



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland



# Agriculture and Rural Crime in Northern Ireland

## Update to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

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Agricultural crime has shown an overall downwards trend since the start of the data series in 2010/11.

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022:

- There were 210 agricultural crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, a fall of 26 on the previous 12 months and continuing the downward trend seen since the start of the data series in 2010/11.
- 99 per cent of agricultural crime was identified as occurring in rural settlement areas
- Agricultural crime represented less than one per cent of all burglary, robbery and theft offences
- Nine policing districts experienced a fall in levels of agriculture crime.

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We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided on the cover page.

# 1. Things you need to know about this release

## Coverage

This release is produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in agricultural and rural crime in Northern Ireland. These figures are based on police recorded crime data and details of the definitions and methodology used are provided below. The statistics are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to PSNI from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

This bulletin presents agricultural and urban/rural crime for the following time periods:

- Latest 12 months 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and previous 12 months 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- Current financial year to date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and previous financial year to date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

Figures were compiled on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022, using data extracted from the police administrative system on that date. All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with figures for financial years dating back to 2010/11 and for calendar years dating back to 2011 are available from the PSNI website in the [Agriculture and Rural Crime spreadsheet for September 2022, 47KB \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 will be published on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023. A full publication schedule is available on the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

## Definitions

**Agricultural Crime** – the agricultural crime figures in this bulletin represent offences of burglary, robbery and theft where the victim is involved in an agricultural-based activity. Agricultural crime covers burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property or vehicles stolen have an agricultural link (e.g. farm equipment, agricultural vehicles, livestock) or where the location was agricultural (e.g. farm, farmhouse). This information is identified from both drop down pick lists and free text searches using key agricultural-related words.

**Urban/Rural crime** – this covers all burglary, robbery and theft offences, split into these two geographical areas based on an aggregation of settlement bands. Please note that not all agricultural crime will occur in a rural settlement.

The urban/rural crime split is based on classification boundaries that are available for Northern Ireland as defined by the Planning Service, these areas being defined from Settlement Development Limits. Further details are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#). Crimes are allocated to urban or rural by linking the available postcode information for the crime location to the Central Postcode Directory.

## Data Revisions

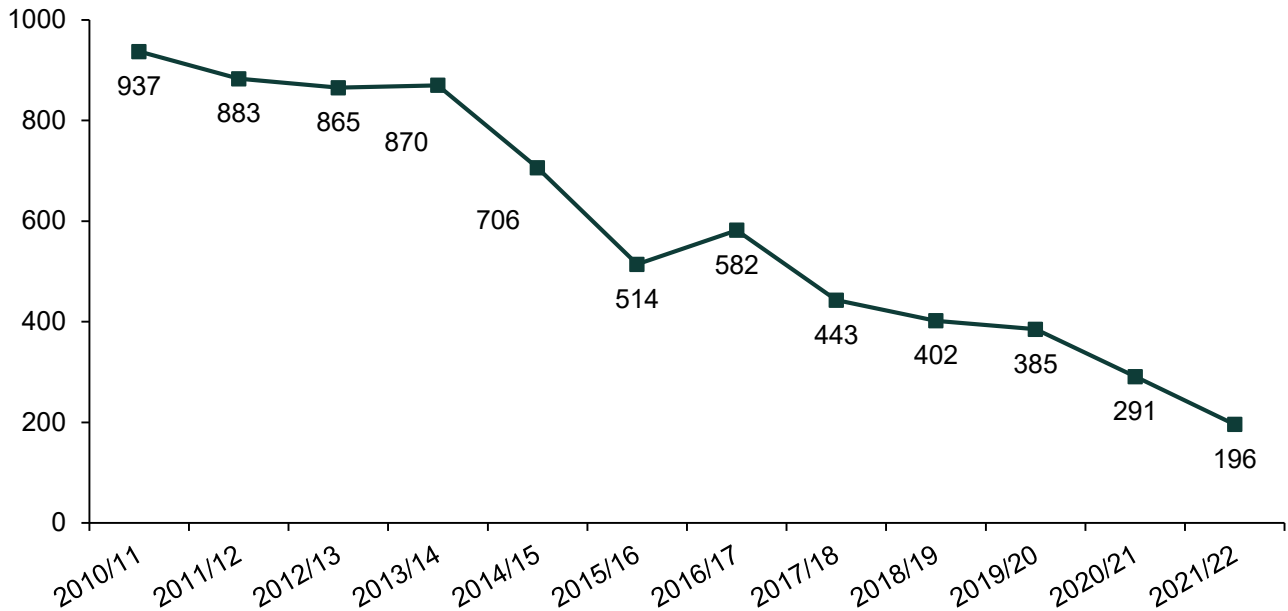
**Agricultural crime tables:** As the methodology used to identify agricultural crimes relies on data extracted from a live operational system, figures contained in the agricultural crime tables may be subject to revision. Further information is provided in the NOTES section on the last page of this bulletin.

