



Home Office

Crime outcomes in England and Wales: Technical Annex

July 2020

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TECHNICAL ANNEX

A1. OVERVIEW

Before April 2013, the official statistics focused on “detections” (the number of cases resolved with a charge, caution, etc.) to reflect how the police deal with crimes. Since April 2014, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office on the broader set of outcomes. The first provisional statistics from the new outcomes framework were published in the Year to March 2014 bulletin. We have since developed the statistics with input from police forces and users.

A2. THE CRIME OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Detections were revised to become the outcomes framework from April 2013. The purpose of the revision was:

- To **strengthen police discretion** by recognising the full range of possible disposals, including community resolutions, rather than incentivising police officers to pursue a particular outcome because it is perceived as ‘better’ than others. This will empower officers to exercise their professional judgement to ensure that offenders are dealt with by the most appropriate disposal available, in the knowledge that no one outcome is favoured over others – the emphasis should shift from hitting targets to appropriateness.
- By strengthening police discretion, the framework should in turn help to **promote a more victim-oriented approach**, focused on providing a better service to victims of crime by removing perverse incentives for forces to record and pro-actively pursue certain crimes on the basis of locally-set detection targets, and encouraging police officers to consider the needs of victims, and the potential for engaging them in the process.
- To **further increase transparency** in policing, and trust in national statistics, by providing the public with a richer picture of crime, and how it is dealt with in their area. This broader set of information can be used as a tool by which the public can hold the police to account, and as a basis for constructive engagement between communities, the police, and police and crime commissioners. By giving every crime an outcome, we will help the public understand – and therefore support or challenge – police activity.

New outcomes introduced from April 2016

It is possible for a suspect to be charged or cautioned but for the charge or caution to be for a different offence to the one recorded.

The recording standards reflect the law and in reaching charging decisions the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) set out a range of standards and guidance that both they and the police must follow. These standards frequently dictate that an alternate offence be charged to that recorded. For example, an assault may be recorded as a crime of Actual Bodily Harm (because that is the offence in law committed) but the CPS will direct that the offence charged is Common Assault.

Therefore, in April 2016 three new outcomes were introduced on a voluntary basis until they became mandatory in April 2017. These outcomes reflect where the charge/summons (outcome 1A), youth caution (outcome 2A) or adult caution (outcome 3A) relates to an alternative offence to that recorded.

For full details on the transition from the regime of detections (in existence until April 2013) to the outcomes framework, please see “Crimes Outcomes in England & Wales, 2013/14”:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2013-to-2014

Table A1.1: Detection types prior to April 2013 and the outcomes frameworks in place thereafter

Detections regime - prior to April 2013 (outcomes 1 - 6)	Outcomes framework - April 2013 to March 2014 (outcomes 1 - 9)	Outcomes framework - April 2014 onwards (outcomes 1-22)
1. Charge/Summons	1. Charge/Summons	1. Charge/Summons
2. Caution	2. Caution - youths	2. Caution - youths
	3. Caution - adults	3. Caution - adults
3. Taken into consideration - previously recorded	4. Taken into consideration (TIC)	4. Taken into consideration (TIC)
4. Taken into consideration - not previously recorded		
5. Penalty notice for Disorder	6. Penalty Notice for Disorder	6. Penalty Notice for Disorder
6. Other	5. The offender has died (indictable only/sexual offences)	5. The offender has died (all offences)
	7. Cannabis warning	7. Cannabis warning
	8. Community Resolution	8. Community Resolution
	9. Prosecution not in public interest (CPS) (indictable only offences)	9. Prosecution not in public interest (CPS) (all offences)
<i>Data not collected by the Home Office</i>		10. Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest (police decision)
		11. Prosecution prevented - named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility
		12. Prosecution prevented - named identified suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute
		13. Prosecution prevented - named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence
		14. Evidential difficulties victim based - named suspect not identified but the victim declines or is unable to support further police action to identify the offender
		15. Evidential difficulties - named suspect identified and the victim supports police action, but evidential difficulties prevent further action
		16. Evidential difficulties victim based - named suspect identified - the victim does not support (or withdraws support from) police action
		17. Prosecution time limit expired - suspect identified but the time limit for prosecution has expired
		18. Investigation complete - no suspect identified. Crime investigated as far as reasonably possible - case closed pending further investigative opportunities becoming available
		19. National Fraud Intelligence Bureau field (NFIB only). A crime or fraud has been recorded but has not been allocated for investigation because the assessment process at the NFIB has determined there are insufficient lines of enquiry to warrant such dissemination.
		20. Further action, resulting from the crime report, will be undertaken by another body or agency subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action to be taken (from April 2015)
		21. Further action, resulting from the crime report, which could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest - police decision (from January 2016)
	22. Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action (Voluntary from April 2019)	

A2. 1 FRAUD OUTCOMES

In April 2011, Action Fraud (the UK's national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre) began gradually taking over the recording of fraud offences from individual police forces in England and Wales. ONS publish police recorded crime statistics both including and excluding fraud and Computer Misuse Act (CMA) offences. As well as offences recorded by Action Fraud, the ONS also publish data on the number of fraud offences reported to the NFIB by two fraud prevention industry bodies: Cifas and UK Finance.. Similarly, outcomes of fraud and CMA offences are not collected in the same way as other crimes. The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) review Action Fraud reports, along with UK Finance and Cifas reports. The NFIB allocate fraud offences with viable information to the relevant police forces in dissemination packages. The police forces investigate the offences, and allocate an outcome to each individual offence. Each police force submits the outcomes to NFIB on a monthly basis.

A3. OUTCOMES DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

A3.1 FORCE OUTCOMES FOR OFFENCES RECORDED IN QUARTER (NEW STYLE)

This method looks at outcomes for offences recorded in the same period in which the offence was recorded, rather than just a measure of total outcomes recorded in a period. It allows crimes to be traced from when they were recorded to when they were given the outcome. As every crime will eventually receive an outcome, this measure can be used to show how an increasing number of crimes recorded in a certain period are resolved over time. This is particularly effective for tracking sexual offences over time, as many of these do not receive their outcome in the same year in which they are recorded.

A3.4 FORCE OUTCOMES RECORDED IN QUARTER (OLD STYLE)

These outcome volumes relate to outcomes recorded in that year regardless of when the associated crime was recorded. Rates can be calculated as the number of outcomes recorded in the year as a proportion of crimes recorded in the same year. This is how rates were presented before it was possible to link crimes with their outcomes. It is still useful to look at outcomes in this way as an additional measure of police activity in relation to crime.

Comparing the number of outcomes with the number of recorded offences in this way should be done with caution, because proportion of the outcomes relate to offences recorded in previous years. Some crime types could show a rate of over 100 per cent against a particular outcome, which is sometimes the case for relatively low volume crimes.

Rates presented for outcomes recorded in the year are therefore illustrative rather than 'true' rates and can be influenced by changes in crime volumes.

A4. TIMELINESS

Timeliness is a measure of the time taken between an offence being recorded and its outcome being assigned. This measure can be used as a proxy for the efficiency of police investigations, but should not be considered a firm measure.

While the analysis in chapter 3 in the [Crime Outcomes Bulletin](#) gives an indication of the length of time to assign an outcome, it is affected by any delay between a force achieving an outcome and recording it on their system. In particular, for some of the outcomes that take 1-5 days to assign, the outcome may have been 'actioned' on the same day as the offence was recorded but implemented on the system at a later date. For example, cannabis warnings will almost always be issued at the time the offence comes to the attention of the police. However, the administration of assigning the outcome on the crime recording system may happen some days later.

A5. TRANSFERRED OR CANCELLED RECORDS

A5.1 OVERVIEW

Transferred or cancelled records (formerly referred to as 'no-crimes') occur when a police force records an offence and later decide that the crime did not take place, was recorded in error or should be transferred to another police force. Since April 2015, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office split by the five reasons why the police may transfer or cancel records. It is important to note that cases where an incident was not recorded as a crime in the first place are not included.

Data on transferred and cancelled records can be found in the supplementary bulletin tables available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

A5.2 DEFINITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Since April 2015, police forces have supplied data to the Home Office split by the five reasons why the police may transfer or cancel records.

- 1 Transferred: Crime committed outside the jurisdiction of the police force in which it was recorded – passed to the appropriate force.
- 2 Cancelled: Additional verifiable information that determines that no notifiable crime occurred becomes available.
- 3 Cancelled: Duplicate record or part of a crime already recorded.
- 4 Cancelled: Crime recorded in error.
- 5 Cancelled: Self-defence claimed (for specific recorded assaults).

Transferred or cancelled records are always recorded in the same financial year as the offence was transferred or cancelled. For example, if an offence was recorded in January and then subsequently transferred or cancelled in the next financial year (e.g. May), the transferred or cancelled record will be recorded for the current financial year.

A5.3 COMPARING TRANSFERRED OR CANCELLED RECORDS

It is important to exercise caution when comparing transferred or cancelled records data across police forces and between years. A full comparison is only possible for the most recent years, after March 2016. Comparing years before March 2016 can only be done by looking at the total of the five categories. Prior to April 2015, all 43 police forces in England and Wales (including British Transport Police) supplied the total number of transferred and cancelled records to the Home Office as one combined category ("no-crimes"), with no further explanation of why the crime was classed as such.

A high or low number of transferred or cancelled records should not necessarily be interpreted positively or negatively, because different forces may use transferred or cancelled records in different ways and volumes may be affected by specific locations of forces (in particular for transferred records). Since April 2015, [the Home Office Counting Rules](#) have required the police to record a crime at the earliest opportunity, and at most within 24 hours after the reporting officer decides that a crime should be recorded (previously this was within 72 hours). This is likely to result in increased numbers of transferred and cancelled records. However, whilst one force may record all crimes immediately and then later transfer or cancel a more significant proportion of these, others may wait slightly longer to judge whether an offence constitutes a crime or not, and thus are likely to record fewer transferred or cancelled records overall. Transfers in particular are susceptible to local practices. As a result, a firm conclusion should not be drawn when comparing transferred or cancelled record data across forces, as any differences seen may just reflect differences in recording practices. More details of this can be found in the HMIC reports.

An Open Data table on transferred or cancelled records by police force is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables

A6. CRIME OUTCOMES DATA QUALITY

A6.1 INTRODUCTION

The UK Statistics Authority published its assessment of ONS crime statistics in January 2014. It found that statistics based on police recorded crime data, assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, did not meet the required standard for designation as National Statistics. The UKSA published a list of requirements for these statistics to regain the National Statistics accreditation.

Some of the requirements of this assessment were to provide more detail on how data sources were used to produce these statistics, along with more information on the quality of the statistics. Additionally, there was also a requirement to provide information on the process used by police forces to submit and revise data, and the validation processes used by the Home Office. In order to ensure that this publication meets the high standards required by the UK Statistics Authority, details are provided below.

A6.2 DATA QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Home Office receives monthly data from police forces on crime, crime outcomes and records that were initially recorded as crimes and subsequently transferred to another police force or cancelled. These data are quality assured and analysed by Home Office statisticians and any anomalies or errors identified through this process result in a report being returned to the relevant force for validation or correction.

Prior to the publication of crime outcomes a verification exercise is carried out with all forces. The data held by the Home Office are returned to individual forces asking for confirmation that the data accords with that held on their own systems and to highlight any perceived inconsistencies in their data. Again, forces resubmit data if required.

The Ministry of Justice has been working with the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service and the National Police Chiefs' Council to deliver a project to make the use of out-of-court disposals for adult offenders more effective. In November 2014, as part of this project, three police forces (Leicestershire, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire) commenced a 12 month pilot operation of a simplified model of such outcomes (West Yorkshire Police adopted a phased roll out starting in November 2014 and fully operational in January 2015). All three forces, with the agreement of Ministers, voluntarily stopped issuing adult simple cautions (part of outcome 3) and cannabis / khat warnings (outcome 7) and limited their use of penalty notices for disorder (outcome 6), instead using the adult conditional caution (part of outcome 3) and the community resolution (outcome 8). The rules and guidance that apply to conditional cautions and community resolutions have been amended for those three forces to reflect this new approach. These three pilot forces have continued to operate in accordance with the pilot conditions since the pilot ended in November 2015. Some other forces have subsequently also limited their use of some out of court disposals. This may lead to apparent falls in some of these outcome types (e.g. cannabis/khat warnings) which may be accompanied by increases in outcomes 3 and 8 which will have been used in their place.

A6.3 CRIME OUTCOMES DATA SOURCES:

- Aggregated Crimsec4 return: an aggregated return supplied on monthly basis from small number of police forces
- Home Office Data Hub (HODH): The HODH allows police forces to provide record-level detail on offences, vastly increasing the opportunities for the analysis of police recorded crime data.
- Voluntary returns: the Home Office requested that all forces providing Crimsec4, voluntarily provide additional outcomes data on a quarterly basis

CRIMSEC4

Police recorded crime data are supplied to the Home Office by the 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales, plus the British Transport Police. Each year a small number of forces supply crime and outcomes data to the Home Office in an aggregated return (Crimsec4 form) on a monthly basis. In this return, data on outcomes and transferred or cancelled records (formerly referred to as 'no-crimes') are collected alongside recorded crime data for each crime within the notifiable offence list. Notifiable offences include all offences that could possibly be tried by jury (these include some less serious offences, such as minor theft that would not usually be dealt with this way) plus a few additional closely-related summary offences dealt with by magistrates, such as assault without injury.

The monthly data are cumulative, such that each month's return will contain the data for the financial year to date. When a police force wants to make revisions to this data, they usually do this in the latest monthly return, rather than re-sending a return for the period affected. The exception to this rule is when the revisions affect a previous financial year. In these cases the police force will re-send an end of year return for that year.

Outcomes are recorded on the Crimsec4 form in the month that the outcome is applied, and not the month in which the original offence occurred. For example, if an offence occurred in January and a suspect was subsequently charged in June, the outcome would be recorded in June. This means that the data recorded on a Crimsec4 do not correspond to the data on offences in that month, or even the same year. However since the year ending March 2016 the Home Office has additionally requested that forces capture outcomes that relate to the period the crime was recorded. Most forces are now providing outcomes data via the Home Office Data Hub (see below) which can also capture outcomes relating to the period in which the crime was recorded.

The latest outcomes introduced, outcome 20 (since April 2015), outcome 21 (since January 2016) and outcome 22 (since April 2019), and the five sub-categories for transferred and cancelled records are not included on CrimSec4 forms and are instead collected via an additional manual collection on a quarterly basis.

The Home Office Data Hub

The Home Office Data Hub (HODH) allows police forces to provide record-level detail on offences, vastly increasing the opportunities for the analysis of police recorded crime data. At the time of publication, there were 39 forces providing their monthly crime, outcomes and transferred or cancelled records data solely via the HODH. The majority of the remaining forces are currently providing Crimsec4 returns, with a view to switching exclusively to the HODH at the earliest opportunity. The Home Office are continuing to work with these forces to help them to achieve this, and are committed to achieving a fully operational HODH. Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have not been able to provide the Home Office with any crime or outcomes data since July 2019 and therefore are not included in any outputs in the financial year end 2019/20 outcomes publication.

The voluntary returns

As not all forces are currently able to provide data via the HODH, the Home Office requested that all other forces provide additional outcomes data on a quarterly basis to capture outcomes data from all police forces.

The data presented in Chapter 2 covers 43 police forces (including the British Transport Police) and is based on HODH for 38 forces and manual returns from the remaining forces; GMP have been unable to provide data since July 2019. Data for year ending March is usually taken from the HODH in early June, and the remaining forces voluntarily provided their data for year on different dates between early-April and mid-June. The proportion of crimes recorded in March that had been assigned an outcome at the time of submitting data to the Home Office is likely to be smaller for a force that sent their data return in early April than for a force that provided this in May or June, because there had been less time for these offences to be investigated and the outcomes to be assigned. These dates will therefore have an impact on the overall proportion of crimes still under investigation and comparability between forces.

A6.4 DATA VALIDATION PROCESSES

The Home Office carry out a series of routine checks and feed the results of these back to police forces on monthly basis. These checks include:

- Looking for any large or unusual changes in offences, outcomes or transferred or cancelled records from the previous month;
- Looking for cases where forces have provided data against an offence classification that no longer exists (e.g. the former fraud classifications);
- Comparing offence types and outcome types against the long-term trend, to spot any outliers in the monthly data;
- Looking at where cautions (outcomes 2 and 3) have been assigned to rape offences and these are then queried with Force Crime Registrars;
- Checking that outcome 17 has not been applied to any offence which does not have a time limit.
- Checking that outcome 7 has not been applied to any non-cannabis or khat offences.

Any outliers or anomalies are usually small. Police forces are then asked to investigate these anomalies and either provide an explanation or resubmit figures where an error has occurred. Where resubmission is required, the force will usually just correct the errors in the latest monthly submission, rather than re-send all of the months in question. In the case of forces providing data via the HODH, the force will send modified versions of the affected records. These then supersede the original versions.

A6.5 FURTHER INFORMATION ON CRIME OUTCOMES

Care needs to be taken when making comparisons of crime outcomes between police forces. In some cases making any such comparisons may be misleading, given that different police forces use outcomes in different ways and will have a different mix of crimes to deal with. For example, some police forces may implement more community resolutions than others, depending on their approach, the nature of the crimes they deal with and the views of their communities. For example, a force that deals with a disproportionately high number of drug offences may apply a different mix of outcomes compared with a force that deals with a higher proportion of violent offences.

General Rules Section H of the [Home Office Counting Rules](#) (HOCR) contains information on recording outcomes. For Home Office purposes, all recorded crimes are assigned one of the following outcome types:

Outcome 1: Charge / Summons: A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at Court).

Outcome 1A [introduced in April 2016, voluntary]: Charge / Summons – alternative offence: A person has been charged or summonsed for the crime, but following the application of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) charging standards and the provisions of the HOCR, the charge/summons relates to an alternative offence to that recorded (irrespective of any subsequent acquittal at court).

Outcome 2: Caution – youths: A youth offender has been cautioned by the police.

Outcome 2A [introduced in April 2016, voluntary]: Youth Caution – alternative offence: A youth offender has been cautioned by the police, but following the application of the CPS charging standards and the provisions of the HOCR, the caution relates to an alternative offence to that recorded.

Outcome 3: Caution – adults: An adult offender has been cautioned by the police.

Outcome 3A [introduced in April 2016, voluntary]: Adult Caution – alternative offence: An adult offender has been cautioned by the police, but following the application of the CPS charging standards and the provisions of the HOCR, the caution relates to an alternative offence to that recorded.

Outcome 4: Taken into Consideration (TIC): The offender admits the crime by way of a formal police interview and asks for it to be taken into consideration by the court. There must be an interview where the suspect has made a clear and reliable admission of the offence and which is corroborated with additional verifiable auditable information connecting the suspect to the crime.

Outcome 5: Offender died: The offender has died before proceeding could be initiated.

Outcome 6: Penalty Notices for Disorder: A Penalty Notice for Disorder (or other relevant notifiable offence) has been lawfully issued under Section 1 – 11 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

Outcome 7: Cannabis/Khat Warning: A warning for cannabis or khat possession has been issued in accordance with College of Policing guidance. Note: Khat warnings were introduced from 24 June 2014 and numbers are likely to be small.

Outcome 8: Community Resolution: A Community Resolution (with or without formal Restorative Justice) has been applied in accordance with College of Policing guidance.

Outcome 9: Not in public interest (CPS): Prosecution not in the public interest (CPS decision). The CPS by virtue of their powers under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 decides not to prosecute or authorise any other formal action.

Outcome 10: Not in public interest (Police) (from April 2014): Formal action against the offender is not in the public interest (Police decision).

Outcome 11: Prosecution prevented – suspect under age (from April 2014): Prosecution prevented – named suspect identified but is below the age of criminal responsibility.

Outcome 12: Prosecution prevented – suspect too ill (from April 2014): Prosecution prevented – Named suspect identified but is too ill (physical or mental health) to prosecute.

Outcome 13: Prosecution prevented – victim/key witness dead/too ill (from April 2014): Named suspect identified but victim or key witness is dead or too ill to give evidence

Outcome 14: Evidential difficulties: suspect not identified; victim does not support further action (from April 2014): Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect not identified. The crime is confirmed but the victim declines or is unable to support further police action to identify the offender.

Outcome 15: Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports action) (from April 2014): Evidential difficulties named suspect identified – the crime is confirmed and the victim supports police action but evidential difficulties prevent further action. This includes cases where the suspect has been identified, the victim supports action, the suspect has been circulated as wanted but cannot be traced and the crime is finalised pending further action.

Outcome 16: Evidential difficulties: suspect identified; victim does not support further action (from April 2014): Evidential difficulties victim based – named suspect identified. The victim does not support (or has withdrawn support from) police action.

Outcome 17: Prosecution time limit expired (from April 2014): Suspect identified but prosecution time limit has expired (from April 2014).

Outcome 18: Investigation complete –no suspect identified (from April 2014): The crime has been investigated as far as reasonably possible – case closed pending further investigative opportunities becoming available.

Outcome 19: National Fraud Intelligence Bureau filed (NFIB only) (from April 2014): A crime of fraud has been recorded but has not been allocated for investigation because the assessment process at the NFIB has determined there are insufficient lines of enquiry to warrant such dissemination.

Outcome 20: Action undertaken by another body/agency (from April 2015): Further action resulting from the crime report will be undertaken by another body or agency other than the police, subject to the victim (or person acting on their behalf) being made aware of the action being taken.

Outcome 21: Not in the public interest – suspect identified (from January 2016) Further investigation resulting from the crime report that could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest – police decision.

Outcome 22: Diversionary, educational or intervention activity, resulting from the crime report, has been undertaken and it is not in the public interest to take any further action (voluntary from April 2019)

A7 FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE

The flow chart in Figure A7.1. Reports from Cifas, UK Finance and Action Fraud are automatically assessed by the NFIB's systems, using a scoring matrix to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to allocate the case to the police for investigation. The NFIB's system constantly reviews all crime reports against all other data held in the database and looks for links between offences which share a piece of information, such as a telephone number, email address or website URL. The reports are scored based on a viability criteria, and the NFIB's system automatically produces crime networks with a viability ranking. The team reviews these networks and determines if there is a realistic chance of identifying the offender through personal information, such as a telephone number, postal address or bank account. The team conducts research to help identify suspect(s), such as requesting information from a bank or making a telecommunications subscriber check.

Where it is judged that there are sufficient grounds for investigation and enforcement is viable, the NFIB allocates these cases to the most appropriate police force or other law enforcement agency. Cases closed at one point may be re-opened if new information comes to light. For example, an offence could have occurred in 2018/19 but not scored highly enough on NFIB's matrix to make it viable for enforcement at the time. Then another offence could have occurred in 2019/20 which links to the 2018/19 offence with a shared offender name, and provides more information such as a bank account. Then both offences could have received a viability score above the threshold, resulting in both offences being disseminated to the relevant force for investigation.

