



Department of
Justice

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Statistics and Research Branch

**Perceptions of Policing,
Justice and
Anti-Social Behaviour:
Quarterly Update to
December 2012**

March 2013

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 January 2012 to 31 December 2012.

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 2010/11 results on perceptions of policing and justice (Campbell and Freel, 2012) and NICS 2011/12 results on anti-social behaviour (Campbell and Freel, 2013), both 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 across Northern Ireland as a whole (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 December 2012 (80.4%) remained on a par with that observed in the same period the previous year (80.5%) (Table 1).
- ◆ Similarly, in the year ending December 2012, no statistically significant changes ($p < 0.05$) were observed, when compared with the previous year, in any of the seven individual indicators relating to confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements.

Table 1: Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements¹

% confident that the...	Jan 11 to Dec 11	Jan 12 to Dec 12	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Overall confidence rating³	80.5	80.4	
Police provide an ordinary day-to-day service for all the people of NI	84.9	85.0	
Police do a very or fairly good job in NI as a whole	72.0	72.0	
Police treat Catholics and Protestants equally in NI as a whole	83.6	82.7	
Policing Board (NIPB) is independent of police	73.7	74.2	
Policing Board (NIPB) helps ensure police do a good job	81.5	82.1	
Police Ombudsman (OPONI) is independent of police	85.6	84.5	
Police Ombudsman (OPONI) helps ensure police do a good job	84.2	84.6	

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 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, both overall and 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.

- ◆ At 64.8% in the 12-months to December 2012, the proportion of people who expressed overall confidence in their local police showed no change ($p < 0.05$) when compared with the previous year (64.5%) (Table 2).
- ◆ Similarly, based on NICS interviews in the year ending December 2012, no statistically significant changes were observed, since the previous year, in any of the six remaining indicators relating to confidence in the local police (Table 2).

Table 2: Confidence in the local police¹

% agreeing that the local police...	Jan 11 to Dec 11	Jan 12 to Dec 12	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Overall confidence in the local police³	64.5	64.8	
Can be relied on to be there when you need them	50.6	51.4	
Would treat you with respect if you had contact with them	83.5	84.6	
Treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are	65.8	66.0	
Can be relied on to deal with minor crimes	49.9	51.2	
Understand the issues that affect this community	62.2	62.8	
Are dealing with the things that matter to this community	49.1	51.2	

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. 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 in partnership 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 people's views about' and 'dealing with' issues have been used to form a composite rating to measure overall confidence in engagement with local communities.

- ◆ At 40.6%, in the 12-months to December 2012, overall confidence in engagement showed no statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) to that observed in the same period the previous year (39.1%) (Table 3).
- ◆ Based on NICS interviews in the year ending December 2012, the proportions of people agreeing that the police and other agencies both 'seek people's views about' (39.1%) and 'are dealing with' (42.1%) ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area remained on a par with those reported during the previous year ending December 2011 (37.8% and 40.5% respectively) (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...	Jan 11 to Dec 11	Jan 12 to Dec 12	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Overall engagement rating³	39.1	40.6	
Seek people's views about the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area	37.8	39.1	
Are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in the local area	40.5	42.1	

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 December 2012, findings indicate that the proportion of respondents who were confident that the CJS as a whole is both effective (40.4%) and fair (58.6%), show no statistically significant change ($p < 0.05$) to those observed the previous year (40.4% and 60.3% respectively) (Table 4).

Table 4: Confidence in the criminal justice system¹

% confident that the...	Jan 11 to Dec 11	Jan 12 to Dec 12	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
CJS as a whole is effective	40.4	40.4	
CJS as a whole is fair	60.3	58.6	

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 December 2012 show that the proportion of respondents perceiving a high level of anti-social behaviour in their local area (11.1%) remained on a par with the same period the previous year (11.7%) (Table 5).
- ◆ Based on the 12-months to December 2012, the proportion of respondents who perceived 'abandoned or burnt-out cars' to be a problem in their local area showed a statistically significant decrease compared with the previous year (from 4.4% to 3.4%). The six remaining indicators were unchanged ($p < 0.05$) over the same period (Table 5).

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

% saying very / fairly big problem	Jan 11 to Dec 11	Jan 12 to Dec 12	Statistically significant change since previous year? ²
Perceived high level of ASB³	11.7	11.1	
Abandoned or burnt-out cars	4.4	3.4	** ↓
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	8.3	8.4	
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	20.0	19.3	
People using or dealing drugs	22.4	21.8	
Teenagers hanging around on streets	21.3	21.2	
Rubbish or litter lying around	24.8	25.9	
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	19.8	18.2	

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

Since January 2012, NICS respondents have been asked how much their quality of life is affected by anti-social behaviour on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no effect and 10 is a total effect. In order to standardise the results, the following conventions have been used to gauge the effect of anti-social behaviour on quality of life:

1. minimally affected (responded in the range 1 to 3);
 2. moderately affected (responded in the range 4 to 7); and
 3. greatly affected (responded in the range 8 to 10).
- ◆ Findings from NICS interviews carried out in the 12-months to December 2012 show that the majority of respondents (83.6%) felt that anti-social behaviour has a minimal impact on their quality of life; 14.3% claimed it has a moderate effect while 2.1% believed their quality of life is greatly affected (Table 6).

Table 6: Perceptions of the effect of anti-social behaviour on quality of life¹

% saying anti-social behaviour has a...	Jan 12 to Dec 12
Minimal effect	83.6
Moderate effect	14.3
Great effect	2.1

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

2. Based on fieldwork from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012.

REFERENCES

Campbell, P. and Freel, R. (2012). *Perceptions of Policing, Justice and Organised Crime: Findings from the 2010/11 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*. DOJ Research and Statistical Bulletin 2/2012. Belfast: DOJ.

Campbell, P. and Freel, R. (2013). *Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2011/12 Northern Ireland Crime Survey*. DOJ Research and Statistical Bulletin 2/2013. 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.

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

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