**Urban/Rural tables:** Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2023. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

## 2. What is happening to levels of agricultural crime over the longer term?

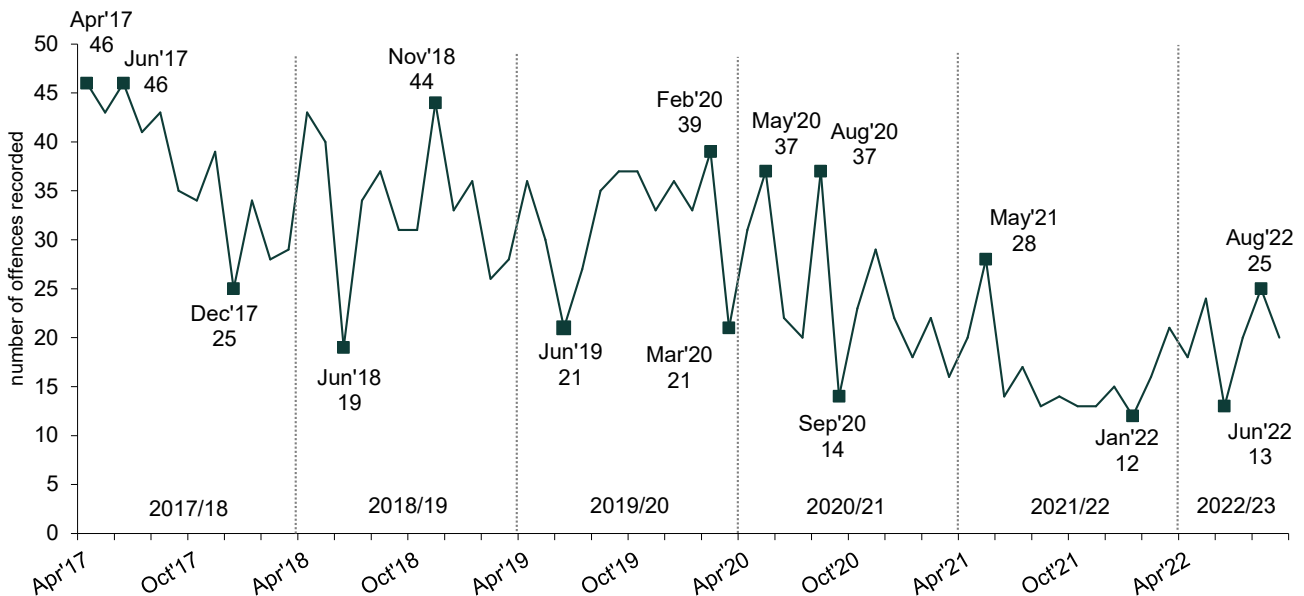
The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences relating to agricultural-based activity has shown an overall downwards trend from 937 offences recorded in 2010/11 to 196 recorded in 2021/22. The figures for 2021/22 show a decrease of 95 when compared with 2020/21 and are just over one fifth of the level recorded in 2010/11. [Figure 1]

**Figure 1 Trends in agricultural crime since 2010/11**



The falling levels of agriculture crime since April 2017 are shown in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2 Agricultural crime each month**

