*"Creating a knowledge-base of **public confidence** in the Criminal Justice System"*

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Newcastle University

NORTHUMBRIA CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD
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ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

Report 5: Final Report on the Empirical Research

Sociology

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Criminal Justice Research

http://criminaljusticeresearch.ncl.ac.uk

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Abbreviations Used:

CJS	Criminal Justice System
NLCJB	Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
PSA	Public Service Agreement
BCS	British Crime Survey
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer

Earlier reports in this series:

1. **Base-line Audit (December 2006)**
2. **Literature Review (August 2007)**
3. **Summary of the Exploratory Qualitative Research (March 2008)**

4. **Research Briefings:**
   a. **Survey Data Collection (May 2008)**
   b. **Survey Data Analysis (July 2008)**
   c. **In-depth Qualitative Data Collection (January 2009)**
   d. **In-depth Qualitative Data Analysis (May 2009)**

(See: http://criminaljusticeresearch.ncl.ac.uk/index_files/KTPProjectReports.htm)

Acknowledgments   ⓘ

Author Biographies

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Liz Turner obtained her BA (Hons) in Politics from York University and her MA in Applied Policy Research (Dist) from Newcastle University, where she has undertaken advanced training in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Liz is currently employed as KTP Research Associate for this work and has published journal and conference papers on this area of study. She is also a PhD candidate at Newcastle University and the working title for her thesis is *'Public confidence and the criminal justice landscape: Comparing institutional and lay perspectives on becoming confident in the criminal justice system.'*

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. Public confidence is believed to make a vital contribution to the likelihood that individuals will engage with the CJS by reporting crime and acting as witnesses. It is a priority for Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) (see PSA 24, Indicator 2[1]) and is measured using a suite of indicators included in the British Crime Survey (BCS). This research aims to challenge existing approaches to thinking about confidence by asking whether the conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence are 'fit for purpose' in respect of the twin objectives of: (i) gauging public evaluations of the CJS, and (ii) providing an indication of the willingness of members of the public to engage with the CJS. The analytical framework for the analysis distinguishes between the objects of confidence (outcomes, actions and attributes of the CJS), the conditions for confidence (person characteristics, exposure to information, interpretations of that information) and the impacts of confidence on behaviour (willingness to engage with the CJS).

Method

2. There were three phases of empirical data collection: exploratory interviews and focus groups to aid design of a questionnaire (Sept-Oct, 2007); random sample survey (Apr-June, 2008); in-depth follow-up interviews and focus groups (Aug-Sept, 2008). Five thousand questionnaires were mailed and 1300 responses were received, representing a response rate of 27% based on questionnaires successfully delivered. Forty three survey respondents took part in the follow-up qualitative phase which comprised five focus groups lasting 60-90 minutes and 14 one-to-one interviews lasting 30-60 minutes. The quantitative analysis focused on identifying the factors associated with confidence that the CJS is effective whilst the qualitative analysis compared comments made by confident respondents with those made by respondents who were not confident.

Analysis

Conditions

3. Many respondents appeared to be discerning consumers of a range of information sources. The effects generated by exposure to different forms of information varied widely between individuals.

4. More than 93% of survey respondents said their views were influenced by the media, however most focus group and interview respondents were critical of the reliability of the media portrayal of crime and criminal justice. Views ranged from doubt, through respondents who thought the media were sometimes misleading, to those who felt they were totally unreliable. Only a small minority of respondents appeared to accept the media portrayal uncritically. Confident respondents were no more likely than not confident respondents to doubt or accept the media portrayal.

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[1] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa24.pdf

5. Respondent evaluations of the information they received often seemed to be based on the level of trust they placed in the motives of the producers and disseminators of that information. On this basis many respondents expressed distrust in official information which they saw as subject to 'spin' and designed to promote the interests of senior CJS officials and/or politicians. Only a minority of respondents expressed a willingness to rely on official information; however, all of the respondents who did were *already* confident.

6. Members of CJS staff *working in front-line or non-senior positions*, especially those known socially to respondents, were seen as likely to provide reliable information to respondents. However, word of mouth accounts from people not working in the CJS were treated with a degree of scepticism; respondents noted that it tends to be only bad experiences that get talked about and that some people may provide exaggerated accounts. Those survey respondents who said that their views were influenced by stories from other people were less likely to be confident than respondents who were not influenced by word of mouth.

7. Stories about *individual* criminal justice and crime-related events which demonstrated CJS inadequacy were used by respondents to illustrate *general* points about the CJS. In the focus groups these stories were traded between respondents and the validity of using these stories *as typifying examples* of how the CJS works was rarely questioned.

8. Many respondents revealed that they regularly engaged in conversations about crime, the criminal justice system and the state of society more generally. In the context of these conversations it appeared that stories were exchanged and circulated, and that respondents' views were reflected back to them by their friends, relatives and acquaintances and thus were reinforced. Information about the CJS appeared to circulate in a dynamic, ongoing 'conversation' about the state of society.

9. Respondents who had had negative experiences of the CJS tended to see their experiences as typical, whereas respondents who had had more positive experiences often dismissed these as atypically fortunate or irrelevant to the bigger conversation about crime and justice. Only 53% of respondents who had had direct experience of the CJS said their views were influenced by this, however those whose views were influenced by their experience were less likely to be confident.

10. The media seemed to leave respondents with negative impressions of the state of society and the CJS, even if they had expressed some distrust in the reliability of media accounts. Official information on the other hand did not seem to leave much of an impression behind, even amongst respondents who said that they trusted this kind of information.

11. There were no clear differences between confident and not confident respondents in terms of how they evaluated the reliability of the media as a source of information, however respondents who were not confident were less likely to trust official information and were more likely to be influenced by stories from other people, circulated through word of mouth.

Objects

12. The objects of confidence are those specific aspects of what the CJS is, does and achieves which the public seek to have confidence in, in order that they can be confident in the CJS as a whole. This analysis distinguishes between respondents' normative expectations of what the CJS *should* be doing and their perceptions of what

it *is* doing. It also distinguishes between confidence in the achievements of the CJS (ends) and confidence in the actions which it takes (means).

13.   Respondents expectations and perceptions were concentrated in four areas:

- Maintaining social order

- Reducing crime

- Delivering justice

- Serving the public

14.   Many interview and focus group respondents, regardless of whether or not they were confident, perceived society as being in a moral decline characterised by decreasing levels of politeness and respect.

15.   Respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to:

- …attribute decline in respect and values to loosening formal and informal controls

- …interpret individual instances of disrespect as indicators of more serious and pervasive social problems

16.   Respondents who were **confident** also noted social changes but were more likely to see these, as:

- …not necessarily typical of the majority

- …not so different from the way things were in the past

- …an improvement on the past

17.   Respondents with negative perceptions of the state of society were less likely to be confident that the CJS is effective; they were also more likely to think that crime was rising. Most respondents implicitly saw the reduction of crime as a core purpose of the CJS, although evaluations of crime trends did not play a prominent role in the interview and focus group discussions. Respondents tended to focus more on their beliefs about which actions would be effective at reducing crime and whether they thought the CJS was currently taking these actions.

18.   Harsh punishment was seen by many respondents as essential to reduce and deter offending. A minority of respondents also expressed support for rehabilitative/community-based approaches to changing offenders' behaviour. Other respondents expressed scepticism about the corrective power of non-custodial sentences.

19.   Confident and not confident respondents were equally likely to see current actions against offenders as too lenient. However, overall those respondents who were not confident were more preoccupied with sentencing issues, and more likely to be strongly aligned with the view that harsh punishment deters offending and reduces crime.

20.   Although respondents in the qualitative phase expressed concerns about the effectiveness of sentencing there was not a strong association between anticipation that sentences would reduce reoffending and confidence that the CJS is effective. Confidence was most strongly associated with anticipation that the CJS can find offenders guilty and punish them. So the use of the language of effectiveness by

respondents does not necessarily indicate that they carefully evaluate CJS effectiveness before stating their overall confidence that the CJS is effective.

21. Perceptions of crime rates were also associated with anticipation that the CJS can find offenders guilty and punish them, and the latter was more important for overall confidence. This suggests that perceptions of the actions that the CJS is taking against offenders are more important than direct perceptions of the results produced by these actions.

22. Respondents also expressed a desire for a more abstract outcome from the CJS; a sense that justice was being done. Although most struggled to articulate this desire in an explicit way, 'justice being done' was implicitly linked to the notion of retribution, or of balancing the harm caused to the victim and their family with harm inflicted on the offender. However, whilst several respondents saw prison as the only 'true' punishment, and many were concerned that conditions in prison were too comfortable to be sufficiently punitive, most respondents were vague about the parameters for what might be appropriate in punishment.

23. Many respondents seemed to see appropriate retribution and effectiveness in sentencing as inextricably linked. Appropriate retribution was therefore seen as both fair and effective.

24. Many respondents were concerned that the CJS unfairly penalised members of the public who tried to protect themselves and their property from offenders. This was seen as indicating that the CJS was tilted in favour of offenders and against the law-abiding.

25. Respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to:

- …see punishment as an end in itself

- …see prison as the only 'true' punishment

- …believe that conditions in prison should be harsher than they currently perceive them to be

- …believe that the CJS is tilted too far in favour of the offender

- …believe that the CJS should allow members of the public to use potentially lethal force against offenders who are threatening them or their property

26. Respondents had a strong sense that the CJS should be working in the interests of 'ordinary members of the public', and should be in touch with their views. The service provided by the police was mentioned by many respondents, concentrating in particular on their visibility on the streets; the speed with which they attended incidents; whether they took action to address a problem; and the politeness with which they dealt with members of the public.

27. Respondents who were **confident** were more likely to mention positive aspects of the service provided by the police, although they did also refer to some negative aspects. Respondents who were **not confident** did make some positive remarks about the police, but tended to qualify these remarks or downplay their significance and on the whole were more negative about the service provided by the police.

28.   Anticipation of the service provided by the police had the second most powerful association with confidence. However, it was much less important than anticipation that the CJS could find offenders guilty and punish them.

Impacts

29.   The recent review by Louise Casey identified a key role for citizens in helping to tackle crime: 'report crime and be prepared to give evidence' (Casey, 2008: 78). This research sought to explore the association between confidence in the CJS and willingness to engage with the CJS in specified scenarios.

30.   The vast majority of respondents were willing to engage with the CJS when there was a threat to themselves or their property, they were somewhat less willing to engage when there was a threat to others, the community or the local environment.

31.   Confident respondents were slightly more likely to have a high willingness to engage with the CJS, however the association was weak. Confidence is not a good proxy measure for willingness to engage.

32.   The standard of service that respondents anticipated receiving from the police in the specified scenarios was a better predictor of willingness to engage than general confidence. A sense of duty to engage was the factor most strongly associated with willingness to engage.

33.   Respondents' willingness to engage was sometimes based on their beliefs about whether the potential benefits of engaging would be realised. However some respondents were willing to engage despite their doubts that the benefits would be realised.

34.   Respondents also weighed the benefits against the costs of engaging. Often the perceived costs of engaging were associated with a lack of belief that the CJS would do certain things, including: arrive quickly, protect the person reporting the crime and take effective action. *Respondents tended to focus on short to medium-term costs and benefits associated with service provision, rather than on longer term outcomes such as sentences.*

35.   Many respondents felt that they had a responsibility to engage with the CJS. This sense of responsibility was sometimes something they felt they owed to the system, and sometimes they felt they owed it to the other people involved. Some respondents gave 'empathy for others' as a reason for being willing to engage. Other respondents were habitually willing to engage with the CJS, seeing it as just something that you do when a crime has been committed.

36.   Respondents made a distinction between approving of all CJS actions and seeing the system as 'legitimate enough' to expect their cooperation.

Discussion

37. Confidence did not appear to reflect a considered evaluation of CJS performance in key areas. Rather it seemed to be rooted in respondents' basic beliefs about the nature and causes of criminality; their trust in authority figures to tell the truth about crime and CJS effectiveness; and the way in which they interpret the available information about the world around them.

38. Key differences between confident and not confident respondents were:

- **Receptivity** – Not confident respondents were less likely to be receptive to conventional information exercises and community engagement activities.

- **Outlook** – Not confident respondents were more pessimistic about the state of society.

- **Beliefs about what works** – Not confident respondents saw punishment, discipline and the fear of these as the best means of reducing crime and protecting social order.

39. In order to 'cross-over' from being not confident to confident, respondents may need to be persuaded to change deeply held beliefs.

40. Confidence is not a good proxy for willingness to engage; willingness to engage seems to reflect people's habits, their sense of duty and their beliefs about the short-term costs and benefits of engaging.

41. Confidence as it is currently conceptualised and measured does not meet the objectives of measuring public evaluations of CJS performance and providing a good proxy for willingness to engage. It is not therefore 'fit for purpose'.

42. Whether a respondent is confident or not confident in the CJS may provide an indication as to the kind of story about crime, justice and the state of society that they subscribe to. If the established approach to increasing confidence reflects that story, it may actually contribute to the consolidation of existing views by:

- Reinforcing the perception that society is in a state of declining values and respect which requires punitive action.

- Lending credibility to the belief that harsh punishment is the most effective way to deter crime.

43. Such an approach is also likely to be ineffective as respondents who are not confident mistrust official information exercises.

Recommendations

44. This report concludes by making specific recommendations that include:

Recommendation 1: Differentiate the concept of public confidence into (at least) the following:

- General approval of CJS

- Anticipation of CJS performance in key scenarios

- Willingness to engage with the CJS in key scenarios

- Wellbeing

Recommendation 2: Develop focused measures for the differentiated aspects of confidence (general approval of CJS, anticipation of CJS performance in key scenarios, willingness to engage with the CJS in key scenarios and wellbeing) suitable for insertion into regular local surveys.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that research into public views of the CJS incorporates both quantitative and qualitative components.

Recommendation 4: Re-orient research, policy and practice around public confidence to the core objective of fostering a hospitable environment for the development of fair, effective, evidence-informed criminal justice policy which aims to meet public demands for crime reduction, social order and justice.

Recommendation 5: Cultivate a new discourse of criminal justice which breaks the toughness-deterrent link and emphasises an evidence-based and inclusive approach to achieving the outcomes which the public desire.

Recommendation 6: To build trust in official information, ensure that locally-relevant information at an appropriate[2] level of detail about crimes committed, detections and eventual sentencing disposals is available on a routine and accessible basis, and that this availability is effectively publicised to the public.[3]

Recommendation 7: Provide regular opportunities for key local opinion formers to engage in informed deliberation about crime and criminal justice.

Recommendation 8: Identify front-line CJS staff with the most power to influence public views and engage with these staff to understand their attitudes and concerns about the CJS.

Recommendation 9: Directly address willingness to engage with the CJS in appropriate scenarios rather than using confidence as a proxy. Outline an ideal model for citizen engagement with the CJS.

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[2] In considering what is 'an appropriate level', consideration should be given to the likely impact of the release of such data and the fact that data can be misconstrued, even with the best of intentions.

[3] This recommendation builds on recommendations 3.3-3.8 and recommendations 4.9 and 4.10 from the Smith Review of Crime Statistics completed for the Home Office in 2006 (Smith, 2006). Similar recommendations were made in the Casey Review (Casey, 2008) which championed the development of interactive online maps (*ibid*: 69). This report however explicitly recommends caution in establishing the parameters of what level of detail is 'appropriate', (see footnote 2 above). Recommendation 6, based on the findings from *this* research (which suggest that the public do not trust official information) has at its core the principle that locally-relevant information about crime and CJS responses to crime should be available to the public as *a matter of routine*.

Conclusion

45. The recommendations of this report embrace a new approach to 'doing confidence' and are built upon a fundamental re-thinking of the way in which confidence is conceptualised. 'Public confidence' is a complex issue that is not amenable to change by 'quick-fix' solutions. Criminal justice agencies can contribute to the environment in which public confidence levels are formed but there is no simple, direct way of increasing public confidence in the CJS. In the light of this work it is unrealistic to suggest that the current confidence measures simply depict the reality of the relationship between criminal justice agencies and the public they serve. It would also be unsafe to use the current measures, alone, to criticise, guide or applaud individual criminal justice agencies or partnerships.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Research

1.1.1 Criminal justice agencies have been required to work towards promoting public confidence in criminal justice since the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review and the introduction of Public Service Agreements (PSAs). Consequently, when Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) were introduced in 2003 to bring together senior executives from the criminal justice agencies within each police force area, increasing public confidence was immediately a core part of their business. Prompted by the new centrality of public confidence to criminal justice system (CJS) business, research into confidence has expanded (see Turner, Campbell, Dale and Graham, 2007). However, the intensified research activity has not generated practical insights capable of producing substantial improvements in confidence against the established British Crime Survey (BCS) indicator.

1.1.2 In 2006, Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board (NLCJB) responded to the lack of usable knowledge about how to increase public confidence by entering into a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with researchers at Newcastle University[4]. The research was commissioned in order to increase understanding of the nature of public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS), primarily within the Northumbria area, in order to inform strategic and tactical approaches to the issue of confidence. This document is the fifth in a series of project reports which can be viewed on the project website[5]. This report focuses on the empirical findings from both quantitative and qualitative data collected from members of the public during the course of the project, and refers back to the literature review (Turner *et al*, 2007) to place these findings within an explanatory framework.

1.2 Policy Context

1.2.1 Public confidence is well-established as an area of performance measurement within the criminal justice arena. Confidence is believed to make a significant contribution towards the likelihood that members of the public will engage with the CJS by reporting crime and acting as witnesses. Having the confidence of the communities that they serve is thus viewed as vital in order for criminal justice agencies to be able to function effectively and efficiently. The delivery agreement produced following the government's 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review maintained that: *'Public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of criminal justice is essential. Low public satisfaction and confidence lead to unnecessary fear of*

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[4] The project was funded by NLCJB and the Economic and Social Research Council. This partnership also received financial support from the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships programme (KTP). KTP aims to help businesses improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the UK Knowledge Base. KTP is funded by the Technology Strategy Board along with the other government funding organisations. The project team comprised: Dr Elaine Campbell (Newcastle University); Dr Andy Dale (Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board); Dr Ruth Graham (Newcastle University) and Liz Turner (Newcastle University). For more information on the KTP scheme see: http://www.ktponline.org.uk/

[5] http://criminaljusticeresearch.ncl.ac.uk/index_files/KTPProjectReports.htm.

crime and insecurity, and mean that the public is less likely to report crime or act as witnesses.' (HM Treasury, 2007: 5). It is on the basis of this belief in the existence of a direct relationship between public confidence and community support for CJS activities that public confidence has become a key component of the way CJS performance is measured.

1.2.2   Public confidence that the CJS is fair and effective is measured using a suite of questions included in the British Crime Survey. The performance measurement framework has undergone a number of changes since being introduced in 1998, including shifts in responsibility for delivery against relevant performance indicators (away from individual LCJBs), as well as alterations to the way in which performance is measured. The current performance framework for public confidence is outlined in the Criminal Justice System Strategic Plan: 2008-2011. The relevant PSA, correct at May 2009, is PSA 24, Indicator 2: *'Increase public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of the CJS'*. Whilst responsibility for meeting targets on the headline measure (derived from the suite of questions included in the British Crime Survey) is no longer devolved to the local level, LCJBs are now required to undertake (and will be judged upon) activities to increase confidence, and are currently being encouraged to put in place their own local methods of demonstrating progress. Increasingly, therefore, it is vital that LCJBs develop a better understanding of the nature of, and influences upon, public confidence in CJS activities.

1.2.3 Current guidance to LCJBs from the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) focuses on the importance of:

- Correcting public misperceptions by providing accurate information
- Communicating key messages about the system to the public

1.2.4 This approach builds on an existing paradigm which argues that there is a gap between public perceptions of CJS performance and the situation as it is in reality, and that this gap must be closed in order to increase confidence (for example see Hutton, 2005; Allen, 2004).

1.3 Research Focus

1.3.1   The purpose of the research presented in this report is not to replicate existing approaches to thinking about confidence. Rather this work has sought to challenge existing approaches where, on the basis of a critical empirical investigation, this appeared to be appropriate and necessary. Key findings from existing research are referred to where relevant throughout this report, and are discussed in more detail in the report on the literature review (Turner *et al*, 2007).

1.3.2   The research began from the position that the basic assumptions about confidence contained within existing policy and research should be interrogated. Starting with the principle that the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the idea of confidence should be 'fit for purpose', this research set out to explore what is captured by the idea of 'public confidence', and what being 'confident' (or 'not confident') means to the people for whose benefit the performance measurement agenda has been designed; the public.

1.3.3   Being 'fit for purpose' is of course contingent upon having a purpose. This study has assumed that measuring confidence in the CJS has two objectives. Firstly, measuring confidence in the CJS should do exactly what it claims to do, which is to

gauge whether or not the public think that the CJS is an effective system[6]. Secondly, as noted above (see Para 1.2.1), PSA 24, Indicator 2 is premised on the claim that public confidence in the CJS is an indicator of how willing members of the public are to engage with the CJS at appropriate points. So, measuring confidence should provide an indication of how willing members of the public are to engage with the system.

1.4   Analytical Framework

1.4.1   The term 'driver' is commonly used in existing confidence research to describe the issues and information sources associated with confidence (for example see Public Knowledge, 2006; NOP World, 2003; Opinion Leader Research, 2005). However Turner *et al* (2007) have argued that the term 'driver' is inappropriate for this purpose because it obscures the complexity associated with confidence. Reports by Dodgson, Dodgson and O'Donnell (2006) and Holme (2006) both structured their analyses of confidence to consider the issues of importance to the public separately from the things which influence public opinions on those issues. The analytical framework for this project draws on this approach and distinguishes between *'the components and attributes of CJS activity in which the public seek to have confidence (which can be thought of as the 'objects' of confidence) and the conditions shaping how the public make judgements about these (which can be thought of as the 'conditions' for confidence).'* (Turner *et al*, 2007: 15). The framework (shown in Figure 1 below) also accommodates the impacts[7] which it is believed that increased confidence will have; namely, increased willingness of members of the public to engage with the CJS in appropriate scenarios.

Figure 1: Analytical framework

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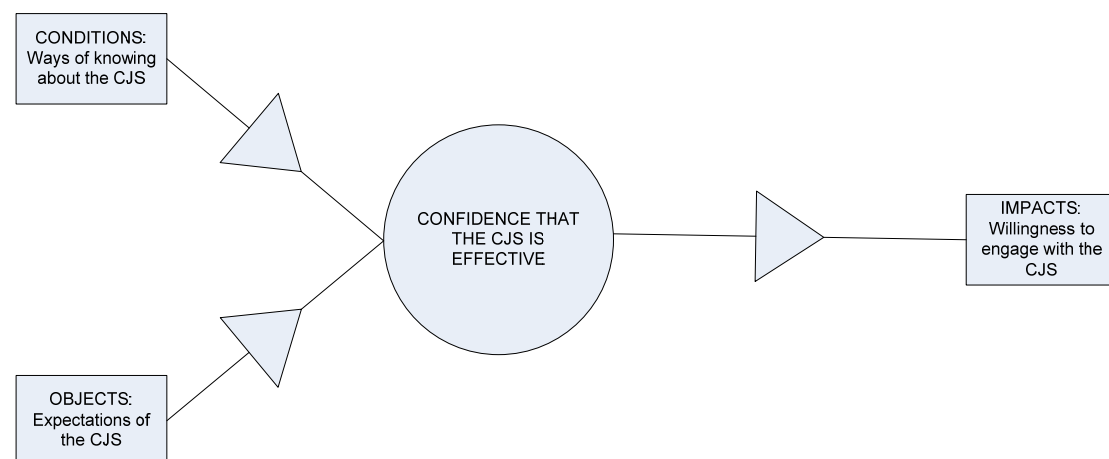
[6] This report focuses on CJS effectiveness rather than fairness as the general confidence measure has historically been concerned with effectiveness rather than fairness.

[7] In previous project reports the term 'outcome' was used here, however for the sake of conceptual clarity it has been decided to substitute 'impacts'. In this report the word 'impacts' is used as a heading for considering the effect which confidence is believed to have on public behaviour.

1.4.2 In line with this framework the research was designed to address three main areas of enquiry:

CONDITIONS – How do the public find out about the CJS? How do they interpret the information they receive? How is this related to confidence?

OBJECTS - What do the public expect from the CJS and do their perceptions of the system match their expectations? How do specific expectations and perceptions contribute to general confidence?

IMPACTS – What factors are related to willingness to engage with the CJS? In what way (if any) does public confidence impact on willingness to engage?

By addressing these questions this report examines whether public confidence, in its current conceptualisation, is 'fit for purpose'; that is, that actions taken to increase public confidence have clear value in respect of increasing the effectiveness of the CJS and its ability to serve all sections of the community.

1.5 Report Structure

1.5.1 The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 – Method - provides a brief descriptive overview of the methods applied during the research.

Chapters 3 – 5 - Analysis - present the findings from the analysis of the data addressing each of the three components of the analytical framework (conditions, objects and impacts) in turn.

Chapter 6 – Discussion - provides a synthesis and discussion of the research findings, drawing on the analysis chapter.

Chapter 7 – Recommendations - presents the key recommendations arising from the analysis.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion – provides some concluding remarks.

2. Method

2.0.1   The study employed three phases of empirical data collection:

1. A small-scale series of exploratory interviews and focus groups8 (September – October, 2007)

2. A random-sample survey (April – June, 2008)

3. An in-depth qualitative phase based on focus-group and semi-structured interviews (August – September, 2008)

2.0.2   Each phase of data collection was used to inform subsequent phases, and findings from all three phases have been integrated within this report. The use of a mixed-methodological research design, drawing as it has done upon both qualitative and quantitative data, has enabled the use of a 'triangulation' approach. In brief, data obtained using one methodological approach have been 'cross-checked' by using data obtained through a different methodological approach. The use of triangulation intends to improve the robustness and validity of research findings and in this research, quantitative data was used to ascertain whether specific qualitative findings were likely to be present in the wider population; and qualitative data was used to probe in more detail the generalised observations from the survey[9].

2.1 Survey

2.1.1   The aim of the survey was to increase understanding of what adults living in the Northumbria area think about the criminal justice system. The survey was designed to enable confident inferences to be made about the views of the whole population of Northumbria based on data collected from a stratified, random sample of individuals.

Sampling

2.1.2   Key aspects of the sampling method included:

- **Postal survey** - the most cost-effective way to obtain a good sample size (Czaja and Blair, 1996: 35; Dillman, 2006).

- **Sample size** - It was estimated that in order to ensure that meaningful analysis could be carried out at least 1000 responses would be required[10]. Based on an estimated response rate of 20% this meant that questionnaires needed to be sent to 5000 individuals.

- **Random sampling** - unlike non-probability sampling methods (for example quota sampling), random sampling allows researchers to

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[8] This chapter outlines the methods used in phases 2 and 3. A report on phase 1, entitled 'Output 3: Summary of the Exploratory Qualitative Research' is available on the project website.: http://criminaljusticeresearch.ncl.ac.uk/

[9] For a discussion of 'triangulation' and the combination of quantitative and qualitative research, see Bryman, 2001, chapter 2

[10] As a general rule, the larger the sample the more powerful the statistical tests that can be carried out on the data (Czaja and Blair, 1996: 152).

make inferences from the sample to the population as a whole (Czaja and Blair, 1996: 111; also see Turner *et al*, 2007 on the relative 'power' of different surveys)[11].

- **Questionnaires distributed to named individuals** (as opposed to 'the occupier') - This is known to boost the response rate in postal questionnaires (Fowler, 2002: 48) and reduces the introduction of bias when householders self-select who is to return the questionnaire.

- **Sample stratified according to local authority area** – This was to ensure even geographical coverage of the area thus reducing the risk of an atypical sample being selected (Czaja and Blair, 1996: 165).

- **Each individual given a Unique Reference Number (URN)** - Responses could be monitored to avoid sending a reminder mailing to those who had already replied. Questionnaires could be easily matched to the local authority area in which respondents lived.

Instrument design

2.1.3   The findings from the initial stage of exploratory qualitative research contributed to the production of a draft set of questions for inclusion in the survey questionnaire. Drawing on these key findings it was decided that the survey questionnaire should try to capture and make a distinction between:

- Normative expectations of what the CJS *should* be doing and achieving

- Beliefs about what the CJS *is* doing and achieving, and about the state of society more generally

- Anticipated CJS service in specific scenarios

- Sense of duty to engage with the CJS

- Likelihood of engagement with CJS in specific scenarios

2.1.4   The intention was to investigate whether being 'confident' (using the established measures) is related to (i) whether or not an individual anticipates receiving a good service from the system were they to call upon it; and (ii) whether or not they are willing to behave in the desired ways in relation to the criminal justice system, by reporting crime and cooperating with CJS agents.

2.1.5   The survey then sought to explore more fully the relationship between expressions of opinion on the CJS; anticipation of the service it would provide in specific scenarios; and behaviour. This enabled the research team to establish whether general opinions about the system are, as current confidence research and policy seems to assume, indicative of an orientation towards cooperation.

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[11] The company Experian obtained a random sample of 5001 adults (over 18) living in the Northumbria area. This sample was drawn from Experian's database 'National Canvasse' which is compiled using the edited electoral lists and consumer data.

2.1.6 Questionnaire design and piloting consisted of 4 stages:

    a. 1ST DRAFT - EXPERT REVIEW
       An initial list of draft questions was reviewed by the project team. This first stage of piloting functioned as an 'expert review' (See Czaja and Blair, 1996: 102).

    b. 2ND DRAFT - RESPONDENT DEBRIEF
       A draft questionnaire was produced and distributed to four volunteers. The respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire noting how long it took to complete and any difficulties they encountered. Immediately after filling in the questionnaire they took part in a structured interview to 'debrief' them on the process of filling in the questionnaire. The purpose of the debrief interview was to identify difficulties and also to probe respondents' understandings of key terms used, to ensure continuity in question interpretation (See Czaja and Blair, 1996: 103).

    c. 3RD DRAFT - TRIAL RUN
       A 'trial-run' of the revised questionnaire to test how it functioned as a whole document. Questionnaires were hand delivered to ten households in three streets in a neighbourhood of the Riverside[12] area of Northumbria (two households declined to accept the questionnaire). A verbal explanation was given to the recipients about the purpose of the exercise and they were asked to fill in the questionnaire in time for a prearranged pick up. Six completed questionnaires were subsequently collected. Patterns of response (and non-response) were then analysed in order to identify any possible problems with the design of individual questions and the questionnaire as a whole.

    d. FINAL DRAFT - AESTHETIC DESIGN
       The aesthetic design of the questionnaire was addressed to make the document as attractive and user-friendly as possible[13]. The aesthetic design was seen as a key tool for increasing the likelihood that members of the public would be motivated to complete and return the completed questionnaire (Fowler, 2002: 48).

2.1.7 A covering letter and factsheet about the research were created to accompany the questionnaire[14]. In order to maximise response the factsheet emphasised confidentiality and the potential for the research to influence policy and practice. It also fulfilled ethical responsibilities to be transparent about the sources of funding for the research, who was carrying out the research and handling the data, and how respondents details were obtained. It also emphasised the voluntary nature of participation. Contact details for the researcher who led on the data collection were provided in case respondents had any queries (See Czaja and Blair, 1996: 213-4).

Data collection

2.1.8 Survey data collection took place during April and May 2008. The first mailing was sent on 4th April and the second mailing, to those who had not yet responded, on 28th April. The cut-off date for returns was 1st June. Respondents were provided with FREEPOST envelopes to return their questionnaires. In total 1300

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[12] All place names (as well as participant names) have been anonymised throughout all stages of the research process. A key to the place names is available only for internal reference by the project team and Northumbria Criminal Justice Board members and secretariat staff.
[13] See Appendix 1 for final version of the questionnaire
[14] See Appendix 2 for covering letter and factsheet

questionnaires were received back. A further 114 letters were returned as undeliverable. This gives a response rate (based on questionnaires successfully delivered) of 27%.

Table 1: Survey Respondent Breakdown

	Sample Value (%)*	North East Value (Census 2001) (%)
SEX		
Male	41	48
Female	59	52
AGE		
18-24	2	11
25-44	23	36
45-64	45	32
65-74	18	12
75+	12	10
OCCUPATION (18-74 year olds)		
Employed full-time	52	44
Employed part-time	4	14
Unemployed	1	5
Retired	29	16
Student	1	2
Home maker	5	7
Unable to work due to illness or disability	7	9
Other	2	4
HOUSING TENURE		
Owner Occupier	72	64
Renting from private landlord	4	6
Renting from council or housing association	21	28
Other	3	3

*Due to rounding totals may not add to 100%

2.1.9   The larger the sample obtained the more powerful the analysis which can be carried out on the data. The sample of 1300 individuals was large enough to enable both descriptive *and* inferential analysis to be carried out.

2.1.10 The more people who receive the questionnaire but choose not to return it the more non-response bias is introduced into a survey (De Vaus, 1996: 73). A response rate of 27% for a mailing survey, based on two mailings, is a reasonable response rate

and, whilst it cannot be claimed that the survey data is completely unbiased, the level of bias introduced is within conventional levels for this kind of research.[15]

2.1.11 Data was captured by a local data capture company (NData). Questionnaires were electronically scanned and responses captured to an SPSS file. Free text responses were manually entered twice to check for accuracy. All respondent personal data was anonymised and stored separately from the response database. Both databases are stored on a password-protected, secure network only accessible to the University-based research team.

Analysis

2.1.12 The data were analysed in SPSS using a variety of multivariate techniques including cross-tabulation, correlation and regression. Any apparent associations between variables were tested using appropriate statistical tests and are only reported here if they proved significant at the 0.05 level[16].

2.2 In-depth Qualitative Research

2.2.1 The purpose of the in-depth qualitative phase was to gain a deeper understanding of how members of the public think and talk about the criminal justice system and their confidence in the system, and to compare the picture of public views gained from the qualitative data with that gained from the quantitative data.

Recruitment

2.2.2 Following on from the success of combining individual interviews with focus groups during the exploratory phase, the combination of qualitative data collection methods was repeated. This enabled comparisons to be made between responses received in a one to one setting and those received in a group discussion setting. The sample was drawn exclusively from members of the population who had completed the questionnaire which enabled a comparison of responses to the questionnaire against responses made in an open-question environment.

2.2.3 Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they would be willing to take part in a follow-up qualitative study and to provide a contact telephone number. In total 420 people (32% of the sample) offered to take part in the next phase and a contacts database of those respondents was compiled. The database included information about respondents' levels of confidence[17], willingness to engage and where they lived to enable a focused approach to recruitment and to ensure that a demographically and attitudinally diverse range of participants took part.

2.2.4 Attempts were made to contact respondents by telephone at different times of the day and on different days of the week, including evenings and weekends. Ninety three (22%) of those who offered to participate were successfully contacted. No incentives were offered to respondents to take part, however refreshments were

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[15] Fowler suggests that 'The way to evaluate a sample is not by the results…but by examining the process by which it was selected' (Fowler, 2002: 11).

[16] Significant at the 0.05 level is the standard level of significance required in the social sciences to claim an association. Claiming association on this basis, researchers can be 95% certain that any observed association between variables is not due to chance.

[17] Throughout this report respondents will be referred to as 'confident' if they have indicated in the survey that they are fairly or very confident that the CJS is effective. They will be referred to as 'not confident' if they have indicated that they are not very or not at all confident.

offered when they attended venues external to their own homes, and they were able to claim back travel expenses. Eighteen (19%) of those contacted declined to take part. Twenty one (23%) could not attend at a suitable time. Eleven (12%) agreed to take part but did not attend. Forty three (46%) took part in an interview or focus group.

Instrument design

2.2.5 The interview and focus group schedules were designed to address four key themes:

The objects of confidence – participants' normative expectations of the CJS - what did they think it *should* be doing?

The conditions for confidence – under what conditions did participants form their views of the CJS?

Impacts – how might participants' views of the CJS affect their behaviour?

Being listened to – did participants think that their views on the CJS are listened to?

2.2.6 The schedules were laid out in a grid formation so that themes would not be addressed in a linear fashion but could be addressed at points which seemed appropriate during the discussion. The intention was to allow the conversations to be as free-flowing as possible whilst ensuring that the core themes were addressed.[18]

Data collection

2.2.7 In total five focus groups and 14 one-to-one interviews were carried out during August and September 2008. Of the 43 participants, 25 were female and 18 were male. The ages of the participants ranged from 27 to 93 years. Three participants were from a black or other minority ethnic background.

2.2.8 Focus groups were carried out in three different locations: at the University campus, in a community centre in Riverton and at the council chambers in Lightly. Three interviews were carried out at the University, the remaining 11 interviews were carried out at locations which were convenient for the participant, including (where appropriate) participants' own homes, workplaces and convenient cafes.

2.2.9 The focus groups each lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were facilitated by LT. The facilitator was assisted at each focus group by a co-facilitator who took notes on the discussion and also on non-verbal interaction, and who later transcribed the discussion verbatim, including notes about the non-verbal interactions. The interviews each lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and were conducted by LT, who also transcribed six of the interviews. The remaining eight interviews were transcribed verbatim by an external organisation.

2.2.10 At the beginning of every focus group and interview the purpose of the research was explained and the source of the funding made explicit. Participants were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed by the research team unless they said something which made the team concerned that someone might be at risk of serious harm. Participants were also advised that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the discussion at any time. Promotional materials for victim support were made available at each interview and focus group. Participants were asked whether they would like to receive a copy of the final report

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[18] See Appendices 3 and 4 for the final versions of the focus group and interview schedules.

and a note was made of those who expressed interest in order to share the published findings.

2.2.11 Transcripts of the discussions were stored on a secure password-protected database only accessible to the University-based members of the research team. Transcripts were anonymised for identity and place and participants were identified only by their questionnaire URN and an allocated pseudonym.

Analysis

2.2.12 Transcripts of the interviews and focus groups were coded with the assistance of the data analysis package NVivo[19]. The analysis was organised according to the framework outlined in the introduction. In line with this framework, the analysis considered the conditions, objects and impacts of confidence. Comments made by respondents who, based on their survey responses, were fairly or very confident that the CJS is effective were compared with comments from respondents who were not very or not at all confident in order to identify points of similarity and difference between these two groups on the key themes. The survey data were also revisited in the light of the analysis of the second phase qualitative data in order to draw out the most pertinent quantitative findings.

2.2.13 In this report the analysis is organised as follows:

- **Analysis 1: The conditions for confidence** – explores the informational background to confidence.

- **Analysis 2: The objects of confidence** – explores what respondents wanted from the CJS and what they perceived the current situation to be.

- **Analysis 3: The impacts of confidence** - explores the relationship between general confidence in the CJS and the way respondents thought they would behave in scenarios where one might expect them to contact the CJS.

2.2.14 Readers' Note: Each interview and focus group participant is identified in the text by a pseudonym and, in square brackets, their interview (I) or focus group (F) number followed by a letter 'c', indicating that participant was 'confident', or by a letter 'n' indicating that participant was 'not confident' based on their response to the general confidence question included in the survey questionnaire. For example: Angie [I5n] (Angie, participant in interview 5, 'not confident' according to her questionnaire response).

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[19] NVivo supports the process of coding qualitative data by storing selected text under multiple coding 'nodes'. The program facilitates the analytical process by enabling researchers to code data by source, respondent characteristics and theme.

3. Analysis 1: The Conditions for Confidence

3.0.1   The conditions for confidence are the factors which create the informational backdrop to confidence. They include social position, media consumption, personal experiences and levels of trust in different sources of information. In order to identify the conditions for confidence, previous studies collected data on the social positions associated with confidence (Allen, Komy, Lovbakke and Roy, 2005; Allen, Edmonds, Patterson and Smith, 2006; Mirrlees-Black, 2001); the sources of information which respondents use to find out about the CJS (e.g. see Holme, 2006; Public Knowledge, 2006), and the association between confidence and exposure to certain forms of information (e.g. see Salisbury, 2004).

3.0.2   Existing research has linked the following factors to confidence in the CJS:

Social Position

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Socio-economic background

Information

- Media
- Different types of personal experience of system and services
- Word of mouth
- CJS community engagement and information exercises
- Environmental indicators

3.0.3   Thus far in confidence research there has been little use of so-called 'reception research' (Ditton, Chadee, Farrall, Gilchrist and Bannister, 2004), which would attempt to gain an insight into how members of the public assess and interpret the information to which they are exposed. The analysis in this section adopts both the established approach of exploring associations between social position, information consumption and confidence, and also offers some insights into how respondents interpret the information to which they are exposed.

3.0.4   It should be noted from the outset that in contrast to existing findings[20] this research has not found any demographic variables which were significantly associated with confidence. The analysis therefore concentrates on the information which appears to have influenced respondents' views, and how they interpreted that information.

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[20] Existing confidence research has found that: women were more likely to be confident than men (Allen *et al*, 2005; Allen *et al*, 2006, Mirrlees-Black, 2001); BME respondents were more likely to be confident than White British respondents (Allen *et al*, 2005; Allen *et al*, 2006; Mirrlees-Black, 2001); young people were more likely than other respondents to be confident (Allen *et al*, 2005; Allen *et al*, 2006; Mirrlees-Black, 2001); older respondents were more likely to be confident than the middle-aged (Mirrlees-Black, 2001) and the most educated respondents and those from managerial or professional classes were less likely to be confident (Mirrlees-Black, 2001).

Analysis 1: Conditions for Confidence - Key Findings

From the quantitative data:

▶ None of the key demographic variables measured in the survey (age, sex, ethnic background, housing, employment status, area characteristics) showed a statistically significant association with levels of confidence.

▶ Over 93% of respondents said their views of the CJS were influenced by the TV News or Newspapers

▶ Respondents who acknowledged that their views were influenced by TV news, national tabloid newspapers, local newspapers, word of mouth or personal experience were less likely to be confident that the CJS is effective

▶ Respondents who acknowledged their views were influenced by official information or fictional TV programmes were more likely to be confident that the CJS is effective

From the qualitative data:

▶ Regardless of whether they were confident or not confident respondents were equally likely to express distrust in the media portrayal of crime and the criminal justice system

▶ Respondents tended to see good local experiences as atypical or irrelevant to their view of the CJS and/or the state of society

▶ Bad local experiences tended to be seen as typifying the CJS and/or the state of society

▶ Stories from a variety of sources were an important medium through which respondents understood and communicated about the CJS

▶ Only respondents who were **confident** expressed any trust in official information about the CJS

▶ Respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to:

- express a low level of trust in official information about the CJS

- rely on word of mouth accounts of criminal justice activity and get involved in conversations about a decline in values during focus groups/interviews

3.0.5 Four key themes emerged from the data and the analysis has been organised around these themes:

Respondents as **discerning consumers** of information from a range of sources

The role of **trusted informants** in delivering information about the CJS which is perceived as reliable
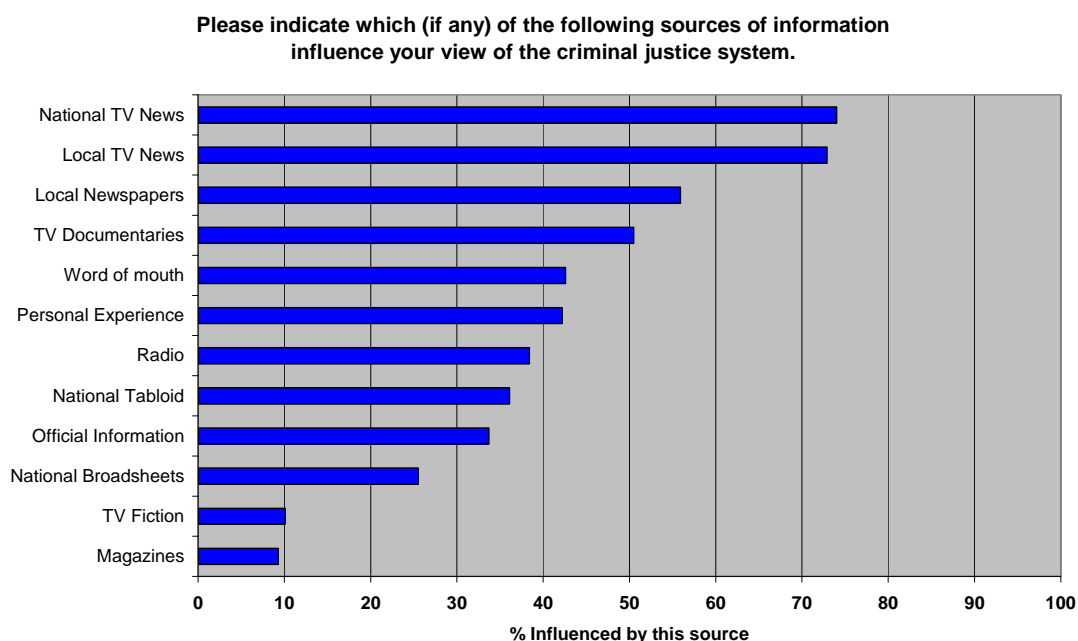
The use of **stories** as a device for understanding and communicating about crime, the CJS and the state of society

The variation in the **impressions** left by the different sources of information

3.1 Discerning consumers

3.1.1 Many respondents appeared to be 'discerning consumers' of a range of different sources of information about crime and the CJS. The magnitude and direction of effects generated by exposure to different kinds of information varied widely between individuals. Few respondents however perceived themselves as passive recipients of information, rather it was clear from the comments made that most implicitly or explicitly evaluated the reliability of the information they received.

Figure 2: Influential sources of information

Please indicate which (if any) of the following sources of information influence your view of the criminal justice system.

3.1.2 Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of respondents who said their views of the CJS were influenced by each of the information sources suggested in the survey. The findings from the survey indicate that 88% of respondents[21] reported that their views of the CJS were influenced by TV News, either local, national or both, whilst 74%

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[21] The figures used here are based on those respondents who cited at least one information source as influencing their views. 69 respondents did not give any response to this question and we cannot tell whether this was because none of the sources listed influenced their views, or because they missed this question out, therefore they are excluded from the analysis.

reported that their views were influenced by newspapers. In total 93% of respondents reported that they were influenced by either TV News or Newspapers. These findings may appear to support the thesis that the media have the power to damage confidence by disseminating bad news stories about crime and the CJS; however many of the interview and focus group participants expressed doubt about or criticism of the media coverage of crime and criminal justice.

3.1.3 When asked which sources of media information they found the most convincing, respondents made distinctions between television and newspapers. Angie [I5n] suggested that television was likely to be more reliable because it was subject to strict regulation, commenting, *'I just think it's more, more factual. If any lies were to be said on TV then they'd have to retract it'* [22]. Fred [I1n] on the other hand thought that although you should not always believe what you read in the newspapers, television does not provide enough information to have an informed opinion: *'...television you only get snippets'.*

3.1.4 The intensity of criticism of the media ranged from Harriet's [I3c] observation that *'...we have much more access to the media so we'll hear about all the nasty bits much more'* and Maureen's [F5n] doubting comment *'...unless I'm just reading the wrong things or...'* to respondents who explicitly suggested that the media were misleading with comments such as *'[t]here is a lot less crime now than there used to be but the press tell you [it] is dangerous.'* (Robin [F1c]), *'[n]ewspapers ... will sensationalise anything'* (Henry [F3n]) and *'[y]ou'd think it was a daily thing if you read the news or watched television'* (Geoff [F3n]). Other participants viewed the media as completely unreliable with Mavis [F1c] even suggesting *'I think we should just get rid of the media if you think about this conversation. Get rid of the media and we will all be happy!'*

3.1.5 It has been widely claimed that the media are unrelentingly and disproportionately negative about crime trends and the actions taken by the CJS (For example see Pratt, 2007; Roberts *et al*, 2003; Dowds and Ahrendt, 1995; Hough, 2003; Allen, 2004). However, it has also been noted that determining just how the media portrayal is assimilated into the public's points of view is a demanding task, especially when most people are at some point exposed to the same material (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981 cited by Ditton *et al*, 2004: 599). The respondent observations quoted above (Para 3.1.4) indicate that respondents have varied evaluations of the reliability of mediated information, and many do not believe that the media are a reliable source of information. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a minority of respondents did appear largely to accept the vision of society portrayed in the media, particularly the vision they saw on television, making comments such as *'...you've just got to put your TV on, haven't you?'* (Margaret [I13n]); and *'[y]ou see them on the television, and ...'* (Karen [I12c]).

3.1.6 Perhaps because they are presented as investigative inquiries trying to get at the truth, documentaries were seen by some respondents as offering authoritative information about how the criminal justice system works, and how it *should* work. This is illustrated by comments such as *'...boot camps. I've seen it on the TV. ..they're different people when they come out'* (Margaret [I13n]); and *'I can't*

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[22] As indicated in chapter 2, paragraph 2.2.14 above, each respondent quoted will be identified by a pseudonym, followed by their interview (I) or focus group (F) number and a letter to indicate whether they were confident (c) or not confident (n). A table listing all participants in the qualitative research and key facts (age, sex, confidence) is included at appendix 5.

remember what programme it is, now, but they proved in a lot of cases that the person who has served the sentence didn't actually do it in the first place' (June [I8n]).

3.1.7 Interestingly, there were no clear differences between confident and not confident respondents in terms of how they evaluated media sources of information. As a group, confident respondents appeared to be no more likely than not confident respondents to doubt or mistrust the media portrayal, and no less likely to adopt the vision of society which it provides as their own.

3.2 Trusted informants

3.2.1 The trust which respondents invested in the *motives* of producers and disseminators of information about the CJS appeared to be an important determinant of how likely those respondents were to believe in the information they received. Many respondents distrusted the motives of those responsible for producing and disseminating official information about the CJS and so made negative assessments of information contained in council and police-produced leaflets and newsletters, official statistics and press releases. These views came through clearly in the qualitative phases of the research with comments such as: *'…statistics can be weighted to prove anything'* (Anne [F5n]) *'[i]t's all spin. It's got nothing to do with facts'* (Eric [F2n]) *'…they will give out the statistics that they want to give out'* (Ursula [F3n]) and *'[t]hey seem to do statistical analysis and they twist it to suit'* (Steve [F5n]).

3.2.2 A minority of respondents did appear to have trust in the motives of those responsible for official information and turned to official sources to find out how well the CJS was performing:

- *'I get a lot of good information from the local councillor - a paper comes every month that he puts comments on'* (Julian [F1c]).

- *'You also get those like local magazines you know…[council produced publication] and things, and it contains information about the police about all other local organisations it's really good'* (Hamid [F1c]).

- *'If I wanted accurate information I would go on the internet on something like the police website'* (Veronica [F1c]).

- *'…a newsletter from the police…that was quite interesting'* (Violet [F4c]).

3.2.3 However, all of the respondents who trusted official sources were *already* confident that the CJS is effective, which suggests that official information exercises may only be 'trusted', and therefore have the desired impact, when they are 'preaching to the converted'. This is in line with the results of the quantitative work which found that respondents who said they were influenced by official information were also more likely to be confident in the CJS.

3.2.4 Respondent comments suggested that some form of 'self-interest' was seen as a reason behind the production of some 'official' public messages. For example Rosemary [F2n], asserted that *'[i]t's the Chief Constable … he produces figures to suit himself, he's going to do this, that and the other. It's all just you know like any Chief Constable, he just wants to make himself feel important. Just like the Prime Minister or anybody in authority'*. In a different focus group, Robin [F1c] expressed a comparable view but one that merged 'self-interest' with 'professional-interest' when he said that *'…basically most senior policemen are probably strongly*

conservative...and they believe that locking people up for the list of crimes that they have before them is the right thing to do and they are very narrow minded. And I think that they are a very bad influence erm – they should be constrained as to what they can say to the public'.

3.2.5   A variation on the theme of 'self-interest' but focused on the 'commercial interest' of the media was observed by Andy [F5c]; *'[n]ow you have got the TV, newspapers and ... they pick up on the negative story, the negative story sells papers'.* This perspective was echoed by other members of the group, for example Anne [F5c] referred to her experience working in a CJS-related environment as proof that the media do not offer an accurate portrayal of CJS successes: *'[w]e do a damn good job in catching fraudsters but the media would have us believe that ... everybody gets away with it'.* Anne positioned herself, with her first-hand knowledge, as having access to privileged information which caused her to mistrust the media. She let the rest of the focus group in on the reasons for her mistrust and the conversation then turned to the other respondents' views of the media.

3.2.6   After hearing Anne's story Laura [F5c] said *'[w]ell bad news sells, good news doesn't. I mean as you said they are not going to have in the Evening Chronicle, the police have done a fantastic job...catching all the criminals... they are not going to say that because it is boring news. They want to say you know look at all these people that have got away with these crimes...bad news sells better, it does doesn't it...'.* The group then discussed the reliability of the media portrayal of crime and it was suggested that the media exaggerate and always pursue negative stories. However, after a short while the conversation returned to the trustworthiness of official information about crime and the criminal justice system, and as soon as this was mentioned the respondents returned to a discussion which was generally critical of the CJS.

3.2.7   However, it seemed that not all information originating from 'inside' the CJS was seen in the same way. The nature of the interaction in which information is transmitted, and the relationship between the provider and recipient of the information seemed to be factors that influenced the way in which that information was received. Jack [F4c] made a telling observation that suggested that information could be seen as more reliable if it was transmitted in the course of a routine interaction with a familiar individual: *'if I was to get an Inspector come along and talk to yer, I would just look upon it as a PR exercise again. Two or three police coming in and having a bit of crack with yer and being honest and you can feel them being honest with yer, there's something there.'*

3.2.8   There is some resonance here with the role that phatic communion, or 'small talk' might play in building confidence by strengthening the medium of 'word of mouth' communication. As Dale, Dodgson, Dodgson, Pulle, Jewitt and Ryan (2008: 59) observed: *'The act of engaging in 'small talk' is a form of relationship building. The police officer who stands in a shop discussing football with the owner and customers is engaged in relationship building...A key task will be to enable and to encourage CJS professionals to sustain communication with members of the public in ways that are not restricted to 'informing', 'educating', 'consulting', etc and to recognise the potential inherent value of conducting 'small talk'.'*

3.2.9   This was echoed in comments about information received from individuals working within the CJS who respondents knew socially; *'...it's actual, it's real, it's right there, and it's fact, it's, you know, there's no spin, there's no Chinese whisper, so to speak'* (Gavin [I4n]). Niall [I6n] confirmed his trust in such sources by the

comment, *'I've asked them what's it like'*. The combination of being perceived as having 'special access/insider knowledge' coupled with engagement in face to face interaction with members of the public, either at work or socially, appears to represent a potentially potent form of influence.

3.2.10 Word of mouth was the fifth most used source of information amongst the survey respondents, with 43% saying their views of the CJS were influenced by 'stories from other people'. These respondents were the least likely to be confident that the CJS is effective; only 33% of survey respondents who were influenced by word of mouth were confident in the CJS and in the focus groups and interviews, respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to accept word of mouth as a valid source of information, comparing it favourably to other sources of information:

> INTERVIEWER: *Which do you find the most trustworthy?*
>
> ERIC[F2n]: *Oh God, its people you know. Who believes newspapers?*

3.2.11 However, while acquaintances, friends and relatives working within the CJS were generally seen as providing reliable information, information passed by acquaintances, friends and relatives who, like the respondents, were outside the CJS, was seen by some respondents as potentially unreliable. This was attributed to different reasons including a belief that it is the bad experiences that tend to be talked about (whilst good experiences are not mentioned) and the potential for exaggeration. Some respondents said they treated word of mouth accounts from other people with a degree of scepticism, seeing them as simply one in a range of sources of information.

3.2.12 Word of mouth, then, appears, as might be expected, to be a frequently used source of information. However, as a means of influence on public views, its impact is tempered by other factors relating to the expertise with which the source is imbued and the level of trust built between message-giver and recipient. The qualitative findings suggest that the trust invested in some informants (e.g. front-line CJS staff and some individuals known to respondents) make stories communicated by word of mouth a potentially powerful source of information, especially where informants are seen as having access to inside information.

3.3   Telling stories

3.3.1   The discussions in some of the focus groups offered examples of how stories about crime and the criminal justice system transmitted by word of mouth, especially if these come from informants who are seen as having access to 'inside' information, can set the tone for the way people think and talk about crime and the CJS. 'Evidence' embedded in stories seems to have 'added value' or 'impact'. Steve [F5n] positioned himself as a knowledgeable informant: *'I used to be in retail and we used to have a lot of interaction with the police, to do with robbery and shoplifting'*. Then later in the focus group discussions, now positioned through a series of comments as having access to first-hand experience, he contributed the following: *'I used to see the repeat offenders out very quickly … They would be back on the streets within a few days'*. The other respondents subsequently took up this theme in their discussions, moving on to consider the limited powers and resources of the police to deal with criminals.

3.3.2   These kinds of exchanges in the focus groups, where the experiences of one respondent became a theme for discussions, demonstrated that testimony of firsthand experience was usually seen as a highly credible source of information. Other

respondents deferred to this kind of narrative testimony, and stories of firsthand experiences and the feelings which they provoked were rarely questioned by other respondents, who would take up the theme presented in the story for the subsequent section of the conversation.

3.3.3 An exception to this pattern came in one focus group when Hamid's [F1c] disappointment with the police following an incident was implied, by his fellow respondents, to be based on unrealistic expectations. Other participants in the group – Mavis [F1c] and Julian[F1c] - suggested that the police had to *'prioritise'* and appeared to dismiss the implication of his testimony, that the police were not responsive to citizens' needs. Later in the discussion Hamid appeared to counter-attack, saying *'to be let down, not just once but four times is just...is enough really'*. In the face of scepticism of his testimony of a one-off incident, Hamid resorted to emphasising the *repeated* nature of his negative experience.

3.3.4 The respondents in this focus group seemed less responsive than other participants to the power of one-off stories. Notably, all of the respondents in this focus group were confident that the CJS is effective, and they gave the strongest endorsements of the value of official information such as police statistics and council newsletters. They were more critical recipients of 'word of mouth' evidence presented within the groups and their discussion did not conform to the story-trading pattern of other focus groups. This might suggest a resistance to taking word of mouth accounts at face value as it was evident that the participants required justification to generalise from one story to make points about the system as a whole.

3.3.5 Apart from the scepticism evident in focus group one, most respondents seemed to regard stories as a reliable source of information and as a valid mechanism for illustrating general points. Stories were sometimes based on personal experience and sometimes 'retold' stories heard, or read elsewhere, including in the media. Respondents seemed to place differing levels of significance on the different stories they heard and told, using some stories as typifying examples, whilst seeing other stories as atypical or irrelevant. This distinction was not based exclusively on the source of the stories, but also on their content and what they seemed to represent.

3.3.6 Typifying stories related by respondents were gleaned from:

- **The media:** *'Could I give you an example? There's a lady tackling two yobs who were abusing her property and she got arrested... I could go on and on. These things happen all the time'* [Jim[23]].

- **Personal experience as a victim:** Andy [F5c] and Laura [F5c] both related stories of having been victims of burglary. They recounted a lack of concern shown by the police and an apparent failure to do more than a very cursory investigation. The main purpose of the police

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[23] Jim took part in Interview 13 which was arranged and carried out with his wife Margaret [I13n]. As the interview took place in their sitting room Jim was also present and asked to be allowed to contribute at some points in the discussion. He did not talk over Margaret or interrupt, and when he did speak their views seemed largely to coincide, however it was clear that he was the more animated about the issues discussed. When he did join in the discussion it was usually to elaborate further on a point made by Margaret by providing more examples, although sometimes he provided information which she had not offered. Margaret deferred to Jim in these instances and would often echo what he had said, using the same words. At one point they appeared to disagree, Margaret said that she would go out at night and was not afraid to do so but Jim suggested that it was unsafe for her to do so because she could not 'stand [her] ground'.

visiting the property appeared to be to provide the victims with a crime reference number.

- **Personal experience as a witness:** *'I rang up and [sigh] she wanted to know who I was, how old I was, where I live. By the time I told her all this ten minutes had gone by. I said don't bother sending them, they've gone … they go through all this rigmarole and I thought, why, they've gone'* Brenda [I9n].

- **Experience of a family member being victimised:** Both Ursula [F3n] and Pam [F3n] talked about the experiences of close family members. Ursula's son was assaulted and his wife was not informed by the police until over 12 hours after the incident. Subsequently, she said, the police took no action, although the family felt that the police knew who had carried out the attack. Pam's daughter was also assaulted, and despite the presence of CCTV no action was taken against the offender. Neither Ursula nor Pam mentioned being given any reasons for no further action being taken in these cases.

3.3.7 These stories were often 'traded' between focus group respondents. For example Violet's [F4c] story was one of a series told in focus group 4. Shortly after Violet had told her story, Ernest [F4c] entered the discussion, saying *'I can give you a recent one that happened to me about six weeks ago'*. Implicit in the telling of each story in this focus group was the sense that they were offering a reliable insight into how the CJS works. The stories were offered as 'typifying examples' of how the CJS operates, and often demonstrated negative points such as; a lack of action or follow-up to incidents reported; a lack of communication within the CJS reducing the effective transfer of information; follow-up taking place in ways which were perceived as tokenistic efforts rather than offering any realistic chance of producing an outcome.

3.3.8 Discussions about how respondents found out about the CJS revealed that many seemed to shape their perceptions of the CJS in the context of periodic ongoing conversations about crime and criminal justice, or about the world more generally; carrying on in 'real-life' the types of discussions that they held within the focus groups. Respondents also referred to, and used the existence of, previous discussions to bolster their views of the extent of their concerns: *'[a] lot of people are saying'* (Vivien [I11n]) and *'…it's the main topic of conversation'* (Bert [I14n]). Rosemary [F2n] even recounted no dissent from her views: *'[a]nyone I've discussed it with neighbours, friends, family, everyone feels the same.'*

3.3.9 Through these ongoing conversations it seems that stories are clearly being circulated and repeated, and views are being reinforced as they are shared and reflected back. When respondents found that others shared their views, those views were validated: *'I've never met anyone who disagrees with it'* (Rosemary [F2n]). In this way, 'word of mouth', or storytelling, rather than being simply a Chinese whispers-style chain of information, may be better conceptualised as a dynamic ongoing conversation about the state of society, which provides a context in which the respondents can have their own views and perceptions validated. Respondents who were **not confident** appeared to be more likely to have engaged in these kinds of conversations on a regular basis.

3.4 Leaving an impression

3.4.1   So far the 'conditions' section of the analysis has noted that respondents were often aware of, and identified, potential weaknesses in information sources; they perceived themselves to be 'discerning consumers' of information. It has also been noted that respondents evaluated information at least partly through reference to the perceived motives of their informants, and that many respondents used stories about particular events to illustrate more general observations about crime and the CJS. However, whilst respondents may perceive themselves as discerning consumers of information, and may express scepticism about some of the information available to them, it is nonetheless still important to examine the impressions which the different sources of information leave behind.

3.4.2   The quantitative data reveals that some of the information sources which respondents believed influenced their views of the CJS were also statistically associated with an increased or decreased possibility that respondents would be confident (see Figure 3). Perceiving oneself as influenced by the most commonly used media information source – National TV News – was associated with a decreased likelihood that a respondent would be confident, as were perceiving oneself to be influenced by local newspapers, national tabloid newspapers, word of mouth and personal experience. Perceiving oneself to be influenced by official information sources or fictional television programmes were both associated with an increased likelihood that a respondent would be confident.[24]

Figure 3: Information sources associated with confidence

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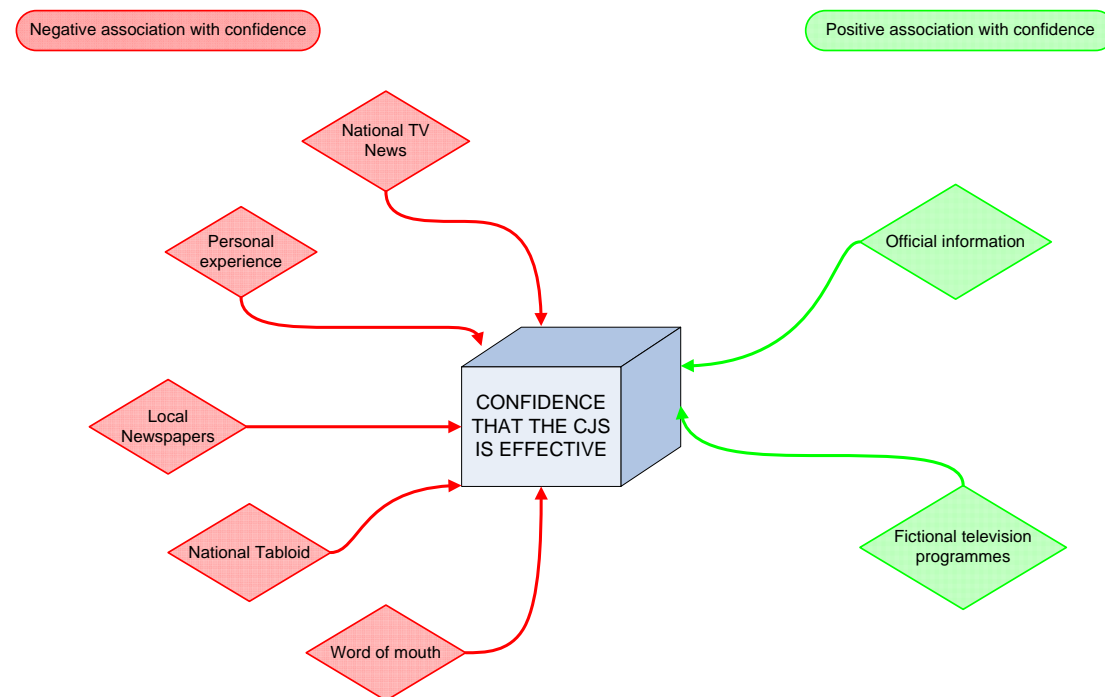
[24] It is important to note that what this work has found are associations between these factors, not causal links. We cannot say, for example, that exposure to official information sources (and fictional television programmes) *causes* an increase in confidence, only that individuals who report themselves as more confident in the CJS are also more likely to say they are influenced by these sources of information. It is also important to note that this variable relies on respondents' own perceptions of the information sources which influence them and it therefore cannot detect influences about which respondents are not self-aware.

3.4.3   On the face of it, the finding that survey respondents who reported that their views of the CJS were influenced by personal experience were slightly less likely to be confident than those who were not influenced by personal experience is of particular concern. It could be interpreted as meaning that contact with the CJS reduces confidence, however it should be noted that over half (53%) of respondents who had direct experience of crime or the CJS in the scenarios asked about in the survey *did not* report that their views of the CJS were influenced by personal experience. This suggests that the relationship between personal experience and confidence is not straightforward.

3.4.4   Further analysis of the data revealed that having had a direct experience of crime or the CJS was only associated with a decreased likelihood that the respondent would be confident amongst those respondents who said they have been influenced by their direct experience. Those respondents who had had direct experience but who did not report that personal experience influenced their view, tended to exhibit levels of confidence that were similar to the overall sample average. Whilst this does not negate the fact that some respondents might have felt that the service they received was not at the level they wished for, it also suggests that for many respondents their personal experience of the CJS did not feature as an important influence on their views of the CJS. Direct experience of the CJS is only one in a range of sources of information about the CJS available to the public and these findings suggest that it cannot be assumed that because someone has had direct experience of the system that this will be the main influence on their views of the CJS[25].

3.4.5   The circumstances of personal experiences of the CJS appeared to impact on whether or not respondents were confident. Figure 4 displays all direct experiences associated with decreased confidence. No direct experiences were associated with increased confidence; however, experiences which were *not* associated with decreased confidence (although we might have expected such an association), were:

- having experience of reporting crime;

- having been a victim of crime (even if this happened in the last 12 months) and;

- having attended court as a witness or as a juror

3.4.6   Whilst this study did not find evidence that these types of experience impact on confidence, other studies do in fact identify a connection. Page, Wake and Ames (2004), and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary (2007) found that one of the predictors of lower confidence was having been a victim of crime. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary also (2007) found that having been a witness was associated with lower confidence and having been a juror or defendant with higher confidence. Analyses of successive waves of the BCS have found that contact with the system as victim,

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[25] These findings demonstrate that shallow analysis of this kind of data can produce findings which are misleading. To claim that personal experience generally has a negative influence on confidence ignores the fact that not all respondents who had had personal experience of the CJS said they were influenced by their experiences. At a time when confidence measures are becoming increasingly important in leading and evaluating service delivery across the CJS analysis of public confidence data needs to be sophisticated enough to distinguish between superficial associations and the more complex factors at work in the background. In this example it may be the case that respondents who have had negative experiences of the CJS are both strongly influenced by these experiences and less likely to be confident, whereas respondents who have had more positive experiences are more influenced by other sources of information. Their good experiences therefore become effectively 'invisible' to the research.

witness or juror lowered confidence (Mirrlees-Black, 2001); *any* contact with the system meant people were less likely to be confident (Allen *et al,* 2005); and that one of the factors most predictive of being confident was not having been a victim in the previous 12 months (Allen *et al,* 2006). However, it should be noted that the research findings from these different studies often seem to contradict one another, suggesting that the relationship between direct experience of the CJS and confidence is complex, and that the methods used to analyse this relationship may not always have been adequate to the task.

Figure 4: Personal experience and confidence

Experiences associated with a decreased likelihood that the respondent will be confident
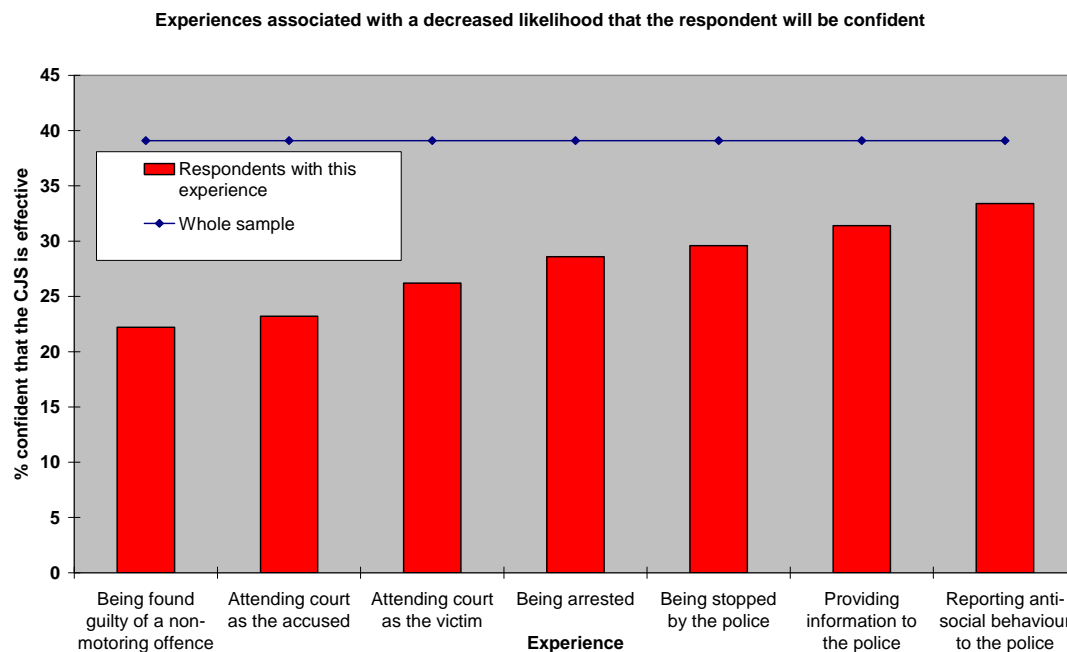
3.4.7   Some researchers have offered a more nuanced investigation of the impact of experience. Jackson, Bradford and Hohl (2007: 8) noted a difference between having initiated contact with the police oneself (three times more likely to rate local police as poor or very poor) and having been subject to police-initiated contact (twice as likely). Benesh and Howell (2001) suggested that the nature of personal experience was the key to determining the likely effect of experience on confidence. Referring specifically to people's experiences of court they argued that the impact of experience on confidence depends upon the amount of stake a person has in the process and the amount of control they have. According to their study, respondents who had a high stake in the outcome and low control of the process were the least likely to be confident.

3.4.8   Being subject to police-initiated contact might be considered to be an 'adversarial' contact, and this is something which is less common in other public services which have regular direct contact with the public. Other aspects of personal experience of the CJS may take place in distressing circumstances and are unlikely, whatever the level and quality of service provided, to be a pleasant or satisfactory experience. Given the inescapable fact that conflict and distress are routine features of CJS business, one might *expect* direct experience of the CJS to be associated with decreased levels of confidence. However, as noted above (Para 3.4.5), potentially distressing experiences such as reporting crime or having been a victim of crime were *not* significantly associated with decreased confidence. Furthermore, although this research did find that respondents who had experienced certain forms of 'adversarial'

contact with the CJS[26] were less likely to be confident that the CJS is effective, the impact of direct experience alone, even if such experience is 'adversarial', should not be overstated. For example, were the confidence levels of those respondents who had been stopped by the police to be the same as the sample as a whole, confidence overall would only increase by less than 2%.

3.4.9 Qualitative data offers the opportunity to consider the relationship between experience and confidence in more depth. In existing research, personal experience was frequently referred to by respondents in interviews and focus groups. However, Opinion Leader Research (2005: 23) found that, whilst good practice can increase confidence, *'...one negative experience will far outweigh any other experiences they subsequently have within the system'*. The findings from this study support this finding, and furthermore indicate that negative perceptions of the CJS which are *not* based on direct personal experience may also outweigh the impact of experiences of good service.

3.4.10 Several respondents talked about positive experiences of the CJS response to crime; for example Abida [I10c] stated, *'[w]e ring them and they're there, so they deal with it, you know, within what? Ten minutes, they're here.'* Gavin [I4n] recalled that *'...the response from the police was excellent';* and Rosemary [I2n] said *'[t]hey were absolutely wonderful, the C.P.S, the legal team, the police legal team, they were absolutely excellent'*. It is perhaps not surprising to hear confident respondents like Abida talking about positive experiences of the CJS. However, Rosemary and Gavin were not confident in the CJS. Rosemary in particular was highly pessimistic about the state of society, yet both she and Gavin had clearly had positive experiences of the service provided by the CJS in specific scenarios. So why is it that their positive experiences did not leave them with a positive overall impression of the CJS? A possible explanation can be found in what another respondent had to say about how her experiences affected her views on crime and the criminal justice system:

> INTERVIEWER: *And what about your experience in the, in this area, the area you live in; does living here, um, make you think at all about crime or the criminal justice system?*

> JUNE[I8n]: *Not really, um, because, like I say, I sit on this housing board and I go to quite a few conferences and, if you talk to the people who live down Astonside and Grandbury and hear about their problems, up here we have nothing to complain about.*

3.4.11 June's response indicates that she saw her own experience as divergent from the experiences of people in different parts of the country. She therefore treated her own experience as almost irrelevant in the context of the more negative story in other parts of the country. Similarly, Karen [I12c] saw her own experiences as a victim of property crime as trivial compared to mediated images of violence and weapon-carrying: *'[t]hat was nothing because they're material things and they can be replaced, you know. But just when you see all these young children being stabbed and... The gun culture's a bit frightening'*. Both June's and Karen's responses suggest that the positive perceptions of the CJS generated by good, local firsthand experiences can be eclipsed by more distant, yet more serious, negative stories.

3.4.12 Another example of the minimal impact of positive local experiences can be found in the comments from interviewee Margaret [I13n] and her husband Jim (who

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[26] Having been stopped by the police, arrested, found guilty of a non-motoring offence or having attended court as the accused.

also took part in the discussion). Both Margaret and Jim were highly critical of the state of society and of the CJS response to crime and anti-social behaviour. However when asked about their local area the following exchange ensued:

> INTERVIEWER: *How do you find the situation living in this local area?*
>
> MARGARET: *Well, it's been all right up to now, hasn't it?*
>
> JIM: *It's improved from a few years back.*
>
> MARGARET: *Yes, it was a bit rough a few years ago when they had all the fighting. There was always fighting or football going on and annoying people.*
>
> JIM: *But it's quietened down a lot since then, you know.*
>
> INTERVIWER: *So it's improved here in this area?*
>
> MARGARET: *Oh, it's improved here, in this area, yes.*

3.4.13 Despite acknowledged improvements *in their local area*, Margaret and Jim seemed convinced that the overall situation was deteriorating. Their own personal experience at the local level was treated as atypical, whereas the televised images of drunkenness and disorder in a different city that they had watched on the news that morning were seen as typical. Only a few moments after saying his local area had improved, Jim even commented, *'It's the same wherever you go isn't it?'*.

3.4.14 Positive local experiences appeared then to be overshadowed by awareness that other people were living in areas more badly affected by crime and disorder. This awareness may come from direct contact with other people (as in the case of June) or from the media. Negative local firsthand experiences on the other hand were retold in such a way as to *justify* negative perceptions, and in some discussions these stories were used as a kind of currency in an exchange of stories about the CJS. The quality of the direct experience seemed to be a key factor in the way that the story of that experience was used by respondents. Bad experiences seemed more likely to be recalled by respondents, and to be retold as typical examples, whereas good or neutral experiences were often played down, or seen as atypically fortunate.

3.4.15 The relationship between impressions gained from the media and impressions gained from personal experience appears to be one of an overarching general impression of the way things are going, which acts as a lens through which more specific local experiences are viewed. Single local stories can, then, serve to confirm an impression which respondents have *already formulated* based on the wider range of information available. Single experiences and stories which do not fit into this wider framework may be dismissed as irrelevant or atypical, or may simply fail to register.

3.4.16 When it comes to formulating this general impression against which specific experiences and stories are assessed, expressing distrust in the media did not appear to mean that respondents were impervious to their influence. Robin [F1c] said: *'I try not to watch the TV with it [crime] in, because it's depressing'* but, as Lorna [I7c] observed, the media is, sometimes inescapably *'...in your face'*.

3.4.17 Those respondents who appeared largely to accept the vision of society displayed on their television screens as a reliable snapshot of society, were left with impressions such as, *'[t]here's no respect'* (Margaret [I13n]); *'...they're like a pack'* (Karen [I12c];) and *'…it's non-stop'* (Niall [I6n]). Based on these kinds of comments,

the media seems to have left many of the respondents with the impression that the CJS offered a pitiful defence against an increasingly violent and disorderly society, with police officers constrained by resources and by legislation, and judges and magistrates tending towards overly lenient sentences which do not punish the offender or protect the public from future offending. In short, where respondents did give the media portrayal of crime and the CJS their attention (something which it appeared to be hard not to do), the impressions they were left with were largely negative.

3.4.18 Combating the negative information communicated by the media has been seen as a key weapon in the battle to increase confidence. However, as noted above (see Paras 3.2.1 – 3.2.4), many respondents do not trust information which they see as being subject to political manipulation and which they feel is always trying to paint the government in a positive light. A further concern for those trying to design effective official information materials is the need to leave a lasting impression on those who are exposed to it.

3.4.19 Respondents' discussions of official information about crime and the CJS revealed that when they did talk about this kind of information, they rarely gave any indication of the impression which it left upon them. Rather the statistics and other information were talked about as simply *'information',* which was *'interesting'* or *'informative'*. No positive emotions seemed to be generated by this information to mirror the various emotions such as disgust, anger, disappointment and dismay which were clearly associated with the negative information. Furthermore, when respondents themselves made positive comments about the CJS these were not usually contained within any kind of narrative, and although CJS agencies and staff were occasionally described using adjectives such as *'excellent'* or *'wonderful',* the actions which they had undertaken to earn such accolades were not woven into a story describing the events referred to. Respondents themselves therefore seemed often to be incapable or unwilling to construct a 'good news' story around their own experiences.

3.4.20 The apparent lack of impact made by official information about crime and the CJS may reflect a lack of trust in those providing this information. It may also be a consequence of the use of 'dry' statistical information which lacks a strong narrative thrust which draws in its target audience and ensures that the information it contains is retained long after the leaflet or newsletter has been recycled. However, this cannot explain why positive first-hand personal experiences of the CJS often appeared both to have failed to convince respondents of the quality of the service provided by the system as a whole, and failed to inspire them to tell a 'good news' story which matched the bad news stories in length and detail.

3.4.21 It is perhaps worth considering again the importance of the 'lens' through which members of the public view crime, the CJS and their own experiences. A bigger story about crime and justice seems to exist at the macro-level, framing each individual incident which is told and retold at the micro-level. If these smaller stories are compatible with the bigger story they appear to be more memorable and respondents appear more willing to pass them on in an exchange of stories.[27] However

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[27] Roberts, Stalans, Indermaur and Hough (2003: 74) have noted that the way in which the problem of crime is framed can encourage members of the public to favour certain approaches to dealing with crime, and that the framing of crime is *'restricted and shaped by underlying cultural beliefs and values'*. Thus, in their argument, the cultural backdrop (similar to the 'bigger story' referred to here) influences the policies which are favoured. *This* research suggests that the bigger story also affects the types of smaller stories or 'episodes' which members of the public *remember and then relate to others.* Smaller stories which are compatible with the 'bigger story' are more likely to be recalled and retold, further reinforcing the bigger story.

stories which do not appear to fit this mould, whilst not necessarily forgotten, may be seen as less relevant and as atypical in the grand scheme of things, and may be imparted to others in such a way that they remain less memorable for all concerned.

3.4.22 This pattern is commensurate with the phenomenon of *'confirmation bias'* which has been observed and tested in psychology. Nickerson has explored the evidence about this phenomenon, which he defined as *'the seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis in hand'* (1998: 175). He argues that both cognitive and *motivational* factors are involved in confirmation bias. In other words *wanting to believe* in a certain theory, proposition or view of the world may motivate the evidence which individuals seek out and retain. In the case of confidence in the criminal justice system *if individuals already subscribe to a view about society, crime and criminal justice which is largely negative, they may be more receptive to evidence confirming this view than they are to evidence to the contrary.*

3.5 Summary

3.5.1 In the interviews and focus groups, most respondents presented themselves as discerning consumers of a range of sources of information about the criminal justice system. Many expressed a lack of trust in the information provided by the media, which they felt was likely to be exaggerated, selective and misleading, but more than 93% of the survey respondents said they were influenced by the media. Respondents who said their views *were* influenced by TV News, national tabloid newspapers or local newspapers were significantly less likely to be confident. This suggests that whether or not respondents explicitly trust the media, they are in some way influenced by them.

3.5.2 Many respondents expressed general mistrust in formal information provided by criminal justice agencies, local councils and government, such as information leaflets, newsletters or official statistics. Only respondents who were *already confident* in the CJS expressed any kind of trust in this kind of information. Amongst the survey respondents, those who said they were influenced by official information were significantly more likely to be confident. However, only one third of survey respondents were influenced by official information, and most interview and focus group respondents saw official information as subject to 'spin' and likely to be motivated by the self-interest of politicians and senior figures within the CJS. In sharp contrast, information gained from more informal interactions with individuals working within the CJS was perceived as likely to be true and reliable.

3.5.3 After mediated sources of information, word of mouth was the most commonly cited influence on survey respondents' views. Word of mouth was also associated with a decreased likelihood that respondents would be confident. In the interviews and focus groups many respondents claimed to take word of mouth information with 'a pinch of salt', recognising that accounts could be embellished or distorted. Nevertheless, it seemed that the personalised, negative, individualised stories presented in the media and also circulated and discussed by word of mouth, often left a greater impression on respondents than did the impersonal, aggregated information provided in statistical form. The power of these stories, even when the events retold were socially or geographically distant from the audience, also appeared to outweigh the impact that positive, local experiences might have on respondent confidence. Such local, positive experiences were often seen by respondents as atypically fortunate, or as simply irrelevant. Negative local experiences on the other

hand were often used as typifying examples, to demonstrate and confirm negative perceptions of the CJS. Where respondents had pre-existing negative views of the CJS it appeared that they may be more receptive to information which confirmed this view than they were to contrary evidence.

3.5.4   The next section of the analysis focuses on respondents' expectations of what the CJS *should* be doing, and their perceptions of whether or not it is meeting these expectations.

4. Analysis 2: The Objects of Confidence

4.0.1 The term 'objects' of confidence is used here to describe those specific aspects of what the CJS is, does and achieves which the public seek to have confidence in, in order that they can be confident in the CJS as a whole. 'Objects' of confidence then are salient CJS issues which represent areas where the public have expectations of what they think *should* be happening, and/or perceptions of what they think *is* happening. It has been argued that if the public's perceptions of the CJS fail to meet their expectations then a lack of confidence will result (Addison, 2006).

4.0.2 Existing confidence research has found the following issues to be particularly important to public confidence in the CJS:

- The overall level of crime (Allen et al, 2006; Mirrlees-Black, 2001; Holme, 2006; Page et al, 2004)

- Youth crime (NOP World, 2003)

- Violence (Public Knowledge, 2006; Jackson, 2004)

- Reoffending (Holme, 2006)

- Local environment (Jackson and Bradford, 2007)

- Police visibility (Smith, 2007; Page, 2004; Holme, 2006; Addison, 2006; NOP World, 2003; Beaufort Research, 2004)

- Police response times (Public Knowledge, 2006; Beaufort Research, 2004; Opinion Leader Research, 2005; Addison, 2006)

- Police effectiveness (Jackson, Bradford and Hohl, 2007; Jackson and Sunshine, 2007)

- Quality of front-line service (Public Knowledge, 2006; Holme, 2006; Addison, 2006; NOP World, 2003; Beaufort Research, 2004; Opinion Leader Research, 2005; Benesh and Howell, 2001; Tyler, 2001)

- Sentencing (Page et al, 2004; Holme, 2006; Smith, 2007; Public Knowledge, 2006; Mirrlees-Black, 2001; NOP World, 2003; Addison, 2006)

- Balance between victim and offender rights (NOP World, 2003; Beaufort Research, 2004)

- CJS priorities (Addison, 2006)

- Fairness to all (Smith, 2007)

4.0.3 In a departure from existing approaches to confidence, the project literature review (Turner *et al*, 2007: 26) attempted to distinguish between these issues by dividing them into principles, functions or results. The review noted the significant overlap between these categories, and the ambiguity around means (functions) and ends (results). Expectations expressed about the functions of the CJS (what it should be doing) may actually reflect lay understanding of how to achieve the results which people desire. For example, public exhortations to 'lock more people up' (a function: something the CJS does) may reflect wishes to achieve broader outcomes such as a reduction in crime (results; something the CJS hopes to achieve); the cry for greater use of imprisonment, then, may actually be a lay request to reduce crime. The recent review by Louise Casey argued that *'...the public... know what they want on crime and justice'* (Casey, 2008: 3), but this assertion does not distinguish between 'means' and 'ends'; in simple terms *the public may know the outcome they wish to achieve but not necessarily the means by which it can be achieved.* Moreover, in a world of finite

resources, public demands will always need to be balanced against what can realistically be delivered.

Analysis 2: Objects of Confidence – Key Findings

From the quantitative data:

▶ Respondents who were not confident were more likely to have strong negative perceptions of the state of society

▶ Respondents who were **confident** expressed a higher degree of support for rehabilitative approaches to dealing with offenders.

▶ Respondent evaluations of crime trends were associated with their estimation of the CJS's ability to find offenders guilty and punish them

From the qualitative data:

▶ Confident and not confident respondents expected similar things from the CJS: maintaining social order, reducing crime, delivering justice and serving the public

▶ Most respondents perceived some evidence of declining respect and order in society

▶ Respondents expected offenders to be given sentences which would deter offending and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Both confident and not confident respondents expressed the view that the CJS was not effective at doing this, although they had varied beliefs about the most effective sentences for this purpose.

▶ A desire for the CJS to deliver justice was implicit in many respondent comments, although respondents struggled to articulate this desire explicitly

▶ Respondents expected offenders to be given sentences which would punish them and deliver justice

▶ Respondents who were **confident** were:

  ▪ …less likely to see instances of disrespect as indicative of a general social decline

  ▪ …more likely to note points of continuity and improvement in the state of society

▶ Respondents who were **not confident** were:

  ▪ …more strongly aligned with the belief that harsh punishment is the most effective way to deter offending.

  ▪ …generally more preoccupied with the issue of punishment

  ▪ …more likely to think that the CJS should reflect *their own* views, which they assumed to be typical of the majority

  ▪ …more likely to favour a system which would allow members of the public to take their own, potentially violent, action against offenders who threatened them or their property

4.0.4 The analysis in this section notes the distinction between public expectations of things that the CJS can *achieve* (e.g. reduced crime) and things that it can *do* (e.g. visible police patrols). It is important to note the relationship between these two levels of expectation as the actions which the CJS is perceived as taking may be seen, sometimes erroneously, as symbolising its effectiveness at achieving certain outcomes. This concern is explored in the analysis.

4.0.5 The analysis is divided into four sub-sections, reflecting the four basic areas where respondent expectations and perceptions were concentrated. These were:

- Maintaining social order

- Reducing crime

- Delivering justice

- Serving the public

4.1 Maintaining social order

> **'Most respondents expressed a sense that there had been a decline in respect and values in society compared to days gone by.'**

4.1.1 Existing confidence research suggests that broad perceptions of declining discipline in society and a breakdown in social values may be associated with reduced confidence in the CJS (See Smith, 2007; NOP World, 2003). Perceptions of order and social cohesion, and feelings of trust within local areas have also been linked to confidence (Jackson and Bradford, 2007; Jackson and Sunshine, 2007). These findings suggest that people expect the CJS to offer some kind of support to the maintenance of order and values in society, and this did seem to be reflected in the comments made by the respondents.

4.1.2 Most respondents in both the interviews and the focus groups referred in some way to what Henry [F3n], for example, termed *'creating public order'* as a key function of the CJS. Without the CJS, some respondents thought that a state of chaos would ensue; *'...people running everywhere, they need to keep order'* (Hamid [F1c]); *'[a] lawless, rule-less society would just be absolute mayhem'* (Pam [F3n]). Notwithstanding these comments, and despite the acknowledged interventions of the CJS, many of the interview and focus group respondents, both confident and not confident, seemed to perceive society as being in a moral decline characterised by decreasing levels of politeness and respect: *'[i]t wasn't an impolite society 40 yrs ago but it is now'* (Robin [F1c]); *'[w]e had our place. Little boys were seen and not heard... [now] I don't think youngsters have respect'* (Ernest [F4c]); *'[w]e were just taught the right sort of values...and a lot of that's disappeared over the last thirty, forty years'* (Harriet [I3c]); *'[w]e certainly respected the teachers, and when a teacher walked in the room you shut up and faced the front. It just doesn't happen anymore'* (Steve [F5n]).

4.1.3   Respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to:

- **…attribute decline in respect and values to loosening informal and formal controls in society**, undermining the ability of traditional authority figures such as parents, teachers and local police officers to instil discipline in children and young people: *'[s]chools can't punish children…children these days just seem to ride rough shod over any sort of authority'* (Steve [F5n]);

- **…interpret individual instances of disrespect as indicators of more serious and pervasive social problems**, generalising from specific examples of disrespect to a more serious sense of social malaise: *'[t]here's no structure to the country anymore; I just feel as if everything's going to pot'* (Vivien [I11n]); *'[p]eople within this society have got no respect for anything'* (Malcolm [F2n]).

4.1.4   Respondents who **were confident**, whilst also noting instances of decline were more likely to be circumspect and cautious about over-generalisation; they tended to note that observed instances of disrespect, were:

- **…not necessarily typical of the majority**: '[t]here is a minority but I think the majority of children are well-behaved' (Sandra [F4c]).

- **…not so different from the way things were in the past**: '…there is always an element and there always has been an element of the youths that are a nuisance' (Violet [F4c]); 'I'm sure everything did go on just the same years ago.' (Harriet [I3c]); '…everything happened 30 years ago as it does now' (Anne [F5c]).

- **…an improvement on the past**: *'…it certainly is not as bad as it was when I was a child – there was a lot more crime'* ([Robin [F1c]); *'[a]re you not looking through rose-tinted spectacles?'* (Sandra [F4c]).

4.1.5   Expressing a sense of declining respect, values and diminished safety were not incompatible with being confident in the CJS. However, the way in which respondents talked about social decline and the significance which they accorded to examples of disrespect gave an indication as to whether or not they were in the confident or not confident group.

4.1.6   The findings from the survey confirmed the findings from the qualitative data: respondents who had negative perceptions of the state of society were less likely to be confident that the CJS is effective than respondents who were more positive about the state of society[28]. In particular, respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to have strong negative perceptions of the state of society on all of these measures, as illustrated by Figure 5 below.

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[28] Survey respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with four statements about the state of society today. The statements were: Nowadays people are only interested in looking after themselves; People today have very high moral standards; Society today is more dangerous than it was in days gone by; Young people today have plenty of respect for their elders. Response categories ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses were used to gauge whether respondents had a generally positive or generally negative outlook on society. By cross-tabulating responses on these variables with confidence, statistically significant associations between a respondent's outlook on society and the likelihood that they were confident the CJS is effective were identified.

Figure 5: Perceptions of the state of society and confidence

% of respondents from the confident and not confident groups having strong negative perceptions of the state of society
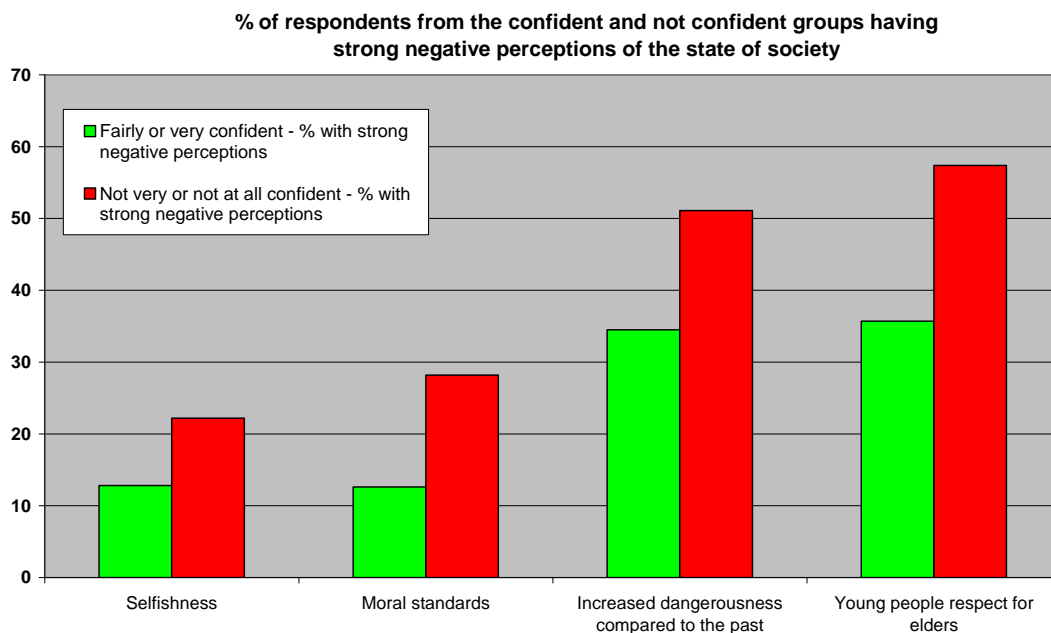
4.2 Reducing crime

4.2.1 Negative perceptions of the state of society might of course arise out of, or encompass, a belief that crime is rising. Allen *et al* (2006) found that one of the factors most predictive of being confident was if respondents did not think crime had risen compared to two years previously. Similar findings were reported by Mirrlees-Black (2001); Holme (2006) and Page *et al* (2004).

4.2.2 The survey findings revealed that respondents with strong negative perceptions of the state of society were more likely to believe that there was much more crime at the local, regional *and* national levels than when compared with two years ago. The quantitative data showed that perceptions of crime rates do have a statistically significant association with confidence that the CJS is effective; and Table 2 illustrates this relationship for perceptions of crime rates at the local level. Perceptions of regional and national crime rates were also associated with confidence.

4.2.3 The importance attributed to this aspect of CJS activity might lead one to expect that confidence in the effectiveness of the CJS is based, to an extent, upon beliefs about whether or not crime is falling. Certainly, the view that the CJS should be taking action to reduce crime was implicit in many of the comments from focus group and interview respondents, who were particularly concerned to see that the CJS was deterring offending and changing offenders' behaviour: *'...stop people doing naughty things'* (Harriet [I3c]); *'...stop them...re-offending'* (Maureen [F5n]); *'...stopping them doing what we don't want them to do'* (Robin [F1c]). However, previous research has noted that public perceptions of crime rates and other indicators of CJS performance were often inaccurate (Hough, 2003). It is also important to note that these relationships are correlative rather than causal; in other words it would be equally true to observe that being confident was predictive of respondents' belief that crime was not rising.

4.2.4   It may also be that other, unidentified variables are responsible for creating the apparent association between perceptions of crime rates and confidence. As it is not possible to determine causality, it is perhaps more appropriate to think of perceptions of the state of society and of crime rates as being components of a general outlook on society. While respondent estimations of crime trends may be inaccurate, and although such estimations did not play a prominent role in focus group and interview discussions, if they do reflect more general concerns about the future then they should not be ignored.

Table 2: Perceptions of crime trends and confidence that the CJS is effective

In your local area do you think there is more crime, less crime or about the same amount of crime as there was two years ago?	Number of respondents within this group that are fairly or very confident that the CJS is effective			
	Count	Expected Count	**% confident**	
Much more crime	35	52.5	**25.9**	(n= 135)
A little more crime	62	78.5	**30.7**	(n = 202)
About the same amount of crime	211	206	**39.8**	(n = 530)
A little less crime	87	73.1	**46.3**	(n= 188)
Much less crime	35	25.7	**53**	(n = 66)

Differences between groups statistically significant to the 0.01 level

4.2.5   As discussed in the introduction to this section, in the interview and focus group discussions, respondents tended to concentrate on the actions taken by the CJS rather than the outcomes which these actions produced. Rather than emphasising their dissatisfaction with crime rates, respondents focused more upon their beliefs about the types of sentences which would be effective at deterring crime and changing offenders' behaviour, and whether they felt that these sentences were being applied.
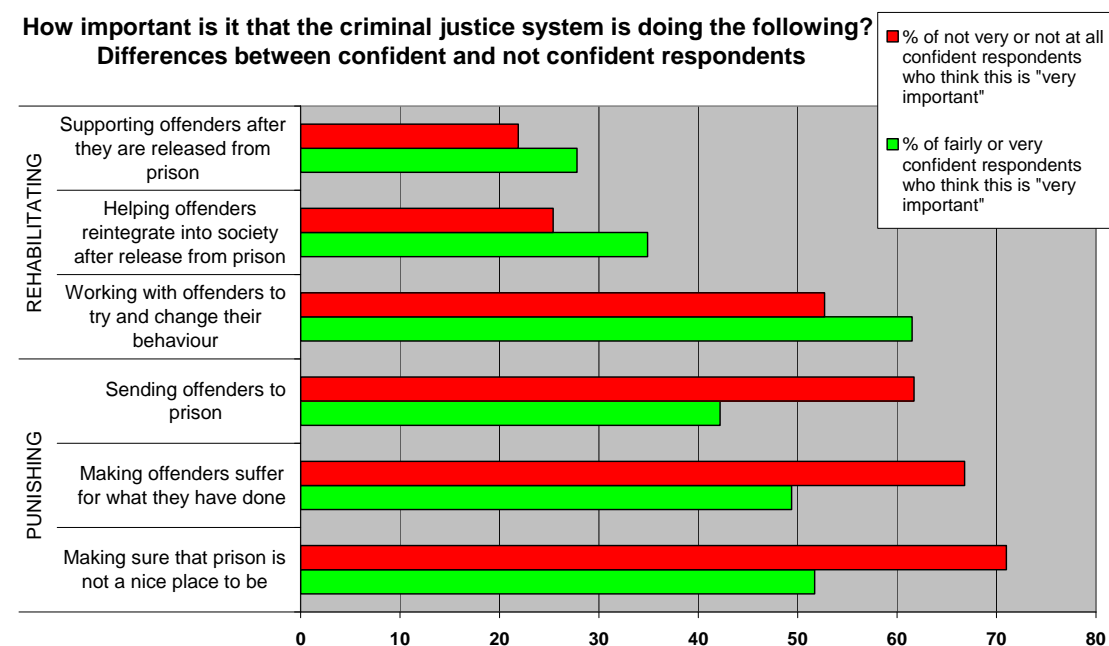
4.2.6   Punishment was referred to by many respondents as instrumental in, and essential for, reducing and deterring offending. As Malcolm [F2n] observed, *'[o]ne of the problems at the moment is that the people are not afraid of the punishment'*. It was suggested that ensuring known *'consequences'* for committing crime provides a mechanism for making people *'...stay within the law...'*(Niall [I6n]); and that weak *'slap on the wrist'* punishments were ineffective at changing people's behaviour (Lorna [I7c]). These findings are consistent with research carried out by Zimring and Johnson (2006) who suggest that *'publics in many countries believe that crime is committed **because** punishments are insufficiently severe'* (2006: 271).

4.2.7   A minority of respondents expressed support for more rehabilitative approaches to changing offending behaviour *'...in some sort of constructive way'* (Ted [F4n]). As Judy [F5n] observed: *'[y]ou can't turn somebody out of the prison gates and expect them to be decent members of society if they can't read'*. Ted [F4n] described a local scheme he had heard about saying, *'...he got them involved in fishing right and he found that it got them out of the environment, introduced them to something that was calming...by all accounts has had results'*. However, rehabilitation often seemed to be seen as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, a harsher prison regime (Maureen [F5n]).

4.2.8 Other respondents expressed scepticism about the corrective power of non-custodial sentences: *'[w]ell to be honest I think this community service is too soft. I mean they're supposed to learn something but er we can all do community service and still not learn anything. Where's the strictness in the community service? Yes they'll do a community service three days, four days or whatever and they'll still go back and do exactly what they did the community service for. Now that isn't correction is it?'* (Elsie [I2c]); *'...the people that've done it have got off scot free. Six months probation er 200 hours community service. I think these are absolutely ridiculous. They go and do an hours work and then [unclear] these community service things they make new friends, learn new ideas for new crimes. I think community service is a complete waste of time'* (Bert [I14n]).

4.2.9 The qualitative data revealed that both confident and not confident respondents expressed the view that actions currently being taken against offenders were too lenient to deter offending: *'[t]here doesn't appear to be a deterrent'* ([Lorna [I7c]); *'[t]hey have got it easy'* (Maureen [F5n]); *'[i]t's not strict enough'* (Elsie [I2c]); *'...they know they can get away with it'* (Margaret [I13n]). However, overall, those respondents who were **not confident** tended to be more preoccupied with sentencing issues, and more strongly aligned with the view that harsh punishments deter offending. The generalisability of this association can be examined using the quantitative data. In order to test any statistical association between beliefs about what the CJS should do and confidence that it is effective, the survey asked respondents how important it was that the CJS took a range of different actions.

Figure 6: Importance of CJS Actions

How important is it that the criminal justice system is doing the following? Differences between confident and not confident respondents

4.2.10 Figure 6 demonstrates that respondents who were **confident** were more likely to think that approaches which **supported offenders** to help them change their behaviour were 'very important'; whilst respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to think that approaches which **punished offenders** were 'very important'.[29]

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[29] The overall association between the extent to which respondents favoured rehabilitative actions and their confidence that the CJS is effective was tested. Support for rehabilitative approaches had a weak but statistically significant positive correlation with being fairly or very confident.

4.2.11 A free text question was also used to gauge respondents' expectations of what the CJS should be doing. Respondents were asked 'What ONE aspect of the criminal justice system do you think is most urgently in need of improvement?'. One third (n=313) of those respondents who gave a response to this question mentioned either sentencing or punishment in their response. 39.4% of not confident respondents who answered this question mentioned sentencing or punishment compared to only 25% of confident respondents answering the question (See Figure 7). This reinforces the finding from the qualitative data that respondents who are **not confident** tend to be more preoccupied with the issue of sentencing.

Figure 7: Free text responses mentioning sentencing or punishment

What ONE aspect of the criminal justice system do you think is most urgently in need of improvement? (Respondents required to give a free text response)
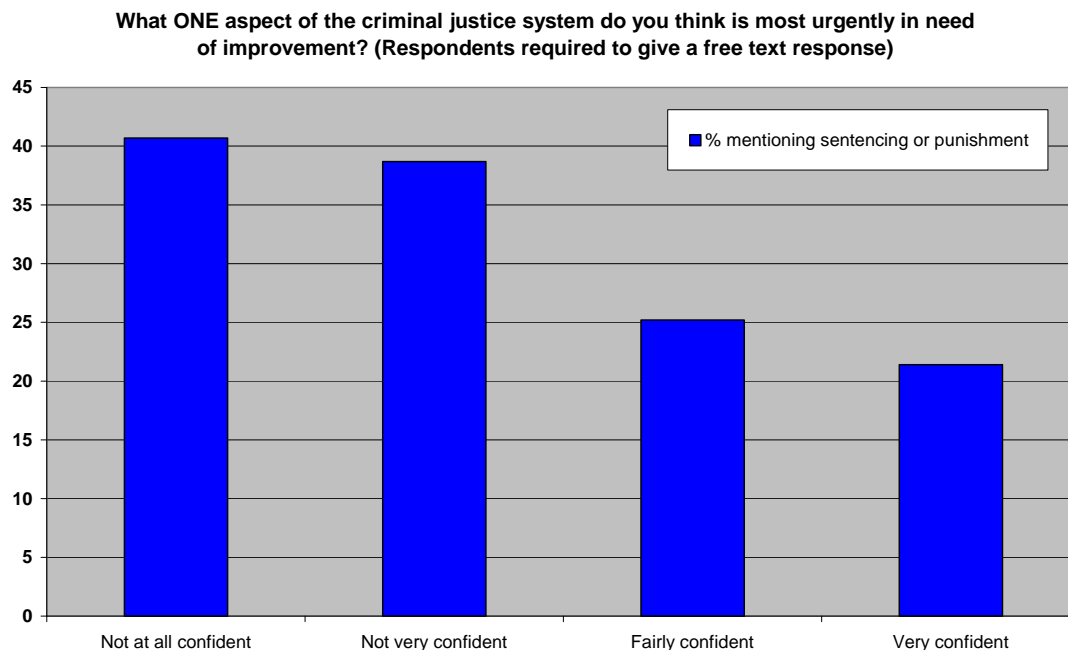
4.2.12 However, as noted above (Para 4.2.6), concerns about sentencing were often expressed in terms which suggested that respondents were dissatisfied with 'soft' sentences because they felt they would be ineffective at deterring offending. It seems likely therefore that confidence in the CJS may be associated not just with respondents' perceptions of sentencing, but also with their anticipation of whether or not the actions taken by the CJS in certain specific scenarios are likely to be effective at reducing offending. Figure 8 illustrates the strength of the association between confidence that the CJS is effective, and anticipation of how effectively it would perform certain key functions in specified scenarios[30].

4.2.13 As Figure 8 illustrates, the most powerful association with confidence that the CJS is effective is with anticipation that the CJS can find offenders guilty and pass sentences which punish them. Anticipation that the CJS would pass sentences which reduced reoffending had only a weak association with confidence, and once one controls for anticipation that the CJS would find offenders guilty and pass sentences which punish them this association disappears. This suggests that whatever the language used to discuss concerns about sentencing, beliefs about appropriate punishment are more important for confidence than beliefs about the effectiveness of

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[30] Respondent scores on the anticipation variables have been obtained using a factor analysis of answers to a range of questions which asked respondents questions in the format 'In [scenario 1] how likely do you think it that [appropriate CJS response] will happen?'. Responses were on a 6 point scale from 1 = very *unlikely* to happen to 6 = very *likely* to happen.

different sentencing disposals at achieving the core criminal justice outcome of reducing crime.

Figure 8: Anticipated CJS service and confidence that the CJS is effective
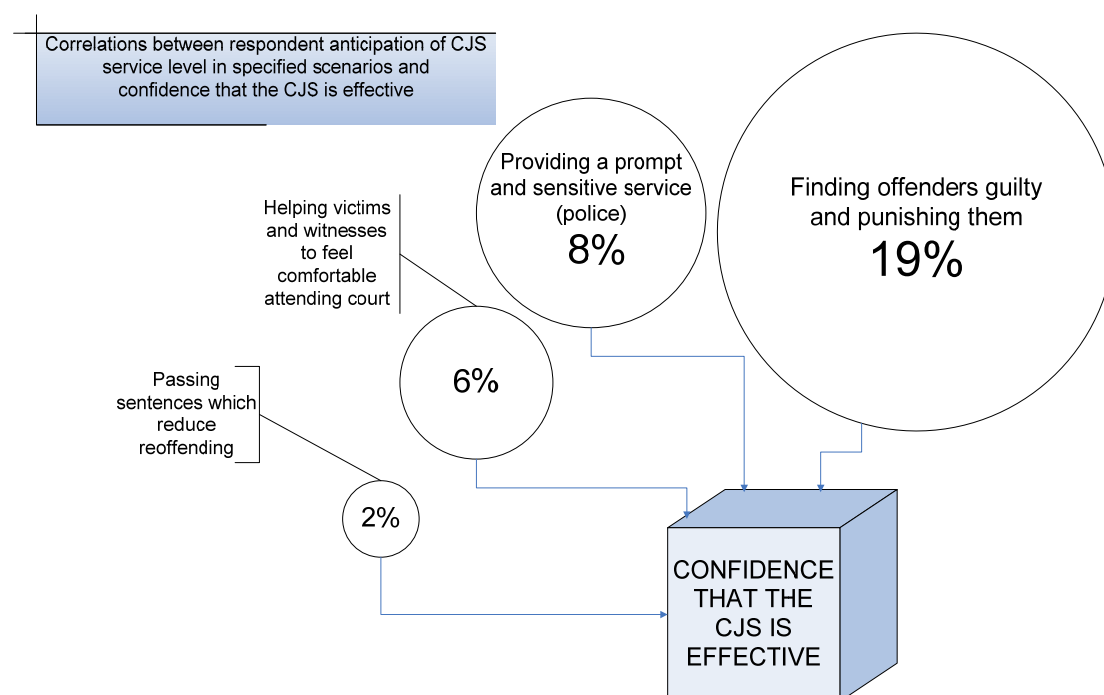
4.2.14 So, whilst the language of effectiveness at crime reduction is frequently deployed by respondents, specific evaluations of the effectiveness of sentencing at reducing reoffending are not strongly associated with confidence. However, at the start of this section it was noted that perceptions of crime rates were associated with confidence, with respondents who thought there was much more crime in their local area compared to two years ago being the least likely to be confident. This suggests that perceptions of the CJS's effectiveness at reducing crime do play a part in confidence. However, when one considers the association between perceptions of crime rates and confidence, whilst controlling for anticipation that the CJS will find offenders guilty and punish them in the scenarios specified in the survey, the association between confidence and perceptions of crime trends is no longer statistically significant. This suggests that the relationship between perceptions of crime rates and confidence is moderated by perceptions of the actions taken against offenders by the CJS. So, despite the apparent importance of perceptions of crime rates to confidence, it seems that perceptions of crime rates may themselves be based, to an extent, on perceptions of the CJS's ability to find offenders guilty and pass sentences which punish them.

4.2.15 Research into public confidence has repeatedly found that perceptions of sentencing are an important 'driver' of confidence (e.g. see Page *et al*, 2004; Holme, 2006; Smith, 2007; Public Knowledge, 2006). However, such research frequently fails to explore fully *why* these perceptions are influential. This research suggests that sentencing is important because the actions which the CJS is taking in this area are seen as an indicator of whether the CJS is effective. A CJS which is perceived as able to find offenders guilty and punish them appropriately is more likely to also be perceived as effective at reducing crime; hence crime is more likely to be perceived as falling. *Perceptions of CJS effectiveness may be based more on perceptions of the actions the system is taking than on direct perceptions of the outcomes it is producing.*

4.2.16 This finding about the relative importance of actions to outcomes is supported by research carried out by Jackson and Sunshine (2007) who found that confidence in the police was primarily driven not by perceived reductions in local disorder, but rather by the police being seen to be tackling the disorder. As noted in Turner *et al* (2007: 37) *'action has communicative as well as substantive value'*. This is an important finding with consequences for how best to communicate CJS effectiveness to members of the public. Presenting the public with good news about trends in crime rates may be less effective at increasing confidence than demonstrating that the CJS is taking actions against offenders which are perceived, by the public, as likely to be effective. *Perceptions of crime trends appear to be less important for confidence than perceptions of the effectiveness of different sentencing disposals, and perceptions of whether the most effective sentencing options on offer are being applied.*

4.3 Delivering justice

> **'...many respondents saw fair retribution and effectiveness as inextricably linked, if not synonymous'**

4.3.1 Whilst respondents often discussed sentencing and punishment in the context of a debate about effectiveness, they also seemed to desire something more abstract and difficult to define from the actions of the criminal justice system: a sense that justice was being done. Addison (2006) found that respondents saw justice as taking place when offenders were punished, made to pay or 'got back at' for their crimes. Addison claimed that if sentencing was perceived as failing to meet this expectation then confidence was adversely affected.

4.3.2 Amongst respondents who used the survey free text question to express their concern about sentencing, the most frequently cited problem with sentencing was that it was not tough enough. In total, 91 (30%) of the respondents used one or more of the following words: harsh, tough, strong, strict, stiff or longer, to describe the change they would like to see in sentencing practice. Seeing sentences as not being appropriate was frequently linked to a desire to see sentences getting tougher. But being tough was not simply seen as a case of sending more offenders to prison for longer. Respondents also suggested that the prison regime needed to become tougher. For example, one survey respondent wrote *'[p]rison is not meant to be a holiday camp'*[31].

4.3.3 In a focus group discussion, Steve [F5n] commented: *'I don't feel that they do get retribution for what they have done'*. Whilst the use of the word retribution may not be particularly palatable to criminal justice system professionals, there can be no doubt that many people have a deeply held belief that the emotional imbalance engendered by offending behaviour requires rebalancing through the sentencing process: *'I just think there are a lot of victims and families that get let down really badly'* (Hamid [F1c]);*'I thought prison was too good for him'* (Vivien [I11n]).

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[31] Survey respondent 110059

4.3.4   It was often difficult to disentangle respondents' perceptions of fair retribution in sentencing (that is offenders getting what they deserve) from their perceptions of effectiveness, and respondent comments on sentencing need to be treated with caution. Respondents who said that sentences were too soft or did not fit the crime may have been trying to communicate one or more of the following:

- that they did not think that the offender had received fair retribution for their crime;

- that they did not think the sentence would reduce offending;

- that they did not think that the sentence was proportionate in relation to the sentences for other offences.

4.3.5   It would not be accurate to say that respondents favoured tougher sentences purely because they believed they would be more effective, nor would it be correct to suggest that retribution was seen as the main reason for sentencing. Sometimes respondents implied that a sentence which provides 'appropriate' retribution would, by definition, deter future offending. This suggests that *many respondents saw fair retribution and effectiveness in sentencing as inextricably linked, if not synonymous.*

4.3.6   Few respondents explicitly articulated their expectation that the CJS should deliver justice, and none offered a clear explanation of what they considered 'justice' to be. Julian [F1c] hinted at a desire for justice to result from CJS processes; however he seemed to struggle for the words to articulate this thought: *'[w]ell I think that society really should be fair and everyone should be innocent until proven guilty and things and people should be helped and things should be inherently fair and things...'.* Vivien [I11n] appeared similarly tongue-tied as she attempted to explain the purpose of the CJS: *'[w]hy do we need it? Well, it's got to... some people's got to be brought to court, haven't they? They can't just let people do what they want to do [laughter]. Um, you know, you have... well, it's for justice, isn't it?'.*

4.3.7   Perhaps the most coherent statement of justice as a desired outcome of criminal justice processes was given by Angie [I5n] as she explained why she thought some sentences inappropriate: *'[j]ust when you hear of.....kids that have been killed by drink drivers, or drunk drivers, whatever you call them, or those under the influence of, like, drugs or anything, and it's like a very small sentence, a couple of years or... And it just seems, you know, some mother out there has lost her kid and that's not fair, not fair at all'.* For Angie [I5n], soft sentences were seen as failing to provide the desired outcome of fairness (or justice), balancing the loss experienced by a mother with punishment administered to the offender.

4.3.8   When justice was not seen to have been done, even in cases in which respondents themselves had no personal involvement, their perception that the criminal justice system had not produced the required outcome of justice affected them personally. Angie's [I5n] empathy for the mother who had lost a child (see Para 4.3.7 above) seemed to reflect her own role as a mother uncertain of whether she herself would receive the outcome of 'justice' if her own child was killed. Abida [I10c] said that hearing about violent crimes made her feel *'sick'*. Her revulsion at the nature of the crimes was compounded by the failure, as she saw it, of the CJS to punish offenders appropriately. Although she herself had not experienced these types of crimes, her perceptions of the way in which the CJS deals with them, and the emotions provoked by these perceptions, have implications for her quality of life.

4.3.9   However impractical or unpalatable it may seem to some practitioners to account for public emotions in sentencing policy, the data in this study confirm what

others have already claimed: that the presence of emotions in matters of crime and criminal justice is unavoidable (Green, 2006; Karstedt, 2002). The political challenge is to balance the emotional needs and wants of the general public against the rights of those who commit criminal offences and the integrity of the rule of law (Loader, 2010: forthcoming).

4.3.10 Punishment appeared to be seen by some respondents as the appropriate mechanism for balancing the emotions that arise when a crime takes place and correspondingly many respondents appeared to see punishment as an end as well as a means: *'...you should be punished for it'* (Vivien [I11n]); *'[w]hen they do something wrong like that, they should be punished'* (Margaret [I13n]). Punishment was more of a preoccupation for those respondents who were **not confident** in the CJS. In the view of these respondents crime must be punished, and as long as crime is punished *appropriately* then justice has been done. However, respondents were notably vague about the parameters for appropriateness, even when asked directly.

4.3.11 Many respondents equated punishing offenders appropriately with sending them to prison. For Lawrence [F4n] the issue was simple; prison was a punishment, whilst a suspended prison sentence was not. Bert [I14n] saw prison as epitomising a *'strict'* sentence, whilst Gavin [I4n] referred to non-custodial sentences as *'lenient'*. For these respondents prison was the standard against which other punishments were judged with other punishments being perceived as potentially not strict enough. Respondents also indicated that they believed that the conditions in prison should be much harsher than they perceived them to currently be: *'[i]t should be really strict, really crack down on them'* (Bert [I14n]); *'I think it's too soft when you see what they've got'* (Vivien [I11n]).

4.3.12 Many respondents expressed concern that when it came to delivering justice the CJS placed *'...too much emphasis on the criminal and not the victim'* (Mavis [F1c]):

- *'We seem to have gone too far with human rights'* (Steve [F5n]).

- *'The villains' have more protection than what the victims have'* (Bill [F5n]).

- *'They're on the side of the criminals'* (Angie [I5n]).

4.3.13 Again, these comments came mainly from respondents who were **not confident**. The issue of a perceived imbalance in the CJS of this kind has been previously noted in confidence research (see Smith, 2007; Addison, 2006; NOP World, 2006), and this theme has been incorporated into criminal justice policy documents which promise to *'rebalance [the] criminal justice system in favour of the victim and the law-abiding majority'* (Home Office, 2006: 4).

4.3.14 A key area in which some respondents perceived that there was an imbalance was in the extent to which the law prevents people from protecting themselves or their property: *'...we can't defend our property'* (Laura [F5c]). An exchange in one focus group (FG5) suggested that some respondents believed that the CJS penalised people for taking actions which they considered to be reasonable to protect themselves and their property: *'[i]t's not for you to explain what you are doing in your house. It's for the person who's broken in unexplained to explain'* (Tara [F5n]); *'...so you defend yourself, well the next thing you know is you're being charged with erm assault'* (Steve [F5n]). An exchange in focus group two was even more robust on this point: *'[t]he man had a perfect right. He should of [sic] shot both of them'* (Rosemary [F2n]); *'...this is reasonable force'* (Eric [F2n]).

4.3.15 The comments in Para 4.3.14 above all came from respondents who were **not confident** that the CJS is effective. Lorna, who *was* confident that the CJS is effective, appeared at first to see things in a similar way to these respondents: *'[y]ou should be able to use whatever appropriate means are necessary to protect yourself and your home'*. However, she then went on to clarify what she sees as reasonable and appropriate for self-defence: *'...it's self-defence, and it's not, you know, a means of just kicking the crap out of somebody because they're in your house'*.

4.3.16 The respondents quoted here all believed that members of the public should be able to take their own action to defend themselves, their family and their property against offenders. Some of the respondents who were not confident in the CJS felt that harsh, potentially lethal force was justified, whilst the single confident respondent who mentioned this issue qualified her responses with the suggestion that actions should be for *'self-defence'* only and should be *'appropriate'*. Findings from the survey confirmed that of the respondents most strongly in favour of the public being able to use physical force to protect themselves and their property, only 29% were confident. The percentage of 'confident' respondents rose to 48% among those who favoured a limited right to use force and 58% of the respondents who thought no physical force should be used against offenders.

4.3.17 Respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to:

- …see punishment as an end in itself

- …see prison as the only 'true' punishment

- …believe that conditions in prison should be harsher than they currently perceive them to be

- …believe that the CJS is tilted too far in favour of the offender

- …believe that the CJS should allow members of the public to use potentially lethal force against offenders who are threatening them or their property

4.4 Serving the public

4.4.1 A number of respondents spoke of their perception that the CJS is imbalanced because people are prevented from protecting themselves and their property. These respondents appeared outraged and clearly indicated their belief that justice was not well-served by a system which emasculated private individuals in this way. The criminalisation of members of the public for, as these respondents saw it, exercising their natural right to protect themselves, their home or their property, led them to believe that justice was distorted and that the CJS was (correspondingly) failing to provide an 'appropriate' level of service to the public.

4.4.2 Many comments made by respondents in the focus groups and interviews indicated a strong sense that the CJS should be working in the interests of 'ordinary' members of the public. Many respondents expressed the view that the CJS should be more 'in touch' with public views as Judy [F5n] observed, *'...they should actually listen to the people on the ground'* . This view was echoed by Margaret [I13n] who commented, *'I think they should listen to the people'*.

4.4.3 Mirrlees-Black (2001) found that perceptions of whether judges were 'out of touch' were associated with confidence. Some respondents in this study (mostly those who were not confident) simply demanded to have *their views* listened to, whilst

others wanted to be listened to because of a belief that they lived in the *'real-world'*, and (therefore) had access to knowledge which they did not believe was shared by judges and other CJS decision makers; views espoused by Karen [I12c], *'...they wouldn't know what it's like to live on a rough estate'*; Bert [I14n], *'...at the end of the day it's the public that are affected'*; and Henry [F3n], *'I'd like to see high court judges and people like that at that level, them living in the real world for 6 months ... they seem to have no concept of what's going on in the real world'*.

4.4.4 The increasing weight placed on public perceptions of the CJS and increasing scope for involving members of the public in decisions about CJS priorities in their area, indicates that increasingly the public are being treated, if not as experts, as partners in the production of criminal justice system services. One aspect of business in which the CJS appears to have been adapted in line with public perceptions of what an effective CJS *should* be like is found in the increasing emphasis being placed upon high visibility patrols provided by a mixture of both sworn police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs).

4.4.5 A desire for the CJS to provide a visible police presence was mentioned explicitly in most of the focus groups and interviews: *'...more police on the ground'* (Rosemary [F2n]); *'...police on the beat'* (Glenys [F5c]); *'I still think there's a place for policemen on the beat as the answer to a lot of trouble'* (Fred [I1n]); *'...having more police on the streets I think is quite important'* (Lorna [I7c]); *'...you need to see a presence of the police'* (Brenda [I9n]).

4.4.6 The desire to see higher visibility policing in their area did not seem to be dependent on the perceived levels of crime in that area. For example, whilst Bert [I14n] frequently referred to living his life in an area where visible crime is a commonplace occurrence, and he saw a greater police presence as one way of combating this, Karen [I12c] admitted that in her area she was not aware of any crime but still felt that a police presence would be appropriate as it would contribute to a sense of wellbeing in the local environment: *'I think you feel comfortable when you see policemen walking around'*.[32]

4.4.7 A visible police presence, then, appeared to be favoured by respondents as something which was both symbolic of order, and had instrumental value in maintaining that order. A visible patrolling presence was widely seen among the respondents in this study as something which the CJS *should* be providing, and this desire applied both to confident and not confident respondents.

4.4.8 In addition to a visible presence, respondents also expressed views on aspects of the level of service they expected from the police, including arriving in good time following an incident, taking action and being polite and pleasant to deal with.

4.4.9 Respondents who were **confident** were more likely to have noticed and to have mentioned in the interviews and focus groups positive aspects of the service provided by the police; *'...they've come back to a bit of the old fashioned bobby on the beat type thing which is quite good'* (Harriet [I3c]); *'...they have always turned up, they have always been reasonable, polite...'* (Robin [F1c]).

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[32] Interestingly, Dodgson, 2006, reported that visible police patrols did not always seem to provide a reassuring presence (and hence, a potentially positive impact upon confidence). While this finding was based upon a comparatively small sample of around 400 respondents found in one locality, it raises the possibility that, perhaps for contextual reasons, while in some circumstances visible patrols might provide reassurance, in others they might simply raise an awareness of the possibility of crime.

4.4.10 Respondents who were **not confident** made some positive remarks about the police, but usually qualified or downplayed their significance; *'...there's always somebody higher up the ladder that makes the decisions'* (Pam [F3n]); *'I think the police are greatly under resourced'* (Steve [F5n])[33].

4.4.11 Respondents who were **not confident** also made many negative remarks about the service provided by the police: *'[t]here's not enough police on the ground'* [Rosemary]; *'I was disgusted with the police'* (Ursula [F3n]); *'...they came and they just said there's a number for the insurance...and that was it'* (Vivien [I11n]); *'...the police are aware of that and very little's done about it'* (Bert [I14n]).

4.4.12 The survey findings indicate that (following anticipation of the CJS's ability to find offenders guilty and punish them) anticipation of the service provided by the police had the second most powerful correlation with confidence. However, when the variable 'anticipation of the CJS's ability to find offenders guilty and punish them' was controlled for, anticipation of the service provided by the police was only very weakly associated with confidence. So whilst issues to do with the service provided by the police were somewhat important in relation to public confidence, their importance was eclipsed by the association between confidence and perceptions of the CJS's ability to find offenders guilty and punish them.

4.5 Summary

4.5.1 Respondents expected the CJS to maintain order, reduce crime, deliver justice and provide certain levels of service. Most respondents were concerned about what they saw as declines in societal and social values, including 'respect'. Confident respondents tended to be more circumspect about this issue, but were still concerned. Respondents who were not confident tended to generalise from specific examples to society as a whole, and saw social decline as being caused by the erosion of authority.

4.5.2 Reducing crime was frequently referred to as something which the CJS should be doing. However perceptions of crime rates appeared to be less important to confidence than perceptions of whether the CJS can find offenders guilty and punish them. The actions of the CJS in this area were used as an indicator of effectiveness. In other words, it appears that what the CJS is seen to be *doing* about crime (that is the actions it is taking against convicted offenders) may provide members of the public with an indication of how effective the system is at achieving the outcome of reducing crime. Whether or not crime has gone up or down overall may be clear to criminal justice agencies and statisticians; however, it may not always be readily visible to members of the public. In this case, members of the public may use their perceptions of what the CJS is doing about crime, and their beliefs about whether such actions are likely to be effective, as a proxy indicator of actual effectiveness.

4.5.3 Respondents who were not confident were more strongly aligned with the view that harsh punishment deters crime and reduces reoffending, and were less likely to believe that, in the scenarios presented in the questionnaire, the CJS would pass

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[33] This remark by Steve [F5n] is particularly interesting as, while revealing a potentially negative influence on responses made to a compound measure of 'general confidence', it suggests the ability of members of the public to distinguish between their own confidence levels in different aspects of the potential service provided by public organisations, such as 'capability' and capacity' - aspects which the current measures are unable to disaggregate. Public awareness of the differences between 'capability' and 'capacity' were noted elsewhere in comments made during a public focus group with young people (Public Knowledge, 2006).

sentences which punished the convicted offenders. In other words they were less likely to believe that the CJS was taking actions against offenders which they thought were likely to be effective. It is perhaps therefore unsurprising that they were also less likely to believe that crime was falling.

4.5.4   As well as being effective at reducing crime, respondents also expected sentences to deliver justice for victims and their families by enacting a measure of retribution on the offender for their offence. However, respondents did not usually provide explicit definitions or examples of what they though would represent 'justice' or 'retribution'. Furthermore, discussions about appropriate retribution and effectiveness in punishment often revealed that respondents did not have a clear conceptualisation of the relationship between retribution and effectiveness. Indeed, many respondents appeared to see them as intrinsically linked in that they assumed that a sentence which met *their* demands for appropriate retribution would also be the most effective way of preventing future offending.

4.5.5   Respondents expected the CJS to be in touch with the views of the public and with 'reality'. They also expected a good standard of service, particularly from the police. Confident respondents were more likely to recall and talk about instances of positive service from the police but tended to provide only brief detail. Respondents who were not confident were more likely to qualify their positive comments about the service provided by the police.

4.5.6   The final section of the analysis considers the factors associated with willingness to engage.

5. Analysis 3: The Impacts of Confidence

5.0.1 The recent review by Louise Casey identified five key actions that citizens could take in order to help tackle crime. The first of these was '*...report crime and be prepared to give evidence.*' (Casey, 2008: 78). Public confidence in the CJS is seen as important in order to ensure that the public reports crime and cooperates with the CJS; recorded levels of public confidence are used as a barometer of willingness to engage. This research included survey questions which measured respondents' self-reported willingness to engage with the CJS in eight different hypothetical scenarios where they were either victim or witness to potentially criminal or anti-social behaviour. Willingness to engage with the CJS was also explored in both the focus groups and the interviews. This section begins by exploring the association between being confident that the CJS is effective, and being willing to engage with the CJS in the scenarios provided to respondents. The section then moves on to consider the other factors associated with willingness to engage.

Analysis 3: The Impacts of Confidence - Key findings

From the quantitative data:

► Confidence that the CJS is effective is only very weakly associated with willingness to engage

► Anticipation of the service provided by the CJS in specific scenarios is a better predictor of willingness to engage than confidence

► The best predictor of willingness to engage is a sense of duty to engage

From the qualitative data:

► Respondents often explained their decisions about whether to engage with the CJS in terms of the costs and benefits of doing so

► Potential benefits of engaging referred to by respondents were: action being taken, protecting people, offenders being punished, crime reduction, making police aware of problems, getting stolen goods back

► Potential costs of engaging referred to by respondents were: inconvenience, diverting CJS resources from serious important issues, risk of reprisals

► Respondents' decision about whether to engage with the CJS were also influenced by social norms including: a sense of responsibility, habitual behaviour and beliefs about the legitimate domain for CJS activity

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5.1 Factors associated with willingness to engage

5.1.1 The vast majority of respondents were likely to engage with the CJS in scenarios where there was a threat to themselves or their property, but they were somewhat less likely to engage where there was a threat to others or to the community or local environment[34]. Over 98% of respondents said they would probably or definitely contact the police if their home was broken into. However, in scenarios where the threat was towards others, or the community or local environment, respondents were more reluctant to contact the police. Only 63% of respondents said they would probably or definitely contact the police if they saw a bus stop near their home being vandalised, 17% said they were not sure and 20% said they would probably or definitely not contact the police in this scenario.

5.1.2 The quantitative analysis in this section will focus on willingness to contact the police where there is a threat to others or to the community or local environment (henceforth referred to as 'willingness to engage')[35]. Whether or not members of the public contact the police in this 'role' is of vital importance to the effective and efficient functioning of the CJS. If members of the public are not willing to engage with the CJS in this way, then it will become increasingly difficult for the system to function on a consensual basis.

Figure 9: Confidence and willingness to engage

General confidence and willingness to engage

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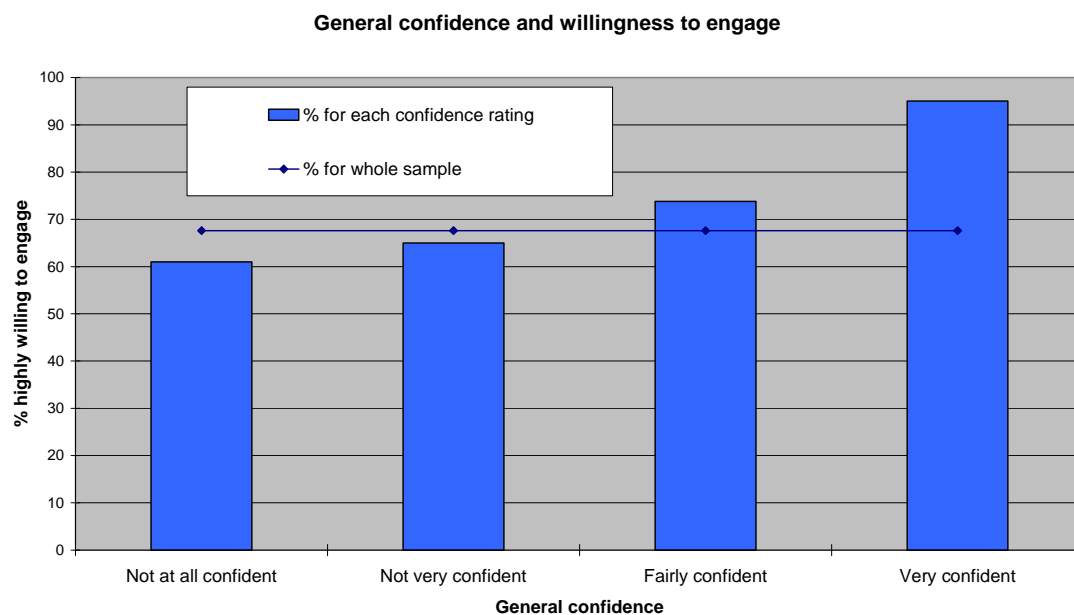
[34] Willingness to engage with the CJS was measured using a series of eight hypothetical scenarios in which the respondent had either been a victim of or witness to crime or anti-social behaviour in their local area. Respondents were asked 'Would you contact the police?' Response options were: definitely not, probably not, not sure, probably and definitely.

[35] Factor analysis has been used to identify the factors underlying responses and to give a continuous variable indicating a 'willingness to engage' score for each respondent. A more crude measure of 'willingness to engage' has also been used. This measure designates respondents as either high or low willingness to engage based on their average score across the questions referring to scenarios where there is a threat to others or to the local environment. A score of 3.6 or higher is considered 'high willingness to engage'.

5.1.3 Cross-tabulating confidence that the CJS is effective with high and low willingness to engage indicates that **confident** respondents were slightly more likely to have a high willingness to engage. However, except in the case of respondents who were 'very confident', the association is only weak. Figure 9 displays this relationship graphically. The graph shows that whilst there is some association between general confidence and having a high willingness to engage, there is much about willingness to engage which is *not* captured by the general confidence measure, suggesting that this measure is not a good proxy for measurements of willingness to engage.

5.1.4 The standard of service which respondents anticipated receiving from the CJS appeared to be a better indicator of their willingness to engage than general confidence. Anticipated performance of the police had the most significant association with willingness to engage, being associated with just over 5% of the variance, closely followed by anticipated performance of the courts in making victims and witnesses feel comfortable, which is associated with just over 4% of the variance. Moreover, anticipation that offenders will be found guilty and given sentences which punish them which is associated with just over 2% of the variance (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Correlations with willingness to engage
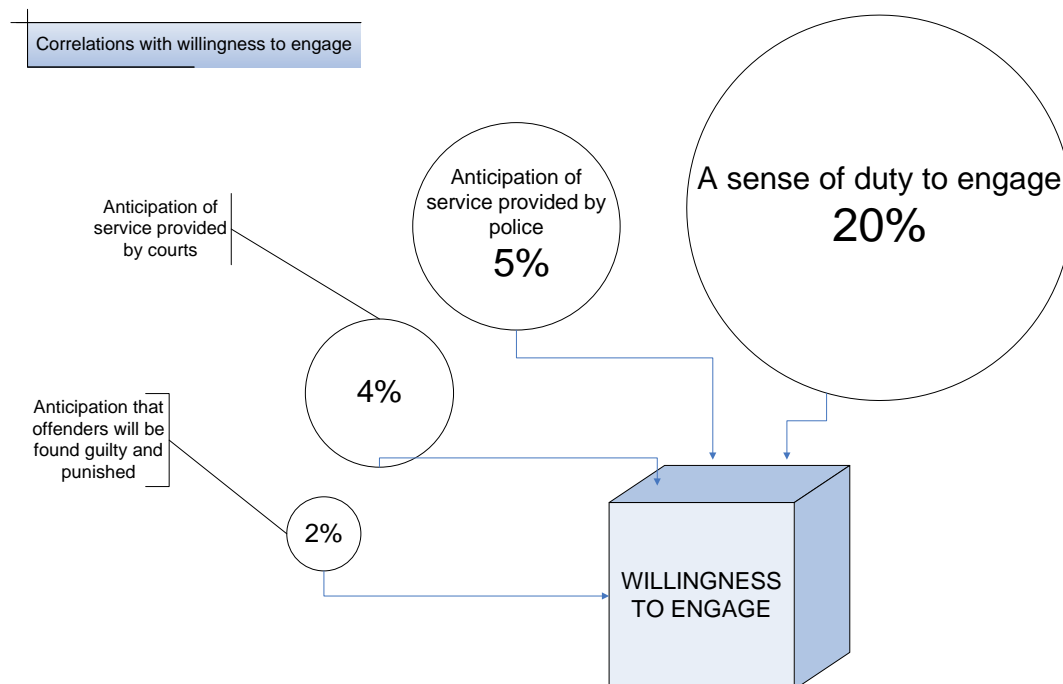
5.1.5 The variable that showed the strongest association with respondents' willingness to engage was the extent to which respondents saw engaging cooperatively with the CJS as a duty[36], being associated with 20% of the variance.

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[36] Respondents were asked to consider what they thought people *should* do in five different scenarios. Responses to these five questions were coded from 1 (least cooperative response) to 4 (most cooperative response). Exploratory factor analysis of responses to these questions resulted in the exclusion of one question from the analysis as the responses to this question were not strongly associated with responses to any of the other questions. One factor was extracted from the remaining four variables. Scores on this factor indicate the extent to which the respondent sees engaging cooperatively with the criminal justice system as a duty.

80.2% of those with a strong sense of duty appeared to be highly willing to engage with the CJS in the scenarios where there was a threat to others or to the community, compared to just 37% of those who did not have a strong sense of duty to engage.

5.2 Costs, benefits and norms

5.2.1 Goudriaan *et al* (2004) suggest that whether or not victims of crime will report their experience to the police results from either a rational cost-benefit analysis, or a decision based on normative beliefs about what one *ought* to do. Although the general confidence measure has proved to be a poor proxy for willingness to engage, anticipation of the service provided by the CJS in specific scenarios *was* associated with willingness to engage. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that confidence, in some form or other, impacts upon how people will behave. For example, a form of confidence might be an important aspect of both cost-benefit and normative decision-making. Low confidence in certain aspects of CJS performance might lead to a belief that the costs of engagement outweigh the benefits; it may also undermine people's sense that the CJS has the legitimate right to require them to behave in certain ways. This section of the analysis considers the role that different kinds of confidence played in respondents' decisions about whether to engage with the CJS.

5.2.2 Respondents mentioned a range of potential costs and benefits of engaging with the CJS as a victim or witness. These included:

Costs	**Benefits**
• Inconvenience to self	• Action being taken
• Diverts resources from more important issues (for minor offences)	• Protecting people
• Risk of reprisals	• Offenders being punished
	• Crime reduction
	• Police aware of problems
	• Return of stolen goods

5.2.3 Many respondents referred to their perceptions of whether or not the potential benefits of engaging with the CJS would be realised in order to explain their decision about whether or not to engage with the CJS. Additionally, the belief that the benefits would be realised was often implicit in respondents' answers, rather than explicitly stated:

- *'...the police would try and catch them'* (Maureen [F5n]).

- *'...especially if there's young children in the house. I mean if it was just the couple themselves.. but even so um yeah, 'cause there's every chance someone could get hurt'* (Harriet [I3c]).

5.2.4 Respondents would call the police in certain scenarios because on some level, at least, they had confidence that the police would take action, catch the offender or prevent someone from getting hurt. Confidence in these specific aspects of CJS activity leads them to believe that the potential benefits of engaging with the CJS might be realised.

5.2.5 Not all respondents who were willing to engage with the CJS in the scenarios described were optimistic about what would happen, for example:

- *'I would very likely contact the police but not with any expectation of anything happening'* (Henry [F3n]).

- *'In that situation I would call the police, but I wouldn't be living in hope of anybody being caught'* (Angie [I5n]).

- *'I can't see them doing anything but I would still ring them'* (Vivien [I11n]).

5.2.6 Of note is the fact that in these cases a lack of confidence in the CJS's ability to deliver specific benefits does not appear to undermine respondents' willingness to engage.

5.2.7 However, other respondents did dismiss the possibility of reporting certain incidents explicitly because they did not believe desired benefits would be realised:

- *'...there would be no point, no-one would get caught'* (Andy [F5c]).

- *'...you know they are not going to be able to do anything'* (Priya [F5n]).

- *'If it was an anonymous person, doing a runner or something, with their hoodies on, and you can't identify them ... then I can't say I'd bother 'cause the cops aren't going to be able to do anything'* (Geoff [F3n]).

- *'...the police wouldn't do anything about that, I'm convinced of that, even if you could identify the people'* (Bert [I14n]).

5.2.8 In these cases a lack of confidence in what the CJS could achieve appears to have damaged respondents' willingness to engage.

5.2.9 Explanations of whether or not respondents would engage, and why, usually made reference both to the benefits and costs of engagement. The most commonly cited cost of contacting the police was the personal inconvenience that this would involve:

- *'...you'll have to wait an hour'* (Andy [F5c]).

- *'I'm going to spend however long standing there until a patrol car shows up'* (Henry [F3n]).

5.2.10 Respondents were also concerned that if they called the police about relatively minor matters this would divert scarce resources from more serious issues:

- *'...they are already under resourced and over worked'* (Priya [F5n]).

- *'...there's other more important things going on, mine's minor compared to other things that have been happening out there'* (Violet [F4c]).

- *'...if we called the police at the first sign of trouble the police would just be inundated with calls'* (Gavin [I4n]).

5.2.11 Fear of being targeted for reprisals if they spoke out was a concern for some respondents:

- *'I share the view that a lot of the public have – I don't want to be involved. There's a lot of this and I think it's to do with fear'* (Rosemary [F2n]).

- *'...they have no hesitation in getting their own back...they'll smash your car, break your headlights...the front window, whatever'* (Henry [F3n]).

- *'They'd make me go to court as a witness and I'd be a target after that'* (Bert [I14n]).

5.2.12 In all of these cases respondents seemed to lack confidence that the CJS could do certain things, from arriving quickly, to being sufficiently resourced to deal with all public concerns, to protecting witnesses from reprisal attacks by offenders.

5.2.13 The ability of the CJS to punish offenders appropriately was a key aspect of general confidence that the CJS is effective; however, it did not appear to be an important determinant of willingness to engage. For example, Angie [I5n] was highly critical throughout her interview of sentencing practice. However her responses also made clear that she would be prepared to engage with the CJS in many scenarios, or to tackle minor problems herself where she felt able.

5.2.14 The distinction between having confidence in all aspects of CJS activity, and still being willing to engage with it when necessary is an important one. Karen [I12c] effectively articulated the distinction between her specific concerns about sentencing, and her overall support for the *'framework'* of the CJS: *'I find there's nothing wrong with the Criminal Justice System as a concept ... I'm pleased it's there. Sentencing is just the thing that I have concerns about'*. The distinction which Karen makes here captures the difference between confidence and legitimacy. In this case a lack of confidence in one area does not appear to have caused serious damage to the respondent's view of the overall legitimacy of the CJS, nor does it appear to affect how willing the respondent is to engage with the CJS.

5.2.15 When talking about their willingness to engage, respondents appeared to be most concerned about what would happen in the short-term after they made that decision, that is, whether the police would be able to take timely and effective action to address the problem, rather than achieve longer-term outcomes such as sentencing. Where respondents lacked confidence in the CJS's short-term response to incidents, they were more reluctant to contact the police, particularly if they thought that doing so would attract a personal cost (ranging from inconvenience to victimisation).

5.2.16 Nevertheless, despite having misgivings about how effective the response would be, some respondents were willing to engage with the CJS and many cited a sense of duty as a key factor in determining what they would do:

- *'Out of a sense of duty, if I saw that, I would phone the police'* (Ursula [F3n]).

- *'...the police <u>should</u> know what's going on in the area and everything <u>should</u> be reported'* (Vivien [I11n]).

- *'...just to make them aware that there's a thief in the area'* (Karen [I12c]).

5.2.17 The respondents above talked about duty as something that they owed to the CJS whereas other respondents were moved more by a sense of responsibility to other people:

- *'If somebody's been hurt, then I think you've got to put all your, your fears to one side to protect that person'* (Angie [I5n]).

- *'I would want that person caught before it happens to someone more vulnerable than myself'* (Gavin [I4n]).

5.2.18 Empathy for the victim, perhaps provoked by one's own experience of victimisation, appeared to increase a sense of responsibility:

- *'Well, because I wouldn't like it to happen to me whatever it was, you know. So you would do it if it was your neighbours or anybody really like, you know'* (Margaret [I13n]).

- *'Because I've been a victim of crime, I've had a break-in to my own property'* (Gavin [I4n]).

5.2.19 The seriousness of the incident also played a part in increasing respondents' sense of responsibility to others, for example, for Bert [I14n] the factor determining whether or not he felt he ought to engage with the CJS if he had witnessed a crime was the level of gravity of the offence; more serious offences such as violence against the person increased his own personal sense of moral responsibility to the victim.

5.2.20 For some respondents, it would seem that reporting incidents to the police was a habitual or instinctive response, rather than a considered decision. If the law had been broken then engaging with the CJS by calling the police was the obvious course of action for these respondents:

- *'...because they shouldn't be doing it, they shouldn't be doing it'* (Harriet [I3c]).

- *'...who are we going to phone other than them?'* (Vivien [I11n]).

5.2.21 However, respondents had different ideas about which scenarios fell into the appropriate domain for CJS activity. For example, whilst Ursula [F3n] and Vivien [I11n] both suggested that they would probably call the police if they witnessed vandalism of a bus-stop taking place in their local area, Karen [I12c] said: *'I'll probably shout at them myself'*.

5.2.22 In the more serious scenario of a potential domestic violence incident Gavin [I4n] was not certain whether he would call the police:

> INTERVIEWER: *Your neighbours, a young couple who you don't know well, have been arguing a lot lately, today they're shouting at each other and it sounds like things may have turned physical; is that a situation where you might call the police?*
>
> GAVIN[I4n]: *I'm not too sure about that one, I probably would, um, inform someone, um, but I'm not too sure how I'd deal with that.*

5.2.23 Gavin [I4n] seemed to be concerned not to waste police resources on a matter which he thought might be better dealt with by talking to friends or relatives of the young couple, or resolved by the couple themselves. He was not certain about who he should inform in such a situation, suggesting that he did not necessarily see this kind of incident as falling within the domain of CJS activity, at least not initially.

5.2.24 Seriousness, either as a 'stand-alone' or as an exacerbating factor, was a common criterion supplied by respondents to explain their decisions about whether to contact the police. For example, Rosemary [F2n] drew a distinction between *'...trivial things...'* and *'...what I call crime...'*. And Harriet [I3c], when presented with the scenario of money having been taken from an unlocked house thought it was only worth bothering the police if the amount stolen was significant.

5.3 Summary

5.3.1 The best predictors of willingness to engage are sense of duty and anticipation of the service which the CJS would provide in specific scenarios. General confidence that the CJS is effective is not a good proxy for willingness to engage.

5.3.2 The answers given by respondents in the interviews and focus groups reveal that willingness to engage is often underpinned by a sense that one *ought* to do so. This sense of duty seems to reflect an implicit belief in CJS legitimacy which, for many respondents, appears to be independent of their evaluations of CJS performance in specific areas. The perceived ability of the system to respond effectively, or in a way that respondents find agreeable does not have a straightforward relationship with the sense of duty they feel to engage with the system. In other words it is possible (and indeed appeared to be commonplace amongst the respondent group) to be highly critical of aspects of CJS performance and yet still display a willingness to engage.

5.3.3 It is apparent that the boundaries of CJS organisations' abilities to shape respondents' personal beliefs about the ways that they should behave are unclear. In particular, minor crimes, crimes taking place within the domestic sphere and anti-social behaviour, appear to be perceived by some respondents as existing at the borders of the CJS's legitimate terrain because respondents seemed less willing to report these kinds of incidents. Respondents' decisions about how to act when they witness these types of behaviour appear to be shaped more by factors other than a sense of obligation or duty. Awareness of limited CJS resources which respondents perceived as needing to be conserved for more serious crimes, respondents' confidence to address issues themselves, and anticipation of the potential personal 'costs and benefits' to themselves are among the factors weighed in deciding whether to report minor crime or anti-social behaviour.

5.3.4 Most respondents indicated that they would report what they considered to be serious crimes, but again, perceptions of seriousness varied. Respondents who perceived the personal costs of engagement to be high compared to the benefits were only inclined to report the most serious incidents. Of course, evaluations of costs and benefits were based on *anticipation* of the service provided by the CJS, and in this way it could be said that confidence (in this 'anticipative' sense) impacted upon willingness to engage.[37]

5.3.5 At the deepest level without some belief in its ability to influence the course of events by protecting people from crime and apprehending, punishing and changing

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[37] Whilst this study found that a sense of 'duty', as discussed above, was a key factor in decisions to contact the police in specific crime or ASB-related scenarios (which has been termed 'willingness to engage'), Dale *et al* (2008) suggested that when considering a broader kind of engagement with the CJS, in scenarios where there is not necessarily an incident 'in progress', respondents tended to focus on the question 'What's in it for me?', rather than upon more altruistic rationales. Care needs to be taken then to define the different types of citizen-CJS engagement which are to be encouraged in order to provide incentives which are appropriate.

the behaviour of offenders, the CJS may eventually lose its legitimacy to determine what people think they *ought* to do. The respondent who said he would report crime to the police in order to protect his vulnerable neighbours might no longer do this if he did not perceive that reporting this to the police would make any difference at all to their safety. The respondent who wanted to let the police know about things going on in her area so that they could deploy their resources more intelligently, would be less likely to do so if she had lost all faith that the police were listening. The respondent who would have reported a possible violent domestic dispute to protect a woman and her children might take other action, or no action, if she thought that the police would not attend and ensure that the potential victim was safe.

5.3.6 On the evidence of the qualitative data analysed for this report, most respondents seemed to be *confident enough* to engage with the CJS in a wide-range of scenarios despite any misgivings they might have about specific aspects of CJS activity, most notably sentencing. However, some of the responses analysed here indicated the danger of the CJS being perceived as failing to provide an acceptable level of service, or failing to provide a basic level of objective and subjective security for people in their day to day lives[38]. When people's confidence in the CJS is particularly low, their decisions about whether or not to engage appear to be made increasingly on the basis of their perceptions of the short-term costs and benefits of doing so. However, of the two respondents interviewed who were moving towards this state of affairs (Bert [I14n] and Andy [F5c]), only one was not confident according to the general confidence measure. This suggests that this instrument is a blunt tool for identifying any potential problems of legitimacy for the CJS.

5.3.7 It should be noted that although the respondents were selected to provide views from a range of members of the community, and across different geographic locations within the research area, the very fact of their taking part in the study suggests that they may represent a sub-group of the general population that is more inclined to see the CJS as a legitimate institution with which they should engage. The views of people like Bert [I14n], who find that their free enjoyment of their day to day lives is constrained by the prevalence of crime in their local area, are not strongly represented.

5.3.8 What we can take from these findings is that there is a distinction between a criminal justice system that is perceived as 'legitimate' and one that is perceived as wholly satisfactory. Importantly, however, people can be willing to engage with a criminal justice system in spite of being sharply critical of many individual aspects of its performance. General confidence then cannot be said to impact on behaviour in the way in which the policy agenda has suggested.

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[38] The Morgan Report (1991) stated that *'Community safety should be seen as the legitimate concern of all in the local community'* (Para 3.7) and led to the development of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and an explicit broadening of responsibility for the safety of the public to include local authorities and other partners. However, members of the public may not always be aware of this wider responsibility for community safety and this potentially creates a mismatch between the agencies which the public hold responsible for ensuring their safety and the broader range of agencies which *are* in fact responsible. As such it should be noted that public decisions about whether they are 'confident' in the CJS and willing to contact the police where appropriate may be partially based on their assessments of the performance of a wide range of agencies, all of which therefore potentially have a role to play in maintaining public confidence and willingness to engage.

6. Discussion   57

6.0.1   The analysis chapter considered three aspects of confidence:

1.   **The Conditions for Confidence** – What sources of information do people draw on to shape their view of the CJS? How do they interpret this information?

2.   **The Objects of Confidence** – What do people expect from the CJS and do they think it is meeting these expectations?

3.   **The Impacts of Confidence** – Does confidence lead to willingness to engage with the CJS or are other factors more important?

6.0.2   Confident respondents were compared with those who were not confident to identify the differences between the two groups. The first part of this chapter pulls out key findings from this comparison to identify conditions and objects of confidence which are associated with being confident and not confident in the CJS. The second section summarises the relationship between confidence and willingness to engage; exploring whether willingness to engage is one of the impacts of confidence and highlighting the factors which appear to be most important for willingness to engage. The final section of this chapter draws together these findings to address the question posed at the start of this report: Is the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence fit for purpose?

6.1   Being confident

6.1.1   While there were many similarities between the confident and not confident respondents, this section will focus on the differences in order to identify areas where a change of perspective might lead to increased confidence. Respondents who were **not confident** in the CJS were **more likely** than confident respondents to:

- …distrust the motives of politicians and senior CJS officials and therefore distrust the information they provide

- …rely on word of mouth accounts of criminal justice activity, and get involved in conversations about a decline in values and respect

- …dismiss positive first-hand experiences of the CJS as atypical

- …see incidents of disrespect as indicative of a general social decline

- …believe that this decline is at least partially attributable to the erosion of the power of authority figures to impose discipline (especially on the young)

- …be strongly aligned with the belief that harsh punishment deters crime and reduces reoffending

- …believe that the CJS does not punish offenders appropriately

- …believe in the right of members of the public to use force to protect themselves and their property from offenders

- …believe that the CJS is tilted in favour of offenders

6.1.2   Confidence does not appear to be based on a considered evaluation of CJS performance in key areas of concern. Rather, confidence appears to be rooted in respondents' embedded beliefs about the nature and causes of criminality, their trust in authority figures to tell the truth about crime and CJS effectiveness, and the way in which they interpret the available information about the world around them.

6.1.3   Respondents who are **not confident** differ from confident respondents in three key areas:

- **Receptivity** – they are distrustful of the motives of politicians and senior figures within the CJS, who they see as acting out of self-interest. Perhaps as a result they tend to see official information materials and community engagement-related activity as always attempting to paint a positive picture of the CJS in order to manipulate public opinion. They are also more likely to dismiss positive first-hand experiences of the CJS as atypical, and so fail to utilise these experiences as a source of information.

- **Outlook** – they are more pessimistic about the general state of society and tend to see each observed incident of disrespect, violence and disregard for the law (whether seen in the media or experienced first-hand) as evidence of a pervasive and chronic social decline.

- **Beliefs about what works** – they see harsh punishment as the most powerful mechanism for deterring criminality and changing the behaviour of offenders, and attribute perceived increases in crime and decline in respect to the erosion of the power of traditional authority figures to discipline offenders and would-be offenders. Punishment, discipline and fear are seen as key instruments of control.

6.1.4   These three key areas of difference between confident and not confident respondents point to the very real difficulty of effecting significant and lasting change in the *overall* level of public confidence. The differences suggest that in order to 'cross over' from being 'not confident' to 'confident', respondents need to change not just their surface perceptions of how well the CJS is doing, but also more deeply held beliefs and their general outlook on society.

6.1.5   In view of not confident respondents' comparative lack of receptivity to the established approaches to communicating with the public, effecting these changes poses a substantial challenge for criminal justice agencies. How can people who distrust coordinated PR efforts be reached? And how, if they can be reached, can their fundamental beliefs and outlook be legitimately changed?

6.1.6   The recommendations in the next chapter provide some suggestions for alternative strategies and tactics that may begin to address this problem.

6.2   Being willing to engage

6.2.1   Analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the general confidence measure currently used is not a good proxy for willingness to engage. The statistical association between general confidence and willingness to engage was weak, and was eclipsed by other factors including a 'sense of duty' and anticipation of what would happen in specific scenarios, in particular, anticipation of the speed and quality of the police response to a report of a crime.

6.2.2 The qualitative data revealed that willingness to engage reflects:

- Habits

- Beliefs about what one 'ought' to do

- Beliefs about the likely 'costs' of engaging

- Beliefs about the likely benefits of engaging

6.2.3 General confidence is one small component of beliefs about the costs and benefits of engaging. The research revealed that general confidence tends to reflect perceptions of the sentences which offenders receive; however, both the interview and focus group data suggest that anticipation of the sentences which offenders would eventually receive, if found guilty, was less important for willingness to engage than what would happen in the immediate period after a crime had been reported.

6.2.4 The one exception to this was a respondent living in an area which, based on his descriptions, appeared to be afflicted by a high volume of both low-level and more serious crime carried out generally unhindered by police interventions (Bert [I14n]). Bert's experience and the views which he expressed as a result of his experience suggest that further research concentrated in high-crime areas would provide more useful information about the factors which undermine the willingness of the public to engage. However, the overwhelming majority of the respondents to this study had little in common with Bert's daily experience of crime, and they were predominantly oriented towards cooperating with the CJS in all but the most minor circumstances.

6.2.5 The data discussed here then, whilst providing a useful insight into the factors which respondents thought would drive their decision-making in the specified scenarios, are mainly useful for the challenge they offer to the assumption that general confidence underpins willingness to engage. Further and more focused research would be needed in order to offer a more comprehensive dissection of the factors affecting willingness to engage.

6.3 What is confidence?

6.3.1 The question posed in the introduction to this report was: is the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence fit for purpose? In order to answer this question it is important to consider whether, by conceptualising and measuring confidence as we currently do, we are meeting the objectives which the monitoring of confidence is supposed to achieve. These objectives were defined as:

4. Gauge whether or not members of the public think that the CJS is effective

5. Provide an indication of whether members of the public are willing to engage with the CJS

6.3.2 <u>**Objective 1 – Gauge whether or not members of the public think that the CJS is effective**</u> – The differences between confident and not confident respondents are not primarily differences of opinion about the overall effectiveness of the CJS. Both confident and not confident respondents questioned the effectiveness of the CJS at deterring crime and reducing reoffending. On balance it would appear that the current method of measuring confidence does not gauge whether or not members of the public think that the CJS is effective. Rather it captures their attachment to harsh punishment as the best method of reducing crime, their beliefs about whether the CJS passes sentences which punish offenders and their perceptions of the state of society.

The current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence does not meet its first objective.

6.3.3 **Objective 2 - Provide an indication of whether members of the public are willing to engage with the CJS** – As already discussed above (Para 6.2.1), confidence is not a good proxy for willingness to engage. The current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence does not meet its second objective.

6.3.4 The findings from this study indicate that the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence is not 'fit for purpose', meaning that it does not capture data which is adequate for meeting the core objectives of the concept (and hence, of enabling CJ partners to target remedial actions and thus improve the service that they provide).[39]

6.3.5 If 'general confidence' can be seen as an indication of anything it is of the vehemence with which respondents are likely to express their concerns about the 'state of society' and the *'way things are going'* (Rosemary [F2n]); as well as the extent to which they think a punitive approach to disciplining and controlling offenders is likely to prove effective in combating crime and social decline.

6.3.6 'General confidence' also provides an indication of whether or not respondents subscribe to a particular 'story' about crime, criminal justice and the state of society. In this 'story' things are *'going to pot'* (Vivien [I11n]) due to the erosion of the power of authority figures to control bad behaviour, particularly from young people. Respondents who were **not confident** were more likely to engage in trading stories which fitted into this larger story of decline, and were more likely to mention regularly engaging in similar conversations with their acquaintances. When research solicits the views of members of the public about their perceptions of current problems to do with crime and criminal justice, and how to improve their confidence, this story emerges time and again.

6.3.7 In most existing confidence research, almost by convention, the story told by respondents has been interpreted as a statement of the public expectations of the CJS, which the CJS must both meet and be seen to be meeting. This has prompted information campaigns seeking to highlight the work the CJS is doing to control troublesome elements in society and to 'get tough' with offenders. In this way, the story to which 'not confident' members of the public tend to subscribe has come to be reflected in the official discourse of initiatives designed to increase confidence.

6.3.8 This study has noted that the key differences between confident and not confident respondents are receptivity, outlook and beliefs about what works. The established approach to increasing confidence, (retelling the story of crime and justice in the language of respondents who lack confidence by emphasising the extent to which their expectations of toughness and control are being met) does little to address these key underlying factors.

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[39] Of course the fact that the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence does not appear to be adequate to the purposes for which it is *ostensibly* intended does not mean that it may not serve other purposes. For example politicians may find a general measure of confidence in the CJS to be a useful 'temperature check' for the state of public approval of their performance in this policy area, whilst researchers seeking to use the measure for purposes of comparison between jurisdictions or over time may also find the measure useful.

6.3.9 In fact the established approach to increasing confidence is likely to be either ineffective or to contribute to the consolidation of existing views. Consider:

- **Receptivity** – attempting to address the concerns of a group of people who are sceptical of 'spin' through the use official information materials is unlikely to have the desired effect. Respondents who are already confident are much more likely to use and trust this kind of information.

- **Outlook** – by emphasising toughness and control this discourse may reinforce the perception that society is in a state of declining values, respect and regard for the law. This approach does little to change the outlook of people who are not confident.

- **Beliefs about what works** – a discourse of crime and criminal justice which consistently emphasises toughness can only lend credibility to the belief that harsh punishment is the most effective way to deter crime and reduce reoffending. Without even commenting on the evidence to support or negate this argument it should be apparent that continued calls for increasingly 'tough' sentencing present an unsustainable situation for the government and the CJS.

6.4 Summary

6.4.1 This chapter has discussed the differences between respondents who were not confident and those who were. It has also summarised the key factors contributing to respondents' willingness to engage. It has concluded by suggesting that the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence is not 'fit for purpose', and that existing approaches to confidence research, policy and practice may be consolidating the factors associated with a lack of confidence. The next chapter of this report presents some recommendations for an alternative approach to thinking about, researching and addressing public confidence.

7. Recommendations

7.0.1 This report has presented findings from a critical, empirical study of the factors associated with confidence in the CJS and willingness to engage with the CJS. It has noted that the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence is inadequate for the purposes both of gauging public evaluations of CJS performance and of providing an indication of how willing individuals are to engage with the CJS by contacting the police in appropriate scenarios. It has also suggested some potential implications of the continued usage of the concept in its current form. This final chapter offers some recommendations for changes to existing policy and practice which should improve the application and utility of the concept of confidence and, by so doing, deliver real benefits to the public.

7.0.2 The recommendations are divided into three sections. Section one suggests some measures to improve the conceptualisation and measurement of confidence. Section two suggests a reorientation of the strategic approach to public confidence. Section three offers some more specific, tactical suggestions for action to improve confidence.

7.1 Conceptualisation and Operationalisation

7.1.1 This study has indicated that the concept of 'confidence' is currently being applied in a way that captures a range of issues which are not interrelated in the way that the policy agenda has suggested. The policy agenda around confidence is premised on the assumption that the concept of public confidence captures specific public evaluations of how well the CJS is performing, and that public willingness to engage is dependent upon such evaluations. The research presented here, however, suggests that the current conceptualisation and operationalisation of confidence does not capture public evaluations of the CJS, but rather captures a much broader set of feelings about the state of society and beliefs about what works in criminal justice. These feelings are not closely associated with how willing a person is to engage with the CJS in scenarios where they might do so. Such feelings also do not seem to reflect people's day to day experiences in their local environment.

7.1.2 On the basis of these findings it seems sensible to reconsider the way in which confidence is conceptualised and operationalised. If the concept of confidence is intended to capture public evaluations of CJS performance and willingness to engage with the CJS, and if it is also intended to provide a guide to people's sense of wellbeing in their local environment, then it makes sense to differentiate 'confidence' into component parts to facilitate greater focus and accuracy in the monitoring of performance. This would also assist agencies to target their efforts to improve confidence and to deliver a better service which would, in turn, deliver greater benefits to the public.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Retain the *idea* of 'public confidence in the CJS' as an overarching label for any work which aims to improve the public's subjective impressions of the CJS and the ways they interact with the CJS, but for application, differentiate the concept into (at least) the following: (i) General approval of CJS; (ii) Anticipation of CJS performance in key scenarios; (iii) Willingness to engage with the CJS in key scenarios; (iv) Wellbeing.

7.1.3 This research devised and utilised successful question formats that provide alternatives to the general confidence measure. These were piloted prior to insertion in the survey for this research and have generated useful information about the service which respondents anticipated receiving in certain scenarios, their willingness to engage in certain scenarios, and the association between these two areas. If these measures could be included in local surveys then more detailed data would be available to Northumbria LCJB to enable them to target remedial actions in localities where anticipated service and willingness to engage appear to be particularly low. The proposed Tyne and Wear perceptions survey which is currently under development offers a prime opportunity to develop such a mechanism.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Utilising the findings from this study and other relevant research, and in partnership with relevant agencies, develop focused measures for the differentiated aspects of confidence (general approval of CJS, anticipation of CJS performance in key scenarios, willingness to engage with the CJS in key scenarios and wellbeing) suitable for insertion into regular local surveys. Identify suitable local surveys and negotiate inclusion of new measures in order to facilitate ongoing monitoring.

7.1.4 Quantitative data gathered through surveys can offer a useful general snapshot of what the public are thinking in a particular area; however, it cannot compete with qualitative data in its ability to get a more in-depth understanding of the reasons *why* people hold particular views and the impact that those views have on their day to day lives. In order to ensure that a thorough understanding of public views is gained, qualitative as well as quantitative methods should be applied when researching and consulting the general public.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Research into public views of the CJS should incorporate both quantitative and qualitative components. Qualitative research is more appropriate for understanding *why* people hold certain views and is therefore vital to developing sound strategy and tactics to help improve public confidence.

7.2 Strategic Approach

7.2.1 The arena of crime and criminal justice is a central issue within political debate and the development of successful policy within this arena attracts significant political as well as academic attention. Indeed, this area of policy is seen as crucial to political success and politicians have a profound interest in ensuring that any policy changes they initiate are well-received by the public. Unfortunately, and as has been well-recorded in the research literature (Roberts *et al*, 2003; Pratt, 2007; Green, 2006), this can lead to a reactive and illiberal discourse around crime and criminal justice. Such conservative discourse is detrimental to the development and

introduction of innovative policies which aim to achieve the core criminal justice outcomes which the public desire (reduced crime and the maintenance of order).

7.2.2 As has been discussed earlier in this report, efforts to increase public confidence have frequently involved adopting traditional marketing-style approaches to research and practice; that is, by seeking to establish 'what the public wants' and then ensuring both that the CJS meets these expectations and that the public are aware that it is doing so. A clear example of this approach can be found in the area of sentencing, where public demands for 'tough' sentences have been translated into policy changes accompanied by marketing campaigns seeking to show the public that the CJS is indeed 'tough'. However, it is unclear in terms of both resource and ethical boundaries, to what extent policy change in this direction can accommodate public demands whilst increasing the effective achievement of the real outcomes which the public desire. Nor is it clear whether, or indeed if, public demands in this area could ever be met.

7.2.3 On the basis of this research it seems both logical and appropriate to propose a shift in the strategic approach to confidence. This shift would correspond with the conceptual differentiation of confidence suggested above (recommendation 1) and offer new strategic objectives for confidence research, strategy and practice. The CJS operates within a complex social and political environment and changes to policy and business are only rarely isolated from other interests. In other words, there are few 'quick fixes' that are both significant and sustainable. The core objective of this new paradigm should therefore be to foster public support for fair and effective evidence-informed criminal justice policy for the longer-term, rather than seeking to make the CJS more popular in the short-term. This would mean creating an environment that was accepting and supportive of the incremental development of valid and robust, evidence-informed criminal justice policy which aimed to meet public demands for reduced crime, social order and justice. Despite inherent difficulties in this approach to policy development, creating such an environment should be a primary objective in efforts to increase public confidence.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Research, policy and practice around public confidence should be reoriented to the core objective of fostering a hospitable environment for the development of fair, effective, evidence-informed criminal justice policy which aims to meet public demands for crime reduction, social order and justice. All actions around confidence, by *all* CJS agencies, should be designed either to meet this objective, or not to damage the prospects of meeting this objective.

7.3 Actions

7.3.1 Existing communications efforts often seek to reassure the public that the CJS is 'tough', and that it is on the side of the law-abiding. This approach responds to research findings which suggest that the public think the system is 'too soft' and that it favours the rights of offenders over the rights of victims. The data from this research could also be used to justify similar conclusions, as these concerns were expressed by some of the respondents. However, communication strategies which address this issue through a combative discourse which pits the law-abiding against offenders, and promises to 'crack-down' on troublesome outsiders, risk accelerating demands for increasingly harsh punishments and the permanent marginalisation of certain sections of society.

7.3.2   The criteria for determining which criminal justice policies are 'tough' are extremely ambiguous and there is little evidence that the 'tough' discourse has thus far produced the desired change in public confidence. Communications of this kind may actually contribute to the construction of the 'bigger story' about crime and criminal justice which provides a 'lens' through which the public view the information and experiences to which they are exposed. If the bigger story is about the CJS being 'tough' or 'soft' then it becomes difficult to talk about criminal justice in any other terms. This is clearly not helpful to the aim of creating a hospitable environment for the development of fair, effective and evidence-informed policy in the area of criminal justice as recommended above (recommendation 4). Sparks, Girling and Smith (2002: 117) explored the prospects for 'replacement discourses' of crime and justice in their discussions of children's conversations on the subject, and Allen (2004: 65) has argued strongly for the promotion of 'viable alternatives' to current approaches to doing criminal justice. Without the active promotion of these alternatives, Allen argues, it is sometimes hard for members of the public to envisage a different way of 'doing justice'.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Cultivate a new discourse of criminal justice which breaks the toughness-deterrent link and emphasises an evidence-based and inclusive approach to achieving the outcomes which the public desire.

7.3.3   Whatever the tone of the discourse about crime and the CJS it is evident from this study that many members of the public actively mistrust official information which they see as subject to political interference and spin. Public information exercises and the marketing of achievements by public sector bodies can be seen as exercises in self-promotion and self-justification. There can be little doubt that many such exercises are conducted to increase public approval of the bodies that run them and as such it is not always clear to what extent they benefit the public as opposed to the people working within the organizations being promoted. When publicity materials appear to the public to have been designed and distributed in order to gain their approval this can undermine trust in the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information they contain.

7.3.4   In order to maintain trust in this information there is a strong case for making accurate information about crime and the criminal justice system available on a routine and ongoing basis to interested citizens. The reliable, regular and constant availability of such information will reassure people that the information is not being released to them for any purpose other than information provision. There are, however, issues that need to be resolved around the level of detail of such information.[40]

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[40] For example, there is the potential for crime data to be misread or misrepresented, potentially reinforcing adverse opinion of certain areas with negative consequences for attempts to improve the quality of life of people already living there. On an individual basis careful consideration would need to be given to preserving the anonymity of vulnerable individuals. The balance between allowing the general public to have access to detailed data in the interests of transparency and the potential adverse effects of the general release of such data would need to be fully considered on an ongoing basis.

> **RECOMMENDATION 6: To build trust in official information, ensure that locally-relevant information at an appropriate[41] level of detail about crimes committed, detections and eventual sentencing disposals is available on a routine and accessible basis, and that this availability is effectively publicised to the public.[42]**

7.3.5 The research also found that 'word of mouth' could be a powerful source of information about the CJS. This was particularly true if the 'informant' was seen as having access to 'inside' information, and was not seen as having self-interested reasons for passing on information. If a new discourse of criminal justice is to begin to take hold it will need to be reflected in the way people talk about crime and the CJS on a day to day basis. Key local figures and opinion formers can be seen as 'connectors'[43] with the potential to begin circulating a new way of talking about crime and criminal justice. The routine availability of information about crime and the CJS should be complemented by carefully targeted events which offer these 'connectors' the opportunity to engage in deliberation about the principles and methods of the criminal justice system, whilst gaining an insight into how the system works. The purpose of these events would be simply to allow space for these 'connectors' to gain a better understanding of how the system works and to engage in constructive, evidence-informed deliberation about its principles and actions[44]. By so doing the information that they subsequently disseminate through their formal and informal contacts with members of the public should offer a more balanced and informed impression of the CJS, as well as hopefully being contained within a discourse which departs from the tough/soft dichotomy.

> **RECOMMENDATION 7: Provide regular opportunities for key local opinion formers to engage in informed deliberation about crime and criminal justice.**

7.3.6 The research has revealed that front-line CJS staff are also 'trusted informants' about crime and criminal justice issues. However, staff themselves are not always fully aware of how the system works and why, and may lack confidence in the system. This may lead to them communicating negative impressions of the CJS to their friends, relatives and other acquaintances, as well as to members of the public they encounter in their professional role. A focused effort on engaging staff to improve their confidence could enable them to act as more positive ambassadors for

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[41] In considering what is 'an appropriate level', consideration should be given to the likely impact of the release of such data and the fact that data can be misconstrued, even with the best of intentions.

[42] This recommendation builds on recommendations 3.3-3.8 and recommendations 4.9 and 4.10 from the Smith Review of Crime Statistics completed for the Home Office in 2006 (Smith, 2006). Similar recommendations were made in the Casey Review (Casey, 2008) which championed the development of interactive online maps (*ibid*: 69). This report however explicitly recommends caution in establishing the parameters of what level of detail is 'appropriate', (see footnote 2 above). Recommendation 6, based on the findings from *this* research (which suggest that the public do not trust official information) has at its core the principle that locally-relevant information about crime and CJS responses to crime should be available to the public as *a matter of routine*.

[43] See Gladwell (2000), in essence 'connectors' are individuals with large circles of professional and/or social contacts with whom they frequently interact.

[44] Green (2006) discusses the prospects for using 'deliberative polls' both to gain a more nuanced understanding of public views about crime and to allow space for members of the public to refine their views through deliberative interaction. Participation in events where individuals have both access to expert opinion and space and time to think about and discuss the issues have been shown to moderate punitive views, and enable individuals to come to a considered judgment rather than giving an 'off the top of the head' opinion.

the system and may well be more cost-effective in the long-term than running public-facing events that may demonstrate little sustained impact.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Identify front-line CJS staff with the most power to influence public views and engage with these staff to understand their attitudes and concerns about the CJS. Identify key concerns and design engagement and educational events to help address these concerns. These events might include deliberative activity as outlined above (Para 7.3.5).

7.3.7   In addition to creating a hospitable environment for the development of sound evidence-based policy, any actions taken to improve confidence should seek to ensure that a good relationship between members of the public and CJS agencies is preserved, based on mutual trust and cooperation. Strategy and tactics in this area should be developed from robust research into the factors informing individuals' decisions about whether to engage with the CJS in scenarios where it is desirable for them to do so.

7.3.8   Increasing general confidence in the CJS was assumed to have a positive and significant impact on whether or not people would be willing to engage with the CJS at appropriate points. This research has challenged this assumption, suggesting that unless confidence falls below a critical point, people's sense of their duty to engage and responsibility to others will usually override their general approval, or lack of approval for the system. However, the willingness of members of the public to engage with the CJS is clearly still an important issue for CJS agencies. If members of the public do not contact the police when crimes are taking place then the police will be unable to respond effectively or allocate resources appropriately. If witnesses refuse to attend court, prosecutions will fail. Ultimately this will damage the effectiveness of the CJS and lead to detrimental effects on crime levels and public wellbeing. It is therefore in the public interest to ensure that willingness to engage with the CJS is maintained.

