

Ed Humpherson
UK Statistics Authority
1 Drummond Gate
London
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16 September 2015

Domestic Abuse recorded by the Police in Scotland / Firearm Certificates, Scotland

Dear Ed,

I am writing to you concerning the National Statistics status of two products – *Domestic Abuse recorded by the police in Scotland* and *Firearms Certificates, Scotland*. Both of these statistics have been produced annually as National Statistics. We will publish the next set of statistics for Domestic Abuse on the 27th October 2015 and the next set for Firearm Certificates in November 2015. My professional view is that both should be published as Official Statistics and I have set out further information below on the reasons for this.

Domestic Abuse recorded by the Police in Scotland

Since 1999 we have published annual statistics on domestic abuse incidents recorded by the police. With the establishment of Police Scotland in 2013, a new national database was set up to ensure a more uniform approach to the collation of these statistics. As information flowed into the database, Police Scotland identified some issues with the data– which meant we had to postpone the 2013-14 publication.

Police Scotland are taking forward actions to quality assure their information, including improvements to the functionality of their database. Not all of these changes can be applied to 2013-14 and 2014-15 data. Having reviewed the data we have received from Police Scotland for those two years, I am satisfied that it would be more appropriate to publish this information as Official Statistics.

The upcoming publication will include comprehensive commentary for our users on the quality of the data, its strengths and limitations, and how this will impact on the use and interpretation of the information. Beyond October we will continue to work with Police Scotland as they improve their database processes and we will consider our position on the designation of these statistics once this work has concluded.

Firearm Certificates, Scotland

We have published annual statistics on the number of people with a firearm or shotgun certificate since 1999. With the establishment of Police Scotland, significant resources have been deployed to develop a new centralised database of firearm certificates. This replaces the previous approach whereby data was collected and held by the eight separate Scottish police forces. We are proposing to publish a final product in November on an Official Statistics basis, before transferring the publication to Police Scotland.

As Police Scotland have devoted time to develop the new database and are the experts on this information, we believe it would make practical sense for them to assume the role of publicising its results. In turn Police Scotland will consider on an ongoing basis the best way to produce statistics on firearm certificates, in consultation with users.

I look forward to hearing your decision on the status of these two statistical products.

Yours Sincerely



ROGER HALLIDAY