Follow-up questions for Scottish Government Police Recorded Crime Team

from a review of available evidence

SG response (questions 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 19)

Principle 1: Meeting User Needs

2. **Do you have any more information on who your users are and what they use the data for?**

Response:

The statistics on crimes and offences are used to inform **National Outcome 9** – we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger'. The statistics are also used by a wide variety of users and stakeholders to monitor trends, for policy, research and development, and for research purposes. Users of information on recorded crime include:

- Scottish ministers
- Scottish Government – analytical and policy colleagues
- Scottish Parliament – MSPs and SPICe
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Police Authority
- COPFS
- Local authorities
- Academia
- Information Services Division NHS National Services Scotland
- NHS Boards
- Children 1st
- Victim Support
- NSPCC
- Parents & abducted children together (PACT)
- Big Partnership
- Teachers Assurance
- Security companies
- Eurostat
- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- Home Office
- Overseas police forces
- Media
- University students – primarily law students and school students re Advanced Higher dissertations etc
- Members of the public

We are made aware of new users, and their uses of the data, on an on-going basis and we will continue to include their contributions to the development of recorded crime statistics in Scotland.

The statistics are useful in terms of providing information to help assess the effectiveness of justice programmes (see references below to Scotland Performs, National Outcomes, the Strategy for Justice in Scotland and the Justice Dashboard) as well as to the **Building Safer Communities Programme** and schemes such as **No Knives, Better Lives** (see references to these within email sent to the UKSA by the SG on Monday 12 May 2014). Recorded crime data is used in the development of the crime domain of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (see below).

The data are also used to answer Parliamentary Questions, Ministerial Correspondence and Freedom of Information requests as well as to provide briefing material to ministers.

Survey of Users of Justice Statistics website

In late 2010, a survey was conducted of the Justice Statistics section of the Scottish Government website (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice). The purpose of this survey was to obtain the views of users on various aspects of the website (including the content and format) and any ways in which they felt it could be improved.

A report summarising the findings from this survey can be found here:

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/jaswebsurvey

This information is contained within the ScotStat Consultation page of the Crime and Justice section, a link to which is provided here:

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime

Scotland Performs

Scotland Performs measures and reports on progress of government in Scotland in creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth.

Progress towards the Purpose is tracked by 7 Purpose Targets and it is supported by 16 National Outcomes - describing the kind of Scotland we want to be - and 50 National Indicators, covering key areas of health, justice, environment, economy, and education measure progress.

A link to **Scotland Performs** is available here:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms

A link to **National Outcomes** is available here:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome

A link to the **National Outcome 9** - we live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger – is available here:

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome/crime

The Strategy for Justice in Scotland

The Strategy for Justice in Scotland sets out in one place our collective approach to delivering an effective and efficient justice system for Scotland. At its heart are the Justice Outcomes, demonstrating how Scotland's justice system is contributing to Scotland's National Outcomes and making a tangible difference to the lives of the people of Scotland. Progress in delivering these outcomes is overseen by the Justice Board.

The **Strategy for Justice in Scotland** is available via the following link: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/justicestrategy

The **Justice Dashboard** was developed to provide a strategic view of performance and delivery, and to ensure accountability and a consistent approach to performance measurement across the Justice portfolio. It was developed in conjunction with the Justice Board and consists of a set of key indicators based around the justice outcomes. These show progress in the delivery of our work in justice and reflect the Scotland Performs approach to monitoring the delivery of National Outcomes using a series of National Indicators. Trend information is summarised in simple, colour-coded graphic form on the website and is consistent with the general methodological approach used by Scotland Performs to determine direction of travel.

The Dashboard will be kept up-to-date with the latest available data and will be reviewed on a regular basis. All data in the dashboard is already publicly available: the Dashboard rings this data together in a single, consistent way.

The main audiences for the Justice Dashboard are those interested in Scotland's justice sector, including the public and the leaders and senior managers from across Scotland's justice sector. The Dashboard will support and enable better communication and understanding between individuals and organisations of statistical information to assess and demonstrate performance in delivering justice outcomes.

The **Justice Dashboard** is available via the following link: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/partnerstories/Justice-Dashboard

Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS)

Recorded crime information is available from the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website which can be accessed via the following link: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/sns?utm_source=website&utm_medium=navigation&utm_campaign=statistics-evaluation-tools

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

Recorded crime data is used in the development of the crime domain of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). SIMD 2012 was published on 18 December 2012.

The SIMD website can be accessed via the following link: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD?utm_source=website&utm_medium=navigation&utm_campaign=statistics-evaluation-tools

The **Measuring Deprivation Advisory Group (MDAG)** is made up of a combination of data suppliers and users of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The group provides advice on issues such as the needs of users; development priorities; methodological options; quality of outputs; and dissemination and guidance on the use of outputs.

The MDAG page provides meeting papers and more information on the group's remit. This page can be accessed here: http://sh45inta/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Social-Welfare/scotstat/mdagmeetings

Corporate SG systems

A number of systems exist within the SG which hold information on the users and the details of their requests:

- Parliamentary Question Tracker
- FoI Tracker
- MACCS system (Ministerial Correspondence)

In addition to the above, JAS also maintains an Ad hoc request list

Consultation Reports

JAS also gives due consideration to responses from users from consultations which have been undertaken with users of recorded crime statistics. .

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

9. How are changes in methodology or classifications announced to users?

Response:

There have been no changes in methodology since the first assessment of Recorded Crime statistics as the police recorded systems and the data collection have remained consistent over this time period so it has not been necessary to inform users of such change.

However, there have been a number of legislative changes over the last few year

which have required changes to some of the crime classifications. The greatest change was the implementation of the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 which came into force on 1 December 2010. These changes in legislation resulted in a large number of changes to the sexual offence crime codes and a working group was set up to take these forward with involvement from JAS, policy colleagues from the bill team, legacy police forces, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), legacy police force crime registrars and SCRS.

JAS colleagues also attend meetings of the Scottish Crime Registrars Group and the Scottish Crime Recording Standard Technical Working Group (previously the ACPOS led SCRG and Counting Rules sub group) to discuss matters related to the SCRS and the Counting Rules re the introduction of new legislation, any new scenarios required etc.

The SCRS and Counting Rules manual is also due to be available from the Police Scotland and the Scottish Government web sites.

Other recent legislative changes include:

On October 6, 2010, sections 38 and 39 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 was implemented which introduced the offence of Threatening and Abusive Behaviour. In December 2010, section 39 introduced the offence of Stalking on 13 December 2010.

The implementation of the Offensive behaviours at football and Threatening Communications Act 2012 which introduced two new offences; Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications

Information about legislative change are included in the statistics bulletin in the commentary section to ensure these are visible early on in the documentation. Necessary details are also included in the table footnotes to allow changes to be brought to the attention of users who make use of the tables without reading background information.

JDIN crime code classification project

The Justice Data Information Needs (JDIN) crime code classification project was a joint project with COPFS and Force Crime Registrars to simplify and make consistent the way crime is classified across the different databases.

The purpose was to look at all our processes, be consistent, identify differences and ultimately to save time maintaining the database in the future. Most of the work has been around consistency, to ensure it meets everyone's needs and find a more efficient way to assign new charges to crimes. The project has allowed us to have a better understanding of the output and of the identified discrepancies.

ScotStat meeting - December 2011

Agenda item 8 - Update on Crime Code Classification Project 11(6.5)

Paper 11(6.5) JDIN crime code classification project
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/CrimeJustice/scotstatcrime/crim
    ecodeproject

Charge Codes

The detailed lists of Charge Codes as approved by the Crown Office & Procurator
Fiscal Service is maintained and updated on a monthly basis by JAS and circulated
to crime registrars, to individuals within Police Scotland and to those within
partner justice organisations.

These charge codes are mapped to the crime codes which are used in the recorded
crime statistics. New charge codes and amendments are included in this Excel
spread sheet as are the dates when any codes have become inactive etc.

The updated monthly Charge Codes list is available at (the foot of) the following web
page:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/DataSource

**10. For how long may police forces make amendments to crime records after
    they have been submitted to SG? Is the change flagged on the next set of
    data that SG receives from Police Scotland?**

Response:

Police data submitted to SG is subject to two stages of quality checks. Firstly, data is
uploaded and routine checks are carried out at a detailed crime code level to
identify any oddities in the data including large changes between quarters and large
changes when data is compared to the previous year. Police contacts have two
weeks in which to amend or explain any such differences.

