



## LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

22 October 2024

2024/25-063

### Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

#### Request

Please find below our response to your correspondence dated 27 September 2024, in which you made the following request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

“At yesterday’s full board meeting of the Scottish Police Authority board member Alasdair Hay, during the examination of Police Scotland’s policies on the recording of sex and gender (from 30:00 on the livestream recording), stated;

“Obviously the statistics within Police Scotland are accredited, which I understand is not the case with all forces in England and Wales, by the Office for National Statistics, and in terms of the development of policy and practice going forward, the authoritative nature of that data and statistics is something that’s important, and you know we really need to strive to maintain that, so it’s not the substantive point today but it is an important issue that needs to be recognised.”

In terms of the legislation I hereby request the following;

1. Details of the relevant statistics to which Mr Hay was referring to within the Police Service of Scotland
2. Details of the relevant statistics to which Mr Hay was referring to across the relevant forces in England and Wales, as well as details of the forces that directly relate to his comments.
3. Details of SPA internally produced documents which may exist to support the comments of Mr Hay

4. Details of any other documents in the possession of the SPA which support the comments of Mr Hay

5. Details of any and all correspondence relating to any pre meet of the SPA (with or without Police Scotland) in the days preceding the formal meeting of the Board. For the avoidance of doubt this includes all emails (internal and external), informal briefing notes, as well as hand written notes, minutes and draft minutes - but only insofar as they are relevant to this specific agenda agenda”

## **Response**

Your request for information has been considered and the Scottish Police Authority is able to provide the following.

By means of explanation, the comments made at the Authority’s meeting on 26 September in relation to “Official Accredited Statistics” relate to [Annual Accredited Recorded Crime Statistics](#) published by the Scottish Government. These accredited statistics are informed by [Police Scotland’s management data published quarterly](#).

You asked for “Details of the relevant statistics to which Mr Hay was referring to within the Police Service of Scotland”

Details of the relevant official statistics referred to are available on the Scottish Government’s website - [Annual Accredited Recorded Crime Statistics](#).<sup>1</sup> The most recent management data provided by Police Scotland to inform the Official Recorded Crime Statistics are available on Police Scotland’s website - [Quarter 1 Force Quarterly Bulletin 2024/25. Quarter 1 Management Information Report 2024/25 - Aggregated File](#)

You asked for “Details of the relevant statistics to which Mr Hay was referring to across the relevant forces in England and Wales, as well as details of the forces that directly relate to his comments.”

The statistics referred to in England and Wales are available on the Office for National Statistics’ website<sup>2</sup> - [Crime in England and Wales](#)

In addition, the Office of Statistics Regulation published a report in May 2024 – [The quality of police recorded crime statistics in England and Wales](#).

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<sup>1</sup> This represents a notice in terms of Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - where information is already available, there is no need to provide an alternative right of access to it through FOISA.

<sup>2</sup> This represents a notice in terms of Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - where information is already available, there is no need to provide an alternative right of access to it through FOISA.

You asked for “Details of SPA internally produced documents which may exist to support the comments of Mr Hay”

An email dated 18 September 2024 sent to the Chair and Chief Executive with a briefing note attached titled “Recorded Crime and Official Statistics accreditation in the UK September 2024” is provided in the Appendix.

An email chain dated from 16 to 18 September 2024 between Strategy and Performance team members while developing the briefing note is provided.

Some third party personal data has been redacted as this is considered exempt in terms of the Act.<sup>3</sup> This exemption is absolute and does not require application of the public interest test. While you may have a legitimate interest in disclosure of this information, it is our view that those interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects.

You asked for “Details of any other documents in the possession of the SPA which support the comments of Mr Hay”.

The Scottish Police Authority holds no further information than that provided.<sup>4</sup>

You asked for “Details of any and all correspondence relating to any pre meet of the SPA (with or without Police Scotland) in the days preceding the formal meeting of the Board. For the avoidance of doubt this includes all emails (internal and external), informal briefing notes, as well as hand written notes, minutes and draft minutes - but only insofar as they are relevant to this specific agenda agenda”.

Item 3 – Chair’s Report to the Board meeting held on 23 September 2024 contained a section titled ‘Self-identification and recording of sex and gender’. This included the following reference:

“Police Scotland should support and maintain the formal accredited ‘official statistics’ status of Scotland’s recorded crime statistics by complying in full with the UK Statistic Authority’s Code of Practice for Statistics.”

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<sup>3</sup> This is a notice in terms of Section 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 – Third party data. Disclosure would contravene the data protection principle in Article 5(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation: personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.

<sup>4</sup> This represents a notice in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - Information not held.

This report is available on the Authority's website<sup>5</sup> - [Chair Report – September 2024](#).

## **Right to Review**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your request you can ask for a review within 40 working days. You must specify the reason for your dissatisfaction and submit your request by email to [foi@spa.police.uk](mailto:foi@spa.police.uk) or by letter to Scottish Police Authority, 1 Pacific Quay, Glasgow, G51 1DZ.

If you remain dissatisfied after review, you can appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months. You can apply [online](#), by email to [enquiries@foi.scot](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) or by letter to Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Commissioner's decision, you can appeal to the Court of Session, only if you think the law has not been applied correctly.

This response will be posted to our [Disclosure Log](#) after seven days.

Yours faithfully

**SPA Corporate Management**

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<sup>5</sup> This represents a notice in terms of Section 25 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 - where information is already available, there is no need to provide an alternative right of access to it through FOISA.

## Appendix

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 12:24 PM  
**To:** Lynn Brown; Martyn Evans  
**Cc:** SPA Chair Office; SPA Chief Executive; Barry Sillers  
**Subject:** briefing on accredited statistics

### OFFICIAL

Good afternoon both,

Following discussions this week on the status of recorded crime data in Scotland as accredited official statistics and how this compares to England and Wales, [REDACTED] has pulled together a short briefing which I hope is helpful.

The conclusion of the briefing also references current guidance and the work underway on a review of the Code of Practice for Statistics at a UK level, as it may be relevant in relation to current and ongoing discussions in recording of gender/sex.

Please let us know if you require further detail

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**Head of Strategy & Performance**



**Prepared for:** Authority Chair and Chief Executive  
**Prepared by:** [REDACTED], Performance and Impact Lead  
**Authorised by:** [REDACTED], Head of Strategy and Performance

## **Recorded Crime and Official Statistics accreditation in the UK September 2024**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This briefing note outlines the definition of official statistics in the UK, providing details of the levels of accreditation available.
- 1.2 This note also gives an up to date position on the status of recorded crime statistics published by relevant organisations in Scotland and England and Wales.

### **2. Official Statistics in the UK**

- 2.1 [Official statistics](#) are statistics produced by Crown bodies and other organisations listed within an Official Statistics Order, on behalf of the UK government or devolved administrations. They provide a factual basis for assessment and decisions on economic, social and environmental issues at all levels of society.
- 2.2 [Accredited official statistics](#) are a sub-set of official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and confirmed as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the UK Statistics Authority's [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.
- 2.3 The OSR maintains the [List of Accredited Official Statistics](#) (previously known as the List of National Statistics), a comprehensive list of all statistical outputs that the OSR has reviewed and accredited. The table below provides examples of producers, but is not a complete list.

Producer	Coverage	Link
UK Government	UK	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics">https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics</a>
Office for National Statistics	UK	<a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/">https://www.ons.gov.uk/</a>
Scottish Government	Scotland	<a href="https://www.gov.scot/statistics-and-research/">https://www.gov.scot/statistics-and-research/</a>
Public Health Scotland	Scotland	<a href="https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/">https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/</a>
National Records of Scotland	Scotland	<a href="https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data">https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data</a>
Transport Scotland	Scotland	<a href="https://www.transport.gov.scot/">https://www.transport.gov.scot/</a>
NHS Digital	England	<a href="https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information">https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information</a>
Home Office	England and Wales	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office</a>
Ministry of Defence	England and Wales	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence</a>
Welsh Government	Wales	<a href="https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research">https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research</a>
Northern Ireland Government	Northern Ireland	<a href="https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/official-statistics/northern-ireland-official-statistics">https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/official-statistics/northern-ireland-official-statistics</a>
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency	Northern Ireland	<a href="https://www.nisra.gov.uk/">https://www.nisra.gov.uk/</a>

