

**Summary of meeting with Scottish Government on the reassessment of  
Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland**

**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 14:00 – 16:00

**Attendees:** [REDACTED] (Justice Analytical Services,  
Scottish Government); [REDACTED]  
(Monitoring and Assessment Team, UK Statistics Authority).

The following meeting agenda was agreed ahead of the meeting:

- Clarify the scope of the assessment
- Overview of the reassessment process
- Agree a timetable/assessment stages
- Confirm evidence required/arrangements for user consultation
- Answer any queries.
- SG update on the additional work currently being undertaken for the production of recorded crime data this year

**Clarify the scope of the assessment:** After initial introductions, [REDACTED] referred to agenda item 1, the scope of the assessment. [REDACTED] explained that as part of the reassessment process, it is common for statistical releases that are the subject of separate previous assessments to be combined and reassessed as one package, particularly if they are related statistics. [REDACTED] asked whether Scottish Government wished to include the statistical releases included within Assessment Report 119 (Statistics on Homicide, Domestic Abuse, Firearm Crimes and Offences and Firearm Certificates Recorded by the Police in Scotland), in addition to statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland.

[REDACTED] responded that Scottish Government were not anticipating that we reassess these additional statistics, as their designation as National Statistics was only confirmed in late 2013 (the assessment report was published in June 2011). The Assessment team asked if the headline statistics on the crimes covered in AR 119 were included in the recorded Crime release. Scottish Government responded that the headline statistics are included, with the exception of domestic abuse. [REDACTED] asked about Scottish Government's plans for statistics on Racial Incidents, as they were currently official statistics. [REDACTED] responded that the team were currently in discussions with policy officials within Scottish Government about expanding the scope of the statistics to include hate crime. [REDACTED] confirmed that there are no firm plans yet to publish new statistics using the new hate crime definitions.

**Overview of the reassessment process:** The producer team were keen to understand the rationale for reassessing these statistics; [REDACTED] observed that the reassessment is not on the UKSA's published programme of re-assessment. [REDACTED] responded that the recent de-designation of the statistics on Crime in England and Wales has highlighted potential issues associated with the use of administrative data that is also used to monitor operational performance as the basis of National Statistics. In addition, the previous Assessment of Recorded Crime in Scotland was Assessment Report 2 published in June 2009 and it is timely to reassess these statistics.

█████ stressed that he didn't feel this was the most appropriate time to be reassessing the statistics, due to the recent establishment of Police Scotland, replacing the old 8 police forces and the subsequent impact on the production of the statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland. █████ added that it would be helpful to get our views on what the reassessment 'product' would look like, and whether it will be forward looking, given that the new statistical release won't be published until June 2014.

█████ responded that the Assessment team is aware, from recent emails, of the time pressures on the Scottish Government team and so the team plan to run the reassessment in a way that has as minimal impact on the producer team's time as possible. The reassessment can be carried out based on a combination of information already published on Scottish Government's website as part of ongoing code compliance, as well dialogue with a range of users, to gather their views of the producer team's engagement with them and their views on the statistics. In addition the team can view drafts of guidance and the statistical release if parts of it have been drafted.

**SG update on the additional work currently being undertaken for the production of recorded crime data this year:** The organisational change to the policy landscape has changed the flow of recorded crime data submitted to Scottish Government. Police Scotland have developed a new process to collate recorded crime from all police divisions, using the 'SCOMIS' system, whereby historically Scottish Government had aggregated excel data submitted to them by the 8 police forces. Scottish Government will be producing a technical report detailing this new process of data extraction and aggregation carried out by Police Scotland, which they plan to publish in June 2014 alongside the new statistics release.

Police Scotland has provided Scottish Government with an overview of the new data and systems. Scottish Government agreed to send the Assessment team a copy of the Police Scotland presentation on the new IT system. Police Scotland has their own team of analysts and they have submitted data to Scottish Government on a quarterly basis since April 2013, as well as historic crime data for the last 5 years, for the purpose of data checking and quality assurance. █████ added that the new systems are complex; the team in Scottish Government have been carrying various levels of detailed checking using the historic data, for the 475 crime codes, meaning the quality assurance process has become time consuming. In addition, the new data supplied by Police Scotland is based on 'live data' therefore is difficult to reconcile exactly.

