

Crime recording standards in Scotland exceed target

The standard of crime recording within Scotland's eight police forces is high with all forces exceeding the set target against their own force audit.

The findings are published today in a report by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland which audited both the internal recording processes of each force as well as undertaking separate analysis of recording standards across three specific crime areas – domestic abuse, vandalism and minor assault.

The report showed that while the standard of recording for all crimes exceeded the target, the separate analysis of three specific crime type showed more variation.

HM Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, Bill Skelly said:

“This is the first audit conducted since crime recording standards were introduced in 2004. I am pleased that all forces are exceeding the required national target and I have confidence that forces are continually working towards improving standards of crime recording.

As part of our audit we also assessed a selection of records for individual incidences of domestic abuse, vandalism and minor assault. In these we found more variation. While this in itself was not a full audit, forces will want to consider the results and in some cases make further assessments themselves.

Now that the crime recording standard is established we have also taken this opportunity to invite ACPOS to consider whether a 95% crime target for all crime types is appropriate when you consider the difference in risk between for example domestic abuse and vandalism.

Individually and nationally police forces and ACPOS analyse crime data to inform decisions including the effective allocation of resource. It is, therefore, essential that this analysis and the decisions that flow from it are based on as accurate a picture of crime as possible. I trust that the areas we have highlighted provide forces with a starting point from which to consider their current processes and procedures in more detail”

Background

- For an embargoed copy of the report please email: stuart.neill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
- Upon publication on 12 August, the report can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/Police/local/15403/publications/pub2010>

- The HMICS audit consisted of two distinct phases. Firstly, it assessed the accuracy and robustness of each force's own internal crime audit across all crime categories. Secondly, across all eight police forces, a representative sample of 104 records were audited in the areas of domestic abuse, vandalism and minor assault.
- The compliance rates for the records audited in the second phase cannot be extrapolated across all crime records.
- In 2008-09 there were around 940,000 crimes and offences recorded by the police in Scotland.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) introduced the Scottish Crime Recording Standard in 2004 to improve consistency in crime recording across Scotland.
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) is responsible for inspecting the eight Scottish police forces and the constituent services provided by SPSA. HMICS operates independently of the police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police services in Scotland.
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