

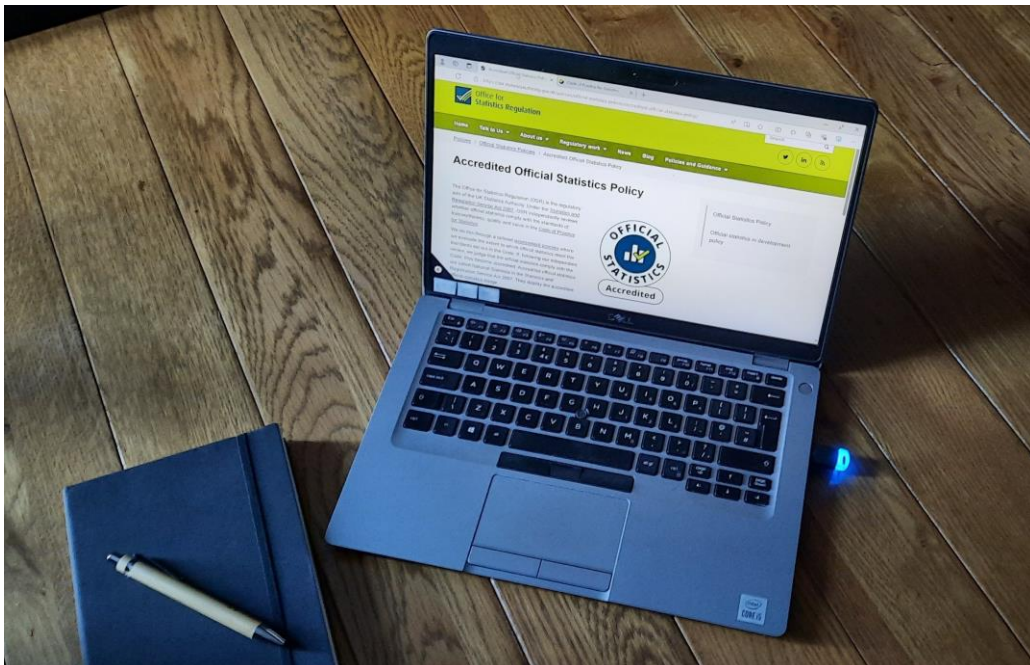


# Recorded Crime and Official Statistics Accreditation in the UK – Public Briefing

Briefing No. 20



November 2024



## Summary

This briefing outlines what is meant by official statistics in the UK. It provides details of the different levels available and how this relates to crime figures in Scotland and in England and Wales.

# Official Statistics in the UK

Public sector organisations produce [official statistics](#) on behalf of the UK and Scottish Government. They provide a factual basis for assessment and decisions.

[Accredited official statistics](#) are official statistics where the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) has confirmed they meet the standards set out in the UK Statistics Authority's [Code of Practice](#). The overall Code is supported by a range of guidance documents, covering such areas as [transparency](#) and [quality](#).

The OSR keeps a [List of Accredited Official Statistics](#). This is a full list of all statistics the OSR has reviewed and accredited.

# Crime Statistics in Scotland

The OSR classifies the Scottish Government's [Recorded Crime bulletins](#) as accredited official statistics. Police Scotland's own [performance publications](#) are management information only.

Police Scotland provide data to the Scottish Government for their bulletins. Scottish Government staff then conduct detailed quality checks. They discuss any queries with Police Scotland, and both organisations make any necessary changes. Statisticians who have not been involved in the process then complete a second round of checking.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland also conduct 'crime audits' to assess crime recording by Police Scotland. They check that recording is in line with the [Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules](#). The [most recent audit](#) was in 2020. The next will be in 2025-26.

As well as police recorded crime figures, the Scottish Government publishes the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#). This asks people about their experiences and feelings relating to crime in Scotland. The OSR classifies these figures as accredited official statistics.

The Scottish Government also produces [experimental statistics](#). This type of official statistics is going through a process of development and evaluation in line with the Code of Practice.

# England and Wales

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes [crime figures in England and Wales](#). These are based on police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England & Wales.

The Home Office provides the ONS with [police recorded crime figures](#). The Home Office collates this data from all 43 police forces in England and Wales, plus British Transport Police. The Recorded Crime publications are official statistics, but not accredited official statistics. The OSR removed accreditation in 2014 following a decision that the data may not be reliable.

The [Crime Survey for England & Wales](#) (CSEW) gathers information from a representative sample of people aged over 16, rather than from the whole population. The survey includes crimes that victims have not reported to the police. However the survey only covers crimes against people who live in households, and it does not include all crime types. The survey results therefore hold some uncertainty and are not precise figures.

The OSR has suspended the CSEW from accredited official statistics status. They are currently reviewing a request for reaccreditation following a [data quality review](#). This review showed that the quality of CSEW data for 2023 was broadly in line with 2020, when they were last accredited by the OSR.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

As outlined above, recorded crime figures published in the UK currently only have OSR accreditation in Scotland. This accreditation provides assurance that the figures used by Police Scotland, the Authority and partners are accurate and reliable.

A current focus in crime recording is the collection and reporting of data relating to sex and gender. As the Code of Practice does not refer specifically to sex and gender, any developments in this area are not expected to affect accreditation. Standards around accuracy and transparency will continue to be met when making any changes to current practice.

# Purpose of these Public Briefings

The Strategic Police Plan commits to the provision of Policing for a safe, protected and resilient Scotland. This requires designing and maintaining services which meet rising and evolving demands in a constantly changing environment. To meet these demands, now and in the future, Scotland's police service must adapt and proportionately adopt the necessary technologies which will enable them to protect the safety and wellbeing of our communities (as outlined in the Policing Principles - Section 32 of Police and Fire Reform Act 2012).

This series of public focused and user-friendly public briefings has been developed to provide an overview of the benefits of emerging technology and upcoming developments within policing, the policies that will govern them, and the ethical, privacy and human rights implications.

## Keeping up to date

To keep up to date with our work, please keep an eye on the Scottish Police Authority's [website](#) where you can find papers and watch livestream committee discussions, and follow us on Twitter/X:

@ScotPolAuth @policescotland

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