

Police Service of Northern Ireland

# User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland

Last updated January 2018

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# 1 Introduction

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data. An alternative but complementary measure of crime, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS), is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJ). Each source of crime information has different strengths and limitations but can be looked at together to provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone.

Detail around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NICS can be found in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the bulletin [Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2015/16 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#). Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

**Availability of recorded crime statistics in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland:** Since April 2012 police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales, along with the Crime survey for England and Wales, have been published by the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS). Prior to that police recorded crime statistics for England and Wales were published by the Home Office. Statistics on crime detections or outcomes in England and Wales are still made available by the [Home Office](#). Crimes recorded and cleared up by the police in Scotland are available through [The Scottish Government](#) website. In Ireland, recorded crime figures are published by the [Central Statistics Office](#). Background information on recording practices, definitions and classifications are available on each of these websites.

Police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland are published throughout the year as monthly updates providing a summary of the latest statistics, these statistics being provisional and subject to revision. The monthly update published in May of each year provides finalised figures for the latest financial year along with trends and commentary. A more detailed trends bulletin is then published in July / August of each year.

**Assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland and continued designation as a National Statistic:** In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority cancelled the designation of police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales because of concerns regarding the quality and integrity of police recorded crime in England & Wales. The lack of assurance of the data integrity in Scotland resulted in the designation of these statistics being cancelled in July 2014; designation was subsequently confirmed in September 2016.

As a result of these concerns, the Authority commenced an assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland in June 2014. In addition to this assessment, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014 similar to those they conducted in England & Wales during 2014. The outcome of the audit was published on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in the report [Crime data integrity – inspection of the Police Service of Northern Ireland](#). The main findings in relation to data quality were:

- a crime recording accuracy rate of 97 per cent with a confidence interval of +/-2 per cent;
- 98 per cent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 per cent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under the Home Office Counting Rules.

The HMIC inspection report made seven recommendations. A list of the recommendations along with the PSNI response is provided in [Appendix 2](#), with details also outlined in the relevant sections of this guide.

The UK Statistics Authority assessment was concluded after the publication of the HMIC report; the Authority's [assessment report Number 301 Statistics on Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland \(Police Service of Northern Ireland\)](#) was published on 28<sup>th</sup> May. This report judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland can remain designated as a National Statistic in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This was subject to implementing two requirements and reporting on these to the Authority by December 2015. Details of the requirements that were in place are provided in [Appendix 3](#); how these requirements were implemented by PSNI is outlined in sections [2.2](#), [4.1](#), [4.2](#) and [Appendix 3](#) of this user guide.

The Letter of Confirmation as National Statistics was issued by the Authority on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics, and to improve its statistics on a continuous basis. If a producer becomes concerned about whether its statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, it should discuss its concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

**User Guide:** This User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland is designed to be a useful reference guide with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of these crime statistics.

**Publication and availability of statistics:** Publication dates for the police recorded crime bulletins are pre-announced and can be found via the [Gov.uk Statistics: release calendar](#). They are also made available via the Police Service of Northern Ireland website: [PSNI Statistics Branch publication schedule](#).

Copies of PSNI statistical bulletins on recorded crime are available from the PSNI website [crime statistics page](#), which also provides access to the latest monthly updates.

Previously published annual reports for the financial years dating back to 2002/03 are available in the [Crime Statistics Archive](#) on the PSNI website. In addition, this archive also contains scanned images of relevant crime tables from each annual Report of the Chief Constable, in calendar year format from 1968 until 1997 and in financial year format (April to March) from 1997/98 to 2001/02. Caution should be taken when looking at previously published reports as there will have been changes and improvements in crime recording practices and systems over time, and also changes in crime classifications and categories. During 2010/11 an exercise was undertaken to more closely align the crime recording classifications used in PSNI publications with those in use within England and Wales. All PSNI crime figures published from 2011/12 onwards are based on this realigned classification.

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided below.

For further information about the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland, or to contact the PSNI Crime Statistician please:

Email: [statistics@psni.police.uk](mailto:statistics@psni.police.uk);

Write to: Statistics Branch, Lisnasharragh, 42 Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9LD; or

Telephone: 028 9065 0222 ext 24135, Fax 028 9092 2998

Information on the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, including past publications and future publication schedules, can be found via:

The [Gov.uk Statistics: release calendar](#);

The [Department of Justice for Northern Ireland website](#); and

By emailing: [statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk); or

By writing to: Department of Justice Statistics and Research Branch, Massey House, Stormont Estate, BELFAST, BT4 3SX

## 2 Police recorded crime

### [2.1 Introduction to police recorded crime](#)

### [2.2 Comparison of Police Recorded Crime Statistics and Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#)

### [2.3 User needs and user consultation](#)

### [2.4 Crime recording practices](#)

### [2.5 Changes to recorded crime classifications](#)

### [2.6 Crime outcomes](#)

### [2.7 Changes to crime outcome figures](#)

### [2.8 'Cancelling crime records'](#)

### [2.9 Revisions policy](#)

## 2.1 Introduction to police recorded crime

Police recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to the Police Service of Northern Ireland from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, working to the [Official Statistics Code of Practice](#).

**What is a recorded crime:** Recorded crime data are based on an aggregated count of each crime within the notifiable offence list (see [Appendix 1](#)). Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely related offences, such as assault without injury. Crime recording is governed by the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) and the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR); further details on these are available in [2.4 Crime Recording Practices](#). Information on recorded crime outcomes is collected in the same way. Further details on crime outcomes are provided in [Section 2.6 Outcomes](#).

**What is an incident:** All incidents reported to the police are recorded in accordance with the [National Standard for Incident Recording \(NSIR\)](#), which sets out a common approach to be followed in classifying the broad range of calls for service the police receive from the general public. In many cases these incidents may be crimes in law, such as disorderly behaviour or many road traffic offences, but they are not of a level of severity that would result in the recording of a notifiable crime (as described above). Thus, they are not included in the main police recorded crime dataset.

Annual crime data are published on a financial year basis and provisional recorded crime data are published each month on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis.

Recorded crime figures are an important indicator of police workload, and can be used for local crime pattern analysis and provide a good measure of trends in well-reported crimes (in particular, homicide, which is not covered by the NICS). There are also some categories of crime (such as drug possession offences) where the volume of offences recorded are heavily influenced by police activities and priorities; in such cases recorded crime figures may not provide an accurate picture of the true extent of criminality.

Recorded crime figures are used widely within PSNI as management information, to monitor performance on crime and detection rate targets against the Policing Plan, to inform PSNI policy and to provide information in support of operational research identifying appropriate allocation of police resource. The figures are also used by the Northern Ireland Policing Board and at local level by Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) to monitor the performance of the police. The Department of Justice for Northern Ireland is a key user of crime figures in relation to policy development.

Recorded crime figures are also used in response to both Assembly and Parliamentary questions, informing public debate and concerns around criminal activity. Information is used by academic researchers and the media, examining local and national public interest in current affairs relating to crime levels. There is a demand for crime figures from businesses, either keen to identify crimes that may affect their business or to identify demand for any related business service they may provide. Members of the public would also forward requests for crime information specific to their area of interest or specific to the area in which they live or work.

## 2.2 Comparison of Police Recorded Crime Statistics and Northern Ireland Crime Survey

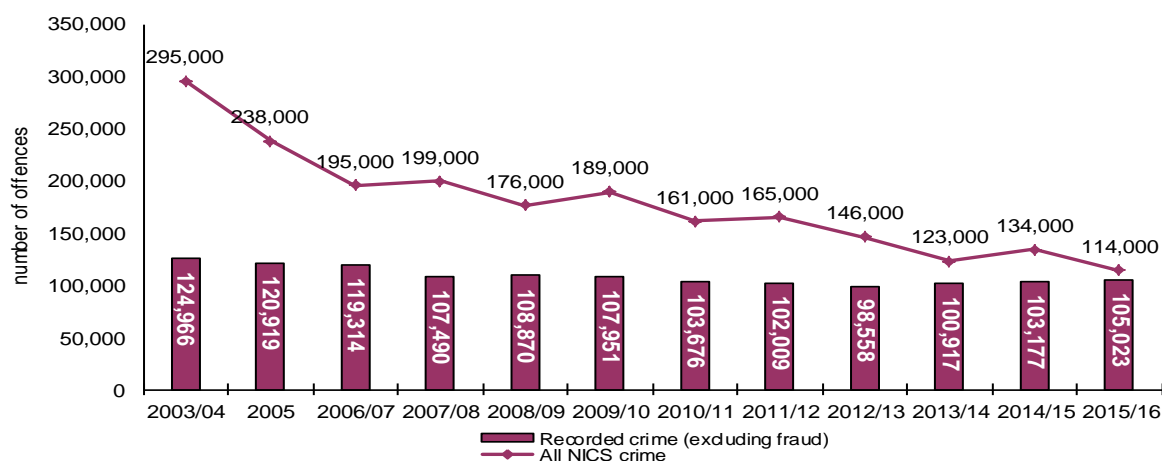
**Strengths and limitations:** There is an alternative but complementary measure of crime to police recorded crime. This is the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) which is published by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJ). Each source of crime information has different strengths and limitations but can be looked at together to provide a more comprehensive picture of crime than could be obtained from either series alone. Details around the need for both recorded crime figures and the NICS can be found in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 of the bulletin [Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2015/16 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#). Both of these measures of crime inform public debate about crime and support the development and monitoring of policy.

Unlike the NICS, police recorded crime figures do not include crimes that have not been reported to the police; they also exclude those crimes that are not recorded in order to comply with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR). They do cover crimes against those aged under 16, organisations such as businesses, and crimes ‘against the state’ i.e. with no immediate victim (e.g. possession of drugs). It was estimated in 2015/16 that around 52 per cent of NICS comparable crime was reported to the police in Northern Ireland although this varied for individual offence types. Findings from previous surveys estimate the proportion of NICS comparable crime reported to the police was 47% in 2014/15, 46% in 2013/14, 52% in 2012/13, 44% in 2011/12 and 2010/11, 50% in 2009/10, 46% in 2008/09, 48% in 2007/08, 51% in 2006/07, 39% in 2005, 45% in 2003/04 and 54% in 2001. Offences included in the ‘all comparable crime’ category from 2014/15 onwards differ from those included in previous years. Further information on crime reporting rates in Northern Ireland, including comparisons with England and Wales, is provided in Section 4 of the bulletin [Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2015/16 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#).

Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. These issues need to be taken into account when using these data.

**Comparison of police recorded crime and NICS:** Figure 2.1 compares trends in police recorded crime and levels identified through the NICS. The level of police recorded crime can be affected by changes in both reporting and recording practices, while data collected through the NICS are unaffected by these issues. Since 2003/04 the NICS estimates have been based on a rolling 12 month recall period (ie the full calendar year preceding interview) which effectively covers a spread of 23 months in a single NICS year. This makes it difficult to directly compare the NICS figures with any specific set of annual recorded crime figures and should be taken into account when examining Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 Trends in recorded crime (excluding fraud) and all NICS Crime 2003/04 to 2015/16**



Further information on the NICS, such as the background, methodology and analysis, is available from the [User documentation section](#) on the DoJ website.

**Comparison of trends using comparable subset of crime:** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a methodological note on Analysis of variation in crime trends in January 2013 (available on the ONS website in [Crime and justice methodology - methodological notes](#)). This work identified a divergence in the trends between the Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW) and the Police Recorded Crime figures in England & Wales, with the police recorded crime figures showing larger falls in crime. It was indicated that a possible hypothesis was that there was a gradual erosion of compliance with the National Crime Recording Standard, such that a growing number of crimes reported to the police were no longer being captured in crime recording systems. Updated analysis is available in the User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and

Wales Chapter 4 (April 2017) which can be accessed through the ONS website in [Crime and justice methodology - User guides](#).

PSNI worked with the NISRA statisticians in the DoJ to replicate the methodology from the ONS report published in January 2013 to create a comparable subset of police recorded crime and NICS crime and conduct a similar analysis. The preliminary findings in May 2013 indicated that the trend identified by ONS was not reflected in Northern Ireland. If anything, the opposite appeared to be the case with the NICS showing crime dropping at a greater rate than the police recorded crime statistics. Table 2.1 below shows the latest findings available for Northern Ireland, along with comparable figures for England & Wales.

**Please note:** the England & Wales figures represent different time periods to those for Northern Ireland. As there was no NICS conducted in 2002/03 comparisons were made with 2003/04. In addition England & Wales updated their analysis, time periods used and slightly revised the methodology used to calculate the number of CSEW crimes in the comparable sub-set. The Northern Ireland figures shown in table 2.1 are based on the previous methodology and years used for comparison.

Requirement 2 from the UK Statistics Authority assessment report asked that this analysis should be updated to include the results of the 2013/14 NICS and should be expanded to include, where feasible, comparisons by crime types with suitable caveats about the quality of the estimates. With regard to the comparisons by crime types, statisticians in the DoJ explored the feasibility of this but concluded that the NICS sample was too small to provide robust information at that level of disaggregation; this finding was reported back to the UK Statistics Authority. In Table 2.1 the NICS comparable subset of crimes for 2013/14 has since been updated to 2014/15, in line with the comparison periods made in England & Wales. A further update will be made, showing comparisons to 2015/16 once these are available.

**Table 2.1: Comparison of changes in crime levels measured by police recorded crime and by the crime survey; England & Wales and Northern Ireland**

Northern Ireland comparable subsets of crime	2003/04	2006/07	2012/13	2014/15	% change 2003/04 – 2006/07	% change 2006/07 – 2012/13	% change 2012/13 – 2014/15	% change 2003/04 – 2014/15
Police Recorded Crime	75,401	70,422	54,711	54,601	-7	-22	0	-28
NICS Crimes (reported to police)	100,000	72,000	54,000	45,000	-28	-25	-17	-55

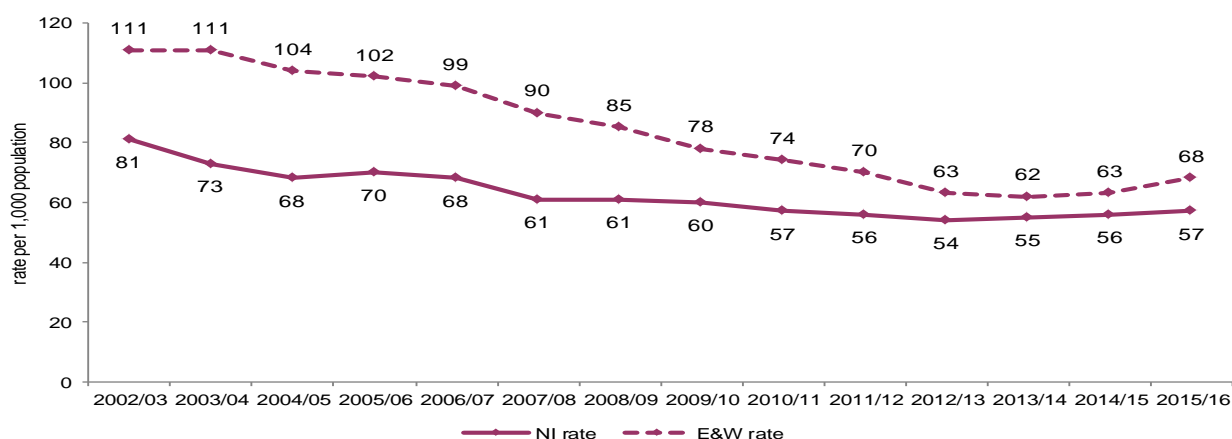
  

England & Wales comparable subsets of crime	2002/03	2007/08	2012/13	2014/15	% change 2002/03 – 2007/08	% change 2007/08 – 2012/13	% change 2012/13 – 2014/15	% change 2002/03 – 2014/15
Police Recorded Crime	3,229,842	2,574,973	1,761,996	1,763,213	-20	-32	0	-45
CSEW Crimes (reported to police)	3,668,905	3,072,780	2,478,062	1,976,152	-16	-19	-20	-46

Taking into account the differing time periods and slight change in methodology in England & Wales, the differing picture between England & Wales and Northern Ireland, as shown in Table 2.1, can clearly be seen.

**Police recorded crime - comparison of rates per 1,000 population:** Figure 2.2 provides a comparison of police recorded crime trends based on rates per 1,000 population. This indicates that, while the direction of trend in both jurisdictions is largely the same, the scale of decreases seen between 2002/03 and 2012/13 to 2013/14 followed by subsequent increases is smaller in Northern Ireland than in England & Wales.

**Figure 2.2: Overall crime rates (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population; England & Wales and Northern Ireland**



**Change to the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) sample size: Requirement 2** from the UK Statistics Authority assessment report asks that information about the recent changes in NICS sample size, response rates over time and the impact of these changes on the quality of the statistics are made available to users of the police recorded crime statistics.

The NICS has operated on a continuous basis since January 2005 with the aim of achieving a representative sample of 4,000 adults per year. Increasing financial pressures and the requirement to make mandatory efficiency savings led to a moderate decrease in the sample size during 2013/14 (from 4,000 to 3,500). A further reduction in sample size to 2,000 was implemented in NICS 2014/15.

**Table 2.2 NICS sample sizes and response rates dating back to 2009/10**

	Sample	Eligible Sample	Achieved Interviews	Response Rate
2009/10	6,852	5,990	4,102	68%
2010/11	6,750	5,984	4,081	68%
2011/12	6,750	6,011	4,064	68%
2012/13	6,750	5,957	4,055	68%
2013/14	5,911	5,107	3,598	70%
2014/15	3,375	2,899	2,074	72%
2015/16	3,375	2,960	1,975	67%

The paper [Change to Northern Ireland Crime Survey \(NICS\) sample size](#) was published by DoJ in April 2014 and highlights the estimated impact of NICS sample size reduction on precision of estimates.

## 2.3 User needs and user consultation

The PSNI is required under Principle 1 (Meeting user needs) of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, to publish information about users' experiences of statistical services, data quality and the format and timing of reports. Any interaction with key users of PSNI statistics usually falls into one of the three groups highlighted below:

1. Engagement with users through regular user group meetings or correspondence– these are held with key users throughout the year and normally involve PSNI statisticians and policy & statistical colleagues in other NI government departments or in other criminal justice agencies but do also involve external interest groups.
2. User Surveys – the key users of PSNI statistics are surveyed to ascertain what they think about the service they receive. The most recent User Survey was conducted in May 2014, with a previous survey conducted in October/November 2011. The outcome of the latest survey is outlined in Section 2.3.3.
3. Consultation exercises regarding proposed changes to statistical outputs or processes – this is where a wide range of users are consulted by PSNI Statistics Branch in advance of any planned changes to the statistics we report on.

An email list of key users is maintained and allows those users to be notified of publications as they are released. Users of the statistics are also encouraged to contact us with any comments or suggestions for improvements.

The PSNI website provides information on each of the types of interaction listed above on its [Official Statistics](#) webpage. Also available on this webpage is the [PSNI user engagement strategy](#) and [comments and feedback](#) from interactions with users.

### 2.3.1 Key users of PSNI recorded crime statistics

The key users of the PSNI's crime statistics fall into three main categories;

1. Internal PSNI – Officers and staff within PSNI rely on the crime statistics to track changing trends in crime and to deploy resources accordingly. They also use these to monitor their performance against various targets in the N Ireland Policing Plan.
2. Oversight bodies & Government - The N Ireland Policing Board monitors the PSNI's performance against these policing plan targets and to assess the PSNI's success at addressing key agreed policing priorities. The Department of Justice also uses PSNI crime statistics for monitoring the achievement of a violent crime reduction target in the NI Executive's Programme for Government. They also use the crime statistics to inform policy making to monitor policy effectiveness.
3. The wider general public, academia and specific interest groups all use the PSNI's crime statistics to inform them about crime trends that they are interested in.



## 2.3.2 Uses Made of PSNI's Crime Statistics

Based on our experience, knowledge & awareness of existing uses of the statistics and on the responses to the PSNI's Crime Statistics User Surveys, the following examples should provide an insight to the main uses made of PSNI's crime statistics.

### Policy making/policy monitoring

- The Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government (PfG) highlights the main priority work areas to be addressed by the various NI departments during the 2011-2015 period. Within this, under Priority 3: Protecting our people, the environment and creating safer communities, the PfG commitment no. 54 is 'To reduce the level of Serious Crime'. PSNI crime statistics on the levels of non-domestic violence with injury offences are used to monitor progress towards achieving this objective. These are provided to Department of Justice policy colleagues on a monthly basis.
- The Department of Justice uses the PSNI's crime statistics to inform policy development and to monitor and track their effectiveness over time. They have a specific interest in the more serious offences such as violence against the person & sexual offences as per the PfG commitment previously mentioned. In addition, the Department of Justice also has an interest in offences against vulnerable groups such as the elderly, victims of domestic abuse and victims of hate crime. As a result we have over the years developed a series of crime statistics reports that address these needs for example we now provide a range of crime statistics by age of victim, enabling users to readily track trends in crimes against the elderly and in the associated outcome rates.
- The Northern Ireland Department of Health and Personal Safety use the PSNI's crime statistics to help inform and develop policy on the extent of alcohol related crime with a particular interest in licensing regulations and also the cost of alcohol related problems to the Health Service in Northern Ireland.
- The Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency uses PSNI crime statistics when compiling its measure of multiple deprivation for Northern Ireland. A range of various offence types sourced from PSNI crime statistics are included in the crime domain of the NI multiple deprivation measure. This is combined with information from other sources (eg NI crime survey & NI Fire Service), which make up the overall crime domain measure.
- The Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency makes PSNI crime statistics available at a range of different geographies through its [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System \(NINIS\)](#). This enables users of the PSNI's crime statistics to access the information at geographies not readily available from the PSNI website and to use the NINIS interactive mapping facility to analyse the information.
- Various local and national special interest groups or voluntary organisations have a particular interest in the crime statistics that relate to their policy area. They would be in contact with PSNI's Statistics Branch on a regular basis and would have specific 'one off' requests for detailed crime statistics that we would provide. These special interest groups or voluntary groups would then use this information to publish detailed reports on the extent of particular crime types in Northern Ireland and would use this with Northern Ireland government departments to lobby for policy or legislative change.

### Performance monitoring/effectiveness of policing

- The PSNI and the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) have an annual [policing plan](#) which contains a variety of quantitative targets by which the NIPB use to monitor the PSNI's effectiveness. A number of these targets are based on PSNI's recorded crime statistics. The overall policing plan is then replicated across each of the PSNI's policing districts which work in collaboration with local Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs). Again these local policing plans would also contain a variety of targets based on PSNI's crime statistics. As a result, the crime statistics are extensively used both within PSNI and also within NIPB and local PCSPs to monitor policing performance.
- Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) conducts annual PEEL assessments of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces, including PSNI. A key part of this assessment generally involves comparing PSNI crime statistics with those in other forces in England & Wales, especially with those forces deemed to be within the PSNI's Most Similar Group (i.e. those other police forces thought to be most comparable to PSNI). They combine the PSNI's crime statistics with other data sources and compare levels of crimes per 1,000 population or would compare the level of recorded crime per number of frontline officers etc. to inform their assessment of the PSNI's effectiveness.
- The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) would also occasionally use PSNI crime statistics to monitor the performance and effectiveness of PSNI in some of their inspections. Again, they would tend to use this information to (i) identify levels of demand within PSNI and (ii) to compare PSNI performance against other police forces.

### National Media related & informing public/public interest

- The local media use the PSNI's crime statistics to inform the public on relevant trends in crime. Because of the nature of their work, they tend to require the relevant information at relatively short notice in order to support/inform emerging stories. If the information isn't readily available, we will try our best to provide something that will assist. In the past the local media have focused on crimes against the elderly,

agriculture related crime, metal theft, car hijackings and detection rates for paramilitary style attacks and many other aspects.

- PSNI Statistics Branch receives a high number of FOI requests for information relating to crime statistics and the numbers of these requests have been increasing year on year. The sort of queries we get asked vary considerably from something very specific and localised (eg. details of every incident at a particular address) to more generic requests that are sent to all police forces in the UK. While Statistics Branch are not provided with details of who has made the FOI request, we are fairly certain that many are media related (both national and local) – as when the article is later published we can usually source the figures quoted to a past FOI response.
- PSNI crime statistics are made available on a monthly basis via the national [Crimemapper](#) website which plots these on an interactive map down to low level geographies (i.e. areas containing more than 7 households). Users enter the postcode or name of the area they are interested in and the map then displays the location of any crimes recorded in that area for the most recent month. Users can also download the data for analysis & mapping on their own software packages – enabling secondary use of the data. We have anecdotal feedback on some PCSPs finding this information useful as well as local neighbourhood watch schemes. Prospective house buyers also use the information if they are interested in moving to a new area.

#### **To facilitate academic research**

- PSNI Statistics Branch receives a number of requests for crime data to assist with academic research projects. If the data is not readily available or cannot be released at the required level of disaggregation, we look to see if we can share the information through having a data sharing agreement. We also get requests from students to assist them in completing projects and presentations.

#### **To inform public marketing campaigns**

- The PSNI has used its crime statistics in the past to make the public aware of levels of crime in their area. There have been campaigns where billboards and poster sites were used across N Ireland to highlight levels of specific crimes in the local area.

#### **In support of local community policing needs**

- Local Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) may access the PSNI's crime statistics and undertake detailed analyses to identify changing or emerging crime trends in their local area. They will then use this to inform their PCSP representatives so that they are in a position to challenge the local police commander about any relevant issues.

#### **To aid decisions on resource allocation**

- Some agencies and special interest groups are dependent on funding that is sometimes linked to crime levels in their area. Hence these groups are keen to be provided with details of specific crime types within their area of concern. Often these are at low levels of geography or perhaps for very local areas which are non-standard geographies.

#### **Commercial interests**

- Occasionally we get requests for PSNI crime statistics that would have a commercial interest e.g. relating to insurance companies. However, since a lot of information is now readily available in downloadable format from the [Crimemapper](#) website, it means that we get fewer such requests from those with commercial interests.

#### **Personal interest**

- We get requests for crime statistics from individuals who have a personal interest in a particular area.

### **2.3.3 User survey 2014**

Feedback received during our most recent customer survey conducted in May 2014 would indicate that the vast majority of users find our crime statistics to meet their needs (98% say they fully/most meet their needs). This combined with fact that we generally get very few requests for improvements or changes to our statistical reports from key users would indicate that our statistics generally meet users' needs.

The majority of users of the PSNI's crime statistics reported that they use the statistics for performance monitoring / effectiveness of policing purposes (71%). The second most common use was for policy making / policy monitoring reasons (47%) followed by media related / informing the public / public interest reasons (31%), to aid decisions on resource allocation (29% and in support of local community policing needs (27%).

The majority of users who reported performance monitoring / effectiveness of policing being their main use of the crime statistics were internal PSNI officers & staff. In contrast, the majority of the persons who indicated that they used the statistics for policy making and policy monitoring purposes were external respondents (those outside PSNI).

## 2.4 Crime recording practices

Recorded crime statistics are affected by changes in reporting and recording practices. To ensure consistency, police recording practice is governed by Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). These rules provide a national standard for the recording and classifying of notifiable offences by police forces in England and Wales. Although the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Home Office, the same recording practices are followed and applied within Northern Ireland. However differences in legislation between the two jurisdictions must be taken into account when making comparisons between police recorded crime statistics for England & Wales and those for Northern Ireland. Details of the relevant guidance are available through the [Home Office Counting Rules](#).

There have been two major changes to the recording of crimes in recent years: in April 1998 the HOCR for Recorded Crime were expanded to include certain additional summary offences and counts became more victim-based (the number of victims was counted rather than the number of offences); in April 2002, the NCRS was introduced across England & Wales and Northern Ireland, although some forces adopted key elements of the standard earlier and compliance with the standard continued to improve in the years following its formal introduction. In April 2001, a year prior to the introduction of the NCRS, the Police Service of Northern Ireland introduced a new crime recording system (Integrated Crime Information System or 'ICIS') which improved data collection and coverage. As a result more low level crime was identified and included within the recorded crime statistics and the subsequent introduction of NCRS in April 2002 did not have a large impact.

The NCRS was devised by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in collaboration with Home Office statisticians. It was designed to ensure greater consistency between forces in recording crime and to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording with the police being required to record any allegation of crime unless there was credible evidence to the contrary (Simmons *et al.*, 2003).

Both of these changes resulted in an increase in the number of crimes recorded. Certain offences, such as the more minor violent crimes, were more affected by these changes than others. All of these factors need to be considered when looking at the trends in recorded crime.

Ongoing consultation on the formulation and development of the policy on crime recording is provided through working groups comprising members of the Home Office, ONS, police force regional representatives and representatives of ACPO, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Any significant changes proposed by these groups in recording will be considered by the independent [National Statistician's Crime Statistics Advisory Committee](#) (CSAC) – established following a recommendation in the [National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#) in 2011 – who will advise the Home Secretary and ONS before any final changes are made.

Police recorded crime statistics, like any administrative data, will be affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. Therefore, when examining trends in police recorded crime data presented in statistical bulletins it is important to read the commentary which will explain any caveats associated with the data.

### 2.4.1 Corporate approach to crime recording within PSNI

In line with the Home Office Counting Rules, a Force Crime Registrar (FCR) is appointed to act as final arbiter in the application of the standards governing crime recording. Within PSNI this role is undertaken by the Head of Statistics Branch, reporting to an ACC who sits outside any responsibility for PSNI crime performance. General oversight of crime recording occurs through a Crime Recording Working Group, with members representing each aspect of the crime recording process.

Between 1998/99 and 2000/01 crimes were recorded through a paper-based system where a completed form was forwarded to PSNI's Statistics Branch for input onto a stand-alone computer system from which crime figures were then extracted. In April 2001 PSNI introduced electronic crime recording through an integrated crime information system (ICIS), which resulted in more low level crime being captured than would have occurred through the previous crime recording process. In April 2007, the NICHE record management system was introduced within PSNI for crime recording, a product specifically designed for police services to record and manage occurrences.

The crime recording process in place within PSNI is outlined in [Section 4.1](#). This approach applies across all policing districts within Northern Ireland. As the process has been designed with centralised crime recording and crime validation teams, individual policing districts have minimal influence on how any resultant crimes are recorded. In addition, PSNI's Statistics Branch would often become aware of local practices that have the potential to conflict with crime-recording policies, either through Occurrence & Case Management Team

(OCMT) colleagues who work more closely with policing districts, or through Statistics Branch validation and quality assurance processes.

In their crime data integrity audit published in March 2015, HMIC recommended that PSNI should undertake a review of crime-recording policies to reassure itself that there is a corporate approach to the recording of key crime categories across all districts and branches (recommendation 3, [Appendix 2](#)). As a result of this recommendation a directive was issued to all District Commanders and Heads of Branches asking them to ensure that no such local policies exist. In addition OCMT staff were also asked to inform Statistics Branch should they become aware of any such local practices.

Should such instances arise, they are raised by the Force Crime Registrar (Head of Statistics Branch) with the Assistant Chief Constable having responsibility for crime recording and also through the Crime Recording Working Group to ensure that the practice is stopped.

## 2.5 Changes to recorded crime classifications

On occasion, the structure of the classifications used to compile recorded crime may change.

**Alignment of PSNI classifications with England and Wales:** During 2010/11 an exercise was conducted to more closely align the crime recording classifications used in PSNI publications with those used for police recorded crime figures in England and Wales. The aim of this exercise was to improve comparability of police recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland with those for England and Wales, while taking into account legislative differences between the two jurisdictions. The realigned crime classification was introduced within PSNI in April 2011.

**Crime classifications consultation November 2011:** In November 2011 PSNI's Statistics Branch ran a consultation exercise about proposed changes to reduce the overall number of crime classifications. This was in line with a similar exercise conducted by the Home Office in England and Wales. This resulted in a reduction in the number of crime classifications from 148 to 126 and these changes which were introduced in April 2012.

**Crime classifications consultation December 2012:** The focus of the consultation launched in December 2012 concerned the presentation of police recorded crime under two broad categories – 'victim-based crime' and 'other crimes against society' in order to improve clarity of presentation. This consultation followed a similar exercise conducted by ONS in respect of police recorded crime in England and Wales. This resulted in a change to the previous classification system implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. The recorded crime list in [Appendix 1](#) has been updated to reflect the revised classifications. All police recorded crime figures published from June 2013 onwards are based on this revised classification.

### 2.5.1 Impact of changes in recording practice and legislation on the data series

As mentioned in [Section 2.4](#) the two main changes in crime recording practice occurred in April 1998 with the expanded coverage of offences and counts becoming more victim-based and in April 2002 with the implementation of the National Crime Recording Standard. Section 2.5 outlines realignments and changes to classifications which, within Northern Ireland, have mostly been applied to the whole data series.

There are other more specific changes in both recording practice and legislation occurring during this time period that have impacted on the time series for individual classifications. Details of these are outlined below.

#### Classifications within violence against the person

- Prior to April 2003, offences where the victim received minor injuries (e.g. bruising or minor abrasions) were recorded as assault without injury. Since April 2003 assaults with minor injuries have been recorded as assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH). This accounts for the large increase in AOABH offences and the large fall in assault without injury offences between 2002/03 and 2003/04. The Home Office introduced this change for England & Wales a year earlier, in April 2002.
- Prior to 2008/09 classification 4.4 Causing death by dangerous driving was the only classification of this nature. From 2008/09 onwards these offences are split across classifications 4.4, 4.6, 4.8 and 4.9.
- In April 2008 the Home Office issued clarification to police forces on how to record offences of wounding with intent/GBH with intent for those assaults resulting in minor or no injury to a victim, but where the intent was to cause serious injury. This revised technical guidance was issued to ensure that these offences were recorded in a consistent manner by all police forces. The effect of this clarification was that some offences that would previously have been recorded as other types of assault are now recorded as GBH with intent. While the clarification was introduced in 2008/09, PSNI continued to experience the impact of this during 2009/10. The majority of police forces in England and Wales experienced similar increases in these offences as a result of this clarification.

- The offence of obstructing police was removed from the notifiable offence list in April 2003.

#### **Classifications within sexual offences**

- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 was introduced in February 2009 and has altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.
- Up to 2003/04 the offence of rape could only be committed against a female. However the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 redefined the offence so that buggery without consent would constitute an offence of rape (i.e. rape could then be committed against a male).
- Offences classified as 17 Indecent assault on a male, 20 Indecent assault on a female, 21 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 14, 22 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 17, 74 Gross indecency with a child, 16 Buggery and 18 Gross indecency between males relate to legislation that existed prior to that introduced in February 2009. From April 2010 offences are no longer recorded using these classifications.
- Under the Home Office Counting Rules, offences which were reported to the police between February 2009 and March 2010 but which were committed prior to February 2009 were recorded under the previous legislation wherever possible. However in April 2010 this guidance was changed so that historic allegations committed under previous legislation should be recorded and detected as if committed today.
- Even though the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 was introduced in February 2009, Sections 57-59 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 continue to apply in respect of trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- The classification of 106 Modern Slavery came into effect from April 2015. Offences which were previously classified in Sexual offences - 72 Trafficking for sexual exploitation have moved into this category along with offences of Modern Slavery which were previously classified in 99 Other offences.
- Offences of sexual grooming and voyeurism were originally implemented through the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

#### **Classifications within vehicle crime**

- The offence of aggravated vehicle taking was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2004.
- From 1st April 2002, a change in the Home Office Counting Rules meant that most attempted thefts/unauthorised taking of motor vehicles previously recorded in Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle are now recorded as Vehicle interference.

