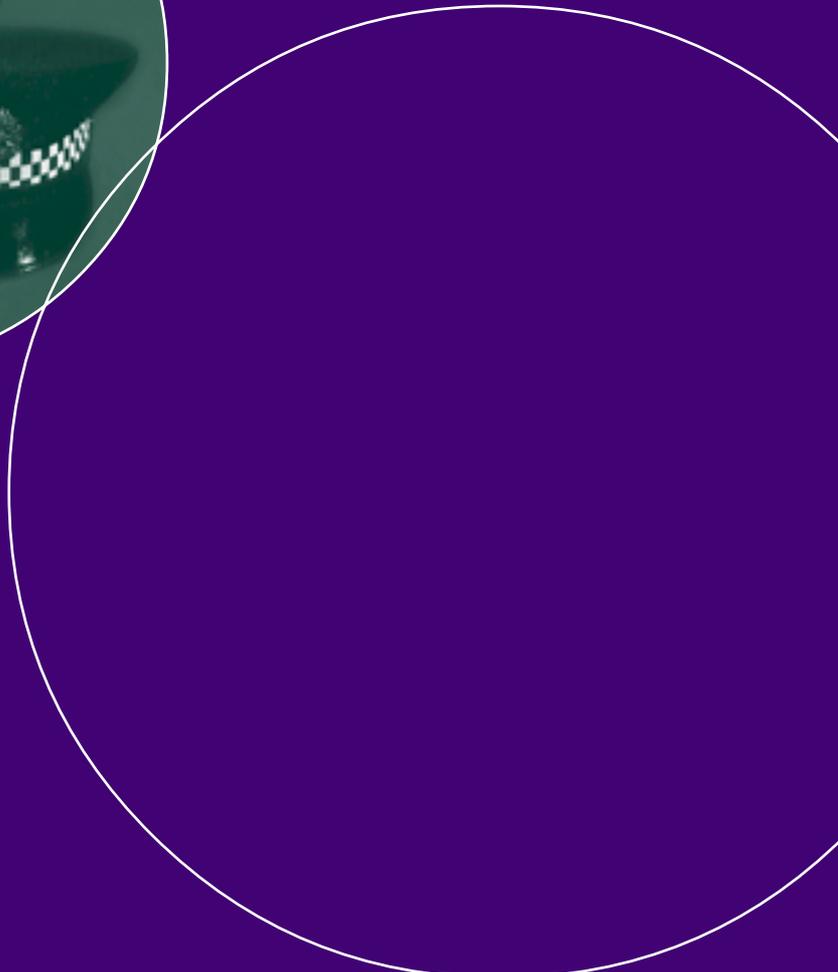


PERFORMANCE AUDIT

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 1999/2000

# Fire and police

Comparing the performance of Scottish councils



## Introduction

Each year, fire brigades, police forces and councils publish a range of information to show people how well they are providing their services and how they compare with similar bodies.

This leaflet contains information on eight indicators relating to the activities of Scotland's fire and police services in 1999/2000. They are:

### Fire

- the percentage of fire calls to which brigades responded within target times
- call reaction times to incidents
- number of casualties/dwelling fires per 10,000 population
- sickness absence levels for full-time fire-fighters

### Police

- crime clear-up rates
- reaction time to emergency calls
- levels of public satisfaction with the service
- sickness absence levels for police personnel

### Other pamphlets published by the Commission cover:

- Social work services
- Leisure and Library services
- Housing services
- Environmental services
- Education services
- Regulatory services
- Benefits, Finance and Corporate issues

The Commission also publishes a comprehensive compendium of the information for all the services for which there are performance indicators.

## Using the information

For each activity we have set out why some of the differences in performance may have arisen. We also highlight particular features of the information – for example, the range in performance achieved by different brigades and forces.

Several factors affect the way a brigade or force performs its activities. You need to be aware of these in order to understand why results may vary. Some of these factors are outwith the control of a brigade or force – for example, population size and density, geographical area, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to a particular service or the groups of people it serves. These **local factors may mean that a brigade or force with a performance which, at first sight, appears to be worse than that of another has, in fact, done better** given the circumstances it faces.

In this pamphlet we have shown information for brigades and forces for 1999/2000, and where appropriate made comparison with previous years. We have introduced a number of new indicators for both brigades and forces for 1999/2000.

## Key

Auditors appointed by the Accounts Commission have reviewed authorities' arrangements for producing the performance information. In the tables and charts shown in this pamphlet, an asterisk (\*) against the data for a brigade or force indicates that the auditor expressed doubts about the reliability of its arrangements for producing the information.

## Fire

The percentage of attendances which met the targets for areas in the risk categories high, substantial, moderate and low all showed a reduction compared with 1998/99.

see indicator 1

Across Scotland, the average time taken to handle an emergency 999 call was 61 seconds.

see indicator 2

There were on average 2.5 fire casualties and 12.6 accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population.

see indicator 3

Across Scotland, the percentage of shifts lost due to sickness absence and light duties was 7.7% (light duties are assigned because of medical reasons).

see indicator 4

## Police

Across Scotland, the percentage of recorded crimes cleared up has increased year-on-year since 1996/97. Three forces, Lothian & Borders, Strathclyde, and Tayside have improved their overall clear-up rates year-on-year since 1996/97.

see indicator 5

Eighty-eight percent of emergency 999 calls were answered within ten seconds.

see indicator 6

Across the forces that carried out surveys, around 84% of people questioned responded that they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way police dealt with their initial and any subsequent contact.

see indicator 7

The proportion of police officer time lost due to sickness absence was 5.1% and the proportion of civilian staff time lost due to sickness absence was 5.7%.

see indicator 8

## Fire

Fire services are provided by eight fire brigades. Two of these cover the same areas as councils – Dumfries & Galloway and Fife. However, six are run by joint boards and cover more than one council area – Central Scotland, Lothian & Borders, Grampian, Highland & Islands, Strathclyde and Tayside.

### INDICATOR 1: RESPONSE TIMES TO FIRES

The percentage of responses to fire calls within the target time, for areas in these five risk categories:

- high
- substantial
- moderate
- low
- rural.

The indicator provides information on all responses to fire calls by brigades, including those which turn out to be false alarms.

There is a national system, agreed by the government and brigades, for categorising areas according to the extent to which they involve risk to life or property in the event of a fire. The national system contains five risk categories, shown here as high, substantial, moderate, low and rural. These categories reflect the risks associated with different localities. For example, high-risk areas include those with a concentration of shopping and business centres, hotels, theatres, cinemas, clubs and halls. Only five brigades had areas classified as being in the high-risk category. Moderate-risk areas include suburban areas and the built-up areas of small towns. For the first four risk categories, there are nationally agreed targets for attendance.

### Points to bear in mind

Attendance times will be affected by a variety of factors, including:

- speed of dispatch of fire appliances
- traffic congestion
- road obstructions and weather conditions
- location of fire stations to new housing and industrial developments which are often built on the outskirts of towns.

The use of part-time fire crews, normally found in smaller towns and lower-risk areas, may influence attendance times. Remote rural areas present problems of distance and accessibility.

## Commentary

The percentage of attendances which were within the target in each of the first four categories varied among brigades as follows:

- 'high': 53.3% (Central Scotland) to 95.4% (Grampian)
- 'substantial': 58.1% (Fife) to 100% (Dumfries & Galloway)
- 'moderate': 93.5% (Strathclyde) to 98.7% (Grampian)
- 'low': 85.6% (Highland & Islands) to 100% (Dumfries & Galloway).

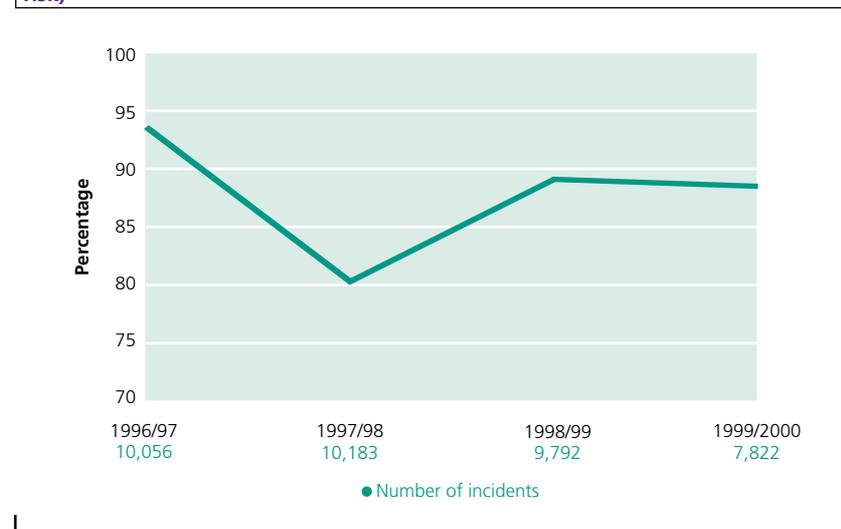
**The performance within target for the categories high, substantial, moderate and low all showed a reduction compared with 1998/99. Across Scotland, the substantial risk category showed the greatest reduction.**

## High risk

The target attendance time in high-risk areas is for two appliances to attend within five minutes and a third appliance to attend within eight minutes.

The overall percentage of attendances within target for this category shows a slight reduction compared with 1998/99 (Figure 1a). Three of the five brigades that reported this information had a reduction in the percentage of attendances within target compared with the previous year. Central Scotland and Tayside reported reductions in performance over each of the years since performance information has been available (Table 1a).

**Figure 1a: The overall percentage of attendances at fires within target time (high risk)**



**Table 1a: The percentage of attendances at fires within target time (high risk)**

BRIGADE	High risk			
	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Central Scotland	53.3	60.0	71.2	94.8
Grampian	95.4	90.9	85.0	93.4
Lothian & Borders	*91.8	94.1	91.2	*94.4
Strathclyde	87.4	87.0	75.0	93.0
Tayside	82.6	90.6	95.8	96.6
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>88.5</b>	<b>89.1</b>	<b>80.3</b>	<b>93.6</b>

Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, and Highland & Islands did not classify any attendances within the high risk category.

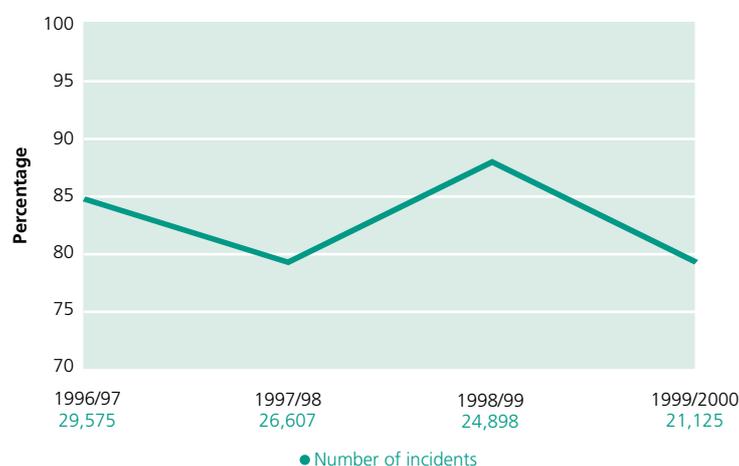
### Substantial risk

The target attendance time for the substantial risk category is for one appliance to attend within five minutes and a second appliance to attend within eight minutes.

All brigades reported this risk category. Overall, brigades attended 79% of fire incidents within the target time, which is a significant reduction compared with 1998/99 (Figure 1b).

Five brigades reported reductions in performance for this category while Dumfries & Galloway (100%), Grampian (95%) and Highland & Islands (78%) all reported improved performance (Table 1b).

**Figure 1b: The overall percentage of attendances at fires within target time (substantial risk)**



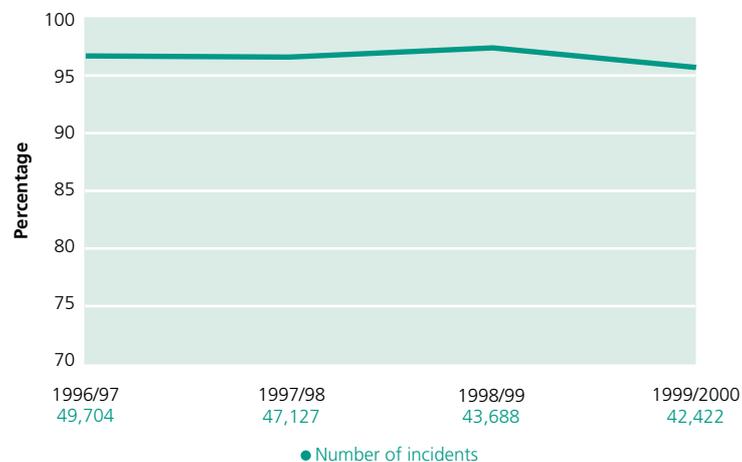
**Table 1b: The percentage of attendances at fires within target time (substantial risk)**

BRIGADE	Substantial risk			
	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Central Scotland	70.5	76.8	81.4	72.9
Dumfries & Galloway	100.0	86.5	84.4	98.6
Fife	58.1	*60.0	66.9	72.4
Grampian	94.7	90.9	90.0	90.1
Highland & Islands	77.5	72.4	46.2	58.6
Lothian & Borders	*88.1	94.0	90.5	*87.6
Strathclyde	77.0	88.0	76.0	85.0
Tayside	88.9	94.3	94.6	92.6
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>88.0</b>	<b>79.3</b>	<b>84.8</b>

### Moderate risk

The target attendance time for the moderate risk category is for one appliance to attend within ten minutes.

Overall, there was a slight reduction in the percentage of attendances at incidents in this risk category compared with previous years (Figure 1c). However, all brigades achieved at least 93% of responses within target time (Table 1c).

**Figure 1c: The overall percentage of attendances at fires within target time (moderate risk)**

**Table 1c: The percentage of attendances at fires within target time (moderate risk)**

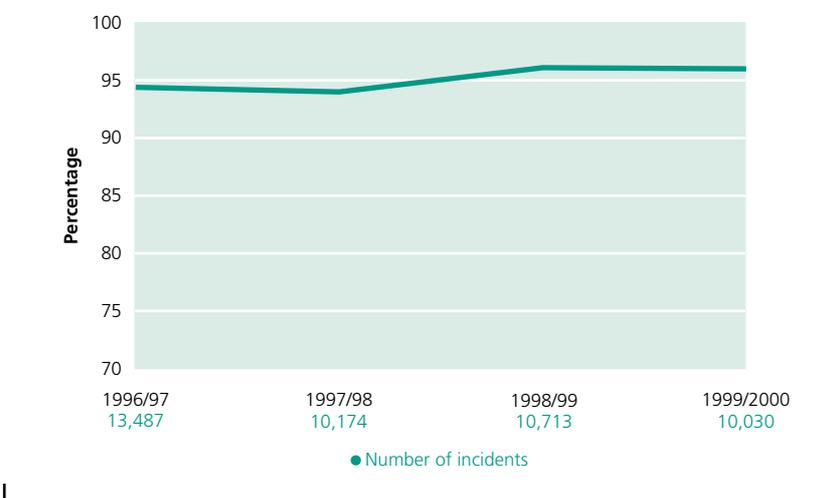
BRIGADE	Moderate risk			
	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Central Scotland	96.4	96.8	96.4	93.9
Dumfries & Galloway	98.6	95.0	98.3	98.0
Fife	94.4	*96.7	97.2	95.7
Grampian	98.7	98.6	98.4	98.0
Highland & Islands	96.2	96.1	94.5	94.3
Lothian & Borders	*97.8	97.7	97.2	*95.8
Strathclyde	93.5	97.0	96.0	97.0
Tayside	98.5	99.4	97.3	99.2
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>96.7</b>

### Low risk

The target attendance time for the low risk category is for one appliance to attend within twenty minutes.

With the exception of Highland & Islands all brigades achieved at least 95% within target for this category (Figure 1d). The Highland & Islands performance of 86% attendance within target reflects a significant improvement compared with the previous three years (Table 1d).

**Figure 1d: The overall percentage of attendances at fires within target time (low risk)**



**Table 1d: The percentage of attendances at fires within target time (low risk)**

BRIGADE	Low risk			
	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Central Scotland	95.9	95.0	96.0	96.2
Dumfries & Galloway	100.0	99.3	99.2	99.4
Fife	97.5	*98.6	98.4	97.5
Grampian	99.6	99.8	99.0	97.9
Highland & Islands	85.6	79.2	67.2	70.9
Lothian & Borders	*97.7	98.0	98.3	*97.7
Strathclyde	95.8	97.0	97.0	97.0
Tayside	97.2	97.9	96.0	96.4
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>96.0</b>	<b>96.1</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>94.4</b>

The number of incidents brigades attended within the high, substantial, moderate and low risk categories in 1999/2000 have reduced compared with previous years. Overall, there has been a 20% reduction in the number of incidents compared with 1996/97 when comparable information was first available.

### Rural

For rural areas, brigades are free to set their own target for attendance, and five of the seven brigades which have rural areas did so in 1999/2000. All of these brigades achieved at least 90% of attendances within their target time. The other two brigades, Lothian & Borders and Strathclyde reported average attendance times of 25 minutes and just over 21 minutes respectively (Table 1e).

**Table 1e: Attendance at fire calls within rural areas**

BRIGADE	Local target (mins)			Percentage attendances within target time			Average time (mins/secs)		
	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98
Central Scotland	35			100.0				29m 22s	28m 40s
Dumfries & Galloway	20	20	20	91.7	91.8	90.3			
Grampian	20	20	20	95.9	96.3	95.1			
Highland & Islands	30			91.4				17m 00s	19m 30s
Lothian & Borders							* 25m 00s	17m 50s	25m 00s
Strathclyde							21m 10s	20m 33s	29m 16s
Tayside	35			93.6				22m 12s	21m 10s

Fife did not classify any of its area in the 'rural' category.

## INDICATOR 2: REACTION TIMES TO 999 CALLS

The average time to handle calls, and the proportion of calls handled within the following time bands:

- less than one minute
- one to two minutes
- two to three minutes.

This indicator provides information on the speed with which brigades respond to emergency 999 calls.

The time to handle a call is the period between the fire control operator receiving the call from the public system switchboard to mobilising the required number of fire appliances.

Only the reaction time to the first call regarding any incident is included. False alarm calls attended by brigades are also included.

### Points to bear in mind

Callers using mobile telephones who are unfamiliar with surroundings often take longer to provide a reliable address.

### Commentary

Across Scotland, fire brigades handled slightly over 108,000 emergency 999 calls. These ranged from almost 2,000 in Dumfries & Galloway to almost 56,000 in Strathclyde.

Overall, **the average time taken to handle a call was 61 seconds**, which varied from 51 seconds (Central Scotland) to 66 seconds (Lothian & Borders) (Table 2a).

Across all brigades, 63% of calls were handled within one minute. Three brigades (Central Scotland, Fife and Grampian) handled 70% or more of their calls within one minute. All brigades handled at least 93% of calls within two minutes (Table 2b).

**Table 2a: The average time to handle calls to incidents**

BRIGADE	Average time to handle calls (seconds)	Number of calls
	1999/2000	1999/2000
Central Scotland	51	4,849
Dumfries & Galloway	61	1,985
Fife*	55	10,677
Grampian	52	7,806
Highland & Islands*	55	4,698
Lothian & Borders*	66	12,941
Strathclyde	65	55,994
Tayside	58	9,066
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>108,016</b>

**Table 2b: Percentage of calls handled**

BRIGADE	Less than one minute	Between 1 and 2 minutes	2 minutes or more
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1999/2000
Central Scotland	73.8	22.6	3.7
Dumfries & Galloway	57.3	36.3	6.3
Fife*	82.0	16.0	2.0
Grampian	75.3	21.7	3.0
Highland & Islands*	66.6	29.9	3.5
Lothian & Borders*	67.0	29.0	4.0
Strathclyde	55.2	38.2	6.5
Tayside	63.6	31.5	4.9
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>5.1</b>

### INDICATOR 3: NUMBER OF FIRE CASUALTIES AND ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES

- Average number of fire casualties per 10,000 population over the previous five-year period
- Average number of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population over the previous five-year period.

Fire brigades provide advice on fire prevention and safety in buildings and they also undertake education and promotional activities amongst the community. This indicator shows the effectiveness of brigades' fire prevention and safety programmes.

Both parts of the indicator show the amounts averaged over the previous five years in order to eliminate peaks and troughs that may occur in any one year.

#### Fire casualties

This indicator reports all fatal and non-fatal fire casualties. It includes all those people injured as a direct result of a fire attended by the brigade and those who required further medical treatment than could be given at the scene. People sent for a precautionary check-up are excluded. The number of casualties does not necessarily equate to the number of incidents attended, as there will be multiple injuries occurring at a single incident.

#### Accidental fire incidents

All accidental incidents are included in this part of the indicator but it excludes those incidents caused maliciously, and those for which the cause was doubtful or not known.

Young children and elderly people are the significant, at risk, groups for this indicator.

#### Points to bear in mind

The level of casualties and accidental fires may well be influenced by:

- areas with higher levels of deprivation
- where a high proportion of properties are multi-occupied.

#### Commentary

##### Fire casualties

Across Scotland, **there were on average 2.5 fire casualties per 10,000 population.** These varied from 1.5 (Fife) to 4.3 (Strathclyde).

### Accidental dwelling fires

Across Scotland, **there were on average, 12.6 accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population**. These varied from 10 (Highland & Islands) to 16.8 (Strathclyde).

**Table 3: Average number of fire casualties and accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population**

BRIGADE	Fire casualties	Accidental dwelling fires
	1999/2000	1999/2000
Central Scotland	1.8	11.4
Dumfries & Galloway	2.2	10.3
Fife	1.5	10.5
Grampian	2.7	11.6
Highland & Islands	1.8	10.0
Lothian & Borders	3.0	14.1
Strathclyde	4.3	16.8
Tayside	2.9	16.0
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>12.6</b>

#### INDICATOR 4: SICKNESS ABSENCE LEVELS FOR FIREFIGHTERS

The percentage of shifts lost to:

- sickness absence
- light duties.

This indicator reports the percentage of shifts lost through sickness and injury absence in fire brigades. The proportion of lost time includes both staff who crew fire-fighting appliances and staff who are assigned to light duties for medical reasons.

Sickness absence includes self certification, absence supported by a doctor's certificate, long-term sickness absence, and work related injury. It does not include authorised absence, for example, compassionate leave, career leave and special leave/unpaid leave nor maternity or paternity leave.

#### Points to bear in mind

Sickness absence levels in the fire service are generally high in comparison with the public sector average, partly as a result of the hazardous nature of the work, and the special needs in respect of fitness.

Brigade policies vary on the number of firefighters who can be accommodated on non-operational light duties.

#### Commentary

**Across all brigades, the percentage of shifts lost due to sickness absence and light duties was 7.7%.** The levels of absence varied across brigades from 5.3% (Dumfries & Galloway) to 9.3% (Fife).

The percentage of shifts lost, solely due to sickness absence varied across brigades from 4.5% (Dumfries & Galloway) to 7.9% (Strathclyde).

The percentage of shifts lost, solely due to light duties varied from 0.1% (Central Scotland) to 1.9% (Fife) (Table 4).

**Table 4: Percentage of shifts lost to sickness absence and light duties**

BRIGADE	Percentage of shifts lost due to sickness absence	Percentage of shifts lost due to light duties	Percentage of shifts lost due to sickness and light duties
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1999/2000
Central Scotland	7.2	0.1	7.3
Dumfries & Galloway	4.5	0.8	5.3
Fife	7.4	1.9	9.3
Grampian	6.7	0.9	7.6
Highland & Islands	5.3	0.7	6.0
Lothian & Borders	6.8	0.5	7.3
Strathclyde	7.9	0.2	8.1
Tayside	6.2	0.4	6.6
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>7.7</b>

## Police

Police services are provided by eight forces. Six of these, run by joint boards, cover more than one council area – Central Scotland, Lothian & Borders, Grampian, Northern, Strathclyde and Tayside. Two, Dumfries & Galloway and Fife, cover the same areas as the councils of the same name.

### INDICATOR 5: CRIMES CLEARED UP

The percentage of all crimes cleared up and the percentage of crimes in the following categories cleared up:

- serious assault
- car crimes (crimes involving theft of a car or theft from a car; an attempted theft)
- domestic housebreaking (theft by housebreaking, housebreaking with intent to steal, attempted housebreaking).

The effectiveness of police crime detection can be measured by the proportion of crimes and offences which are cleared up. A crime is regarded as 'cleared up' if there is sufficient evidence to justify a report being submitted to the procurator fiscal. 'Cleared up' does not, however, necessarily mean that in every case someone was arrested and charged.

Crimes are defined by the Scottish Executive and are generally more serious in nature than offences. They include, for example, murder, serious assault, rape, indecent assault, housebreaking, shoplifting, drug-related crimes and vandalism. Some crimes are far more common than others.

Clear-up rates for three categories of crime selected for their public interest are also reported. Clear-up rates for the different categories will vary. For example, the victim may be able to describe the offender when someone is attacked, whereas there may be no witness to property crimes.

### Points to bear in mind

In rural areas the population is more static, local people are more likely to know each other and, therefore, they may notice offenders more readily and be able to give descriptions of them to the police.

The number of crimes recorded by the police is less than the actual number committed because people do not always report them.

## Commentary

### Recorded crimes

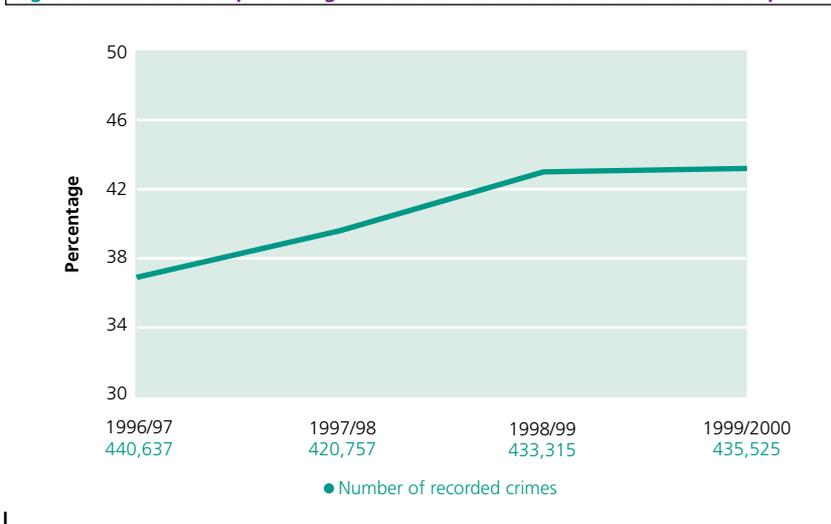
Across Scotland in 1999/2000 there were over 435,000 recorded crimes. This was a slight increase compared with the previous year but shows a relatively consistent level of recorded crime when compared over the past four years.

Four police forces reported increases in the number of crimes recorded compared with 1998/99. Fife<sup>7</sup> and Lothian & Borders had the highest increases of almost 19% and 15% respectively. Strathclyde reported a reduction of almost 15,000 recorded crimes (7%).

Since 1996/97, when directly comparable figures became available, the percentage of recorded crimes cleared up has increased year-on-year (Figure 5a). However, for 1999/2000 four forces (Central Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife and Northern) reported their lowest clear-up rates since 1996/97, and Grampian force clear-up rate has reduced over each of the last three years (Table 5a).

Three forces, Lothian & Borders, Strathclyde, and Tayside have improved their overall clear-up rates year-on-year since 1996/97.

**Figure 5a: The overall percentage and number of recorded crimes cleared up**



<sup>7</sup> Fife police introduced a new computerised recording system in 1999/2000 which they believe has provided greater accuracy in recording crimes.

**Table 5a: The percentage of all recorded crimes cleared up**

	Total recorded crimes	Percentage cleared up			
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
FORCE					
Central Scotland	<b>16,999</b>	<b>54.8</b>	57.1	56.1	58.8
Dumfries & Galloway	<b>8,268</b>	<b>56.0</b>	58.8	61.7	61.2
Fife	<b>27,695</b>	<b>44.0</b>	50.3	46.8	46.2
Grampian	<b>48,259</b>	<b>36.3</b>	37.9	40.8	31.3
Lothian & Borders	<b>84,113</b>	<b>41.5</b>	37.4	35.4	34.6
Northern	<b>12,839</b>	<b>55.9</b>	62.4	66.6	65.5
Strathclyde	<b>205,714</b>	<b>43.4</b>	43.2	36.7	34.0
Tayside	<b>31,638</b>	<b>41.6</b>	38.0	37.0	34.3
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>435,525</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>43.0</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>36.9</b>

