

Police Service of Northern Ireland

# Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update to 29 February 2016

Published 24 March 2016

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This monthly bulletin presents the most recent police recorded crime statistics, relating to crimes recorded by the police to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Figures were compiled on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016, using data extracted from the police administrative system on that date. Figures dating back to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 are provisional and will be subject to change until the finalised 2015/16 data are published on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016.

## Assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland

In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority cancelled the designation of police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales because of concerns regarding the quality and integrity of their statistics; the lack of assurance of the data integrity in Scotland also resulted in the designation of these statistics being cancelled in July 2014.

As a result of these concerns, the Authority commenced an assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland in June 2014. In addition to this assessment, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014 similar to those they conducted in England & Wales during 2014. The outcome of the audit was published on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in the report [Crime data integrity – inspection of the Police Service of Northern Ireland](#). The main findings in relation to data quality were:

- a crime recording accuracy rate of 97 per cent with a confidence interval of +/-2 per cent;
- 98 per cent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 per cent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under the Home Office Counting Rules.

The UK Statistics Authority assessment was concluded after the publication of the HMIC report; the Authority's [assessment report Number 301 Statistics on Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland \(Police Service of Northern Ireland\)](#) was published on 28<sup>th</sup> May. This report judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland can be designated as National Statistics. A letter of confirmation as National Statistics was published on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

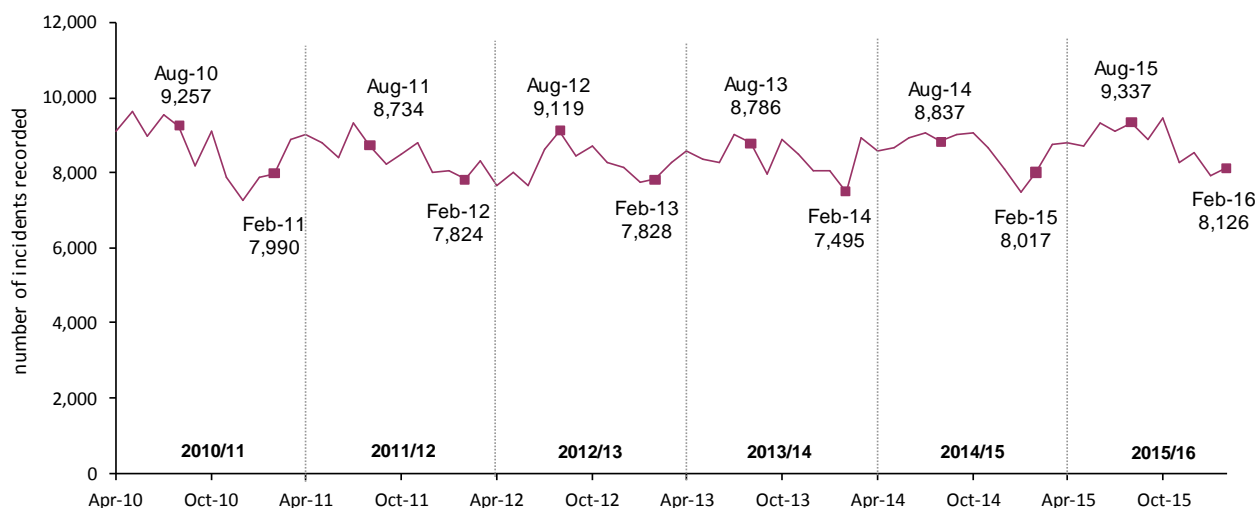
**Introduction of Action Fraud within Northern Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and internet crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to victims residing in Northern Ireland will be provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. As a result, this bulletin will contain a section on 'other fraud' which will present combined PSNI and Action Fraud figures covering the last two years. All other sections within the bulletin will present figures on a comparable basis that exclude 'other fraud'.

**Change to policing boundaries as a result of implementing the Review of Public Administration:** As part of the Review of Public Administration which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, PSNI has moved from eight to eleven policing districts, with the new policing model becoming fully operational at the end of September 2015. While previously published figures were based on a best approximation to the new boundaries, figures in this bulletin are based on the fully implemented boundaries.

## OVERALL CRIME TRENDS (excluding fraud)

- Crime has shown a downwards trend over the last ten years, from a peak of 138,132 in 2002/03 to 98,558 recorded in 2012/13, the lowest level recorded since 1998/99 (the first year for which comparable crime data is available). The level of 105,289 recorded during the twelve months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 shows an increase of 2,113 (2.0 per cent) on the 2014/15 figure of 103,176.
- Crime increased by 1.9 per cent (1,954 offences) in the twelve months to February 2016 when compared with the previous twelve months. The majority of this increase occurred in the categories of violence with and without injury, criminal damage, possession of drugs, sexual offences (rape and other sexual offences combined) and domestic burglary. A full breakdown by crime category is available in Table 2.
- At 8,126 the level of crime recorded in February 2016 was 1.4 per cent (109 offences) higher than the level recorded in February 2015.

