

Police Service of Northern Ireland

# Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: Monthly Update to 31 December 2015

Published 28 January 2016

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This monthly bulletin presents the most recent police recorded crime statistics, relating to crimes recorded by the police to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015. Figures were compiled on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 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 in 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 in January 2014 because of concerns regarding the quality and integrity of police recorded crime in England & Wales; the lack of assurance of the data integrity in Scotland 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 (subject to implementing two requirements and reporting on these to the Authority by December 2015).

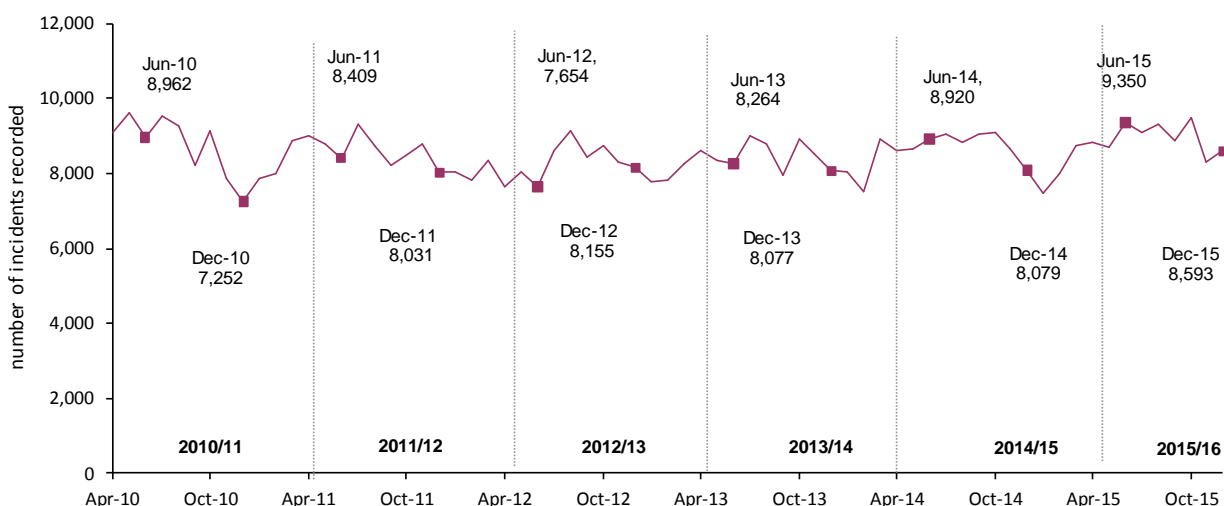
**Introduction of Action Fraud within Northern Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. 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 104,841 recorded during the twelve months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 shows an increase of 1,665 (1.6 per cent) on the 2014/15 figure of 103,176.
- Crime increased by 1.4 per cent (1,458 offences) in the twelve months to December 2015 when compared with the previous twelve months. The majority of this increase occurred in the categories of possession of drugs, violence with and without injury, criminal damage, domestic burglary and sexual offences (rape and other sexual offences combined). A full breakdown by crime category is available in Table 2.
- At 8,593 the level of crime recorded in December 2015 was 6.4 per cent (514 offences) higher than the level recorded in December 2014.