The second stage of QA sees SG producing summary data tables similar to those
published in the bulletin to allow police contacts to check the final summary data
over a longer time period. Any oddities can be investigated and amended as
required.

Due to constraints with police force systems and at the time of the last assessment,
with our own IT system, we do not have a revisions policy for recorded crime data.
Data are considered snapshot as at the end of the financial year and we state in the
notes section of the publication that amendments arising after the end of the financial
year are not generally incorporated. However, where errors are discovered, we
would clearly seek to correct these.

For example, during production of the 2012-13 bulletin, a big drop was found for
parking offences in Grampian. This was discussed with the contact for the force and
it transpired that data returned for prior years had included stationary parking

offences when these should be excluded. We worked with the force to correct the back series of data for the publication and explanatory footnotes and text were included in the publication. See extracts of text below:

Footnote 1 in Table 2:
"The total figure within this category, for each of the years 2003-04 to 2011-12, have been revised following the submission of amended data from Grampian Police. For further information, please see Note 7.5"

and

Note 7.5:
"During work on this publication, it was found that the number of parking offences from Grampian police was unusually high for previous years. It was discovered that the data return had included stationary parking offences which should have been excluded from the data return. Data for 2003-04 to 2011-12, have now been revised and this has reduced the number of Other motor vehicle offences, Total motor vehicle offences and Total offences for the affected years."

From the *Recorded Crime in Scotland, 2012-13* statistical bulletin which can be accessed here:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/9697

The establishment of Police Scotland means that we now obtain information through a single reporting system. In addition, JAS put a new SAS system in place which allows more efficient management of datasets and extraction of information. As a result of these IT changes, we would be in a better position to consider the need for a revisions policy. This is something we would consider following the publication of the 2013-14 publication and where appropriate consult with users to get their views. However at present, we are satisfied that we are publishing an accurate snapshot of crime as at the end of each financial years period and any changes to this policy would have to be carefully considered to ensure we did not change the meaning of the statistics.

Principle 3: Integrity

11. Has there been any external critical questioning of the police recorded crime statistics, by the Scottish Parliament, media, academia or members of the public. How have SG statisticians responded to this?

Response:

The SG has provided a response when it has received questions or requests for information of this nature. This may take different forms, for example, providing an answer to a parliamentary question, providing briefing material for ministers, briefing for First Minister's Questions, providing relevant statistics and commentary to address the question. If the request comes from the media then a response is provided via our Communications colleagues..

For example, the Sunday Herald reported on 23rd February 2014 that anonymous police officers state "crime figures are being massaged to look better". The article calls on the Cabinet Secretary for Justice to "investigate these allegations". Media correspondence related to the robustness of police recorded crime statistics.

SG statisticians contributed to briefing material for First Minister's Questions by providing factual information relating to the Scottish Crime Recording Standard which ensures uniformity in crime recording practices throughout Scotland, stating that the Standard is independently reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) and that Police Scotland has a National Crime Registrar, supported by three regional crime registrars, who ensure ethical and consistent crime recording.

SG statisticians also corrected a factual inaccuracy in a related article as it had been erroneously stated that there is an "absence of a national crime registrar".

Technical briefing for the media

On the morning of publication of recorded crime statistics, SG statisticians hold a **technical briefing for the media**. The purpose of this event is for JAS to provide a summary of the main findings from the statistical publication, explain any particular technical issues or changes to legislation which may have an impact on the year-on-year comparability of the figures and for the media to ask any questions. The intended outcome is that the media report any figures from the publications based on a correct understanding of the material presented in the bulletin.

12. Is there any documentation available to explain the roles and responsibilities of SG and Police Scotland in the production of the statistics?

Response:

2013-14 is the first year for which data are available following the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013. The roles and responsibilities of the SG and Police Scotland will therefore be detailed in the forthcoming 2013-14 statistical bulletin.

A summary overview of the new **governance and accountability arrangements** for policing in Scotland is contained within the set of slides presented by Liz Sadler in Police Division at the meeting on 8 May.

The **Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012** and its associated secondary legislation and guidance sets out the legislative framework for the new policing landscape and replaces previous legislation.

Chapter 12 of the Act provides information related to co-operation and the exchange of information across Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority.

A link to the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 is available here:.

Police Scotland statistics are managed, collated and analysed by the Police Scotland Analysis and Performance Unit.

