

Not Protectively Marked



SCOTTISH CRIME RECORDING STANDARD

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1. INTRODUCTION

Scottish Police forces traditionally recorded crimes and offences reported to them in accordance with counting rules issued by the Scottish Executive Justice Department. Crimes and offences recorded by each Force are subject to audit and scrutiny, internally by individual Force Inspectorate Departments and also externally by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) recognised that greater consistency in recording practices could be achieved throughout the country. To progress this ACPOS Crime Standing Committee (now ACPOS Crime Business Area) established a Short Life Focus Group (SLFG) to consider, amongst other matters, the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), subsequently introduced in England and Wales on 1 April 2002, and assess its potential for adoption in Scotland.

The SLFG reported their findings to ACPOS Crime Standing Committee in April 2002 and recommended the development of a new crime recording standard for Scotland, which should incorporate a victim based approach and meet the expectations of the Scottish public in the 21st century. A National Working Group was established to take forward the recommendations, which resulted in the creation of a new Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS).

The SCRS was agreed by ACPOS Crime Standing Committee on 12th December 2002 and endorsed by ACPOS Council on 3rd February 2003. Dialogue was also undertaken with the Scottish Executive to ensure there was no conflict with their counting rules for crime statistics.

This document is the product of the National Working Group and has been updated by the Scottish Crime Registrars Group. It contains the SCRS aim and principles, underlying values, crime recording procedures, definitions of crimes cleared up, audit practices, and the role of the Force Crime Registrar.

HMIC Thematic Inspection – Meeting the Standard (October 2005)

This amended version of the SCRS takes into account the recommendations made in the above named document, which was published on 25th October 2005.

2. THE SCOTTISH CRIME RECORDING STANDARD (SCRS)

2.1 AIM AND PRINCIPLES

Aim: To provide a more victim orientated approach that serves the needs of our communities and ensures uniformity in crime recording standards throughout Scotland.

Principles: All reports of incidents, whether crime related or not will result in the creation of a report, which is auditable.

Following initial registration, an incident will be recorded as a crime in all cases if:

the circumstances amount to a crime or offence as defined by Scots Law,

and

there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

Once recorded, a crime will remain recorded unless there is verifiable evidence to disprove that a crime had occurred.

2.2 UNDERLYING VALUES

The underlying values are explicit but simple and require to be strictly applied by each Force. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance lies with the Chief Constable and is discharged on a daily basis by the Force Crime Registrar.

All incidents coming to the attention of the police will be registered by the creation of a report, which is auditable.

Crimes can be made known to the police through a variety of channels. A crime record must be raised for crime related incidents as defined by the SCRS, which are perceived to be a crime by the victim or any other person. No corroborative evidence is required before a crime record is raised, if on the 'balance of probabilities' a crime has occurred.

In circumstances where a person believes that a crime has occurred, but the victim, witness and/or complainer refuses to co-operate with the police, a crime record will be raised and the appropriate 'Non co-operative' aggravator assigned.

The exceptions to the Principles are where standing agreements with the Procurator Fiscal exist precluding the requirement to raise a crime record, e.g.

Conditional Offers or Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to moving Road Traffic Offences.

If an apparent crime related incident proves not to involve criminality, the incident record disposal will clearly depict the circumstances dispelling criminality. If, following the creation of a crime record, subsequent investigation proves that no crime occurred, the crime record will be marked accordingly. A full description of steps taken and the reason behind the change in status will be detailed in the crime record.

Exceptions to this are:

- Where duplicate or multiple crime or incident records have been raised. cross-referencing to the master record is necessary;
- When investigation has established that the crime occurred outwith the Force's jurisdiction.

2.3 CRIME RECORDING PROCEDURES

Sources of crime reports are many and varied originating with members of the public and Police Officers alike. Police Forces will record crimes made known to them regardless of when they occurred. The date made known (date crime created on crime recording system) and the date cleared up will subsequently feature as the index reference for statistical purposes.

Crimes and Offences are grouped under recognised categories for statistical purposes as defined by the Scottish Executive.

2.4 DEFINITION OF CRIMES CLEARED UP

A crime can be defined as cleared up where:

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, the Police warn the accused

Or

reporting is inappropriate due to the non age of the accused, death of the accused or other similar circumstances.

3 AUDIT PRACTICES

Audits should be carried out in accordance with the ACPOS Audit Methodology for Reviewing the Quality of Crime Data Recorded by Scottish Police Forces.

Forces must ensure that their procedures for recording crime are open and transparent and meet the requirements of the SCRS.

Due to differences between Information Technology Systems prescriptive audit procedures are not practical. Each Force should describe/map their processes and demonstrate that the scope and frequency of the exercise is robust and compatible with the spirit of the SCRS.

Forces are urged to identify and share best practice in the auditing process and identify problems in the application of the SCRS, bringing them to the attention of the Scottish Crime Registrars' Group for discussion and resolution. The outcome of such discussions will inform future practices, procedures and where appropriate be included in future issues of the SCRS Guidance Manual.

4 ROLE OF THE FORCE CRIME REGISTRAR

The role of the Crime Registrar is critical to the implementation and development of the SCRS. The role is a specialist role that requires knowledge, skills and experience of the crime recording process. It does not however require the exercise of police powers. The Force Crime Registrar will have ultimate authority to determine whether or not a matter is or is not recorded as a crime and the crime classification that will be applied.

The Force Crime Registrar should not be placed in a position where he/she is directly responsible for reducing crime levels or is answerable to a line manager who has such responsibility. The advantage to this approach is openness, transparency and clear independence.

5 FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information relating to this document, please write to the Force Crime Registrar at your local Police Headquarters.

