



Scotland's Progress on SDG16

Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

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IVS analysis of Scotland's progress on SDG16

Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations (UN) adopted The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to embody its struggle to create a more inclusive, just, equal and sustainable society on all levels. The UN placed 17 benchmarks, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at the heart of the strategy to frame the initiative and enable the tracing process. Each of the SDGs, such as poverty reduction, gender equality or climate protection, are defined by precise targets and indicators to be achieved by 2030.

In 2016, the International Voluntary Service (IVS) connected its long-term strategy with SDG16: *peace justice and strong institutions*. IVS committed itself to align all its upcoming activities with the UN-set framework. In particular, IVS has pursued understanding between cultures, peoples and communities through its volunteering projects. IVS is now regarded as an authority on SDG16.

SDG16 consists of 12 targets and 23 indicators enabling the tracing process towards the underlying issues. Nevertheless, some of the indicators are hard, if not impossible, to be measured. Others are designed for developing countries and some are non-statistical. Moreover, there is no comprehensive database covering all SDG16 indicators in a country-by-country order. Most of the databases dedicated to the SDG16 indicators cover only the whole UK regardless of its component countries, making the evaluation of Scotland's progress on SDG16 even more complicated.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, seven SDG16 targets are covered in this report and some significant outcomes stem from the analysed indicators. To accelerate Scottish progress in meeting the SDG16 targets, IVS contributes with its policy recommendations where the country has not been performing well.



Target 16.1.

Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

Indicator 16.1.1.

Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age

There has been a long-term downward trend in the number of homicides in Scotland over the past years.¹ The number dropped by 5% between 2016-17 and 2017-2018 period and, on top of that, there were “only” 59 intentional homicides recorded throughout Scotland last year which has been the lowest rate since the beginning of a systematic measurement more than forty years ago.² If taken in per capita format, Scotland’s homicide rate attains 1.088 per 100,000 population.³

In comparison with other countries, there are both better and worse performers. First, the overall UK’s homicide rate is significantly higher, running to 1.213 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2017 (latest data available).⁴ Moreover, the UK’s homicide rate has been developing conversely to that of Scotland as the number of murders has been rising in the past few years.

To take a look at a worldwide scale, both Scotland and the UK perform well compared to, for example, North America. Canada has generated the latest (2017) homicide value of 1.8021 per 100,000, and the US even 5.353 per 100,000 in 2016.⁵ On the other hand, neither Scotland nor the UK is the low-homicide-rate leaders. Best performing countries world-wide

¹ Pettigrew, Chris. 2019. “16: Peace, justice and strong institutions”. IN: *Report No. 5: On Target for 2030?*, ed. Collins, Chik, Sims, Rhiannon, Pautz, Hartwig (University of the West of Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations). *Scottish Government*. 2016. “Homicide in Scotland 2017-2018: statistics”. Available [08/01/2019]:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/homicide-scotland-2017-18/pages/4/#ch1>.

² *Scottish Government*. 2016. “Homicide in Scotland 2017-2018: statistics”.

³ Counted for its population of 5.42 million people in 2017. Slater, Anne. 2018. *Scotland’s Population: The Registrar General’s Annual Review of Demographic Trends* (National Records of Scotland), p. 24. Available [08/01/2019]:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/rgar/2017/rgar17-corrected-08-04-19.pdf>.

⁴ *United Nations*. 2019. “Indicator 16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex (victims per 100,000 population)”. Available [08/01/2019]:

<https://unstats-undesa.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/indicator-16-1-1-number-of-victims-of-intentional-homicide-per-100000-population-by-sex-victims-per-100000-population/data?page=70https://unstats-undesa.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/indicator-16-1-1-number-of-victims-of-intentional-homicide-per-100000-population-by-sex-victims-per-100000-population-1/data?page=70>.

