
Analytical Services Group

Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey: Fraud and Cyber Crime

June 2019

BACKGROUND

The Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS; formerly known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey) is an annual survey commissioned on behalf of the Department of Justice Northern Ireland (DoJ) and is an important source of information about levels of, and public attitudes to, crime. Amongst other things, the NISCS also measures public confidence in the police and the wider criminal justice system and collects sensitive information, using self-completion modules, on people's experiences regarding crime-related issues, such as domestic violence.

Its results play an important role in informing and monitoring government policies and targets. Within the Draft 2016-21 Programme for Government (PfG) and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan, the Department of Justice will lead on Indicator 1 which reports the 'Any NICS crime' prevalence rate. Change in the prevalence rate will be used to quantify progress towards the desired outcome of reducing crime and the harm and vulnerability caused by crime. NICS findings will also inform the assessment of the impact of the Community Safety Strategy (DoJ, 2012) and the Northern Ireland Policing Board's Strategic Outcomes for Policing in Northern Ireland 2016-2020 (NIPB, 2016).

Conducted on an ad hoc basis since its inception in 1994/95, the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) began operating on a continuous basis in January 2005. An alternative, but complementary, measure of crime to offences recorded by the police, the main aims of the NISCS include:

- ◆ to measure crime victimisation rates experienced by people living in private households regardless of whether or not these crimes were reported to, or recorded by, the police; and
- ◆ to monitor trends in the level of crime, independent of changes in reporting levels or police recording practices;

Published within the annual '[Experience of Crime](#)' report, rates are estimated from the survey for the following broad crime types:

- ◆ crimes affecting the whole household (mainly property offences), including vandalism, domestic burglary, vehicle-related theft, bicycle theft and other household theft; and
- ◆ personal crimes against respondents only (mainly violent offences), including common assault, wounding, mugging (robbery and snatch theft from the person), stealth theft from the person and other thefts of personal property.

The purpose of this note is to advise users that DoJ intends to explore the potential of, and demand for, including fraud and cyber crime within the main victimisation estimates derived from the survey.

MEASURING VICTIMISATION THROUGH THE SURVEY

The victimisation modules in the NISCS are primarily based on the format and core questions of the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). There are two stages to the NISCS questionnaire for measuring experiences of victimisation. Initially, respondents are asked a series of screener questions within the main section of the questionnaire to assess if they have been a victim of crime. The wording of the screener questions has been kept consistent since the survey began to ensure comparability across the surveys. Screener questions do not ask respondents if they have been a victim of explicit crime types, but ask

about different experiences in the last 12 months, such as whether they have had anything stolen. This design ensures the inclusion of all incidents within the scope of the NISCS, including relatively minor ones. Following the screener questions, those who have been victimised are asked detailed questions about exactly what happened on a victim form. Further detail on how victimisation is measured is available in the [NISCS User Guide](#).

Using this information, crime estimates are then derived and presented as prevalence rates, incidence rates and the estimated number of incidents.

- ◆ **Prevalence rates:** prevalence rates give the proportions of respondents who were victims of each offence type at least once during their 12 month recall period.
- ◆ **Incidence rates:** incidence rates take into account multiple and repeat victimisation and provide the estimated number of crimes experienced per 10,000 households (for household crimes) or per 10,000 adults (for personal crimes).
- ◆ **Estimated number of incidents:** the overall number of incidents can be estimated for Northern Ireland, based on the incidence rate (outlined above) and using estimates of the populations of households and adults in Northern Ireland.

Figures for the last five years for each of these crime estimates are given in Annex A.

FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE

While the current NISCS crime estimates cover a range of personal and household crime types captured in the survey, the screener questions and victim form modules (referred to above) do not cover fraud and cyber crime. These are therefore not included within the main victimisation estimates. With the changing nature of crime, the increasing use of the internet not only provides new methods by which existing crimes can be committed but has also enabled the emergence of new types of crimes. The exclusion of fraud and cyber crime means current survey estimates do not fully reflect the crimes now experienced by adults in Northern Ireland, a limitation of the survey which was recognised as part of the ongoing [NISCS Compliance Check](#) by the [Office for Statistics Regulation \(UK Statistics Authority\)](#).

While the NISCS will include a cyber crime module biennially from 2019/20, which will ask respondents' about their experiences of cyber crime, it will not use the same methodology for measuring victimisation as outlined above i.e. via screener questions and victim form module. Consequently, these statistics will not form part of the overall NISCS victimisation estimates.