Independent scrutiny of Police Scotland's Performance is also undertaken by the SPA who examine statistical information at regular board meetings.

Crime registrars

A **new crime registrar structure** was put in place following the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013, together with the roles of the national crime registrar and three regional crime registrars.

As well as having regional responsibilities, these three registrars each lead on a specific aspect of crime recording: training; audit; and maintaining the Counting Rules. The three registrars are managed by the national crime registrar.

Recommendation 3 (of the HMICS review of crime recording (Dec 2013)) states the following
Police Scotland should review the new crime registrar structure and governance arrangements for crime recording one year after their implementation. The review should include consideration of whether sufficient resources are available for auditing incident and crime records, and whether the dual roles held by some crime managers raise a possible conflict of interest with ethical crime recording in contravention of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard.

The crime registrar role is under regular scrutiny and a number of improvement actions have already been progressed. However a formal review will not commence until October 2014.

Quality assurance

All organisations will undertake **quality assurance work**. For example, the Performance Unit at Police Scotland will monitor the daily updates to the ScOMIS system to identify any spikes/unusual trend sin the data. There is also an alert system in place to flag up whether any overnight updates have not been loaded on to the system

Further details related to the quality assurance work undertaken by Police Scotland and the SG is provided in our response to Question 16.

Official Statistics

Following the establishment of Police Scotland and the SPA, the SG would continue to produce National Statistics on recorded crime. However given the creation of these new national bodies, work has also been undertaken by the SG to provide Police Scotland and the SPA with the necessary information for these organisations to consider what it would mean for them to become producers of Official Statistics. The relevant guidance material was shared with the organisations and a workshop

was held earlier this year for JAS and OCSP to take representatives from these organisations through the key principles of the Code of Practice and how these would be applied in practice as well as allowing the organisations to ask questions and discuss any issues they wished to raise.

Such a workshop was also important to provide a forum in which to discuss the distinctions in the use of management information and Official Statistics.

ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee

Statisticians in Justice Analytical Services are members of the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee (and also chair the meeting on a rotating basis)..

The remit of the ScotStat Crime and Justice Committee is given here: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/scotstatcrime/crimeremit

JDIN crime code classification project

As has been mentioned earlier, the Justice Data Information Needs (JDIN) crime code classification project was a joint project with COPFS and Crime Registrars to simplify and make consistent the way crime is classified across the different databases.

The purpose was to look at all our processes, be consistent, identify differences and ultimately to save time maintaining the database in the future. Most of the work has been around consistency, to ensure it meets everyone's needs and find a more efficient way to assign new charges to crimes. The project has allowed us to have a better understanding of the output and of the identified discrepancies.

ScotStat meeting - December 2011

Agenda item 8 - Update on Crime Code Classification Project 11(6.5) http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/CrimeJustice/scotstatcrime/agendaCJDec2011

Paper 11(6.5) JDIN crime code classification project http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/CrimeJustice/scotstatcrime/crimecodeproject

Charge Codes

The detailed lists of Charge Codes as approved by the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service is maintained and updated on a monthly basis by JAS and circulated to crime registrars, to individuals within Police Scotland and to those within partner justice organisations.

The updated monthly Charge Codes list is available (at the foot of) the following web page:

Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

14. Who is responsible for defining policies, procedures and training requirements for crime recording? Is this the responsibility of SG Statisticians, Police Scotland or others?

Response:

Crime recording practice is governed by the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) and the Scottish Government's Counting Rules. These documents provide a framework for deciding when an incident should be recorded as a crime, what type of crime should be recorded and how many crimes should be counted.

The Scottish Crime Recording Standard, introduced in 2004, provides a victim oriented approach, and ensures uniformity in crime recording practices throughout Scotland.

Compliance with the Standard is independently reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS).

Police Scotland has a National Crime Registrar, supported by three regional crime registrars, who ensure ethical and consistent crime recording

Under the legacy police force structure, there were three subgroups of the ACPOS led Scottish Crime Registrars Group (SCRG), namely i) Counting Rules, ii) Audit and iii) Training, each led by a force crime registrar.

One cross-cutting area of work was in the development of a training DVD the purpose and content of which was discussed at the Counting Rules subgroup. The DVD was included in the training of probationers at the Scottish Police Training College at Tulliallan. As well as delivering training at the College, legacy force crime registrars also delivered training in crime recording locally to crime managers and other staff in their legacy force area.

