

# Police and fire services

HOW YOUR SERVICE PERFORMED IN 1995/96

# Introduction

Each year, fire brigades, police forces and councils publish a range of information to show the public how well they are providing their services in comparison with previous years and to allow the public to compare them with similar bodies.

This leaflet contains information on some of the activities of the Scottish fire brigades and police forces. The activities it covers are:

## Fire

- the percentage of fires to which brigades responded within target times
- the percentage of road traffic incidents to which brigades responded within target times.

## Police

- the percentage of all crimes cleared up by the police
- the percentage of selected crimes cleared up
- the percentage of non-motor vehicle offences cleared up.

The information for fire brigades in this leaflet covers the years 1994/95 and 1995/96 and for police forces 1993/94 to 1995/96. It is important for two reasons. Firstly, it shows what performance standards have been achieved in the years leading up to local government reorganisation in April 1996. Secondly, it gives a base against which to measure the work of the police and fire services in future years.

The Commission publishes a comprehensive report on all council services for which performance indicators are set. It provides information for the three financial years 1993/94 to 1995/96. You can find additional information about the fire and police services in the report.

## Using the information

For each activity we have set out why some of the differences in performance between services may have arisen. We also highlight particular features of the information - for example, the range of performance achieved by different services. However, we do not explain why a service has achieved a particular level of performance or what should be regarded as 'good' or 'bad' performance.

Several things 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 the brigade or force - for example, population size and density, and the mix between urban and rural settlements. Others may be specific to a particular service or the groups of people it covers. 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 one has, in fact, done better, given the more difficult circumstances it faces.

Fire services are provided by eight fire brigades. In 1995/96, six of these covered the same areas as regional councils - Central, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Grampian, Strathclyde and Tayside. The remaining two, run by joint boards, covered two or more regional or islands council areas - Lothian & Borders, and Highland & Islands (Highland, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles).

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, other and rural.

They 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 target times for attendance. For rural areas, brigades are free to set their own target for attendance, and three of the seven brigades which have rural areas did so in 1995/96. Brigades which set no target for attendance in rural areas reported the average time for attendance.

## INDICATOR 1

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

- High
- Substantial
- Moderate
- Other
- Rural

### What the indicator reports

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

### Points to bear in mind

Attendance times will be affected by:

- speed of dispatch of fire engines
- traffic congestion
- road obstructions and weather conditions.

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.

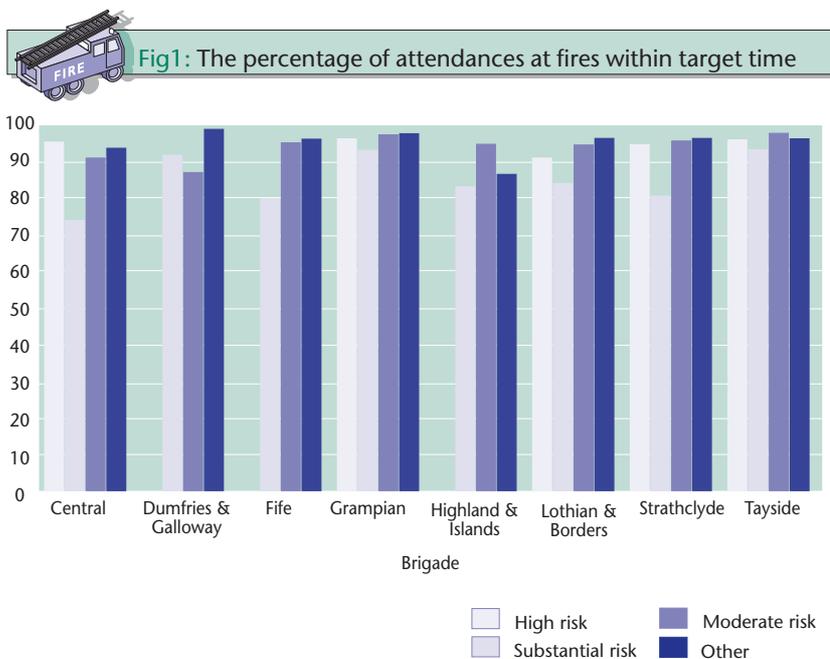
### Commentary

The percentage of attendances which were within the target in each of the first four risk categories ranged between brigades as follows:

- 'High': 92% to 97%
- 'Substantial': 74% to 94%
- 'Moderate': 88% to 98%
- 'Other': 87% to 99%.