EXTENSION OF THE CRIME SURVEY FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

A similar independent review of the CSEW was undertaken in 2011. This review also recognised the exclusion of fraud and cyber crime as a gap in the survey statistics. A project was established in early 2014 to explore the feasibility of including fraud and cyber crime within the main CSEW headline estimates. Screener questions were subsequently developed and incorporated into the live survey in April 2015; new victimisation module questions were then introduced from October 2015 following a large-scale field trial. According to the [CSEW User Guide to Crime Statistics for England and Wales](#), the new questions:

'aim to cover a wide range of frauds including those operated by traditional and more modern methods and those committed in person, by mail, over the phone and online. In addition, questions cover incidents of crime falling under the

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Computer Misuse Act, such as incidents where the victim's computer or other internet-enabled device has been infected by a virus, as well as incidents where the respondent's email or social media accounts had been hacked into by others.'

Initially published as experimental statistics, estimates for fraud and computer misuse were included within the CSEW headline estimates for the first time in the September 2016 quarterly bulletin, once the questions had been asked for a full 12 months.

The number of incidents, the incidence rate per 1,000 adults and the prevalence rates derived from the CSEW are now published for the following offences:

Fraud
Bank and credit account fraud
Consumer and retail fraud
Advance fee fraud
Other fraud
Computer misuse
Computer virus
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)

A dual reporting mechanism is in place whereby separate estimates 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. By way of example, an extract of a published CSEW prevalence rate table is given in Annex B.

The NISCS 2019/20 cyber crime module will not provide a measure for fraud and computer misuse offences, comparable to that used in CSEW.

NEXT STEPS

Analytical Services Group (DoJ) intends to explore the potential of, and demand for, including fraud and cyber crime within the main NISCS victimisation estimates. Discussions will take place with key stakeholders across the department in respect of this. To inform the scoping work at this initial stage, we would also welcome views or comments from other external users. Any feedback should be sent to Analytical Services Group, contact details are given below.

Following engagement with key policy officials/stakeholders and consideration of any additional comments received, a further paper will be published to provide an update and outline any proposed changes to the survey, if applicable. Feedback will again be sought at this time.

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

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ANNEX A**PREVALENCE RATES**Table 1; Household / adult victims of crime once or more by crime type (%)^{1,2}
Northern Ireland (2013/14-2017/18 interviews)

	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	Statistically significant change, 2016/17 to 2017/18? ³
<i>Percentage of households, victims once or more of:</i>						
Vandalism	2.5	2.7	2.2	2.6	1.9	
Vehicle vandalism	1.6	1.7	1.1	1.3	1.1	
Other vandalism	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.8	
Burglary (including attempts)	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.0	0.8	
Burglary with entry	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.6	
Attempted burglary	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2	
Vehicle-related theft (including attempts)	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	0.8	** ↓
Theft from a vehicle	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.0	0.3	** ↓
Theft of a vehicle	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	
Attempted theft of / from a vehicle	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	
Bicycle theft	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.4	
Other household theft	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.6	1.9	** ↓
Stealth theft from the person	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.1	
Other thefts of personal property	1.4	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.2	
<i>Unweighted base - household crime</i>	3,598	2,074	1,975	1,877	1,582	
<i>Percentage of vehicle owners, victims once or more of:</i>						
Vehicle-related theft (including attempts)	1.6	1.6	1.9	2.0	0.8	** ↓
Theft from a vehicle	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.2	0.3	** ↓
Theft of a vehicle	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	
Attempted theft of / from a vehicle	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.5	
Vehicle vandalism	2.0	2.1	1.4	1.7	1.3	
<i>Unweighted base - vehicle owners</i>	2,841	1,708	1,601	1,480	1,305	
<i>Percentage of bicycle owners, victims once or more of:</i>						
Bicycle theft	2.2	1.8	2.1	0.8	1.0	
<i>Unweighted base - bicycle owners</i>	1,161	721	671	594	501	
<i>Percentage of adults (16+), victims once or more of:</i>						
Common assault⁴	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.1	
Assault with minor injury	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.5	
Assault with no injury	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.5	
Wounding	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.8	
Mugging (robbery & snatch theft)	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	
<i>Unweighted base - personal crime</i>	3,598	2,074	1,975	1,877	1,582	
ANY NICS VIOLENT CRIME²	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.9	
ANY HOUSEHOLD CRIME¹	7.2	7.1	6.8	6.4	5.4	
ANY PERSONAL CRIME²	3.0	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.0	
ANY NICS CRIME⁵	10.0	8.8	8.9	8.7	7.9	

