



CRIME DATA INTEGRITY (updated June 2016)

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2014 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) carried out an inspection into the way the 43 police forces in England and Wales record crime data, with a view to establishing whether police-recorded crime information could be trusted. A report on the inspection of West Yorkshire Police was released on 28 August 2014¹. In summary the following strengths and weaknesses were found, and the recommendations made are set out at appendix A:

STRENGTHS

- The force is aware of the threat and risks involved with crime data integrity and has begun to make improvements, examples of which can be seen in the auditing capabilities, IT Management and the development of the Force Crime and Incident Registrar.
- The Chief Officers and Senior Management are positively encouraging accurate crime recording.

WEAKNESSES

- There are clear failings in the way that the force records crimes in relation to vulnerable victims.
- The under recording can be put down to a range of factors including; misunderstanding of counting rules and recording standards, performance pressures, and investigate-to-record tendencies.
- There are current processes in place which allow for no-crime recording which go against the counting rules and recording standards, examples include the use of Dedicated Decision Makers which are not independent from performance.
- Out-of-court disposals are often used where not suitable due to the offender's previous history or without consideration for the victim's wishes.
- There is a strong and improving policy to deal with rape no-crimes however this is not widely known and rarely applied in the correct way meaning that rape no-crime incidents are often recorded in a way that is not compliant with counting rules and recording standards.
- The Chief Officer's direction regarding crime data integrity is positive however it is lost in the lower ranks.

2.0 WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE UPDATE

- 2.1 The Police and Crime Panel have received a variety of inputs from West Yorkshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) regarding the inspection findings and activity being undertaken to address this in September 2014, December 2014, March 2015 and June 2015.

¹ The full report can be found at <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/crime-data-integrity-west-yorkshire-2014.pdf>

- 2.2 West Yorkshire Police have now provided the following update for June 2016 for Panel members. There will be an opportunity at the Panel meeting to ask questions in relation to this activity.

West Yorkshire Progress

The Internal Audit Team have recently reviewed the actions taken by the Force in response to the five "Immediate" HMIC recommendations made. They have concluded that four out of the five recommendations have been fully implemented, with the fifth having been delayed due to operational resourcing issues in the Customer Contact Centre and the Force Demand Management Review not yet having reported. The Demand Management Review aims to ensure as a Force we make the most efficient and effective use of our resources.

In summer 2015, in conjunction with the OPCC, the central CDI audit team carried out a mirror audit, using the same methodology as the HMIC. From the 260 logs, it was found that 166 crimes ought to have been recorded, of which 138 were (83%). Building on this formula, and as recommended by the PCP and OPCC, a further similar exercise has been conducted in April 2016. From 260 logs, 92% of the required crimes had been recorded. Progress over two years from 67% to 83% to 92% demonstrates sustained improvement.

Increase in Recorded Crime in West Yorkshire

The latest data available, from 31st March 2016, shows that recorded crime rose by 28.5% in the previous 12 months, against a figure of 30.8% during April to October 2015, further indicating some levelling off (the increase for April to September was 31.2%). It is estimated that an increase of 19.7% is due to improved compliance with National Crime Recording Standards² (NCRS). These are generally in the crime categories of violence (with and without injury), sexual offences (rape and other sexual offences), robbery, domestic burglary, theft from person, other theft (non-specific), criminal damage, arson, public order and miscellaneous crimes against society³.

NCRS Compliance Audits

In addition to tracking crime-related incidents and recorded crime trends, the Force has an audit function in place that reviews a sample of crime-related incidents.

Some of these audits, those for Serious Sexual Offences and Domestic Burglary, have been conducted monthly since late 2014. Others for Domestic Abuse, Violent Crime, "Other Crime" (a sample of everything not contained in the specific audits) have now been added. These audits verify the accuracy of converting crime-related incidents into recorded crimes (with failure identified as where a crime was not recorded when it was appropriate to do so or where there was insufficient detail on the incident log to provide an adequate rationale for not recording a crime). There is a further dimension which ensures that the audit methodology mirrors the approach of HMIC, in relation to an incorrect recorded crime classification and/or over-criming⁴. This additional dimension has been in place since January 2015 and allows us to view our audit results on a like for like basis with the findings of HMIC. The audit sample sizes each month are significantly higher than that of HMIC, at over 750 crime-related incidents per month. The audits allow us to track changes in compliance over time.

² The national crime recording standard (NCRS) is a standard for recording crime in accordance with the law and was introduced in 2002. It is based on applying legal definitions of crime to victim's reports. The aim of NCRS is to promote greater consistency between police forces when they record crime, and take a more victim-focused approach to crime recording.

