

# National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics: England and Wales

June 2011

## **The National Statistician**

The National Statistician – a statutory office holder – is also the Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority Board and the Board's principal adviser on:

- the quality of official statistics
- good practice in relation to official statistics, and
- the comprehensiveness of official statistics.

She is also the Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) which is a network of professional statisticians and their staff operating both within the Office for National Statistics and across more than 30 other government departments and agencies.

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## Foreword

Jil Matheson,  
National Statistician

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from my review of official crime statistics for England and Wales. I was pleased to be invited to undertake the review by the Home Secretary to review gaps in crime statistics, advise on which independent body should assume future responsibility for publication, and oversee implementation of the recommendations in the UK Statistics Authority report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'. My recommendations aim to improve the public's understanding of crime statistics, and their confidence in them.

I have been assisted in this review by a project board whose membership included leading criminologists and experts from both within and outside government. During the course of the review I have also consulted a wide range of people with an interest in crime statistics who have given up their time to talk to me, and provided invaluable insight and experience. I would like to thank the members of the project board and everyone else who has contributed to the review for their valuable contributions. The findings and recommendations are mine.

*Jil Matheson*

June 2011

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Statistics on crime are important to inform policy and decision making; to facilitate democratic accountability; and to allow the public to assess risk of crime in their neighbourhoods. England and Wales have two main sources of statistics on crime: the British Crime Survey, and crimes recorded by the police. They measure different, although complementary, and often overlapping, phenomena: people's experience of crime, and crimes reported to, and recorded by, the police. Compilation of the statistics is not straightforward and there are challenges with coverage and presentation, definitions and measurement, and concerns about the confidence and trust in the statistics, which this review addresses.
- 1.2. In conducting this review we have talked to many people and organisations with an interest in crime statistics. It is clear that expert users recognise the strengths (and limitations) of these two sources. However there are others for whom the current picture of crime, portrayed by official statistics, is unclear. What is covered by the two main sources, and by neither, and how they fit together to give an overall and coherent picture of trends in crime, is not clear to all users. Moreover, changes in reported trends introduced by methodological or recording changes can be confusing, and the reasons for the changes unapparent. This review has therefore identified three main findings:
  - (1) The presentation of crime statistics needs to be further improved in order to provide clarity about the coverage of the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime, maximise the benefits of complementary sources to fill gaps in the statistics where possible, and clarify the gaps it is not possible to fill.
  - (2) Decision making on change that impacts on the published crime statistics series and trends must be transparent. There may be some scope to reduce the number of crime categories used for the collection and reporting of police recorded crime, and to consider how some offences currently excluded from notifiable crime might be reflected in published crime statistics, but any change must be managed and introduced in a controlled way.
  - (3) The Office for National Statistics should assume responsibility for the independent reporting and publication of crime statistics to the media and the public, together with the compilation of crime statistics from both the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime, and the contract management for the British Crime Survey. The Home Office should retain responsibility for collection and validation of recorded crime data from the police. Home Office statisticians should work with the Office for National Statistics on the compilation and publication of crime statistics to preserve criminological expertise.
- 1.3. This review follows on from the UK Statistics Authority report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales' published in May 2010, and includes a plan for implementing its recommendations, including the need for assurance on the quality of crime statistics.

## 2. Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** The body responsible for the publication of crime statistics should seek to improve the presentation of the statistics to give users and the public a clearer understanding of the overall picture of crime, by providing the major and other sources of crime statistics together with additional contextual information.

**Recommendation 2:** The experimental statistics on crimes against 10-15 year olds developed from the recent extension of the British Crime Survey should be incorporated without delay into the headline statistical releases on crime.

**Recommendation 3:** The Home Office should implement its plans for a telephone survey of businesses in 2011/12, and consideration should be given to running regular surveys on crimes against businesses in future years.

**Recommendation 4:** The National Statistician should establish an independent Advisory Committee to advise:

- the Home Secretary on any changes to the data requirements from the police needed for crime statistics, and on any changes to the Home Office Counting Rules; and
- the producer body on changes to coverage, definitions or methodology and on the handling of any such changes.

**Recommendation 5:** Responsibility for the publication of crime statistics should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics.

**Recommendation 6:** Responsibility for the contract management of the British Crime Survey, the processing and compilation of results from the British Crime Survey, and the compilation of the police recorded crime estimates, should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics. Home Office statisticians should work with the Office for National Statistics in the compilation and publication of both sources to retain criminological expertise and links with crime policy development.

**Recommendation 7:** Responsibility for the collection and validation of recorded crime data from the police should remain with the Home Office.

**Recommendation 8:** Quality assurance of police recording of crime should be re-focused by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on risk areas in terms of the statistical quality of the data, informed by statistical analysis and taking into account other relevant contextual issues. The existing audit programme should be built upon with due regard to burdens on the police.

### 3. Introduction

- 3.1. Statistics on crime are important to inform policy and decision making; to facilitate democratic accountability; and to allow the public to assess risk of crime in their neighbourhoods. Fully validated and quality assured National Statistics that comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics are essential for these purposes at a national level. However the importance of data availability at the level of small geographies has also been highlighted during the course of this review. The recently launched crime mapping website provides a valuable tool for access to timely data on crimes recorded by the police.
- 3.2. There are two main statistical sources on crime, the crime figures recorded by the police (police recorded crime) and the results of the British Crime Survey (BCS). While both sources have known strengths, they also have limitations, and compilation of the statistics is not straightforward. There are long-standing challenges with coverage and presentation, real difficulties in definition and measurement, and concerns about a lack of public trust in the statistics.
- 3.3. Given these issues, crime statistics have been reviewed several times in recent years. The Simmons Review<sup>1</sup> was conducted in 2000; there was a review by the former Statistics Commission in 2006<sup>2</sup>; the independent Smith Review<sup>3</sup>, also in 2006; the Casey Review<sup>4</sup> in 2008; and most recently a review by the UK Statistics Authority in 2010<sup>5</sup>. To varying degrees, all these reviews considered public perceptions of the crime statistics, and issues relating to their presentation. For example, following the 2000 Simmons Review the police recorded crime and BCS data were published alongside each other in Home Office statistical releases in order to provide a fuller picture than was possible for either series alone. The Authority's 2010 review, 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales', put forward a number of recommendations aimed at improving public understanding and confidence in the official crime statistics.
- 3.4. None of these reviews raised any concerns about the integrity of the Home Office statisticians or the compilation of the statistics. Neither has this review found any evidence questioning the professional integrity of Home Office statisticians, or the methodologies underpinning the crime statistics. Misunderstanding and distrust of the statistics appears to have arisen because of the known limitations of both sources (BCS and police recorded crime) and because there is a lack of clarity about which source should be used to identify certain types of crimes. Changes to the recorded crime series have led to confusion and to difficulties in understanding long term trends in crime.
- 3.5. In recent years public perception of the integrity of the crime statistics may have been influenced by politicians' use of crime statistics data, which has led to the UK Statistics Authority's public criticism of their manner of use. The Authority's report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales' stated that the way crime

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<sup>1</sup> Simmons J, 'Review of Crime Statistics', Home Office, 2000

<sup>2</sup> 'Crime Statistics: User Perspectives', Statistics Commission, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Smith A, 'Crime Statistics: An Independent Review', 2006

<sup>4</sup> Casey L, 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime', Cabinet Office, 2008

<sup>5</sup> 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales', UK Statistics Authority, 2010

statistics are used and quoted by politicians and the media is a major factor contributing to public distrust.

- 3.6. In December 2010 the Home Secretary asked the National Statistician to lead a review to consider which body outside the Home Office was best placed to have future formal responsibility for the publication of crime statistics. (Terms of Reference are shown at **Annex A**. Note that the reporting date for the review was subsequently postponed to the end of May 2011 to avoid the elections period). This latest review has also considered the future responsibility for the underlying data systems, and the handling of gaps and discontinuities in crime statistics. Availability of resources will be a key factor in taking forward the identified possible areas for future research for improving the coverage of crime statistics. In addition, this report includes an update on plans for the implementation of the recommendations in the UK Statistics Authority report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime: England and Wales'.
- 3.7. Building on the earlier reviews, the National Statistician's review has considered how public understanding and trust in crime statistics can be enhanced while balancing the needs of users and suppliers. The National Statistician was assisted by a project board during the review. Project Board members are shown at **Annex B**. The review has been conducted in an open and transparent way, consulting widely with users and stakeholders including Ministers and Opposition spokespersons, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Association of Chief Police Officers, police forces, the media, academics, interest and lobby groups, and the public. A list of those interviewed is given at **Annex C**. The review included a four week web based consultation; a summary of the responses received is given at **Annex D**.
- 3.8. Discussions were held with key stakeholders' at the start of the review, and on the emerging findings. Emerging findings were also discussed at a public meeting.



## 4. Published crime statistics: issues and the way forward

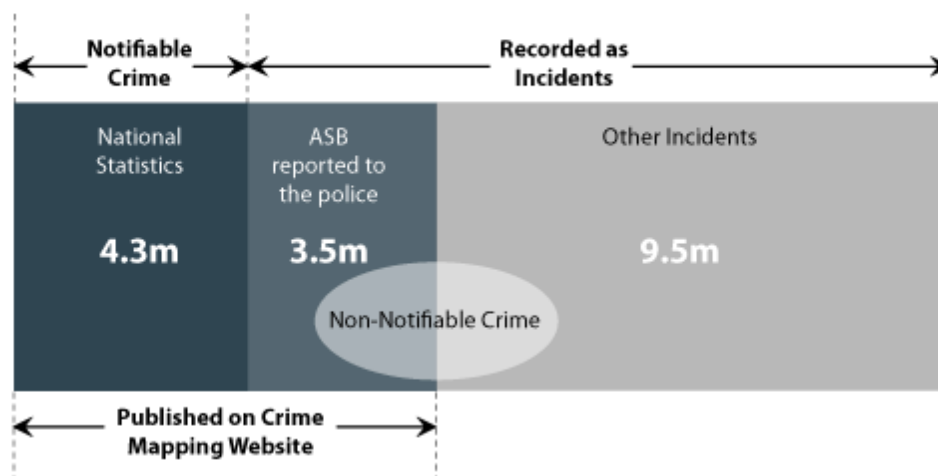
- 4.1. Discussions and consultations as part of both this review and the earlier reviews revealed a number of areas of concern that were considered to have impacted on public confidence in the official statistics. These included the existence of two major sources of crime statistics, the known limitations of each source, and gaps and discontinuities in the series. All of these factors contribute to the way politicians and others use, and the media report, the statistics, and the public's understanding and trust in the data. This chapter sets out the issues and considers the way forward.

### Issues

#### ***Two sources of crime statistics: police recorded crime and the British Crime Survey***

- 4.2. The police record incident data covering all calls for service received, some of which result in classification as 'notifiable crime'<sup>6</sup> with the remainder classified as incidents of either anti-social behaviour<sup>7</sup>(ASB) or other categories. These incidents will in some cases comprise crimes which fall outside existing National Statistics as they are non-notifiable. Many of such incidents are not crime (for example reports of missing persons). **Figure 1** summarises this, showing that in 2009/10 there were some 4.3 million notifiable crimes recorded by the police and reported in National Statistics, approximately 3.5 million incidents of ASB, and a further 9.5 million other incidents. Within both ASB and other incidents are a range of non-notifiable summary offences<sup>8</sup> which may result in prosecution in the courts or other sanctions such as penalty notices.

**Figure 1: Calls for service on the police, England and Wales, 2009/10**



<sup>6</sup> The Notifiable Offence List consists of all offences in law which must be or could be tried at Crown Court, and a small number of summary offences included to ensure completeness and integrity of the overall recorded crime series. The list currently totals some 1470 offences. The list is subject to change as new offences enter the statute book and others are repealed.

<sup>7</sup> ASB incidents are those recorded by the police based on the rules, classifications and definitions set out in the National Standard for Incident Recording.

<sup>8</sup> Summary offences are usually dealt with by the Magistrates' Courts.

- 4.3. Police recorded crime statistics reflect those crimes reported to the police and so they provide data at a local as well as national level, and they can provide a good measure of the more serious types of crime. However, many crimes are not reported to the police, and for some crimes, for example drug offences, the statistics can be seen as a measure of police activity rather than of crime.
- 4.4. The British Crime Survey (BCS), being a survey of the population, provides a measure of crime that includes incidents that are unreported to the police and unrecorded by the police, and thus provides a good measure of the long term trends in the more common types of crime against individuals or households. On the other hand, it does not cover homicide, commercial crime or 'victimless' crimes. (See **Box 1** for a further description of police recorded crime and the BCS).

**Box 1: Features of the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime**

British Crime Survey	Police Recorded Crime
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample survey of 46,000 households, nationally representative.</li> <li>• Supports crime statistics and Home Office and Ministry of Justice research.</li> <li>• Good measure of long term trends.</li> <li>• Excludes homicides, children, 'victimless' crimes, homeless and communal establishments.</li> <li>• Sample size does not support local breakdown.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative records.</li> <li>• 'Notifiable crime' governed by the National Crime Recording Standard<sup>9</sup> and the Home Office Counting Rules<sup>10</sup> (HOCR).</li> <li>• Local data available.</li> <li>• Linkage possible with other data in the criminal justice system.</li> <li>• Trends sensitive to changes in the Notifiable Offence List, recording practice, operational decisions on policing, changes in the HOCR.</li> </ul>

- 4.5. Both sources have their strengths and limitations, but they also complement one another, delivering between them a range of information that cannot be provided by one source alone. The two sources therefore add to public understanding of crime in England and Wales. However, previous reviews have concluded that the existence of two sources of crime statistics, rather than a single authoritative source, can also cause confusion and so contributes to a lack of trust. The existence of two sources can lead to 'cherry-picking' in the use and reporting of crime statistics. Also the sheer volume of data released annually can be difficult for users and the media to understand, and therefore correctly report, as discussed in the UK Statistics Authority report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'.

***UK and international comparability***

- 4.6. Both devolved administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland publish crime statistics based on police recorded crime and a household victimisation survey. While criminal law in Northern Ireland has been very similar to that in England and Wales, Scottish law differs in significant ways meaning that UK comparisons are not always possible.

<sup>9</sup> The National Crime Recording Standard stipulates when and whether the police should record a crime.

<sup>10</sup> The Home Office Counting Rules provide guidance to the police and Force Crime Registrars on how to code crimes on the Notifiable Offence List.

- 4.7. There is no international standard classification for police recorded crime statistics given the fundamental differences in the legal basis and in legal process, as well as the coverage of offences. Thus direct comparisons between countries are difficult except for homicide which varies less than for other types of crimes.
- 4.8. Along with the National Crime and Victimization survey in the United States, the BCS is seen as a model for other countries, and some western European countries now run a victimisation survey similar to the BCS. The European Commission is currently considering a regulation requiring European Union Member States to run a standard household survey (the European Safety Survey) in 2013. Consideration is being given to meeting the regulation through supply of data from the BCS and current Scotland and Northern Ireland surveys.