#### **Classifications within other theft**

- From April 2014 there was a change introduced in the Home Office Counting Rules making it more difficult for crimes of making off without payment to meet the criteria which allow offences to be removed from the crime figures (ie for the crime to be cancelled or "no crime'd"). This may have contributed to the increase seen in this classification between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

#### **Classifications within criminal damage**

- Classification 58A-D Criminal damage (to 06/07 only) contains explosives and petrol bombing offences for which information prior to 2007/08 is not available to allow classification to dwelling, building other than a dwelling, vehicle or other.

#### **Classifications within drug offences**

- Cannabis was classified as a Class B drug until 29 January 2004 when it was reclassified to a Class C drug. Cannabis was then reclassified back to a Class B drug on 26 January 2009. The systems from which the crime figures were extracted did not record the type of Class B or Class C drug until the first cannabis reclassification took place. Therefore it is not possible to provide a complete data series separately identifying cannabis possession offences.

#### **Classifications within public order offences**

- Offences of breach of anti-social behaviour order, breach of non-molestation order and breach of sex offender orders etc were added to the data series in 2005/06.

#### **Classifications within miscellaneous crimes against society**

- The reclassification exercise conducted during 2010/11 identified that, within Northern Ireland, offences of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution had not been identified as notifiable offences. This omission has since been rectified and these offences are included in the recorded crime figures from April 2011.
- New offences (possession of items for use in fraud, fraud by failing to disclose information and fraud by abuse of position) were introduced under the Fraud Act 2006 which came into force in January 2007.

- Offences of profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime were added to the data series from 1st April 2003.
- While the Offender Management Act offences which are included in the notifiable offence list do not extend to Northern Ireland, offences which do extend to Northern Ireland and are similar in nature are recorded in this classification.
- Offences classified within 95 Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc were added to the series from 1 April 2002.

### Classifications within other fraud

- For offences of Fraud by false representation, counting changed from a per fraudulent transaction to a per account basis from January 2007. From 1st April 2007 these offences were reported to a single point of contact within each police force by financial institutions.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and cyber crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud and cyber offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to fraud and cyber crime in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. This means that fraud offences recorded by PSNI are only available for the years 1998/99 to 2014/15.

## 2.6 Crime outcomes

A revised framework for recorded crime outcomes was developed by the Home Office, following a consultation launched in October 2012. While this framework was introduced in police forces in England & Wales from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, it was not introduced within PSNI until April 2015. Within England & Wales this framework covers a range of 20 possible outcomes. Further details on crime outcomes can be found in Section H of the general rules document, available through the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) web page.

The outcome framework, as used within Northern Ireland, is shown below along with the corresponding England & Wales outcome codes.

**Table 2.3 Crime Outcomes Framework**

Outcome type	Explanation
Outcome Type 1: Charge/summons	A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at Court).
Outcome Type 2: Juvenile caution	A youth offender has been cautioned by the police (has received a juvenile informed warning, restorative caution or prosecutorial diversion).
Outcome Type 3: Adult caution	An adult offender has been cautioned by the police (has received an adult caution or informed warning).
Outcome Type 4: TIC (taken into consideration)	The offender admits the crime by way of a PACE compliant interview and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court.
Outcome Type 5: Offender died before proceedings	The offender has died.
Outcome Type 6: Penalty notice for disorder (PND)	A penalty notice for disorder (or other relevant notifiable offence) has been lawfully issued.
Outcome Type 7: Not applicable in PSNI	A warning for cannabis possession has been issued – within PSNI outcomes of this nature would be recorded under Juvenile or Adult cautions.
Outcome Type 8: Community resolution	A community resolution (with or without formal restorative justice) has been applied. These were introduced within PSNI in 2011 and were called discretionary disposals prior to 30 June 2016.
Outcome Type 9: No prosecution directed	Prosecution not in the public interest. Within England & Wales this refers to CPS directed decisions, within Northern Ireland this refers to PPS directed decisions.
Outcome Type 10: Not applicable in PSNI	Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest (police decision). Within Northern Ireland these decisions are made by PPS and covered within outcome type 9.
Outcome Type 11: Under age	Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility.

**Table 2.3 Crime Outcomes Framework continued**

<b>Outcome type</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Outcome Type 12: Too ill (suspect)	Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute
Outcome Type 13: Too ill (victim/witness)	Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence
Outcome Type 14: No prosecution: no named suspect	Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect not identified
Outcome Type 15: No prosecution: named suspect and victim support	Evidential difficulties named suspect identified – victim supports police action but evidential difficulties prevent further action
Outcome Type 16: No prosecution: named suspect but no victim support	Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified; victim does not support (or has withdrawn support from) police action
Outcome Type 17: Prosecution time limit expired	Suspect identified but the time limit for prosecution has expired
Outcome Type 18: Investigation complete	Investigation complete - no suspect identified. Crime investigated as far as reasonably possible – case closed pending further investigative opportunities becoming available.
Outcome Type 19: National Fraud Intelligence Bureau filed	A crime of fraud that has been recorded has not been allocated for investigation as insufficient lines of enquiry as determined by NFIB
Outcome Type 20: Other Agencies	Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action to be taken

For an outcome to be assigned to a recorded crime, a notifiable offence must have been committed and recorded.

Where the offender receives a formal sanction they must be made aware that they will be recorded as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are.

Once an outcome has been claimed, any identifiable victim must be informed of the outcome, or in the case of a child, their parent or guardian must be informed unless it is not in the interest of the victim to do so.

Outcomes are counted on the basis of crimes rather than offenders. For example, if six offenders are involved in a robbery and all are arrested and charged, then this counts as one outcome. Alternatively if only one of the six is identified and charged while the other five remain unidentified and at large, this also counts as one outcome for the robbery.

Further details on crime outcomes can be found in Section H of the general rules document, available through the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) web page. Please note that the terminology and processes in these rules refer to what is in place in England and Wales (e.g. for Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales, replace with Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland). There will be differences between the criminal justice processes outlined in the outcomes section of Counting Rules and those that are in place within Northern Ireland.

### **Outcomes where the offender receives a formal sanction (Outcome Types 1-6 & 8)**

These outcomes were previously known as sanction detections and include offences which are cleared up through a formal sanction taken against the offender. Not all such outcomes will necessarily result in a subsequent conviction. In cases dealt with by 'charge/summons', the Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland (PPS) may decide not to take forward proceedings or the offender might be found not guilty. While community resolutions do not involve the formality of outcome types 1 to 6 they have been included in this section for ease of reference.

- **Charged or summonsed (Outcome Type 1):** a person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at Court).
- **Cautioned (Outcome Types 2 and 3):** The offender has been cautioned by the police. A caution may be administered after PPS direction or consultation with PPS when an offender admits guilt, where there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and where the offender consents to the caution being issued.
- **Had an offence taken into consideration (Outcome Type 4):** The offender admits the crime and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court and where there is additional verifiable information linking that offender to the crime.
- **Youth prosecutorial diversion (Outcome Type 2):** Where the defendant is a youth, PPS may consider a diversionary youth conference as an alternative to prosecution in court, when an offender admits guilt

and agrees to accept and participate in this diversionary option. This type of restorative conference may involve a number of parties including the defendant, the victim and police. A plan will be produced by this conference which must be approved by the PPS. A Youth Conference is a formal process and, although not a conviction, is recorded on a person's criminal record for a period of 30 months<sup>1</sup>.

- **Received a Penalty Notice for Disorder –PND (Outcome Type 6):** The police issue a penalty notice for disorder. Such a notice must be issued in accordance with any operational to the police. An outcome is counted if the penalty notice is not contested, is contested but the PPS proceeds with the case, or, in discontinued cases, the original decision is retained after review. While PNDs were introduced in England & Wales in 2005, they were only introduced within Northern Ireland in June 2012.
- **Community resolution (Outcome Type 8):** A community resolution can be considered by a police officer for crimes that are comparatively minor by virtue of impact and/or seriousness and where the victim and offender agree on a suitable form of reparation such as an apology. Such a disposal provides a prompt means of disposing of a crime that is victim led and does not involve the formality of other disposal methods. PSNI introduced community resolutions during 2011/12, referred to as discretionary disposals prior to 30 June 2016. From April 2013 they are included in the wider outcomes framework.

Warnings for Cannabis Possession are a separately identifiable crime outcome within England & Wales. In Northern Ireland, outcomes in relation to Cannabis Possession will be included within the available outcome methods listed above.

### **Outcomes where no action is taken against the offender (Outcome Types 9-13 & 17)**

Prior to April 2007 various reasons were allowed for claiming outcomes of this type, including where the:

- offender, victim or essential witness is dead or too ill;
- victim refuses or is unable to give evidence;
- offender is under the age of criminal responsibility;
- police or the PPS decide that it would not be in the public interest to proceed; and
- time limit of six months for commencing prosecution has been exceeded.

Between April 2007 and March 2015 the use of these outcome methods was restricted to the following circumstances:

- Where the offence was an 'indictable only'<sup>2</sup> offence and the case could not proceed because the offender had died;
- Where the offence was other than indictable only but had been classified in HOCR sexual offences and was recorded as a result of crimes reported on or after April 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 and the investigation could not proceed because the offender had died;
- Where the offence was 'indictable only' and the PPS decided not to prosecute (through application of the public interest test)<sup>3</sup>.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 the outcome types 9, 11, 12, 13 and 17 are available for those crimes where no action is taken against the offender (explanations of each are provided on pages 13 and 14):

- Outcome Type 9: No prosecution directed
- Outcome Type 11: Under age
- Outcome Type 12: Too ill (suspect)
- Outcome Type 13: Too ill (victim/witness)
- Outcome Type 17: Prosecution time limit expired

**Outcome Types 14 -16 and 18 – 20:** The remaining outcome types cover those circumstances where there are evidential reasons for there being no prosecution, or where no suspect was identified.

## **2.7 Changes to crime outcome figures**

There have been a number of changes to recording practices and the sanctions available that have affected the recorded crime outcome figures and their presentation within Northern Ireland.

### **Terminology – detection rates and outcomes**

Up to 2012/13 the term detections was used to describe outcomes, which were split into sanction detections (those where the offender receives a formal sanction) and non sanction detections (those where no further

<sup>1</sup> Taken from para 4.6.1 of the [PPSNI Code for Prosecutors](#)

<sup>2</sup> Indictable only are those offences which must be tried in a Crown Court

<sup>3</sup> Details can be found in section 4.3 of the [PPSNI Code for Prosecutors](#)



action is taken against the offender). Detections were presented in the form of a detection rate, the number of detections recorded in a given year expressed as a percentage of the total number of crimes recorded in the same period.

**Presentation of 'detection rates':** Changes to disposal methods over the years meant that, until 2012/13, the sanction detection rate was the only means of presenting a comparable and consistent data series.

**Presentation of rates for outcomes:** With the addition of community resolutions from April 2013 and in anticipation of the new Home Office framework, the terminology of 'outcome' was adopted for presentational purposes from April 2013, with the outcome rate comprising all current crime outcome methods available within PSNI. Most of the outcome figures in bulletins published from 2013/14 onwards are shown dating back to 2007/08 in order to provide a data series that is as comparable as possible, bearing in mind that community resolutions were first introduced as an outcome method during 2011/12 and penalty notices for disorder were introduced in June 2012.

**Publication of wider outcomes framework:** The first bulletin presenting the wider outcomes framework within PSNI and summarising the outcomes that have been assigned to crimes recorded by the police during 2015/16 and 2016/17 was published on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The bulletin includes a comparison of 'outcome rates' with the 'wider outcomes framework', which is also available in [Appendix 4](#) of this user guide.

### Changes to outcomes since April 1998

**April 1998:** The Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime changed from April 1998. These brought new offences into the series with varying detection rates.

**April 2002:** The implementation of the NCRS in April 2002 is thought to have had an inflationary effect on recorded crime and the assumption is that it depressed detection rates since those offences added to the data series are generally less serious and possibly harder to detect. Northern Ireland experienced a drop in the overall detection rate of 7 percentage points between 2000/01 and 2001/02, most likely due to the introduction of the ICIS system within PSNI (as described in [2.2 Recording Practices](#)). The introduction of NCRS in April 2002 did not then have any additional impact on the overall detection rate.

**April 2003:** Prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003 it was permissible to claim a detection where "inflammatory consequences" prevented interviewing the suspect or informing them of the detection. This option was removed by the Home Office from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003, stating that in such cases the crime should remain undetected. Within Northern Ireland there was a greater reliance on detecting crimes in circumstances where speaking to the suspect could 'inflammate' the situation resulting in the complainant being threatened or harmed or of further offences being committed against them. For these reasons Northern Ireland was allowed to continue claiming detections in these circumstances while the Home Office considered PSNI's position. While the Home Office indicated that exceptions to this ruling could be considered in relation to paramilitary offences, PSNI agreed to stop the use of 'inflammatory consequences' as a permitted detection method from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004. There was a drop of 4.2 percentage points in detection rate for the Complainant declined to prosecute detection method between 2003/04 and 2004/05.

**April 2006:** In April 2006, a higher evidential standard was adopted within the PSNI following the establishment of the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland. This resulted in a fall in the overall detection rate, from 30.6% in 2005/06 to 23.6% in 2006/07.

**April 2007:** From April 2007 some of the methods allowed for claiming non-sanction detections were discontinued altogether, and the overall detection rate within Northern Ireland fell further, from 23.6% in 2006/07 to 20.5% in 2007/08. Since this date the overall and sanction detection rates have essentially been the same.

**2011/12:** PSNI introduced community resolutions during 2011/12 and this may have contributed to the fall in the sanction detection rate in this financial year. During 2011/12 and 2012/13 community resolutions were not included as a valid Home Office detection method and so were not available for inclusion within the crime detection rate in place at that time. It was identified that each use had a negative impact on the overall detection rate. To illustrate this, inclusion of community resolutions in the overall detection rate would have had the impact of adding around 3 percentage points.

**June 2012:** Penalty Notices for Disorder were introduced within Northern Ireland in June 2012. These are counted as a valid Home Office detection method and can be issued for a range of offences. Theft shoplifting (up to and including the value of £100 where goods are recovered in a saleable condition or the retailer has been compensated for their loss) and criminal damage (up to and including the value of £200) are the only notifiable offences for which PNDs can be issued and that are therefore included in the crime detection rate. PNDs can also be issued for the non-notifiable offences of disorderly behaviour, behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace, resisting/obstructing/impeding a constable, indecent behaviour and drunk in a public place.

**April 2013:** Introduction of the limited crime outcomes framework operating within PSNI, with outcomes for 2013/14 incorporating those outcomes where an offender receives a formal sanction, outcomes where no further action is taken against an offender and community resolutions.

**April 2015:** Implementation of revised outcomes framework within PSNI, with an outcome code being applied to all recorded crimes where there is no ongoing investigation.

## 2.8 Cancelling Crime Records ('No crimes')

Police forces record some crimes which are subsequently cancelled or 'no crimed'. The HOCR set out circumstances under which a crime report may be cancelled. These include situations where a crime is considered to have been recorded in error or where, having been recorded, additional verifiable information becomes available that determines that no crime was committed (for further information see the 'general rules' section of the HOCR). A crime may also be cancelled when it is established that another police force owns the crime and it is transferred to that force.

Cancelled crimes relate to crimes already recorded and are therefore distinct from incident reports that are not recorded as crimes in the first place.

Crime reports that are cancelled are removed from the police recorded crime statistics. Within PSNI all decisions to cancel a crime are made centrally by staff working within the Statistics Branch.

## 2.9 Revisions policy

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and will be subject to slight revision until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. This means that the totals for each month, crime type and policing district for each month from 1<sup>st</sup> April each year can change every time the figures are published during that financial year.

These revisions will happen for one of a number of reasons:

- Incidents identified as crimes but which are not processed on the crime recording system by the time the figures are extracted for publication will appear in subsequent updates. By the time we reach the end of the financial year in March, all outstanding crimes are identified and actioned before figures for the financial year are finalised.
- Figures may change from month to month due to crimes being reclassified from one crime type to another during the financial year. This may be because quality checks have identified the crime as incorrectly classified, or further information may indicate that the circumstances surrounding the crime were not as initially recorded.
- These revisions are not always in an upwards direction. The Home Office Counting Rules allow crimes initially recorded to be 'no crime'd' and removed from the crime figures (see [2.8 'No crimes'](#)). This can happen for a number of reasons:
  - the crime was committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded;
  - additional verifiable information becomes available which determines that no notifiable crime has been committed;
  - the crime, as alleged, constitutes part of a crime already recorded;
  - the reported incident was recorded as a crime in error.

Full guidance on 'no crimes' is available in the [Home Office Counting Rules](#).

The extent of revisions is provided in each monthly update published on the PSNI website. The format of this information is shown below. When each latest monthly update is published, the previous bulletin is transferred to the [Crime Statistics Archive](#) section of the website, where it will remain for the rest of the financial year.

**Extent of revisions for crime figures contained in the monthly update to dd/mm/yyyy, which was first published dd/mm/yyyy.**

	As initially published	As currently published	Numbers & Percentages			
			Scale of revision		% change between years	
			number	%	As initially published	As currently published
Financial Year to date total	xx	xx	xx	xx %	xx %	xx %
Latest 12 months total	xx	xx	xx	xx %	xx %	xx %

## 3 Crime types

Crime types are split into two broad categories of Victim-based crime and Other crimes against society. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud took on the responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and internet crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. This means that these fraud offences recorded by PSNI are only available to 2014/15. Prior to 2015/16 these fraud offences were termed 'other fraud', a classification that sat outside the two broad categories of victim-based crime and other crimes against society.