The lowest percentage of attendances within target was 74%, by Central, for 'substantial' risk areas.

Three of the brigades had their own target for rural areas and each achieved more than 83% of attendances within the target. The other four brigades reported average attendance times which were in the range 21 to 35 minutes.



Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, and Highland & Islands did not class any of their areas in the 'high' risk category.

Table 1: Attendances at fires in rural areas

Brigade	Local target (mins)		Attendances within target time (%)		Average time (mins/secs)	
	1995/96	1994/95	1995/96	1994/95	1995/96	1994/95
Central					34m 16s	21m 08s
Dumfries & Galloway	20	20	88.1	93.1		
Grampian	20	20	92.2	93.2		
Highland & Islands	35		83.5			17m 00s
Lothian & Borders					34m 55s	
Strathclyde					27m 30s	20m 25s
Tayside		35		89.8	20m 45s	

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

## INDICATOR 2

The percentage of responses to road traffic incidents within the target time, for areas in these five risk categories:

- High
- Substantial
- Moderate
- Other
- Rural

The area risk categories and the target times are the same as those for fires.

### What the indicator reports

Fire brigades also respond to certain types of emergency incidents where there is not necessarily a fire.

One of the most important of these services is responding to road traffic incidents. This includes dealing with serious accidents and tackling the problems caused by dangerous spillages on roads.

Road traffic incidents account for around a quarter of all special services provided by fire brigades.

The indicator provides information on the percentage of attendances which were within the target time (or the average time, where there is no target).

### Points to bear in mind

Attendance times will be affected by:

- speed of dispatch of fire engines
- traffic congestion
- road obstructions and weather conditions.

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 in each of the first four risk categories which were within the target varied between brigades as follows:

- 'High': 89% to 100%
- 'Substantial': 73% to 100%
- 'Moderate': 33% to 100%
- 'Other': 97% to 100%.

It can be seen that attendance in 'moderate' risk areas is the most variable.

Seven brigades responded to road traffic incidents in rural areas.

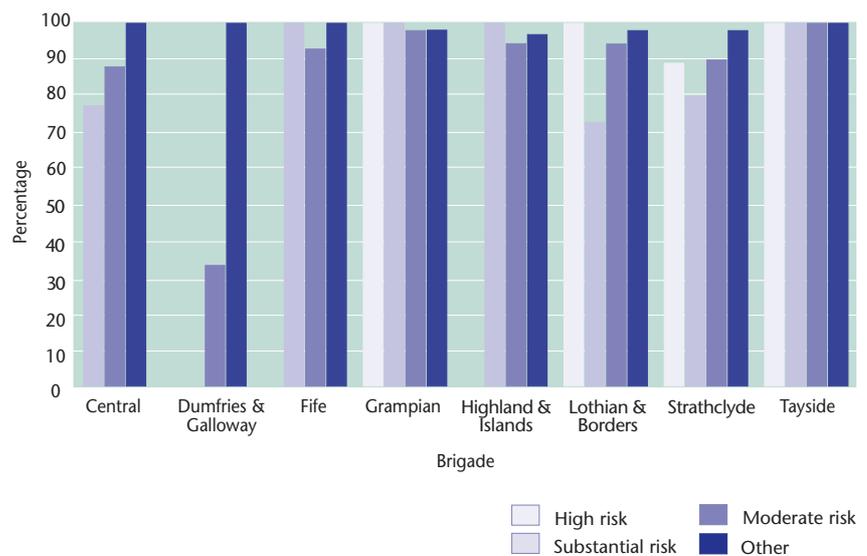
The three brigades which had targets reported at least 94% of attendances within target. The other four brigades reported average attendance times from approximately 14 to 23 minutes.

**Table 2:** Attendances at road traffic incidents in rural areas

Brigade	Local target (mins)		Attendances within target time (%)		Average time (mins/secs)	
	1995/96	1994/95	1995/96	1994/95	1995/96	1994/95
Central					23m 00s	14m 00s
Dumfries & Galloway	20	20	96.3	97.5		
Grampian	20	20	98.7	98.5		
Highland & Islands	35		94.1			19m 00s
Lothian & Borders					16m 20s	
Strathclyde					23m 19s	18m 45s
Tayside		35		100.0	14m 25s	

*Fife did not class any of its area in the 'rural' risk category.*

**Figure 2:** The percentage of attendances at road traffic incidents within target time



*Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, and Highland & Islands did not class any of their areas in the 'high' risk category. Dumfries & Galloway did not have any incidents in 'substantial' risk areas. Central had no incidents within 'high' risk areas.*

Police services are provided by eight forces. In 1995/96, six of these covered the same areas as regional councils of the same name - Central, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Grampian, Strathclyde and Tayside. Two, run by joint boards, covered two or more regional or islands

council areas - Lothian & Borders, and Northern (Highland, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles).

The effectiveness of police crime detection can be measured by the proportion of crimes and offences which are cleared up. A crime or

offence is regarded as 'cleared up' if one or more offenders is apprehended, cited, warned or traced for it. 'Cleared up' does not, therefore, necessarily mean that in every case someone was arrested and charged.

## INDICATOR 1

The percentage of all crimes cleared up.

### What the indicator reports

Crimes are grouped into five wide-ranging categories:

**non-sexual crimes of violence** (e.g. murder, culpable homicide, serious assault, attempted murder, handling offensive weapons, robbery)

**sexual crimes** (e.g. rape, indecent assault)

**crimes of dishonesty** (e.g. house-breaking, theft by opening a lockfast place, theft of a motor vehicle, shoplifting, and fraud)

**fire raising and vandalism** (e.g. fire-raising, vandalism, malicious damage)

**other crimes** (e.g. resisting arrest, contempt of court, offending on bail, drugs, and crimes against public order).

The indicator covers all the crimes in each category although some will be far more common than others.

### Points to bear in mind

Crimes are defined by the Scottish Office and are generally more serious in nature than offences.

Some crimes are more likely than others to be cleared up - for example, where someone is attacked and is able to identify the person who was responsible.

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

### Commentary

In 1995/96 the total number of crimes recorded in Scotland was 503,150 (Table 1). This is a drop of 41,800 in the two years since 1993/94.

There has been an improvement in the percentage of crimes cleared up by each force over the three years.

Figure 1: The percentage of all recorded crimes cleared up

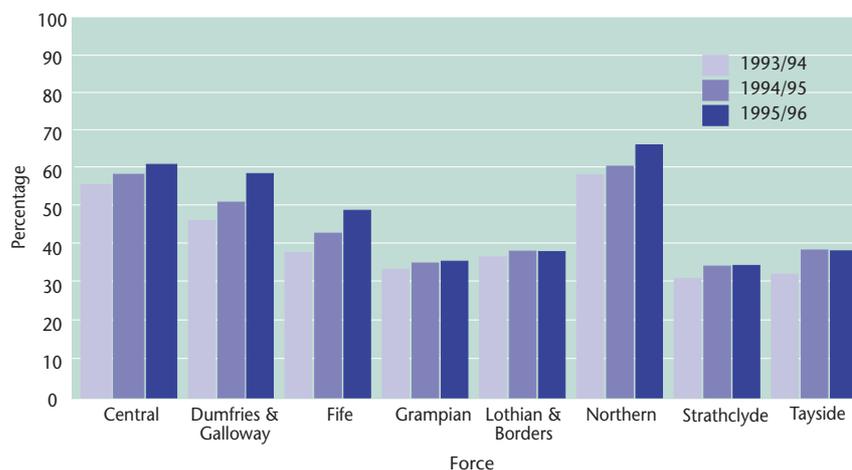


Table 1: The number of recorded crimes

Force	Total crimes recorded		
	1995/96	1994/95	1993/94
Central	18,952	19,483	22,338
Dumfries & Galloway	9,165	10,125	10,788
Fife	27,411	30,917	36,046
Grampian	48,598	48,574	42,666
Lothian & Borders	82,210	82,305	89,057
Northern	16,590	14,042	13,697
Strathclyde	255,680	262,680	282,078
Tayside	44,544	46,406	48,296
<b>Total</b>	<b>503,150</b>	<b>514,532</b>	<b>544,966</b>

