

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>SPA Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>17 November 2020</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Video Conference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Report on Crime Group Detection Rate Trends – Performance and Resource Allocation Considerations</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Tom McMahon, Director of Strategy and Analysis</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

This paper fulfils action PP-20200227-004 which was raised at the SPA Policing Performance Committee meeting on 27 February 2020.

It present an analysis of trends in detection rates, causational factors and implications for prioritisation of resource.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The content of this paper fulfils action PP-20200227-004 which was raised at the SPA Policing Performance Committee meeting on 27 February 2020 and which reads:

*'Detailed report to be brought to the next committee meeting that provides a deep dive into the trends in detection rates, causal factors and implications for prioritisation of resource'.*

## 2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

### 2.1 Executive Summary

- a) Detection rates are not a useful single measure of progress towards strategic outcomes as the recording of a detection does not necessarily mean that the outcome for a victim of crime is positive (this more often being affected by the approach taken to prosecution, the criminal or civil disposal given to the offender or the reparation offered to the victim).
- b) Over the period 2014/15 to 2019/20, the detection rate for total crimes (Groups 1-5) has remained relatively constant between 50-52%.
- c) Divisions are in general following the same year on year variation as the Force. There is no significant regional variation.
- d) There is no statistically significant variation in detection rate across the SIMD quintiles of deprivation or by urban / rural classification.
- e) Detection rate figures for Q1 2020/21 increased from the previous year in five of the six crime groups (Groups 1-6) studied. Only Group 5 fell primarily due to a forensics backlog resulting from measures taken during the early stage of the COVID pandemic.
- f) Increase in detection rate in Q1 2020/21 may be due to a decrease in the demands on officers (fewer incidents attended and crimes recorded) during the COVID pandemic.
- g) In previous years, increased demand placed on officers was highlighted by all divisions as a contributory factor to changing detection rates.

- h) The complex nature of some investigations, especially in relation to domestic abuse (high risk offenders) and Group 2 crimes often have protracted enquiries and challenges which are likely to negatively impact detection rates. Investigations such as OP FORSETTI (Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry, OP BEAR (Human Trafficking) and other local operations involve the investigation of many linked crimes placing a heavy demand on officers with specialist skills.
- i) Since 2014/15, just over one quarter (27%) of all Group 2 crimes have been 'non-recent' i.e. reported to the police more than one year after the crime was committed. The detection rate for all Group 2 'recent' reported crimes was 62.0% versus 56.7% for 'non-recent', a difference of 5.3 percentage points.
- j) All divisions have rigorous and robust mechanisms for reviewing performance and detection rates, generally in the form of weekly and monthly divisional governance or performance meetings with senior management teams.
- k) Recent changes to the Scottish Crime Recording Standards (SCRS) have resulted in significant increases in the number of recorded cyber-enabled crimes, particularly fraud, involving victims residing in Scotland having been targeted by perpetrators based out with the United Kingdom. There is currently a lack of capacity or governance nationally to comprehensively investigate and/or prevent this type of crime although the recently agreed Police Scotland Cyber Strategy will provide a foundation for measures and investment to ensure that detection rates do not fall due to continuing lack of capacity in these areas.

## 2.2 Alignment to Police Scotland Strategic Outcomes

2.2.1 Police Scotland's capacity and capability to detect crimes is critical to the delivery of a number of Strategic Outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

2.2.2 Police Scotland require to effectively resolve threats to public safety and wellbeing. Keeping people safe in the physical world and digital

---

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Crime Recording Standards define a crime to have been 'cleared up' (detected) when there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots Law, to justify consideration of criminal proceedings notwithstanding that a report is not submitted to the Procurator Fiscal or Children's Reporter because either:

- by standing agreement with the Procurator Fiscal or Children's Reporter, the Police formally warn the accused, or
- reporting is inappropriate due to the non-age of the accused, death of the accused or other similar circumstances.

world requires the perpetrators of crime to be apprehended and brought to justice in order to mitigate the risk and harm that they present to our communities.

2.2.3 An expectation of the public and communities is that Police Scotland will thoroughly investigate crimes and arrest those responsible for committing them. Any apparent failure to do so will undermine their confidence in policing.

## 2.3 Detection Rate - Statistical Overview (2014/15 – 2019/20)

2.3.1 Over the past six years, the detection rate for total crimes (Groups 1-5) has remained relatively constant between 50-52%.

