

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Police Statistics in England and Wales

(produced by the Home Office)

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About the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality.

Assessment reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

Contents

Section 1: Summary of findings

Section 2: Subject of the assessment

Section 3: Assessment findings

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

Annex 2: Compliance with Standards for Statistical Releases

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports¹ prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*². The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*³. The report covers the police statistics reported in the following National Statistics publications produced by the Home Office:

- *Police Powers and Procedures England and Wales*⁴ (*Police Powers*);
- *Police Service Strength England and Wales*⁵, (*Police Strength Annual and Update*);
- *Seizures of Drugs in England and Wales*⁶ (*Seizures*); and
- *Firearm Certificates in England and Wales*⁷ (*Certificates*).

1.1.2 Section 3 of this report adopts an ‘exception reporting’ approach – it includes text only to support the Requirements made to strengthen compliance with the *Code* and Suggestions made to improve confidence in the production, management and dissemination of these statistics. This abbreviated style of report reflects the Head of Assessment’s consideration of aspects of risk and materiality⁸. The Assessment team nonetheless assessed compliance with all parts of the *Code of Practice* and has commented on all those in respect of which some remedial action is recommended.

1.1.3 This report was prepared by the Authority’s Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics listed in 1.1.1

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb0711/?view=Standard&pubID=884517>

⁵ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb0312/?view=Standard&pubID=976705> and

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb1311/?view=Standard&pubID=913347>

⁶ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb1711/?view=Standard&pubID=960978>

⁷ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb0512/?view=Standard&pubID=1013546>

⁸ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/criteria-for-deciding-upon-the-format-of-an-assessment-report.pdf>

are designated as National Statistics, subject to the Home Office implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by December 2012.

- 1.2.2 The Home Office has informed the Assessment team that it has started to implement the Requirements listed in section 1.5. The Statistics Authority welcomes this.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 1.3.1 The Home Office uses administrative data collected from the 44 police forces in England and Wales (including British Transport Police), the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) to compile police statistics, allowing the production of detailed statistics for relatively low cost.
- 1.3.2 The Home Office manages burden on suppliers through the formalised Annual Data Requirement⁹ (ADR) process; which requires all requests for data from police forces in England and Wales under the Home Secretary's statutory powers to be justified. The Home Office works with the Association of Chief Police Officers¹⁰ (ACPO) to ensure that police forces are formally consulted. However, police forces told us that they have concerns that the consultation process does not always involve the right people.
- 1.3.3 The Home Office provides detailed information about changes to legislation that affect police statistics within the releases; it also helpfully explains how to interpret the statistics and, in the case of *Police Powers*, provides an accompanying user guide. However, the releases do not provide complete information about the methods used to produce the statistics, or about the quality of the statistics.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the Home Office could strengthen its compliance with the *Code*. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

Requirement 1	Document the use made of these statistics and publish information about users' experiences of the statistics (para 3.1).
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⁹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/science-research/research-statistics/police/annual-data-requirement-police/>

¹⁰ <http://www.acpo.police.uk/>

Requirement 2	Confirm that, in future, the Home Office will publish information about the nature and extent of revisions at the same time that the statistics are released (para 3.2).
Requirement 3	Provide more information about the methods, quality and reliability of the police statistics in relation to use (para 3.3).
Requirement 4	Signpost similar statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland in the releases (para 3.4).
Requirement 5	Improve the commentary in the releases so that it aids user interpretation of the statistics (para 3.6).
Requirement 6	Ensure that pre-release access lists meet the requirements of the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order (2008) (para 3.7).