### ***Gaps in the statistics***

- 4.9. Public trust has also been affected by the fact that some crime is missed by both major sources. It is important to recognise that neither series produces, nor can they ever produce, a count of 'total' crime. Some crime goes unreported or is under reported; victims can be unaware of some crimes such as fraud; and there are crimes where there may be no direct victims, for example drugs possession. Nor is the definition of crime as straightforward as it may seem. The boundaries between crime and simple misbehaviour often depend on context. Whether something is to be treated as crime often involves individual and subjective decisions.
- 4.10. In addition, known significant gaps in the crime statistics include:
- Crimes against children
  - Crimes against businesses
  - Fraud (including online fraud)
  - e-Crime (or cyber crime), enabled by the Internet and new technology.
- 4.11. There is also a concern that public trust in the statistics is undermined because ASB is not categorised as notifiable crime, and thus is not included in published National Statistics. Further, there is a lack of understanding of the flow of offences and offenders through the criminal justice system.

### ***Crimes against children***

- 4.12. The exclusion of crimes against children from the BCS estimates has been considered a major gap by many users. Crimes against children are included in recorded crime if they are reported to the police. Data availability on crimes against children is important for understanding child abuse, neglect and domestic violence, and assisting in the development of programmes to tackle these problems. The Home Office has for some time been actively considering how best to fill this gap in the coverage of the BCS, and has recently consulted on experimental statistics on crimes against 10-15 year olds developed through extending the coverage of the BCS.

### *Crimes against businesses*

- 4.13. The lack of regular estimates of crimes against businesses has been raised by a number of users and stakeholders and is a known and significant gap. Such crimes tend to be under recorded in police recorded crime and by definition they are not covered by the BCS as it is a survey of households. In addition, crimes against businesses tend to be an area of repeat victimisation. In the past the Home Office has periodically run surveys of commercial victims, the last one being in 2002. It has plans to conduct a telephone survey of approximately 8,000 businesses in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

### *Fraud*

- 4.14. Another offence which is not well covered by either the BCS or police recorded crime is fraud. It is not included in the main BCS crime count due to conceptual difficulties with assigning victimisation. For example, most credit card fraud experienced by individuals is crime against the card issuer ie a bank or financial institution. While fraud offences appear in the Notifiable Offence List, it is known to be substantially under-reported to the police. Recent editions of Home Office annual publications on crime statistics have drawn on industry sources, such as from the UK Cards Association, or from modules of supplementary questions on the BCS, to provide a fuller picture of credit card fraud. Measurement challenges exist, for example treatment of fraudulent use of plastic cards belonging to UK nationals outside the UK. The National Fraud Authority is taking steps to improve the available data on fraud.

### *e-Crime*

- 4.15. New technology and in particular the Internet have provided new methods for offenders to commit crimes (i.e. e-Crime or cyber-crime). For the most part these new methods are covered by existing offences such as fraud, but there is concern that the existing statistics do not adequately capture the scale of such crimes or provide a breakdown of offence by use of such methods. Fraud is an important component of e-crime but there are other offences committed this way including emotional abuse (i.e. cyber-bullying), harassment (i.e. cyber-stalking) and sexual abuse/exploitation. e-Crime presents particular measurement challenges, such as willingness of victims to report the crime.

### *Anti-social behaviour and other incidents (non-notifiable crime)*

- 4.16. The published National Statistics police recorded crime series is currently restricted to notifiable crime and, in terms of the legal sanctions for offenders, is focused on more serious crimes. As such police recorded crime does not cover a large volume of crimes and incidents of ASB that are not notifiable. The distinction between notifiable and non-notifiable crime and disorder is not easy to understand for the non-expert, and as a result the official statistics may be out of line with public perceptions of crime.
- 4.17. ASB which results in a breach of an offence in the notifiable list should be recorded by police under the relevant offence (e.g. harassment or criminal damage), and included in the recorded crime series. Such offences should not appear in the ASB incident count. Incident recording is currently guided by the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR). Recording of incident data is known to be not as robust as crime recording. The recording of ASB and other incidents (i.e. non-notifiable crime) is known

to be highly variable across police forces<sup>11</sup> raising questions as to the comparability and quality of any resulting statistics. Reporting rates for ASB may also be influenced by victims' perceptions and levels of tolerance, and vary locally. Not all ASB is reported to the police but rather to other bodies such as landlords.

- 4.18. It is difficult to argue that ASB as a whole should be made notifiable (and hence be included in published National Statistics on crime) as although the public's perception may be that a crime has been committed, a lot of ASB incidents do not constitute a breach of any law. Treating incidents involving young people as crimes risks inappropriate criminalisation of them. However the public's perception of official crime statistics could be influenced by their local experience of ASB if, for example, nationally crime is decreasing but locally they feel exposed to increasing incidents of ASB. ASB incidents data are now published on the crime mapping website along with notifiable crime, and provide some valuable information to the public.

#### *Other gaps – specific types of crime*

- 4.19. A number of comments were received during the review about specific types of crime that are not currently separately identifiable in the National Statistics, including hate crime and domestic violence. Most of these types of crime are covered by the current statistics but cannot be identified because they are recorded under the relevant assault category (for example harassment or actual bodily harm).
- 4.20. The BCS can currently provide data on the circumstances of victimisation and it is used in the National Statistics to provide estimates of domestic abuse. Crime such as domestic violence has high repeat victimisation and better data on this would be useful. However, given the sample size of the survey it cannot be used to produce robust estimates on an annual basis for those crimes that are experienced by relatively small proportions of the population or outside the current scope of coverage.

#### *Flows through the criminal justice system*

- 4.21. Responses to this review suggested that the statistics would provide a fuller picture if the data allowed an understanding of the movement of an individual through the criminal justice system over time. The issue of downgrading of offences as they move through the system is also an area that is little understood and so a cause for concern. Downgrading is most often cited in offences involving violence and sexual offences. The lack of data flows was also highlighted in the UK Statistics Authority's report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'. This recommended developments in statistical publications on crime and the criminal justice system in England and Wales to make it easier for non-experts to understand the flow of offences and offenders through the criminal justice system.
- 4.22. Good progress has been made in considering improvements to the publications (an update is shown in Chapter 7), but in addition, there is a significant demand for full data on flows through the criminal justice system. However, the statistics as currently presented are a snapshot. In order to develop meaningful data, a fully linked dataset needs to be created from crime through to the court system, and the data need to recognise the impact of downgrading as cases progress through the system.

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<sup>11</sup> See 'Anti-social Behaviour: Inspection Findings', HMIC 2010

- 4.23. The Ministry of Justice has recognised this gap and in 2009 it established a Data Improvement Project to link data across the criminal justice system. This project is nearing fruition and the Ministry of Justice now has a dataset which covers data on crimes recorded on the Police National Computer, flows through the court system, spells in prison, time spent under probation supervision, and the interventions received while in prison or on probation. New statistics are planned for release during 2011/12.

#### *Repeat offenders*

- 4.24. As well as better data on repeat victimisation, users expressed interest in information on repeat offenders. It is currently difficult to tell the extent of repeat offending from the published data.

### **Changes and discontinuities**

#### *Changes to counting rules and classifications*

- 4.25. Over time, there have been some major changes in the counting of recorded crime (e.g. the 1998 introduction of the Home Office Counting Rules and the 2002 introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard), and a range of changes to the way offences are classified, causing discontinuities in the recorded crime statistics. The significant changes in 1998 and 2002 were associated with quality improvements to the statistics. However, discontinuities make it difficult for users to disentangle the effects of the new recording or classification regime from the real trends in crime. This leads to confusion and a lack of understanding and consequently a lack of trust in the official statistics.
- 4.26. A recurring theme from stakeholders has been the need for continuity in published series so that long term trends are apparent. If change is necessary, as it sometimes will be, then analysis of the long term impact of any change is vital so that conclusions about the impact of policy changes or underlying trend can still be made. Change should be introduced and managed in a controlled way.
- 4.27. Despite the calls for continuity, there have also been calls for changes to the notifiable offence list for various reasons and from various quarters. For example, concerns about the reporting burdens on the police have led to claims that the notifiable offence list should be reduced. Well documented difficulties<sup>12</sup> in distinguishing between offences of different levels of seriousness (such as crimes involving violence against the person) have also been used to support calls for the aggregation of offences into a smaller set of high level categories<sup>13</sup> in National Statistics publications. It is argued that this would make the statistics easier for the public to understand. The list of 148 crime categories that the police record against under the HOCR, and are published in National Statistics publications, is shown at **Annex E**.
- 4.28. On the other hand, there have equally been calls for extensions to the notifiable list. The list currently excludes most summary offences and by-laws. There are some summary offences which the public might think should be included in published crime statistics. Among these are some high volume offences, perhaps most notably driving after consumption of excess alcohol or drugs. Speed limit offences are also currently

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<sup>12</sup> See Box 2.1 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 'Crime in England and Wales 2008/09'.

<sup>13</sup> The Notifiable Offence List is collapsed into 148 crime categories for the purposes of police forces' reporting to the Home Office, and for publication of National Statistics on recorded crime.

excluded from the notifiable list. Some have argued that unless or until a certain type of offending is deemed notifiable then it may not be taken sufficiently seriously, for example offences relating to wildlife.

- 4.29. Despite the existence of the NCRS the quality of recorded crime data will vary as there will always be an element of subjectivity in recording against the crime categories, and interpretation of the HOCR that guide that coding. Police recording policies and processes may also vary, leading to inconsistencies in recording.
- 4.30. Any change needs to balance the needs of users and the granularity of data required; the ability to produce, and benefits of producing, consistent back series; the impact on data quality; the impact on burden of reporting on police forces or households; and the risk of introducing discontinuity to the statistics which may lead to a decrease in public trust.

## **The way forward**

### ***Improving understanding through improved presentation***

- 4.31. While there can be confusion caused by the existence of two main sources of crime statistics, the absence of either source would lead to major gaps in the public's knowledge and understanding of crime in England and Wales. However, there is a need for improvements in the presentation and explanation of the statistics to reduce the confusion, maximise the benefits of the complementary sources, and provide clarity about what each source does and does not cover.
- 4.32. There are other existing sources of crime data that could be more clearly presented alongside the headline BCS and recorded crime estimates, which would enhance the overall picture of crime, and fill some of the gaps in the statistics. Home Office statisticians have already made some improvements in this context, but more could be done by drawing on other sources. For example Ministry of Justice National Statistics on non-notifiable crime proceeded against in the courts could be made available alongside the quarterly headline series on BCS and police recorded crime. This would provide the public with a better understanding of the overall picture of crime.
- 4.33. This overall picture of crime could be conceived as a 'jigsaw puzzle'. The BCS and police recorded crime represent major pieces of this jigsaw. The publication of additional data (for example on ASB incidents) as more contextual information could form further pieces of the jigsaw. With the inclusion of appropriate explanations about overlaps and remaining gaps, this could provide users and the public with more transparency and a better understanding of the overall picture. As gaps are filled, for example as new data streams become available from the National Fraud Authority, these estimates could be added to the jigsaw. A publication framework such as this could help dispel current confusion and improve overall understanding. This builds upon the findings of the UK Statistics Authority report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'. Two possible ways of visualising this publication framework are shown at **Annex F**.
- 4.34. Currently a large volume of data is released annually, with only partial publication or update on a quarterly basis. Issues with reconciling differing periodicities of the different sources of data, and the detail of content and presentation, would need to be examined. The overlaps between some of the sources would need to be recognised, for example police recorded crime includes some crime against businesses.

**Recommendation 1: The body responsible for the publication of crime statistics should seek to improve the presentation of the statistics to give users and the public a clearer understanding of the overall picture of crime, by providing the major and other sources of crime statistics together with additional contextual information.**

#### *Crime indices*

- 4.35. A further possible way of reducing confusion from having the two major sources of crime statistics could be to develop an authoritative index or indices of trends in crime or types of crime (as for inflation). In July 2007 the Home Office published some exploratory proposals on development of an unweighted 'basket of serious crime', and a weighted crime index. They also experimented with a basket of serious crime for the 2007/8 annual publication based on recorded crime data, but data quality issues with police recording of 'most serious' and 'less serious' violence against the person led to this being discontinued.
- 4.36. Some stakeholders expressed interest in further development of the idea of baskets of crime or crime indices. However, crime indices are technically complex and resource intensive to develop, and that complexity may in itself confuse users. Only one other country in the world (Canada) produces a crime index. There may be merit in considering crime indices as an avenue for further research, but this would have to be balanced against other priorities for research. It is also important to recognise that the key demand from users is for consistent time series of crime data; consideration of any other presentational options should not put that at risk. **Annex G** summarises the issues that would need to be considered in constructing a crime index for England and Wales.

#### *Crime mapping*

- 4.37. The recently launched crime mapping website (January 2011) hosted by the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) provides recorded crime data at street level - a valuable tool for the public in assessing what is happening to crime in their area. It also provides data on ASB incidents reported to the police.
- 4.38. The crime mapper is still developing, and provides a different but complementary service to that of the National Statistics. There is a clear distinction between the provisional, real time management information provided via the crime mapper, and the fully validated and quality assured National Statistics on recorded crime that comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. National Statistics are essential for policy and decision making, and for democratic accountability, at a national level. The crime mapper will conceivably grow in importance as a tool for communicating police activity, and for accountability at a local level, particularly with the advent of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in May 2012. Appropriate signposting should be introduced between the official crime statistics and the crime mapping website to provide clarity on their respective status as National Statistics and management information. As time goes on, management of revisions to recorded crime data on the crime mapper may need attention; these are applied in the National Statistics as police forces supply revised data to the Home Office.
- 4.39. Currently police forces supply data to both the NPIA, the current host of the crime mapping website, and Home Office statisticians for National Statistics purposes.



Development of the Home Office Data Hub<sup>14</sup> provides an opportunity to address efficiency and the streamlining of police processes by working towards a single supply of data by the police via the Data Hub.

4.40. In summary, consideration should be given to:

- **introducing signposting between the crime statistics, and the National Police Improvement Agency hosted crime mapping website, to provide clarity on their respective status as National Statistics and management information;**
- **the need for future management of revisions to recorded crime data published on the crime mapping website; and**
- **the possible streamlining of police processes by working towards a single data supply of recorded crime (and incident data) by forces via the Home Office Data Hub for the purposes of National Statistics and crime mapping.**

***Addressing gaps and discontinuities***

*Crimes against children*

4.41. The Home Office has made progress in recent years in filling a significant gap in the crime statistics, by extending the BCS to collect data on crimes against 10-15 year olds. Annual experimental statistics were first published in June 2010, and this will be repeated in July 2011. Future National Statistics headline releases on crime should incorporate estimates of crimes against children, again to provide a fuller picture.

**Recommendation 2: The experimental statistics on crimes against 10-15 year olds developed from the recent extension of the British Crime Survey should be incorporated without delay into the headline statistical releases on crime.**

*Crimes against businesses*

4.42. A further significant gap noted by many users is the lack of regular estimates of crimes against businesses. As the Home Office already plans surveys in 2011/12 and 2012/13, this gap can be plugged in the short term while further consideration can be given to possible options for the future. An alternative to a separate survey would be to consider adding questions on crime to one of the large scale surveys of businesses already carried out for other purposes.

**Recommendation 3: The Home Office should implement its plans for a telephone survey of businesses in 2011/12, and consideration should be given to running regular surveys on crimes against businesses in future years.**

**In implementing Recommendation 3 consideration should be given to the feasibility of adding questions on crime to surveys of businesses already in operation for other purposes.**

<sup>14</sup> The Data Hub will enable police forces to supply individual record level data to Home Office electronically rather than aggregates via spreadsheets. This will cover crime statistics, police statistics and management information returns.

### *Fraud and cyber crime*

- 4.43. The launch of 'Action Fraud' – a service run by the National Fraud Authority (NFA) to provide a central point of contact for the public to report fraud to the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) – is leading to a transfer of reporting of fraud offences from the police to the NFIB. The public can now report fraud to 'Action Fraud' direct, or to the police who feed fraud data regularly to the NFIB. The plan is that police forces will supply fraud data through 'Action Fraud' rather than in their recorded crime returns to the Home Office. The NFA is also obtaining an increasingly rich set of data on fraud from other sources such as the banks and financial institutions. 'Action Fraud' has plans during 2011 to enable members of the public, when they report fraud, to indicate whether it occurred via an Internet site, by email etc. Consideration could be given as to how new data streams from the NFA and NFIB on fraud could be incorporated into the national crime statistics to give a fuller picture.

### *Anti-social behaviour and other incidents (non-notifiable crime)*

- 4.44. ASB incidents as a whole should not be re-categorised as notifiable crime, and therefore not be added to the published crime count. However ASB incidents data would add valuable context to the published statistics and help the public see ASB incidents in the context of an overall picture of crime. ASB incidents data could therefore form another jigsaw piece in the publication framework.
- 4.45. As discussed earlier, recording of incidents data is highly variable across police forces raising questions about quality, and ASB reporting is influenced by victims' perceptions and levels of tolerance, and can vary locally. Careful consideration would therefore need to be given to how ASB incidents data could be published alongside crime statistics. It is understood that there are plans to include data on all incidents on the crime mapping website at some point. Publication of incident data may lead to demand for increased data quality and consistency of recording.
- 4.46. A low cost, low burden alternative to expanding the notifiable offence list would be to make use of Ministry of Justice data on non-notifiable offences proceeded against in the courts. This would largely cover non-notifiable crimes such as speeding and driving under the influence. Further work would be required to establish how to implement publication of these data alongside the police recorded crime National Statistics, but this is a feasible low cost way of providing additional contextual information to the overall crime picture.

### *Specific types of crime*

- 4.47. Development of the Home Office Data Hub could provide the opportunity to fill another perceived gap in the crime statistics – analysis of specific crime types such as hate crime. The standard data returned from police forces take the form of aggregate counts of offences. This is changing with the piloting by a number of forces to supply individual record level data via the Data Hub. In future, if implemented, this will enable more detailed analysis to be presented where offences are 'flagged' to indicate the circumstances of the crime e.g. hate crime. There would be the opportunity to add further flags in future to identify other crime types, but the additional burden on the police would have to be balanced by a justified user need.
- 4.48. Where the appropriate data can be identified to enable secondary analysis, more could be done to enhance understanding of specific crime types or themes. However, rather

than publish these alongside the headline National Statistics, this type of secondary analysis would more readily sit in specific topic-based reports produced periodically. This issue was raised by the Authority's report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'. Consequently a suggestion to publish topic based analyses is included in Chapter 7, which presents an Implementation Plan for taking forward the recommendations from the Authority report.

#### *Flows through the criminal justice system*

4.49. In terms of improvements to the understanding of flows through the criminal justice system, the Ministry of Justice's work on the Data Improvement Project will soon bear fruit. During 2011/12 the Ministry of Justice plans to publish:

- Full conviction rates which are measured to take account of downgrading of offences as cases progress through the system.
- Experimental statistics on a new measure showing the time from offence to completion in the court system.

4.50. Further work needs to be done to fully exploit this rich new dataset. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with Home Office and the new producer body, should continue work in this area, including the development of separate publications showing flows from recorded crime to conviction, for example for sexual offences as suggested in Chapter 7.

#### *Repeat offenders*

4.51. During 2011 the Ministry of Justice has plans to develop further measures on repeat offending within its Criminal Justice System Statistics quarterly publication.

#### *Areas for further research*

4.52. During the course of this review, a number of areas have emerged in which further research could deliver benefits in terms of filling gaps in the statistics, tackling measurement issues or supporting considerations of presentation. For example:

- developing the publication framework;
- considering the potential use of baskets or indices of crime;
- considering measurement issues in relation to e-Crime or cyber crime;
- incorporating new data streams such as NFA data on fraud into the National Statistics picture;
- publishing Ministry of Justice National Statistics on non-notifiable summary offences alongside crime statistics;
- publishing recorded incidents of ASB alongside crime statistics; and
- investigating the feasibility of improving the availability of data on repeat victimisation.

- 4.53. It would be for the new producer body to own and co-ordinate any programme of research. However it must be recognised that such a work programme will depend upon the availability of resources. The crime landscape will continually evolve so there will always be a need for periodic reviews or research to ensure the statistical picture remains up to date. Such research would have to be appropriately prioritised with users and take full account of the balance of cost and burdens against benefits.

### ***Changes and discontinuities***

- 4.54. Arguments have been made for both reducing and expanding the notifiable list of offences. The principles of the NCRS remain important, but there may be some scope to rationalise the crime categories within the official statistics, and to consider further whether and how some offences currently excluded from police recorded crime data might be reflected in published crime statistics. While there should be no immediate changes, there is a case for reviewing the notifiable list and categories with a view to simplifying collection and interpretation, and improving quality.
- 4.55. On the other hand, this review has confirmed the importance to users of consistent time series to give an understanding of long term trends in crime. Changes to the notifiable list, or any other changes in definitions, classifications, or methodologies, will impact on the time series. The handling and presentation of any such changes to the published series must be made in an open and transparent way, and managed in a way which enables the impact to be understood, if trust in the statistics is to be maintained. Changes should be considered and managed transparently so they are seen to be free from political interference, take due regard of any impact on quality and continuity and on burden, and do not undermine public trust in the statistics.
- 4.56. This review has therefore identified the need for a transparent, independent National Statistician's Advisory Committee to advise on any change in definitions, classifications or methodologies that will impact on time series. This would be a strategic committee with senior membership drawn from the new producer body, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Welsh Assembly Government, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the wider expert and academic community.
- 4.57. This Committee would only be concerned with changes which impact on the statistics, and would want to be advised by the Home Office of any potential changes which would impact upon trends. It would not play a role in decisions on, for example, streamlining of processes within forces to improve efficiency. Responsibilities would include the public provision of advice to:
- The Home Secretary on any changes to the Annual Data Requirement on the police for crime statistics, and amendments to the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) which provide guidance to the police on recording crime; and
  - The producer body on changes to the coverage, definitions or methodology of crime statistics, and the handling and presentation of those changes in published series, paying due regard to the need for transparent analysis of the impact of any change on trends.

**Recommendation 4: The National Statistician should establish an independent Advisory Committee to advise:**

- **the Home Secretary on any changes to the data requirements from the police needed for crime statistics, and on any changes to the Home Office Counting Rules; and**
- **the producer body on changes to coverage, definitions or methodology and on the handling of any such changes.**

**Early tasks of an independent Advisory Committee on Crime Statistics could be to:**

- **commission, and consider recommendations from, a review of:**
  - **the crime categories used for collection and reporting of police recorded crime with a view to simplifying collection, reducing burden on the police, improving quality, and improving presentation in statistical releases;**
  - **how some offences currently excluded from the Notifiable Offence List might be reflected in published crime statistics.**
- **consider the availability of resources, and the demand for, a prioritised programme of research into the improvement of crime statistics, including those areas for research highlighted by this review.**

## 5. Responsibility for reporting and publication of crime statistics

- 5.1. The Home Secretary announced in December 2010 that publication of crime statistics would be moved out of the Home Office to demonstrate their independence. This review considered three main options for the alternative body that would be best placed to have future responsibility for the publication of crime statistics. These options were:
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)
  - The Office for National Statistics (ONS)
  - A new entity (either an independent criminological body or a new departmental arms length body)
- 5.2. Each option was assessed against an agreed set of criteria in order to arrive at the final recommendation. These were: the impact on public confidence; quality; whether any additional burden would be proportionate; whether increased costs were balanced against benefits; sustainable statistical capability; and meeting user needs. **Annex H** summarises the assessment of the options against these criteria.
- 5.3. This assessment led to the identification of ONS as the preferred body, and this received widespread support during the review discussions. ONS is not the least cost option in the short term as IT system set-up costs are likely to outweigh those of HMIC given that HMIC already shares core Home Office systems. However it offers a range of other benefits, including its experience of managing the successful transfer of statistical functions from other departments in the past (e.g. responsibility for labour market statistics and the working model in place with the Department for Work and Pensions).
- 5.4. ONS is independent (reporting through the UK Statistics Authority to Parliament), and has a considerable body of statistical expertise and experience. Its statisticians compile and publish a huge range of National (and official) Statistics, and regularly present these directly to the press and other media. Journalists have direct access to ONS statisticians outside of press briefings on statistics releases, which assists in media reporting.
- 5.5. Transition plans will have to be developed between ONS and the Home Office prior to the transfer. The transfer of responsibility will also need to be accompanied by an appropriate transfer of resources. Given the criminological expertise resting with Home Office statisticians, and appreciation of the policy landscape, it will be important that Home Office statisticians work with ONS in its reporting of crime statistics in future.

**Recommendation 5: Responsibility for the publication of crime statistics should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics.**

## 6. Responsibility for data systems

- 6.1. Chapter 5 concluded that responsibility for the publication of crime statistics should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This raised related questions about the future responsibility for the underlying data systems; in particular the collection and compilation of the statistics.

### Compilation of the crime statistics

- 6.2. It was felt by many stakeholders that the publishing body should also have responsibility for the compilation of the statistics. This would give it an understanding of the underlying data so that it could ensure the quality of the statistics; enable it to prepare appropriate commentary in publications; and publicly demonstrate independence from political influence. Others felt that transferring compilation responsibility could create unnecessary distance from policy makers in the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice; and risk a loss of Home Office knowledge and expertise in crime statistics.
- 6.3. It would be difficult for ONS to provide a guarantee of independence and integrity in the statistics if it had responsibility only for publication and reporting. It would need an in-depth understanding of the quality of the source data. A lack of control over and access to data for quality assurance purposes, or design and management of statistical systems and methods, may also make it difficult for ONS to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The wider public perception of the independence of crime statistics may be at risk if only a small part of the production process was carried out independently.
- 6.4. It is therefore important that ONS assumes responsibility for the statistical compilation of recorded crime figures and British Crime Survey (BCS) estimates. This will enable ONS to provide relevant commentary in publications, and should maximise the impact on public perception of the independence of crime statistics.
- 6.5. However the body of criminological expertise in understanding crime measurement and trends currently residing with Home Office statisticians is critical to the quality of the crime statistics. To mitigate the risks of losing this expertise, and the links with crime and policing policy developments, the Home Office should retain a team of statisticians working on crime statistics. This would ensure the continued provision of high quality and informed analysis for Home Office purposes. These staff would also work with ONS on compilation and publication of crime statistics. Co-ordination and co-operation between ONS and Ministry of Justice statisticians will also be important given Ministry of Justice statisticians have significant criminological competence. ONS should also look to other sources of criminological expertise, such as the academic sector, for input in the analysis and interpretation of the statistics.
- 6.6. The Home Office statistician team would therefore continue to perform analysis and briefing to support Home Office policy makers and Ministers. This would be analogous to the model in existence for labour market statistics between ONS and the Department for Work and Pensions. In consultation during this review, the Department for Work and Pensions has stressed the importance of the retention of sufficient statistical capability to respond quickly to analysis, queries and briefing requests by Ministers; the need for effective channels for communication and consultation on change by ONS; and access to anonymised survey 'microdata' to enable bespoke analyses.

## Data collection for the British Crime Survey

- 6.7. The contract for the BCS data collection is currently managed by Home Office statisticians and put out to competitive tender approximately every three years. Stakeholders and users expressed support for the BCS as a very important and well regarded survey. It is not only seen as the benchmark for monitoring crime trends, but as an important research tool by a wide range of users. It is important that the BCS's role as a comprehensive and trusted research tool continues.
- 6.8. A number of stakeholders expressed concern that the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) may lead to changes in crime recording practices. If the BCS and recorded crime estimates were to diverge it would be important for the BCS to be demonstrably free of political influence. This independence must therefore also extend to the survey management.
- 6.9. This suggests that ONS should assume responsibility for the contract management, funding, data receipt and quality assurance of the BCS. ONS would need to put in place a memorandum of understanding with the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice on handling their requirements and other operational arrangements. To avoid any conflict of interest with ONS' own survey operations, an 'information barrier' should be established between ONS crime statistics producers and social survey operators.

## Data collection for police recorded crime

- 6.10. There are benefits to retaining the collection of recorded crime in the Home Office given the existing relationships between the Home Office and the police, which can be used to encourage the continued supply of good quality and timely data. This would also avoid an increase in bureaucracy in the police supply of data under the Annual Data Requirement i.e. data would not have to be supplied to both ONS (for crime statistics purposes) and the Home Office (for policing statistics and management information purposes). Retention of the data collection within the Home Office would also further strengthen the argument for retaining statistical capability in the department. This suggests that the collection and validation of recorded crime data from police forces should remain as a Home Office function. The validated police recorded crime datafiles should be supplied to ONS for compilation and publication.
- 6.11. Retention of Home Office responsibility for the collection and validation of recorded crime data also strengthens the recommendation to give ONS responsibility for the management of the BCS. Views were widely expressed that the advent of PCCs in May 2012 may lead to differing policies and recording practices in police forces, which in turn could lead to discontinuities in recorded crime trends. The BCS, seen as the benchmark series for monitoring trends, would be visibly independent.
- 6.12. While there are benefits in taking a different decision on the data collection for the two sources (e.g. independent oversight of the BCS benchmark survey, relationships with police contributing to quality and timeliness for police recorded crime, efficiency of arrangements for police recorded crime), there is a potential downside in terms of the risk of losing coherence between the two sources. On balance, the benefits of separate arrangements for BCS and police recorded crime data collection outweigh the risks. The risks would be further mitigated by having the Home Office statisticians working with ONS in the compilation and publication of both sources.



