

Police and Crime Panel

29th June 2018

Crime Statistics

Report of the Office of the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner



Purpose

1. To advise Police and Crime Panel Members about the current picture with regard to recorded crime statistics.

Background

2. The number of crimes recorded by Durham Constabulary has nearly doubled since 2014. The PCVC wrote to all Councillors on 12th February 2018 to explain the rise, and this letter is attached at Appendix two. It explained that there are three main reasons:
 - Changes to the National Crime Recording Standards
 - Increased confidence in Durham Constabulary leading to more frequent reporting
 - Increase in some crime types e.g. acquisitive crime.
3. This paper updates members as to the current position, and also provides information about the solved rate.

Change in recorded crime

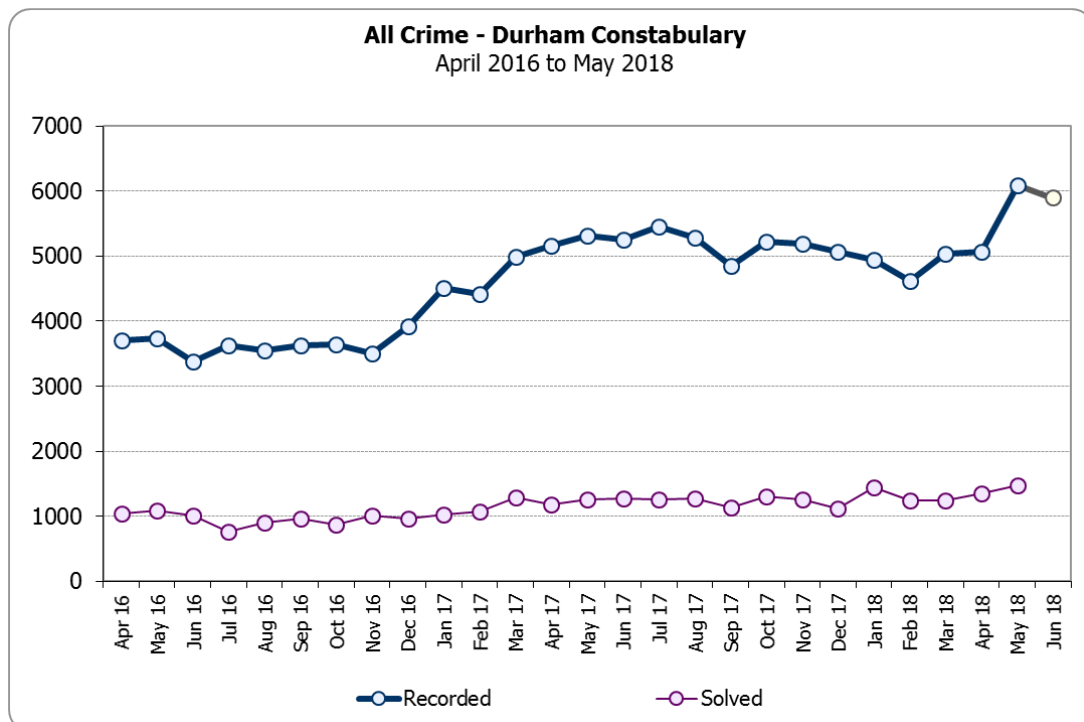
4. This table shows the total number of crimes recorded each month since January 2016:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Apr	3704	5165	5066
May	3732	5311	6097
Jun	3376	5249	5894
Jul	3625	5462	
Aug	3546	5290	
Sep	3635	4847	
Oct	3651	5217	
Nov	3503	5185	
Dec	3918	5069	
Jan	4505	4939	
Feb	4415	4622	
Mar	4995	5035	
Total	46605	61391	11163

Source: Durham Constabulary Management Information System (DCOP)

5. For context, the total number of crimes recorded in 2014-15 was 32,843, and in 2015-16 was 36,634.
6. The graph below shows the change in recorded crime in Durham Constabulary since April 2016, against the solved rate (i.e. the number of crimes that the police have solved).

