

Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2018/19 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey

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February 2020



Northern Ireland
Statistics & Research Agency



Department of
Justice

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1 | Summary Findings

This bulletin presents findings from the 2018/19 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS) and focuses on respondents' perceptions of crime including worry about crime and the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life.

Causes of Crime, Crime Levels and Anti-social Behaviour

- Drugs (82%), alcohol (60%) and a lack of discipline from parents (45%) were the three factors most commonly identified by 2018/19 respondents as major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. These three factors were also most likely to be identified by respondents as the major causes in their local area (50%, 38% and 26% respectively).
- Three-fifths of respondents thought crime levels in Northern Ireland had increased in the preceding two years, a proportion which was unchanged from 2017/18 (both 60%). The 2018/19 figure is, however, 19 percentage points below that observed in 2003/04 (79%). The proportion of respondents who felt there was less crime in Northern Ireland fell, from 10% to 8%, between 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- As in previous sweeps of the survey, latest findings suggest respondents continued to be more positive in their perceptions of crime trends in their local area than at the regional level with 29% believing local crime levels had increased in the preceding two years.
- Findings from 2018/19 show that one-in-ten (10%) respondents perceived the level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local area to be high, on a par with the figure of 9% in 2017/18. Across the individual ASB categories, 'people using or dealing drugs' (31%) and 'rubbish or litter lying around' (28%) were most commonly identified as problems in their local area. The proportion perceiving drugs as a problem in their local area (31%) increased from 25% in 2017/18.

Worry about Crime and Personal Safety

- Latest findings show the proportion of respondents expressing a high level of worry about car crime increased from 8% to 10% when compared with the previous year. The two remaining crime categories considered, burglary and violent crime, showed no statistically significant change. A higher proportion of respondents reported feeling very unsafe walking alone in their area after dark, rising from 5% to 7% between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Effect of 'Fear of Crime' on Quality of Life

- At 74%, the majority of 2018/19 respondents felt that 'fear of crime' has a minimal impact on their quality of life, unchanged from the previous year. A further 22% claimed it has a moderate effect, while the remaining five per cent stated their quality of life is greatly affected by their 'fear of crime'.

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Introduction

2.1 The focus of this publication

This bulletin draws on findings from the 2018/19 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS). The survey was formerly known as the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) but was renamed following a review in 2017/18. NISCS is a representative, continuous, personal interview survey of the experiences and perceptions of crime of 3,429 adults living in private households throughout Northern Ireland.

Previously conducted on an ad hoc basis in 1994/95, 1998, 2001 and 2003/04, the survey began operating on a continuous basis in January 2005.

In addition to describing respondents' perceptions of causes of crime, recent changes in crime levels and the extent of anti-social behaviour in the local area, the bulletin illustrates two commonly used measures of concern about crime:

1. worry about crime and personal safety; and
2. perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life.

Comparisons are made (where appropriate and available) between the results of the 2018/19 NISCS and those of the 2018/19 [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) (CSEW; ONS, 2019), as well as with earlier sweeps of the NICS.

Throughout this report key findings are commented on in the text, with full numerical details on each section available in the relevant tables comprising the Tabular Annex (Appendix 1).

Further background information on this bulletin is available in the Technical Annex (Appendix 2). An additional NISCS 2018/19 report on [Experience of Crime](#) (Rice and Campbell, December 2019) has been published separately. Further bulletins presenting 2018/19 findings covering, for example, Confidence in the Police and Criminal Justice System (Campbell and Rice, forthcoming), will also be published.

3 Causes of Crime, Crime Levels and Anti-social Behaviour

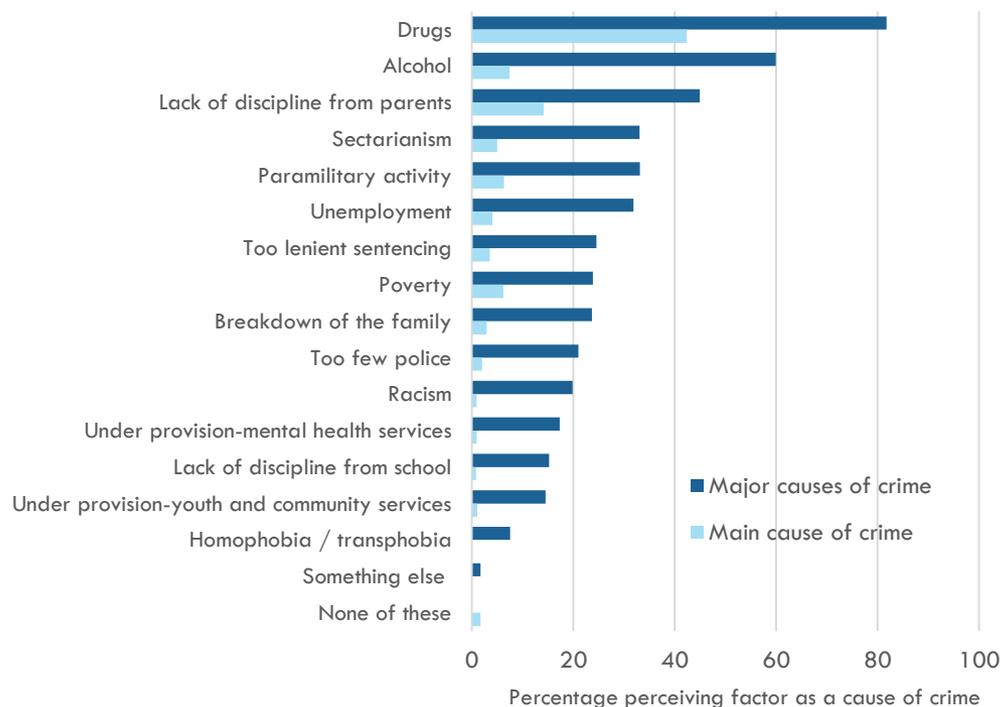
This chapter provides an overview of respondents' perceptions of causes of crime, crime levels and anti-social behaviour. Figures are presented in Tables 1 to 4 of Appendix 1.

3.1 Causes of crime

NISCS respondents were asked to select from a list, the factors they considered to be *major* causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. If a respondent selected more than one factor, they were then asked which of these factors they believed to be the *main* cause of crime. From 2018/19, respondents were also asked to select both the major and main causes of crime in their local area. Figures for both Northern Ireland and the local area are presented in Table 1.