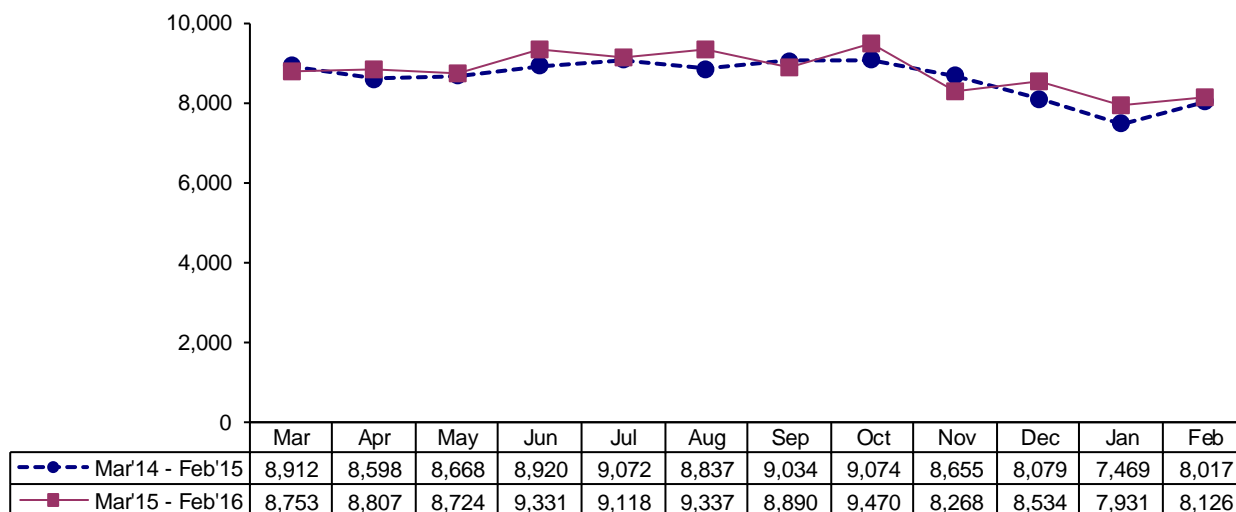
**Figure 1 Total number of crimes each month from April 2010 to February 2016 (excluding fraud)**



**COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, excluding fraud (March 2014 to February 2015 with March 2015 to February 2016)**

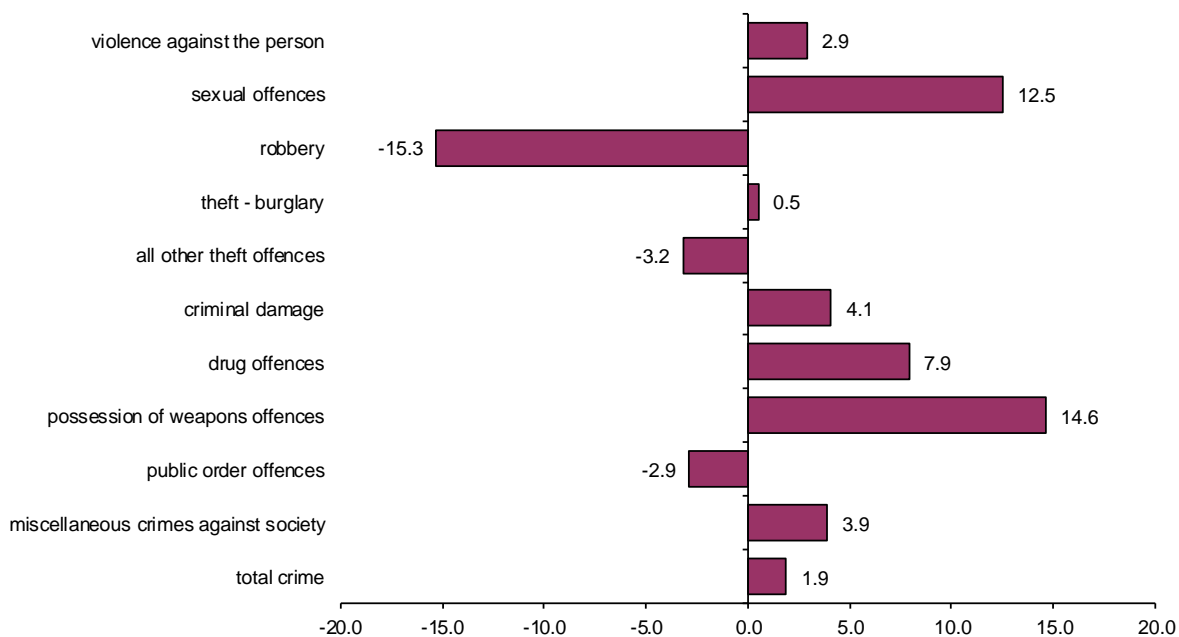
- Overall crime increased by 1.9 per cent in the twelve months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 when compared with the twelve months to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The crime level showed a slight upwards direction from March 2014 (8,912 offences) to 9,074 in October 2014, before decreasing each month to 7,469 in January 2015, the lowest figure recorded in the past two years and the second lowest monthly figure since the data series began in April 1998. Since then the level of recorded crime has generally increased, with October 2015 (9,470 offences) showing the highest level recorded in the last two years. The level fell to 7,931 offences recorded in January 2016 before increasing to 8,126 in February 2016.

