

## **STATISTICS ON THE NUMBER OF POLICE OFFICERS ASSAULTED IN THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2015 IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

This note summarises the two data sources for assaults on police officers collected by the Home Office:

- self-reported data held within police forces' human resource or health and safety systems
- police recorded crime data.

These are **NOT** National Statistics, due to their known limitations. Neither currently provides a complete picture of assaults against officers, but together they can help to indicate the scale of the problem. The main limitations of each source are as follows:

### Self-reported data

- This does not include assaults that officers do not report to their health and safety or HR teams. In some cases officers will choose not to report cases, as it is often not compulsory to do so. This is likely when cases do not involve injury, or where the assault occurs as a result of an individual resisting arrest.
- Not all forces provide these data in the same way. A small number provide data from their crime recording systems, which are likely to include cases where an officer did not report the assault to their HR or health and safety team. Therefore these forces will record higher numbers of assaults.

### Police recorded crime data

- Forces supply the number of cases of "assault without injury on a constable" to the Home Office as part of their recorded crime data. This only includes assaults where no injury was involved. It is not possible to separately identify cases involving officers from other cases of violence with injury.

### **Self-reported data**

These statistics were published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary (HMIC) in their Annual Report until 2005/06. They were then published by the Home Office from 2005/06 until 2009/10. Since then they have not been published due to concerns about the quality and comparability of the data. Some forces were also unable to provide data.

Following discussions with police forces, it is clear that these figures are not fully comparable between forces. Most forces provide data on assaults from their Human Resources (HR) or Health and Safety systems. This is consistent with the Home Office guidance. However, some forces provided data from crime recording systems, and suggested that this provides a better measure of the total number of assaults. It is noticeable that for the small number of forces who have provided the data in this way (Hampshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia), the number of assaults is higher relative to other similarly sized forces.

The HR and health and safety systems data are likely to be an underestimate of the number of assaults on police officers. Police forces have indicated that this is because of the self-reported nature of the data. In many cases officers may not report these assaults to their HR or health and safety colleagues, particularly where

the assault is less severe and does not involve injury, or where it has taken place during someone resisting arrest. Although these cases are likely to be recorded as crimes, it is often not compulsory for officers to report them to their health and safety colleagues, and many do not do so.

The Home Office also collects severity breakdowns for these data: fatal, serious, and minor or no injury. However, many forces are unable to provide these data in a reliable way, and so these data have not been included below.

### **Police recorded crime data**

An alternative source of data on assaults on police officers is the number of recorded crimes of 'assault without injury on a constable'. These are published within the latest 'Crime in England and Wales' release by the Office for National Statistics on 16 July 2015.

These figures only include assaults that do not result in an injury. There is not a separate crime classification for 'assault with injury on a constable', and so assaults resulting in injury will be recorded under the relevant 'violence with injury' offence classification. It is not currently possible to separately identify assaults on officers in these categories. Therefore while the recorded crime figures are more comparable between forces, they only provide a partial picture of assaults on officers.

Discussion with forces has indicated that while some forces are able to identify cases of assault with injury that involve police officers from their crime recording systems, others find this more difficult to do.

### **Future development of assaults statistics**

The Home Office intends to work with forces over the next year to determine the best way in which to measure the number of assaults on the police, with a view to publishing more robust and comparable data alongside the 'Police workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2016' release in summer 2016. It appears that figures from crime recording systems may provide the most complete measure of assaults, but consideration is needed on how to separate cases of assault with injury that involve officers from other cases.

Based on the three forces that provided data on the total number of assaults from their crime recording systems, it is possible to make a crude estimate of the proportion of all assaults on officers that do not involve injury. For the three forces that provided data, this is estimated to be just over 60 per cent. It is then possible to apply this to the number of crimes of 'assault without injury on a constable' for all forces, to estimate the total number of cases of assaults on officers in England and Wales (plus the British Transport Police). This gives an estimate of approximately 23,000 assaults in 2014/15. This assumes that the proportion of assaults that do not involve injury is the same across all forces as it is for these three. This estimate is relatively crude, and should be interpreted with caution. The Home Office intends to refine it further in future years.

**Assaults on police officers, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2015**

	Assaults <sup>1, 2</sup>	Assault without injury on a constable <sup>1, 3, 4</sup>
Avon & Somerset	113	485
Bedfordshire	40	136
British Transport Police <sup>5</sup>	..	367
Cambridgeshire	92	259
Cheshire	112	297
Cleveland	81	197
Cumbria	88	169
Derbyshire	49	185
Devon & Cornwall	154	313
Dorset	87	137
Durham	82	221
Dyfed-Powys	52	104
Essex	353	418
Gloucestershire	70	58
Greater Manchester <sup>5</sup>	..	710
Gwent	77	156
Hampshire <sup>6</sup>	1,007	636
Hertfordshire	145	297
Humberside	48	226
Kent	310	439
Lancashire	212	264
Leicestershire	99	248
Lincolnshire	68	178
London, City of	1	9
Merseyside	124	350
Metropolitan Police	1,354	2,254
Norfolk	114	345
Northamptonshire	173	284
Northumbria	312	261
North Wales	70	136
North Yorkshire	30	168
Nottinghamshire	167	262
South Wales	122	213
South Yorkshire	49	155
Staffordshire	57	259
Suffolk	36	239
Surrey	170	367
Sussex	212	678
Thames Valley	158	528
Warwickshire <sup>6</sup>	88	53
West Mercia <sup>6</sup>	344	217
West Midlands	590	502
West Yorkshire	264	518
Wiltshire	70	102

1. These data are **NOT** National Statistics.
2. These figures are provisional and are correct as at 26 June 2015. They are not fully comparable because recording practices vary between forces.
3. These figures include assaults resulting in serious injury for which the charge would be under sections 18 and 20 Offences Against the Person Act 1861. These figures also include assaults resulting in minor or no injury for which the charge would be under section 47 Offences Against the Person Act, section 38 Offences Against the Person Act, section 89(1) and 89(2) Police Act 1996 and section 39 Criminal Justice Act 1998.
4. Police recorded crime figures for the year ending 31 March 2015.
5. The British Transport Police and Greater Manchester were not able to provide assaults data for the year ending 31 March 2015.
6. Hampshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia are police forces who have informed the Home Office that their data have been taken from crime recording systems. The number of assaults reported by these forces therefore appears to be greater than for other forces, relative to their size.