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Dear Convenor

## **CONVICTION RATES UNDER THE OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR AT FOOTBALL AND THREATENING COMMUNICATIONS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2012 (OBFTC)**

The issue of conviction rates in relation to the OBFTC Act was raised at the Justice Committee evidence session which took place on 3 October 2017 in relation to the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill. The conviction rate figures cited were different to those provided by Scottish government publications.

On that basis, I therefore felt that it was important for me, as Chief Statistician, to provide some more detail about these Scottish Government statistics, how these are calculated and the high quality standards which they adhere to.

As you will know, the Scottish Government National Statistics publication 'Criminal Proceedings in Scotland' is published annually and includes information on the conviction rates for crimes, including conviction rates for charges under section 1 of the OBFTC Act. The latest statistical report is available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/01/6376/1>

'Criminal Proceedings in Scotland' is an official National Statistics publication which fully conforms to the Code of Practice for Official Statistics required for statistical publications by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority. The Authority is an independent body which has a statutory objective of promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that 'serve the public good'. In accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, the Authority has awarded 'Criminal Proceedings in Scotland' a National Statistics designation signifying that the statistics are in compliance with the Code and also that, among other things, they meet identified user needs; have been produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well to users.

In order to be awarded a 'National Statistics' badge, the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value must be adhered to. This applies to all statistical methods, including the calculation of conviction rates. Annex B to the 2015-16 publication can be found at the above link and covers 'Data Quality, Data Processing and Data confidentiality'.

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This annex provides users with further information about the quality of the data and validation processes it goes through to meet the standards required for National Statistics accreditation.

There is therefore a well-established and validated method used for calculating conviction rates for all criminal charges, including those made under section 1 of the OBFTC Act. The calculation is done by dividing the number of people convicted by the number of people proceeded against – as described on page 14 of the 2015-16 publication. In order to carry out credible comparisons with conviction rates for previous years, and conviction rates under other charges, it is essential that there is consistency in the calculations.

If the Committee has any questions about the data provided in the 'Criminal Proceedings in Scotland', then please let me know and I will be happy to respond to these.

Yours sincerely

Roger Halliday  
Chief Statistician and Data Officer