**Action – Scottish Government to send a copy of the Police Scotland presentation on the new IT systems to the Assessment team.**

Scottish Government has been conducting the quality assurance process since January 2014, which has generated 2,000 queries which Police Scotland is currently investigating; to date none of the queries have been identified as a system error. The analytical team in Police Scotland have been very cooperative. █████ asked whether Scottish Government and Police Scotland have had discussions about the possibility of creating 'snapshots' of the recorded crime data at specific points in time, to address the issues associated with reconciling against 'live'; █████ confirmed that discussions to this effect had taken place, but there are currently no plans to do this, due to various considerations such as server space.

████ confirmed that much of the quality assurance has now finished, Scottish Government are awaiting feedback from Police Scotland on the outstanding queries for crime categories 1-5 by the end of this week (w/e 21<sup>st</sup> March), and will receive feedback for crime categories 6-7 by the end of next week (w/e 28<sup>th</sup> March). Scottish Government have started to develop the technical report on the data collection and assurance process, based on their dialogue with Police Scotland to date, and they aim to share this draft report with Police Scotland in early April 2014. Scottish Government plan to receive financial year data from Police Scotland during the first week of April and will then carry out further quality assurance. Scottish Government have developed prototypes of the new web tables; the contents of the Recorded Crime statistical release will also change, as there will be a change to the levels of geographies presented, previously the release presented analysis by police force, as well as the national picture.

████ asked whether the team planned to consult users on the changes to the presentation of the new statistical release. █████ responded that consultation has been carried out through their dialogue with some users; internal discussions have taken place with policy officials and in Crime and Justice ScotStat Committee meetings, who meet every 6 months. The Assessment team asked whether the Scottish Government plan to consult wider than this Committee, to which Scottish Government; █████ responded that they plan to consult in April, with a proposal to present the commentary in the statistics by Local Authority.

████ also asked about the new arrangements in relation to data compliance, particularly the crime registrars. █████ responded that under the new arrangements, there will be one National Crime Registrar, supported by 3 regional Crime Registrars, for the North, East and West, replacing the old structure of one crime registrar for each police force. Each of the new registrars will be representing their areas on relevant groups that will meet every 6 months, including a strategic and technical group (the Scottish Crime Registrars Group and Scottish Crime Registrars Technical Working Group, respectively). The technical group will meet quarterly, and Scottish Government representatives will attend, and a meeting has already taken place.

████ then asked whether there are plans for Police Scotland to become a producer of National Statistics, as Roger Halliday had mentioned this is in a recent email to the Authority. █████ told us that Police Scotland is considering this, as part of wider dialogue with the Scottish Police Authority, Police Scotland and the Fire and Rescue Service in their considerations to become producers of official statistics. Scottish Government have given presentations and held workshops about the Code of Practice, led by Roger Halliday. Whilst there has been interest from the organisations, there are no firm plans for this to happen.

**Confirm evidence required / arrangements for user consultation and a timetable/ assessment stages:**

████ confirmed that the Assessment team will need to present a paper or report to the Assessment Committee in May 2014. This will be based on feedback from users of the Recorded Crime statistics, and research carried out by the Assessment team on ongoing compliance of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, including published documentation. █████ asked the team to provide a list of their key users, and data suppliers, including the crime data leads in Police Scotland. The Assessment team noted that they would speak with stakeholders such as Police Scotland (possibility including visiting the analysts in Glasgow), SPA and HMICS. This research will be supplemented with

a catch up meeting in a few weeks' time with Scottish Government, to clarify any outstanding points. Following this first stage of research and user consultation, the Assessment team can then take a view on the evidence to be presented to the May Assessment Committee. Following this the Assessment team may review the statistical release and accompanying technical report. This further evidence could then be used to present a further report to the Assessment Committee in mid July. The outlined approach is being adopted to allow for the fact that the producer team are currently extremely busy quality assuring the data submission process, ahead of the planned June 2014 release. [REDACTED] added that it is usual for a producer team to supply a new Written Evidence for Assessment (WEFA) to the Assessment team for a reassessment; however this isn't always the case.