Victim-based crimes include: violence against the person; sexual offences; robbery, theft offences (including burglary); criminal damage

Other crimes against society include: possession of weapons offences; public order offences; drug offences; miscellaneous crimes against society

### VICTIM-BASED CRIMES

#### 3.1 Violence against the person

Violence against the person offences contain the full spectrum of assaults, from pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm, to murder. Even within the same offence classification, the degree of violence varies considerably between incidents.

Long-term trends in these types of offences can be difficult to interpret as they are influenced by a number of factors, such as changes in recording practice over time and changes in the levels of public reporting of such incidents. Therefore the Northern Ireland Crime Survey is the best measure for long-term trends in violence at a Northern Ireland level. Police statistics are important for showing the mix of violent crimes dealt with and recorded by the police. They are an important measure of activity locally and a source of operational information to help identify and address local crime problems, at a lower geographical level than is possible using the NICS. Police statistics also provide more reliable information on less common crimes, such as robbery, and are currently the only source of data on homicides and offences against those not resident in households.

Local policing activity and priorities affect the levels of reported and recorded violent crime. Where the police are proactive in addressing low-level violence and anti-social behaviour, this can lead to more of these crimes being brought to their attention and being recorded. For example, research by the Cardiff Violence Research Group showed an association between the introduction of CCTV surveillance and increased police detection of violence (Sivarajasingam *et al.*, 2003).

Police recorded crime data are subject to changes in police recording practices. The 1998 changes to the Home Office Counting Rules had a very significant impact on the recording of violent and sexual crime; In England & Wales the number of violence against the person offences recorded by the police increased by 118 per cent as a result of the 1998 changes (Povey and Prime, 1999). In Northern Ireland there was an increase of 182 per cent as a result of these changes. Much of this increase resulted from a widening of the offence coverage to include assaults with little or no physical injury and offences of harassment (again with no injury).

The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), introduced in April 2002, again resulted in increased recording of violent and sexual crimes particularly for less serious offences, as well as for some other offences. In England & Wales there was an estimated NCRS effect of 23 per cent on violence against the person offences in the first 12 months of implementation, although it was recognised that this effect was unlikely to be complete within the first 12 months (Simmons *et al.*, 2003).

Audits undertaken by the Audit Commission on behalf of the Home Office indicated substantial improvements in crime recording across forces in the two to three years following NCRS introduction, which would particularly impact on violence against the person and result in increases in recorded crimes for this category.

In police recorded crime statistics, violence against the person is grouped into two broad, high-level categories of violence with injury and violence without injury.

- **Violence with injury** includes all incidents of homicide, wounding and assault with injury. Attempts at inflicting injury are also included.
- **Violence without injury** includes all incidents of assault without injury and offences such as threats to kill and harassment.

### 3.1.1 Violence with injury

The categories described below are included within violence with injury. Attempts at inflicting injury are also included.

**Homicide:** Includes murder, manslaughter, infanticide and corporate manslaughter (where an organisation is deemed responsible for a person's death).

**Death or serious injury by driving offences:** Includes causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving, careless or inconsiderate driving, driving under the influence of drink or drugs or while being an unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured driver.

**Grievous bodily harm (GBH):** This includes injury resulting in permanent disability, more than minor permanent disfigurement, broken bones, fractured skull, compound fractures, substantial loss of blood, lengthy treatment or serious psychiatric injury (based on expert evidence).

- **GBH with intent** occurs when there is clear evidence of a deliberate attempt to inflict serious bodily harm regardless of level of injury sustained. These offences are recorded in classification **5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm**.
- **GBH without intent** occurs when serious bodily harm results but there is no evidence of a deliberate intent to inflict such an injury. Prior to April 2008, GBH without intent was not separated out from a much broader category of less serious wounding that mostly consisted of Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH). These offences are recorded in classification **8N Assault with injury**.
- The definition of **GBH with intent** rests upon whether "the actions of the offender clearly show a deliberate attempt to inflict serious bodily harm". The clarification to the rules from April 2008 makes this clear and that "the gravity of the injury resulting is not necessarily the determining factor". The rules were clarified as there had previously been some confusion as to whether the degree of injury sustained, rather than intent, should be the sole determining factor in the recording of these offences.

**Actual Bodily Harm (AOABH):** This relates to any assault with injury which is not GBH (with or without intent) and includes internal injury and shock (when accompanied by expert psychological evidence). AOABH offences are included within classification **8N Assault with injury**, as are offences of assault on police with injury.

Attempted murder is also recorded within violence with injury, as is classification 5E Endangering life which includes, for example, certain firearms and explosives offences and administering poison with intent.

### 3.1.2 Violence without injury

The categories described below are included within violence without injury.

**Threats to kill:** This is where an individual fears that the offender's threat is real and may be carried out.

**Harassment offences:** These are incidents where no other substantive notifiable offence exists, but when looked at as a course of conduct are likely to cause fear, alarm or distress. In Northern Ireland these will incorporate offences of intimidation such as intimidation to leave residence/occupation, intimidation to leave employment or to do/refrain from doing any act.

**Assault without injury offences:** Those offences where, at the most, a feeling of touch or passing moment of pain is experienced by the victim.

Other offences within this classification include conspiracy to murder, cruelty to children/young persons, child abduction, kidnapping, assault on police without injury and modern slavery.

**Domestic Abuse:** Recorded crime statistics do not specifically identify offences of domestic abuse. However, where there is a domestic abuse motivation associated with any incident or recorded crime, PSNI will record this motivating factor on the individual incident or crime record. These figures are available in separate bulletins dedicated to statistics on incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation.

**Hate Motivations:** While in England & Wales there are specific offences in law of racially or religiously aggravated assault, these offences do not exist in Northern Ireland. However as with domestic abuse, PSNI will record a motivating factor relating to hate (racist, homophobic, sectarian, faith/religion, disability and transphobic) on the individual crime record where it is appropriate to do so. These figures are available in separate bulletins dedicated to statistics on incidents and crimes with a hate motivation.

## 3.2 Sexual offences

The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, introduced in February 2009, altered the definitions of some categories of sexual offence so comparisons around this time should be made with caution (similar legislation, The Sexual Offences Act 2003, was introduced in England and Wales in May 2004). The sexual offences category is split into Rape (which includes attempted rape) and Other sexual offences.

### Other sexual offences

The group of other sexual offences recorded by the police covers sexual assault and unlawful sexual activity (mostly involving consenting adults and is therefore particularly influenced by police activity in investigating such crime). It includes among other offences, exploitation of prostitution but not prostitution itself (which is not a notifiable offence), incest, abuse of children through prostitution and pornography, abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature and exposure. Certain offences such as sexual grooming, voyeurism and trafficking for sexual exploitation, which are included in this group, were originally introduced in Northern Ireland through the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

## 3.3 Robbery

A robbery is an incident or offence in which force or the threat of force is used either during or immediately prior to a theft or attempted theft. As with violence against the person, police recorded robberies cover a wide range of seriousness from armed bank robberies to muggings for mobile phones or small amounts of money. Recorded crime offences also distinguish between robbery of personal property (personal robbery) and business property (business robbery). Robbery of business property is a recorded crime classification where goods stolen belong to a business or other corporate body (such as a bank or a shop), regardless of the location of the robbery. The taking of vehicles during robberies (often termed hijacking) are also included as robbery.

## 3.4 Theft offences

Theft offences include offences of burglary, vehicle offences, theft from the person, bicycle theft, shoplifting and other theft offences.

### 3.4.1 Burglary

**Burglary:** The police record an offence of burglary if a person enters any building as a trespasser and with intent to commit an offence of theft, GBH or unlawful damage.

**Aggravated burglary:** This occurs when the burglar is carrying a firearm, imitation firearm, offensive weapon or explosive.

Recorded crime figures are provided separately for burglaries that occur in domestic properties and those which occur in commercial or other properties.

**Domestic burglaries:** These include burglaries in all inhabited dwellings, including inhabited caravans, houseboats and holiday homes, as well as sheds and garages connected to the main dwelling (for example, by a connecting door).

**Non-domestic burglaries:** These include burglaries to businesses (including hotels and similar accommodation) and also some burglaries of sheds and outhouses where these are not clearly connected to the inhabited property.

**Attempted burglary:** This is recorded by the police if there is clear evidence that the offender made an actual, physical attempt to gain entry to a building (e.g. damage to locks, or broken doors) but was unsuccessful.

### 3.4.2 Offences against vehicles

The police recorded crime category of offences against vehicles covers private and commercial vehicles (although does not distinguish between the two).

**Thefts or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle:** This is where the vehicle is taken without the prior consent of the owner or other lawful authority; this includes incidents where there is intent to permanently deprive the owner or where intent is not evident, typically including 'joyriding' where the car is later recovered.

**Aggravated vehicle taking:** This is where a vehicle once taken is known to have been driven dangerously, damaged or caused an accident.

**Theft from a vehicle:** These are where property in or on the vehicle is targeted (including attempts).

**Interfering with a motor vehicle:** This includes crimes where, while damage has been caused to the vehicle as part of an attempt to steal either the vehicle or its contents or to take the vehicle without consent, the specific intent of the offender is not obvious. For example, a car door may be damaged, which shows an attempt was made to open it, but it cannot be determined if the intent was to steal the car or some contents within it.

The taking of vehicles during robberies (often termed hijacking) are included within the robbery offence group.

### **3.4.3 Theft from the person, bicycle theft, shoplifting and all other theft offences**

**Theft from the person:** theft, including attempts, of a handbag, wallet, cash etc. directly from the victim, but without the use of physical force against the victim, or the threat of it.

All other theft offences includes thefts that are not covered by other theft offence groups, including offences of making off without payment which, prior to April 2013, were included within fraud and forgery offences.

### **3.5 Criminal damage**

Police recorded criminal damage results from any person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another, intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged. Damage which is repairable without cost, or which is accidental, is not included in police recorded crime statistics. Separate recorded crime figures exist for criminal damage to a dwelling, to a building other than a dwelling, to a vehicle and other criminal damage.

While in England & Wales there are specific offences in law of racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage, these offences do not exist in Northern Ireland. However as with the recording of similar offences within the violence against the person group, PSNI will record a motivating factor relating to hate (racist, homophobic, sectarian, faith/religion, disability and transphobic) on the individual crime record where it is appropriate to do so. These figures are available in separate bulletins dedicated to statistics on incidents and crimes with a hate motivation.

**Arson:** This is the act of deliberately setting fire to property including buildings and vehicles.

For vehicle crime, if a vehicle is stolen and later found deliberately burnt out by the same offender, one crime of theft of a vehicle is recorded by the police. If there is evidence that someone unconnected with the theft committed the arson, then an offence of arson is recorded by the police in addition to the theft.

## **OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY**

### **3.6 Possession of weapons offences**

This category includes possession of firearms with intent, possession of article with blade or point and possession of other weapons. Also included are possession of firearms offences and other firearms offences. If a weapon is used in the commission of an offence, then the police will normally record a more serious notifiable offence.

### **3.7 Public order offences**

This category includes offences such as riot and violent disorder. Within the classification of other offences against the state and public order are crime types such as bomb hoax related offences, breach of non-molestation and sex offender orders and offences under anti-terrorist legislation.

### **3.8 Drug offences**

In addition to the figures for offences of drug trafficking and non-trafficking that are provided in the recorded crime series, the Police Service of Northern Ireland produces a separate annual bulletin on Drug Seizures and Arrests.

### **3.9 Miscellaneous crimes against society**

This category covers all remaining crime types. Offences such as exploitation of prostitution and soliciting for the purpose of prostitution were included within sexual offences prior to April 2013. In relation to soliciting, the reclassification exercise conducted during 2010/11 identified that, within Northern Ireland, offences of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution had not been identified as notifiable offences. This omission was rectified and these offences are included in the recorded crime figures from April 2011.

### **3.10 Other Fraud**

The measurement of fraud is challenging as it is a deceptive crime which is difficult to detect accurately and is often targeted at organisations rather than individuals. It is known to be under-reported to the police. Under the Fraud Act 2006 (introduced in January 2007), fraud is defined as dishonestly making a false representation to obtain property or money for themselves or another. Previously it was defined as dishonestly deceiving another to obtain either property or pecuniary advantage.

The introduction of the Fraud Act 2006 changed the recording of cheque and plastic card fraud from a 'per transaction' to a 'per account' basis. This means that if an account is defrauded, one offence is recorded rather than one offence per fraudulent transaction as previously. This change was introduced to reduce bureaucracy and to reflect that the financial loss from this type of fraudulent crime is generally borne by the account holding financial institution rather than by the account holder or those involved in processing the transactions.

The changes resulting from the introduction of the Fraud Act 2006 mean that police recorded fraud and forgery figures from 2007/08 onwards are not comparable with previous years.

**National Fraud Authority and the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau:** The Fraud Act 2006 and the Attorney General's Fraud Review resulted in the creation of a National Fraud Authority (NFA). One of their key objectives is to better support the reporting of fraudulent crimes and their subsequent investigation. In 2009/10 the NFA opened Action Fraud, a national fraud reporting centre that records incidents of fraud directly from the public by phone or internet. Action Fraud work with partners in law enforcement – the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB), run by the City of London Police – to ensure a joined-up approach to policing and detecting fraud. In 2011/12 five police forces in England and Wales began directing fraud offences to Action Fraud. The remaining police forces in England and Wales transferred responsibility for recording NFIB fraud offences to Action Fraud from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and cyber crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud and cyber offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to fraud and cyber crime occurring in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis.

Offences previously recorded within fraud and forgery and which continue to be recorded by all police forces but are included under other classifications from April 2013 are:

- making off without payment – now included in all other theft offences;
- possession of items for use in fraud, other forgery, possession of false documents and fraud, forgery etc associated with vehicle or driver records – now included in miscellaneous crimes against society.