INDICATOR **2**

The percentage of crimes in the following groups cleared up:

- **violent crimes** (murder, attempted murder, culpable homicide, serious assault, robbery and assault, possessing offensive weapons and possession of a firearm with intent)
- **sexual crimes** (rape, assault with intent to rape, indecent assault, lewd and libidinous practices/indecent exposure)
- **housebreaking** (theft by housebreaking, housebreaking with intent to steal, attempted housebreaking)
- **car crimes** (crimes involving theft of a car or theft from a car; an attempted theft).

These are sub-groups of four of the categories in indicator 1. The specific crimes included are those shown in the brackets.

What the indicator reports

This indicator shows the clear-up rate for four particular sub-groups of crime selected for their public interest.

Points to bear in mind

Clear-up rates for the different groups will vary. For example, the victim may be able to describe the offender in cases of crimes against

persons, whereas there may be no witness to property crimes.

In rural areas the population is more static and 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.

Table 2: The number of crimes recorded of each type in 1995/96

Force	Total violent crimes recorded	Total sexual crimes recorded	Total housebreaking crimes recorded	Total car crimes recorded
Central	727	156	2,468	2,776
Dumfries & Galloway	324	103	1,286	907
Fife	608	300	4,316	5,319
Grampian	872	357	7,023	7,976
Lothian & Borders	2,507	957	10,525	17,207
Northern	333	141	1,343	1,573
Strathclyde	12,711	1,776	37,956	63,065
Tayside	1,222	400	5,959	8,862
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>19,304</b>	<b>4,190</b>	<b>70,876</b>	<b>107,685</b>

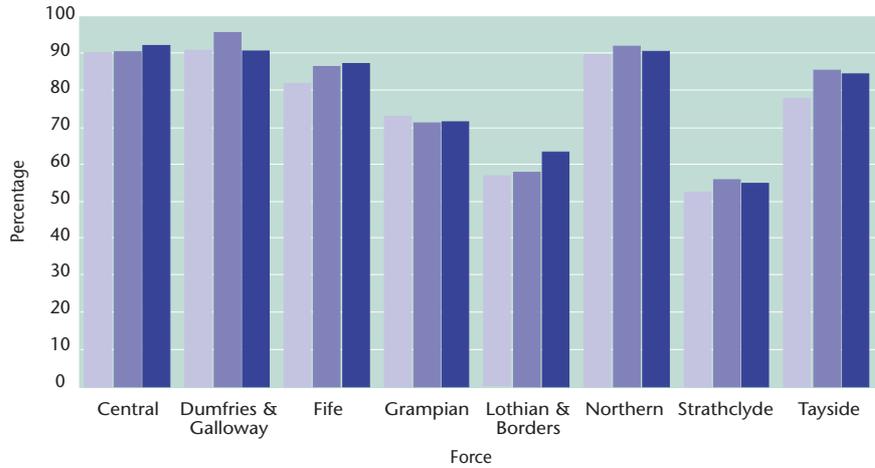
## Commentary

### Violent crimes

The total number of these particular violent crimes recorded in Scotland was 19,304; 10.9% more than in 1994/95.

Across the eight police forces, the percentage of violent crimes cleared up was similar to 1994/95 and ranged from 55% to 93%.

