

Research into Recent Crime Trends in Northern Ireland

Conducted on behalf of the Northern Ireland
Policing Board and the Police Service of
Northern Ireland



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1. Executive Summary & Conclusions

Aim

The purpose of this research is to examine whether the increase in recorded crime in 2005/06 is an accurate reflection of greater criminal activity and experiences of crime within Northern Ireland or evidence of increased reporting of crime within communities traditionally perceived to be non-supportive of the police and whether this can be attributed directly to increased confidence in policing within these communities.

Methodology

There were a number of key strands to the research:

- A general public Omnibus survey was conducted with a representative survey of the Northern Ireland public in terms of age, gender, social class and location. 1,015 interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis from 27th February to 20th March 2007, using a questionnaire developed and agreed with the project steering group.
- A targeted areas survey was conducted in four areas on a face-to-face basis with a sample of 513 people across the four areas, using a questionnaire developed and agreed with the project steering group. The areas surveyed were Catholic and Protestant districts of North and West Belfast, and Catholic areas in Foyle and South Armagh. These areas were identified as predominantly Republican or Loyalist working-class areas, where the level of reporting crime to the police has traditionally been low.
- Qualitative research was conducted with the general public, elected representatives and Section 75 group representatives. In total eight focus groups were conducted with the general public in each of the new eight Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) DCU areas (using selection criteria agreed in advance with the project steering group). Nine depth interviews were conducted face-to-face with local councillors from each of the four main political parties. Four depth interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis with representatives from a selection of the Section 75 groups.

Further details on the methodology is contained in Chapter 2 of this report.

Summary and conclusions

There are a number of key messages emanating from the research. These are discussed in detail below under the most significant headings.

Increase in crime

- All the evidence from the various stages of the research would suggest that the increase in recorded crime in 2005/06 was due to some degree to an increase of reporting of crime to the police.
- Officially, there was a 4.3% rise in recorded crimes between 2004/05 and 2005/06. Predominantly-Catholic areas (i.e. electoral wards where at least 80% of households are Catholic) have seen the biggest increase, where levels of recorded crimes have risen by 11.7%, compared to a fall of 0.2% in predominantly-Protestant areas over the same period. The remaining areas of Northern Ireland have seen an increase in recorded crimes of 4.2% in the same period. Thus, the increase has mainly come from predominantly-Catholic areas.
- In term of crime rates per 1,000 households, there were also considerable differences between predominantly-Catholic and predominantly-Protestant areas. In 2005/06, there were 243.6 crimes per 1,000 households in Catholic wards up from 218.0 in 2004/05, compared to only 144.7 crimes per 1,000 households in Protestant wards down from 145 in 2004/05.
- The primary research, conducted in February and March 2007, shows that Catholics are much more likely to report crimes to the police than they were 12 months ago. This is likely to mean that recorded crime figures will increase in 2006/07. The targeted areas' research also suggests that there has been an increase in certain areas in the reporting of some types of crimes than there would have been previously.
- There are two factors which are likely to result in increases in reported crime in Northern Ireland over the coming years. Firstly, the significant increase in reporting of crime by Catholics, especially in predominantly Catholic wards, may mean a significantly higher level of crime being recorded overall. Secondly, the finding that 'less serious' crime is now, generally, more likely to be reported than before is also likely to result in higher levels of recorded crime. While the combination of these two factors is likely to result in significant increases in the level of reported crime at an overall level, it will be important to note that any such increases in crime levels simply represent more accurately the public's experience of crime, rather than reflecting any actual increases in crime.
- Any decreases in the 2006/07 crime figures may have been even greater had it not been for the increased reporting of crime to the police during the same period.

Perception of crime levels

- This increase in recorded crime is supported by findings relating to the perception of crime from the research surveys. Just under six in ten people in Northern Ireland believe there has been an increase in crime levels in Northern Ireland in the last year. However, this figure is lower in relation to crime at a local area level. The qualitative research strongly suggests that this perception has been informed by increased media coverage of crimes. This is reflected in those figures which highlight that the fear of crime is much higher than the actual level of crime itself.

Reporting of crime to the PSNI

- There has been a marked increase in the likelihood of reporting crime to the PSNI in the past year with over a third of the population indicating they would be more likely to report crime to the police now compared to this time last year. This figure rises to 42% among Catholics.
- There has been little change in reporting levels of extremely serious crimes such as rape, mugging, burglary, and physical attacks, all of which have consistently had high levels of reporting. However, there has been a noticeable increase in certain locations in relation to the reporting of less serious crimes.
- Evidence from various aspects of the research would suggest that this increase in reporting of a wider range of “less serious” offences to the police will continue as society becomes more normalised.
- It would also appear that as support for and confidence in the PSNI in Catholic areas continues to grow, the likelihood to report crimes to the police will increase in the coming years.

Confidence in the PSNI

- Two thirds of the population claim to have the same level of confidence in the PSNI as they did this time last year. However, 17% have **more** confidence in the PSNI, and this figure rises to 25% among Catholics.
- However, it should be noted that while 31% of people in Foyle are more confident in the PSNI, 20% are less confident, suggesting that there is still some way to go in order to increase confidence among this community, a point reinforced by findings from the qualitative research.
- All this evidence suggests that the increased reporting of crime to the police highlighted previously, especially among Catholics, is related to the increased confidence in policing within Catholic communities and that there is a strong correlation between the two.

- However, this is not the case amongst Protestants. While 13% of Protestants are more confident in the PSNI compared to this time last year, 19% are less confident, and this poses additional challenges. However, confidence levels overall are still higher among Protestants than Catholics.

Decreasing paramilitary influence

- From the qualitative research, it is clear that the decrease in paramilitary activity and influence in Northern Ireland has reduced the fear of reporting crimes to the police and has led to an increase in the likelihood to report crimes to the police.

2. Aim & Methodology

This report describes the findings of independent research into crime trends in Northern Ireland, conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (Policing Board) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). This independent research consisted of secondary analysis of existing research relating to crime in Northern Ireland, including recorded crime figures, and primary research with a number of stakeholder groups, both quantitative and qualitative, on the subject of crime and policing. The report begins with an overview of the aim and methodology of this research. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

Chapter 3, *Crime in Northern Ireland*, firstly reviews recent research and survey results conducted in the areas of confidence in policing and reporting of crime in Northern Ireland. It then examines trends in the levels of reporting of crime and victimisation as recorded by recent Northern Ireland Crime Surveys. Finally, this section provides a detailed analysis of recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland between 2002/03 and 2005/06.

Chapter 4, *Quantitative Research on Recent Crime Trends*, summarises the results from two separate elements of quantitative research. Firstly, it presents the results of a quantitative survey conducted with a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population. This survey examined the general public's attitudes to crime reporting in Northern Ireland and their perception of recent trends in crime reporting within their communities. The second element of quantitative research consisted of a targeted survey of four separate areas, identified as predominantly Catholic or Protestant. These areas were chosen on the basis of increases in recorded crime, suggesting an increase in the level of reporting, and agreed with the project steering group.

Chapter 5, *Qualitative Research on Recent Crime Trends*, summarises the results of three separate elements of qualitative research, which examined attitudes to recent trends in crime reporting among a number of stakeholder groups. The qualitative research consisted of one element of four depth interviews with representatives of each of the following minority and under-represented groups: gay and lesbian communities, people with disabilities, minority ethnic communities and the elderly. A further nine depth interviews were conducted with elected representatives representing all four of the main political parties. Finally, eight focus groups with the general public were conducted in each of the new PSNI District Command Units (DCU). From 1 April 2007, the PSNI has been restructured into eight DCU areas, in line with the Review of Public Administration.

Research Aim

Following two successive decreases, totalling 17.1%, in recorded crime in 2003/04 and 2004/05, the level of recorded crime in Northern Ireland rose by 4.3% in 2005/06 according to PSNI statistics. The purpose of this research is to examine whether the increase in recorded crime in 2005/06 is an accurate reflection of greater criminal activity and experiences of crime within Northern Ireland or evidence of increased reporting of crime within communities traditionally perceived to be non-supportive of the police.

Specifically, the Policing Board and the PSNI want to examine whether any increase in reporting can be attributed directly to increased confidence in policing within communities traditionally perceived to be non-supportive of the police.

The exploration of this theory through quantitative and qualitative primary research and through secondary research of existing resources relating to recent trends in reporting and recording of crime in Northern Ireland formed the basis for this project. The research design and methodology for the research is described in detail below.

Research Methodology

Secondary Research

The review of recent research conducted in the area of public confidence in policing, presented in Chapter 3, is based on a number of sources including: bulletins published by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) on findings from the Northern Ireland Crime Surveys of 2001, 2003/04 and 2005 and results from the Policing Board modules of the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey (conducted by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency), the District Policing Partnership (DPP) Public Consultation Surveys of 2004 and 2006, and other research relating to crime and policing published by the NIO.

The identification of trends in the levels of reporting of crime and victimisation in Northern Ireland is based on the results of the Northern Ireland Crime Surveys of 2001, 2003/04 and 2005.

For the purposes of conducting the analysis of recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland between 2002/03 and 2005/06, the PSNI provided Ipsos MORI with a dataset of all recorded crime in Northern Ireland for the periods 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06. Although the recorded crime figures have some limitations, they are a valid measure for the purposes of this research. This data set detailed the date, location (DCU and electoral ward) and offence class of all crimes recorded during the 4 years and consisted of 511,767 offences.

Primary Research - Quantitative Elements

As noted above, the two separate elements of quantitative research were a survey of a representative sample of the general public and a survey of four targeted areas where the level of reporting crime to the police has traditionally been low.

The survey of the general public was conducted using Ipsos MORI's Omnibus survey, which is a syndicated face-to-face survey of 1,000 people aged 15+. Interviews were conducted at 50 sampling points chosen at random from 285 electoral wards across Northern Ireland. Quotas were also set according to age, sex, social class and location in accordance with the known proportions within the population. Fieldwork for the Omnibus was conducted between 27th February and 20th March 2007. The content of the questionnaire used for the Omnibus survey was agreed between the project steering group (which comprised of the Policing Board's and the PSNI's Head Statisticians, the Policing Board's Director of Planning and the PSNI's Director of Analytical Services) and Ipsos MORI, and is attached as an appendix to this report.

The targeted survey was conducted face-to-face with a sample of 513 people across the four areas, including both Catholic and Protestant districts of North and West Belfast, Foyle and South Armagh. These areas were identified as predominantly Republican or Loyalist working-class areas, where the level of reporting crime to the police has traditionally been low and were chosen for inclusion in the targeted areas survey on the basis of increases in recorded crime, suggesting an increase in the level of reporting crime to the police.

The areas and number of interviews achieved in each were:

Area	Number of interviews achieved
Foyle (Catholic area)	166
South Armagh (Catholic area)	154
North and West Belfast (Catholic area)	96
North and West Belfast (Protestant area)	97

Fieldwork for the targeted areas survey was conducted between 26th February and 19th March 2007. The questionnaire was the same as the general public survey referred to above.

Both elements of quantitative research were concerned with respondents' attitudes to crime reporting in Northern Ireland and perceptions of recent trends in crime reporting within their communities.

All interviews were administered by Ipsos MORI's fieldforce.

Primary Research - Qualitative Elements

Three elements of qualitative research were conducted using two separate qualitative methodologies: focus groups and depth interviews.

A series of focus groups and depth interviews was conducted across Northern Ireland. The specifications were agreed in advance with the project steering group, which also agreed the recruitment questionnaires and topic guides devised by Ipsos MORI.

Within the focus group structure and through the depth interviews every effort was made to ensure that as broad a range of demographic factors as possible was covered. This included a range of ages, social class, gender, geographical location, religion, plus consultation with a number of minority and often under-represented groups in society. The final agreed focus group structure and schedule for depth interviews is outlined below.

Focus Group Structure

As illustrated in Table 2.1, a total of eight focus groups were conducted. Each lasted 90 minutes and was moderated by a senior Ipsos MORI executive. The groups were also audio-recorded with respondents' permission.

Table 2.1 Focus Group Structure

LOCATION (DCU)	Age	Social Class*	Gender	Religion
North/West Belfast	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Catholic
South/East Belfast	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Protestant
Ballymena/Coleraine	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Protestant
Antrim/Carrickfergus/ Newtownabbey	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Protestant
Newtownards	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Protestant
Armagh/Newry	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Catholic
Derry	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Catholic
Cookstown/Dungannon	25-55	C2DE	M/F	Catholic

** C2DE denotes manual workers, state pensioners or widows, casual or lowest grade workers*

Schedule of Depth Interviews

In order to ensure the views of as many groups in society as possible were obtained, depth interviews were conducted with those in a number of “minority” and under-represented groups. These were agreed with the project steering group as:

- Gay and Lesbian community
- Senior Citizens
- People with disabilities
- Minority ethnic communities

One depth interview was conducted in each of the above categories to give a total of four depth interviews conducted with minority and under-represented groups. A further nine depth interviews were conducted with elected representatives, with each of the four main parties represented.

In consultation with the project steering group, a topic guide was developed to explore a number of key issues. This topic guide was used as an ‘aide memoire’ for the moderator to ensure that all important issues were covered and to allow the moderator to stimulate, but not lead, the discussion. A copy of the topic guide is attached as an appendix to this report. The depth interviews lasted, on average, an hour and were each conducted face-to-face by a senior Ipsos MORI executive. These depth interviews were also tape-recorded with the respondents’ permission.

3. Crime in Northern Ireland

Since the publication of the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (the Patten Report) in 1999 and the implementation of its recommended reforms, policing in Northern Ireland has undergone many significant changes. This section of the report examines some recent trends in the perceptions, reporting and recording of crime in Northern Ireland. It is divided into three main sections. It begins with a review of recent research and surveys conducted in the area of public confidence in policing and crime in Northern Ireland. It then reviews recent Northern Ireland Crime Surveys, with reference to levels of reporting of crime and victimisation.

It is worth noting that, as yet, there is no data available for 2006, as the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey covers only experiences of crime in 2005, rather than 2005/06. The most recent bulletin on the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey published by the Northern Ireland Office was issued in April 2007. As such, it does not cover many of the significant political events, specifically with regard to policing, that have occurred since the end of 2005.

Finally, this section concludes with an examination of recent trends in recorded crime figures in the period between 2002/03 and 2005/06.

3.1 Public Confidence & Attitudes to Crime

While some of the problems faced by the PSNI arise from a specific set of circumstances, perhaps unique to Northern Ireland, many are similar to problems faced by other police services internationally. Indeed, people in Northern Ireland have generally positive attitudes to the police. Comparative studies give us some insight into how crime in Northern Ireland compares with other countries. The International Crime Victimization Survey, conducted in 17 countries in 2000, is useful in this regard. England, Wales and Scotland were included in this survey, but the Republic of Ireland was not.

This shows that, when asked: "Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police do in your area in controlling crime?", 67% of respondents from Northern Ireland responded that the police were doing a very or fairly good job in controlling crime, 1% point higher than the international average. Northern Ireland ranked ninth out of the 17 countries that participated in the survey - higher than France (65%), Japan (54%) and Portugal (45% - the lowest ranked country) and lower than USA (89% - the highest ranked country), Scotland (77%) and England and Wales (72%).

The International Crime Victimization Survey also showed that, in 2000, respondents from Northern Ireland felt safer than those living in other countries. When asked, "How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark?" over three-quarters (76%) felt that they were either very or fairly safe, slightly above the international average of 75%.

Finally, and of particular relevance to this report, the International Crime Victimization Survey showed that Northern Ireland had a higher rate of reporting crime than all other countries. Of those surveyed in Northern Ireland, 60% of people who had been a victim of a crime asked about in the survey had reported it to the police, compared to 53% in England and Wales, 52% in USA and 50% in Scotland. While these questions focus on personal and local perceptions of crime and policing, results from the Northern Ireland Crime Surveys would indicate that the public perception of crime, *generally*, is much gloomier.

According to the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey, 74% of respondents thought that crime in Northern Ireland had increased in the past two years. More worryingly for the police, who had witnessed a fall in recorded crime in this period, 42% of respondents in the 2005 survey thought crime had risen a *lot*. While this is statistically significantly lower than the proportion who felt similarly in 2003/04 (51%), which is encouraging, it suggests a curious difficulty the police face in trying to bring down the *perceived* level of crime, while continuing their efforts to reduce the *actual* level of crime. Only 44% of respondents in the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey believed that crime had increased in their *local* area, compared to the near three-quarters who believed that crime in all of Northern Ireland had increased in the past two years, suggesting that there is a disparity between the public's perception of general levels of crime and their own experiences of crime.

Equally, comparative studies of the Northern Ireland Crime Survey and British Crime Survey show that the actual risk of becoming a victim of crime in Northern Ireland is lower than in other countries. A comparison of the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey and 2005/06 British Crime Survey shows that the risk of becoming a victim of crime is lower in Northern Ireland (17.3%) than in England and Wales (23.5%). While the risk of crime victimisation has fallen in both jurisdictions since 2003/04, the risk has fallen more sharply in Northern Ireland (4.1% point decrease) than in England and Wales (2.2% point decrease).

The risk of becoming a victim of household crime is also lower in Northern Ireland (13.2%) than in England and Wales (18.1%). This represents a decrease in both jurisdictions since 2003/04 although, again, this risk has fallen more sharply in Northern Ireland (2.9% point decrease) than in England and Wales (1.9% point decrease). While the latest bulletin from the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey does not include a comparison of Crime Victimization by religious background, the 2003/04 Northern Ireland Crime Survey revealed that Catholics have a statistically significant greater risk of becoming a victim of crime than Protestants (25% v 19%).

While negative perceptions of the level of crime may not directly impact on the police's ability to do its job, negative perceptions of policing can have serious practical consequences. Previous studies undertaken by Ipsos MORI on Trust in Public Services in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland¹, have shown

¹ Ipsos MORI, *Trust in Public Institutions*, 2004.

that people who do not trust the police are less likely to report crime and less likely to assist the police with their enquiries. Previous Northern Ireland Crime Surveys have suggested that confidence in policing in Northern Ireland has been greater among Protestants than Catholics, confirmed by the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey.

The 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey shows that, while levels of confidence in the Criminal Justice System were similar between Catholic (44%) and Protestant (42%) respondents, there were statistically significant differences between Catholics and Protestants with regard to opinions on policing. Specifically, a statistically significant greater proportion of Protestant respondents (79%) had confidence in policing than Catholics (70%). Equally, just under two-thirds (66%) of Catholics believed that the police treat both Catholics and Protestants equally, compared to 85% of Protestant respondents. It is worth noting that, at an overall level there has been a statistically significant increase in this measure since 2003/04 (78% in 2005, compared to 72% in 2003/04). However, the published results from the 2003/04 Crime Survey do not provide results to allow comparison between Protestant and Catholic responses to either measure against the 2005 survey.

Nonetheless, more recent results from the 2006 DPP Public Consultation Survey (a postal survey sent to one in ten households across Northern Ireland) suggest that, again, there is little difference between Catholics and Protestants when judging on policing in their area. This survey showed that Catholic and Protestants had the same level of satisfaction (34%) with policing in their District Council area. However, given the self-completion methodology of this survey, and the significantly lower response rate from Catholics compared to Protestants, a certain degree of caution must be exercised when interpreting the results of this survey.

The next section looks at recent trends in the levels of reporting of crime and victimisation as recorded by recent Northern Ireland Crime Surveys, with reference to the variance between the experiences of crime of Protestants and Catholics.

3.2 Public Reporting of Crime

Levels of public reporting of crime are measured by collecting data through face-to-face surveys with the general public, independently of the official recorded crime statistics, on the level of crime and victimisation they have directly experienced. The Northern Ireland Crime Survey collects such information and, by doing so, provides an index of crime in Northern Ireland to set beside the PSNI's recorded crime statistics. The reason for this practice is the belief that many crimes are not reported to the police, as individuals' readiness to report crimes to the police may vary over time or in response to specific events or circumstances, such as key political events. Equally, some crimes that are reported will also go unrecorded, for example, in cases where the police have grounds to consider the reporting of a crime to be a mistake, where the incident is considered too trivial or where there is insufficient evidence.

Self-reported victimisation surveys as described above also have certain limitations, as they exclude: persons younger than 16, business, crimes against the state and victims of murder. Nor can interviewers question the legitimacy of respondent responses.

The 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey is the latest version of the Northern Ireland Crime Survey which has data regarding reporting of crimes and victimisation. This shows that 37% of all Northern Ireland Crime Survey 2005 crimes were reported to the police, a decrease from 41% in the 2003/4 Northern Ireland Crime Survey, and from 48% in the 2001 Northern Ireland Crime Survey. This is now lower than the level of reporting for all crimes recorded in the British Crime Survey 2005/06 (40%).

In terms of cross-community comparison, the 2006 DPP Public Consultation Survey presents a much more active level of reporting for both communities. 79% of all respondents who stated that they had been a victim of crime within the last year reported the crime (81% of Protestant respondents and 80% of Catholic respondents). Again, the self-completion methodology of this survey means it is likely to over-estimate levels of victimisation, as those who were not victims of crime have less motivation to respond to the survey. Methodological caveats notwithstanding, the absence of a significant difference in rates of victimisation between Catholic and Protestant respondents found in the 2006 DPP Public Consultation Survey may be indicative of a trend of diminishing differences in their respective experiences of crime.

While the most recent bulletin from the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey does not include a comparison of crime reporting by religious background, the data on victimisation prevalence in the 2003/04 Northern Ireland Crime Survey shows that Catholic respondents and their households were more likely to be victims of crime than Protestants and that Catholic respondents were more likely to be victims of more than one crime in the preceding 12 months. Catholics were also more likely to be victims of specific crimes than Protestants, including vandalism, car-related theft and violent victimisation.

Of course, reported levels of crime as measured by the Northern Ireland Crime Survey cannot necessarily be directly compared to crime figures, as recorded by the PSNI. Nonetheless, it has been suggested elsewhere² that the information produced from combining the perspectives of reported and recorded crime may provide a more rounded picture of the overall level of crime.

Having looked at public attitudes to and confidence in policing, and crime victimisation in Northern Ireland, a review of existing research shows that previous Northern Ireland Crime Surveys have found that Catholics have had lower levels of confidence in policing than Protestants. However, the 2005 Northern Ireland Crime Survey also shows that confidence generally is on the

² *Crime Victim Surveys: Political Relevance and Methodological Issues*. Paper presented by Britta Kyvsgaard, Head of Research, Ministry of Justice, Denmark at the Joint UNECE-UNODC Meeting on Crime Statistics, November 2004.

increase, compared to the 2003/04 Northern Ireland Crime Survey. The more recent 2006 DPP Public Consultation Survey also reports that both Catholics and Protestants are roughly equally satisfied with their local policing and equally likely to report a crime.

The next section of this chapter looks in detail at recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland between 2002/03 and 2005/06.

3.3 Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland: 2002/03 – 2005/06

For the purposes of conducting this analysis of recorded crime figures in Northern Ireland, the PSNI provided Ipsos MORI with a dataset of all recorded crime in Northern Ireland for the periods 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06. This data set detailed the date, location (DCU & electoral ward) and offence class of each crime recorded.

The PSNI follows Home Office counting rules in recording crime. These counting rules are issued to ensure comparability between figures from police forces throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and are subject to change over time. For example, from April 1998, offences such as low value criminal damage and common assaults were recorded for the first time. From April 2003, only those offences of assault where no injury has been experienced by the victim were recorded as common assault. Of particular relevance to an understanding of the increase in recorded crime in Northern Ireland between 2004/05 and 2005/06, is the introduction of the offence of breach of a non-molestation order which has been recorded as a notifiable offence since April 2005. Previously, the number of breaches of these orders was available, but not the number cleared or the clearance rate.

Thus care should be taken when comparing 2005/06 figures with those from earlier years. The introduction of the above Home Office counting rule change from 1st April 2005 means that the 5,070 increase between 2004/05 and 2005/06 highlighted below includes approximately 1,400 breaches of orders. Taking this change into account, the increase in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06 might more realistically be given as approximately 3.1% or 3,644 offences.

3.3.1 Recorded Crime 2002/03 – 2005/06

While the 2003/04 and 2004/05 recorded crime figures revealed two successive decreases, a total decrease of 17.1%, the level of recorded crime rose by 4.3% in 2005/06, as shown in Table 3.1 below. It is this increase in recorded crime that is of interest to the Policing Board and PSNI.

Table 3.1 Total Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 2002/03 – 2005/06

Year	Total Recorded Crimes	Percentage Change	Absolute Change
2002/03	142,496	-	-
2003/04	127,953	-10.2%	-14,543
2004/05	118,124	-7.7%	-9,829
2005/06	123,194	+4.3%	+5,070

Of particular interest to the Policing Board and the PSNI is the identification of explanations for this reverse by reference to trends and patterns within the dataset of recorded crimes. The two most obvious explanations for this increase in the level of crime in Northern Ireland in 2005/06 are:

Firstly, that the level of crime in Northern Ireland increased in 2005/06, following two years of successive decreases.

Secondly, that crime reporting rates have increased in response to key political events, such as recent Republican statements with regard to support for policing.

The purpose of this review of crime trends is to try and determine which of these alternative explanations is supported by the recorded crime figures. We start by describing trends within individual offence classes over the period 2002/03 to 2005/06 before looking at the trends within individual DCUs. Finally, we examine crime trends at an electoral ward level, in wards which are at least 80% Protestant or 80% Catholic, with a view to understanding whether the significant increase in recorded crime, and crime rates, between 2004/05 and 2005/2006 was equally distributed between Protestant and Catholic wards. This is explored later in this chapter.

This will demonstrate to what extent the 2005/06 increase in recorded crime can be attributed to increases in recorded crime within particular offence classes or can be explained by increases in recorded crime within particular DCUs. Of particular interest to the Policing Board and the PSNI will be the extent to which the increase in crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06 can be explained by increases in areas traditionally perceived to be non-supportive of the police.

3.3.2 Recorded Crime 2002/03 – 2005/06 (by Offence Class)

The PSNI records individual crimes according to the National Crime Recording Standard, which categorises each crime into one of nine offence classes: *Offences against the Person, Sexual Offences, Burglary, Robbery, Theft, Fraud and Forgery, Criminal Damage, Offences against the State and Other Notifiable Offences.*

Table 3.2 below shows how total recorded crime for each year from 2002/03 to 2005/06 is distributed across offence classes. The table shows the number of crimes recorded by offence class for each year, in addition to the proportion of total annual recorded crime recorded by offence class.

**Table 3.2 Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland 2002/03–2005/06
(by Offence Class)**

OFFENCE CLASS	2002/03 TOTAL		2003/04 TOTAL			2004/05 TOTAL			2005/06 TOTAL		
	N	%	N	(+/-)	%	N	(+/-)	%	N	(+/-)	%
OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON	28,455	20.0	28,982	527	22.7	29,339	357	24.8	30,953	1,614	25.1
SEXUAL OFFENCES	1,469	1.0	1,780	311	1.4	1,686	-94	1.4	1,711	25	1.4
BURGLARY	18,659	13.1	16,389	-2,270	12.8	13,388	-3,001	11.3	12,836	-552	10.4
ROBBERY	2,497	1.8	1,973	-524	1.5	1,487	-486	1.3	1,744	257	1.4
THEFT	41,911	29.4	35,691	-6,220	27.9	31,097	-4,594	26.3	29,481	-1,616	23.9
FRAUD AND FORGERY	8,801	6.2	6,273	-2,528	4.9	5,198	-1,075	4.4	5,106	-92	4.1
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	36,571	25.7	32,402	-4,169	25.3	31,432	-970	26.6	34,801	3,369	28.2
OFFENCES AGAINST THE STATE	1,771	1.2	1,292	-479	1.0	1,185	-107	1.0	1,301	116	1.1
OTHER NOTIFIABLE OFFENCES	2,362	1.7	3,171	809	2.5	3,312	141	2.8	5,261	1,949	4.3
TOTAL	142,496	100.0	127,953	-14,543	100.0	118,124	-9,829	100.0	123,194	5,070	100.0

As illustrated in Table 3.2, the offence classes with the highest levels of recorded crime between 2002/03 – 2005/06 are: *Theft, Criminal Damage & Offences Against the Person*. The combined total of crimes recorded under these three offence classes typically account for three-quarters of all recorded crime³. Therefore, it is probable that patterns in these offence classes will have most impact on overall trends. The patterns in offence classes over the 2002/03 – 2005/06 periods are described overleaf.

3.3.3 Patterns by Offence Class 2002/03-2005/06

As noted above, the overall patterns in total recorded crime show a decrease from 2002/03 for two successive years before increasing in 2005/06. However, within individual offence classes, annual trends vary greatly. Table 3.2 shows that the number of crimes recorded as *Burglary, Theft and Fraud & Forgery* decreased annually between 2002/03 and 2005/06. The decreases in the

³ In 2002/03, the proportion of recorded crime categorised by these three offence classes was 75.1%. In 2003/04, it was 75.9%, in 2004/05 it was 77.7%, and in 2005/06 it was 77.2%.

number of offences recorded as *Burglary* and *Theft* between 2002/03 and 2005/06 are particularly substantial.

The total number of offences recorded as *Burglary* decreased from 18,659 in 2002/03 to 12,836 in 2005/06, a decrease of 5,823 (-31.2%). Similarly, the total number of offences recorded as *Theft* decreased from 41,911 in 2002/03 to 29,481 in 2005/06, just over two-thirds of the 2002/03 total, representing a decrease of 12,430 recorded crimes of *Theft* (-29.7%).

By contrast, the number of crimes recorded as *Offences against the Person* and *Other Notifiable Offences* increased each year from 2002/03 to 2005/06. The total number of offences recorded as *Offences against the Person* increased from 28,455 in 2002/03 to 30,953 in 2005/06, an increase of 2,498 (+8.8%). The total number of offences recorded as *Other Notifiable Offences* increased from 2,362 in 2002/03 to 5,261 in 2005/06, more than double the 2002/03 total, representing an increase of 2,899 (+122.7%). The introduction of the offence of breach of a non-molestation order in April 2005, referred to earlier, may provide a partial explanation for this significant increase.

Table 3.2 also shows that the levels of crime recorded as *Robbery*, *Criminal Damage* and *Offences against the State* follow the overall pattern, with the total number of offences recorded under these categories decreasing annually in 2003/04 and 2004/05, before increasing in 2005/06.

The total number of offences recorded as *Robbery* decreased from 2,497 in 2002/03 to 1,744 in 2005/06, a decrease of 753 (-30.2%). The total number of offences recorded as *Criminal Damage* decreased from 36,571 in 2002/03 to 34,801 in 2005/06, representing a decrease of 1,770 (-4.8%). The total number of offences recorded as *Offences against the State* decreased from 1,771 in 2002/03 to 1,301 in 2005/06, a decrease of 470 (-26.5%).

Finally, offences recorded as *Sexual Offences* increased from 2002/03 to 2003/04, decreased slightly in 2004/05 before increasing again in 2005/06. However, given the relatively small proportion, approximately 1.5%, of all offences are recorded as *Sexual Offences*, this does not contribute to our understanding of the significant increase between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

To understand the rise in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06, attention must be directed towards the three offence classes for which there were significant increases in their recorded levels in this period i.e. *Offences against the Person*, *Criminal Damage* and *Other Notifiable Offences*.

There was an increase of 6,932 across these three offences classes between 2004/05 and 2005/06. Offences recorded as *Offences against the Person* increased by 1,614 (+5.5%), to a total of 30,953 in this period, whereas offences recorded as *Criminal Damage* increased by 3,369 (+10.7%), to a total of 34,801. Offences recorded as *Other Notifiable Offences* increased by 1,949, to a total of 5,261 (+58.8%) - the largest proportional increase of the three offence classes.

The next section of this chapter examines levels of recorded crime for the period 2002/03 - 2005/06 in individual DCUs. The purpose of this is to understand to what extent the 2005/06 increase in recorded crimes can be explained by increases in recorded crime within particular DCUs.

3.3.4 Recorded Crime 2002/03 – 2005/06 (by District Command Unit)

As well as recording the nature of individual crimes according to their offence class, the PSNI records where each crime occurred at a DCU and Electoral Ward level. Table 3.3 below shows how total recorded crime for each year from 2002/03 to 2005/06 is distributed across all DCUs.

**Table 3.3 Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 2002/03–2005/06
(by District Command Unit)**

District Command Unit	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	(+/-) 02/03 - 05/06	(% +/-) 02/03 - 05/06
Antrim	3,957	3,495	3,209	3,056	-901	-22.8%
Ards	4,969	4,310	3,718	3,577	-1,392	-28.0%
Armagh	2,967	2,712	2,594	2,927	-40	-1.3%
Banbridge	2,624	2,465	2,187	2,350	-274	-10.4%
Ballymena	4,594	4,328	4,231	4,096	-498	-10.8%
Ballymoney	1,294	953	1,062	1,102	-192	-14.8%
East Belfast	8,429	6,351	5,455	5,372	-3,057	-36.3%
North Belfast	12,137	9,698	8,637	8,435	-3,702	-30.5%
South Belfast	18,389	15,267	14,500	13,080	-5,309	-28.9%
West Belfast	6,346	5,431	5,337	6,625	279	4.4%
Carrickfergus	2,211	1,822	1,760	1,724	-487	-22.0%
Coleraine	4,676	4,813	4,822	5,043	367	7.8%
Cookstown	1,894	1,892	1,996	2,192	298	15.7%
Craigavon	6,406	6,386	5,594	6,077	-329	-5.1%
Castlereagh	4,221	3,561	2,917	3,227	-994	-23.5%
Dungannon and South Tyrone	2,840	2,536	2,591	2,816	-24	-0.8%
Down	5,245	4,568	3,758	4,280	-965	-18.4%
Fermanagh	2,539	2,625	2,503	3,065	526	20.7%
Foyle	7,888	7,902	7,796	8,664	776	9.8%
Larne	1,925	1,722	1,569	1,517	-408	-21.2%
Limavady	1,979	2,075	2,226	2,497	518	26.2%
Lisburn	8,558	8,675	8,009	8,431	-127	-1.5%
Magherafelt	1,673	1,710	1,338	1,750	77	4.6%
Moyle	989	1,005	821	952	-37	-3.7%
Newtownabbey	6,671	6,259	5,275	5,300	-1,371	-20.6%
North Down	5,849	5,060	4,372	4,558	-1,291	-22.1%
Newry and Mourne	5,517	5,074	5,362	5,915	398	7.2%
Omagh	3,162	2,798	2,462	2,545	-617	-19.5%
Strabane	2,547	2,460	2,023	2,021	-526	-20.7%
Northern Ireland total	142,496	127,953	118,124	123,194	-19,302	-13.5%

3.3.5 Patterns by DCU 2002/03 – 2005/06

As within individual offence classes, annual trends between DCUs vary greatly. Table 3.3 shows that while recorded crime decreased annually in a number of DCUs between 2002/03 and 2005/06, other DCUs experienced annual increases in recorded crime in the same period.

DCUs with Crime Decreases Each Year in Period 2002/03 – 2005/06

Nine DCUs (*Antrim, Ards, East Belfast, North Belfast, South Belfast, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne, Strabane*) experienced annual decreases in recorded crime between 2002/03 and 2005/06. Recorded crimes in *East Belfast, North Belfast* and *South Belfast* decreased by 3,057 (36.3%), 3702 (30.5%) and 5309 (28.9%) respectively over the period 2002/03-2005/06.

DCUs with Crime Increases Each Year in Period 2002/03 – 2005/06

Two DCUs (*Coleraine, Limavady*) experienced annual increases in recorded crime between 2002/03 and 2005/06.

DCUs with Varying Patterns of Crime in Period 2002/03 – 2005/06

The trends in recorded crime in 10 other DCUs (*Armagh, Banbridge, West Belfast, Craigavon, Castlereagh, Down, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, North Down, Omagh*) followed the overall pattern of decreases in recorded crime in 2002/03 and 2003/04, before increasing in 2005/06.

In four DCUs (*Ballymoney, Cookstown, Dungannon & South Tyrone, and Newry & Mourne*), recorded crime decreased between 2002/03 and 2003/04, before increasing in 2004/05 and again in 2005/06. The final four DCUs (*Fermanagh, Foyle, Magherafelt, Moyle*) saw an increase in recorded crime between 2002/03 and 2003/04, a decrease between 2003/04 and 2004/05 and an increase between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

To understand the rise in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06, attention must be directed towards significant shifts in the recorded levels of crime at this time. In the period between 2004/05 and 2005/06, there were 16 DCUs which experienced a proportional increase in recorded crime in excess of the overall trend (+4.3%). These 16 DCUs and the magnitude of the increase in recorded crime are displayed in Table 3.4 overleaf. Examining the increase in recorded crime specifically in these 16 DCUs will assist in explaining the overall increase in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

Table 3.4 overleaf also identifies the % of Catholics in each of these 16 DCUs, based on 2001 Northern Ireland Census of Population data, to help determine whether the increase in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06 occurred in DCUs where over 50% of households are Catholic, or in DCUs where over 50% of households are Protestant.

Table 3.4 16 DCUs with an increase in Recorded Crime in the Period 2004/05–2005/06 above Northern Ireland Average of 4.3%

DCU	2004/05	2005/06	(+/-)	(+ %)	% Catholic
Magherafelt	1,338	1,750	412	30.8%	62
West Belfast	5,337	6,625	1,288	24.1%	76
Fermanagh	2,503	3,065	562	22.5%	56
Moyle	821	952	131	16.0%	57
Down	3,758	4,280	522	13.9%	57
Armagh	2,594	2,927	333	12.8%	45
Limavady	2,226	2,497	271	12.2%	53
Foyle	7,796	8,664	868	11.1%	71
Castlereagh	2,917	3,227	310	10.6%	16
Cookstown	1,996	2,192	196	10.3%	55
Newry and Mourne	5,362	5,915	553	9.8%	76
Dungannon and South Tyrone	2,591	2,816	225	8.7%	57
Craigavon	5,594	6,077	483	8.6%	42
Banbridge	2,187	2,350	163	7.5%	29
Coleraine	4,822	5,043	221	5.3%	24
Lisburn	8,009	8,431	422	4.6%	3

As displayed in Table 3.4 above, of the 16 DCUs that experienced increases in recorded crime in excess of the overall increase in Northern Ireland between 2004/05 and 2005/06 of 4.3%, ten of these are in areas where more than half of households are Catholic.

Thus, of the 29 DCUs in Northern Ireland, 13 of which have more than 50% Catholic households, ten of these had recorded increases in recorded crime in excess of the national trend during this period i.e. 76.9% of DCU areas which have more than 50% Catholic households. This compares with six of the 16 DCUs (37.5%) where more than 50% of households are Protestant, which recorded an increase in crime in excess of the overall increase in Northern Ireland.

This demonstrates that the increase in recorded crime was disproportionately driven by increases in DCUs where more than 50% of households are Catholic. Indeed, the five DCUs which experienced the highest proportional increases in recorded crime in the period between 2004/05 and 2005/06 (*Magherafelt, West Belfast, Fermanagh, Moyle, Down*), are all DCUs where more than half of households are Catholic as illustrated in Table 3.5 overleaf.

Of the 13 DCUs (not discussed above) that showed average or below average increases in crime or decreases in crime, three are where there are more than 50% Catholic households and ten where there are more than 50% Protestant households.

3.3.6 Offence Class Patterns in five DCUs 2004/05-2005/06

Table 3.5 below illustrates the patterns in those offence classes with the highest levels of recorded crime (*Theft, Criminal Damage & Offences Against the Person*).

Table 3.5 Offence Class Patterns in Five DCUs in Northern Ireland with the highest levels of recorded crime (2004/05–2005/06)

DCU		OFFENCES V PERSON	THEFT	CRIMINAL DAMAGE	TOTAL
DOWN					
2004/05	N	977	955	992	3,758
2005/06	N	1,155	975	1,163	4,280
	N+/-	178	20	171	522
	%+/-	18.2%	2.1%	17.2%	13.9%
FERMANAGH					
2004/05	N	519	729	690	2,503
2005/06	N	749	719	938	3,065
	N+/-	230	-10	248	562
	%+/-	44.3%	-1.4%	35.9%	22.5%
MAGHERAFELT					
2004/05	N	437	232	443	1,338
2005/06	N	526	323	555	1,750
	N+/-	89	91	112	412
	%+/-	20.4%	39.2%	25.3%	30.8%
MOYLE					
2004/05	N	238	136	275	821
2005/06	N	219	151	404	952
	N+/-	-19	15	129	131
	%+/-	-8.0%	11.0%	46.9%	16.0%
WEST BELFAST					
2004/05	N	1,443	1,381	1,617	5,337
2005/06	N	1,578	1,515	2,400	6,625
	N+/-	135	134	783	1,288
	%+/-	9.4%	9.7%	48.4%	24.1%

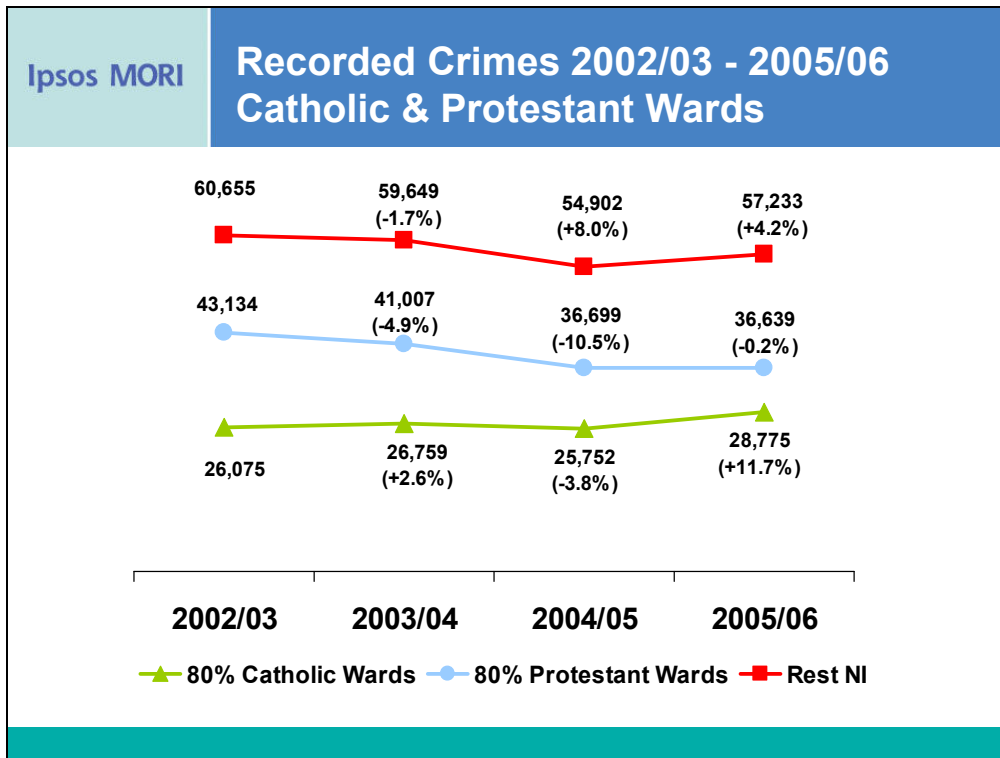
While all five DCUs experienced significant increases in their recorded crime figures between 2004/05 and 2005/06, there is no consistent pattern to the increases, other than incidents of *Criminal Damage* increasing significantly in all five DCUs. *Offences Against the Person* increased everywhere except Moyle. *Theft* increased in all of the DCUs except Fermanagh and only slightly in Down.

Finally, we examine crime trends at an electoral ward level, in wards which are either 80% Catholic or 80% Protestant (in terms of numbers of households), with a view to understanding whether the significant increase in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06 was equally distributed between Protestant and Catholic wards.

3.3.7 Recorded Crime in Predominantly Catholic & Protestant Wards 2002/03-2005/06

This section examines crime trends in electoral wards which are predominantly Catholic or predominantly Protestant, which is defined as those wards where at least 80% of the households are either Catholic or Protestant. Crime trends in these wards are compared at an overall level, in terms of crime rates per 1,000 households, and also with regard to the monthly distribution of crimes over the two relevant periods (i.e. 2004/05 and 2005/06).

**Figure 3.6 Recorded Crimes (2002/03–2005/06)
Catholic & Protestant Wards**



According to the 2001 Northern Ireland Census of Population, there are 109 of the 582 electoral wards in Northern Ireland, where at least 80% of the households are Catholic and 216 wards where at least 80% of the households are Protestant.

As illustrated in Figure 3.6 above, predominantly Protestant wards and predominantly Catholic wards have experienced very different trends in overall crime levels between 2002/03 and 2005/06. Indeed, predominantly Protestant wards have experienced annual decreases in crime between 2002/03 and 2005/06, including a decrease between 2004/05 and 2005/06, when crime in Northern Ireland overall rose by 4.3%. By contrast, predominantly Catholic wards experienced a decrease in recorded crime between 2003/04 and 2004/05 before an 11.7% increase in recorded crime in 2005/06, far in excess of the 4.2% increase in recorded crime for the rest of Northern Ireland.

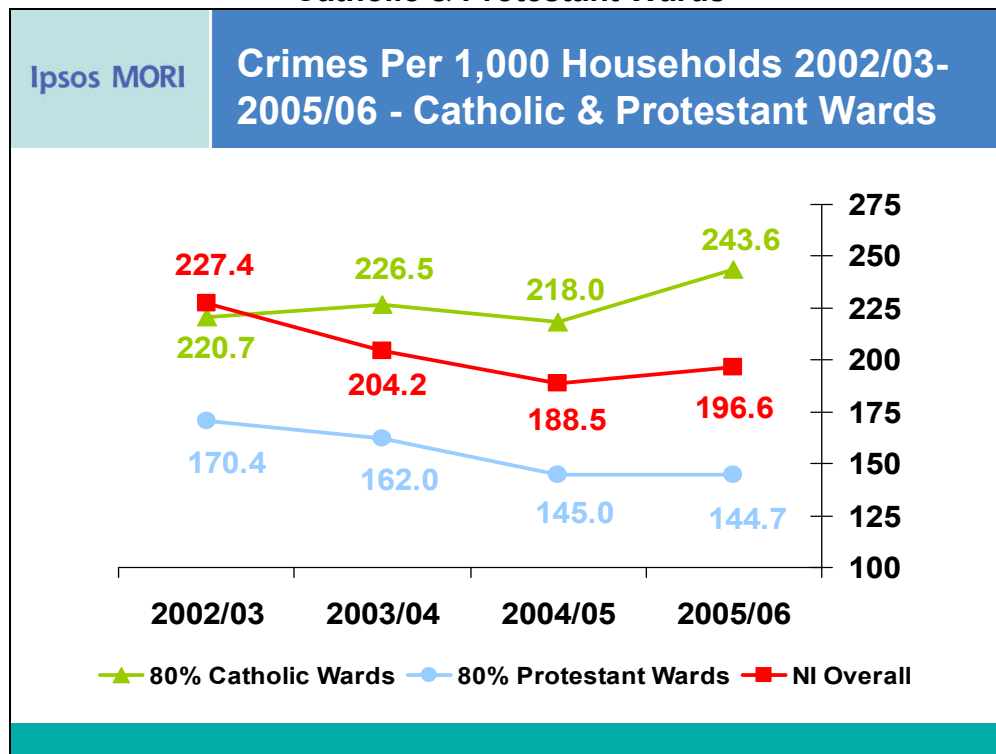
Figure 3.6 does not include crimes for which locations were 'missing' or 'not available' – i.e. a postcode was missing for the particular crime. In 2002/03, this amounted to 12,632 crimes. In 2003/04, the figure was 538. In 2004/05, this figure was 771 crimes, and in 2005/06, this amounted to 547 crimes. Thus,

there was a decrease of 224 between 2004/05 and 2005/06 in 'missing' crimes.

This figure also illustrates that the increase in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06 was disproportionately accounted for by increases in electoral wards where 80% or more of the households were Catholic. Breaking down the absolute increase in recorded crime of 5,070 between 2004/05 and 2005/06, Figure 3.6 shows that there was an increase of 3,023 in recorded in 80% Catholic Wards, a decrease of 60 recorded crimes in 80% Protestant Wards, and an increase of 2,331 recorded crimes in the rest of Northern Ireland. Thus, the increase in recorded crime in 80% Catholic Wards accounted for well over half of the overall increase in Northern Ireland between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

3.3.8 Crime Rates Per 1,000 Households in Predominantly Catholic & Protestant- Wards 2002/03-2005/06

Figure 3.7 Crime Rate Per 1,000 Households (2002/03-2005/06) Catholic & Protestant Wards



As illustrated in Figure 3.7, examination of the crime rate per 1,000 households confirms the findings discussed above. The crime rate in predominantly Catholic wards was significantly higher than that in predominantly Protestant wards for each year between 2002/03 and 2005/06. Also, between 2004/05 and 2005/06, there was a 25.6% increase in the crime rate per 1,000 households in predominantly Catholic wards, compared to a 0.3% decrease in the crime rate per 1,000 households in predominantly Protestant wards.

According to the 2001 Northern Ireland Census of Population, there were a total of 626,707 households in Northern Ireland, 118,124 (18.8%) of which

were in 80% Catholic Wards, 253,175 (40.4%) of which were in 80% Protestant Wards, and 255,408 (40.4%) in mixed wards. In 2005/06, there were 243.6 crimes per 1,000 households in 80% Catholic Wards (up from 218.0 in 2004/05), compared to only 144.7 crimes per 1,000 households in 80% Protestant Wards (down from 145.0 in 2004/05), and 196.6 in Northern Ireland overall (up from 188.5 in 2004/05).

3.3.9 Monthly Crime Trends in Northern Ireland 2002/03-2005/06

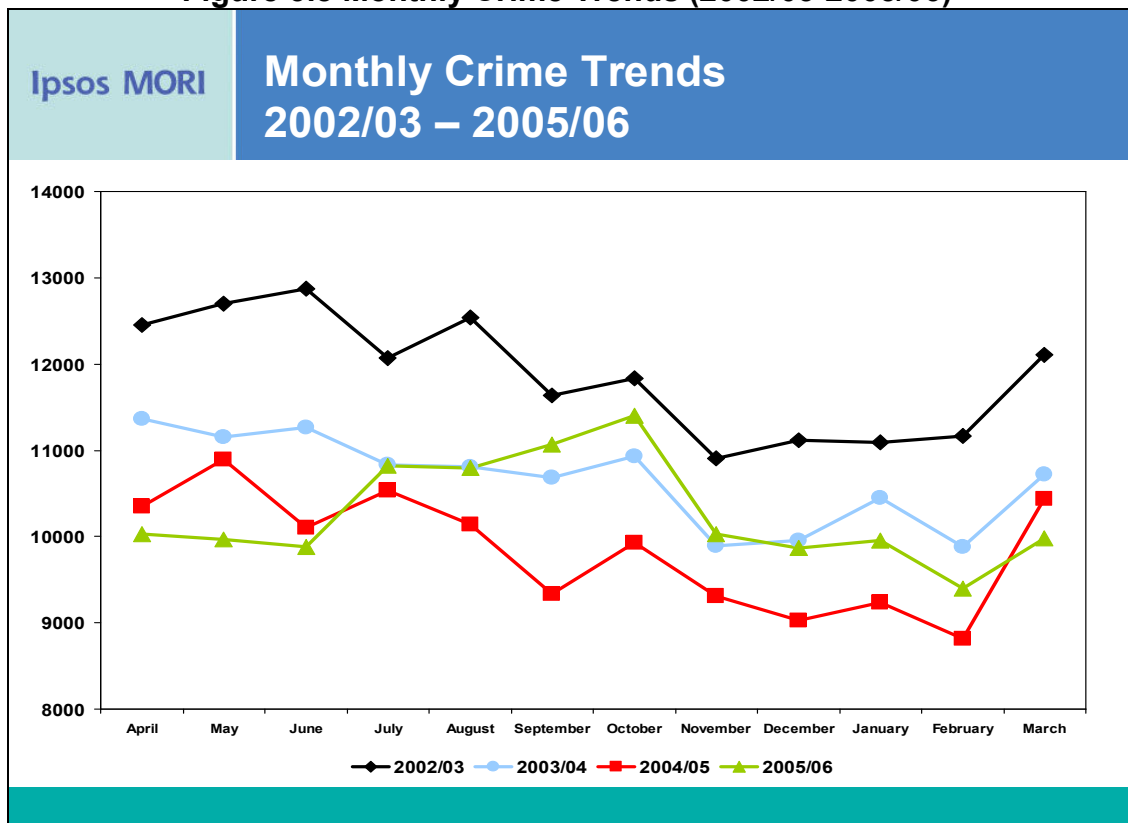
Below, monthly trends in recorded crime are examined for Northern Ireland as a whole in the period between 2002/03 and 2005/06, before turning to an examination of monthly trends in recorded crime in Catholic-controlled and Protestant-controlled electoral wards in the period between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

As displayed below, monthly crime trends for each year are broadly comparable. In 2002/03, May 2002 (12,703) and June 2002 (12,879) had the highest number of recorded crimes, while November 2002 (10,902) and January 2003 (11,095) had the lowest. In 2003/04, April 2003 (11,364) and June 2003 (11,261) had the highest number of recorded crimes, whereas November 2003 (9,898) and February 2004 (9,878) had the lowest.

In 2004/05, May 2004 (10,897) and July 2004 (10,537) had the highest number of recorded crimes, whereas December 2004 (9,032) and February 2005 (8,813) had the lowest. In 2005/06, September 2005 (11,065) and October 2005 (11,408) had the highest number of recorded crimes, whereas December 2005 (9,863) and February 2006 (9,404) had the lowest.

Thus, apart from 2005/06, the months with the highest levels of crime are generally in the period between April and August, with the lowest levels of crime generally between September and February. However, in the 2005/06 trend line, there is an increase between June 2005 and July 2005, the start of an upwards trend that continues until October 2005.

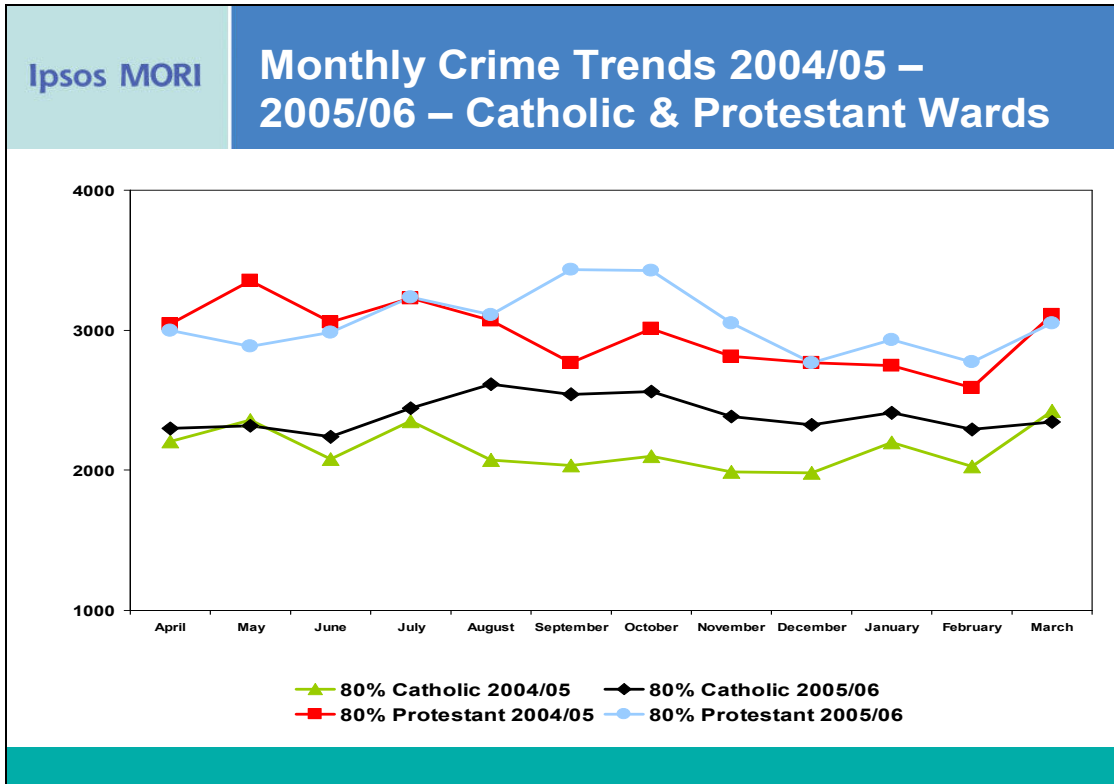
Figure 3.8 Monthly Crime Trends (2002/03-2005/06)



3.3.10 Monthly Crimes Trends in Predominantly Catholic & Protestant Wards 2002/03-2005/06

Figure 3.9 below illustrates monthly crime trends in predominantly Catholic and Protestant wards between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

**Figure 3.9 Monthly Crime Trends (2004/05-2005/06)
Catholic & Protestant Wards**



As displayed above, monthly crime trends for 80% Catholic Wards and 80% Protestant Wards in 2004/05 and 2005/06 mirror somewhat the overall trend for Northern Ireland. For Protestant Wards, in 2004/05, May 2004 (3,351) and July 2004 (3,227) had the highest number of recorded crimes, while January 2005 (2,747) and February 2005 (2,589) had the lowest. In 2005/06, July 2005 (3,234) and September 2005 (3,430) had the highest number of recorded crimes, whereas December 2005 (2,764) and February 2006 (2,773) had the lowest.

For predominantly Catholic Wards, in 2004/05, May 2004 (2,358) and March 2005 (2,424) had the highest number of recorded crimes, while November 2004 (1,988) and December 2004 (1,980) had the lowest. In 2005/06, August 2005 (2,616) and October 2005 (2,563) had the highest number of recorded crimes, whereas June 2005 (2,238) and February 2006 (2,290) had the lowest.

The monthly trends for Northern Ireland overall indicated that the months with the highest levels of crime are generally in the period between April and August, with the lowest levels of crime generally between September and February, except for 2005/06. In 2005/06, both 80% Protestant Wards and 80% Catholic Wards show a general upwards trend beginning in June 2005, which is sustained until October 2005. At this point, crime levels in 80%

Protestant Wards begin to mirror the overall trend, falling by almost 20% between October 2005 (3,429) and December 2005 (2,764), whereas crime levels in 80% Catholic Wards fall by only 9.4% in the same period, from 2,563 to 2,323. Again, this confirms the earlier finding of a general rise in recorded crime in Catholic communities in the period between 2004/05 and 2005/06.

3.4 Conclusions

The secondary research of existing data suggests a number of emerging themes in relation to crime and policing in Northern Ireland.

Firstly, that the most recent Crime Surveys and DPP Public Consultation Surveys indicate that historical differences between Catholics and Protestants in terms of their attitude to policing and confidence are diminishing.

Secondly, at a DCU level, that the increase in recorded crime between 2004/05 and 2005/06 can be attributed to significant increases in recorded crime in 16 DCUs, ten of which where more than 50% of households are Catholic. Thus, of the 13 DCUs where more than half of households are Catholic in Northern Ireland, ten experienced proportional increases in recorded crime in excess of the overall Northern Ireland increase. As such, at a DCU level, DCUs in which more than 50% of households are Catholic clearly accounted for a far greater-proportion of the overall increase in recorded crime than where more than 50% of households were Protestant.

However, it is when the crime figures are examined at an electoral ward level that the explanation for the 4.3% increase in recorded crime in Northern Ireland between 2004/05 and 2005/06 becomes most obvious. Comparing the 109 electoral wards which are composed of at least 80% Catholic households and the 216 electoral wards which are composed of at least 80% Protestant households, there are significant differences in the direction and magnitude of recorded crime trends between the two. Whereas recorded crime *decreased* in 80% Protestant wards by 0.2% (60 crimes) in this period, those electoral wards which are 80% Catholic experienced an 11.7% (3,023 crimes) *increase* in recorded crime.

In order to determine reasons for this increase in recorded crime in Catholic communities, such as greater levels of reporting due to increased confidence in policing in Catholic communities, it is necessary to gather specific data on whether Catholic communities have increased confidence in the PSNI and whether they are more likely now, compared to 12 months ago, to report crime to the PSNI.

In this respect, the primary quantitative and qualitative research described in the following sections is of benefit. The quantitative research provides a statistical snapshot of communities where, historically, confidence in policing has been low. The qualitative research, on the other hand, provides a more nuanced and detailed narrative of the topic. Both contribute to our understanding of the relationship between communities, confidence in the police and reporting crime.

4. Quantitative Research

This section summarises the results from two separate elements of quantitative research. The first element is a quantitative survey conducted with a representative sample of the Northern Ireland population, which examined the general public's attitudes to crime reporting in Northern Ireland and their perception of recent trends in crime reporting within their communities.

The second element of quantitative research, discussed later in this chapter, consisted of a targeted survey of four separate areas. As stated previously, these areas were identified as predominantly Loyalist or Republican working-class areas, where the level of reporting crime to the police has traditionally been low and were chosen for inclusion in the targeted areas survey on the basis of increases in recorded crime. The areas and number of interviews achieved in each were:

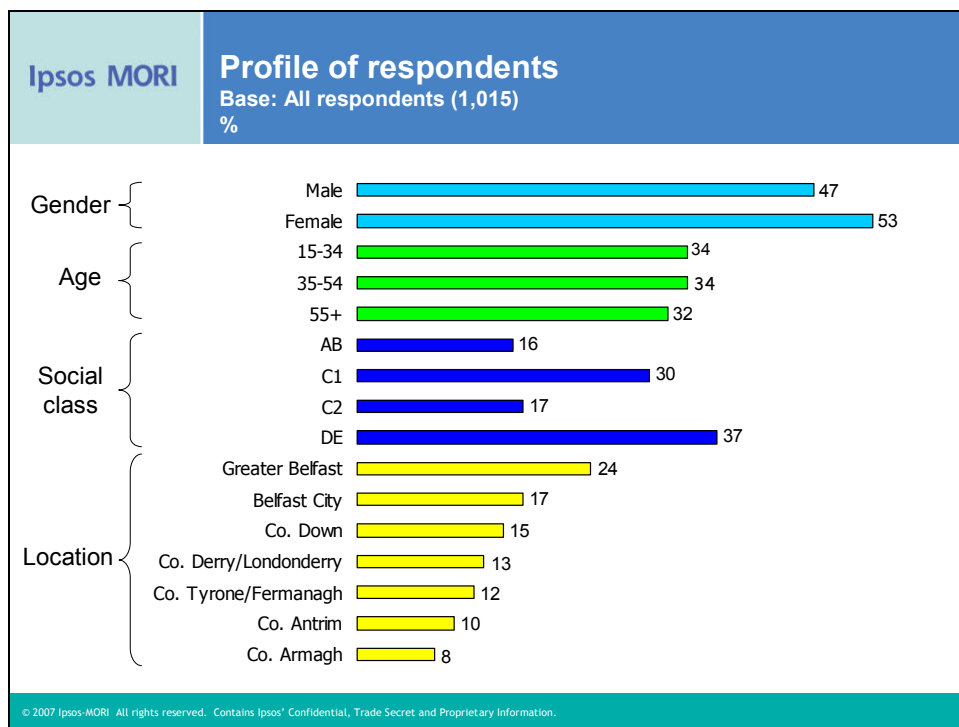
Area	Number of interviews achieved
Foyle (Catholic area)	166
South Armagh (Catholic area)	154
North and West Belfast (Catholic area)	96
North and West Belfast (Protestant area)	97

The report of the findings from the General Public research begins overleaf.

4.1 General Public Omnibus

Questions were placed on the February 2007 wave of Ipsos MORI's Northern Ireland Omnibus to examine the public's attitudes to crime, reporting of crime and policing. Here, 1,000 people (1,015 on this occasion) aged 15 plus are interviewed on a face to face basis each month across Northern Ireland. The interviews are conducted at 50 sampling points that are chosen at random from 285 electoral wards across Northern Ireland. Quotas are set each month according to age, sex, social class and location and are based in accordance with the 2001 Northern Ireland Census of Population.

A profile of respondents that took part in the February Omnibus is detailed below.

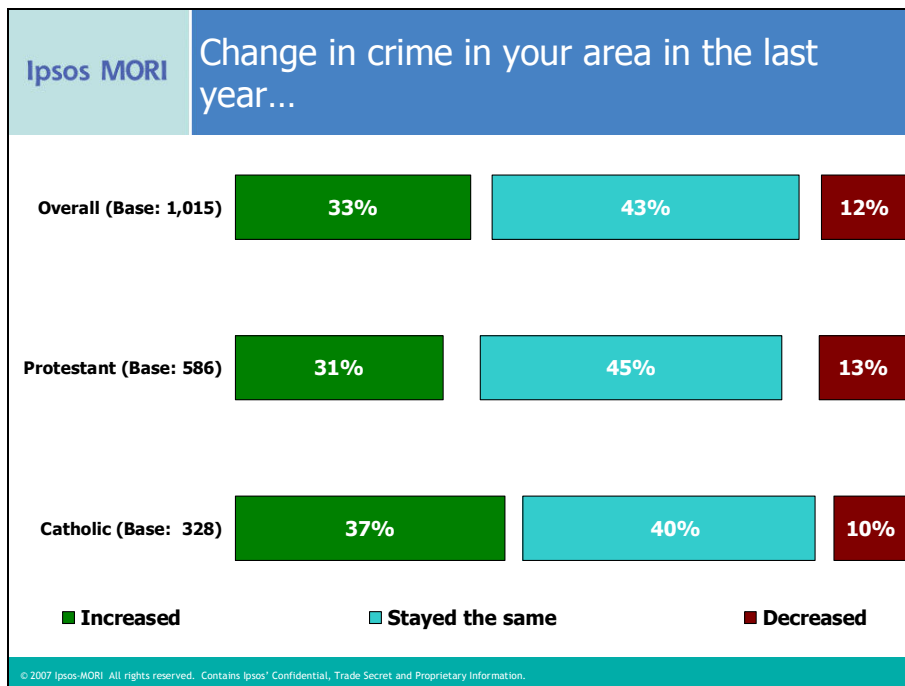
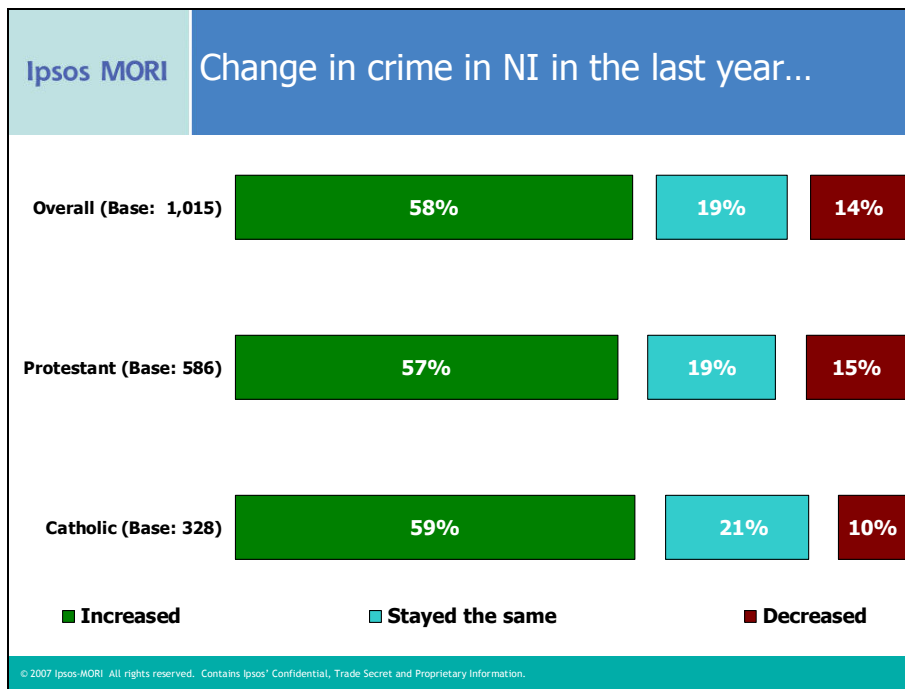


A definition of social grade is found below:

Social grade	Occupation
A	higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	supervisory or clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	skilled manual workers
D	semi and unskilled manual workers
E	state pensioners or widows (no other earner), casual or lowest grade workers

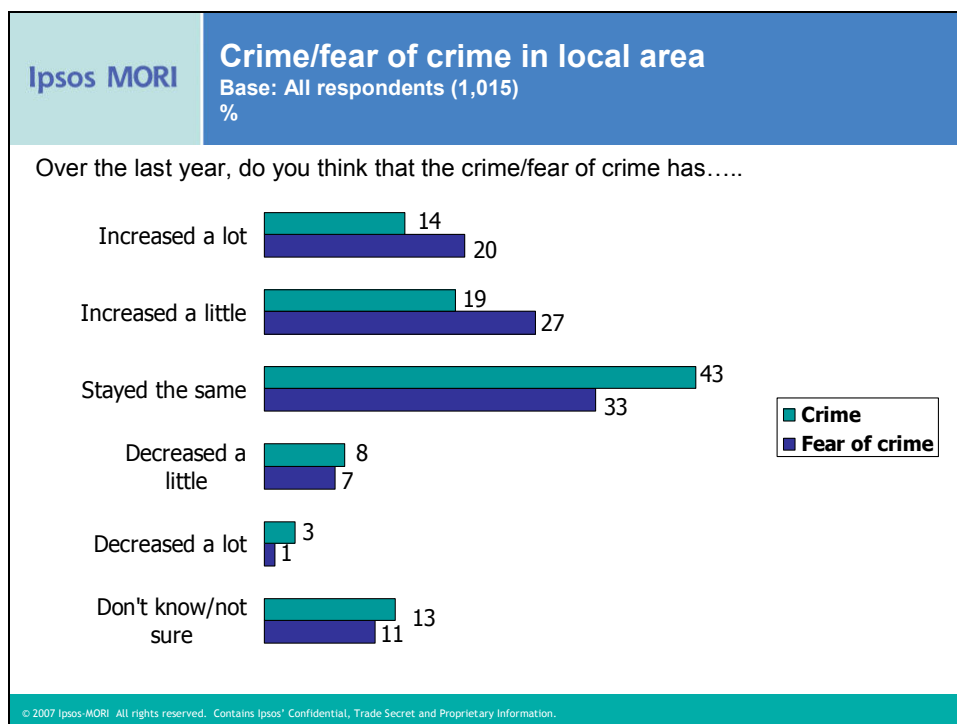
4.1.1 Changes in crime levels

At an overall level, most respondents (58%) feel that crime levels have increased over the last year in Northern Ireland as a whole, with 57% of Protestants and 59% of Catholics believing this to be the case. In comparison to this, one third of respondents (33%) feel that crime has increased in their own area in the last year (31% among Protestants and 37% of Catholics). Both results are lower than the equivalent figures cited from the 2005 NICS reported earlier in this document: 74% of NICS respondents thought that crime in Northern Ireland had increased in the past two years while 44% of NICS respondents thought that crime had increased in their local area.



In terms of their own area, respondents in Counties Down and Tyrone/Fermanagh were more likely to feel that there had been an increase in crime in the last twelve months. Of these, 21% in Down felt that the level of crime in their area over the last twelve months had increased a lot.

43% of respondents feel that the level of crime in their local area has stayed the same over the last year. Interestingly, however, a larger proportion (47%) feel that *fear* of crime has risen in their area. One in five (20%) feel that the fear of crime in their area has increased a lot and more than a quarter (27%) feel it has increased a little.

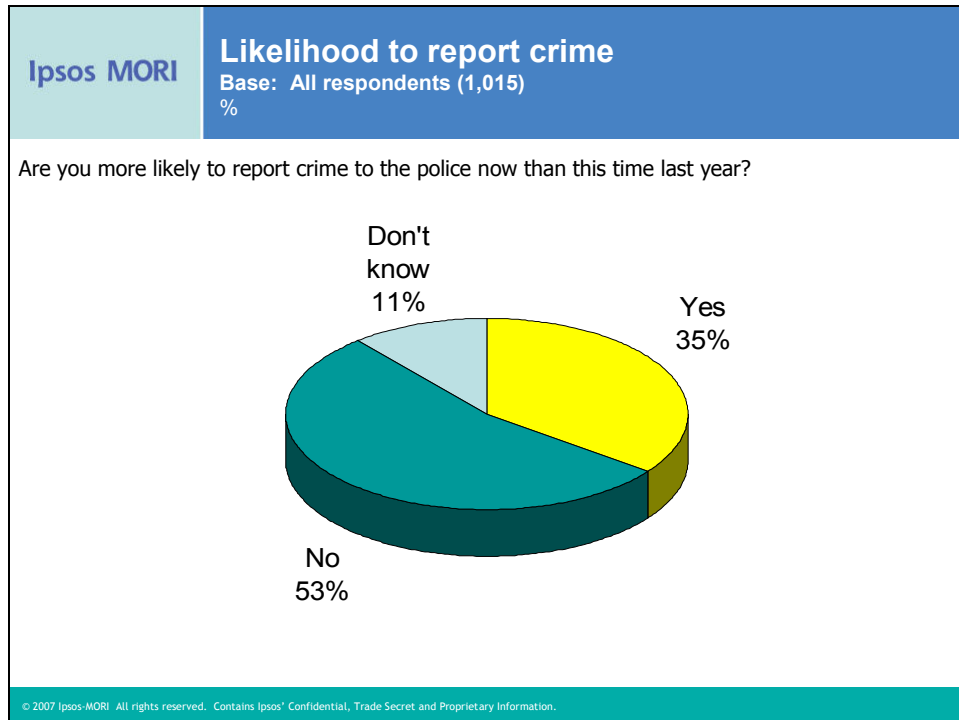


The belief that fear of crime is rising a little or a lot was strongest in Armagh (66%) and Down (61%). As suggested earlier in this report, *perceptions* of crime and policing, in the absence of direct experience, can have consequences for both the police and the communities they support.

4.1.2 Reporting crime

When asked if they would be more likely to report crimes to the police compared to this time last year, over a third (35%) stated they would be more likely. Those in the younger age group (15-34) are more likely to do so than those aged 55+ (42% compared to 32% respectively). In terms of regional comparisons, respondents in Tyrone/Fermanagh (48%) and Derry (45%) were most likely to state they would be more likely to report crimes to the police compared to this time last year. This figure falls to 25% among people living in County Antrim.

Those from the Catholic community were notably more likely to state that they are more likely to report crimes to the police now than this time last year (42% compared to 32% of Protestants), as were first preference Sinn Féin voters where the figure rose to 43%.



The belief that crime should always be reported is the underlying factor why a quarter (26%) of respondents who are more likely to report crime now than last year would do so. A further 23% state they would always report crime to the police while 17% would be more likely to report crime this year due to the increased crime rate. Of the other reasons given, 7% state they are more likely to report crimes to the police now due having more confidence in them while 5% state that they find the police more approachable now and 3% feel more confident to report crime now.

In comparison, 53% of respondents state that they would not be more likely to report crimes to the police than the same period last year. Having always reported crime to the police (47%), little crime in the area (12%) and no confidence in the police (5%) are the main reasons cited why people are not more likely to report crime to the police than this time last year.

4.1.3 Reporting of crime now compared to last year

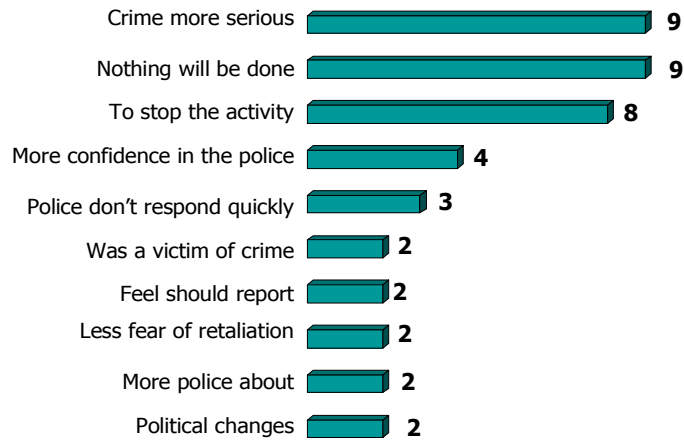
To explore this area in more detail questions were included to establish how likely respondents were to have reported specific types of crime to the police this time last year. The same was also asked for the likelihood to report specific types of crime now.

The 'top five' crimes that were most likely to be reported both now and at the same time last year were burglary, mugging, rape, physical attack and theft of a car. There were no significant differences in reporting level with all achieving a '% likely to report' of in excess of 90%. In comparison, this figure falls to four in ten people who are likely to report excessive noise from neighbours for both time periods.

At an overall level there was little change in the likelihood of reporting now compared to last year across each of the specific types of crime and the overall level has remained high for the majority. Reasons for any change in likelihood of reporting from last year until now are illustrated in the charts overleaf.

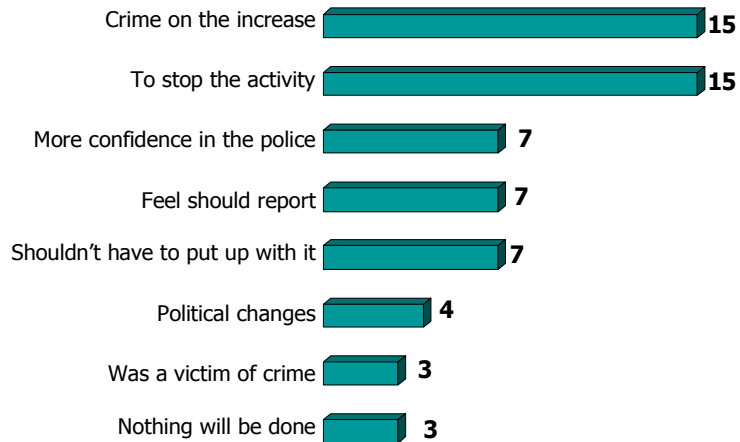
Among those who were more likely to have reported crime last year, the perception that crime was more serious 12 months ago and that nothing will be done about it emerged as the top reasons behind this (9% each). Other reasons include "to stop the activity" (8%) and "more confidence in the police" (4%).

In terms of those who are more likely to report crime now, 15% each would do so as they feel that crime is on the increase and to stop the activity. Other answers given include more confidence in the police, feel they should report it and the belief that they shouldn't have to put up with it (7% each).

More likely to report crime *last year*Base: All who more likely to report crime last year - (89)
%

Other answers mentioned by 1% or fewer respondents

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More likely to report crime *now*Base: All who more likely to report crime now - (176)
%

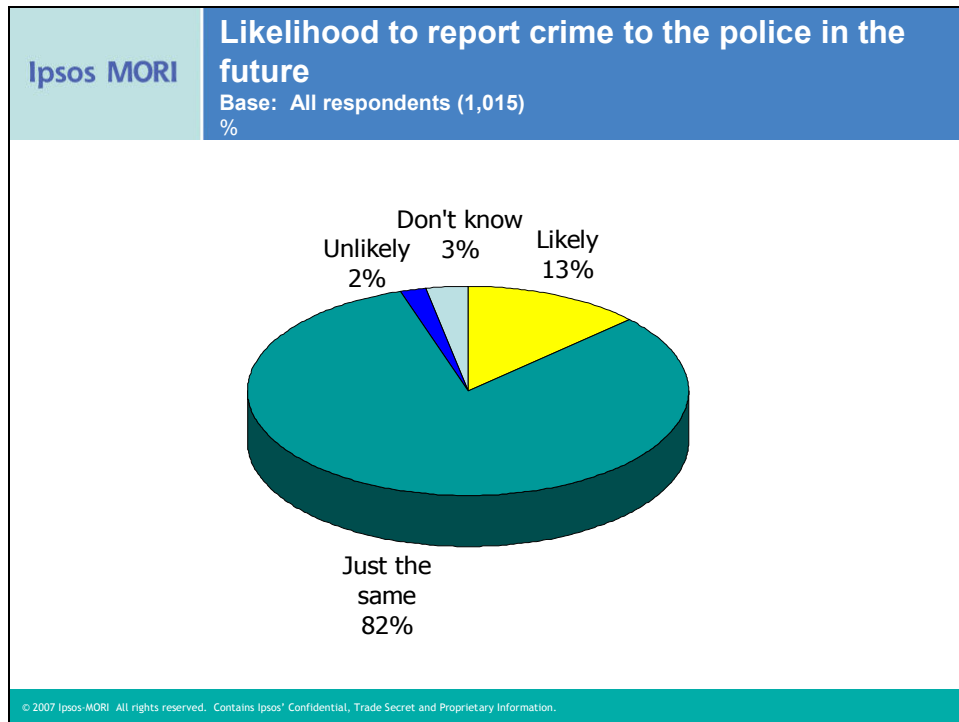
Other answers mentioned by 2% or fewer respondents

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4.1.4 Future reporting

Over eight in ten respondents (82%) state that their likelihood of reporting crimes to the police is unlikely to change in the future. Of the remainder, 13% feel they would be more likely to report crimes to the police in the future while 2% would be less likely.

People in County Down (20%), Tyrone/Fermanagh (19%) and C2s (18%) are more likely to report crimes to the police in the future than other groups.



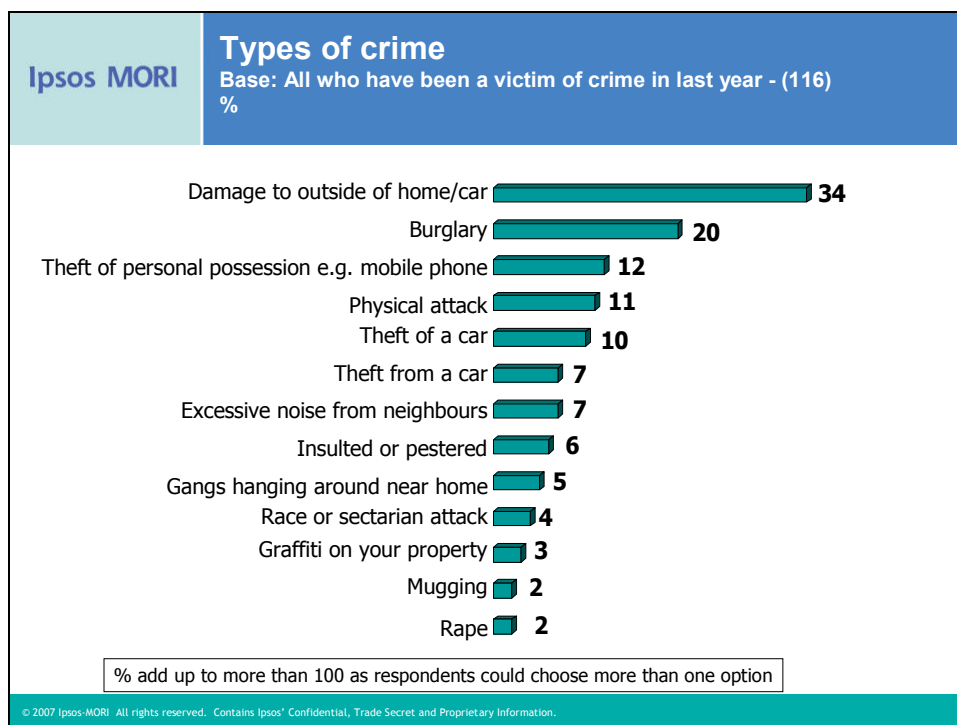
Amongst those who state that are more likely to report crimes to the police in the future, 24% cite being fed up with crime as the reason behind this while 15% state that they have more confidence in the police. ABs (25%), those living in Antrim (30%) and Armagh (25%) are more likely to cite increased confidence in the police as a reason for increased future reporting of crimes.

Other reasons include more crime in the area (13%), wanting people to be brought to justice (10%) and finding it easier to go to the police now (9%). A further 5% are more likely to report crimes to the police in the future “because Sinn Féin says it is OK to report crime now”.

Of the 2% who state they are less likely to report crimes in the future, a lack of confidence in the police (44%) and negative personal experience (19%) are the main reasons given.

4.1.5 Victims of crime

11% of those surveyed have been a victim of crime in the last twelve months. Damage to the outside of home/car (34%) and burglary (20%) are the most likely crimes to have taken place among those who have been victims and the full range is shown in the chart below. While not all of these would be classified as crimes, it is people's *perceptions* and they feel and see these are crimes, even if they are not classified as such. Among those who had been a victim of crime in the last year, 85% had reported the crime to the police.



Of those respondents who have been a victim of crime in the last year and have reported the incident to the police, the majority (59%) are satisfied with how the PSNI kept them informed of developments during the investigation. Females (67%), those aged 15-24 (71%) and those living in Belfast City (70%) are most likely to be satisfied. In comparison, those aged 35-54 (44%), those living in Country Antrim (50%) and Catholics (32%) were more likely to be dissatisfied with how the PSNI kept them informed of developments during the investigation.

In terms of dealing with the incident overall, 63% state they are satisfied with how it has been dealt with by the PSNI. This was particularly the case among those living in Armagh (75%) and Down (73%). In comparison, males (42%) and those aged 35-54 (44%) were more likely to be dissatisfied with how the incident was dealt with.

4.1.6 Factors that deter reporting among those who have been a victim of crime

Of those who had been a victim of crime in the last twelve months, 13% had not reported it to the police. Dealing with the matter themselves (27%) emerged as a top reason why the crime had not been reported while one in five (20%) chose not to report the crime as they thought the police would not have been bothered. Other reasons given include dislike/fear of the police and police could have done nothing (13% each).

Three in ten of those respondents who have been a victim of crime in the last twelve months have reported it to someone else. In terms of the specific crime types theft from a car (75%), theft of a car (58%) and gangs hanging around near their home (50%) are more likely to be reported to someone else.

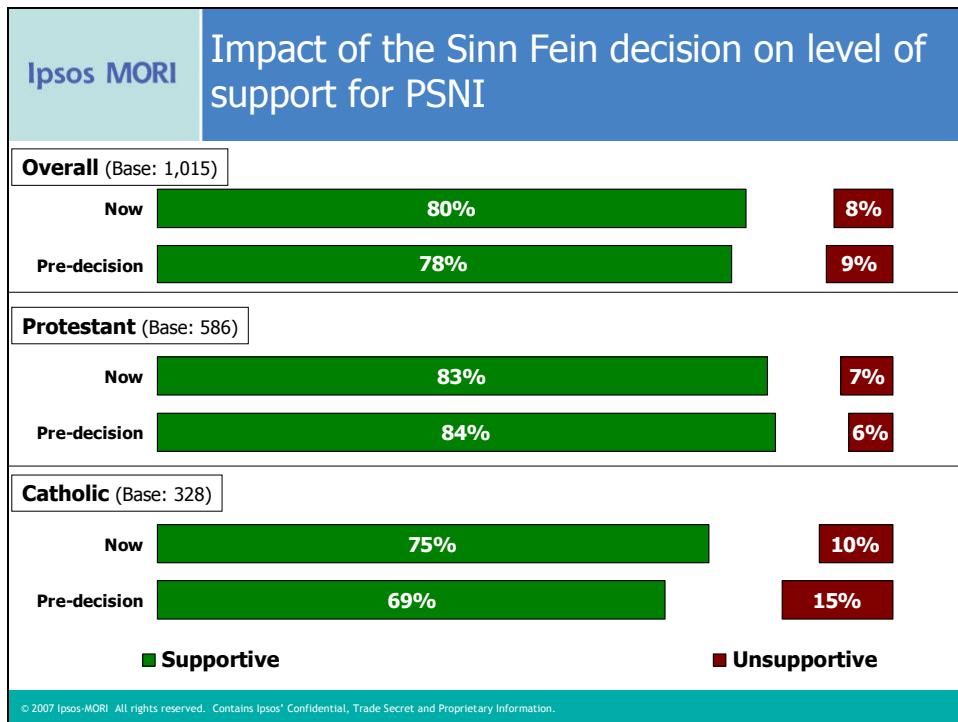
Insurance companies are the most frequently mentioned 'other' channel to whom crime is reported, mentioned by 51% of respondents. Other answers include hospital (9%), local MP (6%), the local council, work and a councillor (6%).

4.1.7 Impact of Sinn Féin decision

Overall, there has been a slight change in how supportive people are of the PSNI since the Sinn Féin decision to support policing in Northern Ireland. More than three-quarters (78%) of people overall were supportive before the announcement, while 80% are now.

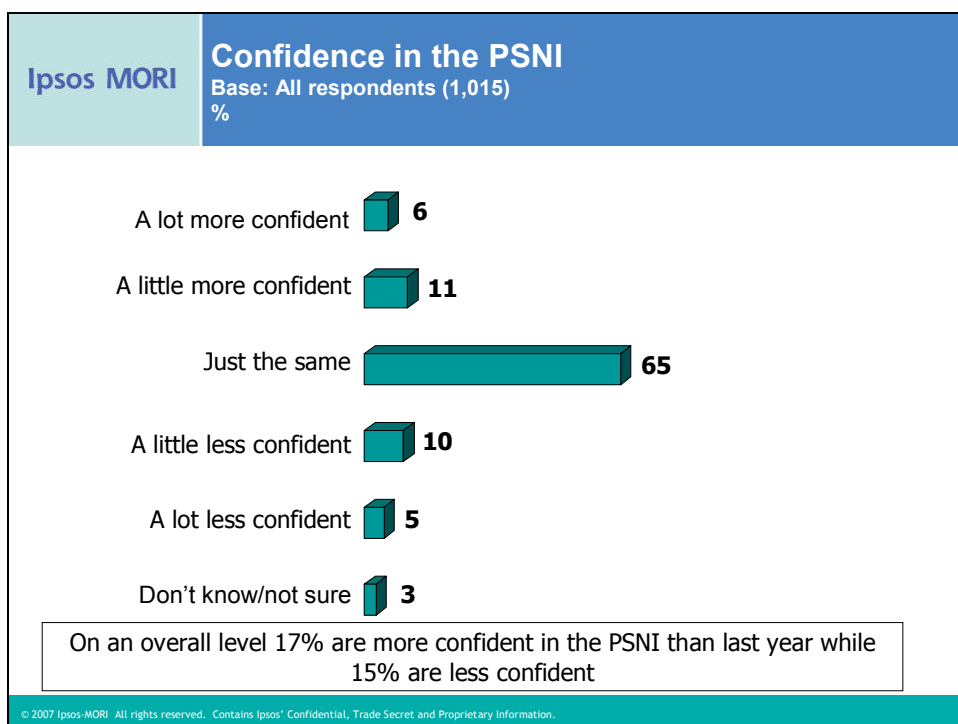
There has, however, been a more marked increase in support among Catholics (75% compared to 69% previously), and especially among first preference Sinn Féin voters (69% now compared to 56% previously). The unsupportiveness levels for the PSNI among both these groups have also fallen substantially.

There has been little change in support for the PSNI from the Protestant community (84% prior to the Sinn Féin decision compared to 83% now). These changes are shown in the chart on the following page.



4.1.8 Current confidence in the police

For almost two-thirds of respondents (65%) the level of confidence they personally have in the PSNI has remained the same from this time last year, which is encouraging for the Policing Board and PSNI. The main reason given for this is that the police have not changed cited by 41% of respondents. Other reasons given include having always supported the police (19%), feeling that the police are doing a good job and never having anything to report (7% each).



Among those who state that they have more confidence in the PSNI now compared to last year (17%), one quarter (25%) are Catholic, compared to 13% Protestant. The most marked change in confidence is among first preference Sinn Féin voters, where 41% now have more confidence in the PSNI than they did this time last year. This would seem to support the hypothesis that increased recording of crime in Catholic areas is related to increased confidence in the policing within Catholic communities.

The reasons for this increase in overall confidence include the perception that the police are doing a good job (16%), the police are trying to do better (16%), more community policing (14%) and a better political climate (11%). Critically, 6% (12% of Catholics) also stated that Sinn Féin giving their approval to support policing has made them more confident in the PSNI than they would have been last year.

In terms of the reasons for increased confidence in the PSNI there are some variations according to religion. Protestants are more than twice as likely than Catholics to state an increase in confidence due to that the fact that police are doing a good job (22% compared to 10% respectively) and a greater police presence (16% compared to 7%). Those from the Catholic community are more likely to state that the good experiences they had with the police (13% compared to 5% of Protestants) and the Sinn Féin decision to support policing were defining factors in their increased confidence.

Overall 15% state that they are less confident in the PSNI compared to this time last year. However this is considerably higher amongst Protestants (19%) compared to 8% of Catholics. The perception of apathy/not being interested from the PSNI is the main reason cited for this fall in confidence (23%). Over one fifth have lost confidence in the PSNI due to the perception that crimes are not solved (21%) while 17% have lost confidence due to negative personal experience. Other reasons include very few police being about (15%), too much bureaucracy (13%), not enough resources and response times being too slow (11% each).

4.1.9 Confidence in the police's ability to deal with various policing activities

Over three-quarters (77%) of people are confident in the PSNI's ability to investigate crime. Residents of Belfast City (83%), Antrim (81%) and Armagh (79%) are most confident in this ability. Members of the Protestant community are also more confident than those from the Catholic community (79% compared to 71% respectively).

A further 72% of respondents state that they are confident in the PSNI's ability to deal with crime prevention. ABs (77%), those living in Belfast City (78%), Derry (76%), and Greater Belfast (74%) are most confident in the crime prevention abilities of the PSNI. Confidence in this regard is also notably higher among those living in urban areas (75% compared to 65% rural).

In conjunction with the above, 67% of people are confident in the PSNI's ability to bring offenders to justice.

Interestingly, crime is not at the forefront of the general public's confidence levels in the PSNI. Rather, people are more confident in their ability to deal with situations such as riots (84%) and providing an ordinary day to day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland (83%). In terms of the latter, there was no significant variation between the Protestant and Catholic communities (84% and 81% respectively).

The public has least confidence in beat/foot patrolling (63%) and the PSNI's ability to improve clearance rates (59%). People living in counties Armagh and Down were the least confident in relation to beat/foot patrolling with 42% and 39% respectively stating they had no confidence in the PSNI's ability to carry out this activity.

4.1.10 Change in confidence in the police from certain sections of the community

Respondents were also asked whether they thought there was increased confidence in the police from certain parts of the community compared to this time last year. 50% felt that there had been an increase in confidence from certain communities. Those from the Catholic community were more likely to hold this perception than those from the Protestant community (57% compared to 47% respectively).

The majority of respondents (52%) feel that there is increased confidence among the Nationalist community while 47% state there is increased confidence among Republicans. Of the other communities, 21% feel there has been an increase in confidence from Unionists and 18% believe there is increased confidence from the Loyalist community.

4.2 Targeted Areas Survey

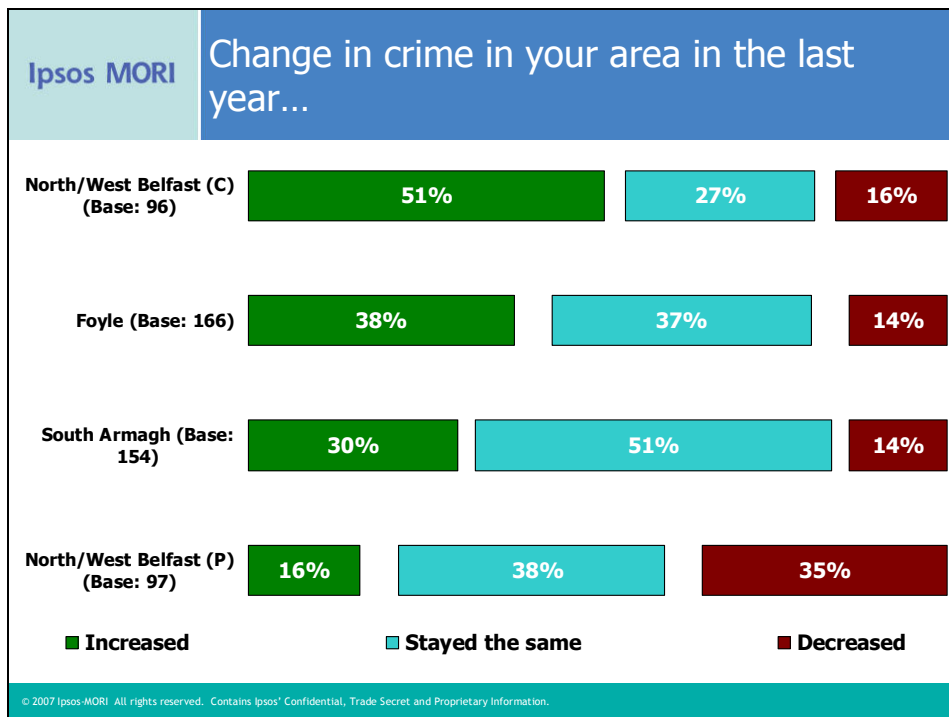
This second element of quantitative research consists of a targeted survey of four areas, identified as predominantly working-class Republican and Loyalist areas, where the level of reporting crime to the police has traditionally been low. The survey was conducted face-to-face with a sample of 513 people across the four areas, which were Catholic and Protestant districts of North and West Belfast, and Catholic areas in Foyle and South Armagh. These areas were chosen on the basis of increases in recorded crime, suggesting an increase in the level of reporting, and in conjunction with the project steering group. Fieldwork for the targeted areas survey was conducted between 26th February and 19th March 2007.

4.2.1 Changes in crime levels

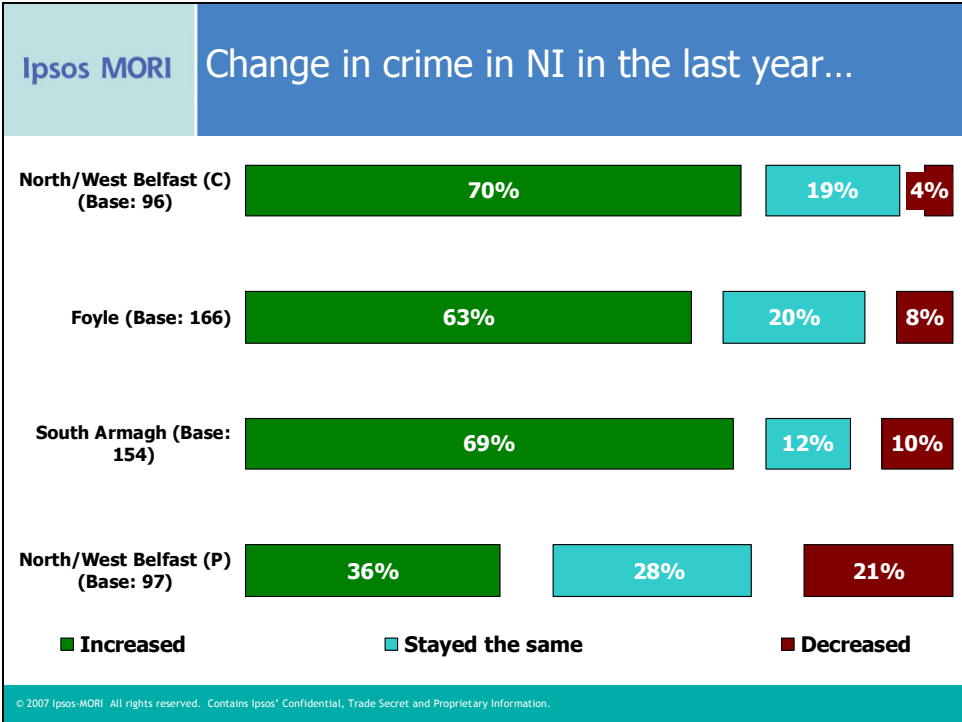
In each of the Catholic areas surveyed, crime is perceived to have increased in the last year. In North and West Belfast in particular, over half of respondents (51%) believe that crime in their area has increased, with 19% stating it has increased a little and 32% that it has increased a lot. 16% of people in this area believe that crime levels have decreased and around one quarter (27%) that they have stayed the same.

38% in Foyle and 30% in South Armagh believe there has been an increase in crime levels in the last 12 months compared to 14% in each area who think crime levels have decreased. A high proportion in both areas (37% in Foyle and 51% in South Armagh) do not believe crime levels in their area have changed.

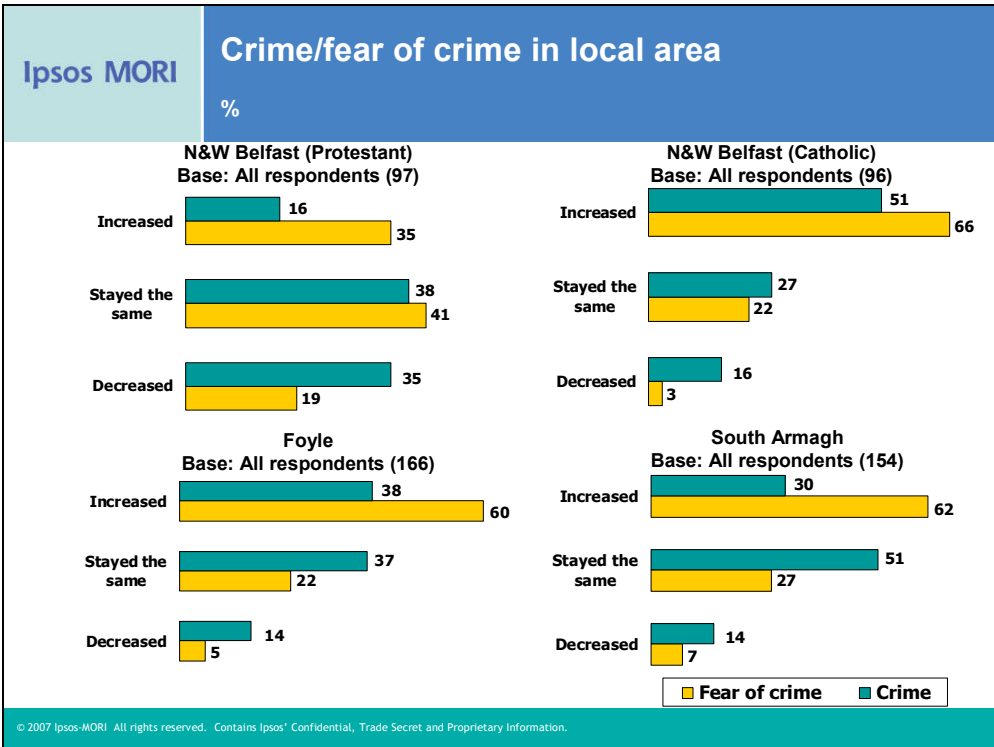
The trend is reversed in the North and West Belfast Protestant area, however, where over one third of respondents (35%) feel crime levels in their area have gone down in the last year. A further 38% think that crime levels are about the same, while just 16% believe there has been an increase.



Trends are more marked in attitudes to crime levels in Northern Ireland as a whole. A much higher proportion of respondents in each area believe that crime levels in Northern Ireland overall have increased, compared to changes in their own area. The most marked difference is among those from South Armagh where 69% of respondents believe that crime in Northern Ireland has increased (compared to 30% in their own area), while 36% of those in the North and West Belfast Protestant area feel that crime levels have increased in Northern Ireland, more than twice the proportion that believe that crime levels have risen in their local area.

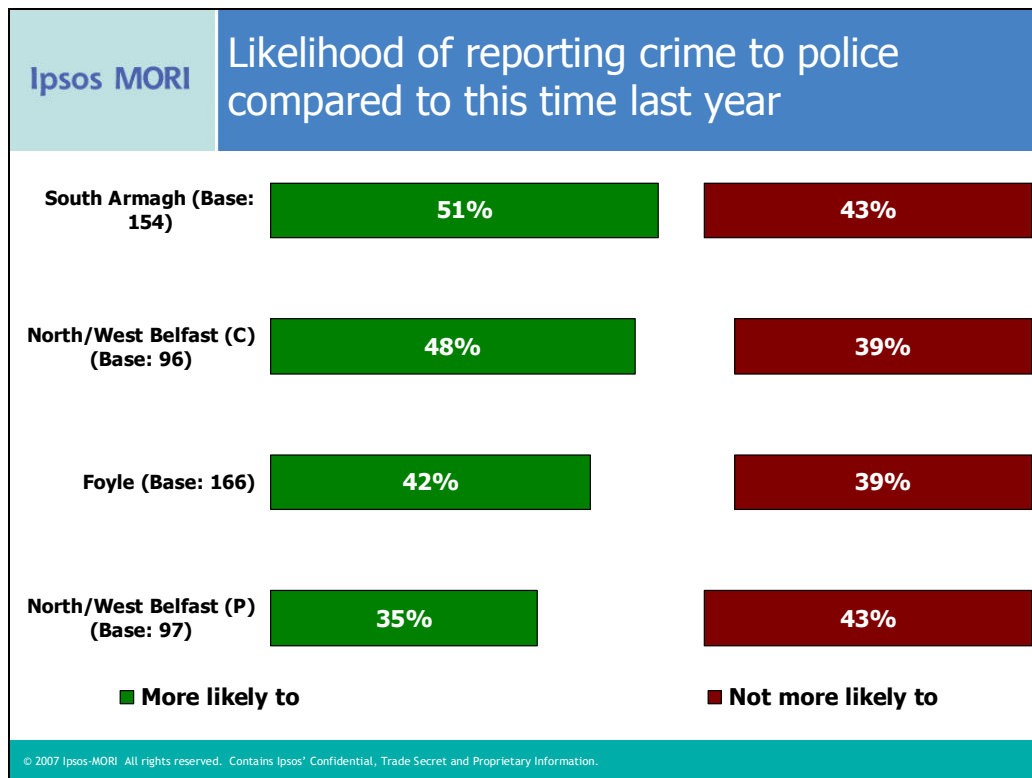


There is also a significant difference between attitudes to actual crime levels and the fear of crime in the area. In all areas the fear of crime is felt to have increased much more than actual crime in the area. Indeed, in the South Armagh and North and West Belfast Protestant areas the difference between fear of crime and actual level of crime is more than double.



4.2.2 Reporting Crime

There has been a significant increase in the likelihood to report crime to the police among respondents in South Armagh and the North and West Belfast Catholic areas, where around half (51% and 48% respectively) indicated they would be more likely to report crimes now compared to 12 months ago. In the North and West Belfast Protestant group, however, just over one-third (35%) would be more likely to report crimes to the police now, compared to 43% who would not be any more likely to report crime to the police now.



The main reasons for an increase in reporting crime to the police are that people would try to help the police and they feel that crime should be reported so that people do not get away with it and crime levels are reduced. The improving political situation, especially for those in Republican areas, is also a contributory factor in the increased reporting levels.

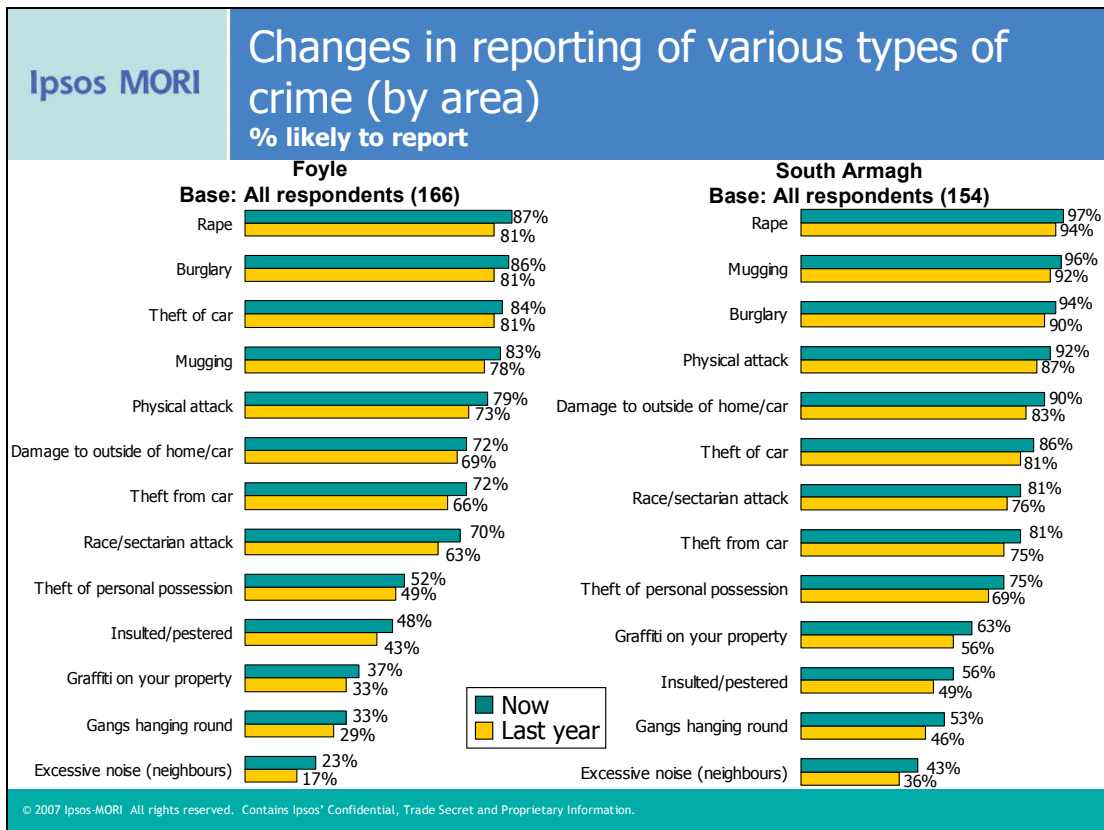
The main reason for people not being more likely to report crime to the police is that they would not alter their behaviour, or that they have no confidence in the police and do not trust them to solve crimes. This final point is particularly apparent among those in the Foyle area.

4.2.3 Reporting of crime now compared to last year

Respondents across all areas are still most likely to report serious crimes such as rape, mugging, burglary, and physical attacks to the police. Gangs hanging around and excessive noise are much less likely to be reported. The likelihood of reporting crime to the police has risen across most of types of crime and across all areas, most notably in the South Armagh and Foyle areas. Respondents are more likely to report all types of crime in these areas than they were 12 months ago.

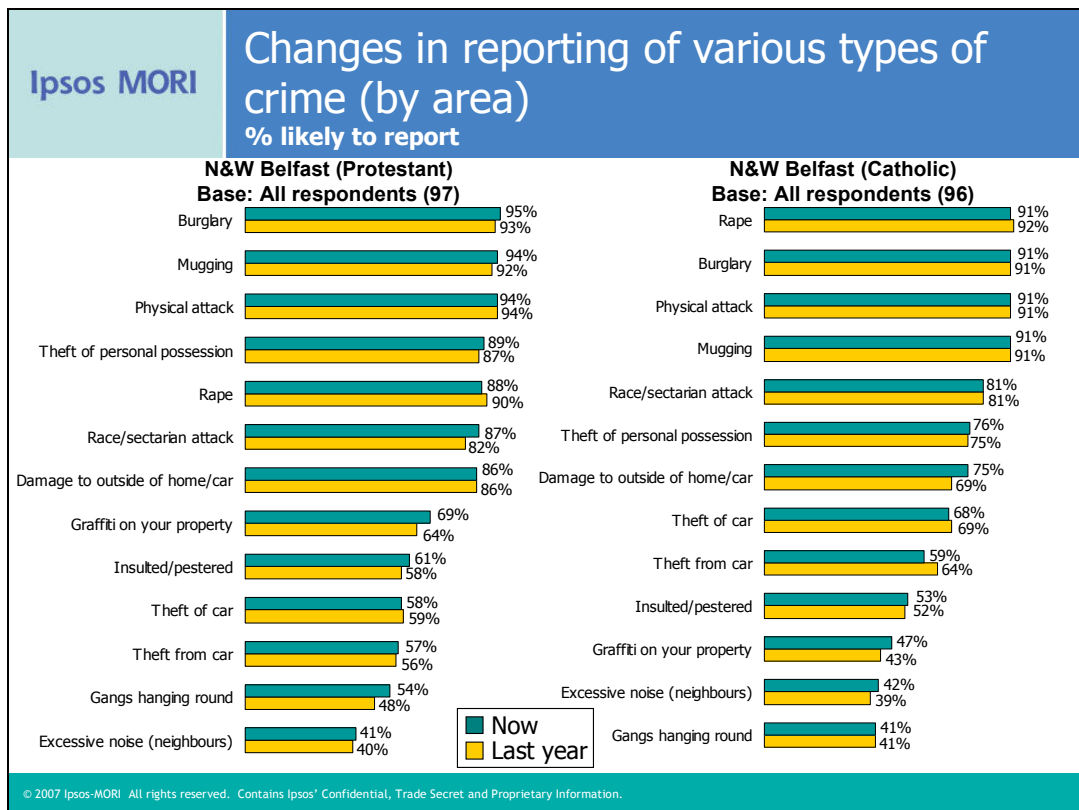
In Foyle the most significant increases have been in the likelihood of reporting race or sectarian attacks, excessive noise from neighbours, car theft, physical attacks and rape. The likelihood to report each of these has risen between 6% and 7% points in the last year. However, it should be noted that reporting levels for most crimes in Foyle are still lower compared to the other areas.

In South Armagh, the largest increases in reporting relate to excessive noise from neighbours, gangs hanging around peoples' homes, insults or being pestered, graffiti on their property, and damage to the outside of the home or car, up by 5%-7% points in the last year.



In North and West Belfast, the levels in likelihood of reporting to the police have risen, but only marginally and only for certain types of crime. For example, in the Catholic survey, the most significant increases in reporting are in regards to damage to the outsides of their home or property, or in relation to graffiti on their property. The likelihood to report more serious crimes is high but unchanged.

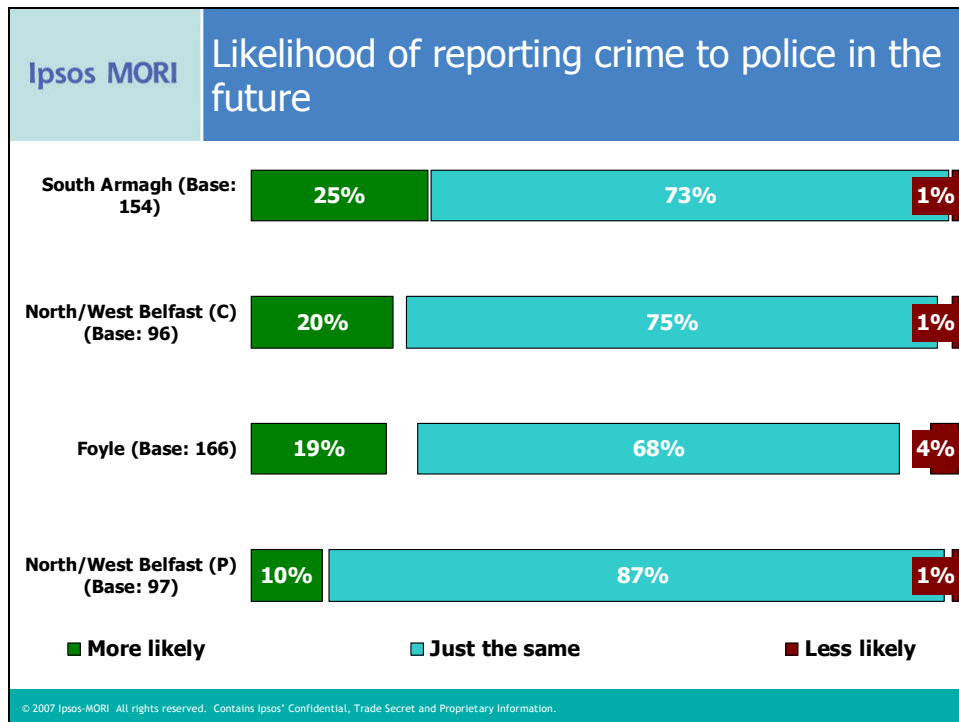
In the Protestant North West Belfast survey, reporting levels have increased but only slightly, although likelihood to report gangs hanging around near their home, race or sectarian attacks, and graffiti on their property has risen more markedly, each up by around 5%-6% points compared to last year.



The most commonly mentioned reasons for increased reporting is because of a desire to stop the activity and also that people feel it is safer now, that there is less fear of retribution and that the police are more acceptable and confidence is growing in them. Political change and progress and the Sinn Féin decision have also led to increases in reporting, especially in the Foyle and South Armagh areas.

4.2.4 Future reporting

In all the areas surveyed, for the majority of respondents there is likely to be little change in their reporting of crimes to the police in the future. This is especially true for those in the North and West Belfast Protestant area where 87% are likely to remain unchanged in their likelihood to report. Around three-quarters of respondents in the other areas are unlikely to change their behaviour in this regard, although one-quarter (25%) in South Armagh and one fifth (20% and 19% respectively) in the North and West Belfast Catholic area and Foyle would be more likely to report crimes to the police in the future.



4.2.5 Victims of Crime

17% of respondents in the North and West Belfast Catholic area have been a victim of crime in the last year. The main types are burglary, damage to the outside of their car/home, and physical attacks. Over three-quarters (78%) of these crimes were reported to the police.

In South Armagh, 14% of respondents have been a victim of crime in the last year. Burglary and car theft are the main forms, and 87% of crimes were reported to the police.

In Foyle, the figure was similar at 12% and the main types are damage to property, insults/pestering, car theft and gangs hanging near their home causing trouble. Only two-thirds (67%) of crimes were reported to the police and the main reasons for this reticence were that respondents did not feel the police could have done anything or would not have been interested, or they dealt with the matter themselves.

Just 4% of those in the North and West Belfast Protestant area have been a victim of crime in the last year and in all but one instance these crimes were reported to the police, although the base numbers are very small.

In the North and West Belfast and Foyle Catholic groups, the majority of respondents did not feel that they were kept well informed during the process by the police, however this was not the case in South Armagh. There were however, higher levels of satisfaction with how the police dealt with crimes across all areas. In all these cases, instances of each type of particular crime were mentioned by only a handful of respondents and base numbers are low.