SGJD crime group/classification	Detection Rate						% Point Change From Previous Year				
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total Crimes & Offences (Groups 1 - 7)	75.7	74.5	71.0	67.9	67.4	67.2	-1.2	-3.5	-3.1	-0.5	-0.2
Total Crimes (Groups 1 - 5)	50.6	51.9	50.4	49.9	51.4	51.5	1.3	-1.5	-0.4	1.5	0.1
Overall Violent Crime*	76.6	76.4	71.4	69.9	69.0	69.5	-0.1	-5.0	-1.5	-0.9	0.5
Total Offences (Groups 6 - 7)	92.6	90.8	87.8	84.3	83.1	82.6	-1.7	-3.0	-3.6	-1.1	-0.5
Group 1: Non Sexual Crimes of Violence	83.0	81.8	77.2	76.2	73.1	71.7	-1.2	-4.6	-1.0	-3.0	-1.4
Group 2: Sexual Crimes	74.9	73.7	61.3	59.5	57.7	56.3	-1.2	-12.4	-1.8	-1.8	-1.4
Group 3: Crimes of Dishonesty	35.9	38.2	37.1	37.2	38.6	37.1	2.3	-1.1	0.1	1.5	-1.6
Group 4: Fire-Raising, Malicious Mischief etc	22.8	24.2	25.1	25.1	26.0	26.6	1.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.6
Group 5: Other (Pro-Activity) Crimes	97.4	97.0	96.8	92.1	90.5	90.9	-0.4	-0.2	-4.8	-1.5	0.4
Group 6: Miscellaneous Offences	86.4	84.3	80.3	77.7	76.5	75.9	-2.1	-4.0	-2.6	-1.3	-0.5
Group 7: Offences Relating to Motor Vehicles	98.3	97.3	96.0	91.2	90.5	89.7	-1.1	-1.3	-4.7	-0.7	-0.8

Table 1: Detection Rate  
Source: Force Bulletin

2.3.2 Whilst detection rate is a key piece of management information, attention should be given to the volume of recorded and detected crimes and offences as these figure are used to calculate detection rates. They are also indicative of changes to relative levels of the investigative demand on Police Scotland.

2.3.3 The trend in the number of detected crimes (table 2) shows a similar pattern to detection rates with the total number of detections for total crimes (Groups 1-5) in the past two years holding at similar levels to those in 2014/15 and 2015/16.

SGJD crime group/classification	Number of detected crimes and offences						% change from previous year				
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total Crimes & Offences (Groups 1 - 7)	479,950	435,457	373,252	343,656	332,016	333,973	-9.3%	-14.3%	-7.9%	-3.4%	0.6%
Total Crimes (Groups 1 - 5)	128,575	126,878	119,034	120,759	125,686	126,861	-1.3%	-6.2%	1.4%	4.1%	0.9%
Overall Violent Crime*	48,074	48,871	45,307	44,738	44,221	44,279	1.7%	-7.3%	-1.3%	-1.2%	0.1%
Total Offences (Groups 6 - 7)	351,375	308,579	254,218	222,897	206,330	207,112	-12.2%	-17.6%	-12.3%	-7.4%	0.4%
Group 1: Non Sexual Crimes of Violence	5,279	5,599	5,546	5,530	5,865	6,681	6.1%	-0.9%	-0.3%	6.1%	13.9%
Group 2: Sexual Crimes	7,291	7,673	6,848	7,506	7,853	7,521	5.2%	10.8%	9.6%	4.6%	-4.2%
Group 3: Crimes of Dishonesty	45,074	43,789	41,446	42,116	43,758	41,287	-2.9%	-5.4%	1.6%	3.9%	-5.6%
Group 4: Fire-Raising, Malicious Mischief etc	11,844	13,114	13,131	12,882	12,428	12,674	10.7%	0.1%	-1.9%	-3.5%	2.0%
Group 5: Other (Pro-Activity) Crimes	59,087	56,703	52,063	52,725	55,782	58,698	-4.0%	-8.2%	1.3%	5.8%	5.2%
Group 6: Miscellaneous Offences	157,949	141,994	120,546	106,273	99,866	97,767	-10.1%	-15.1%	-11.8%	-6.0%	-2.1%
Group 7: Offences Relating to Motor Vehicles	193,426	166,585	133,672	116,624	106,464	109,345	-13.9%	-19.8%	-12.8%	-8.7%	2.7%

Table 2: Number of Detected Crimes  
Source: Force Bulletin

2.3.4 Figures provided in table 2 show that during 2019/20, the number of detections for Group 1 crimes was 20.1% (1,117) higher than the 5 year mean, however, this increase has not kept pace with the 30.6% increase in recorded crime over the same period. As a result, the detection rate for 2019/20 ended 6.3 percentage points below the five year cumulative average (78.0%).<sup>2</sup> See table 3 for comparison of all crime groups against the 5 year mean.