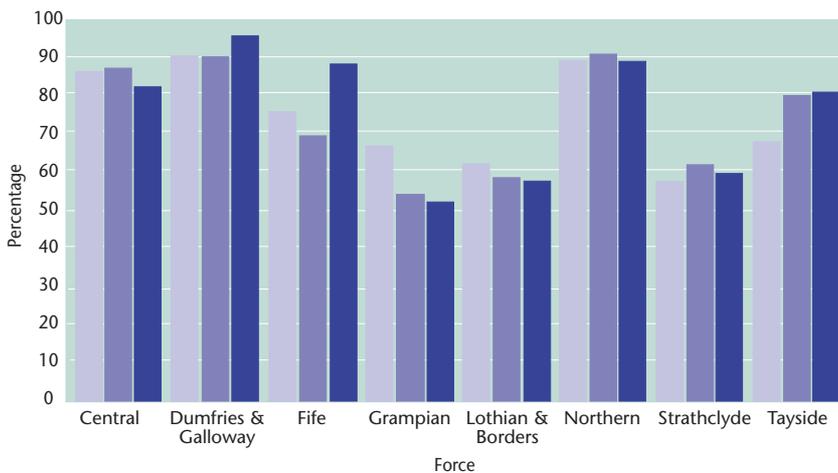
Figure 2a: The percentage of violent crimes cleared up



### Key

- 1993/94
- 1994/95
- 1995/96

Figure 2b: The percentage of sexual crimes cleared up



## Commentary

### Sexual crimes

The total number of sexual crimes recorded in Scotland was 4,190; an increase of 1% on 1994/95.

Across the eight police forces, the percentage of sexual crimes cleared up ranged from 52% to 96%, compared with a range of 54% to 91% in 1994/95.

## Commentary

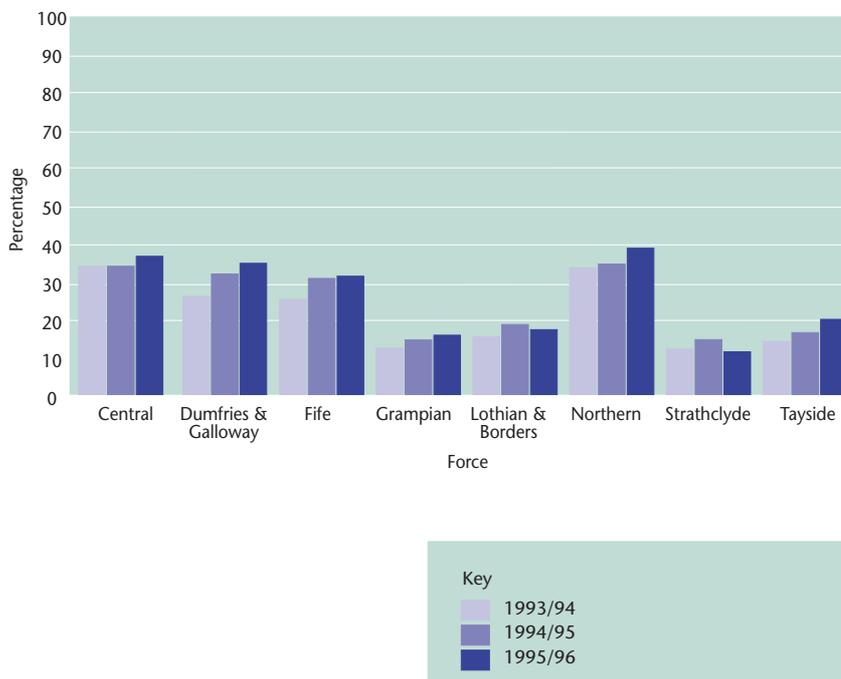
### Housebreaking crimes

The total number of housebreaking crimes recorded in Scotland was 70,876; a drop of 14.7% on the 1994/95 level.

Across the eight police forces, the percentage of housebreaking crimes cleared up in 1995/96 ranged from 12% to 40%, compared with a range of 15% to 35% in 1994/95.

Six of the eight forces improved their clear-up rate for housebreaking crime in comparison with 1994/95.