**Recommendation 6: Responsibility for the contract management of the British Crime Survey, the processing and compilation of results from the British Crime Survey, and the compilation of the police recorded crime estimates, should transfer from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics. Home Office statisticians should work with the Office for National Statistics in the compilation and publication of both sources to retain criminological expertise and links with crime policy development.**

**Recommendation 7: Responsibility for the collection and validation of recorded crime data from police forces should remain with the Home Office.**

### **Quality assurance of police recorded crime**

- 6.13. Views were consistently expressed about the quality and consistency of police forces' recording of crime both within and across police forces. As discussed in Chapter 4, despite the existence of the National Crime Recording Standard and the Home Office Counting Rules, crime recording will always have an element of subjectivity in interpreting the HOCR guidance for coding the crime categories. In addition, force recording policies and processes can vary. As already discussed, a risk exists that recording practices may change, and vary across forces, over time.
- 6.14. The primary responsibility for data quality rests with forces rather than Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the Home Office or ONS. Forces should ensure that their policies and processes support this principle. Quality control within force systems makes the audit process more efficient. Much has been achieved through the provision of a Crime Registrar in each force with responsibility to uphold consistent recording. Their work to develop risk based internal audits with guidance from the Home Office is valuable and should be continued as where this works well it can minimise the need for extensive review by HMIC.
- 6.15. HMIC has an independent role in auditing including of data used for statistics. Audits of data for statistical purposes should be informed by statistical analysis. To enable this, detailed analysis of the recorded crime series could pinpoint specific offence codes within forces, or spot patterns across forces, which would benefit from examination.
- 6.16. The current inspection programme introduced by HMIC should be focused on risk areas in this way, without placing undue additional burden on police. The recommended independent Advisory Committee could advise HMIC on the statistical requirements for police recorded crime, and the risk areas where audit should be targeted. Subject to availability of resources, the Committee could also facilitate independent statistical resource to assist in sample design for supplementary random quality assurance by HMIC. Increases in burden on police forces could be avoided if audits were announced at short notice to minimise the requirement on forces to prepare in advance.

**Recommendation 8: Quality assurance of police recording of crime should be re-focused by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on risk areas in terms of the statistical quality of the data, informed by statistical analysis and taking into account other relevant contextual issues. The existing audit programme should be built upon with due regard to burdens on the police.**

**Consideration should be given to the use of independent statistical resource to assist with random sampling to supplement risk based areas for quality assurance.**

## 7. Update on plans for the implementation of recommendations in the UK Statistics Authority report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'

- 7.1. In May 2010 the UK Statistics Authority published its report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales,' which made a number of recommendations relating to improving understanding and enhancing public confidence in crime statistics. The recommendations are shown at **Annex I**.
- 7.2. All but one of the recommendations have been accepted by the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the National Statistician. Home Office Ministers decided to go further than Recommendation 1 ("the Home Office should establish a standing non-executive board to review and report on arrangements for the production of crime statistics, in order to provide independent assurance of their impartiality and integrity, and to comment on methods and quality"), by moving responsibility for the publication of crime statistics out of the Home Office.
- 7.3. The remaining recommendations were concerned with:
- improving the presentation of crime statistics to make them more authoritative;
  - improving the presentation and publication of crime and criminal justice statistics to make them more relevant and to help the non-expert understand the flow of offences and offenders through the criminal justice system;
  - developing a conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice data and providing guidance on the presentation and use of the statistics;
  - reviewing the availability of local crime and criminal justice data on government websites to identify opportunities for consolidation, sharing of best practice and improvements in metadata, and the strengthening of existing guidelines on the conduct of local surveys; and
  - providing reassurance on the quality of police crime records and consistent application of Home Office Counting Rules, including through strengthened audit.
- 7.4. Many of the findings of the National Statistician's review echo those in the Authority's report. The Implementation Plan at **Annex J** provides an update of progress to date against the Authority's recommendations, together with recommended further actions. Delivery dates for these actions will depend upon the Government's response to the recommendations in this National Statistician's review, and the timing of the transfer of functions from the Home Office to the new producer body.
- 7.5. Progress in improving publications to aid understanding has been particularly noteworthy. At the end of 2010, the Ministry of Justice carried out a public consultation on a major overhaul of criminal justice statistics which aimed to:
- provide greater clarity on the concepts and definitions as measured by the criminal justice system;
  - ensure there was broad user support for these definitions; and

- merge the disparate range of criminal justice publications into three key quarterly bulletins which would replace around 14 separate publications that were confusing to the reader.
- 7.6. Taken alongside the current crime statistics publications, these changes mean that all key measures in the crime and criminal justice system will be published in four quarterly bulletins:
- ‘Crime in England and Wales’ – which provides an overview of trends in police recorded crime and the British Crime Survey.
  - ‘Criminal Justice System Statistics’ – which provides an overview of crime; detections; out of court disposals; prosecutions; convictions; sentencing; first-time entrants to the criminal justice system and criminal histories.
  - ‘Offender Management Statistics Quarterly’ – which provides prison and probation statistics; license recalls and returns to custody, providing the link between prison, probation and the police.
  - ‘Re-offending Statistics’ – which provides an overview of re-offending trends.
- 7.7. There seems little merit in trying further to wedge these publications together due to the volume of material. However, there would be significant benefit in enhancing the series of topic specific reports that are published across crime and the criminal justice system. These currently include reports on ‘Race and the Criminal Justice System’ and ‘Women and the Criminal Justice System’. As discussed in Chapter 4 there would be significant benefit in extending this range of topic specific reports. **Annex J** therefore includes a proposed action for the new producer body, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice to develop such a work programme.

**Recommendations regarding rape statistics in the Stern Review ‘An independent review into how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales’**

- 7.8. In March 2010 Baroness Stern published a report ‘An independent review into how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales’ commissioned by the previous government. The Coalition Government’s response to the review said that the recommendations regarding rape statistics were generally accepted, and would be addressed as part of the response to the UK Statistics Authority report *Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales*.
- 7.9. The key recommendations in terms of rape statistics were:
- The National Statistician and the Home Office should aim to ensure that the publication of crime statistics is always accompanied by enough explanation to ensure that their meaning can be widely understood.
  - The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should work with the National Statistician in order to find a way of presenting criminal justice data that enables comparisons to be made of the outcomes for various offences, and make clear what conclusions can and cannot be drawn from those data.

- 7.10. The first recommendation relates to Recommendation 2 of the Barriers to Trust report i.e. that the National Statistician should publish a regular commentary on trends and patterns in crime. However the situation has moved on since that report was published in May 2010; publication of crime statistics is moving outside of the Home Office to an independent producer. The new producer body will take on responsibility for producing a full and regular commentary on trends and patterns in crime.
- 7.11. The second recommendation is concerned with the methodology used in the production of conviction rates, and inappropriate comparisons being made between recorded crime and convictions, as opposed to prosecutions. This recommendation is now being met by the Ministry of Justice's development of full conviction rates taking account of downgrading of offences as cases progress through the criminal justice system, as discussed in Chapter 4. These are planned for publication during 2011/12. This recommendation is also being met by the developments to criminal justice statistics publications which will provide greater clarity on the flows through the system.

## Annex A: Terms of reference

Working closely with the Chief Statisticians in the Home Office and Ministry of Justice and in consultation with key users and producers of the statistics (including Ministers, Opposition Parties, ACPO and HMIC) to:

1. Review gaps, discrepancies and discontinuities in crime statistics (both the BCS and police recorded crime) and recommend cost-effective ways of addressing them and, in particular to consider
  - whether or not any changes are needed in the distinction between notifiable and non-notifiable crime and disorder to improve public trust and transparency
  - current definitions of crime and anti-social behaviour to provide greater clarity and more alignment with public concerns about criminal activity that causes sustained harms to communities and vulnerable individuals
  - whether or not the categories of notifiable offences for police recorded crime reported in the national statistics can be sensibly rationalised without reducing public trust or damaging transparency
  - how gaps or deficiencies in crime statistics could be addressed, while securing value for money and without adding undue bureaucratic burdens on the police or others
2. Consider which body outside the Home Office is best placed to have future formal responsibility for the publication of crime statistics for England and Wales and what should be the appropriate underpinning data collection arrangements. Both publication and collection arrangements should have regard to the impact on public trust, value for money, data quality, meeting users' needs and bureaucratic burdens.
3. The review should report by the end of April 2011 and proposals subject to a public consultation before any changes are implemented from April 2012.

## **Annex B: Project board members**

Jil Matheson (Chair)	National Statistician
Iain Bell	Chief Statistician, Ministry of Justice
David Blunt	Chief Statistician, Home Office
Professor Allan Brimicombe	Chair of the Crime and Justice Statistics Network
Kate Chamberlain	Chief Statistician, Welsh Assembly Government
Professor Mike Hough	President of the British Society of Criminology
Debra Prestwood	National Statistician's Office, UK Statistics Authority
Caron Walker	National Statistician's Office, UK Statistics Authority

## Annex C: Interview participants

Iain Bell	Ministry of Justice
Martin Bentham	London Evening Standard
David Blunt	Home Office
James Brockenshire MP	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Crime Prevention
Tom Brake MP	Co-Chair of the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Policy Committee on Home Affairs, Justice and Equalities
James Bury	NSPCC
Vernon Coaker MP	Shadow Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice
Rt. Hon. Yvette Cooper MP	Shadow Home Secretary
Partha Dasgupta	Non-executive member of the UK Statistics Authority
Tricia Dodd	Office for National Statistics
Mark Easton	BBC
Miv Elimelech	Home Office
Jeff Farrar	Deputy Chief Constable of Gwent Police
John Flatley	Home Office
Dame Helen Ghosh	Home Office
Tim Godwin	Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police
Stephen Harrison	National Fraud Authority
Catherine Hayes	National Fraud Authority
Nick Herbert MP	Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice
Claire Lilley	NSPCC
Rt. Hon. Teresa May MP	Secretary of State for the Home Department
Catriona Mirrlees-Black	Ministry of Justice
Eddie Nkune	National Fraud Authority
Sir Denis O'Connor	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Sir Hugh Orde	Association of Chief Police Officers

Stephen Otter	Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police
Andy Parker	Deputy Chief Constable of Warwickshire Police
Douglas Paxton	Association of Chief Police Officers
Stephen Penneck	Office for National Statistics
Stephen Rimmer	Home Office
Jaee Samant	Home Office
Professor Bernard Silverman	Chief Scientific Adviser to the Home Office
Sir Adrian Smith	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Rt. Hon. Jack Straw MP	Member of Parliament for Blackburn
Alan Travis	Guardian
Victor Towell	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
Lord Gordon Wasserman	Adviser to HM Government on Policing and Criminal Justice
Tom Whitehead	Telegraph
Peter Wilson	National Fraud Authority



## **Annex D: Summary of web responses**

1. The web based 'invitation to comment' ran from 10 February to 10 March 2011. A total of 49 responses were received; these were a mixture of individual's and groups' views. A list summarising the categories of respondents or organisations who responded is shown at the end of this Annex.

### **Important considerations for trustworthy crime statistics**

2. Respondents noted the following as important considerations in achieving trust in crime statistics:
  - Consistency in recording of police recorded crime data
  - Independent ratification/auditing of police recorded crime data
  - Transparency and relevance of, and necessity for, the statistics
  - Impartial and insightful commentary
  - Availability of data at small geographies.
3. Misuse of the statistics by politicians, the media and police forces was noted as instrumental in leading to an erosion of trust.

### **The strengths of crime statistics**

4. The main strength identified was that they allow comparative analysis of trends, and between police forces (recorded crime). Other strengths cited were:
  - They aid resource targeting
  - There is good availability of local data and frequent publication.

### **Current definitions and gaps in crime statistics**

5. Responses were wide ranging and covered many themes, often involving a small number of respondents. The most frequently occurring comments are summarised below.

#### ***Definitions***

6. Consideration should be given to the following:
  - Whether incident data should be published with the crime statistics to give a fuller picture – one that may resonate more realistically with public perception.
  - Why the current definitions exist, thereby clearly linking the data information need to the requirement placed on police recording.
  - Reducing the complexity of the 148 crime categories in the Home Office Counting Rules with regard to their impact on crime recording, and reducing the statistical burden on police.

- Improving the definition of violent crime.

In addition:

- A variety of organisations wanted improved definitions of a number of specific crimes including burglary, fraud, hate crime and domestic violence against children.
- Some wanted clearer definitions and guidance on how to differentiate between crimes occurring in a public versus a private place.

## Gaps

7. The gaps in crime statistics highlighted by responders are shown below in order of support.

Number of respondents	Data gap	Respondents	Comments
11	Flow of offences through the crime and criminal justice system	Police Forces Surveys, Design and Statistics Sub-Committee (SDSSC) Victim Support (National) Ipsos MORI House of Commons Library (HoCL) Faith Group Equality and Human Rights Commission NSPCC Technical Advisor to Criminal Justice Board	There is a continuing need for linking through from the crime into the criminal justice system to provide better information on the consequences and impacts on crime levels.
6	Businesses	Academia HoCL Crime & Justice Statistics Network (CJSN) National Audit Office (NAO) National Centre for Social Research	The British Crime Survey (BCS) does not provide coverage.  It is not reported consistently to the police.
5	Anti-social behaviour (ASB)	Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group CJSN Academia Local Authorities	There is a gap between what the public perceive to be a crime and official police recorded statistics. Anti-social behaviour incidents tend to be included in public perception.  Crime and incidents are reported to other bodies such as landlords and local authorities. This needs to be included with police recorded figures.  ASB tends to be reported on with the use of flags in police databases. There would have to be new counting rules and better audit in the use of new flags.

5	Crimes against children	Academia Victim Support (National) NAO NSPCC	The BCS has only recently provided coverage.  There needs to be consideration for how vulnerable victims can be supported in reporting crimes.
5	Identity theft/ cyber crime	Academia Straight Statistics SDSSC CJSN Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership	Virtually unrecorded in crime statistics.  There is insufficient reporting of it to police.
5	White collar crime (especially fraud)	Academia Forum for Stable Currencies SDSSC CJSN Police Superintendent's Association for E&W (PSAEW)	Needs better definition.  Fraud against bank accounts, use of credit/debit cards and online – all poorly identified by police recorded crime.
5	Repeat victims/ offenders	Middlesbrough LA CJSN Exeter Community Safety Partnership NSPCC Technical Advisor to Criminal Justice Board	Repeat victims lose confidence to report crime so need to encourage/support them to do so.  Police recorded crime does not address the issues of repeat and multiple victimisations including the increasing seriousness of crime against the same victim.  It is difficult to tell from the available data if we are habitually detecting the same offenders and dealing with the same victims.
4	Domestic violence	Academia Middlesbrough LA CJSN NSPCC	Under-reported to the police.  Not defined in or adequately collected through the Notifiable Offence List but present in police systems. There would have to be new counting rules and better audit in the use of flags.

4	Sexual offences	Middlesbrough LA National Centre for Social Research HoCL NSPCC	Victims of sexual offence tend not to report it – need to encourage them to do so.  Difficulty ensuring consistent recording practice across the police force.
3	Non-household population	Academia NAO HoCL	BCS does not provide coverage.
3	Hate crime	Stonewall CJSN Equality & Human Rights Commission	Hate crime tends to be recorded through the use of flags on crime databases. Better counting rules and audit required.  Expansion of BCS data required so high quality data on hate crime is available for all equality groups under the Equalities Act 2010.

## **Responsibility for production and publication of crime statistics**

### ***Publication***

- 20 of the 49 respondents suggested that the Office for National Statistics should take on the publication of crime statistics.
- A further 13 respondents suggested a location associated with independence of government.

### ***Management and/or compilation of the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime***

8. There were mixed views on whether crime statistics management and/or compilation should also be transferred out of the Home Office.
9. Reasons given in support were:
  - Transfer of management and compilation of crime statistics would lead to better understanding of the data by the new publication body.
  - Transfer would lead to increased independence.
10. Reasons on why further transfer should not occur included:
  - No one has challenged the skill or integrity of the people responsible for the two crime statistics series in the various reviews of Home Office statistics to date.
  - The UK Statistics Authority review of May 2010, 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales' suggested that "crime statistics should continue to be compiled and managed by the Home Office".
  - Retention of responsibility by the Home Office would optimise the expertise and resources presently available.

### ***Distinction between British Crime Survey and police recorded crime compilation***

11. There was concern that the British Crime Survey (BCS) should not become more remote from its end users. Another concern was whether the contract for the collection of the BCS data would still be put out to competitive tender.
12. Respondents highlighted that collection of police recorded crime data was a fairly specialised task which would be difficult to move out of Home Office due to their statutory powers over the police.
13. Regardless of the degree of transfer of either or both the BCS and police recorded crime, the funding would need to be carefully protected in any new arrangement for producing crime statistics.

## Home Office Counting Rules

14. 22 respondents were in favour of the Home Secretary retaining responsibility for deciding the statutory data requirement from the police, and for maintaining the Home Office Counting Rules.
15. 12 respondents thought that this responsibility should be moved out of the Home Office.

## Respondents

### Police responses (17 in total)

- Force Crime Registrars/individuals with crime recording responsibilities
- Police Forces
- Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales (PSAEW)

### Non-Police responses (32 in total)

- Academia
- British Association for Shooting and Conservation
- Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS)
- Crime & Justice Statistics Network (CJSN)
- Criminal Justice Board (Technical Advisor)
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Exeter Community Safety Partnership
- European Secure Vehicle Alliance
- Faith Group (Member of the Standing Committee of East Northamptonshire Faith Group, writing in a personal capacity)
- Forum for Stable Currencies
- House of Commons Library
- Middlesbrough Local Authority
- National Audit Office (NAO)
- Neighbourhood watch
- Nice 1 Limited
- Nottingham Crime and Safety Partnership
- NSPCC
- Road Haulage Association (RHA)
- Social/Market Research Companies
- Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group
- Straight Statistics
- Stonewall
- Surveys, Design and Statistics Sub-Committee of the Home Office Science Advisory Committee (SDSSC)
- Royal Statistical Society
- Victim Support (national)
- Winchester City Council

## Annex E: Current Home Office Counting Rules crime classifications

Code	Offence
1	Murder
2	Attempted murder
3A	Conspiracy to murder
3B	Threats to kill
4.1	Manslaughter
4.10	Corporate manslaughter
4.2	Infanticide
4.3	Intentional destruction of a viable unborn child
4.4	Causing death by dangerous driving
4.6	Causing death by careless driving under influence of drink or drugs
4.7	Causing or allowing death of child or vulnerable person
4.8	Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving
4.9	Causing death by driving: unlicensed drivers etc.
5A	Wounding or carrying out an act endangering life
5B	Use of substance or object to endanger life
5C	Possession of items to endanger life
6	Endangering railway passengers
7	Endangering life at sea
8F	Inflicting grievous bodily harm without intent
8G	Actually bodily harm and other injury
8H	Racially or religiously aggravated inflicting grievous bodily harm without intent
8J	Racially or religiously aggravated actual bodily harm and other injury
8K	Poisoning or female genital mutilation
8L	Harassment
8M	Racially or religiously aggravated harassment
9A	Public fear, alarm or distress
9B	Racially or religiously aggravated public fear, alarm or distress
10A	Possession of firearms with intent
10B	Possession of firearms offences
10C	Possession of other weapons
10D	Possession of article with blade or point
11	Cruelty to and neglect of children
12	Abandoning child under two years
13	Child abduction
14	Procuring illegal abortion
15	Concealment an infant death close to birth



17A	Sexual assault on a male aged 13 and over
17B	Sexual assault on a male child under 13
19C	Rape of a female aged 16 and over
19D	Rape of a female child under 16
19E	Rape of a female child under 13
19F	Rape of a male aged 16 and over
19G	Rape of a male child under 16
19H	Rape of a male child under 13
20A	Sexual assault on a female aged 13 and over
20B	Sexual assault on a female child under 13
21	Sexual activity involving a child under 13
22A	Causing sexual activity without consent
22B	Sexual activity involving child under 16
23	Incest or familial sexual offences
24	Exploitation of prostitution
26	Bigamy
27	Soliciting for the purposes of prostitution
28A	Burglary in a dwelling
28B	Attempted burglary in a dwelling
28C	Distraction burglary in a dwelling
28D	Attempted distraction burglary in a dwelling
29	Aggravated burglary in a dwelling
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
33	Going equipped for stealing, etc
34A	Robbery of business property
34B	Robbery of personal property
35	Blackmail
36	Kidnapping
37.1	Causing death by aggravated vehicle taking
37.2	Aggravated vehicle taking
38	Profiting from or concealing knowledge of the proceeds of crime
39	Theft from the person
40	Theft in a dwelling other than from an automatic machine or meter
41	Theft by an employee
42	Theft of mail
43	Dishonest use of electricity

44	Theft or unauthorised taking of a pedal cycle
45	Theft from vehicle
46	Shoplifting
47	Theft from automatic machine or meter
48	Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicle
49	Other theft
51	Fraud by company director
52	False accounting
53B	Preserved other fraud and repealed fraud offences (pre Fraud Act 2006)
53C	Fraud by false representation: cheque, plastic card and online bank accounts
53D	Fraud by false representation: other frauds
53E	Fraud by failing to disclose information
53F	Fraud by abuse of position
53H	Making or supplying articles for use in fraud
53J	Possession of articles for use in fraud
55	Bankruptcy and insolvency
56A	Arson endangering life
56B	Arson not endangering life
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
58E	Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage to a dwelling
58F	Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling
58G	Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage to a vehicle
58H	Racially or religiously aggravated other criminal damage
59	Threat or possession with intent to commit criminal damage
60	Forgery or use of false drug prescription
61	Other forgery
61A	Possession of false documents
62	Treason
63	Treason felony
64	Riot
65	Violent disorder
66	Other offences against the State or public order
67	Perjury
68	Libel
69	Offender Management Act offences

70	Sexual activity etc with a person with a mental disorder
71	Abuse of children through prostitution and pornography
72	Trafficking for sexual exploitation
73	Abuse of position of trust of a sexual nature
75	Betting, gaming and lotteries
76	Aiding suicide
78	Immigration Acts
79	Perverting the course of justice
80	Absconding from lawful custody
81	Other firearms offences
82	Customs and Revenue offences
83	Bail offences
84	Trade descriptions etc
85	Health and Safety offences
86	Obscene publications etc
87	Protection from eviction
88A	Sexual grooming
88C	Other miscellaneous sexual offences
88D	Unnatural sexual offences
88E	Exposure and voyeurism
89	Adulteration of food
90	Other knives offences
91	Public health offences
92A	Trafficking in controlled drugs
92C	Other drug offences
92D	Possession of controlled drugs (excl. Cannabis)
92E	Possession of controlled drugs (Cannabis)
94	Planning laws
95	Disclosure, obstruction, false or misleading statements etc
99	Other notifiable offences (class 98/99)
104	Assault without injury on a constable
105A	Assault without injury
105B	Racially or religiously aggravated assault without injury
126	Interfering with a motor vehicle
802	Dangerous driving
814	Fraud, forgery etc associated with vehicle or driver records

## Summary Offences on the Notifiable Offence List

Code	Offence/Act
125/68	Harassment etc. of a person in his home Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 Sec 42A Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 Sec 126.
195/94	Harassment. Protection from Harassment Act 1997 Sec 2.
125/9	Causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress Public Order Act 1986 Sec 4A
125/11	Fear or provocation of violence Public Order Act 1986 Sec 4
125/12	Harassment, alarm or distress Public Order Act 1986 Sec 5
125/82	Racially or religiously aggravated harassment, alarm or distress Crime & Disorder Act 1998 Sec 31(1)(c) and (4)
109/1	Allowing persons under 16 to take part in performances endangering life or limb. Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Sec 23
109/1	Training or persons under 12 for dangerous performances. Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Sec 24
109/5	Exposing child to risk of burning Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Sec 11
109/6	Allowing child or young person to be in brothel Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Sec 3
109/7	Neglecting to provide for safety at children's entertainment. Children and Young Persons Act 1933 Sec 12
109/8	Permitting child to be in verminous condition Education Act 1996 Sec 525
104/23	Assault on a constable Police Act 1996 Sec 89
104/25	Assaults a designated person or his assistant in the exercise of a relevant power Serious Organised Crime & Police Act 2005 Sec 51
104/30	Assault on a constable Local Acts

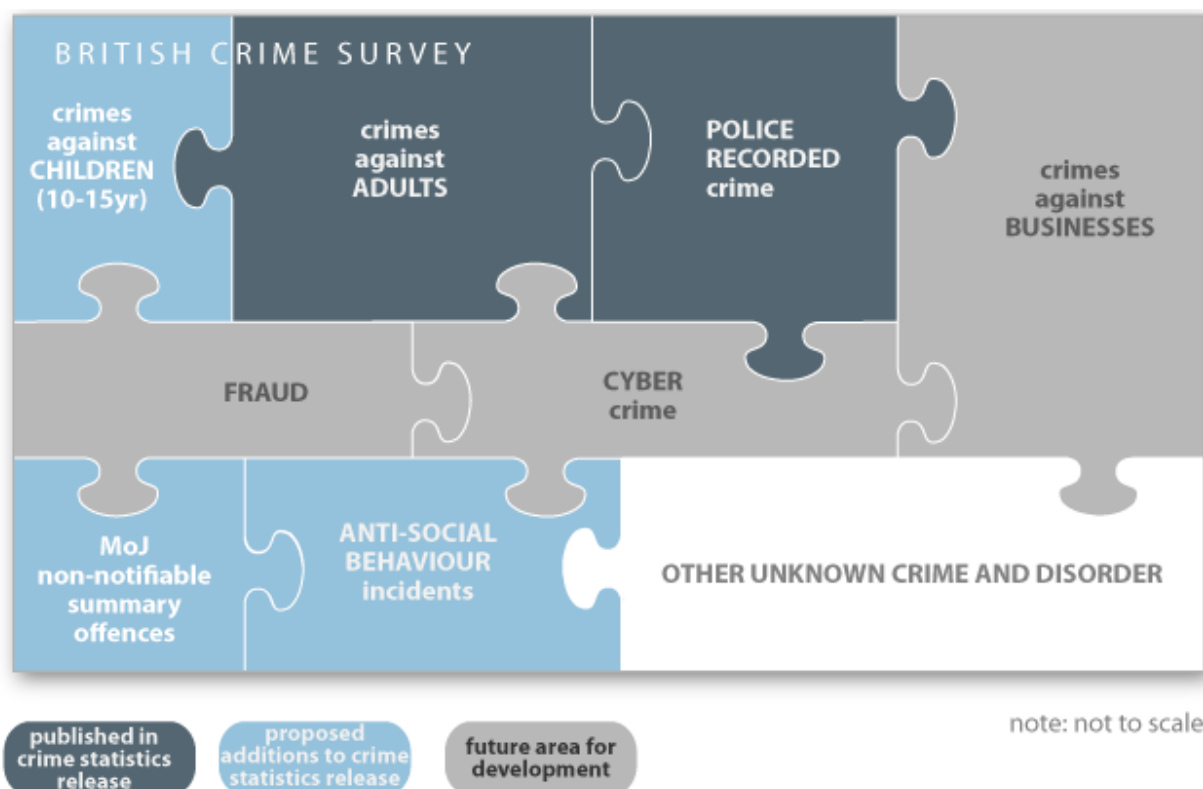
104/31	Vagrant violently resisting a constable Vagrancy Act 1824 Sec 4
104/36	Assaults a member of a joint investigation team carrying out his functions as a member of that team Serious Organised Crime & Police Act 2005 Sec 57
104/39	Assaults an officer of Revenue or Customs. Commissioners for Revenue & Customs Act 2005
105/1	Common assault and battery Criminal Justice Act 1988 Sec 39
105/2	Assault on County Court Officer County Courts Act 1984 Sec 14
105/3	Assault on person assisting a constable Police Act 1996 Sec 89
105/4	Assault on prison custody officer Criminal Justice Act 1991 Sec 90
105/4	Assault on officer in secure training centre Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994 Sec 13
105/5	Resisting or wilfully obstructing a prisoner custody officer Criminal Justice Act 1991 Sec 90
105/5	Resisting or wilfully obstructing a custody officer Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994 Sec 13
105/6	Assault on court security officer Courts Act 2003 Sec 57
105/7	Resisting or wilfully obstructing court security officer Criminal Justice Act 1991 Sec 78
105/8	Assaulting a designated or accredited person in the execution of their duty Police reform Act 2002 Sec 46
105/9	Resisting or wilfully obstructing a designated or accredited person in the execution of their duty Police Reform Act 2002 Sec 46
105/10	Assault on a traffic officer Traffic Management Act 2004 Sec 10
105/11	Resisting or wilfully obstructing a traffic officer in the execution of their duties Traffic Management Act 2004 Sec 10
105/12	Assaulting an immigration officer exercising S2 detention powers UK Borders Act 2007 Sec 3

- 105/13 Assaulting an immigration officer  
UK Borders Act 2007 Sec 22
- 125/62 Summary regulations made under part 8.  
Anti-Terrorism, Crime & Security Act 2001 Sec 77
- 149 Other criminal damage to a dwelling (under £5,000)  
Criminal Damage Act 1971
- 149 Other criminal damage to a building other than a dwelling (under £5,000)  
Criminal Damage Act 1971
- 149 Other criminal damage to a vehicle (under £5,000)  
Criminal Damage Act 1971
- 130/1 Unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle (does not include 'driving or being  
carried knowing motor vehicle has been taken...')  
Theft Act 1968 Sec 12
- 130/2 Unauthorised taking of conveyance other than a motor vehicle or pedal cycle.  
(does not include being found with a conveyance that has already been stolen)  
Theft Act 1968 Sec 12
- 131/1 Aggravated vehicle taking where the only aggravating factor is criminal damage  
of £5000 or under.  
Theft Act 1968 Sec 12A
- 137/18 Take or ride a pedal cycle without consent etc.  
Theft Act 1968 Sec 12

