

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

Press Release – For Immediate Publication

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Accurate crime recording and crime data is crucial for policing in Scotland to ensure activities and resources are properly prioritised, according to the *Crime Audit 2011: National Overview Report* published today by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS).

Conducted between September and November 2011, the report assessed whether Scotland's eight police forces and the Scottish Crime Registrars Group had sufficiently robust audit processes to ensure they were complying with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) – the measure used to ensure nationwide consistency and accuracy in crime recording.

The report found that although forces employed different audit and quality assurance processes overall these were sufficiently robust for forces to identify that, in the majority of cases, they were accurately recording crimes and non-crimes.

Although the majority of police forces exceeded the national compliance target, the report highlighted audits by Lothian and Borders Police, British Transport Police and Tayside Police which showed the forces were failing to achieve the national standard of 95%, achieving 93.9%, 90.91% and 84.42% respectively.

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Andrew Laing, said:

“Accurate crime data and the accurate recording of crime is crucial in allocating police resources and time. The *Crime Audit 2011: National Overview Report* found that Scottish police forces have robust crime recording audit and scrutiny processes. The majority of forces exceeded the 95% compliance target and overall the Scottish average was also above 95%. This shows that a great deal of work has been applied to ensure accurate crime recording as a matter of national importance.

“Three forces – Lothian and Borders Police, British Transport Police and Tayside Police – failed to meet the target and are now working to address this.

“While Lothian and Borders Police and the British Transport Police are now working to make up a small percentage deficit, Tayside Police is in the middle of a significant change programme which has adversely affected its approach to crime auditing. While this is a matter of concern I am now confident that steps are being taken to address the situation.”

The report also made recommendations designed to ensure that the police service working towards a single Scottish police force maintains a standard approach to crime recording throughout the transition period. These include:

- that the National Police Reform Team ensures information recording is an integral part of work to develop a single incident management system for a single police force, and that approaches to information recording by Dumfries and Galloway Police and Northern Constabulary be considered as examples of good practice;
- that the National Police Reform Team works with Scotland’s eight existing forces to ensure crime recording standards are maintained through the transition to a single police force by raising awareness of recording standards among police force staff, and that regular auditing continues to be conducted by individual forces.

Notes to Editors

- The Scottish Crime Recording Standard was introduced by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) in 2004 to improve the consistency of crime recording across Scotland, and to help determine police priorities and the efficient allocation of public funds for policing.
- Scotland's police forces conduct regular internal crime audits to assess compliance with the SCRS, with each audit scrutinised by a crime registrar from a neighbouring police force. To further strengthen auditing ACPOS introduced a nationally co-ordinated annual audit in 2009.
- The *HMICS Crime Audit 2011: National Overview Report* was conducted by independently assessing the self-assessment auditing process used by forces to ensure the procedures used complied with the SCRS.

The full report is available to download at:

<http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/05/9739>

For further information, and to arrange an interview with HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary Andrew Laing, please contact:

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