



Home Office

Statistical News Release

Children's experience and attitudes towards the police, personal safety and public spaces: Findings from the 2009/10 British Crime Survey interviews with children aged 10 to 15

Supplementary Volume 3 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10

The statistics released today comprise the third part of an existing series of supplementary volumes to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10. Following the British Crime Survey (BCS) extension to 10 to 15 year olds in England and Wales, this volume has a focus on children's attitudes to the police and experience of bullying, crime prevention behaviours, hanging around in public spaces, and access to leisure activities. Children were also questioned about their experience of crime; victimisation estimates from the BCS have already been published as Experimental Statistics in June 2010 and updates will next be published in July 2011 (see notes to editors).

Children and the police

Questions about police visibility in the 2009/10 BCS showed that 83 per cent of children aged 10 to 15 had seen a police officer or Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) in or around their school in the last year. Just under half of children (46%) said they knew a local officer by name, sight or both.

Around two-thirds of children (69%) had seen a police officer or PCSO on foot patrol in the local area in the last year. Older children aged 13 to 15 (72%), and particularly older boys, were more likely to have done so than younger children (66% of 10 to 12 year olds). Children from an ethnic group other than White (77%, compared with White children, 67%) and those who lived in high-crime areas (75%, compared with low crime areas, 55%) were also more likely to have seen an officer on foot patrol.

Around a quarter (23%) of children aged 10 to 15 had had contact with the police in the last 12 months. As with police visibility, older children (aged 13 to 15), and particularly older boys, were more likely to have had contact with the police than younger children.

The majority of children were satisfied with the contact they had with the police irrespective of whether the child (79%) or the police (77%) had initiated the contact.

The 2009/10 BCS included a set of questions asking children whether they agreed with a number of policing-related statements; children's responses were generally supportive of the police (for example, 87% of children agreed that 'the police would help if you need them'). Children tended to respond more positively to the broader statements than those specifically relating to young people (for example, 65% of children agreed that 'the police are dealing with the things that matter to young people in the local area').

Personal safety and bullying experience of children

Estimated from the 2009/10 BCS, one per cent of children aged 13 to 15 had carried a knife for their own protection in the last year. Thirteen per cent of 13 to 15 year olds reported that they knew someone who carried a knife for their own protection.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed that carrying a knife meant they were more likely to get stabbed themselves, 69 per cent of 13 to 15 year olds agreed that it did, although 17 per cent disagreed with the statement (14% didn't know). Younger children were more likely to *strongly agree* that carrying a knife increased the chance of being stabbed: 33% of 13 year olds, higher than the 26% of 14 and 24% of 15 year olds.

According to the 2009/10 BCS, 22 per cent of children aged 10 to 15 reported being bullied in a way that frightened or upset them in the last year. Young children aged 10 to 12, and particularly boys in this age group, were more likely to have experienced bullying. Nine in ten children reported that at least some bullying incidents took place at school (half said that *all* did).

Six per cent of children aged 10 to 15 reported being cyber-bullied in the last year (having been sent unwanted and nasty emails, texts or messages or having something nasty posted about them on a website), that is, a quarter (27%) of children who had been bullied. Girls aged 13 to 15 were more likely to have been cyber-bullied (9%) than all boys in the same age group and younger girls aged 10 to 12 (both 4%).

Questions were asked of children about whether they took any precautions to keep their valuable personal property safe. The most common way that children reported keeping electronic items safe was to keep them hidden or out of sight (mobile phones, 34%; iPods/MP3 players, 40%; games consoles, 54%, of those who owned the items) and keeping bicycles safe was to store in a house or locked garage or shed (76% of owners).

Children's use of public space and access to leisure activities

Questions in the 2009/10 BCS about use of public space showed the majority (81%) of children aged 10 to 15 said that they hung around with their friends in public spaces. Around half (52%) of children said they did this at least once a week. Boys were more likely to hang around with their friends in a public place three times a week or more (25%) than girls (17%).

However, only one in five (20%) 10 to 15 year olds had been moved on from a public place where they were hanging around with friends (most likely by a member of the public, 41%), and most children who had been moved on said it hadn't happened that often.

Around a third of children aged 10 to 15 (35%) perceived that teenagers hanging around in the streets were a problem in their local area; this contrasts with around a quarter of adults (27%) who were asked the same question in the 2009/10 BCS. Children who lived in urban or deprived areas were more likely to perceive teenagers hanging around to be a problem (37% and 45% did so respectively).

The majority of children had used public transport in the last year and 73 per cent had used buses (including school and local buses). Of children using buses, girls (21%) were much more likely than boys (9%), and children in an ethnic group other than White (22%) were more likely than White children (14%), to have avoided travelling on buses at certain times because they were worried about their safety or because other people were causing trouble.

Notes to editors

'Children's experience and attitudes towards the police, personal safety and public spaces: Findings from the 2009/10 British Crime Survey interviews with children aged 10 to 15. Supplementary Volume 3 to Crime in England and Wales 2009/10' is available online via the National Statistics Publication Hub as well as the Science, Research and Statistics section of the Home Office website at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb0811/>

Figures from interviews with 10 to 15 year olds have not yet been considered for accreditation as National Statistics but statistics in this bulletin have been produced in compliance with the Office Statistics Code of Practice.

Estimates of victimisation among children from the BCS were published in June 2010 as Experimental Statistics, available at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hosb1110>). Victimization estimates from the 2009/10 and 2010/11 BCS are due to be published on 14 July 2011, again as experimental statistics to reflect their developmental status.