Of those who were victims of crime in South Armagh, 43% reported the crime to somebody else, most notably the insurance company or Northern Ireland Housing Executive. 30% in Foyle reported it to someone else, the most common mentions being Sinn Féin or the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. One-quarter (25%) of those in both areas of North and West Belfast reported crimes to someone else, with a range of organisations and individuals mentioned (such as Victim Support, probation officer, and solicitor) although each was mentioned by only one person. It should be noted that the actual numbers of people reporting to somebody else are quite low.

4.2.6 Impact of Sinn Féin Decision

Support for the police has risen significantly in the Catholic areas surveyed since Sinn Féin's decision to support policing in Northern Ireland in January 2007. In Foyle especially the change is most noticeable, the net change in support (i.e. the difference between those supportive of the police and those unsupportive) having risen by 36% points, from a negative (-19%) support level prior to the Sinn Féin announcement to a positive (+17%) level now. In this area, support for the police now sits at 44% supportive and 27% unsupportive, a complete turnaround from the previous levels of 27% supportive and 46% unsupportive. Indeed the change of those who are very supportive has risen from 1% to 10%, while those who are very unsupportive has fallen by 14% points.

In South Armagh, support for the police has also risen significantly, increasing by 25% points at a net level. Before the Sinn Féin announcement, those supportive and not supportive were 54% and 30% respectively, but after this changed to 68% supportive and 19% not supportive.

Among respondents in the North and West Belfast Catholic group, there was a +19% point change in support levels, with those who are supportive of the police rising from 50% to 59% and those unsupportive falling from 33% to 23%.

However, in the North and West Belfast Protestant group the trend was reversed and support at a net level actually fell by 5% points after Sinn Féin's decision to support the police. So while the majority (79%) are still supportive of the police this has fallen slightly as a result of the announcement. Although it should be noted that support for the police in this area is still much higher than in the Catholic areas surveyed.

Impact of the Sinn Fein decision on level of support for PSNI

Foyle (Catholic) Base: All respondents (166)



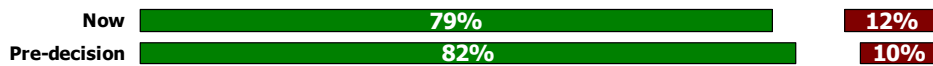
South Armagh (Catholic) Base: All respondents (154)



N&W Belfast (Catholic) Base: All respondents (96)



N&W Belfast (Protestant) Base: All respondents (97)



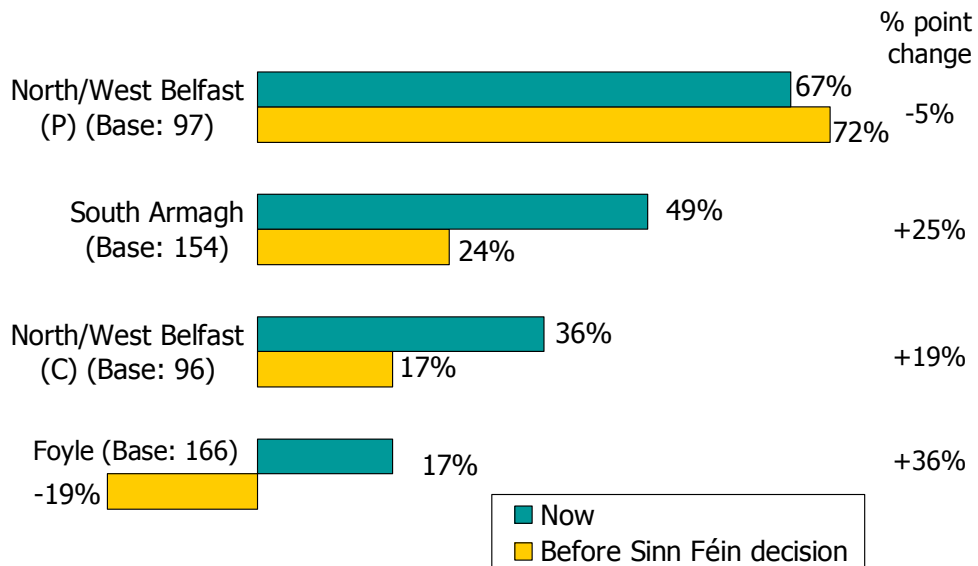
■ Supportive

■ Unsupportive

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Change in support for police – before Sinn Féin decision and now

% Net supportive (all supportive minus all unsupportive)



■ Now

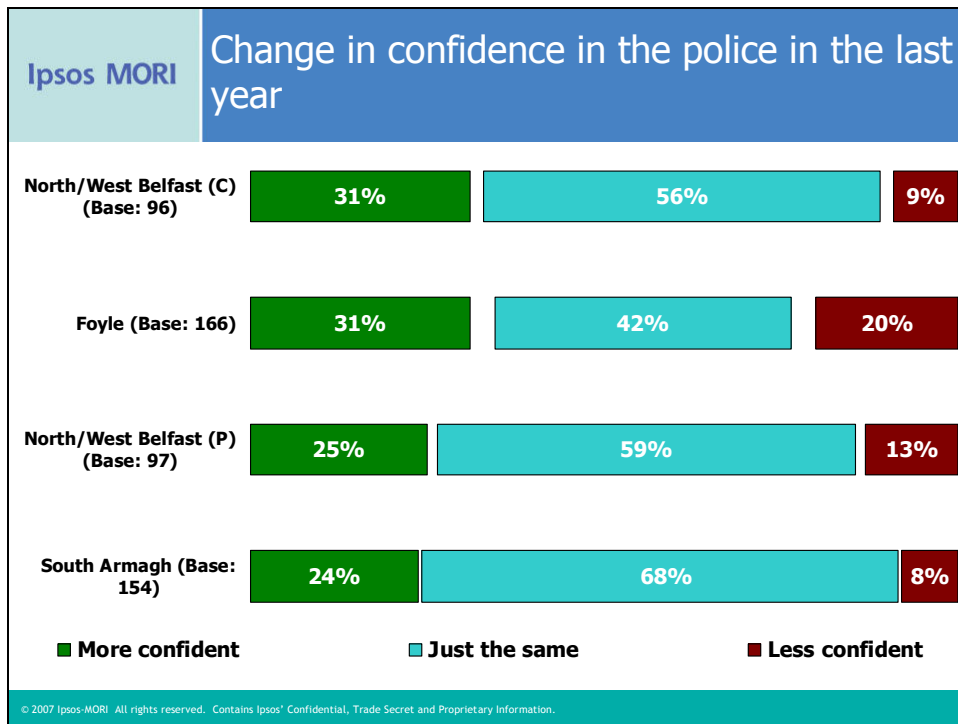
■ Before Sinn Féin decision

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4.2.7 Current confidence in the Police

Confidence in the police generally is increasing in all the areas surveyed, but not to the same extent as support for the organisation. In Foyle, for example, while around one-third of respondents (31%) are more confident in the police than they were this time last year, 20% are less confident. The North and West Belfast Catholic area has seen the most marked change, with again almost one-third (31%) more confident in the police and just 9% less confident. 56% have not changed.

In South Armagh, for over two-thirds of respondents (68%) confidence levels have remained the same, although almost one-quarter (24%) feel more confident in the police and just 8% less confident. The difference is not as marked in the North and West Belfast Protestant area, however, where 59% have the same level of confidence and while for one-quarter of respondents (25%) confidence levels have increased, for 13% confidence has decreased.



The main reasons for the increased confidence in the police are that people feel they are trying to do better and are sorting themselves out, and also in the current political climate there is a greater acceptance of the organisation among more people. Other reasons mentioned for increased confidence include the fact are that people have not had any problems (or have had good experiences) with the police, that there is a greater police presence in the local area and more “community” policing, and also Sinn Féin approval, which is especially true in Foyle and South Armagh.

Where there has been no change in confidence levels the main reasons are that the organisation has not changed, or that people have always held the

same view of them, either being supportive or having no confidence and have not changed in this regard.

For those who have less confidence in the police now the main reasons are because of past experiences and their personal history being negative, or that there is still a lack of trust in the organisation in that it is still seen as one-sided, which is especially the case for those in the Foyle area. Other mentions are that they are not interested or helpful and do nothing for people, and that the response times are too slow.

4.2.8 Confidence in the Police's ability to deal with various policing activities

Those in the North and West Belfast Protestant areas have most confidence in the police's ability to deal with various policing activities. Those activities where confidence in the police is highest are: being able to provide an ordinary day to day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland (where 81% have at least some confidence and 16% have little or no confidence and 3% don't know); dealing with terrorist activity (82% some confidence, 18% little/no confidence); and investigating crime (81% some confidence, 19% little/no confidence). Confidence is lowest in regards to beat/foot patrolling with around two-thirds of respondents (63%) having at least some confidence, but over one-third (35%) with little or no confidence.

Confidence levels in the police to deal with various activities are also reasonably high in the South Armagh area. 81% have at least some confidence in the ability of the police regarding the investigation of crime, compared to 18% who have little or no confidence, while 80% have confidence in the police providing an ordinary day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland, with just 17% having little or no confidence. As with other areas, confidence in the ability of the police to provide an adequate beat/foot patrolling service is lower, with only 58% having some confidence in this aspect, and almost one-third (29%) having little or no confidence.

In the North and West Belfast Catholic area, confidence is reasonably high in terms of the police being able to provide an ordinary day to day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland, with two-thirds (66%) of respondents at least having some confidence in the police's ability to do this, compared to just over one-quarter (28%) who have little or no confidence. At the other end of the scale, in this area, confidence with beat/foot patrolling is low, with 38% having at least some confidence, but 57% with little or no confidence in this regard.

Confidence in the police being able to deal with various activities in Foyle is much lower across the board for all issues. Indeed for many activities respondents do not have very much confidence in the police at all. Just 39% have at least some confidence in police bringing offenders to justice compared to over half (52%) who have little or no confidence. Indeed only 10% have a lot or total confidence in this regard. One-third of respondents (33%) have

confidence in the police improving clearance rates compared to 44% who have little or no confidence.

4.2.9 Change in Confidence in the Police from Sections of the Community

Around two-thirds (62%) of respondents in the South Armagh area believe that there is increased confidence in the police from certain sections of the community compared to this time last year. Almost two-thirds (59%) believe this increased confidence has come from the Nationalist community and over one-third (37%) that it has come from the Republican community. Just 12% believe there is increased confidence from the Loyalist community.

In the North and West Belfast Catholic group, over half of all respondents (52%) believe confidence levels have risen, with a much higher proportion (60%) believing there has been increased confidence from the Republican community and the same percentage from the Nationalist community. Again, only 12% believe confidence levels have increased among Loyalists.

It is a similar story in the North and West Belfast Protestant group, where almost half of respondents (48%) feel there has been increased confidence in the police from certain parts of the community, with two-thirds (66%) feeling this has come from the Republican community, although 43% of people in this area do feel there is increased confidence among the Loyalist community.

A slightly lower percentage (43%) in Foyle believe there is increased confidence in the police and 42% feel this has come from each of the Republican and Nationalist communities. Just 8% feel there is increased confidence from Loyalists.

4.3 Conclusions

The findings from both elements of quantitative research reported in this chapter are remarkably consistent. Both surveys shows that, while the overall level of crime is perceived to be rising amongst all groups, there are significant differences between Catholics and Protestants regarding their current levels of confidence in policing and their likelihood to report crime. Encouragingly for the Policing Board and the PSNI, results from the omnibus survey of Catholic respondents and the results from the Catholic areas included in the targeted survey indicate significant positive changes in the last 12 months in these areas. The difference between likelihood to report now and 12 months ago is significantly greater among Catholic respondents than Protestant respondents.

All of the evidence, plus findings from the qualitative research, suggests that there has been a noticeable increase in the likelihood to report crime to the police, especially among Catholics. It would appear that as support for and confidence in the PSNI in Catholic areas continues to grow, the likelihood to report crimes to the police will also increase. In addition, the increased reporting has undoubtedly had an impact on police recorded crime figures in the last two years and it seems likely, from all the research evidence, that this will continue at least into 2007/08.

5. Qualitative Research

This chapter presents the results from three separate elements of qualitative research. The first element of qualitative research consisted of eight focus groups with the general public, one in each of the proposed new DCU areas. The next element consisted of nine depth interviews with elected representatives representing the four main political parties. Finally, a further four depth interviews were conducted with representatives from the following minority and under-represented groups: gay and lesbian communities, senior citizen communities, people with disabilities and minority ethnic communities.

The discussion guides used in the focus groups and both series of depth interviews covered much the same areas of discussion, including respondent attitudes on living in Northern Ireland, confidence in the police and perceptions of crime.

5.1 Focus Groups With the General Public

5.1.1 Living in Northern Ireland

The most positive aspects of living in Northern Ireland cited by those participating in the research may be summarised into four main themes. These are:

- Friendly people,
- A safe place to live,
- Natural beauty,
- Good Public services.

Friendly people

One of the greatest perceived benefits of living in Northern Ireland is the friendliness of the people. This was mentioned in every location without exception and was said with a certain sense of pride. The friendliness of the people of Northern Ireland is considered something that is recognised internationally and not only by the people living here.

A safe place to live

Since the ceasefires and the demise of the “Troubles”, most people believe that Northern Ireland has become a much safer place to live. However, even at the height of the conflict and even more so now, Northern Ireland was and is considered safer than many other parts of the UK and indeed the rest of the world.

“The gun culture that they have in England, we don’t have yet.”
(Catholic, Newry)

Northern Ireland tends to be viewed as having a lower rate of “normal” crime as opposed to terrorism, although interestingly and indeed worryingly, this is perceived to be changing in certain parts of the country. This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

Natural beauty

One of the major positives of living in Northern Ireland is the extent of the scenery, coastline, lakes and mountains and the fact that wherever you are you are never too far away from nature.

Public Services

The education system in Northern Ireland was mentioned in every location as one of the positive aspects of living here. Schools and education were generally considered by research participants to be of a higher standard than in the rest of the UK. The Health Service was also mentioned as a positive although less regularly and less consistently than education.

Not surprisingly there were some perceived negative aspects to living in Northern Ireland. The weather aside, which was the most cited negative, topical issues such as house prices, water charges and, in some areas racism, were deemed as negatives. While on the one hand some people view racism as the issue others stated that it was the number of foreigners, sometimes referred to as beggars, which was the problem.

5.1.2 Living in the Local Area

The most positive aspect of living in their local area was extremely consistent across all locations and emerged well ahead of any other positives. This was the sense of community spirit or closeness of the community. This was true for people living in both urban and rural areas.

The terms peaceful and quiet were used frequently in relation to their local area and there was a genuine sense in most areas that the quality of life was improving.

However, in contrast, the main negative that emerged was in relation to a perceived growth in anti-social behaviour which was generally attributed to young people and drink and drugs.

5.1.3 Crime – what is understood by the term?

The main activities associated with the term crime tended to be burglaries, car thefts, muggings, crimes against the person particularly attacks on the elderly all of which were consistently mentioned across all locations. Rape, people and domestic violence were also mentioned.

Murder, while obviously a crime, tended not to be mentioned initially or as frequently as the afore-mentioned crimes

Some view that what makes something a crime is if it is premeditated and there was intent behind it. Others view it as more straightforward

“If you are breaking the law that’s a crime.”
(Catholic, Cookstown)

However, there was often debate as to what constituted a crime. For example in North/West Belfast fuel smuggling was considered a crime by some but not by others.

“The red diesel – I don’t call that a crime because they’re helping us out. The government are putting on these taxes for fuel where it costs 25p a litre but they’re charging us a £1, so they’re making 75p.”
(Catholic, North/West Belfast)

“It is a crime and it’s against everyone. The government has to get its money from somewhere and if they don’t get it from fuel because of diesel smuggling it’s put back onto the price of cigarettes and beer, on your income tax and your water bills.”
(Catholic, North/West Belfast)

Similarly there was debate as to whether anti-social behaviour was a crime. It seems unlikely that many people would report graffiti even if they saw someone in the act of carrying it out unless it was on their own personal property. Similarly noisy neighbours would only be reported if it occurred on a persistent basis.

“Neighbours causing a nuisance would be on the same level as graffiti and vandalism.”
(Protestant, Newtownards)

Crimes that were considered less serious were graffiti, noisy neighbours, benefit fraud and TV licence evasion.

“They’re minor crimes, not major crimes. They’re at the low end of the scale.”
(Catholic, Derry)

5.1.4 Perceptions as to whether crime is increasing or decreasing

The terrorist-related crime experienced in Northern Ireland for many years is definitely perceived to have decreased dramatically in recent years but with it has come an increase in other types of more “normal” crime.

The types of crime that are considered to have reduced are not just bombings and shootings but also assaults and punishment beatings carried out by paramilitary organisations. Sectarian crime has also reduced making some people feel safer in certain areas.

“I feel a lot safer now in Belfast this last few years than I did. There was always the chance of getting shot by a Protestant because I’m a Catholic and it was as simple as that. I walk places now where I would have been a bit dubious about walking before.”

(Catholic, North/West Belfast)

Protestants in South/East Belfast held very similar views also believing that it was now safer to go out in Belfast, with one stating: *“You can really go anywhere now.”*

However, people in all areas felt that crime was on the increase. In North/West Belfast it was stated that attacks, particularly knife-related crimes, burglaries, crimes against the elderly and drug related crimes were getting worse.

“It’s a different type of crime now, it’s what every other city in the world has.”

(Catholic, North/West Belfast)

Although crime was generally considered to be on the increase, some people questioned whether this was simply a perception due to increased media coverage of lesser crimes due to a lack of other more serious crimes to report on.

“They’re telling us about robberies now whereas before it was all about people getting knee-capped.”

(Protestant, South/East Belfast)

“The media was more focused on the bigger things that were happening – the shootings and the murders and bombs and whatever so we weren’t hearing about the smaller things.”

(Protestant, South/East Belfast)

The main reasons underlying this perceived increase in levels of crime are as follows;

Fewer paramilitaries

Drugs

Alcohol

Lack of respect (and fear) of the police and parents by young people

Fewer Paramilitaries

The reduced presence of paramilitary organisations is considered to be a major reason for the perceived increase in crime. There were some views, albeit a minority, that the crime situation was better, i.e. fewer crimes were committed, when the paramilitaries were in control.

“The paramilitaries kept their estates in order. If you stood out of line you got busted. Now they’re taking a back seat so I think there’ll be more crime now because people will think they can get away with more than they used to.”

(Protestant, South/East Belfast)

“In my community people’s cars were ruined and seemingly some young person did it but nobody saw it happen. I feel that wouldn’t have happened had they been afraid of the paramilitaries.”

(Catholic, Cookstown)

“Before the ceasefire paramilitaries had a tight grip on the town and things wouldn’t have been allowed.”

(Catholic, Derry)

Drugs

Drugs were mentioned in all areas as being a problem and being on the increase. The increase in drugs led to an increase in theft and burglaries as users needed money to feed their drug habit. Attacks against the elderly were perceived to be “easy targets” for drug users.

Alcohol

Increased crime due to alcohol is perceived to more as a result of what people do when under the influence of alcohol rather than, as with drugs, committing crimes to pay for the alcohol. With many drunk young people on the streets there is a perception that there has been an increase in assaults, attacks and more vicious fights than there used to be.

Lack of Respect (and fear) of the Police by Young People

In addition to the lack of paramilitary presence acting as a deterrent in some areas to young people committing a crime, there is a view that many young people carry out crimes because they are not frightened by the consequences. This is attributed to a number of factors ranging from a general lack of respect for authority combined with the perceived very lenient punishments handed out to offenders out by both the PSNI and the Courts.

“The police need to be seen to be doing more and not just arresting them for an hour or two and letting them out again.”

(Catholic, Newry)

“Since peace has come and the paramilitaries have gone away as such, young people on drugs have no fear now. Whereas when the so called war was on there was always the fear that they would get a beating.”

(Catholic, Cookstown)

5.1.5 Current Reporting of Crime

Historically burglary, car theft or any serious crime that involved an insurance claim would have been reported to the police. However many other crimes including some serious ones may not have been reported to the police in the past.

In some areas, notably North/West Belfast, Newry and Derry some people admitted that they would not go to the police because it was historic or in their culture not to do so. This did not appear to be out of any particular sense of fear but rather it was simply not something that they would even consider doing.

“We’ve come from that generation where people don’t trust the police so we haven’t been reporting crime.”

(Catholic, Derry)

There were others who would not report crimes due to a sense of fear of reprisal, stigma or being labelled a “tout”.

“You weren’t allowed to talk to the police. If you were seen with the police you were classed as an informer or tout so there’s a bit of fear there.”

(Protestant, Newtownards)

Despite the fact that the presence of paramilitaries is perceived to have greatly reduced, there is still some evidence of reporting crimes to the paramilitaries in both Republican and Loyalist areas.

There does appear to be a lot of apathy in relation to the reporting of less serious crime to the PSNI. Reasons for this are as follows;

- Police are slow to respond

“For minor things people aren’t going to bother to report because they know it’s going to take the police hours to come down.”

(Protestant, Newtownards)

“We had a car accident and I phoned up to report it and the guy says “was anybody injured?” and when I said no he said “fine we don’t want to know about it.”

(Protestant, Carrickfergus)

- Nothing the police can do about it

“I got my van broken into and stuff stolen and I never even reported it because it would be a waste of time.”

(Catholic, Cookstown)

“Most of the time when you do ring them they don’t come out to the crime because they know nothing is going to come out of it.”

(Catholic, Cookstown)

“Unless it was something very serious like something happening to one of my kids, I would take it to the police. But something small I wouldn’t bother because nothing is going to happen.”

(Protestant, Carrickfergus)

- Do not want to waste police time

“If somebody steals your kid’s bike you’re not going to report that because that’s petty crime.”

(Catholic, North/West Belfast)

5.1.6 Future Reporting of Crime

At the time that the research was undertaken in February 2007, some Catholics in North/West Belfast stated that it was too early to say whether there would be a change in future levels of crime reporting as a result of the recent Sinn Féin decision regarding support for the PSNI. However, generally in this area, it was considered that there would be increased confidence and support for the PSNI from the nationalist community in the future.

“I think for a lot of people once they saw Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness endorsing the whole thing they say well if they think it’s ok, they’ve brought us this far and what they are doing is right. They’re getting results from the British and Irish Governments and I think confidence and reporting will increase as a result of that.”

(Catholic, North/West Belfast)

Views amongst Catholics in Derry were similar to those in Belfast.

“I think people are starting to use the police slightly more but it’s still early days and a long way to go. People now feel that they can if they want to report something to the police whereas beforehand they felt that they couldn’t.”

(Catholic, Derry)

There were qualifications that what happened in the future in relation to the reporting of crime would be dependent on overall public confidence in policing and it would be up to the PSNI to deliver to the whole community.

However in Newry there was a view that things had already started to change and that even before the Sinn Féin decision that reporting of crime to the PSNI had been on the increase.

“I think the relationship is going to change between the community and the police and with that should come more trust with more crime reported.”

(Catholic, Newry)

Similarly in South/East Belfast most believe that there has been an increase in the levels of reporting crime to PSNI. The feeling in this area is that the police are more approachable and this has led to a greater feeling of acceptance towards them.

“People are less hesitant to go to the police now. The paramilitaries have run out of steam.”

(Protestant, South/East Belfast)

In Ballymena attitudes tended to be quite different. Although there was a general feeling as in other areas that crime was on the increase, people tended to be more negative about the PSNI with some stating that public confidence in policing had deteriorated since the ceasefires. There were strong views in relation to the pointlessness of reporting crime as nothing happened as a result even if the police did come out. The police were also considered to only patrol the “nice” areas such as the town centre but were never present in any of the rougher areas where they were in much greater need.

Views amongst Protestants in Carrickfergus and Newtownards were very similar to those in Ballymena and in general it was felt that levels of reporting crime in these areas were low due to a lack of confidence in policing. As with Ballymena the police were considered to target “soft” areas. Furthermore this lack of confidence is exacerbated by the perceived lightness of sentences handed out by the Criminal Justice System.