	Change in Recorded Crimes	Change in Detected Crimes	Change in Detection Rate (percentage points)	Comments
Group 1	30.6%	20.1%	-6.3	Increase in the detected crimes less than the corresponding increase in recorded crimes
Group 2	16.1%	1.2%	-8.3	Same as Group 1
Group 3	-3.7%	-4.5%	-0.3	Decrease in the number of detected crimes larger than the decrease in recorded crime
Group 4	-7.3%	0.0%	1.9	Number of detections maintained whilst recorded crime decreased.
Group 5	10.7%	6.2%	-3.8	Same as Group 1
Group 6	-16.3%	-22.0%	-5.6	Large decrease in recorded crime but even larger decrease in the number of detections
Group 7	-19.0%	-23.7%	- 5.5	Same as Group 6

Table 3: 2019/20 vs 5 year average  
Source: Crime Bulletin

2.3.5 Local Policing Divisions are generally trending in the same direction with respect to the volumes of recorded and detected crimes, and detection rates.

2.3.6 Detection figures were further analysed to establish if there were any correlation with socio-economic factors or urban-rural classification. Table 6 provides a breakdown of detection rates by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile (1 being most deprived, 5 being least deprived).

<sup>2</sup> The 5 year cumulative average detection rate = (total number of detections during the previous 5 year period) / (total number of recorded crimes / offences during the previous 5 year period).

Crime Group	Most Deprived			Least Deprived	
	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
1	68.9%	73.4%	71.4%	69.7%	65.8%
2	48.2%	50.6%	50.5%	49.2%	49.5%
3	38.0%	39.2%	33.2%	34.1%	28.9%
4	25.9%	27.1%	26.8%	27.7%	19.8%
5	85.6%	87.0%	86.9%	87.3%	87.2%
6	74.0%	75.5%	75.3%	74.3%	69.6%
Groups 1-6	60.1%	59.6%	57.1%	55.9%	46.4%

Table 4: Detection Rate 2019/20 by SIMD quintile  
Source: Force Bulletin

2.3.7 In general, there was no statistically significant correlation between SIMD quintile for any individual crime groups.

Crime Group	Large Urban				Remote Rural	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	64.5%	75.0%	75.0%	87.0%	75.8%	80.4%
2	46.3%	53.1%	48.2%	56.0%	48.2%	45.6%
3	30.3%	43.0%	37.0%	51.5%	30.4%	24.8%
4	22.0%	28.6%	28.0%	35.1%	29.6%	29.8%
5	84.6%	87.4%	87.7%	91.4%	88.5%	92.9%
6	70.1%	78.1%	75.6%	82.6%	73.7%	76.9%
Groups 1-6	53.1%	62.6%	58.3%	68.5%	56.5%	57.6%

Table 5: Detection Rate 2019/20 by 6 fold urban / rural classification  
Source: Force Bulletin

2.3.8 No statistically significant correlation was found between detection rate and urban / rural classification.

2.3.9 Detection rate figures for Q1 2020/21 have increased. During this period, Scotland has been in various stages of lockdown due to the ongoing COVID pandemic. The volume of recorded crime in Q1 was 15.1% lower than the 5 year mean and the detection rates for total crimes (Groups 1-5) was 6.3 percentage points above the 5 years cumulative average.

The increase in detection rates recorded in Q1 2020/21 is assessed to be primarily due to decreased demand on Police Scotland resources enabling more timely investigations to be completed.

- the volume of incidents attended in Q1 2020/21 was 12% lower than the same period 2019/20;
- Group 1-5 crimes fell by 12% from the previous year; and

- Groups 1 and 2 fell by 15% and 18% respectively – these groups contain crime types which are some of the most resource intensive to investigate.

## 2.4 Causal factors for crimes failing to be detected

2.4.1 A wide range of causal factors need to be considered when trying to assess the most prevalent reasons for crimes not being detected. It should be recognised that not all causal factors are either fully (or partially) within Police Scotland's control.