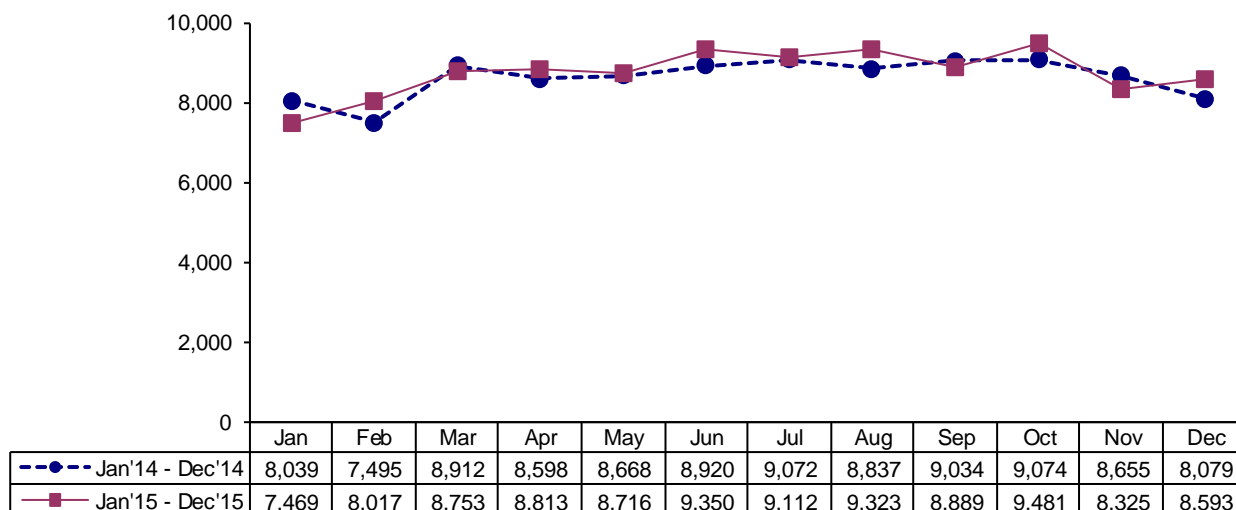
- **Figure 1 Total number of crimes each month from April 2010 to December 2015 (excluding fraud)**



**COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, excluding fraud (January 2014 to December 2014 with January 2015 to December 2015)**

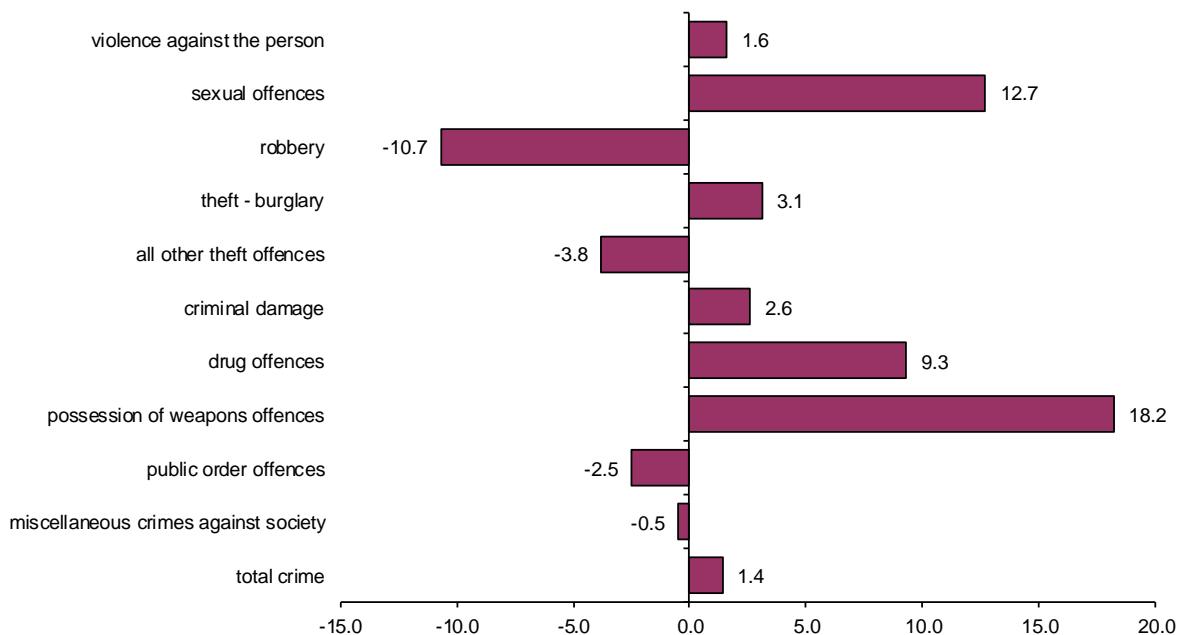
- Overall crime increased by 1.4 per cent in the twelve months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 when compared with the twelve months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. The crime level showed a mainly upwards direction from February 2014 (7,495 offences) the third lowest monthly figure recorded since the data series began in April 1998, reaching a level of 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 (9,481 offences) showing the highest level recorded in the last two years. The level has fallen to 8,593 offences recorded in December 2015.

