

National Statistician's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (NSCSAC)

Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. The Committee advises the National Statistician 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.
2. NSCSAC functions as a strategic, high level advisory body accountable to the National Statistician. In turn, the National Statistician will provide direct advice to the Home Secretary and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), as appropriate, on matters related to the measurement of crime and the collection and presentation of crime data for England and Wales.
3. In carrying out its functions, the Committee can call for papers on relevant issues or topics and can consider matters referred to it by the National Statistician. The Committee may also be briefed from time to time by the Director General for Regulation on relevant aspects of the regulatory work of the UK Statistics Authority. The Committee does not have any advisory role on regulatory issues but it may help inform the advice to the National Statistician if the Committee is aware of current regulatory issues. Committee members may also raise issues for consideration, through the Committee's secretariat. Secretariat is provided by the ONS business area responsible for crime statistics.
4. In carrying out its functions the Committee has due regard to the needs of users and providers; the Code of Practice for Official Statistics; the legal framework in which it operates; the wider affordability of proposals for change; burden or bureaucracy in respect of Police Recorded Crime and on those who provide survey data; and international developments and obligations.

Roles and Responsibilities

5. The role of the Committee is to:
 - i. Advise as necessary on substantial changes in the coverage, definitions, classifications or methodologies underpinning official statistics on crime for England and Wales which might include the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the police recorded crime collection and other administrative or survey sources including those relating to crimes against businesses and other victims.
 - ii. Advise on the statistical implications of any significant changes to such sources, including changes to methodology, coverage or quality assurance. This will include additions or deletions to the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS).

- iii. Review and advise on the quality assurance of police crime recording and data integrity.
 - iv. Advise on the handling and presentation of changes in published series, paying due regard to the need for transparent analysis of the impact of any change on trends.
 - v. Consider and advise on other proposals for significant improvements to the coverage and/or methodology of crime statistics.
 - vi. Consider how crime statistics can be made comprehensible to all and provide advice on how understanding and confidence in crime statistics can be enhanced.
 - vii. Annually self-review terms of reference and committee effectiveness.
6. The National Crime Registrar (NCR), has the delegated authority to determine whether proposed changes to the HOCR or NCRS are significant enough to require referral to the Committee for consideration prior to implementation. This decision is agreed with the Chair. The NCR provides the Committee at each meeting with a report setting out any changes not referred to it for discussion.

Meetings

7. The Committee will usually meet three times a year, one meeting of which will focus on agreeing an annual work programme. The Chair may convene sub-groups of the Committee to expedite business. Some issues will need urgent consideration and, with the agreement of the Chair, maybe dealt with by correspondence.

Reporting

8. The minutes of all meetings will reflect broad arguments and conclusions reached including dissenting views. The minutes will be agreed after the meeting via correspondence and be published along with the meeting agenda and papers on the Committee's web pages. Additional Committee correspondence will also be made publicly available unless a specific case is made to the Chair not to do so.
9. The Committee will provide a report on its work to the National Statistician for each financial year and publish the report on the Committee's web pages.

Membership

10. Membership is at senior level. Members are subject to a Code of Practice. Substitutes may attend with the express permission of the Chair. The Chair may invite others to meetings to provide advice on specific topics.
11. Membership comprises of executive representatives of organisations, and non-executive members acting in an individual capacity (see Annex A).
12. Non-executive members sit on the Committee for a fixed period of 2 or 3 years on a rotational basis with the option for renewal.
13. Meeting quorum consists of the Chair (or his nominated deputy) and at least four other non-executive members.
14. Membership of the Committee is not remunerated (although travelling expenses are paid for those attending from outside Government).

Annex A – NSCSAC membership

Executive members:

- Chief Statistician – Ministry of Justice (Mr Stephen Ellerd-Elliot)
- Chief Statistician – Home Office (Mr David Blunt)
- Chief Statistician – Welsh Government (Mr Glyn Jones)
- Divisional Director Public Policy Division – Office for National Statistics (Mrs Roma Chappell)
- Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary - (Sir Tom Winsor)
- National Policing lead for crime statistics (Chief Constable Jeff Farrar)
- Home Office Policy lead on Crime Statistics – Home Office (Mr Michael Warren)
- National Crime Registrar – Home Office (Mr Steve Bond)

Non-executive members:

- Professor Sir Adrian Smith (Chair) - Vice-Chancellor of the University of London and Deputy Chair of the UK Statistics Authority
- Professor Allan Brimicombe - Professor and Head, Centre for Geo-Information Studies, University of East London, Chair of Crime and Justice Statistics Network
- Mr Junaid Gharda – Office of Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire
- Dr Fiona Glen – Independent expert
- Professor Michael Levi – Professor of Criminology, Cardiff University
- Professor Chris Lewis - Visiting Professor, Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth
- Ms Patricia Mayhew - Independent criminological consultant
- Professor Stephen Shute - Head of the School of Law, Politics and Sociology and Professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice, University of Sussex
- Mr Gavin Hales - Deputy Director of the Police Foundation
- One vacancy currently exists for members providing a victims’ perspective.

Secretariat:

- Mr John Flatley - Office for National Statistics csac@statistics.gsi.gov.uk

Annex B - National Statistician's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee Code of Practice

Introduction

1. This document sets out the Code of Practice for the independent National Statistician's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee (NSCSAC) and any associated working groups or sub-groups. It is a working document, subject to periodic review by the Committee subsequent to:-
 - feedback from members
 - feedback from stakeholders
 - new or updated guidance from Government.
2. Both NSCSAC members and individuals who may be appointed, or co-opted, to working groups or sub-groups for short periods of time, are expected to comply at all times with this Code of Practice.