2 Subject of the assessment

- 2.1 Police statistics have been published since the 1920s. The statistics are an important operational tool for the police and for those who develop policy about policing in England and Wales. These statistics represent part of a wider portfolio of official statistics about policing and crime. The assessment of statistics on crime in England and Wales, produced by the Home Office, has been published in Assessment report number 102¹¹.
- 2.2 *Police Powers and Procedures England and Wales (Police Powers)* is an annual publication that presents statistics about arrests for recorded crime, stops and searches, breath tests and police action in relation to motoring offences. After consulting users¹², the Home Office published *Police Powers* in HTML format for the first time in April 2012, replacing the previous PDF format.
- 2.3 *Police Service Strength England and Wales (Police Strength Annual and Update)* is a six-monthly publication. The Home Office publishes financial year statistics in July (*Police Strength Annual*) and a mid-year update in January (*Police Strength Update*). *Police Strength Annual* includes statistics about police officers and other police staff with breakdowns by rank, gender and ethnicity. The *Police Strength Update* currently focuses mainly on police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Some information is provided about other police staff but the Home Office told us that, in response to user feedback, it plans to include statistics about all police staff in future.
- 2.4 *Seizures of Drugs in England and Wales (Seizures)* is an annual publication that presents statistics about controlled drugs (as defined by the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971*¹³) seized in England and Wales. Statistics include the numbers, quantities¹⁴ and types of controlled drugs seized classified by their harmfulness¹⁵ and purity¹⁶.
- 2.5 *Firearm Certificates in England and Wales (Certificates)* is an annual publication that presents statistics about the issue of firearms and shotgun certificates under the *Firearms (Amendment) Act 1997*¹⁷. Statistics include numbers of firearm and shotgun certificates issued, renewed and revoked, numbers of licensed firearm dealers and numbers of firearms visitors' permits¹⁸ granted.

¹¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-102---crime-statistics-in-england-and-wales.pdf>

¹² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/home-office-science/consult-police-powers-12?view=Standard&pubID=1007323>

¹³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1971/38/contents>

¹⁴ Quantities of drugs are presented as either weight – kilograms - or the number of doses or Cannabis plants seized

¹⁵ Drugs are classified from A to C based on the level of harm they cause, with A being the most harmful and C the least harmful

¹⁶ Statistics on purity are produced using data collected from the Forensic Science Service (FSS) and are based on the average purity of all analysed drug samples submitted to the FSS

¹⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/5/contents>

¹⁸ Visitors' permits allow the holder to possess a firearm or shotgun without holding a certificate and are in force for a period not exceeding 12 months

- 2.6 The *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*¹⁹ specifies the powers of the Home Secretary to collect data, including for statistical purposes, from police forces in England and Wales. The ADR²⁰ process requires formal submissions of all user requests to collect data under these powers. The Home Office works with ACPO²¹ to ensure that police forces are formally consulted about any new requests and, following approval by the Home Secretary, confirms the data collection requirements approximately three months before police forces should start to record the information.
- 2.7 The police statistics are primarily produced using aggregate data returns or files of individual records that the 44 police forces in England and Wales submit to the Home Office via secure e-mail. These data are taken from police forces' management information systems (MIS). The Home Office told us that during 2012 police forces will start to submit individual MIS records directly to the Home Office Data Hub²², removing the need for most aggregate returns. Other data sources that the Home Office uses to produce these statistics include the following:
- *Seizures* – UKBA provides details of on-shore seizures; and
 - *Certificates* – NPIA supplies data about firearms and shotgun certificates from the National Firearm Licensing Management System (NFLMS).
- 2.8 The Home Office uses these statistics to design and monitor policy – for example, the breath tests statistics presented in *Police Powers* are used to monitor the effect of seasonal drink-drive campaigns. HM Inspectorate of Constabularies uses the statistics for inspections and performance monitoring. The Department of Health publishes seizure statistics in *United Kingdom Drug Situation*²³ and academics use the statistics in their research – for example, to investigate the relationship between police activity and recorded crime²⁴. Statistics about police strength, drugs and firearms are widely reported in the news media.
- 2.9 In November 2011, the then chair of the Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar, wrote²⁵ to the Minister of State for Immigration to express concern about a Home Office press release, issued on 4 November 2011, which contained statistics about seizures of Class A drugs three days before the publication of *Seizures*. The Home Office response and related correspondence is published on the Authority's website²⁶.
- 2.10 The Home Office estimates that the annual cost of producing these statistics is approximately £400,000.