# 4 PSNI recording processes, data quality and data availability

## 4.1 Recording processes within PSNI

### 4.2 Quality Assurance and Data Audit

### 4.3 Data Management

### 4.4 Timeliness

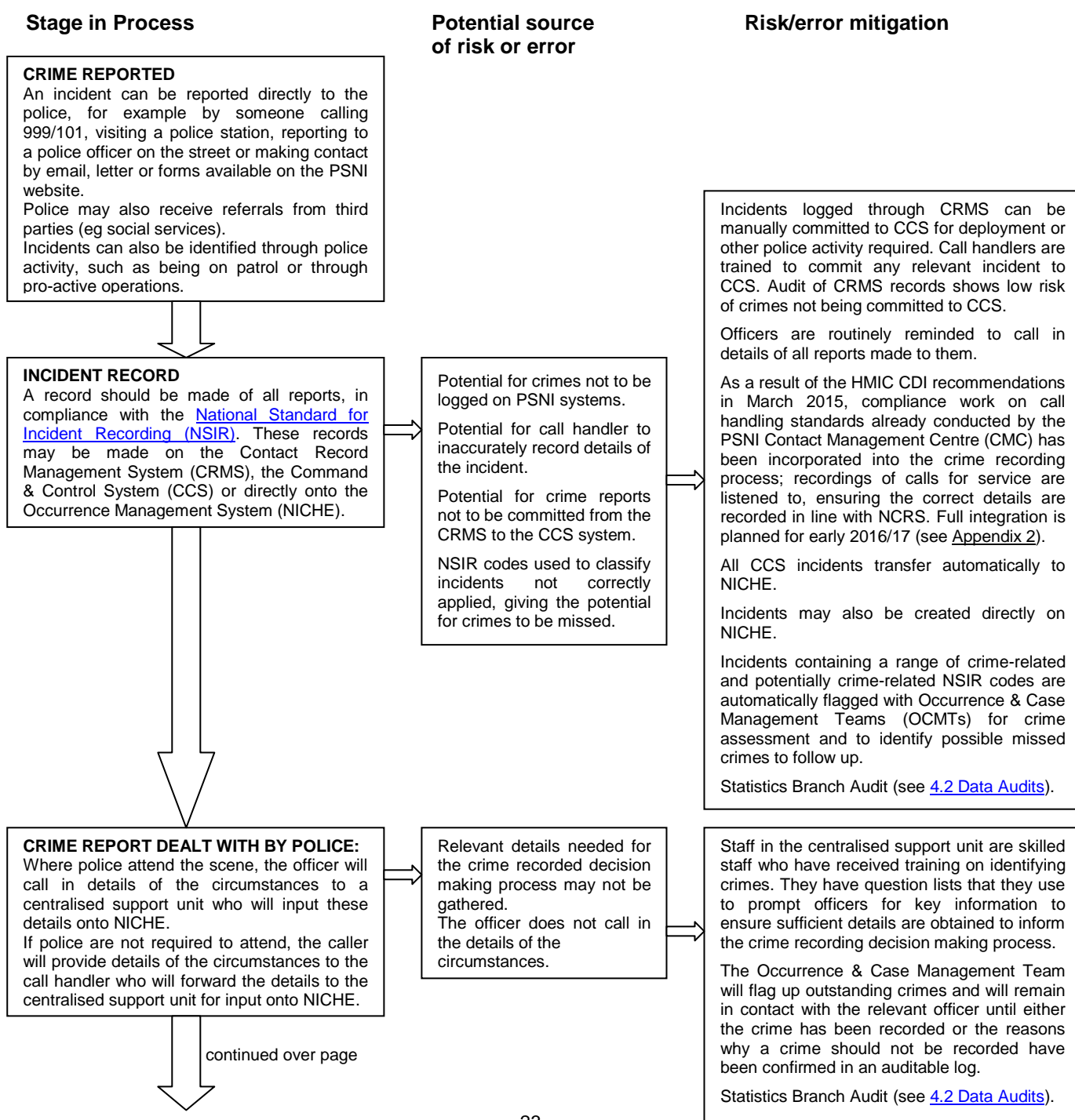
### 4.5 Data Availability

### 4.6 Publication

## 4.1 Recording processes within PSNI

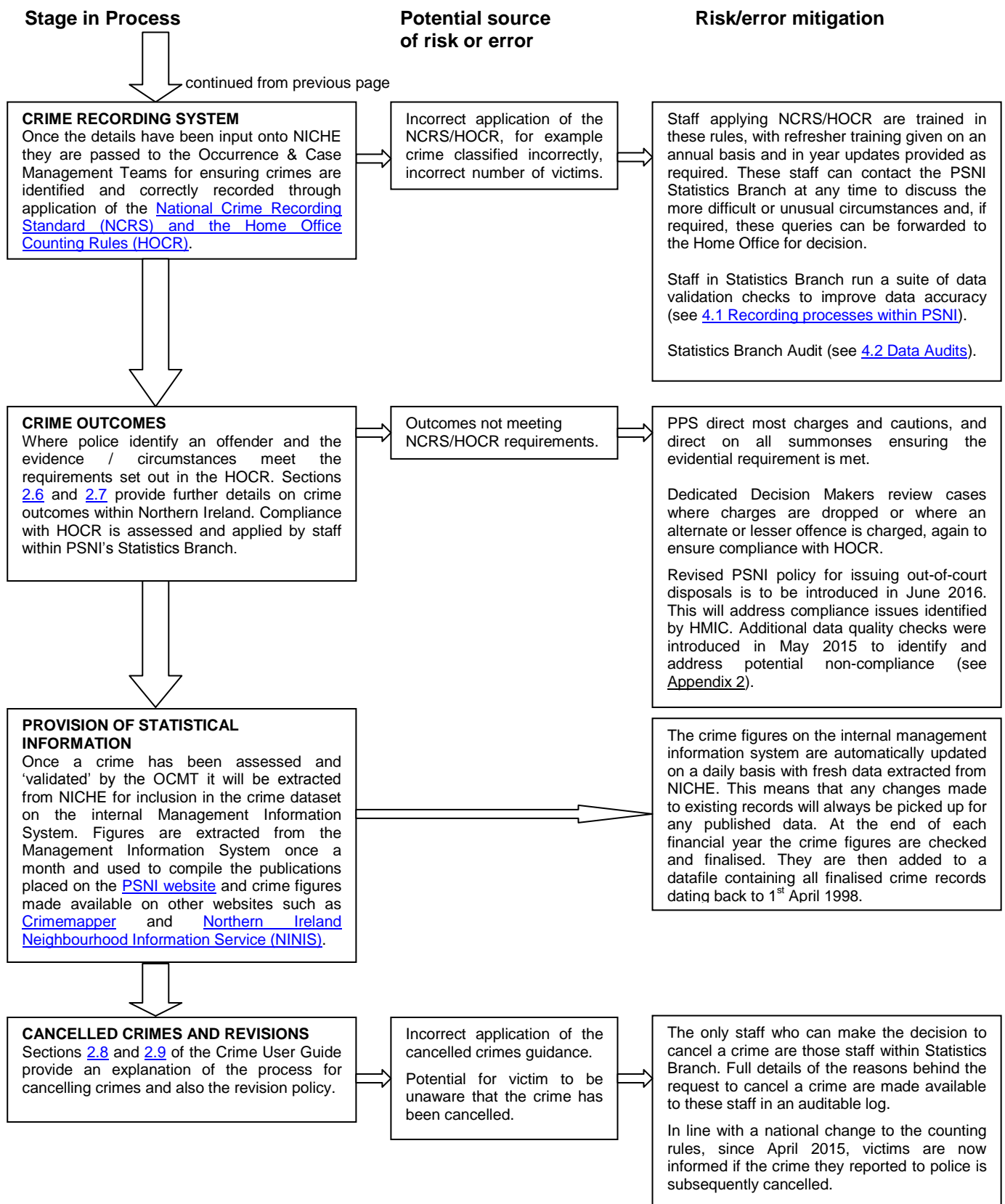
The PSNI processes for recording crimes generally start off with a call for service from a member of the public. However the recording of a crime may also result from police generated action. An overview of the process, from call for service to publication of statistics, is outlined below. Further details on the quality assurance procedures that are applied during the process are provided in the following sections.

### 4.1.1 Crime Recording Process within PSNI





## 4.1.1 Crime Recording Process within PSNI (continued)



The detailed processes underlying the main stages outlined in the flowchart above have evolved over the years and will continue to evolve as changes to systems and structures are introduced. The NISRA statisticians who compile the police recorded crime statistics have always been closely involved in any change processes to ensure that they take into account any statistics that need to be derived from these systems.

### 4.1.2 Mitigating against potential distortive effects of performance targets

Performance measurements and targets are based on the PSNI's crime statistics (eg. Annual Policing Plan set by the Northern Ireland Policing Board). Due to the design of the crime recording process outlined in the previous flowchart, the potential for the statistics used in monitoring performance to be distorted through 'gaming' is minimised and very limited. The crime recording process is managed by statisticians from NISRA who are seconded to PSNI and who work to the code of practice for official statistics; this brings an element of independence to the process. Other staff involved in the process (CMC staff who deal with calls for service, CMSU staff who input details onto NICHE and OCMT staff who check crimes for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules) also sit outside the District structure and are therefore removed from District performance pressures. The senior statistician within PSNI also acts as the Force Crime Registrar and is the final arbiter on all PSNI crime recording decisions. Only the Force Crime Registrar (or his staff) can cancel or reclassify a crime. He reports to ACC Operational Support, who is also removed from District performance pressures. The level of quality assurance applied to crime records is based on the potential for error and the potential source of error, with quality assurance checks being reviewed on an annual basis. Whether or not a crime classification appears as a performance target in the policing plan is not taken into account in any of the processes mentioned in this section. Any suggestion of performance pressure within the recording process will result in that particular issue being more closely scrutinised by Statistics Branch in order to ensure impartiality of recording.

The HMIC Crime data integrity inspection of PSNI that was published in March 2015 supported the view that PSNI's crime recording process was free from possible performance effects. In the findings on leadership and governance HMIC commented that '*We found no evidence of performance pressures of any kind influencing crime recording*'.

## 4.2 Quality Assurance and Data Audit

Concerns about police recorded crime data quality have come to the fore following the recent Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) report into data quality issues relating to police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales and the UK Statistics authority reassessment and de-designation of police recorded crime in England & Wales and the decision not to confer designation to Scotland.

The two main issues that emerged from the recent UK Statistics Authority assessment report of crime statistics in England & Wales related to (i) police recorded crime data quality issues and to (ii) the divergence between recorded crime and crime survey trends. A comparison of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Crime Survey can be found in [section 2.2](#) of this user guide. Section 4 of the user guide deals with issues relating to police recorded crime data quality, describing the crime recording process ([section 4.1](#)) and providing details of the quality assurance and data audit procedures in place within PSNI ([section 4.2](#)).

The police recorded crime statistics produced by PSNI for Northern Ireland are compiled by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) who are seconded to the PSNI. As such, they are in a unique position in that they undertake the Force Crime Registrar function (compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules) in addition to their statistician responsibilities (the collation and publication of the crime statistics). Furthermore, as the PSNI covers the entire region of Northern Ireland, their statistics form the official statistics for Northern Ireland and therefore the quality is not compromised by the requirement to merge datasets from a number of forces (as is the case in England & Wales).

Over the last 15 years the NISRA statisticians in the PSNI have developed and implemented a detailed series of crime data quality checks and have been closely involved in the design of the crime recording process within PSNI. This involvement has enabled them to integrate their quality assurance processes along with the operational requirements of the system and embed them within the system design. As a result, the PSNI's crime data quality is managed by a combination of crime recording process design coupled with a range of data quality checks. The key objectives of the PSNI crime recording quality assurance process are to minimise the level of missed crime and to ensure that the correct crime type is recorded.

### 4.2.1 Quality assurance processes

The main quality assurance processes and checks fall into two main groups; those that are undertaken by staff in Occurrence & Case Management Teams (OCMTs) and those that are undertaken by staff in the PSNI's Statistics Branch.

**OCMT quality assurance checks:** The main role of OCMT staff in respect of crime recording is to ensure crimes are correctly identified and recorded through application of the [National Crime Recording Standard \(NCRS\)](#) and the [Home Office Counting Rules \(HOCR\)](#). These staff also have a role in identifying potential missed crimes and following these up with investigating officers. To assist them in this task PSNI's Statistics Branch have developed a risk based approach to identifying potentially missed crimes; this is an automated

process whereby incidents that have been opened or closed with specific NSIR codes on the PSNI's Command & Control system are automatically flagged to OCMT staff for assessment. If the incident details suggest a crime should be recorded, but none has yet appeared on the system, the OCMT will follow up with the investigating officer. If there are no details within the incident to suggest a crime has occurred, OCMT staff will apply an 'incident only' marker to indicate it has been assessed and the outcome of that assessment.

**Statistics Branch quality assurance checks:** In addition to the various quality assurance measures described previously, staff within the PSNI's Statistics Branch undertake a series of data quality checks on an ongoing basis in order to identify and correct inconsistencies within the data and to minimise any under-recording or over-recording of crime. A risk based approach has been applied to the running of these quality checks, with priority given to those that have a direct impact on the quality of published recorded crime figures.

**Priority 1 checks:** These are checks carried out on a daily basis to maximise the accuracy of figures which are updated daily for internal performance monitoring;

**Priority 2 checks:** These are checks run on a monthly basis which identify potential missed crimes and crime outcomes;

**Priority 3 checks:** These are checks run on a monthly basis which improve data quality, for example:

- essential checks to ensure that victim age, victim gender or injury level matches the offence that has been recorded;
- desirable checks which identify records where the location, property or weapon details may be inconsistent with the recorded offence;
- non-essential checks which may identify missing or potentially incorrect information but which would not have a direct impact on the quality of the published recorded crime figures.

Once a crime has been 'validated' on the NICHE crime recording system (ie processed, checked and available for inclusion in the police recorded crime figures), only staff in Statistics Branch have the ability to reclassify the crime or to apply a 'no crime' decision. This helps to 'lock down' the process once a crime has been identified. Therefore inaccuracies identified through the quality assurance process outlined above are corrected directly on NICHE by Statistics Branch staff, with queries issued to OCMTs if further information is required. There are approximately 93 standard quality checks in total and they are reviewed on an annual basis to confirm that they continue to be sufficient to cover the range of data quality issues that exist. Should individual checks no longer be required they will be removed from the process. Additional checks will be introduced by NISRA statisticians should a new data quality issue be identified.

The other key quality assurance check currently undertaken by Statistics Branch staff is the 'Incident Only' check (those incidents previously checked by OCMTs and identified as having no crimes contained within them). These are important in picking up potential crimes that may have been missed by OCMT staff or those incidents which contained no indication of crime at the initial check but information added at a later stage suggested a crime may have occurred. To allow time for the crime recording process to be completed, there is a lag of around two weeks before Statistics Branch staff would check an 'incident only' record. Between April and November 2013 Statistics Branch staff audited nearly half of the records identified by OCMTs as 'incident only'. Of these approximately 3 per cent were referred back to OCMTs for further information and to date this has increased the total level of crime by around 1 per cent.

Statistics Branch will also monitor the ratio of incidents flagged to OCMTs for checking to incidents containing one or more crimes. This monitoring provides an indication of the consistency of the crime recording process. Over the last 5 years this ratio has remained relatively constant, varying between 48% in 2012/13 and 52% in both 2008/09 and 2013/14.

NISRA statisticians also complete work on an annual basis to improve the level of completeness and quality of postcodes attached to each crime record. This is to assist in the provision of crime data by various geographic areas such as ward and parliamentary constituency. Further details on this process are available in [Section 7 Geographic Recording of Crime](#).

[Section 5 \(domestic abuse incidents and crimes\)](#) and [section 6 \(hate motivated incidents and crimes\)](#) provide additional information on recording processes and data quality as applied to these data outputs.

## 4.2.2 Data Audits

The PSNI does not fall under the direct remit of the Home Office and has therefore not been included in crime data audit programmes run by either Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) or by the Audit Commission. However in light of the recent crime recording data quality issues in England & Wales and Scotland, HMIC were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014, similar to the audits they conducted in England & Wales earlier in 2014. The outcome of this audit is summarised on the following page.

Whilst PSNI adopts the Home Office Counting Rules and the National Crime Recording Standard there are some differences in legislation and in the prosecution processes / disposal options available within Northern Ireland when compared with England and Wales. This can make it more difficult for auditors from England & Wales to directly apply the same audit approach to PSNI without having a good understanding of these differences. For example Sections 4 and 5 of the Public Order Act 1986, covering offences within E&W classification 9A Public Fear, Alarm or Distress, do not extend to Northern Ireland. Another example is that PSNI is not part of the Action Fraud/NFIB set up and so are still required to record and deal with fraud offences, which would not be the same in England & Wales.

A key aspect of the England & Wales audit regime is that headline compliance rates are identified and reported. The range of PSNI quality assurance processes outlined in section 4.2.1 cover the relevant aspects of the England & Wales audit regime with regard to ensuring data accuracy. However to produce ongoing compliance figures in relation to this work would be impractical as the quality assurance processes are designed to enable staff to identify and correct errors on NICHE rather than to keep records of the numbers of problems they encounter. As a result the staff within Statistics Branch have, over the years, designed audits to reflect and expand upon those conducted in England & Wales, in order to provide a level of compliance and to identify any new issues that may not be picked up by existing processes.

**Audits of Levels of Missed Crime with PSNI Recorded Crime (2004 – 2011/12):** PSNI crime recording audits conducted between 2004 and 2008 indicated that the level of missed crimes ranged from 94% to 96%. In 2009/10 the average compliance rate was 96.5%, while in 2010/11 the average compliance rate was 97.6% and in 2011/12 it was 91%, all of which would have been considered as good or excellent performance based on the Home Office Data Quality Assurance manual guidance. The types of crimes most commonly missed tend to be low level crimes such as minor assaults, harassment, minor theft and minor criminal damage.

**Crime Data Audit undertaken within PSNI Dec 2013 – Feb 2014:** This audit was completed in February 2014 in light of the high profile media coverage of the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) report. As this audit was well underway in advance of the publication of the Statistics Authority's assessment of England and Wales crime figures in January 2014, it focused on the main aspects of the Home Office Data Audit Manual as well as on key data quality aspects covered by an HMIC inspection in Kent that reported in February 2013.

The main aspect of this PSNI audit was the assessment of some 1,800 incidents that were reported to police between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and where the code used to open the incident on the Command & Control system was crime-related. The basic aim of the audit was to examine incidents reported to the police, identify if the report should have resulted in a crime being recorded and, if so:

- was the crime recorded within 72 hours (the time limit for recording a crime as stipulated in the Home Office Counting Rules);
- was the crime correctly classified; and
- was the correct number of victims identified.

It should be noted that the audit was undertaken by the PSNI's Statistics Branch and did not incorporate features of the HMIC inspection in Kent such as listening to the calls for service, directly contacting persons who reported crimes in order to discuss their experiences, or speaking to contact management staff, staff in the crime management support unit, OCMT staff or investigating officers.

Of the 1,800 incidents likely to relate to a crime, 1,327 were identified as requiring a crime to be recorded, the table below shows the compliance rates in respect of these. The remaining 473 did not require any crime to be recorded.

	number	%
Crime recording overall compliance (base = 1,327)	1,229	93%
Crime classified correctly (base = 1,229)	1,193	97%
Correct number of victims recorded (base = 1,229)	1,199	98%
Crime'd within 72 hours (base = 1,229)	898	73%

There were 98 incidents identified where a crime was either definitely missed or where there was insufficient information available to make a crime recording decision, leading to the overall compliance rate of 93%.

These missed crimes were mostly less serious crimes such as harassment type offences, criminal damage, theft and assault without injury. While offences such as robbery and burglary were much less likely to be missed, there were some incidents where sexual offences were reported to police but a crime was not recorded.

In terms of comparisons with audits in other police forces, the HMIC crime recording audit of Kent Constabulary (February 2013) found 90% of crimes recorded correctly. The more recent HMIC report on the interim findings of their Crime Data Integrity Audits for the first 13 police forces in England & Wales, published on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014, found that the levels of crime recorded correctly ranged from 68% - 94%.

The PSNI audit also examined incidents that were not crime-related. An additional 100 incidents opened on the domestic code and 100 opened on the contact record code were examined, along with 323 incidents reported through the contact record management system (CRMS) which were not committed to the Command & Control system. While there were some records opened on the domestic code where there was insufficient level of detail available to establish the exact circumstances of the incident, in the vast majority of cases they were correctly marked on the system as having a domestic abuse motivation. The level of crimes potentially missed in those incidents opened as contact records was low and in only one of the 323 CRMS incidents not committed to the Command & Control was there the suggestion of a missed crime.

**HMIC Crime Data Integrity Audit:** In its 2013/14 inspection programme, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) committed to carry out an inspection into the way the 43 police forces in England and Wales record crime data and a full thematic report was published on 18 November 2014. They were also commissioned to carry out an inspection of PSNI following the same methodology in terms of auditing and inspection fieldwork but treated as a standalone audit and inspection of crime recording for PSNI. The [crime data integrity inspection report](#) was published in March 2015. The main findings in respect of data accuracy were:

- a crime-recording accuracy rate of 97 percent with a confidence interval of +/-2 percent;
- 98 percent of crimes correctly classified; and
- 84 percent recorded within the 72-hour limit allowed under HOCR.

