.4 of the Crime User Guide.</p>

<p>Accessibility and Clarity</p>	<p>Accessibility is the ease with which users are able to access the data, also reflecting the format in which the data are available and the availability of supporting information. Clarity refers to the quality and sufficiency of the metadata, illustrations and accompanying advice.</p> <p>Police recorded crime statistics are published on the PSNI website to pre-announced schedules and can also be found via the UK National Statistics Publication Hub. These web-based releases contain contact details should data be required in a different format or if further explanation is necessary. Users of the data regularly contact the branch with more specific queries than can be made available in the monthly or annual bulletins and these requests are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Spreadsheets are made available in open data format, in addition to the excel versions and present data in standard tables and also in pivot tables which allows a certain amount of data manipulation.</p> <p>Police recorded crime statistics can also be accessed via the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System (NINIS) which is managed by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and provides crime figures for various geographic areas such as local government district and ward.</p> <p>The Crimemapper website provides street level recorded crime and anti-social behaviour incident counts presented using a crime mapping tool. This allows users to view crime maps for a specific area and gives a count of crimes in that area as well as an indication of the street location where the crime occurred. The street level data can also be downloaded from the police.uk website. The figures on police.uk will differ from those in the bulletins published on the PSNI website as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.</p> <p>Further details on the geographic areas for which crime figures are available can be found in section 7 of the Crime User Guide.</p> <p>Further background information on police recorded crime, including definitions relating to crimes, incidents, detections (section 2) and descriptions of the crime types included within the bulletins (section 3 and appendix 1) are provided in the Crime User Guide.</p> <p>Comments and feedback from users of the crime data, along with responses and actions from PSNI's Statistics Branch are available through the PSNI website.</p>
<p>Coherence and Comparability</p>	<p>Coherence is the degree to which data that are derived from different sources or methods, but refer to the same topic, are similar. Comparability is the degree to which data can be compared over time and domain.</p> <p>Police recorded crime is an administrative dataset and as all the information contained in the police recorded crime bulletins is derived from the same source coherence is not an issue.</p> <p>Promoting comparability is an important requirement of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics which aids interpretation for the users of the police recorded crime statistics.</p> <p>Crime recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard. These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales. Although PSNI does not fall under the</p>

	<p>jurisdiction of the Home Office, the same recording practices are followed and applied within Northern Ireland. However differences in legislation between the two jurisdictions must be taken into account when making comparisons between police recorded crime statistics for England & Wales and those for Northern Ireland. Further details on the comparability of recording practices are available in sections 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5 of the Crime User Guide, including the impact of changes to recording practice and legislation.</p> <p>Links to UK and International crime statistics are provided in Section 8 of the Crime User Guide. Where national or international comparisons are made, differences in data collection methods and legislation between countries should be taken into consideration.</p> <p>In order to allow users to compare trends over time the annual bulletin which is available on the website provides detailed recorded crime data dating back to 1998/99; these figures are available in both excel and open data formats. More limited crime figures dating back to 1968 and sourced from the annual Report of the Chief Constable are available in the Crime Statistics Archive section of the website.</p>
<p>Trade-offs between Output Quality Components</p>	<p>Trade-offs are the extent to which different aspects of quality are balanced against each other.</p> <p>Information that is published in the monthly and annual crime bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.</p> <p>Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The confidentiality protection arrangements document on the PSNI internet site provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.</p> <p>In relation to the timeliness of data, a balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. Further details on the timeliness of recorded crime figures can be found in section 4.4 of the Crime User Guide.</p>
<p>Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions</p>	<p>The processes for finding out about users and uses, and their views on the statistical products.</p> <p>User consultation is an important part of the work of PSNI's Statistics Branch. It informs work schedules and the statistical planning process. A Customer Service and Engagement Statement is available on the PSNI website, highlighting the aims and standards for dealing with key users and requests from members of the public.</p> <p>The key users of PSNI statistics are surveyed to ascertain what they think about the service they receive. The most recent User Survey was conducted in May 2014, with a previous survey conducted in October/November 2011. Results of these surveys are available on the PSNI website.</p> <p>Also available are user comments and feedback identified through the</p>

	<p>surveys, along with our response to this feedback and any actions required.</p> <p>Details of consultation exercises regarding proposed changes to statistical outputs or processes can be found on the PSNI website.</p> <p>The Crime User Guide is a live document that is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. User comments and feedback feed into these reviews.</p>
<p>Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden</p>	<p>The effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the statistical output.</p> <p>Whilst recorded crime statistics are a by-product of police administrative processes for dealing with reports of crimes from members of the public, a section of the PSNI's Statistics Branch is dedicated to overseeing that these crime reports are recorded in compliance with the standards and guidance outlined by the Home Office.</p> <p>There is no additional burden placed on the public or on businesses as a result of collation of these statistics other than the normal paperwork associated with reporting a crime to the police.</p>
<p>Confidentiality, Transparency and Security</p>	<p>The procedures and policy used to ensure sound confidentiality, security and transparent practices.</p> <p>The PSNI's Statistics Branch complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in relation to Principle 5: Confidentiality. A Confidentiality Protection Arrangements document is available on the statistics section of the PSNI website. It outlines the arrangements for maintaining confidentiality of statistical data and covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical security • Technical security • Staff training • Statistical Disclosure Control • Sharing of data with a third party. <p>In addition, the PSNI Statement of Administrative Sources outlines the governance arrangements for PSNI's administrative or management sources.</p>