**Figure 2 Total number of crimes each month from January 2014 to December 2015 (excluding fraud)**



- Recorded crime figures by type of crime for January 2015 to December 2015 compared with January 2014 to December 2014 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 January 2015 and December 2015 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 three recorded between January 2014 and December 2014; 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, January 2015 to December 2015 compared with January 2014 to December 2014**



- Trends over the last two years:** The main crime categories of violence against the person, sexual offences, criminal damage, drug offences, possession of weapons offences and miscellaneous crimes against society have shown upwards trends over the last two years, with robbery, burglary and public order offences showing a fairly flat trend. Theft offences (excluding burglary) are starting to show a downwards trend.
- Violence with injury (including homicide)** has shown a slight upwards trend over the last two years; the lowest level was seen in January 2014 (1,009 offences) with the highest level recorded in August 2015 (1,399 offences). The number of crimes recorded showed an overall increasing trend between January 2014 and August 2014 before falling to 1,087 in January 2015. The level then increased each month to 1,399 offences recorded in August 2015, the highest level in the last two years, before falling in September to 1,151 offences; the level has since fluctuated with 1,296 offences recorded in December 2015. The trend for **violence without injury** has been similar to violence with injury with an upwards direction over the last two years from February 2014 (which, at 1,367, was the lowest figure in last two years) 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 1,890 offences in August 2015, the second highest figure in the last two years. Since then the level has fluctuated and the current level recorded in December 2015 is 1,607 offences.
- Sexual offences** have been showing an upwards trend over the last two years. The level has moved in a generally upwards direction between January 2014 when 175 offences were recorded, the second lowest figure in the last 2 years to October 2014 when 274 offences were recorded, the second highest 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. While there were decreases between March and April 2015, June and July 2015 and October and December 2015, the level has generally increased in most months since December 2014; there were 207 offences recorded in December 2015.
- Robbery** has shown a fairly flat trend over the last two years. The number of robberies recorded generally decreased from January 2014 when 104 offences were recorded (the highest level seen in the last 24 months) to July 2014 with 52 offences recorded, before increasing in each consecutive month to 102 offences recorded in December 2014 (the highest level recorded since January 2014). 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 has ranged between 64 and 70 offences until December 2015 where the level has fallen to 59 offences recorded, nearly half the number recorded in December 2014.
- Domestic burglaries:** Over the last two years domestic burglaries have shown a slight upwards 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 has been a fall in the level recorded in November 2015 to 454 offences whereas in 2014 the level continued to increase through to November 2014 when 530 offences were recorded. The level has risen in December 2015 to 518 offences recorded. **Non-domestic burglaries** have shown a flat 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 199 offences was recorded in November 2015. The level remains relatively unchanged in December 2015 with 201 offences recorded, the second lowest level in the last two years.

- 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 64 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 47 such offences recorded in December 2015.

**Vehicle offences** have shown a downwards trend over the past two years. A two-year high of 588 offences in January 2014 was followed by a level of 386 in February 2014 with a further increase to 508 offences in March 2014. Levels have generally fluctuated since then, with a two-year low of 347 offences in January 2015. The trend has been in an overall upwards direction since then, with 476 offences recorded in August 2015 before falling to 403 offences in December 2015.

**Shoplifting offences** have shown a slight upwards trend. Levels increased from 487 offences in recorded in January 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 have since increased to reach 632 offences in August 2015, the highest figure in the past two years; since then the level has fallen in most months to December 2015 (534 offences recorded).