## Annex F: Possible publication framework for crime statistics: England and Wales

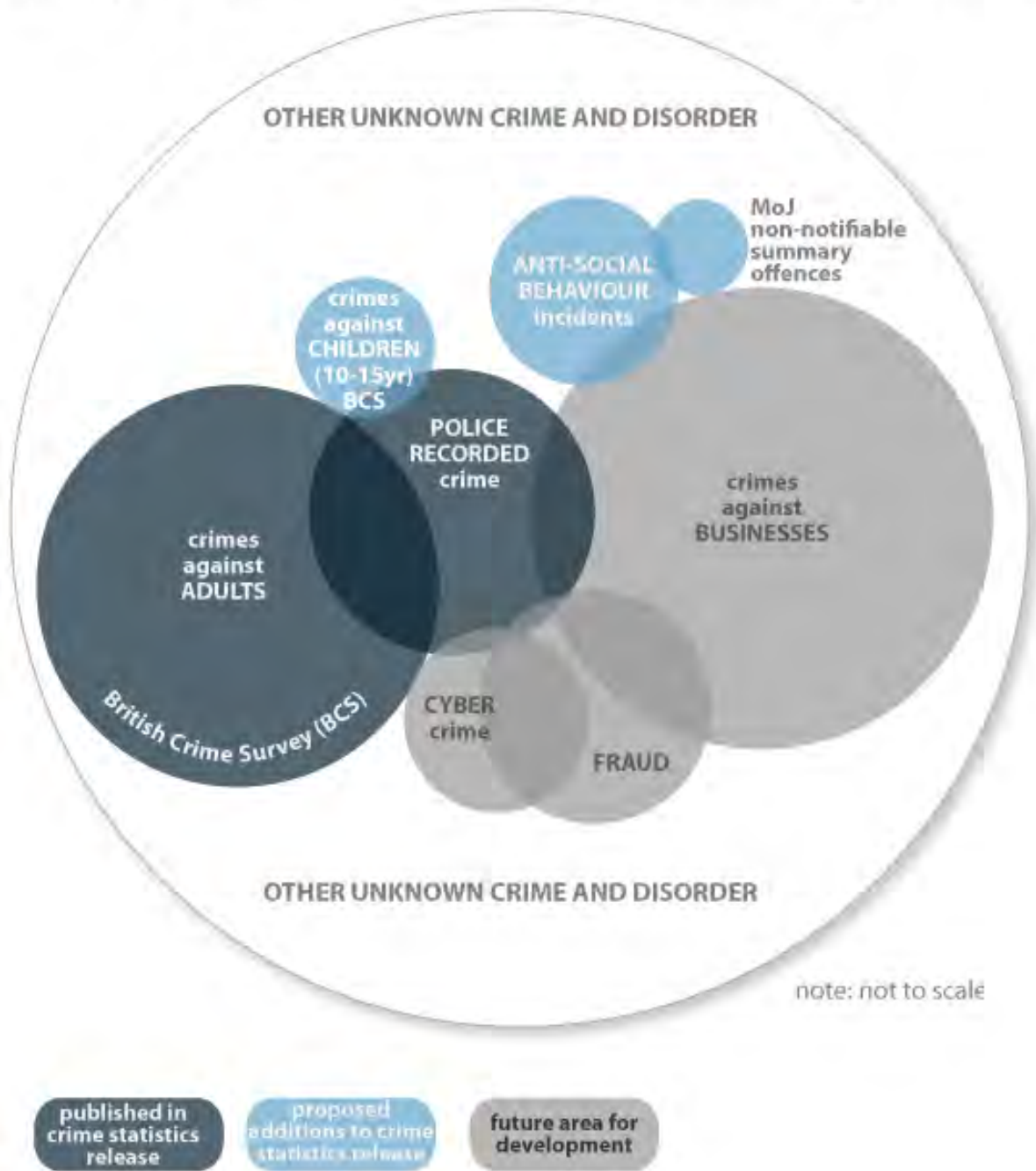
**Figure F1** shows the current sources, and types of crime, for which data should be presented as part of an overall published framework. It does not attempt to show the overlaps that exist between them.

**Figure F1**



**Figure F2** shows the sources, and types of crime, for which data should be presented as part of an overall published framework. Although not to scale, it illustrates the overlaps between these sources and crime types.

**Figure F2**





## Annex G: Issues with the development of a 'crime index' for England and Wales

1. The UK Statistics Authority monitoring report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics'<sup>15</sup> noted that "The total volume of recorded crime is susceptible to variations in reporting by the public, recording by the police, legislation or other changes affecting the notifiable offence list, and police operational practices. This particularly affects less serious offences (which tend to dominate the statistical picture) and can obscure 'real' underlying change in criminal activity. And by default, all crime is given an equal weight, regardless of the harm caused".
2. Two possible solutions to this issue have been suggested. These are either a stable 'basket' of serious offences which are less susceptible to variations in reporting and recording, or a weighted index of crime that gives more weight to more serious crimes. The former solution was suggested in 'Crime Statistics: An Independent Review'<sup>16</sup> carried out by Professor Adrian Smith (Smith Review) whereas the second was recommended by the Statistics Commission's Crime Statistics Review<sup>17</sup>.
3. In Crime Statistics in England and Wales 2006/07<sup>18</sup> published by the Home Office in July 2007 work exploring both these solutions was presented for user comment. Few comments were received. Among those who did comment there was more support for a 'basket of serious crime' than for the weighted crime index which was seen to be less than transparent and difficult to understand. The Home Office experimented with a basket of serious crime in the 2007/08 bulletin. However data quality issues around the quality of police recording of 'most serious' and 'less serious' violence against the person offences led to this basket approach being discontinued.

### Experience in other countries

4. Statistics Canada<sup>19</sup> has developed a crime severity index based on data collected from police recorded crime. The index aims to track changes in the severity of police recorded crime. This index does not replace the traditional crime rates that they produce but rather complements them to provide a fuller picture of crime in Canada.
5. No other countries have been found that have currently developed a crime index or crime severity index. However, several countries report headline figures for a set of key crimes separately rather than publishing total reported crime. For example, the US Federal Bureau of Investigation have a set of eight 'index crimes' and New Zealand Police publish reported and detected crime separately for six top reported offences and five top detected offences. Both Scotland and Northern Ireland report on the total volume of recorded offences.

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<sup>15</sup><http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/overcoming-barriers-to-trust-in-crime-statistics--england-and-wales.pdf>

<sup>16</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/crime-statistics-independent-review-06.pdf>

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.statscom.org.uk/uploads/files/reports/Crime\\_Statistics\\_Review-final.pdf](http://www.statscom.org.uk/uploads/files/reports/Crime_Statistics_Review-final.pdf)

<sup>18</sup><http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100418065544/homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1107.pdf>

<sup>19</sup><http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-004-x/85-004-x2009001-eng.pdf>

## The statistical issues in setting up a crime index for England and Wales

6. The statistical issues with the creation of a crime index for England and Wales can be broadly split into those relating to the:
  - Concept – those aspects relating to what the statistic aims to measure and what the user need is.
  - Data – those aspects relating to the quality of data sources that are available and their fitness for purpose in measuring the concept of interest.
  - Technique – those aspects relating to the statistical techniques that could be used to create a measure including their transparency.

### Concept

7. A key consideration in designing a crime index for England and Wales is what the concept of interest is. This needs to be driven by the users and uses of these statistics. Different concepts will have different uses. For example, inclusion of only crime reported to the police will reflect the volume of crime coming to the attention of the criminal justice system and provide data on trends in serious crime. These statistics will have uses in resource planning and programme development for police forces. In comparison, data collected from population surveys will provide information on levels of crime experienced by the general public, the impact of this crime on their lives and the level of under-reporting of crime to the police. These data can be used to better understand the population's fear of crime, perceptions of crime and the functioning of the criminal justice system.
8. Types of crime included in a measure of crime will also need to reflect the user need. Inclusion of only the most serious crimes may not reflect the experience of crime of the majority of the population so will be less useful in measuring crime as experienced by people in the country. Many crimes can also be considered 'victimless' as there is no direct victim of the crime for example, drug offences. Omission of these will not show trends in overall crime as identified by the police or taking place in the country.
9. The Smith Review stated that the need for crime statistics at a national level is:
  - “to provide reliable quantitative measurements of criminal activity and trends that enable parliament to fulfil its democratic function of holding the government of the day accountable for this aspect of the state of the nation;
  - to keep the public, media, academia and relevant special interest groups informed about the state of crime in the country and to provide (access to) data that inform wider debate and nongovernmental research agendas;
  - to inform relevant aspects of short-term resource allocation, both within government and also for external related bodies – e.g. for policing and Victim Support;
  - to inform performance management and accountability at the national level of agencies such as the police; and

- to provide an evidence base for longer-term government strategic and policy developments.”
10. The reason for wishing to produce a single measure of crime for England and Wales is key to understanding what the concept of interest is. The user need is to provide the general population, politicians and decision makers with a clear understanding what is happening over time with crime in England and Wales which is not heavily influenced by changes in reporting or recording practices or dominated by high-volume low severity offences.
  11. In addition, several reports have noted the need for this data at a local level.

## **Data**

12. There are two main sources of data on crime in England and Wales - police recorded crime and the British Crime Survey (BCS). The first of these provide incident level data on crimes and offences that have been reported to or detected by the police. The BCS surveys around 46,000 households a year to gather data on their experiences of crime over the previous 12 months.
13. Previous work on crime indices both here and abroad has tended to focus on police recorded crime. Extending an index to include other sources could increase the credibility of an index but at the same time comes with increased methodological complexity and less transparency for the end users.
14. An example of the issues that would need to be overcome is that the coverage of the two data sources for England and Wales differ for a number of reasons. These include:
  - not all crime is reported to the police;
  - changes in definitions and reporting policies can affect the coverage of the police recorded crime;
  - some crime is victimless so is detected by the police rather than reported by members of the public;
  - the BCS only covers crime experienced by households not that experienced by businesses or those living in communal establishments; and
  - by definition the BCS does not include serious crimes such as homicide.
15. Whilst there are differences in the coverage of the two sources there is also considerable overlap. The extent of this overlap varies over time and between areas depending on trends in reporting of crime to the police. The overlap and differences in the coverage of these two sources would make it difficult to combine the two sources into a single measure due to issues with double counting. One solution to this would be if each source was used for a different set of crimes. For example, if the BCS was used for minor offences that are known to be under-reported, and police records were used for victimless and serious crime. The feasibility of this would need to be investigated. Problems with recording of ‘most serious’ and ‘less serious’ violence against the person offences that were discovered with the ‘basket’ of crimes approach that the Home Office trialled highlights the difficulties in treating categories of offences differently.

16. One of the major concerns about basing an index on a subset of police recorded offences has been the risk that the police will view the reduction of offences in the basket or index risk as de-facto targets. From previous performance regimes it is known that this risks in turn leading to perverse incentives for officers to downgrade recording which itself will result in a diminution of public trust.
17. If a weighted index of crime were to be created data would also be needed for the weights. In the possible weighted crime index described by the Home Office in 2007 the weights used were the economic cost of each category of crime. These related to crimes covered by the BCS plus sexual offences and homicide. The choice of these weights automatically limits the crimes covered to those for which costs are available.
18. For the so called 'victimless' crimes the derivation of weights is difficult. For example, for illegal drug use there could well be costs to the user, in terms of health, unemployment etc. However, a bigger issue is whether it is possible to count the general underlying prevalence of such crimes, as police figures will be influenced by total policing policies and priorities. This is also a similar issue for fraud where it is known that the extent of police recording is low and for disorder offences and other anti-social behaviours where changes in numbers recorded often reflect operational activity better than actual incidence.
19. A further argument against using weighting systems is that a single weight for any given crime type will fail to reflect the considerable variation in severity which can be associated with any particular crime. However, it could be argued that any weights at all could be regarded as an improvement on the current position which implicitly weights all crimes as equal regardless of the harms caused. Weighting by seriousness also does not overcome the problem associated with variations in reporting and recording of crimes judged to be less serious, as although given a lower weight they remain high in volume. There is also the issue as to whether a weighted index should be based on BCS or police recorded crime figures. The most serious crimes, with the highest weights, tend to be rarer, and this would mean that a weighted measure based on the BCS would have higher inherent variability (particularly the contribution from crimes such as homicide which are relatively very rare but would tend to attract very large weights in such a system) than the current total BCS crime measure.
20. Statistics Canada use weights derived from the sentence that each category of crime receives. More serious offences will attract a higher sentence and therefore these offences will be weighted higher. The data used to construct these weights comes from their survey of adult and youth criminal courts. The specific weight for any type of offence consists of two parts. The proportion of people convicted who are sentenced to time in prison and the average (mean) length of prison sentence. The feasibility of a similar approach for England and Wales using Ministry of Justice statistics could be investigated.
21. Other sources of weights considered by Statistics Canada included: using a subset of the most serious crimes, using information on public perceptions of crime, looking at the financial costs of crime and using maximum penalties. These did not meet their criteria for considering possible weights.

## Technique

22. In considering which techniques are most appropriate for constructing a crime index consideration needs to be given to a range of factors. These include the transparency of the method, how well it will match the concept to be measured and the robustness of the technique to changes in the underlying data. In this context two main techniques have been previously considered – a ‘basket’ of the most serious crimes or a weighted index.

### *Transparency*

23. Transparency relates both to the ease of explanation of the technique to a lay audience but also the ability for others to replicate the results. A careful balance needs to be struck between choosing a technique which is simple to explain and ensuring that the results are sufficiently robust. Index numbers are used to describe changes in time or between areas in a range of contexts. The underlying method used to create these statistics is not always easy to understand for members of the public. For example, the construction of the Consumer Price Index is not simple.
24. The choice of a distinction of ‘most serious’ crimes would also need to be carefully explained though a simple sum of those crimes may be more easily understood. There is a risk in not including a wide range of crimes in the national crime statistics as it could be taken as a signal that the police and government do not care about less serious crimes. An important element here is in ensuring that the documentation is easily accessible for those who wish to access it.

### *Effectiveness*

25. Once the concept to be measured has been identified the use of different techniques to meeting that need should be assessed. If, for example, the concept is trends in overall crime then the technique should ensure that the resulting measure is representative of all crime. This does not necessitate the inclusion of all categories of crime if the technique enables correction or adjustment to ensure the measure is representative of all crime or can be shown that one is not necessary.

