

# Sharing information on crime statistics across the UK

## Round table meeting

### What was the aim of the meeting?

This meeting brought together representatives from the UK's main crime and justice official statistics producer organizations. Its aim was to explore opportunities to share information and facilitate joint working to help ensure crime and justice statistics keep up with ever-changing developments in the real world. These developments include the emergence of new forms of crime (e.g. cyber crime) and challenges such as declining response rates to population surveys. The attendees were from all parts of the UK:

- The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, including statisticians based within:
  - The Police Service of Northern Ireland
  - The Department of Justice
- Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services
- Government Statistical Service Good Practice Team
- The Home Office
- The Office for National Statistics
- An academic expert on crime statistics outside the UK

### How did the meeting address its aim?

Short presentations of each of the following topics were followed by more in-depth discussions between producer organisations:

- England and Wales' experience of developing measures of cyber crime for use in population surveys
- challenges to measuring fraud
- benefits of, and barriers to, linking data
- examples of good practice in other countries
- effective user engagement techniques
- ways of prioritizing what information to collect
- challenges facing population surveys, and their implications for the future of crime surveys

### **What does this mean for crime and justice statistics?**

It was clear from the discussions that all producer organisations had something to contribute in terms of sharing experiences and learning from each other. Useful connections were made and topics for follow-up conversations identified. We heard that some cross-UK networks already exist, particularly around population surveys, and that opportunities to meet and discuss technical ‘nuts and bolts’ issues take place periodically as the need arises and are highly valued. However, opportunities to hold similar conversations about more strategic issues are rarer, and welcome. It was apparent that the next five years are likely to see notable changes in the use of administrative data for understanding crime, with implications for surveys and thus strategic conversations and continued sharing will be important. It was also evident that prioritisation and policy differences in different parts of the UK around crime may lead to increasing divergence in some areas of data collection.

### **What does this mean for users?**

Our work with users has told us that crime and justice statistics across the UK are well used and highly valued by a wide range of organisations and the public. It is also clear that producer organisations’ resources are increasingly scarce at the same time that newly emerging information requirements are increasingly complex. Producer organisations recognise the importance of strong user engagement as they adapt crime and justice statistics and the meeting discussed the value in sharing information on planned changes and prioritisation so that users can input to these.

### **Next Steps**

Facilitating conversations such as those held in Belfast around ways to share best practice can help producer organisations to identify ways to extend and improve their statistics, and in turn, ensure that statistics continue to maintain their public value. Given the strong producer organisation commitment to such engagement and other priorities for OSR, we do not intend to reconvene this group in the near future but will encourage the producers to make opportunities to meet regularly and at a strategic level and check in on what engagement is taking place. As ever, we would encourage users who have any thoughts on ways crime and justice statistics could be improved to raise these with the relevant producer organisations. We are always keen to hear views on crime and justice statistics so we will also be engaging with users directly ourselves.