**Figure 2 Total number of crimes each month from March 2014 to February 2016 (excluding fraud)**



- Recorded crime figures by type of crime for March 2015 to February 2016 compared with March 2014 to February 2015 are shown in Table 2. Overall crime outcomes and outcomes by type of disposal covering the same time periods are available in Tables 3 and 4. Between March 2015 and February 2016 there were nine outcomes where no action was taken against the offender (indictable only offences where the offender died before proceedings or PPS did not prosecute), with four recorded between March 2014 and February 2015; these outcomes are included in the rates presented in Table 3 but are not presented as separate disposal types in Table 4.

**Figure 3 Percentage change in the main recorded crime types, March 2015 to February 2016 compared with March 2014 to February 2015**



- **Trends over the last two years:** The main crime categories of sexual offences, drug offences, possession of weapons offences and miscellaneous crimes against society have shown upwards trends over the last two years, with violence against the person, robbery, burglary and public order offences showing a fairly flat trend. Theft offences (excluding burglary) and criminal damage are showing a downwards trend.
- **Violence with injury (including homicide)** has shown a fairly flat trend over the last two years. The number of crimes recorded showed an overall increasing trend between March 2014 and August 2014 before falling to 1,087 in January 2015, the lowest level in the past 24 months. The level then increased each month to 1,409 offences recorded in August 2015, the highest level in the last two years, before falling in September to 1,161 offences; the level has fallen in each of the last three months from 1,326 in December 2015 to 1,101 offences recorded in February 2016. The trend for **violence without injury** has been similar to violence with injury with a generally upwards direction from March 2014 to July 2014 when it reached a two-year high with 1,908 offences recorded. The level then generally decreased to 1,388 offences in January 2015 before increasing to 1,895 offences in August 2015, the second highest figure in the last two years. Since then the level has fluctuated; as with violence with injury, the level has fallen in each of the last three months from 1,634 in December 2015 to 1,535 in February 2016.
- **Sexual offences** have been showing an upwards trend over the last two years. The level moved in a generally upwards direction between March 2014 when 189 offences were recorded (the second lowest figure in the last two years) and October 2014 when 274 offences were recorded (the third highest figure in the last 24 months). Levels then fell between October 2014 and December 2014 to 164 offences, the lowest figure in the last two years. With a couple of exceptions, the level generally increased in most months between December 2014 and October 2015 to reach 283 offences recorded. As with the previous year, the level fell between October 2015 and December 2015 before increasing again in January 2016 to 275 offences recorded. The current level stands at 248 offences in February 2016.
- **Robbery** has shown a fairly flat trend over the last two years. The number of robberies recorded generally decreased from March 2014 when 88 offences were recorded to July 2014 with 52 offences recorded, before increasing in each consecutive month to 102 offences recorded in December 2014 (the highest level recorded in the last two years). This was followed by a downwards trend to May 2015 with 42 offences recorded (the lowest level in the last two years). Since then the level ranged between 63 and 70 offences until December 2015 where the level fell to 59 offences recorded, nearly half the number recorded in December 2014. There were 48 offences recorded in February 2016, the second lowest in the past 24 months.
- **Domestic burglaries:** Over the last two years domestic burglaries have shown a flat trend. March 2015 and February 2015 have recorded the highest (573 offences) and second highest (546 offences) figures in the last two years while the lowest level was 424 recorded in December 2014. The trend seen between March 2015 and October 2015 is similar to that seen over the same period in 2014, albeit at a slightly higher level. There was a fall in the level recorded in November 2015 to 455 offences whereas in 2014 the level continued to increase through to November 2014 when 530 offences were recorded. The level currently stands at 488 offences recorded in February 2016. **Non-domestic burglaries** have shown



a slight downward trend over the last two years with figures tending to fluctuate month to month; the highest level in the last 24 months was 315 recorded in March 2014 and the lowest level of 182 offences was recorded in February 2016.

