

## Police Scotland

# Prevent Referral Data, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020

### Overview

This publication contains information on the number of individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland over the period April 2019 to March 2020, due to concerns that they were vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent works through identifying individuals who may be at risk of being exploited by violent extremist narratives and drawn into terrorism; assessing the nature and the extent of their vulnerability; and, where necessary, providing an appropriate support package tailored to their needs. A concerted effort has been made to ensure that the preventative, rights-based approach taken in Scotland is balanced, proportionate and aligned to existing safeguarding procedures.

#### Key results

In the year ending 31 March 2020, a total of 100 individuals were referred to Prevent in Scotland.

Of the 100 referrals, around half (51%) were closed after an initial assessment, while the remainder (49%) were identified as suitable for Prevent.

The education sector, including schools and Further and Higher Education, accounted for the highest proportion of referrals (32%).

The majority of the individuals referred to Prevent were male (94%), and individuals aged 15-20 made up the largest proportion of referrals (44%).

The most common type of concern related to right-wing extremism (35% of referrals).

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Coverage

This publication contains information on the number of individuals that were recorded as having been referred to Prevent in Scotland from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. All figures provided are for this period except where otherwise stated.

The majority of the reporting period was prior to the implementation of the COVID-19 'lockdown' restrictions by the UK and Scottish Governments on 23 March 2020. However, it is possible that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had an impact on the number of referrals both during and immediately prior to the introduction of the COVID-19 restrictions, particularly from schools and other education settings. A more detailed assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the number of Prevent referrals will be included in next year's publication.

**Prevent** is a strand of the UK Government's Counter-Terrorist Strategy known as '**CONTEST**'. The purpose of Prevent is to 'stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. In Scotland, the Prevent strategy aims to tackle all forms of violent extremism and terrorism, including right-wing extremism, Islamist extremism and Northern Ireland-related terrorism.

For more information about CONTEST and Prevent in the UK, please see the following publications: [Prevent Strategy](#), [Prevent duty guidance for Scotland](#) and [2018 CONTEST strategy](#).

## 1.2. Prevent process

### 1.2.1. Referral and assessment

Prevent referrals are often made in the first instance by individuals who come into contact with those who appear to be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Referrals come from a wide range of sources including: local authorities, schools, colleges, universities, health bodies, prisons, and the police. These organisations are subject to a statutory duty through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to include in their day-to-day work consideration of the need to safeguard people from being drawn into terrorism. Staff may receive training to help them identify people who may be vulnerable to the risk of radicalisation, and what to do about it.

On receipt of a Prevent referral, Police Scotland's Prevent Delivery Units undertake an initial assessment of vulnerability before agreeing the appropriate response with partners. Where a vulnerable individual has been identified, multi-agency partners will usually come together as part of a Prevent Professional Concerns panel (a 'PPC' panel) to discuss what support they could provide which would benefit the individual concerned.

### **1.2.2. Providing support and leaving the programme**

Support may include signposting individuals to other professionals and may also include an opportunity for potentially vulnerable persons to debate issues with an accredited mentor who can challenge and suggest credible alternative viewpoints. Or, as is often the case, the emphasis may be on identifying the individual's broader support needs and providing access to mainstream support services.

Safeguarding the individual remains the priority but participation in activities that result from a PPC panel remain voluntary. Consent is required to be given by the individual (or their parent/guardian in the case of a child) in advance of their involvement in any activities or actions that have been recommended.

PPC meetings are held regularly to review the progress of the individual. If the panel agrees that an individual's vulnerability has been successfully reduced or managed then the individual exits the process. After an individual has exited the process, their progress is reviewed at 6 and 12 months following closure of the case. In the event that further concerns arise as a result of these reviews the individual can re-enter the process and receive further support.

## 2. People referred to Prevent in Scotland

This section presents information on the number of individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland due to concerns that they were vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

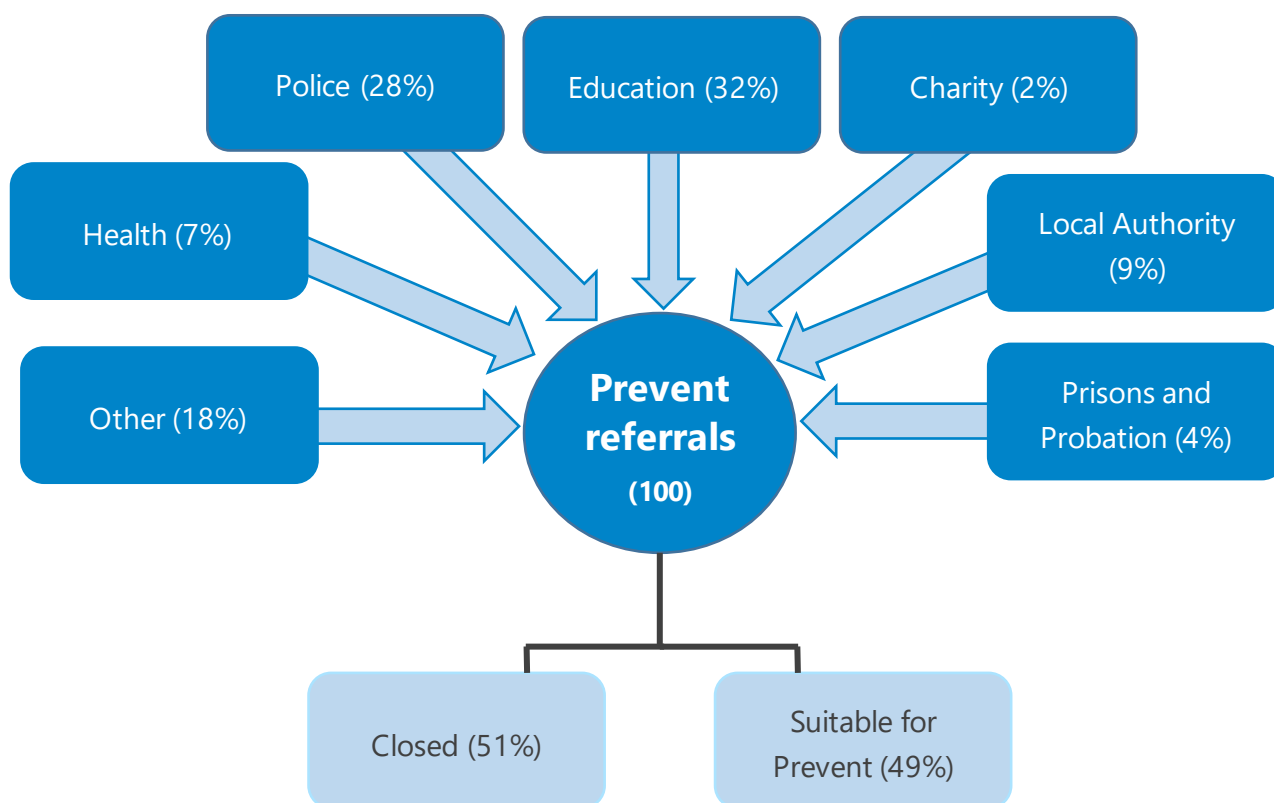
### 2.1 Referrals to Prevent

In the year ending March 2020, a total of 100 individuals were referred to Prevent in Scotland. Of these 100 individuals, 9 had been referred to Prevent previously.

The education sector made the highest proportion of referrals (32%), which included referrals from schools (27% of total referrals) and Further and Higher Education (5% of total referrals). The second highest proportion of referrals was from the police (28%).

Of the 100 Prevent referrals in Scotland, around half (51%) were closed after an initial assessment, while the remainder (49%) were identified as suitable for Prevent (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Sector of referrals and action from assessment<sup>1</sup>**



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020

<sup>1</sup> 'Other' sector of referral includes community, friends and family, military, government and others.

## **2.2. Cases closed**

Of the 51 cases that were closed after initial assessment, 45% (23) were identified as having no basis for concern, while the concern was mitigated in 55% (28) of cases that were closed.

Fifty-nine percent (30) of cases that were closed after initial assessment were signposted to other services or referred onwards. No onward referral was required in 41% (21) of cases that were closed.

Of the 30 closed cases that were signposted to other services or referred onwards, 47% (14) were referred to their local authority, 27% (8) were referred to the health sector, 20% (6) were referred to the education sector and 7% (2) were referred to the police<sup>2</sup>.

## **2.3. Suitable for Prevent**

Of the 49 cases that were identified as suitable for Prevent, the majority (96%; 47) were identified as suitable for a multi-agency led PPC panel, while the remaining 4% (2) were identified as suitable for a police-led panel.

Of the 49 cases identified as suitable for Prevent, the concern has been mitigated in the majority of cases (80%; 39). The Prevent issue was not mitigated for one individual, and one individual was transferred to another force (accounting for 4% of cases identified as suitable for Prevent). As a result, 84% (41) of the cases that were identified as suitable for Prevent are no longer involved in the programme, while a small proportion (16%; 8) remain involved in Prevent.

Of the 41 cases that were identified as suitable for Prevent but are no longer involved in the programme, 71% (29) of cases were signposted to other services or referred onwards. No onward referral was required in 29% (12) of cases.

Of the 29 cases that were signposted to other services or referred onwards, 38% (11) were referred to their local authority, 31% (9) were referred to the health sector, 24% (7) were referred to the education sector, 3% (1) were referred to the charity sector and 3% (1) were referred to the police<sup>3</sup>.

## **2.4. Referrals over time**

There were a total of 100 referrals to Prevent in Scotland in the year ending March 2020, representing a 21% decrease in comparison with the previous year (126).

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<sup>2</sup> Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

<sup>3</sup> Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

The proportion of cases closed after assessment in the year ending March 2020 was 7 percentage points higher (51%) than in the year ending March 2019 (44%). The proportion of cases identified as suitable for Prevent in the year ending March 2020 was 7 percentage points lower (49%) than in the year ending March 2019 (56%).

