

**Central Statistics Office (CSO)
Recorded Crime Statistics Frequently
Asked Questions**

26th June 2014

Introduction.

The purposes of this document is to address some commonly asked questions about CSO recorded crime statistics.

1. What is the legal basis for the CSO producing recorded crime statistics?

The legal basis for the CSO's production of recorded crime statistics is Section 47 of the Garda Síochána Act of 2005. This states:

47.— (1) The Garda Commissioner shall ensure that, in respect of each specified period, statistical information concerning offences, criminal proceedings and the state of crime in the State is compiled and stored.

(2) The Garda Commissioner shall make information compiled in accordance with subsection (1) available to the Minister and the Central Statistics Office at the times and in the manner that the Minister may require.

2. What is the involvement of the Garda Síochána in the production of recorded crime statistics?

The role of the Garda Síochána is limited to the provision of raw (un-edited) PULSE administrative data, including narratives, relating to crimes recorded by An Garda Síochána. Furthermore, the Gardai provide documentation and other metadata on the PULSE datasets to the CSO explaining the structure and operation of the PULSE database system.

3. Does the Department of Justice influence the production of recorded crime statistics?

On the basis of the 1993 Statistics Act, the CSO operates independently of other governmental agencies. Section 13 of the Act states:

13.—The Director General [*of the CSO*] shall have the sole responsibility for and be independent in the exercise of the functions of deciding—

(a) the statistical methodology and professional statistical standards used by the Office;

(b) the content of statistical releases and publications issued by the Office;
and

(c) the timing and methods of dissemination of statistics compiled by the Office.

The CSO analyses and produces recorded crime statistics and the Department of Justice is not involved in the production, analysis or presentation of recorded crime statistics. Likewise the timing of releases is decided solely by the CSO. As per CSO [guidelines](#), two officials in the Department of Justice are granted pre-release access (1 working day) to the CSO quarterly crime release.

4. Are all crimes reported counted?

The CSO includes all reported crimes in its analysis, subject to counting rules. Reported crimes refer to those brought to the attention of the Garda Síochána. Crime counting rules are applied to all criminal offences for the purposes of the statistics. The following are the main rules relevant to the quarterly figures:

General Counting Rules

Primary Offence Rule: Where two or more criminal offences are disclosed in a single episode, it is the primary criminal offence that is counted. The primary offence is that offence which the greater penalty may apply. Where offences have similar penalties, offences against the person take precedence over offences against property for the purpose of determining the primary offence.

One Offence Counts Per Victim: One offence counts per victim involved with the exceptions of cheque/credit card fraud and burglary. Under certain circumstances, the cheque/credit card exception necessitates that a series of these offences counts as one crime where the originating bank ultimately suffers the loss. The burglary exception dictates that one burglary offence is counted where property belonging to two or more victims is stolen (or damaged) during a single burglary.

Continuous Series Involving the Same Victim and Same Offender: A continuous series of offences against the same victim involving the same offender counts as one offence.

5. What recorded crime statistics are published by the CSO?

The CSO publishes recorded crime statistics up to the end of the most recent quarter on a quarterly basis. For example, the Q1 2014 release includes statistics up to the end of March 2014. Quarterly releases also include updated figures for all quarters in the current and previous year. On a quarterly basis, recorded crime statistics are issued for smaller geographical areas (such as Garda stations or division) The quarterly report does not include FCPS (Fixed Charge Penalty System –“Penalty Points”) information, or information on court outcomes.

On an annual basis, the CSO produces an annual report which includes, in addition to recorded crime statistics, detailed information on court outcomes and FCPS offences. For the annual releases, figures for all years since 2007 are updated and reissued.

6. Explain terms “recorded”, “detected”, “relevant proceedings commenced”, “convicted” and “pending”.

“Recorded” – refers to the number of offences recorded by the Gardaí.

“Detected” – refers to the number of recorded offences where the Gardaí have a suspected offender. A subset of these lead to further criminal proceedings.

“Relevant proceedings commenced” – refers to the number of recorded offences in a particular year, where court proceedings have commenced on a “relevant” charge (i.e. related to original reported offence). The proceedings themselves may occur in any subsequent year.

“Convicted” – refers to the number of offences recorded in a particular year, where court proceedings leading to a “relevant” criminal conviction have completed. The proceedings themselves may occur in any subsequent year.

“Pending”– refers to recorded offences where the corresponding court proceedings have not completed.

7. How are offences classified/grouped in CSO crime statistics?

The CSO classifies recorded crime using its Irish Crime Classification System (ICCS). This is a 4-level hierarchical system for classifying criminal offences. For example, 2-digit level: ICCS Group 01 Homicides, 3-digit subgroup: 011 Murder and Manslaughter and 4-digit offence: 0111 Murder. The use of the ICCS ensures that all crimes are classified in related groups. Figures are available for individual offence types, subgroups or overall groups.

See

<http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/crimejustice/current/crimclassification.pdf> for further information. This replaces the now-derogated headline/non-headline crime system.

8. What systems are in place to ensure the quality of recorded crime statistics?

The CSO has access to PULSE recorded crime data and carries out validation checks before any statistics are released. In addition, there is a unit in An Garda Síochána called GISC (Garda Information Services Centre), which among its functions has a quality assurance role for PULSE. Due to the way that data in PULSE is recorded, changes to the narrative will not mean a change in the recorded and detection status of offences.

9. Why did the CSO move, in 2012, from publishing crime statistics 1 month after end of quarter to 3 months?

The reason for this move was to ensure that all offences for a particular quarter would be recorded on PULSE before the CSO prepared crime statistics for that quarter. The choice of a publication date requires a trade-off between timeliness and accuracy – the longer the time to publication, the more time for all PULSE offences in a quarter to be recorded. The CSO still updates the figures for all quarters in the current and previous year at the same time.

10. How are penalty points treated?

Penalty points statistics are included in the CSO Annual Crime reports and are based on the Fixed Charge Penalty System. Due to time constraints and the complexity of combining two distinct systems, it is not currently possible to combine PULSE and FCPS data on a quarterly basis. *It is very important to note that all reported road traffic offences, regardless of their final outcome (penalty points being issued or not) are counted and are included in annual ICCS Groups 04 (Dangerous and Negligent Acts Offences) and Groups 14 (Road Traffic Offences NEC).*

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