**Bicycle theft** generally increased from 55 offences recorded in February 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 second lowest level in the past two years. Since then levels have since increased to 81 offences recorded in April 2015, 88 in July 2015 and 87 in September 2015 before falling to a two year low of 34 offences recorded in December 2015.

**All other theft offences** have shown a flat trend over the last two years. There was a general upward trend between February 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 December 2015 standing at 1,126.

- **Criminal damage** offences have seen an upwards trend over the last two years. The level has moved in a generally upwards direction from February 2014, the second lowest figure in the last two years (1,414 offences) 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 since then to 1,731 in September 2015 before increasing to the highest level in the past 24 months in October 2015 when 1,957 offences were recorded. There were 1,594 offences recorded in December 2015.
- **Outcomes where disposal administered:** The overall rate has shown a fairly flat trend, which has been reflected across most of the main crime types.

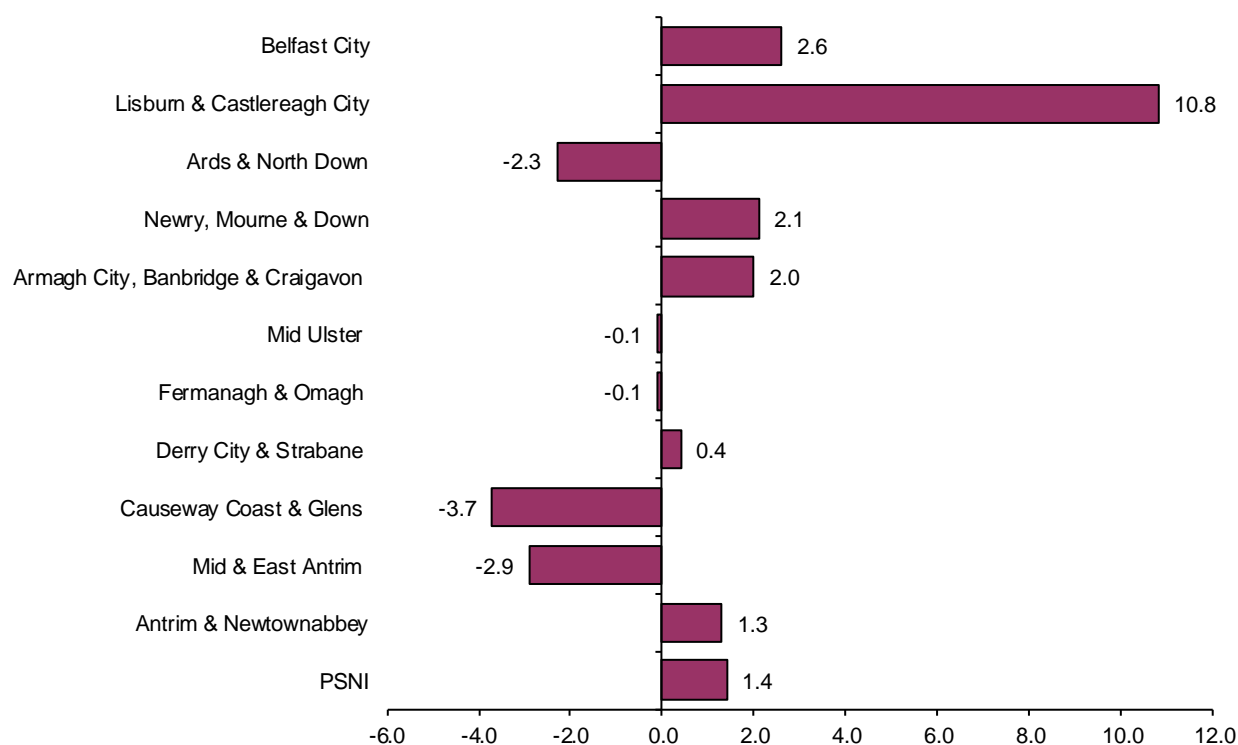
### **POLICING DISTRICT COMPARISON OF CURRENT AND PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS, excluding fraud (January 2014 to December 2014 compared with January 2015 to December 2015)**

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 an increasing crime trend over the past two years. The lowest crime level was recorded in February 2014 (2,514) and was followed by an overall increasing trend to September 2014 (fourth highest recorded at 3,154). Levels then decreased each month to 2,552 crimes in January 2015. Since then there has been an upwards trend, reaching 3,327 crimes recorded in August 2015, the highest figure recorded in the last two years. There were 3,251 offences recorded in October 2015, the second highest level in the past 24 months. The level has fallen to 2,921 offences recorded in December 2015.

