

Address:  
110 George Street  
Edinburgh  
EH2 4LH

Telephone:  
0131 477 1234  
Fax:  
0131 477 4567

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



## Press release

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### Crime clear up rates improve

**Performance information published today by the Accounts Commission shows that in 2002/03 police forces cleared up nearly 47% of crimes, continuing the year on year improvement trend. The report also shows that forces are meeting new Scotland-wide targets for reducing crime in areas such as housebreaking and drug seizures. However the number of serious violent crimes has increased.**

#### **Accounts Commission Chairman, Alastair MacNish says:**

“These latest figures are encouraging and reflect real efforts on the part of Scotland’s police forces to bring crime levels down. Their achievements in areas such as increasing the number of drug seizures and reducing the number of housebreakings are important and need to be recognised. However the figures imply scope for improvement in reducing the number of serious violent crimes.”

The new Scotland-wide targets and results for 2002/03 are:

- To reduce the number of serious violent crimes by 5% by 2003/04. Serious violent crime includes murder, rape, robbery and assault to serious injury – There were 15,551 serious violent crimes reported in 2002/03, an increase of 8% (compared to the average of 14,272 reported over 1997/2000).
- To reduce the number of housebreakings by 10% by 2003/04 – 17,371 housebreakings were reported in 2002/03, a 28% reduction (compared to the average of 24,321 over 1997-2000).
- To increase the number of drug seizures by 25% by 2003/04 – 8,213 drug seizures were reported in 2002/03, an increase of 46% (compared to 5,629 in 1998).
- To reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured as a result of road accidents by 18% by 2003/04 - 3,455 people were reported as killed or seriously injured as a result of road accidents in 2002/03, a 29% reduction (compared to the average of 4,842 reported over 1994-98).
- To reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured as a result of road accidents by 25% by 2003/04 - 497 children were reported as killed or seriously injured as a result of road accidents in 2002/03, a 43% reduction (compared to the average of 868 reported over 1994-98).
- To reduce the number of people with slight injuries as a result of road accidents by 4% by 2003/04 - 15,431 people with slight injuries as a result of road accidents reported in 2002/03, a reduction of 12% (compared to the average of 17,475 reported over 1994-98).

## Fire

Since performance indicators were introduced in 1999/2000 the following improvements have been made:

- A reported 26% reduction in the number of people hurt in fires in 2002/03. (1,473 in 2002/03, 387 fewer than in 1999/2000). Four brigades, Tayside, Grampian, Lothian & Borders and Strathclyde reported the most notable reductions.
- A reported reduction of 884 (13%) in the number of accidental house fires (6,168 in 2002/03). Six of the eight brigades reported reduced numbers of accidental house fires. Strathclyde, Highland & Islands and Tayside reported considerable reductions.

There was a slight drop in 2002/03 in the number of fires attended within target time, however brigades continue to attend 91% of calls on target time (92% in 2001/02).

### Accounts Commission Chairman, Alastair MacNish says:

“It is good to see the number of accidental house fires and people hurt in fires continuing to fall. This reflects the effectiveness of brigades’ fire prevention and safety programmes.”

**For further information contact: Anne Ryan, tel: 0131 624 9971 or**

**Mandy Gallacher, tel: 0131 624 997**

### Notes to Editors

1. The Accounts Commission is responsible for securing the audit of 32 Scottish councils and 34 joint boards, including police and fire services. The Commission investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Accounts Commission is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament.
2. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland.
3. Since 1993/94 councils have been required by law to provide information on how well they are carrying out their activities. Under the Local Government Act 1992 the Accounts Commission has to decide what information councils provide. The information for 2002/2003 is the tenth annual comparison of council performance. It provides important benchmarks against which performance will continue to be measured in future years.
4. The pamphlet published today relates to Scotland’s police and fire services. It is the first in a series of six pamphlets comparing the performance, over a range of services, achieved by all 32 Scottish councils, eight fire brigades and eight police forces.
5. Information considered by an authority’s appointed auditor to be unreliable has been excluded from the Scotland figures.
6. The new targets for the Scottish police service were set by The Scottish Executive, Association of Police Chief Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) and the Police Authorities.
7. The various police targets were set to demonstrate improvement in comparison with figures representing the average of a number of years. The years chosen as the base year vary depending on the issue and are discussed in the body of the pamphlet.
8. During 2003 it was agreed by fire authorities that the arrangements for responding to fire calls would be reviewed.
9. Staff on sickness and light duties include those who, whilst available to be at work, are unfit for operational duties as part of a fire crew. Brigades’ policies vary on the number of firefighters who can be accommodated on non-operational light duties.
10. Information relating to benefits, finance and corporate issues will be published on 15 January. Two further pamphlets covering children’s services, housing and social work will follow on 22 January. Finally, information relating to cultural & community services, and environmental & regulatory services will be published on 5 February. This information can also be found on the Commission’s web site on [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)