

Northern Ireland Policing Board Statistical and Research Strategy 2008-2012

Purpose

This document outlines the Northern Ireland Policing Board's statistical and research strategy during the period 2008 to 2012. The strategy's purpose is to:

- outline the statistical and research strategy for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2012,
- set out the strategic context of the statistical and research activity to be conducted, and
- show how this work is linked with the overall aims and objectives of the Policing Board.

Many of the proposed activities will be undertaken to meet the Policing Board's statutory obligations under Section 3 (3) (d) (ii) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 to "*assess the level of public satisfaction with the performance of the police and district policing partnerships*" (DPPs).

Staffing and reviewing the statistical and research strategy

The three staff in the Policing Board's Statistics and Research Branch (one Deputy Principal Statistician, who is both the Head of Branch and the Board's Head Statistician, and two Assistant Statisticians) are on long term loan from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). They provide a professional, independent and impartial statistical and research service to the Policing Board and DPPs. The Head Statistician has overall responsibility for delivering the Policing Board's statistical and research strategy.

This strategy will continue to evolve during the Policing Board's term of office and this document outlines the planned statistical and research activities that are currently known. The strategy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and formally at the end of each year to

take account of emerging work, ad hoc requests for statistical and research projects and changing priorities. It will then be presented to the Policing Board's Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee (which has delegated authority for the Policing Board's statistical and research strategy and research budget) in April/May each year for approval.

Statistical and research strategy for the Policing Board's term of office (as at April 2008)

Year 1 – 2008/2009

- **Omnibus Surveys in April and September/October 2008.**

The Policing Board has a statutory requirement under Section 3 (3) (d) (ii) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 to “*assess the level of public satisfaction with the performance of the police and district policing partnerships*” (DPPs). Since its creation in November 2001, the Policing Board has commissioned the Policing Board module in the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey twice a year to assess public satisfaction with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the Policing Board and DPPs.

Northern Ireland Omnibus Surveys are carried out several times a year by Central Survey Unit, NISRA and seek the views of the Northern Ireland public on a range of issues, including policing. In April and September/October 2008, the survey will include the Policing Board module of approximately 30 questions and approximately 1,200 respondents aged 16+ will have a face to face interview with the NISRA interviewer. Some questions are used to monitor performance indicators and targets contained in the Northern Ireland Policing Plan – for example, Target 2.1.1 in the Policing Plan 2008-2011 (*To increase the percentage of people who are confident in the police service's ability to provide an ordinary, day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland*).

The Policing Board's Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee approves the proposed Omnibus Survey questions before they are commissioned. The Policing Board publishes the results from the Omnibus Surveys within two months of receiving the

data from NISRA in both hard copy form and on the Policing Board's website – www.nipolicingboard.org.uk.

When the April 2008 Omnibus Survey was commissioned in January 2008, each Omnibus Survey question cost approximately £775, so the cost for the April 2008 survey of 30 questions was approximately £23,120. (This cost is based on a full recovery cost basis – i.e. the cost of running the survey is paid for by the customers – which is similar to how the Office for National Statistics (ONS) calculates costs for its Omnibus Survey. Discounts are given if the question is only asked of a subset of the sample.) The survey is paid from the Policing Board's research budget.

- **Policing Board/PSNI Quality of Service Survey.**

In accordance with Home Office guidelines and in conjunction with the Policing Board, Central Statistics Unit, PSNI has conducted an ongoing quality of service survey of five victim groups, namely the victims of violent crime, vehicle crime, domestic burglary, racist incidents and road traffic collisions since 2004. The survey has included the additional victim category of victims of antisocial behaviour, due to Home Office requirements, since 2006/07.

The survey monitors victim/user satisfaction with the quality of service provided by police in relation to making contact with the police, police actions to deal with the incident, being kept informed, treatment by police staff and the overall service. Questionnaires are posted to a random sample of victims/users from the above categories. The survey is conducted quarterly and results are published annually. The 2007/2008 results are expected to be published on the Policing Board's website by 30 November 2008.

The annual cost for the survey is approximately £25,000, which includes printing, packaging and postage costs and data analysis costs. The survey is paid from the Policing Board's research budget.

- **District Policing Partnership (DPP) Public Consultation Survey 2008.**

Another survey that meets the Policing Board's statutory requirement of assessing the level of public satisfaction with the performance of DPPs is the DPP Public Consultation

Survey. This survey is conducted every two years, as per the DPP Code of Practice. Central Survey Unit, NISRA conducted the previous surveys in June 2003, May 2004 and May 2006 - postal surveys, issued to approximately one in ten households in Northern Ireland. This Northern Ireland wide survey is designed to give reliable results at a local DPP level.