³ This category includes crimes such as: bigamy; soliciting for prostitution; going equipped for stealing; making, supplying or possessing articles for use in fraud; profiting from or concealing proceeds of crime; handling stolen goods; perjury; aiding suicide; perverting the course of justice; absconding from lawful custody; bail offences; dangerous driving.

⁴ The term "over criming" is a term used by HMIC to refer to crimes recorded where there was no absolute necessity under the rules, or where multiple crimes are recorded when fewer were required under the rules.

Domestic Abuse (DA)

In March 2016, a revision to the process handling Domestic Abuse (DA) calls was made. Under the new model, call handlers received additional training in identifying Domestic Abuse. Upon receipt of a DA crime related call, a crime is now recorded immediately by the operator, and forwarded for deployment. The early impact of these changes has been reviewed.





Period	Domestic Incidents	Domestic Incidents with a linked Crime	% DA Incidents with a Crime linked
21st December 2015-6th March 2016 (77 days)	10,779	3,915	36.3%
Since 7th March 2016 - 22nd May 2016 (77 days)	9,655	4,701	48.7%

Recording Domestic Abuse crimes more accurately means that victims are more likely to receive an investigation, risk assessment and the subsequent support than they were previously.

The success of this revision will, during June/July 2016, be rolled out to include Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents.

NCRS Compliance Audits

Below are the most recent audit results. The ratings and colour coding reflects HMIC methodology and are as follows:

	POOR - 79.9% and below compliance
	FAIR - Between 80%-89.9% compliance
	GOOD - Between 90%-94.9% compliance
	EXCELLENT - 95% and above compliance

Percentage of crimes recorded correctly

District	Audit Results in May 2016					
	Domestic Burglary	Serious Sexual Offences	Domestic Abuse	Violence against Person	All Other Crime Offences	TOTAL CRIME
Bradford	97.1%	97.0%	91.7%	90.3%	81.8%	88.4%
Calderdale	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kirklees	100.0%	95.0%	80.0%	81.8%	95.2%	90.1%
Leeds	96.6%	92.4%	93.3%	95.1%	94.9%	94.8%
Wakefield	100.0%	95.5%	87.5%	100.0%	90.0%	92.3%
Force	97.7%	94.6%	90.5%	92.4%	91.7%	92.4%

12 Monthly Rolling Totals (to May 2016)						
District	Domestic Burglary	Serious Sexual Offences	Domestic Abuse (1)	Violence against Person (2)	All Other Crime Offences	TOTAL CRIME
Bradford	94.6%	94.6%	81.6%	90.3%	81.6%	84.1%
Calderdale	97.6%	98.3%	92.3%	100.0%	85.4%	88.2%
Kirklees	95.8%	94.9%	74.3%	81.8%	83.0%	84.4%
Leeds	96.4%	94.1%	78.7%	95.1%	85.2%	86.5%
Wakefield	98.2%	96.1%	83.9%	100.0%	87.8%	89.1%
Force	96.0%	95.0%	80.6%	92.4%	84.3%	86.0%

(1) Domestic Abuse based on just five audits

(2) Violence against person based on just one audit

Cancellation⁵ of Rape Crimes

The Rape Cancellation Panel (Chaired by the Force Crime Registrar) now consider all submissions for cancellation or reclassification of all Rape and Attempted Rape offences, since September 2014.

These decisions are subject to further checking by the Audit Team, and have been verified as compliant.

Ongoing Improvement

Recognising the national drive to professionalise policing, the Force supported the formal training and accreditation of the Force Crime Registrar and Deputy by the College of Policing. The Crime Registrar has also secured professional qualification as a Lead Quality auditor, further enhancing the professionalisation of the function.

The HMIC inspection made clear the need for cultural change. Senior and middle managers have taken steps to make victim focus and ethics everyday business in the force. Policies have been reviewed and amended, the accountability framework revised and unhelpful performance targets removed.

Throughout the accountability framework, from individual to Force level, the overt and implied message is a clear one of doing the right thing first time, believing victims, protecting and supporting the vulnerable. This is now fully embedded in the accountability process at district and force level.

The force level review of demand management continues, and has CDI as one of the central pillars to be designed into the revised process. District crime recording pilots are being reviewed and feed in to the Demand Management Review, which will define the future process for the Force. More crimes are to be recorded at first point of contact and specialist unit's arrangements for crime recording are being reviewed. The CDI action plan has recently been subject of audit by the OPCC and is under review prior to further publication.