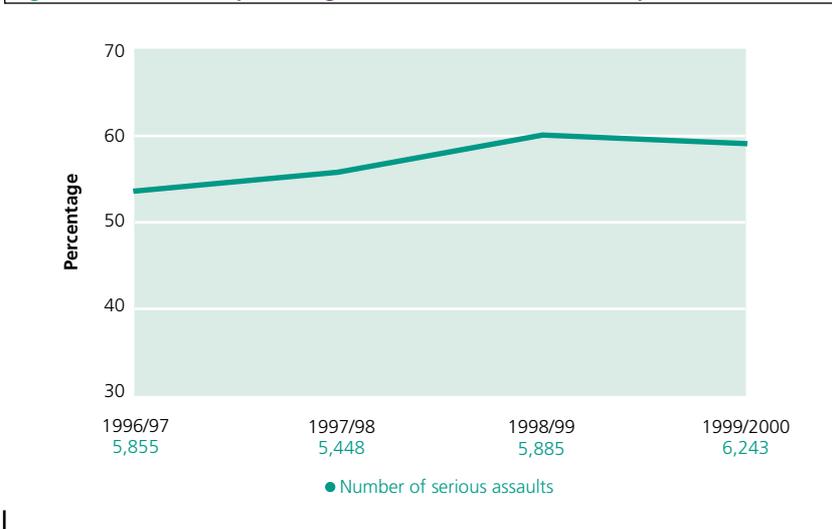
### Serious assaults

The total number of crimes of serious assault recorded in Scotland was 6,243, an increase of almost 6% compared with 1998/99 and an increase of almost 15% compared with 1997/98 (Figure 5b).

Five forces reported an increase in the number of serious assaults compared with 1998/99. Fife police reported a significant increase for serious assaults increasing from 92 in 1998/99 to 272 in 1999/2000<sup>2</sup>.

Overall, forces cleared up almost 60% of these crimes which is similar to 1998/99. Dumfries & Galloway and Fife clear-up rate has reduced year-on-year since 1996/97, while Lothian & Borders and Tayside have improved their clear-up rates year-on-year over the same period (Table 5b).

<sup>2</sup> Fife police introduced a new computerised recording system in 1999/2000 which they believe has provided greater accuracy in recording crimes.

**Figure 5b: The overall percentage of serious assaults cleared up****Table 5b: The percentage of serious assaults cleared up**

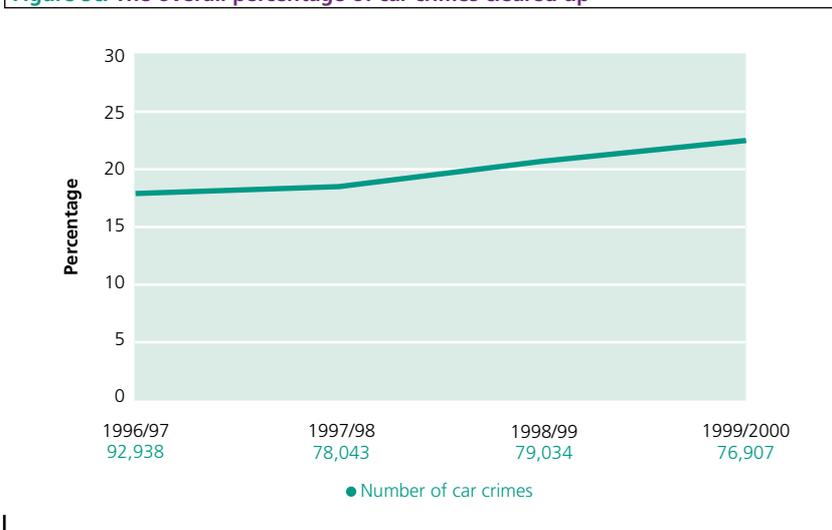
	Total serious assaults		Percentage cleared up		
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
FORCE					
Central Scotland	209	85.6	90.8	88.9	92.7
Dumfries & Galloway	65	84.6	89.7	91.5	97.3
Fife	272	76.8	85.9	92.0	94.8
Grampian	398	69.1	69.8	70.9	61.3
Lothian & Borders	848	70.3	66.4	63.0	61.6
Northern	166	91.6	88.1	86.2	87.5
Strathclyde	4,038	49.8	52.3	46.5	44.5
Tayside	247	86.6	86.3	81.7	77.8
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>6,243</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>53.6</b>

### Car crimes

The total number of car crimes recorded in Scotland in 1999/2000 was almost 77,000 which is a slight increase compared with 1998/99, but reflects a significant reduction of over 16,000 (17%) compared with 1996/97 when directly comparable figures were first available.

Overall, forces reported a year-on-year improvement since 1996/97 in the percentage of car crimes cleared up (Figure 5c). Patterns of clear-up rates reported by the eight police forces varied from 17% (Tayside) to 39% (Northern). Four forces (Grampian, Lothian & Borders, Strathclyde and Tayside) all reported increased clear-up rates compared with 1998/99, Strathclyde has increased its clear-up rate for this category over each of the four reporting years (Table 5c).

**Figure 5c: The overall percentage of car crimes cleared up**



**Table 5c: The percentage of car crimes cleared up**

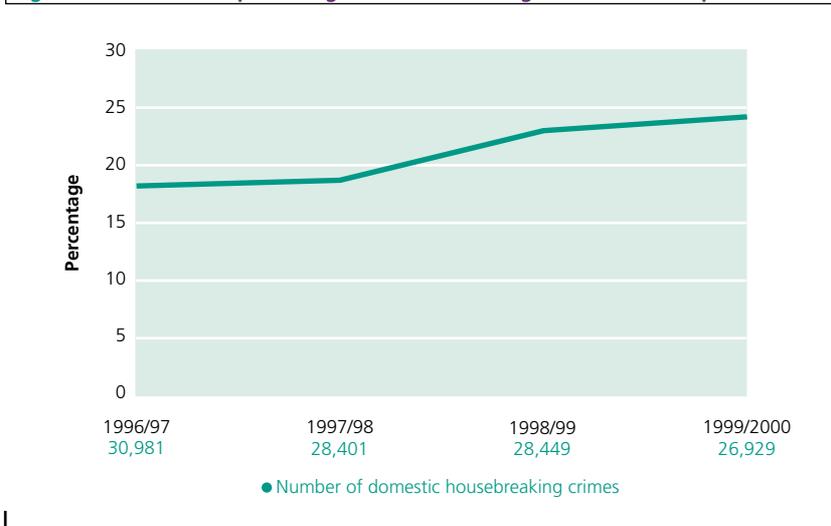
FORCE	Total car crimes	Percentage cleared up			
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Central Scotland	2,588	34.0	34.3	35.0	40.5
Dumfries & Galloway	799	35.8	39.7	42.4	37.6
Fife	4,895	35.4	39.6	35.9	33.4
Grampian	6,909	23.3	18.9	20.5	16.1
Lothian & Borders	13,208	20.7	16.3	16.5	17.0
Northern	1,272	38.6	44.6	50.4	51.4
Strathclyde	42,028	20.6	19.5	15.9	15.3
Tayside	5,208	17.0	14.5	14.3	14.3
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>76,907</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>17.9</b>