### 3. Crime Statistics in Scotland

- 3.1 The Scottish Government's quarterly and annual [Recorded Crime bulletins](#) are designated as accredited official statistics, while Police Scotland's own [performance publications](#) are classed as management information only.
- 3.2 Police Scotland provide their data to the Scottish Government, where detailed quality assurance checks are carried out. Anything that requires further explanation is fed back to Police Scotland, with any required amendments then made.

- 3.3 Once both organisations are content that the figures are an accurate reflection of the dataset, they are officially signed off for publication. The bulletins are also then subjected to a secondary level of checking by statisticians who have not been involved in the production process.
- 3.4 The Scottish Government also produces [experimental statistics](#), this type of official statistics are going through a process of development and evaluation in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.
- 3.5 In addition to police recorded crime statistics, the Scottish Government also separately publishes the [Scottish Crime and Justice Survey](#) (SCJS), a large-scale social survey that asks people about their experiences and perceptions of crime in Scotland. These figures are also accredited official statistics.

#### 4. England and Wales

- 4.1 [Crime statistics in England and Wales](#) are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). These are taken from data collected through police recorded crime and the Crime Survey for England & Wales (CSEW).
- 4.2 [Police recorded crime data](#) are supplied to the ONS by the Home Office, who are responsible for the collation of recorded crime data supplied by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus British Transport Police. These data are supplied to the Home Office monthly for each crime within their notifiable offence list. The Recorded Crime publications are designated as official statistics, but not accredited official statistics. Accreditation was removed in 2014 following an assessment that the quality and consistency of the underlying data may not be reliable.
- 4.3 The [CSEW](#) is an interviewer-administered face-to-face victimisation survey that gathers information from a representative sample of residents aged 16 years and over, rather than from the whole population. The survey includes crimes that are not reported to/recorded by the police, but is limited to crimes against people resident in households and does not cover all crime types. Therefore, the estimates presented in the survey results contain some uncertainty and are not precise figures.
- 4.4 CSEW estimates have been temporarily suspended of their accredited official statistics status. The OSR is currently reviewing a request for reaccreditation following a [CSEW data quality review](#) that showed that the quality of CSEW data for year ending March 2023 was broadly similar to CSEW data for year ending March 2020, when they were last accredited official statistics.



## 5. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 5.1 As outlined above, recorded crime data published in the UK is currently only designated as accredited official statistics in Scotland. This accreditation provides assurance that the data used by Police Scotland, the Authority and partners is accurate, and that good arrangements are in place to produce, validate, and publish these figures in a way that is meaningful and easily understood.
- 5.2 A current focus in crime recording is consideration of the collection and reporting of data relating to sex and gender identity. It is not expected that any development in this area will impact on accreditation of reported statistics in Scotland. The Code of Practice for Statistics does not refer specifically to sex and gender, however its standards around accuracy, transparency and effective analysis of data will need to be adhered to when making any changes to current practice.
- 5.3 There is also specific [OSR guidance](#) in this area to be referred to, as well as an ongoing review of the Code of Practice with an updated version due to be published by May 2025 that may provide further information.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:43 AM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry ; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

Thanks both. I have added a couple of paragraphs to the conclusion for you to review.

■

[REDACTED]  
**Performance and Impact Lead**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:43 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

It might just be worth a few points covering the fact that it would not seem to be linked to Accreditation, but there is developing guidance and an ongoing review which may provide further information but it is not expected to impact accreditation unless there is a change to the CoP?

Does that cover across?

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:31 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]; Sillers, Barry  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

That's a paragraph on the SCJS added. Does the BN need a separate section specifically relating to sex and gender?

