

Not Protectively Marked



SCOTTISH CRIME RECORDING STANDARD

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1. INTRODUCTION

In April 2004, the Scottish Crime Recording Standard (SCRS) was introduced throughout Scotland.

The Standard was produced by the Scottish Crime Registrars' Group and agreed by ACPOS following research which, identified the need to develop a more victim orientated approach to crime recording. This followed on from the National Crime Recording Standard which was introduced in England and Wales in April 2002.

The application of the Standard is supported by the Scottish Government Justice Directorate Counting Rules for Crime, where crimes and offences are grouped under recognised categories for statistical purposes as defined by the Scottish Government.

Tackling crime and the causes of crime are key priorities for all Police Forces. Performance and targets are integral to modern policing and it is vitally important that all Forces' crime recording and disposal practices are capable of withstanding rigorous scrutiny.

Accurate recording of crime assists analysis of crime patterns, trends and fluctuations. Accurate crime data illustrates to the service and the public at large how forces are performing and identifies areas, if any, which require greater re-sourcing.

The Standard sets out to ensure a more victim orientated approach is taken to recording crime. A more detailed approach with regards to the practical recording and application of counting rules can be found within the document 'Scottish Crime Recording Standard - Crime Recording and Scottish Government Counting Rules'.

The counting rules are under constant review, with changes normally being applied from 1 April each year.

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:

(a) the circumstances amount to a crime defined by Scots Law or an offence under statute, *

and

(b) there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

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

* (The Police Service will determine this based on their knowledge of the law and counting rules)

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 will 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. The Police will determine whether the circumstances as reported amount to a crime as defined by Scots Law or an offence under statute. No corroborative evidence is required before a crime record is raised, if on the 'balance of probability' a crime has occurred.

The SCRS while laying down a standard for ethical crime recording does not remove a Police Officer's power of discretion, when dealing with instances of anti-social behaviour, minor acts of disorder and minor road traffic violations. However, there will be occasions when individual force priorities or local initiatives will limit powers of discretion as forces introduce tactical measures to deal with specific local problems or enforce new legislation.

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, where appropriate.

Where the counting rules direct that the raising of a crime record is not appropriate (e.g. crimes committed overseas), no crime record will be raised.

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 Government.

All forces will record crime ethically and will comply with the Standard and the counting rules, taking into consideration differences in IT systems across Scotland.

Where investigation dictates a crime record is to be transferred to another force, the receiving force will record the crime in accordance with the Standard and the counting rules. The remitting force will mark their record accordingly thus preserving the audit trail.

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 or Children's Reporter the Police formally 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 will 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 versions of the counting rules. Updates to the counting rules will normally be implemented from 1 April each year.

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.