Source: NICS 2013/14-2017/18

n/a Not available

1. Prevalence risks for household crime (vandalism, burglary, vehicle-related theft, bicycle theft and other household theft) are based on households.
2. Prevalence risks for violent crime (common assault, assault with minor injury, assault with no injury, wounding and mugging) and personal crime (violent crime, stealth theft from the person and other thefts of personal property) are based on adults and are weighted for household size.
3. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).
4. The NICS common assault definition includes minor injuries. From April 2003, the recorded crime definition no longer includes minor injuries.

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5. The 'Any NICS crime' rate is calculated treating a household crime as a personal crime. It is the estimated percentage of adults who have been a victim of at least one personal crime or have been resident in a household that was a victim of at least one household crime.

INCIDENCE RATES

Table 2: Crime incidence rates per 10,000 households / adults by crime type¹
Northern Ireland (2013/14-2017/18 interviews) and England and Wales (2017/18 interviews)

	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18	CSEW 2017/18
Vandalism	297	391	284	341	247	438
Vehicle vandalism	170	203	137	170	158	281
Other vandalism	128	188	147	170	88	157
Burglary (including attempts)	170	154	147	160	95	206
Vehicle-related theft (including attempts)	150	149	162	176	88	373
Theft from a vehicle	97	92	132	112	38	265
Theft of a vehicle	8	10	5	16	13	33
Attempted theft of / from a vehicle	44	48	25	48	38	75
Bicycle theft	81	116	91	43	44	116
Other household theft	281	313	248	192	272	316
Other thefts of personal property	148	117	135	77	130	141
Common assault³	123	120	66	192	144	222
Assault with minor injury	61	86	41	92	68	82
Assault with no injury	61	33	25	101	75	141
ALL NICS / CSEW VIOLENT CRIME²	186	216	149	258	287	318
ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME²	978	1,123	932	911	746	1,449
ALL PERSONAL CRIME²	357	366	320	403	438	537
<i>Unweighted base - household/personal crime⁴</i>	<i>3,598</i>	<i>2,074</i>	<i>1,975</i>	<i>1,877</i>	<i>1,582</i>	<i>34,636</i>

Source: NICS 2013/14-2017/18; Crime Survey for England and Wales 2017/18

1. It is not possible to construct a rate for all NICS / CSEW crime because rates for household offences are based on rates per household, and those for personal offences on rates per adult, and the two cannot be combined.

2. Rates for violent offences, personal crime and other thefts of personal property are quoted per 10,000 adults. For property offences, rates are quoted per 10,000 households.

3. The NICS / CSEW common assault definition includes minor injuries. From April 2003, the recorded crime definition no longer includes minor injuries.

4. The CSEW 2017/18 unweighted base refers to household crime. That for personal crime will be similar.

5. The CSEW rates for other household theft, common assault, violent crime, all household crime and all personal crime presented in this table have been re-calculated / included for comparability purposes only; they have not been published previously.

NUMBER OF INCIDENTSTable 3: Estimated number of incidents of crime by crime type (thousands)
Northern Ireland (2013/14-2017/18 interviews)

	NICS 2013/14	NICS 2014/15	NICS 2015/16	NICS 2016/17	NICS 2017/18
Vandalism	22	28	20	25	18
Vehicle vandalism	12	15	10	12	12
Other vandalism	9	13	11	12	6
Burglary (including attempts)	12	11	11	12	7
Vehicle-related theft (including attempts)	11	11	12	13	6
Theft from a vehicle	7	7	10	8	3
Theft of a vehicle ⁴	1	1	0	1	1
Attempted theft of / from a vehicle	3	3	2	3	3
Bicycle theft	6	8	7	3	3
Other household theft	21	22	18	14	20
Other thefts of personal property	21	17	20	11	19
ALL NICS PROPERTY CRIME	96	102	92	88	77
Common assault³	18	17	10	28	21
Assault with minor injury	9	13	6	14	10
Assault with no injury	9	5	4	15	11
ALL NICS VIOLENT CRIME²	27	31	22	38	43
ALL HOUSEHOLD CRIME¹	72	81	67	66	54
ALL PERSONAL CRIME²	52	53	47	59	65
ALL NICS CRIME	123	134	114	126	119
<i>Unweighted base - household/personal crime</i>	<i>3,598</i>	<i>2,074</i>	<i>1,975</i>	<i>1,877</i>	<i>1,582</i>

Source: NICS 2013/14-2017/18

n/a Not available

1. For household crime (including the property crimes of vandalism, burglary, vehicle-related, bicycle and other household theft), the numbers are derived by multiplying offence rates (incidence rates) by the number of households.
2. For violent crime (common assault, wounding and mugging) and personal crime (including violent crime, theft from the person and other theft of personal property), the numbers are derived by multiplying incidence rates by the adult population.
3. The NICS common assault definition includes minor injuries. From April 2003, the recorded crime definition no longer includes minor injuries.

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ANNEX B

Trends in CSEW percentages of households/adults who were victims once or more (prevalence risks) from year ending March 2012 to year ending March 2018

Offence group ³	Apr '11 to Mar '12	Apr '12 to Mar '13 ⁴	Apr '13 to Mar '14	Apr '14 to Mar '15	Apr '15 to Mar '16	Apr '16 to Mar '17	Apr '17 to Mar '18
VIOLENCE	2.5	2.2	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7
Violence with injury	1.4	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9
Wounding	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4
Assault with minor injury	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5
Violence without injury	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
ROBBERY	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
THEFT OFFENCES⁷	14.9	13.2	12.3	11.5	10.6	9.5	10.2
Theft from the person	1.3	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8
Snatch theft from person	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Stealth theft from person	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Attempted snatch or stealth theft from person	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4
Other theft of personal property	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.2
Unweighted base - number of adults	46,031	34,880	35,371	33,350	35,324	35,420	34,715
Domestic burglary	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.7	2.3	2.1	2.3
With entry	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.5
With loss	1.6	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.1
No loss	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
Attempts	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9
Domestic burglary in a dwelling	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.7
With entry	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.0
With loss	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7
No loss	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
Attempts	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7
Domestic burglary in a non-connected building to a dwelling	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7
With entry	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5
With loss	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4
No loss	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Attempts	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
Other household theft	3.7	3.3	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.0	1.9
Theft from a dwelling	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Theft from outside a dwelling	3.5	3.0	2.4	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.7
Vehicle-related theft	4.2	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.2
Theft from vehicles	3.2	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.3
Theft of vehicles	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3
Attempts of and from vehicles	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6
Bicycle theft	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1
Unweighted base - number of households	45,998	34,851	35,339	33,299	35,248	35,334	34,636
Vehicle-related theft	5.4	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.6	4.0
Theft from vehicles	4.1	3.5	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.9
Theft of vehicles	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4
Attempts of and from vehicles	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8
Criminal damage to a vehicle	5.4	4.7	4.0	3.4	3.4	3.2	2.9
Unweighted base - number of vehicle owners	36,566	27,368	27,749	26,339	28,252	28,216	27,912
Bicycle theft	3.4	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.3	2.1	2.2
Unweighted base - number of bicycle owners	22,087	16,646	16,891	15,859	16,811	16,824	16,259
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	5.8	5.0	4.2	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.2
Criminal damage to a vehicle	4.2	3.6	3.1	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.3
Arson and other criminal damage	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0
Unweighted base - number of households	45,998	34,851	35,339	33,299	35,248	35,334	34,636
ALL CSEW CRIME EXCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE⁸	21.2	18.7	17.0	15.9	15.2	13.9	14.4
Unweighted base - number of adults	46,031	34,880	35,371	33,350	35,324	35,420	34,715
FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE^{9,10}	..	..	..	..	..	8.6	8.0
Fraud	..	..	..	..	..	6.0	6.0
Bank and credit account fraud	..	..	..	..	..	4.4	4.2
Consumer and retail fraud ¹¹	..	..	..	..	..	1.5	1.7
Advance fee fraud	..	..	..	..	..	0.1	0.1
Other fraud	..	..	..	..	..	0.1	0.1
Computer misuse	..	..	..	..	..	3.0	2.3
Computer virus	..	..	..	..	..	1.9	1.3
Unauthorised access to personal information (including hacking)	..	..	..	..	..	1.1	1.0
Unweighted base - number of adults	..	..	..	..	..	17,171	25,725
ALL CSEW CRIME INCLUDING FRAUD AND COMPUTER MISUSE^{12,13}	20.5	20.2
Unweighted base - number of adults	17,171	25,725

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The full table, including applicable footnotes, can be found [here](#).

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