- Increasing trends can also be seen in Lisburn & Castlereagh City, Ards & North Down, Newry Mourne & Down, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, Fermanagh & Omagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey. The trends over the last two years in the remaining districts are fairly flat: Derry City & Strabane, Mid Ulster, Causeway Coast & Glens and Mid & East Antrim.
- Most districts have seen a higher level of crime recorded in December 2015 when compared with November 2015, with the exception of Ards & North Down, Newry, Mourne and Down and Mid & East Antrim.

**Figure 4 Percentage change in recorded crime by policing district, January 2015 to December 2015 compared with January 2014 to December 2014 (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 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 compared with the previous 12 months**

	12 months to November'14	12 months to November'15
PSNI recorded fraud	1,979	582
Recorded by Action Fraud	-	1,547
<b>Combined fraud figure</b>	<b>1,979</b>	<b>2,129</b>

*Please note as Action Fraud figures are currently unavailable for December 2015, the figures in the table above include the 12 months to the end of November 2015.*

**Table 2 Number of recorded crimes in the 12 months to 31st December 2015 compared with the previous 12 months**

Offence group	Number and percentage changes			
	12 months to December 2014	12 months to December 2015 <sup>1,2</sup>	change between years	% change between years <sup>3</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>				
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	34,309	34,862	553	1.6
<i>Homicide</i>	20	23	3	-
<i>Violence with injury</i>	14,434	14,725	291	2.0
<i>Violence without injury</i>	19,855	20,114	259	1.3
SEXUAL OFFENCES	2,582	2,911	329	12.7
<i>Rape</i>	687	753	66	9.6
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	1,895	2,158	263	13.9
ROBBERY	906	809	-97	-10.7
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	659	590	-69	-10.5
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	247	219	-28	-11.3
THEFT OFFENCES	35,720	34,976	-744	-2.1
<i>Burglary</i>	8,889	9,165	276	3.1
<i>Domestic burglary</i>	5,713	6,105	392	6.9
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	3,176	3,060	-116	-3.7
<i>Theft from the person</i>	544	515	-29	-5.3
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	5,418	4,997	-421	-7.8
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	1,012	737	-275	-27.2
<i>Shoplifting</i>	6,577	6,675	98	1.5
<i>All other theft offences</i>	13,280	12,887	-393	-3.0
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	19,995	20,519	524	2.6
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>				
DRUG OFFENCES	4,950	5,410	460	9.3
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	915	812	-103	-11.3
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	4,035	4,598	563	14.0
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES	749	885	136	18.2
PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES	1,468	1,432	-36	-2.5
MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	2,704	2,690	-14	-0.5
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES (excluding fraud)</b>	<b>103,383</b>	<b>104,841</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>1.4</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures for the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 compared with the previous 12 months, rates (%)**