The 2008 survey was conducted three months earlier than the 2006 survey (meaning that the fieldwork was completed in February/March 2008) to allow DPPs to use the results to help them provide input to both the annual and local policing plans. The Policing Board will publish the Northern Ireland results by autumn 2008 and will report the local findings to each DPP by 30 June 2008, who are responsible for publishing their own local results.

The 2008 DPP Public Consultation Survey costs approximately £155,000 and DPPs contribute 25% of the cost. The remainder of the survey costs is paid from the Policing Board's DPP budget.

- **Press and Public Relations Branch Customer Satisfaction Survey.**

The Policing Board's statisticians, in conjunction with the Policing Board's Communication Manager, developed an annual customer satisfaction survey in order to measure year on year improvement in the service provided by the Policing Board's Press and Public Relations Branch. Originally planned to be conducted among media organisations, the survey was extended to all Branch customers before the first survey was issued in January 2008. It is planned to conduct this survey during early 2009. The only associated costs for this survey are statistician and Press and Public Relations Branch staff costs.

- **Independent Custody Visitors' Satisfaction Survey.**

The Policing Board's statisticians, in conjunction with Service Monitoring Branch, plan to undertake a satisfaction survey among independent Custody Visitors in early 2009. (Custody Visitors are volunteers from the community who make unannounced visits to police custody suites to check on the welfare of people being held in custody. They look, listen and report to the Policing Board on what they find, which assists the Board in monitoring how the PSNI meets its responsibilities under the Human Rights Act.)

The results will provide information on the Custody Visitors' views of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme and will also be used to help plan the induction, training and development of new Custody Visitors who will take up their posts during 2009/10.

The Policing Board's statisticians also plan to undertake exit surveys with Custody Visitors who leave the scheme once their term of office is completed. The results will also be used to develop the Scheme as outlined above. The only associated costs for these two related surveys are statistician and Service Monitoring Branch staff costs.

- **DPP Review Surveys of DPP Managers and Members, District Council Chief Executives and PSNI Area/District Commanders.**

In order to assist with a review of the operation of DPPs and the Policing Board's support for DPPs, the Policing Board's statisticians plan to undertake consultation surveys during late 2008/09 to find the views across a range of issues from DPP Members, DPP Managers, Chief Executives and PSNI Area/DCU Commanders approximately one year into the DPPs' term of office. (Previous surveys were conducted in autumn 2004 and 2005.) The survey will be conducted in liaison with DPP Support Branch. The only associated costs for this survey are statistician and DPP Support Branch staff costs.

- **Policing Board Members' Survey one year into office.**

The Policing Board's statisticians plan to conduct a survey with Policing Board members approximately one year into their term of office, during May/June 2008. This will help Policing Board officials evaluate working relationships between officials and members and will seek ways in which the service can be improved. The only associated costs for this survey are statistician and other Board staff costs.

- **Independent research into crimes against businesses in Northern Ireland.**

In October 2007, the Policing Board commissioned KPMG to conduct research in relation to crimes against businesses in Northern Ireland. The research was conducted between December 2007 and March 2008 and aimed to better understand the problem of business related crime and how it can be tackled and reduced; specifically to discover the nature of

business crime in Northern Ireland, levels of under-reporting from the business community and how any identified problems can be addressed.

The research findings will be presented to the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee in the next few months and it is planned to publish the research thereafter on the Policing Board's website. The research cost approximately £62,000 and was paid from the Policing Board's research budget.

Year 2 – 2009/2010

- **Omnibus Surveys in April and September/October 2009.**

The cost for future surveys is likely to rise as Central Survey Unit, NISRA reviews the Omnibus Survey costs annually.

- **Policing Board/PSNI Quality of Service Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**
- **District Policing Partnership (DPP) Public Consultation Survey 2008.**

It is planned to conduct this biennial survey in February/March 2010.

- **Press and Public Relations Branch Customer Satisfaction Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**
- **Police Administration Branch Customer Satisfaction Survey.**

The Policing Board is responsible for the consideration and decisions in respect of ill health, injury on duty and other pension applications. The Policing Board's statisticians, in conjunction with the Policing Board's Police Administration Branch Manager, developed an annual customer satisfaction survey (which was issued in 2007 and 2008) in order to review the level of effectiveness and service provided by Police Administration Branch, on behalf of the Policing Board, in the administration and management of such pension applications. In the future, it is planned to conduct this survey biennially, commencing in

early 2010. The only associated costs for this survey are statistician and Police Administration Branch staff costs.