Graph to show change in total recorded crime and number of solved crimes per month



Source: Durham Constabulary Management Information System (DCOP)

7. Whilst recorded crime has risen, the number of crimes that the Constabulary is solving has also risen, against a backdrop of decreasing resources. Durham Constabulary solved 24% of all crimes in 2017-18.
8. Durham Constabulary calculates its solved rate based on the outcome of a recorded crime. There are 21 potential outcomes for a crime, 14 of which mean a crime is resolved (for example, Outcome 1 – Charged or Summonsed), and 7 of which mean a crime is not resolved (for example, Outcome 18 – Investigation Complete - No Suspect Identified). In terms of a national comparison, the ONS data for outcomes, year ending March 2017 show that, for Durham, 26% of recorded crime was resolved against an average for England and Wales of 18%.¹
9. There are also two specific crime types on which we track the solved rate – Residential Burglary and Theft from Motor Vehicle (because the victim of these crimes usually

¹ 'Crime Outcomes in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2017: Police Force Area Tables Second Edition', ONS, 20th July 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2016-to-2017#history> (accessed: 19th June 2018).

does not know who the perpetrator is and therefore they are a good barometer for how good the Force is at investigating crime). For these two crime types, year-to-date Durham has solved 13% of Residential Burglaries and 24% of Thefts from Motor Vehicle.