Offence group	Percentages		
	Crime Outcomes <sup>1</sup> (rate %)		% point change
	12 months to December 2014	12 months to December 2015 <sup>2</sup>	
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>			
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON	29.5	30.9	1.4
<i>Homicide</i>	65.0	69.6	4.6
<i>Violence with injury</i>	32.0	32.6	0.6
<i>Violence without injury</i>	27.6	29.6	2.0
SEXUAL OFFENCES	15.7	15.2	-0.5
<i>Rape</i>	9.5	10.8	1.3
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	18.0	16.7	-1.3
ROBBERY	19.0	18.2	-0.8
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	16.8	14.2	-2.6
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	24.7	28.8	4.1
THEFT OFFENCES	19.8	20.7	0.9
<i>Burglary</i>	10.0	10.3	0.4
<i>Domestic burglary</i>	8.6	8.9	0.4
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	12.5	13.1	0.6
<i>Theft from the person</i>	7.2	6.6	-0.6
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	16.7	17.5	0.8
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	4.2	5.2	1.0
<i>Shoplifting</i>	59.8	60.4	0.6
<i>All other theft offences</i>	9.5	10.1	0.6
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	16.4	16.1	-0.3
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>			
DRUG OFFENCES	81.9	87.3	5.4
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	77.6	84.5	6.9
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	82.9	87.8	4.9
POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES	64.6	64.0	-0.7
PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES	55.2	56.9	1.7
MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY	52.5	56.6	4.1
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES (excluding fraud)</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>1.3</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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 are provisional and will be subject to change.



**Table 4 Crime outcomes by type of disposal<sup>1</sup> in the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 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 Dec 2014	12 months to Dec 2015 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Dec 2014	12 months to Dec 2015 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Dec 2014	12 months to Dec 2015 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Dec 2014	12 months to Dec 2015 <sup>3</sup>	12 months to Dec 2014	12 months to Dec 2015 <sup>3</sup>
<b>VICTIM-BASED CRIME</b>										
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON</b>	24.6	25.9	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Homicide</i>	65.0	69.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Violence with injury</i>	27.3	27.9	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Violence without injury</i>	22.6	24.4	2.2	2.1	2.7	3.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>SEXUAL OFFENCES</b>	14.3	14.3	0.9	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Rape</i>	9.3	10.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Other sexual offences</i>	16.0	15.7	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>ROBBERY</b>	18.5	18.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<i>Robbery of personal property</i>	16.2	14.2	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	24.7	28.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>THEFT OFFENCES</b>	12.9	13.5	1.6	1.3	2.9	3.1	2.4	2.7	0.0	0.0
<i>Burglary</i>	9.2	9.8	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Domestic burglary</i>	8.0	8.6	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	11.2	12.2	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Theft from the person</i>	5.9	5.0	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.8	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
<i>Vehicle offences</i>	15.9	16.2	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
<i>Bicycle theft</i>	3.3	3.8	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Shoplifting</i>	31.6	31.6	5.6	4.4	9.6	10.4	13.0	14.0	0.0	0.0
<i>All other theft offences</i>	5.9	6.6	0.9	0.7	2.5	2.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
<b>CRIMINAL DAMAGE</b>	11.6	11.5	1.3	1.2	3.3	3.1	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0
<b>OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>										
<b>DRUG OFFENCES</b>	49.9	50.4	21.9	21.0	10.1	15.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Trafficking of drugs</i>	70.1	77.2	6.9	6.4	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Possession of drugs</i>	45.3	45.7	25.3	23.5	12.2	18.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OFFENCES</b>	53.7	49.9	6.7	7.7	4.3	6.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>PUBLIC ORDER OFFENCES</b>	53.1	55.2	2.0	1.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>MISCELLANEOUS CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY</b>	49.0	53.2	1.3	2.1	2.3	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>TOTAL RECORDED CRIME – ALL OFFENCES (excluding fraud)</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>21.1</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.5</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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 are provisional and will be subject to change.

## KNIFE AND SHARP INSTRUMENT CRIME

Since April 2007 the Home Office has collected additional data from police forces on offences involving knives and sharp instruments, where a sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat is capable of piercing the skin), e.g. a broken bottle. Knives and sharp instruments are taken to be involved in an incident if they are used to stab or cut, or as a threat. Offence coverage is for a group of selected offences, as detailed in tables 5 and 6 below.

**Please note:** the records used to provide the figures in tables 5 and 6 are identified from an operational crime recording system and, as such, may be subject to change where more up-to-date weapon information becomes available.

