

**THE CRIME
STATISTICS
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

This is the second Annual Report of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee, created in late 2011, to which I was appointed as Chair by Jil Matheson, the National Statistician. The impetus for the creation of the Committee was the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales*, a commission from the Home Secretary.

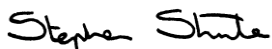
Throughout the period of this report, the Committee has continued to offer advice and support on matters related to the measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales.

I am pleased that the Committee has continued to support the Office for National Statistics in its work to improve crime statistics presentation. Following public consultation in autumn 2012, I wrote to the Home Secretary outlining a set of proposed changes that would further enhance the presentation of crime statistics. Those proposals were accepted and will be adopted in summer 2013.

The Committee is keen to engage with Police and Crime Commissioners and accordingly I wrote to candidates on 8 October 2012, prior to the 2012 election, and again to newly-elected Commissioners on 27 February 2013. The Committee will continue this engagement in order to champion the appropriate use of crime statistics.

I was pleased that the Committee held a day-long workshop in November 2012 with the objective of formulating the key priorities for its future work. These priorities for 2013/14 are highlighted in this report's Forward Look. They include further consideration and work on reducing existing bureaucracy and data burden for police forces; progressing work on the coverage of e-crime and e-fraud statistics; and supporting Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's Inspection Programme.

I commend the Committee's second annual report to you.



Stephen Shute

September 2013

1.1 ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

The Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (the Committee) was established through the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales* which was published on 6 June 2011.¹ The Committee is comprised of a mix of officials from government departments, representatives from key stakeholder organisations, and a majority of 'non-executive' members representing academia, users, and the like. Members of the Committee are subject to a [Code of Practice](#).

The Chair of the Committee is Professor Stephen Shute, who was appointed to that role in December 2011 following an open competition.

The other non-executive members were also appointed through open competition. During 2012/13 they were:

- Professor Allan Brimicombe;
- Ms Giselle Cory;
- Mr Junaid Gharda (since March 2013);
- Professor Mike Hough;
- Ms Christine Lawrie (until October 2012)
- Professor Mike Levi;
- Professor Chris Lewis;
- Ms Patricia Mayhew OBE.

The Committee has seven permanent members. During 2012/13 they were:

- Iain Bell – Head of Profession for Statistics at the Ministry of Justice (until July 2012);
- David Blunt – Head of Profession for Statistics at the Home Office;
- Kate Chamberlain – Chief Statistician at Welsh Government (until December 2012);
- Tricia Dodd – Director responsible for crime statistics at the Office for National Statistics;
- Mike Elkin - Head of Profession for Statistics at the Ministry of Justice (since November 2012);
- Glyn Jones – Chief Statistician at Welsh Government (since January 2013);
- Sir Denis O'Connor – Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (until September 2012);
- Douglas Paxton – Association of Chief Police Officers;
- Jaee Samant – Director for Crime at the Home Office;
- Tom Winsor – Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (since October 2012).

In addition, the Committee also has two ex-officio members. During 2012/13 they were:

- Steve Bond – National Crime Registrar, Home Office;
- Jil Matheson – National Statistician.

Further details of all current members can be found on the Committee membership page, see link, [Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Membership](#).

1.2 FUNCTIONS AND SCOPE

The Committee functions as a strategic, high-level advisory body offering independent advice to the Home Secretary, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on matters related to the measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales. It advises on how best to ensure that official statistics on crime for England and Wales are accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy, taking account of the needs of users and providers.

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-crime-statistics.html>.

In carrying out its functions, the Committee has due regard to the needs of users and providers of data; the Code of Practice for Official Statistics; the legal framework in which the Committee operates; the wider affordability of proposals for change; burden or bureaucracy in respect of Police Recorded Crime and on the public who provide survey data; and international developments and obligations.

The Committee's [Terms of Reference](#) were established in December 2011. They include information on the role of the Committee, its principles and procedures, frequency of meetings, and current membership. The Committee has also established a web presence which includes a section on correspondence.²

1.3 CHANGES TO THE PRESENTATION OF CLASSIFICATIONS USED IN CRIME STATISTICS

In May 2012, ONS proposed to the Committee that changes be made to the presentation of classifications used in crime statistics. These proposals encompassed recent changes to Police Recorded Crime data collection along with findings from the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales*. The aim was to improve the presentation of crime data in statistical releases. The Committee initially agreed that the proposals be given further consideration through the use of focus groups and public consultation. Following that consultation, which was carried out between October and December 2012, the Committee agreed to endorse the recommended changes which were as follows:

- organising Police Recorded Crime under two broad categories – 'Victim based crime' and 'Other crimes against society';
- categorising violence against the person offences as 'Homicide', 'Other violence with injury', and 'Violence without injury';
- introducing a new high-level categorisation of 'Theft offences';
- displaying 'Rape' as a separate sub-category within 'Sexual offences';
- separating the high-volume, well-known, crimes of 'Shoplifting', 'Theft from the person' and 'Bicycle theft' from 'Other theft offences';
- presenting 'Robbery' as a standalone category for Police Recorded Crime and for the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) to improve consistency;
- splitting the 'Other miscellaneous' category into 'Possession of weapons offences', 'Public order offences', and 'Miscellaneous crimes against society' to provide a clearer picture of the types of crimes;
- moving selected offences into different groups to reflect better the nature of the offences (e.g. moving offences relating to the possession of weapons and the offence of 'Public fear, alarm or distress' from 'Violence against the person – without injury' to new sub-categories within 'Other crimes against society'); and
- removing the 'Household' and 'Personal' crime labels in the presentation of CSEW offences, using categories based on specific crime types instead.

² <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/crime-statistics-advisory-committee.html>.

The Chair of the Committee wrote to the Home Secretary in February 2013 about these proposals. The Home Secretary replied that she was content. The correspondence between the Chair and the Home Secretary is included in Annex One.

The changes will contribute to a key objective of the Committee which is to improve the presentation of crime statistics to give users and the public a clearer overall understanding of crime data. In addition, the adoption of the new crime categories by both the Home Office and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will lead to better alignment nationally.

1.4 GUIDANCE TO POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

On 8 October 2012, prior to the election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in England and Wales, the Chair wrote to all candidates. The correspondence outlined the importance of accurate, clearly presented, comprehensive, transparent, and trustworthy statistics and included guidance on using statistics with the media and the public.

On 27 February 2013, the Chair wrote again to the newly-elected PCCs outlining further plans for guidance and support. Copies of the correspondence can be found on the [Committee's correspondence webpage](#).³

1.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRIME TRENDS MEASURED BY THE CRIME SURVEY FOR ENGLAND AND WALES (CSEW) AND POLICE RECORDED CRIME

Throughout the period of this Report, the Committee has been considering issues arising from the divergence of data between the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) and Police Recorded Crime (PRC). There are plans to hold a public meeting during autumn 2013, with the support of the Royal Statistical Society, to consider evidence relating to the divergence between CSEW and PRC data and inform the future thinking of the Committee on this issue.

1.6 CRIME STATISTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

A day-long workshop was held in November 2012 for members of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee. The workshop's aim was to develop a future work programme which would take into account current priorities and future challenges for crime statistics. The workshop included a presentation, arranged by the Association of Chief Police Officers, by police officers on the recording of crime, sessions on the future shape of the Crime Survey for England and Wales, e-crime and e-fraud, and improving respect and confidence in crime statistics. The outcomes have informed the Committee's future work programme.

1.7 INFORMATION ON CRIMES AGAINST 10-15 YEAR OLDS

The experimental statistics on crimes against 10-15 year olds developed from the extension of the CSEW were incorporated into ONS's regular quarterly statistical releases from April 2012. The Committee has endorsed this development as part of its oversight of the implementation of the recommendations from the National Statistician's *Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales*.

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-advisory-committees/crime-statistics-advisory-committee-correspondence.html>.

1.8 FORWARD LOOK 2013/14

The Committee has continued to develop its 2013/14 work programme. This is split into two categories: Communication and Methods.

Communication

- Continue to look for ways to improve the presentation of crime statistics to ensure that users and the public have a clearer understanding of the overall picture of crime.
- Further consider the Anti-Social Behaviour incident data and options for change in autumn 2013.
- Continue to work with relevant parties to develop proposals for further reductions in existing bureaucracy and data burden. The Committee will give further consideration to these issues in autumn 2013.
- Support the work of the Police and Crime Commissioners through attendance at one of their quarterly meetings to explain the work of the Committee. In addition, guidance and workshops will be provided to PCC's support staff by the Home Office.
- Continue to increase awareness of the work of the Committee.

Methods

- Continue to examine the work related to the coverage of e-crime and e-fraud statistics. It is noted that progress has been made over the past year with recording of fraud crimes.
- Support work on investigating further collection of data on crime against businesses in order to address a gap in crime statistics.
- Support the investigation of the feasibility of improving the availability of data on repeat victimisation in order to fill gaps in the statistics.
- Support and provide guidance on the work of HMIC's Inspection Programme.

