MEASURING UP
HOW GOOD ARE THE GOVERNMENT'S
DATA SYSTEMS FOR MONITORING PERFORMANCE
AGAINST PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS?

JUNE 2010

Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 covering the period 2008-2011

Review of the data systems for Public Service Agreement 24 led by the Ministry of Justice:

'Deliver a more effective, transparent and responsive Criminal Justice System for victims and the public'

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Introduction

1. This report summarises the results of our examination of the data systems used by the Government between 2008 and 2011 to monitor and report on progress against PSA 24, 'Deliver a more effective, transparent and responsive Criminal Justice System for victims and the public'.

The PSA and the Departments

2. PSAs are at the centre of Government's performance measurement system. They are usually three year agreements, set during the Spending Review process and negotiated between Departments and the Treasury. They set the objectives for the priority areas of Government's work.

3. This PSA is led by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with data provided by the Ministry of Justice, its agencies and the Home Office. Each PSA has a Senior Reporting Officer who is responsible for maintaining a sound system of control across Departmental boundaries that supports the achievement of the PSA. The underlying data systems are an important element in this framework of control.

4. The most recent public statement provided by the Department on progress against this PSA was in the Autumn Performance Report (December 2009).

The Purpose and Scope of this Review

5. The Government invited the Comptroller and Auditor General to validate the data systems used to monitor and report its performance. During the period September 2008 to December 2009, the National Audit Office (NAO) carried out an examination of the data systems for all the indicators used to report performance against this PSA. This involved a detailed review of the processes and controls governing:

   ▪ The match between the indicators selected to measure performance and the PSA (the indicators should address all key elements of performance referred to in the PSA);

   ▪ The match between indicators and their data systems (the data system should produce data that allows the Department to measure accurately the relevant element of performance);

   ▪ The selection, collection, processing and analysis of data for each indicator (control procedures should mitigate all known significant risks to data reliability; in addition, system processes and controls should be adequately documented to support consistent application over time); and

   ▪ The reporting of results (outturn data should be presented fairly for all key aspects of performance referred to in the target; any significant limitations should be disclosed and the implications for interpreting progress explained).

6. Our conclusions are summarised in the form of traffic lights (see Figure 1). The ratings are based on the extent to which Departments have:

   ▪ Put in place and operated internal controls over the data systems that are effective and proportionate to the risks involved; and

- Explained clearly any limitations in the quality of their data systems to Parliament and the public.

7. The remaining sections of this report provide an overview of the results of our assessment, followed by a brief description of the findings and conclusions for each individual data system. Our assessment does not provide a conclusion on the accuracy of the outturn figures included in the Department's public performance statements. This is because the existence of sound data systems reduces but does not eliminate the possibility of error in reported data.

Figure 1: Key to Traffic Light Ratings

Rating	Meaning
GREEN (fit for purpose)	The data system is fit for the purpose of measuring and reporting performance against the indicator
GREEN (disclosure)	The data system is appropriate for the indicator and the Department have explained fully the implications of limitations that cannot be cost-effectively controlled
AMBER (Systems)	Broadly appropriate, but needs strengthening to ensure that remaining risks are adequately controlled
AMBER (Disclosure)	Broadly appropriate, but includes limitations that cannot be cost-effectively controlled; the Department should explain the implications of these
RED (Systems)	The data system does not permit reliable measurement and reporting of performance against the indicator.
RED (Not established)	The Department has not yet put in place a system to measure performance against the indicator

Overview

8. This PSA is supported by 5 indicators. They are as follows:

- 24.1: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System in bringing offences to justice;

- 24.2: To increase the levels of public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System (the Home Office is responsible for this indicator);

- 24.3: To increase the proportion of victims and witnesses that are satisfied with the way they are treated by the Criminal Justice System;

- 24.4: Better identify and explain race disproportionality at key points within the Criminal Justice System and to have strategies in place to address racial disparities which cannot be explained or objectively justified; and

- 24.5: Reduce the harm caused by crime by increasing the quantity of criminal assets recovered (the Home Office is responsible for this indicator).

9. Overall, the indicators are a fair reflection of the objective and include no obvious exclusions or bias.

10. Performance and delivery of the PSA is overseen by a PSA Board, led by the Senior Reporting Officer. The PSA Board, which includes representatives from the MoJ, Home Office and Attorney General's Office, reports to the MoJ Corporate

Management Board quarterly. The Board reviews progress against the indicators and puts forward action plans for any indicators which are deemed Amber or Red. The PSA Board also reports externally, to the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit which assesses the overall performance under the PSA.

