
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Daniel Shaw
Head of Profession for Statistics
Home Office
(by email)

13 October 2020

Dear Daniel

Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000

As you are aware, we recently reviewed Home Office (HO) [statistics](#) on the Operation of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Following a constructive conversation with the team responsible for producing these statistics, I am pleased to confirm that they should continue to be designated as National Statistics.

We found many positives in our review, particularly in how your team presents these statistics, which enhance their value and quality. These include:

- The use of infographics and flow charts to illustrate the criminal justice process and the [outcomes for those arrested](#). These graphics are simple but highly effective at summarising the data and conveying visually an overall story that could be hard to bring together across a written publication.
- The team is taking steps to ensure its statistical bulletins meet the [new accessibility requirements](#) for public sector organisations, such as including text to describe charts, which can be read by those using screen readers, and making changes to the standard HO colour palate that is used across many statistical publications. This work will ensure a broad range of users is able to access the statistics easily. We also welcome that there is an ongoing discussion in HO regarding publishing statistical outputs in HTML format to aid accessibility.
- The [user guide](#) that accompanies this statistical publication presents insightful, clear information about the different data that make up the statistics and how the quality of these is assured. We particularly like the presentation of this information in tables (pages 2-4 of the current user guide), as we feel it makes it very easy for users of the statistics and guide to find this information.
- The user guide also provides helpful information about how data are collected and resulting limitations on the statistics. For example, it is clear that ethnicity and nationality data may be based on the officer's best judgement, rather than the actual ethnicity or nationality of the person being arrested. The team is aware that some users of the statistics would like ethnicity data to be broken down into more-detailed ethnic groups and is exploring with data providers whether this is possible.

- In response to user feedback, HO has improved the timeliness of these statistics. Previously data were published 6 months after the period to which they referred; HO has worked with data providers to reduce this to 3 months.

Our review also identified several ways we consider you could further enhance the trustworthiness and value of these statistics:

- The [pre-release access list](#) for these statistics is very long, and it is not clear to us that it is essential for all of the named roles on the list to receive the statistics 24 hours in advance of their general release. The trustworthiness of government statistics is in part determined by them being known to be produced independently from outside influence. This perception can be damaged when pre-release access is too wide. We were pleased to hear that your team plans to review the list of individuals who receive pre-release access to these statistics, with a view to reducing the total number before the next publication.
- The statistical bulletin and the user guide make clear that the data in these statistics are regularly revised, and that each release contains data that are correct at the time of publication. While the team told us that the sizes of revisions between publications are small, it would be beneficial for the team to do some quantitative analysis that illustrates the size of typical revisions between publications of the statistics. This would better inform users about the size of revisions and help them understand how data might change in the future, which may impact how they analyse or interpret analysis of the statistics.
- Although there is substantial evidence of the team making improvements to the timeliness and content of these statistics in response to user needs, the user base with which the team engages remains narrow. We think that the team's suggestion of contacting academics working in this space as a way into understanding the wider user base is a good idea.

Thank you to your team for their positive engagement during this review: we look forward to continuing to engage with you and the team on these and other statistics. 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 John Flatley, Programme Director for Crime and Policing Statistics at HO, and Jodie Hargreaves, Crime and Policing Analysis, HO Analysis and Insight.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead