

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SELECT COMMITTEE (PASC)

Crime statistics: Issues and Questions Paper

The Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) is conducting an inquiry into crime statistics. The Committee will be examining whether appropriate checks are in place to ensure crimes are recorded properly and therefore whether policy makers in government, as well as the public, can have confidence in crime statistics.

PASC is carrying out a wider programme of work on statistics and their use in Government, and has published reports on a number of topics in this area. More information is available at www.parliament.uk/pasc.

The Committee would like to receive your answers to the following questions in particular but if you wish to comment on related issues please feel free to do so. Do not feel obliged to respond to all of the questions if you have a specific interest. **Please submit your response by no later than noon on 12 November 2013.** Details on how to submit your response can be found at the bottom of this paper.

You may find it helpful to read the background below before responding.

- 1. Are crimes being recorded by the police when they should be? Are crimes being categorised correctly?**
- 2. What are the factors which can influence police mis-recording of crime?**
- 3. Are the right checks in place to ensure that the systems for recording crime function effectively and accurately?**
- 4. Has enough been done to ensure the integrity of crime data? What more should be done?**
- 5. To what extent can policy-makers have confidence in the statistics which result from the recording of crime by police forces?**
- 6. Should recorded crime statistics be classified as National Statistics?**

Background

Crime statistics come from two main sources: crime recorded by the police, and crime reported through the British Crime Survey.

The recording of crime is the responsibility of individual police forces. Following a Review of Crime Statistics by the National Statistician in 2011, the Government took the decision to move the publication of crime statistics from the Home Office to the Office for National Statistics, in order to demonstrate their political independence.

Separately, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly the British Crime Survey) is a face-to-face survey, which includes crimes that are not reported to the police as well as those that are. This inquiry does not intend to examine the Crime Survey in depth, but intends to focus on police recorded crime.

There are two main difficulties in knowing what crime has really been committed. Firstly, the public do not report all crime. Secondly, it is very difficult to standardise the way that police forces record offences. In addition, there are concerns that some in some cases, crimes are recorded inaccurately by police forces in order to meet targets. Recently, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary undertook an inspection on crime recording in Kent at the request of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, and published a report on the issue in June 2013, concluding that "more needs to be done before the people of Kent can be confident that the crime and resolution figures published by the force are as accurate as they should be".

In 2013-14, HMIC will carry out a thematic inspection into Crime Data Integrity, which will "examine the effectiveness of the police in dealing with reports of crime by members of the public. It is envisaged that this will include whether the police determine correctly that there has been a crime." (HMIC Inspection Programme 2013-14, available at www.hmic.gov.uk)

Previous PASC inquiries and reports:

PASC has launched a programme of work on statistics and their use in Government, with ten studies looking at different aspects of that topic. More information on that programme and recent reports published on the use of statistics in Government is on the PASC website at www.parliament.uk/pasc, under "inquiries".

How to respond

Responses should be submitted by no later than noon on 12 November 2013 through the web portal at www.parliament.uk/pasc.

As part of a scheme to encourage paperless working and maximise efficiency, the Committee is piloting a new web portal for online submission of written evidence. It assists the committee if those

submitting written evidence adhere to the following guidelines. Each submission should:

- state clearly who the submission is from, i.e. whether from yourself in a personal capacity or sent on behalf of an organisation
- be about 3,000 words in length / run to no more than eight sides of A4 paper
- as far as possible comprise a single document
- begin with a short summary in bullet point form
- have numbered paragraphs
- be in Word or Rich Text format (not PDF) with as little use of colour or logos as possible

If you do not have access to the internet, you may send a paper copy of your response to the Clerks of the Public Administration Select Committee, Committee Office, First Floor, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. If you need to discuss any aspect of your submission, please email pascev@parliament.uk.

Submissions should be original work, not previously published or circulated elsewhere, though previously published work can be referred to in a submission and submitted as supplementary material. Once submitted, your submission becomes the property of the Committee and no public use should be made of it unless you have first obtained permission from the Clerk of the Committee.

Please bear in mind that the Committee does not investigate individual cases.

The Committee normally, though not always, chooses to publish written evidence it receives, either by printing the evidence, publishing it on the internet or making it publicly available through the Parliamentary Archives. If there is any information you believe to be sensitive you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure; the Committee will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.

The information you supply will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 for the purposes of: a) obtaining written evidence for the inquiry b) to clarify any queries around the information contained in your evidence c) to contact you to provide updates as to the progress of your evidence. The Clerk of the House of Commons is the data controller for the purposes of the Act. We may ask you to give us some feedback on the web portal and the process of submitting evidence so that we can look to make further improvements. If you have any queries or concerns about the collection and use of this information or do not wish for your details to be used for this purpose, please advise the Committee Team on the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) providing your full name, and contact details.