Figure 2c: The percentage of housebreaking crimes cleared up



## Commentary

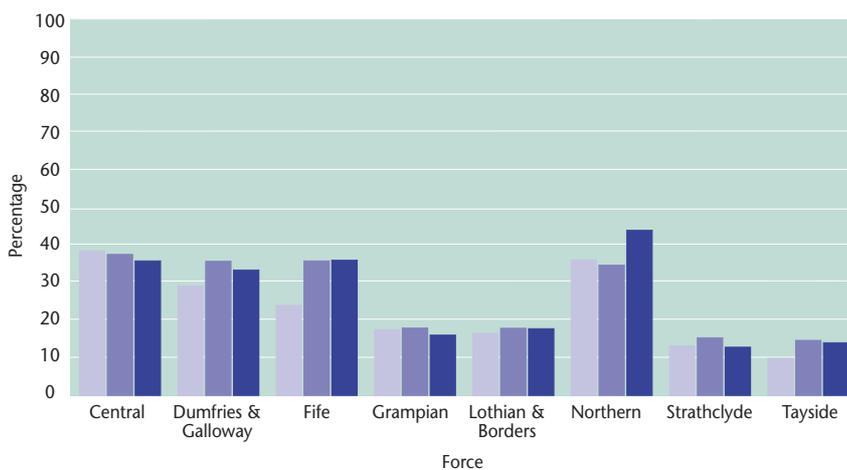
### Car crimes

The total number of car crimes recorded across Scotland was 107,685; a reduction of 7.5% on the 1994/95 level.

Across the eight Scottish police forces, the percentage of car crimes cleared up in 1995/96 ranged from 13% to 44%, compared with a range of 15% to 37% in 1994/95.

The proportion of car crimes cleared up dropped slightly in six of the forces, in comparison with 1994/95.

Figure 2d: The percentage of car crimes cleared up



INDICATOR  
**3**

The percentage of non-motor vehicle offences cleared up.

**What the indicator reports**

Many motoring offences, such as speeding, have a clear-up rate of almost 100%. Therefore, the indicator provides information on the police clear-up rate for offences not involving motor vehicles. These include petty assault, breach of the peace, poaching and drunkenness.

**Points to bear in mind**

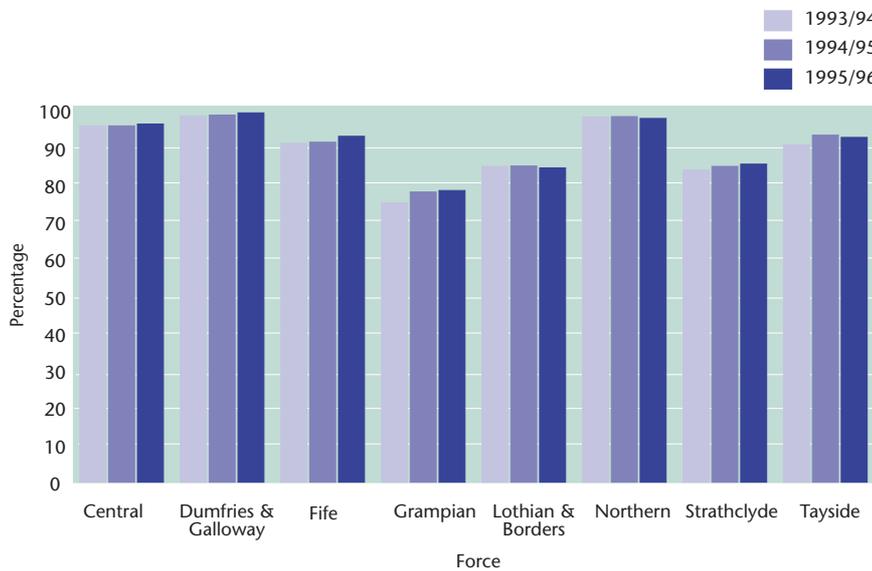
The points made for the indicators above apply to this indicator.

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

**Commentary**

The percentage of non-motor vehicle offences cleared up across the eight police forces ranged from 79% to 99%. In five forces, more than 90% were cleared up.

Figure 3: The percentage of non-motor vehicle offences cleared up



The Accounts Commission for Scotland is a statutory, independent body which through the audit process assists local authorities and the health service in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources.

The Commission has published similar pamphlets for other services. These are:

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Copies of all the pamphlets in this series, and the Commission's national report covering all the performance indicators for a wide range of council services, are available from your council office; your library; or the Accounts Commission for Scotland.



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