The PSNI's response to the 7 recommendations arising from the HMIC audit is available in [Appendix 2](#).

### 4.2.3 National Statistics Designation

In January 2014 the UK Statistics Authority cancelled the designation of police recorded crime statistics in England & Wales in January 2014 because of concerns regarding the quality and integrity of police recorded crime in England & Wales; the lack of assurance of the data integrity in Scotland resulted in the designation of these statistics being cancelled in July 2014.

As a result of these concerns, the Authority commenced an assessment of police recorded crime in Northern Ireland in June 2014. In addition to this assessment, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) were invited to conduct a crime data integrity audit within PSNI during September 2014 similar to those they conducted in England & Wales during 2014.

The UK Statistics Authority assessment report, published on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015, judged that the police recorded crime statistics in Northern Ireland could remain designated as a National Statistic in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (subject to implementing two requirements and reporting on these to the Authority by December 2015).

### 4.2.4 UK Statistics Authority Quality Assurance for Administrative Data

In January 2015 the UK Statistics Authority published [Quality Assurance of Administrative Data - Setting the Standard](#). This standard requires that a judgement is made about the level of risk of quality concerns and the public interest profile of the administrative data being evaluated. This is assessed through a quality assurance risk/profile matrix; level of risk of quality concerns being low, medium or high and public interest profile being lower, medium or higher. For the purpose of compliance with this standard, the public interest profile of the PSNI's recorded crime statistics was deemed to be 'high'. The level of risk of quality concerns was assessed by PSNI statisticians to be 'medium', based on factors such as the statisticians being embedded within the organisation, the administrative dataset being produced from one single system, the checks and balances in place and the high compliance levels reported in the recent HMIC audit. However due to the high profile attached to the quality of police recorded crime statistics across the UK, it was decided that compliance should be assessed against the 'high' level of risk of data quality concerns in order to provide additional reassurance. Therefore the data quality was assessed at the A3 comprehensive assurance level.

While no changes or improvements to existing processes were identified through this assessment, improvements and clarifications have been made to existing documentation. As a result, the statisticians are satisfied that there are adequate controls in place to ensure that the PSNI recorded crime data quality meets the required standards.

## 4.3 Data Management

The NISRA statisticians are based within PSNI and are given access to PSNI's internal systems, once they have been appropriately vetted and trained. The source data and any associated data files are held on secure servers within PSNI and access to systems is controlled and auditable to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Individual staff member's access to these systems is monitored and periodically checked by the PSNI Data Protection Unit. Having the statisticians working alongside the suppliers of the crime data and having close working relationships with IT colleagues means they are involved in any relevant process/system design or change. Formal governance of this process is managed through the PSNI's crime recording working group which has representation from the IT department. Changes to the PSNI's systems or processes that might affect the crime statistics quality are discussed in advance and managed through the relevant project board. Communication with IT colleagues takes place on a regular basis at many levels and ensures that data quality is maintained. The statisticians have access to data which is extracted from the NICHE recording system on a daily basis. Automated processes ensure that the internal management information system and reports are updated each day. Access to these data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information.

## 4.4 Timeliness

A balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. There is a lag of around four weeks between the end of the month and publication of the monthly bulletin. Each monthly crime bulletin highlights the percentage of crime records that have completed the validation process for the period of time covered within the bulletin, to give an indication of how complete the in-year data is. Ideally the percentage of crime records still under process for the latest month covered would be less than 5%.

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the monthly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year. This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data. The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheets are then published later in the year.

## 4.5 Data Availability

Information that is published in the monthly and annual crime bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.

Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The [confidentiality protection arrangements](#) document on the PSNI website provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.

Therefore any requests for crime classifications or types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward.

Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information (eg business crime, retail crime), these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

### 4.5.1 Availability of Information Relating to Victim Characteristics

In the Home Office Counting Rules individual offences are identified as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based offences, the victim can be a member of the public (referred to here as person victim), a police officer who was the victim of a crime in the course of carrying out their duty, or a business or organisation. The introduction of the NICHE system in 2007/08 has enabled a breakdown of crime by the type of victim to be provided from this date.

Figures relating to victim characteristics are available for those victim-based offences where the victim is a person victim (as described above). Victim characteristic figures are provided at a Northern Ireland level for 12 month periods (either full financial years or the latest rolling 12 months), for a range of crime classifications and are made available through monthly and annual updates

Victim characteristics are not available for incidents that have not resulted in a crime being recorded, for example anti social behaviour incidents ([see 2.1 for an explanation of what constitutes an incident and what constitutes a crime](#)). This is mainly due to the proportion of such records for which victim characteristics are unavailable.

#### 4.5.1.1 Victim Age

The age bands available for recorded crime are: under 18, 18-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60-65 and 65+.

Figures are available for number of crimes recorded, number of outcomes, outcome rates and population rates (per 1,000 population).

The following crime types are available for each age band:

- Violence with injury (including homicide)
- Violence without injury
- Sexual offences
- Robbery
- Theft - burglary
- Theft - vehicle offences
- All other theft offences
- Criminal damage
- Other crimes against society
- Other fraud (2007/08 to 2014/15 only<sup>1</sup>)
- All offences

#### 4.5.1.2 Victim Gender

Figures are available (male, female, gender unknown) for the number of crimes recorded, number of outcomes, outcome rates and population rates per 1,000 population.

The following crime types are available for each gender:

- Violence with injury (including homicide)
- Violence without injury
- Sexual offences
- Robbery
- Theft - burglary
- Theft - vehicle offences
- All other theft offences
- Criminal damage
- Other crimes against society
- Other fraud (2007/08 to 2014/15 only<sup>1</sup>)
- All offences

<sup>1</sup>**Introduction of Action Fraud within Northern Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud took on the responsibility for the central recording of fraud offences previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and internet crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. This means that these fraud offences recorded by PSNI are only available to 2014/15. While Action Fraud provides figures relating to victims residing in Northern Ireland from 2015/16 onwards, an age / gender breakdown of these victims is not available.

## 4.6 Publication

Annual data are published on a financial year basis. Provisional recorded crime data are published each month on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis. Provisional figures remain subject to change until the annual data are published. Provisional figures in each monthly bulletin supersede those published in previous monthly updates.

Publication dates for the police recorded crime bulletins are pre-announced and can be found via the [Gov.uk Statistics: release calendar](#). A [publication schedule](#) is also available on the PSNI website.

Further information on crime publications is available in the [introduction](#) to this user guide.

## 5 Domestic Abuse Incidents and Crimes

### [5.1 Definition of domestic abuse](#)

### [5.2 Data use](#)

### [5.3 Data collection](#)

### [5.4 Data quality](#)

### [5.5 Data Management](#)

### [5.6 Timeliness](#)

### [5.7 Data Availability](#)

### [5.8 Publication](#)

As well as publishing figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data, PSNI also publishes data on those incidents and crimes which have a domestic abuse motivation. Figures relating to domestic abuse incidents and crimes are not a National Statistics product.

### 5.1 Definition of domestic abuse

The PSNI has adopted the definition of domestic abuse as outlined in the Northern Ireland Government Strategy 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland' as:

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former partner or family member'.

The following will assist in the application of this definition:

- (a) '**Incident**' means an incident anywhere and not confined to the home of one of the partners/family members;
- (b) '**Family members**' include mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, whether directly or indirectly related, in-laws or stepfamily.
- (c) '**Intimate partners**' means there must have been a relationship with a degree of continuity and stability. The relationship must also have had (or reasonably supposed to have had) a sexual aspect, such as in the relationship between husband and wife or between others generally recognised as a couple including same sex couples.

An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in [Section 2.1 Introduction to Police Recorded Crime](#). A crime will be recorded as domestic abuse where it meets the definition provided above. Not all domestic abuse incidents will result in the recording of a crime as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a notifiable offence being recorded. Where domestic abuse crimes are recorded they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. The recording practices, methods of counting detections and crime types as described in Sections 2 and 3 apply equally to crimes with a domestic abuse motivation.

### 5.2 Data use

These statistics are used widely within PSNI as management information and to monitor performance on domestic abuse related targets against the Policing Plan. The figures are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. Furthermore it is widely accepted that there is under-reporting of domestic abuse incidents to the police. Whilst not directly comparable with police domestic abuse statistics, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey provides estimates of the level of under-reporting. Of all survey respondents in 2010/11 who had experienced some form of partner abuse since age 16, the police were unaware of 72.9% of any of the incidents in question (73.5% in 2009/10 and 71.4% in 2008/09). The survey further estimates that in 2010/11, 68.9% of single worst incidents of partner abuse were not reported to the police (69.1% in 2009/10 and 65.9% in 2008/09). Further details can be found in the bulletin [Experience of Domestic Violence: Findings from the 2008/09 to 2010/11 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#).

Qualitative research into the criminal justice experiences of victims of domestic violence was undertaken by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJ) in partnership with the PSNI during the spring and summer of 2015. A [summary of key findings](#) is available on the DoJ website.



## 5.3 Data collection

Domestic abuse statistics have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05. While PSNI compiled statistics on domestic abuse prior to 2004/05, the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not made available by PSNI's Statistics Branch.

The system which was used by PSNI in 2004/05 for crime recording (the integrated crime information system or 'ICIS') was modified to enable incidents to be identified as having a domestic abuse motivation. Where an incident was given this marker, each crime recorded within that incident was also identified as having a domestic abuse motivation, although offences of assault of police were excluded from the domestic abuse crime figures.

The current system on which crime is recorded, NICHE, was introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. This system refined the process for recording crimes with a domestic abuse motivation in that the marker identifying an incident or crime as domestic could be applied to each incident or crime separately. In other words a crime which may have been recorded within an incident identified as domestic, but which did not itself have a domestic motivation, would not have the domestic marker applied.

## 5.4 Data quality

While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules, the identification of a domestic abuse motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a domestic abuse motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

## 5.5 Data Management

Statistics Branch has access to data which is extracted from the NICHE recording system on a daily basis. Automated processes ensure that the internal management information system and reports are updated each day. Access to these data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information.

## 5.6 Timeliness

A balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. There is a lag of around eight weeks between the end of the quarter and publication of the quarterly bulletin to allow for routine data quality checks to be issued and completed by Districts.

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the quarterly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year. This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data. The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheets are then published later in the year.

## 5.7 Data Availability

Information that is published in the quarterly and annual bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.

Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The [confidentiality protection arrangements](#) document on the PSNI website provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.

Therefore any requests for crime classifications or types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward.

Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information, these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

### 5.7.1 Availability of Information Relating to Victim and Offender Characteristics

The Home Office has identified offences as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based crimes with a domestic abuse motivation the victim will be a member of the public, referred to as a person victim.

Figures relating to the characteristics of domestic abuse victims and offenders are available through the annual bulletins. The information on victim characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity/nationality) is based on the number of offences with a domestic abuse motivation recorded in each financial year, whereas information on offender characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity/nationality) is based on the number of offences with a domestic abuse motivation detected in each financial year. It should be noted that offences detected may have been recorded in a previous financial year. For the purposes of these figures an offender is defined as someone who has been dealt with by police by means of one of the following outcomes: charge, summons, caution, community resolution, penalty notice for disorder, having the offence taken into consideration at court and indictable only offences where no action was taken against the offender (died before proceedings or PPS did not prosecute) – for further details on crime outcomes see sections [2.6](#) and [2.7](#) of this user guide. Figures on offender characteristics, the victim characteristics of ethnicity/nationality and information on the victim/offender relationship were first collated in response to a specific request and so data is only available from 2010/11 onwards.

Victim characteristics are not available for domestic abuse incidents that have not resulted in a crime being recorded ([see 2.1 for an explanation of what constitutes an incident and what constitutes a crime](#)). This is mainly due to the proportion of such records for which victim characteristics are unavailable.

#### 5.7.1.1 Victim Age

In relation to **domestic abuse crimes**, the age bands available are under 18 and 18+, with figures dating back to 2004/05. At a Northern Ireland level the crime classifications provided for each age band are violence with injury (including homicide), violence without injury, theft (including burglary), criminal damage, all other offences and total offences. Figures for each age band are also available for total offences recorded by policing district.

#### 5.7.1.2 Victim Gender

In relation to **domestic abuse crimes**, those victims aged 18+ are further split into female aged 18+ and male aged 18+, with figures dating back to 2004/05. At a Northern Ireland level the crime classifications provided for these gender splits are violence with injury (including homicide), violence without injury, theft (including burglary), criminal damage, all other offences and total offences. Figures for these gender splits are also available for total offences recorded by policing district.

## 5.8 Publication

Annual data are published on a financial year basis, with the annual bulletin providing finalised figures for the latest financial year along with trends and commentary. Provisional incident and recorded crime data are published each quarter on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis. Provisional figures remain subject to change until the annual data are published. Provisional figures in each quarterly bulletin supersede those published in previous quarterly updates.

Publication dates for the police recorded crime bulletins are pre-announced and can be found via the [Gov.uk Statistics: release calendar](#). A [publication schedule](#) is also available on the PSNI website.

[PSNI publications on domestic abuse incidents and crimes](#) are available from the PSNI website. This link also provides access to the latest quarterly updates and to annual reports dating back to 2004/05.

Bulletins on [Experience of Domestic Violence: Findings from the 2008/09 to 2010/11 Northern Ireland Crime Survey](#) can be found in the Statistics & Research Publications section of the Department of Justice website.

## 6 Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes

### [6.1 Hate motivation definitions](#)

### [6.2 Data use](#)

### [6.3 Data collection](#)

### [6.4 Data quality](#)

### [6.5 Data Management](#)

### [6.6 Timeliness](#)

### [6.7 Data Availability](#)

### [6.8 Publication](#)

As well as publishing figures on the levels and trends of crime in Northern Ireland, based on police recorded crime data, PSNI also publishes data on those incidents and crimes which have a hate motivation. Figures relating to hate motivated incidents and crimes are not a National Statistics product.

## 6.1 Hate motivation definitions

Hate crime is defined as any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic. PSNI also use the principles of this definition to record non-crime hate incidents<sup>4</sup>. Within PSNI there are six strands of hate motivation that are monitored; Race, Homophobia (sexual orientation), Sectarianism, Faith/religion (non-sectarian), Disability and Transphobia.

### **Race**

A racial group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins (this includes UK National origins i.e. Scottish, English, Welsh and Irish) and references to a person's racial group refer to any racial group into which he/she falls. Racial group includes the Irish Traveller community.

### **Homophobia (sexual orientation)**

Homophobia can be defined as a fear or dislike directed towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people, or a fear or dislike directed towards their perceived lifestyle, culture or characteristics. Sexual orientation can be defined as an individual's preference for a particular sex (be it the opposite or the same), or an individual's view of their own sexuality.

### **Sectarianism**

The term 'sectarian', whilst not clearly defined, is a term almost exclusively used in Northern Ireland to describe incidents of bigoted dislike or hatred of members of a different religious or political group. It is broadly accepted that within the Northern Ireland context an individual or group must be perceived to be Catholic or Protestant, Nationalist or Unionist, or Loyalist or Republican. However sectarianism can also relate to other religious denominations, for example, Sunni and Shi'ite in Islam.

### **Faith/Religion (non-sectarian)**

A faith or religious group can be defined as a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief. This would include Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and different sects within a religion. It also includes people who hold no religious belief at all.

### **Disability (or Disablist)**

Any disability including physical or sensory disability, learning disability, long-term illness and mental health.

### **Transphobia**

Includes people who are transsexual, transgender, transvestite and those who hold the gender recognition certificate under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

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<sup>4</sup> A crime will be recorded as having a hate motivation where it meets the relevant definition provided above. Not all hate motivated incidents will result in the recording of a crime, as what has occurred in the incident may not be of the level of severity that would result in a notifiable offence being recorded. Where crimes with a hate motivation are recorded they are classified according to the Home Office Counting Rules and form a subset of the overall police recorded crime statistics. Further details of the background and recording practice in relation to police recorded crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics](#). An explanation of what constitutes an incident and a crime is provided in Section 2.1 of this guide, while reference to hate motivated incidents and crimes is available in Section 6. These recording practices, methods of counting outcomes and allocation of crime types apply equally to crimes with a hate motivation.

### **The Perception Test**

Evidence is not the test when reporting a hate incident; when an incident or crime has been reported to police by the victim or by any other person and they perceive it as being motivated by prejudice or hate, it will be recorded and investigated as a hate incident or crime. The perception of the victim, or any other person is the defining factor in determining whether an incident is a hate incident, or in recognising the hostility element of a hate crime. Perception-based recording refers to the perception of the victim, or any other person. It would not be appropriate to record a crime or incident as a hate crime or hate incident if it was based on the perception of a person or group who had no knowledge of the victim, crime or the area, and who may be responding to media or internet stories or who are reporting for a political or similar motive. The other person could, however, be one of a number of people, including: police officers or staff; witnesses; family members; civil society organisations who know details of the victim, the crime or hate crimes in the locality, such as a third-party reporting charity; a carer or other professional who supports the victim; someone who has knowledge of hate crime in the area – this could include many professionals and experts such as the manager of an education centre used by people with learning disabilities who regularly receives reports of abuse from students; a person from within the group targeted with the hostility, eg, a Traveller who witnessed racist damage in a local park.

## **6.2 Data use**

These statistics are used widely within PSNI as management information and to monitor performance on hate motivation related targets against the Policing Plan. The figures are also used by government departments and other voluntary and statutory agencies to inform debate and policy development regarding incidents and crimes with a hate motivation in Northern Ireland.

