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# COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY 2002

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD MODULE

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is an independent public body whose job it is to oversee policing in Northern Ireland. It was set up on 4 November 2001 as a result of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000. The Policing Board is not controlled by Government and has strong independent powers to carry out its work. The Policing Board consists of 19 Members, ten political members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and nine Independent Members appointed through open competition.

The main role of the Policing Board is to ensure that the Police Service of Northern Ireland are effective and efficient. The Policing Board holds the Chief Constable to account for all his actions and those of his staff. This means that the Chief Constable must answer to the Policing Board on any aspect of policing in Northern Ireland. However, the Policing Board cannot, and do not, direct or control the Chief Constable. He has the right to take independent policing decisions based only on the need to uphold law and order. This is called operational responsibility. But he must in turn answer for his actions to the Policing Board. This process is what effective accountability is all about.

Finding out what the community wants from their police service; what they think about the service that is delivered, and how it is performing, is vital if the Board is to carry out that role.

The Board must also keep itself informed as to:

- Trends and patterns in recruitment to the police and the police support staff; and
- The extent to which membership of the police and police support staff is representative of the community in Northern Ireland.

and assess:

- The effectiveness of measures taken to secure that the membership of the police service is representative of the community; and
- The level of public satisfaction with the performance of the police and the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs).

In order to gauge public satisfaction and consider the views of the public on policing, the Policing Board conducts a programme of consultation and research activities involving a range of groups and organisations. The results of this consultation and research are published by the Policing Board to ensure openness and transparency, and to advise the public of its findings.

## COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

The Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency was commissioned in 1992 by Criminal Justice Departments and Agencies and the Central Community Relations Unit to conduct a continuous survey of attitudes towards law and order issues. The survey is funded by the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the Northern Ireland Office and the Equality Unit of the Office of the First Minister/Deputy First Minister. The Community Attitudes Survey is an annual survey, with each year's information collected in a systematic way to enable any emerging trends to be identified.

The interviews are conducted over a twelve-month period with a representative sample of persons aged 16 and over living in Northern Ireland. Results from the Community Attitudes Survey are used by the Northern Ireland Policing Board to fulfil its responsibilities under Section 3(3)(d) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and to measure some targets set by the Board in the Annual Policing Plan.

This bulletin presents the findings from the tenth year of the Community Attitudes Survey (January 2002 - December 2002). Although the survey measures a broad range of attitudes towards crime, policing and the courts, this bulletin focuses on public attitudes towards the police and the Northern Ireland Policing Board. The survey had a response rate of 65%, yielding a total of 1430 respondents. Of these 1430 respondents, 791 (55%) were Protestant, 542 (38%) were Catholic and 97 (7%) said they were neither Protestant nor Catholic or refused to answer the question. The 97 respondents in this "other" category are included in the totals but there is no breakdown of this category due to survey protocol of not disclosing information on categories with less than 100 cases. Percentages in some tables may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

# RESULTS

## 1: PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE

### Q1: Please tell me how polite the police in your area are when dealing with ordinary policing problems?

Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) in 2002 thought that their local police were very/quite polite when dealing with ordinary policing problems compared to 74% in 2001 (Table 1). The proportion rating the politeness of local police as not very/not at all polite in 2002 was 6% an increase of 1 percentage point from 2001 (5%). Over three quarters of Protestants (79%) thought that the police are polite when dealing with ordinary policing problems in their locality (a fall of 1 percentage point from 2001) compared to 67% of Catholics (an increase of 2 percentage points from 2001).