“It’s the Government that makes us not have confidence in the police because they’re coming out and telling the courts not to put people away because our jails are getting too full. So then the police think why bother going out and arresting people if they’re not getting the backing from higher up.”

(Protestant, Newtownards)

5.2 Elected Representatives Report

5.2.1 Living in Northern Ireland and Local Council Area

Most of the councillors feel that the positive aspects of living in Northern Ireland far outweigh the negatives. Overall, the friendliness of the people, community spirit, the pace of life, and the more positive atmosphere created by “peace” and the end of the “Troubles” are the major pluses of living here.

It is the same for the individual council areas, where in virtually all cases things have improved over the last couple of years. The councillors in Derry in particular have noticed great improvements in the City in the last decade with the shops, restaurants, nightlife all improving beyond recognition, in tandem with greater neighbourhood renewal and urban regeneration schemes.

The negative associations with Northern Ireland, apart from the weather, are that there are still some areas where sectarianism and paramilitary activity is common place, while in some particular areas councillors highlighted drugs, student unrest, house prices, anti-social behaviour and limited job opportunities as causes for concern.

All councillors believe that it is safer living in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK and Ireland. This view has been formed by personal experience of living or visiting other places, from tourism statistics, or from reports in the media.

5.2.2. Crime – what is understood by the term?

Councillors spontaneously associate crime with burglaries, theft, attacks on the elderly, assault, murder, vandalism, anti-social behaviour, and car crime. They also see various levels of crime, ranging from the extremely serious to the much less serious.

Graffiti is seen as not as serious as the other crimes mentioned, although a number of councillors did say that it depends on the nature of the graffiti. If it is just someone writing their name on a wall this is seen as much less serious than sectarian or ethnically directed graffiti. The same point was made in relation to noise pollution in that it depends on the nature and the extent of it (e.g. one councillor compared noisy building work being conducted at a school to a 48 hour non-stop party in a built up residential area).

Attitudes to young people hanging around in gangs are mixed. To some councillors they are seen as the major perpetrators of the anti-social behaviour while others believe that the young people are causing no offence and just their very presence in a group is enough to lead some people to believe that they are up to no good and are causing trouble. This can lead to, as one councillor in Craigavon puts it, “demonising all teenagers”.

“99% of young people are dead on and not as bad as they’re made out to be, but there’s a perception. Peoples’ perception of young people is that if there’s three or four of them standing on a corner they’re up to no good or they’re doing drugs.”

(East Antrim DUP Councillor)

In many cases, again, it seems that the level of perceived crime is worse than the level of actual crime:

“90% of the time it (anti-social behaviour) is not crime, but it is the perception and the perception is ‘he’s annoying me, that’s against the law’, but I’m sorry, no it’s not.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

“I’ve had serious complaints about young people playing in their own streets, playing ball or whatever, but people saying they’re torturing them. I think kids have to play somewhere and if they’re playing in their own streets I don’t think that’s a crime.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

As society becomes more normalised these less serious crimes have taken on greater importance and significance and have become the focal point for many people as paramilitary type violence subsides.

5.2.3 Perceptions as to whether crime is increasing or decreasing

The majority of councillors believe that crime levels overall in both Northern Ireland as a whole and in their local council area have not really changed in the last 12 months, and indeed a number have stated that, numerically, crime levels have gone down. None of the councillors feel that overall crime levels have increased, but they do acknowledge that certain types of crime have increased. It is also widely asserted among the majority of councillors that the fear and perception of crime is worse than the reality.

While acknowledging there are some types of crime on the increase, others are decreasing, but the overall impact is that there has been little change.

“I think crime levels have stayed the same overall. I don’t think there’s been any rapid increase or decrease.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

For example, in the Craigavon area, a local councillor highlighted the increase in assaults and put this down to racist attacks on the Portuguese, Lithuanian and Polish communities. The SDLP councillor in Foyle has also noticed an increase in “hate crimes” against foreign nationals in terms of both verbal and physical abuse.

The Sinn Féin councillor in West Belfast has seen an increase in burglaries but a decrease in joyriding and other car-related crime.

“I’ve seen an increase in burglaries, especially ‘creeper’ burglaries, but the other sorts of stuff I think it has reduced definitely.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

His Sinn Féin colleague in Foyle believes that while in his area there has been a reduction in serious crime (murder and serious assaults), other “mundane, nuisance” crimes such as stealing cars, breaking into houses “hasn’t got any better”.

The UUP councillor from East Antrim believes that while crime overall in the area has reduced, burglary and car crime are increasing.

A number of the councillors pointed out a discrepancy between the actual crime statistics and perception in the community. They are aware that crime statistics in their areas have decreased, but the high publicity given to certain types of crime by the media can exacerbate the problem and build up the fear of crime, even if this is not backed up by the figures.

“The ad campaigns that the police have run to say how crime has been coming down for some reason have still not resonated with the community who still have a greater fear of crime and perception of crime than the statistics would indicate.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

“I think there’s been a lot of robberies, especially of elderly people, but maybe that’s just the media portraying it. Because it’s more human interest they are reported by the media more and people are talking about them.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

“TV suggests that attacks on the elderly and burglaries on old people’s homes are on the increase but I don’t know if that’s the case because the press will highlight a lot of those incidents. Maybe they’re highlighting them because there’s less crime elsewhere and sometimes the press can give a bad perception and actually instill a fear factor within people so they think it’s worse than it actually is.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

5.2.4 Current reporting of crime

Both SDLP councillors strongly believe that crime reporting levels have significantly increased in the last couple of years among people in the Nationalist communities and that there has been a marked rise. The main reason is that there is increasing acceptance of, and growing confidence in the police that was not there previously.

“Slowly but surely the confidence is building again in the area. It’s not something that is switched on like a light but it certainly has been building. I certainly think it is because policing is less political than it was. The police used to be seen as more one-sided but I think that since Patten came in there have been moves in the right direction.”

(Armagh SDLP Councillor)

“I think there has been more people willing to report crime. I think because of the acceptance of policing structures, people are reporting it more now and it’s more openly talked about.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

“Back in the ‘Troubles’ people had more important things on their mind than crime. People were mostly worrying about the big things, about bomb scares and things like that, whereas in the last 10 years things have changed a lot and people have realised we’re living in a nice house, we’re earning a wee bit more money and in our society we do need the police and we do need protection and we need a police service that is answerable and accountable and that’s what they have now.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

While Sinn Féin councillors think that reporting levels will increase, they believe that any change in this respect will take time for people in their communities to trust the police enough to report crime to them, although one councillor acknowledged that he had already noticed some movement.

“I’m on many residents associations within the area and you will hear more and more times the police being mentioned, where going back a number of years ago they were never mentioned. So you’ll hear some people saying about the police or somebody contacting the police about certain issues.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

“Has reporting changed overnight since my party made that historic Ard Féis decision? Obviously not, and it won’t change overnight. It’s going to take time. It’s not going to happen overnight – it’s going to happen by degrees. Hopefully if you come back in 10 years time I hope we could report a bigger transformation of our society, but it’s early days yet.”

(Foyle Sinn Féin Councillor)

“Once we go onto the policing boards, if we do go onto the policing boards, that will tell you that we’ve got policing made more accountable and then we can advise and coax people instead of wrapping on my door at 2am then hopefully they could ring the police.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

Unionist councillors are more split about the reporting of crime to the police. Two councillors believe that reporting levels have gone up – the others that they have remained fairly consistent and there has been no real change.

The level of reporting crime to the police appears to depend on a number of factors. All councillors believe that most instances of serious crime would be reported to the police. Other types of crime are also reported to the police only out of necessity for insurance purposes (e.g. car theft, burglary etc.).

“Where I live, people will only report it if it’s on themselves and if they have to. If it’s for insurance purposes, if a car’s been stolen, or a house has been broken into, people will contact them because they have to.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

“If somebody has their car stolen people have no option but to phone the police up. If somebody’s house is broken into, they have no other option but to phone the police up for insurance purposes.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

“People need to report some crime for insurance purposes as opposed to any realistic expectations of a result.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

Most councillors believe that many of the more minor crimes are still unreported as they are not seen as serious enough to be burdening police with.

“I do think more people are reporting car crime and house theft, whereas I don’t know if everybody would report a Saturday night assault.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

Some of the councillors feel that minor crimes are being reported more now than they used to be during the “Troubles” as before they were not deemed important enough to report, especially compared to other types of crime going on at the time.

“In the past minor crimes wouldn’t have been reported whereas now there are more people reporting a crime and that affects your figures as well.”

(Armagh SDLP Councillor)

“(During the ‘Troubles’) I don’t believe a lot of the anti-social activity that happened before was reported and now it is. Normalisation has created ‘normal’ issues. People aren’t being killed, murdered, or maimed, so therefore the smaller issues are more prominent in peoples’ minds.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

“I do think they’re more and more phoning the police about minor crimes.”

(East Antrim DUP Councillor)

The level of reporting crime to the police is also affected by the likelihood of a successful resolution. Many of the councillors think that people will not report a lot of crime (especially minor crime) as they do not believe that there will be a successful conviction or resolution, so apathy takes hold. Linked to this are the person’s past experiences – for example if they have reported a crime before and the police have not responded promptly or efficiently, this will make them question whether it is worthwhile to report future crimes.

“You would hear a lot of people say what’s the point of reporting it to the police when there’s never anything done about it.”

(Coleraine DUP Councillor)

“On most occasions if people have contacted the police nothing has been done. There are people committing the same crimes on a regular basis, but there’s nothing being done about them and they’re not being arrested.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

“There’s a massive cynicism in the reporting of crime. People look at the possibility of an outcome and where there’s viewed to be a minor or no possibility of a result, or of getting a prosecution or your property back, a lot of the perception is ‘well, what’s the point?’”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

“People don’t see the point because the last time they reported a crime nothing was done about it.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

The level of crime reporting is also affected to a large degree by the area the person is from and Councillors acknowledge that reporting can vary greatly depending on the area. There are certain areas in their locales where there is mistrust and where people still do not have confidence in the police and as a result will not feel comfortable reporting incidents of crime. This is particularly true in staunchly Loyalist or Republican areas. This, they believe, will take a long period of time to overcome.

“Many crimes are not reported to the police here because there are people in this area (Bogside/Brandywell) that have a massive, massive mistrust of the PSNI.”

(Foyle Sinn Féin Councillor)

“The reporting of crime to the police varies massively depending on the area. My sister who lives in Mount Vernon is equally unlikely to give evidence and information to the police as somebody in a nationalist controlled area. So I think that working class problems with the police are still alive and kicking on both sides of the community.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

“The confidence in the police is going up gradually but it’s not totally there, especially in certain areas. In Macedon and Rathcoole it’s not there yet and there is resentment and confidence is low.”

(East Antrim DUP Councillor)

“The people who report it would always have reported it and I think unfortunately the people who wouldn’t, still don’t. That’s the challenge.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

Fear of the consequences or reprisals is another common reason why many people, in certain areas, do not report crime and this has a major impact on reporting levels.

“Reporting wouldn’t happen in certain estates because of fear in and around the estates where paramilitary groups would be involved.”

(East Antrim DUP Councillor)

“They may be told they are an informer or a tout or that they are betraying their neighbours.”

(Foyle Sinn Féin Councillor)

“In some areas there is still the fear of what the paramilitaries will do if the police are seen calling at your door.”

(East Antrim UUP Councillor)

One councillor believes that reporting has increased as it is easier to report crime now over the phone and also that they can remain anonymous if they want to via Crimestoppers.

5.2.5 General attitudes to the Police

Attitudes to policing and confidence in the police among the councillors are mixed by area and by political party affiliation.

Over half of the councillors feel that the police service has improved over the last couple of years. A number of reasons are given to support this view. Firstly, the police are seen as being more approachable and less stand-offish by some.

“You can go and talk to them now.”

(Coleraine DUP Councillor)

“In the first few months people would have roared insults at them, whereas it’s now accepted and people have a bit of banter with them and you see more people standing and talking to them.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

“The PSNI have tried to be more accessible to the people and I think people would think that they are now.”

(Coleraine UUP Councillor)

Some councillors also think that the police presence is more visible and they are getting more involved in their local community and going into areas they would not have went into previously.

“They go into schools and they run education programmes out in the community. So they’re actually getting involved in their local communities and getting to know the areas they’re policing.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

“Before in certain areas if you saw a police car outside someone’s house, you would have thought ‘God’, but now it’s just normal.”

(Foyle SDLP Councillor)

“Police officers can now go into areas where they have never been into before.”

(Craigavon DUP councillor)

“There are more bobbies on the beat and more community policing. The public have seen that and that’s had a positive impact and makes people feel safer.”

(East Antrim UUP councillor)

However, some of the councillors do feel that the police need to be even more involved in the community and build confidence with them.

“The police have come on leaps and bounds but there is still a distance between the police and the community and there is a bit to go.”

(Craigavon DUP councillor)

“There’s no need for 5 or 6 policemen sitting in Landrovers on interfaces any more, there’s a better way to deal with it.”

(Foyle SDLP councillor)

“Everybody thinks the police should be out of their cars more and on the beat.”

(Coleraine UUP councillor)

Two of the councillors believe the standard of police officers have improved.

“The standard of police officers have improved and they’re very professional.”

(East Antrim DUP councillor)

“The manner of policemen themselves has changed – they’re more caring now.”

(Coleraine UUP councillor)

There are mixed views as to whether confidence in the police has improved overall. This does depend to a large extent on the area. In some areas, councillors have noticed a marked increase in confidence in the police.

In other areas, this confidence has been less, and an acknowledgement that a lot of work still needs to be done, but there are signs that it will improve in the future. Confidence they feel will increase in certain areas by the police proving themselves to be impartial and able to deal with issues in a prompt and effective manner.

“Confidence in the police has increased to a certain extent but there’s a lot more confidence-building that they have to build up. They have to ensure they are impartial and they have to be accountable to the local communities. Until that, there will be that certain amount of mistrust within the community.”

(West Belfast Sinn Féin councillor)

“We’ve got the acceptance, now we need to build confidence. People will only build confidence when they or someone they know reports a crime and it’s dealt with in a prompt manner.”

(Foyle SDLP councillor)

The Sinn Féin councillors believe that Sinn Féin's support for policing will help to improve confidence in the police in Republican areas and this will increase further if the party decides to sit on the Policing Board.

"The support of Sinn Féin will definitely have an impact. That's not to say there aren't dissident voices because there are, but we have to try and convince them that this is the only way forward."

(Foyle Sinn Féin Councillor)

"I think a lot of people would take the lead from ourselves because they would know they would have a political party challenging the police on any decisions being made and so I think people would have a greater deal of confidence because people in the communities would know then that they wouldn't be allowed to get away with what they've got away with for many, many years."

(West Belfast Sinn Féin Councillor)

In other areas, the confidence in the police has always been reasonably high and there has not been a marked change. One DUP councillor had noted a downturn in confidence among the loyalist community as they believe the police have been used politically and this will be exacerbated if Gerry Kelly becomes responsible for policing.

5.3 Section 75 Depths

5.3.1 Living in Northern Ireland

Overall, Northern Ireland is perceived as being a safer place to live than other parts of the UK. Across the depth interviews, television is cited as the main method through which these perceptions are formed.

An exception to this is the Gay & Lesbian Community representative who, as a general citizen in Northern Ireland, feels safer living here than other parts of the UK or Ireland. However, as a gay man he feels that London, Manchester or other large cities in the UK are safer. The main reasons behind this are the perceived conservative society of Northern Ireland and the fact that there is a small gay community living here compared to other parts of the UK.

"Because it is perfectly acceptable for our politicians to go on TV and almost encourage homophobia and hate crime with their use of sodomite and their terminology whereas a politician in England would never get away with going on TV and referring to a black person using the 'N' word."

(Gay & Lesbian Community Representative)

5.3.2 Perceptions as to whether crime is increasing or decreasing

Among the depth respondents, opinion varies as to whether crime has increased or decreased in Northern Ireland in the last twelve months. In

general, participants are unsure as to whether there has been an actual increase in crime or just an increase in the level of crime reported.

“There has been an increase over the past two years in homophobic crime but is that because people are reporting it more or because there has been an actual increase? It’s hard to say.”

(Gay & Lesbian Community Representative)

“I think it fluctuates. I think people are paying more attention to the issue so people feel like there’s an increase, whereas I think we’re not actually getting a full picture of what’s going on.”

(Minority Ethnic Community Representative)

There are two contradicting views raised through the course of the depth interviews. In general, the representative from RNID feels that robberies and crime against older people has increased in the last twelve months, although this notion was subsequently refuted during the Age Concern depth.

“The number of crimes against older people is on the decrease.”

(Senior Citizens’ Community Representative)

5.3.3 Current reporting of crime

Despite the perception that confidence in the police is increasing, the current level of reporting crime to the police is viewed as being relatively low at an overall level. However, this is starting to change and the feeling is that there has been an increase in crime being reported to the police among the respective groups in the last few years.

Despite the perception that there is an increase in reported crime among the Section 75 groups interviewed, this increase is not necessarily perceived to be as a result of increased confidence as crime is not always reported directly to the police. Rather, the alternative methods through which crime can now be reported to the police without going directly to them are perceived to be largely responsible for the increase in reporting.

Most of the organisations contacted hold the function of an advisory role and as such have no direct part in reporting crime to the police. The exception to this is the Rainbow Project who act as an intermediary in the reporting process. This is felt to impact on the levels of crime reported among the gay community as gay men who have been subject to crime are more likely to approach an organisation such as the Rainbow Project rather than go directly to the police. This is due to feeling intimidated at the thought of going to a police station and the perception that they will be treated differently because they are gay.

“The gay organisations have made an agreement with the police that they will act as a third party reporter and I think that people in that sort of circumstance are a lot more comfortable about coming into the Rainbow Project and asking us to fill out a hate crime incident form and faxing it through to their local branch (police). Or where we have set up

three way meetings between ourselves, the police and the victim. People feel much more comfortable about doing that rather than walking into a police station.”

(Gay & Lesbian Community Representative)

The main reasons given for the reluctance of the gay community to go directly to the police are that the person in question has not come ‘out’ to their family or their wife, they are unsure of the reporting process and what it involves, or a fear of how they will be treated by the police due to their sexuality.

“Because we (NI) have a mistrust of the police, that mistrust is exacerbated if you are gay because there is a huge reluctance from people in the gay community to work with the police...because of the perception that it is a homophobic institution.”

(Gay & Lesbian Community Representative).

Similarly, there is a feeling among the gay community that a certain degree of homophobia is ‘acceptable’ and is to be expected. This perception is based on the findings of ‘An Acceptable Prejudice’ by the Institute for Conflict Research which found that the majority of people in Northern Ireland believe that homophobia is an acceptable form of prejudice.

Among the minority ethnic groups, how the police are perceived in their home country is felt to bear heavily on how policing in Northern Ireland is perceived which will effect whether or not crime is reported. In instances such as this crime may be reported via a community representative.

“There is still a feeling that you are in that area and you’d be better to report it to someone who is a community leader rather than a police officer.”

(Minority Ethnic Community Representative)

Whereas in the past, members of the deaf community were more likely to report crime to a hearing family member or friend, increased contact with the police through the various initiatives mentioned earlier and an increase in access have improved the likelihood of them reporting crime.

“We have an emergency scheme where we can send a text message directly to the police or an emergency number to the police where they will come straight away.”

(Disabled Community Representative)

Other initiatives mentioned for reporting crime to the police without going directly to them are: Project RIOH (gay community) and the Third Person Pilot Reporting Project (minority ethnic) both of which took place in South Belfast.

Factors that Deter Reporting

5.3.4 Reasons for Not Reporting Crime

Among the Section 75 groups there are varying reasons as to why crime may have gone unreported in the past. The “Troubles” played a factor on differing levels both in terms of the perception that resources were concentrated on dealing with sectarianism and also the aversion to dealing with the RUC according to religious and political belief. Although overall depth participants feel that there has been an increase in reporting there is a feeling that there is still a large amount of crime that remains unreported. Along with factors that are specific to certain Section 75 groups, old perceptions and political beliefs are also thought to play a part in why crimes go unreported.

“Just because people are older, if they have certain attitudes towards the police they’re not going to change just because they turn 65.”

(Senior Citizens’ Community Representative)

A lack of access for minority ethnic groups and the deaf community in the past prevented them from reporting crime.

“There was a lack of ways..for example text phones, and for those that didn’t have a textphone, it was difficult for them to make a telephone call.”

(Disabled Community Representative)

Past experience of reporting and nothing being done is another reason given for non-reporting. This was particularly the case among the older community and minority ethnic communities for whom a lack of action from police could have a knock on effect in terms of reporting for the wider community.

“If someone reports a crime and nothing happens they tell everybody.”

(Senior Citizens’ Community Representative)

“If they have a bad experience with the police, well that can be all it takes to have that entire community to be shut down and not communicate at all.”

(Minority Ethnic Community Representative)

The feeling that nothing will be done by the police and the perceived hassle in reporting a crime is another key deterrent for people. What effect this can have on people’s attitudes to reporting was highlighted during the interview with the representative from the gay and lesbian community. Part of his role is to advise and encourage people to report any homophobic incidents to the police yet he himself would not report every incident because of the hassle involved.

“I know that it has happened to me (verbal abuse) and I would never think of going to the police and reporting something like that...I wouldn’t be bothered with the hassle of picking up the phone..I think it is the

embarrassment of picking up the phone and saying that someone is calling you names.”

(Gay & Lesbian Community Representative)

There is variation in the types of crime that are more likely to be reported. In general, verbal abuse would not be reported whereas with more serious crime such as physical attack, people are more inclined to report.

5.3.5 General attitudes to the Police

Overall, confidence in policing is beginning to increase. Each of the depth participants mentioned initiatives taken by the police to build relations with their particular group that has helped confidence. The introduction of minority liaison officers were mentioned by both the Gay & Lesbian community representative and the Disabled community representative as being a positive factor in building confidence in the police. For the deaf community in Derry, Glengormley and Bangor there are Police liaison officers for the deaf community (PLOD) while involvement with community safety groups for older people was mentioned by the representative from Age Concern.

A key point in relation to the older community is that this relationship with the police is fragile and dependant on continuing participation in advisory groups and other schemes which have often stalled in the past or been dropped without explanation.

“The downside for older people is that if they get dropped enough times they just won’t pick it up again.”

(Senior Citizens’ Community Representative)

Across the depth participants it is felt that the change from the RUC to the PSNI also had a large part to play in starting to increase public confidence. The PSNI are perceived as being more about ‘community policing’ rather than the ‘terrorist policing’ of the RUC. This point is of particular importance to the gay community who saw the RUC as a predominantly male-dominated institution that held prejudices towards the gay community.

“The gay community saw the RUC as being extremely homophobic and would have countless stories of how they were subjected to huge amounts of homophobia and discrimination.....whereas the PSNI has this much softer appearance where it is community policing.”

(Gay & Lesbian Community Representative)

5.4 Conclusions

Like the quantitative research, the results from the qualitative are relatively consistent. It is clear that while Northern Ireland is perceived very positively by respondents, there is a common perception among all groups that crime is on the increase. There appears to be reluctance among all groups to attribute the increase in recorded crime to increased reporting. Nonetheless, both the general public and elected representatives are consistent in the assertion that Sinn Féin's decision to support policing structures in Northern Ireland will improve levels of co-operation and confidence in the police in Catholic communities, in the long term, if not immediately.

The other main finding from the qualitative research is that there is a general perception across all groups that perceptions and experiences of crime have become 'normalised' in recent years. That is, that certain incidents that would have been considered trivial previously are now considered sufficiently serious to report to the police. There is also a perception that other criminal incidents or activities, particularly anti-social behaviour, which may traditionally have been suppressed or discouraged by the presence of paramilitaries in particular communities, have been increasing in direct proportion to the decrease of paramilitary activity in these communities.

