
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Prof Roger Halliday
Chief Statistician and Data Officer
Scottish Government
(by email)

3 December 2019

Dear Roger

STATISTICS ON RECORDED CRIME IN SCOTLAND

As you are aware, we recently completed our short review of compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) of Scottish Government's [Recorded crime in Scotland statistics](#). I am pleased to confirm that these statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics.

We reviewed these statistics against the three pillars of the Code – trustworthiness, quality and value, to reflect on the actions you took following the last assessment in 2016, and to consider your planned developments. Following a constructive conversation with the responsible statisticians about our findings, this letter outlines the key strengths of the publication and some areas that may be helpful for you to consider as part of your ongoing improvements.

We found a range of positive examples around Scottish Government's statistics production relating to user engagement, presentation of the statistics, and supporting quality information:

- The statistics, data and explanatory material are presented clearly, impartially and objectively, and there is clear reference to the previous assessment and the designation of the 'Clear up rates' section.
- There is a wealth of quality information on the data sources, methodology, and quality assurance processes. The sections on data considerations, which provide information on comparisons with the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey and any changes to recording and collection processes, are clear and valuable.
- The presentation of key findings through infographics and charts supports users in understanding the statistics. Key terms are clearly defined in plain English and the context is explained clearly and impartially.
- There is evidence of good user engagement and reference to the current user consultation into how the National Statistics are presented, which invites user views on some potential changes in approach to the grouping structure.

We identified several areas where we see potential for improvement of the value of these statistics:

- We welcome plans to revisit the structure of bulletin at the end of the current consultation and look forward to seeing improvements to the clarity and length of the publication.
- The [user guide](#) should be updated to reflect changes to the bulletin as the user guide has not been updated since January 2016.
- The team should consider the next steps for the 'Clear up rates' section. It is clear in the main bulletin that these statistics are Official Statistics following our 2016 assessment. However, more clarity could be provided on the steps being taken to meet the requirements for National Statistics designation. We encourage the team to publish an action plan

outlining the progress and plans for improvement of the 'Clear up rates' section of the publication.

- The team should seek opportunities to present more insight on the topic of recorded crime, engaging users in this and by bringing police workforce statistics into the main bulletin.
- The guidance about the comparability of the statistics with related statistics across the UK should be improved. While law and order is a devolved matter in Scotland, some users will want to understand trends in recorded crime across the UK. We encourage the team to consider what further information and guidance could be provided on comparisons across the UK.

Thank you and your team for your positive participation and engagement during this short review. We were impressed by the team's willingness to improve these statistics and its continued engagement with users. We support the current user consultation and recommend the team continue to engage with users and use this feedback to improve the areas listed above.

Our Crime and Security Domain team will continue to engage with your team on progress in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter further.

I am copying this letter to David Smith, Mark Bell and Neil Grant, the responsible statisticians, and Amy Wilson, Head of the Justice Analytical Services Division at the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pont', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead