

Northern Constabulary
2003 Excellence in Community Policing
Force Area Report
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Chapter One

Survey Methodology

1.1 Introduction

The 2003 Excellence in Community Policing survey was developed jointly by Northern Constabulary, The Highland Council and Shetland Community Safety Partnership. It forms part of Northern Constabulary's programme of Best Value service reviews. In addition to this Force Area report, individual reports were produced for each Command Area. The 2003 survey was conducted by Snedden Economics Ltd, an independent consultancy with survey design, data processing and analysis experience across a range of sectors. Previous large scale community surveys were conducted in 1994, 1999 and 2001.

1.2 Survey Sample and Response

The survey questionnaire was issued by post in September 2003 to 4,500 named householders selected at random using the ACORN classification system. A minimum quota of 350 was issued to three Command Areas (Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands and the Western Isles). All other Command Areas received 690 questionnaires. 1,575 responses were analysed (35% of the total issued), although the final response exceeded this by approximately 250 questionnaires – an overall survey response rate of 40%.

Table 1.1 Survey Sample and Response Rates

Command Area	Sample Issued	Percentage of Total Issued %	Percentage of Total Analysed %
Badenoch Strathspey & Nairn	690	15.3	17.2
Caithness & Sutherland	690	15.3	13.5
Inverness	690	15.3	15.6
Lochaber	690	15.3	13.2
Orkney Islands	350	7.8	7.9
Shetland Islands	350	7.8	8.5
Western Isles	350	7.8	6.5
Ross Cromarty & Skye	690	15.3	17.4
Total	4,500	100	100

1.3 Weighting

The survey data were weighted by ACORN code and by Command Area population. All results in this report are based on weighted data.

Chapter Two

Sample Profile

2.1 Sample

4,500 questionnaires were issued in the Northern Constabulary Force area. A total of 1,575 were processed (35% of the sample issued).

2.2 Type of Area

Respondents were asked to describe the type of area in which they live.

Table 2.1 Type of Area

	Force Area %
A city	10.9
A large town	8.3
A small town	22.3
A large village	13.1
A small village	27.6
An isolated rural area	17.7

Base: All respondents

2.3 Gender

The response was biased in favour of females, which is common for postal surveys. This bias is partly compensated for in the weighting process.

Table 2.2 Gender

	Force Area %
Female	80.7
Male	19.3

Base: All respondents

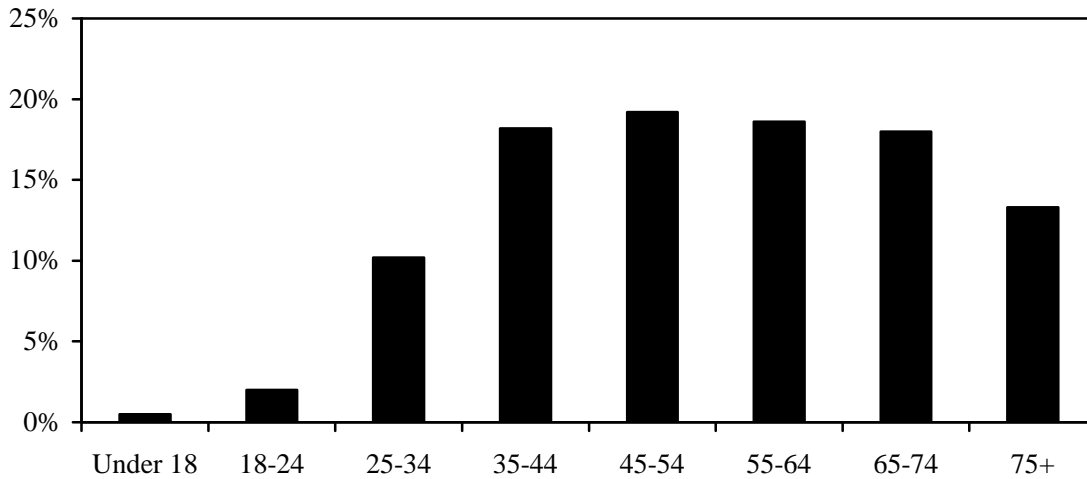
2.4 Household Size

The mean household size for respondents was 2.37 for the Force area as a whole.

2.5 Age

The age range of respondents is shown in the chart below.

Chart 2.1 Age Range of Respondents



2.6 Ethnic Origin

The ethnic origin of the sample is shown in the table below.

Table 2.3 Ethnic Origin of Respondents

	Force Area %
White Scottish	82.1
Other White British	16.1
White Irish	0.5
Other White	0.6
Indian	0.1
Pakistani	0.1
Bangladeshi	-
Other South Asian	-
Chinese	-
Caribbean	0.1
African	-
Black Scottish	-
Other Black	-
Any Mixed Background	0.1
Other	0.5

Base: All respondents

2.7 Language

Respondents were asked to state their main spoken language, if their first language was not English. Responses included:

- Gaelic (47 mentions)
- Dutch (2 mentions)
- French (2 mentions)
- German (2 mentions)
- Welsh (2 mentions)
- Hindi (1 mention)
- Portuguese (1 mention)

2.8 Length of Time in Present Home

Respondents were asked how long they have been in their present home.

Table 2.4 Length of Time in Present Home

	Force Area
	%
1 year or less	2.3
Over 1 year but less than 2 years	6.9
2 or more years but less than 5 years	16.1
5 years or more	74.7

Base: All respondents

Over 90% of respondents had lived at their present home for 2 years or more.

Chapter Three

Main Survey Findings

Views on the Local Area

3.1 The Area Within 15 Minutes of Home

Respondents were asked to rate the area within 15 minutes walk of their home as a place to live.

Table 3.1 Area Within 15 Minutes of Home

	Force Area %
A very safe area	50.4
A fairly safe area	44.8
Rather unsafe area	3.6
A very unsafe area	0.8
No opinion	0.3

Base: All respondents

95% of respondents rated the area within 15 minutes of their home as *very safe* or *fairly safe*. The perceived safety was lowest in urban areas and highest in rural areas. Over 98% of respondents living in small villages or isolated rural areas rated their local area as *very safe* or *fairly safe*, whereas the figure fell to 90% among residents of large towns and 88% among city residents.

Respondents in the 25-34 age group were least likely (92%) to rate their local area as *very safe* or *fairly safe*. There was little difference in the responses of males and females.

3.2 The Area Within 15 Minutes of Home Compared With a Year Ago

Table 3.2 Area Within 15 Minutes of Home Compared With a Year Ago

	Force Area %
Now more safe	2.2
Now less safe	13.1
About the same	83.3
Did not live here a year ago	1.1
No opinion	0.3

Base: All respondents

The majority of respondents felt their area was *about the same* in terms of safety compared with a year ago, whereas 13.1% of respondents felt that their area was *now less safe* than it was a year ago. Only 2.2% thought their area was *now more safe*.

Respondents under the age of 24 were most likely to regard their local area as *less safe now* than a year ago.

3.3 Concerns in the Local Area

Respondents were asked to indicate their concerns across a range of issues. Responses indicating either a *major* or *minor* concern are shown in the table below, along with a *total concerned* figure.

Table 3.3 Concerns in the Local Area

	Major Concern %	Minor Concern %	Total Concerned %
Driving at excessive speed	34.1	37.8	71.9
Dog excrement	22.6	36.0	58.6
Dangerous driving	22.0	36.4	58.4
Rubbish or litter lying around	15.9	39.5	55.4
Drink/drugs driving	19.5	26.5	46.0
Vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage	14.6	30.6	45.2
Young people on the street	11.8	33.5	44.3
Alcohol abuse	18.0	25.7	43.7
Rowdy or drunken behaviour	11.0	28.2	39.2
People using drugs	17.6	21.6	39.2
Bullying of young people, in or out of school	12.2	24.4	36.6
People dealing in drugs	17.2	17.1	34.3
Break-ins to houses	7.9	26.3	34.2
Stray dogs roaming the streets	6.5	21.0	27.5
Things being stolen from cars	5.1	22.3	27.4
Anti-social neighbours	7.5	17.0	24.5
Cars being stolen	4.0	17.1	21.1
Solvent abuse/glue sniffing	7.9	11.9	19.8
Discrimination and abuse	3.8	13.0	16.8
Domestic abuse	4.5	11.9	16.4
Noise from local pubs or clubs	2.2	9.8	12.0

Base: All respondents

Driving at excessive speed was the main concern which was mentioned as either a major or minor concern by over two thirds of respondents.

Dog excrement, *dangerous driving* and *rubbish* were all mentioned as a concern by over half of all respondents.

Among the issues presented to respondents that were of least concern were *noise from pubs or clubs* and *domestic abuse*.

3.4 Who Should Deal with These Concerns

Respondents were asked to indicate who should be dealing with their concerns across this same range of issues, as reported in the previous table. The responses are provided in the table below, ranked in order of concern as indicated in the previous table. Respondents were allowed to list more than one response per issue.

Table 3.4 Who Should Deal with Local Concerns

	You %	Health Service %	Police %	Council %	Parents %	Community / Neighbour hood Wardens %	Teachers %
Driving at excessive speed	2.4	0.7	98.7	5.0	2.4	2.2	0.9
Dog excrement	13.0	5.1	10.3	67.7	4.3	25.5	0.6
Dangerous driving	3.1	0.7	98.5	3.3	2.5	3.0	0.6
Rubbish or litter lying around	13.2	2.0	7.6	79.3	13.6	15.8	5.2
Drink/drugs driving	3.7	8.3	95.7	3.5	5.7	3.4	3.1
Vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage	2.7	0.7	78.3	24.7	21.3	12.7	4.2
Young people on the street	1.9	0.5	48.0	6.9	64.1	10.3	2.3
Alcohol abuse	7.1	50.0	43.1	6.5	14.3	4.7	7.2
Rowdy or drunken behaviour	1.3	1.5	92.8	3.5	9.2	4.4	0.3
People using drugs	2.4	26.4	84.5	5.3	18.2	4.5	9.3
Bullying of young people, in or out of school	7.9	5.0	30.5	11.7	55.0	7.3	73.2
People dealing in drugs	1.8	4.8	95.8	3.5	5.6	3.6	2.7
Break-ins to houses	3.0	0.1	98.3	1.9	1.2	7.1	0.0
Stray dogs roaming the streets	5.3	2.4	20.3	51.6	3.8	22.9	0.4
Things being stolen from cars	4.9	0.1	97.1	0.7	2.4	5.2	0.4
Anti-social neighbours	9.1	2.1	51.8	49.1	5.5	11.1	0.7
Cars being stolen	2.4	0.1	98.1	0.8	2.1	4.7	0.1
Solvent abuse/glue sniffing	2.9	27.0	63.7	5.3	39.9	6.3	21.9
Discrimination and abuse	7.3	4.4	69.1	14.4	15.0	9.1	13.2
Domestic abuse	4.4	14.9	82.0	6.8	4.1	3.9	2.4
Noise from local pubs or clubs	1.5	0.9	69.7	32.8	0.4	6.1	0.1

Base: All respondents

A large proportion of the sample expected the police to deal with many of the issues. The police were mentioned by over 90% of respondents for *speeding, dangerous driving, drink/drugs driving, drunken behaviour, drug dealing, breaks ins and car theft.*

The police were held to be responsible for 14 of the 21 issues listed. Notable exceptions were:

- Litter (more than three quarters of respondents thought the Council should be responsible)
- Dog excrement and stray dogs (approximately two thirds of respondents thought the Council should be responsible)
- Bullying (most respondents felt this issue should be dealt with by teachers and parents).

This question generated a wide range of responses, many of which did not fall readily into groups. The other main responses included:

- Parents — should instil better values in children (16 mentions)
- Residents/Community — to take responsibility for own area (8 mentions)
- RSPCA — for stray animals (4 mentions)
- Social services — domestic abuse, youth behaviour, drug abuse (4 mentions)
- Dog wardens — dog excrement (4 mentions)
- Police — travelling people (2 mentions)

Community Planning

3.5 Importance of Issues in Relation to an Area's Local Plan

Respondents were asked to indicate the priority they feel should be assigned to a range of issues in their Community Plan. Responses indicating either a *top* or *medium* priority are shown in the table below, along with a *total* priority figure.

Table 3.5 Community Plan Priorities

	Top Priority	Medium Priority	Total (Top+Medium) Priority
	%	%	%
Reducing youth crime	72.4	17.3	89.7
Reducing crime	71.0	17.5	88.5
Reducing drug/alcohol/solvent abuse	75.6	14.8	90.4
Reducing anti-social behaviour	63.9	22.3	86.2
Reducing drug dealing	77.7	11.8	89.5
Improving road safety	62.9	28.1	91.0
Reducing boredom, lack of things for young people to do	60.4	28.6	89.0
Reducing unemployment	62.9	28.1	91.0
Increasing availability of affordable housing	50.7	32.1	82.8
Improving roads and transport links	55.6	30.0	85.6
Reducing discrimination and abuse	42.4	27.3	69.7
Improving quality of housing	37.3	39.7	77.0
Improving access to local medical services	43.0	31.7	74.7
Increasing availability of sport and leisure facilities	24.5	43.6	68.1
Improving public transport	27.6	37.0	64.6
Increasing business investment	31.9	36.1	68.0
Increasing rural development	18.9	40.3	59.2
Improving access to technology, e.g. broadband	16.1	34.8	50.9
Improving access to arts and culture	6.1	33.0	39.1

Base: All respondents

Faced with a list of issues, respondents generally chose to include a large number of them as important for inclusion in their local plan. *Rural development*, *broadband* and *improving access to arts and culture* were mentioned by less than 60% of the respondents.

3.6 Percentage of Respondents Who Have Seen their Local Community Plan

Table 3.6 Respondents Who Have Seen their Local Community Plan

	%
<i>All Area Average</i>	13.9
Highland Council Area	14.2
Shetland Islands Council Area	17.7
Orkney Islands Council Area	24.5
Western Isles Council Area	12.6

Base: All respondents

Fear of Crime

3.7 In the Force area as a whole, 53.5% of respondents were *very worried* or *slightly worried* about becoming a victim of crime, with 31.1% of respondents stating that they were *not worried at all*, and 15.5% *never having considered it*.

Urban residents were more likely to be afraid of crime than residents of small villages or rural areas. There was no clear pattern across age groups or by gender.

3.8 Types of Crime

Among those respondents who expressed worry about becoming a victim of crime, the table below shows the percentage of respondents worried about particular types of crime.

Table 3.7 Types of Crime

	Force Area %
Having your home broken into	85.0
Vandalism or deliberate damage to your home, property or car	79.1
Having your car stolen or broken into	68.0
Being attacked, assaulted or robbed in the street	63.2
Being attacked, assaulted or robbed in your own home	52.1
Being insulted or threatened	51.4
Being the victim of an attempted rape, rape or other serious sexual offence	32.9
Being a victim of domestic abuse	3.8

Base: 826 respondents

Having homes broken into and *vandalism or deliberate damage to homes, property or cars* were the main sources of worry over crime. City residents over the age of 65 were most likely to be worried about their *home being broken into* or being *attacked in their own home*.

Other crimes which respondents reported being worried about included:

- Nuisance / malicious calls (4 mentions)
- Financial fraud (credit card / internet) (4 mentions)
- Pedestrian RTA (3 mentions)
- Bogus workmen / hoax callers (2 mentions)
- Bullying of children (2 mentions)

- Road rage (2 mentions)
- Theft from outhouses (2 mentions)

3.9 Fear of Discrimination or Abuse

Respondents were asked to indicate how worried they were about suffering from various forms of discrimination or abuse. Responses indicating either *very worried* or *slightly worried* are shown in the table below.

Table 3.8 Fear of Discrimination or Abuse

	Force Area	
	Very Worried %	Slightly Worried %
Physical disability	1.6	6.5
Gender	0.8	5.5
Religious beliefs	1.2	3.8
Mental health	0.8	4.0
Race or ethnic origin	0.9	3.5
Learning disability	1.1	2.8
Political beliefs	1.9	2.0
Sexuality	0.2	2.6

Base: All respondents

Physical disability and *gender* were the main sources of worry over discrimination. 7.3% of females and 1.8% of males were very worried or slightly worried about discrimination on the grounds of gender. This figure rose to 16% for single mothers. Concern over discrimination on the grounds of physical disability increased with age.

Other forms of discrimination which respondents reported being worried about included:

- Age discrimination (8 mentions)
- Not being local (4 mentions)
- Occupation (2 mentions)

Victims of Crime

3.10 Reporting Crime

In the Force area as a whole, 8.1% of respondents said they had been a victim of crime in the last year, 82.9% of whom reported it to the police.

Respondents who said that they had been a victim of crime were most likely to live in a city or a large town. 15.8% of the 25-34 age group said they had been a victim of crime in the last year. This is not a measure of the true incidence of crime because of the possibility of self selection bias to a postal survey. 10.8% of male respondents and 7.4% of females said they had been a victim of crime in the previous year.

The main reasons given for not reporting a crime to the police were:

- Minor incident (9 mentions)
- No point/nothing police could do (7 mentions)
- My own fault (2 mentions)

Comments included: “There was no point; police cannot do anything unless there are witnesses or proof of who it was” and also “the police have no real means to solve minor crimes”. In another case, the respondent did not consider the crime to be “of sufficient gravity to waste police time”.

3.11 Victim Support

24.8% of respondents who had been a victim of crime in the last year said that they had been offered referral to Victim Support, of whom 8.2% took up the offer – a total of five people, all of whom were female and lived within the Badenoch, Shetland or Ross, Cromarty & Skye Command Areas.

Of those respondents who did not take up the offer of referral to Victim Support, the reasons included:

- Not necessary / didn't need it (13 mentions)
- Didn't feel would benefit from it (5 mentions)

Comments included that the “crime had no real impact on my welfare” and “we didn't feel we would benefit”. Another commented on having “no faith that it would be of use”. One respondent said victim support had not been in contact whilst in another case, the respondent felt that the “police response was poor; insulting to have the matter ‘passed over’ to victim support”.

3.12 Precautions Against Crime

Respondents were asked which of the following they did because of possible worries about crime.

Table 3.9 Precautions Against Crime

	Always %	Sometimes %	Total Always/ Sometimes %
Make sure your home is adequately secured	76.4	15.7	92.1
Make sure your vehicle is adequately secured	74.1	13.9	88.0
Avoid certain places	17.7	38.4	56.1
Avoid going out when it is dark	10.4	32.3	42.7
Avoid going out alone	10.1	30.3	40.4
Avoid going out at certain times	8.2	29.5	37.7
Mark your property in case it is stolen	10.3	30.4	40.7
Take self-defence classes	1.1	2.7	3.8
Carry a personal alarm	1.0	2.3	3.3

Base: All respondents

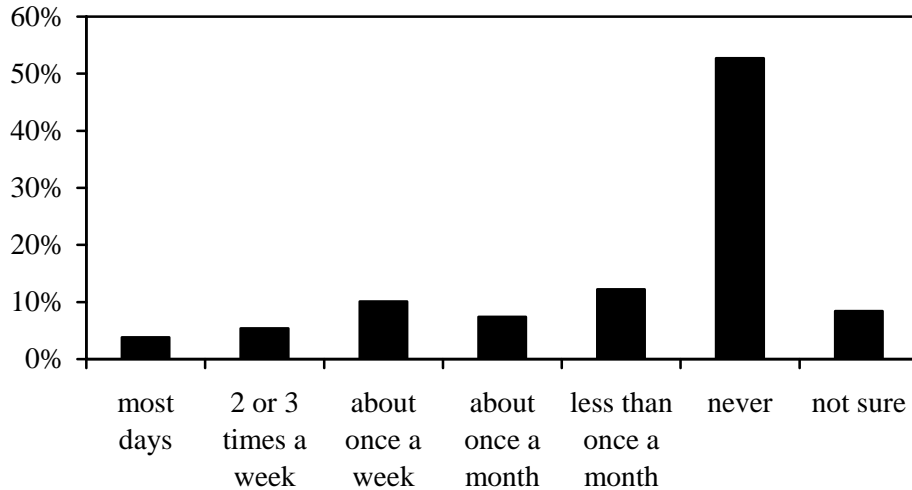
People were most likely to take precautions to protect their *homes* and *cars*. City and large town residents were most likely to take all the forms of precaution listed in the table. Females were at least twice as likely as males to avoid going out alone or when it is dark. The over 65 age group, and the over 75s in particular, were also more likely to avoid going out after dark.

Other activities which respondents mentioned they did as precautions against crime included:

- Install home security / lighting system (4 mentions)
- Photograph valuables (3 mentions)
- Avoid public transport (2 mentions)

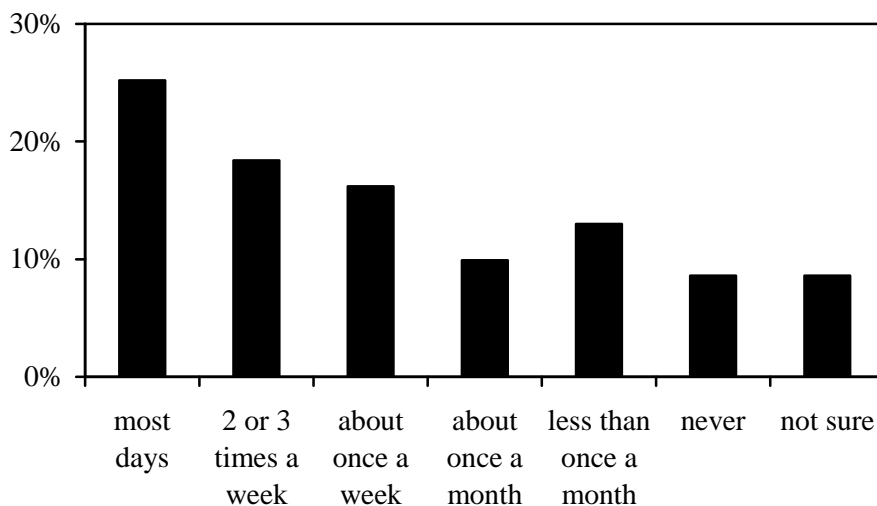
Police Patrols

3.13 Chart 3.1 Frequency of Seeing Police Officers Patrolling on Foot in the Northern Constabulary Area



The majority of respondents (52.7%) across the whole Force area stated that they *never* see police officers patrolling *on foot*, and only 19.3% of respondents stated that they regularly see police officers patrolling *on foot* (at least once a week). Generally, foot patrols were most commonly seen in urban areas.

3.14 Chart 3.2 Frequency of Seeing Police Officers Patrolling in Motor Vehicles in the Northern Constabulary Area



Over 25% of respondents in the Force area stated that they see police patrolling in *motor vehicles* most days, and nearly 60% of respondents stated that they regularly see police patrolling in *motor vehicles* (at least once a week). Generally, patrols by motor vehicle were most frequently reported in towns.

3.15 Level of Police Patrols

Respondents were asked what they thought about the level of all police patrols that they see.

Table 3.10 Level of Police Patrols

	Force Area %
Too much	0.2
About right	30.5
Too little	54.2
No opinion	15.1

Base: All respondents

30.5% of respondents in the whole Force Area felt the level of police patrolling was *about right*. However, 54.2% of respondents felt the level of police patrolling was *too little*. Respondents in the city and towns were most likely to regard the amount of police patrol they see as *too little*.

3.16 Preferences for Police Patrols

Respondents were asked where they would like to see more police officers on patrol.

Table 3.11 Where Respondents Would Like to See More Officers on Patrol

	Force Area %
Town Centre / High Street	29.3
Street presence / foot patrols (all areas)	28.3
Residential areas	18.1
Villages	11.4
Pubs / night-clubs	8.7
Known trouble spots	7.8
Outside schools	6.1
Areas of traffic danger	3.7
Other	15.2

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Town Centre/High Street, was the most commonly mentioned place respondents wanted to see more officers on patrol. This was followed by a desire for greater *street presence/foot patrols* in all areas.

The town centre was singled out especially at weekend nights but others also commented that a police presence during the day, including at weekends, when the

town is busy would be welcome. One respondent said: “Alcohol, drug taking and speeding problems are all regular concerns in the town centre in the evenings.”

Other comments included: “...town centre, Saturday afternoons because there are frequently abusive drunks causing problems for traffic and pedestrians, and making shopping an unhappy and unnerving experience” and “public areas, e.g. shopping centres, especially at night, and areas where youths sometimes gather, e.g. bus stops”.

Responses listed as “other” in the table above included:

- Play parks (26 mentions)
- Rural areas (10 mentions)
- Car parks (7 mentions)

3.17 Respondents were asked when they would like to see more police officers on patrol.

Table 3.12 When Respondents Would Like to See More Officers on Patrol

	Force Area %
Late evening / night (after 10 pm)	35.4
Evening (up to 10 pm)	33.4
Weekends	20.1
All the time	12.4
No specific time / random	12.3
Pub / club closing time	10.1
School breaks / lunchtime / after school	7.3
School holidays	1.5
Other	8.0

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Late evening/night (after 10pm), was the most commonly mentioned time when respondents wanted to see more officers on patrol. This was followed by a desire to see more officers in the *evenings (up to 10pm)* and at *weekends*. A substantial number of respondents specifically targeted weekend evenings, “particularly Friday and Saturday nights” and “outside busy weekend pubs/clubs...at taxi ranks at weekend evenings”.

Responses listed as “other” in the table above included:

- Daily (52 mentions)
- Morning (rush hours) (19 mentions)
- Afternoons (6 mentions)
- Lunchtimes (4 mentions)
- Tourist season/Summer (3 mentions)

3.18 Respondents were asked why they would like to see more police officers on patrol.

Table 3.13 Why Respondents Would Like to See More Officers on Patrol

	Force Area %
Crime prevention / deterrence	47.2
Reassurance / feeling safe	31.8
Youth behaviour / intimidation	16.5
Reduce vandalism	11.4
Reduce motoring offences	8.1
Drink related crime	7.7
Community relations	5.6
Drug abuse	3.7
Other	2.8

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Crime prevention / deterrence was the main reason respondents wanted to see more police officers on patrol, followed by a desire for *reassurance* and a *feeling of safety*.

A police presence was seen as a “deterrent for opportunistic crime”. One respondent commented that “when the police are on regular patrols, would be criminals would find less opportunity to commit crime.” Also mentioned was: “as a deterrent: be more proactive, much of what you do is reactive.” More officers on patrol would also enable police “to detect and deal with problems such as rowdiness”.

Many commented on the fact that more officers on patrol “give a sense of security and safety”. They “give reassurance to the vulnerable” and “make law-abiding citizens feel safer”. One respondent commented: “A visible presence makes people feel more secure. I also feel that police ‘on the beat’ possibly build up more of a relationship with the public.” Likewise one commented on the fact that more foot patrols might improve the “community perception” of the police.

Responses listed as “other” in the table above included:

- Attend to problems on the spot (6 mentions)
- Deal with anti-social behaviour (5 mentions)
- To catch offenders (3 mentions)
- Available to help if required (3 mentions)

Community Safety

3.19 Awareness of Security and Safety Initiatives

The following table shows the percentage of respondents who were aware of certain security and safety initiatives in their area.

Table 3.14 Awareness of Security and Safety Initiatives

	Aware %
Laws banning drinking alcohol in public places	37.4
TV/media campaigns, e.g. drug awareness	36.7
Closed circuit television (CCTV)	27.5
Neighbourhood/Farm/Water/Boat Watch schemes	9.1
Anti-social behaviour orders	9.1
Community / neighbourhood wardens	5.4

Base: All respondents

The under 24 age group were least likely to indicate an awareness of *laws banning drinking alcohol in public places*. Recognition of *media campaigns*, for example about drug awareness, was highest among the 35-54 age group. An awareness of *CCTV* was most likely to be held by city and town residents. Awareness of *neighbourhood watch* and other watch schemes was lowest in rural areas, as was awareness of *anti-social behaviour orders*. Awareness of *community/neighbourhood wardens* was lowest in the city.

Other security or safety initiatives mentioned by respondents included:

- Good traffic warden (1 mention)
- Observant neighbours (1 mention)
- Speed cameras (1 mention)

3.20 Respondents were asked if they thought any of the following improve community safety in their area.

Table 3.15 Perceived Effects of Security and Safety Initiatives

	Aware %
Laws banning drinking alcohol in public places	55.4
Closed circuit television (CCTV)	52.3
TV/media campaigns, e.g. drug awareness	45.0
Anti-social behaviour orders	44.2
Community / neighbourhood wardens	43.2
Neighbourhood/Farm/Water/Boat Watch schemes	38.7

Base: All respondents

Laws banning drinking alcohol in public places and *closed circuit television (CCTV)* were perceived to be the measures which have the greatest effect on improving community safety. Both issues were felt to be of most use in urban areas. A below average proportion of the under 24 age group regarded *media campaigns* as likely to improve community safety.

3.21 Crimestoppers

53.9% of respondents stated that they were aware of the Crimestoppers facility. Awareness was lowest among the over 65 age group. Awareness was highest among city and town residents. Only 3% of respondents in the whole Force area had actually used the facility.

3.22 Confidential Lines

42.6% of respondents stated that they were aware of the Northern Constabulary confidential lines. Awareness was lowest among the under 18 and over 65 age groups. Awareness was highest among city and town residents. Only 4.4% of respondents had actually used the confidential lines.

Contacting the Police

3.23 Preferred Methods of Contact

Respondents were asked how they would prefer to contact the police in each of the following situations.

Table 3.16 Preferred Methods of Contacting the Police

	Phone '999' %	Phone local police station %	Phone Northern Constabulary confidential line %	Visit local police station %	To police officer on patrol %	Email/ internet %	Mobile phone, text, picture imaging %
To report a serious crime, e.g. house break-in	47.7	48.4	2.2	1.3	0.3	-	0.1
To report a minor crime, e.g. vandalism	5.0	82.7	3.7	6.6	1.5	0.4	0.1
To report information about something suspicious	6.8	72.2	12.0	6.8	2.0	0.2	0.1
To report a nuisance or disturbance	7.1	81.1	5.7	4.5	1.5	0.1	0.1
To report a road traffic accident/incident	68.0	28.3	1.1	1.3	0.2	-	1.0
To report other information	4.0	67.3	9.1	17.1	1.8	0.6	-
To ask for advice or information	1.4	56.9	5.2	31.5	3.7	1.2	-
Firearm / shotgun enquiry	4.0	55.9	4.7	34.3	0.7	0.5	-
Lost/found property	1.0	50.3	1.0	47.4	0.2	0.1	-
Missing person	1.0	50.3	1.0	47.4	0.2	0.1	-

Base: All respondents

Phoning '999' was the preferred method of contacting the police to report an accident. *Phoning the local police station* was the preferred method of contact in all other situations listed.

