

Experience of Crime and Perceptions of Crime, Policing and Justice and Organised Crime: Findings from the 2024/25 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey

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CONTENTS

	1. Summary Findings	3
	2. Introduction	5
	3. Experience of Crime	6
	4. Perceptions of Crime	11
	5. Perceptions of Policing and Justice	16
	6. Perceptions of Organised Crime	22
	Appendix 1 - Technical Annex	32
	Appendix 2 - Official Statistics Status	38
	Appendix 3 - References	39

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1 | Summary Findings

This bulletin presents findings from modules contained within the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS) 2024/25 which measures respondents' experiences of crime and gauges views on perceptions of crime, policing and justice and organised crime.

Experience of Crime

- Results from the 2024/25 NISCS indicate that most adults/households did not experience a crime asked about in the survey. Latest findings estimate 4.4% were victims of at least one crime measured through the survey during the 12 months prior to interview, similar to the 2023/24 rate of 4.5%. An estimated 71,000 incidents of crime occurred during the 12-month recall periods for NISCS 2024/25.

Perceptions of Crime

- NISCS 2024/25 respondents were again more positive in their perception of crime trends in their local area than at the regional level. Just under a quarter, 23%, believed local crime levels had increased in the preceding two years. This compares with 68% considering crime in Northern Ireland as a whole to have risen, a proportion which is unchanged from 2023/24 (also 68%) but higher than in 2020/21, 55%.
- Findings indicate that 7% of participants perceived the level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area to be high, unchanged from 2023/24, also 7%. None of the seven ASB strands considered showed a statistically significant change. 'People using or dealing drugs' (28%) and 'rubbish or litter lying around' (26%) were most likely to be viewed as problems.
- Around one-in-twelve (8%) respondents expressed a high level of worry about violent crime, with 7% very worried about becoming a victim of burglary. Of vehicle owners, 5% were very worried about becoming a victim of car crime. Rates for all three were similar to the previous year.
- For the effect of fear of crime on quality of life, the proportion reporting it had a minimal impact rose from 76% in 2023/24 to 79% in 2024/25. There was an equivalent decrease in the moderate impact proportion, from 21% to 18% over the same period, with 3% reporting it has a great effect, unchanged from the previous year.

1 | Summary Findings

Perceptions of Policing and Justice

- Overall public confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements (based on a seven-strand composite measure) was 79% in 2024/25, similar to the 2023/24 figure of 80%. Of the seven indicators that comprise this composite measure, only one, the Police Ombudsman helps the police do a good job, showed a statistically significant change when compared with 2023/24, falling from 89% to 86%.
- In terms of the local police, findings suggest that, in 2024/25, 52% rated their local police as doing an excellent or good job, unchanged from 2023/24, also 52%. When asked about overall confidence in their local police, 66% felt that, when taking everything into account, they had confidence in the police in their area, down from 68% the previous year.
- With regards to community engagement, the proportion agreeing that the police and other agencies seek people's views about the anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues that matter in their area was similar in 2023/24 and 2024/25 at 29% and 27% respectively, while the proportion who felt the issues were being dealt with fell from 37% to 33%. Both engagement measures have been declining gradually over the last number of years and compare with 2020/21 rates of 42% and 50% respectively.
- When asked about the criminal justice system (CJS), the proportion of respondents who were very or fairly confident that the CJS as a whole in Northern Ireland is effective was 58% while the proportion considering it to be fair was 62%. Both proportions were similar to those observed the previous year, 60% and 63% respectively.

Perceptions of Organised Crime

- One-in-five (20%) considered organised crime to be very or fairly widespread in their local area, a statistically significant increase from 17% in 2022/23. Almost three-in-ten (28%) believed the level of organised crime had increased in their area over the previous 12 months, up from 22% in 2022/23. When asked about the role members of the public, including themselves, can play in tackling organised crime, the most common response, given by 56% of respondents, was to report it to police or other law enforcement bodies.
- There was an increase in the proportion of respondents who felt paramilitary activity was widespread in their area, up from 11% in 2022/23 to 14% in 2024/25.
- Almost half (48%) of respondents who considered that paramilitary activity occurs in their area felt the groups had either some or a lot of influence, rising from 40% the previous year. Of these, more than half (55%) described it as a 'negative' influence, while a further 27% felt the influence was 'more negative than positive'.

2 | Introduction

2.1 The focus of this publication

The Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS) is a representative, continuous, personal interview survey of the experiences and perceptions of crime and crime-related issues of people, aged 16 and over, living in private households throughout Northern Ireland.

Traditionally, the NISCS was a face-to-face interview survey. In 2020/21, the survey moved to telephone mode due to the pandemic with a shorter questionnaire being asked to reduce completion time. It remained this way until 2023/24 (inclusive). The move to telephone and changes to the questionnaire resulted in a break in the time series, with these four survey years being referenced as the Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey.

From 2024/25, the survey adopted a mixed mode methodology, whereby respondents have the option of either a face-to-face or telephone interview. This bulletin focuses on findings from the 2024/25 survey year, which are considered to be broadly comparable with the telephone survey years, therefore reference may be made to them, where appropriate.

Similar to the format adopted in recent years, one single report will be published, merging what would have previously been three annual reports, Experience of Crime, Perceptions of Crime and Perceptions of Policing and Justice, into one single publication.

In addition, findings from a biennial module gauging perceptions of organised crime will also be included within this report. Latest findings for this module will therefore be compared with 2022/23 when the module was last included.

Results are based on a sample of 3,407 respondents. Throughout this report key findings are commented on in the text, with full numerical details available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source (ODS) documents. Any references to table numbers made in the report therefore refer to the respective table in the accompanying Excel and ODS documents. Further background information on this bulletin and survey methodology for 2024/25 is available in the Technical Annex (Appendix 1).

Note: The move to telephone mode and changes to the questionnaire mean results for 2020/21 to 2023/24 are not directly comparable with previous years. Figures for earlier years are presented in some graphs within this bulletin to illustrate the trend prior to the break in the time series. While the latest results for 2024/25 have been compared with recent telephone years, the survey modes should still be borne in mind when reviewing the figures. The impact of the pandemic may have altered people's attitudes, particularly in the initial years. It may be a number of years before any emerging trends become evident. Only differences that are statistically significant are described as increases or decreases within this report. Further information is available in the Technical Annex.

3.1 Crime victimisation (prevalence) rates for all offences

This chapter provides an overview of crime victimisation rates derived from the 2024/25 NISCS, both prevalence rates and incident numbers. Table 1 contains best (that is, the average or mean), lower and higher estimates of crime victimisation (prevalence) rates per household or adult in Northern Ireland for the main NISCS crime categories during the 12 full calendar months immediately preceding each 2024/25 interview. Table 2 provides figures for 2020/21 to 2024/25 while police recorded crime figures can be found, for reference purposes, in Table 3. The following analyses are based on the best estimates derived from the survey.

- Findings from the 2024/25 NISCS suggest that most households/adults had not been a victim of any of the crime types covered by the survey. Latest findings show the proportion indicating that they had experienced crime (any NISCS crime prevalence rate) was 4.4%. The proportion remained steady in the early telephone years at 3.9% and 3.8% in 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively before increasing to 5.8% in 2022/23. The rate subsequently fell the following year to 4.5% in 2023/24 and was similar in 2024/25 at 4.4%.
- The proportions of 2024/25 respondents who had been a victim of any household crime, 3.5%, or any personal crime, 1.3%, also showed no statistically significant change since 2023/24 (3.6% and 1.2% respectively).
- While the estimates derived from the last five years are not directly comparable with those observed prior to this, the any NISCS crime prevalence rates since 2020/21 have, on the whole, lay below the range of those observed in previous years.

**Figure 3.1: Households/adults victims of crime once or more (%):
any NISCS crime 1998 to 2024/25 interviews^{1,2,3}**



- The any NISCS crime rate is calculated treating a household crime as a personal crime.
- In 2020/21, face-to-face interviews were suspended due to the pandemic resulting in a break in the NISCS time series.
- Confidence intervals are shown for the last five survey years. There is 95% certainty that the figure lies between the lower and higher estimates.

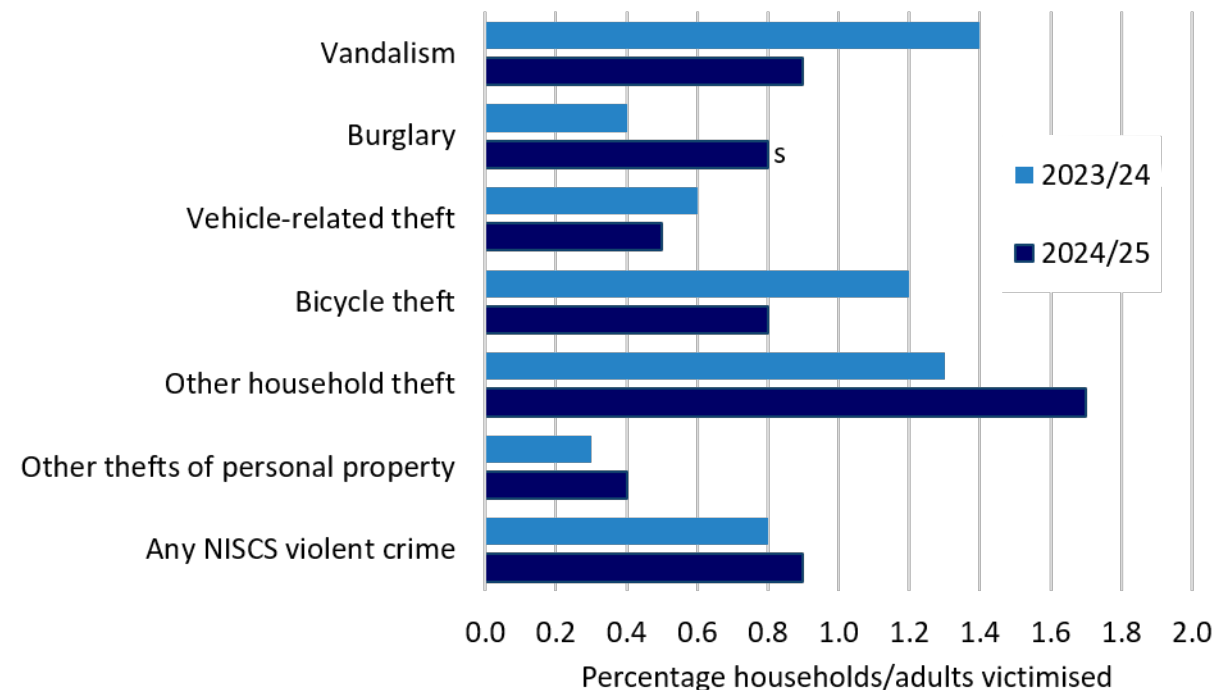
3 | Experience of Crime

3.2 Crime victimisation (prevalence) rates by offence category

For the main offence categories considered and, with the exception of burglary, victimisation (prevalence) rates for NISCS 2024/25 were generally on a par with those experienced in 2023/24.

- Following a drop from 0.8% to 0.4% between 2022/23 and 2023/24 in the prevalence rate for burglary, latest findings indicate the rate has increased again, back to 0.8% in 2024/25. PSNI recorded crime figures however, show a net decrease for burglary (residential) offences which fell overall by 17.1% between 2022/23 and 2024/25, from 2,504 to 2,077.
- For the remaining household offences presented, 2024/25 rates were similar to the previous year. The apparent decreases in vandalism (from 1.4% to 0.9%), vehicle-related theft (0.6% to 0.5%, vehicle owners) and bicycle theft (1.2% to 0.8%, bicycle owners) were not statistically significant.
- The rates may, however, while not significant, reflect somewhat the levels of police recorded crime, which for all three have fallen between 2022/23 and 2024/25. Criminal damage (the nearest equivalent to vandalism) fell by 18.6% (net) from 17,224 to 14,028, vehicle theft offences by 9.1%, from 2,641 to 2,401, and theft of a pedal cycle by 22.3%, from 762 to 592.

Figure 3.2: Households/adults victims of crime once or more by offence category (%), 2023/24 and 2024/25 interviews^{1,2,3,4}



- Rates for household offences are based on all households.
- Rates for violent crime and other thefts of personal property are based on all adults and are weighted for household size.
- The rates for vehicle-related theft are based on vehicle owners only, while bicycle theft rates are based on bicycle owners only.
- Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

3 | Experience of Crime

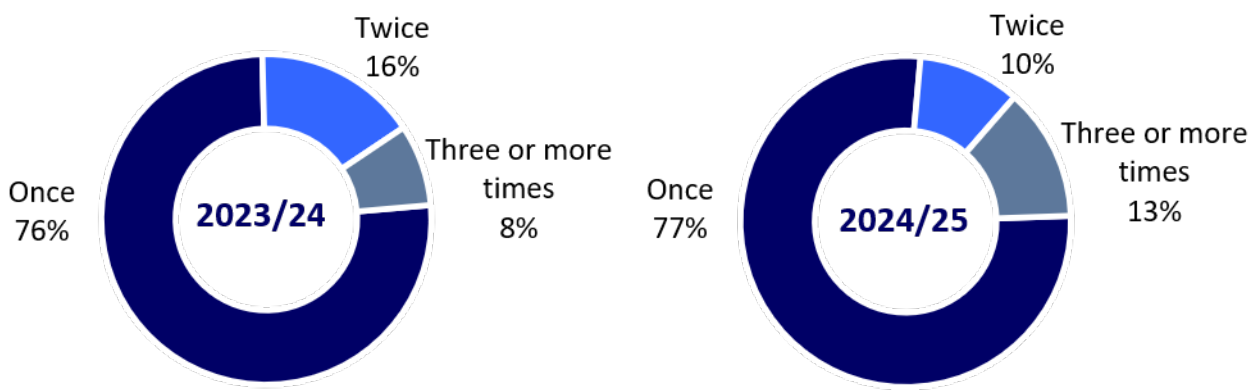
- For other household theft, the rate rose between 2021/22 and 2022/23, from 1.0% to 2.0%, before falling again to 1.3% in 2023/24. From the latest figures it may appear to have risen again to 1.7%, however this apparent change, like other crime types, was not statistically significant. In terms of police recorded crime, there has been some slight fluctuation for theft in a dwelling over the last number of years with 2022/23 recording the highest level in recent years, but since then has shown a decrease overall of 28.7%, from 530 to 378.
- At 0.9% in 2024/25, the rate for any NISCS violent crime has remained on a par with recent years, while the number of recorded crime offences has fallen from 49,897 in 2022/23 to 41,144 in 2024/25, a net decrease of 17.5%. Part of any discrepancy in NISCS estimates and police recorded violent crime may relate to the narrower focus of the NISCS, the relatively low proportion of respondents affected by violent crime, a possible unwillingness of some respondents to disclose sensitive domestic incidents directly to an interviewer, variation within the sample and differences in the time period covered between the two sources.

3.3 Repeat victimisation in Northern Ireland

Table 4 presents the frequency of repeat victimisation for any NISCS crime, based on 2021/22 to 2024/25 interviews. Given the limitations of the sample size and the number of victims, rates for NISCS repeat victimisation, including any apparent year-to-year changes, should be viewed with caution. It may be more appropriate to consider figures over the longer term to determine if there are any changes in trends.

- Since 2021/22, findings have indicated that more than three-quarters of victims each year were a victim only once in the 12 months prior to interview. This continued in 2024/25 when the majority, 77%, were a victim on one occasion. While it may appear that between 2023/24 and 2024/25 the proportion who were victimised twice fell while the proportion who experienced crime on three or more occasions increased, these findings were not significant.

Figure 3.3: Any NISCS crime - households/adults victims of crime by number of times victimised (%), 2023/24 and 2024/25 interviews^{1,2}



- The any NISCS crime rate is calculated treating a household crime as a personal crime and is weighted for household size.
- Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

3.4 Crime victimisation (incidence) rates and estimated number of NISCS incidents in Northern Ireland

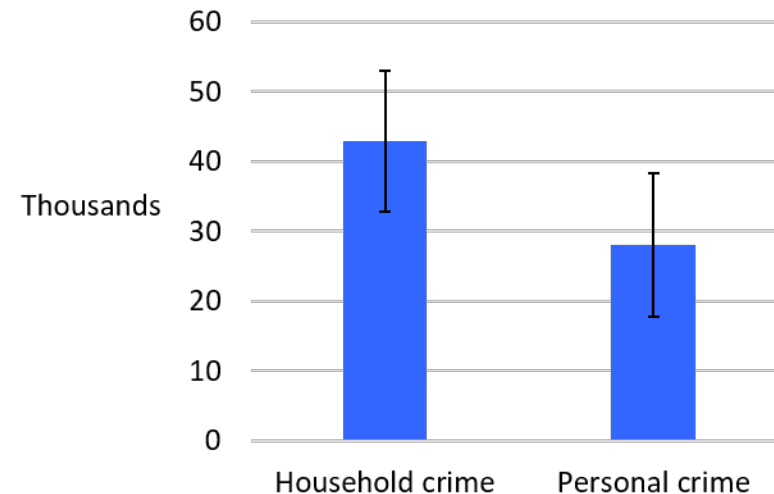
Table 5 gives crime victimisation (incidence) rates per 10,000 households or adults in Northern Ireland for a limited range of crime types. This approach differs from prevalence rates in that it takes into account the number of times each type of incident may have occurred, as opposed to the proportion of households or adults victimised at least once.

It is possible to use these incidence rates along with the household and adult population estimates to produce best, lower and higher estimates of the number of incidents for a range of crime types covered by NISCS 2024/25, which are presented in Table 6. There is 95% certainty that the actual number of crimes against households and their adult occupants lies between the lower and higher estimates (confidence intervals). It is important to note that, given the limitations of the sample size, these confidence intervals can be relatively wide, particularly for less common crimes. Best estimates from 2020/21 onward are given in Table 7.

- Results indicate that an estimated 71,000 incidents occurred during the 12-month recall periods for the 2024/25 NISCS. Of these, around three-fifths, just over 43,000, were household offences and the remaining incidents, around 28,000, were personal offences.

- This is similar to previous years, whereby household crime has accounted for the majority of incidents.
- The 43,000 incidents of household crime estimated from the 2024/25 survey comprised mainly of other household theft (17,000 incidents) and vandalism (11,000). Violent crime accounted for the majority of personal crime, 20,000 of the 28,000 personal crime incidents estimated from 2024/25.

Figure 3.4: Estimated number of NISCS incidents (thousands), 2024/25 interviews^{1,2}



- Incident numbers for household and personal crime are rounded and therefore may not sum to the total number of incidents estimated from the survey.
- Confidence intervals are shown for the number of incidents. There is 95% certainty that the figure lies between the lower and higher estimates.

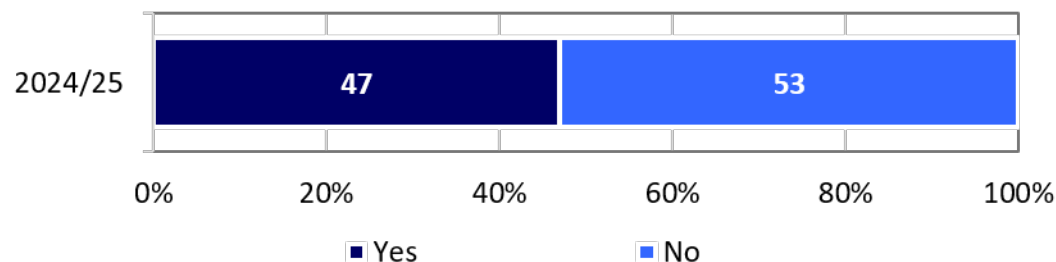
3 | Experience of Crime

3.5 Crime reporting rates in Northern Ireland

Table 8 presents the proportions of various crime types reported to the police in Northern Ireland. As variation in reporting rates are largely dependent on the type of crime in question, any direct comparison between reporting rates should be carried out cautiously given the limitations of the sample size.

- It is estimated that just under half, 47%, of all NISCS crime was reported to the police. Of the various crime categories covered, vandalism (64%) and burglary (58%) displayed some of the highest reporting rates.

Figure 3.5: Proportion of all NISCS crime reported to the police (%), 2024/25 interviews¹



1. Estimate is based on NISCS incidents reported to the police as a proportion of all NISCS incidents.

3.6 Reasons given for not reporting crime in Northern Ireland

Those victims who had not reported the incident to the police were subsequently asked their reason(s) for not doing so, results for which are presented in Table 9. Victims were able to give one or more reasons.

- 'Too trivial/no loss/police would not/could not do anything' (68%) continued to be, by far, the most common reason given by NISCS victims for not having reported a crime to the police. Each of the other reasons were cited by less than a fifth of victims.

Summary: Experience of Crime

Latest findings from 2024/25 interviews suggest that the prevalence rate for any NISCS crime, 4.4%, showed no statistically significant change when compared with the previous year. Of the crime types presented, burglary was the only one to show a significant change, up from 0.4% to 0.8% between 2023/24 and 2024/25. An estimated 71,000 incidents occurred during the 12-month recall periods for 2024/25 respondents, many of which, 43,000, were household offences. Results indicate that just under half, 47%, of incidents were reported to police, with 'too trivial/no loss/police would not/could not do anything' (68%) as the main reason given for not doing so.

4

Perceptions of Crime

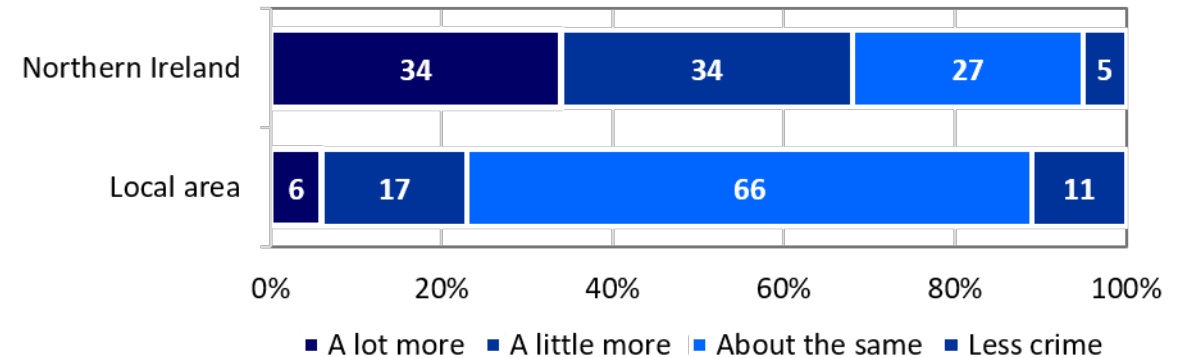
4.1 Perceptions of change in crime levels

NISCS 2024/25 participants were asked how they perceived the level of crime to have changed, if at all, in both Northern Ireland and their local area during the two years prior to interview, based on a five-point scale ranging from ‘a lot more crime’ to ‘a lot less crime’. The proportions perceiving there to be either ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’ more crime in Northern Ireland comprise the overall ‘more crime’ figure presented in Table 10. Similarly, the two response options, ‘a little less’ and ‘a lot less’ crime have been combined into the ‘less crime’ figure. Equivalent figures for change in crime levels in the local area are given in Table 11.

- Just over two-thirds (68%) of respondents felt there was more crime in Northern Ireland. While the more crime figure was unchanged from 2023/24, also 68%, the proportion has risen by 13 percentage points overall from 55% in 2020/21, driven primarily by an increase in the proportion believing there was ‘a lot more’ crime, from 21% to 34% over the same period. A large part of this increase occurred between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 survey years, when the more crime figure rose by eight percentage points. Subsequently, the proportions who believed there was less crime or crime levels had stayed the same both fell, from 10% to 5% and 35% to 27% respectively between 2020/21 and 2024/25.

- Respondents continued to be more positive in their perceptions of crime levels within their local area than at the regional level. While 68% believed there was more crime in Northern Ireland generally, just under a quarter (23%) thought crime in their local area had increased. In terms of local crime levels, respondents were most likely to believe crime levels had stayed the same (66%), while just over a tenth (11%) believed they had fallen. Figures for local crime levels have been relatively stable since 2020/21 with very few year-on-year changes.

Figure 4.1: Perceptions of changing crime levels in Northern Ireland and the local area (%), 2024/25^{1,2,3}



- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- Local area figures are based on respondents who had been living in their area for more than three years.
- Percentages may not sum to 100 or total those referenced in the text due to rounding.

4 | Perceptions of Crime

4.2 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland

Respondents to the NISCS were asked to rate how much of a problem different types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are in their area using a four-point scale ranging from ‘very big problem’ to ‘not a problem at all’. Responses to the following seven strands have been used to form a composite measure (see Section 4.3 of the [User Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#) to gauge the overall perceived level of ASB in the local area:

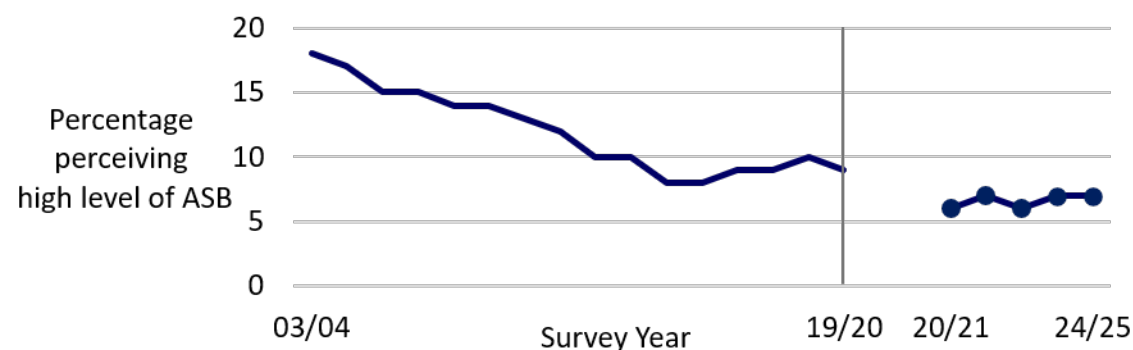
- a. abandoned or burnt-out cars
- b. noisy neighbours or loud parties
- c. people being drunk or rowdy in public places
- d. people using or dealing drugs
- e. teenagers or young people hanging around on the streets
- f. rubbish or litter lying around
- g. vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property

Figures for the composite measure and the seven strands are given in Table 12.

- At 7%, the proportion perceiving the level of anti-social behaviour in their local area to be high (composite measure) was unchanged when compared with the 2023/24 figure, also 7%. The proportion has remained stable since 2020/21 sitting at around six or seven percent each year with no statistically significant year-on-year changes observed.

- People using or dealing drugs (28%) and rubbish or litter lying around (26%) were again the two most likely types of ASB to be considered as problems. While both proportions were in line with last year, people using or dealing in drugs has shown an overall increase from 24% in 2020/21. In contrast, rubbish or litter lying around has fallen overall since 2020/21. While still considered one of the most problematic types, the rate of 26% in 2024/25 was lower than the 31% observed in 2020/21.
- Of the five remaining indicators, none showed a statistically significant change from 2023/24, while only one, teenagers hanging around on streets, has changed since 2020/21 with the proportion considering it a problem falling from 16% to 12%.

**Figure 4.2: Perceived high level of ASB (%),
2003/04 to 2024/25^{1,2,3}**



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Perceived high level of ASB derived from responses to the seven individual ASB strands.
3. In 2020/21, face-to-face interviews were suspended due to the pandemic resulting in a break in the NISCS time series.

4

Perceptions of Crime

4.3 Worry about crime and personal safety in Northern Ireland

Worry about becoming a victim of crime is measured by the survey in two ways: firstly, about specific crimes; and secondly, with regard to personal safety when alone after dark, either at home or walking in the local area.

Respondents to NISCS 2024/25 were asked how worried they were about becoming a victim of the following crimes using a four-point scale, ranging from 'very worried' to 'not at all worried':

- a. home being burgled
- b. being mugged and robbed
- c. physical attack by a stranger
- d. physical attack because of hate motivations
- e. rape
- f. theft of a car
- g. theft from a car

Two composite indicators for worry about car crime and violent crime are constructed from the responses to the individual car crime and violent crime questions. These composite indicators, together with the proportion of respondents who claimed to be 'very worried' about burglary, are given in Table 13.

For the worry about car crime indicator, responses to each car crime question of 'very worried' are awarded 2 points and 'fairly worried' 1 point. Those respondents scoring a combined 3 or 4 points are considered to have a high level of worry about car crime. This measure refers only to respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

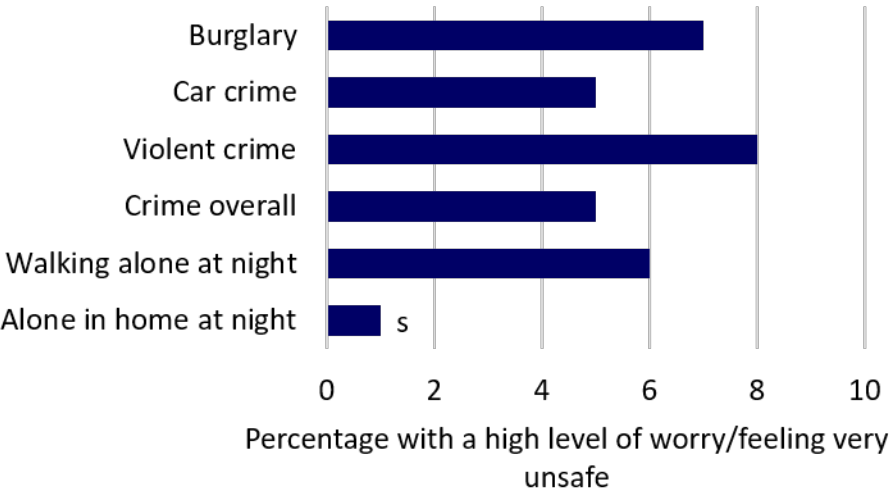
A similar approach is used to determine the worry about violent crime indicator, with responses to each violent crime question of 'very worried' being awarded 2 points and 'fairly worried' 1 point. In this instance, the scale ranges from 0 to 8 points and those scoring 4 or more points are deemed to have a high level of worry about violent crime.

Respondents were also asked how worried they are about becoming a victim of (all types of) crime in general, using the same four-point scale ('very worried' to 'not at all worried'). Responses to this question are also included within Table 13.

4 | Perceptions of Crime

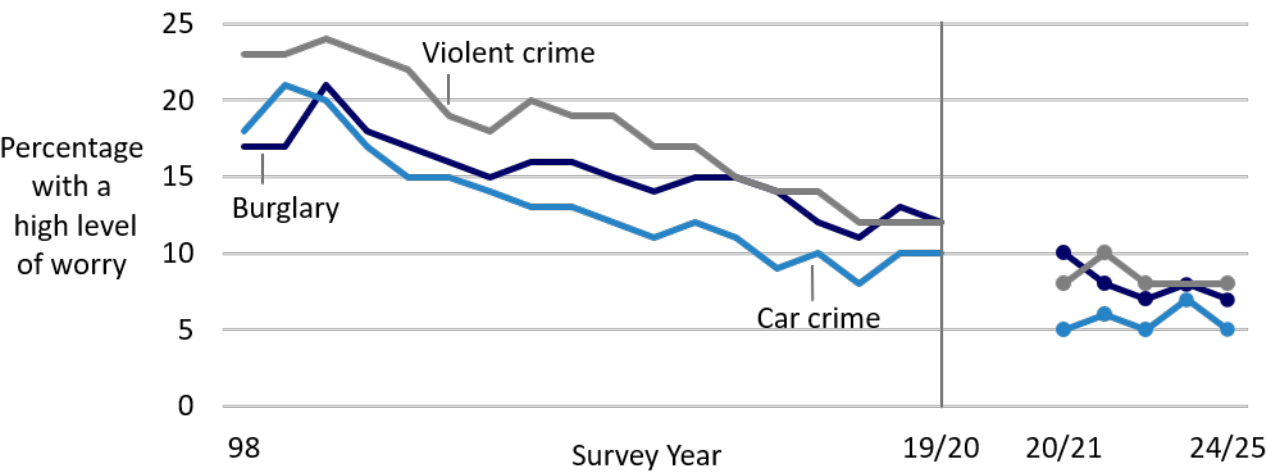
- Latest findings suggest none of the four worry about crime indicators showed a statistically significant change when compared with 2023/24. At 8% and 5% respectively, the rates for worry about violent crime and crime overall were unchanged from 2023/24 (also 8% and 5%), while the apparent decreases for burglary, from 8% to 7%, and car crime, from 7% to 5%, were not statistically significant. There have been very few year-on-year changes for these indicators over the last number of years and when latest findings are compared directly with 2020/21, only burglary has shown an overall change, falling from 10% to 7%.
- With regards to personal safety, 6% felt very unsafe while walking alone in their area after dark, while 1% felt very unsafe being home alone at night. For the latter, a statistically significant increase was observed over the last year, from 0.6% to 1.1%. While rounded figures, which are normally referenced, would suggest the rates are equivalent at 1% in both years, it is the unrounded figures upon which statistical significance is calculated and thus indicates a significant change.

Figure 4.3: Worry about crime and personal safety (%), 2024/25^{1,2,3}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Car crime refers to vehicle-owners only.
3. Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

Figure 4.4: Worry about crime (%), 1998 to 2024/25^{1,2,3}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Car crime refers to vehicle-owners only.
3. In 2020/21, face-to-face interviews were suspended due to the pandemic resulting in a break in the NISCS time series.

4 | Perceptions of Crime

4.4 Perceptions of the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life in Northern Ireland

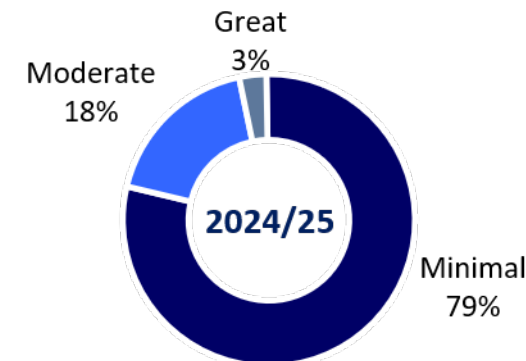
While a basic level of concern about crime may be beneficial in that it encourages people to take measures to reduce their likelihood of victimisation, ‘fear (about being a victim) of crime’ can become problematic if it has a detrimental impact on a person’s quality of life. Respondents were asked how much their own quality of life is affected by their ‘fear of crime’ 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 ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life:

- a. minimally affected (responded in the range 1 to 3)
- b. moderately affected (responded in the range 4 to 7)
- c. greatly affected (responded in the range 8 to 10)

Figures are presented in Table 14.

- The vast majority of respondents felt fear of crime has a minimal impact on their quality of life. The proportion has shown an improvement over the years, initially sitting at 73% in 2020/21 and 2021/22, rising to 76% for each of the following two years before showing a further increase to 79% in 2024/25. There has been an almost equivalent decrease in the moderate impact proportion, which has fallen from 23% to 18% over these years. The proportion claiming it has a great effect has been steady at around three or four percent each year since 2020/21.

Figure 4.5: Perceptions of the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life (%), 2024/25¹



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Summary: Perceptions of Crime

Respondents in 2024/25 were again more likely to believe that crime had increased at the Northern Ireland level (68%) than in their local area (23%). The proportion believing crime levels in Northern Ireland had increased has shown an overall rise from 55% in 2020/21. People using/dealing drugs (28%) and rubbish or litter lying around (26%) continued to be considered as the most problematic types of ASB in the local area. For worry about crime and personal safety, only one, the proportion who felt very unsafe while home alone at night, showed an increase, from 0.6% to 1.1%. Most respondents (79%) again reported that fear of crime has a minimal effect on their quality of life, an increase from 76% the previous year and up further from 73% in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

5.1 Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements

Modules were included in the survey which sought views on the police (both in Northern Ireland as a whole and the local area), police accountability arrangements and overall confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, an overview of which is given in this chapter.

A set of seven questions was asked of respondents which elicited views on the fairness and effectiveness of the police and police accountability arrangements. Figures from the 2024/25 NISCS are presented for these seven indicators in Table 15 and are based on the proportions of respondents who stated that they:

- a. have some, a lot or total confidence in the ability of the police to provide an ordinary day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland
- b. think the police do a very or fairly good job in Northern Ireland as a whole
- c. believe the police treat Catholic and Protestant members of the public equally in Northern Ireland as a whole
- d. think the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) is independent of the police
- e. think the Policing Board helps ensure that the police do a good job
- f. think the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI) is independent of the police
- g. think the Police Ombudsman helps ensure that the police do a good job

This set of seven questions is then used to construct an overall confidence rating (composite measure). In constructing the composite measure, greater weight is given to the three police indicators (a to c, above), so that the arithmetic mean of their individual confidence ratings is worth two-thirds of the overall confidence rating. The respective means of those relating to the Policing Board (d and e), and the Police Ombudsman (f and g), each account for a sixth of the overall composite measure.

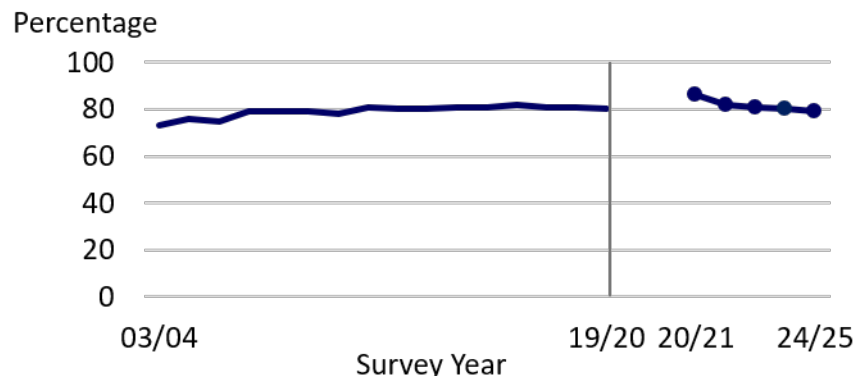
As a note of caution, this seven-strand composite measure should not be misinterpreted purely as personal ‘confidence in the police’ as its focus is much broader including not only the performance of the police per se but also accountability measures put in place following recommendations set out in the Patten Report to reform policing in Northern Ireland.

5

Perceptions of Policing and Justice

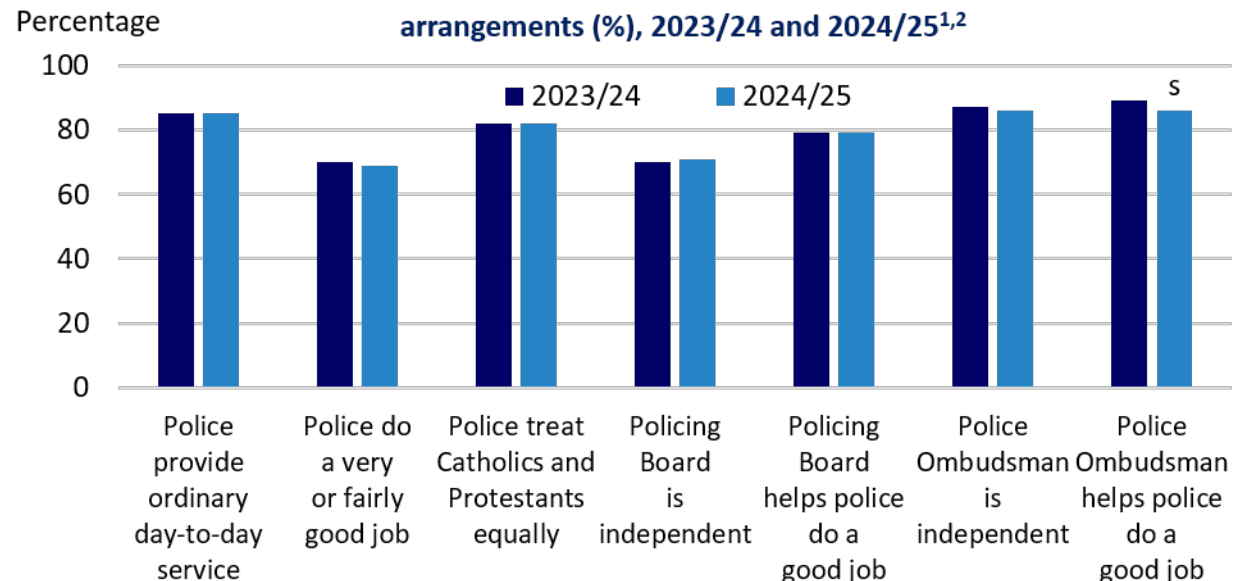
- In 2024/25, almost four-in-five (79%) respondents had confidence in policing (composite measure) in Northern Ireland. While similar to the previous year, 80%, the rating has shown an overall decrease from 86% in 2020/21. Much of this reduction occurred in the early telephone years, between 2020/21 and 2021/22, when the figure fell from 86% to 82% and was a result of statistically significant decreases in six of the seven strands that make up this overall policing measure. The further reduction since 2021/22 has mainly been due to an accumulation of non-significant decreases.
- In terms of the seven individual indicators, only one showed a statistically significant change from last year. The proportion believing the Police Ombudsman helps the police do a good job fell from 89% to 86%. Six of the seven indicators showed an overall decrease when compared with 2020/21, again, this generally occurred between 2020/21 and 2021/22, with few year-on-year changes thereafter and any further decrease mainly a result of non-significant changes.

Figure 5.1: Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements (%), 2003/04 to 2024/25^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. In 2020/21, face-to-face interviews were suspended due to the pandemic resulting in a break in the NISCS time series.

Figure 5.2: Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements (%), 2023/24 and 2024/25^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

5 | Perceptions of Policing and Justice

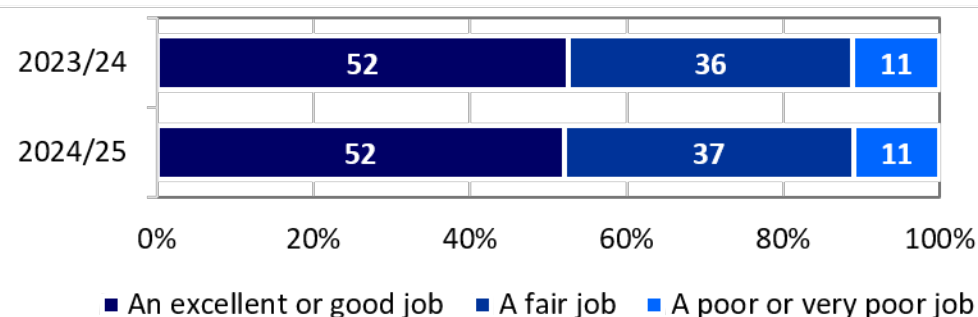
5.2 Ratings and perceptions of the local police

In addition to policing in Northern Ireland as a whole, the NISCS measured perceptions of the local police, both in general terms as well as in specific aspects of their work. Table 16 considers perceptions of police performance in the local area in Northern Ireland based on the question ‘Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?’. The response options were excellent, good, fair, poor and very poor.

It should be noted that this question and its response options differ from those covered by the similar question in the previous section ‘Do you think the police do a good job or a poor job in Northern Ireland as a whole?’ (Section 5.1, Table 15). The focus in this section is on the local rather than on the regional area. It is also possible that, in terms of the local police question, some respondents may have interpreted the middle option (‘a fair job’) as a positive or satisfactory response, while viewing the ‘neither a good nor a poor job’ middle option within the previous composite measure question as a neutral response. This may partially explain the lower confidence ratings produced by the question on the local police.

- Latest NISCS findings show just over half, 52%, of respondents rated their local police as doing an excellent or good job, 37% rated their performance as fair, while the remaining 11% of participants perceived local police as doing a poor or very poor job.
- There was no change in these proportions when compared with 2023/24 figures though the excellent or good job rating has fallen from 62% in 2020/21. Similar to the overall confidence rating in section 5.1, a large part of this decrease happened in the initial telephone years between 2020/21 and 2021/22 when the figure fell from 62% to 55%, with the seeming decreases in subsequent years not being statistically significant.
- Consequently, the reduction in the excellent/good proportion has resulted in both the fair and poor or very poor ratings increasing overall between 2020/21 and 2024/25, from 32% to 37% and 6% to 11% respectively, with most of the change occurring between the first two telephone years.

**Figure 5.3: Ratings of local police performance (%),
2023/24 and 2024/25^{1,2}**



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

5 | Perceptions of Policing and Justice

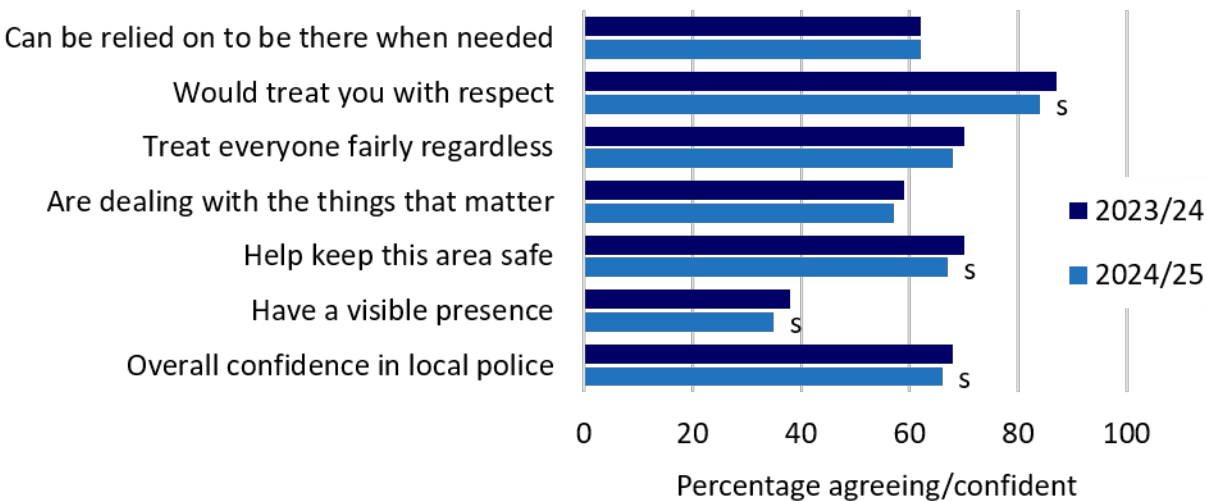
Table 17 gives the proportions of respondents who claimed they ‘strongly agree’ or ‘tend to agree’ with seven statements concerning the local police. The first six of these (a to f, below) are ‘funnel-type’ questions, designed to help generate a more considered response to the seventh, overall confidence measure (g, below). The statements are, the local police:

- a. can be relied on to be there when you need them
- b. would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason
- c. treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are
- d. are dealing with the things that matter to this community
- e. help keep this area safe
- f. have a visible presence in this area
- g. taking everything into account, I have confidence in the police in this area

The alternative response options were: ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘tend to disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. Although this presented a neutral option, the emphasis here on specific aspects of local police activity may have contributed to some confidence ratings being lower than those indicators comprising the seven-strand composite measure, which concern general police performance and behaviour at the Northern Ireland level.

- Around two-thirds (66%) expressed overall confidence in their local police, a statistically significant decrease from 68% the previous year. The rate of 66% is the lowest rating since 2020/21 when three-quarters, 75%, of respondents had confidence in the police in their area.
- Three of the six statements showed a statistically significant decrease from last year; the local police would treat you with respect, fell from 87% to 84%, they help keep this area safe, from 70% to 67%, and have a visible presence in this area, from 38% to 35%. The latter indicator has generated the lowest ratings every year since 2020/21 but had remained relatively stable before this decrease. Confidence levels for all six statements have fallen from 2020/21. As has been the case with other indicators, for most of the statements, a fair portion of the decrease was observed in the early telephone years.

Figure 5.4: Confidence in the local police (%), 2023/24 and 2024/25^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

5 | Perceptions of Policing and Justice

5.3 Confidence in community engagement by the local police and partnership agencies

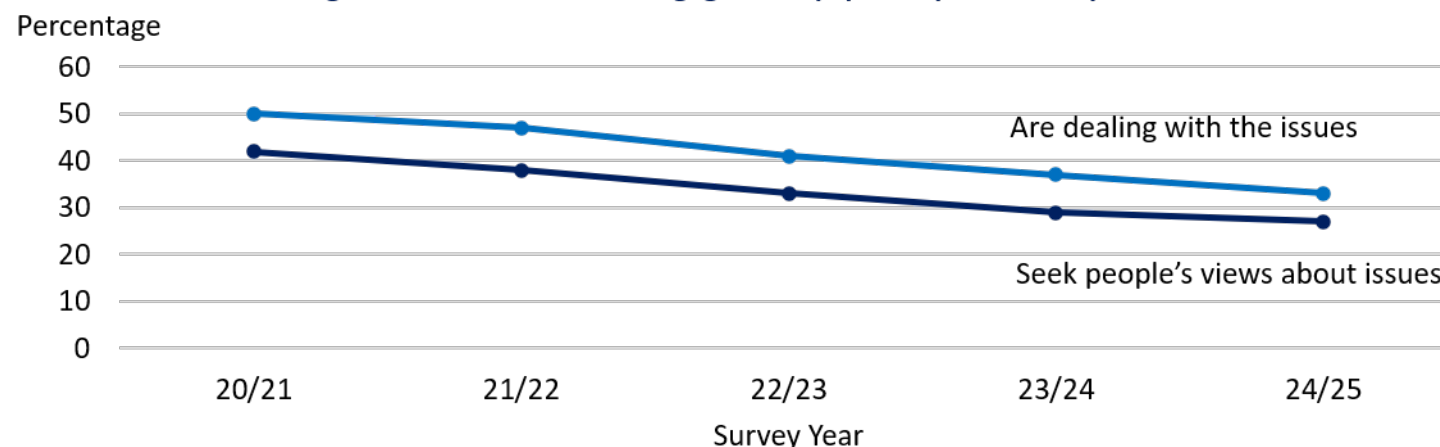
The NISCS measured levels of public confidence in the local police and other agencies working in partnership on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues. Focus is on the proportion of respondents who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘tend to agree’ that the local police and other agencies, including Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and district councils:

- a. seek people’s views about the ASB and crime issues that matter in this area
- b. are dealing with the ASB and crime issues that matter in this area

The alternative response options for these questions are ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘tend to disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. Results for these two questions have been combined to form a single engagement composite measure (‘Overall confidence in engagement’), figures for which are presented in Table 18.

- In 2024/25, 27% of respondents agreed that the local police and other agencies seek people’s views about the ASB and crime issues that matter, with 33% agreeing that these issues are being dealt with. The overall confidence in engagement (composite measure) was therefore 30% over this period.
- Since 2020/21, confidence in engagement has been on the decline though this has been more gradual rather than a large portion occurring in the earlier years, as was the case with some previous confidence indicators. While the 2024/25 proportion who felt views are being sought showed no statistically significant change since 2023/24 (29%), year-on-year decreases were observed prior to this with this latest figure of 27% being an overall decrease from 42% in 2020/21. The proportion who felt issues were being dealt with also saw decreases in recent years, which has continued into 2024/25; the figure has fallen to 33% from 37% the previous year and is even lower than the 50% observed in 2020/21.

Figure 5.5: Confidence in engagement (%), 2020/21 to 2024/25¹



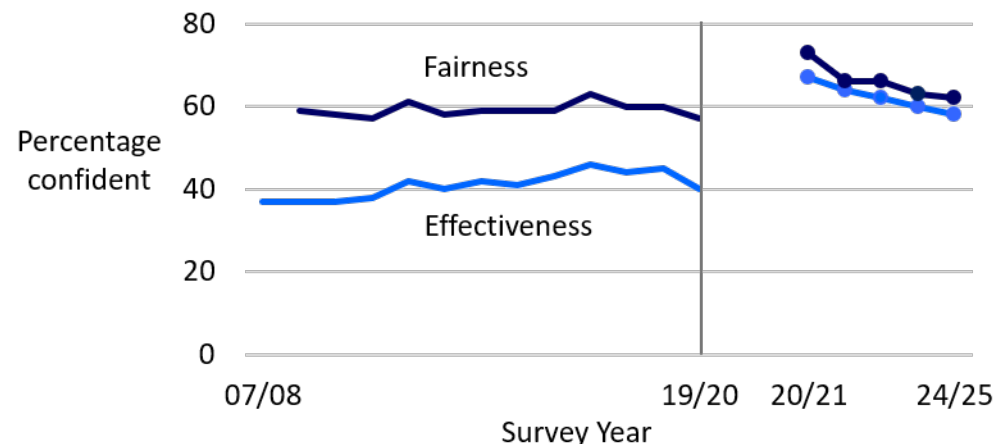
1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

5.4 Confidence in the overall fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system

Respondents were also asked two separate questions regarding how confident they were that the criminal justice system (CJS) in Northern Ireland as a whole is fair and effective. Both questions used a four-point scale with the response options of 'very confident', 'fairly confident', 'not very confident' and 'not at all confident' offered. Results are included in Table 19.

- The proportion who felt the CJS as a whole is fair was 73% in 2020/21, before dropping to 66% in 2021/22. It remained at 66% in 2022/23 before falling further to 63% in 2023/24. The latest 2024/25 figure of 62% was on a par with 2023/24, showing no statistically significant change.
- For the effectiveness rating there have been no year-on year decreases, instead the overall reduction in confidence levels, from 67% in 2020/21 to 58% in 2024/25, has again been due to a combination of non-significant decreases.

Figure 5.6: Confidence in the overall fairness and effectiveness of the CJS (%), 2007/08 to 2024/25^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. In 2020/21, face-to-face interviews were suspended due to the pandemic resulting in a break in the NISCS time series.

Summary: Perceptions of Policing and Justice

Latest findings have shown that confidence in policing, both in the local police and policing in Northern Ireland as a whole, has generally fallen since 2020/21. While only one of the police and police accountability indicators and four of the seven local police indicators showed a decrease from last year, they are all lower than the respective 2020/21 figures, with a fair proportion of the decrease occurring in the early telephone years. Confidence in engagement is also declining. The proportion who felt views are being sought (27%), while similar to last year, saw year-on-year decreases prior to this. The proportion who felt issues are being dealt with (33%) continued to decrease with this latest year showing a further reduction. Confidence in the fairness (62%) and effectiveness (58%) of the CJS measures have also both shown a decrease of at least ten percentage points from 2020/21.

6

Perceptions of Organised Crime

6.1 How widespread organised crime is in the local area and the extent of change in the past 12 months

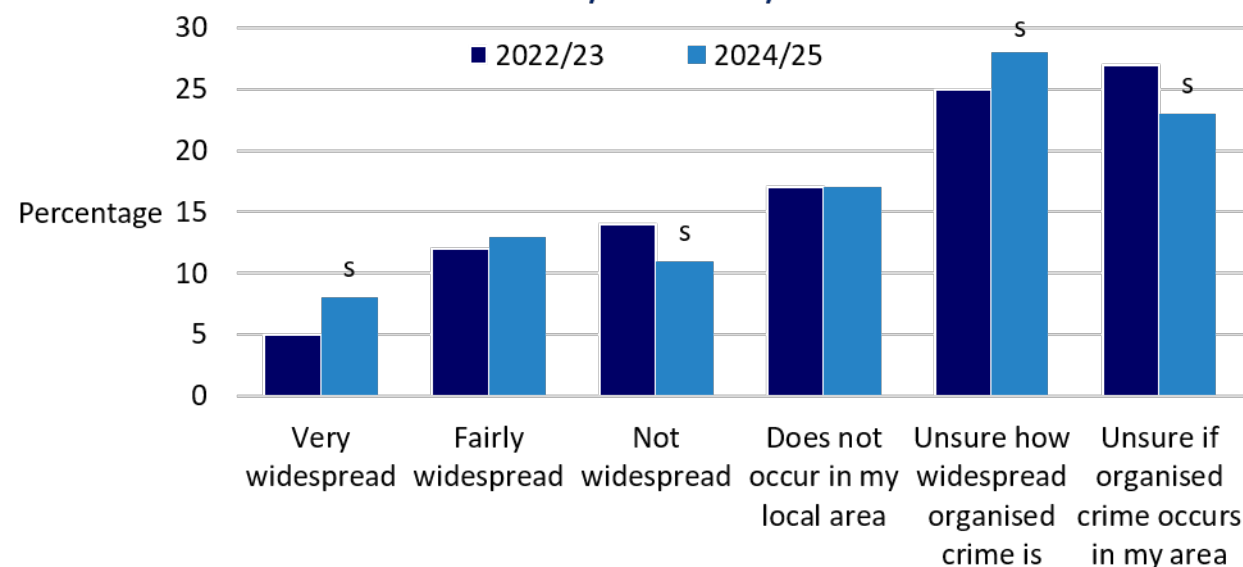
A number of questions were also included in the survey to gauge perceptions of organised crime and paramilitary groups. As a biennial module the questions have been included in the 2020/21, 2022/23 and 2024/25 survey years.

Respondents were initially asked how widespread organised crime was in their local area, figures for which are given in Table 20. The response options were 'very widespread', 'fairly widespread', 'not widespread' and 'does not occur in my local area'. A further two response options, 'I know organised crime occurs in my area but not sure how widespread it is' and 'unsure if organised crime occurs in my area' were also included for respondents who were uncertain as to how prevalent it is. The proportions who considered it to be very or fairly widespread have been combined into an overall 'widespread' figure.

- Following a decrease from 21% to 17% between 2020/21 and 2022/23, the proportion who considered organised crime to be widespread in their area has increased again to 20% in 2024/25. This was due to an increase in the proportion who considered it to be very widespread, from 5% to 8%.
- The proportion who said it does not occur in their area remained consistent with 2022/23, both at 17%.

- Similar to the previous two surveys, a considerable proportion were unsure as to the extent of organised crime in their area. This is comprised of 28% who knew organised crime occurred but were unsure as to how widespread it was and 23% who did not know whether or not it occurred in their local area.

Figure 6.1: How widespread organised crime is in the local area (%), 2022/23 and 2024/25^{1,2,3}



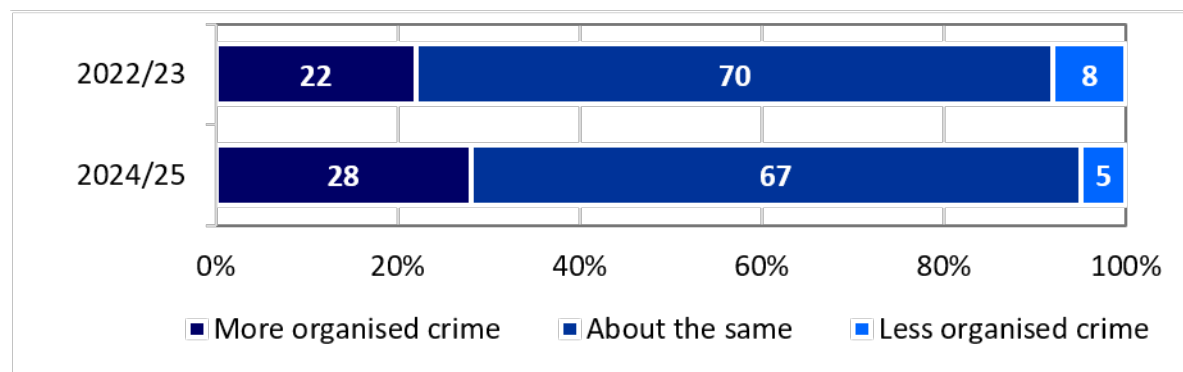
- Results exclude refusals.
- Figures for each of the individual response options may not sum to 100 or total those referenced in the text due to rounding.
- Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

Participants were then asked about the extent to which organised crime had changed in their local area in the past 12 months, using a five-point scale ranging from ‘a lot more’ to ‘a lot less’ organised crime. The proportions perceiving there to be either ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’ more organised crime comprise the overall ‘more organised crime’ figure included in Table 21.

- As was the case in 2020/21 and 2022/23, the majority of 2024/25 respondents, 67%, felt the level of organised crime was unchanged over the previous 12 months, while almost three-in-ten (28%) believed there was more in their local area. The overall more crime figure of 28% has increased from 22% in 2022/23, with the proportion who believed there was ‘a lot more’ rising from 9% to 12%. The remaining five percent of 2024/25 participants thought there was less organised crime than 12 months ago.

Figure 6.2: Extent to which organised crime has changed in the local area in the past 12 months (%), 2022/23 and 2024/25^{1,2}



- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- Figures for each of the individual response options may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Figure 6.3: More and less organised crime breakdowns (%), 2024/25^{1,2}

28% More organised crime	5% Less organised crime
12% A lot more	2% A lot less
15% A little more	3% A little less

- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- Figures for each of the individual response options may not sum to the overall totals due to rounding.

6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

6.2 Extent of, and harm caused by, different crime types associated with organised crime

Respondents who had indicated that organised crime occurs in their local area were then asked a set of questions regarding the extent to which certain crime types, that could be associated with organised crime, occur in their local area. More specifically, respondents were asked in turn about each of the following:

- a. drug dealing
- b. armed robbery
- c. fuel laundering/fuel smuggling (excise fraud)
- d. cigarette/tobacco smuggling (excise fraud)
- e. trading in counterfeit/stolen goods
- f. protection/extortion/racketeering
- g. illegal money lending/loan sharks
- h. modern slavery (including human trafficking)
- i. prostitution
- j. illegal waste dumping

The response options for these questions were ‘widespread’, ‘some extent’, ‘little extent’ and ‘does not happen in my local area’. ‘I know it occurs in my area but not sure of the extent of it’ and ‘unsure if this occurs in my area’ options were also included. Results are presented in Table 22. The ‘widespread’ proportions by crime type, for each of the three survey years, 2020/21, 2022/23 and 2024/25, are presented in Table 22a.

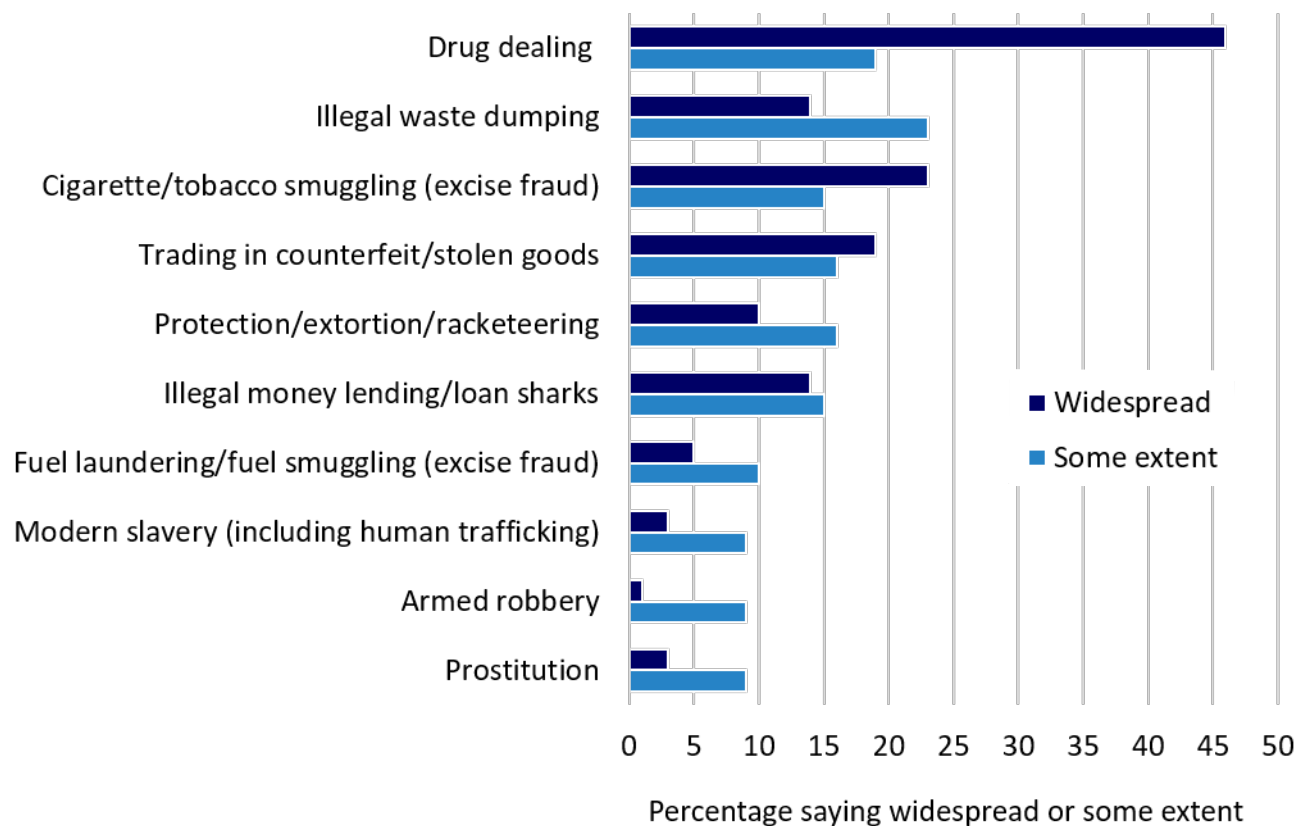
Respondents who identified a crime type as occurring in their area (that is they responded it was widespread, occurring to some extent or little extent) were then asked a follow-up question with regards to the level of harm they felt it caused. A separate harm question was asked for each crime type identified. The alternative response options were ‘extremely harmful’, ‘fairly harmful’ and ‘little harm’. Figures are given in Table 23, with the combined extremely and fairly harmful proportions for 2020/21, 2022/23 and 2024/25 in Table 23a. Given both of these sets of questions were asked only of a subset of respondents, the subsequent smaller sample sizes should be taken into account when considering these findings.

6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

Extent of the different crime types

- Of the ten different crime types examined, respondents were more likely to say that drug dealing was either widespread (46%) or occurred to some extent (19%) in their local area. In contrast, armed robbery, modern slavery (including human trafficking) and prostitution were among the crime types least likely to be considered by respondents as being widespread or occurring to some extent.
- The widespread proportions increased for most crime types between 2022/23 and 2024/25, fuel laundering/fuel smuggling, modern slavery and prostitution were the only ones to remain on a par with the previous year.
- For eight of the ten crime types asked about, a substantial proportion of respondents were unsure as to whether it happened in their area with at least a fifth, and almost two-fifths for some, providing the 'unsure if this occurs in my area' response. The exceptions were drug dealing and illegal waste dumping where the proportions who were unsure were 7% and 16% respectively.

Figure 6.4: Extent to which different crime types associated with organised crime occur in the local area (%), 2024/25¹



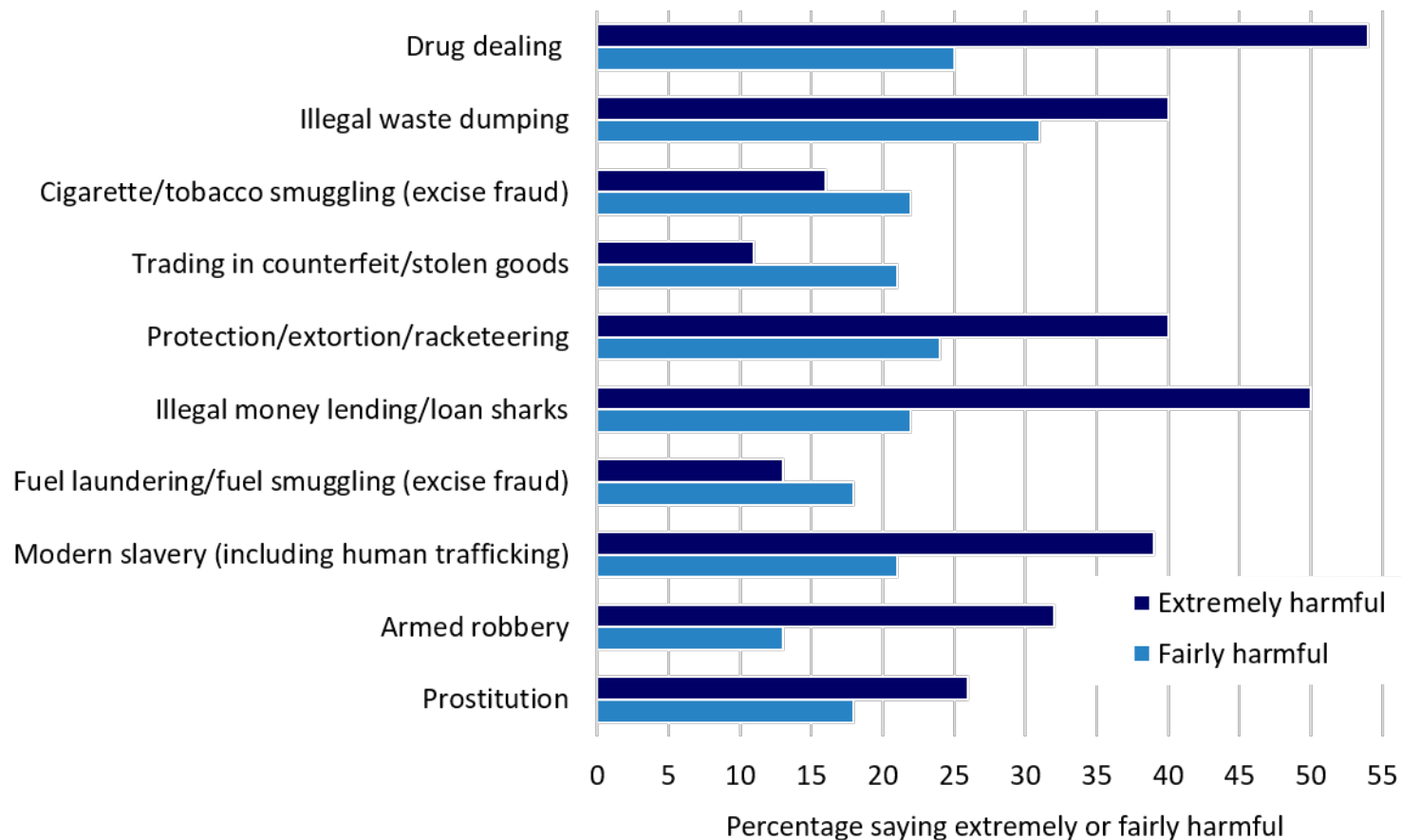
1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

Harm caused by the different crime types

- Findings show that, when the ‘extremely harmful’ and ‘fairly harmful’ response options are combined, drug dealing at 79%, illegal waste dumping and illegal money lending/loan sharks, both 72%, were among the crime types most likely to be considered harmful to the local area. The lowest proportions were observed for fuel laundering/fuel smuggling and trading in counterfeit/stolen goods with each at 31%.
- Of the respondents who reported that drug dealing occurred in their area, around one-in-eight (12%) felt it caused little harm, with the equivalent figure for illegal waste dumping at 18% and for illegal money lending/loan sharks at 14%.
- When the combined extremely and fairly harmful proportions are compared with 2022/23, results suggest there were statistically significant changes for four of the crime types considered. The proportions who felt cigarette/tobacco smuggling, trading in counterfeit/stolen goods, fuel laundering/fuel smuggling (excise fraud) and prostitution to be harmful each fell between 2022/23 and 2024/25.

Figure 6.5: Harm caused by different crime types associated with organised crime (%), 2024/25¹



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

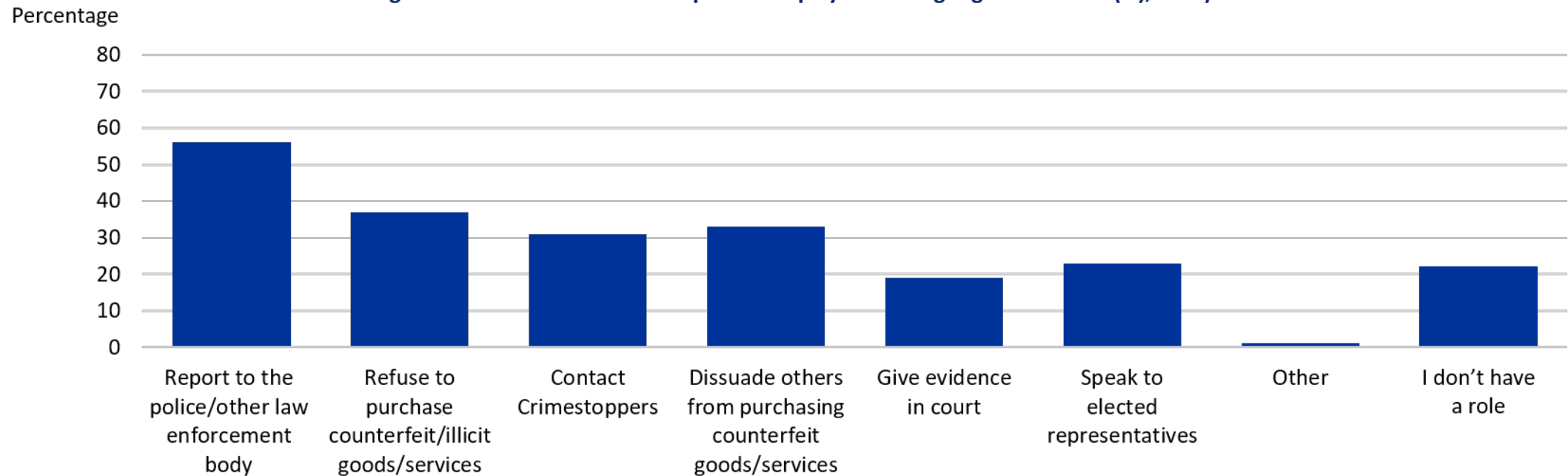
6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

6.3 Role members of the public can play in tackling organised crime

Views were also sought from NISCS participants on the role, if any, members of the public, including themselves, can play in tackling organised crime. Respondents could select more than one response. Figures are presented in Table 24.

- When asked about the role of the public, the most common response, cited by 56% of respondents, was to report it to the police or other law enforcement body. Refusing to purchase counterfeit or illicit goods or services and dissuading others to do also were both common responses, selected by 37% and 33% of respondents respectively. Over a fifth (22%) of respondents felt that they didn't have a role to play in tackling organised crime.

Figure 6.6: Role members of the public can play in tackling organised crime (%), 2024/25¹



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

6

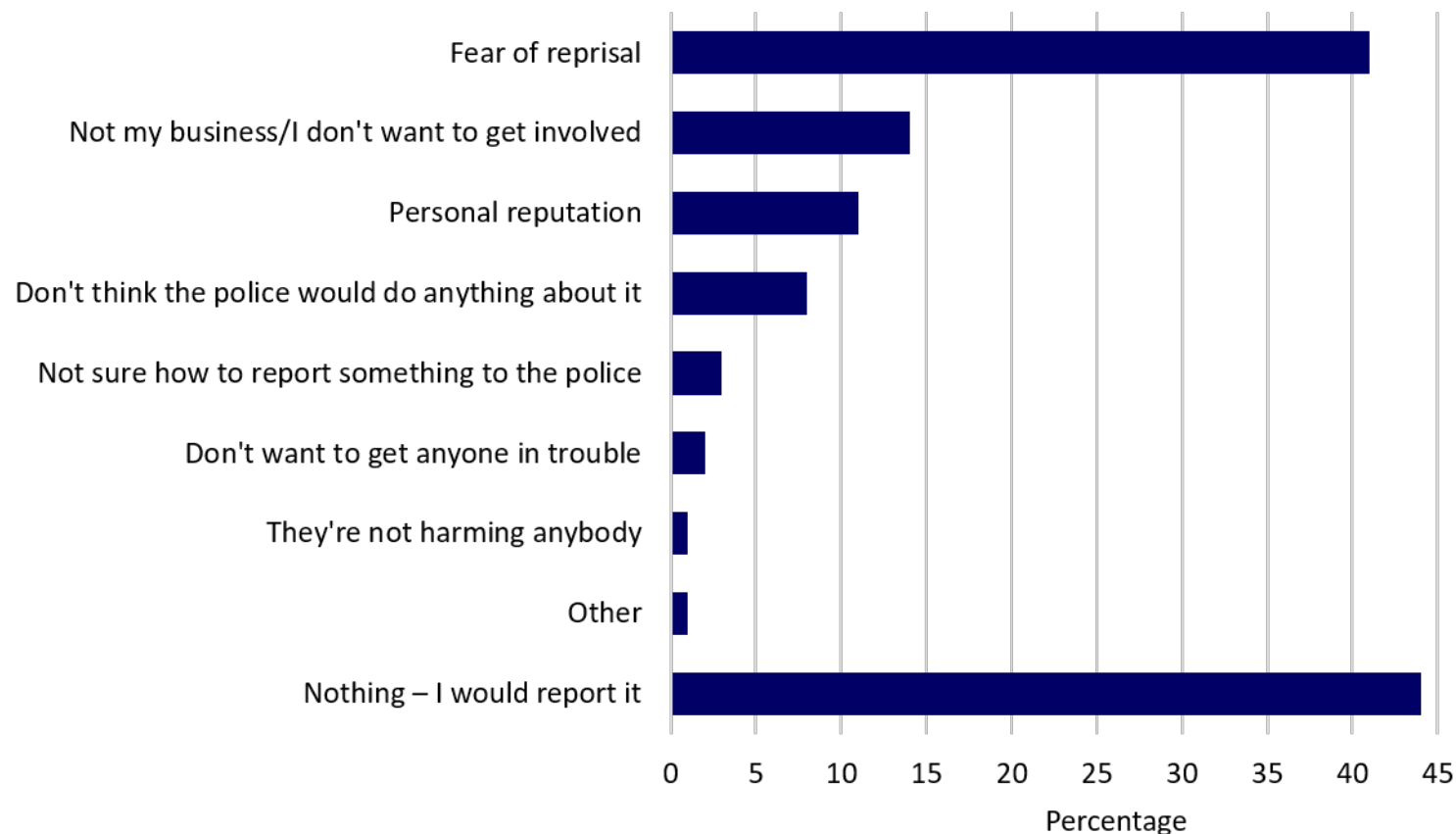
Perceptions of Organised Crime

6.4 Reporting an incident linked to organised crime

Respondents were then asked to select from a list, the reason(s) that would prevent them from reporting an incident, or suspected incident, linked to organised crime to the police. The list included an option for respondents who felt nothing would prevent them from reporting an incident. Findings are presented in Table 25.

- Over two-fifths (44%) of respondents stated that nothing would prevent them from reporting an incident, or suspected incident, of organised crime to the police. For those who did provide a reason as to why they would not contact police, fear of reprisal was by far the most likely reason to be given, cited by 41% of participants. This was followed by not my business/I don't want to get involved at 14% and personal reputation at 11%. Less than one-in-ten selected each of the remaining reasons offered to respondents.

Figure 6.7: What would prevent respondents from reporting an incident linked to organised crime to the police (%), 2024/25^{1,2}



- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- Respondents could select more than one response.

6

Perceptions of Organised Crime

6.5 Perceptions of paramilitary groups

Within the organised crime module, respondents' perceptions of paramilitary groups were also measured. More specifically, respondents were asked about how widespread paramilitary activity is in their local area, any links between organised crime and ongoing paramilitary activity, the level of paramilitary influence and how they would describe this influence. Figures are presented in Tables 26 to 29.

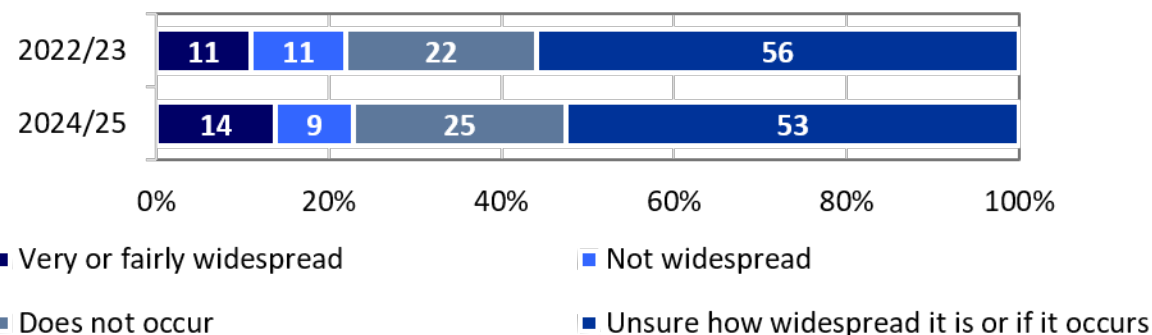
How widespread paramilitary activity is in the local area

When asked how widespread paramilitary activity was in their area, the same response options were offered as the equivalent organised crime question (section 6.1). The proportions who considered it to be very or fairly widespread have been combined into an overall 'widespread' figure.

- Findings for 2024/25 indicate that around 14% of respondents felt paramilitary activity was widespread in their area, up from the 2022/23 figure of 11%.
- There was also a statistically significant increase in the proportion who knew paramilitary activity occurred in their area but were unsure as to how widespread it was, increasing from 21% in 2022/23 to 24% in 2024/25. The proportion who were unsure whether it occurred at all, however, fell from 34% to 29%. Together, these continued to represent a substantial proportion of respondents who were unsure about the prevalence in their area.

- At 25%, the proportion who said paramilitary activity did not occur also rose, from 22% in 2022/23. While this may appear to contradict the aforementioned increases, including the rise in the proportion who said it was widespread, the changes may in part be due to the decrease in those who were unsure as to whether it occurred at all and, who may have instead, chosen one of the alternative response options.

Figure 6.8: How widespread paramilitary activity is in the local area (%), 2022/23 and 2024/25^{1,2}



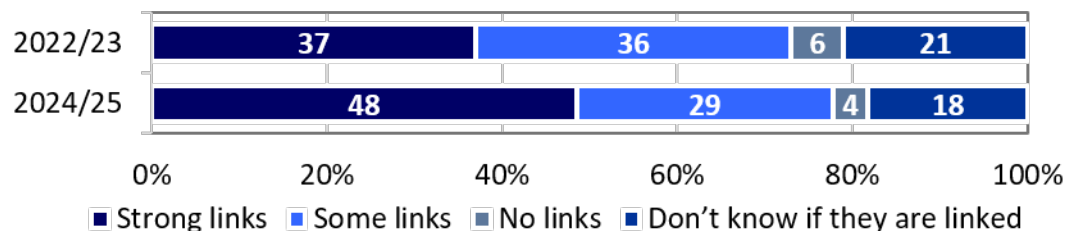
- Results exclude refusals.
- Percentages may not sum to 100 or total those referenced in the text due to rounding.

Links between organised crime and paramilitary activity

Asked of respondents who believed paramilitary activity occurred to at least some extent, views were then sought on whether they believed there were links between it and organised crime, results for which are given in Table 27. The alternative response options were 'there are strong links between the two', 'there are some links between the two', 'there are no links between the two, they are totally separate' and 'don't know if they are linked'.

- The vast majority of 2024/25 participants considered there to be links between organised crime and paramilitary activity; 48% believed there were strong links and a further 29% perceived some links between them. The 'some links' proportion has shown two consecutive decreases, from 44% to 36% between 2020/21 and 2022/23, and then to 29% in 2024/25. The proportion who believed the links are strong, while similar in 2020/21 and 2022/23 at 39% and 37% respectively, has increased to 48% in 2024/25.

Figure 6.9: Links between organised crime and ongoing paramilitary activity in the local area (%), 2022/23 and 2024/25^{1,2}



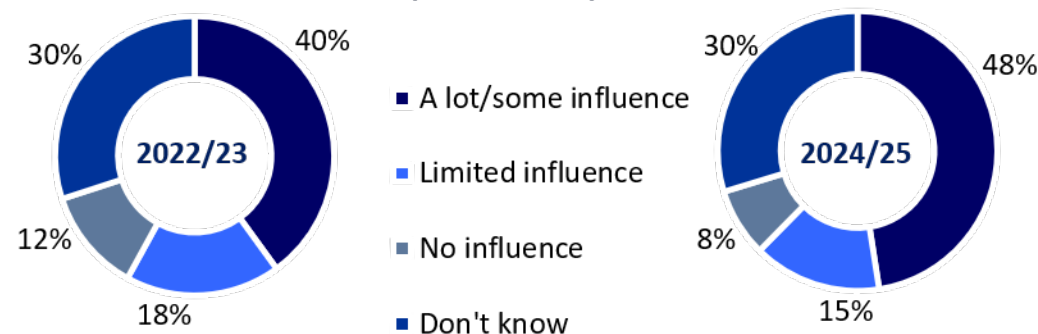
- Results exclude refusals.
- Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Level of paramilitary influence

This subset of respondents were also asked about the level of influence paramilitary groups have in their local area. Table 28 gives results for each of the response options, based on a four point scale ranging from 'a lot of influence' to 'no influence'. Again, an unsure of the level of influence option was also included.

- Respondents were more likely to consider paramilitary groups as having at least some influence in their area. Just over a quarter (26%) assessed this as 'some influence', with 22% considering it 'a lot of influence', the latter rising from 15% in 2022/23. Consequently, the proportions who perceive them to have limited or no influence have both fallen from 18% to 15% and 12% to 8% respectively.

Figure 6.10: Level of influence of paramilitary groups in the local area (%), 2022/23 and 2024/25^{1,2}



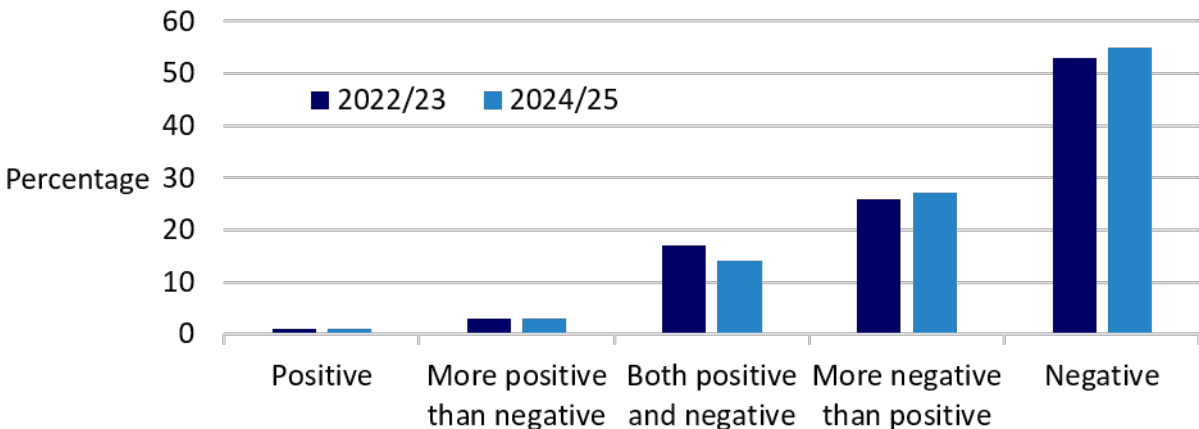
- Results exclude refusals.
- Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

Perceptions of the influence of paramilitary groups

- Respondents who considered paramilitary groups to have a lot or some influence in their area were subsequently asked how they would describe this influence, 55% of whom considered it a ‘negative’ influence. A further 27% felt the influence was ‘more negative than positive’. The proportions who viewed the influence as either positive or more positive than negative were substantially lower at 1% and 3% respectively. For all response options, findings were in line with 2022/23, however, the figure of 55% for those believing the influence is negative was higher than the 45% observed in 2020/21.

Figure 6.11: Description of influence of paramilitary groups in the local area (%), 2022/23 and 2024/25^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

Summary: Perceptions of Organised Crime

One-in-five (20%) respondents considered organised crime to be very or fairly widespread in their local area. This is up from 17% in 2022/23, as is the proportion who felt there was more organised crime than 12 months ago, up from 22% to 28%. A substantial proportion, 52%, were unsure how widespread organised crime was or whether it occurred in their area. Of the crime types considered, respondents were most likely to report drug dealing (65%) as being widespread or occurring to some extent in their area.

The majority of respondents, 56%, felt reporting it to police or other law enforcement was the main role the public could play in tackling organised crime, with fear of reprisal (41%) the main reason given as to why they would not report an incident linked to organised crime to police.

There continued to be a substantial proportion, over half in 2024/25 (53%), who were unsure as to how widespread paramilitary activity was in their area. The proportion considering it to be widespread increased from 11% to 14%.

Nearly half (48%) felt paramilitary groups had a lot or some influence in their area, 55% of whom described this influence as negative and a further 27% as more negative than positive.

Appendix 1: Technical Annex

Background to the 2024/25 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's Central Survey Unit (NISRA-CSU) is commissioned by the Department of Justice to undertake the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS). As a result of the pandemic, the NISCS could not be conducted through the traditional face-to-face interviews and, between 2020/21 and 2023/24, interviews had been conducted via telephone. Given the move to telephone mode, a substantial reduction was made to the length of the questionnaire as a whole with some modules subsequently being either shortened or removed in order to reduce completion time. This primarily affected the perception-based modules; the methodology for measuring respondents' experiences of victimisation was unchanged. The move also meant that results from 2020/21 onwards were not directly comparable with previous years.

From 2024/25, the survey moved to a mixed mode methodology, whereby respondents could opt for either a face-to-face or telephone interview. The self-completion module, which in 2024/25 captured experience of domestic abuse, was re-instated and asked of those opting for a face-to-face interview. Prior to the pandemic, the survey was known as the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey but had been referred to as the Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey for the 2020/21 to 2023/24 survey years. Given the change in survey methodology and that the survey is no longer solely using telephone interviews, the name from 2024/25 will revert back to the NISCS. However, data will still not be comparable with pre-2020/21 years. Further detail on the questionnaire content is given in the 'Points to note about this publication' section, presented later in this Appendix.

Sampling and fieldwork

Having been suspended in April, May and most of June 2020 as a result of the pandemic, telephone interviews commenced at the end of June 2020. Between April 2020 and June 2021, a letter was sent to each address inviting the resident to take part in the survey and those interested in participating were asked to register their interest online or to contact NISRA CSU directly. Expressions of interest were then passed to interviewers where an attempt was made to interview one randomly selected adult respondent at the address. As of July 2021, Knock-to-Nudge was introduced whereby a letter was issued to the sampled addresses and interviewers could call at the doorstep to obtain a contact number. Any interviews were then carried out by telephone via CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing). As referenced previously, from 2024/25 the survey moved to a mixed mode. This meant respondents had the choice of either a face-to-face or telephone interview. The initial NISCS 2024/25 sample consisted of 7,500 addresses, randomly selected from the NISRA Address Register (NAR). The NAR is developed within NISRA and is primarily based on the Land and Property Services (LPS) POINTER database. During 2024/25, visits to addresses by an interviewer from the NISRA Central Survey Unit resulted in an eligible sample of 6,990 occupied addresses. The response rate for productive interviews (containing both household details and interview with a selected respondent) was 48.7% of eligible addresses. This represents 3,407 completed interviews achieved with people aged 16 years and over.

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 smaller households.

Respondents were assured in advance of the interviews that any information they provided would be treated as entirely confidential and that the level of detail produced in publications or in any subsequent analyses would not allow for identification of individuals. The interviews typically lasted around half an hour for non-victims, although those involving respondents who disclosed they were victims of several crimes could last longer.

Measuring victimisation and limitations of NISCS data

Respondents to the survey were asked to recall all relevant incidents in the 12 full calendar months prior to the month of interview. Since the NISCS 2024/25 fieldwork period began in April 2024, this means that the valid recall periods commenced for some respondents as early as 1 April 2023 and finished for others as late as 28 February 2025 (a spread of 23 months). Any changes in the latest NISCS rates are, therefore, usually compared with 2022/23 police recorded crime figures. While results of the 2024/25 NISCS are generally comparable with those from 2020/21 to 2023/24 and not earlier sweeps of the face-to-face NISCS, the methodology by which respondents' experiences of victimisation were captured and derived has remained unchanged. Further information on the methodology used, as well as additional background information, such as the need for both recorded crime figures and the NISCS, can be found in the [NISCS User Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#), available from the NISCS section of the DoJ website.

Although the survey may shed light on the experience of victimisation:

- its coverage is restricted to non-fatal crimes against private households and their adult occupants (it excludes, for instance, homicide, crimes against children, fraud, crimes against businesses, organised crime and so-called 'victimless' crimes)
- it does not facilitate local crime pattern analysis
- it is subject to sampling and non-sampling errors (see [NISCS Quality Report \(opens in a new window\)](#) for further details)

Examples of non-sampling errors that respondents may introduce include making up an offence, failing to realise that an incident meets the criteria of the questions, failing to recall all incidents, being unable to remember whether an incident occurred within the reference period or not wanting to reveal their experiences as victims (for instance, sexual offences, domestic incidents and victimisation occurring as a consequence of a victim's own criminal involvement). Notably, the NISCS may undercount crimes where the victim and offender know each other, either because respondents do not think of these as 'real crimes' or they do not wish to disclose the details to an interviewer.

Demographic breakdowns

The following socio-demographic (personal, household and area) groups (listed below) are forthcoming and will be presented in the accompanying Microsoft Excel workbook and Open Data Source (ODS) tables only. Associated confidence intervals will also be presented. The first six relate to equality categories specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. religious belief | 5. household type (child dependants) | 9. type of area (urban / rural) |
| 2. age | 6. self-perceived nationality | 10. Local Government District |
| 3. sex (gender) | 7. housing tenure | 11. experience of crime reported to the police |
| 4. disability (or illness) | 8. household income | 12. multiple deprivation measure rank (MDM 2017) |

Rounding, error and statistical significance

Refusals and non-valid responses have been excluded from the analyses. Percentages may not always sum to 100 or numbers may not sum to an overall total due to the effect of rounding to the nearest whole number, or because respondents could give more than one response. Figures presented in the graphs within this bulletin have been rounded. Unrounded figures are available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and ODS versions of the Tabular Annex.

Due to a combination of both sampling and non-sampling error, any sample is unlikely to reflect precisely the characteristics of the population. Because NISCTS estimates are subject to sampling error, differences between estimates may occur by chance. For the purposes of this bulletin, 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. Only differences that are statistically significant are described as increases or decreases within this report. When figures are described as, for example, unchanged, in line with, similar to or on a par with, this indicates any apparent change is not statistically significant. Given the lower response rates and achieved sample sizes in the earlier years of telephone mode (when compared with the more recent face-to-face NISCS sweeps), the respective confidence limits of any percentages from the survey will also be wider than would be the case had a higher number of interviews been completed. This should be borne in mind, and caution should be taken when considering the results from the survey, particularly estimates which are based on follow-up questions that may only be asked of a smaller group of Respondents and when considering estimates of victimisation and the low number of victims upon which the estimates are based. Estimates drawn from the sample will be less precise, particularly for infrequent crimes, such as violent crime.

The Department of Justice does not routinely publish NISCS estimates where the unweighted base is less than 100 cases, therefore findings for some socio-demographic sub-groups (to be included in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and ODS workbooks) may not be published. Some findings for the socio-demographic sub-groups when examined may present as zero. These findings are based on the selected sample. They do not necessarily suggest that people in that area or among that group do not, for example, experience the crime type in question or worry about crime or personal safety.

Further information on the 2024/25 NISCS is contained within the accompanying Technical Report (forthcoming, via the NI Safe Community Survey section of the Northern Ireland Department of Justice website).

Points to note about this report

- Given the changes in survey mode, direct comparisons have not been made between findings from 2020/21 onwards and earlier NISCS surveys. Figures for previous years, however, have been included in some graphs to illustrate the trend prior to the break in the time series. Trend data, where available, are included within the accompanying Excel and ODS tables. The impact of the pandemic and change in data collection mode may also have changed behaviour and attitudes and how participants respond to the survey. This should be borne in mind when reviewing the figures and considering any changes outlined, for example the change in some perceptions of policing indicators during the early pandemic years. It is not known if any change is due to amendments in the methodology or changes in actual attitudes at that time. It may be the longer term before any emerging trends become evident.
- The lower sample size obtained in the first years of using telephone mode, particularly for 2020/21, will impact on the precision of the estimates derived and the level of detail that can be published. This is particularly so for figures related to crime victimisation, including figures on repeat victimisation, reporting rates and reasons for not reporting crime to the police. This should be taken into consideration and findings should therefore be viewed with caution.
- Earlier NISCS reports have presented comparable figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Due to methodological differences, comparisons have not been made with the 2024/25 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Further information on the [CSEW \(opens in a new window\)](#) can be found on the Office for National Statistics website.
- The content of the questionnaire was substantially reduced with some modules being shortened or removed. The following table gives a brief overview of the content of the 2024/25 NISCS. The self-completion Experience of Domestic Abuse module was re-instated and offered in face-to-face interviews.

NISCS 2024/25 – Content of Questionnaire

Module	
1. Household questions	
2. Perceptions of Crime and Anti-social Behaviour	• perceptions of change in crime levels • perceptions of anti-social behaviour in the local area • worry about crime and personal safety • effect of fear of crime on quality of life
3. Experience of Crime Screener Questions	
4. Experience of Crime Victim Forms	
5. Confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS)	• overall confidence in the fairness of the criminal justice system • overall confidence in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system
6. Confidence in the police	• confidence in local police • confidence in engagement • confidence in policing in Northern Ireland as a whole
7. Confidence in Police Accountability Arrangements	• Policing Board independence and whether it helps the police do a good job • Police Ombudsman independence and whether it helps the police do a good job
8. Perceptions of Organised Crime	• extent and harm caused by organised crime • perceptions of paramilitarism
9. Demography module	
10. Experience of Domestic Abuse	• measures experience of domestic abuse

Sample profile for NISCS 2024/25

Group	Sub-Group	Unweighted Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Sex	Men	1507	44.2	45.5
	Women	1900	55.8	54.5
Age Group	16 to 24	177	5.2	8.0
	25 to 34	413	12.1	12.6
	35 to 44	552	16.2	16.3
	45 to 54	488	14.3	15.7
	55 to 64	605	17.8	17.6
	65 to 74	631	18.5	17.0
	75 and over	541	15.9	12.8
Religion	Catholic	1352	39.7	40.3
	Protestant	1588	46.6	45.6
Area Type	Rural	1282	37.6	40.4
	Urban	2125	62.4	59.6
Policing District	Antrim and Newtownabbey	239	7.0	7.2
	Ards and North Down	336	9.9	8.9
	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	361	10.6	11.4
	Belfast	587	17.2	15.9
	Causeway Coast and Glens	288	8.5	8.7
	Derry City and Strabane	302	8.9	9.0
	Fermanagh and Omagh	217	6.4	6.8
	Lisburn and Castlereagh	242	7.1	6.9
	Mid and East Antrim	286	8.4	8.8
	Mid Ulster	259	7.6	8.3
	Newry, Mourne and Down	290	8.5	8.2
Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank ¹	1 st quintile (most deprived)	636	18.7	16.5
	2 nd quintile	667	19.6	19.6
	3 rd quintile	725	21.3	21.7
	4 th quintile	731	21.5	22.5
	5 th quintile (least deprived)	648	19.0	19.7
Vehicle-owning households		2799	82.2	86.8

1. Rank order of super output areas (derived from 2017 Multiple Deprivation Measure).

Appendix 2: Official Statistics Status

An Official Statistics publication

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics \(opens in a new window\)](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Further information can be found on the [Office for Statistics Regulation \(opens in a new window\)](#) website.

Appendix 3: References

Department of Justice (2023) [Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey User Guide \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Department of Justice (2023) [Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey Quality Report \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2025) [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2025 \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2025) [Police Recorded Crime Annual Trends 1998/99 to 2024/25 \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2025) [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(Updated November 2025\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)