7.3.9   This research has found that even where a sense of duty and responsibility has been damaged, the kinds of concerns impacting on willingness to engage tend to be focused on the short-term costs and benefits of engagement, rather than on the more global issues about sentencing which tend to dominate discussions about confidence. Whilst most respondents to this research were willing to engage with the CJS in most of the scenarios discussed, and particularly in serious scenarios, there is some evidence to suggest that a lack of willingness to engage may be concentrated in particular localities, especially high crime localities where the benefits of engagement may be less visible and potential costs appear all too real. Therefore, rather than expending resources on a general 'blanket' campaign, 'difficult' locations should be identified and targeted and efforts to improve engagement should be focused upon such areas where increased engagement would be desirable. Further research, including use of police intelligence about areas, and the development of questions using crime scenarios where the cooperation of the public is problematic, would be beneficial to increase knowledge in this regard.

7.3.10 It should also be noted that without an ideal model of how and when citizens should engage with the CJS, it is more difficult to put together a coherent strategy for encouraging such engagement. In this study, respondents frequently expressed uncertainty about the appropriate domain for CJS activity, and some were unwilling to contact the police if they thought that the issue was too minor and would not be treated as a priority. Other respondents were confident to address some minor issues

themselves, and it would perhaps be unwise to suggest that they should contact the police in this case - although it must be acknowledged that being made aware of events, whether or not they are required to resolve them, enables the police to build up better intelligence profiles and more accurately identify problems and their locales.

RECOMMENDATION 9: The willingness of members of the public to engage with the CJS in appropriate scenarios should be addressed directly, rather than through the proxy of confidence. An ideal model for citizen engagement with the CJS should be outlined and further research into the factors underpinning decisions about whether to engage would be beneficial. Existing police intelligence should be compared with data from other, relevant partners and this analysis should be utilised to identify those localities and crime scenarios where a lack of willingness to engage may be having a detrimental effect on the ability of the CJS to serve all communities fairly and effectively. These localities should then be given priority attention for further research to inform the development of suitable strategies and tactics.

8. Conclusion

8.0.1   The previous chapter outlined nine key recommendations based on the empirical research and the review of the literature conducted during this study. The recommendations embrace a new approach to thinking about how the CJS 'does' confidence and apply to issues ranging from future research and the development of assessment methods, to the development of strategies and tactics to build public confidence on a sustainable basis. The recommendations are built upon a fundamental re-thinking of the way in which confidence is conceptualised, and offer key strategic objectives to structure future action around confidence.

8.0.2   At the heart of these recommendations lies the recognition that 'public confidence' is not a simple issue that is amenable to change by 'quick-fix' solutions. Confidence is a complex and elusive concept which, in its current form, does not appear to meet the objectives in the service of which it is most often invoked. The feelings which are captured by the current confidence measure often do *not* reflect a considered assessment of the effectiveness of the CJS, and no simple, direct, causal links between the activities of CJS organisations and *general* levels of public confidence in the CJS as it is *currently* measured have been identified. Furthermore, the often claimed association between public confidence (as currently measured) and willingness to engage with the CJS is weak. In the light of this work, it would appear inaccurate to suggest that the current measure of confidence 'that the CJS is effective' depicts the reality of public evaluations of the impact of the work of the CJS. Furthermore it would be unwise to use this indicator as a proxy measure for how willing the public are to engage with the CJS in appropriate scenarios.

8.0.3   This report has highlighted some potential dangers of continuing down the current route with regard to public confidence. It has suggested that the existing method of measuring confidence is not 'fit for purpose'. Furthermore it has argued that attempting to increase confidence by being seen to respond to simplistic characterisations of 'what the public wants' runs the risk of both reinforcing negative perceptions of 'the way things are going' and accelerating public demand for 'tough' action against offenders which will prove unsustainable in the long-term. However, the report has also proposed a way in which the idea of confidence may be rehabilitated: as an umbrella term encompassing activities which address the undisputed need to ensure the subjective, as well as the objective wellbeing of the public, and also those activities which seek to create a hospitable environment for the development of fair, effective and evidence-informed criminal justice policy.

8.0.4   It is not in the public interest for criminal justice policy to be formulated in conditions which are inhospitable to innovation, and where evidence of effectiveness is less important than the findings derived from shallow measures of public opinion. That is why this report recommends re-orienting strategic objectives around confidence to the broader aim of building support for the implementation of fair, effective and evidence-based criminal justice policy. This reorientation would not exclude the public but rather would seek to ensure that the methods used to access their views were sophisticated enough to cope with the complexity and ambivalence of public views in this area. It would also ensure that the interests of the *public* rather than those of policymakers and practitioners were clearly situated at the heart of all actions designed to improve public confidence.

8.0.5   Certainly more research will be needed in this area, and it is perhaps needed most urgently in respect of maximising the prospects for a 'new discourse' of crime and criminal justice. To succeed this discourse will first need to be accepted *within* the CJS, particularly by those 'trusted informants' who play an important role in communicating information about the CJS to the public. With the need for further research in mind it is instructive to conclude by referring to Mike Maguire's (2004) paper on the demise of the Crime Reduction Programme in England and Wales.

8.0.6   Maguire draws attention to the '..*different cultures, perceptions and timeframes of policy makers and politicians, practitioners and academics*…' (2004: 232) and also to the problems that '…*narrow targets and crude statistical indicators*…' (*ibid*: 232) bring for practitioners[45]. He tells of a desire for the longer-term development of a robust and valid knowledge base being overtaken by the need for organisations to be seen to be meeting, or striving to meet, short term targets. This story has some resonance with what is happening in the arena of public confidence. In this area there is a real need to allow policy to be developed incrementally, following the kind of long-term, iterative processes advocated by Maguire. This will require flexibility and in some cases the ability to divorce funding from the time-limited constraints imposed by central government's financial planning cycle. This cycle can be detrimental to project planning and encourages profligacy to spend grants before deadlines which are wholly external to the requirements or rationales of individual projects expire (Maguire, 2004; Dale *et al*, 2008).

8.0.7   This Knowledge Transfer Partnership has offered the opportunity for a University-based research team to collaborate with practitioners on a project which is both responsive to practical imperatives and developed over a time-frame appropriate to the formulation of robust, evidence-informed research findings. The project has represented a significant commitment to the importance of developing strategy on the basis of robust research by the members of Northumbria LCJB. Moreover, to commit the necessary funding to a project spanning four financial years required a long-term vision which may be more difficult to sustain in the challenging financial times ahead.

8.0.8   Bearing in mind the likely reduction in financial room-for-manoeuvre at the local level it is to be hoped that careful consideration will now be given to the funding provided centrally to support the development of work relating to confidence, community engagement and other areas of CJS business. Bridging the divides between academics, policy-makers and practitioners, as this project has sought to do, may help to ensure that policy development is informed by a valid and robust knowledge-base and also by an awareness of strategic and tactical thinking that provides viable options in the real world.

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[45] Maguire also notes bureaucratic difficulties in working with multiple agencies; to an extent, Local Criminal Justice Boards provide a platform to assist in overcoming some of these difficulties.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

This questionnaire is about your view of the Criminal Justice System. The Criminal Justice System is made up of the following agencies and bodies: the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Courts, the Prison Service, the Probation Service and the Youth Offending Teams. They all work together to deal with crime.

IMPORTANT: Please mark boxes with a CROSS [X] unless otherwise instructed.

Newcastle University

PART 1: The Criminal Justice System

1. *In your opinion, how important is it that the Criminal Justice System is doing the following things? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is not at all important and 6 is very important)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Not at all important 1	2	3	4	5	Very important 6
Working with offenders to try and change their behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arriving quickly in an emergency situation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making offenders suffer for what they have done	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keeping victims updated about the progress of their case	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Treating people from all backgrounds fairly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sending offenders to prison	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providing a visible police presence on the streets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Supporting offenders after they are released from prison	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Providing support to witnesses when they attend court	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making sure that prison is not a nice place to be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Helping offenders reintegrate into society after release from prison	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being sensitive towards the feelings of victims and witnesses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ensuring that those accused of a crime receive a fair trial	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Arriving quickly in a non-emergency situation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. *Thinking about all the agencies within the Criminal Justice System: the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, prisons, and the probation service. How confident are you that…*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Don't know
…the Criminal Justice System as a whole is effective?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
…the Criminal Justice System as a whole is fair?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. *What ONE aspect of the criminal justice system do you think is <u>most urgently in need of</u> <u>improvement</u>?* **(WRITE IN BOX)**

PART 2: Society Today

In this part of the questionnaire we want to find out what you think about society today.

4. *In each of the following areas, do you think there is more crime, less crime or about the same amount of crime as there was two years ago?* **(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)**

	Much more crime	A little more crime	About the same amount of crime	A little less crime	Much less crime	Don't know
Your local area (the area within a short distance of your home)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The whole of the Northumbria area (Tyne and Wear and Northumberland)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The whole country	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. *Thinking about your own opinion, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?* **(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)**

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree
Nowadays people are only interested in looking after themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People today have very high moral standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Society today is more dangerous than it was in days gone by	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Young people today have plenty of respect for their elders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 3: Imagine

This part of the questionnaire asks you to imagine yourself in a variety of different situations and to think about what you think would happen next.

IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATION IN YOUR LOCAL AREA.

6. *You return to your home to find that someone has broken in, damaging your front door and taking some of your belongings. You call the police. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen 1	2	3	4	5	Very *likely* to happen 6
The police arrive quickly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The police are polite	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The police take the matter seriously	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. *The police have arrived and spoken to you about the incident. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The matter is investigated thoroughly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You are kept informed about what is happening	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The offender is arrested	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. *The offender has been charged and will be appearing in court. You are required as a witness. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
What will happen in court is explained to you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Effort is made to help make going to court as convenient as possible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the court people are helpful	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The offender receives a fair trial	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The offender is found guilty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. *The offender has been found guilty. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The sentence punishes the offender	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After serving their sentence the offender is less likely to offend again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. IMAGINE ... *A group of people have congregated in the street outside your home. They are playing loud music and shouting. When you ask them to keep the noise down they swear at you and carry on. You call the police. How likely do you think it is that that the following things happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The police arrive quickly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The police are sympathetic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The group of people are moved on	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. IMAGINE ... *You have witnessed a violent robbery. Whilst you were browsing in a shop a man came in and threatened staff with a knife before punching a shop assistant and making off with the contents of the till. The police have arrived and have taken a statement from you. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The matter is investigated thoroughly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The offender is arrested	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. *The offender has been charged and will be appearing in court. You are required as a witness. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
What will happen in court is explained to you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Effort is made to help you feel comfortable giving evidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At the court people are friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The offender receives a fair trial	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The offender is found guilty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. *The offender has been found guilty. How likely do you think it is that that the following things would happen? (Rate on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is very unlikely and 6 is very likely)*

(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)

	Very *unlikely* to happen					Very *likely* to happen
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The sentence punishes the offender	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The sentence is explained to you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
After serving their sentence the offender is less likely to offend again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 4: What would you do?

This part of the questionnaire asks you to imagine yourself in a variety of situations and to think about what YOU would do in that situation.

IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THE FOLLOWING SITUTATION IN YOUR LOCAL AREA.

14. *Would you contact the police?* **(CROSS ONE IN EACH ROW)**

	Definitely not	Probably not	Not sure	Probably	Definitely
Your home has been broken into and some of your belongings have been taken.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A man comes up to you in the street and threatens you with a knife to make you give him your bag.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You have left your back door unlocked and someone has gone into the house and taken some cash.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
You see a group of people vandalising a bus stop near your home.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is 11pm. A group of young people are hanging about in the street playing music and shouting. They have been there for about 30 minutes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your neighbours (a young couple who you don't know well) have been arguing a lot lately. Today they are shouting at each other and it sounds like things may have turned physical.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The police have appealed for information about a spate of burglaries in your local area. You have some information which might help them with their enquiries.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
In a residential area you see a car driving at high speed and swerving all over the road.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART 5: Rights and responsibilities

This part of the questionnaire asks you to think about how you think people should behave in certain situations.

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES BY CHOOSING THE OPTION WHICH MOST CLOSELY MATCHES YOUR OWN POINT OF VIEW.

15. *When someone has been a victim of a crime…* **(CROSS ONE)**

… they should always report it to the police ☐

… they should only report it if they think it will be worth their while ☐

… they should usually report it to the police ☐

… they should never report it to the police ☐

16. *If someone has been asked to give evidence in court to help convict an offender they should…* **(CROSS ONE)**

… always attend court when requested ☐

… only attend court if they feel like it ☐

… do everything that they can to attend court when requested ☐

… not attend ☐

17. *People should have the right to protect their property from offenders…* **(CROSS ONE)**

… using whatever means they think are necessary, including using physical force which <u>might</u> cause permanent harm to the offender ☐

… as long as they do not resort to using physical force ☐

… only using physical force which will <u>not</u> cause permanent harm to the offender ☐

… under no circumstances ☐

18. *Reporting crime to the police…* **(CROSS ONE)**

… is a duty ☐

… is not a duty and is only worth it if you think they'll catch the offender or if you need to claim insurance ☐

… is not a duty but is worth doing in most cases ☐

… is not a duty and isn't worth it ☐

19. *If someone has some information which would help the police with their enquiries they should…* **(CROSS ONE)**

… always contact the police ☐

… contact the police as long as they feel safe to do so and it won't get someone they like in trouble ☐

… contact the police as long as they feel safe to do so ☐

… never contact the police ☐

PART 6: Your experiences

20. *Please indicate if any of the following have happened to you.* **(CROSS ALL THAT APPLY).**

	YES, this has happened to me	NO, this has never happened to me
I have contacted the police to report a crime	☐	☐
I have contacted the police to report anti-social behaviour	☐	☐
I have contacted the police to provide them with information	☐	☐
I have been stopped and questioned by the police	☐	☐
I have been arrested	☐	☐
I have pleaded guilty to or been found guilty of a <u>motoring offence</u> in court	☐	☐
I have pleaded guilty to or been found guilty of an offence in court which was <u>NOT a motoring offence</u>	☐	☐
I have served a prison sentence	☐	☐

People working within the Criminal Justice System include police officers and police staff, people who work for the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts (including Magistrates and Judges), the prison service, the probation service or youth offending teams and also Solicitors and Barristers working both for the prosecution and the defence.

21. *Please indicate if any of the following statements apply to you.* **(CROSS ALL THAT APPLY).**

	YES, this applies to me	NO, this does not apply to me
I have worked within the criminal justice system in the past but no longer do so	☐	☐
I currently work within the criminal justice system	☐	☐
A close friend or relative has worked within the criminal justice system in the past, but no longer does so	☐	☐
A close friend or relative currently works within the criminal justice system	☐	☐

22. *Have you ever been a victim of crime?* **(CROSS ONE)**

Yes ☐   No ☐ → **(GO TO QUESTION 27)**

23. *How many times have you been a victim of crime?* **(CROSS ONE)**

Once	☐	2-5 times	☐
6-10 times	☐	More than 10 times	☐

24. *On the <u>most recent occasion</u> that you were a victim of crime, was the incident reported to the police?*   Yes ☐   No ☐

25. *Where did the incident take place?* **(CROSS ONE)**

Within your local area (the area where you were living at that time) ☐

Outside your local area but within the Northumbria area (Tyne and Wear and Northumberland) ☐

Outside of the Northumbria area but within the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) ☐

Outside of the UK ☐

26. *Was this within the last 12 months?* **(CROSS ONE)** Yes ☐ No ☐

27. *Have you ever been to court for any reason?* **(CROSS ONE)**

Yes ☐ No ☐ → **(GO TO QUESTION 31)**

28. *Think back to the* <u>most recent occasion</u> *on which you attended court, which court did you go to?* **(CROSS ONE)**

The County Court ☐   The Crown Court ☐

The Magistrates Court ☐   Don't know ☐

29. *On the* <u>most recent occasion</u>, *why did you go to court?* **(CROSS ONE)**

For my job ☐   I was accompanying the accused ☐

I was accused of a crime ☐   I was accompanying the victim ☐

I was the victim of a crime ☐   I was accompanying a witness ☐

I was acting as a witness ☐   Other (please specify below) ☐

I was a juror ☐   ....

30. *Was this within the last 12 months?* **(CROSS ONE)** Yes ☐ No ☐

31. *Please indicate which (if any) of these sources influence your view of the criminal justice system.* **(CROSS <u>ALL</u> THAT APPLY).**

Local newspapers ☐   Local TV News ☐

National Tabloid Newspapers (e.g. The Sun, The Mirror, Metro) ☐   National TV News ☐

National Broadsheet Newspapers (e.g. The Times, The Guardian) ☐   TV Documentaries ☐

TV Soaps and Dramas ☐   Magazines ☐

Stories from people you know ☐   Radio News ☐

Official information (for example leaflets from the police or council) ☐   Own personal experience ☐

PART 7: About You

32. How old were you on your last birthday? **(WRITE NUMBER IN BOX)** ☐ years

33. What is your sex?   **(CROSS ONE)**   Male ☐   Female ☐

34. What is your ethnic background? **(CROSS ONE)**

1. White – British	☐	9. Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	☐
2. White – Irish	☐	10. Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	☐
3. White – Other White Background	☐	11. Asian or Asian British – Any Other Asian Background	☐
4. Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	☐	12. Black or Black British – Caribbean	☐
5. Mixed – White and Black African	☐	13. Black or Black British – African	☐
6. Mixed – White and Asian	☐	14. Black or Black British – Other Black Background	☐
7. Mixed – Any Other Mixed Background	☐	15. Chinese	☐
8. Asian or Asian British - Indian	☐	16. Other (please specify below)	☐

....

35. Which of the following most accurately describes your employment status? **(CROSS ONE)**

Employed Full-time (16 or more hours per week)	☐	Retired	☐
Employed Part-time (less than 16 hours per week)	☐	Student	☐
Unemployed	☐	Homemaker	☐
Suffering from an illness or disability which prevents you from working	☐	Other	☐

36. Which of the following most accurately describes your housing status? **(CROSS ONE)**

Home-owner	☐	Renting from the council or a housing association	☐
Renting from a private landlord	☐	Other	☐

37. When we have analysed the data from this questionnaire we will be doing some further research. This might involve one-to-one interviews or group discussions. Would you be willing to be contacted to take part in this next stage? **(CROSS ONE)**

Yes ☐   No ☐ → **(END OF QUESTIONNAIRE)**

38. Please provide a contact telephone number so that we can contact you about the next stage **(WRITE ON LINE)**

_____

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank-you for filling in this questionnaire. Now please <u>return your completed questionnaire</u> to us using the pre-paid reply envelope provided.

Appendix 2: Covering Letter and Information Sheet

Newcastle University

School of Geography,
Politics and Sociology

Professor A E Gillespie
Head of School

[Unique reference number]

[RECIPIENT'S NAME]

[RECIPIENT'S ADDRESS
1 SOMEWHERE STREET
SOMEWHERE
SW1 1SW]

[Date]

NOT YOU? If this person does not live at this address, please call **07528551543** so we can correct our records and prevent further mailings. Please also feel free to complete and return the questionnaire.

Newcastle University
5th Floor Claremont Tower
Claremont Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE 1 7RU

Dear [RECIPIENT'S NAME],

We are seeking your views on the services provided by the criminal justice system in your area. Enclosed with this letter is a questionnaire and we would be grateful if you could take the time to fill this in and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided. Filling in the questionnaire will not take long and will ensure that your views are heard.

On the other side of this letter are the answers to some questions you may have about the research, however if you have a question which is not answered here please contact Liz Turner:

Phone: 07528551543
Email: liz.turner@ncl.ac.uk
Write to: Liz Turner, School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, 5th Floor Claremont Bridge Building, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU

We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Turner

Liz Turner

KTP Associate
Newcastle University

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The University of Newcastle upon Tyne trading as Newcastle University

Newcastle University

WHAT IS THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT?

The questionnaire is about *your views* of the criminal justice system.

WHAT IS THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM?

The criminal justice system is made up of the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, the prison service, the Probation service and the Youth Offending Teams. These agencies all work together to deal with crime.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

The research is being carried out by researchers from Newcastle University.

WHO IS PAYING FOR THE RESEARCH?

The research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board. The Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board is the body which brings together the most senior people from each of the agencies that make up the criminal justice system.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH?

The research aims to gain a greater understanding of the views of local people about the service they receive from the agencies which make up the criminal justice system. It is part of a 3 year project looking at public confidence in the criminal justice system.

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL THE RESEARCH MAKE?

The findings from the research will be presented to the Northumbria Local Criminal Justice Board, and in this way will inform the development of local criminal justice strategy.

HOW DID YOU GET MY NAME?

Your name has been randomly selected from a list of names of people living in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. The list was provided by Experian and is compiled using consumer data and the electoral roll.

DO I HAVE TO FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE?

Whether or not you fill in the questionnaire is entirely up to you.

ARE MY ANSWERS CONFIDENTIAL?

Your answers will be treated as confidential so nobody except the research team at Newcastle University will know what you have said. They will not share information which would identify individual respondents with anybody else.

WHY SHOULD I FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE?

Filling in the questionnaire is your chance to make sure your views are heard. This will help local criminal justice agencies to ensure that their services are meeting the needs of local people.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete.

HOW WILL THE DATA BE REPORTED?

The findings from the survey will be written up in a report which you will be able to access in due course by going to the project website: http://criminaljusticeresearch.ncl.ac.uk. If you are not able to access the report using the internet please contact Liz Turner at the address given overleaf, and she will arrange for you to receive a copy of the finished report.

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Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

SECTION 1: OBJECTS	SECTION 2: CONDITIONS
Why do we need a criminal justice system? Why is that important to you in your day to day life? What should the CJS be doing to achieve those aims? What is it about ---- which you think would help the criminal justice system ----? What do you mean by ----? Do you think the CJS is doing this? Is there anything that you think the CJS is doing well?	*What sort of information do you use to find out about what the CJS is doing?* Why is that convincing? Is there any information about the criminal justice system which you don't use? Why not? How does your own personal experience in your local area and day to day life affect your view of the criminal justice system? Is crime something you think about often?
SECTION 3: BEHAVIOUR *How do your views about the criminal justice system affect the way you behave?* In the survey you were asked whether or not you would contact the police in certain specific scenarios. I would like to go back and talk about some of these scenarios in a bit more detail. Would you call the police in that situation? OK so why might you not call the police? What else might you do? Is that a situation where you think people *should* be calling the police? Would you like to be able to call the police in that situation?	SECTION 4: BEING LISTENED TO *Do you think that your views about the CJS are quite typical?* What gives you that impression? What other points of view are you aware of? Do you think the CJS listens to views like yours? Who *does* the system listen to? Who *should* the system listen to? How can the system listen better?

Appendix 4: Focus Group Schedule

SECTION 1: OBJECTS	SECTION 2: CONDITIONS
Why do we need a criminal justice system? What should its main aims be? Why are these things important? What should the CJS be doing to achieve those aims? What is it about ---- which you think would help the criminal justice system ----? What do you mean by ----? Do you think the CJS is doing this? Is there anything that you think the CJS is doing well?	*What sort of information do you use to find out about what the CJS is doing?* Why is that convincing? Is there any information about the criminal justice system which you receive but don't use? Why not? How does your own personal experience in your local area and day to day life affect your view of the criminal justice system? Is crime something you think about often?
SECTION 3: BEHAVIOUR	SECTION 4: BEING LISTENED TO
How do your views about the criminal justice system affect the way you behave? In the survey you were asked whether or not you would contact the police in certain specific scenarios. I would like to go back and talk about some of these scenarios in a bit more detail. How many people would definitely call the police in that situation? OK so why might you not call the police? What else might you do? Is that a situation where you think people *should* be calling the police? Would you like to be able to call the police in that situation?	*Do you think that the criminal justice system listens to views like yours?* What gives you that impression? Who *does* the system listen to? Who *should* the system listen to? How can the system listen better? Do you think your views are typical? What other points of view are you aware of?

Appendix 5: Interview and Focus Group Participants (Anonymised)

Interview	Identifier	Alias	Sex	Age	Confident?
Interviews					
1	130220	Fred	M	93	
2	130552	Elsie	F	77	✓
3	120660	Harriet	F	63	✓
4	150136	Gavin	M	28	
5	150006	Angie	F	43	
6	150411	Niall	M	28	
7	150963	Lorna	F	39	✓
8	105034	June	F	61	
9	120286	Brenda	F	64	
10	150147	Abida	F	27	✓
11	120387	Vivien	F	68	
12	110578	Karen	F	58	✓
13	120132	Margaret	F	72	
14	120630	Bert	M	65	
Focus Group 1 – All confident					
	120106	Hamid	M	31	✓
	120138	Mavis	F	57	✓
	120384	Robin	M	60	✓
	120385	Veronica	F	49	✓
	130445	Julian	M	56	✓
Focus Group 2 – All not confident					
	101057	Rosemary	F	56	
	103177	Eric	M	61	
	106165	Malcolm	M	51	
Focus Group 3 – All not confident					
	104006	Ursula	F	54	
	120318	Henry	M	54	
	120443	Pam	F	44	
	120769	Geoff	M	63	
Focus Group 4 – Mixed confidence					
	140030	Sandra	F	42	✓
	150178	Violet	F	55	✓
	150324	Lawrence	M	47	
	150422	Ted	M	56	
	150724	Ernest	M	77	✓
	150812	Jack	M	65	✓
Focus Group 5 – Mixed confidence					
	120020	Judy	F	57	
	120050	Steve	M	52	
	120077	Bill	M	55	
	120390	Maureen	F	59	
	120435	Sandy	F	46	
	120457	Tara	F	54	
	120510	Andy	M	35	✓
	120518	Priya	F	50	
	120646	Anne	F	49	✓
	130028	Laura	F	45	✓
	130512	Glenys	F	86	✓

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