



LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

23 October 2024

2024/25-066

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Request

Please find below our response to your correspondence dated 1 October 2024, in which you made the following request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

“For the period from 1 September 2024 onward, please provide copies of any internal Scottish Police Authority communications, held in any form, about the accreditation of any statistics produced by Police Scotland.”

Response

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

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”.

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

A transcript of Whatsapp messages from 13 September between the Chair of the Authority, Martyn Evans, and an SPA Officer.

Some third party personal data has been redacted as this is considered exempt in terms of the Act.¹ This exemption is absolute and does not require application of the public interest test. While you may have a

¹ 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.

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.

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 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 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

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

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?

█

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.

█

█

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

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)

Transcript of Whatsapp messages dated 13 September between the Chair of the Authority, Martyn Evans, and an SPA Officer.

13/09/2024 @ 07.20am WhatsApp message from Martyn Evans to SPA Official

Image highlighting police recorded crime data are not designated accredited official statistics.
Text: Can we check if police recorded crime in Scotland are accredited as official statistics?
When I invited Ed Humperson (DG Office for Statistics) to speak at Tulliallan he said they were.

13/09/2024 @ 08:02am WhatsApp message from SPA Official to Martyn Evans

Text: Recorded crime in Scotland is clearly badged as Official Statistics.
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/recorded-crime-in-scotland/>

13/09/2024 @ 08:03am WhatsApp message from Martyn Evans to SPA Official

Text: Is that the same as police recorded crime data?

13/09/2024 @ 08:05am WhatsApp Message from SPA Official to Martyn Evans

Text: Yes it must be. These statistics stem from the management data we are provided by PS on a quarterly basis. It is also subject to official checks and balances but the info we get is the source of the data.

13/09/2024 @ 08:07am WhatsApp message from SPA Official to Martyn Evans

Text: There is a very valid point about the credibility of official stats if there is no agreement or consistent application of approaches. It needs direction from Government. I think John Swinney's response in Parliament yesterday should be very robustly challenged by us.

13/09/2024 @08:49am WhatsApp message from Martyn Evans to SPA Official

Text: That's my view. Our police statistics are designated official and we are very keen to maintain that status.

13/09/2024 @ 08:50am WhatsApp message from SPA Official to Martyn Evans

Text: I think we'll only maintain that status with a clear policy position on the approach from SG backed up with guidance from Official statistician.