**Table 5 Selected violent and sexual offences recorded by the police involving knives or sharp instruments<sup>1</sup> by offence type in Northern Ireland, 2007/08 to 31 December 2015**

Selected offence type	Numbers								
	Number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument								12 months to Dec 2015
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	
Homicide <sup>2</sup>	5	8	7	8	7	7	3	3	9
Attempted murder	50	44	31	33	40	28	27	41	36
Threats to kill	100	102	105	67	74	84	72	80	73
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>3</sup>	569	521	600	520	492	558	574	573	546
Robbery	207	236	228	215	249	238	200	216	167
Rape / sexual assaults <sup>4</sup>	3	9	7	8	7	13	13	11	6
<b>Total selected offences</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>837</b>

**Table 6 Proportion of selected violent and sexual offences recorded by the police involving knives or sharp instruments<sup>1</sup> by offence type in Northern Ireland, 2007/08 to 31 December 2015** (i.e. 39 per cent of all homicides in the 12 months to December 2015 involved knives or sharp instruments)

Selected offence type	Percentages								
	Number of selected offences involving a knife or sharp instrument								12 months to Dec 2015 (%)
	2007/08 (%)	2008/09 (%)	2009/10 (%)	2010/11 (%)	2011/12 (%)	2012/13 (%)	2013/14 (%)	2014/15 (%)	
Homicide <sup>2</sup>	17	31	32	29	29	35	14	13	39
Attempted murder	37	35	27	30	35	27	24	35	32
Threats to kill	5	5	5	3	3	5	4	3	3
Actual bodily harm & grievous bodily harm <sup>3</sup>	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	4
Robbery	18	18	18	16	20	23	21	25	21
Rape / sexual assaults <sup>4</sup>	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
<b>Total selected offences</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

1. A sharp instrument is any object that pierces the skin (or in the case of a threat, is capable of piercing the skin), eg a broken bottle. The knife and sharp instrument figures presented here are based on weapon details taken from a live operational system and are therefore subject to change.

2. Homicide includes murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter. The proportion of homicides involving a knife or sharp instrument shown in table 2 for 2011/12 and 2013/14 have been revised to include the offences of corporate manslaughter recorded in each of those years in the base for calculating the proportions.

3. Includes 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm and 8N Assault with injury.

4. Includes indecent assault on a male/female (classifications 17/20) and sexual assault on a male/female (classifications 17A/17B/20A/20B), as well as 19A-19H Rape.

## 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 did not show 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. In addition, while NICS figures for 2013/14 are currently available, additional analysis has yet to be conducted for this time period to identify the comparable sub-set of crimes required to update the Northern Ireland figures below]. Further details can be found on page 5 of the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics User Guide](#).

**Table 7 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 8 Percentage reduction in comparable crime categories 2003/04 to 2012/13 (Northern Ireland)**

	Percentage change 2003/04-2006/07	Percentage change 2006/07-2011/12	Percentage change 2011/12-2012/13	Percentage change 2003/04-2012/13
Police recorded crime	-7	-20	-3	-27
NICS	-28	-28	4	-46

### 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 9 Percentage of crime records that have completed the validation process, April – December 2015**

	Percentages	
	% crime records complete	% crime records under process
Year to date: April-December 2015	99.6	0.4
Latest complete month: December 2015	98.3	1.7

### 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 10 Extent of revisions for crime figures contained in the monthly update to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015, which was first published 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

	Numbers & Percentages					
	As published 17 Dec 2015	As published 28 Jan 2016	Scale of revision		% change between years	
			Number	%	As published 17 Dec 2015	As published 28 Jan 2016
Financial Year to date: Apr - Nov 2015	72,155	72,009	-146	-0.20%	1.8%	1.6%
12 Months Dec 2014 to Nov 2015	104,473	104,327	-146	-0.14%	1.0%	0.9%

**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 December 2015. 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

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

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 (subject to implementing two requirements and reporting on these to the Authority by December 2015).

### 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:

[http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/updates/updates\\_statistics.htm](http://www.psnipolice.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics.htm)

### 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