



# PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE, PCSPs AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**REPORT BASED ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD  
MODULE OF THE JANUARY 2013 OMNIBUS SURVEY**

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## **THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO**

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is an independent public body whose job it is 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 operates at arms length from Government and has strong independent powers to carry out its work. The Policing Board consists of 19 Members and comprises 10 Political Members from the Northern Ireland Assembly and 9 Independent Members who have been appointed by the Minister of Justice.

The main role of the Policing Board is to ensure that the Police Service of Northern Ireland is 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 does 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.

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 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.

The Board acting on behalf of the Joint Committee, which consists of representatives of the Department of Justice and the Board, assess:

- The level of public satisfaction with the performance of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs).

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 of activities involving a range of groups and organisations. The results of this consultation and research are

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published by the Policing Board to ensure openness and transparency, and to advise the public of its findings.

### **January 2013 Omnibus Survey**

The Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey is conducted several times each year by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and is designed to provide a snapshot of the behaviour, lifestyle and views of a representative sample of people in Northern Ireland. The survey comprises two distinct parts: core questions about the respondents and their individual circumstances, and a variety of mainly attitudinal questions commissioned by clients, which seek the views of the public on a range of issues, including policing.

The sample for this survey consisted of a random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses, the most up-to-date listing of private households in Northern Ireland. At each address, one person aged 16 or over was selected to participate in the survey. From an eligible sample of 1,938 households, 1,154 interviews were achieved, giving a response rate of 60%. Interviews were conducted between 31 December 2012 and 2 February 2013. Analyses by religion are based only on those 1,042 respondents who said they were either Catholic or Protestant. Respondents who refused to answer the religion question or who said they were a religion other than Catholic or Protestant are excluded from these analyses.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board uses Omnibus Survey results to assess the level of public satisfaction with the performance of the Police and of PCSPs and DPCSPs.

The following symbols are used in the accompanying results tables:

Category not applicable	–	Cell is empty
Category result less than 0.5%	–	Cell contains a zero (“0”)

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

**Statistical significance**

Statistical significance tests have been carried out on the findings between the January 2012 and January 2013 Northern Ireland Omnibus Surveys. These tests are used to establish the degree of confidence with which we can infer the observed findings as an accurate reflection of the views of the population. In this publication, where differences have emerged as being statistically significant, this has been reported at the 5% ( $p < 0.05$ ) level of probability (two-tailed). This means that, for any observed result that is found to be statistically significant, one can be 95% confident that this has not happened by chance. Such statistically significant results are clearly noted in the text above each table.

## PERFORMANCE OF THE POLICE

### Q1. How do you rate the job the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) do in your area?

In January 2013, almost two out of three respondents (65%) thought that the police were doing a very/fairly good job in their area, a statistically significant increase on the January 2012 finding of 59% (Table 1). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (67%) thought that the PSNI were doing a very/fairly good job in their area than Catholic respondents (64%). The finding for Catholic respondents is a statistically significant increase from 54% in January 2012.

One in ten respondents (10%) rated the performance of their local police as very/fairly poor, a statistically significant decrease from 16% in January 2012. Findings for both Catholic and Protestant respondents showed statistically significant decreases.

Table 1: Performance of local police												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly good	55	57	56	57	61	58	54	64	59	64	67	65
Neither good nor poor	19	18	19	21	21	21	26	22	24	21	24	23
Very/fairly poor	24	23	23	20	16	18	19	14	16	14	9	10
Don't know/refusal	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	1

### Q2. Do you think that the PSNI does a good job or a poor job in Northern Ireland as a whole?

In January 2013, over two out of three respondents (70%) thought that the PSNI was doing a very/fairly good job in Northern Ireland as a whole, similar to the January 2012 finding of 69% (Table 2). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (76%) thought that the PSNI was doing a very/fairly good job in Northern Ireland as a whole than Catholic respondents (63%).