The *Northern Constabulary confidential line* was most likely to be used to report information about something suspicious. The *confidential line* was mentioned as a possible way of contacting the police across all the situations listed, but generally, respondents were much more likely to *phone the local police station*.

In certain situations, such as to report *lost/found property*, or in connection with a *missing person*, respondents would be highly likely to *visit the local police station*.

Other electronic media such as *e-mail* and *picture imaging* were relatively unlikely to be used to contact the police.

Information about The Work of the Police

3.24 Type of Information Sought

46.8% of respondents stated that they would like to receive more information about the work of their local police officers. Respondents were then asked what type of information they would like.

Table 3.17 Type of Information Sought by Respondents

	Force Area %
General police work in your area	81.8
What is being done to reduce and prevent crime	79.8
What is being done to make your community safer	74.2
What is being done to improve road safety	64.4
More information about police officer's job/how they spend their day	50.8
How we are spending on policing in your area	49.8
How you can help the police, e.g. Neighbourhood Watch, appeals	47.3
Police achievements/successes	46.6

Base: 707 respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

3.25 Method of Finding Information About Police Work

Respondents were asked how they normally find out about the work of local police officers.

Table 3.18 Current Methods of Finding Out About Police Work

	Force Area %
Local newspapers	59.8
Local radio	32.2
Talking to friends and relatives	29.5
Television	23.0
Don't get any information	22.1
Talking to police officers	14.0
Personal experience	13.2
Community meetings	7.2
Literature from the police	3.8
Local area newsletter 'Putting People First'	3.2
Public meetings held by the police	1.8
Internet	0.3
Other	3.1

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Local newspapers were the main source of information on police work, followed by *local radio* and *talking to friends and relatives*.

Responses listed as “other” in the previous table included:

- Community groups/school visits by police (22 mentions)
- Community Council meetings (4 mentions)
- Notices posted at police stations/post offices (3 mentions)
- Local newsletters (3 mentions)
- Open days (2 mentions)

3.26 Awareness of Police Campaigns and Initiatives

17.3% of respondents stated that they were aware of a campaign or initiative by Northern Constabulary during the last 3 months. Respondents were then asked what the campaign was about.

Table 3.19 Awareness of Police Campaigns and Initiatives

	Force Area %
Speeding	34.5
Drugs awareness	25.1
Drink driving	17.1
Road safety	15.9
Drug dealing	10.5
Press coverage of drug enforcement	5.5
Dogs Against Drugs	4.9
Drugs awareness in schools	4.4
Other	7.9

Base: 225 respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Speeding, drugs awareness and drink driving were the most frequently cited campaigns that respondents had noted in the previous 3 months.

Responses listed as “other” in the table above included driving under the influence of drugs and drinking in public (2 mentions each).

3.27 Respondents were asked how they were made aware of the campaign.

Table 3.20 How Respondents Were Made Aware of the Campaign

	Force Area %
Local newspaper	63.2
Local radio	43.7
Local TV	21.6
Talking to friends/relatives	9.9
Leaflet or newsletter	8.6
Talking to police officer	6.6
Internet	0.5
Other	5.2

Base: 255 respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Local newspapers were the main source of campaign information, followed by *local radio* and *television*.

Responses listed as “other” in the table above included:

- Community Council meeting (2 mentions)
- Notice in police station (2 mentions)

3.28 Influence of the Media

Respondents were asked if their confidence in the police, views on crime and overall feeling of safety are influenced by the media.

Table 3.21 Influence of the Media

	Confidence in the Police %	Views on Crime %	Overall Feeling of Safety %
Yes, definitely	10.3	14.3	9.2
Probably	13.5	16.7	13.9
Sometimes	23.6	31.7	20.8
Not significantly	30.3	22.5	35.0
Definitely not	18.1	11.7	17.2
Don't know	4.2	3.1	4.0

Base: All respondents

The media had greatest influence on respondents' views on crime, with over 60% saying their views were influenced at least some of the time by the media. Confidence in the police and people's overall feeling of safety also appeared to be influenced significantly by the media in up to 50% of cases.

There was no clear pattern in responses according to location, age or gender in relation to how their confidence in the police is influenced by the media.

3.29 Use of Internet and Mobile Phones

Respondents were asked if they would use the internet to report a crime.

Table 3.22 Willingness to Use Internet to Report Crimes

	Force Area %
Yes, any crime	2.4
Yes, minor crime	3.2
No, don't have access to the internet	39.0
No, would prefer to speak to police	51.1
Don't know/No opinion	4.2

Base: All respondents

Use of the internet would be considered by only 5.6% of respondents.

3.30 11.9% of respondents said they would be happy to receive general information from the police via text to a mobile phone.

3.31 25.3% of respondents said they would be happy to receive general information from the police via email/internet.

Generally, these forms of communication were best suited to people of working age.

3.32 Mobile Police Station

35.2% of respondents would like to see a mobile police station visit their area on a regular basis. Over half of urban respondents stated that they would like to see such a service, compared with only a quarter of respondents in isolated rural areas.

3.33 The Use of Public Places to Access Information on Police Services

Respondents were asked if they would utilise the following to access information on police services.