- Findings from NISCS 2018/19 show that, as in previous years, drugs, alcohol and a lack of discipline from parents (82%, 60% and 45% respectively) remain the three factors most commonly identified as major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. Similarly, these factors were also most commonly cited by respondents as major causes when focusing on their local area (50%, 38% and 26% respectively).
- From the list of factors presented to respondents, 'homophobia/transphobia' was least likely to be identified as a major cause of crime, in both Northern Ireland (8%) and the local area (1%).
- When asked about the main cause, drugs was most likely to be cited by respondents for both Northern Ireland and their local area, at 42% and 31% respectively.

Figure 3.1: Perceptions of causes of crime (%) in Northern Ireland



Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

1. Respondents could provide 'something else' as an alternative/additional *major* cause. This was not taken as the main cause. If the main cause was not from the list provided, a 'none of these' response was given.

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Causes of Crime, Crime Levels and Anti-social Behaviour

3.2 Perceptions of change in crime levels

NISCS participants were also 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 2. Equivalent figures for change in crime levels in the local area are given in Table 3.

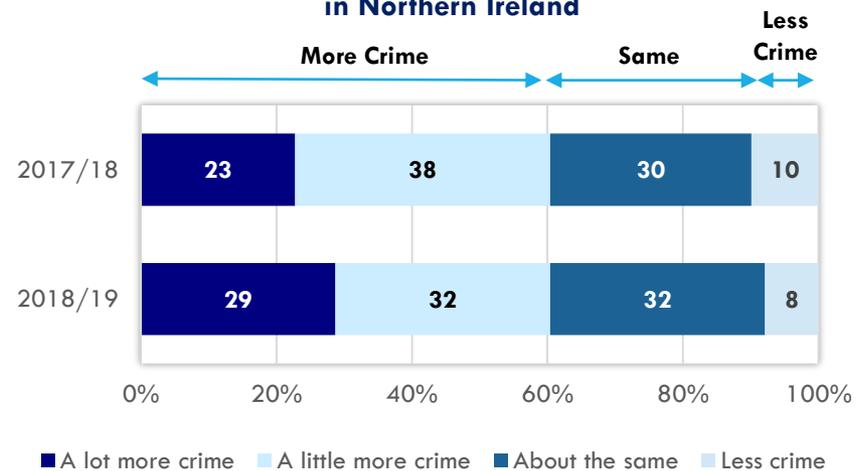
Typically, people can believe crime is on the increase, even if it is not, and that the situation is worse at the regional level than in their own local area. Thus, it is the trend in this proportion, rather than the actual value, that is of primary interest.

Northern Ireland

- Latest findings suggest that the proportion of respondents who believed there was a lot more crime in Northern Ireland showed a statistically significant increase, from 23% to 29%, between 2017/18 and 2018/19. In contrast, the proportion who felt there was a little more crime showed an equivalent decrease over the same period, from 38% to 32%. As a result the combined overall 'more crime' figure remained unchanged from the previous year (both 60%).

- While unchanged from last year, the proportion perceiving there to be 'more crime' in Northern Ireland has, however, shown an overall decrease when compared with 2003/04, from a high of 79%. This decrease is primarily due to a fall in the 'a lot more crime' figure, from 49% to 29% over the same period.
- Findings for 2018/19 suggest that fewer respondents believed there was less crime in Northern Ireland with the proportion showing a statistically significant decrease from 2017/18, down from 10% to 8%. The apparent increase in the proportion feeling crime levels were the same was not statistically significant.

Figure 3.2: Perceptions of changing crime levels (%) in Northern Ireland



Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

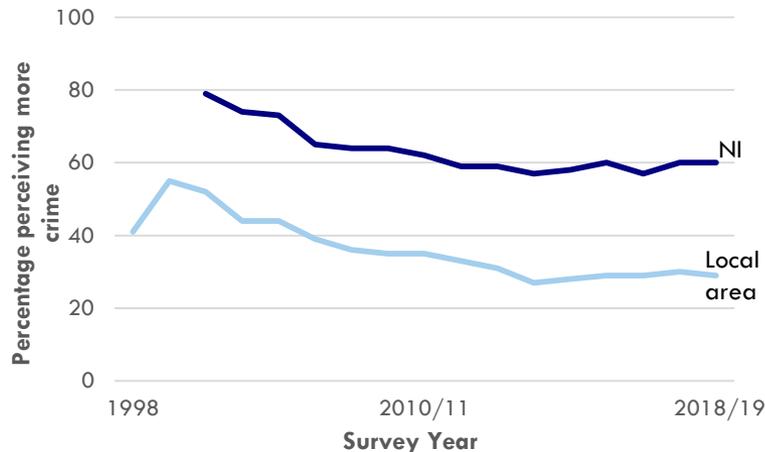
1. Percentages/values displayed may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

3 Causes of Crime, Crime Levels and Anti-social Behaviour

Local area

- Figure 3.3 shows that, as in previous sweeps of the survey, 2018/19 respondents were more positive in their perceptions of crime levels within their local area than at the regional level, with 29% believing crime in their local area had increased in the preceding two years compared with the 60% believing there was more crime at the Northern Ireland level. While the figure of 29% is similar to the 2017/18 rate of 30%, it is almost half that of the figure in 2001 (55%).

Figure 3.3: Perceptions of changing crime levels (%) in both Northern Ireland and the local area

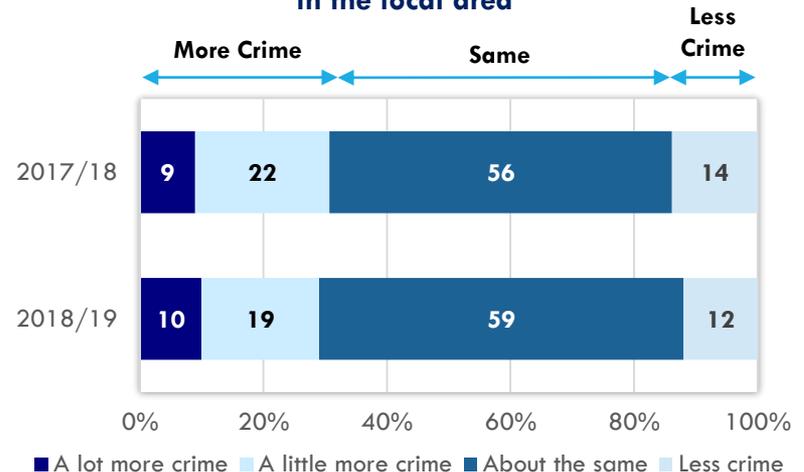


Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Surveys 1998-2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

- The question relating to change in the NI crime level was not included in the survey until 2003/04.
- Figures for local area are based on respondents who had been living in their area for more than three years.

- Over the years respondents have become less likely to believe crime levels in their local area had increased and more likely to believe crime has stayed the same. The reduction since 2001 in the proportion perceiving 'more crime' in their local area, from 55% to 29%, has resulted in an almost equivalent increase in the percentage who felt crime levels hadn't changed, from 36% to 59% over the same period. This latest figure of 59% was a statistically significant increase from 56% in 2017/18.
- Latest findings show a lower proportion of respondents felt there was less crime in their area, falling from 14% to 12% between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Figure 3.4: Perceptions of changing crime levels (%) in the local area



Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

- Percentages/values displayed may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
- Based on respondents who had been living in their area for more than three years.

3 Causes of Crime, Crime Levels and Anti-social Behaviour

3.3 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland and England and Wales

Respondents to the NISCS and CSEW 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'. Since 2003/04, responses to the following seven strands have been used to form a composite measure (see Section 4.3 of the [User Guide](#) (DoJ, 2019a, for more information) to gauge the overall perceived level of ASB in the local area:

1. abandoned or burnt-out cars;
2. noisy neighbours or loud parties;
3. people being drunk or rowdy in public places;
4. people using or dealing drugs;
5. teenagers/young people hanging around on the streets;
6. rubbish or litter lying around; and
7. vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property.

Figures for the composite measure and the seven individual strands are presented in Table 4.

- Based on this composite measure, findings from 2018/19 indicate that one-in-ten respondents (10%) perceived the level of ASB in their local area to be high, showing no statistically significant change from the previous year (9%).

- The proportion perceiving a high level of ASB has, however, shown an overall decrease from 18% in 2003/04, mainly due to a combination of non-significant decreases over the years. The equivalent figure for England and Wales (CSEW 2018/19) was lower at 7%.

Figure 3.5: Perceived high level of ASB (%) in Northern Ireland



Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Surveys 2003/04-2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

1. Perceived high level of ASB derived from responses to the seven individual ASB strands.

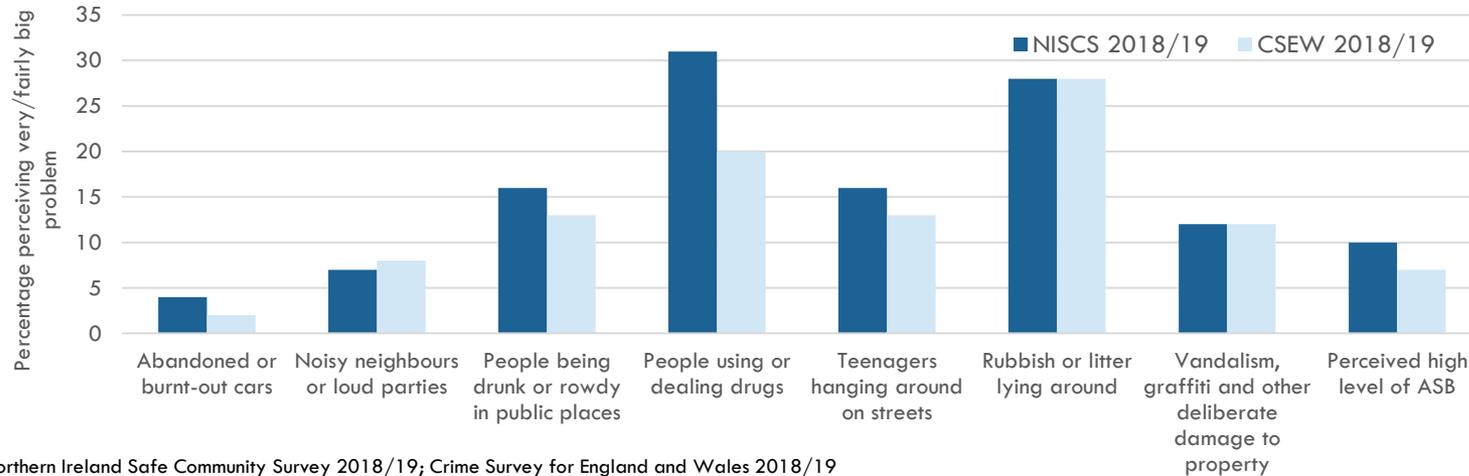
- In terms of the seven individual ASB strands, latest findings suggest 'people using or dealing drugs' was the only strand to show a statistically significant change from last year, up from 25% to 31%. Until recently, the proportion of respondents perceiving people using or dealing drugs as a problem had, on the whole, been falling with the rate reducing from 31% in 2003/04 to 21% in 2014/15. The rise back to 31% since then is mainly due to the increase which occurred over the last year.

3

Causes of Crime, Crime Levels and Anti-social Behaviour

- When latest findings are compared with 2003/04 for the six remaining strands, four have shown an overall decrease. The largest decreases, in percentage point terms, occurred in the proportions perceiving ‘vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property’ (28% to 12%) and ‘teenagers/young adults hanging around on streets’ (31% to 16%) as problems.
- As in recent sweeps of the survey, ‘people using or dealing drugs’ (31%) and ‘rubbish or litter lying around’ (28%) were the ASB types most likely to be perceived by NISCS 2018/19 respondents as problems in the local area. From 2003/04, ‘abandoned or burnt-out cars’ and ‘noisy neighbours or loud parties’ have been considered the least problematic forms of ASB (4% and 7% respectively in 2018/19). Similarly, rubbish or litter (28%) and people using or dealing drugs (20%) were also identified as the most problematic in England and Wales, though the proportion reporting people using or dealing drugs as a very/fairly big problem was lower in England and Wales than in Northern Ireland (20% v 31%).

Figure 3.6: Perceptions of ASB in Northern Ireland and England and Wales



Sources: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19; Crime Survey for England and Wales 2018/19

1. Perceived high level of ASB derived from responses to the seven individual ASB strands.

Summary: Causes of Crime, Crime levels and Anti-social Behaviour

Drugs, alcohol and a lack of discipline from parents were the three factors most commonly identified by 2018/19 respondents as major causes of crime, in both Northern Ireland and their local area. Three-fifths (60%) of respondents thought crime levels in Northern Ireland had increased compared with 29% who believed crime in their local area had risen. Latest findings also show that one-in-ten respondents (10%) perceived ASB to be high in their local area, unchanged from the previous year (9%).

4 | Worry about Crime and Personal Safety

4.1 Worry about crime and personal safety in Northern Ireland and England and Wales

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

Respondents to NISCS 2018/19 were asked how worried they are about becoming a victim of the following crimes using a four-point scale, ranging from 'very worried' to 'not at all worried':

1. home being burgled;
2. being mugged and robbed;
3. physical attack by a stranger;
4. physical attack because of hate motivations;
5. rape;
6. theft of a car; and
7. 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 compared with CSEW analyses in Table 5, Appendix 1.

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.

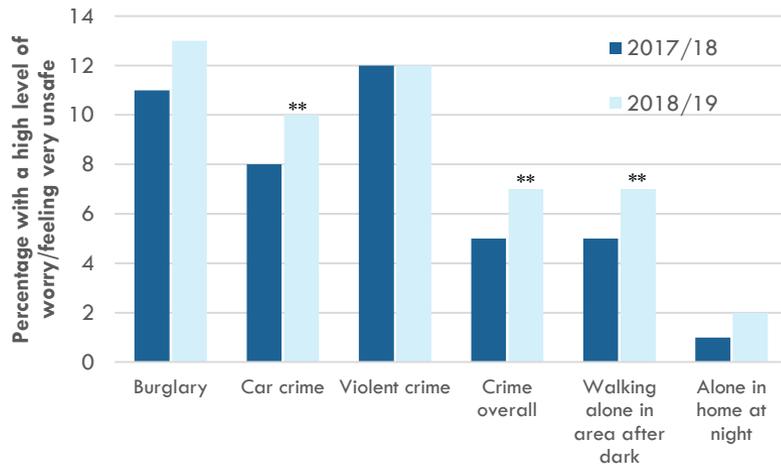
A similar approach is used to determine the worry about violent crime indicator, with responses to each violent crime question of 'very worried' being awarded 2 points and 'fairly worried' 1 point. In this instance, the scale ranges from 0 to 8 points and those scoring 4 or more points are deemed to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

Since 2007/08, respondents have also been 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 5.

4 | Worry about Crime and Personal Safety

- Findings from 2018/19 show that one-in-ten respondents (10%) displayed a high level of worry about car crime. While this represents a statistically significant increase from the figure of 8% the previous year, the rate has reduced by more than half since 2001 (21%).
- For burglary and violent crime, latest findings suggest the proportions who expressed a high level of worry showed no change from 2017/18. The proportion for violent crime has remained at 12% in both years while the apparent increase for burglary, from 11% to 13%, is not statistically significant. Worry about both crime types has however, shown an overall decrease when compared with the rates reported in 2003/04. Burglary has fallen from 21% to 13% and violent crime from 24% to 12%. These overall reductions were again, mainly a result of a number of non-significant decreases over the years.
- When asked about crime overall, 7% of 2018/19 respondents reported having a high level of worry, a statistically significant increase from 5% the previous year.

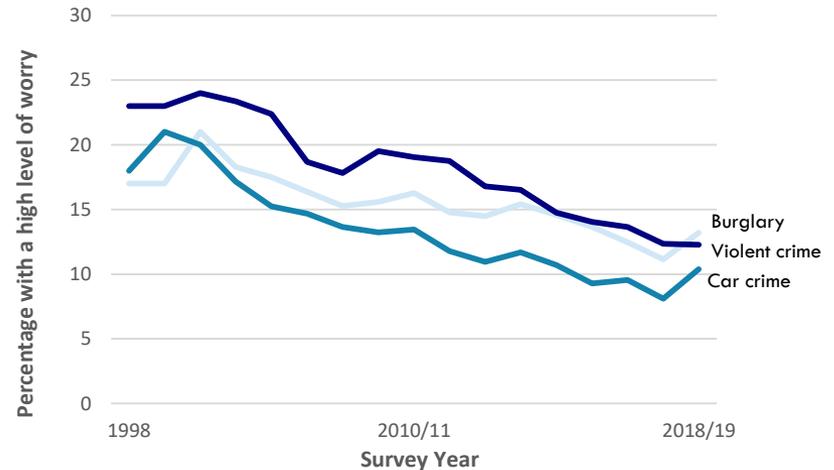
Figure 4.1: Worry about crime and personal safety (%) in Northern Ireland, 2017/18 and 2018/19



Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

- Car crime based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.
- Statistically significant change (5% level two-tailed test) from previous year is indicated by a double asterisk (**). Figures available in Table 5, Appendix 1.

Figure 4.2: Worry about crime (%) in Northern Ireland, 1998 to 2018/19



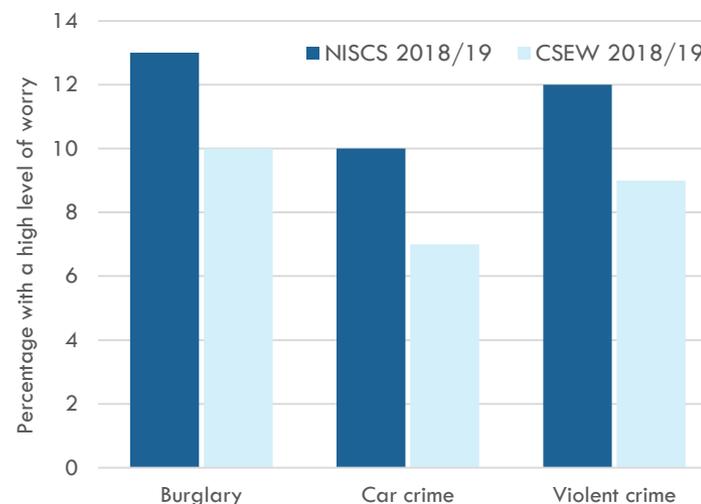
Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Surveys 1998-2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

- Car crime based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

4 | Worry about Crime and Personal Safety

- With regards to personal safety, latest findings indicate 7% of respondents felt very unsafe walking alone in their area after dark. Again, while this is a statistically significant increase from 5% in 2017/18, the proportion has almost halved compared with 2003/04 when 13% reported feeling very unsafe.
- Over the last two decades, the proportion feeling very unsafe when alone in home at night has remained stable at around 1% or 2% each year.
- Despite a lower prevalence of crime in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales, NISCS 2018/19 respondents were more likely than their CSEW counterparts to express a high level of worry about each of the three crime types considered. For example, 13% of respondents in Northern Ireland were very worried about being a victim of burglary compared with 10% in England and Wales.