¹⁹ *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011* replaced the *Police Act 1986*, which superseded the *Police Act 1954*

²⁰ See footnote 10

²¹ See footnote 11

²² <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/home-office-science/ho-state-admin-sources-10?view=Binary>, see page 4

²³ www.cph.org.uk/showPublication.aspx?pubid=707

²⁴ <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1387032>

²⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/letter-from-sir-michael-scholar-to-damian-green-mp-15112011.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/correspondence/index.html>

3 Assessment findings

- 3.1 The Home Office has published a *Statement of Compliance with Code of Practice for Official Statistics*²⁷ (*Compliance Statement*) which outlines how it engages and consults with users. The Home Office encourages users of the releases to contact the responsible statistician with queries – of which it received several hundred per year; users responding to this assessment were complimentary about the service from the statistics team. The Home Office told us that it recently consulted²⁸ users about the move to publishing *Police Powers* in HTML format. However, outside of the ADR process, which mainly focuses on meeting the requirements of government departments, it has not recently engaged with users of these statistics beyond the Home Office and police forces. The Home Office has not published information about the users and uses of these statistics, nor users' experiences of the statistical service. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Home Office should document the use made of these statistics and publish information about users' experiences of the statistics²⁹ (Requirement 1). We suggest that the Home Office refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, *The Use Made of Official Statistics*³⁰ when documenting use.
- 3.2 The Home Office has not published a revisions policy specifically for these statistics, but the statistics team told us that it follows the Home Office's corporate revisions policy documented in its *Compliance Statement*. *Police Powers*, *Police Strength Annual*, *Seizures* and *Certificates* do not make it clear that the Home Office has adopted this policy; *Police Strength update* includes a statement which explains that the statistics are provisional and subject to possible revision but only in the background notes. The Home Office does not publish information about the nature and extent of scheduled revisions. The Home Office published a correction to the 2009/10 edition of *Police Powers*³¹ and issued an errata notice that made clear what errors were corrected; however, this errata notice is included on the last page of the release and is not referenced from the contents page. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Home Office should confirm that in future, it will publish information about the nature and extent of revisions at the same time that the statistics are released³² (Requirement 2). We suggest that the Home Office include a link to the corporate revisions policy in the releases and make it clear which statistics are provisional in the commentary and tables that accompany *Police Strength Update*. We further suggest that the Home Office make any errata notices more conspicuous in future Police statistics releases.
- 3.3 Police Statistics are based on administrative data sources. The releases briefly describe the sources and *Seizures* and *Certificates* present some information about the methodology for compiling the statistics. There is no information about methodology in *Police Powers* and *Police Strength Annual and Update*.

²⁷ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/home-office-science/ho-compliance-state-11>

²⁸ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/home-office-science/consult-police-powers-12?view=Standard&pubID=1007323>

²⁹ In relation to Principle 1, Practices 2 and 5 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁰ <http://statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/index.html>

³¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb0711/?view=Standard&pubID=884517>

³² In relation to Principle 2, Practice 6 of the *Code of Practice*

The Home Office told us that it has procedures for ensuring the quality of the statistics, including a series of standard validation tests and a formal quality assurance process before publication. The releases generally provide useful information about any discontinuities in the statistics and how these have been managed. However, the releases include little information about any potential sources of error in the administrative data sources, how the Home Office manages these sources of error, and the potential impact on the statistics relative to their use. For example, some police forces told us that difficulties associated with recording information about seizures accurately and potential differences across forces may have some impact on the statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Home Office should provide more information about the methods, quality and reliability of the police statistics in relation to use³³ (Requirement 3).

- 3.4 The police statistics releases do not signpost related UK or international official statistics or include information about how police statistics compare to statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland. Police statistics relate to current drugs, firearms and police powers legislation in England and Wales and the Home Office told us that the absence of established international standards makes it difficult to make meaningful comparisons. Nonetheless, the Assessment team considers that there may well be scope to publish some statistics which are sufficiently comparable as to enhance users' contextualisation of those for England and Wales. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Home Office should signpost similar statistics for Scotland and Northern Ireland in the releases³⁴ (Requirement 4). We suggest that the Home Office provide information about the comparability of police statistics with those produced by other Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 3.5 The Home Office manages the burden on data suppliers through the formalised ADR process. The Home Office works with ACPO to ensure that police forces are formally consulted. ACPO manages the consultation through its ADR network. However, some data suppliers from police forces told us that they have concerns that the consultation process does not always involve the right people. We suggest that the Home Office work with ACPO to ensure that the ADR consultations with police forces are suitably focused.
- 3.6 The releases use language that is mostly straightforward and include explanatory information either within the text of the release or in a separate glossary of terms. However, there are instances of technical terms and jargon that could be better explained within the text. The releases include some helpful information about the policy and operational context for the statistics and information about how to interpret the statistics. *Police Powers and Certificates* make some attempt in the commentary to describe and discuss trends. *Seizures* also presents information about longer term trends but does less to describe factors that might have affected these trends. The commentary in *Police Strength Annual and Update* is limited to presenting the year-on-year changes. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Home Office should improve the commentary in the releases so that it aids user

³³ In relation to Principle 4, Practices 1 and 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁴ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 6 of the *Code of Practice*

interpretation of the statistics³⁵ (Requirement 5). We suggest that in meeting this requirement Home Office should consider the points detailed in annex 2.

- 3.7 Some of the lists of people with pre-release access to police statistics are long. For example, the Home Office granted 77 people pre-release access to *Police Strength Annual*. 21 of these were within the Home Office – officials, Ministers and Special Advisers – and a further 44 were in police forces. The Home Office told us that the lists are kept under review and that, in order to be transparent, the lists include the Ministers and everyone in their private offices who sees the release. The Home Office also advised us that each of the 44 police forces requires pre-release access to be in a position to handle media enquiries about statistics for their force at 9.30am. The Assessment team considers that police forces should only be given pre-release access to statistics that relate to their force and not to the full release. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Home Office should ensure that pre-release access lists meet the requirements of the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Order (2008)^{36,37} (Requirement 6).

³⁵ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/2998/contents/made>

³⁷ In relation to Protocol 2, Practice 7 of the *Code of Practice*

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the Home Office's police statistics, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Suggestion 1 | Refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, <i>The Use Made of Official Statistics</i> when documenting use (para 3.1). |
| Suggestion 2 | Include a link to the corporate revisions policy in the releases and make it clear which statistics are provisional in the commentary and tables that accompany <i>Police Strength Update</i> (para 3.2). |
| Suggestion 3 | Make any errata notices more conspicuous in future Police statistics releases (para 3.2). |
| Suggestion 4 | Provide information about the comparability of police statistics with those produced by Scotland and Northern Ireland (para 3.4). |
| Suggestion 5 | Work with ACPO to ensure that the ADR consultations with police forces are suitably focused (para 3.5). |
| Suggestion 6 | Consider the points detailed in annex 2, in seeking to improve the statistical releases (para 3.6). |

Annex 2: Compliance with Standards for Statistical Releases

A2.1 In October 2010, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Releases*³⁸. While this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and compliance with the *Code*. In relation to the statistical releases associated with police statistics, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.

A2.2 In implementing any Requirements of this report (at paragraph 1.5) which relate to the content of statistical releases, we encourage the producer body to apply the standards as fully as possible.

Appropriate identification of the statistics being released

A2.3 The releases use standard headings, formats and logos for a National Statistics release and include details of the originating department. The releases provide contact details for the Home Office's chief statistician and name the author of the release. *Police Powers*, *Police Strength Annual and Update* and *Seizures* include a title that describes the coverage of the release and the time period to which the statistics relate. It is not clear from the title of *Certificates* that the release includes shotgun certificates. The Home Office told us that it plans to consult users with a view to changing the title for the next release. *Police Strength Annual and Update* includes a statement about the frequency of release, but *Police Power*, *Seizures* and *Certificates* do not.