■

[REDACTED]  
**Performance and Impact Lead**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:09 AM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Maybe something from this [Collecting and reporting data about sex and gender identity in official statistics: A guide for official statistics producers – Office for Statistics Regulation \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](#) would be useful?

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**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:07 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Thanks if you add those points in Amanda can review for approval

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 11:06 AM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

Thanks Barry. The SCJS is also accredited official statistics so I can add this in.

The Code of Practice does not refer to specific types of data, so it doesn't mention sex or gender recording. It is based around criteria relating to quality, transparency etc.

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**Performance and Impact Lead**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 10:57 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Thanks [REDACTED]

2 additions please:

What is the status of the SCJSurvey in comparison to the CSEW which you reference.

Can you make a definitive statement whether there is anything in the Code of Practice referring to sex or gender recording.

Cheers

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 10:54 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]; Sillers, Barry  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Thanks [REDACTED]

I'll review now

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 10:53 AM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

The briefing note is now saved [here](#). I've added in a bit more detail around the checks carried out on PS data by SG to achieve the accredited statistics designation.

If there is anything else needed please let me know.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Performance and Impact Lead**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 18, 2024 7:24 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

[REDACTED]

Any chance you can bring this into a BN format today and then Amanda can send on to the Chair ahead of the wider BN on gender recording?

Thanks

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 5:08 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Understood

Worth just closing the loop with the Chair on whether there is anything specific in Accredited OS CoP regarding sex or gender data.

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:44 PM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL: NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY]

**NAMED RECIPIENTS ONLY**

Based on what SG said previously, I don't think so but that's a question we can ask of SG in terms of JAS data standards.

Just met with Lynn and been told to stand down as she'll respond to KK in the first instance on the query sent this afternoon.

[REDACTED]

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:28 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks – so at least for the foreseeable future Scottish Crime Stats are alone in being accredited – although it is not immediately obvious whether PS recording of gender will impact this accreditation if at all?

By reading between the lines this would appear to be the Chair's question. Would a recording of female gender on an individual born as male sex be seen as a data quality issue?

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:22 PM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

Yes, they both were stripped of their accreditation but it's specifically the survey that is awaiting the outcome of a request to be reinstated.

[REDACTED]  
**Performance and Impact Lead**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:19 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Sorry – reading the BN against it the Crime Survey in EW which may get accreditation back rather than the Crime stats from Forces and then collated by the Home office which have been suspended since 2014

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:14 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

Thanks [REDACTED]

So Scottish Crime stats still get the badge but E/W are still suspended for questions over data quality but they may get accreditation back in the near future?

Some guiding questions re the second part:

Is there anything specific in the CoP against which the accreditation judgement is made regarding sex or gender recording?

Is the 2021 census accredited to official statistic level given the issue re gender and sex recording with that survey?

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:07 PM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

Hi Barry,

Thanks for this. Saved [here](#) is a document with my notes on the status of different statistical publications. Hopefully this covers the first part of your request around explaining the levels of accreditation and where Scotland sits vs E&W. I'll catch up with Amanda on the second part in relation to recording sex and gender.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**Performance and Impact Lead**

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 4:01 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

[REDACTED]

Sorry for late catch up but if you have not already found it this is where the definition and accreditation of "accredited official" statistics is kept. Previously known as national statistics and with a funky new badge!

[Types of official statistics – UK Statistics Authority](#)

[https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Accredited\\_OS\\_List\\_May24.xlsx](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Accredited_OS_List_May24.xlsx)

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 11:39 AM  
**To:** Sillers, Barry  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

No problem

[REDACTED]

**From:** Sillers, Barry  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2024 11:38 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Official Statistics - Crimes in Scotland [OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

[REDACTED]

Can you review the work we did before on PS Crime Statistics being Official Statistics – what that accreditation is based on and why E/W do not have the accreditation.

Can you examine recent ONS report on recording sex and gender in that context.

**Barry Sillers**  
**Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)**