Figure 4.3: Worry about crime (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales



Sources: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19; Crime Survey for England and Wales 2018/19

1. Car crime based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

Summary: Worry about Crime and Personal Safety

Latest findings suggest that car crime was the only crime type to show a statistically significant change from the previous year, with the proportion reporting a high level of worry increasing from 8% to 10% between 2017/18 and 2018/19. Figures for burglary and violent crime remained on a par with the previous year. The proportion feeling very unsafe walking alone in their area after dark also rose over this period, from 5% to 7%. In 2018/19, NISCS respondents were more likely than their CSEW counterparts to worry about all three crime types considered.

5 | Effect of 'Fear of Crime' on Quality of Life

5.1 Perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life in Northern Ireland and England and Wales

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.

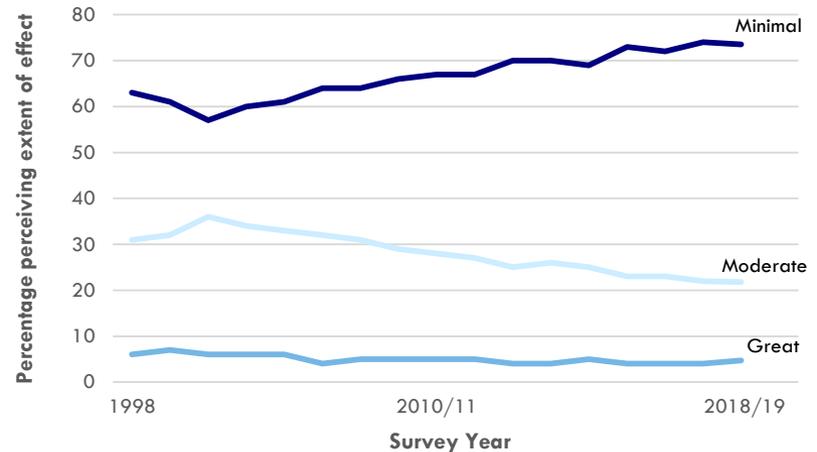
Respondents to NISCS were asked how much their own quality of life is affected by their 'fear of crime' on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no effect and 10 is a total effect. In order to standardise the results, the following conventions have been used to gauge the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life:

1. minimally affected (responded in the range 1 to 3);
2. moderately affected (responded in the range 4 to 7);
and
3. greatly affected (responded in the range 8 to 10).

Figures are presented in Table 6 of Appendix 1.

- As in previous sweeps of the survey, the majority of 2018/19 respondents, almost three-quarters (74%), felt 'fear of crime' has a minimal impact on their quality of life, showing no change from the previous year (74%). Similarly, the proportions claiming fear of crime has a moderate (22%) or great (5%) effect on their quality of life also remained on a par with last year.

Figure 5.1: Perceptions of the effect of 'fear of crime' on quality of life (%) in Northern Ireland



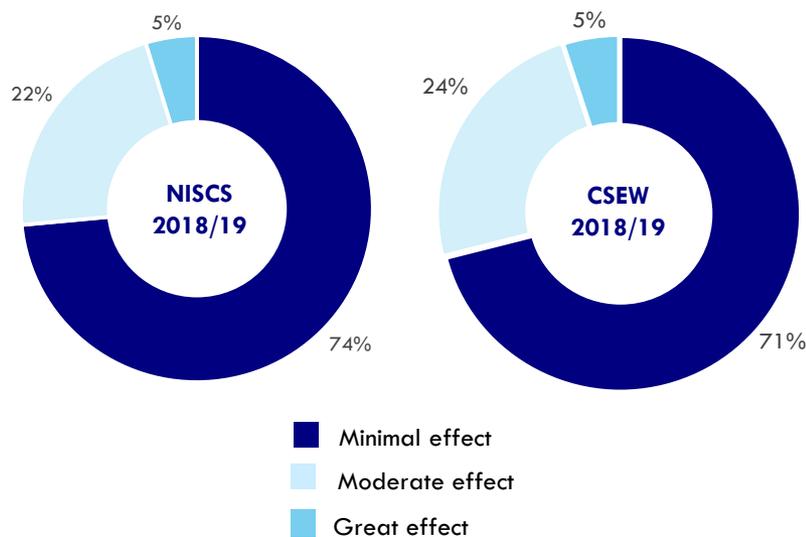
Sources: Northern Ireland Crime Surveys 1998-2017/18; Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19

- The proportion of respondents who felt fear of crime has a minimal effect has shown a gradual improvement over the years with the 2018/19 rate of 74% comparing with a low of 57% in 2003/04. This increase has been compensated for primarily by a subsequent reduction in the proportion reporting a moderate effect from 36% to 22% over the same period. The rate observed for a great effect on quality of life has remained relatively stable over the years.

5 | Effect of 'Fear of Crime' on Quality of Life

- Findings for England and Wales reflect the trend in Northern Ireland in that the majority of respondents also claimed 'fear of crime' has a minimal effect on their quality of life (71%; CSEW 2018/19). The proportions of CSEW respondents claiming a moderate and great effect were similar to NISCS results at 24% and 5% respectively.

Figure 5.2: Perceptions of the effect of fear of crime on quality of life (%) Northern Ireland and England and Wales



Sources: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey 2018/19; Crime Survey for England and Wales 2018/19

1. Percentages/values displayed may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Summary: Effect of 'Fear of Crime' on Quality of Life

At 74% in 2018/19, the majority of respondents felt fear of crime has a minimal effect on their quality of life, a proportion which has been increasing over the last fifteen years or so, from 57% in 2003/04. The proportion perceiving a moderate effect has shown a similar decrease over this period (from 36% to 22%). The rate for great effect has largely remained unchanged over the years.



