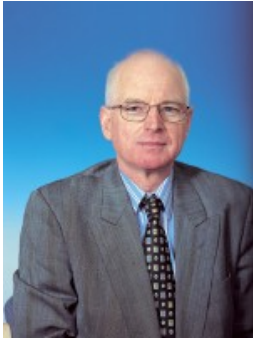




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Northern Ireland 'safer than England and Wales'



Sir Desmond Rea

Professor Sir Desmond Rea, who heads the body which holds the Police Service of Northern Ireland to account, said crime rates were lower here “across all categories of crime”. He said that in 2004/05, Northern Ireland had 691 crimes recorded per 10,000 people, significantly lower than 1,051 per 10,000 for England and Wales. He was speaking as the board received a comparison of recorded crime levels.

Sir Desmond said overall recorded crime in Northern Ireland fell by 8% in 2004/05. He said robberies had decreased the most, with a fall of 25%.

Vehicle crimes fell by 24% while domestic burglaries were down 18%, decreases which Sir Desmond said meant the PSNI had met targets outlined in its annual policing plan.

He said the clearance rate for murders and manslaughters in Northern Ireland had increased slightly in the past year.

However, he added that clearance rates for violent crimes had fallen from 54% in 2003/04 to 51% in 2004/05, compared to a slight increase in England and Wales.

Sir Desmond said these figures, presented to the board's corporate policy committee, came at a time when police were facing widespread criticism from various groups.

“These figures show that the PSNI, along with the District Policing Partnerships and those people who have engaged with local policing, are making a real difference in reducing our communities' experiences of crime and ensuring that Northern Ireland remains one of the lowest crime areas in the UK,” he added.