[REDACTED] responded that he still felt unclear about the reassessment process, and what exactly the Assessment team will be able to present to the May Assessment Committee ahead of the June 2014 publication. [REDACTED] therefore wanted to feel clear of what input the Assessment team would expect from his team, since they are currently at maximum capacity, and had found the work to contribute to the original assessments very time consuming, amounting to 1-2 weeks of full time work. [REDACTED] explained that the first assessment is usually more time consuming for statistics producers, due to the newness of the process and the *Code of Practice*. A reassessment should be less time consuming, since *Code* compliance is assumed to be ongoing.

**Action – Scottish Government to send a list of key users and data suppliers to the Assessment team early next week (w/c 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014).**

In relation to the reassessment approach, [REDACTED] responded that he understood that the reassessment would be conducted in two stages, with the second stage of the reassessment being conducted in September 2014, based on an assessment of the new statistical release published in June 2014. [REDACTED] also asked whether the Assessment team could provide in writing our plans for what we will present to the Assessment Committee in May 2014, and how we plan to conduct the assessments. The Assessment team confirmed that they would summarise the reassessment approach outlined in this meeting, in a note of the meeting. [REDACTED] also added that it difficult to foresee what will be presented to the Assessment Committee, as this would depend on the outcome of the research.

[REDACTED] asked whether the team would be in a position to share a draft of the technical report with us when it was near final, before publication, to help us base our judgement of compliance against the *Code*. [REDACTED] responded that this would be difficult, since some of the key messages from the technical document could be indicative of the commentary that will appear in the new statistical report. Scottish Government also plan to share the technical report with Police Scotland for their comments, therefore they will not necessarily be in a position to share this with the Assessment team ahead of publication.

**Other questions:** [REDACTED] asked about whether the Crime and Justice Survey statistical release included detailed analysis of the survey results in comparison to the Recorded Crime statistics (which are not expected to be the same). [REDACTED] confirmed that the Crime and Justice Survey release includes an analysis of the comparison between the survey results and the recorded crime statistics. The Crime and Justice Survey is a bi-ennial publication and Scottish Government is keen not to duplicate the analysis, although the Recorded Crime Release does include a summary of comparison with the Crime and Justice Survey. [REDACTED]

asked if the producer team use the SCJS findings as QA of the recorded crime statistics, the producer team indicated that this is not done. The assessment team asked who they should speak to in order to find out more about the comparison work, Scottish Government confirmed that we should speak with the team who produce the SCJS.

**Answer any queries:** Scottish Government wanted a clearer sense from the Assessment team about what decisions could be taken by the Assessment Committee in May 2014 before publication of the new statistical release. [REDACTED] also asked how the reassessment report will be structured and presented, and to what timetable. [REDACTED] stressed that Scottish Government want to be in a position to provide support to assist with the Assessment process, but he needed to be clear what evidence the Assessment team will require to make their judgement. The Assessment team confirmed that the Assessment Committee can take whatever decision they see necessary, if any issues arise from the partial re-assessment. The content and structure of the report would also very much depend on what the research stage of the reassessment would uncover, and what users tell us.

[REDACTED] added that the quality assurance process that Scottish Government was undertaking was gold standard for quality assurance of administrative data, and they are taking a cutting edge approach to this. Scottish Government are not concerned about the reassessment, but they want to be fully aware of the risks associated with not being able to commit more resource to the process; this is why they are keen to see the Assessment team's plans in writing.

[REDACTED] responded that the Assessment team will schedule a follow-up meeting for two weeks time to discuss any issues that have been flagged up in the meantime. The Assessment team will also circulate a note of the meeting, for comments and amendments to factual inaccuracies in the note, or to add any additional information that Scottish Government feel would assist with the reassessment process. The Scottish Government confirmed that they have a copy of the WEFA for Assessment Report 2, the Assessment team explained that that would have changed somewhat since then and the latest version is on our website.

[REDACTED] stressed that if Scottish Government would feel more comfortable submitting a revised WEFA to the assessment team, they could do so within the next few weeks rather than follow the approach that the Assessment team has suggested.

**Action – Assessment team to schedule a follow-up meeting with the team in 2 weeks.**

**The meeting closed at 16.20pm.**