

Review of the NI Crime Survey – Public Consultation Response – March 2018

Background

Following consultation in December 2016 on the draft Programme for Government (PfG), it was agreed that a review of the Northern Ireland Crime Survey would be necessary. The Northern Ireland Crime Survey is the source of data for Indicator 1 of the PfG (*'Reduce crime and the harm and vulnerability caused by crime'*): the percentage of the population who were a victim of crime.

The overall aim of the review is:

"To review the scope and content of the NI Crime Survey to ensure it meets customer requirements in alignment with Departmental and PfG priorities."

In November 2017, a draft revision of the questionnaire was made available for public consultation via Citizen Space. Simultaneously, this draft was supplied to NISRA Central Survey Unit (CSU), who administers the survey on behalf of the Department, to allow them to begin initial preparations for coding, testing and timing.

This paper presents the Department's response to the consultation, and the details of any further changes that have been made to the questionnaire.

Summary of Consultation

The public consultation opened on 9th November 2017, and closed 8.5 weeks later on 9th January 2018. Notice of the consultation was placed on the DoJ website, the DoJ Twitter feed, the NISRA Facebook feed, the NISRA website and also a more general press notice. In addition, an email was sent to those on our NICS mailing list, including academics, charities, and local councils amongst others.

In total, eight responses were received to the consultation: three by email and five via the Citizen Space link. Of these, one was excluded as invalid/incomplete, leaving seven responses. The majority of the responses came from organisations, or people representing organisations. One response was from an individual.

The responses were generally favourable, with no overly negative comments regarding any of the proposed changes being made. A wide range of comments were received relating to the wording of specific questions, with those responding on behalf of organisations putting to the fore particular organisational viewpoints and issues.

Suggested changes related mostly to either revised wording or the addition of new questions. In general, we have approached these suggestions, alongside NISRA CSU (who have expertise in questionnaire design), with the intent of including them unless there is a good reason not to. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to include any

of the new questions suggested, either due to similarities with existing questions or the unsuitability of open-text questions. However, it has been possible to include the majority of wording revisions.

Feedback from Testing

Experienced interviewers from NISRA CSU tested the revised questionnaire on a number of volunteers during January 2018. There were two aims: to assess the length of the questionnaire; and to test whether the questions were providing the intended results. Feedback was also sought from NISRA CSU analysts, who were asked to peer-review the revised questionnaire in terms of best-practice in question design.

The general feedback was that the questionnaire was too long, and this would be off-putting to respondents. Certain sections were also seen as repetitive, with the quality of responses likely to tail off towards the end.

More specifically there were concerns over the following:

- The “worry about crime” questions in module 2 were regarded as being too similar in purpose to the “perceptions of risk” questions in module 11; the recommendation being that we should remove one set.
- The “worry about harassment” questions, in particular the hate crime versions, were seen as repetitive and the respondents were not picking up the differences between them. Here, the recommendation was to redraft the questions.
- The terminology used in the Sentencing module was regarded as too technical for most respondents, and could result in a large proportion of “don’t know” responses. These questions will need to be revised before they can be used.
- There were issues with both the Modern Slavery and Cyber Crime modules using too many freeform text responses, due to the difficulties in collating and analysing the responses.
- There were particular concerns over the paramilitary questions in module 12, due to the sensitivity of the topic. An ‘opt-out’ will be added to enable both the interviewer and respondent to skip these questions if they feel uncomfortable.
- Some of the Demographic questions in module 16 were of questionable value, and could potentially be removed if they were not used anymore.

Summary of Changes

Those changes already identified prior to the consultation¹ have now been approved for inclusion in the questionnaire. Based on the feedback from the public responses, feedback from interviewers & respondents involved in the field testing and also

¹ Details of which can be found at <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/consultation-proposed-changes-northern-ireland-crime-survey-november-2017>.

feedback from those peer-reviewing the questionnaire, further changes have been made to the questionnaire. The details of these revised questions can be found in the attached Appendix.

The most notable change is to the name of the survey. Based on feedback that the name could be off-putting to some potential respondents, both the Project Board and the DoJ Departmental Board have agreed to change the name to '**The Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey**'.

The largest change to the contents of the questionnaire is the removal of the '*Perceptions of Risk of Becoming a Victim of Crime*' and '*Night Time Economy*' modules, and the removal of some of the demographic questions (again, the details of which can be found in the Appendix).