Role and Remit

3. NSCSAC is a non-statutory body established by the National Statistician. The Committee was established following a recommendation from the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics: England and Wales (published 6 June 2011) to establish an independent advisory committee on crime statistics.

Code of Conduct

4. Members of the Committee are responsible for ensuring that it fulfils its role as set out in the Committee's Terms of Reference.
5. To ensure its accountability in carrying out its duties, the Committee will seek to work as openly as possible.
6. Members are required to observe the Seven Principles of Public Life endorsed by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life and to comply with this Code of Practice. See Annex (i).
7. Each member must at all times act in good faith and observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the conduct of the Committee's business. In particular, members should:
 - familiarise themselves with the Terms of Reference of the Committee;
 - undergo any required induction training;
 - declare any personal or business interest which may, or may be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public), to influence their judgement. This should include, as a minimum, personal direct and indirect pecuniary interests, and should normally also include such interests of close family members and of people living in the same

- household;
 - not participate in the discussion or determination of matters in which they have a personal or business interest, and should normally withdraw from the meeting (even if held in public) if their interest is direct and pecuniary;
 - make a declaration of interest at any Committee meeting if it relates specifically to a particular issue under consideration, for recording in the minutes (whether or not a Committee member withdraws from the meeting);
 - not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations;
 - not hold any paid, or high profile unpaid, posts in a political party, and not engage in specific party political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the Committee. When engaging in other political activities, members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion.
8. Committee members may be personally liable if, in the performance of their Committee duties, they make a fraudulent or negligent statement which results in a loss to a third party.
9. In accepting this Code of Practice members accept that they will not disclose any information or documents if they are marked "Official Sensitive" and not disclose any subsequent comments about material which has been marked "Official Sensitive". Members also undertake not to make copies of any such documents, and to follow the advice provided by the Chair and Secretariat about the handling of such documents.

Responsibility and Role of the Chair

10. The Chair of NSCSAC is appointed as an individual to fulfil the role of the Committee, not as a representative of their particular profession, employer or interest group, and has a duty to act in the public interest. The Chair is appointed on a personal basis, even if they are a member of one or more stakeholder groups. If a Chair declares an organisation's views rather than a personal view, he/she should make it clear at the time of declaring that view.
11. The Chair is expected to attend all NSCSAC meetings.
12. The Chair has responsibility for providing effective leadership and :
- ensuring that every member of NSCSAC has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is overlooked or ignored;
 - setting the strategic direction for NSCSAC;

- ensuring that NSCSAC meets at the appropriate intervals;
- ensuring that any significant diversity of opinion among NSCSAC members is fully explored and discussed;
- representing NSCSAC to the public or the media as arranged. The Chair will be responsible for speaking on behalf of NSCSAC to the press or to be interviewed by journalists and broadcast media;
- ensuring that NSCSAC acts in accordance with this Code of Practice.

Role of Members

13. Non-executive, non-permanent members of NSCSAC are appointed as individuals to fulfil the role of the Committee, not as representatives of their particular profession, employer or interest group, and have a duty to act in the public interest. Non-executive members are appointed on a personal basis, even if they are members of one or more stakeholder groups. If a non-executive member declares an organisation's views rather than a personal view, he/she should make it clear at the time of declaring that view.
14. Executive, permanent members of NSCSAC are appointed to represent the views of their employer organisation and will sit on the Committee for the duration of their holding of that post designated as a seat on the Committee.
15. A member's role on the Committee is not circumscribed by the expertise or perspective he or she was asked to bring to NSCSAC. Any report or advice belongs to the Committee as a whole. Members should regard themselves as free to question and comment on the information provided or the views expressed by any of the other members, notwithstanding that the views or information may not relate to their own area of expertise.
16. Members are expected to make every endeavour to attend all meetings. Executive members can delegate attendance in exceptional circumstances to persons with the appropriate authority to represent them; this should first be discussed with the Secretariat. Meetings will be held providing a quorum can be achieved at the discretion of the Chair.
17. Members should satisfy themselves that NSCSAC's advice is comprehensible from the point of view of a lay person and that the implications of any uncertainties concerning the basis of NSCSAC's advice are fully explained.
18. All members have the responsibility for:
 - acting in the public interest;
 - contributing at NSCSAC meetings;
 - examining and challenging, if necessary, the assumptions on which advice is

formulated;

- ensuring that NSCSAC has the opportunity to consider contrary views and where appropriate the concerns and values of stakeholders before a decision is taken;
- sharing in the general responsibility to consider the wider context in which their expertise is employed;
- acting with a presumption of openness and ensuring that they act in accordance with this Code of Practice.

Communications with the Media

19. The Chair of NSCSAC will be the spokesperson for any contacts with the media unless other specific arrangements have been made by the Chair and Secretariat.
20. If a member receives an approach for an interview on behalf of NSCSAC the request must be referred to the Secretariat for advice.
21. If a member is speaking or writing in a personal or professional capacity to the media (which they are entitled to do) and they are identified as a member of NSCSAC, it should be made clear that the individual's view is not necessarily that of NSCSAC.
22. All media inquiries to members should, when relevant to NSCSAC business, be routed through the Secretariat who will liaise with the National Statistician's Media Relations Team and the Chair.
23. Any media appearances that members have been asked to undertake on behalf of NSCSAC, or which specifically cover the work of NSCSAC, should be reported beforehand to the Secretariat, who will liaise with the National Statistician's Media Relations Team and the Chair.
24. Any requests for articles, letters or other comments relating to the work of NSCSAC that are intended for publication should be referred to the Secretariat and a copy of the text made available to the Secretariat as early as possible prior to its publication.

Annex (i) - The Seven Principles of Public Life

The 'Seven Principles of Public Life' are expected to apply to all in the public service. These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.