11. At a lower level there is a Performance Board for each indicator which reviews detailed progress and develops more detailed aims and objectives. A named officer is responsible for each indicator and they are supported by analysts, statistical technicians and other stakeholders.

12. While the reporting structure is well-designed and implemented, there is currently no focus on how results are measured. A variety of MoJ staff undertake continuous internal reasonableness checks throughout the reporting process but there is limited formal review of the data systems underpinning results. This represents a gap in assurance which could be filled through internal validation of the data systems in place.

13. Figure 2 summarises our assessment of the data systems.

Figure 2: Summary of Assessments for PSA Indicator Data Systems

No	Indicator	Rating
1	Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System in bringing offences to justice	**AMBER (Disclosure)**
2	To increase the levels of public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System	GREEN (disclosure)
3	To increase the proportion of victims and witnesses that are satisfied with the way they are treated by the Criminal Justice System	GREEN (fit for purpose)
4	Better identify and explain race disproportionality at key points within the Criminal Justice System and to have strategies in place to address racial disparities which cannot be explained or objectively justified	**RED (Not Established)**
5	Reduce the harm caused by crime by increasing the quantity of criminal assets recovered	GREEN (fit for purpose)

14. Of the five indicators, two (PSA 24.2 and PSA 24.5) were reviewed by the NAO as part of our review of the Home Office PSAs and DSOs during the period September 2008 to December 2008. As this review covered the current spending review we have not re-performed the work conducted on these indicators. For completeness, we have included the output of this review and, for PSA 24.5 we have updated the rating and comments to reflect improvements made since the completion of this audit.

15. Our main conclusions on the PSA are:

▪ The reporting structure for PSAs ensures that the reported outcomes are communicated at the highest level of the business. We have identified, however, that while performance is reviewed at a high level, this is currently not extended to the data systems which underpin performance;

▪ The indicators selected are generally a fair reflection of the overall objectives;

▪ There are a number of critical weaknesses within the datasets which are currently not adequately disclosed within the published reports of performance; and

- The race disproportionality indicator is split into three elements:
  - staff;
  - suspects, defendants and offenders; and
  - victims and witnesses.

  Currently progress is only being measured formally against suspects, defendants and offenders.

16. We recommend that the MoJ:

- reviews the assurance gap that exists in relation to validation of the data systems which underpin performance;

- discloses more fully the inherent data limitations such as the time lags in bringing offences to justice and the issues concerning multiple offenders;

- considers ways in which additional respondents could be included in surveys to make them more representative of the population as a whole, such as including under 18s and more vulnerable victims; and

- considers reviewing the methodology for measuring race disproportionality to measure outcomes rather than outputs. The methodology should be changed to measure the change in race disproportionality rather than measuring that Action Plans have been put in place which should, in theory, address race disproportionality.

Assessment of Indicator Set

17. In undertaking the validation we read the documentation associated with the PSA, including the Delivery Agreement. We have concluded that the indicators selected to measure progress are consistent with the scope of the PSA and afford a reasonable view of progress. Furthermore, we feel that the indicators are not biased towards any element of the PSA.

18. While generally the indicators are well designed, we would like to comment on indicator 4 - race disproportionality. The aim of this indicator is to identify and explain race disproportionality rather than to reduce race disproportionality. This indicator is therefore output rather than outcome focussed. We recommend that indicators should focus on outcomes in the future; i.e. reducing race disproportionality, so that the service to the public is improved.

19. Generally, we are satisfied that the Department has used the appropriate data sources to measure each indicator and we are not aware of alternatives that would have been more appropriate.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL DATA SYSTEMS

The following sections summarise the results of the NAO's examination of each data system.

Indicator 1: Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Bringing Offences to Justice

Conclusion: Amber - Disclosure

20. The data systems in place for measuring performance against this indicator are broadly appropriate, but improvements could be made to strengthen the data further. Some of the weaknesses identified, such as the issue of the time delay between offences being committed and convicted, cannot be cost effectively controlled but the Department should ensure these weaknesses are appropriately disclosed in all performance reports.

Characteristics of the Data System

21. This indicator is split into two discrete data systems; one which measures efficiency and one which measures effectiveness.

