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**Justice**

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**Statistics and Research Branch**

**Perceptions of Policing,  
Justice and Organised  
Crime:  
Quarterly Update to  
September 2010**

**January 2011**

## INTRODUCTION

This update presents the most recent statistics on the level of public confidence in policing and the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland as well as the perceived level of harm caused by organised crime. The data are drawn from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) and are primarily based on interviews conducted during the period 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2010.

NICS in-year results (i.e. quarterly updates based on the 12-months to June, September and December) are provisional and are subject to revision during end-of-year validation procedures.

End-of-year NICS 2009/10 results (covering the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010) on perceptions of policing, justice and organised crime, including socio-demographic analyses, have been published in a separate Official Statistics bulletin (Freel and Toner, 2010).

## CONFIDENCE IN POLICING

Public confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements (referred to collectively as 'policing') is measured through a series of questions contained within the NICS, with the aim of maintaining the high level of confidence in policing in Northern Ireland (until 31 March 2011) observed through a composite baseline of 79.4% in NICS 2007/08.

The overall confidence measure is derived from responses to seven individual strands as outlined in Table 1. This same measure was used to form a previous target within the SR 2004 Public Service Agreement (PSA) (French, 2008).

- ◆ As shown in Table 1, the proportion of people who expressed overall confidence in policing in the 12-months to September 2010 (78.1%) showed no statistically significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) to that observed at baseline (79.4%; NICS 2007/08).
- ◆ Based on fieldwork conducted during the 12-months to September 2010, statistically significant decreases ( $p < 0.05$ ) have been observed, since baseline (2007/08) in the level of confidence within four of the seven strands: 'police provide an ordinary day-to-day service' (83.4% to 80.7%); 'police treat Catholics and Protestants equally' (81.5% to 79.7%); 'Policing Board is independent of the police' (77.0% to 74.8%); and 'Police Ombudsman is independent of the police' (90.0% to 86.6%). The remaining three indicators show no statistically significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) since baseline (Table 1).

**Table 1: Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements<sup>1</sup>**

| % confident that the...  | Baseline<br>NICS<br>2007/08 | Oct 08<br>to<br>Sept 09 | Oct 09<br>to<br>Sept 10 | Statistically<br>significant change<br>since baseline? <sup>2</sup> |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Overall confidence rating<sup>3</sup></b>                           | <b>79.4</b>                 | <b>79.6</b>             | <b>78.1</b>             |   |
| Police provide an ordinary day-to-day service for all the people of NI | 83.4                        | 82.5                    | 80.7                    | ** ↓  |
| Police do a very or fairly good job in NI as a whole                   | 66.4                        | 68.7                    | 66.7                    |   |
| Police treat Catholics and Protestants equally in NI as a whole        | 81.5                        | 81.8                    | 79.7                    | ** ↓  |
| Policing Board (NIPB) is independent of police                         | 77.0                        | 76.4                    | 74.8                    | ** ↓  |
| Policing Board (NIPB) helps ensure police do a good job                | 81.7                        | 81.4                    | 82.2                    |   |
| Police Ombudsman (OPONI) is independent of police                      | 90.0                        | 88.4                    | 86.6                    | ** ↓  |
| Police Ombudsman (OPONI) helps ensure police do a good job             | 87.4                        | 87.1                    | 87.5                    |   |

1. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).

3. This measure is the weighted mean of the responses to the seven individual confidence strands listed in the table. Greater weighting is given to the three questions on the police.

## CONFIDENCE IN ENGAGEMENT

A set of questions relating to levels of public confidence in the local police working with other agencies, including district councils, to tackle the anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues that matter in the local area was added to the NICS in October 2007. Results from two separate questions on 'seeking' and 'dealing with' these issues are used to form a composite rating to measure overall confidence in engagement with local communities. The aim is to achieve a statistically significant increase in the level of engagement by 31 March 2011, from a composite NICS 2007/08 baseline of 42.4%.

- ◆ Latest figures indicate that, based on the composite measure, overall confidence in engagement has fallen by 3.5 percentage points, from 42.4% in 2007/08 (baseline) to 38.9% (Table 2).
- ◆ Much of this overall decrease in confidence is accounted for by a fall in the proportion of respondents who agree that the local police and other agencies seek people's views about the ASB and crime issues that matter. This indicator has dropped by 5.6 percentage points since baseline, from 46.0% to 40.4% (Table 2).
- ◆ In contrast, the apparent decrease (since baseline) in the proportion agreeing that the local police and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime issues (from 38.9% to 37.3%) is not statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

**Table 2: Confidence in the level of engagement by the local police and other agencies<sup>1</sup>**

| % agreeing that the police and other agencies, including district councils ...   | Baseline NICS 2007/08 <sup>2</sup> | Oct 08 to Sept 09 | Oct 09 to Sept 10 | Statistically significant change since baseline? <sup>3</sup> |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>Overall engagement rating<sup>4</sup></b>                                     | <b>42.4</b>                        | <b>40.8</b>       | <b>38.9</b>       | <b>** ↓</b>   |
| Seek people's views about the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area | 46.0                               | 43.3              | 40.4              | ** ↓  |
| Are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area          | 38.9                               | 38.3              | 37.3              |   |

1. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Baseline drawn from fieldwork 1 October 2007 to 31 March 2008.
3. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).
4. This measure is the arithmetic mean of the responses to the two individual engagement strands in the table.

## CONFIDENCE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

In conjunction with the CSR 2007 'Justice For All' PSA a set of questions designed to measure confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system (CJS) was introduced to the NICS, replacing those questions used to construct a six-strand composite measure adopted as part of the SR 2004 PSA (French, 2008).

- ◆ While there has been no statistically significant change, since baseline, in the proportion of respondents who are confident that the CJS as a whole is fair (58.0% to 58.3%), the increase in the proportion who consider the CJS as a whole to be effective, from 35.6% (baseline) to 38.7%, is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 3: Confidence in the criminal justice system<sup>1</sup>**

| % confident that the...     | Baseline NICS 2008 <sup>2,3</sup> | Oct 08 to Sept 09 | Oct 09 to Sept 10 | Statistically significant change since baseline? <sup>4</sup> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| CJS as a whole is effective | 35.6                              | 37.1              | 38.7              | ** ↑  |
| CJS as a whole is fair      | 58.0                              | 58.3              | 58.3              |   |

1. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Effectiveness baseline drawn from NICS fieldwork 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008.
3. Fairness baseline drawn from NICS fieldwork 1 July 2008 to 31 December 2008.
4. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).

## PERCEPTIONS OF THE HARM CAUSED BY ORGANISED CRIME

In association with the CSR 2007 'Make Communities Safer' PSA, a set of questions was devised and introduced to the NICS in June 2008 to gauge the perceived level of harm caused by organised crime in Northern Ireland. The results contribute to a Crime Harm And Risk Measurement (CHARM) matrix, a methodology developed specifically to monitor progress against this indicator.

- ◆ Latest findings indicate that two-thirds of people (67.2%) feel that organised crime overall generates a minimal level of harm in the local area. In contrast, 6.4% of respondents consider organised crime to result in a great level of harm. These figures compare with 63.5% and 8.5% (respectively) in 2008/09 (Table 4).
- ◆ Of the various types of organised crime examined, drug trafficking, either the selling or buying of illegal drugs, was most commonly cited as promoting a great level of harm (14.9%), while respondents were least likely to consider immigration crime (3.8%) as promoting a great level of harm (Table 4).

**Table 4: Perceived level of harm caused by organised crime (%) in the local area<sup>1</sup>**

| Perceived level of harm (%) caused by...                               | NICS 2008/09 <sup>2</sup> |          |       | Oct 08 to Sept 09 |          |       | Oct 09 to Sept 10 |          |       |
|--|---------------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|----------|-------|
|  | Minimal                   | Moderate | Great | Minimal           | Moderate | Great | Minimal           | Moderate | Great |
| <b>Organised crime overall</b>   | 63.5                      | 28.0     | 8.5   | 65.0              | 27.8     | 7.2   | 67.2              | 26.4     | 6.4   |
| People selling or buying illegal drugs                                 | 51.8                      | 30.7     | 17.5  | 54.4              | 29.6     | 16.0  | 58.7              | 26.3     | 14.9  |
| People selling or buying counterfeit or smuggled goods                 | 60.5                      | 30.3     | 9.2   | 63.4              | 27.4     | 9.2   | 66.3              | 26.4     | 7.3   |
| Money laundering and fraud <sup>3</sup>                                | -                         | -        | -     | 72.2              | 20.6     | 7.2   | 77.0              | 17.4     | 5.6   |
| Fuel laundering and smuggling <sup>3</sup>                             | -                         | -        | -     | 72.3              | 21.4     | 6.4   | 76.7              | 18.1     | 5.2   |
| Protection or extortion racketeering                                   | 73.6                      | 17.9     | 8.5   | 75.7              | 16.8     | 7.5   | 79.3              | 14.4     | 6.3   |
| Armed robbery  | 75.3                      | 16.4     | 8.3   | 75.9              | 16.5     | 7.6   | 78.4              | 15.6     | 6.0   |
| Immigration crime including human trafficking / smuggling <sup>4</sup> | -                         | -        | -     | -                 | -        | -     | 85.4              | 10.8     | 3.8   |

<sup>1</sup> denotes variable was not included in the survey.

1. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. NICS 2008/09 figures are based on the period June 2008 to March 2009.
3. Individual questions on money and fuel laundering were introduced to the NICS in May 2009.
4. Question on immigration crime was introduced to the NICS in April 2010.

- ◆ Over two-thirds (68.9%) of NICS respondents interviewed during the 12-months to September 2010 believed the level of harm caused by organised crime in the local area had not changed during the previous 12 months, a statistically significant increase ( $p < 0.05$ ) since 2008/09 (62.7%) (Table 5).
- ◆ In contrast, latest figures show a statistically significant reduction ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the proportion of respondents who consider the level of harm caused by organised crime to have fallen in the previous year, from 17.2% in 2008/09 to 12.5% in the 12-months to September 2010. The apparent decrease since baseline (from 20.1% to 18.6%) in those claiming the level of harm had increased is not statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 5).

**Table 5: Perceived change in the level of harm caused by organised crime (%) in the past 12 months<sup>1</sup>**

| % perceiving... | Baseline NICS 2008/09 <sup>2</sup> | Oct 08 to Sept 09 | Oct 09 to Sept 10 | Statistically significant change since baseline? <sup>3</sup> |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| More harm       | 20.1                               | 19.3              | 18.6              |   |
| About the same  | 62.7                               | 62.9              | 68.9              | ** ↑  |
| Less harm       | 17.2                               | 17.7              | 12.5              | ** ↓  |

1. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. NICS 2008/09 figures are based on the period June 2008 to March 2009.
3. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (\*\*).

## REFERENCES

**French, B.** (2008). *Confidence in Policing and the Criminal Justice System: Findings from the 2007/08 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*. NIO Research and Statistical Bulletin 15/2008. Belfast: NIO.

**Freel, R. and Toner, S.** (2010). *Perceptions of Policing, Justice and Organised Crime: Findings from the 2009/10 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*. DOJ Research and Statistical Bulletin 3/2010. Belfast: DOJ.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the Northern Ireland Crime Survey please contact: Statistics and Research Branch, Massey House, Stormont Estate, Belfast BT4 3SX; Telephone: 028 9052 7157; Email: [statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk)

This update and other Department of Justice research and statistical publications are available at: [www.dojni.gov.uk](http://www.dojni.gov.uk)

Further information on the CSR 2007 PSA is available on the NIO website:

[http://www.nio.gov.uk/justice\\_for\\_all\\_-\\_delivery\\_agreement\\_-\\_version\\_2.pdf](http://www.nio.gov.uk/justice_for_all_-_delivery_agreement_-_version_2.pdf)

[http://www.nio.gov.uk/comprehensive\\_spending\\_review-public\\_service\\_agreement-make\\_communities\\_safer.pdf](http://www.nio.gov.uk/comprehensive_spending_review-public_service_agreement-make_communities_safer.pdf)

## TECHNICAL NOTES

Selecting only one person at each address means that individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than those living in small households. Accordingly, the data presented in this publication have been weighted by household size to prevent a bias towards small household sizes.

Don't knows, refusals and non-valid responses have been excluded from the analyses. Percentages may not always sum to 100 due to the effect of rounding to the nearest whole number, or because respondents could give more than one response.

Because of a combination of both sampling and non-sampling error, any sample is unlikely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population.

Statistical significance tests have been carried out on a range of group differences observed between different sweeps of the NICS. These tests are used to establish the degree of confidence with which we can infer the observed findings as an accurate reflection of the perceptions of the population.

For the purposes of this update, where differences have emerged as being statistically significant, these have been reported at the 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of probability (two-tailed tests). This means that, for any observed result that is found to be statistically significant, one can be 95% confident that this has not happened by chance.

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