

Changes to recording practices for offensive weapon related crimes



Chief Superintendent Mark Williams

Changes to the way handling offensive weapons are recorded have been introduced, thanks to a move by Police Scotland to further improve its understanding of weapon and knife crime across the country.

From the 1st April 2017, the new recording standard will show the number of knives or offensive weapons possessed as well as the number of knives or offensive weapons used to commit other crimes.

This change was agreed by the Scottish Crime Recording Board, following a request from Police Scotland. From the 1st April 2017, the additional crime of handling a weapon when used to commit a crime will now also be counted in the statistics. This is to align recording practices with how the criminal law operates, with the possession of a weapon or knife in a public setting a separate crime.

This ensures that the new recording standard will continue to show the number of knives or offensive weapons possessed but from the 1st April 2017, will also show the number of knives or offensive weapons used to commit other crimes in public settings.

Assistant Chief Constable Mark Williams, who has the national portfolio for violence, welcomed the move, stating it would add value to the statistics and provide additional information

to better understand the extent of knife and other weapon-related offences across the country.

He said, "Tackling crime involving knives and offensive weapons is really important and we know it is a priority for communities right across Scotland.

"These changes will provide us with a more complete picture of the problem and crucially, allow us to better target our resources in response.

"The change in recording practices is an important step to improve our understanding of the complexity of the issue. We know that, as a result of these, there is likely to be an increase in the volume of offensive weapon offences recorded in our management information figures but let me assure you that does not mean there are more weapons on our streets. What it does mean is that police and partners can work more effectively to prevent crime by targeting resources in the right parts of the country, to help us do more effective preventative and educational work."