22. Efficiency is measured by considering the monetary value of the budgets of different CJS departments which is spent on various aspects of bringing offences to justice. In order to do this, each department estimates the percentage of their activities which relate to bringing offences to justice and multiplies this by the total budget to arrive at the cost of bringing cases to justice.

23. This budgeted spend is then compared to the baseline year of 2007-08. The indicator uses the Treasury's GDP deflator in order to make year-on-year comparisons. The deflator is revised each year.

24. The MoJ measures effectiveness by comparing the percentage change in convictions for serious offences to the percentage change in recorded serious offences. Success would be indicated by a percentage increase in convictions greater than the percentage increase in recorded offences.

25. Recorded offence information is taken from the Police Recorded Crime Records produced by the Home Office. The Home Office team reviewed this system in 2008 as part of PSA 23. The level of convictions for serious offences is taken from the Court systems: CREST for Crown Court and LIBRA for Magistrates' Court cases, where convictions are recorded at the conclusion of each case.

Findings - Efficiency

26. Our main finding in relation to efficiency is that the monetary cost of bringing cases to justice is not compared to the number of offences brought to justice (i.e. absolute cost is considered and not cost per conviction).   A measure of efficiency is only relevant if the spend information is compared to the number of offences brought to justice. We appreciate that this number will only be an estimate of the costs but, without this comparison, the measure looks at budgeted spend only and not efficiency.

27. Each year the departments in the CJS involved in bringing offences to justice are required to estimate the proportion of their budgeted spend which is used on bringing offences to justice.   We recommend that the Department consider using actual as opposed to budgeted spend figures as there could be significant

differences between the two figures resulting in inaccurate measurement of the indicators.

28. The assumptions used to estimate the proportion of annual budgeted spend which is used to bring offences to justice are very broad and provide an estimate of the proportions only. For example, the methodology assumes that police forces spend 42% of their overall budget on bringing offences to justice but we have no basis on which to corroborate this figure and believe that estimations may be based more on custom than defensible calculations. We recommend that the Department should consider whether these estimates are accurate enough to provide reliable data. We note, however, that the MoJ central team discuss the assumptions with the appropriate organisations annually to ensure they are amended as necessary.

29. The use of the Treasury's GDP deflator in order to make year-on-year comparisons is a reasonable way to ensure that inflationary changes do not influence the performance measurement.

Findings - Effectiveness

30. It is clear that this target has been developed after much consideration. However, there are inherent weaknesses in the dataset and, while it may be unrealistic to expect all the weaknesses to be addressed, they should be adequately disclosed in publications. This is currently not being done.

31. One of the main issues is the time lag between crimes being committed and convicted. Many serious offences may be committed in one year, but not brought to justice until subsequent years. This is particularly true for complex cases in which it takes time for the perpetrators to be caught or where the analysis of evidence results in delays to the commencement of trials. For this reason, it may not be appropriate to compare the change in the rate of convictions to the change in the rate of recorded crimes at the same point in time. Further weaknesses may be evident in cases where multiple offenders are bought to justice for one crime and cases where serious crimes are reported but where a non-serious crime is brought to justice. These examples could skew the data which could lead to inaccurate results being reported.

32. The Police Recorded Crime records which produce data for this indicator is a Home Office data stream which we reviewed as part of PSA 23 "Making Communities Safer". This data stream was assessed as Amber due to some risks not being appropriately controlled, largely in relation to local variations in the quality of data. We recommended that the data system for measuring the number of offences brought to justice would be better controlled by a central team responsible for cleansing the data. The Home Office has not had an opportunity to develop any improvements to date and this impacts on the reliability of the data that it produces.

33. The convictions data are reviewed and cleansed centrally by a dedicated team. Codes have been designed for both CREST and LIBRA which list probable errors. This is an electronic control which highlights, for example, cases where the offence is incompatible with the conviction or where the sentence is incompatible with the conviction. Each of these errors is reviewed and corrected as necessary in the live database. We believe this is an effective methodology for assuring the accuracy of data produced.

34. This indicator measures progress against serious crimes, which are clearly defined in the Measurement Annex, rather than all crimes which were measured in previous years.