**TABLE 1: Politeness of local police**

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/quite polite	69	82	76	68	76	73	65	80	74	67	79	73
Neither polite nor impolite	13	8	10	17	12	14	14	9	11	13	11	12
Not very/not at all polite	9	4	6	7	4	5	9	3	5	7	3	6
Don't know/refusal	8	7	7	9	8	9	13	8	10	13	7	10

### Q2: Please tell me how helpful the police in your area are when dealing with ordinary policing problems?

Over two thirds of respondents (69%) in 2002 thought that their local police were very/quite helpful when dealing with ordinary policing problems compared to 72% in 2001 (Table 2). The proportion rating the helpfulness of local police as not very/not at all helpful in 2002 was 10%, one percentage point higher than 2001 (9%). Just under three quarters of Protestants (73%) thought that the police are helpful when dealing with ordinary policing problems in their locality, a decrease of 4 percentage points from 2001. The proportion of Catholics who thought that the police are helpful when dealing with ordinary policing problems in their locality (63%) was identical for 2001 and 2002.

**TABLE 2: Helpfulness of local police**

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/quite helpful	67	81	75	63	75	71	63	77	72	63	73	69
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	12	7	9	11	10	10	10	9	9	12	10	11
Not very/not at all helpful	11	5	7	15	5	9	13	5	9	12	8	10
Don't know/refusal	10	8	9	11	9	10	14	8	11	13	8	11

### Q3: Would you say that the police deal fairly with everyone?

Under three quarters of respondents (71%) in 2002 thought that the police deal fairly with everyone compared to 72% in 2001 (Table 3). Just over three quarters of Protestants (78%) thought that the police deal fairly with everyone, a decrease of 5 percentage points from 2001 while the proportion of Catholics who thought that the police deal fairly with everyone increased from 57% in 2001 to 61% in 2002.

**TABLE 3: Fairness of police**

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	64	85	77	63	81	75	57	83	72	61	78	71
No	28	10	17	28	13	19	33	12	21	30	13	19
Don't know/refusal	8	5	6	8	6	7	9	5	7	9	9	9

### Q4: Taking everything into account, do you think that police in this area do a good job or a poor job?

Over two thirds of respondents (67%) in 2002 thought that their local police were doing a very/fairly good job compared to 69% in 2001 (Table 4). The proportion rating the police as doing a fairly/very poor job in 2002 was 15% an increase of 2 percentage points from 2001 (13%). Just over three quarters of Protestants (76%) thought that their local police were doing a very/fairly good job compared to 79% in 2001. The proportion of Catholics who thought that the police were doing a very/fairly good job increased from 55% in 2001 to 57% in 2002.

**TABLE 4: Do local police do a good job?**

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly good	63	81	73	58	79	72	55	79	69	57	76	67
Neither good nor poor	15	10	12	14	11	12	20	10	14	16	11	13
Fairly/very poor	19	7	12	23	7	14	21	8	13	22	10	15
Don't know/refusal	4	2	3	5	2	3	4	2	3	5	3	4

## 2: PUBLIC VIEWS ON POLICING PRIORITIES

### Q5: Which of the following, in your view, should receive most attention from the police in this area?

The following were highlighted as the issues which respondents believe should receive most attention from the police in their area: speeding (32%), burglary (14%), damage to property/vandalism (13%), drinking and driving and illegal drug use (both 9%). These issues were almost identical to those noted in the 2001 Community Attitudes Survey. A higher proportion of Protestants than Catholics thought that speeding, vandalism and burglary required most attention in their area whereas a higher percentage of Catholics than Protestants thought that theft of/from cars, drunk and disorderly people and drinking and driving required the most attention.

**TABLE 5: Issues which should receive most attention in your area\***

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Burglary	9	16	13	8	18	14	12	15	14	11	15	14
Theft of/or from cars	10	7	8	10	3	6	11	7	9	10	6	7
Assaults	3	1	2	2	2	2	4	2	3	3	3	3
Damage to property/vandalism	9	12	11	12	13	13	8	13	11	12	14	13
Speeding	32	33	32	31	33	32	29	35	33	28	34	32
Drinking and driving	10	9	10	11	7	9	13	9	11	11	8	9
Drunk and disorderly people	6	5	6	6	6	6	5	4	5	11	5	7
Family rows	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1
Sexual assaults on women or children	3	2	3	3	4	4	3	2	3	2	3	2
Illegal drug use	15	12	13	15	11	12	11	10	11	9	9	9
Child abuse	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	2

\* Note: Percentages based on respondents mentioning particular issues.

### Q6: Which of the following, in your view, should receive most attention from the police in Northern Ireland?

The issues respondents thought that the police should give most attention to in Northern Ireland as a whole were illegal drug use (33%), assaults (12%), drinking and driving (11%) and sexual assaults on women/children (10%). Although illegal drug use was the single biggest priority in 2002, the proportion of respondents who thought it required most attention has fallen steadily from a high of 46% in 1999 to 33% in 2002. Protestants were more likely than Catholics to think that vandalism required most attention from the police in Northern Ireland as a whole whereas Catholics were more likely than Protestants to think that illegal drug abuse and sexual assaults on women/children required the most attention.

**TABLE 6: Issues which should receive most attention in Northern Ireland**

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Burglary	2	4	3	5	5	5	2	4	3	3	5	4
Theft of/or from cars	7	3	5	1	3	2	3	4	4	7	5	6
Assaults	6	8	7	8	9	8	10	13	12	12	12	12
Damage to property/vandalism	4	6	5	5	5	5	4	8	7	5	9	8
Speeding	6	5	6	5	6	6	7	7	7	6	5	5
Drinking and driving	12	11	12	13	13	13	13	14	13	12	11	11
Drunk and disorderly people	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2
Sexual assaults on women or children	11	8	10	12	9	10	11	8	9	12	9	10
Illegal drug use	42	48	46	44	41	42	41	34	37	35	32	33
Child abuse	8	5	6	6	7	7	7	5	6	7	9	8

\* Note: Percentages based on respondents mentioning particular issues.

### 3: PERCEPTIONS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

#### Q7: Have you heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board?

Eight out of ten respondents (80%) had heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) in 2002 compared to 77% in 2001 (Table 7). Over four fifths of Protestants (83%) had heard of the NIPB in 2002 (an increase of 5 percentage points compared to 2001) and 77% of Catholics had heard of the NIPB in 2002 (an increase of 1 percentage point on 2001).

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey					
	2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	76	78	77	77	83	80
No	24	22	23	23	16	19
Don't know/refusal	0	0	0	0	0	1

\* The Northern Ireland Policing Board was created on 4th November 2001 and replaced the former Police Authority.

#### Q8: Do you think the Northern Ireland Policing Board is part of the police or independent of the police?

Of those respondents who had heard of the NIPB, just under half (49%) thought that the NIPB was independent of the police in 2002 compared to 47% in 2001 (Table 8). A further 38% of respondents thought that the NIPB was part of the police in 2002 compared to 41% in 2001. The proportion of Protestants who thought that the NIPB was independent of the police increased from 49% in 2001 to 53% in 2002. Similarly the proportion of Catholics who thought that the NIPB was independent of the police increased from 44% in 2001 to 45% in 2002.

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey					
	2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All
Part of the police	45	38	41	41	36	38
Independent of the police	44	49	47	45	53	49
Don't know/refusal	11	12	12	14	11	13

\* The Northern Ireland Policing Board was created on 4th November 2001 and replaced the former Police Authority.

### 4: COMPOSITION OF THE POLICE SERVICE

#### Q9: Do you think that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has too few Catholics in it, too many or is the number about right?

Over half of respondents (54%) in 2002 thought that there were too few Catholics in the police compared to just over two thirds (69%) of respondents in 2001. The proportion of respondents who thought that the proportion of Catholics in the police was about right increased from 17% in 2001 to 24% in 2002. The number of Catholic respondents who thought that there were too few Catholics in the police fell from 85% in 2001 to 73% in 2002. Similarly, the proportion of Protestant respondents who thought that there were too few Catholics in the police fell from 57% in 2001 to 42% in 2002. The proportion of respondents who stated they did not know increased from 14% in 2001 to 19% in 2002. Protestant respondents (23%) were most likely to give a 'don't know' response in 2002.

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Too few	84	62	71	85	60	70	85	57	69	73	42	54
Too many	-	1	1	-	1	1	0	2	1	1	3	2
About right	5	17	12	6	18	14	6	24	17	15	31	24
Don't know	11	20	16	9	20	16	9	17	14	12	23	19

#### Q10: Does the Police Service of Northern Ireland try harder to recruit Protestants or to recruit Catholics or does it try equally hard to recruit both?

Almost half of respondents (49%) in 2002 thought that the police try equally hard to recruit both Catholics and Protestants compared to 52% in 2001. The proportion of respondents who thought that the police try harder to recruit Catholics increased from 30% in 2001 to 35% in 2002. Catholic respondents (53%) were more likely than Protestant respondents (48%) to think that the police service tries equally hard to recruit both Protestants and Catholics.

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Tries harder to recruit Protestants	14	2	7	16	3	8	12	1	6	10	0	5
Tries harder to recruit Catholics	15	24	20	13	22	19	22	35	30	24	43	35
Tries equally hard to recruit both Protestants and Catholics	50	61	56	49	60	56	50	54	52	53	48	49
Don't know	22	14	17	22	15	17	15	10	12	13	9	11

## Q11: Which, if any, of the reasons given do you think might deter Catholics from joining the police in Northern Ireland?

In 2002, seven out of ten (70%) of respondents cited 'Fear of intimidation or attack on them or their relatives' as a reason why Catholics might be deterred from joining the police compared to 68% in 2001 (Table 11). 'Other Catholics putting pressure on them not to join' (60%) and 'Fear that they couldn't maintain contact with family and friends' (46%) were the next biggest reasons which all respondents believed might deter Catholics from joining the police. There were substantial decreases in the proportions of respondents who thought that Catholics would be deterred from joining the police by the name (21% in 2001 down to 6% in 2002), symbols such as the badge (25% in 2001 down to 10% in 2002) and 'Don't join because they don't support the system of government' (42% in 2001 down to 34% in 2002). Catholic respondents were much less likely than Protestant respondents to think that Catholics might be deterred by other Catholics putting pressure on them not to join and much more likely to think that they would be treated badly in the police or that they would not be chosen because of their religious beliefs.

**TABLE 11: Reasons which might deter Catholics from joining the police<sup>1</sup>**

Rating (%)	Community Attitudes Survey											
	1999			2000			2001			2002		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Other Catholics put pressure on them not to join	44	60	54	57	60	59	56	64	61	54	64	60
They feel they would be treated badly in the police in the police	34	18	24	34	17	23	35	15	24	28	17	22
They try to join, not chosen because of religion	15	4	9	15	7	10	15	6	10	10	6	8
They try to join, not chosen because of political beliefs	14	8	10	17	8	11	18	8	12	16	8	11
Fear intimidation or attack on them or their relatives	67	73	70	67	71	70	65	71	68	72	70	70
Don't join because they don't support the system of government	30	46	39	41	40	40	40	43	42	30	36	34
Fear they couldn't maintain contact with family and friends	42	52	48	47	46	47	47	48	47	46	45	46
Don't join because they don't support the police	30	38	35	35	32	33	35	36	36	36	38	37
The name <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	27	21	23	21	21	21	6	6	6
Symbols such as the badge <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	26	22	24	24	25	25	8	11	10
Other reasons	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1
None of these	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	1
Don't know/refusal <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	2	4	4

1: Percentages will not sum to 100 due to the possibility of multiple responses.

2: Option not included before 2000.

3: Option not included before 2001.

## NOTES

For additional copies or further information about this publication please contact the Head of Statistics:  
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