- The classification of theft offences (excluding burglary) has shown a slightly downwards trend over the last two years. Within this classification the following trends can be seen:

**Theft from the person** has shown a flat trend; the highest level in the past 24 months was seen in August 2015 with 65 offences recorded, while the lowest month was January 2015 with 26 offences recorded. The level generally increased between January 2015 and August 2015; there were 52 such offences recorded in February 2016.

**Vehicle offences** have shown a downwards trend over the past two years. A two-year high of 508 offences was recorded in March 2014. Levels showed an overall downwards trend between March 2014 and January 2015, when 347 offences were recorded (the second lowest in the past 24 months). Levels showed an overall increase to August 2015 with 476 offences recorded, before falling again to a two-year low of 337 offences in February 2016.

**Shoplifting offences** have shown a fairly flat trend. Levels increased from 506 offences recorded in April 2014 to 614 offences in November 2014. The level then fell to the two lowest figures recorded in the past two years of 439 offences in January 2015 and 450 offences in February 2015. Levels reached 632 offences in August 2015, the highest figure in the past two years; since then the level has fallen in most months to January 2016 (464 offences recorded) before increasing to 570 offences recorded in February 2016.

**Bicycle theft** generally increased from 68 offences recorded in March 2014 to September 2014 (134 offences), the highest level in the past two years. As with the previous year, levels then fell sharply to 36 offences recorded in January 2015, the lowest level in the past two years. Since then levels have increased to 81 offences recorded in April 2015, 88 in July 2015 and 87 in September 2015 before falling to 36 offences recorded in December 2015, the same level as recorded in January 2015. The level in February 2016 stands at 37 offences.

**All other theft offences** have shown a slight downwards trend over the last two years. There was a general upwards trend between March 2014 and October 2014 to 1,201 offences, the highest level in the past two years. Levels have fluctuated since then, with the latest figure for February 2016 standing at 1,092.

- **Criminal damage** offences have seen a downwards trend over the last two years. The level has moved in a generally upwards direction from March 2014 (1,698 offences recorded) to October 2014 when 1,844 offences were recorded. The number of criminal damage offences fell between October 2014 and January 2015 to the lowest level in the last two years (1,321 offences). The number of offences recorded showed a general increase between January 2015 and June 2015 with 1,937 offences recorded, the second highest recorded in the last two years. Levels fell in each month to 1,737 in September 2015 before increasing to the highest level in the past 24 months in October 2015 when 1,959 offences were recorded. The level has since fallen again to 1,391 offences recorded in February 2016, the second lowest level in the past two years.
- **Outcomes where disposal administered:** The overall rate has shown a fairly flat trend, which has been reflected across most of the main crime types.

#### **POLICING DISTRICT COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, excluding fraud (March 2014 to February 2015 compared with March 2015 to February 2016)**

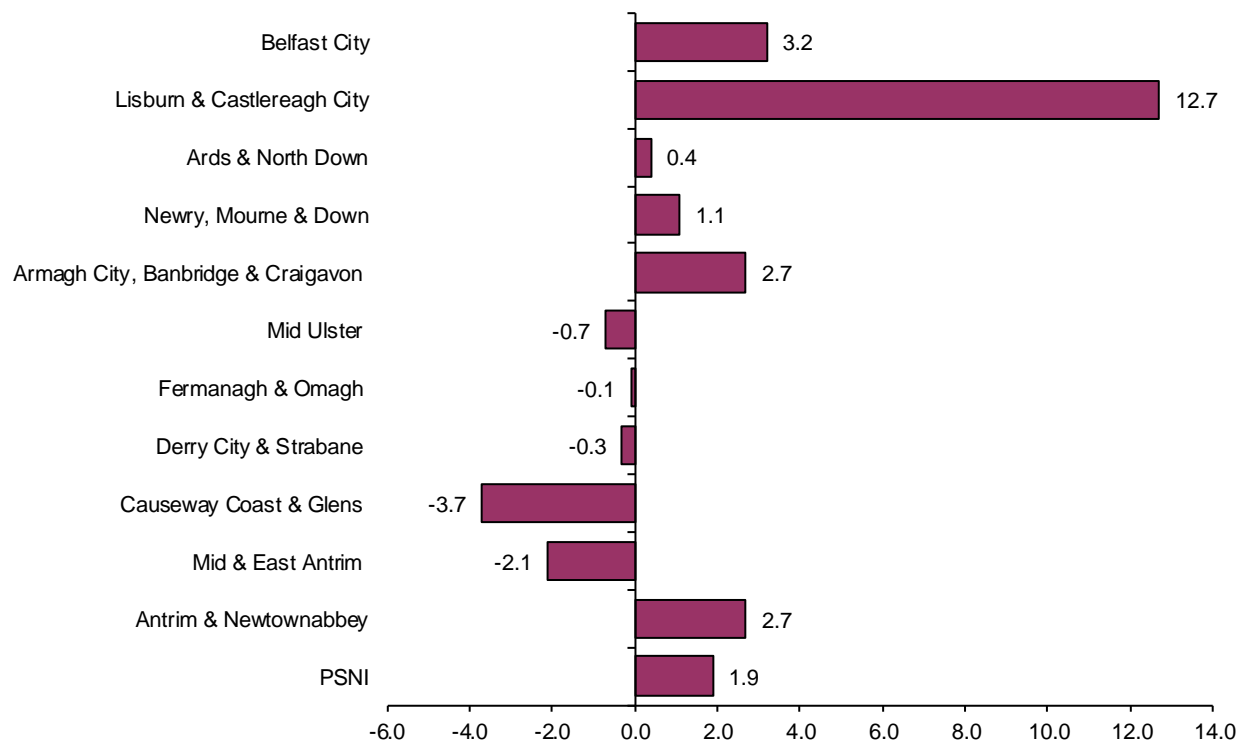
As part of the Review of Public Administration which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, PSNI has moved from eight to eleven policing districts. Figure 4 is presented on the basis of these new boundaries.

- Belfast City has shown a fairly flat crime trend over the past two years. The crime level showed an overall increasing trend from March 2014 to September 2014 (fourth highest recorded at 3,154). Levels then decreased each month to 2,552 crimes in January 2015 (the lowest level in the last two years). This was followed by an upwards trend reaching 3,328 crimes recorded in August 2015, the highest figure recorded in the last two years. There were 3,247 offences recorded in October 2015, the second highest level in the past 24 months. The level has since fallen to 2,643 offences recorded in January 2016, the second lowest level in the last two years, before increasing to 2,709 offences in February 2016.
- Lisburn & Castlereagh City has shown an increasing trend over the last two years, while decreasing trends have emerged in Derry City & Strabane, Causeway Coast & Glens, and Mid & East Antrim. In the remaining districts the trends over the last two years are fairly flat: Ards & North Down, Newry Mourne &

Down, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Mid Ulster, Fermanagh & Omagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey.

- All districts have seen a higher level of crime recorded in February 2016 when compared with January 2016, with the exception of Lisburn & Castlereagh City, Mid Ulster and Fermanagh & Omagh.

**Figure 4 Percentage change in recorded crime by policing district, March 2015 to February 2016 compared with March 2014 to February 2015 (excluding fraud)**



### RECORDING OF FRAUD

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and internet crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to victims residing in Northern Ireland will be provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. The table below incorporates both sets of figures to show the number of fraud offences recorded by PSNI and Action Fraud over the last two years.

**Table 1 Number of fraud offences recorded in the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 compared with the previous 12 months**

	12 months to February'15	12 months to February'16
PSNI recorded fraud	1,919	161
Recorded by Action Fraud	-	2,023
<b>Combined fraud figure</b>	<b>1,919</b>	<b>2,184</b>

**Table 2 Number of recorded crimes in the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 compared with the previous 12 months**

Offence group	Number and percentage changes			
	12 months to February 2015	12 months to February 2016 <sup>1,2</sup>	change between years	% change between years <sup>3</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>				
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	34,425	35,414	989	2.9
<i>Homicide</i>	25	22	-3	-
<i>Violence with injury</i>	14,562	14,907	345	2.4
<i>Violence without injury</i>	19,838	20,485	647	3.3
SEXUAL OFFENCES	2,664	2,997	333	12.5
<i>Rape</i>	715	773	58	8.1
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	1,949	2,224	275	14.1
ROBBERY	893	756	-137	-15.3
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	646	562	-84	-13.0
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	247	194	-53	-21.5
THEFT OFFENCES	35,530	34,739	-791	-2.2
<i>Burglary</i>	8,930	8,977	47	0.5
<i>Domestic burglary</i>	5,839	5,988	149	2.6
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	3,091	2,989	-102	-3.3
<i>Theft from the person</i>	522	557	35	6.7
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	5,223	4,954	-269	-5.2
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	982	735	-247	-25.2
<i>Shoplifting</i>	6,484	6,827	343	5.3
<i>All other theft offences</i>	13,389	12,689	-700	-5.2
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	19,783	20,595	812	4.1
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>				
DRUG OFFENCES	5,079	5,478	399	7.9
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	895	870	-25	-2.8
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	4,184	4,608	424	10.1
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES	780	894	114	14.6
PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES	1,465	1,423	-42	-2.9
MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	2,716	2,823	107	3.9
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES (excluding fraud)</b>	<b>103,335</b>	<b>105,289</b>	<b>1,954</b>	<b>1.9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures for the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 are provisional and will be subject to change.

