
Director General for Regulation

Roger Halliday
Chief Statistician & Head of Performance
Scottish Government
Room 2W.02
St Andrews House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

27 September 2016

Dear Roger

ASSESSMENT OF STATISTICS ON RECORDED CRIME IN SCOTLAND

Thank you for the correspondence outlining the actions that have been taken to address the requirements in Assessment Report number 288 on Statistics on Recorded Crime in Scotland.

On behalf of the Board of the Statistics Authority, I have reviewed these on the advice of the Assessment team and I am pleased to confirm the designation of the police recorded crime statistics that are presented in *Recorded Crime in Scotland* as National Statistics. I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the statistics team involved in the Assessment process to introduce a range of improvements to the presentation of *Recorded Crime in Scotland* and supporting documentation, including the development of commentary and analyses that provides context to the statistics, helping to enhance users' understanding of the statistics.

I also welcome the proactive approach taken by the statistics team to investigate and better understand the recording and quality assurance of police recorded crime, working in collaboration with a number of stakeholders. This work has been evidenced by the range of published information to provide assurance to users. I am pleased to hear that this work has been supported and guided by the recently established Scottish Crime Recording Board, chaired by Scottish Government statisticians. Given the high profile nature of police recorded crime statistics, I am reassured by Scottish Government's commitment to demonstrate strong reassurance of police recorded crime statistics.

While we can confirm the designation of the police recorded crime statistics, at this stage we are unable to confirm that the 'clear up rates' presented in *Recorded Crime in Scotland* can be designated as National Statistics. This is because of a lack of external assurance of these data. In the context of high profile statistics such as police recorded crime, we have been clear that systematic published audit of the underlying data is essential to increase both the quality of, and public confidence in, these statistics. We therefore consider that the Scottish Government should seek independent assurance about the quality of the data underlying the 'clear up rates'.

We welcome plans by HMICS to scope an audit of clear-up data and pilot an audit methodology in 2017, with a view to providing the public and other stakeholders with assurance about the reliability of clear-up rates. We propose to revisit this decision once statisticians in Scottish Government have considered the results of this audit and any implications for those statistics.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value and is something to be celebrated. We invite you to include a statement alongside the statistics which reflects this status. You may wish to base your statement on the boilerplate text attached to this letter.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of this with us at any time. I am copying this letter to David Smith and Euan Dick of Scottish Government and to John Pullinger, the National Statistician.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson

NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm.

The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is the Scottish Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