One in ten respondents (10%) thought that the PSNI was doing a very/fairly poor job in Northern Ireland as a whole, which is similar to the January 2012 finding of 11%.

Table 2: Performance of police in Northern Ireland as a whole												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly good	61	65	63	62	73	67	63	73	69	63	76	70
Neither good nor poor	19	16	17	22	15	18	23	16	19	24	15	20
Very/fairly poor	21	17	19	14	12	13	12	11	11	12	7	10
Don't know/refusal	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1

**Q3. How satisfied are you that the PSNI treat members of the public fairly in Northern Ireland as a whole?**

In January 2013, almost three out of four respondents (73%) were very/fairly satisfied that the PSNI treat members of the public fairly in Northern Ireland as a whole. This is a statistically significant increase on the January 2012 finding of 68%. A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (80%) thought that the PSNI treat members of the public fairly in Northern Ireland as a whole than Catholic respondents (67%).

One in eleven respondents (9%) were very/fairly dissatisfied, a statistically significant decrease on the January finding of 12% (Table 3). One in seven Catholic respondents (14%) were very/fairly dissatisfied that the PSNI treat members of the public fairly in Northern Ireland as a whole, compared with one in twenty five Protestant respondents (4%).

**Table 3: Satisfaction that PSNI treat members of the public fairly in Northern Ireland as a whole**

Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly satisfied	66	75	71	62	74	68	62	74	68	67	80	73
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	19	14	16	20	14	17	21	17	19	19	15	17
Fairly/very dissatisfied	13	9	11	16	10	12	15	8	12	14	4	9
Don't know/refusal	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	0	1

**Q4. How much confidence do you have in the PSNI's ability to provide an ordinary day-to-day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland?**

In January 2013, over seven out of eight respondents (87%) had some, a lot, or total confidence in the police's ability to provide a day-to-day policing service for everyone in Northern Ireland, a statistically significant increase from 84% in January 2012 (Table 4). The percentage of Catholic respondents who had little or no confidence at all in the police's ability to provide a day-to-day policing service for everyone in Northern Ireland fell from 21% in January 2012 to 15% in January 2013, a statistically significant decrease.

**Table 4: Confidence in the police's ability to provide an ordinary day to day policing service for all the people of Northern Ireland**

Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Total confidence	7	10	8	5	9	7	7	11	9	10	11	10
A lot of confidence	26	32	29	34	37	35	31	37	35	34	36	35
Some confidence	48	39	43	39	37	38	41	40	40	40	42	42
Little confidence	14	13	13	17	14	15	15	9	12	11	9	10
No confidence at all	5	6	6	4	2	3	6	3	5	4	1	2
Don't know/refusal	0	0	0	1		1	1	0	1	1	0	1



**Q5. How satisfied are you with the levels of police patrols in your area?**

In January 2013, under one out of two respondents (46%) were very/fairly satisfied with the levels of police patrols in their area, a statistically significant increase on the January 2012 finding of 41%. This was mainly due to the statistically significant increase in the number of Catholic respondents from 41% in January 2012 to 48% in January 2013 who were very/fairly satisfied.

One out of four respondents (26%) were very/fairly dissatisfied, which is a statistically significant decrease (Table 5).

<b>Table 5: Satisfaction with the levels of police patrols</b>												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly satisfied	40	34	37	45	38	41	41	42	41	48	43	46
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20	22	21	26	28	27	27	28	28	25	29	28
Very/fairly dissatisfied	39	43	41	28	34	32	31	29	30	27	27	26
Don't know/refusal	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0

**Q6. Over the last year, has the overall standard of policing in your area...?**

In January 2013, over three out of four respondents (77%) thought that the overall standard of policing in their area had remained the same over the last year, a statistically significant increase on the January 2012 finding of 71%. One in twelve respondents (8%) thought that it got better and one in eight (13%) thought that it got worse, both findings were statistically significant decreases (Table 6). Protestant respondents (15%) were more likely to think that the overall standard of policing in their area got worse than Catholic respondents (11%).

<b>Table 6: Perception of the overall standard of policing over the last year</b>												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Got better	14	8	11	13	9	11	14	8	11	9	7	8
Remained the same	71	67	69	72	70	71	69	71	71	78	77	77
Got worse	12	21	17	10	16	13	15	18	16	11	15	13
Don't know/refusal	2	4	3	5	4	5	2	2	2	2	1	2



**Q7. Do you know the names of or recognise the police officers policing your local area?**

In January 2013, one in eight respondents (13%) knew the names of or recognised the police officers policing their local area similar to the January 2012 finding of 14% (Table 7). Protestant respondents were equally as likely as Catholic respondents to know the names of or recognise the police officers policing their local area.

<b>Table 7: Recognition of police officers policing your local area</b>												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	13	12	12	11	12	12	11	17	14	13	13	13
No	87	86	86	89	88	88	89	83	86	87	86	87
Don't know	1	2	1	0		0		0	0	0	0	0

**Q8. Have you been in contact with the PSNI over the past 12 months?**

In January 2013, one out of five respondents (20%) had been in contact with the PSNI over the past 12 months, which is a statistically significant decrease on the January 2012 finding of 26% (Table 8). This was mainly due to the statistically significant decrease in the proportion of Protestant respondents from 25% in January 2012 to 18% in January 2013 who had contact with the PSNI over the past 12 months.

<b>Table 8: Contact with the PSNI over the past 12 months</b>												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	24	24	24	25	29	27	25	25	26	22	18	20
No	76	76	76	75	71	73	75	75	74	78	81	80
Don't know						0		0	0	0	0	0

**Q9. How satisfied were you with the PSNI during this contact?**

In January 2013, seven out of ten respondents (71%) were very/fairly satisfied with the PSNI during their contact (Table 9). One out of six respondents (16%) were very/fairly dissatisfied, which is a statistically significant decrease from the January 2012 finding of 26%. The percentage of Catholic respondents who were very/fairly dissatisfied with the PSNI during their contact fell from 25% in January 2012 to 10% in January 2013, a statistically significant decrease.

<b>Table 9: Satisfaction with PSNI contact</b>						
Respondents who had contact with PSNI	Percentage of respondents					
	2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very/fairly satisfied	68	63	65	77	64	71
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7	12	10	13	14	13
Very/fairly dissatisfied	25	24	26	10	23	16

**Q10. How safe do you feel in your local community?**

In January 2013, nine out of ten respondents (91%) felt very/fairly safe in their local community, a statistically significant increase from 88% in January 2012 (Table 10). The Protestant finding of 92% was a statistically significant increase from the January 2012 finding of 87%. The percentage of respondents who felt fairly/very unsafe in their local community fell from 5% in January 2012 to 2% in January 2013, a statistically significant decrease.

<b>Table 10: How safe do you feel in your local community?</b>												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2012 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very safe	38	36	36	46	42	44	34	32	33	40	38	38
Fairly safe	51	53	52	44	50	47	55	55	55	51	54	53
Neither safe nor unsafe	7	5	6	3	4	4	6	8	7	5	7	6
Fairly unsafe	3	6	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	2	1	2
Very Unsafe	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
Don't know/refusal						0				0	0	0

## 2: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF PCSPs

### Q11. Have you heard of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)?

In January 2013, just over one out of two respondents (51%) had heard of PCSPs (Table 11). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (60%) had heard of PCSPs than Catholic respondents (40%).

<b>Table 11: Have you heard of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)?</b>			
Rating	Percentage of respondents		
	2013 (January)		
	C	P	All
Yes	40	60	51
No	60	40	49
Don't know/refusal	0	0	0

### Q12. Do you know who your local Policing and Community Safety Partnership members are?

In January 2013, almost one out of five respondents (18%) who had heard of PCSPs knew who their local Policing and Community Safety Partnership members are (Table 12). Similar proportions of Protestant and Catholic respondents know who their local Policing and Community Safety Partnership members are.