Following the establishment of Police Scotland, a Scottish Crime Registrars Technical Working Group was established. Training is one of the main functions considered by this Working Group. (Ref Scottish Crime Recording Standard Meeting Structure note circulated at an earlier UKSA/SG meeting). .

HMICS Review of Crime Recording (Dec 2013)

There were two recommendations related to training in the recent HMICS review of crime recording (Dec 2013)) namely:

Recommendation 4
Messages about ethical crime recording and performance with integrity from senior members of the service should be frequent, consistent, clear and

understood by all members of Police Scotland.

Recommendation 7
To promote consistency in crime recording, Police Scotland should review the training needs of all those involved in crime recording decisions and develop a strategy to address those needs. The strategy should address initial and refresher training and bespoke training for crime managers and their staff. It should also set out how officers and staff will be kept up to date with changes to crime recording practice.

An action plan has been developed to address these recommendations (please note that currently this is an internal Police Scotland document)

In relation to Rec 4, there is continual reinforcement of the ethical approach to crime recording by senior leaders within Police Scotland. Crime recording audits will have focus at Divisional Commander's meeting on a quarterly basis. A Crime Managers seminar bed by the CC and a DCC is scheduled to take place in late June/early July to reinforce the ethical approach to crime recording.

In relation to rec 7, continual training is provided to crime registrars by crime registrars on a needs basis. A Crime registrar's bulletin was introduced to improve communication about training issues. A Crime Managers seminar bed by the CC and a DCC is scheduled to take place in late June/early July to reinforce the ethical approach to crime recording. The seminar will provide training inputs. Crime audits circulated to each divisional crime management unit highlighting individual errors, non compliance etc.

The training of police officers and police staff is an operational matter for Police Scotland.

A further recommendation, *Recommendation 6,* states
Police Scotland, in cooperation with the Scottish Government and other criminal justice partners, such as the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, should seek to review and clarify the definition of serious assault.

An example, re procedures in relation to Rec 6, was that Police Scotland drafted a revised definition (showing changes from current definition) and then circulated to SG for initial comment. It was then discussed at a recent SCRG meeting with contributions from COPFS and HMICS.

Work is currently on-going with key partners to review and clarify the definition of serious assault.

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16. **We understand that you are carrying out QA of the data with Police Scotland. Beyond this QA how do you satisfy yourselves with the quality of the data?**

Response:

There are two parts to the QA for 2013-14.

As detailed in the response to question 10, a two stage quality assurance process is in place to check the data each year. This involves a stage of checking detailed data across the four quarters of the financial year period, and against the data for the previous year, and a second stage where forces are asked to check and ultimately sign off summary data over a longer time series. These checks have always been in place and will continue to be carried out in future.

However, 2013-14 data will be the first year for which data is for a single police service rather than eight separate legacy forces, and a single data is returned to us from the new ScOMIS system. We are carrying out a bespoke, one off quality assurance exercise to ensure that we are satisfied with the data returned from this new system and to ensure comparability with previous years data. To do this analysis, we are using data for 2008-09 to 2012-13 from the ScOMIS system and comparing it against the data we already hold (which has been published in our statistical bulletins).

While the police have already carried out thorough system testing and have produced a couple of papers about findings from their own quality checks, the checks were carried out at a higher level that was appropriate for our purposes. So we have obtained ScOMIS data and used it to carry out a much more detailed set of checks (475 crime codes, 32 local authorities, 5 years). We provided a list of queries back to the ScOMIS team for investigation and explanation and as we have now received responses to these checks, we are in the process of drafting a technical report which will be published and will be referenced in the next statistical bulletin.

This report is vital to ensure that the 2013-14 data is not only accurate but is comparable with our existing time series. However, it is a separate exercise to the routine checks that are carried out on new data prior to its publication.

We will also refer to any internal audits undertaken by Police Scotland and to HMICS audit reports, as well as main findings from the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey.