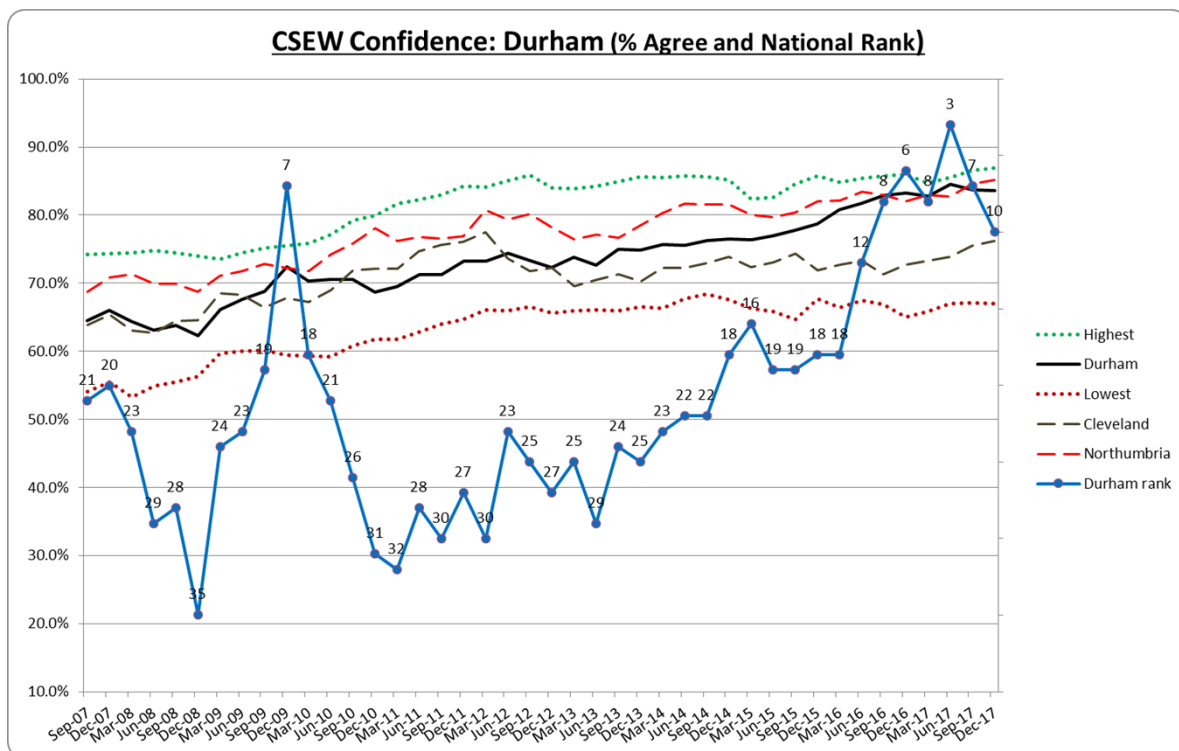
Crime Data Integrity

10. One of the major reasons for recorded crime having risen is changes to the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS). Several types of incident, which previously would not have been recorded as crimes, now need to be. This has caused the crime figures to increase. Examples include harassment, which is now recorded as a crime at the first time of reporting, and certain low-level public order offences, which might previously have been recorded as anti-social behaviour.
11. Harassment is classed as a victim-based crime, and also “violence without injury”, and therefore the change in how harassment is recorded also manifests as an increase in the figures relating to violent crime.
12. In November 2015, HMICFRS announced that it would inspect forces’ crime-recording practices in a rolling programme covering every force in England and Wales. These inspections would report on the progress made by forces since crime data integrity inspections which were carried out in 2014. The report into Durham Constabulary’s Crime Data Integrity was published on 15th February 2018 and presented to the Panel at the previous meeting on 8th March 2018.
13. Overall, the report showed that the Constabulary is “Good” at recording crime properly and accurately. Durham is one of only a handful of forces to be rated “Good”. None has been rated as “Outstanding”.
14. The report showed that 91.5% of crimes have been recorded accurately by Durham. However, this means that at least 4,700 crimes have not been recorded. The 8.5% of reported crimes, that went unrecorded, include public order crime and online crime where young people share indecent images of themselves.
15. The report was particularly complimentary of the leadership shown in ensuring that crime is recorded properly, grading this as “outstanding”.
16. The report contained three recommendations. The PCVC is satisfied that the Constabulary is responding to the issues identified. The PCVC and his Office continue to hold the Constabulary to account robustly through face-to-face meetings with both the Executive and the Force Crime Registrar, and is he satisfied as to the work that the Constabulary is carrying out to ensure continued improved compliance. This remains an area which the PCVC will continue to scrutinise.
17. Where forces have been poor at recording crime, their increases in recorded crime will have been smaller. The increase in recorded crime in Durham can be seen as a measure of success rather than failure.

Confidence

18. The graph below shows the change over time in confidence in Durham Constabulary. This data is taken from the Crime Survey of England and Wales, which is a rolling survey, carried out nationally, in which people are asked questions about their perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.
19. The graph below shows the proportion of people who “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that “Taking everything into account (they) have confidence in the police force” (y-axis), and the change over time since 2007 (x-axis). Key:
- The solid black line is Durham Constabulary
 - The dashed red line is Northumbria Police, and the dashed black line is Cleveland Police
 - The dotted green line is the highest in the country, and the dotted red line is the lowest in the country
 - The solid blue line does not relate to the y-axis. It shows Durham Constabulary’s national rank on this measure i.e. in December 2008 we were 35th in the country, and in June 2017 we were 3rd.

Graph showing proportion of people agreeing and strongly agreeing they have confidence in Durham Constabulary; and Durham’s national rank, over time



Source: Crime Survey of England and Wales and DCOP (Durham Constabulary Management Information System)

20. This shows that over time there has been a substantial increase in confidence in Durham Constabulary, from around 65% ten years ago to nearly 85% today.

Furthermore, during that time the force's national rank has moved from the third or fourth quartile to the top quartile.

21. This increased confidence is likely to have contributed to the rise in recorded crime, because people are more likely to report.

Increases in crime types

22. There are certain types of crime where there may have been genuine increases. My latest public performance report shows increases in these areas. These include:
 - Acquisitive crimes such as shoplifting (12%) and burglary (6%)
 - Vehicle offences (27%)
 - Criminal Damage and Arson (20%).
23. However, these increases may also be attributable to increased confidence and, in some cases, changes to recording rules.

Recommendation

24. That the Panel
 - note the contents of the report and seek any relevant points of clarification
 - offer support to disseminating messages about the increase in recorded crime, so as to help to allay fears that real crime has increased on the scale suggested by the recorded crime statistics.

Alan Reiss
Chief of Staff

Appendix 1: Risks and Implications

Finance

None

Staffing

None

Equality and Diversity

None

Accommodation

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Children's Act 2004

None

Stakeholder/Community Engagement

None

Environment

None

Collaboration and Partnerships

None

Value for Money and Productivity

None

Potential Impact on Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Recording crime accurately ensures that support can be made available for victims and crimes can be investigated.

Commissioning

None

Other risks

None

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Appendix Two

[Insert letter of 13th February]