### Domestic housebreaking cleared up

The total number of domestic housebreaking crimes recorded in Scotland was almost 27,000 which is a decrease of almost 1,500 compared with 1998/99 and a decrease of over 4,000 (13%) compared with 1996/97. Five forces reported reductions in this category of crime with Strathclyde and Tayside reporting reductions of more than 10%. Fife police reported an increase of 46% compared with 1998/99<sup>3</sup>.

Overall, forces have improved clear-up rates for domestic housebreaking year-on-year since 1996/97 (Figure 5d). Five forces reported a reduction in the percentage of these crimes cleared up compared with 1998/99 while Strathclyde, Tayside and Lothian & Borders reported increases. The Lothian & Borders clear-up rate increased significantly (over 8%) compared with 1998/99 (Table 5d).

**Figure 5d: The overall percentage of housebreaking crimes cleared up**



<sup>3</sup> Fife police introduced a new computerised recording system in 1999/2000 which they believe has provided greater accuracy in recording crimes.

**Table 5d: The percentage of housebreaking crimes cleared up**

FORCE	Total domestic housebreakings	Percentage cleared up			
	1999/2000	1999/2000	1998/99	1997/98	1996/97
Central Scotland	1,124	28.3	34.1	30.0	35.1
Dumfries & Galloway	477	42.1	43.7	38.0	48.7
Fife	2,207	35.2	39.0	31.0	32.9
Grampian	3,545	20.6	21.0	24.4	19.3
Lothian & Borders	3,259	27.2	18.9	16.0	17.4
Northern	324	35.5	37.0	52.0	45.0
Strathclyde	14,018	22.0	21.7	14.9	13.3
Tayside	1,975	20.0	18.6	16.6	20.5
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>26,929</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>18.2</b>

## INDICATOR 6: REACTION TIME TO ANSWERING EMERGENCY 999 CALLS

Percentage of 999 calls answered within ten seconds

This indicator provides information on the speed with which forces deal with 999 calls.

The time to answer a call is the period between the first ring at the police control room until it is answered by a police employee. There is a national target time of ten seconds for forces to answer 999 calls. This indicator is based on the sample of calls which are electronically recorded. All forces have electronic recording equipment at their main control room, but not necessarily at other locations within their force area.

The indicator does not measure the reaction time to deployment of police officers.

### Point to bear in mind

Some forces did not have electronic recording equipment available for the entire year and have provided the percentage answered within ten seconds on a sample basis.

### Commentary

Over 530,000 emergency 999 calls were sampled across Scotland in 1999/2000. **Of these calls almost 470,000 (88%) were answered within 10 seconds.** The proportion of responses within 10 seconds varied across forces from 81% (Tayside) to 98% (Northern) (Table 6).

**Table 6: Percentage of calls answered within ten seconds and number of calls**

	The percentage of 999 calls answered within ten seconds	Number of calls
	1999/2000	1999/2000
FORCE		
Central Scotland	96.7	4,320
Dumfries & Galloway	93.0	10,796
Fife	97.4	3,404
Grampian	90.7	47,942
Lothian & Borders	88.0	89,583
Northern	98.0	6,625
Strathclyde	88.0	340,096
Tayside*	81.6	28,149
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>88.3</b>	<b>530,915</b>

## INDICATOR 7: QUALITY OF SERVICE SURVEYS

Quality of service surveys:

- the main reason contact was made with the police: to report a crime, disturbance/nuisance, road accident, missing person, lost/found property, other
- the public's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their initial contact with the police
- the public's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way the police dealt with their matter.

This indicator provides information on the reasons that the public make contact with the police and their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction on how the police deal with their contact.

The survey conducted by the police sought the public's view on the:

- main reason contact was made with the police
- level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with initial police contact
- level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way the police dealt with their matter.

The survey of the public who make contact with the police was designed to include equal numbers of people reporting a crime or offence, and people that contacted the police for reasons other than to report a crime.

The information provided in this indicator will normally form part of wider quality of service survey. The survey questions were designed to obtain a measure of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, although a category was also available for people who were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

### Points to bear in mind

The reason for contacting the police is that perceived by the person reporting. It may be that someone contacts the police believing a crime has been committed when, following investigation, it is found that this is not the case.

Northern Constabulary did not report this indicator. The force had undertaken a public survey a few months prior to the indicator being introduced and had not included these questions in their survey.

## Commentary

The reasons for the public making contact with the police varied across forces (Table 7a).

### Level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with initial police contact

Six police forces reported this survey information. For the forces that reported, **84% of people were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way police dealt with their initial contact**. The level of satisfaction varied from 80% (Strathclyde) to almost 88% (Central Scotland). Slightly over 8% of people who made contact reported a degree of dissatisfaction, and just under 8% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 7b).

### Level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way police dealt with matters reported by the public, following initial contact

Seven police forces reported this information. Overall, **83% of the public reported they were either very or fairly satisfied with the way police handled their matter**. The level of satisfaction varied significantly from 70% (Fife) to 94% (Grampian).

Over 8% of people reported a degree of dissatisfaction with the way police dealt with their matter and almost 9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Table 7c).

