

Policing Plan Survey Background Quality Report





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1. Introduction

This report assesses the quality of Policing Plan Survey official statistics for the Northern Ireland Policing Board using the European Statistics System (ESS) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). This is the method recommended by the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Quality Strategy. Statistics are of good quality when they are fit for their intended use.

The ESS QAF measures the quality of statistical outputs against the dimensions of

- ✓ relevance
- ✓ accuracy and reliability
- ✓ timeliness
- ✓ accessibility and clarity
- ✓ comparability and coherence

The GSS also recommends assessment against 3 other principles in the ESS QAF. These are:

- ✓ trade-offs between output quality components
- ✓ confidentiality and transparency
- ✓ balance between performance, cost and respondent burden

These dimensions and principles cross the three pillars of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics. [Code of Practice for Statistics \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk)

1. Introduction



This quality assessment covers the Policing Plan Survey statistical report which provides information about the public perception of policing in Northern Ireland and views of Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board/NIPB), National Crime Agency (NCA) and Police and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

The report is based on a comprehensive survey over the period of 3 months. This background quality assessment, considers the quality of the data used to produce this publication, and any statistics derived from these data.



2. Background and Context

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board), set up in 2001, is an independent public body which oversees policing in Northern Ireland. The Policing Board is responsible for the independent oversight of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and has a range of legislative duties to deliver. The main role of the Board is to ensure that the PSNI is effective and efficient. The Board sets targets and monitors how well the PSNI perform against them. The Policing Plan Survey is one method the Board uses to monitor progress and performance.

The first survey of this nature, directly commissioned by the Board in relation to the Policing Plan, took place between November 2021 and February 2022. The results of this survey were published in May 2022. The 2022 report followed a period of 4 years when no surveys were undertaken. The 2023 survey took place from January to March 2023 and was published in June 2023. Reports can be found on the NIPB website <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/statistics-research>.

Prior to the 2022 report, the previous survey of public perceptions took place in April 2017 as part of the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey. The Omnibus Survey was conducted several times each year by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and was designed to provide a snapshot of the behaviour, lifestyle and views of a representative sample of people in Northern Ireland. The survey comprised two distinct parts: core questions about the respondents and their individual circumstances, and a variety of mainly attitudinal questions commissioned by clients, which sought the views of the public on a range of issues, including policing.

The Omnibus Survey ceased in 2018 and the Board was unable to continue with this method of surveying public perceptions. The Board therefore commissioned a survey in 2021, specifically designed to meet the needs of the outcomes-based accountability on which the 2020-2025 Policing Plan is based.



3. Methodology and Production

The purpose of the survey is to monitor outcomes of the Policing Plan and to explore public perceptions of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in policing and engagement with the community.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board commissioned a commercial market research company based in Northern Ireland, to conduct a telephone survey. The survey was undertaken in 2022 and 2023 using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) call centre. The data from the surveys have been supplied to NISRA staff within the Board for analysis. The data used in the 2023 report was a sample of 2,500 adults (aged 17 and over) in a population of 1.9 million. Using stratified random sampling, the adult population was divided into smaller subgroups based on the Mid-Year Population Estimates and the 2011 Census data for Northern Ireland and this was used to achieve the final sample of respondents. The quotas set were based on the following categories;

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Socio-economic group
4. Urban/Rural
5. Local Government District.
6. Multiple deprivation measure quintile (MDM 2017)

3. Methodology and Production



For survey questions relating to satisfaction/dissatisfaction, for example ‘How satisfied are you with the job that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) do overall in Northern Ireland?’ respondents were given a scale of 0 to 10 to choose from, where 0 was described as ‘not at all’ and 10 was described as ‘completely’. The tenor of responses was discussed with the interviewers and their comments provided some insight into suitable categories for the scales. Therefore, respondents who scored 0 or 1 would be categorized as ‘very dissatisfied’, a score of 2 to 4 would be ‘dissatisfied’, 5 to 6 ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’, 7 to 8 ‘satisfied’ and a score of 9 or 10 would equate to ‘very satisfied’.

Multiple Deprivation Measures were calculated using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) 2017.

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>

The survey definition of tenure is based on the following classifications; owners who are households who own their homes outright or are buying with the help of a mortgage or loan (includes shared ownership), social-rented sector tenants who are renting from a housing association or other social-rented sector, and private-rented sector tenants namely households privately renting unfurnished or furnished property.

The two socio-economic groups (SEG) of ABC1 and C2DE are based on the type of occupation specified by respondents. The category AB equates to occupations which are described as higher/intermediate managerial, administrative and professional, C1 to supervisory/junior managerial and professional, C2 to skilled manual and DE to low grade, semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, or unemployed.

4. Relevance



This report is used by the Board as one method to measure the performance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) against the outcomes set annually in the Policing Plan.

[Policing Plan 2020-2025 and Annual Performance Plan 2023/24 | Northern Ireland Policing Board \(nipolicingboard.org.uk\)](https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk)

The plan lists three specific areas of performance and the Board measures progress in these areas.

Outcome 1: We have a safe community

This is about tackling crime to make communities safer and ensure people feel safe.

Outcome 2: We have confidence in policing

This is about building community and confidence in the work of the PSNI.

Outcome 3: We have engaged and supportive communities

This is about building the relationship between police and the community.

As this is a new publication, the 2023 report has been classified as experimental statistics. Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference. Experimental statistics are a sub-set of newly developed or innovative official statistics that are undergoing evaluation.

4. Relevance



The report can be used to answer press queries and Freedom of Information requests. The report is also useful for the Board to support evidence-based decisions and to support discussions with external stakeholders such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland.

We welcome feedback and will continue to develop the statistic over time to ensure we continue to meet user needs. [Statistics Publications – Feedback](#)

5. Accuracy and Reliability



A survey is a sample of the population and the information gathered is not from the whole population. Therefore, results from sample surveys are estimates of the unknown population values. One sample is selected at random but other potential samples could have been selected, which may have produced different results. The difference between a statistic derived from a sample and the population value is caused by what are known as sampling error and non-sampling errors.

Using a sample means that statistics are usually accompanied by measures of uncertainty. Uncertainty relates to how the estimate might differ from the 'true value' and therefore we employ measures to understand the degree of confidence in the outputs. Understanding sampling and the effect it has on statistics is also important for interpreting these measures of uncertainty.

A test of statistical significance is used in the analysis to decide whether the difference between the estimates from different samples is caused by a real change in the population, or whether it is because of the effects of random sampling alone.

Statistical significance also helps to establish what observed changes or relationships we should pay attention to, and which apparent changes may have occurred only as a result of randomness in the sampling. A result is said to be statistically significant if it is likely not caused by chance or the variable nature of the samples. The standard of 5% is used in the analysis to test for statistical significance. Where the observed change is statistically significant at the 5% level means that there is less than a 1 in 20 chance of the observed change being calculated by chance if there is actually no underlying change.

5. Accuracy and Reliability



For further information on statistics and the types of methodology used, see

www.ons.gov.uk

Refusals and non-valid responses have been excluded from the analyses except where these were regarded as relevant to the analysis or commentary. Percentages may not always sum to 100 or numbers may not sum to an overall total due to the effect of rounding to the nearest whole number, or because respondents could give more than one response. Figures presented in the tables and graphs have been rounded. Unrounded figures are available in the accompanying Microsoft Excel and Open Data Source tables. Some findings for the socio-demographic sub-groups examined may present as zero. They do not necessarily suggest that people in that area or among that group have not, for example, been the victim of crime or feel safe in their area.



6. Timeliness and Punctuality

Figures are published within four months of the completion of the survey. This is to allow time to produce the statistics while ensuring they are timely for users.

The release date for this publication was pre-announced on the Northern Ireland Policing Board's (NIPB) Research and Statistics section of GOV.UK. There is also a 12-month release calendar with a specific release date given at least four weeks in advance, where practicable, provided on the GOV.UK website and on NI Policing Board's own website (<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/statistics-research>).

7. Accessibility and Clarity

Our statistics are published on the GOV.UK and Northern Ireland Policing Board websites. The publication is available from 0930 hours on the day of release.

Figures from the statistic are separately available in Microsoft Excel and Open Document formats for users to download. This allows for use in individual research and reports.



8. Comparability and Coherence

The survey and report are currently in the process of evaluation and review and have therefore been designated experimental statistics, within the classification of official statistics. These statistics, from a new source, are produced to the high standard expected of official statistics but remain under evaluation. User engagement is welcomed on the suitability and value of these statistics.

[Statistics Publications - Feedback](#)

Where data is available, the publication includes trends over several years (from 2014 to 2017) to allow comparisons over time.

For most of the data in this publication there is only one source and therefore it is not possible to cross-reference this – but it is possible to compare data with what was published the previous year and in former publications based on the Omnibus Survey. There were no issues to date identified in this report.

9. Quality Assurance

Data for this publication undergoes quality checks. The layout and presentation of the data in the statistical report is read by selected members of the data and performance team to ensure that the data is presented appropriately and to enable the correct interpretation by the user.

10. Security



NISRA staff and staff within the Board involved in the production of this Official Statistic have completed the Government wide 'Responsible for Information' training and they understand their responsibilities under GDPR and the Data Protection Act and the Official Statistics Code of Practice.

Data are held on a secure network only accessible to the statisticians who need access. All staff involved are trained on the protocols for protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of the data and adhere to the principles and protocols laid out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The pre-release access list for the report is reviewed on an annual basis. Checks are made on the pre-release access list of named individuals to ensure that the details are correct and that the individual is available on the day before the release of the report (if they are not then they can nominate a deputy). A guidance document is also sent to those on the list explaining to them their obligations about data disclosure prior to the publication of the report. The Pre-Release Access list for publications is available on the Northern Ireland Policing Board website.

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/policing-plan-survey>



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