There have also been some minor changes to the wording and grammar of some questions and responses, although these do not affect the original intent and so are not listed in the Appendix.

Based on the feedback that the questionnaire is too long, we have opted for biennial rotation of some attitudinal modules, whilst the 'core' modules will remain annual to align with Departmental priorities. This will result in a shorter questionnaire each year, and will reduce the time-burden on the respondent.

Annual	Biennial – Year 1	Biennial – Year 2
Perceptions of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	Electronic Monitoring	Sentencing
Experience of Crime	Organised Crime	Modern Slavery
Confidence in the Criminal Justice System	Experience of Anti-Social Behaviour	Cyber-Crime
Confidence in the Police	Experience of Domestic Abuse	Experience of Sexual Violence and Abuse
Confidence in Police Accountability Arrangements		
Confidence in the Youth Justice Agency		

One further change that will apply for 2018/2019 onwards is confirmation of a funding increase which will allow the target sample size to rise from 2,000 to 4,000 annually. This will improve the robustness of the socio-demographic analyses, have the positive effect of narrowing confidence intervals, as well as meaning smaller percentage point changes will be required to achieve statistical significance.

Next Steps

The final questionnaire will 'go-live' in April 2018. The first publications from the 2018/2019 period are anticipated to be available from late 2019.

The final year-1 questionnaire will be published alongside this paper.

If you have any feedback in regards to any of the changes detailed in this paper, please contact us at statistics.research@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk.

Appendix: Details of Changes

The changes detailed in this appendix are those identified since the draft questionnaire published in November 2017. Those changes from the current questionnaire to the November draft can be found at the following link: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/consultation-proposed-changes-northern-ireland-crime-survey-november-2017>.

Module 2: Perceptions of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

CAUSEC, CAUSEM, (New Q1) & (New Q2) – Three additional responses added.

Under-provision of mental health services

Under-provision of youth and community services

Homophobia / Transphobia

(New Q3) – Freeform text answer has been replaced with a list of responses.

If you feel unsafe alone at home at night, why is this?

Personal or domestic reasons

Burglary/theft (or attempted) from own home/garage/garden

Damage or vandalism to own property (including cars)

Friend's/relative's home was burgled/vandalised

Neighbour's home was burgled/vandalised

General increase in burglaries in the local area

General increase in vandalism in the local area

Increase in crime in the local area

Increase in crime generally

Nuisance neighbours

Feeling vulnerable/insecure due to changes in personal circumstances

Feeling vulnerable/insecure due to changes in the neighbourhood

National media reports in newspapers/on TV/in other media

Local media reports in newspapers/on TV/in other media

Other (please specify)

WRACEATT – Text of question has been updated.

(How worried are you about...) being subject to a physical attack because of hate motivations, such as those indicated on this card?

[DISPLAY CARD: Hate motivated crimes can be committed for the following reasons: skin colour, sexuality, community background, disability, faith/religion, or transphobia]

WHARR, (New Q6) & (New Q7) – Combined into a single question.

I would now like you to think about harassment, including intimidation and verbal abuse. How worried are you about being subject to harassment in each of the following locations?

1=Away from your home or in a public place.

2=In, or just outside, your own home.

3=Online.

WHARR, (New Q8) & (New Q9) – Combined into a single question.

I would now like you to think about harassment, including intimidation and verbal abuse, specifically because of hate motivations, such as those indicated on this card. How worried are you about being subject to harassment in each of the following locations?

[DISPLAY CARD: Hate motivated crimes can be committed for the following reasons: skin colour, sexuality, community background, disability, faith/religion, or transphobia]

1=Away from your home or in a public place.

2=In, or just outside, your own home.

3=Online.

TEENHANG – Text of question has been updated.

(How much of a problem are...) teenagers / young adults hanging around on the streets?

BIGPROB – One response is changed, whilst another is added.

Looking at this card, which of these things would you say is the biggest problem in your local area?

Teenagers / young people hanging around on the streets

Something else (please specify)

Module 4: Experience of Crime Victim Forms

DESCRINC & DESCRIN2 – Potential length of responses is increased from 150 to 250 characters.

(New Q1) – Removed as is too similar to SATPOL.