## **6.3 Data collection**

Incidents and crimes with a racist or homophobic motivation have been collated by PSNI in their current format since 2004/05. Sectarian, faith/religion and disability motivated incidents and crimes have been collated since 2005/06. Incidents and crimes with a transphobic motivation have been collated since 2006/07. While PSNI compiled statistics on racist and homophobic motivations prior to 2004/05, the method of data collection and definitions of crimes and crime types was not comparable and so these figures are not made available by PSNI's Statistics Branch.

The system which was used by PSNI in 2004/05 for crime recording (the integrated crime information system or 'ICIS') was modified to enable incidents to be identified as having a racist or homophobic motivation. Where an incident was given this marker, each crime recorded within that incident was also identified as having a racist or homophobic motivation.

The current system on which crime is recorded, NICHE, was introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. This system refined the process for recording crimes with a hate motivation in that the marker identifying an incident or crime as hate motivated could be applied to each incident or crime separately. In other words a crime which may have been recorded within an incident identified as hate motivated, but which did not itself have a hate motivation, would not have the hate motivation marker applied.

## **6.4 Data quality**

While crimes included within the police recorded crime statistics for Northern Ireland are individually checked for compliance with the Home Office Counting Rules, the identification of a hate motivation is derived from a motivation 'tick box' on the system used by PSNI to record crime. The motivation is identified and completed by a police officer or member of police staff for each such reported incident or crime. The correct application of a hate motivation for all such incidents/crimes is not quality assured by the PSNI's Statistics Branch, but audits and data quality checks are routinely conducted in an attempt to ensure that any under or over-recording is corrected.

## **6.5 Data Management**

Statistics Branch has access to data which is extracted from the NICHE recording system on a daily basis. Automated processes ensure that the internal management information system and reports are updated each day. Access to these data extracts enables Statistics Branch to produce bulletins for publication and to respond to ad hoc requests for information.

## 6.6 Timeliness

A balance needs to be obtained between the requirement for figures to be as up-to-date as possible and the requirement to publish figures which are of appropriate quality and completeness for use. There is a lag of around eight weeks between the end of the quarter and publication of the quarterly bulletin to allow for routine data quality checks to be issued and completed by Districts.

Figures within the current financial year to date are provisional and remain subject to change until finalised figures for the full financial year are published. Final figures for the full financial year (presented as per the quarterly updates) are published around six weeks after the end of the financial year. This is to allow for additional quality checks to be completed on the data. The more detailed annual commentary and spreadsheets are then published later in the year.

## 6.7 Data Availability

Information that is published in the quarterly and annual bulletins has been examined to make sure it meets levels of quality and completeness appropriate for publication. The proportion of records for which information is unavailable is identified in the bulletins and accompanying spreadsheets. There will be some variables held on the operational system for which the level of missing or incomplete information is too high to allow for inclusion in the bulletins, or where the data quality is not sufficient for publication.

Crime classifications are published at levels for which disclosure issues have been considered, including the geographic level at which the information is produced and also the length of time period covered. The [confidentiality protection arrangements](#) document on the PSNI website provides additional information on PSNI's arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data and statistical disclosure control.

Therefore any requests for crime classifications or types of data not included in the bulletins are assessed and responded to on a case by case basis. Where there is potential for placing additional data on the website, this will be taken forward.

Where there are requests for types of information that would require additional processes to be put in place for gathering this information, these will be forwarded within PSNI for a decision on whether there is a business requirement to collect information in this format.

### 6.7.1 Availability of Information Relating to Victim Characteristics

The Home Office has identified offences as being victim-based, state-based or victim and state-based. State-based offences are those for which no member of the public or business/organisation is a victim. For victim-based offences, the victim can be a member of the public (referred to here as person victim), a police officer who was the victim of a crime in the course of carrying out their duty, or a business or organisation. The introduction of the NICHE system in 2007/08 has enabled a breakdown of crime by the type of victim to be provided from this date. Victim characteristic figures are available through the annual bulletins.

Victim characteristics are not available for incidents with a hate motivation that have not resulted in a crime being recorded ([see 2.1 for an explanation of what constitutes an incident and what constitutes a crime](#)). This is mainly due to the proportion of such records for which victim characteristics are unavailable.

Victim characteristics are also not available in relation to victims of faith/religion, disability or transphobic motivation as the number of person victims is too small to enable these details to be provided.

#### 6.7.1.1 Victim Age

In relation to **racist, homophobic and sectarian crimes**, the age bands available are under 18, 18-64 and 65+. Figures date back to 2007/08 and are available at a Northern Ireland level and for total offences recorded.

#### 6.7.1.2 Victim Gender

In relation to **racist, homophobic and sectarian crimes**, figures are available split by female victims and male victims, with the number of crimes where the gender is unknown also provided. Figures date back to 2007/08 and are available at a Northern Ireland level and for total offences recorded.

### 6.7.1.3 Ethnicity/Nationality

Figures relating to the ethnicity and nationality of victims are provided for crimes with a racist motivation and are available in both the quarterly and annual bulletins.

### 6.7.1.4 Religious Background / Sexual Orientation

The provision of these victim characteristics in relation to crimes with a homophobic, sectarian or faith/religion motivation is not possible due to the proportion of such crimes for which this information is either unknown or for which the victim refused to provide these details. Further information is available in the sections of the Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes in Northern Ireland annual bulletin which deal with information relating to victims.

## 6.8 Publication

Annual data are published on a financial year basis, with the annual bulletin providing finalised figures for the latest financial year along with trends and commentary. Provisional incident and recorded crime data are published each quarter on a rolling 12 month basis and financial year to date basis. Provisional figures remain subject to change until the annual data are published. Provisional figures in each quarterly bulletin supersede those published in previous monthly updates.

Publication dates for the police recorded crime bulletins are pre-announced and can be found via the [Gov.uk Statistics: release calendar](#). A [publication schedule](#) is also available on the PSNI website.

[PSNI publications on hate motivated incidents and crimes](#) are available from the PSNI website. This link also provides access to the latest quarterly updates and to annual reports dating back to the year the recording of each type of hate motivation started.

## 7 Geographic recording of crime

As a general rule crimes, anti-social behaviour incidents and incidents / crimes with a domestic abuse, racist, homophobic or sectarian motivation are recorded by the police based on the geographic location in which the incident occurred.

Boundaries used for operational policing have changed a number of times since the start of the recorded crime data series in 1998/99. While these boundaries do not always correspond with administrative geographies, postcode information is used where available to create a dataset enabling the presentation of data by a range of administrative geographic areas dating back to 2001/02.

Prior to April 2015 policing areas were based on the local government district (LGD1992) boundaries for Northern Ireland, with Belfast being split into East, North, South and West. Policing areas were then grouped together to form eight policing districts.

With the implementation of the Review of Public Administration in April 2015, the boundaries used within PSNI are based on the administrative geographies of Ward 2014, District Electoral Area 2014, and LGD 2014.

Information for geographic areas within Northern Ireland is available from the following sources:

- [PSNI website](#)  
Bulletins covering [police recorded crime](#) and [anti-social behaviour](#) are published on a monthly basis, while bulletins covering [incidents and crimes with a domestic abuse motivation](#) and [incidents and crimes with a hate motivation](#) are published on a quarterly basis.
- [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System \(NINIS\)](#)  
Following the implementation of the Review of Public Administration, work is ongoing to provide a complete series of financial year information on crime, anti-social behaviour and incidents/crimes with a domestic abuse or hate motivation for geographic areas such as Local Government District 2014 (LGD2014), District Electoral Area (DEA), Ward2014, Assembly Area, Education & Library Board, Health & Social Care Trust, Urban/Rural and Neighbourhood Renewal Area. Once all figures are in place, they will then be provided for update to this website on an annual basis.
- [Crimemapper](#) This website provides street level recorded crime and anti-social behaviour incident counts presented using a crime mapping tool. This allows users to view crime maps for a specific area and gives a count of crimes in that area as well as an indication of the street location where the crime occurred. The street level data can also be downloaded from the police.uk website. The figures on police.uk will differ from those in the bulletins published on the PSNI website as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.

**Data Availability:** Data is available for a range of crime classifications in relation to each of the sources listed above. The level of detail at which figures are made available depends on the numbers involved. For example less detailed crime classifications are available at ward level due to the smaller numbers involved, and to prevent the possible disclosure of the identity of an individual/organisation or any private information relating to them. Further details on disclosure control are available in the statement on [confidentiality protection arrangements](#).

## 8 Published sources of crime data and data comparability

Police Recorded Crime statistics for England & Wales, Scotland, Ireland and those for Northern Ireland are collected and published separately.

Police recorded crime figures for Northern Ireland can be accessed through the following sources:

- The crime statistics page of the [PSNI website](#) where bulletins and spreadsheets are published monthly and annually;
- Monthly updates are supplied to the [police crime mapping website](#) which provides street level recorded crime and anti-social behaviour data presented using a crime mapping tool. The raw data can also be downloaded from the website. The figures on the crime mapping website will differ from those provided in this bulletin as they have been extracted from the police administrative system on different dates, and also require a grid reference in order to be mapped.
- Data in respect of police recorded crime, anti-social behaviour and incidents/crimes with a domestic or hate motivation are updated annually on the [Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System \(NINIS\)](#) website.

In 2014 the Government Statistical Service compiled a UK Statistics comparability report which gives an overview of data comparability issues for the main theme groups, including crime & justice, across the UK. An indication of comparability is given in respect of the total number of crimes and the number of violent and sexual crimes from the police recorded crime data. This report can be access through the following link:

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Comparability-Report-Final.pdf>

Bulletins on Police Recorded Crime for England & Wales are available from the [Office for National Statistics](#) website. Bulletins on crime outcomes are available from the [Home Office](#).

Bulletins for Scotland are available from [The Scottish Government](#) website.

Bulletins for Ireland are available from [Central Statistics Office Ireland](#) website.

Links to additional publications which contain recorded crime figures are provided below. Where national or international comparisons are made, differences in data collection methods and legislation between countries should be taken into consideration.

[Eurostat](#)

[European Sourcebook](#)

[United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends](#)



## Appendix 1 Recorded crime list

The classifications defined in this Appendix are those used for crimes recorded by the police and notifiable to the Home Office. In general, attempting, conspiring, aiding, abetting, causing or permitting a crime is classified under the heading of the crime itself, though in certain cases it is shown separately.

Recorded crime covers all indictable and triable-either-way offences. Additionally, a few closely associated summary offences are included. These offences are identified in the listing, together with the reasons for their inclusion. The crimes on this list are termed notifiable offences and their listing is referred to as the notifiable offences list (NOL).

Most of the offences listed are defined in terms of legal offences (i.e. sections of Acts). A comprehensive list of these offences, together with key legal definitions and explanatory notes, are available in the [Home Office Counting Rules](#).

The numbering of each classification provided below follows the numbering of the crime classifications as displayed within the Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

Note: The offences and legislation in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime are based on those used in England & Wales. There will be differences in offences and legislation within Northern Ireland.

### VICTIM-BASED CRIME

#### Violence against the person

##### Homicide

- 1 Murder
- 4.1 Manslaughter
- 4.2 Infanticide  
*Applies to infants aged under 12 months killed by the mother while of disturbed mind*
- 4.10 Corporate manslaughter

##### Violence with injury

- 2 Attempted murder
- 4.3 Intentional destruction of a viable unborn child  
*Applies to the unborn child 'capable of being born alive'*
- 4.4 Causing death or serious injury by dangerous driving
- 4.6 Causing death or serious injury by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs
- 4.7 Causing or allowing death of a child or vulnerable person
- 4.8 Causing death or serious injury by careless or inconsiderate driving
- 4.9 Causing death or serious injury by driving: unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured driver
- 5D Assault with intent to cause serious harm  
*(offences of grievous bodily harm with intent / wounding with intent)*
- 5E Endangering life  
*(certain firearms/ammunition and explosives offences, administering poison etc with intent, endangering life at sea, endangering railway passengers and other use of substance or object to endanger life)*
- 8N Assault with injury  
*Further split into grievous bodily harm (GBH) and wounding, assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH), assault on police with injury (Covers those assaults with an AOABH injury level but where the victim was a police officer. Where a police officer receives an injury more serious than AOABH, this will be recorded using the appropriate offence) and poisoning to aggrieve*
- 8P Racially or religiously aggravated assault with injury  
*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland*
- 37.1 Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking

## Violence without injury

- 3A Conspiracy to murder
- 3B Threats to kill
- 8L Harassment  
*Further split into Harassment and Intimidation (no exact match for intimidation offences in England & Wales)*
- 8M Racially or religiously aggravated harassment  
*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland*
- 8Q Stalking  
*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland*
- 11A Cruelty to children/young persons
- 13 Child abduction
- 14 Procuring illegal abortion
- 36 Kidnapping
- 104 Assault without injury on a constable  
*Summary offences, closely associated with actual bodily harm (see classification 8N).*
- 105A Assault without injury  
*Summary offences, closely associated with actual bodily harm (see classification 8N). Includes, amongst other offences, common assault and aggravated assault. From 1 April 2003 only includes assaults involving no injury, please note that this change was introduced a year earlier in England and Wales on 1 April 2002.*
- 105B Racially or religiously aggravated assault without injury (see classification 105A)  
*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland.*
- 106 Modern Slavery (including Trafficking for sexual exploitation, previously classification 72)

## Sexual offences

### Rape

- 19A-H. Rape  
*Is further split into rape and attempted rape*

### Other sexual offences

- 16 Buggery  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*
- 17 Indecent assault on a male  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Is further split into age 17+ and age <17*
- 17A Sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over
- 17B Sexual assault on a male child under 13
- 18 Gross indecency between males  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*
- 20 Indecent assault on a female  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, is further split into age 17+ and age <17*
- 20A Sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over
- 20B Sexual assault on a female child under 13
- 21 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 14  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*
- 21 Sexual activity involving a child under 13
- 22 Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 17  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*
- 22A Causing sexual activity without consent
- 22B Sexual activity involving a child under 16
- 23 Incest or familial sexual offences

## Other sexual offences continued...

- 25 Abduction of a female  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*
- 70 Sexual activity etc. with a person with a mental disorder
- 71 Abuse of children through prostitution and pornography
- 73 Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature
- 74 Gross indecency with a child  
*Covers offences recorded under legislation in place prior to introduction of Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008*
- 88A Sexual grooming
- 88C Other miscellaneous sexual offences
- 88D Unnatural sexual offences
- 88E Exposure and voyeurism

## Robbery

*Key elements of the offence of robbery (Section 8 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969) are stealing and the use or threat of force immediately before doing so, and in order to do so. Any injuries resulting from this force are not recorded as additional offences of violence.*

- 34A Robbery of business property  
*Further split into armed robbery, ordinary robbery and hijacking.*
- 34B Robbery of personal property  
*Further split into armed robbery, ordinary robbery and hijacking.*

## Theft Offences - Burglary

*Key elements of police recorded burglaries (as defined by the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969) are entry (or attempted entry) to a building as a trespasser with intent to either (a) steal property from it (including stealing or attempting to steal), (b) inflict grievous bodily harm or (c) commit unlawful damage to property whilst inside. The offence group also includes aggravated burglary (Section 10 of the same Act), which is defined as a burglary where the burglar is in possession of a weapon at the time. The Home Office Counting Rules contain details of the types of premises that constitute a dwelling.*

### Domestic burglary

- 28A Burglary in a dwelling
- 28B Attempted burglary in a dwelling
- 28C Distraction burglary in a dwelling  
*Not available in Northern Ireland, distraction burglary figures are included in 28A*
- 28D Attempted distraction burglary in a dwelling  
*Not available in Northern Ireland, attempted distraction burglary figures are included in 28B*
- 29 Aggravated burglary in a dwelling

### Non-domestic burglary

- 30A Burglary in a building other than a dwelling
- 30B Attempted burglary in a building other than a dwelling
- 31 Aggravated burglary in a building other than a dwelling

## Vehicle offences

- 37.2 Aggravated vehicle taking  
*Part of Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981. Applies to offences of unauthorised vehicle taking (see classification 48 below) with additional aggravating factors of dangerous driving, or causing an accident involving injury or damage.*
- 45 Theft from a vehicle

## Vehicle offences continued...

- 48 Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicle  
*Unauthorised taking of motor vehicle (part of Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981; also known as taking without consent or TWOC) is a summary offence. It is closely associated with theft of a motor vehicle because at the time of recording it may not be known whether the intention is to permanently deprive the owner.*
- 126 Interfering with a motor vehicle  
*Summary offences, closely associated with theft of or from vehicles. The Home Office Counting Rules contain detailed guidance for forces on distinguishing between these offences and criminal damage, where a vehicle is reported damaged.*

## Theft from the person

- 39 Theft from the person  
*Includes snatch theft, but if this involves the use or threat of force (e.g. if the victim resists), then it is recorded as robbery*

## Bicycle theft

- 44 Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle  
*Includes taking a pedal cycle without consent (Article 172 of the Road Traffic Northern Ireland Order 1981)*

## Shoplifting

- 46 Shoplifting

## All other theft offences

*All the offences listed here, unless shown otherwise, form the legal offence of theft (Section 1 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969), which is defined as a person dishonestly appropriating property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.*

- 35 Blackmail
- 40 Theft in a dwelling other than from automatic machine or meter
- 41 Theft by an employee
- 42 Theft of mail
- 43 Dishonest use of electricity
- 47 Theft from automatic machine or meter
- 49 Other theft or unauthorised taking  
*Includes, amongst other offences, unauthorised taking of conveyance other than a motor vehicle or pedal cycle*
- 49A Making off without payment

## Arson and Criminal damage

- 56A Arson endangering life
- 56B Arson not endangering life  
*Not all malicious fires that the police record are included here. If the owner of the property set alight is wounded, then a crime of violence is recorded. If a stolen vehicle is subsequently burnt out, it is recorded as a vehicle theft. An additional arson offence is recorded only if there is evidence that the arsonist is unconnected with the vehicle thief.*
- 58A Criminal damage to a dwelling
- 58B Criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling
- 58C Criminal damage to a vehicle
- 58D Other criminal damage
- 58J Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage  
*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland*

