
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

John Flatley
Programme Director Crime & Policing Statistics and Acting Home Office Chief Statistician
(by email)

7 February 2020

Dear John

STATISTICS ON POLICE POWERS AND PROCEDURES AND POLICE WORKFORCE, IN ENGLAND AND WALES

As you know, we have recently conducted our review of the compliance of two Home Office statistics against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). These statistics are:

- [Police powers and procedures England and Wales](#)
- [Police workforce England and Wales](#)

These statistics are especially important given the continued focus on policing in public debate. Thank you for the positive engagement from you and your team throughout our review process. I am pleased to confirm that these statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics.

We found many positive aspects in the way that the Home Office produces and presents these statistics, including:

- Neutral but insightful commentary is provided alongside the statistics throughout each of the sets of published bulletins.
- Presentation of the statistics in both sets of publications has been improved as a result of user feedback. Data tables are now more user-friendly and allow for easier and quicker analysis.
- The supporting user guides for both sets of statistics explain the data limitations in a transparent way, which increases the trustworthiness and value of the statistics and helps users make better-informed decisions.
- The statistics team actively engages with police forces to better understand how the data used in the production of the statistics are obtained and recorded. These discussions mean the statisticians have insight into the constraints and difficulties that some police forces face in providing high quality data. The team has developed data collection templates with guidance and inbuilt quality checks that aim to reduce the burden on the forces and to ensure a higher level of data quality.
- The team shows an ongoing commitment to improving the statistics and ensuring that they help to answer relevant policy questions: it has introduced new statistics, clearly labelled as 'experimental', which means data are available, but those using the statistics can be clear that they are still in development.
- Finally, the team continues to consider new ways of presenting data to add value for those using them.

We identified two areas where we consider that the team should enhance the value of the statistics:

- We are aware that there is demand for geographic breakdowns of these statistics below England and Wales level: for Wales as a whole, for example. To help people and organisations who need to understand the policing landscape across specific nations or

regions, we expect the team to understand this demand and to meet it as best it can. This could include clearer signposting in the statistical bulletin to supplementary data tables that contain breakdowns of the overall figures; making sure that all supplementary data tables include separate totals for England and Wales; and drawing out any differing trends observed between nations within the statistical commentary.

- We suggest that the team include information in the police workforce statistical bulletins and/or user guide that provides more clarity on the scope of the statistics, detailing the types of officers not currently included in the published numbers; those working in the National Crime Agency (NCA), for example. Providing this information will help users of the statistics understand exactly what the numbers presented to them represent.

We are aware that the team is currently conducting a [user consultation](#) to seek feedback on a proposal to extend the coverage of the police workforce statistics to cover NCA officers and that the team is exploring with police forces the potential for presenting new statistics on the number of people 'released under investigation', after policy changes in 2017. We welcome this focus on user-led continuous improvement.

Alongside these initiatives, we were very pleased to hear from you on 28 January that the statistics team is working to develop a new data stream to allow Home Office to report quarterly on progress against the UK Government's intention to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers. We commend the collaborative approach of your team, which is working with National Police Chiefs Council and individual police forces to provide these statistics, and your [information note](#) for users, which clearly communicates the proposed methodology for calculating the initial workforce baseline and how progress will be reported on. We welcome the development as a really good example of seeking to produce statistics that address topical issues and contribute to improving public debate.

We look forward to continuing to engage with you and the team on these and other statistics.

I am copying this letter to Jodie Hargreaves (Crime and Policing Analysis, Home Office Analysis and Insight).

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont
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