<b>Table 12: Knowledge of local Policing and Community Safety Partnership members</b>			
All those who have heard of PCSPs Rating	Percentage of respondents		
	2013 (January)		
	C	P	All
Yes	18	19	18
No	82	81	82

**Q13. Do you know how to contact them about local policing and community safety?**

In January 2013, almost six out of seven respondents (86%) knew how to contact their local Policing and Community Safety Partnership members about local policing and community safety (Table 13). Similar proportions of Protestant and Catholic respondents know how to contact their local Policing and Community Safety Partnership members about local policing and community safety.

<b>Table 13: Knowledge of how to contact PCSP members about local policing and community safety</b>			
All those who have heard of PCSPs Rating	Percentage of respondents		
	2013 (January)		
	C	P	All
Yes	90	88	86
No	10	12	14

**Q14. Do you feel that your local PCSP has helped to improve policing in your local area?**

In January 2013, over one out of three respondents (36%) who had heard of PCSPs felt that their local PCSP has helped to improve policing in their local area (Table 14). A higher proportion of Catholic (38%) than Protestant (36%) respondents thought that their local PCSP has helped to improve policing in their local area.

<b>Table 14: Has your local PCSP helped to improve local policing?</b>			
All those who have heard of PCSPs Rating	Percentage of respondents		
	2013 (January)		
	C	P	All
Yes	38	36	36
No	36	43	41
Don't know/refusal	26	21	23

**Q15. Who would you normally contact on policing and community safety issues locally?**

In January 2013, almost three out of five respondents (59%) would contact the police on policing and community safety issues locally (Table 15). Three out of ten respondents (30%) would contact either their Councillor or MLA.

<b>Table 15: Who would you normally contact on policing and community safety issues locally?</b>			
Rating	Percentage of respondents		
	2013 (January)		
	C	P	All
Police	55	62	59
Policing and Community Safety Partnership	3	8	5
Neighbourhood Watch	5	4	4
Councillor	20	20	19
MLA	11	11	11
Community Group	6	6	6
Other	0	1	1
Would not normally contact anyone about policing and community safety issues	14	13	14
Refusal/Don't know	4	2	3

Percentages may add to more than 100% due to multiple responses

### 3. PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

#### Q16. Have you heard of the Northern Ireland Policing Board (Policing Board)?

In January 2013, over four out of five respondents (82%) had heard of the Policing Board (Table 16). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (86%) had heard of the Policing Board than Catholic respondents (80%).

Table 16: Heard of the Policing Board?												
Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	84	90	87	83	90	86	83	87	84	80	86	82
No	16	10	13	17	10	13	16	13	15	20	14	17
Don't know/refusal		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

#### Q17. Do you think that the Policing Board helps ensure that the PSNI do a good job?

Almost three out of four respondents (74%) who had heard of the Policing Board thought that the Board helps ensure that the PSNI do a good job, a statistically significant increase on the January 2012 finding of 69% (Table 17). The Catholic finding of 79% was a statistically significant increase from the January 2012 finding of 70%.

Table 17: Does the Policing Board help to ensure that the PSNI do a good job?												
All those who have heard of the Policing Board	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Yes	68	67	67	67	68	67	70	69	69	79	71	74
No	21	23	22	17	19	18	18	16	17	10	17	14
Don't know/refusal	11	10	11	16	13	14	12	14	14	11	11	11

#### Q18. Do you think that the Policing Board is part of the police or independent of the police?

In January 2013, three out of five respondents (60%) who had heard of the Policing Board correctly thought that the Board is independent of the police, a statistically significant decrease from the January 2012 finding of 71% (Table 18). The findings for both Catholic and Protestant respondents were also statistically significant decreases. A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (66%) correctly thought that the Policing Board is independent of the police than Catholic respondents (52%). Conversely, one out of three respondents (34%) who had heard of the Policing Board thought that the

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Board is part of the police, a statistically significant increase from the January 2012 finding of 24%. The findings for both Catholic and Protestant respondents were also statistically significant increases from the figures reported in January 2012.

