
Director General for Regulation

Andrew Anderson
By email

21 July 2015

Dear Andrew,

Scottish Government statement on police recorded crime clear up rates

Thank you for drawing my attention to the statement from the Scottish Government with regards to police recorded crime clear up rates, which was in response to a report – ‘The Thinning Blue Line’¹ – published by Reform Scotland on 11 June 2015.

You highlighted concerns over the figures quoted in the statement from the Scottish Government, which stated:

"The claims this report makes are wrong. The clear up rate for all recorded crimes increased by 1% to 52% in 2013-14, the highest recorded since 1976, the first year for which comparable records are available."

Specifically you raised a concern that, while the rounded figures for 2012-13 and 2013-14 (51% and 52% respectively) did show an increase of one percentage point, the unrounded figures (51.30% and 51.52% respectively) showed an increase of only 0.22 percentage points. We have investigated these figures and identified that the source was ‘Recorded Crime in Scotland 2013-14’².

We subsequently sought clarification from the Scottish Government about the method used to calculate the year on year percentage difference in the clear up rates with regard to rounding of data. The Scottish Government informed us that they “will reflect on this point in the production of the next Recorded Crime bulletin, due on 8th September, with a view to making any changes necessary to further improve the presentation of these statistics”.

As a consequence I have contacted the Head of Profession for Statistics, Roger Halliday, to seek reassurance that the method used to calculate percentage differences is based on unrounded figures, not rounded figures.

1

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:mPzvu8glxDsJ:https://reformscotland.com/public/publications/The_Thinning_Blue_Line_2015.pdf+&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk. At the time of writing the Reform Scotland website indicates that it is under construction and any queries should be sent to info@reformscotland.com.

2 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00466162.pdf>

I have also asked him to consider whether a correction is needed for the text in 'Recorded Crime in Scotland 2013-14', or any other statistical bulletin that uses this method to calculate percentage differences.

I am copying this letter to Roger Halliday 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