CRIMNUM – Removed as is too similar to COPSKNOW.

Module 5: Confidence in the Criminal Justice System

DISPLAY 1 – Text of introduction has been updated.

The next few questions are about the effectiveness of the organisations that make up the Criminal Justice System, including the police, public prosecution, courts, prisons and probation services. You don't need to have had contact with any of these organisations to answer the questions. We are just interested in your general opinion.

Firstly, I'd like you to think about the role of the police. The police are responsible for keeping the public safe by preventing crime and catching criminals.

DISPLAY 2 – Text of introduction has been updated.

The Public Prosecution Service is responsible for deciding when a case should be brought to court and then prosecuting the defendants, as well as providing victims and witnesses with information throughout the process.

FAIRATT – Replaced by seven separate questions.

DISPLAY

The Criminal Justice System deals with a variety of people in different circumstances, such as victims and witnesses of a crime, as well as those who are accused or convicted of committing a crime. Thinking about the Criminal Justice System as a whole, please choose an answer from the card to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

FAIRATT1

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) gives witnesses and victims the support they need?

FAIRATT2

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) treats those who have been accused of a crime as 'innocent until proven guilty'?

FAIRATT3

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) takes into account the views of victims and witnesses?

FAIRATT4

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) takes into account the circumstances surrounding the crime when handing out sentences?

FAIRATT5

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) is too soft on those accused of committing a crime?

FAIRATT6

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) achieves the correct balance between the rights of the offender and the rights of the victim?

FAIRATT7

(How much do you agree or disagree that the Criminal Justice System...) discriminates against particular groups or individuals?

CJSIMP1 & CJSIMP2 – Combined into a single question.

Looking at this card what would be the MOST and SECOND MOST important thing the Criminal Justice System could do to improve your confidence in it?

Module 6: Confidence in the Police

POLATT – Four of the statements have been removed, leaving the following.

Choosing an answer from this card please say how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the police in your local area.

They (the police in this area) can be relied on to be there when you need them.

They (the police in this area) would treat you with respect if you had contact with them for any reason.

They (the police in this area) treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are.

They (the police in this area) are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community.

They (the police in this area) help keep this area safe.

They (the police in this area) have a visible presence in this area.

Taking everything into account I have confidence in the police in this area.

POLRATNI – The existing text for the question will be retained.

Do you think the police do a good job or a poor job in Northern Ireland as a whole?

POLEQUNI – Text of question has been updated.

Taking your answer from this card please, how do you think the police treat Catholic and Protestant members of the public in Northern Ireland as a whole?

(New Q1) – Four responses are changed, and one is removed.

Looking at this card, which of the following has affected your confidence in the police as an organisation?

Personal experience with the police

Relatives' and/or friends' experiences

Word of mouth/ Information from other people

Reporting on police involvement in high profile incidents

Broadsheet newspapers, including online (e.g. Times, Telegraph)

Tabloid newspapers, including online (e.g. Mirror, Express)

Local newspapers, including online (e.g. Belfast Telegraph, Irish News)

TV documentaries

TV news programmes

Social media (e.g. Facebook/ Twitter)

Something else (SPECIFY)

SPONTANEOUS ONLY: Not sure

Module 9: Sentencing

(New Q2a-Q2e) – Two new responses are added to each question.

Which of the purposes of sentencing identified above do you think <sentence type> deliver?

Punishing the offender for their actions

Deterring others from committing crime

Rehabilitating the offender to prevent them from re-offending

Protecting the public from harm

Reparation to the victim and/or community

None of these

Don't know

(New Q4) – Removed as is too similar to FAIRATT4.

Module 11 – This subject of “Perceptions of the Risk of Becoming a Victim of Crime” is removed entirely.

Module 12: Perceptions of Organised Crime

(New Q1) – Text of question has been updated.

In what ways does organised crime harm you and/or the population of Northern Ireland?

(New Q5) – Text of question has been updated.

What impact do you believe the successful prosecution of cases has had on the level of organised crime in the past 12 months?

(New Q6) – Question removed.

(New Q7) – Text of question has been updated.

What impact do you believe the level of sentences handed down in cases has had on the level of organised crime in the past 12 months?

(New Q8) – Question removed.

New **DISPLAYCARD** to be inserted before the paramilitary questions.