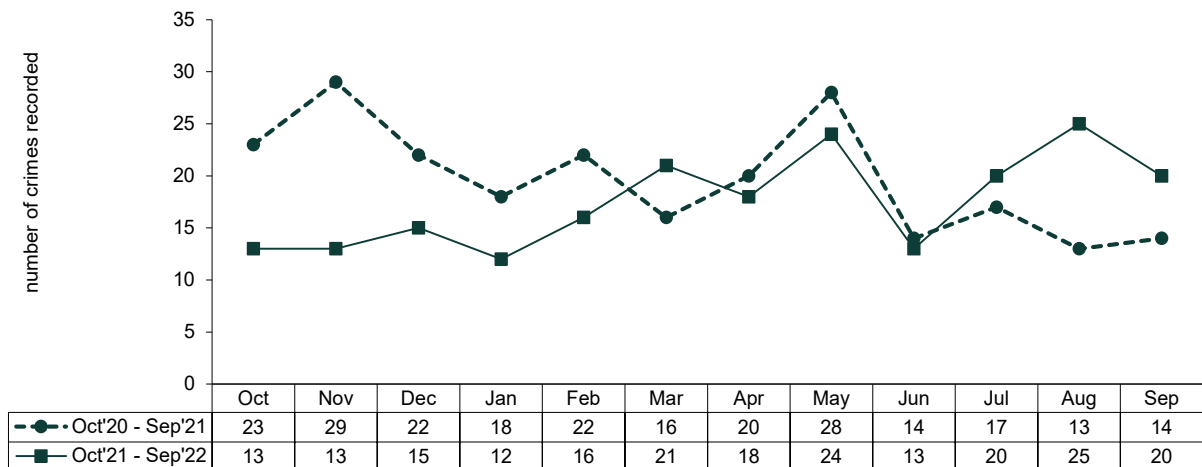


### 3. What has been happening to levels of agricultural crime more recently?

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022:

- There were 210 agricultural crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, a fall of 26 on the previous 12 months and continuing the downward trend since 2010/11. [Table 1 and Figure 1]
- 99 per cent of agriculture crime was identified as occurring in rural settlement areas. Since 2010/11 this proportion has ranged between 95 and 99 per cent<sup>1</sup>. [Table 2, accompanying spreadsheet]
- Burglary and robbery represented 26 per cent of agricultural crime, while theft represented 74 per cent. Since 2010/11 burglary and robbery have represented between 26 and 36 per cent of agricultural crime while theft has represented between 64 and 74 per cent. [Table 3, accompanying spreadsheet]
- Agriculture crime represented 0.9 per cent of all burglary, robbery and theft offences. This compares with 1.1 per cent during the previous 12 months. The figure of 0.9 per cent is the second lowest in the data series after the 0.8 per cent recorded in the 12 months ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The highest proportion of 2.4 per cent was seen in 2010/11, 2012/13 and 2013/14. [Tables 1 and 5]
- The highest level of agriculture crime was seen in Newry, Mourne & Down (47), followed by Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (40), Fermanagh & Omagh (26), Mid Ulster (25), Causeway Coast & Glens (23) and Mid & East Antrim (19). [Table 1]
- Nine of the policing districts showed a decrease in levels of agricultural crime. Both Fermanagh & Omagh and Antrim & Newtownabbey had the greatest decrease (-10) and Newry, Mourne & Down had the greatest increase (10). [Table 1]

**Figure 3 Agricultural crime October 2020 to September 2022**



<sup>1</sup> Urban/rural settlement figures are identified through matching the postcode of the occurrence with the Central Postcode Directory.

**Table 1 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) by Policing District**

Policing district	Agricultural Crimes Oct'20-Sep'21	Agricultural Crimes Oct'21-Sep'22	Change
Belfast City	1	0	-1
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	8	7	-1
Ards & North Down	6	4	-2
Newry, Mourne & Down	37	47	10
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	37	40	3
Mid Ulster	30	25	-5
Fermanagh & Omagh	36	26	-10
Derry City & Strabane	14	11	-3
Causeway Coast & Glens	25	23	-2
Mid & East Antrim	24	19	-5
Antrim & Newtownabbey	18	8	-10
No district assigned	0	0	0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>-26</b>

**Table 2 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) split by Urban/Rural settlements**

	Agricultural Crimes Oct'20-Sep'21	Agricultural Crimes Oct'21-Sep'22	Change
Urban	4	2	-2
Rural	232	208	-24
Not known	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>-26</b>