Indicator 2: To Increase the Levels of Public Confidence in the Fairness and Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

Conclusion: Green – Disclosure

35. The British Crime Survey (BCS), which is run by the Home Office, is appropriate for the indicator and the Department explains fully the implications of limitations that cannot be cost-effectively controlled. Based on a large sample and high response rate, the survey should provide accurate data, within a known margin of error, on the adult public's confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System. Though some elements of the population are excluded, these are extremely small and unlikely to affect national estimates significantly. The Home Office applies appropriate and clear caveats to all published information and has been active in improving the quality of data handling in recent years.

Characteristics of the Data System

36. The data system measures the level of confidence people have in the fairness and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System. The same questions are asked to respondents to the BCS over the reporting period. The Department will assess that it has been successful if the percentage of people feeling confident has increased in a statistically significant way between the baseline period (October 2007-March 2008) and 2010-11.

37. The BCS is a continuous survey of individuals aged 16 or over living in private households in England and Wales. It asks them about their experiences of crime, their perceptions of criminality and their confidence in the state's responses to it. The most recent results are based on face-to-face interviews with just under 47,000 people. Data and analysis are reported quarterly.

Findings

38. This is a good data system, which has developed and been improved over many years. The Home Office is aware of and open about its limitations and actively seeks to reduce them and, where this is not possible, manages the associated risks.

39. As a survey, answers to questions in the data system are subject to a margin of error and possible bias from people's exclusion or failure to respond. The Home Office mitigates this by having a very large sample size and, through robust interviewing procedures, a very high response rate (76 per cent in 2007). Once all raw data have been collated by the British Market Research Board, weights are applied to take account of a relatively low response rate from people aged 16 to 24 and to ensure that the survey is representative of the population in each Government Office region, in terms of age and sex. The Home Office is able to calculate accurately the margins of error and confidence intervals that should be applied to estimates for each question in the survey.

40. Nonetheless, some important sections of the population are excluded from the BCS altogether. Currently, these comprise under-16s and individuals living in communal establishments, such as homeless shelters and care.

41. In response to recommendations, including from the National Audit Office, from January 2009, a separate BCS now runs for under-16s. This should report its first results in June 2010. This does not impact on the measurement of this indicator as questions relating to fairness and effectiveness of the CJS are not included in the questionnaire for under 16s. The Home Office has concluded, however, that the substantial additional cost of including those who live in communal establishments

(2.1 per cent of the population in the 2001 census) would bring only a small enhancement to completeness and accuracy and would be unlikely to affect significantly national estimates taken from the survey.

42. BMRB, the Department's survey contractors use CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) during interviews, which performs plausibility checks on answers and thus partially mitigates the risk of errors in reporting by the interviewee and keying by the interviewer. Since 2006, the Department and BMRB have further cut the risk of errors by introducing an integrated processing system for survey data reducing the movement of datasets from one software system to another.

43. The Home Office, in consultation with the Office of Criminal Justice Reform and the MoJ, has a robust governance structure for managing the BCS. Of particular relevance are the procedures that govern the introduction of new questions into the survey. These include thorough consultation and risk assessment to ensure not only that the question is properly phrased, but also that it is included in a way that will not impact adversely on the accuracy and year-on-year comparability of answers to other questions.

Indicator 3: To Increase the Proportion of Victims and Witnesses that are satisfied with the way they are treated by the Criminal Justice System

Conclusion: Green – Fit for Purpose

44. The Witness and Victims Experience Survey (WAVES) and Police User Satisfaction Survey are appropriate for the indicator. Based on a large sample size, the surveys should provide accurate data, within a known margin of error, on the adult public's satisfaction with the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

45. Though some elements of the population are excluded, these are small and unlikely to affect national estimates significantly. However, the clarity of reporting results of these surveys could be enhanced by disclosing which populations the police user survey does or does not include. The populations excluded from WAVES are adequately disclosed with the reported performance.

Characteristics of the Data System

46. This indicator is measured by two discrete data systems which measure user satisfaction at different points in the CJS. For the indicator to be fully achieved, both the Police User Satisfaction Survey and WAVES must meet their targets of increased user satisfaction. Both surveys exclude certain user groups such as vulnerable victims, due to the distress of reliving their experiences, and young people.

47. Both WAVES and the Police User Satisfaction Survey are telephone surveys which ask respondents about their experience of the CJS. Both surveys are made up of multiple questions, however, only the last question, which asks respondents how satisfied they are with the CJS overall, is used for the purpose of this indicator. Satisfaction is based on a seven point scale ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied.