<b>Table 18: Is the Policing Board part of the police or independent of the police?</b>												
All those who have heard of the Policing Board Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Part of the police	27	16	21	24	19	22	29	21	24	41	29	34
Independent of the police	66	77	73	69	74	72	66	73	71	52	66	60
Don't know/refusal	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6

### Q19. What do you think is the primary role of the Policing Board?

In January 2013, three out of four respondents (76%) who had heard of the Policing Board correctly thought that the Board's primary role is "to oversee policing and hold the Chief Constable and the PSNI publicly to account". This was a statistically significant decrease from 81% in January 2012 (Table 19). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (81%) than Catholic respondents (67%) correctly knew the Board's role. The finding for Catholic respondents (67%) is a statistically significant decrease on the 82% finding in January 2012.

<b>Table 19: What do you think is the primary role of the Policing Board?</b>												
All those who have heard of the Policing Board Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
To actively direct police operations	11	10	10	14	13	14	11	10	10	21	11	15
To oversee policing and hold the Chief Constable and the PSNI publicly to account	80	82	82	75	79	77	82	81	81	67	81	76
To tell the Chief Constable what to do	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	4	4	5	4	4
Other	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Don't know/refusal	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	6	3	4



**Q20. Do you think the Policing Board is made up of ...?**

In January 2013, almost three out of four respondents (74%) who had heard of the Policing Board correctly thought that the Board is made up of “a mix of politicians and independently appointed members”, similar to the January 2012 finding of 73% (Table 20). A higher proportion of Protestant respondents (76%) correctly knew the Board’s composition than Catholic respondents (72%). One out of six respondents (16%) who had heard of the Policing Board thought that the Board is made up of “independently appointed members”, a statistically significant decrease on the January 2012 finding of 20%.

<b>Table 20: Do you think that the Policing Board is made up of...?</b>												
All those who have heard of the Policing Board Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Politicians	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Independently appointed members	15	18	17	17	22	19	20	19	20	19	13	16
A mix of politicians and independently appointed members	76	75	75	74	71	73	72	74	73	72	76	74
Other	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	1	2	2	2
Don't know/refusal	7	4	5	7	5	6	5	5	5	6	6	6

**Q21. Overall, how well do you think the Policing Board is working?**

In January 2013, just over three out of four respondents (77%) who had heard of the Policing Board thought that the Board is working at least adequately, similar to the January 2012 finding of 77% (Table 21). Likewise almost one out of three respondents (31%) who had heard of the Policing Board thought that the Board is working well/very well, on a par with the January 2012 finding of 32%. A higher proportion of Catholic respondents (34%) than Protestant respondents (27%) thought that the Board is working well/very well. The percentage of Catholic respondents who thought that the Board is working poorly/very poorly fell from 13% in January 2012 to 7% in January 2013, a statistically significant decrease.

<b>Table 21: Overall, how well do you think the Policing Board is working?</b>												
All those who have heard of the Policing Board Rating	Percentage of respondents											
	2009 (September)			2010 (September)			2012 (January)			2013 (January)		
	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All	C	P	All
Very well	7	7	7	5	3	4	7	5	5	4	4	5
Well	36	26	30	34	32	33	29	26	27	30	23	26
Adequately	39	48	44	39	46	42	43	46	45	46	46	46
Poorly	10	9	9	10	12	11	10	9	9	6	14	10
Very poorly	2	3	2	2	0	2	3	3	3	1	1	1
Don't know/refusal	7	7	7	10	7	8	9	11	11	12	11	12



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#### DOCUMENT TITLE

**PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE POLICE, PCSPs AND THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD JANUARY 2013 OMNIBUS SURVEY**

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