- **Policing Board Staff Attitudes Survey.**

A staff attitudes survey is conducted with all Policing Board staff approximately every two years. Surveys have been conducted in December 2002, June 2004, January 2006 and January 2008. Each survey has been conducted by Central Survey Unit, NISRA and the 2008 survey was completed online. Central Survey Unit's statisticians analyse the results and send a full report to the Policing Board's statisticians. An action plan is drawn up based on these results to improve working practices and relationships as appropriate.

The survey is paid from the Policing Board's research budget and, in January 2008, cost approximately £4,500.

- **Independent Community Observers' (ICO) Scheme Satisfaction Survey.**

The Policing Board's statisticians, in conjunction with Service Monitoring Branch, will consider undertaking a satisfaction survey among Independent Community Observers during 2009/2010, similar to a previous survey conducted in summer 2005. The results will provide information on the community observers' views of the ICO Scheme and will also be used to help plan the induction, training and development of new observers for the ICO Scheme. The only associated costs for this survey are statistician and Service Monitoring Branch staff costs.

Year 3 – 2010/2011

- **Omnibus Surveys in April and September/October 2010.**
- **Policing Board/PSNI Quality of Service Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**
- **Press and Public Relations Branch Customer Satisfaction Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**

Year 4 – 2011/2012

- **Omnibus Surveys in April and September/October 2011.**
- **Policing Board/PSNI Quality of Service Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**
- **Press and Public Relations Branch Customer Satisfaction Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**
- **Independent Custody Visitors' Satisfaction Survey, as outlined in 2008/2009.**
- **Police Administration Branch Customer Satisfaction Survey, as outlined in 2009/2010.**
- **Policing Board Staff Attitudes Survey, as outlined in 2009/2010.**

Other ongoing statistical and research activity within the Policing Board

During the entire period covered by this strategy, statisticians in the Policing Board's Statistics and Research Branch will continue to provide statistical and research services to the Policing Board, its committees, Members and officials on a regular and ad-hoc basis. Such activities will include:

- Collecting and interpreting statistical information that (i) monitors current and (ii) helps determine future performance indicators and targets contained in the Annual Policing Plan;
- Providing routine and ad-hoc statistical and research advice, guidance and information to the Policing Board, four of its six sub-committees, Board Members and officials to assist in the monitoring of key PSNI strategies. The statisticians interpret relevant statistical, social research and survey information and publications for the above group;

- Monitoring and reporting complaints against the PSNI (collected by the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland – OPONI), statistics on the use of CS Incapacitant Spray and PACE/JSA stops and searches (collected by the PSNI) and statistics on the operation of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (operated by the Policing Board);
- Conducting research in support of the Policing Board’s obligations under the Equality Legislation;
- Conducting ad-hoc survey work, research and data collection which allows Policing Board Members and officials to carry out their functions, including, but not limited to, assisting the Policing Board in monitoring the effectiveness of DPPs; and
- Providing professional analysis, advice and support on customer satisfaction, internal staff surveys and other surveys conducted by or within the Policing Board.

Statistics and Research Branch will also continue to provide a statistical and research service to DPPs to enable them to monitor local police performance and to carry out their public consultation exercises.

Procurement of statistical surveys and research

The Department of Finance and Personnel’s (DFP) policy and procedures on the appointment of consultants (which the Policing Board follows) states that NISRA *“should be regarded as possible extensions of in-house resources and should be approached to provide a quotation for the assignment prior to inviting external consultants to submit proposals.”* Central Survey Unit, NISRA is approached when the Policing Board considers conducting any statistical surveys to see if it can provide the service.

As NISRA does not offer a research service, the Policing Board has to procure research services through competitive tendering. The Policing Board’s Procurement Guidelines state that a tendering process must take place when using public funds, if the work cannot be completed using an in-house source, including NISRA. Following these Guidelines, for all contracts, the Policing Board publicly advertises in local newspapers when it is seeking

researchers to submit proposals. (The Northern Ireland Office's Procurement Unit is responsible for the entire procurement process.) This allows researchers that the Policing Board is unaware of to submit proposals and ensures a "level playing field". The Policing Board can consider unsolicited or speculative research proposals but will not award research without competitive tendering.

District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and statistical surveys/research

DPPs have a responsibility to conduct public consultation within their local DPP area. The Policing Board's statisticians offer all DPPs guidance, support and advice on statistical and research issues. A number of DPPs procure organisations to consult with the public and each DPP is responsible for procuring and managing such work.

Working in partnership with other organisations

Although the Policing Board recognises the advantages of working in partnership to fund crosscutting research, the Policing Board (like other organisations) will continue to set its own research priorities and fund and manage projects initiated by it. This is largely driven by legislation, equality obligations and current policing needs. Where possible, the Policing Board works in partnership with other organisations - such as the PSNI (on the Quality of Service Survey), the Northern Ireland Office and OPONI.

Statistics and Research Branch

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