HMICS Audits

On 2 May 2014, HMICS published *HMICS Scrutiny Plan 2014-2015.* This document can be accessed via the following web link:
http://www.hmics.org/publications/hmics-scrutiny-plan-2014-2015

Contained within this Plan is the following:

"Crime Recording – (October to December 2014) – HMICS will test the accuracy of incident and crime recording in Scotland. The results will provide the public and key stakeholders with greater information on which to base their assessment of the validity of crime statistics. It may also highlight areas for improvement and/or increased internal audit and scrutiny"

These results will provide an important contribution to our overall assessment of quality.

17. Do Police Scotland audit the underlying police recorded crime data? If so, do you have access to the audit reports as part of your quality assurance process?

Response:

Under the legacy police force structure, there were three subgroups of the ACPOS led Scottish Crime Registrars Group (SCRG), namely i) Counting Rules, ii) Audit and iii) Training, each led by a force crime registrar.

Within legacy force audits and across legacy force audits were undertaken by legacy force crime registrars and crime managers. The timetable for such audits and the outcomes were discussed at the subgroup meetings and reported to the ACPOS led SCRG meeting.

For reference (and provided to the UKSA on a restricted basis), please find attached an email from a legacy force crime registrar in March 2013 which contains a copy of the Scottish Crime Recording Standard Annual Compliance Audit Report for 2012. This report documents the results of audits conducted by all Scottish legacy Forces and British Transport Police to demonstrate compliance with the national standard. The report was approved by the Scottish Crime Registrar's Group at a meeting on 8 March 2013.

SCRS - Annual Compliance Audit 2012 - email from [ ] - 15 March 2013.msg

This is the fifth annual audit conducted by all Scottish legacy Forces since the introduction of the SCRS in 2004.

The 2012 audit was subject to cross-scrutiny between legacy Forces in accordance with guidelines within the Audit Methodology. These audits highlighted the benefits to be gained from cross-scrutiny and consideration will be given by the SCR Audit Sub Group to continue a similar process during 2013.

Following the establishment of Police Scotland, the scheduling and outcomes from any cross division scrutiny audits across and within police divisions are reported at meetings of the Scottish Crime Registrars Group (SCRG) and the Scottish Crime Registrars Technical Working Group. Any issues identified are discussed along with any actions required to address any specific issues.

For reference (and provided to the UKSA on a restricted basis), please find attached a copy of the agenda the next Scottish Crime Registrars Technical Working Group on 15 May 2014 which includes agenda item 4 on "Audit".

18. Are Police Scotland responsible for recording all fraud crime or are there any other sources? Is Action Fraud operational in Scotland?

Response:

The *Recorded Crime in Scotland 2012-13* statistical bulletin presents statistics on crimes and offences recorded and cleared up by the eight Scottish legacy police forces in 2012-13. Statistics on crimes and offences recorded by the police provide a measure of the volume of criminal activity with which the police are faced.

There are other reporting bodies such as British Transport Police (BTP) (defrauding the railway of fares etc) and Ministry of Defence Police who have the ability to report straight to the Procurator Fiscal in respect of frauds occurring within their area of responsibility. Such occurrences are thought to be relatively rare and the bulk of frauds would be recorded by Police Scotland.

If a fraud which occurred in Scotland is reported to Action Fraud prior to Police Scotland being advised, a crime must be recorded by the owning Police Scotland Division. Action Fraud makes disseminations to Police Scotland through the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) at the City of London Police and come into the different divisions at Police Scotland. Providing that the dissemination contains sufficient information to comply with Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS), Police Scotland will raise a crime report and enquire into the circumstances.

Action Fraud is an organisation which we understand is funded wholly by the Home Office and therefore, currently, Police Scotland is not part of it.

19. How have you noted comparability between crime statistics producers in England and Wales and Northern Ireland?

Response:

In March 2013, JAS hosted a meeting of the Crime and Justice Theme Group/Four Nations Crime Statistics producers. Included in the agenda was an item on

"Review of cross-cutting issues affecting comparability"

Please note that the agenda, papers and minutes from this meeting are available on the JAS Sharepoint site.

During the second half of last year, there has been a range of activity with crime statistics producers in E&W and NI, in relation to comparability... This included an exercise on comparability led by the Home Office, based on a framework document prepared by the Chief Statistician in Scotland.

Please see attached email, by way of example of this activity.

Also subsequent work with ONS in advance of their publication on comparability.

We also provided a contribution to the section on comparability in ONS' quarterly publication on crime statistics in E&W. This was done in conjunction with the crime registrars in Scotland.

