



Home Office

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Statistical News Release

Perceptions of crime, engagement with the police, authorities dealing with anti-social behaviour and Community Payback: Findings from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey.

Supplementary volume 1 to Crime in England and Wales 2010/11

This statistical bulletin is the first in the series of supplementary volumes that accompany the annual bulletin 'Crime in England and Wales 2010/11', and presents more detailed analysis on perceptions of crime, engagement with the police, views on the authorities dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) and perceptions of Community Payback.

Policing and community engagement

The 2010/11 BCS showed that over half of people (55%) said they had seen a police officer or Police Community Support Officer on foot patrol at least once a month, up from 38 per cent in 2006/07 when the question was introduced. A quarter (25%) said they never saw police officers on foot patrol in the local area, down from 40 per cent in 2006/07.

Awareness of local neighbourhood policing teams increased from 39 per cent in 2009/10 (when this question was first asked) to 44 per cent in 2010/11.

In 2010/11, about a third (32%) of adults had seen, read or heard details about their local police and over half of people (57%) said they knew how to contact the police about policing, crime or ASB. Ten per cent had contacted the police about local issues.

Around a quarter of people (23%) had made contact with the police (other than about local issues) in 2010/11, most commonly to report a personal or household crime. This is a fall from 43 per cent in 1993. It is not possible to be certain of the reasons for this fall, but they are likely to include police deployment, policing methods and falls in actual levels of crime.

Around one in ten people (9%) had been in a car or motorcycle which was stopped by the police in the last 12 months and a much smaller proportion had been stopped when they were on foot (3%). Of those who had been stopped, eight per cent of those in a vehicle and 30 per cent of those on foot had been searched (both representing less than 1% of the general population).

Public confidence in the authorities tackling anti-social behaviour and awareness of Community Payback

Of those who perceived at least one of five elements of ASB as a problem in the local area (see notes for editors):

- half (52%) were confident that the authorities were effective at reducing ASB;
- two in five (41%) felt the authorities were effective in bringing ASB offenders to justice; and
- a third (34%) felt well informed about what was being done to tackle ASB.

As might be expected, perceptions of the effectiveness of the authorities in tackling ASB were associated with other measures of confidence in crime and policing-related issues. For example, those who thought the police in the local area were doing a good or excellent job were twice as likely to be confident in the effectiveness of the authorities at reducing ASB compared with those who thought the police were doing a fair or poor job (70% and 35% respectively).

A high proportion of people had heard of Community Payback (85%), but levels of awareness of activities in the local area were much lower: only 15 per cent of adults had personally seen offenders carrying out Community Payback work in the last 12 months.

Two-thirds of all adults (67%) felt that Community Payback was a very or fairly effective form of punishment. Only five per cent thought it was not at all effective.

Those who had heard about, were aware of, or had personally seen Community Payback were less confident in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system (CJS). For example, 40 per cent of those who had heard of Community Payback were confident in the CJS as a whole being effective compared with 50 per cent of those who had not. However, caution is needed in the interpretation of this result as it is likely that other factors may be contributing to this pattern.

Understanding perceptions of crime

The 2010/11 BCS showed that 60 per cent of people thought that crime in the country as a whole had gone up over the last few years, but only 28 per cent of people thought the same about crime in their local area. Ten per cent of people thought crime in their local area was 'higher than average' and around half (51%) thought it was 'lower than average'.

The media was most commonly mentioned when people were asked which sources of information gave them the impression that crime was going up nationally, most commonly news programmes on television or radio (59% of respondents). The media was also important in informing views on changes locally (for example, 47% of respondents said that information came from local newspapers). However, personal experience was much more influential in informing views of local changes (41%) than it was in the case of views of national changes (24%).

Those who had used online crime maps in the last 12 months and who lived in a relatively low-crime area were more likely to think that crime in their local area was 'lower than average' than those who had not (83% compared with 65%). However, there was no relationship between use of crime maps and perceptions of crime in relatively high-crime areas.

The use of crime data, such as via online crime maps or published as official Home Office statistics, was relatively low when compared with media consumption. Thirty-six per cent of people said they take notice of official crime statistics and four per cent had used crime maps in the last 12 months. This compares with 73 per cent of people reading newspapers and 91 per cent watching the news on television.

There was some evidence that perceptions of crime in the local area were related to personal experiences. Those who had been victims of crime in their local area, those living in areas of high physical disorder and those who experienced problems with ASB in their local area were more likely to think that crime in the local area was 'above average'.

Notes to editors

Figures included in this publication are from the British Crime Survey (BCS), a large, nationally representative victimisation survey in which people resident in households in England and Wales are asked about their experiences of crime in the 12 months prior to interview. Respondents to the survey are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues, such as the police and the criminal justice system and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour. Some questions are asked of a half (around 23,000 respondents) or quarter (around 11,500 respondents) of the overall BCS interview sample. In these cases, respondents are assigned modules of questions on a random basis meaning that the results are based on a nationally representative sample.

Analysis relating to confidence in the authorities tackling ASB is focused solely on people who perceived at least one of the following five behaviours to be a problem in the local area: noisy neighbours, teenagers hanging around, vandalism and graffiti, people using or dealing drugs, and people being drunk or rowdy (that is, 48% of BCS respondents). This measure of ASB is different to the standard 7-strand index measure routinely published from the BCS.

'Perceptions of crime, engagement with the police, authorities dealing with anti-social behaviour and Community Payback: Findings from the 2010/11 British Crime Survey' can be accessed via the National Statistics Publication Hub as well as the Home Office website.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1811/>

'Crime in England and Wales 2010/11' is available online on the Home Office website:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1011/>