<sup>2</sup> Individual crime types may not add to Total Recorded Crime – All Offences as there will be some crimes yet to complete the validation process and be allocated to a crime classification.

<sup>3</sup> '-' indicates that for offences recorded a percentage change is not reported because the base number of offences is less than 50.

**Table 3 Crime outcomes<sup>1</sup> in the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 compared with the previous 12 months, rates (%)**

Offence group	Percentages		
	Crime Outcomes <sup>1</sup> (rate %)		% point change
	12 months to February 2015	12 months to February 2016 <sup>2</sup>	
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>			
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	29.7	30.9	1.2
<i>Homicide</i>	64.0	72.7	8.7
<i>Violence with injury</i>	31.8	32.7	0.9
<i>Violence without injury</i>	28.1	29.5	1.4
SEXUAL OFFENCES	15.4	15.3	-0.1
<i>Rape</i>	10.1	11.9	1.8
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	17.4	16.5	-0.9
ROBBERY	19.3	19.6	0.3
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	17.2	15.1	-2.1
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	24.7	32.5	7.8
THEFT OFFENCES	20.0	20.8	0.8
<i>Burglary</i>	10.4	10.4	0.0
<i>Domestic burglary</i>	9.0	9.1	0.1
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	13.0	12.9	0.0
<i>Theft from the person</i>	8.0	6.6	-1.4
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	17.4	17.8	0.4
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	4.5	5.0	0.6
<i>Shoplifting</i>	60.0	59.4	-0.7
<i>All other theft offences</i>	9.7	10.1	0.4
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	16.4	16.4	0.1
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>			
DRUG OFFENCES	82.2	89.4	7.2
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	80.7	84.3	3.6
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	82.5	90.3	7.8
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES	64.5	63.5	-1.0
PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES	54.6	56.9	2.3
MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	53.1	56.0	2.9
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES (excluding fraud)</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> Outcomes presented here include charge/summons, cautions (adult and juvenile), discretionary disposals, penalty notices for disorder, offences taken into consideration and indictable only offences where no action was taken against the offender (died before proceedings or PPS did not prosecute).

<sup>2</sup> Figures for the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 are provisional and will be subject to change.



**Table 4 Crime outcomes by type of disposal<sup>1</sup> in the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 compared with the previous 12 months, rates (%)**

Offence group	Percentages									
	Charge/summons		Caution		Discretionary disposal		Penalty notice for disorder <sup>2</sup>		Taken into consideration	
	12 months to Feb 2015	12 months to Feb 2016 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Feb 2015	12 months to Feb 2016 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Feb 2015	12 months to Feb 2016 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Feb 2015	12 months to Feb 2016 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Feb 2015	12 months to Feb 2016 <sup>3</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>										
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON</b>	25.0	25.6	2.2	2.3	2.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Homicide</i>	64.0	72.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Violence with injury</i>	27.3	27.8	2.4	2.5	2.1	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Violence without injury</i>	23.2	23.9	2.0	2.1	2.8	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SEXUAL OFFENCES</b>	14.2	14.4	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Rape</i>	9.9	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	15.7	15.4	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>ROBBERY</b>	18.8	19.6	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	16.6	15.1	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	24.7	32.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>THEFT OFFENCES</b>	13.1	13.4	1.5	1.3	2.9	3.2	2.4	2.7	0.0	0.0
<i>Burglary</i>	9.6	9.9	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Domestic burglary</i>	8.4	8.8	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	11.7	12.1	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<i>Theft from the person</i>	6.3	5.2	0.6	0.2	1.1	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	16.5	16.5	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	3.4	3.3	0.3	0.4	0.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Shoplifting</i>	32.0	30.3	5.3	4.6	9.5	10.8	13.2	13.7	0.0	0.0
<i>All other theft offences</i>	6.0	6.5	0.8	0.8	2.7	2.6	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
<b>CRIMINAL DAMAGE</b>	11.6	11.5	1.2	1.3	3.2	3.3	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>										
<b>DRUG OFFENCES</b>	50.5	50.6	21.5	20.8	10.1	17.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	73.5	77.7	6.5	5.7	0.7	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	45.6	45.5	24.8	23.7	12.2	21.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES</b>	53.3	49.7	6.5	7.8	4.6	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES</b>	53.1	55.1	1.4	1.8	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>	49.6	52.6	1.3	2.1	2.1	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES (excluding fraud)</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> It is possible to detect a crime with an offence which attracts a lesser penalty than the crime recorded. For example where an assault occasioning actual bodily harm has been recorded (violence with injury), the offender may be dealt with for the offence of common assault (violence without injury). Outcomes where no action was taken against the offender are not presented.

<sup>2</sup> Penalty notices for disorder were introduced in June 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Figures for the 12 months to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 are provisional and will be subject to change.

## NOTES

### Strengths and Limitations of Police Recorded Crime Statistics and Alternative Measures of Crime

While this monthly update presents the level of crime recorded by the police, there is an alternative but complementary measure of crime, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) which 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. Details around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NICS can be found in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the bulletin [Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2013/14 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#). Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

Unlike the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, police recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police or those that the police decide not to record, but they do cover crimes against those aged under 16, organisations such as businesses, and crimes 'against the state' i.e. with no immediate victim (e.g. possession of drugs). It was estimated in 2013/14 that around 46 per cent of NICS comparable crime was reported to the police in Northern Ireland although this varied for individual offence types.

Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. These issues need to be taken into account when using these data.

### Variations in crime trends: crime survey data and police recorded crime figures in England & Wales and Northern Ireland

An analysis of variation in crime trends looking at comparable crime categories between the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and the police recorded crime series for England and Wales was conducted by the Office for National Statistics and published in January 2013. Updated analysis for England and Wales was made available in the [User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) in July 2014. This study identified that, while both sets of figures showed crime to be falling, after 2006/07 the rate of reduction for police recorded crime was around twice the rate of the CSEW. This raised questions about the quality of the police recorded crime figures and was one of the issues that led to the UK Statistics Authority removing the National Statistics designation from the police recorded crime figures in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland the police recorded crime figures have not shown the same rate of decrease as either the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) or the police recorded crime figures in England and Wales. [Please note that the NICS was not conducted in 2002/03 and so comparisons were made instead with 2003/04]. Table 6 below includes comparisons for Northern Ireland based on the latest available NICS figures for 2013/14. Further details can be found on pages 5 to 7 of the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics User Guide](#).

**Table 5 Percentage reduction in comparable crime categories 2002/03 to 2013/14 (England and Wales)**

	Percentage change 2002/03-2007/08	Percentage change 2007/08-2012/13	Percentage change 2012/13-2013/14	Percentage change 2002/03-2013/14
Police recorded crime	-20	-32	-2	-47
CSEW	-16	-19	-14	-42

**Table 6 Percentage reduction in comparable crime categories 2003/04 to 2013/14 (Northern Ireland)**

	Percentage change 2003/04-2006/07	Percentage change 2006/07-2012/13	Percentage change 2012/13-2013/14	Percentage change 2003/04-2013/14
Police recorded crime	-7	-22	-1	-28
NICS	-28	-25	-30	-62

### Data Accuracy

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and will be subject to slight revision until finalised figures for the full financial year are published in May 2016. Within year, crime figures are subject to a validation and quality assurance process. The overall crime figures at Northern Ireland, District and Area level cover all records identified as crimes, including those that have not yet completed the validation process. However figures for each crime type do not include records which are under process and so these figures will not add to the overall total. The percentage of crimes complete and under process is shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7 Percentage of crime records that have completed the validation process, April – February 2016**

	Percentages	
	% crime records complete	% crime records under process
Year to date: April 2015 - February 2016	99.8	0.2
Latest complete month: February 2016	98.7	1.3

### Data Quality and Auditing

The quality assurance processes mentioned above have been set in place to ensure that the numbers and types of crimes being recorded are, as far as is possible, recorded in compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules. Further details of the data quality checks and processes that PSNI has in place are available in section 4 of the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland](#).

As mentioned previously in this bulletin, in light of the crime recording issues in England & Wales and Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014, similar to those they conducted in England & Wales during 2014. The outcome of the audit was published on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in the report [Crime data integrity – inspection of the Police Service of Northern Ireland](#). The main findings in relation to data quality were:

- a crime-recording accuracy rate of 97 percent with a confidence interval of +/-2 percent;
- 98 percent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 percent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under HOCR.

### Revisions

As mentioned above in relation to Data Accuracy, figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and will be subject to slight revision until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. This means that the totals for each month, crime type and policing district for each month from April 2015 can change each time the figures are published during the financial year.

These revisions will happen for one of a number of reasons:

- Incidents identified as crimes but not processed on the crime recording system by the time the figures are extracted for publication will appear in subsequent updates. For example, a crime is reported to the police on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 and it is fully processed on the crime recording system by 15<sup>th</sup> November 2013. As figures for the bulletin covering the latest 12 months to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were extracted and published in December 2013, this crime will be included in the November figures in this publication. However if the same crime is not processed on the crime recording system until 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014, it will not be available for inclusion in the figures until the data extracted and published towards the end of January 2014.
- Figures may change from month to month due to crimes being reclassified from one crime type to another during the financial year. This may be because quality checks have identified the crime as incorrectly classified, or further information may indicate that the circumstances surrounding the crime were not as initially recorded.
- These revisions are not always in an upwards direction. The Home Office Counting Rules allow crimes initially recorded to be 'no crime'd' or removed from the crime figures. This can happen for a number of reasons:
  - the crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded;
  - additional verifiable information becomes available which determines that no notifiable crime has been committed;
  - the crime, as alleged, constitutes part of a crime already recorded;
  - the reported incident was recorded as a crime in error.

Full guidance on 'no crimes' is available in the [Home Office Counting Rules](#).

**Table 8 Extent of revisions for crime figures contained in the monthly update to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, which was first published 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

	Numbers & Percentages					
	As published 25 Feb 2016	As published 24 Mar 2016	Scale of revision		% change between years	
			Number	%	As published 25 Feb 2016	As published 24 Mar 2016
Financial Year to date: Apr 2015 - Jan 2016	88,488	88,410	-78	-0.09%	2.4%	2.3%
12 Months Feb 2015 to Jan 2016	105,258	105,180	-78	-0.07%	2.4%	2.3%

**Introduction of Action Fraud within Northern Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and internet crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to victims residing in Northern Ireland will be provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. As a result, this bulletin contains a section on 'other fraud' which presents combined PSNI and Action Fraud figures covering the last two years. All other sections within the bulletin present figures on a comparable basis that exclude 'other fraud'.

### Additional data

This bulletin shows a Northern Ireland level summary of police recorded crime for the 12 months to February 2016. Accompanying this bulletin are additional data in the form of [summary tables](#) and [pivot table data](#), both of which are available in excel spreadsheets. The data is also available in open data format.

The pivot tables allow the user to manipulate the data, select the data they are most interested in and carry out calculations on the data. The data records displayed in the pivot tables are also available in the same spreadsheet files. The pivot tables provide a range of data including recorded crime, crime outcomes (both numbers and rates) and victim age/gender/population rates; data measures are available for the previous and current rolling 12 months:

- at Northern Ireland level
- for a range of crime types;
- by age range or gender

### National Statistics Designation

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics, and to improve its statistics on a continuous basis. If a producer becomes concerned about whether its statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, it should discuss its concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The UK Statistics Authority commenced an assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland in June 2014 and this was concluded after the publication of HMIC's crime data integrity report in March 2015. The Authority's [assessment report Number 301 Statistics on Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland \(Police Service of Northern Ireland\)](#) was published on 28<sup>th</sup> May. This report judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland can be designated as National Statistics.

### Geographic availability of police recorded crime statistics

Figures are available for a range of additional geographic areas through the [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System \(NINIS\)](#). These figures are updated on an annual basis.

Provisional management information drawn from police recorded crime figures, published at street level each month, is available through the [police crime mapping website](#). The figures on the crime mapping website will differ from those provided in this bulletin as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.

### Further information

[Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2014/15](#) was published on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and provides detailed trend information covering this time period. An updated publication covering trends from 1998/99 to 2014/15 will be available from 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015, instead of early July 2015 as previously indicated.

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland](#), and in the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics Quality Report](#). These are reference guides with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of police recorded crime statistics.

Copies of other PSNI publications are available from the PSNI Internet site:

<https://www.psnipolice.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/>

### Contact details

For further information about the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland, or to contact the PSNI Crime Statistician please:

Email: [statistics@psni.police.uk](mailto:statistics@psni.police.uk);

Write to: Statistics Branch, Lisnasharragh, 42 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9LD; or

Telephone: 028 9065 0222 ext 24135, Fax: 028 9092 2998