48. WAVES measures the satisfaction of witnesses and victims with the agencies, such as Her Majesty's Courts Service and the Crown Prosecution Service, which dealt with their case after a suspect was charged. Success is measured by a statistically significant increase (approximately ≥ 1%) in the percentage of people who are satisfied with the CJS. The survey is performed by sampling victims and witnesses from the Witness Management Database (used by the Witness Care Units), which covers all witnesses where a charge has been made against the case. This means that where a charge has not been issued, witnesses cannot be selected for WAVES.

49. The Police User Satisfaction Survey measures satisfaction of victims of crime with the Local Police Force (LPF) that dealt with them. Success is measured by a statistically significant (approximately ≥ 0.3%) increase in the percentage of people who are satisfied and no change or an increase in the percentage who are very satisfied. Ongoing surveys are conducted by each LPF which is issued guidance by the central Home Office team on how the surveys should be conducted. While there are some standard questions which must be asked, individual LPFs have the ability to decide how the surveys should be conducted. The central Home Office team ensures that each LPF has used sufficiently large sample sizes in order to ensure they obtain a statistically valid sample.

Findings

50. These are robust data systems which accurately measure satisfaction of the defined user groups. As surveys, answers to questions are subject to a margin of error and possible bias from people's exclusion or failure to respond. This is mitigated in the

case of both WAVES and the Police User Satisfaction Survey by ensuring that adequately large sample sizes are used (approximately 40,000 for WAVES and 158,000 for the Police User Satisfaction Survey). The Police User Satisfaction survey gives an equal weighting to each user group (road traffic collision, domestic burglary, violent crime and vehicle crime). WAVES uses weighting techniques to ensure that the survey accurately reflects the demographic. The sample size for interviewing victims and witnesses is the same. However, to reflect the fact that there are more witnesses than victims in the general population, a greater weighting is given to the witness data than the victim data.

51. WAVES is contracted out to a service provider but the level of interaction with the MoJ is high. Response and eligibility rates are communicated to the Department quarterly and these are discussed at an indicator level. The Department has added data quality standards, such as interviewer reviews, into the service provider contracts. This ensures that the guidance is being adhered to, providing them with assurance that the survey is conducted to a high standard.

52. The quality of the data provided by the Police User Satisfaction Survey was checked in the past by the Audit Commission, but this was discontinued on the grounds of cost. While the overall central governance of the survey is good and checks are made by the Home Office every quarter on sample sizes, outlying data points and comparison against the previous years' average, there is no longer any detailed review at the LPF level leading to an assurance gap. We have recommended that the Home Office put in place a cyclical audit to give assurance that the controls stipulated in the guidance are being performed at the local level.

53. Some important sections of the population are excluded from the surveys, although these groups should not be large enough to impact materially upon the validity of the survey. We recommend, however, that the exclusions from the Police User Survey are disclosed within the published reports on performance, as the exclusions from WAVES are in the annex to the MoJ's Autumn Performance Report.

54. WAVES excludes victims below the age of 18, victims who live with the offender of the crime, such as victims of domestic violence, and victims of traumatic crimes, such as sexual violence and murder. At the time of writing, the MoJ are considering methods which will allow inclusion of under 18s and vulnerable groups into WAVES. We commend the work to include these groups and recommend that when data are available, they should be included in the results of the indicator.

55. The guidance for the Police User Satisfaction Survey recommends that victims who are members of the police service should be included, but that victims where the offender was a member of the police service should be excluded. It also recommends that victims who have made an official complaint against the police should be excluded. We recommend that the Home Office review their guidance on the population to be excluded so that these groups are included going forward.

Indicator 4: Better Identify and Explain Race Disproportionality at Key Points within the Criminal Justice System and to have Strategies in Place to Address Racial Disparities which cannot be Explained or Objectively Justified

Conclusion: Red – Not Established

56. The indicator has been divided into three distinct categories. Although progress has been made in all areas, we can only assess the group "suspects, defendants and offenders" in detail as the data streams for the others are still being developed.

57. The data in relation to suspects, defendants and offenders is well controlled and fit for purpose.

Characteristics of the Data System

58. The aim of this indicator is for each Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to identify and address race disproportionality within the CJS. This indicator addresses race disproportionality, at the LCJB level, within three groups:

- LCJB staff;

- suspects, defendants and offenders;

- victims and witnesses.