Before, paramilitary influence and fear of repercussions led to suppressing levels of crime reporting. While the indications are that paramilitary influence is still prevalent in certain areas and still does deter reporting, as time goes by and this influence becomes less and less, all indications are that this will lead to less fear of reporting crimes to the police.

Evidence from the research would point to the fact that increased crime reporting from areas with a traditionally strong paramilitary influence may therefore be a good indicator of increased support for the police.

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Appendices


- **General public Omnibus questionnaire**
- **Targeted areas questionnaire**
- **Focus groups topic guide**
- **Elected representatives topic guide**
- **Section 75 representatives topic guide**

GENERAL PUBLIC OMNIBUS QUESTIONNAIRE

And now some questions about the area where you live.

		Q16a Own area	Q16b NI
Q16a	Over the last year, do you think that crime in your area has...?	Increased a lot	5
		Increased a little	4
		Stayed the same	3
		Decreased a little	2
		Decreased a lot	1
		Don't know/Not sure	99

READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES

Q16b And over the last year, do you think that crime **in Northern Ireland as a whole** has... 

READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES

Q17	Over the last year, do you think that the fear of crime in your area - that is the extent to which people are frightened that they might be affected by a crime - has...?	Increased a lot	5
		Increased a little	4
		Stayed the same	3
		Decreased a little	2
		Decreased a lot	1
		Don't know/Not sure	99

READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES

Q18a	Are you more likely to report crimes to the police now than this time last year?	Yes	1	Go to Q18b
		No	2	Go to Q18b
		Don't Know	99	Go to Q19a

SINGLE CODE

Q18b Why do you say this?

**ASK ALL
SHOWCARD 19**

Q19a Thinking about **this time last year** how likely would you have been to report each of the following to the police?

(READ OUT EACH STATEMENT – TICK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH)

<i>Rotate Tick Start</i>		Very likely	Quite likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	DON'T KNOW	NOT APPLICABLE
	Burglary	4	3	2	1	99	
	Mugging	4	3	2	1	99	
	Physical attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Race or sectarian attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Rape	4	3	2	1	99	
	Insulted or pestered	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft from a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Graffiti on your property	4	3	2	1	99	
	Gangs hanging around near your home	4	3	2	1	99	
	Excessive noise from neighbours	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a personal possession eg mobile phone	4	3	2	1	99	
	Damage to the outside of your home or car	4	3	2	1	99	

SHOWCARD 19 AGAIN

Q19b And thinking about **now** how likely would you be to report each of the following to the police?

(READ OUT EACH STATEMENT – TICK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH)

<i>Rotate Tick Start</i>		Very likely	Quite likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	DON'T KNOW	NOT APPLICABLE
	Burglary	4	3	2	1	99	
	Mugging	4	3	2	1	99	
	Physical attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Race or sectarian attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Rape	4	3	2	1	99	
	Insulted or pestered	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft from a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Graffiti on your property	4	3	2	1	99	
	Gangs hanging around near your home	4	3	2	1	99	
	Excessive noise from neighbours	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a personal possession eg mobile phone	4	3	2	1	99	
	Damage to the outside of your home or car	4	3	2	1	99	

If a change in answers between this time last year and now (Q19a and Q19b) ask:

Q19c Why would you be more or less likely to report this to the police now compared to this time last year?

Q20a Are you more or less likely or just the same to report crimes to the police in the future?
SINGLE CODE

A lot more likely	1	Go to Q20b
A little more likely	2	Go to Q20b
Just the same	3	Go to Q21a
A little less likely	4	Go to 20b
A lot less likely	5	Go to 20b
Don't know	99	Go to 21a

Q20b Why do you say this?

ASK ALL

Q21a Have you been a victim of crime in the last year?

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	Go to Q21b
No	2	Go to Q24a
Refused	3	Go to Q24a

Q21b What type(s) of crime were you a victim of in the last year?

<i>Rotate Tick Start</i>		Q21b type of crime victim of	Q21c Yes	Q21c No
	Burglary	1	1	2
	Mugging	2	1	2
	Physical attack	3	1	2
	Race or sectarian attack	4	1	2
	Rape	5	1	2
	Insulted or pestered	6	1	2
	Theft of a car	7	1	2
	Theft from a car	8	1	2
	Graffiti on your property	9	1	2
	Gangs hanging around near your home	10	1	2
	Excessive noise from neighbours	11	1	2
	Theft of a personal possession eg mobile phone	12	1	2
	Damage to the outside of your home or car	13	1	2

Q21c For each type of crime mentioned at Q21b ask. Did you report the crime to the police?

CODE EITHER YES OR NO ABOVE

IF NO CODED TO ANY RESPONSE AT Q21C

Q21d Why did you not report the crime to the police?
DO NOT PROMPT PROBE TO PRECODES MULTICODE ALL THAT APPLY

Private / personal / family matter	1
Dealt with matter myself	2
Reported to other authorities Please specify _____	3
Dislike/fear of police	4
Fear of reprisal by offenders/make matters worse	5
Police could have done nothing	6
Police would not have bothered/not been interested	7
Inconvenient/too much trouble	8
No loss/damage	9
Attempt at offence was unsuccessful	10
Too trivial/not worth reporting	11
Previous bad experience of the police or courts	12
Other people in your community discouraged you	13
You don't support the current policing system	14
Other (please state)	15

Q22a Did you report it to anyone else?

Yes	1	Go to Q22b
No	2	Go to Q23a
Refused	3	Go to Q23a

Q22b If yes who did you report it to?

ASK IF VICTIM OF CRIME AT Q21A AND REPORTED TO POLICE – YES AT Q21B. OTHERS GO TO Q24A

Q23a How satisfied were you with how the PSNI **kept you informed of developments during the investigation?**

SINGLE CODE

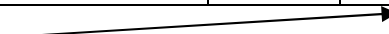
	Q23a Informed	Q23b Dealt with
Very satisfied	5	5
Quite satisfied	4	4
Neither	3	3
Fairly dissatisfied	2	2
Very dissatisfied	1	1
Don't know/Not sure	99	99

Q23b And how satisfied were you with how the PSNI **dealt with the incident?**

ASK ALL

Q24a Before Sinn Fein’s recent decision to support policing in Northern Ireland, how supportive were you of the police (PSNI)?

	Q24a Before	Q24b Today
Very supportive	5	5
Fairly supportive	4	4
Neither	3	3
Fairly unsupportive	2	2
Very unsupportive	1	1
Don’t know	99	99

Q24b And how supportive are you of the police (PSNI) today? 

READ OUT

ASK ALL

Q25a Compared with this time last year, how confident are you personally in the police (PSNI)?

A lot more confident	5
A little more confident	4
Just the same	3
A little less confident	2
A lot less confident	1
Don’t know	99

Q25b Why do you say this?

ASK ALL

SHOWCARD 26

Q26 How much confidence do you have in the police’s (PSNI) ability to deal with the following policing activities?

(READ OUT EACH STATEMENT – TICK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH)

Rotate Tick Start		Total confidence	A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Not very much confidence	No confidence	Don't know/ Not sure
	Provide an ordinary day to day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland	5	4	3	2	1	99
	deal with public disorder situations such as riots	5	4	3	2	1	99
	deal with terrorist activity	5	4	3	2	1	99
	beat/foot patrolling	5	4	3	2	1	99
	crime prevention	5	4	3	2	1	99
	bringing offenders to justice	5	4	3	2	1	99
	improving clearance rates	5	4	3	2	1	99
	investigating crime	5	4	3	2	1	99

ASK ALL

Q27 Compared with this time last year, do you think there is increased confidence in the police (PSNI) from certain parts of the community?

Yes	1	Go to Q28
No	2	Go to classification
Don't know/ Not sure	99	

SINGLE CODE**SHOWCARD 28**

Q28 From which parts of the community do you think there is increased confidence?

Republican	1
Nationalist	2
Unionist	3
Loyalist	4
Other (please specify)	5

Don't know/Not sure	99

MULTICODE ALL THAT APPLY

TARGETED AREAS QUESTIONNAIRE

And now some questions about the area where you live.

		Q1a Own area	Q1b NI
Q1a	Over the last year, do you think that crime in your area has...?	Increased a lot	5
		Increased a little	4
		Stayed the same	3
		Decreased a little	2
		Decreased a lot	1
		Don't know/Not sure	99
READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES			

Q1b And over the last year, do you think that crime **in Northern Ireland as a whole** has...

READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES

Q2	Over the last year, do you think that the fear of crime in your area - that is the extent to which people are frightened that they might be affected by a crime - has...?	Increased a lot	5
		Increased a little	4
		Stayed the same	3
		Decreased a little	2
		Decreased a lot	1
		Don't know/Not sure	99
READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES			

Q3a	Are you more likely to report crimes to the police now than this time last year? SINGLE CODE	Yes	1	Go to Q3b
		No	2	Go to Q3b
		Don't Know	3	Go to Q4a

Q3b Why do you say this?

**ASK ALL
SHOWCARD 4**

Q4a Thinking about **this time last year** how likely would you have been to report each of the following to the police?

(READ OUT EACH STATEMENT – TICK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH)

<i>Rotate Tick Start</i>		Very likely	Quite likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	DON'T KNOW	NOT APPLICABLE
	Burglary	4	3	2	1	99	
	Mugging	4	3	2	1	99	
	Physical attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Race or sectarian attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Rape	4	3	2	1	99	
	Insulted or pestered	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft from a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Graffiti on your property	4	3	2	1	99	
	Gangs hanging around near your home	4	3	2	1	99	
	Excessive noise from neighbours	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a personal possession eg mobile phone	4	3	2	1	99	
	Damage to the outside of your home or car	4	3	2	1	99	

SHOWCARD 4 AGAIN

Q4b And thinking about **now** how likely would you be to report each of the following to the police?

(READ OUT EACH STATEMENT – TICK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH)

<i>Rotate Tick Start</i>		Very likely	Quite likely	Not very likely	Not at all likely	DON'T KNOW	NOT APPLICABLE
	Burglary	4	3	2	1	99	
	Mugging	4	3	2	1	99	
	Physical attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Race or sectarian attack	4	3	2	1	99	
	Rape	4	3	2	1	99	
	Insulted or pestered	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft from a car	4	3	2	1	99	
	Graffiti on your property	4	3	2	1	99	
	Gangs hanging around near your home	4	3	2	1	99	
	Excessive noise from neighbours	4	3	2	1	99	
	Theft of a personal possession eg mobile phone	4	3	2	1	99	
	Damage to the outside of your home or car	4	3	2	1	99	

If a change in answers between this time last year and now (Q4a and Q4b) ask:

Q4c Why would you be more or less likely to report this to the police now compared to this time last year?

Q5a Are you more or less likely or just the same to report crimes to the police in the future?
SINGLE CODE

A lot more likely	1	Go to Q5b
A little more likely	2	Go to Q5b
Just the same	3	Go to Q6a
A little less likely	4	Go to 5b
A lot less likely	5	Go to 5b
Don't know	99	Go to 6a

Q5b Why do you say this?

ASK ALL

Q6a Have you been a victim of crime in the last year?

SINGLE CODE

Yes	1	Go to Q6b
No	2	Go to Q9a
Refused	3	Go to Q9a

Q6b What type(s) of crime were you a victim of in the last year?

<i>Rotate Tick Start</i>	Q6b type of crime victim of	Q6c Yes	Q6c No
	Burglary	1	2
	Mugging	2	2
	Physical attack	3	2
	Race or sectarian attack	4	2
	Rape	5	2
	Insulted or pestered	6	2
	Theft of a car	7	2
	Theft from a car	8	2
	Graffiti on your property	9	2
	Gangs hanging around near your home	10	2
	Excessive noise from neighbours	11	2
	Theft of a personal possession eg mobile phone	12	2
	Damage to the outside of your home or car	13	2
	Other please specify.....	14	2

Q6c For each type of crime mentioned at Q6b ask. Did you report the crime to the police?

CODE EITHER YES OR NO ABOVE



IF NO CODED TO ANY RESPONSE AT Q6C

<p>Q6d Why did you not report the crime to the police? DO NOT PROMPT PROBE TO PRECODES MULTICODE ALL THAT APPLY</p>	Private / personal / family matter	1
	Dealt with matter myself	2
	Reported to other authorities Please specify _____	3
	Dislike/fear of police	4
	Fear of reprisal by offenders/make matters worse	5
	Police could have done nothing	6
	Police would not have bothered/not been Interested	7
	Inconvenient/too much trouble	8
	No loss/damage	9
	Attempt at offence was unsuccessful	10
	Too trivial/not worth reporting	11
	Previous bad experience of the police or courts	12
	Other people in your community discouraged you	13
	You don't support the current policing system	14
	Other (please state)	15

Q7a Did you report it to anyone else?

Yes	1	Go to Q7b
No	2	Go to Q8a
Refused	3	Go to Q8a

Q7b If yes who did you report it to?

ASK IF VICTIM OF CRIME AT Q6A AND REPORTED TO POLICE – YES AT Q6B. OTHERS GO TO Q9A

	Q8a Informed	Q8b Dealt with
Q8a How satisfied were you with how the PSNI kept you informed of developments during the investigation?		
Very satisfied	5	5
Quite satisfied	4	4
Neither	3	3
Fairly dissatisfied	2	2
Very dissatisfied	1	1
SINGLE CODE	99	99

Q8b And how satisfied were you with how the PSNI **dealt with the incident?**

ASK ALL

Q9a Before Sinn Fein’s recent decision to support policing in Northern Ireland, how supportive were you of the police (PSNI)?

	Q9a Before	Q9b Today
Very supportive	5	5
Fairly supportive	4	4
Neither	3	3
Fairly unsupportive	2	2
Very unsupportive	1	1
Don’t know	99	99

Q9b And how supportive are you of the police today (PSNI)?

READ OUT

ASK ALL

Q10a Compared with this time last year, how confident are you personally in the police (PSNI)?

A lot more confident	5
A little more confident	4
Just the same	3
A little less confident	2
A lot less confident	1
Don’t know	99

Q10b Why do you say this?

ASK ALL

SHOWCARD 11

Q11 How much confidence do you have in the police’s (PSNI) ability to deal with the following policing activities?

(READ OUT EACH STATEMENT – TICK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH)

Rotate Tick Start		Total confidence	A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Not very much confidence	No confidence	Don’t know/ Not sure
	Provide an ordinary day to day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland	5	4	3	2	1	99
	deal with public disorder situations such as riots	5	4	3	2	1	99
	deal with terrorist activity	5	4	3	2	1	99
	beat/foot patrolling	5	4	3	2	1	99
	crime prevention	5	4	3	2	1	99
	bringing offenders to justice	5	4	3	2	1	99
	improving clearance rates	5	4	3	2	1	99
	investigating crime	5	4	3	2	1	99

ASK ALL

Q12 Compared with this time last year, do you think there is increased confidence in the police (PSNI) from certain parts of the community?

Yes	1	Go to Q13
No	2	Go to Q14
Don't know/Not sure	3	Go to Q14

SINGLE CODE**SHOWCARD 13**

Q13 From which parts of the community do you think there is increased confidence?

Republican	1
Nationalist	2
Unionist	3
Loyalist	4
Other (please specify) _____	5

Don't know/Not sure	6

MULTICODE ALL THAT APPLY**ASK ALL****SHOWCARD 14**

Q14 From this card, what is your community background? **(Do not read categories)**

Catholic	1
Protestant	2
Muslim	3
Jewish	4
Other (specify) _____	5
Refused	99

NOTE: If respondent says "Christian," PROBE: "Is that Protestant or Catholic?"

ASK TO ALL AGED 18 PLUS**SHOWCARD 15**

Q15 And finally, from this card, which political party are you most likely to give your first preference vote in the forthcoming election? **SINGLE CODE ONLY**

DUP	1
Sinn Fein	2
UUP	3
SDLP	4
Alliance	5
PUP	6
Other (specify) _____	7
Do not intend to vote	8
Refused	9

FOCUS GROUPS TOPIC GUIDE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION (MODERATOR)

- Welcome and introduction
- Outline of format of evening
- Audio and video recordings (where appropriate)
- Assurances of confidentiality/anonymity

General discussion on living in Northern Ireland and specifically their local area

- Positives and negatives of living in Northern Ireland
- Perceptions as to what has got better/worse over the last 5 years/last year
- Positives and negatives of living in their local area
- Perceptions as to what has got better/worse over the last 5 years/last year
- Views as to whether it is safer living in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK and Ireland. PROBE as to what is influencing their opinions – media, word of mouth etc.

Attitudes to crime generally

- General discussion as to what people associate with the word **crime**.
- Spontaneous associations
- Prompt with examples such as criminal damage e.g. graffiti, damage to outside of property, anti-social behaviour, noise etc. Are these considered to be “crimes”?
- Perceptions as to whether there has been an increase or decrease in levels of crime in **Northern Ireland** in the last few years & last 12 months
- Perceptions as to whether there has been an increase or decrease in levels of crime in their **local area** in the last 12 months?
- Specific types of crime perceived to have increased/decreased in Northern Ireland as a whole and in local area. Probe fully for crimes against the person, the elderly vehicle crime, burglary etc.
- Perceptions re reasons underlying these trends?

General attitudes to reporting crime

- Extent to which crime is perceived to be reported to the police. Most of the time, some of the time, rarely?
- Focus on different types of crime. Are there reporting differences depending on whether it is crime against a person, vehicle crime, burglary etc., graffiti, anti-social behaviour etc?
- Exploration of factors that prevent/deter reporting of crime.
- Has the situation re the reporting of crime to the police changed? If so since when? And how & why?
- What has brought about this change?
- Has the change been across all types of crime or only with specific types? PROBE as to why.
- Has the change been across all geographical areas or only in certain areas? PROBE as to why.
- **If an increase in crime reporting change reported.** What would have prevented people from reporting crime before?

General attitudes to policing

- Perceptions as to whether policing has improved across Northern Ireland in general and specifically in their local area/ in the last 12 months?
- PROBE for factors influencing these opinions.
- Has confidence in policing improved? How/in what ways?
- **If confidence in policing is reported to have improved;**
- When did this change start to take place? (It is important to establish with the Republican communities whether this has just been as a result of the recent Sinn Féin support or whether it was longer ago).
- Has this led to an increase in the reporting of crime?
- **Republican communities only** Will recent Sinn Fein support lead to further increases in the reporting of crime? PROBE FULLY – To what extent, when - at what stage/time, what types of crime etc.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES TOPIC GUIDE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- Thanks and introduction
- Background to the interview
- Audio recording
- Assurances of confidentiality/anonymity

General discussion on living in Northern Ireland and specifically their local council area

- Positives and negatives of living in Northern Ireland
- Perceptions as to what has got better/worse over the last 5 years/last year
- Positives and negatives of living in their local council area
- Perceptions as to what has got better/worse over the last 5 years/last year
- Views as to whether it is safer living in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK and Ireland. PROBE as to what is influencing their opinions – media, word of mouth etc.

Attitudes to crime generally

- General discussion as to what they associate with the word **crime**.
- Spontaneous associations
- Prompt with examples such as criminal damage e.g. graffiti, damage to outside of property, anti-social behaviour, noise etc. Are these considered to be “crimes”?
- Perceptions as to whether there has been an increase or decrease in levels of crime in **Northern Ireland** in the last few years & last 12 months
- Perceptions as to whether there has been an increase or decrease in levels of crime in their **local council area** in the last 12 months?
- Specific types of crime perceived to have increased/decreased in Northern Ireland as a whole and in local council area. Probe fully for crimes against the person, the elderly, vehicle crime, burglary etc.
- Perceptions re reasons underlying these trends?

General attitudes to reporting crime

- Extent to which they perceive crime to be reported to the police. Most of the time, some of the time, rarely?
- Focus on different types of crime. Do they think that there are reporting differences depending on whether it is a crime against a person, vehicle crime, burglary etc., graffiti, anti-social behaviour etc?
- Exploration of factors that they perceive to prevent/deter reporting of crime to the police.
- Do they think that the situation re the reporting of crime to the police changed? If so since when? And how & why?
- What do they think has brought about this change? Has the change been across all types of crime or only with specific types? PROBE as to why.
- Has the change been across all geographical areas or only in certain areas? PROBE as to why.
- **If they think there has been an increase in crime reporting change reported.** What would have prevented people from reporting crime to the police before?

General attitudes to policing

- Perceptions as to whether they think that policing has improved across Northern Ireland in general and specifically in their local area/ in the last 12 months?
- PROBE for factors influencing these opinions.
- Has confidence in policing improved amongst people in their local area? How/in what ways?
- **If confidence in policing is reported to have improved;**
- When did this change start to take place? (It is important to establish with the Republican councillors whether this has just been as a result of the recent Sinn Féin support or whether it was longer ago).
- Has this led to an increase in the reporting of crime to the police?
- **Republican councillors only** Will recent Sinn Fein support lead to further increases in the reporting of crime to the police? PROBE FULLY – To what extent, when - at what stage/time, what types of crime etc.

SECTION 75 REPRESENTATIVES TOPIC GUIDE

Introduction from moderator

- Outline of format of interview
- Audio recording
- Assurances of confidentiality/anonymity

Introduction from interviewee

- Background and position in relation to group representing
- Length of time in position
- Role and responsibilities

General discussion on living in Northern Ireland and specifically their local area

- Positives and negatives of living in Northern Ireland
- Perceptions as to what has got better/worse over the last 5 years/last year
- Positives and negatives of living in their local area
- Perceptions as to what has got better/worse over the last 5 years/last year

PROBE SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO GROUP REPRESENTED

- Views as to whether it is safer living in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK and Ireland. PROBE as to what is influencing their opinions – media, word of mouth etc.

Attitudes to crime generally

- General discussion as to what people associate with the word **crime**.
- Spontaneous associations
- Prompt with examples such as criminal damage e.g. graffiti, damage to outside of property, anti-social behaviour, noise etc. Are these considered to be “crimes”?

PROBE SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO GROUP REPRESENTED

- Perceptions as to whether there has been an increase or decrease in levels of crime in **Northern Ireland** in the last few years & last 12 months
- Perceptions as to whether there has been an increase or decrease in levels of crime in their **local area** in the last 12 months?
- Specific types of crime perceived to have increased/decreased in Northern Ireland as a whole and in local area. Probe fully for crimes against the person, the elderly vehicle crime, burglary etc.
- Perceptions re reasons underlying these trends?

General attitudes to reporting crime

PROBE SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO GROUP REPRESENTED

- Extent to which crime is perceived to be reported to the police. Most of the time, some of the time, rarely?
- Focus on different types of crime. Are there reporting differences depending on whether it is crime against a person, vehicle crime, burglary etc., graffiti, anti-social behaviour etc?
- Exploration of factors that prevent/deter reporting of crime.
- Has the situation re the reporting of crime to the police changed by group represented. If so since when? And how & why?

- What has brought about this change?
- Has the change been across all types of crime or only with specific types? PROBE as to why.
- Has the change been across all geographical areas or only in certain areas? PROBE as to why.
- **If an increase in crime reporting change reported.** What would have prevented people from reporting crime before?

General attitudes to policing

- Perceptions as to whether policing has improved across Northern Ireland in general and specifically for the group represented in the last 12 months?
- PROBE for factors influencing these opinions.
- Has confidence in policing improved? How/in what ways?
- **If confidence in policing is reported to have improved;**
- When did this change start to take place? (It is important to establish with the Republican communities whether this has just been as a result of the recent Sinn Féin support or whether it was longer ago).
- Has this led to an increase in the reporting of crime?
- Will recent Sinn Fein support lead to further increases in the reporting of crime? PROBE FULLY – To what extent, when - at what stage/time, what types of crime etc.