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Crime Recording in the UK

About Me:

**A UK government civil servant in the post
of:**

**National Crime Registrar in the Home
Office**

**Previously working in Police agencies on
incident management, crime investigation
and central policy.**

Police in The UK:

- 45 Police forces each with geographic responsibility for their area.
- Plus 1 national force for transport
- Each Police force has democratically elected officials to set plans and to hold commanders to account
- Each police force records reports of crimes received from victims or witnesses.
- Each force has its own IT systems and processes for dealing with reports of crimes

- So quite a complex landscape!

Rules That Govern Police Crime Recording:

- Statistics on crime recorded by Police have been available since 1857
- We provide a national set of rules that provide for when a crime must be recorded and what type of crime it must be
- But it is not ALL crime – only those crimes for which a sentence of imprisonment of more than 6 months could be given.
- This still means that nearly 1500 offences in law are covered by Police recorded crime statistics and that the Police must record each report as soon as they receive it.
- The detail rules are
 - The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS)
 - The Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR)

NCRS

- NCRS says that the Police must record each report of crime as soon as they receive it from the victim or as soon as they discover it themselves.
- There does not have to be a suspect or offender named or identified
- Police should believe the information provided by the victim and must record the crime based on that information unless there is real evidence immediately available to show that the report is false or mistaken.
- For example – a female reports to police she has been raped. She says where and when. The Police must record a crime based on this and before the full investigation is completed unless there is immediate evidence to show the female is not being truthful.

HOCR

- The Counting Rules set out which classification of crime should be recorded in order to ensure the crime statistics are accurate and that all police forces are recording the same way
- Those rules give examples and direction to officers to set out the crime classification to be used and how many crimes to be recorded
- For example a fight in the street – 3 people are injured by 1 offender – so 3 crimes to be recorded and each crime type to be according to the nature of the injuries.
- **ONE VICTIM = ONE CRIME**

HOCR

- Where Police then determine that the crime as recorded did not happen (for example the victim was lying) the crime report can be cancelled.
- Where there is no direct victim (the victim is the “state” or “monarch” – known as crimes against society, for example Riot or Espionage) then police must still record a crime as soon as the required evidential points are established

Statutory Basis For Crime Recording

- Crimes are recorded by Police in accordance with the law
- In order to bring forward a prosecution there must be a crime recorded
- As each police force records their own crimes in order to create national statistics the details and data must be sent to the Home Office
- There is a statutory requirement placed on the Police to send that data and also that the data must be completed in accordance with the rules set out in the HOCR
- Now the Home Office collects centrally all individual crime records from each police force through a national data hub giving statistical details of the types of crimes and when and where they happened – but not details of people involved.

The Crime Reference Number (CRN)

- As soon as recorded each crime is allocated a CRN
- There is no standard format for the number system but they must be recognised that they are a CRN
- The CRN is unique to each crime and is the means by which the crimes are then counted for statistics and tracked through the system
- If a crime is cancelled the crime number is still valid as it can be counted and tracked as a cancelled crime
- There does not have to be a suspect or offender with any CRN
- Where an offender is identified the police can then refer the crime to the prosecuting agency – the CPS (but for many minor crimes the police are also the prosecuting decision makers)

Example of CRN:

01/AX/13/4001

01 = the force identifier – 01 Metropolitan

AX = the force district or division

13- the year (2013)

4001 – sequential annual crime number

But there are other versions

CRN and Statistics

- Each CRN must also be allocated a Home Office offence code
- The HO code identifies the offence in law
- For example
 - Code 48/1 is Theft of a Motor Vehicle
 - Forces must allocate the correct code to the CRN and crime report
 - The statistical return then counts the HO code to show how many crimes of that type were recorded in each force each month and broken down into force districts.
 - So we can see how many crimes of vehicle theft are recorded
 - Police must display each crime on crime maps available to the public on www.police.uk

HOCR Example

48 Theft or Unauthorised Taking of a Motor Vehicle Classification (1 of 1)

48/1	Theft of a motor vehicle <i>Theft Act 1968 Sec 1 (pt)</i>	130/1	Unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle (does not include 'driving or being carried knowing motor vehicle has been taken..) <i>Theft Act 1968 Sec 12 (pt) as amended by Criminal Justice Act 1998 Sec 37</i>
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The UK Crime Map

POLICE.uk

Leicester, UK

Search

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Overview Maps Meet the team Get involved Crime and justice advice Your police and crime commissioner

Activity in this area in December 2012

Give information about a crime to Crimestoppers

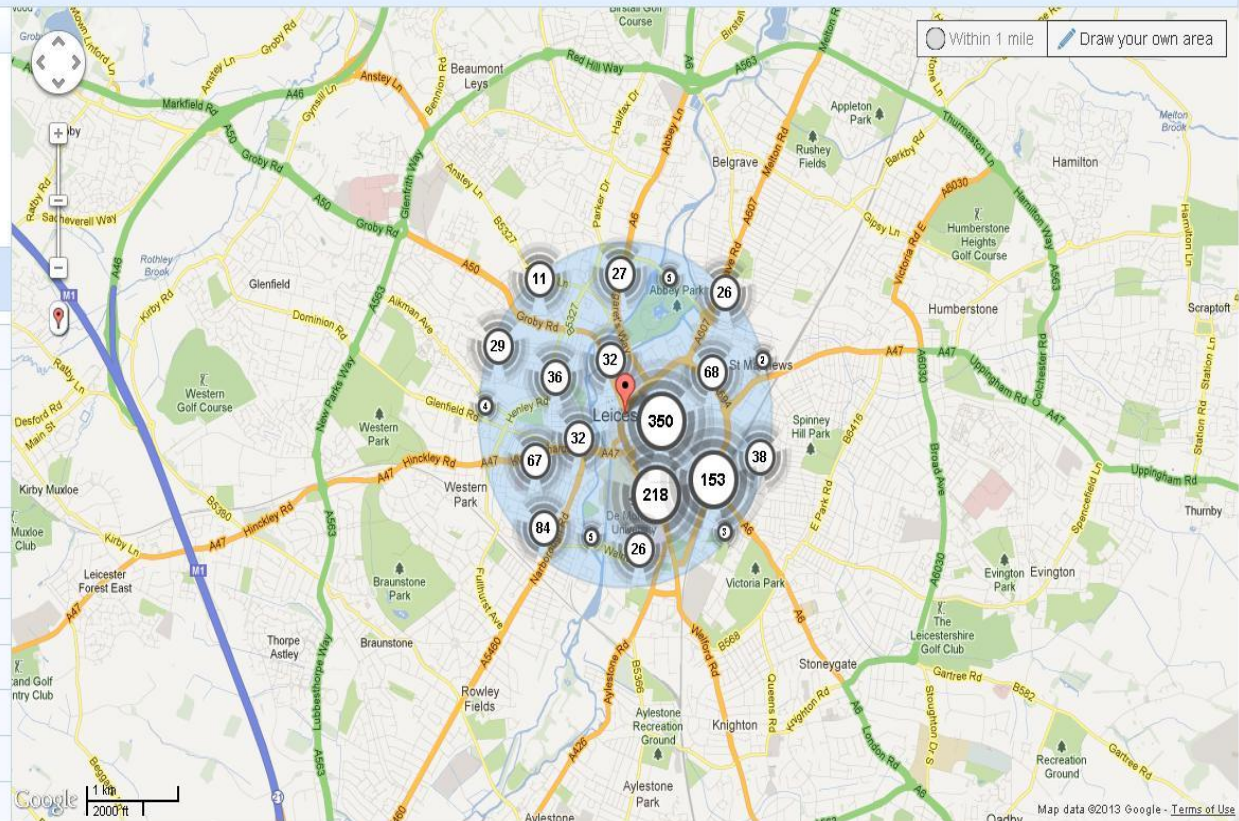
Crime Outcomes See Your Stats

Crime reported in December 2012 within 1 mile of Leicester, UK

For more information about these crimes including current status and outcomes, click the markers on the map.

Show list of streets and locations »

All crime	1216
Anti-social behaviour	197
Burglary	91
Criminal damage and arson	129
Drugs	39
Other theft	246
Public disorder and weapons	46
Robbery	15
Shoplifting	161
Vehicle crime	90
Violent crime	190
Other crime	12



Recorded Crime Outcomes

- Police refer case files where they have a suspect identified and arrested to the prosecuting agency (but in many less serious cases police make the prosecuting decision themselves)
- Every recorded crime and CRN has a statistical outcome assigned to it (person charged, person cautioned, penalty notice issued etc) including if no offender has been identified
- We are now moving to provide a series of statistical outcomes that explain why no offender has been identified (example - lack of evidence)
- The court results and justice outcomes are then included in statistics by the Ministry of Justice and are linked on police.uk to the original crime record.

Quality Assurance

- Every force has a crime registrar to oversee recording and to assist in assuring the rules and requirements are kept.
- The police inspectorate assess and audit force crime records on a regular basis to assess:
 - Accuracy of crime recording
 - Compliance with the rules to ensure resulting statistics are comparable
 - Assessment of the decisions made in dealing with offenders
 - Reports are published openly and the Chief Officer must make a public response to address any issues

The UK Statistics

- 2 distinct sets of statistics
- CRIME and JUSTICE
- Crime statistics – the number of crimes recorded by the Police – **a count of crimes**
- Justice statistics – the numbers of persons in court or dealt with by the Police directly – **a count of offenders**

Crime Statistics

- Developed from the data set of records held by the Police
- All crimes recorded as required in the NCRS and HOCR
- Using the administrative data set held by the Home Office
- But also:
 - Additional data on the numbers of initial *incidents*
 - Additional data on crimes that are later cancelled
 - Additional data on the outcomes to recorded crimes
 - All data set out by crime type and police area
 - **Includes all crimes – not just those where the offender has been caught**
 - **Published by the National Statistical Agency**

Crime Statistics

- Vital to understand the total demand
 - So every report to the Police must be captured including those which might not be crimes but need to be counted
 - Needs a standardised incident coding framework
- Vital to understand why reports are NOT crimes
 - So careful audit and quality assurance inspection of reports
 - Audit required at local level
- Comparing the Data
 - To ensure robust data the records must be compared at each level to check for issues or differences

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Justice Statistics

- Developed from the data set held by the courts
- Gives the data on persons charged, found guilty, sentenced
- Includes the data on penalties applied directly by the Police
- Sets out the Justice data based on the crimes types and offences
- **Published by the Ministry of Justice**

A Final Word

- The UK Office for National Statistics describes the arrangements in place for the collection and presentation of crime statistics are being
- “Amongst the best in the World”
- It is not perfect and there are always areas for improvement

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Thank You

Questions?