**Table 3 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) split by type of offence**

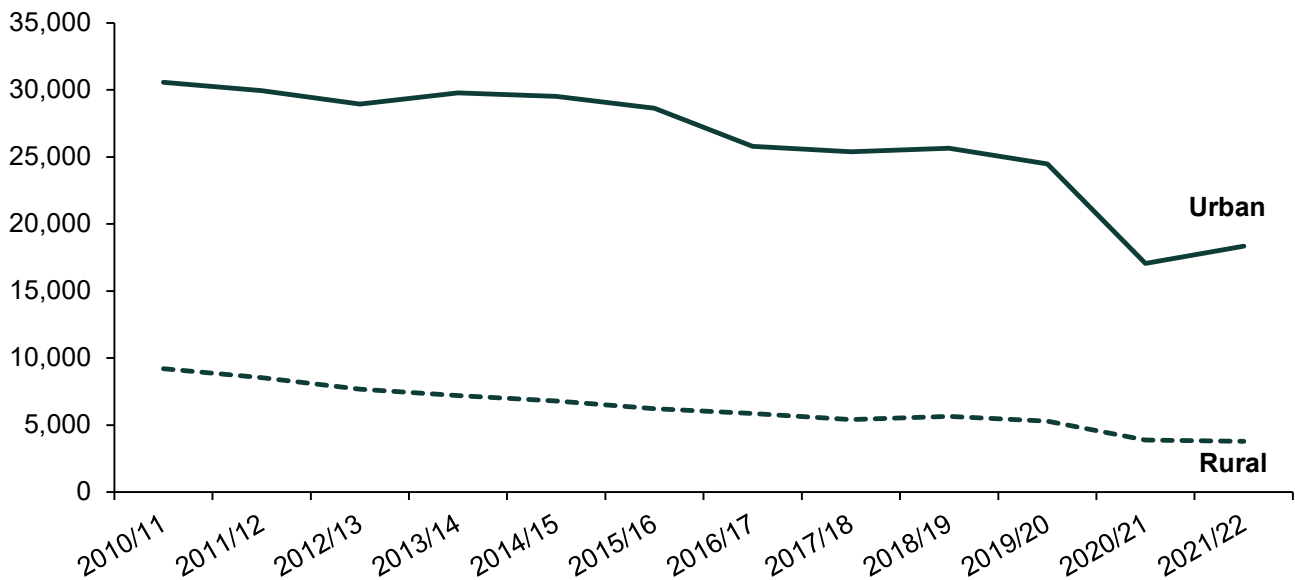
	Agricultural Crimes Oct'20-Sep'21	Agricultural Crimes Oct'21-Sep'22	Change
Burglary / Robbery	73	55	-18
Theft	163	155	-8
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>-26</b>

## 4. What is happening to levels of urban and rural crime over the longer term?

Between 2010/11 and 2021/22:

- Looking at Northern Ireland as a whole, burglary, robbery and theft offences showed an overall downwards trend between 2010/11 and 2021/22, with the level recorded in 2021/22 representing a fall of 44.4 per cent when compared with 2010/11. [Table 6]
- The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **rural settlements** fell each year between 2010/11 and 2021/22 with the exception of 2018/19. The level of 3,784 recorded in 2021/22 is a 58.9 per cent reduction on the 9,211 offences recorded in 2010/11. [Table 6]
- Levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **urban settlements** have shown an overall downwards trend since 2010/11. The level of 18,345 recorded in 2021/22 shows a fall of 40.0 per cent when compared with 2010/11. [Table 6]
- Between 2010/11 and 2021/22 the *proportion* of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in urban settlement areas increased from 77 per cent in 2010/11 to 81 per cent in 2013/14 and remained at either 81 per cent or 82 per cent between 2014/15 and 2020/21. In 2021/22 this proportion rose to 83 per cent. Correspondingly the *proportion* of these offences occurring in rural settlements fell from 23 per cent in 2010/11 to 19 per cent in 2013/14, remained at 18 per cent or 19 per cent in each year between 2014/15 and 2020/21, and fell further to 17 per cent in 2021/22. [Table 6]

**Figure 4 Trends in burglary, robbery and theft offences by urban and rural split since 2010/11**



## 5. What has been happening to levels of urban and rural crime more recently?

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022:

- In Northern Ireland as a whole, burglary, robbery and theft offences increased by 11.0 per cent (2,350 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **rural settlements** increased by 2.3 per cent (86 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- Levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **urban settlements** increased by 12.9 per cent (2,264 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- Covid-19 lockdown measures were first introduced in Northern Ireland on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, with measures re-introduced at the end of December 2020. These measures had a substantial impact on lower levels of police recorded crime during 2020/21. Burglary, robbery and theft offences saw greater and more sustained falls during these lockdowns than any other crime classification. Increases in the number of burglary, robbery and theft offences should therefore be seen in light of the effects of Covid-19 restrictions that were in place during the previous 12 months.
- The *proportion* of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in urban settlement areas was 84 per cent, with the *proportion* of these offences occurring in rural settlements sitting at 16 per cent. This compares with proportions of 82 per cent and 18 per cent recorded during the previous 12 months. [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The percentage of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in rural settlement areas was 50 per cent in Mid Ulster, 44 per cent in Fermanagh & Omagh, 35 per cent in Newry, Mourne & Down, 29 per cent in Causeway Coast & Glens, 27 per cent in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, 24 per cent in Lisburn & Castlereagh City, 23 per cent in Mid & East Antrim, and 17 per cent in each of Ards & North Down, Derry City & Strabane and Antrim & Newtownabbey. The figure was less than 1 per cent in Belfast City. [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]

**Table 4 Urban/Rural Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences based on geographical location) by Policing District, Current and previous 12 months**

Policing district	Urban Crimes Oct'20-Sep'21	Urban Crimes Oct'21-Sep'22	Rural Crimes Oct'20-Sep'21	Rural Crimes Oct'21-Sep'22	Total Crimes Oct'20-Sep'21	Total Crimes Oct'21-Sep'22
Belfast City	8,201	9,402	28	24	8,229	9,426
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	1,058	1,099	320	356	1,378	1,455
Ards & North Down	799	956	224	198	1,023	1,154
Newry, Mourne & Down	990	1,242	636	662	1,626	1,904
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	1,393	1,448	483	534	1,876	1,982
Mid Ulster	459	481	479	487	938	968
Fermanagh & Omagh	416	512	418	400	834	912
Derry City & Strabane	1,460	1,662	332	344	1,792	2,006
Causeway Coast & Glens	673	809	355	338	1,028	1,147
Mid & East Antrim	871	1,015	275	311	1,146	1,326
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,190	1,148	254	236	1,444	1,384
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>17,510</b>	<b>19,774</b>	<b>3,804</b>	<b>3,890</b>	<b>21,314</b>	<b>23,664</b>



## 6. Background notes

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.

### Definitions

**Agricultural crime** covers burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property or vehicles stolen have an agricultural link (e.g. farm equipment, agricultural vehicles, livestock) or where the location was agricultural (e.g. farm, farmhouse). This information is identified from both drop down pick lists and free text searches using key agricultural-related words.

**Urban/Rural crime** covers all burglary, robbery and theft offences, split into these two geographical areas based on an aggregation of settlement bands.

Please note that not all agricultural crime will occur in a rural settlement.

### Data Accuracy and Revisions

Agricultural crime figures are based on a range of information extracted from a live crime recording system and, as such, will always be subject to revision.

Within the current financial year revisions may occur because:

- There will be incidents identified as crimes but not processed on the crime recording system by the time the figures are extracted for presentation in these tables.
- 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.
- The Home Office Counting Rules allow crimes initially recorded to be 'no crime'd' or removed from the crime figures.

Revisions to any records within the dataset may also occur as information in relation to property stolen, vehicles stolen and location may be updated on the live system. This may be through adding additional information or updating existing information based on more up-to-date details.

The urban/rural figures are identified through matching the available postcode to the Central Postcode Directory. Postcode accuracy and availability within the current financial year will not be of the same quality or completeness as a full financial year. This is because additional quality checks are completed at the end of each financial year to improve postcode quality and completeness. Further details are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**Annual Revisions:** Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2022. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

### Web links to other information you may be interested in

[Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2020/21, 3MB \(opens in a new window\)](#) was published on 20 November 2020 and provides detailed trend information covering this time period.

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#), and in the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics Quality Report, 293KB \(opens in a new window\)](#). 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 website \(opens in a new window\)](#)