For example, see attached email re correspondence with colleagues at ONS.

We will be including a corresponding section on comparability in the forthcoming statistical bulletin.

The next meeting of the Four Nations crime statistics producers is due to be held in Belfast on 24 June 2014. A similar meeting to that held in Edinburgh is being proposed with 3 or 4 specific topics (with papers), and a summary written report of developments in each organisation.

Two of the topics for discussion (based on the draft agenda) are the following:

- Identifying cross-cutting issues affecting the comparability and coherence of official statistics within the theme
- Each department / constituency to review each other's publications with a view to reciprocating references between publications; to improve their documentation on quality, reliability, consistency, users and uses; and to document comparability issues

Further questions for Scottish Government Police Recorded Crime Team

SG response (questions 30 to 37)

To note that responses to the following questions were provided by the SG at the meeting with the UKSA on 8 May 2014. The following is a summary of, or key points, the responses provided previously...

30. **Do you plan to include statistics from BTP, MDP or others in the next release?**

    Response:

    Yes. Data returns have already been received for 2013-14 from the BTP, MDP and CNC.

31. **Can you explain (or point us to documents that can explain), how domestic abuse is recorded on police databases? The reason we ask is that HMICS report includes domestic abuse, but these are not identified as a specific crime type in the Scottish Government statistics. Do the police record the underlying crime/offence (if any) and then 'flag' the case as DA? If this is the case do you consider that the overall compliance rate given in the HMICS report could be misleading if used to support the statistics presented in the Scottish Government's annual report?**

    Response:

    There are no specific crimes which relate directly to domestic abuse, but any crimes which are part of a domestic incident will be included in the Recorded crime dataset. However, as data is collected on an aggregate level basis, it is not possible to identify which crimes related specifically to a domestic abuse incident. Data on domestic abuse in Scotland is collected separately in an incident level data collection and helps identify the nature and number of crimes associated with domestic abuse. Not all incidents of domestic abuse result in the recording of a crime or offence.

32. **The NCR told us that this is the first year that police audits have been carried out on the police recorded crime data on a national level, is this also your understanding of the situation? Have you had sight of these Police Scotland audit reports?**

    Response:

    Please see response to Question 17 (above).

33. **Do you think that the lack of similar audit in previous years could impact on the timeseries that you plan to present?**

    Response:

Please see response to Question 17 (above).

34. SCOMIS development work - did the Scottish Government propose or request any new variables or fields to be supplied by Police Scotland compared with what had been previously supplied by the 8 legacy forces?

Response:

The ScOMIS system was set in advance of the establishment of Police Scotland on 1 April 2013. The ScOMIS system is a performance reporting tool which draws data together for the eight legacy police forces' existing crime recording systems. Legacy forces systems continue to be used while a single national crime recording system is being designed and implemented. As a result, additional variables were not requested by SG for the ScOMIS system. However consideration was given during its design to ensure that recorded crime data could be provided to SG on the same basis that data has always been submitted.

35. What information have you provided to users throughout the last year to explain the release of data by Police Scotland/SPA and the different uses and purposes that these data could have?

Response:

The SG has worked with Police Scotland and the SPA throughout the year to discuss how any information they release is presented to users, in terms of ensuring that the information is marked or labelled as 'management information' and then sign-posting users to the National Statistics on recorded crime produced by the SG.

Information relating to the ScOMIS system will be provided in the Technical Report to be published by the SG.

36. Have you considered the reporting of cybercrime and whether there is any impact on Scottish crime statistics?

Response:

As with domestic abuse, a crime will be recorded as a crime regardless of its locus. As the recorded crime dataset is aggregate however, it is not possible to separate out cybercrimes from other crimes of a similar nature. For example, online fraud would be counted as fraud in the recorded crime data return, but we would be unable to separate out which happened online and which happened 'in person, unless a given crime code provided such information.

37. Are the statistics available on the UK Data Service? Does the Scottish Government plan to make these available in the future?

Response:

To date, data is not available via the UK Data Service. However we are considering ways in which we can make our data available as per, for example

the GSS Data Strategy Implementation Plan.we are also taking into consideration the work being undertaken, and the guidance being prepared, by OCSP in relation to Open Data etc.

The Justice Analysts Group is considering the potential for Police Scotland data linkage through the Administrative Data Research Group.