In order to develop insight into the challenges of detecting crime from an operational perspective, surveys were sent to the Divisional Operations Supt in every territorial division in which they were able to share their experience and opinions. (Two divisions provided a second return completed by their Public Protection Unit). Analysis by thematic area of the 15 returns is presented below and will be used to inform management action.

2.4.2 The percentage of undetected crimes where there was an uncooperative complainer or witness varied between 1% (Groups 3, 4) and 18% (Group 1).<sup>3</sup>

2.4.3 Late reporting resulting in lost opportunities to gather forensic evidence was highlighted as a contributory factor for the non-detection of crimes. This is particularly so for certain types of Group 2 sexual crimes where there are time bound windows of opportunity to gather forensic evidence which can be used in the investigation and prosecution of cases.

2.4.4 Loss of forensic opportunities ranked higher than the issue to retention of CCTV and forensic laboratory capacity and capability, both of which were assessed to have a moderate impact on detections.

2.4.5 Police Scotland continues to see increasing levels of cyber related crime, particularly in relation to on-line fraud. Access to telecoms and/or cyber related data is vital to the investigation of a wide range of crimes. Divisions report that securing support from social media platforms is more challenging and time consuming than financial institutions or internet service providers (ISP).

---

<sup>3</sup> Figures are based on data extracted for legacy Strathclyde Divisions only

2.4.6 Crimes where victims delay reporting the circumstances to the police makes the investigation and detection of that crime more challenging. Opportunities to gather evidence (forensic or otherwise) can be lost should the victim delay reporting the crime for an extended period of time.

2.4.7 Non-recent reporting has been defined as being crimes where the circumstances were reported to the police more than a year after the crime was committed. Experience has shown that non-recent reporting happens most frequently in Group 2 sexual offences.

2.4.8 Since 2014/15, just over one quarter (27%) of all Group 2 crimes have been non recent. The annual percentage has remained relatively constant (24-30%) over the past six years.

## **2.5 Operational and organisational factors**

2.5.1 Divisions reported various factors that may have an impact on the detection of crime, for example:

- Resourcing challenges associated with responding to changes in the type and volume of crimes being committed, for example, capacity to investigate increasing levels of cyber-related crime.
- Demand on operational resources to respond to non-crime related incidents.
- Prioritisation of high risk areas of business.
- Level of abstraction related to policing events, attending court or training courses, demand linked to serious criminality for example locus protection and door to door enquiries.

2.5.2 Increased demand placed on officers has been highlighted by all divisions. Giving officers more time allows evidence gathering to be maximised and enquiries progressed. There are constant competing demands and finite resources available.

2.5.3 Recent changes to the Scottish Crime Recording Standards (SCRS) have resulted in significant increases in the number of recorded cyber-enabled crimes, particularly fraud, involving victims residing in Scotland having been targeted by perpetrators based out with the United Kingdom. There is currently a lack of capacity or governance nationally to comprehensively investigate and/or prevent this type of crime although the recently agreed Police Scotland Cyber Strategy will provide a foundation for measures and investment to ensure that detection rates do not fall due to continuing lack of capacity in these areas.



## **2.6 Good practice**

2.6.1 Divisions have rigorous and robust mechanisms for reviewing performance and detection rates. This is generally in the form of weekly and monthly governance or performance meetings with senior management teams. Chief Inspectors and Inspectors also manage this on a daily basis at local levels, implementing initiatives involving dedicated resources, where a need is identified, to increase solvency.

2.6.2 Public Protection Units at divisions also hold regular governance meetings allowing a full review of enquires and ensuring standardising of enquiry files and the maximisation of investigative opportunities.

2.6.3 Divisions reported that having continued emphasis on improving response, investigation, quality of recording crime and the quality of update through all ranks is required to improve detection rates. Using the governance processes embedded within the divisions following performance meetings to start initiatives that focus on solving problems, reducing risk in the community and providing support and justice for victims, all assist with improving detection rates.

2.6.4 Having the opportunity for officers to focus on reducing outstanding enquiries in workbaskets to ensure that all investigatory opportunities are explored and utilising joint working between local policing and CID, also contribute to solvency rates.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with the contents of this report.

## **4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no personnel implications associated with the contents of this report

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no reputational implications associated with the contents of this report

**7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no social implications associated with the contents of this report.

**8. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

8.1 Failure to take all steps to maintain or improve the number of detections (and detection rate) carries an increased risk of offenders remaining at large. Publication of decreasing detection rates may also carry the risk of losing public confidence in the Force.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no equalities implications associated with the contents of this report.

**10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with the contents of this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.