

Crime Flags

- F1** **Hate Crime**
- F2** **Metal Theft**
- F3** **Domestic Abuse**
- F4** **Online Crime**
- F5** **Child Sexual Abuse**
- F6** **Child Sexual Exploitation**
- F7** **Alcohol**

F1 Hate Crime (1 of 1)

Hate crime is defined as:

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

This collection requires offences aggravated by hate or prejudice (for the five strands outlined below) to be flagged on Data Hub extracts provided to the Home Office. From 2017/18, perceived religion of victim was made **mandatory** for religious hate crimes.

- Disability [Code 23]
- Transgender [Code 55]
- Racial [Code 18]
- Religion / beliefs [HODH flag is called "Religion" and is Code 19]
- Sexual orientation [Code 54]

Note that multiple aggravating factors may be recorded against an individual offence, including multiple hate crime indicators (for example both race and religion/belief may be recorded against a single offence).

Where the Religion flag has been applied, one of the following flags should also be applied to capture the **perceived** religion (or belief or faith) of the victim:

- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other
- No religion
- Unknown

Please note that where one of these flags is applied, the 'Religion' flag must also be applied.

Perceived religion means the targeted religion of the offender when known. For example, if Islamophobic graffiti is sprayed on a Gurdwara (Sikh temple), then the targeted perceived religion should be recorded as Muslim.

F2 Metal Theft (1 of 1)

Offences should be flagged as Metal Theft if the police employee filing the crime report believes that the intent for committing the offence was to remove the item for its scrap metal value rather than the acquiring of the item (s). Offences of attempted metal theft should also be flagged. **One and only one** of the following two flags should be used:

1) Metal theft (infrastructure related)

The removal of metal that has a direct impact on the functioning of infrastructure and/or fabric of a building or machinery. This includes all metals that are connected to live services such as water, heating, electricity, other service cabling and railway cabling; roofing lead, a catalytic converter removed from a vehicle and manhole covers.

2) Metal theft (non-infrastructure)

The removal of metal that has no direct impact on the functioning of infrastructure and/or fabric of a building or machinery. This includes metal that is not connected to services, redundant metal, war memorial plaques, and metal gates/fencing.

If it is considered challenging to determine which of the two flags is appropriate then the infrastructure related flag should be used as a default. Only one flag (and not both) should be applied.

F3 Domestic Abuse (1 of 1)

Domestic abuse definition:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

Controlling behavior is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behavior.

Coercive behavior is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

1. Notifiable Crimes

The **mandatory** collection of data on notifiable crimes relating to domestic abuse took effect from April 2015. This applies to all crime classifications and to all reports of domestic abuse related crime (including those where there is a repeat victim). Collection of this information should be achieved by means of a flag or other type of identifier being applied to all crime records. How this is achieved is a matter for forces to consider individually. The resulting data will be collected either via the Home Office Data Hub.

2. Repeat Domestic Abuse Crimes

In addition to the collection set out above, there is an additional data stream for repeat reports of Domestic Abuse (DA) crimes. The repeat DA became becomes **mandatory** for 2018/19.

It is important to underline that this is for notifiable crimes only. This collection requires forces to additionally identify (by means of a further flag, qualifier or similar identifier) those crimes where the victim is making a second or subsequent report of a DA related offence, following the initial recording of such a crime. The following examples set out how this would operate:

i) A is in a relationship with B. A reports for the first time being assaulted by B. A discloses that s/he has been assaulted by B several times but this is the first time it has been reported. Police record a crime.

Count as DA non repeat – apply the DA identifier to the recorded crime

ii) 4 weeks later A reports that B, who has moved out of their shared home, is carrying out a course of harassment. Police record a crime

Count as DA repeat – apply the DA identifier AND the repeat DA identifier

iii) Some months later A has formed a new relationship with C. A then reports a DA assault by C. Police record a crime.

Count as DA repeat – apply the DA identifier AND the repeat DA identifier

It is essential to underline that whilst the examples above relate to crimes of harassment or violence and to a party in an intimate relationship, the principle extends to other crime types and to the full range of family members.

A “repeat victim” is defined as “a second or subsequent report by a victim within a rolling 12 month period”.

ALL notifiable crimes that meet the DA definition should have the DA flag applied to them. **Where crimes are flagged as Repeat DA then BOTH flags should be applied.**

F4 Online Flag (1 of 2)

Online flag definition:

An offence where the reporting officer believes that on the balance of probability, the offence was committed, in full or in part, through a computer, computer network or other computer-enabled device.

The requirement is for returns relating to certain offences committed online. i.e offences that are online-enabled. The online crime 'flag' helps provide a national and local picture of the extent to which the internet and digital communications technology are being used to commit crimes. This gives an insight into the scale and nature of online crime, and it greatly enhances the development of policies to tackle them and protect victims.

Important Note

Offences which fall to Action Fraud for recording do not need to be flagged using the online flag. The data collected is intended to complement data collected by Action Fraud regarding fraud and Computer Misuse Act offences, by providing a broader picture of offending online.

Applying the flag

One flag is to be applied in accordance with the definition and inclusion/exclusion criteria.

Exclusion criteria

Offences should not be flagged where:

- The crime has already been recorded by Action Fraud or the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, i.e. in the case of fraud and computer misuse offences.
- The crime only involved a phone network to make phone calls or send/receive text messages, rather than an internet network. Some use of a computer network or internet technology is required.
- The computer was used to make or design fraudulent items such as fake gift or shopping vouchers.
- The offence involved theft of computers or other internet-enabled devices.
- The crime was committed using a machine but the intention was not to interact with the computer e.g. theft at an ATM or self-service tills.