Analysis of in Force audits carried out by the Force Crime Registrar produce a clear picture of performance pressures having a much lesser impact on staff/officers decision making. Knowledge of when a crime is required is also greatly improved, and is in need of fine tuning only. The nature of many of the failed logs is now only a misunderstanding of the more technical requirements of NCRS/Home Office Counting Rules⁶, some considerable progress from the previous blatant attempts to avoid recording a crime accurately in order to satisfy performance demands.

⁵ Cancelled crimes (formerly referred to as 'no-crimes') are when the police have originally recorded an offence, but have subsequently determined that the crime did not take place, or was recorded in error.

⁶ Home Office Counting Rules provide a national standard for the recording and counting of notifiable offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales.

As well as reducing the number of Dedicated Decision Makers⁷ (DDM's), training and accreditation and quality assurance of their work now routinely takes place (A sample audited monthly). Where a lowering of standards is indicated, a more detailed audit of the DDM's work is carried out, and, where appropriate, authority removed and retraining undertaken. Only when the Force Crime Registrar (FCR) is satisfied that standards are re-established is re-accreditation authorised.

Taking this professionalisation to the next level, the FCR has proposed to remove responsibility from all of these decisions from operational officers, and to create a small cadre of specialist DDM's managed centrally. Funding and role profiles have been approved, recruitment and training are anticipated from July onwards.

Conclusion

The overall picture of culture change, supported by policy and management messaging, audit and performance management, has had a significant impact on the accuracy and crime recording and cancellation. Progressing from 67% to 92% (HMIC and mirror audits), plus sustained improvement of crime type and total crime audits into the 90% plus category provides reassurance that the force has responded to the action plan set, and continues to seek improvement.

3.0 GOING FORWARD

- 3.1 The PCC will continue to ask for routine updates and consider improvements, to ensure that the focus on data integrity and accurate crime recording does not diminish.
- 3.2 The Joint Independent Audit Committee, received a report into CDI in September 2015 and again in April 2016. They will be continuing in their scrutiny of this at future meetings.
- 3.3 As previously mentioned HMIC will continue its focus on crime recording, with unannounced inspections to take place in future.

⁷ The DDM is responsible for reviewing and subsequently authorising various methods of disposal for cases, including when a crime is cancelled.

HMIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

Immediately

1. The Force should introduce a consistent and structured approach to call-handling quality assurance processes; this should include listening to audio records to assess the accuracy of incident recording and have compliance with National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) is at its core, with particular attention given to those offences which are of greater risk to public safety.
2. The Force should communicate to all staff that an ethical approach to crime recording, done in accordance with the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) and NCRS, is expected and that crime-recording decisions should not be based on local performance concerns, undertaken through an investigate-to-record approach or subject to approval by a local supervisor or investigator; and any such processes that are in place should stop immediately.
3. The Force should ensure that the oversight of the decision to use out-of-court disposals is sufficiently robust so that they are only used in appropriate circumstances; in particular, that they are not used when the offending history of the offender should preclude their use, and that the views of victims are taken into account. This should be supported by the immediate introduction of an effective mechanism for the monitoring of the use of out-of-court disposals to ensure the decisions being taken to use the disposals are appropriate.
4. The Force should review the current structure for the approval of no-crime decisions, ensuring these decisions are made by individuals who are independent of local performance accountability and supported by effective and proportionate oversight by the Force Crime Registrar (FCR).
5. The Force should begin the operation of an adequate system for the auditing by the FCIR of rape no-crimes to ensure they are compliant with the HOCR and NCRS, and the results of this audit should be reported into the force performance meetings.

Within three months

6. The Force should introduce NCRS compliance performance across the whole of its governance structure and should use this to underwrite crime performance achievements.
7. The Force should ensure that the resources available to the FCIR are sufficient to enable the FCIR to fulfil an effective audit regime to monitor and improve compliance with the HOCR and NCRS.
8. The Force should establish and, as soon as practicable thereafter, begin operation of an adequate system for the auditing by the FCIR of all computer systems which are in use by the safeguarding teams which may contain reports of crime, with special attention being directed to those reports involving vulnerable adults and children.
9. The Force should complete a gap-analysis to aid its understanding of what is required by its communities to ensure its structures, systems and processes are able to support the provision of a victim-centred approach for all victims and, as soon as practicable thereafter, and to the greatest extent economically feasible, make the necessary changes identified through this analysis.
10. The Force should establish and begin operation of an adequate system of training in crime recording for all police officers and police staff who are required to make crime recording decisions, and ensure those who require such training receive it as soon as reasonably practicable.