[INTERVIEWER: IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE ASKING THESE QUESTIONS, PLEASE SKIP THEM AND INDICATE ACCORDINGLY]

The following questions are on the subject of paramilitary groups in your local area. Although the subject can be sensitive, they are important in helping government understand more about people's perceptions of the subject. We, therefore, value your honest responses. Please be assured that these will be anonymised before any analyses are carried out. However, if you are not comfortable answering question on this subject, please let me [THE INTERVIEWER] know, and we will move onto the next subject.

New **QUESTION** to be inserted before the paramilitary questions.

Are you continuing with the paramilitary questions?

1=Yes.

2=No, respondent requested to skip.

3=No, interviewer skipped.

Module 13: Experience of Anti-Social Behaviour

ASBPROB – Text of question has been updated.

How much of a problem is anti-social behaviour in your local area. By your area I mean within a 15 minute walk from here?

IF NECESSARY: Anti-social behaviour is any behaviour that causes people nuisance, annoyance or distress. This can include behaviours that are aggressive or intimidating or that impact upon a person's quality of life.

(New Q4) – Removed as it is too similar to (New Q5).

(New Q8) – Question removed.

Module 14: Perceptions of Modern Slavery

(New Q1) – Text of question has been updated.

What do you understand by the term "modern slavery"?

[INTERVIEWER: We're interested in a definition of the phrase, or activities the respondent may associate with modern slavery]

(New Q4) – Removed as it is too similar to (New Q1).

Module 16: Demographics

The following demographics will be removed:

GENHEALT – How is your health in general?

STUDY – Are you a full time student at school, college or university?

EVERW – Have you ever had a paid job?

AGEHOUSE – When was this building first built?

MANAGHH – Thinking of how your household is managing on the total household income at the moment, would you say it was...

NEWPAPNA – Which of the following daily national newspapers do you read most often?

PAPNASPE – Please specify.

NEWPAPNI – Which of the following daily regional newspapers do you read most often?

PAPNISPE – Please specify.

New **QUESTION** added.

Which of the options on this card best describes how you think of yourself?

1=Heterosexual / straight.

2=Gay / lesbian.

3=Bisexual.

4=Other

Module 17: Experience of Domestic Abuse

DVQP5 – Text of question has been updated.

Again thinking back to this (worst) incident, do you suspect someone gave you more or stronger alcohol/drugs than you intended to drink/take, without you knowing at the time? Or did you drink alcohol or take drugs beforehand?

(New Q2) – Removed as it is too similar to (New Q3).

Module 18: Experience of Sexual Violence and Abuse

SHINTRO – Text of introduction has been updated.

The next set of questions asks about stalking or sexual harassment, which can affect both men and women. This might include a person making calls or writing messages that are obscene or threatening, following someone around or loitering outside their home.

Although some questions may seem quite intrusive, they are important in helping government understand more about people's perceptions and experiences of such incidents. We, therefore, value your honest responses. Please be assured that these will be anonymised before any analyses are carried out. If the questions upset you in any way, or have an impact on your mental health, you can just pass over them by pressing 'Don't wish to answer' - however, we hope you will continue to the end.

(New Q6) – Removed as it is too similar to (New Q7).

SVINTRO – Text of introduction has been updated.

We would now like to ask you two similar sets of questions about sexual violence and abuse, which can affect both men and women. This covers, for example, indecent exposure, sexual threats, indecent assaults, sexual assaults, attempted rape and rape.

The Government defines sexual violence and abuse as: 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability).' Please note that coercive, exploitative and harmful behaviour includes taking advantage of an individual's incapacity to give informed consent.

Although some questions may seem quite intrusive, they are important in helping government understand more about people's perceptions and experiences of such incidents. We, therefore, value your honest responses. Please be assured that these will be anonymised before any analyses are carried out. If the questions upset you in any way, or have an impact on your mental health, you can just pass over them by pressing 'Don't wish to answer' - however, we hope you will continue to the end.

(New Q13) – Removed as it is too similar to (New Q14).

SVQ13 – Text of question has been updated.

Again thinking back to this (worst) incident, do you suspect someone gave you more or stronger alcohol/drugs than you intended to drink/take, without you knowing at the time? Or did you drink alcohol or take drugs beforehand?