

Findings from the 2022/23 Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey

M Beggs

March 2024



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1 | Summary Findings

This bulletin presents findings from modules contained within the Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey (NISCTS) 2022/23 which measure respondents' experience of crime and gauge views on perceptions of crime, perceptions of policing and justice and perceptions of organised crime.

Experience of Crime

- While results from the 2022/23 NISCTS indicate that most adults/households did not experience a crime asked about in the survey, the proportion showed a statistically significant increase when compared with the previous year. Latest findings estimate 5.1% were victims of at least one crime measured through the survey during the 12 months prior to interview, up from 3.8% in 2021/22. An estimated 80,000 incidents of crime occurred during the 12-month recall periods for NISCTS 2022/23.

Perceptions of Crime

- NISCTS 2022/23 respondents were again more positive in their perception of crime trends in their local area than at the regional level. Just over a fifth, 22%, believed local crime levels had increased in the preceding two years, a proportion which fell from 25% the previous year. This compares with 60% considering crime in Northern Ireland as a whole to have risen.
- Findings indicate that 6% of participants perceived the level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area to be high, similar to the 2021/22 figure of 7%. Two of the seven ASB strands considered showed a statistically significant decrease; the proportion viewing rubbish or litter lying around as a problem fell from 31% to 28%, while teenagers hanging around on streets fell from 15% to 12%.
- Around one-in-twelve (8%) respondents expressed a high level of worry about violent crime with a similar proportion, 7%, very worried about becoming a victim of burglary. Both showed a statistically significant decrease from the previous year, from 10% and 8% respectively. Of vehicle owners, 5% were very worried about becoming a victim of car crime.
- At 76%, the majority of 2022/23 respondents felt fear of crime has a minimal effect on their quality of life, an increase from 73% in 2021/22.

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 81% in 2022/23, on par with 82% in 2021/22. None of the seven indicators that comprise the composite measure showed a statistically significant change over the same period.
- In terms of the local police, findings suggest that, in 2022/23, 54% rated their local police as doing an excellent or good job, on par with 55% in 2021/22. When asked about overall confidence in their local police, 70% felt that, when taking everything into account, they had confidence in the police in their area, similar to the previous year (72%).
- With regards to community engagement, decreases were observed in the proportions agreeing that the police and other agencies seek people's views about the anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues that matter and that these issues are being dealt with, falling from 38% to 33% and 47% to 41% 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 62% while the proportion considering it to be fair was 66%. Both proportions were similar to those observed the previous year, 64% and 66% respectively.

Perceptions of Organised Crime

- Around one-in-six (17%) considered organised crime to be very or fairly widespread in their local area, a statistically significant decrease from 21% in 2020/21. Just over a fifth (22%) believed the level of organised crime had increased in their area over the previous 12 months. When asked about the role members of the public, including themselves, can play in tackling organised crime, the most common response, given by 58% of respondents, was to report it to police or other law enforcement bodies.
- In terms of paramilitary activity, there was a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of respondents who felt paramilitary activity was widespread in their area, falling from 15% in 2020/21 to 11% in 2022/23.
- Two-fifths (40%) felt paramilitary groups had either some or a lot of influence in their local area, 53% of whom described it as a 'negative' influence, while a further 26% 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 adults living in private households throughout Northern Ireland. Traditionally, the NISCS had been a face-to-face interview survey. Following government advice on Covid-19, however, face-to-face interviews were suspended in March 2020 and interviews have subsequently been conducted via telephone since 2020/21. As a result, a shorter questionnaire has been asked to reduce completion time; 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 will be considered as discrete survey years and referred to as the Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Surveys (NISCTS). This bulletin focuses on findings from 2022/23; [findings for the previous two years \(opens in a new window\)](#) have already been published and reference to them may be made, where appropriate.

Given the reduced questionnaire and change in survey mode, and similar to the format adopted for the previous two years, three annual reports that would normally have been published separately have been merged into this combined report for 2022/23. These annual reports are entitled: Experience of Crime; Perceptions of Crime; and Perceptions of Policing and Justice. 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 2020/21 when the module was last included.

This bulletin therefore presents findings on: 1. experience of crime; 2. perceptions of crime (including anti-social behaviour); and 3. confidence in policing and in the fairness and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System; and 4. perceptions of organised crime (including paramilitary activity).

Results are based on a sample of 3,413 respondents (aged 16+). 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, the move to a telephone survey and survey methodology for 2022/23 is available in the Technical Annex (Appendix 1).

Note:

The estimates contained within this report are the best estimates derived from the 2022/23 survey on the extent of crime and public perceptions. The move to telephone mode and changes to the questionnaire mean results for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 will not be directly comparable with previous years. However, figures for earlier years are presented in some graphs within this bulletin to illustrate the trend prior to the break in the time series. Results for previous NISCS surveys are also included, where applicable, in the accompanying Excel and ODS tables.

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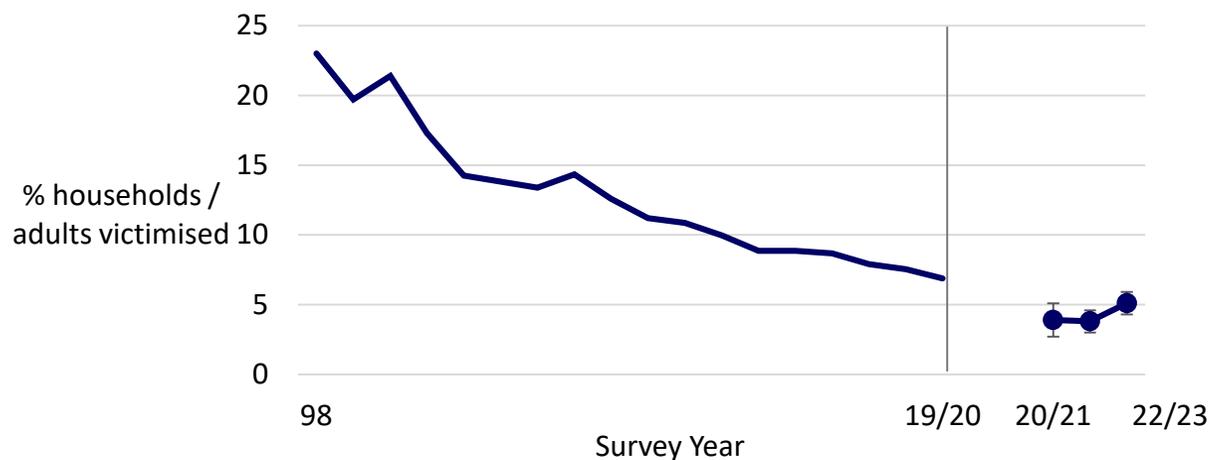
Experience of Crime

3.1 Crime victimisation (prevalence) rates for all offences

This chapter provides an overview of crime victimisation rates derived from the 2022/23 NISCTS, both prevalence rates and incident numbers. Table 1 contains best (i.e. the average or mean), lower and higher estimates of crime victimisation (prevalence) rates per household or adult in Northern Ireland for the main NISCTS crime categories during the 12 full calendar months immediately preceding each 2022/23 interview. Table 2 provides comparable figures for 2020/21 and 2021/22 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 2022/23 NISCTS suggest that most households/adults had not been a victim of any of the crime types covered by the survey. The proportion of 2022/23 respondents indicating that they had experienced crime (any NISCTS crime rate) was 5.1%, a statistically significant increase from the 2021/22 figure of 3.8%.
- In terms of the proportions who had been a victim of any household crime and any personal crime, estimates suggest that the respective rates were 4.3% and 1.3%. Neither showed a statistically significant change when compared with those observed in 2021/22, 3.5% and 1.0% respectively.
- While the estimates derived from the last three survey years, 2020/21 to 2022/23, are not directly comparable with rates observed through NISCS sweeps prior to this, the estimates for the any NISCTS crime prevalence rate lie 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 2019/20 and any NISCTS crime 2020/21 to 2022/23^{1,2,3}



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

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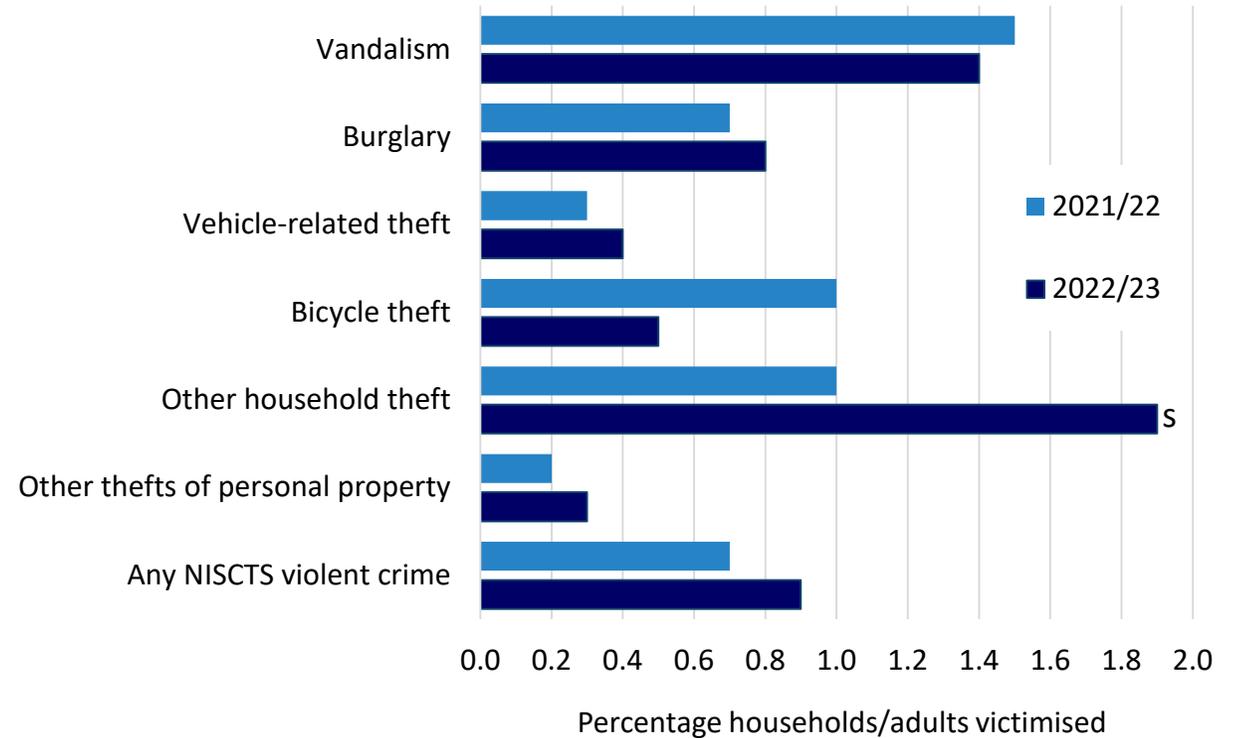
Experience of Crime

3.2 Crime victimisation (prevalence) rates by offence category

For the main offence categories considered and with the exception of other household theft, victimisation (prevalence) rates for NISCTS 2022/23 were generally on a par with those experienced in 2021/22.

- Latest findings indicate that a statistically significant increase occurred in the prevalence rate for other household theft, from 1.0% to 1.9% between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Similarly, PSNI recorded crime figures for theft in a dwelling offences also showed an overall increase of 9.5% between 2020/21 and 2022/23, from 485 to 531.
- For the other household offences presented, 2022/23 rates were similar to the previous year. The apparent decrease in the bicycle theft (bicycle owners) prevalence rate, from 1.0% to 0.5%, is not statistically significant. There was, however, a (net) increase of 4.2%, from 731 to 762, in the number of theft of a pedal cycle offences recorded by the police between 2020/21 and 2022/23.
- The vandalism prevalence rate of 1.4% also remained on a par with 2021/22 (1.5%). This is similar to police recorded crime offences for criminal damage (the nearest equivalent to vandalism) which showed little change over the last couple of years with only a small net decrease of 0.3% occurring between 2020/21 and 2022/23 (from 17,278 to 17,231).

Figure 3.2: Households/adults victims of crime once or more by offence category (%), 2021/22 and 2022/23^{1,2,3,4}



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

3 | Experience of Crime

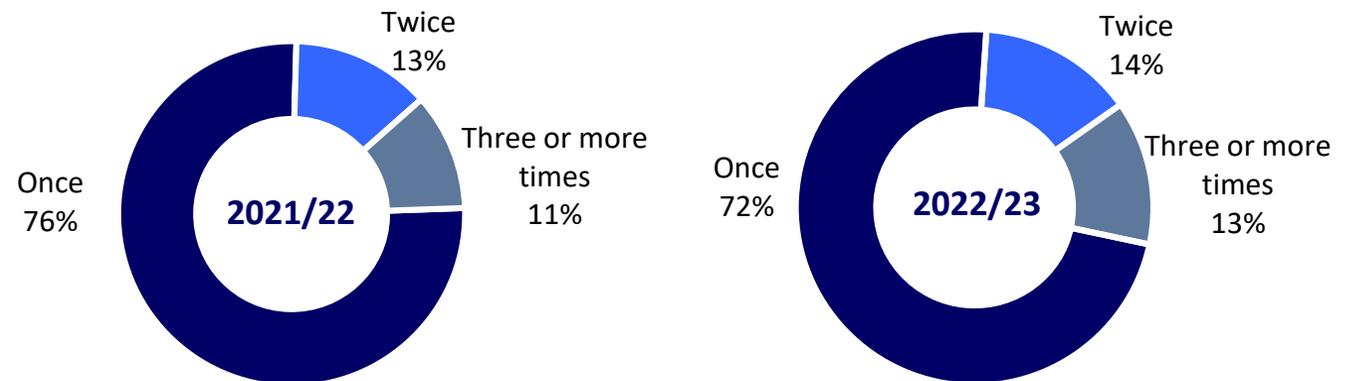
- While the apparent increase in the proportion of adults who were victims of NISCTS violent crime, from 0.7% in 2021/22 to 0.9% in 2022/23, was not statistically significant, the latest rate of 0.9% does show a significant increase when compared with 2020/21 (0.3%). Though the NISCTS rate is more narrowly focused in terms of scope, the change between 2020/21 and 2022/23 somewhat reflects the PSNI recorded level of violence against the person offences which showed an overall increase of 27.5% over the last two years, from 39,253 in 2020/21 to 50,035 in 2022/23.
- Part of any discrepancy in NISCTS and police recorded violent crime estimates may relate to the narrower focus of the NISCTS, 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 NISCTS crime, based on 2021/22 and 2022/23 interviews. Given the limitations of the sample size and the number of victims, rates for NISCTS repeat victimisation should be viewed with caution.

- Findings from 2022/23 indicate that the majority of victims, 72%, were a victim only once in the 12 months prior to interview, 14% were victimised twice, while 13% experienced three or more crimes. A similar breakdown was observed in 2021/22.

Figure 3.3: Any NISCTS crime - households/adults victims of crime by number of times victimised (%), 2021/22 and 2022/23 interviews^{1,2}



- The any NISCTS 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

Experience of Crime

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

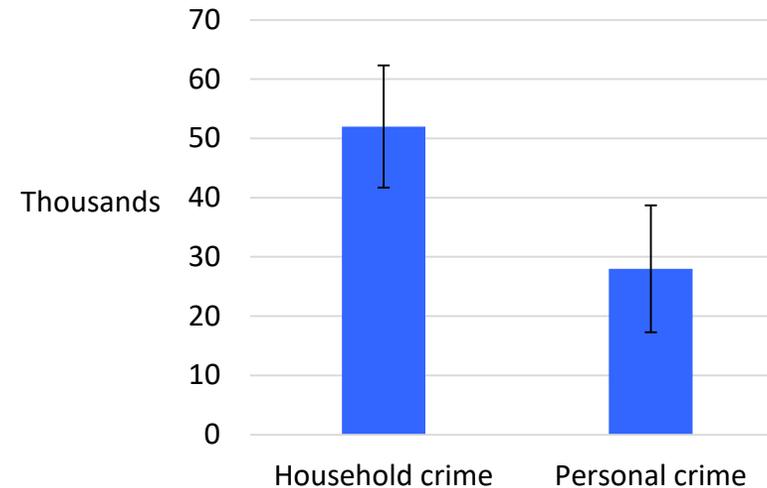
Table 5 gives crime victimisation (incidence) rates per 10,000 households or adults in Northern Ireland for a limited range of crime types. This approach differs from prevalence rates in that it takes into account the number of times each type of incident may have occurred, as opposed to the proportion 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 NISCTS 2022/23, 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.

- Results indicate that an estimated 80,000 incidents occurred during the 12-month recall periods for the 2022/23 NISCTS, of which almost two-thirds, 52,000, were household offences and the remaining 28,000 personal offences.

- Results suggest that the 52,000 incidents of household crime estimated from the 2022/23 survey comprised mainly of other household theft (21,000 incidents). Violent crime accounted for the majority of personal crime (21,000 in 2022/23).

Figure 3.4: Estimated number of NISCTS incidents (thousands), 2022/23 interviews^{1,2}



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

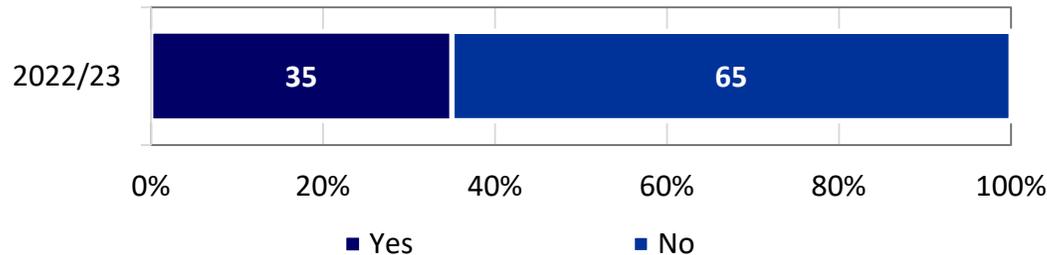
3 Experience of Crime

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.

- Latest findings estimate that 35% of all NISCTS crime was reported to the police. Of the various crime categories covered, burglary (46%) and vandalism (44%) displayed some of the highest reporting rates.

Figure 3.5: Proportion of all NISCTS crime reported to the police (%), 2022/23 interviews¹



1. Estimate is based on NISCTS incidents reported to the police as a proportion of all NISCTS 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’ (61%) was the most common reason given by NISCTS victims for not having reported a crime to the police. This was followed by ‘private matter/dealt with matter ourselves’, cited by 32% of victims.

Summary: Experience of Crime

Latest findings from 2022/23 interviews suggest that, at 5.1%, the prevalence rate for any NISCTS crime has shown a statistically significant increase when compared with the rate of 3.8% for the previous year. With the exception of other household theft, which increased from 1.0% to 1.9%, prevalence rates for all other crime categories covered showed no statistically significant change over the same period. An estimated 80,000 incidents occurred during the 12 month recall periods for 2022/23 respondents, the majority of which, 52,000, were household offences. It is estimated that just over a third, 35%, of incidents were reported to police, with ‘too trivial/no loss/police would not/could not do anything’ (61%) as the main reason given for not doing so.

4

Perceptions of Crime

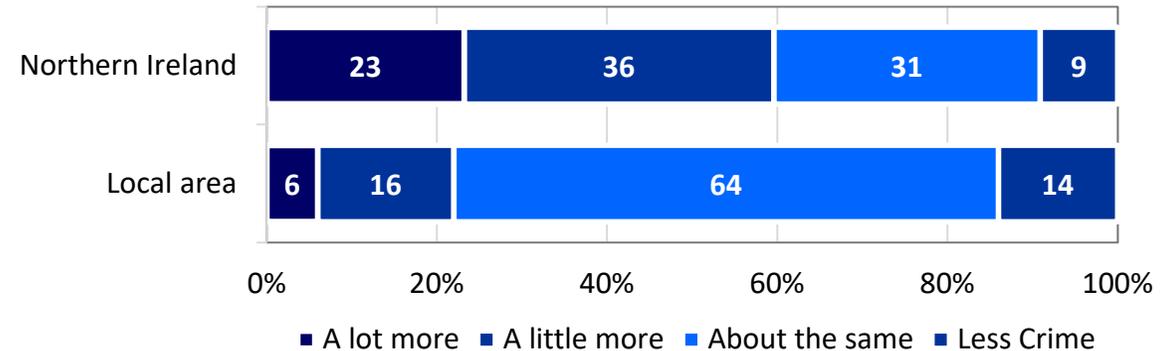
4.1 Perceptions of change in crime levels

NISCTS 2022/23 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.

- Findings from 2022/23 indicate three-fifths (60%) of respondents felt crime had increased in Northern Ireland, a proportion that showed no statistically significant change from 2021/22 (57%). A third (31%) of 2022/23 participants thought crime levels were unchanged, while the remaining 9% believed crime had fallen. Neither proportion represented a significant change from the previous year.

- Respondents continued to be more positive in their perceptions of crime levels within their local area than at the regional level. While 60% believed there was more crime in Northern Ireland generally, just over a fifth (22%) thought crime in their local area had increased in the preceding two years. The figure of 22% fell from 25% in 2021/22.
- At 64% and 14%, the proportions of 2022/23 respondents who felt crime levels in their local area were either about the same or had fallen were on a par with the previous year, showing no significant change from the 2021/22 figures of 62% and 13% respectively.

Figure 4.1: Perceptions of changing crime levels in Northern Ireland and the local area (%), 2022/23^{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

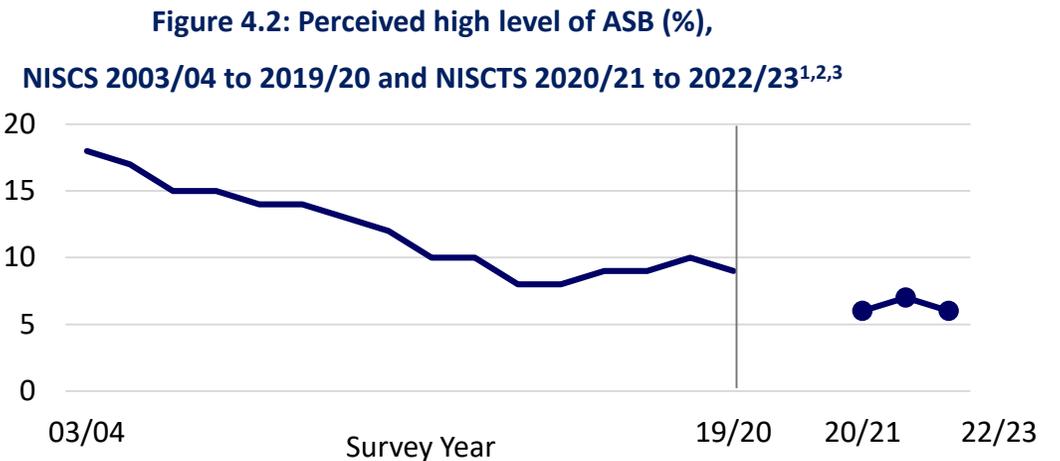
Respondents to the NISCTS were asked to rate how much of a problem different types of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are in their area using a four-point scale ranging from ‘very big problem’ to ‘not a problem at all’. Responses to the following seven strands have been used to form a composite measure (see 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 individual strands are given in Table 12.

- Based on the composite measure, findings from 2022/23 indicate that, at 6%, the proportion perceiving the level of anti-social behaviour in their local area to be high was similar to the 2021/22 figure of 7%.

- In terms of the individual ASB strands, and similar to the previous year, 2022/23 respondents were most likely to perceive rubbish or litter lying around (28%) and people using or dealing drugs (25%) as problems. Abandoned or burnt-out cars were considered least problematic (1%).
- When compared with the previous year, two of the seven strands showed a statistically significant change. The proportions who thought rubbish or litter lying around was a problem fell from 31% in 2021/22 to 28% in 2022/23, while the proportion considering teenagers hanging around on streets as a problem dropped from 15% to 12% over the same period.



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 NISCTS 2022/23 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.

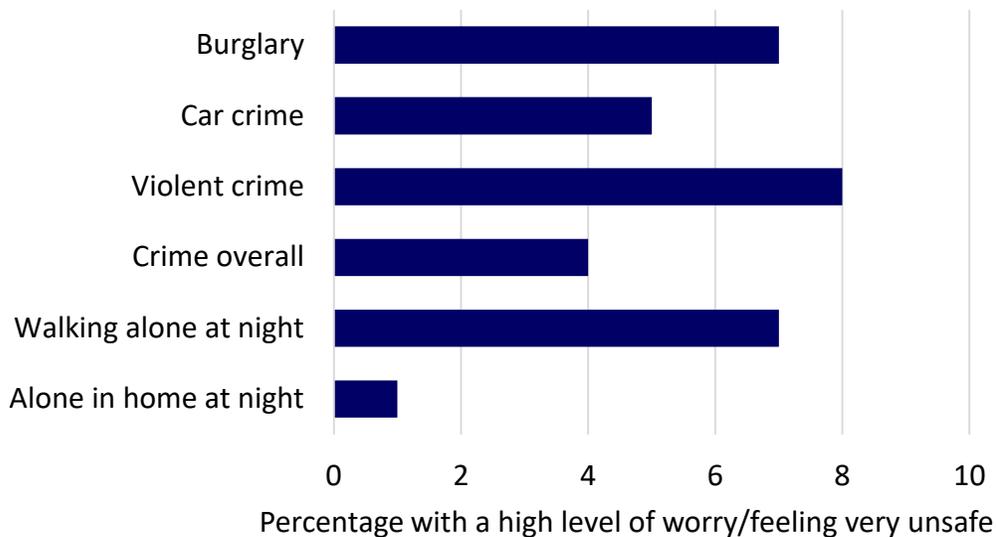
4

Perceptions of Crime

- Latest findings indicate that, at 7% and 8% respectively, there were statistically significant decreases in the proportions of respondents expressing a high level of worry about burglary and violent crime when compared with 2021/22 rates (8% and 10% respectively). The proportion of vehicle owners who were very worried about becoming a victim of car crime, 5%, was unchanged from the previous year (6%).
- With regards to personal safety, 2022/23 respondents continued to be more likely to feel very unsafe while walking alone in their area after dark (7%) than being home alone at night (1%). Both proportions were unchanged from 2021/22 (6% and 1% respectively).

Figure 4.3: Worry about crime and personal safety (%),

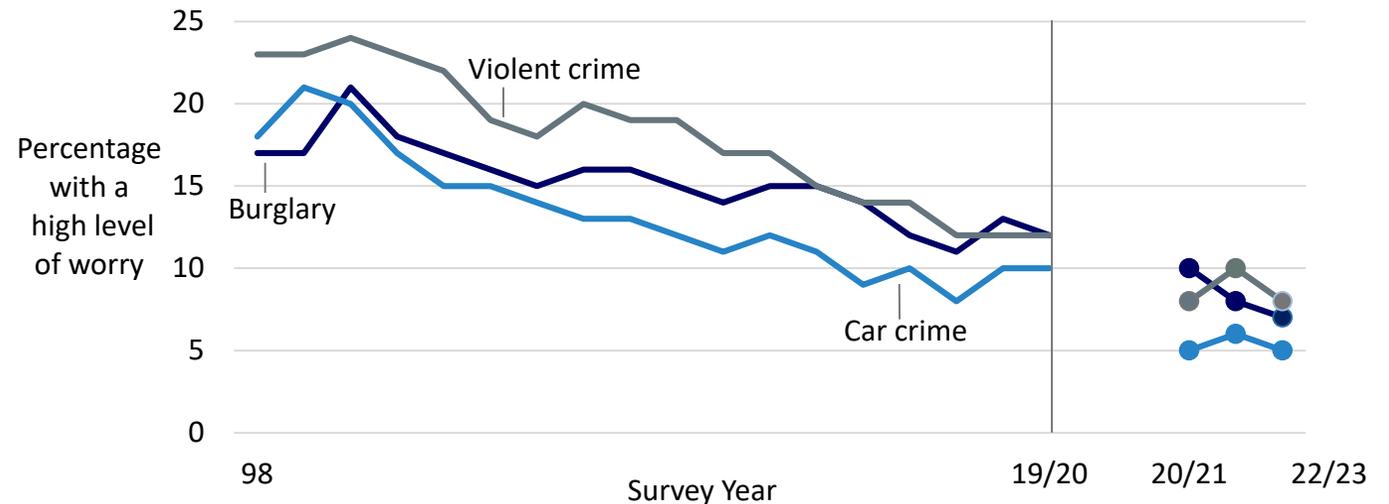
NISCTS 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Car crime refers to vehicle-owners only.

Figure 4.4: Worry about crime (%),

NISCS 1998 to 2019/20 and NISCTS 2020/21 to 2022/23^{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

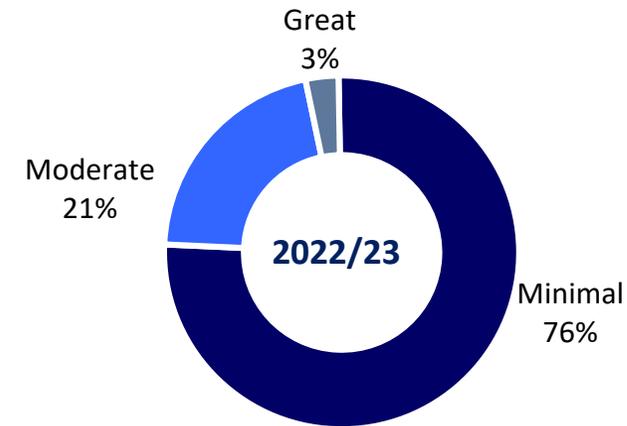
While a basic level of concern about crime may be beneficial in that it encourages people to take measures to reduce their likelihood of victimisation, ‘fear (about being a victim) of crime’ can become problematic if it has a detrimental impact on a person’s quality of life. Respondents were asked how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

- At 76%, the vast majority of respondents felt fear of crime has a minimal effect on their quality of life, a statistically significant improvement from 73% in 2021/22. For a moderate impact, the proportion was 21%, while 3% of respondents considered fear of crime as having a great impact on their quality of life. Neither proportion showed a significant change from the previous year.

Figure 4.5: Perceptions of the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life (%), 2022/23¹



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

Summary: Perceptions of Crime

Respondents were again more likely to believe that crime had increased at the Northern Ireland level (60%) than in their local area (22%), with the latter showing a statistically significant decrease from 25% the previous year. Rubbish or litter lying around (28%) and people using/dealing drugs (25%) continued to be considered as being most problematic in the local area. When considering worry about crime and personal safety, the proportions with a high level of worry about burglary and violent crime both saw a significant decrease from the prior year, from 8% to 7% and 10% to 8% respectively. The majority of respondents again reported that fear of crime has a minimal effect on their quality of life (76%), a statistically significant increase from 73% in 2021/22.

5 | Perceptions of Policing and Justice

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 2022/23 NISCTS 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.

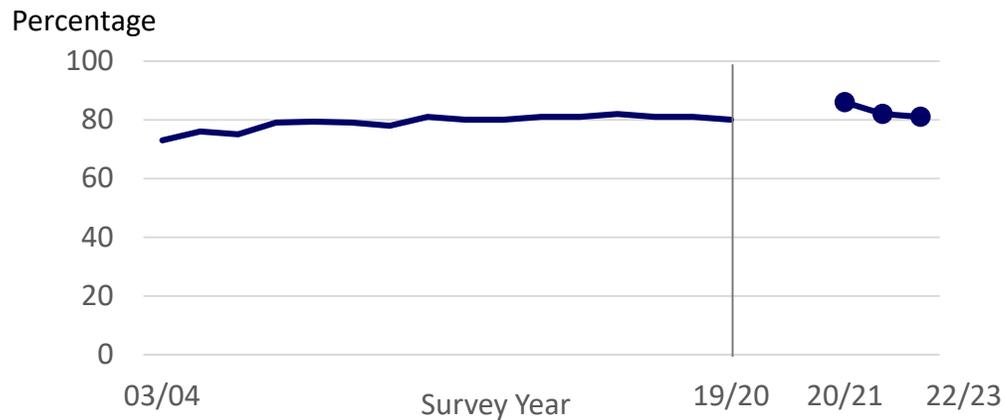
5

Perceptions of Policing and Justice

- Just over four-in-five (81%) respondents had overall confidence in policing (seven-strand composite measure), which was on par with the 2021/22 figure of 82%.
- When considering the three questions relating directly to the police, findings were in line with the previous year with no statistically significant changes observed. The 2022/23 proportions confident that the police provide an ordinary day-to-day service for all the people of Northern Ireland (87%) and who thought the police do a very or fairly good job in Northern Ireland as a whole (72%) have remained lower than the 2020/21 rates of 91% and 80% respectively.
- In terms of police accountability arrangements, none of the four indicators showed a statistically significant change between the last two survey years. Similar to the police measures, however, rates for three of the four indicators were lower than those observed in 2020/21, showing a statistically significant decrease, the exception being the proportion agreeing the Police Ombudsman is independent of the police, which showed no change when compared with 2020/21 findings.

Figure 5.1: Confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements (%),

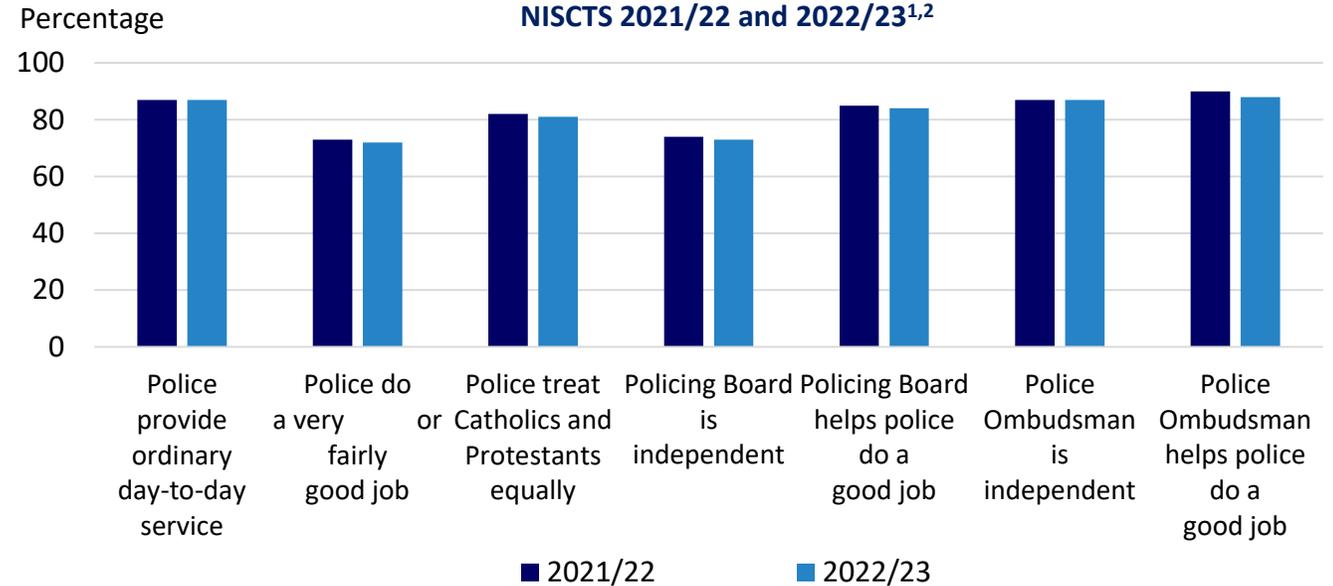
NISCS 2003/04 to 2019/20 and NISCTS 2020/21 to 2022/23^{1,2}



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 (%),

NISCTS 2021/22 and 2022/23^{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

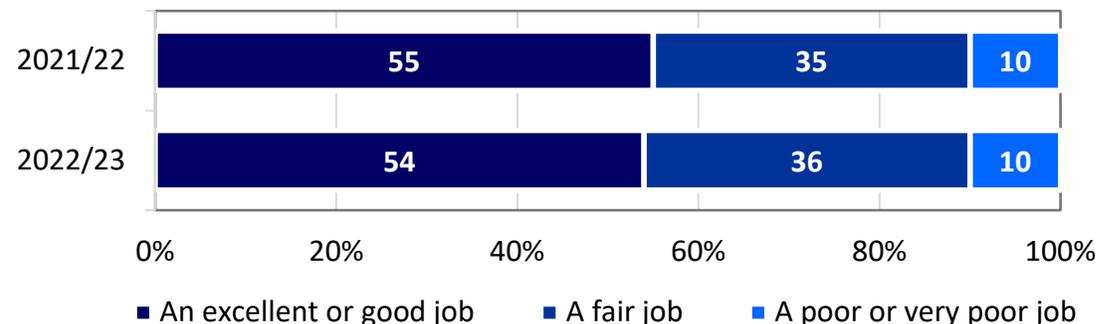
5.2 Ratings and perceptions of the local police

In addition to policing in Northern Ireland as a whole, the NISCTS 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?’.

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 NISCTS findings show 54% of respondents rated their local police as doing an excellent or good job with 36% rating their performance as fair. At 10%, participants were least likely to perceive local police as doing a poor or very poor job.
- While 2022/23 findings indicate there have been no statistically significant changes in these proportions when compared with the previous year, the percentage who considered the police to be doing an excellent or good job remains lower than the 2020/21 figure of 62%.

**Figure 5.3: Ratings of local police performance (%),
2021/22 and 2022/23¹**



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

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.

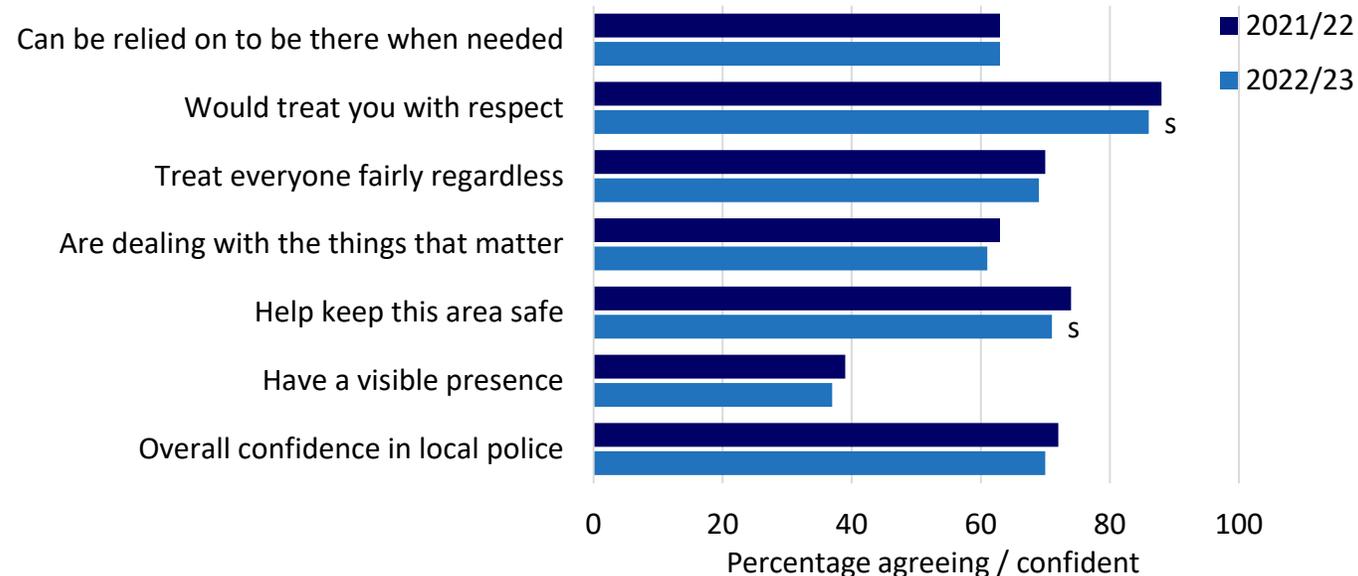
The first six of these (a to f, below) are ‘funnel-type’ questions, designed to help generate a more considered response to the seventh, overall confidence measure (g, below). The statements are, the local police:

- 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.

- Seven-in-ten (70%) respondents expressed overall confidence in their local police; the apparent decrease from 72% in 2021/22 was not statistically significant.
- In terms of the six individual statements considered, two showed a statistically significant change, both decreases, when compared with the previous year. The proportion agreeing that the local police ‘would treat you with respect if you had contact with them’ fell from 88% to 86% between 2021/22 and 2022/23, while the percentage agreeing the local police ‘help keep this area safe’ fell from 74% to 71% over the same period.

Figure 5.4: Confidence in the local police (%), 2021/22 and 2022/23^{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

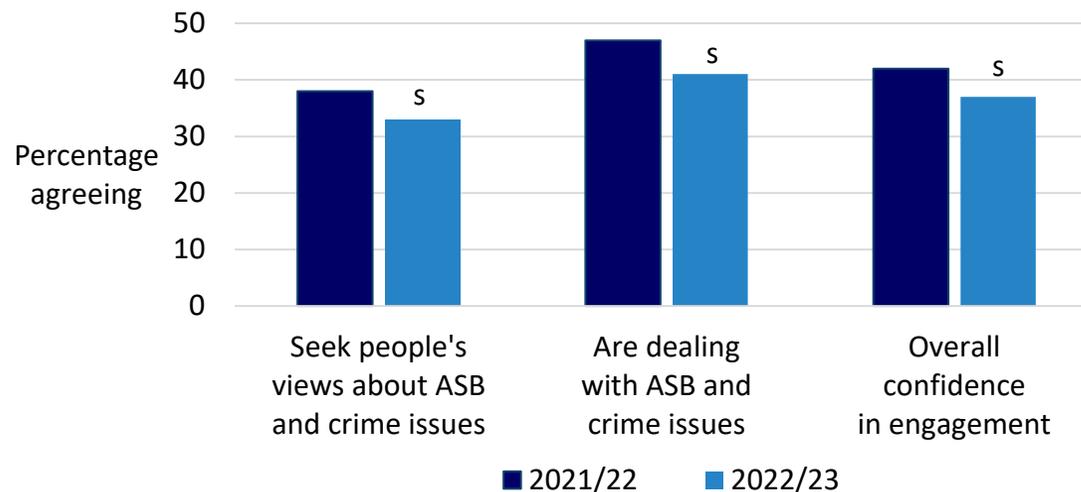
The NISCTS measured levels of public confidence in the local police and other agencies working in partnership on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime issues. Focus is on the proportion of respondents who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘tend to agree’ that the local police and other agencies, including Policing 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 2022/23, a third (33%) of respondents agreed that the local police and other agencies seek people’s views about the ASB and crime issues that matter, while a higher proportion, 41%, agreed that these issues are being dealt with. Consequently, overall confidence in engagement (composite measure) was 37% over this period.
- Following a decrease, from 42% to 38% between 2020/21 and 2021/22, the latest figure of 33% in 2022/23 represents a further fall in the proportion agreeing that views are being sought. The decrease between 2021/22 and 2022/23, from 47% to 41%, in the proportion who felt ASB and crime issues are being dealt was also statistically significant. Subsequently, the overall confidence in engagement measure was lower in 2022/23 (37%) when compared with the previous year (42%).

Figure 5.5: Confidence in engagement (%), 2021/22 and 2022/23^{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.

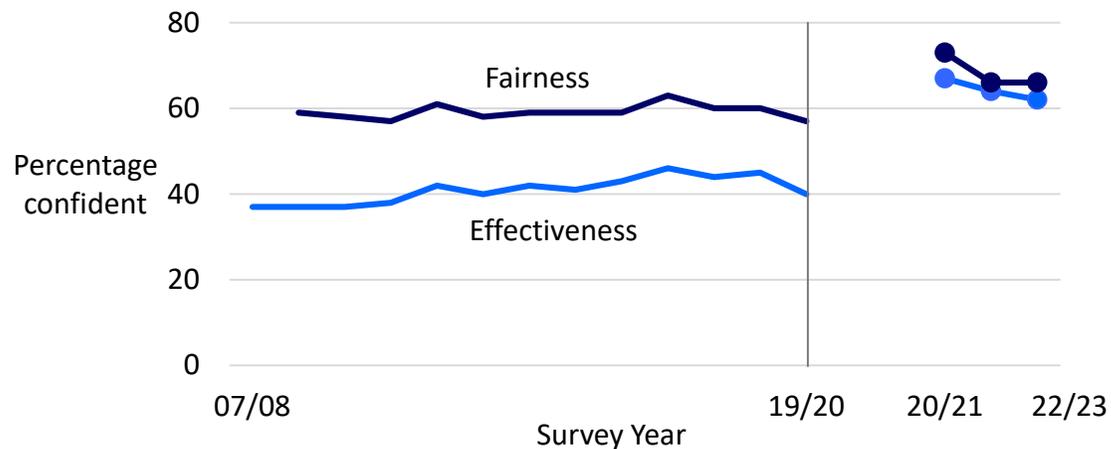
5 | Perceptions of Policing and Justice

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

Respondents to the survey 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.

- Two-thirds (66%) of 2022/23 participants were confident that the CJS in Northern Ireland as a whole is fair, while 62% considered it effective. These figures were in line with the previous year (66% and 64% in 2021/22 respectively) but lower than those observed in 2020/21 (73% and 67% respectively).

Figure 5.6: Confidence in the overall fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system (%), NISCS 2007/08 to 2019/20 and NISCTS 2020/21 to 2022/23^{1,2}



- Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
- 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

Findings suggest that a number of statistically significant decreases occurred for some of the perceptions of policing and justice findings.

Decreases were observed in two of the six individual measures related to the local police. In terms of engagement, the proportions agreeing that views on ASB and crime issues are being sought and that they are being dealt with both fell, resulting in a decrease in the overall confidence in engagement rating.

In terms of confidence in the police and police accountability arrangements, the overall confidence rating and the seven individual statements remained unchanged from the previous year. Latest findings for the proportions confident the CJS as a whole is fair and effective were also on a par with 2021/22 findings.

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

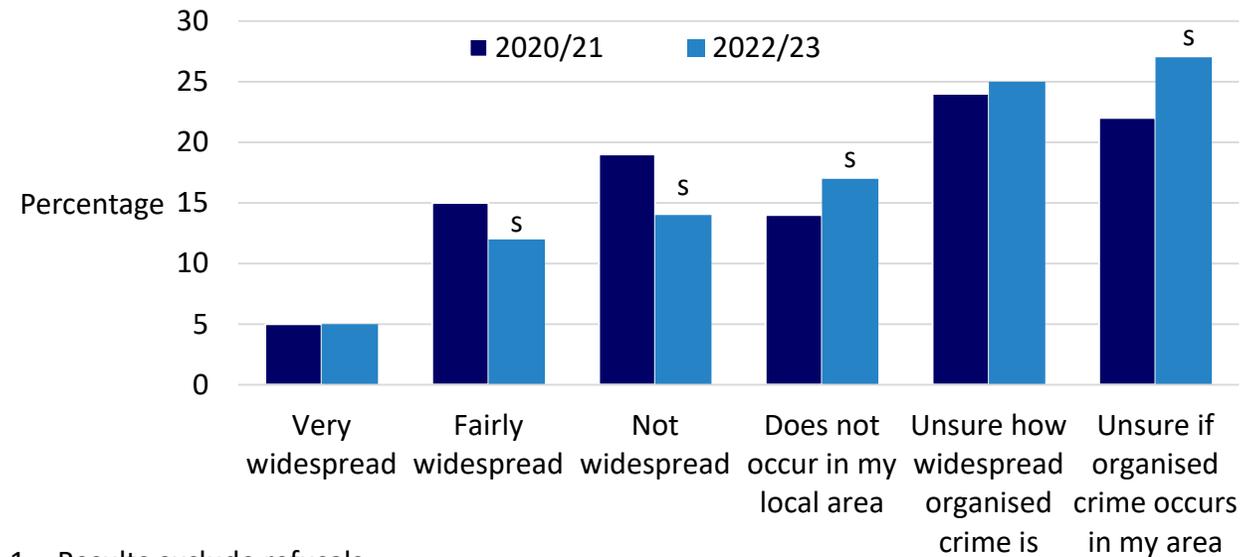
A number of questions were also included in the survey to gauge perceptions of organised crime and paramilitary groups. This chapter provides an overview of the findings based on 2020/21 and 2022/23 interviews.

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.

- Latest findings indicate around one-in-six (17%) respondents perceived organised crime to be widespread in their local area, a statistically significant decrease from 21% in 2020/21. This was due to a decrease in the proportion who considered it to be fairly widespread, from 15% to 12%.
- In contrast, the proportion who said it does not occur in their area increased from 14% to 17%.

- Similar to 2020/21, a considerable proportion, over half (52%), were unsure as to the extent of organised crime in their area. This is comprised of 25% who responded that they know organised crime occurred but were unsure as to how widespread it was and 27% who did not know whether or not it occurred in their local area. The latter is a statistically significant increase from 22% in 2020/21.

Figure 6.1: How widespread organised crime is in the local area (%), 2020/21 and 2022/23^{1,2,3}



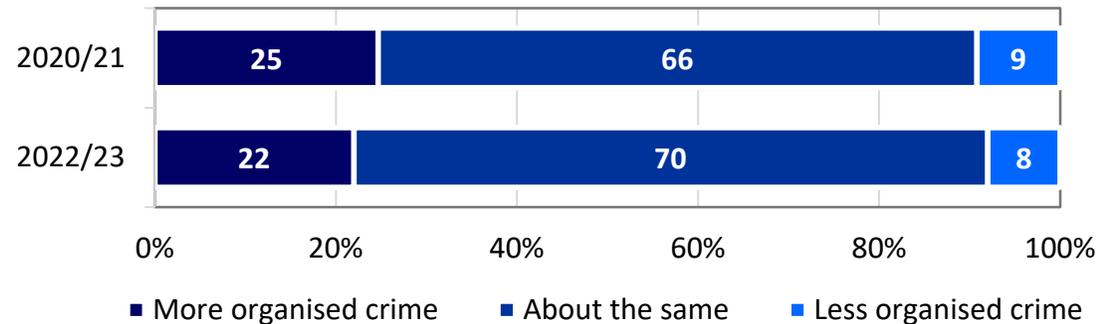
1. Results exclude refusals.
2. Figures for each of the individual response options may not sum to 100 or total those referenced in the text due to rounding.
3. Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by an s.

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.

- The majority of respondents, 70%, felt the level of organised crime was unchanged over the previous 12 months, while almost a quarter (22%) believed there was more organised crime in their local area (9%, a lot more and 13%, a little more). The remaining eight per cent of respondents considered the level of organised crime in their area to have fallen in the preceding 12 months. With the exception of the proportion who felt there was a little more organised crime in their area, which fell from 18% to 13%, the figures remained on par with 2020/21 findings.

Figure 6.2: Extent to which organised crime has changed in the local area in the past 12 months (%), 2020/21 and 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. 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 (%), 2022/23¹

22% More organised crime	8% Less organised crime
9% A lot more	3% A lot less
13% A little more	5% A little less

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

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.

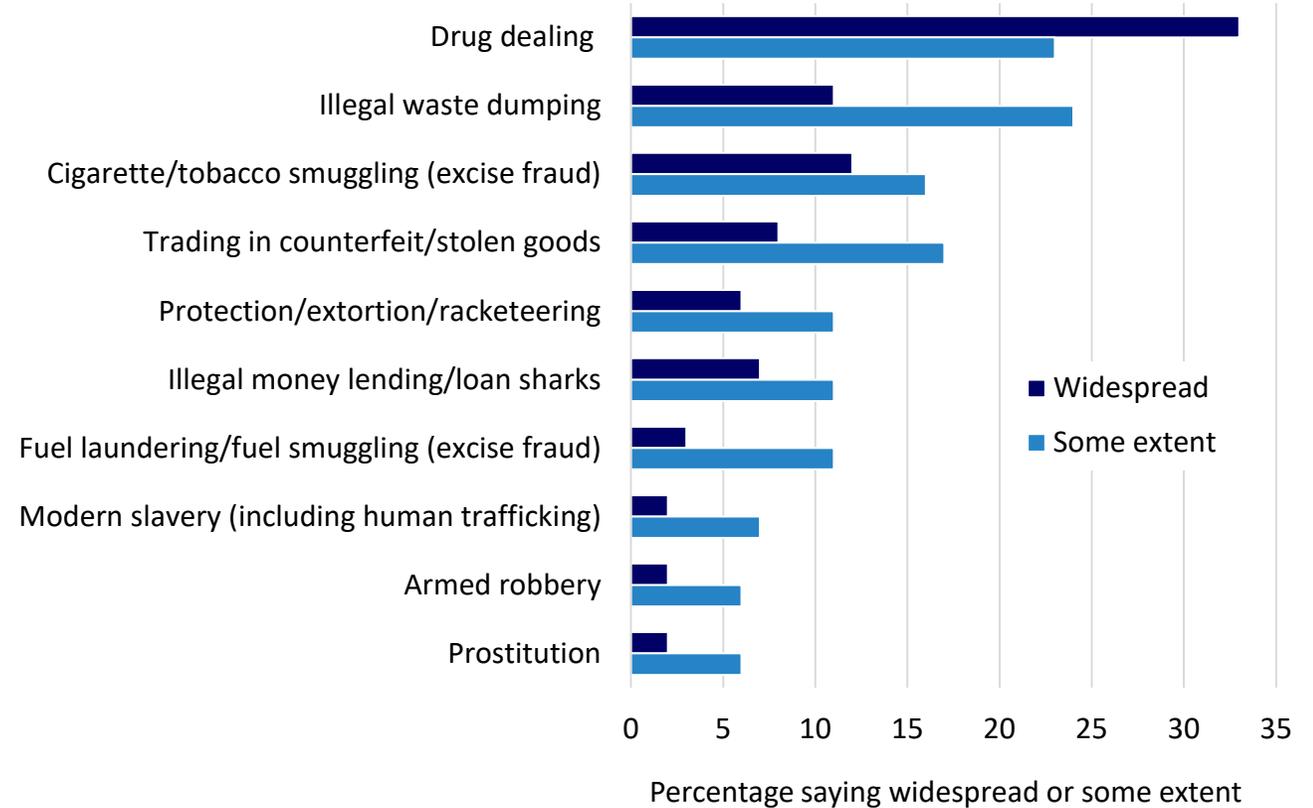
Respondents who identified a crime type as occurring in their area (i.e. they responded it was widespread, occurring to some extent or little extent) were then asked a follow-up question with regards to the level of harm they felt it caused. A separate harm question was asked for each crime type identified.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

6 | Perceptions of Organised Crime

Extent of the different crime types

- Of the different crime types examined, respondents were more likely to say that drug dealing was widespread (33%) or occurred to some extent (23%) in their local area. This was followed by illegal waste dumping with the combined proportions at 35% (11%, widespread and 24%, occurring to some extent respectively).
- In contrast, modern slavery (including human trafficking), armed robbery and prostitution were among the crime types least likely to be considered by respondents as being widespread or occurring to some extent.
- 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 24% providing the 'unsure if this occurs in my area' response. The exceptions were illegal waste dumping and drug dealing where the proportions who were unsure were 14% and 9% respectively.

Figure 6.4: Extent to which different crime types associated with organised crime occur in the local area (%), 2022/23¹



1. Results exclude refusals.

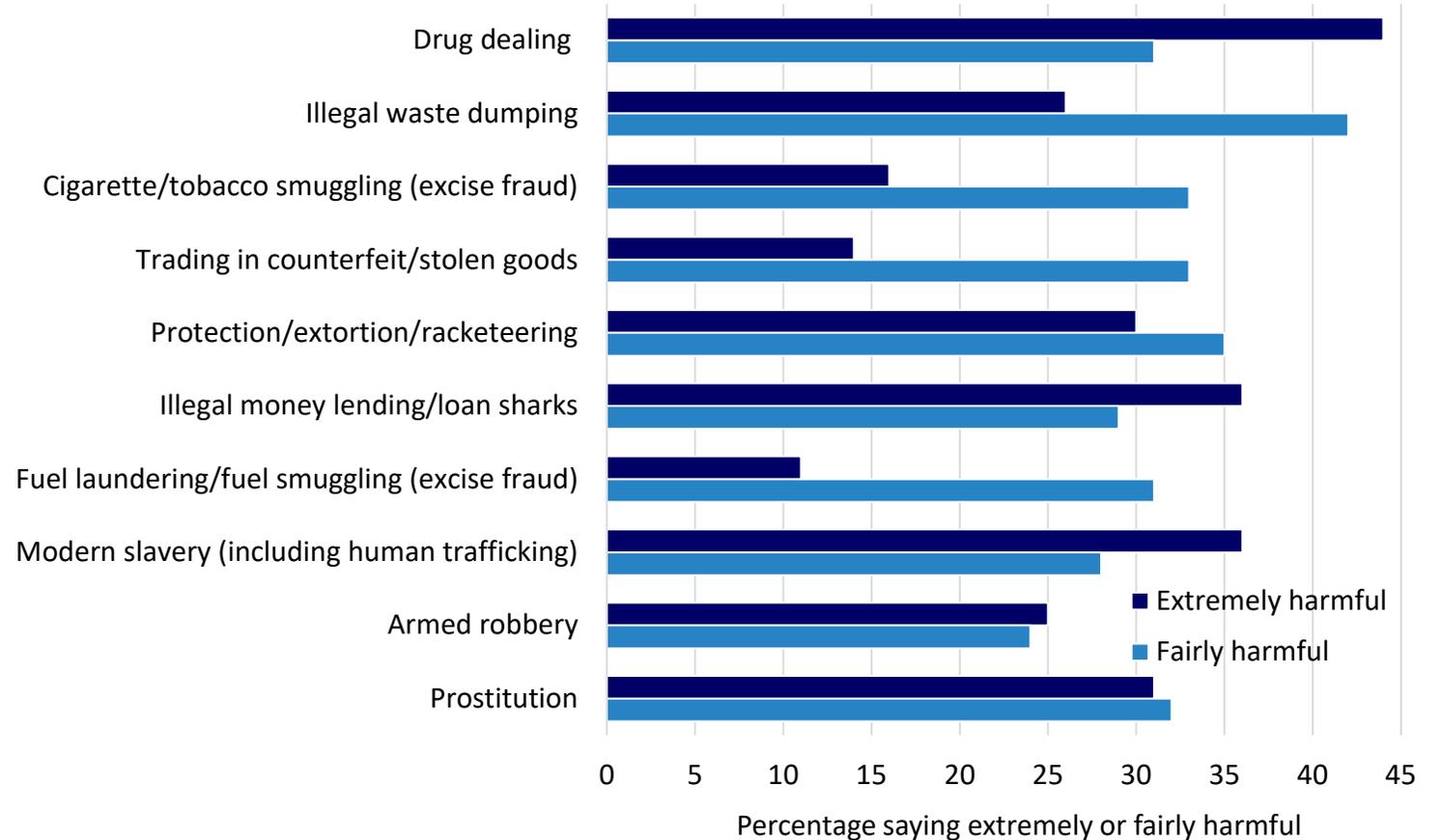
6

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 75% and illegal waste dumping at 68% were again among the crime types most likely to be considered harmful to the local area. One of the lowest proportions was observed for fuel laundering/smuggling for which 42% of respondents considered it to be harmful.
- Of the respondents who reported that drug dealing occurred in their area, around one-in-seven (14%) felt that it caused little harm, with the equivalent figure for illegal waste dumping at 23%.
- When the extremely and fairly harmful proportions are combined, results suggest there was a statistically significant increase for five of the crime types considered. These are drug dealing, illegal waste dumping, cigarette/tobacco smuggling, trading in counterfeit/stolen goods and protection/extortion/racketeering.

Figure 6.5: Harm caused by different crime types associated with organised crime (%), 2022/23¹



1. Results exclude refusals.

6

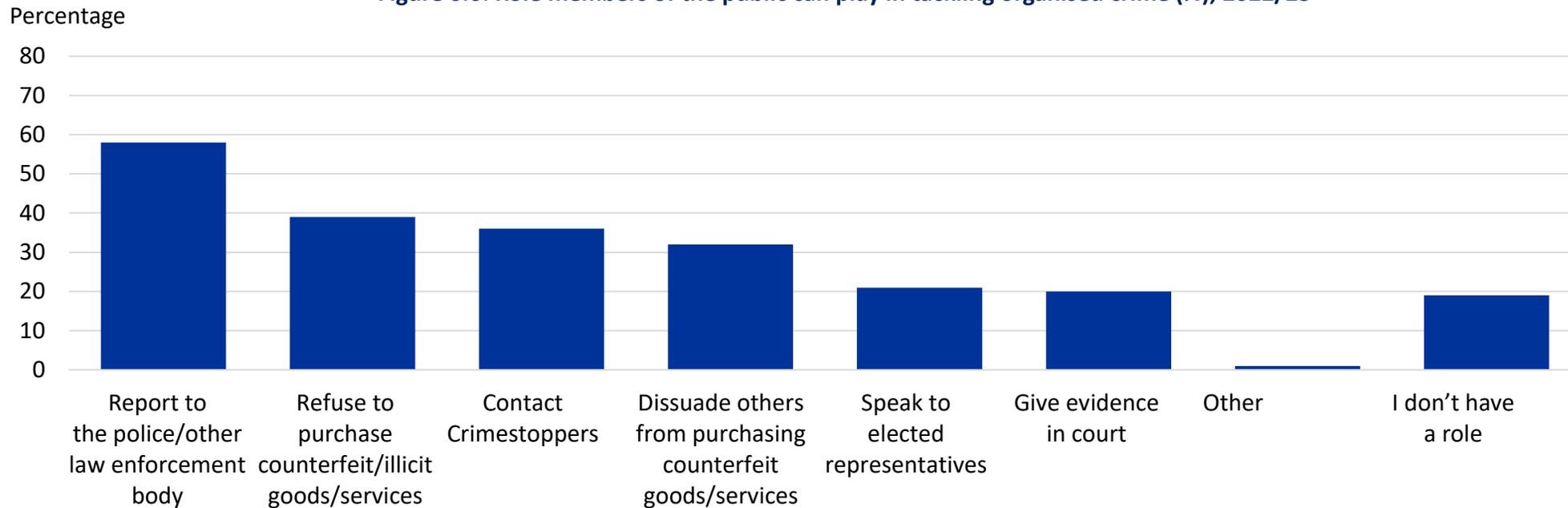
Perceptions of Organised Crime

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

Views were also sought from NISCTS 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 around three-fifths (58%) of respondents, was to report it to the police or other law enforcement body. Refusing to purchase counterfeit or illicit goods or services and to contact Crimestoppers were also common responses, selected by 39% and 36% of respondents respectively. Just under one-in-five (19%) respondents felt that they didn't have a role in tackling organised crime.

Figure 6.6: Role members of the public can play in tackling organised crime (%), 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

6

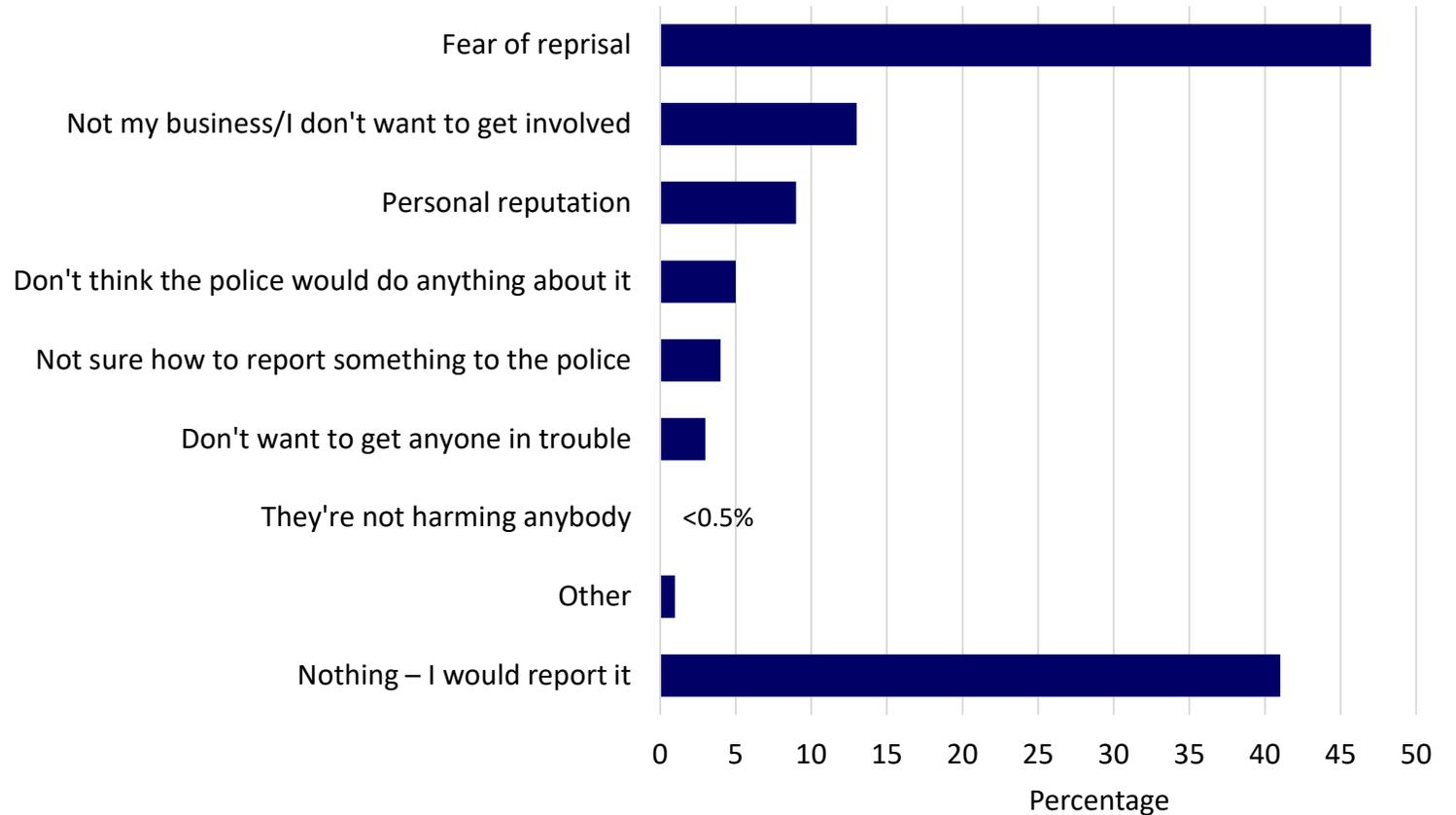
Perceptions of Organised Crime

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.

- Just over two-fifths (41%) 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 47% of participants. This was followed by not my business/I don't want to get involved at 13%. 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 (%), 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. 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.

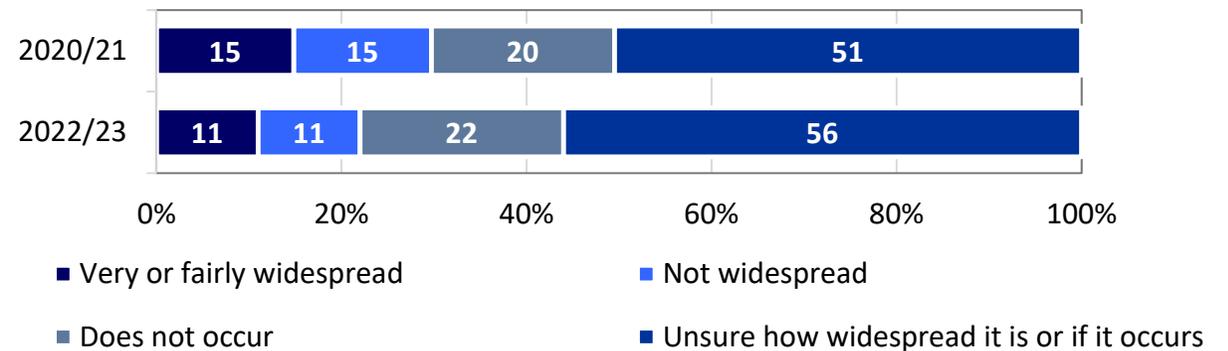
How widespread paramilitary activity is in the local area

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.

- Latest findings indicate that 11% of respondents felt paramilitary activity was widespread in their area, a statistically significant decrease from the 2020/21 figure of 15%. This decrease was due to a fall in the proportion who considered it to be fairly widespread, from 11% to 7%.
- There was a significant decrease in the proportion of respondents who thought paramilitary activity was not widespread, falling from 15% to 11%. Just over one-in-five (22%) reported that it didn't occur in their area.

- As was the case when asked about the extent of organised crime, a substantial proportion of respondents were uncertain as to how widespread paramilitary activity was in the area in which they lived. Just over one-fifth (21%) responded that they knew there was paramilitary activity but were unsure as to how widespread it was, while 34% did not know if it occurred. The latter was a statistically significant increase from 27% in 2020/21.

Figure 6.8: How widespread paramilitary activity is in the local area (%), 2020/21 and 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude refusals.

2. Percentages may not sum to 100 or total those referenced in the text due to rounding.

6

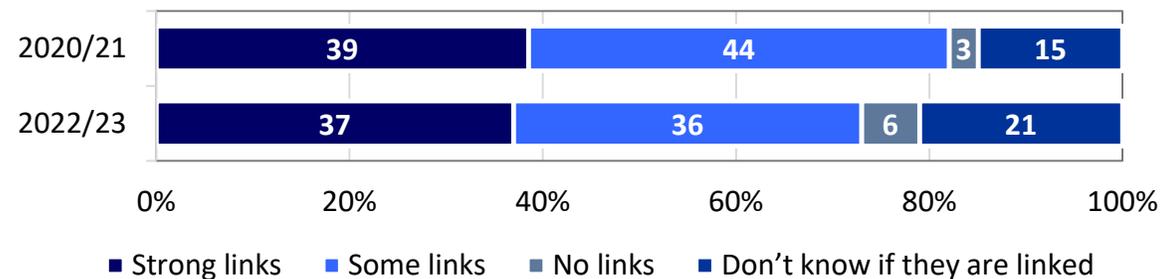
Perceptions of Organised Crime

Links between organised crime and paramilitary activity

Asked of respondents who believed paramilitary activity occurred to at least some extent in their area, 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’.

- Results suggest that the vast majority considered there to be links between the two with 37% believing there were strong links and a further 36% perceiving some links between them. The latter figure is a statistically significant decrease from 44% in 2020/21.

Figure 6.9: Links between organised crime and ongoing paramilitary activity in the local area (%), 2020/21 and 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude refusals.

2. 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 which were 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. A quarter (25%) assessed them as having some influence with 15% considering it as a lot of influence. The ‘some’ influence proportion of 25% is a decrease from 29% in 2020/21. In contrast, 12% considered paramilitary groups as having no influence at all, an increase from 9% in 2020/21.

Figure 6.10: Level of influence of paramilitary groups in the local area (%), 2020/21 and 2022/23^{1,2}



1. Results exclude refusals.

2. Percentages may not sum to 100 or total those referenced in the text due to rounding.

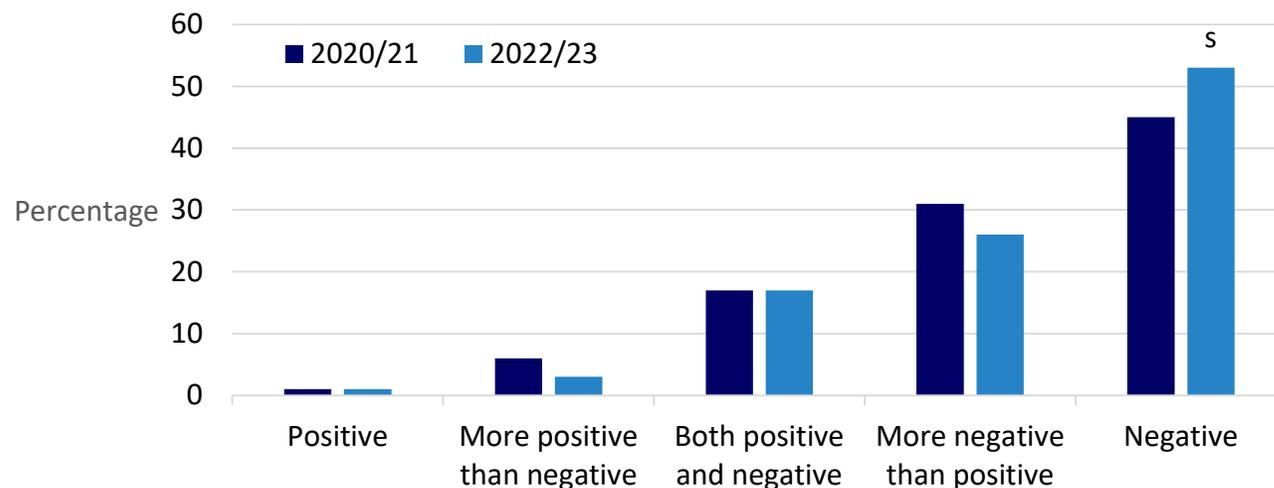
6

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, 53% of whom considered it as a 'negative' influence. This was an increase from 45% in 2020/21. A further 26% felt the influence was 'more negative than positive'; the apparent decrease in this, from 31% in 2020/21, however was not statistically significant. Similar to 2020/21, the proportions who viewed the influence as either positive or more positive than negative were substantially lower at 1% and 3% respectively.

Figure 6.11: Description of influence of paramilitary groups in the local area (%), 2020/21 and 2022/23^{1,2}



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

Summary: Perceptions of Organised Crime

Around one-in-six (17%) respondents considered organised crime to be very or fairly widespread in their local area, falling from 21% in 2020/21.

A substantial proportion, 52%, were unsure how widespread it was or whether it occurred in their area. Of the crime types considered, respondents were most likely to report drug dealing (56%) as being widespread or occurring to some extent in their area.

The majority of respondents, 58%, 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 (47%) the main reason given as to why they would not report an incident linked to organised crime to police.

A substantial proportion, over half (56%), were unsure as to how widespread paramilitary activity is in their area. The proportion considering it to be widespread fell from 15% to 11%.

Over two-fifths (40%) felt paramilitary groups had a lot or some influence in their area, 53% of whom described this influence as negative and a further 26% as more negative than positive. The 53% was an increase from 45% in 2020/21.

Appendix 1: Technical Annex

Background to the 2022/23 Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone 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, since 2020/21, has been conducted via telephone. Similar to the 2020/21 and 2021/22 surveys, the 2022/23 survey year will also be referred to as the Northern Ireland Safe Community Telephone Survey (NISCTS). The 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 sweeps are being considered as distinct survey years with results presented separately for the years prior to this.

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. When considering the modules and questions to be retained, account was taken of those questions that would be more suitable for a telephone interview. 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 and have continued like this since then. The initial NISCTS 2022/23 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. Between April and June 2022, 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). Visits to addresses by an interviewer from the NISRA Central Survey Unit resulted in an eligible sample of 6,923 occupied addresses. The response rate for productive interviews (containing both household details and interview with a selected respondent) was 49% of eligible addresses. This represents 3,413 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 NISCTS 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 NISCTS 2022/23 fieldwork period began in April 2022, this means that the valid recall periods commenced for some respondents as early as 1 April 2021 and finished for others as late as 28 February 2023 (a spread of 23 months). While results of the 2022/23 NISCTS are only comparable with those from 2020/21 and 2021/22 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 NISCTS, 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 NISCTS 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 breakdown

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 tables only. Associated confidence intervals are also presented. The first six relate to equality categories specified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. religious belief. | 7. housing tenure. |
| 2. age. | 8. household income. |
| 3. sex (gender). | 9. type of area (urban / rural). |
| 4. disability (or illness). | 10. Local Government District. |
| 5. household type (child dependants). | 11. experience of crime reported to the police. |
| 6. self-perceived nationality. | 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 tables and graphs within this bulletin have been rounded. Unrounded figures are available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source 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. Given the lower response rate and achieved sample size in 2022/23 (when compared with the most recent face-to-face NISCS sweep), 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 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 NISCTS 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 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 2022/23 NISCTS 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 change in survey mode, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 are being considered as discrete survey years and direct comparisons with earlier NISCS surveys have not been made. 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.
- The lower sample size, 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 2022/23 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 2022/23 NISCTS. The biennial Experience of Domestic Violence and Abuse module, due to be included, could not be asked of respondents. As a self-completion module, the questions would be completed by respondents themselves and their answers hidden immediately afterwards to ensure privacy and confidentiality. However, the move to a telephone survey meant this confidentiality could not be maintained.

NISCTS 2022/23 – Content of Questionnaire

Module	
1. Household questions	
2. Perceptions of Crime and Anti-social Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence in local police • confidence in engagement • confidence in policing in Northern Ireland as a whole
7. Confidence in Police Accountability Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing Board independence and whether it helps police do a good job • Police Ombudsman independence and whether it helps the police do a good job
8. Perceptions of Organised Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent and harm caused by organised crime • Perceptions of paramilitarism
9. Demography module	

Sample profile for NISCTS 2022/23

Group	Sub-Group	Unweighted Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Sex	Men	1,527	44.7	46.1
	Women	1,886	55.3	53.9
Age Group	16-24	191	5.6	8.8
	25-34	455	13.3	12.7
	35-44	581	17.0	16.5
	45-54	516	15.1	16.7
	55-64	645	18.9	19.0
	65-74	599	17.6	15.9
	75+	426	12.5	10.3
Religion	Catholic	1,367	40.1	40.7
	Protestant	1,593	46.7	46.3
Area Type	Rural	1,293	37.9	40.9
	Urban	2,120	62.1	59.1
Policing District	Antrim and Newtownabbey	253	7.4	7.3
	Ards and North Down	325	9.5	8.9
	Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon	331	9.7	9.9
	Belfast	567	16.6	15.4
	Causeway Coast and Glens	270	7.9	8.1
	Derry and Strabane	297	8.7	8.4
	Fermanagh and Omagh	285	8.4	9.1
	Lisburn and Castlereagh	219	6.4	6.8
	Mid and East Antrim	319	9.3	9.3
	Mid Ulster	236	6.9	7.8
	Newry, Mourne and Down	311	9.1	9.1
Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank ¹	1 st quintile (most deprived)	616	18.0	16.3
	2 nd quintile	702	20.6	20.1
	3 rd quintile	711	20.8	21.5
	4 th quintile	723	21.2	22.2
	5 th quintile (least deprived)	661	19.4	19.9
Vehicle-owning households		2,853	83.6	88.4

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

Appendix 2: Official Statistics in Development Status

An Official Statistics in Development publication

These are official statistics that are undergoing a development. As a result of the pandemic a change in survey mode, from face-to-face to telephone, was required for the entire NISCS. A significant reduction was also made to the questionnaire. In 2020/21, the first year telephone mode was used, a substantially lower response rate, 15%, was achieved when compared with previous years. While the 2021/22 survey year, which continued to use telephone mode, saw an increase in the response rate and number of completed interviews (40% and 2,838 respectively), they have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels which will impact the precision of estimates. During this period of change and while response rates were lower, it was important to continue to monitor respondents' experiences of crime and public perceptions on a range of criminal justice-related topics.

Telephone mode continues to be used. During 2024, however, a comprehensive review and consultation on the survey will be undertaken to determine the way forward. Users will be informed when the consultation commences.

Official Statistics in development were previously known as Experimental Statistics. Further information can be found of the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) website.

Appendix 3: References

Department of Justice (2023) Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey User Guide

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-user-guide> (opens in a new window)

Department of Justice (2023) Northern Ireland Crime Survey Quality Report

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-quality-report> (opens in a new window)

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2024) Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2023

[Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/crime-in-england-and-wales)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2023) Police recorded crime Annual Trends 1998/99 to 2022/23

<https://www.psni.police.uk/system/files/2023-11/456441561/Police%20Recorded%20Crime%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%201998-99%20to%202022-23.pdf>(PDF, 1.2MB)(opens in a new window)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2023) User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland (Updated November 2023)

<https://www.psni.police.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Police%20Recorded%20Crime%20User%20Guide.pdf>(PDF, 642KB)(opens in a new window)