### *Robustness*

26. Any technique used will need to be robust against changing definitions, recording practices or variability in crimes included. As was shown by the ‘basket’ approach trialled by the Home Office, treating categories of crime differently can lead to large impacts on the final measure if the assigning of crimes to each category changes. A measure that is based solely on police recorded crimes, or even a subset of them, is likely to be more susceptible to these issues than one based on data where the categorisation of crimes is under the control of statisticians. If a single measure becomes a key government target or mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of the police service these risks could become greater. Equally a weighted index could be volatile if the underlying weights themselves are volatile or some crimes have very large weights. A small change in the weight for the rarer more serious crimes could have a large impact on the final measure particularly if it coincides with an unusual year for that category of crime. In developing a crime index or basket of crimes the sensitivity of the statistics to changes in the data would need to be assessed.

## **Conclusion**

27. Previous work by the Home Office has demonstrated that the production of a crime index would be complex and would require a significant amount of development work.
28. The approach taken in Canada has been shown to add value to their analysis and understanding of trends in crime and a similar approach may be feasible in England and Wales.
29. There are several possible areas of further investigation in relation to the development of a robust crime index for England and Wales. The most important aspect is in confirming the user need for a crime index and what the concept of interest is. The costs of proceeding with any research would need to be justified by a clear user demand for this work as a priority.

## Annex H: Evaluation of options for responsibility for publication of crime statistics for England and Wales

Option	Impact on public confidence	Impact on quality	Is any burden increase proportionate	Are costs & benefits balanced	Does sustainable statistical expertise/ capability exist	Will user needs be met	Option suggested by stakeholders and the web consultation
<b>i. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)</b>	This may be negative given conflict with HMIC's audit role of police recorded crime	This may be negative as HMIC does not have statistical infrastructure/ experience	There would be no change as the review is not recommending any change to data collection methods	This is unlikely. There would be relatively low set up costs but a move to HMIC is unlikely to positively impact on public confidence	No. HMIC could experience recruitment and retention issues; it would be a small crime statistics team	Possibly but there is no evidence; HMIC is currently focused on the general public	Very few suggestions were received for HMIC to take over publication
<b>ii. Office for National Statistics (ONS)</b>	There should not be a negative impact, and there may be a positive impact as ONS is already independent and part of the UK Statistics Authority	ONS has potential for quality gains given its critical mass of statistical expertise, but loss of criminological expertise could be an issue	There would be no change as the review is not recommending any change to data collection methods	This is likely. ONS may have relatively higher set-up cost but has other benefits and the potential for future efficiencies given economies of scale	Yes. ONS has a critical mass of statistical expertise	Yes. The ONS/DWP model for labour market statistics demonstrates this	The majority of suggestions received were for ONS to take over publication
<b>iii. Criminological or other body</b>	It may be positive as such a body would be seen as independent; it may be negative as no one body would be seen as representative	This may be negative as such a body would not have statistical production infrastructure/ experience	There would be no change as the review is not recommending any change to data collection methods	This is unlikely. This option would probably incur highest costs, is not certain to improve public confidence, and has few other benefits	Unlikely. Expertise may lie more in research, it would be a small crime statistics team	Possibly but there is little if any evidence	This option received the least suggestions for taking over publication

## **Annex I: Recommendations from the UK Statistics Authority report ‘Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales’**

### **Recommendation 1**

The Home Office should establish a standing non-executive board to review and report on arrangements for the production of crime statistics, in order to provide independent assurance of their impartiality and integrity, and to comment on methods and quality.

### **Recommendation 2**

The National Statistician should publish a full and regular commentary on trends and patterns in crime. This would set an authoritative benchmark for further analysis of these data.

### **Recommendation 3**

The National Statistician, in conjunction with relevant government departments and the Welsh Assembly Government, should draw up proposals for the development of statistical publications on crime and the criminal justice system in England and Wales, and consult users inside and outside government. The aims should be to:

- i) make the publications as relevant as possible to the likely uses of the statistics;
- ii) make it easier for the non-expert to understand the flow of offences and offenders through the criminal justice system.

### **Recommendation 4**

The National Statistician, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should produce the following:

- i) A conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice data, showing flows through the system, where and how data are captured, and where gaps, discrepancies or discontinuities occur.
- ii) A free-standing guide that explains the strengths and limitations of different types of crime data, the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to use one source rather than another, and the kinds of judgement that need to be made when no single source is ideal.
- iii) Guidelines on the presentation and use of crime and criminal justice statistics in government documents and statements.
- iv) Advice for the public about the interpretation of performance measures in the criminal justice system. This advice should be made available on all government websites where such data are displayed.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Home Office, in conjunction with the NPIA, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Ministry of Justice and other relevant parties, should:



- i) review the local data on crime and criminal justice that are becoming available across a variety of government websites and consider whether there are opportunities to consolidate, share best practice, and provide more comprehensive and consistent metadata (for example, definitions, explanations of how the data are derived, and discussion of strengths and limitations); and
- ii) supplement existing guidelines on the conduct of local surveys with good practice advice on the analysis, presentation and communication of results to the public.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Home Office should publish a description of the steps currently taken i) to ensure that police crime records result from the consistent application of the counting rules and (ii) to quality assure the statistics deriving from those records. It should supplement the steps in i) as necessary, for example by spot checks or periodic external audit, in order to provide public reassurance of consistency.

## Annex J: Implementation plan for recommendations from the UK Statistics Authority report ‘Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales’

Delivery dates for the recommended actions in this plan will depend upon the Government’s response to the recommendations made in the National Statistician’s Review of Crime Statistics: England and Wales, and the timing of any move of statistical functions from the Home Office to the new producer body. For the purposes of this Implementation Plan the new producer body is shown as the Office for National Statistics in accordance with the recommendations of the National Statistician’s Review of Crime Statistics: England and Wales.

### Recommendation 1

**The Home Office should establish a standing non-executive board to review and report on arrangements for the production of crime statistics, in order to provide independent assurance of their impartiality and integrity, and to comment on methods and quality.**

<b>Recommendation 1: Progress to date</b>	<b>Action</b>
This recommendation has been overtaken by the Home Secretary’s decision to move publication of crime statistics out of the Home Office to an independent body.	Not applicable.

## Recommendation 2

**The National Statistician should publish a full and regular commentary on trends and patterns in crime. This would set an authoritative benchmark for further analysis of these data.**

**Background:** Barriers to Trust Chapter 7: Presentation and release arrangements

The Statistics Authority identified the way that journalists report crime statistics as being critical to public perception and confidence. On release of the statistics, journalists have minimal time to digest the figures and obtain political comment before submitting articles for the media. It was suggested that, under the prevailing pre-release rules, the publication of political comment almost simultaneous to data release coupled with a lack of strong statistical narrative from statisticians were factors contributing to public distrust. It was proposed that the Home Office should continue to produce the standard statistics but that a separate narrative should be produced by the National Statistician some time later after there has been time for further analysis and consideration of the underlying trends.

<b>Recommendation 2: Progress to date</b>	<b>Action</b>
This recommendation has now been superseded by the Home Secretary's decision to move publication of crime statistics out of the Home Office to an independent body.	The Office for National Statistics should take on responsibility for producing a full and regular commentary on trends and patterns in crime.

### Recommendation 3

**The National Statistician, in conjunction with relevant government departments and the Welsh Assembly Government, should draw up proposals for the development of statistical publications on crime and the criminal justice system in England and Wales, and consult users inside and outside government. The aims should be to:**

- i) make the publications as relevant as possible to the likely uses of the statistics;**
- ii) make it easier for the non-expert to understand the flow of offences and offenders through the criminal justice system.**

**Background:** Barriers to Trust Chapter 7: Presentation and release arrangements

The Authority noted that the annual crime statistics produced by the Home Office contain a large volume of statistics and other countries do not seem to release such a wide range of data so quickly in a first release. They felt that this made it more difficult for the statisticians to present a clear narrative and the media found the volume of information overwhelming.

The Authority also identified an issue with the separation of crime and criminal justice statistics. Currently the media focus on the crime statistics, with lesser publicity given to the criminal justice and sentencing statistics; this is also mirrored in local level media coverage. The separate volumes of Home Office and Ministry of Justice statistics make it difficult for the non-expert to understand the flows through the crime and criminal justice system.

Further consideration was given to the complexity of including two sources of crime data within crime publications. Acknowledging that there remains a need for both crime measures, it was suggested that splitting the annual publication into a series of commentaries based around the principal uses of the statistics might help address the confusion. These reports could be published separately, alongside the statistics.

These commentaries would be able to focus on whichever crime data source is the more appropriate, highlight key trends, provide insights into the most likely explanations, and provide independent advice about when not to place too much reliance on a single finding. The commentaries may also be an opportunity to marry up crime and criminal justice statistics. Reference to previously produced digests by the Home Office was also given as a possibility to give the public a more joined up picture on crime and criminal justice.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Digest 4: Information on the criminal justice system in England and Wales, Home Office, 1999 <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/digest41.html>

Recommendation 3: Progress to date	Action
<p>(i) The Home Office had started an internal review of their statistical outputs on crime in particular reviewing the content of the first release of headline crime statistics in the annual crime statistics and the quarterly updates. This aimed to reshape these into a standard First Release with a smaller set of headline statistics. However, this work was put on hold given the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics: England and Wales.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice in conjunction with the National Statistician launched a major consultation on improving criminal justice statistics. The consultation was well received with a record number of responses. The proposals involved merging the previous publications on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criminal Statistics (annual)</li> <li>- Sentencing Statistics (annual and quarterly)</li> <li>- Juvenile First time Entrants (6-monthly)</li> <li>- Criminal Justice System information (quarterly)</li> </ul> <p>into a single quarterly overview of the Criminal Justice System which in one place gives headline figures for many of the key concepts within the criminal justice system as well as details on many aspects of the criminal justice system. The first quarterly publication was published on 26th May 2011. This means the timeliness of production has been improved by five months compared to last year.</p> <p>From October 2011 five existing publications split between Home Office and Ministry of Justice on re-offending will be merged into a comprehensive quarterly measure of re-offending which will also give significantly more local information. The first publication will be on 27th October 2011.</p> <p>A previous consultation has also resulted in 4 Offender Management publications being merged into a single quarterly overview of the Offender Management system.</p> <p>This now means that on a quarterly basis, Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics, instead of being split across 15 publications which varied in frequency, are now consolidated into 4 comprehensive quarterly publications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Crime in England and Wales Quarterly (published by the Home Office)</li> <li>2) Criminal Justice System Statistics Quarterly - an end-to-end overview of the criminal justice system with details on out-of-court disposals, prosecutions, convictions and sentencing, criminal histories and first-time entrants to the criminal justice system (published by the</li> </ol>	<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) to review crime statistics publications in conjunction with the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Welsh Assembly Government as detailed in Recommendation 1 of the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics: England and Wales.</p> <p>ONS to set up a strategic Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics Publication Co-ordination Group consisting of ONS, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Welsh Assembly Government to agree timing and content of future publications.</p> <p>Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics Publication Co-ordination Group to review the effectiveness of the suite of crime and criminal justice statistics publications in the context of Recommendation 3 of the Barriers to Trust Report, and to provide any recommendations for improvement.</p>

<p>Ministry of Justice)</p> <p>3) Quarterly Offender Management Statistics - an overview of prisons, probation, licence recalls and returns to custody (published by the Ministry of Justice)</p> <p>4) Re-offending Statistics Quarterly (published by the Ministry of Justice)</p> <p>These changes, together with the development of a conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice statistics as part of Recommendation 4 (see below), and development of further topic specific publications across crime and criminal justice statistics (see Recommendation 3ii below) should meet this recommendation.</p>	
<p>(ii) The Ministry of Justice has carefully considered the need for further rationalisation of the publications to explain flows through the system. It is their belief that trying to explain flows through the system for all offences in one publication would become overly complex. Any publication on flows through the system has to deal with complex issues surrounding down-grading of offences at various stages through the criminal justice system. The Ministry of Justice consultation proposed four key ways of helping understand down-grading in the system:</p> <p>1 - a 'within offence' conviction rate which shows the proportion of people prosecuted for an offence who are found guilty of that offence; and</p> <p>2 - an 'all offence' conviction rate which shows the proportion of people prosecuted for an offence and found guilty of any offence</p> <p>3 - an 'all offence' disposal rate – the number of offences where a disposal is recorded for any offence; and</p> <p>4 - a 'within offence' disposal rate – the number of offences where a disposal is recorded for the same offence.</p> <p>These measures help deal with the issue but rely on data linking. The Ministry of Justice has significantly progressed its data linking and is currently testing a system which links information from the Police National Computer, Magistrates Courts, Crown Courts, prisons and probation trusts to give a single overview of the system. Secondly, there is strong desire for publications which bring together key trends across crime and criminal justice on a topic specific base. There are many examples of publications where the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice already do this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Terrorism Statistics bulletin</li> <li>- Race and the Criminal justice System</li> <li>- Women and the Criminal Justice System</li> </ul>	<p>The Ministry of Justice should quickly move towards publishing key statistics on flows through the criminal justice system. Given the complexity, this should be split by topic areas, starting with sexual offences where there is considerable user interest.</p> <p>Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics Publication Co-ordination Group to agree a programme of cross-cutting topic specific publications to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knives/firearms/other weapons</li> <li>▪ Youth crime</li> <li>▪ Serious sexual offences</li> <li>▪ Hate crime</li> <li>▪ Anti-social behaviour</li> <li>▪ Domestic violence</li> </ul>

## Recommendation 4

The National Statistician, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should produce the following:

- i) a conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice data, showing flows through the system, where and how data are captured, and where gaps, discrepancies or discontinuities occur
- ii) a free-standing guide that explains the strengths and limitations of different types of crime data, the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to use one source rather than another, and the kinds of judgement that need to be made when no single source is ideal
- iii) guidelines on the presentation and use of crime and criminal justice statistics in government documents and statements
- iv) advice for the public about the interpretation of performance measures in the criminal justice system. This advice should be made available on all government websites where such data are displayed.

**Background:** Barriers to Trust chapter 7: Presentation and release arrangements (paragraphs 124, 126,141 and 144), Barriers to Trust chapter 9: Measuring performance in the criminal justice system (paragraph 184)

As per Recommendation 3 above, the Authority noted that it is difficult for the non-expert to understand the flows running through crime and criminal justice data. To aid interpretation it was recommended that a conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice in England and Wales is produced, to make it possible to understand the extent to which steps and processes in the justice system are covered and explained by the available data.

Given the differing sources of crime data for statistical commentary, the rationale behind the selection of data from each source needs to be explicit and widely accepted. A free-standing guide on the relative strengths and limitation is therefore required. Preparation of such guidelines are recommended to be with oversight by the National Statistician.