59. Under the Race Relations Act 1976, LCJBs have a duty to monitor staff levels with reference to racial groups. The Department has developed a toolkit, which uses pre-existing HR information, to gather information on the employment, progression and retention of staff of differing races. This data system is still under development and it is therefore too early to assess progress.

60. Understanding and addressing race disproportionality for suspects, defendants and offenders is measured using the Minimum Data Set (MDS). This tool uses a range of pre-existing data from both national and local sources. These sources include:

- Home Office police statistics;

- data from the Criminal Prosecution Service Management information system;

- court proceedings data from the database held in the Office of Criminal Justice Reform;

- Youth Offending Teams data supplied by the Youth Justice Board;

- probation data supplied by MoJ offender management statistics; and

- prison data supplied by Her Majesty's Prison Service's race equality action group.

Some elements of the police and court data supplied for MDS are unvalidated as the data is generated for performance management purposes only. This is made clear to users, as is the fact that data are indicative rather than definitive. CPS and court data are monitored at a national level on a quarterly basis and discussed with the owners of the data. However, the data do not undergo a full validation process as this would result in a long delay in receiving the data.

61. The data are disseminated via an online portal which sets out the data outcomes for each LCJB. It does not draw any conclusions on whether the results show discrimination; this is for LCJBs to decide. The data are reviewed for evidence of race disproportionality and to develop action plans as required. The aim of the

action plans is to resolve any race disproportionality issues identified. This information is communicated and reviewed by the central team which collates the results.

62. The data stream for the measurement of race disproportionality amongst victims and witnesses is currently in the development stage. At the time of writing the forecast is for a diagnostic tool to be completed by February 2010. This, and the staff sub-indicator, have been lower priority work than the MDS and the pace of development has consequently been slower. While progress has been made in developing the indicator, it is too early to assess it in detail.

Findings

63. The toolkit which is currently being used for measuring race disproportionality amongst staff was only launched in November 2009, so it is too early for us to assess progress.

64. The MDS has been developed to assess race disproportionality in relation to suspects, defendants and offenders. The data set draws on a number of pre-existing data sources and collates them. This provides each LCJB with sufficient information to assess race disproportionality.

65. The toolkit is not capable, however, of assessing whether race discrimination exists. Instead, it provides LCJBs with the information necessary to identify potential issues of concern. Where the assessment has shown evidence of race disproportionality, the LCJB must put in place an action plan outlining how it aims to resolve the issue. Before the central MoJ team record the progress, they review the action plans to ensure they are reasonable.

66. A central team is responsible for reviewing the progress made by each LCJB. In order to keep track of progress it has split the stages into Pre MDS, MDS roll out, action planning and consultation. Progress against each criteria is recorded on a central spreadsheet.

67. The central team responsible for this indicator is in regular contact with the LCJBs and has several informal methods for ensuring they are kept up-to-date of progress. Firstly, the central team is available for help and advice. Secondly, all action plans are presented to the team and they ask for proof of action. Finally the team attend meetings at a local level to gain assurance that they have been provided with accurate data.

68. A toolkit to assess race disproportionality within victims and witnesses is currently being developed. While progress has been made in developing the data set, it is too early to assess it in detail.

Indicator 5: Reduce the Harm Caused by Crime by Increasing the Quantity of Criminal Assets Recovered

Conclusion: Green – Fit for Purpose

69. The data system is fit for the purpose of measuring and reporting performance against the indicator. The Joint Asset Recovery Database is able to provide data on the value of assets recovered, and in most cases this can be verified with reference to the Home Office's accounts system.

Characteristics of the Data System

70. The data system measures the value of assets recovered in pounds sterling each year by the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and their agencies. These include assets recovered from cash forfeiture, confiscation, civil and international asset recovery activities. The Departments will assess that it has been successful if the amount of recovered assets in 2009-10 is £250 million, in comparison with a baseline of £125 million in 2006-07.

Findings

71. The Measurement Annex records that the data system used for reporting will be the Joint Asset Recovery Database, which is a case management system. The data are generally of a good quality and timeliness. For all types of recovered assets except those recovered through civil proceedings, the data can additionally be verified against the Home Office's Adelphi accounts management system.

72. There are protocols and instructions governing the way in which data is entered into the Joint Asset Recovery Database. In addition, in the case of all but civil assets, the Department can rely on the robust way in which the Adelphi system is managed. The identification and recording of receipts are of a high standard and checks and controls are substantial, reducing the likelihood of errors to an acceptable minimum.