Inclusion criteria

There are a wide variety of offences that may be committed online. The flag should therefore be applied to any relevant offence category at the crime recording stage. Offences should be flagged using the following rules:

- 1) Offences should be flagged where a crime was committed online or through internet-based activities, such as:
 - sending or receiving emails;
 - use of social media or networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr etc, this also includes online dating sites (for example, Match.com, e-harmony etc) and other online chat rooms;
 - use of internet forums, blogs or websites;
 - online auction or retail sites (e.g. Ebay, Gumtree);
 - communication via online video game networks (e.g. through X-box Live, Playstation Network); or communications platforms such as Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp or Viber.

F4 Online Flag (2 of 2)

- 2) Offences should be flagged where a 'computer, computer network or other computer-enabled devices were used to commit a crime. This includes:
 - desktop computers or laptops, in the home or in the workplace;
 - smartphones, tablets and other telecommunications devices linked to computer networks
 - any other identifiable computer system or network that produces, processes and transmits data, which may also include internal intranets (e.g. those used for staff payment transfers).

- 3) Some offences may use a combination of methods i.e. methods involving computers or the internet, as well as more established 'offline' methods. These offences should also be flagged as an 'online' crime, providing that at the time of interacting with the computer or network, and on the balance of probability, you believe the intention was to commit a crime. For example:
 - Adult victim met someone new via an online dating website. Following a couple of weeks of talking online, they met in person. The victim was subsequently raped. Officer on the balance of probability believes that the suspect intentionally initiated contact with the victim online for this purpose.

Further examples of online offences

In all the following cases the resulting recorded crime must be flagged as online:

- Victim received a number of threatening messages, including threats to kill, over Facebook and e-mail from ex-partner.
- Report received that 15-year old child has been communicating with unknown man on Facebook for a period of time. Suspect sent indecent images to the child and requested that the child remove their clothes on webcam and the child did so.
- Goods being sold on-line were identified as being stolen property.
- An adult downloaded a series of indecent images of children onto his computer hard drive.
- Selling illegal drugs or weapons online.
- An adult made threats on Twitter and Facebook that they were going to petrol bomb a local housing office.
- An adult uses social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) to try to organise a riot and cause disorder.
- A male harasses his ex-partner online.

F5 Child Sexual Abuse (1 of 1)

Child sexual abuse is defined as:

'Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing, rubbing, touching outside of clothing etc.) They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).'

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a clearly defined as a subset of CSA and so all offences flagged as being related to CSE should also be flagged as CSA (but not all offences flagged as relating to CSA will be flagged as CSE).

CSE Incident Data

A separate collection is used to collect data on incidents involving, or suspected to involve, CSE. This was mandatory from April 2017.

Uses / Publication

CSA and CSE Crime Flags

The collection increases police, government and public understanding of the scale of CSA and CSE in response to a recommendation by the Office of the Children's Commissioner to improve the recording of crimes involving CSA. The data will be included in future statistical outputs published by the Home Office and ONS.

The full scale of CSA and CSE is notoriously difficult to measure given the hidden nature of the crime and there is a gap in our knowledge regarding the precise number of cases of CSA and CSE recorded by the police. During the development stages of the ADR, we considered all possibilities to collect data on CSA centrally. However, the current data collected by police recorded crime statistics does not allow for all sexual offences against children to be identified (e.g. obscene publication offences that are specifically related to children). There is also an issue with offences where it is known that the victim is under age, but the exact date of birth is not known. Using current data therefore provides an under-estimate of CSA.

The CSE crime flag (CSE related offences) is required as CSE is not defined in law as a separate offence. CSE cannot be identified using offence subclasses only as some subclasses could be made up of CSE and non-CSE offences. As such, a 'flag' is the only method for collecting these data.

CSE incident data is needed to provide a better indication of the scale of reports to the police where CSE is suspected as we know anecdotally that many cases do not result in a crime being recorded due to lack of disclosure by the victim or other supporting information to meet the crime recording requirement.

F6 Child Sexual Exploitation (1 of 1)

In February 2017, the Government published a new definition of CSE:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-progress-report>

‘Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.’

This definition must be used from April 2017 onwards. The Government also published ‘Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners’ to assist with this:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners> .

There is further guidance that is being developed and will be circulated shortly, as a ‘words of advice’ document.

CSE is a subset of CSA and all offences flagged as being related to CSE should also be flagged as CSA (but not all offences flagged as relating to CSA will be flagged as CSE).

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Uses and Publication

CSA and CSE Crime Flags

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CSE Incident Data

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F7 Alcohol-Related Crime (1 of 1)

Alcohol-related crime definition:

“any notifiable offence (crime) where it is perceived, by the victim or any other person, that the effects of alcohol consumption on the offender or victim was an aggravating factor”.

The qualifier should be used where the consumption of alcohol has been associated with the offence.

This recorded crime collection provides the numbers of crimes directly attributable to alcohol via the Home Office Data Hub, which assists in assessing the impact of alcohol on crime and policing, improves transparency and provides improved information for the public on the scale of the problem. This data collection became **mandatory** from April 2017.

Uses / Publication:

This data will inform decision making and be included in future statistical outputs and widely published in Home Office and ONS statistical bulletins. In the future data it is intended that data will be published on Police.uk