

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP

“Creating a knowledge-base of public confidence in the criminal justice system”

<http://criminaljusticeresearch.ncl.ac.uk/>



RESEARCH BRIEFING

Project Output 4B
July 2008

Survey Data Analysis

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

This briefing paper gives an overview of the analysis of the survey data carried out to date. It summarises findings presented to the Northumbria Criminal Justice Board at their meeting on Friday 25th July 2008. It is an interim rather than a final statement of findings and draws attention to the key associations identified so far. It should be noted that association between two variables does not imply that there is a causal link and that these associations will require further exploration through the follow-up phase of qualitative research which is currently underway. A completed and more detailed report on this phase of the project, including references, will be included in the final report on the empirical research (Output 5). This report will be available at the end of February 2009 after all phases of the data collection and analysis have been completed.

SURVEY FOCUS

The survey had a particular focus on the relationship between ‘general confidence’ (as measured by current confidence questions included in the BCS) and ‘confidence to engage’ (the likelihood that an individual will engage with the CJS at appropriate points). Key question areas included: beliefs about what the CJS should be doing, beliefs about the state of society, expectations of the CJS in specific scenarios, ‘What would you do?’ and demographics.

HEADLINE FIGURES

- 27% response rate
- 97.1% White British
- 59.4% Female
- 75.6% Over 45
- 63.7% had been a victim of crime
- 39.1% fairly or very confident that the CJS is effective
- 45.2% fairly or very confident that the CJS is fair
- 90.6% would definitely contact the police if their home was broken into

- 63.7% would definitely contact the police if they had information which might help with their enquiries

CONFIDENCE THAT THE CJS IS EFFECTIVE (GENERAL CONFIDENCE)

DEMOGRAPHICS

There were no significant associations between demographic factors and confidence.

DIRECT EXPERIENCE

Most direct experience of the CJS reduces the likelihood that someone will be confident that the CJS is effective, however having been a victim of crime or having reported a crime to the police are *not* associated with decreased confidence.

MEDIA

Using the local papers to find out about the CJS is associated with a slightly reduced likelihood that a respondent will be confident.

ANTICIPATED SERVICE

The higher the level of service respondents anticipated receiving in specified scenarios the more likely they were to be confident. The strongest association was between anticipation that the CJS can find offenders guilty and punish them.

BELIEFS ABOUT THE STATE OF SOCIETY

Respondents who had a strongly negative outlook on the state of society were much less likely to be confident than other respondents.

BELIEFS ABOUT CRIME TRENDS

The more positive a respondent's assessment of changes in crime trends over the previous 2 years the more likely they were to be confident.

PUNITIVENESS

The mean level of punitiveness amongst respondents who were not at all confident was significantly higher than for other respondents.

THE EFFECT OF VICTIMISATION

Experiences of victimisation seemed to have a counter-intuitive impact on perceptions of society and crime trends, and on confidence:

- Having been a victim of crime did not make respondents any less likely to be confident
- Having been a victim of crime was associated with being *more likely* to think that crime in Northumbria had stayed the same or fallen over the last 2 years
- Those who had been a victim of crime *6 or more times* were *less likely* than those who had *never* been a victim of crime to think that crime in Northumbria had increased
- Those who had been a victim of crime were *less likely* to think that society is more selfish than it used to be
- Those who had been a victim of crime *10 or more times* were *more likely* to think that young people have plenty of respect for their elders

PROPENSITY TO ENGAGE (CONFIDENCE TO ENGAGE)

AGE

Under 45s were less likely to have a high propensity to engage with the CJS in the specified scenarios.

OFFICIAL INFORMATION

Those who used official information sources to find out about the CJS were more likely to have a high propensity to engage.

ANTICIPATED SERVICE

Respondents anticipating a high level of service in the specified scenarios were more likely to have a high propensity to engage. The strongest association was between anticipation of the service provided by the police and the propensity to engage.

SENSE OF DUTY

Respondents with a strong sense of duty to engage had a higher propensity to engage.

CONFIDENCE THAT THE CJS IS EFFECTIVE

There was a weak association between confidence that the CJS is effective and the propensity to engage.

ANALYSING THE CONFIDENCE GROUPS

Respondents were classified according to the following grid:

	Confident that the CJS is effective	Not confident that the CJS is effective
High propensity to engage	TOTALLY CONFIDENT	CONFIDENT ENOUGH
Low propensity to engage	OUTWARDLY CONFIDENT	NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT

Analysing these groups found that they had the following characteristics:

Totally confident (29%)

More likely to...

- ...be retired
- ...rely on official information
- ...agree that 'people today have high moral standards'

Confident enough (39%)

More likely to...

- ...have experience of reporting crime or anti-social behaviour, or providing the police with information
- ...have a strong sense of duty to report crime

Less likely to...

- ...say that they 'don't know' about crime trends

Outwardly confident (10%)

Less likely to...

- ...think that young people lack respect for their elders
- ... think that society is more dangerous than in the past
- ...think that local crime has gone up

Not at all confident (22%)

More likely to...

- ...have been stopped by the police, arrested or found guilty of a non-motoring offence

Less likely to...

- ...think that crime across Northumbria has fallen
- ...have a strong sense of duty to report crime

KEY FINDINGS

General confidence (that is confidence that the CJS is effective) appears to be underpinned by individual's levels of punitiveness, their beliefs about the state of society and their beliefs about crime trends. It seems therefore largely to reflect people's broader outlook on the world. However, it is also independently associated with whether respondents anticipate that the CJS is able to find offenders guilty at court and punish them, suggesting that evaluations of this aspect of CJS performance are important to overall confidence. General confidence is a poor guide as to whether or not a person will engage with the CJS.

Propensity to engage with the CJS is most strongly associated with having a sense of duty to engage, but is also significantly associated with anticipations of service levels and age. Like general confidence, propensity to engage is associated to some extent with whether people think that the CJS is able to find offenders guilty and pass sentences which punish them, however, the association is much weaker. This suggests that whilst believing that the CJS can bring offenders to justice and punish them is important to the public, the impact of such a belief on likely behaviour is limited.

NEXT STEPS

The data collection and analysis are still ongoing. The next phase of data collection will use focus groups and one-to-one interviews, the format of which will be shaped by the survey findings. This stage of data collection will gather rich qualitative data to complement the quantitative data and further enhance our understanding of confidence. Analysis of the survey data will continue up to the production of the final report and emerging findings and ideas will be fed through to the Board and the Communications and Community Engagement Sub-group as appropriate.