<b>Recommendation 4: Progress to date</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>(i) Both the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice have produced diagrams depicting flows for crime and criminal justice data separately, but the complexities involved have made it difficult to produce a single, definitive, combined flows diagram.</p> <p>A high level conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice data has been produced comprising of three levels:</p> <p>Level 1: Key concepts for crime and criminal justice statistics  Level 2: Flow of crime and incidents into the criminal justice system  Level 3: Flows through the criminal justice system</p> <p>This conceptual framework is shown at the end of this Annex.</p> <p>(ii) The Home Office has a well established user guide on crime statistics. This may require updating once crime statistics publication moves to the Office for National Statistics and progress is made in filling some of the current gaps in the statistics, for example as data becomes available from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau.</p> <p>(iii) The Home Office has developed guidance on the presentation of statistics in press releases and Ministerial statements. The Ministry of Justice has since adopted this guidance.</p> <p>(iv) PSA targets have been abolished since this recommendation was made. The government's Transparency Agenda now advocates that performance should be assessed at a local level. This recommendation is therefore no longer applicable.</p>	<p>The high level conceptual framework produced for crime and criminal justice data should be implemented on the ONS and Ministry of Justice websites to act as a guide for users.</p> <p>ONS, with Home Office, to review the crime statistics user guide with respect to redeveloped publications and new data becoming available.</p> <p>No further action required.</p> <p>No further action required.</p>



## Recommendation 5

The Home Office, in conjunction with the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Ministry of Justice and other relevant parties, should:

- i) review the local data on crime and criminal justice that are becoming available across a variety of government websites and consider whether there are opportunities to consolidate, share best practice, and provide more comprehensive and consistent metadata (for example, definitions, explanations of how the data are derived, and discussion of strengths and limitations).
- ii) supplement existing guidelines on the conduct of local surveys with good practice advice on the analysis, presentation and communication of results to the public.

**Background :** Barriers to Trust Chapter 9 : Measuring performance in the criminal justice system (paragraphs 176 – 180, 181, 184)

An increasing number of agencies and websites are involved with the publication of statistics on the criminal justice system. On crime: NPIA crime mapping, the Home Office, Neighbourhood Statistics, HMIC and individual police forces. On criminal justice: the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, National Criminal Justice Board and HMIC all publish data relating to criminal justice outcomes or performance.

Recommendation 5: Progress to date	Action
<p>(i) Since publication of the Authority's Report the landscape has changed in that new websites have been set up (notably the National Police Improvement Agency crime mapping website), and large scale reductions have been made in the number of government websites. The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice have been closing down websites and consolidating the data published. All key statistics from Ministry of Justice partners are now available via <a href="http://www.justice.gov.uk">www.justice.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The Home Office is represented on the steering group for the crime mapping website <a href="http://www.police.uk">www.police.uk</a>, which is becoming the key mechanism for local crime data being made available to the public. The Information Commissioner's Office<sup>21</sup> have published advice on crime-mapping, privacy and transparency (November 2010). <a href="http://www.ico.gov.uk">www.ico.gov.uk</a> Pilot studies are taking place in the Ministry of Justice to map outcomes within crime mapper.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Justice to conduct pilot studies (trailblazers) for adding criminal justice data to the crime mapping website</p>

<sup>21</sup> The Information Commissioner's Office is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

<p>The Home Office have developed metadata for national statistics on crime (e.g. user guide for main crime data is at <a href="http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/crimestats-userguide.pdf">http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/crimestats-userguide.pdf</a>).</p> <p>(ii) The Home Office has guidance on conducting local victim satisfaction surveys, and some guidance was prepared for forces on conducting public satisfaction surveys. However the Coalition government has abolished police targets at the national level, and there is no longer a mandatory requirement for police forces to conduct user satisfaction surveys.</p>	<p>No further action required.</p>
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## Recommendation 6

The Home Office should publish a description of the steps currently taken

- i) to ensure that police crime records result from the consistent application of the counting rules and
- ii) to quality assure the statistics deriving from those records. It should supplement the steps in i) as necessary, for example by spot checks or periodic external audit, in order to provide public reassurance of consistency.

**Background :** Barriers to Trust Chapter: Measuring crime (paragraphs 81,91)

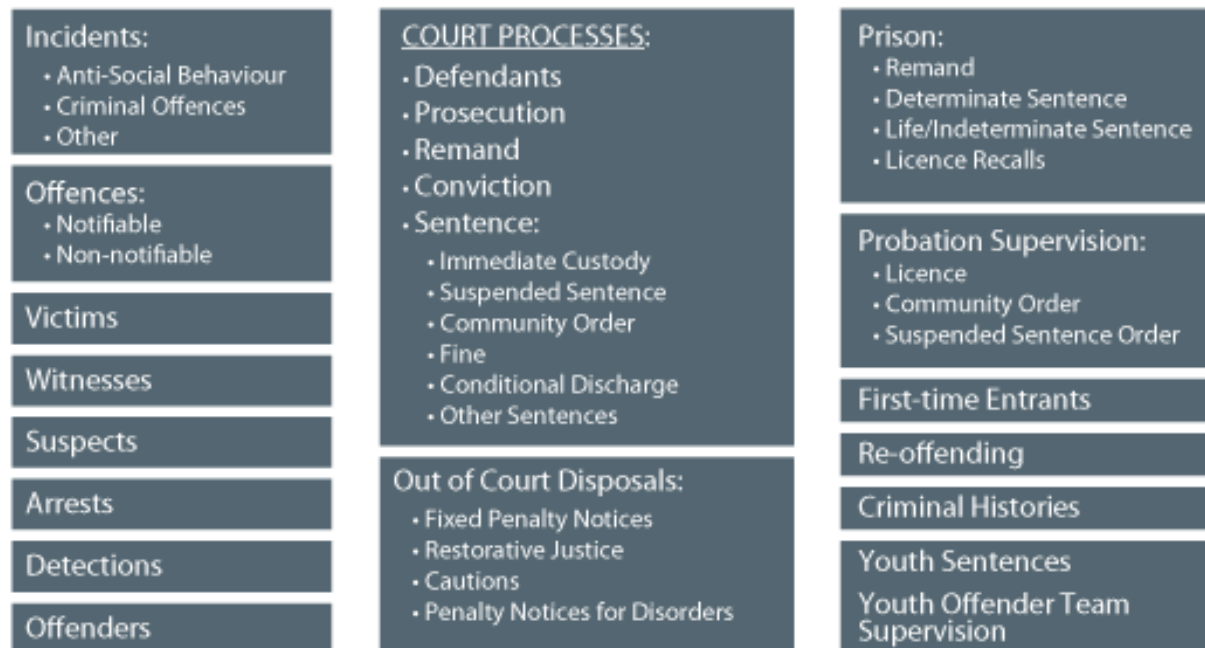
The audit commission ceased audits of police recorded data in 2007. The Statistics Authority found that users were agreed that independent auditing had worked well whilst more recent reviews by HMIC had concluded that the current lack of monitoring was a possible factor to the error rate, thus demonstrating a need for better quality assurance.

Recommendation 6: Progress to date	Action
<p>(i) The Home Office intend to include a description of the current steps taken to quality assure the police recorded crime data that underpin the published national statistics in their published User Guide. This will next be updated on 14 July 2011.</p> <p>(ii) The Home Office engages with Force Crime Registrars (FCRs), through the National Crime Recording Steering Group (the Audit and Inspection Working Group), to discuss crime counting issues and propose changes to audit. This has involved the development of a local audit guide for FCRs.</p> <p>HMIC have recently started an inspection process for recorded crime.</p> <p>This recommendation is now overtaken by Recommendation 8 of the National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics, i.e. that the HMIC audit of police recording of crime against the Home Office Counting Rules needs to be focused on risk areas in terms of statistical quality informed by statistical analysis.</p>	<p>The Home Office to update the Crime Statistics User Guide with the next quarterly release of statistics to include a description of quality assurance of recorded crime data.</p>

## Conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice statistics

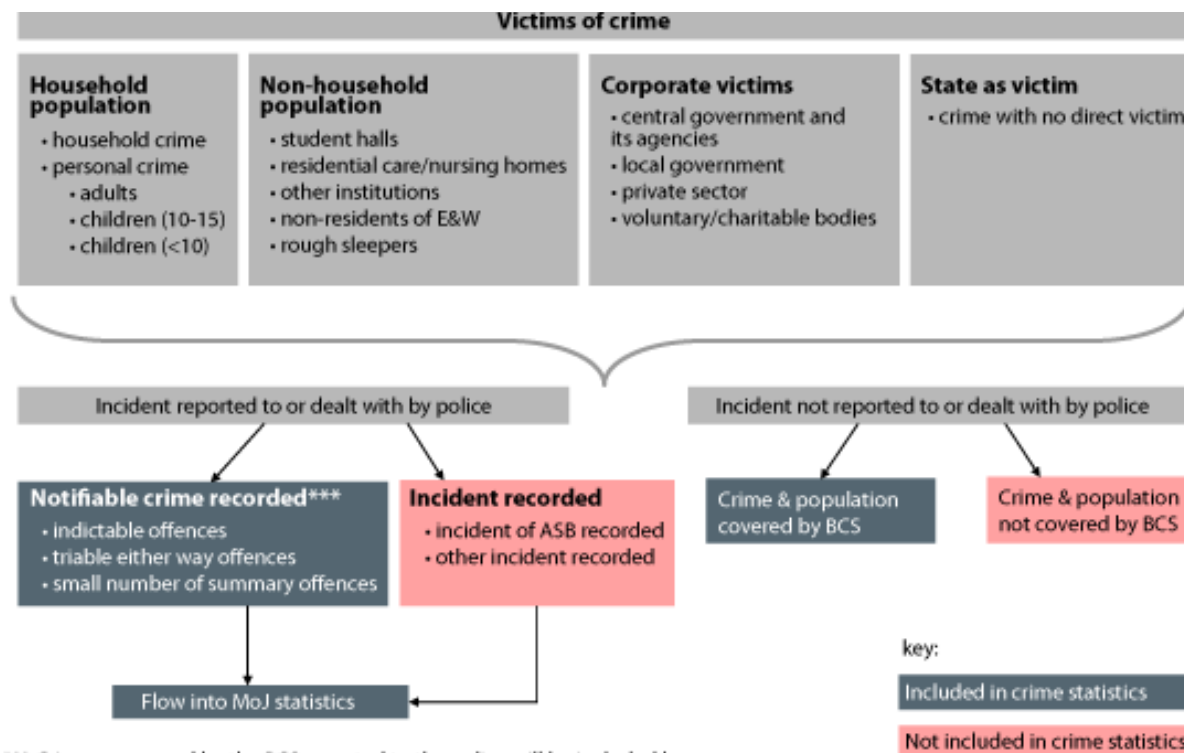
**Figure J1** shows the first level of the conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice statistics i.e. the key concepts that apply across crime and the criminal justice system.

**Figure J1: Key concepts for crime and criminal justice statistics**



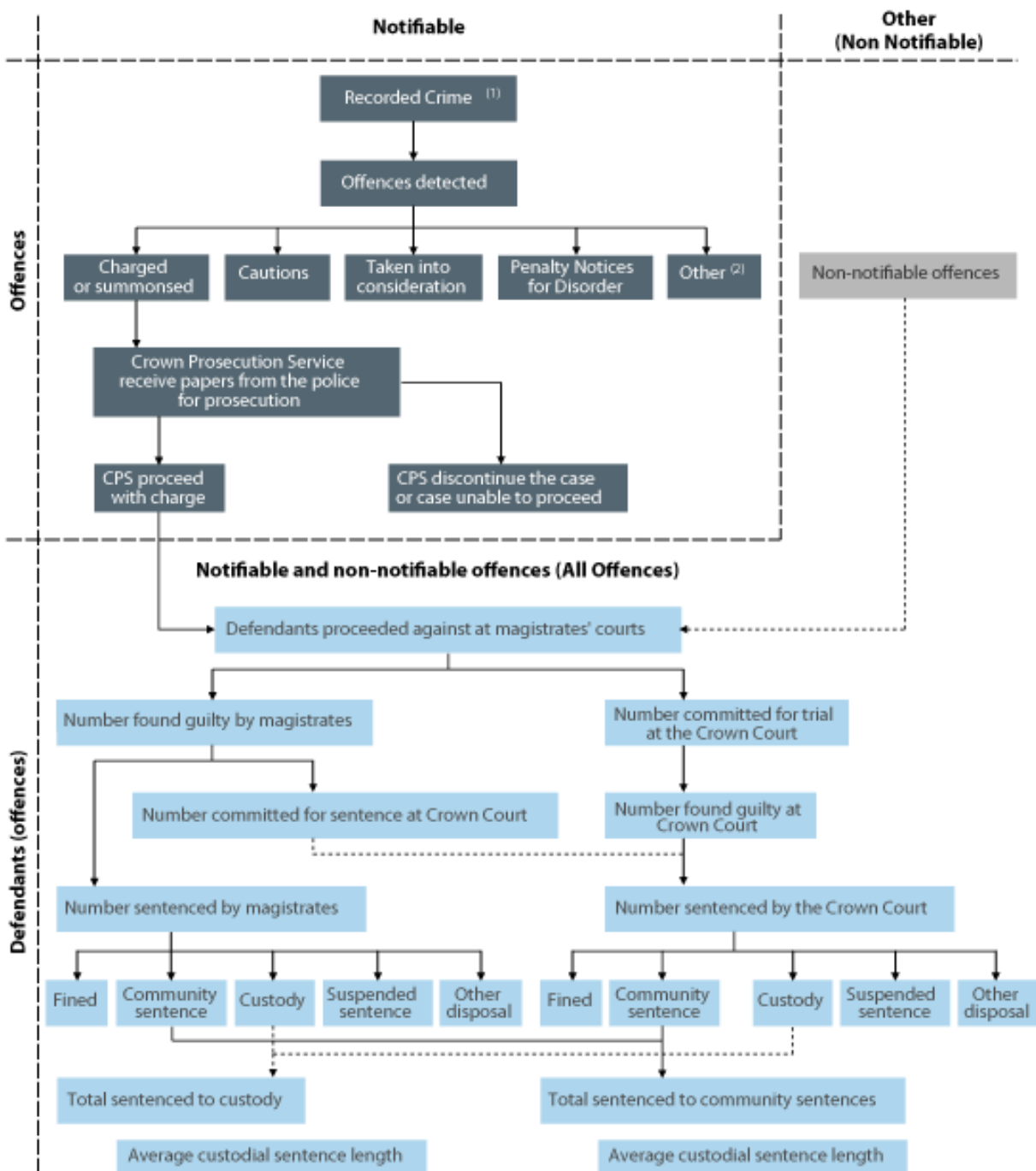
**Figure J2** shows the second level of the conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice statistics i.e. the path of an incident from occurrence through to the criminal justice system.

**Figure J2: Flow of crime and incidents into the criminal justice system**



**Figure J3** shows the third level of the conceptual framework for crime and criminal justice statistics i.e. the flow of notifiable and non-notifiable crime through the criminal justice system.

**Figure J3: Flows through the criminal justice system**



1. Covers all indictable, including triable either way, offences plus a few closely associated summary offences.  
 2. Includes formal warnings for cannabis possession and non-sanction detections.

## Annex K: References

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