Table 3.23 Public Places Used to Access Information on Police Services

	Force Area %
Council office / service point	36.1
Post office	35.8
Library	32.5
Supermarket	27.5
Bank	16.7

Base: All respondents

Council offices / service points and *post offices* were the preferred methods to access information about police services in the Force area as a whole. Council offices / service points were less favoured by residents in isolated rural areas, who preferred the *post office* or *library*. City and large town residents were more likely than residents of other areas to access information at a *supermarket*.

Other sources which respondents stated that they used to access police information included:

- Police Stations (29 mentions)
- Internet (6 mentions)
- College/Schools (4 mentions)

The Role of the Police

3.34 Public priorities

Respondents were asked in what ways the Northern Constabulary could improve the service it provides to the public. The main groups of response to this open question are shown in the following table.

Table 3.24 Ways to Improve Services Provided

	Force Area %
Foot patrols / officers on the beat	44.1
Higher profile / higher visibility	25.2
More accessible / approachable / friendly	15.1
Community involvement / community policing	11.0
More information / communication (including newsletters)	10.9
Satisfied with existing Police service	10.6
Do more with young people / in schools	7.8
Recruit more officers	7.1
Higher presence in villages	2.2

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

A clear priority for respondents was *foot patrols/officers on the beat*, with 44.1% of respondents stating this as a preference. However, only 24.1% of respondents in isolated rural areas stated this as a possible improvement. *Higher profile/visibility* policing was a common theme across rural and urban areas alike. *More information/communication* from the police was more likely to be mentioned by younger age groups. In response to the question, 10.6% of respondents expressed satisfaction with current service levels from the police.

Comments included the need for a return to “more bobbies on the beat”; “more foot patrols and less running around in cars”. Many commented on the need for officers to be friendlier, suggesting they were more aloof now than in the past, including one respondent who said: “train your officers to be more approachable and user friendly” and another who felt that officers should “not treat ordinary civilians as if they were criminals”. One respondent called for “a much closer working relationship with the wider community so that people really get to know why and what the police are all about”.

3.35 Respondents were asked what should be the three main priorities for the Northern Constabulary. The main groups of response to this open question are shown in the following table.

Table 3.25 Main Priorities for the Police

	Force Area %
Crime prevention/law and order/public safety	52.7
Road safety / speeding	33.7
Drugs (general / unspecified)	20.8
Theft / property crime / vandalism	20.0
Drug related crime / behaviour	16.5
Drink driving	14.5
Drink related crime / behaviour	14.3
Drug dealing	13.7
Violence / assault	12.3
Crime detection (incl. prosecution)	12.3
Public relations	9.0
Youth behaviour on streets	7.6
Integrate with youth groups / schools	7.2
Quick response to reports of crime	4.7
Partnership working / liaison	4.3
Anti-social behaviour	4.0
Drug awareness	2.1
Community policing	1.8
Education/Advice	1.6
Tougher on sentencing/known offenders	1.1

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Over half of the respondents who answered the question mentioned *crime prevention/maintenance of law and order* as the key priority for Northern Constabulary. Such comments included: “To help provide a safe and secure living environment in which we can all live.” Respondents also singled out children and older people as being especially vulnerable.

Road safety/speeding and *drugs (general/unspecified)* were the next most commonly mentioned priorities.

Other responses not listed in the table above included helping victims of crime (8 mentions), problems with licensed premises (5 mentions), and litter (4 mentions).

3.36 Respondents were asked with which things the police should not be dealing. The main groups of response to this open question are shown in the following table.

Table 3.26 Areas With Which the Police Should Not Be Dealing

	Force Area %
Litter	19.1
Excessive administration	18.0
Stray animals / lost pets	15.7
Minor motoring / parking offences	15.2
Dog fouling	14.5
Parenting	10.5
Minor domestic disputes	6.5
Anti-social neighbours	6.0
Petty crime	5.9
Drug/alcohol abusers	3.8
Crowd control , e.g. football matches/demonstrations	3.8
Court duties/transfers	2.8
Lost property	2.8
Bullying	1.7
Council issues	1.7
Pub/club noise	1.4
Mentally ill	1.2

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

Respondents felt that *litter* was the most important issue with which the police should not be dealing. Excessive administration was next with comments such as “...cut the paperwork down, so that officers can get on with the job”.

Other responses mentioned by less than 1% of respondents included:

- Mountain rescue (3 mentions)
- Graffiti (3 mentions)
- Domestic abuse (2 mentions)
- Minor drug infringements (2 mentions)
- Royal protection duties (2 mentions)

The Role of the Individual

3.37 Individual action

Respondents were asked what they thought they could do to help improve the quality of life in their community.

Table 3.27 Individual Action

	Force Area %
Report crime or suspicious behaviour	28.6
Neighbourliness / be friendly	22.8
Support community activities / groups (including youth events)	22.4
Engender law abiding behaviour	13.5
Nothing	13.2
Neighbourhood watch	11.6
Be law-abiding	7.5
Collect litter	4.9

Base: All respondents

Note: Multiple responses were accepted

The most common way in which respondents felt they could contribute to the quality of life in their community was to report crime or other suspicious behaviour. The other main responses were to be more neighbourly or friendly in their local community and to support community activities. An illustrative response was: “By being a good neighbour, being ready to help others, being vigilant and reporting suspicious behaviour”.

13.2% of people who answered the question said that they could do nothing to improve the quality of life in their community. Reasons given for this response included old age, disability and working too many hours.