



Department of
Justice

www.dojni.gov.uk

Statistics and Research Branch

**Perceptions of Policing,
Justice and
Anti-Social Behaviour:
Quarterly Update to
September 2011**

December 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 public perceptions of anti-social behaviour. The data are drawn from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) and are primarily based on interviews conducted during the period 1 October 2010 to 30 September 2011.

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 (Freel and Toner, 2010) and anti-social behaviour (Freel *et al.*, 2011), including socio-demographic analyses, have been published in separate statistical bulletins.

CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE AND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS

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. An overall (composite) confidence in policing measure is derived from responses to seven individual strands as outlined in Table 1.

- ◆ The proportion of people who expressed overall confidence in policing in the 12-months to September 2011 showed a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$) to that observed in the previous year (from 78.1% to 80.2%) (Table 1).
- ◆ Of the seven individual indicators comprising the composite measure, the three relating directly to the police each showed a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$) in the 12-months to September 2011 compared with the previous year: 'police provide an ordinary day-to-day service for all the people of Northern Ireland' (from 80.7% to 84.0%); 'police do a very or fairly good job in Northern Ireland as a whole' (66.7% to 71.3%); and 'police treat Catholics and Protestants equally in Northern Ireland as a whole' (79.7% to 82.7%) (Table 1).
- ◆ The four remaining indicators on police accountability arrangements remained unchanged since the previous year ($p < 0.05$) (Table 1).

Table 1: Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements¹

% confident that the...	Oct 09 to Sep 10	Oct 10 to Sep 11	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Overall confidence rating³	78.1	80.2	** ↑
Police provide an ordinary day-to-day service for all the people of NI	80.7	84.0	** ↑
Police do a very or fairly good job in NI as a whole	66.7	71.3	** ↑
Police treat Catholics and Protestants equally in NI as a whole	79.7	82.7	** ↑
Policing Board (NIPB) is independent of police	74.8	73.3	
Policing Board (NIPB) helps ensure police do a good job	82.2	81.3	
Police Ombudsman (OPONI) is independent of police	86.6	86.5	
Police Ombudsman (OPONI) helps ensure police do a good job	87.5	86.2	

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 THE LOCAL POLICE

In addition to policing within Northern Ireland as a whole, the NICS also measures the level of public confidence in the local police overall as well as in specific aspects of their work. As part of a series of questions, respondents were asked if they agree with seven statements concerning the local police; the first six are ‘funnel-type’ questions designed to help generate a more considered response to a seventh overall confidence measure.

As this represents the first time that levels of confidence in the local police have been included in a quarterly statistical update, Table 2 presents the final figures for NICS 2010/11 (previously unpublished) together with in-year results for the years ending September 2010 and September 2011.

- ◆ The proportion of people who expressed overall confidence in their local police in the 12-months to September 2011 showed a statistically significant increase ($p < 0.05$) to that observed during the same period in the previous year (from 59.2% to 63.9%) (Table 2).
- ◆ Based on NICS interviews in the year ending September 2011, statistically significant increases ($p < 0.05$) were observed, compared with the same period the previous year, in the proportion of respondents who agreed that the local police: ‘can be relied on to be there when you need them’ (from 43.7% to 50.0%); ‘can be relied on to deal with minor crimes’ (45.0% to 50.2%); ‘understand the issues that affect this community’ (59.0% to 62.6%); and ‘are dealing with the things that matter to this community’ (45.3% to 48.4%) (Table 2).
- ◆ The proportion of respondents who agreed that the local police ‘would treat you with respect if you had contact with them’ and ‘treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are’ remained unchanged since the previous year ($p < 0.05$) (Table 2).

Table 2: Confidence in the local police¹

% agreeing that the local police...	NICS 2010/11	Oct 09 to Sep 10	Oct 10 to Sep 11	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Overall confidence in the local police³	60.6	59.2	63.9	** ↑
Can be relied on to be there when you need them	45.7	43.7	50.0	** ↑
Would treat you with respect if you had contact with them	82.1	81.8	83.3	
Treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are	64.1	63.8	65.6	
Can be relied on to deal with minor crimes	46.9	45.0	50.2	** ↑
Understand the issues that affect this community	60.8	59.0	62.6	** ↑
Are dealing with the things that matter to this community	47.1	45.3	48.4	** ↑

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. Based on respondents agreeing with the statement, ‘Taking everything into account, I have confidence in the police in this area’.

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 address local anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues is also included within the NICS. Results from two separate questions on 'seeking' and 'dealing with' these issues have been used to form a composite rating to measure overall confidence in engagement with local communities.

- ◆ Based on the composite measure, overall confidence in engagement in the year ending September 2011 (38.5%) remains on a par with that observed during the same period in the previous year (38.9%) (Table 3).
- ◆ Based on NICS interviews in the year ending September 2011, the proportion of people agreeing that 'the local police and other agencies seek people's views about the ASB and crime issues that matter' showed a statistically significant decrease ($p < 0.05$) compared with the previous year (from 40.4% to 37.4%) (Table 3).
- ◆ The apparent increase during the last year in the proportion agreeing that 'the local police and other agencies are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter' (from 37.3% to 39.6%) is not statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (Table 3).

Table 3: Confidence in the level of engagement by the local police and other agencies¹

% agreeing that the police and other agencies, including district councils...	Oct 09 to Sep 10	Oct 10 to Sep 11	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Overall engagement rating³	38.9	38.5	
Seek people's views about the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area	40.4	37.4	** ↓
Are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area	37.3	39.6	

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 arithmetic mean of the responses to the two individual engagement strands in the table.

CONFIDENCE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Public confidence in both the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system (CJS) is measured through two separate, single questions contained within the NICS. Both questions are preceded by a series of "lead-in" questions on the fairness and effectiveness of various aspects of the CJS, designed to encourage a considered response.

- ◆ Based on interviews conducted in the 12-months ending September 2011, findings suggest that the proportions of respondents who expressed confidence that the CJS as a whole is effective (39.5%) and fair (59.6%), showed no statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) to those observed during the same period in the previous year (38.7% and 58.3% respectively) (Table 4).

Table 4: Confidence in the criminal justice system¹

% confident that the...	Oct 09 to Sep 10	Oct 10 to Sep 11	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
CJS as a whole is effective	38.7	39.5	
CJS as a whole is fair	58.3	59.6	

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 (**).

PERCEPTIONS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Respondents to the NICS are asked to rate how much of a problem different types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are in their area. Since NICS 2003/04, responses to seven individual ASB strands, as outlined in Table 5, have been used to form a composite measure to gauge the overall perceived level of ASB in the local area.

- ◆ Findings from NICS interviews carried out in the 12-months to September 2011, show that the proportion of respondents perceiving a high level of anti-social behaviour in their local area has decreased ($p < 0.05$) since the same period in the previous year (from 13.5% to 11.9%) (Table 5).
- ◆ Based on NICS interviews in the year ending September 2011, three of the seven indicators that make up the composite ASB measure showed statistically significant decreases ($p < 0.05$) compared with the previous year: 'teenagers hanging around on streets' (from 24.8% to 21.3%); 'rubbish or litter lying around' (28.3% to 25.1%); and 'vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property' (21.1% to 19.0%). The four remaining indicators were unchanged over the same period (Table 5).

Table 5: Perceived level of anti-social behaviour in the local area¹

% saying very / fairly big problem	Oct 09 to Sep 10	Oct 10 to Sep 11	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Perceived high level of ASB³	13.5	11.9	** ↓
Abandoned or burnt-out cars	4.7	4.8	
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	8.3	8.3	
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	21.1	20.0	
People using or dealing drugs	23.0	21.8	
Teenagers hanging around on streets	24.8	21.3	** ↓
Rubbish or litter lying around	28.3	25.1	** ↓
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	21.1	19.0	** ↓

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. ASB: Anti-social behaviour (measure derived from responses to the seven individual strands in the table).

REFERENCES

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.

Freel, R., Quigley, D. and Toner, S. (2011). *Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2009/10 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*. DOJ Research and Statistical Bulletin 2/2011. 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 2658; Email: 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

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 households.

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.

NOTES

Department of Justice

Access to Justice Directorate
Statistics and Research Branch
Massey House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SX

Email: statistics.research@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 028 9052 2658

www.dojni.gov.uk