⁵ Ibid.

in 2017 were Singapore (0.192 per 100,000) and Japan (0.240 per 100,000).⁶ Perhaps not surprisingly, the European champions comprise Norway (0.527 per 100,000) and Switzerland (0.530 per 100,000), followed by Cyprus (0.593 per 100,000) and Czechia (0.621 per 100,000).⁷

Whereas low values in Singapore, Japan, Norway and Switzerland might stem from their overall low crime figures,⁸ others, such as Cyprus or Czechia, have made significant progress in reducing murder rates recently. For example, the number of homicides has slumped in Czechia by 25% from 0.829 per 100,000 in 2015 to 0.621 per 100,000 in 2017 and, even more strikingly, the figure has dropped by a stunning 54% in Cyprus between 2015 and 2017.⁹ According to the Czech authorities, the downward tendency is due to conscientious work of frontline law enforcement in their everyday service, that positively impacts the public, and also improving economic situation in the country.¹⁰ Namely, public support and cooperation with frontline law enforcement might serve as an example for countries world-wide, including Scotland.

Given the recent figures, some improvements are still to be done in Scotland. Whereas homicide with firearms is rare in Scotland, knives and other sharp instruments remain principal weapons, being involved in approximately two-thirds of all homicides.¹¹ Despite the activities of praiseworthy organisations, such as the Violence Reduction Unit or Scottish-government-funded initiative No Knives Better Lives, knife-related killings remain the country's principal challenge. Given the above-mentioned figures, the Scottish Government should consider introducing new laws subjecting knife sales to stricter conditions.

Policy recommendations

- Subject knife sales to stricter rules

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. Note there are no recent data for several European countries.

⁸ *Japanese Times*. 2018. "Japan's crime rate hits record low as number of thefts plummets". Available [08/02/2019]:

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/01/18/national/crime-legal/japans-crime-rate-hits-record-low-number-thefts-plummets/>

⁹ *United Nations*. 2019. "Indicator 16.1.1".

¹⁰ *Czech Television*. 2019. "V Česku loni znovu klesla kriminalita, ubylo vražd i krádeží a vloupaček". Available [08/21/2019]:

<https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/domaci/2719091-v-cesku-loni-znovu-klesla-kriminalita-uz-paty-rok-za-sebou>.

¹¹ *Scottish Government*. 2018. "Homicide in Scotland 2017-2018: statistics". Available [08/01/2019]: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homicide-scotland-2017-18/pages/4/>

- Foster better public cooperation between Police Officers and the general public.
- Allocate more funding for local youth work and volunteering organisations



Target 16.2.

End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

Indicator 16.2.2.

Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation

The second SDG16 target focuses on reduction abuses, exploitation and human trafficking. Human trafficking and modern slavery have been on the rise in the UK as the figures have skyrocketed by 80% in the past two years with 6,993 reported cases on UK territory in 2018 (10.438 occurrences per 100,000 population).¹²

While classifying the problem slightly distinctly, a similar Scottish government statistic shows there were 228 “potential victims of human trafficking” in Scotland in 2018.¹³ Hence, the human trafficking rate in Scotland peaked at 4.206 per 100,000 people last year.¹⁴ The two rates were taken out of two different datasets, albeit there is a broad overlap. The two figures show Scotland significantly outperforming the UK in human trafficking abatement.

Policy Recommendations

Follow the recommendations laid out by police chiefs across the UK and reverse the significant cuts in policing.

¹² The rate was deducted from the overall number per year and actual UK population. *Worldometers*. 2019. “U.K. Population (live)”. Available [08/01/2019]: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/uk-population/https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/nearly-7-000-potential-victims-of-slavery-and-trafficking-reported-in-2018>.; *National Crime Agency*. 2019. “Nearly 7,000 potential victims of slavery and trafficking reported in 2018”. Available [08/01/2019]: <https://nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/nearly-7-000-potential-victims-of-slavery-and-trafficking-reported-in-2018>.

¹³ *Scottish Government*. 2019. “Human trafficking”. Available [08/01/2019]: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/human-trafficking/>.

¹⁴ The count was built on the Scottish population of 5.42 million, see Slater, Anne. 2018. *Scotland’s Population*.



Target 16.3.

Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

Indicator 16.3.2.

Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population

Target 16.3. is dedicated to the rule of law and equal access to justice. In general, Scotland is undoubtedly a very progressive country in respect to both rule of law and equal access to justice, however, its score on UN-set 16.3.2. indicator (unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population) remains rather negative. The latest available UN data show 18.14% detainees in Scottish prisons had awaited their trial. In other words, approximately one in five detainees in Scotland was on remand awaiting trial at the end of 2016. Furthermore, the number remained more or less unchanged in the preceding years.¹⁵ According to a different dataset, the most recent figure was 14.8% in March 2018.¹⁶

Here, Scotland's performance is not satisfactory, in comparison with England and Wales. The respective number for England and Wales was 7.51%.¹⁷ Contrary to that, the situation in Northern Ireland is slightly worse than that of Scotland. There were altogether 23.67% of unsentenced detainees in Northern Ireland at the examined period.¹⁸

As the data show, Scotland lags behind England and Wales in meeting the target 16.3. This is to a significant extent due to overuse of remands as it might be often used as a tool to ensure the charged person comes to the trial.¹⁹ Holyrood has been aware of the issue and has embraced a more suitable electronic monitoring system recently to challenge the misuses of remands.²⁰

¹⁵ Note that the newest data available stand for the situation on 31st December 2016. *United Nations*. 2018. "Unsentenced detainees as proportion of overall prison population". Available [08/13/2019]: <https://dataunodc.un.org/crime/unsentenced-detainees-as-proportion>.

¹⁶ *HM Inspectorate of prisons in Scotland*. 2018. "HM Chief inspector's annual report 2017-18". Available [08/13/2019]: https://www.prisonsscotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publication_files/SCT07181362302.pdf.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Alderson, Reevel. 2017. "Concern over number of remand prisoners in Scotland". *BBC*. Available [08/13/2019]: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-41818119>.

²⁰ *Scottish Government*. 2017. "Electronic monitoring in Scotland: consultation on proposals for legislation". Available [08/13/2019]:

Policy recommendation

- Continue dismantling the system of remand to prevent the misuses

Target 16.7.

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Indicator 16.7.2.

Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group.

On face value Scotland could easily be considered as the leader on target 16.7.2.

Scotland is a global leader on youth participation in democracy, having lowered the voting age to 16 in local elections and for the development of the Scottish Youth Parliament. SYP aims to provide a national platform for young people to discuss the issues that are important to them, and campaign to effect the change they wish to see. Key achievements include their advocacy work for 'Votes at 16' which ensured that young people aged 16 and 17 could vote in the Referendum on Scottish Independence in 2014. Another was the 2017-8 campaign 'Right Here Right Now', centred on improving the protection of young people's rights in Scotland, which was successful in securing a commitment from the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) would be incorporated into Scots Law. Furthermore, the '50/50 by 2020' campaign from the Scottish Government's Third Sector Unit aims to encourage organisations across all sectors to have a gender balance of Directors by 2020.

However, less than a quarter of Scots (22.7%)²¹ believe they can influence decisions affecting their local areas compared to 26% of residents in England.²² More than one quarter (26%) of England's inhabitants agreed they can influence decisions regarding the local area in 2017/2018. Scotland performs worse by 3.3 percentage points (22.7%).

Scotland's poor positioning compared to its neighbour is surprising given the successes

Policy recommendation

ScotGov's 'Citizen Assembly' initiative will include more citizens in decision-making, however, steps must be taken to ensure that a broad demographic of citizens are included in these discussions.

²¹ *Scottish Government*. 2019. "Influence over local decisions". Available [08/22/2019]:

<https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-equality-evidence-finder/#equality-npf-top>.

²² *UK data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators*. 2019. "Percentage of population agreeing they can influence decisions affecting their local area". Available [08/22/2019]:

<https://sustainabledevelopment-uk.github.io/16-7-2/>.

Target 16.9. 👍

By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

Indicator 16.9.1.

Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

The level of registration of children's births indicates how countries cope with target 16.9. which is focused on legal identity for all. According to the UN estimates, all children have been registered within a civil authority in the UK, given the system is complete and works well.²³

²³ *United Nations*. 2017. "Birth registration". Available [08/14/2019]: https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Birth_registration_Nov-2017.xlsx.

Target 16.10. 👍

Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Indicator 16.10.1.

Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

Target 16.10. seeks to ensure free access to information. The respective indicator maps offences against human rights activists, journalists and other media staff. Protection and rights of journalists are in the heart of various NGOs, such as Irish-based Front Line Defenders or American Committee to Protect Journalists. The latter gathers a thorough database comprising details on killed journalists and media staff, places and motives of their assassination since 1992.

Despite a few shocking killings in the past few years, for example, that of Slovak journalist Jan Kuciak (2018) or Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia (2017), Europe has been generally a largely safe place for journalists compared to other parts of the world. Furthermore, the UK saw “only” four journalists killed on its soil between 1992 and 2019.²⁴ The most recently, a freelance journalist Lyra McKee was killed in a crossfire in Londonderry (Derry), Northern Ireland, in April this year.

Given the places where the killings have occurred, Northern Ireland alongside London has been the two most journalist-hostile places in the UK. Scotland has not seen any journalist killed in the examined period.

Furthermore, there were 321 human rights activists killed world-wide in 2018.²⁵ The majority of cases have occurred in Latin America, none of them in the UK and “only” one human rights advocate was killed in Europe (Ukraine) last year.²⁶

²⁴ *Committee to Protect Journalists*. 2019. “1998 Journalists and Media Workers Killed between 1992 and 2019 / Motive Confirmed or Unconfirmed”. Available [08/14/2019]:

https://cpj.org/data/killed/2019/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&motiveUnconfirmed%5B%5D=Unconfirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&type%5B%5D=Media%20Worker&start_year=1992&end_year=2019&group_by=location.

²⁵ *Front Line Defenders*. 2018. “Front Line Defenders Global Analysis 2018”. Available [08/14/2019]:

https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/global_analysis_2018.pdf.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Target 16.B. 👍

Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

Indicator 16.B.1.

Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

Promoting non-discriminatory society is at the heart of the last target. The most up-to-date data show, 0.162% of the population in England and Wales declare they were victims of hate crime and felt discriminated.²⁷ Scotland performs slightly better than England and Wales as the respective number for Scotland is 0.124%.²⁸ This means that more than one person per 1000 Scots has felt discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation etc. Further steps to completely erase discrimination from the society needs to be taken in Scotland.

²⁷ *UK data for Sustainable Development Goal indicators*. 2019. "Proportion of population who were victims of hate crime". Available [08/16/2019]: <https://sustainabledevelopment-uk.github.io/16-b-1/>.

²⁸ *Scottish Government*. 2019. "Hate crime: availability of information recorded by the police in Scotland". Available [08/16/2019]: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/developing-information-hate-crime-recorded-police-scotland/pages/5/>.

Conclusions

This evaluation report aimed at showing the Scottish progress towards the SDG16 and comparing its position with the rest of the UK. On top of that, several policy recommendations were proposed for targets where Scotland lags behind the rest of the UK.

Scotland has been performing better or equally with the rest of the UK in five out of seven examined targets. First, Scotland's homicide rate is significantly lower than that of the whole UK. Both the UK and Scotland perform several fold better than the US, for example, but lags behind countries such as Japan, Norway or Czechia. Based on the research, introducing stricter rules on knife sells and fostering police officers' reputation should be embraced in Scotland.

Second, modern slavery and human trafficking are of a rising concern globally. The data showed Scotland handles the issues more successfully than the UK as a whole. There were more than two times less potential victims of these crimes per capita in Scotland than in the whole of the UK. On the contrary, the third target is one of the Achilles' Heels of Scottish progress towards the SDG16 as there have been regular remand misuses in Scotland. On the other hand, the Scottish Government has been aware of the issue and has been embracing more suitable policies to address the issue.

Another drawback *vis-à-vis* meeting the SDG16 in Scotland is the lack of Scots' conviction that they may influence decisions regarding their local area. Less than a quarter of scots are confident their voice will be considered in local decisions. Scotland has been outperformed by England in this statistics. In sharp contrast with the latter, Scotland and the rest of the UK have been performing well on legal identity for newly born children, as measured by indicator 16.9.1.

Greater London and Northern Ireland were identified as the most hostile territories to Journalists in the UK, with two journalists killed in the both UK's capital and Northern Ireland since 1992, compared to Scotland with no such murder during the examined period. Scotland also outperforms England and Wales in target 16.B which focuses on instances of discrimination.

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