



HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland
Improving Policing across Scotland

Wednesday, 10 March, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Review of Police Scotland's Recording of Crime

Crimes reported to Police Scotland are generally recorded correctly and according to national guidelines, states a major report published today (March 10, 2021).

However the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland did identify recurring issues which have not been addressed since its previous audits.

The HMICS Crime Audit 2020 makes six recommendations incorporating previous years' outstanding issues and focusing on future improvements which, when implemented, will enable Police Scotland to reach its self-imposed target of 95% accuracy in crime recording.

In her report Mrs Gill Imery QPM, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, praised the work of Police Scotland's regional crime registrars and highlighted examples of good practice, adding: "Recorded crime statistics may not, on first glance, seem the most interesting of police topics, but they go right to the heart of public confidence and it is essential crimes are recorded accurately and ethically.

"The public use the data to determine if their local area is safe and if crime is decreasing or increasing. The police use them to monitor trends and variations, enabling them to ensure that resources are deployed appropriately.

"Our results show there is a need for improvement in many local policing divisions for Police Scotland to meet its own target of 95% of records filed accurately.

"For a national police service aspiring to provide the same quality of service to communities across the country, it is disappointing to find wide variations in compliance with recording standards at a local level. Progress towards standardisation may be limited until there is a national crime management system in place.

"One area in which Police Scotland consistently performs well is in the documenting of domestic abuse incidents and this reflects the investment which has been put into training and understanding of domestic abuse, including new legislation. It is important therefore that learning from this area is considered when new legislation or improvements to practice are introduced.

The aim of the audit was to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of Police Scotland's crime recording and the extent to which it complies with the Scottish Crime Recording Standard and Counting Rules and follows similar reviews by HMICS.

It examined if incidents had been properly closed and subsequently if crimes had been correctly classified, counted and recorded within 72 hours of being brought to the attention of the police. Some

divisions performed well in one area of the recording process but poorly in others with a few being consistently efficient across all areas. The report also noted the standards of recording sexual and violent crime in some of the areas assessed had dropped, likewise standards had dropped for non-crime incidents since the last HMICS audit in 2016.

HMICS' recommendations aim for improvement in public reporting of crime recording audits; cultural change to improve compliance with national guidelines; streamlining of processes to avoid duplication; reviewing of crime management structures; enhanced training to provide consistent crime recording, and seek to ensure the benefits the national crime management system are maximised.

Progress towards these recommendations will be supported and monitored by HMICS.

Ends

FOOTNOTE

The Crime Audit 2020 tested the accuracy of crime recording by examining 7177 incidents, 2525 crime records and 3901 individual crimes. Auditing this volume of records allowed HMICS to report on statistically significant differences and changes in compliance rates across Scotland and at divisional level.

The audit had been scheduled for March 2020 but was postponed until August when it was able to go ahead under Covid safe restrictions.

Ends notes

NOTES TO EDITORS

The HMICS report Crime Audit 2020 is available to download from the HMICS website www.hmics.scot from 1200 hours, Wednesday, 10 March, 2021.

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