Appendix 1: Tabular Annex

Table 1: Perceptions of the causes of crime (%) in Northern Ireland and the local area^{1,2}

	NI		Local area	
	Major causes of crime ^{3,4,5}	Main cause of crime ^{3,4}	Major causes of crime ^{3,4,5}	Main cause of crime ^{3,4}
Drugs	82	42	50	31
Alcohol	60	7	38	15
Lack of discipline from parents	45	14	26	13
Sectarianism	33	5	9	2
Paramilitary activity	33	6	10	3
Unemployment	32	4	15	5
Too lenient sentencing	25	4	8	2
Poverty	24	6	10	5
Breakdown of the family	24	3	10	2
Too few police	21	2	16	8
Racism	20	1	4	1
Under provision of mental health services	17	1	5	<0.5
Lack of discipline from school	15	1	7	1
Under provision of youth and community services	15	1	8	3
Homophobia / transphobia	8	0	1	<0.5
Something else	2	-	9	-
None of these	-	2	-	9
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3,412	3,412	3,248	3,248

Source: Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey (NISCS) 2018/19

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.
2. Respondents were asked to select from a list the factors they considered to be the major causes of crime in Northern Ireland today. If respondents selected more than one factor they were asked which of the factors they believed to be the main cause of crime. If respondents gave only one factor, this was taken as the main cause. From 2018/19 respondents were also asked about the major and main causes of crime in their local area.
3. When asked about the major causes of crime, respondents were able to select a 'something else' option and offer an alternative or additional cause of crime. When subsequently asked about the main cause, respondents either selected from the set list or gave none of these as an alternative option.
4. Four new response options 'paramilitary activity', 'under provision of mental health services', 'under provision of youth and community services' and 'homophobia/transphobia' were added from 2018/19.
5. Percentages for major causes of crime may add to more than 100 as respondents could select more than one cause.

Table 2: Perceptions of change in overall crime levels (%) in Northern Ireland¹

	NICS/NISCS															Statistically significant change, 2017/18 to 2018/19 ²
	2003/04	2005	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
More Crime³	79	74	73	65	64	64	62	59	59	57	58	60	57	60	60	
A lot more crime	49	42	40	34	32	31	28	26	25	23	25	25	23	23	29	**↑
A little more crime	30	32	33	32	31	33	35	34	34	34	33	35	35	38	32	**↓
Same	14	17	18	20	23	24	25	28	29	31	31	30	29	30	32	
Less crime	7	9	10	14	13	11	13	12	12	12	10	10	14	10	8	**↓
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,704</i>	<i>3,578</i>	<i>3,678</i>	<i>3,790</i>	<i>3,737</i>	<i>3,977</i>	<i>3,916</i>	<i>3,925</i>	<i>3,898</i>	<i>3,458</i>	<i>2,003</i>	<i>1,914</i>	<i>1,820</i>	<i>1,539</i>	<i>3,330</i>	

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).

3. Comprises the proportion of respondents believing there has been 'a little more crime' or 'a lot more crime'; these figures may not sum to the 'more crime' composite figure due to rounding.

Table 3: Perceptions of change in local crime levels (%) in Northern Ireland^{1,2}

	NICS/NISCS																Statistically significant change, 2017/18 to 2018/19 ³	
	1998	2001	2003/04	2005	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18		2018/19
More Crime⁴	41	55	52	44	44	39	36	35	35	33	31	27	28	29	29	30	29	
A lot more crime	14	26	22	17	17	14	14	12	11	10	10	8	8	8	8	9	10	
A little more crime	27	29	30	27	27	25	22	23	24	23	21	19	20	21	20	22	19	
Same	47	36	36	42	42	45	48	49	49	51	53	55	56	57	56	56	59	**↑
Less crime	12	8	12	13	14	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	16	15	15	14	12	**↓
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>2,648</i>	<i>2,597</i>	<i>2,644</i>	<i>3,076</i>	<i>3,171</i>	<i>3,295</i>	<i>3,291</i>	<i>3,495</i>	<i>3,494</i>	<i>3,497</i>	<i>3,524</i>	<i>3,109</i>	<i>1,816</i>	<i>1,707</i>	<i>1,605</i>	<i>1,375</i>	<i>2,883</i>	

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Based on respondents who had been living in their area for more than three years.

3. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).

4. Comprises the proportion of respondents believing there has been 'a little more crime' or 'a lot more crime'; these figures may not sum to the 'more crime' composite figure due to rounding.

Table 4: Perceptions of different types of anti-social behaviour as very / fairly big problems (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales¹

% saying very/fairly big problem	NICS/NISCS																	Statistically significant change, 2017/18 to 2018/19 ²	CSEW 2018/19
	1998	2001	2003/04	2005	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19		
Perceived high level of ASB ³	-	-	18	17	15	15	14	14	13	12	10	10	8	8	9	9	10		7
Abandoned or burnt-out cars	-	8	10	8	7	6	5	5	5	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4		2
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	6	7	8	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	7	7	7	7		8
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	-	-	24	25	23	25	24	22	20	21	18	17	15	15	15	14	16		13
People using or dealing drugs	21	29	31	28	26	26	24	23	22	23	22	23	21	22	25	25	31	***↑	20
Teenagers hanging around on streets ⁴	20	33	31	29	27	28	26	26	23	22	20	17	15	15	14	13	16		13
Rubbish or litter lying around	22	27	29	28	27	27	28	28	27	26	24	26	26	24	25	26	28		28
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property	23	32	28	26	23	22	23	22	20	20	17	16	15	13	12	13	12		12
Unweighted base ^{5,6}	3,058	3,007	3,104	3,691	3,788	3,932	3,855	4,098	4,077	4,063	4,055	3,596	2,071	1,974	1,877	1,582	3,427		8,503

¹ Denotes indicator was not included in survey.

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).

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

4. Prior to 2018/19 question referred to 'teenagers hanging around on streets'. From 2018/19 it refers to 'teenagers/young adults'.

5. Unweighted base refers to rubbish or litter lying around. Other bases will be similar.

6. CSEW unweighted base refers to people using or dealing drugs. Other CSEW bases will be similar.

Table 5: Worry about crime and personal safety (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales¹

	NICS/NISCS																	Statistically significant change, ² 2017/18 to 2018/19 ²	CSEW 2018/19
	1998	2001	2003/04	2005	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19		
% with high levels of worry																			
Burglary	17	17	21	18	17	16	15	16	16	15	14	15	15	14	12	11	13		10
Car crime ³	18	21	20	17	15	15	14	13	13	12	11	12	11	9	10	8	10	**↑	7
Violent crime ⁴	23	23	24	23	22	19	18	20	19	19	17	17	15	14	14	12	12		9
% very worried																			
Crime overall	-	-	-	-	-	9	8	8	9	8	7	7	7	6	7	5	7	**↑	-
% feeling very unsafe																			
Walking alone in area after dark	8	11	13	11	11	12	10	10	9	8	7	7	7	7	6	5	7	**↑	6
Alone in home at night	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2		-
Unweighted base ⁵	3,057	3,010	3,104	3,691	3,790	3,933	3,856	4,102	4,080	4,061	4,054	3,594	2,073	1,975	1,876	1,581	3,428		8,623

¹ Denotes indicator was not included in survey.

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).

3. Car crime based on respondents residing in households owning, or with regular use of, a vehicle.

4. As described in Section 4.1, the violent crime indicator is constructed from four questions. For the question relating to worry about physical attack because of a hate motivation (referred to in Section 4.1 and the Technical Annex of the main report), the CSEW question refers to skin colour, ethnic origin and religion.

5. Unweighted base refers to worry about burglary. Other bases will be similar with the exception of car crime which is based on vehicle-owners only.

Table 6: Perceptions of the effect of ‘fear of crime’ on quality of life (%) in Northern Ireland and England and Wales¹

	NICS/NISCS																	Statistically significant change, 2017/18 to 2018/19 ²	CSEW 2018/19
	1998	2001	2003/04	2005	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19		
Minimal	63	61	57	60	61	64	64	66	67	67	70	70	69	73	72	74	74		71
Moderate	31	32	36	34	33	32	31	29	28	27	25	26	25	23	23	22	22		24
Great	6	7	6	6	6	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	5		5
<i>Unweighted base</i>	3,049	3,008	3,099	3,691	3,789	3,929	3,854	4,099	4,079	4,062	4,054	3,596	2,074	1,975	1,877	1,581	3,427		3,870

1. Results exclude don't knows and refusals.

2. Statistical significance of change at the 5% level (two-tailed test) is indicated by a double asterisk (**).

Appendix 2: Technical Annex

About the NISCS

Closely mirroring the format and core questions of the CSEW, the NISCS is an important source of information about community safety issues such as levels of, and public attitudes to, crime and anti-social behaviour. Its results play an important role in informing and monitoring government policies and targets. Within the [2016-21 Draft Programme for Government \(PfG\)](#) and the [Northern Ireland Civil Service Outcomes Delivery Plan](#), the Department of Justice will lead on Indicator 1 related to reducing crime. Findings contained within this bulletin will be used by the Department to inform the Delivery Plan for this Indicator. Survey 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) and [Annual Policing Plan 2019-20](#) (NIPB, 2019).

An alternative, but complementary, measure of crime to offences recorded by the police, the main aims of the NISCS are 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;
- monitor trends in the level of crime, independent of changes in reporting levels or police recording practices;
- measure people's perceptions of and reactions to crime (for example, the level and causes of crime, the extent to which they are concerned about crime and the effect of crime on their quality of life);
- measure public confidence in policing and the wider criminal justice system; and
- collect sensitive information, using self-completion modules, on people's experiences regarding crime-related issues, such as domestic violence.

Recorded crime figures cannot, by their nature, provide an impression of the extent of concern about crime (often described as 'fear of crime') among different sections of the community. Hence, it is necessary to complement the police figures with information drawn from the NISCS, which, for the crime types it covers, provides a more complete measure of the extent and impact of crime against private households and their adult occupants. Further information on recorded crime statistics can be found in the [Police Service of Northern Ireland \(PSNI\) User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics](#) (PSNI, 2018a).

While some of the core interviewer-administered modules for NISCS 2018/19 were (generally) based on CSEW 2018/19, some modification has been necessary to reflect local issues and the fact that the smaller NISCS sample size would not have generated robust results for follow-up questions asked of small sub-sections of the sample.

Frequency and sample size of the NICS/NISCS

Initially, the then NICS was conducted on an ad hoc basis, before becoming a biennial survey in 2001. At that time, the Community Attitudes Survey (CAS) was also being conducted on a continuous basis, facilitating annual reports on topics linked to crime, policing and the criminal justice system. Increasingly, however, the CSEW was becoming a key vehicle to track progress against Public Service Agreement (PSA) and other targets related to the criminal justice and health sectors in England and Wales. Hence, interest increased among officials and Ministers in what the NICS had to offer in terms of direct comparison, while, in light of the improved security situation, many of the issues originally covered by CAS were becoming less relevant.

Accordingly, it was decided that a more effective use of resources would be to discontinue CAS at the end of 2003 and to move fieldwork for the NICS to a continuous basis with effect from January 2005. This would facilitate the monitoring of annual trends and more regular direct comparison with England and Wales. It was also decided to increase the target achieved sample size for the NICS from 3,000 to 4,000. This would contribute to increased accuracy of headline results and generate more robust analyses for various socio-demographic characteristics. However, unavoidable budgetary pressures resulted in the need to reduce the target achieved sample size; a moderate decrease was first made in-year 2013/14, from 4,000 to 3,500, with a full sample reduction to 2,000 first being implemented in 2014/15. Following a review of the survey during 2017/18 (details of which can be found [here](#)), the target sample size has been increased with effect from April 2018 onwards. It is anticipated that around 3,500 interviews will now be achieved annually.

Additional information, covering issues such as sampling design and methodology is available within the survey [User Guide](#) (DoJ, 2019a) and associated [Quality Report](#) (DoJ, 2019b).

Sampling and fieldwork

The initial NISCS 2018/19 sample consisted of 7,500 addresses, randomly selected from the Land and Property Services domestic property database. Visits to each address by an interviewer from the NISRA Central Survey Unit resulted in an eligible sample of 6,534 occupied addresses, from which attempts were made to interview one randomly selected adult respondent at each address.

Selecting only one person at each address means that individuals living in large households have a lower chance of being included in the sample than those living in small households. Accordingly, the data presented in this publication have been weighted by household size to prevent a bias towards small household sizes.

In January 2005, the then NICS began operating on a continuous basis. This bulletin refers primarily to fieldwork undertaken during the financial year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019, which involved complete interviews with 3,429 people aged 16 years and over. This represents an eligible response rate of 52%.

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 under an hour for non-victims, although those involving respondents who disclosed several crimes could last much longer.

Demographic breakdown

The following socio-demographic (personal, household and area) groups (listed below) are now 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;
2. age;
3. living arrangements;
4. sex (gender);
5. disability (or illness);
6. household type (child dependants);
7. self-perceived nationality;
8. household income;
9. housing tenure;
10. type of area (urban / rural);
11. policing district;
12. perceived level of anti-social behaviour in area;
13. experience of crime reported to the police; and
14. multiple deprivation measure rank (MDM 2017).

Rounding, error and statistical significance

Don't knows, 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 NISCS estimates are subject to sampling error, differences between estimates from successive years of the survey or between population subgroups (presented in the accompanying Microsoft Excel workbook) may occur by chance.

For the purposes of this bulletin, where differences have emerged as being statistically significant, these have been reported at the 5% ($p < 0.05$) level of probability (two-tailed tests). This means that, for any observed result that is found to be statistically significant, one can be 95% confident that this has not happened by chance.

As a result of the sample reduction in recent years, the respective confidence limits of any percentages from the survey were wider than was the case previously and the margin of difference between findings required to achieve 'statistical significance' was widened accordingly. This means that absolute differences in percentages which would previously have been 'statistically significant' with the larger numbers then sampled (and the much narrower range of error for any findings) may not necessarily be found to be statistically significant with the reduced sample size. This should be borne in mind when considering the long-term trends presented in the tables.

The Department of Justice does not routinely publish NISCS estimates where the unweighted base is less than 100 cases, therefore findings for some socio-demographic sub-groups (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, worry about crime or personal safety.

Further information on the 2018/19 sweep of the NISCS is contained within the NISCS 2018/19 Technical Report (forthcoming, via the [Safe Community Survey](#) section of the Northern Ireland Department of Justice website).

Points to note about this publication

- *Causes of crime (Section 3.1)* - new response options have been included from 2018/19: 'paramilitary activity', 'under provision of mental health services', 'under provision of youth and community services' and 'homophobia/transphobia'. Respondents are now also asked about causes of crime in their local area.
- *ASB (Section 3.3)* - prior to 2018/19, the anti-social behaviour indicator relating to 'teenagers hanging around on streets' referred to teenagers only. From 2018/19, this now refers to 'teenagers/young adults'.
- *Worry about crime (Section 4.1)* - from 2018/19, the worry about car crime questions, i.e. worry about having your car stolen and having things stolen from your car, have been extended to include worry about car or van. An amendment has also been made to the wording of the question related to worry about physical assault because of a hate motivation, which is used to derive the violent crime composite measure. The list of potential hate crime motivations has been amended slightly and are now listed on a display card shown to the respondent.
- Previous publications included statistics relating to perceived risk of becoming a victim of crime, however, this module has been removed from 2018/19 onwards following a review and consultation of the survey during 2017/18.
- Previous publications included a table which measured different types of anti-social behaviour as the single biggest problem in the local area (Table A5 from the 2017/18 [Perceptions of Crime](#) report). Due to a technical oversight, the relevant question had been included as multiple response in the 2018/19 sweep rather than a single response question as in previous years. Therefore, as comparable figures are not available, this table has not been included in this report.

Sample profile for NISCS 2018/19

Group	Sub-Group	Unweighted Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Sex	Men	1,576	46	47
	Women	1,853	54	53
Age Group	16-24	222	6	10
	25-34	464	14	13
	35-44	597	17	18
	45-54	540	16	17
	55-64	621	18	18
	65-74	527	15	14
	75+	458	13	10
Religion	Catholic	1,429	42	42
	Protestant	1,575	46	46
Area Type	Rural	1,287	38	40
	Urban	2,142	62	60
Policing District	Antrim and Newtownabbey	220	6	6
	Ards and North Down	270	8	8
	Armagh, Banbridge and	353	10	11
	Craigavon	660	19	18
	Belfast	298	9	9
	Causeway Coast and Glens	272	8	7
	Derry and Strabane	260	8	7
	Fermanagh and Omagh	262	8	8
	Lisburn and Castlereagh	259	8	8
	Mid and East Antrim	234	7	8
	Mid Ulster	341	10	10
	Newry, Mourne and Down			
Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank ¹	1 st quintile (most deprived)	651	19	17
	2 nd quintile	710	21	20
	3 rd quintile	716	21	22
	4 th quintile	707	21	22
	5 th quintile (least deprived)	645	19	19
Vehicle-owning households		2,788	81	86

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

Appendix 3: National Statistics Status



National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

These statistics are currently undergoing a [Compliance Check](#) by the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#). The statistics last underwent a full assessment against the [Code of Practice](#) and were subsequently re-designated in 2012/13, details of which can be found [here](#).

While the current review by the Office for Statistics Regulation is ongoing, we have made the following improvements:

- carried out a comprehensive review and public consultation of the content and scope of the survey, details of which can be found [here](#); and
- published a [Future Programme of Work](#) that details the list of developments that the department plan to scope in terms of feasibility of implementation.

Appendix 4: References

Department of Justice (2019a) Northern Ireland Crime Survey User Guide

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-user-guide>

Department of Justice (2019b) Northern Ireland Crime Survey Quality Report

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-crime-survey-quality-report>

Department of Justice (2012) Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doj/cs-strategy-20122017.pdf>

Northern Ireland Executive (2016) Programme for Government 2016-21 and Outcomes Delivery Plan

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/programme-governmentoutcomes-delivery-plan>

Northern Ireland Policing Board (2019) Annual Policing Plan 2019-20

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/publication/annual-policing-plan-2019-20>

Northern Ireland Policing Board (2016) Strategic Outcomes for Policing in Northern Ireland 2016-2020

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/sites/nipb/files/media-files/Strategic-outcomes-for-policing-2016-2020.pdf>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2019) Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2019

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2019>

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2018a) User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland (Updated January 2018)

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/documents/crime-user-guide.pdf>

Police Service of Northern Ireland (2018b) Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2018/19. Belfast: PSNI

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/police-recorded-crime-statistics/documents/police-recorded-crime-in-northern-ireland-1998-99-to-2018-19.pdf>

Rice, A. and Campbell, P. (2019) Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2018/19 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey. DoJ Research and Statistical Bulletin. Belfast: DoJ

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/experience-crime-findings-201819-northern-ireland-safe-community-survey>