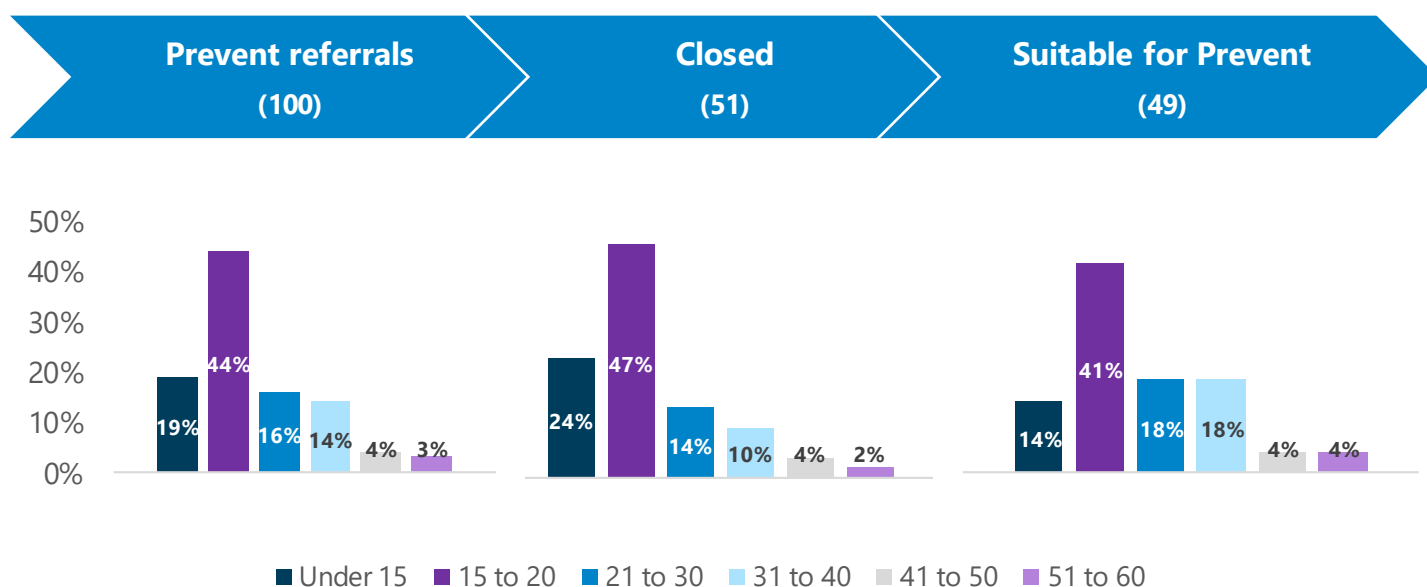
### 3. Demographic information

This section presents information on individuals referred to Prevent in Scotland due to concerns that they were vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Demographics (including age, gender and region) are reported, as well as the type of concern raised.

#### 3.1. Age

Individuals aged 15-20 made up the largest proportion of the 100 referrals (44%). Around a fifth of individuals referred (19%) were under the age of 15, while 16% were aged 21-30. Those aged 15-20 also made up the largest proportion of both the 51 referrals that were closed after assessment (47%) and the 49 referrals identified as suitable for Prevent (41%) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Age of individuals at time of referral for all cases, for cases closed, and for cases suitable for Prevent<sup>4</sup>**



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020

Individuals referred to Prevent by the education sector had the youngest median age (15), followed by those referred by local authorities (16). The median age for individuals referred to Prevent by the health sector was 20, while the median age for referrals from the police was 27<sup>5</sup>.

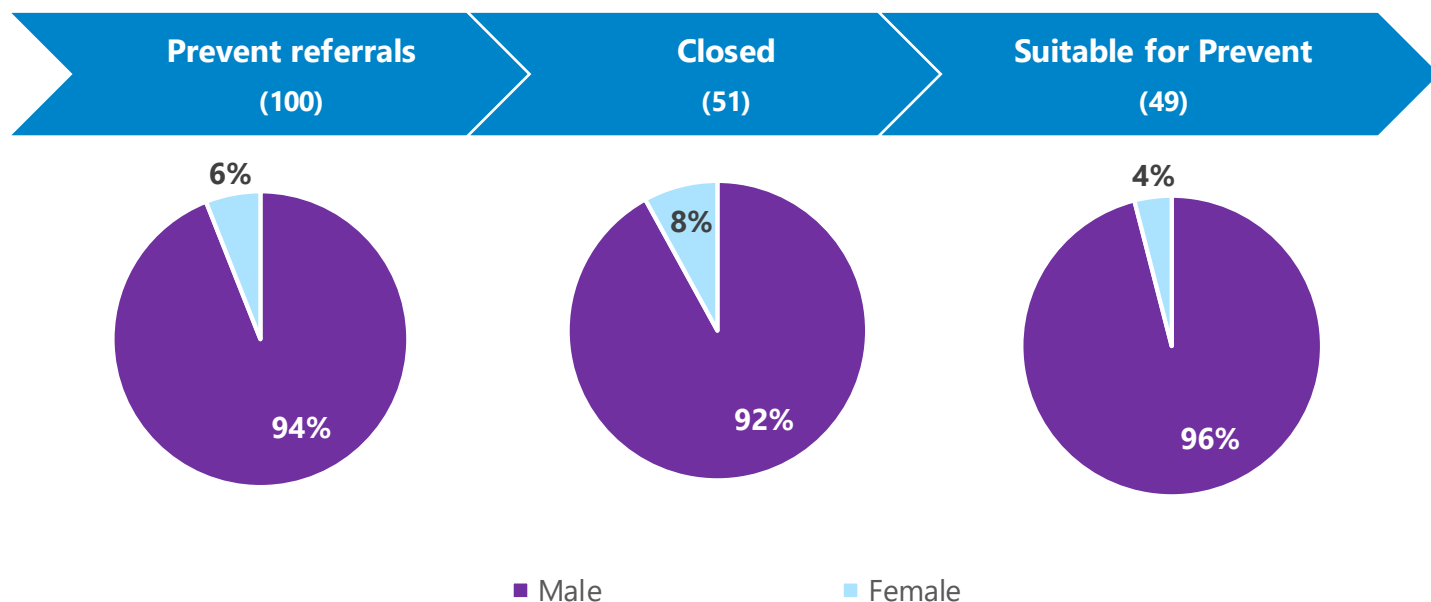
<sup>4</sup> Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

<sup>5</sup> Median ages are not presented for other sectors due to the number of referrals being 5 or less.

### 3.2. Gender

The majority of the 100 individuals referred to Prevent were male (94%). Males also made up the majority of the 51 referrals that were closed after assessment (92%) and the 49 referrals identified as suitable for Prevent (96%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Gender of individuals at time of referral for all cases, for cases closed, and for cases suitable for Prevent**



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020

### 3.3. Type of concern

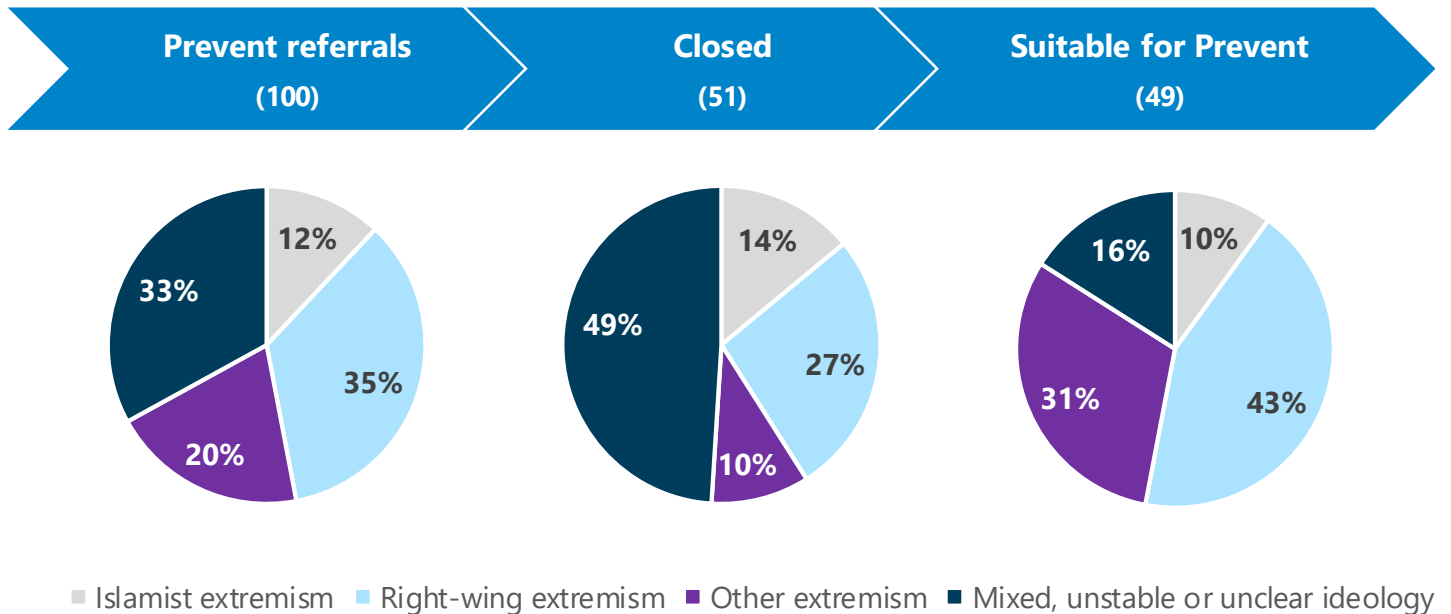
Of the 100 referrals to Prevent in Scotland, 35% were referred for concerns related to right-wing extremism and 12% were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism. Twenty percent were referred for concerns related to other types of extremism (including, for example, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim concerns). The remaining third (33%) were referred with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology, over half of whom (18 individuals) were identified as having no basis for concern following an initial assessment.

Of the 51 cases closed after assessment, almost half (49%; 25) were referred with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology (this includes the 18 individuals referred to above, who were identified as having no concern following an initial assessment). A further 27% (14) were referred for concerns related to right-wing extremism and 14% (7) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism. The remaining 10% (5) were referred for concerns related to other types of extremism.



Of the 49 cases identified as suitable for Prevent, 43% (21) were referred for concerns related to right-wing extremism and 10% (5) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism. Just under a third (31%; 15) were referred for concerns related to other types of extremism, and 16% (8) were referred with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Type of concern at time of referral for all cases, for cases closed, and for cases suitable for Prevent**



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020

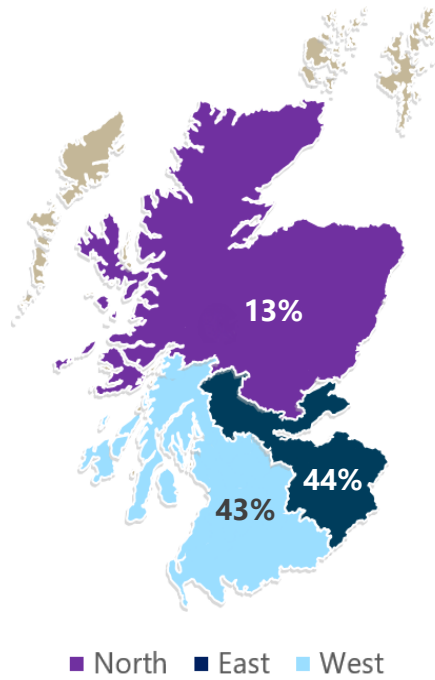
For each type of concern, individuals aged 15-20 accounted for the largest proportion referred. The proportion of males referred was also higher than the proportion of females referred for each type of concern.

Of the 35 referrals related to right-wing extremism, the largest proportion came from the police (26%; 9) and from 'other' sectors (26%; 9). Of the 12 referrals related to Islamist extremism, the largest proportion came from the education sector (42%; 5). Of the 20 referrals related to other types of extremism, the largest proportion came from the police (30%; 6) and education sector (30%; 6), while the largest proportion of referrals related to a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology came from the police (33%; 11).

### 3.4 Region

Most of the 100 referrals were from either the East of Scotland (44%) or the West of Scotland (43%). A small proportion of referrals were from the North of Scotland (13%). There were no referrals from the Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands or Western Isles (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Region of referrals**



Source: Police Scotland, Individuals referred to Prevent, Scotland, April 2019 to March 2020<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Police Scotland uses three main operational regions: East, West and North. The North of Scotland region covers: Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee, Highland, Moray, the Orkney Islands, Perth and Kinross, the Shetland Islands and the Western Isles. The West region covers: Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire. The East region covers: East Lothian, Edinburgh City, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders, Stirling and West Lothian.

## 4. Data quality

### 4.1. Data quality

The information presented in this report is subject to data quality checks (see below). However, the data relies on the recording of information by police and local authority partners and therefore it cannot be guaranteed that the totals are complete and accurate.

### 4.2. Quality checks

The data in this report has been compiled by Police Scotland and Scottish Government analysts, who have worked together to quality assure the data. The checks have included:

- Checking for duplicate data.
- Ensuring the data provided is complete.
- Querying contradictory data.

### 4.3. Improvements to data quality

Police Scotland are working with Scottish Government analysts to improve the quality of the data included in these reports. Updates will be made to the way the data is collected and recorded, which will improve the coverage and completeness of future publications.