A2.4 *Police Strength Annual and Update*, *Seizures* and *Certificates* include a brief account of the contents of the release including tables and subject discussed. *Police Powers* outlines the subjects discussed, but not the tables and charts included.

Include commentary that is helpful to the non-expert and presents the main messages in plain English

A2.5 The releases use language that is mostly straightforward and include explanatory information either within the text of the release or in a separate glossary of terms. However, there are instances of technical terms and jargon that could be better explained within the text. For example, the Home Office could define full-time equivalents (FTEs) earlier in *Police Strength Annual and Update* and explain the appropriate use of FTEs and headcounts for different purposes. *Police Strength Annual and Update*, *Certificates* and *Seizures* provide some commentary explaining changes over an extended time period and give contextual information for any changes. However, there is a general focus across the releases on year-on-year changes.

Use language that is impartial, objective and professionally sound

A2.6 The commentary in the releases is impartial and demonstrably evidence based. Descriptions of proportions and changes in trend are professionally sound.

³⁸ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-releases.html>

There is no discussion of any potential sources of error in the statistics, how the Home Office seeks to manage these sources of error, or the potential impact on the statistics.

Include information about the context and likely uses

A2.7 The releases include some helpful information about the policy and operational context for the statistics, for example, *Police Powers* includes information about the impact of the annual Christmas drink and driving campaign in England and Wales on the number of breath tests. The releases also provide information about how to interpret the statistics – for example *Police Powers* explains that arrest statistics describe police activity and that users should not infer that they represent levels of crime.

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

A2.8 The releases include little information about the methods and reliability of the data used to produce the statistics. *Police Powers* includes a helpful user guide that includes a glossary of terms, information about related official statistics and commentary and information about the legislation that underpins each police power reported – for example, the *Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE)* which governs stops and searches made by the police. The releases do not signpost to UK or international statistics or include information about how police statistics compare to other countries' statistics.

A2.9 The releases provide information about the impact of changes to legislation about the statistics and include explanations and consistent time series – for example *Seizures* includes a consistent time series for Cannabis (the classification of which changed in 2004 and 2009). *Police Powers*, *Police Strength Annual*, *Seizures* and *Certificates* do not make it clear that the Home Office has adopted the corporate revisions policy for these statistics; *Police Strength Update* includes a statement, in the notes section, which explains that the statistics are provisional and subject to possible revision; however, this is not made clear in the commentary or data tables.

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

- A3.1 This assessment was conducted from March to June 2012.
- A3.2 The Assessment team – Gary Wainman and Donna Livesey – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Home Office in March. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 12 March. The Assessment team subsequently met the Home Office during May to review compliance with the *Code of Practice*, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

- A3.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare Assessment reports.
- A3.4 The Assessment team received 23 responses from the consultation of users and suppliers. ACPO consulted its ADR network across police forces and submitted a coordinated response. We expect there to be some overlap between this return and the responses from individual police forces. The respondents were grouped as follows:
- | | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Academic | 1 |
| Central government | 3 |
| Non-profit organisation | 1 |
| Police forces (including ACPO) | 18 |
- A3.5 Users were generally complimentary about the service provided when requesting data from the Home Office. Users reported that they would like more timely and detailed firearms and seizures statistics. The Home Office told us that it had investigated producing more detailed seizure statistics, but that this was not taken forward due to the burden on police forces. We were also told that the Home Office has scheduled a meeting with NPIA to determine the feasibility of bringing forward the publication of *Certificates*; and that the statistics team will explore the other issues raised by users at this meeting.
- A3.6 Police forces told us that much of the data would be collected for their own use, but not in the detail collected by the Home Office, particularly the data required for *Seizures*. Some police forces reported concerns about the level of engagement during the ADR consultation process, and suggested that the right people are not being contacted.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