As was noted in the Committee's first Annual Report, the Work Programme is dependent on relevant resources being identified in government and beyond. Due regard will also be given to the demands upon the police service. In everything it does, the Committee is conscious that, at a time of public expenditure restraint, it is important that all resources are used to best purpose. The Committee strives to advise on priorities in a timely and informed way that facilitates the delivery of its Work Programme.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN CHAIR AND THE HOME SECRETARY

Letter from Professor Stephen Shute to the RT. Hon. Theresa May MP on 5 February 2013



Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary 2
Marsham Street London
SW1P 4DF

05 February 2013

Dear Ms May,

Crime Statistics Advisory Committee

I am writing in my capacity as the Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee to inform you of advice recently given to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The Crime Statistics Advisory Committee met on 23 January 2013 to consider proposals from the ONS to revise classifications used in the quarterly publication of National Statistics on Crime in England and Wales. This follows their public consultation that ended in December 2012. None of the proposed changes creates any additional burden on the Police. The Committee was advised that ONS intends to make these changes with effect from their July 2013 publication which will contain the crime statistics for the fourth quarter of 2012/13.

In coming to their judgements, the Committee has been guided by the responses to the consultation and by criteria that are intended to assist in its deliberations of this nature. These criteria, based on the findings of the National Statistician's 2011 Review of Crime Statistics in England and Wales, include balancing the needs of users and the granularity of data required; the ability to produce, and benefits of producing, consistent back series; the impact on data quality; the impact on burden of reporting on police forces; and the risk of introducing discontinuity to the statistics which may lead to a decrease in trust.

The Committee was asked to consider the following proposals:

- (i) Organising Police Recorded Crime under two broad categories – 'Victim based crime' and 'Other crimes against society'*
- (ii) Categorising violence against the person offences as 'Homicide', 'Other violence with injury' and 'Violence without injury'*
- (iii) Introducing a new high-level categorisation of 'Theft offences'*
- (iv) Displaying 'Rape' as a separate sub-category within 'Sexual offences'*
- (v) Separating the high volume, well-known crimes of 'Shoplifting', 'Theft from the person' and 'Bicycle theft' out from 'Other theft offences'*
- (vi) Presenting 'Robbery' as a standalone category for police recorded crime (as it is now) and CSEW crime (rather than under violent crime) to improve consistency;*
- (vii) Splitting the 'Other miscellaneous' category in to 'Possession of weapons offences', 'Public order offences' and 'Miscellaneous crimes against society' to provide a clearer picture of the types of crimes*
- (viii) Moving selected offences in to different groups to better reflect the nature of the offences (e.g. moving offences relating to the possession of weapons and the offence of 'Public fear, alarm or distress' from 'Violence against the person – without injury', as these offences involve no actual violence, to new sub-*

categories within 'Other crimes against society' named 'Possessions of weapons offences' and 'Public order offences')

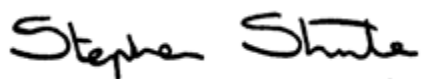
(ix) Removing the 'Household' and 'Personal' crime labels in the presentation of CSEW offences, using categories based on specific crime types instead.

The Committee is able to recommend adoption of all proposals without amendment except (ii) about which it felt that the use of the word 'other' could cause confusion and suggested its removal. The Committee also acknowledges the particular difficulties inherent in (viii) as this change may risk criticism as it will show a reduction in violent crime numbers. Careful communication will therefore be vital, explaining that this change only sees crimes which involve no actual violence being taken out of the violent crime category, to avoid undermining public confidence in these statistics.

The Committee also notes that it will be important for ONS statisticians, working with their counterparts in the Home Office, to work pro-actively with the media and other users to explain the changes to the classifications and any impact on time series.

I am copying this letter to Jil Matheson, the National Statistician, and will arrange for it to be made available on the Committee's webpages.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Stephen Shute
Chair of the Crime Statistics Advisory Committee



Letter from the RT. Hon. Theresa May MP to Professor Stephen Shute on 7 March 2013



Home Office

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Professor Stephen Shute,
School of Law,
Politics and Sociology,
Friston,
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Dear Professor Shute

7 March 2013

Thank you for your letter of 5 February, outlining the Office for National Statistics' plans to change crime classifications. I note that these were endorsed by the Committee and will be made by ONS in the summer. Officials in the Home Office fed into the consultation and I am content with the changes ONS intend to make and hope that these continue to help build trust in the statistics by improving the presentation of the main sources of crime statistics.

I agree it is important to ensure that changes, particularly in violent crime, are communicated carefully to avoid undermining our attempts to build trust and Home Office Statisticians will work with their ONS counterparts to seek to ensure this is achieved.

I await further updates from the committee as your wider work programme continues to progress.

Yours sincerely
Theresa May

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP