

Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey: Future Programme of Work

This future programme of work provides a high level outline of developments that Analytical Services Group in the Department of Justice (ASG, DoJ) aims to address in relation to the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS; formerly known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey).

With the desire to improve and add value to the data and statistics derived from the survey, ASG plan to assess the viability of implementing the developments below, which have been addressed in similar surveys in other parts of the UK, or have been identified as a demand through various consultation exercises. Some of these developments were also identified by the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) as part of the ongoing [Compliance Check of the Safe Community Survey](#).

This document will be updated as and when developments are addressed or new potential areas for improvement and consideration are identified. The rate at which each of these developments will be assessed by ASG, in terms of feasibility, and implementation where applicable, will be subject to available resource.

Extension of the survey to include children aged 10 to 15

Background: The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) was extended to children aged 10 to 15 in January 2009. Where applicable, a sole child of this age group is selected at random to be interviewed within households responding to the main CSEW, with the primary aim of providing estimates of the levels of crime experienced by children and their risk of victimisation. A set of questions was specifically designed for children of this age range. Results are presented separately from adult estimates.

Aim: To publish a scoping paper to: (i) evaluate the feasibility of including 10 to 15 year olds in the NI Safe Community Survey; and (ii) consider if other options are available to measure victimisation among children. This paper will also address the feasibility of extending the NI Safe Community Survey to include communal establishments.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Extension of the survey to measure experience of fraud and computer misuse

Background: When measuring victimisation, the Crime Survey for England and Wales introduced questions in October 2015 to include respondents' experiences of fraud and computer misuse. The new offences were included in the CSEW headline estimates for the first time in January 2017. A dual reporting mechanism is in place whereby separate overall prevalence rates are published, to both include and exclude fraud and computer misuse. This enables the continuity of the time series, year-on-year comparisons and analyses of long-term trends.

Aim: To work with users to highlight the expansion of the CSEW to include fraud and computer misuse offences, the benefits of its coverage and to determine the requirement for a similar measure in NI. While the NISCS will include a cyber crime module biennially from 2019/20, the main aim of the module is to gauge awareness/attitudinal in nature. The module will not provide a measure of victimisation for fraud and computer misuse offences, comparable to that used in CSEW.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Repeat victimisation: Removal of the cap applied to the number of incidents of a series

Background: In cases of repeat victimisation, the CSEW previously only included the first five incidents of a series within published estimates. Following a review of the methods for addressing high-frequency repeat victimisation, and subsequent consultation on the proposed change to the methodology, it was decided that the current cap would be removed and the 98th percentile would be used as the cut-off for repeat victimisation.

Aim: To conduct scoping work on the effect of removing the cap on NISCS incidents taking account of the sample size. If applicable, undertake the steps associated with the removal of the cap, including a consultation and review of reporting format as required.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Improvements to offence classifications

Background: Refinements were made to the offence classifications used to present CSEW data. While presentational in nature (as no changes had been made to the coverage of offences), the amendments aimed to improve public understanding of crime statistics and coherence of CSEW data with police recorded crime.

Aim: To scope the potential to apply the CSEW offence classification changes to the NISCS and, if applicable, undertake the steps necessary to implement the changes including a consultation and review of reporting format as required.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Depositing of NISCS data with UK Data Archive

Background: ASG plan to deposit NICS/NISCS datasets to the UK Data Archive with the aim of promoting the reuse of the data.

Aim: To work with UK Data Archive and NISRA Central Survey Unit regarding the steps required to deposit NICS/NISCS datasets. This will include the drafting of any meta data/reference documentation and take account of any confidentiality, disclosure and technical issues to be addressed.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Exploration of Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing for offence coding of victim forms

Background: ONS have explored the use of Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques to automate the offence coding process of victim forms.

Aim: To explore the potential use of this technique in respect of the coding of NISCS victim forms.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Analyses at Local Government District level

Background: NISCS data can be disaggregated by the 11 Local Government Districts from 2014/15 onward. There has been an increasing demand for more local level analyses, with some councils including NISCS-based indicators in their Council/Community Plans. However, the sample size impacts on the robustness of data disaggregated at Local Government District level.

Aim: Consider options for providing more robust analyses at Local Government District level.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Outreach beyond government

Background: The NISCS plays an important role in informing and monitoring government policies, such as the Draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan. While it is known that findings are used outside the department also, there is scope for more extensive and regular engagement between ASG and those beyond government. This engagement will enable ASG to ascertain the current uses of NISCS as a data source externally and explore and promote potential uses of the statistics and data.

Aim: To initiate and maintain regular engagement with users beyond government to explore and promote the potential uses of NISCS data and statistics.

Timescale: To be confirmed.

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this paper or would like to provide feedback, please contact:

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