



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



Archive document containing the work completed by PSNI Statistics Branch in response to

- the recommendations from the HMIC Crime Data Integrity Audit; and
- the UK Statistics Authority Assessment Requirements

Compiled 2015, last updated 2017/18

Comparison of police recorded crime data with comparable crimes from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey by crime type

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ONS website in [Crime and justice methodology - methodological notes \(opens in a new window\)](#) [please note this is an archived document]. 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 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

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

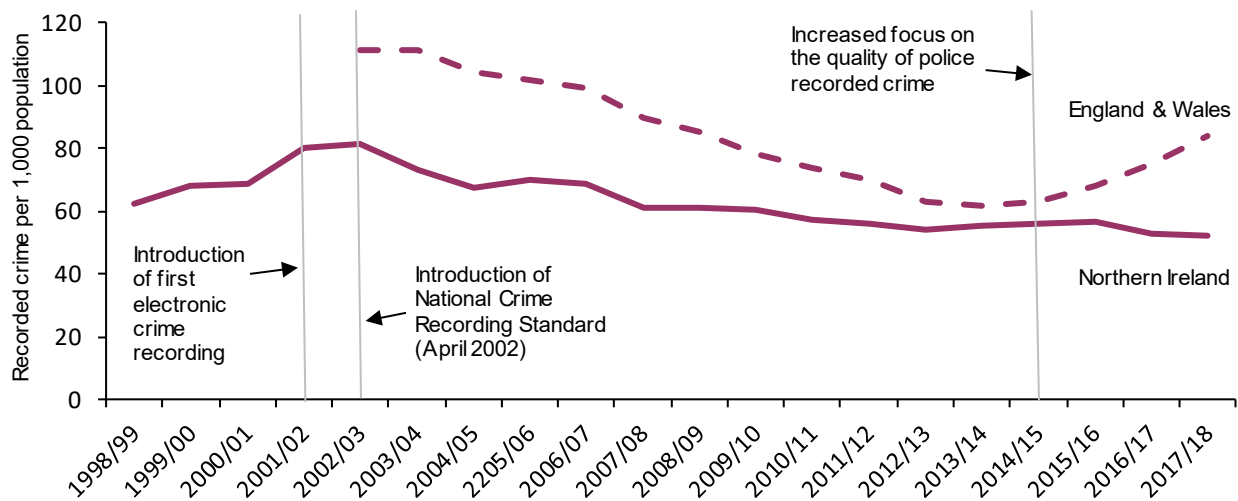
Northern Ireland comparable subsets of crime	2003/04	2006/07	2012/13	2014/15	% change 2003/04 – 2006/07	% change 2006/07 – 2012/13	% change 2012/13 – 2014/15	% change 2003/04 – 2014/15
Police Recorded Crime	75,401	70,422	54,711	54,601	-7	-22	0	-28
NICS Crimes (reported to police)	100,000	72,000	54,000	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 between 2002/03 and 2015/16 in both jurisdictions is largely the same, the scale of any change 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 the target achieved sample size to 2,000 was implemented from April 2014.

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%
2016/17	3,375	3,030	1,877	62%
2017/18	3,375	3,024	1,582	52%

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

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>30th 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 1st 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"> - All victims should be updated on the progress of their investigation within 10 days - The PSNI/PPS Victim & Witness Care Unit keeps victims and witnesses fully informed of the progress of their case throughout the criminal justice process. - 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. - Monthly surveys are conducted amongst victims of crime. The results are monitored to identify any emerging trends in dissatisfaction.

Recommendation	Target completion date	PSNI response/plans to address the recommendation
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	30 th April 2015	Guidance was issued to all officers & 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 the 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.
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.	30 th June 2015	<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 & 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 & 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>
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.	30 th June 2015	<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>
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	30 th June 2015	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 & 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

Recommendation	Target completion date	PSNI response/plans to address the recommendation
in Northern Ireland; this should include specific reference to the offence of rape.		published on 6 th 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.
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.	30 th April 2015	<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 30th June 2016.</p>
7) PSNI should arrange scenario-based training on additional verifiable information for all sergeants and inspectors in OCMT, CMSU and PPU	30 th September 2015	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.

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>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"> a) publicly stating how it plans to address HMIC's recommendations that are relevant to the quality assurance of police recorded crime data; 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 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). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) PSNI's responses on how these recommendations will be addressed are outlined in Appendix 2 (pages 46-47). 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. 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 Statement of Administrative Sources and the recorded crime quality report have also been updated where relevant.
<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>Update and expand its analysis by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A comparison of changes in crime levels measured by police recorded crime and by the crime survey; England & 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. 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.