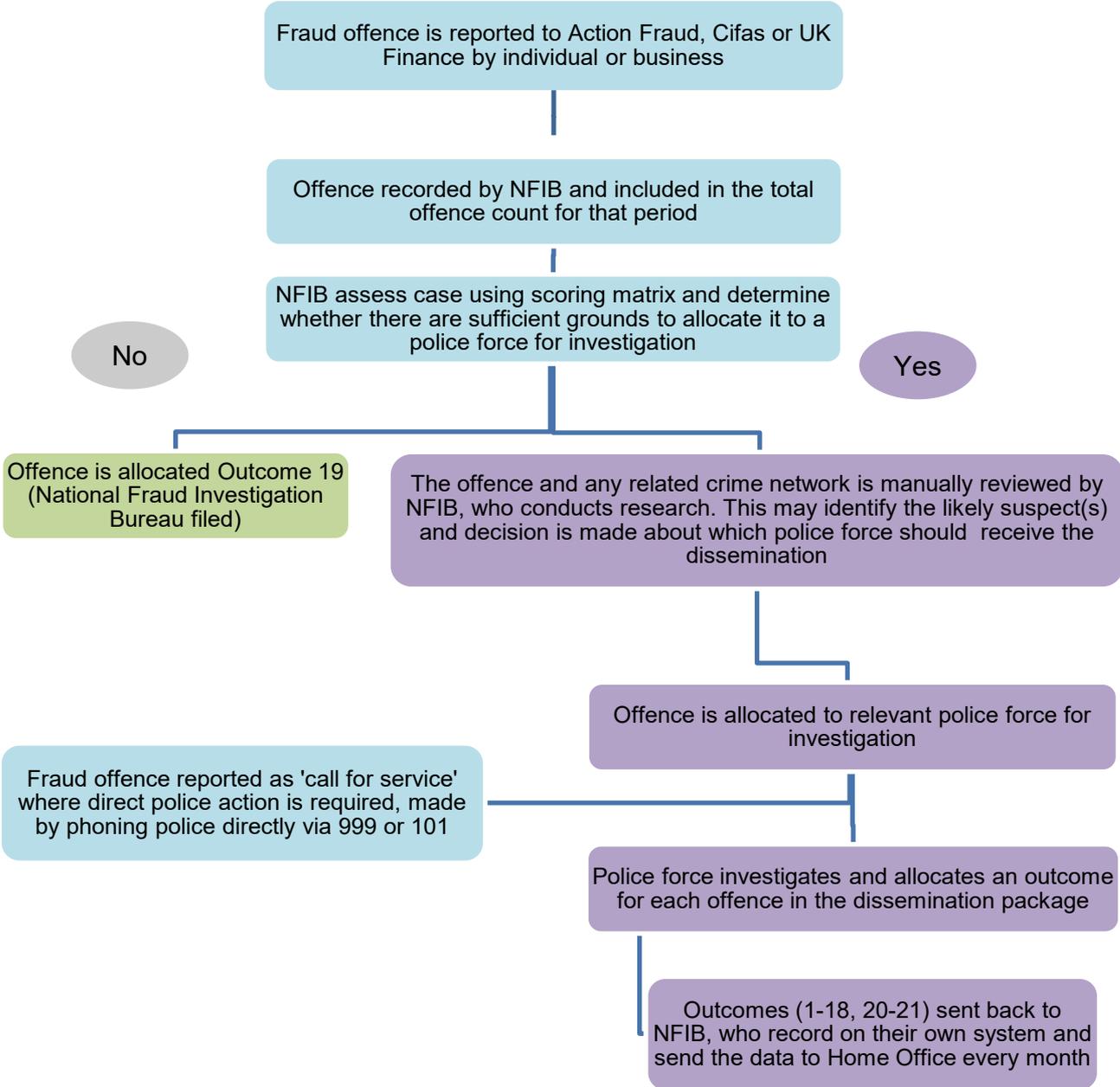
NFIB allocations to forces are referred to as "dissemination packages", and each package can contain multiple offences. The police force investigates the offences and allocates an appropriate outcome to each individual offence. Rather than return these outcomes to the Home Office with other recorded crimes, each police force submits the outcomes to the NFIB on a monthly basis, who in-turn pass reports to the Home Office.

For crime reports where sufficient grounds for investigation do not exist, the reports remain on the NFIB's database. As new crime reports are submitted, more data may be linked to existing crime reports which may increase their viability for investigation.

In addition to investigating offences disseminated from NFIB, a police force can also receive fraud-related 'calls for service' direct from members of the public. This is when victims of fraud require an active police response, and dial either 999 or 101 to contact the police directly. Police forces will deal with fraud directly if certain criteria are met, such as if at the time of the call for service, the offender is in the act of committing, or has recently committed, the offence. As with disseminated offences, the outcomes of calls for service for fraud offences are submitted by the relevant force to the NFIB.

It should be noted that, unlike other outcomes data presented in this bulletin, it is not possible to link individual outcomes to offences as the recorded fraud data streams at present is based on aggregate totals. It is important to note that the number of outcomes will not necessarily correspond to the number of disseminations in a given year since investigations can take months, or longer, to complete. A large number of offences disseminated to the police in the year to March 2020 are still under investigation. In addition, some outcomes data will relate to offences recorded in previous years. Caution should be used when comparing the number of outcomes to disseminated offences and in comparing fraud outcomes with other offence types.

Figure A7.1: How fraud outcomes are recorded



The Home Office have invested in a new IT analytics engine for the Action Fraud/NFIB capability, to improve the reporting and reviewing process. The new online self-reporting system went live in October 2018. The victim reporting process has been made easier through the implementation of a streamlined, more intuitive online portal for crime reporting and individuals are now able to 'track my crime' for the first time.

In 2017, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspected approaches to fraud, particularly focussed on referrals made to forces by Action Fraud, within their PEEL effectiveness inspections. In their report ‘PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017’, they stated: “Inspection findings showed forces are providing a mixed response to this type of crime; some are more advanced than others in dealing with referrals, in conducting effective investigations and in providing reassurance and support to victims”.

In 2018, HMICFRS also published ‘Fraud: Time to choose - An inspection of the police response to fraud’. The inspection found variation across forces in their handling and investigation of fraud cases allocated to them by NFIB.