## OTHER CRIMES AGAINST SOCIETY

### Drug offences

#### Trafficking of drugs

92A Trafficking in controlled drugs

#### Possession of drugs

92B Possession of controlled drugs  
*(in use to 2003/04 only)*

92C Other drug offences

*Various offences, mostly under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, including permitting premises to be used for unlawful purposes; failure to comply with notice requiring information relating to prescribing, supply etc. of drugs; supply of intoxicating substance; and supply etc. of articles for administering or preparing controlled drugs.*

92D Possession of controlled drugs (excluding cannabis)

92E Possession of controlled drugs (cannabis)

#### Possession of weapons offences

10A Possession of firearms with intent

10B Possession of firearms offences

10C Possession of other weapons

10D Possession of article with blade or point

81 Other firearms offences

90 Other knives offences

#### Public order offences

9A Public fear, alarm or distress

*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland*

9B Racially or religiously aggravated public fear, alarm or distress

*Classification does not apply within Northern Ireland*

65A Violent disorder

*(includes offences of riot and violent disorder)*

66 Other offences against the State and public order

*Further split into bomb hoax related offences, breach of anti-social behaviour order, breach of non-molestation order, breach of sex offender orders etc, offences under anti-terrorist legislation, other*

#### Miscellaneous crimes against society

15 Concealing an infant death close to birth

24 Exploitation of prostitution

26 Bigamy

27 Soliciting for the purpose of prostitution

33 Going equipped for stealing, etc.

33A Possession of items for use in fraud

*(includes making, supplying or possessing articles for use in fraud)*

38 Profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime

54 Handling stolen goods

*Section 21 of the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, dishonestly receiving etc. goods, knowing them to have been stolen*

59 Threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage

60/61 Forgery or use of false drug prescription / Other forgery

61A Possession of false documents

67 Perjury

- 69 Offender Management Act
- 76 Aiding suicide
- 79 Perverting the course of justice  
*(includes intimidation or threat to harm witness etc, as well as perverting the course of justice)*
- 80 Absconding from lawful custody
- 83 Bail offences
- 86 Obscene publications, etc. and protected sexual material
- 95 Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc.
- 96 Wildlife crime
- 99 Other offences  
*(includes betting, gaming and lotteries; Customs and Revenue offences; Immigration offences; Public health offences; Trade descriptions etc and other indictable or triable-either-way offences)*
- 802 Dangerous driving
- 814 Vehicle/driver document fraud  
*These records comprise driving licences, insurance certificates, registration and licensing documents, work records, operators' licences and test certificates.*

## Other fraud<sup>1</sup>

- 51 Fraud by company director
- 52 False accounting
- 53 Fraud by false representation etc  
*Further split into*
  - 53D *Other fraud (not covered elsewhere including deception)*
  - 53E *Fraud by failing to disclose information*
  - 53F *Fraud by abuse of position*
- 55 Bankruptcy and insolvency offences

<sup>1</sup>**Introduction of Action Fraud within Northern Ireland:** From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Action Fraud has taken responsibility for the central recording of fraud and cyber crime previously recorded by PSNI; Action Fraud became responsible for all such reports in England & Wales by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Action Fraud is the UK's National Reporting Centre for fraud and cyber crime reported directly to them from the public and other organisations. While this means that these fraud and cyber offences are no longer recorded by PSNI, Action Fraud figures relating to fraud and cyber crime occurring in Northern Ireland are provided to PSNI on a monthly basis. This means that fraud offences recorded by PSNI are only available for the years 1998/99 to 2014/15.

## Appendix 2 PSNI response to the HMIC Crime Data Integrity Audit Recommendations

Recommendation	Target completion date	PSNI response/plans to address the recommendation
<p>1) PSNI should adopt a more comprehensive methodology when assessing each crime-recording decision, judging the whole incident from the initial call to victim feedback at the conclusion</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> June 2015</p>	<p>The HMIC audit found PSNI's overall crime data compliance rate to be 97%, one of the highest achieved by any of the forces audited. Our crime recording processes are specifically designed to maximize compliance through a combination of IT design and centralised crime recording and crime validation units which check every crime for compliance with the Counting Rules. We continually review our processes to ensure that data quality is maintained.</p> <p>As a result of this HMIC recommendation, we intend to widen our current validation checks to include a monthly dip-sample of recordings of calls for service to ensure that the original call for service is accurately reflected in the incident log and dealt with appropriately according to call handling standards. This is currently conducted by Contact Management staff, however the quality assurance process will now be enhanced as a result of the HMIC recommendation to address the required crime recording aspects. The findings and any resultant queries will be reported to Statistics Branch on a regular basis for follow up as required. This process commenced in August 2016.</p> <p>With regard to the need for victim feedback in the crime recording process, we have already introduced the cancelled crime victim update as per the Counting Rules change which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015. In addition to this, we have a range of other victim update and victim satisfaction monitoring processes in place within PSNI which we feel adequately addresses the crime recording requirement.</p> <p>The PSNI's victim updates/monitoring arrangements currently include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All victims should be updated on the progress of their investigation within 10 days</li> <li>- The PSNI/PPS Victim &amp; Witness Care Unit keeps victims and witnesses fully informed of the progress of their case throughout the criminal justice process.</li> <li>- Victims are consulted by the Investigating Officer before offenders are given an out-of-court disposal eg. discretionary disposals (re-launched as Community Resolutions on 30 June 2016) and this process will be enhanced with additional guidance to officers when these disposals are re-launched later in 2015.</li> <li>- Monthly surveys are conducted amongst victims of crime. The results are monitored to identify any emerging trends in dissatisfaction.</li> </ul>

<p>2) PSNI should reinforce the need to record crime at the earliest opportunity, and certainly within the 72-hour limit, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and ensure that quality assurance checks and audits consider and report on the timeliness of crime recording as well as the accuracy</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> April 2015</p>	<p>Guidance was issued to all officers &amp; staff on the need to record crimes within the new 24 hour requirement adopted by the Home Office Counting Rules in April 2015. A variety of daily updated management information reports are already available within PSNI which give details of the numbers of crimes outstanding and indicating which stage of the process they are at. However, in response to the HMIC recommendation we will develop an additional report to enable senior management to more readily monitor PSNI's compliance with the 24 hour crime recording requirement. This requires a change to be made to the NICHE crime recording system and this request has been submitted to the PSNI's IT department and we are currently awaiting its implementation by Niche RMS.</p>
<p>3) PSNI should undertake a review of crime-recording policies to reassure itself that there is a corporate approach to the recording of key crime categories across all districts and branches.</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> June 2015</p>	<p>Because of the way that PSNI's crime recording process has been designed with centralised crime recording and crime validation teams, Districts have minimal influence on how any resultant crimes are recorded. In addition, Statistics Branch would often become aware of local practices that conflict with crime-recording policies either from Occurrence &amp; Case Management Team (OCMT) colleagues who work more closely with Districts, or through our own validation processes.</p> <p>This recommendation was discussed at the PSNI's Crime Recording Working Group meeting in June 2015 and it was agreed that a directive would be issued to all District Commanders &amp; Heads of Branches asking them to ensure that no such local policies exist. In addition, OCMTs, who deal with Districts on a daily basis on crime recording issues, have also been asked to inform Statistics Branch should they become aware of any such local practices.</p>
<p>4) PSNI should review any historic sexual abuse inquiries currently being undertaken to ensure the accuracy of crime recording, given the likelihood of there being a large number of victims and offenders.</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> June 2015</p>	<p>Statistics Branch received spreadsheets from Public Protection Units that had been set up for the historical abuse investigations which listed and cross linked victims, suspects and locations. These spreadsheets were compiled into a single list so that all potential NICHE reference numbers could be identified. The final list identified more than 7,600 rows of data.</p> <p>The aim of the Statistics Branch review was to find out whether crimes arising out of reports of historical abuse were being correctly recorded. If crimes were being missed, action could only be taken from a crime recording point of view in relation to reports made to police during 2014/15..</p> <p>As a result of this work a small number of additional crimes were identified and were included in the crime figures for 2014/15. This work commenced in Oct/Nov 2014 and was completed by 31st March 2015</p>
<p>5) PSNI should provide guidance to officers and staff so that they can deal appropriately with reports of crime that occur in another jurisdiction or police force, but where the victim either resides or is temporarily resident in Northern Ireland; this should include specific reference to the offence of rape.</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> June 2015</p>	<p>A review of the PSNI's Service Procedure on the 'Investigation of Sexual Crime' was conducted during the summer of 2015 and a section has been included to ensure that officers &amp; staff are made aware of how to deal appropriately with reports of crime that occur in another jurisdiction or police force. The revised Service Procedure was published on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015. Similar guidance has been issued to call handlers (CMC and CMSU staff) in June 2015 to ensure that they were also aware of how to record crimes in the circumstances stated by HMIC.</p>



<p>6) The joint PSNI/PPS group that examines PNDs and discretionary disposals should review its process to ensure more rigour is applied and that its approach is more risk-based to ensure all aspects of local and national guidance are adhered to when using these means of disposal.</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> April 2015</p>	<p>PSNI has reviewed its processes for administering Discretionary Disposals and Penalty Notices for Disorder and is to re-launch these later this year (planned for October 2015 but dependent on agreement with the PPS). The PND process will have presentational changes to the ticket that's issued to the offender along with revised guidance and a change to the questions asked by CMSU when the details are phoned in by the investigating officer. Discretionary Disposals are to be re-branded and will now have a ticket issued to the offender explaining the implications of accepting this disposal. Similarly the guidelines and proforma to be completed by the officer will clearly state which offences it can be issued for and will contain a check list which covers whether the victims' wishes have been considered.</p> <p>At the same time the roles and responsibilities of the joint PPS/PSNI group that oversees the quality assurance process, are being reviewed to tie in with the re-launch of the 2 out of court disposals. The relevant PSNI department overseeing the process has also introduced additional monthly quality assurance checks to correct any anomalies with the administration of the process. The combined effect of the new processes along with the additional quality assurance checks built into the system and the oversight by the joint PSNI/PPS group should therefore adequately address all the areas of concern raised by HMIC. The re-launch of Discretionary Disposals (now known as Community Resolutions) took place on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016.</p>
<p>7) PSNI should arrange scenario-based training on additional verifiable information for all sergeants and inspectors in OCMT, CMSU and PPU</p>	<p>30<sup>th</sup> September 2015</p>	<p>The additional verifiable information scenario based training was completed in March 2015 during the PSNI's annual crime recording training seminars for OCMT and CMSU staff. Staff in the PSNI's newly formed Central Referral Unit (which replaced Public Protection Units) were also briefed on the scenarios and were sent copies of the training presentation slides.</p>

## Appendix 3 PSNI response to the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Requirements

Finding	Requirement	PSNI response in addressing each requirement
<p>HMIC's inspection of crime data integrity in Northern Ireland has identified a strong crime-recording accuracy rate within PSNI, but HMIC recommended that PSNI should adopt a more comprehensive approach to its internal audits judging the whole incident from the initial call through to victim feedback and that it should improve the rigour of its audit of out-of-court disposals. PSNI should:</p>	<p>1 Enhance its arrangements for auditing the quality of administrative data used to compile the Northern Ireland police recorded crime statistics in the light of the Authority's regulatory standard on <i>Quality Assurance and Audit Arrangements for Administrative Data</i>, and HMICs recommendations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) publicly stating how it plans to address HMIC's recommendations that are relevant to the quality assurance of police recorded crime data;</li> <li>b) publishing demonstrable evidence that the findings from HMIC's inspection have been considered, and implemented where appropriate, in the compilation of the statistics presented in <i>Crime Monthly</i>, <i>Crime Annual</i> and <i>Crime Trends</i>; and</li> <li>c) updating its published quality information for these statistics, making it clear how the Authority's guidance and the outputs from the inspection informed its understanding of the quality of the statistics (para 3.34).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) PSNI's responses on how these recommendations will be addressed are outlined in Appendix 2 (pages 46-47).</li> <li>b) The crime recording process map (pages 23-24) has been updated to include details of the enhanced quality checks for both call handling and out-of-court disposals.</li> <li>c) Page 28 of this user guide outlines the process undertaken to apply the Standard for the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data. This process was undertaken in light of the crime recording process, associated quality controls and audit procedures and external audit reports described in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this user guide. The <a href="#">Statement of Administrative Sources</a> and the recorded crime <a href="#">quality report</a> have also been updated where relevant.</li> </ul>
<p>PSNI's analysis comparing police recorded crime data with results from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey does not include detailed analysis of comparable crime by crime type. PSNI should, in updating the analysis comparing police recorded crime statistics and the NICS to include the results of the 2013/14 NICS:</p>	<p>2 Update and expand its analysis by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) analysing, in conjunction with DOJNI, crime trends in the police recorded crime statistics and the Northern Ireland Crime Survey, to include, where feasible, comparisons by crime types, with suitable caveats about the quality of the estimates; and</li> <li>b) publishing, or clearly linking to, information about the recent changes in the NICS sample size and response rate over time and the impact of these changes on the quality of the statistics (para 3.38)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A comparison of changes in crime levels measured by police recorded crime and by the crime survey; England &amp; Wales and Northern Ireland is shown in Table 2.1 on page 6 of this user guide. DoJ Statisticians have advised that the comparison by crime type would not be feasible as the sample size is too small and the estimates would not be reliable.</li> <li>b) NICS sample sizes and response rates dating back to 2009/10 are available in Table 2.2 on page 7 of this user guide, along with a link to the paper <i>Change to Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) sample size</i> that was published in April 2014 by DoJ.</li> </ul>

**Appendix 4: Presentation of the Wider Crime Outcomes Framework compared with presentation of Outcome Rates**

Outcome Rates	Wider Crime Outcomes Framework
<p><b>Publications:</b> Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Monthly Updates &amp; Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland Annual Bulletin.</p>	<p><b>Publications:</b> Outcomes of Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2015/16 to 2016/17.</p>
<p><b>Time series:</b> Crimes detected since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998 (sanction outcome methods only).</p>	<p><b>Time series:</b> Crimes recorded since 1st April 2015 that have subsequently been assigned an outcome (all outcome methods).</p>
<p><b>Coverage:</b> Sanction outcome, ie investigation resulting in charge/summons, adult or juvenile caution, offence taken into consideration at court, penalty notice for disorder (PND), community resolution and no prosecution directed (prosecution not in public interest / offender died before proceedings where offence is indictable-only and where there is sufficient evidence to prosecute).</p>	<p><b>Coverage:</b> All methods of outcome; those resulting in formal action being taken and those where no formal action could be taken due to evidential difficulties / no suspect identified / action undertaken by another agency.</p>
<p><b>Data Quality:</b> ‘Sanction’ outcomes are applied on the basis of charge sheets, PPS directions (summonses issued), signed caution forms, PND notices and community resolution forms. They are checked for compliance by the PSNI’s Statistics Branch and validated in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules.</p>	<p><b>Data Quality:</b> Crimes where no formal action is taken by police against a suspect are assigned outcome codes based on the guidance provided in the Home Office Counting Rules. The correct application of these outcomes is not quality assured by the PSNI’s Statistics Branch. However basic quality checks are conducted to ensure records have the essential elements completed, allowing inclusion in the data. These figures are published as Official Statistics.</p>
<p><b>Basis for presentation:</b> Number of crimes detected in a defined period as a percentage of the number of crimes recorded in that same period. In other words these are two separate data sets with no direct link between crime and outcome, although there will be a great degree of overlap between them.</p>	<p><b>Basis for presentation:</b> Number of crimes recorded in a defined period and how they have since been resolved, ie the crime is directly linked to its associated outcome.</p>
<p><b>Calculation example:</b> These outcome rates are based on sanction detection methods only. For example 98,076 crimes recorded during 2016/17 and 27,751 crimes detected by means of a sanction outcome during 2016/17</p> <p>Percentage (outcome rate) =</p> $100 * 27,751/98,076 \text{ ie } 28.3\%$ <p>It is possible to show a rate of over 100 per cent against a particular outcome.</p>	<p><b>Calculation example:</b> This calculation is based on all crimes having the potential to be allocated an outcome. For example 98,076 crimes recorded during 2016/17 of which 92,919 have since been assigned an outcome (at date of publication)</p> <p>Percentage (outcome since assigned) =</p> $100 * 92,919/98,076 \text{ ie } 94.7\%$ <p>This percentage will increase over time until it reaches 100%.</p>
<p><b>Strengths:</b> Volumes of outcomes recorded in a particular time period provide a useful indication of police activity in resolving crime. The outcome rate is not impacted by the lag time for a crime to result in an outcome.</p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> This presentation is the best way of understanding how crimes recorded in a specified time period have been resolved, with such analysis repeated over time as investigations are completed and outcomes are assigned. It gives a more complete picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime.</p>
<p><b>Limitations:</b> These outcome rates are described by the Home Office as illustrative rather than true rates that can be influenced by changes in crime volumes. Where crime volumes increase or decrease markedly from one year to the next, it is likely that any outcome rate will react more slowly.</p>	<p><b>Limitations:</b> The proportion of crimes not yet assigned an outcome is a main consideration when looking at outcomes covering a more recent time period with those for an earlier time period.</p>
<p><b>Caution when using figures:</b> Comparison between two time periods should be treated with caution where the proportion not yet assigned for a more recent time period is higher than the proportion for an earlier time period. Figures within this bulletin show that 2.0% of crimes recorded during 2015/16 have yet to be assigned an outcome, while the figure for 2016/17 is 5.3%.</p>	