**Table 7a: Reasons for people making contact with the police**

	To report a crime	To report a disturbance or nuisance	To report a road accident	To report a missing person	To report lost/found property	Other reason
FORCE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Central Scotland	48.0	23.3	14.9	3.2	5.2	5.5
Dumfries & Galloway	50.5	9.1	12.6	0.6	13.2	14.1
Fife	42.8	26.2	2.1	0.2	16.0	12.7
Grampian*	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lothian & Borders	50.3	16.6	11.7	6.4	15.0	0.0
Strathclyde*	45.0	10.0	20.0	15.0	10.0	0.0
Tayside	33.1	15.8	6.2	0.0	1.3	43.5
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>6.0</b>

**Table 7b: The public's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their initial contact with the police**

	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
FORCE	%	%	%
Central Scotland	87.5	5.6	6.9
Dumfries & Galloway	84.0	10.4	5.6
Fife	84.3	7.5	8.2
Lothian & Borders	86.9	5.4	7.7
Strathclyde*	79.7	9.9	10.5
Tayside*	86.6	5.5	7.9
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>83.9</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>8.3</b>

Grampian did not report this information

**Table 7c: The public's level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way police dealt with their matter**

	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
FORCE	%	%	%
Central Scotland	82.2	6.4	11.4
Dumfries & Galloway	80.3	12.6	7.0
Fife	70.8	15.6	13.6
Grampian*	93.9	4.0	2.0
Lothian & Borders	81.1	8.8	10.1
Strathclyde*	75.8	11.5	12.6
Tayside	85.4	7.7	6.9
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>82.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.5</b>

## INDICATOR 8: SICKNESS ABSENCE LEVELS FOR POLICE PERSONNEL

Proportion of working time lost due to sickness absence for:

- police officers
- civilian staff.

This indicator reports the amount of time lost through sickness and injury absence in police forces.

Sickness absence includes self certification, absence supported by a doctor's certificate, long-term sickness absence, absence due to assaults on police, and work related injury. It does not include authorised absence, for example, compassionate leave, career leave and special leave/unpaid leave nor maternity or paternity leave.

In the report *'Focus on absence – Absence and labour turnover survey 2000'* conducted by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), survey findings across the whole of the UK for the public sector show that, on average, 4.3% of time was lost due to sickness absence. The definition used by the CBI is not identical to this indicator, but broad comparison can be made.

### Points to bear in mind

Some variation in sickness absence between forces for civilian staff may be explained by the variation in the extent to which forces use traffic wardens, who generally have higher levels of sickness absence than other civilian staff.

### Commentary

#### Police officers

Across the seven police forces that reported this information **the proportion of police officer time lost due to sickness absence was 5.1%**. The level of sickness absence varied from 2.8% (Grampian) to 6.3% (Tayside) (Table 8).

#### Civilian staff

Overall, **the proportion of civilian staff time lost due to sickness absence was 5.7%**, which varied from 3.2% (Northern) to 7.1% (Strathclyde).

**Table 8: Percentage of time lost due to sickness absence for police personnel**

	Police officers	Civilian staff
FORCE	1999/2000	1999/2000
Central Scotland	5.8	6.8
Dumfries & Galloway	3.3	3.5
Fife	4.7	4.2
Grampian	2.8	3.4
Northern	4.2	3.2
Strathclyde	5.5	7.1
Tayside	6.3	6.1
<b>All Scotland</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.7</b>

Lothian and Borders did not report this information

## Contacts

If you have any specific queries about the performance information, you may wish to contact your force or brigade. The addresses and telephone numbers are given below. If you have general queries about this pamphlet, you may wish to contact Alec Taylor or Jim Lakie at Audit Scotland.

**Central Scotland Fire Brigade**, Divisional Officer C Collier, Personnel & Strategic Planning, Fire Brigade HQ, Main Street, Maddiston, Falkirk, FK2 0LG, Tel: 01324 716996

**Dumfries & Galloway Fire Brigade**, Divisional Officer Frank McGinlay, Fire Brigade HQ, Brooms Road, Dumfries, DG1 2DZ, Tel: 01387 252222

**Fife Fire and Rescue Service**, Commander Support, Strathore Road, Thornton, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 4DF, Tel: 01592 774451

**Grampian Fire Brigade**, Firemaster J Williams Fire Brigade HQ, 19 North Anderson Drive, Aberdeen, AB15 6DW, Tel: 01224 696666

**Highland and Islands Fire Brigade**, Firemaster R Gordon, Fire Brigade HQ, 16 Harbour Road, Longman West, Inverness, IV1 1TB, Tel: 01463 227000

**Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade**, David Millar, Fire Brigade HQ, Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, EH3 9DE, Tel: 0131 228 2401

**Strathclyde Fire Brigade**, Assistant Divisional Officer John Ironside, Fire Brigade HQ, Bothwell Road, Hamilton, ML3 0EA, Tel: 01698 300999

**Tayside Fire Brigade**, Deputy Firemaster S Hunter, Fire Brigade HQ, Blackness Road, Dundee, DD1 5PA, Tel: 01382 322222

**Central Scotland Police Force**, Chief Inspector Alan Ruthven, Policy Strategy & Quality Unit, Police Headquarters, Randolphfield, Stirling, FK8 2HD, Tel: 01786 456000

**Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary**, Chief Inspector Roy Robson, Police HQ, Cornwall Mount, Dumfries, DG1 1PZ, Tel: 01387 252112

**Fife Constabulary**, Police HQ, Detroit Road, Glenrothes, Fife, KY6 2RJ, Tel: 01592 418888

**Grampian Police Force**, Superintendent, Strategic Development Department, Force HQ, Queen Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1ZA, Tel: 01224 386180

**Lothian and Borders Police Force**, Karen Hawkes, Performance Analyst, Management Services, Fettes Avenue, Edinburgh, EH4 1RB, Tel: 0131 311 3145

**Northern Constabulary**, Old Perth Road, Inverness, IV2 3SY, Tel: 01463 715555

**Strathclyde Police Force**, 173 Pitt Street, Glasgow, G2 4JS, Tel: 0141 532 2000

**Tayside Police Force**, Superintendent Brian Kirk, Strategic Management Services, PO Box 59, West Bell Street, Dundee, DD1 9JU, Tel: 01382 223200.



110 GEORGE STREET EDINBURGH EH2 4LH

T. 0131 477 1234 F. 0131 477 4567

[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)

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